



Denali Literary Arts Journal is a quarterly student publication of Lane Community College. Denali accepts submissions from all Lane County residents. A submission form is located on the inside back cover of this issue.

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### calendar

### MARCH

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Art In Transit the first installment on LTD buses!

Winter issue of Denali
hits the streets

6 h

### What is Art in Transit?

Art in Transit is an ongoing project that publishes poetry and visual arts on displays inside LTD buses. If you're interested in participating call Denali at 463-5897. All works submitted for the print edition of Denali will automatically be considered for this unique opportunity.



For information on how you can contribute to Denali's scholarship fund, please contact Denali's office.

MAY

1

### Deadline for Spring issue

Don't miss out on this opportunity; it's the last issue of the year!

MAY

1717

If you would like to have your art related event posted in Denali's print and electronic publications, please contact our office at 463-5897.

### A Special Message from THE LANE NATURE WRITERS GROUP

And so what is Nature?? Is it alive, dying, lost, waiting, gravity, out there, in here, green, yellow, blue? Roots and snow and dirt? Turtles and eagles and stars? Can you see it, taste it, hold it in the palm of your hand? Is it what you miss most when you notice the newest clear-cut, strip mall, lifeless river?

Are we of Nature, or its enemy? Is it up to us to protect it, or is Nature all that keeps us protected from ourselves?

The Lane Nature Writers Club asks these questions, reads together Thoreau, Abbey, and others, engages in activity both in and for Nature, and publishes a Journal of Nature Writing. It is our mission to explore Nature through reading, writing, discussion, immersion, and excursion. We hope to promote environmental sensitivity and sensibility through words and actions. Our first Journal, Working Currents, came out last spring. Our next issue is scheduled for winter term 2002, and we encourage submissions from all in Lane Community.

Writings, drawings, etc. can be brought to the Working Currents desk outside 456 Center at Lane Community College. We encourage you also to attend meetings, generally scheduled every other week—watch for flyers!

Come along. Read. Write. Draw. Walk. Swim. Breathe. Talk. Touch. Listen. Be.

### Denali Contributors Art Show 7:00pm at WOW Hall

The WOW Hall art gallery hosts a month long exhibit featuring a range of artists published throughout the Fall, Winter and Spring issues of Denali.

### open

### Mondays-The Buzz Cafe-poetry

Sign-up in advance at The Break, in the EMU.
Mic opens at 9:00pm.
Call 346-3725 for info.

### 2nd Sundays of every month Foolscap Books-poetry

Sign-up starts at 8:00pm and mic opens at 8:30pm. 780 Blair Blvd. in Eugene.

Call 681-9212 for info.

### Last Saturday of every month Books on Main has music

open mic/music at 7:00pm. 319 East Main Street in Cottage Grove. Call 942-7423 for info.

### ISUAL







- Pete Baldwin photography
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- 4 Aaron Vit photography
- Melissa Lubofsky drawing/painting
- Chris Meyers painting
- Taylor Castle photography
- Drew Laiche photography
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dbf@dirtline.net

Dylan freeman

### SILL ERIGHTS

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb, nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use w i t h o u t i u s t c o m o e n s a t i o n.

In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by jury shall be otherwise re-examined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

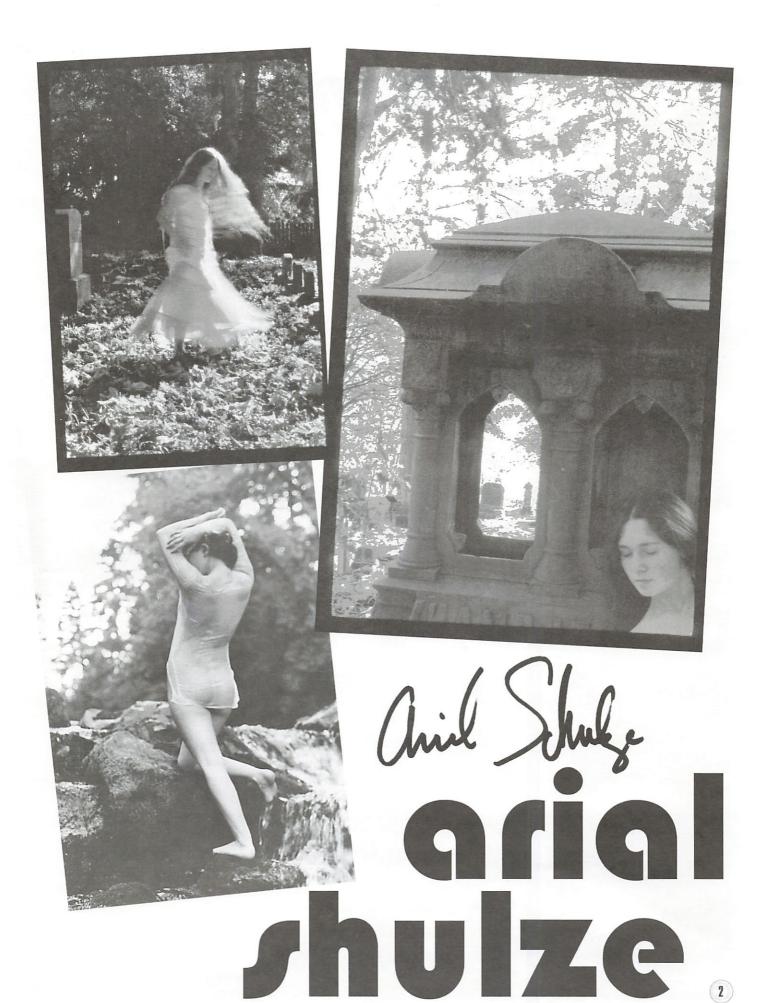
The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

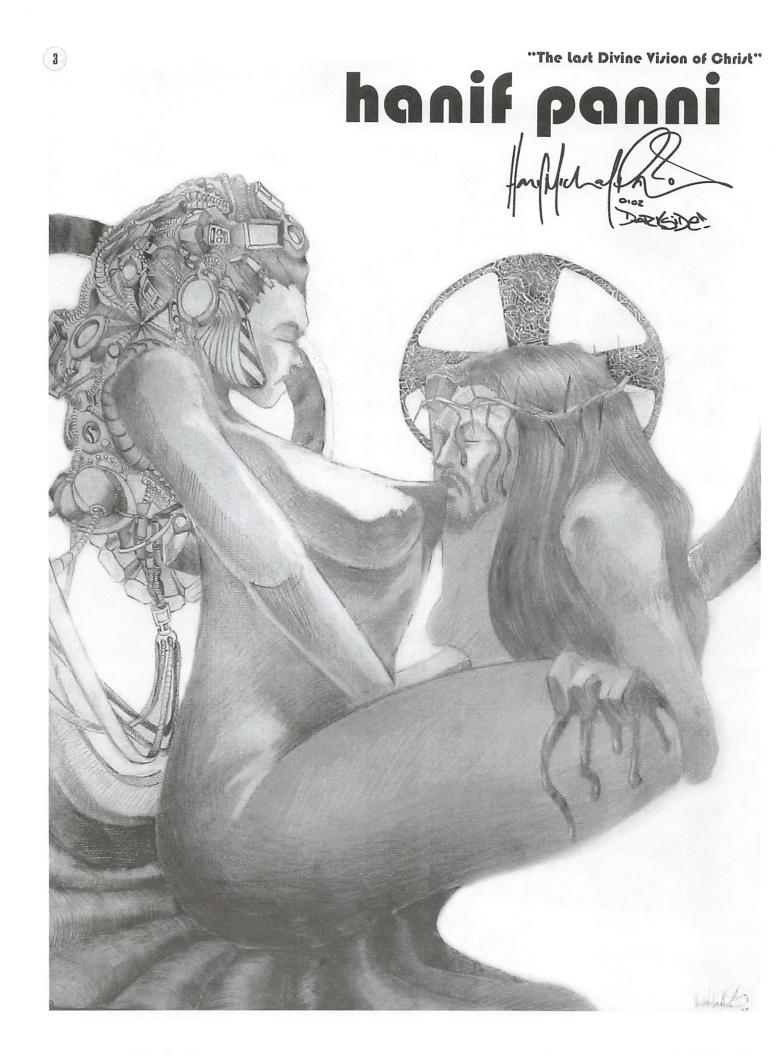
In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed; which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause for the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor and to have the assistance of counsel for his defence.

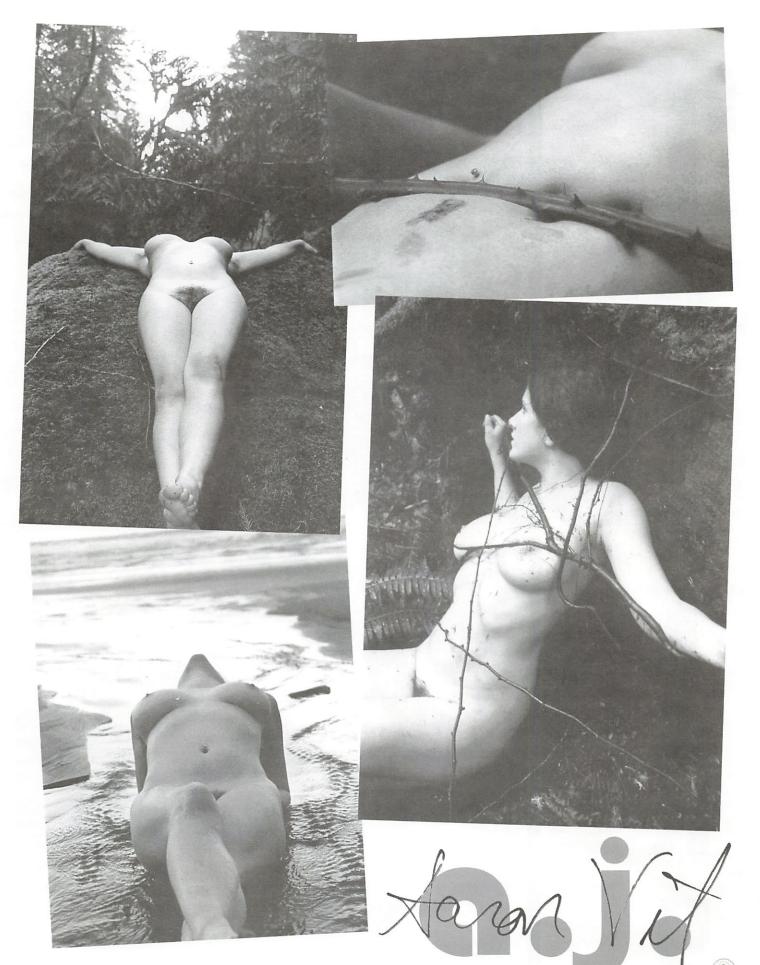
Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

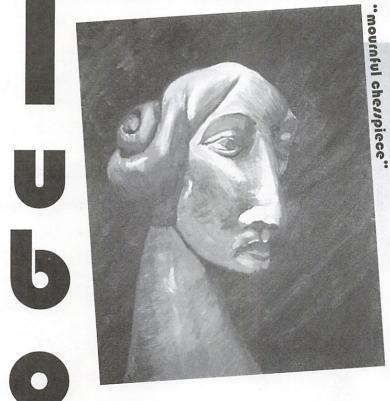








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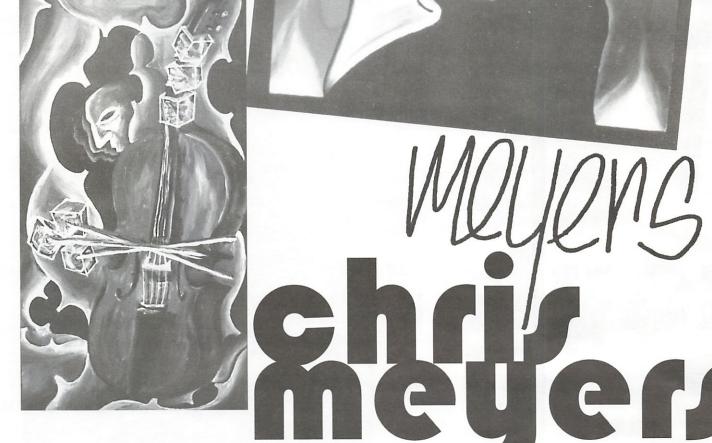






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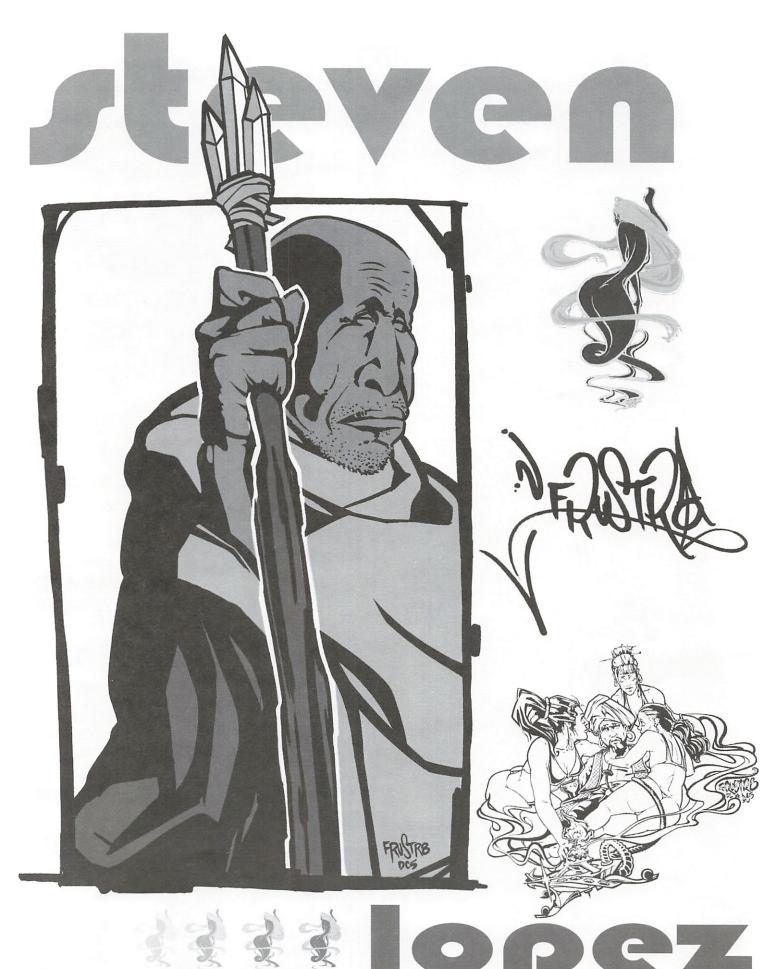


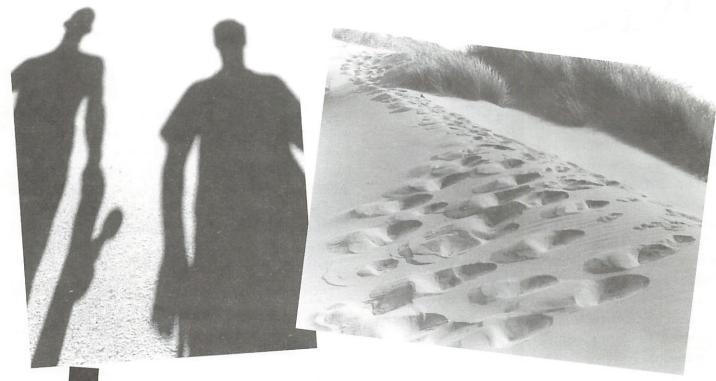


### taylor castle



DREW LAICHE





### dashan

radhana



John

# Mclean,

The scarring effect upon my psychological condition by certain childhood events can usually be measured in terms of hours spent each day devoted to revenge-fantasy daydreams. These imagined scenes were the only source of my empowerment, my only sanctuary—a place the proverbial tables had been turned. I spent far too much time in this place, so much that I began to loathe the real world—or at least the minimal power I carried in it. Until I found drugs, the daydream land-scape would be my well of solace; besides, the real world was full of people like Steve Holtet.

Steve had been the sort of kid you never wanted to see reach maturity—well, it was unlikely that he would

ever reach "maturity," but he was going to get bigger—and he was over-developed as it was, a genuine Darwinian throwback. To think that his present condition of sociopathic predation was merely a precursor to some height of development to which he was aspiring was about the scariest thing I could think about. And it was an inescapable reality due to the La Crosse, Wisconsin public school system; we were going to grow up to become the backbone of this great nation: Me and Steve "titty-twister" Holtet.

It certainly was not an issue of Steve being the one bad apple in the La Crosse public school system. Much to the contrary, Wisconsin in the late 1980s was so full of people with intentionally ripped Levi's committing date-rape to Judas Priest and kicking your ass for no reason other than "Budweiser," that most anybody would think they had stumbled onto the filming of some awful after-school special. Walking to school with my cello was as dangerous as wearing high heels, so I gave it up. I gave up a lot of myself to the Steves of the world. I became skilled at the art of detachment,

but no matter how many beatings and humiliations I would endure, nothing ever made Steve Holtet less frightening and intimidating.

Steve would mess with me when I was alone. I think that was part of what made him so much scarier than the other packs of adolescent males. The various goon squads always did what they did to win the approval of some alpha-male figure or the approval of the collective will, the mind they all shared. They were aping one another and showing off, and I knew it because they could never look me in the eye by themselves. Some of them had even been my friends before being accepted by the "cool kids" and moving up the middle school social ladder. Steve always looked me in the eye, and I could tell that he was doing what he did because he really, really, liked me to be afraid.

I can still see him: perpetually shirtless and covered with veins, strutting like a rooster with that cemetery smile—he had these rows of perfect teeth that reminded me of the headstones at the veteran's memorial. Right before he pulled something really painful, he would get this cat-like glint in his eyes, dirty brown hair dangling before the; that grin would stretch across his face and then split open to show off the graves.

WE WERE GOING TO
GROW UP TO
BECOME THE
BACKBONE OF THIS
GREAT NATION: ME
AND STEVE
"TITTY-TWISTER"

HOLTET.

Even in the worst
Wisconsin winter, he
would be out there,
shirtless and cockwalkin', and he always
knew which door I was
going to try to sneak
out of, or if I was cutting eighth period, he'd
be out there after seventh. He'd whip iceballs at me from a less
than sporting distance and

then before I knew it, he'd be straddling me. I'd be face down in a snowbank with Steve on my back, rubbing my face in a yellow spot that he "Made just for you!" I never doubted it.

The only time that I can remember seeing that smile without an attached traumatic memory would be the summer after the seventh grade, the worst year as far as my playing the victim goes. That cemetery smile was nestled between a pail of Gummi Worms and a revolving caddy of Whistle Pops on the counter next to the cash register at the Ben Franklin. The picture from our

seventh grade yearbook was on a baby blue Xerox copy of a flyer wrapped around a donation can; it said that Steve's mother needed help paying hospital bills and buying a wheelchair for him. Apparently, he'd had some sort of diving accident. I was so excited that I ran out the door without even paying for my comic book. I had to go tell my friend about this, see if he knew anything else about this "tragedy." I thought about how those Gummi Worms and Whistle Pops were some pretty stiff competition for impulse buyers' dimes and nickles.

I was so elated when I reached James' house that I was talking a million miles an hour. "James!" I said, "You know that scumbag, Steve Holtet? Well, you won't believe what I just saw at Ben Frank's by the register, and NOT whistle pops . . . "

James looked up at me from his homework and said: "Yeah, I heard, that's too bad."

"Too bad?" I said. James was as much a member of the victim class at school as I was, so I was confused at why he didn't share my epiphany. "What are you talking about? This is awesome; he won't walk again." I said, "If he wants to give any of us any shitit will have to come out of his

COLOSTOMY BAG!" Realizing the icy wit of my remark, I fell into hysterics and solicited a hi-five from James, who only looked at me in a you-really-don'thave-a-soul-do-you? sort of way. "Didn't that steroid case ever beat you up?" I asked James, my hand still hanging in the air, waiting for approval. "Oh, don't tell me you put a quarter in his can."

"No," James said as he got up to go stare blankly into the refrigerator. "But you can't walk around holding how he was against him now that he's handicapped, it just isn't funny."

But I was holding everything against him. It was funny. It made me about as happy as anything in my life at that time could. I was growing so hateful and bitter toward those around me that I could hardly face the day. I would win arguments by shouting and menacing; I had even started to beat up on my younger brother. I cut off ties to many of my classmates based on where they stood on the issue of Steve Holtet.

"Next year," I'd tell them, "I'm going to push his crippled ass down a flight of stairs, I promise." I fantasized about it to the point of having a righteous speech full of melodrama and rage, memorized to deliver to him prior to his plummeting. I had a collection of stolen donation cans that I would show off to my thinning number of friends. "Let him shake down lunch money to pay for his wheelchair."

Of course, when the time came for me to carry out the terms of my vendetta, Steve Holtet was still in physical therapy. It was going to be at least three months before he returned to school. That gave the school enough time to raise funds to have elevators installed for Steve, as if he were the first local tough to get crip-

OF COURSE, WHEN Bridge, or the only kid THE TIME CAME FOR ME TO CARRY OUT THE TERMS OF MY VENDETTA, the jagged rocks just STEVE HOLTET WAS STILL IN PHYSICAL THERAPY.

pled by the Black River at school in a wheelchair. Everybody in town had been warned about a thousand times apiece about jumping off that bridge. About under the surface of the water-that's why it was so cool and dangerous. Before, all the kids in wheelchairs stayed on the ground floor.

Why couldn't anyone remember Steve Holtet for the way he was? Hadn't they ever had their nose broken, or their bicycle stolen? Hadn't they ever been so terrified of going to school that they had to play sick? I was the victim here. The whole community pulled together for some dime-a-dozen future wife beater because he crippled himself being a show-off. My classmates all lined up waiting for him so they could dab his drool away; the lemmings were hanging up banners and balloons. At least they had sense enough not to ask me to sign the card.

Now that I think about it, I seem to remember a football jersey. Yes, I definitely remember a football jersey. Steve had to have been a football player; redneckville only pulls together for one reason: High School Athletics. Endearing yourself to Wisconsinites is a simple matter of physical prowess.

Meanwhile, as the masses prepared for his return with rehearsed empathy, I began the

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metamorphosis into a twelve-year-old Poe character. Steve had the "Vulture's Eye," and I would doubtless have his heartbeat beneath my floorboards soon. Each night I walled him up in the increasingly perverse catacombs of my mind. I finally got to see old Fortunado himself around Halloween, and to call him humbled would be an understatement.

The vestigial Steve Holtet was so feeble and twisted, such a distant echo of the thug that had been—all that I could do was stare. He couldn't maintain eye contact very long, either from shame or lack of muscle control. Right then and there, I knew there was no way I could go through with my vengeance. I felt razed, lower than dirt. He smiled at me like I understood that he was serving his sentence, but I didn't. I hated him even

more now. I hated him because he had been "cleansed," because I wanted nothing more than to see an expression of terror on his face. He had been cleansed, and I was left there standing helpless before all the hatred and rage within me. I wanted a story about Karma, a story about how the Steve Holtets of the world end up getting what they deserve.

Instead, I'm telling the story of how misanthropy is contagious, how it is spread. A story about how much of my adolescence was wasted on daydreams about beating up a quadriplegic. I look over these admissions with a deep sense of shame and remorse because in the end Steve Holtet and I had traded places, and all the good karma in the world wasn't going to return what had been beaten out of me. I was hollow.

From the wreckage I am sifting ashes, splinters, and glass smooth little stones so cool in my hands they will be my delight alone here on in they always told me to let it out "You can only bottle up those emotions for so long" That stoic wash as it spills that cork of hesitation escaping across the floor the bottle spills in a whirl and you stand there an inferno I filled that bottle with what I thought everyone around me wanted to see inside so now I smash the bottle on the bar wave all my jagged emptiness in your face never stopped to read the label how can any of you swallow that shit I have memories of when we were all much better liars I could love you then guess I still can from the coolest martian shade

### ASHLEYLEAL

What I see here is wrong With these memories so strong

(by design)
This moment defined
By words that he says
Screams to her head
Throw down

Go down Scream, yell in her ear She is silence Loudly with fear This scar

inside

And tar

on her thigh There is no reason why This ignorance Ignoring

this disease What crime & then criminals freed This is wrong And my song is sung To awaken the care In your soul Let's make this fair We must take control As simple as a smile to a stranger on the road As complicated as honesty Purity & consciousness of self It is ours to claim It is the true wealth A woman scorned

This is our story American Glory Pursuit of an ideal Save money Don't feel What you own Is what's real Borrow money

Save money Spend money

Earn money Throw money

It's money
It's money, honey
And that's what we need
It's pride & greed
It owns us
And we are not free
This is wrong
And my song is sung

To awaken the care
In your soul
Let's make this fair
We must take control
As simple as a smile
To a stranger on the road

As complicated as honesty
Purity & consciousness of self
It is ours to claim

It is the true wealth
To jail with you and your laws

Set free stoned felons

& lock up these rapist Without denial

We can go far But we're clouded

With GOD

And all his "rules"
He probably doesn't care
He sees we are the fools
This is wrong
And the road is long
To total tolerance
Fairness & patience
My song is sung
To evoke this in you
We must understand
And speak only truth
As simple as a smile
As confusing as honesty
If we love all the while
We will set ourselves free

anhey L

### EVERYTHING 15 Frozen

Everything is frozen And the air is thick I feel warmth within Memory plays tricks Ever changing face Always rearranging My dream place No use explaining The story we're creating Because we keep forgetting Who we really are We are the sun setting The moon & the stars We are the air we breathe And all that we feel Though it's hard to conceive We are good & we are evil The visual world is The lowest dimension Above that we find Our true reflection A different perception And a clearer direction.

The Spirit

A child forlorn

All this talk of color
And I wonder what
Sight helps us to see
Our vision makes us
Blind to beauty within
The Spirit is contained
Inside of our hearts
If you close your eyes
And stop trying you find
This feeling that binds
Us all, the connection
The real perfection we crave
It's heaven in us
When we recognize
That beauty is within

elizabe

There comes a time when she crosses that invisible line, that moment when my dog can't reach that flea. She stares blankly as she scratches her belly with first one hind foot and then the other, then back again, slowly, with desperate calmness, standing, her face turned toward me but her gaze turned inward, directed at the source of her torment.

"Bath time," I say, my heart tight because she's at least a week overdue. Maybe two.

Her eyes click back to real time; her tail begins that slow, heavy wag. She's not exactly sure what I said, but she knows the tone of voice. We're gonna do something together. Oh boy.

I put on my gardening shorts and a ragged t-shirt, unbuckle her collar, and go into the bathroom. "C'mon, Fletch." I slap the edge of the tub and she dutifully climbs in, carefully cautious of the slippery surface. I warm the water and then try to wet her down, but her long black and brown hair is water repellent at that point, and all I manage to wet down is my shirt.

She's tense. She closes her eyes. Dogs are suspicious of warm water.

The soap is the reward. I rub the bar of flea killing soap over her ears and head, down her back, across her strong chest and forelegs, and down her tail and give special attention to the thick hair on her haunches.

Then I suds her. She loves this massage. Her long hair lathers up in the richest, gushiest way. Her nose becomes very cold and while her posture seems to say she feels somewhat indignant, everybody likes to be shampooed. Rubbed. Groomed. Massaged. Cherished.

I knead and squeeze her long coarse hair and gently soap that naked part of her sweet little tummy, talking softly the whole time about dead fleas and how much the world loves sweet-smelling dogs.

She grows impatient with the rinsing, and though the air is warm, the water even warmer, she begins to shiver. I have to keep pushing her head back over the tub so

she won't drip on the floor. Finished. I throw a towel over her and begin drying

her face, planting a few loud kisses on her snout in appreciation for her patience. I rub her briskly, wanting to put as much water into the towel as possible—because the rest will be shaken onto the bathroom walls.

Her patience has limits.

I tuck the towel around her, dash to the bathroom door, fling it open and call her. Then I run to the front door, hoping with the hope of the idiot optimist that one day, some day, she will forget herself and make it all the way outside before shaking.

Never happens.

She shakes off the towel in the bathroom, dampens down the wallpaper in the hall, and shakes her feet in a goofy little dance as she runs through the living room out to the front yard, where she rolls and rubs her nose on the grass. She grins and sparkles in the sunshine.

I, of course, am soaked clear through and must bathe myself and clean the bathroom, but for now I watch her with affection as she does this strange canine after-bath ritual on the front lawn. Dog owners drive by and smile in recognition.

She wiggles up to me at last, her black nose so cold I can't understand how it could possibly be a working portion on a mammal's anatomy. She is happy, appreciative, and flea-free. She licks my hand; I scratch her head, feeling that profound gratitude again. A friend is such a gift.

I sit on the step as she goes back to her frenetic nose rubbing and back scratching. It took such little time and energy to make her feel so much better.

I reflect on other friends and their gifts to me, and realize my gratitude extends far beyond this little front vard to the very best things in my life. Life is worthwhile because of the small, important things, and friends who notice my discomforts and soothe them with simple acts.

### Maren Cushing

### A Tornado of Butterflies

A tornado of butterflies are my thoughts softly twirling as light and unwary as a sleeping child a beautiful, delicate dance free to flow whenever it wishes airy as a moonbeam touching everything in view.

# hate is ... blackish red, like evil, mechanical being; blinding your hearing with the sound of menacing, rushing water; choking you with the taste of blood; a putrid, enveloping stench filling your nostrils; too hot to stand and you feel like you're going to explode; consuming your mind, body and soul in one enveloping gulp;

### Courage

Courage is facing your fears.

Courage is trust love kindness

Courage is trust, love, kindness.

Courage is opening your heart knowing it might get broken. Courage is my Grandfather.

### THE TRUTH

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Love is a pacifier through which we all live. We want it, we crave it, we desperately need it. We cherish it, abuse it, and we also betray it. Love has no boundaries, no walls or illusions. Love needs only love in return to thrive and burn the unsaid chant of forever. Love is timeless and aging but yet it is still young.



### Roger Steinmetz Kogin Steinmetz

It is twilight in the graduate student parking lot, and I am shuffling across the blacktop, lugging my weary, Sisyphusian briefcase toward the brick study-box where I live. A full load of master's level classes, a thesis, and a half-time teaching position in freshman English have

I am struck by the sight of two figures entwined

transformed me into the academically lobotomized. There is no thought of my own that I can think. I slug along as sunset's last credits roll off the edge of the earth and gravity drags at the books and papers I carry.

As I approach the middle of the vast lot, I am struck by the sight of two figures

entwined. A man of my own age, mid-twenties, is holding up the staggering body of a young woman whose arms seem almost too weak to grasp his neck. She is holding him, but doubling over, in an agony of illness, or pain, or grief. She makes not a sound as she hangs from his shoulder, her legs failing, her back to me. I am walking along, forty feet away, and can see in the dusk the silhouette of the man's concerned profile. My brain, dead though it is, registers that something is seriously wrong. Has she been hurt? Is she safe? Does the man

need me to help him in some way, to call the cops, an ambulance, a priest? On automatic pilot, I slow down, trying to discern through the darkening autumn air whether I should speak up, ask a question, run up to give assistance, or walk on by. Uncertain of what I am seeing, I slow my pace, almost stopping. The

woman gasps, "Can I help?" sags against

the man's body. From ten yards away, wordlessly, I try with all my might to project the telepathic question to the man, "Can I help?" With the woman's back to me, and without appearing to look at me at all, he gradually extends one arm away from her body, and slowly, slowly, delicately, millimeters at a time, allows the silent rising of his middle finger toward my face. He holds it there, long enough for me to register its general intent, and longer. He holds it there so long that it becomes the statue of a hand holding up its middle finger against the twilight of my mind. And in the days that follow, I visit the statue often, in the classroom, in the cafeteria, in my bed, reading the hand's dark, shapely balance like an unknowable Rosetta stone that I must try to interpret, as a scholar, beyond the simple "Fuck You" of its origins.

## Sold and when has my when has my seed stephing.

My mother danced the Charleston on a summer's day as when I was young.

She raised her arms and stepping back began to dance oh, so slowly as if just remembering, and then suddenly with great abandon.

Knees high
hips turning
arms flapping
gold chain twisting
elbows bent
shoulder straps falling
apron strings loosening
high heels tapping
mouth smiling and laughing.

My mother danced the Charleston around the dining room table while the soup simmered and the day lengthened with work to be done and a house to run.

My mother danced the Charleston as I edged into the shadow of the buffet wide eyed, wanting the moment to go on forever.

nanting the mone to go on forever.

around the dining room table

Hanna next to could 1 about t She wo where I

Hannah loved me. She placed her body close to mine. She slept next to my bed. She followed me from room to room. When she could no longer walk, she followed me with her eyes as I moved about the room.

She would have given her life for me. We lived in a neighborhood where life was not valued much. She did.

Hannah would look over her shoulder at me and smile. She would be checking me out—to be sure I was watching her clever moves. And when she was dying she would look over her shoulder at me and smile in appreciation, in acceptance and trust of my lifting her hind legs so she could walk.

Hannah loved popcorn.

I could never be sad and alone when I was with her. If I started to cry she would come up to me and put her nose under my forearm until I petted her.

Hannah was beautiful, strong and elegant. She loved the ocean, rivers and lakes. She loved to ride in the bow of a canoe—straight up like a captain!

She was the only dog I knew who would jump into a tub of water eagerly upon request.

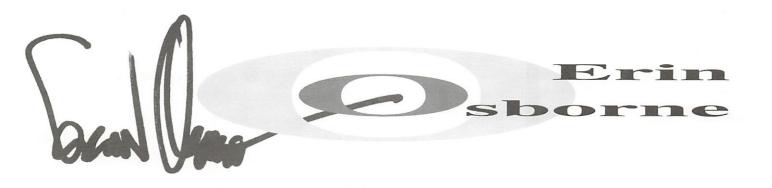
Hannah taught me the meaning of freedom. She showed me freedom is knowing yourself and trusting your instincts and acting upon them.

When it was time for her to die she held on as long as she could. She waited until I had the courage to face life without her.

The vet told me she had cancer I collapsed on the floor next to her. I felt like I had been kicked hard in the gut. I know that dogs die. I just never believed Hannah would.

She has been gone three weeks. I can still heart her barking when I leave the truck and sit at meeting.

"Oh death, They that love beyond the world cannot be separated by it. Death cannot kill that which never dies. Nor can spirits ever be divided. That love and life are the same Divine Principle. Death is but crossing the world as friends do the seas. They live in one another still." William Penn



"I told y'all he's a Goddamn pussy!" An explosion of deep, gruff laughter followed the exclamation.

A boy about ten years old with whiteblonde hair, a complexion to match, and ice-blue eyes was spitting and coughing wildly as he held a can of beer away from himself.

"If you can't drink it, may as well get used to servin' it. Go and get your daddy another drink, for Christ's sake."

The boy blinked through watery eyes and saw a hazy vision of his stepfather. He swallowed once, as if to ingest the unusual visual information being placed before him. His stepfather's beady blue eyes disappeared completely from his face, and the cigarette that he had always clenched between his teeth looked like a severely deformed extension of his left incisor. His brown hair bled into his dirty tanned skin. The boy was happily surprised at the disfigurement he was now witnessing. He sustained the premonition as long as he was able, until the tears in his eyes dissipated.

"Well, boy?" The boy turned around and walked through his back door toward the kitchen.

"You ain't my daddy," he muttered. He blindly walked past his mother, who was sitting at the small kitchen table, looking over a pile of bills. "Who you talkin' to, Sugar?"

"Huh?" The boy froze in his tracks and looked at his mother as if she had just caught him with his hand in the cookie jar.

"I said, who you talkin' to, Andy?"

"Nothin'. I mean, nobody, Mama." He pulled at the refrigerator door as hard as he could, and it flew open. He looked at the rows of beer cans and hoped that he would magically pick the one in a million that

had a mouse or a cockroach in it. Better yet, he thought, he'd shake it up or drop it accidentally before he got back outside. Andy saw his stepfather, some time in the near future, spitting and coughing just as he had done a few moments prior.

"Shut that door, please, Sugar." His mother's interruption made the vision in his head fade.

Head lowered, he walked past his mother again.

"Where do you think you're going with that, young man?"

"Roger told me to get used to servin' and bring him another beer." His mother closed her eyes, breathed in deeply and exhaled while looking up at the ceiling.

"So help me . . ." She lifted herself up from the pale pink formica table, grabbed the beer out of Andy's hand, and said, "Don't you have something to do?" He shook his head blankly and followed his mother to the back door.

"Roger!" She opened the white-washed screen door that had been obviously, but neatly, patched up several times. Roger, and his friends like him, were huddled around a small disposable grill, drowning a pile of charcoal with lighter fluid.

"Roger," she said as she sidled next to him.

"What, Baby?" He threw match after match on top of the briquettes, but was not successful.

"Aw, fuck it. We need more lighter fluid." His wife took the matches out of his hands and held a flame to part of the pyramid for a short while and got it to light. Roger's friends jeered him.

"What do you want?" He gritted his teeth and looked at his wife. She took a step back, but then rocked her weight forward.

"What do I want?" she mocked. "I want you to stop makin' Andy get you beers. He's just a boy, Roger. We've fuckin' talked about this. He's gonna have plenty of time to figure out drinkin'. He don't need no help from you."

"Aw, c'mon, Baby. It ain't like he's drinkin' it himself. He's just doin' me a favor. Right, Andy?" Andy wrapped his arms around his mother's waist.

"Don't you bring him into this. This is between you and me. I mean it, Roger. No more. I don't even like the shit in my house." She thrust the beer toward him.

"Oh you don't, huh?" he said slyly. He pushed Andy out of the way to pull her towards him by her hips. His friends quietly cheered him on.

"I'm serious, Roger," she threatened.

"I know, I know, Baby." His voice softened, and he whispered in her ear, "I'm sorry, Baby. It won't happen again." She wrapped her sunburned arms around his thick neck and allowed him to kiss her. He groped her buttocks and pulled her hips closer to his. She slunk away when the "ooh's" and "aah's" from the collective audience rose to a crescendo and walked back into the house.

"Damn fine. Damn fine," he said through a growl. "As for you, boy, you ever get me in trouble like that with her again, you'll be punished. Got that? Gotta be quicker in the head than that. Gotta outsmart. 21

Gotta figure. What the hell I'm gonna do with

you? Figure if you a wuss, you at least got some damn brains." Roger looked down at Andy, who was expressionless.

"Aw, fuck it," he said. He cracked open the beer with no unexpected bath and took a long drink.

Later that evening, Andy's mother set his clothes out for the next day while Andy brushed his teeth in his bedroom doorway.

"Ith wahgger onna swoop onna cow agah?" he asked his mother.

"Honey," she hopelessly giggled, "spit that foam out of your mouth before you choke yourself. You're gonna make a mess, too. Get in that bathroom."

> Andy giggled back at her and tiptoed gleefully toward the bathroom down the hall. He came back to his mother with rosy cheeks and a white ring around his mouth. She walked over to him, grabbed the bottom of her tee shirt, and wiped his mouth with it.

He flung his arms around her waist. She lifted his face up from his chin, and he deliberately smiled as wide as he could.

"Good job, Baby. Now, what was it you wanted to ask me?"

"Is Roger gonna sleep on the couch again."

"I wouldn't call it sleepin', Sweetie. But, never mind, though. It's nothin' to worry about. Everything's fine. All you gotta do is go to bed and dream about good things. You got it?" Andy's grip loosened on his mother, and he buried his face in her soft belly.

"Hey, now. I mean it, Andy. You worry about your stuff. I'll worry about the grown up stuff. You hear me?" Andy blinked up through the folds of her tee shirt and leaned back to see her face.

"Andrew . . . ," she said.

After a short pause, he said, "Tell me what my name means again, Mama." She smiled and put her hands on his shoulders to direct him to his bed.

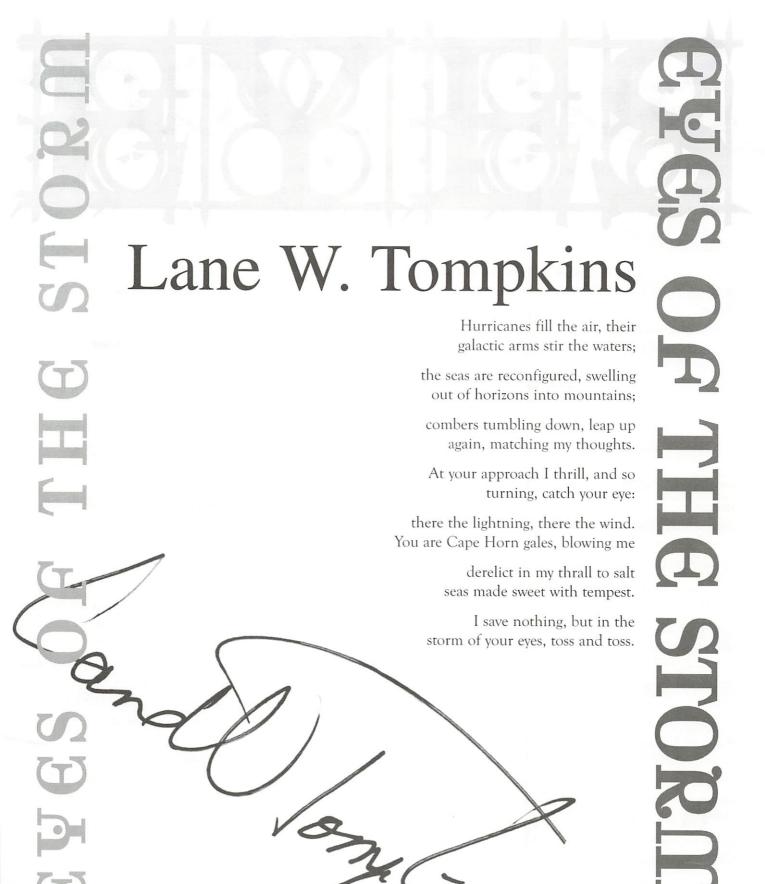
"It means 'strong,' Baby," she said as she tucked him in. She kissed him on the forehead.

"Strong like a man?," he asked.

"Almost strong like a man," she replied.

He sighed and rolled his eyes.

She smirked and walked over to the doorway.



EVES OF THE STORM

### Susi Klare

This summer they'll be celebrating the fifty-year anniversary of the first time a man walked on the moon. Lydia from down the road told me that Philip Morris will sponsor the biggest lunar laser light show of all time. I said, "Lydia, that does it, I'm outta here."

So Lydia said, "Where do you think you can go to

get away from the moon?" and I told her Alaska, and she laughed like I was joking. Then she asked me if I remembered it, that first moon landing.

"That was too many years back to remember," I said, and as soon as Lydia went home, I stuck a For Sale sign in front of my house. had enough of mankind and his giant steps. It seems he can't put his foot down without crushing the life out of something.

The truth is, I do remember. It was the summer I left Dallas to be a maid in Glacier National Park. That was the night when, instead of going back into the dorms after the evening volleyball game, all the employees stayed outside and listened to transistor radios. They were all pointing up at the crescent moon and the noise of their cheering was like football season in Dallas, where everybody was all excited about this thing that I had no feelings for. This was back in 1969, before television satellites and cable, so there were no TVs in the park, just static and men's voices on the radio, all wound up about a giant step for mankind.

Well, I for one, have had enough of mankind and his giant steps. It seems he can't put his foot down without crushing the life out of something. Like what they did to the moon. Today I'd wipe the sky clean of that thing in a minute, but back when I was nineteen,

it was the moon that lured me out at night. It lit the Going-to-the-Sun Highway and the lake, St. Mary's Lake, which they said was the most beautiful lake in the world. That's what they told us at the orientation meeting when all the kids showed up for work at the lodge.

Then a ranger told us about the grizzly bears who ate a couple of girls my age. It all happened in one night, two grizzlies on opposite sides of the Continental Divide, each bear taking a girl out of her sleeping bag. To this day I wonder, what was the moon like that night?

Back then, they said the full moon could make you crazy. Nowadays it's supposed to make you go shopping. But what I remember is how the full moon was a good excuse to party and get drunk by the lake, and it was the tequila that made me let the busboy stick his hands under my sweatshirt, until before I

knew it I was on my back with him breathing hard on top while I was swirling down a whirlpool of darkness.

But then the noise of the party brought me back. There was a girl who couldn't laugh without screeching and a sharp rock digging into my shoulder blade and a guy I had no feelings for trying to unzip my jeans. So I told him I needed to go to the bushes for a moment, and it was true, his heavy weight on my bladder, and I squirmed out from under him and stumbled off in the aspen scrub. I squatted there with my eyes closed and it felt good, the hot wet rush of pee. The next time I opened my eyes it was to the sound of leaves ruffling in a breeze and I was surrounded by the flickering lights of a thousand moon mirrors, and that was nicer than the party, so I pulled up my pants and glided through the aspen like a fish through water.

And I decided I didn't ever want to go home because Dallas was busy becoming the shopping capital of the world. The abandoned cottonfield where I used to race my horse bareback was already under pavement when I left for Montana. And I couldn't keep Geronimo after the stable where I boarded him was bulldozed to make room for the new Sears. And where it used to be just crickets, now it was freeway noise all night.

But at Glacier Park the ranger came by every evening and locked a gate across the Going-to-the-Sun highway, so the only sounds were the ones made by wind and creatures moving through the night. And I gave it all my full attention, every little rustle, because that's what you do in grizzly bear country. When a deer pulled leaves from a bush, I had to know what was making that tearing sound. And when I heard its teeth grinding the leaves, I saw what happened to those other two girls as if it were lit by the moon. Moonlight on the slow curve of a claw, a girl's thin wrist flung across her moon-white face.

Still, every morning I finished my rooms in record time—no one stripped a bed faster or had a quicker hand with the toilet scrubber—and I put away my housekeeping supplies and slipped out alone into the clean mountain air. On a day off, I hitched a ride through the Blackfoot Reservation to a northern outpost of the park where I hiked far into the backcountry along the Belly River and then up a mountain beyond timberline.

That's when I saw footprints in a patch of mud, tracks with the claw poking out a full finger length from the toe. I scanned a full circle around me, then crouched down, and I could fit three of my fingertips into the cold mud bowl of one toe and when I stood up my legs felt flimsy as reeds, and my heart was pounding so hard I thought the bear would feel it drumming through his feet. The trailhead was at least ten miles back with its orange sign with the humpback profile of a grizzly and the usual warnings. "Don't hike alone. Make plenty of noise. Don't be having your period"-I guess the girls who got eaten were bleeding even before they met their bears. I considered different sounds I could make, but none of them wanted to come out. A voice inside me that belonged to someone else told me how sensible

and easy it would be to turn around and go back now, and another voice that belonged to someone like Ulysses or Davy Crockett said the heroic thing to do would be to go the direction those claws were pointing. While these voices argued inside my head, my feet took a small step in the direction they wanted to go. And another, and another, until I was walking again, always telling myself I'd just peek over the next rise and then turn back.

Then there was the bear grazing on meadow grass like it could care less who was watching. A breeze glinted along the blond streak of its hump, and I backed away before the wind turned on me.

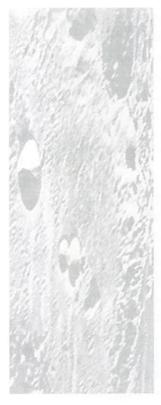
But that time I went too far, and it was getting dark with no moon rising to show the trail out. So I used up the last of my light to find the backcountry ranger station that was marked on the map. The windows were dark, and I was hoping the door wouldn't be locked when I caught a whiff of cigarette smoke. I made out the shape of a man sitting on the cabin steps, and I knew I'd been spotted, so I didn't break stride through the dusk-lit meadow. I walked right up to the steps and told him I needed to borrow a flash-light, even though I really hate the way a flashlight spoils the night—you can't see anything but what it's pointed at—and I asked him if he knew there was a big grizzly on that mountain behind his cabin.

And there was the bear grazing on meadow grass like it could care less who was watching. A breeze glinted along the blond streak of its hump and I backed away before the wind turned on me.

His voice was low in the dark. "Sure, I know that bear," he said. He told me he'd welcome the company if I'd stay till morning. Then he said his name was Gordon, and he offered me a smoke. I said no thanks in a voice that made him

jerk back like he was pretending I'd slapped him.

I was quick to let him know how much I hate the way cigarettes foul the air because I didn't want him to think I was acting touchy about his offer of a place to sleep. And he said he'd just met me and already he



I want the same things now that I wanted then and that's why I've got to leave. I'll escape Montana just like I escaped Texas, and for a lot of the same reasons...

knew two things I hated, so now he'd like to know two things I love.

"That's easy," I said and my eyes wandered along the jagged edge between the mountain peaks and the stars. "I love being alone in these mountains; I love how the air smells, and I love the moon when it shows me the way."

"That's three things," he said and then he held his cigarette out a distance in front of his face and said, "Do you want me to stop?"

I said, "What, stop smoking?" He nodded, and I told him it's a free country; he can do whatever he wants, ruin his lungs, whatever, it's none of my business. "I don't even know you," I said.

He took a long, slow drag, then stubbed out his cigarette on the step and told me that was the last one; he was giving up smoking for me. Then he went inside the cabin and brought me out a flashlight.

Gordon. Gordon's the one who helped me find these few affordable acres when Polebridge was no more than a tumble of rough cabins along the Flathead River. He's also the one who first told me about the Brooks Range in Alaska, and that's where I'm going as soon as I sell this place. He gave me a book about a woman who built a cabin in the Brooks Range all by herself, and Gordon said she seemed a lot like me. Of

course, as my too-close neighbor Lydia loves to point out, that woman was a lot younger when she did it. But I don't care, they've still got grizzly bears and wolves up there, and Gordon always said he'd head for Alaska before grizzlies went extinct in the Lower Fortyeight. Well, they say that happened quite a while ago, and extinct is a horrible word unless you're talking about dinosaurs.

I'm sure he made it, because Gordon's a man who means what he says. Like with the cigarettes. I knew it was a lie that he was quitting for me. He only said it like that to create something between the two of us. But in spite of having quit smoking fifty years ago, Gordon still might not be alive any more. He was older than the rest of us, even back in 1969. That was before they let the local Blackfeet work in the park, back when it was all college kids who got the jobs, except for the managers who came out of their Arizona retirement communities to boss us around for the summer. They were maybe in their sixties, which seemed impossibly old at the time.

But old age really isn't how you think it will be. I'm that old now, and I still have the same feelings as I did the summer I worked at Glacier. I want the same things now that I wanted then and that's why I've got to leave. I'll escape Montana just like I escaped Texas, and for a lot of the same reasons, and I won't let Lydia talk me out of it like she did the time I went to town for supplies and there was a BiMore Mall sprawled all over the south end of Polebridge like some mistake that was intended for Whitefish. Lydia tells me I'm crazy to think of moving into the Brooks Range at my age. She says I cut myself off from everything, and if I'd just get cyberlinked, then I'd be more in tune with the world and I wouldn't take things so hard.

Lydia says what happened to me that first time with the moon was my own damn fault, that it was all over the news for weeks before it happened. She says if I'm going to be so mule-headed about linking, then I should at least remember to listen to my radio once in a while and not just to see if a blizzard's coming. Well, I can't stand the noise and that's just the way I am. I'd rather read if I want someone else's words in my head. And call me Auntie Diluvian, but I still read words printed on paper, and that's what I was doing the

evening they ruined the moon. I was reading a book, when suddenly something changed in the room. I looked up and there was a glow from the window and since it was the time of the new moon, that glow could only mean one thing and this one thing filled me with the excitement of a child at Christmas. So I rushed to put on my parka and boots, and I ran out into the snow.

But it was not the northern lights, it was something else. It was slashes of light making a shape like the letter M across the dark face of the moon. I stood there a long time trying to puzzle it out, and then I walked the half-mile down to Lydia's. Her husband was outside watching it too, and he explained that it was all done with lasers and satellites, and no, he didn't think the moon should be turned into a Mega Mart billboard, but this was just the beginning.

"Wait'll you see what Pepsi's cooking up for the full moon," he said. And I clamped down on my tears, but he must have sensed something because he said, "You'd best shut your blinds at night till you get used to it."

"I don't want to get used to it," I said. "And my windows have never had blinds."

I stomped back up the hill and emptied a few rounds at the moon, and to this day, Lydia will bring up that story about me shooting myself in the foot to make whatever point she's working on. This has been going on for years, and from a woman young enough to be my daughter.

This spring when she brought me one of her pies, we took our plates and coffee outside and sat in the sun, and Lydia started in with, "I've been thinking about you." Watch out when Lydia says she's been thinking about you, because what's next will be some instructions about how to improve your life. Sure enough, Lydia goes on to tell me how she was in her garden cutting rhubarb stalks, which reminded her it was spring, which reminded her that spring is when I always take off into the mountains without telling anyone where I'm going or when I'll be back. And I could see Lydia blazing a trail to my little accident, and she'd have to stop there and admire the view of herself and her husband roaring up to my cabin on their snowjet

to see what all the shooting was about and how they found me bleeding to death in the snow.

Which is not how it was at all. The bullet barely grazed the tip of my big toe and the only reason I wasn't back inside patching it up was because when I slipped on the ice, not only did my gun go off, but I also got a nasty sprain to my ankle. So now, every time spring comes around, Lydia can't help but wonder what I'd do if something like that happened to me in the middle of god-knowswhere. And it's no use reminding Lydia that I don't carry a gun when I'm out wandering because that will just set her off about all the other ways I could get myself killed.

So I closed my eyes and chewed real slow so Lydia could see how much I was enjoying her rhubarb pie. Then I told Lydia what a good cook she is and how her kids sure must miss her good cooking now that they've all moved out, and it looks like their loss is my gain. Well, that got Lydia talking about her kids for awhile and then her pie recipe. But soon enough she remembered why she came, and she told me that before I took off on foot anywhere, I had to tell her where I was going and when I'd be back. And I could see that this wasn't a bad idea. but how can I do what she wants? How can I tell Lydia

And maybe grizzly bears and cougars and wolves are no more than varmints and maybe the moon is no more than a good place to stick some company's logo.



when I never even know myself where I'm going or when I'll be back?

I try not to hold it against Lydia that she doesn't love what I love. She's like most of the others up here who felt relieved when the last grizzly was air-lifted out. I've had skunks live under my porch, so believe me, I know how it feels to want to get rid of something, even to the point of killing it. And maybe grizzly bears and cougars and wolves are no more than varmints and maybe the moon is no more than a good place to stick some company's logo. And maybe I'm no more than a deluded old woman who can't keep up with the changes. So I can't answer Lydia when she asks me why I go alone into the mountains. I can't tell her I'm searching for a footprint with the claw poking a good finger length out from the toe, that I need to prove them wrong-what they say about grizzlies being extinct from Montana-because

as much as Lydia says she cares about me, she does not feel what I feel.

I can't tell Lydia I'm hunting for those feelings I had when this was grizzly country. Those feelings that stir through my body and alert my senses and make me as alive as when I'm with a man. That mix of excitement and fear and yearning like when I told him I only came to return his flashlight, and I chose the full moon to do it so I'd not feel rushed to leave, but there I was, rushing to leave, because surely he was too old for me; he must have been in his thirties, and I was only nineteen. So I turned my back on him—that's

And I stood for a spell, frozen on the edge and fully exposed under the spotlight of a cold moon. The man behind me and the bear in front and me not knowing which one I wanted more or which I was more afraid of...

such a habit with me when it comes to people—and I felt his eyes watching me walk away. With every step through the moon-sharp meadow, I moved farther from what I wanted until I was about to enter the forest, and there it was: the bear crossing my path. It could have been a bear, it could have been the shadow of a bear. And I stood for a spell, frozen on the edge and fully exposed under the spotlight of a cold moon. The man behind me and the bear in front and me not knowing which one I wanted more or which I was more afraid of, until I noticed my feet moving backwards one slow step at a time, then I turned and ran to the man, still waiting for me in the welcome shadow of his cabin.

But now, I'm almost seventy and the man is gone, maybe dead, but maybe not. Maybe he went to Alaska, and maybe he made a life for himself in the Brooks Range, and one winter night he was drawn from his cabin by a strange light in

the window, and he stepped out to look, and there was the moon at a time when the moon was not meant to be seen, only it wasn't the moon. It was the letter M. And perhaps that man needs someone to hold him close on the night of the Mega Mart moon, the Disney moon, the Nike moon. Especially in the dark of winter when there will be no sun to erase those emblems from the sky. But come summer in the Brooks Range, the moon won't have a chance in all that daylight, and the bears will be out with their cubs, and the man will want to share his good feelings with a woman who loves what he loves.



### Charles Farrel-Theilman

gray stones held
in a concrete wall. the swept bank entrance punctuated by an abstract-metal fountain, water glancing off sharp struts.
bus after bus pours blind thunder over the routes of transit, each plowing through the exhaust of the bus ahead.

glass and steel tower walls
to trees in sidewalk pots.
this Monday,
what I hold in my eyes weighs
no more than a wren's song in rain.

my hands are inked from spreading ad copy, names and lines that weigh no more than museum air over pottery.

washing my hands in fountain splash, then watching the various faces lining up at stops inside this gas shower of rush hour. I am hoping for a slow dance

I wait for her,

I am hoping for a slow dance across our wood floor as a candle splays coleus shadows over the walls

this night can shift its hot strata above hands cupping created mirage.

cupping created mirage.

young coffee shop workers are delivering cups of water to the street-kids as mannequins in a window get ready for the beach.

so, you can triage your malaise with this cup of iced decaf, sit, back to wall, between windows, and pull your ground-speed from restive into oval, yes, this heat pummels street, sidewalk, and your nerves.

perhaps samsara swims from the heart of this bricked square to the edge as the heat drags its knuckles over bare arms and faces.

scoop a cube on to your neck, rub it in from clavicle to temple, there now, run a cube up and down your left forearm. the night sky is the color of sea raven and the woman in the blue cotton dress may be back, window shopping, and you could offer her

a cube or two, your palm up and eyes softened.

Rieber



**Bank of America** 

SAFEWAY





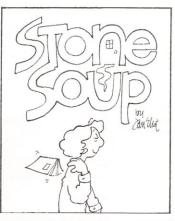
Herman Krieger



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# SUBMIT DENALI

May 1st is the Deadline for the Spring Issue!!!

### **Guidelines for Submission**

A limit of 10 submissions will be allowed from any one individual person.

Visual Arts

- Submissions should be typed (12 pt. Times) and printed on normal computer paper (8.5" X 11")
- A diskette should accompany your submission, and if possible saved in a Word format (if it is not possible to put your submission onto disk that is okay, although that makes things harder on the people reviewing your submissions)
- Each individual submission should not exceed 1,200 words.

- A photographic print of your visual work may be submitted.
- A negative or slide may be submitted.
- If you feel uncomfortable photographing your art work, please contact the Denali office ASAP, so that we can schedule a time when your work can be photographed.
- If a print or slide is not submitted by May 1, that art will not be considered for use in the magazine.

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HONE	EMAIL	

I authorize Denali to publish my work, should it be accepted by the Editorial Board.

SIGNATURE

DATE

Thank you for considering submitting your work to Denali. Completion of this form does not guarantee publication. All works are submitted to an Editorial Board, which chooses works for a variety of reasons including style, statement, voice, creativity and originality. For pieces selected for publication, Denali will receive one time publishing rights. After publication, all rights revert to the artist or author of the work.

Denali Literary Arts Journal considers all original submissions of art and writing regardless of medium, style or subject matter. We do not censor except for literary and artistic merit, and we do not hold artists and authors to theme-based issues. Although art and literature pertaining to the times may be given more weight during the selection process, because the piece may be of more interest to the public.

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