

Mother

OF COURSE

SHE WAS YOUNG ONCE





AND SO

WAS I



TRACES OF THINGS

THAT HAPPENED

THAT WON'T GO AWAY



THE ACCIDENTAL  
FAMILY



SHE HAD ALWAYS WANTED TO  
GET MARRIED ON THE BEACH



IT'S GONE NOW



IT HAD BEEN DEAD  
SINCE I CAN REMEMBER

---

DRIVING HOME AT NIGHT IN  
WITH THE WINDOWS DOWN  
THERE WERE NO STREET LIGHTS  
POTHOLE FILLED ROAD

WOODS ON BOTH SIDES  
NO HOUSES NO SPEED LIMIT NO

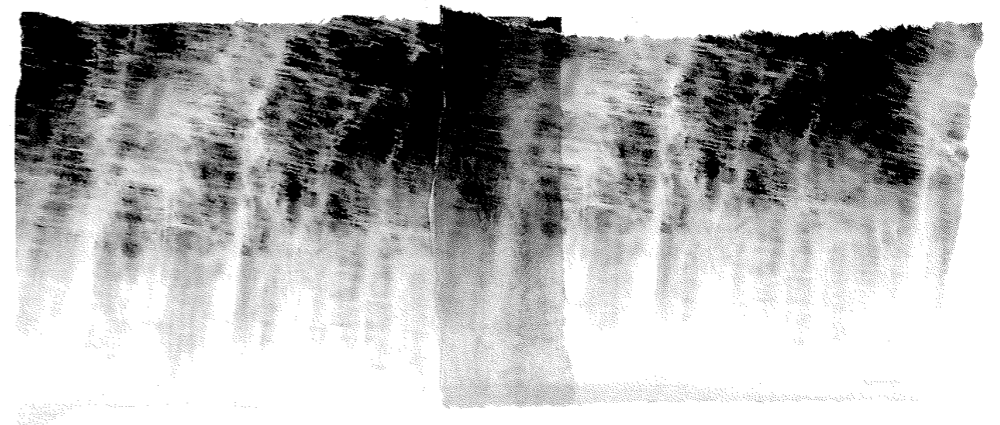
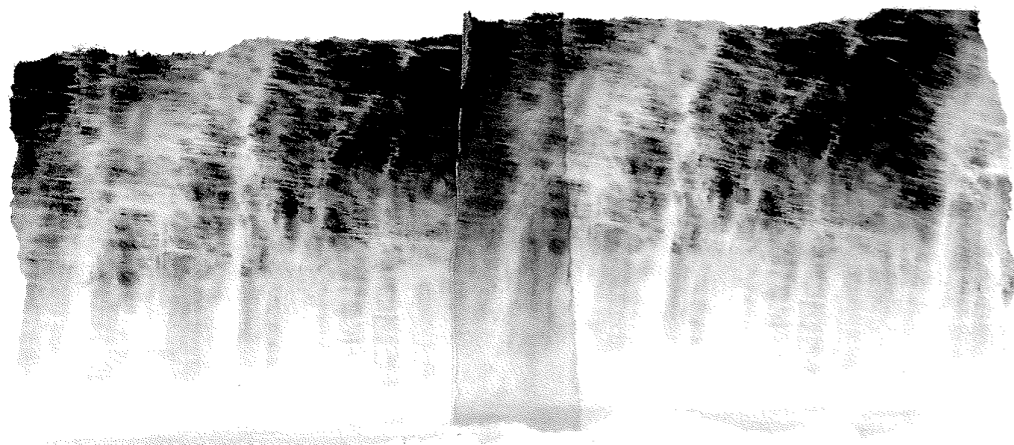
I KNEW SOMETHING HORRIBLE  
JUST OUT OF SIGHT BEHIND THE  
LUCKILY SHE WAS SO DRUNK  
IT NEVER CAUGHT US

THE SUMMERS

FOR MILES OF WORN OUT

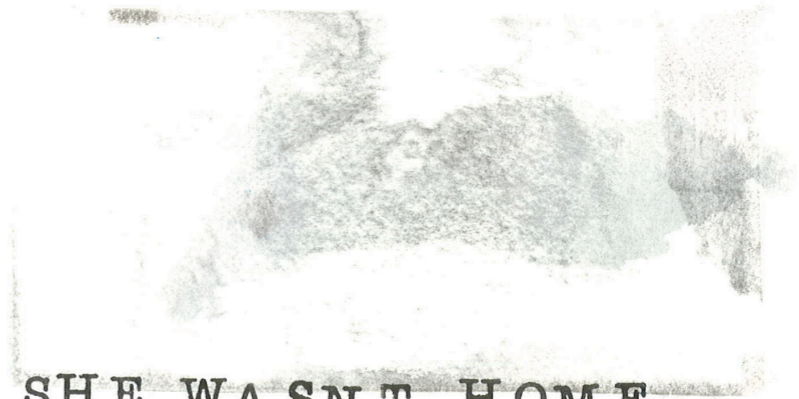
COPS

CHASED THE CAR  
TREES  
DROVE SO FAST



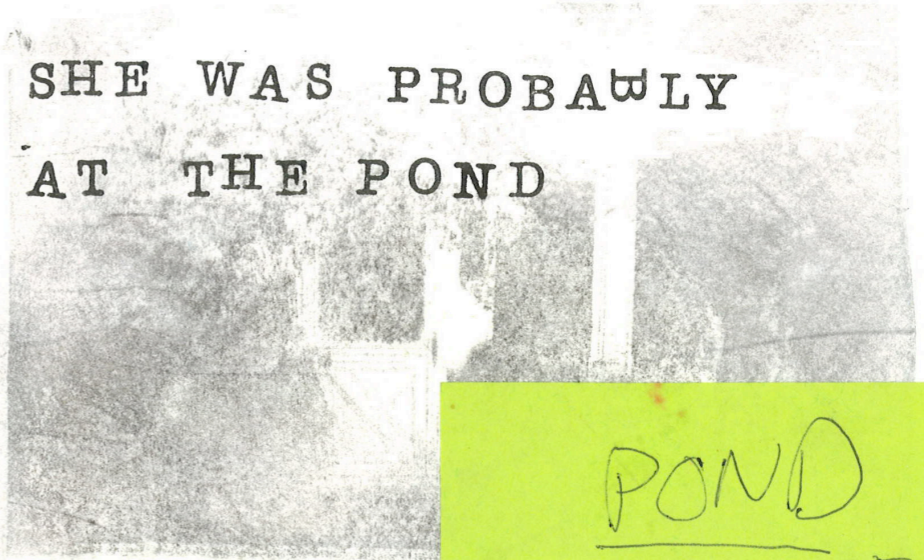


DID I EVER TELL YOU ABOUT WHEN I WAS A SINGER IN NEW YORK



IF SHE WASNT HOME

SHE WAS PROBABLY  
AT THE POND

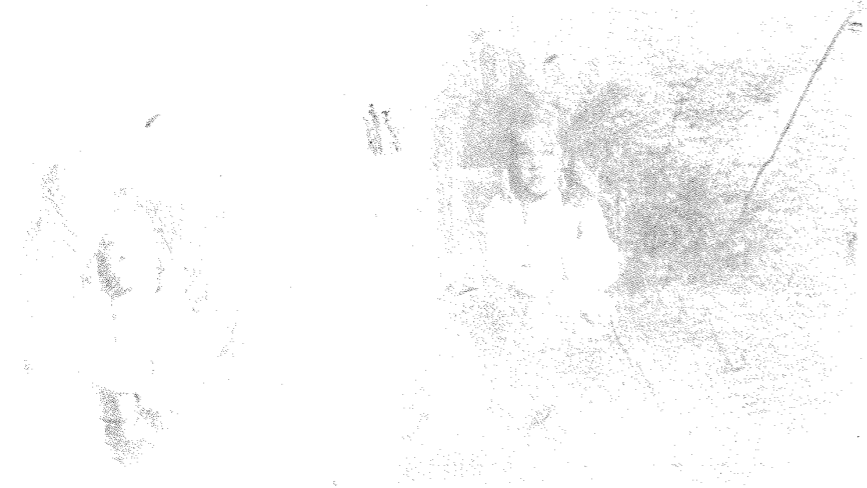


POND  
825-9855





MOTHER

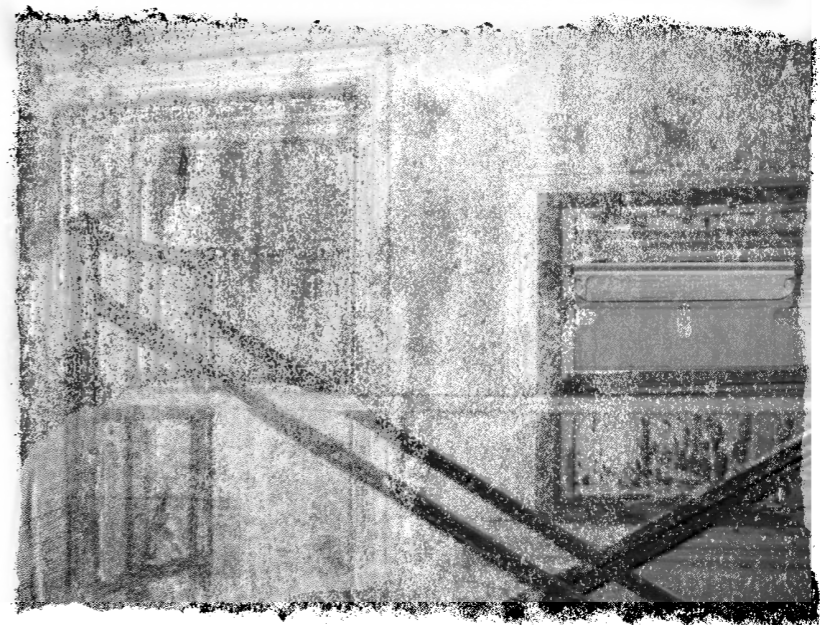




I GOT VERY ANGRY

AND TORE THE ROOM  
APART

ITS A DISEASE



DID I EVER TELL YOU ABOUT WHEN I WAS A SINGER IN NEW YORK?

YES GRANNY.

IT WAS THE MOST INCREDIBLE THING REALLY

YOUVE TOLD US GRANNY

YOU SEE I HAD NEVER BEEN TO NEW YORK BUT I ALWAYS KNEW I WANTED TO BE A SINGER EVER SINCE I WAS A LITTLE GIRL KNEE HIGH TO A GRASSHOPPER AND PAPA WOULD CALL ALL OF US AROUND THE PIANO AND WE WOULD SING SO I KNEW THAT I HAD TO GO TO NEW YORK AND BECOME A SINGER DID I EVER TELL YOU THIS?

YES

I DID? ABOUT THE TAXI?

YES YOU GOT TO NEW YORK AND YOU DIDNT KNOW WHERE TO GO AND THE TAXI DRIVER TOOK YOU TO A CLUB AND YOU GOT A JOB

ISNT THAT THE MOST INCREDIBLE THING? HERE I WAS THIS YOUNG GIRL NEVER BEEN TO NEW YORK AND THIS TAXI DRIVER TOOK ME EXACTLY WHERE I NEEDED TO BE HE BROUGHT ME TO A NIGHT CLUB WHERE THEY WERE HAVING AN AMATEURS NIGHT HAVE I TOLD YOU ABOUT THIS?

YES

WELL I ENTERED THE CONTEST AND I DIDNT WIN BUT THE OWNER TOLD ME I HAD A JOB THERE IF I WANTED IT ISNT THAT THE MOST INCREDIBLE THING? THAT TAXI DRIVER KNEW RIGHT WHERE I NEEDED TO GO HAVE I EVER TOLD YOU THAT STORY BEFORE?

YES GRANNY

OH I DID?

YES

DID I EVER TELL YOU ABOUT THE TAXI DRIVER IN NEW YORK?



I WONDER

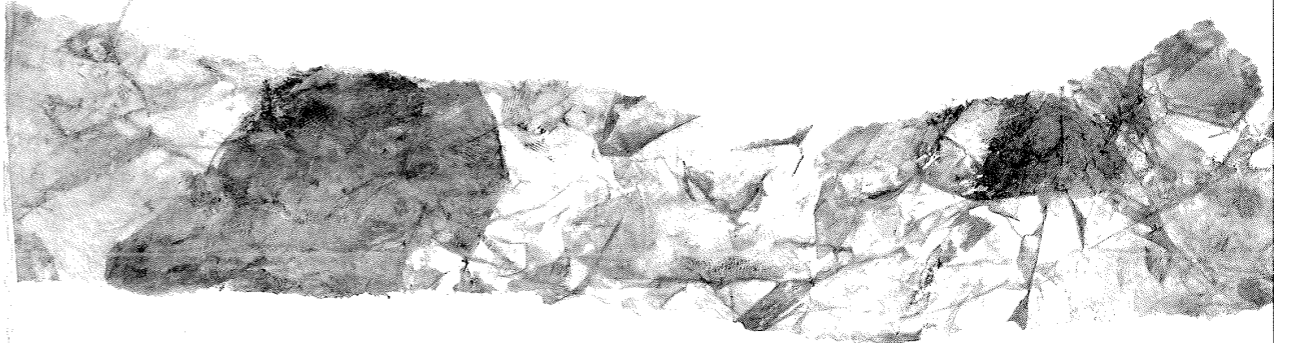
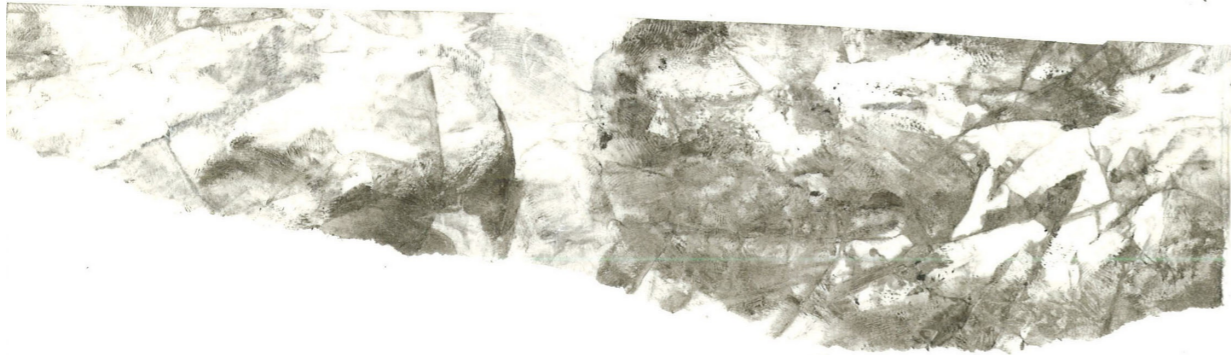


IF SHE IS 'ALREADY

GONE



BREAK DOWN IN A BAR  
I NEVER MET ANYONE  
I COULD SING MY SONG  
TO SHE KNEW THE TUNE  
SO SHE SANG ALONG TOO



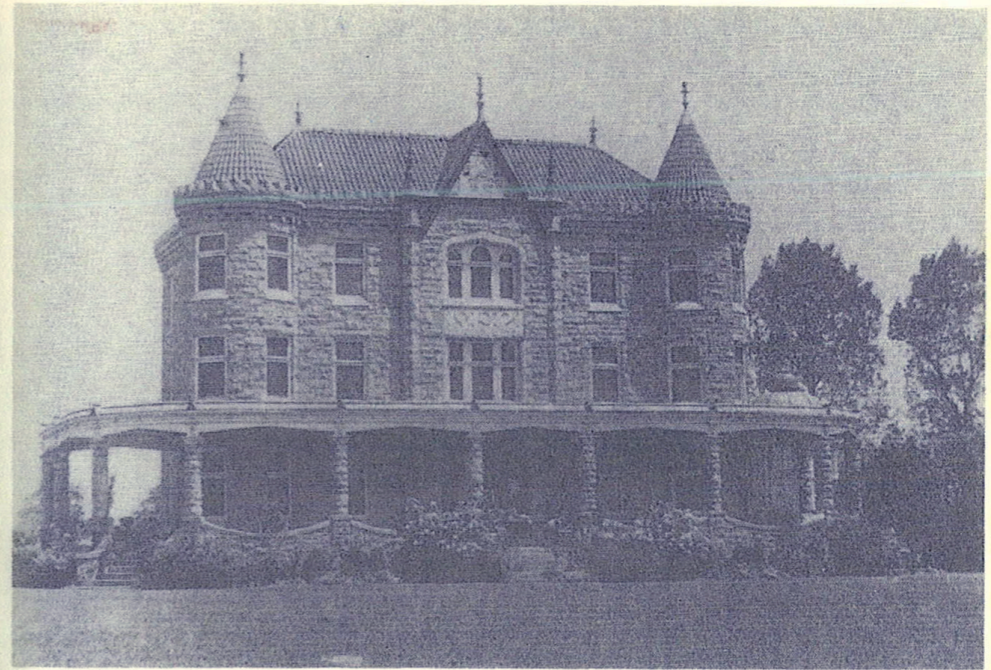
BEFORE I KNEW  
HOW MUCH WAS  
WRONG

ONCE SHE  
OWNED A  
CASTLE

BUT THEY  
WATCHED  
IT BURN



ON THE EVENING NEWS



The Bergdoll Broomall castle, built in 1907. *Courtesy of the Philadelphia Bulletin.* The Broomall castle now lies in ruins after what police term a "suspicious" fire on March 24, 1976. *Photo by Ronald Dell.*

ITS KIND OF STRANGE  
HOW MUCH I DID ACTUALLY  
L'IKE HIM

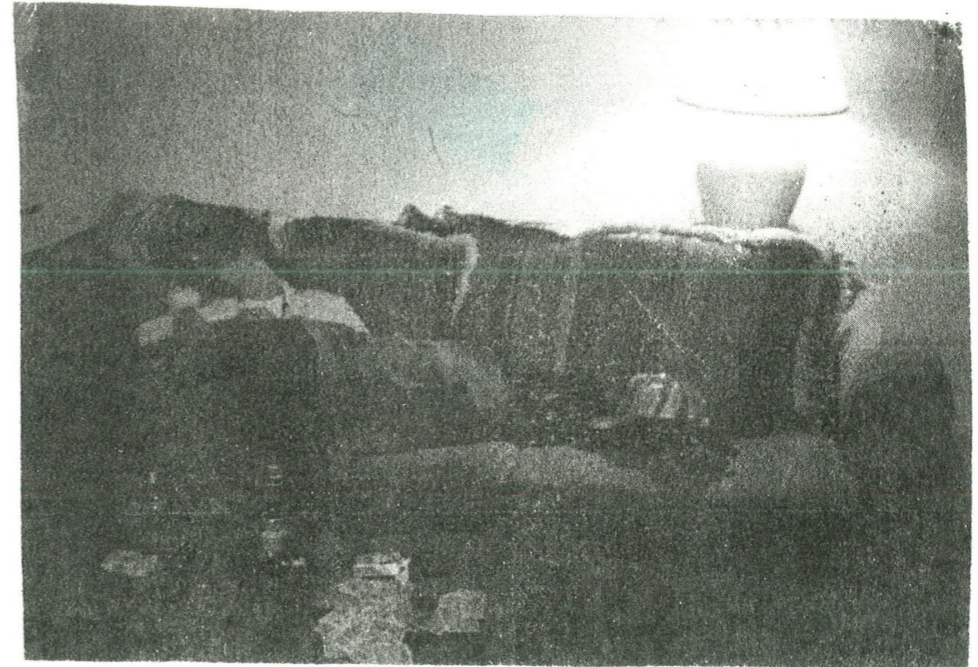
CONSIDERING

THE BLACK EYES

AND 'ABORTION'S



SHE WOUND UP



FACE DOWN

THE TURNING

POINT IS A BLUR TO ME

I WROTE SO MUCH DOWN  
BUT NOT THIS PART,  
GAPS IN MY MEMORY  
AND RECORD KEEPING

SHE WANTED TO KEEP IT  
THE FLY IN THE HONEY

THE FIRST TIME I SAID IN BED  
AND CRIED  
UNTIL SHE MISCARRIED

THE SECOND TIME I COULD SAY  
GOOD BYE  
AND HUNG UP THE PHONE

SO SHE

DISOWNED

ME FOR MY LACK

OF SYMPATHY

I HEARD HER DOOR OPEN AND HER FOOTSTEPS IN THE BATHROOM  
I COULD HEAR THAT SHE WAS CRYING BEFORE I HEARD HER PULL A TISSUE  
FROM THE BOX

SHE BLEW HER NOSE AND THEN THERE WAS A PFISS AS SHE DROPPED HER  
CIGARETTE INTO THE TOILET

I PAUSED IN MY READING WAITING TO SEE IF SHE WOULD COME DOWN  
AS SHE DESCENDED THE STAIRS I PRETENDED TO CONTINUE TO READ  
I NEVER MEANT TO BE A HORRIBLE PERSON  
SHE BEGAN

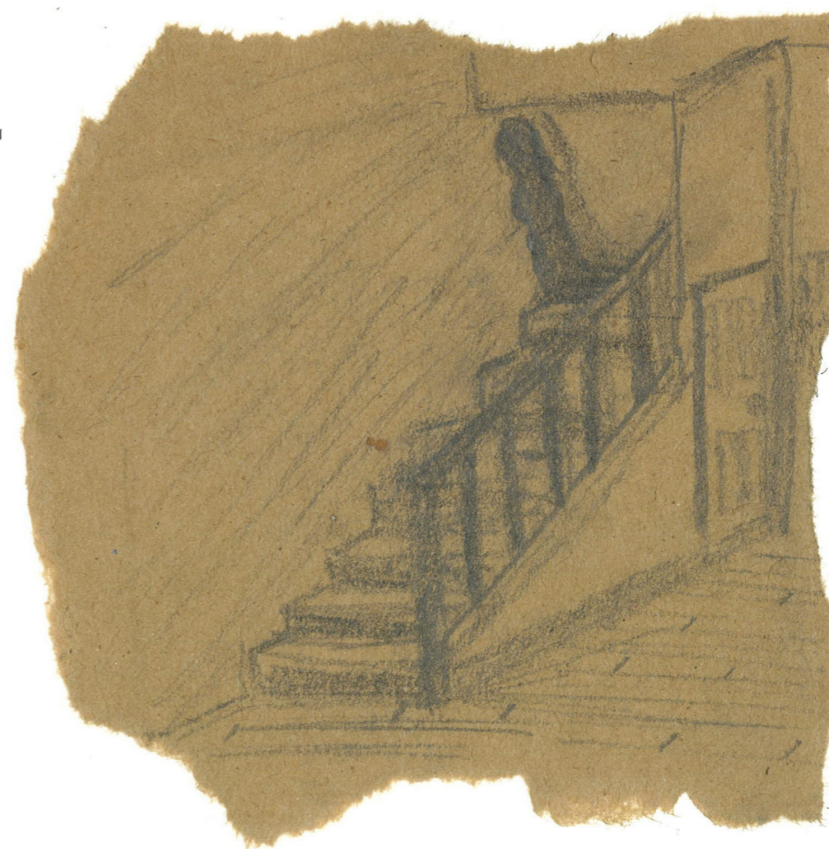
AND I KNOW I DON'T DESERVE TO BE

F O R G I V E N

I TRACED THE STITCHING IN THE RED HAND SEWN QUILT ON MY BED  
WHEN I FINALLY LOOKED UP AT THE DIRTY, CREAM COLORED WALLS THEY  
APPEARED FAINTLY GREEN FROM THE RED BURNED ON MY RETINAS

I CONTINUED TO FIDGET  
WITH MY BOOK WITH MY FINGER NAIL WITH THE CAT

I KEPT THINKING ABOUT MY LAUNDRY IN THE DRYER.





IN HER SHADOW



BREAK THE CYCLE

NERVOUSLY WATCHING THROUGH THE LIVING ROOM WINDOW  
AS THE MAN CLIMBED THE TELEPHONE POLE OUTSIDE  
WHAT WAS BEING SHUT OFF THIS TIME

WHAT SHIFT WAS SHE ON

FOUR TO TWELVE

SHE WAS GONE BY THE TIME I GOT HOME FROM SCHOOL  
ALONE ALL NIGHT AFRAID OF THE DARK

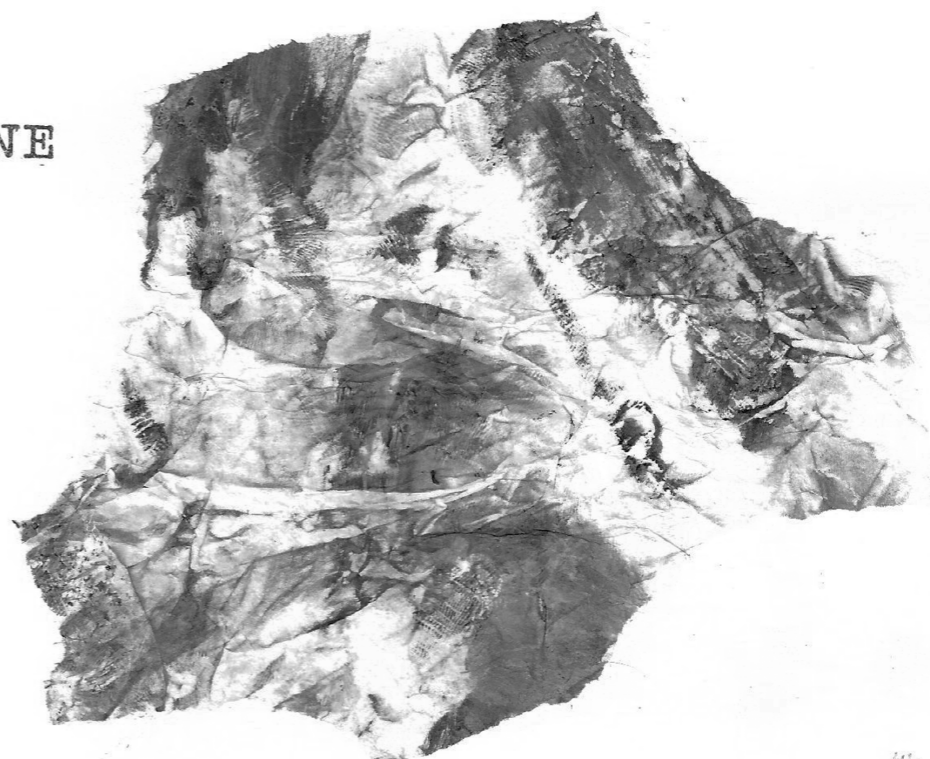
MIDNIGHT TO EIGHT

SLEPT IN AN EMPTY HOUSE

GOT UP AND CAUGHT THE SCHOOL BUS ALONE

EIGHT TO FOUR

ONE OUT OF EVERY THREE WEEKS  
PERHAPS A FRONT OF NORMALCY





DID I EVER TELL YOU ABOUT THE TAXI DRIVER IN NEW YORK

IT WAS THE MOST INCREDIBLE THING REALLY





SHE LEFT HER CHILDREN  
IN THE CAR

WHEN SHE STOPPED AT  
THE BAR

ON LONG DRIVES

AND THEY SPENT THE  
NIGHT IN JAIL

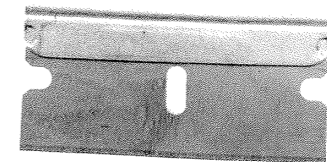
LISTENING TO HER  
SING FROM

HER CELL'

LYING IN BED, THINKING DARK THOUGHTS  
A BURIED MEMORY ROSE UP

DRUNK AND RED FACED SHE HAD HER GLASSES OFF  
SMALL AND ALONE IN HER KING SIZED BED  
WHY DO YOU HAVE A PACK OF RAZOR BLADES I ASKED  
SHE SMILED AND SAID SHE WAS GOING TO KILL HERSELF

I KNOW I SAID IM TAKING THESE AWAY  
BUT CANT RECALL IF SHE STOPPED ME OR NOT  
I CALLED SOMEONE TO DISCUSS HOW WORRIED I SHOULD BE  
ALL OTHER DETAILS OF THE NIGHT ARE LOST



EXCEPT FOR THE IMAGINED MENTAL IMAGE OF MY MOM ON BLOOD SOAKED SHEETS

SHE DIDN'T CARE

WHAT I SAID

SHE DOESN'T CARE

THAT SHE DOESN'T KNOW

HIS NAME





AT BARS AND  
HOUSE PARTIES

NO ONE EVER  
SEEMED TO QUESTION

THE PRESENCE OF  
A THIRTEEN YEAR OLD

SHE TOLD ME LATER  
THAT IT HAD BROKEN  
HER HEART TO HEAR  
ELEVEN YEAR OLD ME  
SAY THAT ITS OKAY  
MY MOM RAISED ME  
AND I CAN TAKE CARE  
OF MYSELF NOW SHE  
CAN DO WHAT SHE  
WANTS NOW



## ACCUSATIONS

YOU SHOWED UP DRUNK TO  
SCHOOL FUNCTIONS

YOU EMBARRASSED ME

YOU BLASTED LOUD MUSIC  
ALL NIGHT WHEN I HAD TO  
GO TO SCHOOL IN THE  
MORNING

YOU DIDNT PAY THE BILLS  
AND THEY TURNED THE  
ELECTRIC OFF

YOU WERE PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE

YOU TRIED TO BUY MY LOVE

YOU WERE THE FIRST PERSON  
I SMOKED POT WITH  
WHEN I WAS THIRTEEN

YOU GAVE ME ACID WHEN I  
WAS SIXTEEN

WHEN YOU'RE DRUNK YOU TALK  
IN CIRCLES

I HAD TO ASK PEOPLE TO  
DRIVE ME TO LOCAL BARS  
TO HELP ME FIND YOU

YOU WILL BECOME A BURDEN  
JUST LIKE YOUR MOM

YOU DROVE DRUNK WITH ME  
IN THE CAR

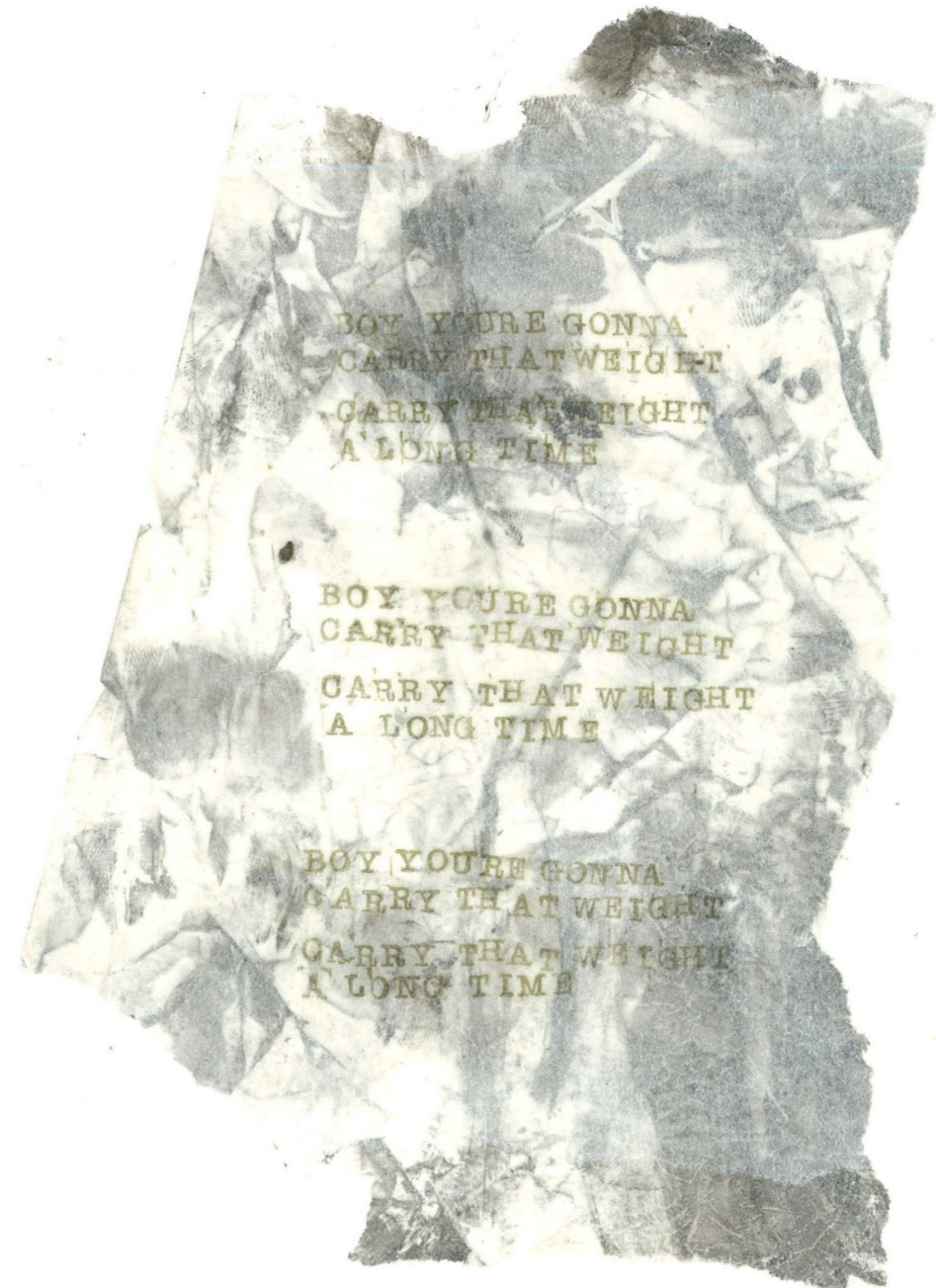
WHEN I TOLD YOU I TRIED  
COKE YOU WERE MAD I HADNT  
BROUGHT YOU ANY,

YOUVE MADE ME CODEPENDENT  
AND INCAPABLE OF HAVING A  
FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIP

I DONT THINK I CRIED WHEN I  
FOUND OUT SHE DIED  
I SAW MY MOTHER CRYING  
ITS NOT LIKE WE DIDNT SEE IT  
COMING  
SHE WAS DRUNK SOBBING LISTENING  
TO ABBEY ROAD AT FULL VOLUME  
SHE STOOD UP AND HUGGED ME  
SHE SOBBED ON MY SHOULDER  
SWAYING WITH THE MUSIC AND  
SINGING

I COULDNT REMEMBER THE LAST TIME  
I HUGGED MY MOTHER  
I STILL DIDNT FEEL SAD ABOUT MY  
DEAD GRANDMOTHER  
I FELT SAD ABOUT MY DYING MOTHER  
WHO WAS FOLLOWING IN HER FOOTSTEPS

WE BOTH CRIED AND SANG AND  
SWAYED



ACCIDENTS HAPPEN



WE LASTED 'AWHILE

SOMETIMES  
WE STILL HAVE TO GET TOGETHER  
AND PRETEND  
TO BE A FAMILY



ISNT THAT THE MOST INCREDIBLE THING

PAPA WOULD CALL ALL OF US AROUND

AND WE WOULD SING

SO I KNEW THAT I HAD TO GO TO

DID I EVER TELL YOU ABOUT WHEN I WAS A

NEW YORK AND BECAME A SINGER

SINGER IN NEW YORK

WELL I ENTERED THE CONTEST  
AND BECAME A SINGER

DID I EVER TELL YOU THIS

IT WAS THE MOST INCREDIBLE THING REALLY

DID I EVER TELL YOU THIS

HAVE I TOLD YOU ABOUT THIS

TAXI DRIVER

WANTED TO BE A SINGER

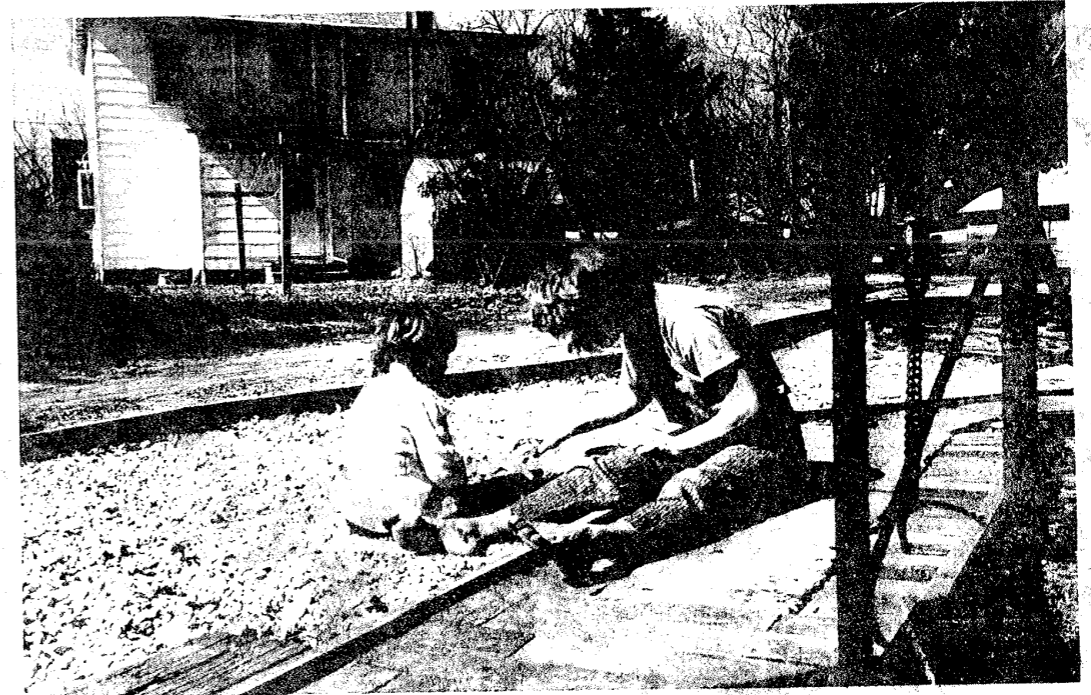
HAVE I TOLD YOU ABOUT THIS



ISNT THAT THE MOST INCREDIBLE THING

YOU WERE USUALLY MORE  
CONCERNED WITH BEING  
COOL  
THAN BEING 'A

MOM



DO YOU SEE THIS DO YOU SEE WHAT YOUR MOTHER IS DOING HE YELLED WAVING  
THE PACK OF MARLBORO LIGHTS IN MY FACE  
FROM THE TONE OF HIS VOICE IT SEEMED AS IF HE WERE ANGRY AT ME INSTEAD OF  
HER

I DONT REMEMBER HOW WE CAME TO BE STANDING IN THE BACK PART OF THEIR  
BEDROOM

THE ADDITION WITH HIGH CATHEDRAL CEILING AND WALK IN CLOSET THAT MY  
FATHER HAD BUILT

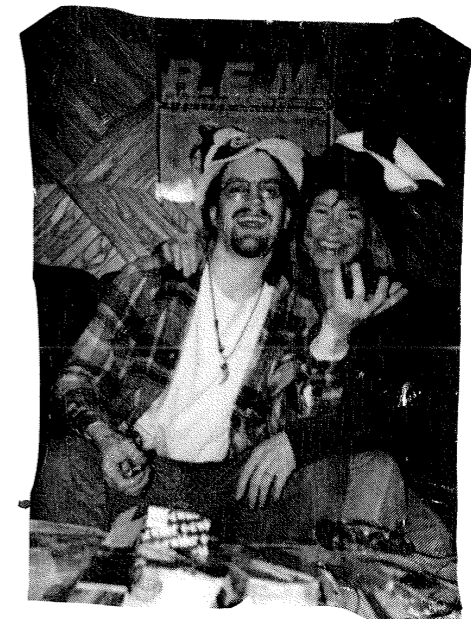
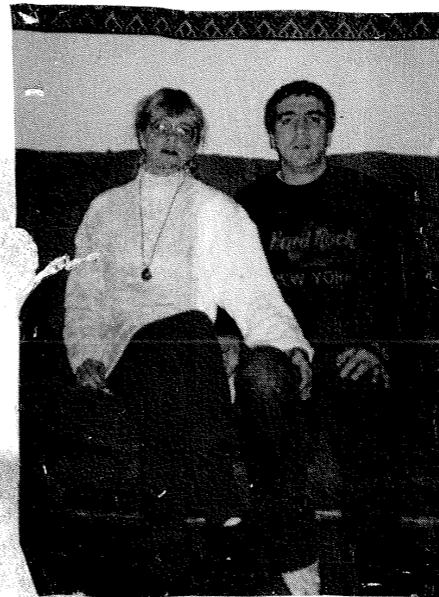
OR HOW WE CAME TO BE STANDING IN FRONT OF MY MOTHERS LITTLE WOODEN DESK  
WHERE I KNEW SHE ROLLED JOINTS OF MARIJUANA

AND I DONT REMEMBER WHETHER OR NOT I KNEW THAT THE LITTLE BAG TUCKED IN  
THE CELLOPHANE OF THE CIGARETTE PACK WAS FULL OF COCAINE



NOW I JUST WAIT  
WITH MY EYES CLOSED  
AND MY HEART FROZEN

TO SEE  
IF IT ALL COMES  
CRASHING DOWN  
THIS TIME



I LIKE TO THINK THAT  
HE TRIED

BUT



I DON'T KNOW



I  
'JU'ST  
KEPT  
H'ANGING  
ON

