

#### IV. INTIMACY

**DON THACKREY***MY WINTER SUN*

As when the sun relieves the chilled dawn's grey  
 And choreographs the sparkling in the snow,  
 So Helen's morning glance provides a ray  
 Of light that gives our home a gentle glow.

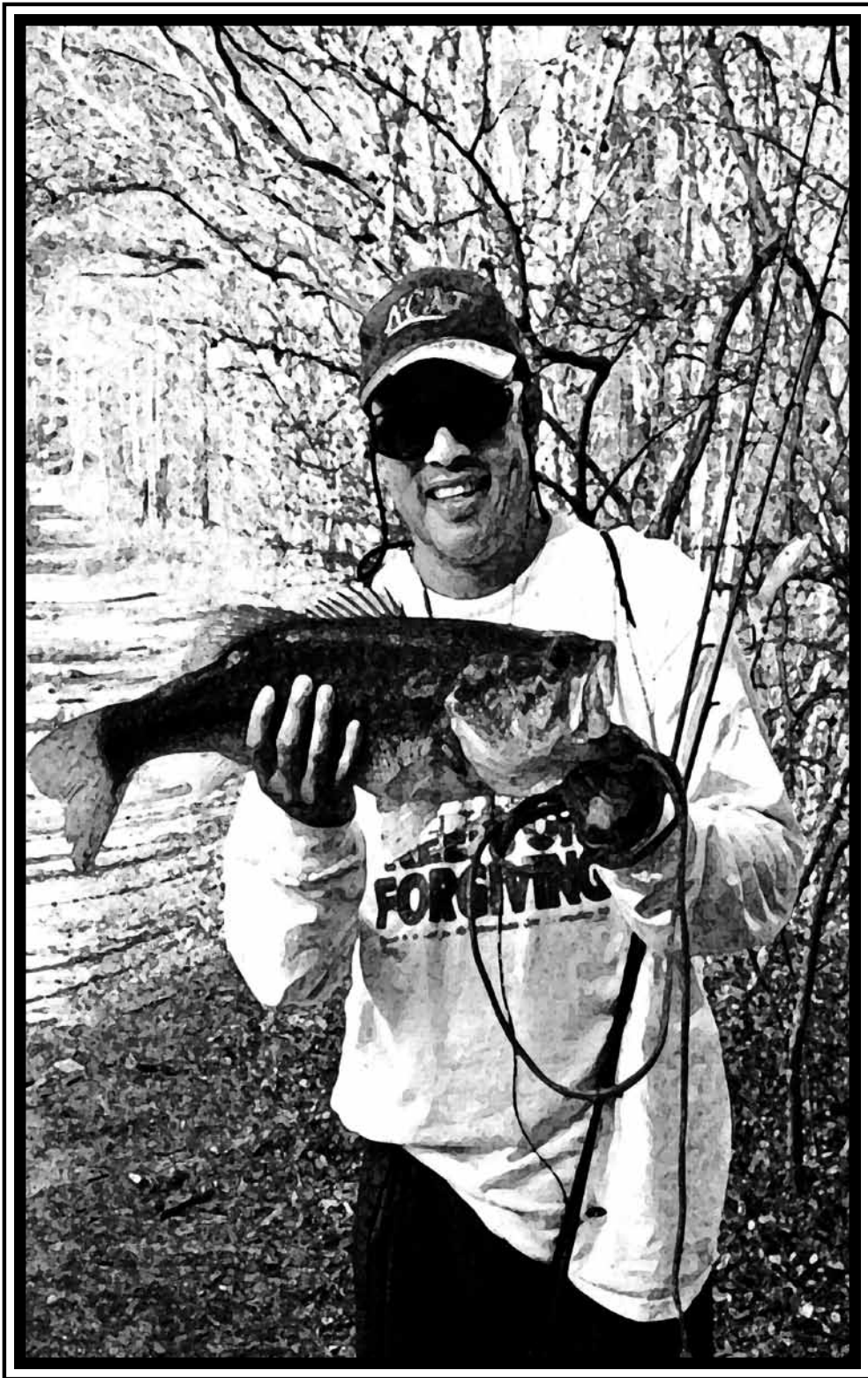
I don't know why this earth-bound angel smiles  
 When payments on our debts are in arrears;  
 We missed our ranching goals this year by miles,  
 And botulism hit our herd of steers.

Our middle son is prey to alcohol,  
 The baby seems to have a lung disease,  
 The twins at school face trouble for their brawl  
 With toughs who ended up with injuries . . .

But still, despite all woes I might compile,  
 My Helen daily warms me with her smile.

**FRANK SALVIDIO***AGAIN*

I am too old to be in love again,  
 Yet all the ancient symptoms reappear:  
 Her red-gold hair; the sudden heartbeat when  
 I hear her name; the urge to be there where  
 I know she'll be; and then to say her name  
 Again—again!— just as a schoolboy does  
 Who falls in love at sight. It's all the same,  
 With everything again just as it was.  
 But it's ridiculous to want to hold  
 Her hand; even to think I could would be  
 Preposterous—absurd—and far too bold  
 For someone of my years. I cannot see  
 What this new adolescence can presage,  
 Except that I'm in love—and at my age!



## V. THE QUOTIDIAN

**FELICIA MITCHELL***BOURRÉE WITH GOLDFINCH*

In the morning,  
 I threw sunflower seeds  
 onto the porch  
 and left them there,  
 temperature dropping,  
 as I did my chores.  
 Sweeping, dusting,  
 washing—it was all a dance,  
 the dance I do at home  
 alone with chores.  
 As cold as it was,  
 I took compost outside.  
 It was for the earth or the crows,  
 whichever took it first,  
 and also for me,  
 a reason to stand at a bare beech  
 that towered over me  
 and look up.  
 Later, dusting piano keys,  
 I began touching them,  
 one and then the other,  
 until I sat down with a bourrée  
 Bach wrote for his children.  
 It was simple and sweet,  
 and it made a goldfinch pause  
 just outside the window  
 as I played a dance  
 even birds can dance to.  
 The goldfinch stayed

until I started a minuet,  
 a faster tempo lifting its wings,  
 and then I got up to vacuum.

## MARGARET HASSE

### *DAY AFTER DAYLIGHT SAVINGS*

The blue numbers said I forgot  
to change the clocks, which set  
routines on haywire.

Like a domestic goat staked  
to its circle of earth,  
I don't do well untethered.

Outside a disruptive wind  
turns leaves up-side-down,  
provokes the eaves to whine.

I have no hunger for early dinner,  
become confused by the sound  
of children who seem out

too late for a school night.  
They've found an extra helping  
of daylight to romp on new grass.

They can't contain themselves,  
strip off jackets, scatter  
like a rag of ponies.

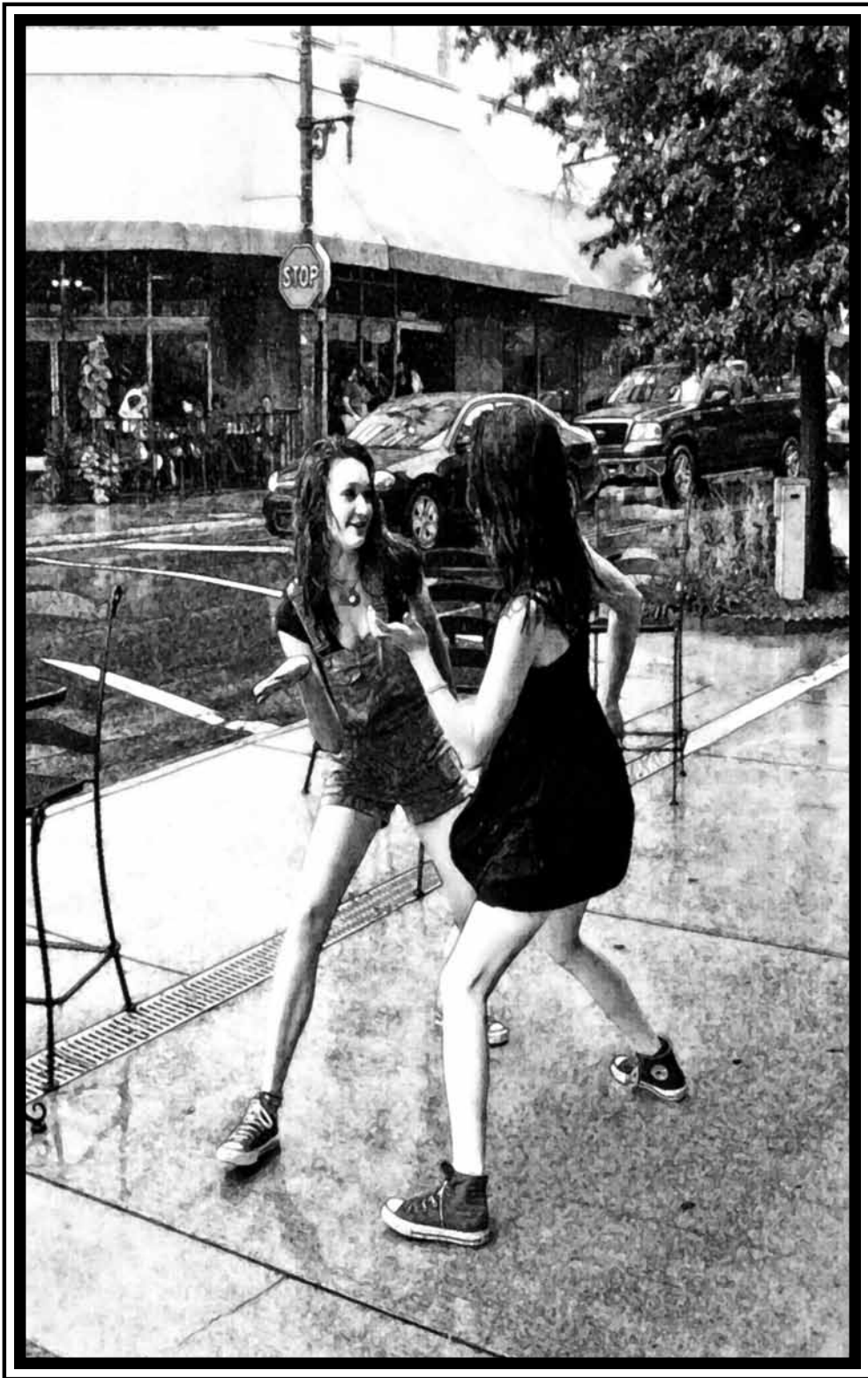
How can I regret one fugitive hour?  
Whatever time says, children's joy  
insists on springing forward.

### *WHAT THE WINDOW WASHERS DID*

They arrived in a truck at 8 a.m.,  
introduced themselves as Dave and Mike,  
said no, they brought their own supplies  
and equipment, said yes, pay in advance.  
They circled the house, removing storms,  
tugging at last year's ivy that cast its spell  
of thatch across the east windows.

I opened the door to Mike, watched  
as he positioned water bucket and rags.  
Through grimed glass latticed with cobwebs,  
Dave appeared on the outdoors side.  
As if starting a fight, each lifted  
his Windex bottles at the same time  
and seemed to squirt the other in the face.

The men, silent as mimes in a mirror  
with big hands tracing one another,  
rubbed the surfaces of all the panes  
until the glass squeaked and disappeared.  
The sun, free to fly in, flung  
a rectangle of light onto the floor.



## VI. COMMUNITY

## ZACK ROGOW

### *SUNDAY MORNING BERNAL HEIGHTS*

*for Francine Slack, my freshman-year high school English teacher*

Walking down from the crest of the hill  
 I glimpse the bay  
 fitting itself  
 snugly around the city.  
 A big black lab off-leash  
 bounds up  
 and shlurps my fingers.  
 "Maui," shouts the man behind him,  
 "stop that!" with a hint in his voice  
 that he knows there's no way  
 his dog will ever stop.  
 I buy bagels at the Good Life Grocery—  
 pumpernickel, onion,  
 everything. And lucky day!—  
 at the little latte shop I score  
 the last chocolate croissant for my daughter  
 with its tongue of dark flavor.  
 I pass a couple on the bench  
 in front of the Liberty Café,  
 the man weaving his arms together  
 to basket his baby  
 with its black lawn of hair,  
 an infant so new  
 the tags are just off,  
 and at that instant I know  
 I'm here to learn how to cherish  
 all that will endure  
 long after I'm gone  
 and even what has not yet  
 passed through the membrane.

### *A LITTLE BEFORE 3 P.M.*

Barry and I walk down to the East River Bank  
 because he needs to cash a paycheck  
 and I need to withdraw a few dollars.  
 We jaywalk Amsterdam at 96th  
 and Barry points out the marble of Mary  
 outside the Church of the Holy Name.  
 The statue has bare feet  
 poking out from the bottom of her robes.  
 Barry goes to look for a post office  
 and I head toward Sunflowers,  
 which has the best buy in the neighborhood  
 on my favorite health food junk food.  
 The February sunlight plates everything on Broadway  
 with slightly tarnished silver.  
 The wind chaps my face.  
 Around 92nd Street I end up  
 behind an aging bum  
 who's ambling downtown.  
 In a guttural voice  
 he suddenly bursts into song:  
*This magic moment...*

*DAFFODIL MADMAN*

From my bed I'd see the old nut  
sneak out after midnight, pockets stuffed.  
Before dawn he'd return, pockets empty.  
In black of night he buried bulbs  
in junk-strewn yards of Scuffletown,  
paper-coated teardrops  
lurking dormant under earth  
while footprints faded.

My mother disapproved, afraid he'd get shot  
and we couldn't waste money but  
he never got caught.  
A short man with spectacles, brown mustache,  
schizoid, unemployed.  
Me, a kid, to be seen with him was  
murder by mortification.

Fifty years later and far away  
they tell me all around Scuffletown  
come bursts of yellow each April  
from joy banked in dark times.

**JAN SARCHIO***I DON'T GET IT*

Chris has holes in his jacket, two of them, on the collar, at the back of his neckline. Fiberfill, the stuff they pack into pillows, is fingering its way out like a tiny polyester cloud. He doesn't care one lick about this course of events. He knows the holes are there, but the rest of the jacket, as far as I can see, is intact. Nan, one of his current "helpers" points to a picture of him that he has tacked to one of several bulletin boards in his room. He's on a motorcycle and he's wearing the same jacket. I tabulate the years between that photo and now and it's no less than twenty. This is the only jacket he's worn over that time, despite the fact that there are three "new" ones collecting dust in his closet.

We all try to take care of Chris. We all want to make sure he's warm, has pants without holes in the crotch, shirts that aren't frayed, socks that corral his wayward toes, hats that keep the snow or sun off, swimsuits that don't expose his privates, underwear with upstanding elastic, shoes with soles. You get my drift. So, with us (his mom and dad), friends, a sister, aunts and uncles all making sure that he's "covered," his closet is loaded.

He wears through things at a glacial rate. Even when there are obvious bits missing, he is content to continue wearing them. "It's still good," he tells me about his trusty jacket, while I wave a new one in front of him, as if I am a matador and he is Ferdinand. He has nothing against the new things, but he is attached to the old. It's as if they are part of him, like old buddies. He holds on until the last thread snaps. He does this with blankets, sheets, upholstered furniture, well, he does it with everything. He still has some music tapes. He howls with great emotional pain when they get irreparably tangled in his tape player. In order to part with them he unreels all of the tape, cuts it into confetti, puts it in the trash, and weeps. We get him replacement CD's, which helps, but the old items seem to be woven into the fabric of him. When blankets, shirts, appliances, etc. break, he has to finish the job, rending them