

Does your mother know you read

gerbil

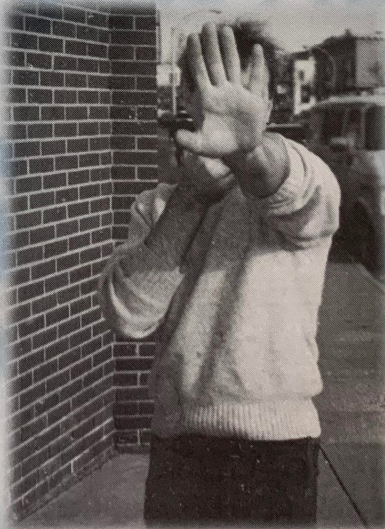
A Queer Culture Zine

necca like San Francisco, where the presence of seropositive men (roughly half the gay population) on their clients' minds, Eric Rofes worries about gay men's bodies and their sexuality (specifically, with rigid safer sex rules contributing to the "mass psychic numbing" that exists among seronegative men).

As I have written before, I think that it is disgusting and immoral. There is absolutely no reason to push this in the face of others. This is in contrast to Natural Laws, and is forbidden. You have until Midnight of the fourth to comply and submit.

way with it. I think I will y... That will ma... at everyone k... g and to pay... situation.

idual sexual choices need to be honored and encouraged. Still I wonder if Rofes isn't engagingly men today consider the recuperative power of sexuality (something which, according to Rofes, makes themselves seem more responsible in this age of AIDS. As a result, young gay men try



number 6

\$3

Japanese Beetle

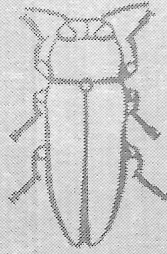
1.

You slept; it entered your ear.
You dreamt; your lover's tongue
potato chips, radio static.

You woke at the sensation of touch
in wrong places, the beetle etching in
the scars that would mark
its path through your ear,
its way to your heart.

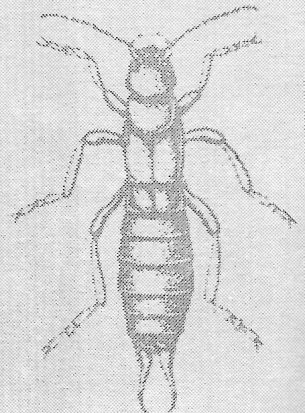
You heard the beetle and danced
about
but it crept further in.

Then you remembered light.
You knew your beetle
would go towards the light.
You crushed the body
that clicked on the floor.



The beetle came out
when you showed it light—
but it never really left.
You hear it in the daytime
when the operators put you on hold
when you swim under water
when you first wake.

The Japanese beetle searches for food
in the home it's made of your heart
It scratches, scrapes.
You know it takes whatever it wants.
You listen to it chewing.



2.

Sometimes you think of your beetle as company.
It rides with you as you maneuver through traffic, as you sing with the radio.

Sometimes you turn it up loud not because the song is your favorite but because you've heard the Japanese beetle.

Your ear remembers its rasp as it made its way through.

Sometimes you sob, wondering how it can live what it can be breathing, eating. You wonder what will be gone when it leaves.

3.

Your beetle never speaks to you though you listen for a code in its scratches and tappings. A beetle has no voice, but you are listening all the time

You've read all the books and the entomology texts (you know they wear their skeleton on the outside). You want to find a pattern—maybe the markings on its body, how many times it will molt.

There are few points of entry to a beetle's center. In the pictures you can't find even one (even though it found one of yours what seems like years ago). A beetle seems an ingenious insect when it's lodged inside you.

4.

A beetle inside you for so long would hardly seem the same if you saw it again.



Deborah Owen-Moore