

ANTHROPOLOGY AND HUMANISM QUARTERLY VOLUME 16, NUMBER 4 DECEMBER 1991

First Prize Winner

JOHN F. SHERRY, JR. J. L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management Northwestern University Evanston, IL 60208

## **Restoration Triptych**

The buttress leans against the scaffold, breathless, Flying its last mission unsupported through the ages, And the gargoyles tense above the masons' blades, Their haunches flexed, and undecided still, Pondering the leap of faith required To bridge the centuries or return to earth. The bell tower now is silent save for birdsong And for scholding, as the hammers ring In service of a reconstructed nave.

Uncobbling the ancient arteries of their neglected town, A medieval wheel of radiant spokes staved almost to the hub, Repiping life with fiber optic nerves, with water, gas, electric, Ancestral city fathers gird the streets and grid the town, Retrofitting custom to convention, hardening targets, multi-Lingually labelling photo importunities, returning to the future All the idols and the alleys of the guilds. The workers tile And spackle, sift and dig and haul and hose, Laboring to enchrism these weird ways with honest sweat.

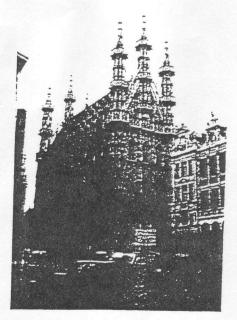
Images glimpsed through the sooty windows of a speeding train, Or savored on an aimless solitary stroll Of embraced places, distant times and strangers,

Revisit me as often I do them.

I balance lightly on the couch prepared to root and scared to fly And lift again that silent spade with once rough hands gone soft, Determined to unearth and to inter a calloused soul, To undermine, to tunnel out, to backfill and to plant.

## Too Far Afield

I held a child's voice Against an ocean, And wondering too late If it were mine, Released it dumbly to a Foreign wind. Alone he was, and not, Yet could not fathom Such dark distance as must Pass before we meet.



## Local Custom [Field Journal/Amsterdam Station]

At last the rain relents.

Sunlight warms the bridge rails And the smell of sweat and sausages, Of diesel fumes and cold canals Is wafted into town on measured gusts.

A ragged band of unwashed foreign boys, A fluid claque of banter and percussion, The very occidental tourist becomes

An accidental terrorist Safeguarded by a bungling host.

Exchanging currency as they embody it, They mount a raucous randy quest For guilder bags and golden arches.

As life unfolds, Imbaya Kuna trill Andean tunes outside the station, Lilt and shill, accompany hawked tapes, And dare ethnographers to record

The truth of this Dutch treat.

