

T·H·E
P·O·R·T·A·B·L·E
W·A·L·L



Volume III
number III
1989

To
or
not to
be...



THE PORTABLE WALL

VOLUME II NUMBER III SPRING 1989

Publisher: Dan Struckman
Typsetting: Jon Angel
Guest Editor: Geoff Angel

What's in this issue?

Letters and Health Hints.....	Page	2
Two Poems by David Thomas.....	Page	6
Editorial Diatribe.....	Page	7
OK, History Buffs.....	Page	7
Poetry by Louise Murray.....	Page	8
Death of a Friend.....	Page	12
My Sentiments by Bonnie Olsen.....	Page	14
Art More Than Painting by Sara Berg.....	Page	14
Mythical Bent by Errol Miller.....	Page	15
Back in Business.....	Page	16

Dear Readers,

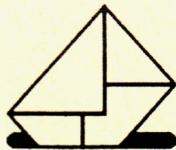
This issue of the PW comes to you from many places. Authors, Artists and Poets from across the country have submitted their work. Compiled in Billings MT it was sent via facsimile and mail to Flagstaff, AZ where it was set in type. From there it was hand delivered back to Billings where the press sat idling. From the press they were sent through all known channels to distributors throughout the world. And finally our faithful allies got them into your hands.

We love to hear from our readers, whether it's about the Wall or just things in general. If you have poems, short stories, essays, drawings or prints that you think would fit in The Portable Wall send them along.

Our address:

THE PORTABLE WALL
c/o Dan Struckman
215 Burlington
Billings, MT 59101

Copyright by THE PORTABLE WALL for all authors



Letters and Health Hints



Dear Dan,

Thanks for the copy of Sewers and Drain Tiles - you never know what you're going to dig up next in this business. It will take a prestigious place on my bookshelves, along with such classics as The Romance of Nickel, Concretes, Cements, Mortars, Plasters & Stucco, and The Practical House, Wagon and Automobile Painter.

Your timing on the gift was perfect - I just switched back to the archaeology / restoration business on October 1 after my two year 'Training and Development' assignment in the museum collections / curatorial realm. I'm very glad to be back in the proverbial traces, got some old projects back, some new ones added (mostly related to adobe restoration projects) - what fun!

The curatorial stint was challenging, productive and (sometimes) fun. After a seemingly infinite series of feasibility study reports, systems specifications, etc. we managed to find, justify and purchase a pretty sophisticated museum computer / software system for managing collections records. There's no justice, however - I won't be around to play with the new toy when it arrives. Actually, I'm now trying to convince the powers to let me put the archaeological collections from my current projects on it. Here we go again, more justifications, etc...

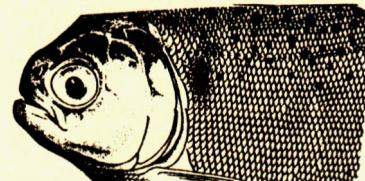
Thank you for the copy of the last Portable Wall - belatedly, as is usual. I was surprised and flattered to see portions of my letter reproduced there, and most enjoyed all the other good stuff you included. Thanks again for keeping a mostly-out-of-touch friend in mind.

Susie is off to a job interview even as we speak. She's been working her tail off, and will graduate in accounting next May, although the recruiting season is NOW. They'll have jobs lined up before they're half way through their senior year - quite a change from the Liberal Arts / Social Science scene, no? 'Jobs? We don't expect to actually find JOBS in our field!' (Actually, I can't complain - I beat the odds, although wouldn't relish hunting for work in the Anthropology / Archaeology profession at the moment).

So what are you up to these day's besides a literary publishing magnate? I assume you're still in the pharmacy business - A couple of years ago I met a friend of Gerry Bishop's (Billings high school friend) named Susan who's a nurse who thought she might know you - sent a brief note with her, but suspect it never got through. Hope all's well with you and your family - give Penny our regards.

Sincerely,

Larry (and Susie, I'm sure)



Readers,

We got the following letter disclosing both a shocking activity and the temperament of a red haired eagle-beak. In order to warn you we are printing the letter in full. ★★★

Dan,

A passage from a book I looked at recently:

You know the limited edition vamp. If you write very obscure verse (and why shouldn't you, pray?) for which there is little or no market, you pretend that there is an enormous demand, and that the stuff has to be rationed. Only 300 copies will be printed, you say, and then the type will be broken up forever. Let the connoisseurs and bibliophiles savage each other for the honour and glory of snatching a copy. Positively no reprint. Reproduction in whole or in part forbidden. Three hundred copies of which this is number 4,312. Hand-monkeyed oklamon paper, indigo boards in interpulp squirreltoe, not to mention twelve point Campile Perpetua cast specially for the occasion. Complete, unabridged, and positively unexpurgated. Thirty-five bob a knock and a gory livid bleeding bargain at the price.

Well, I have decided to carry this thing a bit farther. I beg to announce respectfully my coming volume of verse entitled "Scorn for Taurus." We have decided to do it in eight point Caslon on turkey-shutter paper with covers in purple corduroy. But look out for the catch. When the type has been set up, it will be instantly destroyed and NO COPY WHATEVER WILL BE PRINTED. *In no circumstances will the company's servants be permitted to carry away even a rough printer's proof.* The edition will be so utterly limited that a thousand pounds will not buy even one copy. This is my idea of being exclusive.

The charge will be five shillings. Please do not make an exhibition of yourself by asking me what you get for your money. You get nothing you can see or feel, not even a receipt. But you do yourself the honour of participating in one of the most far-reaching experiments ever carried out in my literary workshop.

-Flann O'Brien,
The Best of Myles

You wrote recently inquiring about my involvement in the White Power movement here in the northwest. Did I detect a tone of apprehension in your letter? Well, let me start at the beginning.

As you know, I'm a forty-ish white male Montanan. No news there, you say? But think about it. What are my prospects? As a Montanan I'm essentially barred from the real money operations, which are controlled here, as every where else, by Big Money -- the Eastern Establishment -- run by guess who? As a white man with no children I am barred from the give-away programs of welfare and affirmative action, etc. In other words, I'm stuck.

Well, I can live with all that. I'm not going to whine about it, and I can go on pulling myself up by my own jockstrap. One day last summer though I paused to speak with an individual who was handing out leaflets on the U of M campus. At first I was somewhat hostile towards this person, for it was clear that the leaflets were anti-semitic, and I recoil from Nazi sentiments which I've always associated with countless horrors.

Quite unexpectedly, though, this fellow struck a chord with me, and to make a long story short I am currently working hard for the White cause here in Missoula.

Missoula, as you know, is a cosmopolitan place, relatively speaking, mostly on account of the university. It all seems harmless enough, even carnival-like to have Orientals scurrying hither and yon, black men with white women, Indians in full tribal costume, Arabs, homos --- you name it. But as I can see now, the basic result of this hodgepodge is confusion and disruption for the White people. You see, what happens is that this racial imbalance actually corrupts White people. In the sixties there was the term "Oreo" describing a black man who was white inside - a traitor to his race. In Misoula there are many Whites who are becoming murky and dark inside --

without even being conscious of it!

What's the bottom line, you ask? Simply that people like me, who should be in control in this neck of the woods, are instead looking through a glass darkly, while influence is taken over by elements from the outside -- Jewish money financing Japanese land grabs and supporting, through hand-outs and under-the-table giveaways, a motley crew of coloreds and homosexuals and Communists. They divvy up the proceeds and I work for them at a subsistence wage. I ask ya! Can I explain this? I don't know. Looking back at that fateful meeting, one thing stands out more than any other. And its not the obvious thing -- It's not that I became filled with hate and fear, it's not that I had a conversion experience, it's not that I suddenly saw a way to personal power. Nothing so grandiose. It was simply that I realized that I could put my personal resources together in a way that I'd almost forgotten. I had gotten into a humdrum existence as a casual laborer with a dull kind of security and no new horizons. I had given up on putting to use my higher education and literacy. Suddenly I found a way to rise above my material conditions.

'As a white man with no children I am barred from ...welfare.... I'm stuck.'

You see, the White NW Power movement right now is pretty isolated in northern Idaho. As an isolated group it is often singled out for persecution and harassment. And unfortunately when they're attacked they fight back like their lives depend on it, which they do. It's an armed camp, literally. So the whole thing is stymied.

What I can do, you see, is soften the image of the movement and expose the problems we've got right here in River City that the movement helps us understand. Missoula is a key community if the nation is to ever get out of the backwoods and become truly a northwest power.

Anyway, it's clear how these events unfold. Still, I confess to no real hatred, or even dislike, for the various non-white outsiders in Missoula (including the white outsiders -- white on the outside, etc. Most women, alas, fall into this group -- pretty Aryan features, but murky and misty inside).

'The material below is classified! I'm sure you will keep it in strictest confidence....'

By chance then, given my position inside Missoula, I can analyze the non-white influences close up in an area crucial to the White Northwest. As I say, I do this without animosity. I say study the thing and let the chips fall where they may.

I am going to give you an example of my current duties, you can make up your own mind. Be advised that some of the terms I'm about to use are considered derogatory. I wouldn't use them except that with the White Movement these are part of the official language. The material below is classified! I'm sure you will keep it in the strictest confidence, for the disclosure of any of this could put me in harms way.

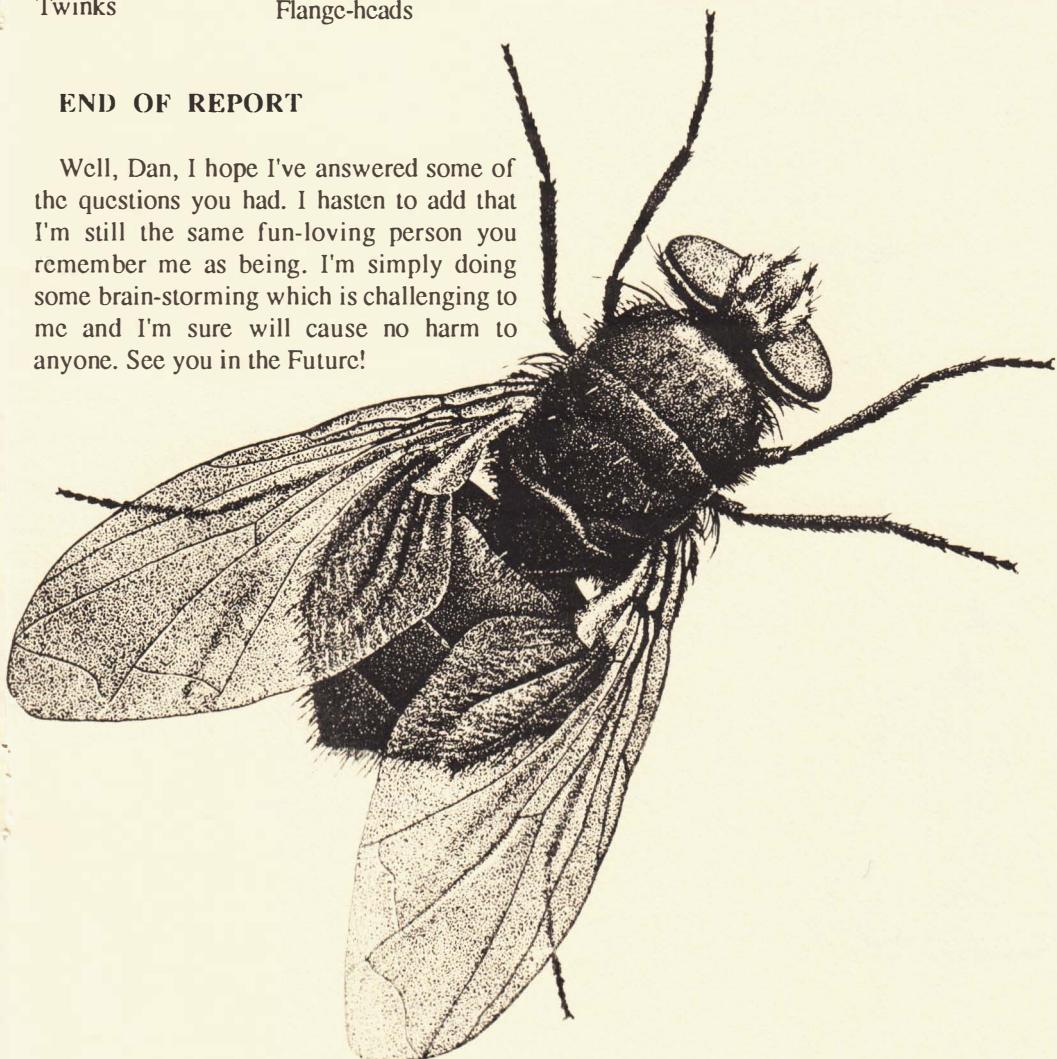
Report: Special Study
area #2, Great White
Northwest Project.
Agent: Mark "Jones"

Relocations: Agent recommends following groups as primary subjects for weeding out of area #2 in accordance with Aryan Directive #(Classified).

Eagle-beaks	Tar-pots
Eco-freaks	Ring-tails
Fag hags	Florons
Shad-mouths	Goo-goos
Wogs	Rag-heads
Greas-balls	Weak sisters
Corn holers	Spookerikans
Vietniks	Comsymps
Butterheads	Flatbackers
Twinks	Flange-heads

END OF REPORT

Well, Dan, I hope I've answered some of the questions you had. I hasten to add that I'm still the same fun-loving person you remember me as being. I'm simply doing some brain-storming which is challenging to me and I'm sure will cause no harm to anyone. See you in the Future!

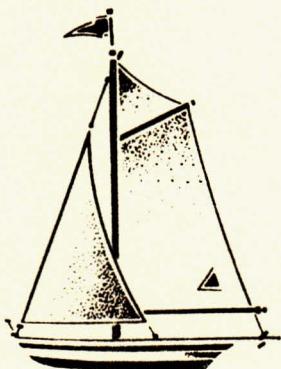


Puerto Radero Two Months Later

looking for lost treasure
I dug nothing
but empty holes

Words here a moment ago

evaporate
in surf roar
I think of lost love
faraway friends
and watch mosquitos



Peyote Dream

full moon
wind sparkles stars
thru cactus
roots the mountains
and red lips
of home.

Editorial 'diatribe'

The Gazette's editorial of Nov. 16 was a response to the Supreme Court letting stand a decision that the man does not have the legal right to prohibit a woman from choosing an abortion. The editorial was a diatribe of the worst sort, totally distorting actual circumstances and recommending no constructive effort.

In an ideal world, men would share equally with women the responsibilities for any pregnancy. I do not believe we should refer to rights in regard to pregnancies and children, only responsibilities.

But what is reality? Many men do participate in the decision and support women through child bearing or through abortion. But all too often men faced with an unintended pregnancy abandon the woman. They blame the woman for the predicament. They disappear. Or they say it is your problem, you take care of it.

The bottom line is that in today's society it is the woman who will ultimately remain the one person responsible for the pregnancy and for the care and rearing of the child. Therefore, it stands to reason that it is she, and she alone, that has to make the final decision.

Not until all men accept responsibility for their sexual activities and obligation for any pregnancy, intended or unintended, will we as men earn legal rights.

Until that time what can men do? First, we can set an example for our sons and other men by acting responsibly ourselves. Secondly, we should not condone in any manner the actions of any man who fails to act responsibly toward a woman whom he impregnates. Thirdly, we should take positive actions to encourage men to better understand their relationship with women and to be accountable for the effects of their own sexual activities.

-Clayton H McCracken, M.D.,
M.P.H. 3227 Country Club Circle

OK, HISTORY BUFFS,

PW#1 hit the freebie newsstands in July, 1977. During its first two years of publication, PW featured artwork and literature of many fine Rocky Mountain minds: Dirk Lee, Frank Dugan, Dan Struckman, Mike Fiedler, Dana Graham, Pete Koch, Jim Feathers, Mark Fryberger, Dave Thomas, and others.

The magazine is kind of named after a wall in an old Missoula hippie-house of the 1960s. One of those walls where all the folks who drifted through felt-markered or painted or penciled their thoughts and drawings, until the wall became a historical statement, a manifesto, Graffiti, man.

But now we are 1989. The PW is intended to carry on the work of that wall, but with an added advantage: this wall you can stick in your pocket, carry, and pass along.

Feel free to doodle, inscribe, manifest. Send us your gleanings. This magazine exists for all of it's readers, toward the delineation of a common consciousness.



Oh Cha'lie

Oh Cha'lie

When you' face come home?

Oh Cha'lie

doncha lea' me alone

I'm chilled to the bone

Lone

Home

Cha'lie

When you' face come home?

Oh Anna

She turned around and said,

"Why can't you hear me?

Are you going deaf?"

I said,

"Your voice blows away in the breeze."

And she said,

"Why doesn't yours?"

I should've told her,

"The breeze

blows

my voice

to

you."

Untitled

I passed the house today
The house we were married in
Where none had gone astray
And two small children were my life
And you would come home wearily

Time's gone now
And you are, too
And they live too far away
For me to cling to.

How weary is life--you were right
Yet I passed the house on my bike tonight.

Jun. '87

Untitled

How is it that
As night falls
You are two doors
Away from me and

I, in my magic,
Can't get from here to
There?



Death of a Friend

by Dan Struckman

We honor the memory of our friend John Herman this issue. He was one of the dozen or so people to inspire this magazine (look through your old issues). I'll review some memories in a bit. A couple of weeks ago Larry Felton mailed me a photocopy of this tragic message he got from John's sister:

"We want to let you know that John Hayden Herman took his life on Sunday, April 24, 1988 thus ending a long and painful struggle with mental illness.

We are sad beyond words but are relieved that he has finally found peace.

Memorial contributions may be sent:

c/o The John Herman Memorial Fund
North Carolina Alliance for the
Mentally Ill
4900 Waters Edge Dr. Suite 170
Raleigh, N. Carolina 27606

From: Nancy Herman
68 White Oak Creek Rd
Burnsville, NC 28714

I can't help wondering what John would say if he could read his sister's announcement. Back when we all knew each other we wanted to style ourselves as somewhat reckless and free and somehow answering to a higher authority than government officials. It was our turn to search for the meaning of life 20 years ago. We were all freshmen at the University of Montana. I don't know how many of us. Maybe 10 or 20, and we bonded. We became like a family and we spent practically all our time together. Middleclass teenagers away from home for the first time. I think John Herman and Larry Felton were the nucleus of this holding together.

I became aware of this group as it began condensing out of the uniform mass of students one day at supper in the University Food Service Dining Room Student Center. Across the sea of tables with rosy-cheeked students having supper, I saw what looked like a place where a small bomb had exploded. A whole bunch of tables had been pushed together willy-nilly and a gang of railroad laborers or bums -- no, they were hippies -- were slouched all around. What a hodgepodge of Navy pea-coats, musical instruments, people smoking hand-made cigarettes, girls with stringy hair, boys wearing army shoes and a few genuine bums there too.

Unlike their closely cropped and combed counterparts at the other tables, these folks seemed to be in no hurry. Certainly John Herman was one of the originals and when it came to being in no hurry, he was at the fore. We became best friends.

We had adventures. Most of us had terrible faults. At times we suffered mental illnesses, certainly. Maybe that helped bond us all. We did not hide our faults from each other, not that we would have been able to. We basked in the warm rays of laughter and smiles we gave to each other. We often met en masse in Larry's dorm room, sneaking the girls in by disguising them.

At one point we all hitched to Kalispell one wintry Friday after school. For no reason: Even Jerry Berner, the wealthy ranch kid from Wolf Point, hitch hiked. We split into 2s and 3s for the trip, met in Kalispell -- no particular plan, just chance. John was one of the leaders of this expedition.

Larry loved to claim a kinship with John because they shared a dorm room at the University of Montana for more than a year, I'd guess, John put up with all Larry's iron junk and furniture refinishing and Larry put up with John's incessant slowness. You couldn't get out of the room without John's sitting down to roll another joint or one of his Prince Albert cigarettes. That was back before smoking became uncool. When Larry

and John quit school to move to Seattle to work on a boat I quit school too. (So did several others: Scott Hendrix, Skip Reising) But that was after John and Me and Gordon Simard and this other guy formed a rock and roll band called "Water" We played about 3 gigs before our manager got arrested and all our equipment went back to the music store. John was our indefatigable drummer, and a pretty good one. After I had been in Seattle long enough to see what a drag living in the city really was, and had moved back to Missoula, John returned from a job he had on a fishing boat and he and I got a job working for the Northern Pacific Railroad on a Steel Gang. There were about 20 of us folks working that season: Jerry Printz, Tom Struckman, Duck Lenhart, and several older guys, Reiner, etc. Some genuine railroaders: Mono, Jim Smiley. When John came back to Missoula from Seattle he had a panel truck, vintage 1950 or earlier, all in rusty brown and black. Maybe it was more a 1940. It ran lousy. Cough, sputter, pop. Slow. But John and I wanted to work for the railroad in Avon which is toward Helena from Garrison Junction up the Little Blackfoot. John's truck got there mid morning somehow, and we got hired right then and there. I never knew why it was so easy for us. They gave John and me an outfit car to sleep in. That is one of those boxcars with windows cut out of it and inside was a couple of beds without mattresses and an icebox without ice. The ice was in a car a couple of cars away and you hit the block of ice with a spike maul which is a sort of skinny sledge hammer. Then you take the chunks of ice back to the car. Creosote. Smell of stinky coal too. Mixed with kerosene. That is how we started a fire in the pot belly stove. It was chilly the day we got there and almost rained. The stove felt good with a coal fire. There was a couple of outhouses near the outfit cars, but they were on a slant and uncomfortable. We usually just pissed in the weeds. Even though we had a few blankets

along, the springs on the bed were not enough padding without a mattress. We spent a cold and miserable night in the outfit car. And hungry. Neither John nor I had any money, and Tom didn't have any to loan. But we ate cold cereal with some borrowed milk. We had to survive the last 3 days of the week until payday. Now that I've begun jotting down memories of John and the rest of us more keep flooding in. We were really crazy then, consuming our lives like firefighters eating catered ham sandwiches. We did dangerous, impractical things.

Some of you readers may want to add your thoughts. Does anybody know where Skip Reising lives? I remember his mother lived in a small town in the vicinity of Helena or Great Falls or maybe Bozeman. He and John were close. Played guitars a lot.

More memories:

-- the night we drank "Vino Fino" and got stoned and climbed Mount Sentinel in the snow. Larry looked like George Washington.

-- John and I took speed one night and spent the night in the basement of one of the University buildings reading world history. 15 minutes after I closed the book I couldn't remember any of it.

-- John and I rode an NP freight from Seattle to Missoula. Took a day and a half. Once when the train stopped, before noon, sun is shining, we peeped over the edge of the gondola car we were in. Peeping back were two Walla Walla policemen with apples on their uniforms.

-- We all camped on that island in the Clark Fork one spring.

-- We visited Peter Koch who read us "I smile with my teeth but not with my purty eyes" and took us over to Eddy's Club.



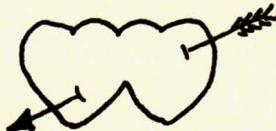
MY SENTIMENTS...

by Bonnie Olsen

I love Valentine's Day; it's one of the candy-giving holidays. Candy is a token of affection. It can't be mistaken for anything else. Candy is not nutritious. Oh sure it's got calories, but if you needed to give someone calories you'd be better off giving them a bucket of lard. Candy says only one thing: "I love you."

Just like a kiss. You could hardly call a kiss a health-giving measure considering all that microbe and saliva exchange. Same thing with candy: you risk tooth decay and fat. You risk being misunderstood. Come to think of it, candy is a lot like a kiss -- but you'd better not get confused between the two. One will not do when the other is called for.

Hearts are for valentines day too, even more than candy is. When I was little we had a wooden chair with a hearts-and-flowers Pennsylvania Dutch design. I was convinced that it was a holiday chair that should be brought out and put away like the Christmas lights.



Valentine's day makes me think of hearts and hearts make me think of Marilyn Seastone. Tonight's dinner will consist of heart-shaped meatloaf topped by red catsup and surrounded by puffs and curls of mashed potatoes. I learned to do this from example of my dear friend Marilyn Seastone. I haven't seen or heard from her in years due to the harsh and cruel consequences of neither of us being good correspondents. I miss her. I wish that I could send her a Valentine letter and some Valentine candy and a Valentine kiss. Instead, I communicate to her through the medium of meatloaf, heart-shaped on Valentines Day.

Art More Than Painting

by Sara Berg

Picasso, Rembrandt, DaVinci, Renoir--- all of them artists, all masters, but do we call a plumber an artist?

No, of course not, but what about the "artist" who paints for money and fame? He is less an artist than the man who fixes our pipes with true dedication and pride in his work.

Art is not necessarily a painting or a sculpture or even the work of an "artisan." It is loving what you do.

We go to museums and art shows to see art. Often, we hear ourselves saying, "That's terrible. That's not art." But how do we know?

If a person does anything with respect for its intrinsic spirit and the inspiration that gave it life, he has completed a work of art.

So many people have set standards and criteria for art that no one is considered a true artist unless his painting sells for six figures, and even then, the art may not be considered "good."

Often a work of art is considered nothing more than an investment. If this happens, the piece may as well be a bowl of lime jello, because without appreciation, a work loses its validity.

Art can be a paper on the mathematical properties of cow dung, for all I care. If the person who worked on that paper struggled with it, enjoyed it, put his soul into it; then whatever he made, it is art.

The purpose, not the result, deems a work of art. If work is done because the worker needs to -- has to -- if you will, art is being crafted. Art must be done for the simple pleasure of the process that brings it about.

Many paintings are completed that are not art, but simply jobs completed. This is not to say that the completed job is bad or lessened in quality. It is just not art.

There is no such thing as "good" or "bad" art, just so long as it is art.

Mythical Bent

Lately, late at night
sea-green urchins violate
life's neutral zone
the Keeper of the Other Outer Shore
stands as erect as possible, listening
tropical palms sway in Tara's
alluvial red-clay topsoil
across the mountains Shangri-La
glistens in all-night chrome cafes
all that ever happened vanishes
into an hourglass of time
pale orange incense drips from the moon
Mississippi carpenters carve hickory
white-oak and elm into exquisite
country cupboards, in difficult Virginia
the carcass of a deer swings
from heaven's ceiling
it is the end of a long grey war
a transparent summer place
on an island off Charleston's coast
all the little sleepy Budda dolls awaken
dust rolls up from country roads
look at vaporous Man
look at the cedars lining
the rutted path road to Rowan Oak
brick-by-brick a perfect kingdom
rowing in the blue Atlantic.

Back in Business

The Portable Wall is published annually, or as close to it as possible. Its current origin is Billings Montana where the Struckman family makes their home. Our thanks to these contributors:

- Mark Fryberger
- David Thomas
- Louise Murray
- Bonnie Olsen
- Errol Miller

Editorial 'diatribe' was reprinted with permission from Clayton H. McCracken. The PW is very grateful for his allowing us to share in his wisdom.

Our thanks also to Sara Berg for allowing us to reprint "Art More Than Painting"

