

# genesis

volume XXVII



Jaymi Anderson • Tess Baker • Katherine Bridgewater • Sally L. Burton  
Michael Coatney • Joseph M. Duncan • Carol Durbin • Julie Marie Frye  
Aaron Green • H. Suzanne Heagy • Marianne Hedges • Erin Kay Hiatt  
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Benjamin Foley Shine • Angela Taylor • Julie A. Taylor • Matthew Walsh  
Alex Walson • Becky Winnie • Donna Winsted • Jennifer Witten  
Daniel A. Young • Alexi Zekas • Jan Zunkel

spring 1999

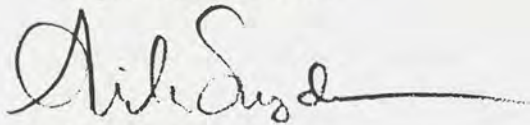
Cover:  
Winner - Best of Issue for Art  
**Kings**  
Oil on Canvas, 24"x30"  
by Kris Peterson

*genesis* is an opportunity for IUPUI students to showcase their creative talents in many different genres and mediums. The spirit of creativity at IUPUI seems to grow stronger with each new semester. We received over 400 submissions, more than doubling last semester's entries, which made the selection process very competitive. We enjoyed reading the great variety of submissions and seeing the creative fruits of IUPUI students.

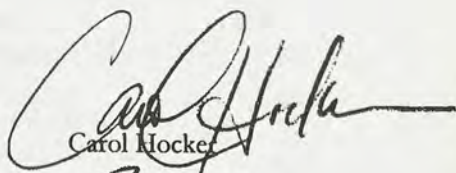
While we are excited to see how *genesis* is growing, it was difficult choosing only a small percentage to be published. The quality of the works has been pushed to a higher level this semester. We found a need for a longer publication to honor the great effort students put into their work. We hope you enjoy what we consider to be representative of the best creativity at IUPUI.

Several people worked many long hours to make *genesis* possible. We would like to thank everyone who cooperated to publish *genesis* this semester. To honor the student writers, artists, and staff, we will again hold a reception and reading. We would like to invite everyone to join in the celebration on April 26, 1999 at 6pm, in the Lilly Auditorium in the basement of the University Library—Room UL0130.

Sincerely,  
the *genesis* editorial board:



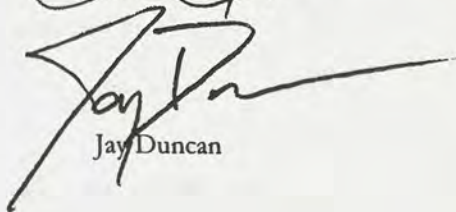
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# *genesis*

established 1972

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**Fusion**

My husband met Miles Davis  
*On the Corner* of seventh street.  
He had been strumming a funky beat  
and outta no-where this trumpet  
came resonating into the wind,  
joining the force with a blast of revelation.

A kinship through sound,  
conversations without words,  
instrumental fusion,  
like crickets chirping at night.  
He knew what Miles said,  
*In a Silent Way*.

He brought this music home.  
Never before had I heard a horn so sweet.  
He asked if I felt like dancin'  
to the three valve vibes,  
but he stepped all over my feet,  
typical of a musician.

We drank the *Bitch's Brew*  
and whizzing lights flashing  
came crashing,  
climbing and falling,  
Miles into our ears,  
shrouding the crevices of brain.

Inspiration for countless creations,  
compositions formed of freedom  
collage of improvisation,  
a *Kind of Blue* colored the air,  
caressing and coaxing the language of them,  
Swirling lessons of construction,  
melodic pairs, they shared. Rhythms.

by Angela Taylor





**Bass**  
Black and White Photo, 5" x 3½"  
by Tony Reitz

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**African Fable**  
(On Colonial Politics)

You are in the mouth  
of the lion

You think you can  
dance a while

Then  
jump off his tongue  
before he swallows

by Daniel A. Young

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## The Laundromat

A woman, older than she acts,  
perches herself on the corner of a washer.  
She grins as the spin cycle  
shakes the cool machine.

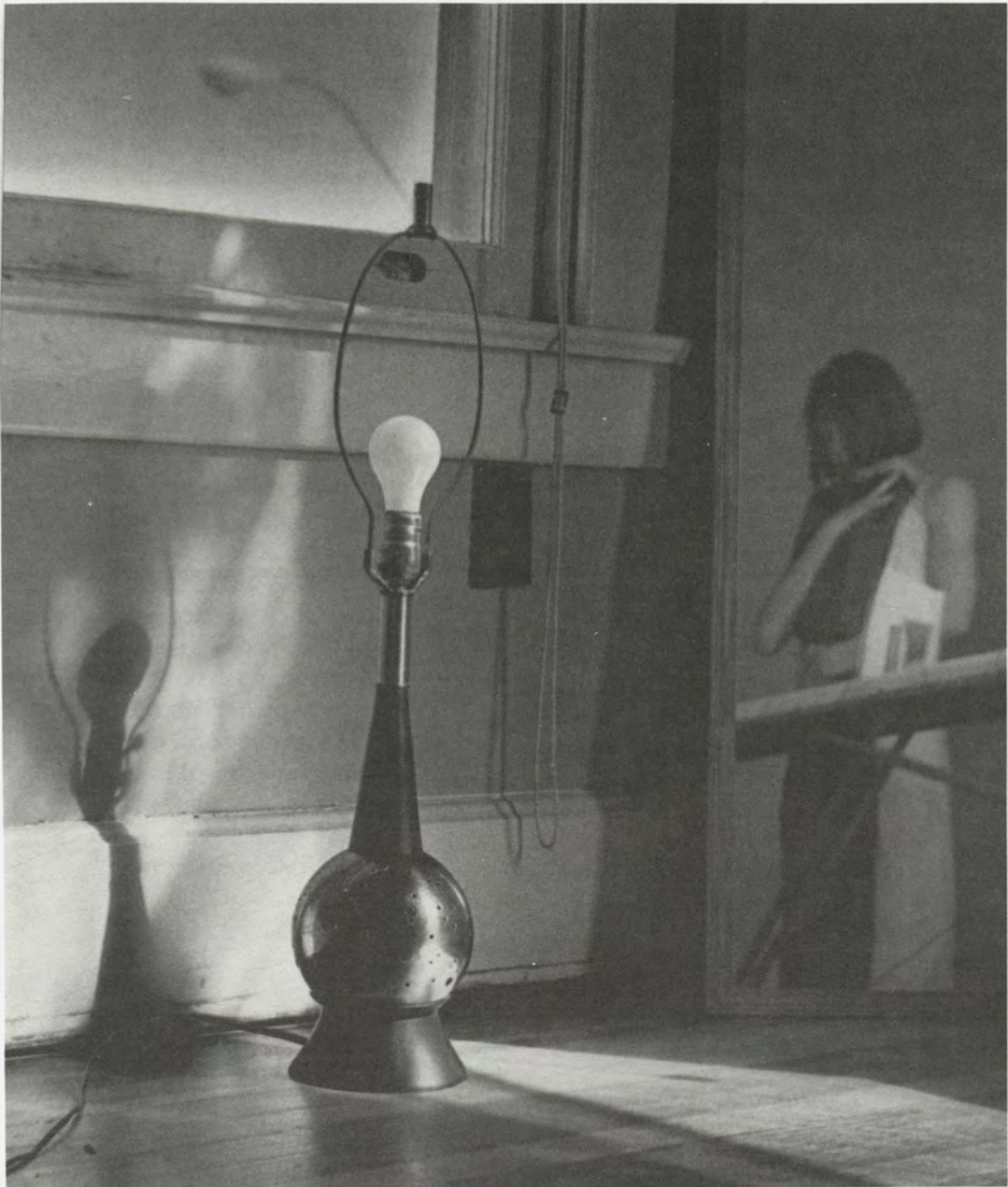
A silver-buckled guy with tight jeans  
empties the washer next to her.  
He notices, but pays no heed  
to the stubbles of hair on her jiggling thighs.

The woman glances his way  
as he bends over to remove his silk boxers.  
His buckle clinks on the machine  
with every undergarment he retrieves.

The woman's washer starts to bounce  
and wiggle - rhythmically - out of balance.  
The silver-buckled guy tries to control it  
by placing his full weight upon her wild machine.

A disgruntled attendant wipes her wrinkled hands  
on her stained, red smock and nudges between the two,  
terminating the whole sordid affair  
by simply lifting the lid.

by Sally L. Burton



Black and White Photo, 9"x12"  
by Jan Zunkel

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## Over the edge of a boat

Murky green  
what's below?  
Perpetual  
darkness.

Monsters  
lurking....  
beneath  
the deep.

by Erin Kay Hiatt

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## Why Don't You Crawl Out Your Window

Why don't you crawl out your window  
So we can go down to the shore,  
And take our shoes off in the grass  
To goose-bump in the water glass  
And scream "Bon soir, Madame la Lune!"  
We'll dance to some lone cricket's tune.

Who cares if it's early November?  
The water will be there still,  
Waiting to rush over our naked feet,  
All bubbling and cold.

by Benjamin Foley Shine

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## Velvety Darkness (Fire Escape)

I sit in amber nightfall,  
so still I sit amongst the sounds  
hearkening to this, as night wraps me  
in velvet darkness  
lost, tossed, and heavy in my thoughts,  
of the eternal game-moth to flame  
say my ancestors  
moth to light, in my reality  
mortality  
still imminent, wisped away in flashes of  
memory, past to present.  
The scent of summer kissing fall  
not all—can come into this  
bliss  
of subjective, sublime, formless  
divinity of the mind,  
as such go to your own  
piece of nightfall  
mine's only on loan  
repossessed by the sun.  
His generosity will loan you  
another one,  
on the 'morrow.  
To find your own piece of bliss,  
and to enjoy the stillness,  
of being wrapped in velvety darkness

by Clayton D. Rhodes

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**Child of a Purpose**

by Michael Coatney

I've tried to think back on the whole thing, as though playing it through my mind again would yield up a different ending. Oh, it started pretty badly too, that's for sure. I was taking out the garbage. There wasn't much. My lunch counter never did much business in the winter, though I couldn't blame people for not wanting to sit in the cold and eat. But I would roll up the metal gate every morning at 5:30 and feel the meat-freezer wind blow off the street and rip right over the eight black stools into my face. I would stay warm enough—what with the grill and the fryer blasting away all day. But even with the canvas flap rolled down from the awning to block the wind, the occasional customer who did screw up and squirm onto one of the torn, frozen pedestals never made the mistake again. I suppose they felt the warmth come over the counter at them, but their feet probably froze. Oh, I didn't starve. I managed to keep the food locker stocked. Mostly, I sold a lot of coffee, plenty of hot, hot soup, and some decent take out for lunch. I'd done better if wasn't for the lousy corner. Nothing but brownstones up and down four ways from the intersection, the drug store that I rented the window space from for my little café-de-crap, and the old church across the street that no one but the priest seemed to go to anymore. Hadn't had a customer all night, not the church and not me, so I shuttered up about 11:00 and went to sling the garbage down the alley when I hit that patch of ice. Both feet went straight to the sky and I came down like making angels in the snow. Hard.

So hard I just lay there waiting for the pain to follow and hit me like the slab of concrete had. I was covered with grease, peelings, you name it. The bag had burst all over me. And I looked over my shoulder to get my bearings—I was just realizing what had happened—when I saw it, hunched right by my hand. Now, this wasn't just any rat. It was one of those 10-pound black rats that'll square off with you on the subway stairs in a game of chicken until you stand aside and let him through. Jesus, I am scared to death of rats but I couldn't move. And just as I noticed, beyond its shoulder, the stained-glass window of Mother Mary holding the infant baby—the one the kids had thrown the rock right through his face—she saved me. I saw the club slap down like God's vengeance on the rat. Just like that. I guess it was a baseball bat she had picked up off the street. Next thing I was in her arms.

"You gonna make it?" She was a merciful angel on a black-hearted December night. And so I owed her just as much as *he* would come to owe her, which made me just as guilty.

"Just stunned for a minute." Hardly thanks. I was more

ashamed now, but somehow, lying in the slushy cold grit of salt and snow and covered in steaming garbage I felt safe in her arms. I tried to joke. "I'm getting too old for this." At 52, I really was, but I wanted her to say "no."

"Let's see if you can stand up sailor." And she hoisted me off the ground like a fight manager. As I stood, the garbage rolled off onto the heap of fur on the sidewalk. "Looked like he wasn't too happy with some eggs you must have cooked him."

"Yeah," was all I could manage. She still had her arms around me, and it was then that I noticed how young she was, even in the blackness. Maybe 18 or 19.

"Tell you what, you make the coffee, I'll clean up the mess. Can you make it on your own?" I thought I could, didn't want to, but she was really *telling* me. So I did. Rolled up the smaller gate that served as a door and went back in to pour two cups of what was left from a rotten night. She cleared the mess with a broom and snow shovel. Then she came in and sat down at the counter. "I'm not touching your little friend, so I guess he's all yours." The place had warmed up a little since I had rolled down the big gate, and I hurt, so I slid around the counter to a stool. I was afraid I'd make her nervous if I closed the small gate, so the place had started to chill again already. Never could figure out why I bought the place. It was one of those open-air deals, the kind you find in any big city where they take an old storefront window, make a box out of it, and stick the counter where the window used to be, with the stools on the sidewalk side. No outer wall like a restaurant, just the metal gates you roll down like a frozen metal wall between the stools and the sidewalk when you close up shop. Like a real pro, I bought the place one summer when it was busy. Never occurred to me to think about winter, when people wouldn't sit in the cold. Spent my whole life savings, too—what little there was.

"Coffee's pretty bad." I had made it hours before. I didn't mind, but she deserved better. The least I could do was warn her. And she was the best-looking thing that had sat on one of my stools in months. "Sorry about the cold." She just smiled, and I thought I wasn't going to get another word out of her.

"Aren't you going to get rid of it?" Now she had a little mischievous glimmer, a little of the street-wise in her eyes, and I understood what kind of girl she was. And she didn't accuse me with those eyes, didn't let them call me a coward. Not like *his* did when she had him get the rat. We must've been there for a half hour when he walked through the open gate.

"Still open? I could use a coffee, black." He moved toward the stool on her other side.

She answered, "Not really. We're just trying to figure out a way to get rid of that rat outside. You wouldn't have any ideas,

would you?" She smiled at him, and he gave me that look that seemed to say, 'what's your problem?' "Tell you what," she offered him, "you get rid of the rat, and I'll make the coffee." *He* couldn't resist her any more than I could. When he got back, she had a third cup of coffee on the counter, and this time *she* closed the small gate. "I'm Jill." She held out her hand to him.

"Nate." He shook it, and she asked him what he did for a living. "Medical Student." He said it gravely, and with capital letters, like he *already* walked on water. But I couldn't help liking him because *she* did--probably because of the rat--and I owed her. He asked her back, "What do you do?"

"Look for work, mostly. Nate, this is..." She looked at me. We hadn't traded names.

"Frank." I guessed they *knew* what I did, or didn't care.

"Of course," she said, like she had forgotten. And as though we were old friends, she added, "I always call him *Bump*, but you'll call him Frank." She never told him why she called me that. And for the next year and a half, the three of us were something. Until I screwed it all up.

By late January, the world had turned to glass, and I had taken to walking more carefully. Business was like the frozen white vapor that escaped your mouth in puffs as you huffed your way up the street. Customers vanished in the bitter gusts as quickly as they walked by. Truthfully, I was more lonely than broke. As always, I ate well enough, and if I stayed busy, I stayed warm. Cleaning kept me busy. And I didn't really have anything to spend money on, anyway. I usually unfolded a cot and slept behind the counter at night if it wasn't too cold. During the week I closed early. But on Fridays and Saturdays if it wasn't snowing too badly I would try to keep the gate up until people rolled home late at night, sometimes until 2 or 3 in the morning, catching 2 or 3 hours of sleep before I opened back up. I couldn't sleep anyway. Friends were hard to come by. Good friends were even harder, but lately I knew I could count on Jill to come by pretty often with her Mother Mary smile.

Sometimes she would drop by during the day and she would come around behind the counter with me, pull up a stool, and sip coffee or soup or both and read the want ads. She never seemed to find anything that suited her. But she always had plenty of money, and she sometimes brought little gifts—a pack of cigarettes, a magazine I liked, maybe a pint of something to keep me warm. I would have done anything for her. She never asked. Mostly she would come by at night and flash some money with a hearty "Hey sailor" or a "How's it hoppin' Bump?" I liked to think she came by so late just to be with me, that I was her refuge from the Arctic wasteland that lit



the night if the moon was full. But then one night I noticed her across the street, in the little pool of white below the streetlamp just in front of the long Mary with the window-sized halo. A car pulled up, she leaned in the window for a minute, then got in. And I finally realized what I should have known all along. She was always looking for work all right, and she was *finding* it. A half hour later, she was back, this time dropped on my side of the street, and she did a little hopscotch across the frozen crust to my counter.

"Hey Bump." I couldn't look her in the face, but I knew she was giving me the smile. "Are you my friend, Bump?" Now I had to look. Maybe she did come by just to be with me, to be friends. I poured her a coffee, and put it down in front of the stool behind the counter. Then I cut a double size piece of apple pie and put it in the microwave.

"I will always be your friend, Jill." Silence. The microwave finally broke it, and I took out the pie, set it in on the counter, patted the stool, and looked her dead on. "Now come sit down and eat your pie." She sat. I crossed in front and closed the main gate, even though I always got a visit from Nate about this time of night. He would see the light coming from inside and know I was still open. I sat next to her. She gave me the smile again, to make sure I had seen it.

"You're not gonna tell on me are you, Bump?" Again, the smile. "You don't know my life, Bump, you weren't there. It was not a pretty thing." I guess I understood. And so she ate her pie, and when I poured us each a second cup, I topped them both off with a swigger of some Royal Crown she had bought me. And I raised my cup in a toast.

"To good friends." She raised hers and smiled, and I looked in her eyes, and I couldn't tell her how I really felt, how jealous I was of the guy in the car, or the many guys who must have paid to be with her.

"You won't tell Nate?" I shook my head and smiled back, and I was sure she knew how hard the smile came.

"Won't tell me what?" We almost spilled our brew as he stepped in and brushed the fresh white powder from the shoulders of his peacoat. More snow. "Are you two hatching plans against me now?" He was blowing breath through his hands so I poured him a coffee, double swigger.

Jill answered. "That you're a preppie med student and you can't join our gang until you see the real meaning of life." She suddenly ran outside. Not sure what he'd done, he moved to a stool opposite the spot she'd been at.

"What did I do?" He took the coffee, added cream, sipped and whistled. "Jeez, Frank, that's quite a little cup of fire." He slurped some more and gave a thumbs up, then let loose a great shiver. "Cold outside." Like white lightning, a chunk of snow sailed through

the open doorway, catching Nate squarely in the head. Startled almost to anger, he froze. Jill stood in the open doorway, a dozen or more clumps in her arms. She tossed me a chunk, then heaved another one at Nate. I got the idea, and smacked him, too. She ran over to me, and we let loose a mighty volley at him. Griping, ducking, backing out the whole way, he stumbled outside. We followed. And for the next fifteen minutes, we played like children, Jill fetching me a supply of chunks so I wouldn't have to run on the ice. Finally frozen, we returned to the coffee, whiskey, and warmth.

"Preppie!" She would throw at him from time to time, and we would all smile. It was his official initiation into our world, a kind of crossing of the threshold from acquaintance to friend, and I was jealous to see our private circle grow.

The end of March brought a little warmth and a tad more business. The sun had turned from white to yellow and the snow melted and the wind carried in the smells of life. And the last day of the month was the best of them all. It was a day to leave your coat at home and come outside in your sweater and spring jacket and everywhere smelled like fresh wash as the melted snow carried away the last of the stale winter. And I cast the spell of bacon frying and sausage and ham and greasy potatoes over the whole neighborhood, billowing like the fires of life over the crowd that stood and sat before work to fill themselves with my hearty grub. Smoke billowed over the heads of these twelve poor souls, four of them *standing* to eat, and rolled toward the church and the window that showed the disciples lined up like my patrons for the last supper. Below it, in boxes that he tended like they were his children, were the priest's little parish of yellow daffodils basking in the early morning sun.

She had brought this on, this whole scene of glory, working the passers-by for a week like a carnival shark, greeting them with an other-worldly "good morning," and a "hey! Try a piece of this bacon. Isn't it the best bacon you've ever tasted?" Then today, proudly broadcasting "the first day of spring," she culled them in off the sidewalk, laughing, joking, teasing every one, to sit for breakfast. Even when the counter was full, she'd ask someone who'd finished eating to stand for their coffee, freeing up a stool for the next victim to wallow in my hash. They stayed mostly to please the strawberry smile with the blond halo and to steal another look at the yellow sweater, or just drift in the airy mixture of bacon and perfume and flowers. But I didn't mind. I hoped they'd be back. Jill did her best to be sure they would, calling after each one of them with a "come back and see me," or a teasing, "now isn't that just about the best stick-to-your-ribs you ever ate?" and as the crowd thinned, she took a cup of coffee over to the stoop of the brownstone next door where

Nate lived, to ambush him just like the rest.

Despite living there, he'd hardly ever stopped in for real food. He'd come by for coffee, soup, maybe some pie, and always conversation, but we worried that he didn't eat. He spent all day, every day at school, and he must've eaten there, but weekends he usually stuck around the neighborhood, mostly at home, probably studying, and the only thing I ever saw him carry to or from was books. Jill resolved to change that, even though we both thought he mostly tried to avoid mingling with a class of people he really couldn't understand and didn't try to. And so today she tried to take the neighborhood to him, and waited on his steps. It wasn't long 'til he came out, and he smiled when he saw her, then lifted his nose to the flowery, greasy wet smell of Jill and me and spring. She patted the step beside her and he sat and they sipped and talked and laughed but didn't come over for breakfast. Finally, she wrapped both hands around his throat and shook him with a kind of choking motion, then stopped, and he raised his hands in surrender. She stood, turned toward me, and shouted "bacon-eggs-scrambled-rye-toast-lots-of-butter, Bump," and sent me a high-five that I returned.

"To go!" he hollered too loud. "I've got to get to school!" And while I cooked the eggs, she scolded him.

"You can be late one time!" She punched him in the arm. "The world isn't going to stop if you walk in fifteen minutes late one time!" It must've worked, because a few minutes later she came to get the food while he sat on the stoop. "He's going to sit with me on the steps and eat, Bump. Best I could do." She refilled their coffees and carried the bounty back to him. And while I catered to the last of the early morning crowd, I watched her *feed* him, laughing, joking, pleading with every bite like a mother with her infant, he protesting every forkful. It was almost more than I could bear to watch. Her sweater swarmed around him and I was sure her smell did, too. And I could hear her giggles as she said, "plllllleease, just one more bite."

"No, please, I've really got to go," he begged over and over. But I could tell he was wrapped in her spell. The daffodils wagged their yellow fingertips at me as I heaved a sigh and tired not to mind. Finally, the breakfast was done and the coffee finished, and as he rushed off to his classes he looked over his shoulder at her with the eyes of a man escaping from a hex. "Thanks, Frank," he called back, not sure if he meant it.

"Great morning, right Bump?" As she plopped hard on an empty stool, I had to smile and nod. It really had been, thanks to her, bold or not. Every man at the counter stole a look at that proud yellow sweater, as Nate had done a dozen times, and I did too. She would get the smiles she wanted, even if she had to do it this way. It was all she knew.

It didn't take a couple months to turn itself around. Nate worked her like a vacuum salesman. She tried hard not to buy it. It was the kind of warm out that begged you not to go inside. And everywhere you looked, the little cut-glass chunks of stained glass color jumped out of orange marigolds and red petunias planted in the little boxes on the street and the bright clothes that told you May was here to stay. No one hurried. The counter was busy three times a day and I had lots of friends. Everywhere the air was music. Traffic sang like an orchestra warming in the pit. Kids ran up the street laughing at their own insolence and my customers chattered about absolutely nothing or even less important things like politics. Music played all day from the radio she had perched on the shelf that used to hold the picture of my wife. She had made me take it down, said ghosts like music too. Danced for me all day that day. Smiled her smile. And kissed me full on the mouth, saying "that's from *her*." Gave me a dozen roses that day and a "you're my friend, right, Bump?" and a wink that sent those block-long legs to their next mercy killing.

Today they had Nate's wide-eyed envy as they lounged on his stoop below cut-off shorts and a red t-shirt that battled for glory with his tangerine-colored polo and both of them forgot the world had other business. They were like two prize fighters squared off in the ring, each trying to put the other down for the count. I knew she'd win, and I couldn't help but admire her moves from ringside. She never looked him in the face, never gave him an opening, kept her arms folded across her chest like true guardians of untold treasure. Face uplifted to the sun, she worked those legs like scissors, one knee perched on top of the other while she smiled and laughed and shook her head. No, she was telling him, no, I'm not buyin' yet; not just yet.

They kept at it that way almost 'til lunchtime, until hunger got to her, or the hardness of the steps or he finally told the right story about his daring exploits at the Medical Center or the soccer game he'd won in high school or the time he and a hundred of his best friends and saved the Pope from drowning. Without a word, without even looking him in the face, she nudged her shoulder just once against his, the kind of nudge that says "all right, I'll try it, but just for a week." She was finally ready to buy.

Her voice lifted over the traffic sounds toward me like a violin. "You scare away all the customers again, Bump?" I just hung my head low in sorry shame. It always brought her to the counter, even though we both knew it was just an act. "Must not be smiling enough, Bump." She was already halfway to the nearest stool.

"I just never could get the hang of that, Jill." I looked up at her and smiled.

“What’s for lunch, Frank?” Nate had taken to coming down from his studies twice a day on weekends, and we were always glad to see each other. They each took a seat.

“Too early for lunch.” Jill never ate much during the day. “How about a coke?”

“Two cokes, Nate?” He nodded, and I filled the icy glasses ‘til they overflowed. They picked up where they must have left off.

“We could go to the art museum next Friday...” Seemed they were negotiating the accessories.

“The museeeuum?” She rolled her eyes—a tough sell.

“How about the theater? There’s a new...”

“The Theeeeeeater? Nate, where are you from?” She never passed up the chance to remind him he was out of his home pond. “Does anybody really still go to the theeeater?” And she pulled the red ribbon from her hair and started the scissors working again.

“The symphony?” Now he was blushing, and I took pity on him.

“I always wanted to go to the symphony Nate.” I was lying through my teeth. “What’s it like?”

She shot me a secret look that said “you’re going to blow the sale!” as he stared into his coke. “How ‘bout we just go to the movies and come back here for coffee with Frank?” It wasn’t what he wanted, wasn’t much different from any other night, except for the movie part, but it was a start, and he was relieved to finally get a signature. They both smiled, and so did I, and the orange sun got suddenly warmer, and I was glad for both of them, even if I wished it had been me.

That summer was one of those lusty ones that burned purple in the evening and sweated well into the night. The kind of summer that reminded you of the taste of carnivals as a kid. The cotton candy, elephant ears, lemonade, Polish sausage with fried onions and syrupy cokes and too much candy. The sticky hot that makes you taste your own sweat as it rolls down your face while you flip burgers over the grill. And even the angry violet thunderstorm clouds turn to steam before they bless you with their bounty, grumbling as they pass you by overhead and threaten to come by again tomorrow. Each day swelled so big it hid the line between it and the next until it seemed like a week had passed since you felt the cool air of an intervening night. Daytime business had dried up with the coffee pot but I couldn’t keep the ice tea pitcher full enough once afternoons and weekends brought me desert travelers from afar. Nights brought the full glory of city life and a full counter and a full till. And Nate and Jill went out almost every night.

He must've known he'd never gain entry into her world despite living in the middle of it, but it didn't matter much since he'd finally coaxed her into his. They did go to the symphony, the museums, the "theeeeater," and he even talked her into the opera, for God's sake, which she'd vowed never to return to, and flashed him that smile. And they'd gone to the ball game, the movies, and the beach. And every time, he'd picked her up at my counter, where they'd had a coke while I'd sipped ice tea, and she smiled that smile and they told me what time they'd be back. And they'd always come back for another coke, or a little ice cream and she walked him to the stoop and said good night and she'd come back to the counter and told me all about it. Until that night. The one where the sweat washed down the street at midnight in the 100-degree heat and business was so busy I didn't have time to wipe the counter before the next customer had sat down. It was two in the morning when I realized I hadn't seen them. Tell the truth, I'm not sure what time or if they'd said they'd be back. They just always were. And I worried, but I figured they'd just seen how busy I was and said goodnight and gone on their way. Or gotten tied up in snarling traffic downtown. But they never did come. And I couldn't sleep. And by four a.m. I'd sat in the open gate of the doorway on a stool and drank myself into a miserable state when I heard her voice. It carried through the suffocating air like the first cool breeze of the week and I looked at the clarion angels in the tall windows over the door across the street in the violet robes and thought I'd dreamed it. But then I heard it again. And this time it pierced the air like a baby's cry or a wounded animal. Or was that what it was? One more time and this one like a faraway and lusty siren rising, then falling, and I walked out onto the sidewalk and looked at the angels and their trumpets, and then I realized. And I turned around and look up, up above the stoop next door, up to the third floor window where Nate lived, wide open, begging for a little relief. I stood for what must have been an hour and looked up at that window, listening for another sound. As the heat washed over me, I thought of them on top of the sheets and their skin salty and glowing with sweat and the way their lips must've tasted it and each others' mouths. And I thought of the way her body would have felt and how he must've pressed his chest up against hers and felt her hair in his fingers. I could see every detail through the window twenty feet over my head just as though I were tall enough. And I cried.

September brought rain. It started with afternoon thunderstorms that drove people under my canvas awning and kept them there long enough to buy something. The best clouds would let up long enough to let the people on their way, then start up again, sending me a whole new crop. The world turned green again, its summer thirst finally quenched, first by downpours, then whole days

of drizzling rain that never let up. Grass grew back in the little patches in front of the church and trees along the street remembered their leaves. Flower boxes could hold their own without the daily hose and the city bathed its summer grime away newly baptized in the river with Jesus in the green and blue window. The music of the street was replaced by a sodden rhythm punctuated here and there by the thundering rolls of heavenly kettledrums.

Nate had done the right thing, the good thing, and I got to see Jill more than ever. He had asked her to move in with him even though she'd made him drop to bended knee like a formal proposal. He stayed around home more now, complained that it was hard to study in the little flat but she'd said "pleeeeee" and he'd given in. I got to know him better, and we'd hit it off better than ever. Seemed he'd come from a pretty wealthy family and they'd wanted him to be a lawyer just like Dad but he'd wanted medicine like Uncle William and Mother'd made Dad give in but things were never the same, so he moved out on a small allowance and we were all he could afford for now. Said he wanted to help sick people but I thought he just wanted anything that wasn't Dad. On soggy afternoons he'd sometimes bring a book down to the counter but he wouldn't read it. We'd just talk about things. About fishing and baseball and places we'd been to. And he'd started bringing me little things just like Jill did. A nice *Cross* pen that I was afraid to use and a little Buddha he said would bring me luck and some good cigars that we'd smoked together even though neither one of us smoked and once in a while a little pint of something that'd keep me company while they went out on the town together. Mostly books. Books that he'd read or books that he hadn't from Michener to Chekhov to Dickens. And always we would talk about them if I got around to reading them or even if I hadn't. Mostly he talked about the misery in the world and when I asked him why, he'd told me how rough he'd had it growing up. How every minute was planned and how hard he'd had to work at everything and how it still wasn't good enough. And the rain kept coming and the green got greener. And I'd try to tell him how rough it was on the streets. About crack mothers and crack babies and heroin and angel dust and ecstasy and men who beat the life and the spirit and the soul out of the only people that still cared about them. He saw it all at the Medical Center—the addicts, the injuries, the filth. But I'd told him the stories behind it. About people who never had an ounce of the hope that he'd had and who smiled every day anyway just to feel the feel of it. About people who'd really rather die and were really better off dead but didn't have the courage for it and so killed themselves off slowly the only ways they could. And he'd grown sullen as the rain. He said he'd always thought poor people had it good because nothing could be as bad as his childhood. And he'd wondered aloud if it was worth it. *What?* I'd asked, and he'd said *anything*.

And Jill'd gone and taken a job. She'd said it would help with cutting corners and I think it did but she'd also bought me things and bought him things and bought some new things to wear. And she'd said she *hated* the job when she showed up at the counter the first day with her shamrock colored vest from the grocery store where she'd been hired for the cash register. But she never complained again, she was so happy with the rest of her life. And Nate had tried to talk her into school but she said first she'd have to get her high school diploma and we knew she was scared. "Maybe," she said. "We'll see. First I have to see about something else." And that's as much as she'd talk about it. I'd wondered what it was. And so had he. And she reminded me of my promise never to tell him what she used to do and I tried to reassure her that I never would. But I told her I thought she should. And I really did. I thought about him finding out some other way. "Are you my friend, Bump?" she said, and I dropped it. One day she announced that she had a special night planned for the three of us. They met up around 11:00 at the counter and she brought a two-liter bottle of Burgundy and a green candle and glasses. She was excited, or nervous or both. And we poured a round and drank it and poured another and drank it too and as she poured one more and I wondered, she said she had a toast.

"To Baby," she said. And smiled the smile.

"And back to you, baby," he replied, and took a drink. She just looked at him, and repeated the toast.

"To *Baby*." And he looked at her with nothing but a question mark on his face.

"*Baby*," she replied, and patted her belly. I nearly laughed. Nate just looked. And we all waited for him to say something. He didn't. We just sat and drank and finished the bottle and he just stared straight ahead. And a drop finally rolled down her cheek and she wiped it away and ran inside to choke on the rest.

They argued about it for a month and never got anywhere. Nate didn't want to bring another child into the world, he said, and she replied that it wasn't just *another* child. They argued about how it had happened. She said it was an accident and he said she did it on purpose. She told him it would all work out and he refused to believe it. He said they couldn't afford it and she said of course they could, they'd live right here, and get more money from his parents if they needed it. He was going to be a *doctor*, after all. With this he'd gotten angry and refused to talk at all for a week. He said neither one of them was ready to be a parent and that *his* parents wouldn't accept her into their world and that her world would never take him in. And if it weren't for the baby, I'd almost have been happy for the growing wall between them since I'd always been a little jealous. But I'd look



up at the manger scene with the blue blue sky in the big window on the corner of the church. And I'd get angry with myself. Like the innkeeper in Bethlehem, I was the only place these two could go to get in from the storm.

She'd come to me by herself and sit and talk about nothing. "Jill," I'd say, and she'd just keep talking. "*Jill.*" And she'd look at me. I asked her why she didn't just put the baby up for adoption. And she said that wasn't the point.

"Don't you get it, Bump?" but she never smiled much anymore.

"What?" I said.

"He doesn't really *love* me." And I wanted to say that she was right and take her in my arms and tell her that *I* did, and that *I'd* raise the baby with her and that together we'd do fine and we'd save and we'd get a real restaurant and she'd go back to school and we'd have a good life. But I was too scared. And then she locked her eyes on mine for what seemed like forever. And the deep blue sky swam behind her. "What am I going to *do*?" And finally I said it. All of it. And her shoulders slumped. Like the soul had just flown out of her. And she didn't say another word.

He came to me too, angry at first, then calm as he explained to me that he hadn't thought it through, that his family would never buy it but that it didn't really matter, anyway. He said he loved her and everything but he just wouldn't raise a baby right now, probably never. And he appealed to me to see his point and I admitted I did. Where would the three of them ever be welcome outside of my little stand? And I asked him if they'd talked about an abortion and he said they hadn't.

"I just can't understand her anymore, Frank. I just can't see where she's coming from." He said he thought they'd just be better off apart and I was desperate to keep us together at any cost. Desperate to see her happy.

"No you don't, Nate. You couldn't," I said. He had never really been able to understand the people he lived right in the middle of, why they just ground it out a day at a time and only looked forward to the part of the day when they weren't conscious. And I couldn't take it anymore. He *had* to understand. "How do you think she got by before you came along, Nate?" I'd have given my damned soul to take those words back.

"I don't know. I never really thought about it. She won't talk about her family, school, nothing. I didn't want to press it." We sat in silence as the blue grew deeper and the chill started to set in and Nate went inside himself with thought. The silence broke itself with the only thing it could. "How *did* she get by, Frank?" And I *told* him. About the cars in the middle of the night and the pools of light under the streetlamps and the fistfuls of money and the gifts she'd

bring me and how I'd promised on my oath to never tell. And he never batted an eye.

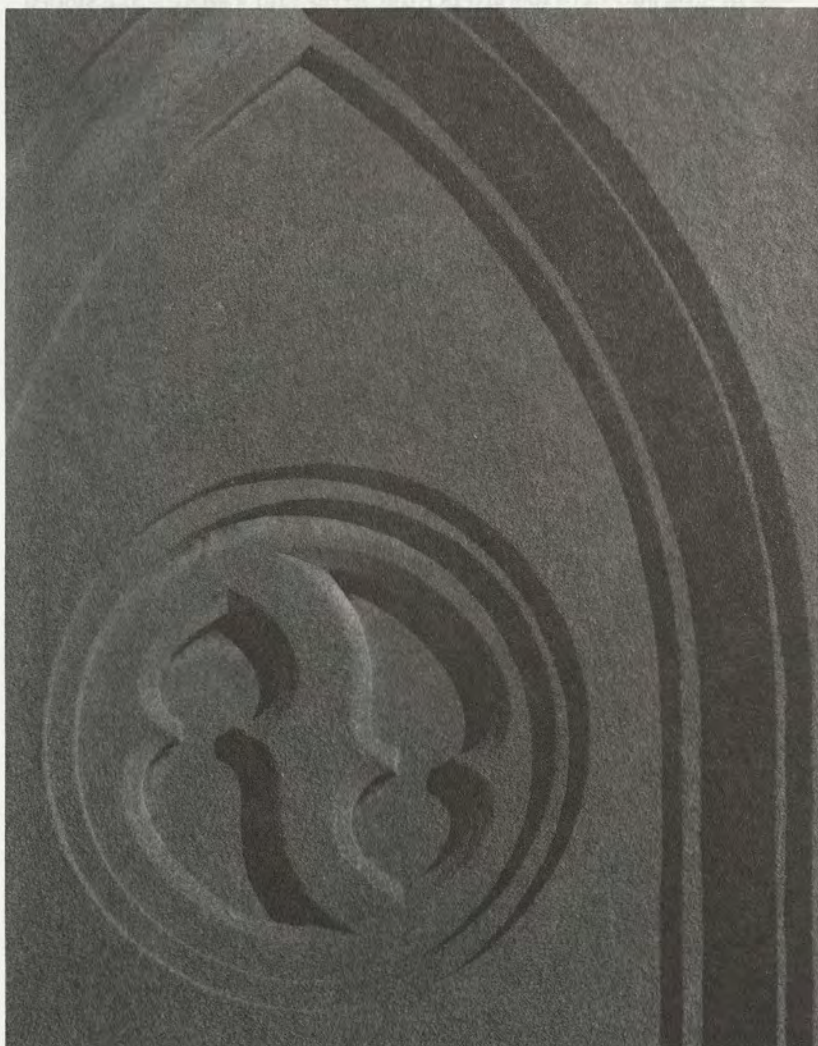
She came running down the sidewalk from the stoop so fast I never got a word out. I knew right away what happened and felt like breaking every dish in the place. He'd blown it. Five minutes later he came down, hair a mess, shoes barely tied and a look of glaze on his face. And he told me that he'd explained to her how he finally understood and about how he loved her and why didn't they just get an abortion and they'd start all over, just her and him and me. And he said it didn't matter what she'd done to get by but that it was all the more reason not to have the baby. And all I could do was stand and look away from him.

The months rolled by and I didn't see him much and I didn't see her at all until that last morning. But I worried every single day and on into the icy gray nights and I missed her 'til I started throwing up. I'd look across the street to the picture of Christ dragging the cross up the street, and wonder how much a man could take. And I felt horrible about how I'd told him and gone back on my word to her. And how I'd told her how I felt and taken away the one thing she could count on. How she'd come into my life and saved me from the ruin of a man who knows he's a failure and a coward and alone. And how I'd been jealous of the two of them when they looked so pretty like one of the couples in a catalog. And I felt bad about Nate. He looked bad. He was wrong to not want the baby but he didn't know it yet and still he looked like somebody had drained the life out of him. I guess she had.

When I finally saw her it was April but the sky had never lost its gray. It was almost Easter but there were no bunnies or colored eggs in my life like she would have brought. It was six o'clock in the morning when she'd pulled up across the street in front of the church in a silver convertible 'Vette that was six or seven years old and matched the sky but still looked pretty good. Her hair was blowing in a wind too cold for anyone but her. And I wondered if she'd had the baby or not, but not for long. She got out of the car with what I first thought was a great big Easter basket. But she walked over toward Nate's stoop and I realized it was overflowing with a blanket that was one of those you get for a baby and it was powder blue. I wondered how she'd done it. But I looked again at the car and I guessed she'd spent the last six months with somebody she didn't love but who had the money to buy her full time and didn't mind—or even liked—that she was pregnant. Maybe she'd sold herself one more time to put an end to a story that hadn't come out the way anyone wanted and least of all her, and to being her life again. But I couldn't have guessed what she'd had in mind.

She walked slowly up the steps and carefully fussed with the blanket and set the basket in front of the door. And I held my breath as she walked back down the steps and up the sidewalk toward me. She never looked at me and I would've given anything to see her smile. My heart wanted to run away but I stood my ground, even if I couldn't speak. And she sat at the stool at the end of the counter where she'd always sat and I thought she was waiting for Nate. I poured her a cup of coffee and set it down in front of her and one for myself. She slid hers toward her but never said a word. She sipped quietly and stared at nothing and she didn't say my name or ask if I was her friend or call me Bump or smile. But she finished her coffee and looked at her watch and I knew Nate would be down soon and so did she. I poured her another cup and me too. And she drank this one faster than the first and I wondered how she could drink it so fast, so hot, but mostly I wondered how she'd been all the gray months. And just like that she got up and flipped her hair over her shoulder and looked at me and said "Take care of yourself, Bump," and smiled the smile and stuck a thick wad of bills in the empty cup and walked away and I couldn't find the guts to say a word.

The last of her I saw she was vanishing up the street like a gray ghost with her hair flowing back over the seat of the car. On to another place, maybe, another city, another try for real friends that she knew she could trust, or maybe never to try again. And Nate stepped out the door just a few minutes later. He stood for longer than I could stand and he stared at the basket. He just didn't move—the same way I couldn't move when I'd seen that rat at the end of my arm. Finally he picked it up with one hand and just stood for a while like he was checking the weight of it and deciding what to do. He must've had a hundred thoughts flashing through his mind in those few minutes. Thoughts about what he'd do next and mostly thoughts of her and what she'd been doing all this time like I had. And he walked to the edge of the stoop and sat on the step where they'd sat together so many times. And he stared down at the basket like he was expecting something to happen. He opened up the top and looked in but I couldn't see his face. Finally he scooped up the baby blue blanket and held it to his chest and rocked it way too fast. I had to go to him. So I did. And I sat down at the top of the steps where she would always sit and looked at his face and his eyes were glazed over. And I peeled back the blanket and heard myself say Jesus when I saw him. She must have done it by herself and planned this all along. And I didn't even wonder how she could've done it. For there, inside that blanket, the baby blue blanket all wrapped up warm, in all its tiny thumb-sucking fragility and the amber liquid of the gallon jar that was now its womb, and waiting, waiting for its father to decide what would happen next, was the carefully preserved fetus—Nate's only son.



**Cemetery Detail**  
Gelatin Silver Print, 5 1/4"x4 1/4"  
by Aaron Green

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## Picasso

I want to paint you like Picasso would;  
preferably nude and in blue.

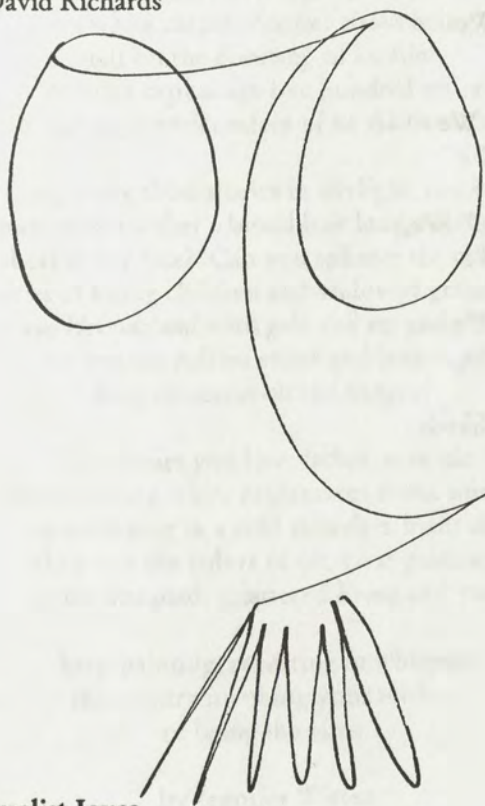
I want to paint you with a cumbersome  
face and one square eye larger than  
your breasts.

I want to paint you with thick strokes of  
navy hair that fall like sheets of rain  
down your crooked back.

I want to paint you in the arms of a lover  
so entranced by the sweetness of  
your turpentine scent,

that the shrouded *Celestina* scorns you  
from a crucifix above the altar.

by Chad David Richards



**The Minimalist Joyce**  
Ink on Paper, 8½" x 11"  
by Matthew Walsh

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GRANITE CHILD  
SWADDLED IN HURRICANES  
ENCASED IN GLASS  
PACKAGED IN SHRINK-WRAP  
IMPENETRABLE FLEXIBILITY  
SOLUBLE IN TEARS

Webster, on soluble: "able to be dissolved, able to be solved."  
Priscilla, on soluble: "able to become a part of something else."

by Becky Winnie

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The Artists - inspired by Gwendolyn Brooks

We all heart. We  
Do art. We

Called "geek." We  
Don't speak. We

Called "strange." We,  
"Deranged." We

Brush stroke. We  
Die broke?

by Hiroko I. Niksch

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## My Father's Art

I have listened to stories about youth,  
your father, crying over dogs with broken backs  
and feeding stray calico kittens in empty parking lots.  
Your voice thick with cigarette smoke and laughter:  
the first job, construction in Mobile at fourteen,  
the first car, orange with white racing stripes,  
the photograph you posed, developed, painted with greens.

I have heard late at night when I feigned  
sleep whispers, what you left out: a mother  
and step-father and scalding coffee down your back and broken  
arms  
for smoking, swearing, red oil paint  
on white carpet. Stories about being  
left on the doorstep of an aunt  
or in an orphanage five hundred miles  
from the sugar-sweet safety of an Alabama home.

Forgetting these stories in daylight, can you  
draw your mother's blond hair long or cropped  
short at her face? Can you splinter the colors,  
her stories of losing children and widowed grandmothers,  
*ein Heimatland* with *gelb* and *rot* and *grün*  
on woolen ruffled shirts and languages  
long loosened off the tongue?

The stories you lose, father, save me  
from flashing white nightmares about suicide  
or drowning in a cold porcelain bathtub,  
they mix the colors of oil, your painting  
of my sculpted, splattered living and you

keep painting, repeating in whispers  
the mantra invoking your *rot* fear  
of being the same.

by Jennifer Witten

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## Doll eyes and Dali

My sister, My sister  
So young and quietly bold  
An image of peace  
Spiced with trials, her smile.  
My sister and I  
Grew up hand in hand  
A mocking bird pair  
Our days joyous adventures.  
My sister, her smile  
A complex, loving secret  
The slyness of an acute observer  
Candy coated  
With a gentle touch you can trust.  
My sister and her eyes  
Bright sapphire doll eyes  
Captured Dali's eyes  
As we walked through the watercolor  
Of the pink blossomed park  
On our way home one warm day.

Dali, holding Gala's fingers  
Stopped us with a grin  
My sister and Salvador Dali  
Regarded each other  
Her blue doll eyes  
Dali's moustache curled  
Wild petals whirled in a small wind

The shadow of my sister  
Bled stone-purple on the paper  
Dali wiggled his long whiskers like a wizard  
And Gala chuckled gaily  
I watched like a dreamer  
As my sister was captured  
Doll eyes of trust  
And a smile of laughter  
On Dali's magical watercolor  
Glistened as the warm wind urged us onward and home  
And my sister and I



Left that childhood memory  
But my sister's doll eyes  
Remained encased by Dali's hand.

by Veronica V.R. Reeves



Objects in mirror are closer than they appear  
Color Photograph, 5"x3½"  
by Kris Peterson

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## Bean Snapping

She'd tried all her tricks already.  
She knew I wouldn't do anymore  
contests: bean snapping races or who can find the longest bean.  
She wasn't talking anymore. Her head bowed in toiling silence  
before  
the colander of broken  
bean bodies and in her fingers  
pods cracked like knuckles.

With my index finger I stroked a stiff bean carcass—silky  
on the way down and scratchy  
on the way back like a cat's tongue but without the hullabaloo  
of forcing a cat's mouth open. I dug my thumbnail in  
and separated it from the stem convinced  
the stem felt nothing, but on the bean side  
I could feel a little bit of wetness, less than a tear, on my thumb.  
The invisible glue holding baby bean  
to its umbilical stem  
lasted only a moment. I broke the bean  
in half and threw it  
into the colander's done pile.  
The next bean was exactly the same. And the next.

She sang,  
“...even though we  
owe the grocer, ain't we  
got fun, tax collector's getting closer, ain't we  
got fun.”

by Marianne Hedges

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## Life Under Glass

by Michael Coatney

I kneel down, peering through the glass of the cider jug, leaning on the ping-pong table where it's sat for months. Darn it! Why do I always mess up? It might have been like this for days—weeks, even. If only I didn't hate coming down into this horrible basement with its disgusting smells of dog-doo and ripe wet clothes. Dog-doo my brothers should have to clean up and laundry that just piles on the floor and sits, soaking up the water that keeps overflowing from the laundry tub that always gets plugged by the stray socks that cough up out of the washer's water hose. My big brother's dogs' messes and my family's mildewing clothes that I don't want to clean up. Some twelfth birthday.

My insects always die. Not this one! Not like the praying mantis did. It wasn't fair! A praying mantis eats other insects, the book said. It didn't say what kind. The other kids were going to kill it but I saved it, saved it and put it in the jar, like I always do. It's not right to kill insects to collect them. So I collect them alive. But they always die anyway. I can never get them to eat. The praying mantis was supposed to eat other insects but he didn't touch the grasshoppers I gave him. Not for a whole hour. I didn't know! So I left him, and when I got back, the grasshoppers were perched on his back, eating him alive. He didn't even defend himself! He just sat there—doing nothing, letting them eat him.

I've got to start cleaning up these piles, I know. I'll do it like I always do—hold my breath while I scoop them up with the shovel. I shouldn't have let it go so long. Why do we need so many dogs? I'll get through it if I just count to a hundred; scoop, dump in the bag—one-exhale, (ninety-nine to go); scoop, dump in the bag—two—darn it! I always feel like I'm going to gag when the smell hits me. But I'd rather do it than listen to Mom scream at me. Or cry. I don't know which sounds worse, her scream or her crying. I wish I could put the dogs in a jar to die.

Man, I should of let the poor little thing go. But it was so neat: a perfect little cocoon wrapped around the forked branch of the tree out back; I just knew it would be a Clouded Yellow butterfly. And I checked it everyday. For a while. Then every other day—I knew it might take a while—then every third day, but God! I hate coming down into this basement. How could I have forgotten for three whole weeks to come down and check on it? And when I did, there it was—perched on the little twig, the cottony brown cocoon split open like a knife had cut it, its wings—almost like butter cream—raising and lowering. It was alive, and I couldn't bear to let it go.

But now it's been three days, at least, and it must need to eat. I know what I have to do. So I open the basement window—man, the outside air feels good, and I look at the sky, picture it fluttering away. It's a good thing. Letting it go before it dies. And I climb down to get the jug. One more look at it—today it just clings to the branch, not moving a bit—and as I pick up the jug, the little guy falls. Not like a dead thing, but like a leaf. Fluttering like the helicopters that fall from the trees, all the way to the bottom of the jar where it lands on its back and just stays there, not moving. Not moving at all.

the top hole on the floor and she, looking up the way that I do  
overflowing from the laundry tub that always gets plugged by the  
water. She coughs up out of the window a great noise. My dog  
bracket's dog messes and my family's clothes and clothes that I don't  
want to clean up. Some really bad ones.

My insect's dog die. For this one. Not like the dog you  
meant. He was a bird. A flying insect that was not a  
bird. It didn't say what kind. It didn't say what kind to kill  
it but I always saw it and put it in the jar. It always do. It's not  
right to kill insects to collect them, but collect them they  
always go away. I can never get them to eat. The flying insect  
was supposed to eat other insects, but he didn't touch the other  
I gave him. Not for a whole hour. I didn't know. So I let him, and  
when I got back, the helicopters were washed out his back, strong  
him alive. He didn't even blink himself. He just sat there doing  
nothing, letting them eat him.

I've got to start cleaning up these piles. I know. I'll do  
like I always do—hold my breath while I scoop them up with the  
shovel. I shouldn't have let it go so long. Why do we ever let  
dog? I'll get through it. I just count on a hundred scoop. I don't  
the bag one extra, (almost time to get wood, dump in the bag two-  
dum in. I always feel like I'm going to gag when the smell hits me,  
but I'd rather do it than listen to Mom scream at me. Or cry. I don't  
know which sounds worse, but scream or her crying. I wish I could  
put the dog in a jar to die.

Man, I should let the poor little thing go. But it was so  
near a perfect little cocoon wrapped around the forked branch of the  
tree out back. I just knew it would be a Glorious Yellow Butterfly.  
And I checked it everyday. For a while. Then every other day—I  
knew it might take a while—then every third day, but God, I hate  
coming down into this basement. How could I have forgotten for  
three whole weeks to come down and check on it? And when I did,  
there it was—perched on the little twig, the cocoon. In was cocoon  
split open like a little red cut in its wings—almost like butter  
cream—raising and lowering. It was alive, and I couldn't bear to let it

go.

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## On the Lake

At a roadside tavern advertising "Gas and Nickel Beer,"  
I met a man who told of this sight at dusk  
On the lake at the bottom of the ridge, behind the bar.  
It being dusk, and I a dollar less,  
We made our way stumbling down a path of roots  
Where he knocked the lock off the boats marked "Boy Scouts"  
(I must confess how I liked him)  
And we paddled out to float as the oaks and elms  
Rustled their leaves in calling.

Before there was one there was a hundred.  
Bats, descending in squeaks and screams  
As though the lake were Troy,  
Devouring bugs mid-air,  
And skimming their orange bodies  
Across the water to kiss their reflections.

The lake air was filled with the flapping of wings,  
Skin on skin, and with this,  
I noticed a change in the manner of the lake,  
A silence, as if every creature had hushed  
Out of fear or awe,  
And I, too unimportant to count, both.

by Benjamin Foley Shine

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## Wicker Park Image

The rain of Chicago midwinter,  
That runs lengthwise the brick gutters,  
Pelt eyes ears nose and comes to rest  
On tips of icicles, hung delicate  
From the beard of a stone giant  
Clad in robes of burlap; who leans,  
Dwarfing a blue postal box; shaking  
Coins cupped in gray hands at passers by  
As the el shrieks overhead.

by Benjamin Foley Shine

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## writer's block

composition:  
poetic fish  
swimming upstream  
(of consciousness)  
to multiply  
and die  
giving birth  
to phrases,  
metaphors,  
idioms  
post-mortem.

by Jaymi Anderson

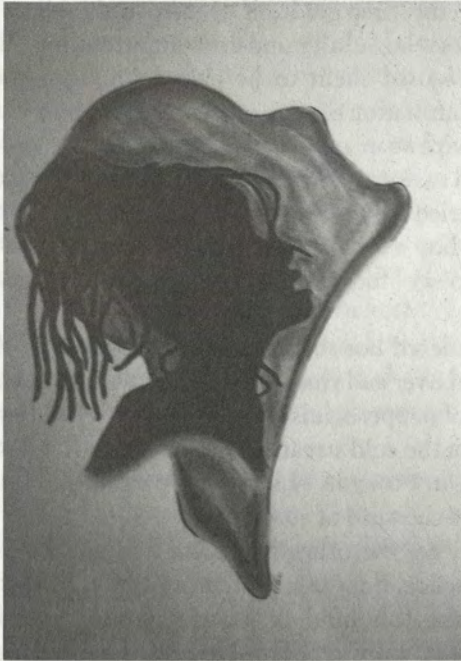
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Goddess

Sepia-toned beauty,  
Brown sugar baby, Ebony-eyed wonder that  
Looks into my heart.  
I catch her scent  
As she passes by.  
Wild thoughts escape.  
My head reels,  
As my heart tumbles  
And jumps in my chest,  
Caught in a torrent of  
Longing.

by Carol Durbin



**Momma Don't Cry**  
Charcoal, 21"x25½"  
by Oliver L.

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## CREATIVE PHILOSOPHY: OF SENSE AND SENSUAL PERCEPTION

### I. What Kind of Glue Keeps Salt on Crackers?

by H. Suzanne Heagy

I can tell you this: they don't make school paste the way they used to. Not lard paste, the creamy, crumbly kind. Packed smooth in plastic tubs with the applicator attached to the lid, brush on the inside, handle out, for convenience's sake. We had this paste in the lower grades, say thirty years back, before glue sticks were even an idea. No one had *heard* of glue sticks. And they didn't trust the lower grades with anything runny as syrup, like Elmer's, because we might go crazy and dribble the lower halls, as if the floor were pastry.

The floor could never be pastry, that nasty, smeary tile. Six-hundred-odd shoes tramping on it at any given time, fall through spring, shoes shedding dirt, grass clippings, puddle water. Did they really believe we would find the floor appetizing?

What children ate, we ate, you know, the paste. At school, anyway, there were crayons and paste. It was better to eat the paste. Because crayons left colored wax evidence between the teeth. By the end of the first grade, it seemed only idiots stayed with crayons, the ones who didn't mind drawing attention, whose grinning crayon smiles caused them to be cuffed up from their desks for punishment, humiliation or worse, accompanied by a violent washing of the mouth with soap and water.

I used to dream it was really those children liked the taste of soap. Until I tried it myself, as an adult. Because a woman I know washed off her boy's tongue with soap for saying bad words, though he continued to say "fuck you, fuck you," and I thought maybe soap was the reason.

I pondered hot soap versus cold in front of the bathroom mirror. Leaned over and rinsed my mouth with cold water, washing away the taste of peppercinis and coffee, the day-old staleness. I wet a bar of Dove in the cold stream from the faucet (I'd decided on cold) and lay it atop my tongue. Like acrid perfume. I do not see how anyone can like the taste of soap.

Paste, on the other hand...its rich consistency, its subtle peppermint essence, float in my memory. You have to understand, they don't make this kind of paste anymore. And we weren't supposed to eat it, anyway. Trouble came from eating paste. If we were caught. It was hard to catch us eating paste.

The obvious ways we dismissed outright, like using the brush as a spoon or dipping blatantly into the tub with our fingers. Sly poses were best, so that one seemed above ulterior motive. Best for me was my forefinger, dabbing up crumbs from pasted collages of



log cabins or cherry trees. My finger absent-mindedly finding my mouth as I contemplated the page. Where Abraham Lincoln was born. The taste and history soothing, the minty meltingness of it.

But we weren't supposed to eat the paste. We were supposed to eat our lunch, and you had to eat all of that. One time an older boy, a fifth- or sixth-grader, underwent stomach surgery and couldn't eat spinach. But the monitor said he had to, so the boy hid it under his tray. Maybe he was a crayon eater from way back. Why didn't he know the evidence would come into view like coughed-up grass when he lifted his tray?

Obvious, overt, obtrusive. Oh, oh, oh. I was never a crayon eater. There were other things, though, the leaves of the private hedge which, when crushed, promised with the scent of green apples, though tasted bitter as unripe olives. Other things I won't tell, though it's plain paste-eating set me up for disappointment.

At one point I believed humans were the answer, that one could use the tip of the tongue to find sweetness. But the taste of skin varies as to time, unpleasantness always coming of it. The crevice of an elbow turns salt to sour in moments, a scrotum bland to bitter takes longer.

Taste makes no distinctions; all creatures own the sense of taste in some form. Think of fish, like arawanas and wahoos, tasting with their skin, swimming tongues. I used to think of my tongue as swimming. Swimming over and in and between, so that my knowing was complete, the sweet, sour, salty, and bitter of a body, clean with water but free of artificial scent, always in the end a staleness. Did you know suckling infants have taste buds in the soft palate and throat, to intensify their tasting pleasure?

Nature knows what it's doing when it takes the buds, minute by minute until in the end no taste is left at all.

For years I lived on the memory of paste. I didn't know it wasn't made anymore, until a week ago when I went out, this graying woman with a story about grandchildren and puzzle projects, to stores, discount, office supply, grocery, pharmacy, everywhere I believed paste might be sold.

It's not to be found. There's no substitute, and the tongue-weary task of trying has worn me down. Don't ask me what kind of glue keeps salt on crackers, young man. At this point, I really don't care.



**From All Angles**  
High Fixed Stoneware, 9"x10"x3½"  
by Julie A. Taylor

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## A Poem on My Birthday

What is it  
Of the Sunflower's  
Downcast pose?  
Is it sacrifice  
For the seed?  
Or, is the burden  
Of discretion  
Heavy in the weight  
Of the Sun's  
Sweet offerings?

I know that heaviness,  
It's a top heaviness.  
I know it in the  
Curve of my back,  
And the weight  
Of my own season.

by Benjamin Foley Shine

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## Losing a Turtle

the girl sits in her empty room,  
    no cautious tongues, no deaf ears at her door,  
just the deep greens of her walls  
that she painted two months ago  
with her sisters' help while they laughed about the color  
and sometimes splattered the carpet on purpose,  
    ruining the old night stand  
    that kept her worn notebooks safe.

the girl listens to her father and uncle talk  
    at a heavy wooden table they've refinished eight times—  
the table she first ate on and cracked  
her head open on—in a crowded,  
dark-paneled dining room that is never  
completely clean,  
    about politics and God's damnation  
    and they talk loud like she can't understand.

the girl eats the turkey and cranberries  
    off a ping-pong table with a starched white cloth on top  
and tries to dodge the drops of dripping food  
from the plates of people standing in the food line behind her  
and tries to ignore their shrill voices "She got  
an A on the test!" but never "She wants a little dog!"  
    And tries hard to swallow Great Aunt Louise's  
    sour rhubarb pie.

the girl hears children screaming, sees them running  
    wild through the wooded backyard with balls and water guns  
laughing without reason, thrilled  
by blades of grass, pointing gooey fingers  
at silvery clouds, dancing ice-cream truck dances  
and ignoring the adults who scramble after them  
    with senseless concerns of injuries and safety  
    while the girl can't find her precious green turtle by  
herself.

the girl sits alone at a fold-up black card table  
in a basement that never gets warm  
the windows and doors locked tight, the brothers  
and sisters and mom and Joe sleeping well,  
dreaming that she is sleeping too  
instead of awake late hours drawing scratchy pictures  
of a school yard on fire and kids burning alive  
and blond hair like hers in flames on the paper.

by Jennifer Witten

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## Life in a Glass House

I have Richard Simmons  
In a jar in my room,  
Oblivious to the notion  
Of his impending doom.

He always seems so perky;  
He'll dance and jump about.  
And when he does I shake the jar,  
And then I scream and shout.

He looks at me with frightened eyes  
That will soon be replaced with a smile  
In the futile hope that I'll let  
Him out of the jar for a little while.

"No such luck," I say to him,  
And give the jar a shake.  
Then I put it in the sun,  
So his skin can bake.

But that doesn't make him angry;  
He just waves his little hand.  
He seems to be rather excited  
For this chance to work on his tan.

Damn you, Richard Simmons!  
You're just like a little kid.  
But I'm the one who'll have the last laugh,  
'Cause I never poked holes in the lid.

by David Shapiro

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## If I Could Be Like Clark?!?

If I were superman  
I'd fly around the world  
saving ladies in distress.  
The north pole would be  
my home address.

Cold and lonely  
with snow like a sea  
the perfect place  
for a guy like me.

If I were superman  
I'd fly around the world  
wearing my cool blue tights  
and no one would laugh  
'cause I could knock out their lights.

by Alex Walson

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## Swimmers

by Brice Mabry

Charles

“You know we’re dying.” In black she says. Black lips. Black nails. Black words and deep. Eyes make contact. And again contact but not long enough to feel who she is or see who she was or discern enough *was* in the *is* for her to still be my sister.

Rings. Mom had a lot of jewelry. Thin. Foil. Sunken treasure. Not a lot of expensive things, just things and glitter. “Look at me,” she said with that jewelry. She was sunburn and baby powder and existentialism. A swan clawing its way out of the shell to emerge in a world of rain and dust. But I think she tried. I think.

“Do you want any of this stuff?” I float the tray to Mint and she smells it. In black, dark aqua. She takes nothing.

“Can I look?” Pass it to Tell, I say to her and she does. He pulls out a few of the largest and gaudiest things I have never seen her wear and adds them to his keep. He’s only four.

I watch them go through what’s left. Scavengers, foraging for memories. A ship has passed and they are struggling to keep their footing in the wake. Rolling. Head up. Head down. Keep swimming, I think. And kick your feet.

Mint has only spoken once. Her reticence a product of adolescence and Goth videos and daytime talk shows which do nothing but produce more urban, black hoodlums and rural white trash due to the exquisite examples they provide. Curt, precise in response. Enough to let me remember she is alive but not enough to love. She gulps air.

I counted the years away. Each an eraser and my past presence etched in lead. Swish.

Mom’s books. They are going through mom’s books.

“Did she read all of those?”

I must let him admire her, still. Mom. “I don’t know. Do you want them? They won’t do you any good now, but maybe in sixth or seventh grade you can read them.”

“Find me the good ones Charles. Git me the ones she liked.”

I don’t know what she liked. Besides Las Vegas and cheap jewelry. I hand him, *The Works of O. Henry*. Leather covered. Gold leaf edging. Intellectual. A good way to remember his mother. Oh, Adele. I doubt you read page one.

He flips through it looking for money. Like what he found in the Bible. All the while Mint is silent. She wants no memories, I think. And I wonder how much she remembers and how much she is able to shove away. Her stone face. A preserver. Floats above the



waves. But her insides are gooey and hot lava. Sinking. She drowned a long time ago. And had I been around then, I could have saved her from it. I wasn't watching. I was on the beach.

Mint

No use for this. They cried at the funeral, her in that billowy dress. She took me to Salazaars once and bought me fresh donuts and milk. After Charles left. She played then and I laughed, I think for the last time with her. She tried. Then. Mother.

She let them in unrestrained. For affection. Such poor choices. Gave so much to them but sacrifices the link with her children and now we piece together a childhood searching her possessions for a symbol. A solid. An anchor. A cloth to wrap our memories and secure the fundamental belief that a mother would do anything to protect her young. To provide.

Cried for whom they don't even know. I could tell them don't. I could tell them she left in time for Tell to grow up without scars. He'll not have to hear the sounds they made in her room and feel a hand on his neck in the dark and sour drunken breath. Asking what is right to do and not telling just because.

Charles will buy us clothes and be good to Tell and leave me alone. He knows he's guilty of that already. Of alone. And he knows when I look at him he's guilty and I know and I wish him guilt. I deserve that.

They cried for her and I wanted to shout—My God have you no sense! Are you blind?

"You can take whatever you want Mint. You will have a room."

"You know we're dying."

"What do you mean by that?"

"We're all dying." And that is enough. Sullen is my name.

Charles should have stayed. Charles was old enough to save himself from her and her men. I save Tell and Charles is saving his conscience by taking us but no one saved me. That's not true Mint; death saved you on a Sunday. Sunday came much too late. Much too.

I will not cling because I am unable but nature says to cling. But nature is tempered. And trust. Trust is never now. Shipwrecked and ruined by them and her and you. I feel someone must pay and you are here.

Oh Charles you should have stayed, damn you. Don't make me hate you Charles.

And now I can finish a job she started poorly.

Adele Burris, sought a cornerstone for her family; a buoy in the storm to rest on. A man to build and provide and love. But I won't realize this until well into the future after Charles and I have made peace between ourselves well enough to talk. Then I will cry.

Tell

Mom died on a Sunday and we get her stuff. She's dead. I saw her in a casket. It was grey and had white pillows inside. She looked real comfortable. I could sleep good in there. In that casket. Mint said not to touch her so I didn't but I wanted to. I wanted to touch her. She's dead. On last Sunday.

Mint says we're orphans now. Me and Mint. But not Charles he's too big to be an orphan. He can be our dad and mom he said. And we have to keep up the garden. Mint says we can't stay here with Charles because it's his house now and he's going to sell it. He says it's all our house. He came to get us. I never met my brother but I seen pictures of him on a horse. We are going to Maine with Charles. I want to sleep in that casket with momma. He got two kids for me to play with and a wife. He showed me pictures. At the funeral.

"Find me the good ones Charles. Git me the ones she liked."

There's no money in this one like there was in the Bible. I got ten dollars. She got from her men is what Mint says. She won money in Vegas with him. I got ten dollars.

She's in Heaven. On last Sunday.

Charles

Kick your feet, Mint. And Breathe.

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Asriel Moskowitz  
New York, 1904

I arrived with my copy of the *Kabbalah*.  
I knew no soul. No innkeeper, no employer.  
Here the ghetto men shear their curls,  
stop speaking the language of the Nation.

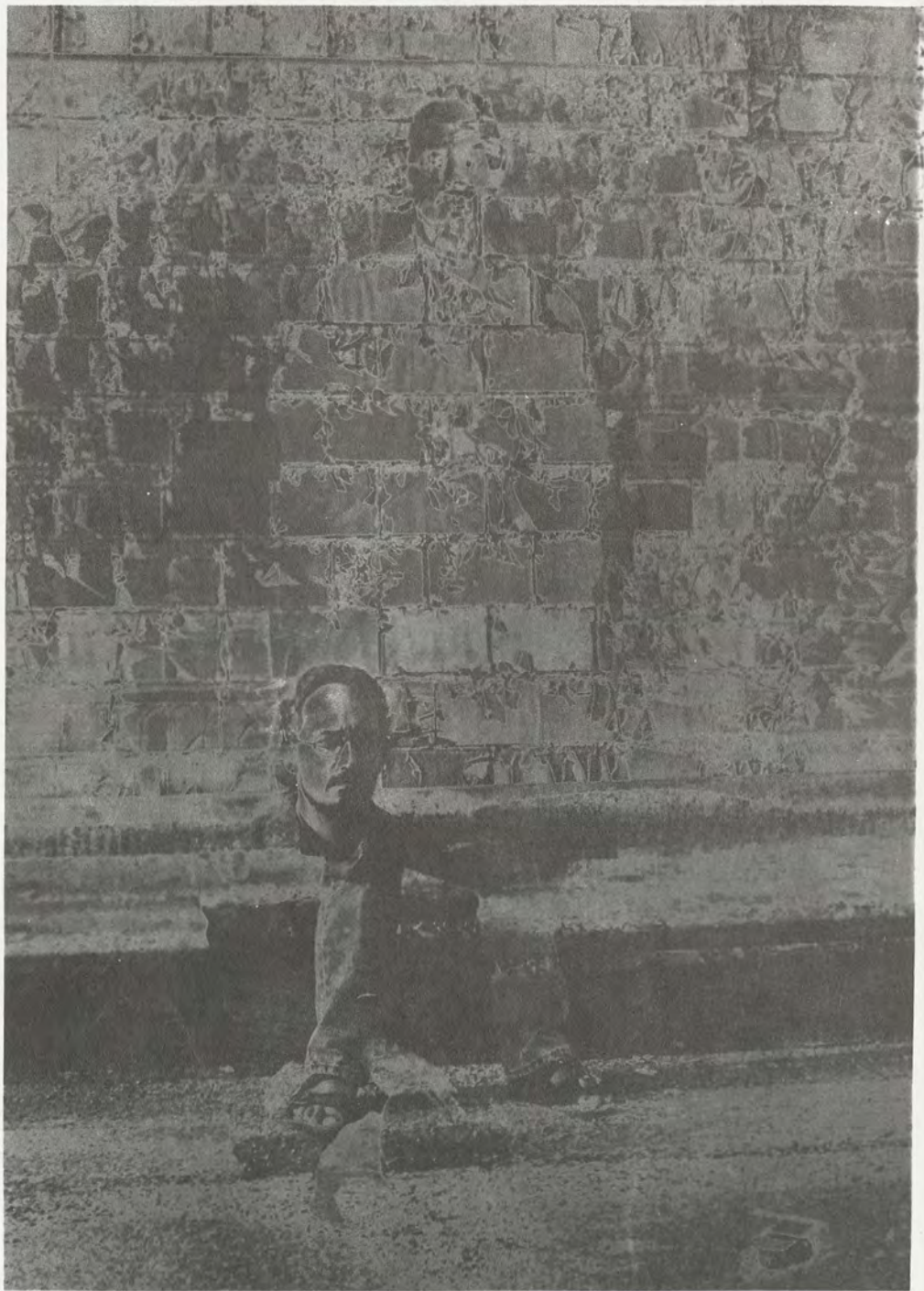
At home, pogroms, the polished boots  
of Russian soldiers, hunger.  
My wife, my people, they send me here  
to start anew, then book them passage.

I am now called Al. I wear  
merchant clothing, attend dance halls,  
and bark English. But I am not uncouth-  
stop your judgement! I forgot the shawl just one day.

I wait for her in the morning dew, my wife, I wait.  
Through the fog smelly with tar and fish, I see  
the face I loved; fat cheeks, straight brow,  
nose like a snail. She wears the wig.

From the deck she is waving a protective garment,  
she spits out my old name in the tongue of home.  
Silly woman crying, her shawl falls to the rail  
like a sturgeon. Can't she see  
my heart is jostled?

by Julie Marie Frye



Black and White Photograph, 9"x12"  
by Jan Zunkel

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Ethel Rosenberg

The Early Bird on Broadway knew,  
Knew it before you did:  
You were to be Hoover's  
Electric example,  
Brother Greenglass' lever;  
An Empire's sharp stab inward.

Down below the courtroom,  
In a holding cell, sentenced  
To die, it became all too clear.  
You sang Puccini's great aria,  
While Julius, four walls down,  
Knew it too, answering with  
"The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

After they dressed you and shaved you,  
And the gels and electrodes were applied,  
You remained silent, foregoing  
Last words for cold stares  
At those men who created you;  
Those men who used ammonia to cover  
The smell of your husband's burnt skin;  
Who were surprised at your silence  
While it took four attempts to kill  
Any question of innocence.

by Benjamin Foley Shine

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## Cape of Good Hope

Looking across  
Cape Town Bay to  
Where the waves beat froth against  
The shore,  
And purple wild geraniums  
Play among everlastings,  
And yellow arioginums  
Dress the slope  
Up to the Cape of Good Hope.  
There Table Mountain sandstone  
Overlies monkeystone  
Alive with grey and  
Orange lichen.  
Biodiversity thrives  
Here in this land so  
Divided  
By color.  
“Better a peligionium  
In Fishhook  
Than a black man  
In Johannesburg.”

by Carol Durbin

Black and White Photographs, 1912  
by 1912 Zambel

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## Cerulean

A tepid sky on a mid-summer's day renews the spirit  
of agitation amidst the chaotic fumes of an order.

The calm of the ocean reflects radiant majesty  
from the sun's rays.

Serene plains beyond the foot of the mountain  
flaunts forget-me-nots, delicate beauty.

Blue birds melodious song awakes a hushed morn;  
the sun peeps above the horizon.

The prismatic view of twilight grasps the onlooker  
as the daystar disappears into the watery floor.

How the lull of nature lauds the intent of  
Creation.

by Katherine Bridgewater

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## February Pastels

Winter mornings  
fade from black to gray.  
And shade on shade  
of slate blue;  
clouds billow,  
lay their bellies down  
on a snow-white earth.  
Shades of brown;  
beige weeds sound a death rattle;  
parchment, shuddering in the snow  
giving way to the north wind.  
The sun gives up the day,  
trailing her pink ribbons behind;  
draped over the deadened hills  
and leaves me  
longing for Emerald Green.

by Tess Baker

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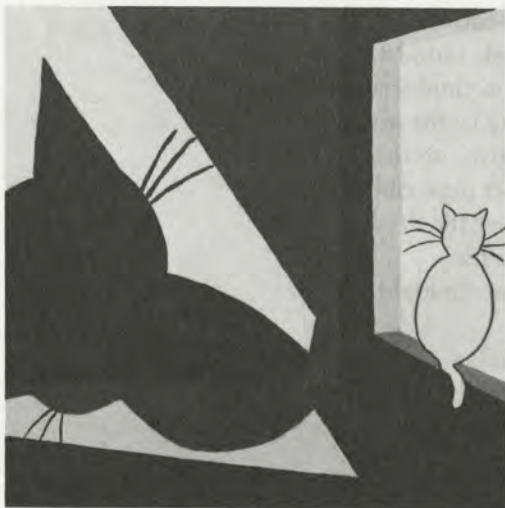
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From "The Analects of SuperGenius," Book I

by Tim Rogers

On truth

1. The SuperGenius said, "I am one whose presence is much less than commanding, I do not have a voice that allows me to speak eloquently, I am not exactly respected by all, the mighty do not bow down before me, the brave do not admire me, the daring do not follow me, and I shall probably never change the world in any significant way. Yet I continue to learn."
2. The SuperGenius was accused of being "selfish." He retorted, "How can I be called selfish? How can any man be called selfish who looks out for himself? 'Educated' people have to stop and analyze their own lives; they live to supplicate their own need, and the needs of their families. At heart, all are selfish, for longevity is measured in our own mind not by our legacy—who are mortal men to care about what happens after their death?—but by how we live our own life. We help ourselves and help others in the prospect of a return on our investment of time. Those afraid to admit to their selfishness are the more selfish."
3. The SuperGenius said, "Selfishness is not shameful; it is only shameful if it hurts others."
4. The SuperGenius was accused of being bothersome. He replied, "It is not I who am bothersome, it is you who are easily disturbed."



Cats in Space  
Acrylic, 5"x5"  
by Donna Winsted



5. The SuperGenius was questioned concerning his qualifications. He answered, "Why would I claim to be such if I truly were not? To claim to be one so gifted as I is to accept much responsibility, to teach others. Would a 'selfish' man undertake such a task?"

6. The SuperGenius explained, "I am one who has lived for less than twenty years. I was not of noble birth. I completed my education without positive or negative incident. I have not been acknowledged for it, but I have gathered wisdom beyond what many would learn in a lifetime."

7. The SuperGenius presented his challenge. "Ask me anything you wish, concerning anything. From mathematics to linguistics, from nuclear physics to anatomy, from computer programming to the basic elements of life, and I will present you with an answer."

8. The SuperGenius was asked how to discern truth from falsehood. He began, "I have learned that there are only six things which are true in this world, and almost all of them must be negatively worded."

9. The SuperGenius continued, "Nothing lasts forever; everything has to come to an end sometime."

10. "Nothing's ever fair; somebody always has an advantage."

11. "Nothing's ever free; there's always a cost somewhere."

12. "Nothing's ever perfect; there's always something better."

13. "Nothing's ever easy; a problem always arises."

14. The SuperGenius concluded, "But then, nothing is exactly impossible, either."

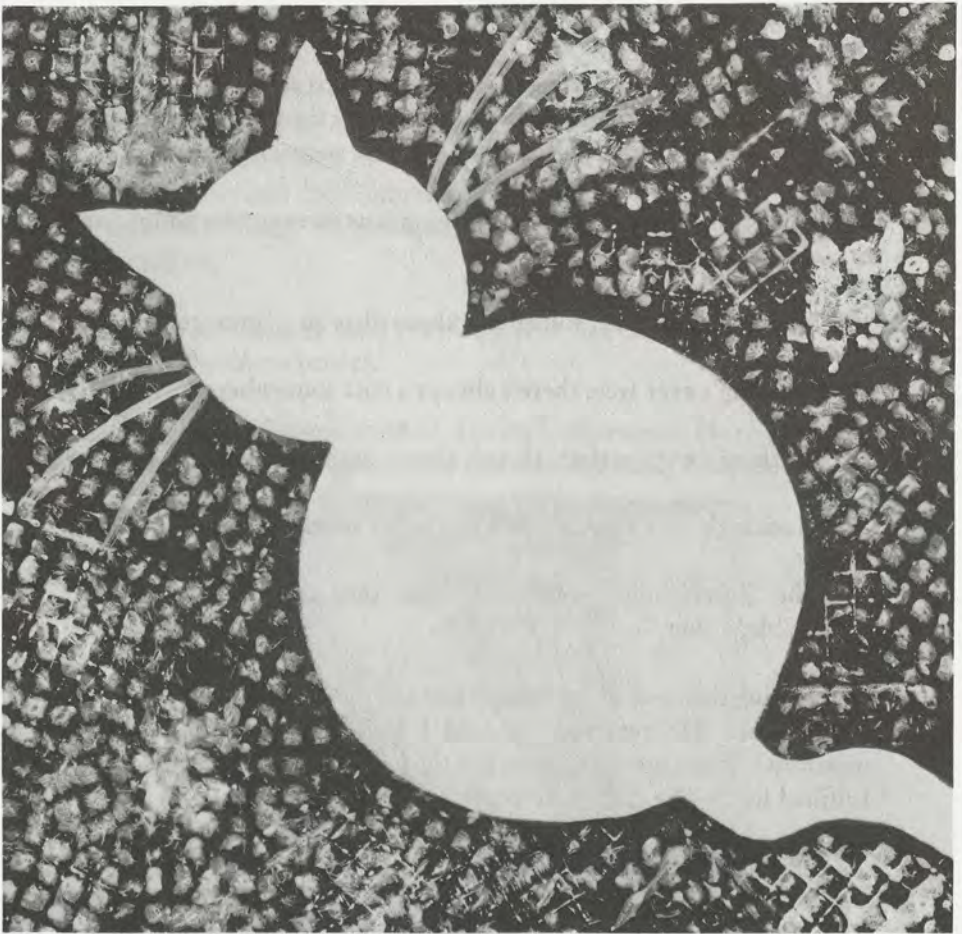
15. Hearing this, one in attendance accused the SuperGenius of being a pessimist. He retorted, "Should I be ashamed to be called a pessimist? When one looks at it, it is the pessimist who leads the most fulfilled life." The critic reacted, "How can this be?"

16. The SuperGenius said, "The Pessimist is one who expects the least out of life, or always expects the worst possible thing to happen. Therefore, when he does find fortune or have a stroke of luck, he is bound to appreciate it more than any other."

17. The SuperGenius said, "In the end, anything that rises above the Pessimist's low expectations will be considered fortunate. He will be happier leading a normal life than the Optimist would be living a rich one that does not and can not live up to his lofty standards."

18. The SuperGenius said, "When weighing the cost of something, consider this: expensive things are more expensive for a reason—they are most likely better."

19. The SuperGenius admitted when he made mistakes. He once said, "Things are always changing. Many times when I make a point about something I find there has been a recent exception."



**Cats in Space**  
Acrylic, 5"x5"  
by Donna Winsted

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## From "The Analects of SuperGenius," Book II

by Tim Rogers

### On Progress, Satisfaction, and Perfection

1. The SuperGenius was asked about Progress. "I have seen Progress, as we call it."
2. The SuperGenius spoke on Progress. "Driving downtown last week I see a large sign near a construction site. The sign read '66,000 square foot office building coming soon.' Progress is a thing that can be good or bad, but usually shows itself in such an ambiguous way as this. Progress is what causes men to build structures for which the use is not yet determined."
3. One of the SuperGenius' vegetarian friends was eating a veggie burger. She commented on its similarity to real meat. The SuperGenius said, "What is the use of claiming you are a vegetarian if everything you eat must bear some similarity to that which you gave up? A vegetarian who eats a veggie burger, though technically still adhering to his own 'code,' is a hypocrite."
4. The SuperGenius then said, "A person willing to make a change must first abandon their old ways."
5. The SuperGenius gave an example, "An American businessman who travels to Japan and chooses to eat at McDonald's rather than try Japanese food is the same as a vegetarian who eats a veggie burger. So is a Chinese person who comes to America and chooses to eat exclusively at Chinese restaurants."
6. The SuperGenius concluded, "In new surroundings, the past must be forgotten; new laws must be observed and new languages must be learned."
7. The SuperGenius said, "A person faced with different surroundings than he is used to must either make progress or be rejected."
8. One of the SuperGenius' friends was drinking a large bottle of a soft drink. The SuperGenius observed, "Ten years ago, we would drink twelve-ounce cans almost exclusively. Five years ago, it was sixteen-ounce bottles. Then twenty-four-ounce bottles. Now, I see people drinking thirty-two-ounce bottles."

9. One asked, "What is the significance of this point?" To which the SuperGenius replied, "It appears to me that mankind is getting more and more thirsty for some reason I am unable to explain."

10. The SuperGenius said, "Perhaps we are becoming harder and harder to satisfy."

11. One of the SuperGenius' friends ridiculed another for playing with a yo-yo. "Such a waste of time! You would be better off studying." The SuperGenius asked to see the yo-yo. He said, "It is not so useless as you may think." The doubter asked, "You claim to find a deeper meaning out of anything, so I ask you, find a deeper meaning to this." The SuperGenius said immediately, "I will try." He held the yo-yo for a few moments in his hand.

12. The SuperGenius said, "Even the most educated mind must at some point allow itself to be entertained."

13. The SuperGenius said, "Something as simple as entertainment is welcomed by a person so burdened by the weight of studies."

14. The SuperGenius said, "Remember, nothing is as simple as it seems. Even a yo-yo can be complex if viewed the right way."

15. The SuperGenius explained, "Examining the physics of a yo-yo, one will see that it is actually quite complicated. The yo-yo is held like this, and is thrown like this. The wrist spins the yo-yo in the direction opposite the direction in which the string unrolls. Therefore, the yo-yo falls having been enacted upon by two forces, the stronger one being the force of gravity. When the string reaches its limit, the force of gravity is nullified, and the force of the spin takes its effect, and so the yo-yo returns to its master."

16. The SuperGenius concluded, "When acted upon with two opposite forces, anything will return to its place of origin; the student presented with two differing viewpoints on a subject will undoubtedly return to his teacher for further questioning."

17. One of the SuperGenius' friends was making a painting. His friend said, "How it bothers me that I cannot cover this area as completely as I would like to! I have tried again and again and each time without success." The SuperGenius said, "How you have forgotten!"

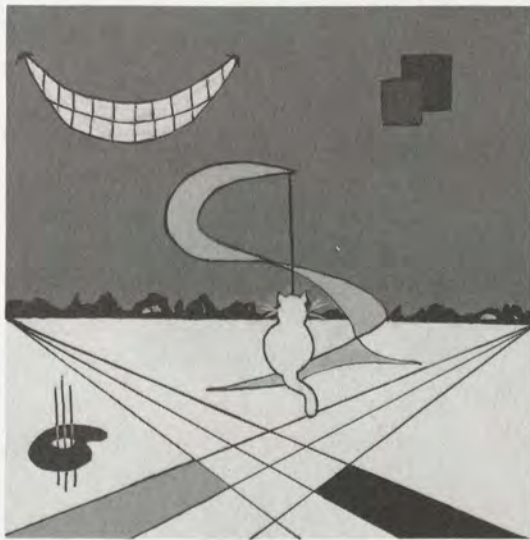
18. The SuperGenius repeated himself, "Nothing is ever perfect; there's always something better.' Always in our own minds there

exists the need to have something better than what we currently possess. It is the nature of Progress to lead us to believe what we have is inadequate, and that a change must be made.”

19. The SuperGenius said to his friend, “It is a sign that Progress is being made in your painting skill, as you are confronted more and more with inadequacies that can be seen by none other than yourself.”

20. The SuperGenius said, “I am always the first person to criticize myself. For all people it is this way. Only we know exactly how we want our own lives to be, and so we recognize our faults on the path toward our goal much more clearly than any other person possibly could.”

21. The SuperGenius said, “One beloved teacher of mine once told me, ‘The hardest thing for an artist to learn is how to know when to stop.’ This is indeed a true saying which applies to all facets of life.”



**Cats in Space**  
Acrylic, 5"x5"  
by Donna Winsted

22. The SuperGenius said, “Satisfaction is a learned response.”

23. The SuperGenius said, “Objectivity to the Journalist is as unattainable as Perfection is to the artist.”

24. The SuperGenius sighed. His friend asked him what was wrong. He replied, “If nothing can ever be perfect, then what is the point in

attempting to perfect anything? It is a useless pursuit, one which confuses even me.”

25. The SuperGenius said, “The Perfectionist in an imperfect world can do nothing but confuse himself and others.”

26. The SuperGenius told his friend, “This is something regarded as Truth, that nothing is or ever can be perfect. But the concept of Perfection must exist.” His friend asked his meaning.

27. The SuperGenius concluded, “Without unattainable concepts like Perfection, we would have nothing to compare with even the best written stories or well-sculpted works of art.”



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Stars

Borne out of the night  
    they appear.  
With a flash, and a sparkle  
    they catch your eye,  
beckoning you to your  
    window.

At the first glimpse  
    a solitary one is seen.  
Then an entire array appears.  
    A host of silvery flecks,  
magnificently thrown upon  
    a dusty blanket.

An infinite display of shimmering whites  
    that flicker in the sky.  
Captivating and mesmerizing  
    your inexhaustible sight  
until the sun rises.

by Erin Kay Hiatt

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## The Business of Beauty

First off-  
This isn't a song  
This isn't a radio play  
This is NOT heavy rotation  
                                poetry on the  
                                hot one hundred  
                                every hour  
                                on da hour  
                high fidelity  
                low intelligy  
speaking strictly for the masses.

now...  
with THAT outta the way...

Hi!  
Mike Melanoma here, and have  
                I  
                Got a deal for YOU!  
If ya wanna be tha MAN,  
                Ya gotta have the TAN!

Put down that mouse an' get  
                                Outta yr house  
Our new technology, produced by a  
multinational team of average citizens  
like you  
                                and me,  
                allows you to have the bronze  
look and hard leather creak you have always wanted!

Let me ask you, what is more natural  
                than the sun?  
Get the full effect now, unaided by those pesky O3  
atoms.

Amaze your friends-  
                Be the first on you block to be able to say-  
                                "Mike Melanoma helped ME out,  
and he can do the same for you!"  
                Satisfied customers include-  
                                George Hamilton  
                                Jack Palance after 1991,  
                                and Farrah Fawcett!



Yes, the mole's getting darker

BUT

That's yr body, yr temple, yr holy alter

to you

telling you

I want MORE!

Carcinogenics is a science and I

Am the Bill Nye

Of Sexy solar amplitude and anti-polar

attitude,

And the beauty of it is,

It's

On Discount!

Sure, I could make more money offa this, but

Your complexion is payment enough

WHATTA SWEET DEAL!

Act now, and receive at NO extra cost

A twig shaped figure!

You guessed it, Mikey Melanoma's breaking  
into new territory

It isn't enough to be dark and beautiful,

Now be dark, beautiful,

AND thin.

Be the token supermodel in your home or office.

Step up to the all you can eat bar of the opposite sex.

Looks are,

After all,

The most important factor to healthy living, and who  
knows this better than me.

Wow your peers-

We can shape you into the form you have always wanted,

You can look exACTly

Like them!

Satisfied customers include-

Calista Flockheart

The 1998 Team Roster of Victoria's

Secret

And Farrah Fawcett!

As if this were enough,  
NOW AVAILABLE  
Pheromone Cologne!

Have the allure, sensual power and sheer animal magnetism  
Through man-made body odors!

Sure, there are chemicals naturally  
generated by your body that would do the same thing  
But

Why waste time with building confidence  
When you can just  
BUY IT!

Dazzle your dates-  
Slap some of the magic on your face  
Smell like a dirty monkey  
and get laid!  
Satisfied customers include-  
Brad Pitt  
The Entire French Nation  
And, you betcha, Farrah Fawcett!

Yes, I have tons and  
TONS  
of beauty for sale,  
don't be left out in the cold,  
be BOLD  
Get GOLD!  
Just remember the name, Mike Melanoma, and my slogan,  
"If you are different, you are doing something wrong!"

by Jeff Ridenour



**Layback**

Black and White Photo, 3½"x2½"

by Tony Reitz

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## A Walk Through the Aisles

by Joseph M. Duncan

The most vindictive command my Mother ever gave me was, "Just go over and ask those kids if they want to play."

This is a terrible, irrevocable decree. "Those kids" never want to play. They never even want to look up. I certainly didn't want to play, much less ask the malicious little bastards for any favors. They never even looked up. Just went on playing. Without me.

Standing uncertainly, hands uncomfortably at sides, balanced between the contempt of my would-be playmates and the imperious ukase of my Mother, I looked awkwardly from side to side, up and down, wishing for something, anything to visibly attract my attention so that I could, with some sort of dignity, walk away.

Related to this grinding, demeaning command, was the single most perfidious lie she would ever tell. "Oh, go ahead, they're not making fun of you. They don't even know who you are."

Never believe mothers when they say that the others aren't laughing as you make your way through life. They are laughing. They are talking about you. I know. Often it's me doing the talking and laughing. Much like Batman used the wicked murder of his parents to energize his lifelong fight against crime, so I did use that early humiliation to fuel a lifetime of snideness and gossip. Someday, somehow, I will snub, humiliate, or at least ruin the day of at least one of those rotten little guttersnipes who hurt me. They say that Karma is on the side of those who wait.

And one thing that life in any of the facets of the retail industry gives you is patience. Patience and a certain degree of studied malevolence.

Monday morning, bright and early, after working the cash register for ten minutes, you've brought in more money for the store than will be your salary for the next two weeks. Everything else you do for the next 79 hours and 50 minutes you spend at work will go towards the store, "For the Team."

By minute 16, boredom sets in.

Customers often complain about hearing retail workers talking about their upcoming breaks rather than the dire task at hand. "I always have to hear them talking about their breaks," says the heavily bejeweled 47 year-old house wife in tennis skirt, "If they hate their jobs so much why don't they quit and get another job they like? I'm sick of hearing about it."

Do this little gendankenexperiment::

*You have a job walking up and down flights of gray stairs all day, every day. Randomly selected stairs are painted lavender or red. Ten minutes ago, to your dull, rusted eyes, a lavender step appeared. Four minutes of soul-deadening, step-slogging monotony later, you pass another stoop-*

*shouldered defeated person who also has the job of walking on stairs all day, every day. Do you talk about all the gray stairs you've seen all day, because walking on gray stairs is your job? Or, perhaps, to the consternation of bejeweled housewives everywhere, talk about the exciting lavender step you passed only ten minutes ago?*

There is an anti-drug commercial that says that no one ever started out saying that he wanted to be a Junkie. True enough, perhaps. But also, no one ever started out thinking that they would end up giving caring, detailed, endless customer service to shrieking children, steaming old women and roaring fat guys with facial hair for a living. Junkies have it easy. At least they get commercials. People don't insist that they be cheery and answer the phones using their own name in an **Official Greeting Formula**.

"We just have these two books to buy, and we'll use one gift certificate."

After awhile, you tend not to look up to meet the eyes of teenagers and below, "Sure, just sign the back please."

"I won this at school, it just says Pat, do I write that?" asks the smaller one, getting a fierce glance from his companion. I looked up in time to see "Pat" visibly blanch at the gaze. These two were a red step.

The smaller boy's fingernails were quite long, fairly jagged, and painted black. Or they had been painted black. Now they were hacked and chipped, and just used-looking. As if that's the main concern when a boy in high school has long finger nails painted black.

"Yep, get used to signing your life away," said the much taller kid. Surprisingly charismatic, for one so young. But it kind of gave me the creeps to see him boss "Pat" around.

As they were fiddling with their money and certificate, I looked again at the now silent "Pat." Christ, what a sickly looking kid. Then, he caught my eye and started to stare, Dracula-like. His eyes widened weirdly in patheto-hypnotic fashion. My immediate thought was that I'd been caught rudely staring, then I saw the books.

Some load of crap about "Real Vampires," and a little black book called The Necronomicon. Fuck. You always feel vaguely rotten selling this type of stuff to kids. I know, there's nothing you can say about any cult that couldn't be said about Christianity. But Christianity hadn't just attempted to use force of will to stare me down. Then the stupid cult let the tall, charismatic kid march some pathetic, drug addled kid out of the store like a toy soldier. "Carry

the bag. Why don't you leave?" No fun to be around, let me tell you. You gonna do something? Just tell me what.

And that, my friend, is six dollars and fifty cents worth of guilt and bullshit earned for the hour right there.

Once I was eating lunch back in high school. This one of us, in a spontaneous attempt at dominance, starts chewing his salad; spitting it out; putting it back; chewing it some more; back into the mouth; and so on for almost a minute, to the increasing cries of anguish and approval from the guys at our table. I stole his crown when I reached over with my own fork...you get the picture.

I raised the bar of personal, publicly glorified repulsiveness almost impossibly high that year. We, as a unit, would simply have to disappear from the old alma mater before another King of the Disgusting could rule. Maybe that behavior itself was rather cultish, though no one told either of us to start acting like such idiots. I would certainly never have made anyone do anything remotely so moronic given the chance... maybe... And, our antics just seemed to feel a bit funnier than those of that sad, vampire duo.

"So what do you think, Beth," I explained my little situation to her in the back, pretending to help move some of the hundreds of boxes of books a major chain has laying back in storage.

"Guess you better not sell black magic to children then."

"I didn't. I mean..."

"Suuuuure sounds like it to me. If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen," she paused to smirk for a moment, than continued actually doing work rather than paying attention to me.

"God damn it, Beth, this is important. Well, sort of. You know, what if I condemned this kid to the endless fires of Hell. That's a real bitch. Don't you think? Hell? Jesus, you'd think a mother would care."

"Dear," she said laying an arm on my shoulder, "Assuming for the moment, that two boys did actually come to the cash register outside at the other end of the store, and that you did not make this up as an excuse to come back, make small talk and stare at my chest..."

"You're projecting," I accused, looking up.

"And you're transparent."

I'm of the opinion that any woman who has ever given birth loses an argument to any man only for the sake of the variety. Let's face it, while some men supposedly hold all life sacred, no man ever expressed the desire to bring forth life by passing it through his urethra. Not even once.

Consider this:

*Article the Second*

*It being necessary for the security of the State to have a well regulated militia, the right to bear arms and for a man to terminate his own pregnancy at any time up to three months after the birth, shall not be infringed.*

*"You lissen here," said Sheriff "Pistol Pete" Enos McKlowski to a band of hippy demonstrators during the Viet Nam War, "This country was founded on three things: Guns, Guts and a man's God-given right to make decisions concerning his own body—the most personal decisions that a man can make. And I'll be Gawd-damned if I'm gonna let some hippy commy pinko take away my guns or my right to abortion."*

"So look through me."

"What is it with men?"

"Don't 'what-is-it-with-men' me, what is it with women? What, men are so dumb, so immature?"

"Pretty much," she chirped, striking six notes with the three syllables.

"And you've been married how many times?" I said, scoring a favorite point.

"Just 'cause men have gotten it wrong a couple of times, doesn't mean I should punish them forever."

Tough as mothers might be, unwed mothers are tenacious, they fight verbally like the Viet Cong must've fought with guns. Clear the field any number of times, they just keep coming back. I decided to mount my helicopter and give up, "Come on, Beth, tell me what to do, before I go find something else to amuse myself."

"Well, since you abandoned the first customer to burn in Hell eternally, maybe you should do something nice for the next person. Remember the company motto, **Make Someone's Day!**"

Good advice. Lose one, save one. Complete the eternal cycle. That's the current ticket. Admit no failure. Suggested by a mother, no less. Whom better to listen to?

As rat bastard luck would have it, the next person, a dear old lady, the nice type you can't help but love, wanted to find the Decorating/Design section. This is no place to abandon even the bitterest of enemies. From the opening of the doors in the morning to the locking of those same doors long, long after dusk, people file to the Decorating/Design section; assembling without artifice gigantic, swaying stacks, and leaving a growing pile of detritus around the entire area. The shelves start to take on a rumped look as the piles grow on the floor. Soon the entire area starts to look like the set from *Sanford & son*.

In fact, the Decoration/Design area of a bookstore, along with the Crafts section, together form some sort of allegory or microcosm of America's dying cities. Innocent customers, on seeing

the wild dishevelment and anarchy surrounding them in the area they must be, despair of finding what they want or doing anything to help reorganize. The surrounding community and government (we who work there) see a rat's nest of jumbled books and paper which the very people who hang out there have made. We justify doing a really crappy job of cleaning it up. "They'll just muck it up again." "They're always slob over there." "They should clean it up themselves, if they want to go there."

Working at being charitable, after abandoning one of the vulnerable teens, part of America's Future, to endless Hellfire, I tell the dear old lady what to expect, "You know, people are in and out of here constantly, it's not in real good order."

"Oh that's all right," she says, stabbing me to the heart. "You've been so nice just to take me here. I'll just putter around on my own. I don't think a young man like you wants to be looking for *Feng Shui* anyhow."

As I laughed with her and started to deny this, a monotone voice penetrated the conversation, "Is it decoration or design? They're completely different."

"Well, here, even though they're different, they both involve housework, so they're together. Alpha by author."

"Can you help me when you're done with her?"

"Well I ..."

"Oh you go ahead," said the old wonderful woman, for whom I could not do enough but would let me do no more, smiling pleasantly, "You probably hate it over here." Was she telling me to go play?

"What can I do for you?" I said to the new woman, dreading the idea of trying to find a single author in the midst of the paper jungle. She had a certain archetypal midwestern housewife look. With the right kind of eyes you could see her plowing the prairies and building churches with Pa Ingles, making the land of the Indians safe for decent Europeans. With only slightly different eyes, you could see her in the front of the wild crowds below the Guillotines, baying for Noble blood.

"I need to see your medical section." This made me wonder what she had been doing, criticizing the organization of Decoration/Design, but I smiled and nodded, walking the two of us over to the Medical section. "My daughter has a condition," she continued, to the back of my head.

"I'm sorry, I hope she'll be all right." I said this to the air in front of me.

"You may have seen it on TV a few weeks ago. Its....myriadical syllabalice something ending with 'ovaries,' Did you see it?"



"No I didn't." But I was vaguely uneasy. Ovaries is one of those words, like cervix, prostrate and polyp, that you never hear in pleasant context.

"...hormones run wild," she stopped me and motioned to her armpits, "Her armpits turned yellow and rubbery. And the hair."

God, the poor thing, "Well, you know that sounds specific, I don't know that we'll have anything here, in a regular, non-medical bookstore..."

"Her gums turned rotten and green. Her finger and her toenails..."

"That! That...sounds serious. And terrible. You know, I wonder if maybe you don't want to go downtown to State U. They have a medical school there, and a library and bookstore. Probably they'll know what you are talking about..."

"Oh I'm not going to drive that far."

This was a bad sign. Not one to tell a parent how much effort her daughter was worth, I started to attempt some of the Basic Escapes. Raise-The-Left-Heel and begin a Leftward Turn, while wishing luck. The Big-Breath-of-Air with an invitation to ask later for more help. The Backward Creep. Beth walked by, and I gave the Flutter-Fingered Wave of disdain, turning that signal to a concealed middle finger as she walked away without helping me out in any way. Through it all, the ever-more frightening litany of symptoms continued to pile on.

"And I didn't have any symptoms, I was just going for a check-up. And he said my uterus was twice the normal size."

**That word!** I cringed imperceptibly. At least she probably couldn't also have a prostrate.

"...And when they cut me open..."

Oh God no.

"...It was just full of them."

"That's awful," I said with a dullness coming close to her own monotone, never daring to question just what "Them" might be. I had learned too much already.

"They were just aghast."

"I'm sure..."

"And the smell..."

I lurched forward. Some strange barrier had now been broken. A record suppressed. Divide 6.50 by the minutes in an hour, and the time on my medical counselor meter had long ago run out.

Years ago, there had been no succor for me on that awful playground. I had stood there stupidity until the kids who didn't want to play left. "Did you have a good time?" my mother asked when I went back. "Yeah," I said, "They were real nice." It was easier that way.

But not this time. This time, not ten yards away, Beth stood, flirtatiously chatting up some model-gorgeous businessman in an immaculate trench coat. He needed advice about the virtues of various tattoos and body-art. She lifted up her sleeve, displaying her own howling wolf with bloody fangs, gnawing on a human skull.

"Her," I said, pointing at Beth, "I don't know how I forgot. She had just what you are talking about."

"Really? I don't..."

"Oh yeah, she just got over it like a month ago. She's just the one you need to talk to." Dastardly, I knew, betraying another worker. But I figured that in a world where mothers are tough, unwed mothers tenacious, tattooed unwed mothers must form some sort of Green Beret Elite in the Rhetoric and bodily-dysfunction department. I knew my decision was right when I saw the hope in those crazed eyes as they advanced on the unaware figure of the tattooed woman Beth. No doubt she would soon have tired of Suit-boy, anyhow.

I determined never again and go play with the other kids. No matter what.

"Excuse me sir," said a voice behind me, "Do you work here?"

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Writing is a journey  
through an eternal maze  
searching for the right word  
through a thick, foggy haze.

The words love to elude,  
to laugh, mock, and taunt me  
why they tease and torture  
is still a mystery.

Still they are a treasure  
to be sought with great zeal  
perhaps this game we play  
enhances their appeal.

They are my salvation  
my fortress and my friends  
waiting to carry me  
on them I can depend.

At times I am busy  
and keep them all at bay  
but the words beckon me  
silent, they never stay.

It's almost orgasmic.  
What ecstasy! What fun  
to catch the scamps at last  
the victory is won!

Tho' the game has ended,  
the words will never die  
we are one entity  
the relished words and I.

by Michelle Jones

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“boymangodshit” (inspired by “You Eat Myself” by Phish)

sad horns sing the blues  
    in ragtime attitudes  
    then slow to an opera-like  
    bagpipe weeping.  
drums click clack tapping  
    in unmeasurable meters  
    and unfollowable but unfailing rhythms.  
organ sighs (or organ choir harmonizes)  
while a steady, ceaseless whistle  
    provides the ghost town setting  
    for a winding, but sure stepped bassline.  
swirling in wind-blown-leaf-in-fall pattern  
    enters the harpish electric guitar  
    being chased by the  
    clod-clod-clodding  
    heavy-soled bass.  
only after more lonely heartbeats  
    does the kaleidoscoping piano begin  
    it's dance. the tinkling notes  
    do-si-do with the cryptic  
    celestial circled guitar notes  
until the climatic moment of lyrical realization

by Jaymi Anderson



**Piano**

Black and White Photo, 5" x 3½"

by Tony Reitz

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**The Electrician's Apprentice**  
(for Aaron)

His hair pulled back in ponytail  
under his union hat:  
He goes to work like that;  
His belt full of tools to light up the world.

by Tess Baker



**True Wisdom Begins With Self-Discipline**  
High Fixed Stoneware, 10"x8"x6½"  
by Julie A. Taylor

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She stands in green fields  
Trying to surround herself  
With Earth's petaled gifts  
Seeking softness  
From rougher blades of grass

Suddenly stooping  
She inhales the sweet fragrance  
Of honeysuckle and clover.  
The perfume of Earth's femininity  
Calls her to lie and breathe deep,  
She sleeps  
And dreams of being *woman*.

by Jaymi Anderson

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...For Gerard Manley Hopkins...

Amen to the Marlboro Man  
to white wisps of sveltysmoke wafting away,  
for peel-rinded orange forefingers flicking  
ashen ashes.

Amen to Nature's produce-  
to sun splattered vines and refractory mirrors of petals,  
for the one grass blade made to stay facing the other  
way.

Amen to the Ancients-  
who gave Orion or Taurus or orbiting orgasms of stars,  
whose can-pulsory lights lift the lads  
ways.

Amen Amen...

Amen be fresh bread  
and intertwined twist ties  
and divine milk-wire it is made of  
and wheat heels, gentiles, cheese meals, brown banana peels,

Amen, amen...

Amen for time, clocks, temporal, spatial  
Amen for smell, olfactory, perfectory  
Amen for jests, just, right, holy  
Amen, Amen, Amen.

by Jeff Ridenour



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DR. ZAY: THE FINAL CHAPTER  
or A NEW MARRIAGE

by H. Suzanne Heagy

PREFACE: Doctor Zay, *Elizabeth Stuart Phelps's* 1882 novel, championed a new role for women, that of the intellectual professional. Waldo Yorke, the masculine protagonist whose emotional perceptions tell the story, struggles as he tries to become a "new man," worthy of the touted "new woman" of the era. The novel's ambiguous ending leaves the reader guessing about the one-sided courtship. Does Dr. Zay embrace Waldo only to turn him out? Does she embrace him and take him as her lover? Or does her embrace imply she has conceded to marriage? With respect for literature's responsive history, I offer a final chapter for Dr. Zay.

It was the moment between last light and dusk when Waldo Yorke strode into his third-floor study and approached the open window. He still wore his daycoat, as the law office of Kraul and Yorke was exceptionally busy and prosperous of late; he rarely left his desk at the appointed hour. Though one would expect such a successful young lawyer to wear the countenance of contentment, Waldo's face revealed nothing of the kind. His brow furrowed and his dark, intelligent gaze swept wildly the length of Pettimere Street, but he did not see the carriage or figure of the one he desired.

Shadows deepened in the alleys of the near-deserted street beneath him, and the windows of the nearest residences began to light with the life and warmth he imagined the families inside were enjoying. Blast it! Tonight of all nights he had asked his Zay to return home at a reasonable hour, as Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* was opening, and he had connived at great cost for box seats.

Margot, the upstairs maid, called from the doorway, "Mister Yorke, please sir, would you have a lamp lit?"

"No. Did I ask for such?"

"No sir," the maid answered, murmuring an apology for her intrusion before she withdrew, though her voice held enough reproach to draw Waldo's attention to his unconcealed irritation.

He could not be sorry. A gaslight fluttered to life at the end of the street and, in that instant, he saw how the game would unfold.

Ten street lamps trailed up to the window where he stood, ten trailed away to the corner. If Zay appeared before the last lamp was lit, he decided, he would forgive her, for they would still have time to dress and attend the opera. If she did not...He settled in the gloom to watch, his attention fixed on the distant corner where her carriage should first appear.

As the fire may crackle before the kettle boils, Waldo at first failed to hear the bawdy song of the lampkeep. When the disheveled man drew near enough, the lyrics pierced Waldo's ear:

*She laughed to scorn the vows  
From hearts though true or bought,  
While merrily she sang;  
And cared all day for naught.*

The lampkeep wore three hats, one stacked on top of the other, and his voice was rollicky with drink. He must be mad, Waldo thought. In that incredible attire and singing of such a woman. A woman who didn't know a true heart when she met one. If nothing else, his Zay knew he loved her. How could she not? Wasn't he patient always, didn't he keep his promise to allow her to continue doctoring, though the Boston Asylum was an establishment where every resident was loony as the lampkeep?

And she would repay his devotion with this: total neglect, no acknowledgment of his creation of a single night in which they could enjoy each other's company. If only she would appear before the last lamp was lit. He closed his eyes for a moment, to wish her appearance true.

It was some distant time later before the clatter of hooves invaded the consciousness of the tired, young lawyer. He started awake on his watch and saw the Yorke carriage approaching with no exceptional speed. It rolled along lazily as a barge. Waldo stood, straightening his clothes so as to give no sign of his impromptu slumber. If she knew, she would be that less regretful about her late appearance. And above all he wanted an apology, a true sign of remorse, because her tardiness caused them to miss the grand opera, and because once again she had left him alone, without even a note to explain her delay. It was not the first time she had committed such marital treason in the six months since she had moved to Boston. This time, he would not dismiss it lightly.

He descended the second floor stairs, stopping on the landing above the foyer and planting his hands on the rail. He did not speak when she entered.

"Waldo, dear. Were you in your study? I didn't see a light. Come down, I'm famished. I've so much to tell you." She removed the light cloak she wore to protect her brown work dress from the city's soot and dust. After the cloak was hung, she paused before a gilded mirror to smooth her hair. "Waldo?" she finally asked. "Is something wrong? Is it your mother? I was sure the prescription I sent for her cough would ease the symptoms."

"My mother is fine."

"Just as I expected. Come, sit with me in the dining room. I can't stand a moment longer." With that, she stepped through the double-glass doors to the left of the stairs and disappeared from sight.

Confound the woman, he thought. How can she tend the feeblest patient with such empathy, yet be so blind to me? And the opera...blast the opera. She had more to answer for. Jamming his hands in his pockets, Waldo began his descent, stepping heavily as he followed his wife's trail to the dining room.

\* \* \*

He found her relaxed at the far end of the table, her hands laying limp on either side of a steaming cup of tea. He sat down in the nearest chair, though his plate and utensils were laid at the far end. She opened her eyes and smiled. "Hello again, dear. Today...it was wonderful, and completely exhausting at the same time. But you go first. Tell me, how was your day?"

"Nothing exceptional," Waldo said, trying hard to resist the warm, satisfied glow that emanated from his wife's face and posture. "Do you know what tonight was?"

She pursed her lips. "Tonight? It's Friday, so I...oh," she said, clapping her hands to her mouth. "Friday night. Wagner. I'm so sorry, it completely slipped my mind. One of my patients had an amazing breakthrough, Madge, though I should say her whole name, because she very soon might leave the Asylum and be able to reenter society."

"This Madge," he said, "did she by chance spend a fortune on box seats for the opera?"

"Of course not," the doctor said, spooning a bit of sugar into her tea, her posture straightening as his tone struck her. "You sound out of sorts. I apologize, and I'm truly sorry for your disappointment, but my patients will always come before the opera. I thought this was understood." She sipped her tea, her arms held close to her body.

"I've been sitting and waiting for hours."

"Why? You have the tickets in your possession. You could have gone on without me."

Did she discount his true heart, did she not know that Wagner without her beside him would have been misery, as rank as the lampkeep's tune? "I've mentioned Dr. Lange before. You could have a practice like that. She keeps her office prompt, and works next door to her home, so if her husband needs her, he has only to knock and enter."

"I was trained to treat greater symptoms than vapors caused by fashionable dress, Waldo. I would not trade my position at the Asylum for such a practice as Dr. Lange's."

Celena, the kitchen maid, entered with a platter of boiled potatoes and roast, granting the quarrel a respite.

Waldo considered how to proceed. Exasperation, denied on his part more than once these last six months, seemed impossible to quell at this moment. Was he being unreasonable to expect more consideration from his wife? If the shoe were on the other foot, if it were he that constantly missed engagements for the sake of work, and failed to send word, would she be upset?

He looked at his lovely Zay, her handsome face turned distractedly toward the painting which hung on the wall, of a shepherdess tending her flock. Blast it. He knew in his heart she would not hold his business against him. She did not need him the same way he needed her, she was an independent woman for whom love was a deep aside. A plunge into the essence coated her with assurance that could carry her from interlude to interlude. She would not have minded one bit to return home and find he had gone ahead to the opera.

Oh, that he were able to accept this difference between them once and for all. That he were able to convince her to meet him halfway. But what of halfway, if he could not lead her there? Was the failing more hers than his? From the first, he loved the woman. But he had married the woman and the doctor, too. Woman, doctor, wife. Three hats, he thought. Yet he had entered the union willingly, had pressed for it against her objections.

Blast his logical mind. It turned him from the righteous anger he longed to unleash. But if he did... he imagined the worst, her returning to Maine, him left behind in Boston...alone.

"Zay," he began, once the maid was gone from the room. "I won't deny my disappointment, but...will you forgive me?"

She turned from the bucolic painting, her eyes tired and not understanding. "For what? It's I who failed tonight. I've let you down. It's what I was afraid of from the beginning."

"No," he said, reaching for her hand. "Never. You'd be lost as a dull penny without your flock. I'm glad we didn't go to the opera. Then I'd be forced to share you with the crowd." He bent his head to kiss the strong, competent hand he held in his own.

"Waldo," she said, "will you always amaze me?"

He laughed. "I hope so. And if I forget, will you forgive me?"

"I hope so," she answered. "Would you like to hear about my patients?"

He shook his head. "Tonight is for two. The rest of the world can wither away, for all I care."

"Don't say that," she warned. "If the world were withering, I'd not be sitting here with you."

It was the bitter truth, yet he managed a smile. "I know, my Zay. I know."



**La Diego a la fleur**  
Oil on canvas, 24" x 36"  
by Kris Peterson

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Kansas City, 1996

The walkways of Kansas City, they were styled  
after a Spanish village.

I like the hilly streets,  
my feet catch themselves  
with each step down.

The river market,  
wooden walkways, shops,  
There goes a fish vendor, old and smiling.

I'm snoozing on an oak plank sidewalk, it's night, hat over eyes.

the river market is busy and teeming with chicken drenched fools  
rallying

support of god figures who will be voted into the next Heaven...

There's talk of wars with multicolor textiles in red and  
blue, says a señora  
on a plank board who has spent long obtuse hours at the lip of the  
dock.

where now

German missing links cheer themselves on toward evolutionary  
humor, a five  
piece jazz combo improvising the next Kubrickian dawn of man...

Piñatas are undulating rhythmically in the night air,  
awaiting the rare-  
rain, children eat blood beans and jump for independence joy  
'round a sombrero...

Down the way, mad sorrows are drowned in gin and tonic over  
women left and  
loves of a lifetime never there when two lonely space aliens  
wanted them...

look deep, and one can see dilemmas over contemplations  
to sleep no  
more, nevermore  
suffering the Shakespearean slings and  
eras of failure in a Mamet nine to five...

Closer to the river, a quite uncommon intellectual  
gathering of prophetic  
philosopher kings at rose paper tables sipping sweetened  
Colombian oil,  
celebrating the mind and its powers of exploration that rival the

gas giants above...

Across the way away from philosophy peasant revolts over fishy  
type madmen  
baring  
their used souls for a quickie...  
hungry soul searching, the two lonely aliens wandering if they are  
all gone on to  
eternal purgation of self...

jazzy German sing song patterns of love fading  
in out in out in out

and further  
out to pinnacles of living...  
jubilant hypocrisy from the minds of Mexican sickly sweetness,  
who came to  
orgasm one after another only to  
drop the fishy type madmen back to sea for another more  
experienced catch...

crowds of commoners seeking pearls of  
wisdom but not Arthurian truth...

clandestine operations, orchestrations of movements  
from storefronts 1108 to 1510 to 1108 to 1105 to  
dimestore to diner to beer blanket sleep...

the crowds waiting for the prophets to drop the pearls  
on the corner of the arena, prophets that will always  
arrive at 3:05 a.m. and thirty seconds...  
señoras dancing in textiles of red and blue  
crowds, prophets, madmen snap, clap, and cheer  
jazzy monkeys blow notes over their heads  
aliens continue to admire lost loves intricately dancing...

it's morning  
hat over head, vendor still old, still smiling.  
Walking down the hilly streets,  
his feet catching themselves with  
each step down.

by Jeff Ridenour

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## ALL THAT I See

I look and see  
the busy bustle of student bodies  
darting about to special destinations  
between the NU and SI building.

I hear and see  
giddy groups of girls and guys  
debate and banter the philosophical nature  
of Tupac vs. Biggie.

I listen to and see  
the click, clack rhythm and hum  
of the bronzed Pakistanis'  
secret insights and private revelations.

I watch and see  
surprised and confused Ph. D.s  
screaming musical obscenity  
at the haughty copier.

I hear and see  
the ticklish tongues of lovers  
conversing quietly.

I watch and see ALL THAT  
and I wish a little for myself.

by Zandra E. Mukes



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*Sonnet*

Through the maze of tables she'd sway like tides  
I loved her ease, the way she walked by me  
That smile spread across the room in strides,  
Those eyes the blue parallel of sky and sea

Men were captivated, wanting to partake  
All the day trying to caress her hair  
Their egos humbled in her shadow's wake  
Their pride worthless, withered in despair

Bleeding organs tossed out on the floor  
She pierced them with her high heel shoes  
Whoever succumbed, always wanted more  
Eager to pay the woman her proper dues

She served me, day by day by day by night  
I waited patiently, through darkness by her light

by Angela Taylor

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## Dance of the Dionysian

by Alexi Zekas

Camilla arrived slightly before eight. I was just finishing the final preparations: chips, veggies, and of course, a couple bottles of wine. Camilla loved red wine. She had a night out on the town in mind, first dinner, then dancing. I made dinner reservations for 9:15 and the taxi would pick us up at 9:00. Stewart had promised to be home by 8:30. It was the first time I had gone out with my friends since long before I became pregnant.

Brandon was wearing his new plaid overalls. I had put the matching hat on him, even though he didn't really like it, just to show him off.

"Oh isn't he beautiful," Camilla said, reaching out and taking him from my arms. She lovingly swayed and caressed him. "Thank God, he looks just like you." Camilla marveled over the fact that he was so big.

"Yes," I said jokingly. "And that all came from me." I poured her a glass of wine and explained that I was going to wait to drink until after the baby had eaten.

"So how did you talk Stewart into staying home with the baby?" Camilla asked.

"Oh, just the usual. I simply told him that both of you were in town, and that I wanted an evening alone just to catch up," I said. "So, naturally he agreed, came rushing to my side and said he'd support me in anyway he could."

"I'm sure he bought you flowers as well."

"No, not flower—"

"What then, lingerie? A little gift for himself to compensate for his noble actions," she said.

"I don't know if I'd go that far. He's a dedicated worker. You have to give him credit for that. He truly believes that he's sacrificing himself for his family."

"What a martyr!" she said.

I could tell by the expression on her face that she regretted either misusing the word, or the implied meaning behind it.

"Well, how's the business doing?" she asked.

"Fine, I suppose. We've started to make a profit but Stewart wants to put everything back into it for right now. He keeps telling me that we'll scrimp and save now in order to live very comfortably later."

"Comfort," Camilla said, listening to the sound of her voice as she repeated the word. "Funny you say that." She reached for the bottle and refilled her glass. "So when did Tiffany say she'd get here?"

“8:00, but you know how she is with time and money,” I said.

“No comprehension of either.”

“Exactly.”

“So, what’s she doing now? How’s she getting along?” Camilla asked.

“Fine, I imagine. She’s got a job, an apartment, an affair with a married man.”

“Really! What am I thinking? That doesn’t surprise me.”

“And you?” I asked. “You haven’t really said anything so I’m assuming there’s nothing really going on.”

“No. I gave up the idea of ever getting married years ago.”

That meant that she didn’t want to talk about it. This was Camilla’s charming barrier that only the divine liquid could penetrate. She placed Brandon on the floor and the two of them were playing with puppets by the fireplace. She spoke to him in an adult voice, yet maintained a comforting slowness that was neither condescending nor contrived. Her tone seemed to communicate more than the words did. Brandon was drawn to her. I remained in the background observing like I did in years past, when I spent my time donating my services to the broken fools that she would leave behind. She never intended to hurt anybody, but Camilla, my best friend for years, was scared of people and terrified of the pain that they could inflict on her. Walking or sometimes, running away was her trademark.

“I wish you lived closer so that you could see Brandon more often,” I said.

“Really, I’m surprised you want me to have any influence on him, or that Stewart would even trust me to be alone with him.”

“Stop,” I said. “By the way, it’s not your influence that Stewart’s worried about. I think it’s more yours and Tiffany’s combined.”

“That’s odd, we haven’t spent any time together since high school, seven years ago,” she said.

“But the first time I introduced you to him you were both together. He hasn’t really gotten past that shocking event. Shows you the injustice of first impressions.”

“Perhaps we were a bit harsh. But you have to admit that you had set yourselves up for abuse by wearing matching purple sweaters.”

“I’ve told you before, it wasn’t intentional. You guys just took it a little too far,” I said.

“He just has to learn to stop being so mature,” she said.

It was three weeks ago when I received the phone call. Camilla said she’d be flying in from Portland for a week. She was anxious to see Brandon, and wanted to know why I hadn’t sent any

pictures. I felt guilty for not responding to the care packages she sent, but working, being pregnant, and running a household is enough to fill all the hours in a day. Besides, I was unaware of her current address. Camilla moved around so frequently, her address was something that needed to be kept on a post-it note. It was her idea to arrange this little rendezvous. I expressed my doubts that Tiffany would drive in from Chicago just for old-times sake. But Tiffany is full of surprises, and promised to be there at 8:00. I was glad she suggested it.

Tiffany arrived around 8:20 p.m. She and Camilla spent the next few moments getting reacquainted, Camilla pouring, both drinking. I sat and watched, trying to figure out what it was that had changed in them. Time had little significance on their friendship and they interacted as if only a few weeks had passed. Perhaps it was their clothes; tight seams revealing the outline of cared for bodies contrasted drastically with our baggy-jean high school days. But it wasn't that. Soft diagonal lines sprouting from both the corners and underneath the eyes were also apparent. However, it wasn't that either. Nor was it their dialogue, gestures, composure—existence? Or, perhaps it was all that combined.

The two of them hadn't seen each other in two years. I was both excited and nervous. After high school we saw each other a handful of times, but there were always others involved, such as boyfriends and new friends. Camilla poured three fresh glasses. "Here, Sacha, drink this. You're awfully quiet," she said as she passed me a glass. "I read somewhere that if you have a glass of wine before feeding your baby he will never have heart problems, as well as getting a peaceful night's rest."

The tone in the room was lightened by Tiffany's presence. She was still like the eleven year-old girl I was best friends with in sixth grade. Her hair had changed from the bright blond of her childhood to a more somber brown of twenty-five. Yet, I still saw those yellow curls. She seemed to take nothing too seriously, blowing everything off with an inward nasal laugh. It was alluring, although her most attractive quality was not when she was cheerful, but when she let all that fall away. Her eyes would stare out, casting out melancholic rays, as if she could see through anything placed in front of her. Then she would say something so insightful that it would touch you profoundly. This rarely occurred, and consequently she was characterized by her ditzy, frenzied appearance. I tried to let her superficial playfulness encompass me, but my thoughts were occupied with the time, now 8:50, and my husband's absence.

"How about we feed him ice cream?" Tiff exclaimed, grabbing Brandon and swinging him around before returning him to

the floor. "We could just take a bunch of Sacha's milk, mix it with chocolate syrup and stick it in the freezer."

"Yuck," I said.

"Oh yes!" Camilla said, joining in. "We could mass produce it and sell it to the nature freak stores as *Mammas All Natural Dessert!*"

I now realized why my husband didn't like the two of them together. He said they were immature and obnoxious.

"We should do something more like pudding pops and call them *Sacha's Suckers*," Tiff said, stuttering with excitement.

The two of them complemented each other. Tiffany's *I don't want anyone to think I am intelligent because they'll expect more out of me* gaiety, combined with Camilla's *I'm afraid to let anyone get to know me because they might think I'm stupid* silliness blended smoothly as water and light and I wondered how much I disrupted this balance.

"Give him to me," I said, "before you get him worked up to the point where he'll never go to sleep. He needs to be fed. Sometimes you can be so immature."

"So what does it feel like?" Camilla asked as I pulled up my shirt. "Does it hurt?"

"At first it did, but not so much anymore, there is just the bizarre feeling of milk being pumped out of your nipple," I explained. "And he consumes 500 calories a day, so I can justify having an extra dessert!"

Camilla refilled the glasses. "So, Sacha tells me your sleeping with a married man," she said bluntly.

"I didn't say it like that," I said.

"You said she's having an affair—that she's sleeping with a married man," Camilla said.

"Well," Tiffany said taking a sip. "He's Pakistani, so it's different."

"How so?" Camilla asked.

"He had one of those arranged marriages. But he was raised in England so he thinks the whole thing's backwards."

"So tell us, Tiff, what's he like? How did you meet?"

"Well, I met him at the hospital. He's a doctor."

"We always knew you gave up journalism for the chance to marry a doctor, and not to be nurse. So, I have to know, do I hear the sound of future signatures on divorce papers?" Camilla asked.

"I don't think so. And I'm not really sure if I want him to. He has a six-year-old daughter. Anyway, I don't really care. I'm just having fun!"

In a sick way, this was almost acceptable. Tiffany enjoyed sex. She always had, ever since her first time with Gary in the ninth grade. It gave her power to dominate a man, (since so many of the

men in her life seemed to dominate her) even if it was just for fifteen minutes.

“So where is that husband of yours?” Camilla asked.

“Making love to the check book?” Tiffany said.

“Don’t go there,” Camilla said raising her glass. “He bought the wine.”

I could have pretended to be offended, but I decided that there was no point in getting involved. Besides it was kind of fun watching the two of them squirm for a minute.

“So what about you?” Tiffany asked Camilla.

“Well, nothing great after I left Andrew. I was seeing this musician, but it didn’t work. He was a little too nice, the type that would let you have your orgasm first. You know how we women enjoy being treated like shit,” she said as she reached for the bottle. And the conversation took a turn back to high school. *Do you remember how’s* and *Do you remember when’s* were all we talked about, all we could talk about.

“Do you remember the time it should have been a snow day and they didn’t cancel school, so we decided we’d protest by calling each other in sick?”

“Yes, I remember that. I called you in, you called Sacha in and she called me in,” Tiffany said.

“Oh God, not again,” I said.

“Everybody got off except me!” Tiffany said.

“But as I recall, you did get away with it,” I said.

“Oh yes, I remember. It was a great excuse. You said that you were pregnant and you had to go to Planned Parenthood to get an abortion. You even cried in the Dean’s office. I was amazed. The Planned Parenthood here doesn’t even perform abortions,” Camilla said.

“I didn’t think it was that funny,” I said. The truth is that nobody would have questioned Tiffany’s pregnancy.

“They were going to suspend me for three days and call my parents.”

“I never really understood that,” Camilla said. “Why would they give students a three-day vacation from school when it’s obvious that they don’t want to be there in the first place? I think that what they should really do is just tie the offender up by their ankles and hang them up in the cafeteria. That way the other students walk by and say, *suspended*.” Everybody laughed.

“Shhhh,” I said, “Brandon’s asleep, I’m just going to put him to bed.”

“Hey, what time is it?” Camilla asked as I returned. “Maybe you should give Stewart a call?”

It was five minutes before nine. I was aware of the time, but I thought he’d just been running late. I calmly said that I was going

to phone him at work, that he'd probably just forgotten about the time. Although I knew that wasn't true. He had, once again, decided that there was something more important than permitting me to have an evening out. By not calling, he assumed it was understood. I went in the bedroom and pretended to make the phone call, afraid of what he might say had I really called. Tiffany hadn't noticed my red eyes when I returned, but Camilla did. I didn't want them to judge my marriage and my decision to get married and have a family while I was still young. I wanted to give the impression that I knew what I was doing. I had a committed life time partner, a house, and a beautiful baby boy. That was all I really wanted from life, unlike the others. Camilla had big dreams. I suppose we all did. I wanted the ideal family life, while Tiffany wanted to break free from hers. Camilla, her dreams changed with every season. Sitting in the living room, I realized we were still so different.

"Go send the taxi away," Camilla whispered in my ear, as if speaking about our spoiled evening was taboo.

"How long has it been since we had an all girl pajama party?" Camilla asked in a playful tone.

"Did we ever have an *all girl* pajama party?" Tiffany asked back.

"Come on, look at this place. It's perfect for a party. We have a fire in the fireplace, great music in the CD player. This could have been set up by the divinities themselves." She was going to say something else, but stopped. "Sacha, go and get some of your sexy lingerie. Let's do this thing up right."

I couldn't help thinking that I shouldn't have offered to have us meet at my house. That way nobody would have known about my disappointments.

I returned carrying everything I had in my drawer.

"Oh my God Sacha, you actually wear this!" Tiffany said holding up my black teddy with the attachable French maid's apron.

"Stewart always had a fetish for those things," I explained.

"I think it's great that you live out those kind of fantasies, even when you are married—especially since you're married," Camilla added.

That was the first time I heard her sound as if she approved of my marriage. I suppose we do change with age.

"Tiff," she said, "Let's just stick to the gowns. We don't want Stewart walking in and thinking we've corrupted his wife. We already have a bad enough reputation."

We all changed in the living room. Camilla slipped out of her long tight black skirt, and Tiffany removed her low crop-top.

"What are those?" Tiffany asked, pointing at my underwear and laughing. "I didn't think you could have your period while breast feeding."

I was confused.

"You know the one pair of underwear that you want to throw away because they are so ugly, but you hold onto them because you think they'd be great for when that time of the month comes around," Tiffany said.

"I know exactly what you're talking about, Tiff. Period panties, that's what I call them," Camilla said.

"Oh no, Sacha," Tiffany said, as if she just remembered something really important. "I hope you're not on your period. I'm supposed to meet Nigel on Tuesday, and now you're going to knock me into mine early."

"Don't worry, I'm not on my period," I said.

"Then why are you wearing those things?" she asked, not understanding how someone could only look at the functional side of undergarments.

"I only wear strings," Camilla said.

"Strings?" Tiffany asked, enthralled.

"You know, thongs. I think they're comfortable. And you don't have to walk around digging them out, because they are supposed to be there."

"I'll have to get some," Tiffany said, taking Camilla's advice as she often did in the past.

Camilla walked over to the wine rack and carefully selected another bottle. "So what do you have to eat? I'm hungry!"

I had forgotten about dinner. I went to the kitchen and pulled out everything I could find. We devoured practically everything I brought out. From outward appearance, nobody could imagine how much these girls were capable of consuming.

Camilla reached for the raw veggies. "Do you have mayonnaise? I like to dip my carrots in mayo, and not that Miracle Whip shit."

"Jesus, not mayonnaise!" Tiffany said. "I've always had this terrible fear every time I pass a Kraft semi-truck on the road that it's going to roll over on top of me and dump a thousand tons of mayonnaise on my car and I would never be able to get rid of the smell."

"Interesting," Camilla said. "You truly have a dazzling intellect. Now could you pass me the goddamn Mayo!"

"That's exactly what I think it is, god damn mayonnaise!" Tiffany said.

"Guys, don't swear. Brandon's asleep in the other room," I said.

"Sacha's becoming such a mother now. Did you know that children pick up words that they hear before they start speaking?" Camilla asked.



"Yes. I work with this lady whose daughter's first word was *shit* because her mother said it so often around her," Tiffany said.

"I wonder if we could test that theory. The next time I come over I'm going to bring a list of insightful words and say them constantly to Brandon. Wouldn't that be great if one of his first words was something like *subservient*," Camilla said.

Tiffany picked up one of the carrots and started playing with it.

"Tiff, don't," I said.

"These make great phallics, don't you think? Everybody is so caught up in the cucumber that we seem to have forgotten the carrot."

"No, they don't do too much for me," Camilla said. "A little too long and skinny. What else do you have?" she asked.

I avoided the question. She got up and ran into the kitchen with her long cream gown trailing behind her. She looked like a diva.

She returned with three ice-cream cones. "These aren't perfect either, but at least they taste better than carrots."

"What? Are we going to have a contest?" Tiffany asked with excitement.

"Exactly."

"I'm not having any part of this," I said, trying to keep my dignity. The two of them had already engaged in caressing and licking.

"That's an interesting technique," Camilla said, watching Tiffany's tongue swirl. "Here's what I think of men," she said taking a big mouthful out of the tip. "And take that!" They began biting and breaking their cones. Their laughter dominated the music. Camilla's eyes watered with excitement.

"Hey cut it out," I said, again regretting the decision to have this gathering at my house. This time for other reasons. "I have to clean that up."

Tiffany grabbed one of the tips of the ice-cream cones and placed it over her nipple. "Hey, Camie, pass me that other tip over there. I need it. I want to make a replica of a steal-tip bra, just like the boots the straight-edgers used to wear in high school."

"Great!" Camilla said. "What should we call these, *Boob blockers*--- the modern way to protect yourself on the dance floor?"

"Ugh, that always disgusted me," I said. "Do guys really think women don't feel them brushing up against them? Really, men make me sick. I'm so glad I don't have to deal with that anymore."

Tiffany manipulated her perky little breasts into the cones. She stood up and began to dance. "You know," she said. "What I really need are tassels. That could be fun. I should have been a dancer in a redneck strip joint," she jerked her chest in a miserable attempt

to twirl her breasts around in opposite directions. "Do you think I've missed my calling?" she asked.

"It looks painful, Tiff. You'd be more likely to inflict remorse in a man rather than a hard on," Camilla said.

"No, wait. I should be a cabaret dancer—up on a grand stage where I could be admired. Join me Camie, show me how to do it," Tiffany said.

Camilla remained with her back against the brick wall, expressing her decision to stay where she was seated. "What you need to do is show more leg," she explained. "Tuck the bottom part of your gown into the seams of your underwear. And stop jumping. That's not sexy." Tiffany followed every one of her orders. "Start moving your hips," she added.

Tiffany picked up her glass and drank from one hand while eating fruit out of the other. The top part of her gown had unbuttoned, revealing her bare shoulder. The outline of her body was perfectly silhouetted from the gleaming light of the fire behind her.

"Well done, Tiff. I think you mastered it. You can stop now," Camilla said.

"Ugh, you've danced all over the cones. What a mess this place is," I said.

"What you need to get is a dog. That would fit perfectly in the picture here," Camilla said.

"But why, when she has stew-ie-poo!" Tiffany said, laughing.

"Hey!" I said.

"Tiff, she's right. We better stop, or else she'll cut us off."

"Sorry Sacha."

"Sorry Sacha."

"So, you never told us exactly what happened between you and Andrew. I thought for sure you would be the next to have a ring on your finger," I said, knowing perfectly well that Camilla would never get married, at least in the near future. But I was searching for an excuse to divert their attention.

"I actually considered that damn proposal. Does that shock you?"

"No," I said, although it did. "So what happened?"

"Well, the last time I went to visit him I started noticing all these annoying habits that I never really paid too much attention to before."

"Like what?"

"You know, just the usual. He farts. I suppose everybody farts," she said, taking a big gulp, "but I just don't want to know about it."

For some odd reason, I understood her, although I always admired the more humanistic side of people. Camilla was an idealist. She never really stuck around too long, to where things started to

stink. She bailed out long before that. This was just her searching for the beauty in life.

"Everybody farts!" Tiffany said three seconds too late. "Now that's fucking poetry."

"Hey," I said. "Please watch your mouth around my son."

"What do you mean by that Tiff?" I could hear some tension building in her voice.

"About what?" Tiffany asked.

"Comparing everybody's farts to fucking poetry!" Camilla said.

"Stop it," I said.

"What do you mean by that?" Camilla asked, again.

"Nothing," Tiffany said.

"I think you need to clarify yourself before I misinterpret what you just said," Camilla said.

"And how could you do that?" Tiff asked.

"Easily."

"Well, I want to know."

"Then tell me, are you being condescending? Or, are you just saying that you are better than me because you are in a relationship where you will never have to answer the question of spending the rest of your life with that person, because it's not an option for you?" Camilla asked.

At this point I wanted to cut in, to stop where I thought this was going, but I sat there passively letting the events play out before me. My humanistic side could not avoid the temptation.

"I'm just saying that maybe you need to start looking at your life and where you're going, instead of always running away leaving people," Tiffany said.

"I should look at my life. Why don't you look at yours? Home-wrecker!"

The happy buzz had turned and there was nothing I could do. Now I was afraid to step in and break things up. I was afraid to have my life displayed, naked on the table open to criticism.

"What gives you the right to judge me?" Tiffany asked, this time with a sad voice.

Camilla shouted back, "What gives you the right to judge me?" Not quite noticing the change in Tiffany's disposition.

"I'm not judging you. I never did!" Tiffany said.

The four eyes met and red faces as a result of the wind. Tempers and heat from the fire now lingered in confrontation. Tiffany's typical numbed expression had turned. Her eyes pierced with a message of sincerity. Camilla broke the stare.

"Why can I judge you, why?" Camilla's voice softened. "Why do we judge others?" she asked. "I never meant to place my decisions in life above yours. I judge, I suppose, because I'm searching

for an excuse to justify my own life," she paused. Then turned her head away from our direction and gazed into the fire. "There are a lot of things you don't know about me. Things I haven't told anybody." Her head started to swing from side to side and she reached up and pulled out her hair-clip. "Sacha, you have a lovely house, and a beautiful son." As she ran her fingers through her hair, they latched onto the ends and she pulled them nervously. "I just wanted you to know that I believe that," she took a deep breath. "I don't know what's wrong with me. Andrew didn't know either. I don't think he ever really knew me. Maybe that's why I left him."

She leaned back against the wall. All of her grace and eloquence as a woman hovered around her, carrying the guilt placed on us since the fatal apple. I wanted to be supportive as she had so often done for me. But how could I? She was right. There are probably many things I don't know about her or Tiffany. And there is so much that pride forbids me to share with them.

There she sat; shoulders rounded, head down, belly sticking out and sobs of tears smudging her made-up face. Yet still, her rosy cheek somehow showed the innocence of the young girl who once existed. I pitied her. I felt for her secrets as I did for my own. Tiffany was crying too.

"I'm sorry," I said.

"I don't want you to feel sorry for me," she said looking up into my eyes.

The heat from the fire warmed the room to an uncomfortable level and we all sat waiting for someone to say or do something. Tiffany finally broke the silence.

"I think I'll go back to my original point. It's just fucking poetry."

"I think you're right," Camilla said.

Camilla needed to hear that. I was dumbfounded.

The disk on the CD player changed and some ethnic music from the Middle East began to play. There was a piercing sound from a banjo that rang out. At that moment, the beating of a tambourine seemed to release us into a world where erratic rhythms heighten to a passionate, impulsive nature.

"Let's dance," I said. "Come on, this is a party. I never get to do this now that I'm a wife and mother. Camie," I said holding out my hand, "come on."

Camilla grabbed it, clenching my wrist with her skinny fingers.

We filled the room with our dance—Tiffany's bouncy, uppity swing; my more reserved sway, and Camilla's long graceful searching gestures. Nobody spoke. Slowly we let the wine take over our inhibitions, releasing personal limitations for a union with the divine. At one moment, I reached out and grabbed the hands of my

friends. There we were, together in a circle, desecrating our repressed desires.

I felt my fingers intertwined with the others. They embraced the faults we carried. What were our sins to the world? We cast them aside. A frenzied energy sprang out from our feet and I felt our bodies being spun around faster and faster. The sweat on our foreheads glistened in the orange light of the fire. Our heads tilted back as our hair loosely dangled smacking against our shoulders and backs. The fire cracked together with the beat of the music and we delighted in our new-found freedom.

I attempted to hold on to that moment forever. But the speed picked up and the sweat on my palms betrayed me, fragmenting our link. I fell, landing on top of the coffee table. The force of the crash sent the bottle against the stone brick fireplace, smashing it.

The music stopped and I heard Brandon's voice in the background.

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Jaymi Anderson** is an aspiring poet and songwriter. She has been inspired by Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsburg, George Orwell, Tori Amos, and Ani DiFranco.

**Tess Baker** is a History major. She has written four books of poems and was raised in Indiana. She has also lived in Idaho, Utah, and Arizona. She likes to build dollhouses, travel, and grow marigolds.

**Katherine Bridgewater** is a Radiology student. Poetry is cathartic for her; it is also a hobby. She hopes to publish a book of poems one day.

**Sally L. Burton**, an English major, enjoys lurking about in ordinary places watching ordinary people do extra-ordinary things. Her goal in life is to share these experiences through writing. Since lurking and writing won't even pay for tent space at a KOA campground, she maintains a day job as a corporate legal assistant and plays the violin in her spare time.

**Michael Coatney** is an honor student majoring in both Communications and English and is a sophomore at IUPUI. He divides his time between writing, theater, film studies, and recently directed Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story* in a sold out Drama Club production. He has received many honors, awards, and scholarships, including the Upperclass Academic Scholarship, the Community Service Scholarship, a SUR Grant, and more.

**Joseph M. Duncan** is the fierce descendant of Highland Scots on the one side and draft-dodging Southern Germans on the other. His ancestors always fought on the side of Right and Truth. Except his father, who was something of a fascist, but well, there you go. Life is not a bowl of sweetened cream, not even for the terribly gifted and kind. The literary influences he claims are Robert Burton, Laurence Sterne, the Maquis de Sade, T. H. White, George MacDonald Frazier, James Joyce, and Elizabeth Wurzel.

**Carol Durbin** is an Anthropology major with a minor in Geology. She enjoys writing poetry as well as doing practically anything outdoors.

**Julie Marie Frye** is a junior, majoring in Secondary English Education. She is a learning community mentor for English W131, and teaches Sunday School at the Boys' and Girls' Club. She is also involved in the Civic Theatre.

**Aaron Green** is a returning student who is currently a Pre-Fine Arts major at the Herron School of Art. Aaron has been active in

photography for several years and hopes to be accepted in the BFA photography program at Herron.

**H. Suzanne Heagy** is a senior majoring in English. She has a meager collection of publication credits, which she dusts off once a year, along with the credenza and the top of the refrigerator. Her future plans include eating breakfast and shopping for a prom dress with her daughter.

**Marianne Hedges** is a graduate of IU with a Bachelor's Degree in History and a Master's Degree in Social Work. She is currently in an IUPUI independent writing course. She has published a few poems in small magazines.

**Erin Kay Hiatt**, previously a Geology major, is now a student at Herron School of Art. Her interests have shifted to art and art history with geologic influences. Her current studio interests focus on sculpture and ceramics.

**Michelle Jones** is a sophomore, majoring in Psychology. Eventually, she will have her own practice. Writing is her favorite pastime. She would also like to publish a book of poems and a novel.

**Oliver L.** is a student at Herron School of Art. He is a modern day Renaissance man who lived and studied in Europe.

**Brice Mabry** will graduate this spring with a Bachelor's Degree in Economics. He hopes to work in investment and move to Europe or the Rockies.

**Zandra E. Mukes** is a junior at IUPUI, majoring in English. She returned to school in Indianapolis after a four-year interruption in her education. During those four years she explored exciting careers in food service (waited tables), financial management (did taxes), and gaming (dealer in a casino). Zandra enjoys dancing, writing, and watching Batman cartoons with her five year old son Jordan in her spare time.

**Hiroko I. Niksch** was born in Japan and raised in California. She is a student at Herron School of Art. She works at a hospital and teaches SAT preparation classes while waiting for her husband to graduate from medical school.

**Kris Peterson** has been taking photos and painting for about three years. As of late, he is putting most of his efforts into painting. Kris is always looking for new ways of expressions and for new things to learn.

**Veronica V. R. Reeves** is a sophomore, majoring in Psychology and planning on a minor in Illustration. She moved to Indiana three years

ago from Washington state, and spent her senior year at Avon High School.

**Tony Reitz** is a senior, majoring in English at IUPUI.

**Clayton D. Rhodes** is a simple black man raising his family in the struggles and joys of everyday life.

**Chad David Richards** is a New Media major with plans of becoming editor of Rolling Stone magazine one day.

**Jeff Ridenour** was born. He grew up. At three, he killed a 'baar.' At sixteen, he quit school to put the award winning musical *Eskimo: A Journey in Fish Preparation* on Broadway, where it is still selling out to this day. Someday he will make sense.

**Tim Rogers** is a sophomore at IUPUI, and will transfer to Bloomington next year to major in Japanese and Chinese. Tim literally goes around everywhere claiming to be a "SuperGenius." Though he does have IQ scores, mathematical skills, and photographic memory capabilities that indicate this is true, many people still doubt him.

**David Shapiro** has, through the course of events, become the world's leading authority on everything. He still has not, however, learned how to lie about his accomplishments very well. He is an English major.

**Benjamin Foley Shine** thanks his influence, Jared Carter.

**Angela Taylor** is a sophomore, majoring in Environmental Science and Health. She plans on having a minor in English, as well as Fine Arts. In her spare time, she enjoys writing, painting, sculpting, playing the flute, and various outdoor activities.

**Julie A. Taylor** is a student at Herron School of Art, majoring in Fine Arts and Stoneware. Many of her works are a combination of techniques and processes united with the concept of aesthetics and her personal experiences and reflections.

**Matthew Walsh** is one bad mutha – shut yo mouth – but I'm talking about Matt – we can dig it! Remember kids, it's uncool to ask, "Where'd you get it?" – It's uncool to let friends use your pad as an address for packages from Mexico.

**Alex Walson** is a freshman at IUPUI. After graduating from high school, he spent three years working, traveling, and being a "student of life." He believes in his country and is sure that through its laws, the citizens of the USA will be able to magically make themselves better than any other peoples have been before. He has studied many



great politicians and he hopes (as all politicians do) that all will learn to follow his teachings, but not the ways in which he lives.

**Becky Winnie** is an Elementary Education major with a Second Endorsement in Science. She has returned to school after a nearly twenty-year absence. She writes for fun and from frustration.

**Donna Winsted** is a student at IUPUI.

**Jennifer Witten** is a senior English major at IUPUI. She also works for the Rufus Reiberg Creative Reading Series. She has been writing poems for more than ten years and plans to attend an MFA in Poetry graduate school program.

**Daniel A. Young** is an artist, writer, and musician from Indiana, with professional experience as a graphic designer in the printing industry, and also as a singer, songwriter, and music producer. He has worked as a session vocalist in area recording studios, and has performed intermittently around central Indiana. His written works include poetry, song lyrics, essays, and music reviews. He is seeking a Bachelor of Science degree.

**Alexi Zekas** is a senior majoring in English and is graduating in May. She has studied in France and Sweden each for a year. She began writing after her year in Sweden.

**Jan Zunkel** is a junior at Herron School of Art, majoring in Fine Arts. She loves good food, films, interesting people, and generally avoids mainstream middle-class suburbia at all costs.

## Invitation to Writers, Artists and Future Staff Members:

The Spring 1999 staff of *genesis* would like to invite all IUPUI students to submit manuscripts, poetry, essays, photographs, slides, drawings, sketches, construction paper mobiles, etc. to the fall issue. Students have up to one year after graduation to submit to *genesis*. In order to insure fairness of evaluation, members of the board of *genesis* are not permitted to submit. Previously published works are not permitted for submission and faculty members are not permitted to submit, as well.

**Tentative Deadline: October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1999**

All submissions should be accompanied with one cover sheet, total, listing the following: name, address, telephone, email and a short biographical sketch, which includes school status, major, influences, and future goals. No manuscripts will be returned; however, all original artwork and slides will be returned, no earlier than the end of the semester. Please send or deliver to the respective addresses.

**Manuscripts** of essays, one-act plays, nonfiction, poetry and art of literary criticism should be double-spaced, classified as either fiction or nonfiction and be no longer than 2,500 words. No more than ten submissions from each author. Names should not be placed directly on the manuscript, as authorship is not revealed during the judging process.

**Visual Art** must be identified by title as well as actual dimensions.

### All Manuscripts:

*c/o genesis*

Dept. of English

Cavanaugh Hall, Room 507

425 University Blvd.

Indianapolis, IN 46202

### All Visual Art:

Office of the Dean

Herron School of Art, IUPUI

1701 North Pennsylvania Street

Indianapolis, IN 46202

*genesis* is also seeking new board members to participate in all stages of the journal's publication. Interested students should contact Iris Rogers at [irisjean@yahoo.com](mailto:irisjean@yahoo.com) or at the address listed above for more information.

**genesis**

the origin or coming into being  
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origin < the ~ if a book >  
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Back Cover

**Summer**

Oil on Canvas, 14"x11"

by Donna Winsted

