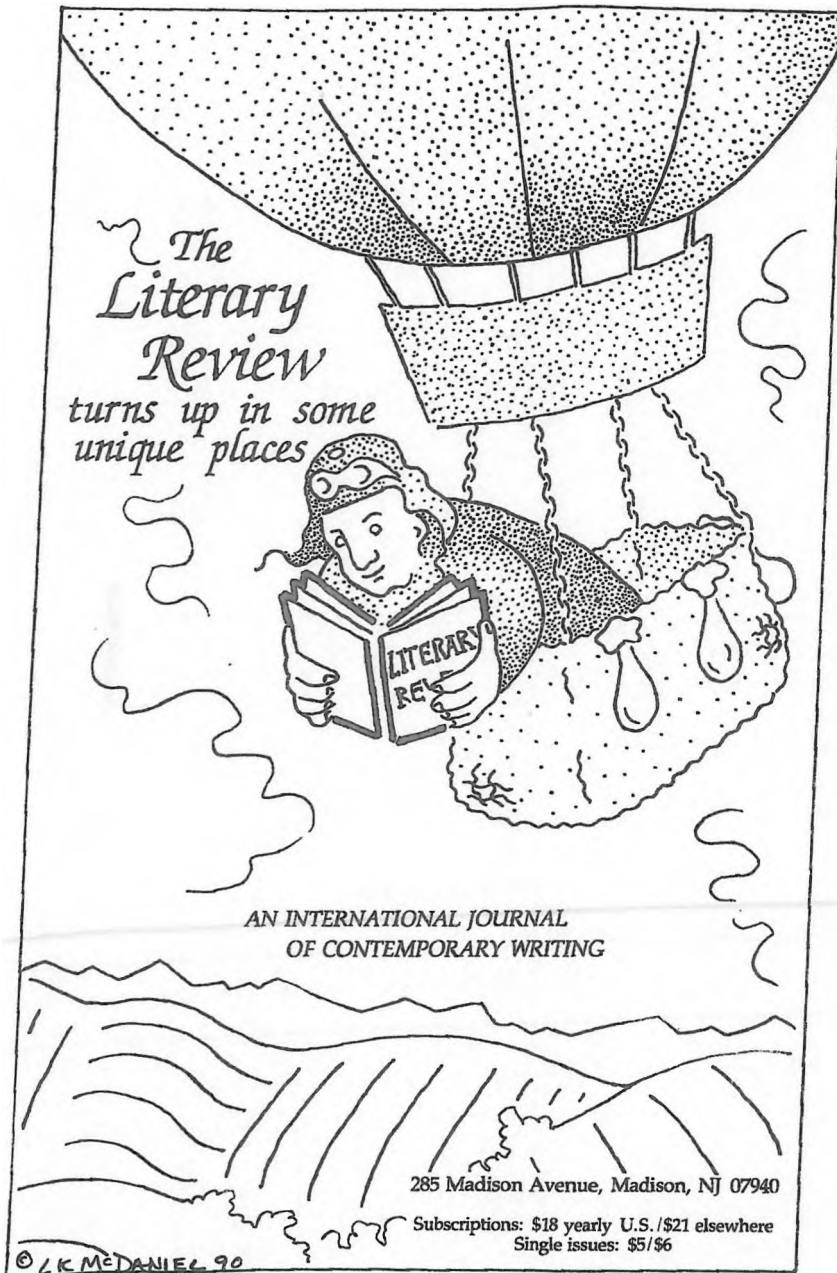


I don't want to go on living

without my most beautiful satisfaction,
 without my language of brass knobs
 on ash drawers pickled in white green
 on resonating music of children's voices
 giggling into the night of their fantasies
 left pristine untouched by the sullied hand
 of experience called living,
 without hot fudge sundaes and jamoca almond fudge ice cream
 without splintered slats through which all can be seen
 when nothing is supposed to be,
 without a thousand smiles glaring at me in the light of my
 morning,
 without my favorite daughter lying next to me pleading mommy
 don't die,
 without my favorite son saying mom you sort of embarrassed me
 when you passed out on the floor,
 without the invisible room in the invisible mind of my invisible
 existence,
 without the awakening rush of learning over my rock-brain
 plunging into the pools of my gut-valleys,
 without the white dove that laughs and flies free from its cage
 to perch on the head of my lover,
 without tears that forget the words that caressed the treachery
 of the lost landscape of my little-girlhood,
 without Jesus Christ in superstar billing,
 without my four-year-old self crouching behind the bed eating
 dustballs,
 without melted Look bars and braces destroyed by Abba Zabas,
 without sex too soon under cotton flannel sheets stained crimson
 in a Hollywood motel,
 without my French grandfather wearing his beret leaning on his
 1 ahogany cane sipping wine made in his garage during prohibition,
 without the photographs that line the gallery walls of my home
 ataloguing the bowels of gained ambitions and lost hopes in
 sepia-tint,
 without my grandmother wandering lost incontinent herjet
 earrings bobbing with 18 karat gold and diamonds,
 without the smell of cherry tobacco from my father's pipe in my



father's house,
without sneaking one drink then two then three from the punch
bowl when the adults weren't looking during my uncle's funeral
after he stabbed himself twice,
without a hundred miles from the last time my plate was empty and
my stomach was full,
without my breast covered in gardenias and his thighs covered in
thorns,
without the perfume of my mother's black suede gloves on her way
to meet a man I frightened away,
without one single truth crawling on my skin,
without my sleep-mussed hair getting in his mouth and in his
scrotum,
without my cousin and I hiding behind the pink kitchen door while
mother her sister and brother beat one another and cried,
without last year's abandoned sunset and this year's fragile
dawn,
without love which colors me white and leaves me human,
without my desire which wears my red silk bed-clothes outside in,
without praise for the dark moon of my thoughts and the intimacy
of my knowing secrets which have yet to be revealed,

I don't want to go on living in this world
without these gestures
of my coming-of-age reasons
that acclaim my belonging
to my world of dream-poems,
without the rose that always
grows upon a thorn
where the wind blows it back
into a blossom at my feet.