

daily nebraskan literary page

The P.A. System

(At a county fair)
The candidate slipped his glasses back into his coat
(though a ghost of them hung on in the look in his eyes,
and the ringing we heard made light of this new pose)
and stood there squinting. He cleared his throat

and tapped a time or two on the microphone—
nothing. Again—and again nothing. Then someone
from deep in the platform shadows got up and ran
to him there, with the luck of the third time.

Some shuffling went on up there, and then some kind
of stumping, outdoor dance, its back turned to the audience,
before the machine sprang to life again
with a whack and a loud-muttered "Damn!"
(The laughter drew in waves from the farms around—
the one sound that would shore up all to come.)

He was heckled when he drew out the focals again;
he stood there reading his speech and looking down.
It threw out a rope of hope to the drowning—kind,
but dangerous: he might have been hanged. One
risk of his trade is that someone might be listening.

—Roy Schelle

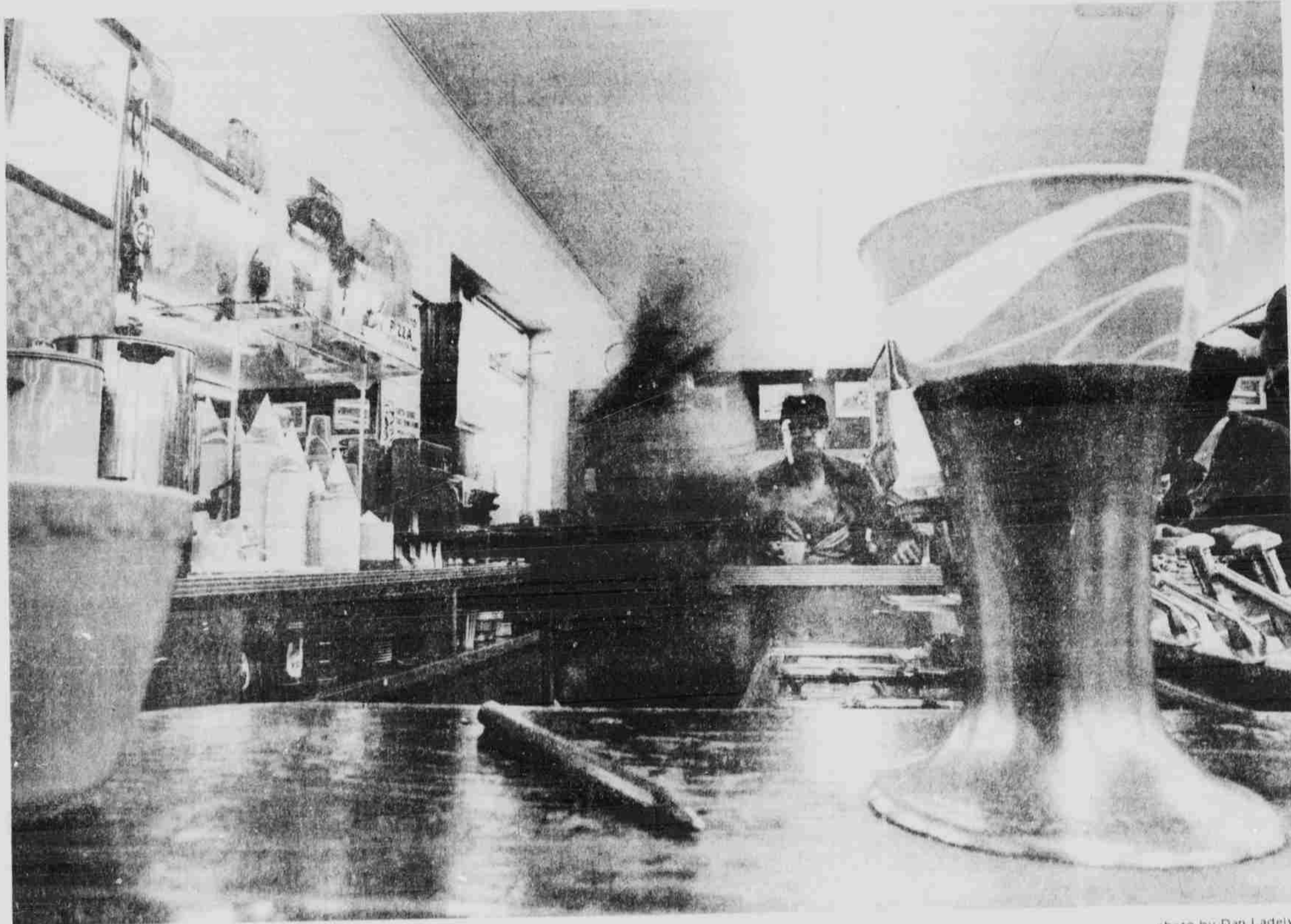


photo by Dan Ladely

The Earth Coming Green Again

Here, at the roots of the grass,
earth on its long axis
turns to us as it was.

as a flame leans out and catches
a climbing hop; a bean plant
and the yard is laid in swatches.

of ash, flickering green,
Un-tilt are shining!
I warm to you as a sign

that something was coming to pass
out here in cold and darkness,
with the sun at its southernmost.

and I think I know what it was
desires completing its course
in every part and twice

until the whole sky was spanned
with energy to burn
and, taking its own sweet time,

swung home like a compass hand.

—Roy Schelle

She sits in her apple
naked
conceiving a distant tree
covered by ripe wooden apples
waiting to be picked by me

—Patrick Ted Maloney

photo by Dan Ladely

