

genesis

Volume XXXIII



Fall 2002

Jason Abels:Matt Bourbeau:Michael Cardwell:Gaylie R. Cotton:Paula J. Dalton:
Matt Davis:Jose Di Gregorio:Jessica Fields:Karla Glaser:Sara Hanlon:
Gabriel Harley:Mary McCorkle:Kevin McMahon:Amanda Miller:
Kirk A. Robinson:Chizoma Sherman:Michael Springer:
Emily Clare Watson:Aaron Woodsworth

Best of Issue Artwork

Cover Art: Straw Hat Woman

Sara Hanlon

Letter from the editors

We really enjoyed reading all the wonderful submissions we received this fall and are pleased to share such an astonishing array of art, poetry, and prose. From Talbot Street to London, this issue of *genesis* promises to take you on a journey only words can create. Here you will find love, death, and even a little madness. Together, these works reveal the diverse talent and creativity of our fellow IUPUI students. We would like to thank not only those who submitted work, but also those behind the scenes whose dedication made this issue possible.

Sincerely,

The *genesis* Editorial Staff

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Tracy Martin

Kimberly McClish

Tedra Richter

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genesis

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Best of Issue Prose

Open

Aaron Woodsworth

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was Scrampilious."

The eldest brother stopped reading, winced a little, and looked up at the others.

"Umm..." he said.

It was quickly decided by almost all involved that another word must be chosen to start everything off, one that was, perhaps, a little less bewildering.

The youngest of them, though, disagreed.

"It's perfectious as it is," he stated confidently.

They sat silent for centuries, or seconds, if you prefer.

"The thing is," spoke the eldest, "I'm not entirely sure what it means."

"That's part of its charm," replied the youngest. "It adds a certain air of mystery, right from the beginning! It's fantastappropriatory!"

The eldest sat for another century reflectively.

"Right...anyone else want to take this one?" He looked around the circle at all of the eyes avoiding contact.

Awkward centuries passed.

"Fine then," said the eldest. "I'm just wondering," he said, returning his gaze to the youngest, "whether or not we want to make it so 'mysterious' at this particular point, you know, this being the first line, and all." He awaited a response from the youngest, but none came.

He continued.

"Beyond that, I think that it's a bit more *confusing* than it is *mysterious*." He turned again to the circle. "Does anyone else agree with me?" He accented the syllables in the word agree significantly.

"I must admit that I agree with you, brother," spoke the second eldest.

“Myself as well,” agreed the third eldest.

“I am also confused by the Word,” said the fourth eldest.

“I strongly recommend that we choose another, a more accessible one.”

“What does the meaning of the word matter?” questioned the youngest.

“Well,” replied the fourth eldest, “it will be said that the difference between the *perfect* word and the *wrong* word, is the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning.”

“Who’s going to say that?” The seventh eldest asked.

“I haven’t decided yet, but someone will, you watch.”

“Why do you always have to quote people who don’t even exist yet? Why not just make your statement?” The seventh eldest raised his hands to the air out of frustration. “I mean, what is the point?”

“Because quotations are much more powerful than statements, as they help to make one’s point more strongly.” The fourth crossed his arms huffily.

“Nobody exists yet! You are aware of that fact, are you not? Nobody exists yet! If there is no one to quote, then it’s just your own words, you...”

“We are getting off track here,” interrupted the eldest, “the quotation is valid, or at least it will be, in that it stresses the importance of the word’s appropriateness.”

“Exactly!” shouted the fourth eldest.

“Then just say *that!*” The seventh chided the fourth,

“Must you always...”

“And so,” continued the eldest, “with that in mind, let’s discuss some alternate words that we might substitute for...”

“Scampilious,” stated the youngest, somewhat venomously.

“Right, that.” The eldest moved on unfazed. “Any suggestions?” He looked again across the circle’s eighteen members.

Stars were born and died before a word was spoken.

“How about *Slimy?*” asked the previously silent ninth eldest.

“How about *Slimy*?” asked the previously silent ninth eldest. The circle was united for a moment in their expressions of shock and confusion. Even the youngest was stunned enough to lose his focused visage of contempt, and joined the others in their facial exercises, albeit briefly.

“Or not.” Said the ninth, quietly.

“No, it’s a good *suggestion*, I’m just... I’m not entirely sure that it’s what we are looking for, exactly.” Said the eldest, in his most conciliatory tone.

“I just like how it sounds.” Said the ninth.

“Fair enough. Any other suggestions, anyone?”

“*Cabbage*?” asked the sixth eldest.

“Hmmm...yes. Any others?” questioned the eldest.

“*Flowery*?” asked the twelfth youngest.

“*Unconscious*?” asked the third eldest.

“*Whimsical*?” asked the fourteenth youngest.

The youngest remained silent and rolled his eyes dramatically at each new suggestion.

The eldest rose and began to walk around the circle of gathered brothers. “While these are all interesting words, and they truly are, I think it might behoove us to maybe take a moment to focus on what it is that we are trying to express here, exactly.”

“Ah,” they all said agreeably, in unison.

At this point, the eldest wondered, as he often did, how exactly it was that he could be related in any way to these accumulated beings before him. He grumbled silently, and cursed no one in particular before proceeding.

“This my brothers, is the beginning of everything, of everything that will be, so, as beginnings go, this is pretty important.” He stopped circling and faced their upturned eyes. “Would you not agree?”

There were nods and sounds of approval.

“It will someday be called ‘The Mother of All Beginnings!’” said the fourth eldest merrily.

“Then call it that now! Ugh! Why is this so flaming difficult for you!” shrieked the seventh.

“It will be said soon enough.”

“It has been said, because you just said it! **IT HAS BEEN SAID!**” The seventh turned to the eldest brother. “May I strike him? Please, just once, please? I am begging you!”

“No.” said the eldest.

“I don’t know why he must sit next to me, this is quite more than I should have to bear!” The fourth eyed the seventh nervously.

“Be happy that he asked permission this time.” Said the eldest, “and he’s quite right, the quotations are getting a little tiresome.”

“A little?” questioned the seventeenth youngest sarcastically.

“Humph!” said the fourth.

“And who will be saying that?” asked the seventh wryly.

“As I was saying,” interjected the eldest loudly, “this particular beginning is quite important, and we must make sure that it is truly reflective of that which is to come.

Perhaps at this point we should concern ourselves more with the meaning of the word, rather than whether or not we like the particular sound or shape of it, yes?”

There were more nods and sounds of agreement from all but one.

“I still don’t see why the meaning of the word is so damnationally important.” Sniveled the youngest.

The eldest turned and glared at him. “You mean aside from all the reasons that I’ve just given: The fact that it is the beginning of all things, the fact that it will be studied and discussed and argued over for generation upon generation, the fact that it, in essence, sets the tone for our every interaction with this race that we are creating? Aside from all those apparently insignificant reasons?”

“Yes.” The youngest stated dryly.

“I see,” replied the eldest, “well, then, I can’t think of a one.”

He walked calmly back to his place in the great circle and sat.

Millenniums passed silently.

The fifteenth eldest stood and addressed the circle.

“Why don’t we just get started, and then we can think up the beginning later? We’ll have some time yet, before the people evolve. Let’s just get this all started, and then we can figure this bit out later.” He paused, nervously. “Who knows, maybe the work will help us focus a little better.” He sat back down.

The eldest raised a hand to his beard and scratched it, pensively, for a moment.

He looked around the circle. Seventeen faces looked back at him questioningly.

“How does the circle vote on this idea?” he asked.

Seventeen arms raised in unison.

“So be it.” Announced the eldest. “We shall make The World and prepare the way for the race of Man.”

The circle cheered and planets shattered.

“But,” interrupted the eldest sharply, “after we finish, we shall all sit back down and prepare this treatise, for the necessary time of its announcement shall come quickly upon us. We must all swear that it shall be done.”

The eighteen members of the great and powerful circle of brothers swore so, accordingly.

“Let us begin.” Spoke the eldest.

Seven days they worked together, each playing his own part, performing his own particular task. Even the youngest seemed too engrossed in his function to remember his previous chagrin. At the end of the seventh day, they rested, and resumed their places in the great circle, and watched the world revolve.

The first signs of cellular activity were beginning to take place on the world, which was a good indication that things would progress as the brothers had planned, that their efforts had not been wasted.

Much pleased with their creation, they rejoiced quietly and carefully.

“Now,” said the eldest, after an acceptable space of time

had passed, "we must finish that which remains unfinished as of yet."

All of the brothers nodded in agreement.

"Does anyone have any suggestions?" asked the eldest.

"How about '*squamous*'?" asked the youngest.

The eldest looked down into his lap, defeated. He sighed loudly.

"What?" asked the youngest.

Neither the eldest, nor any of the others made any reply. Their silence lasted through the age of the Lizards, the shift of the Continents, through the dawn of Man. The Circle of brothers quietly watched the revolution of industry, watched the population of humankind increase exponentially and eventually, out of necessity, expand to other worlds, as they colonized other planets. They watched as the Human race, Godless and peaceful, evolved and changed. How they created a Utopia that, governed by love, lasted for centuries upon centuries, before the World itself ultimately failed and collapsed. The Human race lived on, though, despite the loss. Across countless planets and infinite space, they lived on and flourished.

Eventually, the last of the humans on the last of the planets died, alone.

And then there was silence.

The great circle of brothers sat mutely and looked at each other.

"Well," said the eldest, "shall we try that again?"

They all nodded in agreement.

"Let's try to get it right this time." The eldest spoke.

The brothers all nodded their agreement.

"I've got it, I've got the perfect word!" exclaimed the youngest, exuberantly.

"Save it," said the eldest, and they began to work.

X

Best of Issue Poetry

Elegy for Kenny Kirkland

Gabriel Harley

Hushed Queens hallway,
landlord's keys clatter
as nervous hands usher police inside,
summoned by the noses of concerned neighbors.

Heat cranked high with the windows open
November buffets the dusty sills
stereo speakers hiss with static

And center stage

The husk of a black male
half naked in a sea
of twisted silver spoons

Gap-toothed and fleshy

Coke bottle glasses
placed safely on the table

O.D. – open and shut.
“What’s his name again?”

And aside from the solitary piano,
no further intimation of identity.

No mention of the decades of disciplining fingers
to strike at Mozart and Monk,

Of global stages shared with Wynton, Elvin, Sting,

Of a mother's persistent practice reminders
while Beethoven escaped a Brooklyn window
and outside the boys played ball.

third date

Chizoma Sherman

i discovered you in damask
you danced among dandelions
and i drank from your decanter
of sweet berry wine

you were delicious
in your drowsy sunday dreaming

and i wanted to devour you
from hem to hat

legs dangling over the bedside
you read to me
from *delta of venus*
explained climax
as *la petit mort*
i decided then
i would die for you

**To the lone company that owns our radio stations:
Clearchannel Entertainment**

Kirk Robinson

I know who is robbing the American airwaves of real
music, and depriving everyone of good sounds and al-
ternative ideas
I have seen how dumb kids my age are due to recycled
and vacuous pop and rock music that dominates crackling
car speakers
I know you're in bed with ticketmaster, I've caught you
every time I get raped by their service charge
I've heard of "pay to play" and i must say you should be
ashamed
I saw the list of banned songs last year when we needed
music the most,
but Rage Against the Machine could not exercise free
speech on your frequency,
while john lennon's utopian dream was ordered to cease
and desist
and most absurdly the retro station could not *walk like an
egyptian*

May your ears start bleeding when I lock you in a room
and make you listen to the most terrible song on repeat
May the warmongering country star toby keith be cut off
in mid-bullshit by a sonic youth explosion of a chaotic
teenage riot
May the 3rd forgotten verse of woody guthrie's *this land
is your land* play forever on Radio NOW
May Eddie Vedder take over with pirate radio, leaving all
the big wigs to cry out that he's not playing major label
goons
May we the children of television, internet...find some
way to save this precious form of communication.
May radios be tuned to the truth... providing music that
is beautiful, challenging, inspirational, and innovative.
May we always be able to be reminded to *imagine*.
(with a nod of the head to Martin Espada)

John Lennon
Matt Davis



Five Figures
on Edward Hopper's Hotel Lobby

Emily Clare Watson

The girl is restless, though trying not to appear so, and rocks her sandaled foot from toe to heel. She shifts as if to cross her legs and pauses, suddenly conscious of her fidgeting. She has already brushed her hair back from her face once and not a strand crosses the line of white scalp. She escaped from the sparse isolation of her rented room with its twin bed, stamped sheets and monogrammed towels, but finds the feigned community of the lobby just as intimidating and guards herself from conversation with the open magazine in her lap.

The concierge barricades himself behind an oak desk and shields his face with the green lampshade. His eyes, downcast, avoid the glance of his tenants—the deliberate detachment of one who caters only to transients.

The woman looks up at her husband from a powder blue armchair but her blank gaze and the stiff inclination of her head give nothing away. He could be a stranger who has just momentarily paused by her chair. She is ready to go out, her best hat carefully pinned to her coiffed hair, a brooch clasped at the neckline of her red dress.

The man is still, overcoat on his arm. For a brief moment, he is lost, displaced, and for that second, he doesn't know anything. Why does woman in the red dress stare at him with such an expectant look? What has brought him to a foyer in a naless American town? How did he come to be holding a bulky overcoat when the girl in blue has bare legs and short sleeves?

The painter leans back from their isolation as if it were catching. He sits above and away from the tableau he's created, startled at the seclusion of one figure from

another. He has trapped each painted form in a cage of slanting light and he walls them off with a glaze of linseed oil and turpentine. They are forever poised on the canvas stage of a hotel lobby, half a second before the curtain is drawn.

South American Shifty-Eyed Parrot

Kevin McMahan

The world is filled with the unexplainable. The wonders that exist around us baffle scientists leaving theologians to hopefully provide some sort of explanation to ease our bewildered minds. Consider the construction of the pyramids, the accurate predictions of Tibetan numerologists, or grown men that wear lederhosen. These wonders perplex and intrigue the human mind. I recently discovered an article that adds another tally to the ever-expanding list of stupefactions. The Noticias de Montevideo, a prominent South American newspaper, ran a story about a rare species of parrot with shifty eyes:

“The South American Shifty-Eyed Parrot had been known by Uruguayans as an innocent and peaceful indigenous member of the community. Despite the suspicious shifty eyes, the parrot was considered a delightful pet because of its pleasant squawk and its ability to produce bar soap from discarded coffee filters.

The domestication of the bird in the early 1970’s led to constant exposure to humans and our language. Some members of their species began developing the ability to mimic words and eventually sentences. In July of 1982, the Universidad de Uruguay Department of Psychology conducted a study on a Shifty-Eyed Parrot who had the uncanny ability to speak in complete sentences using only words that start with the letters “J” or “F”. Students and doctors were shocked when the bird recited the entire score of “The Mikado” without ever breaking this pattern.

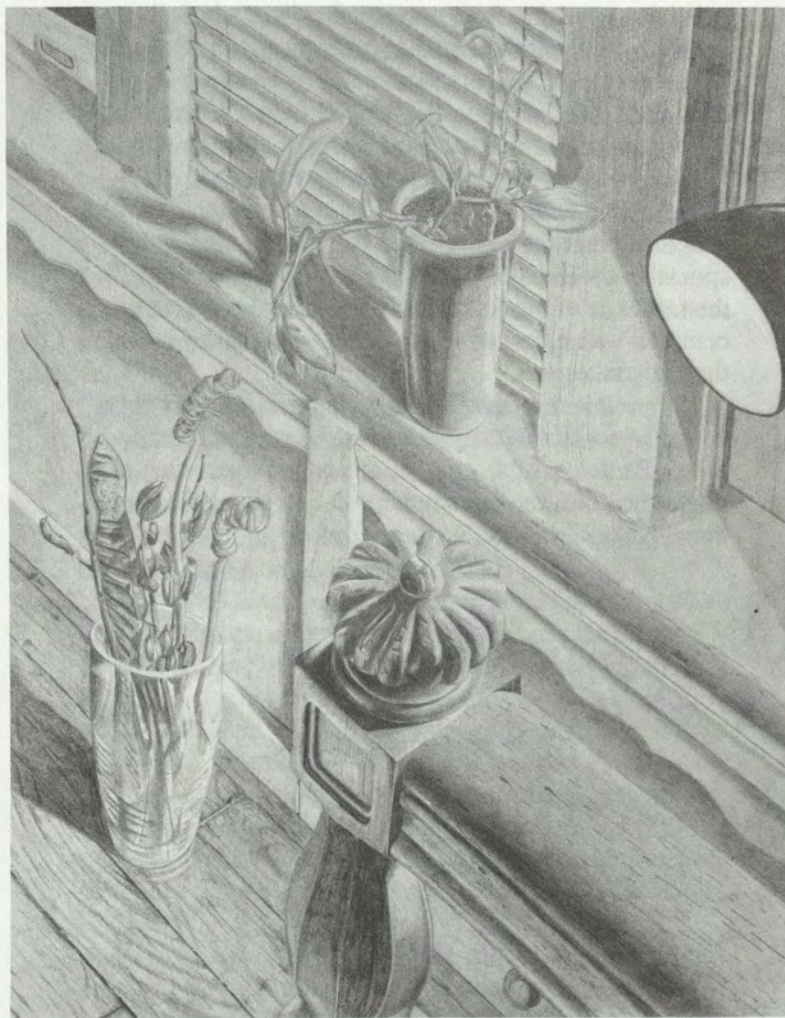
The suspicious nature of this bird had now been made public. Many families began releasing their pet birds back into the wild claiming that the shifty eyes were no longer seen as cute. Still many families defended the bird stating that as of yet the birds had not posed any threat to society. Those remaining loyal families soon changed

their minds when local police began questioning a Shifty-Eyed Parrot about a missing copy of *Ethan Frome* from the town's library.

After the expulsion from society, the parrots had disappeared from the limelight. Most people assumed that the birds became extinct due to an inability to adjust to the wild after years of domestication. Others assumed that the entire species adopted Buddhism, died, and returned to earth as those people who sit at bus stops and shout things. Both theories proved to be wrong when scientists concluded that the Shifty-Eyed Parrot was allegedly responsible for the recent earthquake in Uruguay that left the residents of the Entrepiernas de Canguro apartment complex with a broken water heater and a candy machine that only takes yen.

Government officials are advising anyone who comes in contact with a Shifty-Eyed Parrot to be cautious. Be weary of any suspicious occurrences such as overturned furniture, punctual postal service, or unintentional pants shrinkage.”

Untitled
Jose Di Gregorio



light rays of white, and many flowers, arranged in the
middle, the top of the vase and the petals are spread in
a circle. These drawings have a certain sense of depth.

The Madness of Malarkey

Michael Cardwell

I'm dead, Simon thought serenely to himself as the gunfire began from the German side of the canal. Not to be out done the American side of the canal opened fire and like one domino falling after another the air was soon overflowing as far as the eye could see with the blurry firefly images of green and red tracers.

Simon continued his leisurely slide down the handrail of the footbridge that extended over the canal and came to rest with a plop on its wooden planks. Glimpsing down at the front of his camouflaged smock he could see the blood begin to blossom and to discolor his light green fatigues, staining them darker and darker until they seemed to be almost turn to emerald.

I like emerald he thought absentmindedly.
Makes me think of Ireland.

His mother had always told him he would come to a bad end if he went to war, and he guessed in the back of his mind he had always believed her. Just five minutes ago he had been reading Stars and Strips in his command post, minding his own business, letting the war pass him by for a few minutes. He had almost been able to think he was home again, reading the morning paper on the porch with a hot cup of coffee. Then a sniper had opened up from across the canal. The sniper was not shooting at them, but as he continued to fire again and again, Simon had become more interested. Dropping the paper to his bunk, he had slipped his helmet on, snatched up his rifle and walked forward to the observation post. Bending to slip inside the short doorway of the sand-bagged OP, he had nodded curtly to Corporal Walters and pushed Staff Sergeant Murphy gently to the side so he could look out across the canal.

“What’s up Murph?”

“Nothing sir, just some Kraut taking pot shots at a dog. He probably wants to

Only five minutes ago he had been reading, somehow amused at the irony. Simon saw the blood was running out of his smock and was tinting the timbers of the path cherry. The sounds of guns, tanks, mortars and artillery washed over him as a wave and his clothes seemed to ripple with their passage. He watched in amazement as little crimson rivulets ran outward across the oak planking of the bridge. The little tributaries of blood skittered about to and fro, moving outward like blind fingers. Unable to make much headway on their own the little streams ran together into one river and only then did it find the narrow gap between the two pieces of wood. Once there, the blood momentarily lost its courage to go on and only after it had gathered a host of friends, did it plunge ahead mightily over the edge. Simon was spellbound at the blood falling smartly, swiftly, and silently into the gray-brown, muddy, ice-choked waters of the canal. Amazed at the travels of his body’s fluids, Simon was leaning back against the railing of the bridge when a gentle almost unseen smile touched his lips.

Sure doesn’t take much to entertain a dead man, he thought.

Simon now heard the screaming of the American soldiers in the observation post just a few yards from him over the pandemonium of the battle. He could hear the loud, baritone voice of Staff Sergeant Murphy ordering his men to lay heavy fire on the building directly across from them.

“Knock that goddam building down!”

“Get a goddam fucking medic up here now!”

“Lieutenant Malarkey, we are goddam coming for you sir!”

Both sides of the canal, it was called the Wurm Canal Simon’s little voice told him, seemed now to be blanketed by a solid wall of flying armament. Machine-gun bullets and Panzer Faust rockets poured from the German salient and into the American lines. Simon watched as one rocket blew the facade off of what had once been a candy store, thinking the whole time of how much he like chocolate covered peanuts.

But the Americans counter-punched with vast amounts of Browning automatic rifle fire and an occasional round from a hidden Sherman tank. Slowly one of the buildings on the German side began to wither under the intense barrage and fall in on itself, burying the defenders.

“On the count of three, we move!”

“Be careful, its rough out here boys. Better wear your muff.”

“One, Two, Three....move, move, move, run goddam it, run!”

I really should get my sorry ass out of here, thought Simon. Artillery shells rained down and splinters and ice flew up around him landing in the canal. A guy could really get hurt out here.

Simon listened to the hammering approach of a herd of booted feet and suddenly the members of his platoon enveloped him. Corporal Walters and Private First Class McKee were kneeling beside him firing their M-1 Garand rifles at a pillbox down the street. Private Wilkins jumped over his body and squatting with his back to Simon, began spraying a torrent of bullets from his Thompson Machine gun into a bookstore. The company medic, Specialist John “Doc” Peppers appearing from out of thin air and pulling out his bandages and syringes.

“Hiya Doc, what’s shaking?”

He saw Staff Sergeant Murphy toss his rifle to the ground and pull out a large field dressing and place it

on his bleeding stomach, the whole time muttering over and over again, 'Stupid bastard, stupid bastard, stupid bastard.'

"I think it's going to snow Murph," Simon said giggling, "Sleigh bells ring, are you listening"

"Shut up Malarkey, you daffy bastard", ordered Sergeant Murphy. "Doc, hurry it up. The goddam Krauts are getting frisky."

"He's ready," answered Doc, pulling the morphine syringe out of Simon's thigh, packing his bag and moving out back towards the American side of the canal.

"Walters grab his arm we are fucking out of here," shouted Sergeant Murphy, picking up his rifle and slinging it across his shoulders. "Wilkins! We are leaving! Cover us!"

"Roger," shouted Wilkins over the din of the gunfire.

Simon felt himself being lifted from the hard planks of the bridge and carried roughly between the bodies of Sergeant Murphy and Corporal Walters, while Private First Class McKee lifted his legs. Wood, snow and ice exploded around the group as the German's got the range right and poured fire onto the bridge.

Simon looked up and saw Staff Sergeant Murphy's unshaved face and saw him panting in and out from carrying him. Simon wanted to say he was sorry for being such a burden but decided now was not the time. Simon looked at Walters and saw his mouth moving.

"Mother Mary, full of grace, mother Mary full of grace, mother Mary full of grace,"

Feeling faint he watched the German side of the canal fade farther and farther from his view as he was half dragged, half carried to the American side of the bridge. Simon could see Private Wilkins between the bobbing back and forth of Private First Class McKee following their small group. He was steadily walking backwards covering their retreat with his Thompson still shredding the air with a deluge of forty-five caliber slugs.

“Go ahead and drop me anywhere boys,” Simon said weakly, his eyes fluttering slightly from the loss of blood, “I’ll take it from here.”

“Shut the fuck up sir!” Staff Sergeant Murphy said to Simon, “Goddam it you slow bastards, move faster.”

Artillery began to rain in from both sides of the battle now and the air was alive with wood and metal shrapnel. Simon heard the hollow echo of Staff Sergeant Murphy’s, Private Walters’s and Private First Class McKee’s boots abruptly end as they ran off of the end of the bridge and onto the frozen ground of the American side of the canal.

“Hurry the hell up Wilkins!” Staff Sergeant Murphy screamed, tossing Simon to Doc Peppers who pulled him into the observation post through the narrow doorway like a log.

“Here comes the big stuff, get the hell over here.”

Artillery rounds put the period at the end of the sergeant’s sentence, and the footbridge disappeared in a shower of ice as a round exploded in the canal. With a heavy groan the bridge collapsed into the canal.

Staff Sergeant Murphy grabbed each of the men in turn, herding them into the observation post.

“Move! Move! Move!”

Like dominos the men fell into the Observation Post; first Corporal Walters, second Private First Class McKee, third Private Wilkins and fourth and finally Staff Sergeant Murphy. Artillery pounded the American side of the canal and frozen ice and dirt cascaded in through every opening of the observation post.

“Jesus Christ”

“Its good boys,” Simon said, “Slip your shoes off, I’ll put the kettle on”

Raising his head, Staff Sergeant Murphy shook the debris from him and began to stand up.

“Anybody hit.”

“Negative”

“Just a nick”

“Fine here.”

“Good. Then get up in that window and see what’s happening. Doc how is he?”

“I’m aces, Murph,” answered Simon for the medic.

Specialist Peppers looked at Staff Sergeant Murphy and shook his head in agreement.

“The shoulder’s a through and through and the two in the stomach are under control, but we better get him to the Aid Station pretty dam quick.”

The roar of the artillery and gunfire had begun to move farther away outside the observation post and Simon heard the crackling of a disembodied voice over the radio hand mike.

“Wilkins, see what HQ wants.”

“Roger, Sergeant.” answered Private Wilkins, leaning his Thompson against the wall and lifting the hand mike. “Easy Red. Easy Red. This is OP Utah, over.”

Simon saw Staff Sergeant Murphy move to hover over him. Slowly Staff Sergeant Murphy pulled his helmet from his head and kneeled down beside him.

“Goddam it sir, what where you thinking?” he asked, running his dirty hand through his dirty hair.

“Did the dog get away?”

“Dog, what dog?”

“You know the scrawny yellow dog the German was shooting at.”

Simon saw Staff Sergeant Murphy eyes bulge as he begin to shake his head from side to side. “You mean you ran out onto that goddam bridge to save a goddam mutt?”

Simon could see the disbelief on Staff Sergeant Murphy’s face and knew he would never understand why he had done what he had done, so he just shrugged his

shoulders and put a stupid grin on his face. Hell, come to think of it Simon didn't even know why he had done what he had done. Maybe every man has a limit to the number of deaths he can see and one scrawny yellow dog was one past his limit. Or maybe, as Murph would say he was just a daffy bastard.

"Sergeant"

"Yea"

"HQ wants to know who the hell started this bar fight."

"Tell them it was me Wilkins," said Simon, leaning his head back onto the sandbag wall and mystified by his stupidity. "No reason for the rest of you to get in dutch with command"

"In dutch, are you kidding sir," answered Private Wilkins, grinning ear to ear. "Our artillery pounded their command post and third battalion pushed across the canal. The Krauts are running sir and command wants to know who to give the medal too."

Looking at Simon, but speaking to the room Staff Sergeant Murphy said, "Your shitting me."

Breaking up laughing Wilkins could only shake his head. "What should I tell them?"

"Maybe we should tell them to give the medal to the dog, Murph," said Simon, smiling.

"You're a daffy bastard sir."

Funeral 1972

Gaylie R. Cotton

I wore white patent-leather shoes
white fold-down lace socks
My knees were black
legs bowed and brown

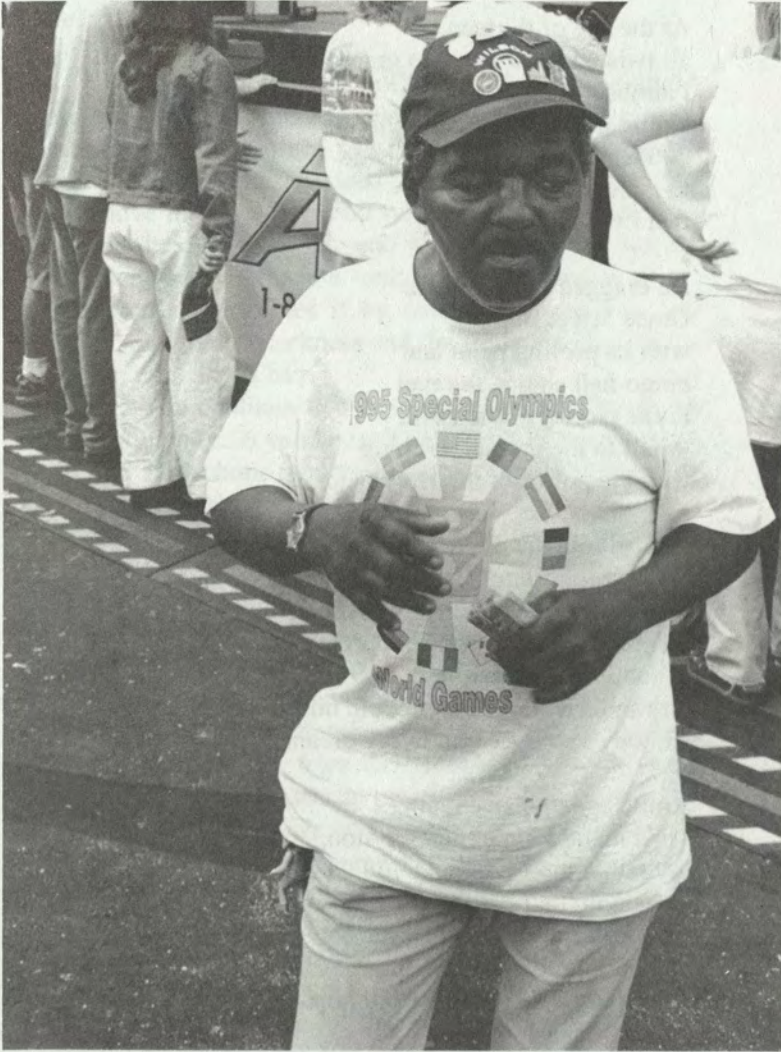
They marched on in
took seats on pews
Legs glossed through
flesh colored stockings
Pant legs flew flags at half-mast
patted their black shoed feet
Their calloused palms
clapped and praised God

To cool the sweat
beading on their necks
they waved violent
the paper fans with
black faces looking to
white Jesus blue eyes

At the front of the church
in a big silver white box
with shiny white fluff
black-charcoaled hands
crossed your bosom
Salt pepper hair
pulled from your deep black face
You lay there
eyes closed asleep
with a smile

Afterwards I drank
cold orange soda
from a bottle too big
for my four year old hands
and trudged through the
Red Muds of Hurtsboro Alabama

Boogie
Matt Bourbeau



The Faith of My Father

Jason Abels

At the age of thirteen,
all twisted angles and no grace,
I almost told my father,
sitting in his recliner watching
700 Club as leaves fell outside
to a crisp October wind,
that I was gay.

He dragged us to church,
Grace Street Baptist
with its peeling paint and
bingo-hall chairs, to revel
in the glories of the Lord,
to fall to the ground writhing
with the power of the Holy Ghost.

He had told me of dark fantasies
starring frail temptress women
who had plagued man since Adam,
women that never appeared in my dreams
of football stars and best friends,
unwanted demons that I could not force away.
Nobody was ever frail in my dreams.

At the age of sixteen, after
I had made a sin of commission,
my father died watching 700 Club,
screaming that Pat Robertson was right.
I went to bed that night with
a crisp March wind howling,
telling my father that I loved him.

How to Marry a Musician
In the style of Pam Houston

Karla Glaser

“Lights on or lights off?” he asks. You want to say, “On,” but he flips the switch before you are able to speak. He slides toward you through the dark and finds you with his hands. He tells you he thinks it’s sexy to make love in the dark. You wonder what he’s trying to hide. He caresses your hair and whispers into your ear but he never uses your name, only baby, sweetheart, hon’. You wonder sometimes if he remembers who you are. You give in to the blackness and the sooty smell of nightclub air, thick in his hair.

You continue to sleep with him even though he lies to you and tells you he isn’t seeing anyone else. After you find a telephone number in the pocket of his jeans, he tells you no girlfriend of his is going to worry about his laundry. After you find lipstick on his collar, he insists you don’t iron his shirts because ‘you aren’t his maid.’ When you spend the weekend, his closet bulges with laundry that he’s tucked and stashed from view. When you stay for a week, he actually runs out of clean pants.

Promises of love and tenderness will have seduced you out of the carefully woven schedule that has been keeping you safe from such intimacy. Your cat doesn’t understand and casts a reproachful glance over his shoulder when you leave on Friday for the weekend. But the musician’s loft apartment is Bohemian, even exotic, and when he tells you to use the key hidden in the hall under the fake ficus tree, you’ll think that means he loves you. A heat wave will wash over the city and everything will be blanketed in a thick haze. Too hot to move, the two of you will recline on lounge chairs on the balcony, tilting your heads back and letting the occasional breeze cool the perspiration that has gathered on your necks. His finger tips will travel the length of your arm, stopping just past your shoulder on your collarbone. You’ll clasp his

hand earnestly with love resonating through your fingertips. As you move to the bedroom and begin to unbutton his shirt, you will catch a glimpse of pale red on the collar. He will tilt your head away from the offending stain and kiss you deeply.

Your sister will say, "Are you surprised? When has any musician been faithful to any woman at any time in history?"

What I learned in high school: men want sex; women want love.

The musician will talk about hitting the big time, playing Carnegie Hall with a real orchestra. He'll talk about leaving the rat race to play somewhere in the Midwest and you'll be left wondering if he means to include you in that departure. When he asks you if you ever think about playing piano professionally, realize this is not an invitation to join him, only a topic of conversation. Realize these for what they are--things to talk about when you are not having sex--and don't try to visualize yourself in his future.

He'll ask you if you ever sang in high school or college, if you ever wanted to, if you ever thought about it. Your cat will betray you and prefer his lap to yours, will sleep on his side of the couch when you watch a movie.

One night, he'll leave you to go play a club or meet with his agent or pick up some cigarettes and you will sit down at his desk to check your email. You'll log on and notice three "friends" on his instant message buddy list: Sxysngr, Diva, and Axman. You'll type in the URL for your webmail and try not to look at the list as you surf by. Chime. Diva will send you an instant message. *Hey, Lover*, she will say, *I missed you last night*. You'll stare at the pale gray Arial letters and try to breathe. Maybe she'll send him an email when you don't

reply to the instant message. You'll look down at your cat who is rolling around on the floor with a toy, a gift from the musician. You'll log off and stare at the soft glow until the screen saver begins to undulate toward you, the names of all the great jazz legends flying at you from the black depths of the monitor.

Your younger brother will say, "No fluff-headed girl singer can even begin to compare to you, but why don't you let him sleep alone for a while and see?"

The musician will dig around in his office for two CDs he has wanted you to hear. He'll tell you not to work too hard, to get some rest, to take care. He'll say you're a really special girl, not like so many of the women he has met.

Tell him you're certain he has lots of experience on which he can base that statement.

He won't tell you and you won't ask, but you'll know that Diva is a blonde. She sings in a smoky jazz club and knows how to hail a cab at midday in Manhattan. She wears lots of makeup and says, "Ciao!" instead of good-bye.

Two weeks before the fall semester starts, you'll both watch *The English Patient* and munch popcorn while sitting in bed. As Ralph Fiennes walks out of the cave with a swirling froth of chiffon in his arms, you'll lean into the musician's shoulder and tell him you think you are falling in love. He'll joke and ask if you mean with Ralph Fiennes. He'll grow quiet and look at you with brooding eyes. He tells you he's trouble, bad news, that a nice girl like you shouldn't fall for a guy like him. You'll start to cry and clutch your arms around his neck like a teenager. He'll pat your head and say he just needs some time. This isn't what he really means. Dry your tears and tell him you'll be his brave girl. Tell him you'll give him that time he needs. Be grateful you are a brunette. A natural brunette.

Your sister will stir her tea quietly and ask you if you actually said, "I love you." You'll lie and say, "Not really," remembering how he said, "I'm sure you do."

Your brother will offer to beat him up. He'll nudge your chin with his fist and tell you that you are a silly girl for bringing up a serious relationship.

You say you never claimed to be serious.

He'll say, "Women always want serious relationships."

The sultry days of summer will slide into September. Diva will fly in to the city and the musician will tell you he has a gig in Atlantic City and that he'll be back "sometime next week." He'll chatter on about the band getting back together and make it sound like a bunch of beer-swilling guys going on the road. He won't know which hotel he's staying in. Leave Manhattan as fast as you can. Don't watch the airplanes flying over the haze, heading south toward Jersey. Find your favorite bar on the Island and flirt with as many men as possible.

You get home late that night and find wilting on your welcome mat a single red rose, a damp paper towel and plastic grocery bag wrapped around the stem. A matchbook cover from the bar where you met the musician will have a note written on the inside cover saying something like, "Roses are red, you know the rest." Feed the petals, one at a time, to the garbage disposal. Call his apartment while you grind the stem. Tell him you forgot the rest of the poem.

Your sister will say, "What does this bozo have to do to convince you that he's a complete slime bag?"

Your brother will say, "Wow, he must really care about you to leave a rose on your doorstep. That's really romantic." Kiss your brother's cheek and show him the matchbook cover with the musician's message.

A late summer storm will shut down Laguardia. He'll call you from Atlantic City and tell you he misses you, that he can't wait to see you. He says he's renting a car because he just can't stand the wait and those tiny little airplanes. You will sit on your couch with the cat purring in your lap and the book of matches lying open at the base of a candle.

What you learned in your twenties: Being with the wrong man is often more comforting than being alone.

He'll silently let himself into the dark of your apartment and kiss the back of your neck. Check his collar for Diva lipstick. Don't kiss him back.

He'll treat your ears to everything you've been wanting to hear. He'll tell you that he really doesn't need more space. He'll say he realizes how much you mean to him, that he feels closer to you than any other women he's been with. You'll wonder if that includes the Diva. He'll plead for just one more chance to show you how much he cares.

Stare out the window into the pink slits of light that are beginning to slice through the night. Remember how you looked to him the first time he told you that you were independent, brilliant, witty, fun. Stare through his face, focusing your eyes on the mole on his right cheek. Don't speak.

He'll claim that he doesn't sleep as well when you aren't with him. Wonder if this means he's always having sex when you aren't in his bed. Be touched. For a moment.

When he moves toward the door, say his name and let one tear slide from your right eye as he stares at you in the half light.

Your sister will say, "It's your own fault. You let him keep coming back for more. Cut him off."

You'll say that you can't. You don't know how.

The musician will stay for breakfast and then leave, looking over his shoulder as he pulls out of the parking lot. Don't wave. Turn your back and don't let him see you cry.

Your brother will shrug and say, "Sounds like me and my girlfriend. Sounds like you and your last boyfriend. Sounds like mom and dad. Same story, different players."

The torrents of rain ease up. The musician will meet Diva at Laguardia during her two hour layover before she flies home. You imagine her humming in his ear the same songs she sang the night before. Diva won't tell him she's falling in love. Diva will leave him missing her and the faint traces of vanilla in her hair.

If you can, don't answer his calls, his email or his instant messages for at least a week. If you can't stay away, then ask him to come over for dinner. Thaw out two veggie burgers and tell him you have sworn off meat because you don't believe in taking advantage of vulnerable beings. Pat his arm apologetically when he looks at you as if you've gone mad.

Talk about the work you are doing in your classes and how interesting your male lab partners are. Wax your legs and wear the mini skirt that shows off your runner's legs. Be the first to pull away after sex.

He'll play for you a new CD and describe the nuances of the chord structures and instrumentation. The two of you will take turns playing favorite songs from each other's CD collection. Try not to imagine him making love to other women when he plays soft romantic songs. He'll suggest you get a CD organizer and then mention that he has an extra one at his place.

Your sister will say, "Why can't you fall for someone who loves you more than you love him?"

Your brother will say, "Guys always treat the nice girls like shit."

What you learned in your thirties: Love means settling for what hurts the least.

Play "Misguided Angel" by the Cowboy Junkies and tell him this is your song about him. He'll run his fingers through your dark hair and kiss your forehead as he chuckles. You'll close your eyes and let him guide you to the bedroom. You see your cat staring at you from the windowsill. The musician will reach for the light switch and you'll stop his hand. For a moment. You will both see your cat watching with detachment. He'll pick up the cat and place him in the hall. As he shuts the door, he'll turn off the lights and the moonlight will cast stripes across his face through the blinds as he moves toward you. You close your eyes and give in to the darkness.

**The Only Air Conditioned Restaurant in London on
the Hottest Day since 1959**

Michael Springer

The waitress is from Austria
And it's her first day
So I try to use really simple words
To convey that I want something WITHOUT mayonnaise on it
And she's leaning against me,
Giving me twitterpated looks
With beautiful eyes way too big for her head,
And saying,
"I don't understand, I don't know, I get my manager,"
and she's off.

The manager sounds Australian
And says there's really nothing on the menu without
mayonnaise on it,
but they can leave it off anything I want.
I'm pleased.
He says he'll send my waitress back so I can order.

Occasionally, between people
I see a glimpse of her,
And sometimes she glances at me
Then looks away nervously,
Never coming anywhere near my table.

I watch the London Eye go 'round
A huge ferris wheel, each seat in a clear plastic egg-shaped vessel
Microwaving the idiotic tourists who picked today to ride it.

Big Ben is in the distance
Sitting there and waiting to be photographed,
No more interesting up close than in pictures.

I watch people of every color, size and shape
Walk past, I drink the water,
Tap my finger,
Read my book,
I wait

Until I see another waitress
And I ask her if she could send my waitress over
And she says in a North Dakota-esque accent
That she will.

Notes for a Poem: T'ian An Men Square

Emily Clare Watson

T'ian An Men means Gate of Heavenly Peace.

One hundred acres? Should I really go with that number? As with everything in China, all numbers are estimates and 98, 99, and 122 would be equally supported. One hundred almost sounds as if I am guessing.

And how can I leave out some of the names? The Hall of Vigorous Fertility as well that of Piled Excellence and Eminent Favors, the Pavilion of Pleasant Sounds, the Gate of Divine Military Genius and the Tower for the Inspection of Truth—they translate the spirit of imperial China. Include the thresholds raised to prevent the entry of demons. They thought demons could only move in straight lines along the ground.

Above all, don't let on that I was only in Beijing for a few days and that I really prefer the Japanese aesthetic.

I wish there were some way that I could work in how the square was repaved in 1999. It wasn't falling apart (unlike much of Beijing), but May of '99 was the tenth anniversary of the T'ian An Men Massacre and the government wanted a reason to close the square. It was reopened just in time for the more opportune fiftieth anniversary of the Communist Party's rule over China.

My guidebook noted that the new granite paving stones would better support the weight of tanks—can I lift a line from a *Cadogan Guide* without a footnote?

The poem might seem more authentic if I included a phrase or two in Chinese. Have to research that some more—I only know how to say “thank you” and “I'd like a cold beer.” A professor tried to teach me to say “I'm sorry, I don't speak Mandarin.”

It began something like, “Wo bu hui shuo...” but I can’t remember the rest of it. That never seemed important anyway, I’m sure my accent made it apparent that I didn’t speak Mandarin.

There might be an interesting parallel with the granite paving stones in the square and the marble ones in the Forbidden City. I love the line, “tread upon only by the imperial entourage: one hundred eunuchs’ callused feet and forty-four concubines’ silk slippers.”

Would anyone notice that I’ve used that before? I’m sure plagiarism doesn’t apply to a quote from one of my own poems but the practice seems a little sketchy.

Be sure to mention the people with kites—giant butterflies and carp. The short lived kite management office is fascinating; it required a twenty yuen permit for those who wished to fly their kites in T’ian An Men Square. But how poetic is that?

Should I juxtapose the crumbling steps of the Forbidden City with Mao’s decaying extremities? Morticians filled him with twenty-two liters of formaldehyde (side note: how many gallons is that?) but they used too much and he swelled up like an overcooked grain of rice. His ears fell off before the mausoleum was even finished and wax copies had to be pasted onto the remaining embalmed flesh. Two doctors went to London to research this procedure at Madame Tussaud’s! (I thought that Mao was pretty lucky; Ho Chi Minh lost his nose.)

For all I had read about the Forbidden City, I was set for it to be my first real poetic experience in China. It wasn’t really. In my notebook, I wrote down that a classmate ran his hand over a bronze water buffalo and murmured, “Man, these Chinese, they don’t fuck around.” Maybe that was just funny to me as we’d all grown accustomed to his usual philosophical rambling.

We talked about the art museum at home. If it had just one of these numerous sculptures, we would see it under glass, in a climate-controlled environment. But in China, my roommate straddled a Ming dynasty dragon and smiled for a photograph without rousing the attention of a guard. I cringed when she scrambled down its marble scales, but I leaned against the same piece to pose for my own photo. I would have thought that the destruction of so many priceless works of art would have made people treasure the remaining pieces more but I watched countless people crush cigarettes into hand-carved stonework and lift their children onto ancient monuments. Photo opportunities clearly meant so much there. I had dinner with a woman who showed me photographs of her entire family posed in front of the pyramids at Giza, the Eiffel Tower, the Taj Mahal. They looked strangely out of proportion—the people seemed too big for the buildings. My friend spoke enough Chinese to understand the explanation that the family spent a day at a theme park full of miniature reproductions of the monuments. People went there just to have their pictures taken. But I'm getting away from the theme here.

Perhaps an epigraph from Mao's *Little Red Book* would bring in the sentiment I want to express.

In the world today all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines. There is no such thing as art for art's sake, art that stands above classes, art that is detached from or independent of politics.

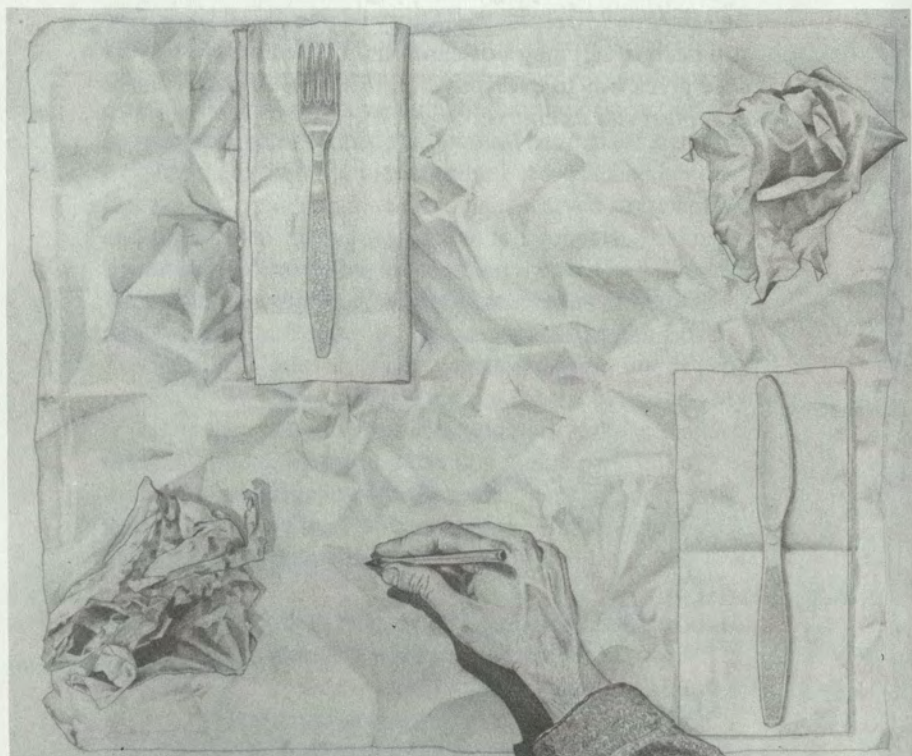
Will people get that? What I mean is that the Cultural Revolution forced the Chinese people to become so desensitized to their heritage. Culture's just another photo opportunity and all of the reverence for history, and art has been transferred to a corpse.

But can I really say that's a bad thing? One hundred years ago, starving farmers paid for palaces they were forbidden to enter.

Was Auden was saying something similar in "Musée des Beaux Arts"? Despite the history of this place, vendors still need to sell their postcards and bottled water. Reverence gives way to everyday life. *Even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course.*

From the stroke of afternoon sun
we sit together, quiet
my tin can of horse manure and tack
like a rickish white scarf
the artist replicates
your drangle we blast to perfection
tucks the money we tip him
into the pocket of his Bernina shirt
and we dinner

paper and utensils
Jose Di Gregorio



*So now they are writing on paper, not that
much different from the old parchment
or the old woodblock.*

*Will people get used? What I mean is that the
Cultural Commission found the Chinese people to be
so different from the West. Culture's not another
thing, it's a way and all of the things that
and it's not just a thing.*

talbot street

Chizoma Sherman

the summer sun burns
the silhouette of tank top
onto my bare shoulders
we walk through the street fair
hands weighed down
with the cargo of pottery
cradled in newsprint

we rest against mortar
that threatens to take flight
ice cream swirls decorate
the outline of your mouth
i drizzle evian into my palm
wash strawberry from your lips

you press your face to my hand
and close your eyes
my smile is reflected
in your aviator shades
my modern-day amelia

i take your hand, pull you into the swell
of the crowd, try to find the artist
with the graying beard puffy like a cloud
hands decorated with charcoal streaks
and windblown skin like leather
from the stroke of afternoon sun

we sit together, smile
my tan arm at home around your neck
like a rakish white scarf
the artist replicates
your triangle necklace to perfection
tucks the money we tip him
into the pocket of his Bermuda shirt

and we disappear

this is what i know of frida

(in response to Kahlo's "Broken Column")

Chizoma Sherman

like Greece

Diego said

you are the living Parthenon

go to hell

my spine has been shoved aside

by a Corinthian column

from my cunt to my throat

i exist in fragments

seemingly helpless

and all he can talk about

is the beauty of my pain

and how graceful I am

it only hurts when I blink

i used to be marked

by Diego's hands

now I am kissed

with nails and scars

i pose by the ocean

await his strokes on canvas

bought with hard-earned coins

he will resist painting resignation

in my eyes

instead he will darken my nipples

and thick brow on his canvas

make their brown hue succulent

dark like the fuel of the revolution

Diego will paint me exquisite

in my agony

i will not move

beneath the blinding pain

for the sake of his brush

Incarnations

Gabriel Harley

Gabriel.

From the Hebrew *gavhri'el*
Tendered across ages caked with dust and blood
Uttered in the streets of Jerusalem and Mecca
 Paris and Venice
 London and New York

Gabriel.

Transcribed from Angels to Men and from men to each other
A disconnected tribe embracing the scale of individual experience
 Fauré and Fahrenheit
 Prosser and Marquez
 and thousands of faceless namesakes

Gabriel.

Latinized, feminized, curtailed, and expanded
And yet the meaning carries through: "Strength of God"
Composers and physicists
Insurrectionists and authors
Mechanics and shop keepers.

Gabriel.

Given to me in faith but received with doubt
I've no wish to shoulder the larger expectations
Driven, but apprehensive
 Hopeful, but agnostic
ever skeptical of gods and men.

Still, none of us completely escapes our divine heritage.

The Chicken and the Egg

Kevin McMahon

If the chicken came before the egg, she must have been scared when that big, white oval fell out. I would imagine she was ostracized by the other chickens who had not experienced such a strange phenomenon. Of course, the awkward phase experienced by this first egg-layer was short lived since the other chickens would naturally have begun laying eggs in due time. But let us focus on that first chicken, the pioneer.

There is not a doubt in my mind that the name of the first chicken was Cluck. I state this under the same logic that the first cow was named Moo, the first dog was named Arf, the first cat was named Meow, and the first giraffe was named...um, you get the idea.

Cluck entered the world as a full grown adult. She was not sure how she got here on earth. Her first memory was of a concerned voice saying, "Oops," followed by a long fall where at the end she found herself in an endless field of green. Now I may be indicating that the creation of the chicken was an accident, but their tender meat and delectable flavor was certainly no fluke.

After brushing herself off, Cluck decided to venture out and see if there was an end to this green. There wasn't. At least not as far as she could tell. But then again chickens have no sense of direction and tend to walk in circles, which is what Cluck unknowingly did for several hours. She looked up at the direction from which she fell and shrugged her wings.

"Cluck cluck?" (Author's note- from this point on I will be translating the language of chickens into English.) "What now?" Cluck asked Oops. She assumed Oops would have some type of reason for dropping her here. But he didn't. So Oops decided to toss down a few more chickens just to see what would happen. The sky began to rain feathers on Cluck as four more chickens fell to the earth.

These new arrivals didn't have the same life experience that our friend Cluck had possessed. Cluck's fall had occurred several hours earlier.

"Listen up, chickens," Cluck began to lecture. "We all have one thing in common. We're all chickens. We may not know how we got here, or what we're doing here, or where we're going to go, but one thing is certain..." Cluck paused. "What's everybody staring at?"

The expressions on the faces of the other chickens had frozen. Beaks were wide open. Cluck followed their gazes, which were aimed at her feet. It was there she found the white oval object that we as humans have come to identify as the egg.

Cluck was flabbergasted. Even with her hours of experience she could not explain this to the other chickens. Was this normal? Once again she looked up at Oops, puzzled. No response. Oops did not want to interfere with this experiment. When she turned her attention back to the other chickens they had already begun walking away. Unless she could offer a reasonable explanation, the others would brand her as a freak.

So she shouted the first thing that came to her head. "Inside this white thing is a tiny version of me!"

The other chickens, fascinated, turned their attention back to Cluck.

"Yeah, that's it. And if I keep it warm...the little version of me... will emerge from this small, fragile... enclosure."

It was clear that Cluck was making this up as she went along. That is, clear to you and me. But the new chickens were not intelligent enough recognize the art of improvisation. Oops was impressed at Cluck's quick thinking and imagination so he decided to make her idea true.

Soon after Cluck's explanation, an egg inevitably fell out of one of the new chickens. Excited to see a tiny version of herself, the new chicken immediately broke the egg open. The new chickens were all shocked

and appalled to find nothing but a sticky, cholesterol-filled, translucent goo inside the shattered shell. The four new chickens then marched off, leaving Cluck ostracized, excommunicated from the Church of Chicken, booted from the bosom of her bird buddies, deprived of the pleasurable promenades with poultry pals, forced to flee the fortunate fraternization with fellow fowl. Need I continue? I hope not.

Oops found it pretty clear that chickens were not the right species to rule the earth. Banishment of a luminary like Cluck was inexcusable, and he could not allow that kind of attitude to flourish in his creation. But he was so impressed with Cluck that he let her interact with his favorite new invention- humans.

The humans killed and devoured Cluck immediately. Oops was not surprised. Cluck may have been a hero and a pioneer, but her wings were just too succulent. Pioneer shmioneer, she didn't stand a chance. The humans were so satisfied with their meal that they praised their Oops and asked if they could have another chicken. Oops gladly granted them four more.

You may be wondering what happened to Cluck's egg. Well, so am I.

Tea for Two
Paula J. Dalton



**Café Pergatorium: Judas and Lao-Tzu Over Coffee
and Tea**

Gabriel Haley

Later that same day, Judas returns to the coffee shop. Shoving his way past the throngs of thirsty New Arrivals, he finds an open seat near the window. An elderly Chinese gentleman is already sitting at the table. He looks up and, recognizing the distraught youth, waits for the tirade...

I'm sick about it, Lao,
as if some Centurion,
pilium in hand,
has sliced me open --
a crimson line,
throat to navel.

Dwelling on the Christ-jen?
Two millennia hence,
will you still be mourning
your purchase?

Easy for you to say, old man!
Your name is revered --
saint to sages,
a cloud-hidden mystery!

[Cradles spoon in hand;
swirls and clinks it
inside the cup.]

But imagine truly, literally, being a *Judas*,
a man whose very kiss condemns,
silenced forever by the pens of appalled companions
and Hellbound in the collective imagination!

And I for one don't blame them!
Do you have *any idea* what I've done, here?!

Fulfilled your purpose admirably?

It's always Christmas Inside My Refrigerator

Mary McCorkle

The holidays are over, the decorations are put away, the Christmas cards have been read, and now comes the hard part. Every year I do the same thing—hoard food in the refrigerator, justifying its existence with the same excuse—“It’s the holiday season, we should have things on hand for company, and besides no one can diet now.” Without question, I did my best to live up to that credo, as my bathroom scale can attest. Now the New Year’s diet and exercise program are in full swing, and my husband is grumbling about all the leftovers in the refrigerator; it’s time for action.

I stand gazing into the jam-packed depths of the fridge, listening to my stomach fight with my brain over the rocky road fudge, from my favorite chocolate place in Hilton Head. They make the best fudge in the world, which my in-laws faithfully send every year. It has chunks of fluffy, homemade marshmallow and whole walnuts. The fudge itself is so chocolaty, that it’s black. I salivate and hide it behind the bottle of salsa, sporting its low fat label. Next come the butter pieces. I don’t know how everyone else feels, but I think that it’s tacky to drag out the butter dish with a half used stick of butter, complete with toast crumbs, and expect it to mingle pleasantly with the holiday china. Each holiday meal necessitates a fresh stick of butter, and that translates into lots of leftovers. I study the containers of butter pieces, and make a pile of all the little odds and ends of butter that are left over from cookie baking. My mother would have a fit if she knew I was even considering throwing away this much butter, so I condense it all into one large container and hide it in the vegetable bin. Maybe I’ll make Valentine cookies. Next I move on to the eggnog. I’m sure that for some, this would be the best place to start. For me, however, eggnog heralds the beginning of the holiday season; it proclaims, “Let the feasting begin.” I love it, with a tiny touch of

Southern Comfort, a little extra cream if you happen to have it, thank you, and a light dusting of fresh nutmeg on the the top. All good things must come to an end, and fortunately for me, the eggnog has exceeded its shelf life. I feel strong and proud of myself as I pour it down the drain.

Why is it that I feel the need to hoard forbidden food? Am I in fact the only person who engages in the post-holiday game of rearrange the contents of the refrigerator instead of pitch? If a head of lettuce looks less than perfect, it's history; whereas I can forgive the forbidden food for the sin of expiration simply if it still looks and smells okay. Perhaps a therapist would comment that I am holding onto the past, refusing to come to grips with the post-holiday blues. Said therapist can diagnose all he wants, the fudge stays.

On to the next challenge, the Christmas pre-dinner cheese tray, Brie, white cheddar, a cheese ball, rolled in toasted nuts, all still perfectly good. For the first big snowfall, I could make macaroni and cheese, the really good kind with the white cheddar. Now, mind you it would not be diet food, but one doesn't diet on snow days. Brie, with peach-pepper jam, or baked in puff pastry, is always nice to have on hand if company comes to call. I decide that in this group there has to be one sacrificial lamb, so I appoint the cheese ball and out it goes. The Brie and cheddar get secreted into the butter compartment on the door of the refrigerator because no one ever looks there.

The leftovers from the relish trays are the next victims, albeit easy choices. I refuse to eat black olives that have touched sweet pickles, and I don't like green olives, except in salads, so that proves to be an easy choice. The guy who puts the relishes on the tray (never me because I am in a tizzy fixing the meal) drains all the liquid off the olives and they get really yucky without it, so out they go. The leftover carrot and celery sticks can be used in salads, but the mushy cucumber strips and sweet peppers are on borrowed time.

With my hands on my amply padded hips, I stare at my final adversary, the leftover cookies. I absent-mindedly reach for one to nibble on while I make my decision. Before it reaches my mouth, though, I am reminded of a promise that I made to myself two years ago: I would get either a tattoo or a navel ring when I turned fifty, conventionality be damned. My mother's lectures to me about advancing middle age, with words like settled and matronly, fall on deaf ears. I block out her voice and concentrate on visions of a navel ring or a tiny tattoo. Unfortunately both require a svelte figure, and the mere thought of a tattoo undulating on thick rolls of fat makes me ill. I take all of the cookies and pack them into zip lock bags and store them in the freezer for when the kids come home from college for a visit.

Feeling somewhat fatigued and in need of a nap, I step back to view my progress, iffy at best. I know that my husband is going to fuss when he finds the secreted objects; he doesn't sustain temptation any better than I do, but for now, I am taxed. As I start to shut the door, there in the corner, on the bottom shelf, hiding behind the bag of oranges, is the tin of my mother's homemade candy; fudge with big, crunchy walnuts, and peanut butter buckeyes, dipped in chocolate. My mother, who is in her eighties, has great difficulty doing anything, let alone making candy. How can I possibly throw away the fruits of her labor, knowing that she might never be able to make candy for me again? The vision of her worn, arthritic fingers, painfully shaping candy, long into the wee hours of the night, fills my mind. I sigh, stuff a handful of "buckeyes" into my chipmunk cheeks and retire to the bedroom for a much needed nap.

I Want to be Thin

Jessica Fields

I want to be thin. I want my body sharp, angled,
brittle; my ribs as pronounced as giant gaping
frowns. When I am hugged, I want my
washing-board chest bones to scrub
your shirt clean. When we dance,
I want your hands to slide down
my sides, and sink into those
slits, feel the hard bones
of birth. I want my
spine lumpy and
obscene.

Please, no dessert.

The Light

Matt Bourbeau



Chinese Colors

Emily Clare Watson

"At first glance, China seems to come in four colors—yellow for the dusty earth, blue for the baggy clothing, red for the omnipresent slogans and gray for just about everything else."

an excerpt from the diary of Mel Elfin, a journalist who accompanied President Nixon on his 1972 trip to China

Yellow

is the anglicized name for three thousand miles of vacillating ochre water—the Huanghe, China's Sorrow. It is gardenia hulls crushed for the dyeing of fine silk reserved for imperial robes, the burnished gold of roof tiles over the emperor's palace, the sallow skin of his favorite concubine, and the luminescent glow of Shanghai when seen from an airplane at night.

Blue

-collar employees on bicycles sport gauze masks as protection against diesel exhaust. It is the azure of a Beijing postcard sky, the cobalt-painted coal trucks lumbering along the highway, and the way distance tints the Guilin mountains a cloudy indigo on a clear afternoon.

Red

attire is forbidden for twenty-seven months after the death of a beloved parent. Black characters of good luck and fortune dance on scarlet paper tacked to the doorways of mud brick cottages and high rise apartments. It is Hunan peppers and the crimson

feathered breasts of pheasants strutting at the Changsha aviary, the square of rayon knotted round the necks of schoolchildren and the carmine walls enclosing the nine hundred and ninety-nine rooms of the Forbidden City.

Gray

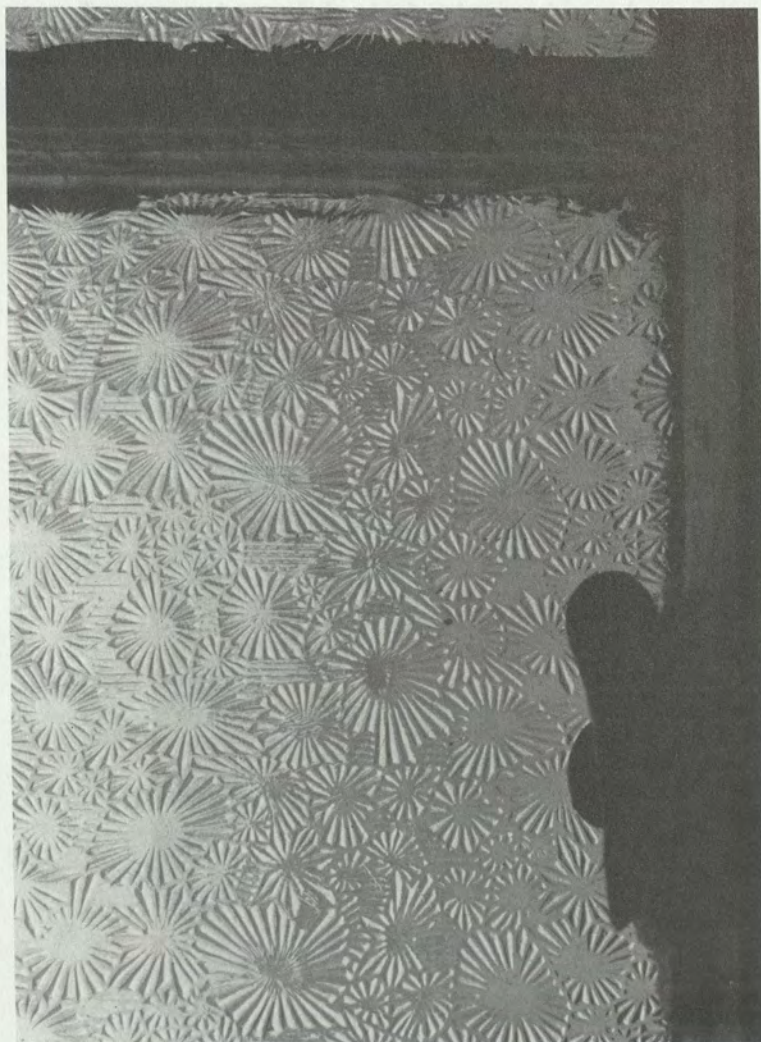
coal dust suffocates every surface and the grime of the city imbeds itself in open pores. It is the battered marble elephants at the Ming Tombs, the polluted haze over T'ien An Men Square in August, the propagandist newsprint, and the wisps and clumps of hair scattered around the barber who has set up shop in a folding chair on the street corner.

Sunset Table

Amanda Miller



Early Dawn
Matt Bourbeau



Red Kimono to John

On John Sloan's Red Kimono on Rooftop

Emily Clare Watson

You know, it's bad enough living in the packing district
without having to deal with you
and that Ashcan School.
Ever since you moved into the adjacent building
I always feel you watching.
And I don't understand,
why would you want to see this
out of your studio window?
The dirty backsides of warehouses,
meatpackers smoking on fire escapes,
worn-out seamstresses gabbing and taking in a little sun.
Why paint our grimy alleys when you know
people just want to see sailboats
and ladies in crisp shirtwaists
playing croquet on a manicured lawn
or just sippin' tea on the veranda?

Now, what do you think you've done,
painting me like that?
I'm a simple girl, I work for my living
and you've gotta put me in a picture
when I'm hanging my skivvies out to dry!
You've caught me with my hands chafed
and a mouthful of clothespins-
and on the one morning
I went out on the rooftop in my old dressing gown.

Don't you know a girl in red is no better than she ought
to be?

Contributors

Thanks to all who sent in their creative work—not only those listed here.

Jason M. Abels I'm currently a senior in the Department of English. I will be graduating in December, but will probably be back to start work on a second degree in History. I currently work at UITS on this campus. I've been published at the *Purdue Exponent* and in the Fall 2000 edition of *genesis* for the poem "The Dandelion." My first novel, tentatively titled "I Kissed Matt" should be finished and making the publishing rounds by this summer.

Matt Bourbeau is a Herron student that thinks he exists.

Michael Cardwell: I am a husband, father, student, soldier and athlete. But I dream at night of being a writer and having something worthwhile to say. I wrote extensively in high school and in the dim dark mists of time passed and now as my military career is winding down, I have found time to write again and that hopefully I have not completely lost my literary voice.

Gaylie R. Cotton I am a fulltime wife and mother who work and attend school part-time. I am a perpetual Junior in the School of Liberal arts pursuing an English degree. I often sit in the presence of the masters and mistresses of literature and poetry. I mix words with Nikki Giovanni and sit sipping tea while Maya Angelou reads aloud selections of my poetry; I cry with Toni Morrison as we ponder Pecola's blue eyes; I sit on Chicago's corners observing black life with Gwendolyn Brooks; and even discuss Ethridge Knight with Amiri Baraka at Rita Dove's house...Then the blasted alarm goes off spoiling my dreams.

Paula J. Dalton is a Senior at Herron School or Art

Matt Davis – Upon starting my freshman year here at IUPUI, I really have been enjoying my classes. After studying in my History of Beatles class, I felt an urge to express this feeling creatively. This portrait is the end result.

Jessica Fields: is an English major and a sophomore in the School of Liberal Arts.

Karla Glaser: is a self-described non-traditional student majoring in Chemistry with plans to complete her B.S. in May 2004. She favors the genre of creative non-fiction, finding real life provides more humor than anything she could possibly create. "How to Marry a Musician" is loosely based on personal experience and written in the style of Pam Houston, one of her favorite authors.

Jose Di Gregorio is a Sophomore at Herron School of Art

Sara Hanlon is a Senior at Herron School of Art

Gabriel Harley is a musician, student, tutor, teacher, web designer, and recording engineer. Oh yeah — he writes sometimes, too.

Mary McCorkle: this is a piece I wrote for Steven Fox's W350. I am currently taking W401, Advanced Fiction Writing. I am a graduate non-degree student, with an undergraduate degree in Natural Resources from Ball State.

Kevin McMahan: I transferred to IUPUI from Bloomington last year. I'm a senior and will graduate in December. This is my first time submitting to *genesis*, so be gentle.

Amanda Miller Senior at Herron School of Art, IUPUI and will be receiving a BFA in Furniture Design in 2004 with hopes of attending graduate school. My goal is to create art that people can interact with. My inspiration comes from a variety of sources from friends and family to art and music. I enjoy the hands on work of manipulating blocks of wood back into an organic form and using painting and texturing techniques to create an environment that is more playful.

Kirk A. Robinson I am colorblind. When I tell people this they usually think I see in black and white, or they ask if I dream in color. This leads me to the belief that people, in general, are not that intelligent. Thank you for taking the time to read, it was very sweet of you.

Contributors (cont)

Chizoma (Chi) Sherman recently graduated from IUPUI with a B.A. in English. While she enjoyed her reign as both a *genesis* editor and the self-described Darling of Cavanaugh, all good things must end. She packed her scepter and various bejeweled crowns, moved to a villa in Paris and became a world-famous author. She lives with her lover, equally world-famous ex-model Esmerelda de Sangria, and their pet iguana, Fluffy.

Michael Springer: is 6'1" and weighs approximately 165 pounds. His shoe size is 13 ½. He prefers earthy colored clothing, especially dark greens and grays. He has a fascination with top hats and white tuxedos, and wears a Native American sun medallion around his neck at all times.

Emily Clare Watson is greatly intrigued by the Encounters section of the NUVO personal ads and each week waits anew for someone to print, "Last Tuesday, saw you, glasses and a mop of mousy hair, eating at Yat's and reading *The New Yorker*; me, geeky Casanova cum Handy Andy desiring nothing more but to send you witty love e-mails and refinish your hardwood floors. Call 555-5555, I think I'm in love!"

Aaron Woodworth I am an English major who hopes to teach someday. I am very well adjusted.

An invitation to...
You may submit a total of up to ten works of art...
title of your submission) and the word count...
number a mail address and a brief biography...
statement. You need include only names and...
with all submissions. Do not include...
the number, names of any pages each piece...
submission. Do not include your name...
the name of the artist. All names will be...
written in black ink on a white background...
All names must be typewritten and printed...
right (name, title, your address and...
the submission number and the...
2,000 words or less. All...
on both sides of the page...
submitting the work to us...
Artist's Guidelines
Please clearly label your artwork with the title(s) if...
the piece(s). All materials will be accepted, but...
slides are preferred. Please include a self-addressed...
stamped envelope with your submission(s) so that...
work may be returned.
Guidelines. Artists reserves the right to discard...
without notice those submissions that do not follow...
our guidelines.

An Invitation to Future Writers and Artists

General Guidelines

You may submit a total of up to ten works of art, poetry, or prose. Include a cover sheet listing the title(s) of your submission(s) and the word count for all prose along with your name, address, phone number, e-mail address, and a brief biographical statement. You need include only one cover sheet with all submissions. Do not place your name on the manuscripts; *genesis* editors judge each piece anonymously.

Writers Guidelines

All genres must be typewritten and printed in 12 point Times New Roman font. Fiction and nonfiction submissions must be single-spaced and contain 2,500 words or fewer. All work must be submitted on **both** an IBM-compatible disk and hard copy.

Artists' Guidelines

Please clearly label your artwork with the title(s) if the piece(s). All mediums will be accepted, but slides are preferred. Please include a self-addressed stamped envelope with your submission(s) so that artwork may be returned.

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E-mailed submissions will not be accepted.

Upon publication, copyright reverts to the author.

Please mail or deliver your submissions to:

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C/O Department of English

Cavanaugh Hall, Room 502-L

425 University Blvd.

Indianapolis, IN 46202

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to e-mail the editors at: genesis1@iupui.edu

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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>