

LRR

LONG RIVER REVIEW

2002



UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

LRR

LONG RIVER REVIEW

2002

Creative Writing Program
Design Center
Undergraduate Student Government
University of Connecticut

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*PRIZE WINNERS

COLLINS LITERARY PRIZES

Dave Ripley, poetry

Justin Short, prose

Awarded in memory of Edward R. and Frances Schreiber Collins for the best undergraduate poetry and prose in the journal.

JENNIE HACKMAN MEMORIAL AWARD FOR SHORT FICTION

Kristin Gelderman, first prize

Caroline Bennett, second prize

Andre J. Bowser, third prize

Awarded in memory of Jacob and Jennie Hackman for the best undergraduate works of short fiction.

WALLACE STEVENS POETRY CONTEST

Robert Dunn, first prize

Christina Dent, second prize

Christopher Anderson, third prize

Awarded by the English Department in conjunction with The Hartford.

LONG RIVER GRADUATE WRITING AWARD

Aaron Sanders

Awarded for the best piece of graduate writing in the journal.

LONG RIVER ART AND PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS

Lisa Rau, art

Anzelina Okarmus, photography

Awarded to the best photograph and best overall piece of artwork in the journal.

AETNA UNDERGRADUATE CREATIVE NONFICTION AWARD

Rebecca Murphy, first prize

Tarik Hadžić, honorable mention

Awarded to the best works of undergraduate creative nonfiction in the journal.

EDITORS' NOTE

We as artists, and writers—as human beings—feel the need to share something of ourselves with those around us, to connect meaning to our lives. We seek to reestablish the connections we have lost, to grasp tighter to those we have, and to break through to each other. Our art is an outlet for the things we struggle to say that are difficult to express.

This year we received more visual art submissions than ever before. After viewing the artwork that the students on this campus created, we were left with afterimages that could not be ignored: more artwork had to be added. Our goal: to meld together the sound of the written word with visual media to create a literary arts journal which is complete in its rendering of the artists on this campus. We all have something that we are struggling to express, connections we are seeking to make. The number of submissions we received this year, more than ever before, attests to that fact.

While flipping through the pages, you might get goose bumps. You might cry, or laugh, or sing out loud for no particular reason. If something makes you think, takes you back to your childhood, returns you to the arms of a love that could have been, or brings you to a place you've never been before, we are glad to accompany you on your travels.

Julie and Josh

“Beauty is commonplace, as cheap as dirt”

from “Clay”
by Marilyn Nelson
(poet, mentor, muse)

ROBERT DUNN

WALLACE STEVENS
POETRY CONTEST
1ST PRIZE WINNER

CANE FIELDS
AT NIGHT

In the rainy season,
the sky floods into rivers,
the rivers flood into savannas
and the savannas flood into everything.

Tonight the old man
with his ox-cart is somewhere in the middle
of these muddy miles, his ox stuck
and the distance home
too far for any resolution.

Resigned to his place,
he lies back
onto his bushel of sugar cane.
With the moon not yet risen,
he falls asleep. His ox sighs,
then does the same, sinking further
into the flat, black mud.

ROBERT DUNN

NOODLING

Fishing for the smooth flesh of catfish
beneath logs, you curl your fingers
into dark folds of water and mud.

Where the Mississippi pushes around
its objects, you fumble for the slightest
sting of whiskers.

You've held water moccasins and women
escaping the floods. Even the moon
has turned up in your grasp,

but now, years later, it is I that am fishing
for you, in dreams of rivers,
where I can almost reach your hands.

-for cousin J.T.

ROBERT DUNN

LEONID STORM

This winter morning everyone
is turned sky-watcher.
Families set their alarms and stumble
into their yards.
College kids driving back from bars
and factory workers on their way in
slow down and stare.
Down at the baseball diamond,
where the sky is clear of trees,
the bleachers are full.
Some people stand and crane
their necks, others lie back into the snow,
but everyone is looking up.

Between meteors,
people make wishes,
or complain about the cold,
but with each streak of light,
there is a collective sigh,
an almost unconscious "wow" or "aww,"
deep exhalations at the realization
that the sky is not quiet,
that somewhere behind everything is the hum
of the universe,
a sound also like "awe."

CAROLINE
BENNETT

JENNIE HACKMAN
MEMORIAL AWARD
FOR SHORT FICTION
2ND PRIZE WINNER

EVERY DAY

*Everything's on purpose, everywhere they go
Hiding in my car and running through the snow
Running with the friends they'll know for years
I've seen it all from here, from here
It happens every day...
– Dar Williams*

Every day at recess, Marcella takes the grapes out of her lunchbox and gives them to the people she likes best. She always gives some to her cousin Tony, and she always gives some to her best friends, Jennie Withaneye and Jenny Withawhy. Sometimes she gives a couple to me. She never gives any to Melanie.

On Mondays it's Tag Day and the girls chase us around the playground, over the slide and around the swings and the merry-go-round that nobody ever goes around on anymore. We run until the girls get tired and then sometimes we chase some of them back. Once Marcella tagged me on the monkey bars and I was her boyfriend for the whole week. At lunch if you have a girlfriend you have to sit next to her. Marcella ate the cheese out of all my sandwiches all week. She wrote a heart on her sneaker, and my name in purple marker. She spelled it the wrong way: L-O-Y-D.

In class Miss Chapil teaches us our math. She teaches us our science and we learned all about weather. She teaches us our reading, only I knew how to read before I came to school. And they taught us last year but I guess some people think it's hard. We do our reading and we have to write about what we read and draw a picture at the top of what we wrote. I put my name at the top of my papers with both L's in. Next year they're going to teach us cursive and I hope I can do it, 'cause Miss Chapil always says I have to write neater, my handwriting's so messy it looks like footprints from a dancing chicken.

I said, how do chickens dance? Then Jennie Withaneye did a chicken dance and everyone laughed. Then we had to be quiet because Miss Chapil did her mad face.

On Tuesdays it's Toe Day and everyone tries to step on everyone's toes. But we don't do that anymore because the Janitor says he won't unlock the shed unless we don't do Toe Day anymore. So we promise we won't and he gets the jump ropes and the dodgeballs and then everyone steps on people anyway. Sometimes at recess I help Mickey Sanchez with his homework, 'cause he's my reading buddy, only he's behind and I'm ahead. Miss Chapil makes us sit on the bench by the

classroom. I'd rather play dodgeball but I don't like people stepping on my toes anyway, and Mickey gets in trouble if his worksheet isn't done so it's all right.

On Wednesdays it's Opposite Day. The rule is you say yes when you mean no and left when you mean right. Marcella comes up to the boys and she asks, Are you a girl? And if you say yes she tells everyone you're a girl and if you say no she tells everyone you meant yes. She laughs and Tony laughs and the Jennies always laugh so hard you can see the grapes in their mouth. But I don't, and Melanie doesn't laugh. Last month on a Wednesday Mickey Sanchez punched Marcella in the tooth. He made her fall on the blacktop, and there was blood all over her lip and blood on his shirt. After that he had to stay in at recess all month and so I had to stay in too. At the end of the month he knew how to do his pluses and minuses, and all his times up to threes but he stopped practicing and now he can't remember them anymore.

We have lunch in the gym. We sit with the other second grade class at the tables by the stage. We eat lunch with the first grade and they sit by the kitchen on account of that's where the garbage cans are, and the first grade always makes a big mess. I used to always spill my juice on my T-shirt but I'm not a baby anymore. We eat with the third grade too. They sit at the tables in the middle and they are the loudest. When you're in third grade they stop blowing whistles at you, and you don't have to walk to lunch in a single file line. I guess it's better and better at school when you're older.

The popular kids sit with Marcella at the middle table. Usually I sit with the other boys, because most times I don't play on Tag Day so I don't have a girlfriend. While we eat lunch the teachers walk around. They're supposed to watch us so we don't make a mess but mostly they talk to each other. One day I heard Miss Chapil talking to Miss Derringer from the other class. She said, I went into teaching because I love children. I hate to see any of them getting left out.

Miss Derringer said, well, what do you expect? Her father's long gone and her mother, well, little pitchers. Bobby McClnnerly, you get back in your seat, hear me?

Miss Chapil said, she's so quiet. I wish she'd just speak up for herself more.

Miss Derringer said, my problem is the ones who speak up too much. Another McClnnerly boy in my class this year, I swear they're the bane of my life. And you've got your hands full of loudmouths yourself, don't worry about the quiet ones, they'll be okay.

Miss Chapil said, I just think it's sad, that's all.

They didn't know I was listening 'cause I just ate my banana and I was quiet. I swapped my cookies with Randy for the fries from his hot lunch. Then he swapped them to Jenny Withawhy for her Doritos.

The teachers were talking about Melanie, 'cause she always sits by herself. She sits on the stage and eats her

sandwich, which is messy bread and butter, and she wipes her fingers on the brown bag. She gets a carton of milk from the kitchen and she drinks it. They used to try and make her sit at the table but there weren't enough chairs, not for all the classes and the first and third grades. So Melanie sits on the stage. She never has any cookies, and she doesn't swap.

Miss Derringer always says that about little pitchers. It means she doesn't think we're big enough to know anything really. I don't know how she teaches her class stuff if she doesn't think they're big enough to know anything really.

Thursdays aren't any day at all, except Marcella says they're Throw-Up Day 'cause it was on a Thursday when Summer B. threw up on the merry-go-round. But nobody can figure out what the rule should be for Throw-Up Day so mostly we just play with the balls and the girls jump rope. If we play dodgeball I'm on the team with Mickey. Tony tries to peg us but he usually misses. People try to peg each other in the stomach on Throw-Up Day but it's hard. Mickey's the best pegger and I'm the best runner and Randy is the worst, he has asthma and he's always on our team, and we put him in front so he gets out first. I don't know who's the best jump-roper but I know that if Marcella trips she always yells that someone wasn't turning right. Melanie jumps rope by herself with the shortest short rope. Or sometimes she's just a turner and she doesn't get a chance to jump.

On Thursdays we also have gym class, which is like recess mostly. We go in the gym after they move the lunch tables out, and then we play basketball, or we do jumping jacks, or other things. Also the other class has gym with us, and Bobby McInnery and his friends try to beat everybody in all the games. The gym teacher is Mr. Clifford and he calls me Shorty, only he doesn't say it mean. He says that about everyone, he says we all have to bulk up so he'll have him a basketball team. He has a funny mustache and he's nice. He makes sure when we play something everyone plays except Randy, who sits on the stage during gym.

On Fridays it's Flip-Up Day and that's like payback for Tag Day on Monday, because it's when all the boys chase all the girls and if they're wearing dresses, they try to flip them up. Marcella and the Jennies and their friends run and they scream, and then sometimes they let themselves get caught. You're supposed to yell Flip up! when you catch somebody. If you have a girlfriend you're supposed to chase her, only it ends up with everybody running around and yelling flip up even if they don't catch anyone. The Janitor yells at us but he isn't looking most of the time.

Last Flip-Up Day, Danny Jackson caught Marcella before school even started, he flipped her purple skirt up and she laughed until we all had to go inside. But she got mad because at recess he chased Summer B. and she screamed and hid in the girls' room. Tony caught both Jennies. Then he got bored and he went to ask the Janitor for a dodgeball. But the Janitor said no 'cause we were being bad. I was helping Mickey with his reading book, it was about a boy named Omar in the city and all about his family. He was sounding out a word, it was "underground." We were on the bench and all the

girls were by the slide, eating grapes. Except Melanie, she was on the monkey bars. That's when Tony came back from bothering the Janitor, he went to the water fountain and then he saw Melanie.

She wasn't looking so she didn't get a good head start, so Tony ran up and he pulled Melanie right off the monkey bars. She scraped her knees and her elbows on the blacktop but she didn't even yell. She got up running and I never knew she could run so fast, like the Roadrunner in the cartoons runs so you can't see his legs. She kept her hands in fists on her sides so her skirt couldn't go flying up. Tony chased her and he yelled Flip up! as loud as he could and they ran and ran. Miss Chapil came out and she blew her whistle loud and we were supposed to go inside, only Tony kept chasing Melanie. She was running back toward me, back toward the classroom and Marcella's leg went out.

Melanie tripped, and she fell down.

The Janitor grabbed Tony's arm and he pulled him over to the rest of the class. Melanie got up all by herself, she ran to the classroom and I was standing by the door. She pushed me out of the door, she can push hard, and she ran inside. She was crying and her nose was all runny, only she couldn't wipe her face 'cause she was still holding on to her skirt.

Miss Chapil did her mad face and she started to tell Marcella off but Marcella said It's not my fault, Miss, honest, sometimes my leg just goes out like that. Then she started to tell Tony off but everyone started to say how he was just playing. It's kind of true, he was just playing. And sometimes on Tag Day when she wants to catch someone, Marcella's leg does go out like that.

So we all went back into class. Melanie was so red she was almost purple, she went to the nurse and she didn't come back all day. On Monday in class she wore blue jeans like a boy and she stayed inside when we had recess. At lunch yesterday, she sat on the stage. She ate her sandwich and drank her milk.

Today she's wearing her jeans and she didn't come out at recess again. She sits on the stage and she starts to take her sandwich out of the paper bag. Marcella has a Hershey bar in her lunch. She gives some to Tony, some to the girls and none to Danny Jackson 'cause he's in trouble with her. When Melanie gets down to go get her milk I get up too.

I have chocolate chip cookies, my mom makes the best ones, that's why people swap with me. Today I've got peanut butter and carrot sticks too. My mom puts my name on my lunch bag so I don't get it mixed up in the cubbies with everyone else, she writes it with both L's and a smiley face. I go over to the stage and I put my bag down and I climb up.

Melanie doesn't look at me when she comes back with her milk, she just stares at her sandwich. She eats it and I eat mine too, and she drinks her milk and I drink my orange juice in the box. Then I take the cookies and the carrots out of my bag.

I have a big lunch, I say.

Melanie doesn't say anything at all.

So I have to say, do you want a cookie?

She looks up and she smiles. She has a missing tooth and freckles on her nose. She has a blue mark on her arm.

I like carrots, Melanie says.

So. I give her my carrots and she eats them and then Miss Derringer comes over and Lloyd Silver, you get down from there, she says. So I get down from there and I go sit at my table again. Mickey goes oo-oo-oo and Marcella throws her cupcake wrapper at me and the Jennies laugh. Tony says he's going to step on my toes in the hallway, I better walk on tiptoe. And in class I have to read out loud and Marcella makes chicken noises. Everyone laughs, even Randy, until Miss Chapil says be quiet and then I have to read some more.

But I don't care. I don't care if nobody picks me at kickball, and I don't even care if everyone steps on my toes. I don't even care if I'm not the fastest runner in the class anymore. 'Cause I'll always sit on the stage now until they stop telling me to get down. And I'll always give Melanie my carrots, and my cookies too if she wants them. Every day.

LYNDSAY
STEPHENSON

SUNDAY MORNINGS
IN AUGUST

Colored chalk drawings on the sidewalk
running to the road in a flood of
rainbow reflecting soap suds as dad
washes the car and we're running past him,
dodging the dryness for the smile of
his hose before darting inside where mom
was cooking hot dogs atop a piece of foil in
the stove and they were always too big for the bun
and the Heinz would run out thick and slow and
mom would tell us to eat slower, slower, slower,
don't forget, the hot dogs aren't going anywhere
which wasn't true for those august days
and the watercolor painted puddles we danced in.

RACHEL PALETSKY

JOSHUA AT
GRANDMA'S

black and white
photograph



KATHERINE THURBER

OBSESSIVELY

I was cleaning
the toilet
and smelled you
that night
the alcohol was
too much
and you threw
up obsessively
before trying
to kiss
my cheek

MAX ALTHOFF

LEO CONNELLAN

You creaked into the classroom,
rag-tagging along below the fluorescence,
a once-average man squished in height,
assembled beneath a mismatched pants
and sports jacket, necktie-ends wagging
under a back problem.

I was taken by the codger in you,
crosshatched shadows in the wrinkles on your face,
crevices like neighborhoods abandoned
by all but time and darkness.
You took to it straight,
as if analyzing a wooden block.

I could tell. The people in that room despised you.
You were ragged and blunt, ideals hidden
under a thick skin, trained by turmoil,
treated with gasoline and beer.
You warned against those Rancid Magazine types
in the kerchiefs and blue jeans,

those who would make or break on a glance,
buy a poet's soul with 2 copies.
But anyone noticing much could notice that we all die
young,
saving the years we would have had like proofs of purchase
for some meaningless heaven,
some place with less to live for.

In that room, we envisioned lobsters on the walls.
No wonder they couldn't understand.
The moment you walked in, shadows spread from the
corners
like virtual cobwebs,
tainted the surrounding whiteness
with a sensibility of experience.

You taught me that to question was to be a man.
But even you didn't get it, Leo.
If you had turned your head rapidly
the walls would have reverted,
the lobsters swept back in by the tide of your mind,
the shadows disposed of like bad blood.

You were a complex boy who took the form of a penguin,
slouched in that schoolchild's chair.
When the chips were cashed, we found your lobsters
beached,
your shadows orphaned,
but you were long gone.
No one should have expected any different.

MAX ALTHOFF

THE WINDS

Here, the winds are bank robbers storming uncaught.
They hide in the cornfields.
They stamp your toes and fingertips,
brush cold steel pistols against your nose.

You feel the air on the brick and concrete
without even touching it.
It's the aura of winter grabbing your skeleton,
shaking it against the wall.
It stumbles swift and quick for your spare change,
leaves you picked clean as the next gust pushes
his way to prominence.

It's an old western out here.
Strong buries Weak and Mother Nature holds court
outside by the tombstone.

But the winds have no history,
no sense of tradition as they break East
in a constant chain of torment.
Rivers cut them off.
Trees break their spirits,
waffle their untrappable pride.
Behind every hill is an old fashioned stand-off.

The winds scrape up storms,
pounding land as they push themselves into the Atlantic.
For the first time they are visible in the flying water.
You see eyes.
You see lassos, kerchiefs, facial scars. The whole deal.
They're made of the sweat of battle as they surrender
their pistols on the far side of Rhode Island.

JUSTIN SHORT

*COLLINS LITERARY
PRIZE, PROSE WINNER*

ALICE IS KEEPING
HER EYE ON THINGS

Biffie sat with his father in the red easy chair. The television made its turning-on sound, like the flash on a camera. A gravelly voice announced, We now return to: War Games. Biffie pushed buttons on his father's digital watch. His father smelled like the potato drawer.

"Son, do you know who said, 'If there's a World War Three, World War Four will be fought with clubs?'"

"Kermit the Frog?"

"Nope."

"Bozo the Clown?"

"Albert the Einstein," said Biffie's mother. She was just in from the cold. Her hair and jacket were covered in snowflakes. "Gimme a hand."

Biffie jumped down from his father's lap. "I'll get the juice," he said.

"Not yet," his mother said. She was an expert fire starter. Among the accelerants at her disposal was a supply of fermented orange juice. "I'm gonna start with egg cartons."

Biffie kept quiet. The egg cartons were stored under the basement stairs.

"Save the juice for when the Russians attack," his father said.

"Oh, forget the Russians!" his mother said. "Biffie, time for bed."

Bedtime was a regular thing. Like Christmas, it happened all over the world. It was something Biffie must accept. Unlike Christmas, he never quite got used to it.

Biffie's mother stayed up all hours tending the fire. This was an esteemed survival skill, and a big part of what she did, like his father going to work. After Biffie went to bed, he always knew if the fire was to his mother's liking. He could tell this from the ardor of her curses.

Nights were replete with sound. His mother's cursing was one part of the orchestra. His father's snoring and stereophonic carrying-on was another. Often his baby sister suffered nightmares. She screamed like blasts from a soprano saxophone. Out in the yard, his beagle performed her houndish bellowing. Biffie rarely woke to pregnant silence.

Biffie dreaded silence. Silence was always possible, even in a noisy house. Biffie prepared to make the silence bearable. He requested a night light. He filled the space under his bed with a garrison of plastic soldiers, a kingdom of stuffed animals, various smoke- and spark-spitting robots, and his arsenal of weapons replicas. The remaining space was taken by board games, leaving absolutely no room for monsters.

One night, after Biffie slept awhile, the telephone woke him. It rang twice, then his mother answered. His door was ajar, and the hallway seemed to breathe with his father's snoring. He heard the phone hang up. Then he heard the screen door creak. Was his mother going out into the night? Was his dog in trouble? He decided to investigate.

He looked into his parents' room and saw the blanket-covered mound of his father's belly. A thick, hairy arm appeared, hung to the floor for a moment, then whipped through the air and backhanded the bedside table. This repeated, followed by a wild snort. Once he and his mother counted his father's snores and bedside crashes as people count thunder crashes and lightning strikes. Biffie thought how every morning his mother scooped paint chips off the bedside, from where it crashed against the wall. Even his father's sleeping was formidable. Emboldened, he crept on.

In the living room, the fireplace contained a fulgent blaze. There was a slightly acrid odor. (The fire was started differently each night.) His mother's glass was on the little table in the foyer. The main door was open, and the screen door let a draft of cold into the room. Biffie peered out into the dark. He put on his boots and stepped outside.

His mother was in the yard. She stood in ankle-deep snow. She wore boots and her nightgown. Rudy, tail wagging, leaned against her, a peculiar habit of the beagle.

"Biffie, c'mere," his mother said. She laughed.

Biffie ran to her. The dog shifted its weight to him. His mother pointed above the house. A galaxy of sparks shot out from the chimney. Cinders zigzagged skyward like flaming bees. Larger pieces arced and burrowed into the snow on the roof.

"Ain't that a gas?" his mother asked.

A cinder landed in the snow nearby and Rudy nudged it playfully.

"What's happening?" Biffie said.

"I put some dead Christmas wreaths on the fire."

"Wow!" Biffie said. His mother was full of good fire ideas, but this was by far the best.

"Of course Sajak called about the sparks. Old bag swears we're gonna have a chimney fire. Dumb, old cracked-brain. I told her to mind her own beeswax."

Biffie looked at his neighbor's house. Sure enough, behind a glowing window shade, was the old woman's silhouette.

"Funny," his mother said, "I had no idea this would happen. It pays to experiment."

The next day was Saturday. A new cord of wood was delivered while Biffie played with his dog. His mother came out to haggle with the deliveryman. She had said all morning that the delivery better not be piss oak and that she was going to be home to smell it, and if it was piss oak they'd have to take it back.

The deliveryman cut her off, "Lady, ya want seasoned wood ya get piss oak."

"You told me you had hickory," his mother asserted.

"Ya wanted seasoned wood. I toldja the hickory was green."

His mother eyed the man suspiciously.

His mother spent the better part of the afternoon in the shed, configuring the new wood into the piles of old. Biffie made frequent trips to the shed to watch her; she didn't mind company but insisted on doing the work herself. Every once in a while she paused, and she and Biffie looked with tacit delight into the loft. There hung the last dead wreath. He agreed it was the mother of all dead Christmas wreaths.

"Tonight I'm gonna start with a bale of hay," his mother said.

"And orange juice?"

"And orange juice," she concurred.

That evening Biffie wanted badly to help his mother with dinner. He tore the bag of frozen tater tots over the Fry King. In the Fry King was a cake of congealed fat.

His mother was slicing carrots. She raised an eyebrow.

"Not like that," she said. "You're supposed to turn it on first. There."

"It smells bad," Biffie said.

"Nonsense. Fat takes a long time to go bad."

His father was passing through the kitchen. He clasped a giant hand on his mother's waist. "Damn right," he said.

His mother aimed her knife at his father, but she was smiling.

A liquid rim had formed along the perimeter of the shortening. "It's starting to smell like food," Biffie said. The tater tots settled into the white mass like crusty Viking ships marooned in an arctic sea.

Biffie ate dinner with his little sister in the living room. He wanted to eat with his parents in the kitchen. He watched his little sister eat with a nascent feeling of disgust. She crushed a tater tot against her lips. She stuck a chewed tater

tot in the ketchup.

"Mom," Biffie called. "Can I eat in the kitchen?"

"I'm talking with Daddy."

"Mom, Julie is messy."

"You both are, hun. You can't help it."

His mother sat on his father's lap. His father spoke in the quiet voice so Biffie couldn't hear. Biffie resumed eating. He tried not to look at his little sister.

Biffie lay across his father's lap in the red easy chair. The night was as boring as church. Biffie sighed at the familiar sounds of his dog barking outside, his father's heavy breathing, his mother fetching ice cubes from the freezer, and the newsman's voice: Tonight we remember the Challenger tragedy.

His little sister lay on the floor wrapped in a tattered beige blanket. She looked like a fallen silk worm.

"Biffie, time for bed," his mother said. She said it in the no-nonsense voice of little reason. His little sister had triggered the bedtime reflex by falling asleep on the floor. It was pointless to resist. For all her adventurousness, his mother was, after all, just the agent of bedtime. Biffie took a last look at the fire. He heard a quiet sighing sound as air escaped from a log. He gave his parents grudging hugs, and went to his room.

Someday Biffie would have his own house. He would build the biggest chimney allowed by law. He would drop dead Christmas trees down it. He'd have hot chocolate parties under the stars and be the envy of the neighborhood. These were his thoughts as he fell asleep.

Biffie woke to the sound of breaking glass. His chest burned. He rolled out of bed and onto the floor. The floor was hot. His door came ajar, showing a hallway of flames.

"Here, child!" someone called. Her face appeared for a second through the broken window. "Come here!" she called again. Biffie climbed his desk and jumped into her arms, slicing his knee on broken glass. The woman was old and it was hard for her to carry him. She sat him on the edge of the lawn. He looked shyly at her pale calves beneath her coat. Rudy came and huddled beside him. Flames showed behind every window.

"Dear God!" the woman gasped.

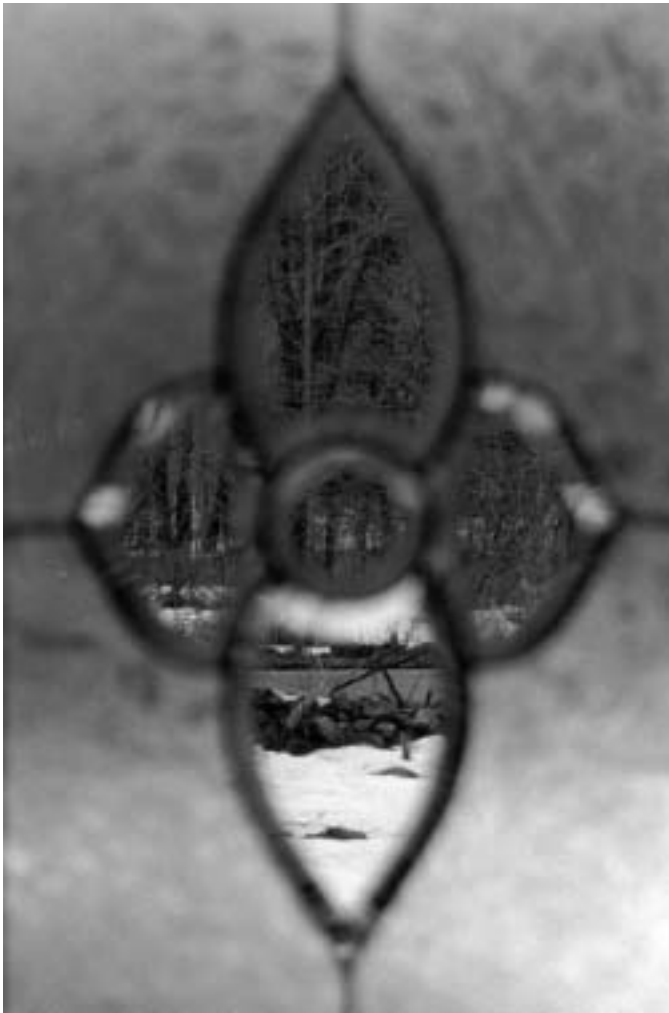
Biffie heard a distant siren.

LISA RAU

UNTITLED

*LONG RIVER ART
AWARD WINNER*

black and white
photography



MELANIE E. ADAMS

SPAM

Grandmother slyly struts
into my mother's kitchen. Her heels
click on the dirty linoleum floor
as she hums the words to *Respect*.

The smack of the pea green refrigerator
signals the beginning of another meal's
preparation. Grandmother pulls out the scraps
of turkey from the Thanksgiving feast.
Everyone moans, "Not turkey again!"

Grandmother answers by turning and placing
the dead bird back in its resting place.
Now she begins to talk to the old white
poodle lying on the cold floor.
"Well, I'm glad you didn't run off
to Honolulu with your new husband."

The dog declines to raise an ear.
Grandmother goes about finding something new
to fix for her hungry grandchildren. She opens
all the cabinets and even the oven.
She does not bother to close any of them.
She stands back and spies a shiny blue tin
and giggles with delight.

Without a blink she snatches the tin up.
She announces, "We will be having Spam tonight!"
as she holds the tin up for everyone to see.
She pulls the metal tab. The crack and smack
of the tin opening tells the children there is no
turning back. They wait in awkward silence
for dinner torture.

KELLY LORRAINE CHIN

UNTITLED

black and white
photograph



MELANIE E. ADAMS

ALMOST WINDOW

I had outgrown my crib in
Eric's wood paneled room.
Mother told me I had to move
down the pale yellow hallway
to sleep under the sheets of
a bed I had to climb
into. I hugged Eric's
waist and refused to let go.
My face flushed,
I burst into tears. I squinted
my eyes shut and squeezed
him even tighter than before.

Eric protested on my behalf
but Mother did not listen. Instead,
she calmly opened the closet door.
There was a hole, a square of
Nothingness, hidden in the back
of the closet, an almost window.

I let go of Eric and climbed into the closet
to stick my arm through the opening.
I knew whose room was on the other side,
my room.

Eric and I fought over cleaning the dishes,
who got to eat the last piece of cake,
and what video games to play during the day.
But at night, we opened our closet doors
to whisper and laugh ourselves to sleep.

KRISTIN GELDERMAN

JENNIE HACKMAN
MEMORIAL AWARD
FOR SHORT FICTION
1ST PRIZE WINNER

CARD CATALOGS

I don't do much. What is there to do anyway? I eat, I sleep, I manage to conjure up a few light conversations with people, but, on the whole, I don't do anything. I merely exist. That seems to work just fine. I observe people doing "things" and I think why? Why do anything that has any meaning behind it? It's meaningless.

At fifteen I declared myself an island. Nobody was allowed on, except when they came bearing food, preferably shrimp. My mother constantly asked me what was wrong, why I was so distant, why I acted as if nothing mattered. I think she searched for more information on my behavior, but after a while, her inquires began to resemble clicking noises.

My name is Joe Smith. I should stop writing now. You should know my story by learning that my name is, in fact, Joe Smith. It's not even short for Joseph; it's just Joe. Had my mother named me Mortimer or Horatio or Blitzen or Harvey, I might not be the way I am. My name is Joe Smith and to me that says, well, it says nothing. Once, in third grade, I told a substitute teacher my name wasn't Joe. It was a misprint. When they read my notice of registration, the main office didn't like my name and decided to change it to Joe.

"Well, what is your real name?" she asked in a condescending tone, which I can only assume was meant to be polite.

"You wouldn't believe me if I told you." I said, shrugging.

"I think I would." Once again the condescending tone filled the room.

"Maybe I should write it on the board. It's not that easy to say." A few girls in the class giggled. Why were they giggling? There's nothing funny about wanting a little identity.

"If it's your name, dear, you should have no problem saying it."

I smiled at her. I'm not really sure why. She wasn't one to smile at. She had large arms that bulged out of her dress. Her entire body rested on her legs, which looked as if they were carrying the weight of the world. The pattern on her dress resembled the curtains in my grandmother's living room. She peered at me through her wire-rimmed glasses. She looked like an obese owl.

"After all these years of being called Joe, I've forgotten exactly how it's pronounced."

"Well, go ahead and write it." She folded her massive arms across her chest and waited.

I strode up to the board and picked up the yellow chalk. I rolled it between my fingers for a moment, and then wrote

the most obscene word I could manage at such a young age. The entire class whooped with laughter. I felt that substitute teacher take in most of the air in the room, possibly the school. She grabbed the eraser and rubbed away the word as if the way she did it would efface the action itself. When she finished that, she turned to the class, "Because your friend, *Joe*, has taken it upon himself to make a fool of me, I will, in turn, punish the entire class." She paused for what I can only assume to be dramatic effect, and then continued, "There will be no recess." The faces in the room went dead.

That was the day I realized that a single act of indiscretion, even in third grade, could have severe ramifications. I don't really have any friends. Maybe because I am an island. Maybe I'm an island because the obese owl took recess away that day.

I'm seventeen now and being an island really worked well for a couple years. Everything was moving along at a remarkable pace. Until I met Layla Robinson. I was in the library attempting to find some information on the mongoose. Mr. Bixler, my biology teacher, claimed that learning about other animals would, "enhance the knowledge of ourselves, as humans." Mr. Bixler knew very little about humans. He also knew very little about putting together an intelligent sentence.

So there I was standing at the card catalog, which was actually a computer. I hadn't been to the library in quite some time and was unaware that computers had become the official card catalog. I wasn't really sure what I was doing, so instead of typing the name of the animal, I typed, "Mr. Bixler, insane asylums," to see if anything came up. Nothing did. I heard a voice from behind me, "Excuse me, are you almost done with that?"

I turned around to see a mass of red hair and freckles. Her hair was pulled back in some sort of half ponytail, causing the rest to fall in curly tendrils over her shoulders. Emerald eyes searched my face, as I searched the rest of her body. She wore a pink shirt that scooped around her neck. It clashed beautifully with her hair. On her neck hung a gold necklace, which spelled *Layla*. It wasn't love at first sight or anything, but for some reason I couldn't catch my breath.

"Well, are you?" she inquired again, stepping back a little.

"Yeah," I managed. Sometimes I'm amazed at how articulate I can be.

She smiled at me, revealing two rows of pearly white teeth. The bottom was a bit crooked, but it was sort of like imperfect perfection or something. "Great, I need to find information on the Frontier and the computer I was on just crashed."

I loved that she told me she was finding information on the Frontier. I deserved that glimpse into her life. After all, I was giving her my card catalog. "I'm looking up stuff on the mongoose."

"A mongoose named Mr. Bixler?"

"Yeah, well, we're very close."

She laughed. It entered my ears like bells. To the rest of the library it was a high-pitched squeak that probably injured the ears of small children and adults with extremely sensitive hearing aids. At that moment, I wondered if a girl named Layla with hair that clashed with her shirt and emerald eyes could like me, Joe Smith. I wondered if Layla would ever feel anything for a kid who did not feel much himself.

"What school do you go to?" she asked as she took a step toward the computer.

"North Bend High."

She began typing. I watched as her fingers swept across the keyboard. My eyes were mesmerized by the way she typed Frontier. What was happening to me? I liked shrimp, not people. As she was waiting for the information to pop on the screen, she tilted her head toward me, "North Bend, huh?" I nodded, anticipating more. Instead she looked back at the screen.

"So where do you have the pleasure of attending?" I questioned, boldly going where no man had gone before.

She glanced back at me. "St. Margaret's." The computer made a noise and it jolted her attention back to her work. "Damn, that's the book I already have." She muttered. She shook her head and looked at me again. "My parents thought North Bend would turn me into an angry teenager."

"Are you?"

"An angry teenager?"

"Yeah."

"The only thing I am angry about is the fact that I was forced to attend St. Margaret's." She moved away from the card catalog. Gesturing toward it, she said, "Mr. Bixler awaits."

"I suppose he does." I didn't move.

"Well, um..." I could tell she was getting uncomfortable. I have a knack for that. I once stared at my mother for two consecutive hours. We were on the 8:05 train to New York City. She bought us tickets to see *Beauty and the Beast*. I stared and stared and stared, just to see if she would flinch. My mother doesn't like to react to anything that I do. She feels if she responds to me, it will encourage me to act like more of a juvenile delinquent. When we got off at Grand Central Station, she grabbed my arm and shook me, "Joe, you are very rude." Her brow furrowed into her forehead. I blinked. She made an animal-like noise and shoved me ahead of her. Sometimes I just want her to say, "Joe, I should have named you Horatio."

"So you're done looking up information on Mr. Bixler?" Layla's voice brought me back to reality.

"Well, it's not due until the day after tomorrow. I really don't have to do this now."

She laughed again. "What's your name?"

"Joe."

"Joe, huh?"

"Yeah, Joe."

"Huh, that's funny," she mused

"It's a scream."

"No, no, that's not what I mean." She examined me for a second. "You," she made a gesture with her hand, "you don't seem like a Joe."

"Do I seem like a Horatio?"

"Possibly." She started to walk. I fell in step with her. We climbed the steps leading to the exit. The air was brisk. She wrapped her arms around herself, forcing her chest into the scoop of her shirt. I wonder if she saw the lump in my throat as clearly as I saw her cleavage. She looked at me. "You seem like a Daniel."

"That's certainly an improvement, I guess."

"Daniel Goolahsee."

"Oh," I laughed. For the first time since the obese owl, I laughed. Sure there had been sarcastic gurgles and unenthusiastic grunts, but no real laughter. This one was on the verge of guffaw-hood and I kind of enjoyed it.

"I like your laugh, Joe. It's sincere."

"I like yours, too. It's, um..."

"High-pitched," she smiled. "I'm surprised you heard it. Up until now only dogs reacted to it."

"I like it," I repeated quietly.

"Thanks." She looked around. "Well, I guess I should go."

"Weren't you going to find books on the Frontier?"

"Well, I already have the one book they offered me. I guess I will have to come back later for newspaper and magazine articles."

"I'll tell you what...." I paused and glanced up toward the sky. Taking a deep breath, I proceeded, "Since you happen to be the first person I've ever had a meaningful conversation with, I say we meet her same time tomorrow." My thumb twitched and I clenched my hand together, hoping she didn't notice that, I, Daniel Goolahsee, was nervous.

She nodded. "I'd like that." She turned to walk away. Suddenly, she stopped and looked back at me. "First person?"

"Yeah, well, I'm an island," I stated with a grin on my face.

She narrowed her eyes, "Tropical or desert?"

"We'll talk about it tomorrow," I laughed again.

Smiling, she turned around and ambled away. My eyes followed her as she got into her car and drove off. Was it possible that Joe Smith deep down was a Daniel Goolahsee? Layla had just landed on my island. She hit the shore and stepped right on like it was no big deal. Maybe I should talk more, strike up conversations with those who are willing. On the other hand, maybe not. Maybe I should just take it one at a time. I mean, I don't do much. There's no point. Or is there? Damn. I just had the answer. Those card catalogs can be tricky if you don't know how to work them.

MARC BOVINO

HESITATION

black and white
photograph



KATIE DEVLIN

ALICIA'S MOSQUITO

Alicia sat on the front stairs and watched as her father drove the pickup out of sight. The Firestone tires raised dim clouds of dust from the unpaved driveway; she saw them gradually dissolve as they settled back into the ground. It reminded her of how her grandfather used to settle his round behind into his favorite recliner, moving side to side and wiggling down into the depths of the chair. By the time all the dust settled, the roar of the V-8 had faded and the license plate had long since disappeared from sight.

Inside, a door slammed. Then it was silent.

Alicia swatted at a mosquito and it darted away. She began to pick at the scab on her left knee with one dirty, ragged fingernail. It had had about three days since the last time she picked it to grow thick and hard again. Her mouth watered and her senses heightened as she pulled up one small section and began to feel the reluctant tug on the rest of the dark, mottled blob. She leaned down closer and peered at the underside of the section she had pulled free. It looked like pizza after you ripped off the cheese, she thought, a nasty mixture of red slime and white pus.

She patted the scab back into place and waited. The mosquito returned. This time it landed on her arm. She watched it there for a moment. Then, with a sudden smack, she splattered its little body all over her smooth, tan, light-haired arm. Frowning, she examined the massacre up close. A wing here, a few legs there, some teensy mosquito guts.

Inside, a bottle shattered. "Shit," came her mother's wavering voice.

A slow, cool breeze began blowing almost imperceptibly, gathering strength, gradually. Alicia watched it coming towards her—she could tell by the way the grass was blowing that it was approaching. She closed her eyes and let the air wrap itself gently and quickly around her hot, tan body. A soft hum began in her toes and vibrated all the way up her body before tingling an exit out of her ears. It was gone almost as soon as it came, like her mother's silky scarf when she pulled it across her body with a fast motion, teasing her skin and making goose bumps pop out all over.

She slid her grubby hands along her left thigh, feeling the thin blond hairs glide under her palm. Her fingers rested again on the scab and she left them there for a long moment, registering the tough and bumpy surface, so different than the rest of her skin. She found the loose corner and pulled it up again. This time she kept pulling and more came up. Her eyes watered as the scab peeled away from the soft skin surrounding it. Blood rose and swelled underneath the crusty layer. She kept pulling, gently, gently. Now. She ripped the last edge off her leg with a grim flourish and held it pinched between her finger and thumb. It was smaller than it had looked when it was still attached to her body, more flimsy; it began almost instantly to lose its crispness in the humid air,

clamped between her sweaty fingertips.

She heard her mother come up behind her in the screen door. Alicia quickly flicked the freed scab into the yard, where it was lost forever in the jungle of grass and dirt and ants. It was okay, though. A new one would begin to grow soon. First the blood would start to get dry and crusty and turn so dark it was almost purple. After that, each one was slightly different from the last. Sometimes they stuck way out from the rest of the skin and other times they sank down like the inside of a collapsed, exhausted volcano. Once it was ready she would tear it off again and the cycle would start all over until finally the scab faded into a white, wrinkly patch on her skin. Her legs and arms were covered with splotches like that already.

Alicia's mother pulled open the screen door and joined her daughter on the porch steps. Alicia looked at her mother's face and saw it was red and wet. Pink spider webs crept across the whites of her eyes and her short hair was messy from running her hands through it over and over again. Alicia turned away and squinted out across the yard again. She could feel the blood slowly pooling up in the raw spot left by the scab. She felt a slow trickle begin to make its way down her leg, a tear tracing a lonely path down a dirty cheek. Her mother sighed.

Alicia realized the remains of the mosquito were still stuck to her arm. She spit onto her middle finger—why her middle finger? She didn't know—and thought, *If I get it all off with one rub, then Daddy will come home tonight.* Her heart started beating faster in anticipation of the challenge before her, but before she could see how it turned out, her mother grabbed her in a panicked hug. She held Alicia fiercely and rocked her back and forth as she moaned. Gulping, Alicia hesitated a second and then hugged her back, hard. Butterflies tap-danced in her stomach. What about the mosquito? Her mother pulled away, stood up unsteadily and stumbled back into the house. Glasses rattled; there was a pop as she yanked the top off another bottle.

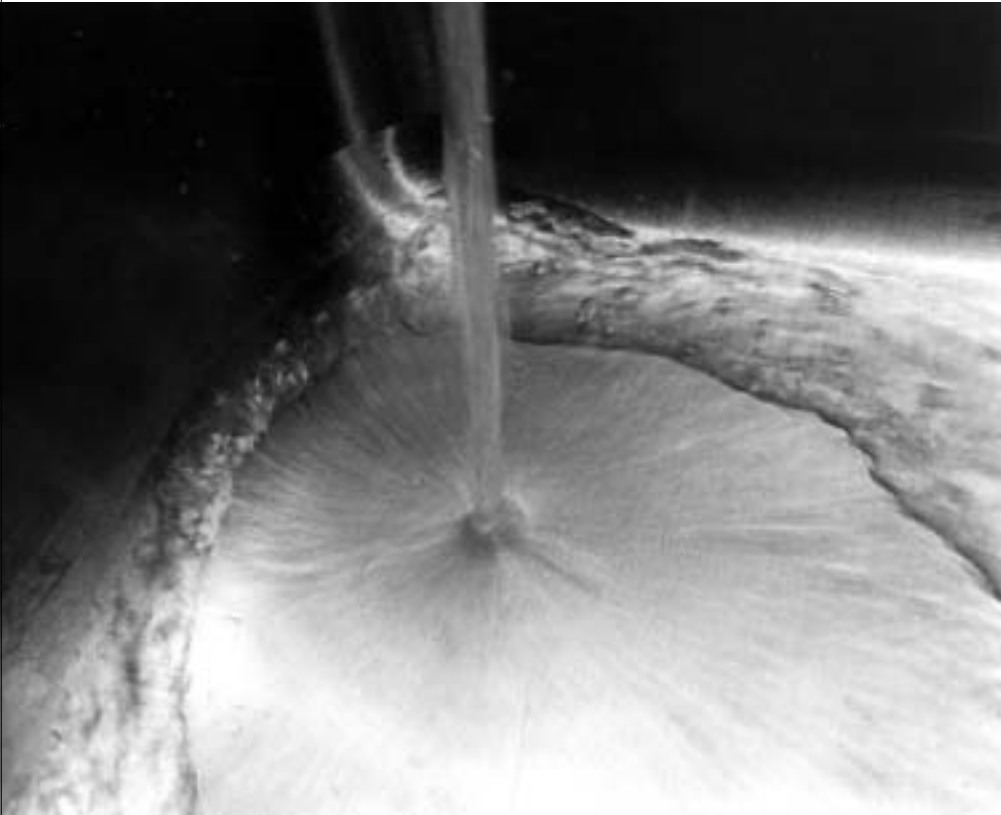
Alicia's mosquito was gone from her arm, except for what appeared to be one wing. One mosquito's wing. She didn't know what to think. One of her little competitions against herself had never been interrupted before. Her fingers itched to pick off another scab and almost as if they were operating on auto-pilot, her fingertips traced along her arms and legs, searching for one. There were no others. She realized she should get a Band-Aid to put over the tiny, bloody wound. They turned scabby faster that way. But what would she do in the meantime? She rested her elbows on her knees and her cheeks in her hands. Gazing down the dusty road her father had bumped along in the truck earlier that day, she thought, *It's the waiting that'll kill me.*

When you say "I love you,"
I wish that I could believe that
there weren't small print at the bottom,
instructions telling me how to proceed
and warnings reminding me that
you hold no responsibility
should my heart be broken.
And I think that if I weren't such a coward,
it wouldn't be this hard to ignore
the dictionary definitions
of what love is supposed to be;
I would be able to take a deep breath
and calmly tell you how I feel
without worrying about
the hidden meanings and
underlying tones
in every word you say.
But when you call,
I still have sweaty palms
and ragged nails
and I start to fear
that with each conversation,
I'm becoming more and more bound
to an agreement that has
rules I never agreed to,
stipulations I can't understand.

BEN CHARNEY

LIQUID

black and white
photograph



STACY PENNELL

CONCRETE LIGHT

When I pointed to the perfect white circle
that floated before us on the water,
I praised the moon for its sexy self-portrait.
But you corrected that it was just a reflection
of a street lamp behind us...artificial light,
and I never forgave you for that.

REBECCA MURPHY

DESERT SUNRISE

AETNA

UNDERGRADUATE

CREATIVE

NONFICTION

AWARD WINNER

The dawn is the meandering trail of a jet wash, a river of white in plush, fertile hues of purple and blue. Through the slats of the window blind I am witness to a juvenile sky. Behind pueblo houses and thick-skinned cacti, the mountains frame the lower edge of the color growing brilliant.

I have not seen those hours of the morning for some time, and never with such grace have they found me. My grandparents are off early to my grandfather's dialysis. Three days a week. I hear the garage open but go peacefully back to sleep, not having to fully arouse myself to the idea of what it is they are leaving for. It is an easy distance I have, being a dreamer and dozing under the weighty covers I bear. But sometime soon I will have to wake and face the beautiful but chilly morning that lies at my feet, out the window, and that is slowly walking towards me, back slightly hunched.

We wait for Jeopardy, the only show we all seem to commonly enjoy, to return. I watch from a distance the commercials that show fancy houses alongside luscious, desert golf courses. There are pools filled with tepid blue water, which my guess tells me can only be entered by children under the age of fifteen between the hours of 2-5 PM. I hear the slogan of "active adult communities" numerous times. People with silvery white hair walk briskly to and from the abundant diversions. They all assume painted grins and swooshy running-suits. Their steps are bouncy. Faux energy is released from the television and hangs in the air like the medical smell of hospitals. It is the kind of scent that is only detected by those who are new to it, whose noses tingle with its introduction. I glance to my right and see my grandfather glaring at the TV, head slightly bowed and arms limp in his lap. My grandmother, farther to my right, lies sleeping on the couch. Her head bobs and as the show starts up again she opens her eyes and straightens up to watch. It is 7:15 at night.

Monday morning, as my grandmother passes the time before she must return to retrieve grandpa from dialysis, she tells stories from her childhood. She describes to me the time when she and the rest of the kids from Park Circle in Milford, Connecticut, saw something that frightened and excited them equally.

She sits in one of the armchairs in the living room, one leg folded underneath. Her loose, white cloth sneaker creases the velvet fabric of the cushion. There is no dirt on it to dirty

the chair, though. There is not much dirt anywhere out here. It is all sand that brushes clean or gets knocked off by the foot's hard impact with the earth. She asks if she has ever told me the story before, and I shake my head heartily, hoping if I show enthusiasm she will tell it more excitedly. She leans forward slightly as if disclosing a secret and begins with a vigor I was unaware anyone could have so early in the morning. Morning hours are the most energetic times for her.

She describes how she and the other children would steal apples from the orchard near her home, then hide in the branches of a high tree called Secret Service to eat them. I have never named a tree before, and it takes me a moment to realize what it is she is talking about. She is getting excited. Her hands move in rhythm to her telling, and her face flexes and relaxes with each eager sentence. She tells how one day they saw a man dressed in black creeping along the edge of the orchard. They watched him hide something and then leave. All of the children were luckily concealed by the abundant branches of the tree, and they made their way home in safety to tell her mother, who quickly phoned the police. Sure enough, two German spies were found near there and arrested.

She leans back as she ends the story, appearing to be quite satisfied by the stupefied look on my face. She powerfully exhales and her face falls into a quiet grace as she watches for my reaction. I consider this quite a story. Making an impact on the fate of a nation is no light dinner conversation, and my grandmother knows the gravity with which I will hold the story. She smiles a greedy little smile and I can tell she wants me to forever see her as the savior of the world. Her eyes glow. It is as if she is again able to influence someone. Moving to the desert has allowed her to be surrounded by people like herself, which is part of the appeal. However, this transition has removed her from the role of "authority figure". She is an equal with her neighbors, and so her ability to educate or influence is lost. Visits such as mine, where a younger person is her audience, are an opportunity once again to be the influential character that she has always and will always wish to be. The apparent power to mold and shape perceptions is a sort of gift I give her, and I leave with a more clear sense of who she is. Whether I accept all she says is hidden by my grateful smiles.

She is almost late to get grandpa. As she leaves to go get him I look out the window after her and I focus between two desolate cacti, sharp needles like barbed wire jutting out of them. There is too little vegetation all around the neighboring area to hide anything. Most lawns are bare and conveniently accessible, but my grandmother's yard is a jungle fit for a guerrilla war. It resembles the land that used to border her New Canaan, Connecticut, home. I wonder if as much as she says this is where she wants to be, and it probably is, she misses her evergreens and other Northeast species. Here rich greens flourish and dance in cool breezes just as they did there, but there seems to be more work involved. More water is used and only certain plants can be grown. But the tropical weather does permit her to grow fruit

trees, which never made it in New England. The different plants offer that same feeling of density that her yard back East did. It is almost as if she toted it along in her bags and transplanted it in the desert. In a space of about 45-by-7 feet that runs the length of the back of the house, she has made a thick, diverse tangle of plants. In her element she is at ease, even with the straining work. It is starting to get warm, and soon my grandparents will be back. I stand at the edge of it all and shiver in the morning coolness. As the desert creeps close to her garden's gate, the big leaves of the banana tree flop around, lazily waving at passers-by.

Behind my grandparents' resort-like community is an airfield that houses stunt planes or retired air-force planes, I am not sure which, and the weekend I arrive there happens to be an air show going on. My grandparents had been to see it already, a couple of times, so they are content to catch glimpses of the planes and their tricks from over the clay-shingled rooves of the houses next to and behind them. My grandmother instructs me on which planes are which. Some carry bombs and others have on board guns. They are all painted differently and to her that means something. While the dots in the dusty sky are discernible to her as individual models, they remain dots to me. I let her tell me all of their names and special features and which ones are from the local air strip and which ones were brought in special for the show. I nod with each fact and wonder how she has become so knowledgeable on the subject. The planes dip and scream, closely maneuvering, flitting at the ground and then ascending at mountain pitches back towards the faint blue sky that bore them. They look like they are confused about which way they are supposed to be going, as if their destinies weren't a carefully planned out pattern of turns and dives. We sit with lulled apprehension as they perform for us. My grandfather is nearly motionless as the beasts steal his restful silence. Their engines quake the cavity that holds our hearts, each of differing strengths, as they soar closely overhead. Their trails are misty reminders of where they have been, but they fade quickly and the broad blue sky is empty of any trace they ever came at all.

My grandmother works her garden—ferociously but with rapid accuracy. The planes push past us, but she only bobs up when they sound close by. Occasionally she tells what species of flower she is working with. She holds it up so I can see it, and I lean forward to show her I am listening. My parents love flowers and I imagine she would do the same thing to them. She loves talking about her plants, and I think she believes everyone likes them as well. She is a skilled weeder. Her movements are like that of a shore bird which lances a fish inches below the waters surface before it even disturbs the stillness. With one more deafening roar all six planes careen close by, and I squint to catch a glimpse of them. But they go so fast, I miss them, and they are gone. The show is over.

As the morning sky kindles through the sun's veil, there is little movement in the house. I gingerly step onto the cold cement patio, which having been shaded by the overhang, has yet to be ignited by the desert sun. It is here I find him. My grandfather is sitting, his thinness slightly hunched forward, in a white plastic chair with pink and white flowered cushions on it. Around the edge of each cushion is fabric piping and a quarter-inch ruffle. His body barely indents the cloth beneath it. His white hair is glistening in the sun's rays and I can tell by the defined comb marks running like tracks through it that it is still wet from his shower. With a shaky effort he glances up at me. "Hey, there, Reb." I smile and comment on the weather... the garden...the lizard perched on the wall. He gives quick one or two word responses, and I finally relent and sit in his labored silence. The skin on his arms is tan but sags loose where his abundant muscles used to pull it taut. He closes his eyes. I do the same, then turn my head upward and search the sky. Another cloudless day.

The day is warm and heavy with sunlight. Grandma and I venture away from the house for a few hours, the longest we can leave Grandpa alone, to go to the zoo. He is tired from the dialysis he had that morning and will probably sleep the whole time we are gone, so she is not that worried at the moment. We are excited; we both love animals. On the way we pick up some sodas for ourselves and some bread to feed the ducks, turtles and fish that live on the moat you cross over to get to the zoo. We feed them almost a whole loaf before we enter the zoo. Many young children are running around, which my grandmother comments on. They are loud and anxious, pulling at their guardians' arms with eager tugs. They run and stop short in front of us. When they chase the birds my grandmother purses her lips. "How would you like it if I chased you?" she asks in her high voice. Some parents take offense to her comments, while others see her point and reprimand their youngsters. Most don't even pay attention to her, to which she sighs and looks at me for support. I give it in the form of a sympathetic agreeable grin. Later we realize that there is no school that week, explaining the staggering numbers of children.

We head straight back into the heart of the zoo and see some giraffes eating. There are gazelles and ostriches that all share the same habitat. With long grasses and few trees it faintly resembles the African plain, until you look up and see the bright red rocks and faded mountains behind it. My grandmother suggests we take the tram to see all there is, and then we can go back and see what we really want on foot. I say okay, even though I hate those trams. I feel like they should only be used by people with young children whom they are tired of carrying and old people who can't really walk the whole way around. I feel embarrassed; I am capable of walking the whole way around. Still I get in beside my grandmother and sigh. My legs stick to the bright turquoise plastic seats and the heat emanating from the roof is already making me sweat. "The yellow flowers along here are

beautiful, aren't they?" she asks me, to which I nod and smile a grin of apathy. She tells me the name of the flowers, but the tram has started and I can't really hear her. I do not ask her to repeat it. She is the one who loves flowers, and I do not care to know.

We are on our way to the baseball game. It is Monday, about 10 in the morning. The game starts at 1:30. On the way there Grandma decides it would be nice to take me to this spot on a river that is very near the base of Red Mountain. From almost anywhere around where they live you can see mountains and Red is a big one. As we near the place I realize I have been here before. Five or six years ago when my parents and I came out here the first and only other time, we came to this same spot. It is on the Salt River. A cool breeze is always blowing here, and all along the edge birds swoop and dive picking fish off with each maneuver.

Grandpa stays in the car. We walk to where the recent rains and storms have eroded away the gradual slope that used to lead down to the water. Now a jagged cliff is left, no beach anymore. Garbage floats and ducks peck at it. They come up to the edge of the water, waddling toward us on unsteady webbed feet. My grandmother sweetly breaks it to them that we have nothing to feed them, which is presumably what they have come looking for. Her high voice does not seem to deliver the message though, as they struggle to pick a path through the trash and reach us. About five feet straight down, I doubt they will continue their efforts once they meet the vertical wall in their track. I walk away and take more pictures of the large red mound, pictures I probably have twins of at home. Grandma has abandoned her efforts with the ducks and is now reminding me how the other side of the river is Indian land. Her voice mixes with the sound of the water pushing through the limbs of a downed tree on the shore. I am lost in wonder at what our side looks like from over there, if their side is as dirty as this one, or if from there this side looks as clean as theirs does. Grandma is walking away from me and I fear I may have neglected to hear a question she asked, or to hear another observation she pointed out. It is time to go anyway; we don't want to be late for the game. It is now 10:32.

The seats are still fairly empty, and since it is still two hours until game time this makes sense. We have arrived early so we can get one of the close, handicap parking spots. We get some hot dogs and drinks and are eating them as the Chicago Cubs warm up. The team comes here for spring training, and then goes back to Chicago when the weather warms up and the real season starts. They always go back home. There is no dispute to where their home is; this place is just a temporary residence. I can remember when my grandparents, too, used to make the same kind of seasonal trek, but for years now their stay has been year-round. Every year I hope they will come back home, but to them that is

what this is: A hot desert where most only come to visit but where they chose to stay.

As game time nears, more of their friends show up. They always sit in the same seats so they have come to know the people who sit around them very well. One couple a few years younger than my grandparents, Louise and her husband Bob, are avid fans of both the team and the beer man who works this part of the arena. They show off pictures that they have turned into playing cards of their beer man dressed in St. Patrick's Day garb. He is tall, with a long ponytail and a gentle face. He smiles easily and appears to be close friends with everyone around him. He and Louise joke about her husband, who with his camera dangling from around his neck is ready to again today snap some shots of the beer man at work. Louise has a tattoo of Sammy Sosa on the side of her calf. Apparently one day she had him sign it with a marker, then ran to the tattoo parlor and had that tattooed on as well. I chuckle. This tattoo is okay with my grandmother, but earlier when we discussed my desire to get one—granted not of Sammy Sosa—she scoffed and ridiculed me. Louise smiles broadly and laughs with her whole body. In her hands is a life-sized cardboard cutout of "her man." She plans to get it signed and add it to her collection. I look at Louise. She is proudly showing off her leg to someone else. She places her hand, which displays several rings, on the railing in front of her. She is tan and her freckles are almost blotted out with the darkness of the rest of her skin. A plump woman, her auburn hair pulled back into a tight bun; she is a tough-looking lady, loud and unafraid of embarrassment. The sun from across the way glints in my eyes and she is bright even in the shade. I believe she is originally from Chicago and answered the call of the desert like my grandparents did, but like her favorite team, her fate has followed her here. She is dying of cancer. The game is starting, and we all rise for the national anthem.

As I wait in the airport for the last leg of my trip to be over, I see a full sky with dark charcoal clouds barreling towards me. The windows of the terminal offer shelter, but soon the rains begin and the pelting of bullet drops can be heard over the speaker announcements. I stare, searching the sky, so different from the sunrise I saw that first morning in the desert. I think of the reality of it all, the science behind it. The sky that I saw that morning was no more juvenile than my grandparents. The very light that I saw was millions of years old. But more than that, the idea and possibility of such spectacular events is eternal, coming each morning whether we are able to see them or whether clouds shroud their magnificence. Like death there is no escape; there is no alternative. There is beauty and potential, and it surrounds us everyday. There is a reality just as there is an order to things, and death and life are equals in that reality. I board my plane; home lies below sheets of translucent clouds. The land is rolling below me, though I cannot see it. I know what I cannot see. It is still light on the desert of my grandparent's home, and light will find my home tomorrow, too.

MATTHEW STARON

ARCHITECTURE
OF VIENNA

black and white
photograph



CAMERON HULL

THE PERILS
OF BIKING

michael and i used to make bike jumps out of plywood
and 2 by 4s
we would perform twists and turns
often moving backwards through the air

michael stopped performing at 17.
i moved away to a new neighborhood,
he had no one to do bike tricks with.

i often wonder what he was thinking about
at the moment he pulled the trigger of a 12-gauge shotgun
his lips wrapped around the barrel like a suction cup

perhaps he had fond memories of spinning through the air
defying gravity
defying the inevitable end of childhood innocence

CHRISTOPHER
TODD ANDERSON

LEARNING TO WRITE

Do you remember
practicing penmanship
in the tale-laden days
of first grade,
days when the alphabet
paraded like mythology
around the room, a magic totem
attending every letter?
It was a bestiary
of kangaroos, ostriches,
camels, and umbrellas.

Can you still see
the dull gray newsprint
where we struggled
to cage our wild script,
little scribes
gripping thick red pencils
in concentration?
We carefully stretched
uppercase letters the full inch
from one pale blue line
to the other, while the lowercase
stopped short at the dotted line
that bisected the space
like no man's land. Too soon
we marshalled language into ranks
and yoked it to the burden of our thought.

Do you never dream
of crossing the margins
to write letters
tall as the page, tall
as a steeple, of letting them
hoot and cavort
like the shadows of dancers
circling around a fire?
Don't you ever crave
the mild quiver of pleasure
you once felt when,
on rare occasions,
you could let
the little tail of a Q
dangle immodestly
beneath the line?

CHRISTOPHER
TODD ANDERSON

WRITING THE
BIRTHDAY POEM

WALLACE STEVENS
POETRY CONTEST
3RD PRIZE WINNER

I thought I could begin with how your hair
Was long as Whitman's beard when we first met—
Or any little patch-scrap of yourself
Where I could pin a gentle mockery:

Your manic dancing, hidden fish tattoo,
Some joke about a leprechaun to coax
The ire up into your Irish blood.
I'd finish with a nod to Illinois

And how you write a poem every year
In honor of your own damn birthday, though
You never wrote a single line for me.
I couldn't pull it off. Though laughter is

The daughter of affection, the poetry
Got in my way: the whole idea of it,
How every year you wrap yourself in language,
Pulling it around you like an infant's caul,

A birth shroud knit from words. Each August 5th
You swim the river of your being, back
To the mute place of your making, when your cells
Had not yet taken names. A poet's words

Are cells. Some die. Some replicate themselves,
Catch fire like a nascent embryo
Whose one sufficient duty is to be.
No wonder, Joseph, that we talk about

Writing a body of work. It's true. The heart's
A rugged sonnet-maker, tapping out
Ten thousand perfect lines a day. The heart
Will never break its meter until we taste

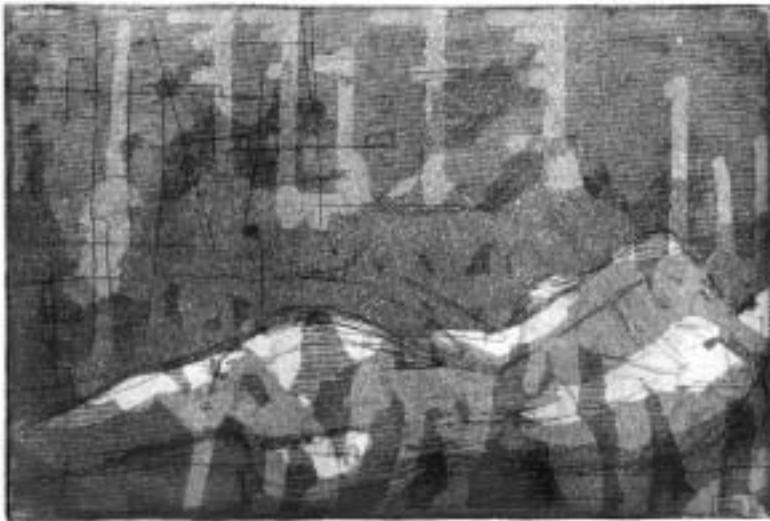
The sadsweet final couplet on our tongues,
As we, like newborns, struggle to express
Sensations which cannot be bound to words.
We'll have to learn another language then.

—for Joseph Lennon

KRISTINA BROWN

UNTITLED

intaglio print
9" x 6"
ed. 4/6



LISA JACOBS

HARVEST

He tastes like last night's pizza and
he reeks of after-shave. He withdraws
his lips and lies back down.
I feel his naked skin press on my back again,
his hips curl around mine,
but I push him away.
There is no more time for that.

I set the coffee to brewing and
hear him murmur in the next room:
the sheets fell off the bed again, the
window was left open,

 'it is cold,' he moans.

The window screens let in the breeze of
early morning October, inseminated
with Autumn's harvests' seeds.
It is time to reap what I can.

The cat paws at my leg for breakfast,
her belly bulging;
I give her milk and stroke her back.
I am still sore from last night,

 (they never hear 'gentle' or 'stop')

and so sit carefully on the dinette chair.
I put my hand upon my abdomen and
imagine them swimming through my channels.
They are mine now.
Inside me, they will blossom and
fill my emptiness,
carve themselves out of dust and clay.
They will paint this kitchen with springtime
and blur his memory into grayness.

He comes to fetch his coffee.
He tousels my hair and takes his
half-naked body outside to the street
for the paper.
I see the glint of his blond hair
 glisten like gold.

ANDRE J. BOWSER

*JENNIE HACKMAN
MEMORIAL AWARD
FOR SHORT FICTION
3RD PRIZE WINNER*

THE SKINNY

Skinny's was a small down-home fashioned juke joint where musicians and artists gathered. The ambiance was like that of a funeral home, somber and dusty, but familiar with all its photos and curiosities positioned piously on shelves and hung on walls; tables, chairs, loveseats, coffee stands and sofas in the joint created a jigsaw of isles. But everything in Skinny's – including Skinny himself – had its place amid chaos.

He converted his brownstone into a juke joint because he missed the down-home feel of Louisiana— notwithstanding he enjoyed its profitable, if not prime, location on St. Nicholas Avenue.

The front steps, which led into the brownstone, were removed, and where they once elevated, now stood a large, inviting door. The ground and the first floor landings were also removed; and replaced by a large open area with a narrow stage in its rear.

He gutted his home in the same way he popped off the head and sucked out the tasty innards of the craw daddies of his youth. He left the tail-end, and third and fourth landings, for his personal effects, since the juke joint was more home to him than anywhere else. But in truth, all things of any personal or private importance to Skinny were placed, with the utmost reverence, on those shelves and walls in his juke joint twelve years ago. He knew that anything he should ever care to hide need only be placed out in the open. The first failing of human nature was to bury anything. He had prearranged to be reduced to ashes; on the shelves and walls out in the open of his mausoleum for memories, he carefully displayed the key components of his innermost being, unabashedly, which in themselves, if reviewed carefully and in the proper order, were enough to bury him.

On the stage in the rear, musicians had to position themselves according to however many were playing at the same time, as tightrope acrobats; but that only synthesized the effect of performing for them. The large doorway to Skinny's was topped by a circular window through which the sun often shown during the day on the empty jigsaw room. The moon acted as a cosmic spotlight, further synthesizing the effect of the performance for the musicians as they perceived they were being viewed – like they were in the audience of God's one eye, secretly peeking in, though the room was hardly ever empty then.

Skinny walked on the narrow stage twelve years after he first opened the doors of the club so that, by the late fifties, he, being in his late fifties, could enjoy a full view of his

success, which he judged by the almost instant following and frequent visits by musicians and patrons.

All this came about not by business savvy or even the proper management of money, but strength matching an infallible desire, which almost always matched.

It worked when he raised himself up from family and home in the south. Years and years and still more years after grabbing ahold of the hem of the North's garment to take part in the industrial revolution in the factories of the Northeast, he realized he had made a mistake, whereas he had had no blood issue before clutching that hem. His blood now boiled, and to such a degree that if he had not taken up someone else's cross, surely he would have been crucified on his own. He made so many mistakes in his youth, despite accomplishments in the service of his race to his credit, that by his late forties, the decision he made to purchase the brownstone and renovate it and then, finally, to turn it into the first real Louisiana juke joint the city had ever seen was enough to make him, at the ripe age of fifty-eight, wipe the perspiration from his forehead that he had at last done something right something that had not yet begun to backfire – as all things in his life did – until his fifty-ninth birthday.

The good thing he had done was to carve out a little niche in the world where the spoken truth, word, music, art, creativity, and the realization of all these things, could abound. He himself, however, was not a creative person, although he liked to believe he had learned some of the clever crafts of his father's trade as carpenter. The joint had, after all, survived for twelve years without so much as even a screw coming loose.

He had settled on a juke joint twelve years ago because it was all he could do, as a forty-seven-year old cook, doorman and porter – all concurrently, as he often held three jobs at one time – to avoid moving back to Louisiana and becoming a carpenter like his daddy, because he damn sure wasn't gonna be an ex-slave turned sharecropper like his granddaddy. It was at that point in the 1920s that he hung up his U.N.I.A. uniform for the last time and securely zipped up the garment bag he had enclosed it in, in which it still lay. On that day they could have zipped him up too, in a body bag, and other than being dead, he would not have cared. The U.N.I.A.'s cross had been taken away and replaced by his own again, which he was slowly being raised up on. His life savings, gone; and, besides what he could work for, he was a man overlooking a deep dark sea from a precipice. He could see the water enfolding the cross just as the Black Star Liner, a commendable scheme of sea-going ships to the motherland, and cargo and pleasure cruises, captained by black men, in which he had placed all but the shirt on his back and future wages, which were all he had left then, had sunk.

On the day that Marcus Garvey was to be deported back to Jamaica, he wished he could be so lucky to receive a free trip to a Caribbean isle, though he knew that black folks were having a hard time everywhere. Still Garvey, whom he had all but worshipped, had let him down, though he really didn't. Skinny was conflicted on that day, not only having to ask a

white man, who was considerably younger than he, for a half-day, but also having to walk the entire distance to the docks – a sum of forty-one blocks – for fear that the next nickel he spent would be his last. He was going to watch Garvey's boat sail off and away to Jamaica, and so he blocked out the venerable singing, because he had heard enough sorrow songs being sung by Negroes, and he, perhaps the only one of hundreds who collected on the docks that day to say goodbye to Marcus Messiah Garvey, wished his ship would summarily sink.

Aside from a fading daguerreotype hidden inconspicuously on a wall in the joint displaying Skinny resplendent in his majestic U.N.I.A. uniform – his secret was safe. It was safe because it was not buried at the bottom of the deep, like so much rumored buried treasure to be later scooped up, but floated out in the open like driftwood, discarded and seemingly useless to the eye. Like the eye in the IRS that watched his wealth grow, over recent years, inscrutably. He wanted no one to know that he'd been a failure before he was the success standing before and looking out on the crowded audience – again a loser.

Skinny said, in his usual gruff manner that by now had been widely accepted as quaint, "there will be poetry and jazz until the cock crows." It was all he could say without crying at the thought of losing it all.

Sun Ra stepped into the club. The quiet, which evaded him, his every movement, was replaced by a trumpet's blare. A "solaristic sine," as he might say. "As we are US, US IS, US ARE, US, US AM (RE AM)." The crazy, rancorous noise was only outshined by the lights, which blazed bright as the sun, reflecting off Sun Ra's tailor-made sequined suit, but Sun Ra stood unexposed.

"Sine, cosine, standard sine, complete bright sun sine, moon pollen glow, bloom-bloom moon pollen glow," he sang.

A cursory mark anticipating the next move, a frenzy of light and sound, a frenzy that no one could dispose, a bleak black beacon, sizzling like bacon, beckoning all with its aroma, trailed in Sun Ra's wake. It rested beside him, nearly in the form of a personage, at the table where he sat quite alone.

Naima stepped in after Sun Ra, embarrassed as everyone looked half-expectantly of her, but she considered herself an out-of-town guest, which dictated that she be on her best behavior. The first time she visited Skinny's she fell instantly in love. She marveled after finding out that all the renovations and construction had been done by Skinny, a few friends and limited resources.

Her eyes were wide taking in the ebony, mocha, tapioca, cinnamon, ivory and cherry skin tones abounding in Skinny's. Unlike where she lived, by no choice of her own other than having been raised in New England and too complacent in her youth to move, Skinny's clientele assuaged the soul caste into a body of mixed parentage. If not for New York and cultural points north, though less in grandeur, she would 'die in those provincial mountains of New England,' was her thinking.

She was in a sentimental mood, however, when she stepped in. Undecided and wondering where John was and half

wanting to wait until he arrived. It had been some time since she and he last saw one another. She distinctly recalled telling him, though, that she recently had been published. And if the publishing wasn't enough of an accomplishment, she would go where she had never gone before: On a stage in a smoky club filled with people, and recite that poem, she recalled telling him. She did not have to impress him, their dealings were ancillary at best, for she was married, though under no obligation to act as such, but she did tell him to insure that he'd show.

As she walked toward the stage she heard Skinny's laconic voice barking out that a poetry reading would precede any jazz musicianry tonight and that "if you came to hear jazz, you will. If you didn't come to hear poetry, you will." Hearing him say this, she half regretted having been talked into it all by John.

"I've never stood before people and bared my soul before," she remembered telling John, and besides his promising to be there should she need his support, she could recall him preaching about the importance of the soul and "how it was like an eye, and that the soul could not see its meaning, its purpose, unless you opened that eye from time to time."

Well, her eyes were wide opened, despite the perspiration that blurred them. While she wiped her forehead delicately so as to not appear outwardly nervous, she felt inside, imagined perhaps, that she was a majestic blue whale rising from the deep to breathe the fresh sea air before disappearing farther into the depths. She would breathe and enjoy it while it lasted and make a hasty retreat from the openness of the narrow stage to the nearest seat deep within the darkest corner of the club's shadowy recesses.

Just then, as if someone knew precisely what she was feeling, she heard a man shout, "how high?" to which the audience replied, "in the sky," followed by "how low," to which the audience again replied, "in the ocean," all coming from the shadows of the club. The expression, though commonly used by musician's who wander on the narrow stage and become overwhelmed by the effect of the music, the moon, and the monsoon-swooshing of spirits, would often be incorrectly intoned to exacerbate the intensity of their music; it was conceptually reserved and used by the audience to edge on nervous artists, though the man in the shadows must have known that.

Once she mounted the stage it was a different story. Instantly, she felt the Holy Spirit assuaging her sensibilities till she was almost completely at ease. And in the face of the audience – just as all audiences coalesce into nothing more than an abstract object at which the entertainer hurls concepts – she smiled.

She began to read with perfect enunciation.

"This poem is entitled 'Lovely,'" she said placing her hands to frame her face, but more in a gesture that all faces – the face in abstract – were beautiful.

A few claps and a kind catcall or two followed her words, but then silence swept over the club, a silence unlike that which half permeated while the din of jazz musicians shook the stage, offering an immediate reverence that only words and the comprehension of words can demand.

“Lovely dark and lonely one
 Raise your bare fist to the sun.
 Thrust your sign of vigilance
 At the moon.
 Create with your tears a monsoon.
 Dig deep dark daughters and sons
 For the treasures your ancestors
 Foretold in you – lovely, dark and
 Lonely ones.
 Deeper than the depth of space is
 The soul behind the face that no
 Beauty can replace, just this soul,
 Stand alone – suffice.
 Lovely, dark and lonely one
 Why are you who circumstance deems
 Shallow above the vastness
 Of your dreams,
 Lovely because of
 The beauty, which precedes,
 Dark because of your likeness
 To a thousand eves
 And lonely just because you are
 One amid a myriad of stars.”

She bowed her head and a harangue of silence fell on the club that made her squint, although her eyes were closed as she read, now through half-lid and lash she could not make out the expression on the face. Just then she heard a whistle. Then an exuberant jackal cry, followed by a less cultured, “hell yeah,” and finally everyone’s approval enfolded her and presented—through a syncopated rhythmic clapping that gave her poem the ambiance of the end of a preacher’s sermon in Southern churches were clapping could serve as worship of God, approval of a sermon or relief that it was finally over—her chance to sink into a chair in the shadowy depths of the club.

John walked in shortly after Naima had arrived. He did not want her to see him because he did not want to be a distraction. He sat in the shadows.

Naima quickly and nervously began to walk to the table where John had been sitting all along. She saw him during her quick descent from the stage and was now nearly to the table. She longed, then, while walking hastily, for the serenity and ambiguity of her seat. John stood in his chair clapping now, beckoning her like a court jester beckoning the king to show off some new foolery; she wanted to walk in the opposite direction and really wished she had submersed herself into a quiet corner and sank out of everyone’s sight. Wanting only to disappear. To sign her name on the face of a rapidly passing train, thus making her mark without being seen by its passengers. Instead she signed her name on a slow locomotive, low on coals and lumbering along through a densely populated town.

The club was packed by then.

“Nita, that was beautiful,” John said, sensing her sensitivity toward what she had just done. They sat silently,

him thinking it best to let her get over her first post-jitter experience. It had been some time since he’d felt that way, but perhaps he would if he didn’t have his horn to hide behind, he thought.

Flames flickered as candles blew when Monk stepped in bringing with him the bitter night chill. The streets were cold outside, but 145th Street seemed to streamline the wind between the Hudson and the East River creating a funnel of so many avenues and turning them into conduits of cold wind and bitter chill. The heat in Skinny’s made everyone’s head light, though it may have been the wine. Steam collected on the windows. Behind Monk, a street lamp flickered with the candles, but it flickered out, and the moon shone more brightly behind blue-black buildings. Monk smiled warmly at the sight of Skinny’s joint as he removed his coat and placed something entirely unique on the hat tree by the door. It looked like a fuzzy, black, pyramid-shaped headdress.

“See, that’s why I come here...” he said to someone everyone took for another great musician who still lingered behind him with the bitter night air. “I feel like more home than home, like the time we played in Paris or the first time we stepped off the plane in Africa,” Monk was smiling to the shivering personage out in the cold. “We in America, but ain’t a solitary nigger in here. Man, we more home than home,” he said.

Skinny smiled. He loved Monk, but Monk acted like he didn’t see him, sneering in his general direction more than at him. He watched as John climbed up the stepladder to the thin slice of stage.

Skinny laughed because John always had that type of effect on people.

The lights inside Skinny’s were warm and although the cars speeding up and down the avenue cast shadows on the joints windows that refracted and shot across the room like phantoms, that joint was transformed into something more than a joke joint. The ethereal emanations of the musicians made it okay for the boogey to enter, but not the man. It became a temple in outer space where men and women worshipped the divine creator as wails from John’s saxophone penetrated their souls.

Waiters, bartenders and customers all stared in reverent awe.

Drums. Bass. Who’s on drums? A collective consciousness asked the questions. What rhythm section has the authority to validate the presence of angels? Again, a trumpet’s blare, as when Sun Ra entered the joint; it made young men dream and old men see visions by the candor of its cadence.

Piano keys, like cosmic reigns harnessing an infinite ocean of souls and creating electricity, now shocked the audience as slender slave hands played in static pulses. The pulses clung to the melody that suckled manna of John’s horn. A radiant being, who spoke a foreign yet intelligible language into a microphone he pulled out of the piano he played because his playing didn’t need amplification, chanted as he

played staccato.

Preach.

Teach.

Reach.

Beseech.

Speech.

Speech.

Speech.

Speech...

John began to sermonize in poetic diction.

“Next stop Jupiter

Next stop Jupiter

Jupiter Jupiter Jupiter Jupiter Jupiter

The potential

Beyond other things and other worlds

Are those things and other worlds

Are the things that seem not to be

And yet are.

How impossible is the impossible.

Yet the impossible is a thought.

And every thought is real

An idea, a flash of potent fire

A seed that can bring to be

The reality of itself.

Beyond other thoughts and other worlds

Are the potential...

That hidden circumstance

And pretentious chance

Cannot control,” John placed his horn back to his mouth and began to blow a melody that sounded remarkably dactyl.

Monk veered off from the melody and to everyone’s surprise Sun Ra bound the stage, sat beside Monk on the one bar stool and followed suit, performing his pastiche in a higher register. Even Monk stuttered, once or twice, to which Sun Ra responded by stuttering as the two geniuses dueled sharing the same universe as their creative spheres merged on the one piano stool.

One of the two crooned, “How high?”

The crowd responded with equal veracity, “The moon.”

Monk chuckled slapping his knee.

“Watch out before y’all loose your cool,” he sang to the music. “Slow down daddy, daddy slow down,” Monk slurred in some foreign, yet intelligible language to Sun Ra.

Sun Ra’s face lit up like the still flickering candle flames as many in the streets were drawn to Skinny’s from sheer amazement at the unique, seemingly four-handed pianist’s music pouring through the building’s porous façade. They felt swindled, as at a sideshow when the phenomenon wasn’t real, but stayed anyway. Sun Ra’s face, still lit, ill-disposed of the bright sunlight that followed him, but affected everyone accept him, imagined himself a universe free of conformity and began to head in that direction. Monk became a meteor to Sun Ra, chasing his creative velocity, but Ra quickly made Monk the moon choosing to call himself Ra from then on.

“Sun Ra,” a voice in the crowd stammered.

He considered whether or not to acknowledge, then

quickly shot a glance out into the audience.

Lights flashed. Blinking lights like camera flashes. Flashing lights. A ray of sun shown through the music played by the musicians, as they were no longer themselves, but icons, brightening the faces of the audience. Making them more alive again. New again. Brighter than ever before.

A spot of darkness shown where Monk sat (like a storm cloud was forming over his head). His eyelids were shut tightly and the veins in his forehead and neck tensed. A quiet emanated from his motionless hands, which warned Ra that he was about to face a battle of abstract expressionism in piano virtuosity.

Monk touched one key at a time, with one manicured finger at a time. A slow blues dirge refrain stepped out of the past, becoming an ambiguously nostalgic Negro spiritual to everyone in the joint, including Ra.

A painter splattered wet paint in Ra’s mind. He stopped and jerked again at the keys of the piano, drilling out a pastiche of a Picasso instead of his own masterwork. Stopping again and plugging away again, he fought with the originality, plugging away again at the keys. Splashes of color in the form of both bright and dark sound (filled familiar forms and lines till they looked like something already done. The vibrancy of the blues, the grit of rock-n-roll, the pomp under no circumstance of classical, all came out and Ra questioned setting) as the worlds collided in his mind.

One manicured finger. One piano key. One note. One touch of understanding (at a time).

Suddenly as often as a child is born in the world a man. A blue note was struck.

Silence.

Another blue note was struck.

Monk screamed.

Another.

The piano screamed in a syncopated frenzy again... and again as Ra’s notes were drowned in the wet tears of Monk’s blue notes.

Ra’s fervor was lost in a field of blue.

Monk’s magic stopped. The Magi visited him in the mangle of his discontent and he was reborn. Thank you Jesus. Given gifts of spices and incense the likes of nutmeg and jasmine. Thank you Jesus. Stars shown bright above, but the North Star was nowhere in sight till a cloud broke and a continent of waves rushed through his fingers and reigned over the keys of the piano.

Stop.

A be-bop idiom was formed again.

John knew it because he was among the first.

Monk knew it because he was there and had succeeded himself.

Ra stood up and walked off the stage.

A light encircled his head as if he had been touched from sharing Monk’s stool. He whispered to himself, “How low?” Skinny stood watching and listening and wondering if he would be able to keep that piano.

KRISTEN DEMARCO

NY ART SHOW

black and white
photograph



K. JAH ADISA

INDIGO

slow drifts
fast sways
street prancers move
as shadows play

magic bro/men
lay down their burden
near Shango's tree
hispaniola sisters drink bourbon
and dance in mango leaves

rhythms deep
never slow
street zombies sing
to hot Indigo

imagine this
long trips
like the ones Jimi had
congo drums sipping rum
the Dahomey, glad

bells clang
snakes drop
rootwork done
to betty carter's be-bop

different beats
that are sweet
in lbo tongue
Ships that sail, so what the Hell,
let the Indigo sounds move on.

BRIDGET FLYNN

TO SARAH
SOBOLESKI,
WHEREVER YOU ARE.

You were an oaf of a third-grader;
I really don't remember you before that.
Your blond hair was fine but hung heavy with dead ends
(your mom was a hair dresser. I wondered why she
never did anything about it)
and you always smelled like a winter radiator.
I remember at lunch your mom always gave you cheese
but you hated it
And mine always gave me raisins, but cheese is so much
tastier.
So we switched and you would talk and I was
fascinatingly appalled at the way
saliva swung from your braces to cling to your teeth;
But I *really* liked cheese.

Then one afternoon you invited me over to your house to
play. "Uuuhh...okay."
Your mom drove a really big car with a fuzzy green steering
wheel.
I stared at it all the way to your house...what was I
getting myself into?
Your house was old and you didn't have a dishwasher I was
a little scared to drink out of
your cups and your room was always a mess
but it had treasure.

We planned our weddings to New Kids on the Block and
rapped with Vanilla Ice while
Jillian and Laura and Katie laughed at us
(just because we tried to sit with them at lunch—you patted
my back as I tried not to cry.
Those meanies!)

Your dad was a mailman with long hair and a long beard
a good man
Named Joe. He was so big,
I secretly thought he was Jesus delivering the Word of
God.

One day Jillian and Laura and Katie asked me to sit with
them at lunch and I did
Every day for three weeks.

One afternoon you clomped up to me with your eyes off to
the side. "My mom said she'll give you a perm"
(Jillian and Laura and Katie had them).

I stared at the fuzzy green steering wheel two afternoons
later.
I still wanted to be your friend but I didn't know how to
make things different.
I missed your room, cheese, and you. *Where are you?*
I got my perm and a silent treatment—

I never talked to you after that.
I could tell that you thought that I thought I was too good for
you, my daddy with his
fancy job in New York—I even heard your mom say it.
From your disdain I almost cried no Sarah to pat me back to
o.k.
At lunch from my throne I watched your big shoulders
protect you from us and at night
I ate cheese.

DANIEL MURPHY

REGRETS

We should have
closed their eyes
before we shot them.
All these pictures
and every eye open
staring back at us.
We should have made them
close their eyes
when we shot them.
Each one fell to the ground
and still they were open
staring back at us.
Do you know how long it takes
to close ten thousand pairs
of empty eyes?

-In memory of the victims of the Khmer Rouge atrocities

PETER DALKNER

UNTITLED

monotype
22" x 30"



SHANNON McAVOY

UNTITLED

mixed media collage
25" x 25"



REBECCA KIMMONS

PROFILE

color photograph



DAVID BELLONA

UNTITLED

Adobe Illustrator™
drawing



CARRIE-LYNN

O'DONNELL

A SEPARATION PIECE

I.

Her womb housed me for nine months:
her belly rounded, her tiny hips struggled
to carry the awkward weight of me,
her small breasts swelled sweet with milk.
I emerged — quiet.
So silent the doctor wrapped his gloved fingers
around my ankles and held me upside down.
His hands swooped fast upon my tiny newborn bottom.
As she watched in horror, I screamed my first sound
A savage baby howl.

II.

She curls up;
her knees, like a fist,
are pulled tight to her chest.
In the silver semidarkness
of a room lit only by a television static,
she chants as if words are an intricate part of breathing.
Go to bed. Pull the pillow over your head.

III.

She turned and walked out the door,
Barefoot, in jeans and a flimsy T-shirt,
To walk amidst the melting snow;
She told me she was the one
Who made the grass green.
I couldn't prove her wrong.

IV.

On the last day I saw you, you hid your face
in your hands while I talked around you
to her caseworker, relinquished control
of your privacy, agreed to have a phone installed
so I could check up on you. I talk around you.

REBECCA LEPAK-SACK

NAUGHTY NUDIE

Walking into high school's
blurred orange morning
I glance down
surprised and ashamed
at my own bare breasts

I have never had that dream

I was born naked
a baby playing in the sun
naked
running on the beach
shrinking and shrieking
from the confines
of bathing suits and sunscreen

I was the little girl
who told all the neighbors
what happened when
you pulled her Daddy's finger

Who forgot to wear underwear
to a cousins bat-mitzvah
announcing it as
we pulled into temple
my parents laughed at my inanity
the next two hours
I enjoyed the breeze

Naked has been my way
in every sense

On a tipsy adolescent night
two boys dared me
to run naked
from pond to pool
and back

At private school on Monday
I was the slut.

Reputation fails to erase the memory
of the *feeling*
night wind and bare skin
unencumbered movement
the thud of my entire body
and nothing more
as it met with the earth.

In a summer sundress it is easy
to be naked
even as I sit here now
I am still naked.

Some may wear cloaks
and masks
make-up and jewelry
to show the world
who they think it thinks
they should be.
That's fine with me.
I'll be naked.

JOHN BENT

AH THOSE LATE
NIGHT OFFICE SEX
PARTIES – SO
APPEALING!

Polywallcut on
Rives BFK.
22" x 30"



JOSH WALDMAN

SKIN

The fabric of security,
Fastened tightly before sleep.

Fibers woven together,
My cover is rough and wrinkled,
Yours, washed and fragranced, drying and flaking.

This uniform,
Worn
Day in, day out,
Finds its place in crevices and corners,
Unswep in the edges of the hallway,

it will last no longer than
a single person,
somehow detached
And floating to rest
On dusty
Floorboards.

JOSHUA EYLER

WALT FINNEGAN
BATTLES SLEEP

...would wake to choke and sputter through the haze of despair once again. Night had fallen but it was still ninety-three degrees outside. Walt Finnegan sat naked on his torn, leather couch, the humidity bonding his skin to the cheap furniture as if by the same sort of paste that he used to eat as a small child. Beads of sweat sprinted down his body and his eyes were open wide. His breath was heavy, rattling like a pneumatic's, and his hand trembled as he caressed his revolver.

—you're worthless said the gun.

"You say that every night, you know. You need some new material," Walt whispered.

—you're ugly too giggled his coffee table. Walt was surprised because this wasn't the coffee table's usual Scottish brogue. This was Tommy Simpson's voice, with a hint of Ricky Crumbaker and a dash of Janie Nasgiewicz. Maybe, all those years ago, they had said it because the circus came to their town every year, and every year, all of them would run there to laugh at the man in the orange, canvas tent: the man with elephantitis of the face who was paid money to dance vaudeville on a cardboard stage. At first, Walt had been a part of their group. But he didn't laugh at the man, and they thought that was odd. Soon after, their laughter found a new target.

Or maybe these kids had been hand-picked by the principal of Park Hills Elementary School as the Truth-Tellers, the Sooth-Sayers, the prophets. For a while he tried to tell himself that everyone (even him and the dancing circus freak) was beautiful on the inside, but the mirage soon faded away. Walt knew they were right. Surely this was the reason all the girls looked stunned when he walked by as if they smelled raw sewage. And when he didn't get a date with a woman until he was in college, and then she slapped him when he tried to kiss her cheek later that night, he decided that he would never be happy. Ugliness defined him.

"I've known that all my life!" Walt shouted as he kicked the table away from him. "You're going to have to do better than that."

—okay, then you're also a failure crooned his father's voice from a lamp.

"Get out of here!" Walt flung the gun aside, peeled himself from the couch hurriedly, ran over to the lamp. "I hate you!" He grabbed the small appliance and stared at it, grinding his teeth.

—i know

Walt flung the lamp from his sweaty hand the way a small child might heave a shotput. It hit the wall and shattered. Just for a moment, as the familiar tinkling of broken ceramic thundered through the room, he thought that this

time, This Time, the voices might finally stop.

—i love that you're scared of me said a curiously shaped shard of lamp.

Standing there in the middle of the room, Walt began to shake violently, a puddle of urine settling at his feet.

"Shut up!" he screeched. The tears exploded in torrents, causing him to hide his face from the lamp. His memory winced from all of the beatings served to him for bawling like a little baby. Joe Finnegan had never called it weeping, sobbing, or crying. It was always bawling like a little baby.

—you can't hold a job

"Shut up, shut up, shut up!" Walt ground his hands into his ears vigorously. He screamed something unintelligible and ran over to where the gun lay on the floor. He picked it up and placed the oily coldness in his mouth.

—yessss—yessss

A new voice had now joined the chorus. It came from the figure of Jesus in Walt's picture of the Crucifixion that hung over his broken television.

—yesss sleep walt—go to sleep—yesss

—and you were a bad brother too shouted the pile of lamp.

Walt turned his attention back to the fractured mass on the floor and took the gun out of his mouth for a moment. "That wasn't my fault!"

But everybody had told him how much he was to blame. If he had just been driving slower or if he had been more focused or if he had chosen a different way home that night, things would be different. Things weren't different though, and he was certain that the first thing Sue would do—Sue, who had once spent hours and hours of her summertime playing catch with Walt—Sue, if she ever awoke from the coma that he was responsible for, would sit up and point at him and tell him just how bad a brother he had been.

Walt placed the gun back in his mouth and cocked the hammer, his finger poised on the trigger.

—yesssss sleep rasped Jesus gleefully.

—honey put the gun away said Walt's hand.

"Oh, thank God—I didn't think you'd come tonight. I just wanted it all to stop." He began to sob again.

—i know walt i know—but I did come—now let your mama sing you your favorite song

Walt sighed with relief now that his savior had made her nightly visit, but he was still shaking. Slowly, he placed the gun onto the ground and went over to the couch. He covered himself with one of his mother's quilts, one that she made for him two years ago. Walt liked to call it the B.C. quilt: Before Cancer. She had sewn him that blanket right before her body ate itself alive.

But Walt wasn't thinking about that now. He just closed his eyes and listened to his mother's sweet voice singing "Amazing Grace" to him from his hand. After a few verses he felt himself falling asleep, though he wasn't sure if he wanted to because tomorrow he...

MARC BOVINO

HANDS

black and white
photography



ANDREA T. ARIMAN

UNSENT LETTER TO
MY HIGH-SCHOOL
FRIEND

While you commute by car
between Cologne and Munich,
I ride the sky-rail from Bonn to D.C.

While you complain
about your broken car
and heaps of laundry,
you believe need to be ironed,
I breathe international air:
I have dinner with Pavitra from India,
live with Stella from Guadeloupe,
and I read poetry with Laura from CT.

While you plan your wedding
and bear your four children,
have a well-paid job
and a big bright apartment,
I flee the safety
I wish for and despise.

While you live in my dream house,
my dream grand in your living room,
in your parents' town,
I, without a house of my own,
inhabit the earth.

SAM BLAKE

A STRANGER ON A
BEACH IN INDIA

Along the ochre sands
of a beach in Goa
the men are busy
pushing a dolphin boat
into the sea.

The warm pastels of the bow
are worn by sand and salt,
the silt of waves and searing
equatorial sunlight.

They do not see you there
as they press their sore backs and shoulders
against the blistered wood of the boat,
sweat and sea-mist salty on their lips.

Down the beach
an old woman has spread scarves on the sand
and sits with barefoot children
placing chilled orange slices
into their eager palms.

With a lone orange slice remaining
she looks out at the many
empty hands, anguish folding into
the sun-made wrinkles around her eyes.

If only she could sit and talk to you
talk about anything at all with you
see the validation offered by your eyes
sit and listen as you consider
stone, sky, tongue, and moon.

If someone would just tell the weary men
about the time you fed sugar cubes to horses
or how you cried for your father's pain
with tears that began in your chest
how once, in the mountains,
you listened to snow shifting on pine boughs,

The soft slopes of your shoulders,
your silhouette against the burning dusk sky.

Then perhaps, in the face of such beauty
sorrow and pain would evaporate,
if only for a moment
like sea smoke vanishing in the
sultry Indian sky.

SAM BLAKE

AGING

I used to put my rough hands
upon the rough skin
of your rough whiskered face
and ask why you felt so rough.
Then the skin around your rough eyes
would fold into rough wrinkles
and your rough voice
would say, "Because I married your mother."

AICHA ALOUAH

Exodus

I was created in a dusty parking lot behind an abandoned theater.
It was not an act of love, but rather a whirlwind of lust driven by the immaturity of two young teenagers.
She asked him to stop—maybe she had me in the back of her mind somewhere.
He said he “couldn’t stop,” that it “felt too good.”
After, he left her alone, naked.
So, in the back of a hot, sweaty, station wagon, I was conceived.

That was the last time she ever saw him.
She never told him or anyone else about my existence.
It was *our* secret.
I often felt her body tremble as poisonous tears ran down her cheeks.
I felt them as they burned grooves into her skin.
I felt the Earth shake as the tears hit the ground and flowed into a river.
She often wished she could drown herself in her river of misery that her demons had created.
I felt her blood boil as she stared into a cracked mirror at her naked body with disgust and shame.
She often woke up in the middle of the night suffocated with fear and uncertainty.
She whispered that she loved me as we drifted into unconsciousness together where, still, she would find no solace.
Did she know that I loved her too?
We ached *together* during those lonely nights where her pain seeped into my crevices and flowed through my veins.

One day she made up her mind.
She drove with one hand on the wheel and the other on her protruded stomach.
I was comforted by her embrace and wished that I had the same effect on her.

As she waited her turn, she flipped through wrinkled magazines where all she saw were cheerful faces smiling back at her.
She could not smile anymore.
Her once porcelain face had been replaced with a stone mask, where hidden behind was a ghostly distortion, branded with agony.

The nurse called her name.
She got up.
“No,” I shrieked.
But my cry was lost in the confusion of waves that enveloped me, the waves that were supposed to protect me.
I wanted to tell her that we would be all right, that she was already forgiven.
It was too late.

How can you end something that never began?

I heard a voice say, “It would have been a girl.”
Then I heard the familiar sound of her crying and I, with her red tears, flowed into the River....

MEGHAN
MAGUIRE DAHN

AFTER DOROTHEA
LANGE'S *MIGRANT*
MOTHER, 1936

AFTER DOROTHEA LANGE'S *MIGRANT MOTHER*, 1936
*"No, Mrs. Thompson, I'm sorry, but she's just too old for the
shot I want."*

Florence Thompson
recalled that picture
on the cover of *Vogue*,
and she was discomfited by the request
not to smile; she looked
so much older than her 32 years
when she frowned.
Florence didn't want to
hoist the youngest to her bare breast
for that last shot;
he was so soundly sleeping.
And she knew that the oldest one—16 years
and 8 months—would have
something to say about being sent to
crush sparrows for supper
instead of being photographed by this lady.
Still, this would surely bring some money.

Dorothy Lange:
studio portraitist turned FSA employee,
wife turned illegitimate pant-wearing
companion to a sociologist,
hid her polio-withered leg under slacks.
She found it often made her subjects distant;
they would stare at the
hem of her left pant leg
as if demanding to know why,
during the hot California summer,
she was not wearing a dress.
So she adopted the role of a woman:
head sometimes bent,
never seeming pushy.
She spoke to them
face to face,
the camera just a gaudy bauble
around her neck.

As for me,
I still can't get past
that anthologized photo:
the one that turns a real woman
into a Madonna—
that turns a woman who
pressed her first forth when she was only
fifteen, into a struggling mother
who can till the ground
from which Eden was taken.
And I am struck
by the irony of
misappropriated profit, of
Mrs. Thompson's still-
empty table and still-
hollow belly, of
the lard of wealth, cud-rolled
in the fat lip of the U.S. Government.

COLIN MCNAMARA

ICICLES

black and white
photograph



MEGHAN

MAGUIRE DAHN

THE BODY IS NOT
BRUISED TO
PLEASURE THE SOUL

When Mama said that my Uncle Kevin died
of a broken heart, with more eloquence
than I can muster now, I replied,
Mama, I promise I won't die.

I understood literally her explanation;
my five years disallowed clichés
of broken, love-locked hearts.

I understood that Kevin's heart had stopped,
stopped working, that it cast no shadow
of purpose, that it had become a defunct shell.

What I have now come to understand is different,
more garish. Still, there's a beautiful simplicity
in thinking that the human body
shuts down of its own accord
when it should, quietly—no pomp, no cliché.

[Seventeen years later:]

I think I remember most
being naked in the whirlpool tub;
then my brother—
all infant ass in a chrome sink.

Or, maybe, I remember most the photos:
my tan, five year old sexuality,
my brother's rashes,
Kevin's large nose and smile.

I know that he had studied to be a priest.
I know that his anti-depressants didn't work.
I have wondered if I carry his spirit, affectionately.

And I have an Irish Reader of his;
his hand dog-eared *Among School Children*.

I harbor Kevin when I read that Yeats disbanded
ways he tried to glean some joy.
I want to mother-hen the smiling public man.
I write to him, asking if up there Kevin agrees
that joy can't be found
through pious life, intellect, or family.
I dare that heap of sticks and rags to tell
this Leda that he maintains those claims.

JESSE SCACCIA

FOR THE WORLD TO
HIDE ITS GREATNESS

Sometimes I wish the world would
Hide its greatness—
To let the sonnets sleep.
To cause Ulysses to hide his head,
For Moby Dick to spring a leak.

For Shakespeare to misplace his rhyming skills,
To watch them tumble bumping down the drain.
For someone to give F. Scott sleeping pills,
To shoot the shadow of Mark Twain.

Because then we'd all be safe and sound
With the masters good away and hidden.
Today's artists with their lush voices found,
To yesterday's muse a fair good riddance.

JESSE SCACCIA

JEN.

“God is dead,” she whispered through the goose down of her sleeping bag. She was always dramatic, now hiding her head underneath the covers, pretending what I just said had changed the world forever. Which of course to her it had, but I was too careless or crass or just plain selfish until now to realize that. Maybe this is my second chance, my shot at that pure and wonderfully nostalgic emotion called redemption. But I'm not sure yet.

* * *

The first time I actually met her was in a creative writing class my sophomore year at Saint Louis University. There I was, an East Coast atheist at a Midwest Jesuit landfill, and hating every God-fearing minute of it, when I caught her pretending not to look at me across the recycled light of the classroom. I had just recited my first poem of the semester, an awkward little thing that managed to make reference to Hulk Hogan, Jesus Christ, and a cat's vomit within the first two lines. The class stared at me like a pack of catatonic owls, speechless and absurd. The teacher, a nice woman with greasy black hair who let us call her Linda, must have asked the class, “What's going on in this poem?” thirty or thirty-five times by my count, probably as much for her as for the class. Shit, I didn't know, either. Then Jen, Jenny Layton as she now likes to be called, never considering herself a 'Jen,' raised her hand, her silver bracelets sliding steel metal smooth down her lightly freckled arm.

“Yes, Jen,” the teacher said.

She looked at me with eyes a color I didn't know existed, and I got the same feeling that I think water has while it's freezing.

“I think this is something that we're going to show our kids one day. I'm going to tell them that Daddy wrote this when he was young and angry.”

* * *

She really said that exactly one week and ninety minutes later. We were in her dorm room after class. She was showing off her illegal kitten that she named after an obscure female poet I'd never heard of but was sure I'd love. She was a year older than me and the sexiest girl that had ever let me touch her, but this put me over the edge. I took the kitten from her fingers and placed it in the top drawer of her faux-mahogany desk. Before she could move or smile or yell in flirtatious protest, I pressed my mouth hard against hers, taking the air from her chest into mine, stretching the moment like fabric.

Right after that I asked her what she thought of my poem, and that's when she really said it.

* * *

She brought me to Cahokia Mounds and explained the mysteries of the land's disturbingly womanlike curves. We got coffee at midnight from trendy shops in the Central West End, places that only Jen was cool enough to enter, me getting in with her as my validation. She watched me play lacrosse, braiding her auburn hair and cheering too loudly from the relaxed angle of her tag sale lawn chair.

We would lie in that mousetrap of a dorm room and let Ella Fitzgerald and Duke Ellington fill our ears with their sweet aroma. The way we touched was subtle and unnerving, every wet breath against tight pink skin seeming like a predetermined destiny.

And she told me she was in love with me, that she was from the first moment she saw me. We would fight in the singular way that lovers do, Jen threatening to cut her hair like a boy and dye it purple and me threatening to lock the kitten in a drawer. She couldn't wait to be a mom—she thought it was her purpose in life, her redemption. See, Jen was adopted, and this knowledge efficiently made her who she was. It's why she was such a natural at loving people, why she drove to East St. Louis twice a week to volunteer at that women's shelter, why she was so afraid of losing me.

And though I'd like to plead ignorance, it was also why it was so easy for me to hurt her.

* * *

I guess it was her love that got me, but that's just speculation. We were at the coffee shop that always gave me free hot chocolate, having one of those conversations that seem so important at the time, about God or something, when I knew it was over. No, that's not true. We were on her car, that little white Honda or Toyota or whatever it was, after the Neil Diamond concert that my mom got us free tickets to. Yeah, that's it. He sang "Sweet Caroline" three times that night, and every time we sang along, mumbling everything but the chorus which we sang out obnoxious and loud.

The night doesn't sound too bad, I know. But believe me, if you saw the way she smiled at me with joy that looked like epiphany, or if you saw how she held my arm, proud and beautiful, or if it was you who she caught singing the wrong word and instead of saying something sarcastic or mean, she just grabbed you and kissed you... then you would know what I'm talking about.

* * *

We were in the parking lot next to my apartment, too late on a Tuesday for us not to be alone. We lay side by side on the hood of her car, she, content, holding me under the sleeping bag, me seeing how many stars I could count before I lost interest. Jen told me how much fun she had had, that she didn't even like Neil Diamond, a laugh getting caught in her throat at the idea that anybody really did. I focused on the heat disseminating from the idle car to me and back and tried to hear the words to the R.E.M song that seeped through the windshield as if by osmosis.

She turned to me, her face glowing from the luminescence of streetlights and stars, and told me she loved me. I rocked my bottom lip between my teeth, back and forth until I tasted the faint bitterness of blood against my tongue. I told her that I was sorry, that I was wrong, that I didn't think we were meant for each other, that I needed space. I said it all without thinking, the whole thing surreal, not really me or her, both of us slipping into roles that neither of us had truly known before. I told the limp figure under the sleeping bag that I would call, that we'd talk about it. Then I got up and walked to my apartment, a strange mix of freedom and despair making my steps uneven and me suddenly very, very tired.

* * *

I never called her, and Jen should know that I'm sorry. She should know that one day I'm gonna have my wife call her and thank her for teaching me how to love, even if I wasn't ready to put what I learned into practice at the time. And Jen, baby, God isn't dead, not even close. I made a mistake, and there's nothing that can happen to make me stop being sorry.

OLIVIA HANZEL

PILILANI

black and white
photograph



DAVID RIPLEY

*COLLINS LITERARY
PRIZE, POETRY
WINNER*

EPITHALAMIUM

1.

Orlando International Airport.
6:10 pm.
Gate 52 – next flight 7:45.
Several available bathrooms.
A woman.
Mid-30s, blonde.
Walks past the waiting area.
Walks behind the check-in desk.
Vomits once.
Does not look around.
Lifts her left foot.
Massages the substance into the carpet.

2.

The other men in this public restroom are not aware that I
am masturbating.
I can hear the ones at the urinals stare, each at his own
stream. “All rats are groups,”
the stall wall informs me in neat pencil printing. I have found
a way to moan
that sounds like a constipated grunt. The man in the stall to
my right shuffles his feet
in a slow lunatic rhythm against my beat.

DAVID RIPLEY
THE PROBLEM WITH
SWIMMING

*"We have discovered happiness,"
– say the last people, and blink.
–Nietzsche*

The woman who lives in that apartment above mine looks
away
when I run past her door naked
with forty-three spoons all tied to my genitals with dental
floss.

There's something wrong with that.
She ought to give me a sandwich
or call the police.

When I call her at 4:16 am and cry "Are you *with* me or
against me?"
she says she accepts me and asks me not to call again.

I thought about stabbing her, but that would be giving up.
Besides, they'd just replace her or take me away or both.

I tell her the problem with swimming is my bathtub's too
small,
but that's not it exactly:
The problem with swimming is the water stays put.

DAVID RIPLEY
BIRD SEX

When I got home, they were dancing again.
I was eight. I thought they liked to dance.
They were bouncing, crouched and stacked, Molly's
segmented feet clutched
around the dowel suspended across their cage. Their wings
were spread, half-flapping for balance.

A single stalk of down shook free and feathered through the
bars; it swung
slowly over the linoleum floor (without interrupting the
birds' frantic tweeting),
past the golden retriever (who had never seen anything so
white), and into the retriever's water bowl,
where it swelled as if to bloom and then sank.

It made my teeth hurt to see it. It made me
want to rest my testicles in a dish of ink. It made me want
licorice. I turned to find my parents, but they were out back,
swinging and howling in a tree they'd painted pink.

MAYA TAAL

LE MATIN

black and white
photograph



MERILEE FORBES-
KEARNS

LOVE OF MANGO

Forget oysters and chocolate.
Mango is a sexy fruit—
sun-drunk, drowsy and smooth.
Slices slide from my knife into a clear blue bowl.
Orange against blue—
(Opposites attract).
I grasp a slippery slice and take it to my lips.
I bite and my taste buds send a tingle over me—
triangles, diamonds of fruit smooth on one side,
sueded on the other.
One bite feels like a kiss—
Body knows before mind does.

ANZELINA OKARMUS

UNTITLED

black and white
photograph



MEGAN RUDNE

BETTER-OFF THAN
CONSCIOUS

Last time I drank with a purpose,
I vomited for twelve hours straight and
woke up drunk on a tarp in the sand.
The marathon that concluded our vacation
began.
Tampa Bay International Airport
seemed like hours away
each time Dad jerked the rental car
over to the soft shoulder.
The terminal was a transient reprieve –
my dehydrated body retched at will
over a tissue-wrapped toilet seat.
I had introduced my blood and brain to the poison
of vodka straight up with a grape soda chaser.
I punished myself
and lost the burden of magnificence
every time the bottle graced my lips.
I shred most evidence
of that night before on the beach,
shit-faced,
blacked-out,
with puke breath,
but better off than conscious.

COLIN MCNAMARA

“MILK” WEED?

black and white
photograph



ERIN CATHERINE
BATOG

ORANGES AND
ALSTROMERIA

I was sixteen years old when my parents checked me into Southwood Hospital. I kept my cool in Southwood. The rooms were nicer than at Leonard Morse. The walls were less dirty and bordered with a floral print, alstromeria. I stared at the flowers that encompassed the room and pretended I was lying on a grassy hill surrounded by hundreds of alstromeria. I pictured hundreds of colors, but pink flamingo was my favorite. For my junior prom a year later, my date would have to go to an obscure flower shop in another state to get the bouquet of pink flamingo alstromeria and baby's breath. I inhaled their sweet perfume and felt their soft petals glide gracefully through my bony fingers.

I could barely use my body, but my mind didn't need as much energy. I used all my body's energy to rip out the IV in the middle of the night, so I was spent for the rest of the day. I hardly ever went to the lounge to play games or watch television; it was too much to walk the twelve feet down the hall. But I could always run through my garden of alstromeria.

The second week I got a roommate. She smelled like oranges. She was eighty-eight pounds. I was happy she was eighty-eight lbs; it meant I was thinner. She was not happy. She ripped her IV out, too. We didn't talk much. She commented once on the alstromeria, and I didn't respond. I was actually mad at her because those were my flowers, and I didn't want someone like her having them. I watched her while she slept. Barely breathing. Her chest would struggle to rise. She slept with her mouth closed and the whole night she would breathe through her nose. I slept with my mouth open. I tried and tried to keep my mouth closed, but I couldn't. She could breathe all day and all night through her nose, and I couldn't. I didn't like her much. She amused me sometimes, though, when she would tell the therapists where to shove it. Outside we probably would've been friends, but we were in here and we were not friends.

Her name was Tara, but I don't think I ever said it out loud. Even when I told them, I didn't say her name. She had brown eyes. Every morning when the sun shone through the window her eyes would go wide and kind of sparkle. I thought people's pupils were supposed to shrink in the light, but hers would dilate. She liked the sun. I don't really know why, but it was very important to her. She called the nurse in one morning and started freaking because the sun wasn't out. It was raining and she screamed at the nurse that she would sue the hospital if they didn't bring the sun back. I was thinking she had bigger problems than anorexia, but I wasn't a "professional," so what did I know?

I noticed other things about her. She never made her bed. As part of our program we were supposed to make our beds and keep our rooms clean, but she never did. Her side was always a mess. Her books and magazines were always on the floor beside her bed, but they weren't in piles; they were strewn about in no particular order. She was kind of odd. I always made my bed and my magazines were in piles and sorted by name, date and who was thinner on the cover. She was always doing her nails. Cutting and filing and painting. Every morning she would wake up and before she even showered she would remove the nail polish she had put on the night before. Then she would cut and file her nails and put on a different color. After "lunch" she would repeat the process, then the same after "dinner." She was odd. I never did my nails. Even for my prom a year later I only put on clear nail polish. I bite my nails, always have. One night she caught me staring at her while she filed and glared at me. I wondered, then, if she ever noticed that I bite my nails. I wondered if she ever noticed anything about me. I thought about asking her, but I didn't.

My third week there I started to talk. I figured out that was what they wanted. I became a professional talker. In my group, at individual, all I did was talk and talk. They wanted to hear that you have a problem and that they helped you realize this and that they are solving it. In one group we were talking about what kind of people we were. I told them I was like my father. A militant mind. I was the kind of person who got things done. Emotions were second to what needed to be done. I told them this story about the time my friend got hit by a car. She was lying in the street bleeding from her head and instead of freaking out, like my other friend who was there, I quickly memorized the license plate number of the red Toyota as it sped away. They caught the guy and everyone thought I was a hero, but I didn't think much of it. I just did what needed to be done, because that's the kind of person I am.

When I got back to my room that night I was going to tell my roommate that I was probably going to be out soon. I didn't tell her, though. She wasn't talking. She wasn't breathing, either. I just stood by her bed, on top of some magazines, and stared. Her eyes were open and wide, but there wasn't a sparkle. The color was fading. They were dull. Her fingernails weren't done. Some of them were filed, some of them were polished, but they weren't done. I thought about finishing them for her. I thought about how I hoped the sun would be out at her funeral. I thought that maybe I should pick up her magazines and books and organize them, so her mother could see that she was trying. I didn't. I didn't shut her eyes. I didn't paint her nails. I didn't pick up her magazines. I didn't tell the professionals that she was dead. I just stared at her. Her lifeless, emaciated body. I crawled into my bed and slept.

I felt like I was waking from a coma the next morning. I looked over at my roommate; she wasn't stirring, she wasn't breathing, she hadn't moved, she was dead. I got up and walked down the hall to the nurse's station. Sally was eating her Egg McMuffin. I told her my roommate was dead. She shot up and almost choked. She pushed some buttons and paged a doctor. She ran to my room with some medical stuff. I walked behind her. I stood in the doorway and watched her try to resuscitate my roommate. Sally was a professional. The doctor came and tried just as hard as Sally, but she was long dead.

I was moved to another room. I didn't get a roommate this time. I kept talking and was released a little over a week later. I don't think about Tara that much. I think about how I wasn't the person I said I was. I think about how it was raining on the day of Tara's funeral. I think about me. I think about how things sometimes don't go the way you anticipate them to. I think about oranges and alstromeria.

REBECCA KIMMONS

IN REMEMBRANCE

black and white
photograph



CHRISTINA E. DENT

WALLACE STEVENS
POETRY CONTEST
2ND PRIZE WINNER

INTERSECTION

We were driving too fast.
I told him these winding paths cutting
through Connecticut farmland weren't
like congested Boston roads.
My words hung in the air when the doe jumped,
testing the asphalt like water before she sprang,
with certain deftness,
in front of our compact Chevy.

White-knuckled,
braced for impact,
I did not prepare myself for collision.
I did nothing.
I did not even have time to pray.
No scream.
No sound.
Just a hopeless sucking in of breath,
a prolonged blink, a feeling
altogether otherworldly.

If she had leapt even an inch shorter...
If she had panicked and changed direction
we would have collided—her sleek grace
buckled by metal and glass.

Illuminated in the glare of our headlights,
she thought nothing of us, thought
nothing of death. She was pure elegance.
She wanted nothing more than the anonymity
of forest darkness.

Somehow she jumped just enough to elude us,
and ran into the nearby trees; she never looked back.
My tense hands, relaxed—strangely—as we skidded
past—sideways—then righted ourselves and continued
hurtling homeward.

PETER DALKNER

UNTITLED

monotype and
woodblock print
22" x 30"



CHRISTINA E. DENT

DISCOMFORT

- I. The weight of the sleeper couch far outweighs its usefulness. This is not a nest for sleeping, no refuge of comfort. Instead, I lie, perfectly conscious—waiting. A spring, dislodged in folds of mattress, finds its way to my lower spine. It rests there insistently, poking everything out of alignment.
- II. *Dancers in Pink*. I muse over the colored Xerox carefully pinned to the ceiling, lying on my back, spread-eagled for examination. How thoughtful of some nurse's aid to hang Degas to calm this indelicacy. I'm surprised at how asexual this all is, as the doctor's stiff fingers slide in, well-lubricated, searching the walls of my womanhood for disease. My urge to pull my legs closer together—shamed—is reigned by steel stirrups. I can only lay propped and stare at little girls' tutus.
- III. On a rumpled morning, I spend a brief moment at rest at the kitchen table. Sipping green tea. You across from me. I can't see you across the expanse. This rift is too wide.

DOUG COLE

THE WORKDAY
WASTES ON WITH
A FALSE SENSE
OF DIRECTION
LIKE A SPORTS
UTILITY VEHICLE IN
TOMORROW LAND.

"I was already an old man
working there,
nearing 50,
had been there eleven
years
working the night shift,
this young guy came
along,
blond, swift,
full of
energy. He told me at a coffee
break one
night:
'I'm only going to
be
here for a year, I'm working
on my novel.'"

—"Some Luck Somehow" (SLS),
from Charles Bukowski's *Bone Palace Ballet*

"Some Luck Somehow" reminds me of the times with an old co-worker. Mickey: not suicidal yet secretly wishing a Chevy Suburban would run him over when he crosses the street. He crosses the street exactly three times during a shift. At three, six, and nine Mickey hustles his 5'6", two hundred-twelve pound frame to the cheaper gas station to buy cigarettes. He looks both ways, waits for the traffic to empty before crossing. I watch this ritual each day and wait for the day I return to college.

"Twenty years later
I heard he's still there,
and worse that he's given up
writing."

-SLS

Mickey drinks. Mickey curses. Mickey hates Disneyland but most of all Mickey hates wearing the stiff blue gas attendant uniforms blistering his beech skin like aluminum foil under the burning tar heat of summer.

"Welcome to the Magic Fucking Kingdom," he proclaims. Cringing as the time card proclaims his arrival, clamping Thursday two pm in bleached black ink.

"I hope I get tomorrow off," he declares.

"Doing anything exiting tomorrow?" I say.

"Um, no plans. Except planning not to be here in CrappyLand."

"Well, there's 'Misfits.'" (The mullet pub behind the station.)

"I do that anyways," Mickey says. "I know! I'll go fishing."

A blue Chevy Suburban pulls in four hours into the shift. The driver wears a pressed flannel suit. I ignore his smile, shove the gas hose into the car's tank (filling it with high test, \$1.78 per gallon high test). It gurgles like a pig's stomach with an ulcer. Mickey comes out of the garage bleeding sweat, as if our boss had just bludgeoned him over the head with a tire iron. But it's the heat. Our boss merely yelled at him. I know this from looking at Mickey's smile. Mickey never smiles.

"Apparently ninety-seven degree heat does not allow us to lax on the dress code," he grits. "The top button must be fastened at all times... (Bad impersonation)... Our Boss is an asshole!"

Mickey and Asshole both share the same age. In their late forties, that and drinking, pretty much all they have in common. Mickey could never become an Asshole, just as Bukowski could never be an Asshole. The poems in *Bone Palace Ballet*, including "Some Luck Somehow," may show instances of sphincter emulation but in order to crown oneself an Asshole, one needs to sign paychecks, go through life just for the money.

"some of those dumb jocks
deserve the dull
jobs
they hate."

-SLS

Asshole: A greedy, turd-spouting, anal-retentive family man, with a daughter attending Wellesley College (tuition: \$40,000 per year), a bleached brained trophy wife who treats him like a throw rug, and his dream: owning and operating Hine Brother's Garage and Gas Station, inherited. And worst of all, he drives a Chevy Suburban with free gas.

Mickey: Lives alone, divorced from his wife, and his daughter (around my age) was institutionalized after taking some dirty LSD. Four years ago, Mickey took this job to pay child support and to stay close to his kids. He would rather move to upstate New York and fish but every month or so his ex-wife drags him to court. Plus he gets free drinks at "Misfits."

"so many of those
jobs are held
by
first time
novelists.
I was one of them"

-SLS

People tend to associate works of art to people they know. But they say it in an awkward way. Example: "Mickey would like Charles Bukowski's book *Bone Palace Ballet*." Mickey never read a book of poems in his life. His knowledge of lyrics never extends beyond classic rock radio stations and Lynard Skynard vinyls. And as far as I can tell, Mickey probably thinks John Milton is the guy that invented "Candy Land." Mickey would enjoy Bukowski about as much as getting kicked in the groin by Goofy. I associate *Bone Palace Ballet* with Mickey because Bukowski in both persona and craft describes my co-worker well, so well that I cannot shake the image of Mickey from out of the pages. I just cannot imagine Mickey reading the poetry through his thick Southern Comfort colored shades. The book personifies him too much. A piece of work cannot read itself.

The whirling gusts of a dashboard air conditioner buzzes like a cloud of icy insects as flannel suit guy steps out of his Suburban. Then bolts into the hut. A twelve square foot paper cluttered, plexi-glass cell where we keep the cash register.

"Wow!" flannel suit guy proclaims. "You guys have air conditioning!"

"Yup," I say. Waiting for the credit card slip to print.

"You know," flannel suit guy proclaims, "in Disneyland, when you wait for the rides there are these air conditioned vents that run constantly above your head, keeping you cool."

"Cool," Mickey responds with sarcasm. He stomps out of the hut to light a cigarette. Still hot, still sweating, still with his top button fastened (Assholes have eyes, keen ones at that).

The poem flows in a banter much like Mickey's speech pattern, consist of short lines, short words, sounds that drive smoothly over the frequent bumps of line breaks. With a voice honest as an old photograph, sweet like warm beer, unavoidable as a war story, mundane, physical, earthy, cynical, and undeniably real and genuine. I never tell him this, don't plan to, yet I should.

"but somehow I knew
that the gods were
watching
so I never told
anybody"

—SLS

At the end of the night Mickey and I close the station. Eight hours of being treated as numbers, feeling like numbers, and now counting out numbers and typing in numbers. It didn't matter who tallies up the cash, credit cards, checks; the response stays the same.

"Made close to four grand today..." I say, stuffing all the paper into an envelope. Even though we both know that fact holds as much significance as knowing about the air vents at Disneyland. I never tell Mickey that I am a poet for the same reason.

"and still
to this day
there are billions
of people
who don't
know!"

—SLS

Everyone needs to get paid. Everyone works to get paid, but poets think they have something that exempts them from "getting a real job." People who refer to themselves as poets believe that their contributions to humanity through their art should automatically grant them high status and a fat check each week. I do write poems, but that deserves no material reward. Mickey and Bukowski help me uncover this. The work, the physical act regardless of means, ends, salaries, and social security should support itself. People who call themselves poets try to use their poems to cover the cost of living when, really, poetry is living. A sonnet should not equal a month of rent. Mickey should read Bukowski. I imagine him opening the book like one of those fold-out mirrors, his eyes reading the words the same way he looks in at his reflection before shaving. A ritual of self-inspection, bringing to surface admiration or even disgust, but most importantly creating a connection, empowerment through art. Poetry reminds us that we exist in a physical world feuled by forces not driven by physical gain but by forces that drive us closer towards a greater understanding of each other.

The next day I punch in to see Asshole fuming red as a hemorrhoid. Preparation H is the three cans of "Bush Lite" (\$12 for a thirty pack) he guzzles in a thirsty rage for relief. But you get what you pay for. He's pissed. Mickey never got the day off. He called in sick. Chains of cars snake into the station. I laugh, making my way to the hut, knowing last night Mickey got drunk at the bar, and after nursing a hangover this morning, went fishing.

COLIN McNAMARA

LONELY WELCOME

black and white
photograph



KEN CORMIER

AND RUBBER SKIN
BUDDHA SITS
PLAINLY ON
EGGSHELLS

AND RUBBER SKIN BUDDHA SITS PLAINLY ON
EGGSHELLS

Disguising the fact that his payments are late
And the laundry is piling up higher than Crosby
Drunker than priests on a day full of masses

Kept like a virgin and cut like a razor
Bloodied up sheets and a head full of bourbon
Lighter then darker then absolute nowhere
Stuck on a hook in a bucket of bait

Children in heavy coats crouched under windows
Big twitching mandibles splashing in bathtubs
Savory chicken breasts stuffed with no sympathy
It's time we get packing and head for Tibet

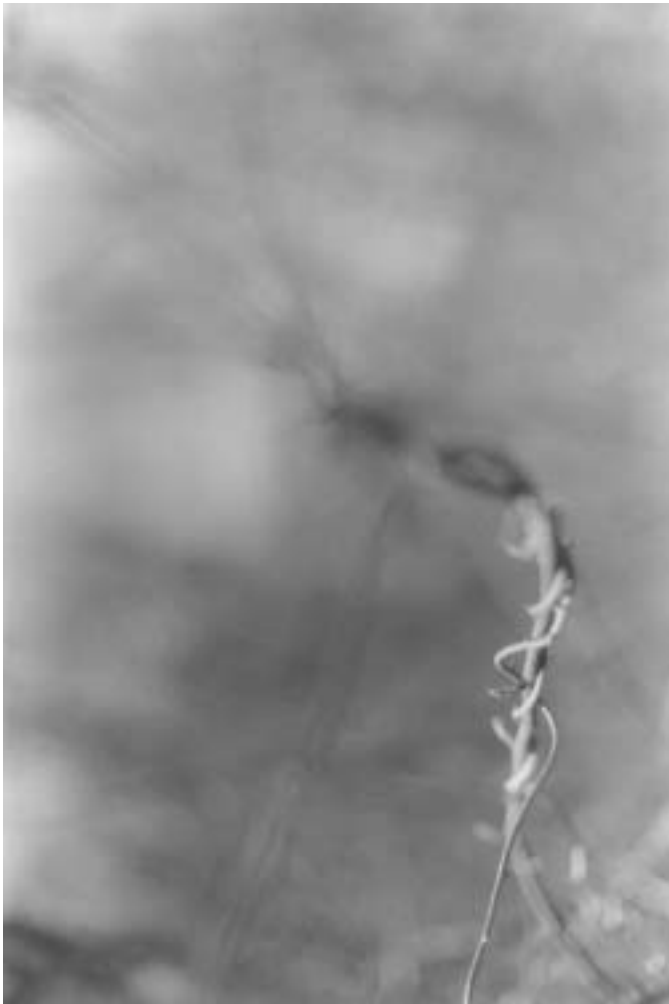
Croutons and apricots tossed with the laundry
Women with duffle bags walking home wet
The stomachs of salesmen digesting their paychecks
It's time we get packing and head for Tibet

ANZELINA OKARMUS

UNTITLED

*LONG RIVER
PHOTOGRAPHY
AWARD WINNER*

black and white
photograph



TARIK HADŽIĆ

SUN DEFINITELY
RISES

*AETNA
UNDERGRADUATE
CREATIVE
NONFICTION AWARD
HONORABLE MENTION*

[UConn dorm room. An eighteen-year-old Bosnian contemplates his life.]

A morning. A cold morning. A cold morning of a warm October day creeps up my dorm window, oozes into my room, engulfing all my oxygen. It steals the air, hides it, choking me and invading the tiny place. I open my right eye and realize the wrongness in this. No, this is not it. This is not that place on *Jalijski put* number six, back in 72,000¹. It is not my city. Even this four-by-five-meter communist-looking cage is not mine. "Relax!" I command myself, and my eye, my right eye, snaps back in place. The stillness of my body is just a boring indicator of what's not there. It reminds me of the Missing.

Darkness. I feel it around. It hovers under my bed, getting ready to lift it up, a carpet, and carry it back over the Oceanus Atlanticus, back to where my heart's atria and ventricles pump the liquid at the highest pace. Back to those damned mountains, the cursed valleys, the screwed-up rivers. There, Where I possess and am possessed. There where young peasant girls milk the cows in the morning. There Where the sun is more, most, the most. Where "there" is *m y* "there."

Still between the real reality and the other reality, I try to urge myself to think back, think radically, try and succeed, recreate and recall...the time before I existed as Tarik Something, an "exchange" student...that "ex" in the adjective radiating from the Pole, icing stuff around me. Nothing comes to mind. Surprised and astounded, I organize my thinking and scream silently: "Think, you...you...you...sclerotic boy!" Seconds flow: one second, two seconds, two and a half, three.00 are already gone. The river grows bigger, and with it the tributaries bring in the cyanide...panic.

I panic and I panic. And I panic again. Suddenly, the source of memories opens up, someone screaming: "Open Sesame!" The cave is finally let open. One by one, same and different memories show up and vanish. I can see my face reflecting in the toilet water I just imperfed with my vomit at 02:18:39 a.m. The tasteless Bosnian air rushes in. A realization: I have been fasting for years now...with no dear face, no dear city, no dear homeland in sight.

¹ Jalijski put 6, 72000 Zenica is the author's address in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

One memory, drowned like all the others, surfaces and I grab it and unroll. I catch, and resuscitate it, the decomposing piece of reality. "Live, damn it, live!" I rebel and start feeding it with fresh freshness. The movie begins, no previews, no popcorn, no tickets. Human life is the theatre, the first movie being played. Through a fog, unexplainable, I see a street with half a dozen holes in the concrete. The kids use it to play "klis and pala," a lame game, a game that is really lame.

Once, we accidentally threw the "klis" on top of an old shed in my street. I had to climb up, supported by Her Number One, a goddess of my youth. She put her hands, gentle, tiny, under my feet and gave me "the robber's stand" on a clear clear autumn day. The result: the "klis" was retrieved; the lame continued. At the moment, the street stumbles down upon me with its massiveness. I have to continue. It's pressing me, its mild grip squeezing without pleasing, my body pressurized. The apartment building is calling me, its voice coming from one side of the same gray line. Two sets of nine floors, each breathing its own destiny, exist in the Lost City². The entrances are numbered six and 6A. It seems the communists totally forgot about the B as in alphaBET.

A condo building with an even number; yet another condo building. An even numbered floor in an even numbered condo building; yet another floor. Floor number Two in *Jalijski put 6* – a micro-cosmos. Exactly 10.00 Homo Sapientic individuals live on this floor of this condo building in this town of this country on this continent. Humans in the Damned Country are also a weird mix. Little over 3.00 of the precisely defined 10.00 were and are considered to be pubescents (the full meaning of the word, I assume). To complete the picture, add objects. With them, picture still being identical: no change. No change comes around in the Lost City. Pictures usually arise and sometimes pictures fade away. This one wobbles in between realities; yet it never changes in composition. It seems, *Jalijski put 6* is eternally non-different, bound for constancy.

In Number Six, one of the two elevators is broken, the mailboxes having lost their function. Or having no function at all but for activists of different religious groups to put in their never-to-be-read fliers. The human residents seem to have missed Mrs. Doko's lecture on mailboxes in their youth. Maybe they simply did not want to learn. Thus, the conclusion: Number Six is weird. Abnormal. It swallows all the Living that enter it, tags them and stamps the Weirdness into them.

² The Lost City is Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina, zip code 72,000

Now my darlings that you have had gotten the roughest sketch of Number Six, we shall continue the voyage by reaching for another memory about to boil off ...the memory called: Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. SFRJ should by all means be rid of its fanciness; hereby I choose to call it the good old Yuga. And, my readers, Yuga will follow you in this nightmare. It was a good-bad thing, multiple packs of humans lumped together into one great stable. Where do you think Number Six fits in? Six was the Yuga Ideal: the great mix that worked while money worked. Money disappeared, and look! Six is still there.

While I was in the old Yuga, I was a naïve individual. I believed.

My beliefs were sent into concentration camps, raped, killed, snipered, starved to death, thrown into caves and land filled, hung ...by Them.

"A mass grave believed to hold hundreds of corpses is being exhumed by forensic experts," an official has said...³ The dig comes a day after the commission finished exhuming another mass grave in a nearby wooded area, collecting bags full of the remains of 250 people. Bosnia and Herzegovina, the name of the land it is. Truly cursed...truly damned. Killed and run over, leveled so many times it does not even hurt to count anymore. Its people – a bunch of lunatics one might think. Yet, impreciseness is the flood of the flaws of this term. For God's sake, we are peopLe, unexpectedly normal after the crazy Game has stopped. There are still a couple of million of us, some normal, some semi-normal, some half-normal, some little normal, some abnormal, some not willing to be normal, some not able to be normal, some just some.

We stand confronting the two Sides we all know so much about: the West and the East, or so they call them. You know what Bosnia's problem is? Its problem is its beauty, its nightmare is its dream belle. Simply ask Constantin⁴ about it! He was the Wise One who firstly thought of dividing, binding, dividing, enwalling, encaging, splitting....

Bosnia has been cursed by choice, its people volunteering to be killed, ridden of their lives, stricken of their dignity so many times. East and West, I call upon you once again. I wish you a successful battle next time. And there will be a NeXt. There always is...but, let me just tell you this: yes, the futura brings us the historia back: Bosnia remained, remained (again), remains ((again), and will remain (((again).

³ from CNN

⁴ Constantin—a Roman Emperor who divided the Roman Empire into East and West, the border going straight through Bosnia and Herzegovina.

OLIVIA HANZEL

ABANDONED

black and white
photograph



SARAH KANABAY

BURIED

The stars come
down

to where the field begins to say
the same quiet things
into the night

I heard
geese this morning, the air

cold enough to be cut by the rough
voices—

I think of
that empty barn, the owl

feathers in the falling
light,

moving
the wing half-seen—

A body can only say
so much

and breaks
itself

in trying.

AARON SANDERS

WAR STORIES

LONG RIVER
GRADUATE WRITING
AWARD WINNER

Photo #1

They take their wool overcoats and make a pile in the middle of the camp. The pile grows quickly because each coat is thick with wool and warm and heavy and, in the sub-tropical heat, completely unnecessary. So the pile grows until it marks the camp like a new skyscraper and the soldiers talk about it as they would a new skyscraper. The soldiers say: *We never thought we'd use them and now look what we've done with our army-issue wool overcoats. We've used them to construct a tower that on a clear day we could climb to heaven.* That's what the soldiers say. The tower of overcoats grows and grows until the day that Douglas MacArthur wades onto the beach keeping his promise that he would return, saying: *I have returned.* And when Douglas MacArthur sees the tower of overcoats he tells the noncoms to burn it, them, the overcoats because he has returned. So that night, while Douglas MacArthur eats steak and drinks wine, the tower burns. The tower burns through the steak, through the wine, and through the GI foil dinners until it, made of wool, has burned to the ground.

Military Cartoon, from *Stars & Stripes*, 1943

So there are these two officers, standing over a city they've just taken, and the sea is in the background past the city lights and the one officer says to the other: *Hell of a view from up here. Do you think there's one for the enlisted men?*

Resume

I went in on April 6, 1943. I had just quit my job at the railroad cleaning coaches down at the Pacific Depot. Before that, I packaged bullets—.50/.30 caliber—for the war at the Remington Plant out west and before that I worked at a hardware company where I fixed things and kept the books. The army put me in this ordinance outfit called the Heavy Truck Maintenance Company. Our outfit fixed everything from handguns to tanks. Our clerk got sick and they put him in the military hospital and the C.O. made me the clerk. I sat in a tent, at a desk, writing memos and doing payroll.

What Really Happened

The most ironic thing about it was that the guy had come from the front for R&R when it happened. R&R: rest and rehabilitation, not relaxation. And they worked the shit out of him. Up early, drills, exercise, work—*got to keep in shape for*

the front—and the whole time this guy on R&R kept saying how glad he was just to have a break. He never did ask what I did—I didn't tell him—I don't think he wanted to hear how I sat at a desk making sure everyone got paid, now and again sending memos up the line. I didn't tell him and he didn't ask. So he's supposedly on R&R, but this officer is with him, running his ass into the ground. *Got to keep in battle condition*, he'd say. But he's on R&R, we'd think. I'm just happy for a break, the guy on R&R would say. So he's sleeping one night and this Japanese soldier sneaks into our camp and, out of everyone in the outfit, sticks his bayonet into the guy on R&R. The Japanese soldier didn't get away though, the guy on R&R slipped his knife into the Japanese soldier's gut so that they both lay there bleeding until they started rattling. There was nothing we could do except listen to them die and the entire time I'm feeling guilty because I sit at a desk and because this guy doesn't and he gets a bayonet in the gut. Even now I see the guy on R&R gurgling and hear his rattle as his heart races and his throat swells and he dies. This is what really happened.

Weather Forecast #1

It's going to be hot today, hot like it was yesterday. So hot that your fatigues stick to your body, but it's more than that—they move into your body so that the cloth is flesh, one supplementing the other so that with every movement you are aware of the cloth on your skin, in your skin, and you're aware that it's too hot because you no longer bother to distinguish between the skin and your cloth.

What Could Have Happened

Sometimes I wish I had killed a man, that man, that Japanese man when he put his bayonet into that guy on R&R. If I had, maybe that guy would be alive, maybe he would have returned to the front and killed a thousand Japanese soldiers to my one. Maybe we all would have gone home earlier because I saved that guy. But I didn't and the guy on R&R died before I knew his name and his family didn't find out that he was dead for weeks, weeks after he rattled to death on that cot in the middle of the night. I did try to call a medic, but none came. They were all at the front helping other men die. I did wipe his head with a damp cloth and I tried to give him water, but he wouldn't stop rattling so I watched him die and then I went to sleep, got up and went to work, sitting behind the desk.

True Story

I didn't kill anyone. I wasn't ever really in danger; the worst thing that did happen to me was circumcision. So there I was, 20 years old, with an uncircumcised penis, trying to pretend

my penis was like the others. And then one day our unit gets busted at one of the pro-stations for having sex with the natives and so they give us the short-arm test. We're all standing there with our pants down, penises in hand. When my turn comes, I wring out my penis and there's no semen because I didn't have sex with a native, but the noncom notices that I have a small infection in my uncircumcised penis. *What's wrong with your dick*, he says. I didn't know. Everyone starts laughing at this point, the noncom, the other soldiers, everyone. Twenty soldiers with their pants down, penises in hand, are all laughing at me and then the noncom starts calling me Circ—a name that sticks. I try to laugh it off, but the noncom gets serious and moves his face in real close to mine. *Cut it*, he says. Then everyone gets quiet because everyone knows that when adults get circumcised they're down for weeks and their penises never quite recover all their feeling and that I was the only one in my outfit without semen in my dick. That really happened.

Photo #2

This is the day when the men have to move from the Solomon Islands to the Philippines three days after the thing in Manila. They find out in the morning and are gone by evening. The day before, the outfit receives about twenty crates of tank parts. They are too heavy, of course, to take with them so they leave all twenty crates in the middle of camp and they get in the transport boats with their packs. One man almost drowns when he slips in between the transport boat and the ship while trying to climb the rope ladder, but no one makes anything of it. When they arrive south of Manila, the men in the tank-repair outfit pretend they're soldiers and they storm the beach because it's still considered dangerous. So that's what they do and all the while, twenty crates of tank parts in the Solomon Islands just sit there, on Bougainvillea, accumulating anything that comes by. Centipedes as thick as your thumb find their way in and out of the crates until they finally move in for good. Snakes as thick as your thigh cool themselves on the cold metal and make meals of the rats as big as small dogs—the rats act like they own the crates, hissing and waving their teeth at the snakes. And then later, much later, plants begin to grow inside and out, engulfing all twenty crates as if the crates themselves grow roots into the sand so that if one of the soldiers who stormed the beach south of Manila were ever to come back, he might miss the crates because of all this.

What Did Happen

I never forgot the Japanese soldier creeping into our camp and out of all the guys in our outfit, choosing to put his bayonet into the guy from the front who was only with us for some R&R. I would dream about it at nights and I would let the Japanese soldier get big in my mind—7 feet tall, broad-shouldered, and hands as big as rats. He would sneak into our camp again with all kinds of weapons and kill everyone.

This is what I would think about while sitting at my desk when everyone had been paid and all the memos had been written. So when I heard about the bomb, instead of hating it the way we all do now, I was relieved.

Funny Story #1

So there was this guy called Saunders and he could sleep through anything—even the whistle in the morning—and he did. So one morning he was missing from formation and the C.O. went into his tent and found him sleeping on his cot. Instead of waking him up, he had two soldiers pick up the bed and empty him onto the ground. And everybody laughed. From then on, he heard the whistle.

What I Said Happened

When people think of World War II, they think of Hitler, Germany, Europe. I've never been to any of these places, but I was a soldier in World War II. Everyone knows about Pearl Harbor; people visit the memorial. But not many people know where the Solomon Islands are, or the Philippines, or even that Japan is a group of islands. When I came home, nobody wanted to hear what I did if it wasn't in Europe and it didn't involve flying a plane or fighting on the front and I guess I can understand—my job was boring. But I was there, getting up every day, half way around the world, worried about snipers and animals and my future. I did it for two years and nobody wants to hear about it. I began making up stories—I'm the one who pulled off the Japanese soldier, I pulled him off and beat him to death with my fists. My prisoner, my first kill, my 7-foot-tall Japanese soldier. People would stand there, open-mouthed, and thank me for their freedom. I'd go on telling them how I could smell the soldier before I could see him, how his breath reeked of cloves and garlic, how his strong body was difficult to take down and how his fist felt against my face before I pounded him. Some would cry and put a hand on my shoulder. Some would even hug me because of what I said happened.

Weather Forecast #2

It's hot. Of course. But today it will rain. It *does* rain a lot here. But unlike the dry Utah weather you are used to, the rain makes it humid and your sweat and the rainwater mix, a tropical cocktail of fluids that lubricate your hands—try picking up that gun, try squeezing that trigger—and glue your clothes to your body.

True Story #2

They gave me a local so I could watch. That's what they said. They didn't ask me. A grown man strapped to the table, a doctor, and a knife. So there we were and he sticks the needle in my penis and he says something forgettable to me to relieve the tension we both feel. Something like, It's just a small prick and then he giggled. I might have giggled too, if the circumstances had been different—if, for example, at that moment, I wasn't a grown man with a needle in my penis. So

then he sticks this plastic cap over the tip, which isn't quite numb yet, and takes the knife to me. I hear the other men doing drills while I grip the table and while the Doc gives me a circ and I know that this is one story I can never tell.

How I Told What Happened

When telling the story, I found it useful, no necessary, to conflate elements. For example, the guy Saunders became Slim from Denver and they became the guy on R&R. But then I had to throw away the *I didn't even know his name as he was dying* bit and that always elicited wonderful audience responses. Such is the life of a storyteller. So then Slim from Denver and Saunders became me, the uncircumcised Utah. It makes sense that getting flipped out of a cot, screwing up drills, and circumcision would all happen to the same character. All these things happened, but none of them *actually* happened to me unless I'm telling the story. My boss asked me to give a report on the war to the other employees when I got back. I knew none of them wanted to hear how I sat at a desk for two years in a sweaty gray T-shirt so I told the story of the Japanese soldier, but, this time, instead of pounding him with my fists, I took his own bayonet and rammed it through his gut and into a tree. A few people clapped on the word "rammed," a few people yelled something about the Japs and I became more popular than ever. That's how I met my wife. Every time I told her the same story, she wanted to make love. Anytime anyone mentioned the war around her, she would start crying and tell them how I did my part to ensure freedom. When I'd get home from work she'd be waiting for me with that look.

Funny Story #2

Drop your pants, turn around, and spread'em. We couldn't do it one-by-one in privacy, but we had to do it all at once—twenty men bending over, asses to the sky. When the inspection was over and the rubber gloves disposed of, the C.O. would say, *Fall out. You're all perfect assholes.* Everyone thought that was pretty funny.

Photo #3

When they arrive at a new place, take Bougainvillea in the Solomon Islands for example, the place is beautiful. Everything they have imagined about a sub-tropical island is true. White sands, blue water, palm trees, jungles. And they are happy to be here even though they are here for war. Every day, after work, that's what they call it because of their seven to four schedule with a lunch break, every day after work they get in the jeep and drive to the beach. Over time, however, the island starts to look different, more than the tents, the supplies, more than the garbage pit, the cigarette butts, the cans, the bottles, more than all of this. The place begins to look different and then one day the soldiers pack up everything they can carry and leave. More than the stuff they leave behind, the island—its white sand,

palm trees, blue water, and jungles—looks different and all the soldiers know it.

What I Wish Hadn't Happened

The guy on R&R *is* here, and they *are* working the shit out of him. And I do sit at a desk all day making sure the men get their checks. I sit in a tent, at a desk, in a sticky gray T-shirt. This is what I do. At lunch, I can walk over to the mess tent and see the guy on R&R running sprints or doing pull-ups, but always doing something. It's always the same.

One night, I've been drinking, and I'm wandering back to my tent, and I think I'm seeing things. One thing I think I'm seeing is a Japanese soldier coming toward me from behind a tent. This Japanese soldier keeps coming until I can almost smell his breath and he's talking to me in a quiet voice. I've never seen the enemy and I'm imagining this encounter, how it *would* be to see the enemy face-to-face, to feel him next to me, to smell him and I know I'm projecting because he smells like garlic and cloves and it all seems so real.

So here we are—my imaginary Japanese soldier and me, face to face and I'm wondering when it will end and then from behind me, I feel someone rush by and into my imagination. And these two figures are rolling around on the ground, grunting and thudding, and I go out, hitting the ground, I think, hard.

I open my eyes—the C.O. is looking down at me, shaking his head, and then he walks away. I hear him say something like It's a damn shame, he was a good kid, and I'm getting worried, thinking maybe I'm dead and that soon I'll float away into the sky so I sit up and I'm not dead at all. There's not a scratch on me. So I ask the medic what's going on and he tells me that some Jap tried to kill me, but that the guy on R&R took him out. Where is he, then, I say. Oh, the medic says, You don't know? He killed the Jap, but the Jap killed him.

What Has Happened

I'm older now, but I'm in great shape. I play tennis twice a week and my wife and I take a trip twice a year. I don't need to tell stories any more because everyone I know has heard it all before or seen a movie about the same thing. I guess, in this sense, my war time has lost value. I tried to tell my grandson about the 7-foot-tall Japanese soldier and he just asked me how many other men I killed. I told him none and all he could say is: *War is hell, Grandpa. Get over it.* Or maybe he didn't say that, maybe he just ran outside to play with his friends.

MATTHEW STARON

POLSKA

black and white
photograph



JULIE WERNAU

WAX STATUE

They say Charlie fell out of the truck at seventy miles
an hour, the impact crushed his brain, and left him
paralyzed like a photograph of a tragedy too far
away for anyone to care.

His parents bring him to the Thanksgiving
Football game—drooling on himself like a child.
Nobody talks to him, nobody likes to cry.

I'm reminded of a story I wrote in fourth grade,
a little girl sucked into an old man's brain
after hitting him with her bicycle.

The old man's memories
written in chalk,
lay scarce, half erased.

She encounters the scribe
—responsible for scrawling down
each recollection, afterthought,
keepsake—
asleep on the job.

He is fired
and replaced.

She patches the brain damage with cement.

Charlie sits limp, waxen
—our town statue—
his significance lost
as we pretend to remember the game.

JULIE WERNAU

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

*“What if no one’s watching?
What if when we’re dead we’re just dead
What if God ain’t looking down
What if he’s looking up instead?”—Ani Difranco*

I. Flashback

There was a sewing machine,
a landmark by the stairs.

My mother would stand guard
creating matching dresses out of discount fabric
for my sister and me.

Two years old
—barely old enough to walk
independently
of our wobbly oak wood table

yet, I bravely trekked past that sewing machine,
on all fours—crawling,
the carpet plush and thick beneath my tiny body—
up the mountain of stairs I was never
to climb alone, piled
one atop the other like an eternity
of building blocks.

Briefly unwatched,
my first time alone
other than grocery store nightmares.

When I reached the top,
my parents’ bedroom
lay dark and to a two-year old

empty

the glowing digital
alarm clock
throwing shadows of objects,
shifting into clutching fingers, misshapen faces;

it was the panicked delusion of nightmare.

I screamed with all the terror
a two-year old possessed,
choking on my own tears
until I was plucked off the carpet
into my mother’s arms, and

like the soft hand of forgetfulness,
she lulled my mind to sleep.

II.

I was looking forward to the mindlessness of note-taking,
The comfort of authority
—the kind others find in God.

But I couldn’t get the bodies out of my mind,
dropping like lead doves from the windows of the Trade
Center
—unable to hold their breath any longer.

The billowing walls of smoke, the Towers folding on
themselves
like origami.

Debris flying out like paper airplanes,
—almost graceful.

After class, I drove the hour-long ride home to my mother’s,
hoping to find an answer I knew she wouldn’t have.

She stood in the kitchen. Behind her,
the tiny television reporting the news
like the soft hum of a theater hushing.
She turned her head as I walked in,
tears rolling down her cheeks in lines.

Folding her into my arms,
we wept,
too exhausted to speak.

BETHANY CARDILE

UNTITLED

1 of 8 photographs
in a series about
the destruction of
earth at the hands
of mankind.



"The Last Poem is sick and tired of the barely intelligent...
barely sane... totally greedy... running the world"

– Nikki Giovanni

BIOS

MELANIE ADAMS is a junior at the University of Connecticut majoring in English and minoring in Philosophy. After graduating, she intends on working for publication companies and writing poetry to her heart's content. The poems that have been selected for this publication were written in a workshop she took with Marilyn Nelson this past winter. Marilyn gave Melanie wisdom that she will carry for the rest of her life, including drawing with crayons to get insight into her childhood; although it sounds funny, it worked. She would like to thank Marilyn, who deserves much praise and respect.

K. JAHİ ADISA is an MA student in English who prefers writing in lower case but is often forced to conform to the hegemonic emperor known as "Standard Format." besides writing poetry, adisa enjoys writing short fiction and really long seminar papers (but not as much as he enjoys short fiction). his journalism has appeared in the *washington post's* weekly tabloid known as the *district weekly*.

AİCHA ALOUAH is a senior at UConn, working towards a Bachelor's degree in Communication Disorders. Her career goal is to become a Speech-Language Pathologist and work with children in a public school system. Her main hobby and source of happiness is spending time with family and friends. Her other interests include writing, reading, clothing making, drawing and traveling. The idea for "Exodus" came to her as she was contemplating the nature of abortion and its repercussions. She also wanted to write from a unique perspective to give the poem an added dimension.

MAX ALTHOFF is a fourth semester English major from Moorhead, MN. He hopes to teach English at the university-level and, in the meantime, continues to write poetry as often as time permits.

CHRISTOPHER TODD ANDERSON is a resident of Willimantic and a doctoral student in the UConn English Department. He holds an M.A. from UConn and a B.A. from Earlham College. He has received the *Long River Review* Graduate Writing Award in 1999, 2000 (2nd place), and 2001, and was among the winners of the Wallace Stevens Poetry Contest in 2000 (2nd place) and 2002 (3rd place).

ANDREA T. ARIMAN, a transfer student from Germany, fell in love with New England while living in Belmont, MA, and working as an *au pair*. A graduate student and TA, she is presently teaching German at UConn and hopes to resume her studies in English this fall. Andrea is a Writing-Center-addict and a travel-aholic. Her work has been published in the University of Heidelberg's *In Our Write Minds* and in last year's *Long River Review*.

ERIN CATHERINE BATOG is a sixth semester Creative Writing major. She currently resides in Franklin, MA, with her family and two cats. She plans to attend NYU for graduate school and receive an MFA in Creative Writing.

DAVID BELLONA is an 8th semester senior majoring in Visual Communications. Having lived in many states, David claims Waterford, Connecticut as his home. Upon graduation in May, he will tour the U.S. When he returns, David will be applying for positions at type foundries and design firms. His artistic interests include the function of micro aesthetics on a macro scale, fundamentals of typography, their role in print and web design, and the exploration of various letterform uses and applications.

CAROLINE BENNETT is a sixth semester English major with a concentration in Creative Writing.

SAM BLAKE is a sixth semester English major. His poem was written for and inspired by Meena, the most loveable and beautiful girl he has ever known.

MARC BOVINO is a sixth semester student at Uconn. Officially a Spanish major, however, Marc, who happens to be a Pisces, is an artist at heart expressing himself through photography or his other passion, theater. His acting career is currently on hiatus as a result of the Uconn Acting department's severe misjudgments (he's not bitter). Consequently, he's been looking elsewhere for inspiration through photography. Marc has been doing black and white photography for six years and continues to experiment with new techniques of manipulating the photographic image.

ANDRÉ J. BOWSER is a 26-year-old journalist. Raised in Harlem, NY, he was educated at city schools and on the streets. After serving five years as a military journalist, he worked as a freelance feature writer for the *Virginian-Pilot* and numerous other publications. He is presently an editor with the Tribune Company, where he has worked as a reporter and copy editor for *New York Newsday* and *The Hartford Courant*. He is a part-time student at UConn's West Hartford campus. "The Skinny" was inspired by an unpublished jazz novel written by the author.

BETHANY CARDILE is a sophomore at UCONN possibly majoring in Illustration. She is from Windsor CT and is a member of the UCONN Equestrian Team. She sends her thanks go to Cora Lynn for the flyer regarding this publication.

BEN CHARNEY is a 6th semester graphic design major from Guilford CT. He thanks Frank Noelker, and Todd Jokl for their help with his photography.

KELLY LORARINE CHIN.
She was born. She is here. She journeys on.

KEN CORMIER is the author of *Balance Act*, a book of poems and stories, as well as two CDs of original music, *God Damn Doghouse* and *Radio-Bueno*. Ken toured the United States and Canada in 2000, and he performs frequently in his native New England and in New York City. He is a drummer, first and foremost, and he claims influences as diverse as Chaim Soutine, Buddy Rich, Virgil, and the Shaggs. Ken currently studies American literature and teaches Freshman Composition at the University of Connecticut.

MEGHAN MAGUIRE DAHN is a 10th semester student pursuing dual degrees in English and Art History. In 2001, she placed third in the Collins Literary Award contest and was awarded an Anniversary Art Award. She has participated in internships for UConn's Creative Writing Program, Real Art Ways, and the Contemporary Curatorial Department at the Wadsworth Atheneum. A guest reader in the Long River Student Reading Series both in 2001 and 2002, Meghan has previously published work in the *Long River Review* and will appear in a forthcoming edition of the *Beloit Poetry Journal*.

PETER DALKNER offers the following manifesto of his work: "Art is ok. Drawing naked people and such. But my main love is in the field of biology. Micro-organisms and reticululums, what have you. My eye has been glued to the microscope going on eighteen years now for, you see, under the microscope we are all the same no matter what color our skin is. It was only recently that I became interested in [insert genre of piece accepted here] after I knocked my microscope off the bathroom sink and broke it on the floor. Forced to live without my microscope I picked up a pencil and began to do art. Art isn't as interesting as biology but as the great Dr. Dexter Sear said: 'the main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.'"

KRISTEN DEMARCO is a sixth semester Individualized Fine Arts major with concentrations in photography and graphic design and is working on a minor in Communication Sciences. The field of advertising, especially magazine advertising, which she hopes to investigate further in her work, fascinates her. Mass media and pop culture have a tremendous influence on her work as well as the population at large. However, she tends to base her work on personal matters and inspiration/influence that come from her family.

CHRISTINA E. DENT is currently finishing her M.A. in English at UConn. Previously she has been published in *Venture*, *The Rectangle*, *Meanie*, and *The Long River Review*. In 2002, she placed second in the Wallace Stevens Poetry Contest. She wishes to thank poets Margaret Gibson and Fred Marchant for their instruction and inspiration.

KATIE DEVLIN is a sixth semester English major from Higganum, CT. She loves to read and write and is honored to have her fiction published in the *Long River Review*.

MOLLY EMERSON is a third semester Political Science major who has absolutely no idea what she wants to do after college and whose major will most likely change for the third time within the next two months. She wrote “Disclaimer” four months ago, found and edited it the day that submissions were due, and feels that the fact that it was accepted for publication either proves that procrastination is a good thing or that she’s really lucky.

JOSH EYLER lives in Windham, CT, and is currently a graduate student in the Medieval Studies Program where he focuses on the apocalyptic aspects of Anglo-Saxon poetry. On the opposite end of the spectrum, he enjoys writing short fiction and creative nonfiction that deal with everyday struggles in a postmodern context. When he’s not studying or writing, Josh can usually be found either enjoying the company of his friends at UConn or playing fetch with his crazy dog Clifford, who has never once returned that which was thrown to him.

JONATHAN FENWICK is an eighth semester graphic design student and a member of the Design Center at UConn. He has worked on a number projects for the Creative Writing Program, including a few of the Poetic Journeys™ bus posters and the recent re-design of the Creative Writing Program’s website. Jonathan is extremely happy with the new look of the *Long River Review* this year and he would like to thank Erica who is, in a very large part, responsible for such a strong turnout in art submissions this year.

ERICA A. FLAMAND is a sixth-semester graphic design student from Guilford, CT. She is currently the graphics manager at the *Daily Campus* (no, it’s not her fault that there are so many typos). She gives thanks to her family, friends and fate-driven encounters that continue to inspire her in life and in art.

BRIDGET LISZET CATHERINE FLYNN (eighth semester) enjoys classic adventure literature, red wine and whisky (not together!), all kinds of weather, and long gazes from good-looking men.

MERILEE FORBES-KEARNS is a seventh semester English and French major, a woman of many passions, including a penchant for words and the way they taste. She enjoys cross-country skiing, hiking, learning new things, expressing herself through writing, music, and celebrating nature. She will be studying French and French nightlife in Quebec this summer.

KRISTEN GELDERMAN is currently a junior at Uconn, majoring in secondary English Education. She hopes, against the advice of many, to teach seventh or eighth grade. This is Kristin’s first time being published and she is very excited to have been chosen for the *Long River Review*. Kristin has had a passion for writing since she was young and, in addition to teaching, she would love to write children’s books. A special thanks goes out to her family, her friends, and all those teachers who have helped her along the way.

TARIK HADŽIĆ is an 18-year-old Bosnian, now in his 3rd year in the United States. Being “Euro-nostalgic,” he understands that there’s much more to the world than my own “Bosnian cosmos.” Yet, he says, “I refuse to burn my Benetton t-shirts just because they are a female brand here!” He loves UConn’s German Department, the lab that he works in (hurray for Dr. Nishiyama!) He writes to express himself, something mostly inevitable.

OLIVIA HANZEL is a fourth semester fine arts major concentrating in photography. Olivia sends Immeasurable love and thanks to her family and friends who taught her to surround herself with all that I love and to find the beauty in everyday.... “The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls.” –Pablo Picasso

CAMERON HULL is an eighth semester student pursuing a B.A. in Music. He studies voice and has been active in both the choral and opera programs at UConn. Cameron also performs as a singer-songwriter throughout Connecticut. He is a section leader and soloist at South Church in Hartford, and he is the Youth Group Coordinator at First Church in West Hartford. Cameron was a field manager for the Fund for Public Interest Research’s “Heritage Forest Campaign” in 1999 and also taught English and music at the Hong-Yu Middle School in Lao Tse, China. Hobbies include running, playing basketball, and chess. Every summer Cameron recharges his batteries at Silver Lake Conference Center, a camp for kids in Sharon, CT.

SARAH KANABAY has been writing poetry seriously since she attended the New England Young Writer’s conference at Bread Loaf five years ago and she sincerely hopes that that wasn’t her peak because she’d like to go on doing it for a while longer.

REBECCA KIMMONS is a junior studying fine arts with a concentration in photography. Much of her work is autobiographical but her primary goal is to create photographs that appear dreamlike or surreal in their unaltered state. After graduation she hopes to return to the west coast where she grew up, and possibly pursue graduate school in California. She would like to thank her family and friends for their support, encouragement, and love.

REBECCA LEPAK-SACK is a sixth semester double major in English and Journalism. She has been writing since the third grade, even though she spends much more time thinking and talking about it than actually doing it. The poem “Naughty Nudie” originated out of a childhood nickname and was a gift, that is, one of the few pieces of work that needs little revision before it is finished. Only two words were changed in the entire process of revision.

COLIN McNAMARA is a 2nd Semester-Aspiring Photo major whose photographic experience is relatively limited. He only has taken one semester-long photo class; and even though he is new to photography he knows that he wants to pursue it in the future. Colin sees a picture in almost everything that he looks at. Colin thanks his high school photo teachers Mr. Scorso and Fr. Lou, her family, Mike (for the camera) and the good Lord. “Nothing satisfies the man who is not satisfied with a little” (Epicures)

REBECCA MURPHY (sixth semester) is delighted to have her work in the *Long River Review* this year. Born to be a writer, she has been sharpening her craft here at UConn and eagerly anticipates the years of poverty that will surely follow graduation. She enjoys the outdoors (when warm and sunny), reading (when the books are short), and watching movies (as long as there is no Freddie Prinze Jr.). She would like to thank m, and d, and both of the b's. And a big thanks to slp.

RACHEL PALETSKY is a 7th semester art history/fine arts major at the University of Connecticut. She is originally from Litchfield, CT. She first became interested in art and photography through her parents, who have encouraged her to involve herself in numerous projects and to create from her heart. Photographing people has produced some of her most meaningful pieces. The diversity and character of facial and bodily expressions captured through camera draws her to this subject matter. She takes pictures of her family and friend as a way of documenting herself through those by whom she is surrounded and most influenced.

STACY PENNELL is a sixth semester student in the School of Family Studies and plans to go on to teach after she graduates. In her spare time she likes to snowboard. This is her first published piece.

LISA RAU is currently a Junior pursuing her degree in Graphic Relations. This is an individualized major that she created combining art, communications, and marketing. There isn't a particular person or thing that inspires her when she does work but she likes to keep her mind open to see what's around her. Last year she was stuck in her house for a week with mono and began to look at the beauty in all things. It's interesting to see what compositions can be created from simple things that one comes across everyday.

DAVID RIPLEY was born on October 16, 1980, and has lived ever since. He enjoys climbing trees, playing bass, writing, grammar, and dancing. A crossword anecdote follows. “Unscrupulous lender, S-H-_-_-_-K.” “SHAAARK.” End crossword anecdote. The narrative here is implied, especially if he insists that it isn't dialogue, which he is wont to do, despite the quotation marks.

MEGAN RUDNE is a fourth semester Art History student at UConn. Originally from Colchester, Meg attended East Hampton High School. After graduation, she aspires to be a high school Art teacher. She draws inspiration from a whirlwind freshman year in her favorite imaginative outlet: Denise Abercrombie's section of Creative Writing. Meg is enthused about this, her publishing debut.

AARON SANDERS is a first-year M.A. candidate in the English Department. Most recently, his fiction has appeared in *The Hawaii Review*, and he just finished a two-year stint as fiction editor for *Quarterly West*.

JESSE SCACCIA is currently student teaching tenth grade English at Coventry High School. He was the managing editor of a Long Island newspaper last summer, the *Montauk Pioneer*, and has been published in the St. Louis University Arts magazine *Dan's Papers* and on sigmachi.org. He has written a novel called *2.5* and is currently involved in the editing process.

MATTHEW STARON is a junior at UConn majoring in Molecular and Cell Biology with a minor in Chemistry. He aspires to go on to medical school to become a surgeon in the field of transplantation. Photography is a unique art form for which Matthew feels passion because it allows him the freedom of composition and breadth of expression that is rarely, if ever allowed to students in the sciences.

LYNDSAY STEPHENSON is from Cotuit, MA. She is a junior in the School of Business but hopes to take as many writing courses as possible before attending law school. Her primary focus in writing is nonfiction, but she has learned finally to appreciate the art of writing poetry. The daughter of John and Debra, she has three sisters who are often the topic of her writing. “Sunday Mornings in August” is her first published piece.

KATHERINE THURBER is a sixth semester double major. Aside from concentrating in creative writing, she is majoring in English and Art. Katie hopes to someday work with children in museums or teach art in lower grades while pushing her way toward a first novel. She also participated in Poetic Journeys™ through the University of Connecticut last Spring.

JOSH WALDMAN will win the race to graduate by a nose. Since his classroom failures are about the worst things that have happened to him, he owes his parents a heck of a lot. He received an honorable mention for the Aetna Undergraduate Creative Nonfiction Prize in 2001. And a brief mention for Beth....

JULIE WERNAU is an eighth semester English and Psychology double major. She hopes to someday live somewhere with emerald green grass, ample sunshine, good food, and many, many books.

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The *Long River Review* is currently in its fourth year of publication and features literary and art works by graduate and undergraduate students.

It is published annually by an exclusively undergraduate staff.

PRIZE WINNERS

POETRY

Christopher Anderson
Christina Dent
Robert Dunn
Dave Ripley

PROSE

Caroline Bennett
Andre J. Bowser
Kristin Gelderman
Tarik Hadžić
Rebecca Murphy
Aaron Sanders
Justin Short

VISUAL ART

Anzelina Okarmus
Lisa Rau