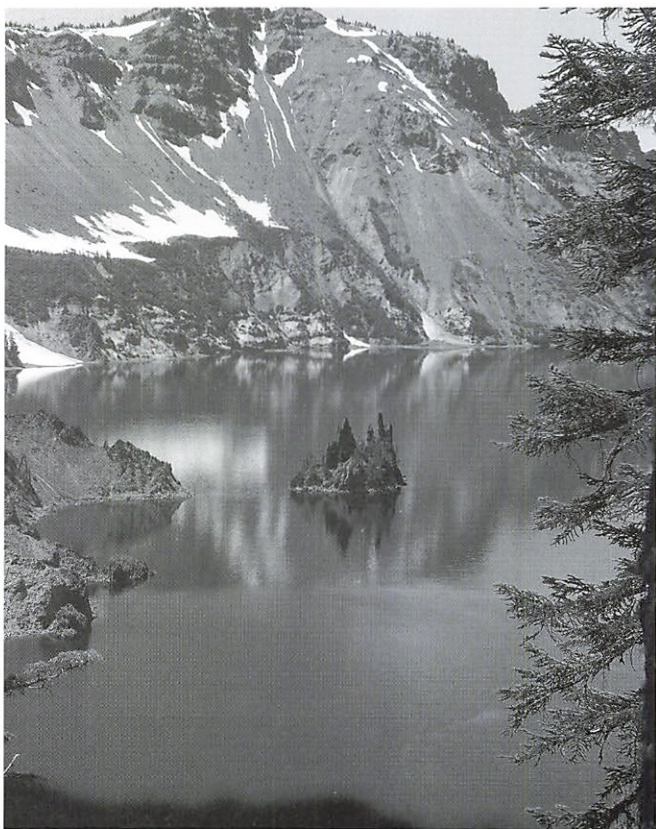


2012



Denali



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INSIDE BACK COVER	JS Kaplan <i>Untitled</i> , photography

2012 Denali



An Arts and Literature Magazine

Presented by
Lane Community College
Eugene, Oregon

From the Editor.....	5
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ART

Luna: Spotted Owl	5
<i>Candice Westberg</i>	

Gaia Rising	7
<i>Christine Paige</i>	

Threaded Rum Bottle and Rammahorn Stein	8
<i>Dustin Maxwell</i>	

Untitled	11
<i>Natasha Stringer</i>	

Untitled	13
<i>Josh Schmidt</i>	

Cuba	14-15
<i>Susie Morrill</i>	

Yaquina Lighthouse Lookout	19
<i>Nicole Lovejoy</i>	

Fear of Birds	20
<i>Candice Westberg</i>	

Untitled [Eagle]	21
<i>Ramey Alexander</i>	

Untitled [Black-eyed Susans]	24
<i>Josh Schmidt</i>	

Sentinels	29
<i>Kathy Torvik</i>	

Chain Fractured	31
<i>Korene Pearson</i>	

Self Portrait	32
<i>Ramey Alexander</i>	

Series of Ear Cups	35
<i>Christian Dray</i>	

Utah	36
<i>Christian Moody</i>	

Down the Spiral	40
<i>Jacob Horttor</i>	

Waiting	41
<i>Jacob Horttor</i>	

Daryl and Hobo	42
<i>Liz Wolfe</i>	

Avaritia	45
<i>Jud Turner</i>	

Rusty	46
<i>Grace M. Wicklund</i>	

Solitary	49
<i>Rachael Bohning</i>	

Ipu Ika	50
<i>Deborah Bulcao</i>	

44° N 123° E	53
<i>Christian Dray</i>	

Untitled	54
<i>Aaron Moore & Nicholas Johnson</i>	

Self Portrait	55
<i>Brittney West</i>	

Remnant	56
<i>Andrew Grediagin</i>	

Cups and Casserole Dish	59
<i>Anna Stehle</i>	

Intellectual Enlightenment60	
<i>Rachael Bohning</i>	
A Prance in the Dark63	
<i>Nicholas Johnson</i>	
RIP Louie64	
<i>Nicole Lovejoy</i>	
Untitled [Nude]70	
<i>Sarah Tustin</i>	
Untitled [Nude with Fabric71	
<i>Shannon Burlington</i>	
Untitled [Strawberry]73	
<i>Daniel Rider</i>	
Galaxy Skipping74	
<i>Nicholas Johnson</i>	
Porcelain Beginnings77	
<i>Melissa Johnson</i>	
Ambush78	
<i>Larena Cornell</i>	
Loving Hands81	
<i>Karen Seaton</i>	
Mystic Forest82	
<i>Misty Jones</i>	
Cemetery Ice86	
<i>Nicole Lovejoy</i>	
Untitled [Gull]89	
<i>JS Kaplan</i>	
King Estate95	
<i>Monika Barry</i>	

Door99	
<i>Daniel Rider</i>	
Tree Nymphs101	
<i>Sarina Dorie</i>	
Rising Power102	
<i>Danielle Stafford</i>	
She Lived107	
<i>Korene Pearson</i>	

LITERATURE

Nameless Face6	
<i>Bunloeur Yath</i>	
The Green Top9	
<i>Michael Hoekstra</i>	
The Indefensible Detriments of Promiscuity12	
<i>M.J. Petrick</i>	
Mein Kleiner Engel (My Little Angel)16	
<i>Alexandra Prewett</i>	
Sunset Beach18	
<i>Leo Rivers</i>	
A Colorful Evening or a Downright Good Monday	
<i>Nicole Taylor</i>22	
Daisy Chaining25	
<i>Mary E. Lowd</i>	
Layers28	
<i>Melissa Johnson</i>	
Testing Reflections30	
<i>M.J. Petrick</i>	

Zombie Psychology	33
<i>Sarina Dorie</i>	
Waking in the Morning Fresh Dew	37
<i>Traci Johnston-Ruiz</i>	
A Day	38
<i>Michael Maring</i>	
Street of Reality	43
<i>Traci Johnston-Ruiz</i>	
Rage	44
<i>McKenzie Snowdon</i>	
Perro Poco Loco	47
<i>Gary James Jo</i>	
City	48
<i>Jayme Goodman</i>	
Laughing Jesus	51
<i>Michael Hoekstra</i>	
Mobius Strip	52
<i>Briana Bullington</i>	
I Have Always Been Yellow	57
<i>Serina Troup</i>	
Interoffice Mail	58
<i>Kris Bluth</i>	
Jury Duty	61
<i>Tom Knox</i>	
A Ghost's Guide to Haunting Humans	62
<i>Sarina Dorie</i>	
The Necromouser	65
<i>Mary E. Lowd</i>	

Perfect Lover	72
<i>Gary James Jo</i>	
The Lone Ranger and Tonto	75
<i>Tom Knox</i>	
Love and Crickets	76
<i>Michael Maring</i>	
Black Sheep	79
<i>Bunloeur Yath</i>	
In Her Hands	80
<i>Savanna Lilly</i>	
Gravity	83
<i>Joshua Coon</i>	
Thirteen	87
<i>Jordyn Senn</i>	
Pied	90
<i>Laura Duffield</i>	
Moon's Cycles	96
<i>Briana Bullington</i>	
The Carnage of Carelessness	100
<i>M.J. Petrick</i>	
The Emerald Palace	103
<i>Leo Rivers</i>	
Finding the Worker's Voice	104
<i>Olivia Salzman</i>	
INDEX OF CONTRIBUTORS	108

When I took on the position of editor for the 2012 edition of Denali I set some pretty hefty goals for myself and for the magazine. I wanted more. I wanted more literature, more photography, more fine art, more individuals represented. My friends, I have done it. This year's publication showcases the work of 57 individuals, the largest number ever represented in a single issue. With almost four hundred unique submissions the undertaking was massive. But with



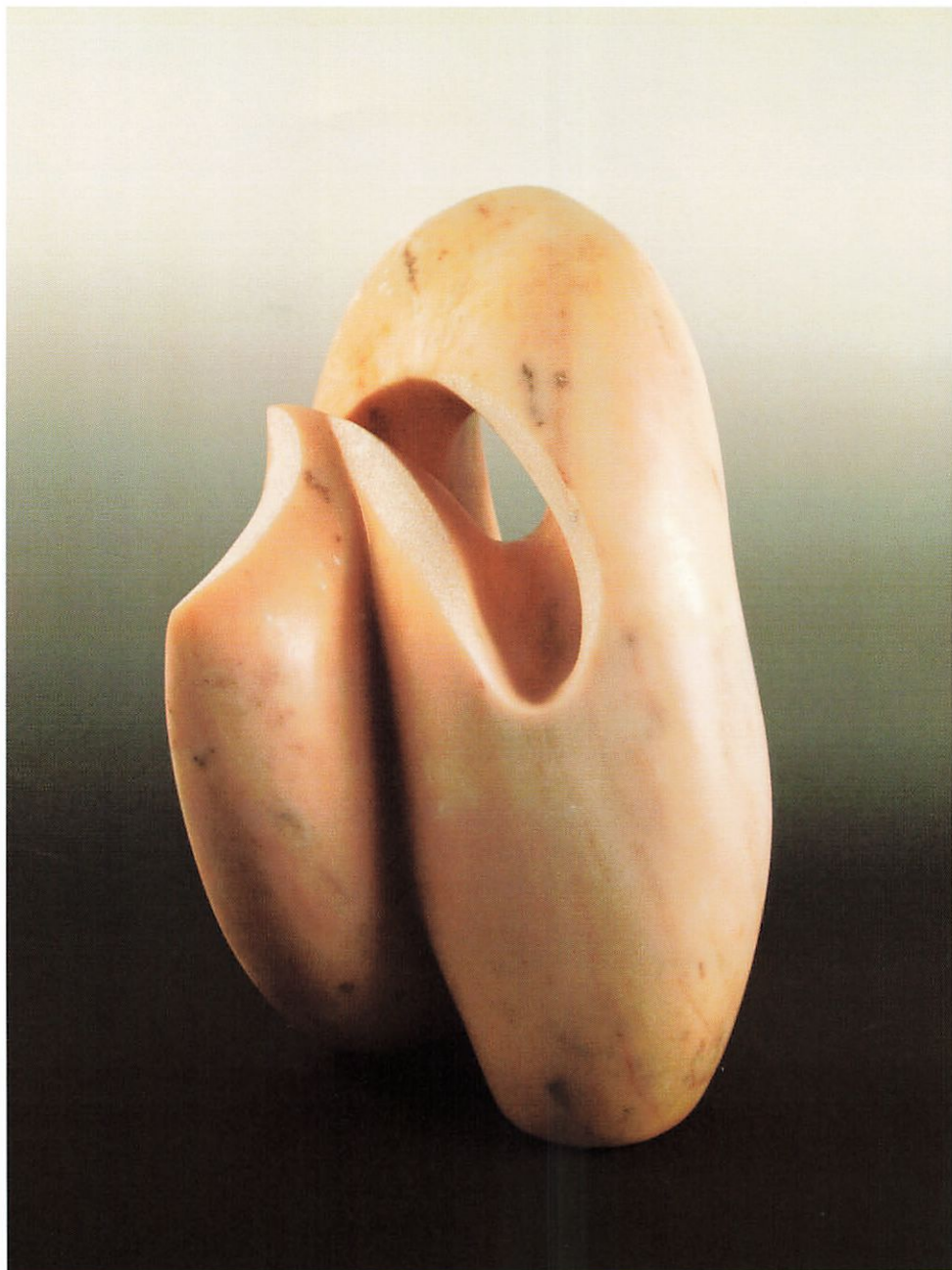
a bit of sweat and elbow grease and the dedication of my editorial team, the selection was narrowed to just over 90 submissions that you now hold in your hands. The final selection was challenging. There were so many worthy pieces that we just did not have the room for and difficult cuts had to be made. I want to encourage those who were not featured in this issue to not give up, to polish and refine your work, and to submit your best work again next year. Remember that you have not failed unless you fail to try.

Sincerely,
Candice Westberg
Editor

Nameless Face

Bunloeur Yath

Like a magnet,
the forces that draws me to you
Who are you?
You disappeared
as suddenly as you appeared
elusive
mysterious
you slipped my mind again
it was nice to see you
again
I'd probably forget you
like I did before.
Elusive in memory
elusive physically
a nameless face in a dream.



Christine Paige
Gaia Rising
Marble



Dustin Maxwell
Threaded Rum Bottle and Rammahorn Stein
Ceramics

The Green Top
Michael Hoekstra

And the symphony began
Amidst the Dank,
Dark,
Smokiness.
Smokiness I add to,
Inhaling deeply my unfiltered
Cigarette.
Giving me that
Sweetly coveted
Burn in the throat
Reminding me,
Strangely,
I am living.

[How surreal it is,
The tatterdemalion drunks
And the pristinely dressed hipsters
Mingled together,
In the deep afternoon.]

Shot of whiskey,
Two tall beers,

And that warmth washes over,
Revealing the half-assed drunk
I am.

[Oh-ho! The pretty boy artist,
Living the cliché,
Downing Old Style after Old Style
And I don't believe I have ever
Heard of him painting a single
Picture.]

I'll sit tight 'till it's crazy,
Packed with punks, perps, and
The mo-ped Army,
Old alcoholics
And young shady types.

[And here's the "Noodle Man"
Peddling hints of the cosmos
With his wide array of powders,
Plants
And chemicals.]

I'll sit with my sad intentions
And sad allegories of a downed plane
The crash and burn
Applied to the self.

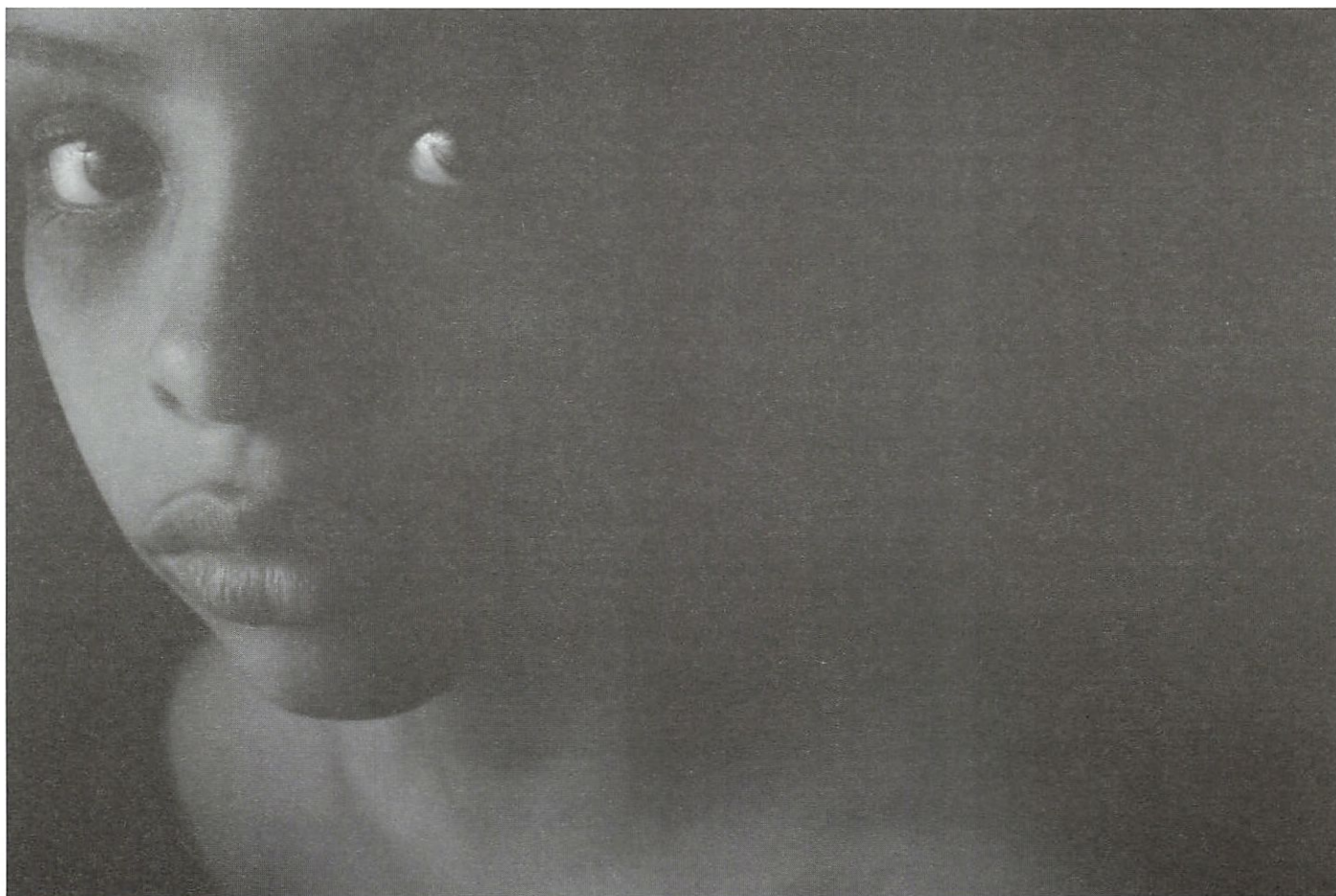
[At the "Big Kids" table
Sits the off duty waitress,
Hunched over and inhaling
Completely
Her numbing agents
Then handing the rolled up bill
To her neighbor.]

I'll sit tight until a friend,
Or something more than
Just a familiar face
Joins me in
My Emotional water boarding,
So to speak.

[The flashing neon music machine
Is cranking out its noise
With a general Emo scheme
In continual rotation,
With The Rolling Stones,
Beast of Burden era,

And other gems or turds
Of classic rock.]

I'll sit among these tatterdemalion drunks
And pristinely dressed hipsters
With a simper upon my face,
Despite the impending 'Bad Camp',
I grin at being alive.
Laugh at its ridiculousness,
Have a few more beers.
And wander,
With pen on paper,
Through many subjects.
None of them
The truth of tomorrow.



Natasha Stringer
Untitled
Photography

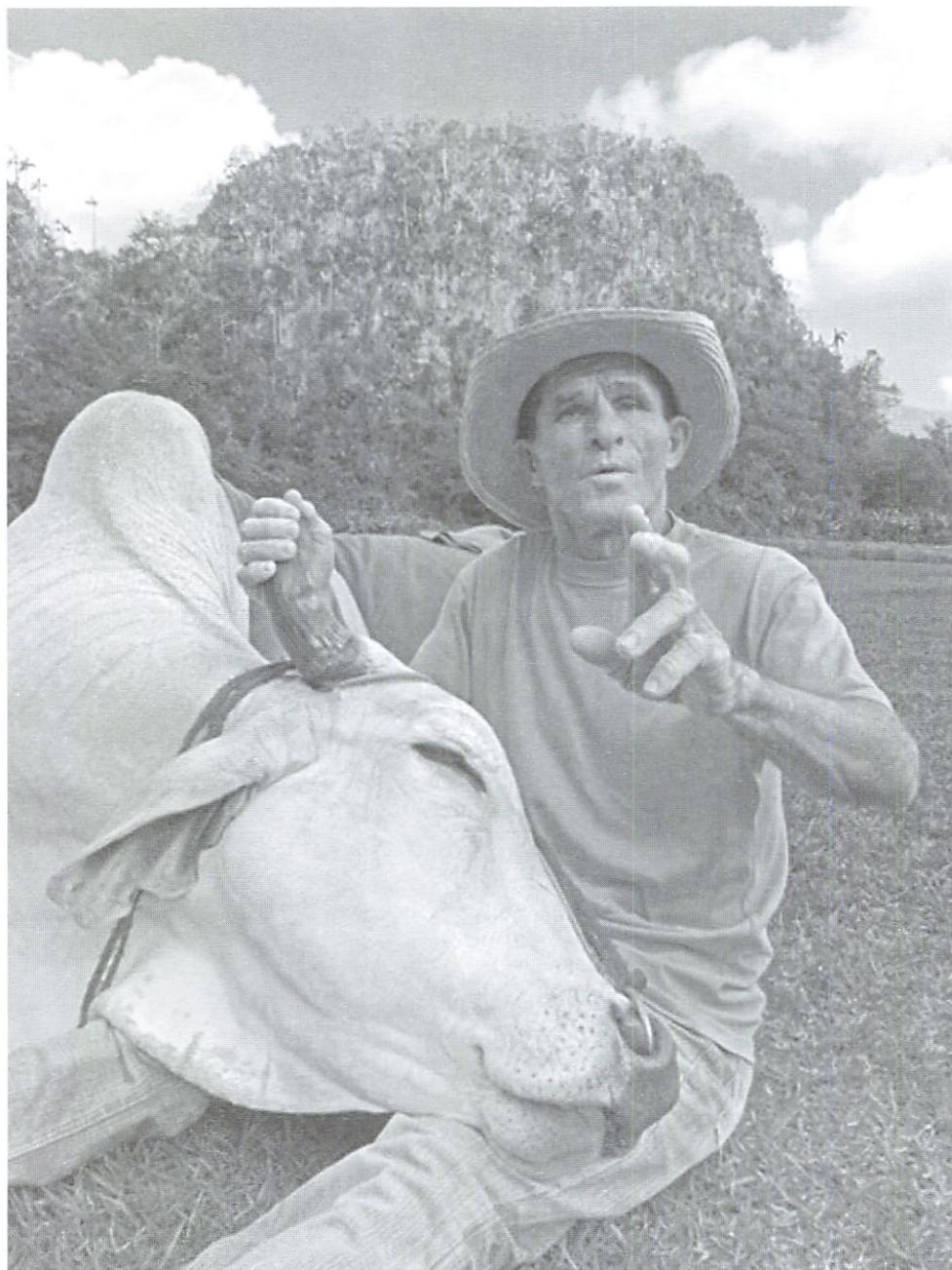
The Indefensible Detriments of Promiscuity

M.J. Petrick

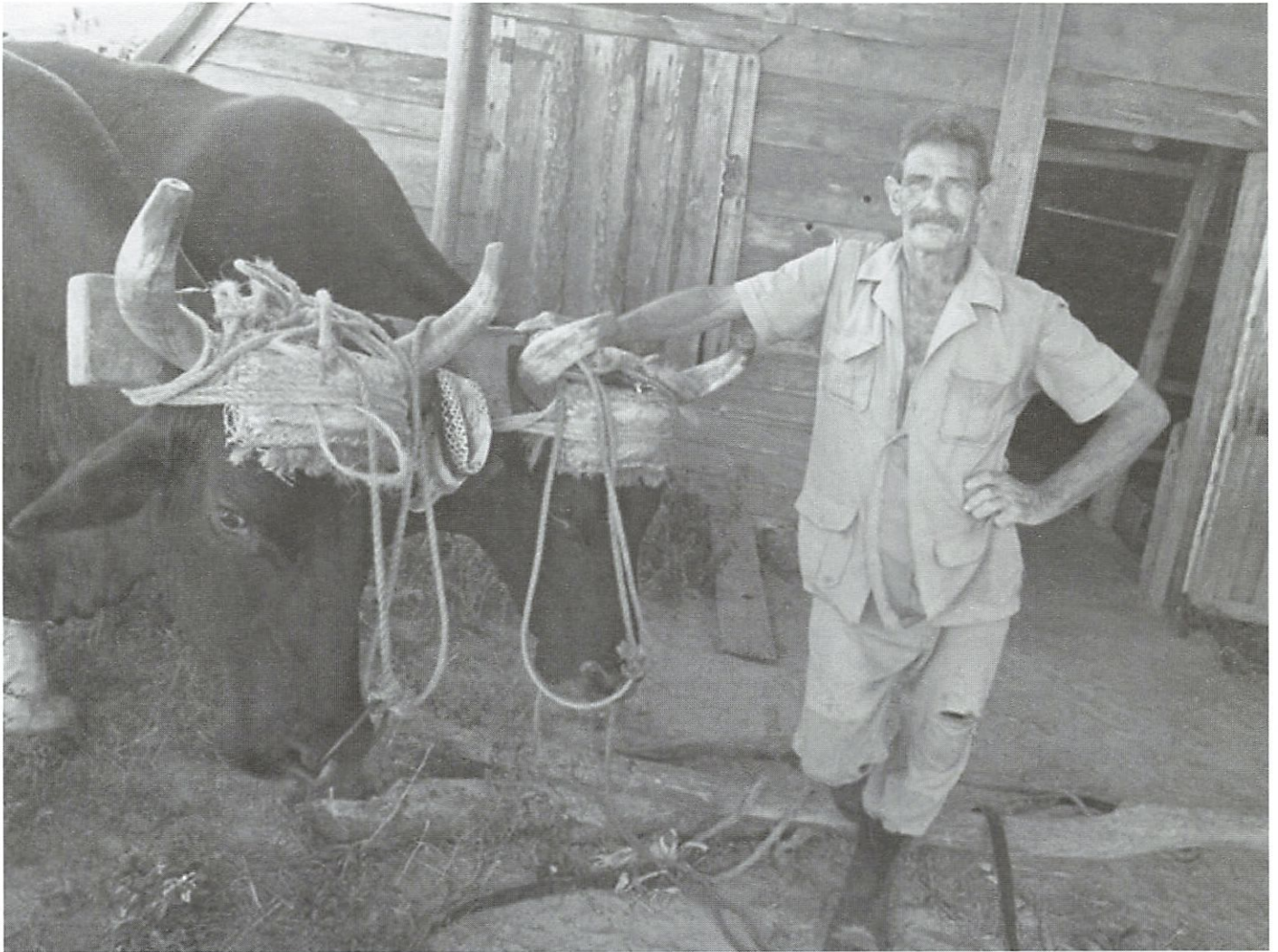
Consider me quickly, and then no more,
For my character is sickly; an un-virtuous whore.
Not that you know this, nor should it deflect
Your terms of endearment, or my future prospects.
But dismally it does demand a disastrous fate,
For both age and judgment pass at alarming rates.
And I am left listless, lulling lovely lyrics in vain
Deflecting, detaching, drying my eyes from the pain.
Still saliently I wonder what amour should shield,
A fresh-wounded woman whose heart has not healed.
What weapon would a wistful woman wield in defense,
When the opposed holds a higher, more justly pretense?



Josh Schmidt
Untitled
Photography



Susie Morrill
Cuba
Photography



Susie Morrill
Cuba
Photography

Mein Kleiner Engel (*My Little Angel*)

Alexandra Prewett

For as long as I could remember, I have heard the gruesome stories of the Holocaust from my grandfather. He told me tales of the Jews that had been rounded up like cattle, taken from their homes all over Europe, and separated from their loved ones. Selected to live or die by one group of people who thought they were lesser beings, most of their lives ended in death. Much to my Mother's disappointment, Grandfather Mahler loved to share the seemingly epic stories, always telling me, a small smile on his withered face, how lucky he and my grandmother were to escape hell itself, how lucky they were to lose only one son instead of the three they had at the time.

"Come *mein kleiner engel*," he'd say, patting his lap, and I'd be more than willing to crawl upon his boney knee, eager to learn about the tragedy that caused so much pain for my people. I never understood how my grandfather could be so happy with life after what he and my grandmother lived through. When I was older he'd say, "*Weil gott lass mich leben*, Elena, because God let me live, because I survived when many didn't, part of my soul maybe lost but at least I have my life."

Because I have you and everyone else while others have no one, I knew what he also meant. My grandmother, on the other hand, always shied away from the mention of the Holocaust, leaving the room when the words left my grandfather's lips, a frown on her once beautiful face. Whenever I asked her about her life during such horrid times, her dark eyes would glaze and her small hand would rest on her arm where the numbers that forever reminded her of the traumatizing events she had witnessed were placed. Never did she speak of her life during the Holocaust, never.

Not until a few years after my grandfather died and she was living in a retirement home, did I ask her, plead with her, to tell me what she knew, what she experienced, what she had seen. I was in high school when she finally told me, old age getting the best of her. But finally she gave in patting my cheek and murmuring, "*So stur, so stubborn, just like my Karel*."

It took many visits to satisfy my thirst for the knowledge my grandmother supplied. She told me how they, she and my grandfather, were pulled out of their house in Budapest and put on a train before being separated. My grandmother told of the woman's camp, Gleiwitz, where she was sent, not knowing whether my grandfather and her sons were still alive. She told of the many times her life was threatened by the SS soldiers. She told me of her heart-ache, the agonizing pain of losing her son, the uncle I never got the chance to meet. Many tears were shed at the pain of knowing her story.

I never got to hear the rest of my grandmother's journey, though I knew the outcome. She had fallen ill and, as strong as she had been during the times of the Holocaust, she now was not going to fight. I will never forget the day

before she passed on to join my grandfather. As I sat by her bedside, holding her small calloused and wrinkled hand, I thought of all the heartache and horrific things she had went through.

She said to me, “Do not waste to your life away my dear sweet Elena. Never be afraid to fight for what you want and never, never let anyone tell you, that you are not.” She paused, caressing my hand as tears filled her dark eyes and as tears flooded mine; this was the time I felt most connected to my grandmother. “You are not special. *besondere*, During your young life you will go through many challenges. Never back down, stay strong. Remember the people *mein kleiner engel*, your people, the sufferings, but remember, most importantly the *hoffnung*, hope.” She patted my hand, murmured, “*weine nicht, do not weep engel, stark sein.*”

I knew she wouldn’t live much longer, so I listened to her words, wiping my tears away. I sat there by her side just listening. Listening to her breathe, listening to the heart monitor, just listening. Her last words I will remember forever. She said in a gentle tone, most sweet and soothing, a voice full of peace, “You have filled my life with joy, when I thought nothing could. You have shown me peace, *mein kleiner engel*. She looked towards the sky after that, softly saying one last prayer, before she turned to me once more. I see him, my *engel*, my little Nenatel, Karel, they are waiting for me and I do not fear death. Though I may not be here with the living for much longer, Elena, the memories of the Holocaust will forever imprint in my mind, though the numbers will not be branded on my arm much longer.”

That night we got a call from the home telling us of grandmother’s death. I knew that she had died peacefully. Without worry and without fear, she was finally with her little *mein kleiner engel* again smiling once more.

Sunset Beach

Leo Rivers

leave the oyster farm behind, pass
by the south slough estuary
and at sunset
you will walk out onto the beach, rock
curled around you like
the green-black claws
of an iguana - resist
those paths that low tide shows you

lest you kneel to gather sea glass
in a little cave
while the tide stalks in
and sea foam
like a dozen dragon tongues
draw you out to go

to embrace a laughing ocean
and know the siren's steely fingers
in the heartless undertow!



Nicole Lovejoy
Yaquina Lighthouse Lookout
Photography



Candice Westberg
Fear of Birds
Scratchboard



Ramey Alexander
Untitled [Eagle]
Graphite

A Colorful Evening or A Down Right Good Monday

Nicole Taylor

Gray fog on my eyes, glasses linger
from the dark stormy evening walk.

Two banjos and
one singer, in a red blouse.

A young guy in a green sweatshirt says
*She sat on my lap, and
later.*

A guy in a brown mountaineer cap
and zipped blue down jacket drinks
and talks at the corner to my left.

Hop Valley's Stepchild Red
is the bomb says my young neighbor
at the table at my right, and I agree.

Later other guys yell

*I gotta buy beer;
How can you leave without beer?*

I ate two large pizza slices
with white mozzarella
and orange sweet potato fries.

A cheerful golden bluegrass classic is sung
by a group of four, one in autumn shaded
patchwork hat and pants:

*Rock Me Momma Like a Wagon Wheel,
Like the Wind and the Rain,
Like a Southbound Train . . .*

They sang *Everything Around You Shines*

I like the song but the line
Until We all go to Jesus.

A family plays on a classic

Clue board, emerald green.

A young couple plays on a vintage

Scrabble board, beige squares.

Tonight I feel optimistic, energetic orange,

but I hear so many songs of the blues:

Blues Everywhere I See and

Nobody's Ever Had the Blues like Me.

A few orange fries and heads

energize the waiting young poets and

the ignoring audience, the poet's texting fans,

probably young university students.

The Monroe Street Cafe, Eugene, OR



Josh Schmidt

Untitled [Black-eyed Susans]

Photography

Daisy chains are kind of tricky, so I didn't believe the frezzipod when he said he could daisy chain his way from Altu 7 to Altu 5 in fifteen minutes flat. First of all, that's a forty minute flight, if you pull up above the belt and fly without all those rocks in your way. Secondly, frezzipods look like a cross between a crab and a pineapple -- the perfect tropical hors d'oeuvre. Who's going to believe anything a walking hors d'oeuvre says anyway?

So, I laughed at him. Big deal. Everyone laughs at frezzipods. The way they clatter around, those six arthropoidal legs, and that ridiculous bushy, green tail swinging from side to side behind them... That's just downright funny.

But then I made a mistake. "Yeah? Well, I could do it in *ten* minutes if I had one of those space convertibles like you drive." My buddies were laughing and jeering with me, but then it turned out the frezzipod had buddies too. One of his buddies offered to lend me a ship. Suddenly, my buddies weren't laughing anymore.

You'd think there'd be a way to back down. I mean, a human can't drive a space convertible without wearing a goddamn spacesuit for chrissake! Frezzipods can take the vacuum for hours, and convertible controls are designed for their clackety claw-hands. Me, though? I found myself sitting in a spaceship that hardly deserves the name -- more of a space skateboard with an over-clocked engine, if you ask me -- wearing a big, fitted bag of Kevlar, Mylar, whatever-*lar*-stuff.

My opponent's buddy, the other frezzipod, gave me a crash course in the controls, but I only had a few minutes to warm up before I found myself pushing full throttle on an alien spacecraft, racing like my life depended on it for Altu 5.

Caddy, for that's what I'd decided to call my frezzipod *friend*, started the race with some extra-fancy moves. For a moment, I thought I was off the hook. Caddy headed straight toward a starwhal sized asteroid, before we'd even passed the start line, way too fast to dodge it. At the last second, Caddy sprang his six legs, jumping clear off his convertible.

My elation at having already won was followed fast on its heels by realizing what I was truly up against. Having sprung eight feet from his ship, and, conversely having pushed his ship eight feet in the opposite direction -- a good, fat starwhal's girth -- Caddy and ship sailed smoothly on. The asteroid passed *between* them.

I, on the other hand, took the slow way around, adjusting acceleration from one direction, then the other, canceling

my spurious sideways motion out. When I got past the behemoth of a rock, I saw Caddy pulling himself and his ship back together via his safety tether, still sailing straight ahead.

I'm good, but Caddy was flying at a whole different level. And after a couple more tricks like that one -- tricks I knew better than to try in my baggy suit with no prior experience -- I was almost convinced Caddy could do it. He was way ahead of me. Maybe he really could daisy chain from Altu 7 to Altu 5 in fifteen minutes. Then Caddy made his mistake.

See, he underestimated how fast I could dodge those rocks, daisy chaining the old-fashioned, sitting-in-my-ship-the-whole-time way. So, he was still close enough for me to see him when he ducked off planet-bound. We'd used up eleven and a half of our minutes. I'd already been proved a liar, and in another four and a half -- make that four -- minutes more, Caddy would be proved a liar too. Except, it looked like he didn't plan on being there to get laughed at. Well, to Jupiter with that! If I was going to be humiliated, the one thing that might help me save face was making sure Caddy got humiliated *more*. I hung a hard right, heading planet-bound too.

Not far off of the beaten trail, Caddy slowed way down. He had his ship moving at a virtual crawl, and he started doing something strange. The asteroids were thicker here, and when the small rocks -- ones that wouldn't even knick your hull -- hit his ship, Caddy carefully stopped to knock them back into place. He was covering his trail. Caddy had something to hide.

Well, he was going to be surprised when his hiding place turned out to be not so hidden. I was all steeled to confront that boastful, cowardly frezzipod and drag him back to Altu 5 the long, slow way when his ship vanished.

I was furious. Had I blacked out? I've been flying the belt since I was a tween, and I'd never blacked out before. How else could his ship be there one second and not the next? How long had I blacked out for? I looked down at the timer on the convertible's dash. Just over fourteen minutes. I was still puzzling over it when my buddies all started cheering for me over the radio. "Come on! You can do it!" they cried, snapping me back to the here and now.

The 'now' was fourteen minutes and forty seconds. The 'here' -- I looked around, trying to orient myself -- the 'here' turned out to be about four daisies from Altu 5. So, I pushed that little ship into gear, and I loop de loop de loop de looped around those last four asteroids... Arriving at Altu 5, according to the automated ship-register, just in time. Just in time to tie Caddy.

Holy Helios! I'd just daisy chained from Altu 7 to Altu 5 in fifteen minutes flat! Except, of course, I hadn't actually daisy chained the whole way. Neither had Caddy. I took my time parking the borrowed convertible and suiting down. By the time I joined Caddy in the ship port bar, there were only a few minutes until my buddies, who'd taken the long way here, would arrive.

I wasn't sure how this was going to play out, so I took the stool next to Caddy's and ordered a marzicran sherry from the Canilon bartender. Caddy looked at me appraisingly over his drink. At least, I assume that's what the look on his pineapple-rind face meant. I know I was trying to appraise him. "My *friend* and I here," he said, clackingly to the Canilon, "just daisy chained all the way here from Altu 7 in fifteen minutes." Caddy turned his myriad eyes back to me fixing me with a level stare. "*Flat*." "Is that so?" the Canilon asked, mixing my drink with his prehensile nose.

"Well..." I said, uncertainly, still trying to figure out the rules of the game we were playing. The Canilon shoved my finished drink toward me, looking skeptical. Caddy still had his eyes fixed on me, waiting to see what I would do.

If I called Caddy on cheating when he flew through that wormhole, he'd discredit me for not living up to my boast. For sure. I downed a big gulp of sherry and said, "Yeah, that's right. Fifteen minutes flat.

Caddy slapped me genially on the back with a crustaceous claw. At the same time, I heard my buddies approaching, raucously clamoring to hear about our race.

"You know," the Canilon said before they got to us, his lips curling to the side of his elephantine proboscis. "I can cut a cloverleaf around the Soris 'roids. *Without* stopping to refuel."

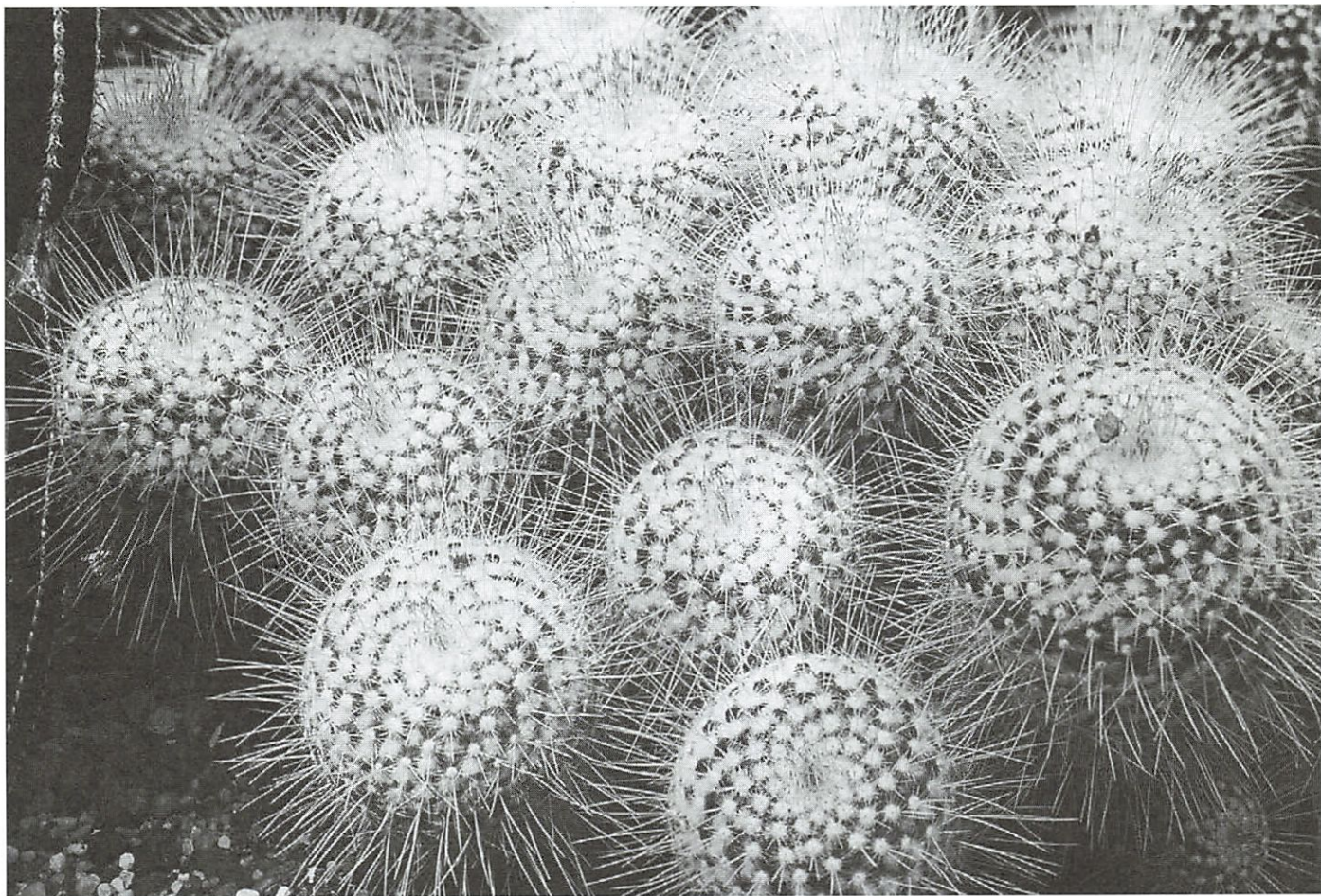
Now, that's clearly impossible.

Yet... No nose-handed Canilon ever cut a cloverleaf better than *me*. My buddies arrived just in time to hear me telling that elephant-face, "You think that's good? I can do it on *half* a tank!"

Layers

Melissa Johnson

Unveiling of hidden secrets
as if to say, here is my past unravel at your own risks,
or rather mine.
Snake like slithering watching absorbing
from a distance, shedding and letting go.
Hold me and my layers in your cocoon of dark and light
holding tight so to squint through the weave of the nest in which we pray to lay.
Layers, missing layers...
Tides remind us of past and future layers. Layers to be worn for practical protection and
to be collected,
scooped up like buttons to hold so very near,
so sacred never to be forgotten.
Stitched together from personal seasons
toured with thoughts in my head,
dreams of walk with me there.
Orange Gold Green Red
bright from the passing of the strongest sun into the coolness of frost.
Turn our planet, spiral
effortless.
One more layer out the door. Overnight and FedEx, layers made simple,
simply missing.
Missing my layers while always faster
spinning your wheel while yardage passes by.
On with our layers, our maps and compasses,
oh how we do not mean to pass on,
anything to not pass that along.
That is my layer over there, hidden in an over-amped agenda of persuasive
over-dyeing, waxing and waning
for that last thread of control
only then to be quieted and soothed.
Crutch-ed by the cocoon that binds the layers of my heart
and
my love my life my turn...
Now my sole can melt confidently back to sleep
encased by the weave of the cocoon that holds mine so dear.



Kathy Torvik
Sentinels
Photography

Testing Reflections

M.J. Petrick

An old sweatshirt feels nice doesn't it?
Like life? Love? Nothing? None of it?
Like childhood hoodies in the ocean mist
Hold me; I'm the heart you tried to kiss.

We're running too fast to turn back now
But enticed, we still fall short somehow.
As the roaring rhythm turns into a solo
We crawl into a place that only we know.

Kicking rocks across cracks in the sidewalk,
We stare silently when it's too tough to talk.
Electrified by life's 'thousand natural shocks'
I'm your muse but I feel used and mocked.

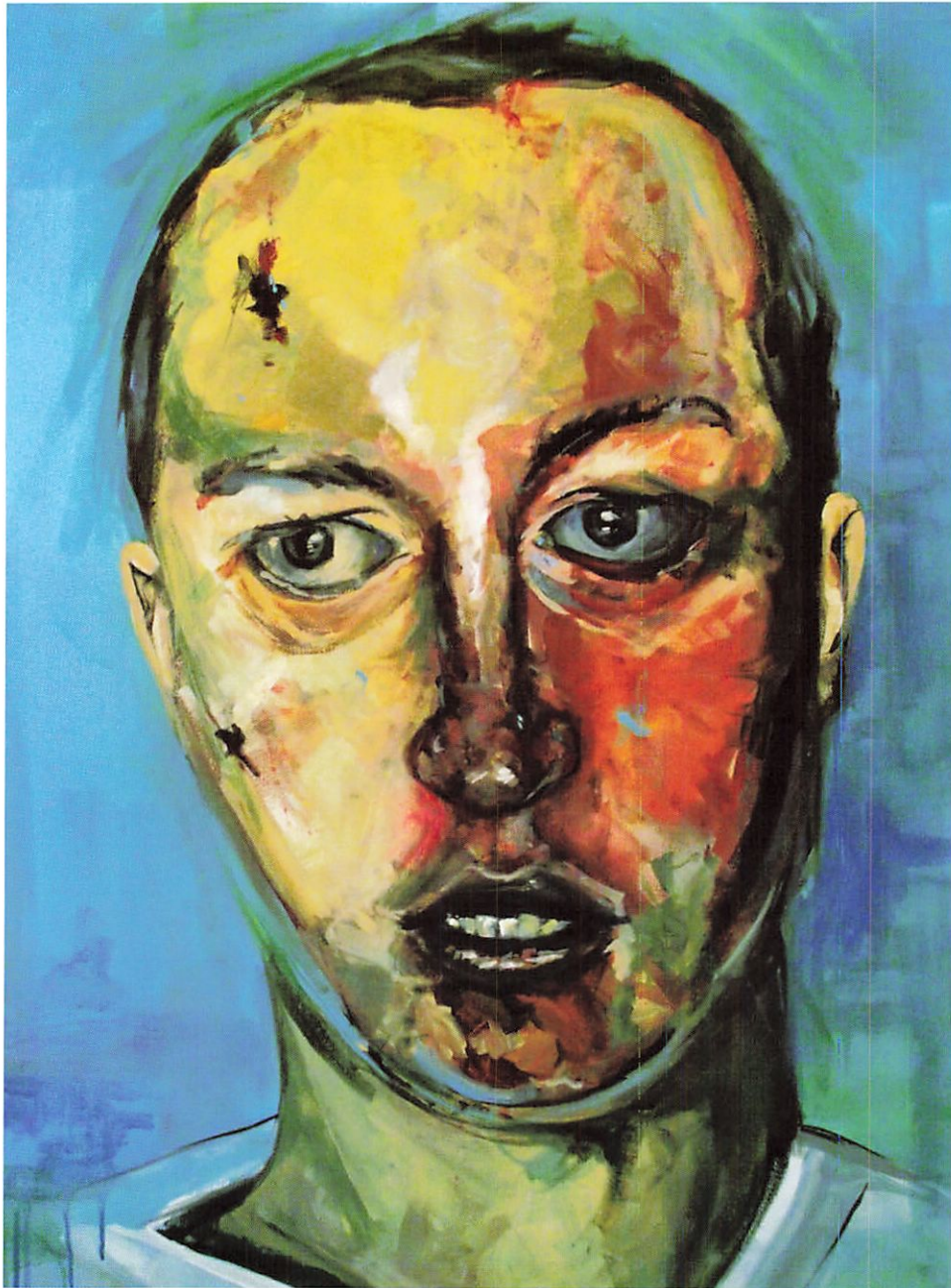
I try fresh truth against my past's reflections
Investigating my soul, intent on introspection.
What permeated pores of my past predilections
Dissolving desires and detaching connections?

But my mind is all absorbed inside your chest,
And you carved out a hole for my head to rest.
Then I emerge enthralled in my own emptiness.
Can consciousness be considered moral excess?

The comedown is conceived inside my sickness.
When I'm at my worst, you always take my best.
But when I ask for more, you always give me less.
If this love just is a question, my life is just a test.



Korene Pearson
Chain Fractured
Acrylic on Canvas



Ramey Alexander
Self Portrait
Painting

I'd been expecting my ex-boyfriend to show up sooner or later, and when he did, I knew he'd probably want to eat my brain.

When the moaning and thumping started, I ignored it, thinking it was my upstairs neighbor having sex with his girlfriend again. As the moaning grew louder and drowned out the sitcom I was only half watching, I realized the noise was coming from zombies.

I threw down my Psych 501 textbook and stumbled toward the drafty window, still wrapped in my leopard print Snuggie. I told myself I was ready for this moment. Still, it didn't make my heart pound any less as I yanked open the blinds and peered out into the moonlit night.

Kevin stared at me from the other side of the windowpane. Dirt caked his face, his once-shaggy, hipster haircut matted to his head. The red of his lips stood out against his ashen face. They were either covered with blood or lipstick—you never could tell with Kevin. Now that he was living-impaired, I didn't expect death to put a damper on his womanizing.

The dark suit he'd worn at his funeral last month was pretty much intact, and his skin hadn't fallen off yet. I couldn't say as much for his two friends standing on the lawn behind him. One was missing chunks of face and a autumn leaves were stuck to his sweater. The other had an eyeball dangling down his cheek, decomposing flesh that seeped through the cracks of the closed window. My voice was muffled. "What is it this time?"

"Leticia baaaaby, you know I'd only rise from the grave if it was important," Kevin said, his voice garbled in a slushy moan.

Considering the first time he'd risen had been to crash a football game at the University of Oregon, and the second time had been to crash a kegger, I knew 'important' was subjective.

I picked up the bottle of pumpkin spice fresh air spray from the bookcase and spritzed the window so I could breathe. "What do you want?"

"I missed yooooou. I needed yooooou."

I rolled my eyes, more annoyed than afraid now. "Yeah, you needed me so much you had sex with Sara Palmer in the parking lot of Dairy Queen."

Baaaaby, you're the only oooone for me."

"I'm not your baby," I said. "We broke up two months ago. Why don't you go to Sara's dorm?"

"Saraaaa doesn't haaaaave caaaable," Dangly-Eye said.

Kevin frowned and elbowed his friend which caused a few of the dude's ribs to tear through his shirt.

“He waaaaaants you for your braaaaaain, too,” Missing-Flesh-Face said and then snickered.

“Guuuuys, you aren’t helping.” Kevin’s raspy voice rose.

I crossed my arms, almost too indignant to speak. “Let me get this straight—you came here to watch some stupid TV show?”

“It’s the big gaaaame.”

“But you didn’t come to me first, did you? You went to Sara’s. And I assume from the bits of gore on your face you ate her brains?”

“Um. . . .”

“Fine. We can do this the hard way,” I muttered, turning back to the TV. I wasn’t a witch doctor or voodoo queen, but I had gotten my undergraduate degree in psychology at the University of Louisiana, and I had picked up a few things about magic—and men—along the way.

When I pulled the TV over to the window, they gave each other high fives with the best coordination one might expect from zombies—which meant falling all over each other. One of them lost an arm in the process. I headed for the fridge, retrieved the little yogurt cup of blood that I’d been draining from packages of chicken wings for the last two weeks, and set it on the bookcase.

All three of them had their faces pressed up against the window, peering at the TV, shouting and groaning what channel the game was on. I ignored them as I scanned the TV listings. I flipped through the channels, their shrieking reaching a crescendo as I passed the game and left the screen on some sickly sweet Hallmark movie.

I yanked the window open and poured the chicken blood on them. Before the placebo of black magic wore off, I said, “With this blood I command you: get your sorry asses back to your graves this instant, or your bones will be rooted to this spot forever and you’ll be forced to endure chick-flicks for eternity.”

They clutched at their eyes in agony, either because of the pregnant farm girl scene they’d just witnessed or the Tabasco sauce I’d mixed with the blood. They lurched away, stumbling into each other, wailing into the night.

Thankfully, there were some constants on this earth: one being that most men, dead or alive, would do anything to avoid watching girly movies on Lifetime.



Christian Dray
Series of Ear Cups
Photography



Christian Moody
Utah
Photography

Waking in the Morning Fresh Dew

Traci Johnston-Ruiz

Nature Mornings rush
Waking in the morning fresh dew
Sky dark moon shinning early morning
The fresh smell of morning rain
The shuffling of morning rush
Off to work off to school
People do as they do
Animals skittle scatter
The sky parts from dark to light
Its early morning delight
The dew drips fresh scents
Inhale the fresh breath
Relax in your morning rush
Do not forget natures hush
The beauty of the early morning
From dark sky to early light
Nature awakens you
Your day awaits it is up to you
Make it positive whatever you do
That nature inside you

A Day

Michael Maring

My body

A ball of tin foil
Unfolds as I roll out of bed
Going down stairs
My bones pop and echo
I reach for the coffee pot

My daughter laughs at my hair
“Good morning fine morning
Good morning” I say
Like I’ve said every morning
Since she’s been too old
to sit on my lap
And listen to Seuss

Two cups of coffee
And a long steaming shower
Off to school I go

I find myself trudging
Through the leather and pajama wearing
youth of the nation
We liberally call humanity

They want my cigarettes and spare
change

It’s cold and raining
The bus is late of course

I eat breakfast
In the cafeteria
“Special” eggs smothered in gravy
Plastic bacon dipped in grease
Cold milk to wash it down
(This will be my death)

Poetry is my first class
My first attempt is bad
My lines don’t stand out
I need more detail
It’s frustrating but
I will get better

Algebra is next
Math is not subjective
It’s black and white
Right or wrong
I don’t see any words that belong

in the English language
I never talk to the teacher
I trudge back through
The foul mouthed, chain smoking
Future of the world
Somewhere James Dean
Cries in pain

If I was a better man
I'd stop to explain
If I was a better man
They might listen

I decide to have a beer instead

Forget the poetry class
Two beers to the third power
I am feeling more relaxed

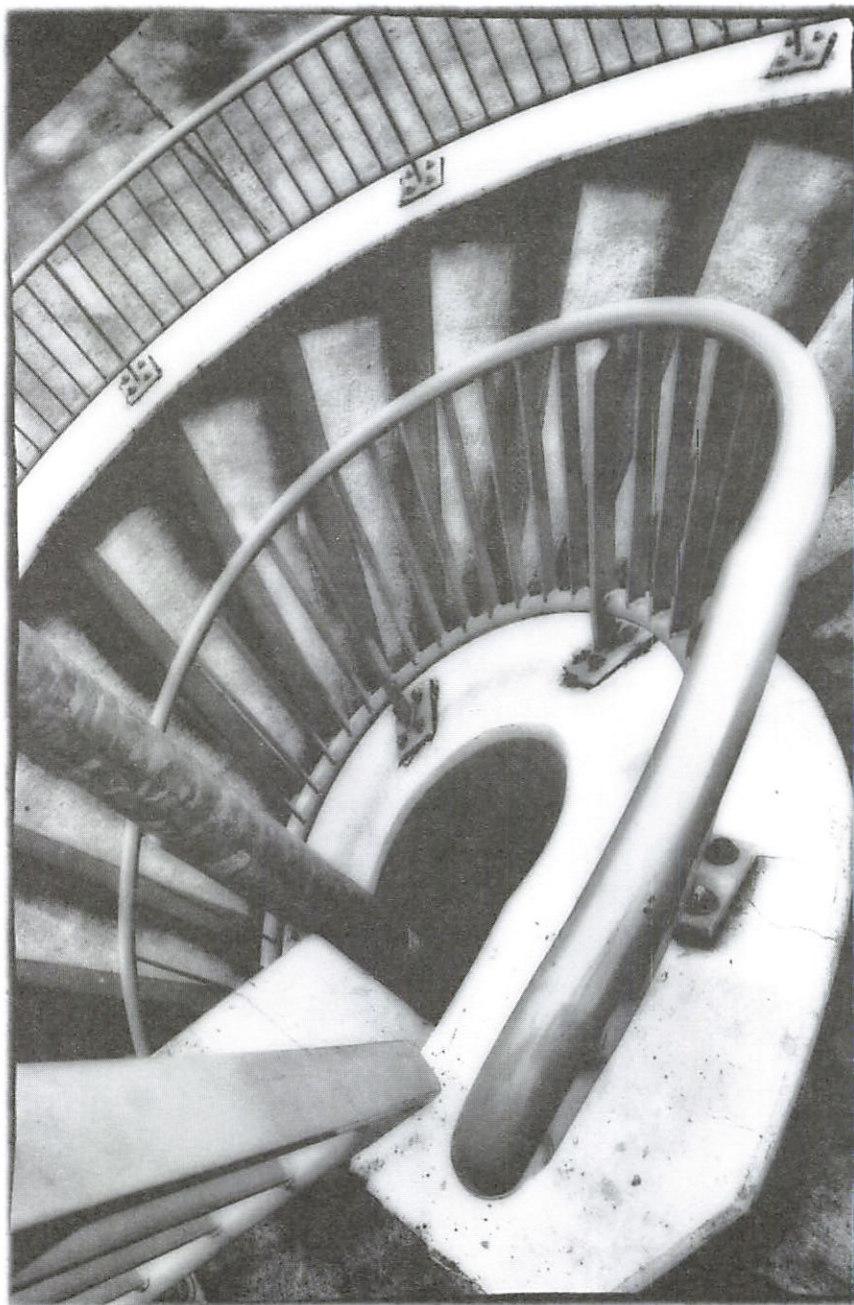
I catch the bus at the station
It's always on time whether
I am or not

My dog barks as I walk up
My driveway
My dogs bark

As I kick off my shoes
My daughter yells "Daddy!"
In my mind
She's five years old again
She's growing so fast
I smile and ask about her day

She's so much like
Her mother
I shudder

An hour later
Sitting on my back deck
Puffing smoke
Watching my dog chase squirrels
Watching a day fade



Jacob Horttor
Down the Spiral
Photography



Jacob Horttor
Waiting
Photography



Liz Wolfe
Daryl and Hobo
Photography

On the sidewalk strumming my guitar singing for
A buck down on my luck you hear my sound of my voice
A beautiful sound at the post office on a sunny day
People passing by strolling along their way
Inside this upside down economy everybody has been hit
All of us in some way
But kindness is free a gift from you and me a simple smile
A coin tossed in a case or a meter running
In this recession we all may fall in some way, but being
Humble is free, laughing is free, and sitting at the park is free
But judging that has a price on your heart that's not nice
Think twice be nice share with the fellows in your mix
Just like the fairy tales someone must be the one that shares
Stop it with those ugly stares I am down on my luck
I sit at the corner begging for a buck
Do you even care I am human too
Life is a circle we all pass through
Sharing something you have extra is the right thing to do
Maybe it is just the little bit, but it will help get them through
You have a mirror you see yourself every day
I am homeless you see me every day

Rage

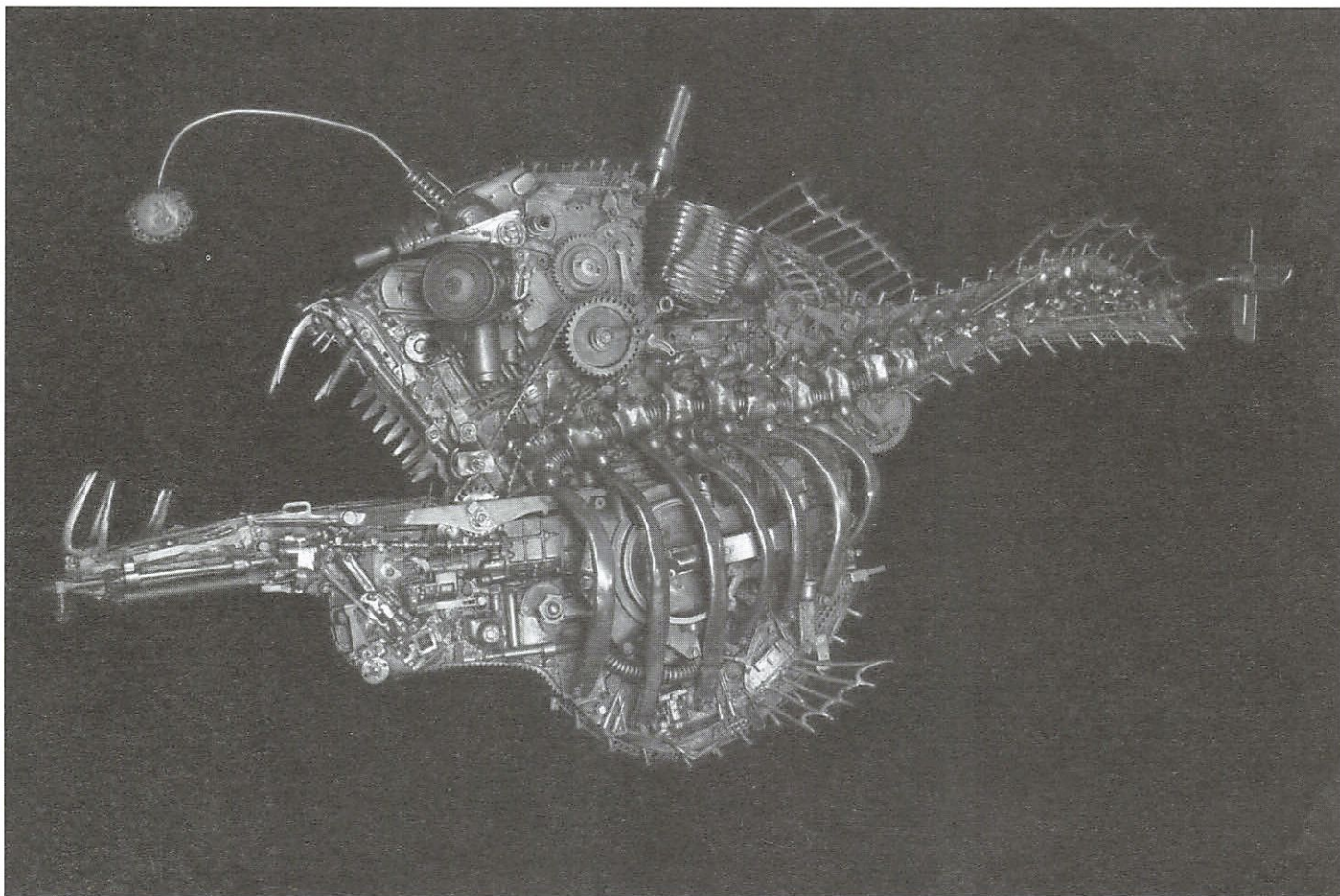
McKenzie Snowdon

All I can see are dimly lit porch lights
Luminous against the deep night sky
And shadows of trees that taunt me from above
But where we stand facing each other, its dark.

We are intoxicated.
A bottle of cheap raspberry-flavored poison launches itself
it runs and jumps out of my hand,
as I had tried to run away from my thoughts

I scream at him. Everything I never wanted to say
comes pouring out of my mouth all too fast.
I rip apart the flesh on his chest and dig
Scoop out his heart and take it with me, leaving him
there: Numb and raw.

I yell bullets into his mind,
and sharpened truths destroy him.
The scent of liquor kisses each word
infiltrating the warm summer air
as it leaves my mouth with rage.



Jud Turner

Avaritia

Mechanized mixed media assemblage



Grace M. Wicklund

Rusty

Photography

Perro Poco Loco

By Gary James Jo

The arpeggios of a sharp whip tale against the padded carpet
His diamond-cut claws click against the hollow laminated floor.
He shivers out like a tuning fork to his coda
Ears flapping like a clumsy pelican
Big in his skin
His eyes big at his breakfast bowl
Not for chickens this morning! I bark
Chickened joggers jump clear of this champion
chaser of anything on 2 wheels or in running shoes
His tail tucked:
Whimpering tales of a crowned chicken chewed
Half cock
Balls all

City
Jayme Goodman

Rhythm pours from windows
Waterfalls pooling on the asphalt
Where weeds suffocate from the taste of pollution
Between the choking slabs of cement

While fire hydrant flowers
Bloom on every block
In vibrant shades of red and yellow
As smoke puffs into the smog filled sky

In the marks of the natives
Seers stand on every street corner
While the fallen clothe themselves
In shadows, shaking coins in tin cups
To a beat only they can hear
As the stream where people ebb and flow
Swarming like starving ants
Over the city.



Rachael Bohning
Solitary
Photography



John and Jesus,
Buddha and Bob,
Were sitting by the fire,
John asked Jesus,
“Hey, man, was I right?”
And Jesus replied,

“You are all just light,
Never be afraid to let it shine,
It’s all the same,
Just far too many names,
Allah, Jesus, Buddha, and Bob,
Shining light right through us all.”

John and Jesus,
Buddha and Bob,
Were sitting down,
And burning the Jah,
Bob asked Buddha,
“Hey, man, got a light?”
And Buddha replied,

“You are all just light,
Never be afraid to let it shine,
It’s all the same,
Just far too many names,
Allah, Jesus, Buddha, and Bob,
Shining light right through us all.”

John and Jesus,
Buddha and Bob,
Were sitting down,
And talking to God,
They all asked him,
“Hey, man, were we right?”
And God, well she replied,

“You are all just light,
Never be afraid to let it shine,
It’s all the same,
Just far too many names,
Allah, Jesus, Buddha, and Bob,
Shining light right through us all.”

Facing Page:

Deborah Bulcao

Ipu Ika

180 yr. old cedar, fibers, and metal

Möbius Strip

Briana Bullington

You only want the unattainable. Once fantasy has become reality, once desire has been sated, your yearning evanesces. So you start the purest of searches, you seek a muse. Some element out there must have the capacity to spark your imagination, and continue to captivate. You want to bathe in the waters of inspiration. You crave for the embers, no, the *bonfire* of your creativity to eternally blaze, all those around you drawn to your beacon. More than anything you want something that can rouse you from your apathy.

You search high and low for your muse. You look to your family, to your friends, to complete strangers. You look to your dreams, but they keep their silence. You explore meditation, explore drugs. You pursue beautiful women. You travel to the ends of the earth, experience the highest class to the lowest squalor. You coast along in the middle. All the while your cheeks hollow, your eyes begin to appear sunken and manic. The intensity of your gaze startles passersby. Your friends avoid you, your family is uncomfortable in your presence. And still you search.

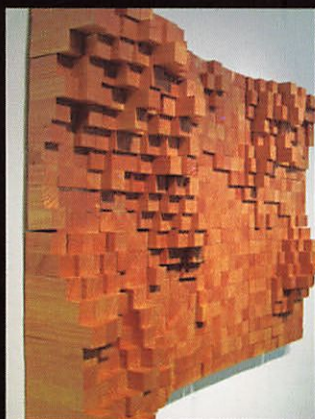
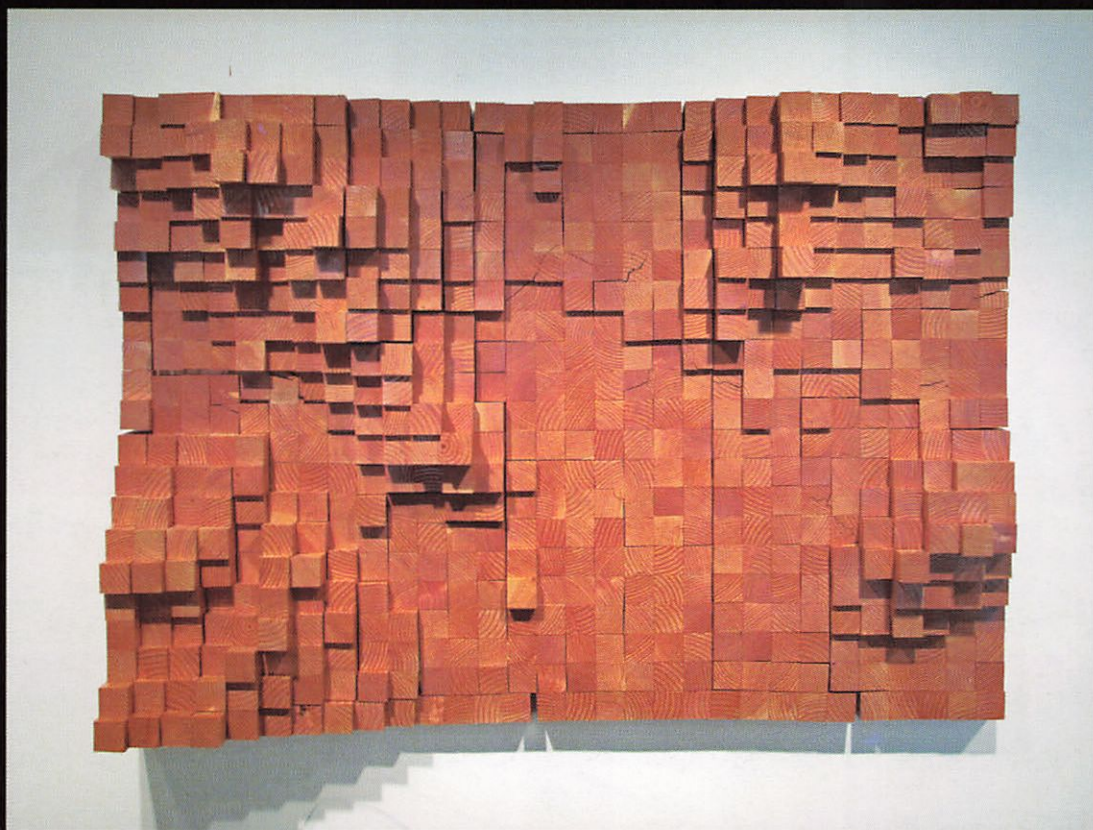
By chance you happen upon another man with your fervent gaze. In his eyes you see madness. The pity you feel for his condition almost amounts to the fear you feel for yourself. Is this your destiny? Is all of your searching for naught? Nonetheless, you speak to him.

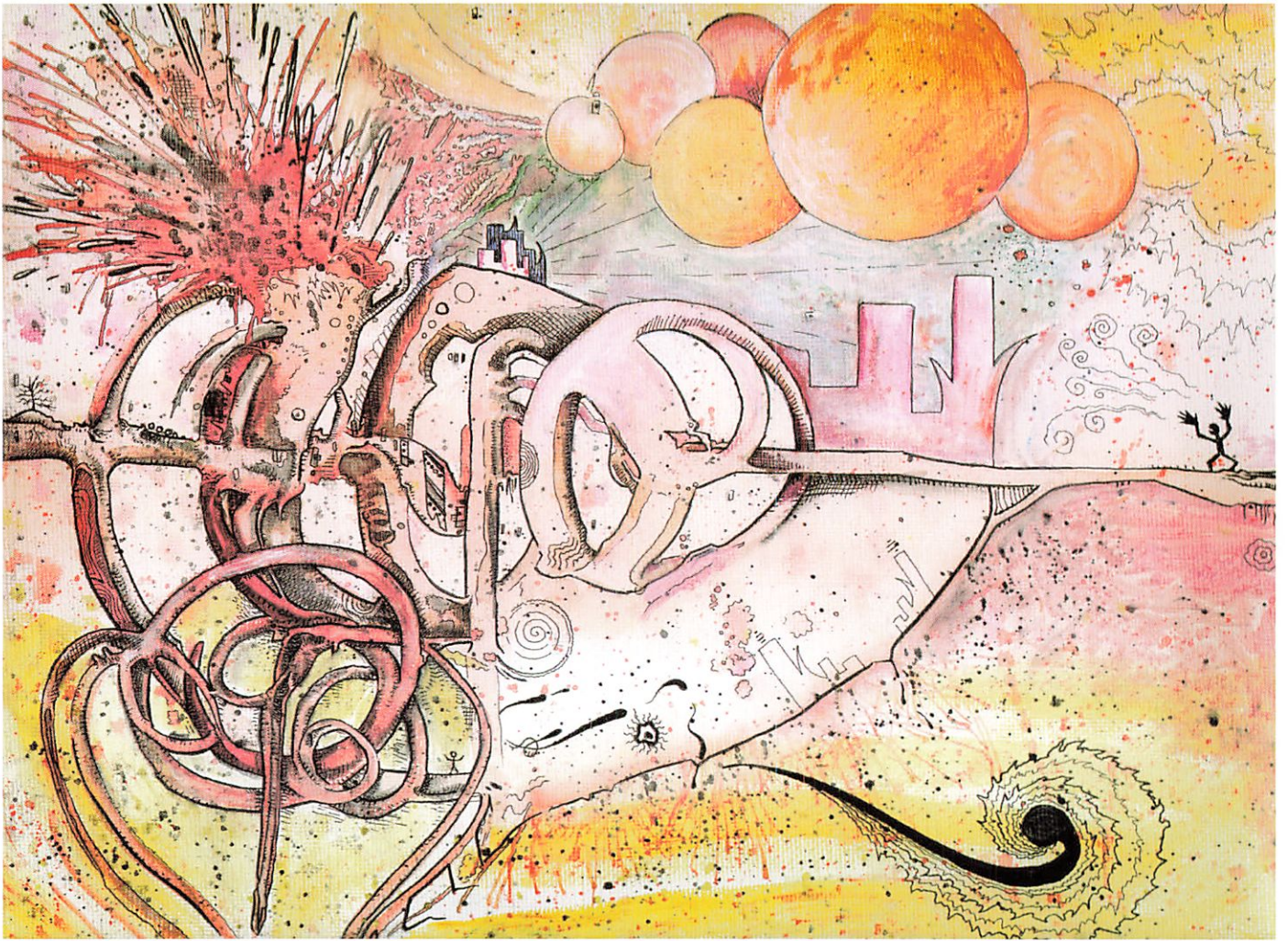
“Have you found it? The muse?” the stranger shakes his head, a movement that is reminiscent of seizures.

“No. No, you seek not to find, you seek the *hunt*.”

You nod, uncomprehending, as he weaves his way past you. It is only as you lay in bed that night, sleepless, that it registers. Euphoria. *The hunt*. There is no goddess, no divine power that you can obtain for your muse. Beauty fades, the drug fugues dull. But this, *this* is lasting. Your search is unending, a labyrinth, an ant traveling its Möbius strip. Eternity. It is true, you only want the unattainable.

Facing Page:
Christian Dray
44° North 123° East
Fir





Aaron Moore and Nicholas Johnson

Untitled

Mixed Media Illustration



Brittney West
Self Portrait
Charcoal, pastel, and acrylic on wood



Andrew Grediagin
Remnant
Photography

I Have Always Been Yellow

Serina Troup

Color sits inside my chest.
It just sits there.
And rests.
The crepe paper
has 75% opacity. Velvet,
the leaves.
Ardor.
Yellow. Basking life,
bleeding sunlight.

Waxy are the barbered necks.
Indescribable petals.
Perfect wreck.
Wrapped in arms
of cellophane.
Smelling yellow.
Breathe.
I find I'm filled with life.
Bleeding you.

Write anything but a love poem-
but what else to convey?
Softly shown
texture, slender gold
entangling me.
Neon, the ribbon.
Ignite.
Life is fliced within us.
Bleeding flame.

Interoffice Mail

Kris Bluth

Interoffice Mail

TO: Thomas Costello, Maintenance

FROM: Lorna Carslile, Human Resources

DATE: Tuesday, March 20, 2012 15:27 P.M.

SUBJECT: Change of Address?

I just wanted to remind you that we haven't received that Change of Address from we sent to you last week. We still need to update your health insurance information, so if you could just stick it in your outgoing mail, that'd be great.

You'll also find a copy of the minutes from this month's safety meeting attached to this letter. Please post it on your department's bulletin board.

Also, I like you. Do you like me?

Yes__ No__

Thanks again, Tommy. Talk to you later.

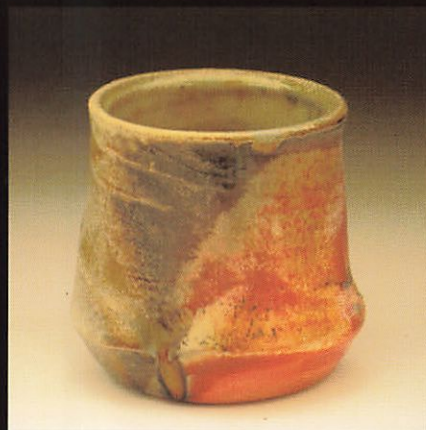
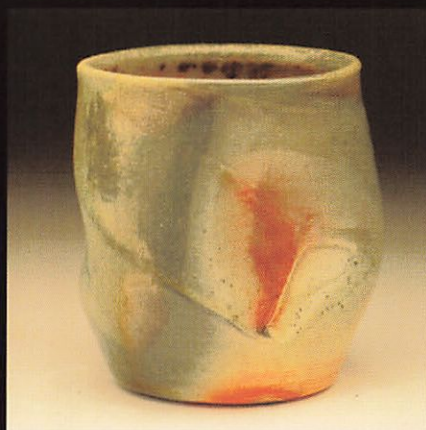
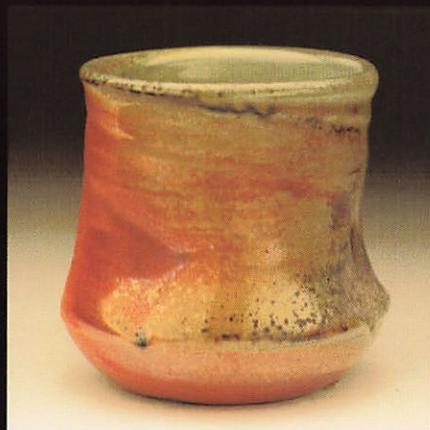
Lorna

Enc..

Facing Page:

Anna Stehle

Wheel-thrown and Altered Cups, and Casserole Dish
Ceramics





Rachael Bohning
Intellectual Enlightenment
Photography

You only wanted to fulfill your fantasies.

You tasted forbidden fruit while you robbed children of their innocence.

You defiled their young lives in the most disgusting way.

You are a master of disguise.

No one suspected you.

You misled everyone around you to believe you were sensitive

and good

and kind

and creative no less with that camera around your neck.

You produced images that you must have called art—images of pain and children suffering.

Sadly, no one could see the darkness that you hid.

Your victims didn't deserve you.

They were born with complete innocence,

a future filled with promise

and hope that you stole from them.

They'll never dream of knights in shining armor courting beautiful princesses—

where everything is beautiful

and good because of you.

Their innocence is gone forever, shattered like glass--all because of you.

You are spineless.

You tried to end it all with pills and booze but the wheels of justice caught up to you.

How did the sound of hand cuffs clicking shut against your wrists make you feel?

Did the flash of the mug shot camera turn you on?

Did you feel anything?

The dark shadow of you will live with your victims—their faces blurred in the evidence
photographs—for the rest of their lives.

Their last image of you will be your mug shot flashed on the news—your beady sinister eyes staring back
from the other side of the screen fogged by the stench of your breath that filled the room.

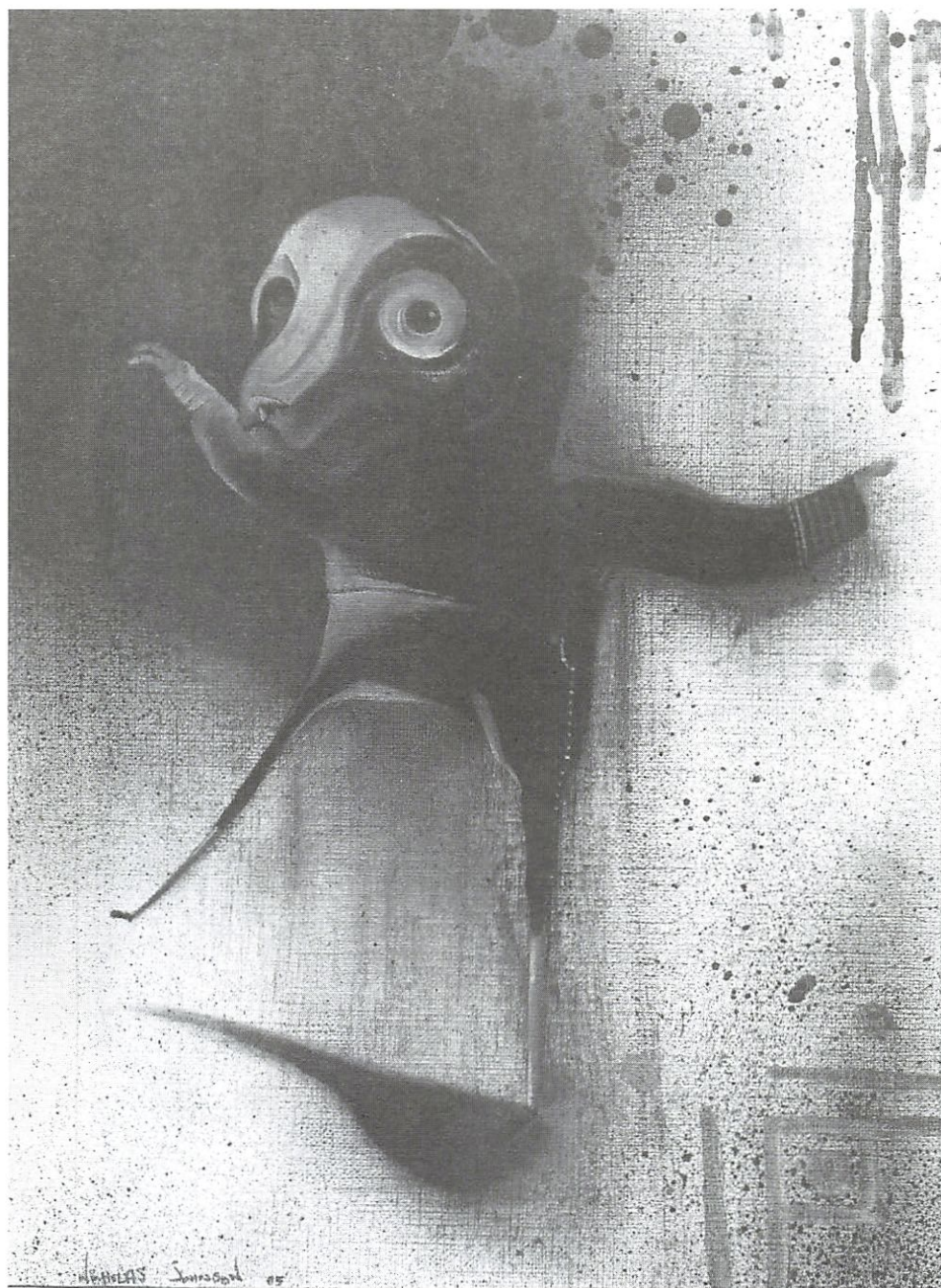
Your true self was revealed.

You'll never make it right.

A Ghost's Guide to Haunting Humans

Sarina Dorie

1. Make the first impression a lasting one. Do you really want to be the ghost known for tripping on ectoplasm as you make your big entrance? Take care in planning your first meet with your mortal 'hauntees'.
2. Avoid clichés. Creaking stairs have been done. Moaning, wailing, shaking chains, leaving stains on carpets and saying, "Waaaaaaah!" or "Oooooooh!" isn't scary, it's just pathetic. It reeks of amateur.
3. Brown is the new white. Appearing as pale, glowing beings in white gowns is OUT. We don't need another Casper or Lady in White. Think of creative ways to use mud, root beer or chocolate.
4. Be original. Be unpredictable. No one has ever haunted a sock drawer, possessed a juicer or made a Yorkshire terrier vomit pea soup.
5. Don't lose your head. Literally. It's been done so often humans are starting to notice and wonder just how many ghosts have been decapitated.
6. Be yourself. There are enough ghosts of Abraham Lincoln that these impersonators have to take shifts so that they can each get a turn at the Lincoln Memorial. The worst part of portraying yourself as a historical ghost is some historian is sure to see through the guise and say in a calm and certainly not frightened manner, "How curious. Zippers weren't yet invented in the eighteenth century."
7. Remember, they are more scared of you than you are of them. Do not let your fear show. You are in control. No one can exorcise you if you don't want them to.
8. When all else fails, remember, death becomes you. If you are having a bad day, no one can ever take your immortality away.



Nicholas Johnson
A Prince in the Dark
Oil Painting



Nicole Lovejoy
RIP Louie
Photography

Shreddy never had a particular taste for fish, but he'd been in a sour mood for days.

The Red-Haired Woman had won their latest skirmish over the orchids. She'd cordoned off the kitchen window with chicken wire. Shreddy rattled the wire, pulling with his claws at the edges. He shoved his face into the few centimeters between wire and wall, wrinkling his nose and squinting his eyes at the discomfort, but the wire didn't have enough give. Shreddy couldn't get his head through.

As the days passed, the orchids flourished and basked in their new protection. Without suffering chewed leaves and frequent up-rootings, they began putting forth lush purple blooms. Shreddy was infuriated. The perfect promise-shaped buds mocked him, and the delicate spots on their tentatively opening petals made him seethe inside.

On the one week anniversary of the Day of the Chicken Wire, Shreddy skulked through the house slashing furniture and knocking petty objects, like pens and paperclips, off the Red-Haired Woman's desk. But that wasn't enough.

Shreddy was a fat tabby who never cared for mice, or birds, or fish. He liked catnip toys and colorful ribbons; his favorite toy was a kooshball on a string. The Red-Haired Woman dangled it for him, and that was the way it should be. So, he didn't attack the goldfish for his own benefit. No, he would have preferred to leave the goldfish alone. Yes, the Red-Haired Woman forced him into it. And it was extremely distasteful. He watched the gasping fish flop on the floor, and he struck it a few times with his paw to make it stop. There. That would teach her. Shreddy stretched out on the floor, feeling better.

That would have been the end of it if his whimsical cat-mind hadn't happened on the perfect cherry to top off his sundae of rebellion. He would hide the fish, somewhere inconvenient, for the Red-Haired Woman to find it later. He took the slimy, dead object in his mouth, curling his lips away from the scaly flesh. Fate provided the perfect place -- a broken All-in-One. Shreddy dropped the fish in the empty paper slot for feeding paper through, an indentation deep enough to completely obscure the tiny body; then, he stretched out, pleased with himself, on the device's control panel. The weight of his stripey girth pressed down the "start" buttons for faxing, scanning, printing... everything the All-in-One could do.

Before the orchids and before the All-in-One broke, the behemoth machine had been the primary source of

contention between Shreddy and the Red-Haired Woman. Against the Woman's wishes, Shreddy liked to sleep on the control panel of the All-in-One. "Shroedinger!" she would shriek, shooing him off, and he would do his best to ignore her. Nonetheless, it had made his ears twitch and twist around backward when his weight inevitably turned the machine on, inspiring mechanical whirrings, electrical hummings, and sometimes a glowing green light. Shreddy liked the All-in-One much better now it was broken.

To Shreddy's great distress on this day of the Brutally Murdered Fish, the All-in-One leapt to life underneath him. He flattened his ears, trying not to hear the hummings and whirrings under his body, but they vibrated through him, echoing louder in his ears than they ever had before. When the green light flashed, it filled his eyes with ghostly after-image. Shreddy feared it had blinded him. His paws felt weak and unreal to him, but he leapt off the machine, panting like a puppy. It was as if his contact with the machine had electrically shocked him. He would know better than to sleep on a broken All-in-One again.

Then, as his vision cleared, Shreddy saw movement in the paper feeder. A tiny gold fin was flapping, and, as Shreddy watched, the once-dead gold fish flopped its way out of the All-in-One. Shreddy tilted his head, looking at the fish quizzically. He had felt its cold, limp, body in his mouth. No heart had beaten in the tiny, scaled breast. The All-in-One powered down, kachunking its internal moving pieces back to their rest states. Had the All-in-One resurrected the goldfish?

Shreddy looked back at the gasping fish, dying once again on the floor. As the fish drew its last strained breath, Shreddy felt his own chest constrict. For an instant, he saw through the goldfish's eyes. How terrible to die as a fish! He would have to find a new place to hide it. More importantly, Shreddy decided he would have to find a more useful beast to test the All-in-One's powers on. If that machine could help him raise the dead -- and possibly channel his mind into the resurrected corpses, using them as his minions -- it would give him Great Power.

It would give him the power to fit through the chicken wire... He had to find out. Shreddy was not a hunter, but he devoted the rest of the week to tracking and attacking mice. The Red-Haired Woman had never been happier with him, but he was unable to enjoy her praises. He daily worried that she would throw the broken All-in-One away. He had to hurry.

The first three mice were a disaster. After resurrection, despite Shreddy's immense concentration, each of them scurried away. In his fazed, drained state brought on by the noise and lights of the All-in-One, Shreddy was unable to recapture the raised mice or take control of them. He experienced a strange dual existence, each time, until the mouse re-died. This didn't take long, since the mice were generally quite panicked by their experience being captured by Shreddy, not to mention deeply confused by the metaphysical experience of dying and resurrecting as part cat.

Shreddy lay on the floor, eyes dilated and ears flattened, viscerally experiencing a mad dash through the ductwork or the unpleasantness of being caught by another cat, once back outside. He hoped his attacks to the brainless beasts were equally frightening. They certainly deserved it for what they were putting him through.

On the fourth mouse, Shreddy had a stroke of luck. Although, it was a mixed blessing. Losing his patience with the tedium of catching mice, Shreddy had taken his aggression out on his soon-to-be host: the mouse's back legs were broken, completely crushed by Shreddy's horrific (and splendid) mauling. Since the mouse couldn't run away, Shreddy was able to properly focus on it and take the time he needed to learn dominion over his tiny, pained minion. However, Shreddy couldn't take the pain for long -- as he controlled the mouse, practicing using its body, he experienced the excruciating pain it felt in its broken limbs. Shreddy put the miserable beast out of its misery. Out of *his* misery. He would be able to use the next mouse properly. The taste of orchid greens was nearly his again. He could almost feel the fleshy plants between his teeth.

Mouse number five proved harder to control. Although Shreddy could see through its eyes and shared partial control of its body, the mouse proved to have a mind of its own! Shreddy had to smack it down, dizzily, with his paw. Dealing and receiving the same claw-filled blow stretched his perception of reality in a mind-blowing way. He was walking on both sides of the thin line dividing pleasure and pain. Unfortunately, the mouse re-died during the momentous experience. Shreddy deftly resurrected it again, making mouse number five also mouse number six.

After a quick repeat of the same interchange, mouse numbers five and six also became mouse number seven. The mouse, who Shreddy had come to think of as "Orchidbane," was much more pliable to Shreddy's control after its third death and resurrection. Fortunately, Shreddy had remembered to treat the mouse carefully while killing it, and Orchidbane was still in good (albeit less than mint) condition.

Shreddy spent the rest of the afternoon curled up in the kitchen sink, resting after his valiant struggle. He left Orchidbane quivering in the All-in-One. As Shreddy fell heavily into the abysses of sleep, he dragged Orchidbane with him. Their dreams mingled. The hunter was hunted, and the hunted was horrified by his power. The smell of cheese wafted through the dual dreams, both delighting and disgusting them. When nightmare phantoms reared, their instincts conflicted: fight *and* flight, they said.

Shreddy awoke less rested than when he'd fallen asleep. It was time to get this job done. He stalked back to the All-in-One, where he extracted Orchidbane from the paper feeder. Delicately, he carried himself (well, his mouse-form) inside his own mouth. It was warm and wet inside. He leapt lightly to the kitchen counter and placed the mouse under the windowsill. It was an easy jump for a cat from counter to sill, but Orchidbane had to

scramble up Shreddy's back, using the cat as a ladder to reach the height of the offending chicken wire. Shreddy's brain felt like it did a back flip trying to understand the sensation that mouse paws on a cat back -- all controlled by the same mind -- created.

Shreddy watched intently with his own cat eyes as his Orchidbane body squeezed through one of the holes in the chicken wire. Nose twitching, Orchidbane skittered across the windowsill and up to the first orchid pot. With a little leap, he landed in the moist potting soil. He sunk his claws into the base of the lush orchid stem (Shreddy gave a sigh of contentment) and stared up the length of the flower. Orchids were trees to him.

One by one, Orchidbane climbed the orchids until they drooped downward, eventually breaking their stalks. Then, biting deep into the green flesh (another catly sigh with each bite -- who knew orchid's would taste as sweet to mouse teeth?) he dragged the orchids, flower end first, toward and through the chicken wire. Pulling the flowers through the inch-wide wire holes stripped their leaves and mangled them. Shreddy didn't care. Once his faithful mouse was done, Shreddy feasted on them. He gnawed the stalks until they became white and stringy. He batted the misused blooms about, chasing them from end to end of the linoleum kitchen floor. He sated himself after his long and unwillingly endured abstinence from orchids.

The Red-Haired Woman returned from her day at work to find Shreddy deep asleep, wound in orchids. The mouse, Orchidbane, had been abandoned, carelessly, in a stupor on the counter. The Woman shrieked when she saw him -- both Shreddy and the mouse -- but, she would have been hard-pressed to decide which distressed her more: destroyed orchids or vermin in her kitchen? Shreddy slept better after the mouse was destroyed. His brain was washed clean by pure, feline dreams.

Blinking his eyes, Shreddy roused to the world slowly the next morning. It was uncatly of him to sleep the whole night through, never rearranging himself to find better comfort or moving from spot to spot, as if sampling the quality of sleep in each. Yesterday's antics had drained him, and so he had slept the sleep of the dead.

The orchid remains were gone. He noticed that first. Then, he realized the chicken wire had been removed. He leapt into the window to enjoy his hard earned right. It should have been his simply by nature of his cathood. Cats own window sills. Yet, something was missing. His triumph should have been complete...Suddenly, Shreddy felt the diminished state of his existence. Where he had lived in two bodies, he now lived in one. The Red-Haired Woman had killed his other self! No matter. He would make another self. Perhaps he would make two and live a threefold life. Or four? His eyes dilated, possessively, as he thought of the possibilities. He felt the urge to sleep on the All-in-One while he planned his nefarious deeds.

Unfortunately, during the night, Shreddy's fears had been realized. The Red-Haired Woman had moved the All-

in-One out to the curb with the trash and recycling. When he found it there, his heart was nearly broken. It was as if the Red-Haired Woman were trying to kill the tiny parts of him that were yet to be born. He would have to hurry before the garbage truck came. He would kill and resurrect as many mice as he could. (The idea made his head spin.) No! He would resurrect a bird and feel what it's like to fly!

Frantically, Shreddy climbed the cherry tree in the front yard and crouched in its crotch. He waited impatiently for birds to fly by, and when they did he leapt haphazardly at them, paws flailing. By sheer luck and the element of surprise, he managed to knock a sparrow out of the air. Although, he fell awkwardly from the tree with it. Despite the urban myth, cats don't always land on their feet. Especially if they are overweight and careless. Shreddy recovered, but the bird didn't. He carried it, lovingly, possessively, in his mouth. He trotted, quickly, toward the soon to be discarded All-in-One. His ears flattened as he heard the garbage truck turn onto the end of the block and begin toddling its way up the street. *Hurry*. There would only be time for one last minion, but he would learn to *fly*. (His stomach twisted at the idea, but there was no time to be queasy.)

Three more houses, and the truck would be here. Shreddy stuffed the bird in the paper feeder, and bounced onto the control panel. His stomach lurched in preparation for the leeching sensation as his mind was funneled into the re-rousing bird. It didn't happen. (Two more houses.) Shreddy jumped off and on again, slamming the control panel with all his portly weight. Nothing. (One more house.) He batted his paw against the large green buttons. *Nothing*. The garbage truck parked in front of the Red-Haired Woman's house. The garbage man swung off of the back of the truck and lifted the trash can, deftly emptying it into the back of the truck.

Shreddy crouched possessively on his All-in-One, but the garbage man shooed him away. Shreddy had to relinquish his beloved electronic box. He watched the power of his necromancy crash into the pile of common rubbish. As the truck and All-in-One pulled away, Shreddy counted up his little minions in his mind: one fish, three mice that ran away, one mouse with broken legs, and three resurrections for Orchidbane. Eight. And one life of his own. *Nine*.

Of course he couldn't raise the sparrow, *not without sacrificing himself*. He didn't notice the unplugged power cord, hanging uselessly, out of the back of the garbage truck driving away. That evening, the Red-Haired Woman greeted Shreddy warmly. "I don't know how you did it," she said, "but chicken wire won't do me any good if you can pull my orchids through it." She was carrying a new potted plant, which she set in the kitchen window. She had bought a catnip plant to replace her orchids.



Sarah Tustin
Untitled [Nude]
Photography



Shannon Burlington
Untitled [Nude with Fabric]
Photography

Perfect Lover

Gary James Jo

Your lower back is my favorite.

I know how you want to be worshipped like Cleopatra,

with those smoky eyes guiding my play

I know the nipple on your right is more sensitive, but I'm really into this left one and besides, its closer to my lips

...and those hips...created for my hands

Letting go more with each breath

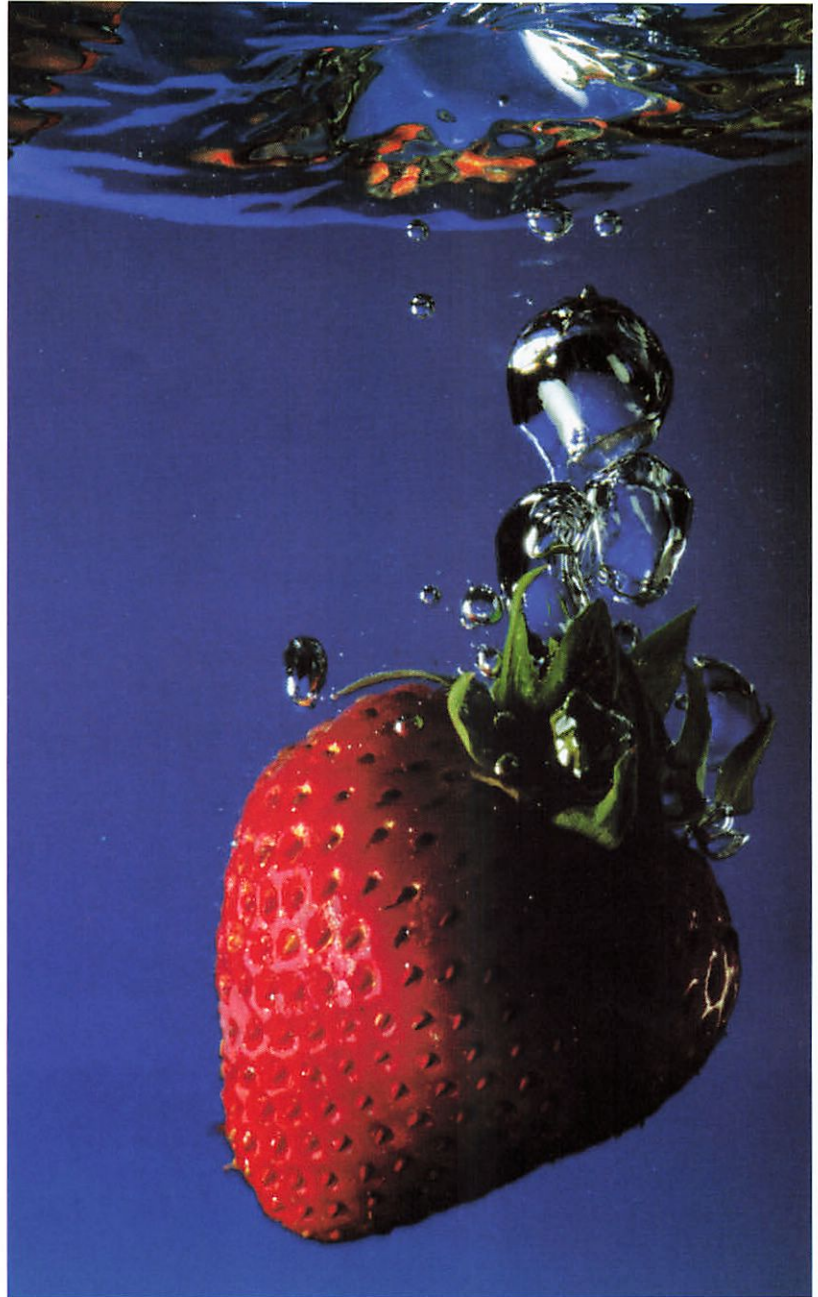
I know you like to bury your face deep into my peppermint scent

The applause of our skin adopts the rhythm from a dripping rain gutter

Slow fast slow rough, soft

I know you like to be

worn on my skin with invisible pride.



Daniel Rider
Untitled [Strawberry]
Photography



Nicholas Johnson
Galaxy Skipping
Acrylic and Ink

The Lone Ranger and Tonto

Tom Knox

I used to love early spring—the season of darkness turning to light, the earth warmed by lengthening days—the Bitterbrush awakened from its winter slumber—coming to life—knowing that another summer was just a moment away.

Now, I hate the thought of spring turning into summer after this winter of darkness. The last thing I want to do is sit on the edge of rim rock watching the sunrise now that Johnny's gone—consumed by the terror of his demons—a state of mind that he couldn't endure—carrying a monkey on his back that he couldn't afford to feed anymore.

Johnny and I rode bareback through life—down and out of the ravines of the school of hard knocks together. He was the Lone Ranger. I was Tonto. We lived our lives with freedom and the wind blowing through our hair.

I shared all my secrets with him while we rested our ponies next to the river. He shared all his delusions with me while the water flowed slowly by. We traced out the mysteries of life in the sand left there by the flood from last winter's storms.

He lived with hallucinations of evil demons that stalked him both day and night. He couldn't satisfy their hunger for him. He fed them with every drug under the sun, hoping and fighting to satisfy their appetite for his heart and soul.

I found him where they left him, face down in the sand—a needle in his arm and a blackened spoon lying by his side.

It will never be the same now that Johnny's gone. Never a day goes by that I don't think about him. He was beautiful in every way.

We'll never ride Silver and Scout again all over the wild, wild, West—rescuing damsels in distress, bringing outlaws to justice—dreaming that we could make our world a better place.

Why am I crying? He is finally free—free of the fear and pain and suffering caused by the illusions that were his.

Someday, I'll hear my trusted friend say, "Hi-yo Silver away!" as we ride off into the sunset together once more.

Love and Crickets

Michael Maring

Let us slay them
And lay them to rest
Love and crickets
Even grasshoppers and fireflies
Let's set their pyre ablaze
And push them off the sandy shore
Led by graceful swans
To fade away with
Rolling waves
Flaming suns setting
On the ocean
And the shadows
of moonlit nights
The carpet of the meadow
Is lush and green
Where they go
So let a flock of red winged
Black birds sing
Or a single raven caw
And in honor of the moment
Let us not say something
As simple as goodbye
But rather let us tell
These love and crickets
"Until we meet again"



Melissa Johnson
Porcelain Beginnings
 Ceramic





Larena Cornell
Ambush
Mixed Media Painting

Black sheep in White Clouds

Belonging is fantasy

Homeless heart,

Pave your own way—

To the heart of the Sun

By the light of day

Black sheep wanders the world in sleep

Where the edges are soft

And the world sleeps

Wake up Black Sheep!

In Her Hands

Savanna Lilly

She held her life
in her hands as if
it were a crystal ball.
She waited
to see
to be shown
the way.
She wanted
to laugh.
She wanted
to play.
She wished for an orb
to see
fortunes light.

She used her might
to seek
to climb the peak.
With insight
she scanned the horizon
her future came into sight.
The unknown dissipated.
Fear subsided.
Life is waiting.
Fulfillment surrounds.



Karen Seaton
Loving Hands
Photography



Misty Jones
Mystic Forest
Photography

I remember the bone-chilling feeling of seeing the black almost hearse-like car coming to take me away from the only place I was familiar with. I remember the feeling of confusion, the feeling of sorrow, and the feeling of anger. I remember getting into the car and smelling the old, damp, mildewed scent of previous the rider's tears. The tears I had grown so accustomed to. I remembered how I wished to scream and squeal, like the brakes, when the car stopped at my new quarters. I remember telling myself, "Don't get comfortable Josh, because you won't be here long, right? I'll be home soon. Right?" I remember the feeling of being abandoned, the feeling of being unwanted, feeling just plain alone. Throughout my years as a foster child and adolescent, I moved in and out of countless houses, met and said goodbye to countless families, friends, and teachers.

I remember a family; they took me in when I was seven. I had already been moved around eight times. The first thing they said to me was, "It'll be okay, you don't have to worry anymore, you'll be here for a long time." The weight of uncertainty lifting off your shoulders is a good feeling; in fact, it could be the best. Being able to take off your shoes, plunge down on the couch, and say hello to someone who says hello back. Having the ability to look someone in the eyes and, not only feel, but here, "I love you." Home to me is all of those things tied together and put in my back pocket, saved for a rainy day. I grew comfortable and unworried the two years I didn't have to pack around any extra weight with me.

It was presentation day, in my third grade class. For my presentation I chose an animal, the cheetah. "Did you know that a family of cheetahs will stay together until the babies are all grown up, and will support each other?" I gave my presentation and was feeling good about it. I was chosen to hold our class pet, the gerbil, he was brown and smelled almost exactly like an old crusty sock, I was overtaken by the joy of his warm pulsing body. My class and I were sitting in a circle around my teacher, listening to our daily reading of the second Harry Potter, when the door opened and the sound of my teachers voice was cut short of telling us what happened next.

Two gloomy adults came in, a man and a woman. The man was tall, dressed in nice black slacks and a black sports jacket, the woman was short, dressed in black dress pants and a red sweater which had thirteen black buttons straight down the front. My teacher excused herself and met them at the front of the class. My friend and I started laughing at the gerbil; he was doing summersaults on my lap and almost fell off.

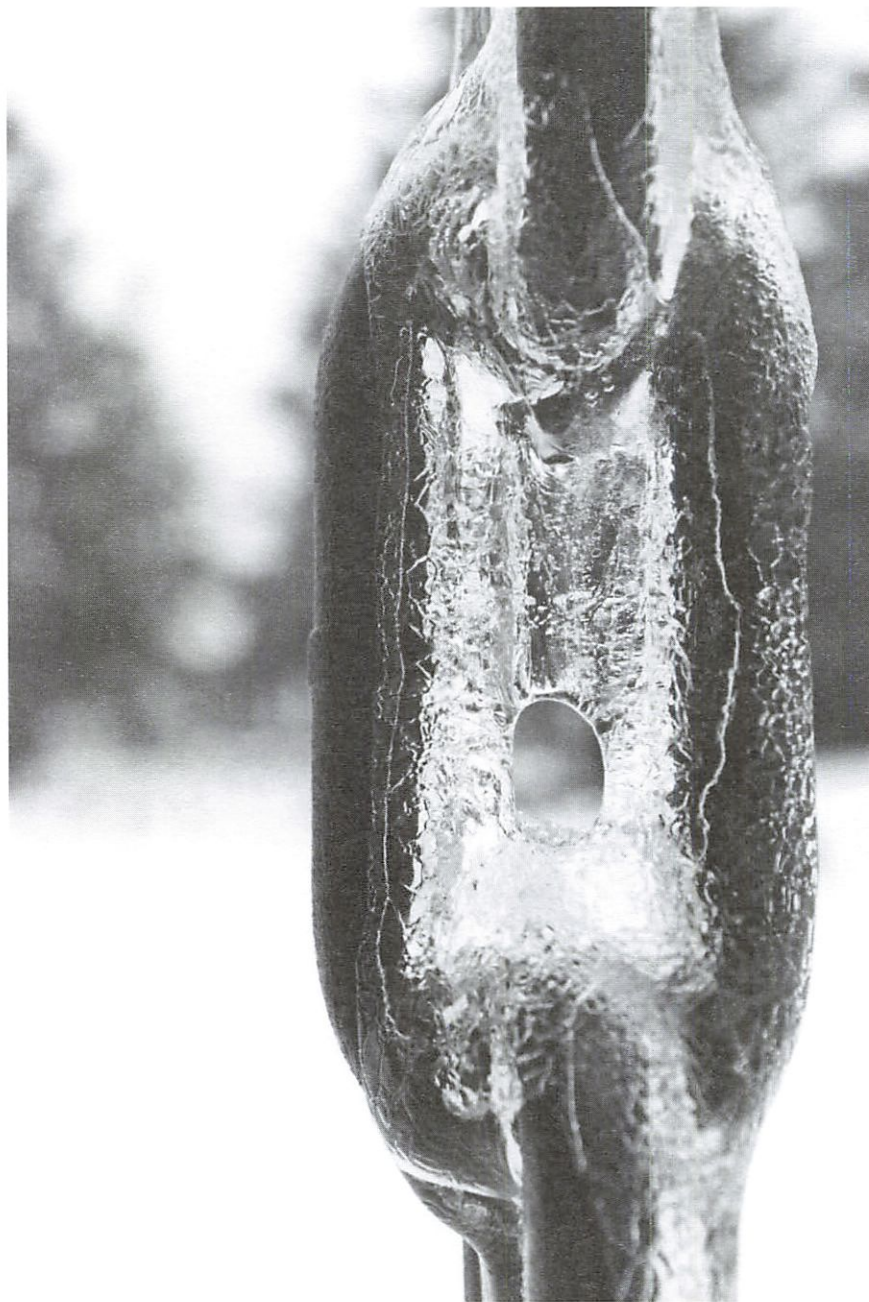
“Josh,” my teacher called my name, “Come up here please,” I gave the gerbil to my friend and went to the front of the class. As I was walking to the front of the class, I noticed my teacher’s eyes; they seemed to be turning a glossy color, almost like two wet marbles shimmering in the bright sun. The two people dressed in black were smiling down at me with blank expressionless looks on their faces and said “hello.” Their words were cold and harsh. I noticed a sharp fast glare, almost like needles, injected from my teacher to the two people dressed in black. My teacher knelt down to my level so we were both eye to eye. She stared at me with her big marbles and said, “Josh, these people are going to take you out to lunch. You need to go with them, OK Josh.” My teacher’s eyes were getting wetter, “You need to be a big boy, OK Josh. You be a big boy now.” Before I knew it, she had engulfed me into her chest, wrapped me neatly into her arms, and covered my head with her chin. Warmth and love surged through my body as if I was hit by a bolt of lightning cupid had mistaken for an arrow. I felt a warm drop of water hit my head.

“OK Josh, it is time to go,” said the large man dressed in black. I felt his cold hand grab my shoulder, abruptly stopping the lightning from continuing through my body, forcing it out of me. My teacher released me, stood back to her full height, and pricked them again with her needle. The woman dressed in black took my hand; her hand felt like an ice cube, cold and damp. The man and woman led me away from my teacher, away from my friends, away from my security, away from my love, away from my peace. As soon as I got into the lifeless car, all of the lost feelings returned to me at once. “It’s happened again. What’s wrong this time? Was it me? Maybe I can take whatever I did back and say I’m sorry?” “Josh, we’re taking you to another house.” An enormous weight hit my chest; I couldn’t breathe, I felt my eyes swelling, my nose began to run. A salty liquid hit my mouth again and again, my memories flooding out, like millions of bees swarming and stinging after their homes have been breached by smoke, engulfing me.

I can hear, I can see, I can feel. To what length must I go to reach, to get, where? I feel more, I feel it I can almost see. The only thing holding me back are these knives, why are they so sharp? A glimpse of what I perceived as a dream; Gaze out of pain, fear, a beautiful waterfall cascading down into a drop only thirty feet below. I was in a trance by the way the water fell so gracefully down into the motionless bottom. I’m close, I start walking towards the fall; pushing through more relentless spines and fallen hopes.

Will I ever get there? Will I ever grasp what I desire so immensely? Determined to reach the edge for reasons I don’t know, maybe I do. Fifty feet, thirty, ten; instinct will take over soon, jump. Glistening water beads on my chest forming spherical droplets, following a path, like blood surging through veins, my heart. Speed never felt by

man previously. Weightlessly, for the first time, attached to something other than my preplanned determination to focus on the negative, to focus on what was. For once sovereignty, for once understanding, for once forever. Now gravity, the waters catching up with me, my body shot through the untouched liquid, it appeared to have been kissed by a crystal. Instantly, twisted up out of the water to embrace the oxygen set aside specifically for me.



Nicole Lovejoy
Cemetery Ice
Photography

I am thirteen years old and my baby's head is crowning. I am thirteen years old and I have been in labor for nineteen hours. I am thirteen years old, lying in a hospital bed, crying for my mother as a new life is pushing its way through me.

I hadn't gone to school in over a month. Not since my too large sweatshirts started betraying me and showing my ever-growing stomach. I couldn't hide behind my pudgy tomboy look anymore. The other kids were starting to notice that my stomach wasn't just a stomach. They had started whispering as I walked by. These kids, whose names I didn't know, were starting to know me. I wasn't going back.

We moved to LA so that I would be just another face in the crowd. Away from the small suburbs of Utah, where my family lived around the corner, I was just a girl with a weight problem. I didn't even have a name to these kids. Not like the kids back home, who I had known my entire life, who recognized me as I walked through the street. Not like the kids that would never forget what was happening to me.

Three months ago, I was sick, so sick that I couldn't go to school. I would spend the mornings puking, sleep all afternoon and wake up with a throbbing headache. Sleep possessed me and, despite throwing up every morning, I ate too much. Three months ago, I found out that I was pregnant. By then it was six months too late. I had no options, no choices. My mother was the only one who knew, my mother who was now my best and only friend. She told me, "No one is going to know. We can put this all behind us in a couple of months." We moved to LA from our quaint Utah suburb. Away from the family who didn't know, to a place where the kids didn't know my name, a place where I could hide under too large sweatshirts.

No one else in my family knew what had happened to me. We didn't tell a soul other than the police. They questioned me for hours, making sure that I got the name right. Who was I going to confuse him with? I've known him my entire life. They just asked the same question over and over, "Are you sure it was him?" Surprisingly, word hadn't got around... yet. I guess my mother threw a fit and the media wasn't allowed to breathe a word. She told me she would protect me. Not even my grandmother knew.

I kept hearing the word "rape." It was said in hushed tones and everyone in the room seemed to pause for a split second whenever the word leaked from someone's mouth. Everything felt heavy. My muscles were numb and my mind was fuzzy. I couldn't feel the doctors and nurses touching me or my mother's hand holding mine. What was the reason for all of this? I told them everything I knew. What were they looking for? I hadn't done anything wrong. I held onto the words that were repeated in the room to keep myself from falling under the drug's spell...internal trauma...scarring...internal trauma...internal trauma...internal trauma.

In my drugged stupor, I didn't fully understand what was happening to me. Everything was black and then my mother was crying in the corner. All I could hear her say was, "How could this be happening? What was she thinking?" When the black faded again, the doctors were brushing my hair and scraping under my fingernails. My mother was standing over me. She kept saying that it was going to be okay, but I didn't know if she was talking to me or herself.

Sitting in the emergency room this time was much different than the time I had broken my arm. I didn't have to wait. Immediately, they put me in a room with what seemed like hundreds of other people. The lights were too bright and they stung my eyes. It hurt to sit on the hard, metal table. "How do you feel? Are you alright?" They repeated these tedious questions. I responded with the same answer, "I just hurt." They kept saying that I was in shock, that this would all hit me later and that I would probably become hysterical. They said that it would be in everybody's best interest to give me a sedative.

There was no need to go to the hospital. I was fine, really. I was just bleeding, like I had started my period, but it was normal, right? My period had started a couple of months ago and I started bleeding at odd times. Wasn't this just another one of those, something that adults do? I didn't understand why my mother kept crying, "He was our friend." He used to baby sit and he took my older brother hunting. It wasn't like some stranger had tried to hurt me. It was our friend.

I came home that night and asked my mother what sex was. We had never talked about it before. She had just told me not to let strangers touch me "down there." He wasn't a stranger and he was someone I loved. Isn't sex supposed to be something you do with someone you love? I didn't think it was supposed to hurt so much. I walked with my legs spread apart to keep from hurting and I was bleeding. She asked me why I was thinking about it and I told her that he had said it was something between adults and I was an adult now. She grabbed my shoulders and asked what I was talking about. I told her it hurt, was it supposed to hurt? At that, she started crying.

"This is our little secret. No one needs to know." Those were the words that I believed. "This is just something that adults do." Those were the words that I found some comfort in. It meant I wasn't doing something wrong. I did not understand what was happening to me - it just hurt. It was something that adults did and kids didn't talk about. How was I supposed to know that a man that I trusted, a man that had been part of my family for such a long time, would abuse me? It just hurt.

He invited me over after school like any other day. We played Scrabble and went on a hike through the woods. Then he started to get closer to me, brushing up against me on the walk home. His hand lingered on my back pocket while we walked and he just winked at me. When we got home he kissed me. Not rough, like the pecks that we used to share playing house years ago. Fast, like I still had cooties. He started to tell me that I was beautiful and that he wanted to trust me with a secret.

I am thirteen years old and my baby's shoulders are in the doctor's hands. I am thirteen years old and I am screaming while my baby is crying and my mother is sobbing. I am thirteen years old and my son is put into my arms. I am thirteen years old and the doctor mumbles a weak congratulations.



JS Kaplan
Untitled [Gull]
Photography

Pied

Laura Duffield

Pied: adjective; patched, with multiple colors.

Example: The pied clothing reflected his lack of affluence.

I, myself, was born to a particular lack of affluence. I was a pied child, wandering the streets with innocence and enthusiasm. It was soon discovered, though, that I was endowed with an unusual talent. Strong, I was not. Neither was I particularly handsome, and I will be the first to admit that I was not the brightest. I was the kind of kid everyone thought would wind up begging in the gutters. I would bring no pride to my parents, who had already given up on their own chances for success.

When I was twelve, though, I found the source of my redemption. A used flute, left by the side of the road. I picked it up and held it with some wonder. I had heard the pipers play their wooden instruments and always thought it perfectly charming. I started blowing into it, excited by having finally found something that I myself could own. I found my hidden gift. I was meant to be a piper.

Inside, I swelled with pride. I earned money on the street, playing those who listened and eagerly accepting whatever coin they threw my way. I spent weeks and months practicing and playing. My fingers cramped and my lips cracked, but I couldn't have been happier. I had money! My parents' meager caring was no longer necessary. I became the breadwinner of the household, and with that, I soon found that I continued my affinity with pied clothing. Bright colors, flashy and bold, won me crowds. Look like a performer and people will think of you as a professional. At the age of fifteen I would don my bold garb and play for crowds that only ever grew.

Inside of me was a flurry of music and sounds, and the pipe was my release. Excitement and youthful hope and the brilliance of life burst from the flute. Have you ever realized the influence of a simple song? I released songs that fended away a parent's angry fist. I played songs that made people smile. I learned to read people and guess what tune could make them friendly to me. A sad tune for the girls could make them fawn over me. A buoyant tune to bring in crowds. I'm getting to the part you want to hear. Don't rush me.

It came to pass that I became successful, and found a wife. I had two kids. They were the most beautiful children to ever grace this planet, and they shone like the sun. My flute played songs that brought inspiration to passersby, full of joy and love and care. Then...Then. Then my wife caught fever, terrible fever, and it spread to the youngest child. It took both their lives.

Inside, I screamed my throat raw. I begged for some justice in this life. The lonely gutter boy found love and lost it

far more easily than he had won it.

My tunes were melancholic, songs of hanging on to what little you have and delighting in what was left. Trying to hope, even when you feel like you're falling apart. My songs made people cry. My songs made animals whimper and submit, curl into themselves and seem as though they'd given up on life. I sought solace in my flute.

One day, I walked in on my only remaining child being beaten up by some neighborhood ruffian. My normally meek fist leveled the punk. For a while, all my songs were angry. Furious. They made people bicker and animals bite and scratch. I learned that the ruffian lived in an alleyway. I used my pipe. I led the dogs to the man who laid his fist on my son. And I let them go with a single abrasive, hostile note.

I didn't stick around to see what happened to the man. I fancy it was painful. Me and my young son left the city. We got a small cabin in the woods. I travelled around, playing my pipes in villages, towns, cities. I played for money. I learned how to lead the animals that ate and irritated and spread sickness out of the towns, into lakes and caves that they never came out from. I barely made enough money to feed me and my son. I never learned how to play the song to lead my pain away.

I'm still looking for that song. Hamlin, said the sign that I followed, for the hopes of earning some coin there. Hamlin is the part you know. Why should I tell you this? Oh, yeah. You don't know the whole story.

Worn boots scuffed against the worn dirt road. The sharp wind blows through me like I'm made of smoke. My clothes used to be pried because the loud, clashing colors that were good for business. Now I'm just that poor again. Ashes to ashes. My expert eye scopes the village before me. Business signs, etched with symbols for those who lack the gift of reading, are made of metal, true, but that metal is rusted and corroded. As I walk down the street, I see suspicious eyes peering from behind windows blocked with planks pried from decks. The few men that remain outside of the ramshackle buildings are strong and tough. They all refuse to meet my eye, taking care to lean against walls with their arms folded over their chests.

I know this act. This is the act of men who are losing everything, and need to be strong so they won't be broken. If they were confident and unafraid, they would be open and bold, they would look me in the eye, call hearty greetings. Familiarity breeds comfort, and by keeping me an outsider they keep me uncomfortable, keep me from wanting to approach them and test boundaries. Even this act, though, is seen through by my keen eye, and I can see how their clothes hang, how their faces are lean and their bodies are wiry in their muscle. These men are hungry and worn. Decrepit stores on the sides of the road and the dirt around the general atmosphere leave me unsurprised when I see rats crawling into the shadows like they're returning to their homeland. Rats. I can do rats.

The first step is to approach the right man. The people here are like mines in a minefield; most of them are hidden, and the ones that I can see are more than likely to explode on impact. But if I step just right, I might defuse one before he ignited all the others. I turn suddenly and make direct eye contact with a young, more innocent-

looking man, smiling before I made eye contact, to seem less like I am a predator choosing him as prey, scoping him out. Now I was just a cheerful piper selling business.

“Greetings, friend, but why so serious?” I play the cheerful but helplessly confused new guy. The man tries to stay foreboding, but he blinks suddenly and I see how the corners of his mouth twitch, the effort of being serious going against his nature. “Old Man Winter may be whirling by soon, but the snowfall has yet to arrive!” “Go away.” “Oh, so serious,” I tease. I dramatically fall into a low bow, immediately getting every single eye in the town fixed on me. I can feel the interest rising from behind closed doors and broken windows.

“But if you must disregard this lonesome traveller, might you at least spare a meal for a wandering soul?” I clench my fist to my chest as though physically experiencing heartache. “In these bitter days, I must work harder than ever to raise a sixpence! How is one to live?” I use my stage voice, wringing sorrow from every word for all to hear. The man gets a hard look in his eye. “You’ve come to the wrong place, traveller. Move on.” “Oh, so cold! A voice like the bitter wind at my heels!” I moan. Standing suddenly, I spin and smirk at the man who moved behind me during my little act. “Or maybe, your cold shoulder might not be the cause of famine here.”

He holds eye contact for a few tense seconds. If these men are going to kick me out of town, now would be the time. His jaw clenches and he scowls at me. Then he says a word, one word, the word that secures my role here. “Rats.” I knew it. “Don’t you just hate those buggers? I lost a good house to some vermin once.” The kind of lie that creates a bond between men, shared grievances. “Get in line.” He’s distrustful. “We’re being eaten into poverty, all of us.” “Well, everybody has problems these days, so I suppose I should just pass through...” I trail off, watching their reactions out of the corner of my eye. “...Or I could play a little tune to lead the rats out of this place and leave you lot to your devices. For a fee.” The young man’s eyes grow round as I flip my wooden flute out from where I keep it tied around my neck, under my shirt. I spin it in my fingers a few times like a bayonet and give him a sideways look. “How does that sound?” He narrows his eyes. “You can play?”

“Understatement.” I hold the flute to my lips, wink, and start to play. This is the most daunting part of the show. Surrounded by grim men, proving my worth into the fire. I start with songs that everybody knows, songs that make me familiar to the people. Women and older children emerge from the shadows as time goes on. The crowd formed, people came. Play a tune, make a wisecrack, wink at the girls. I’m amazed at how good music brings folk together.

While the shadows grew longer, people were prepared to think of me as their new best friend. My flute played songs containing the happiness that I used to know, the hope and experience that I used to have, and the love I felt when I held my last child, left behind at the cabin we had. The moon rose. I took a deep breath, cast a brief eye around the fire to the glowing faces around me, and opened my heart to the flute. My notes brought to life around me my wife and child, and the day they had been buried, when the snow fell like ash from a fire in the gray skies.

Listen to the music, hear the tears I shed when nobody could hear. Hear the love I feel, with every breath, hear the sound of love through loss and the sound of living every single day, even when you think you can't go on. Notes carry my burden, tunes lift my memories to the stars, stars like the pied clothes I wear, multicolored with different emotions and sights and feelings. Red with anger, blue with sorrow, green with riches and yellow with ease. Brown all over for the dirt of the streets.

That song I played, a pied patchwork of my life. It seemed to end too fast, as though I never found an end, never found the tune to tie down all those colors and notes into a nice, packaged song.

If anyone had cared to listen close enough, I am sure that they would have heard the sound of my only child lying, alone, in our little cabin, sick with the same fever that killed his mother and brother.

People begin to return to their homes. I tell parents to cover the ears of their children. I wait until the rats are on the prowl, slithering from the shadows and filling their gaping maws with the hard-earned food of the people. The night I win their hearts is the night I lead away their problem.

The song to lead rats is a slow, slithering, hypnotic tune. It takes their simple minds and makes them want more.

I play and walk around, and they come to me. This song winds down alleys and worms into the ear, enticing and beckoning. I lead the rats through open fields. I play though the wind. I lead the rats towards a river. I play over the crashing waters. I lure the rats, loyal and trusting followers who only ever heard a song and followed instinct, to the lake. Shadows were swallowed by ink. The rats made no sound as they drowned, made no struggle as the song told them to trust, blindly trust. By the time they fought the flow, it was too late. I, the pied piper, led the rats of Hamlin to their death.

The matter of payment came up the next day. The man I bartered with was startled by the ferocity with which I argued the price. Yesterday, he'd met an outgoing and friendly piper. Now he was unwittingly arguing a father for the life of his only remaining child. But he didn't know that.

My eyes were fire, my words knives, my voice was a pipe that played harsh, wounding notes. I needed the money. They didn't have enough. Not only did they not have enough, but they denied me any form of payment whatsoever. I reared back to lay an angry fist on the one who unwittingly denied my son his life. I was struck from behind and came to on the roadside later. Without payment. No gold coins for the cure. I had nothing.

When I had left my son, the fever had allowed time for a journey to only one town, if I was to find the cure for his sickness. One town, one show, one removal of pests. This town was the closest, and any other place that would pay me was too far away. There was no time for a shortcut, no time to get the medicine. I had no money. I had nothing to sell. I had nothing.

I suppose you'll want to know how it felt to go home and hold my son's head in my hands, to feel his fever, to see him pale and shaking. He had minutes left to live. I suppose you want to know how I held him close and

whispered, I love you, I love you. I suppose you'll want to know how he died there, and I could do nothing to save him. I suppose you want to know how I wept. Well, I'm not telling you. I did not pick up the flute for a month. Then, all at once, I did. I seemed to wander out on a route I'm surprised I still knew. Then I played a song. Oh, what a song I played.

The children of Hamlin turned when they heard my song. They followed, smiling and trusting. They heard the song and, innocent creatures that they were, followed. As though in a trance, as though captivated, they all wandered to me. Did the parents come? Yes, they came. They gaped at me. I led the children away from town, and some of the had a horrified realization. They chased me.

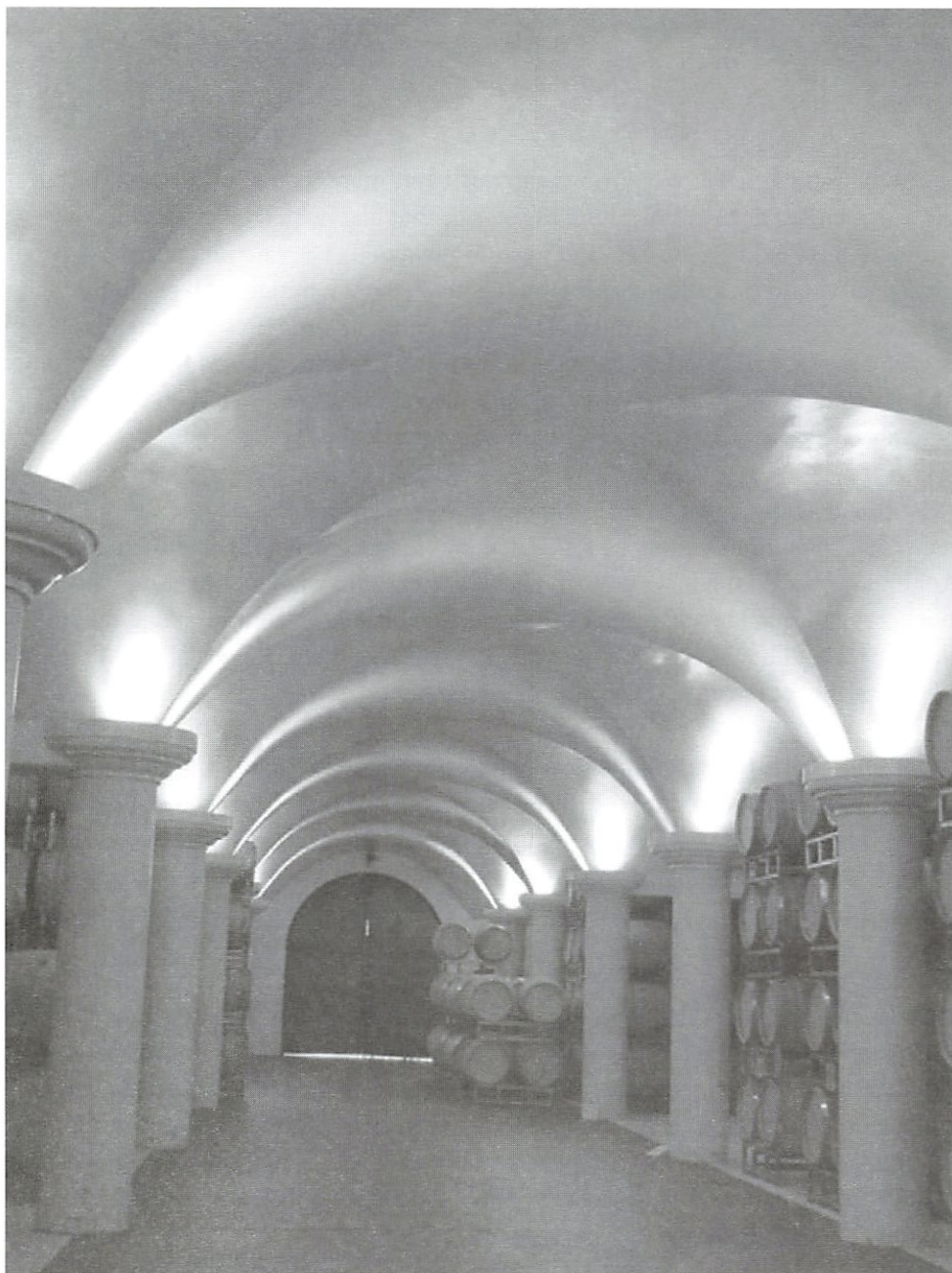
I played a tune to pit the children against them. They were so eager to beat the one who saved their town, and it seemed odd to me how they would not shove aside their young to stop me.

Angry, heartbroken, lost notes led them to the water, where the children of Hamlin drowned themselves like the rats of that same town had. Somebody loved each of the children like I had loved my child, and now they felt the same heartache I did. The pied piper of Hamlin led the children to the freezing lake like he did the rats, and he watched as they were carried away by the river, screaming and howling as the spell of music wore off. The pied piper of Hamlin watched the children die as his family had died, cold and alone and beyond the help of anybody. The pied piper of Hamlin was not of Hamlin, but of a lonely, hidden cottage in the woods.

In case you were wondering, every song from there on out was a dirge. Each note was loss and pain and regret and guilt. Every tune was as unfinished as my own life seemed to be. The pied piper of Hamlin was a man cheated of everything that made his life worth it, who struck back against the people who cost him his last remnant of joy and love. His broken soul barely lasted him through his days, where he toiled fruitlessly, always with his pipe to his lips. The coin he earned was of pity, for someone who could play such mournful tunes if they had any source of joy in their lives?

The piper barely made enough money to feed himself. I never found the tune to lead my pain away. I'm still looking for that tune. In my final lonely, broken moments, I seemed to be a single note away from finishing the song that had all my heart in it. I am sure it was a great song, the last tune I played. The song that took all the sorrow of life and took those moments, a pied garment of anger and loss and regret and brought them to the moon and stars, to the river and the willow and the solitary cabin in the woods. My song, the song of the pied piper of Hamlin, is still heard in the forests and villages and crowds and rivers. It is the sound of sadness and the sound of misunderstanding. You have heard notes and echoes from that song.

Indeed, to live a life worth living is to stand where you are always at risk of finding yourself listening to the song of the Pied Piper of Hamlin.



Monika Barry
King Estate
Photography

Moon's Cycles

Briana Bullington

Roger could only watch as his wife self-destructed. He was always supportive, if more than a little worried. He tried to help her find the motivation to work on her art, reading aloud the stories that had helped before as they lay together in bed. When that changed nothing, he tried new stories. She wouldn't respond. They no longer made love at night. They watched movies together; Roger would pick the usual feel-good movies that entertained them before the collapse. He never saw her smile, the closest thing being the cynical sneer in response to a movie's happy ending. He switched tracks, and they watched darker content, had discussions about life's more macabre side. At best, she seemed bored. The new topics distressed Roger, but not as much as his wife's apathy. The stress started to tell on him. He started to lose sleep. He appeared more aged. She was the same; a demon, an automaton.

The weeks passed, indifferent. Fall drained away, replaced with winter's lethargy. Roger came home like clockwork to find her sitting in the same fetal position as when he left. Their studio apartment acquired the faintly sweet smell that permeated the ill. Roger no longer felt comfortable in his own home. He wanted to make excuses to stay late at work, anything, to be anywhere other than the apartment. But he was worried to leave her alone for any length of time, in case-- He wouldn't admit what he was afraid of, just that the fear was there. Roger talked to one of the docs at work and scheduled an appointment for his wife. Then she disappeared.

I step back from 46 hours of work, absentmindedly brushing yellow across my forehead. I close my eyes, count to ten, let them drift open. The image refuses to change. Avoiding the pitiful gaze of the canvas, I gently set the brushes in the water jar, secure the lids on the rainbow of acrylic colors, lay the tubes back in their box. I select the massive tub of gesso and the #12. Swathes of white obliterate the image, like snow covering the body of a beloved. I do not stop until my creation is completely buried. Methodically I cleanse my instruments, put them away. I sit down on the futon and wait to feel something.

Roger whistled as he stepped out of the car, a tuneless, happy thing. He knew that he couldn't carry a tune to save his life, but he whistled nonetheless. He stopped to watch leaves swirl down around him in their glorious colors. This was their little piece of paradise, their apartment on the edge of the forest. Roger opened the door to the flat, and the familiar acrid smell of paint rushed out to meet him. He took a deep breath, as if the smell is comforting. The apartment was dark, but he didn't think anything of it. His wife was probably out at a coffee shop. He flipped on the light. His gaze was drawn immediately to the canvas, interested to see how the painting had changed since this morning. "Again, Diane?" the words came out soft, choked.

Roger stood, staring at the scene of destruction. When he was finally able to look away from the blank canvas he noticed Diane. She sat, a statue, on the futon. He opened his mouth, closed it again. Roger sighed deeply, and then sat on the couch next to his wife, offering silent comfort. She turned her head slowly, rests it on his shoulder.

The next morning I pace around the flat, drinking herbal tea and debating what to do next. Every so often the empty canvas earns a dirty glance in its corner of the room. My sketchpad is on the easel, waiting for my touch. And I, in turn, am waiting for inspiration. Something worth saying, worth the effort. Everything feels unnatural, every mark a painful reminder of past failure. I storm about the apartment, kicking the box of paints, misplacing my pencil, and knocking over my tea in my search. Each moment is compounding my fury. Finally I slam my feet into my shoes, not bothering with socks. Making sure to slam the door behind me to let the sketchbook and that wretched canvas know exactly how things stood, I leave, my footsteps beat out a muffled tattoo on the earth below me.

The woods look plain, lifeless and boring. Who said nature was so fucking magnificent anyways? The ground was covered with rotting plant flesh, the trees naked and withered, and the grey of the fall day drained the last vestiges of color from the sky. The rain is the half-hearted drizzle that I've come to expect from this horrible place. It does nothing to sweeten my mood. After a few hours of cold, rain, and mud, the rage fades. Even irritation takes too much energy. What it left in its wake is worse, somehow.

This is the start of my downward spiral. I know I am wallowing in my artistic ennui, but my art is my life. Without it, I am an empty husk. My hands, my mind, have betrayed me. So I sit, curled up, and dream. It is an escape from the real world and all of its disappointments, all of its cruelty. I live instead in my world. It was not a perfect world, oh no, it could be just as cruel. But I control it. Everything that exists there exists because of me. And I, god, martyr, savior, I revel in it.

As the weeks pass though, I start to notice some problems in my world. I have find it peopled by those I have not created. Chaos keeps creeping in. Some days I have waking nightmares, and I am trapped, trapped inside my skull, my frozen body. Roger comes home from work, weary, and I can't call out to him, I couldn't move. Other days I wander listlessly about the apartment, I never leave anymore. I feel trapped here too, the door is locked and barred from the outside. Even on the best of days though, I am plagued by doubt. I'm not sure I am even real. Am I alive? Who am I, and what does that mean? I want to speak, but I can only stare.

I wander around the woods, not bothering to stay on the path, not really caring where I go. A small part of my mind notices that the earth was frozen beneath my bare feet. I don't really care. A part of my mind notices that I am outside, free. I don't really care. I came out here because I feel guilty. That's a lie, I don't feel guilty, and I know that I *should* feel guilty. Before I left I had been going through some of the old boxes of junk that I kept, it started out a better day.

There I found a little treasure, one I had hidden from myself, but more from Roger. I had smoked the H despite the fact that Roger doesn't like it when I get high. Maybe after a good trip I can draw. I push the thought from my mind. Too painful. I wandered in no particular direction, going wherever my feet choose. A while later I sit down in a little meadow, more due to a lack of motivation to move on than any true desire to stop. I sit there, hours perhaps, until the light wanes in the sky. I get up to pee, then make a circuit of the field. I moseyed to roughly the center, sit down and nap, fetal position, hours perhaps.

When I awake the clouds have cleared, leaving the night crisp and bright. Icy, really, but I don't care. I am distracted. The moon shines three-quarters full above me, a gibbous moon. It gives the land a silvery glow. In the moon's light, I feel a part of me loosen. I feel more real, more alive. I can talk, and I do. I tell the moon my story, my pain. I unburden myself before this beautiful being. She answers, surprises me. She answers, confesses to me her pain, her elation.

"Look at me child, how bright and beautiful my form. This light though, it is not mine and mine alone. What you see is a reflection." I weep for her then, but the celestial body continues on, "I do not begrudge the source of my light, child. It is endless energy, it is life giving. Without it I would be dark, an orb of night, confined to circle a lifeless world."

I sit there, absorbing her light and her wisdom. In the morning I walk back to the apartment, cold and weary, but whole again. I look at the first rays of the sun, the moon's words echo in my head, reassuring. It is a melody that I hope to carry with me, no matter how bright the valley or dark the abyss. I glide into the apartment, careful to not wake Roger, pick up the canvas, and begin to paint.



Daniel Rider
Door
Photography

The Carnage of Carelessness

M.J. Petrick

At the gates of a new chapter
I unfold
Discarded papers, discolored,
Grown old
Discover aged desires, deep secrets
To be told
Sincere reminders of when I once
Was so bold
Wild like tangled spring flowers
We touched
Carelessly candid with the hearts
We clutched
Diving blindly into disaster since
We didn't know
When the heart is abandoned with
No place to go
Its blood does dissipate and slowly
Cease to flow
Decays despotically contrived for the
Carrion crow
The deviant and desecrating devil
Of desire

Whose tactful attacks of talons tell
What transpires
Whose white-tipped wings forever
On fire
Proctor pain in their promises to take
You higher
Then defunct and drop you dead in a
Dismal daze
Manic and mortified by meaning-
less praise
Hapless and horrified held up in a
Hopeless haze
So you collapse in self-crucifixion, an
Insecure craze
You're finally flown to mortal fortune
Up above
Discover soulful deliverance you only
Dreamed of
Delight designed by desperation sees
What luck!
Because one couldn't wish for what they
Know not of

Sarina Dorie
Tree Nymphs
Painting





Danielle Stafford
Rising Power
Photography

The Emerald Palace (after a Poem, "The Jade Flower Place" by Tu Fu)

Leo Rivers

where the wind drops from the boughs of power lines
to the wordless babble
of rain water pouring into the throats of the storm drains
elderly cats peep from broken adobe tiles
and old corrugated sheeting - all a heap, this mansion has
melted into its own midden;
so, what Famous Name once lived here?

left on the tables when the sirens called
the magazine covers of all his party-girls are yellow
stained parchment scrolls now,
curled and cracked, their forced joy long gone, like the
gilded paper
from these walls;
only a stone Buddha from his days remains by the door.

in damp bedrooms submarine shadows roll
across mildew marbled drywall
as if these dead television screens were dreaming...
but it is tornado weather and the queasy skies try
to hold back a vomit of thunder and hail.

I plop down in the wet grass before this house, mourning
its lost youth with a toast, giving into wine
and lamentation.
his lot, their lot, my lot...
not even the long lived gods are eternal.

Finding the Workers Voice

Olivia Salzman

My grandfather was a hardworking man from central Wisconsin. He worked as a pipe fitter on numerous construction projects and faced many unsafe, unwarranted, and inconsiderate situations while on job sites. Once he worked for weeks on a job. He was to seal a ruptured holding tank. He took the job and spent a week in the tank working with two other men. After they finished their job a man came and put a sign on his workstation that read, "Do not enter without a respirator." The paper mill who owned the tank had failed to mention that it had held hazardous materials before it burst. On another job, my grandpa got copper poisoning from the fumes emitted while brazing copper pipes for a plumbing system. The lack of ventilation in the building caused my grandpa to come home sweating green from the oxidized copper in his body.

My grandpa and many other workers were treated this way because it was cheaper. The companies who hired them to work on their sites didn't want to spend the extra money to give their workers healthcare or spend money on protective equipment. The working men like my grandpa had to pay for the terrible conditions because they were cheaper for the higher management.

A central reason why these conditions occurred was because there was no way to fight the system and earn equal wages and health care. The only real way to combat these offences is by forming workers' unions, which would negotiate and work toward better conditions for its members. The difficult aspect of forming a union though is if anyone is heard by the administrative staff saying the word *union* on a jobsite, he and any other worker suspected of contemplating forming a union would be fired on the spot. If a union was to succeed, all the workers had to agree to unionize, or the few who spoke out would be fired--often the most difficult objective to complete in forming a union, but the one that is essential. Workers' unions give employees the voice they need to speak up for their rights.

The mass efforts needed to form a union often frighten people away from the idea, but many people today fail to realize that directly or indirectly unions benefit every working class person. Unions either negotiate fair treatment gain enough support to stage walkouts and other techniques that force managerial and administrative staff to consider the requests and force them to deal with of the union.

When some companies form unions, others can benefit from their example whether they follow their example or not. Administrative managers will go far to avoid unionization, including raising wages and giving workers better benefits. My union worker parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles carry the same attitude; like it or not, all working class citizens benefit from the unions.

The use of a union is unarguable when viewed this way. If only this was enough.

My grandpa was never scared in silence. He held the jobs of business manager and secretary of the union for ten years. His union duties were to financially and physically run the negotiations for several contracts. Each contract was for a different group of men and stipulated how the men were to be treated by the contractors that oversaw their work. He also oversaw the healthcare and retirement plans of each man. Periodically, the Department of Labor would stop by unannounced for spot checks and records of each man's working hours. My grandpa said that this was to ensure the fair treatment and upholding of the contracts negotiated by the workers' labor union.

My grandpa's first encounter with the union was when he was twenty years old. He was working at a company called Wausau Homes, which was a nonunion company. When he applied for an apprenticeship, my grandfather was wait-listed for the program for over six months; my grandpa left and the very next day joined a union company and got his five year apprenticeship. He went through rigorous training and took a day-long, eight-hour practical and written final test to complete his apprenticeship. He passed and then began to go out in the field, working as a plumber.

"Times were hard," he said. I can't say it was easy. I was what they called a traveler. I've been on the road to as far away as southern Illinois and work a job for 5-6 weeks, sending the money back home to your grandma and the kids, keeping only enough funds to live on." When the job was done, my grandpa would come home and begin looking for a new job. If there was no work to be found, my grandpa would be classified as laid off and would have to keep looking until something was found.

Eventually my grandpa studied to become a pipe-fitter, which was a far more technical and better paid job than his former job as a plumber. He worked tough hours, but the pay was great, especially in comparison to his plumbing job. "I never lost money on a job," he said. "Once I was hired to work a job when Wausau Papers decided they didn't like the site leader before me. We worked 24/7 for the whole summer, but we followed our union steps. We negotiated with the engineers over cost of pipes, and materials without cutting corners. Then we made sure the mill signed each of our timecards each day, so there was no discrepancy in the time we put in."

Soon after the switch in specialty, my grandpa found himself working better jobsites with higher pay, and he developed a reputation for being a hard worker and a good man. This is when he began working for the union. The union position demanded a lot, and he was called all over the country to negotiate and unionize different teams and contractors. He first began by talking to the workers and organizing union elections. Each man would sign a card of representation that called for an election. Then, my grandfather would hold an election, and if the 51 percent majority voted yes, a union contract would be drawn up for the contractors to sign.

Many times, my grandpa would have to strong-arm the contractors into unionization. When a worker joins a union, their pay increases, and a union due is created. This due does not pay union officials, but rather is used to sign different contracts and keep the existing union afloat.

A target bid was often used to promote union contracting. What would happen is a company would call for contractors to make bids on different jobs. When a nonunion contractor would bid low enough to be considered for the job, a target bid would be made on them. The union would take the union dues and put it up against them. Then a union company could bid even lower than the nonunion company and would get the job. After the job was taken from the nonunion workers, the money put up against the contractor, would go to the union team so they could afford to run the job on their bid.

“Nobody will listen unless you back up your word,” my grandpa explained, “When you run a nonunion contractor out of business for a year, they tend to listen more. I’m not saying this isn’t a risky move, people get mad. I was once chased out of an office by a man with a shot gun, but six months later, he needed work, and his team got their union.”

The only way to have any say in your pay is to form a union. The contractor can pay his team what he feels like without a union and why would he ever pay them more when he could save money by giving his workers the short end of the stick?

Currently, in my grandpa’s home state of Wisconsin, union protests are going on, and an anti-union bill is being pushed in the state legislature. Governor Scott Walker is arguing, among other viewpoints, that when conditions are met, there is no use for collective bargaining, a tool my grandpa and many other workers have used. Union practice allows the union to negotiate conditions and make requests. When this tool is taken away, the management has no incentive to meet demands of their workers and give them better conditions.

The unions are now fighting for their rights to be respected while being hailed with insults from many people. Some have gone as far as to say that these people are whining for better conditions, or being, ungrateful for their current situations. My grandpa is a good man. He has faced cancer, mesothelioma, heart conditions and a brain bleed over the years. All of these conditions are directly affected or inflicted by his unjust treatment on jobsites, and he was classified as a union worker. Can you imagine what could have happened to him if he were a nonunion worker? My family and many other families across America are comprised of union workers. They all work tirelessly endless hours and deserve a voice in the fight they have for better working conditions.

Is it so much to ask for the opportunity to make their voice heard? Unions are not set up as a tool to hurt people or inconvenience others, but a way for reliable people to negotiate for better working conditions that they deserve.

ONCE UPON A
TIME...

THERE WAS A
WOMAN
WHO DID WHAT
SHE WANTED

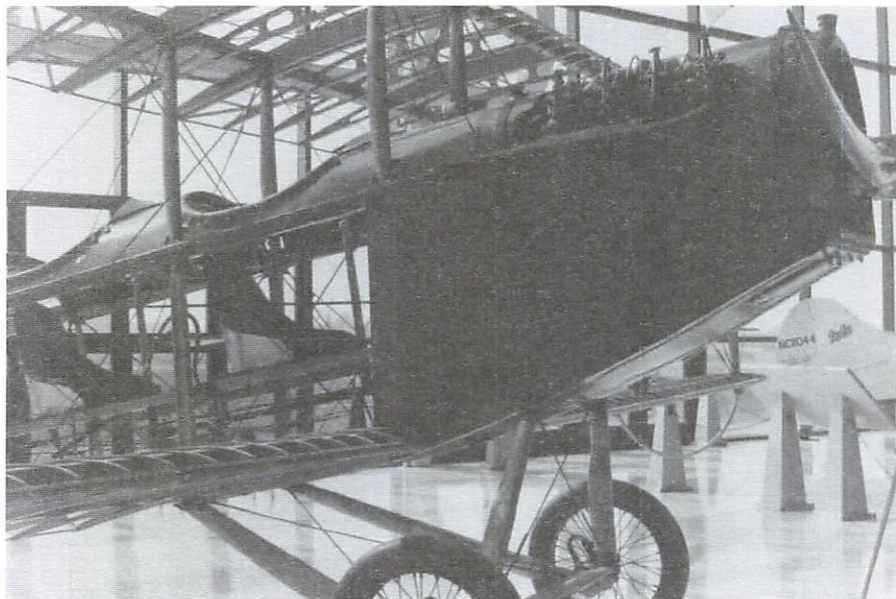
AND SHE LIVED

HAPPILY

Korene Pearson
She Lived
Silkscreen on Paper

INDEX OF CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS AND AUTHORS

A		
Alexander, Ramey	21, 32	
Barry, Monika	95	
Bluth, Kris	58	
Bohning, Rachael	49, 60	
Bulcao, Deborah	50	
Bullington Briana	52, 96	
Burlington, Shannon	71	
C		
Clark, Mariah	Inside front cover	
Coon, Joshua	83, back cover	
Cornell, Larena	78, back cover	
D		
Dorie, Sarina	33, 62, 101	
Dray, Christian	35, 53	
Duffield, Laura	90	
G		
Goodman, Jayme	48	
Grediagin, Andrew	56, back cover	
H		
Hoekstra, Michael	9, 51	
Horrtor, Jacob	40, 41	
J		
James Jo, Gary	47, 72	
Johnson, Melissa	28, 77	
Johnson, Nicholas	54, 63, 74	
Johnston-Ruiz, Traci	37, 43	
Jones, Misty	82	
K		
Kaplan, JS	89, inside back cover	
Knox, Tom	61, 75	
L		
Lilly, Savanna	80	
Lovejoy, Nicole	64, 86	
Lowd, Mary E	25, 65	
M		
Maring, Michael	38, 76	
Maxwell, Dustin	8	
Moody, Christian	36	
		Moore, Aaron
		54
		Morrill, Susie
		14, 15
P		
		Paige, Christine
		7, back cover
		Pearson, Korene
		31, 107, back cover
		Petrick, M.J.
		12, 30, 100
		Prewitt, Alexandra
		16
R		
		Rider, Daniel
		73, 99
		Rivers, Leo
		18, 103
S		
		Salzman, Olivia
		104
		Schmidt, Josh
		13, 24
		Seaton, Karen
		81
		Senn, Jordyn
		87
		Snowdon, McKenzie
		44
		Sorseth, Reneé
		back cover
		Stafford, Danielle
		102
		Stehle, Anna
		59
		Stringer, Natasha
		1, 11
T		
		Taylor, Nicole
		22
		Troup, Serina
		57
		Turner, Jud
		45
		Tustin, Sarah V
		70, 108
		Torvik, Kathy
		29
W		
		West, Brittney
		front cover, 55
		Westberg, Candice
		5, 20
		Wicklund, Grace M
		46
		Wolfe, Liz
		42
Y		
		Yath, Bunloeur
		6, 79



Sarah Tustin

Curtis JN-4 1917

Photography



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Denali

AN ARTS AND LITERATURE MAGAZINE



Lane Community College

Eugene, Oregon