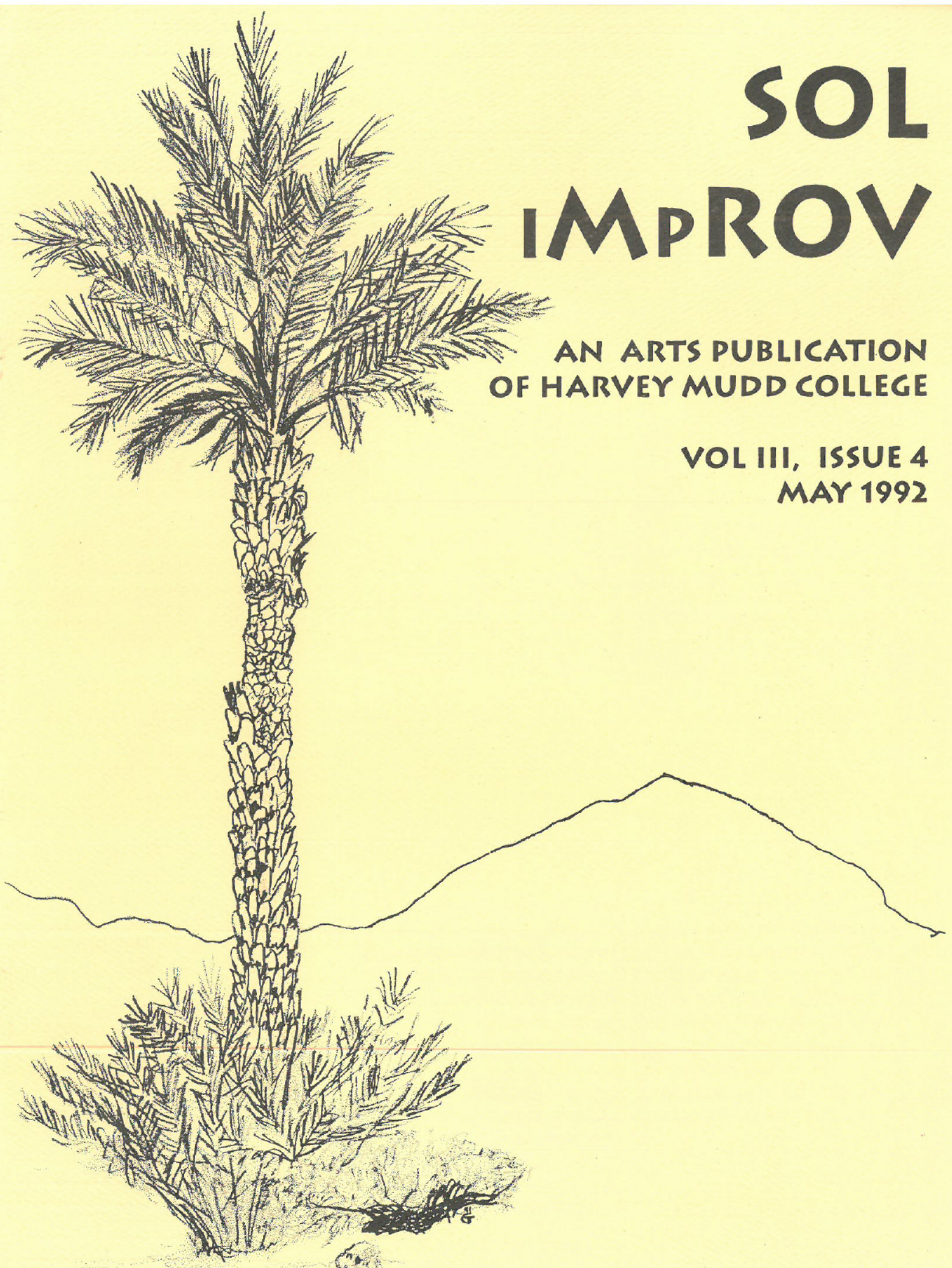


# SOL IMPROV

AN ARTS PUBLICATION  
OF HARVEY MUDD COLLEGE

VOL III, ISSUE 4  
MAY 1992



# SOL iMPROV

VOL. III, ISSUE

AN ARTS PUBLICATION OF HMC

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## The Last Editor's Corner

Well folks, this is it. This issue of SOL iMPROV happens to be our farewell to Jack Houg, our founder, Greg Levin, our second Editor-in-Chief, and countless other members of the senior class (their portraits are on the back cover, if you don't happen to know who these people are). In my opinion, the Class of '92 has been the most artistically prolific of the five classes here at Mudd. Although we at SOL iMPROV will miss their creative efforts, we hope that Mudders in the Classes of '93, '94, '95 and '96 will help fill their shoes and perhaps outdo their great contributions.

Since summer is just around the corner, I'd like to make a special request to all of you who have told yourself all year, "I'm gonna finish that sketch," or "I'd really like to get that story going now!" but never quite got around to doing whatever you wanted to do. Why not spend a few hours in the coming months and start (or finish up) that favorite project you've been

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putting off for the longest time. Whether it's poetry, short stories, drawings or photography, you're sure to have lots of fun in making it happen (not to mention having lots of free time). And, when you come back in the fall, you can show off your summer creations by submitting them to SOL iMPROV—we can't guarantee you fame and fortune, but we can at least give you a free shot at flaunting your talents in front of countless friends and admirers. (This pitch also applies to graduating seniors.)

With a good number of iMPROV's supporters leaving Mudd in a few days, we felt that it would

be great if graduates could stay in touch with us and the arts community at HMC through a subscription to iMPROV. The details haven't quite been worked out yet, but we propose to provide interested alums with delivered copy of S.I. for a small fee to cover postage.

If you are interested in getting iMPROV in the mail, please send a note with your name and real-world mailing address to me. We'll send you information either before you leave or in the mail once we find out the cost of postage.

I'd like to close out my stay as editor by thanking the many contributors who have filled these pages with their outstanding work over the past year, and the staff of iMPROV for their help. I'd also like to congratulate Dan McClelland for his selection as Editor-in-Chief for next year; I know he'll avoid many of the mistakes I've made and guide iMPROV into its fourth year. I'd also like to thank Jack Houg and Greg  
see CORNER, p. 14

# The Sun Story

by Jack Hounq

Many have asked me about the origin of SOL iMPrOV and I've tried giving quick replies, but the replies never sounded too impressive. Frankly, there were many motivations for starting this magazine. But there is one reason that I like to share with everyone. It has to do with a Chinese folk tale about the sun and the moon. The story has always been my favorite because it made me realize many simple ideas about living. The following text tells a modified version of the tale. I want to dedicate it to Dawn Takamoto, to whom I owe the ending of the story since Sophomore year.

\* \* \*

A long time ago there were ten suns. They were the sun god and his nine little sons. The sun god was the god who rode on a carriage from dawn to dusk, east to west everyday. He provided the human below the heat and energy necessary to cultivate their food and escape from the cold darkness. The sun god was very proud of his sons, but did not allow them to play outside in the sky because he knew the world

and the people below were too fragile to withstand their combined heat. The Moon, the mother, kept them indoors by teaching them the manners and the Ways of godhood. They grew restless at times, but the Moon had her way of controlling these little rascals.

So it went that during the day the sun god rode across the sky in his majestic carriage blazing with piercing rays. He was worshiped for his kindness to bring without delay day after day the energy necessary to cultivate their crops. Other gods were jealous of his popularity, but that was all they were, jealous. They did nothing to improve their own abilities nor did they dedicate themselves to any particular skills to contribute to the well-being of the world. They sat around and enjoyed their immortality. During the night, the Moon would occasionally go out to shed soft light to the people below. Her multi-faceted beauty enchanted the young and the old alike.

One day, however, the sun forgot to bring his shield, which served to protect him from his enemies. The Moon chased

after him on her carriage after reminding her children that they were old enough to understand why they should not leave the house to play in the sky.

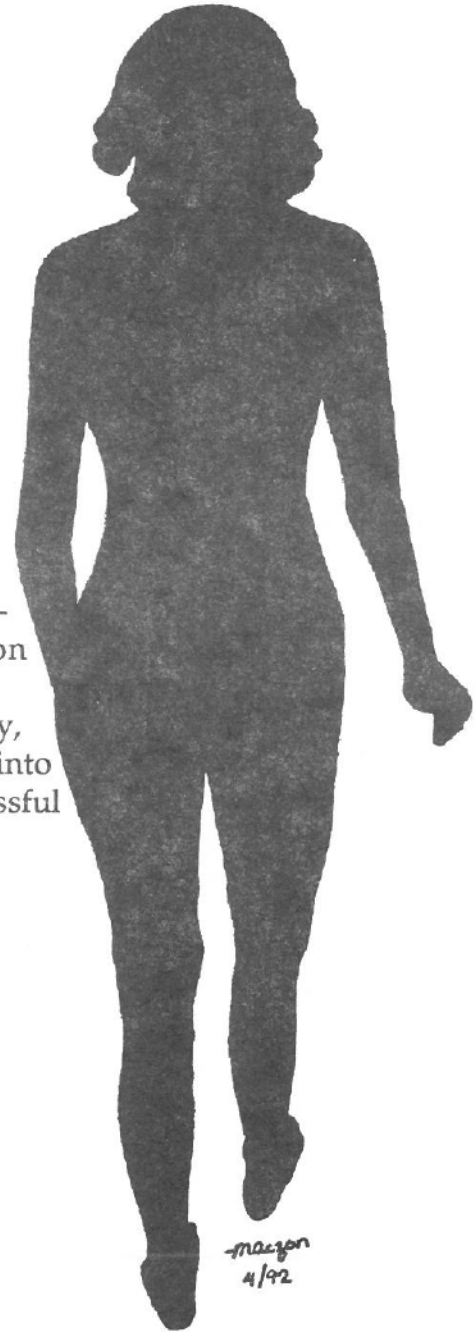
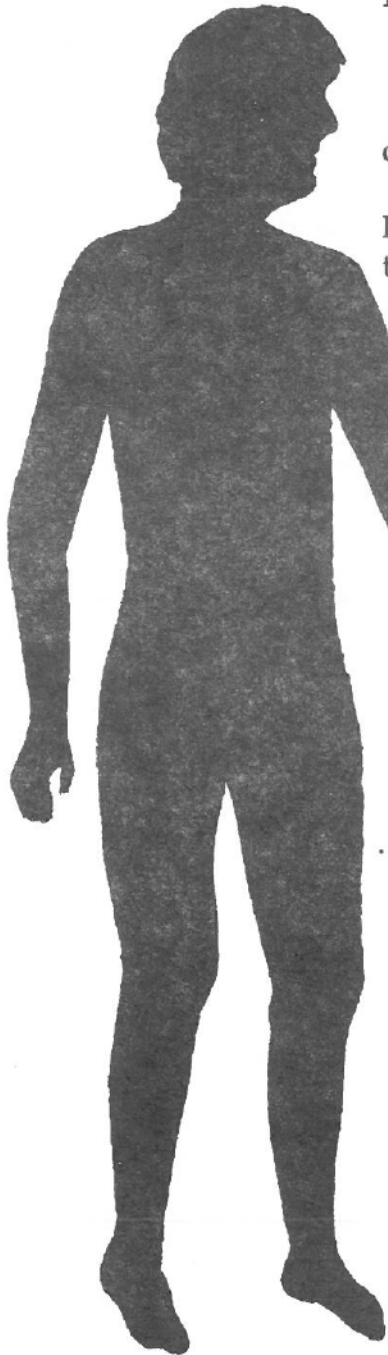
This made it a very curious day for the people below. The bright shining sun was suddenly being eclipsed by a smaller dark disc. The religious people spoke of it as an ominous sign of a disaster to come. They did not realize it was simply the Moon catching up to the Sun.

But as often is the case, coincidence made fool of the truth. The people were correct about a disaster, but not for the reasons they thought. The gods who were jealous of the Sun and Moon, upon realizing that both parents were not around, lured the children suns out of their home. They knew for sure that the Emperor of Heaven would heavily punish the Sun for the behavior of his sons. The children, not knowing the intent of the gods, dashed outside to see the world below. They swirled in the clouds and danced in the air. They fell in love with the world outside and completely forgot the warning of their mother.

Not long after the

# February 22

by Joseph Chen



*macjon*  
4/92

I await,  
in passionate agony,  
in painful desire,  
in hateful love,  
our next rendezvous.

I await;  
to embrace you:  
that strong, supple body—  
a lithe, muscular python,  
adept and powerful,  
that entangles me  
in the dark jungle  
of secret taboos;  
to kiss you:  
those moist, tender lips—  
pink, feathery cotton  
candies,  
firm and sugary,  
that draw me into  
the web of blissful  
dreams;

to taste you:  
that enticing sweet spot  
a smooth, delicious piece of  
white chocolate  
rich and intoxicating  
that taunts me  
with its precious scarcity.

I await,  
in biting wind,  
in bitter snow,  
in burning flame,  
our next rendezvous

Art by Melissa Azzon

# The Hall

by Krista Shufelt

All it takes are a few words to remind me, to force me to remember things that are better left forgotten...

With loud explosions, the heavy iron-bound door bursts open. Immediately, hordes of demons come pouring into the Great Hall of the Mind, shrieking and moaning. The small, agile and devious little Fears scramble nimbly in, crawling into cracks in the walls, insidiously infiltrating the room. The larger imps of Anger stomp in, waving their claws, looking for victims. The Memory-wraiths flow like mist into the Hall, forming pictures, goading and guiding the others onward. Last to enter are the slow-moving, slimy slugs of Despair, leaving treacherous trails behind them.

The Hall is not undefended. With a shout, bold Reason in shining armor raises a sharp sword of Logic and charges the ancient foe. Love and Hope scream and flee. Confidence stands behind Reason, but cowers as the horde advances.

Reason hacks and stabs with the sword Logic, but as fast as the Fears are slaughtered, more pour through the door. The sword cannot even touch the Memory-wraiths. The Fears, meanwhile, are clambering around the Hall, wreaking havoc.

Confidence slips on a slimy trail left by Despair. Reason is hemmed in on all sides, being slashed at by the Angers. Suddenly, Panic and Desperation wake from their corner and join the fray, lashing out at everything within their reach. The demons are slowly forced back towards the door.

Reason rallies and manages to herd the demons into the doorway. Reason swings the heavy door, closing it against the pressure of the demon horde. A desperate wailing arises from behind the door as it is slowly forced shut, trapping the demons in the Dungeons of the Mind once more. With a last tremendous effort, Reason closes the door completely, and drops the crossbar into place with a thud.

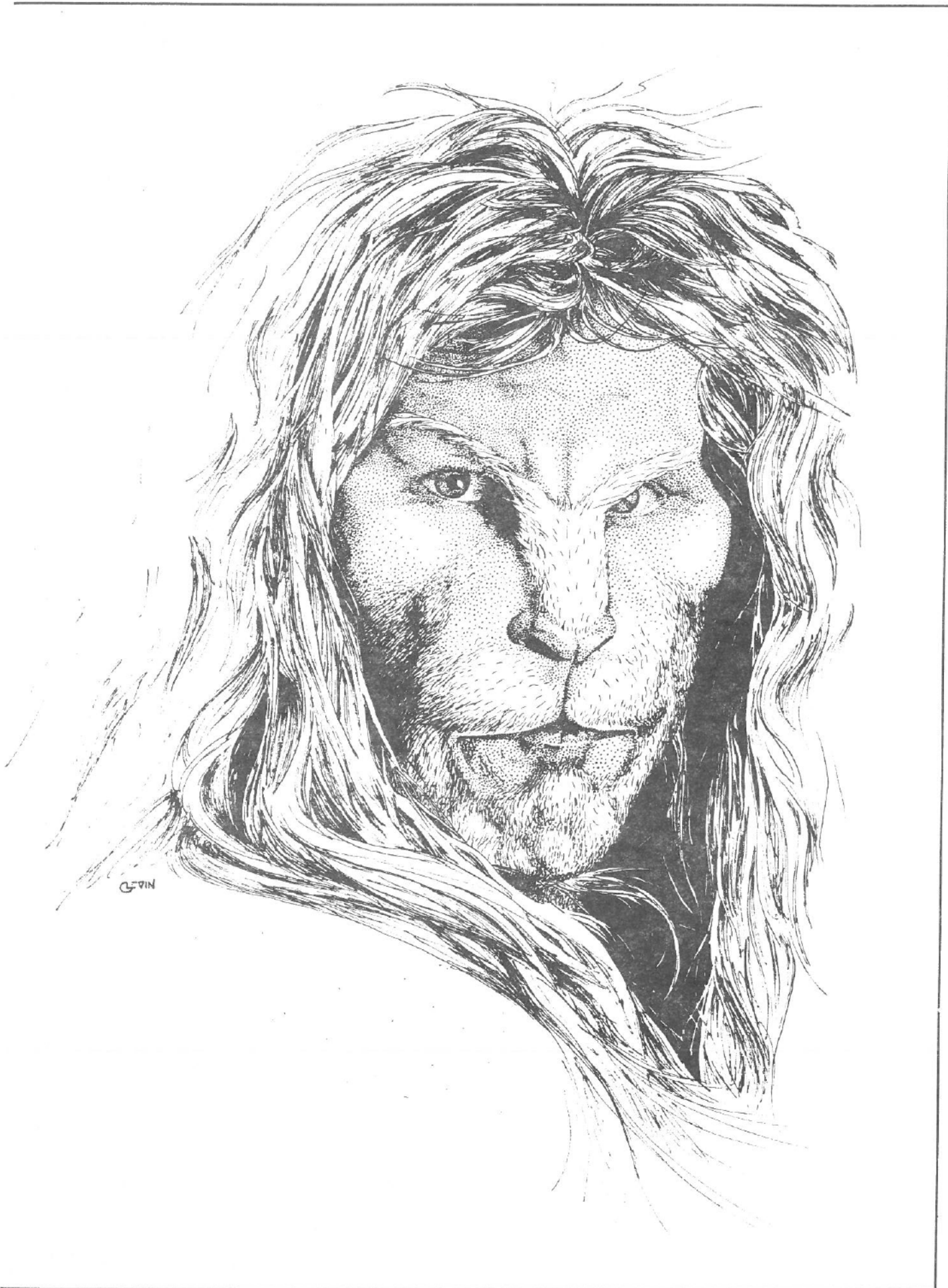
Cut off from the rest of the rest of the horde, the Memory-wraiths dissipate into harmless smoke. The last few Fears are ferretted out and dispatched, and the Great Hall returns to some semblance of order. Confidence, however, has been severely wounded.

Reason sheathes the Sword, ignores the continued wailing behind the door and the last few Fears gibbering from dark corners, and returns to duty, leaving Confidence sobbing and nursing wounds in a corner.

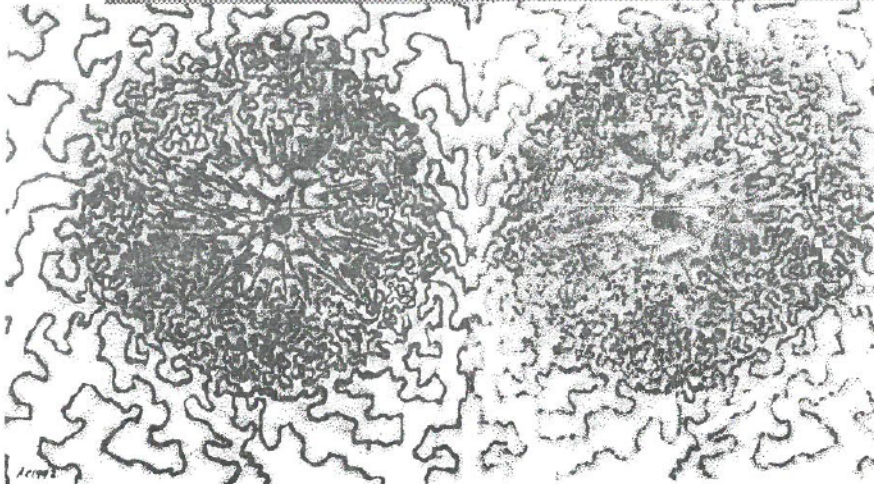
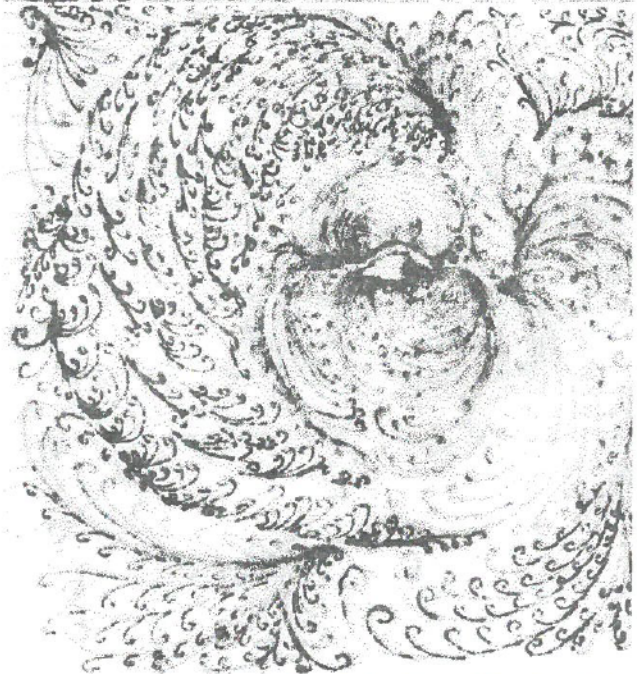
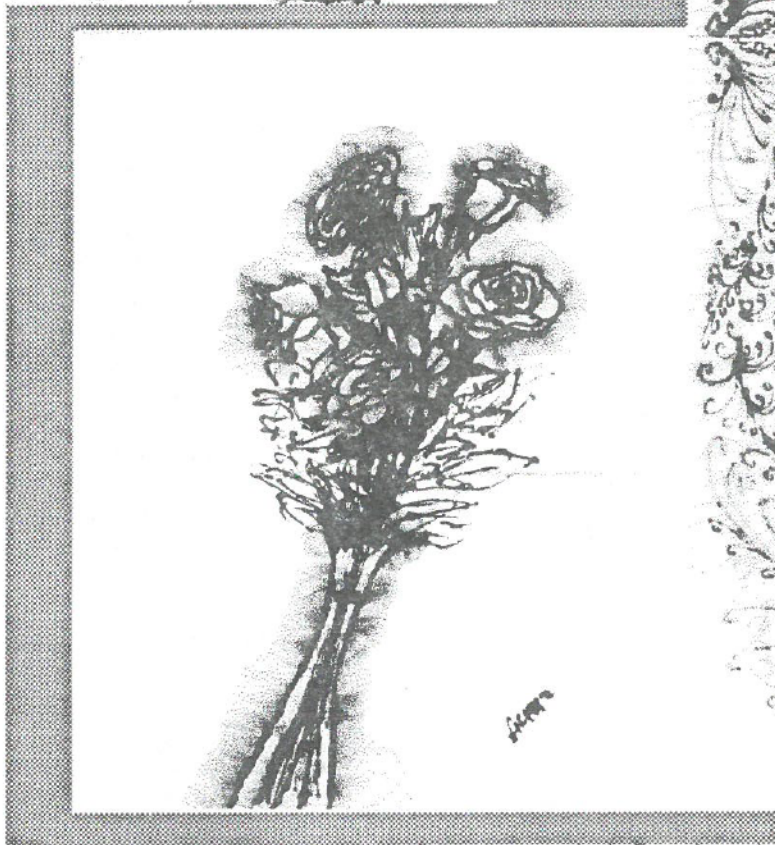
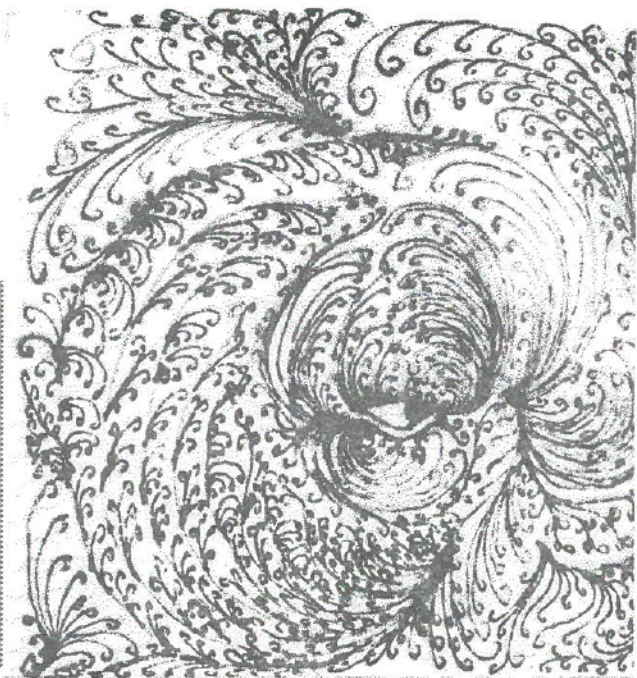
"Are you alright?" they ask, "You look upset."

"I'm okay now" I tell them, resuming my mask. I'm fine as long as the door holds...

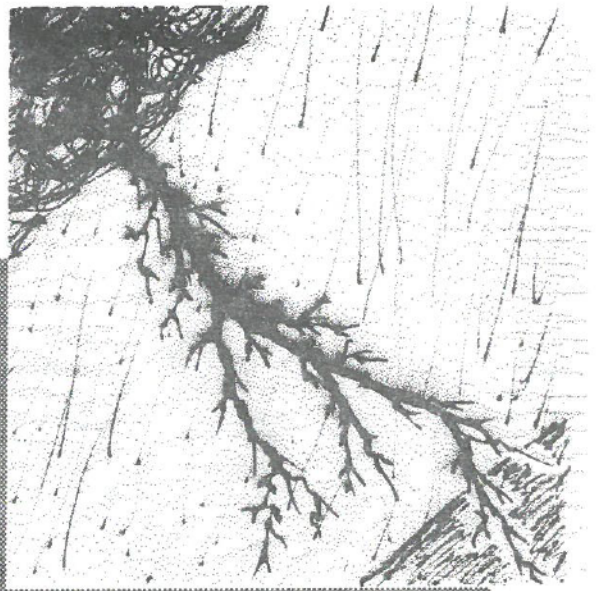
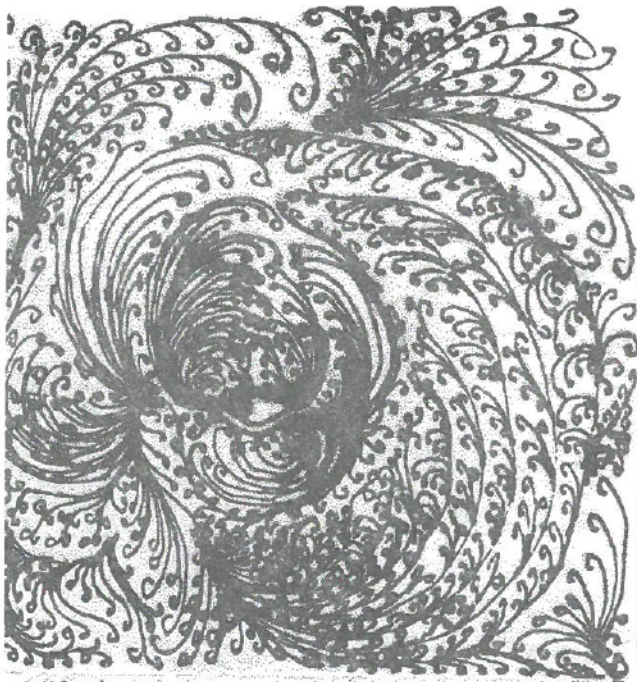




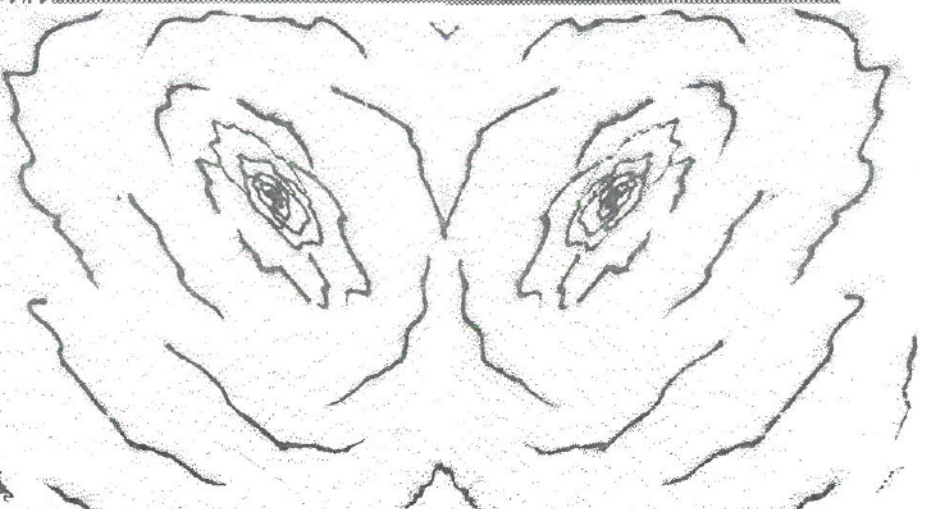
*Napkin Art*







*Amy Crook*





# Of Tales of Tales

by Michael Yuan

*The elders say a story's pleasure lies within its telling.  
Grant me the pleasure to send forth my story from its dwelling.*

I am an eleven-year-old orphan. My mother died giving birth to Saraya; my father... stories tell of an accident involving a car outside of town around the time of his disappearance, but nobody could tell if the body was his. Saraya, my younger sister, still believes that he is alive, somewhere, and I always tell her not to be so ridiculous. Of course the body was his. She just hisses and tells me that I'm not that much older than she is, and refuses to speak for a while; then Moloshi, my older brother, laughs quietly to himself and I ignore him.

The village elders gave our care over to surrogate mothers, and named us when the time had come. They told us of our own mother, how beautiful she was, how adept she was at hunting, how proudly she held her tail when bearing children. Many other stories filled those days, legends and epics as well as simple rhymes and songs. We learned that the earth was called into being when Morri'Ka, the feline All-Spirit, won a storytelling contest among the gods, and thus the right to make

her tale real. Naturally, Morri'Ka decided to populate the creation with physical forms most like her, and such we are, as cats. She made other forms which were servants to us; these were humans, the manifestations of the Spirit which was judged to have told the worst story. Upon seeing this, the human Spirit was angered, and, when Morri'Ka had fallen asleep, increased the size of humans tenfold. Morri'Ka woke in time to prevent the total conversion of the human role from servant to master, but the damage had been done.

In response, Morri'Ka urged her creation to turn their backs on humans and regard any association with them as unfit. Those who listened reveled and hunted in the world she had provided for them; those who did not found themselves longing for such a world but only able to see it through impenetrable glass walls. The code of our tribe, we learned, was to obey the creed of Morri'Ka in the strictest sense.

When we were old enough to hunt, the task of our instruction was passed on to those still swift and agile enough to lead us. I don't intend to boast, but I was the first among the three of us to make a kill. Looking back, I think it was more chance than anything else. I was following Moloshi and

Saraya, with Oulofée, one of our uncles, in front of all of us. A brief rustle caught my attention, and I turned to find a rat scampering away through the tall grass. Immediately, I chased it, catching up shortly. A quick stroke knocked the prey down, but it got up and fled, changing direction so swiftly that I stumbled and fell over myself trying to compensate. I recovered myself and resumed the pursuit, and this time my attack was more careful. Oulofée was proud, as were my brother and sister, when I returned with my capture. Following the newly learned Ceremony of Presentation, I let the rat drop to the ground at my uncle's feet.

It scurried away and down a hole.

I was infuriated, and reached into the hole to find it, staying there until my companions finished laughing and Oulofée said it was time to move on. I stayed silent, cleaning myself and walking off as if I didn't want it anyway. When nobody was looking, though, I snuck a glance back at the hole, just in case.

As I grew older, Oulofée and others taught me how to avoid many other such mistakes, both in the hunt and elsewhere. Ryosu, an aunt, taught me of ka'lé, that is, female cats, and of the Ritual of Mating; but my first mating was not an event

which I had planned for in any way. It was near the end of the moon's ascent into the sky, and I became hungry. Sitting to one side of my path to the grassy hunting fields was a female, although I was not aware of her until I came within a few leaps' distance. A somewhat startled glance became a long stare as my pace slowed and stopped. Her eyes shone in the semi-darkness, illuminating tiny beads of dew on her delicately vibrating whiskers. Without knowing it, I sat down.

We sat facing each other for a long time, the drops of moonlight swaying on the grass like some sort of mystical energy. Mesmerized, I stood and approached cautiously, drinking as much of her scent as possible with every step. So much was I entranced that I did not realize the presence of another smell until it was almost too late.

It was the scent of another male.

I whirled to find him crouched expectantly, offering silent challenge. We circled slowly about each other, ominous growls rumbling in our throats. At some invisible cue, we sprang as one to clash and tumble in a tangle of flesh and fur to the ground. Our bodies writhed and twisted as we tried to inflict and avoid blows. Our minds became intense foci of power as we struggled with both muscle and will.

Suddenly, we broke apart.

Blood swelled from a cut above his right eye, while I suffered from a small scratch on my shoulder. Both of us cleaned our wounds for a moment before I advanced threateningly. He retreated, then turned and walked away with dignity.

The cause of our battle was still in the same place, watching me closely. Again, by some mutual agreement, we began acting out an ancient ritual—but this time of love, not contention.

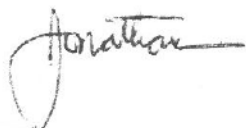
She bore four young, three female and one male. We sang to them ancestral tales as well as the few we had composed from our own lifetimes, and taught to them the way of hunting and the code of our kind. I thought briefly that my mother would have been proud of the latest additions to her line. I wondered if my father would have acted as I did had he the choice.

My mate's name was Poléma. She bore more litters for me and others, the offspring being strong and healthy. I last saw her two years ago, thin and weak

#### CORNER from p. 2

for next year; I know he'll avoid the many mistakes I've made over my watch and guide iMpROV into its fourth year.

Have fun on your summer break, and I'll see you in the fall.



with a strange sickness. She told me that she chose to die alone, and bid me good hunting. I returned the wish in kind to her spirit, and asked her to bring a greeting to my parents. Poléma nodded, and shambled away.

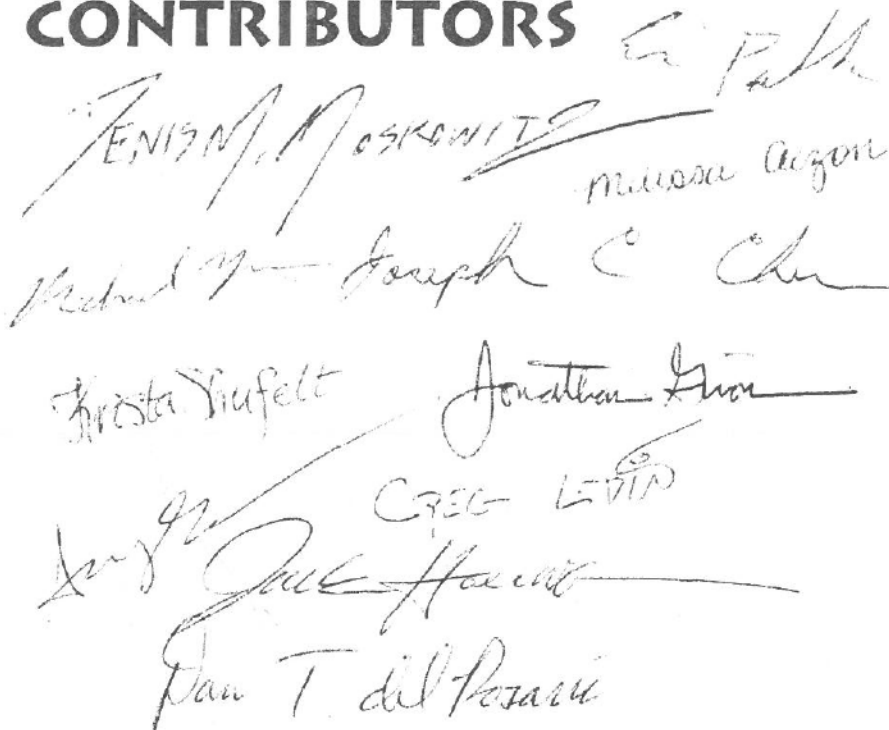
And now I am an elder

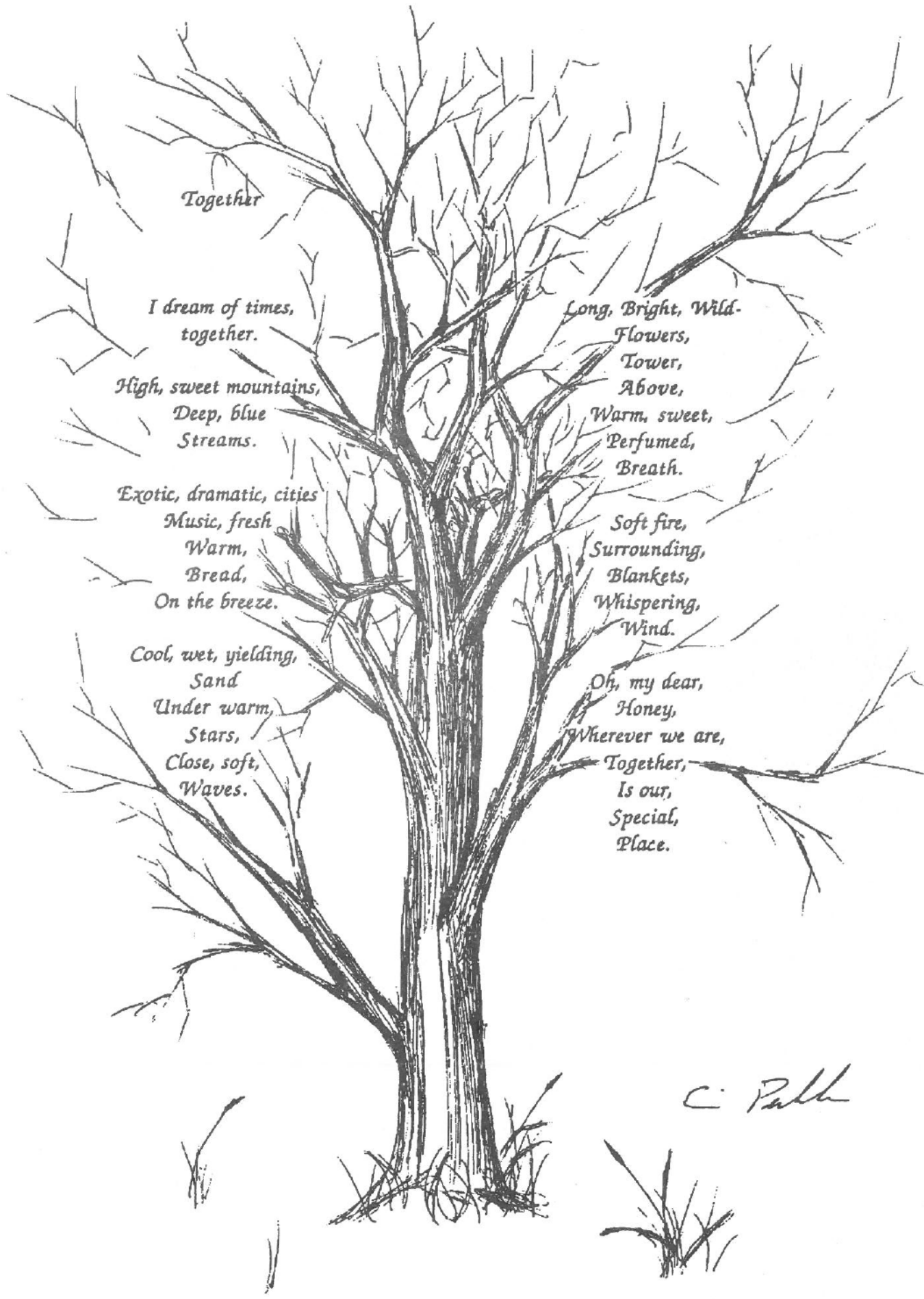
whose bones are too weak to stretch down holes after rats, whose muscles are too tired to contest for the right to the Ritual of Mating, but whose voice is still strong enough to tell tales to young kittens with bright and eager eyes. ■

## What It Is!

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 this end, SOL iMpROV promotes the process 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. SOL iMpROV is also an ongoing process, and for this reason, we depend on your input to continue our publication. If you have any creativity that you would like to see published, or if you have any suggestions, comments, or criticisms about SOL iMpROV, please don't hesitate to contact us. We have a jarthur account (improv@jarthur) for your convenience. We appreciate your input in all its forms.

## CONTRIBUTORS





*Together*

*I dream of times,  
together.*

*High, sweet mountains,  
Deep, blue  
Streams.*

*Exotic, dramatic, cities  
Music, fresh  
Warm,  
Bread,  
On the breeze.*

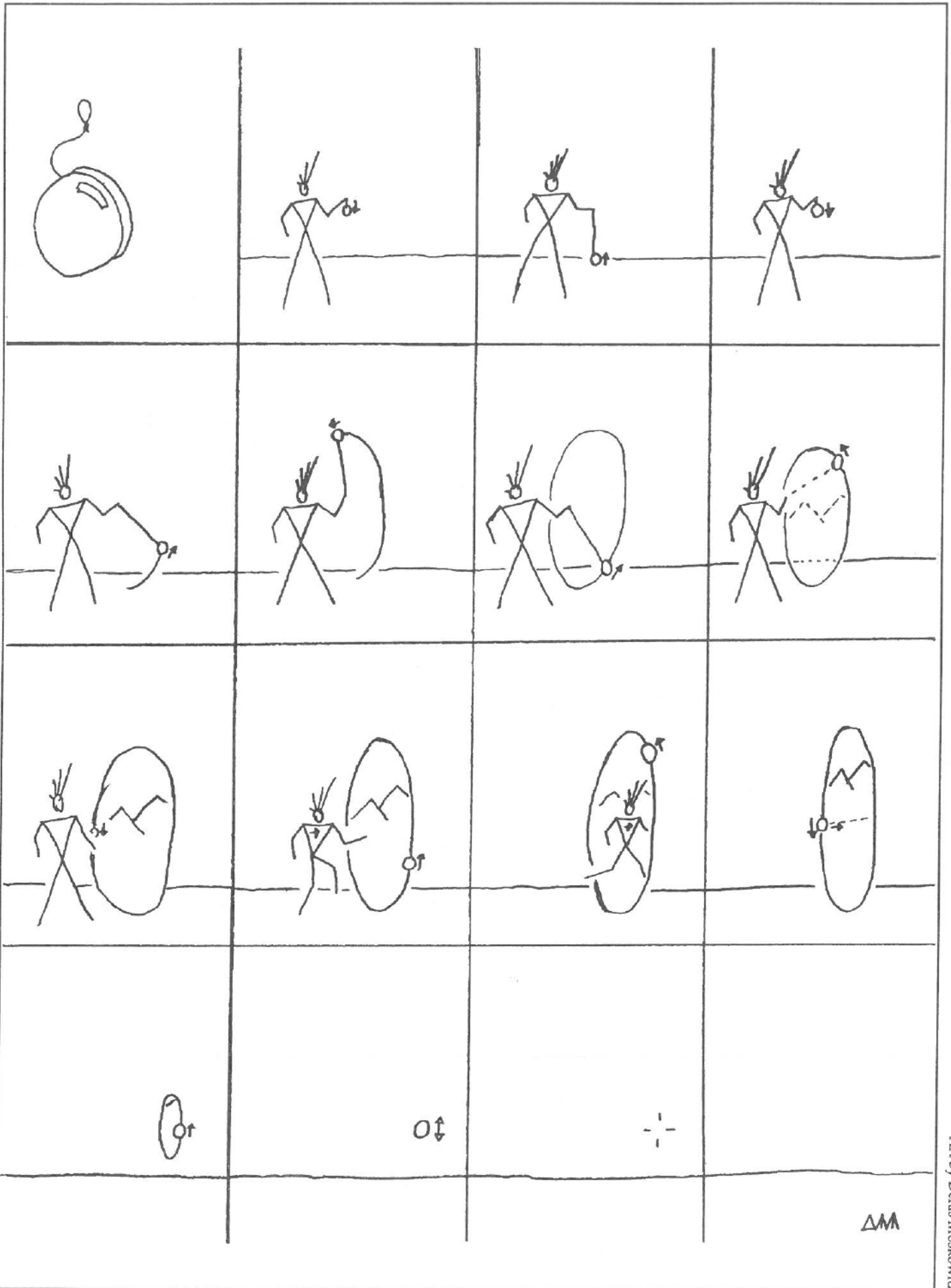
*Cool, wet, yielding,  
Sand  
Under warm,  
Stars,  
Close, soft,  
Waves.*

*Long, Bright, Wild-  
Flowers,  
Tower,  
Above,  
Warm, sweet,  
Perfumed,  
Breath.*

*Soft fire,  
Surrounding,  
Blankets,  
Whispering,  
Wind.*

*Oh, my dear,  
Honey,  
Wherever we are,  
Together,  
Is our,  
Special,  
Place.*

*C. Pahl*



Art by Denis Moskowitz

# The Last Hoorah

by Dan del Rosario

The friends woke up slowly  
on that particular day,  
for graduation had come...  
they would all go away.

Up from their beds  
they began to arise  
looked in the mirror  
with tears in their eyes.

Their time had come  
for all to depart,  
the sadness they felt  
deep down in their heart.

They summoned up courage  
for the end of senior year  
had come and the unknown future  
still to fear.

The families and friends gathered  
teachers, faculty too,  
the look in their faces  
of pride so true.

The graduating class  
an intimidating fleet,  
looked each other in the eye  
and took their proper seat.

The ceremony continued  
the end grew near . . .  
amongst all their faces  
one lonely tear.

They rose towards each other  
they hugged and they kissed  
look up to the sky  
with a mighty fist.

The class of '92 . . .  
a wonderful breed,  
with passion in their souls  
they will succeed.

So they gathered together  
for perhaps the last time,  
they cried out openly  
it was no crime.

They all made their turn  
to make their final leave,  
but the sentimental senior  
asked for a reprieve.

He stood in their midst  
with tears in his face,  
his friends looked with sadness  
as he stood there in place

He straightened himself  
wiped the tears off his cheek,  
watched his friends proudly  
and started to speak.

"We've endured so much  
but we came. . .we saw. . .  
Thanks for the memories. . .  
The Last Hoorah"

# Senior Staff



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Houg



Cliff  
Stein



Becky  
Jensen



Greg  
Levin



Benis  
Babusis

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