

2,4-D

Crash, crash
And all falls apart:
Who holds the pen
For the script of my life?
Scratch, scratch,
The blade descends
The heroes fall,
And nothing is left.

— Andrew M. Duke

PHOTO: Paull Grandy

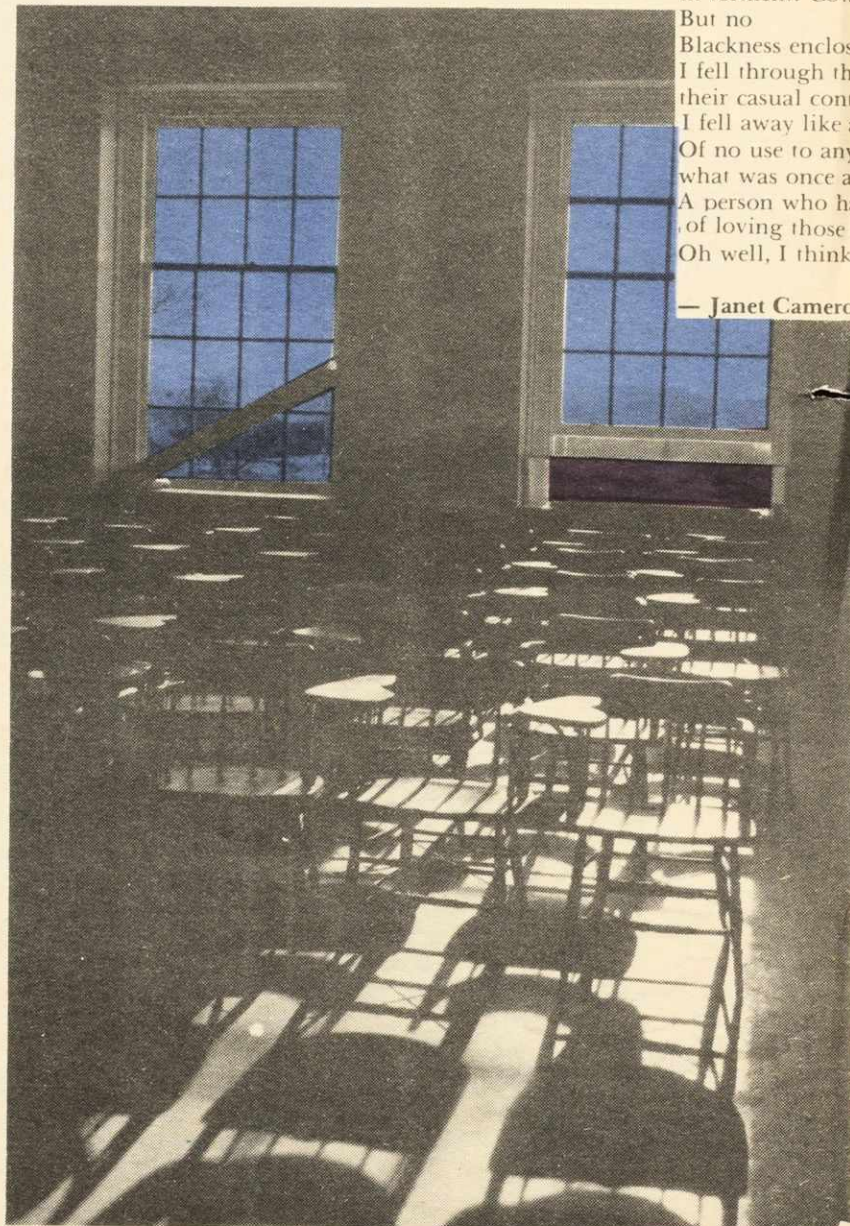


PHOTO: David Deveau

Cowshed

I was in the cowshed yesterday
The cows told me to go away
By heaven and hell, I'll never know why
They'd mistreat such a lovely guy
I loved those cows! I loved their eyes
I never told those cows no lies
But still their cruel silence persisted
Their eyes full of hate burning my soul
Their smooth flanks turned away like
a wall blocking out my entreaties
Cows! Don't turn your backs on a soul
in torment! Cows! Listen to me!
But no
Blackness enclosed my senses
I fell through the dark hell of their rejection,
their casual contemptuous dismissal
I fell away like a red leaf, like garbage
Of no use to anyone, a twisted scrap of
what was once a feeling, thinking person
A person who had the tragic flaw
of loving those aloof cruel cows
Oh well, I think I'll see what the rooster's doing.

— Janet Cameron (alias Hideous Helen)

DEMOLITION on the horizon

Dim lights
Shade the room olive
A sharp
rectangle of black
represents
the world outside
It is framed
by
engraved mahogany.
On a silent night
it is like
the house respire —
a woman whose lungs
are a century old

A handsome nostalgia
shines
at four o'clock
on certain
brilliant afternoons
Her panes
reflect jagged pieces
of prised light
weaving
a most magnificent
pattern
on the otherwise geriatric carpet

Her
works of art
protects
dwellers
from rough edges
of a cruel world

Cobwebs grow
on corners
of ceilings and walls
Every detail has been washed
in shades of
Age
creating
the image of nobility
common to all
well lived in houses.

— Pamela Fairfield



PHOTO: Ariella Parlike

We are imprisoned by the phases
Of a circle moon. . . snow moon. . . wolf moon.
My footsteps are nearly silent
As the train whistle beckons
From a tunnel built by prisoners. . .

I can smell their sweat
And hear songs
See the hot soup passed round
Behind hedges of time

Fence me in
Don't fence me in

Change hands on the whip, time-master,
Be discreet

We see the lay of the land
The diffuse moonlight
Spreads our perimeter

Our enclosure defines
A turning point

Show restraint with the belt
Do not punish me

As the wind blows
In the natural course of things
I have only the moon
A pen
and someone else's
Distant memory.

— Phil Thompson (alias Leon Virgo)

PFYRTF

I'm at University
and
I don't want to think or
grow up (grow up)
I just want to drink and
throw up (throw up)

— Andrew M. Duke

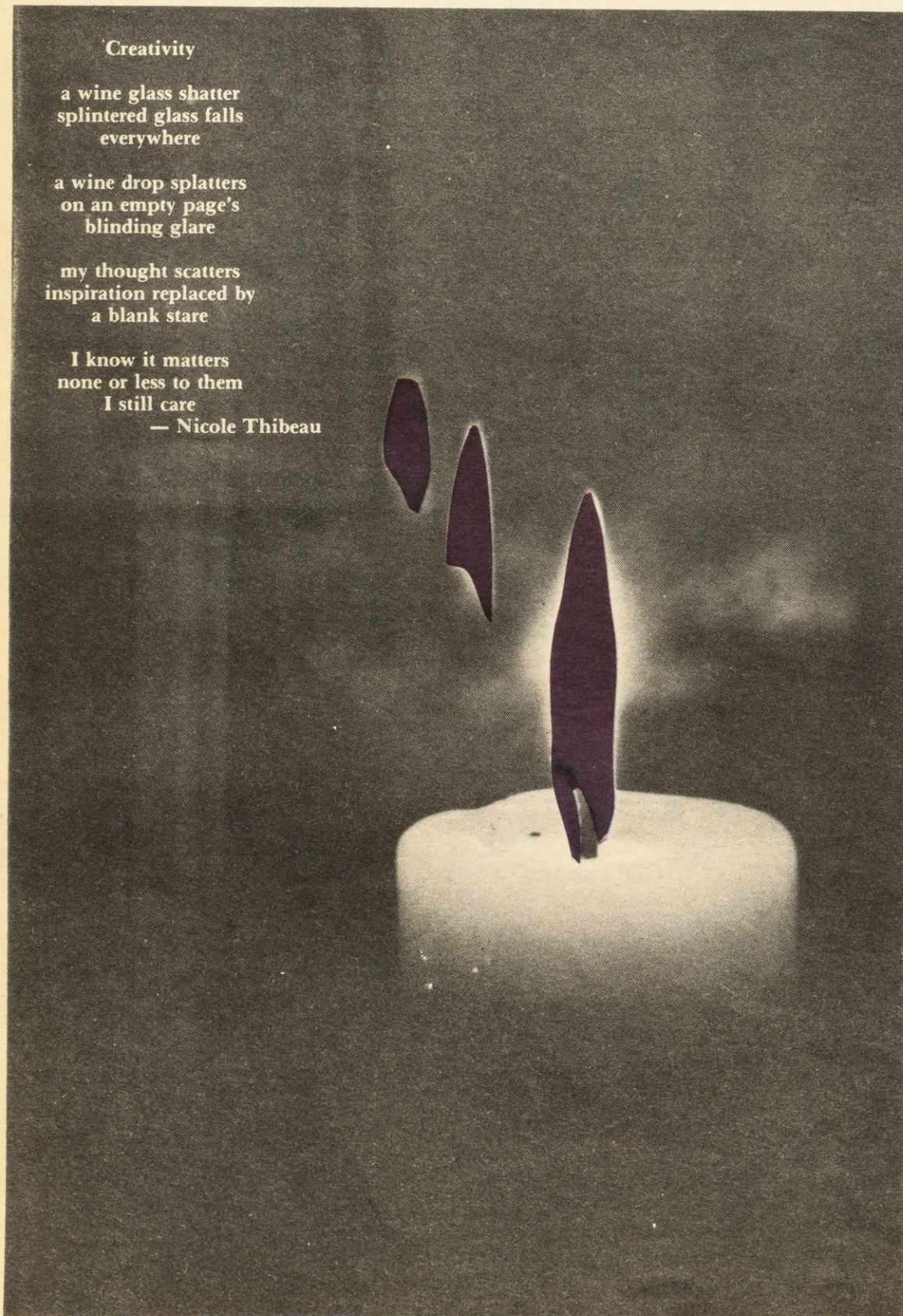


PHOTO: Kristen Nichols

Creativity

a wine glass shatter
splintered glass falls
everywhere

a wine drop splatters
on an empty page's
blinding glare

my thought scatters
inspiration replaced by
a blank stare

I know it matters
none or less to them
I still care

— Nicole Thibeau

Untitled

Scraped from its shell
the oyster in my child palm
cold, wet as a mouth
turned inside-out

I wondered at its deadness
the smooth bloodless transition
from life to the blade
of my uncle's knife

I feared death then

as I feared tigers
and starvation on the Russian steppe
or the poison skin
of green apples

I place the oysters equidistant
on a bald hot rock
their deadness gapes at me

Now it is not dying I fear
but loss of life,
the inability to fear
an impossible death

— anonymous

Sybil

A primal shout
Is crying out
Deep from within
And 9 long years
Created those fears
Forced to witness sin

Because they teased
Laughed when they pleased
And performed procedures all to vile
In Sybil you'll find
A tortured mind,
The conscience of a child

— Andrew M. Duke

The Accident

This is the lake in morning
Where water cold as steel
Whitens your feet
On the aching garden of stones

This is the lake in evening.
Where tadpoles rise to kiss
The swirling fatigue of weeds
And the loon's cry can break your heart

This is the lake in darkness
That swallowed you down from light
and bore your shoes
Like shells
Upon the sand

This is the lake in mourning.

— Lisa Fiander

Graphic: Michelle Thibeau

Invoking the Gods

invoking the Gods
of Public Transit
Siddartha lights a cigarette
and sits down
at the last bus stop
before the Bridge

he inhales
and exhales the incense

he inhales again
and a thin trail smokes
up the road

he inhales a third time
and a cloud envelopes
his head sweat glistens
on his dark face

the cloud vanishes
and a bus appears

we bunch up joyous
try outguessing where
almost pearly doors will open
and Siddartha grinds out
his almost whole cigarette
on the sidewalk chanting
under his breath and he's last
to board the slow bus

— Joe Blades



PHOTO: Kristen Nichols