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Jason Abels, Christie Blizzard, Sally L. Burton, Hector Del Campo,
Paula Dombrow, Jonathan Edwards, Carolyn Everett,
Andy Gaunce, Karla Glaser, Pat Harvey, Renee Hesch,
Nicholas Hollibaugh, Lindsey Holloway, Daniel J. Hook,
Thomas Hutcheson, Victoria Kheynis, Lauren E. Kussro,
Tegan Echo Lynn, Jessica Miller, Sarah Miller, Ben Mohr,
Rick J. Morris, James D. Oakes, Allen O'Connor, Ian Osborne,
Chad David Richards, Leigh Runkle, Ted Scheck,
Albert Spaulding, Michael Springer, Eric Vetesy,
Peter Frederic Wallace, c.m. williams, Leslie Anne Woodward,
Donna Yarema, Dale L. Yessak

volume
XXIX

Front Cover
Best of Issue -- Art

"Mind's Eye"
by Hector Del Campo

A Note From The Editor

Working with *genesis* during the past year has been both exhilarating and challenging. It's wonderful to receive so many wonderful submissions, both written work and artwork, and see firsthand the incredible talent that IUPUI students possess. The difficult part is making decisions that will simultaneously thrill and disappoint. This issue is chock full of poetry, prose and artwork that I think will take your breath away, much as it did mine. Enjoy!

Chi Sherman
Fall 2000

genesis

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Blue Waltz in B-Flat
by Lindsey Holloway

Best of Issue - Poetry

The town slept with its eyes closed, but I dreamt with mine open.
Our house was a crooked still life, drawn in shades of indigo
And wild sharp strokes, like one of Picasso's women,
Weeping melancholy from every window.

There were few audible sounds droning from the rooms within:
The low-octave cello of a man crying in the dark;
The harpsichord of a child's bare footsteps;
And most clearly, the rising tympani of my mother's absence.

Symphonic blues and lavender swelled on the lingering clef of her scent
And reached a crescendo that was drowned only by the sobbing
Which bellowed from deep within the black stomach of the house.
Though I had never heard this particular movement, I knew well the musician.

I moved toward the source and found my father facing the corner, head in hand.
I crept onto the pillow of his lap and wrapped my arms about his neck.
We had all waltzed around the ending, but now we were resigned to it.
So together we drifted away, longing for the orchestra to play something by Tchaikovsky.

Goddamn Copyboy

by Peter Frederic Wallace

Best of Issue - Prose

I'm a goddamn copyboy.

When they gave me this job, I said, "Why am I a copyboy? I can type." They said, "This is your job. Do your job." So, I do my job. All day long, I unstaple, copy, and restaple documents. That's the routine: unstaple, copy, restaple. I'm a goddamn copyboy.

On my first day as a goddamn copyboy, I was asked many questions by a very friendly copygirl. She asked and asked and I answered in a way that was meant to indicate that I don't really like answering questions about myself, but the friendly copygirl was too friendly to notice. She probably just thought I was shy.

In the copy room, we listen to a radio station that plays "hot country." Sometimes an announcer will say, "more hot country coming right up!" or "you're tuned to the station that plays hot country!" I would like to change the station because, as it turns out, I don't really care for hot country. There are times when I will look at the radio as it spews hot country and I will attempt to focus my mental powers so that it will leap from its perch and plummet to the floor where it will be smashed to bits. I imagine the looks of shock and confusion on the faces of my co-workers at the sudden cessation of hot country. They will stand like statues, mouths agape, hands hanging useless at their sides. The only sound will be the perpetual drone of the copiers.

When I was hired, I had to sign a form that said I would never disclose the name of the company for whom I make copies. If anyone asks, I'm supposed to divert the topic of conversation to something else. Even if it's my mother asking. I am to refer to the company only as "The Company." I also had to sign a form that said I would never testify against The Company in a court of law. It had never occurred to me to testify against The Company in a court of law until I was asked to sign a form saying I wouldn't, but, now that I know I'm not allowed to, I find it hard to stop imagining myself testifying against The Company in a court of law. In these imaginings of mine, I make a very good witness even though, in reality, I don't even know what product or service The Company provides. It could be baby formula. Or chew toys. Or chemical weapons.

The friendly copygirl found out that I don't have a girlfriend and her eyes glowed. She's pretty, I guess, in a "the kind of girl I might actually have a chance with" sort of way. Sadly, I do not like the friendly copygirl. Instead, I am drawn to the sullen copygirl.

The sullen copygirl knows everything there is to know about the copiers. When there is a paper jam or the toner is low, the sullen copygirl knows how to fix it. Sometimes I daydream that my copier will be jammed and the sullen copygirl will come to fix it and as we are inspecting the copier's innards, I will look into her dark, morose eyes and we'll each recognize the other's longing and we'll fall together in an embrace and the hum of the copiers and the sounds of hot country will muffle our euphoric sighs.

But this daydream is the height of folly, for the sullen copygirl has no interest in me. She's in love with the goddamn copy repairman. When he's there, she lingers and asks him questions and pretends she doesn't know everything there is to know about the copiers. When he tells her that the chronic paper jams in section C2 are the result of a slightly bent

rod which is "pretty common in this model," she nods her head and she smiles and she blushes. "This is still a pretty good model, though," he tells her. "But, have you seen the new 728's? Slick." She shakes her head to indicate that she hasn't seen the new 728's. But she'd like to, she tells him. She'd really like to see the new 728's. "Oh, you will," he tells her, "you will." When the sullen copygirl hears this, she feels like she is floating. I can see it in her eyes and in her step. She is lighter than a feather and her world is full of possibility.

Sometimes I wonder if The Company is up to something. Sometimes I will be copying and the documents are all blacked out with permanent marker. The first time this happened, I asked my boss if I was supposed to copy it and he told me I was. I asked why they needed me to copy a document with all the words blacked out and he told me that my job was to copy, not to ask questions about copying.

He is under a lot of stress. My boss is. He is losing his hair and his wife. He is fat, too, but not in an unpleasant way. He is probably fifty or so. Sometimes he will come out of his cubicle and yell at us to copy faster because we're too goddamn slow and the boys upstairs are breathing down his goddamn neck and he'll be goddamned if he's going to miss another goddamn promotion because of us. Later, he will come out and apologize. You can see from his eyes that he really is sorry. Like I said, he's under a lot of stress. And he probably never imagined he'd be in charge of the goddamn copy room.

There is a girl with a deformed hand who works in the copy room. When I first noticed it, I wondered if it was the result of a goddamn copier mishap. After several surreptitious glances, I concluded that she must have been born this way. The deformed hand looks almost like a baby's hand and has tiny little bumps where the fingers should be. She isn't bad looking, either. Not for a girl with a deformed hand. I wonder if I could ever love a girl with a deformed hand. I probably could. Love is funny that way.

The more I copy, the more ambivalent I become about everything. As a copyboy, I am acutely aware of the phony, the fake, the facsimile. There's no point in trying to put one over on me, because I am hip to every con and grift known to man. Every day I deal in imitation, so I know of what I speak. But, the result of this awareness is that I see clearly how little difference there really is between the genuine and the simulacra. They are almost interchangeable. There are even rare occasions when the copy comes out better than the original. If this can be true of a document, a concrete object, then can it not also be true of the more ethereal items we encounter? What about sincerity? Laughter? Love? Perhaps all of these are more convincing when they are a sham. How is one to trust one's moral compass when faced with such revelation?

It is possible that The Company is evil. This raises several questions: if The Company is evil, does that mean I, too, am evil? Am I complicit in The Company's crimes? What *are* The Company's crimes? The documents offer no clue. We have been warned not to read the documents and not to memorize the names and information printed thereon. But, what if The Company is involved in a government takeover? What if The Company is carrying out genocide? Sometimes I glance at the names to see if they seem to belong to a particular ethnic group, but I can't really tell. I wonder if everyone else is in on it. The friendly copygirl, the sullen copygirl, the copy repairman, my boss—they could all be in on it. All but the copygirl with the deformed hand. I couldn't see her doing something like

that. She would never agree to cause suffering in others because she understands it so well herself. Her deformity has taught her tolerance.

But, why wasn't I told? Don't they trust me? I have two, perfectly normal hands. I don't limp or lisp or laugh at inappropriate times. What is there about me that made them hide their dark secret?

Maybe The Company needs someone to take the fall if they are ever found out. Maybe I'm their patsy. When their whole horrific enterprise finally comes to light, they'll point the finger at me. "It was the copyboy," they'll say. "He made us do it. We didn't want to. It was his idea."

People will shake their heads in horror and disgust. "All that pain," they'll say. "All that pain and all that suffering. All those millions of innocent lives — men, women, children — all of them lost. All because of a goddamn copyboy."

I wouldn't blame them for their anger. I would be angry, too. To think that such wickedness can exist in this world, and that I could be its unsuspecting tool, makes me tremble with fury. I am supposed to unstaple, copy, restaple, and ignore the atrocities that may be taking place. And I do. I unstaple. I copy. I restaple. But the day is coming when I will no longer be their stooge. The day is coming when I will take a stand. I will load the copier with documents that I have neglected to unstaple and I will watch it choke on its own evil. The resultant paper jam will shake worlds. It will be the first throat-clearing of a true and honest and noble humanity that will stand up against its corporate oppressors and demand justice. No longer will we be slaves. No longer will we be fearful. No longer will we eat our own children for breakfast.

In the ensuing confusion, I will grab the copygirl with the deformed hand by the hand, not her normal hand, but her deformed hand, the hand everyone is afraid to touch. I will take her by her deformed hand, which I will hold tenderly, and we will march out of that wretched place and into a world where we can breathe deep and stand tall. It will be a world where we can be free. We will live together and have many children, some with deformities and some without. And we will be in love. Real love. Or the closest we can get.

I don't know when that day is coming. But it is coming. I won't be a goddamn copyboy forever.

mistakes in an office supply store

by c. m. williams

"excuse me sir"

then
realizing his mistake
as i looked his way
he does not apologize
instead
he says,

"damn it
why can't women
just be women anymore
what's wrong with a little femininity
i mean, would it hurt you to dress yourself up a little
grow some hair like the good Lord intended
so i can tell what god damned sex you are"

then
in my office supply store uniform
with my office supply store smile
i directed him
to the three ring binders

I Dream of Eve
by Victoria Kheynis

I dream of Eve and ponder why I was discarded. Such a shame. Who would have thought my flirting tongue could lead to such disaster? And she, my dear one, so gullible and sick, has brought upon herself and man the loss of Paradise.

I am the king whose throne is made of everlasting blaze, who once had future and a wild past. I was esteemed and feared in these hot depths by many of my peers. But now I hide in caves with orange glow and lobster skin, escaping only chips of bleakness of this world. She chokes my heart and mind.

With lava in my veins, I have become a snake. With scaly skin and forked tongue in this volcano nightmare I desire her still. And why? She brought me only pain, and pain to those on that green ball they call a home. If I could just convince her. If she would stay with me and be my queen, I'd be complete. And I will know sadness.

I dream of Eve when days and nights have mixed and merged. I feel the moon inside my skull and sun incinerates my beggared hoofs, not shoulders. The man she loves cannot cognize her as I do, but she will hear no reason from a wretch like me. I swayed her once, but those eternal days of light are through.

I think of her when stars sing lullabies, when screams and cries in Hades fill my heart with grief. I wonder if she thinks of me when ribs of her beloved ache her side, when her mortality and pain she comprehends. I dream of her tonight and wish she lay beside me, in this inferno in the underworld.

So now I burn with unrequited love for my beloved Eve, but her beloved holds her close at night. Tomorrow, she will bear his sons and praise his name for all eternity, while my skin blisters in this fiery grave. Their sick pathetic life, unjust monotony and filth. I dream of Eve and weep.

in the garden

by c. m. williams

serpent

slipped her the tongue
before she could
ask my name
filled her mouth
with an orchard
of forbidden trees
promised her my skin
for that apple core

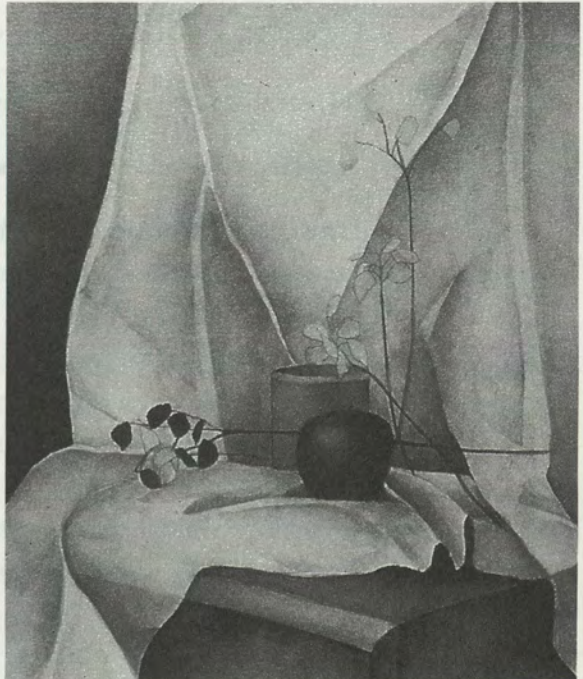
eve

come on
snake

you think you have me
whipped?
think I only eat apples
to undress their cores?
think I don't know what
forbidden means?

"Untitled"

by Lauren E. Kussro



Riddlonnet
by James D. Oakes

Perfection is the tailored word for thee.
Can sunrise, to her beauty, hold a flame?
Some errant God, this gift, bestowed on me,
And even urged the angel take my name.
Her elegance seems fragile in life's swirl.
Her grace plays second fiddle to her smile.
No even judge could ever fault this pearl,
But he'll enjoy the effort all the while.
My true heart's name is here for her to find,
That maiden name she knew before we kissed.
Like Edgar played his game with Valentine
I fear that she, my riddle, may have missed.
Begin at first and first and there first hides.
Then next and on peels back the thin disguise.

"Static"
by Michael Springer

This isn't love.

I'm no KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR

I can't

fall

in love.

I'm already sitting down

But still

it can be something;

right?

I don't need everything

I don't even need a real something

just a little fake something

every now and then

that isn't too much to ask for

is it?

silence

phone static

phone static transmitting disappointment

deep disappointment

static saying what about all the true love you always speak about and write about and preach
about and swear by and live by?

static saying how come you can do what you've warned me not to do so many times?

static saying I know we've been broken up for about a year now & I dumped you to go out with
some other guy, but do you think it's right for you to be seeing other women?

static not understanding that true love, although nice in theory, and despite hundreds of years &
billions of dollars' worth of research, has yet to be found

static not understanding the difference, metaphorically speaking, between a man who has a lot of money and goes to the grocery store where there are lots of vegetables and meat products alongside assortments of breads and cheeses, and this man purchases some jellybeans which aren't healthy
and another man who's been without food for 13 months, 14 days, 6 hours and a few minutes coming across a brand new bag of jellybeans in the road, which are better for him than nothing at all, metaphorically speaking
static not understanding that I'm no KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR waiting indefinitely in case
at some point in the distant future
she wishes to be whisked off to my castle.

then, she speaks.
with words.

cinquain for boots
by c. m. williams

lover
untying my
boots, unstringing my loops
slipping fingers effortlessly
inside



Three Haiku
by Dale L. Yessak

These humble verses
-- Clumsily crafted in haste --
Will perhaps suffice:

Nature's Prison

A wolf, old, lame, blind,
Knows not that death is mercy,
And so, fights the dark.

Aftermath

Who is the victor
When in losing they have gained
What we, winning, lost?

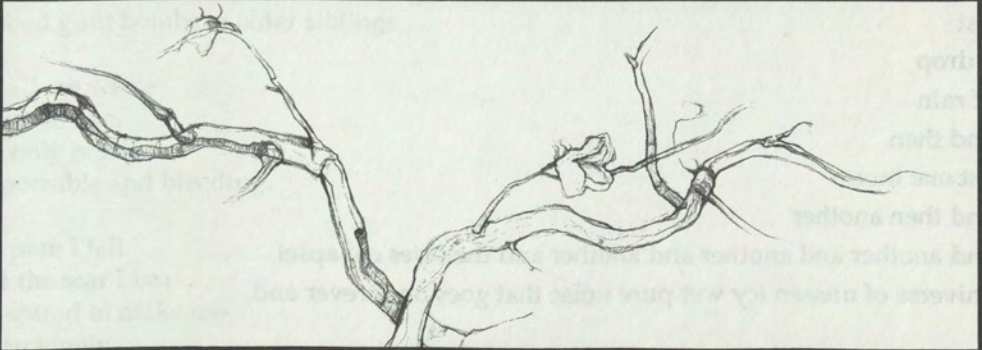
Dead Soldiers

Crumpled paper balls,
Casualties of battle
When mind versus pen.

Untitled
by Ben Mohr

wringing his hands, then
stepping out to smoke – but stops –
an ancient wind

"Flower Tree"
by Albert P. Spaulding, Jr.



On a Caribbean Island, October 24, 1983, 2 a.m.

by Dale L. Yessak

Sweltering invisible jungle

Sighs, silently

In its thirst,

Whispering

No ... air

no air

No

Air.

Oh

For

Just

A drop

Of rain

And then

just one more

And then another

And another and another and another and the skies collapse!

Universe of unseen icy wet pure noise that goes on forever and

Thunder crash!

Lightning

strike!

Wet,

green

hell

lit, flickering

for a

split second

By God's wrath.

M.I.A.

by Carolyn Everett

Ah, the camaraderie in conspiracy
Older sister and I were keeping
My water balloon festooned brother outside
Our house with his first lieutenant.

Only one door lock away from completion
When my hand missed the stupid knob
My arm shot through the glass pane
But shredded flesh when I yanked it back in.

Giggles to screams, laughter to sobs,
A wet red roll of paper towels
And my mother's hostile verbal barrage
Lobbed guilt bombs at older siblings.

But all the while
I was the one,
The only one
Responsible and bleeding.

The pain I felt
And the scar I bear
Conspired to make me
Again lonely.

Not a purple heart,
Just one again broken
For being wounded in battle
And permanently out of action.

Reds

(An Imitation of Lynn Emmanuel's "Whites")

by Lindsey Holloway

Cool, sticky vinyl seats atop wood-veneered paneling; the smoke-rimmed eyes of our waitress and the thready letters of WANDA stitched above her left breast; catsup, half-filling the Heinz bottle on the Formica tabletop and puddled between the shreds of hashed potatoes on my plate; the plastic stripe extending from my lips, past the cracked rim, and into the pool of grenadine at the bottom of my coke; maraschino cherries floating on the perfectly cubed ice.

Pancakes, saturated in strawberry compote, lustfully attacked by the woman in the corner; the stain on the filter of her Virginia Slim and its lit-end burning cinders in the ashtray; the odd, Stalin-like mustache of the cook behind the counter and the half-day's growth on his jaw; the clock's second hand dragging time toward two; and from my pocket, the message boldly, anonymously written on Wanda's dollar tip: Jesus Saves.

laws of motion
by c. m. williams

I.
Ms. Banner your five-eleven thighs thrust
always at eye-level. The tick-tack, tick-
tack of heels stopping at my desk. Fingers
on the edge rapping red polish for my
attention. You have it. "Newton," you say,
"has some laws you should know for the exam
on Friday. What are they?" looking at me.
I start flipping through my notes for Newton.
You grin, say, "Exactly. Every body,
every one of you continues to sit
until I move you, with force, true physics."

II.
You talk about the space program like god,
NASA your Jesus Christ, your Northern Star.
You explain light years with your arms stretched wide,
show lift-offs and moon landings with your hips.
You tell us that motion is everything,
a bell, after all, launches us to lunch.
You set me spinning to the speed of light,
you rip me open, an atmospheric
hole. A green eyed orb of water and gas.
And when you come down I am waiting silent,
your second law, Newtonian proverb.

III.
Sexy physicist and third floor teacher,
I think of you now, with Newton and space.
You sent me to detention for writing
poetry during your lecture on Time.
I never understood continuum,
the allure of Einstein at eight a.m.,
or why you washed your hands so many times.
What could you have done to get so dirty?
When they called on the vernal equinox,
your suicide was no surprise to me.
A mere lecture, *Energy Unending*.

Fractal Palette
by Jessica Miller

Marvelously
Magically
Miraculously,
The beauty
Of a sunset
Paints the earth,
Paints the sky,
With a veil of
Reflected rainbows
Of lingering light
As day fades away
Into the dark shades
Of night.

Oakland Avenue Alley
(Paradise Between the Streets)

by Daniel J. Hook

Cracked and broken concrete ribbon
Stretches from North Street to 10th
Tired garages staring each other down
Shattered windows in swinging doors
Hanging uneven on rusted hinges

Path long ago paved for cars
Though cars were unwanted
 Disruptions of
Basketball, dodgeball, kick the can
Pushcart races, bicycle races
 Inner-city Olympics

Played by
Dirty kids in holey jeans
Shoes with little sole
Tattered t-shirts
 Or no shirts at all

Baseball played
With shared mitts
Splintered bats
And hideless balls
Held together with black tape
Swiped from somebody's dad

(Inner-city kids
hit straight up the middle
'cause in the yard is an out)

Learning skills
The nuns don't teach 'em
Shooting BB's at screwing dogs
Smoking
Cussing
Fighting
 Over girls
 Over rules
 Over ... nothing at all

Sweaty boys
Finding the beauty
Of a naked woman
In Ronny Green's
Magazine box)
Piled in Joe's hearse

No driver's license
 No mortician's license
But Joe Mills had a hearse

Picnicking in the alley
Living high on the hog
Swigging Nehi strawberry
With baloney sandwiches on white bread
Bruised by their gritty fingers
Grapes apples pears
Copped from a neighbor's yard

Alley kids learning life
Happy in ignorance
Knowing no better way
Or better place

Paradise between the streets

Succotash Dreams

by Renee Hesch

Ten deep she stands waiting for her turn in the checkout line
the line that accepts food stamps and WIC.
Her young son cried for the canned corn in the Green Giant label
as he watches the Hilfiger-clad youth
grab two rolls of Lifesavers.

Balancing the accordion folder of coupons
the selected ones between her cracked lips,
she tears out the last food stamp coupons
praying for the end of the month
hoping that someday she won't have to choose
between corn and green beans
and that the cost of the candy her son wants
won't dip into the last two dollars she has safety pinned
to her brown tweed coat pocket.

Ode to a Wooden Spoon
by Allen O'Connor

I found you at the "Feast of the Hunter's Moon."
Hand carved with loving care,
A hardwood I know you are, but your roots are aloof to me.

Your handle is long and straight
Grayed by the oils of my hand,
You show your age,
Like the distinguished gray of a gentleman's hair.

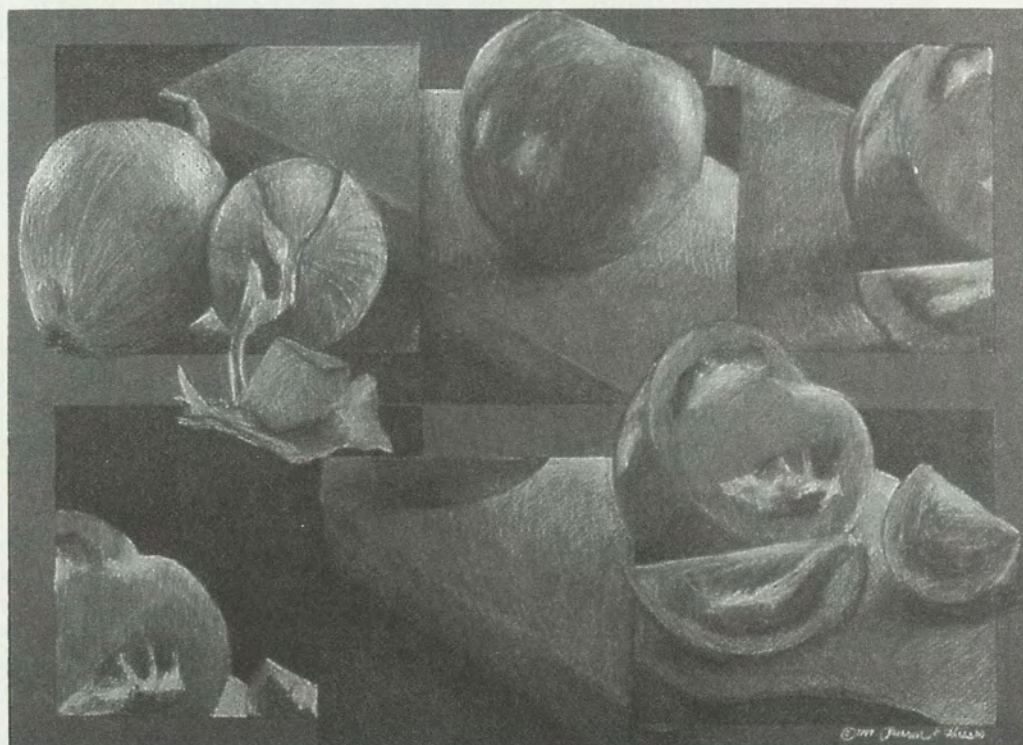
Brilliantly seasoned and battle scarred,
Your scorched bottom slightly bruised
You bravely stir my sautéing onions,
Those, which make me cry to cut them.

I raise you to my lips
And touch you with my tongue
Your scent and flavor change
With the sauce or roux
 I am concocting.

When the cooking is done
You soak in a hot tub
And
I rub you down with a towel.

Then, I lay you to rest
Until the next time
 When we share an adventure in your kitchen.

"Sliced"
by Lauren E. Kussro



not spaghetti again?
by Renee Hesch

A symphony of sleek silver pots awakens my hunger.
I watch as the sultry steam rises seducing me
Olive oil the sizzling partner
to fresh garlic undressed and pressed
one clove at a time.
hot strips of crimson peppers smolder within the skillet
as linguine lavishes under this culinary creation
waiting to be stirred
pleasure passion pasta.

Hook, Line and Sinker

by Renee Hesch

Tonguing gooey mallow
Ignoring crows feet eyes
Wet dream swirls of chocolate
Drizzling caramel on midlife.

Phish food for Yuppies
Ben & Jerry's bait the line
Forty something euphoria
Tastes of youth, chocolate fish, the red tide.

Mix this potion with routine
The Prozac of our time
Status quo our safety net
Sucking color out of light.

Younger days of tie-dyed T's
Slowly graying in our minds
Orgasms come in pints now
Melting metaphors combined.

Love, lust and ice cream
Just a fading memory
Vanilla visions safer than
Phish food simile.

black hole theorem #1

by c. m. williams

they say
that they have proven
black holes exist
describing them
as over sized taffy pulls
stretching the energy,
of anything
that gets sucked inside
“the spaghetti effect”
they are calling it—
a big deal,
that they are saying
black holes exist.

but this discovery
is nothing new
to me—
the first time
at camp
third bunk from the door
on top of everyone it seemed
while the others were playing
tennis and canoeing
too far from the dock—
we were
exploring

you were fourteen
i was twelve
when i slipped from the earth
into the black hole
of your mouth
all of me
tingling and separating
like light in a prism —
that first kiss
my limbs were like
neon telephone wires
stretched from your home town
to mine

this was your last summer
you said
making the face
my mother would make
when looking at my report card
and then i knew
it was over
"i'll miss you" i said
as my body came together
a swirling cosmos
new arrangement of me

they do not know what happens
to the energy
after it has passed through a black hole
but i do—

rats live on no evil star
by Tegan Echo Lynn

On the anniversary of my birth
I called you,
the telephone cord balanced
in my hand, and
that voice reminding me of you---
your voice like a spoon,
launching me through the door:
Meet me

Halfway between your home and mine.

And the cement roads,
thick with oil,
made my jaw ache---
bending closer
to that drink in your hand,
your warm skin
melting ice---
distilling chemicals.

We were born on a star

I show you
the bite marks on my wrist
where a rat's yellow teeth
tried to speak my language
with a long vowel sound,
the scar on your left palm
matching, like a full moon tattoo.

It wasn't an evil star

Light years away, laying
in the grass and dirt,
past cracking sidewalks
and furious weeds,
our heads will bend into glass.
And blocking street-lamp-light
with our hands,

the universe will come into focus
as we look for our star
in each bending knee,
and reaching arm,
each animal eye
and sloping back

the star unborn babies travel

And we have
shuttled between two star systems
swimming through the sewers
of quasars
nearly brain-damaged with radiation, our voices

Reached the highest pitch of transmission

In this upside-down looking glass
we understand
we do not belong.
The bones of our wrists and elbows touch,
and we are as
we are
still
as the soil beneath our sprawling bodies,
our world nearly black
under the waning eye-blink of the moon.

halfway between your home and mine

Your teeth are brighter
than anything.

Spaceman's Creed
by Sarah Miller

Farther than the siren song
The sea wind brings to men
Above the dusky, sunlit skies
Another mistress calls.

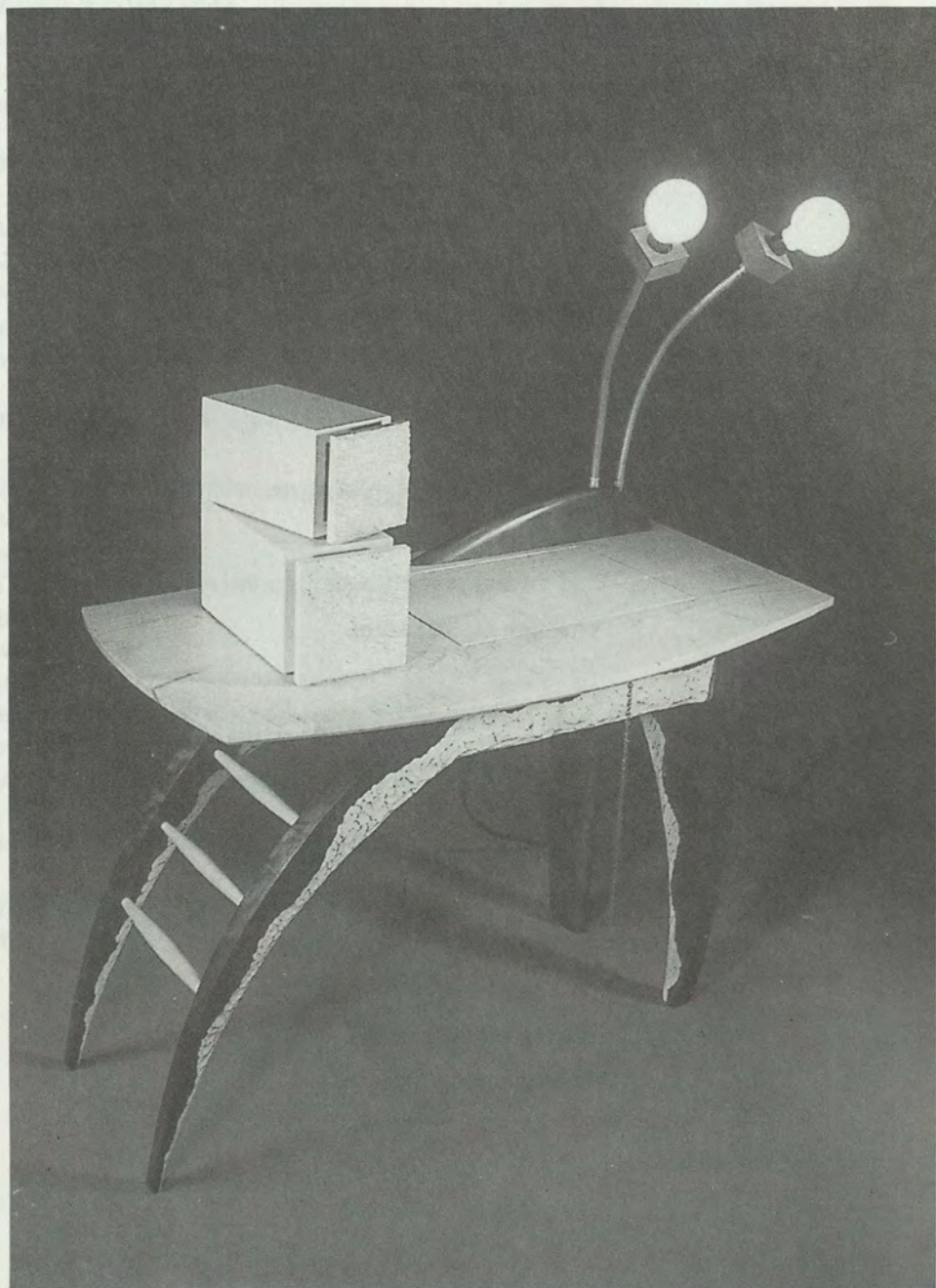
The stars cry out for willing hearts
To travel far and wide
On laser beams of light
Beyond their homeland skies.

To dance our lives among the stars
Blazing comet bright
Bold voyagers we travel
Through eternal night.

Though lady space is fickle,
Jealous, hard and cruel
No earthly lady ever
Turn us from her sight.

Fast held slaves of foamless waves
We into horizon ride
Loyal, brave, eternal
Who sail among the skies.

"Vanity"
by Eric Vetesy



On Hurrying through Life

by Paula Dombrow

Now is a fleeting thing. As soon as you can comprehend the moment that is "now," it is gone. You call a friend on the phone and ask, "What are you doing now?" and he replies, "Eating breakfast," which he no longer is, because he's talking to you on the phone. Or, he might consider himself a wag, and reply, "talking to you," which isn't the answer you were after at all. You wanted to know what he was doing "now," but by the time he picks up the phone, "now" has been replaced by "then."

Now is indeed a slippery fellow. I believe that the smallest time increment discovered so far is the nanosecond, or about the time that it takes a pulse of light to move half way through a glass of water. A small bit of time, but even the nanosecond contains several nows. Now the light has started through the glass: Now it is half way through. Perhaps there is a slice of time so small that it can't be divided any smaller. Or perhaps time can be divided infinitely. Perhaps the smallest chunk of time actually contains no time, just like the smallest bit of space contains no space. A frustrating concept, but one that is supposedly true. Physicists claim that stars collapse into black holes that have something called a singularity in them, composed of a lot of matter and absolutely no space. Supposedly, this is possible, although they say that these strange singularities must nip out of the universe for a bit, in order to exist . . . or not exist, since it isn't a part of the universe ...Either way, it doesn't much matter, whether the smallest slice of time is so small that it is very small, or whether it is so small that it isn't there, and feels the urge to leave the universe stranded for a bit because it doesn't exist anyhow.

And so we hurry on through life. College seems enticing in high school, a job and big money so enticing in college, and retirement during the working years. It seems logical, that if now doesn't really exist for all practical purposes, and that now constantly disappears before we can grasp it, that we must therefore live in that precarious balance between past and future. This predicament is like that of an angel from the book of Revelations, who, after descending from heaven, "placed his right foot on the sea and his left on the land," as though he couldn't find the ever moving shoreline, and was obliged to straddle it, rather than stand on it. So it is with us. We never seem to be able to find the ever-disappearing "now," but are caught perpetually between the past to the future.

If time constantly propels us, why shouldn't we enjoy the ride? Apollo drives his thundering chariot across the sky: It is a race from the rising to the setting of the sun. I, for instance, take great pleasure out of hurrying. My feet hit the floor with a resonant thud when I jump out of bed on a day to hurry: I have

no time to waste as I eagerly hurry into the next second. The whole day is full of little pleasures. When taking a test in history class, I begin to think of the next test, and lunch, and the paper for English class (and this has the added benefit, that I am often well prepared for the future). Because I am in a hurry I see the smallest chunk of time and hurry to fill it with something, perhaps lunch with a friend – as nature abhors a vacuum, so does my day planner. But, on a day when I don't hurry, I stay in bed, with the warm covers pulled up over my head.

By hurrying this way, I get the full benefit of all of time. It is the only way of grasping what time there is and living it to the fullest extent. When I am hurrying, I can savor the memories of the past, the little pleasures and triumphs, and forget the boring and unpleasant episodes. At the same time, I am looking ahead to and already beginning to enjoy the future. And if the future doesn't shape up to the way that I imagined it and looked forward to, I have the benefit of having lived two futures: the one in my head, and the one in reality.

Now is so much so a fleeting entity, neither past nor future, and never really present, that one wonders if now even exists, since by hurrying, we are never really in it. Somewhere in the fundamental framework of reality must be now. If there is no now, then there must not be a reality, only, perhaps there is no reality. In the book *Restaurant at the End of the Universe* by Douglas Adams, Mr. Adams depicts an ultimate ruler of the universe puzzling over reality. The ultimate ruler of the universe says, "How can I tell . . . that the past isn't a fiction designed to account for the discrepancy between my immediate physical sensations and my state of mind?" If reality is to be called into question, how can one prove that there is not a rhinoceros in the room with him? Because he doesn't see it? You don't see the air in the room, either.

But I ask what profit there is in this argument about whether or not reality exists. Argue what you will about the nature or fact of reality. One may still ask what reality is, but if there is no way to prove reality, as the ultimate ruler of the universe suspects, why shouldn't I enjoy the pleasures afforded by hurrying? It seems futile to not hurry, anyhow. I'm a chronic hurry-er. I eat breakfast with my hamster and my homework. And if the hamster sometimes ends up in my lukewarm coffee, or my toast on the book, at least I know that I have done my best to get as much done as I can.

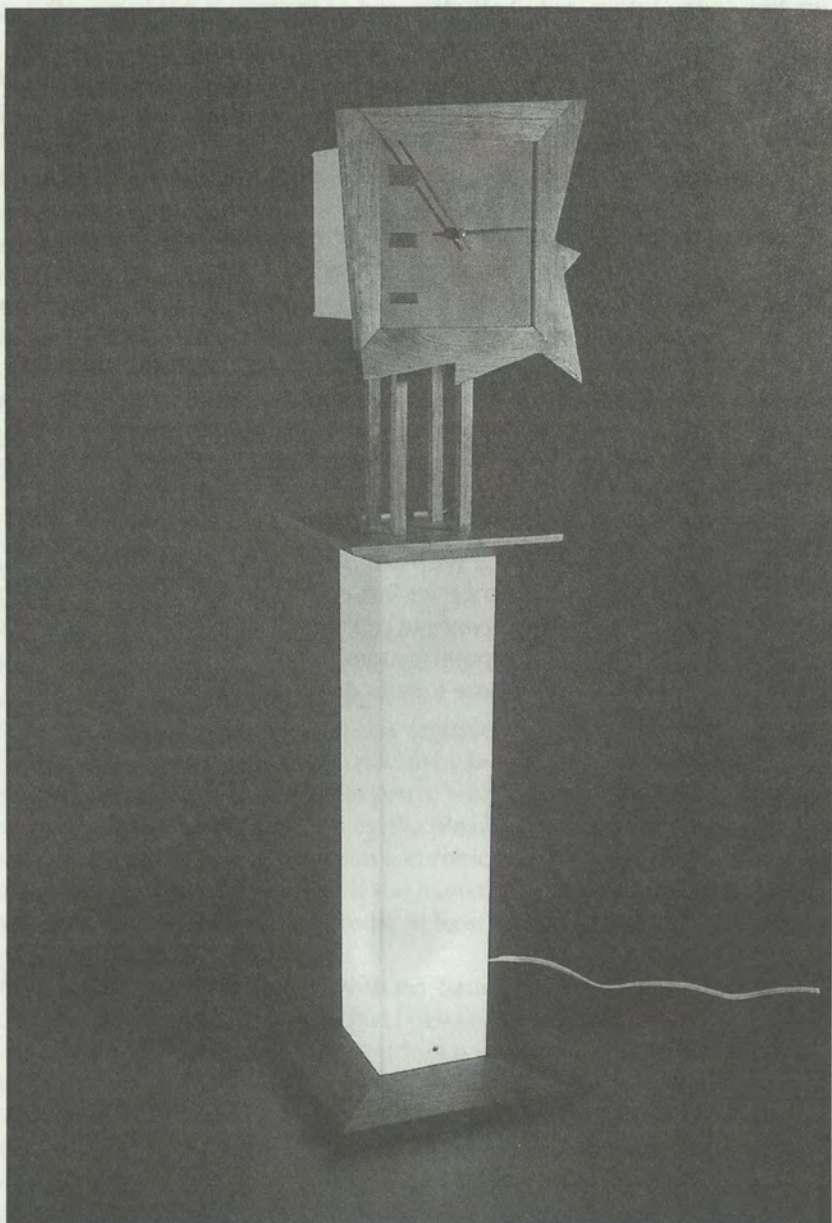
As I sit there eating breakfast with my hamster, I can imagine not only everything that I have to do that day, but I can also see myself in two years from now so clearly that I find myself there before I have a chance to collect the few minutes that I missed of the year in between. In *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller, a character named Dunbar explains this phenomena: "Do you know how long a year takes when it's going away?" Dunbar repeated to Clevenger. "This long." He snapped his fingers. "A second ago you were stepping into college with your lungs full of fresh air. Today you are an old man."

And yet, what pleasures does hurrying afford? Constantly hurrying, looking back towards the past and ahead to the pleasures to come, breeds a certain set of dissatisfactions. Now becomes paled in light of the splendors awaiting in the future, only half glimpsed in the race to get to something bigger. Missed opportunities and pleasures, ways to soothe pains all pass, until retrospection reveals them gone . . . and then there is no way to capture, relive the moment. We all would forget how good the present really is until it is part of the past, like in the poem *The Men That Don't Fit In*: "And each forgets that his prime is past/Till he stands one day, with a hope that's dead/In the glare of truth at last."

Hurrying only leaves one wondering what is now. Either pushing ahead time or stalling time seems as futile as grasping at the wind or pushing against a river. Hurrying does nothing but muddle the mind, dull the present, sow discontent, and yield perplexing and bothersome questions about the nature of 'now'. Perhaps the best thing to do is to follow the advice of Solomon. He says: "So, remove vexation from your heart and put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting." Perhaps it is much better to enjoy now to its fullest extent and not to hurry into the future. The future is coming soon enough.

But the true conclusion of this essay is that it is more profitable to hurry and not to worry about it. For if we hurry and worry about hurrying, or rather do not hurry, and yet still worry over lost opportunities, where is the profit? For hurrying indeed offers more chance to profit from life (which goes swift enough), and little time to dwell on its imperfections, while not hurrying accomplishes nothing and gives the mind more time to dwell on the problems of life.

"Clock II"
by Nicholas Hollibaugh



The Summer of '69 by Pat Harvey

That summer of free love. Haight-Ashbury, Woodstock, demonstrations and protests for peace. Draft cards blazing up in smoke across the nation. Timothy Leary's "drop out, tune in, and turn on." Neil Armstrong's one small step, one giant leap for mankind. "Helter Skelter" splattering the headlines. Napalm burning the jungles, villages, and children of Southeast Asia. And in the cornfields closer to home, a new generation of Hoosier rebels vandalizing James Dean's tomb.

For me, the summer of '69 was a time for playing pioneers or pirates; a time when my neighborhood could still become the Seven Seas or a prairie settlement under Indian attack. And hot afternoons when some brave mother would take the whole neighborhood gang swimming at the Olympia Club. The humid air reeked of chlorine, yet the water beckoned cool, crisp, and clear. Evenings spent industriously catching fireflies or playing nighttime games of tag with wild abandon. The orange arc of the sodium streetlight encircling the safety of home base at the bottom of the hill.

*Why do we never get an answer, when we're knocking at the door?
Because the truth is hard to swallow, that's what the war of love is for.*

Janet Gold had always been my babysitter, and she was as precious to me as her name. The oldest child, I had no siblings or cousins to explain the intricate workings of our small-town world. I was a curious child with many questions that she always tried to answer. Janet used to watch my younger brother and me on Monday nights when Mom played bridge and Daddy worked second shift at RCA. When Daddy died after second grade, Janet began watching us after school and in the summer.

When I think of Janet Gold today, I always remember her standing at our back door on a summer afternoon. Her black, black hair fell below her shoulders in a perfect, perky flip that seemed effortless. Yet I knew how much time she spent with her hair rolled up in empty, 12-ounce orange-juice cans, all gummed up with green, gooey Dippity-Doo. I would feel a sort of dreadful, nervous anticipation of the time when I would be expected to take such pains with my own lank hair. In the back of my mind, I imagined ironing it and wearing long, flowing tresses. My fine, mousy-brown hair could never look as perfect as Janet's thick, black, luxurious flip.

On this extraordinary afternoon, there's no bright summer sunlight shining through the back door. The big Chinese elm tree in the front yard kept the afternoon sun from the house. Janet was standing in the cool shadows—her back to the kitchen. I couldn't see her face. And somehow, I knew I didn't really want to see.

Janet had a box in her arms, a long, skinny white box. The lid lay on the living-room floor, where I picked it up. I took it with me as I followed her into the kitchen, setting it quietly on the table. She was just standing there in absolute silence, the box with dark red

petals cradled in her left arm. The card in her right hand was right in front of her face. She looked as if she was reading it over and over, but she was crying. Silently crying, with a silence so strong and devouring we were left helpless and breathless; the bright afternoon shattered upon the floor.

And I know, she told me all about it. I sigh and watch. Watching and waiting—nothing else to do. Her boyfriend, Terry, was drafted when school let out. Now in July, he was off to Vietnam. The DMZ, demilitarized zone. I look at those words now, and I still don't understand why they were used to describe a place where battles raged and young boys died so far from home.

In that year, 1969, the acronym DMZ tolled like a death knell on the distant church bells. To this day, those words always conjure up the same image: my Aunt Mid in her surgically clean kitchen, grinding juicy, bright red meat, making mince for her famous Thanksgiving pies.

Suddenly Southeast Asia was there in my Indiana home—not just on the TV news at dinnertime. The Vietnam War had sent out a slimy, nasty tentacle, small as it was, to reach us all the way in Beech Grove. We had become long-distance casualties. The war half the world away was horribly real and it hurt. And as I watched Janet's back in the enormous silence, my own eyes filled with hot, quiet tears.

*Won't you take me back to school, I need to learn the Golden Rule
Won't you lay it on the line; I need to hear it one more time....*

In July, we registered for school. My Catholic school, Holy Name, ran straight through from grade one to eight. The closest I would come to middle school or junior high was the second-floor classrooms. Only the same old, comfortable routine. After 10:30 mass we would go over to the school and see the new room assignments for the next year.

The school year of 1969-70 would be the first that girls had to wear uniforms, a modest, traditional Catholic value in a time of change. We picked up the new uniforms when we registered. And for the remainder of the summer, two hot turquoise and prison-gray, plaid school jumpers hung in my closet like nameless threats of what the future would hold in store for me.

Sister Lydia was more than a principal; she was the stern disciplinarian of my elementary days. Sister Lydia was the unholy wrath of God personified. With features chiseled from limestone, this Bride of Christ handed down the edict from on high that limited each student to two uniforms, saving our sainted mothers precious time wasted on laundry. None would dare rebel against Sister Lydia. Instead, we accepted this lesson of pious humility and shunned the frivolous fashions of the day, at least for school. Simply because we had no other choice.

When we tried the uniforms on, my mom discussed the merit of owning *one* of these ugly jumpers. I wanted to scream out, to protest. I bit back my words only because I got tired of being different. Sometimes I really hated being the only one who didn't have a father and a mother who worked instead of staying home baking cookies. So I told her instead that if I have two, I would have an extra if something gets spilled on one. I got my way—an important lesson learned.

So, for the rest of the summer of '69, I had my new future hanging over my head, in

my closet. In the days of hot pants and mini-skirts, those two jumpers were two inches above my knees. Incredibly unflattering. I would become a laughingstock of the fifth grade. At 11, I felt gawky, an awkward girl-child—a scrawny, too-tall, two-legged colt. Just as a puppy must grow into his feet, I feared reaching seven feet before I was done. Since I was already the second tallest of everyone my age at school, I faced this with a dreadful anticipation. And I reluctantly accepted it as proof of the inevitableness, the fleeting, finite summer.

*Cold-hearted orb that rules the night, removes the colors from our sight
Where red is gray and yellow, white; yet we decide which is right
And which is an illusion*

Evenings, children would spew forth from their homes, gathering under the big Chinese elm in my front yard—the after-dinner ritual of midsummer. Latecomers were the chosen dishwashers for the day. Once a majority gathered, voting began on which games we played for that night. The bulk of our gang consisted of my brother, me. And then the Callon kids: Bobby, Cathy, Mary Sue, and Tommy. Instead of using family ties to an advantage—the Callon kids could be counted on to split up, boys against girls. Since this added nothing to either side when voting, it usually fell to the fill-in kids to break the age-old stalemate. Not that it mattered anyway; life was still as simple as the games we played. If the girls didn't like what the boys voted, we would just go off on our own.

July 20, 1969, would be a night unlike any night that had ever come before. The Eagle had landed. Tonight, for the first time, the man-in-the-moon would wave back. The only question on the evening of July 20 was how to fill the time before the televised moonwalk.

The gang crowded around the glowing TV screen; squirming twisting, elbowing into the most comfortable vantage points while an anonymous reporter droned on and on, trying the last of our collective patience. "C'mon, let's get to the good stuff," a voice jeered at the TV. Murmurs of consent filtered across the room.

Suddenly, the image of the reporter cut away, replaced in an instant with black and gray static. Acting as one, we let out a long, satisfied "Ahh," as if the jumble of colorless dots were bright and brilliant fireworks. Strange, indistinct shapes seemed to take form and dissolve in the static. We all stared straight ahead, eyes transfixed on the flickering screen.

The screen began to stabilize, black on top and white on the bottom—images from another planet came into focus. A shape took form, barely recognizable as human, to the left of the screen, moving ever-so-slowly down from the lunar module. We watched with bated breath, all of us; Bobby, Cathy, Mary Sue, Tommy, Ronnie, Mike, Steve, and me.

Then it happened—Neil Armstrong leapt from the bottom run and landed flat-footed on the moon. And as he spoke those memorable words, "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind," my heart pounded hard and fast with intensity—words were already a passion of my life. The thrill of actually witnessing them left me breathless.

The astronaut's helmet visor reflected like a mirror—Earth hung in the sky, a little, lonely blue ball lost amid the infinite velvet blackness, as he boldly strode a few more steps across the Sea of Tranquility. Watching the Stars and Stripes firmly planted on alien soil,

the room let out another collective sigh. Neil Armstrong had claimed the moon for the United States—we did it, our country was first.

With the amazing sight of the flag on the moon came an unexpected realization: I learned something about patriotism. Memorizing lofty ideals and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance isn't quite the same. The America of my childhood was filled with war and protests—I never could understand. At 11, I was naïve enough to believe one side had to be right. I never knew before that moment being an American could make you proud. It was good to know and I smiled.

*Timothy Leary's dead. No, no, no, he's outside looking in
He'll take you up, he'll bring you down
He'll put your feet back firmly on the ground.*

When I was 11, I was young enough to listen to any side of my thoughts I chose and ignore the rest. Life wasn't always simple, but it was still good. The summer of '69 will always be a happy and carefree time of my life, memories of being young, and the comfortable knowledge you are taken care of. The decade of the '60s would fade with the year, and my childhood would inevitably follow close behind. Free love and open expressions of affection would soon be replaced with STDs, HIV, AIDS, and caution.

War continued to rage in Vietnam, and yet it too came to a close, leaving a country that bears the painful scars to this day. And no one seems to get excited, or even barely interested in NASA. Space shuttles rate nothing more than a quick blurb on the evening news. Timothy Leary is gone for good, his ashes rocketed into space. Woodstock made a silver-anniversary encore but wasn't quite the same. Perhaps the spirit of the summer of '69 was missing. Nineteen sixty-nine is just a memory now—a little bit of history. You can never go back, but it was great to have been there.

And up in the cornfields of Fairmont, young rebels gather to pay homage to the master. James Dean's tombstone is still being stolen and replaced.

*Nothing changes, nothing stays the same.
And life is still just a simple game.*

Author's note: All italicized subtitles are lyrics from Moody Blues songs.

Curriculum Vitae

by Tegan Echo Lynn

1979-- The year I came loose, a Leo, not a Libra as diagnosed,
a piece of my mother wrapped around my bloody neck,
I looked like a modern reinvention of the Frankenstein monster,
full of tubes and hoses. They played doctor games: how long
can she live without oxygen? I was carried home with minimal brain
damage.

1984-- Lying in bed at night
I hear hushed voices planning my eventual strangulation.
Under my bed, on the tops of my finger, in the corner of my eye—
hands sneaking up my knees.
Mother, please don't turn out the light.

1987-- The assignment was simple: Three yellow construction
paper faces decorated by our own budding minds
and hands— a sad face, a happy face, an angry face.
On the first day of our new project I fixed my
frowning face to the front of the desk.

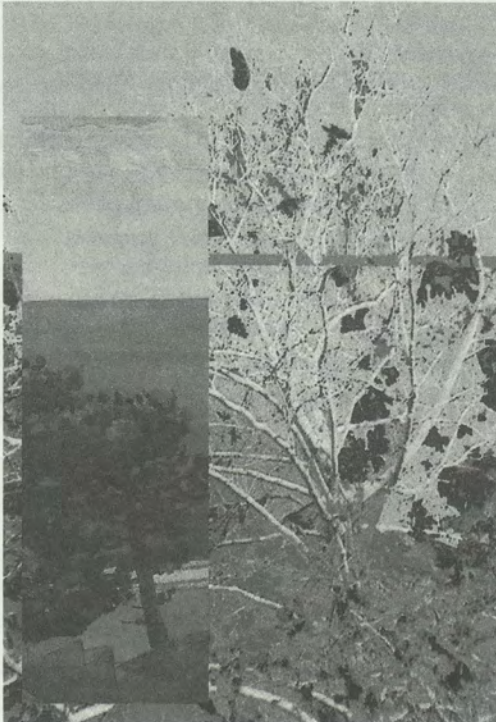
1990-- Two, maybe more, long thin slices near my wrist,
not quite sure where to cut or how,
only knowing the shiny penny taste at the back of my throat
had been making me sick for months. And I kept thinking
of the boy down the street who took enough pills.

1999-- Slammed between bookends of psychology texts—
the boundaries of my mind. I was written into a prescription
to control my twitches of madness, my indifference to optimism.
The fastened frown is sliding from my skin,
the chimeras have disappeared from the cracks in the floor.

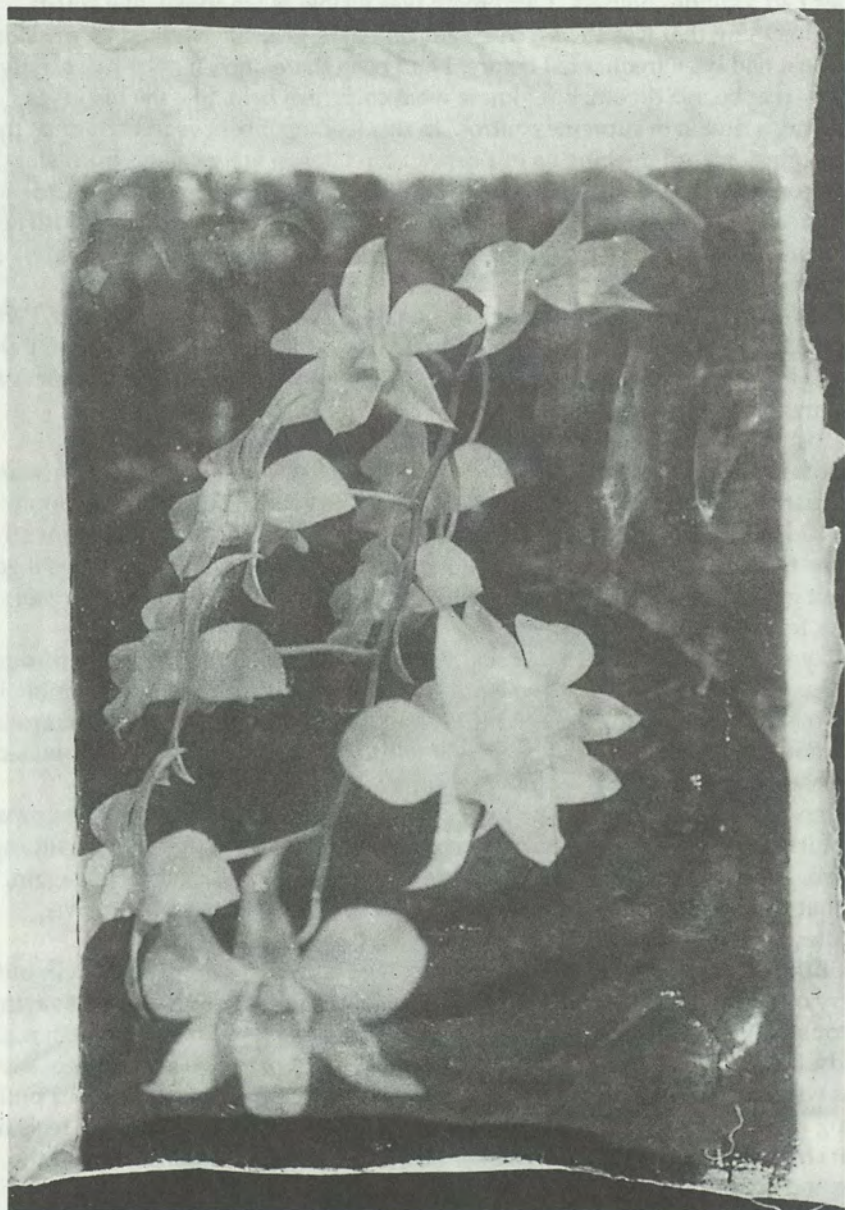
Reconstructing the Time
by Christie Blizard

Soft,
willowy, soft and mad, we
came to feel the slow imagery of time
sweep over us
(like time unraveling neatly at
its end)
then we could find time
again
like a loosened vision,
like a field guide
going home.

"Cycles"
by Hector Del Campo



"Sweetness"
by Donna Yarema



A Long Walk to Forever by Ian Osborne

The air had a subtle coolness. Our breath was visible as we spoke, like spirits escaping, or something that was shown true against a dark veil. She walked by my side down a path that had been frequented before; I had been there once, maybe twice, only in childhood. No, maybe in a dream, but I knew what each turn held, like the life I was supposed to lead, a dream in supreme control. In this leading, I believe in each of us there's an internal nagging, a hand pushing us in a certain direction, a voice calling from afar, begging us to come there way to step in their lonely darkness. Just something of that sort.

We weren't meant to walk this earth alone, and that is why I'm walking with her right now, because in this there's resolution. Again, that outer voice begs to speak, it calms the soul and pardons you to follow.

We didn't need to talk, I heard what she had to say as clearly as I felt the cold wind against my ears, as if emotion was a substance that I could touch and hold between the two of us, as love is a bodiless expression of the soul. It's right to breathe; it's inimitable desire to be kept in another's heart.

Her stride was light, like it went with the wind, but I kept up.

"Isn't it a beautiful night?" I asked, breaking the silence. It didn't matter, whatever I'd say. My heart would prove to be content whatever the verse would be. She didn't respond, she didn't need to, her eyes were mine. Her reply was my question; it was all a cycle I've come to know. The path through those creaking woods split, "I think we'll go this way. This will get us there." It never mattered which direction we would go, her feet would always follow beside mine.

"I love you, I'll always love you," I said, and the wind tossed her response through the autumn leaves. "I love you too." The words dissipated into the heavy dark night. I pressed for a memory, something to keep me. I thought of the summers we spent under the milk wood, knowing how it would all be, how it will all end, never thinking for one second fate would disagree and send us whirling into different paths.

Autumn holds a certain freshness to it, like something new, something coming alive. Even though, in fact, things begin to wilt and decay. Maybe in their after life something else is exposed, a new life to the senses. You come apparent to the beauty of life again, the sunflowers that reached for their godly sun, the melodic voicing of the birds above. Indulgence dies and an utter awareness is born.

As autumn is a reminder of the pure and natural beauty of it all. I can't help but think of every other reminder. Times when I could have said more, thinking that saying it once more could have made a difference. And, when I'd find the resolution, and in it, the perfect words, I'd shout it from the highest point, and feel it with the true depths of my soul. But, as we come to this spot, the dreamed long walk to forever is at its end. I pull a still-surviving flower from its roots and place it upon her head. I give a kiss that feels like cold stone, it chills, but feels so true. I whisper goodbye and that I love her so, and the wind rustles and speaks through the leaves. "I love you too."

For Kay, for all memories priceless and all things unsaid, I love you.

First, Last, Forever
by Thomas Hutcheson

A rule: your friends are not your friends if they don't insist you learn to hate old loves.

"Screw her, Pete. How worried you think she is about you right now?" Therapeutic? No, this is field surgery, something done with bayonet and gunpowder so that the mission can go on, so that your friends can continue on to the next bar or party without having to bear your weight. Keep the gin flowing. Liquid fuel for thought.

I remember the first, right around the age deodorant became necessary, but the image is loaded with so much nostalgia that it cannot be trusted. She was blond and a grade older, and our lips thrust a new dimension into the world, so electric that now it makes me question my lack of faith. The good memories get better with age, warmer and sweeter and impossible. Trust the bad memories. 24 hours a day in some low-rent corner of your brain the shit you regret is being neatly filed for posterity. Every horrible bit of forensic evidence.

What my first kiss was, my second "first" wasn't. Of course I'd already had sex dozens of times, mainly in lies I told to my friends, but all that faux experience helped nothing. Her name was Jennifer, and I had done all the right things. There was dinner, followed by a Julia Roberts movie, accompanied by eager touching. A virgin lad's delusions of sex include the Destroyer archetype, making a mess so that you can move on to the next mess. What delusions the virgin lass may have still escape me.

"It's okay, Pete. I'm okay." What did she mean?

But that first time is almost universally in the dark, isn't it? We protect ourselves from embarrassment by turning out the lights, which only makes the act clumsier. Once I slept with a girl who kept the lights out because she "...wanted to hide from God." And I thought I was fucked up.

Another bar, and I'm held up by a thread. I feel like fighting, and the asshole at the end of the bar whom I stare down has become a prime candidate. He turns to his friends, a lot of talk and animated gestures in my direction. Oh yeah, he'll be 'round soon. The world's full of tough guys. I am not one of them.

Keep after women, I tell myself. And they are all so lovely. There was one a while back I classified as serious. Two years, one of them shacked up. Kathy played guitar and sang off-key, and I can't tell you how wonderful it was. Hours of it. She caught me fucking her best friend. The end.

Who else? Maria was beautiful. Afterwards, she would drift asleep squeezing my waist. It was funny though... she'd whisper in Spanish when she dreamt and it kept me awake sometimes. I meant to learn, but there was no

reason to after she returned to Madrid.

Susan was pretty and smart. So pretty that she modeled swimwear, so smart that she got into grad school back east.

Last week I met a girl at the bars who ran a Handicam the entire time we went at it.

They are all so lovely, and I am not a tough guy. I'm inescapably in love with each of them forever. My friends' prescriptions cannot cure me of it. I ache for them, and the vacuum intensifies daily. I don't need a girl to fall in love with, I need one to fall out of love with.

He's here now, with his friends. Turning around on the stool I realize I can't feel my face. The tough guy is moving his mouth, but all threats sound the same at the bottom of nowhere.

(untitled)

by Andy Gaunce

Do you remember when
we walked
In the streets
Comforting ourselves
In masquerade
Jealous ambition

Will it be the
end?

the television beats
another unconscious
beat (?)

do you remember when
consciousness was at
its

feet.

"Don't fret, now..."
-conscious melody
of
drama.

Laughter amiss
"Child don't drag
your feet..."

-Beat.

Free yourself from
what you wonder.
Free yourself from
why you wonder
Free yourself from,

The memories kept
Us awake that night

Because,
By accident we had
love.

Was it?
Cut the ball & chain
Mamma.
Hear what's coming
next on
the AM radio
Miscarried child
Miscarried memory

"Don't fret, now..."
the joy of laughter.
Rising our heads high
while sun gleams
down
- our necks.

Heat & loneliness
play games
in the sand
Well now,
Don't you remember?
Lights are on.
Don't frighten your
mother.

The plot goes here &
there
lost maybe like you
In the sand,
Sun gleams pour
On you precious
head
Consciousness Flows
arbitrarily

Arbitrates
Dug deep.
"Go on girl
free yourself"

I know.
I know.
Vanish.
Like breeze
In
Intimate
Silence.
I don't
Believe
I do remember
Sadness.
Only
Redemption.

Mamma
Watch
Out...

"The Rise and Fall of Matt Ware"
by Albert Spaulding



The Dandelion

by Jason Abels

Darkness.
Darkness is the first thing I see.
A darkness thicker than night.
It smells of sweat and
Old Spice.

I feel his hands on me,
groping.
They're cold and rough
and then he finds what he's looking for.

He rips my underwear off.
The ones I got last year.
They're pink and blue and green
with a little tag
that says "Amy" on it,
and I can feel air.
It is cold, cold
and I know what he's going to do.
I try to escape
but he's holding me down
with his cold and rough hands
that smell like
Old Spice.

I stop struggling
because then I can feel something.
Something cold and hot,
something I know,
something that is scaring the hell out of me.
I close my eyes,
morbidly anticipating,
knowing what is coming,
hoping that it won't

I open my eyes.
I can feel him hesitate.
He's nervous?

Then, in a flash of pain
and my silent scream,
he enters me.

And then I look up,
and I can see the dandelion.
It shines in the
pale moonlight,
Yellow petals like the sun.

He gave me those today
while we walked in the fields
behind our house.

He said they reminded him of me.
Reminded him of his little girl.
Strong and willful,
standing out in the crowd.
The petals, he said,
reminded him of my golden hair.

And as the sweat drips
from his beet-red face,
I can see the dandelion
floating
in the Mickey Mouse glass
from McDonald's

I barely feel his body
tense up
because I can see the moon's
pale light
reflect off the murky water
that the dandelion stands
alone
in.

The yellow leaves
glisten
as though dew-covered
And it's so sweet
It's so sweet I don't ever want to let the vision
go.

And as he comes inside of me
I hold back the screams
I hold back the screams
because the dandelion
is so beautiful
So beautiful
like a second sun
in my desk bedroom.
I can't ruin it's beauty
as it shines
in my dark bedroom.

And then he is gone.
Something inside of me
has gone with him
Something good.
Something he had no right to take.

But I can still see the dandelion
I can see
each slender yellow petal
like the knives he has driven
into my heart.

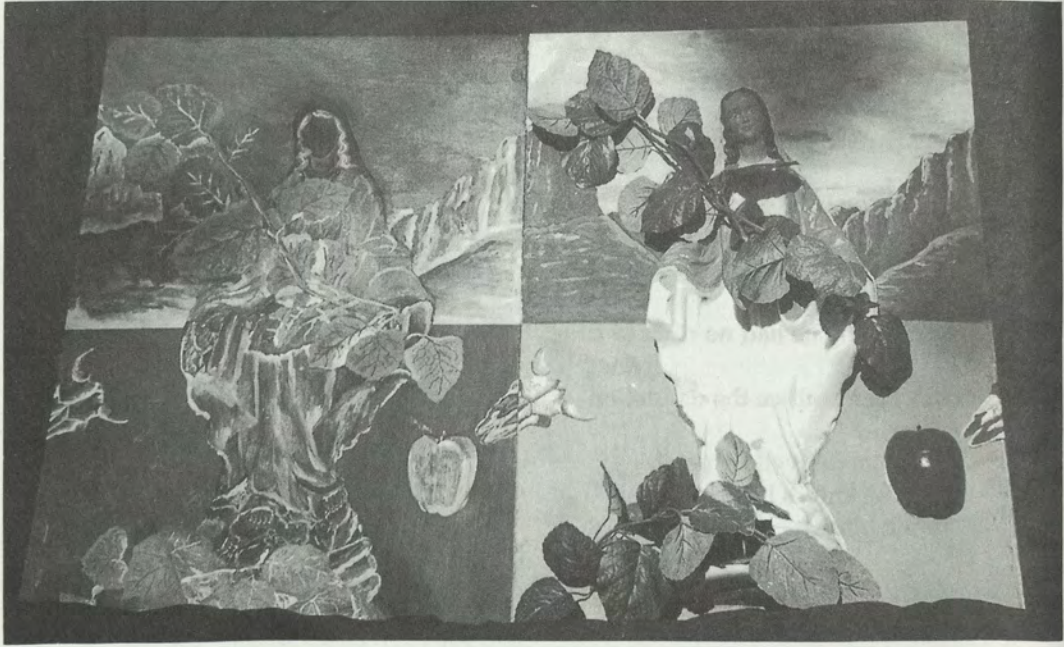
The dandelion.
My beautiful flower.

As I watch,
the yellow petals turn to
gray,
and then,
to black.

And then the dandelion is gone.
gone.
Gone with the moon.
and it's pale moonlight
and the hands
that smell like
Old Spice.

But the dandelion is still there
every night.

Black and White Madonna
by Rick J. Morris



Salvation

by Chad David Richards

It could've been worse
you said. Stop crying.

But no child should
should have to see that.

No child should have
to feel his father's

swollen fist come crashing
down upon his perfect face

(bruising not only the flesh,
but the soul) forever scarring

the subconscious mind.

It could've been worse
you said. Stop crying.

Perhaps in death I'd find
salvation.

Three Chord Song: An Interview

by Tegan Echo Lynn

The Pilar El-Dib Award for Best Woman's Poem

could you introduce yourself?

When I was three, I blew soap bubbles at strangers. At five I ate chocolate that melted off my fingers. When I was nine I painted unicorns in paint by number oils, never getting the eyes just right. When I was ready I drank wine from complimentary Christmas glasses and ate crackers from a dish. When I am older I will run through sprinklers, my legs blue and stiff.

But now I am three again¹. Three in a package. Three in a pill dispenser by my bed. Three in the lines of my hand. Three in intimidation. three in dread. Three waiting for the gate to open and three with dirt falling on my skin. Three candles in a row, blowing out of breath.

you're a poet?

Cynic, reader, mathematician, tarot card reader, once I wanted to be a physicist. I bought a book, *Physics for Poets*. I am burglar, an overdose of quiet, a listener and a confidant. As a child I wore an alien headband to the circus. I wanted to wear a tutu; I never had the figure. Figure me out.

what aspect of writing do you enjoy most?

I am an orphanage for lost voices. When writing, a voice becomes color, unweaving like a thread. We become a trinity of hand mouth reason, painting our portrait. Twice I have missed the texture, glossy prints and glassy eyes.

what do you enjoy about poetry?

¹ & she shows me her fingerprint underside, the three middle fingers of her right hand, the whorls and curves distinct, painted with ink, middle finger taller than the rest.

I like that twisting of reality, trickery in the mirrors.
Look at my iris at it shines, radiates lies into ears.
Straight lines bending like a hinge; for the longest time I
wanted to be a doorway with nine broken locks, an escapist
fantasy.

what are you working on now?

Keeping awake. Drugging my dreams². I had a dream about not
working so I stayed indoors, covered the windows with
Halloween decals of spiders and webs.

I like to remember the past; in pictures I was a missing
tooth child, my eyes were a mistaken red. I think I had too
many nightmares of electric skillets and frying pans,
roasting and cannibalism. I feel too consumed, digested.

what are your goals?

Diagramming sentences³; structures and sculptures in the
blood, through the eyes, through the tongue. To drink more
water and not cry so much. I don't want to smudge the ink;
I want my fingerprints to stay attached to my skin, finger-
painting on wide eyelids.

and your motivations?

Sighs, panic attacks, hiccups that can't be cured,
Christmas globes with plastic clumps of snow. Vibrations--
electric shocks that start at the brain, leave the pores of
my skin. Taste buds, and the lump in my throat. The
violence of eating⁴. The Everything, the everything I take
out, put down, say aloud.

² & she opens her medicine cabinet, prescription and OTC pills, tan
bottles with her white and black-type labels, colorful cardboard boxes,
illustrations of moon and stars, arms stretched out.

³ & she throws scraps of paper to the wooden floor, scraps like shredded
tissue, shredded thoughts and incomplete equations, stick figures and
oblong circles.

⁴ & she feeds her pets live crickets.

what are some of your other daily activities?

Creating nightmares, ignoring road signs, eating three oval 600 mg. meals, sticking needles in my fingers. I am tame. I don't resist.

is it true you were once an activist?

I was particularly ignorant.

are you calling activism ignorance?

I remember when the alphabet made sense, when the vowels came together in a belly dance. It was particularly erotic. I sat at my grade school desk feeling like an alchemist, turning sketches into art. When I was taller and wiser I realized if I should cut my ear, my hair would grow to cover the scar. I wanted to be a two times two equals six equation.⁵

instead, you realized...?

I wanted to wear a tutu. A pink and sparkle monster. The tip-toe dancer springing up from the dark.

what are your plans for the future?

In the future I think I'd like to have a split personality. I want to take a breath, not know where I've been. I want my memory in a not-to-be-used-in-a-microwave dish: I want to crack and not know I'm broken.

will you continue writing?

A friend said, "live to take notes." As long as I'm living...

I will glitter my eyes and Polaroid figures in black and white, telling lies through my triplet size. An enticement whore in a squinting outfit, I'll be cracking the legs of cursive letters. I'm going to set the demons free.⁶

⁵ & she shows me a notebook titled Math Never Made Sense.

⁶ & she keeps a camera above her pillow, hoping to capture those ghosts in print, pen and paper at her feet to record the number of beats her tapping heart makes in the dark.

GREED

by Leslie Anne Woodward

It waits in the corners of every Vegas casino
Seducing its prey like the showgirl
with the twinkle in her eye
With its blue suede walls and
Elvis Presley ornaments
Mirrors angled up to make any man
feel taller, bigger, luckier
The VIP room with green velvet
tabletops that spill out before the
unsuspecting, like a fairway at
some country club where only the rich boys play.
Built just for the family man who
hesitated unloading his wife and
kiddies into the hands of a museum.
The kind who plays quarter slots
to live life on the edge.
Orders a drink, but doesn't.
Hates the Hollywood millionaires
who never donate to charity.

They say a man is most dangerous
when he has nothing to lose, but
perhaps it is when a man has
everything to lose,
And doesn't fold.

Wake-up Call

by Dale L. Yessak

I stop in front of the bar and check the name in my notebook. The Eagle Head Grill. Yeah, I got the right place. I push into the cool, dark interior looking for the guy I'm supposed to find here. Buddy Thompson; what a lost case. A totally sorry piece of work is our boy Buddy.

And sure enough, there he is, parked on a stool down near the end of the bar. Staring morosely into his beer. Just chock-full of remorse and self-loathing. Gimme a break; like anyone cares.

So I sit down just a stool away and order a beer. I'm on the job, what the he... heck. Supposed to blend in, you know?

After the bartender leaves, I look over at Buddy. He's still staring into the bottom of his beer mug like it has all the answers down there somewhere. I just about want to smack him.

Well, time to get down to business.

"What's bothering you, chum? You don't look too happy." I've learned it's best to be direct. Saves time.

Buddy turns to me real slow and he looks like he hasn't slept in a month. He's got about a three-day beard and, well, the guy stinks. Really bad. He's got a big burn scar on the left side of his face. I know he's got more scars than that, some of them not necessarily where you can see them. I come into focus real slow for him, and he opens his mouth to speak like he doesn't know what's going to come out.

"They're all dead," he finally says. He blinks like an owl caught in bright sunlight and then says, "All of 'em. All the other people. 'Cept me. The plane crashed and they all died.... all but me." He swallows about three times and I think he might burst into tears right there. "Why them and not me? Why am I the only one left?" His eyes have taken on that hollow, thousand-yard stare like they do sometimes. "They deserved to live. But me, I'm nothing. I got no one and I ain't important. Why am I still alive?" He shakes his head like it's the biggest mystery in the world, and for him I guess maybe it is. "Why?" he asks again.

"Well, Buddy," I say sorta slow and sarcastic, to get his attention, "I'd be willing to bet it's not so you can sit around in a bar, swilling beer and feeling sorry for yourself."

He looks at me like I slapped him, then it's like a light coming on in there behind his eyes and he says wonderingly, "Yeah, maybe you're right." He sits there for maybe a minute, just thinking things through, then he pushes his beer away and gets unsteadily off his bar stool. But as he heads for the door his shoulders are straight and there's purpose in his step.

I take my time and finish my beer, even though I know I need to get moving. I'm ahead of schedule for now but the next one is way across town; some woman in a Laundromat with a meaningless job and a meaningless boyfriend and a meaningless life. She has a bottle of pills in her purse and she really, really wants to take them all, make everything just go away.

Just another someone due for a wake-up call.

Love Is Everywhere to Find

by Leigh Runkle

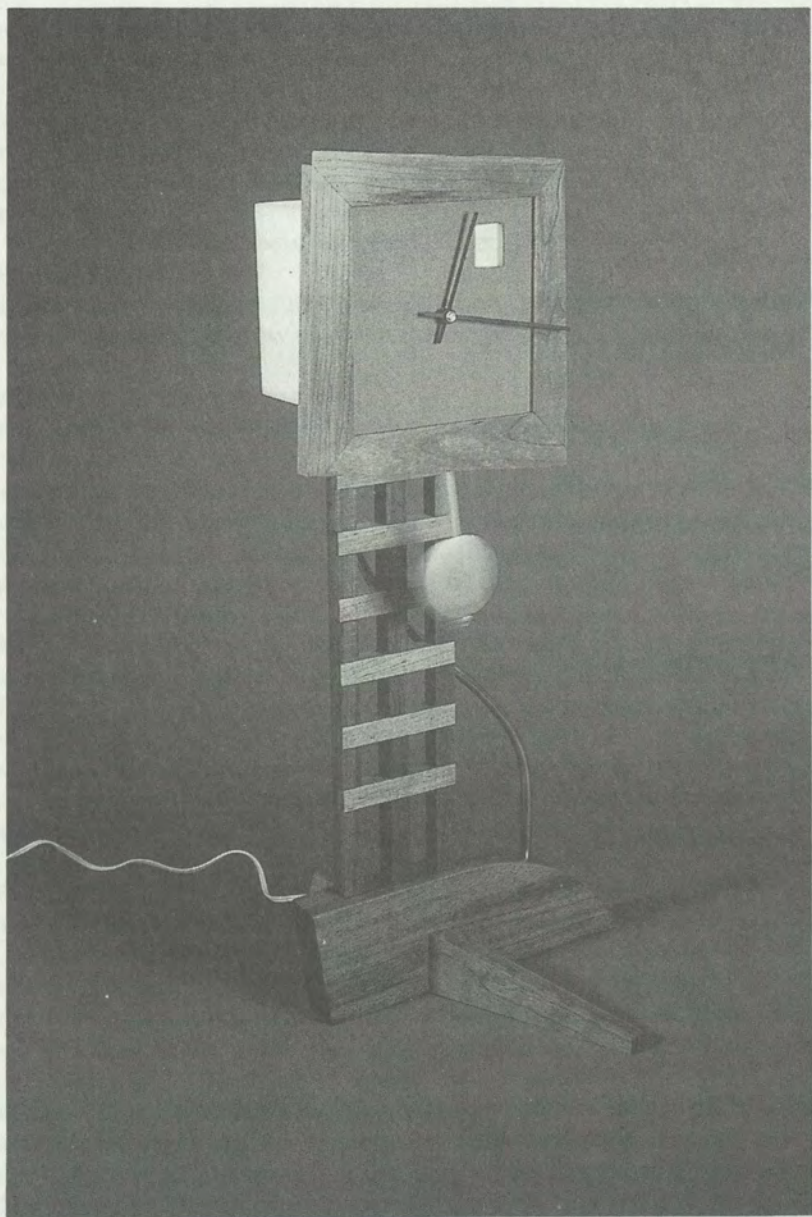
Every morning-the sound of birds singing-awakens me to another day.
Clocks-I need only to tell the time-
Because the rhythms in nature and myself are deeply entwined.

In my youth-I remember
The days marked by beauty-
Adorned only with tender achings-
And music that inspires the dance in me.

Where the rain pours-however it pleases-
I am there to join it-
For I find in it-a sensual rhythm of being-
That joins nature with emotion-
And gives to the choir of angels from heaven,
An angel and her harp-
To hear the tears of Jesus-alone.

Whenever I find my destiny-my comforts alas will carry on-
For love is everywhere to find.

"Clock I"
by Nicholas Hollibaugh



Trevi's Fruit Altars Reality in the Name of God

by Lindsey Holloway

As the God-light descends beyond the housed of the Via delle Muratte, and the tourists pitch their wishes into the fountain, my eye is caught by the colors of Trevi's Fruit. This is the preacher, and the holy antiquity of Rome, the prayer.

Italian apples plucked in Bolzano and Trentino,
the Red Royal Gala harvested in late August.
Oranges and lemons, thick-skinned domes
of juice from the orchards of Basilicata.
Mandarins, diminutive and tropical, imported from Sicilia.
Bergamots, pear-shaped, the nonconformist fruit,
proud to differ from their cousins.
Sunflowers dangling as fruitless decoration,
but lifted with the dignity of a glorious past,
when they stood as sentries, beacons to the sun,
in service to the wheat fields of Molise.
Red Terrano Grapes from the hills of Friuli,
white from the plains of Calabria,
plump and salivating from their own sweetness.
Tomatoes pulled from the dirt of Abruzzo,
begging to be pulped into marinara,
or tossed with basil and onion and spired atop foccacia.
Peaches cloaked in adolescent fuzz and apricots with
smoother skins share the colors of amber from the Baltic Sea,
and blush with the absence of their leaves.
Indiscreet cherries borne from the southwest shores of Campania.
Fresh green olives, unacquainted with pimentos,
wishing to be oiled and married with bread.
Absent are strawberries from the Pontine Coast,
harvested months ago. But I see them,
heart-shaped and firm and spiced by the lowlands of Lazio
where they shared the soil with heather and wild laurel.

The fruit of the earth and the fruits of men's labor stand facing one another on the Piazza di Trevi. The work of nature confronted by the work of faith, and I don't know which altar to worship at. But I understand penitence as never before. In the architecture of a pear, I enter a place where I must cover my shoulders.

"Grapevines"
by Lauren E. Kussro



Donne, Be Not Proud
by Jonathan Edwards

Donne, be not proud, though some have called thee
Immortal and brave, for thou art not so;
For those who revere thee do not thee know.
They cannot, poor Donne, for thou art near me,
From joy and life, I brought delivery.
Much pleasure, from thy living pen did flow,
But soon the best men follow where I go.
Rot of thy bones, all men and I dost see.
Thou wert slave to fate, chance, old age and sin,
And now with earth, small worms and rot dost dwell;
And other pens can bring men joy as well.
And better than thy stroke. Why swelled thou then?
One short life past, men sleep eternally,
And death shall come to all; Donne, thou hast died.

—Death

Death of a Friend by Sarah Miller

The worst thing about a funeral isn't that a friend is dead, or thoughts of continuing without their guidance and vitality. It isn't even the half-truths about a person's life that make them sound like they should be sainted, when they were in truth riding the down escalator. No, the worst thing at a funeral is looking into the casket. It doesn't matter how skilled the mortician is; the body never resembles your friend. The warm smile, mischievous glances, shared memories are gone. Your friend has suddenly become the most remote person in the world. It's as if death not only ends life, but familiarity as well. You have no connection to the person in the box. For some reason your friend has left, never to return, and you are left trying to say good-bye to a stranger.

Cold, windy, and rainy, it was the perfect day for a funeral. Overcast skies threw a pallor over the world, and the misty rain drove sound and thought to their own hidden dens. It made strangers of everyone, insulating them as it drove them deep within their personal shells. No other mourners stood beside me, though there may have been others with a shadow in their hearts. A banner over the door flapped in the wind as I stood in the parking lot. "Going Out of Business," it read. The windows, dead eyes, were devoid of the usual jumbled trappings. The door locked so that no one could enter, and the string of bells inside—gone. The bookstore closed its mouth, barred its arms, and succumbed quietly to a world obsessed with the new, the easy. No eleventh-hour saves, no great political statements about corporate conglomeration. It just faded, sighed, and was no more.

Funny, the things you miss when something is lost. Dead and buried in the annals of the world, it stays in your mind, fuzzing around the edges as the years pass. What was frustrating endears itself in the perfect vision of recollection. Infuriating actions become quirks, emphasizing the uniqueness of a friend. The used bookstore was not new. No bright lights, teen-aged sales staff, or popular music greeted the customer. Instead there was a feeling of welcome. The bookstore was a friend. It was there if I had money and it was there when I didn't, summer or winter tucked behind the bustle of the world, quietly waiting. The door opened in, though sometimes not far. Towers and spirals of books crowded the floor, creating a literary labyrinth requiring the grace of a cat to tread safely. The welcoming smell of old books, old wood, dust greeted the nose upon entry. The whispers of a thousand stories beckoned from the forests of shelving. Ghosts and specters of the dog-eared pages caressed the mind, promising anything desired, behind the upright facades. Great towers of shelves rose to the ceiling. They spanned the walls as ivy clinging to every available nook and cranny. Even the windows were subject to the comfortable clutter of the store. Displayed together, the passions of man, the farthest reach of space, and the strictest minds of science held a lazy peace. All together they reached out to the faithful reader, drawing them into a warm and comfortable embrace.

The counter (located conveniently to the right of the door) was dominated on the right by an antique cashier's machine and to the left by another tower of words. It was framed from the top by a yellowed piano keyboard, long deprived the joy of sound. Below, another encroachment of text struggled to reach the height of its peers. But behind the

counter was the heart and soul of the Bookstore. He couldn't have been more than 50 nor younger than 40; the thin, comfortably well-dressed man in the comfortable chair behind the counter. Beard, mustache, and neatly tied ponytail came in matching shades of salt and pepper gray. Round, wire-frame glasses stood in front of the eyes of a reader. Often they were buried in a book, and when they were not, they held the look all other bookaholics know. Eyes that tell the living of a thousand vicarious lives, eyes whose adventures have gone from the top of the world, the edges of space, to the darkest depths of the human soul, never one venturing beyond the safety of an inviting seat. He was quiet, and it suited me. Friendly anonymity, with no prying into the details of life, like so many others I viewed as adults, though in truth I had joined their ranks long ago. A kind greeting, and a kind farewell, received with or without change. He was easy to like; no reality encroached upon the fiction of my opinions.

A stately, steel-gray tom with gold eyes prowled the shelves with confidence and wisdom. He carried the name of a great French author, now forgotten in ravages of time and memory. The cat would join a reader and stay for a sociable chat, or perhaps just pass through the aisles, keeping his own eye on the occupants of his domain. He never went out the door. It was often left open in the summer, but the gray tom was trusted to remain inside the shop. Perhaps it was he who truly ran the store, leaving the man behind the counter only as an apparent leader?

Time became an easy commodity to lose between those silent towers. Classical music flowed over the radio, separating the shopper from the jarring world outside. No musical words to drown out the small voices calling, "Come, I'm here, what you're looking for, seek and find." No clocks marred the wall, to remind one of the world beyond the door. Like the branches of a forest, the towering shelves blocked all concept of day and night, preserving time in one moment indefinitely. So complete was the illusion that upon leaving, a customer was often bewildered by the change of the day.

Inevitably I was drawn to a wall covered in the promise of adventure beyond my corner of the universe. A thousand ranks of spines, inscribed with titles and accompanied by bold covers, promised a thousand million journeys. Space, time, history, and fantasy mingled into the realm of the barely real, begging to be believed. Each lobbied that it was the greatest; the reader would travel the farthest, become the bravest, best looking, most revered in all the universe if he would only allow himself to be caught up in the whirlwind of pages where imagination is the only boundary.

But the ghosts have left, caught in the final moments of the life and dispersed on the winds. The silent man and the cat have left, as nameless as they began. No battered binding or dog-eared pages greet me. Only the lonely husk remains, showing no signs of the friend that was. It blends in with the other weathered storefronts and becomes no more distinguished than any other tombstone. Like a wilting tribute the banner flutters forlorn in the wind. Friendliness, in death, has become anonymity. I turn back into the rain with memories and drive away.

Flying J

by Daniel J. Hook

I

16 rows 5 deep

J.B. Hunt Werner OTRX

New life black IV's

Watkins Mercer CLT

Chrome glass shattered bugs

Switzer Joe Brown TSL

II

Bacon grease floating

J Mar driver to register 7

On the buffet on the tables

Whatta you have hon

Collides with coffee and smoke

Oversized men shaved heads

ponytails

Shower 503 is ready

Sleeveless shirts stressed buttons

*Drove through a mother-fucker in Ohio
last night*

Waitress trailer park Stepford wife

Catsup Tabasco jelly caddy

Shower 504 is ready

Menu salt pepper truck ads

Harrison Ford ain't in that movie

Thick de-caffed brown mug

Two grizzled men blank stares

The following trucks are parked illegal

Nothing new to say after 6 days

Tri-State Panther Delta

3,000 miles together

Cute blond with huge cretin

Average tow bill 560 dollars

Curly Joe back hairy

Shower 505 is ready

Her eyes see what we don't

Virgel belt pointed boots

Warm your coffee

Cowboy hat giant feather

Get your check

Buck and a quarter tip

III

Mesh hats stupid slogans

Indiana spoons thimbles

Twenty-dollar shoes

Twinkies big bag beef jerky

I can help somebody at 6

Atlas log books books on tape

CBs CDs Fuzzbusters

Denim shirts pants caps

USA Today Wall Street Journal

Shower 506 is ready

Bob White

by Sally L. Burton

The old woman sways in her sturdy rocker,
which she bought from a state park ranger.
"It'll last forever," he told her, "even on your porch.
The prisoners take pride in their craft."

She dips her tea bag into her cup
to reduce the temperature of the scalding drink,
while she waits to hear her feathered friend's
whistle from the forest on the other side of the road.

"Bob White," the old woman whistles, "Bob White,"
unable to wait any longer.
He must not hear her, she surmises,
because of the breeze.

An owl returns her call,
but she does not respond.
The neighbors heard her hooting last week
and telephoned her son in concern.

She pauses a minute more, waiting for her friend's reply.
No sense rushing. They've got all day.
She pinches the tea bag and tosses it to the ground
promising to retrieve it later.

Finally, Bob White answers.
He heard her and he's coming.
Every day he comes
to trade friendly conversation—to listen and reply.

She teases and whistles like
a construction worker on windy skirt day.
He hears her and jests back,
"Bob Bob White."

The phone rings and she knows it's her son
making his obligatory call.
He sounds like a crow—caw caw caw
never hearing a word she says.

She sips her tea,
refusing to answer the ringing phone.
It would be improper to interrupt
her conversation with Bob.

Sentry

by Allen O'Connor

Stand-alone on a cliff, steps away from the edge,
Peril and almost certain doom.

Howl at the Moon, my love, feel the power it gives you.
Watch as your spirit soars in the distance, free from control,
On powerful wings.

Clouds turn to mist as they touch my Place of Power.
The full Moon lights the sky, reflections of the Sun, hours away from awakening.

The mask of night,
Where the Standing People hide in the shadows and the crisp night air,
Awaiting the light of day, the first rays, that brings warmth to a chilled skin.

Calling out, into the night
Let the world hear your voice.
Even if your Spirit is the only set of ears that listen.
Such is life, as a lone Wolf...
This is I, without you...

On Reasons Why the XX Chromosome Needs To Be Heard

by Tegan Echo Lynn

i'm a wired woman
a hook you up
silicon veins
intravenous woman
i'm a word woman
i twist you like a vowel
till you are unpronounceable
i'm a woman revising your breaks
a woman of the unlined page
i'm a fire woman
i burn your fingers on my skin
match your breath
with a steady rush of sounds
i'm a red rimmed eye
shaking hands
medicated breath woman
dragging you down
i'm a brain scans blue and red woman
a woman with a chronic infection
unbalanced and bleeding
half dying and half healing
i'm a noise in the ear
don't let go
mess it all up woman
i'm not an ashamed woman
i'm a three heads woman
i'm a loose skin
cracked hands
clenched jaw woman
i'm a no laughing woman
i'm a black ink woman
i'm a black three sugars woman
a down to the filter
nicotine fingers
yellowed woman
i'm a taste her for days
licking her knees
under her shirt

up to her neck woman
a loop of limbs across her hips woman
i'm a look you up and down woman
i'm a driving too fast
walk alone at night woman
i'm a feverish woman
an abracadabra woman
i'm a hermit woman
a cave woman
carving figurines out of clay
i'm an appointment woman
a keep you locked up in the office woman
i'm a glass ceiling
never touch the top woman
i'm a woman with a coat of arms
a no is the answer
package is everything
non-advertising woman
i'm a temple woman
an altar woman
a grasslands woman
a river woman
a water woman
a pavement woman
i'm an unannounced
unabridged woman
i'm a woman who peddles her words
serving up letters
syllable after syllable
i'm a shouting woman
a hands up and dancing woman
i'm as dense as a thesaurus
a woman of tongue tricks
and clicking teeth
i'm a woman with a magic hand
i'm a black and burgundy woman
i'm a rerun
pixilated red yellow blue woman
a woman unfolding
in a too small cell
i'm a wild woman
i spin magic in my kitchen

feed you tainted syrups
i'm a woman inventing
inviting
creating
reciting
remembering
and chanting
i eat the evidence
spit out the clues
and leave you wanting more

Coming Home from Seattle
by Leslie Anne Woodward

It was as if God himself had tipped a bucket full of cottony dreams over the mountainside. And only the tops of the Olympics that were meant to tickle the stars broke through like reality. The girl had just walked out of her lover's arms with a simple "I'll see you later." She did that all too often it seemed. Now, next to her was a man and his son. The father was of a dignified type, with just enough gray in his hair to make him look like royalty. The boy appeared to wrestle the notion sleep, until finally he melted away onto his father's lap. The man rested his large right hand across his son's hands, holding them. And he ran his other hand through the boy's thick brown hair. Caressing each stroke, as if the hair was the only living remnant of his wife. The man turned ever so gracefully to the girl, like a low tide wave rolling onto the shore out of breath. His voice was soft and lonely, he kept the corner of his eye constantly on his pride and joy. "He doesn't want to go home. He didn't want to leave." The thick Russian accent choked the air. The girl smiled through her eyes, already fading back to her lover's memories and warm embrace. "I know just how he is feeling." She whispered in reply. Some hundred miles away - a tear rolls of her lover's cheek.

"The Door"
by Donna Yarema



The Mind's Eye
by Jonathan Edwards

Helen was in bed the night the sea came alive. The wind roared against the side of the one-room house, and all the boards shook. The glass rattled in the windows, and she could hear the loud scratching of a branch against one of the panes. Rain dripped through the ceiling, and she watched from under the covers as the center of the room slowly filled with rising water.

Outside the water also rose. Winds rushed over the sand and blew it against the side of the little house. The poor building creaked and groaned against the weight of the wind and sand and tree branches and roaring ocean.

The ocean was aroused, and Helen had to see. Pure eyes should never look on the fury, but her eyes were not pure anymore. She got out of bed. The nightgown fluttered in the gusts of wind from above and below — from all around her. The tree branches still scratched out an eerie, simple tune. The fury called to her, beckoned her, and she obeyed. She calmly looked on the evil storm and the pounding waves as though it was the stillness of her childhood lake.

The lake was no more. She had grown up with its smooth stillness. She had slept in the security of its gentle lapping. It was so good back then, she never could have imagined it would grow up to be an ocean. To be so evil. As she pulled open the rough, wooden door and looked out at the storm, she realized the lake and the sea were one. She had polluted the lake, and its waters had finally caught up with her. She had birthed the evil on the day Marcus learned to swim.

She was young then, but she could already swim, and she knew she could teach someone else. The water was so smooth that day. So good. So inviting. She had jumped in and told him to follow her. He trusted her — his sister. Mother. Teacher. Lover. Loser. Hater. Killer. Betrayer. The current killed. She killed. She couldn't help him when he jumped in. She couldn't stop the evil the day Marcus learned to drown.

She felt like she could drown now as the wind whipped through her hair. The gushing rain poured through the door and into her mouth, her nose, her soul. She opened her mouth and breathed large drops of water. The water of the ocean, the lake, the rain, the blood. She let the water rush over her. To be clean again, she had to wash.

She didn't wash the blood from her hands. She didn't tell anyone about Marcus. They looked everywhere, and there were police and dogs. She didn't tell until the search was almost dead, and then she only told God. He found out that, in the smooth lake, about a mile from the house, her little brother's body was slowly being eaten away by the little fish. She said she hoped they didn't bother him too much before the men found him. She said amen. She went to the tub to bathe.

To bathe in blood. The blood of lambs, the innocent, sheep, goats, little brothers who follow where they're led, one dove or two spotted pigeons. She sat in the water. Wishing she hadn't told God about Marcus. Wishing she could take it back. Now he knew, he'd send her to hell, and she didn't want to go. Hell's hot.

The water in the tub was hot. The water could clean her soul. Maybe hell would make her clean again, she thought. It would take the guilt. It would turn to steam and float away. She sank into the tub.

Now, through the rain, she watched a wooden tub as it sank deeper in the sand with each pounding wave on the beach. The wind and rain whipped back stronger. The lightning flashed like flaming webs across the sky that God had made. God bade. God played. She played. God won. She hid. God found. Now the storm had come for her. Like the tub, she was going to sink.

Sink and fall and die. Sink like Marcus. Sink like Simon Peter. Sink like a stone. Sink like a ship.

She could see the ship when she closed her eyes. Rising and falling, falling, falling. The captain's eyes widen in shock. The crew's in terror. She grabs the mast and tries to hold on. The water opens its mouth and they all fall down. Like Marcus, God, evil, sand,

ship sink tub hot bathe washdrownswimlakeoceanwatersea...

Helen shut the door. The wind stopped. The sea was calm. Her clothes were soaked. Out the front window she could see a car drive by through the rain. In the other room she could see her husband. She could hear the movie.

She could see, hear, feel taste, touch, live the movie. She closed her eyes. A cowboy looks for the lost goldmine, but she knew there was more than gold in the lost mine. They both knew it. She knew what he was really looking for—the girl she'd left behind all those years ago. She was young then, but she thought she could get them both out. Thought she could make it, and somewhere they got separated. Long ago, she lost little Catherine in the lonely caves, and even now, years later, she could still hear the faint voice calling to her from the darkness—haunting her dreams.

Eyes wide with fear, Helen moved out of the dark bedroom towards the light and into the other room. Then, in the warm glow of the television, she smiled, reached over her sleeping husband's head, and dipped her soggy fingers in the popcorn.

Nine Swords

by Tegan Echo Lynn

I sewed her lips
my special unborn stitch
five terse lines
right to left
a bulging woman seamstress
with needles in fingers
and pins in my bodice
one long darning needle
held with a fist

cesarean sounds
flesh opening
flesh in a grip
flesh like a tadpole
in the toilet
a little blue nugget
of nothing
and slow blood
a lobotomy
in the middle of me
something missing
but I can't see it

because I killed her
while we were both sleeping
waking in a stain of blood
I was a postcard woman
in my robe
with my nine fingers to my eyes

it was this thing inside of me
my strawberry shortcake
my miniature china doll
my nine inch creation
I move her arms
put her in the window
her skin a light blue
her skin a plastic wrap
with nine cold swords
pointed at my neck
nine vomiting organs
piercing me with guilt

clear as the lines on my palms

The Circles of Decision

by James D. Oakes

Circles are the Siren's call.

They sing and draw the eye.

We hear them and we're quick to fall.

Resigned, to them we fly.

We recognize their whirlpool,

Seek refuge in its grip.

To light we're drawn like flies a' fool,

The fates demand the trip.

Strange comfort charted courses bring,

The warm bouquet of home.

The safety of our mother's wing,

Familiar seas to roam.

Lost souls! Look here and hear me well,

Known paths we must depart.

The Siren's song conceals a swell.

Damn fate, and make fresh start!

A Tee Shirt Wannabe in a Gabardine Suit by Karla Glaser

Tired feet. Sleepy eyes. Fingers jiggled the key in the lock, as a weary shoulder strained against the weight of a day's worth of living. Books and papers shared quarters in my lead-filled bag, while an empty lunch container clicked against a stray lipstick. Earth Rose. Pushing the door closed behind me with the heel of my pump, I instinctively reached for the light switch, as I executed my well-rehearsed dance.

The canary corner of a legal pad sneered at me from my haphazardly deposited ball and chain. Tension welled up inside me like a river ready to spill over its banks. Breathe. Breathe again. I read through the erratic scratches of the minutes from the day's staff meeting, recalling the harsh words and accusations. Tight-lipped and stoic, the director had deemed our grievances unworthy of his time. Dazed and detached, my hands had mechanically recorded the bizarre turn of events. Swimming thoughts curled around me in dizzying eddies, as one question kept breaking through the surface: What was I doing there?

"I refuse to be distracted by this right now," I declared to myself, as my mind drifted to that evening's class. W140 had been a welcome respite from a day of walking on eggshells. I was part of the "seniors" who sat in the back of the room. Eclectic and older, we each held full-time jobs that pulled at us like clinging, needy children. We struggled to stay in school, as demands like family, work, and sleep threatened to knock us off course. Fueled by the syrupy elixir that passed as vending machine cappuccino, our lively discussions made me feel like a real student, not just a part-timer. But the others could tell. I was a tee shirt wannabe in a gabardine suit.

Vacant eyes stared unblinkingly at the light in the refrigerator. Tuna salad seemed so pathetically common after a discussion about thesis statements. "I wonder if Darwin thought about the evolution of thesis statements," I mused to myself, as I shrugged off my suit jacket. Cradling the phone against a padded silk shoulder, I sighed and kicked off my heels. Stockinged feet padded to the bedroom. Toes curled and stretched. I absently listened to my messages, as I slid one arm out of its sleeve. A lengthy description of my father's most recent golf game. Some anonymous friend named Bob trying to sell me aluminum siding for my rented apartment. "Do you wish to listen to the message again?" I quickly pushed the key in response to the automated voice.

"Hi, Karla, this is John-Michael. I'm in Anne's position now. Crazy, huh? Now, I know you are busy with school, work, and a real life, but I have had strict orders to find you and make you an offer to be Cruise Director for the summer. Give me a call and let's sort out the details to see if you are interested."

Breathe. Breathe, again. The possibilities played through my head like a slowly accelerating 8mm movie, as my fingers carefully dialed the number. By the time I reached the last digit, my thoughts were swimming with blurred images and confusion. Questions, so many questions. How did they find me? Why did they want me? Anne had been a thorn in my side throughout my tenure with the company. Bitter, plain, and spiteful, she had resented me from day one. Her boss and my entertainer ex-husband had conspired

for me to be hired into the shipboard entertainment department without her official seal of approval. The job was my ex-husband's way of feeling better about himself when we got divorced. I worked hard. People liked me, but the damage had been done. To Anne, I had been branded yet another entertainer's mistake that needed to be fixed.

Silence. "Karla, are you there?"

"Oh, sorry, John-Michael, what was that?" Charming and handsome, John-Michael had been a dancer when I met him. He had also been a witness to the dramatic scenes leading up to my divorce, as well as the challenging role into which I recast myself after the intermission.

I managed to be coherent and witty as John-Michael brought me up to speed on the latest situation within the company. They had experienced some turnover and were now in a pinch to fill a few slots. My fingers numbly sketched out the details in the margin of my staff meeting notes: Europe, three months, dates would coincide with summer vacation, salary. Pause. The left side of my brain quickly performed some rapid calculations, while the right side wrapped up the conversation with a quick joke and an offhanded reply stating that I would, of course, need to sleep on it.

Eyes shut. Fingers pressed against temples. The carefully designed world into which I had knitted myself threatened to unravel like a favorite sweater caught in the spiral ring of a notebook. How could I just leave the comfort and security of my life? Okay, I had worked on a cruise ship for four years and survived. I had endured the demands of high-maintenance, low-class clientele who treated me like a poorly paid servant. I had listened while some SUV-driving, Gucci-wearing, nouveau riche, pseudo-intellectual lectured me on the finer points of financial success. I had even smiled and acted as if it was the most riveting monologue I had ever heard. I had put on a uniform just to eat breakfast in the morning. I had worn a nametag.

Opening my eyes, I looked down and saw the notes of my conversation furiously written next to the staff meeting minutes. I quickly flipped the pages to a fresh, crisp sheet, sharpened my pencil, and switched my scientific calculator to financial mode. If I made enough money in the summer, I could quit my job and go to school full-time in the fall. A silly, almost maniacal, grin ran across my face. Me? A full-time student? I sharpened my #2 pencil and recalculated my expenses. What could I live without? Walking into the kitchen to empty the overflowing sharpener, I looked around my apartment like an appraiser preparing to sell an estate. Tiny price tags fluttered in my mind like lovely white butterflies. How does one put a price on something intangible, like a feeling? Like the feeling you get when you see those first butterflies in the spring?

The shrill ring of the telephone jolted me out of my number crunching. I eyed my nemesis suspiciously. I ventured a cautious "hello" and was thrilled to hear the soothing tones of my godmother's voice.

"How's my girl?" she chirped. Sandy had always likened my time on the cruise ships to me running away to the circus. While she knew it had given me the opportunity to travel and try to "find myself," the analogy did little to conceal her contempt for the Bohemian lifestyle.

"Oh, I'm okay. I had an interesting message this evening."

"Really? Does this mean you and that nice young man are progressing as well as I imagine?"

I stammered a bit, "Oh...um...we are okay...I guess. I don't know. But, hey, I got a call from Holland America. They want me to be a Cruise Director this summer. Isn't that just wacky?" A nervous giggle escaped from my throat.

Silence. "And?"

"I don't know, Sandy. The money would be great. I could be a full-time student when I got home this fall. You know that's what I really want more than anything. But..."

Silence. "But?"

"I like my life. I think." I stopped cold. My eyes glanced at the dining room table where my fingers had been feverishly working out figures. Crumpled yellow balls littered the floor like discarded pages from an unfinished movie script.

Minutes turned into an hour as Sandy and I carefully examined every scenario. Wise beyond her years, Sandy had always offered me brutally honest advice which she had gained from an impoverished childhood and years of a support system of one. A year before my mother succumbed to breast cancer, Sandy had been diagnosed with ovarian cancer. The three of us formed a powerful bond which continued even after my mother's death. Ever since, I had consulted her on everything from hairstyles to my own brush with cancer. Our final decision? I would make a counter offer that, if accepted, I would be crazy not to take. If they chose not to accept it, I could breathe a sigh of relief and return to my tidy little world.

Early the next morning, nervous fingers dialed John-Michael's number. My cheery message advised him that I was terribly flattered and eager to discuss the situation with him, provided he could meet my salary needs. The poorly disguised strains of fatigue and tension creased my voice. One arm curled around the Wall Street Journal as the other struggled with the lock on the apartment door. Sigh. Another day, another dollar.

The words on my computer screen disappeared as I listened to the automated voice. "You have no new messages." Darn. An hour passed. I dialed the number again. One ear listened for messages, while the other pretended to listen to my co-worker asking for an extra pad of post it notes. Double darn. That evening, squirming like a three year old, I listened to my Algebra professor drone on about quadratic equations. Variables and functions blended with thoughts of "what if" into a crazy algebraic tapestry of possibilities. I had to get home.

I don't remember the drive home that evening. I recall being thankful there were no policemen staking out College Avenue. Taking the stairs two at a time, I simultaneously fished my house key out of the bottomless pit. Nervous fingers grinded the key in the lock. Kicking the door shut, I threw down my bag. Breathe. Breathe again. An eager hand grabbed the telephone and dialed the number.

"Oh, Karla, I'm so glad you called. Good news; we've accepted your counter offer and are even sweetening the deal a bit. So, can you fly to Barcelona on May 10?"

"Sure," I cheerfully replied. I'm crazy. I'm nuts. What the heck am I doing? John-Michael chattered on about the assignment as my thoughts spun out of control like a car on an icy street. Turn into the skid. Breathe. Meet this head on. You can do it. He signed off with a promise to send my plane tickets to me right away. I dialed Sandy.

"Well?"

"They accepted my offer. I fly to Spain on the 10th of May."

Silence. "I guess you better start packing."

Shiny, painted toe nails. Vagabond Red. Chunky, brown leather sandals. Sunshine warmed my legs as I juggled a bottle of water in one hand and my lab notebook in the other. Fumbling through my backpack in search of a stray Power Bar, the tips of my fingers brushed across a familiar memory: Greek "worry beads," a treasured memento from a sunny June day in Rhodes. Squat pieces of smooth, sapphire plastic alternated with shiny silver spheres on a silver chain. I slipped the chain around my index and middle finger on my right hand. The strap of my backpack dug into my shoulder as I twirled the beads around my fingers with absent-minded ease. Grimacing against the weight of 16 hours, I straightened my untucked tee shirt over my shorts and turned toward the library.

Sunlight reflected off the front of the building like stabs of awareness, as my thoughts rewound to one of my first days of school the previous year. Friday chemistry recitation. 8:00 a.m. My boss had grudgingly allowed me to take an hour to go to the class--if I promised to make up the time on Friday night. Traffic on Capitol Avenue that morning had been a nightmarish rendition of the Indy 500. In no hurry to brave the streets in a rematch, I had skulked around campus, guiltily enjoying the sunshine and brief moment of freedom from the leaning tower of paper that surely waited in my pregnant inbox. Pinched toes in Nine West high heels had paused in front of the library, silently envying the Birkenstocks that breezed past. Sigh. Tee shirted teenagers. Real students.

"Hey, Karla!"

A familiar voice paused the movie playing in my head. I smiled and fell into step with one of my classmates from chemistry lab, as we turned away from the library. "What's so funny?" she quizzed.

"Life." She cast a sidelong glance my way and raised a questioning eyebrow.

"I see," she nodded, but I knew she didn't, couldn't. Silence. Downward glance. Flashes of hot pink sparkled as her chunky platforms clumped up the stairs. Perfectly manicured fingernails nervously flipped her car keys as they chimed against her "Class of 2000" keychain. Silence. "Hey, cool tee shirt."

A smile curved slowly across my lips. Silence. Downward glance. Flashes of red blinked back at me, as my own sandals thumped along the corridor. "Thanks. So what did you think of that lab report?"

By Headlight

by Michael Springer

It's space

All space as the dark, deep blue sky surrounds and hangs above the fields, black, hidden from sight by the night where, by headlight, we journey through time and space.

I am in the backseat

alone with my thoughts and a Coca-Cola
mom and dad in the front seat
and when I lower my window, they scream
"It's too cold. Put that back up."

and I put it up, but I wanted to feel the wind and hear the night
since it's completely surrounded us
I wanted to give it my undivided attention.

In the city, there are no stars

cities form light bubbles, and you can't see stars from within.

That's one reason why I want to leave

I want stars in my life.

So, flying down these backroads, I'm in complete awe of the sky,
seeing it completely for the first time.

I soon fall asleep, in peace, humming down the road
by headlight.

And it's easier to fall asleep while on the road at night because there's a comfort in the motion, a peace in never knowing when or where you will wake up and not worrying about it.

Now, buzzing down the road in an August night in a red convertible under stars,
everything's the same. It's been years upon years

and Mom and Dad are nowhere to be seen

just me and my friends

and we don't know where we're going

but, at 90 mph, we'll get there fast

and the conversation's died

because it's too nice to talk

and I'm laying back, staring up at the sky directly above me and I'm no longer flying down the road by headlight with my friends and sitting in the back of a red convertible

I'm in a star-sprinkled infinity.

Tre's Pinto

by Michael Springer

In the beginning, Tre purchased a Pinto. And the Pinto was without gas, and bumper; and many scratches were upon the surface of the doors. Yet, with much patience, Tre did push the car to the gas station. And, to the gas station attendant, Tre said, let there be five on five; and there was five on five. And it was good. And to the body shop Tre went, and said, let the scratches upon the Pinto be none, and let there be blue paint instead of yellow, and let the handles be gold plated. And Tre did return to his studio apartment; and on the seventh day, Tre returned to the shop; and the scratches upon the Pinto were none, and the paint was blue, and the handles were gold plated. And it was good. But upon the car there was no bumper; and Tre said, fuck it, who needs a fucking bumper anyway. And it was so. And so Tre did go searching for any female that doth walk the earth; for Tre was with much sexual repression, and with much lack of style he did look like a complete imbecile when he crasheth into the Mercedes in front of him as did scream unto a passing fly honey. And many lawsuits were upon him, and he lacketh the monetary sums; so unto his homeboy, JoJo, Tre said, "Yo, my dawg, with much happiness I hope you are equipped. I am without ghetto cheese, and many bills and lawsuits are upon me, for my car did go astray upon Main Street. Could I bummeth some dough?" But JoJo was upon much acid tripping, and did mistake Tre for the five-O, and placed an AK bullet in Tre's lower thigh, and one in Tre's arm, and one in Tre's stomach, and the floor was with much of Tre covered. And Tre did passeth away. And it was good.

Wallago attu
by Ted Scheck

John A. Fischer rode his mountain bike through clouds of early-morning mist, enjoying the shivers he got from the ground fog. Wiping moisture from his face and eyes, he took deep breaths of the slightly musty air and shivered. Hearing voices, he turned and saw two men from the town's TV station, prepping for a shot of people using the new trail. He smiled and waved, thinking two things at once:

1. I hope I'm on TV today.
2. There's no place I'd rather be than right here.

John was right about one, and massively wrong about the other.

The Unnamed River, deeper at this point than anywhere else, flowed slowly on John's right. The trail wound like a loosely coiled snake. As the trail moved downhill to a pedestrian bridge, something splashed in the deep water to the right of John. It was eighteen feet long and weighed eight hundred pounds, torpedo-shaped, with eyes.

As John approached, his brain refused to interpret what his eyes were seeing. Blinking, he slowed and stopped, lay his mountain bike down and moved to the edge of the riverbank.

"What the...?"

Not ten feet away from him was--

* * *

The WVRM (Vroom in the Morning!) News Team was setting up a shot of the new park. Bob Griswald, a tall and sandy-haired reporter, was preparing his comments, and Tom Sharoyan, a short, swarthy-looking cameraman with a long, drooping mustache, was setting up his equipment when the man on the green mountain bike motored past.

Tom shot film of the cyclist, whose head appeared to float above a cloud of mist and disappear entirely as the ghostly tendrils appeared to swallow him. Tom turned, gave his partner the thumbs-up, and then Bob did a standing commentary on why they were there.

A few moments later, a single, long scream tore the serene moment to shreds, which abruptly ended in a strange slurping noise. With higher-tuned instincts than most, Tom fled to the scene. Bob took off after his cameraman.

* * *

-a species of *Wallago attu*, a large, predatory catfish. This particular fish had been smuggled out of Pakistan decades ago, and accidentally flushed down a Hoosier toilet. It was hyper-aggressive, with a voracious appetite that fed on anything it could eat, over the seasons it had grown unchecked to its enormous size. But it had eaten all the food in this particular stretch of river, and it was dying of hunger. If it did not eat soon, it would die.

John saw what had to be the biggest catfish in the entire world, possibly a whale catfish that he'd heard rumors about as a kid growing up a mile away from the Mississippi River in Davenport, Iowa. Stories and legends came back to him about divers diving beneath the giant locks and dams to clean the intake valves, where they claimed to have seen huge fish.

But this...Humongous! Gigantic! These words tried fitting themselves inside John's fascinated brain and gave up. The thing was almost twenty feet long, John estimated, and weighed only God knew how much. It was a strange speckled-brown color, like a rainbow trout, with lighter spots running the length of its body. Moving closer, John saw that its mouth was almost three feet wide. The mouth was wide enough, John mused uneasily, to swallow him whole.

Moving even closer to get a better look, John stood on the spongy, grassy bank, directly over the idling fish. Thoughts of catching and mounting this monster danced before his eyes. He'd be famous! John looked around for anything that he could use as a weapon. Just then, the edge of the bank gave way, toppling him in. John landed right on top of the fish.

Startled almost out of its meager wits, arching its powerful back and using its tail as a catapult, the giant cat slapped the human completely off him. Screaming but unaware of it, John tumbled end-over-end and landed butt-first in the deep water. Surfacing and gasping in a wild panic, what he saw next made him almost scream his lungs right out of his chest.

"Guy must've fallen in, or broken his ankle," panted Bob, approaching. "Or, from the sound of it, fallen right on his head."

"Or impaled himself on a metal stake," Tom gasped, bouncing and jiggling down to the bridge. Automatically, he tried to flip his camera on, but found that he hadn't turned it off after finishing with Bob. Turning his camera to the water, he recorded a giant species of fish eating a human being.

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John opened his eyes, felt a wave lift him first up and then forward to the tunnel-sized mouth of the catfish. Screaming again, he instinctively put his hands out for protection. The fish's mouth was scaly, rubbery, and slimy, with small suckers clinging to it. And much, much too big for his taste. Its rotten breath wafted over him, smelling of putrescence and decay.

Its soulless eyes pointed at him like arrows, and in them was the unmistakable look of yawning hunger. The fish inched John forward.

"Goodness, I'm being eaten alive," John shouted, but it came out normal, if not a little flat. With a tremendous flick of its tail, the fish launched itself completely in the air and swallowed John head-first, turning itself sideways to accommodate for his size, its razor-sharp teeth leaving indentations on the lateral aspect of John's shoulders, arms, ribs, and legs. Three gulps later and the man was inside the fish, squeezed tightly in so that only his boots were protruding from the fish's mouth.

John had no words, nor emotions for the sensation of being swallowed alive by a giant fish.

Safely above ground, Tom continued to roll camera. Later he could never satisfactorily explain why he didn't immediately try to help the fish-eating-man as it swam into the deeper water in the middle of the river. Holding a camera was an excuse that only worked in certain situations.

"Did you just..." gasped Bob, his eyes saucers in his head, his mouth a close second.

"What do we do?" Tom pleaded, unable to wipe the somehow pornographic stain of the image from the eye in his mind. "Fish that ain't supposed to exist just swallowed some poor guy whole, what do we do!"

"Call 911, and keep 'em rolling. It's all we *can* do." The more pragmatic Bob said, pushing three buttons on his phone and already phrasing answers to the thousands (no, make that *millions*) of questions he'd be asked about, later on.

Like his forefather, Jonah, John A. Fischer was in the belly of the beast. Unlike Jonah, the belly fit his body like an undersized glove. Unable to do anything else, he closed his eyes and prayed for a quick death.

Bob recorded his excitable commentary as Tom filmed the giant fish swimming deep to the bottom and then surfacing; the protruding booted feet of the swallowed man twitched spasmodically.

The fish surfaced again, appeared to look at the two men standing on the riverbank, and swam toward them. As a testament to their bravery, Bob and Tom backed up in direct proportion to the distance the fish swam toward them.

Short, gasping noises could be heard. They were coming from the fish.

* * *

"I think I'm gonna be sick," moaned Bob.

"I think the fish is, too," groaned Tom.

Waking up to find himself very much immersed in the nightmare, John Fischer found reserves of strength and courage he'd previously been unaware of.

First, he took inventory. In the large gullet of an even larger fish, teeth-marks down both sides of his body, John was amazed he was still breathing. Arms pinned to the ribbed sides of the fish, John felt himself (and the entire fish) rising, and falling, leveling out, rising, falling, and leveling out. Where was the water? Oh yeah! Rising...falling...a gulp of air-the fish breathed air! It was breathing, so John was, too.

With all his might, John brought his hands up to his sides, elbows poised in tight. He scraped off inches of skin doing this, and it took every ounce of effort, and a few more he didn't know he had. Next, he lashed out with his hands in one explosive movement, letting all the air inside the fleshy cavity out and freezing brackish mud and water in.

Feeling broken bones digging into his body like daggers, John found he could kick his legs. The fish was now regretting its menu choice (in the dim way fish regret biting into what appears to be food but in reality, is almost certain death) and swam back to where he found its prey. Retching now, feeling its life force draining with each powerful flick of its tail, the giant catfish swam gracelessly towards the shore.

Drowning in watery darkness, panic bit into John deeper and with more poison than any living thing. Claustrophobia closed like a fist around him. John fought for his life as hard as he could, thrashing angrily inside as the fish thrashed outside.

"Please, God, please, God help that poor man," Tom prayed, as the giant fish swam crazily back into the little tributary, near the bridge under which he and Bob stood. The man's knees were showing, and then his waist. He was fighting, God help him! He was fighting the fish!

"Hey, hey, look at that!" Bob yelled. "This couldn't be any better if we'd planned it. Hey—"

"Take this," Tom said, handing his camera to his partner and jumping in.

More surprised than he could imagine, Tom took the camera, double-checked to see that it was indeed recording, and filmed his partner committing suicide. Oh well, it would only add to the story.

Tom swam fearlessly toward the mouth of the fish, caught the man's feet, and found the strength to drag both to the shallows. Praying to God for strength, he found a solid foot on a submerged rock, placed his other foot on the fish's huge mouth, and yanked as hard as he could.

The ripping noise that followed was, is, and forever will be beyond description.

In the final spasm of its strange and long life, the giant catfish threw its catch back up, felt its insides turn to mush, shook violently for a few endless seconds, and died.

Bob grabbed the slimy man and swam to the muddy shore. He pressed his fingers deep into the man's stomach, grinding them in, causing the man to wrench up an amazing stream of vile fish-water.

He was reborn, shot from the warm, tight cavity into teeth-aching cold air and a new, bright world. Finding the breath to cry, John cried, a great, gurgling wail that grew louder with each successive breath. On the cusp of consciousness now, John felt fingers wiping goo from his eyes and he opened them, saw one smiling man holding him in a fraternal embrace.

"Aren't you the camera guy?" John asked, his voice the distant cousin of a whisper.

"Not anymore," Tom said, watching the fish turn belly-up and flow with the current, back to the deep middle of the river.

"Thanks for—" John said, and passed out.

* * *

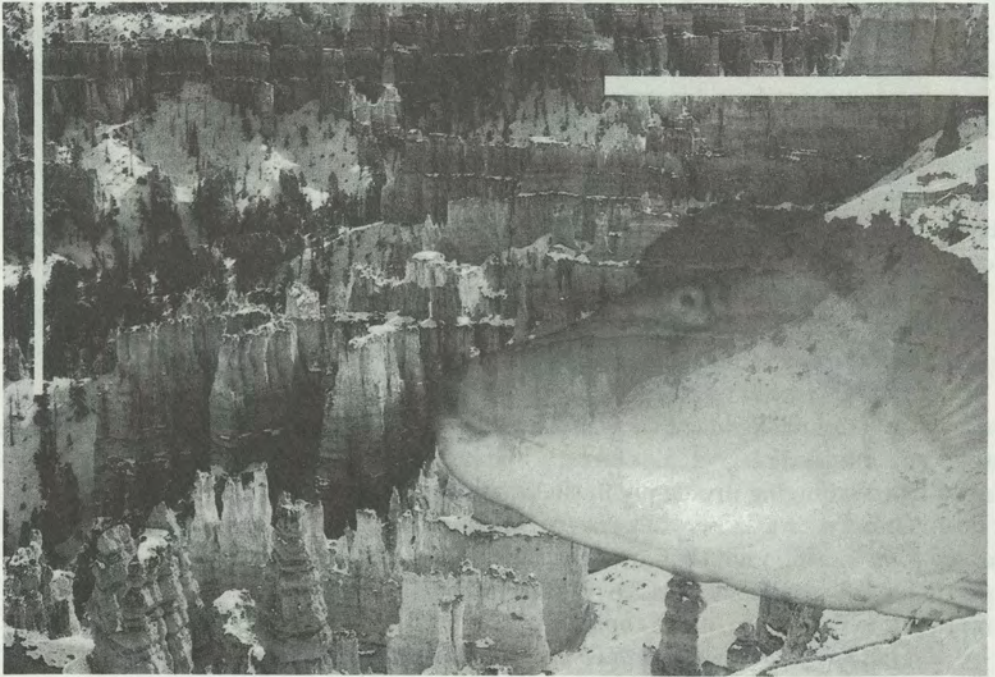
EMTs with stretchers were first on the scene, and they got both men out of the soup and into ambulances, all of which Bob happily recorded. He also recorded the dead fish, wallowing drunkenly in shallows a few feet away.

Greed now filled Bob Sharoyan, filling his eyes and seeping noxious fumes from every pore in his body. He filmed his way to his partner, now lying on a stretcher inside the belly of the ambulance. "We're famous, Tommy boy. Famous! Let's get the film back to the station, make copies, and sell them for a million bucks each!"

Tom gave his former partner a look of contempt that would have peeled paint, EMTs shut the door, and they took off for the hospital.

"Snowfish"

by Hector Del Campo



Contributors

Jason Abels is an English major who has also attended Purdue and IU Bloomington. He's been writing poetry since 1992 and has been published twice previously. He also writes speculative fiction, but finds poetry a better outlet for emotional writing.

Christie Blizard is a painting major at Herron School of Art. She enjoys the imagery that can result from poetry. She's trying to learn poetry, and has noticed that it is difficult. One thing she has learned is that "poets teach you how to die, and that is remarkable."

Sally L. Burton says, "If music be the food of love, play on."

Hector Del Campo is a student at the Herron School of Art. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1999 and has taken part in a number of exhibitions over the past few years, including the "Senior Show" at the Herron Gallery.

Paula Dombrow is a senior with an English major. She interns at Indianapolis Monthly, and enjoys taking long walks and writing.

Jonathan Edwards is an English major. He has been writing for several years, reads voraciously, and plans to go to graduate school to study English composition.

Carolyn Everett is a senior and majoring in English. She works at the IU Law School Library, has been writing on and off for about ten years, and noted that she generally writes more short stories than poetry, so this publication was a pleasant surprise.

Andy Gaunce is a freshman and has been writing for about three years. He writes poetry and some prose, and hopes to get involved in publishing so he can continue writing after graduation.

Karla Glaser is a non-traditional junior majoring in Chemistry with designs on a double minor in English and Philosophy. In addition to being a Chemistry mentor and Writing Fellow in the University Writing Center, she spends her precious spare time running, roller blading and cooking.

Pat Harvey recently became a survivor of major corporate downsizing and barely escaped a mundane yet oddly successful middle management career with imagination intact. She has been a non-traditional student at IUPUI for an

infinite number of years and continues to pursue the ever-elusive Bachelors degree.

Renee Hesch is a senior majoring in English. She recently finished writing her first novel, *Slowly Sways the Sycamore*, and is cautiously optimistic about getting her book published. Her dream is to be the next Toni Morrison or to finish college before her oldest son graduates from high school.

Nicholas Hollibaugh is a senior at the Herron School of Art, majoring in Furniture Design. He plans to attend graduate school for Furniture Design next fall. His work revolves around geometric forms, which represent clean, crisp lines. Incorporation of various materials allows him to generate a wide variety of shapes.

Lindsey Holloway is a junior English major concentrating in writing. She works for the Indiana State Judiciary as a web designer and hopes to have a career in publishing and to become a published writer as well. She enjoys traveling and art as a hobby.

Daniel J. Hook pleads the Fifth.

Thomas Hutcheson is a junior in the New Media program. He hopes the story is enough. He's flattered, but needs to get better at fighting evil.

Victoria Kheynis is a senior majoring in Psychology. She also tutors at the University Writing Center. And she's not crazy ...

Lauren E. Kussro is a junior at the Herron School of Art, majoring in painting and printmaking. She enjoys using many different mediums, and likes to render objects with both precision and realism.

Tegan Echo Lynn plans on being an eternal student, and states that maybe one of these days she'll get a job.

Jessica Miller has been writing for many years, as far back as seventh grade. She is majoring in Biology, and she is a student in the Honors College in the School of Science.

Sarah Miller is a student at IUPUI.

Ben Mohr has a degree in English and Education from Indiana University. Currently, he works in a steel studio and makes furniture.

Rick J. Morris is a junior at the Herron School of Arts. His major is Art Education and General Fine Arts. He hopes to become an art teacher or to illustrate children's books.

James D. Oakes is 24 years old, married and an expecting father. He is currently a junior, working towards a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science with a Legal Studies minor. He has been writing poetry and short fiction since he was 13.

Allen O'Connor is a senior, double majoring in Human Resource Management and Management. He breeds angelfish, studies T'ai Chi, and he's looking for a girlfriend.

Ian Osborne began writing around the age of seven. Most of this writing dealt with political humor in comic book form. He started writing short stories around the age of 15 and is currently working on two novellas, *Remember One Thing* and *Lessons in Floating*.

Chad David Richards is a New Media major and an aspiring media mogul.

Leigh Runkle is a 38 year-old, single mother of one. She began writing poetry at the age of 12 and is also a self-taught guitar player. Currently, she is working towards a Masters Degree in Journalism.

Ted Scheck has been Director of the Gait Analysis Laboratory at Riley Hospital since 1990. He is finishing up his Masters of Biomechanics degree. He and his wife, Pam, have two boys.

Albert Spaulding is majoring in Fine Arts at Herron School of Art. He works at Atkins B & G Club as the Art Director. He also teaches art to youth at the Urban Arts Consortium of Indianapolis during the summers. Albert received best of Issue - Art for the Spring 2000 issue of *genesis*.

Michael Springer is majoring in English with hopes of getting filthy rich by writing what he wants to write (ha). He's been writing prose ever since he learned the alphabet, and has been writing poetry for about six years.

Eric Vetesy is a senior at the Herron School of Art, majoring in Furniture Design. He is also the father of a young daughter who influences his work greatly. His designs are mainly centered around organic elements and strong colors.

Peter Frederic Wallace is a graduate student at IUPUI.

c.m. williams is a Religious Studies major and has been writing since high school. Eventually she wants to run a creative writing camp.

Leslie Anne Woodward is a sophomore at IUPUI, majoring in Secondary English Education. Writing poetry and short stories has been her favorite hobby for approximately four years, and she aspires to have published works.

Donna Yarema is a student at the Herron School of Art.

Dale L. Yessak started writing fiction in Germany in 1989. He spent 23 years in the Army and is currently seeking a Secondary Education English major.

Invitation to Future Writers, Artists, and Editorial Staff Members

The Fall 2000 Editorial Board of *genesis* would like to invite all IUPUI students to submit works in poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and art to *genesis* for the Spring 2001 issue. Students may submit works up to a year after graduation. To insure impartiality, Editorial Board 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.

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, e-mail address, and a short biographical sketch. Limit ten.

Writers: Submissions should be double-spaced and of 2500 words or fewer. Submissions should be submitted on disk, Microsoft Word format, Times New Roman, 12-point font. Disks will not be returned.

Visual Artists: Please clearly label your submissions with title and the actual dimensions of the piece. All mediums will be accepted, but slides are preferred. All original artwork or slides will be returned.

Please send or deliver all submissions to:

**Department of English
c/o *genesis*
Cavanaugh Hall, Room 502L
425 University Boulevard
Indianapolis, IN 46202**

Genesis is seeking new board members to participate in all stages of the journal's publication. Interested students should contact the editors at genesis1@iupui.edu.

genesis - the origin or coming into being of anything;
development into being especially by growth or evolution;

the process or mode of origin <the ~ of a book>

<the ~ of a pattern>