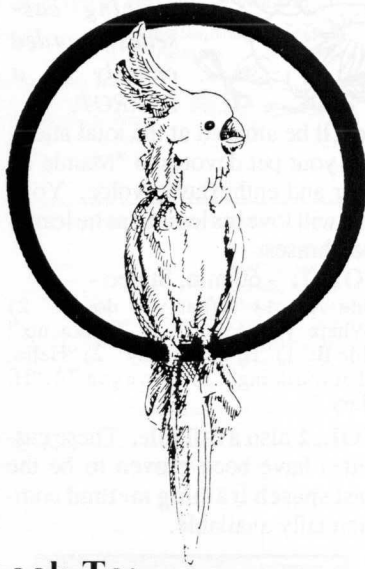


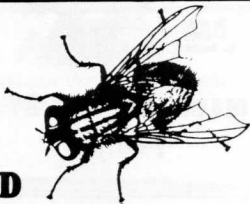
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Photo by author

WOODY

Part 6

EDITOR'S PROLOGUE: From the dim prehistory of the human race to this very hour, certain people have had special communion with certain animals. To one degree or another, I believe, we have all had such experiences.

The following column is about the relationship between a man and a parrot. It reflects the philosophical, introspective musings and intimate thoughts that many of us have had but have not expressed.

DETENTE

by Paul Wiener
St. James, New York

If secrets are invisible evidence, there is one secret about Woody about which I know almost everything. He himself offers infinite evidence. Woody is a loner, forced to exist utterly apart from his kind, indeed forced to be a "self," himself. Like most parrots, blue-

crowned conures are gregarious, noisily social birds meant to live amongst their own kind, their own sounds. They know and feel things partly through the reactions of other blue-crowned conures, whom they think of as themselves. Their birthright is a large green world of fruit, sun, space, speed, propagation, more conures.

It is so obvious that Woody doesn't live like that and never will. He lives a violated life. Most of what I think I love about him — his sidelong glances, his grumbling, his work on factory-cut dowels, his watchful submission to my fingers and to my wife's voice, the character of this parrot that bathes in a casserole dish — most of it is purely a result of his living separated from his kind — truly, separated from his soul. Most of Woody's cuteness has been squeezed from desperation, as has my love for him. His behaviors are characteristics of a Woody only fate has created, not of Woody as a typical, enviable blue-crowned conure who just happens to be paying us an extended visit for our own good.

Woody is an embarrassment, like my love, but it gives him strength, even power. It is the saddest thing I know about Woody — the power of his loveableness — and is why almost every time I feel tender, angry, or overjoyed with him, the feeling is accompanied by a shameful woe, despair at how I ever will achieve an honest relationship with this bird — as if we were equal to it: two unlikely symbols of their species, diplomats of alien races caught in the quicksand of circumstance. ●



Photo by Bud Reinick, Federal Way, WA

Two commercial displayers combined to make this very attractive booth at the Seattle convention; Over-The-Rainbow Bird Toys of Federal Way, WA, and Textiles of Clearwater, FL. For more on convention see page 50 this issue.