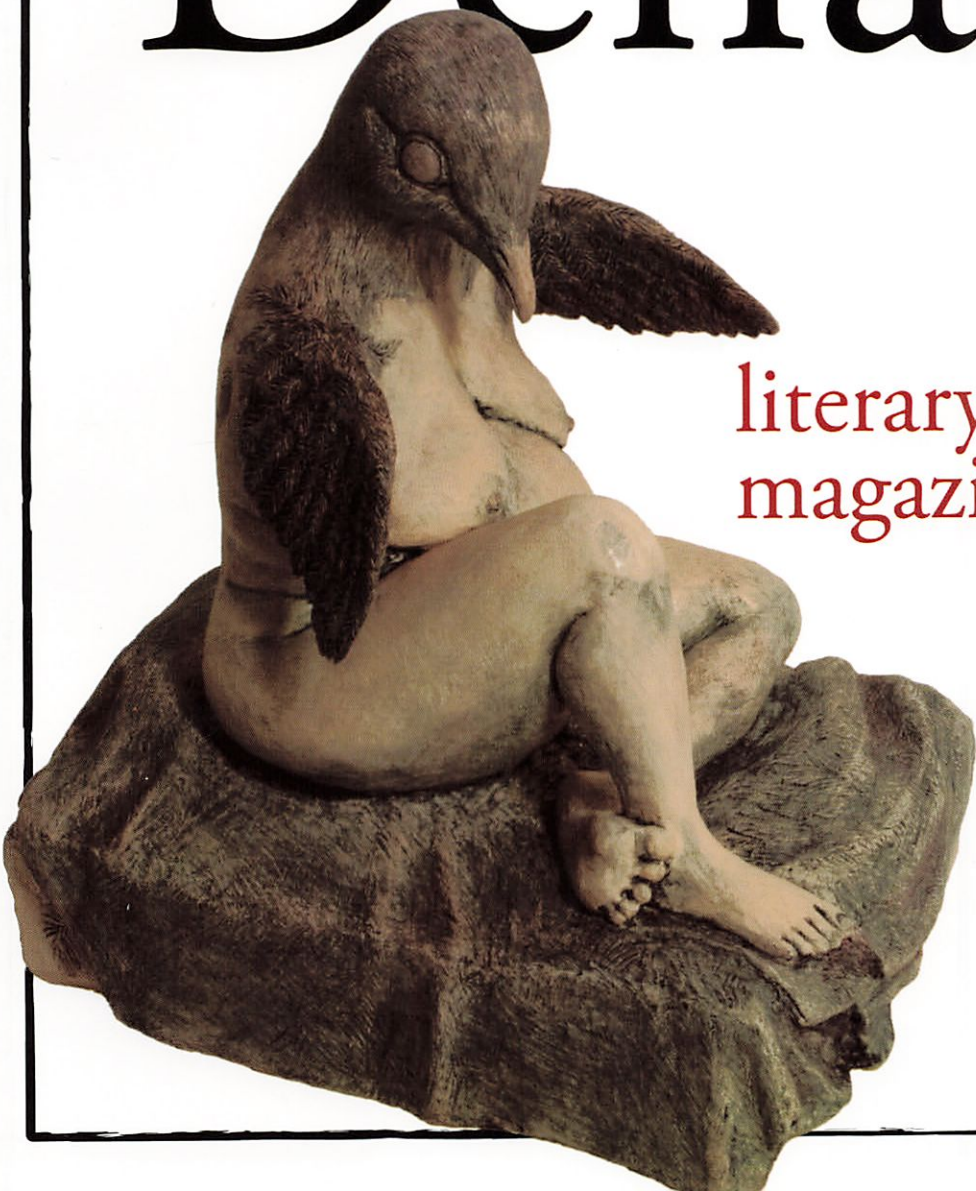


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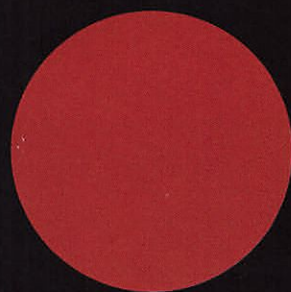
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2010



Denali

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I Like You | *Victor Schramm*

My muse plays
Chords fallen on deaf ears
Noise
The sound of the pace of her walk
Fluttering of her lashes when she wonders
Warm rustling on the stovetop under her spoon
My heart beats to it
Runs on the track
That's music only to us
And noise to the rest of the world



Returning Home | *Brittney West*
oil on raw canvas

Belongings | *Megan Hinkel*

1. Izabel

Months of tedious preparation, then finally everything you owned fit within the confines of international travel regulations. Two 50-pound suitcases full and as much weight to carry with you as you could bear to carry with you.

All the dozens of sellable items sorted, priced, photographed, advertised, and sold on Craigslist. Dozens of boxes to store at your mother's house. Some heartfelt selections of beautiful things you wanted me and Estelle to have. The trips to antique stores, pawn shops, consignment clothing boutiques, used bookstores, and sometimes adding new essentials – a slender laptop, a giant box of your favorite incense. Years worth of collected kitsch and bike parts left behind by your heroin junkie ex. Hundreds of pounds of everything else left hastily by the dumpster.

Even after all this shedding of your presence in the world, I ended up driving home from the airport with 27 pounds of your belongings which had been deemed extraneous in those

last frantic moments before your departure from my life – your turquoise sequin dress, your running shoes, your “it’ll be cheaper to buy it here” contact lens cleaning solution, your bath towel (oh how you laughed when you took your first shower in Buenos Aires and realized you had chosen to leave behind your towel).

The story of lost luggage during your subsequent move to Guadalajara, where your last minute packing style found you swapping carry-on items for checked items, and left you in the subtropical climate with no computer, no camera, no change of clothes...but at least you had your heavy winter coat, your hooded sweatshirt and your acrylics.

You good humoredly quoted Don Miguel, and cheerfully explained your philosophy: “I’ve just had to let go of everything – *‘my’ camera, ‘my’ clothes* – I just got to *use* those things for a while.”

After a few months respite in Eugene, you moved to Khartum, taking even less with you than you had taken before.

2. Alexander

“Hey Xan, do you still have any morphine? I want to give some to Walter.”

“Who’s Walter?”

“A guy I work with. He’s a veteran. He’s in a lot of pain...he threw his back out, and can’t make it to the VA until next week.”

“No, I dumped out that whole bottle a long time ago, the uppers, downers, lefters, righters...there was enough variety in that bottle to stop a mans heart...” he followed this trail of thoughts in silence. After following it to its private conclusion, he found the path back to our conversation and asked,

“Do you remember when I was collecting all those pills?”

Vividly, yes, I remember that time in our lives. Never before had our love been so sweet, or a trip to Albertsons been so tolerable (actually, pleasant!) than the time we did morphine together.

I remember all the parties and the continual current of faces flowing through our living room, how you would, with the smooth timing of a lounge singer, procure your pill bottle from the shelf, and like Pablo from Steppenwolf distribute just the right thing to just the right person.

The sales for cash, the trades, the charity, the consumption just for the evening’s festivity.

You purchased this miniature pharmacy while working at a skeezy gambling parlor on the desolate end of town. You would come home late from your late night shifts and interrupt my pre-school sleep and animatedly relate to me your pre-dawn stories – complex concoctions of real events, half-truths, lies and pure fiction.

The women who came to gamble there, knowing it was your shift, whose thongs peeked out from their tight jeans, feeding their children’s college funds into the video poker machines, who, by your descriptions, became so aroused that they left little wet spots on the bar stools while you discretely

Belongings (continued)

(or maybe not so discretely) pressed your erection against the lottery ticket case below the counter.

Jackpots were won, tickets were cashed, hundreds of dollars in tips you'd receive.

With such money in your wallet, you became a magnet for customers needing to sell you their possessions so that they could gamble the money. Drug dealers, needing to deal. Thieves, needing to turn a profit for their goods.

Your new bike, your new belt, your new musical instruments and recording equipment, your Fender Passport. The cocaine fueled jam sessions, the new recordings...

"Yes, I remember." I said.

"I was planning to kill myself. That's what all those pills were for."

A genuinely innocent confusion overtook my face "But...you were doing so well! You were doing more with your music than ever, you were finally getting serious – all

that equipment that you purchased, the microphones, the amps..."

"The accumulation of material goods is meaningless to someone planning on being dead in a month."

3. Maraleigh

The time I came home to find every single thing I owned uprooted, overturned, broken, bashed, torn, thrown, and strewn around the room. This climatic act of jealousy was quite unnecessary - unlike you, I never cheated.

Nonetheless, the word "LIAR" scrawled crudely with all of my lipstick on the bathroom mirror. My clothes decorated with smeared toothpaste, laying in heaps around the apartment. The bed covered in potting soil from the first aloe plant I had ever kept alive. Your ashtrays emptied onto my textbooks and homework. Broken plates with socks. Soap with staplers and pens. Jewelry and shoes. Q-tips commingled with Kafka.

The only thing of yours that was broken was a Led Zeppelin LP, unfortunate enough to be sitting on your turntable when your eyes fell upon it at the time you decided to physically represent your inner turmoil in a grandiose explosion of anger towards me and everything I owned, towards us and the space we shared.

My computer, and my collected years of college work, miraculously spared.

It was at this time, seeing all of my belongings mixed with cigarette ashes, potting soil and broken plants, that I decided to finally move out. That this was exactly the kind of drama I no longer needed in my life. That I would, in fact, be happier alone and lonely.

I called Seraphine, the one friend I had. Before she even arrived, I had nearly everything packed and ready to go in garbage bags.

By the time you came home later that evening, you found a teary sob-story letter written on a torn yellow legal pad, and your digital

keyboard smashed to pieces with your crowbar (to show you that I can be angry and violent too).

While I lived in Seraphine's living room during the weeks it took me to find a new place, the garbage bags full of my belongings lived in her hallway.

4. Nadine

Being nearly one century old, you've had plenty of time to collect things, and to save enough income to hire people like me to dust those things once a week.

The explosion of gaudy pink flamingo paraphernalia dominating your bathroom – the countertops, the shelves added to countertops, the window sills, the baskets hanging from the ceiling.

The spare walk-in closet full of excess garage sale finds, flea market bargains, estate sale purchases, clearance bin victories, holiday decorations, souvenirs, gifts to give people two or three Christmases and birthdays from

Belongings (continued)

now. I would help you pack sellable items, and then help you unpack all the things you had purchased that same day.

The oversized hobby horse you had shipped from Nebraska, at no small expense. The teak wood table which was admittedly beautiful (I noted this every time I had to oil it) but distressingly unusable, as the tiniest knick or scratch would devalue this small fortune of furniture.

The charms hanging in front of every possible window, the china cabinets full of valuable fragile collectables. The robot vacuum cleaner.

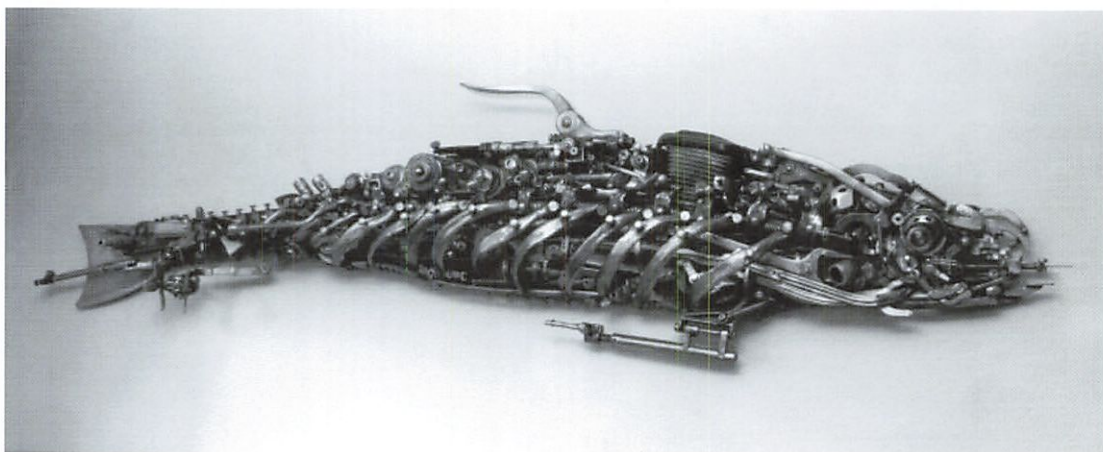
While it was not kind of me, I couldn't help thinking to myself every time I cleaned your house, what a profitable hassle your estate sale will be.

5. Mom & Dad

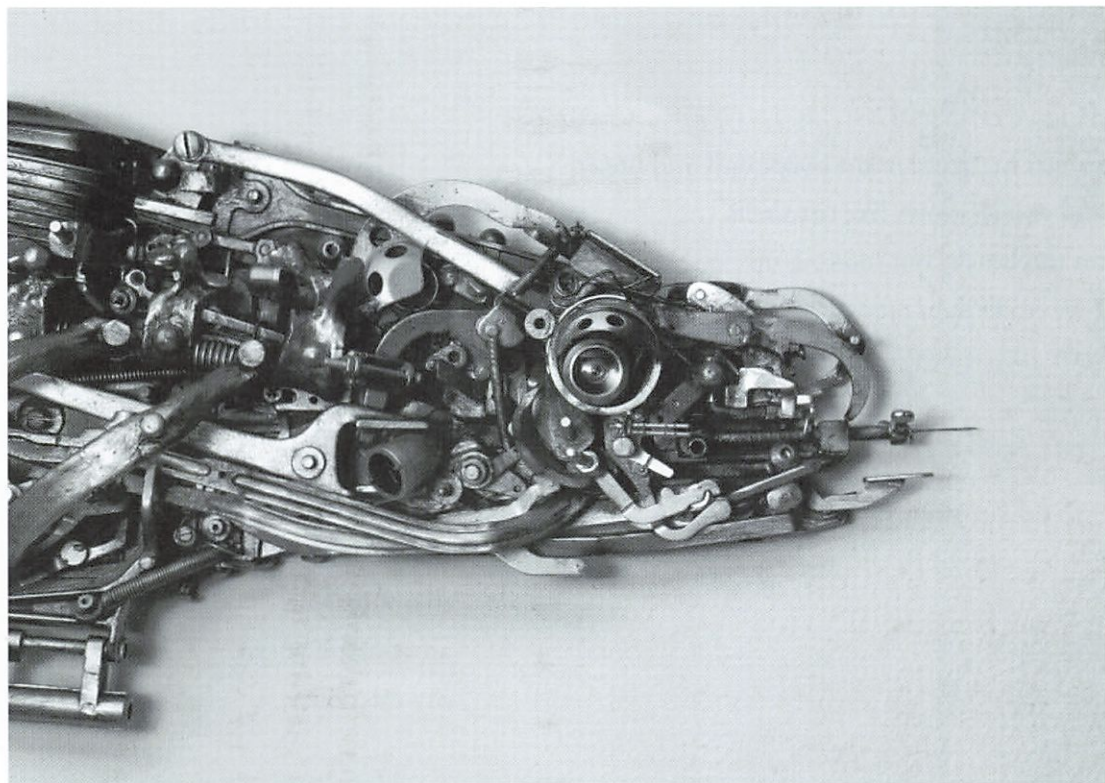
The surreal comfort of opening a drawer I haven't opened for 18 years, and knowing exactly what will be in it before I even open it.



A Creek In The Woods | *Maggie Wright*
photography



Pullutacuda | *Jud Turner*
assemblage



2 Poems after Emily Dickinson | *Leo Rivers*

311

clouds high and wind swept curl and break
and cast shadows like sea shells
on the beach, but looking up
I see no kraken tendrils
wave like seaweed in the sky.

328

arachnid - so serious
all eight eyes,
yet merry of limbs
with weaving

top to bottom
then up again
an animate yo-yo
my miss busy.

soon her cotton boll
of progeny
will popcorn with babies

all in need of feeding!



Tattoo Book pg. 4 | *Rachael Miller*
mixed media



Ship | *Lauri Kinder*
photography

Even though I lost track of you long ago, I still think about you. You never responded to the letter I wrote. You were a key piece in the puzzle of my life. You and I fit together like two links in chain back then; we were one.

I imagine that you're still living on the fringe, just getting by, making something out of nothing from the opportunities — that come your way.

I wonder if you have a car or three parked out in the street, combining the worn parts into one that barely runs just the way you and I used to do.

Do you still hit the road on your thumb? You looked at the world with your eyes wide open to experience new places, people, and things. Do you still have the same sense of adventure that you and I used to share?

I remember when we met. We lived on the fringe — listened to Dark Side of the Moon on your stereo. We thought outside the box. We dreamed about adventure. We wanted to see the world, on our terms, in our own way.

When we talked about girls you didn't have much to say. You were raised to be a

good Catholic boy. You said, "I don't want to be tied down. Maybe you'll find the girl of your dreams."

You weren't an altar boy. You and I were brothers. We didn't need to confess to find the truth.

I'll always remember stringing hammocks in our rented palapa hut with a single light bulb and the top of the Dutch door open to the sights and sounds of the village and the people watching us from the street outside. I can still feel and smell the warm banana bread, wrapped in worn dish towels that you and I bought from fishermen's wives at the end of our siesta each day.

Do you remember strolling through the streets of Iztapa together — along the black sand beach, late in the afternoon, filling two shirts full of mangos for just a dime? I can still taste the sweet fruit piled between us while we sat in the shade of the mango tree on that hot sunny afternoon, peeling back the red and yellow skin, sucking the stringy fruit from the pit, while the sweet juice dripped down our chins on to the ground and the ants feasted on the drops in the dust.

Danny (continued)

Every now and then when I get to feeling low, I think about you and I taking the train through the jungle; both of us watched the jungle go by — sitting on hard wood seats, until the train ran out of track and we hitched a ride from there to Tikal in the back of that truck. We crept through military checkpoints at night, trying to catch some sleep as the truck rattled along, with that old sow squealing and shitting at every bump in the road.

Do you remember that clear tropical night? We watched the full moon rise over the jungle canopy as we sat on top of the pyramid, and the jungle came alive with the spirits of long lost Mayans while the rays of the full moon inhabited every part of us?

You and I were free back then, free to choose our own paths. We never had a plan but we always knew when we had arrived at the place we should be.

My life has been an adventure since the day we crossed the Belizean border to Mexico and you said, "I'm going to Oaxaca to buy a hammock."

"I'm going north," I said, with the weariness of the road that you saw on my

face reflecting back at me from your eyes.

I had my eye on another prize the last time I saw you. You headed west from Vera Cruz and I headed north towards home — each of us with empty wallets sewn from the leather of apple-picking bags from that fall's harvest.

I knocked around for awhile — working in the woods until my wallet was full — before I went back to the Cays to buy a sailboat just the way we dreamed we would do.

I still ask myself if your spirit was with me the day I bought the boat. My senses were alive. I thought about you as I searched for kerosene from shop to shop down rat-infested roads lined with clapboard houses and black men hanging out in the shade watching me walk past them out of the corners of their eyes.

"What are you doing here, Mon?" the shopkeeper said, when I asked him if he had any kerosene. "The next shop have it," he said, pointing down the road. "Get your kerosene and go, Mon."

I filled my jug at the next shop and started back to the waterfront alone when three men

walking in front of me slowed their pace forcing me to pass between them. I glanced over my shoulder as they reached out to grab me.

I ran like the wind.

They couldn't catch me because something I couldn't see held them back. I was sure it was you and the strength of your spirit alongside me — there and then — holding them back to let me escape to experience our dream.

You would have liked the boat, Danny. Twenty-six feet of mahogany planks nailed to its ribs, joined to a hand-hewn keel with a mast, cut from the straightest jungle trees to create the boat of our dreams. The white canvas sails were a bit tattered and torn. But they caught the wind just fine. It came with everything that a guy would need: a kerosene lantern to read when it was dark and only the stars shined in the night sky, and a single burner stove to cook a mean pot of garlic and beans. I imagined you sitting at the stern in a pair of shorts with a strong grip on the tiller, your lean body tanned by the sun with the wind blowing through your sun bleached hair setting a course for a place on the horizon

you and I had never been.

Without you I sailed on the tropical wind, dove in the clear emerald water, and plucked lobsters from between the corals for my dinner each day. I met the woman of my dreams. I fell in love when I looked into her eyes. She and I shared the same sense of adventure that you and I had. I didn't have a plan but I knew I had found paradise. It was just the way you said it could be.

Things started to change after I met her. I named the boat "For Sale." The time was right for me to move on. It didn't take long to sell the boat unseen to a expatriate drinking rum in the corner of the Caribbean Inn one morning at nine-o'clock for twenty one hundred dollar bills.

I left the Cays that day — never to return — with her on my arm and ten bills tucked in each shoe, on the skiff you and I rode together the last time we left the Cays for Belize City.

On the waterfront my new girl and I dodged the thieves waiting for us and the bills they knew were in my shoes. I could see their knives disguised by white handkerchiefs

Danny (continued)

sticking out of their back pockets.

They yelled, “Hey Mon! Dis side, Mon.” We jumped out of the skiff on the other side of the river and hailed the first taxi we saw, to race across the city and catch the first bus out of town — north to the border. You would have been proud that we made it back to the states with all the bills in my shoes.

We bought a Dodge truck that was sweet for its age, to travel the west, living in the Yurt you and I built together out of clear pine lath from the bankrupt mill. All we had then was a pieced together plan and the desire to build something new that we had never experienced before.

My life was full of adventure until she gave me the news that I was going to be a father. I didn’t adjust to the loss of freedom right away, but I did settle in. I traded the road and a piece of my sense of adventure for a hammer and nails, pounding out a good life as solid as the concrete that I poured each day. I didn’t have a plan, but somehow my life changed again and I ended up ironing my shirt each day before I went to work to pay the bills. I’ve fit more pieces into the puzzle

of life since the last time I saw you. So many days I find myself wanting to cut loose and hit the road again, to experience new things that can’t be relived. That’s when I think of you and me back then.

It was good to hear your voice the last time we talked on the phone. I wanted to see you and catch up, trade the stories of our lives, of all the years, and the distance that has grown between us. We made plans to barbeque. You said you would come. You never did.

I wonder if you’re still free.



Dragon Breath | *Rick Barich*
photography



Untitled | *Kia Metzler*
acrylic on cardboard



Trapeze Artist | *Kia Metzler*
acrylic on canvas



Alone but Radiant | *Brittney West*
oil on paper

finally there was the moment
everything was silenced into a single harmony
nothing from anywhere but the Center
i was floating
for the moment i was illuminated, i understood
but then i Wanted
and then as if attached to a weight of immutable Suffering
i fell back to the here and now
alone but radiant



Beuford | *Emma Gunson-Anderson*
mixed media



Herman | *Emma Gunson-Anderson*
mixed media



San Telmo | *Lauri Kinder*
photography

I've been on this beach once before and I know the shape of the thing I am looking for. Finding it is the only way to give form to what I've lost. My rental Honda is beeping at me, an electronic nag reminding me I've left the door open. It doesn't know there's no one here to steal it. El norte is chasing the blue-green waves until they turn white against the shells on the rim of the sea. How many years has it been since Robin was here? We were young. So young I can't quite picture it now. Can't remember what I looked like in my red bikini. I think it was red, anyway. I had a red one and a yellow one. Robin made a joke about my wearing Spanish colours on a Mexican beach that day so maybe I was wearing the bottom of one and the top of the other. Or maybe that was a different day. The only thing I still have is my taste for Kools. It's hard to smoke in this wind. It keeps chasing my sarong, wrapping it around my legs. Cradled in my hand, the red ribbon of my hat flicks against my wrist.

We hadn't meant to come here. At least I hadn't meant to come here. Maybe Robin planned

it. We'd been on the road for a week, from Guatemala to Belize, then across the border into Quintana Roo. We spent a roach-filled night in a hippie flat in Cancun, sneaking out before anyone woke up to hitchhike west into Yucatan. I remember Robin telling me about Mayan astronomy as we sat in the back of a pickup truck, rolling through scrubby plains. They probably had a more accurate knowledge of pi than Europeans did, he told me. Otherwise they couldn't have produced their calendar. I'd pushed the straps of my bikini top to the sides of my shoulder because I was getting stripes. Robin had his bandana tied high around his forehead. The air smelled like dry grass. He smelled like coconut oil and the warm rubber soles of the sandals he'd cut out of an old tire somewhere in Argentina. I'd laughed when he told me, pretending to not be impressed by his resourcefulness. It made his blue eyes seem brighter and wiser.

El norte is kicking in earnest now. The clouds have hard, shiny edges that change position as they race past the sun. If only it would blow away the layered years of sand. Then

Lost and Found (continued)

maybe the light would catch it, toss it up as if from the bottom of the sea so I could snatch it. Something tangible to make up for what I lost. Mom, Shayla asked before I left, are you having a midlife crisis? She was only half-kidding. I can barely remember myself with Robin, that summer, how could it be any clearer to her? She's a good kid, bright, with blue eyes. When she turns 18 next year she wants to go travelling. Her and Beth-Ann spend hours on the computer, arguing about where to go and what to see. So far they've planned three entirely different world tours. Beth-Ann's dad suggested a coin-toss; said they'll still be in my living room when they're 30, trying to decide, if they don't. He and Mary think it's a great. They're proud of the girls' independence. I'm proud of Shayla too. Not a scaredy-cat bone in her body. But when I think about her sitting in the back of a pickup somewhere, pushing her bikini straps over her shoulders, I reach for my pack of Kools and light one without even thinking about it.

My daughter thinks I'm having a midlife

crisis. I can't explain there is something I have to find, something I lost here. I wasn't even sure if I would find the beach. It's been nearly 20 years since that summer afternoon. We got dropped off on the edge of Mérida, late. I shouldn't have left my shoulders uncovered so long. They were burnt raw. Robin carried my rucksack to the hotel, plopped it on one of the twin beds and asked: do I get a tip? Sure, I joked. Here's a tip: always look both ways before crossing the street. He laughed, bright eyes flashing. The next day he said: let's go to the beach. Neither of us had a map so we asked at the bus station: Queremos ir a la playa. Cual es la proxima? The attendant didn't say anything, just yawned and pointed to the third bus down, handed us two scraps of paper and our change. Adelante! Vamos! Shouted the driver. I didn't know where we were going until the kid next to us said, Celestun. Wow, said Robin, playing with his bracelet, I've read about it. There's a flamingo colony there. The leather strap was worn and dirty. The row of thick silver beads gleamed dully against his broad wrist.

It was midday when we arrived. Hot. No wind that day. Robin had our stuff in one bag, his canvas holdall. That's right. I'd changed to my halter top to keep the straps off my burn. Little kids scampered around our feet while their dads tried to sell us boat rides and their moms tried to sell us tamales. We couldn't afford a boat ride, so we bought a few banana-leaf wrapped bundles, double-wrapped them in newspaper and stuffed them into the bag along with a jug of water and a bag of gumdrops. *Donde estan los flamencos?* Someone pointed and we started walking. Hard to believe we only met a week ago, Robin said, how different would your life be if you hadn't nearly gotten run over by that bus? It did seem like a long time ago. I was used to his company now. I thought he might be about to say something more but he suddenly looked ahead, hey, there's a break through the brush there, let's go walk down by the sea. He turned right, pushing through a thin tangle of vines. Ducking, I followed him. It must have been about 60 or 70 metres of light scrub before we stepped onto the deserted crescent of beach.

Yesterday I did a recon trip from my hotel, walking from the point on the end of the beach where we'd begun. Little kids scampered around my feet while their dads tried to sell me a boat ride and their moms tried to sell me tamales. I can afford a boat ride now. But that's not why I'm here. I didn't need directions, but I did buy a bottle of water and a plastic bag full of mango slices dusted with chilli. I'm more adventurous now. I paced the distance with my pedometer. To my surprise it was just like I remembered. The cone-shaped rock like a fossilised dinosaur tooth, prodding insistently up from the underbrush, as it had then. Obviously someone maintains the road, keeps the wild grasses and vines cut back. I almost walked through, yesterday, but decided to come back in the 4 x 4. It probably got scratched to hell driving those 60 or 70 yards but I don't care. It's fully comped. I need the beep-beep. It makes the space smaller, so it's not just me and the sand and the Gulf of Mexico running into the distant horizon. I guess that's why I left the door open, so I can make a quick getaway. With it waiting I don't feel so alone. If only the hurrying

Lost and Found (continued)

wind would help me find what I'm looking for. What I lost.

Look at this, Robin had said, bending to pick up a bleached white shell. The beach was perfect, pure, unspoilt. Do you think anyone's ever been here? I asked him.

Sure, he said. Maybe. I don't know. I don't think people come here very often. We walked along the waterline, not saying anything, watching turquoise turn to white as it danced the sand. Up to one end, back down. God, it's hot, let's sit down. Robin led me to a corner lightly shaded by the vines, c'mon. He sat down next to me, close. I shut my eyes to listen to the sea. He put his hand on my shoulder. You know, he said softly, you know, I think you're quite a girl. I don't know many girls like who'd come out here.

I opened my eyes. What are you doing?

I told you, he said, I think an awful lot of you. His eyes were so bright it hurt to look at them. I couldn't get to my feet because he was behind me, one arm over my shoulder,

pressing me down.

You're quite a girl, he repeated. My body started to go cold despite the white midday heat coming off the sand. He was pulling at my bikini bottoms, grinding me back against the heat, sending a chill through me.

Please. Stop it. Stop it.

He threw his body across mine, digging fingernails into my sunburn, making me yelp. His coconut oil blocked out the smell of my cheap sunblock. My breath went in a rush, crushed out of me. He pressed my shoulders back, forearm across my collarbone. Snatching, my fingers caught his bracelet. I tore it off and threw. His arm slid up against my windpipe. Maybe it's not even here any more. For all I know he found it and took it with him. When I regained consciousness he was gone, along with the rucksack. The newspaper-wrapped bundle of tamales and the water jug lay a few metres away.

I've been walking up and down the beach for almost three hours now. Maybe Shayla's

right and I am having a midlife crisis. Did I really think it would be here, nearly 20 years later? The leather strap was dirty and rotting then. It would be long gone by now, the fat silver beads scattered among the shells or washed out to sea. Why does it matter now? Maybe it would have made a difference then, if I'd had it to show to my mother. All she saw when I got home was the new curve of my belly. Probably she would have taken it better if I'd called her first, told her what had happened, but I didn't know what to say. Tell her I'd spent a week with a man, sleeping in the same room, drinking out of the same water bottle, riding in the back of strangers' pickup trucks? Where I came from, that was enough. Anything I had to say after that she wouldn't have wanted to hear. So I stayed away until there was no hiding.

She never really forgave me, I don't think. Loved Shayla to distraction, though, which I am grateful for; it helped me love her too. I wasn't sure how I'd feel, but when she arrived we were instantly a team. Only, sometimes, I catch a flash in her bright blue eyes and

find myself reaching for a Kool. You should quit that mom, those things will kill you, she says, only half-kidding. I use my hat as a windbreak to light a fresh cigarette. The sea is so blue. What I am looking for isn't here at all. All these years that bracelet has been my talisman. Proof it wasn't my fault, that I would have stopped it if I could. Now I realise, I don't need it. The proof is in me. In Shayla's eyes bright with desire for the unknown. My shoulders are burnt around the edge of my sarong. I sit down and open the bag of mango.

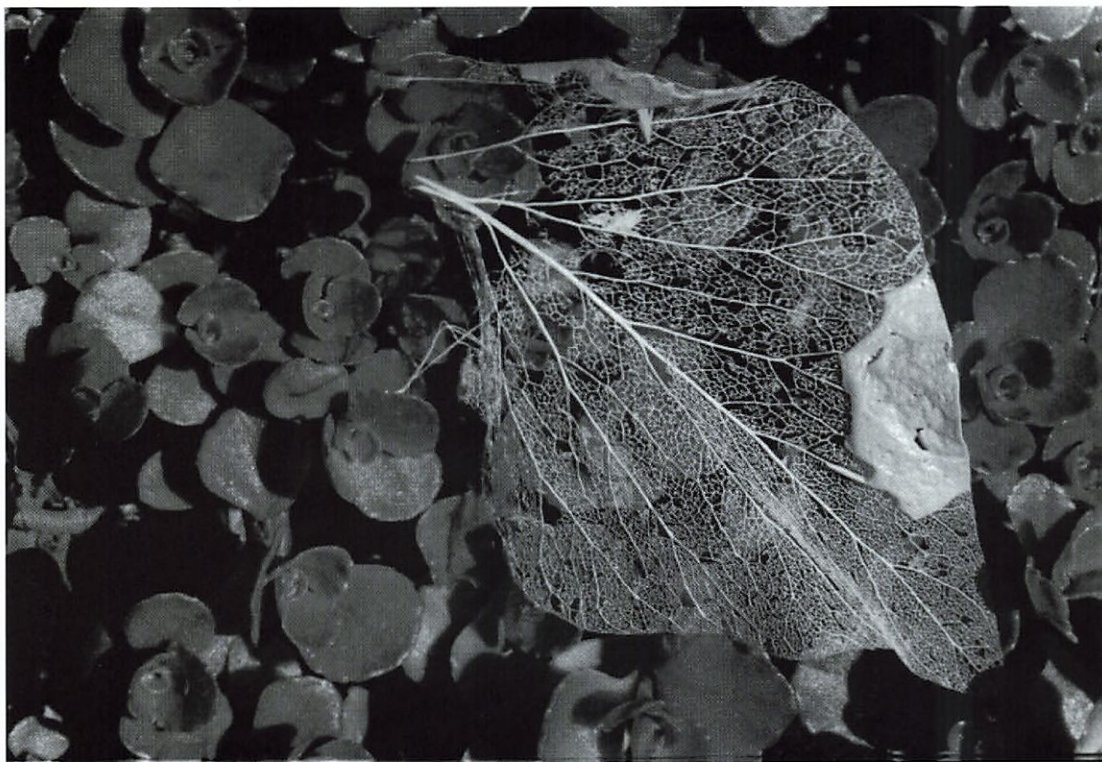
Derelict | *Eileen Dawson Peterson*

Like tentacles of fear
thick tangled ivy
invades
every chink, every opening

intertwined
with dripping moss
it softens disfigures
with insidious persistence
The stark lines
of the rusting hulk

hides its familiar shape
overlays a muskiness
of decay
escalates its uselessness
creating a new image

a monument to waste
beside the dusty road.



Meaning in Decay | *Caleb Epstein*
photography



Untitled | *Molly Eno*
fiber art



Death of an Arctic Pack | *Joe McCormick*

After days of searching the tundra for her only remaining cub, an arctic wolf lies down in a grove of trees that border a frozen lake. She is weak, not only due to the tireless search for her last-of-kin, but also because no food has crossed her path since he went missing.

She's on the verge of falling into a late-afternoon nap when suddenly she catches the wisp of a scent she more than welcomes; a juicy rabbit. As she rises, she glances from side to side, searching for the brush that will give up her prey. It's only a matter of time before the rabbit moves. The wolf immediately advances on the rabbit, who springs into action, and in a second the two begin dashing across the ice.

From above, perched in his nest on a tree overlooking the vast lake, a hawk watches the drama unfold. The hawk has one great advantage that the predator and prey do not: he can see the entire lake and a large blue spot in the ice that formed over the hours of this late-spring day. In fact, it is unusually warm in the arctic today.

The rabbit's claws barely penetrate the ice, allowing him to go fast and continue sliding.

But the wolf, much larger, must dig her thick claws deep into the ice to gain momentum. They approach the center of the lake with not more than five feet separating them; the wolf lunges. Her body floats gracefully towards the rabbit and, for a moment, a thought crosses her mind: she wonders why the ice has become blue. In the next moment, she realizes the rabbit has escaped.

When she lands, her claws dig into the thin ice in an attempt to regain her grasp. But the ice gives way under her weight and she falls in instantly, helpless and weak. The rabbit sees only salvation and nothing else. A short time later, the hawk finishes feeding its young ones fresh meat, and not a soul remembers the death of an arctic pack.



Bubbles | *Michael B. Wilkes*
photography



Out of The Storm | *Jessica Haeckel*
oil on canvas

It's Time | *Megan Hinkel*

As the long-standing paradigms
of greed and domination
crumble under the weight
of their own obsolescence,

a few forward thinking gems
will be seen standing
resplendent
amidst the rubble.

Will you be one of them?

The future exists only in theory.

The time of good enough is over.
Now, it is time to be great.

It's time to start doing those things
that you've always wanted to do.

It's time to go beyond the boundaries
of what you thought was possible
for you to accomplish.

It's time to fearlessly

share your love and talents
that you have kept locked up
like a cranky hermit
in a house built from cynicism,
in which the only windows are
"me" "mine" and "I."

It's time to go beyond
chaos,
distraction
and upheaval.

It's time to stop participating
in peacelessness,
and time to untangle
your actions
from the webs of weakness.

It's time to spin
your yearnings into action,
and to weave your hopes
into your reality.

I'm serious.
I'm tired of the limitations
we impose on ourselves.
The excuses we make

It's Time (continued)

when we're on the verge
of doing something great.

Aren't you?

It's time to dazzle the world
with your kindness.

It's time to smile more,
smile often,
smile without provocation,
smile for no reason at all.

Smile about the good
and smile about the bad,
because you are beyond both.

Things can never be
anything but what they are,

so it is time to vanish
all expectations,
those fickle conspirators
who seek only
to make you constantly

disappointed.

The past is tired
of you dragging it around
with you all the time.

It's time to realize that you are NOT,
in fact, like an onion,
layered with odiferous complexity,
but time to realize that you are
refreshingly simple, sweet,
and without complications.

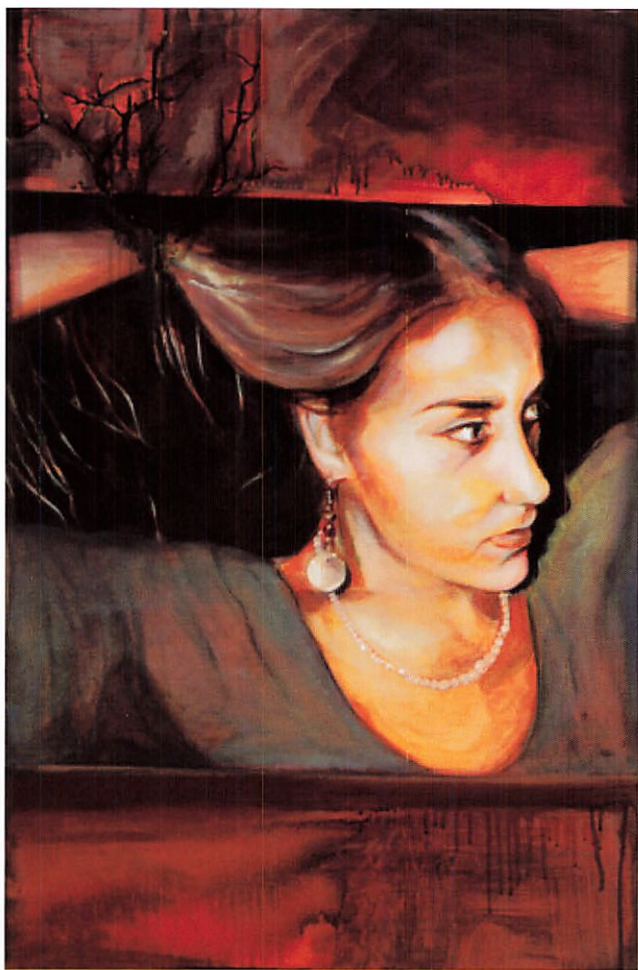
It's time to be as brave
as mushrooms
going about their business,
even though you are destined
to be wholly underappreciated
for your mycological magic.

The future exists only in theory.

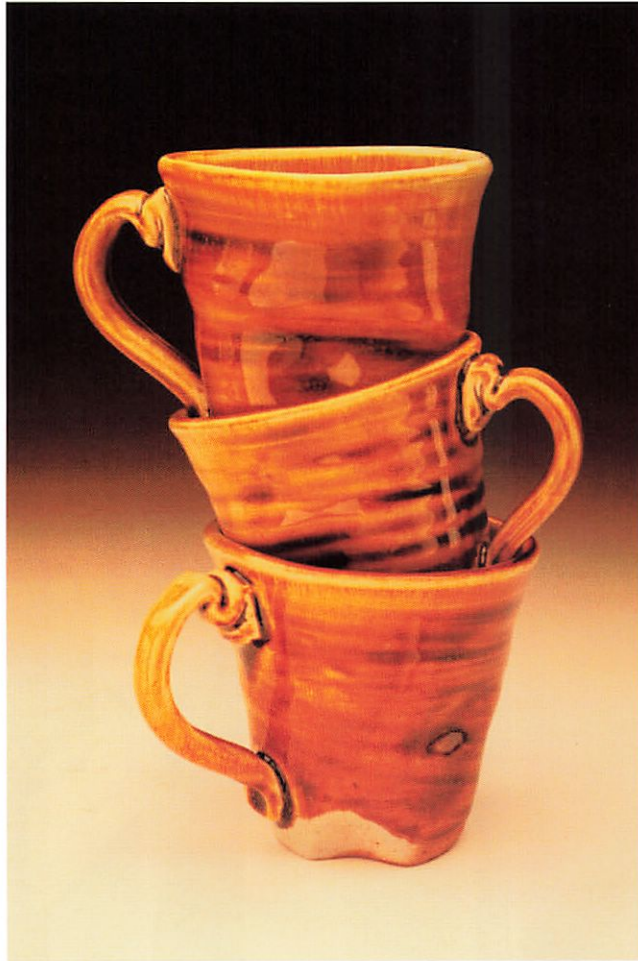
If not now, when?



Icarus | *Amanda Newell*
bas-relief



Kia | *Mildred Crow*
oil on canvas



High Fire Porcelain Cups | *Emma Gunson-Anderson*
soda-fired ceramic



City of Death | *Michael B. Wilkes*
photography

The Job | *Debbie Cassidy*

Bing...bing. I sit up with a jolt. I try to shake off a disconcerting dream and focus. I go through my check list; I'm home, I live in Huntsville Texas. Scanning the walls, I stop at an award that says I'm Will Fisher, Journalist Extraordinaire. I am not myself. It isn't like the Kafka story, I haven't grown insect legs or a hard shell on my back. The sensation reminds me more of the mornings I used to wake up after too many scotch and sodas. Most of those nights I'd somehow find my way home and pass out. The next morning, bleary-eyed I would stumble out of bed and wonder, what happened to me? How did I get here? But my drinking days are long over. They ended with the first execution in 1984.

Oh shit, it's Friday morning. Doreen is scheduled for her goodbye cocktail. I let my head slam back down on my pillow.

As a kid out of Texas A&M I felt like the luckiest guy alive. I landed a job at a paper right out of school, there was always a smart, pretty girl on the other end of the phone, and I usually had a few twenties burning a hole in my wallet. I was on top of the world.

Huntsville Prison was my first beat. The

writing was dull, mostly human interest stuff. There was an occasional lockdown or escape but it felt like a 9-to-5 job. I was bored.

Then the promotion came. I started covering the courtroom and my career took off. I was on fire, unstoppable. Everyone loves a murder, and the more sordid the details, the better. All of a sudden I was the "Man of the hour." There were journalism awards and slaps on the back. The twenties in my wallet turned into hundreds. If there were too many women and too much booze, I didn't notice. I loved my life. If I didn't know better, I would have thought I made a deal with the devil. Ten years vanished in what seemed like an instant.

In 1977, the death penalty reared it's head again. On July 4th 1984, I was handed my new assignment. I was sent to cover the execution of James Barton, convicted of murdering a family at a local campground. I reported on the trial and the appeals. He had a weak defense and after six years of courtroom drama he was scheduled to die by lethal injection. In a strange way we got to know each other, in somewhat the same

The Job (continued)

way you get to know a market checker or your postman.

The day of the execution arrived. I was nervous and, I'm embarrassed to say, exited. There were four other reporters in the room, all guys I knew. We sat in our folding chairs. We had been briefed about what to expect. The prisoner would be given a sedative, then the final injection. It sounded so civilized, not like the circus surrounding Gary Gilmore's firing squad.

We waited behind the glass wall that separated us from the prisoner.

James Barton was led in. He was asked if there was anything he wanted to say. He nodded and looked in my direction.

"Will, I want to thank you for being there for me. Now you take care."

Then he laid down and died.

There were spots before my eyes and the room began to tilt. I felt like I was going to pass out.

Arthur Hughes, the reporter sitting next to me laughed and nudged me, "First time huh? You'll get used to it. Just take a few deep breaths."

Those few deep breaths changed my life.

A piece of me died that day with James Barton.

Nothing felt the same. I stopped going to bars and started turning down invitations. I kept to myself. My co-workers said, "All work and no play makes Will a dull boy." I didn't give a shit.

I started showing up at every execution. It felt like I had a mission, almost as if I were essential to the process. I needed to make sure these lives did not get extinguished by the State of Texas without a witness. Each time I sat in the reporters' room and watched the end play out for these luckless souls, I felt a small part of me go with them.

The dreams began shortly after I won the Pulitzer Prize. Every night, I relived the executions. I wasn't a reporter in my dreams, instead I was a distinguished older man wearing a well-fitted suit. My face was always in the shadows, but I sensed I was a welcome guest. Perhaps I was a spiritual advisor. Sometimes I would be holding the prisoners hand. There were other times, like

with Rocky Morris, that I simply listened to him sing Silent Night on a sweltering August day and wept.

Now, I can't stop thinking about Doreen. Poor Doreen. I really like her. She's had such a tough time. Her husband beat her senseless for years. One day, she decided she'd had enough and poisoned his morning coffee. She was found guilty of first degree murder. She appealed, but she had a bad lawyer, bad teeth, scraggly hair and a Mississippi accent so thick you could barely understand her. The jury was unsympathetic. Mostly they didn't care about her. They just wanted to go home. I don't know how the prosecutors got the death penalty. Usually I try to stay neutral, but this didn't seem fair.

The next time I saw Doreen she was so calm I thought she might be drugged. Her appeal had been denied. A date had been set for her execution. Sitting across from her at that cold metal table I felt like screaming. I hated everything: the system, the jurors, and who ever else was responsible for this horrible situation. Interviews this late in the process were rare, but there are always exceptions. I

felt uncharacteristically anxious and afraid. I hoped in didn't show. I reached for her hand.

"How you doing Doreen?"

"A whole lot better now honey, I'm just glad this is done with. You know I'm not sorry, right? And I'm sure not mad at those people who decided what was goin' to happen. They didn't know Bobby Jim, so you couldn't really expect them to be on my side. I don't blame them a bit."

I shook my head "How is it that you don't even seem to be afraid?"

"Don't need to be. You're holding all of my scaredness for me. If you ask me, Bobby Jim was just like a big wad of chewing gum on the bottom of God's shoe. I'm gonna bet right now that God's thanking me for gettin' rid of that piece of trash. So I'm just goin' to sit here, bide my time, and wait for my reward. Cripes, I'm the one that should be worried about you, Will. You look like death warmed over. Go home get some rest." She squeezed my hand and winked. "I'll be seein' you."

I put my head down on the table, I was

The Job (continued)

losing it.

When I got home that night, there was a message from my editor Walter Grace.

“Will, my boy, it’s time for you to take a break. I have a little assignment for you in Paris, get it done then eat some great food, have a little fun, relax, you look like hell.”

It was an offer I couldn’t turn down.

After a week in Paris, I felt almost human. I didn’t have a single execution dream. By the time my plane touched down in Texas, I had a new lease on life. If Walter knew I was falling apart, he never let on. He picked me up at the airport as cheerful as always. We talked about the trip and he brought me up to speed on the paper.

He pulled up in front of my house and said, “Good to have you back Will. See you Friday bright and early for Doreen, after all, the show can’t go on without Death’s side-kick.”

I froze and almost shouted, “What?”

“Come on, it’s what everyone at the office calls you, Death’s sidekick, Death’s angel. You have been at every execution since they started in ‘84. Four hundred thirty six

last time I looked, and in case you haven’t noticed you are the only reporter that covers them these days.”

Maybe it was just jet lag, but I felt a surge of panic, I thanked Walter and got out of the car. Inside my house the panic didn’t subside. Could I actually be what they say? It felt like the truth. Could I have made a deal with someone? God? The Devil? Death? Did I not remember? It was true that not a single execution had been carried out for twenty years without my presence. I had witnessed 436 deaths. Last year, I told the Warden that I would be attending my mother’s funeral the day Roger Ellis was scheduled for injection. It was the first failed execution in the state of Texas. Was I losing my mind? Did I get promoted to angel of Death without knowing it? Did I sign a consent form? Is that what the dreams are about?

It is Thursday morning, I have to get some sleep. I’ve been awake for 30 hours. It’s 7:00 am. Doreen is probably just waking up to her last full day of life.

I must have fallen asleep because I had the dream. It’s Friday morning now, I have

been laying here for about an hour. People ask me if I am in favor of the death penalty and my answer is "I guess everybody's got to go sometime." But this definitely doesn't feel like it should be Doreen's time.

I'm not going to the prison today. I don't know if you can quit the job of angel of Death, but I am composing my resignation letter: To whom it may concern, Effective immediately...

The phone is ringing. I pick it up and hear "Where the hell are you?" I put the phone down and drift off again.

Saturday morning, The Texas Post headline reads: Texas Governor Cornelia Rickman gives an eleventh hour reprieve to death row inmate Doreen Buckler. The Governor cites extenuating circumstances.

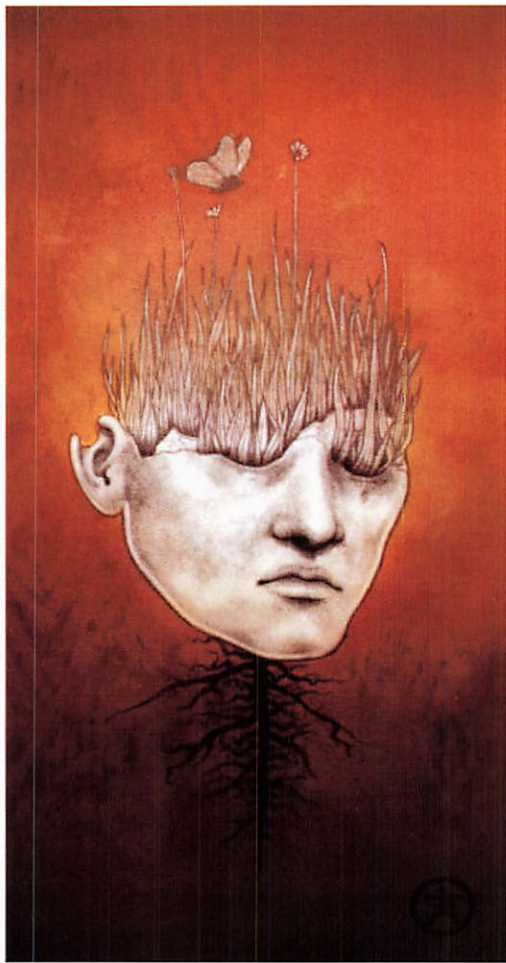
When asked for comments, Ms. Buckler said "I 'specially want to thank Will Fisher for all the hard work he did in my behalf. Take care Will."



Girl With Bubbles | *Jennifer Jurca*
photography



Wood Fired Kiss | *Anna Stehle*
ceramic



Entropy | *Jessica Haeckel*
mixed media

Writing: The Solitary Art | Cila Warncke

Scribbled in the back of my shatter-spined 2009 diary are the words of Jessamyn West: “Writing is a solitary occupation. Family, friends and society are the natural enemies of the writer.”

She might have blamed, also, colleagues, television and cookery. Or dog-walking, DVDs and chocolate. Work, sleep, love, indifference, good music, bad movies, weather, furniture, news, caffeine or the lack of it. A literal world of distraction poised like a comic-monster in the closet, waiting for the unwary writer to allow to lapse the protective guard of solitude. For born-contrary loners it’s a childish fantasy. An excuse to kick petulant feet and demand sanctuary, a light in the hall to keep the boogie men away.

I’m one of these cranks. My dreams are of open roads in unmarked cars, the world at the bottom of the sea, places untouched by the hand of man; anywhere you can’t see the end from the beginning. These spaces hold the tantalizing prospect of rebirth, endless reincarnation into whatever I want to be at the moment I arrive. They hold nothing; no

memory, no back-story, no construction apart from mine. The appeal of solitude has little to do with art and everything to do with the fears of the artist.

Writing is a series of selfish, arbitrary choices. Effective writing imposes order, kills Schrödinger’s cat, insists something is *here* rather than *there*. Friends, family, crying children and cocktail parties are a writer’s enemies because we cannot control them. They are, at best, available for interpretation, after the fact. Hence the writerly urge to scuttle off to a hermitage far from forthright reality.

All knowledge is borrowing and every fact a debt. For each event is revealed to us only at the surrender of every alternate course. —
Cormac McCarthy

This is why writers have an irrational fear of pets, lovers, must-see TV and the daily paper. We know that to write a lucid sentence is to not-write a thousand equally valid, truthful, consequential sentences. Writers

Writing: The Solitary Art (continued)

must choose *one* thing from an infinite number of possibilities. As anyone who recalls being a child in front of a wall of pick-a-mix sweets knows, a super-abundance of choice leads to paralysis. Yet it is a writer's job to be *aware* of everything. Not just facts, what "really" happened, what he or she said, but of all the loose threads one might pick up, hidden meanings, fantasies, improvisations, alternate endings. Writers are advised to take notes, write down their dreams, improve their imaginations, scribble down fragments of speech, lie back and absorb life like a sponge. The charge is to then *make sense of it*. To sift 500 tons of dirt to find that ounce of gold.

Is it surprising writers develop the same cranky relationship to daily life that forty-niners must have had with the California soil? What we need is in there, but the process of extraction is terrifyingly laborious. Every moment of reality holds both promise and distraction. Solitude offers the fleeting hope of achievement. Perhaps, within a protective cocoon, we can shake a few flakes of truth out of the last heap of experience.



Visionaries | *Lauri Smith*
digitally-altered charcoal drawing

Isabella Rose | *Kris Bluth*

“Isabella Rose”

Isn't that the

cutest name

for a little girl?

I swear, we were

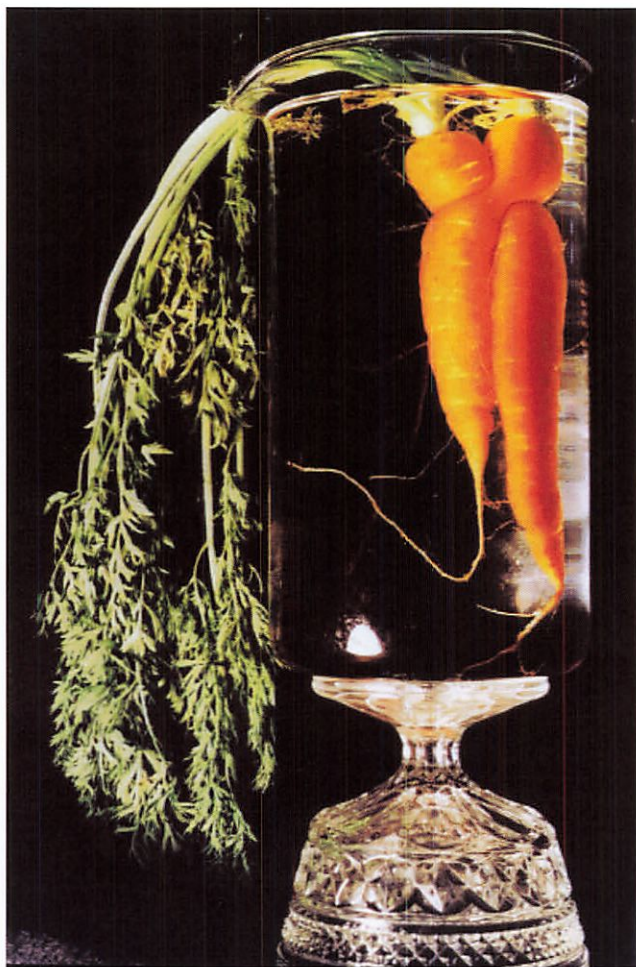
on the way home

from the vasectomy

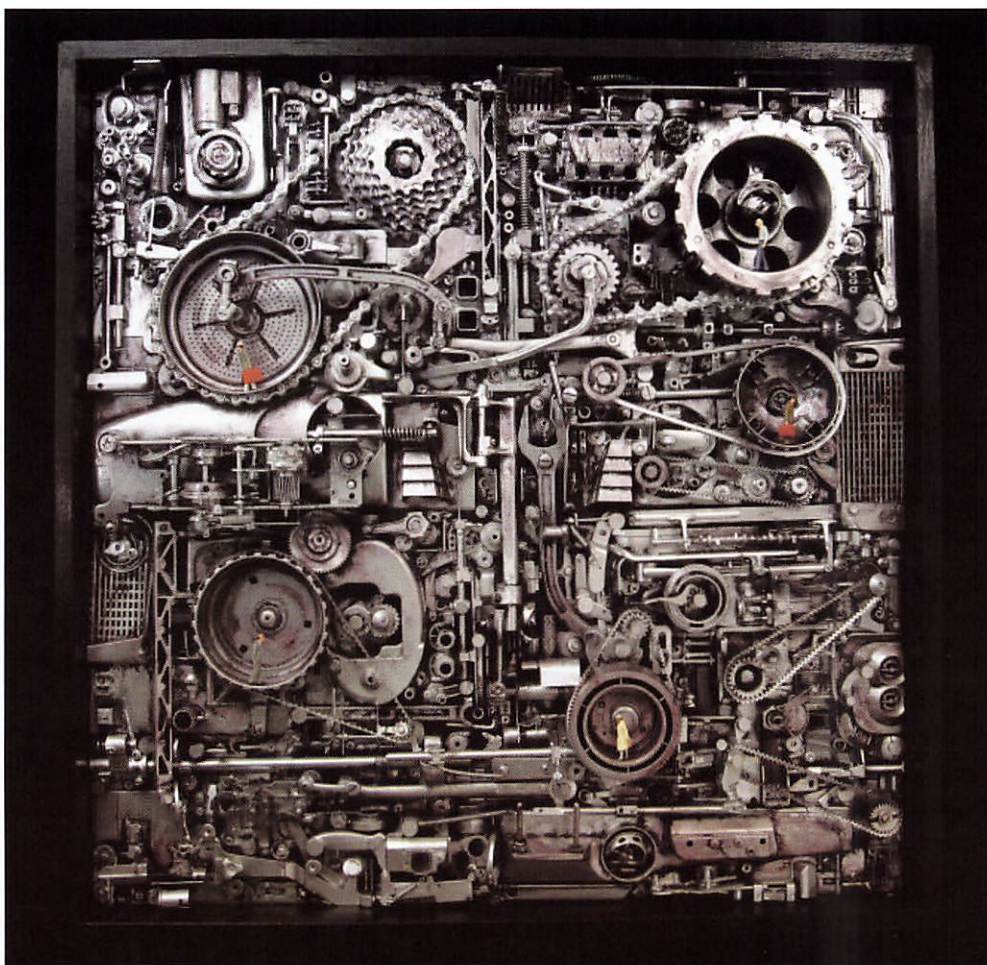
and it just came to me.



Life | *Stephanie Erikson*
papercut collage



Intertwined | *Jacob Swearingen*
photography



Factotum | *Jud Turner*
assemblage

Timothy: The Middle Child | *River Donaghey*

Two hundred and thirty two, that's how many stars I can see from the window above my bed right now. To be fair, I might have counted a few twice... It's hard to keep track, especially when we're moving. With the stars slowly sliding across the reinforced plastic window, I'm probably counting one star, then counting it again a few minutes later after it has moved a few inches to the left. Sometimes the stars moving slowly past my window remind me of those old videos they showed me during my history lessons. The videos of conveyer belts in old grocery stores. Sometimes I pretend that there is some great cosmic checkout girl somewhere, sliding each star over a bar code scanner and stuffing them all into plastic bags. Two hundred and thirty two. That's how many I've counted tonight. I have to keep counting before I fall asleep and don't wake up until the ship's artificial sunlight fades on in a few hours.

My name is Timothy. I don't have a last name, or I woulda told you. There isn't really a need for a last name here. There aren't any other Timothys here. Once, Mark said I could choose a last name if I wanted, and

they would print it in big blocky gold letters on the breast of my jumpsuit. Mark is my captain. I couldn't think of one, so it just says TIMOTHY. All in capitals. Just like that.

I'm just about due for a new suit. This old one is getting pretty tight around the shoulders and the back. The legs, too. They ride up a little above my ankles when I sit down. My birthday is coming up soon. They will probably give me a new suit then. I'll be fifteen. That means exactly fifteen more years until I have to make the baby I'm here to make. I'm getting a little anxious. Mark says that's just because I'm a teenage boy and I should know that they've planned it all out. We need to stick to the timeline the people in charge on Earth laid out. I guess he's right.

I was born on this spaceship. My mother and father were about my age when they left Earth. When I was younger, my dad would tell me stories about the planet, and his old friends, but he stopped wanting to talk about it and gets mad when I ask him now.

Mom died during my birth. They hadn't really "worked the kinks out of the birthing aid machine." That's what Mark said. It's okay

that she died, though, because she completed her part of the mission. That was having me. Mark says I should be proud of her. But I don't feel very proud.

See, I'm part of one of three families here on the Columbus. We took off on January 11th, 2050. Apparently, some satellite had picked up a signal from a planet in a solar system a little bit past our own. At first they thought it was just gibberish... The satellite was broken or something. It would send out a signal and then the signal would break and then it would come back. On and off and so on. They didn't really pay a whole lot of attention to it until some scientist guy, realized that there was a pattern to the stuttering signal. And that the pattern was long, but it was repeating the same message over and over. It was repeating simple math problems in binary code.

Well, the world certainly freaked out over that. Problem was, the planet was pretty far away. A ship would take over a hundred years to reach it. And that's where I come in.

When my parents reached the age of thirty, they were instructed to make me.

When I turn thirty, Mark will find a girl my age from the other two families and instruct us to make a kid ourselves.

The ship left with six kids who were all about the age I am now. Three boys, three girls. My mom and my dad were one of each of those. Each pair was supposed to have two kids, a boy and a girl. My parents didn't, because my mom died and all. That makes five kids my age. Second gens, they call us. Middle children. Sometimes, when Mark gets frustrated or tired or grumpy, he yells at us, calling us "fucking Middles" or something like that. Some of the other kids get pretty made about that, but I don't mind. I know what I am. I'm a middle.

I'm probably going to make a child with a girl named Lilian. Then Lilian's brother will make a child with a girl from the third family named Felicia. Felicia's brother is named Bradley. He was supposed to make a child with my sister, but I never had a sister to make a baby with. That's okay, because Bradley wouldn't be allowed to make a child with anyone anyway. Mark says he has something called Marfam Syndrome, and his genetics

Timothy: The Middle Child (continued)

are too weak. Bradley is really skinny and he sort of looks like a monkey with his big long arms and everything. I still think he would make a good child if he got the chance. He's a really smart guy. But Mark said no, so it's all up to me and Lilian's brother.

They're training Bradley to be the new captain, once Mark dies. He may look goofy, but he is real smart. He used to tell the funniest jokes and do perfect impressions of all the crew members, but ever since Mark started training him Bradley's gotten a lot more serious. Mark says it's because he's growing up, but if that is what growing up is than why would I ever want to grow up?

In fifteen years I'll be thirty years old and I can make a child. I guess the scientists on Earth did some math and made sure that if we make a child at thirty, our kid will be the perfect age when he finally reaches the alien planet. Fifteen years is a really long time. That's my whole life all over again!

Mark says I should be proud of my mother because she did a great thing for the human race. And that I should be proud of myself, because my child is going to be

the first human being to make contact with another alien race of creatures. I should be proud. But I don't feel very proud. I don't really feel a whole lot of anything.

Every morning when the sun lamps turn on to make another fake day, I lay in my bed for a few hours not doing much of anything. There isn't much for me to do except wait.

I used to have to get up quickly for my daily lessons. My dad would show me history videos or teach me math, but on my fourteenth birthday he decided to stop. It was pretty weird and kind of scary. We were working on the history of the mission and doing a few basics of Algebra, when all of a sudden Dad threw the writing tablet onto the ground and it smashed into a million pieces of plastic and metal and silicone chips.

"What's the use?" he asked me. I didn't know what to say so I didn't say anything. His eyes were real red and puffy. I asked him if Bradley had given him pinkeye, because a few days earlier Bradley had come down with something called pinkeye. Dad stood up really fast, knocking his chair over backwards, and stomped to his room.

He stayed there for almost a week until Mark finally talked him into coming out. We never had another lesson. Mark says my birthdays are hard on my father. They are a little hard on me, too.

Without school I don't have much to do during the days. Bradley isn't much fun to talk to anymore. Lilian mostly just ignores me when I try to talk to her.

So that's why I've started counting the stars. I lie in my bed and when I lean my head just right I can get a perfect view out the window. I write down the number every night before I go to sleep. When it's a big number, I feel pretty happy with myself. Once I got to five hundred and seven, and the next day was one of the best days of my entire life. Bradley got caught by Mark doing a perfect impersonation, and Mark chased him all over the ship's deck. I laughed until my sides were sore and my face hurt from smiling. We also hydrated macaroni and cheese for dinner.

Getting past four hundred means tomorrow is going to at least be an okay day. Right now I'm at two hundred and thirty two, so I can't fall asleep yet. I've got to rub the

sleep out of my eyes and keep on counting. Two hundred means not a very good day. So I'll do my best to stay awake a while longer.

It will be morning in a few hours, so I will have to count fast. I'll just sleep all day tomorrow. It isn't like I have Algebra lessons to do. I'll stay up until I get at least a hundred more. Maybe a hundred and fifty. Maybe, if I try really hard, I can go for two. Then I can let myself sleep.



Everyone Had A Good Time At The Wedding | *Megan Hinkel*
photography



Untitled | *Fernando Ortiz*
photography

A Paradox | *Beverly Ediger*

Oh, Frederick, I hail thy noble fight
For freedom thou didst dream each night
And cry for grief thy brothers' plight
Fling off the bonds, and reach the light
And grasp the dream of freedom

For this you pledged to give your life,
You left your friends, your promised wife
Threw off your chains of bondage rife
With suffering and endless strife
To reach your land of freedom

Oh such a noble cause as this
Can't help but bring about great bliss
For all who in this cause enlist
And raise all men from the abyss
And lead us all to freedom

But, alas dear Frederick weep
For freedom's hill is still as steep
The chains upon our hands and feet

Are gone, yet those upon our minds still keep
Our hearts from gaining freedom

It still is not a given right
To speak your mind and not incite
The master on the left or right
To lash at you with all his might
And crush your right to freedom

For on this side the one dictates
And on the other, he berates
And you must think just as they state
Or risk the wrath of those who hate
Your differing view of freedom

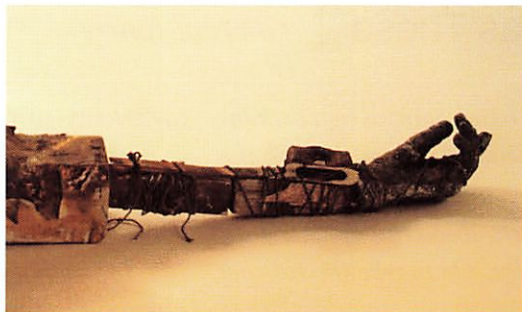
But if they find you still resist
Their ears they close and they dismiss
Your thoughts as though they don't exist
And, once you're silenced, they insist
That you still have your freedom



Untitled | *Anthony S. Russell*
mixed media



Crucifix | *Kathy Gunson*
mixed media



Roots Such as These | Chrystal Emiry

Along the way, a hand-painted sign beckons “turn left for food.” Sunlight filters through the leaves of an old oak, alighting on the sign at just the point where the wood has become dark and rotted on the edge. Or maybe the rot goes deeper.

I was the innocent one at the relief camp – the virgin. I came straight out of a church pew to the disaster zone of Hurricane Katrina. My idealistic naiveté had recently been trampled by religious politics and I was looking for a group who was actually living the love of Jesus rather than the pretense of the Pharisees he despised. I found it there, amongst the black mold, twisted metal sign posts, and old oak trees – the only things that looked unaffected by the storm.

A charming swing hangs from the oak that supports the hand-painted sign. It alludes to an interlude of joy. The oak sinks its roots into the center of a road well worn with travel. This whole place is old and rooted in years of magic and history so tangible that my body quivers.

My own life had also been tossed and tousled by wind. Neglect, illness, homelessness and isolation were themes threaded throughout

my twenty-seven years. All I had when I came to Arabi, Louisiana was a pretty face, sufficient hope, some things I had bought on credit, and my waning innocence.

The intoxicating aroma of food returns my attention to the path at the left. It leads past a field of tall grasses performing acrobatics in the strong winds. The path, and my hunger, end at the Made with Love Café and Grill, where travelers are welcomed as if they are lovers, and the weary people of the city visit to find rest and refreshment.

My first two visits to disaster land were limited to my work’s allotted paid-time-off days. I was finally holding a stable job and didn’t want to drop my grip on the steep slope out of the poverty pit. Yet the volunteer camp and small damaged town, just beyond the lower ninth ward of New Orleans, offered something unexpected and irresistible – community, hope, celebration and abundance. I hadn’t found that in my Southern California office job on the outskirts of a strip mall.

In the circus tent kitchen, volunteers dance spontaneously to the music that’s playing as they

weave a banquet plentiful enough for all who “turn left for food.” The shelves are abundant with grains and spices, pots and spatulas. Flames dance upward, all around, warming the flavorful food tended by many hands.

The predominant lifestyle of volunteers at this grassroots effort was that of grass smokin’ hippies. They didn’t know what to make of me when I pulled up in my old Mercedes with my toy dog and my pink fuzzy boots. Lali’s first thought was, “Doesn’t she know she’s gonna get those boots dirty?” Over time, she discovered who I was, and became one of my best friends. In the wake of Katrina, I discovered who I was also.

Next to the kitchen a dome stands, housing people as they sit in a circle and pass a feathered stick so that all can be heard. The humid heat of the day settles down upon the group like an oppressor they won’t pay attention to. One woman speaks, and then a child, and then a man. A drum in the distant background gives rise to a tribal rhythm.

Even though, by all appearances, I didn’t belong among the wreckage of a disaster, I was inspired by a feeling—vague like a

premonition, but still captivating like an obsession — to sacrifice security and become a relief volunteer. I quit my job, broke my apartment lease, and returned to the South for a third and final time. My last day in San Diego was spent along the roadside at North Beach, my favorite place in the world. All the possessions I still owned, after selling the little furniture I had, were packed in my car. The waves roared peaceably along the sands. I always got a sense of grounding there, where the dogs and the ocean ran free, where sand cliffs towered precariously, beautifully dripping with greenery, where Torrey Pines bent, swept by the ocean breeze, grown in a gorgeous image of forward motion.

Not too far away, boats lie as wreckage on the shore of a grand lake, like the skeletal remains of pirate ships. A dank smell rises through the heavy mist. The water looks thick and dark, like it could swallow me whole.

In New Orleans, what I thought I knew about the world was wiped away like sands in a tidal wave. The stories of corruption I heard broke my trust in the relative safety of my country. The constant, selfless generosity and

Roots Such as These (continued)

freely-offered compassion of many volunteers shook my faith in my religion: I questioned why self-proclaimed heathens and pagans demonstrated the love of Christ better than most Christians I'd met. Like the landscape of the South that was leveled by the storm, my loss of certainty created a clean slate, allowing a fresh view of the world to grow.

Across the road, two races of people, different colors to their skin, are in battle. One wants to drive the other off the land. Military trucks guard overflowing makeshift storehouses, yet they only let some through – the ones who live in the “right” neighborhood. The evidence of oppression is strewn everywhere, imitating the aftermath of the recent storm.

The residents — the ones who survived the hurricane — became an inspiration to me. The history of generations, the bonds of community, the epic battles against corruption, and the depth of souls who celebrate life in the aftermath of loss, were analogous to small seeds buried within me. I longed for roots such as these, like the ones so deep they keep an oak tree standing through a hurricane.

Those of us who have been cut off from home, from roots, wonder at the nagging discontent that chews at our stomachs. This may be worse than the greatest suffering. Suffering deepens the soul; discontent eats at it like black mold. The collective soul of New Orleans is arguably the deepest and most beautiful in the United States: still rooted, still reaching its branches skyward, still celebrating life with parades of shimmering decoration for any occasion from a funeral to a change of seasons.

I stop to take a rest and reflect, perched on the branch of an old oak. Leaning against the wide trunk, I dangle one foot, swinging it lazily back and forth. My breathing calms to a slow pace in response to the heaviness of the humid air. I watch the river follow its path, past the fast-growing sunflowers that brighten its refuse-strewn shore.

Valisa planted sunflowers, to help clean toxins from the soil, along the river at the site that stayed open till June. The roots took up heavy metals and contained them in the cell walls of the flowers. Even when growing among nasty substances, they didn't lose their

beauty. They stayed bright while making the ground a friendlier place for new trees to sprout amongst the old rooted oaks. The Made with Love Café and Grill was like a sunflower, springing up quickly, maintaining the beauty of joy amid devastation, helping to clean the muck from people's hearts, through kindness and beauty, so they could move forward.

The sun above the oak I am sitting on is hidden behind thick clouds: a tropical storm is coming. My mind begins to survey the state of the work site. Within hours, winds will blow strong and the depth of our forethought will be tested, as supplies and the tents we call home will be threatened with rain and gale winds. My feet hit the ground as I jump from my comfort to take the first step towards preparing for the coming storm.

As I left New Orleans behind, I thought a lot about preparing for life's storms. Back at home, the independence and security of my Southern California lifestyle hadn't served as an anchorage to sustain me through adversity. It was the ethos of the survivors of Hurricane Katrina — their courage, connection and

celebration — that became a beacon to guide my own life forward with values deeply rooted.

Mirror In The Glass | *William C. Crutchfield*

I think there is a finely ground mirror
in the glass.
as we look towards the bottom,
to see what is left, we see the glint of light,
curving along its smooth edge.

what remains here, as we wait for the fluid
to settle into the safe corners, seeking
its own meticulous level?
sometimes, when the light is just right,
balanced on the edge of forgetting,
we can decipher our own desperate
reflection, immaculate in its
absolute stillness.

it lingers there, shimmering in the
dwindling hopes of today's neglected
dreams.

sometimes, we take a step,
and dash its contents
away, staining the ground with its moist
shadow,
then fearful, we refill the glass and
step up again,
closer this time,
to the mirror.



Raven | *Stephanie Erickson*
acrylic on cardboard



Tsunami Sirens | *Jennifer Jurca*
photography



Walnut Figure: Struggle | *Brent Deyo*
wood



Erika | *Nancy O'Connor*
oil on canvas

Making Amtraks | *Cila Warncke*

Union Station in downtown LA feels deliberately anachronistic, an amalgam of art deco and country-house library. It is cool, dim, discreetly curved; big, tan leather chairs march squarely along the polished floor. All it needs is F. Scott Fitzgerald's chattering undergraduates clutching long green tickets, or Lane Coutell with his cigarette and unadjusted muffler.

Trains operate on different timescales. Twenty-nine hours from LA to Portland is a languid reproof to modernity. All aboard. Get comfortable. The urgent coping mechanisms of rapid transport (in-flight movies, car stereos, PSPs, magazines) are only partially applicable here. An 11-year-old wraps her little sister up, tells her to pretend to be asleep. They both leap up, balance on the edge of their seats, watch the passing Pacific waves intently, after mum hands them disposable cameras. A much younger mother chats to her parents in English, breaking off to call her wandering toddler back: "Mami! Aquí!" Lengthy complaints from another parent when she discovers the change machine in the

"arcade room" downstairs (four worn-looking video game consoles) only gives tokens: "I don't want \$20 worth!"

The lounge car is a refuge for beer-drinking veterans and emo kids umbilically attached to their iPods. "They started being nice to us. That's how we knew it was real. They weren't yelling at us for once" — an ex-serviceman tells his drinking buddy, recalling the World Trade Center attack.

Downstairs, a middle-aged woman is scanning the drinks menu at the snack bar. "It's hard to get high on a train, on beer. Something about the motion." She orders a Jack Daniels then adds, apologetically: "People think because I'm little I don't have problems. But after five kids your little old body gets all kind of aches."

Plump, glossy, brown-eyed Aly is on her way to Chico to sign up for a dental hygienist course. "I told him, 'get out!'" she chuckles. "Then he came back the next day and said he was sorry, that he'd never had a serious relationship before. That was three years ago."

Making Amtraks (continued)

She is 19; her boyfriend, 22, is shy but a promising baseball player. Aly wants to move to Chico because it'll give her mom time to miss her, but she's worried about giving up her walk-in closet. "I don't want them doing anything to my room while I'm gone."

The dining car fails to nourish Casino Royale fantasies, but there are flowers on the table and a choice of cabernet sauvignon or merlot. Scott orders scampi and Diet Pepsi. He's on his way from San Luis Obispo where he was helping a friend with some building. Getting laid off from his job repairing heavy machinery in steel-processing plants has compensations, like the freedom to take off for a little fishing in Ensenada, Mexico. Someday, he'd like to go to Europe.

Jack wouldn't. He vows to never again leave "the sovereign United States." His Navy baseball cap shades sharp, Irish-blue eyes. "Americans are targets," he warns me. He also won't return to his home state, Louisiana, because (he lowers voice) "The white man is under attack." Don't rush to conclusions. Jack has been with his Chinese-American wife

for 50 years and three children; he has two Masters degrees; his manners are impeccable. America — land of contradictions.

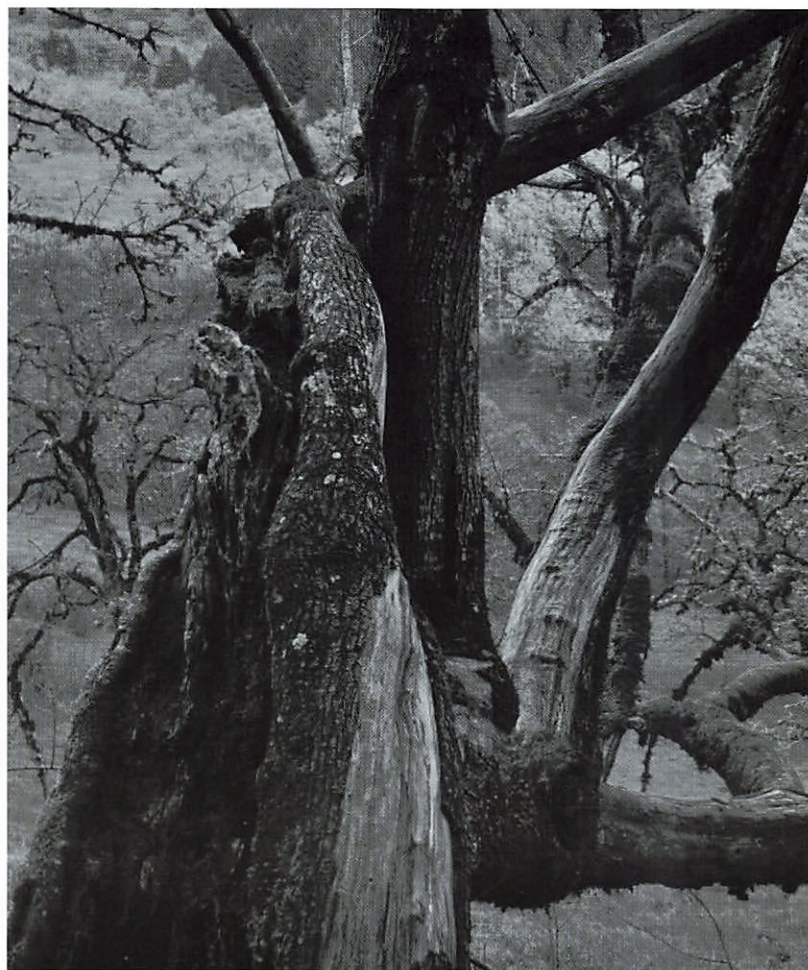
Snow-dusted lakes. Rolling miles of dry, golden grass with the occasional oversized ranch house. Ferns curl wetly on the edge of evergreen woods. Surfers bob sleekly in spumy Pacific breakers. Darkness erases hours as kids pad stocking-footed along the aisles, a mother curls around her sleeping infant, couples sprawl intimate-awkward across their seats and sleepy slumped heads crick necks.

Twenty-nine hours is not half long enough to hear or guess at all the stories. Andrea trots up and down the dining car with trays of food, 13 years on the rails; four days on, six days off. Another waitress, much younger, flirts with the supervisor: "I brought my teddy bear." He shifts heavily, tells her to go get her things. She's changing at Salem. Sometime in the night a drunk passenger was met at a station by the police. "Be careful cleaning that room," the supervisor tells an attendant. "Someone thought they saw a needle on the bed."

The Coast Starlight arrives punctually. Sea-legged passengers roll off onto the rain-slick platform. All that's missing is a man in an overcoat to scoop up my suitcase and offer his umbrella.



Snow | *Amanda Newell*
acrylic on canvas



Tree | *Jennifer Jurca*
photography

Ray | *Debbie Cassidy*

August of 1988, we were sitting in
the apartment on Hollywood Boulevard.
Drinking,
In those days we drank heavily and often
I don't remember the specifics,
We smoked, talked about poems, stories,
where we were going next.

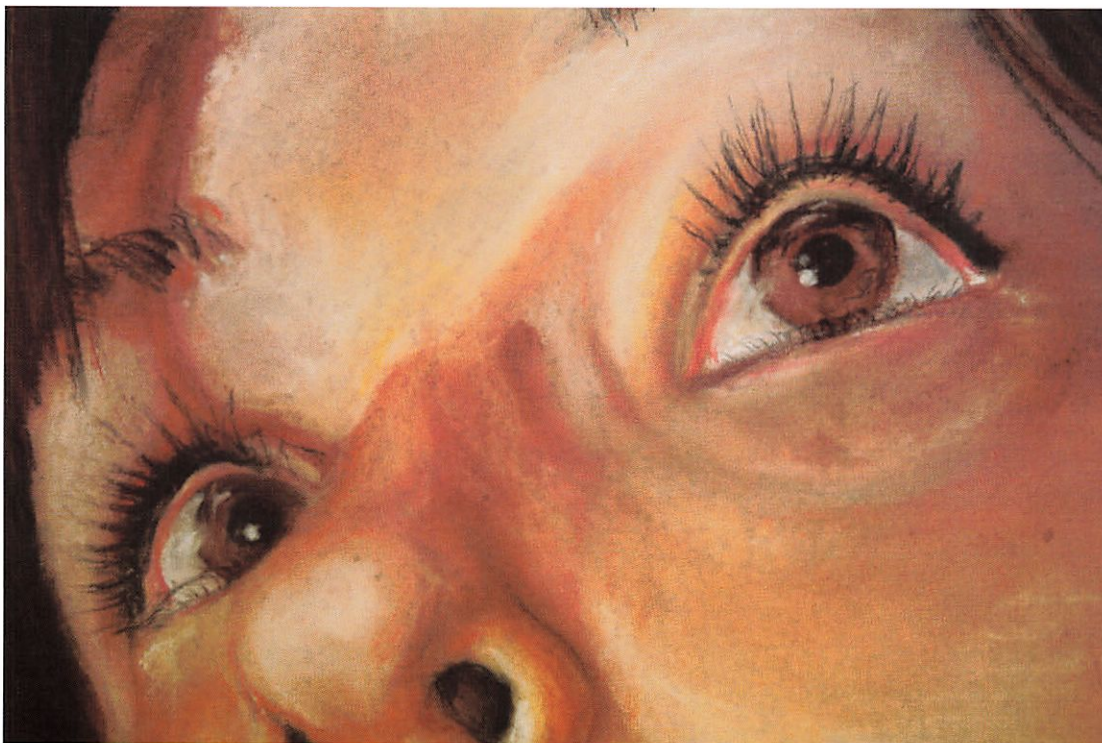
The news came on the radio,
Raymond Carver was dead.
No romantic, brilliant, death for him.
He wasn't supposed to die. He got sober,
met a great woman, kept writing,
Lung cancer, Jesus, I mean,
What kind of reward is that?

I waged a protest,
Against God's crazy decision
I stopped drinking,
A couple months later
stopped smoking,

changed my idea of the good life.

Twenty-two years later,
Raymond Carver's website.
There's a place that says,
Click here for Raymond Carver's laugh.
All of a sudden,
there he is, relaxed, gravelly,
Alive.
It says I can click again,
Then, Raymond Carver laughs harder,
He laughs loud, it's genuine, funny,
I start laughing too.
We've come a long way since 1988

Thanks Ray.



It's In Your Eyes | *Drew Bardana*
acrylic on canvas

Galoot Dancing | *Traci Johnston-Ruiz*

Standing along the road
Free load drunken, stoned
He tips his hat to the traffic
And shakes his behind
Staggering to keep his
Beat and stand on his feet
Homeless at his best
Dirty clothes unshaven face
He makes my day
Staggering in his haze
Free entertainment
Early Friday morning
Is he a father?
Is he a brother?
Standing out on the
Curb dancing in the rain



Blue | *John Herberg*
photography



Twisted Jar | *Matt Grable*
ceramic



Ghost Bike | *Javier Magallanes*
photography



Dragon Clutch | *Mitchell Pearson*
drawing

Rick Barich

My wife and I take pictures of flowers in neighborhood gardens. Visit our website: www.oregonmacro.com.

Drew Bardana

I am a self-taught artist working towards a Direct Transfer to PNCA. I try to release my imagination into the physical form of art.

Kris Bluth

I live in Eugene with my wife and daughter.

Debbi Cassidy

I live and write in Eugene, Oregon.

Mildred Crow

In a series of portraits I am exploring the combination of narrative and symbolic elements in each painting. With an emotionally-distant half view of a face I seek to convey a sense of personality through associated images, colors and painting style.

William C. Crutchfield

I have been a Eugene resident since '73. I am a UO BA English graduate '78. "Write as if no one will ever read it . . . But write it."

Brent Deyo

This piece of walnut tree was created artfully by nature then clumsily destroyed by man.

River Donaghey

I am a nineteen year old writer, musician and nude model. I recently dropped out of college and am the music editor for the new, artfully-titled newspaper "The Dropout."

Beverly Ediger

After raising my family I have returned to school to work towards my Bachelor's degree and hopefully a Master's in English and literature. Writing is my favorite pastime.

Chrystal Emiry

I spent four months total in the disaster zone of Hurricane Katrina. Returning home to San Diego, where I was born and raised, I found my perspective and values no longer in line with southern California's materialistic lifestyle. I moved to Eugene, OR to develop a new Intentional Community project with others I had met during relief efforts. I continue to work at building a sense of community with those around me.

Molly Eno

This work represents a lot of work and a lot of love. It is meant to be held, felt and explored, just like people.

Caleb Epstein

A love for black and white photography has been my motivation for most of what I have done in the last eight years. The darkroom is really where I want to be.

Artists' Statements

Stephanie Erickson

I get my inspiration from my loved ones and nature. Art history has been influential, as well as my fascination with the human figure. I have been fortunate to have had some amazing teachers whose talents and passions for art, give me confidence and strength to pursue my dreams.

J. R. Giska

Creating distinctions leads to the inevitable suffering of existence. I hope to distill moments where these distinctions fail and leave us all connected. Please find the compassion to see the life that connects all sentient creatures and refuse to cause any more death or suffering by choosing a diet based solely on the primary producers of this planet – be a primary consumer!

Matt Grable

I believe through working with clay I have been able to freely express my emotion by a process that is both elusive and personal.

Kathy Gunson

I create art for myself because I can. No parameters, no rules; just because I can.

Emma Gunson-Anderson

I'm a multi media artist mainly focusing on ceramics. I enjoy both wheel throwing and hand building and try to incorporate the two in my work. I like to pull functional dishware

on the wheel and trim it by hand, and I like to make sculptural creatures by hand. I am most interested in atmospheric salt, soda and wood firings. I encourage anyone and everyone to check out and try ceramics.

Jessica Haeckel

I am a prolific artist whose mediums range from painting, printmaking, and sculpture to music, tattoo, graphics, web design, and beyond.

Eva Choonok Harvey

I hope shapes and color that I present in my work through the female figure may move the viewer's mind, evoking sensational emotion; furthermore, I hope such an aesthetic experience would lead the viewers to get in touch with the yet-uncultivated side of themselves. I believe that a powerful aesthetic experience could be an avenue for self-redemption.

Megan Hinkel

I am a nature photographer currently residing in, and in love with, Eugene Oregon. Both my photography and my writings are inspired by my meditation practice.

Traci Johnston-Ruiz

I am a student at LCC. I have been writing poetry for many years. Publishing something is a goal that I have had.

Artists' Statements

Jennifer Jurca

I am inspired by the beautiful things I see around me every day, and my goal is to use my camera lens to share this beauty with the viewer.

Laurie Kinder

My vision is always in the aspect of art. I try to take the perspective of artistic vision through my day and embody my perspective to enable others to see my angle. There are many different mediums and visions of art and I strive to pursue all of them.

Javier Magallanes

I am currently a multimedia student at LCC. Besides photography my other academic interests include web design and journalism.

Joe McCormick

I am a twenty-two-year-old English and Literature major. I love being back in Oregon after two and a half years of work and school in Salt Lake City, Utah. I am possibly interested in a career in teaching, writing and/or playing and writing music.

Jim Mender

I am a father, grandfather and dreamer.

Rachael Miller

I am a printmaking student at the University of Oregon and will be graduating this June with a BFA in Printmaking. In 2008 I earned

a BS in Women's and Gender Studies from the UO. Currently I use intaglio line etching and aquatint, collage, book arts, and drawing in the exploration of tattoos, scarves on cowboys, and the biblical story of Judith.

Amanda Newell

I enjoy making work that inspires a variety of responses in the viewer, both in their personal reactions and their interpretation of subject. This piece lightly explores that ambiguity.

Nancy O'Connor

The work is from my first studies in oil. The series focused on my daughters. I have been trying to capture a mood and a moment with glazing and texture to add depth and meaning to these paintings.

Fernando Ortiz

I am Mexican. I took photography last term and that is my only formal education in this subject. I can trace the time when I peeked through the blindfold over my eyes and saw the beauty around us.

Mitchell Pearson

I work primarily in graphite and charcoal. However, I always strive to learn new mediums. Most of my work comes from an illustrative background, but I'm trying to branch out into the fine arts style.

Artists' Statements

Eileen Dawson Peterson

I live in Eugene, OR. I have written poetry since childhood. I have been published in several Anthologies and in South Dakota Magazine, Pasque Petals, The Lutheran Journal, Arabesques, Faith and Inspiration, Denali, Thresholds and Avocet. I won honorable mention for two poems in the 2004 Annual Writers Digest Writing Competition. My play, "Blue Skies and Butterflies", won an Honorable Mention in 2004 Writer's Digest Annual Writing competition and again with a revision in the 2007 competition. Dragonfly's Eye Press has published my children's picture book, "Kitty With the Raccoon Tail" featuring a poem by that name. I am a member of Lane Literary Guild, Oregon State Poetry Assoc. and South Dakota Poetry Assoc.

Leo Rivers

I am a poet living in Cottage Grove, a member of the Kalapuya Poets, a Buddhist and Atheist, a writer of endless curiosity, and a judge of a good hamburger! Check out: www.madimi.com.

Anthony S. Russell

Zero Seven Technology, "a cultural reflection for the future."

Victor Schramm

I've been creating art in Lane County my entire life. I currently juggle as many creative endeavors as possible, practicing various visual and literary arts including painting, printmaking, and

writing poetry. I work in no particular style. I prefer to follow the original inspiration down whatever path it must go. I'm always working with poetic forms. Whether I'm drawing on traditional structures or constructing one for a particular piece, the exploration of lyrical subject and form are always simultaneous and exciting to me.

Lauri Smith

I am a second year graphic design student. I love doing multi-media artwork. I also enjoy writing short stories and poems that have to do with a moment in my life.

Anna Stehle

I am working toward an AAOT with my focus in functional ceramics.

Shannon Sullivan

I grew up in Lorane, OR, where I began making art, and Bend, OR, a city that influenced what kind of art I'm interested in making. I now attend the University of Oregon and study oil painting. I enjoy incorporating abstract elements with images taken from nature.

Jacob Swearingen

I'm a Multimedia Design major and enjoy creating pieces that are visually interesting.

Jud Turner

I am a sculptor using found objects and steel to

Artists' Statements

create unique works that address contemporary issues, such as the balance between nature and human technologies, mortality and spirituality. My artistic philosophy is that "between seeming Contradictions lie greater Truths."

Cila Warncke

Writer, explorer, adventurer. A resident of Eugene, I am a freelance writer, blogger, essayist, writing tutor and student of literature. I'm also an excellent part-time waitress and cookery columnist!

Brittney West:

"Observe the wonders as they occur around you . . . Don't claim them. Feel the artistry moving through and be silent." –Rumi. You can find more art at www.brittneywest.deviantart.com or on Facebook at "Brittney West's Art."

Candice Westberg

I am most recently interested in exploring merging birds with women to create intriguing pieces that make you wonder about the character. I am careful in which birds I choose so that either their characteristics or simply their names create greater meaning. In this case the woman has the head of a mourning dove.

Michael B. Wilkes FAIA

I am an architect and photographer. In 2007 and 2009 I received the *Juror's Special Commendation* in the National American Institute Of Architects

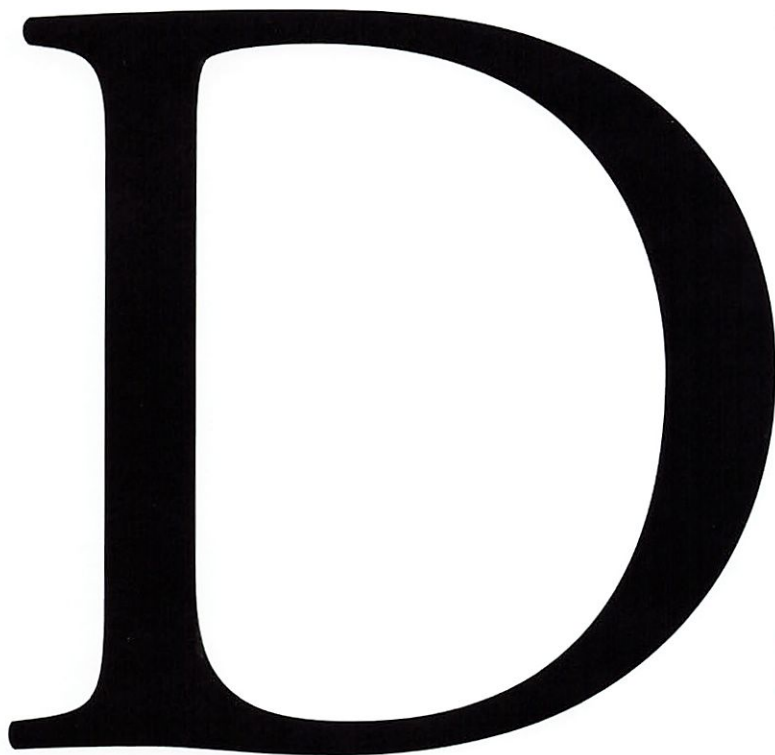
Photography Competition. My firm has received over 65 awards of excellence in design. I am a graduate of the University of Oregon.

Maggie Wright

My work is black and white photography, 35 mm and medium format. I am an advanced photography student expanding my knowledge in the fine arts.



Shop | *Shannon Sullivan*
oil on canvas



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ABOUT DENALI

Denali has been a publication of Lane Community College for over thirty years. A student-produced annual magazine, Denali publishes original art and literature by residents of Lane County. We strive to give both new and established artists and authors the opportunity to share their work with the community.

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Featuring Works by

**Joe McCormick
Jim Mender
Kia Metzler
Rachael Miller
Amanda Newell
Nancy O'Connor
Fernando Ortiz
Mitchell Pearson
Eileen Dawson Peterson
Leo Rivers
Anthony S. Russell
Victor Schramm
Lauri Smith
Anna Stehle
Shannon Sullivan
Jacob Swearingen
Jud Turner
Cila Warncke
Brittney West
Candice Westberg
Michael B. Wilkes
Maggie Wright**

**Rick Barich
Drew Bardana
Kris Bluth
Debbi Cassidy
William C. Crutchfield
Brent Deyo
River Donaghey
Beverly Ediger
Chrystal Emiry
Molly Eno
Caleb Epstein
Stephanie Erickson
J. R. Giska
Matt Grable
Kathy Gunson
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