

THE

Spring - 1996
Volume II, Issue III

NORTH RIVER

QUARTERLY

An Expressive Arts and Education Publication

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SHORT STORY

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**POET'S
SPOTLIGHT**

mr. lee

**PILLOWS of
UNREST**

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Suggested Donation - \$3.00

Artwork by ROGER POOLE - Family Group Photo

THE NORTH RIVER QUARTERLY

EDITOR

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to this issue of the North River Quarterly and for all submissions. The 'Quarterly' welcomes all artwork, poetry, short stories and articles about alternatives to the medical model. The next issue will be a special holiday edition. Work that is a commentary and/or reflects the holiday season will be given special consideration.

I am continually inspired by the artistry of my peers and have always believed, that art transcends all differences and is the true documentation of a culture and its history. I look forward to my role, as Editor of the North River Quarterly, and thank North River Gallery and Empowerment Center, its Staff and Volunteers for the support and encouragement given me. This self-help model and peer support have been crucial to my recovery process. Recovery from mental illness and from the resulting psychiatric labeling and stigma is a long and hard road. All journeys start with a first step. My first step, began here. I believe that recovery is possible. I also believe, that we must carve against the hard stone of stigma with tools. This Publication is an important tool and we need your support, in the form of support letters and donations. We look forward to hearing from you.

NEITHER DO MEN LIGHT A CANDLE, AND PUT IT UNDER A BUSHEL,
BUT ON A CANDLESTICK, AND IT GIVETH LIGHT UNTO ALL THAT ARE IN THE HOUSE.

NEW TESTAMENT, MATTHEW, V, 15

Quarterly Staff

Frank Marquit - Chief Advisor
Beverly Burgtorf - Editor-In-Chief
Ralph Ivery - Artistic Advisor
Beverly Burgtorf - Layout & Design



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Special Thanks to Mary Lou Bradford, Editor's Assistant

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North River Gallery
&
Empowerment Center
announces
Artwork for Sale
80% of price goes to Artist
Contact Ralph Ivery, Art Director
Show our artists your support.

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THE LADYBUG

by Christopher W. Grahame

Sunlit morning through frosted glass...
ladybug on the sill.
I have no orange shell like yours,
nor feel as strongly built.
I have no wings to carry me
on winds from here to flowers,
but I have time to ponder them
and wait for garden wanderings.
My colors can be varied
as the clothing that I wear.
I'll paint with the words... a ladybug
as if she lingered there.

Pansies
by Beth McDermott

Sunflower & Bee
by Kathy Breda



The ART of RECOVERY

By Franklin A. J. Marquit

The River



4TH ANNUAL STATEWIDE ART SHOW

'Perspectives in Recovery'

co-sponsored by

Senator Thomas W. Libous & Assemblyman James F. Brennan

North River Gallery & Empowerment Center

384 Main St., P.O. Box 151, Catskill, New York 12414-0151

MAY 20 TO MAY 24, 1996

ART SHOW ENDS AT 11:00 A.M. ON MAY 24

Reception - May 21 at 12:00 - Noon

Music, Drama, Buffet, Speakers

with Veterans Participation

'THE WELL' - Legislative Office Building

Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York

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ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF OUR PEERS

&

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SEEKING ARTWORK

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By **Beth McDermott**

Flows... announcing



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ANTI-STIGMA AWARENESS DAY

in New York State on May 19, 1996



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Do A PROJECT IN YOUR COMMUNITY

ON MAY 19th.....such as:

a PILLOWS of UNREST Work-shop

An ART EXHIBITION

A Candlelight Vigil

A self-help group meeting or a letter to the Editor

Create a Painting or.....Write a Poem

and send the news of your Event to

North River

for Publication in the North River Quarterly

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YOUR PARTICIPATION IS IMPORTANT

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518-943-3529 OR 1-800-413-4761 FAX 518-943-2807

by Ralph Ivery

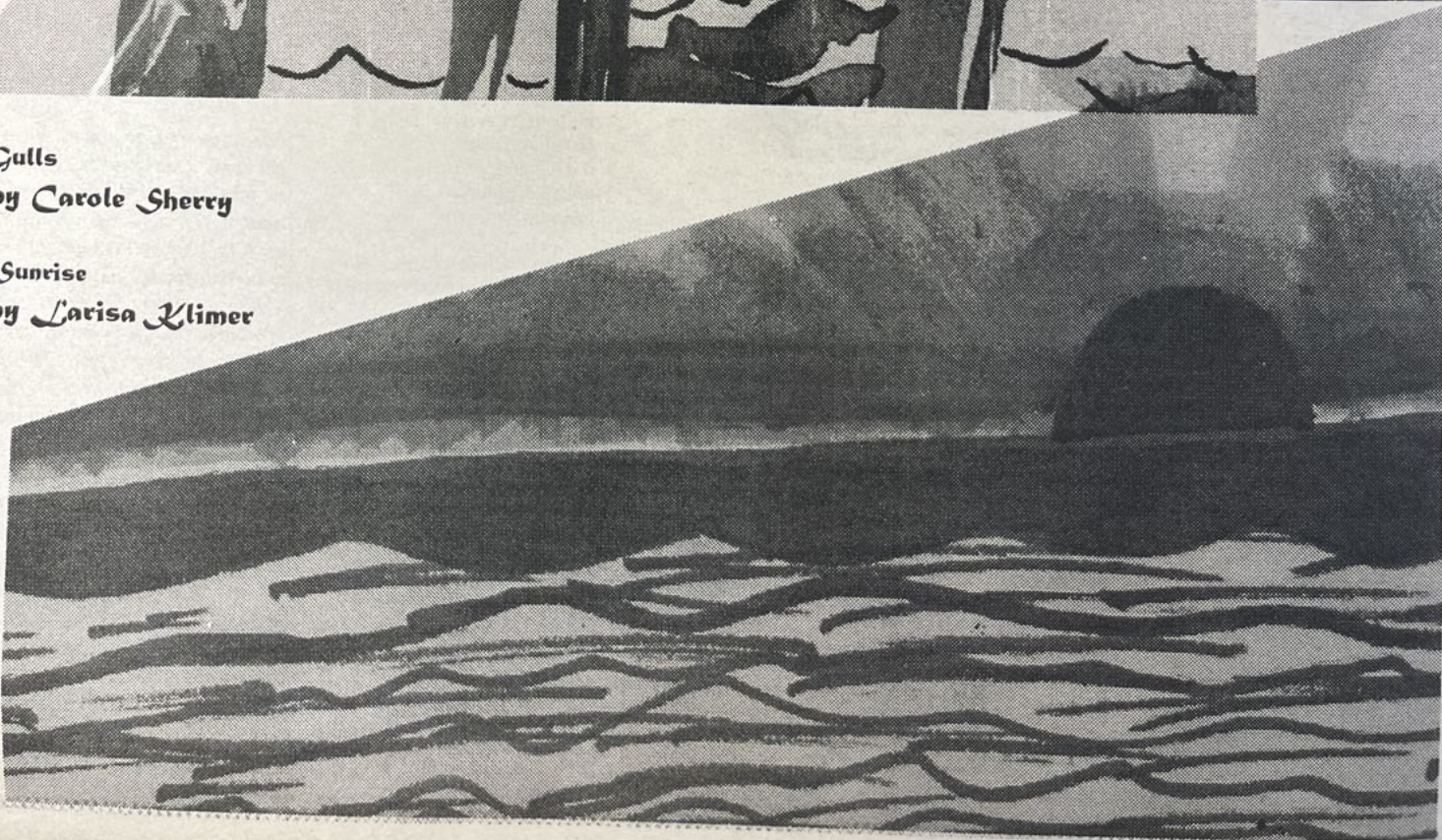
An Artistic View

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Gulls
by Carole Sherry

Sunrise
by Larisa Klimier



THE LADYBUG

by Christopher W. Grahame

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PROGRESS & RECOVERY IN THE YEAR 2025

BY BEN MURPHY

In the year 2025, most of the world was in *Recovery*. The love and spirituality of the sixties had merged with the nineties self-help movement. If a person was *not in recovery*, then they surely were in *denial*. Modern problems were being *cured* through an increasing number of *support groups, interventions and councils*. Religion and the family were in decline, replaced by *the Group*. Television was mostly talk-shows, in which every human pathology was exposed. As the politicians said, "*No one has to be alone again...Recover*".

Max was alone. His partner was out sick again with Chronic Fatigue. It was Max's responsibility to pick up the Friday' recyclables. It was no great task. It was only five blocks. Time alone was always a plus. Max jumped out of his truck and walked up the Wilson's driveway. The Wilson's daughter was awakened by the *scraping noise of the can on the concrete*. She kicked her arms and legs, freeing herself from a lime-green bedspread. Assuming a cross-legged position on the cement floor, she gave her face a good rub. She exceeded the size of her blue sweatsuit. Her eyes were puffy and her blond curly hair was in disarray. She had retained a certain attractiveness, despite the fifty pounds she'd gained. Her habit was talking aloud to herself. She said, "May as well stay up...more work to force sleep." "If it's not the garbage man, it's the next door neighbors." "You'd think they had more to do, than mess with me." "Ah, Nikita, you're certifiable, certified..." "Who isn't?"

Outside, Max stared up at the sky. It was so overcast you couldn't even make out the hilltops of Palos Verdes, as usual. The sky was a dirty yellow blur. Max was the only human profile on the street. He stood in six foot of rail thin coveralls gazing upward. His hair showed some white. "Rain", he yelled. He reached into the bed of the truck and pulled up the shelf, flipping the lid of a can and pouring out it's contents. He had put on his extra thick leather gloves. He didn't want to get Treatment-Resistance Syndrome, although the Surgeon General had said that it wasn't contagious. "I guess we're just a tired generation", he thought. The Accountability Law was now in effect. Anything indicative of substance abuse or esoteric interests must be reported to the Bureau of Certified Helpers. The term was 'Garbage Aberrations'. Max had recorded only one in his entire career. Several years ago, the Zangles were throwing out whisky bottles at the rate of a case each week. Max had assumed that they wanted to be reported. They could have just as easily buried them in the back yard. Now, they were in recovery.

Max uncapped one of Nikita's medication bottles. Inside was the expected note. He pulled off his right glove and unfolded it. It read, *I am you and*

you are me and we are all together, the Beatles. It wasn't that impressive. Her last one had been better. *How we tell the dancer from the dance?*, William Butler Yeats. "She's a pip," he thought, and he pushed the release lever. The garbage fell into the compactor.

Above the entrance to the Seven-Eleven, was a snazzy wood sign with gold letters. It read, In God We Trust. Max punched in his home number and his wife's voice came over the speaker phone. "Hello, can I help?" "Hi, Honey, it's Max." "You'll see me in ten minutes." She was distracted and responded slowly, "Yeah, it's Friday for you, but I have to stay on line at this stupid crisis hotline all week-end." (Dead air from the speaker phone.) Max went into the Seven-Eleven to get a hamburger and pay his phone bill. As he pulled the truck into the flow of traffic, he saw a red Program sticker attached to a bumper. It read, If you are a member of Anxiety Anonymous...Honk.

When Max walked into his livingroom, there were four people sitting on his couch. One was a stranger and the others were his wife, his partner on the garbage truck and his boss. The stranger spoke first, "Good-Afternoon Max. I'm a helper from the Bureau of Helpers". It was an intervention. There had to be three significant others and a helper to make it official. A contract was drawn up and he signed it. The program of recovery was not very demanding. He would have to see a doctor and attend the recyclers support group. Max asked, "How long?" "About one year", the helper finished his coffee and left.

His pride was damaged for about a month. He swung between denial and anger at being wrongly judged and misunderstood. He asked the doctor, "When will I be well?" "When will I stop the meds?" The doctor said that he was having trouble seeing the trees for the forest and he was getting help for that. His boss and partner thought he wasn't interested enough in his work. He had only had one garbage aberration in his entire career.

All in all, he felt the benefit of the recovery program. So, why was it all such a grind? Why was he so tired? He remembered Nikita's last note: *All I have left is a felicity for swallowing all manner of hell laden small brown pills, sure I do*. He drove to the Santa Monica pier and parked his truck. He purchased a quart of Kaluha, a gallon of milk and a felt tip pen. Then, he began to walk. Within twenty-four hours, he had walked out of L.A. County. An old man picked him up and asked him to buy lunch in exchange for the ride. Max told him he didn't have a consumer card. Back in L.A. County, Dr. Kim put a note on the internet. Maxwell Behan: Client is officially A.W.O.L. Initial diagnosis: aggravated depression.

Responded to somatic treatment. Believed to have narcissistic reaction to treatment. Underlying paranoia. Suffers from cognitive dissonance. Could be dangerous to others and self.

Max sat alone on a beach in the Hamptons. It was late fall. He had a wool army blanket draped over his shoulders. Beside him, was a sketch-book and pen...gifts from hitched rides. He was wearing Totes (no shoes or sneakers) ...just socks and the thin rubber Totes. He removed the blanket and Totes, rolled up his jeans and waded into the Atlantic Ocean. After a quick dunk, he shook his long hair and the water sprayed from it. Max returned to the beach and picked up the sketch-book and pen.

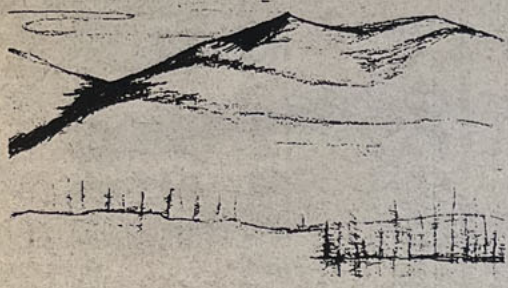
November 12...Been on the move over a year. Country consists of three groups...Job holders...Wards of the State...and the Homeless. I'm in this last group and only stay so, because I keep on the move. People are eager to talk to hitchhikers. They know they will never have to see us again. I still think that I must be crazy. My total detachment from mainstream leaves me feeling exposed and suspect. I have irrational fears, that I'm going to be arrested for some crime I didn't commit. I know this stems from my feeling of loss of self. Maybe, I am crazy. Most of us escape the Northeast before the winter really hits. I haven't talked to Hillary in four months. Called her at a truck stop. Crisis line has a quick police trace. Only enough time to find out, that we were annulled. To her questions, I could only answer, "I don't know." Saying, "It's definitely not on you, it's just the more I moved, the less I wanted to come back."

A VISIT TO THE DOCTOR



ARTWORK
by Colleen Burke

UTILIZING ALTERNATIVES



Writing poetry gives me a sense of being...It helps me relate to my emotions...get in touch with my 'real' feelings or thoughts that arise... day or night...On impulse...I place my thoughts and feelings into a poem, short story or song lyrics.

Living with mental illness for over twenty years has been rough. However, I have been in therapy and taken medications for the past six years. It has given me a chance to discover who I am and what my potential is. I started writing poetry, short stories and lyrics in the early 1980's. The more that I discovered about myself and the world around me, the more intense I became about my writing. I have written enough to fill a book. I think of myself as one of the poets of the '90's', because I have touched base with every emotion that a person with mental illness can feel.

It is like fighting an invisible ghost. No one sees it, because it's inside of the mind. The internal battles of fear and anger are as painful and stressful as a physical battle. For instance, compare these kinds of battles that one might strive to survive: When will I walk again? v.s. When will I stop hearing voices? Or, When will I see again? v.s. When will I stop getting flashbacks? And, When will my broken wrist heal? v.s. When will my hands stop shaking?

Mental illness is as impairing as physical illness. Some of us heal fast, some slow and some never heal. These are facts of life. So, I continue my struggle. Some of my days are filled with depressed moods and confusion. Others are high, happy and hopeful. I am a person diagnosed with borderline personality disorder. I have periods of agoraphobia, panic attacks, anorexia and bulimia. You might wonder how I can write or concentrate. I believe that I am blessed by the grace of god, and that all is not lost.

ARTWORK by Anji Eide

I told my mother once, "That if I had arthritis and couldn't use my hands, I would learn to hold a pen with my toes or mouth". A few years back, I was suicidal every three months. But, with consistent psychotherapy and relating to others like me, (I found the experience of sharing pain brought great relief and healing), I left the hospital with the following conclusion: Just when you think it can only happen to you, and you feel so ashamed that you feel you don't deserve to live...You find that others suffer in similar ways.

Getting back to writing...Yes, it is wonderfully therapeutic for me. It not only gets me in touch with myself, but it brings forth positive characteristics within me, such as compassion. It brings out my artistry and makes me more realistic. It gives me a reason to be proud of myself, which is something I've had difficulty with my whole life. I would like to say to those of you who suffer, "That you must utilize your gifts to their fullest extent". "God Bless you and good luck".

By Nancy A. Cayton

The Writer

by Coryne F. Schaeffges

The Words will come I tell myself,
as my soul struggles.

I am determined to pull out,
of the deep recesses of my mind,
some new or different way to Love.

Some wisdom passed down through the ages,
possibly a morsel of truth,

That,

When found would shed light
on mankind's very being...

His deepest, innermost Self.

The Words will come I tell myself,
As, my soul struggles.

ANNOUNCING
Art Works!
soon to be published...

*A Handbook Created & Compiled
by National Artists For Mental Health, Inc.*

(A step-by-step guide on how to plan, organize and execute an exhibition of artwork created by individuals diagnosed with mental illness as an event and how it serves the purpose of educating the public, assists in the recovery process, and breaks down social stigmas).

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MEMBERSHIP

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