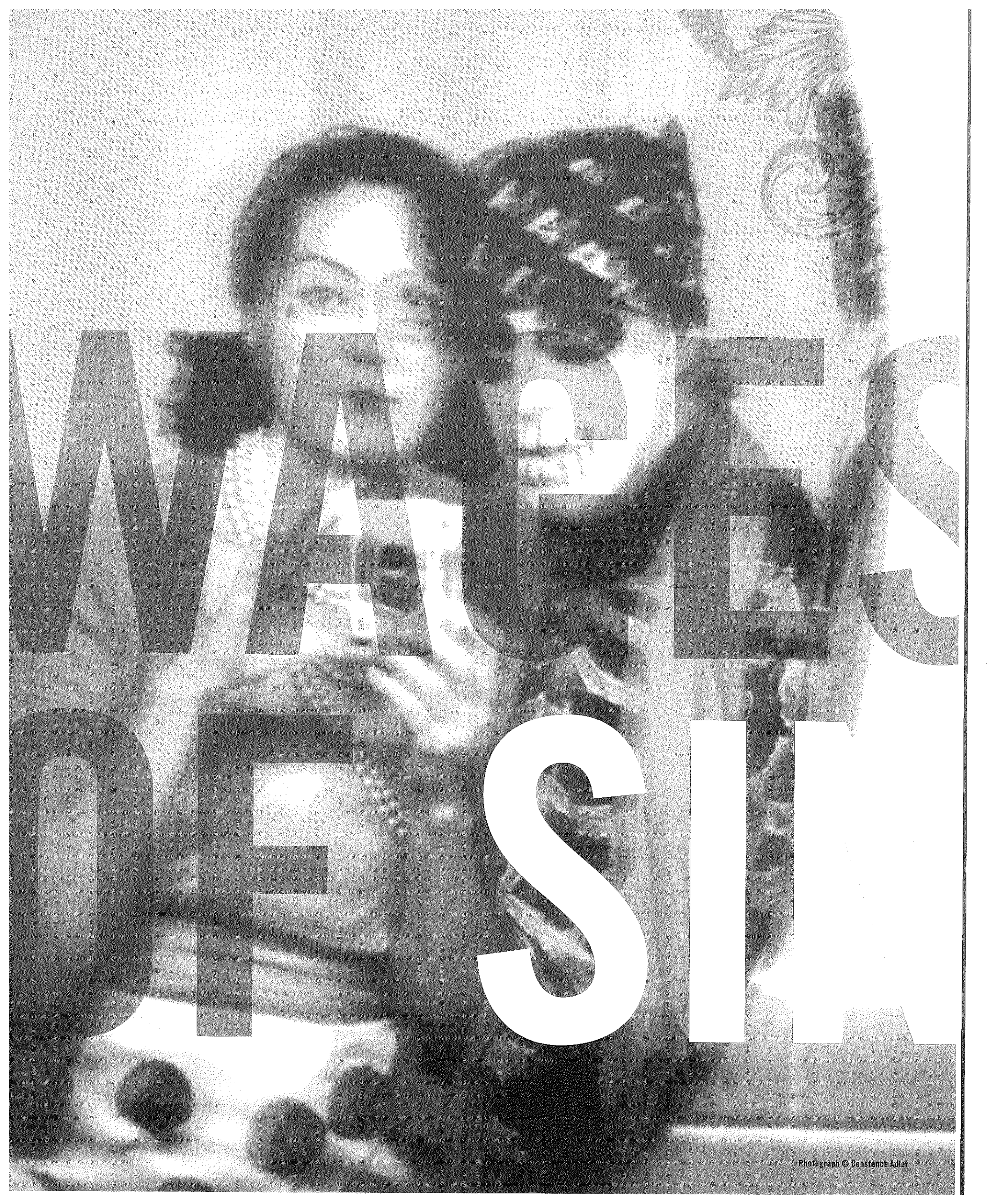


by Constance Adler

DEATH AND THE FAIRY

My costume consisted of a high pointed cone hat, covered in pink silk, draped with a sheer ecru veil and secured with a long pale green ribbon beneath my chin. Below I wore a pink satin strapless prom dress that I found at Thrift City, only I had massacred this dress so that the skirt rose in a large padded poof around my waist. I also glued a hundred or so lavender silk flower petals to the dress so they flapped in the breeze as I walked. (Never underestimate a girl with a glue gun.) Even farther below I wore pink lace knickers, a shocking red garter, pale pink and hot pink striped stockings, and a pair of pink patent leather Converse high-top sneakers. I was a riot of pink. Geoff said he'd never be able to take me seriously again after seeing me in this get-up. I consider that a small loss in the scheme of things.

On Mardi Gras morning this Pink Fairy danced with Death in front of St. Louis Cathedral. The Tremé Brass Band blasted away, while the crazy Christians marched up and down with their scary signs and shouted, "The wages of sin are death!"



Photograph © Constance Adler



No matter. "Hell for the company," I always say.

I like dancing with Death. He's strong, confident and doesn't care who's looking. Nor is he flustered by crazy Christians. Death smiles and waits. He is patient and compassionate. He may shake your hand. The great leveler, he accepts everyone. This year, however, Death wore a Saints helmet just to show where his true heart lies. That should explain how that "sudden death" coin toss in the Vikings game went in our favor. Death hovers over Chance. Don't kid yourself. Plus, Death loves the Saints because the Saints embrace Death with gladness. Whatever they do, the Saints are willing to die in order to do it. Certainly, they have died enough in the past to know what that means. Death rewards the Saints for entering into a conscious relationship with the end of life by making them brave and therefore invincible. It is the awareness of Death that pleases him. Death only wants to be recognized and appreciated. What any of us wants.

Death also has an appetite for Pink Fairies. He takes them with tea and toast in the morning...if he can catch one before she transforms into a cloud of smoke.

Today Emily sent the following: #885, c. 1864

*Our little Kinsmen — after Rain
In plenty may be seen,
A Pink and Pulpy multitude
The tepid Ground upon.*

*A needless life, it seemed to me
Until a little Bird
As to a Hospitality
Advanced and breakfasted.*

*As I of He, so God of Me
I pondered, may have judged,
And left the little Angle Worm
With Modesties enlarged*

Emily affects a faux innocence here. The poem seems like a harmless appreciation of nature. Look closer. Emily says that we are great and useful to God in the same way that the worm is great and useful to the bird—as food. He made us to be part of this cycle of eating and digesting, living, dying and fertilizing the earth. Don't kid yourself. This "modesties enlarged" is her grim joke. Modesty is a false pose. Humans put themselves at the top of the food chain, in order to see themselves as closest to God.

Thank you, Emily, for the reminder that our soft pink flesh is no better and no different than the pulpy mass on the ground. That we are all worm's meat in the end. You are weird, Emily, and morbid. Still, I like you.