

the next day,
the only photograph
in the paper would be:

"Uga Alberts, Latvian-
born painter and architect,
at the opening night
of 'La Traviata....'"

at the opera
my father
was in the paper
more than
the mayor.

— Ulvis Alberts

Belfair WA

DANDELIONS

"Don't call any more, it's killing me," she screams,
and slams her front door in his face.
He tells himself it was too good to last, drives
twice around her block, then home.
He hugs his wife, finds the dandelion-digger in
his garage, and kneels on his brown lawn
Beside green dandelions still growing strong despite
three mowings in four weeks.

His digger has a wooden handle and steel blade forked
like a stick for pinning snakes.
He drives it in beside a dandelion, thinking of hot
sheets; cool, slippery showers afterwards.
He loved dandelions as a boy, their yellow suns
changing into white space helmets
Made of seeds which, one by one, would float away
like planets in the solar wind.

He feels around for the tap root, branching like
cancer, sucking life from decomposing stone.
Simply watching her breasts emerge, soft sculptures,
from her bra's cloth mold,
Could pull him out of the tar pit into which marriage
and job were sucking him.
"You know you're grown up when your life feels like
a soap opera," she said.

In his hand — gloved against the dandelion's
protective spines — its fibery stalk

Stirs the earth like a spoon stuck in dark coffee. With
a faint ripping sound,
It's out, roots clutching little chunks of rock. Even
uprooted, in hot sun,
It will stay green for days. It wants to live that bad.

NOT A NATIONAL ENQUIRER KIND OF GUY

He wasn't a highschool misfit.
He's not deformed, and had no horrible
disease that changed his life.

His mom and dad weren't alcoholics
or drug-addicts or circus-freaks,
and never abused him. Politically,

they were middle-of-the-road.
He could always talk to them, but rarely did;
he had things well-pegged even then.

His marriage is in decent shape;
his kids, normal in every way.
He doesn't fool around, though if he did,

no one would know. He doesn't believe
in reincarnation, space aliens, ESP, or God,
though he doesn't rule them out.

He doesn't have visions but does have interesting
dreams, which he won't relate because
they're personal. Besides, he forgets them.

He's achieved his great success by being smarter,
better looking, and luckier than most people.
It's as simple as that.

LE COMTE DE WEEB, CONNOISSEUR OF FINE WINE

The sign says FINE WINE TASTING — FREE!
Weeb whips his Beetle into the parking lot.
While Jane samples abalone earrings,
he heads for the tastery.

"First, are there hidden costs?" he asks
the long-haired drink-dispenser.

"Nope."

"Do I have to spit it out?"

"Naw, that's tv stuff."

"let's go."