

Denali

Fall '98



• Lane Community College •

FROM THE EDITOR

The theme was "Denali Exposed", but we had fewer nude artworks submitted than in the five previous terms I've been with the magazine. Sort of surprising.

Most people chose to bare their souls, let out all the secrets and emotions they'd rolled up in their summer carpets and hidden away from foot-traffic. We're featuring the dream-like photography of James D. Sherman in this issue, the gauzy series of prints exposing the artist's unique vision.

And then there's an incredible variety of writing from people in different walks of life, from Denise Cameron's celebratory "Smile Rising" to Sabrina Forkish's exploration of the second coming of Christ and Rob Grant's "Her Funeral", which somehow manages to make you cry without even once mentioning tears.

It's a beautiful piece of work, this magazine, put together through the efforts of dozens of people, from the artists to the production crew to the printing staff at Oregon Lithoprint.

So enjoy this issue of *Denali*, pass it along to your best friend, your mom, your dog (yes, Dorothy, he can read. I've seen him proofing copy when you nodded off). Expose the whole world to *Denali Exposed*.

— the editor

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Denali

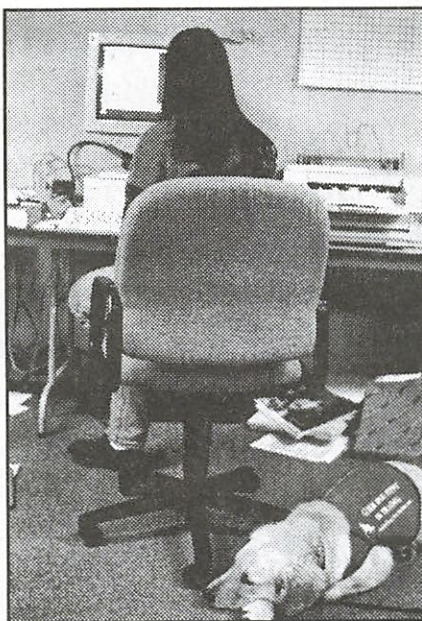
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Fall 1998

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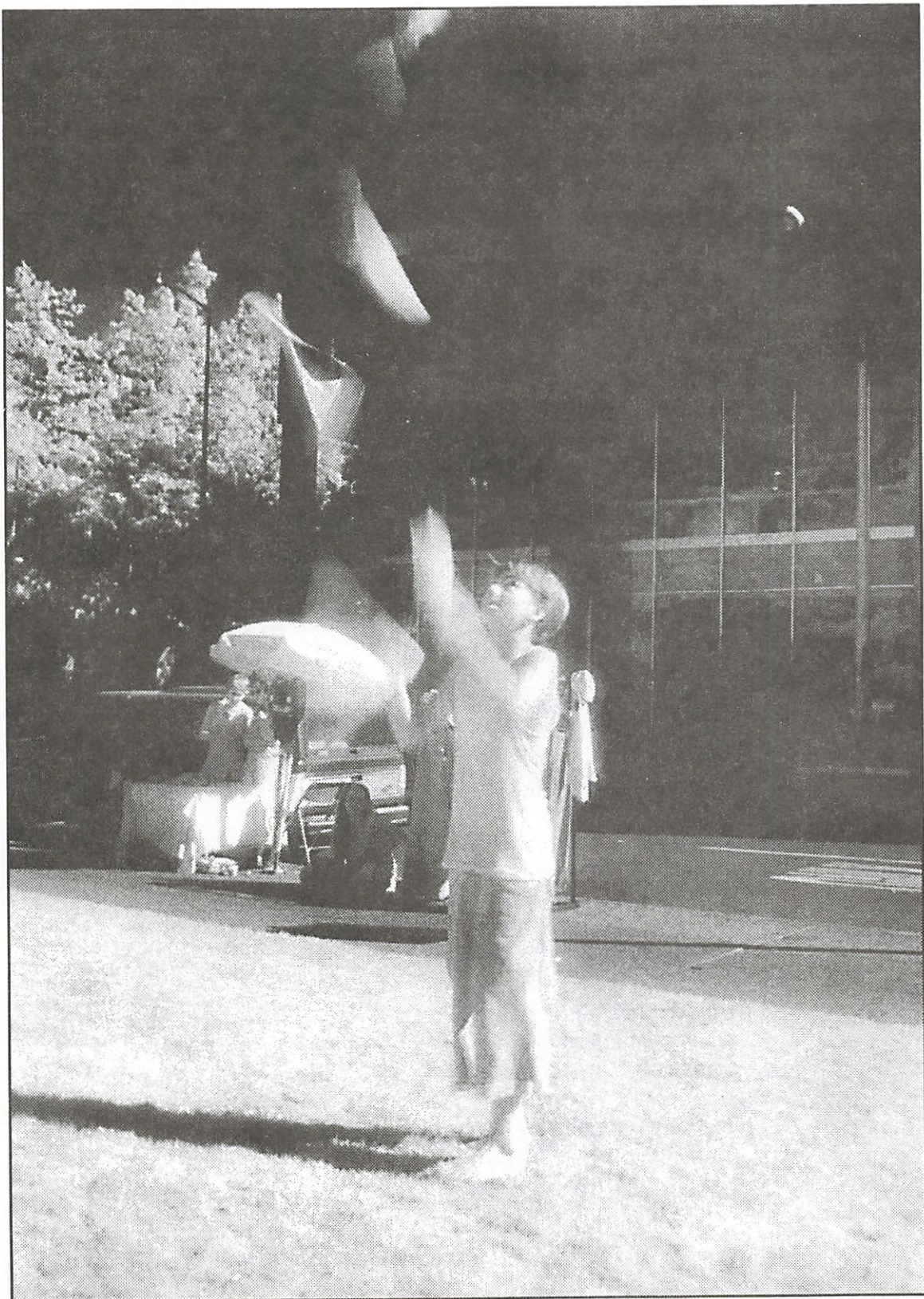


Avatar, the Guide Dog
Puppy, helps Marleena :)
with production.

Photo by Dorothy Wearne

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	BACKCOVER



Boy Juggler

James D. Sherman

Smile rising

I'm drunk on
chocolate frosting and
Vanessa Williams' jazz
10:15 in the morning
dancing naked in the bathroom,
down the hall,
and into my own room —
bass vibrating the dried flowers
on the wall.

I'm supposed to be in the shower
getting ready for item one
on today's agenda
but the only thing that matters is:
no one is home.

So I
eat frosting for breakfast
play music too loud
and display my body
for my own enjoyment,
and the possible amusement
of my cats.
A veritable freedom fest:
me.
at home.
alone.
at last!

No one told me in the delivery room
that this sort of morning
would qualify as ecstasy,
or just plain necessary
to my survival.

So many things I was never told,
but I was born anyway;
kicking and screaming and dancing,
whirling naked under the light of my own smile.

— Denise Cameron

One to Destroy

tiptoeing through life
without shoes on
gets me searching for
clunky shoes
that make me trip
and fall
on the floor
in desperation
and i just want to be
me
the trash is full of regrets
that i can't rid of
maybe if i wear the big shoes
i can be loud
and cover up the trash
and tomorrow i can be someone else
to destroy

— *Jessica Parsons*

untitled

Broken strand of time
Pushed against the belt
the limit
the jagged rocks
of uncommon ground
yet, I've tread on this before
feeling it's been in my bones
Hated the time when Anger went flying through the air
Bending — soft pink — innocent to ignorant
soft pink of unmolded minds and uncharted waters and waves
He insists the feelings of guilt and anti-compliance
Jabbing
Loathing and Misunderstanding
in my twisted guts of unsure
Duties and wrinkled Responsibilities
Swerving and Careening around the worn rugs and metal arcs

— ΔSjt

untitled

Even though the single street light was flickering almost a block away, he felt spotlighted, almost like huge flashing arrows were drawn in the air, pointing at them. She, on the other hand, was so calm, the cigarette hanging loosely from her lips ...

He wished she wouldn't smoke, but didn't have the guts to tell her not to. What to say? He wiped his nervous hands on his pants legs.

She flicked the cigarette out her window and leaned over towards him. Without a word she scooted closer on the seat, took his hand and put it on her thigh. He turned his head slightly away and she kissed his neck, then without looking, unzipped his fly.

His consciousness shifted suddenly, and he knew only the throbbing, hot pounding, so much stronger than his heart could bear for long, his pulse racing out of control. Somewhere, under water a million miles away, he heard her murmuring, empty sounds; they might have been endearments, curses, encouragements (*the soundtrack so much slower than the video*) and finally she reached inside and grabbed him. He felt her clench his (*heart, guts*) throbbing shaft and squeeze; then freedom, the cool air against his heat and her moist breath.

As he drove away from her standing on the corner he felt the brand, felt the mark on his flushed cheeks, and for the first time he noticed no one ever meets your eyes, as they look at (*pretend to be fascinated by*) the scenery.

— Larry Good

a moon poem for the bell boy

morning sits on my front porch —
i think she's tired, fading quiet
into afternoon ...

(The Moon: remember the cheshire cat smile
from the steps of a church?

3 more days and he was home
and She was spilling over the edge
of halfway —
like a cupcake baked in a bowl, glowing there
making me think of things that are
almost done —

now She's reached her climax and begun to
eat away at herself
fading back into a field of
dismantled constellations —

still, mornings after six She floats so pale
keeping her eye on me ...)

and morning is drinking her coffee
slowly from a white mug
the steam rising around her face
pulling herself into those first hours

she's naked at dawn, like me, awakening

and remember?
you said i was beautiful
and i thought maybe you were seeing the moon
through the blinds
or maybe the morning
walking up the path to my door

— mia lai

untitled

She wore her tattoo
like a badge
(maybe a membership card)
prob'ly had a secret knock to get in,
which I'll never know
'cause she freaked me out
with her Forked,
I mean Pierced
tongue
and the metal in her nose.
It turned me on
in a weird kind of way,
but she looked across at me;
(*and somehow down*)
I didn't know what to say ...

— Larry Good

untitled

in my opinion
your opinion
is her opinion
and her opinion sucks
because she fucks around
and never leaves town
all black and brown
in her rustic ball gown
that she wore to my funeral,
and spit on her mother
because she cannot offer
any intelligence on a conversation
she licked her lips and her dessert plate
but before you hate her
or make any assumptions
you must first know
she goes to church once a month
on a Friday
to form morals and community service
which is a pretty high price, considering,
considering it's not her, it's not her at all!
but she who for the grit and the grass
shot the preacher in the ass
not worth mentioning
but just in case you wanted to know
(he can't smell bacon — because his son
tried to suffocate him one snowy December morning
I guess he wasn't pleased with his Christmas present
the ungrateful rotten bastard.
the dad was calm
and only broke his left arm)
but he, we always knew he was full of charm
and compassion
for the stray lambs he was
always leading off to heaven for his
favorite Lord

— ΔSjt

a deeper sort of sex

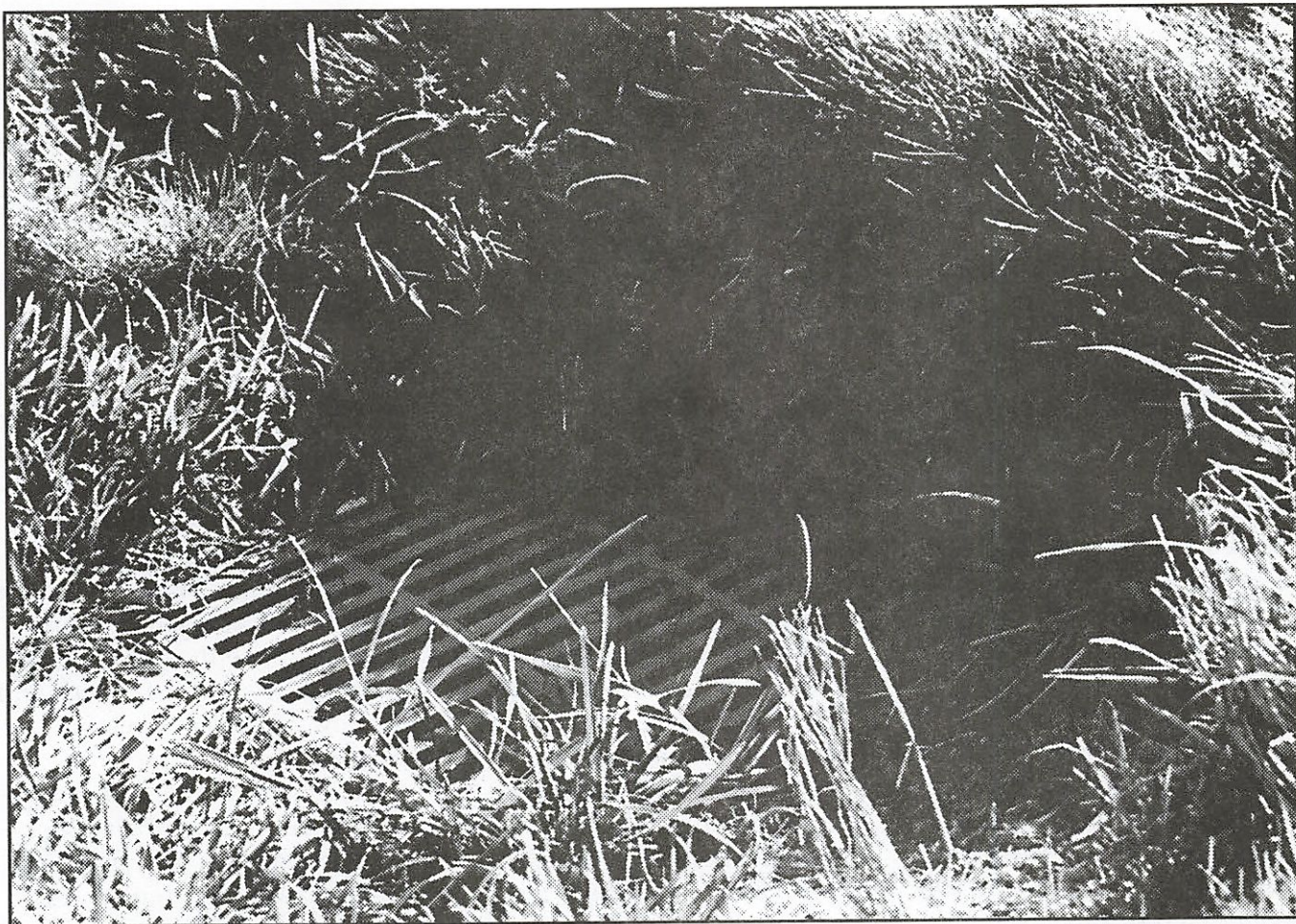
i want to throw my
sex on
slammed down
for you
to
play with
have your way with
me as i am
i can be that
little girl
or
the DOMINANT WOMAN
with my arms pinned down
and fear in my eyes
with my legs spread wide
the harshness reality
is me
as a woman
and you
as the man
with your body
touch smooth
and the skin to skin
stripped bare
to the nakedness
of the evening sky
i want you
and
i crave you
to hold me
as i am
and if you want to
blame me
for your
latest
wet dream
go ahead
and give head
just keep
an open mind

— *Just Me*

Poem from the Toilet

Silence finally
Isolated by a 3' by 5' cell
The action outside is liquid and quick
The mathematician calculation at which
The rate per grams per volume times
6*10 to the 23 his piss falls
Against the porcelain
Washes his hands frantically and retreats
Then the business major
Coming to check the stock reports of
His zits and hair
Listening to the trickle down economics
Of others around him
It's funny the things you'll think of
When bored and constipated.

— Adam Louie



untitled

James D. Sherman

Escape from Arena Rock

And so we waltz into this place, the patron and I, still not so sweetly imbrued with the caustic resin of CK and fresh from the seething, homogenous puree of the pop blender. I needed a beer.

Now, on this point I must not be misunderstood. Pop concerts, however inane, can nonetheless be some of the most downright colorful experiences there are to be had. Substanceless? Arguable. Crass? Mostly. But boring, almost never. And besides, a free ticket to just about anything short of the Crossfire Ministries I welcome with open arms. If for no other purpose than a window into a strata of society I'm not usually privy to. OK wait, I take that back about the Crossfire tickets. Jesus, TV and rock n' roll forever.

– Some great things about pop shows –

- \$5.25 beer
- surcharges
- stars demanding that you, "come on and sing it with me!"
- ubiquitous chemical amusement aid
- multimillion dollar light shows that make for a smashing good time

– Sticking points of the pop aesthetic –

- guitars that never go out of tune
- intelligible(if innocuous) lyrics

(continued on page 14)

(continued from page 13)

— seats so far from the stage that you're unable to fully appreciate the spasmodic, pouting charisma of the star(s).

Still, despite the contagious euphoria of watching the people in front of you trip the light fantastic with the deftness of Steve Martin in "The Jerk," even the most diehard people watcher must eventually beg quarter, and go forth in search of substance. So there we went, my ticket/ride benefactor and I, not knowing shit about the Rose City, and off to find a rip-snorting bar with some comfortably mediocre music. I drove.

"Just head downtown," the benevolent companion said, gesturing ambiguously in the assumed direction, "We're bound to find something." And so it was that after wending our way through the wet streets of Old Town, rejecting several steak houses, card-rooms, and glass and chrome yuppie bars, conspicuously devoid of ashtrays, that I fixed on a refreshingly drab edifice, juxtaposed merrily between a high-polish cigar bar to port, and the bellicose one way windows of a security firm on the left. Pulling the benefactor's little red car rapidly to the curb, we stepped excitedly into the November drizzle. However, approaching the buildings poster-covered vestibule I stopped, dead in my boots. This was no bar. This was in fact, an establishment of the infamous, and historically romanticized "saloon" persuasion. What's more, as I stood transfixed abeam this anachronism, I made yet another yet startling discovery. On through the

solid double doors, and dirty casement windows, into the gauzelike wet night like a clarion call to music lovers everywhere, came the unmistakable straining crackle of a truly shitty PA. We quickened our pace, I.D.s at the ready.

Once inside, I made a quick survey of the room's interior, taking in the few obvious regulars at the bar, the stage area, (capacity crowd of about twelve) and a huge wall mural of a provocatively disheveled, axe-wielding girl with the ever important cigarette stuck in her headstocks strings. "Excellent," I said, rubbing my hands mischievously.

On stage, the band "Milwaukee's Best All-Stars," were engaged in the time honored tradition of, "turn on all the toys while the drummer sets up to see if they still work." So I made use of the interim, elbowing up to the bar to make my contribution to the evening's expenses. Drinks in hand, we adjourned ourselves to the stage area, succeeding in choosing perhaps the most *unstable* table in all of Portland. Almost immediately I made the mistake of touching it, loosing 20% of my drink onto the sticky Formica top. The benefactor laughed, and I cursed what was obviously strategic sabotage. No doubt part of a well organized conspiracy on the part of the owners to boost drink sales. At least there were ashtrays.

Back on the stage, one of the guitarists, a grinning swarthy "young adult" in a Captain EO T-shirt was trading lines of a dirty

limerick with his friends at the nearest table, generating peels of laughter which threatened to upset their equally unwieldy table, as it swayed dangerously on mismatched legs. Meanwhile, the drummer seemed to be finishing the last of the esoteric fine tunings to his set. I lit a smoke, sensing that at last music in a finer form was imminent. As the fates would have it, I was not disappointed. Unshipping a pair of (at least) one-ton drumsticks, which resembled more billyclubs than utensils of rhythm, he proceeded (and with much fanfare) to assail the skins in a whirlwind of show-offishness as yet unequaled by any of the other members. "Animal!" one of the friends yelled from their drunkenly listing table. It was an apt, and certainly faltering analogy that I concurred with wholeheartedly. Especially in light of the fact that after the catcall, he bit off (no kidding) a piece of one of the sticks and spat it at the guy. At any rate this seemed to precipitate some sort of start to their set. Sticks clicked in a syncopated preamble, which tossed them headlong into a blistering punk-rock frenzy of angular, discordant verve, tinged with the incomprehensible melancholy vocal of the erstwhile lymricist.

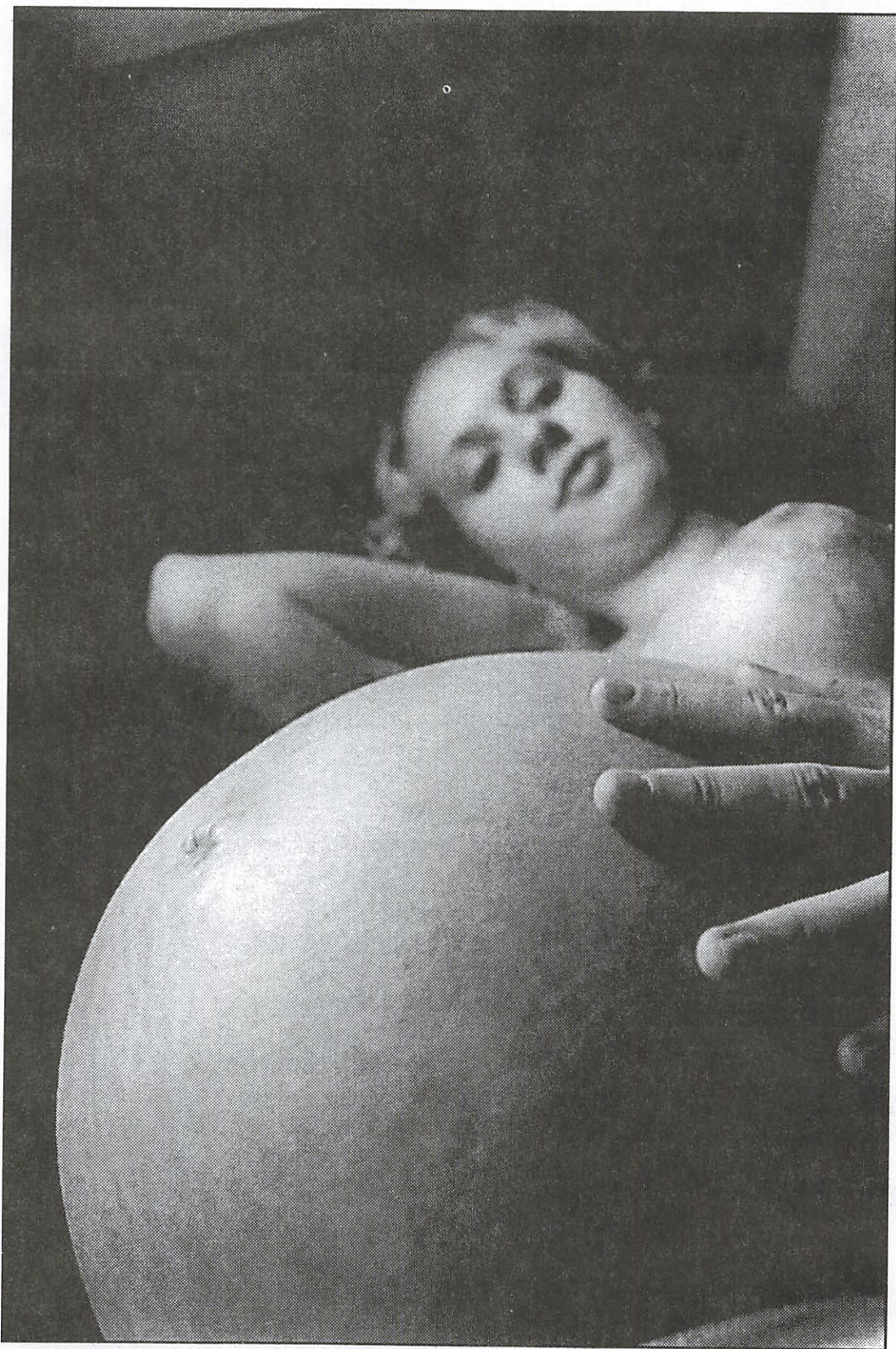
"Fuckin rock n' roll," yelled my patron over the din, between long pulls from her beer. "Yea," I strained back, "Arena Rock eat your heart out. This is ancient, this, is mystique!"

— Drew Bolster

glow

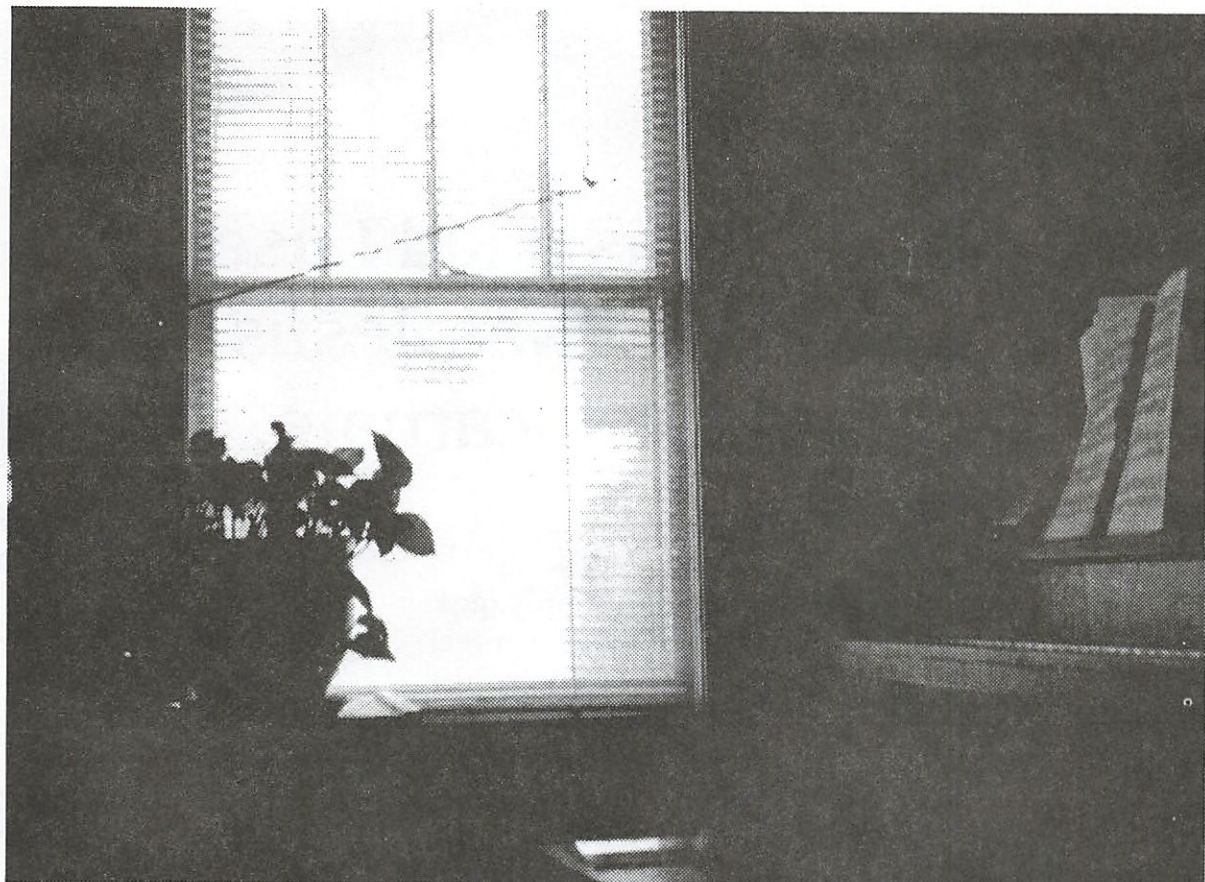
watching your shiny glow
but i know about the dull spots
and all your black holes
(the night rides in on her apaloosa
the pony sounding like stars)
in the old days your comets hit me
but now loving you feels
like falling down stairs
maybe a little rugburn on my forehead
from the bottom step rubbing me there
sometimes i think i've broken something important
but usually i remember
it's just you
and sweep the pieces out of view
i've always paid too much attention to you
spent too long peeking over your fence —
i'm tired now of spying on your secrets,
of keeping an appointment book of your love affairs —
i want my self back now;
you've been stretching it out here and there
wearing holes through my favorite places.
(it never fit you right; we both knew it from the start.)

— mia lai



untitled (world)

Mickey Stellavato



tripp st.

amelia arianne reising

The Next Messiah

"In a way, you know, people are kind of like onions."

"How do you mean?"

"Like, everyone has all these layers and layers hiding their center. When you try to get through to them there sometimes seems to be so many skins you have to cut through to get to the heart."

"Onions have no heart."

"That's another thing. You keep peeling to find some prize, but really you are just cutting away all the good stuff."

"You read that somewhere, didn't you?"

"What's the matter? Don't you agree?"

"Just keep slicing. You're having problems with Brian again I gather."

"What? Well, yeah, but that wasn't intended to be a hint. I don't want to talk about it anyway. Ughh! This onion is making my eyes water."

"Good, I'm sick of hearing it. Get started on that tomato, will you?"

"But he seems so helpless sometimes, you know?" It's hard to stay away. Ow! I keep jabbing my finger. You know what tomatoes

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When I was a kid I used
to think I was Jesus
Christ reincarnate.



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always make me think of Eden."

"That was an apple. God, you're getting juice everywhere."

"I don't know, maybe I read the Bible once while I was eating spaghetti, but whenever I think of tomatoes, I feel a bit of religious inclination."

"A religious inclination?"

"Yeah. Have you ever thought you were the second coming? You know, the next Messiah?"

"That's ridiculous."

"I don't think so. I've always thought it was pretty normal. When I was a kid I used to think I was Jesus Christ reincarnate."

"But you don't still, do you?"

"Actually, sometimes I do — on a different level. Like, for example, I sometimes feel I owe it to the world to stay in school, because one day I'll

do something simply ingenious. Don't you ever feel that way? Like you're just sitting on the verge of genius? When I was a teenager the biggest force in curbing suicidal tendencies was that to kill myself would simply be an awful sin. I mean, not killing or suicide in general, but me you know?"

"So you think you're the next Jesus Christ?"

"Well, yeah, sometimes. I mean, really, who's to say I'm not? Jesus didn't do anything miraculous until he was thirty. I still have ten years to go. Who can tell what might change during that time. Are these slices thin enough?"

"That is simply ridiculous. Yeah the tomatoes are fine. Do we have any peppers?"

"I think so. I've known some other people who thought that way, which I guess means I'm not the next Messiah. Unless we all are. Maybe you are since you

have the modesty. But, you know, I don't think Christ could really have been a modest, humble guy. I mean, really, he was walking around performing miracles, I don't think even he could say, 'Aw, shucks guys, it's just my job.' We've got two green peppers. You want me to cut them?"

"Yes, please. Of course he knew he was special. No one is going to deny that."

"I think it's even more than that. I mean, I really think he got a kick out of being in the spotlight. Everyone loves him, everyone wants to get a chance to just touch the hem of his robe, it really can't get much better than that."

"Not everyone loved him in his time."

"And not everyone does now, but that's not the point. What I'm saying is that everyone wants to change the world because they want to get the credit. *They* want the

credit for *themselves*. I wouldn't try to find a cure for cancer because I wanted to save millions of lives. I'd do it because people would love me forever."

"You'd find a cure for cancer for yourself?"

"Well, yeah, I mean, I'm certainly not looking to save a bunch of strangers out of the goodness of my heart. I don't even know most of them. I just want to feel good about myself. Do you really think there are any unselfish acts?"

"Plenty."

"No, no, think about it. For example, when you die, do you want people to be happy or sad?"

"What do you mean?"

"Well, one thing that bugs me about dying is that eventually people won't be hurting that I'm gone. I want people to hurt forever. Otherwise how would I know they cared?"

"I really don't see your point."

"If people are upset, they obviously aren't upset for me. I mean, I'm not suffering. I'm just gone. For all they know, I'm fine with being dead. So they're selfishly upset. Which is flattering if you think about it. They want you alive, because there's something missing for them when you're gone. You really meant something. Isn't there a saying that the best way to measure your impor-

tance is by the number of people who show up to your funeral?"

"So you're saying you want people to suffer because of you?"

"Well, yeah, I guess you could put it that way."

"I can't believe it. I wouldn't wish unhappiness on you in any circumstance."

"No, really, think about it. If you died, and you looked down on a lot of people singing and dancing at your funeral, can you really tell me you wouldn't be seriously offended?"

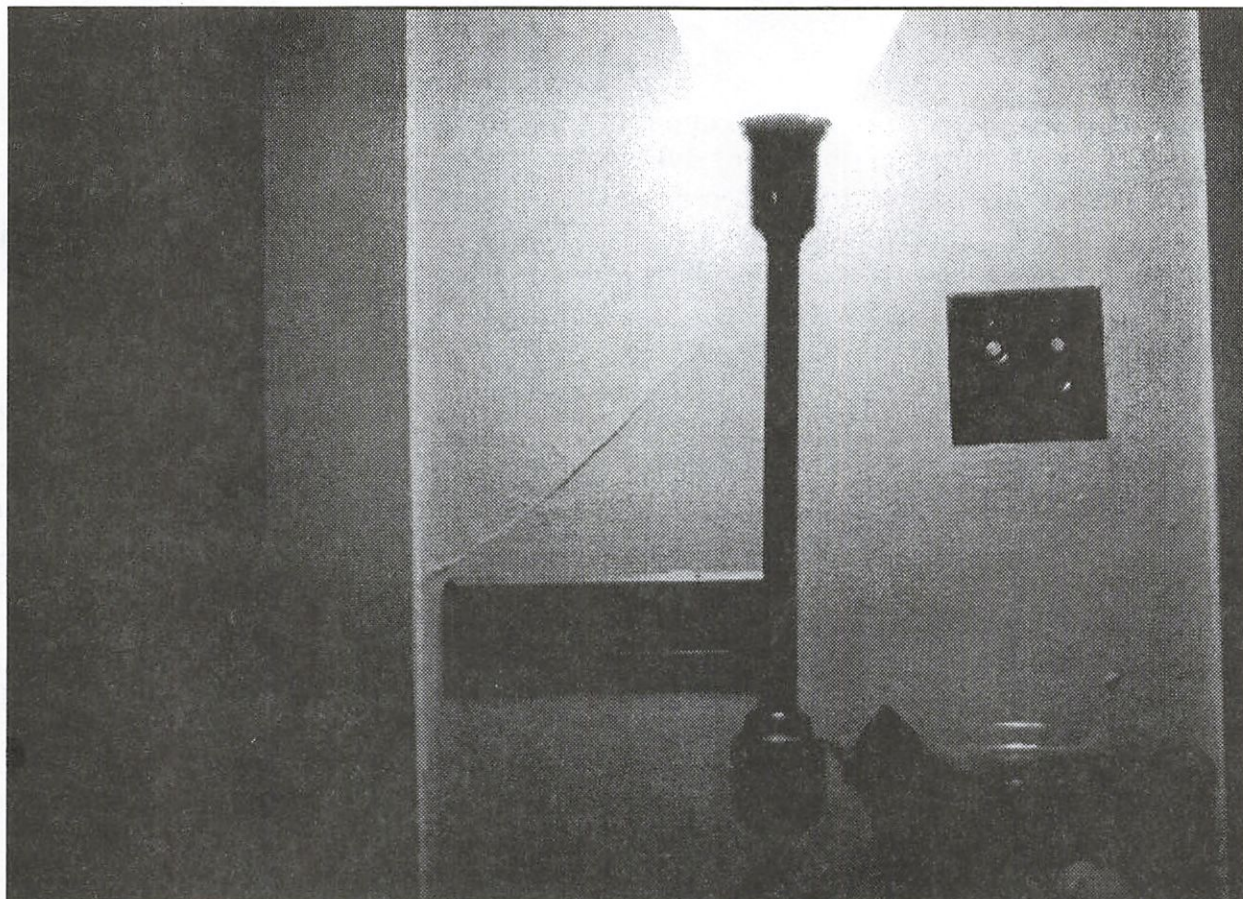
"God, just shut up and cut the peppers."

— Sabrina Forkish

“

For example, when
you die, do you
want people to be
happy or sad?

”



lucent

amelia arianne reising

Mobil Villa

Dirt poor on the edge of town
Waiting for God in sweats —
beer poems, grafted to air
on the protean threads of hope
Less of a journey than a long,
slow sickness tinged primer gray
with unrealized ambition
Let it end here, as if
I never was

— *Drew Bolster*

MuseDog

It came again last night
barking fluorescents on my back porch

Its slimy nose dripping
ignorant youth sensing something
A cat perhaps
or maybe

A lie

GO HOME I ordered

I AM It replied

OR I'LL
KICK YOU
IN THE SNOUT

I just stood there

It just stood there

We just stood there

Each not entirely comfortable
with just standing there

Marooned on the strange moons
that spin in the spectral galaxies
of eyes

In the camaraderie
of enemies

Then

noticing a twig
that lay at my feet

I smiled slightly at It
and It at me before heaving

the stick into

infinity

with all the strength of dreams

It bound by nature
to dumbly give chase

Leaving me to stand
naked in the night

Soon

to be blinded
by morning

— Rob Grant

California Sun

The California sun burns overhead.
I long for you.
Warmth and coolness, a longing unique.

You hang above an ocean of absurdity.
Above life and death,
You are what I search for,
Pure sun.

I long for you as masses do,
Scurrying along;
In need of something they can not define.

California Sun.
A vision of crystal clarity.
Hopeful myth, what I need,
What I search for, I would die
For nothing but you.

— *Eli Trompeter*



untitled

James D. Sherman

THE CALLING

There is a place I go when I need to be alone, yet more than alone. If my parents knew I went there they would be upset. They would tell me it is because caves are dangerous places with unstable walls that crash down and smother in blackened horror or because a stranger might find me there and harm me. I know that is what they think they believe, but not what they really mean.

They are afraid that if I am alone in a quiet place, with nothing to do but be I will think; I will be different. They are afraid that if I am alone in a small way I will realize we are all alone in a much larger way.

So I tell them I am riding my bike, practicing

with one group of friends or another for the summer races. It is not entirely a lie; I do ride my bike to the cave, and home again. I will not win any race though.

In the cave I have found a room, curled in upon itself. It is much lighter there than one would expect since it is so far inside the earth. The walls in my secret room are coated with some shimmering material, a pale yellow in color. When I put my hand near the wall that first day in the cave the yellow seemed to shudder, as if even the threat of my touch was painful to it. As if the light were a living thing.

I cannot harm a living thing when it does no

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harm to me, nor is needed for my survival, so I am careful to walk clear of the wall when I enter the room, and sit in the center.

Something I have noted about the wall, about the shimmering light — it does not glow at exactly the same radiance all the time. Some days the light is dim, hushed and muted, and I can see myself as if in a fog. Other days it glows so fiercely I almost think I could see through to my bones. And sometimes the room is warm, as if the wall were a fire burning gently, and sometimes the room is cool, as rooms in caves are expected to be.

I know it is not prudent to go there too often. My absence from the communal events of our lives would be remarked upon if I did not make at least a show of participating. This way, when I am absent I can use my excuse of practicing for the summer races, or let one group think I am at some activity with another group. I could not bear to be prevented from going to the dark cave and sitting in my secret room where the walls are light itself. And I know that there is no one who would understand my need to be there in that quiet place, just to be.

Everyone I know is terrified of solitude, a terror showing itself in nervousness whenever they do not have another person

close at hand. So great is this terror that we are never quiet when we are together, but always must talk or sing or shout. If someone is unfortunate enough to be alone, the viewscreens automatically come on and synthetic "friends" appear to share the activities of their days, and ask about the day of the viewer. There are pauses, as if to give the viewer a place to answer, as if the answer will be listened to. Some remark like "Very interesting," is made by one of the "friends" and then one of them suggests activities which will fill up the hours and not leave one so lacking in things to do. All of those activities involve being in a group.

I ache for my time in the cave, my time in my secret room. When I am with the groups of people I feel more alone, more disconnected than when I am in my fortress of solitude. At games I shout and cheer with the rest as a spectator; I run and ride and pant with the other contenders. I am as loud as any, as close to the pack as any.

I long for the quiet.

I long for the hours, hours stolen and too brief, when I can sit, all to myself, not touching, not being touched. In the secret room no one's sleeve brushes against mine, no one's breath stirs the million filaments of hair on my body. In my secret room I am myself, whoever that self may be, and

not the activities I am signed up for, not the organizations I am rostered in.

They have told me I may not return to the cave.

I was not careful enough.

Greed for need made me careless, when I told myself I was being cautious, when I told myself I was denying myself all but a tithe of what I needed so much. My absence from the groups was noticed, was remarked upon. Even my answers to the viewscreen "friends" did not have the right content. Of course, I did not mention the cave, but there was something lacking in my enthusiasm for the activities I did tell about. Truly, I did not wish to journal my life for synthetic images with programmed responses. I should have been more careful, more like the others, at least in appearance.

My parents gently expressed their concern for me, their disappointment that I had concealed something from them, lied to them. They wanted to know "why?"

I had some sense. I did not say "Because I long to be alone; I thirst for it like one who has traveled on foot through the desert."

I replied instead that the cave was so interesting I forgot about other things. They asked me why I did not tell someone about it.

Almost I said, with some

truth, that I didn't think anyone else would want to go there. I am not entirely a fool though, and I said instead that I wanted it to be a surprise, that I was exploring the cave, and planned to take my friends and them to the cave and show them what I had discovered.

That answer pleased them and lessened their worries for my oddity a little. They said they would be happy to see the cave with me and that certainly I could take my friends there, but once shown, the cave must not be returned to, alone, or with another. As I expected, they used the excuses of safety, telling me how frightened they had been when they were told I had been seen exiting the cave.

I lay, pretending to be asleep, so I could hear what else they might say about it and learned that they planned to close up the entrance of the cave the next day, the very next, right after I had given the tour. My father had gotten explosives from a friend and would lay the charge after they had indulged my explorer fantasy.

I waited until their breathing was as regular as I had made mine seem to be. Then I waited longer to be sure. Quietly I slipped out of my bedding, foregoing shoes or outer clothing. It would have made a noise to get those and I did not wish to be heard. I found the explosives, laying by

the door, ready to crush the walls of my joy. Yes, that is what the secret room in the cave was to me — my joy.

I had thought that my parents could not understand how very deep the need for those brief times of solitude was, and so I did not make any attempt to explain it to them. There was something more, something I was just beginning to understand myself. It was not just solitude, not just being alone that called to me. I would have liked, would have appreciated, time alone in my own house, or on the hill that overlooks the city, but this was more. It was this place, this very place, I needed to be. I needed to be alone there, and there I felt some kinship with a mystery greater than myself, greater even than my need for solitude.

I rolled my bike silently until I was well past the house, then rode it through the empty streets until I reached the city's edge, and the smooth pavement gave way to the ground. At the cave's entrance I laid the explosive charges and drew the wire after me as I walked deeper and deeper into the cave until I reached the room of joyful light. There in my fortress of solitude I knelt, and struck the plunger down. The blast reverberated through the twisting, turning avenues of the cave, bringing down the walls, rolling a thunder of earth until it reached the room I waited in. The entrance

to the room was covered in the dirt. I was closed in.

The room had never glowed so brightly. I had never felt its warmth so surely. The walls moved, but not as they had done when I had tried to touch them the first time I came into the cave. They did not shudder in unease, but seemed to reach out to me in welcome, in longing.

They will realize I have gone, gone with the explosives that were to close up my secret place and my parents and others will come to the cave. They will gasp in horror and become a community digging out the fallen earth. Eventually they will dig all the way here, to the golden center. I will not be here for their eyes, for the rescue they plan for me.

The golden walls beckon me and they are drawing me into their shelter, their golden joy. It was not solitude in its emptiness that drew me to the cave, to this room. Because I needed to be alone, needed to be quiet, I was able to feel the pull of this place and come here where something wonderful beyond comprehension, something made of sheer golden joy waited for me, waited to ease the awful loneliness.

I am not alone. I am the sheer golden joy. We are the sheer golden joy.

— Kay Ball



Boy Crying

James D. Sherman

Down by the Sea

Of all the losses felt by a man, the loss of my youngest daughter struck the hardest. Nothing can prepare a parent for such a dreadful day, and as I waited before the sunset, I trembled in shock thinking of the words I'd use to tell her mother. The words of my grandmother haunted my mind. The same words she had used when I cried at my Uncle Standley's funeral. "It's all right, he's resting now, at peace with God." All the anger I felt, all the guilt and shame fell away, and another best friend, my brother, showed up to take us into his home. He offered hugs and love that helped bear the pain. After we'd buried our little angel, Mom packed us up and carried us to a refuge on the coast. A place to heal the wounds of life. At the end of the first day, there I sat, alone before a beautiful sunset and these words fell from my heart:

Golden sun, on the horizon. White wings soar so gracefully. My heart is sitting on the shoreline, where my baby waits for me. Ohh, down by the sea, down by the sea. I know she knows I'll be coming, if not today, eventually.

— Orley Kim Brock

Dear Sister

in memory of
Angela Faith Brock

My dear sweet sister, how do you do?
It's been a while, since we last reconciled.

Though we were young and innocent then,
I do remember our memories as friends.

So much time has past since you went away,
Again someday we will run and play.

Years full of pain,
As a vision of you is what I try to gain.

My daughter, you see, she looks of you,
To me it gathers a vague view.

How enchanting it would be,
to see your face looking at me.

Dream or not, it will always be a mystery.

Each day I wonder where you are,
I search in the sky to find your star.

Up above in the heavens so high,
I wonder sister, do you hear me cry?

— *Tara Lenay Brock*



Shantimoy

Gabriel Powell

The Will To Die

I fumbled nervously with the keys, trying to unlock the apartment door. They clanged as they fell on the cement porch. I bent over to pick them up; the uneasy feeling that kept gnawing at me wouldn't go away. Finally, the key slipped into the lock. It was a beautiful sunny day and dogs were barking in the distance. The brass door handle was cold to my touch. I turned the knob; a shiver went up and down my spine. As I opened the door, daylight streamed across the floor in the darkened room, creating a path for me to see. The shades had been drawn, but I could still make out the

shadowy figures of the furniture. The stillness of the room was eerie.

Calling Cec from the office every morning was a daily ritual. I would pick him up for lunch, then take him home again. He hated being home alone all day, but the doctor said he needed to rest from his triple by-pass surgery. But today was different; he never answered the phone. After about an hour of trying, my stomach had started feeling queasy. I asked a friend to go with me to check on Cec; after some coaxing, he had relented, but waited in his car.

I stood in the middle of the living room, looking down the quiet hallway toward the bedrooms, calling out his name, "Cec! Cec!" Slowly, I moved forward, being careful to stay in the light from the still opened front door. Inching my way, I could hear, coming from the bathroom the sound of water drumming against the side of the shower door and tub. I stood there for a moment, not sure if I should knock or just go in. Cautiously, I reached for the door handle, startled to hear the sound of my beating heart. The thumping seemed to get louder and louder. My lips began to move and without realizing it, I was pleading, "Please be taking a shower." I opened the door and the brightness from the light momentarily blinded me. The aroma of soap and potpourri penetrated my senses. Looking toward the shower, I could see something slumped against the door. It was a shoulder with a dark shadow above it. I couldn't breathe; feeling my chest suddenly tighten up, my eyes quickly darted away, then landed on the note lying on the counter. The sheet of yellow legal pad was laying on the right side of the sink, almost as if it had been very carefully put there. The note was written in pencil

with Cec's very distinguished hand. "Gayle" was placed neatly at the top. Afraid, I quickly ran out of the room.

Tears were now streaming down my face, as I held my chest. I felt like I was going to vomit. I darted out the front door to the top of the balcony, screaming to my friend below. I was gasping for air and screeching now in short breaths, "Come quick-it's-Cec!" my arms waving wildly, motioning for him to come faster. He ran up the stairs, two at a time. When he reached the top, I was sobbing so loudly, still unable to breathe, pointing down the hall and blubbering, "Cec, note—I didn't read it!" He dashed into the bathroom. I collapsed against the wall, skimming a light switch and flinching as brightness illuminated the room. He quickly scanned the note, returning ashen faced; his knees seemed to be buckling under him. I went to the bedroom to get a tissue. On the floor close to the wall were Cec's favorite sweat clothes; "comfies," he'd call them, lying there as if he'd just stepped out of them. On one side were the gun holster and a box of shells, a yellow legal pad on the other. There were a few pages flipped underneath, probably scribbled notes on some profound thought he

was always jotting down.

A strange feeling came over me: I actually could "see" him sitting there, with his legs crossed, Indian style, as he always did. He was carefully taking apart the gun, cleaning it, putting it back together. He would then take a soft cloth and gently rub it down, caressing it, like it was a cherished treasure. As I watched, not quite understanding the feelings he was showing, I thought how much I hated the .357 magnum he held so tenderly. The fear and anger I felt when he brought it home came rushing back to me. All he could say to comfort me was, "We need this, honey—the world is a crazy place. It will be our survival some day."

I heard voices coming from the other room. Confused, I began lifting my feet, laboring with each step I took. I bumped into a police officer as he was coming toward me down the hall. The weights from my feet were suddenly gone and I quickly followed him into the bathroom. Time seemed to stand still; removed from reality, I was watching myself from a distance, in a dream as the scene unfolded. I could hear the scraping of the metal as the shower door was pushed open. My husband was lying in the tub, naked

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(continued from page 29)

and wet, the gun partially sticking out from under his body. It seemed to be mocking me. The incision from his surgery traveled the length of his chest, from his throat to his pelvic bone. I knew he was devastated and felt mutilated when he first saw the incision, but he quickly made a joke about it. I remember smiling, but thinking it was not very funny.

I looked sharply toward his face, then looked away, tears welling up in my eyes. Slowly I looked back, like something or someone was beckoning me. His coffee brown eyes were glassy, staring lifeless toward the ceiling, his head resting against the shower wall. Cec's ebony hair was wet, sticking to his forehead, disguising the graying throughout. The water from the shower steaming down his face into his slightly opened mouth — then pouring out. Remnants of blood and pieces of flesh were on the shower wall above his head refusing to be washed away.

The policeman took the note, muttering something about coming down to the station, and getting a copy of it or something. "What?" was all I could say. The tears had stopped. Feeling nothing, I stood staring blankly ahead.

Everything and everyone looked hazy. I could hear talking in the distance, then realized my friend was telling me to go to the neighbors' while they took the body out. I started to move, then stopped abruptly — wait, I needed to read the note. What would I tell our six-year-old son?

I'll never forget the look on Kent's beautiful, innocent young face when I told him his daddy had died and wouldn't be coming home anymore. He looked up at me with his big brown eyes, frightened, not knowing whether or not to cry. I wasn't sure he really knew what death was. Tears were once again rolling down my face and I just took him and held him, neither one of us speaking. I held him tightly, knowing he was all I had left of a man I loved and deeply respected — my best friend. In the eight years we were married, he never judged me and always helped me believe in myself. With his encouragement, I could accomplish anything.

For the next few years, still functioning in a fog, I could picture so vividly what I knew had happened. I could see him writing the note, carefully undressing and placing it on the sink where I would surely find it. He was very calm as he got slowly into the shower, turning it on to let the spray wash down

the evidence of his final act. Raising the gun without hesitation, he put the long black barrel gently between his lips, careful not to scratch the surface with his teeth. Gently, he squeezed the trigger

"BAM!" a car backfired on television. The shortness of breath and tears returned as if it all had happened the day before. In part of his note he wrote, "If you think about it, there's no kind of life left for Cec Draney anymore. The 'once great' has gotten old, sick and useless. I really didn't have a chance. I was raised to hate myself and suicide had to be the only eventual answer."

Our son gave me the strength and courage to take one day at a time. The day Kent looked pleadingly into my eyes and said, "Mom, aren't you ever going to laugh again?", the healing began.

I still miss Cec, especially when my life doesn't seem to be going right. There's a sadness that's always there, but as time passes, the smiles and laughter are gradually coming back. The anger is nearly gone now; Kent is starting high school and hardly ever talks about his dad. But I know one day his questions will come... What will I say?

— Gayle Draney

HER FUNERAL

The church
in a shopping mall

I don't cry
You don't die

The priest tells lies
of how you tried

how

(towards the end)

You accepted god and

quote

WERE HOISTED FROM
THE EVIL WORLD OF
DRUGS AND ALCOHOL
BY YOUR HEAVENLY
FATHER'S LOVING HAND

end quote

Funny
I don't remember that

I remember
I touched your breasts

I remember blond hair
skipping school
drunk autumn porch
laughing trees and skies

As the music smiled
softly in the distance

and later
driving off with friends

Not at all feeling sad
Not at all feeling

— Rob Grant

CONTRIBUTORS

ΔSJT sings old Prince songs in the shower.

Kay Ball has dangerous visions.

Drew Bolster collects Star Trek figures, among other things.

Orley Kim Brock loves his children.

Tara Lenay Brock misses her sister.

Denise Cameron is happily living her life.

Gayle Draney, mother of one son, Kent, is an Advertising Sales Rep. for the Register-Guard and a student at LCC, working on her AAOT degree.

Sabrina Forkish is secretly employed as a counselor for wayward cooks.

Larry Good is just this guy, you know? He reads and writes a lot while drinking beer so you must excuse his grammar.

Rob Grant is from Peterborough, NH, via Taos, NM. Whenever possible, he jumps over the moon and runs away with the spoon.

Dustin Haines is a senior at Sheldon High School.

mia lai had a chip on her shoulder — it's gone now.

Adam Louie is a sensitive male,

living his sensitive American life in hopes of finding other sensitive people to share in his sensitive dreams.

Jessica Parsons says, "Don't read the classics, just use your imagination. Mine works quite well."

Gabriel Powell is no relation to Colin and said he would run if nominated.

amelia arianne reising prefers omnipotence to omniscience.

Maggie Shannon has plenty of writing time since breaking some hip bones on her way down from Mt. Hood. She is still in love with the Irishman she married in 1940.

James D. Sherman is "confused about how I intend to make a living, or what I want to become; I drift through life learning as much as possible about any given subject in any culture level and try to be 'nice' and 'fair'. I don't know what to do, I just try to capture whatever I'm doing on film to analyze it later."

Mickey Stellavato is a rum runner for the Mafia.

Eli Trompeter struggles with normalcy, the size of his shoes, and still doesn't know who shot J.R.



untitled

Dustin Haines

untitled

So what is the face of evil?
How can I recognize it?

I know there is some in each of us.

Is it that each time a soul is handed down to another,
the new owner is not only blessed with the good of the past,
but the evil as well?

— *Maggie Shannon*