

DRAWING BY MINUET McCARTHY (AGE 5)

Spirit is a hard tough baby  
A hard tough baby on a wild Friday night  
A hard tough baby in a swirling spiraling eddy of salacious storm  
A meld of pernicious ocean and  
Godless omnipresence if ever there was

Spirit is a hard tough baby in January  
And a hard tough storm is slowly crucifying  
The 72-foot crab boat superstitiously named the *Mary Kay*  
After the Skipper's fair-skinned wife with eyes as blue as a Norwegian fjord  
And a tower of dyed red hair as coifed as Marge Simpson's

72 feet of hard cold steel with slurry-charcoal paint  
and steel plate with middens of florescent-orange crab pots  
coiled as a paint-by-numbers portrait of the next sleepy port of call  
if only it was September with Indian summer skies.

Not to be, as this denizen of rust and grunge and grime  
From a sink-full of greasy frying pans with yesterday's sticky leftovers —  
And who the hell could eat this sluck, anyways  
Eat this sluck in this nasty ass-kicking devil's tantrum —  
And rust, grunge and grime all the way

To a jet-black hold stacked plumb full of 35000 pounds of squirming Dungies  
A cloud of red squirming reptilian-like space creatures, fishermen called bugs  
With creaky joints and pin-black eyes  
Anointed by tons of salt-brined ocean water with deadly implications  
Rocking back and forth, rock and rolling like Elvis, Chuck or Jerry Lee

A god's belly-full of frothy bottle-green water  
Rumbling back and forth, back and forth  
Throwing some kind of aqua temper tantrum  
While the Pacific Ocean thrashes its version  
Of a *grand mal* seizure

Thrashes on a night in January when a Sou'wester  
Throttles this creaky hulk of steel and grunge, all 72 feet —  
*Take all of me, why not take all of me*  
Tosses it around that Harvard educated junky  
Standing dejectedly behind a power block

Wishing he was back in the classroom  
Listening to Professor Whomever drone on about Plato, Keats or Shelly  
While really, really all he cared to study  
Was that Neutrogena-faced girl with long elegant gams  
When the moon was full but she never bothered to call

Yes, he remembers chosen lines from Bob Dylan  
Twists them like mountains of Poly-Dac  
Wishing Dylan — not he — was sulking  
Behind the power winch  
And he — Mr. Harvard — was free-wheeling

Spirit is a hard tough baby  
As he grabs crab pot after pot in 22-second, double-fisted grasps  
From sandy ocean floor littered with delinquent dreams and bones  
Not mine, he shouts. Damn it to hell, above the clatter of hard wind  
A shrill trumpet call as vindictive as his third wife, Celine

Well, she had those almond-eyes the color of opals  
And she just happened to call  
Not my soul, he murmurs. You piece of aqueous garp...yes, well  
The ocean is a hard mistress. Hard. And Mr. Harvard yells above the maelstrom of storm  
Above a maelstrom of ocean storm on a dingy black night

Three days and three nights, to be exact, without sleep or a hot meal, a crying game —  
Jesus Moon Baby with jet-black eyes and raven hair, stringy as boiled linguine  
He remembers her, number two  
On a blind January night with the moon down  
And he can't get no satisfaction

Spirit is a hard tough baby  
As the *Mary Kay* runs hard at the Columbia River Bar  
On a feral night in January when the weather report predicts 60 knot winds  
With overriding gusts to 80, and Mr. Weatherman —  
Yes, 20 years of college and they put you on the day shift —

Or on the stern-end of this 72-foot slug bait tanker  
Hand-crafted in Seoul in 1985 for less than a buck an hour  
And Mr. Weatherman is off a full 15 on this no-mercy night with crab claws and pincers  
And the Skipper has no heart, has no heart  
Has no cash to make a six month bank payment on this Korean tub

And the bank manager ain't no friend with his Chamber of Commerce smile  
And his way too pretty wife who drives a Lexus with an automatic  
And all the Skipper's got is his beat-up one-ton '86 Ford  
Sad as a played out gravel pit  
Where he used to make his girlfriends on Friday night after football games

Friday night — how can he forget  
As a 35-foot mastodon wave rakes the deck  
With all the hungry spite of a German pincer movement  
Friday night in January when the boys who made it home  
Won't leave the Sea Hag Tavern

Won't leave until little George summarily dismisses them all 60 minutes after last call  
And he ain't so little, the stingy mean bastard, all 300 pounds of him. *Take all of me*  
But hell, rain races sideways down the lonely streets in Ilwaco  
And the boys haven't even paid for Christmas yet  
And all nice girls are married or fast asleep

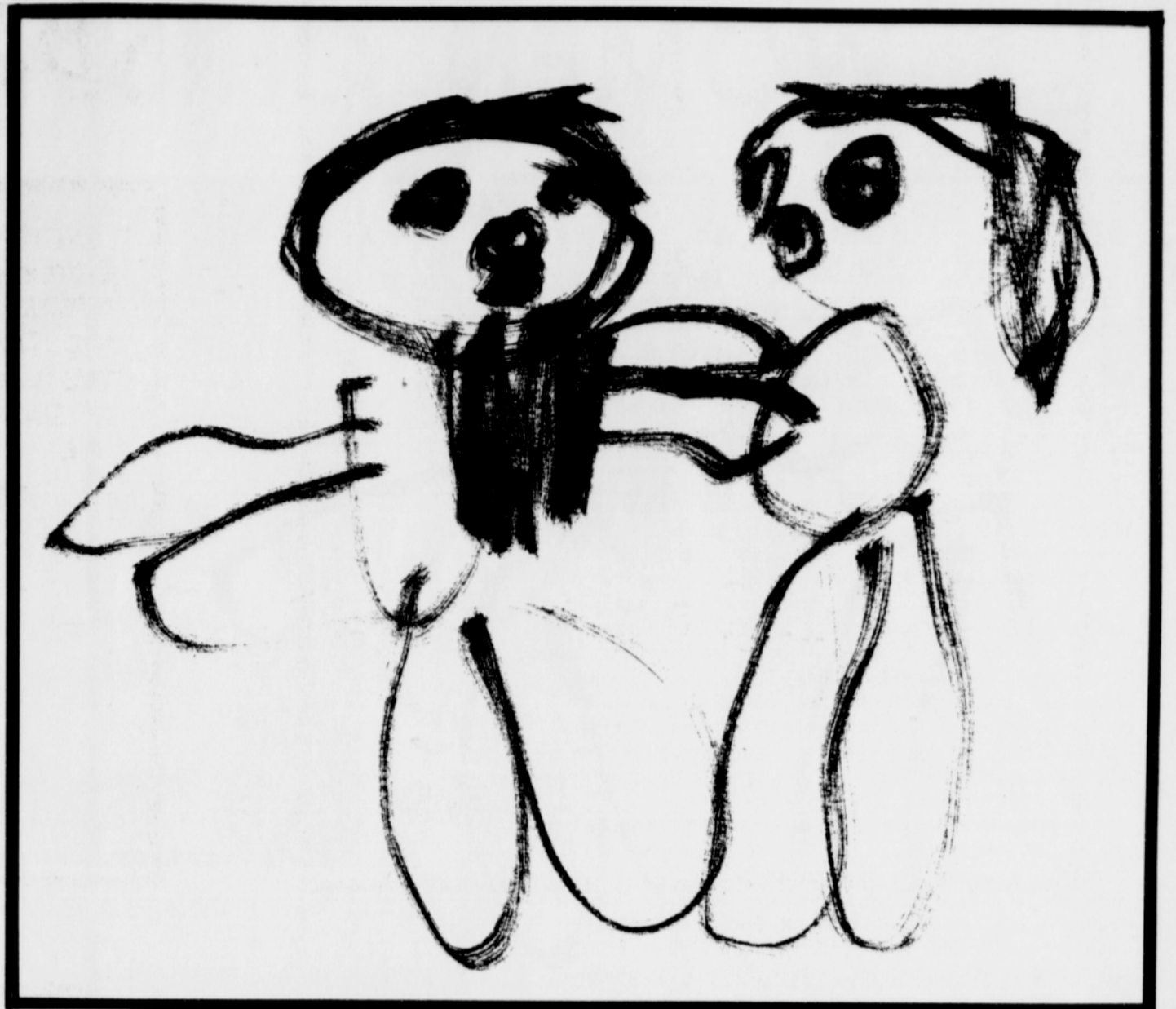
Dreaming of long vacations in Hawaii  
With George Clooney as fawning scoutmaster  
Hawaii with blue cerulean skies and baby-blue seas and soft pillow clouds  
The kind Gainesborough painted on English heath in July  
And he didn't carry no frigin' umbrella

Spirit is a hard tough baby  
As the *Mary Kay* tramps into a tobacco-brown sluice of trouble and storm  
On the Columbia River Bar in January  
Now rumbling into 40-foot snarl-faced combers  
Like the clarion call of a trumpet in the hands of the devil himself

The devil high on pain killers and Bennies  
Oh, Mr. Harvard where did you go wrong  
Now a member of the fishermen's pain fraternity  
A hard tough breed that feeds on punishment as noxious as lutefisk  
On a mean six-pack night in January when the moon is down and

Spirit is a hard tough baby  
A hard tough baby  
A hard tough baby  
Driving the Columbia River Bar in January  
Hard tough baby

~DAVID CAMPICHE



# POETRY

## 'JUST' CHILDREN

### POEM FOR THE GOVERNMENT

I'm writing some poems for the government  
but I can't talk about them now.  
I can't talk at all. The writing has been going  
well, on schedule, and all expenses have been taken  
care of. I'm not at liberty to discuss  
the secretive nature of my work  
which demands that I write  
in silence and disgust and under  
an assumed name. My work for the government  
is not only confidential, it is gross, exquisite  
many lives hang in the balance. I'm also writing some poems  
that aren't for the government, but now those seem  
about nothing at all. I don't know where or how my poems  
will be used, but I want them to be fool-  
ish and deadly.

That I write in silence  
and seclusion and under  
this parasol, for the government  
my tiny son at my feet, makes me  
extremely poetic. I think  
of splashes and hear the poems  
I am writing in this paradise, one  
of which is really for you  
I include it in the government batch  
perhaps to better include you in our lives.

~LOREN GOODMAN

### A BRIEF FOR THE DEFENSE

Sorrow everywhere. Slaughter everywhere. If babies  
are not starving someplace, they are starving  
somewhere else. With flies in their nostrils.  
But we enjoy our lives because that's what God wants.  
Otherwise the mornings before summer dawn would not  
be made so fine. The Bengal tiger would not  
be fashioned so miraculously well. The poor women  
at the fountain are laughing together between  
the suffering they have known and the awfulness  
in their future, smiling and laughing while somebody  
in the village is very sick. There is laughter  
every day in the terrible streets of Calcutta,  
and the women laugh in the cages of Bombay.  
If we deny our happiness, resist our satisfaction,  
we lessen the importance of their deprivation.  
We must risk delight. We can do without pleasure,  
but not delight. Not enjoyment. We must have  
the stubbornness to accept our gladness in the ruthless  
furnace of this world. To make injustice the only  
measure of our attention is to praise the Devil.  
If the locomotive of the Lord runs us down,  
we should give thanks that the end had magnitude.  
We must admit there will be music despite everything.  
We stand at the prow again of a small ship  
anchored late at night in the tiny port  
looking over to the sleeping island: the waterfront  
is three shuttered cafés and one naked light burning.  
To hear the faint sound of oars in the silence as a rowboat  
comes slowly out and then goes back is truly worth  
all the years of sorrow that are to come.

~JACK GILBERT

It was just children playing in the sand  
(accompanied by the narcotic scent  
of blooming lindens, don't forget),  
just children, but after all  
the devil, and the minor gods,  
and even forgotten politicians,  
who'd broken all their promises,  
were also there and watched them  
with unending rapture.  
Who wouldn't want to be a child —  
for the last time!

~ADAM ZAGAJEWSKI

### AFTER SCHOOL

Here is a boy just out of school.

Here is the same boy now at large.  
Here is the officer in charge.

Here is the bunker where they lie  
Here in the desert sere and dry  
Under the hot sun in the sky.

There is the liar with his prattle  
Moving the boys around like cattle.  
Listen, you'll hear his saber rattle.  
There is the man who began this battle.

There is the coward who, when young,  
Raised his finger, stuck out his tongue  
At the flag, emptied his lung  
Of a hawk when the bell was rung,  
Calling the boys whom he stood among.

There's the commander now in chief.  
There is the robber baron, the thief  
Wrapped in religion and his belief  
That this is his land, his personal feoff.  
The ship of State is upon the reef.  
Here are the mothers lost in grief.

Here is the blood. Here is the oil.  
Here are bitterness and turmoil,  
Here the men and boys who were loyal;  
Here is death upon foreign soil —  
There is the man who believes he's royal.

Handing out a cross, a star:  
"Here is a medal. There you are,  
Mrs. Jones. Have a cigar.  
Be proud of your son. Tell him *au revoir*."

"We thank you for the life you gave  
Which, it's too bad, we couldn't save.  
How sad that it wound up in this grave."

Here is a body in the sun.  
Here is a life that is undone.

Here is a boy just out of school.

~LEWIS TURCO