



genesis

spring 2005

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Cover: "Untitled" Tasha Vaden
4'x4' Oil on Canvas

Editors' Note

You may have noticed *genesis*' recent metamorphosis into an explosive and energetic experience, one that we have tried to continue in this issue. This issue was created by an editorial staff enrolled in a newly formed class, English W280: Literary Editing and Publishing, led by Lecturer Jim Powell and advised by the senior editors of the Fall 2004 issue. The central focus of the course is to learn how to become a successful literary editor by designing and producing a commendable issue of *genesis*.

We hope to maintain the highly regarded standard established by over thirty years of previous issues, while achieving an aesthetic principle that readers find pleasing and highly relatable. The featured artists and writers will dazzle your eye and charm your thoughts. You will find these selections to be intellectual, provocative, and, above all, entertaining.

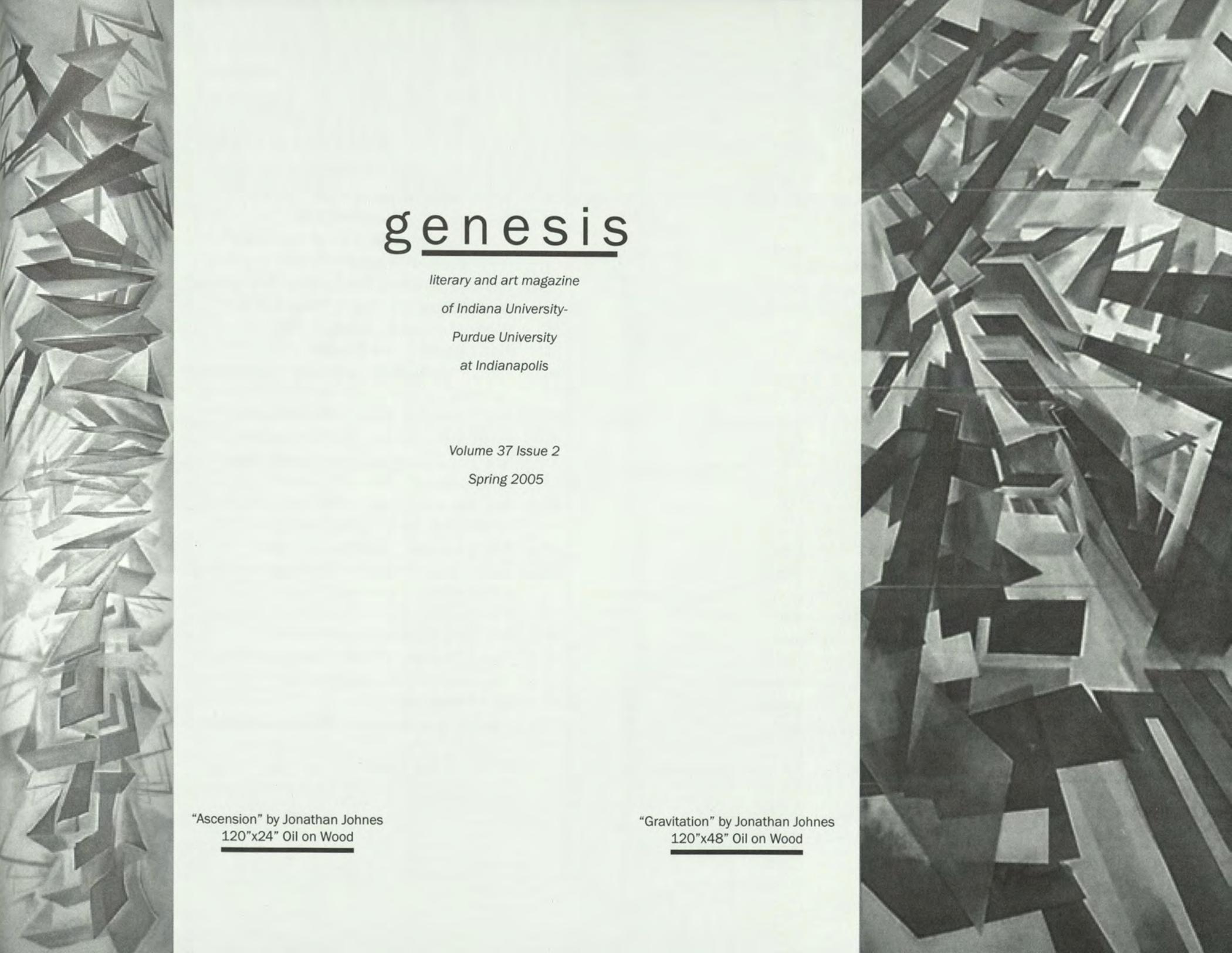
We truly thank every writer and artist who submitted to this issue. We look forward to reading your future submissions, and are proud to continue the legacy of *genesis*. Enjoy, and let your journey begin.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the following:

IUPUI School of Liberal Arts, English Department
IUPUI Campus and Community Life
Western Publishing

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>



genesis

literary and art magazine

of Indiana University-

Purdue University

at Indianapolis

Volume 37 Issue 2

Spring 2005

"Ascension" by Jonathan Johnes
120"x24" Oil on Wood

"Gravitation" by Jonathan Johnes
120"x48" Oil on Wood

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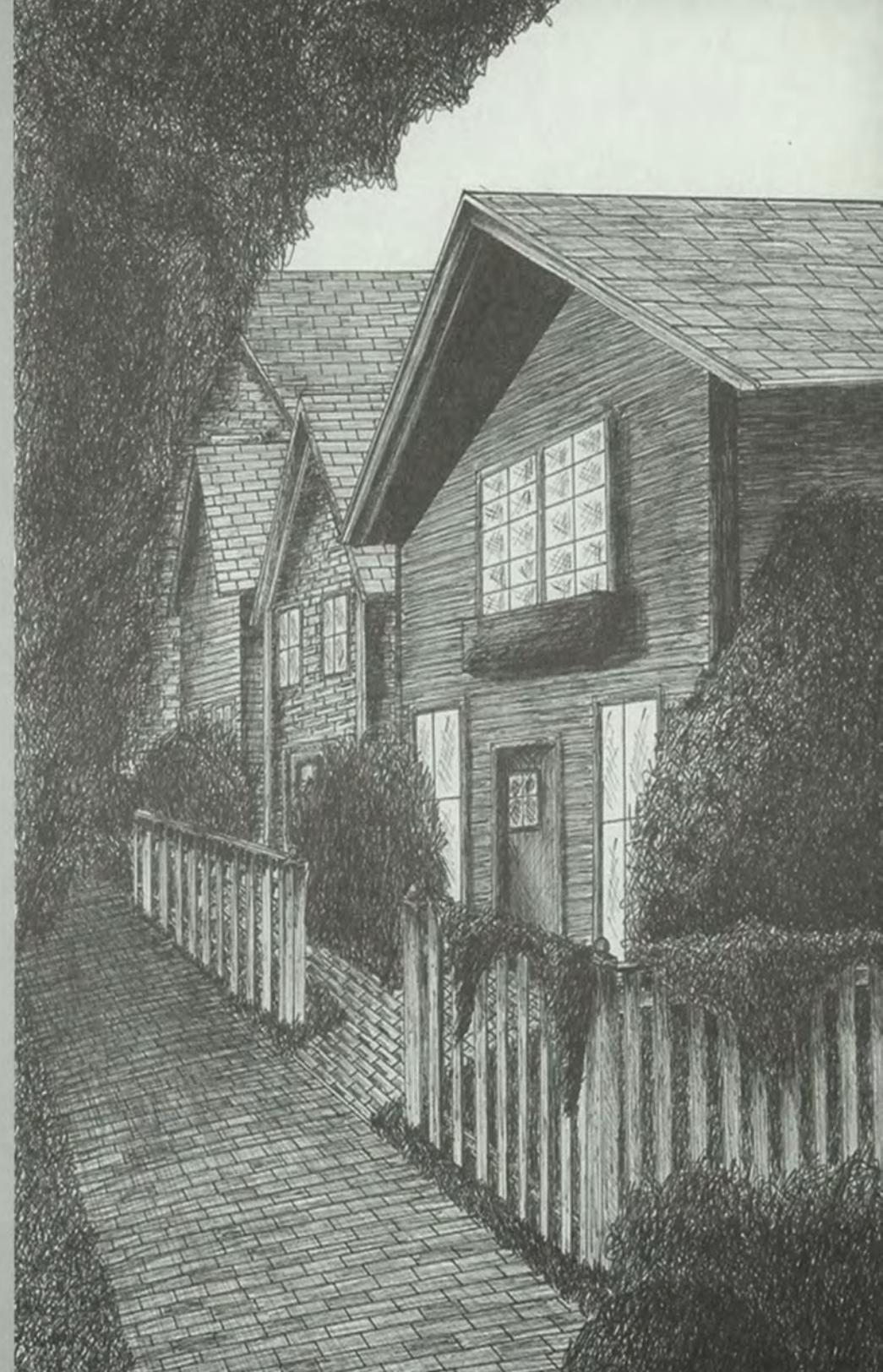
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Years Ago

Kasey Kasa

They met playing tennis—
she was married to Lamont, who
cheated at everything while
he was dating Terry, who
was good for almost nothing.
As couples they played doubles
every Thursday at
the YMCA but that faded
away like her marriage.
Nine months of counseling
after the divorce
gave birth to her new life
when she ran into him again
and again and Terry
was nowhere to be found.
Elkhart really is
a big small town. Two
years they dated
before he announced they
would marry but he never
asked her (she
said yes anyway). They
went to the White Chapel
in Las Vegas but Elvis
wasn't in the building.
They were in
a gambling mood and
though they took
the right chances,
they came home
with only 87 cents
between them.

"Elm Street" by Michael R. Dunkin
10"x14" Ink



Denial

Karen D. Mitchell

In a fire ocean
the dead tree lingers.

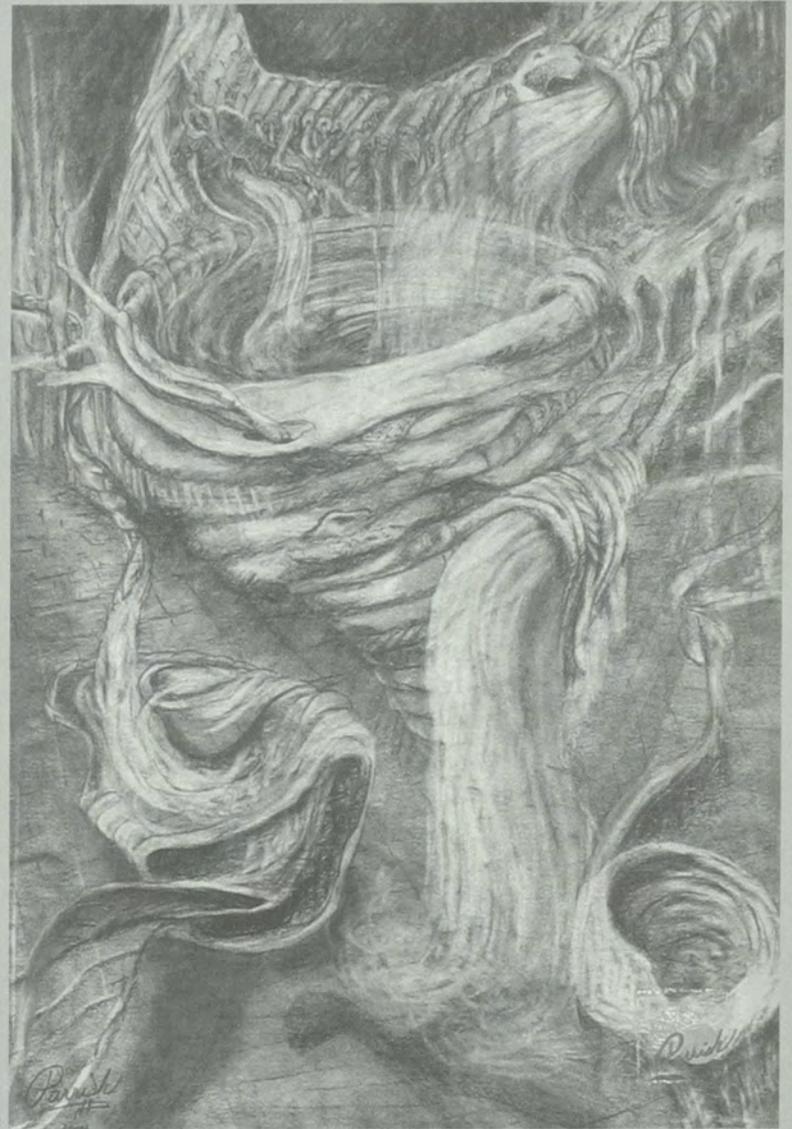
Pale and erect, it points
brittle bone fingers

into the sky but fails
to notice the measured loss

of leaf and nest,
the creeping trails of moss.

Roots begin to wither away,
bark dust crumbles in soil.

Only one chooses to stay, the terrible
bird whose wings leak black oil.



"Escape #1" by Jane Parrish Cooper
34"x24" Charcoal on Paper

A Rare Dolphin

Karen D. Mitchell

*Lipotes vexillifer, the Yangtze River dolphin,
is likely to go extinct in my lifetime.*

On my 35th birthday, I practice
the time-honored female tradition

of examining my face in the mirror
to see if I still look young, because I'm not

so sure anymore.

When I was a smoker, I always got carded
because I fit the "appears younger than 28" profile,

but it's been six years since I quit.

I suddenly realize that my monthly visitor
and I are having our silver anniversary this year.

Exactly how do I celebrate that?

My beautician notices a new strand of grey hair and asks
if I want to drown it in a vibrant new color. No thank you. It's my

silver dolphin in a deep, muddy river!

She swims in elegant strides through my waves
and loves me because I love her first

even when her snout gets caught in a net.

We know the tide will come for us, so she holds me close.
In the end we'll dive down together

into the finless pools.



"Puddle. Savannah, Georgia" by Justin Dodd
4"x6" Photograph

The Point

Cindy Lafferty

Sometimes life is just too hard and I am tired. It's just too much work, especially since I have trouble seeing the point. You're going to die in the end, right? Why do all this suffering?

This is what I'm thinking as she prattles on and on. That makes me feel guilty. There are people all over the world who suffer horrid things and yet cling to life. I want to kill myself over a long-winded mother and a run in my pantyhose.

I don't understand the point of pantyhose. The conventional wisdom is that being dressed up makes us feel more professional and to be more productive. Me, I just end up spending half my day in the ladies room tugging at the waistband. If I were comfortable, I would not be distracted. I would be more productive, pounding out paper-work, in my sweatpants and Nikes.

This is not entirely true. I am constantly distracted by that little voice in my head. I wonder if I'm schizophrenic. But the shrink says no. Just depressed.

"What about the voice in my head?" I ask.

"That's called a 'train of thought.' You're depressed," she says, "not schizophrenic."

That is depressing in and of itself. Everyone is depressed these days. I think the rest of them are faking.

Mother is still talking. Really, you should hear her. Rambling on about my eating habits. I'm having real salad dressing on my salad. What is the point, she wants to know, of eating salad if you're going to slather on all that fat-laden dressing? The point, of course, is that I like it. Some things are more obvious than others. At least to me.

Someone once said depression is a sane response to an insane world. So, I'm sane, and perky Mandy Stolz is crazier than a parka in July. Mandy is a pain in the ass. She's one of those unnaturally happy people who can smile through any crisis. Her desk is next to mine. She says hello every morning. *Every* morning. If I am on the phone when she comes in she will wait and be sure to say hello when I hang up. She never just comes in and starts working, speaking to me when it's needed. She has to say hello. She is a freak. Also, she tries to cheer me up. I hate that.

"Oooo, you're feeling down today? How about some chocolate?" she will say, and hold out her candy dish. I cannot resist chocolate, even from Mandy.

Perhaps Mandy is Satan.

Anyway, I tried explaining to Mandy once that I was not "feeling down" but that I was experiencing a bout of depression, which is a serious medical condition that cannot be bought off with Three Musketeers. She listened attentively.

"Yes, but if chocolate makes you feel better," she said, "even for a few minutes, isn't that the point?"

She missed the point entirely.

I've talked to my shrink about my suicidal thoughts. I've assured her that I won't do it, that they are just thoughts. "I have too much stuff to do," I tell her.

"What kind of stuff?"

I know the right answer is something about finishing my degree, finding a husband, having a baby, making my mark on the world.

I don't say that, though. I just shrug my shoulders and continue to pick the lint off her couch.

I consider ending my visits to Dr. Lauer. Perhaps if depression is normal, if it is sane, I'm wasting my time trying to get rid of it. Or maybe getting rid of it isn't the point of therapy at all. Perhaps the point is hiding it, so the Mandys of the world won't notice and feed me chocolate until I weigh 200 pounds. Maybe I should just ask Dr. Lauer what the point is.

She is looking at me intently, as if she's trying to see inside my head. I hate when she does that. I look away, like when a dog thinks if he can't see you, you can't see him.

"What do you think the point of therapy is? What are you hoping to get out of it?" She has not stopped staring.

I concentrate on picking lint off her couch. I wonder how she still has a couch left. I wonder if any of her other patients pick at the couch. I wonder why I pay this woman if I don't want to answer her questions.

And then it occurs to me.

"I want answers, I want you to explain to me what the point is."

"The point of what? Therapy?" she asks.

"No," I say. "Life. What's the point of life?"

She sits back and makes some notes. She's heard this one before, I'm sure. I feel I need to explain.

"I think if I knew what the point was, I wouldn't be depressed anymore."

"What if there is no point? How would that make you feel?"

The possibility had not occurred to me. There has to be a point, doesn't there?

Well, doesn't there? ■



"In Between Places" by Nick Wiesinger
16"x20" Silver Gelatin Print

Cashier Poet

Rebecca Susan Richardson

Please, be a horrible customer.
Please get angry at store policy
and assume that I – a lowly cashier,
having high and mighty head-honcho
corporate connections – can effect the kind
of change that only a customer could love.
Keep calling cashiers crummy human beings.
Keep being the customer I dread to serve.

Please ramble on your cell-phone while I –
hapless human harassed into helping
negligent name-callers negotiate
Old Navy's "latest and greatest" styles –
try to attract your attention when I notice
that you only bought one two-for-twelve-fifty.
Snap your credit card across the pin-pad device –
still sighing over your girl's gossip –
and take your receipt without a second glance.

"Please come again," I tell a lovely lie.
And you do return, receipt in hand, hissing
over the two-for I "forgot" to ring up.
Remember you? Of course I do!
I only have hundreds of customers
come courting cashiers' catastrophe
while I work ten hours daily at Christmas time.
Of course I remember every detail
of your transaction from three hours ago!

Please remember, I am no longer a cashier.
I am a cash register, a computer,
a U-scan without hands and a heart,
just a head that is about to explode
from lack of love and a limitless line
of customers whose credit ails are mine!
At least, for a time.

Because, cashier-crushing customer,
my shift ends in five minutes, and when I step off
I will turn your tantrums into my own private poetry.
I grin when you call me a crummy cashier;
while you whine in line I laugh at lyrics
I mentally write over my plight.
It's victory for me, writing happily over
mishaps that happened at my expense,
because I get the last laugh.
I get to turn my pain into poetry,
my customers into characters,
my day into drama, and your
hatred into my happiness.

I owe you this – not just the
two cents you think I cheated you out of.
I owe you a muses' medal for making me
learn how to take my disaster days
of cashiering customers who never ever
temper their tempers with patience,
and produce pet-peeve poetry.
Berate me and I benefit –
me, the crummy cashier poet.

Pop Talk

Rebecca Susan Richardson

Valley talk, surfer talk, hood talk,
I-don't-get-it-talk.
MTV, Seventeen, People Magazine.
I don't speak this lingo, yo.
My buds scream, "SHUT up!"
when I say I'm switching majors.
Did I say something wrong?
MTV says "bling bling" is dead. Really?
"Fo shizzle, Breezy," my girl rolls her eyes.
Wait; am I a breezy, a chick, a dawg, or just a girl?
I gotta fess, I'm clueless.
TV talk, tabloid talk, radio talk, movie talk.
I ask "How'd ya like the movie?"
She says, "Rocked my face off!"
Try slammin' knee-first, ribs-first, chin-first
into a rock climbing wall. That I can relate to.
Try Shakespeare talk, old-school talk, English talk,
and maybe I'll get your drift.
Try writer's talk, poet's talk, rhyme-time talk,
and then you'll be talking MY lingo.
But will you get my drift?
Holla at me one more time in your slang talk!
So: "your mom" is a dis, and the crib is jancky,
and if your new car is bunk you got punked
and that's so rah, and if it's cool then it's hot
and if it's tight it's alright and apparently
these jeans make me look phat.
Tru dat.
Ok, I'm down wit it -
although, I always thought I was pretty smart...

The Earth, Her Body

Theresa Carol Williams

A slice of roseate sky glows from the horizon
like a soft piece of silk, spun for fashion
It lay there on the neck of the world
Breathing
Inhaling
Exhaling

Scarves, like skylines, wrap around things
Curving like orange peels and falling
from shoulders and sliding down the body
Like the sun
creeping, elegantly,
along the Earth's
hips and thighs

And like a lady's glow,
from her blush and shimmer,
the waters move
as if they were a poem
and she was the speaker
and all the clouds in the atmosphere
could not dull her reflection

And from the core
where the fire burns and the nickel turns
there is magnetism,
attraction
that only she feels when men walk upon
her surface

She spins and turns
so as to show herself to the Universe
but still remains motionless in one place

The True Meaning of Autumn
(from The Life and Opinion of Power Enforcer M.D.)

Brandon Storm

In the cool, autumn morning, M.D. sat on the front porch of his white, two-story house. His shirt was faded, but the words “James Dean Festival” were still faintly visible. His stonewashed jeans were patched at the knees.

“It’s too easy—it’s been too easy, for too long—Power Enforcin’ that is,” M.D. said to himself, while pulling a *Kentucky’s Best* from behind his ear. “There has to be more to travelin’ the nation Power Enforcin’ than this. I know there is ‘cause I seen it.”

He stood up and looked out with an undecipherable gaze over the front lawn. He ran his fingers through his Bono circa Live-Aid-orange mullet and flicked his cigarette across the lawn onto the neighbor’s front porch. “I thought you didn’t smoke Johnny—WAKE UP!” he screamed with a smirk.

M.D. paced around the yard for a moment. “Power Enforcin’s lost its soul; it’s lost its purpose. I just can’t stand for this! The world needs Power Enforcin’! I gotta recharge m’batt’ry. I gotta remember what it was to be young and in love with the road, Enforcin’ Power at every stop.”

M.D. walked to the lone tree in his yard and looked up to the fort held snugly in its branches.

“Ricket Boy! Hey Ricket! You hear me?”

There was the sound of scurrying. A second later a young man in stained sweatpants and a homemade Reba McEntire t-shirt appeared in the fort’s window.

“YeaeAHeahhhheah?” he screamed.

“I’m gonna be gone for a day or two, I got some Enforcin’ that needs to be Enforced. You stay outta my house ‘less you hear my

phone ring, all right? You answer that phone, you hear me! Other n’ that, stay out!”

Ricket Boy replied by pounding on the window ledge and screaming, “You got a deaAeaaE!”

M.D. entered his perfectly hand-painted ’73 Ford Falcon XB Coupe and pulled out of his driveway. As soon as the engine was a distant hum, Ricket Boy was out of the tree fort and climbing into M.D.’s house through the front window.

By noon M.D. had traveled halfway across the nation to the Native American gaming town of Fire Feather. He pulled his car into the drive of a rundown dive of a bar and stepped out onto the gravel.

“Who are you?” a voice yelled through a screen door.

“I guess I haven’t introduced myself. The name is M.D., Power Enforcer M.D. My friends say I’M KING.”

The voice called out again. “What do you want?”

M.D. flicked away a half-smoked cigarette and pointed at the bar. “Near on twenty years ago I buried a case of important items right here, right where your bar stands. I said to myself twenty years ago, I said, ‘M.D. twenty years from now you’re gonna need everything you just put in the ground,’ and here I am, twenty years later, right on with my impeccable foresight, dead set on retrieving my goods.”

The screen door opened and a man walking with the aid of two canes stepped outside. “Just what the hell are you talkin’ about, son?”

M.D. looked to his left and then to his right, as if making sure the man was addressing him. “Am I speakin’ Swahili? Did all that sound like a bunch of clicks and whistles? ‘X’ marks the spot is what I’m sayin’, and only two men call me son, and that’s El Presidente and

the Pope, and the Pope only does when I say so.” M.D. furrowed his brow and raised his palms to the sky, as if asking, Was that clear? He moved to the back of the Falcon, opened the trunk, and retrieved a flashlight and a shovel.

“I don’t have your box, mister,” said the ramshackled elderly man.

“Did I say you did? No. The ground got it—and I’m gettin’ it back. And I’m unstoppable.”

M.D. walked on by the old man, swung the screen door open, and entered the bar. For the most part it was empty, save for the bartender and some rowdy-looking regulars huddled around a few tables. M.D. walked to the center of the building and lifted his nose. “I can smell the salt in the air. It’s go time!”

M.D. began to kick floorboards loose, left and right. The wooden planks flew through the air and skidded across the floor. The rowdy regulars set their drinks down and began to walk over to M.D. to get a closer look at the ruckus he was creating.

“What’re you doin’, man?” asked one of the regulars, a slightly overweight Texan in a rainbow t-shirt.

M.D. stopped kicking floorboards and looked right in the man’s eyes. “I think I’m Power Enforcin’.”

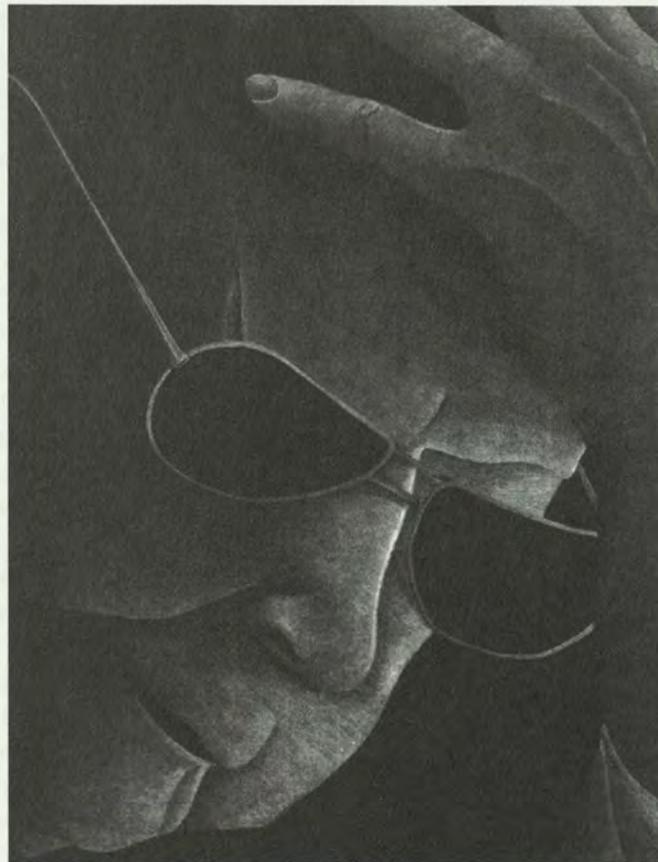
“What?”

“Let’s sound it out. Repeat after me: I—”

“I—”

“Think—”

“Think—”



“Genius in the Making” by Michael R. Dunkin
18”x24” Colored Pencil on Black Paper

“I’m—”

“I’m—”

“Power—”

“Power—”

“Enforcin’.”

“Enforcin’.”

“Good, now put that together for me.”

“I... think... I’m... Power... Enforcin’?”

“Hey, ya did it! Now take a bow!” M.D. punched the man in the stomach, doubling him over.

M.D. scanned the rest of the regulars. “Who else wants a nice cold glass of Power Enforcement? One fist or two?”

Another regular dashed toward M.D. with a pool cue. M.D. chopped the stick in half with his bare hand and punched the attacker in the face, sending him to the floor in a spasm of Power Enforcement. The remaining regulars furiously drew knives or smashed beer bottles open and pointed them at M.D.

“This reminds me of the time I was in Tibet climbing through the Himalayas

with the Dalai Lama. We set up camp one night and—HEYA—outta nowhere came at least thirty of them damn yetis. Dalai Lama said to me, he said, ‘We ain’t gonna make it outta this one M.D.!’—and I said back to him, I said ‘Have a li’l faith brother, this is gonna be a bit hard but we can do it. We ain’t outta the woods yet though!’ We punched and kicked all night long until, hell, yeah, you guessed it, each one a ‘em yetis was dead or badly bruised. What I’m sayin’ is, it

ain't often that I find myself surrounded and outnumbered. But what I'm also sayin' is that you guys ain't no pack of yetis. HEAVY METAL BAY-BEE!"

Thundersong reached behind the bar and retrieved a machete.

M.D. spun around like a cyclone, striking his adversaries down two at a time. He dodged their knives and glass shards and kicked the back of their necks, just enough to stun them, with his 24-karat gold cowboy boots that glistened like the golden headdress of a Mayan king.

The 107-year-old bartender watched impartially.

M.D. sprinted across the floor and threw his body across three drunk regulars. The force of the blow, and the ensuing fall, caused them to vomit thick, red goo all over one another, while lying on the ground.

"You're a buncha sick puppies," said a disgusted M.D., as he stood and backed away from the putrid mess.

M.D. dusted himself off and looked across the devastated bar. There were only two men left standing: M.D., and a grizzled pirate of a man named Ricky Ronald Thundersong.

"Hey," said M.D., "being one-sixteenth injun m'self, this is gonna hurt me as much as it hurts you. I'm gonna feel your pain. I already feel the pain of our once great nation."

Thundersong reached behind the bar and retrieved a machete. M.D. grabbed his *Bodyguard* belt buckle and swiftly removed the belt from his pants. He began to swing it over his head like a manriki gusari (a ninja weapon, and M.D. knew all about ninja, inside and out). Thundersong rushed forward. M.D. didn't budge. As Thundersong prepared to strike, M.D. let the end of the belt with the buckle fly out toward Thundersong's throat. It connected and Thundersong flipped head-over-heels from the force of the blow. M.D. slid his belt back on and went back to kicking up floorboards.

Once a large enough area was cleared, M.D. began to dig. Four minutes later, after digging down eight feet, M.D. heard a clang. "HO-LY! HO-LY! There it is! Heavy Metal, Baby!"

The bartender now seemed interested in what was going on.

M.D. lifted a decently sized steel box from out of the ground.

He wiped the dirt away from its lid to reveal the initials "M.D." scratched on by car keys. He struck the lid of the box with his bare hand and it slowly opened.

Inside were a stack of *Grit* magazines, some bottle rockets, and ticket stubs: three of the things that made M.D. the man he was. They were items from another era, items of a younger M.D., one that felt the earth tremble every time he took a step.

M.D. sat himself down Indian style in front of the box and rifled through its contents.

"Bottle rockets—the hell? I coulda used those!" He stuffed them under his belt.

M.D. picked up the stack of magazines. "'Sell *Grit!*' that's what the comics used ta' say. No one wanted no dang *Grit!* You made a fool of me *Grit Magazine*, but you showed me there had to be more ta' life than workin' for some change and bein' someone's fool! Back in the box you go!"

M.D. felt hesitant to pick up the ticket stubs. He looked at them one at a time stopping now and again to look up toward the Heavens. "It's too powerful."

M.D. looked at stub after stub. "I remember these shows! Heavy Metal, Baby. Heavy Metal. Rock and Roll's too powerful for you!"

M.D. stood and placed the stubs back into the box, slammed it shut, and threw it back into the hole where it promptly exploded. He threw three dollars worth of change toward the bartender and smiled.

"For the damages."

M.D. made his way to the bar's front porch.

The man with two canes was still standing outside. "Did you find what you were looking for?"

"You know I did, you dumb bastitch! I discovered Power Enforcin' don't ever stop. Power Enforcin' just don't ever stop. Some seasons might be dry but the Power's still there to be Enforced. The leaves might fall and the trees might be stripped bare but the world keeps movin', the Power keeps needin' to be Enforced. That's the true meaning of autumn, and that's the true meaning of Power Enforcin'. Keep it a secret." And with that he was on his way home.

Traffic was better on the drive back, so it only took a little over half as long. M.D. spun the Falcon into the driveway, left it running, and hopped out. There was a trail of *Redbooks* and *Ladies Home Journals*, all featuring Reba McEntire stretching from the tree fort to M.D.'s house, but he wasn't in the mood to care. M.D. leaped onto the porch and called for Ricket Boy.

"Get out here, now! You ain't got none of my time to waste! C'mon Ricket!"

Ricket Boy crawled out from the window. "That's not My NAmE, I'm Ricket BOY!"

"You're whatever the Good Lord named you, now get in the car!"

"Whhy?"

"Because we got some work to do, boy! Lishun t'me! Lishun! We got a full tank of gas and God's good day ahead of us. The world's a big place and there's only one man that can Enforce Power with a Powerful Force and that's me—and baby I'm unstoppable."

Ricket Boy slid into the car through the open passenger-side window. And just as M.D. threw himself over the porch railing, the phone began to ring.

"HO-LY!" screeched M.D. He jumped back onto the porch, ran inside the house, and picked up the phone.

"Who is it!"

"M.D., it's Jorge from Mekicko. It's time for Josephina's quinceañera."

"When's it start?"

"In one hour."

"You know I'll be there. Heavy Metal Bay-Bee!"

M.D. threw the receiver down and bolted out of the house. He slid inside the Falcon and was on the road before the car door closed.

Ricket Boy scanned the horizon nervously. "Heaeay, whAt's HappenINg?"

M.D. said, finally, "It's go time, Ricket. It's go time." ■



"Untitled Bench" by George D. Mast
36"x88"x20" Walnut Osage Orange and Bubinga

Lemonade Stand in the Graveyard

Clint Smith

This place, some may say, is a bad place for this kind of stand. Bad for business I guess, what with the headstones and snails slinking over marble markers out here in the boneyard.

Nothing special about this booth—planks from abandoned pirate ships held together with a jar full of nails. Old bristles dipped in black lacquer and broom handles to support my sign.

Beginning with those yellow egg-shaped fruit—peeling back their waxy skin (almost reptilian) for some juice. Dissolve the sugar. Dilute with water. Stir. My stand was inspired

by a child—her campaign. In the end she had no pain. In the end she was 8 (inside dwelling on that indelible design—the way that singular character is shaped). Years ago our class passed

this location on a field trip en route to an antediluvian museum. We learned about scurvy—Barlow's disease. Primates (it turns out) are no longer able to produce Vitamin C due to lost genetic

information. Lately a few have been a little critical—too much citric acid burning up their guts—too bitter. Some feel compelled to spit it out to prove their point. Typically complaints

come from those with prison cell grins or firecrackers stuffed in their eye sockets. Some are so desperate to take a homemade drink they don't regard where they are (the graveyard) they make

the mistake of falling

—arms outstretched, into one of those freshly dug pockets and I usually don't see them again. For now I am content, especially in the morning after the small hours ebb—

When dawn yawns across the cemetery's cobwebbed carpet. It's not so awful when there is a lack of traffic in The Acre Because I have my Grandma to keep me company.

Finishing Touches

Clint Smith

He waits at the kitchen table and stares at his sepia-framed face in that space over the sink

—that hazy x-ray reflection lingers in the window. Twilight stretching shadows on the other side.

Under the low-watt glow: vegetable soup getting cold in a bowl—cold like the umbilical spiral

of cord hanging from the rotary phone would feel between his fingers and how the receiver might be.

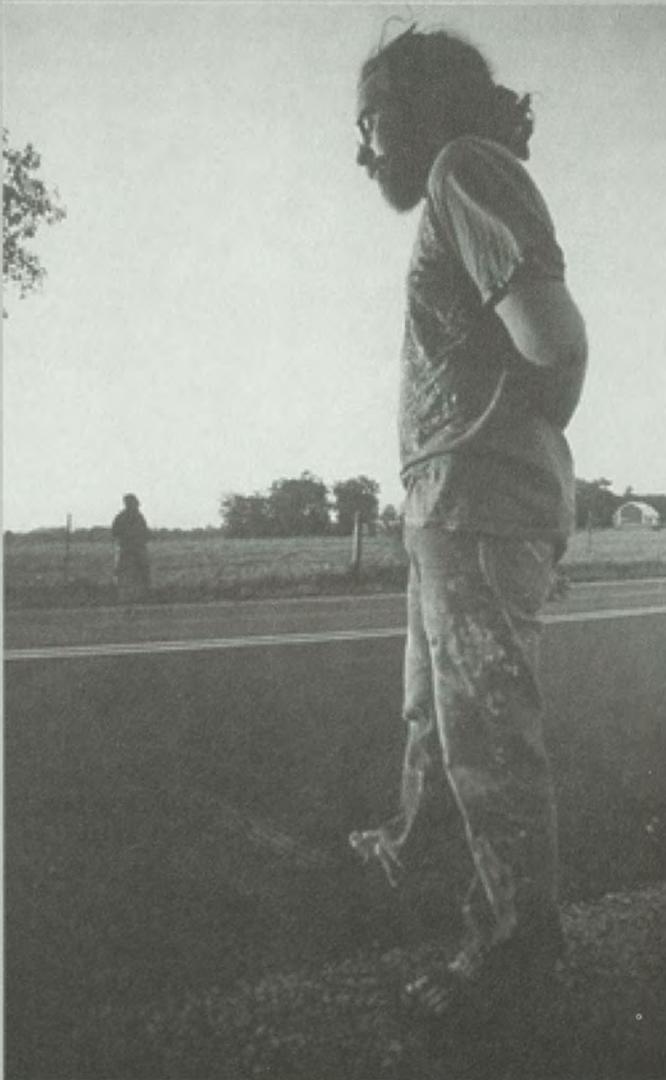
Never repeat this: mostly he thinks about his father's farm out in the middle of Illinois, surrounded by lakes of frozen fields.

This man continues to listen to God & Devil debate over business in the family room. From time

to time he glances in on those two as they argue in the near darkness—both backlit by the night lights

of his Christmas tree (which has taken years for him to break down and put back in its box). And still he waits

For his dead wife to come home from Armenia or for you to walk through the door —which ever happens first.



"Do We Ever Give Up?" by H. Vincent Peterson
Photograph

A Cross Country Team Runs by a Corpse

Clint Smith

Dressed in a blue suit and a yellow tie—
a noose too hard to tell on this fellow. Thank God
For the twisted position in which the body lies
—it hides most of the decomposition
and a few of those plague-thirsty green bottle flies.

This dead guy's wrist is fixed with a—tick, tick—
timepiece; an ornament in life which has become a stop-
watch of sorts (that trophy was all his wife gave
with his police description). Safety-pinned squares
(individually numbered) give encouraging claps

on the young men's backs, until the friction
of shorts making secret sounds ceases.
An awkward athlete (#3) sees him first. At school
an abbreviation for the team looks like: X-COUNTRY.
And we know what's next—that primeval rise & fall

of feet; a genuflect reflex to cover our mouth
—cover our face. Most boys retreat from the cadaver
and run away from the finish line; no longer
concerned with who wins or who has the best time.
However some maintain this is a race after all.





"Which One?" by Christina Watson
10"x7" Photograph

Alone in the Apartment

Josh Flynn

When I returned from the hospital, my apartment appeared less promising than it had a month before. The art school fantasies spurred by reading about the Talking Heads and watching the film *Basquiat* had diminished, lost in a nightmare of depression. I no longer thought of the apartment being filled with friends, discussions of art, music, movies, and books lasting through the night. Instead I saw reality. I was alone with boxes of unpacked belongings. The apartment was no longer eccentric. It was just another old, rundown place in the shadows of Indianapolis skyscrapers. As each lonely day passed, it became an entity I feared.

I did meet a couple of people in the building, and afterward tried to avoid them at all costs. They added to my dislike of the place. I would encounter the first as I passed through the arched doorway, while stepping onto the green-tiled floor caked with dirty footprints. I would walk up the three steps that led to the first floor hall and the old lady would always be there. She was fragile, her tree-twigg arms straining to move her walker. From a distance one might mistake her for an innocent elderly woman. She would wear a knitted, white sweater, which buttoned up in the front and a blue night gown. Her white hair would be pinned up and her glasses would be a slow avalanche sliding down the bridge of her nose. But, upon closer inspection, you could see the madness oozing from her squinted eyes, madness that had turned to hate from her isolation in the apartment building. She would wait with tongue rolled up behind her dentures and lash out when someone stepped within range. She would point at the massive stains on the hall carpeting and proclaim, "These goddamned kids are tearing the place apart!" I never once

saw a child during my time there, but I do not doubt that in her mind there is an army of youth haunting her.

A set of purple stairs spiraled up to the second floor, and I would walk to my apartment on carpet as stained as that on the first floor. On the second floor an oppressive heat would hit me. By the time I walked down the filthy hall to my place I was ready for a shower. The brown carpet was thick with dirt and unraveling away from the walls. The walls had once been white, but were now a dirty yellow with little brown streaks of slime creeping down them. A friend, upon his only visit, once looked at a particularly bad patch of slimy tendrils and asked, "Did someone get their head blown off in here?"

On the second floor lived a large man who would open his door every time I passed and step into the hall followed by a fog of smoke. He wore his hair long and tied back in a ponytail. A scraggly beard grew around his puffy cheeks and chin. A black shirt would always be struggling to wrap itself around his belly, holding on for dear life. And he always wore a necklace with a satanic pentagram. He stopped me once when I first moved in and asked me if I were a student. I replied yes and commented on his shirt, which had a picture of Neil Gaiman's *The Sandman*. He mistook this as friendship and would always lay in wait of my passing.

I never met my neighbor across the hall. But, I would awake each morning to find anti-government rants taped to his door. I read the first out of curiosity and found it full of death threats directed to FBI agents and feared the CIA was after him and his family. From that point on, I opened and closed my door quickly and quietly, moving inside my apartment or to the stairs as fast as possible, always

fearing a gun would be pressed hard against his door, looking for a reason to be fired.

For the most part, my boxes remained packed during my stay. Only two rooms were ever appropriately set up, the bedroom and the bath. Not able to move my bed by myself, I left it behind in my old apartment and planned on using my air mattress. It lasted for about a month before developing a slow leak. Each morning I would wake up sinking in a swamp of plastic and blankets. I also had an old kitchen table in the bedroom, using it to set my computer, scanner, and printer on. The closet was packed full with mostly boxes and the few shirts I owned.

I had grand plans for the living room. The walk-in closet with double doors had been one of the key selling points when I was first shown the place. I imagined setting up my own entertainment center in it. My TV, stereo, music and movies all hidden, in wait for me to swing open the doors and surprise my guests with the massive collection. Those ideas were shot early on. I could not afford cable and my TV picked up no reception in the closet. I soon moved all those things out and the closet doors remained closed, hiding only a *Cheers* board game and a planter from my grandmother's funeral.

One of the first purchases I made for the apartment was a pair of blue curtains. I had imagined them hanging from their rod, extending to tickle the wood floor. They almost made it, but they were too short



"Compelled to Dwell" by Desiree Moore
5"x7" Photograph

in width and my living room always remained partially exposed to the apartments across the parking lot.

In front of the gap between the curtains, I sat my drawing table. To the right I put together black plastic shelves and loaded them with CDs and my aquarium, which housed three hermit crabs named Tori, Neil, and Edward Scissorhands. When I got home from the hospital, I would find the poor things dead, their bodies dried, twisted, and withered. They lay removed from their shells, having fought a hard battle to

escape their homes and survive. My first act, when returning home after a month, was to

dump the aquarium containing the decayed bodies in the dumpster outside. In the left corner I stacked five wooden crates filled with books, sat a John Lennon figurine on top of one, and hung a mirror with a welded bronze frame I bought only because it reminded me of something I once saw in a Nine Inch Nails music video. On the floor sat seven boxes that would be opened only when I thought I needed something from them.

The decorating for the other rooms was sparse. The kitchen was tiny—there was barely any room to stand in. The linoleum would crunch every time you took a step. It curled up at the walls, trying to escape the place. On the left side of the kitchen was a counter and above it a row of cabinets. On top of the cabinets I lined a row of *Star Wars* actions figures. Padme, little Anakin, the Emperor, Vader, and a few others stood looking down upon my sink, stove, and

fridge. Next to these I sat a large *South Park* Eric Cartman statue. As the weeks passed, each figure would eventually fall backwards. I taped their tiny feet to the cabinet top, but the tape would lose its grip, and the figures would topple down.

In the bathroom, painted a light green compared to the white plaster-like walls in the rest of the apartment, I sat a blue waste basket on the floor and a blue tooth brush holder on the sink. The bathroom had a tiled floor colored the same green as the walls. The tub was an old fashioned model, standing up on porcelain legs. On the shower rod, I fastened a curtain made of material that shone either green or blue, depending on where you stood.

The apartment was as decorated as it would ever get. There were still many boxes whose contents would never see the light of day. They remained filled with magazines, books, action figures, and odd things I had collected over the years. This was as close as I would get to making it feel like home.

As the months wore on, no new art school friends developed and no one I knew had any desire to visit. I soon found myself alone with these strange characters inside the building. I decided to go outside and explore.

Living downtown was not what I expected. In my naïve mind I imagined adventure and excitement. I imagined walking around with my camera all the time snapping pictures. I was not prepared for the poverty and desperation that came with urban living. I discovered

people had no qualms with asking you for money any time of day, and those very people would be the only ones I had contact with.

My phone had been turned off during the hospital stay. I had no money to reactivate it, so I found myself using the payphone next door, which sat outside a bar called *The Varsity Lounge*. One day I called my friend and was in the midst of a conversation when a scrawny man came up beside me. He wore a tattered white t-shirt,

stained with dirt, and he wore faded blue jeans caked with mud at the bottom of each leg. His right knee was exposed thanks to a giant hole that looked like it had been created by a bomb planted on his knee cap. Blue threads trailed from the edges of the crater and fluttered in the breeze. His knee was covered in sores.

Cold eyes looked at me from a hungry face. He asked for money. I continued to talk on the phone but shook my

head no, trying to tell him I had no money, which was the truth, without speaking any words to him.

He continued to stand there, hand outstretched, waiting for a few coins to land in his palm. I prolonged the phone conversation as long as I could, overcome with fear and waiting for the man to leave. But he continued to stand with his arm outstretched and hand open. I talked on, surprised I could carry a conversation for so long. Eventually he gave up and walked away.

Most often I could not refuse these people. One time I sat in



"Bare Feet. Milan, Italy" by Justin Dodd
4.75"x7" Photograph

a McDonald's across the street from my apartment. I was getting started on a meal, cheeseburger, french fries, and a coke, when a man sat down across from me. He was very tall and tired-looking. He said hello and I humored him, not sure what to do but not particularly wanting him at my table. He told me about all his hardships, being betrayed by women, by his own family. He spoke to me like we were best friends and he could confess anything and I would have a solution to his problems. But I didn't. All I could offer him were my french fries, which he happily accepted and devoured. I wanted to get away from this. "I'm going to go now," I said.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"I'm going to go home and watch *The Simpsons*," I replied.

"I want to watch *The Simpsons* too." He smiled.

I bet you do, I thought, and hurried away.

There was one other instance that stands out in my mind. It was a cold December night and the wind had no mercy. I felt its cold stabs as I walked to that arched doorway. A small woman stopped me. She had large childlike eyes and she spoke in a sing-song voice. She needed money to stay in the shelter for the night. She told me she was harmless, and with shaking, unsteady fingers removed several bottles of medication from her coat pocket with a desire to show them to me. I empathized with her, immediately thinking of my own collection of medication lining my kitchen counter. I reached into my pocket and gave her my last five dollars. I did not know if she really needed money for the shelter. I had probably been conned. But, looking at the bottles of pills in her trembling hands, I could see myself in her position for just a moment. It was a long enough moment to justify parting with the money.

The roaches arrived in the early fall. One night I was on the couch, the TV attempting to entertain me, but failed in maintaining reception. Out of the corner of my eye I saw something dart up the wall. It moved in a zigzag fashion, never sure where it was going. It scurried to the left, then to the right. It moved up a foot, then down two feet. I let it go on its way. I had never seen a real roach. I had no

idea what pests they were. I thought nothing of it.

I woke the next morning and went into the bathroom. I slid the shower curtain back. Another roach raced along the edge of the tub. In the kitchen sink one climbed over the lip of a cereal bowl. I went to the office and informed them of these visitors, and returned home from class late that afternoon to find a note saying my apartment had been sprayed.

I slept restlessly that night. At this point in time I still slept in my bedroom on my air mattress. The fan swiveled back and forth, trying hard to cool me but not succeeding. With each pass the hairs on my legs would shift, and I would imagine a bug crawling on my leg. My hand would lash out to knock it away, but find nothing. I drove myself insane that night. Between the heat and the paranoia of roaches, I did not sleep. After that I would forever sleep on the couch, a safe island in a wooden sea patrolled by bugs.

The spray did not help. They returned with a vengeance. I would see roaches climbing up the walls in twos or threes. They attacked the kitchen, hiding in every drawer, under every dish in the sink, setting up fort under the fridge. God knows what the evil things did to poor Padme as she lay on top of my cabinet.

In the morning I would scan the bathroom, creating a mental scouting report before stepping in. I would find them hugging the base of the toilet, inspecting the canyon of the tub, sliding down the porcelain of the sink.

Once I opened a box of magazines, looking for a specific one. I was greeted by a roach sitting atop a mountain of *Rolling Stone*. It was now their apartment. I was but an unwanted houseguest they were trying to chase away.

Things only got worse from there. Soon the tub's drain became clogged. One night I went to shower and found a shallow pool of gray water lingering at the bottom of the tub. Maintenance came the next day and got things fixed. But, two days later I found it backed up again. I began purchasing Liquid Draino on a weekly basis.

Looking at the bottles of pills in her trembling hands, I could see myself in her position for just a moment.

It was more effective than anything maintenance could do. But even that stopped working at some point. And I found myself having to shower in a diluted gray muck.

As fall turned to winter, I was hiding at school as much as I could. I anticipated the moment I could leave the apartment and dreaded when I would have to return. I spent hours sitting around campus before class. I prayed to see someone I knew, just so I would have some contact with humanity, someone who would not beg me for money I didn't have. I would be okay if I could find anyone, if anybody would spare me five minutes of conversation. That was all I needed. Five minutes.

When it came time to step through that arc and for my feet to hit the dirty floor, my heart would break. What was I doing there? How did I get there? When did those art school fantasies dissipate, leaving me alone with a battalion of bugs, and showering in dirty water up to my ankles. I was afraid to be in my apartment and afraid to be outside of it unless I was going to campus. School distracted me but when I was alone in the apartment my mind wandered to bad places. Places I had only nearly escaped months before and hoped never to return.

Night was the worst. In the dark I could not keep an eye on what was around me. I slept on the couch with the TV on, NBC fading in and out. I slept in shifts, asleep for twenty minutes, awake for an hour. I caught pieces of everything that aired through the night. I was awake for the midnight session of the Sydney Olympics, seeing through tired eyes, events nobody cared about like equestrian and judo. One night I went to sleep and Al Gore had won Florida. When I woke later, nobody knew who won it. I would fall asleep during Jay Leno's monologue and wake for Conan O'Brian's first guest.

At some point in the night a desperate clanging would begin. I never figured out where it came from. It was the sound of steel pipes hitting with great force. They would beat against each other, metallic wails emitting from an invisible source. Every night I would hear them.

Around three or four in the morning a car alarm would sound. I would startle out of sleep to the screaming "whoos" and "beeps," then it would die and I would collapse back into the couch. Every night.

The apartment was breaking me. The early days of January brought a hail of snow and sleet. Inside my apartment it was still eighty degrees. I was melting and could not figure how to turn down the heat. I looked out the cracks of frost on the window and saw everything covered with white dust. I could make nothing out. I felt trapped. Just me and the apartment. I had to leave.

I woke up a few days later after a night spent watching a roach marathon. They climbed across the perimeter of the living room and I made up my mind. I got up and dressed, and began hauling those unopened boxes down to my car. I packed as much as I could and said goodbye to things I could live without. I knew there would be consequences for my actions, but I did not care. I knew if I remained alone in my apartment I would go insane and end up back in the hospital. Or worse.

How I had lasted so long I did not know. I started the car, slid carefully into the slippery alley, and made a slow escape in the cold, snowy morning. ■

It's Getting Better

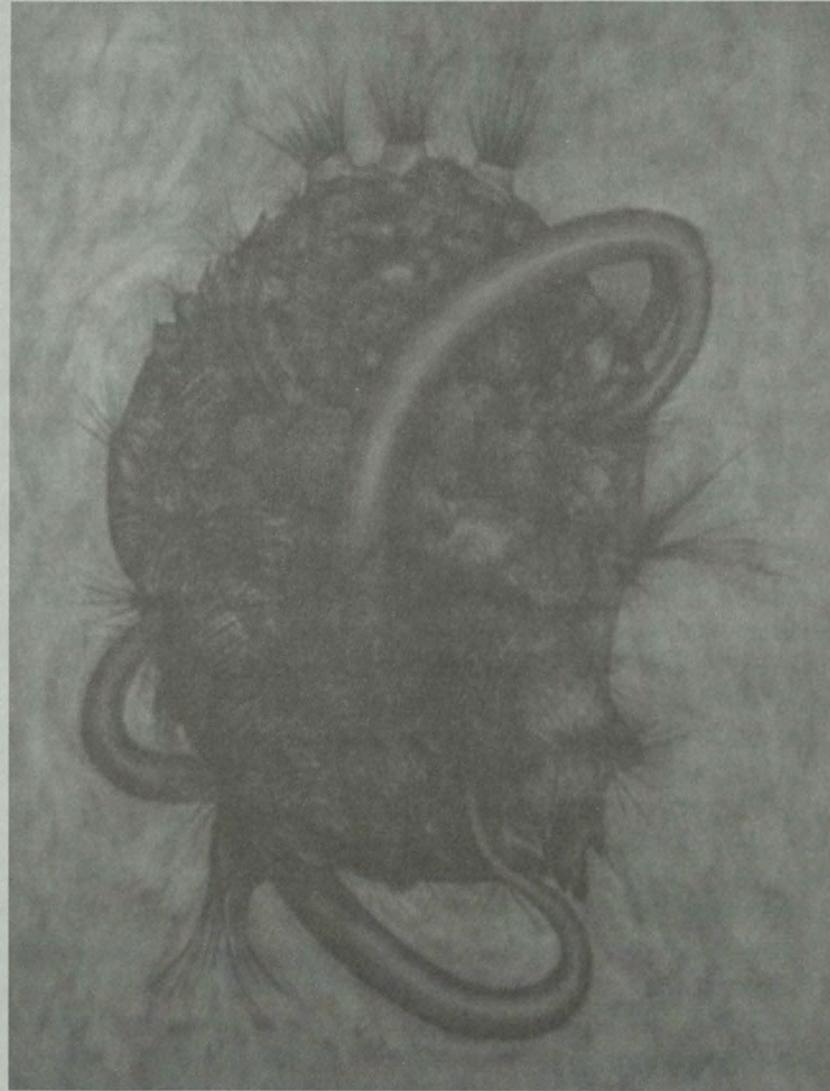
Megan Kinyon

You tasted like the earth
when I kissed you in the kitchen.
I cannot fault you for that
and you never lost your sanity.
I'm getting better at accepting
 what duty tells me to scold.

I cannot fall asleep
while you are still awake.
You drain so quickly.
I feel you there one moment.
I stroke your jaw
and your subterranean breath ensues.
I'm getting better at dreaming
 by your side.

The music faded off and onto me
and in your sleep
you're telling someone something.
I lose my perception again.
You aren't speaking to me.
I'm getting better at understanding
 I'm the center of nothing.

I woke you with a kiss
that you claimed you wouldn't wake without
after brass doorknobs fall to the floor.
Inches from your face is mine.
From here, I tell you you're beautiful
and there isn't any light yet.
I'm getting better at knowing
 without having to see.



"Coronary" by George D. Mast
17"x22" Charcoal Pencil

Best of Issue: Prose

Josh Flynn

My cousin Caily wants to be a basketball star. At eleven she stands at almost five feet tall. She's stocky with dirty blonde strands of hair coiling from her head. Freckles dot the landscape of her face while beautiful brown eyes look at everyone with care. In the summer she prefers baggy gym shorts and her Tamika Catchings jersey, a blue and red replica of one worn by her favorite WNBA player. Caily has never cared for dolls or looking pretty.

Kellie is the polar opposite of her sister Caily. At eight, Kellie is a slender diva. She has an angel's face and a devil's attitude. Her dark brown hair is always perfect and she is always dressed in the finest fashions made for the eight-year-old crowd. She struts around in all pink, with glimmering earrings in her ears, sparkling bracelets dangling from her tiny wrists. She wants to be a cheerleader or a gymnast, but that's as far as she will venture into the world of sports. Girls playing sports is yucky, she says.

I am given two options: stay home with my father who has been drinking all day, or go with my mother and brother to the basketball game. I hate sports but the game seems more bearable.

It's a high school basketball game, the start of the 1989 Indiana Boys' State Tournament. I am overwhelmed with the amount of people crammed into Kokomo's Memorial Gym. Each section brings a shift in school colors, from red and blue, to purple and white, to green and yellow, to red and black. I am excited for the victors and sad for the teams who must go home and wait months to play again. I have been bitten. I have been infected with basketball fever.

We sit in Assembly Hall, waiting for the IU women's team to start their game against Penn State. Caily is upset at seeing so many empty seats. I try to explain to her women's basketball just didn't have a fan-base like the men. Only schools like Connecticut and Tennessee could sell out their women's games, and those schools had won eight of the last ten championships. Kellie sits a few seats away next to her mom grumbling about all the closed stores in Bloomington's desolate mall.

Caily watches the players warm up and examines the red banners hanging from the rafters. Kellie asks if she could get autographs from the cheerleaders. A small group of musicians enter the arena, hauling tubas, clarinets, an electric guitar, and drums. They set up behind one basket, a small collective wearing black pants and white shirts with red vests. "Is that all the people in the band?" my mom asks.

"No. They never use the full band for women's games," I answer.

Caily is silent, listening to the musicians tune their instruments and watching the girls on the court continue to practice. "They should at least get the entire band," she finally says.

Caily is three years old. She loves to explore my room, digging through things to see what she can find and what I might let her keep. Her tiny hands rearrange my books but find nothing interesting there. She crawls under my bed, but nothing hides in the dark. The closet is too much of a mess even for her to venture into. Finally, disappointed, she gives up.

On a small dresser by my bed lay some basketball cards of the

1996 women's Olympic team. "Here Caily," I say, picking them up and handing them to her. "You can have these."

"I don't want basketball cards," she responds with disgust.

"But it's girls' basketball."

Her eyes widen, filled with amazement. "Girls can play basketball, too?" she asks.

Kellie is a gymnast this week. She makes me sit in the grass and watch her do cartwheels. As her legs flip up into the air, they swerve unsteadily to one side or the other. "That's a 9.5," I tell her. She is confused so I try to explain how the gymnasts are graded in competitions.

I watch many cartwheels. Kellie gives herself a score after each one. "That was a 9.7," she tells me after falling on her behind. "Definitely a 9.7."

My mom tells a story of my first attempt at playing basketball. A basket has been screwed onto a warped piece of board and hammered onto a tree. I am two, playing with my parents. "Shoot the ball, Josh," one of them says.

I run into the house and return with a toy *Star Wars* gun. I take aim and commence filling the ball with imaginary laser rays.

Caily's grandfather put up a basketball goal in their driveway. On summer days when I am home I play with her. In the past I have been very lax in following the rules, but now that she is eleven I try to teach her the appropriate ways to play. "Double-dribble," I call out. "That's a turnover. My ball. Check it to me."

"What?" she protests. "I've never heard of that."



"Swingset" by Whitney Mattila
11.25"x15" Digital Photograph

A few plays later she runs me over trying for a lay-up. "Charge. That's an offensive foul. My ball."

"I did not," she whines.

She tosses the ball to me. I try to make a quick path to the basket, but she steps in front of me and we collide. "Charge on you," she laughs before going after the ball that is rolling across the hot concrete into the shade of a small tree.

"No," I respond.

She forgets I am the referee here. "That was a blocking foul on you.

My ball."

She stomps her foot. "You're making this stuff up."

Kellie has her *Bratz* dolls perfectly lined up on a shelf. The large eyes sit in their large heads staring at us. She stands by her closet, showing me all the clothes she got for Christmas. I pick up one of the dolls and stuff it into my coat pocket, making sure it sticks out enough for her to see. It takes several moments, but when she finally notices, her face grows grim, and she silently comes toward me. She grabs the doll from my pocket and replaces it on the shelf, making sure it is in the exact position as before. She returns to her closet, shuffling backwards to keep an eye on me. She continues to show off her clothes, watching me closely the entire time. Eventually, her guard slips. I take advantage of the moment and snag another doll from the shelf. When she finally sees it she comes toward me again, growling my name as her right leg shoots out, kicking me in the shin.

My first WNBA game is between the Indiana Fever and Minnesota Lynx. Caily should be here with me, but she fell victim to her

grandfather's fear of downtown Indianapolis. I sit with my friend Melissa instead. Conseco Fieldhouse is nearly empty, yet everyone in attendance is having fun. I watch as the players head back to the locker rooms to prepare for the start of the game. They stop and sign autographs for the fans. I see Svetlana Abrosimova, a favorite from her days at the University of Connecticut, head off the floor. I shoot from my seat and seconds later I am waiting for an autograph. Sveta signs my scorecard. "Good luck tonight," I say.

"Thank you," she responds, her words thick with a Russian accent.

Caily goes to a basketball clinic taught by Stephanie White, a former Indiana Miss Basketball, an All-American at Purdue, and a member of the WNBA's Indiana Fever. I call her after the camp is over to see how it went.

"I don't think Stephanie really knows what she is talking about," she tells me.

I remind her White was once the all time leading scorer in Indiana girls' high school basketball and won a national championship at Purdue.

Kellie has spent a week at cheerleading camp. "Let me show you my cheers," she says. She gives me her book of cheers so I can look at it while she collects her pom-poms and gets into position. After several moments she is standing perfectly still. Then the black and red pom-poms fly up in the air and her right foot steps forward. "Give me a W," she yells. Then she falls silent. She looks at me and the cheerleading book, confused. "What comes next?" she asks.

"You should go see the girls play," my uncle says. There is a girls'



"Self Potrait - Fur Hat" by Nicole Yalowitz
24"x36" Charcoal on Paper

basketball team at Kokomo? I'm amazed.

A few days later I sit in the Kokomo South Campus gym. It's three or four times smaller than the Memorial Gym and thirty people are spread out between two sides of bleachers. Every voice echoes. Every squeak of shoes on the court echoes. Every shout of direction or reprimand from the coaches echoes.

I look up at the scoreboard. Kokomo leads 85 to 30 with four minutes left. Girls can play basketball. And they can be more exciting than the boys, I discover.

Caily buys her Tamika Catchings jersey at her first Fever game. I've taken her to see them play against Diana Taurasi and the Phoenix Mercury. Caily watches countless people enter Conseco Fieldhouse wearing shirts with Taurasi's image on them or shirts that celebrate

the three championships she won at Connecticut. I, too, am one of those people.

"Why is everyone wearing those shirts?" she asks.

"Because Connecticut is the best college team in the nation and Taurasi is the best player."

"They're going to be for her instead of the Fever?"

"Probably. I am, anyway."

She looks at me with disgust. "I'm going to be for the Fever." she says.

The Fever win a close one. "Tamika is my favorite player," she tells me as we exit the Fieldhouse. "But Diana is my second favorite."

"I've got you so brainwashed," I tell her.

Kellie has been dancing and singing for several weeks, insisting she is the next Britney Spears. She slinks around the room, swiveling

her hips and rolling her shoulders. I'm babysitting them while their mom is out of town. I'm attempting to watch a movie with Caily but Kellie wants all the attention. She sings a children's church hymn, the lyrics about Jesus clashing with the dance steps. "Oh, Jesus loved the little children," the words are slow and seductive, not at all how the lyricist intended them. "I just want to make love to you," she continues singing.

"What did you just say?" she finally gets the attention she's been craving.

She pushes her hair behind her ears as an angelic smile radiates across her face. "What's wrong?" she innocently shrugs.

It is 1992. People from Kokomo have filled one side of Market Square Arena for the girls' basketball state finals. Everyone wears hot pink shirts and a radio announcer comments that Kokomo's section looks like a sea of Pepto-Bismol. In a few hours I will see the city of Kokomo pushing their way into the Memorial Gym to celebrate a state championship. All corners of the gym will be filled and people will be overflowing onto the floor. Fire trucks will be pulled out of their garages with lights flashing and sirens blaring in celebration. I will see them pulled onto the side of Highway 31 as soon as we enter Tipton, a town next to Kokomo, feeling the need to congratulate their neighbor. All this for girls' basketball.

It's a cool summer night. The sun is fading but there is still some light. I have just watched a WNBA game on TV with Caily. I ask her if she wants to go down to her grandpa's and play basketball. She says yes. So does Kellie, who has watched the game with us out of pure boredom.

The sun is almost gone by the time we get there. It's two against one. Me versus them. We play to ten points. I don't even bother guarding Kellie. I want to get the game over with, and make three quick baskets. But the sun sets and the country darkness makes the basket invisible to me.

I talk trash, trying to frustrate Caily. She lobs the ball to her sister,

who stands all alone under the goal. She throws the ball up and in. "Woohoo!" The eight year old jumps up and down.

I miss my next shot. Caily runs the same play and Kellie gets another basket. She does a cheer.

A moment later and Kellie has tied the score.

I revise my game plan. I fall back in a one-man zone defense, making sure Kellie doesn't get the ball again. Caily has no problem with that. Seeing I am not guarding her as close as I was, she squares up and knocks down a basket. They lead, 8-6.

I know I can't see to shoot from the outside, so I power my way under the basket with two little girls grabbing at my arms. The three of us have probably committed a hundred fouls during the possession.

I make a shot to tie the game. "Next basket wins," I warn them.

Caily takes the ball out of bounds. Kellie takes off her shoes, dropping them to the court, and jumps up and down screaming, "Caily, I'm open. Pass it to me." Caily dribbles around. I try to keep an eye on both of them. Caily acts as if she will pass the ball to Kellie, but I don't buy it. Kellie is still screaming. I stand between them. Caily decides to shoot. The ball flies into the night sky and falls into the basket.

The two girls scream and run towards one another, leaping into each other's arms and crashing to the ground as if they had just hit a buzzer beater to win a championship.

"Technical foul," I calmly inform them. "The basket doesn't count. I get two free throws and the ball."

"What?" they both cry.

"Kellie took her shoes off and left them on the court. That's endangering the players and its unsportsmanlike conduct. So it's a technical."

They don't buy it. They know they beat me. They scurry off to brag to their grandpa. I stand all alone at the free-throw line and shoot my baskets. ■

I know I can't see to shoot from the outside, so I power my way under the basket with two little girls grabbing at my arms.

Best of Issue: Poetry

Zen Western

Michael Springer

"I wish we had time to bury them fellas."

"To hell with them fellas. Buzzards gotta eat, same as worms."

From The Outlaw Josey Wales

Like flint resting on sandpaper,
Clint sits,
formless whiskey in a clear, stout glass
in hand,

With unwavering calm, emotionless as headstones,
his eyes
reflect the expanses of sand, the blistering sun
of life.

With sixguns flowing from his holsters
so fast,
like wind changing directions, as elemental
as flame,

The crackle of guns, bodies falling as
he fires,
'til the cowboys are silent, cold and at peace, like
his eyes.



"History is a Verb" by H. Vincent Peterson
30"x40" Silver Gelatin Print



"Untitled" by Carrie Rebecca Armellino
11.5"x6.5"x8" Mannequin Head

edit

anna rae landsman

we were still in our shadow boxes then
i picked a rusted tin one for you
the back was black velvet
and i made that photo of an octopus into a transparency for the glass
and you made a box for me out of an old soapy window frame
behind the muck you could make out some rubies

so patient with symbol

we went on a long drive to the east of indiana
there, the pond scum wasn't a group of people
it was brilliance in the ditches
that moated our drive to the rumored marsh
in the fallout county

just like the lake of fire
and the boxcar mirrors
we bowed to everything with sacred fervor.
even the way you walked ahead on the welled path
and looked back at me was holy

a clearing revealed a tree with a hunting ladder.
while you climbed,
i fingered the circumference of the trunk
on the lap of a cracked tree was a rusted plate page
bent like a page
and two unblest hands blurred each side
i pried it off

i am a romantic
and by that i mean that i glisten for practically no one
we have since become split soap.
i raise the notion that your brain is filled with curdled cords
that burning doors couldn't save.
and now we are both poised in our separate entropic seats.

Drei Mädchen or Three Girls

Jay Snyder

*Hindering the artist is a crime,
it is murdering life in the bud!*

—Egon Schiele 1912.

Three Girls from Schiele's psyche

pencil and watercolour blocks;
discerning flesh and disrobing
no more than sultry suggestion.

Three Girls in Schiele's Studio

Organic and orgasmic obsessions
With demurring postures and gait.

Drei Mädchen on Schiele's sofa;

Young angelic, naive fräuleins,
Intertwined legs viewed from a hover

Tres Girls from Schiele's Brush

effusive emotions gush
from eyes like the alluring moans of sirens

Three Girls sketched from Schiele's

leaded wand rumored to be
indecent to Danube's moralists.

Three Girls beckon Schiele,
emanating a glow like fireflies;
invoking viewer and voyeur celestial
phantasms of innocence lost.



*"Gender as Construct" by Stefanie Mojonier
11"x14" Photograph*

Excerpts from “Staying Away From Bedtime”

David Dalton

Weeks Ago...?

A quiet thunder was growing in the distance as I slipped into the crowd, unnoticed. The party my friend invited me to was already out of control. People were lying about in the hallways, sipping domestic beer, talking about art projects they planned to work on, but probably never would. Listening to the soft rumble of the growing thunder from inside the building, I stood in the back of the room. I overheard two girls laughing at a guy across the floor who was dancing his heart out to some late '70s disco mix that was pumping from the speakers. He flailed about in all directions as if he had been seized by the spirits of whatever lost generation he had come from, but I knew better than to credit his ability to just let loose. I kept silent and continued to watch.

Some time...?

Jason had known me for over ten years, and having invited me on a whim, he knew I rarely made guest appearances at such events. Having known him since we were in junior high, I trusted him and respected his opinions. I have always preferred less distracting environments, but it had been awhile since I had seen him. I had spent the past several months locked away in my studio apartment pouring over books, homework, and writings that I had been working on, but never got around to finishing. I read Thoreau, Miller, and even some Arthur C. Clarke my friend had recommended. I worked

harder trying to improve my writing style and my energy toward working. Regardless of productivity, I knew something else was happening all around me. I understood how other individuals were enjoying themselves and behaving as reckless youths. Feeling the need to join in at times, I only lived vicariously through the stories I heard as I watched Jerry Springer by candlelight.

I was on the verge of collapse, like something intense was bearing down on me, pressing me to work harder and produce something tangible. All my social skills escaped me, and my ability to carry simple, meaningless conversations about reality television programs, in meaningless situations, no longer existed. During this time I filed all my writings from most recent to past, stored them in a box, and hid them in the back of my closet. Focusing primarily on my academic life, I left little room for anything else. Often I found myself drinking whiskey and feeling far too withered for my ripe age. Boredom echoed throughout my little ferocious isolation in the basement. I was decaying and I felt my youth being burned alive in every waking instant.

That Night...?

A drunk girl started talking to me about her best friend's boyfriend and how it would be best if they broke up. "He's no good for her. You know what I mean? Just 'cause he's cute doesn't mean he's right." Nodding in approval of her assessment of inner beauty, I continued to listen. Her lipstick was a painful shade of red and her eyeliner coated her eyelid thick, like a blanket. I examined her

closely. Her insecure nature crept out with ease in drunken conversation. She continued tapping rhythmically on her teeth with her fingertips. Nearly every silent moment she sipped her glass of rum and let out deep sighs. I knew she had things on her mind as everyone should, but it wasn't the time or place for her to open up. I glanced over at Jason; he tipped his glass in my direction and smiled.

Years Ago...?

I lived with my sister for over a year and a half in a townhouse we rented for an outrageous price. We agreed that there would be no smoking in the house, but that rule was broken almost immediately. We sat discussing rules within the first week while she sat, attempting to blow smoke rings that danced in the air and then quickly dissipated. We came to no substantial agreements on anything and I soon gave in. I realized that I would have the smoke-free bedroom I always desired. Liz and I had not spoken to each other for months. She had been living in a rundown house downtown with her boyfriend, and I was still at our parents for the time being. It was this in and out of touch relationship that led us to believe that we would be the perfect roommates. Growing up we had always been seemingly close, but the substance of our relationship was built on a shaky foundation. I was the younger brother who drifted in and out of her problems, and she was the older sister who tried to set the right example, but never considered the consequences of her actions.

After the first couple of months living together, we traveled to New York to see a mutual friend. It was during this time I began questioning our decision to live together. She had been wound tight ever since she was young. Any time she wasn't asleep she was distressed, or so it would seem. It took me months to pick up on her complex disposition, but once we arrived home from our trip these aspects began to surface. She often surrounded herself with others, close friends who I had never met. I would come home from work at 10:00 at night and discover some stranger cooking eggs in my

kitchen, which I had purchased. With internal fury, silently I would storm upstairs locking myself in my bedroom and cursing all who stumbled into my path. It was during the summer when I returned home from work to a house full of strangers my older brother had invited over. I realized a confrontation with Liz was well overdue. I told myself I would be gentle but firm. I would make myself heard without hurting her feelings. I knew what I could say that would make my argument impenetrable.

I crept upstairs and peaked inside her bedroom. I could hear her quiet sobs under her breath as she lay on the bed with her head buried in the pillow. I watched her closely knowing she was unaware of my presence. Flooded with memory, I remembered my sister growing up in the early nineties so youthful and defiant, full of hope and such subtle beauty. Always decorated in black lipstick and fishnet stockings, butting out cigarettes on her Doc Martins, locking herself in her bedroom for countless hours while she listened to albums by The Cure. She was a young poet on the verge of something tremendous and heartfelt, graceful yet full of raw emotion. I saw it in her as she lay there vulnerable and exposed. I sighed and shut her door so she could be alone as she had always been.

She was a young poet on the verge of something tremendous and heartfelt, graceful yet full of raw emotion.

The Party...?

Looking at my watch, I realized it was well past the time I should have been in bed. I was about to leave when Jason invited me to the rooftop of the building we were in. I looked at my watch once more and nodded as he motioned for me to follow. Deciding to be polite, I went along just to see what was going to happen. He mentioned a few of his other friends would be up there and that I should take the time to introduce myself. I thought perhaps he was right. I never make it a point to introduce myself when surrounded in a large crowd of people, but I had drunk a few beers and that would

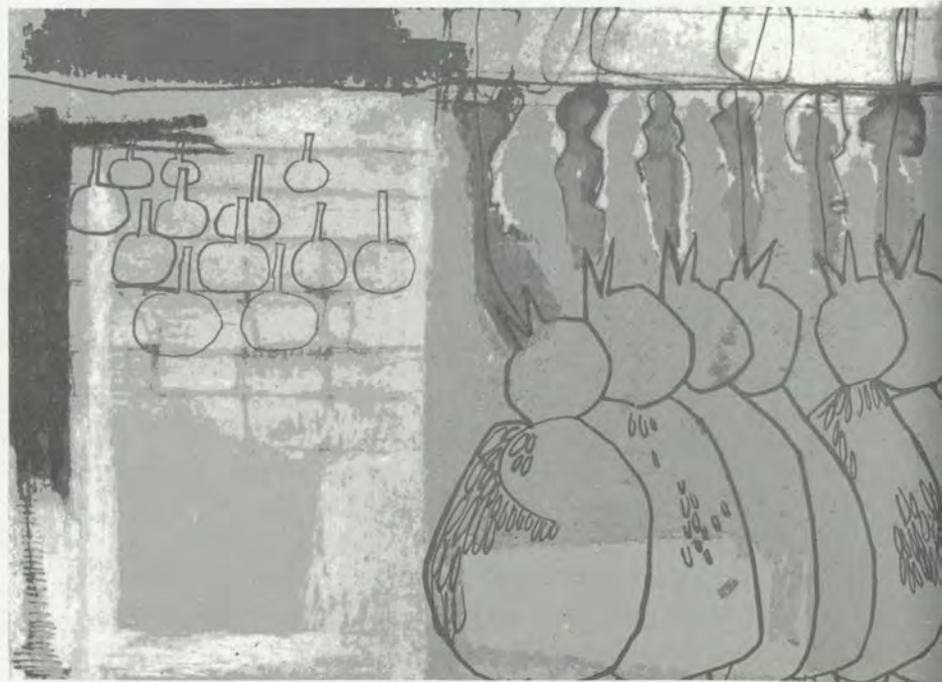
provide me with enough interest in what was going on to comment when I felt the urge. We walked up several flights of stairs. When we arrived at the top people were screaming, straining their vocal chords with all they had and spilling their drinks on the pavement far below. The November air was cool and crisp. I pulled on my menthol and relished it as it burned deep within my lungs. The rain had stopped momentarily and gave the city a wet glossy look, like it had been dipped in glass. I looked across the cityscape at the tiny lights glowing in the windows of all the tiny lives that filled this tiny city, and I thought how nice it was to be alive.

Jason and some of his friends were laughing and carrying on about some girl who had just returned home from art school somewhere in Minnesota. She was nineteen when she left Indiana and she had now just turned 24. She never successfully got a degree. She only skipped around from one subject to the next, never focusing on anything for too long. She had returned home after she depleted her funds and her loans could no longer sufficiently provide her with enough money to get through the semester. They continued to laugh as I stood at a healthy distance looking down below. Deep down I felt a pang in my heart; the very fabric of my existence ached. Having never met her, I could stand in her defense without hesitation. However, as usual, I only smiled and kept to myself. I made my way down from the roof and into the hallway where I noticed the man who was dancing earlier in the evening. He was swaying back and forth and interjecting into someone else's conversation. Heading towards the door, I clapped him on the shoulder, as I walked by. Apparently he knew something that we all didn't, and he was embracing it with everything he had.

Whenever...?

As of late I find myself going out more and more. The days spent watching Jeopardy, looking over old writings, and going to bed at a decent hour are rapidly diminishing. I enjoy the solitude of a quiet evening doing whatever it is I do in my short life. It has provided me

with a sense of security I would not have known otherwise. However, it is in those rare instances I find myself drowning in thought. Drenched in the magnificence of life that I feel. The internal burn that desires to breathe and to feel and to think and to be surrounded by others that feel the same, full of youth and hope. We wake in hopes of escaping the everyday monotony that fills our lives with a sense of normalcy and predictability. The comforts of responsibility and maturity cloaked in a sense of urgency to just be. And sometimes we turn out just fine. ■



"Chickens at the Lab" by Jessica Robinson
5"x7" Pastel and Ink on Paper

First Time

Joshua A. Yates

I remember white knuckles
gripping the wrought iron
headboard as you plunged
ahead.

I remember tears falling
onto the cherry-patterned
pillowcase as I whispered:
What about lube?

I remember your sour
candy breath on my ear as
you pleaded:
Relax, you'll like it.

I remember the pale green
tile of the shower stall
where I washed your
pungent, foul juice away.

I remember the ten spot
you left on the nightstand
along with the hastily scrawled
note: *Thanks for the good time.*

I remember your chocolate eyes,
charismatic smile, and the twisted
sense of reasoning that made it all
my fault. I remember feeling like an old toy
tattered, battered, broken, and forgotten.
I remember the words I said when you
seduced me, *but you're my brother.*



"Reflection" by Joe Bieschke
11"x15" Watercolor

Tijuana Jewel (a country drinking song)

David Scott Johnson

I've got no place to go, except Tijuana Mexico,
If you don't want me hanging 'round no more.
I've spent five years with you, I ain't got much to lose,
If you don't want me hanging 'round no more.

I'm tired of taking advice from drunken fools (*Echo "Drunk damn fools"*)
My head can't hardly think straight with this bartender in my ear,
I can't shoot straight on the table and my Spanish ain't worth a damn,
But come that sun I'll have some fun with a Tijuana jewel.

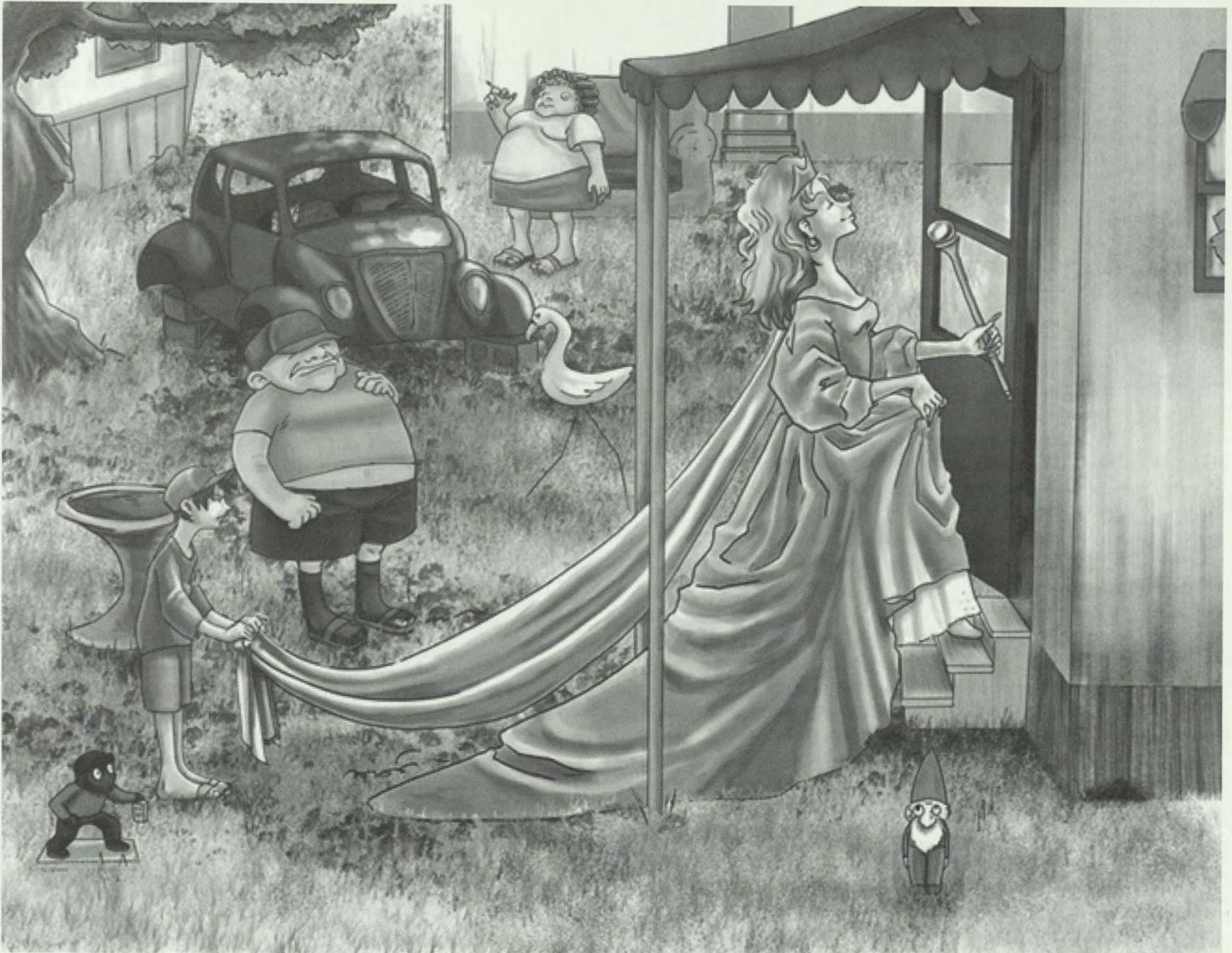
I've got no place to go, except Tijuana Mexico,
If you don't want me hanging 'round no more.
I've spent five years with you and that ain't that much to lose,
If you don't want me hanging 'round no more.

I'm tired of taking advice from drunken fools (*Echo "Drunk damn fools"*)
There words don't seem to matter much as I'm falling off my stool,
I can't shoot straight on the table and my Spanish ain't worth a damn,
But come that sun I'll have some fun with a Tijuana jewel.

I've got no place to go, except Tijuana Mexico,
If you don't want me hanging 'round no more.
I've spent five years with you, the sun will be raising soon,
If you don't want me and my dog sleeping here no more.

I'm tired of taking advice from drunken fools (*Echo "Drunk damn fools"*)
They're still trying to figure out what went wrong as my tears water down the beer,
I can't shoot straight on the table and my Spanish ain't worth a damn,
But come that sun I'll have some fun with a Tijuana jewel.

Yaaah, come that sun I'll have my fun with a Tijuana jewel.



"Trailer Park Queen" by Whitney Matilla
11"x14" Digital Painting

Can't Live With 'Em

Robert Kent

"From [Pandora] descends the ruinous race and tribe of women, who live as a curse and cause of sorrow to mortal men. No partners in grim poverty, but only useless excesses. As bees in their dome-shaped hive faithfully tend to the drones, who take no part in hard work while the workers toil through the day; till sunset they keep on loading their honey in the white comb, while the drones sit lazily peering out from the arching hive, sweeping the fruit of his labor into their own slow bellies—just so Zeus, who thunders on high, saw to it that women, curse of us mortal men, should invent work utterly useless."

-Hesiod, *Theogony*

So I'm sitting around the apartment one afternoon. I've got about a half hour before I have to leave for work, and a half hour isn't enough time to do anything worthwhile. So, like any good American, I sit my butt down on the couch and decide to kill the time watching a little television. There's a half-empty bag of Doritos on the floor—the cool ranch kind, 'cause I already ate all the nacho cheese. They're a little soft, but not bad, and I count myself lucky I found them before they went stale.

So I'm lying there flipping channels and munching chips and there's nothing good on, just your typical garden-variety daytime crap—that's the problem with working the night shift: you miss all the "good" TV. But I'm flipping through the channels anyway. Somebody's lying half-naked next to somebody else on some soap opera, Maurie's got these teenage girls on that "don't know who they baby's daddy is," and some Japanese kid with great big round eyes is chasing after this little yellow thing that looks like a cat, screaming

how he's "gotta catch 'em all, gotta catch 'em all." If I had more time, I'd put a movie on, but I don't have that kind of time.

Then I come across the Oprah Winfrey Show. I don't much care for her, myself, but my mom's a big fan. She calls her Oprah—just Oprah, like they're on a first name basis or like Oprah is Cher or Madonna or somebody with no last name; or sometimes she just calls her "O." Drives me nuts. But seeing as how I already wasted ten minutes of my TV-time channel surfing, I decide to sit back and give "O" her day in court, and man, you will not believe the crazy shit they had on.

Oprah's standing center stage before a live studio audience filled with women (mostly overweight) and a few men (whose heterosexuality is in serious question), and she's smiling that warm, trademark smile of hers—the one that marked her as an "acceptable-American-mainstream-black-person," back when such things were important. She's wearing a nice woman's suit, yellow with black stripes, which for some god-awful, unknown reason, opens up at the top so that we can get a good look at what no one wants to see: an aerial view of the rolling hills in the forbidden land of "O." Her hair is molded into a picture-perfect helmet and after years of struggle, her body is slender and trim—it ought to be; she paid a lot of money to get it there.

Oprah's voice rolls out like chocolate silk. "Man alive, have we got a show for you today. We have got a show for you *today!*" Oprah stamps her foot in a pouty gesture for emphasis.

The weight in the room shifts dramatically as the two-hundred-or-so husky women, who have finally made their pilgrimage to this, their Holy Land, lean in closer to the warm glow emitting from the glorious "O." The bolts of the risers for the studio audience strain as the thing threatens to topple completely over where it would almost

certainly leave a very large, very deep crater in the studio floor. A few of the men in the audience frown at their wives—you can tell which ones are the husbands: they have a desperate, forlorn look about them, a defeated look that remains from the battle they surrendered in a long time ago. The huskies quickly hush them up—the “O” is speaking.

“We have a guest on the show today, who—I don’t even know how we got him. Everyone wants him, and we got him! We got him here *today!*” Oprah stamps her foot again, and then turns to her producer. “Gary, how’d we get this guy? ‘Cause I don’t even know. I do not know.”

Gary is standing behind the cameras with a clipboard in hand. He is wearing a magenta shirt with a puce tie. He has tiny round glasses and his hair is done up into a nearly perfect perm. Unlike some of the men in the audience, there is no question whatsoever about Gary’s sexuality. “I thought he came to see you,” Gary says.

“Oh, no he did not,” Oprah says. “You booked him. It was your masterful skills, not mine. My masterful skills could not even win me an Oscar, which I so sorely deserve.” There is a heavy sigh of sympathy from the huskies. “It was all you.”

Gary rolls his eyes and waves a hand at Oprah. “No, you!” he whines.

“Well, anyway,” Oprah says, getting down to it. “You may have heard about today’s guest in recent news. He is in fact, one of the first known men in existence, if not the *very* first. He was recently thawed out from a glacier believed to have floated away from somewhere in Greece. How about that?”

“We’ll have more on that later in the show, and don’t forget to read the upcoming novel on the subject by Toni Morrison that, rest assured, will be top of the list in my book club. It’s a story about how African-American women were persecuted even back when there were no African-American women.”

The huskies busy themselves taking pens from their purses and making a note to be sure and read Toni Morrison’s *The Coldest Greek: The True Story of Ice Baby, Who Was Not Necessarily Black, But Could Have Been*.

“Well now,” Oprah says, “let’s get *down* to it. Let’s get down to it! Ladies, people, please welcome today’s guest, a man who may very well have been the first man on earth, Epimetheus!”

The huskies applaud like mad, but their eyes never leave the “O.”

A strange sight comes onto the stage then: a squat, muscular man with thick, dark hair and olive skin. His hair is cut short and is mostly in order, the result of a great deal of work backstage. He is wearing khakis and a black shirt, with a tan sports coat thrown in for good measure. Somebody, probably Oprah’s PR people, has gone to work on this guy. But, even so, it isn’t hard to imagine him wearing only a loincloth and covered in filth, the way he was when thawed.

Oprah strolls over to him and offers him her hand. The man instantly recoils and growls in a low, threatening tone.

Oprah turns to the audience, a shocked, yet at the same time, thrilled look on her face. “Whew, this child be fierce. He be *fierce!*”

The huskies laugh and applaud. The man looks out over their fat faces and multiple chins in horror. His own face twitches and contorts nervously.

“Girl, this boy may have been frozen, but he is *hot!* He is *so hot!*” Oprah cries. “Hot! Hot! *Hot!*”

“Women,” the man moans. “So many women, so much of them. Why? Thundering father in heaven, *why?*”

“You can sit yourself down right over here, now,” Oprah says, motioning to two oversized chairs in the center of the stage with a table between them—it looks as though Oprah has set up for tea rather than an interview. “You just sit down now and rest awhile.”

Oprah takes a seat and gradually the man sits down in the chair across from her. “Now then, Epimetheus—do you mind if I call you Epimetheus?” Oprah asks. “Or how ‘bout just ‘E?’ Is that alright with you, E?”

“E?” the man repeats.

Oprah leans forward. The huskies lean in as well. “Tell me E, how is it that you’re able to communicate with us today?”

The man’s brow furrows for a moment as though he is confused then relaxes. “They teach me how to speak English. Now I am speak English good.”

“You certainly are. You certainly are,” Oprah says, and then turns to the huskies. “Isn’t he?”

On the “O’s” command, the huskies applaud in agreement as

“He was recently thawed out from a glacier believed to have floated away from somewhere in Greece.”

though they are a group mind with a *very* large body.

Oprah's smile fades and her face grows solemn. "So, E," she says, the same dramatic tone in her voice now that once almost, but not quite, won her an Oscar. "Tell us, what was it like"—she pauses dramatically—"being the first man? Tell us, what was that like?"

Suddenly, he is out of his chair and crouched on the ground, trying to crawl under Oprah's tea table.

E stares at the tops of his Brooks Brothers shoes, so brand new the black tops reflect the shine of the studio lights.

He thinks a moment. "Cold," he says at last.

"No doubt," Oprah says with a laugh. "No doubt. What else?"

E thinks another moment. "Dirty."

"Oh, but you're stylin' now, aren't ya!" Oprah turns to the huskies. "Isn't he *stylin'*?"

The huskies nod their agreement.

Oprah's solemn face and Oscar tone return. "Now then," she says, "E, you must have had some interesting experiences, I'm sure. In fact, we're all quite anxious to know—," and the huskies are nodding away, "—what I mean to say is that you had an opportunity in your life that none of us—" The huskies shake their heads. "—have ever had, in that you were in direct contact with the gods. Is that true?"

E looks around nervously. "Gods?" he asks, his voice quivering.

"Sure," says Oprah. "Ya know, *gods*. *Go-ds*? Apollo, Zeus, Aphrodite—"

"Zeus!" E cries in alarm. Suddenly, he is out of his chair and crouched on the ground, trying to crawl under Oprah's tea table.

"Oh, that's right," Oprah says, scratching her chin. "I done forgot the two o' y'all don't get along no more."

"Well, what about Prometheus?" Oprah asks. "Y'all got along, didn't ya?"

At this, a look of calm, sadness comes over E's face. Slowly, he returns to his chair. "Prometheus," he says longingly.

"Right," says Oprah. "Prometheus. Now then, something I want to establish right here at the top of the show—" E waits expectantly.

The huskies wait expectantly.

"—Prometheus told you—he warned you—not to accept anything from the gods, correct?"

E frowns.

"I'm sorry?" Oprah puts her hand to her ear. "Is that correct?"

Slowly, E nods his head and his eyes cloud over, his face a mask of shame and sorrow. Oprah leans in for the kill. "But you accepted Pandora?" she asks, an undercurrent of triumph in her voice.

E nods again and buries his face in his hands.

Oprah's face lights up with a smile as she turns back to face the camera and the huskies. "We'll be right back with E after this, so don't you all go nowhere."

A commercial with a pudgy baby in pristine white pampers comes on. I'm just sitting there in my seat, unable to move. I'm hooked. Man, oh, man, this is gonna be good. I'd heard about the frozen guy on the news, of course, but I didn't know he was even talking yet, let alone being interviewed by Oprah!

When I was in college—this was a while ago, I dropped out in the middle of my second year—I took a class in Greek Mythology, which really wasn't all that interesting, but it had its moments. I remembered Epimetheus and the story of Pandora—how the gods sent woman to man along with all the evils of the world, and, oddly enough, hope. I used to joke with my girlfriend that the story had been a real eye opener—clearly some god had sent her to me and I'd been in constant torment ever since. She hadn't found this to be all that funny. Anyway, something about the whole situation now struck me as very funny, and the irony of it was just too much. Here was this guy, recently thawed out, who had more reason to hate women than anyone because he could remember back to a blissful time without them. And what do they do? Why they stick him on the Oprah show, of course.

While it's on a commercial for some product guaranteed to relieve "feminine itching," I make a run for the bathroom. I ought to be out the door and headed for work by now, but I can probably afford to be a little late, and there's no way I'm missing the rest of this show.

I briefly consider calling my girlfriend and telling her what's on, but I know I'll never get off the phone with her by the time the show comes back—that woman just talks and talks. Besides that, she's probably already watching it. Like my mom, my girlfriend's a huge Oprah fan—I think all women are. She watches her most every day, and no, for those of you who must know, she does not sit there on the couch munching bonbons. She likes caramel—less fat and better for your skin.

I probably should give my boss a call and let him know I might be a little late, but the show's gonna come back on any minute now. He's a nice enough guy—pretty negative though. He complains all the time, mostly about his wife. But he's generally pretty cool if you want to call in sick or late or something.

Just as I'm flushing the toilet and rinsing off my hands, I hear the applause of the audience on the TV. I zip up, grab a coke out of the fridge to go with my Doritos and I'm in my seat on the couch just as the show's coming back on.

"Welcome back," Oprah says. She's still in her oversized easy chair and E is still sitting across from her, though his face seems to have grown even wearier over the commercial break. The applause of the huskies dies down.

"If you're just joining us," Oprah says, "we're sitting here with Epimetheus—or, as I calls him, E—who is now believed to be the first man on earth. *The first man on earth!*"

Oprah turns away from the camera and back toward E. "Now then, E, just before we went to break, we were discussing how your boy, Prometheus, told you never to accept anything from the gods."

"He tell me no take, but I no listen!" E's voice cracks in his deep grief and sorrow.

"Now the gods had plans for you," Oprah says. "They had *plans for you!*"

E nods sadly.

"They put together a little package for ya," Oprah says. "Called her Pandora, and gave her a jar!" Oprah snaps her fingers and jerks her arm side to side in a quick ethnic motion. Long time fans of the show have noted Oprah doing more and more things like this ever since focus group testing indicated she was getting "too white."

"And word 'round the campfire is, it didn't even have nothing to do wit'ch you," Oprah says. "It was all on account of Zeus punishing Prometheus."



"Fragile Container" by Jane Parrish Cooper
24"x24" Charcoal and Gesso on Paper

"Never trust gods!" E cries suddenly. "Never good, always bad!"

Oprah sits back, her face now looking stricken as though something terribly offensive has just been said. "E," Oprah says, her eyes peering out nervously over the audience and her voice cautious. "Now-a-days, we leave one's thoughts on religion to one's self. How a person worships, and what a person chooses to put their faith in is their business and their choice."

"Choice?" E's face is now bright red and he is literally shaking with anger.

"Choice?"

"Sure," Oprah says. "But I guess you wouldn't see it that way, would ya?"

E shakes his head. He stares out at the women in the audience and his eyes grow to narrow slits. His entire being seethes with hate.

"Now let's talk about Pandora," Oprah says.

E turns his head back and his angry eyes fix on Oprah.

"Go on now, E," she says. "Tell me about Pandora."

"The jar!" E screams. "She open jar!"

"Now that's interesting," says Oprah. "'Cause I'll let ya in on a little secret. I think that story's a myth. A legend. Somethin' y'all made up so you could go on wit'cha hatin' o' women."

E shakes his head. "Man happy, then woman come. She open jar! Death! All hungry! Sick! Bad! Woman open jar!"

"Oh, come on now, E," Oprah says, her feathers not the slightest bit ruffled. "You love us women. You know you do."

E shakes his head. "Women bad! Open jar! Keep hope! Hate women, need hope! No choice!"

Oprah sighs. "E, calm down."

E stands up and glares down at Oprah. "Women open jar!" he screams at the top of his lungs. There is a white froth of spittle running down his chin. "Women pain! Women bad! Open jar!"

Oprah crosses her arms across her chest and glares right back at

E. "You hate me, don't you?" she says.

E nods his head emphatically, as if to say, That's right, Oprah. I hate you, you bloated, self-important, over-pampered pig.

"You hate me 'cause I'm black," Oprah says, "don't you?"

E shakes his head. "Me no hate 'cause black," he says. "Me hate 'cause woman!"

On either side of the risers, security rushes toward the stage, but it is too late.

Now it is Oprah's turn to be angry and now it is Oprah who stands. She shakes her head and wrings her hands, writhing in her own rage. "All my life I had to fight," she says, her voice trembling with emotion. If the Academy were here now, she'd probably win that Oscar after all—but the Academy isn't here "I had to fight my daddy, I had to fight my brothers! A girl child ain't safe in a family o' mens.

But I ain't never thought I'd have to fight on my own show!"

Epimetheus lets out a high-pitched shriek that cuts through the air like the huskies' teeth through chocolate. It is a primordial sound: the war cry of ancient man. He lunges forward and places his hands firmly on either side of Oprah's pudgy, tan—didn't it used to be dark?—face.

Oprah shrieks in terror and then the sound is gone. In its place is a loud, snapping sound like the huskies cracking open a hot buttered crab claw. Oprah flumps over like a tipped cow, and the dull thud of her body falling against the hollow stage resonates throughout the studio. On either side of the risers, security rushes toward the stage, but it is too late. Oprah's neck is broken. Later there will be a great celebration among all the men of the world, for they is free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty, they is free at last. But now there is only sorrow for the women of the world. The "O" has been slain.

The huskies sit stunned for a moment and there is silence. Then their beady little pig eyes flush with rage. There is a great trumpeting, like that of elephants, and the herd of huskies stampedes down from the risers and across the stage toward "E."

Epimetheus watches the coming onslaught of hungry, hungry hippos with great fear and trepidation. "Women!" he cries, his eyes filled with horror. "Women!"

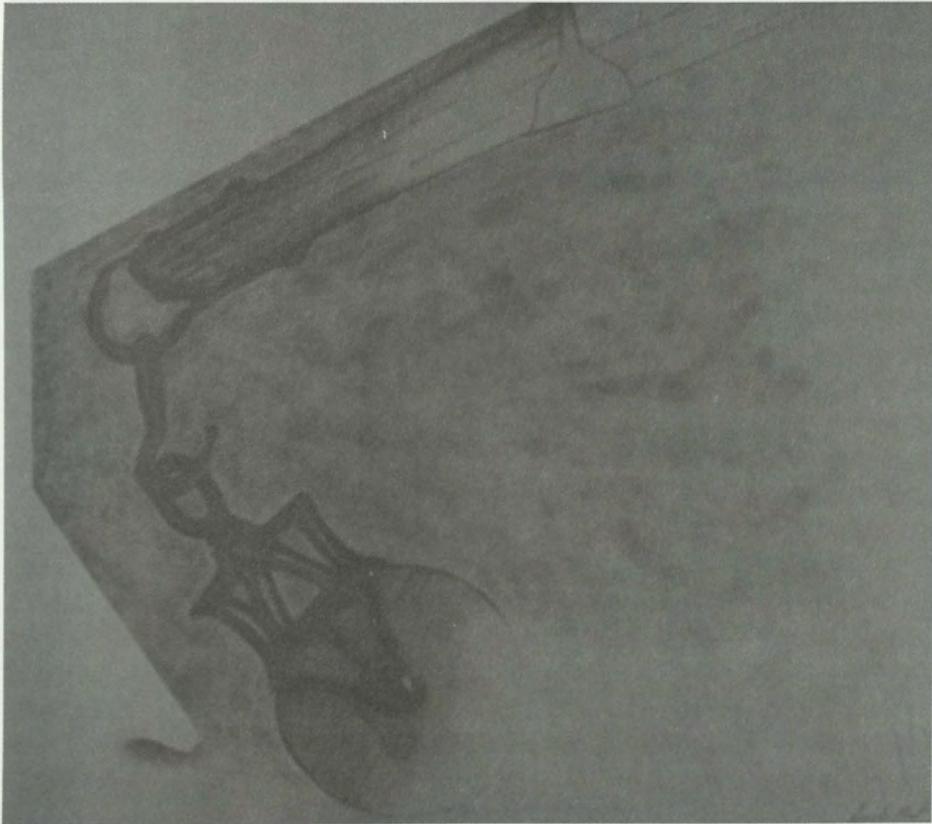
Then they are upon him. The last thing we hear is Gary yelling, "Kill the camera!" and then the picture cuts out and the screen goes to static.

So I'm just sitting there in my seat, stunned. For a moment, I can't move or even blink. But eventually I have to move 'cause at this point I'm late for work. I shut off the TV and head for the door. I briefly consider calling my girlfriend and my mother both to see how they're holding up, but if I do that, I'll never get to work. Besides, I'll hear plenty from them later, I'm sure.

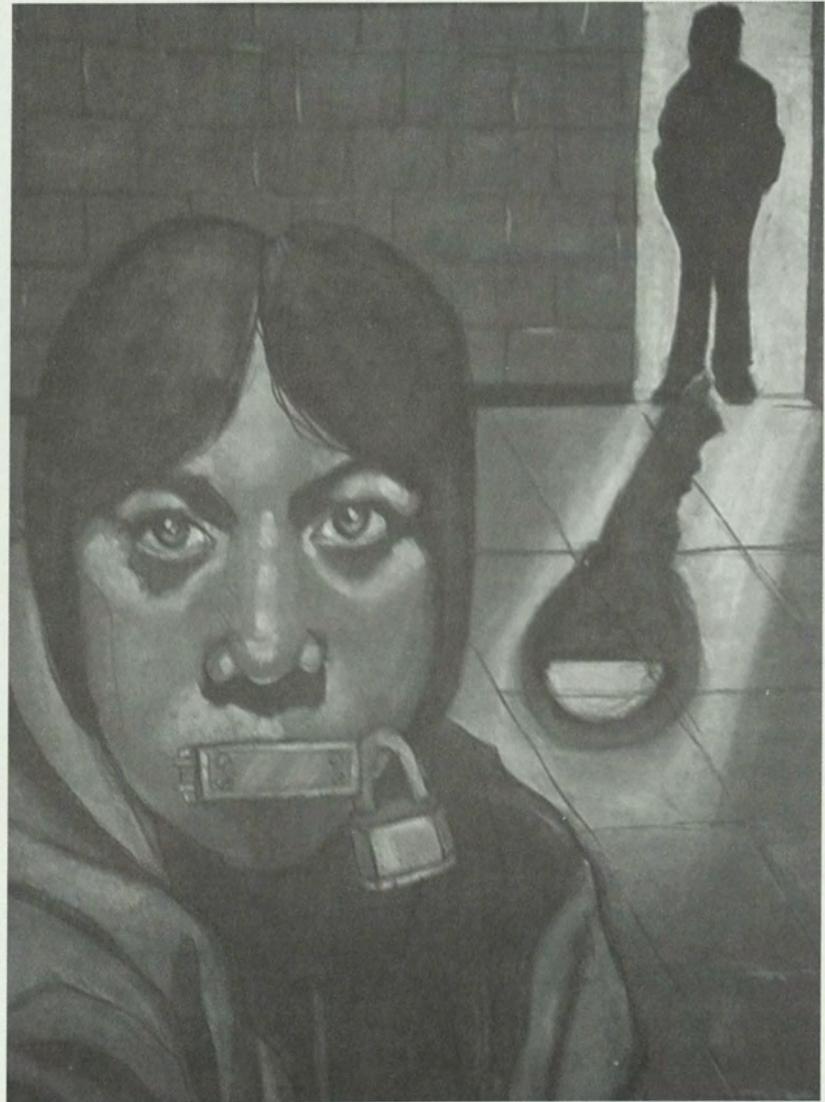
I ought to call my boss and let him know I'm coming in late, but I figure I'll tell him when I get there and at the same time I'll tell him why. Like I said, he's a pretty cool guy, except for his complaining, which he does all night, and which I have to listen to, all night. But when I tell him about the shit I just saw, he'll understand. Hell, he'll be as excited as I am—if he hasn't already heard.

Boss's wife is a big Oprah fan—huge. Unlike my girlfriend, she really does sit around on the couch all day and she really does eat bonbons like a pig at trough. She doesn't work or do anything else, save for eat and watch the tube, and there's a good chance she's already called, her voice quivering and tears dripping down her pudgy cheeks.

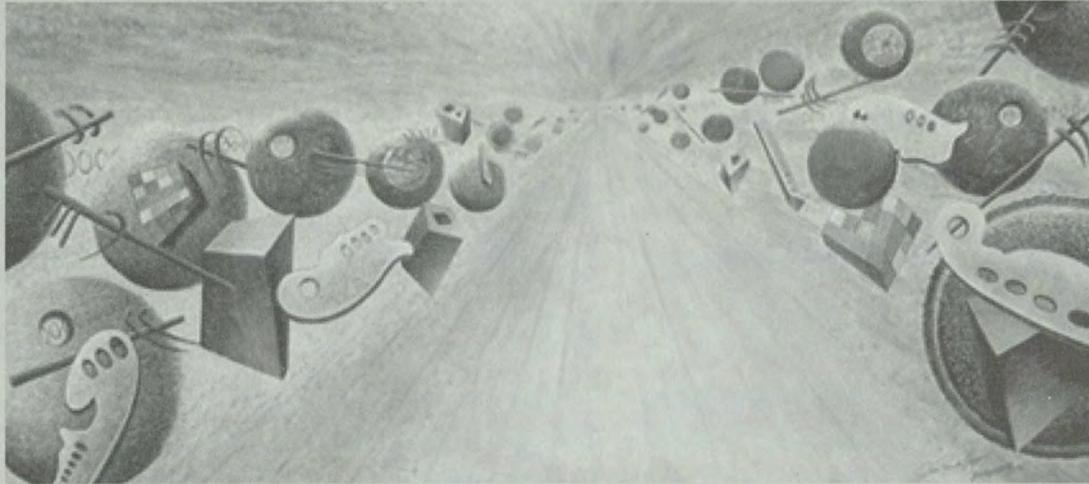
But I'm hoping not, 'cause I want to be the one to tell him. When he hears about Oprah getting her neck broke, he is gonna be so happy he'll forget all about my being late. Then we'll probably laugh and laugh for the first hour or so, high five each other, and then laugh some more. After that, I suppose he'll go back to his complaining, which means I'll probably have to go back to listening to it. I'll sit there going out of my mind as he tells me how much he hates his job, how he should have been a pro-football player if it weren't for his knee, and above all things, how much he hates his fat, worthless wife. ■



"Cantilever" by George D. Mast
18"x18" Graphite Pencil



"Silenced" by Tasha Vaden
16"x20" Pastel



"Infinizoom" by Jane Parrish Cooper
2'2"x4'10"x9" Acrylic on Board

Dear Jared

Jessie Rae

Jared, I want to write a poem about our government's spreading cancer of corruption,
but you won't stop swing dancing on my cerebellum and

Jared, I want them to know about George's plan to start a colony on Mars,
but your guitar keeps colonizing my eardrums and

Jared, I want to reveal to them the CIA's Bluebird Mind Control Program,
but that handsomely crooked grin keeps me changing my panties and

Jared, I want to expose Area 51 and its super-secret test range cover-up,
but I can't stop tracing the path your fingertips took across my bare back this morning and

Jared, I want to divulge the Fed's arrogant and sham war-on-drugs,
but I can't remember to after we've smoked a couple bowls together and

Jared, I want to disclose to them the top-secret scandals behind 9-11,
but every time we kiss I can't help but wonder what's in your tighty-whities and

Jared, I want to make public just how much the authorities are fucking us over,
but as we sit on my couch all I can think about is fucking you over my coffee table.

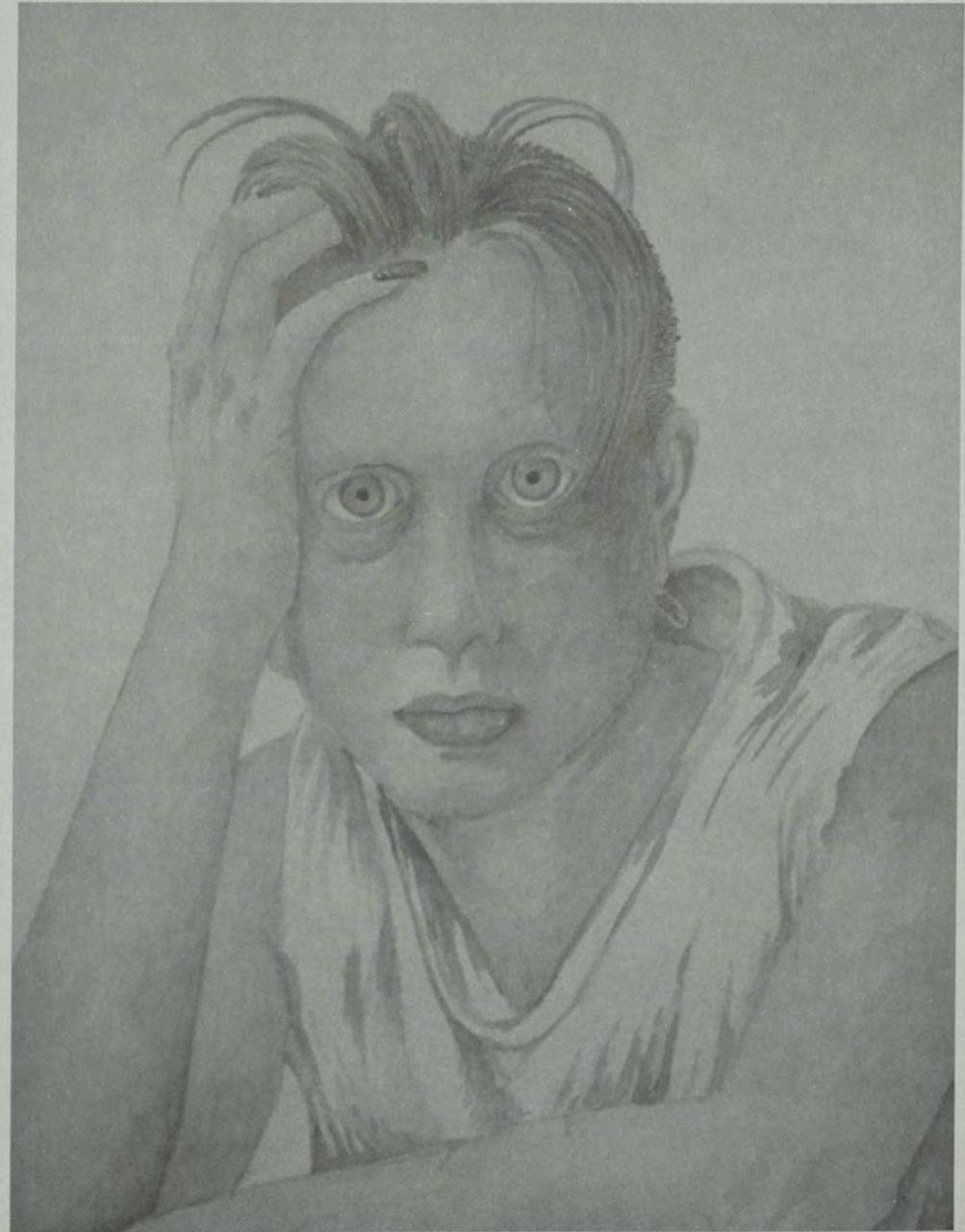
Brunettes Beware,
Bleaching Your Hair is a Very White Trash Move

Jessie Rae-Gilliam

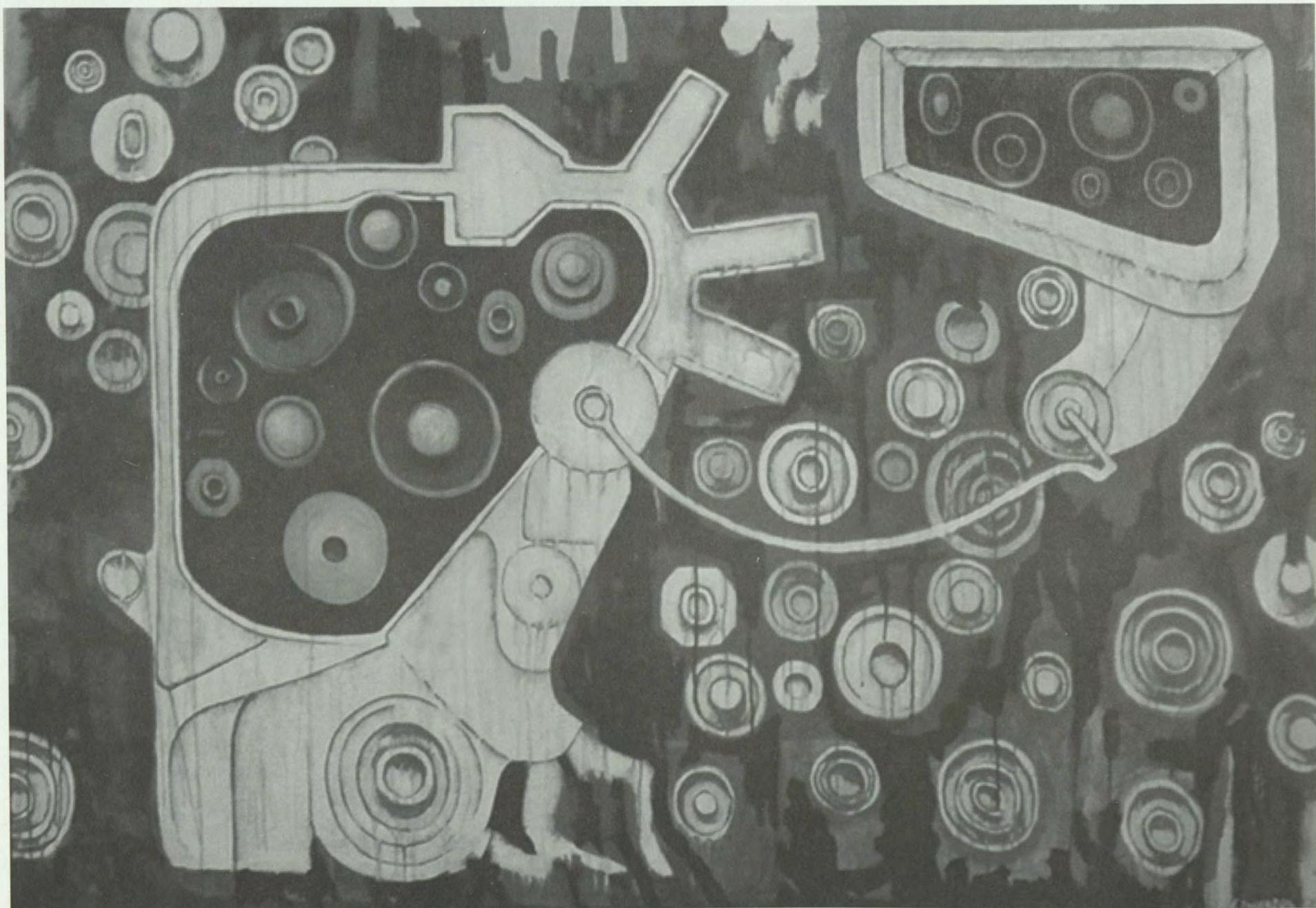
Bleach-blonde hair, sinuous current
L'Oréal façade, peroxide parade
Do you truly have more fun
as princess of the counterfeit
clan of sham, bogus on every stage,
except in your university poetry
writing class where you dribble the dabbings
of your lost love or loves or fucks-for-a-night aficionados

Caked on, baked on, eternal Cover Girl
stratum o'foundation, o'rouge,
o'I'm beautiful so let's fuck, and my friends,
my Friends and I wear matching
furry, bleach-blonde Gucci panties
we tan together
we smoke cigarettes together
we bleach our teeth together
and shave our cunts together

Driving bleach-blonde drop-tops
in crop-top drop-tops shouting
I'm proof the South Beach diet is for real
munching on McNuggets
It's hot when I puke, huh
when I puke and put on that size 0 swimsuit
when I puke and smear that gluey
gluey
gluey neon pink on
plagiarized lips



"Neo-Athena" by Joe Bieschke
11"x15" Watercolor



"Love Machine" by Erin Swanson
38"x56" Acrylic on Canvas

And Me Smiling

Justin Wayne Quiggle

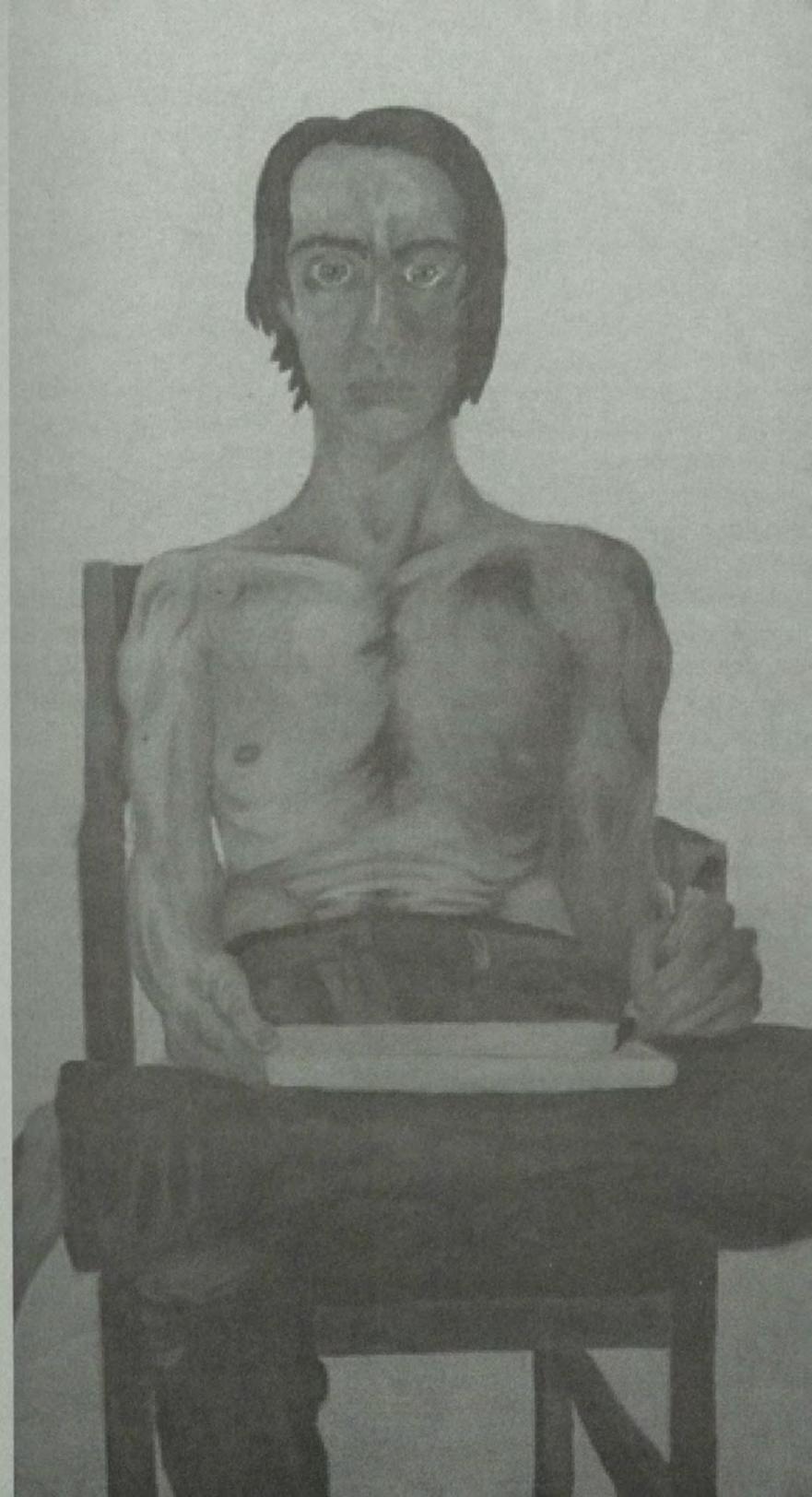
Grandmother's high-rise perm
and rock-star frames, red tinted
below auburn locks, her stone
face aimed elsewhere, and me
smiling.

Uncle Greg's hands holding up
his Seventies scowl, Beatle
bangs tousled from a spin
in his cream-colored Camaro,
and me smiling.

Mother's over-the-shoulder
curls mounted with a tie-dye cone.
Lioness eyes priding her lone cub
on his third big day, and me smiling.

The brown shag littered
with wrappers of Thundercats,
Transformers. Dad's hard
dollars squandered for Saturday
morning fads, and me, satisfied,
smiling.

"Observer" by Joe Bieschke
24"x56" Oil on Canvas



Contributors' Notes

Carrie Rebecca Armellino is a Fine Arts/Sculpture major at Herron School of Art and Design. She is also a Resident Assistant on the IUPUI campus.

Joe Bleschke is currently studying Visual Communication at the Herron School of Art and Design. He is currently working on several commissioned portraits. Eventually, he would like to display his work in galleries, as well as work on film design.

Jane Parrish Cooper is a graduating senior at Herron School of Art and Design. She expects to pursue a career as a full-time artist upon graduation. Her website is artofparrish.com.

David Dalton is a senior who studies English and walks in the winter. He is currently divorced from all creativity. His only hope is to one day live out his dream of becoming a bare-knuckle boxing champion.

Justin Dodd is currently working on a degree in English Education, since his interest in photography is rivaled by reading and writing. In fact, he is interested in so many things he has an intense fear of ending up a charlatan.

Michael R. Dunkin is an undergraduate student pursuing a degree in Mechanical Engineering. He likes to hike and draw in his spare time. His drawings are inspired by his personal life experiences, as well as from those around him.

Josh Flynn is an English major and a photographer.

Jessie Rae-Gilliam is a Cancer who completely adores Woody Guthrie; chocolate; Allen Ginsberg; her puppy, Bontecou; Lee Bontecou; organic lifestyle; and performance art. She abhors McDonald's; black licorice; wet socks; snow; getting the flu; animal abuse; and George 'Dubya.' Jessie is a senior at Herron School of Art and Design.

Jonathan Johnes is a senior painter at Herron School of Art and Design. He is currently involved with the Art for the Heart art auction. He is also doing illustrative work for the Lumina foundation. Finally, he is doing illustrations for *Thrive*.

David Scott Johnson's biography has joined his sanity in Tijuana, Mexico.

Kasey Kasa is a sophomore studying Creative Writing. She has no clue what she's going to do with her life.

Robert Kent wishes to impress upon readers that his story is satire, made to arouse laughter and nothing more. For those who may not see the humor in this work or who may even venture to become enraged, Rob advises, "Fuck 'em if they can't take a joke."

Megan Kinyon is a full-time sophomore who works two part-time jobs. She loves writing and hopes to become a professor and published author. She's an Aries who loves pizza and Jacuzzi baths (not always at the same time).

Cindy Lafferty earned her BA in English from IPFW in 2002 and is working on her Masters in Library Science at IUPUI. She has started writing her first novel, a fantasy story for children.

anna rae landsman is from Chicago. She spent two years at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Anna will finish at Herron School of Art and Design in May of 2006. She likes to have meaningful interactions. She certainly likes her cats and tea.

George D. Mast is a junior at the Herron School of Art and Design majoring in Furniture Design. Now that he has found his niche, he looks forward to the years he will spend exploring and enhancing it.

Whitney Mattila is a student at Herron School of Art and Design, and a Fine Arts major with an emphasis in Illustration. She is currently in her third year.

Karen D. Mitchell is a sophomore English major. Her first love is poetry, but she also enjoys writing nonfiction and young adult fantasy stories. She dedicates her work to Lecturer Jim Walker, her husband and daughter, and writing group buddies.

Stefanie Mojonier will be graduating in 2005 with a BFA in Visual Communication after five years at IUPUI, 26,000 miles worth of commuting, more than 6,000 hours of class and homework, countless sleepless nights, and more cups of coffee than is healthy.

Desiree Moore was born and raised in Indiana. She's been taking photography seriously for about three years. She loves the oddly beautiful and hopes to continue with photography for a long time to come.

H. Vincent Peterson is a student at Herron School of Art and Design. **Justin Wayne Quiggle** is a junior English Education major. His interests vary depending on the mood he is in. To him, writing is publishable expression. He would describe himself as a mellow, relaxed, smart-ass.

Rebecca Susan Richardson is a Creative Writing major who especially enjoys writing poetry. Her highest ambition is to use her writing to share God's love with others. Rebecca would like to thank her parents for their love and support, Liesa and Kasey for being such awesome friends, and God for everything.

Invitation to Publication

Jessica Robinson is a student at Herron School of Art and Design.

Clint Smith is an Honors Graduate from the Cooking and Hospitality Institute of Chicago, *Le Cordon Bleu*, and is currently the Chef Instructor in the Culinary Arts and Commercial Baking Departments at Central Nine Career Center. Clint is seeking his bachelor's degree.

Jay Snyder is a senior English and Philosophy major. He is devoted to the children at the LeGore Boys and Girls Club. He hopes his poetry follows the sage advice of Henry Miller: "If you cannot make words fuck then don't masturbate them."

Michael Springer would prefer, if he is eaten by an animal while still alive, it not be a Komodo dragon. The Komodo dragon paralyzes its prey with poison, and then eats it without killing it. This sounds painful and undesirable, and Michael Springer hopes to avoid dying in this manner.

Brandon Storm, aka Brandon-Storm Kenobi, fled into exile after the second stage of the Clone Wars.

Erin Swanson is an Indianapolis painter who spends time working on her art, taking care of her son, and educating others about art. She will be graduating from Herron School of Art and Design this May with a degree in Art Education.

Tasha Vaden is a junior majoring in Fine Arts at Herron School of Art and Design. Most of her work tackles everyday issues in life.

Christina Watson is in her second year at Herron School of Art and Design. She has traveled extensively to Haiti, Jamaica, Honduras, Mexico, Rome, Venice, Florence, and Naples with her church. She has a close bond with her grandmother, who is her greatest support.

Nick Wiesinger is a student at Herron School of Art and Design.

Theresa Carol Williams is a senior in the School of Liberal Arts. Her degree will be in English and Political Science, with a minor in Philosophy. She has been actively involved in the IUPUI Student Global AIDS Campaign, as well as Undergraduate Student Government.

Nicole Yalowitz is a junior majoring in Painting at Herron School of Art and Design.

Joshua A. Yates is a twenty-three-year-old retail slave who moonlights as an English major. He is wanted in four states for felonious misrepresentation of heterosexuality. He can be distinguished by his blatant attraction to rainbows and tendency to switch when walking. If spotted, contact the authorities immediately.

Fall 2005 Issue

Accepting Submissions

Deadline: Friday, October 7th

\$100 Prizes for Best of Issue for
Poetry, Fiction, Creative Nonfiction, and Art

genesis is seeking fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, and artwork for its Fall 2005 issue. Work should be fresh, engaging, and provocative, with inventive and skilled use of language. All IUPUI students are eligible and invited to submit work.

For the Fall 2005 issue, *genesis* will expect e-mail submissions of all work. Please include contact information and a brief biographical statement (up to fifty words) with your submission. No contact information should appear on the work itself.

Literary submissions should be sent as Microsoft Word attachments. Artwork should be submitted as high resolution .JPG or .TIF files. Please use the title of each work as its attachment name. Except for cover art, all work is reproduced in black-and-white.

Contributors will be notified of acceptance and rejection by the end of the semester. Further details, including word count and submission limits, will be available in early September 2005, and will be posted on our web page at <http://php.iupui.edu/~genesis1/> and our bulletin board outside CA 349. Questions can be e-mailed to genesis1@iupui.edu.

Back Cover: "Soul Searching" Jane Parrish Cooper
34"x24" Oil on Canvas

Contributors

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anna rae landsman
George D. Mast
Whitney Mattila
Karen D. Mitchell
Stefanie Mojonnier
Desiree Moore
H. Vincent Peterson
Justin Wayne Quiggle
Jessie Rae
Rebecca Susan Richardson
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