

Issue #4, Spring 1995

I was seven years old when I first discovered secrets gliding on the underside of ice. Afterwards, the delight of spring would always be tinged by uncertainty. It was a warm day in the first week of March, and I had fallen behind my brother and his friends on our way to school; relishing the sudden warmth, and hushed by the sight of grass emeraldizing out of the snow as the planet twisted its cold cheek to the sun. Along the gutter, icy streams wove braids of crystal, diving under drifts, and emerging under long, delicate windows of ice no thicker than a butterfly's wing, each latticed with tiny transparent struts. Most had been loudly scrunched by a rubber heel -- but one remained unbroken near the curb at the bend of the road.

Some movement caught my eye, and I squatted down to watch bubbles hovering elastically under the winter glass as they wormed their way downstream toward the schoolyard. Kneeling, I found myself gazing into the currents of a river in miniature. On its bottom, patterns were woven on the fine silt overlaying the asphalt. Tiny grains of sand and silt were dancing in the pencil-thin rivulets under the warm March sun, and tiny boulders inched into the future downstream with an urgency that nothing I had learned in school could quite explain. It was a vision that was to later fascinate and sometimes terrify me-as if in something small I had discovered something gigantic. Bigger than street, houses, and trees; bigger than school, family, and the blue patch of sky overhead. Something that stretched beyond the distant honking of cars, and the exuberant shouts of children in the schoolyard, playing fox and geese in the wet slip. The pulse of a thaw both precious and perilous.

Looking back I realize it was a vision of the future -- a season like an icy river of transformation rushing toward me, full of exciting and terrifying changes that I could neither alter nor prevent. At the time I crushed the ice with my heel and fled.

Forty years later I still face spring with delight and ambivalence. I hesitate to welcome the warmth for fear that "backhand fists of older ice will slay the perjured spring." I hover over my computer, unable to write. I stay inside more than I should, lurk by the heating vent with my coffee cup -- not ready to trust or bloom. I've been working all winter, but something in me has stayed asleep in the terrible cold and does not want to wake up and engage the season: to write, reach out, rediscover. Thus the bear hesitates to leave his cave and saunter into the trickling thaw. Thus I know the secret dread a farmer must sometimes feel, looking out the windows of his kitchen at the cold and stony fields he will soon be called upon to plow and plant.

But cruel April does not wait, and March roars. We thaw. Think. Step out of our fear. Risk. Write. Begin. Outside ice melts and fish leap. Lilacs and rosebuds bloom. Sunshine lures you to the doorstep, and the squirrels go mad in the trees. Not so bad, you begin to think. Why have I found it so long?

Speaking of renewal rituals, this is the fourth issue of **Rosebud** to come into being. If you have not subscribed we would urge you to do so. (You may have noticed it's getting harder to find **Rosebud** at the bookstores. It keeps selling out.) If you are a charter subscriber -- this is your last issue and this is the time to renew a ground-breaking magazine at a reasonable price. We are fortunate to have made many friends with our first four issues and hope to make many more. As writers and magazine makers, we know how it feels to face fear of rejection. Sometimes we get overwhelmed with mail, but your submissions and subscriptions are what keeps us alive -- so please, keep them coming. The ice is history, and the future is bright.

Rod Clark, Editor