



# DENALI

*Lane Community College*

*Fall 1997*



## IN THANKS:

Just a quick note of thanks to all of the wonderful people who made this publication possible again this year, and to those whose praises were neglected in the last issue:

to **Mary Ann Martin** and **Linda Ochs** for their generous contribution to the magazine, in memory of **Robert Mapplethorpe** and **May Sarton**.

to **Dot Dotson's Photography** for the donation of time and free photo developing for *Denali*.

to the **staff of the Torch** for graciously sharing space and time in the production office.

to all of our contributors, past present and future, all of the staff of the same designations, and to the **dancers of Collaborations '97**, featured on the front cover.

## WE BE SORRY:

A world of apologies to those whose works were improperly credited due to an oversight in the Spring 1997 issue. To begin, in the table of contents, the poem "**Sea Swallow Me**" should have been credited to **Diane Hailey**, and the pen and ink drawing "**Serene Seas**" should have been credited to **Jean Sinclair**. Oops.

Further down the page, the title of the poem listed for **page 24** should have been listed as "**Inversed Breathing**" rather than "Reversed Breathing", and was written by **Adam Louie**. Double Oops.

And many apologies to **Sophie Navarro**, whose beautiful painting, "**Musician's Paradise**", wasn't credited to her anywhere in the magazine, but to Jean Sinclair.

Anyone who wants a more detailed description of exactly how, where and why we messed up, wants submission information for the winter issue of *Denali*, or who simply *lives* to speak on answering machines, should feel free to contact the *Denali* office at 747-4501, ext. 2830. Visit our *Denali* web page. Thanks!

# DENALI

"the high one"  
formerly "The Concrete Statement"  
Fall 1997

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## Michael

At 3am the gentle push-me-pull-me  
of your ribs taking air.  
I snail curl, warm beneath your arm.  
Aaron's lips, by six, on mine remind me  
I love him no less that he is not you.  
Over the burnt earth steam  
of coffee he is beautiful,  
unlined,  
unstained,  
unburied.

Your mother calls just to keep in touch -  
to ask how I am doing.  
I know what she means by this.

Out the kitchen window they lay new sod -  
even squares  
patched one to another.  
The science of making the earth flat - seamless  
over the spaces we have made in the dirt.  
A skill I have not learned.

Aaron takes the phone from me  
when I am done - opens the window.  
There is not air enough inside this room for the three of us,  
he and I and you.

Are these lines  
drawn in the dirt we will not cross  
enough?

I take him in arms  
like the belly of potato bugs touched.  
One round shell.

*-Rowan Morrison*

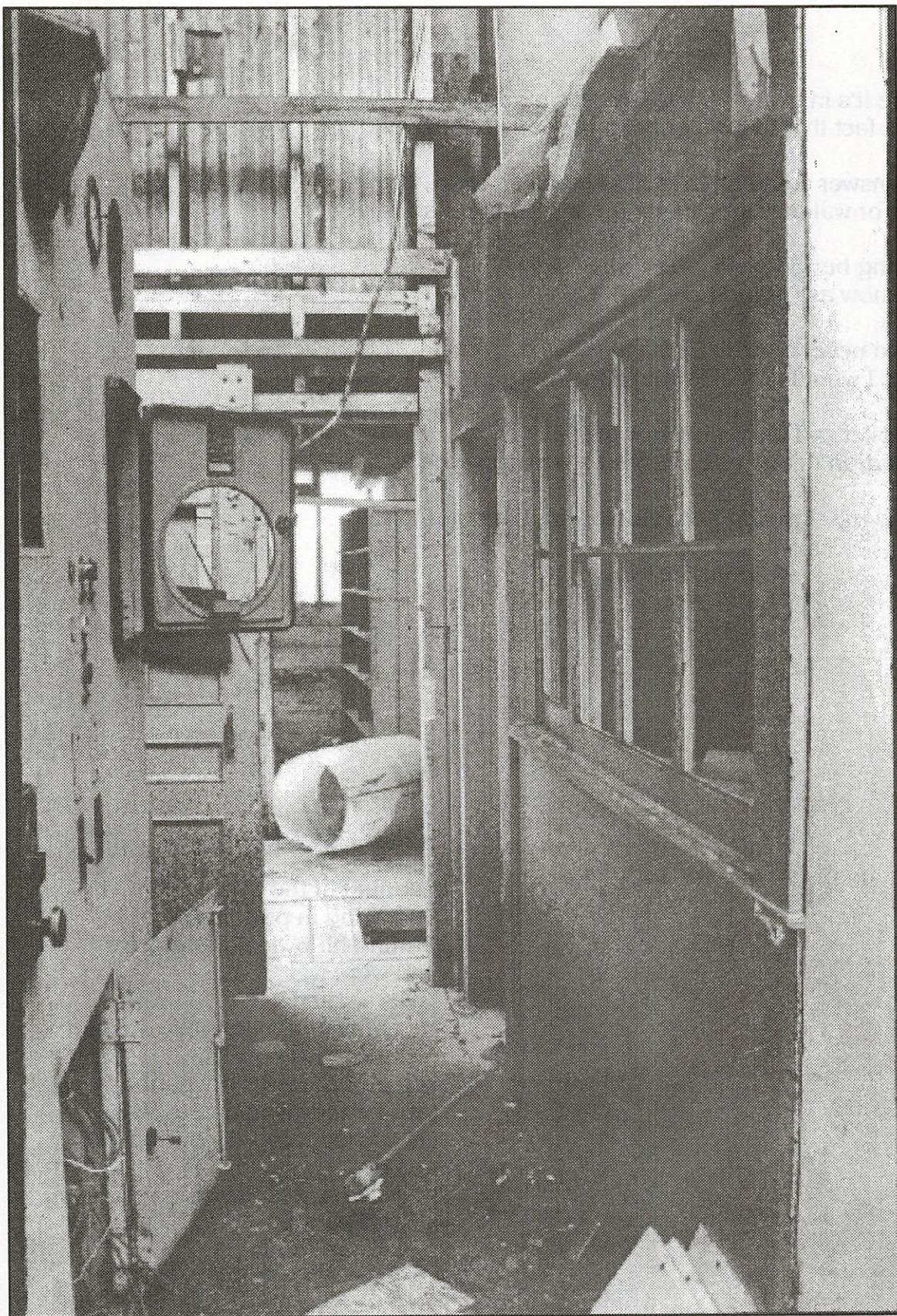
## ...of Substance

I can feel the lobby  
of an empty chest  
-hollowing out-  
leaving undesired room  
for an uninvited guest

I know the labyrinth  
of a dreamless sleep  
-carrying on-  
the thicket that surrounds  
a child beginning to weep

*-Patrick Strautman*





**untitled**

**Micky Hulse**



## Rain

Maybe it's in my ancestral farmer's blood,  
or the fact that I've never been properly baptized.

The answer could be in my astrological chart,  
a fish or water bearer made up of swimming stars,

a spring buried in all of my earth signs.  
All I know as I stand here is

I could never be satisfied living  
where I wouldn't feel immersion, a wetting

the holier call forgiveness or grace.  
Absolution I don't ask for, but comes none the less

just by my standing here stupidly in this pouring rain.

*-Kathryn Steadman*

## Rainy Day Running

Running in the water  
Splashing in puddles  
Getting hit by leaking gutters  
You were wet  
I was soaked  
My pants and hair finally washed  
(without my consent)  
You lent me your dry pants  
(even if they wouldn't button)  
It's a good thing my underwear  
was dry  
I would have looked funny  
in your panties

*-Seven*



## Red House

It's a game (and viscous)

red house w/ green porch light

seen through filter

of the rain;

It's sane (and vicious)

slide and sidle

up to a stranger

(hah!) and make "connect" --

no coupling, even sweet skin and hip or hands and lips,

can save me

from the nightside enigma of empty room.

i'm here --

you know this --

watching red houses in the rain

*-Chad Goodell*



## Her Daughter Dies Again

Two years to the day  
she has maintained  
everything as it was.  
The white lamb still  
wound and ready to play.  
The plastic table set  
with plastic bread and fruit.  
The blue dress in the closet  
like a quiet school girl  
waiting in line with the others,  
arms obediently at their sides.  
She touches with pride  
the bright fabric then feels  
with sudden clarity  
the emptiness of every sleeve  
that will not reach for her.

*-Michael Jenkins*

## Untitled

As if something could be lost  
sitting cross legged  
outside lecture room 170

A long stare  
she's the blood  
of a romantic affair  
between Buddha and The Thinker

a bastard work of  
art watching a murky movie  
between her thighs  
on the concrete triangle  
screen her tangled legs have framed

and if this bulwarked picture show  
reveals itself through peppered  
memories

when she finds what is missing

will the black tights get up and go away?

*-Sarah Williams*



### **Can You See Her?**

She is but a shadow of herself  
in the pale night-light.

Slamming again and again  
on to him.

Does he think she is making  
love? No, it's something else.

She wants him to break through  
into the place, where

life was made within, that  
she could give birth to.

She has not heard her doors,  
heavy steel, time-locked,

close silently against him-  
against others who may think

She loves.

*-Samina Van Winkle*



## hejira

and there you are all dream-tainted  
colored by the night  
your hot breath between my legs  
waking me as you kiss inside my thighs;  
your hands stroke-soften skin i've worn years now  
then you're loving inside me gentle  
then drinking me like an over-ripe orange  
pulling, straining me in through tight-clenched teeth  
(i can't -- i can't . . .)  
open eyes downwards see your's staring up into me  
peeking at me from behind two colors tangled hair  
there it is, my body night-shaking  
you overcome and the taste of me is in my mouth from yours  
as those sweet blue eyes bleed down into me  
as your body presses down onto me and  
i know you've been starved for me  
some things i only know at night  
with you pressing up into me . . .

i told you i think sex is pretty --  
to you it's just sweaty bodies seeking warmth  
like why cats and dogs come in when it's raining  
and huddle together over heating vents --

but i thought . . .

i know the night-smell of you like the air before it rains  
i know the needful crush of your lips and teeth --  
maybe you don't know what i see when  
i close my eyes and you're so close  
maybe you missed it somehow  
that this isn't about sweat, but the rain

*-amelia arianne reising*



## Solace

This summer  
will be over soon.

Already the tired  
margins of oak leaves  
turn a rust curl  
to a blue sky  
of windswept clouds.

The sun slants  
a different light  
on the moving world  
and life scatters  
from dry casing

of bursting seed-pods.  
Silk asteroids puff  
from the cotton wood  
to orbit the deck, searching  
for a place to get caught in

while,  
a crumbled piece  
of almost white paper,  
crackles  
tumbling down  
the sharp gravel road.

Yes, summer will soon  
be over and the rain  
will come.

*-Samina Van Winkle*



## observation

moments like this creep stealthily.

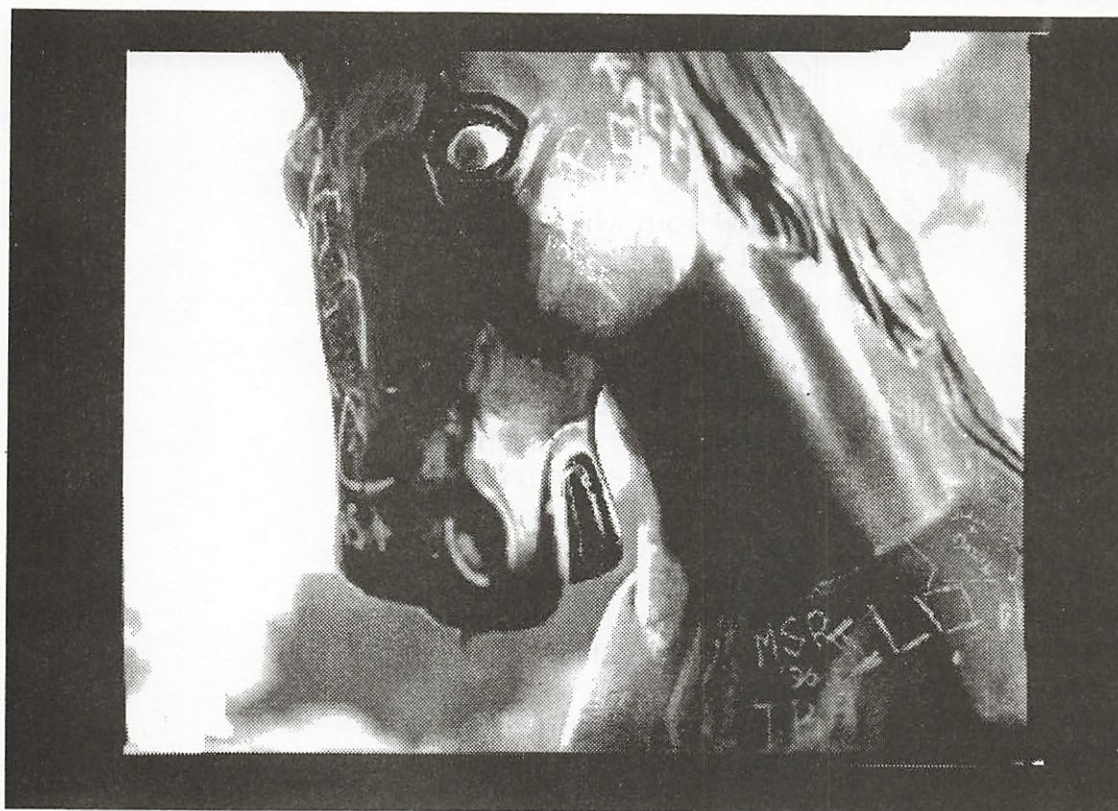
when awake your bony mouth clatters words,  
(rattling, echoing missives) they wrap around me  
like wax on a bottle (the most improbable union.)  
this dazzling xylophone, your face,  
while I am white-knuckled pen  
ready for your siren sleep songs.  
I peer under your eyelids,  
the pupil will not contract  
in light. you are buried too deep.  
(and still you gleam. and gleam.)

I write this a thousand times  
dawn buzzing around my mouth in stale frenzy,  
"I will not write another poem to you,"  
knowing this is a lie.  
the truest lines are just under my tongue,  
you seek them out,  
you are the last roadblock. (rhinestone muse,  
you sling your bones at me)

it is no good to pretend I could leave.

*-Hannah Ingram*





untitled

Robert Berryhill



# YOU WHO NEVER WEEP BUT LAMENT OVER YOUR DRY, CRACKED

## FIELDS; I AM THE FLOOD!

You prefer a contained river  
anonymous in its passing,  
to where you step in and out,  
bearing no witness  
you forget her with each  
drying step.

But I am the Flood!  
I am the Glacier of your angst and  
solid tears, that moves under its  
own weight.

Though exiled to the untouchable  
heights, so you may live in safe  
distance from yourself,  
I fall and rise and reach to  
take you in my muddy arms!

Are you surprised now?  
Uphold the soul, and  
you may sail instead of  
drowning.

I know from where I come,  
and I know where I go,  
My gift is giving,  
my gift is taking,  
I am the Flood -  
I am the Glacier,  
returning to the Ocean, the  
redeemer of all who weep.

But your eyes are sealed,  
and the blue mirror - vast,  
the one who drowns there  
drowns for real in  
darkness,  
face to face with the only  
Light there is.

*-Barbora Bakalarova*





**Death Valley, Dried Streambed**

**John Shephard**



### One Afternoon, Downtown

walked out of a bookshop,  
lastway out found one, a  
bunch of beats.  
a beatbook of photographs.

Dark and faded they were!  
dorky winestained and pressed collars, Jack  
Kerouac standing on a ladder (arms outstretched  
like alcoholjesus reading kicks)  
'cuz beatmen are workingmen,  
not critics.

Black and whites and musty feasts --  
pictures didn't turn out quite right  
though they did though, if you are able to  
disregard quality.

made me disregard color for a second, actually.

(then I saw)

three blue cops talking in front of the gray  
public works building,  
armored car black beetles by,  
so many green trees in the city.  
pink old men rambling, telling red dirty  
jokes,  
there's a one-legged man on a bicycle.

walk, drop  
money that knocks  
into the case of the violinman.

*-Jesse Steinman*



## Shaken

Unbridled convention allowed the idea to remain unnoticed. It does not help that it's disguised simply as a family barbecue. Who's to see the peril found here. We all glance around shiftily. And not because of uncouth wariness do our eyes dart. We gaze at smoke rising, at little Rick jumping, at uncles drinking, at Amanda primping, at Dad grilling. We lay supine and sit hunched. The fire creates bands of charcoal smoke. The wind disturbs the laminar flow. The unseen disrupts things visibly. Wishful thinking won't change nature; old bums on liquor store corners will tell you that just for sitting with them and sipping a beer. We would've paid insurmountably for that advice right then.

When the burgers were being flipped, a family was ten seconds away from being torn asunder indelibly. From formerly in the public restroom, which afforded me the nerve to urinate into a bush, I gazed from behind this deteriorating, bleak, amber rose bush objectively. Had I been in the midst I would've been



untitled

Freeman

likely to interfere with fate. Outside and within I observed a meltdown. Dad's lover, a man, decides to expose their love affair.

My uncles step away from a fag, my mom steps towards a coward, everybody else freezes and stares. Dad's lover stands just behind him while my mom yells at them both. Expletives, obscenities, slaps, curses, damnings, spit, all spewed furiously from Mom. I ran away. I didn't want to know what I knew. I walked fast, and increased my pace. The sky looked odd, so I became fixated on the ground. Pouting with folded arms; I embellished on being disturbed. Soon, I found myself at my old elementary schoolyard. That day I had lost an easy childhood I

never really valued. I crouched into a brown concrete shoe that I had loved to play in during recess. I cried for the first time since I was ten. Sitting there, wishing to be comforted by some fact of life, but finding nothing. I wasn't angry or puzzled. I didn't even look to the heavens and ask why? I just sat there for hours, feeling lost and stony, slowly accepting the terms of selfish fate.

-Simon Manso



## For Lack

I'm in your shit now

I'm in your shackles --

we're mirrors now, aren't we?

Dulcinea and Adonis and back again --

now I'm the hooker

and you're my client, now

I'm the client

and you --

oh,

you're somewhere

on a Crystal plain, somewhere high

in your crystal plane.

I'm all a-hangman frenzied,

flop-sweat and shivers

like when you (come) . . .

I like when you (come) - but

more often, you

just

walk

away.

*-Chad Goodell*



## The Reception

From behind closed eyes Adam listened to the kind of quiet that only comes to busy streets or factory floors or social events like this one. White-noised silence. The sound of one voice over another over another, the shuffle of feet, a human surf riding a gentle hiss of paperware and plastic utensils. In his mind Adam tried to imagine a place he'd rather be. Wished the heavy wood of his chair would fall away beneath him and leave him there.

This was his secret.

After a few minutes, he opened his eyes, nudged his chair back another centimeter from the room's center, retreating further between the drape and his mother's fern. She had told him this would be something like a bar mitzvah, but it reminded him more of a wake. A hundred faces around him, like porcelain masks suspended from the ceiling smiling the same, slight smile and Adam wondered, as he had done before, if they were all second cousins or something. Or maybe it was a Mormon thing, he thought. His mother and father were affecting the same subdued expression and they had only been Mormons for a few hours.

He wished Uncle Isaac were there.

On Thursday night, Adam waited shoeless on the hall carpet without switching on the light and listened to Isaac's voice, a baritone like psalms and the scent of chamomile tea. Isaac had promised Adam's mother he'd come for the reception on Saturday. Only because it was important to her and he was her brother, Adam heard him say. Could hear what he had not said. Wasn't it enough that she married Adam's father (a Catholic)? Enough that she chose to turn her back to tradition? Wasn't it enough? Did she have to renounce her ancestors to become, of all things, a Mormon? Adam would never have said so to his mother or his father but he wondered a similar thing.

Adam didn't like Mormons. Hadn't since his family had first come to this place when he was four. He recalled the circle of hostile faces, tribal and terrifying. Three and four and five year olds, they were beautiful. He remembered the sharp sting of the roadside. He remembered the sticky twang of the spring on the gate to his backyard and the latch too high for him to reach. He picked pebbles from the furrows in his hands, tried not to drip salt into them. He did not go out again from his backyard for months. In the eight years that followed, Adam had only learned to trust one or two of them, and still, never in a group. Uncle Isaac had explained that there were other places in the country where people were mostly Jews or Catholics, and that they behaved as badly as the Mormons Adam had found here.

"They are not bad people," Isaac had told him, "that's just the sort of thing that happens when all those people get together, thinking the same way about so many things. So many things that sometimes they forget there is any other way to think."

By twelve, never having been to any of those places, Adam learned to imitate Mormons. He'd learned early on what to say and do and not to say and do. Their buzz-words, their slangs, their sensitivities. Learning to identify things like which neighborhoods belong to which "wards". Nobody ever asked where you lived; they asked what ward you were in. And if you couldn't tell them, didn't even know what a ward was, everybody knew about it and the whispering and giggling would start. And explaining that you were a Catholic or a Jew, and Adam wasn't really sure that he was either one, could earn you a fat lip on the playground.

And if, during a game of baseball, some kid popped a fly ball in your direction and you lifted your mitt and looked up into the sky and the sun got in your eyes and you missed the ball and it hit you smack on the corner of your eye and gave you three week's worth of black and blue and green and you screamed "Jesus Christ!" they acted like you personally had driven one or two of the nails into his hands.

He knew one cool Mormon, at least, one you didn't have to pretend anything around. One that was better than anything in the whole world.

Through the window, Adam saw Isaac crossing the street mid-way down the block. Dark woolled, black and silver hair. Adam had been sick once as a child, spent several weeks in the hospital. Adam remembered only Isaac's face on the other side of the oxygen tent, eyes rip-



pling like water behind the plastic.

Adam's mother opened the door for Isaac and wrapped both her arms around his neck and kissed his cheek and wept big, quiet tears that she wiped quickly from the corners of her eyes. She was saying something over and over to Isaac and Adam realized then that she had been afraid he would not come.

Isaac was saying something back to her that Adam could neither read nor guess, but from all the way across the room he could see the warm tones of reassurance that were his uncle's alone to sing, humming like a lullaby off his skin, his shirt and tie. He watched it wrap around his mother like the edge of sleep and she smiled a simple, contented smile - all her tears dry. For a moment she was more beautiful than anything Adam had ever seen. Isaac could do that to you, Adam knew.

Isaac turned his head, looked past Adam's mother and Adam knew he was looking for him. He knew Isaac wouldn't come and sit with him and talk until after he'd been introduced to all his mother's friends and made enough pleasant chit-chat that he could slip away unnoticed and give Adam his undivided attention. But he always found Adam first with his eyes, nodding, as if to say, it's you I've come to see.

With the turn of his uncle's head, Adam saw the yamulke he wore today. It was Saturday, after all; a yamulke was no surprise, but it was the particular yamulke Isaac wore that surprised him. He remembered how his uncle's voice softened and thinned when he told him the story, like the night-breeze in the eaves just out Adam's window. He did not quite understand the sadness deep in his uncle's eyes at moments like that, but he could see his uncle then, younger than Adam was now, listening to the crackle of the fire and watching his own grandmother's hands joining four white triangles of cloth with needle and thread for her husband.

Isaac had pressed it into Adam's palms without letting it go. Absently fingered the braided pattern of gold thread, variations on the Star of David embroidered in a delicate chain all the way around. And Adam tried not to shake or cry or think he was touching Isaac's soul or the souls of Isaac's father or grandfather with the pads of his fingers. Afraid he might leave prints in the rough weave. Isaac never wore it except on the most important occasions and Adam was a little surprised that today might be considered such a day.

Their glances met at that moment and Adam felt the instant somewhere between his breastbone and his navel, like a tumbler dropping into place in a lock. And he knew he was going to tell his uncle today. Knew he couldn't keep it from coming out of his mouth.

His uncle turned away then to begin the introductions waiting at his mother's arm.

Adam stared at the wall, at the fern, at the floor. The sun cast the shadow of one frond over another, a pattern like the criss-crossing of cobweb on the floor. He could not help thinking about his secret. Really wanted to think of nothing else at all. They'd met on the first day of school in English class, and talked during lunch and after school. They often rendezvoused at the Y and swam for hours on end. They talked every day, every minute they could find, told each other things they'd never told anyone else in all their lives. Then two weeks ago, the kiss - sudden and lingering on his lips and Adam knew he'd never be the same again. Didn't want to be the same.

He'd been lost in his thoughts for a long time when it happened, just as he knew it would.

"So, Adam, how's it going?" It was his neighbor from caddy-corner across the street. "I suppose you'll be next in line in a few weeks or so, huh?"

Adam didn't bother answering him, except for a guttural noise of disgust that rolled over his tongue, past his lips before he made it out of the room. At the end of the hall, just before he twisted the knob of his bedroom door he heard his uncle's voice.

"I can tell how much you're enjoying the festivities, Adam. Maybe you could tone down your enthusiasm a little." Adam turned around and laughed.

"I can't believe I have to be here for this," he said.

"It's important to your mother," Isaac replied.

"I know, I know. It's just ..."

"Yes. It's a little like that for me, too," Isaac said. "You know, I'm very proud of you."



Having the sheer unmitigated audacity and independence not to jump on the band wagon when your family has jumped before you; that takes something very special."

"It really isn't that big of a deal," Adam replied.

"Oh, I think it is," Isaac said. "I have something for you."

Adam felt the moment shift, watched the season change in his uncle's eyes. He said nothing, waited for Isaac to fill the space curling like ivy over the seconds that passed between them. Isaac reached up then and took the yamulke from his head in one smooth motion and placed it on the crown of Adam's head.

"This is for you," he said. "You are strong, strong enough to wear it. Your mother has forgotten, and she isn't the only one. I've watched it over the years. More and more Jews marrying goyim. More and more boys forgetting the traditions of their fathers and mothers. Maybe someday, in ten generations or twenty, there will be no more Jews and all of the generations before us will be forgotten. But that day isn't today, Adam. This is for you. It's your job, your gift to remember, just to remember, for this generation that we are Jews."

For a moment he was afraid. Who was he? Who was he to remember? A Jew who went to Christmas mass, the son of Mormons; he could not read Torah to save his soul or the souls of the hundred generations and five thousand years of history that was suddenly his to carry. Isaac's face cracked into a wide, happy smile as if he knew what Adam was thinking. He laughed and Adam knew then that it would be all right and that whatever it meant to remember for this generation, he could do it.

"Come on," Isaac said, "let's get some punch."

Adam walked to the dining room proud and happy and a little defiantly, Uncle Isaac a half-step behind. A woman Adam did not recognize stood sentinel over the punch bowl, smiled at Isaac and Adam and stared at the yamulke, said nothing. Adam was grateful, a little afraid of the things he might say in return. Isaac took two cups of punch from the woman, motioned toward the glass doors behind her and Adam followed him out onto the patio.

"You know, Adam, I've been watching you this afternoon?"

"Then you must know I'm bored out of my skull," he complained.

Isaac smiled.

"No, that's not the impression I got. You looked like you had a lot on your mind."

Adam felt his cheeks suddenly warm, took a long drink of bright red punch, said nothing.

"If I didn't know better," Isaac prodded, "I'd say you were a boy in love."

"Well ..."

"Okay, Adam," he laughed, "who is she? Tell me her name?"

Adam thought about this for a moment, said simply:

"It's not a she, Isaac, it's a boy. His name is Travis."

There was no sound for a long moment and Adam looked up at his uncle.

Dead air on his face, no words, no thoughts at all. Then Adam caught the sharp wince in his left eye as if he'd cut his hand on the edge of a page in his favorite book.

"I'm sorry," Adam said instinctively, and for the first time since discovering his secret, was afraid.

"No," Isaac said. "Never. Never be sorry."

But Adam could see the rabbinical banter of Torah and Talmud in his uncle's eyes. He heard the story of David and Jonathon interpreted and reinterpreted and he wasn't even sure if the thoughts were in his own head or his uncle's. Adam was afraid. His vision blurred through the moisture gathering in his eyes like the ripples of a clear plastic tent. Isaac's soft, sad eyes on the other side. The Rabbis opined then and Isaac took him in his arms close, closer than he had ever been to his uncle before.

"Never be sorry," Isaac said again. "God has given all of us something to do, to be, and it is for no man to question what God has made for another. Never be sorry," he said. "I'm not." And Isaac sighed a long low sigh and placed his hand over the yamulke on Adam's head as if to say that was where it belonged.

*-Rowan Morrison*



## **Breakfast**

There's a crayon hate here  
falling from a gurgling mouth  
my words are  
crumbling in colors  
all  
my crumbling wax Jericho.  
The alarm off and you,  
with your horns  
in a morning's debris.  
Halloween orange words  
swimming in  
pen cap drool.

(there are so many no's)

still,  
you're everything  
and a pocket protector  
saving my alert breast  
from the elastic embarrassment  
of a  
single ink spot

*-Sarah Williams*





**Untitled**

**J. David**



## Sentient House Cats

It is late and I must sleep. Once again, I lay restless. Sentient House Cats play long into the night. Their noise is infernal and deep sleep goes unachieved.

Morning has come and I was not properly awoken. Sentient House Cats undeniably unplugged my alarm in their play. Unavoidably, their noise is infernal and yanks me from the precious slumber. I search for some reasoning but am denied; the alarm clock blinks twelve at me.

I am up and head downstairs. Sentient House Cats hide. Suddenly, I am tripped. I fall. I tumble. Nursing my wounds, I look up to find the rubber-squeaky-cat-toy upon the stairs above. They chuckle from a safe distance, hidden from my wrath.

I move, cautiously now, to the kitchen. The clock reads nine-thirty, so I am late. Clutching my precious toaster pastry, I head back upstairs and into the shower. Sentient House Cats are prepared. They move silently to the garage.

In the bathroom, I disrobe and enter the shower. It will be warm and gently coax me into taking on the day. The knob is pulled, but what next? Blasts of icy misery soak my skin and break my will. Climbing out, I am suddenly aware: Sentient House Cats have successfully located the water heater. They chuckle. I cry. I make to towel off but my towel has disappeared. Quietly and swiftly, They stole it while I bathed.

Cold, wet, and naked, I head back to my room. Bed calls to me. "No! Not today Bed! I shall not be defeated by your safe, warm comfort and a pair of Sentient House Cats!"

Clothed, I gather my school things and go back down the stairs (avoiding the rubber-squeaky-cat-toy as I go). The keys, so invaluable, are not perched in their designated place atop the fridge. I am more late. From a safe distance, chuckling is almost audible.

Spares located, wits gathered and spirit regained, I am finally out the door and off to school. The day passes, but Sentient House Cats waste no time. They pull off my bed covers. They dump dirty laundry on my floor. They unplug my lamp and hide my remote. And, just to spite me, They place my keys out in plain sight.

Escaped from the mind control and brain-washing, I have come back to my

home. Somewhere between pulling into the driveway and turning the key, They apply the final touches to Their masterpiece and hide.

Inside the house, I move casually to the kitchen. I am hungry. I am starved. I open the fridge, but no! It is empty. With quick moves of desperation, I find that, somehow, the kitchen itself is void of food. Food is good. I crave it, but am conquered. Saucer by saucer, the milk was emptied. The leftovers were similarly disposed. The cereal and the cookies are not to be found. I call out to them, "Cereal ... Cookies ..."

The search ended, I drag myself, my torn soul, and some bread and water up the stairs, around the rubber-squeaky-cat-toy, and back to my room.

The curtains drawn (hey, Bed, I thought I left those open), it is dark and I cannot see. I flip the light switch but my lamp doesn't wake up. Brave and impetuous, I search for my lamp in the dark. I am a fool. I fall, tripped by bedding and dirty laundry. I moan, smeared by bread and water. Sentient House Cats are amused and proud, for They have done well. But like all truly professional Sentient House Cats, They shall not let satisfaction keep Them from performing their coup-de-grace.

As I clean up my room I think to myself, "Maybe my luck will change. Yes! It will all be worth it if Pretty Patty from school calls. Ha! I still have one last reason to live, you Sentient House Cats."

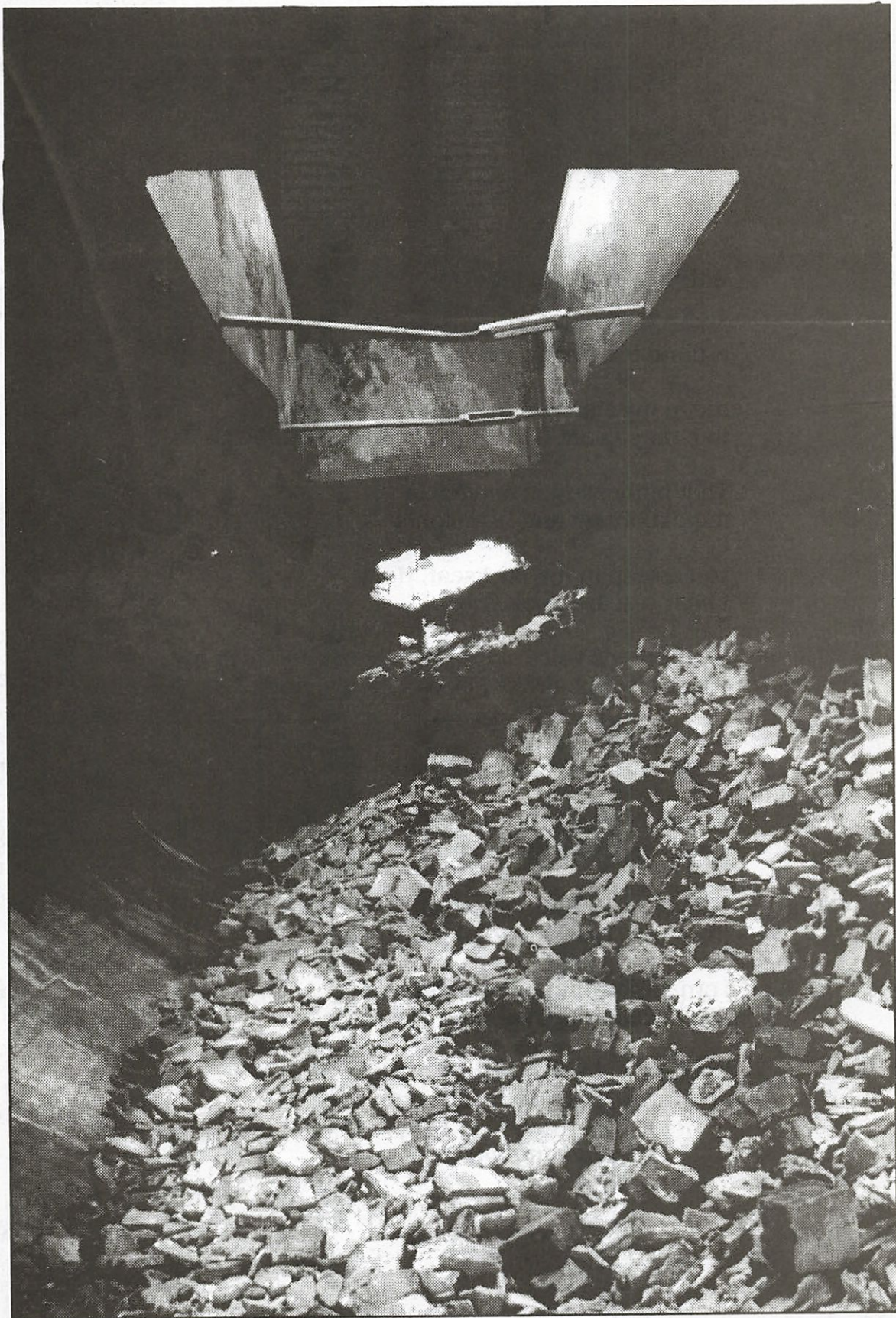
Surprisingly, somewhere across town a pretty girl named Patty is sitting by her phone. Her plan is simple: if he answers, she'll take him with her. She'll end up falling in love with him and in time she'll want to pleasure him in unspeakable ways. Yes, he'll get this one shot ... before she calls Bruno, the part-time model/kick-boxer.

My phone rings. Out of the corner of my eye I see Sentient House Cats sneak in my door. "NO!" A foot race breaks out. I run and grab for the phone but ... alas ... They have defeated me once more, pulling out the phone cord.

It is all over now. I have lost. From a safe distance, They chuckle. Even Bed can't help but laugh. Finally, will shattered, spirit broken and soul destroyed, I begin to die. "DAMN YOU SENTIENT HOUSE CATS! DAMN YOU!"

-Casey Lamm





**Untitled**

**Micky Hulse**



**nothing but blue skies**

Afternoon drew its noose tighter  
around the neck of the neighborhood,

me in my sterile campground, ears ringing  
to hear you are tied up in needles and tubes.

That night slipped and fell in  
tequila breath and headlights

you asleep in the backseat, Holly  
I hear you are awake now.

My mother's voice slopping over me and over me  
blood alcohol, driver killed instantly, none

none of this matters.  
I saw you a week ago, little cat.

nothing remarkable in this meeting, (as if anyone  
would ask) and yet, what were you wearing?

This lapse of memory whistles through  
my lungs, turning red at the edges.

I am suffocating myself with this  
filmy wondering, knowing even this

is a luxury; to lie awake and think  
about you, to know that you are alive.

*-Hannah Ingram*



### **Lake Music for Diamond Peak**

The rhythmic drums against the skins  
of my eyelids  
and prenatal waters pulse,  
flood my ears.

The chanting motorboat distantly supports  
the chorus of waves  
rushing to my shore.

Separate  
from the legions of wind-driven  
battalions,  
that can only spit at me in frustration,  
I fill the air  
with a song of myself.  
The flute, new to me,  
has not yet discolored  
from my body's oils,  
from my measured breath.

Tennessee's red cedar is not yet so full  
of me

that the smoke of summer wildfires  
cannot fill its notes with lamentation.

Between lungfuls,  
I wonder if the plaintive cedar cries  
for the incinerating forests of kin,  
or the captive future of mediocrity  
stretching before itself.

*-David Guy Evans*



### **Almost Drowning (under lights)**

It is mostly inevitable.  
I, window reflection; you, shuttered glass tight.  
From the living room,  
your mother's rocking chairs squeal in noise  
splinters, as if clutching gritty fingers and  
there is nothing to this anymore.

It's not the first time I've said this,  
yet standing still,  
my roots grow up.  
I am so tired  
of watching you bleed,  
of eating the words from your lips.

Memory sneers from dark corners,  
hissing its reminder that women's bodies  
are both harder and easier to speak into.  
Your skin is a clue and  
I see the secrets at the corners of your mouth.

You must have known this was coming,  
thinking twinges your mouth  
open again.

*-Hannah Ingram*



## **Broken**

Sharp enough to draw blood  
edges that sparkle  
a fragment  
of a greater whole  
Forgotten/ mislaid  
Alone on the floor  
of someone else's room

A piece out of place  
impossible to put back  
A little glue might do  
I'd never look right  
light refracts in the cracks  
scars in plain sight  
better off by myself  
Dangerous  
without even trying

Get too close  
I'll cut you open

Has anyone  
ever felt  
like broken glass

*-Kristen James Broder Hansen*



## Goddess

Approaching millennia and she dances,  
Who said: "I am the center,  
My roots is deep,  
I'm the whole story, start-to-end,  
Unraveling, veils fall into the earth,  
Pulling apart concious reality,  
"weren't too concious,  
weren't too real,"  
precisely,  
my sleeping body slacks,  
let go yourself into myself,  
I, easing myself into you,  
Deeper,  
Exploring your realms of passions,  
Beauty,  
Mystique,  
My precious,  
Who art the goddess  
Who art my mother,  
My lover,  
My life-source

*-Charles P. Alvarez*



**silver**

there was an angel  
hidden in my body  
her silver rimmed wings  
covering over her bent head  
at your touch  
wings flared  
head lifted  
silver flashed

*-Bonita Rinehart*



**untitled**

**Chenoa Brady**



## Topanga

Auburn days.  
the wind in the eucalyptus sings  
the ancient,  
sandy palm and yucca sift  
the ocean.

Freeways moan, clenched teeth  
and tight fingers the knots  
of tension  
over citrus grove paradise.

Burrough's hungry ghost paces  
his room at the Asbury,  
muttering Mexican poesia  
to downtown L.A. and listens,  
listens to the ghetto birds  
whirling and hovering over MacArthur Park.

My ghost walks the canyon  
like a breath of night;  
Owl stalks its perception  
Coyote transcends his own cries  
Rattlesnake hides in jasmine;

Beyond that brimstone wreck  
we are the angels of Topanga

*-Sean Patrick Hill*



### With the Grain

If she was the keeper  
of the sea I desired  
The hands of the tide  
would arouse my flesh  
Leave me exposed  
to the elements  
The sand clinging to my skin  
her motion would rock me again

*-Patrick Strautman*



**Pt. Lobos, CA. Kelp**

**John Shephard**



## Bear Dance

i can see myself coming closer to myself being,  
this is what i've asked for,  
    why am i running away,  
giddy like when i was a sixteen year old  
virgin and a "loose" girl put the moves on  
me.  
    i'm nervous,  
    so much that i forget where my home  
fire burns,  
    but i know where it burns and i am  
walking the streets,  
    dancing in the clubs,  
    singing in the bars,  
talking nasty with young and giddy girls,  
and i haven't, not once,  
    come close to forgetting,  
i tell myself that i'm forging ahead,  
i keep searching for you,  
    my soul's heart returning manifest  
physically,  
i know you're somewhere,  
    here,  
        amidst the random melee of our  
society,  
    i get tired of searching,  
i just want to bring you home for the  
night,  
    for the weekend, take us both away  
and return with the concrete of our  
twining,  
    bring you home for the winter,  
i'd rather hibernate with you,  
    than alone,  
    but i'm not willing to compromise  
anymore,  
    even though my loneliness is screaming  
at me like a spoiled child and being weaned of  
it,  
i need to rein in the beasts i've let run,  
hither-to, wild,  
my one, fairest,  
    truest,  
    dearest,  
you continue to tempt me,





## Dimensional Intervals

Tony Sondag

*(continued ...)*

to try my love,  
     pushing me,  
 i do so love you,  
     when i become the place you are,  
 i/we will know it and dance,  
     as we have rejoicingly found the  
 limitless,  
     you and i as one,  
     with these thoughts unleashed,  
 i return to my cave,  
     i will hibernate,  
 come spring,  
     my winter fat consumed,  
 i will be ravenous,  
     i might consume you,  
 i will be consumed by the holy one and  
 remade in the perfect image of myself  
 walking side-by-side with you --

-Charles Smith





## Thirst

Glen Cushing

### Ten Dollar Poem

Of course she didn't show up- -she's an illusion  
She really doesn't exist -- except in my spool of thread  
    Like a cassette tape that you find along roadside  
    Broken! with its intestines strewn along weeds and thistles  
    And you pull out the rest of the guts and drag it along  
    Half wondering what songs he used to sing  
But that's all hearsay I say -- stiff upper lip -- in fits I grit my grits  
Gotta bring hominy to my troubled soul  
Maybe the tartar sauce will help  
    I really didn't know how to tell her that I  
    Wasn't who she had capsized  
The guy she was destroying had already been there before  
    Tough as callused rhino skin  
    His heart chews the nails  
She paints a thumb-sketch masterpiece of cannibalism  
He weaves a basket case  
    "Without sex you'll surely die," spews the media  
    Propaganda bloodshot eye



(continued ...)

"The signs of severe depression: lack of appetite,  
Lack of motivation, lack of sex drive, lack of consumer potential"  
While at the other end of the beasts entrails they bitch about overpopulation  
I have not become bitter -- She bit me  
You can't really blame her though; who wants to spend time with a  
Psycho, manic-depressive, Tourettes syndrome, vegetarian who dreams of  
Life in the slaughter-house -- Who's only aspiration is to make it  
Another day without masturbating or eating cheese  
Girls just wanna have fun  
They don't give a damn about the inner  
Machinations of depraved madman lunatic  
And his dreams of revolution  
Who has been to the end of nowhere  
And gone on a little further for coffee  
She spends her time along emotional rapids  
Avoiding fish hooks  
I spend my time either with her -- or away from her  
She swims from rock to rock  
I drown interminably in her womb  
Wishing life could suck me back without the pain or knowing  
The perplexity is that when she is with me I do know  
A yin yang stops the  
Cling clang  
Of restless pots and pans in my  
Mind's kitchen  
Cooking up thoughts of jealousy and revenge  
My heart is green at Stonehenge  
"By Caesar salad!" I would exclaim passionately to her  
She'd order the clam bisque instead  
It was the opposites of us that attracted  
Opposite ends of the room  
Opposite motivations  
Opposite desires  
Opposite ends of the earth it seems  
But then I was never a stickler for precision  
Although I could measure our love with a yardstick  
Part of me was always sick  
Of her  
But kind of needed her in a funny way -- like when you're breathing or  
Your heart is beating -- or life is fleeting -- or that little lamb  
Bleating as it jumps over your cold body un-dreaming  
But when you look at her you still can't help beaming  
That way she'd make the wall paper a little brighter  
Or the way she'd use a lighter -- a flame thrower  
Burning away my cobwebs and making my eight legs dance  
I'd stand hard in that stance but she'd always knock me over  
And over and over and over  
Until he finally rolled away over the edge  
And it was too late as night falls on Niagara  
She still swims through the scenes  
From rock to rock avoiding fish hooks  
Getting caught up in webs of despair  
All's fair in love and circuses  
And when I rounded the corner there was a parking ticket on my car

-Hobe Rubin



## Diogenes the Busboy

An elephant with squinty eyes, prowling around in a greasy shirt while those goddam sirens and bells and shrieks were howling away - 'Vic' we called him. And we were a little afraid not to call him 'Vic', whether we admitted it to ourselves or not. Vic would scowl and cast you a fierce glare and then sneer. What glee he must have felt in inspiring those oily sixteen-year-old trainees with terror. He poked at the waitresses and made clowns of his own managers. In that crude and humiliating sphere of restaurant work, he had a cynical charm that took time to appreciate.

One day, when the foul concrete kitchen was steamy and backed up, and the parlor was filled with gluttonous, ugly white people who had a combination of pineapple sauce and peanuts sliding over their lips and piles of cold fries and half-finished banana splits sitting before them, Vic refused to work. The stacks of dishes built up while he smoked at the table in the back and laughed at the inability of Rolando, the supervisor, to control him. "Yeah, watch me move," Vic barked at Rolando's pleas, causing the cowardly supervisor to walk away without saying a word. Later on, he caused a fountainboy to break a parfait glass, he scared some old ladies closer to death by 'accidentally' shutting of the lights, and he confronted someone's criticism by yelling out, "I didn't hire these fucking idiots."

In my servile, bitter state at that place, I often felt hatred for Vic. But that didn't last. Holding clumps of other people's refuse, spit, half-chewed food, and dirty napkins, and working right in the shit and inhaling that stench, how can a person not begin to think about this feudal hierarchy of ours that forces decent human beings to slave away detached and alienated from their work and deliberately breaks their wills and dreams? Under those oppressive conditions, Vic's cynicism became an anthem. It was a song of uncompromising honesty. Far from angering me, each stab he made at petty illusion and 'work ethic' sent a shiver down my spine.

May he go on biting the hand that is cruel to him. May his grumbled curses become shouts. May his thick arms shatter that ice-cream establishment built on low-paid sweat rather than sugar. May his angry simmer become a flame that rages out of control.

*-Eric Nelson*



# CONTRIBUTORS:

## CHARLES P. ALVAREZ-

from Southern Spain, Born 541 B.C. Born as Carlos Alvarez, wanderer, mixes w/ gypsy / poor folk as well as the elite. Sees beyond classes and "isms" realising people are people, and damn wierd at that. Now lives in Eugene.

## BARBORA BAKALAROVA-

"I feel I am constantly in and out of This World, below and above This World, remembering and forgetting This World. It's not a bad state after all, if one has good timing."

## ROBERT BERRYHILL-

is a *Denali* contributor.

## CHENOA BRADY-

is a *Denali* contributor.

## GLEN CUSHING-

is a *Denali* contributor.

## J. DAVID-

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## CHAD GOODSELL-

will be accepting submissions for a cool pseudonym throughout the year. Palindromes encouraged vigorously.

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## SEAN PATRICK HILL -

wishes he was a country gentleman, but for now is living, working and writing shamanistic poetry-songs in Eugene, Oregon.

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is a *Denali* contributor.

## HANNAH INGRAM-

spent a year in New York at Sarah Lawrence College studying poetry, french and history. Returned to Oregon with an expended sense of self and observation. She is now enjoying wallowing in her smog-free environment.

## MICHAEL JENKINS-

is a poet living in Grants Pass with his wife, Susan, and their two children, Noah and Emma. His work has appeared in *Rogues' Gallery*, *Oregon East*, *Fireweed*, and *West Wind Review*.

## CASEY LAMM-

is a *Denali* contributor and staffer of epic proportions.

## SIMON MANSON-

born in Brasil, raised in Chicago, reached adulthood in Oregon. Became self-aware in California, and started writing one summer in Wisconsin when he was fifteen.

## ROWAN MORRISON-

is a *Denali* contributor.

## ERIC NELSON -

"It was I who killed the old woman money-lender and her sister Lisaveta with a hatchet and robbed them!"

## AMELIA ARIANNE REISING-

is a lost cause nookin por nub.

## BONITA RINEHART-

is far too modest to reveal anything about herself.

## HOBE RUBIN-

poetry to me is like these little words written on paper that sound good together.

## SEVEN-

tells his two dogs, plus all of his dead dogs, hamsters and goldfish, that he loves them, every night before he goes to bed. His friend thinks that's neat.

## JOHN SHEPARD-

is a *Denali* contributor.

## ARTHUR SMID-

is a *Denali* contributor.

## CHARLES SMITH-

is a divorced father of one, working as a butcher five days a week. He likes to hike with his dog Sam.

## TONY SONDAG-

was born and raised in Southern Illinois.

## KATHRYN STEADMAN-

is a *Denali* contributor.

## JESSE STEINMAN-

is a *Denali* contributor.

## PATRICK STRAUTMAN-

was born but has not died yet.

## SARAH WILLIAMS-

"I stumble on biographical statements because I don't know how to put a statement of life on paper."

## SAMINA VAN WINKLE-

has an M.S. in Food Toxicology from Oregon State University and has an interest in creative writing which she is pursuing at LCC.





*untitled*

*John Shephard*

**fallen as the morning**

you were an angel of light  
dark demon  
my lucifer  
the hooded executioner  
mesmerizing cobra  
i should have run  
as fast as i could  
away from you  
but i have stayed  
to feel the angel's wings  
seduce the devil  
set fire to the sword  
lock eyes with the serpent  
dance on the point of a pin

*-Bonita Rinehart*