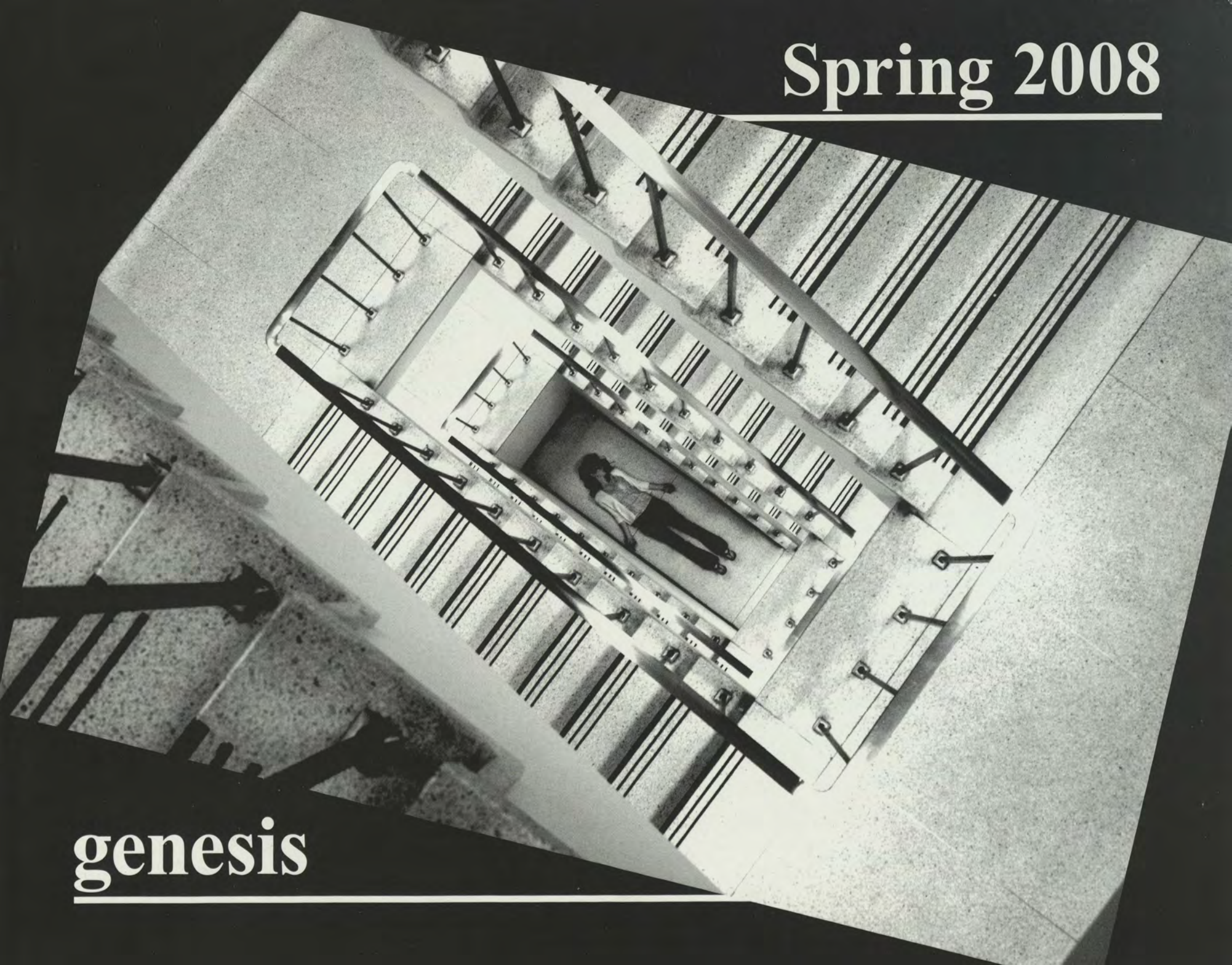


Spring 2008

genesis





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### Cover: Stairway

Justin Oakley  
Photograph

## Editors' Note

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The editorial staff of *genesis* underwent many challenges during the creation of the Spring 2008 issue. With a new faculty advisor, and an influx of new editors and interns with conflicting schedules, bringing the magazine to publication was a triumph of determination. But the opportunity to explore the art of IUPUI's creative student body made it all worth while.

We don't judge submissions looking for a particular theme, but only for work that rises above the ordinary. While designing the layout for this semester's selections, we noticed that a somewhat *film noir* aesthetic had emerged. These edgier works contrasted well with the musicality of the more traditional offerings. We hope you enjoy this stroll down the dark side of the street.

## Acknowledgments

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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>

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# genesis

Literature and Art of Indiana University—Purdue University of Indianapolis Volume 40 Issue 1 Spring 2008



## Song of the Space Turtle

Beth Zyglowicz  
Digital Media



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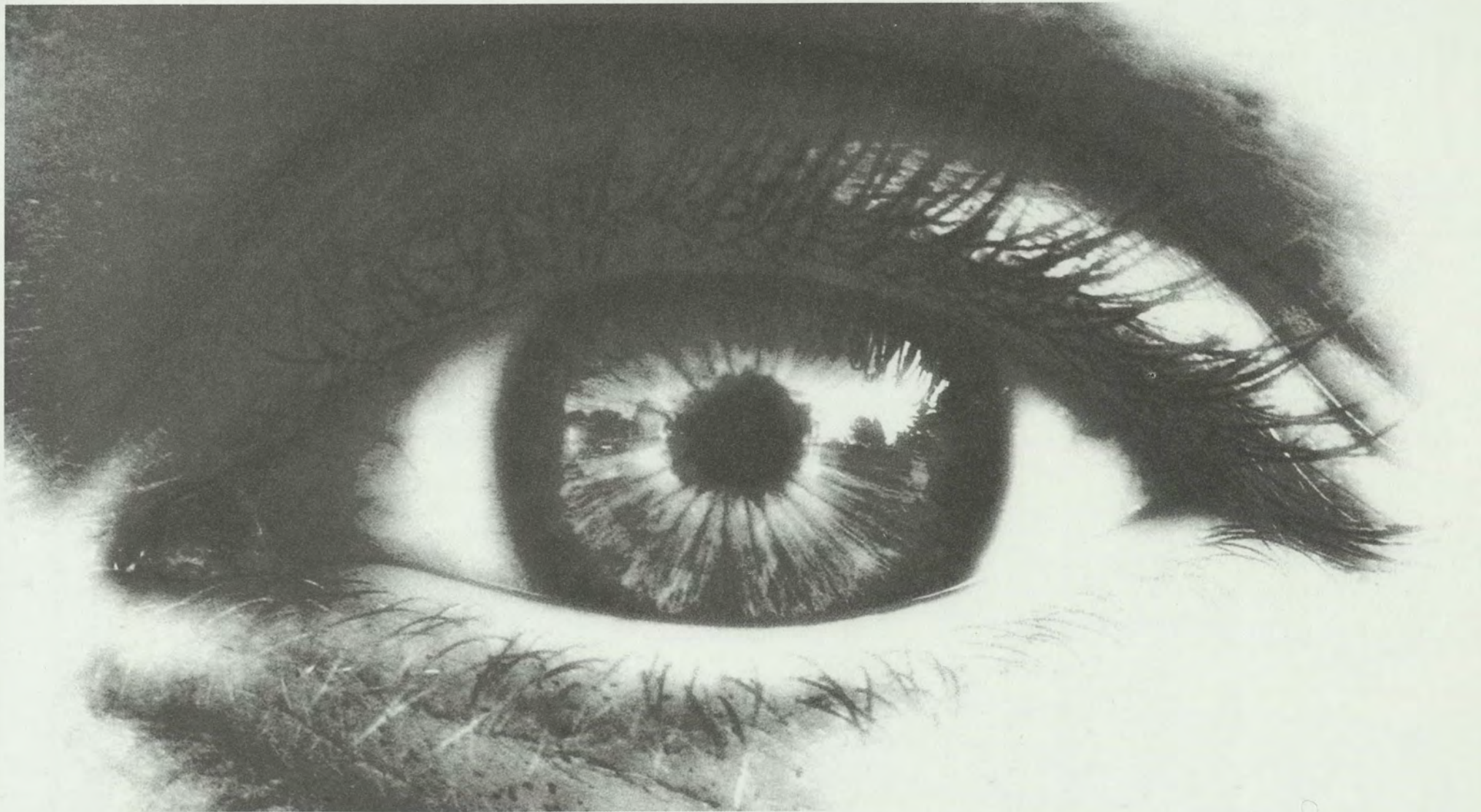
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**Witness**  
*Joe Wallace*  
Photograph 8" x 4.22"



## In the Mix

*Regina Brown*

Prepare surface;  
oil, grease, or lard  
Spread evenly

Milk, contents of cracked egg  
Discard shell  
Stir into creamy mixture  
until stiff peaks form

Pour onto surface  
Even out mixture  
Fingers or utensils

Heat for thirty minutes  
or until surface dries  
Remove promptly  
Style as desired.

## Best of Poetry

## Beautiful Monsters

*Karen D. Mitchell*

From the second the pink Loch Ness of your mouth broke open  
and those monstrous cries cascaded into the world,  
I knew you were a different breed.  
When they plopped you onto my belly,  
gasping and flapping your fins like an air-locked sunfish,  
I imagined a blue tiger, captured from the mountains of China,  
left paw prints inside my cavern walls.  
You seemed a hoax, my huge cryptic alien child  
sleeping in the isolation chamber while needles  
stitched my ruptured door and potion broke my fever.  
I awoke to see my dear little Komodo dragon,  
venom on your tongue and tail a proud whip,  
tiny fangs at my nipple and claws dug into my finger.  
It was then that I knew the oldest mystery of all:  
the fierce beast that mothers share, the instinct  
that keeps us from eating our young and instead devouring  
the scavengers who seek to rip them from us.  
If only we could hide our silver moths  
inside steel cocoons till their wings drip with wisdom,  
then our teeth would not be so sharp  
from gnawing on all those vulture bones.

**Taylor Reservoir**  
*Georgianna Lea Quinn*  
Photograph







# What My Shadow Does When I'm Lost in the Light

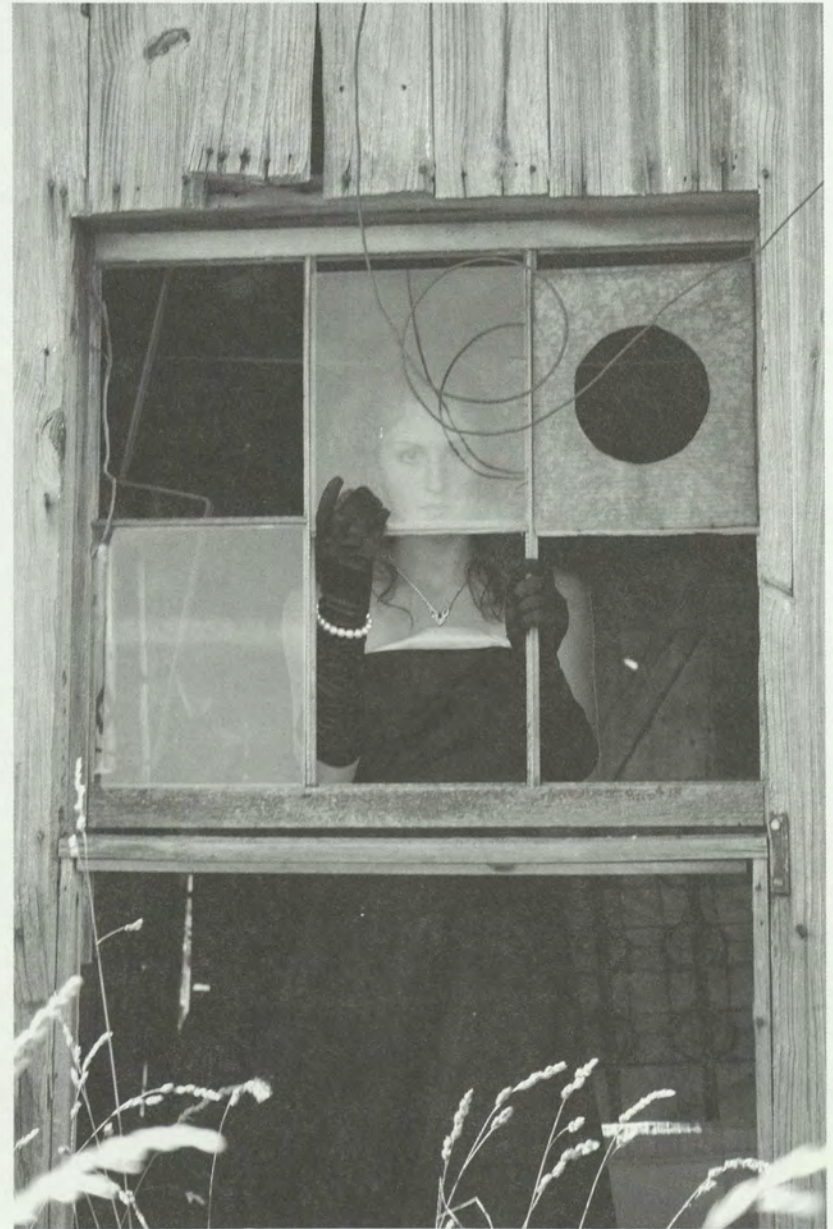
*Karen D. Mitchell*

When my Shadow knows I'm not looking, it  
churns in pools of plasma  
    crushes igneous rock with taloned feet  
        climbs a barren crater, plastic wings askew  
            coughs and Venutian arachnoids spin with fear  
    cadavers the lost

When my Shadow knows I'm looking, it  
cages the singing rain  
    clamors for the hum of moths  
        captures rubies in a glass vile  
            caches every fractured violin string  
    collars necks with a velvet tongue

When my Shadow doesn't know I'm not looking, it  
coils around moonlit willows  
    carries cindered doll's hair in a leather flask  
        clangs the rusty church bell  
    calms the disembodied

When my Shadow doesn't know I'm looking, it  
clings to my night like a falling slip  
then  
    chooses  
        me  
            closes  
                me  
                    calls  
                        me  
                            home.



**Window Model**  
*Justin Oakley*  
Photograph



## Dragonfly

Karen D. Mitchell

First in flight, your wings are stained glass windows  
through which we glimpse an ancient sanctuary  
that flowered in the woods  
before all churches, synagogues, mosques, and cathedrals  
and after the last stegosaurus lay down her head

your ancestors sleep in amber beds that some of us wear  
around our necks like talismans while you, the original cross,  
hover above our heads, hunting mosquitoes before they steal  
our blood and spread the disease of forgetting  
the name etched into your spirit, *katsumushi*, invincible insect

who sits on the tip of our sword, waiting to see  
if we listen to the stories that live inside your wings,  
spread our arms, and leap onto your strong back

you, the flying Hermit who carries a glowing lantern,  
the bearded witness of our lonely journey,  
who leads us into the next world with your eyes  
that see blue water, blue sky, blue stars

and the blue beyond

## Lens

Matthew Cicci

'This is not a photograph  
but a snapshot immemorial,'  
she whispers, laughs to herself.  
It eases the silence,  
despite its airy hush.

Clouds unbroken, just ancient  
shades of smoky gray.  
It hits her then, she mouths it,  
'The sky is the same everywhere.'

Gravel crunches underfoot.  
Her first, hesitant step.  
'Not true, the ground.'

She releases a sigh, empathic, prosaic  
'This is not a photograph  
but a snapshot immemorial.'

She closes her eyes—the bulb flares.



## Parking Lots & Back Roads

*Matthew Cicci*

Rain falls like doomed soldiers  
parachuting down on the Normandy  
of your truck's roof—  
a perverse military cadence  
steadily spreading the  
dirge of our youth  
all across the parking lots  
and back roads  
of this town.

Unrestrained, cruising under myriad stars,  
wayward travelers with little  
or no direction  
except pursuit of an exit  
from the static knowledge  
of our location—  
the same old parking lots  
and back roads  
of this tired town.

Death or your escape? 2 names  
for one Houdini display.  
Both etched in clay,  
the soft malleable soil  
that sustains my mind's museum.

We each stole out of this town  
under the cover of night.  
You gone in a flash;  
me fading, an old photo,  
like the one I keep of you.

They were ours,  
these parking lots  
and back roads  
of this tragic town.

**Forgotten**  
*Colleen Card*  
Photograph





## untitled

*Catherine Wyllie*

We escape from the house  
as the day disappears from the sky  
into night.  
We become what we want to be  
like a dream or a ghost.  
I collapse out of turn  
near a house  
lying still in the grass, and feel the heat from the ground  
rising up to contract and expand like a breath.  
We escape from this place,  
soaked with the sweat and the poison we drank.  
Fill the bathtub with ice and hope this fever will break  
like a heart,  
easily  
but I will not recall the words that form  
on these wire lips as they greet me.  
Though a promise is made as the temperature climbs  
and I start to sink like the moon  
tends to do if you stare at it too long,  
then you blink and it's gone.

## Re-Rooting

*Lacey Anne Bohlen*

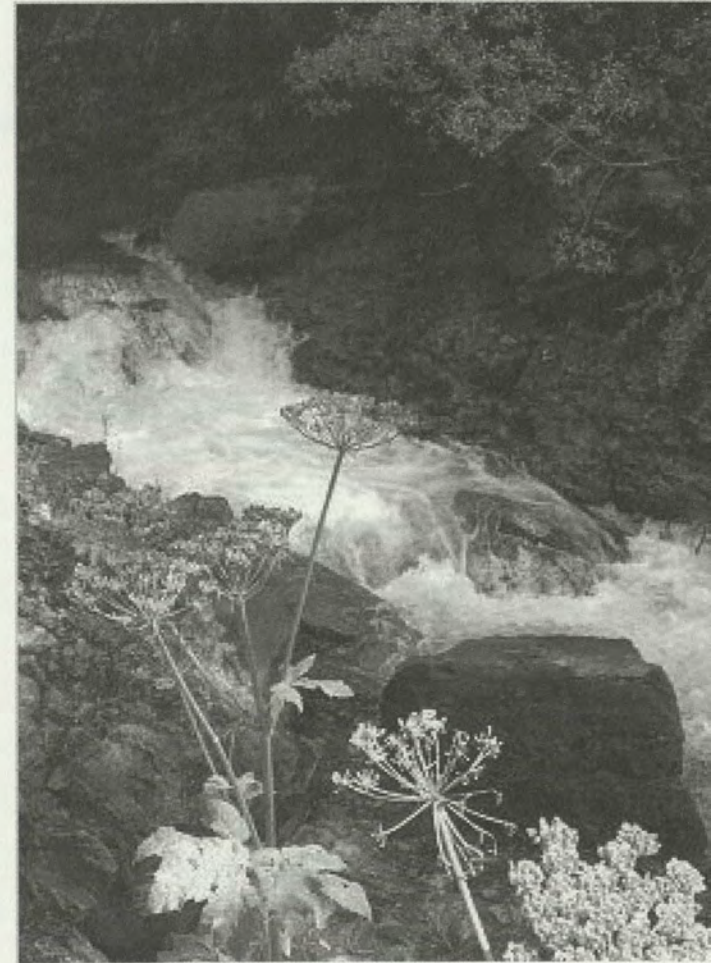
Crimson red lilies,  
absent heart, empty black soul,  
pulled from earth in sleep.

Illuminate pain—  
cold, deeply frosted windows.  
Red, dry, nameless hands.

Mourning's procession,  
poppies engulfed in black shroud,  
wait for hope, beauty.

Forth the lotus comes,  
humble calendula wait,  
heal, birth purity.

His absence leaves her whole—  
white lily of innocence,  
find the earth again.



### Cement Creek

*Georgianna Lea Quinn*

Photograph



## Decay

*Justin Oakley*

Wood

cracked and splintered  
rotten now  
once stood in splendor

Rooms devoid  
of life and laughter  
silent  
but for the creaking rafters

The roof  
burdened by snow, sags  
like the shoulders  
of a weary widow

The squeak of the shutters  
and the howl of wind  
converse in the cold  
as if they were friends

Once rich with life  
on manicured property  
Now overgrown, forgotten  
in a ruin of poverty

The grandeur of a house  
will pass away,  
human endeavor  
undermined by decay



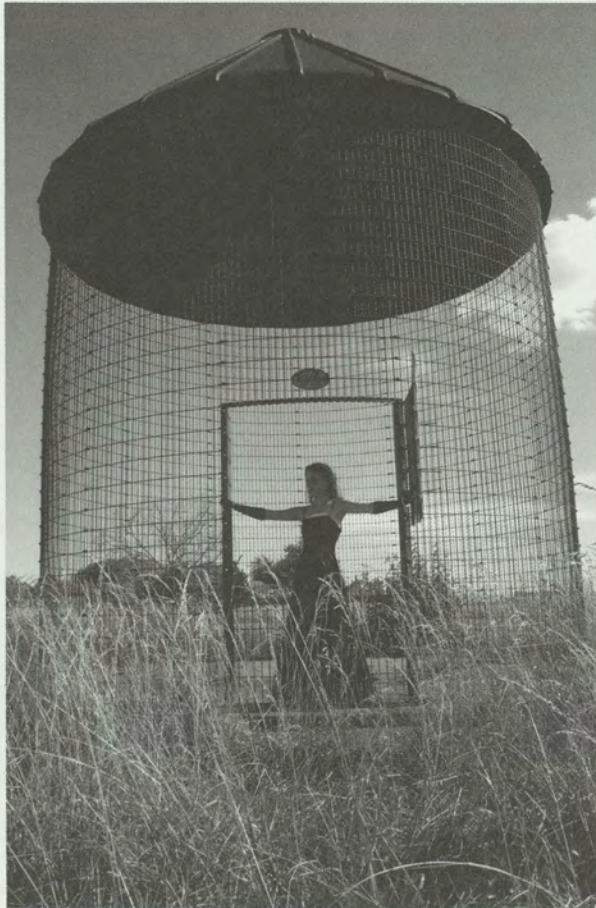
**Door Model**  
*Justin Oakley*  
Photograph



## Shaving

*Erik William Scott*

I watch the  
flecks of hair  
flirting with the  
drain, and finally  
disappearing,  
where they will  
wait  
for the  
rest  
of  
me.



### Caged Model

*Justin Oakley*

Photograph

## South Shore Stroll

*Marlene June Million*

Drifted dunes sprout grassy shoots  
where breezes blow to catch  
the water's mist. Indiana steel mills dot  
the shore; blast furnaces churn  
and curl their smoke into the air.

We stroll, sharing confidences,  
as summer's evening haze filters  
the distant sites of Chicago. The twin  
antennae of the Sears Tower pierce  
the skyline.

Sea gulls wobble on stilted legs,  
scavenge the sand for crumbs,  
then taking flight, soar aimlessly —  
hobos of the beach.

Butterflies flutter, winging near  
the swish and swirl of water  
that brushes the shore's edge.

Beached people pack belongings  
and pass by artistry in the sand:  
a flop-eared dog, a moat that guards  
a castle, turreted high.

Our toes sink into cool, wet sand.  
We carry on in our rhythmic pace,  
turning towards home as the sun slips  
beneath a westerly wave.



## Dazzle

*Marlene June Million*

Hot stars  
collide  
on a bed  
of Universal  
sheets.

Silken mists  
and trailing  
comets glitter  
our galaxy.

We sway,  
intertwine,  
and sizzle  
in solar  
sparkle.



**Caged Elegance**  
*Justin Oakley*  
Photograph



## Quiet As I Walk

*Treva Mitchell*

In the middle of nowhere is a white four-square farmhouse  
that used to be mine.

If you turn down that gravel diveway  
(and I don't know why you would)  
strong, straight trees stair-step their way up to heaven's cornflower blue.

Beneath the massive Doric columns of the front porch  
lies a sea of violent colours;  
Domineering blue bachelor's buttons,  
fairy pink sedum,  
yellowed black-eyed Susans.  
and blood gash poppies.

I am caught somewhere between infinity and the aromatic seas  
in the middle of this five hundred acres of dirt.

My job is to feed  
the Black Aberdeen Angus cattle.  
I have had this job ever since I can remember,  
and will have it for as long as I live here.  
If they don't get fed, it's my fault.  
As I walk out to the sun-beaten red barn,  
I wonder what it would be like  
to live a different life.  
One that does not consist of  
cold rooms as I watch my breath,  
canning raped gardens,  
butchering wide-eyed trust.



### **Nosy Opie and Her Gang**

*Ross Waitt*  
Photograph



# If Tears Could They Would

Clint Smith

Images come quick for The Quick.  
The Dead however (tortured with reflection  
scratching that chalky, nostalgic  
portion inside their skull) stand in procession,

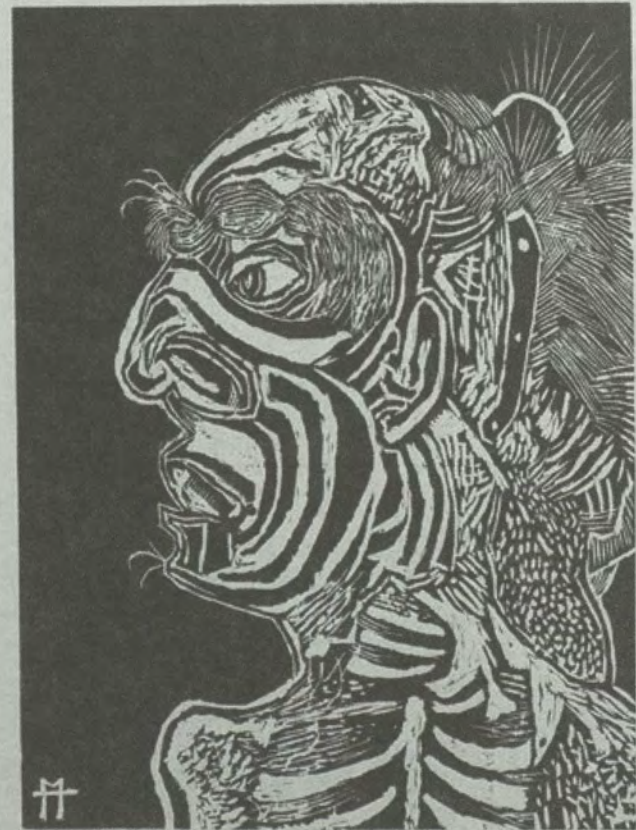
waiting for their turn to view  
The Mental Film. There are a few  
who upon retrieving their negative strip  
pose the questions: *Whose fishing trip*

*was this? How did that trout taste  
in my mouth?* For some it's a waste—  
the visages are more than they can bear  
and they thank The Prankster for their

recently vacated sockets; while  
others in the single file might offer a smile  
if flesh still existed. If...tears  
could they would smear

the emulsion—swirling the black  
& white stains into new eidetic  
conceptions. *Who is this  
couple tying The Knot? How much did it  
cost the two of us?* Looking back,  
perhaps everything was inverted—mis-  
matched (with the exception of the jux-  
taped color scheme of the tux,  
of course). Afterwards it's back to the ground,  
and if tears could they would heal  
the celluloid rerun wound  
around the antique reel too real.

**Bokwus**  
Stephen Hall  
Woodcut Print





## Breakfast in Mexico

*Clint Smith*

There was a period of roughly  
7 seconds where the sound of the tide  
outside our balcony was perfectly in  
synch with the rise & fall  
of her eyelids, barely hiding irises aching  
for dilation. Black hair—raven-pitch tendrils on the pillow

next to me. A lizard sunbathing on a clay rail  
made movements both furtive and infinitely  
still. *How far have we come?*  
As the crow flies: 1,283 miles.  
We will make it at least knee deep  
into The Gulf—both hands clutching  
sand. I have a picture, taken with the intent  
to prove it.

## Contact Solution

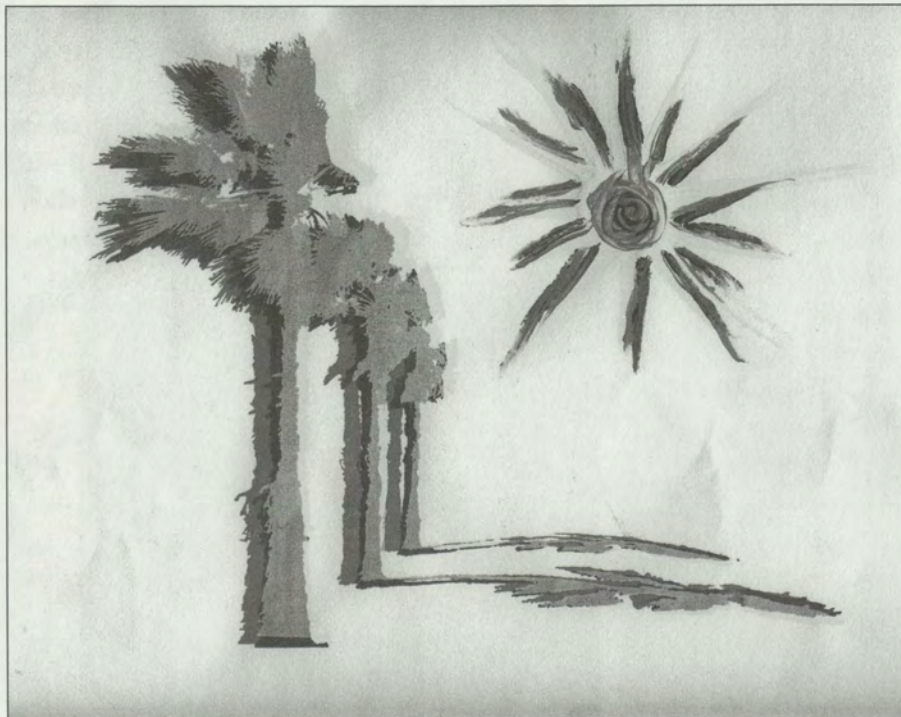
*Clint Smith*

He was known for sleeping with women  
who owned no hands

and it wasn't always his fault—sometimes  
these women screwed on

those plastic mannequin hands as a joke  
or trick, later finding them soaking

in contact solution next to  
their Mother's smoke-stained lingerie.



### **Destination**

*Joe Wallace*

Silkscreen Print 8.5" x 11"



## The Great Rift

Catherine Coppage

I hear him ask me if I am listening to him, and I am –  
So my head does a nod in his direction to indicate  
a positive response. But really I am watching his eyes,  
the deep blue of a storm, for now. But they will change.  
They do this, this rush of emotion, one moment of gray  
and then the sky opens to light, or dark.  
I ask him if he is aware of this meteorological phenomenon  
in his eyes—but I don't say it like that.  
He smiles and tells me, *yes*. And then  
he asks me if I am aware that globin needs a catalyst  
in order to turn into hemoglobin,  
that it will eventually change on its own, but it will take  
millions of years and constant volcanic temperatures  
in order for this spontaneous change to manifest.  
I look at him and wonder if he knows  
that I am, at this moment, feeling  
a strange kinship to the globin in this scenario.

*The universe will be pulled apart eventually,  
in about fifty million years he says (at this he laughs, and  
the gaps between his teeth peek at me for just a moment).  
I smile back, and wait to hear the rest of the theory,  
wait to see the change in his atmosphere, wait.  
At the end of time the universe will expand itself  
into nothingness. One deep exhale into the infinite.  
First the galaxies will begin to separate, then  
the solar system will become gravitationally  
unbound, until eventually everything  
will expand and explode—gone.  
So, I say in my most attentive voice  
(the voice that says I'm listening)*

you are telling me that eventually,  
at the end of time, our universe  
will just let go of its obligations  
and for one exquisite second before death  
become its potential?

*Yes, I suppose you could say that.*

What about the tiniest atoms? What about  
their energy?

*Gone, just like the rest – poof, everything  
will be over.*

I am listening.

He hands me a book— *this is for you*

he says, *I've been meaning to give it to you,*

*I know he's your favorite. Kirkegaard, The Present Age.*

I look at him and I try to keep my facial expression  
appropriate—but inside...he's giving  
me Kirkegaard. He asks me to read the first  
paragraph, and I will—but first I press my nose  
in between its thin yellow pages and inhale.

*Read it out loud,* he says. And so I begin.

Aspens

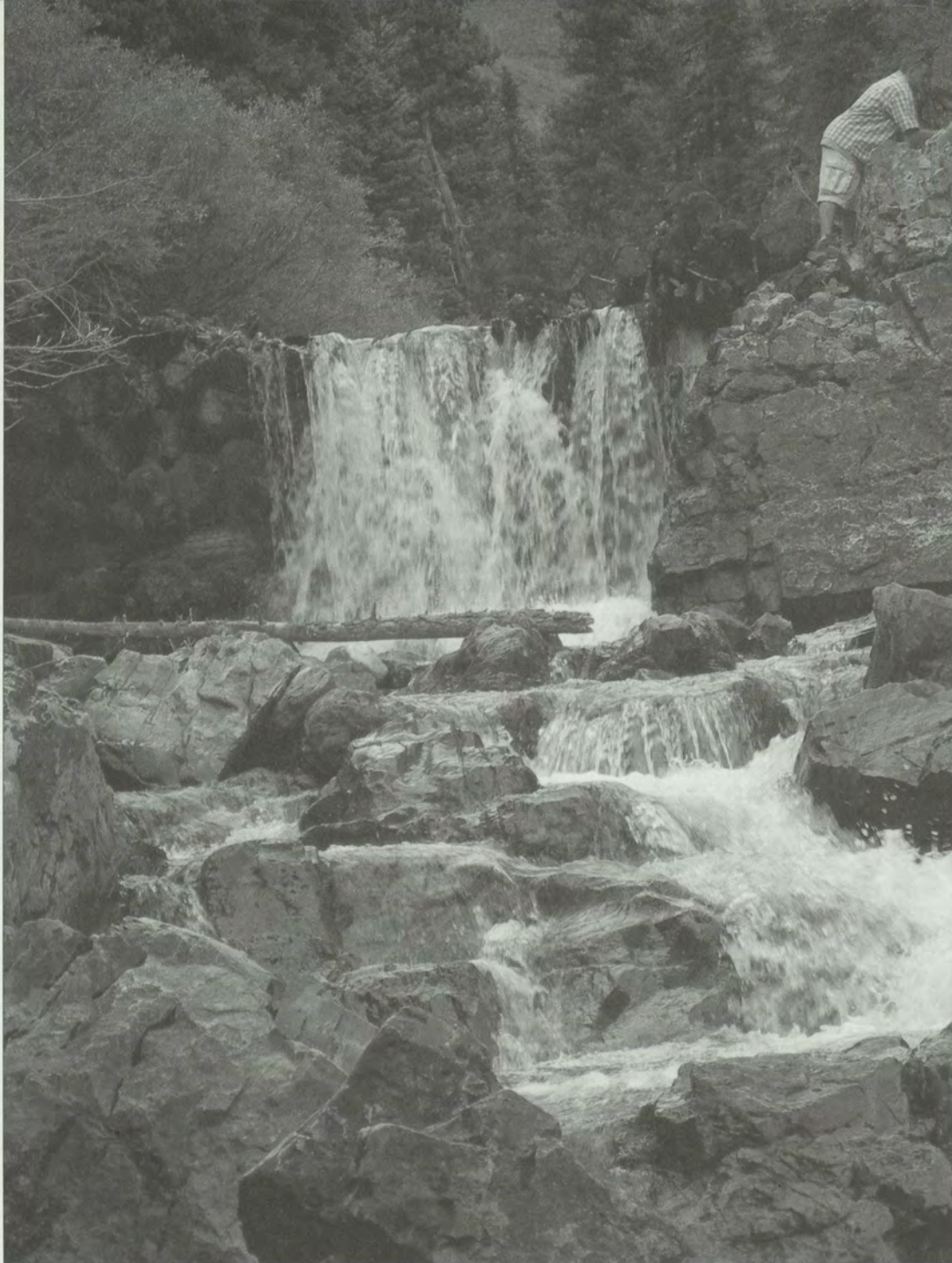
Georgianna Lea Quinn

Photograph









**Emerald Falls**  
*Georgianna Lea Quinn*  
Photograph



# Tattooed Mourning

Andrew Polley

The needle is buzzing, droning,  
grinding away at her flesh,  
her dirty flesh.

At least this parlor is clean,  
not like the others a half-step up from an opium den and  
a half-step down from any Board of Health certification.  
She holds her life in her hands as if it were water.

As if it is just water flowing down  
mixing with ink, sweat, and tears.

She, and her sideways glances at me in the next chair,  
judge and hang me in the same breath.

I don't need to speak.

I fade in to the background for her.

I become the wallpaper

the chair

the Asshole-Who-Wouldn't-Stop-Staring-At-Me

the stereotype.

So I watch.

her inked skin betrays her love for art,

her love for (he)art,

her love for the one with the the birthday wrapping around her  
too-delicate wrist

her

precious, too-delicate,  
scarred wrist.

Daddy was never home  
or was home too much.

He never loved her  
or loved her too much,  
every week,

for an endless season of love  
like death  
on a stillborn's face.

And this is grotesque, this voyeurism  
but she is Beautiful like mourning,  
that release of grief and tension  
and I can't turn away.

Or she is Beautiful like morning,  
that release of grief and tension. It was morning  
when she said goodbye to him  
and released that tension in a flood of grief,

a storm of blades,

a cyclone of fists,

a shower of dirt,

a sprinkling of tears,

and no more!

No more for that man

and his endless seasons!

No more for that stillborn's face!

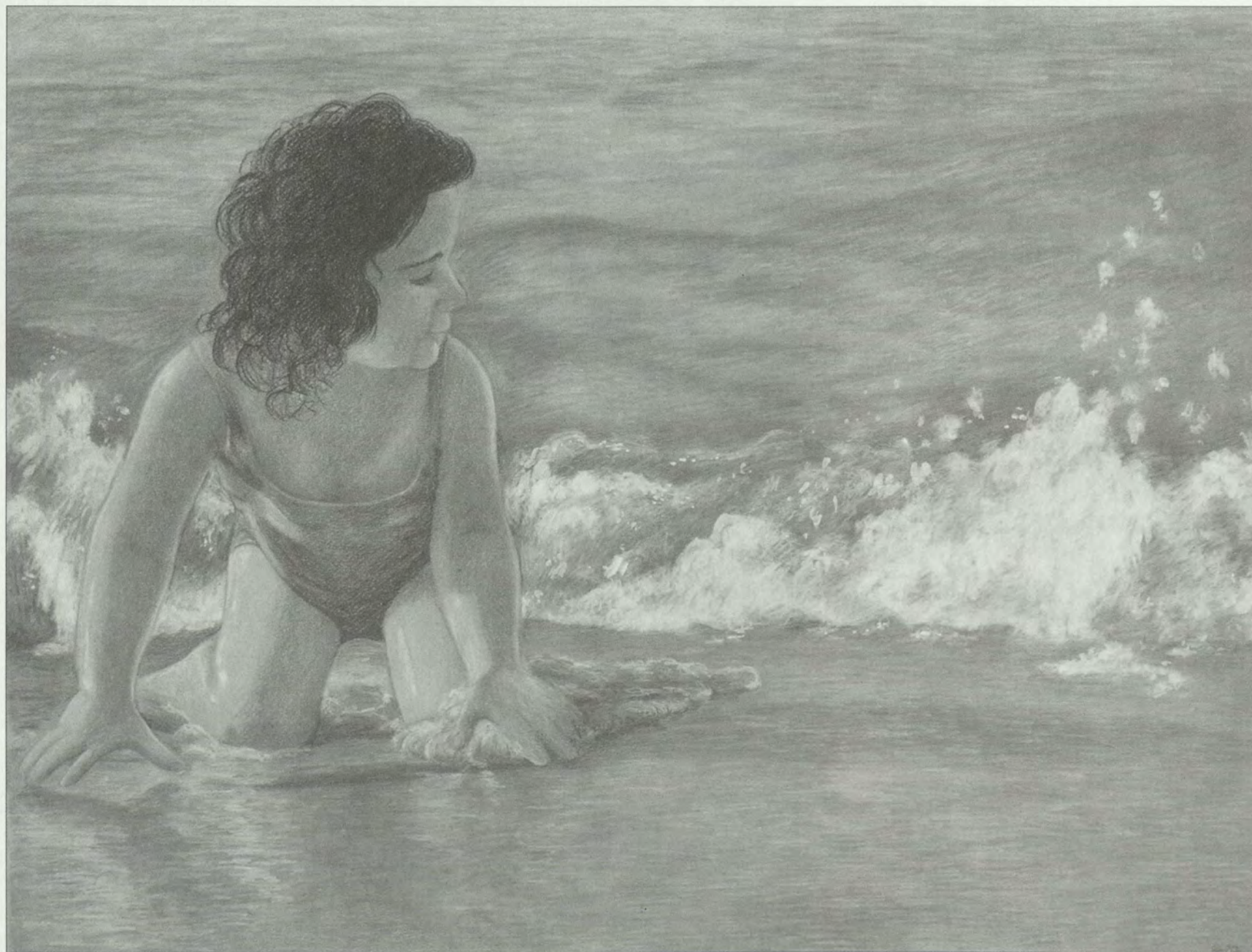
There is nothing left for morning to take!

She holds her life in her hands as if it were water,  
just water flowing down  
mixing with ink, sweat, and tears.

As if it were water  
drowning the baby  
the birthday  
the father.

As if water and ink  
are the only things  
she uses needles for.







### Bathing Beauty

Colleen Card

We lived in a house two miles south of town surrounded by eighty acres of muck; a silky, rich, black soil highly coveted by farmers. Once marshland, the land grew thick with corn, wheat, and soybeans. Our house, with its red barn and weathered outbuildings, was well over a hundred years old, sagging and clothed in dirty, gray asphalt siding. It consisted of two floors and seven rooms so poorly insulated the wind blew in on one side and out the other as if the walls were tissue paper. In the winter, I burrowed under the blankets in my upstairs bedroom, but I could still see the white vapor of my breath. The sole window in my room vibrated in its frame with each gust from the north humming like a giant kazoo. I don't remember winters colder than those. I had covered the wall beside my bed with an amorphous collage of magazine cut-outs depicting tropical places, bold, bright phrases, and advertisements all meant to cajole consumers into buying things they couldn't afford. That included everything for me. One dollar bill made me rich and filled my mind with speculations of what to buy and where to buy it. I snuggled further down into the covers, dreamed of ways to make some money, and waited for spring.

When the wind shifted and started blowing in from the south, the snow finally thawed, and the muck thickened into wet mire that could suck a farmer in waist deep. Barren fields began raising a stubble of early green, and by the fourth of July those tender stalks waved knee high. Our huge garden grew lush in the old cow pasture. Summers seem endless when you're a kid; September and school are too far away to even consider. I roamed the fields and woods near my home learning the shape of the land. The days grew sultry, and the corn towered over my head. The heat and humidity thickened the air and turned my room into a sauna. On the hottest nights I would lie down on the living room floor in front of a box fan with

my two brothers. We spent our days trying to keep cool by running through the hose and eating popsicles. My mom paid me fifty cents a week for keeping the garden hoed. Sweat rolled down my face, into my eyes, and off the tip of my nose while I hacked away at weeds. At ten years old the lure of my own cash was strong motivation, but I never saw so many miles of green beans in all of my life.

I worked hard though, and managed to save every bit of my money in a glass jar that I kept hidden in my room. Each week I took out all of those quarters and counted them. I aimed for five whole dollars to spend, but when my stash totaled four fifty, the temptation proved too great to wait any longer. I placed all those coins into my white vinyl billfold with the red jeweled flower on its front. The next time Mom took me to town, I headed for Wegmiller's dime store. Wegmiller's was a store from the turn of the century, with high ceilings and smooth oak floors. It was divided into rows full of every kind of merchandise imaginable—from wind-up tin toys, baby dolls with eyes that opened and closed, to knickknacks, kitchen utensils, sewing supplies, and clothing. A large, glass-fronted candy counter full of chocolate-covered peanuts, chocolate stars, maple drops, candy corn, rainbow jelly beans, and sugared gumdrops stood in the center of the store. I would do well to stay away from it with my terrible sweet tooth. Four dollars and fifty cents would buy one giant bag of candy and an inevitable trip to the dentist. My Red Ball Jets squeaked on the smooth wooden floors while I browsed through the aisles. I carefully contemplated each selection, anticipation building, knowing I would go home with something fabulous. I strolled down the last aisle where I came to a sunny window display at the front of the store. Before me was a "perfect day at the beach" right there in Wegmiller's. Bright, fluorescent beach towels were spread invitingly and a blue-and-white webbed lawn chair stretched

*continued...*



out just waiting for someone to lounge in it. A tangerine-striped bathing suit draped over one arm of the chair, and a pair of yellow flip-flops lay beside it as if someone had just gotten up to take a dip in the lake. The window presented enameled metal sand buckets and shovels, sleek plastic air mattresses and swim rings, and a bold, red-and-white striped beach umbrella that topped off the scene. The July sun shining in the window bathed the whole scene in a golden glow looking just like the cut-outs on my bedroom wall. There wasn't a beach for miles except for the man-made one at Waubee Lake about twenty miles away. Still, I could see myself in that lawn chair, all stretched out and covered in Coppertone. Every kid there would wish they were me as I spread my stunning new beach towel in the sand, and placed my new yellow flip-flops on one corner. I would leisurely stroll down to the water with my new air mattress and float out across the lake as if I owned it. I smiled to myself and opened my billfold. There were all those shiny quarters. The tag on the lawn chair read five dollars and ninety-nine cents. Too much. But I could buy flip-flops for fifty cents, a beach towel for a dollar, and an air mattress for seventy-five cents; half my money. There was a rack of bathing suits off to the side of the window display, but they were all too big, and too expensive. I wondered about the suit in the window. I asked the saleslady if I could see it.

She retrieved it from the window, held it up, and said "It's a size ten. Is that your size, sweetie?"

I nodded.

"But look, the front has faded in the sun" she said.

I could tell it was brighter than the front when she turned the back of the suit to me.

"Tell you what honey; since it's faded you can have it for half off. So that would be two dollars. How's that?" she smiled.

I smiled too and nodded my head. I followed her to the cash register. One pair of yellow flip-flops, one fluorescent beach towel, one lime-green air mattress, and one partially faded, tangerine-striped bathing suit.

The saleslady chimed along with the cash register as she rang up

my purchases. "Let's see, that's four twenty-five, plus tax, will be four forty-two."

I dug into my billfold and began counting out my quarters, all eighteen of them, all 100 miles of green-beans-worth of them, and slid them over the counter to her. She plunked them into the cash register and held out my change to me cheerfully.

"Here you go, eight cents! I think you got yourself quite a bargain!" she chuckled.

She placed my purchases in a flat brown paper bag, folded the top over carefully, and handed it to me.

"Thank you," I said as I turned and pushed open the heavy, glass front door and stepped out onto the baking sidewalk.

I saw the saleslady already replacing the bathing suit I had bought with a bright, blue and white polka-dotted one as I passed the display window. She

looked up at me and winked. I knew she was thinking she had made a slick sale of a faded bathing suit to a dumb kid who didn't know any better. But I knew what I was doing, and I knew I had gotten the better end of the deal. After all, people only saw one side of me at a time, didn't they?



**Father of Invention**  
Stephen Hall  
Lithograph



### Bead-Fest

Colleen Card

So Missy and I went to sell back our evil Finite Math books at The Textbook Alternative. Along with some other unread tomes of wisdom, we received a total of sixty-six dollars and coupons for a free latté or smoothie at Moe Joe's. We ordered, sipped our smoothies, got frozen brains, and Missy showed me her Sara's wedding day pics. Her daughter looked like a delicate china doll. I loved the photo of her lifting the hem of her dress to take her first step with her new husband beside her. Her satin-slippered foot peeked out from under her dress as if she were a ballerina, preparing to dance *en pointe* into the rest of her life with the man of her dreams. It's hard not to believe in happily-ever-after when you see moments like that.

After we finished basking in the glow of their young love, we decided to take our cash and use it to banish a whole semester of combinations, permutations, and the Gaust-Jordon method. We would transform the remnants of innate mathematical stupidity into something beautiful to feed our heads. Boca Beads was the place. One step into the store and I transformed into a lusty, hungry, bead freak who couldn't keep her hands to herself. I found beads of every shade and hue, every shape and texture; sparkling, glittering strands of glass and stone just waiting to be touched. Missy said she wanted to snort them. Missy doesn't seem like the type to have ever done drugs, but I swear I sensed an addictive bent to her lady-like demeanor as she held those mesmerizing beads to her face. She once said she used to think of herself as a flower child and went barefoot on a regular basis. I could see her with strands and strands of love beads strung around her neck swaying hypnotically to Janice Joplin and The Doors, her toes peeking out from beneath her bell-bottoms. She was a natural.

So after watching Missy snort beads, and after much

contemplation, I chose some smooth, carved stone beads streaked with creams and browns, some ivory beads shaped like tear drops, and some amber glass. The stone beads reminded me of rocks that I had brought back from the California coast, swirled with the smoky colors of the hills and valleys. I rubbed them between my fingers like rosary beads, wanting to soak some of the place they came from into my skin. They could have come from anywhere in the world. I wondered how far they had traveled, and how many hands had touched them before mine.

After paying for our treasures, Missy and I sat at a large round table in the front window of the store. Perpetually prepared, Missy laid out her boxes of beads and tools. She was a bead junkie and this was her stash. As she showed me her snippers and crimpers and the assorted gems waiting to be strung into body candy, I knew that this could become a serious habit. She showed me how to lay the beads out on a board that measured the length of each strand. We were making a bracelet. After arranging my beads she cut a length of wire for me to string them with, and one by one my beads took their place in line. With a few quick turns of her wrist, Missy had my bracelet catch attached and it was ready to wear. I couldn't think of a better way to banish Finite Math from my memory than these bangle beads. I felt beautiful and exotic as they hung from my wrist. We strung a few glass beads onto some wire for earrings to match and there I was; all I needed were some flowers in my hair. With all of the counting and measuring, our math professor would be proud: We had demonstrated how much math-book money it takes to string four kinds of beads in so many different ways.

Missy gathered up her things, and we said our good-byes to the store owner with promises to return soon. Outside the sun blazed down on us, and I knew it made my beads glorious in the light. The afternoon had

*continued...*



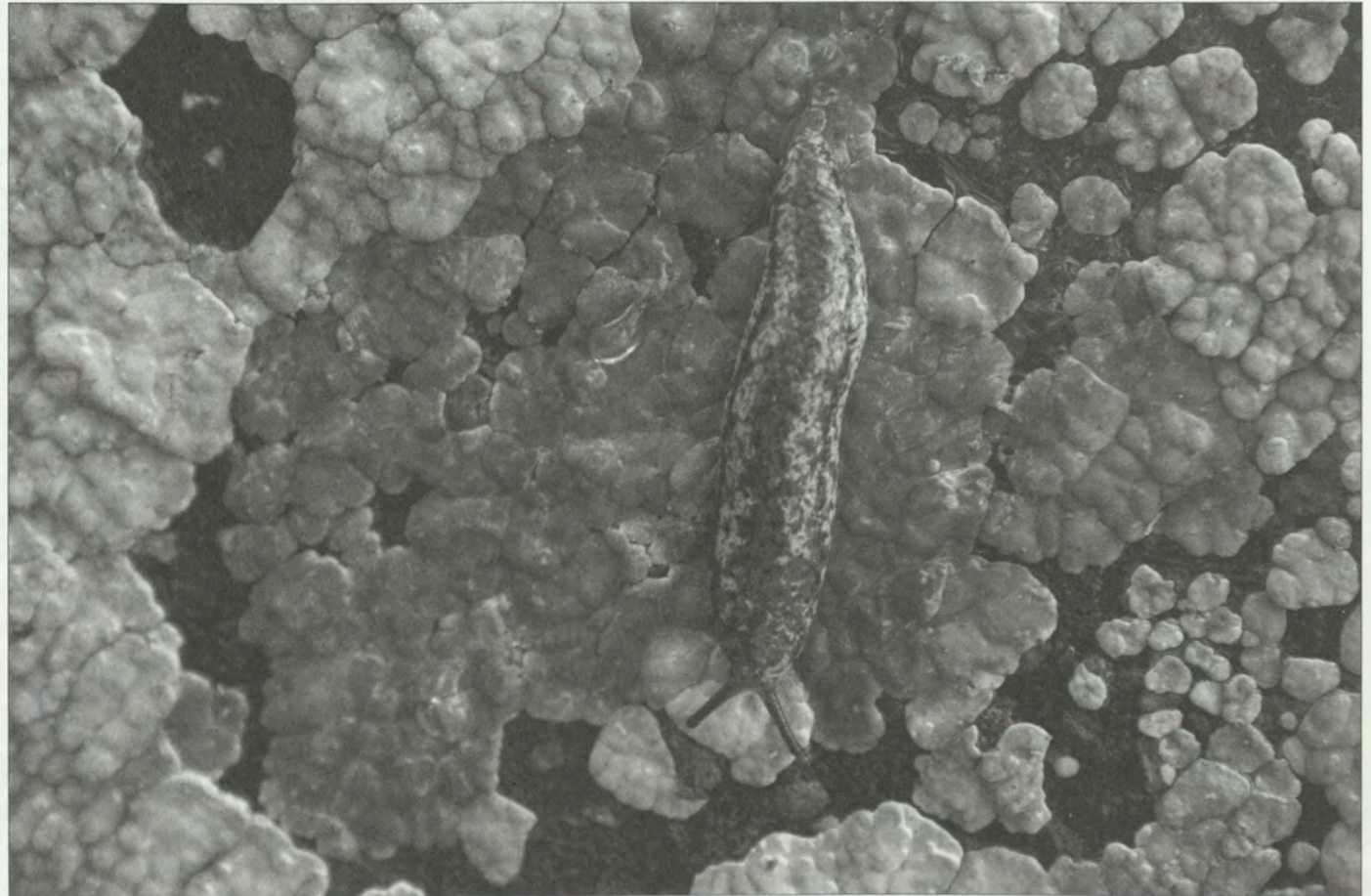
## Bead-Fest/Colleen Card

gotten away from us, and now it was time to come back to the real world with all the colors of the earth and sea and sky glittering behind our eyes. Maybe that's why it was such a satisfying experience. We could reach out and touch little pieces of the beauty on this earth, and for just a moment stand on the shore of the Pacific watching the waves glimmer in the sun, or stand in church catching the sparkle of a young bride's eyes as she speaks her faithful vows. The beads were bearers of light, messengers from afar speaking in a universal language. The flower children thought love was the universal language and they shared their beads to express it. They believed that if their stands of beads broke they would fall in love. Mine are secure for the moment, but who knows. Peace man.

**Slug**

*Joe Wallace*

Photograph 4" x 6"





### Idle Hands

Colleen Card

He stood behind the pulpit in his black gabardine suit and stiff, starched shirt. His voice boomed out over the parishioners, strong and sonorous, urging them to consider their sins. The pleated paper fans waved in the pews, like dozens of butterfly wings brushing the perspiring faces of the parishioners. Late summer sunlight blazed through the stained glass Jesus, his shining sheep looking beneficently down upon the sanctuary of the Nazarene Church. Violet sat in the front pew where she always did, plain and prim in a navy dress with a white collar, her swollen legs encased in opaque support hose and her feet in black orthopedic shoes. Polio had taken its toll on her legs long ago. Her only extravagance was the color of her eyes, soft and blue as a summer-gazing sky, the kind you lie back in the green grass and stare into until your soul soars on up into it. Her eyes took measure of the congregation, and she shook her head at its scantiness. Pastor Lawrence Gahlen, her husband of 29 years, pounded his fist on the pulpit making her blink and look up at him. He was a fine man, tall and lean, sturdy and steady as the days of the week. She gave him a small, serious smile, and nodded her head in affirmation of his exhortations, but his eyes were not looking at her. She turned to the left and looked down the pew to where his eyes led, and there was Hester Williams smiling up at him. Hester crossed her legs in her tight black skirt and it hiked up revealing most of her thigh. Lawrence's eyes were very appreciative as he announced Hymn number 23, "Bringing in the Sheaves," and asked the congregation to stand. She stood stiffly while the organ music enveloped her. She opened her mouth, sang sweet and deep, and kept one eye on Hester with the other on Lawrence.

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She stood in the kitchen one afternoon, her hands covered in flour as she rolled circles of pie dough with a heavy wooden rolling pin. Today was pie baking day. She baked a dozen pies every Friday to sell at Miller's Market, the proceeds of which went to the church discretionary fund. As she rolled the dough she thought of all the pies she had baked in her life, beginning as a child. She had stood on a wooden kitchen chair as her mama's hands had guided hers and flattened the dough with this same rolling pin.

"Gently, Violet. You need to keep an easy hand when you're rolling out the dough or you will surely end up with a sorrowful pie," her mama had said.

Today she was baking four old-fashioned cream pies, four strawberry rhubarb pies, and four Bob Andy apple pies. The Bob Andy's were from an old secret family recipe. Nobody even remembered for sure who Bob Andy was; he had disappeared from the family history as if he never existed. All Violet was certain of was his pie would melt in your mouth. It had one unusual ingredient that gave it a flavor everyone raved about. She placed a round of dough into a waiting tin. Then she poured sliced, sugared apples into the center and sprinkled them with cinnamon. She covered them with the top layer of dough and tucked them in like babes in a blanket, pinching the edges closed with her thumb and forefinger, trimming off the extra. A few deft slices with her paring knife drew a vine-and-leaf pattern into the top for steam, then a sprinkling of sugar and into the oven.

There wasn't a whole lot Violet found more satisfying than baking her pies. The rest was just busy work, but baking pies was her thinking time. Time to remember, time to let all her worries and sadness flow out of her spine, and down through her arms to her hands, and out through

*continued...*



the tips of her fingers as she rolled smooth the dough. Her mama had been right about being gentle with the pies, but to her they were all sorrowful pies because she poured her sorrows into them to bake and bubble away into savory sweetness.

She rinsed her hands in the kitchen sink where she saw Lawrence through the window out in the gravel driveway lying under the old Ford, trying to squeeze just a little more life out of its weary bones. The hood was up and all she could see of him was the top of his balding head and an occasional greasy hand groping the ground for a wrench. The summer was winding down to a slow fading death as the last humid days of August were upon them. The lawn was dry and brittle—the garden haggard and spent. This house was on the edge of town, perched on the line between Michigan and Indiana. So it depended on which way you leaned whether you were a Hoosier or a Michiganite. A long stretch of woods roamed behind the house and if you cut through the tangled brush far enough, you'd come to the St. Joseph River. She and Lawrence used to walk back there when they were younger, his arm supporting her as she stepped gingerly over the uneven ground. They'd sit on the bank and listen to the song of the river crooning to the earth and watch the fish leaping and dancing to its cadence. They had quietly enjoyed one another's presence under the shelter of willow trees as the chickadees, jays, and cardinals busied themselves in the branches. That was a long time ago. Lawrence was so busy now with the church it was a rarity when he had a moment to just sit, and Violet was lonely here sometimes. The houses were stretched out from one another on an old asphalt road with no sidewalks, and it wasn't everyday visitors came, so she was surprised to see a flash of white outside the window and someone strolling over to the Ford. It was Hester Williams in a white cotton summer dress. Violet leaned over the sink to get a better look and saw her standing right next to where Lawrence's shiny head peeked out from under the Ford. Hester leaned over the bumper, looked down into the engine, and mouthed something to him. He shimmied out partway and paused, just where Hester stood over him, her dress billowing in the breeze. Violet wiped her hands on her apron and shuffled across the kitchen to the back screen door. As

she opened the door and stepped out onto the porch, Hester tipped her head back, and her laughter bubbled out into the hot August air. The screen door slapped shut and Lawrence scrambled out from under the Ford like he had a pantful of fire ants. He brushed himself off real quick and ambled on over into the garage. Hester smoothed her dress and strolled over to the porch.

"Hey there Violet! I was just saying to Lawrence how it's been such a long time since I came over here to pay you a visit." She reached up and tucked a strand of auburn hair behind one ear. "You know you're a lucky woman having a man that can fix things! My Kenneth doesn't like to get his hands dirty." She stopped at the bottom step of the porch, the light gleaming in her hair. The sun was behind her, and her slim silhouette was sketched starkly against the white of her dress.

"Well Hester, imagine finding you standing out in my driveway in the middle of the day. Don't you just look like a picture in that dress? Women your age usually look a little washed out in all white, but you seem to be holding up just fine."

Hester cocked her head to one side and pursed her mouth. "Well thank you very much. If I could just throw on any old thing like you it would be so much easier."

Violet just looked at her for a second. "I thought you and Kenneth were down at the lake for the month. Weren't you going to have a second honeymoon or something? I thought that was real sweet of Kenneth. You know Lawrence and I celebrated thirty-five years in July. We took the train up to Chicago and visited my Aunt Emma. We spent the night at her place, and the next day we took a taxi downtown to see the sights. My, my, I swear I had a stiff neck for a week from looking up. We didn't walk far, you know, my legs just don't hold up."

Hester looked down at Violet's legs. "It's a shame, a downright shame, but you must be used to it by now. Why, I remember you in those same kind of shoes way back in high school."

"I do just fine."

"I know you do, but don't you want to wear some pretty heels and just go out dancing sometimes? I remember Lawrence was a wonderful

*continued...*





**Remnant**  
*Colleen Card*  
Photograph



dancer back in his day. I think he spun me around the dance floor quite a few times.”

“If I remember correctly, Hester, quite a few boys spun you around. Anyways, I don’t have time to think about dancing and pretty shoes. I’ve got enough on my plate as it is with my pies, and the church and all. So does Lawrence.” She turned, opened the screen door to the house, and stepped inside speaking to Hester through the screen. “I really don’t have time to visit today. I’m baking strawberry-rhubarb pies right now. Maybe I’ll stop by later and bring you and Kenneth one.”

“Oh, you can’t! I’m deathly allergic to rhubarb, you know that. Once I had just a taste of jam and ended up in the emergency room. My throat just closed up like I was being strangled. It was a nightmare!”

“That must have been awful. I imagine Kenneth was frightened to death. I guess I’ll just wait and bring you a nice simple apple pie. I certainly wouldn’t want you to end up in the hospital again. What would we do without you dear?”

“You’re just too kind. I wish I could be more like you; just plain old comfortable Violet. Well, I’d better get going. Kenneth will be wondering what’s kept me. You make sure and tell Lawrence I said good-bye. I’ll pop over another time and maybe we can all sit for a bit and have a glass of tea.” She turned and flounced away from the porch, her hips swishing under that dress. She looked sideways at the garage, hoping to catch a glimpse of Lawrence. Violet watched her walk away, and Lawrence came out of the garage and went back to work on the Ford.

Yes, Violet was a plain woman, as plain as bread and butter. She’d never laid any kind of claim to beauty or fashionableness, but she did have those eyes. That’s what Lawrence said he fell in love with all those years ago. He said her eyes told him she needed someone to take care of her. She’d been shy, painfully so, always worried about people looking at her funny because she was different. She’d had to wear braces on her legs back then, but eventually had outgrown the need for them. Now she just shuffled a little when she walked. She was certainly no track star, but she had other talents. She could sing like an angel dropped to earth, and she baked the

best pies in three counties.

As the afternoon passed into evening, Violet and Lawrence sat at the kitchen table eating supper. Lawrence was a reticent man, always carefully chewing his thoughts before they formed into words. Tonight he was even more quiet than usual. Violet decided to cut the thick silence as she placed one more scoop of mashed potatoes onto his plate.

“Wasn’t that nice of Hester to drop by this afternoon? I swear that woman doesn’t age. I can’t imagine how she does it. Kenneth is certainly a lucky man, don’t you think so?”

“I guess it depends upon how you define luck.”

“Well just imagine how proud he must be to have such a fine looking woman for a wife. Oh, I know looks aren’t everything, but some people find it mighty important. I always did say though, God sees the heart, that’s what matters. Isn’t that right?”

“Yes. It’s the heart. You’re right about that.”

Violet stood and carried their plates to the sink and began to rinse them. “You’re such a good man. I know you must have so much patience and strong will to counsel all the people at church. They look to you like a father, you know? It’s such a responsibility, but they couldn’t have picked a more upstanding man.” She dried her hands and stepped behind him, placing them on his shoulders. “Would you like to sit out on the porch later? There’ll be a full moon tonight. It’s the Sturgeon Moon. That means the fish will be jumping for sure.”

Lawrence pushed his chair back from the table and stood. “I need to look over my sermon for Sunday. I’ll be in my office. You’ll have to sit without me.” He patted the top of her head, and she felt like a dog begging for a bone and getting a kick instead.

The next morning Violet slept in a little late. She rarely slept past 7:00 and it was quarter-to-eight by the time she squeezed her swollen feet into her shoes. She did hate these shoes. If only someone would take the time to consider the definition of orthopedic did not necessarily mean ugly. Lawrence was up already and as she shuffled through the house she looked for him. His office was empty and his used coffee cup was in the



kitchen sink. She looked out of the window to see if he might be working on the car and noticed the side door to the garage was ajar. She wondered if he remembered they needed to deliver her pies this morning. She filled his cup with fresh coffee from the percolator on the stove and, cradling it, stepped out the screen door, catching it so it wouldn't slam. Going up and down stairs was always the hardest for her, so she held on to the railing and stepped down one foot at a time, both feet on one step before moving to the next. She reached the bottom and crossed the lawn over to the garage and grasped the handle of the half-open door. Just then she heard what sounded like Lawrence grunting, like he was lifting something heavy. She opened the door and stood frozen at the scene in the shadows of the garage. Hester Williams was up on Lawrence's tool bench with her skirt around her waist. Lawrence had his back to the door, pumping and grunting between her thighs, his pants around his ankles. Violet dropped the coffee cup and it shattered on the cement floor as she turned and stumbled to the house. She staggered through the kitchen and stopped, staring at the pies lined up on the kitchen table, and one by one she picked them up and dropped them onto the floor where they formed a sticky oozing pile of fruit and sugar and cream.

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Violet sat in her usual spot in the front of the church. Today she and the congregation were all in black, and Lawrence stood solemnly before the pulpit. Violet looked to the left and saw Kenneth, his shoulders slumped, a creased white handkerchief pressed to his face. She looked up at her husband as he opened his bible and began to speak.

"And God said, 'Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better'."

She nodded her head and smiled at him, then looked down at her hands as his voice ebbed and flowed through the church like the river winding through the woods. Her hands were smooth and soft as pie dough. She thought of how she had had her hands covered in pie dough just the

other day. Mama had always said idle hands are the devil's handiwork. She had always loved baking pies, and this one had been special, from her heart. She had cooked the rhubarb to a fine pulp and strained the juice into her favorite stoneware bowl. Then she had sliced some of the juiciest Jonathans into it, adding sugar, lemon, and cinnamon and stirred it all together with the rhubarb juice coating the apples. She had taken extra care with the crust, rolling it as gently as a mother stroking her baby's skin, her hands rolling back and forth, back and forth, as tears dropped in salty splashes onto the dough. She laid it into the tin softly, and then pressed her hand into the bottom, the pliable dough imprinting every line and crease of her palm along with the impression of her wedding band. She poured the fruit into the pan, juicy and ripe and tart. This would be the perfect pie; every crimp, every vine, every leaf, every grain of sugar. She was sure Hester would love it. She had told her she would bring her a simple apple

pie, and it was; Bob Andy's apple pie was simply sorrowful.



**Forest Wanderings**  
Beth Zyglowicz  
Mixed Media 5" x 8"



## The Judgment of Crows

Colleen Card

His breath came in sharp gasps as he crouched behind the locked door. Outside, a crowd of frenzied voices rose and fell, shouting obscenities. Footsteps climbed the rough plank steps onto the sagging front porch, and hard fists banged on the door. He sprinted from the front room of the tiny house through the sparse kitchen and out the back door. Sweat dripped down his back, staining his shirt, and his mouth was as dry as the clouds of dust rising from his feet as they pounded the ground. His body and breath reeked of stale whiskey. He ran through the yard, down a damp, rubbish strewn alley, and out into the next street pushing people out of his path. Behind him the slap of hard boot soles came closer and closer, finally overtaking him. He suddenly found himself with a mouthful of gravel, a pair of sinewy hands pinning his arms, and a knee digging into his back. It was a bluecoat, one of Loganstown's finest. He snapped cuffs around his prisoner's wrists and yanked him to his feet.

"You come with me, Caponidro, before the crowd gets here! They want your neck." He pushed him down the street past curious faces peering from shop windows and doorways.

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It was 1917, and Vito was nineteen. He had ridden a rattle-trap bus all the way from Chicago to Loganstown, Indiana where his brother Tony lived. The bus creaked and bounced along rutted, dirt-packed roads for 150 miles, past a seemingly endless grid of wilted crops specked with flocks of arguing crows pecking at the soil for insects. The hours ground by until finally the beast groaned to a stop, and the driver turned in his seat and gestured to Vito to get off. He stepped down from the bus with one small black leather satchel and looked around the town with its redbrick

buildings and sunbaked dirt streets. The few people he saw looked as limp and damp as old shirts hanging on a clothesline. Against the yellow haze of the sky, smoke belched from a brick stack in the distance. A flabby, middle-aged woman with frizzy hair piled on top of her head stood fanning herself in the doorway of a café. The faded red lettering in the window read "LORETTA'S." His English was poor but he approached her, boots scuffing the dirt, eyes downcast, and the envelope his brother's letter had arrived in gripped tightly in his hand.

He took off his battered hat, held it to his chest, and asked quietly, pointing to the address on the letter, "Prego dove è questa casa?"

He held the grimy, creased envelope out to her. She hesitated for a moment and looked him over with narrow eyes, from his dusty boots to his greasy hair, then took the envelope from his hand and squinted at the ragged handwriting. She handed it back to him, wiped her hand on her long skirt, and pointed up the street. He nodded, slowly backing away, and turned in the direction she had pointed, feeling her wary eyes pinned to the back of his head. The streets were empty, as if everyone was hiding from the dense humidity behind shaded windows of the tired houses he passed. He walked for twenty minutes down the street, watching each sign until he came to a cross street whose name matched the one his brother had written on the envelope, Toledo Street. He turned left and began to watch the numbers nailed to the front of each house until he came to 652. The house was aging, gray clapboard with peeling paint, and black shutters hung precariously from the windows. As he stood in the street in front of the house he heard a small voice singing. In the sunburnt yard of the house next door, a little girl with long, auburn hair sat sifting dust through her fingers. Their eyes met and she smiled crookedly, her mouth ringed in dirt. She pointed at him then tilted her head back and laughed. He felt his



stomach tighten, gritted his teeth, and turned away. Her laughter followed him like his own shadow.

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That day seemed like a lifetime ago. Now here he was, pacing a cold jail cell and waiting for an attorney. Vito hoped the man would be able to tell his side of the story for him. He knew, firsthand, that here in America, many did not want immigrants like him living and working beside them. He saw it in their eyes. They hated him before they ever knew him. He ended up doing the dirtiest jobs for the longest hours and lowest pay. His only comfort lately had been amber liquid that came in thick glass bottles wrapped in brown paper. Tony had kept insisting things would change, but Vito hadn't shared his optimism. He just took another drink. Things had changed, not like Tony predicted, but in a drastic and twisted turn of events. As Vito waited he thought of Tony and his family. He hoped they were alright there in the house. That crowd had been murderous. He heard the guard's gruff voice as footsteps echoed down the corridor towards his cell.

"Caponidro, your lawyer is here!"

Beside the guard stood a short square man, with slicked-back hair and wire-rimmed spectacles. He wore a dark coat despite the heat, and his face shone with sweat. The guard opened the cell with an iron key that hung from a ring at his hip, and the man entered, the door clanging shut behind him. His eyes searched Vito's face as he held out his hand towards him.

"Mr. Caponidro, I am Benito Canoni. I am pleased to meet you, although the circumstances could be better."

Vito took his hand in his own sweating one and broke down into silent, heaving sobs. "Mr. Canoni. Si, por favor, you must help me."

Mr. Canoni opened his notebook, reached into a coat pocket and drew out a fountain pen. He looked at Vito and motioned for him to sit.

Vito sat and began to speak.

He had started out here with an intense drive to work and help his family. He began working at the factory with Tony, but his job was torturous. He showed up every day before dawn to shovel coal into the belly of a great furnace that blasted him with a wall of heat that felt as if it came from Hell itself. The first three days on the job the heat had made him so nauseous he had to sit down in the coal pile with his head between his knees, and the foreman had just thrown water on him and bellowed at him to get back to work.

"They're lined up for this job Caponidro! Get off your ass!"

He had been promised a better job on the line if he did well, but each day passed in a blur of endless, repetitive shoveling and lifting and feeding the unquenchable appetite of the ravenous flames. His hopes of ever escaping died. He left each day after the darkness that inhabited the factory blended with the darkness of the outside sky, his eyes gleaming starkly white out of his sooty face. All of the hair had been singed off his hands and arms and they were covered in blisters that continually oozed. One night he stopped at a pub on the way home, stepping like a dark phantom into the crowd of laborers easing their woes one glass at a time. He sat alone at the end of the bar and gestured to the bartender, who approached him wiping his hands on his apron.

"No tabs for Wops"

Vito reached into his pocket, drew out one silver dollar and placed it on the counter; one tenth of his weekly wage. The bartender pocketed the coin and placed a bottle and a glass on the bar. The first glass went down hard, and he choked as his throat rebelled against the caustic liquid, but the next one went down more smoothly. After that, each glass plunged him further into a fuzzy, forgetful world. Soon he found his feet leading him to the pub every night, and his silver dollars disappeared as fast as he made them. Each morning he awoke with his head pounding and heaved himself out of the bed and back to his job. Each morning it got harder for him to do, until finally the foreman had fired him. He had been late too many times. Tony was furious. It was hard enough to feed his wife and children without

*continued...*



having to worry about his grown brother.

Vito spent his days wandering the streets of Loganstown, looking for a job; anything to earn some money. He shoveled wet piles of manure in the stable, heaved 100 pound bags of feed at the mill, and, when he was desperate, cleaned latrines in the pub. The owner paid him in food and drink. On one of those days when he had scrubbed the putrid toilets and cleaned vomit off the wooden floor, choking and gagging with the stench, he had deferred the food and drank his entire pay. As he sat at the bar, his shoulders sagged and he miserably watched the liquid in the bottle in front of him disappear. He heard laughter coming from a table in the back of the room. He turned his head to see the foreman who had fired him sitting with three other men he recognized from the factory. They were drinking large mugs of dark beer, and their laughter was loud and arrogant. As he peered at them the foreman turned in his direction. The other men turned to look at Vito and the foreman murmured something to them Vito could not hear. They pounded the table as they burst into another fit of laughter. Vito stood up, holding the now empty bottle, and walked unsteadily over to their table, his veins flowing with false courage. As he reached the table he stopped and held the bottle aloft, smiling derisively at the foreman.

“Americani di menzogne! Here, all are liars!”

The foreman stood up and lunged towards Vito, grabbing him by the front of his shirt and lifting his feet from the floor. He held Vito’s face nose to nose with his, filling Vito’s nostrils with the smell of beer and stale sweat.

“Ya lazy Wop! Go back where you belong! We don’t need your kind here!”

He pushed Vito backwards, causing him to fall flat onto his back on the wooden floor. The bottle in his hand exploded into hundreds of sharp, glittering shards around him. He laid there stunned. The men’s laughter was dark and pecked at him like the flocks of crows in the fields he had seen when he had arrived here that first day. The foreman stood over him and spat into his face, then turned and swaggered back to the table with his friends. Vito staggered to his feet and lurched out the door,

their laughter pursuing him. He wove his way through town and down the street toward his brother’s house, resting occasionally to stop his head from swimming. Small pieces of glass rained down from his hair. His mind echoed with their laughter and he pressed his hands to his ears, trying to smother the sound. As he neared the house, the little girl stepped out into the yard of the house next door. By now he knew this family had several children. They ran in and out, their voices like the raucous squawking of blue jays all day long. This was the same girl who had sat playing in the dirt that first day. Today she wore a faded, blue cotton dress, and her legs and feet were bare. As he passed, the girl began to laugh and point at him as she had done before. She spun around in circles dizzily, her hair flowing out around her, she laughed loudly, making faces, and stopped to point again. He stopped short. Why was she laughing at him? His face grew hot and red, and his ears pounded with blood and alcohol as he staggered towards her with his fist raised, but the girl kept on spinning and laughing.

Just then another older girl came running out of the house, her face etched with fear, shouting at him. “No! Wait! Please, she doesn’t mean it! She can’t help it. She’s not right!” She dragged her younger sister to the house and through the front door as she continued to laugh and point.

Vito ran after the girls and began pounding furiously on the screen door, shaking it violently with every strike. “I make her stop! Sto avvertendoli!”

A short, haggard woman came slowly to the door. She had dark circles under her eyes; her chest heaved as she struggled for each breath. She peered into Vito’s angry face as he shouted at her.

“Your man, I speak to him!”

“My husband isn’t here.”

Vito pressed both hands against the screen, his black eyes flashing. “La vostra ragazza, gli dite di smettere di ridere! I am not to be laughed at!”

“She didn’t mean anything by it. She always acts like that. Her mind isn’t right. Leave her alone.”

She slammed the inner door shut, leaving him pressed against the



screen. His heart hammered in his chest as he spat his words through the door to her.

“I will be back! Crazy girl needs to learn! Pazzesco!”

He stormed next door into his brother’s house where the laughter of the men and the laughter of the girl echoed off the walls and floors as he paced, seething with anger. His mind reeled. Here he was in this place with no job, no money, and cleaning toilets for those liars, those men who would spit on him; here where even a child would laugh at him. They were making fun of him because he was an immigrant. No one wanted an Italian family in this neighborhood. No one wanted him in this country. Well, he would show them Vito Caponidro was not to be laughed at. He stepped over to the low bed, reached under the mattress, and drew out a cold black 38 caliber revolver. It fit his hand with a satisfying smoothness, as if he had finally found one solid thing to hold on to. Walking through the house he looked around slowly, fondling the gun. He stopped in front a picture of the Virgin, flanked by two candles. Her eyes were cold and empty, holding no solace. The picture and the candles careened through the air, crashing to the floor as he pushed them off with one swift sweep of his arm. The Virgin’s face lay broken and torn, staring emptily at the ceiling. He slammed his foot down onto her face, grinding it into the floor,

and then tread heavily through the house and out the back door onto the creaking stoop. He looked up at the sky—a solid, impenetrable shroud. Two large crows cawed harshly from an ancient oak in the back yard. He saw them there posing and preening, peering out with shiny, beady eyes like two judges in black robes weighing him and finding him lacking.



**Via Domus**  
*Anthony Deak*  
Photograph

down with his back against its coarse bark. From this spot he could see the neighbor’s house. He took a small flask from his shirt pocket, tipped it back, and emptied the liquid down his throat and into his stomach where it lay feeding his anger. His head nodded down onto his chest as he fell into a drunken doze, the gun hanging limply from his hand.

Slowly and steadily he raised the gun toward them, pulled back the trigger and shot. The crows jumped, flapping furiously and scolding as the bullet missed them both. He pulled the trigger one more time, and this time one crow plummeted from the tree in a flurry of black feathers. The other swooped down towards the house and his head, screeching its fury, then up and out into the sky until he heard it no longer. He stepped down into the yard and crossed over to the tree where the bird lay sprawled on the ground stone-still, its inky eyes frozen open. He nudged it with his foot, smiling to himself, then turned to the tree and sat

*continued...*



\*\*\*

He awoke sluggishly. Loud voices spoke rapidly and heatedly, crowding his mind. He raised his head and through bleary eyes saw the man from the house next door striding toward him. The little girl in the blue dress skipped beside him, holding his hand. He rose from the ground clumsily, the gun still in his hand, and staggered towards them. As he approached, the girl saw his gun and threw her arms around her father. The man paused, looking from the gun to Vito's eyes for a moment, and then slowly pulled his daughter's arms away, crouched down, and whispered in her ear. She ran towards the house, her father following closely behind. As they left, Vito stared after them. A dark shadow passed over his head as the lone crow swiftly swept out of the sky, veering past his face, and out over the girl as she ran through the yard. Startled, Vito raised the gun unsteadily, and a shot rang out. The girl toppled forward to the ground facedown, as a dark blossom of blood spread across the top of her back, onto her dress, and into her long hair. Her father fell to his knees on the ground beside her, gathering her limp body into his arms, shouting and crying.

"Not my girl! You bastard! You shot my girl!"

He struggled to his feet with the girl in his arms as blood dripped from her hair down into the dry dusty ground, soaking it red and disappearing, as if her life was being sucked up by the earth itself. He stumbled with her to the front of the house, screaming for his wife.

\*\*\*

As Vito's story poured out of him in a torrent, Mr. Canoni's pen scratched his words onto the paper. Vito sat with his head in his hands.

"You know the girl is still alive."

Vito sat up slowly. "I did not mean to shoot the girl."

"I understand, Mr. Caponidro, but right now an innocent young

girl is fighting for her life because you lost control. Do you understand me? If that girl dies, you will die." Mr. Canoni looked Vito straight in the eye to make sure he understood.

"Si, I understand." Vito's voice cracked.

\*\*\*

The doctors probed the young girl's back for the bullet. She had lost so much blood. Her long tresses lay in a heap on the bloodied floor. She was partly conscious and moaned as the doctors searched. Her father could hear her from the hallway where he paced, cursing and praying at the same time, his thoughts torturing him. He should have made her stay in the house. He should never have confronted that man. He should have moved out of that neighborhood like he'd planned, but his wife was sick. There was just never enough money since he'd lost his job; since they'd hired an immigrant to replace him for half his wage. He sat down exhausted on a hard bench and waited as time crawled by. The sound of muffled voices and footsteps floated into his mind, as if he were wrapped in cotton batting, separated from reality. The only thing that was real to him was his own heartbeat throbbing in his ears. His lungs strained for each breath, weighed down with bricks of fear.

He heard the doctor's words but they sounded foreign. His brain could not process them. The doctor was standing in front of him shaking his head. He spoke hoarsely.

"I'm sorry, we couldn't save her. We tried. She lost too much blood. The bullet damaged her spine." The doctor's white coat was splattered with red; painted with his daughter's life.

He was in a long, dark tunnel and the words buzzed and bounced off the walls like flies. He stood weakly, his knees giving out. The doctor reached out and caught him, supporting him as he led him to see his little girl.

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As his attorney left, Vito stood staring down at the floor of his cell. His shoulders were stooped, and his hands hung at his sides like two dead weights. He lifted them, looking closely at the lines that crossed his palms. A bird cried outside the cell window. He swallowed hard, and climbed up onto the low bunk where he could look out through the bars of the small, rectangular opening. He saw the crow perched on a pole, wings spread. Its black eyes bored into his as it raised its head, cawing, laughing.



**Vanishing Point**  
*Ross Waitt*  
Photograph



## Contributors' Notes

**Lacey Anne Bohlen** is now a senior at Herron School of Art and Design. Her intentions throughout this semester are to focus on poetry as artwork and to incorporate written word into visual arts media.

**Regina Brown** would like to thank everyone who has encouraged and believed in her throughout her educational journey. Her experiences as a writer have helped her understand the complexities of life, language, and the pursuit of happiness. She looks forward to more opportunities to share her unique perspective with the world.

**Colleen Card's** life growing up in rural Indiana greatly influences her writing. She is tied to the land and the lives of the people that walked it before her. They are ghosts from the past and she strives to tell their stories to give them a chance to walk again in this life.

**Matthew Cicci** is a fan of fiction and poetry, both as a writer and reader. He especially enjoys the short stories of Salinger's "9 Stories" and has a particular fondness for Bly's "Driving to Town Late to Mail a Letter."

**Catherine Coppage** is a junior, double major in Creative Writing and Psychology. She has been on the IUPUI Student Readings committee for the past 2 semesters.

**Anthony Deak** currently attends the Herron School of Art and Design and pursues a BFA in photography.

**Stephen Hall** is a senior at Herron School of Art and Design. His poems are inspired by the artwork of local artist and poet, Jim Walker. His printmaking is narrative in nature. It tells the story of his fantasy and experience.

**Justin Oakley** is a sophomore at IUPUI pursuing a major in English literature and a minor in creative writing. It is his desire to create something beautiful; that's why he writes and takes pictures.

**Karen D. Mitchell's** newest obsessions are anime (especially Naruto - "Believe It!"), yoga, and garbanzo beans. She is excited to be studying poetry under Terry Kirts this semester and hopes to join the *genesis* fold in the spring. Karen is pursuing an English/Creative Writing B.A. with a minor in Psychology.

**Treva Mitchell** is a non-traditional student at Herron School of Art and Design. She is interested in combining her artworks with her poems.

**Marlene Million** has read her poetry at venues in Northwest Indiana, in Indianapolis, and at the Green Mill in Chicago. She has published two chapbooks, "Celestial Impressions" (Full Moon Press), and "Notes From Venus," and is currently finishing her English degree at IUPUI in Indianapolis. Marlene has been published in "Poet's Market," "Romantic Interludes," and two other anthologies. She has participated in a FLUXUS program which included poetry, art, music, and theater. Her recent poetry acceptance is the Towe Museum anthology in Sacramento. CA.

**Andrew Polley** is a native of the state of Indiana, born and raised on the south side of Indy. He has a ten-year-old daughter named Ivy. He's recently returned from a three-year literary exile, and "it feels really, really good to be back."

**Georgianna Quinn** is currently a junior at IUPUI and is majoring in English. While she enjoys writing very much, photography has always been a passion as well. She especially enjoys taking nature photos.

**Erik Scott** is a first-year student at IUPUI. He has published poems in multiple small-press journals and magazines. He is also coeditor of the small-press literary magazine "The Quirk."

**Ross Waitt**, a lifelong Hoosier, was raised on a dairy farm in Big Springs, Indiana. He is twenty-three years old, and his life is a work in progress.

**Joe Wallace** loves photography and digital art. He is employable, very employable.

**Catherine Wyllie** is a junior at IUPUI majoring in creative writing and museum studies with a minor in literature. She one day hopes to become a writer, or to be able to work at a publishing house or museum. In her spare time she loves to write, go online, travel, read, and hang out with friends.

**Beth Zyglowicz** is currently a junior studying at the Herron School of Art with a double major in Japanese and Illustration. She still has no idea what she will do with this focus, but knows her life is guaranteed to be interesting.



# \$100 Prizes for Best of Issue Poetry, Fiction, Creative Non-Fiction, and Art!

*genesis* only accepts submissions from current IUPUI and Herron undergraduate students.

**All submissions for the Spring 2009 issue due by:  
Friday, October 17, 2008**

#### **All Submissions:**

E-mail submissions are preferred for all genres if possible. Please include your name, title, contact information, a short biographical note (no more than fifty words), genre, medium, and dimensions in the body of an e-mail and submit each piece of work as an attachment. Do not include your name on the file as all submissions are judged anonymously.

Send submissions to:

**genesis1@iupui.edu**

#### **Writers' Guidelines:**

Literary submissions must be sent via e-mail as Microsoft Word attachments. All genres should be in Times New Roman font, single-spaced, and contain no more than **3,500** words. Students may submit a maximum of **nine** pieces: **five** poems and **two** prose pieces per genre. Do not put your name on the manuscripts.

#### **Artists' Guidelines:**

A maximum of **five** art submissions may be sent via e-mail or on a CD as EPS, TIFF, or JPEG files with a **minimum resolution of 300 dpi**. Include titles, medium, dimensions and a short bio. Please note that all artwork, except those which go on the front and back covers, will be reproduced in black and white. All CDs should be mailed to the address below or put in the *genesis* mailbox in Cavanaugh Hall room 502-L. E-mail [genesis1@iupui.edu](mailto:genesis1@iupui.edu) for information on scanning high-resolution images or submitting original artwork.

## **genesis**

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**Back Cover: City's Morning Face**

*Ross Waitt*  
Photograph



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