

genesis

volume XXVII



*Christine Barton * Lisa M. Barton * Rachael Cantrell * Howard Carter * Teresa Carter * Neil Diamante * Patrick Doolin * H. Suzanne Heagy * Lindsey Holloway * Angela Kraft * Sharon Kratzer * Todd Manning * Kris Peterson * Dave Shapiro * Chizoma A. Sherman * Sextus Tansinsin * Angela Taylor * Alexi Zekas*

Fall 1999

Front Cover

when the sky is falling nothing else matters

Kris Peterson

Best of Issue-Art

genesis
established 1972

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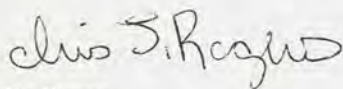
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With the Fall '99 issue of *genesis*, we had hoped to equal the quantity and quality of the Spring '99 issue. The number of submissions was down considerably from the plethora we received last spring, and we have a correspondingly smaller magazine. However, good things are said to come in small packages, and we believe the caliber of work in this issue reflects this.

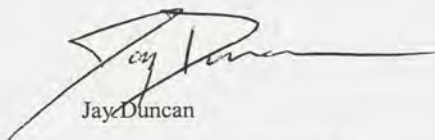
Making art of the small, the everyday, was a thread tying this issue together. A cornucopia of savory food images wafts through the poetry and fiction spread upon these pages, from the morning coffee to mutton and gooseberries to the smell of peppermint to the search for cheeseburgers. Lipstick and Neutrogena and bottled blonde, the little artifices of cosmetic beauty, must be celebrated in lieu of the real thing. We travel through the heather in Bronte's heath, under the poplars along the Seine in Paris, to the anytown suburbia of literary landscapes, while keeping an eye on the heavenly bodies of stars, planets, and moons. One of the most common themes, love, ribbons along this issue, perhaps becoming a little twisted and even convoluting into knots in places.

This semester's issue of *genesis* has brought back some familiar names and introduced some new ones. We would like to thank all the writers and artists who submitted their works to *genesis*, our new faculty advisor, Robert Rebein, and everyone who helped put this issue together.

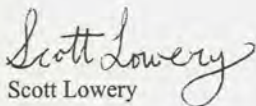
Sincerely,
The *genesis* Editorial Board



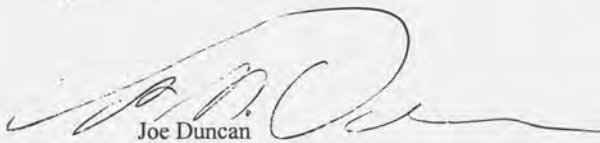
Iris Rogers



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Scott Lowery



Joe Duncan

Table of Contents

Poetry and Fiction

1	Matters of Lipstick	Best of Issue-Poetry.....	Lindsey Holloway
2	I Call You Mister		Sharon Kratzer
3	Anatomy		Todd Manning
4	athena's burn		Dave Shapiro
9	My Life as a Blonde		Rachael Cantrell
11	Swallowtail		Angela Taylor
12	Pennine Way		H. Suzanne Heagy
14	hooked in the deep		Sextus Tansinsin
16	Corruption of Time		Lindsey Holloway
18	You Know (Love American Style)		Dave Shapiro
19	Joseph's Light		Alexi Zekas
24	she likes neutrogena		Lisa M. Barton
25	Romping Grounds		Angela Taylor
26	Mexico City		Neil Diamente
27	To Whom It May Concern.....	Howard Carter and Teresa Carter	
30	Even in Youth		Patrick Doolin
31	antihistamine dreams revisited		Chizoma A. Sherman
33	Momentary Thoughts on the Human Condition		Lindsey Holloway
36	The Del-Ray Motel	Best of Issue-Prose.....	Christine Barton

Art

Front Cover	when the sky is falling nothing else matters	Best of Issue-Art.....	Kris Peterson
8	untitled silver gelatin print		Angela Kraft
16	untitled silver gelatin print		Angela Kraft
35	rusty cans		Kris Petersen

We could have been the children
You and I.

The inseparable five-year-old girls
Arms slung around each other's waists
Pigtails dancing to the rhythms of hopscotch and jump rope.
Spending all of youth involved in one another and fantasy.
Each of us a surrogate daughter to the other's family.

I see that now,
What we could have been,
Even though we've only known each other a handful of years.
I see that as I sit here with my back to the railing,
November sun crashing down on my freshly dyed hair.
And you on the bench beside me,
Your nose buried deep within the words of a simple poet.
Clutching a Marlboro,
Dreaming of a sense of purpose and new birth.

And I am sure at some point we were and will be again
Those five-year-old girls.
Those makers of princesses and tea parties
And all things pure.
As I watch you decorate your face without a compact,
With me as your mirror,
I am sure of that.
Because I would never lie to you concerning matters of lipstick.

Sunrise aroma
Eases me to consciousness
Senses teased to response -
Your robust scent a magnet.
The object of my affection.

Good morning Mister
Strong, dark and handsome.
The package is attractive,
But it's what's within I desire -
Your very heart and soul.

You touch my lips, my tongue
Steam rises between us.
I savor the bitter-smooth taste of you.
Your name? Some call you Joe,
But I call you Mister -
Coffee that is.

Broken metal-man
Heart Hollow
Like a dull echo
Sewers of dim blinking lights
Eyes become tunnels
Of broken glass
Only shallow puddles
Of oil and water
To be found
The gears grinding
Bone to dust
Radios
A thousand mouths
Ears like cold brick walls
Moonlight dies on this stone
Knuckles bleed with the incoherent data
Lodged in the empty churches
Prayers drown in these streets
Tears along the side of the roads
Veins pumping
With a rhythmic electric dullness
There is no center
Except all of those
Face down on their floors

the thing i should tell you in order for this to make any sense is that i'm a writer. i write. not professionally, of course. but writing is an essential part of who i am. if i stopped writing, i would cease to exist. it's my way of thinking things through, of finding focus. all right, enough about that. if you're a writer, you'll understand what i mean. if not, try to think of something in your life that makes you feel like that. think of sports or sex or mcdonald's or television. chances are, at least one of those makes you feel that way.

the next thing i'm going to tell you is the seuss is not my real name. it's not essential to the understanding of my story, but chances are you're going to wonder how i came to be known as seuss. so let me explain. one night, after watching "independence day" on video in a drunken stupor, i had a fit of misdirected admiration for the actor playing the president, zeus. zeus, as you may or may not know, starred opposite hulk hogan in "no holds barred" and wrestled against hulk hogan long ago, before hulk bit the hand that fed him and left the wwf for the wcw. i don't want to talk about that.

anyway, i had this misdirected fit of admiration, and decided to adopt zeus's old look, which was a completely shaved head, save for a stylish "z" on either side of the scalp. since i was not only shaving my own head while looking in a mirror, but drunk as well, i ended up making the "z" backwards, so it was a strange-looking "s." my friends, upon hearing the reluctantly told story, took to calling me zeus with an "s" at the beginning rather than "z," which is, of course, suess, as in doctor. i realized later that what i had really been in awe of was how i hated the film for so many reasons, yet i watched it over and over again. i hadn't realized that at the time.

m learned all this the day i started working with him at the bookstore. m was short for meta. "meta is actually short for margaret," he said to me. "that's my real name. so i actually have a girl's name, but nobody knows what the hell the name meta means anyway, so i've never been given any trouble." he had always gone by meta until he started reading e.e. cummings and raymond carver at the same time, and his brain almost imploded (that's a joke for literary people). suddenly, he felt that only a lower-case letter "m" was necessary to get the point across.

anyway, my first day working at the bookstore, he asked me about my name. i told him my story, and then i asked him about his name, and he told me his story.

meeting people is easy.

after a while we started to hang out. he had the most wonderful stories to tell, all about where he had lived and what he had done. he told me stories about things he had studied in college and made them seem interesting. i myself have never been to college; i love reading and studying, but i am allergic to scholars. they influence me too much, and i break out in rashes of pretentiousness.

i would always watch his eyes when he talked. his eyes were like stars. yes, i know that's a cliché. let me finish. his eyes were like stars in that everything i saw in them at any given point had been created

long ago and was just now reaching me years later. i wanted to catch up with him. i wanted to see the things in his eyes as they happened. i wanted to be a part of those stars.

mushy. yes, i know. but i couldn't help it. we talked like that, he and i. i once asked him what he liked about me. not, like, physically, but as a person, and he said, "what i like about you, seuss, is the fact that you can say the phrase 'artistic integrity' without sounding pretentious or full of shit."

i liked him. very much so. in fact, within a few weeks, i felt like i was falling in love with him. and it was the scariest thing in the world. and so i told him.

"i'm scared." that's what i said.

"i don't want to scare you." that's what he said. and i felt very much like i was in every love story ever made. i've often wondered about the question nick hornby asks in his novel *high fidelity*: does the population's attitudes and behaviors determine the subject matter that popular culture deals with, or is it the other way around? hornby deals primarily with music, but i'm thinking more about tv and film. did m and i have the "i'm scared" conversation because we really felt that way, along with countless others throughout history? and then it became a part of our cultural mythology, immortalized in countless films? or did we have the "i'm scared" conversation because that's what we've been taught to believe? "love is scary. you should be scared of love. it is sacred and pure and you'll only fuck it up." right? and there's no way to really come up with an answer, because things are too ingrained in us to really ever look at it objectively. it's a chicken/egg scenario.

and so m and i were scared of love together. really, it only gave us another thing in common.

meanwhile, i couldn't write. i had been working at the bookstore for over a month, and in that time i had not been able to write a thing. i don't know. i would walk up and down the aisles of the bookstore, looking at all the books i loved, and all the books i didn't love (maybe even hated), and all the ones i had no opinion of yet because i hadn't read them. 99% of the books fell into that last category. and there they all were. i felt the way i do whenever i walk downtown. small. the buildings always loom over me. walking downtown is like walking at the feet of the gods. i hate it. and this is how i began to feel in the bookstore. and as a result, i could not write.

m tried to help me. and really, there's no reason why he shouldn't have been able to. as i felt myself slowly easing into love's la-z-boy, i should have been more inspired that i had been in forever. i should have been writing cheesy love poems, at the very least. i was so in love with him. it threatened to consume me, destroy me. i could feel it. it bound and gagged me, my love for him, and i couldn't move or talk. i couldn't think. i couldn't write. love was going to destroy me unless i could find a way to channel it.

and then: it was a friday night at work. the ten minute announcement was made, and m and i went around the store together, rounding up people and letting them know that we were closing soon, so they should be sure to take their final selections to the register at this time, blahblahblah. great. so that's what we did.

time was wasted, and we did our best to avoid giving the stragglers dirty looks. obviously we have

nothing better to do on a friday night than wait for some damn fool to decide which overpriced michael jordan biography he wants to buy. but this is all beside the point.

i thought i was going to die. i needed to write. i could feel the tension in my head, like in those commercials where they show the rope as an example of headache tension, and then... specialsauselettucecheesepizzapizza. i don't know. all the commercials run together after a while. but that tension, it was there. like nothing i've ever known before. and the tension, like the cord to a television that, no matter how tight you pull it, just can't quite reach the outlet, ran through my arms and stopped at my wrists. there was so much tension, so much energy building, but my hands couldn't connect with it.

the store was closed for the night and there was much rejoicing. yay. and that's when i heard it. a noise. like a child's cry. an infant.

"did you hear that?" i asked. "it sounds like a baby's cry."

"it's nothing." m's eyes were like black holes then, trying to suck everything into them, including my attention. he wanted me not to know something.

"it is," i said. "it's a baby's cry." before m could lie to me again i was off in search of the source of the cry. well, not the source. i mean, it was a baby's cry. i wanted to find where specifically in the store the cry was coming from. that's what i meant. you knew that. so never mind all that explanation.

i walked and i walked through the store, and i found it finally in the children's section. a tiny baby, a girl, unclothed and screaming at the top of her lungs. her face was distorted from the yelling, and she looked like some sort of strange pink lizard. other employees knew what was going on (i was the only one who didn't), and had come into the children's section as well.

i couldn't believe that someone had just left their child there in the store. i just stood there not knowing what to say or do. and then the child just stopped. she just stopped yelling and looked at me. a child that young, a newborn, isn't supposed to be able to focus properly on objects or people. that was the thought in my head then. that's the only thing i remember from when my younger brother was born. i don't remember the way he looked or smelled or how annoying it was to have him screaming in the middle of the night, waking me up. but i remember my mother sitting in her bed in the hospital telling me that he couldn't focus properly on things yet. and i couldn't believe that your first impressions of this world were fuzzy and completely out of focus. now i think it explains a lot.

and when the baby girl looked at me, i only wanted to pick her up and hold her. i had this feeling of dread about doing so, but i knew i needed to pick her up. i started to bend down, and m, who had followed me, screamed, "don't!"

"it's a baby," i said to him. "somebody left a baby in the store."

"it's not a baby," he said to me.

"it is."

"no, it's not."

"fucking look at it. i think i know what a baby looks like." and despite his continued protests, i bent over to pick it up. the moment i touched the baby, i was on fire. the cord reached the outlet, finally,

and overloaded the circuit. every single nerve in my body was over-stimulated. every hair on me stood on end. my cheeks flushed. my heart beat so fast i thought it had stopped. i felt as though my head had been cracked wide open. and i knew suddenly that we are all standing on the shoulders of giants. but more than that. we are born on the shoulders of giants, springing from their heads and spending our entire lives up there, knowing no ground but the one that exists higher than we ever realize we are. and that's scary. but you can look at it a different way: we may spend our lives up on top of everything that came before us, but we're that much closer to the infinite. one day we might become a part of it.

i wasn't afraid of love anymore.

and i wanted to write.

but my hands burned, and i knew that if i didn't put this child down, i wouldn't have any hands left. i dropped her. m grabbed me and pulled me to the bathroom, where he ran my hands under warm water for a little bit.

"i told you," he said to me.

i was still in shock, and could say nothing.

"you're not going to be able to drive with your hands like this. it'll take a few hours before they're better. i'll drive you home."

i hadn't understood what he meant by, "it'll take a few hours before they're better." these were pretty bad burns. but he was right. within a few hours there were gone. and within a few hours, as m sat on my couch watching reruns of "three's company," i was typing away at my computer, writing a story that would cause me much pain later on in revision, but whose initial creation felt like nothing short of a miracle. later that night m held me, and the pain had disappeared completely. i began to wonder if i hadn't just hallucinated the entire thing. so i asked m: "what happens to it now? the baby, i mean."

"it'll be gone in the morning," was all he said. i believed him.

then i asked him why he hadn't told me about this before. about the baby.

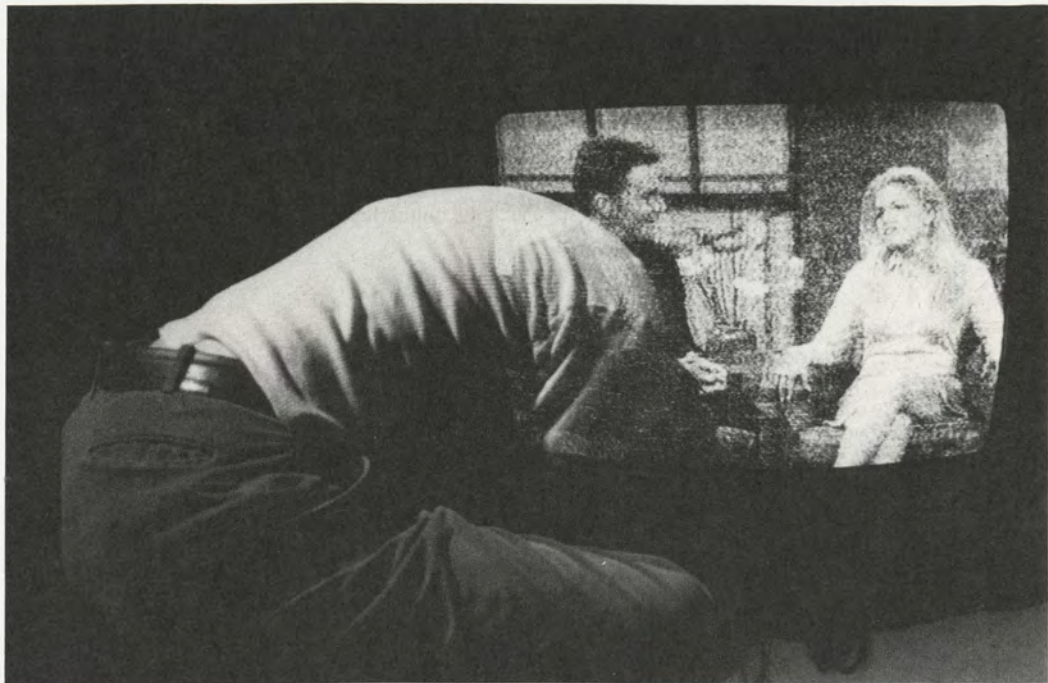
"there are some stories," he said to me, "that cannot be told. and should not be told."

so i hope he never reads this.

oh. before i forget: i am a part of his eyes now. i am a gas floating around, reacting with everything else, and glowing because of it. i am a part of the stars, finally.

the baby was gone the next morning, by the way. they're always gone the next morning. there's nothing you can do about it really. they're always too hot for you to touch for very long. you've just got to hold onto them for the infinitesimally short period of time you're able, then drop them, and learn everything you can from the burns until they disappear.

Untitled 11x14 Silver Gelatin Print
Angela Kraft



My name was Mark in another life.
I know this because I react to it as to my own:
When I hear it called out in a crowd
I turn around.
I notice it in newspapers
And magazines.

One of my lovers was named Mark; I think this has nothing to do with it,
Because I don't notice Shane
Or Sean or Jake'
Or Aldus;
Only Mark.

I was famous in another life.
I know this because I always check the obituaries
In Time and Newsweek,
To see which of my celebrity friends
Has died.
Sometimes I see a name and feel sad
And that's how I know that
Someone I knew is gone.

I was a blonde in another life.
I know this because sometimes I look
At the Marilyn Monroe poster next to my mirror
And I can't tell which is me.
I've spent hundreds of dollars
Trying to replicate my natural bloneness,
But somehow I only end up with split ends.

I was in love with you in another life.
I know this because we belong together.
It was our love that created the universe;
All the stars and planets
And comets are held in trust for us
For when we come of age
In a million years or so.
One day I will reclaim those heavenly bodies
And share them with you.

I was a dreamer in another life;
I know this because I haven't yet outgrown the habit.
I prefer to live on memories

And dreams of you than face the truth.
Somehow, I'm happier this way.

prism of color
layered symmetry folding
tapestry of satin
guru of metamorphosis
connoisseur of growth
icon of femininity
the crafter's coveted muse
and refuge from rigid winds
you have come on sun flower days
in a dream like flight
you have changed your name
a hundred times, but I know it is you
the one who trusts enough to perch on my shoulder
and cling to the shelter of my hands
you are delicate still free I remember
the designs of your divergence
the chill of your crawling legs on my neck
and I will be with you again next summer
if the light brings you back

It was like walking the basin of a bowl, though the moors fell away on the right and rose up on the left as we hiked to the Bronte Falls from Haworth. Lena led the way. She had her camera and stopped to take pictures every five minutes. She walked more quickly than the doctor. I lagged furthest behind, nursing my blisters and wondering how anyone could climb out of a bowl.

The doctor pointed at a sheep to make her point. "Good or bad?" she asked. "To be gentle and meek, an inheritor of the earth, or stupid and led to the slaughter." There were sheep everywhere, some inside of fences, some loose on the moors.

"Good," I said. "Mutton's the best." It was too early in the season for the heather to don its famous purple; it still looked like parsley and made me hungry.

The doctor said she, too, had once believed in absolutes, but then grad school convinced her otherwise. She said it in the tsk-tsk manner of a parent, advanced in wisdom and manners. The path turned left. "Look ahead," she pointed. "That's Top Withins. We're almost to the falls."

The ruins on the hill looked like the endpoint of a line and above an airplane passed over and I drew the line in my mind and saw it stretch away as the plane flew on to Amsterdam or Paris. Something came to me. "A line has two endpoints," I said.

"Definitional," she said, "nothing that would help you drink a glass of water."

Thirst or hunger, the difference was moot between us. We were walking up a slope then and we reached a peak where boulders showed their hard, gray skin against the dull earth. Still, there was the feel of declivity. The slope on the right had turned into a ravine and a trickling stream flowed away from us but I couldn't hear it. Instead came voices, shrill and louder as we continued to ascend.

When we topped the next hillock, the Bronte Falls trickled beneath us. How pitiful, a gurgle up against a guffaw. The falls and the source of the voices, a host of school children who swarmed the banks and the short stone bridge like ants, who ate their sack lunches and lost the wrappings to the breeze, so that scraps of waxed paper and crisp bags fluttered on the ground and into the water in spite of the teachers who flapped their arms and moved here and there to pick up the waste.

"Drats and double drats," Lena said. "What kind of picture is that?" She was writing about the landscape and the Brontes and the littering, noisy school children ruined her gothographic aspirations.

"Let's sit and rest," the doctor said. "They're finishing up. Maybe they'll leave."

We scattered out and took seats on the rocky wayside about the falls. Before the school children, the last people we'd seen were an elderly pair picking gooseberries from a patch of bushes. The husband held up a berry, tiny and unknowable between his forefinger and thumb. "They're worth it," he called. "You should taste the pies." His wife didn't raise up or speak; her gray head bobbed horizontal with her bent back.

It came to me that it was her who made the pies, in a hot summer kitchen washing the berries,

destemming them, mixing and rolling the crust.

"Someone makes the pies and someone eats them. Who's thirstiest?" I ask.

"They don't have to be pie," the doctor said. "You can eat them straight from the bush."

She would not be bested. Two of the students below us, boys too big for grade school, gathered up scraps of paper. I thought, how nice, in spite of their size which must mean they were stupid and had been retained. I watched them stuff the paper in their pockets, moving further and further from the group, toward us and the few straggling sheep who grazed on the other side of the stream feeding the falls.

Then they were throwing the paper toward the sheep and the sheep were eating it and the boys began to chase them and try to grab the paper out of the animals' mouths and the sheep panicked and skittered like idiots on their skinny legs.

"Stop that," the doctor called.

"Stop that," Lena called, "leave them alone."

"Cruel," the doctor said. "You boys, stop."

But the noise of the school children and our elevation in the bottom of the bowl of the moors above the Bronte Falls made their voices as useless as knives against guns.

I didn't call out. I laughed.

"We should go down and tell the teacher in charge," Lena said.

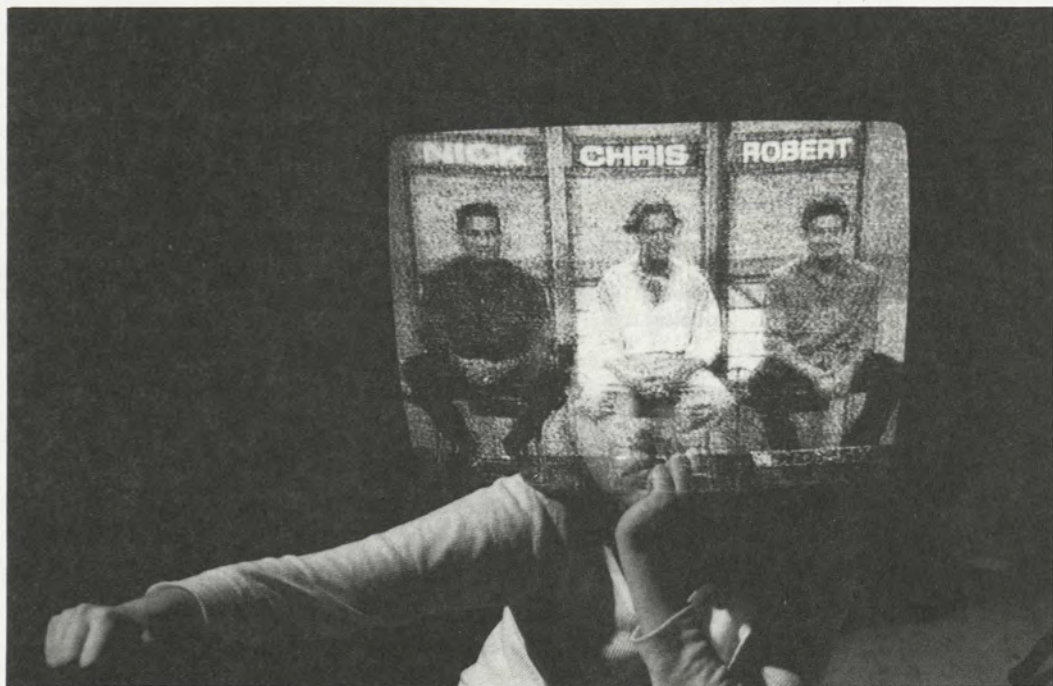
"What's so funny?" the doctor wanted to know.

"You have it," I said. "You shouldn't chase the sheep."

She looked away to Top Withins and didn't say a thing.

cooling (s)pooling	the grip of his glance
shifting shoving	the dearth of my stance
p(l)aying staying	outside the s(h)un
come by drive-by	shaft of a gun
bleak and weakened	soft of the soul
f(l)ailing scaling	stopping the (w)hole
ripples nipples	bending the light
scribbles dribbles	blurring the "might"
brag snag	hooked in the deep
lag s(h)ag	crooked and steep
pecs sex	tears and ripping
reflex objects	fears of (t)ripping
force(s) coarse(s)	callous(es) hearts
cut(-up) shut(-up)	(replace)able parts
pain(less) aim(less)	pointless advance
leading conceding	deadened by dance
sincerely(,)	
perplexed (may) i have the next(?)	

Untitled 11x14 Silver Gelatin Print
Angela Kraft



Corruption of Time
On "The Persistence of Memory" by Salvador Dali

Lindsey Holloway

I sit in the armchair
Meticulously placed by the hearth,
Counting the moments,
The minutes until her return.
I wait for my mistress,
My wife.
Staring intently
At the face on the mantle.

One hand sits silently,
Unwavering,
Grasping toward the seven.
Another hand
Extending from the longer arm,
Creeps along,
Trickling,
Waiting for eleven's kiss.
The third, slender arm ticks away,
Like a runner
Aching for the glory of the win.
And my eyes follow.

My head moves in a slight,
Hypnotic
Circle.
After awhile,
I myself melt into the clock.

Tick, Tick, Tick.
Tick, Tick, Tick.

These moments spent idling,
Waiting endlessly for Gala.

She's only gone to a picture.
But long ago I tired
Of the Camembert and crackers
Left for me
To have with tea.
So I slump into the armchair
With the golden-brown upholstery,
And spend half my afternoon,
Half my life,
WAITING.

And I realize
I'm not the only one.

Like insects devouring carrion,
We eat away the minutes.
We eat away the years.
We eat away the one thing that
Cannot be replaced.

While memories persist,
Time dissolves.
Ebbing with the tides.
Eroding with the soil.
Ever sinking.
Descending.
From the crest of Sinai
To the Valley of Death.
Rendering
The Persistence of Memory
As empty as my teacup.
As empty as my home
Since Gala left.

We're like two...
Somethings that go around
In groups of two.
You know what I mean.

And when I look in your eyes,
It's like the stars shining.
Because you know how stars
Shine and stuff.

And when I touch your skin,
It's like touching something
Really soft. You know.
Like a bunny or something.

Your smell runs through my veins.
Like blood; how blood
Does that, too. Runs through
My veins, I mean. Not smell.

Now that I think about it,
You're not really soft like a bunny;
More like that one side of velcro
That isn't as rough as the other side.

You know when you're at a Basketball game,
And they play "We Will Rock You,"
And everybody stomps and claps?
And also, you're drunk?

Being with you is like that,
Sometimes. Except that there
Isn't a big sweaty guy sitting
In front of me. Usually.

And you know that song?
The one by that band?
You know. They play it on the radio.
Anyway, that's, like, totally us.

What I'm trying to say is that
Being with you is like this really big...
Thing. Like...something really big.
Like...huge. You know.

Joe was not an artist. He was not a writer or a poet. Neither was he a musician or a dancer. He couldn't sing. He couldn't sculpt. He couldn't act, not in front of one person or fifty. No, Joe was definitely not an artist. He liked people and animals, no particular sort; he seemed to find appealing qualities in all that he ran across. He was kind, rising up to the status quo, but rarely beyond. He was sensitive, liked to hold a woman or dog in his arms for the average of fifteen minutes – but he was no artist.

Joe's suburban roots had little relevance on his mid-lifestyle. He seemed to take things as they came and let them go as they went. He had no real ties to the city in which he spent most of his life. Nor did the city have any lasting impact on him. Joe was always there, or he was never there. Joe grew up, having what he considered to be a normal, happy childhood. Graduation from both high school and college affected him lightly, as he believed these to be the normal actions of the middle class man. He met his first girlfriend in college, got a job, and then met another girl and another. He had a small savings account, no real debts, few precious items. Most of his salary was spent on living expenses.

Joe was never extremely fond of poetry. The girl he met in college had an obsession for the romantics. Poe in particular. He often thought to mention to her that Poe was not from that genre, but he never did. She recited lines like, "Our most beautiful songs are those that speak of saddest thought." He liked it when he heard it. He liked hearing her say it, but then he forgot about it. No, he didn't really enjoy poetry at all.

She, the girl he met in college, was fairly pretty - petite with a light brown mole on her upper lip that sometimes quivered when she spoke or got excited. He could always tell when she was about to have an orgasm because her legs would shake and the mole would tremble like staring too long at the colored dots on a newspaper comic strip. Thinking about this mole used to distract Joe during classes and just before he would let his mind drift into the world of fantasies, he would pinch himself, take a sip of his soft drink and continue with his dry note taking.

Darah was charming and playful. She liked to laugh out loud and eat her picnic lunches barefoot in the park. Said she read it somewhere in a poem and he let her believe she was right. She felt it was important to live out her fantasies and while she was in college she often proposed that they invite another girl in the bedroom with them. Joe always laughed when she said things like that. He was never really sure if she was serious, but he could tell she liked making him laugh. So, he did just that – laughed his dry laugh.

Joe didn't spend much time pondering over his future with Darah, or any woman for that matter. Nearing the approach of graduation Darah took the initiative and arranged a meeting to discuss the subject.

"I want to live by the sea," she proclaimed. "What do you say about that? Do you want to live by the sea with me?" Her directness was clumsy, yet it didn't take Joe off guard.

“No,” he said.

“Oh, come on. Don’t you even want to think about it? We could take walks along the beach and go skinny-dipping in the moonlight.” Her eyes took on a mischievous glare.

“I can take a walk here,” he said rather frankly. “And the only place I want to be naked with water is in the shower - alone.”

He knew his response would aggravate her. Moreover, he didn’t really know if he believed in what he was saying. He simply had never questioned the idea of moving. She continued to persuade him. Still, the result only procured a discouraging blank stare and she quickly gave up.

Joe realized that in life there were certain challenges that had to be met and eventually mastered. None of these seemed very complicated to him. He thrived in their dormant simplicity.

Joe thought a great deal about that afternoon while she was packing her car. He contemplated the sound of the ocean that she had so often talked about and described in her writing. And at one moment, Joe tried very hard to hear the balance in the cadence of the waves crashing, but he couldn’t hear it and she left.

Joe wasn’t alone for long. Soon after college he found a job in the corporate world where the faces that dominated his business classrooms remained the same. The only distinction was that of a suit and tie which seemed to change the environment a little. He liked greeting the secretaries with a pleasant sounding “good morning” as he arrived at work in the mornings, and finishing his business days with a wholesome “good evening” as he left to go home. One evening, one of his co-workers invited him to go to the downtown theater for the special opening of a newly-founded modern dance troupe. This co-worker’s sister was a dancer and afterwards they were having a private party at the Grand Hotel for the crew members and friends and families. With a bland expression on his face, Joe reluctantly went to the show. For a brief moment, the fluid movements of the synchronized performers entranced him. He enjoyed looking at the bright colors of their costumes. They made him feel light and open with a touch of naive freedom woven into their material. He wondered what it would feel like to run his fingers across that group of dancers all decorated up in their soft, shimmery leotards.

At the party he met Lylla, with whom he stayed for three years. She liked to cook and would spend hours preparing gourmet meals. In their free evenings they ate, drank wine, and listened to music. She ate twice as much as he did. Joe was impressed that her excessive eating style did not procure a larger waistline. Lylla did several things that Joe considered excessive. She drank every night, either at home or out after her performances. As well, she woke up early in the mornings and stretched and worked her muscles for at least five hours, even when she didn’t have rehearsals or performances. Joe couldn’t understand that. He did his work at the office and led his private life at home, never mixing the two. Nonetheless, at the time their lifestyles seemed to work well together. He wasn’t sure if he was ready to settle down and start a family as he saw so many of his peers doing. She didn’t want children and hence, never nagged him about marriage. He wished she did.

Two years after the troupe’s debut, Lylla was offered a position teaching modern jazz dance at the

nearby university. She contemplated the proposal for several weeks before finally coming to the conclusion that she was destined to be a performer and not a teacher.

"My place in on the stage," Lylla said to Joe during a discussion about her decision. "That's what I love. I just feel that it's more important to sacrifice a bit of stability in order to live out your dream." Joe looked up and his dark eyes met hers. He couldn't understand, but he didn't ask her any questions: not then and not when she left to join a troupe in New York a year later.

Joe missed her a little and one evening thought about drinking a glass of wine by himself in remembrance of her, but he forgot. He took naps on the weekends and started running in the evenings. He was thinking of buying either a motorcycle or a convertible so he could feel the sensation of wind running through his hair without having to do all of the work of running. However, the day at the dealer's shop frustrated him and he committed to neither. He spent a year alone and often thought that he should really contemplate his situation.

One day on his way to work, he saw an accident on the side of the road. A woman had lost control of her car on a hill, drove her car into a ditch, and hit a tree. He was the first one to arrive at the site. She was fine, although another man insisted on phoning an ambulance. She was crying. In her car, she had compiled the lot of her paintings, which were finally accepted to be displayed in the local gallery. Most of them were either destroyed or severely damaged. Joe pitied her situation although he could tell that this was woman who despised pity. He offered to help her in any way possible but she refused. It wasn't until six months later that he saw her again. He was out running and she was walking her dog. They spoke a little and then relied on the dog as an excuse to extend their conversation. They ended up sleeping together that evening. Joe didn't like that it moved so quickly, but he liked her. She wanted to paint a portrait of him and during the next few weeks she made him pose while she drew several sketches. He was patient and sturdy. She often said that he was a good model for study.

Mera's paintings were furious and full of life. Her images were contorted and colliding. She explained to Joe that her goal was to have several contradictory perspectives. He smiled lightly when she would interrupt her work for him. She often said that she wanted to create pictures that shouted at people. She never completed her portrait of Joe, although he would notice his neck or his legs in some of her other works. Mera didn't make much money, and since the accident she had been working the Sunday brunch at a hip breakfast restaurant in town. She didn't mind, but Joe didn't like the idea of his colleagues thinking that he was dating a waitress.

"It's not my work," she would often say. "It's *for* my work. Don't you see? I'm living out my fantasies, my dreams."

Joe suggested one time that she could start painting more conservative pictures such as portraits and landscape scenes with perhaps a commissioned house on them. She flew into a rage, crying and screaming incomprehensible sentences that Joe tried, but couldn't listen to. It was the last time he ever brought the subject up. But it was not her last rage. On occasion, she would throw her paintings against the wall or put her foot through them. Afterward, she would always cry and try to repair the damage. She

often sat sulking, begging for the skill and devotion she believed was shown to her by the masters. These fits bothered Joe, but they did not frighten him. He just couldn't understand.

At times, Mera seemed to desire a more stable life and often talked about possibly having children. Joe couldn't think of a reason not to. One evening, he gave Mera a ring, which she wore on the condition that there wouldn't be a ceremony. Joe didn't care. He had no use for gifts or a flamboyant party. He simply wanted the declaration that Mera was a taken woman. She moved in with him, but kept her apartment as a studio. Since she quit her Sunday job, they became accustomed to spending the day taking long walks with the dog. These were Joe's favorite times, although he never really acknowledged it or spoke about it with Mera. He didn't feel he needed to.

Mera, although not actively trying to get pregnant, had stopped taking the pill for nearly two years before she decided to consult a doctor. Joe wondered if perhaps there was something that he might be able to do in order to help the situation. However, she never asked and he was too embarrassed to offer. During this time, Mera appeared to be going through a transition and Joe was content with the results. He believed that this new maturity was a result of their marriage. Furthermore, he was glad that the relationship consumed some of her nervous energy. The subdued Mera, Joe felt, was simply the stability achieved from fulfilled aspirations and the harmonizing of passion with reality.

Mera never got pregnant and her pictures seemed to slow down in movement, taking on a rather still life appearance. Skewed images were now tightly focused, providing direct, sharp angles that cast dark, weighted shadows. Her rages were also calmed while her frustrations seemed to be overcome by simply speaking about despair.

One Saturday evening, before Joe's anticipated lazy Sunday, Mera came home in a drunken stupor. Joe found this appalling and shocking since he had rarely seen her intoxicated.

"I did it," she declared.

"Did what," Joe asked.

"I took them." Mera waited for Joe to say something before blurting out, "I took the whole damn bottle."

Joe, still startled by her condition, remained slumped over his papers on the kitchen table. It took him a minute to realize what had happened.

"Don't you even think about making me throw them up. This is what I want." Joe was still confused and his slow response only aggravated Mera.

"Do you hear what I'm saying to you, you idiot! I took them all!"

She was crying. Joe didn't cry, but he did force her into the car and drove her to the hospital to have her stomach pumped. He sat in the emergency waiting room for five hours before the doctors finally came out to speak with him. He noticed that their remorse seemed sincere when they said that it was too late and that all of the damage had been done.

Joe arranged a simple funeral, trying to be sensitive to the fact that Mera didn't like ceremonies. He didn't like them much either. He had very few preferences so he didn't mind when one of Mera's

friends selected a poet to speak on their behalf.

At the funeral, the speaker described Mera as "an artist." Joe fixated on that word. He never really thought of her that way. To him, she was a painter.

she's too blonde to hate
you know what I mean?
it's almost a pity not quite shame
brain stimulated by 50% off
clearance sales and
leonardo dicaprio

when all you friends
are "heather" or "jenny"
how can you question the universe infinity?
when do you examine your psyche?
do you have one?
can you spell psyche?

books are for classes,
the hard ones.
the breezes of your voice
smell peppermint
just like
your hair
bowed, with the barbie style.
aren't you pretty?

breathless baby,
don't you worry wrinkles.
of course you're pretty,
but never be beautiful.
they don't sell that wisdom.

There was grass, lots of it...

Fields of wild weeds, dandelions gone to seed
spread by tiny bare feet that ran
and stepped on stinging bees while
kites were flown in the open sky above

The back was wooded...

Hidden forts where battles took place,
a fortress of dirt, leaves, and rock
tree-climbing children excited chase as
lightning bugs sizzled through brush thickets

There was a river nearby...

Crawdads were caught, taken from the creek
marshy, muddy holes in which to sink,
where cattails grew and crickets would speak
to the sun-setting friends at summer's peak.

It was our world, my friends and I...

We made up history when Indian heads were found
Sand box Saturday digs made us archeologists
on top secret grounds. Swing set abandon and cherry drop
blossoms made childhood days of play linger

A couple of boys and a ball
Playing catch under the sun
Run and bounce across the tracks

Where fast black trains
Carrying unknown freight
Come driving through and never stop,

But stay, late in the night
Like a sound the boy has hidden
Or else holds onto all life long
Dreaming with the stick in his hand.

And two young girls carrying baskets
Come walking through the marketplace
To pick up some fruit to eat:

Rosy cheeks with golden apples in their eyes,
Sun-ripening, swaying from side to side
As if to say to you you cannot hide.

The men are fixed upon their hips,
The women's bending to pick the best,
All the rest is play, the days go by and by...

The crying of summer cicadas in the trees
And the quick friction of the cricket's legs
Arouse a soft, seducing trance
A hot summer dance in Mexico
That seems to last and last, until at last
It leaves you cold:

As the eye, hand, hip, corner
Sunbeam, thigh slips through
Your grip and hits your head
And knocks you out.

The town stands drunk
As time stands still
And the ball rolls on...

When you read this letter, you will understand why the sadness and guilt, that have overcome me today, have made this the last day of my life. My best friend committed suicide in prison earlier this week. He shredded his blanket and wove it into a rope then hanged himself. Dead at twenty-five years old, what a waste.

I received a letter in the mail from him when I returned from his funeral. He sent it the day he killed himself. Please understand he was really not a bad person. He got into a fairly successful little band, and did the obligatory drugs that came with his new found fame. Unfortunately, it came to a point where the drugs weren't destructive enough. So, he began his career as a bank robber and ended up in prison where he finished out his life quietly doing time in a four foot by six foot cell. Just him and the voices.

He had always teased about the voices and the headaches, at least I thought he was teasing until I received his confession. It seems the guilt was just too much for him in the end. It started when we were about twelve years old. Our little band of losers were spending yet another night of summer break immersed in pizza and Playboys. There were three of us, Sean, Joe, and myself. I was the stereotypical nerd clad in flannel, pocket protector, and yes the scientific calculator. Joe was the short, fat, redheaded geek. Sean was the kid who picked his boogers and ate them in public. He also never bathed and smelled like it too. As you can see, we were not exactly popular. We hung around together because nobody else would come near us for fear of being ostracized.

On this particular night, we were in a deep discussion about what we would do with the busty babes in the centerfolds, if we only had the chance. None of us really knew what to do with a girl, but my older brother had bragged to us that it involved putting one's face into that strange looking, hairy, yet somehow exciting area of the female anatomy. I think we had all sworn to ourselves that we would never really do something that gross, but a group of boys could never admit that to each other.

We had stayed up all night bragging about our fictional prowess with the most popular girls while drinking the beer we had stolen from Joe's dad. Two beers each, if I remember right. At about five in the morning I came up with the idea of going out to Belt Crossing to watch the trains, and if luck was with us, maybe even hop a few.

Upon arrival, it appeared luck was with us that day. There was an extremely long train coming through very slow and we all managed to hop right on and ride for about a mile. At that point, we jumped off just as it started to pick up speed. We walked back and went for a second attempt at it, despite the rigorous protests and assorted whines Sean was making about getting caught. I don't know why he was worried, his dad was in a wheelchair, paralyzed from the waist down, and could not punish him if he wanted to. The second train came in a little faster, but we still managed to hop it. We decided a little surfing was in order so we climbed to the top of a grain carrier. The sun was up and we were finally

getting into the real thrill of things. The train was up to about twenty-five miles an hour and we were still oblivious until we hit a curve and gravity got the best of me. I went down on my back extremely hard, yet I managed to catch the railing with my crotch. I felt like I would be singing soprano for the next week, but I suffered no real damage.

It was then that we realized that we had to get off quick because the train was only going to get faster. We had spent enough time at this particular entertainment venue to learn the trains' patterns. Joe and I managed without any problems to get into leaping position, but Sean must have got snagged on something. Joe and I hit the ground running and then tumbling head over heels managing only a few minor cuts and scrapes from the gravel. We didn't see Sean anywhere, but we were confident that he was smart enough to jump off before getting out of the city. So we turned back to make another go at it.

The scream that we heard was as indescribable then as it is now. I don't think human beings were meant to be capable of making a sound like that. The taste of copper erupted in my mouth, never before or since have I felt the fear that I felt at that moment. We had started to run toward the scream without even thinking about it. When we arrived at the scene, there was Sean lying across the tracks. There was so much blood spraying from the stumps that used to be his legs. It was as though they were fire hydrants opened for the neighborhood kids to play in on a ninety-degree day. His deep blue pleading eyes asked all the questions we were too young to understand, better yet answer. At that moment, Joe and I simultaneously broke out into laughter. The kind where you laugh so hard you cry, your sides hurt, and you roll on the ground uncontrollably. I don't know what we thought was so funny, but for some reason we just could not stop laughing. We laughed until he took his last breath, then it all became just too painfully real, and we ran like our lives depended on it.

We made it back to Joe's house before anyone had managed to get up. By then fear and exhaustion had overcome us, and we slept... like the dead. His parents woke us up around noon. Sean's parents had called to deliver the news and to ask just what had happened. Our answer came as though we had rehearsed it a thousand times, although we had never discussed what our answer might be. We told them Sean wanted to go home and go to sleep and that he had left at five. Joe's parents confirmed that they had heard someone leave, and thought nothing of it, as this was normal for Sean.

In his letter, Joe said he was serious about the voices and the headaches. They began shortly after Sean died. It was Sean's voice telling him that his dues must be paid, that they would be paid. He claimed that was why he was doing the drugs, to get away from Sean's demands that he really must pay. Robbing banks was a way to destroy his life, a way to pay, and it worked for a while. It worked until he was caught and put in prison, where there were no drugs to take and no banks to rob. There were only the quiet walls and Sean's compelling voice driving him slowly mad until he finally paid his dues. The voices have finally stopped torturing him. In his letter, he said he had never told the story to anyone, just as we had promised each other.

Now, I too have a confession to make. I have heard the voices all along just like Joe. His voice is always there screaming, yelling, demanding restitution. With those pleading deep blue eyes asking, "How

could you be so cruel as to laugh while I, your best friend, laid there dying before your very eyes?" Up till now, I have been very good at dealing with Sean's incessant bombardment, or at least better than Joe was. The migraines are ever more intense these days. Yet, I've told the story now and will pay my dues. If I'm lucky, just maybe the voices will stop for me too, like they have for Joe.

Even in youth knew the rare smoke was
backside of magnified: there, but ephemeral,
dodging men chasing through noise and
traffic. Knew the clowns running through
heroin bazaar and their innocence, even
through their bumble nonsense and the clouded
minds of suburban kings. Bore the weight
of a generation's backlash and forgotten lore,
wearing the guilt of thousand know-nothings of
city streets never been to. Asked questions about
things forbade by dogma, always carrying burden
of truth to prove wrong set-in-ways wizards
at the top of pedestals growing out the thinker's
back. Missed days never lived, hoping being
someone special was a dream possible to
reach. Fell into cracks and never lifted out;
taunted, teased by loved ones above knowing
no better. Even in youth knew such pains as
father and mother. Caught the blunts of grudges
and lived as the man who robbed fathers
of money, mothers of security, daughters of
virginity, sons of guilt. Had been all things
never lived, seen or heard -- shots in the dark
hoping to hit phantoms dancing in pale moons
atop money, security, virginity and guilt. Even
in youth danced with phantoms hoping to cure
loneliness forced by accusations that time gave
quantum leaps to the pit of the stomach. Disconnected
from God and Nietzsche at once, floundering
on banks where Darwin stood, wondering why
Kant was so unstylish in youth groups. Had written
thousand poems better than "Howl!" but threw away
when discovered Ginsberg. Hoped to fly with wings
to God, said God was fictional and served only
relinquish questions unanswerable by most -- Thank
you Meletus! -- and spoke prayers to forgive tomorrow's
sins. Even in youth knew the calamity left with fathers:
taxes, opposite sex, children, sweet release, drugs, alcohol,
God, art, books, aquariums, globes, outer space and all
other things left out, put on top of phantom's shoulders,
dancing in pale moons atop answers sought.

startled my eyes open
black magic red candles white sheets
a camera whirs
Andy Warhol holds a martini
hisses *put your damn clothes on*

irritated my eyes close
magic licks at my eyelids
handcuffed by untouchable hunger
I cannot escape
the reminder of stroking in my mind

she is cat-like
crawls over me
kneels and kneads /
I need her mouth
ice-cold lips are
colder on rebuffed flesh
her forked tongue paints me
we dance as though
we return to graves come sunrise

in the air, the smell of ripe sweat
strong and pure
from my body?
I shimmer from exertion but
have not moved

laughter pulls me
into an airport
a fresh girl / we have no time
for love and Paraguay
she vanishes
how would she have tasted?

lips kiss gentle ferocious
her smell is the perfume of
nylons rubbing together
her voice makes me think of
sandpaper and seduction

java strong black in my cup
my eyes water I cough
my soul fills with rainwater
I catch your ecstasy / lose it

tiny soap bubbles melt
blackberry girl / sweet cream
her hands around my essence
sweat and depression = bait
shark drinks blood in water

woman in fishnets & combat boots
sits on my lap
feeds me cherries
dances on my lap & I

wake up to the
desperate cry of the alarm.

MOMENTARY THOUGHTS ON THE HUMAN CONDITION
WHILE LOST IN THE *TROMPE L'OEIL* OF DALI'S "THE INVISIBLE MAN"

Lindsey Holloway

I am as much a part of the landscape
 Of the poplar
 Of the Seine
 Of the intricate facade of Notre Dame
As much a part as carbon and chlorophyll have always been.
Intrinsically connected
 With the movements of the ocean
 The patterns of the weather
 Poignant moments of history
And these are all a part of me.

So I move into life
 Through ambiguous edges
 And hazy borders
Longing for Europe and her proud bosom
 Tufts of green pastures tucked beneath Alps and Pyrenees
 Along ancient, unmapped, stone-paved roads worn smooth by the centuries
 Through arched, gilded windows framed in hyacinth.

Like a dream...

History tags along behind me.
Future unfolds, like the legs of a lover... Inviting. Inevitable.
Present moments maintain themselves
 static and dynamic at the same time.

And the world seems balanced by tradition.

And I begin to understand
 That I am everything and nothing,
 Everyone and no one, all at once.
That is the relationship between man and history
 That determines evolution.
And when the past is forgotten,
When history is no longer a part of the experience,
Our existence will be reduced to a fossil.

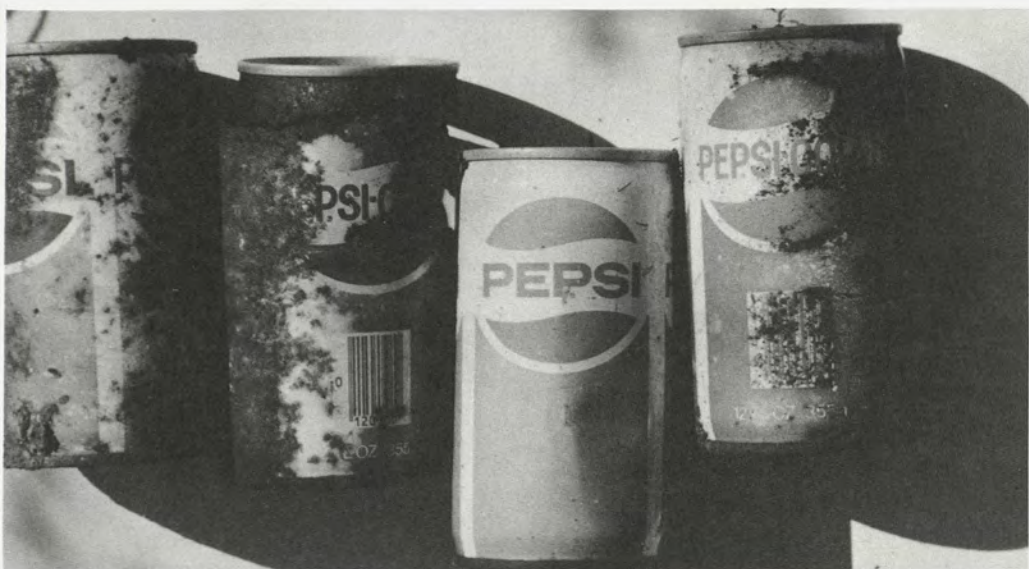
We will become **Invisible Man**...
Laid to rest amid the sediment

Beneath the poplar
Within the Seine
Reaching up toward the arches of Notre Dame.

Balanced by tradition.

Mingling with Brontosaurus and Neanderthal.

rusty cans
Kris Petersen



I think it started with the hotel room. There had been signs, of course, for a long time before. But the hotel room was the end.

The beginning of the end, and the end of the end came shortly after. He'd wanted to get a room in an old motel, play Kerouac or Carver, I don't know. So we went out on Route 40 one evening after a summer storm had turned the skies wet and orange, and drove past the McDonalds and the ShoeWorlds and all the rest of the depressing little strip malls and apartment complexes, and it rained off and on. It was so hot outside, the sky looked molten. It thundered sometimes, in the distance. Maybe, looking back, I should have taken the oppressive weather as foreshadowing. At the time it just added to the excitement. I thought it was a great idea. Rent a room in an old motel with a name like the Paradise Motel or the Rest-A-While We Have Air Conditioning And HBO, and have fun. Drink cheap champagne, eat greaseball cheeseburgers from the joint down the road (no doubt cooked by a guy named Mel or Moe) and watch HBO. See what happens. In short, pretend we weren't two suburban kids trying to go slumming in a literary manner, in a way which would've worked ten or twenty or forty years ago but not anymore.

The motel was called the Del-Ray Motel and was long and low. It stood just off the old highway, its sign lit by pink and green neon, some of which was, of course, burned out. It had A/C, HBO, and a pool. And a coffee maker in the lobby. The man behind the counter was balding and very fat. He smoked two cigarettes in the time it took to register for our room, and watched us with a mixture of suspicion and detached curiosity. When Tom asked him if he saw a lot of action around here, know what I mean, I could have hit him. The counter guy just looked bored. "Nope." And handed us our key.

Our room was the second-to-last in the row. Every now and then, a car or truck swished by on the still-wet, steaming roads. Heat lightening sparked the sky far away. When he unlocked the door, Tom was greeted by an outrush of stale, smoky air. He turned to me with an eager look on his face, and went in, turning on every light as he walked around the small room.

"This is great! I feel like a 1950's traveling salesman or something! Let's go get cheeseburger bombs and cheap beer! C'mon, Zoe, this is great!"

I stood in the doorway, feeling damp wind whisper past my back and watching him. As his enthusiasm increased, mine waned. Already I was missing my futon and regretting agreeing to this idea, fun though it sounded at the time. Perhaps it was the weather. I stepped inside, just as it began to rain again. Tom had the TV on, and was flipping through the channels with the remote bolted to the bedside table. A tattered paper sign above the TV stated that popular and adult movies were available for a small fee, and that guests would be charged for missing towels. The room was decorated in shades of orange and brown, with large venomous flowers adorning the matching bedspreads and curtains. The bathroom proved to be clean, if small and decorated in avocado green. Depressing, but this was what we'd come out here for, and I would enjoy it, somehow. Tom was already getting his camera out and fiddling with the

lens.

“You want to change into that fifties dress you brought? Or do you think a black turtleneck would be more appropriate? I want to get the right feel for this room.”

I shrugged. “Whatever.”

Tom and I had planned to take pictures of each other, in as authentic as possible outfits, to show our friends. He thought it would be art. Tom would do just about anything for art. This whole evening was, in effect, a play in as many acts as needed, to dramatize Tom’s love of both the fifties kitsch and modern American Lit. I think he was thinking of using the photos and the experience for his final paper in one of his classes at school. I liked those things too, but Tom seemed to be veering more and more towards living in a time warp of his own creation, and farther away from just liking it for art’s sake.

“So, what do you say, cool kitty? Snap off some shots of this place and then grab some grub at a diner or something?” He was down on one knee, camera poised. I rolled my eyes.

“Out here, Burger King is more likely than some funky diner, and truthfully I’m not really in the mood right now. Can’t we just sit for a minute? It was kind of a long drive.” He gave me a pained glance, probably more for the Burger King than anything else, and sat down on the bed opposite me. He sighed.

“Sure, we’ll sit. You want some coffee or a soda? Are you feeling OK?” He reached over and took my hand.

“Yeah, I’m fine. No soda, thanks. I’ll wait for dinner. It’s just that, sometimes, when you read about places, they become glamorous, but then you go there and it’s not quite the same. Like, you’ve been to a restaurant, remember that new Thai one, that got the really good reviews? Remember how it really sucked when we ate there? That’s kind of how I feel about this place.” I sat back against the pillows and waited for his reaction.

“Well, I don’t know if I’d call it glamorous.” He laughed. I shook my head.

“No, it’s not. I mean, it is, not quite what I expected, somehow. I guess when you read about it, you don’t read about the stale cigarette smoke and the rough sheets,” I rubbed one between my fingers, “and the bored guy in the office, but you can’t really smell it or feel it. I guess it’s just more real than I thought.” I looked at him for a minute. “That sounds silly.” I added.

“Well, kind of. I mean, this is real life, babe.” I winced. I hated ‘babe.’ “And this is how real people live, truckers and traveling salesmen and everyone, and I’m just trying to wake you up. Real life isn’t a fun car and a fun job for everyone, you know. I thought you were more open-minded than that.”

“Ooooh, you’re a fine one to talk. Look at you, with your khakis creased just so, and your sneakers you had to have because Kerouac had a pair like them, and your vintage Hawaiian shirt because we’re ‘traveling.’ You wanted this, you set this all up, brought your cameras and your Discman with your Charlie Parker and Johnny Cash and everything. But what did we drive here in, huh? Your old Saab, that’s what! Yeah, lots of real people drive Saabs.” I stopped. I was getting mad, and this was supposed to be fun, an escape. What had happened? Tom glared at me. He didn’t like having his plans and setups

exposed; he preferred to do them quietly and then sit back and pretend it was totally spontaneous, that he just happened to be sitting in a 1950's motel wearing the right clothes and listening to Parker and drinking coffee, or perhaps reading selections from Ferlinghetti while I, his approving and also appropriately-attired girlfriend looked on. I had killed his spontaneous illusion. So he glared at me.

The rest of the weekend wasn't much better. We couldn't find a diner anywhere, and Tom became grumpier the more we searched. His theory was that diners should be supported by the Federal Government as pieces of history. I agreed with him, but at that point, I wasn't going to say anything. We stayed in the hotel room, mostly, and watched old eighties movies like *Risky Business*. It rained, of course, and when it wasn't raining, the sky felt like liquid rain. The second day there, I sat on the doorsill watching the clouds pile up, preparing for another outburst, and felt the damp breeze hiss under my skirt. Tom sat inside, with the curtains drawn, listening to melancholy Coltrane and flipping cards into his fedora. I don't know why we didn't just leave that first night, or even the next morning, first thing. Tom was determined to find a diner or at least an old roadhouse trimmed in neon, to complete his fantasy. It seemed, though, that his initial idea of a culture-loving traveling salesman and his willing girlfriend was rapidly degenerating into the fantasy of a salesman in a sweaty stupor, lolling the polyester bedspread watching bad movies and clutching a bottle of something. It wasn't until the end of the second evening, after a terrific thunderstorm which knocked the power (and thus, the TV) out, that he suggested we leave. We paid the (laconic?) desk guy and got into his old Saab, which looked decidedly out of place among the few battered huge American sedans and pickups. We didn't talk much on the way back into the city. There really wasn't too much to say. Something had gone wrong, besides his inability to find a diner and my inability to stay in character, but we weren't quite sure what it was and were thus afraid to talk about it.

He dropped me off in front of my building, waited long enough for me to get my bag out of the hatch, and drove off without another word. I was too weary of the whole thing. It didn't seem right that we'd only been gone two days. I stood outside my building for a moment, looking at the skyscrapers downtown and the purple-orange clouds spiked every now and then by lightening, and wondered what had just happened. The rain that started up again made me decide that it really wasn't worth much thought and I went inside.

CONTRIBUTORS

Christine Barton has been writing for as long as she can remember, and since she's an English major, she has had a lot of writing to do. This December, she'll graduate and get to test her writing skills in the business world, hopefully as an editorial assistant. Or maybe a bum writer in a garrett somewhere....

Lisa M. Barton: graphic designer, photographer, painter, poet, student extraordinaire. She is a senior visual communication major at Herron School of Art, but she tries to learn as many art forms as she can so she doesn't get bored (plus she's good at it). Poetry is something she's always done as an expression and outlet for her excessive thinking and emotion. The more she writes, the better she gets, and she thinks others can appreciate some of her rantings as much as she appreciates theirs.

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Patrick Doolin is a freshman English major at IUPUI. He is irritated by adults who think he needs a reality check for wanting to write. He is as equally influenced by philosophers and physicists as he is authors. He admits to not reading most of the books he is assigned.

H. Suzanne Heagy: In order of priorities, Suzanne considers herself a reader, a writer, a wife, a mother, and a friend, though priorities shift and no one should set anything in concrete. If she were stranded on a desert island and could only have three books, she would choose: the *Bible*, *Ulysses*, and *The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction, 4th Edition*. She believes no amount of time is excessive when spent editing and that to perfect anything, even sorting laundry, can take a lifetime.

Lindsey Holloway is a sophomore English major working toward a minor in French and a certificate in Journalism as well. Her goal is to teach French-speaking students (in Paris, of course) how to write effectively and creatively in English.

Angela Kraft is too heady and emotional for her own good. She is constantly overwhelmed by the possibilities in life. She is the mother of one child, herself.

Sharon Kratzer: Previous to becoming a student, Sharon worked as a claims analyst for Farm Bureau Insurance. She was with the company for seventeen years. In August of 1995, she quit her job and enrolled as a full-time student. Last May she earned her Associate of Arts degree and is currently working toward a Bachelor's degree in English.

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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.

Dave Shapiro is a big, lazy slob. He came over to my house once and ate all my cheese. You know how those English majors are. Oh, here he comes. Don't tell him I said that about the cheese.

Chizoma A. Sherman is a sophomore-and-a-half on the IUPUI ten-year plan. Chi enjoys writing immensely, and has been writing (mostly poetry) for about seventeen years. Chi hopes to use a degree in English for anything that does not mean working at Hardee's, and hopes to graduate from college before qualifying for retirement benefits.

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Angela Taylor is currently a junior at IUPUI working to make the world a happier place through science, music, art, and language!

Alexi Zekas is a French and English major at IUPUI. She studied languages and cultures before she began writing fiction three years ago.

Invitation to Future Writers, Artists, and Editorial Staff Members

The Fall 1999 Editorial Staff of *genesis* would like to invite all IUPUI students to submit their creative works in poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and art to *genesis* for the Spring 2000 issue. Students may submit works up to one year after graduation. To insure impartiality, Editorial Staff Members are not allowed to submit their works. As *genesis* is a student publication, faculty members are not allowed to submit. Previously published works cannot be submitted as well.

Guidelines for all Submissions: Do not place your name directly on your submission, as the writer/artist is to remain anonymous during the judging process. Include a cover sheet with the title(s) of your submission(s), your name, address, telephone, email address, and a short biographical sketch. Limit ten submissions, please.

Writers: Submissions should be double-spaced, and of 2,500 words or less. Hard copies only - we do not accept submissions via email or on disk. Written submissions will not be returned.

Visual Artists: Please identify your submissions by title and the actual dimensions of the piece. All mediums will be accepted. Your original artwork or slides will be returned.

Please send or deliver all submissions to:

C/O *genesis*
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genesis is seeking new board members to participate in all stages of the journal's publication. Interested students should contact Iris Rogers at irisjean@yahoo.com and/or Jay Duncan at jrduncan@iupui.edu for more information.

