

SOL iMpROV



An HMC Student Arts Publication
February, 1990
Valentine's Day Issue

SOL iMpROV

ISSUE 3

AN HMC STUDENT ARTS PUBLICATION

FEBRUARY, 1990

The Editor Speaks

Welcome to the third issue of *SOL iMpROV*.

Before you think any further let me assure you that this "Valentine's Day issue" is not just a compilation of mushy poems, drawings and stories—our school is too atypical for that. Instead, we have a collection of materials with a broad range of emotions, some of which might offend you. We think that a sample of how people feel toward "love" at Harvey Mudd is more interesting than an issue with "sweet love" from cover to cover.

I am not going to lecture about what love is. But I would like to bring up a question which I ponder often: what is love and where can we find it? In many ways this is very similar to asking: what is the meaning of life? So similar that hardly anyone asks those two questions publicly anymore. It seems like the general feeling is that these questions are too difficult and pointless to answer. We must take care of homework, bank ac-

CONTENTS

The Editor Speaks

Dreaming

Four Seasons

Mr. Hawking's Jigsaw

Hoiwon Salutes

The Heart, Through the
eyes of a . . .

Views of Chile

A Valentine's Kiss

Console Me

Haikus

Cat

counts, financial aid, course requirements, clinic . . . and the list goes on. We become so busy especially at Mudd that we often don't stop to think, "so what if we get our homework done; so what if our project comes through?" For me *SOL iMpROV* is one of the proudest projects that I've ever attempted. But every time when I finish I feel empty. Yes, I've accomplished a difficult task, but there's no one to share it with. My parents don't understand, and everyone else is busy punching calculators or scratching

pencil marks. I have come to realize that I have started *SOL iMpROV* not only because I wish to gather together the creative talents of this school, but also because I'm seeking a way of living. Is getting so busy that I don't have any time for a friend really the way I wish to lead my life? Can any project be worth so much that I will give up friendship? If not, how do I work around that? How do I express my emotions to the ones that I truly love amidst all the workload? Well, I've found an answer. So, go out there and make your love be known. To all who have helped me with *SOL iMpROV*, and especially to the ones that I truly care for: I wish you all a happy Valentine's Day. ■

THE CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE HEREBY RETAIN ALL COPYRIGHTS TO THEIR WORKS. AND THE VIEWS EXPRESSED OR IMPLIED BY THOSE WORKS ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF *SOL iMpROV*.

Dreaming

by Dan del Rosario

As I lay there in bed
in the silence so deep,
I relaxed and I felt
the pangs of sleep.

In my mind I was living
where fantasies come true,
the characters appeared
alone me and you.

You came closer to me,
I would quiver and shake.
You touched me and I hoped
I would never awake.

Our eyes met at last,
our love grew so strong,
passion was created and
nothing could go wrong.

Closer we came
as we finally touched hands,
the next thing that happened
I just can't understand.

My love for you I tried
to forgive and forget,
but at that special moment...
our lips had met.

Our eyes shut hard
the kiss so sweet,
that act it had seemed
an incredible feat.

I couldn't believe
what had just been done,
but for that small piece of time,
we were together as one.

The kiss in my memory
so real it had seemed,
I opened my eyes...
I had only dreamed.

Four Seasons

by Tim Radsick

The early morning sun cast gentle rays
And lucky those which fell into a park
where a single flower bloomed. And with a spark
I watched once more. I loved those summer days.

And autumn came and colors in a blaze
Knelt 'round the flowers like embers round a fire
For nothing else could motivate desire
When placed just so. I loved those autumn days.

And winter came, and snow and through the haze
My heart froze clear, but eyes saw only white
sheets of falling ice. I lost my sight
And knew it vain. I lived those winter days.

Then spring. And once again I turned my gaze
To her. The snow had gone—an icy loss
Not missed. And I lay down, a single blossom
At my side. I loved, on that spring day.

Mr. Hawking's Jigsaw

by Gordon Hogenson

A puzzle with more than five thousand pieces, no edges, and no picture box was a futile task, yet in my boredom and, admittedly, insanity, I chose to take on the task of conquering the most infamous puzzle in local legend.

Shaking the hanging lamp in an attempt to shed more light on the table of plywood, I overturned the bag and dumped thousands of pieces out onto the table, and began to spread them around. I quivered; I shivered. For years I had waited for this—to test my puzzle acumen against old Mr. Hawking's jigsaw. Mr. Hawking, who had always lived alone, was a notorious eccentric. It was rumored that his jigsaw was the most singular that had ever been made. I was a puzzle fanatic, so naturally, I was interested. I had approached him before on the subject, and he had always grimaced and said that he didn't want children losing his pieces. But, as he was an old man, he eventually passed on to greener pastures, as it were, and in so doing left his puzzle to me. I was surprised, since the sour old man seemed to bear only dispassion toward me, if not ill will.

If only he had lived long enough to tell me what the picture was! Of course, I knew the rumors—it was a terrible dragon, or a haunted castle, or a desolate ruin. The only way to find out was to put the puzzle together. At least curiosity would provide an incentive to continue the daunting task.

Oh, I could tell this was no ordinary jigsaw. Looking at the entire puzzle, I felt I was looking through a shattered window into a myriad of other worlds—worlds that kept changing before my eyes. Some of the pieces on the far end of the table appeared to be miles away, whereas the dim corners of the basement, stacked with boxes, were too close for comfort. Well, in any case, the puzzle was a painting.

Enough! It was time to begin. At the moment I didn't want to overturn every piece. I wanted to get a general picture of what I was doing. I looked for recognizable objects, turning a few pieces over as I sifted through the unending heaps. Two bulbous buggy eyes, green warty skin, and a grinning

set of teeth leered out at me—a small imp or demon?

One piece suddenly caught my eye—I let the imp drop into the chaos. The piece I saw was a woman's ear. I studied it. Violet-tinged and pale white, the ear occupied about half the piece, so this woman was a major feature. It was a perfectly formed ear, I thought appreciatively, also admiring the way the hair was painted. Like spun gold—typical Renaissance sentimentalism, but appropriate for a fairy princess. I was pleased. Putting together a beautiful woman would be another incentive to continue, and I needed all the moral support I could get.

Following this lead, I began the search for bits of the same golden hair and pale skin. Within an hour I had three more pieces—a chin, a noble brow, and a piece of hair which connected with her ear. I cleared a space for my new-found companion and put the four pieces in a reasonable configuration, trying to imagine the rest of her face. Was that a glimpse of a lower lip on the chin piece? At any rate she was defi-



nitely painted in profile, with her head turned to the left.

My progress continued. I did not find much more of her face, but I discovered the color of her body and located many such pieces quickly. She was painted with indistinct brush strokes, pale white, with a hint of pink, and nude save for a few wisps of nearly transparent strips. There certainly was an incentive for me to continue now, I thought, admiring the beauty that had emerged from the chaos. I sat back to take in what I had accomplished. I had about twenty pieces of her, with many of them connected to form the lightward side of her chest and torso. I had the navel but, I thought shamelessly, no nipples yet. Oh, a shoulder—and she had wings! Delicate dragonfly wings.

I looked up now, and saw the room around me dark. I started suddenly and looked at my watch—it was nearly three in the morning. I had started in the afternoon, with the light of the sun streaming into the room. Now I realized I had been working by the dim moonlight. Yet when I had looked at the woman, I had seen her skin seemingly brightly lit with a white

radiance. I realized I was very hungry.

I ate and went to bed, disturbed at what had transpired. The next morning I got up early and set to work at the puzzle. The fairy queen was still there, waiting for me. At first it seemed odd that she had not grown more assembled during my absence. I looked again at her head. How uncomfortable it must be to have a head in so many pieces. I felt obliged to ease her discomfort and locate the missing pieces of her face. At least I had to find the eyes. She couldn't see without those.

I began a concerted effort to find the eyes. I started at one end of the long plywood table, turning over upside-down pieces and exposing buried pieces.

I needed the eyes most of all, I told myself, though I was also watching for her nose, mouth, and hair.

And, yes, I have to admit that I was a little anxious to find those nipples. She didn't seem complete without them.

My idle thoughts were interrupted when I found her eye—or rather, when her eye found me. I discovered it staring straight out at me. The eye was blue, and framed by

long lashes. It was a little distant, as though focused on some object behind me, rather than on me. It snapped into place, connecting to three of the pieces I had. Suddenly her face came to life. For half a second it seemed that she had smiled and said thank you. I was inspired to find the rest of her face and

body. There was no worrying about lack of incentive now. Working on this puzzle wasn't such a lonely task anymore.

A knock at the door disturbed my concentration. I went and answered it, annoyed at being disturbed. It was a friend, probably wanting something to do.

"Hi," he said.

I found myself thinking of the best way to get rid of him. The puzzle was uppermost in my thoughts.

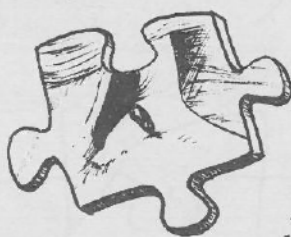
"What are you doing?" he asked, stepping forward as if to enter. I blocked the doorway.

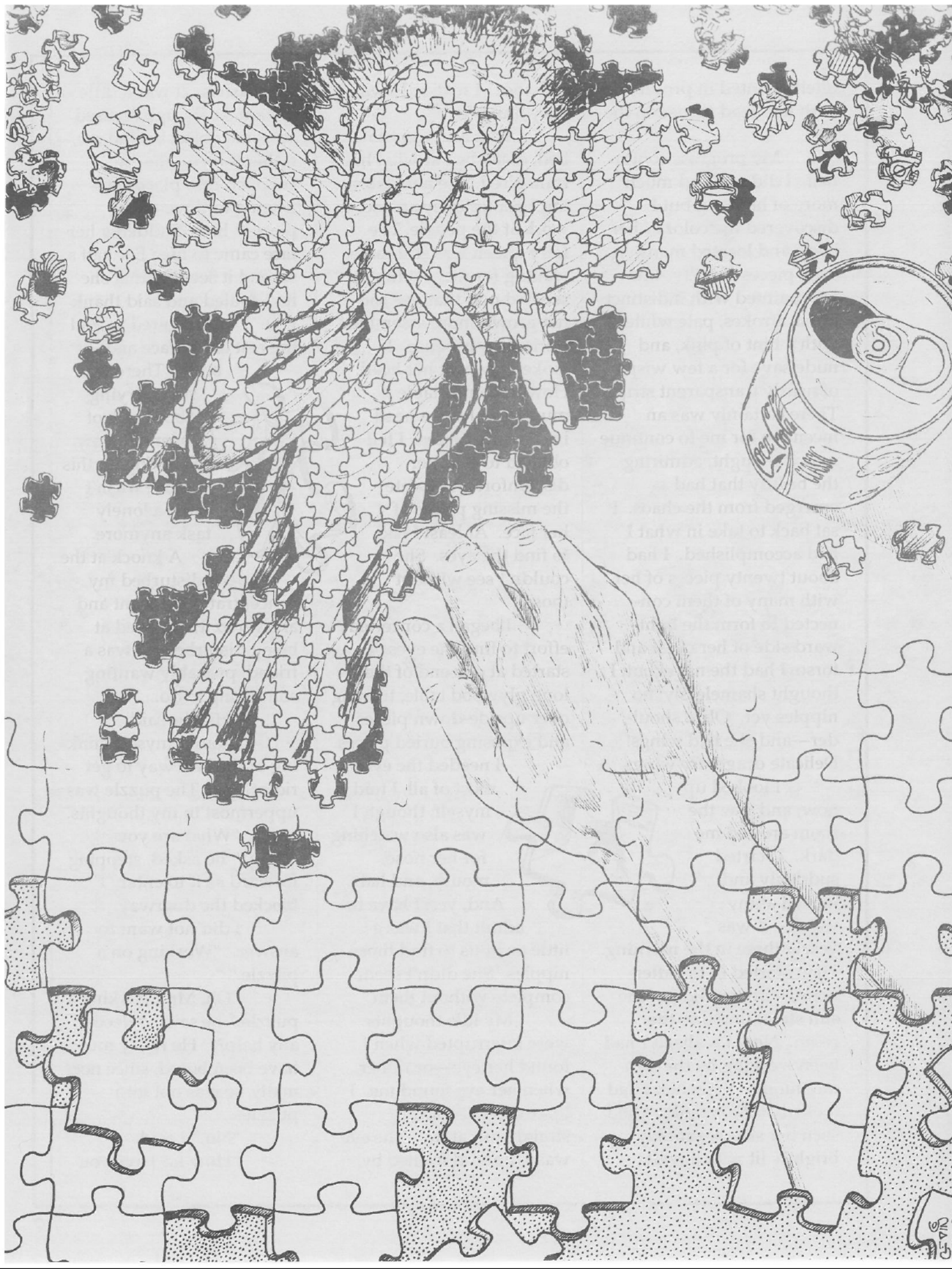
I did not want to answer. "Working on a puzzle."

"Oh, Mr. Hawking's puzzle," he said. "Need any help?" He really must have been bored, since normally he was not into puzzles.

"No," I said.

"How far have you





got?"

"Far enough."

"Can I see? What kind of picture is it?"

He knew he was aggravating me, but he wouldn't let up until his curiosity was satisfied. I had no choice but to show him what I had accomplished.

"Come in, then," I said. "I haven't done that much."

I took him to the room with the puzzle, and showed him the little I had done on the woman. He glanced once at the puzzle and then at me.

"At this rate you'll never finish. When are you actually going to put some pieces together?"

"What?" I said, looking at what I had. "I've done fairly well considering how much time I've spent."

He laughed, then stopped when he saw I wasn't joking.

"So you've just been staring at all these pieces and haven't put anything together," he said. "Sounds like a lot of fun. I think I'll go somewhere else."

That was the last I saw of him, so I continued my progress, soon forgetting his intrusion. I found many pieces in the next few hours. It was not long before I had assembled a group of pieces around the

head. I saw that the painting depicted a radiant glow emerging from her face, lighting up the darkness around her. Some blurry shapes circled in the light around her face—sprites and nymphs.

It struck me that the face did not look quite as it had when I found the pieces. Her head was turned a little more toward me now than before, and she was no longer looking through me, but rather was focused directly on me, a most unnerving feeling, but one which I dismissed readily.

As I continued to find pieces, it seemed that I was no longer spending a lot of time searching for them; I was looking all the time at her, admiring her beauty, feeling such satisfaction at having built her up from nothing. At long length I no longer felt that I was putting together a puzzle at all. I was dancing by the moonlight with a long-forgotten goddess, in a lonely forest clearing. I could even feel the wind in my hair.

I shook myself awake, looking upward now at the electric light burning in the night. Time had passed. Apparently I had dozed off while working. I glanced down at the puzzle, looking for her



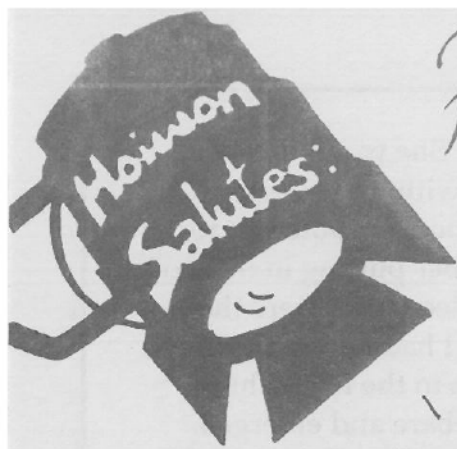
eyes. She was still there, now with only a few missing spots. I could not remember putting in most of the pieces that were there. Now I had her all the way down to the feet, which were bare and emerged from a long, flowing dress that covered her from the waist down. I resolved to finish her tonight. I got myself a branch of grapes out of the fridge as I steeled myself to search for the six or seven pieces that would complete her. Each one would take some time.

They took several hours altogether, but finally I located the last piece. It was her left hand. I reached the piece into the puzzle to complete her.

A magical thing happened. When I reached back, her hand was in mine. She had become flesh. I reached out to help her, as she seemed to want to climb out of the puzzle. At the time I saw nothing unusual in this. I pulled a little and helped her into the room. In a few moments she was next to me in the glow of the electric light. She was breathtakingly beautiful. She smiled softly, and parted her lips.

She kissed me, and I forgot who I was.

Mr. Hawking's puzzle now had about a hundred pieces more than before. ■



Professor "Beeman"



Ooh
Yeah!
Ooh
Yeah!
I want
your
Torque!



The Heart

Through the eyes of a . . .

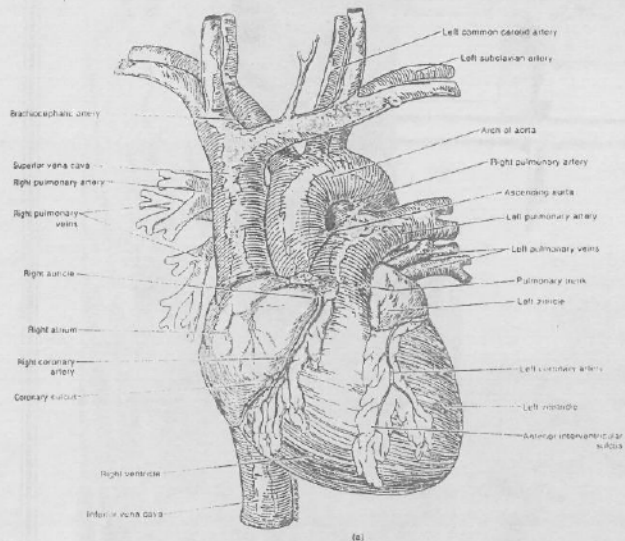
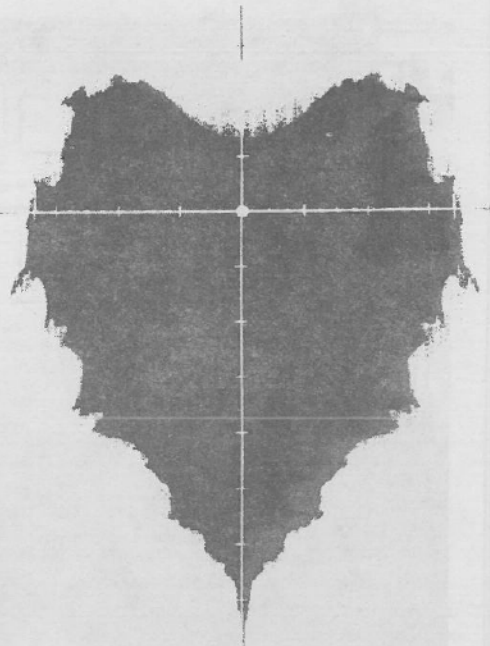
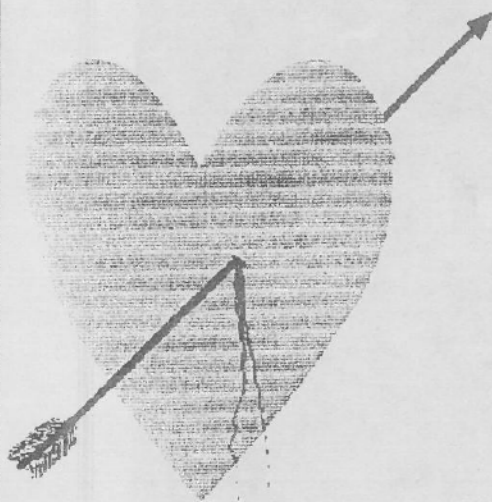


Figure 20-2 Structure of the heart. (a) Anterior external view.

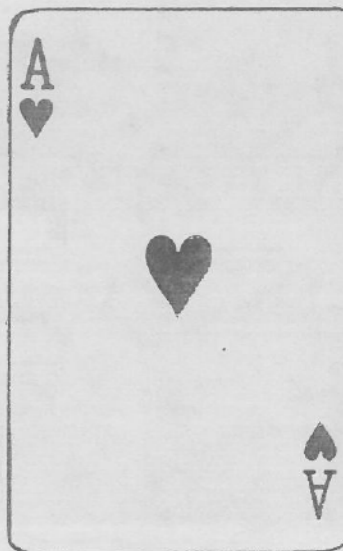


SURGEON

MATHEMATICIAN



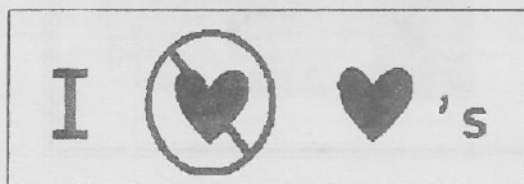
ARCHER



GAMBLER



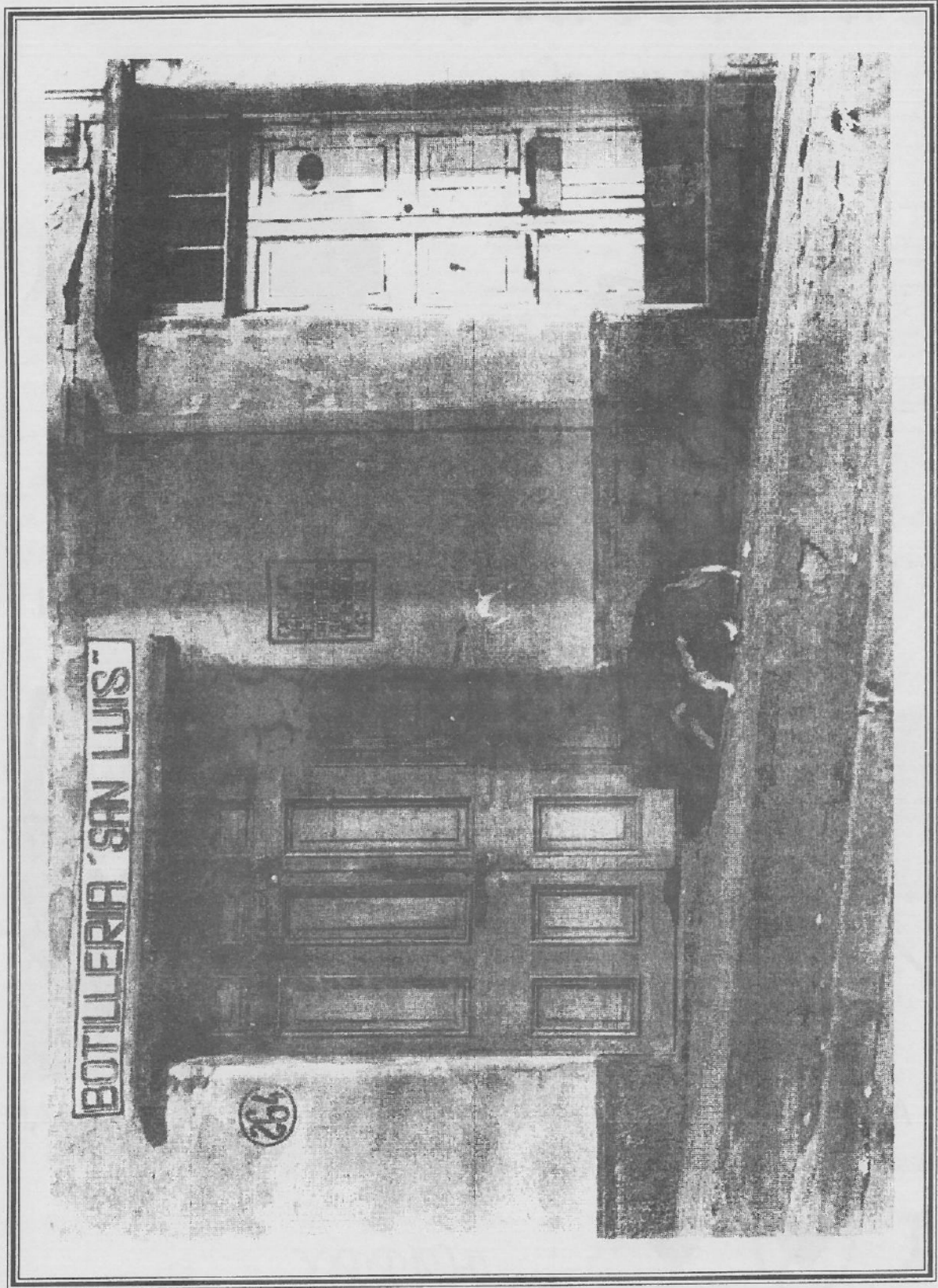
POLITICIAN

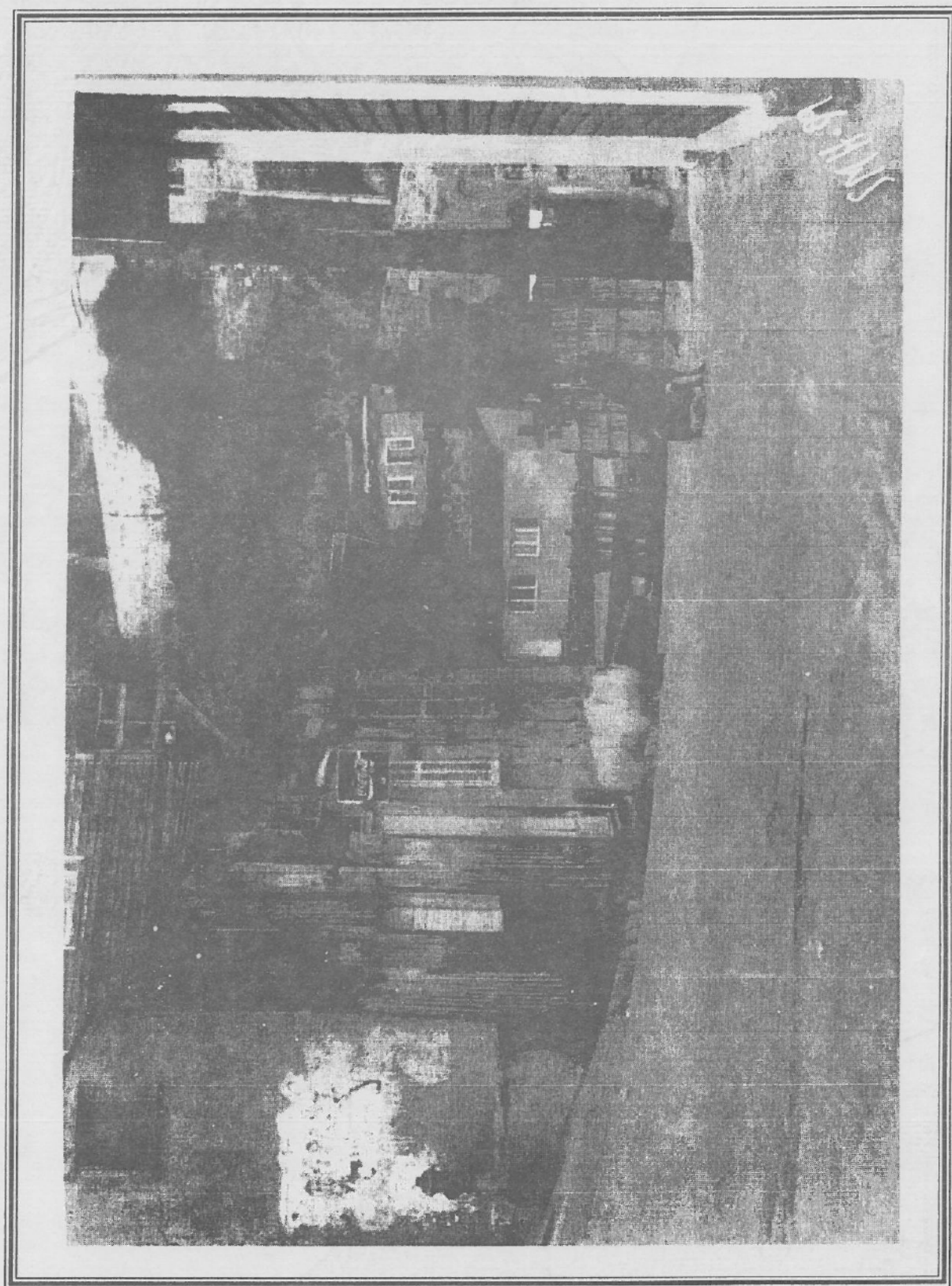


CYNIC

HAPPY
VALENTINE'S DAY!

Views of Chile







DAVID SIMPAO 12/88

Console Me
by Mark Gustafson

Console me

wrap me in your arms
and talk to me tenderly

Treat me as if I were fragile

begging to be broken
treat me like you know what is best

for me

Don't let me do

what I want to do
to myself

Keep me from myself

from all harm
and despair

Pull me close

even if I struggle
and scream 'til my lungs ache

Hold me tight, tight

though I may say I don't like it
I'll thank you later

When we're both in Hell

and it's frozen.

Four Haikus

by Corey Liu

On the serene lake,
Peace surrounds the floating swans.
Wonders of Nature.

With quiet whispers,
A light wind tells its story
To the small windmill.

How strong their love is,
As the two sit on a hill
Sharing a sunbeam.

Striding through the field
The deer leaves behind a trail
In the morning dew.

MISSION STATEMENT

SOL iMpROV is a periodic publication that seeks to complement one of the main purposes of Harvey Mudd College as stated in the Preamble of the Student Handbook: "to emphasize an understanding of the human purposes and aspirations their knowledge can serve." To accomplish this end, *SOL iMpROV* promotes the act of self-expression by providing a forum for artists, both literary and visual, in which they can explore, express, and discuss their creativity, emotions, and philosophies.

Cat

by Michael Yuan

Cat sits at a narrow window
Staring into the eyes of another.
Gold into blue, blue into gold;
Both hold perfectly still.
"Little cat, what do you see?"
Picking her up gently,
And tearing her gaze away.
Tail swishing, head turning towards mine;
Bright gold into dark brown, and likewise.
"You wouldn't understand,"
Jumping off, then on a window sill,
Staring into the moonlight on the dark ocean.
Gold into white, white into gold;
Both hold perfectly still,
Save for a slight rippling on the ocean surface.
Picking her up again,
Destroying the link between the two,
"Little cat, what is it you watch?"
Stroking her black fur.
Tail moving, heart pounding, turning to me,
Wide gold into small brown, and likewise;
"What you cannot see."
Putting her down, watching her walk to a large window,
Lying down, staring into empty air.
Gold into black, black into gold.
Sitting next to her,
"Little cat, what do you know?"
Head turning, eyes locking with mine,
Laughing gold into puzzled brown, and likewise,
And smiling and purring,
"More than you will ever find out."
And promptly fell asleep.

So, what do you think?

We the staff of *SOL iMpROV* strive to produce an excellent arts publication for the HMC community, but in order for us to do that, we need your feedback. Please let us know how you think we are doing! Feel free to E-mail any comments you may have about the *iMpROV* to our new account on jarthur (improv@jarthur). We have also placed a box for suggestions next to the mailboxes in the Muddhole. We appreciate the feedback we have received, and we hope that you will continue to make suggestions on how *SOL iMpROV* can be made even better.



Contributors

DAVID SIMPAO

Benny Baturo

Hailan Kim

Michael Z

Tim Radack

GREG LEVIN

Shawn Hooper

Gordon Hogensohn

Dan T. del Rosario

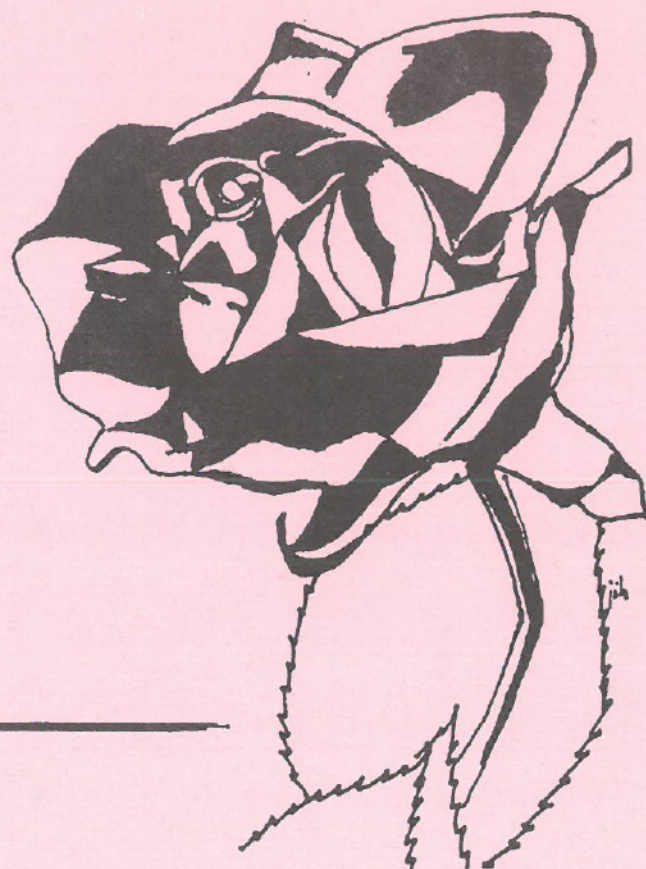
Jack Houn

Cy Hine

Robert Linder

Mark Mancoff

Editor-in-Chief/
Production Editor: Jack Houn
Art Editor: Greg Levin
Layout Editor: Wes Mancoff
Copy Editors: Andy Gray
Roy Hom
Dylan Walker
Treasurer: David Nakayama
Secretary: Clifford Stein



Front Cover by Scott Lewallen

Back Cover by Jack Houn