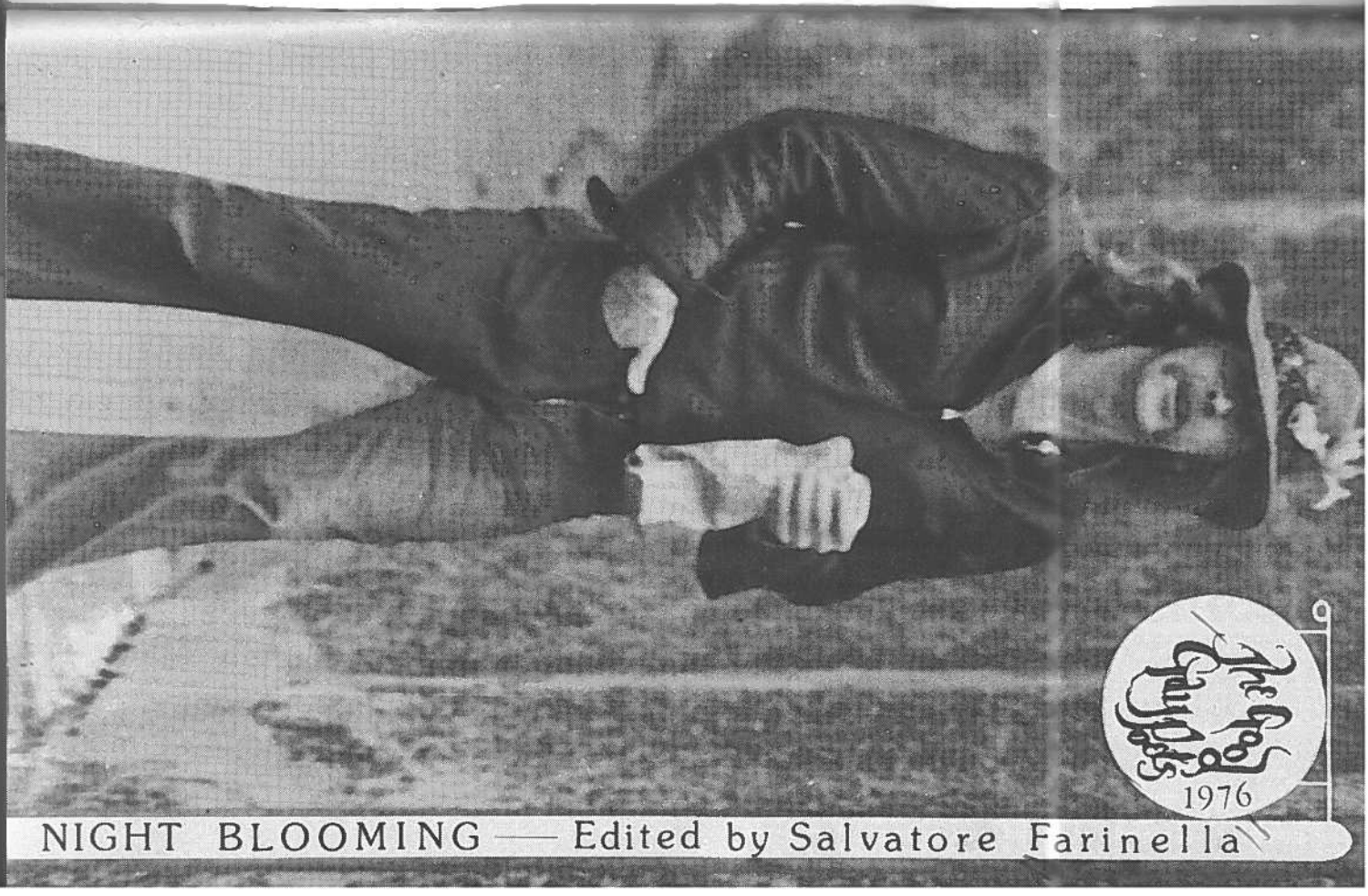
IIGHT BLOOMING

ABOUT ALLYN AMUNDSON



NIGHT BLOOMING — Edited by Salvatore Farinella

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WINDOWSILL FLYER

FOR ALLYN

And you become Icarus rider
of the high wire humming the bow
whispering to arrow goodbye
yet owls compose featherballs
themselves featherballs neatly
on tree shelves into forest blackout;
a Disney "nightfall"
a curtain slams;
goodbye light goodbye
sight and Williams talks
about everything but
a splash out of Brueghel.
Featherballs owls eyes in the forest
flickering images bigger than life
look out in registered Technicolor.
Unregistered we watch in the hollow theatre dark
feathers float through tubes of light.

Salvatore Farinella

Remembrance
Eugenia Parry Janis

Allyn Amundson was born on August 19, 1934 in Baraboo, Wisconsin. He was baptized and confirmed a Roman Catholic. His father was an engineer of Norwegian descent. His mother was of German stock. The discoverer of the South Pole, he believed, had been his great uncle. He was in the army for three months and ten days, just long enough to be considered a veteran.

He was trained as a painter: from the University of Wisconsin he received a B.A.; he had two Masters degrees, a Master of Science (M.S.) and a Master's Degree in Fine Arts (MFA in painting). He taught painting and art history at the University of Wisconsin and at Michigan State University. By the time he came to Boston in August of 1963, he had already exhibited his work and was awarded prizes in over a dozen one-man and group invitational shows not only in Wisconsin, but in California, New York, and Washington, D.C. He also illustrated books on language teaching, created several children's books and painted murals. The one which particularly pleased him decorates the downstairs bar at the 2170 Club in Boston; it was finished in 1973. He was at home with all artistic media: oil painting, sculpture, printmaking, pen and ink and watercolor. He could design theatrical sets, costumes and had particular success with this in Wisconsin in his student days.

Above all, he was a draughtsman — of astounding skill. He left behind many hundreds of drawings and numerous sketchbooks filled with studies of everything from nudes to cats to carefully scrutinized botanical specimens. During his life the paintings and the prodigious numbers of drawings spilled into the hands of his friends and those he had come to know, and more and more his drawings came to be *about* and *for his friends*. They framed them, decorated their houses with them, published them in their newspapers or just kept them.

In the early sixties, he discovered the medium of silver point, the quintessential medium of the draughtsman, because it does not allow the artist to erase a mistake or to correct a false start. In a way, he personally revived silver point, learning the lessons of the great draughtsmen of the past like Durer or Rembrandt who had used it. His greatest drawings are probably the silverpoints which emerged, under his hand, as rich and detailed as paintings. He cared a lot about the fine line drawing he could make with silverpoint and when he exhibited his work at the Loeb Theater in the late 1960s, the glory of his part of the exhibition were the works in this medium.

He was an inveterate letter writer, and the many 1000s of letters that he produced as a whole, if gathered together would constitute perhaps one of the most extraordinary personal statements of his generation. His letters were often punctuated with drawings which in themselves were as rich as the letters in humor, outrageousness and insight.

He was a hippie, a flower child, a dissenter long before those notions were fully part of the contemporary American conscience; these facts contributed in no small way to his superiority as a teacher. His students not only loved and admired him for his artistic skills, but for the fact that he was 'seasoned' and in a word, another sort of 'veteran'.

He was a resident of Boston for twelve years, but he never denied or forgot his roots in Wisconsin. Baraboo, in spite of the fact that it is losing its elm trees, is still the sleepy town that it was in the late 19th century when it was the winter quarters of the Ringling Brothers Circus. From his mother's house, he could hear the musical sounds of the steam calliope, from which, even recently, he took enormous pleasure and amusement. The circus and the circus museum which came to be established in Baraboo, appealed to his deeply ingrained love of fantasy and the world of the fantastic imagination. His involvement in fantasy and the world of the fantastic gradually became the subject matter of his art, it influenced in no small degree his style of life, his mode of dress and his genuine appreciation of all of the unique qualities in his wide range of acquaintances and friends. As an artist he believed in the power of the imagination. Blond, lionine, he moved among us like a prince, passing his life on his own terms like an aristocrat. Yet in this he was exceedingly concrete and practical. He had the gift of honesty which shocked his acquaintances yet drew them more closely to him. Above all, he had the supreme gift of friendship, and for making friends. After all, didn't he introduce us all to one another?

AFTER SEEING ALLYN'S DRAWINGS

Wholesome giver
    out of your ego
    out into joy
    out and around
        each flexing finger
        each skittish muscle
Your pen a tongue.

Leather lovers
too beautiful for pain
boy princes in a kingdom
    sucked
    rimmed
    love-longed
stoning the looker.

Pastoral figurations
ink figments of an eye
gently learned
in pathways
of
trusting in flesh.

—Jon Franck

MYTH

In memory of Allyn Amudson

Flung from a window five flights up
a blinded painter breaks
into bloom, fleeing
hope.

Two ghosts haunt his open mouth:
stamen and pistil
blessed
by Apollo.

Pollen and laurel dust the brow
cracked on the brick of vision
below,
empty bottle:

ancient temple of sight overthrown.

David Eberly

Dolores Klaich

Allyn was gay. He was, in fact, the first gay person I ever knew. He was a very fine painter; you may have seen some of his drawings in gay publications. He was a very fine man who, as Gertrude Stein *might* have said, was very finely gay. He was perhaps too outrageous for some, but for others he was simply wonderfully so.

Many years ago, when I first realized I was gay, it was Allyn who helped me to welcome the fact with great whoops of joy, just as he had accepted his homosexuality with great gusto from the very beginning. Back then, in the late 1950s, he was a terrific role model. In the '50s, as a lot of us in this room know only too well, self-acceptance, let alone complete openness, was infinitely more difficult than it appears to be today. In those days, Allyn was great support, not only for me but for many others.

Allyn had many close women friends — both gay and straight. He was that rare being: a non-sexist man. Yes, there are some. I dedicated my book to him — in many ways he was resonsible for my writing it. The reaction of some women to this dedication, women who were into separatism, was amazement and in one case, complete shock. A book about lesbianism dedicated to a man? they said. They just couldn't believe it. Although I hadn't anticipated this sort of reaction, in truth, it hadn't even crossed my mind, it is, of course, highly understandable — when one considers the strong sexism of most straight men and, sadly, not a few gay men. However, it does seem to me that those women who tick off all men as not worthy of consideration, are every bit as guilty as that segment of the straight public that ticks off all gay people as not worthy of consideration. I wonder what is accomplished without dialogue? — frustrating as it often is.

Allyn Amundson really was, so to speak, my sister. I'm distressed by his death; I feel a little like Colette when she heard of the poet Renee Vivien's death. Colette said, 'Like all those who never use their strength to the limit, I am hostile to those who let life burn them out.'

Allyn, like the poet Renee Vivien, was not a survivor. But they certainly were livers. And their legacies — Vivien's poems, yet to be translated into English, and Allyn's paintings and drawings are there to bring joy. Especially to their gay Sisters and Brothers who, against still frustrating odds, have chosen to survive, and to fight.

Left Handed
Tom Farley

Allyn Amundson was left handed and loved it. He was a pure blonde and he exulted in it He lived in a cold water flat and boasted about it. He was out of tune with the aux-courant art world and cared less. He dressed unconventionally and did it intentionally. In short, Allyn loved being different and unique and he succeeded.

Uniqueness was very important to him. He always wanted either to be rich or famous and since he saw that he couldn't achieve either he decided to be outrageous in personality and appearance.

He was egocentric and loved being noticed if for no other reason than just being noticed. Yet on the other hand he noticed others and bolstered their self image also. He was a great encourager. He loved to spur other people along life's tedious journey with grand encouragement. He was never selfish with praise even if he didn't completely understand. He was seldom a 'downer'.

Yet Allyn had some serious problems that only a few shared with him. He was a person of many contradictions which also made him unique. He could encourage others but at the same time he was discouraged. Outwardly he would project joy but inside he was tortured and tormented. He wore many masks. He was a tragic figure yet he was delightful. He never wore thin.

I met Allyn in Sporters on July 31, 1963. The last time I saw him was the day before he died. I drove him to Sporters. He loved that place. He was a very social being and loved to talk with people. He didn't think of Sporters so much as a cruising ground but as a meeting place where he could talk with people.

He was a total person in his regard for people. He could carry on conversations on all topics with all sorts of people. At one moment he would be talking with Mary Sullivan on the care of plants and in the next moment he would be explaining the proper method of wearing a cock ring with some hunky person. He loved to talk and enjoyed people.

He couldn't stand being totally alone or even with just one other person. Being alone made him nervous and at the same time too many people confused him — again the contradiction.

In regard to art, Allyn was unfashionable. He was a figure painter and consummate draftsman in an era of pop and op and felt very secure and comfortable in his own medium. He was not an innovator nor did he aspire to be one. He loved doing those things that pleased him most: people, plants, and cats. He was disappointed about his minimal success in his life time but he was pleased with his shows, his sales at his gallery and his appearances in *Fag Rag* and *Sebastian Quill*. Besides these two publications he also illustrated two French texts and one Spanish text for Appleton Century and Croft. In his university days he won many awards. In 1969 he was the runner-up for the Whitney Award. On the strength of this award he went to Paris for a year. It was a difficult year for him. He loved the thought of travel but the execution of it was somewhat different. He was totally a home body and loved the security of the familiar rather than change.

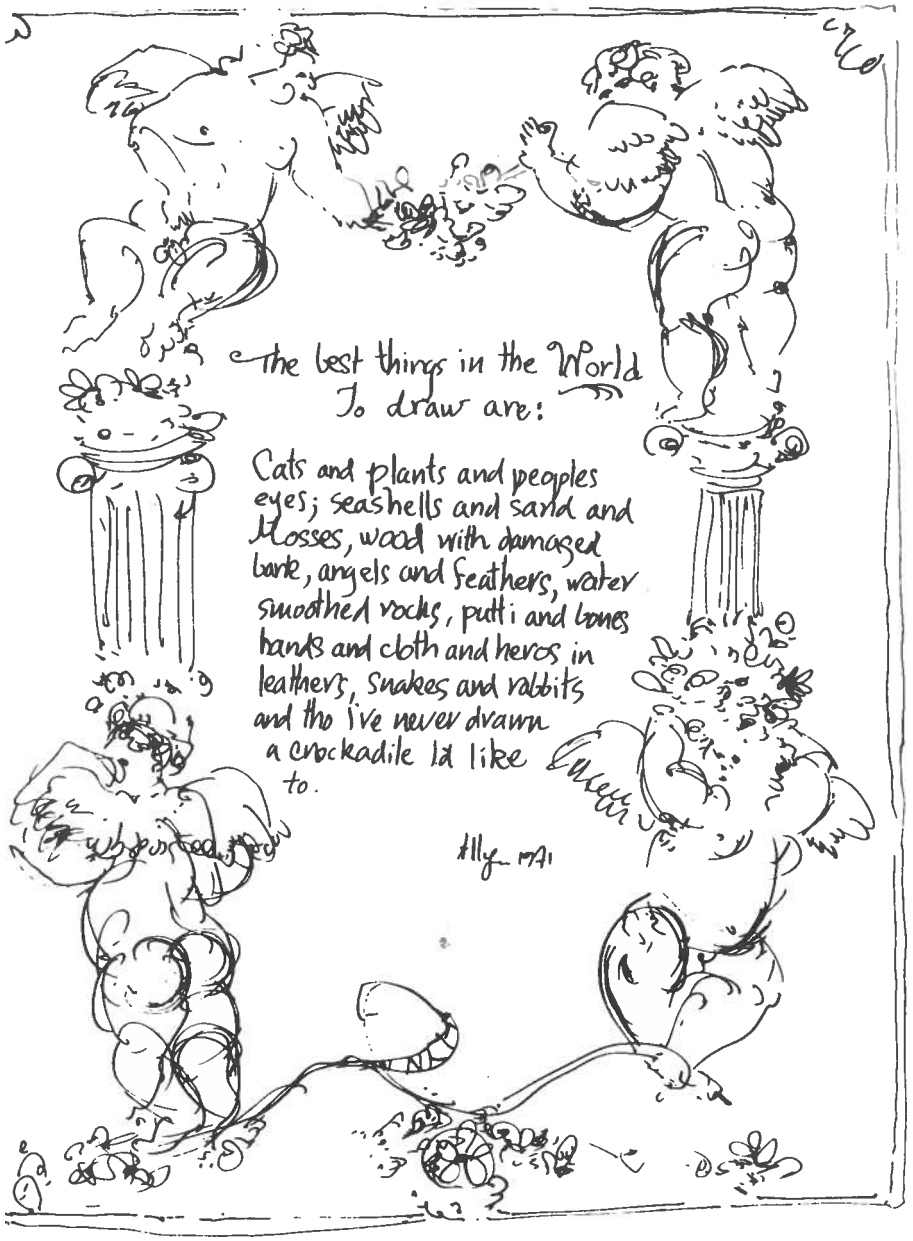
I once travelled with him to Greece in 1965. It was a disaster for him. He went to England in 1971 but that too ended in defeat and he returned to 33 Clarendon Street and vowed to never leave again. Yet he did enjoy travelling in this country. In 1967 we drove cross country to the West Coast and that he enjoyed, especially San Francisco which he revisited in 1972.

Of course Allyn did have his weak points as all of us do. He could be obstinate, imperious, and down right obnoxious and loud but he was so damn infectious that you usually forgot or overlooked his bad points. The good definitely out weighed the bad. The balance always tipped to his favor. He was lucky that way.

Allyn was a summer person — a true follower of Apollo. He loved the sun. He could sit for hours whether on a rooftop in Boston, or a pier in Madison, Wisconsin, or a sandy beach on Cape Cod, or an old swimming hole in Maine and soak up the jollies from the sun.

I can see him sunning himself, brushing back his beautiful blond hair, and sipping on an eternal drink and saying, 'Isn't it just marvelous, Tommy'.

I will miss him this summer and all the summers to come but when the hollyhocks bloom in the sky, I will think of Allyn and smile.



FOR ALLYN

33 Clarendon, AEA's Interior

Even in chaos
was there a plan
amid the rubble
appears an abundant array
of saints and flowers
efflorescent with crystal and jewels
the stains intentional
as Adam and Eva look blackly out
of their solemn eden
the memory drifts in a gaseous balloon
propelled with the humor of hope
photographs, post cards, sketches are sepia
poses on motorcycles, headdresses, of cocks
soiled maiden wistfully, timorously
facing a future of her defacement
the master laughs at himself with love
floating Christos
no place does the eye stop
the chaos is splendor
splendorous imbroglio
testing the senses, the eyes
great garbage can of beauty, life, laughter
velvet, fur, leather, gold, crystal, wool
dusty, destroyed to the essence of beauty
and in this shoddy palace
cold tap, paint-by-number ceiling
engraved table, passions past present
there is life
Marzipan rules, Dementia succumbs
loving, laughing
La Rue, Gabriel, acrobatics of space, time
paste, cutouts, Andruski, Jamus
    somnolent eden where one is tied to his pleasure
the peacock, the cardinal
the earth breeds life
the message is arrayed amid the clutter, canvas, paprus

on photo, beside porcelin, velvet, silver scallops
like an epitaph into the tabletop
waiting to conclude the future
patiently, patiently
Vivaldi soars within
glittering like the incandescent suns
dotting the mismatched china
Michael, wanting to be Gabriel
ever, ever praising
the fig leaf accepts my ashes
wishing me, wishing the three in our various occupations
fantasy, chinese, present, greets us, promises us well
it is the earth upon this oceanic linolium
and he who walks upon
he who loves, who we love, with our graciously filled tummies
and our rapturously filled hearts
love --30/5/73

James Frase-White

ICARUS *song for allyn*

Thinking on the last time that I saw you
Laughing eyes, the smile too bright to be
Danish oils, the colours grace my walls here
Inside, outside, everything I see

Twenty-five had come and gone that Tuesday
Laughing eyes, so far above that sea
Swirling madly down below the bar there
Laughing eyes that always got to me

CHORUS;
Now it only makes me wonder what we're headed for
With you I felt so solid off the ground
When the sun's this hot I start to feel so crazy
Then it looks like losing everything we found

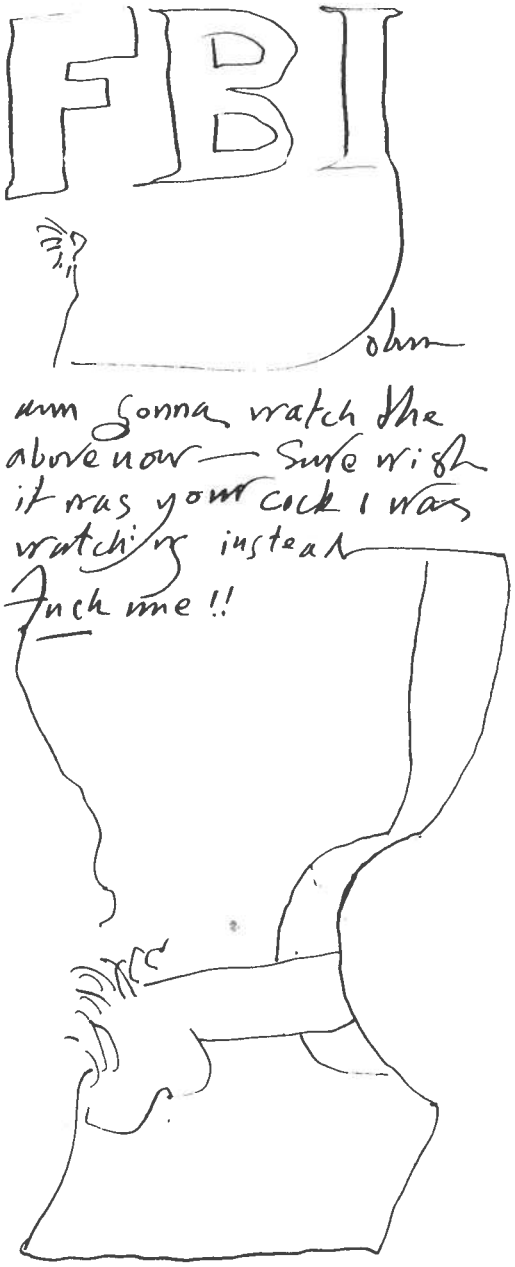
Every picture paints a thousand meanings
Every word becomes too hard to feel
Every thought evokes a different question
Laughing eyes, the terror gets so real

later;
Missing in action
The sigh rings so true
I'm flying very close to you
Stars in your night shine
Suns too far to reach
When there's just light enough for each
Of us living
And these freaks you leave behind
The window open
Measure out my time
You know, I'll have you
More than life can ever keep inside

CHORUS;
Now it only makes me wonder what we're headed for
With you I felt so solid off the ground
When the sun's this hot I start to feel so crazy
Then it looks like losing everything We found

Guess I saw the sanity and reason
Something that you'll never get to see
Laughing eyes, I loved you just for being
Laughing eyes, won't you come back for me

Glenn A. Johnson



Is There Life Before Death?
Salvatore Farinella

Crossing the Boston Common I saw the wide free spray can scrawl across a park building — IS THERE LIFE BEFORE DEATH? Another reminder, a skull and cross-bones, spelling out and hinting at a pirate existence. This planet, this dimension — are we — AM I ready to really and frankly deal with its truths, its lies. Allyn, my close friend, flew from that fourth story window how many months ago — three, four? Already the facts are fading. In preparing to write this — these words farming their furrows into some type of understanding, dredging up the pain again so recently put under the underwear in the linen closet at the back of my mind — I will try to come to some kind of understanding of the act or of Allyn more likely of myself and those friends who found themselves washed up stranded on skull beach. Maybe there is some hope of treasure under the sand but I've left my metal detector home and I'm afraid. Allyn Amundson, you are still too warm and watching over my shoulder. You and I will talk then about you and me and Roger and Ken and Tom and all the others. We are all part of it — this death — this parting with all the promises of future picnics at the sea shore unfulfilled.

The first days are seven years behind us and gauze skrim clouds romantically the features of those days. If I tear away that theatrical curtain, the cold reality glistens like mica. I saw you as being afraid vulnerable as afraid as myself — except I did a better job of disguising the terror of the streets. It was you who led Roger and me to the South End. Little did Roger and I know that the apartment we would find was directly down the street from that famous address 33 Clarendon. Allyn, you always said that Lawrence Street was magical and held surprises in store. But it all turned out to be for everyone else was Vaseline Alley where the hustlers took their tricks to score. You and 33 Clarendon were the greatest magical attraction in Boston and you never knew it.

Shall I tell the pleasant people a little about you, my friend, who is so private in your public way? I am left to

interpret your silence. But I won't because all the others — lovers, friends will do that — they will relate the facts; they will build up the shell of the man and stand it on its feet — pull the string — the hand waves. We are all left with this shell. When the death bell rang and the bodiless voice at the other end of the phone gave the news — what can I say — the death rattle danced against raw bone behind my eyes? All the friends got it this way. Then one by one the crying the wailing, the keening started all over the city — Boston, New York started the moan, Santa Barbara groaned and all the other places where I don't know the names, the people behind the names, the places, the people the magical man touched and left his fairy dust. The spot raw and irritated and changed.

We must all go on I thought and showered and cried and sobbed and showered and gasped and shaved but we must all go to work. And we did; all the friends did go on to do what they had to do to continue living. Allyn, the Norwegian priest of chiaroscuro, you taught us how to find the sun in dark places. I left Roger at work crying and I went to work crying. At the coffee mahine I told Kate, the woman I work with, Allyn flew the night before while tripping and fucked up his handing gear. Kate's best friend had recently died and her face moved imperceptively as a wall does when the building foundation shifts. After awhile she came into my office and we cried together. I don't understand why but I became obsessed with wanting to know and understand the facts. I had to know or die myself. After all Allyn you were the personification of all light and dark to us your friends.

Work was a bust. As I lfet the building the whispers were following me out the door like grey footstaps left in dust. I hunted the others. I drove looking for them — those others who I didn't really conceptualize with faces — what friends, which friends, do I have a right to intrude, do I want to see them and I drove until I was at 33 Clarendon ringing the bell. Amazingly the three clicks which signalled the waiter to enter released the lock and I walked in and up the stairs to the top floor. I went straight to the kitchen where Andy was sitting looking bewildered in Allyn's apartment. His face was wet with the tears tearing his face into a sorrow mask. He was there hiding all the pornography so that the relatives wouldn't find it. What could we say to each other? What were we doing in Allyn's apartment? What if he came back? His dishes were still piled in the sink; Marsha, the money cat, was flipped on her back on the large radio. Obviously the man was coming back. Why didn't you?

Allyn, can I say this for the others? The apartment was permeated with the man. Everywhere one looked Allyn jumped out at you. Life sized pictures on the walls, porno collages of nude men doing the Big It everywhere, drawings, beer cans, hundreds of plants dominated by the famous night blooming Cereus, a life sized angel suspended over the bed blowing his horn. I could go on and on everything was touched by the man and he left his mark on everything. Everything, each object had a story which gave it value to us who listened or participated in it: even the thousands of roaches crawling over everything. One night Allyn met a new star at Sporters Cafe and Lounge. When they decided that they would see each other through the night, Allyn congratulated the young man because that night the night blooming Cereus would bloom. He was extraordinarily lucky for the flower bloomed only once a year. Their meeting heralded by the momentous blooming must certainly signify a new star on the horizon and true love. Everything was colored with this romance.

Andy and I mumbled incoherences and left because we could not bear being so near to the life still warm, the heart still heard through the walls.

I had heard that Allyn fell on Charles Street so went there slowly walking wanting to be near him in some fashion. You see I'm Sicilian Italian. When our people die, we fall onto their coffins screaming in grief until we are carried away in utter exhaustion. I did know what was happening to me but I guess I was trying desperately to exhaust myself — fall down in the gutter until someone would take me away to some warm place where the roots of the trees would wrap themselves round my body and carry me to this friend, Allyn, who had left me in such pain and relieve me of it. The particulars of the whole thing I didn't know so that I ended up in Sporters, the one place that I always knew I could find Allyn. (What do you think of this Allyn? Is this a lot of shit? Do you love me for it this re-living, the opening of the partially healed wound?) Allyn was not there. There was one corner of the bar that Allyn owned. No one could sit there. If by some unlucky chance some insensitive number found himself on this particular stool, Allyn by sheer presence

would spirit him away and take possession of his rightful place. I couldn't come near that stool so sat across the bar and watched for the man to appear all the while in my misery wondering what kind of self indulgent masochist I was to give myself this kind of pain. This was at 12 noon. It was here that the particulars of Allyn's death were learned. A male nurse from Mass. General was talking to someone about the suicide and relating grusesome details. Every detail was sponged into my memory with broken glass. I felt as though the tears bled from my eyes. The building Allyn jumped from was directly across the street from Sporters on Blossom Street. I went out and there it was: a homely yellow brick building with one window blank — Allyn had taken the entire window frame — almost like one eye blinded and the sun was shining. 'Allyn, spring's here' I said and walked on.

I saw Larry waving down a cab. He was in his fur collared long grey tweed coat. He didn't see me until I reached him. He looked at my face and said, 'Oh, you heard.' He put my head on his shoulder and I cried for awhile. All I could think about was that I was crying all over his fur collar wetting the fur. He held me awhile there in the street. I don't cry often in private never mind in the middle of the street in the arms of another man but I did and the cabs cruised by Larry stroking my head. Somehow walking dazed throughout the morning and dealing alone with spring and Allyn dead had been a wet rag to drag around. Seeing Larry busy with his life waving at cabs left me with this wagon of bones rattling down the street. I couldn't understand why the whole city was not inundated with tears.

Death has never moved me as much as Allyn's leaving. When my grandmother died, a Sicilian funeral director did it up right and Sicilians all came to pay respects. The little old ladies dressed in black all sat around and loudly wept into handkerchiefs. My aunt pleaded with my grandmother for two days to return. I was moved with grief but was bruised by culture shock. My grandfather died while I was in Rome and was buried before I returned. I still think of him as alive. But Allyn's death haunts me with a choking that is death's hand on the throat. Allyn, my friend, are you still that or are you yawning by now?

What about the living? I am one of them as is my lover, Roger, Ken Rob, Robert, doctor Jack and Tom, Allyn's lover, who on asking for a leave of absence from his rural school department due to the death of his 'close' friend, was denied because his department heads did not understand the relationship. After all we don't know how to act. As men — gay men — we are not allowed to be a part of the core family even if we have been 'espoused' for decades. Is the partner respected when the goods get divided or does the family descend with wide wings and scoop up the belongings? How intensely does one cry at the funeral of your 'friend'? Oh, the nods, the clucks that follow us. Well, all that has to stop. We, as Gay people may have to show the way to all the others. We must allow ourselves to feel ourselves live through our lives. This means there will be pain as well as pleasure. Obvious isn't it. By stepping out of our sedation, we must embrace our humanity and surrender to it. Allyns what do you think? This teaching purgatory for Farley put him deep in the wilds where the students swear at him and call him faggot on the street. At middle age one is left to wonder whether the great escape from Nuevo York, Glitter City, has been worth it. Long deep winters isolated from anyone who can share experience even momentarily loom menacingly at the start of each and every school year. This only one facet of Farley. On first seeing Tom after the news had acid etched sorrow into his face and body, he looked majestic: the sorrowing king/queen lean to the bone dark and brooding. He was entering the room and I didn't expect to see him. In the elegant cocktail party sparkling with crystal and pure white walls. We were all clinking glasses in a dairy made chic and there was Farley under the arch — red flannel shirt and dungarees — wide belt cinched tight. He was surveying the cornice carytid. His face had known the razor and there was the barness of the strop. It was at that moment that I realized why Allyn loved him so intensely. He is the fire smoldering in the charcoal and the cool breath needed to fan it. That room we all were standing in of tinkling chandeliers and facile glass became sheer, diaphanous between the finger and thumb. He can do without any of it, I thought, yet he's here. What intense loneliness must have driven him here.

The night of Allyn's death the friends agreed to go to Ken's place and hide in each other's safety. I felt we were hiding in each other's arms between drinks. We drank a lot and tried to cheer each other up. We told funny stories about Allyn and the crazy that he could be. And the happiness he could give us and the concern he caused us. Shall I tell all, my

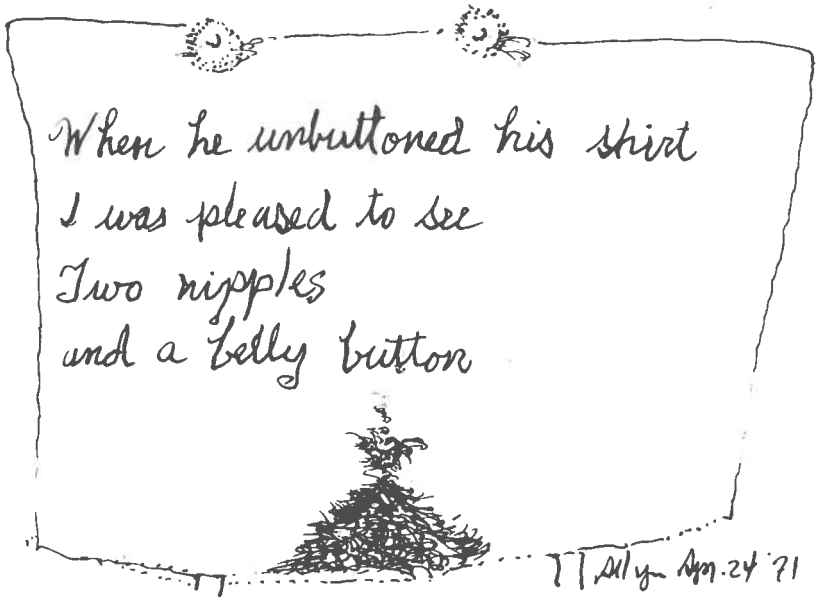
friend; it should all come out. As the friends we were carrying a burden of guilt because we each and everyone of us, loved the man. And he drank too much. And we worried and fretted about the quarts of beer that disappeared before noon each day. He was a grown man — weren't you — after all. He had some responsibility to himself and we worried. One by one of us had found the worry so intense that at different times we would not visit any more. The destruction was visible; the cracks were forming and age was creeping on. As a young man Allyn was a beautiful man: tall, blondina, Nordic. He was talented. But he drank too much because he was an artist. In his apartment he sat, perched on his stool listening to the never ending news, the talk programs and wrote the editor and called the news commentators. Something had to be done, didn't it? But nothing could be done. The silver point drawings assured him and us through their pure artistry that there was order in the world. After all there it was in plain sight silver and white! But it wasn't enough to reassure the artist, who sought through his medium a purpose, a vision of life in order to combat that fucking radio jittering away on its shelf. If it weren't for Marsha, the comely cat whom Allyn loved intensely, holding the radio down, Allyn would have stomped it into unrecognizable metal coils and springs. I guess that's what it's made up of. But the news held a fascination for Allyn was vomit sometimes does: all that gross stuff came out of me syndrome. Aren't we somehow responsible in part for all that terrible stuff happening? All the incredible furs he puts over his shoulders, all the amulets he hung round his neck did not asssuage the helplessness, the guilt and he always drank. I read someplace that rats when overcrowded not only go crazy but prefer alcohol to water. The city . . . the South End is supposed to be a scary place. Crime is everywhere. And Allyn was afraid. He was alone and *Gay* and his hunting grounds for love and sex were the same dark forbidden places that we all haunt. The victims of the muggers may as well have been impaled on pikes at each and every street corner. They had a lesson to teach and Allyn bit the bullet.

Who knows what the reasons were for the fear or the drinking. We are only his friends who cared and found they had inherited a huge guilt. One night late from Sporters dropping Allyn at his door he told me how much he loved Roger and me. It was then I told him how much we cared about him and found ourselves worrying about the man. His face twisted as he said what a down it was that his friends worried for him. He appreciated their concern but it was a down. I didn't talk about it again. It was easier to not come by and watch the disintegration. I thought I was alone in this but I wasn't. Many of the friends thought they were doing the same withdrawal alone also. Not consciously I guess, but nevertheless it happened. One week before he died each and everyone of us were called to meet Allyn. Roger and I went to visit and see Allyn again and see Tom just in from the wilds. Tom the only man Allyn consistently loved. The one man he thought perennially beautiful. Allyn looked better than I'd seen him in months. I had talked to an alcoholic counselor earlier in the week about what a friend who respects another man's right to private destruction does when everything starts to fall apart for that friend. He said talk about it. All the friend can do is kick you the hell out. I was going to do it even though I didn't want to be kicked out. Allyn beat me to it. He had been going to group therapy with the local gay group and loved it. It was doing him good. The goods were there in front of me facing me. We had a wonderful time. I felt good about Allyns and myself. It was obvious he was progressing. When we left he kissed both Roger and me. We never saw him again. Evidently he did this for all the friends. We didn't suspect a thing. Well, the man's dead and living with us each and everyday.

We, the friends, planned a tribute celebration for our friend. Allyn's family had shipped his body to Baraboo, Wisconsin and here we were with the memories, the pain, the loss and not even a funeral at which to grieve. None of us witnessed the lowering of the body into the ground; the memorial stone. How could we really believe he was really gone and not in hiding? The celebration was for him and us — all the friends. A number of close friends met and planned this celebration. It took place on a day mixed with heavy clouds, some rain and spots of sun. Each and every friend received a sun bright and yellow daffodil whose throat of yellow trumpeted spring. The friends came to the service and slowly filled the church. Everyone felt uncomfortable in this proper place chosen to honor this wild man, Allyn Amundson. Do you mind me saying that Allyn? One by one the friends either

performed by playing a musical instrument, read poems, or just talked a little about Allyn. This was our farewell gift to the man. The morning went by and we were all deeply moved. When the service ended, the friends poured out onto Arlington Street and gave three hundred daffodils to everyone they saw. 'This is on Allyn,' they said.

A number of people came to my place after the service. The friends all talked and slowly began to dance and laugh and cry because we missed him so much. When early morning found us still trying not to convince ourselves that the day had ended some of us friends went to Chinatown to eat. We each kissed other tenderly goodnight amazed at how soft friendship had made our lips. If there is a point to this — it's because the friends who are left miss him so much.



ALLYN

a year
since i was last here with you.
man of summer -
casting haiku forms on
gentle dunes in truro.
astride pale blue waves,
whimsical statue of foam.
it is home again.

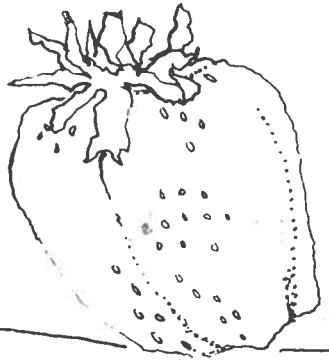
yet different. though our moods
still blend, smooth
as your golden morning hair.
you've changed - from friend to lover.
orion master, studded
with a belt of stars.
sparkle of acetylene eyes
in a turguoise sky.
prefigured in breaths of light,
your celestial arrows
pierce each sebastian heart
with gentle shafts of insouciant joy;
releasing the insistent laugh
and dove wings in soft murmur
to shed shadows on the velvet of your force.
fold and unfold,
obscuring the last per cent
of bewildered mundane.

i hold you near,
the way night carries
the bird's impervious cry.
we've crossed years in an anticipated touch.
beautiful accidents rile the roaches and
outnumber money in the angel's toe.
geraniums in italien tin cans.
night-blooming jasmine, our wandering jew.
the golden goblet of beer,
shimmering in the morning and
shaking sleep and memory
from your lazuli eyes,
and leonine hair.

Andy Kopecki

6.12

Six dollars and twelve cents
for that fucking
Picnic
And he didnt show
Two weeks later the
Strawberries
are still
Rotting in the Refrigerator



THE PICNIC

for allyn amundson

The dark cleft of the conch opens;
I walk out as if nothing happened.
River wind and spring sun
cut the husk of cold
my winter self with shears.

Grass sleeps;
Tinker Bell's cousins
belly kick hairless legs;
elastic bikinis snap like mouths.
River wind index finger
wraps my hair into a ring.

Black police boots bruise my memory
through night park bushes
and he to meet me here
to seal our pact with food:
wine of his blood, bread of my sperm.

Our eyes passed hands;
river wind marched
nude in our presence;
I have waited an hour.

Round my neck strawberries
suck the sun;
rocks whisper:
He does not know you.

1971

Salvatore Farinella

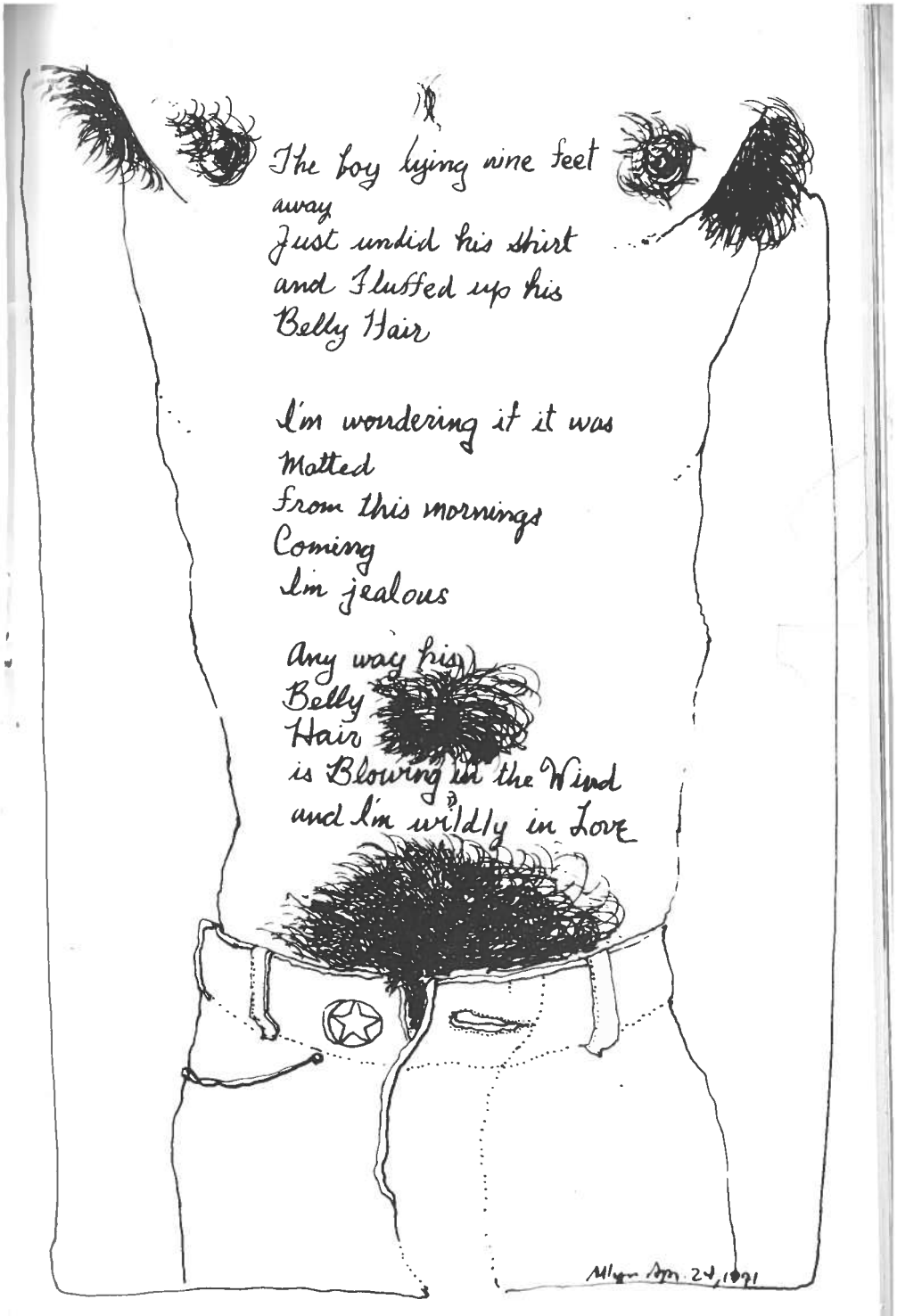
HIS PRESENCE

I could be in California
as well as heaven
chasing sharp angels down
cubist corridors
these red brick wall
to wall mirrors
burn lunch room
sob song almonds
after a crochet pocket
soft wine hand
wrapped strap pant around
his falling stoop
soon wires circuit fingers
chain sockets
tight locker change
acquire packasandra
hard shoe dance step
outside Paris
Mati Hari flees her own
executioner
he had nerve not to fight
or talk back
take your grey compliment
to another chair
games can cut their own sissors
citrus green
reflected meets inflected tricks
in my eye
every buldge wrestling bread rising:
listen charefully.

27 January 1975

for Allyn & Jack Spicer

Harley Shively



POEM FOR ALBRECHT

I watch the sun rays
fall upon your head
until you burst into sunflowers
which whirl like stars
on some deep background

or glitter like pearls & sweet whispers
between ruby wet lips.
a solid drop of spit
crystalizes on your foreskin
prismatically begetting a fan of colours

upon paper, cloth or wall
arriving at my beck and call

'my beard towards heaven'
drips stain glass calico colours
& each pore exhudes desire
rainbow 'desire
provokes desire
then knows care'

& i care not if my drunkeness
causes disruption, your pain
will heal when the brush speaks
to me & my mind will ease of guilt
turned pure by the smell of flowers
& the sound of the sea
crashing like a foil wrapper
in a dark movie
or the flush
of clear water hurdling
down pearly porcelin
towards the only darkness

'At the sweet murmur of a little stream'

'I saw a beautiful woman
that I . . .
. . . my fate . . .
I felt myself completely comforted.'

'. . . a sweet lodging in Hell'
though the marquee proclaimed live music
and cheap drinks
we finished the last beer
and drove the chevy on,
stopping for rest at a truck stop
on highway 101 . . .

and drove away with our James Dean fantasies
pealing from our hearts like church bells

'In the shadow I escape the day'
while my sorrow discolours . . .

'not otherwise was Daedalus awakened
not otherwise the sun drives out
. . . or my breath tired
. . . or the evil hour
. . . light to my pleasure
. . . in frost or shade'

shadows like plumes
ride across your body

'the only remedy' . . .

'can all be boredom and anxiety

among us there is nothing human

the heart, the mind, the soul

console heaven'

and takes my loving from me
weeping my energy

white balls roll across planes of green
something I saw in no sport
but imagined like dreams
'like fever, sides, pain, sickness
eyes and teeth'

'he burns me
binds me
holds me
seems like sugar to me'

in my thoughts, Lord, I keep you
there

'made scorched and burned by greater heats
through eyes to heart will pass'

and the waves keep coming in
though the moon exhales and inhales them

there is sand in my shoes
in my hair, eyes, teeth
hidden in bodily caches
which feels good, clean
like the after of sex

'Who is it bringing me to you by pressure,
Alas, alas, alas,
Though I am loose and free, bound up so tightly?
If you can fetter us without a fetter,
And without using hands or arms have caught me,
Against your beautiful face who will protect me?'

'John,* come to the rescue
of my painting now, and of my honor;
And judgment, hence, must grow
Borne in the mind, peculiar and untrue;'

the lowly daffodil sinks it's talons into earth
but it's head bursts into sunshine.

—michaelangelo buonarroti
(translated by Creighton Gilbert,
designated by single quotes: ')
& james frase-white
25 feb 1975

*refers to michaelangelo's friend John of Pistoia, to whom he wrote poems & letters, this reference is from his sonnet about the agony of painting the sistine ceiling (1509-12).

ANNUALS

for allyn amundson

What's right my friend
when old bastard age
jingle jangles his chains
lovelessly mother haunted
his feet so high bent kneed
joylessly dancing his bells
a dangling from his toes ding-a-ling.
I remember the shop door
opening, rooms filling for love of candy
with children we will never have
children we have placed on tongues
of thousands. At our feet they roll out prepasted
on bio-degradable tape: zinnias, petunias
wrap it round your fist your wrist
ornament the Christmas tree in the old candy store.
My friend take my hand take
the poinsettia from my hand
no let me behind your ear place it
my friend in your blond hair: the wheat
field I am passing through;
only my head and bare shoulders seen.
Bodiless I see you burning your shadow
far away eclipsing the sun my friend
coming toward me the field between us
my friend I'm waving excited as you are waving.

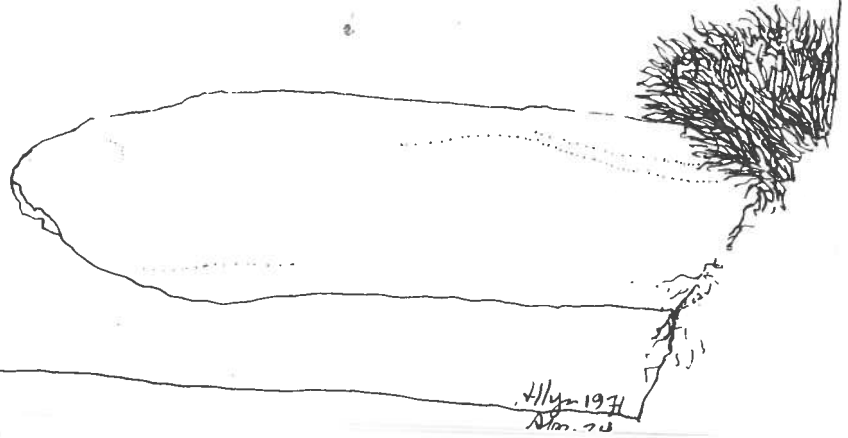
1973 **Salvatore Farinella**

April 24, 1971
Esplanade

I just saw three fat dogs pulling their two fat masters along.

Three young men in hot pants showed up for the Liberation Picnic

Today is Stop The War Day in Washington
But I lounge here on grey green grass
Trying to let the Sun
Give me a Hard On



Allyn 1971

SEEDS OF MUSHROOM, DANDELION

to allyn amundson

Manicured lawns
wave their blades
at me like knives.
They cut the wind
to shreds. I refuse
to mend the motion
and press my face
into its dry blood.
No one listens
to my threat of revenge.
My pockets are holy
and I place
between the blades
seeds of mushroom, dandelion.

Boston, 1969 **Salvatore Farinella**

If poets are prophets
what are painters?

Blossom Street pad
Sporter's supper crowd
Beacon Hill stoops
February stiff tar
hard to get thru
Thoreau every winter

What did Allyn see?

worse only worse
horsehair voices
our first millionaire
Wall Street broker
broken headed
monument wall

What did Allyn see?

they turned away
from tattoo hearts
on his finial penis
final brush back
free food pen ink
pours apple pavement

What did Allyn see?

when I was little
I saw only shapes
before teachers' words
wore hums buns
landscapes dripped
margins elasticated
only a dissertation

What did Allyn see?

flaked petunia scars
rump roast cheeks
rag man hair West-
ern cowboy maché
blind acrobat stunned
in flight stoned
we'll always look
there for him

What did Allyn see?

spider limbed men
cold water flat stretched
aviator garden tea
room china cupped
home iced gen-
eration in pots pans
articles of clothing
stud brimmed hat

What did Allyn see?

pages of him pink
parts spare torn
window frames rot
fall out eventually
coming climax mud
masonary cemetery
watch your step

What did Allyn see?

his own corner
a smile across a
crowded room
sun stains glass
pains his hands
reaching a new trick
at last clear bone

What did Allyn see?

joy in kitchens melting
mad at running
water colors unsteady
breaking people chatter
sidewalk oil
you can not wash
away with argyle tears

What did Allyn see?

captured victims
monoply capital land
lords driving prices
up and out he goes
we own no land
no homestead
no streets
no future
no children
no heirlooms
gathering cut glass
maiden hair ferns
lintel dust brows
going down

If poets are prophets
what are painters?

Don't look now
gross worms
worn words
signs designs
picket pictures
all around town
they drew Allyn out

If poets are prophets
what are painters?

charley shively
21 February 1975

ELEGY

for allyn amundson

1. Five Days

Feet Chop into the stairs climbing
hallo? hallo?
hollow sounds questioning.
Here he comes; the Chinaman has made it.
Stuttering the lawyer is stopped
by the sign—KNOCK FIRST—a door
so he knocks the law and
hallo? hallo?
His comb plowed hair a graph
for thinning; I wait for Marsha
the cat to notice and jump
plop on top his head; a laugh
for Allyn dead five days.

2. Home in the Sun

Allyn's persona

Where will I find my home
in the sun where gulls
greet one face to face flying
out the window to meet
sidewalk. Mr. Concrete
one way to get friends all together
in prayer. Granite me this
tomb stone next to dad
under the pine tree in Baraboo
if you can't burn.

3. Widows

The weeds sashay
worry worts for grief
widows all the tricks
in life but now that death's track
stains the sidewalks
with heels drag
of the flying friend
o allyn magical celt
suddenly closets erupt
fur coats by the thousands
and the widows are grasping
the bosoms are filling
the tears are dropping
the goods are dragging
behind the mourners
the friends who deserted him.

4. Si Le Grain Ne Muert

Bubbie of the blonde head of hair
stature small may turn
the heads of men in crowded
rooms but rarely on inspection
turn up more than a turd.
Yes your loves are found
in toilets white and gleaming
porcelain percolates your
rough trade sometimes splashes
your golden head into urine
they have just thrown away. Yet
you return as the tide
flushed back from copper tonsils.
Tonight you tell me Allyn's story
as you see it from one blonde
to another: Corn King swallowed
all he could of brew stuffed three or four
bottles in his belt so wouldn't
run out. Except for all the pretty ones
long haired and freaky boys dried up
before his eyes and fell to dust
wind swept up him chasing clean
as a whistle bare ass bare
up four flights to fall
onto a defrosting February sidewalk.

5. Survivors

Almost over February
chapped lips raw red cheeks: what
meaning to this sidewalk calligraphy
ornamented with bits of bone and glass?
A human chaulk line
leads to mind remembering
a vacant socket, a blinded building
whose face suddenly projected a man
yes mind projects the will to fly
to leave that skin of yellow brick and
become free initiate this death
of spring. Spring, summer: another February
flaunts a merciless flag of ice.
Everything appears unchanged yet
the buildings gone. Another socket
bits and pieces of lumber and plaster.
Holes in ground greet one
open faced a dark earth
of teeth smiling square
one upon the other. Only
a house gone ghostly
for us survivors from
a suicide within its memory.

6. Blooms

Blossoms strewn along the street
do not denote spring has come
careening carefree foot loose.
Outside this church pedestrians
are presented presents of daffodils
dizzy under rain in February;
flowers yellow in fear
of cold; blooms forced
to appear two months early
a presentiment of things to come
cheer for those of us
who had given up.

Salvatore Farinella

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SALVATORE FARINELLA
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