

HARPER'S

HARPER'S MAGAZINE/JULY 2001 \$4.95



COURTESY KIM FOSTER GALLERY, NEW YORK CITY

"Fresh Kills 1," a photograph of the Staten Island landfill, by Susan Wides, was exhibited in February at the Kim Foster Gallery in New York City.

Minnesota a Southern Gourmet Feast, a crate of tangerines and dry-iced jumbo rock shrimp. The son was back at the old farm with a gorgeous and pleasant Swedish wife and blond children, elfin beauties. They loved Ulrich and believed him to be a dear eccentric. Benignly senile, deafened to communication with any but the nearest friends, who whispered in his ear. They were unaware he was a fool who disastrously misconstrued aeronautical possibilities in his dreams of "personal flight." Which is to say, a minimalist backpack and propeller raised above the buttocks of the pilot by titanium struts and powered by a camshaft spun by a featherlight nuclear pack almost invented by a renegade physicist and airport bum in Huntsville, Alabama, with whom Ulrich was in correspondence. There were problems of torque in free fall and necessary wingspan and even of where to place the rudder. Reversing the prop for brakeage brought also the complication of chewing up the legs, ass, and spine of the pilot.

As much had in fact transpired in Huntsville as Ulrich and the inventor looked not so much upward but more at tree level. The half of the pioneer aeronaut which remained brought a staggering lawsuit against the inventor and his philosophical adviser, Earl L. Ulrich of Redwood, MS. Though he lived, correctly, at Eagle Lake.

Ulrich had not told his son or his pals about this litigation, which Ulrich, the inventor, and the aeronaut were just after settling in an anteroom of the courthouse where the Alabama magistrate declared all three rampant idiots who owed the scientific community an apology, and a pledge to vacate themselves from his jurisdiction, a jurisdiction that now included all continental airspace into which they might in future hurl a human fuselage, forever. Ulrich rose and began an excursus in rebuttal, citing correctable errors quite obvious to them now, as if this project were steaming full ahead despite the judge, as the sad wretch with his artificial rectum and main colon gawked on from his