

Denali
WINTER 2007

DENALI

LITERARY ARTS JOURNAL

A Student Production of Lane Community College



Denali publishes in the Fall, Winter and Spring.

We accept original submissions at any time from all residents of Lane County. Submission forms for art and literature may be found outside the Denali office.

All literary submissions must be accompanied by a digital copy
or they will not be considered.

Submissions, questions and comments can be sent to:

denali@lanecc.edu

SUBMISSION DEADLINE
FOR THE SPRING 2007 ISSUE:
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El Regreso | Christian Ward
Wood Cut Relief Print

the monsters have moved out
from under my bed
and have taken residence
everywhere else i look:

they line the bars with faces too weary to give
up, and
they crush me on the bus with bad perfume and
too much makeup and
they harp continually about nothing:
who they love does not love them, or
they don't love who loves them, or
they are out of money or
got screwed out of a job or
baseball scores or
bowling leagues or
giving at the office and
the list
goes on and on.

the truth is that everything is
one-sided and
everyone is wrong for each
other,
money will kill us all
sports are merely a way to
avoid
thoughts
of boredom and
or
death,
and we are all
wired
for defeat.

the monsters have moved
out
from under my bed,
but now i
sometimes
crawl into
theirs.

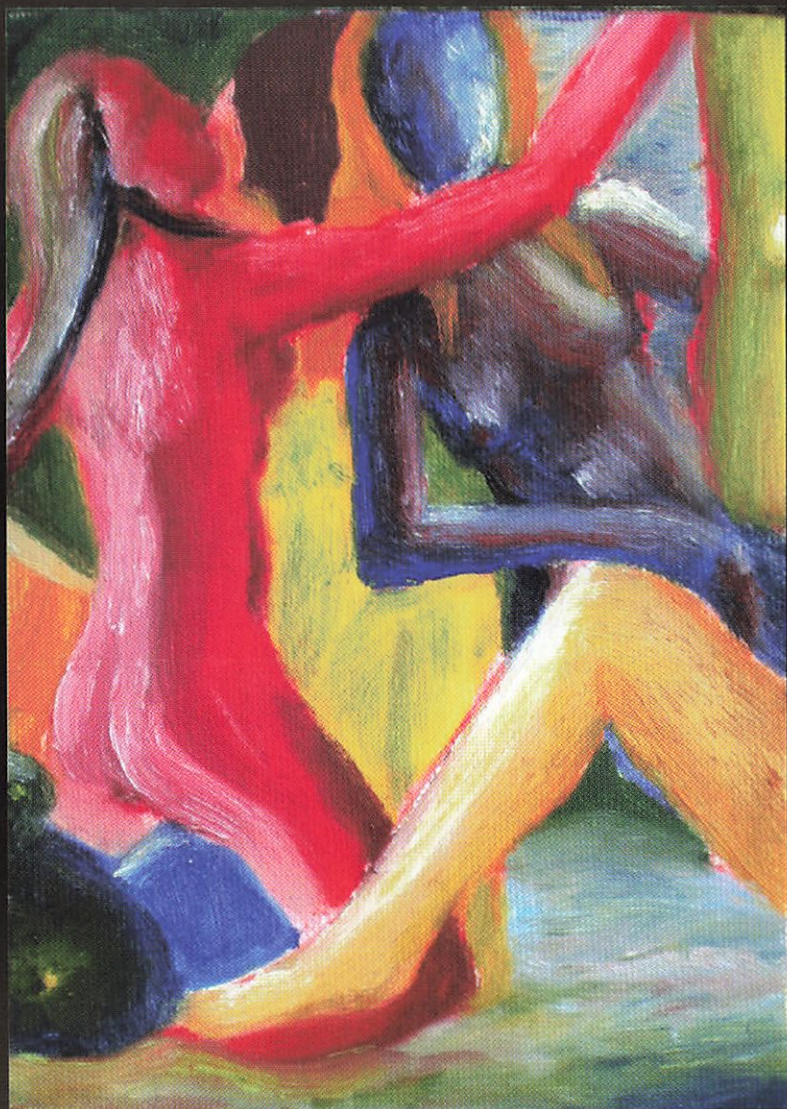
Day at The Holiday Inn

G.L. Morrison

The poet is ironing sheets.
The heat in her hands is an eraser,
lifting the slight lines
she had found written there.
Still warm, this is the sheet
she will stretch over the mattress
blank as paper
for other bodies to scrawl
sleep or love on
which every day she will edit
with lemon-smelling soap.
Making the first bed of the day
in this hundred-roomed hotel, the poet
folds in
the bed's papered corners,
a tremulous denouement.

Chasing their dust from the white
sinktop
and wooded picture's edge
she never fails to be surprised
at what is left behind,
between or beneath the bed or drawers.
The ring left in the sink
she wanted but feared to keep
glitter in the drain like an accusation
a cesura in that marriage.
The poet is not sorry to find
herself emptying the parentheses
of ashtrays. There are worse jobs.
There is something honest
in this quick repetition of cleaning
up after people she never sees
who like a shoemaker's wayward elves
come in the night, making more
work for her to scurry after.

She busies her mind scripting
names for the shades that still stick
to the sniggering lipstick-stained cigarette butts.
Promiscuous Purple.
Under-aged Coral.
Emphysema Red.
Sometimes writing mouths to the words
that might have been said
between tokes. She culls
hair from the bathtub, replaces
the midget shampoo and individually wrapped soap.
She empties the wastebasket
and lays some meaning in the margin
between the can and the plastic liner
loose-fitting as the gap
between the expectation of her life
and the way it had come to her.
The postcards and white towels
that the hotel provides for guests to steal
reveal an alphabet of loss.
Before she leaves, she will set
a wrapper across the toilet seat
like a ribbon angled over the breasts
of a potential beauty queen.
Sanitized for your protection.



A Blessing | Hannah Salerno
Oil on Canvas

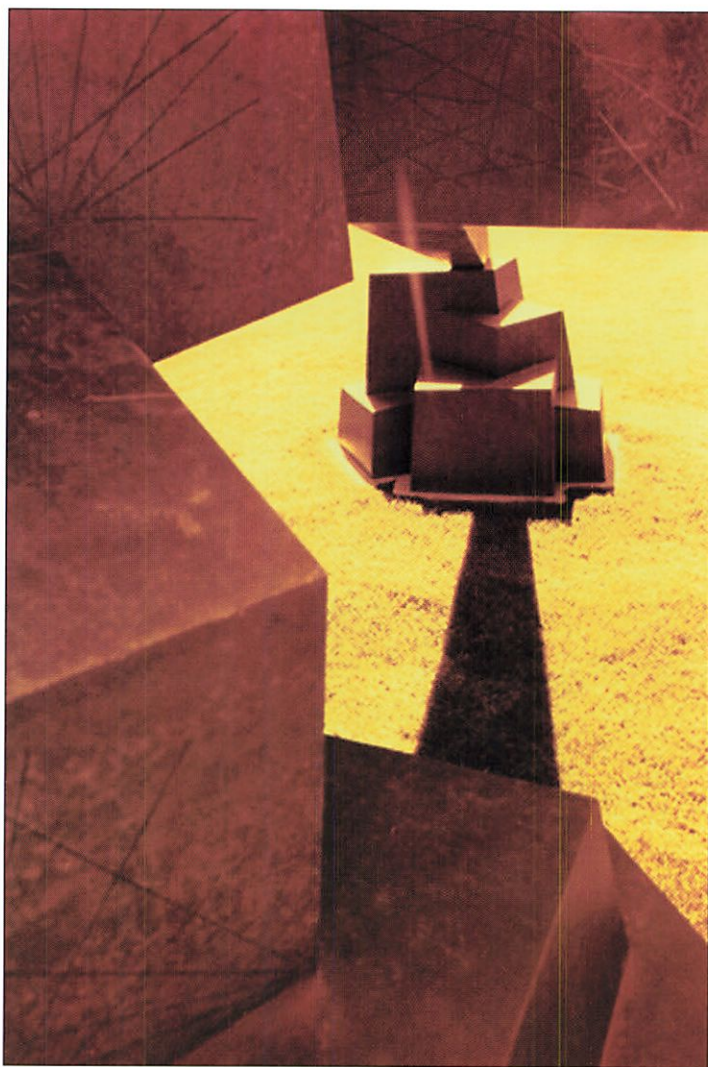
Lake Ohrid

Haley Farr

Slow waves striking the gravel beach
skirted around the Balkan lake of blue
the first time I saw it
the waters were black in the darkness.
The next morning I ate breakfast
mizythra and sourdough
overlooking a drab grey expanse of water.
When I took to swim, I was joined
by a long snake moving along the surface
red and black muscles undulating in the algae.
In the city across the lake
I read Neal Gaiman and talked broken English
to a salty ferry man over a Fanta Orange.
If I stare far enough on a clear afternoon
I can see the hill peaks of Albania.
The night I left to board my plane
four hours away in Skopje
I took one last look at the black water,
Ohrid's lights far away,
the lights of our town, Struga
reflecting in brief lapses flashing silver,
I knew that I'd never go back.
Lake Ohrid was like a childhood fantasy to me.
A small boat comes towards the dock
and I turn to give the driver my suitcase
before boarding the bus.
It's kind of like growing up, leaving Ohrid,
because like a castle's drawbridge raising
the bus lurches forward into the city
and turns towards the highway
my last look at the lake--
and the fantasy is gone forever.



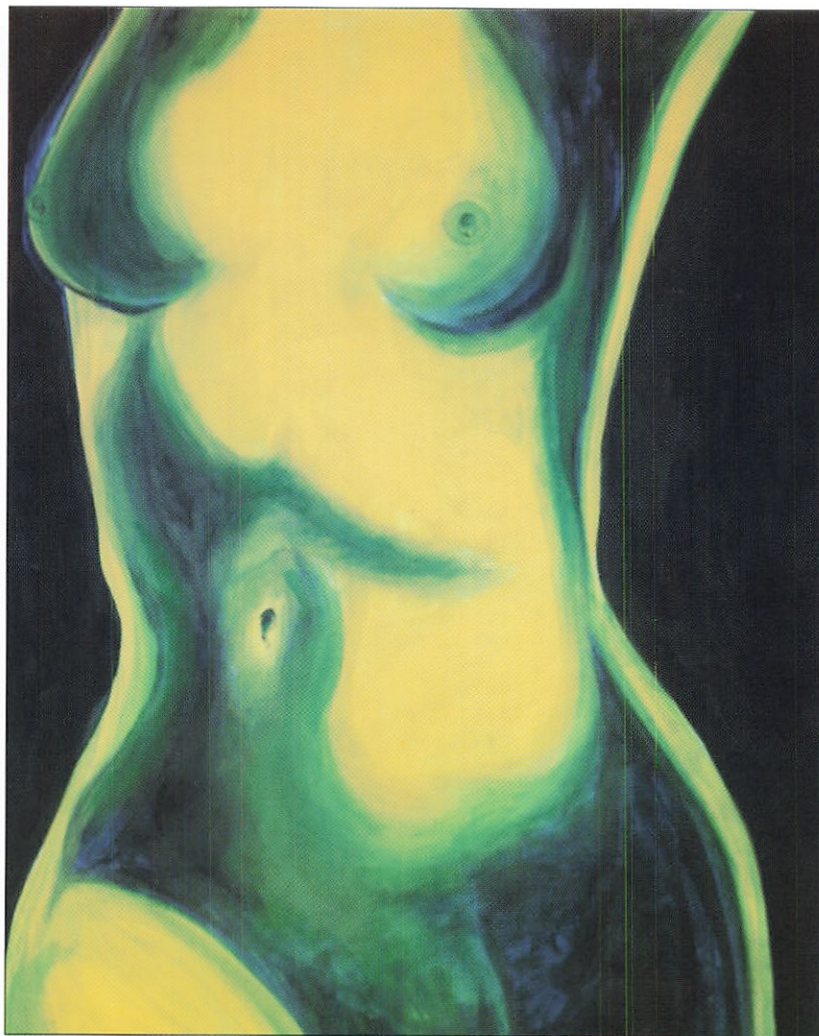
Falls | Sean Wyman
Photography



Angle Overlap | Noah Guadagni
Photography

agony is cheap
costume
jewelry
these days,
stapled to a thousand
whores'
arms
and bubbling
from the lips of a million bad poets
and
i am bored of
this.
the hip thing,
these days,
is to wail on and on about
meaning
or
lack of
meaning

and to be as
apathetic and jaded as
possible;
to let the lack of it all
drift off the tongue
like so much
cigarette smoke.
i am dying
in aisle 3
and this woman next to me,
her biggest problem
in
life
is pilaf
or
rigatoni.



Green Nude | Erica Hardin
*Acrylic on
Masonite*

Elegy for Fyodor Dostoevsky

Willa Bauman

I watched you, Dostoevsky,
in my mind
as you ran from falling
bricks and stones and fire to violent freedom.
I watched you,
gambler that you are
spin this roulette wheel in December
sleeplessly wretched staring red-eyed holy
at bright Vegas lights
seeing snows of Siberia
in every move the dealer made...
You sang to me the song of the gutter
the curse of a drunk
the step of an orphan or a prostitute
selling a body she did not own for copecks
that she threw in the street ---
they were too holy
for her redemption.
And I read your dream words
in cold-light November
under a bare lamp bulb
in fog of overseas war
in evenings after work
in unknown days of the hanging of a tyrant
in an age when 3000
flag-draped caskets came home
to sobbing
mothers
when hands were red and torn

and shoulders ached from weeping
and feet from pacing to silence words
I could not give the rain.
What would you write today, Dostoevsky
the eulogy of every soldier dead
of the crime whose punishment is crime
Or would you write of
staircases
and aging feet
that yellow walls
and stink of grime
or consumptive women on highway 99
who cough blood on LTD seats
but always lift their goodwill bags
to let me sit
and to ask me
about the weather.
I saw you yesterday, O orthodox sinner,
on the corner of 8th and Broadway
you wore the rags of Raskolnikov
but carried three thousand
of Katerina's roubles.
Rain was in your beard:
Did it remind you
of Siberia?

Meniscus

Colin Cavasher

jim had a nice wife

and a nice office

with african artwork

and pictures of his family on the walls;

during christmas time

he would hand out wreaths

his wife had made

and teddy bears wearing

tee shirts with

phrases like

world's best dad.

christ marched forward

shouting

buy now, buy now

more

more

more.

he sat in his

nice office

dripping candle wax onto his desk

into

the shape of

animals

and listening to the little hanging metal spheres

go

clackclackclack

against each other.

hands covered the waxy holes

in his head

and the mortgage papers did not get finished

that day

while water beaded

like the full-throated

brother of

steam

and ran down the sides

to make war

upon the woodwork.

the meniscus was

five degrees above empty

in the highball glass

in his hand

in the heated room

of someone's building as

instead,
he thought he would think
about his sister
or times when
he had been happy
like
cocktails and
cap gun fights—

jim discovered that thoughts of happy times
make current ones worse
and death stroked his face
like a morning lover
lying in bed with the shades down
wearing an oversized tee shirt and
stretching, stretching—

jim
thought
about nothing,
as best he could.

he thought a little about the gun,
about the warm tub
and red, red goodbye
but it's always question of mess,
and who has to find it:
not the nice wife
not the son
not the cat,
then who?

words made war in his skull
standing and applauding the dull
terror
they had invited in for drinks—
the holidays are coming
the holidays are coming
the holidays are here

jim sat back
and thought of the gun
of the pill
of the knife
of the anything
he might have the courage to
do
and,
looking down,
he said to himself
hey,
i
think
this one
looks like a
seahorse.



Untitled | Kathleen Gunson
Colored Pencil

Dr. Daniel Putnam lounged on his back porch in the evening with a cold bottle of Henry Weinhard's Rootbeer. It had been a long day at the clinic and he needed to unwind. Sarah was not home yet, as she was often not home by this time, her teaching duties regularly keeping her late. Daniel laughed as he thought to himself that she often kept the hours of a prostitute. She had looked especially exhausted lately, discolorations appearing under her eyes like wet bags of black tea, blemishes she smoothed over in the mornings with cover-up, like hiding a sin. He had tried to talk to her about her late hours but she only said *Daniel, you don't understand. You don't know what it's like being a teacher. A person like you can't possibly fathom my life*, and he felt a little hurt, as he did when people did not believe that he was a physician, the disbelief coming at parties or banquets when Daniel was introduced to strangers who were bored by his simpleness or put off by the cup of juice in his right hand. They would ask *What do you do* and laugh when he would answer *Well, actually, I'm a doctor*. It was as it always had been, and Daniel went out on his porch and stared off towards the West where the sun was setting, and down the hill a half a mile the train yard lay with rusting cars red.

Sarah called at eight. One of her students needed more tutoring and she planned on helping him late. Daniel returned the receiver to its cradle and dumped the spaghetti noodles into the strainer in the sink where they looked like, he noted, nematode worms. He ate alone, with Beethoven playing, and did not turn on the television because the blue light annoyed him, as did the cliché storylines. He told himself *Honestly, television writers can do much better*. After dinner, Daniel opened the lid to his laptop and pecked away at his book on structural engineering, his hobby, Chapter 23 focusing on the relative strengths of steel alloys. Then Daniel did two hundred push-ups, two hundred sit-ups, took an organic multi-vitamin with the thickness of his pinkie finger, and drank a glass of water. He went into the bathroom to floss his teeth, slowly pulling the floss through to avoid cutting his gums, then brushed his teeth lightly and thoroughly, for exactly five minutes, spending even time on each surface area. Daniel swept his bed out even though there was nothing in it to be swept, making sure that the invasion of crumbs or sand or dirt had not taken place in his absence. He read two chapters of a novel, *As I Lay Dying*, considering carefully Faulkner's shifting voice. Then Daniel closed his eyes and slept as a man who is dead.

Sarah said she had to go into school on Saturday, that it was quite common for teachers to have to go to school on their weekends, so Daniel walked down to the park by the river. It was not a nice day, cold and wet, and the park was empty except for the screaming. Daniel was drawn to the sound, and found its origin at a picnic table by the

water where families often sit on fine afternoons to throw breadcrumbs to green-headed mallard drakes. Two men now occupied the table, one lying on his back and the other standing above him, bent over his head. Daniel was much too curious to walk away, so he sidled within twenty feet, from a direction where he hoped he could observe without being discovered. The dress of each man resembled the torn and weather-beaten patterns of that lost generation, the Vietnam War Veterans who lived under the bridge and rode the trains at night. Daniel noticed that the man who was standing had a prodigious beard and glasses that didn't fit his face, spectacles in fact that slipped with each rough action and jerk of his hands. The hands held an extractor, much like surgical tongs, and the muscles in his upper forearms rolled like piano strings as he slowly worked a rear molar from its resting place in the prostrate man's lower jaw. The extractor was only one of thirty or so dentist's tools, arranged neatly on the wooden bench, in various states of upkeep or decay, some rusted completely, while parts of other devices sparkled like mirrors even in the slow drizzle of the afternoon. The screaming was not important to the dentist and he would only recognize the pain of the other man if he jerked suddenly away from his working tool. Then the dentist would gently push his head back down onto the table, like a parent might pet a frightened child back onto her pillow after a nightmare, and he would whisper something calming; he then pulled the tooth with one swift action, making a sound like coring a green apple with a sharp spoon. The man screamed a final time and sat up as if coming out of a tunnel, and the dentist handed him a plastic half-gallon jug of vodka. The men did not notice Daniel then, but he was concerned they might look in his direction, so he turned and walked back to his house, considering the tools and the whispers and the liquor and the dentistry, a series of sacred acts, the Rosary.

Daniel recognized Sarah's deltoid against his ribcage as she slid under his arm and up against him. She smelled of heavy perfume, and it was late, and she apologized and said *I am really sorry, I had no idea I would be out this late*, and he started to turn to look at the clock before she stopped him in the only way she knew, her hand moving slowly at first, then faster, then holding steady as he exhaled, as a sealed container expels air suddenly when opened.

Each time she was not at home, Daniel tried to get back to the dentist, scouring the park at first, returning to the table, each table, all tables, but not finding what he was looking for. Then he began to widen his search circle, as he had read in a book, proceeding to a predetermined radius distance, then moving 360 degrees, as if searching for a person lost in the woods. His wider circle was enough to include the Washington Street Bridge where he found two shelter holes, three empty Old English bottles and a urine-soaked

sleeping bag. His mind registered the Old English labels and the sleeping bag brand of REI. Later, he would find a person resting under a thatched roof of brambles, not far from the other shelters, but it was not his dentist and he apologized and continued on to the train yard. There, Daniel found a group of men huddled in a circle as if playing cards, but there was no deck, only a box of lemon wine they passed, taking five-second pours each, until it was empty and cast aside, bouncing off a fifty-gallon trash can and rolling up to a maple tree.

The next weekend, she was out once again and Daniel went down to the park with the hope of finding the dentist but was disappointed to find a young family, two little girls feeding ducks out of their hands next to his table; as if that park and that table had not been the location of what Daniel had witnessed. The search had now become an obsession and Daniel spent time during the week, in between patients, considering the life of the dentist. It was not something that he could explain to anyone, including himself, nothing like the occurrence of natural surfactant in the lungs, but Daniel did not try to explain. Instead, he allowed himself to think without any real evaluation or organization and this thinking was something new for Daniel, revealed underneath, like the soft innards of a warm banana. He had looked to the train yard all week, in the evenings, trying to pick out the heavy forms who hopped the boxcars there as they left the confines of the changing area. The explosions of the yard no longer bothered Daniel and he sat up in the dark listening to the cymbals, the long lines adding links, the crash of steel against steel, the lengthening of trains.

It was two months before Daniel saw him again, a fever on his forehead, in the park, at a table, talking slowly to a similarly dressed man, passing a bottle. Then there was dentistry, a full cleaning and extraction, much more wonderful and engaging than Daniel had hoped. It was like the first night with his cadaver in medical school when he had not been able to sleep but had only thought of his incision over and over, now noting that perhaps he had tailed a millimeter to the right at the end of his cut. He could not be sure though. He could not go back. The dentist did not have as much trouble with this new patient and new tooth and Daniel believed he could see the soft rot of dark brown from his observation point, partly hidden behind a tree, and the screaming was not screaming but more of a nudging groan at the time when the pressure was the heaviest. There was a second patient too, after an hour, and Daniel stood for three hours observing the work of the dentist like a child might watch at a batting cage, waiting for an autograph from a baseball player.

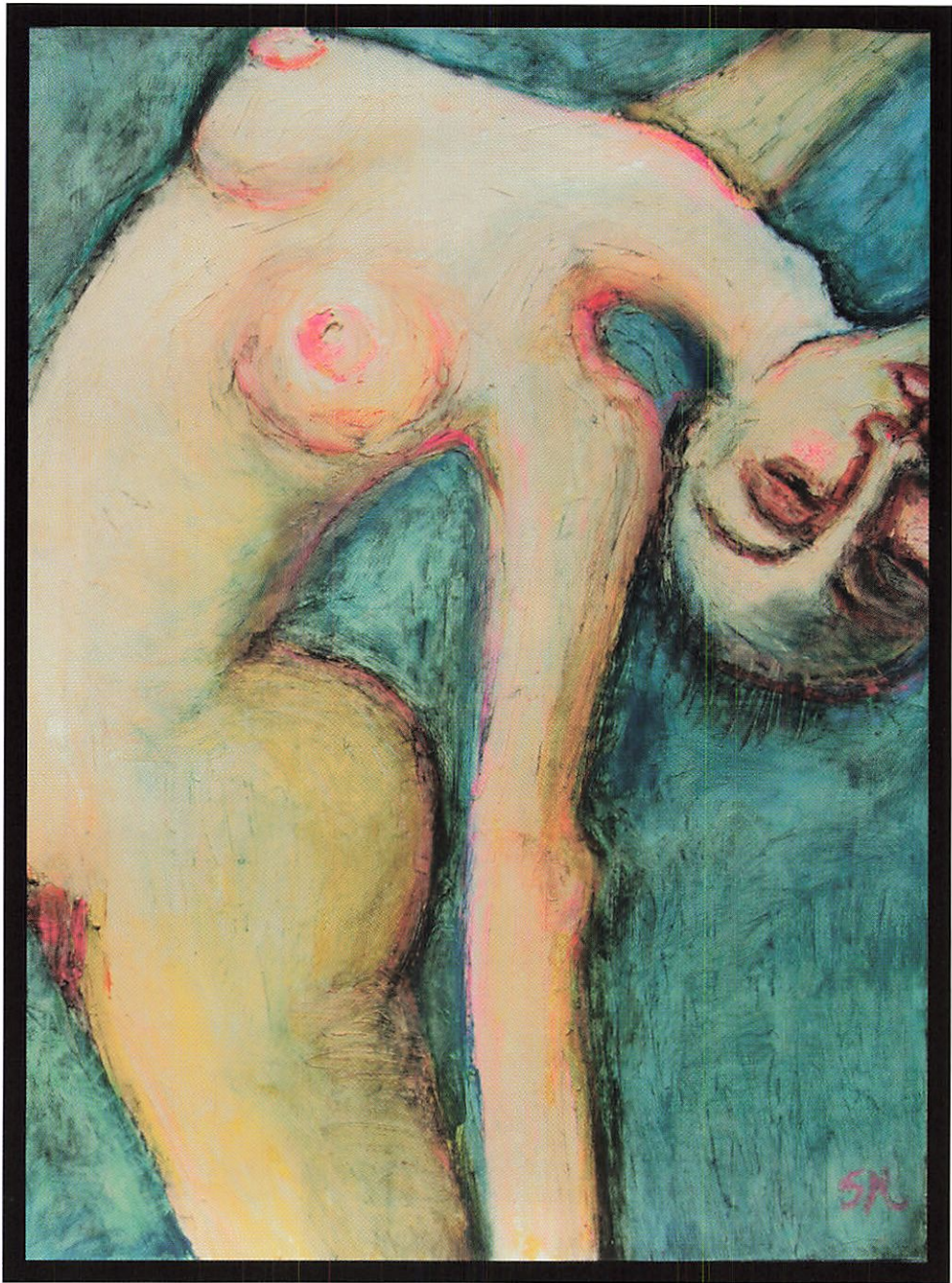
Daniel did not think about when he was young. He did not think about the heavy door of the barn, or how it had sounded that night. He did not remember all of it, but he could have remembered what was important if he needed to. There was the smell of the wet hay in the loft, molding upstairs, the long ladder, and he had climbed. He had chosen to climb. That much was his fault. The loft was not. It was uncomfortable and cold and damp and he had tried to say no. He wanted to believe that it was not his fault and he had said no. It was rough and heavy and quick. And afterwards, alone, he had told himself that he would be able to control what took place in the future, that there would be nothing of the smell of cheap whiskey, Wild Turkey, or any other alcohol in his life, and that he would be careful and precise, inviolate. He had begun his control by putting that moment away, like shelving a can in a pantry, in a recess, though it was not a simple can he had put away, but rather something animate, a bear with teeth and muscles and claws like the curves of hay hooks, and it waited, unseen against the charred black bidding of time. And Daniel did not think of this.

Daniel was sweating. He had been sweating for days and they had begun to notice at work. A nurse had asked him if he had a temperature. He had been staring at a chart, not writing, and a drop slid off his nose and landed loudly on the paper. *Are you ok, Doctor?* Daniel smiled, revealing teeth that had not been brushed in a week.

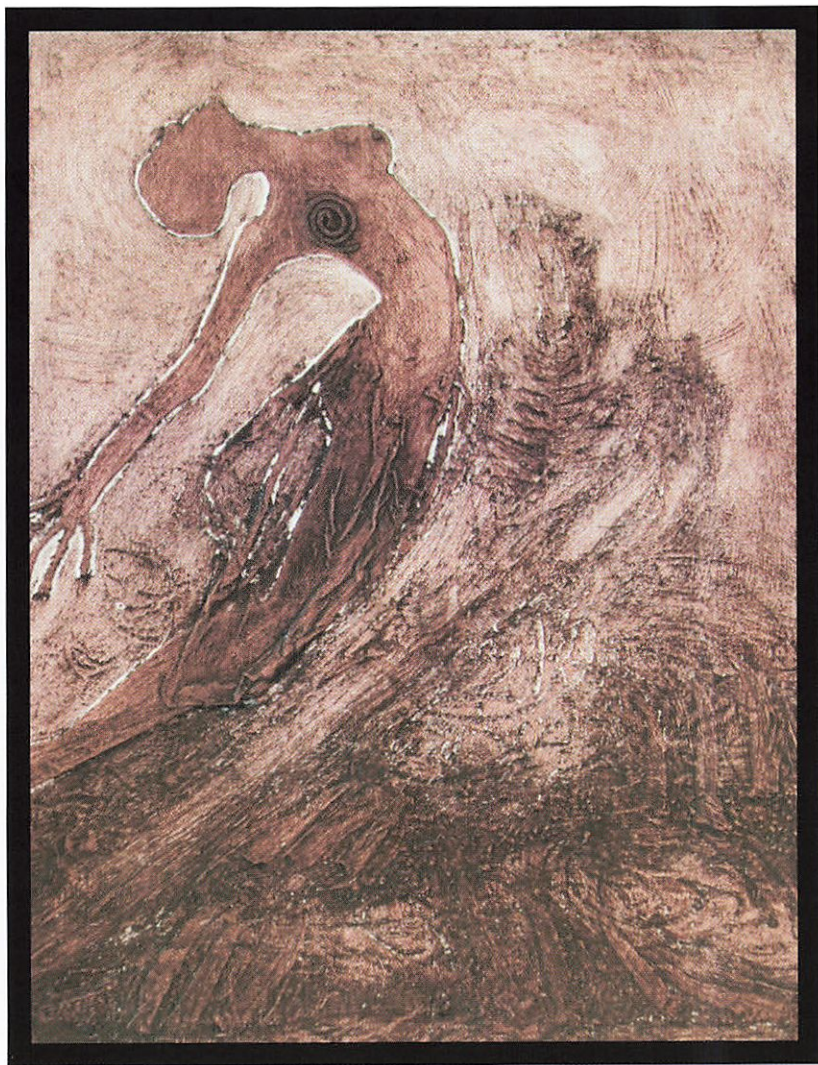
The leaving was not hard. Daniel was alone in the evening again, and it was not hard. He had purchased the coat, the boots, and the backpack at the Army Surplus. He stuffed what he thought he would need in the bottom of the pack: clothes, matches, bread, canned food, an REI brand sleeping bag, cards, a Swiss Army Knife and three forties of Old English. He thought about a note then, something to explain, but there was nothing to explain and she would come late and learn slowly, as he himself had learned slowly. There was a process to it all, an experience that takes time, as a baby begins to feed while cutting new teeth. She would work soft food at first, then masticate larger material. Daniel did not worry about her. The lights were on and Daniel did not worry about those either. They were no longer his lights to worry about and he left them. The last was his doctor's bag, an old country practitioner's satchel that he had stuffed with otoscope, stethoscope, thermometer, sanitary wipes, tongue depressors, tongs, gauze, tape, tweezers, needles and syringes, bottles of antibiotics, and various other medicines. He picked up the bag and held it firmly in his left hand. Daniel went out the back door, leaving it open, across the deck and the yard. Then he hopped the fence. He picked his way through the new growth of the suburban woods, trees five feet high, down across the muddy creek bed in his stiff army boots, and began walking along the old road towards the train yard, trains crashing together there, changing tracks like iron dogs changing owners.



Ford | Gen Schock
Photography



Fervor | Shelley McKeithen
Cattle Markers



Free Spirit | Shelley McKeithen
Collagraph Print



Feet | Charlotte Johnson
Photography

An Adoration of Hands

Sarah Marie Stevens

I adore hands; both calloused and smooth,
the fine-fingered dance of them in motion,
the Ability in them.

I have large hands,
for a girl –

strong and coarse from work;
yet the Flare of them stretching
is the flash of feathers in the sun,
and the stories in them
are endless;

Each scar, visible and in memory,
Hold me to myself with firm grip.
Rilke says palms are the sole of the hand,
But I say; Hands are the soul of the body.

Calloused or smooth,
it is the fine-five-fingered dance
of them in motion,
Ability is in them.

If hands came in herds, in flocks,
they would be called an Adoration.

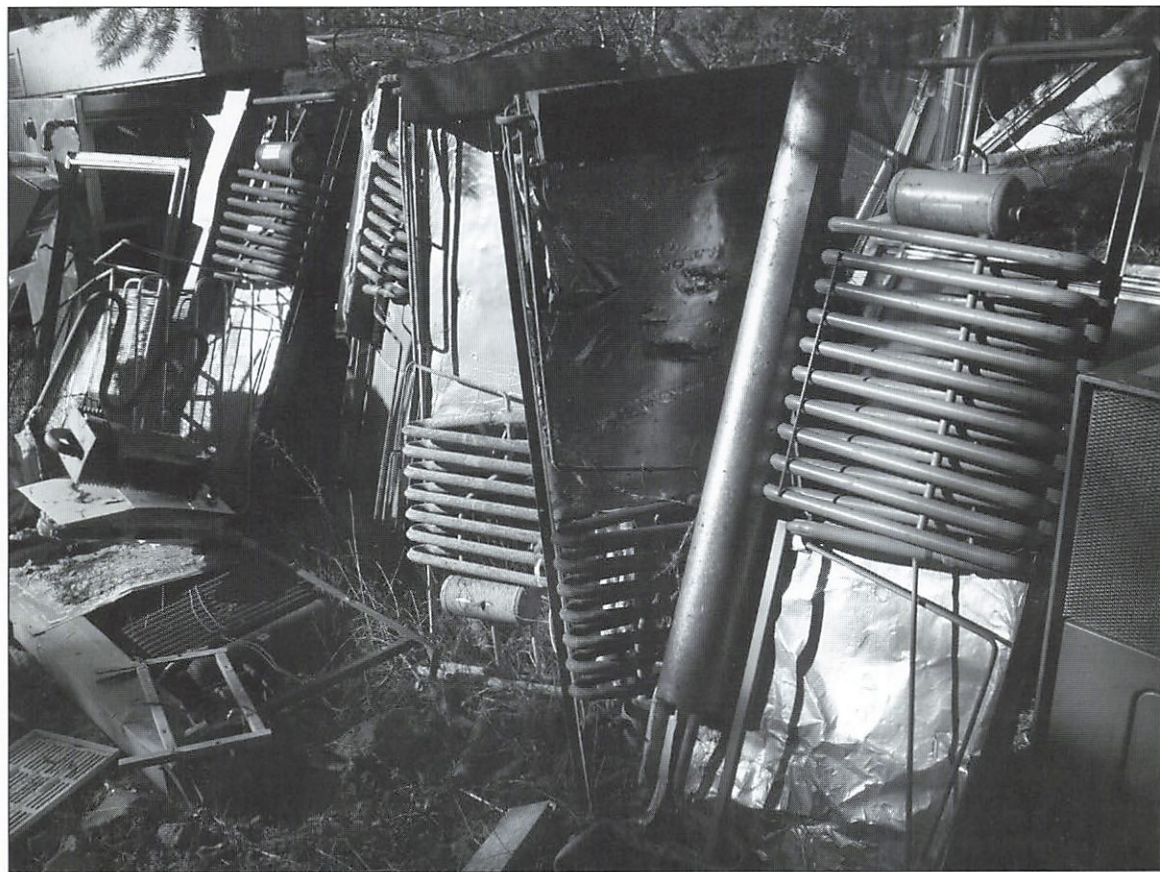


Claw | Ramsey Tainton
Photography

I Only Noticed Rome

Paige Lehmann

I only noticed Rome
at midnight
in the window of the bus--
the coliseum, all lit up,
the apartments and
shuttered windows, closed
against the cold night,
and memories of Rome
and birthdays.
No, I didn't notice
Rome the marvel, Rome
the everything,
Rome, the eternal city.
I was too busy
sitting in your room,
on your bed,
warming my feet by the
heater and watching
your back as you sat
at your desk,
studying. Ah!
Vita Eterna!
How could I notice anything?
You were there.



Insides | Gen Schock
Photography

Yesterday

Lilith Lincoln-Dinan

She picks small stones from the puddles while crouching down in the driveway. The water shows hidden colors and patterns, stripes and polka dots. When the puddles dry everything will return to dusty gravel; but now, in the rain, they're revealed.

She pokes through the mud, careful not to stir it, leaving clear water on the top to rinse the stones before lifting them into the air and light for inspection. Only the truly interesting ones go into her pockets. Turning over a rock the nose of a pale pink worm swims out, blindly swinging toward her fingers and scaring her away from further searching.

She stands, wiping her hands on her jeans, and looks up the long driveway to where it meets the road. Occasionally a car will roar past, the sound carrying across the surrounding fields to her ears. Then they're gone, leaving only the patter of raindrops on the hood of her jacket.

She turns and looks at the house behind her. It's quiet. She wonders how long she can stay outside before someone tells her to come in. It's still several hours until sunset, but her fingers are numb with cold. She leaves her boots and jacket by the door, watching a moment as the water soaks into the carpet.

She empties her pockets of the stones in her room, laying them out to dry on the dresser. Once they're completely dry they'll be reevaluated. Those that still look interesting, if faded, will go into a little wooden box. At any time some spit rubbed across the stones will bring the colors back to full life. The ones not put in the box go back to the puddles tomorrow.

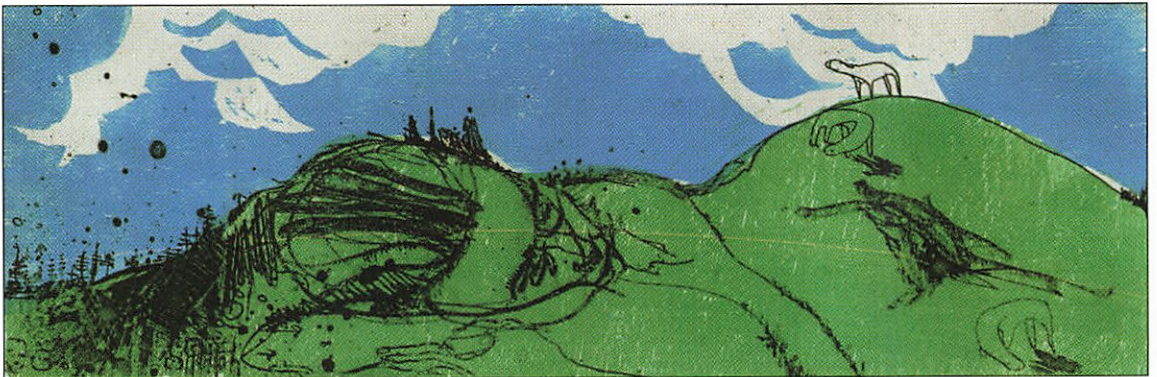
She takes out paper and colored markers and draws rainbows arcing over green hills and pots of gold. Attention is paid to the details, individual coins drawn carefully piled, and small star shaped flowers placed in seeming randomness on the hills. Little birds flying in the blue sky.

She draws this picture often. The best ones are hung with tape on the wall above her bed.

(In a few years she will carefully take down all of the pictures, stack them, fold them, and then she will throw them away. Her new drawings will be in pencil. Pictures of wide open eyes staring out of the paper, kept in a folder under her bed. She will take the small wooden box full of stones and empty it into the dry dusty gravel of the driveway.)

She looks out from under her door at the house. It's quiet. She wonders how long she can stay inside before someone tells her to come out. It's only a few hours after sunset, but she crawls into bed. She leaves the light on, pulling the covers over her head to block it out.

words flow from frescoes on the walls under the ruby
paint as smog pours in and voices vibrate against
the ceilings like the clatter of light reflecting
from so many diamonds
I take my glass of water to the oak
tables where I shot down two shares to
shore up on and write in the semi-darkness
only lit by the sky of day and
the trains pass by
I said goodbye to your sister and
bought her an espresso in the tiny glass she
poured an eternity of sugar accidentally
into mine
and I returned to pay eighty cents for
the water
at home we're out of pasta
and you wait, typing on the keys
surrounded by our paintings, primary colors
and the trains roll by



Gaia | Christian Ward
*Wood Cut and
Solar Plate Etching*

Our Fathers

Peter Hoffmeister

In the mornings, the man got up early to pray while sitting against the refrigerator on the linoleum floor and the house was dark, and he would ask that he would not be afraid and that he would not fail today. He rubbed the top of his head in the front where an island of hair stood alone as an act of repentance, and he whispered in the cold but he did not notice the cold. After an hour, his young daughter would come out of her room with a child's shuffling steps, and she would form to her father's lap, pulling her knees up and flattening her feet against the warmth of his leg. She would smell her blanket and suck the two fingers nearest her thumb while the man said Our Fathers as the light began to sift into the darkness of the apartment like flour is sifted into a soup. Each time the man came to *give us this day our daily bread*, he would push his daughter's head under his chin, tucking her more and more into himself and she would wait until he was finished with his last *kingdom and power and glory forever*, resting in her father's arms with the security of her blankets and her two fingers and his warmth and her ear against his chest where she could hear his heart beating in fearful syncopation. Then the daughter would look up at the newly born stubble on her father's jaw and the worry lines that crevassed his brow and she would take her two fingers out of her mouth to whisper you are very strong daddy. She said to her father in the mornings when it was not so dark anymore you are very strong.

The man had asked to watch as they harvested her organs but the doctor said that there was a strict policy against spouses witnessing such a thing. Instead, he paced the waiting room drinking the scalded coffee that had been on the warmer all day with nothing to protect it from the hot plate underneath. The man refilled his cup three times without noticing the bitterness or the fact that he had burned a large blister onto the top of his tongue, a blister that would open three days later with the taste of decay in his mouth, a taste he could not avoid. The man was still pacing when the doctor returned and said it is finished. The doctor had replaced his gore flecked scrub coat with a white reconciliatory lab jacket but the man was not fooled and knew her blood was hanging somewhere, in another room, on a wall hook. He nodded as things were explained to him but he failed to nod at the correct times and had no recognition of larger truth or significance. His world was small at the moment, the room, the cup in his hands, and that was all. He would pick up his daughter in an hour, from her grandparents, and he would try not to explain about the coffee and the blister and the waiting room.

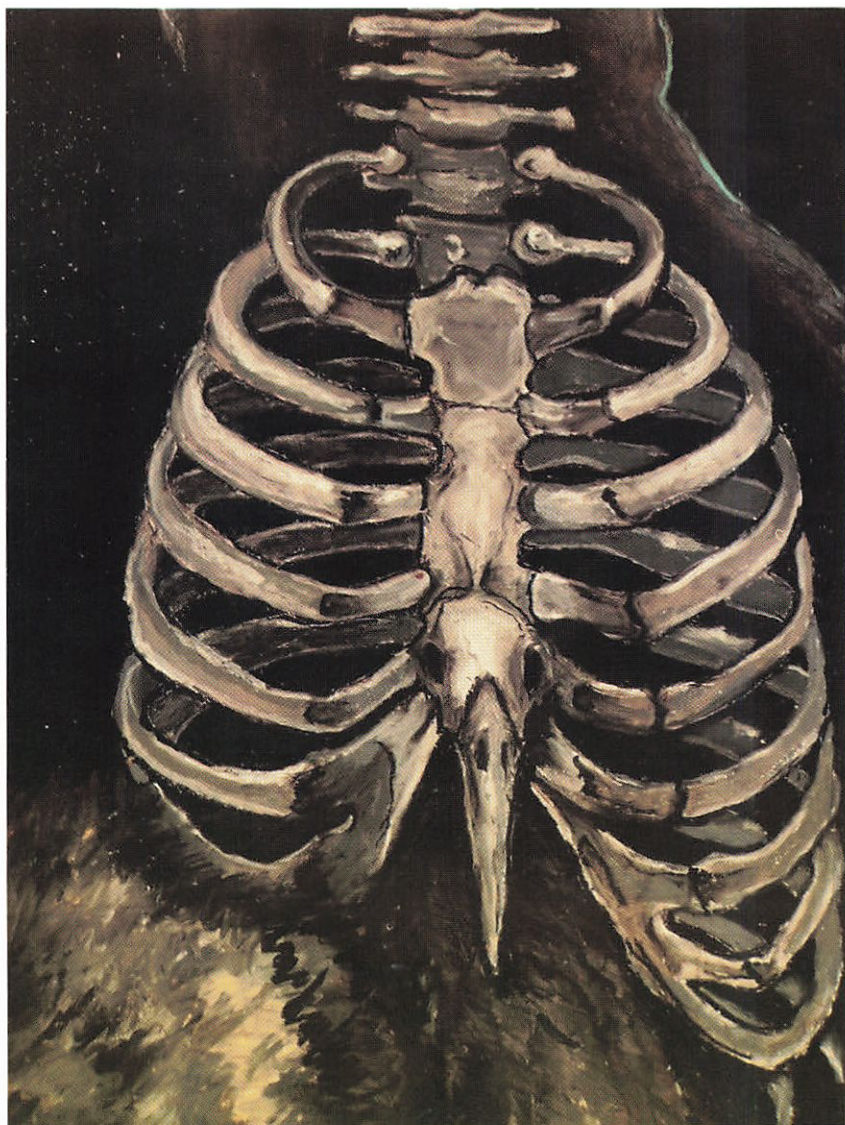
It started as an accident, but the mouthwash became a ritual. After reading a story aloud to his daughter and telling her that everything would be fine, that there is a heaven for people we love and a time for all people to live together once again, the man prayed with his daughter that she would not have the night terrors any longer and that she might sleep in peace as all children

in this world deserve. He did not look at the empty crib in the corner, and after leaving a small crack to her room and leaning his head against the doorjamb for a moment with his eyes closed, the man walked into the bathroom to clean his teeth. It was then that he brushed and gargled a large mouthful of Listerene, swallowing without thinking, and a sharp warmth came to his stomach. The mint liquid ached and heated his stomach in a mixture of pleasure and pain and the sensation terrified the man, causing him to retch. But he did not vomit, and the pain in his gut was replaced by a hazy buzz that was the closest thing to nothing that he had ever known. Within an hour the man had finished half the bottle and was belching mint drunkenness with neither a smile nor a frown on a face that was no longer there. The next night he returned to the bottle, and after the mouthwash the man wrote at his desk in his room until the heaviness of sleep overcame him. He did not go to bed then, but slept each night in a leather chair that was made for only one person and not two. The mouthwash was of no consequence and could be purchased at a local store for only \$2.79 a bottle.

He remembered a long time ago when his friend had called to speak about the friend's son and how he was not going to school most days but was drinking and using drugs and many at the school thought that he was a drug dealer as well. The man had listened to his friend for a long time, silent and nodding to himself, but when the friend began to cry the man stopped him and said Friend, this is fine, your son is only going through his hero's journey and everyone must journey. He said it as a writer and a professor, and he could hear that his friend was hurt, so he added We all journey but he had no understanding of the experience himself and that is why his books had always been Nathaniel Hawthorne rather than Ernest Hemingway. The man was still living in the world of trite allegories months later when his friend called again and said that his son was dead and had been found in a bathroom at the school with three large rubber bands knotted together around his upper arm. The school nurse attempted to resuscitate the sixteen year old for an hour on the dirty floor with her white uniform pressed against his dark clothes and there were tiles underneath, and the man had tried to picture the image clearly so that he might use it later in a book.

It was different when his new novel came, the box of hardbacks arriving on a Wednesday afternoon during a school year in which he no longer taught. His daughter was in grade school now and could ride the bus home if necessary but he tried to pick her up every day and tried to avoid drinking until after she was in bed. Lately this prospect had become more difficult and he sat at his typewriter for hours in the afternoon pecking at a new story but fantasizing about the first taste of alcohol.

The man sat on the living room floor in his undershirt and heavy beard, sucking the finger he had cut with a box knife and reading the jacket cover of his new book. Someone at Random House had written, "This signals a departure of sorts, a journey from Hemingway to a post-modern Sherwood Anderson, from disciple to dark master," and the man laughed caustically because he had neither been Hemingway nor did he know when he had crossed into the darkness. His friends, who no longer liked him, said it had been the accident but the man knew that this was not true, that the accident had only been a beginning of things and could not be solely blamed, like an alcoholic's cirrhosis of the liver could not be placed on a first drink at the age of eleven. He knew that the accident had left him amputated, that much was true, but it was the long nights of no sleep sitting across the arms of a chair, thinking of writing and writing and nothing and hating while trying to hold himself high enough to breath into his daughter's lungs and heart in the mornings and evenings and he knew he had no heart left but only a cut of raw meat the size to pinch between his index finger and thumb and he gave this to his daughter because it was all he had. It was this giving that made him suddenly an old man and alone, except for his daughter, and the world did not know that there was still a small kindness to him. His daughter of course could not see what others did and felt that her father was poor and meek and therefore blessed, and was careful with him as a child might be careful with a broken bird found wingless in the street.



Birdcage | Darren Cook
*Oil Stick on
Canvas*

My Father Became a Myth

Moriah R.E. West

When I was sixteen my father became a myth
gradually he faded from the portrait of my life
in to the murky mists of memory

He became font.
Black shapes on white, with no meaning
but what we give them
Font, the thing that always held the most meaning for him.

When I was sixteen my father became a myth
not like a legend, just a story, the kind you're not sure if it's real

As I lay here on my bed, looking back on my life
I wonder,
Was he was ever real?
Was he just the desperate attempts of a lonely child,
An imaginary friend,
An imaginary teacher,
A made up game that with age
disappeared,
soon after the Dolls?

When I was sixteen
my father became a myth



Untitled | Ras Terms One
Mixed Media



Untitled | Susie Morrill
Photography

Psychosomatic Seduction

Orion

sick
well
heal
hell
insistant assist and grown distant
stick with it
i went to the special-est
extended friendship
to tiptoe around the relentless event list
and open up in repentance
just to be blessed then
to vent my aggression
i ventured my best guess and said
do your worst, make me your bitch

i'll send you a present
and imagine a perfect marriage
to dissolve into love and spirit
i no longer feel useless
in my world-view apartment
advanced stage of psychosis
and my friend's name is jesus



Black and White Nude | Hannah Salerno
Oil on Canvas



Lock | Ramsey Tainton
Photography



Nature's Play | Katelyn Alexander
Photography



Shadow Light and Dark | Darren Cook
Oil Stick on Canvas

"Are you kidding me? There is no way that mer-people lay eggs!" Keith took back a defiant slug of beer.

"Well, how can you be so sure? I mean, they definitely don't have genitals." Derek responded.

The air in the bar was thick with smoke and general laughter rang throughout. Soft tones of Eric Clapton crackled from old dusty speakers.

"No, no, no, no, NO! They are too sexy to fuckin' lay eggs. Surely, they have crazy underwater sex in all types of positions. Maybe they unzip their bottom half...?"

"What are you saying?! A mermaid definitely does not unzip her lower half. They're like fish, man. Face it." Derek swayed slowly to the rhythm of the music. He noticed the slight recede in Keith's hairline and smiled.

"You losing some hair there, Grandpa?"

"Don't fuckin' change the subject, damn it. We've got to get to the bottom of this. What if they are like snakes? You can't see the man snake's penis, but somehow it emerges when the time is right. And the female, well, I guess she just needs some sort of hole..."

"Look, Keith, the bottom half is fish-like. They don't have reproductive organs like we do. No dice, man. They lay eggs, for sure."

"I refuse to accept this. Ever since I was in middle school, I have had this crazy fantasy about meeting some hot mermaid and having unbelievable sex on the beach. What if at a certain time during the day they change into full humans? You know, like werewolves? Fornication time. And why do the girls wear bras to cover their-" Keith trailed off, suddenly noticing the tears in his friend's eyes.

"What?"

"Listen."

And with a turn of their heads, they heard the scream of the falling bombs, at last.



Ages | Ramsey Tainton
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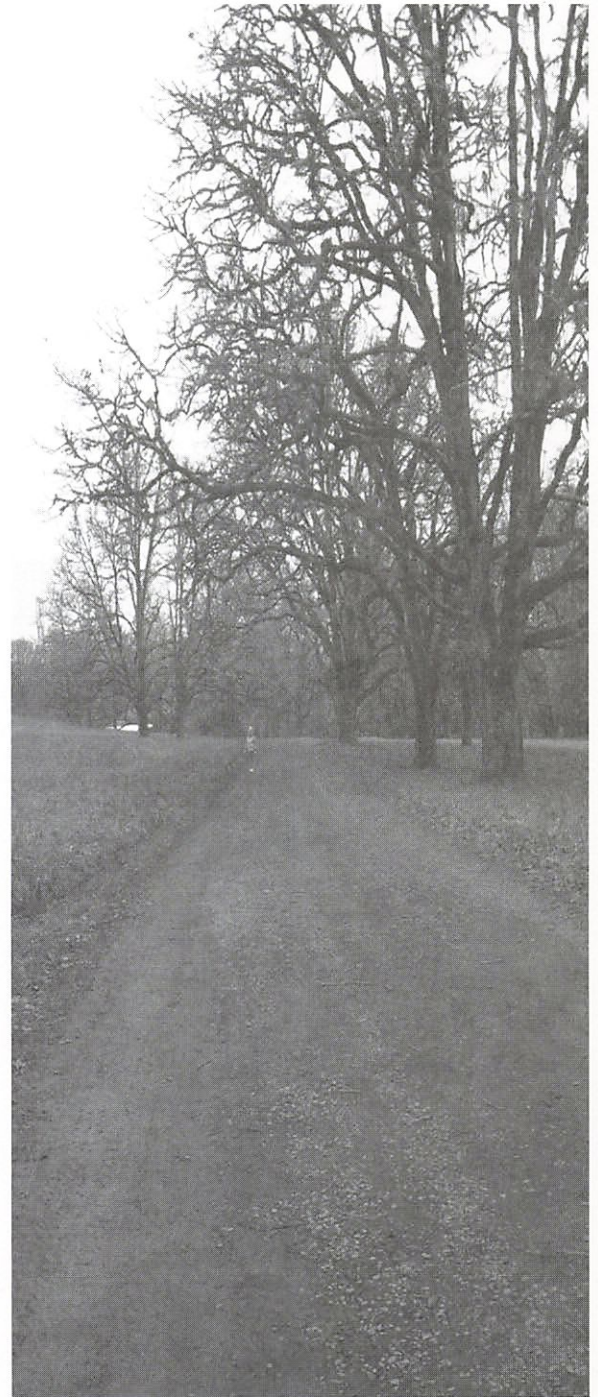
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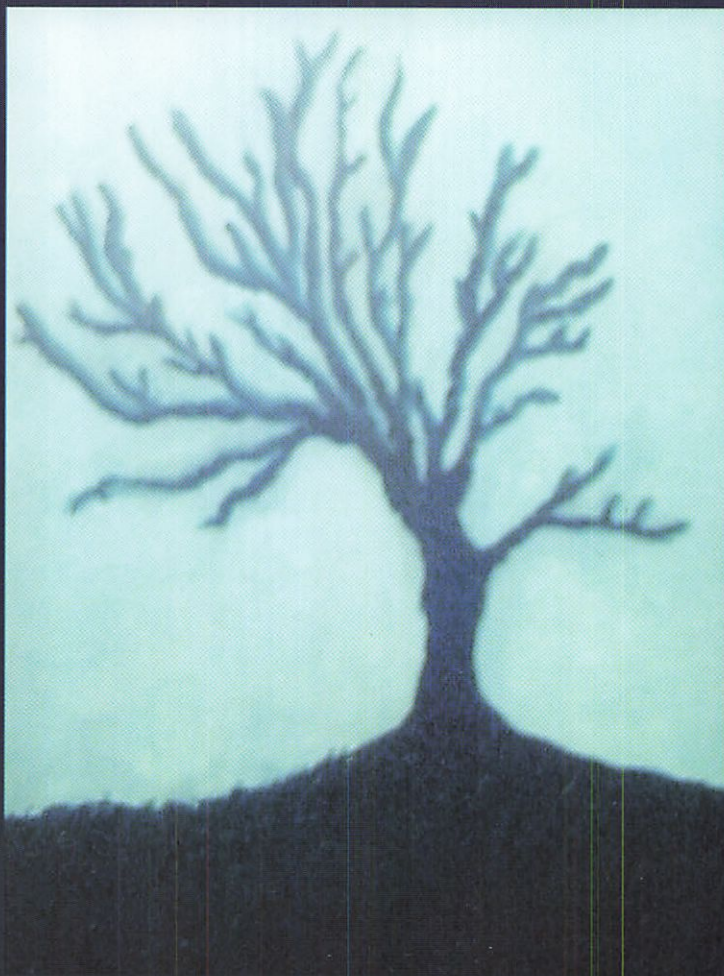
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Winter Tree | Colleen Patricia Williams
Oil on Canvas

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