

This is a peculiar thing. Before going out, I always make a point of turning on the radio; when I come home, the living essence of my alcove seems to be dancing in space. It might only be my imagination. (And I've yet to tape those full-color pinups in my alcove.) When I get a good photograph of my alcove, I'll send it along. (You must be laughing. . . . I'm trying hard to show signs of an interior existence; as when you make something in your house, even if it's crude, it becomes yours and then you don't want to even take a step into the exterior.) I take one step, two steps out. I start my car and hear the same WJZZ jazz. Did you see the movie, of about a year ago, I guess, *The Deer Hunter*? Please look at the photograph. A young man in the neighborhood has arranged the carcass of a deer othe back of his car. I'm sending the nostalgic odor of blood.

LAKESIDE

Thank you for your letter.

At last, winter is reality. The tens of hundreds of lakes dotting suburban Detroit have frozen. The ice must be over a yard thick. I've forgotten what the average thickness is supposed to be, and even if I brush away the powdery snow and peer into the sheet of ice, which looks like cracked quartz (I think they often sell it in souvenir shops), I am unable to measure how thick it is. So let's just say it's "over a yard thick."

In small trucks, or are they vans, young people (at least I presume young) go "skating." They go straight ahead, then slam on the brakes, taking a slide. . . . Well, since roads are often icy around here, I suppose that is good practice. The ice groans with the weight of a car and sends the sound of "varoom" into the air. When I hear that noise, I remember vaguely something about Lake Suwa, of Japan's Shinshu District. (Is noise my destiny?)

How about the mysterious Lake Mashuko, which never freezes? I look in the dictionary: ". . . circumference 24 kilometers, depth 208 meters; a volcanic crater lake noted as one of the world's clearest lakes. . . ." I wonder if it's just too large and clean to freeze? In my dreams I see hairy grandfathers sliding on their bellies. Shwoosh. And here, at the Great Lakes . . . I read in the newspaper (*The Detroit News* —15 cents) Lake Erie has frozen.

In a corner of a neighborhood lake (literally, in a corner) kids have made a rink. They pretend they are playing a furious game of hockey in Detroit's Olympic Stadium. A large expanse of lake, small human forms. They can make a rink anywhere, but it's more pleasant to do it in a corner of a large lake. Nowadays, are you still making temporary playing fields in the corners of rice paddies? A field rink, a winter day, watching from a train window: these clearly remain in my memory.

One day I walked out on the frozen lake, dodged the skating trucks, said "Hi" and waved to the kids of the corner rink. I left the lake to visit the lakeside home of a friend (who rents someone's summer cottage for the winter). Well, that day I thought I'd enjoy a solitary walk on the lake. Wearing my heavy winter coat and my Spanish-made boots, I went out only to encounter problems. There were so many "No Trespassing" signs that there was just no place to walk along the lake. That made it difficult. I see now, in summer or winter, it's private domain. What do you think of the lakeside of the Baikal in Siberia?

I'm sending the picture I promised last month. On the desk is the rubber tree of *my* "domain." Do I water it too much? One by one its big leaves fall to the floor, now there are only two left. Still, dead trees are tastefully understated. White, downlike flowers bloom. I'm told it is called cat's tail. Isn't that what we call *tokusa*? I think it's somewhat like modern sculpture, in its line and in the realm of shadow. Sometimes I hear the music of Seiji Ozawa, but WJZZ is a jazz station.

AUTUMN FLOWERS

Did you have a chance to see what looked like an improvised "altar," that or a "flower arrangement" done by someone who had never done it before but ended up making one anyway? How did you feel, I wonder. I noticed something. The materials—are they called dry flowers?—can be left for months, even without water, and they don't change. I am told they are called cat's tail, in Japanese (according to the dictionary) *gama*, *tokusa*, *sugina*. When I went to pick those dry stalks, which are brown and shaped like *yaki-tori* skewers, they gave way lightly with a brittle snap. Since they are dry flowers, I could lean them against a wall and play around a little bit. If they had been wet flowers, it would have been a mess. Any daydreamer like myself (deluded idealist? believer in