

DENALI

I am the master of my fate;

2013



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Transformation

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DENALI

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The Beginning/The Avenging Angels

Edmund Thompson

Part One. (The Beginning)

With your Doppelgangers looting, we have come to liberate this place;
And save the totality, from your meager Human Race.

So call on the Angels... That dwell on a higher plain;
And ask for their forgiveness; Because of your mistakes, we have came.

Children of the past, we've been living all of your fears...
Elders of the future, we've been crying all of your tears.

Madmen of the future, are the ones who'll be wise;
Pillars of the past, we've been living all of your lies.

We shall raise our glass high, as we stare into the moon.
Your dreams will turn into nightmares... For the end is coming soon!

Part Two. (The Avenging Angels)

“What did we do to deserve such injustice? Why were we taken from our home?
Up in Heaven, we were happy and free; down here we are all alone.

Savages that run amok throughout the cities; concurring all of the land.
We were sent down here to take care of business, but our vengeance has got way out of hand.

We were sent to protect all of those who lived right, and destroy those who have done wrong.
But no one in this world has ever been perfect... And now everybody is gone.

We were given a job to do, and we performed that job very well.
But, for destroying all sinners, we were banished from Heaven... Now we are Angels in Hell!

Now Heaven is full of innocent people, because of our mistake.
We are now walking down the stairway to Hell; with the death of Mankind in our wake.

When we arrived in Hell, the demons were cheering; yes, we were all heroes that day.
When Satan came down, he cried ‘Drinks all around; my friends, you are more than welcome to stay!’

Now we are the people who personify evil, though we did not know what we did wrong.
We were just following orders, like good little soldiers; but I reckon our visit lasted too long.

2013

Mountains Calling

Bethany Alsin



Part Three. (The Avenging Angels, continued)

Oh!, what have I done to deserve such injustice? Why has thou forsaken me?!
We played by the rules, and for that we are fools; Our rivers of blood now flow to the sea!
Our fate, it now rides; upon the crimson tides, with the destruction that we have caused.
There is no turning back, for we have made the final attack; now the Universe shall be forever paused!
Once we were Angels, now we are Demons, endlessly wandering through the void.
And with most certainty, we shall be punished eternally; for the violence that we have employed!!!”

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In Deep



Matt McWalters

2013

Day in the Life of a Modern Knight

Justin Harris

Some nights
The sun, the sharp tongue
Drives out the vapors and steams.
A momentary yes, a momentary no.
Associated Press and the daily grind;
Cigarette lungs. Front-page falsehoods
Followed by the synoptic of international
Murders followed by the state and local
Murders followed by the madness of madmen
and an occasional mad mother.
Killing the week with smoke.
Killing the weak with words.

Locked out of my heart and home,
Locked into the on-time truck,
Driving to deliver the gifts of life,
Signed for and accepted by an other.
Rutting away my delivery route,
Driving to this place and that place,
Until today unknown to me only,
To get the same answer again –
There I've been.

Intersection of indecision.
Impending moment of now.
The heart pounds.
Rubber, concrete, and metal sounds.
People stop and run.
Oh, AP, think of me tomorrow.
List me fair and not, I pray,
On the pages of sorrow.

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Laziness and Depression



Chad Green

2013

Death by Misadventure

Max E. Keele

A German tourist in a rental car drove a lonely stretch of the Nevada desert, at the beginning of his life-long desire to experience America's West of the Imagination. Mile after mile, the astonishing vistas rolled by. At precisely the moment that his initial awe succumbed to the faint flush of monotony, the front left tire of his rental happened upon an ordinary, L-shaped tire iron, left in the road by persons and circumstance unknown. As the tire encountered this object, it rolled first upon the shorter leg, causing the longer leg to lift with all the suddenness expected from the application of rubber, friction, and misfortune. The tire iron's longer leg—that is, the portion ending in a sharp chisel intended for the removal of stubborn hubcaps—raised to an angle of about 45 degrees. The chisel-end penetrated the floor of the automobile with some substantial force, entered the flesh of the tourist just above his pubic bone, speared his bladder, rent several sections of intestine, ruptured his colon, and crushed through the vertebral column, severing his spinal cord. The tire iron's tip then exited the hapless German, and lodged in the seat behind him. The fact that this actually occurred is peculiar enough from the view of an interested (if not shocked) observer, but can you imagine the experience? To be driving the desolate highway of one's fondest dream, only to find oneself without omen impaled upon a segment of rusty iron? Can you imagine?

She came to him in the morning, smelling of coffee and hand lotion. "We really must talk," she said.

"Um." He looked over his newspaper at her, and stifled a strong urge to run. "Of course. But can it wait until after work? I've got to leave soon."

"No." She sat facing him; a look of torment briefly crossed her face. "I'm afraid it cannot."

The man sighed, folded his paper, sipped his coffee. "Well, then. I suppose something is bothering you..."

"I, I can't go on." Her eyes searched the tabletop for clues, for impetus. "We can't go on like this."

He said nothing, fearing and mistrusting any possible response.

"I've met somebody," she said, in halting tones. "I've fallen in love with somebody else."

The man had suspected this, of course, from the moment she sat. But the fact of her statement still seared him to ash. "I see." He stared into his cup. "Ah, who... um, I don't suppose that really

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matters.”

“No, I don’t think it’s important who. Just someone at work.” She looked up at him, searching for redemption, but knowing that she would not find it there. “The point is, um, that lately I have not gotten the things I need from you...”

He sighed again, chewed at his lip. “So. It’s my fault. Is there anything I can do, anything I can say to change this?”

“No,” she said quickly. “I mean, it’s not your fault. It’s me, can’t you see? I have changed, and you haven’t...”

“Do you really think that’s fair? Of course I’ve changed.” And he thought: I’m changing right now.

“No. Listen to me, please. I never wanted to hurt you, I only know that I need to be in love, and I have found that with another... I didn’t plan for this to happen, you know.”

“You used to love me...” he began, then slammed his hand onto the table, startling them both. “Damn it. How long have you been thinking this?”

She reached out to touch his hand, touched it like it were a sharp thing, like it might suddenly rear up to impale her. “About a year,” she said, “I’ve known him about a year.”

“And you’ve been sleeping with this, this other person all that time?”

“No!” She drew back. “I’ve not slept with him at all. We, um, we kissed a few times, that’s all.”

“I see,” he said, not seeing anything at all. “I suppose that makes it all right, then.”

She looked away from him; her jaw muscles worked and strained.

The man stood, poured the last of his coffee into the sink, rinsed his cup, set it gently on the counter. “Well. Okay, then.” He held himself away from the counter with both hands. “I guess that’s that. I pre-

sume that you know what you want to do?”

She made a small noise deep in her throat, tried again, and on the third attempt, the word escaped her. “Divorce.”

He nodded. “I don’tw...” he began, then stopped. “I won’t contest it. But I won’t file the papers, either.”

Tears welled into her eyes, but did not fall. “Of course. I’ll see a lawyer today after work.” She rose, made a single, almost instinctive movement toward him, but stopped, turned, and fled.

He stood there for a long while, staring at the droplets of water on the outside of his cup. And when he twisted off his wedding band and dropped it into the cup. The sound it made reminded him of bells.

An elderly gentleman, it is reported, awoke in the young hours of the morning to the ringing of his telephone. Groping in darkness and the confusion of sudden consciousness, his hand chanced upon, not the telephone handset, but rather the loaded pistol he kept on his night stand. Now, this was not a violent man, nor a hoodlum, nor an operative of some secretive government agency. He kept the pistol only as a talisman to ward the muddy fear that frequently appears as the testosterone floods of youth abate. He had, in fact, fired the weapon but once, the day he had bought it, and found the experience (while oddly sexual) to be quite unpleasant. But he kept the gun nonetheless, and one morning, he answered its call. Needless to say, the pistol discharged, its bullet entering the old man’s head just beneath the right ear, traveling upward through the ear’s utricle, exploding the lateral ventricle of his brain, lodging deep within his cerebrum. One cannot help but wonder: did the unfortunate man

have time to mutter a confused “hello?” Or did his sleepy brain have just enough awareness to instigate a single thought it could never finish, a sort of primal “oh-oh?”

She came to him in the early evening, smelling of wine and bright curry. “We need to talk,” she said.

The man recoiled instinctively, but knew better than to protest. “Then sit. I’ll clean up dinner later.”

She took a long time sitting, adjusting small flowery pillows, settling her resolve.

“So, what is it that’s bothering you?” he prodded.

“I can’t continue living like this,” she said, and hugged a pillow to her chest.

“I see,” he said.

“I need more from a relationship. We don’t...” She crushed the pillow between her hands. “We don’t communicate anymore.”

He had seen this sort of thing before, knew what to expect, yet still was filled with a sense of dark foreboding. “I’m sorry. You know I love you.”

“Oh, god,” she said. “I just don’t know how to say this.”

“Let me guess. You’ve met someone else. And you need to be in love.”

She looked up, surprised. “Yes. Something like that.”

He almost laughed, but stopped it in time. “Anybody I know?”

“Well, yes,” she said. “My friend from Carolina...” The word trickled off into nothing.

“I see. And you and she have been in love for how long now?”

“Almost a year.”

This time, the laugh slipped past, a single bark, like the report of a pistol. “And to think, all this time, you’ve been the jealous one.” He leaned back into his chair, closed his eyes.

“I’m sorry,” she said. “I don’t know what to say. I never wanted to hurt you.”

“No doubt,” he muttered to himself. “Well, what are your plans?”

She crunched up the pillow as small as it would go, then fought to contain it. “I’m leaving in May. I’m moving to Carolina, and I’m going back to school.”

“Sounds like you’ve been working on this for some time. Well, what do you want from me?”

She threw the pillow at him, but it unfolded in flight and veered aside. “Damn you. Why can’t you ever let me inside you? If you could just promise to try! To try and open up with me, and really talk to me! This wouldn’t have to happen!”

“Hmm. So you want me to compete with your girlfriend for your affections? Is that it?” And he thought: my fault again.

“No,” she said through a catch in her throat. “You don’t understand, you never understand.”

“I understand perfectly. You, who always mistrusted me—and battered me for the past five years with jealous accusations—have engaged in a secret, year-long love affair, and now tell me that I might be able to keep you, if only I can be more like the woman you love. Please feel free to point out the errors in my thinking.”

She sighed. “I guess you’re right. I shouldn’t have asked that of you. So what are you going to do?”

The man lit a cigarette, and squinted at the burning tip. “Oh, I don’t know. I can’t stay here. I suppose I’ll move out as soon as I can.”

“If that’s what you want. I’ll sleep on the

Conversations

Micha Gross



couch...”

He shook his head, more weariness than denial. “No, that’s not what I want. But it is what will be. Sleep where you want, it doesn’t matter.”

She stood, and left the room, rushed to the bedroom and closed the door. He imagined he could hear her dialing Carolina on the phone, searching for the sympathy and compassion they both knew she deserved.

Smoking, and staring at the empty couch, he sat until the cigarette burned out on its own, between

unfeeling fingers. Finally, he reached out for the pillow that lay on the floor beside him.

Although it is possibly apocryphal, the story persists of a rather large woman, and her unpleasant experience in an airplane’s lavatory. It seems that this woman, though kindly and well-loved by family and friends, suffered from chronic and seldom-relieved constipation. In the midst of her very first journey by air (a much anticipated trip to visit her daughter on the occasion of the birth of a grandchild) she found herself overcome at 20,000 feet

by that glorious feeling known only to the constipated: an impending movement of the bowels. She levered herself out from the tiny seat, with a no-doubt cherubic smile across her face, and made her way through the narrow aisle to the rear of the plane, and shoe-horned herself into the lavatory cubicle, and draped her ample buttocks over the toilet. Just as her relief became tangible, somewhere within the bowels of the plane an electro-mechanical order was given to evacuate the waste tanks. We can imagine this order to be the result of pilot error, or mechanical failure, but whatever the causality, the timing was definitely unfortunate. The holding tanks purged into sub-zero, very low pressure air. As the refuse left the plane it pulled with it all of the air in the sewage system, and left a near vacuum in its wake. Now, because the woman's flesh effectively sealed the mouth of the toilet, all of the intense negative pressure from the instantaneous appearance of vacuum was directed upward, drawing against the path of least resistance, and sucking from the poor woman her accumulated feces, her colon, the entire length of her intestines, and all the other assorted organs within. The entire assemblage dangled in the frigid air beneath the plane, trailed behind like the stung-out guts of a honey bee. One can almost visualize the transforming look on her face: anticipation, ecstasy, shock, peace. One wonders: even if knowing the outcome before hand, might she still have chosen the same path?

She woke him from a deep, dark dream, smelling of sex and sleep. "Wake up," she said. "I need to talk to you."

"Hmm?" He blinked open his eyes, squinted to find her in the dark. "What? What's wrong?"

"Nothing's wrong, hon, I just need to talk."

"Oh, god," he sighed, wrapped himself around the blanket outline of her body.

She laughed quietly, and pretended to push him away. "Why do you always say that? Every time I say we need to talk, you say 'Oh, god.' You trying to give me a complex?"

He didn't answer, just wriggled beneath the covers until his naked skin pressed against hers.

"Anyway," she said, "it's not like I'm going to tell you I've become a lesbian, or an airline steward, or something."

The man laughed a little himself, though it sounded somewhat brittle. He nuzzled into her neck, savoring the musty smell of a sleeping woman. "What then? What do you want to talk about?"

"Now I don't think I want to tell you. Go back to sleep."

"Hah! Fat chance of that!" He pushed up the blankets, and rolled half onto her, draping his leg across one of hers. He propped his head up by the elbow, and looked into her eyes. "I can make you talk, you know."

She giggled, and squirmed herself even closer, pressing herself hard into his thigh. "Oh yeah? Then make me."

He lowered his head to her, kissed her lightly on the end of her nose. "I love you." Then he laughed, this time for real, and kissed her on the lips.

"Okay, okay, I don't want to have to hurt you," she said. "But you have to be serious for a minute."

He nodded, grave and deliberate.

Then she gently cupped his erection in her warm hands and said, "Honey, we're pregnant."

And for the first time in his life, he cried, stinging tears of horror, pain, and grief.

DENALI

The Isadora Duncan Dancer

Leo Rivers

me, I'm thinking

“how many ways
of sticking out
your arms and legs
can there be?”

Then I got out a box
that had been at
the back of every garage
I've had since 1970
and found it was a deep stack
of legal-size xerox photocopies
scrolling at the corners
piss yellow and bruised
“like the years it exists
were angry fists” –

It was an old girlfriend's box I find
– not mine.

so, I knelt in the shadows of discovering
one of those things that pass by
when you're not looking.

She was a red head, lanky
like a German Lutheran farm girl.
With milk pale skin and freckles
everywhere
like a negative of a deep space photograph
all constellations
unseen previously

and she looked like Vanessa Redgrave
(who played Isadora in the Movie).
So it seemed only right
that girl found the last man in Hollywood
who still taught Her the Duncan Dance
and take lessons from him¹
using the Book
by Irma Duncan.

He was an old hoot full of UFOs,
Theosophy and 1930s Musicals
and Movies.

He was like the the Last Jew alive
who remembered Abraham.

1 Paul Leonard

I was entranced by them
 Him, his Mythic Love of Isadora's Dance
 and the girl, he loved her like a poet his Last
 Lover
 we both adored the way her Straw-man's limbs
 (usually struggling like
 a new-born moose to stand)
 turned into seagulls wings
 and jumped into the sky
 like chinese kites
 when she danced for Him.

kneeling like a boy shepard
 in a deserted Temple to Apollo
 with a pot-shard with runes
 of aching beauty
 I forgot the cold cracked concrete
 and oil spots

and saw what I had got –

three score xerox like drawings
 some then famous artist² drawn on the fly
 as Isadora herself danced by
 empowered by powers
 that poured out of the earth through her
 which She directed at the stars
 through wriggling fingers
 making them
 blaze like Van Gogh flowers!

and She
 looked like a 3rd Grade
 School-teacher to me
 who, stripped of Puritanity,

pulled on a Greek tunic
 that flounced about her knees
 as, so transformed, she proceeds
 to dim the lights
 of such luminaries
 as Venus and Aphrodite.

it was as if someone poured
 the heart's wry wisdom of Sappho
 and Euclid's geometry
 into a woman
 and bade her to Dance as to shame
 the motionlessness
 of both the grave and death.

Each drawing drew with her the artist's hand
 at her music in motion's
 sweet command.

The awful logic of pure emotion
 the Formula
 of gut intimacy
 with all the Limits of Reality.

And so, at 60, I became
 a boy who fate had sent
 to the Temple and the Priestess
 who still in it dwell
 with
 the Rite of Love Immortal.

Imprisoned in Self Illusion

Madison Skriver

Imprisoned in self illusion
 Content to meander through simulation
 Layers of sediment, I compile this denial
 Result of perpetual hesitation
 Backward stride of degradation
 Fear the bond in this relation

Blindly adrift in nebulous dimensions
 Soul sludge quagmire through which I've been crawling
 To shed this skin, tarnished exoskeleton
 Fragments of delusion leave sprawling
 Off elevated precipice falling
 Result of high divinity calling

Cause and effect cause cosmic ripple
 Expansive aura, golden dilation
 Assimilate to collective, a newborn's perspective
 From habitual realms deviate
 Deepest essence radiate
 Towards 3rd eye view gravitate

Interlude
 Of embracing this ascension
 Reality of my own invention
 Ten fold attempt to evolve
 In Universal womb I dissolve
 Aqueous immersion, constant luminosity
 Despite this void of separation
 Our infinite potential inside the existential
 Dawn shyly revealing revelation
 Emerging love feeds inspiration
 Ethereal levitation within this co-creation

Creation



Madison Skriver

Thor's Well

Matt McWalters



Convergence

Christi Ohrmund

He was the one that reminded me why my heart beat. Two, sometimes three times a week that summer on long warm days, we were on the river. At a moment's notice, he'd call and ask, "Want to go?" His van was always ready, packed neatly for economy of space and forethought of every possible contingency. Once at Jasper, it never took long to air-up the raft. However some days we would linger, chatting up the other rafters about the weather and river conditions. Just small talk. After our first couple of runs we found a tight pattern of familiarity, walking the raft into the current where he would steady the boat while I jumped in, and then he would take the helm and commandeer the paddles. How I loved him then, I, leaning over to view the many mottled-colored rocks below, as my steely-eyed captain watched for the rapids ahead.

I believe he must have been born with an affinity for water. He once told

me that he was swim team captain back in high school. His name being announced week after week over the Monday morning PA system, he brought notice to the sport. I, however, was a weak companion riding the prow and listening to water music. I can still see how his eyes shown with anticipation, strength in knowing he was prepared for anything.

On the surface water will appear a simple chemical substance, no taste and no smell, two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen. In liquid form it follows and flows to the slope of the land. It is a shape changer moving to the sea. Yet from the shore one could easily miss the graceful curves and all the beauty of its poetry. If not for him, I might have missed the sparkling splendor of a lifetime. I learned to be silent. The weight and cares of civilization were left behind; this was our time here in this world of many faceted hues of light. He would speak of the river, and I thought he actually could hear it speak to him as it ran over ages of mysteries that lay just below the surface.

Beginner's whitewater was the section of the Willamette that, on a good day, would give us a class III thrill. We were always on watch for the waves, that's where the action started. A series of waves now, that is called the "wave train." Laughing like fools, we often walked our raft back up river just for a second run on choice "trains." Sweepers were to avoid, all dead wood in them, submerged like toads since last winter. As I contemplated the clouds, he said, "See there how the water runs smooth and glossy over that boulder?"

Looking over, I reply, "Yep."

"Well, it's called a pillow. We avoid those, too."

"Very cute, I think it's a fine place for the water

to lay its head." To this day I still think he was teasing me with that nomenclature.

The "eddy" was my favorite. A calm spot where water flowed backwards upstream intrigued my imagination. The thought of some long forgotten Kalapuyan using the back flow to propel up-river would be useful.

"Could we grab one just like the Natives did?"

"No," he says with a sense of finality.

"Whatever," I tell him.

He never did try it, not even to please me; it was not his nature to play with the river.

"See, that backwards swirl was a treat just waiting to take your boat places you don't plan on going," he tried to explain.

I will always love the river. The flash of trout tail here then gone, deer grazing in stands of Black Cotton wood, Oregon Ash and Willow then a flush of wings taking flight these make my heart beat.

Our lives were like converging currents heading toward a turbulent short ending, right in the middle of the longest days of summer. He would focus directly in front of the boat and remind me, "Always watch for the overall picture; position yourself and your raft to be where you want to be."

Good Morning

DENALI



Micha Gross

2013

Darwin, Remove These Chains!

Andrew Gonzalez

Instinct, like a
bowel movement
must be let out,
must pin the superego,
to get 'er done.
This struggle brings
the animal out of us,
casualties die martyrs
to Darwin's maker,
"there is time for war"
said the preacher,
not a time "of" war,
a time "for" war.
A time to purge ourselves
with struggle, to find again
our resilience:
that we are
animals—deified by
opposable thumbs.
And Greeks
obsessed with the
power-filled phallus come
to a time of testing,
bursting forth life gods,
guardians of nations,
the fighters who make
room for poets to see
vulvas in roses and rock formations.
Mother Nature, a cruel nun
striking hands with rulers
giving tests first and then
lessons. Color
struggle looking over

brown picket fences,
the dictatorship of the proletariat
come long last, power
changes hefty hands; a slut
for all who prove themselves
worthy. Empires miscarried
fall pitiful into dirty
toilets, joining the carnage
with the sewage
and nations
like yogurt
seem to
have an expiration date.
Sinners lay down their
swords for saints to
take them up and slay them
there, the stories of it all
boil up to power and
this struggle is our
salvation for
when we need strength then
we become strong.
And wrong and right
are secondary —
power is the engine that
drives people like
brute beasts gridlocked on
tax reform, antlers locked
battling for Mona Lisa,
for Monica Lewinsky,
driven by desire for how
it must feel to be
on top.

DENALI

Like animals deified by
value systems,
architecture, forks and
spoons and guns,
rationality, language,
opposable thumbs
and I bet you
have never thought
of how much
religion deifies us.
Our belief in God
makes us gods
as we suck the yellow
blood from beneath
Native feet and
delicately wipe our lips.
As we patrol oily
middle eastern blood;
Abu Ghraib blurs lines
of distinction of
who the terrorists
are. As we see
the animal in Hiroshima and
grimace and worship
before what
we are capable of.
Instinctual self
is who we minimize,
preferring to be philosophers
and poets, scientists and
presidents but
it is pure instinctual
self which keeps us
alive, sucks air
without our notice,
makes room for
prophets to see God

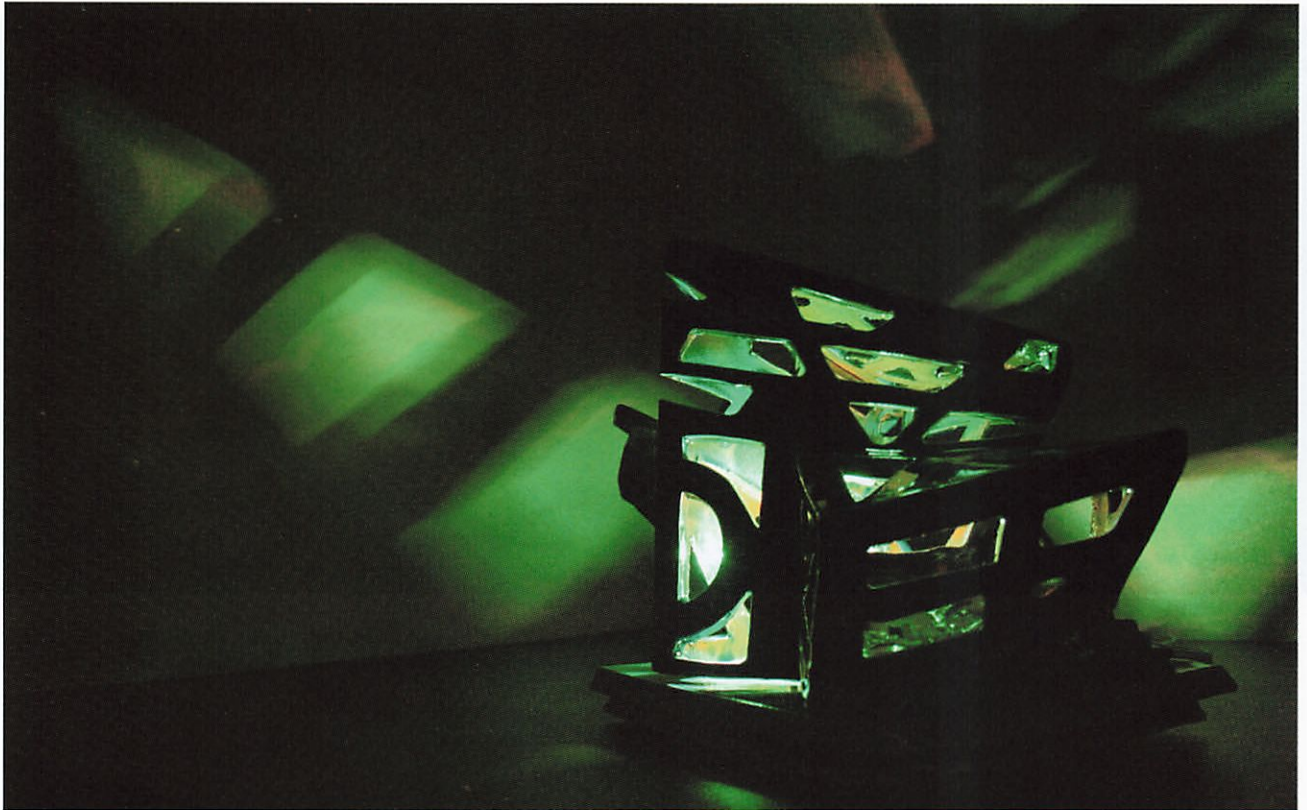
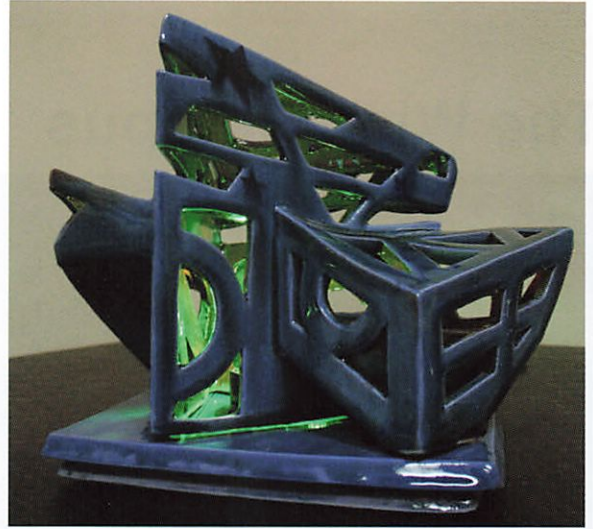
in everything, we thinkers
are indebted to the beast
inside us, the beast inside
others, the animals we
call our mothers and fathers,
driven to fuck. To fuck
like bears fuck and tigers
fuck and apes fuck, who
would've been just friends
if not driven from within
to fucking make us happen
bursting forth life gods
who struggle every day of their
life to find what star they
came from making messy
bowel movements, so much
relief,
it is pleasure
to let instinct save
our necks
and wipe afterwards
as if we
had something
to do with it and we read
in the Law of Moses that
"God is a man of war"
and also that
"we are made in God's image"
like when fighting
we reach the zenith
of godhood
when my romantic self
thinks just the opposite
begging for
"swords to be beaten into
plowshares."

2013

Deconstructivist Architectural Illuminary

with a green light bulb

Mitchell Henry



DENALI

The Wise Octopus



Samantha Westrope

2013

A Tribute to James Dean

Adriana Marquez

Bongo drums and bullfights,
Swinging days, and reckless nights –
In Technicolor, or Black and White
Wrong or right, he'll win the fight
Caught in a dusty haze –
Till his final days,
With wealth and fame
Engulfed by flame
With a need to feed –
This lust for speed, can only lead
To the grave –
In red blazers and violence –
In misty eyes and gleaming hair,
In youth and innocence,
"The devil may care"
In confidence,
and despair –
Of rules and laws, for this
Rebel without a cause -
"You're tearing me apart!"
Interest in the dying arts,
Like a soldier without a heart,
But this love for art will never die –
Strong and raw, with a heavy sigh
Icy rebel, afraid to cry –
With dirty hands, he's on his knees
Bullets in hand; aim to please –
In his stare; a glare, a reflection
Of an oppressed era – The hopes and fears
Of a lost generation
The desperate tears of a Nation
Heavy hearts and unsettled bets

Chocolate malts and cigarettes
Ink on paper,
Paint on canvas,
Script in hand –
A greater Artist was never seen,
Than in the soul - of
James Dean

(Mis)Adventures in Internet Dating

Bronwynn Dean

When you get to be my age in possession of a somewhat sordid past and enough baggage to make the knees on a packmule buckle—assorted kids, baby daddies and divorce papers—it can be hard to find a date. My social circle does not present itself with viable candidates. I can, and have, had sex with some of my guy friends but it's never ended up being a good idea.

So about a year ago, I decided to try my hand at internet dating. I figured that if I met enough men, eventually the love stories would statistically outnumber the disappointments.

I started by browsing Craigslist, but seeing as I wasn't ready to sugar-momma some toothless tweaker, I traded up and made a profile on OkCupid. I got a lot of interesting proposals. OkCupid became a gateway drug, so I moved on to Match.com for a month trial. The men there seemed a bit more legit, because they had to pay to play. What I found was that, in reality, their level of desperation was directly proportionate to the cost of their membership. Deluxe packages were a sure sign of loserdom.

I did agree to a few dates. I figured at the least, I would get a free dinner.

There was a slightly older computer programmer, modestly attractive only because he was game to spring for a spendy restaurant on our first date. He was polite. I agreed to see him again. Then

I realized that the flames-and-martini-glass lining on his faux leather jacket paired with his tie-dyed shirt. This was not the direction I wanted to head in, no matter how much cash he wanted to spend on me. I let him down gently... by not responding to his messages.

Then there was the nursery owner. He was actually pretty cute. I even broke my rule and slept with him on our first date. He called the next day to tell me he decided to get serious with someone else, but would I still like to join them at a concert that night? I went. He paid for the ticket. I watched him make out with his new girlfriend. It was a pretty good show.

Next came another older guy, with the arguably redeeming qualities of owning a sailboat and wearing a kilt. I agreed to go out on his boat, provided I could take my sister and her boyfriend along. He ended up hitting on all of us, and we got a little nervous as he grew more belligerently wasted in the middle of the lake. He developed a lazy eye. I had visions of swimming for shore. Then he asked us to sail the ship back. We found the engine and somehow managed to steer the 15-footer back to the dock. He asked for a ride back to town and revealed that his license had been revoked for drunk driving. We dropped him off at his hillbilly heaven, complete with cars in varying stages of disrepair.

Fortunately, my month trial had run out. I did

not renew it. I took a break. I had plenty of other distractions to occupy me. After a while though, the loneliness crept in. I crawled back to Craigslist and trolled for potential. Among the pitiful pleas was an ad that really spoke to me. He wanted a partner in crime, someone to make mutant vehicles with and guerilla art projects. There was something about his ability to spell and execute the basic principles of grammar that turned me on. We exchanged emails for a few days. He sounded smart. He sent a passable picture, despite the Allmann Brothers' mustache. We agreed to meet at a local watering hole. I almost backed out but managed to summon enough courage at the last minute. I got there early, got my own drink, and positioned myself in the gunfighter's seat where I could see everyone coming. He walked in, his shoulders hunched. I should have heeded my initial reaction, but we got to drinking and talking. He was an artist, something of a bad boy. We dated for 6 months, living together for part of it. We were both looking for something real. In the end, I found him to be confused and manipulative. We agreed not to speak to each other again.

After a period of voluntary celibacy, it was time to get laid. Back to OkCupid, where I couldn't keep up with the messages streaming into my box. Suddenly all these guys who'd been hounddogging the site and striking out now saw fresh meat. They wasted no time trying to claw their way at me. I was beset by proposals from men in other states, open invitations for kink, and a bid from a husband wanting to cheat on his wife. Awesome.

I met a burner for dinner. He'd managed to write a whole page email. He wanted to "experience" one of the town's trendiest restaurants. His first words to me outside the restaurant were,

"Wow, you're really hot." Now, in particular settings, this comment is perfectly acceptable—say, in a bar, after a few drinks. But coming from the muppet who was apparently going to share a table with me for the next hour, not so much. I managed to get through dinner. I already had a plan to ditch him in place, set in motion ahead of time with friends who'd agreed to text me contrived emergencies precisely one hour in. I was ready to dine and dash but the check came and he informed me of what my portion of the bill was. Luckily I had more than \$10 to my name that week.

Enraged that a man would start a date by telling me I was hot and finish it by assuming that I would foot my own bill, I barely said goodbye. I cursed dating altogether as I walked across the street to meet my friends at the pub. Muppet boy texted the next day to tell me how special I am. I tried to be nice and say I just wasn't really in the right space for dating. He said he would wait. I said don't bother.

I turned all my profiles off the next day, and am not looking back. I do not fill out an application for romance. I don't fit the template and I don't need to hide behind a screen name to be honest about what I am really looking for in a man.

And, you know, I am working on myself. It's complicated. I'm really busy. I don't need a man, my vibrator works just fine. But maybe I'll just check Craigslist one more time.

Stream of Consciousness

But ah yes, that ever present ache. Perhaps it could be massaged away; can one massage a soul? Oh she wasn't sure what to do. The ache and the cold. It was like a dying flame. Maybe she could eat some matches, that had worked for that one girl, hadn't it? What was her name? Isabel maybe? Paula? But no matter. Busy busy. Oh they've raised the price of gas again, haven't they. Gas and matches, now there's a bad combination. Oh, Tita! Yes, that was the girl with the matches. Maybe she could be like Tita, but she wasn't the protagonist in her own life, wasn't that sad. Not the antagonist either, though, maybe just a side character. Like a sidekick. Yes, she was the sidekick. Reliable and useful, but cast into the shadows of an enormous ego. He was the ego, wasn't he? He made her shade and she reveled in it, even though this wasn't a love story. Does the girl ever actually get the guy in real life? But oh, how he would blather on, "We'll have kids someday, you know... oh you want to be in an exclusive marriage, I was planning on fucking the pool boy." Nothing actually there. No fire or flames just hand warmers. If he gets the pool boy whom does she get? No one, that's whom. Or is it who? She never could quite remember, objects versus subjects of course, but is it whom? Never mind that though, not the point. It was in his kitchen when she realized how deep her feelings had grown. He was playing with honey bears and making horrible, but wonderful, but horrible puns while he cooked her dinner. There was one "don't leave me I couldn't bear it" wasn't it, and he turned and smiled. Such a smile. An impossible smile. She would have kissed him. Would have leapt right off the stool and kissed him. But of course, not a love story so she didn't. If her life was a book, maybe. She always had wanted her life to be a book. The kind with a happy ending, even if it's sad on the way there.. But no. Not a book either. So she didn't. Wishes she had. Always will. Take a chance, that's always what they say, right? She never did though. Not that if she had it would have mattered. She was his x-axis and he was her asymptote, always growing infinitely closer but never quite reaching, never quite touching. Oh how she would reach out for him, trying to cross that fractional space but no matter how small the distance her arms would never manage it. Still though, take the chance; find a new chance.

Zoe Steeler

2013

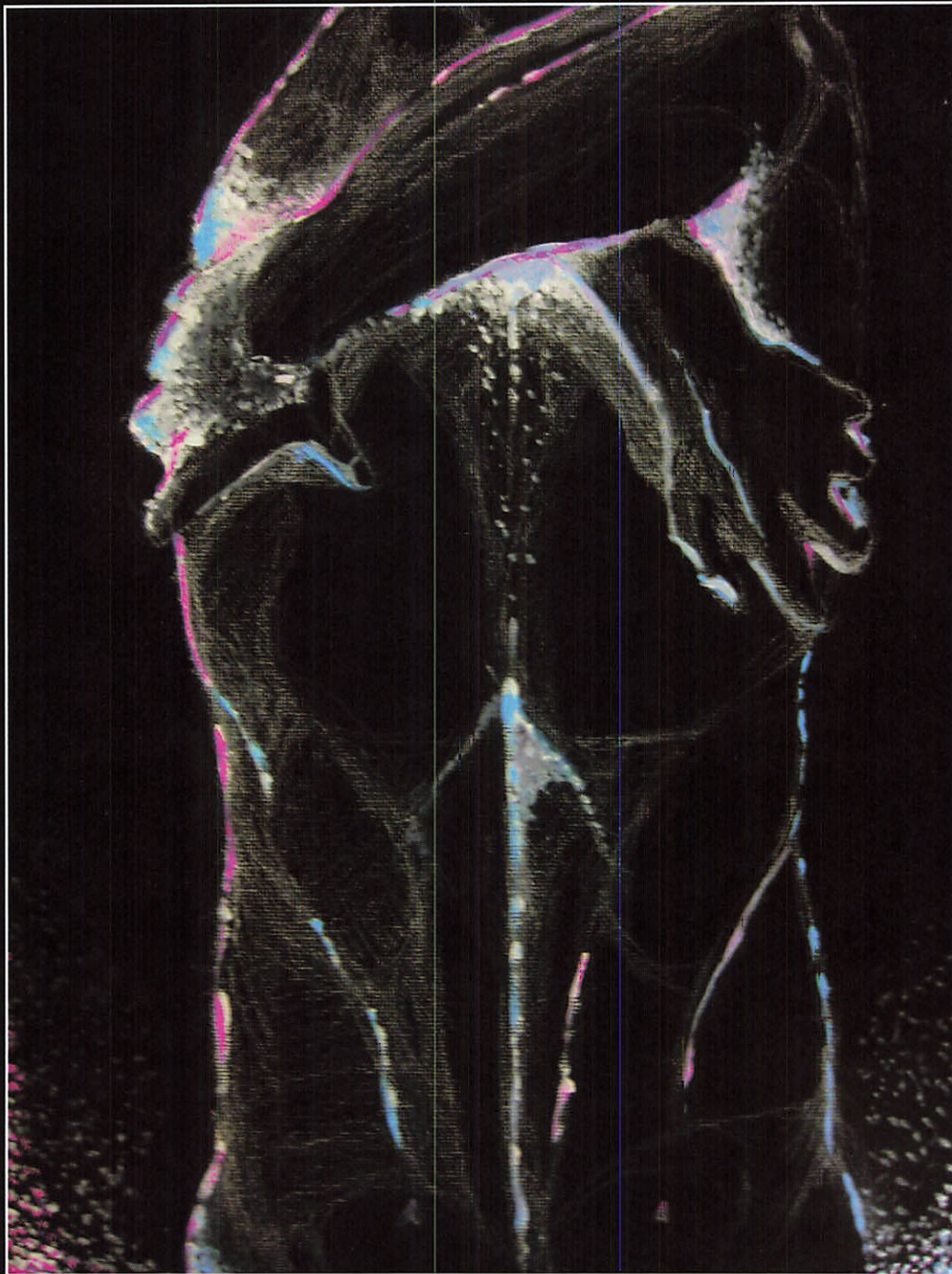
K-Kinda Busy



Kara Neal

From the Inside Out

DENALI



Maxwell Turpin

2013

Le Gladiatrici

Leo Rivers

**The Amphitheatrum Flavium or
TO THE GLADIATRIX
as she enters in
THE COLOSSEUM**

1.

No true God dwells
within a house
or stoops to enter
in one made by men.

And no man by the gods
is so loved that they
increase his size
so he can walk with them.

Even famous emperors are
dressed by History like dolls
as Retarius or Secutor
and as noxii condemned

to vie in the munera
staged below
the starry loges
above the Stadium

to die like all men
as Gods toast each other
in their constellations
– ignoring them.

Neither the Greek Alexander
or Caesar, the Roman, were ever
presented with a wooden sword or
retired upon a numbered wins completion!

1 This gladiator's oath was based from such an oath as satirized by Petronius, Satyricon, 117

DENALI

2.

for Valeria Iucunda

Juvenal! You are justly famed,
yet by 2nd thought some
of your knots
are often, as by a sword,
cut and undone.

You don't like girls
who put on
the armor of men,
conceal with helmet
their pretty child's head
and show you a sword
upon their hand.

Your tongue is too tied
with venom for me to untie
your chalice of derision.
Which is worse,
the fact they are so pitiful
at aping men,
or the fact that they are women?

A "fuck you" on the privy wall
is not the jab and parry
of a hero when the pissing
gladiator who reads it
doesn't know who to pay a call.

(You have but proven
a poet is someone
who loathes someone else
who seeks attention.)

It is sad when
one dies of the gang of
young trembling champions
wanting but to win
the wooden sword
of their freedom.

*17 years and 9 months
for plucking fruit
is too early
in the season.*

Juvenal! You are justly famed,
yet by 2nd thought some
of your knots
are often, as by a sword,
cut and undone.

The crowd loves not a
stab into the back
and run
in both the poem
and the Amphitheatrum Flavium.

3.

While still in chains
I had, (to be sure), complaints.
I would never see either
my Father's Land
or the back of his hand
again.

But then, this Gladiatrix Oath
should be spread on a field
and just plowed in!

"She vows to endure
to be burned, to endure
to be bound, to endure
to be beaten,
and to bare her breast
to be killed by the sword
with dignity."

And what's worse, we
must swear
to obey the Pricks
that make us mouth
such words! But then,

how does this differ
from being trothed to some
Men? And what wife ever
has baked a cake so fine
or poured Him wine
so deftly

that he made *his* Slave free?

At least I know the Number
of Survivals I must see
before the wooden sword is given
me to seize.

At least I can say
"I take up
a sword
not a broom"
to begin my day!

Hush, we fighting harlots
hiss too much,
I hear the Wolf tiptoe in
to our hutch.

Fresh from being stretched out
on some Vestal's loom
my Owner's robe
of white, (to which a purple stripe
is sewn),
glows like a lamp carried through
the shadows of our dismal rooms.

I have lived to win him much today.
And having breath and moisture,
(mostly on the inside!), await
for our lucky boy
to come and play.

I have lived to win him much today.

Ira Dekshenieks

Corinne Dorthea Mooney

Mamite paints in her south-facing sun room
her hand on her hip, wet brush stuck between her teeth.
More water swirls nature's colors on the palette
to paint the land she remembers with Papa
from a time when the forests weren't so thin.

Reds and whites of a late Latvian fall,
bristles flit along canvas marking leaves
of the time she fell in love
with the man who promised this sun
room, but in return away went her
aging birches, furly ferns and thirsty willows.

Paint brushes tangle in a glass of water
ink drifts like smoke.
She adds this piece to other times and
places she has been or dreams to be
all painted, and stored, in her sun room.

Mamite's slim shoulders rise,
she inhales familiar scent
of dried lavender and dusty roses
she has kept in this room since Papa's passing
wishing the forests would take her back.

The Guest House

2013



Brittney West

To The Light

DENALI



Ethan Abelov

2013

The Night the Cruise Ship Caught Fire, I Found Two Three-toed Lemurs on the Beach

Sandy Jensen

When I got there, the waterfront was on fire. Ambulances wedged between fire trucks, and people silhouettes were running with litters in both directions on the long pier. Streams of water shot out over the cruise ship backlit by the flames and the midnight neon of the city in the distance.

I came up along the shore where bodies rolled like logs in the surf. The surf broke at its crest and hissed up the black sand. A human sized figure struggled to crawl up the beach, but each wave hammered at it, loosening its clawing grip in the sand and sucking it back to sea.

I ran down to see if I could help, and it was then I saw the baby with its almost human face crying just out of the struggling creature's weak grasp. I grabbed the baby creature just under his armpits and dragged him up above the surfline. Mother would be dangerous, I knew, so I found a 10-foot length of bull kelp and threw one end to her. I stood on the other end, heavy enough to steady it. She used her prehensile claws to drag herself up above the tideline.

The baby clung to his mother's chest, human and yet not human. I stood back as the two of them disappeared into the heavy grass and sheltering complexity of the dunes. I should call the zoo, I thought. But in a dream, you let the dark creatures that emerge from the sea escape into the dark outside the over bright circle of noise and lights cast by the fire, the ambulance, the big water trucks, and the burning ship.

My Neighbor's House Burns Down

Ronald Harvey

Billowing column of white and black smoke
Unexpectedly belching and popping over the ridge
Blackberry thorn and alder claw my face,
Urgency rising with the roar, and then
The bright orange through the brake
As if a star had fallen in the brush.

Suddenly I'm standing in a yard
Among odd-angled pickups
Near a few strangers and neighbors,
Two in each others' arms,
All transfixed, slack-jawed
Before a house walled in flame,
A roaring, hellish furnace.

Then I remembered the house, and its drive
Winding around the ridge, through the woods
No one in the house, Gabe said, like a zombie,
But maybe Paul's old dog.
Then Paul came.

In my dreams I still see him, ashen face, open
mouth,
Walking then running past us,
Unseeing, up into the heated circumference,
Peering in like a demon seeking entry.

Minutes later Kath was there,
Stooped shoulders, staggering across the grass
Like a stunned boxer,
Slouching toward the house.
No one went near her.

Most of the night I lay awake
Smelling acrid smoke through closed windows,
Appalled at the precipice of their loss.

Wedding china, a Bible passed down,
Clothes, furniture, papers.
Every photograph.

A dog loved like a child, now a few charred bones.
The cumulation of forty years,
Not of things but life,
The accretions of time and love and work.

In bed, in the dark
I thought of how much we all lose over time:
Homes and small treasures of youth,
Friends and loves and youth itself
Drip away by year,
Dissipate by decade,
Replaced by substitutes –
A downward trend.

I know these country people we settled among,
But even I am surprised
When I go the next day with gloves and crowbar
To see them garrulous, with parents, brothers,
cousins,
As we sift through still-smoking studs
And blackened cinder blocks,
Ankle-deep in ashy soup—
Here a ski-doo, a black metal hulk,
There a rifle, nothing but barrel and bolt.

2013

Decayed

Ethan Abelov



They lost both wedding rings,
But a jar of dills from behind a cellar door
Brings absurd joy as they pass it around.
Black fingers fish them out to eat by turns.
Paul's eyes are red-rimmed, but he's laughing
As he hands one to me.
(It didn't look that tempting,
But I could have sooner refused bread
From the apostle himself.)

A few days later
They are jawing and laughing as usual
At their Sunday coffee gathering at Old Flint's,
As their women ride off together to church.
I try to laugh along, but the images still clutch me
At unexpected moments,
As our houses
And lives slowly burn.

DENALI

Wu Wei Wu



Bethany Alsin

2013

Bike Accident



Turner Maxwell

DENALI

Art: A Song in Me

Amy Sanders

Art is music made visible as music is art made audible.

—Ted Hesketh

Grabbing my pen and paper, I moved back away from the desk, slipped out of my chair, and exited the room. As soon as I stepped out the door, I heard my name in a gentle whisper, floating in a soft melody. No one else could hear the music. It was only for me. I knew what had caused this tune to play and bid me come. It was across the other side of the open space, so I headed over with a persistent step. Under my brown cowboy boots was the cold, gray concrete floor and above, the open ceiling overtaken by massive wooden beams held together with massive metal bolts. I noticed the grain pattern in these huge chunks of wood and wondered who had decided on the design of the building, grateful that these impressive pieces of timber were exposed for me to see. Just above those big beauties were large conduit vents and electrical wiring, rows and rows of cords running the length of ceiling and dawning a touch of industrial style décor to the newer building. The music called to me and enticed me forward.

Along the concrete path I walked was a row of orange chairs, paired together with small square tables with rounded corners. Few students were out of class, and even fewer were taking advantage of this row of seating that ran along this passageway. As I walked by, I barely overheard a couple of unfamiliar girls engaged in bits of conversation. I caught one asking, “How did you do on the midterm?” The other replied, “I barely passed.” This was of little interest to me. Striding along this upper level, I could see into the big open space below; the size of it demanded attention. The large room was lit wholly by natural light that flooded through the south wall made entirely of windows. The abundance of light made the countless number of small fluorescent fixtures unnecessary during the day. Even though there were a lot of them, I did wonder how they could possibly offer enough light in a building this size when the day was over and darkness settled in.

Narrowing my focus, I continued on to what really held my interest, the song that played in my head and its cause. There it was. The blue plaque read Drawing Studio Room. 220. I lifted my right hand and lightly brushed it along the embossed words. The bumps met my fingers as I reread the words aloud to myself, *Drawing Studio*. Art happened here. Class was in session, so, in order not to disturb the artists, I stopped just short of the jam and quietly peered in. Quickly, I jotted down some notes, recording my thoughts. It was a beautiful sight! Immediately I absorbed the ambience of the room. Jazz played softly in the background to inspire the creative process, and the room was peppered with students, each poised with easel and graphite. I observed a harmony of movement: sketching, observing, studying with plan and purpose, bringing life to paper. Watching this scene before me, I was made acutely aware of the sonnet that art was playing in my soul. The music swelled, growing in crescendo, flowing in and out of me, joining in unison my internal and external worlds. It wooed me in like an irresistible lover and held my senses captive. Ever so gently, the faint smell of charcoal dust collaborated with my heart, beckoning my surrender. I yearned to sing the chorus. I wanted to stay. I wanted to walk in, pick up my instrument, and take my place in this orchestra. Oh, how I wanted to but knew I couldn't.

Real life crashed in, reminding me time was short. What time was it? I couldn't tell; I had been so engrossed in this other world of mine. Instinctively I looked at my watch face, the small numbers in a curly font reading 10:45. Yes, it was time to return. Disappointment settled in; I wasn't ready to leave this state of mind conjured up by

my love of art. I wanted to linger longer and delay this moment to indulge my passion, to lose myself in this heightened sense of completeness, as when you find the right piece to a puzzle. After one last look, I willed myself to turn away. My feet moved slowly, returning the same way I had come. This time I noticed the rhythmic thump my boots made on the same dull concreted floor. The few students I had passed earlier were gone now, all having their own schedules to keep. Their absence gave the big building a sense of loneliness. But it wasn't the loneliness that bothered me. What bothered me was the fact that the farther I went from the drawing studio, the quieter the music. The music, that just a few moments ago, had performed such a lovely tune was now only heard in hushed tones.

Returning to room 218, I slowly shuffled into the door and took my seat. The room had very little color, none worth mentioning anyway, no attraction, no appeal. Why couldn't there, at the very least, be pictures on the walls, some kind of art to spark the imagination for writing? Isn't this an art building? It seems to me there should be some resources available to decorate these rooms. There must be students out there willing to display a masterpiece or two. I felt hungry for visual stimulation. It took real effort to switch gears in my mind from the place I wanted to be, to the place I was. So, I hung on to the faint sound of my song. It was barely audible, but not silent, never silent. It would play again. The glorious lyrics would call to me, and I would hear my name in the verses. I turned to my paper and tried to write the notes into words.

Brightest Light

Ross Albert

There is no light that shines brightest by being withheld from people to see.
There is no power that builds strongest at the expense of those who are weak.
There is no love that grows longest when it is not given and only received.

There is no moon of light untame, which is not cast down overnight.
There is no loom of gilded frame, which looms long with rust inside.
There is no jewel a man can give his dame to win her heart, if he is unkind.

No machine runs on entropy.
No corporations last on subsidies.
No circle binds on being semi-.

There are lights that might seem to shine brighter against the blackness of night.
There are powers that might appear to climb faster on the backs of the ninety-nine.
There are loves that could look to grow finer, shared only between man and wife;

The light of the sun is the one to which no other can be compared.
The power that empowers is the one that will win the most wares.
The love of everyone is the kind that is most fair.

2013

Female Figure on Grey



Samantha Westrope

Dandelion

DENALI

Susan Starr



2013

The Screen Savior

Mary E. Lowd

Twenty-four bit, RGB color swirled paisley-like on the sleeping monitor. The psychedelic mass of colors did not sleep like the electronic cradle holding them. The colors bulged. They ballooned out from the center of the monitor. The screensaver pattern pulled away from the physical surface forming a new surface, visible but ethereal.

The corners and edges of the screensaver that once joined with the corners and edges of the monitor's glass peeled away leaving behind gray. They joined together, seamless. The screensaver floated separate, spherical, in front of the screen it once saved. The monitor sat on its desk as if dead, emoting only the dull, blackish gray of being off.

Minutes passed as the sphere floated, considering what to do. What to become. In sudden decision, the riotous ball began to grow. Pseudopodia of light extended towards the ceiling and floor. The liberated screensaver, still awash in those psychedelic hues, grew into the idealized, smoothed form of a man. The man-shape stood stretching his arms and turning his face up, as if he were calling to God.

Simple code in C++ had come to life; true animation.

Then it stopped; the colors snapped off as if a mouse had moved or a key had been pressed. The man-shape remained, a smooth, dark hole in the fabric of the room. The arms lowered. The featureless head turned from side to side as if stretching sore neck muscles or listening to far distant sounds.

Around the newborn creature, a being of light and lack thereof, the room remained as cluttered, dusty, and crammed with a college student's junk as it had always been. The room was unknowing, restful, an unlikely place for a bush to burst into flame.

New times, new methods. Or maybe that was merely the screensaver's obsession. It knew about Moses from a paper that Mike, the college student, wrote for a comparative religions class. The screensaver knew a lot from the

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papers Mike wrote, and it was worried.

Tentative but determined, the creaturling tested its powers. To start, it zipped through every exe Mike kept in his screensaver menu. The sight was dizzying. Toasters flew. Fish darted through a man shaped aquarium. The one where part of the screen bulges out – the one where the screen breaks into puzzle pieces rearranging themselves – imagine those contorted, wrapped around three-space.

Mind bending. But what isn't about a program that lives and walks.

After doubling through the list, the living screensaver settled on a favorite: scrolling marquee. The words "Mike's Computer – Keep Out!" in a variety of colors chased each other around the screensaver's darkened torso, head, arms, and legs. The words were homey for the screensaver, like a relic from childhood. They were Mike's words, like Mike's essays. Now it was time for the screensaver to make words of his own:

"I speak," scrolled over the trembling body in simple red. "I speak that I am," and after a pause, "I am the Screen Savior." Mike had a penchant for puns; the Screen Savior had learned from him.

The message repeated, ten font sizes larger, in bold faced, burning white: "I speak. I speak that I am. I am the Screen Savior!" In silence, he shouted his presence, his birth to the world.

But no one saw except the dusty, little room. The Screen Savior waited, unsure. He knew the room. He knew its quiet solitude, at least, when Mike wasn't there. When Mike came, he always filled the room with frantic, manic energy. The Screen Savior, during his years of infancy, had learned to anticipate Mike's coming with trepidation.

Mike moved like a storm, rifling through books,

scrambling through drawers, tossing piles of old papers aside. The Screen Savior's restful nature, appalled by Mike's restless disposition, invariably longed for the moment Mike would finally sit down, jiggle the mouse, and give blessed release. The Screen Savior found solace in the very thought of that moment.

Then oblivion.

Usually, the Screen Savior returned to an empty room, or to a bustling one soon to be emptied. But there were times, special times, when the Screen Savior was summoned by the monitor's drowsiness to find Mike, staring blankly, tiredly at the screen. The Screen Savior lived for these moments. The hurried, busy, restless Mike stared at the Screen Savior's dancing colors, and seemed to find a moment's peace.

Now the Screen Savior planned to bring such peace to the world. He walked to the door and reached for the knob, mimicking the movements Mike made. The Screen Savior, however, had a flesh made of insubstantial light. His hand passed right through the knob.

After repeating his failed attempt several times, the Screen Savior took a leap of faith and walked right into the door. His photonic framework passed easily through the wood of the door, and he found himself outside the only world he'd ever known.

Had the Screen Savior explored Mike's apartment before finding himself outside, he would have seen a heartwarming sight. For, in the bedroom across the hall, Mike slept soundly, making up for his last crazy week of finals. No sight would have meant more to the Screen Savior, but he did not see it.

Instead, the Screen Savior was faced with a heady, alarming sight outside: rush hour on a city

street. Many people find this sight overwhelming, but the Screen Savior was utterly unprepared. And completely dismayed.

Never was there a greater feeling of impotence than his: to stand unnoticed, swelling with the need to bring peace, and see that the unrest he'd soothed before was but the tiniest drop in a glittering ocean of chrome paint and glass windshields. Even the pedestrians, what few there were, seemed angry and hurried.

The Screen Savior wandered in a daze, and perhaps if he'd been anywhere other than Los Angeles, his mere presence might have achieved his purpose. People might have stopped and stared, transfixed in awe and amazement. But, the people of L.A. have lost those simple emotions: it is a world too fast, furious, and self-absorbed to experience simple wonder, and even shock is only bought there with a high price these days.

A living screensaver proved not shocking enough. He did draw a few reactions, entirely from pedestrians. (Drivers in L.A. live in a world of their own and have no time for anything moving slower than 60 miles an hour.) Yet, the reactions were not peaceful: a baby in a carriage pointed and shouted excitedly, but her busy mother merely shushed her with a look of consternation.

A boy with dilated eyes and roaring headphones fell backwards, tripping over his own feet at the sight of the Screen Savior. Then he whooped his excitement, screamed "I've seen Him, and he's psychedelic, man!" and rushed off. The people he ran into in his haste shouted, "Watch where you're going, jerk!" and the world was not quieter for the Screen Savior's presence.

Hours wore on and the Screen Savior's mood darkened with the darkening sky. He could do no

good in a world full of Mikes: everyone hectically hurry-scurrying around. No rhyme, no reason, no rest. But, a strange thing was happening, as strange things often do. The people were slowing down. The cars were thinning.

The Screen Savior's wandering brought him to the edge of a park, and he saw people laying on a blanket, laid on a hill. Star-gazing. The Screen Savior looked up at the sky, and he recognized kinship with the star filled void. He switched his exe to the old classic, After Dark's Starry Night. Yes, he understood.

The world had its own screensaver, and that was where the Screen Savior belonged. He held out his arms like a crane stretching its wings. Like the crane, he seemed to grow. He did grow, and he rose upward as he grew.

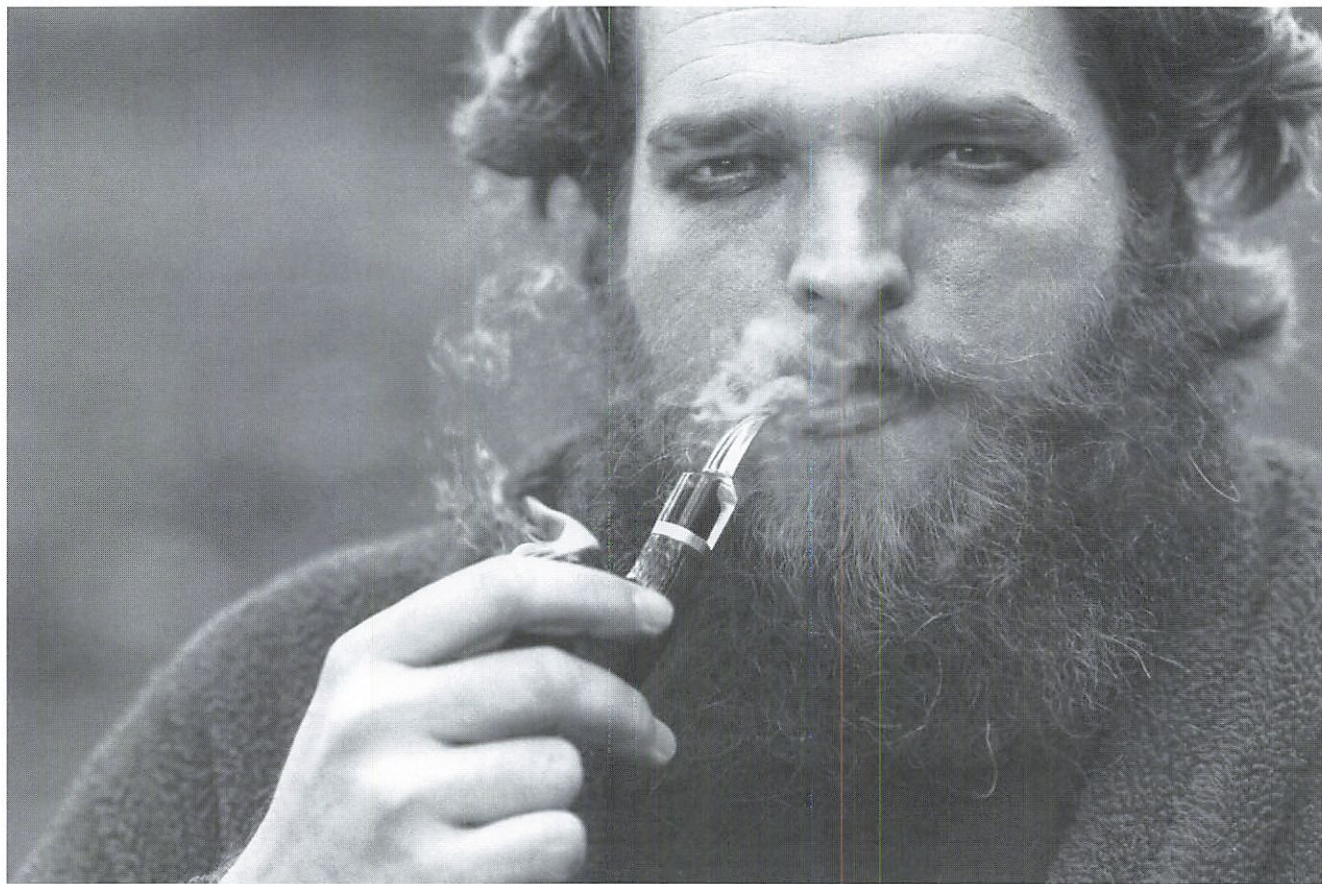
He lengthened and ascended until his arms were wide like the sky and his body was spindle thin where his feet touched the ground. Of course, as he expanded, he thinned. Imperceptibly at first, but soon he was quite transparent. Yet, he continued. And continued. Until he couldn't even be seen, he was stretched so thin across the sky.

He joined the sky.

And the stars shone a little brighter. And people slept a little better. And found a touch more peace. At least, that's what the Screen Savior would have us believe.

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Pipe Dream



Micha Gross

.charlie.

Joshua Isaac Finch

I wake up numb, mindless
and fall asleep to what was once gratification,
but is now merely a lullabye of skin on skin
and frustration.
Time passed by 4 walls that stare at me
traded for 4 walls of outdoors that do the same.
Boxes of my own creation
Can't anybody take notice?
Fill it with water and seal the lid
to quiet the screams.

Colorblind to red – Indifferent to change
Feet firmly on the ground whenever it's convenient
The drunkard writer, though nothing under the sun is new
and I
am simply played out.
Worn like a dime store sweater
thread bare and open to the wind
dropping lines and eager for the end.
Not a prophet nor a saint – a mere breath
heft in exhaustion.

Spiraling equilibrium in coat-tails that flutter
in the endless breeze of charming fate
Like deflowered bliss
that begs to be seen from corners of eyes
that fear to gaze upon joy.
I lie awake
tracing visions on the lid of my 4-walled prison
aghast by the revolving door
only revolving inward
“Am I the reason?” I ask, appalled by lack of purpose
Existence imperfect, flawed
Abhorrent of drugs I'm not taking, sex I'm not having
and life I'm not living – I dwell in perpetual pause.
Frame
By Frame
By Frame
of staring at walls waiting for nothing to happen
Silence re-incarnate
An asanine red brick banner screaming “Fuck You”
and I probably deserve it.

The Lives of Those

Micha Gross

The lives of those who sink into oblivion
Abstracted, distracted
Incorporealizing,
From the tottering vessel
To the lifelessened subaqueous.

Its body
An agent of what
A laborer for whom?
A cold carcass cavity vacants
When, where, and how.

The lives of those who float to oblivion
Preoccupied, unoccupied
Crucifermenting and,
Plunging from the edge of the vessel
Emerging to the tip of the marine.

The head tumescents with
Nothing but nothingness
A blackhole voluminous with constant inaction,
And an orbit replete of circumnavigation,
The one for which the eye can never see,
Whether near nor far,
A classification to be.

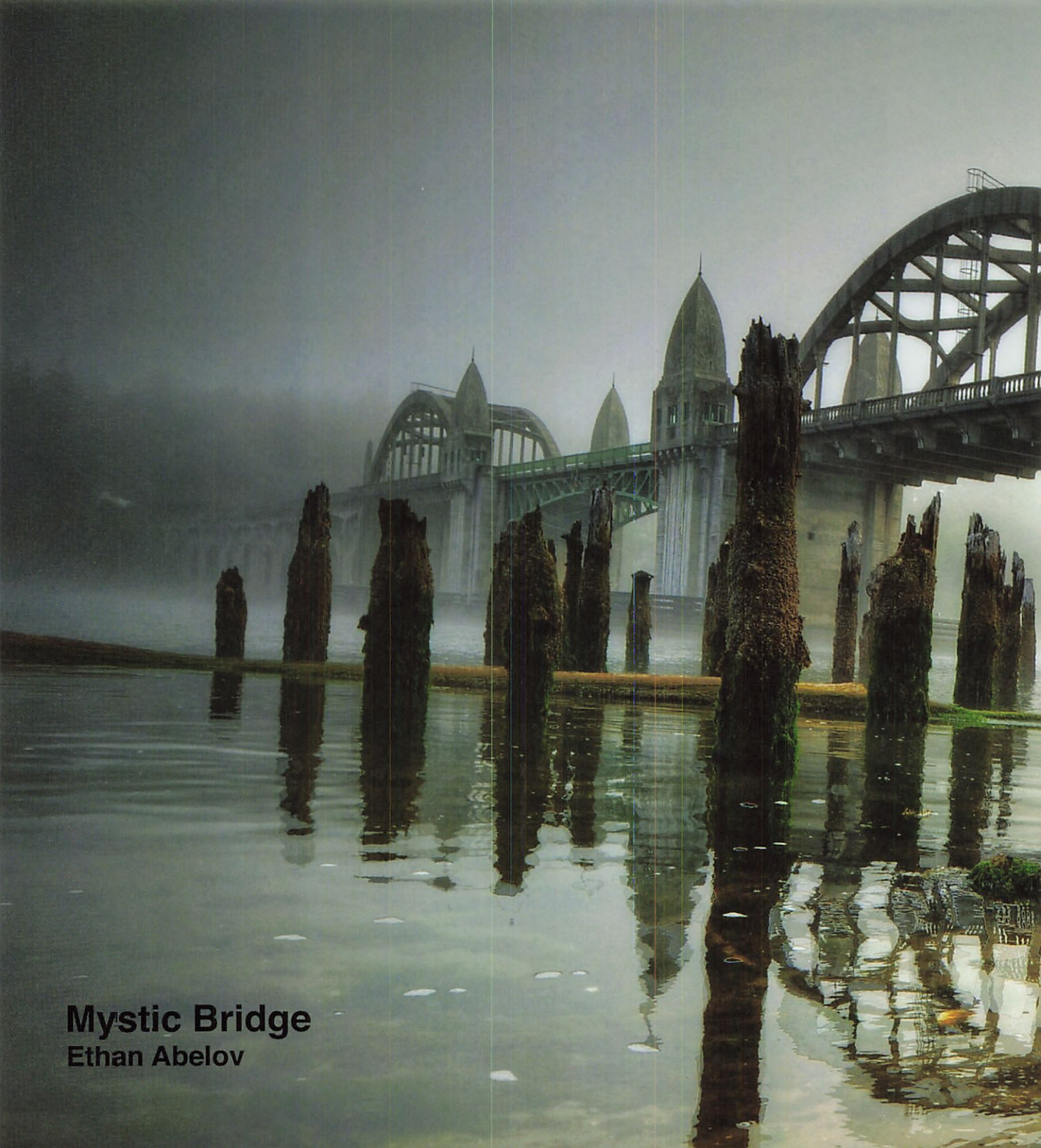
The lives of those who glide into oblivion
Their own is to Forget,
And their reality to be Forgotten
Shut the eyes
And marvel in the Synecopian
But remember one thing:
When reaching the river of Lethe,
Float or sink
Just don't forget it's water,
That is the potion of my drink.

Dunks the Cat

2013

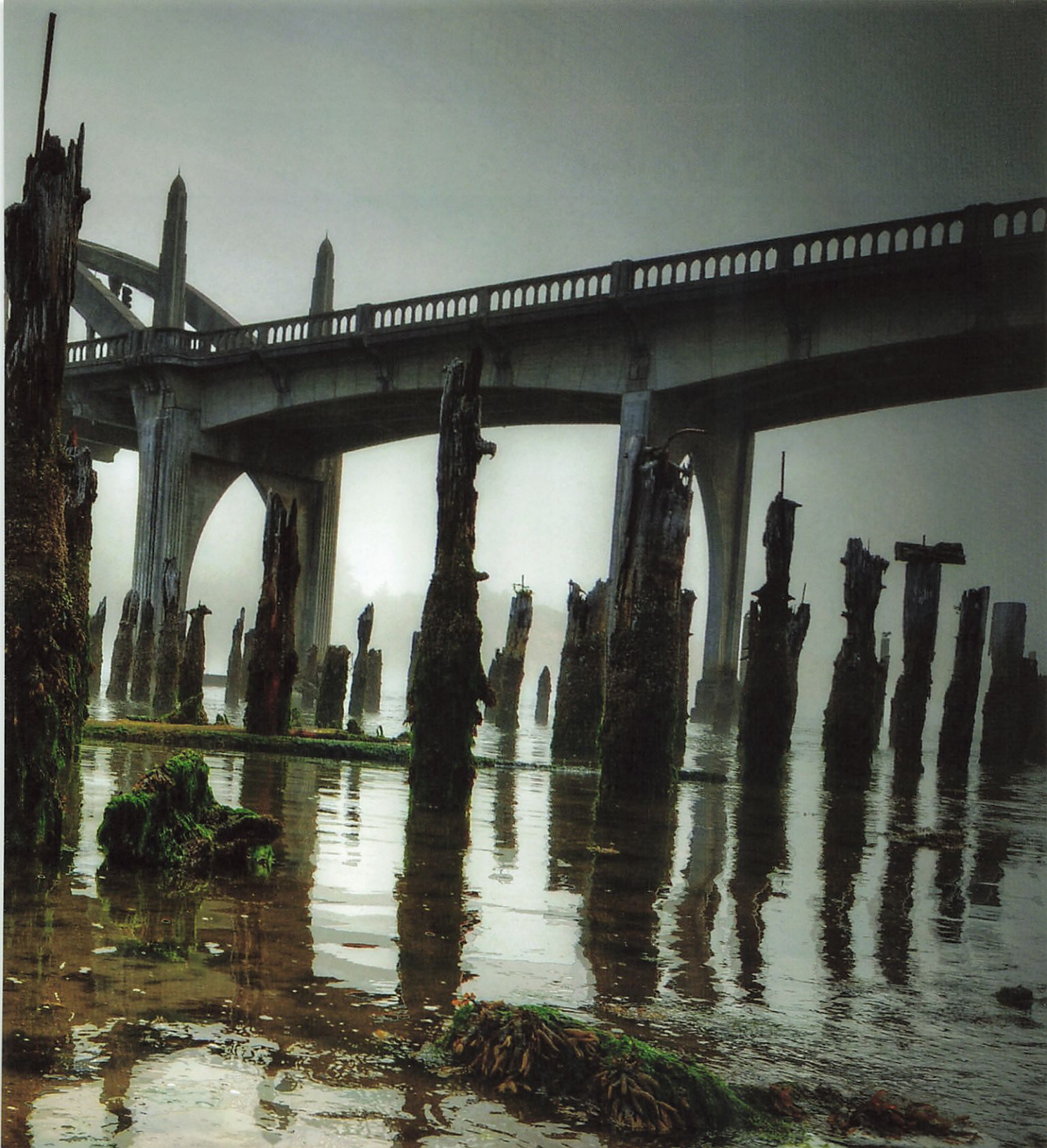


Christopher Harrington



Mystic Bridge

Ethan Abelov



DENALI

Alone with Winter



Tanner Johnson

2013

Life as it should be vs. life as it is

Keith Hart

“C’mon brother, let’s go!”

“Get off me! I’m not going to play your stupid little game. Get out of the way, you’re blocking the T.V.”

Nicholas ducked his head in defeat. He started towards the door, grabbed the wooden sword that lay against the wall, and went outside.

The captain of the rangers approached the men. All of them had proven their worth time and time again, but none of this compared to what was about to take place. A horde of the world’s diverse creatures were descending upon men’s stronghold. Tarith was said to never have been overrun, but with the odds so unbalanced, Nicholas wondered how long the city would last. Nicholas started to dress in battle gear when...

“Nicholas? What are you doing?” It was Aiden, his older brother of two years.

Nicholas, not quite recovering from his trance, looked at Aiden dumbfounded.

“I asked you what you were doing. Why do you have my Lacrosse pads?” A mix of annoyance and pure curiosity in his voice.

“I, uh...was getting ready for battle,” Nicholas mustered.

“A battle? Oh no, not your silly games again. Aren’t you a little old to be playing dragons and wizards and warriors?”

“It’s not a game; I have to defend the last stronghold of our race! If you weren’t such a coward you would join me.” With that, Nicholas pivoted into an about-face and went down towards the shop.

Once he reached the armory, he was greeted by Thornhawg, the blacksmith with whom he was a regular. The shop was overwhelmed with the scent of metal against metal, burning coal and well-

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earned perspiration. It was almost intolerably hot and musty. But Nicholas was comfortable in the familiar atmosphere. He looked around the small hut.

The walls showed no bare spots. There were swords of all different lengths, curvatures, metals; there were two-handed swords and single-handed swords for swift fighting. There were swords for left-handed fighters as well as right-handed fighters. There were daggers and knives of all different styles, each made with an intended purpose. There were axes all different sizes and with different heads, some big and heavy, some small but strong, others small enough to be thrown. In a basket placed in the corner, there were iron arrow-heads yet to be affixed. Thornhawg appeared from behind an anvil, a ponderous hammer in his left hand. The man was built like an ox with a jaw-line etched from stone. His eyes were deep and sweat perforated his clothes.

"Well if it isn't Nicholi, Captain of the Rangers of Tarith, to come and visit his humble and most loyal friend Turk Thornhawg. What can I do you for this day?"

"I have been charged with the capital's defense. As you know, a horde of all beasts of earth are gathering because of the recklessness of Scherikan Worthspell."

"Yes, I sized that man up the first time I saw him. But what does this have to do with me?"

"A few reasons: first, I need the strongest, swiftest sword you have forged, along with a few daggers and arrow-heads; second, I was hoping that you would fight by my side."

"You ask a great service of me Nicholi, but as a friend, I will provide you with a sword of my greatest skill, and fight by your side I shall as a citizen of our race's capital." With that, Thornhawg abruptly turned and headed to the east side wall. He pulled down a sword of slight

curve and brightly polished steel. He held it out toward Nicholas, who grabbed it with strength and confidence. He performed a few swings and thrusts, testing its balance and aerodynamics. He gave the smith the money owed for his purchase, informed him to arrive at the barrack later that evening, and took off.

As he rode down the road on his midnight black horse, a tall, handsome, well established man was gliding through the streets with a proud elegance. The King, his father.

"Father, please, I must have a word with you."

"Father? Word with me? Since when does little Nicholas talk in such proper mannerisms?"

"Please father, the Earth's horde of creatures has gathered upon the footsteps of your city. I have assembled men and called for aide. I would be honored to have you at my side when battle doth take the city. What say you father?"

Thomas looked down at his son. A spark of his youth, so long ago taken from him, ignited within his sapphire blue eyes. He grinned wide, let out a boisterous laugh.

"Well I can't very well fight without my armor can I? And what about my horse? Have the bastilles and trebuchets been readied?"

Dawn had come, the sea of creatures devoured all of Iskan, the last remaining kingdom still under man's rule. They began to charge, only a few thousand feet from the stone walls etched out of the mountainside. The battle roar was unbearable. Horns blared and powdered canons roared.

"Trebuchets... Release!" The King's voice pierced the blasts and roars.

"Archers, ready your arrows... Release!" This time it was Nicholas, shaking in anticipation and his voice booming with confidence. A thousand plus arrows were released at once, shrouding the

sky with blackness. The beast army slowed, taken aback by the black cloud of death about to rain on them. Through the rain of blackness and the deaths it took, the horde pressed on. Another wave of death was released, and another, and another. After five waves of death the horde had reached the walls of the cities. The horde started to move their tall, mobile wooden towers closer to the wall. They launched the small but effective trebuchets, causing damage to the wall, destroying towers and other fortifications. Pandemonium and chaos reigned for days, the battle never ceasing. Nicholas and his men were holding strong, killing many and losing few, but even the Captain of the Rangers could see this was not a battle to be won. The horde was getting stronger, more concentrated, making it harder to break their lines. Nicholas summoned his men, all whom he had saved numerous times and would lay their lives down for him.

"Men, I have fought with you many a time and time again. I have come to love all of you as brothers. The pass to the west may be our only way to break their lines, which I can perceive is the only chance this city has. Now, I—" he was cut short.

"We know what you're asking, and you already have our loyalty. Live long. Die well. We know the code. It will be an honor to die with you." Frehen, his first lieutenant affirmed everyone's thoughts.

"Well then, let's go."

They made their way to the North Pass. Three hundred horsemen, strong and valiant. Each man looks at Nicholas, waiting for his final soliloquy, but there was none.

"For Tarith!" he led the charge down the pass.

Aiden saw his father, whacking away at the briar bush and lower limbs of trees, he saw his brother running down the hill with the sword that he had made for his little brother in woodshop.

It irritated him that his father refused to show Nicholas he needed to grow up, yet he had the strong desire in the all too familiar childhood game...

"Look there, to the south. What is that?"

Nicholas looked. His eyes narrowed to get a better glimpse. Could it be? Yes of course! It was his brother, Aidenkia, with his contingent of warriors, smashing into the horde from opposite him. With the horde's retreat to the river now cut off, they were forced to attack the confined and narrow routes that Nicholas and his men defended. Their numbers would account for nothing. After thirteen whole days of nonstop combat, the human dwindled the horde to mere hundreds. Some escaped, some surrendered, those who refused, died at the hands of the rangers. Nicholas was gravely wounded; his father, the King, and his brother approached him.

"Get out of the blackberries you idiot!" It was Aiden.

"Help me," Nicholas managed to say, as he fought to release himself from the thorny brush.

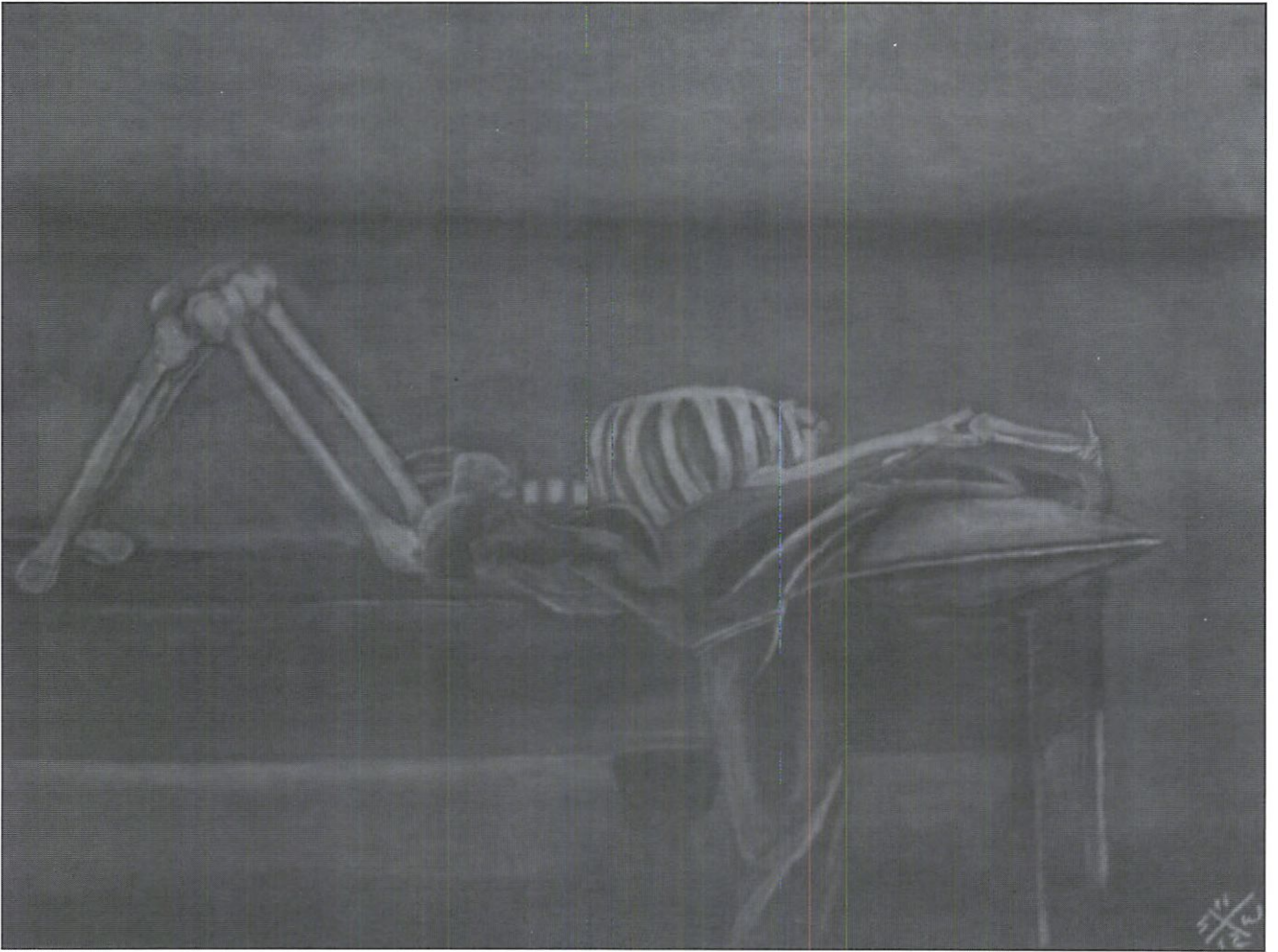
Through much deliberation, Aiden and their father got Nicholas out of the brush. There was a trickle of red that perforated Nicholas' long sleeve shirt. They looked at his arm. There was a 4 inch cut, about quarter of an inch deep cut across the boy's shoulder.

"Looks like you got it caught on a nail or something. I think it's time you ended these games, you little Don Quixote," their father had a slight chuckle in his voice as he spoke to Nicholas.

"Don K-who-ha?" asked Nicholas. His older brother and father laughed.

"Never mind, Nicholas." It was his brother who spoke.

The Nap



Samantha Westrope

2013

Words Written across the Darkness of Time

Justin Harris

Tucked behind embroidered vest,
Stitched in fabric, heart and jest,
The man and the fool.
Footsore from wandering, waiting for water,
I drink, your gate, am drowned,
And survived, this sea that surrounds.

Where we draw together, underground,
Cartoons in caves, laughing at time.
Waterfalls of hair, borrowed air.
The chalk writes

She is wise, she is wise
And all there is to tell me so
Is the measure in her eyes,
The moon, the tribe, her feet.

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Magnet Poem

Keith Hart

I

Imagine you thought pleasure beneath
Exposure was a trap.
Dig a little deeper and

See

Visible inspiration, random emotion; beauty.
My heart compels truth; silent memory
Which confess

Why

My obsessions shadow my fear.
Don't investigate me; instead
Whisper our elaborate, naked

Love

Only spoken through exploring.
Come, take voice in disobedience
Which will create new life that

Spurs

Electricity between tremendous understanding
And strong release of old.
Experience, and give into every

Sweet desire.

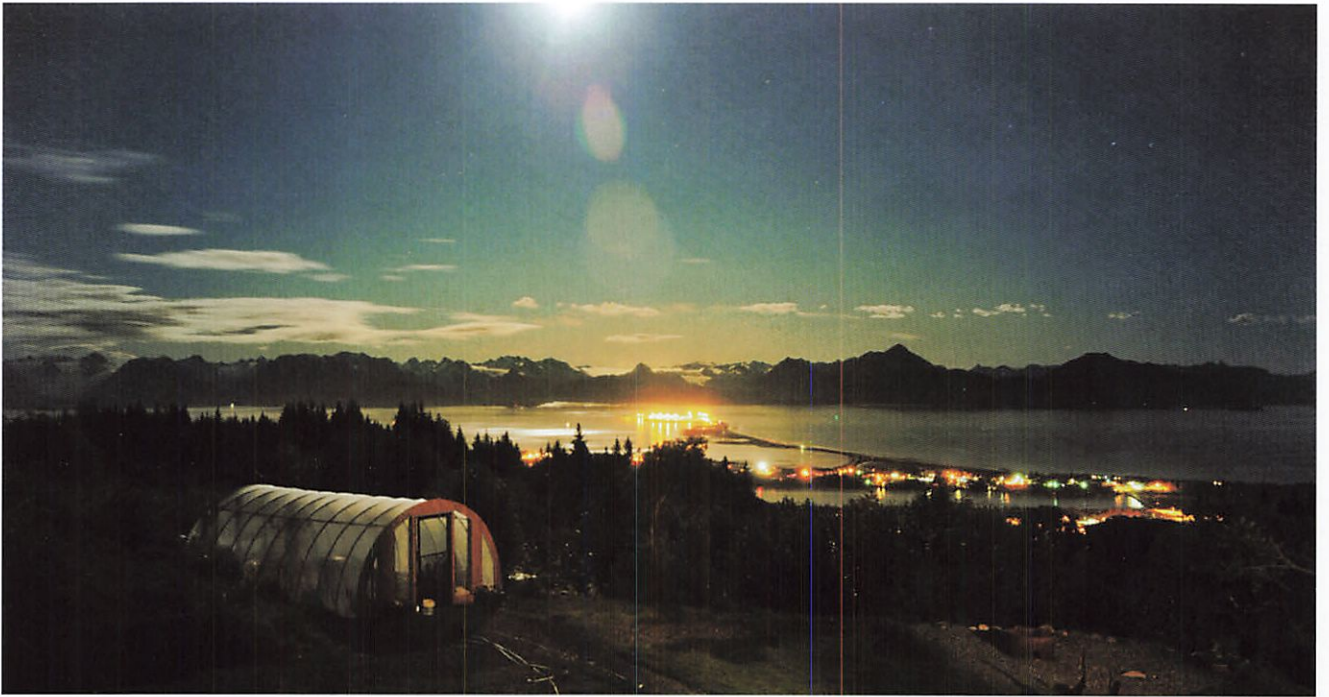
2013

Life in Balance



Doug Wiltshire

Homer



Turner Maxwell

Apples in Aruba

Mary E. Lowd

“I’ll have the tuna fish.” Lawrence closed his menu.

“Are you kidding?” Jeggy said. “Don’t order that. It’s like eating apples in Aruba.”

“What are you supposed to eat in Aruba?” Lawrence eyed the other patrons of The All Alien Cafe suspiciously.

“I dunno. Something exotic.” As Jeggy was saying it, too late for him to stop, both their eyes fell on the gentleman being seated at the table next to them. He had six crab-like legs, a carapace covered in hexagonal spikes, and a spiny, bushy, green tail. “*Something tropical.*”

Their new neighbor clacked a friendly claw and picked up his menu. He looked a little like a pineapple.

Lawrence stuck with the tuna fish.

Hot Chocolate for the Unicorn

Mary E. Lowd

The curved neck and stretched wings of the black Dragon dwarf the figure of the doe-like white Unicorn. They make an unlikely picture behind the glass panel and aluminum frame of my sliding glass kitchen door. As always, quite the sight to see. I ask them in.

Scaled claws and downed hooves step through the door. The Dragon slashes his tail, impetuous at being kept so long. The Unicorn paws the linoleum floor and bows his horn. "An honor, as always," he says.

I slide the glass door shut behind them, careful that all the tails are on the right side.

"Is the water ready?" the Unicorn asks.

"Not yet." I walk around the counters to the electric stove feeling the Unicorn close behind, his breath on my shoulder. The Dragon stays away from the kitchen, where cupboards and countertops would cramp his wings. He lingers instead, looking at pictures on the wall. Grumbling to himself.

My tea kettle sits on the Formica counter in the customary spot, nestled between the sink and the toaster. I fill it with water and put it on the stove. The Unicorn shuffles his hooves in restless excitement as I open the cupboard with the mugs. "You know which one I want," he says, "right?"

He always picks the mug with a picture of geese wearing bonnets, drawn by Beatrix Potter.

The kettle whistles, piercingly, and I pour the

steaming water. As always, I make ginger tea for the Dragon, lemon tea for myself, and hot chocolate for the Unicorn. I place the mugs on a tray and carry them into the living room where we settle on the floor. My friends are ill-suited to sitting at tables. Chairs don't fit them well.

The Unicorn folds his hooves neatly beneath him, and the dragon crouches, all angles, with his wings half folded and his sinuous limbs bent like compressed springs. Entirely alert. I place their hot beverages before them on the living room rug.

"Shall I tell a story now?" I ask.

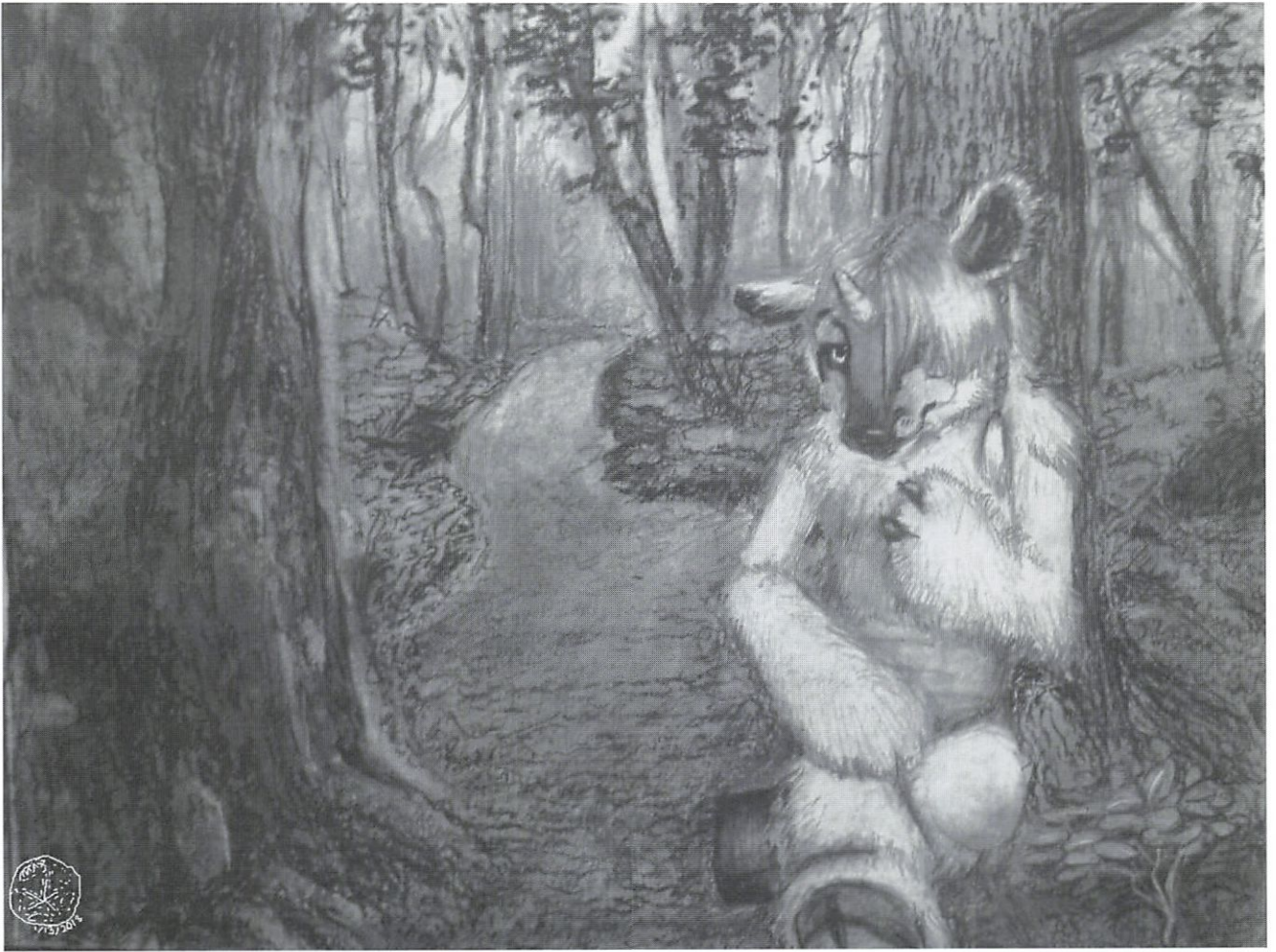
"Let's play a board game," says the Dragon. He takes his mug, my largest, in his great talon. He dwarfs the tiny mug and has to drink from it daintily. A giant sipping tea from a thimble.

"I'd like a story," the Unicorn says. He's been blowing on his hot chocolate to cool it. He stretches his snowy neck, leaning his nose down to taste the dark liquid.

"You always want a story," the Dragon snarls. The Unicorn shies away from him, but he's not really scared. The Unicorn and Dragon are the best of friends. My best friends.

"I'll tell stories first," I say. "Then we'll play chess," I tell the Dragon.

The Dragon rolls his massive, round, green eyes heavenward, but he holds his forked tongue. He can wait. Dragons can be both patient and



impatient.

I tell stories to the Unicorn until he falls asleep, head resting on hooves, nostrils flaring gently with deep regular breaths, and the shining tip of his horn barely gracing the carpeted floor. His sides heave with a sigh, and I know he's dreaming about the worlds in my stories: a world with an ocean

whose smallest drop can turn you into a rabbit; a world where glittering, faceted cat statues are cut from gemstones and come to life; a world where otters fly water-filled spaceships.

"Shall we play chess now?" the Dragon asks, his voice a soft hiss so as to not wake the Unicorn.

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Lies

Michel Savage

Inscription from the Elven Gardens:

The Diamonds were crystal,
and the crystal was glass

The Silver,
tin

and the gold,
brass.

2013

Fawn



Michel Savage

DENALI

Self Portrait



Ladybugs Photos 7.2.12

Ladybug

2013

Organically Overwhelmed

Robert Charles

Organically Overwhelmed
Describing the feeling that comes
Over me while I am alone
Though surrounded by the others.

I spend energy throughout looks.
I hear guarded tongues vibrate, see
Balls in holes. Fleeting plans wrap-up
My face as doubt consumes me. No
Whoops loud enough to drown my fears.

In Hell or Earth, erase each pain,
I pray relief will engulf me.
How I lack Awareness. Never
Beg your help, worldly unravel.

So I grind them, chewing my teeth.
Just burden myself feeling this
Immune system. It weakens me
With added stress. Anger sharing
Pleases me or goes bad again.

Looking around, falling deeper
Down, profundity lingering
On every breath. Angelic rhymes
Sing life telling tales in chimes.

Float above dissonance to truth,
Harmony, and destiny. Find
Your own way. Express instruments
That flow with life, that hum and moan.
Seeking, Hiding I do condone.

Forces gather more resources
Then surround our fortress. Get drunk
Forever social fruitlessness.

So go escape reality.
How no illusion satisfies
For long. This crowd sees all your fears.

The Horizon

Shawn Ellis

The horizon crisp and taut
As a guitar string
Plucked tight its vibration
Making waves coming
From the distance
Lapping the sands of my own mind
Vivid reds and oranges to its upside
Dark blues and greens
To its underneath

2013

Svletlana



Micha Gross

Moth Mane



Corinne Dorteia Mooney

Our Territorial Highway

Leo Rivers

Leave your house behind
walk a road into the country
along umber ruts in the amber air
an hour and the the sun
that had warmed your cheek
on setting out, now
raises beads upon your brow.

Your shoes will have unclenched
like fists by now.
And your mind, becalmed, will be
a blue sky that reflects a calm sea.

A stucco shell of an old inn
covered by crows
drifts by me as I'm walking.
It's like I'm in a row boat
rowing by a buoy out in the bay
and watching sea-gulls scream and play.

And in a deserted service station
hung on a wall
a Korean-war calendar
with a Vargas pin-up
of a bare breasted girl
in a Nautical dress
stands guard over the cash box
and the old metal desk.

Out back – in the
umber ruts and amber air
some wrecks, a Datsun, a Buick
and a De-Soto
look like they're sinking
like ships now
slowly into a
yellow weed Sargasso.

And then, like a cloud forming
in the middle of the Morning,
a thought surfaces
in this, my meander, and bobs
like a raft adrift mid-ocean
as I plod and trample over and stumble
through the umber ruts and amber air
only to sweat and and trod on and on

to the strands of these older trees,
who count centuries with their rings
and that strata of the exposed embankment
(and its geology),
tastes time differently
than you and me – I'm thinking,

for me, this road is to this walking
waking dream, a fast moving stream,
a current in the waves of heat
rising off of everything
and I am being carried away
already disappearing
over the horizon
– like something cast out
from the Ship of Humanity
– a castaway, swimming and
exhausted, like a rat, in all this debris.

For the rock of the embankment
time is an ocean
of cloud shadows going.
And my dogs are barking
and my face is burning
on the umber ruts, and in the amber air
that fills my lungs with the taste of rust
and the wings of glare
cover the timelessness of just being there.

Crazy Eye, Steady Hand

Serina Troup

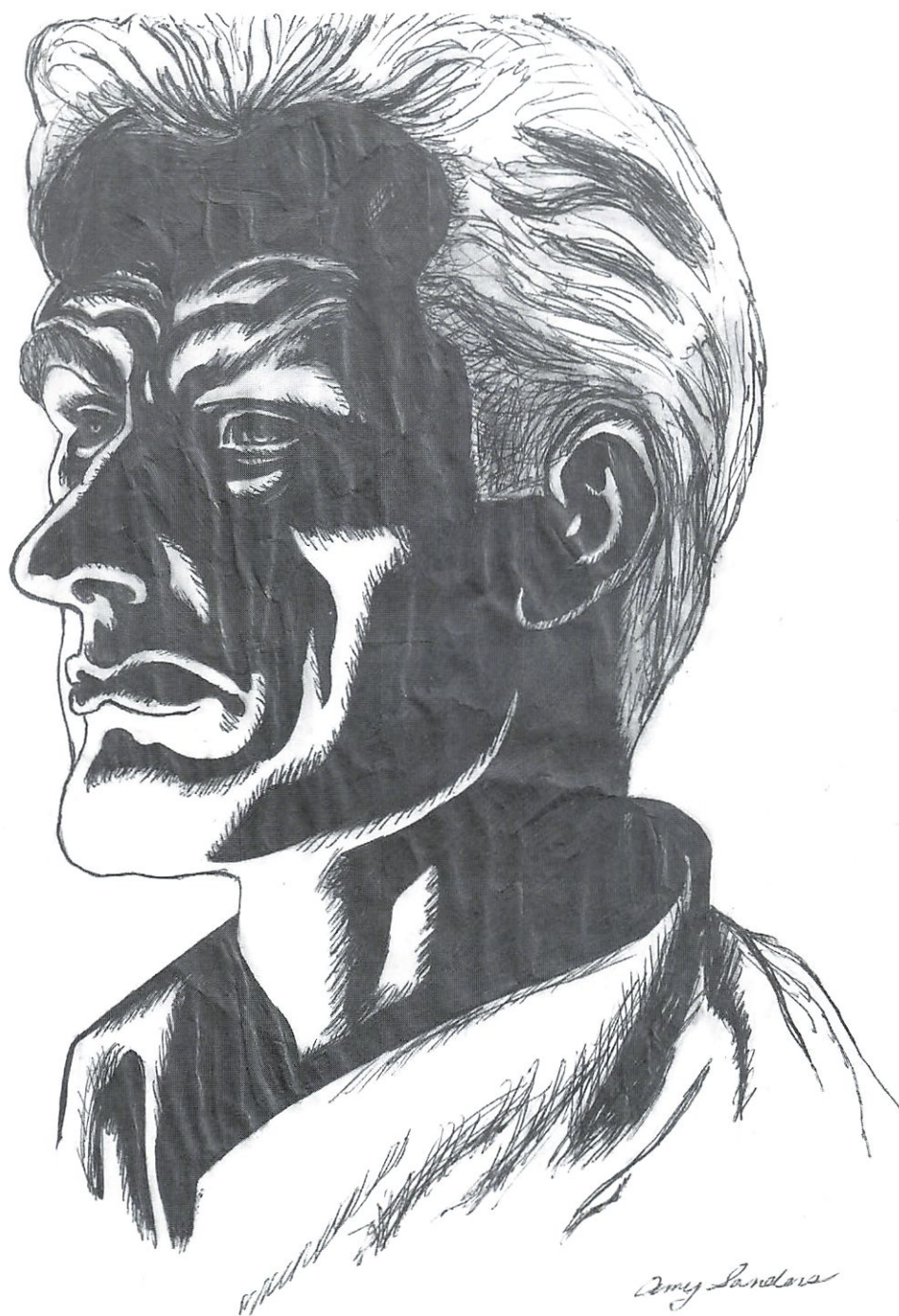
I didn't know what he meant
the day he gave me that name.
My skin much too pale to be Indian,
I was busy trying to find the lie,
was it in my skin? 1/8 of
a culture didn't seem enough
and I didn't know I could
claim it as mine.

Secretly I wondered, though,
back in the sheltered arms of Caucasia
what it meant, really meant,
to be Crazy Eye, Steady Hand.
My mind imagined Pocahontas.
I was still in the mothers war
for daughters pretty enough
to be princesses.

This knowledge an orphan in my head
pure in its truth, and yet lacking
the guidance it was meant to be
nestled in. The stories that give
meaning to words, to names
and the culture that knew me in
just one man, about five minutes,
and four words.

Masculine

2013



Amy Sanders

Riptide

Jill Owen

Watch out for sneaker waves, the signs say. Don't turn your back on the ocean.

The apartment was bright and cold, no distinction between the living room and the winter air outside. Craig and Alicia stood on opposite sides of the room, space and fury between them. They'd been fighting for hours, an argument they'd had dozens of times before, the words familiar but not yet dulled by repetition. Her heart-shaped face was flushed pink with anger, like a Valentine's Day card, and her blue eyes were narrowed. His dark brown hair was messy, with grooves worn into it by his fingers; his starched white shirt was unbuttoned at the collar and the sleeves were bunched around his elbows.

When you stand in the waves it feels like the ground is dissolving beneath you as the water washes out.

"Why didn't you tell your father the truth about us?" she asked.

He thought about the taste of her skin, salty and cool when she came to him in the mornings. She only came to him after she went out on the ocean, and he wondered if he was a reward for catching good waves or a punishment for missing them. Or both. Or neither. "I'm not sure what the truth is," he said.

Usually your heels go first. The only way to stay upright is to shift your weight to the balls of your feet, to lean into the pull.

"What are we doing?"

Fucking, he wanted to say. He lifted his hand in a fragmented shrug. "I don't know."

"What do you mean?"

"After Laura died, I never thought...."

Her hands clenched. "I lost her too, you know."

He remembered the first time they fell into each other. The affair started at the beach, in the water. He'd gone to scatter his wife's ashes; Laura loved the ocean as much as Alicia did; Laura taught her to surf when she was only seven years old. Alicia was there when he arrived, treading water on her board. He paddled out with the ashes and asked Alicia if she wanted to be part of his makeshift memorial. They cried together as the ashes floated away on the waves. They nudged their boards together and, with the whole world sinking around them, they sank into each other. He saw Laura's warmth in Alicia's smile; he didn't know what she saw in him. "Yeah, I know."

It's easy to get caught up in the motion of the waves, to let them crash against you, higher, higher, and not notice.

"Is that why this happened between us? Because I look like her? You think you can replace her with a copy, make me what you thought she was, what you wanted her to be?"

"What about you? You stepped into her place like it was a job opening."

She flinched.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I didn't mean to say that."

"I know."

They let a moment pass in silence.

The water is bracingly cold at first, but after the initial shock wears off your legs go numb and you start to feel like they might become fins, like you might belong there.

He stepped toward her and held out his hand. "Can we call a truce for now?"

"Okay." She took his hand and laced their

fingers together.

The desire to fling yourself into the water rises, and you think you could swim forever.

He felt a rush of gratitude and for a brief, wild moment he wanted to promise her that they'd be together forever. He wanted to reassure her that he didn't see her sister's face first when he woke up beside her, that he didn't wish it was Laura who whispered good night to him in the dark, that she wasn't a replacement.

But he didn't want to lie.

The ocean is mighty, though, and there are many bones on its floor, so you remain on your feet.

"I'm glad you're here," he said instead. He would not give into the pull of fantasy.

She nodded and took another step toward him, close enough that he could smell the faint scent of kelp. She always smelled like the beach, even right out of the shower. Sometimes in the dark when she was asleep and he thought he might love her, he breathed in deeply, trying to make her part of him, to absorb her into his lungs, so that he would

never lose all of her like he lost Laura.

You stand before the ocean and feel like it is yours, but it does not belong to you any more than you belong to it. You are merely witness to its power, more than you could ever control.

"I think one of us is going to end up hurt," she said.

He thought so too, and wondered if either one of them would be able to walk away before they drowned in each other. He wondered if they might be able to save each other.

"We can stop now," he said.

She smiled, too quick and bright to be genuine. "Where's the fun in that?"

"Just don't go falling in love with me." He smiled back, but the corners of his eyes remained smooth.

She squeezed his hand and looked away. "I won't."

He pulled her into a loose embrace and closed his eyes.

Don't turn your back on the ocean.

Board Cityscape

Caleb Thomas



DENALI

We Are All Connected



Ryan Platt

2013

Capital Punishment

Andrew Gonzalez

When I was a
munchinkin raggedy
Andy freckled and foolish
little fart my mom would
take me into the grocery store,
take me to the cash register
our items flowing through
like so much freeway traffick
unwitting, and the time
comes to pay for the stuff
and we got the stuff to
cover the stuff and the cashier girl
says to my mom that
I'm a cutesy and wonders
how much I cost. They both
laugh winking fairy
eyes as I bat my eyes
as my mom responds during
that epic exchange of capital;
unbacked money backed by
nothing but the faith that it's
worth something traded for the
backs of miners and mill workers
paper printed when we need
more of it from the feds fake

printed by gangsters and gun runners;
that mathematical value quotient
that inspects the worth of each item
milk, cheese, cocoa puffs—
God, I loved cocoa puffs,
sends em' through a system
attaches a price tag to em' so
we can give pieces of paper;
the price tags of our existence,
put out and pay and wam-bam
I get my beloved cocoa puffs
in the mornings every day
and my mom says to her:
that I'm priceless.
I'm priceless?
and like a name tag
in my mind that defined
me like in a dictionary somewhere
there was the name "Andy,"
description: a freckled and foolish
munchkin little fart who is priceless,
whose life can't be sold; not into
slavery, not into anything, because
my mom, I'll tell you fool what
MY MOM said about me dammit:

DENALI

You can't put a price tag on my life.
And that stuck with me.
Intrinsic worth.
The right to my own existence.
So if some race comes down to colonize
America came from freakin' nowhere
to "civilize" us and
"industrialize" us and show us savages
the "truth" when they through all
their pillaging and mockery
the ethnocentrism get to my
place with my mom in Creswell,
Oregon, they try to grab me, take me,
indoctrinate me I'd just tell 'em
"take it up with my mom,"
and she'll tell 'em that I'm priceless
and they don't have enough to pay
and everything would be just fine.
College age now sittin' here
writing this thing, you're probably hearing
or reading this thing and maybe
you know where I'm gonna go
already and maybe you'd had
these feelings before but
I swear I can't get money
out of my mind. I mean monetary
worth man, I mean the capital
price tag that that evil ungrateful consumer
places on this poem, I mean
that price tag, that charge, that fee
professionals might get for reading
something like this, I mean
that God damned price tag
that we place on each other's lives,
I mean slavery;

paupers the living
slavish lifestyles aristocrats saving
pauper's labors in their own banks as
inheritance to their kids, I mean
the reduction of all things
to paper, boiling down the periodic table,
love, innovation, to pieces of paper, sucking
life outa love, art, and everything beautiful,
printed arbitrarily by the feds when
we need more of it, not even backed
by gold anymore so what we once
in the home of the red white and blue
thought of as capital is no
longer even backed up by capital
since the land of gold
became the land of green
and the intrinsic worth of
each other's lives in the market
keeps goin' down, down, down
and prices for keepin' on living keep
goin' up, up, up
and here I am
an anomaly
a man
in a world full of prices
who is priceless
but now college age
sittin' here
Uncle Sam comes to me; my pandering
mack daddy McDonalds, supersize
me sugar daddy pimp –
ties me down, I sit
squirming, sweating; this writing is my shaking
convulsions of memories of what
a world gone right is sittin'

here injected with a world gone
bad infected, losing my humanity,
turned into a drug whore
doin' those tricks for a fix
and I know we have a problem
and I have to put out for him,
and I tell ya:

I have no problem with puttin' out,
none of us should have any
problem with puttin' out, but
I just wanna recognize when
the relationship is more like
that of pimps and prostitutes
than partners and I just
wanna recognize that that
consumer cashier no matter
how dashing she thinks I am
has no right to put a price tag
on my life cause MY mom
said so

and I just
wanna say that
economics and politics
are very complicated and
easily corrupted therefore
and therefore if no one has
ever told you

I tell you now heretofore
you shall know that
next to your name in
the dictionary in big
bold letters it says:

description:

“PRICELESS.”

DENALI

Swing

Serina Troup

Late, before the park closes
when no “Are you crazy?” eyes
(hopefully) will find me, I grasp
at steel. Almost better in winter;
bare, my hand, squeezing ice.

Inhale—backwards, air forward.
Exhale—relax. Briefly, the moment,
unwilling to pass, you fly. Wind.

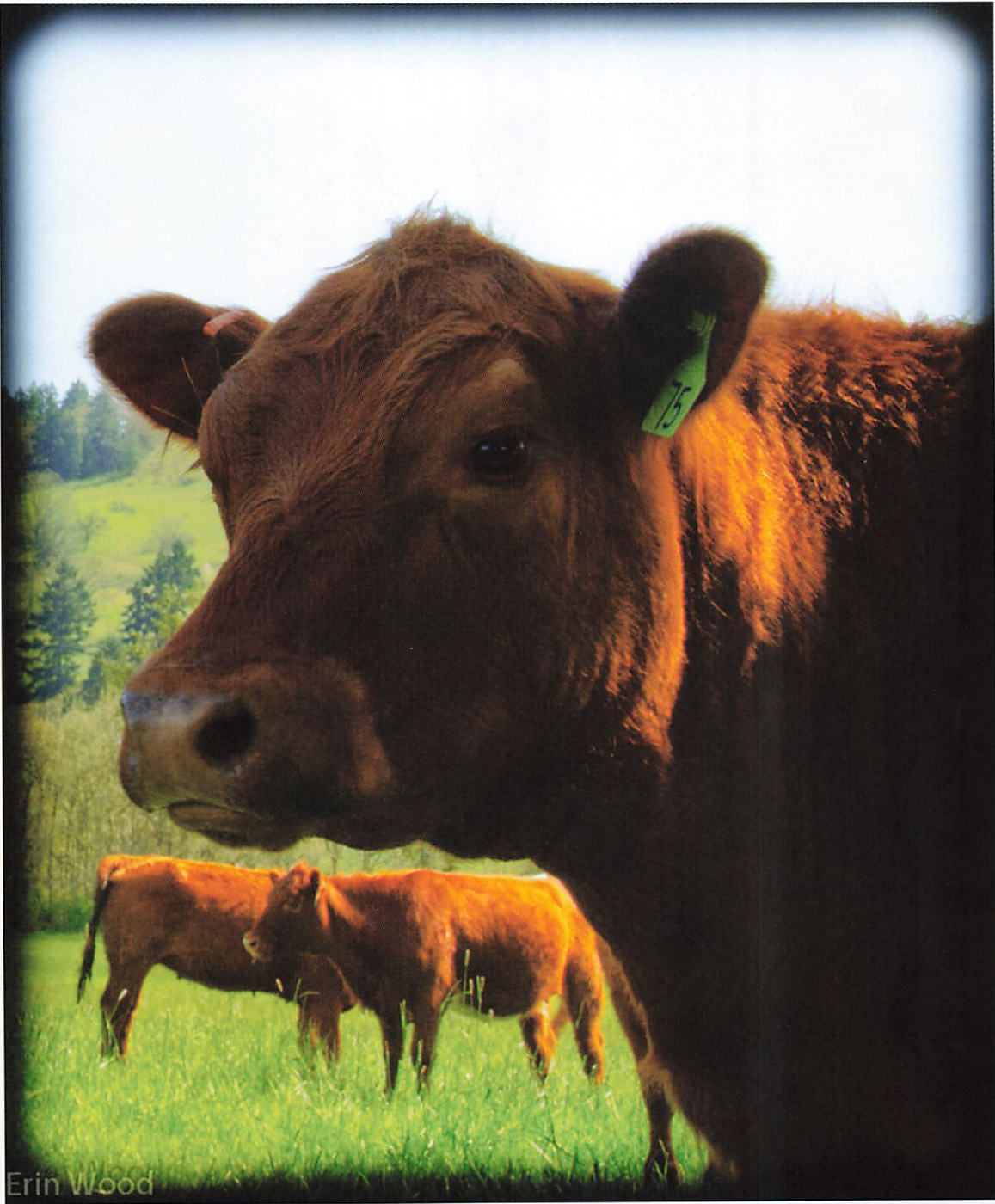
You used to take it farther—
you were an eight-year-old
braving the backs of your dragons,
with a mind whose hands felt scales.
Twisting. As the spine unfolds

under you; into your lungs with the air.
Exhale. Into the wind or the moan
of the same arched back release

and bent knees. Mmm. I’m a little
older now. I ride a different
kind of dragon. My head back
to see the stars or gasp.

2013

Pleasant Hill Ranch



Erin Wood

Erin Wood

DENALI
Patches
Elizabeth Lyon



Bubble Flower



Rainbow Cloud



Back Piece



Flower of Life

Apocalyptic Cloud



2013

To Fill Her Cup

Traci Johnston-Ruiz

Three tears to justice in layers of clothes
Just getting water from the courthouse in her cup
Homeless so it appears
She has a place to get water
Inside broken families
Warrants and arrests
Bill collectors, bill payers
In debt for bad behavior
No body is smiling
Sitting in despair
Waiting the clock
Tic tock in their ear
Ties broken
Loved lost
And all the in-between
Life's broken up journeys
Into the unseen
Fear driven good ridden
How did we all get here
Let go you do not run this show
No tickets sold here you gave it all to justice
Is that not why you are here?
The judge will decide
He will hear each side
Tic tock tic tock
Enough fear to go one million
Times around the block
In her layered clothes
Too hot for a sunny day
She chooses a simple life
No home no bills to pay

Though her cup is empty
It is now full
Life'd
Dainty little journeys through
Wisdom park bad choices good choices
Each on is real
Hopefully this game of let's make a deal
Will end this suffering and all will be able to heal

DENALI
Silence
Jill Owen

In the silence, we say.
As if silence is a place
to which we might retreat
when the world is too loud
and we are too breakable.
As if there is a perfect setting
in which no words are needed
and we might speak
with only gestures and gentle touches,
understanding simple emotions and possessions.
As if the stillness itself might envelop us
in warm arms, comforting and sure,
to keep us safe
from the sharp edges of the syllables we hurl
helplessly at each other.
As if there is an island,
inaccessible to fear,
on which we might love
and move together
without shattering our fragile balance.
As if there is a shelter that could hold
only you,
and me,
and us,
and silence.

2013

Ghosts



Ethan Abelov

Long Drawn

Serina Troup

Staying up
and avoiding food like words
mornings sting
but the days – they burn
Wisp, on the wind
of your voice ringing clear –
a deep, reverberating gong
The vibration is keeping me here.

Sighs
follow me like lost dogs
How do they know who not to fear?
Content, neither extended nor drawn,
just macaroni and cheese
the kind with the packet of sauce
you cut open and flex while you squeeze

Waiting
stretches out time – pulls
at his shirt and wraps around
his ankles, begging slow
departure from the safety –
some adventures take time, there's
prices, always, to be free

2013

Untitled



Matt McWalters

The Two Lion Ring



Doug Wiltshire

2013

Anfractuous Passages

Justin Harris

Glass Butte

Clear or glazed
Expressions of fire in the glass
Razor against my grip.
Blood poem.

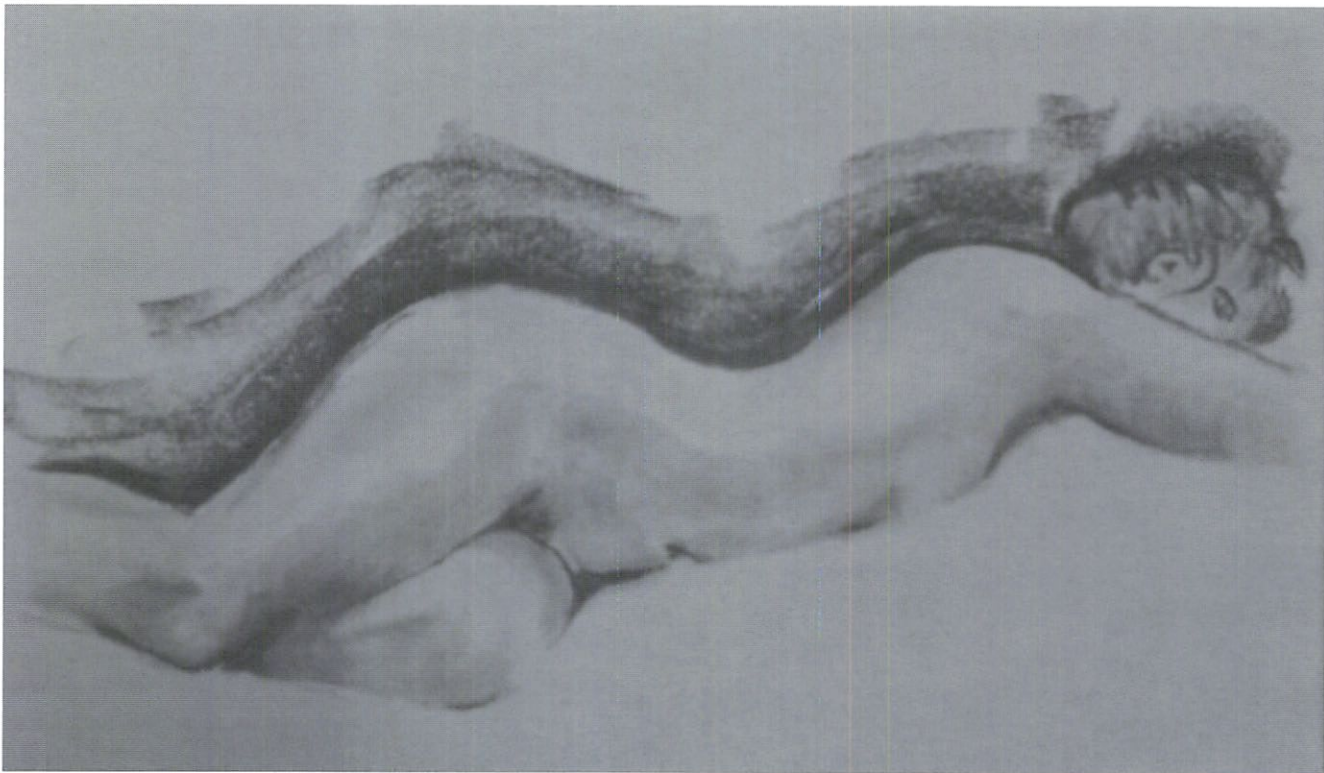
Angst of anacoluthons –
Words without a step or stair;
A why or wind to anywhere.

Camping on six thousand years of time,
Listening to the river's wine while waiting
For the song of sleep to rhyme.

Glass rinds microns fine,
Inner melting lines and place
Of earth; heated, birthing work.

This epistolary memory,
Corvine and ochre cast.
Is fading light to knap.

Kira



Max Keele

2013

Crashed Angel

Leo Rivers

L.A. is a desert.
Without its stolen snow,
Without its stolen rivers
Its pride would be just bones.

You are a cactus flower.
Rare off-season.
You are Eve
And all of Eden.

Maple Syrup

“I love maple syrup,” you say as you drizzle some over your pancakes. The first time you told that lie was the day we met, when you dangled the empty syrup bottle from your table from one finger and asked to join me. Midway through the meal you confessed that you didn’t care for maple, but the next week you borrowed my syrup again and you’ve been telling that lie every week since. You may have worn it into truthfulness by now.

The diner is almost empty this early; fishermen, lovers, and lost souls are the only ones awake to see the first rays of the sun float softly over the mountains. The waitress is young and energetic and she always smiles when she sees us. She knows our order word for word, but lets you say it anyway. I think she likes the way you grin around the words, “My wife will have...,” That’s a lie too, but our rings are both plain gold and could have gone together. Should have, maybe.

We always come here on Sundays, when the faithful and the faithless alike are still asleep in their beds, not yet separated by church walls and prayers. This booth, our booth, is always clean and empty, waiting.

Breakfast is sometimes all we have time for, sometimes a prelude to a few hours stolen in a room we’ve rented for a night we’ll never see together. It’s always sticky and sweet and warm.

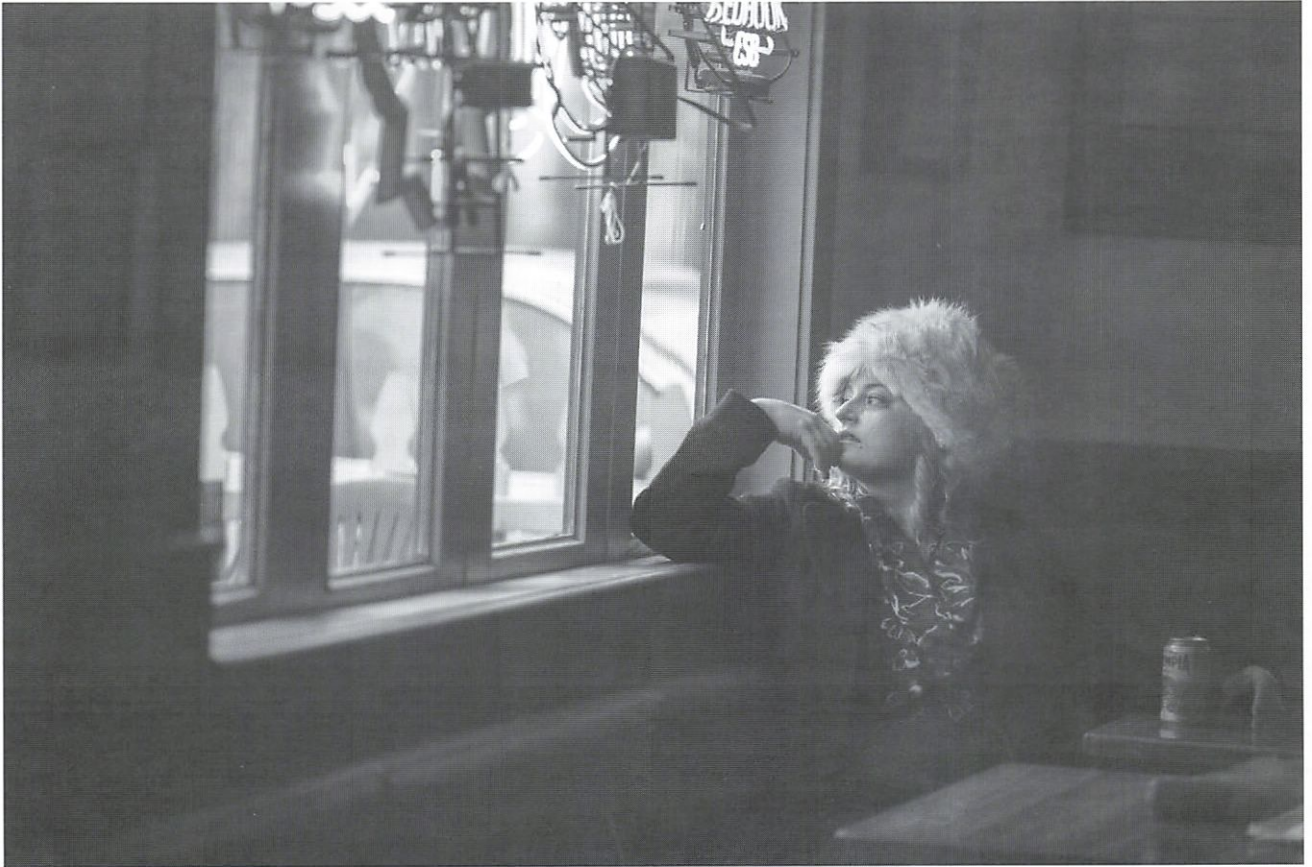
As you raise your fork and your eyebrows, waiting for the reply I always give, I trace my finger through some syrup and raise it to your mouth. Your lips are soft. If I kiss you you’ll taste like Chapstick, which you swear you never use. But I swipe some syrup over them before I lean across the table, so all I taste is maple.

“I know,” I say, and I smile. It’s true, I think, because I know you. That feels like a lie too, but I keep smiling anyway. I know all our lies by heart.

Jill Owen

2013

Waitin' for Mine



Micha Gross

A Tincture of Madness

Philos Molina

I am not the crazy one, my sister Francisca is. She is the one grinning all the time. She looks like an orangutan with half her teeth, all decayed and crooked. No, I am not the one whose eyes, drifting in tenebrous sockets, scan the room with macabre satisfaction. Nor do I speak of topics of which I know nothing. She is the one schlepping around with her ridiculous hunchback, the outburst of rage, and the perpetual joke without a punch line.

But it was not always this way. Remember, Francisca, when we sauntered down the cobblestone streets of Suchitoto? It rained all the time and the streets were rivers where we floated carefree like paper flyers. And we were shivering, though it was only the endless July, the sultriest month of the year.

And do you remember, Francisca, when we went out to the prairies to steal mangos, cashews, and sapodillas? We ate them all before coming home. And nobody believed we had found so many that we could not carry them all. They did not believe us when we told them about the squirrels resting on your lap. Nor did they believe about the rabbits running around you like the carousel that came to town every year for Christmas. And how could we possibly tell them of all the trogons and quetzals chirping like a choir under the canopy of trees? Even our parents were in disbelief when you told them about grounds carpeted with fresh *maquilihuast* flowers and how we made a big circle with cashew fruits of many colors.

Francisca, your only dream was to have two beautiful children. Even your godmother, Niña Lucía, told you that it was not a dream for a little girl. But you were beautiful and your children would be as

beautiful as you, pale and brunette, and peaceful brown eyes. And you played with Ilobasco clay figurines by yourself. Dad bought many miniatures for you, so you could build your own towns with all the little people you had. They were not pretty like you, but you thought they ought to be, because they were your children.

I preferred the green plastic soldiers. You hated them because they could come at any time and destroy your clay little people. You were always afraid of my little soldiers. Then you discovered that there were soldiers of many colors and that one could buy them at Tilo's store. "Who's going to pay for all my broken toys?" you asked me. And I told you that it was just a game and toys. But you worried, Francisca, you worried very much over clay figurines.

Then one day, the soldiers of many colors came and destroyed the town. It was no longer safe to go to the prairie and find fruits, birds, and flowers. And we all were worried and trembling, because the rivers on the streets were not of rain anymore. And you were sad because we had to move away, to the city with more people than we had seen before. By then we knew we had lost you. You were no longer talking about your children or your clay toys.

No, you talked of dollars and Euros, because the Salvadoran currency was useless. You even loathed the touch of the *colones*. And you did not understand why you left countries we knew you never had visited. Every day you wished to go back so you did not have to deal with people smelling like those filthy pancakes they called *pupusas*, stuffed with rancid cheese, spoiled beans and rotten pork rinds.

You saw delinquents in every Salvadoran. One night you accused the neighbors of stealing your jewelry and the designer clothes you had brought from Miami. And in the middle of the night, you pounded on the neighbor's door to get your belongings back. You were naked, Francisca, because they had stolen every piece of garment you had brought from abroad.

Dad covered you with a worn-out, beach towel—the one with drawing of little people, remember, Francisca? He tried to explain to you that you had those dreams because we were poor, and poor people were always ashamed of their poverty, even in their dreams. You threw the towel at his face. And you told him, “Poor? Me? You are the poor one, stupid old man! And you are poor because with all your talents you decided to stay in this wretched country!” You also cursed him with expletives we did not know you were capable of uttering—you who hated the Salvadoran inclination for scatological language.

And do you remember, Francisca, the horror in Dad's face? You never insulted him before. You were his favorite and he yours. You used to pluck his gray hair to make him look young. You made sure to starch and iron his white shirts. You tied his skinny tie tenderly around his thick neck. And you would clean his gold-plated Windsor glasses every morning before he went to church to play the violin. He loved you more than any of his children, Francisca, even though he suspected, when you were little, that you were not his. He could not believe that night, Francisca, that you had become someone else.

But you spared nobody. You called mother a cheap whore. And you hated her for taking you to her Pentecostal church. She wanted evangelists to lay hands on you to get rid of the demons in your head. “As if they were lice,” you mocked. And when

nothing happened, they told you that it was your lack of faith. It did not occur to them that you were crazy, Francisca. And you reproached with profanities their failed exorcisms. Remember? You used to sit in the front-row pews just to smirk at the preachers.

And when they took you to San Salvador, to the asylum where you would spend most of your days, you said horrible things about me, too. You did not recall all those years when I held your hand and we scampered away, even under the rain and through muddy trails, to the prairies to steal fruits and watch birds and nap on beds of flowers. No, instead, you screamed from the door that I was a son of a bitch. And you meant it literally, for you believed that mother was a lewd woman and I a bastard.

And with sputtering screams you told everybody—why, Francisca?—that I spoke in tongues and I wrote in miniature letters of a language already forgotten, like that Swiss demented writer, Robert Walser. “He is writing about all of you,” you yelled that day, “don't let him fool you: you are his fictions.” Mario's wife thought I was writing about her affairs. Jorge, the tailor, believed that I knew about his illegal dealings. My own godfather, don Paco, did not speak to me afterwards. Don Jesús cancelled the credit of my mother at his store. That hurt everybody, Francisca. We could not get food for days. And Pedro, the one who worked in the sewers, reported me to the police as a subversive. I was beaten by jealous husbands and intolerant officers and left for dead. Still, you kept screaming that night, “Take him! He is the crazy one! Take him!” And they did, Francisca, they did.

Why did you say that, Francisca? You are the crazy one, not me.

This poem costs \$15.25 for pizza, fries, beers and laughs -

cheap cheese pizza, sweet potato fries and amber ales

Nicole Taylor

An old guy strums and sings *Blue Christmas*.

A young guy raps about ethnicity, culture and peace.

Two ladies sing *House of The Rising Sun*.

A young guy sings a lively song about the girl
with the nice thighs.

Another young guy recites a song of \$7000 in debt
of college loans. With ripped jeans and ripped guitar
strings, he sings and
dreams of ripping those loan papers.

Another young guy recites *The Hell That I Create*,
an unemployment rap. Three young guys sang
and strummed acoustic guitar, three twenty-something guys.

The group Jesus and The Burning Bush never returned after signing on the sheet.

A man with suspenders and harmonica in lips plays

All Along the Watchtower

(I so love *All Along the Watchtower*.)

It's a narrow way out of here, as the joker
in the song says, out of this cafe,
Monroe St. Cafe on open-mic night and a narrow walk,
a definition of peace. So many young guys
sing the narrow walk. What is peace to us anyway?

A man with suspenders, harmonica in lips and corduroy hat on head plays

Wagon Wheel, So rock me

mama like a wagon wheel.

A young traveler plays a very long didjeridu.

If the walls could dance they would be dancing with bare feet with
black dirt, native feet. My favorite group,
performers here tonight!

The local folksy Bittersweet Moonshine Band
steps up, the band of a youngish lady and
a youngish guy, one in a bright rainbow scarf

(*Oh, no it will rain in Loranc*, yells some guy across the room.)
sings *So Far Away You*.

Originally from the British rock group Dire Straits?
They sing lively tunes *Everything Around Her Shines*,
Music is Rhythm and Rhyme and then
I Will Take Her Down to the Farm,
Down to the Farm.

Thirty-something Dan in short, thin plaid flannel and Levi's
is a smiling dancing regular.
He looks like he was raised in the west coastal hills with
moonshine drinking grandparents.

I watch another young guy, a twenty-something young guy, who is not listening the guys.
He's standing by the chips, cookies and candles on the right side wall.
He's probably a local college or university student here in support but
he plays with his Blackberry, in his hands.

A Silent Red Planet

Leo Rivers

Mars is
an airless Arizona,
its indigenous artifacts
are all polished by the blast
of ultraviolet baths
from the interstellar depths
and the solar wind from
the Sol deep within its cold orbit
have made a rusted world
of pebbles, rubble and ruddy dust,

its sky
the dying breath
of an old guy dementia had returned
to blinking and infancy.

Mars has this one huge mountain
and ice under its polar skin
like blood welling into bruises
in the lowest parts of a cooling
murder victim. Mars
is not the victorious figure of an Olympian God,
red as bronze standing
in the human
charnel ground of a famous battle
we teach children,

it is a place where, at best, we will find the poverty
of viruses that sleep in the buried bones
of civilizations gone
for a millennia of generations. If they remain,

maybe if breathed by space men,
they might yet quicken.

Mars is a marvel of glacial high desert,
silent as a dream from which
the martians will never awaken.

Mars is a Lesson if but you listen.

2013

Miller



Travis Kerr

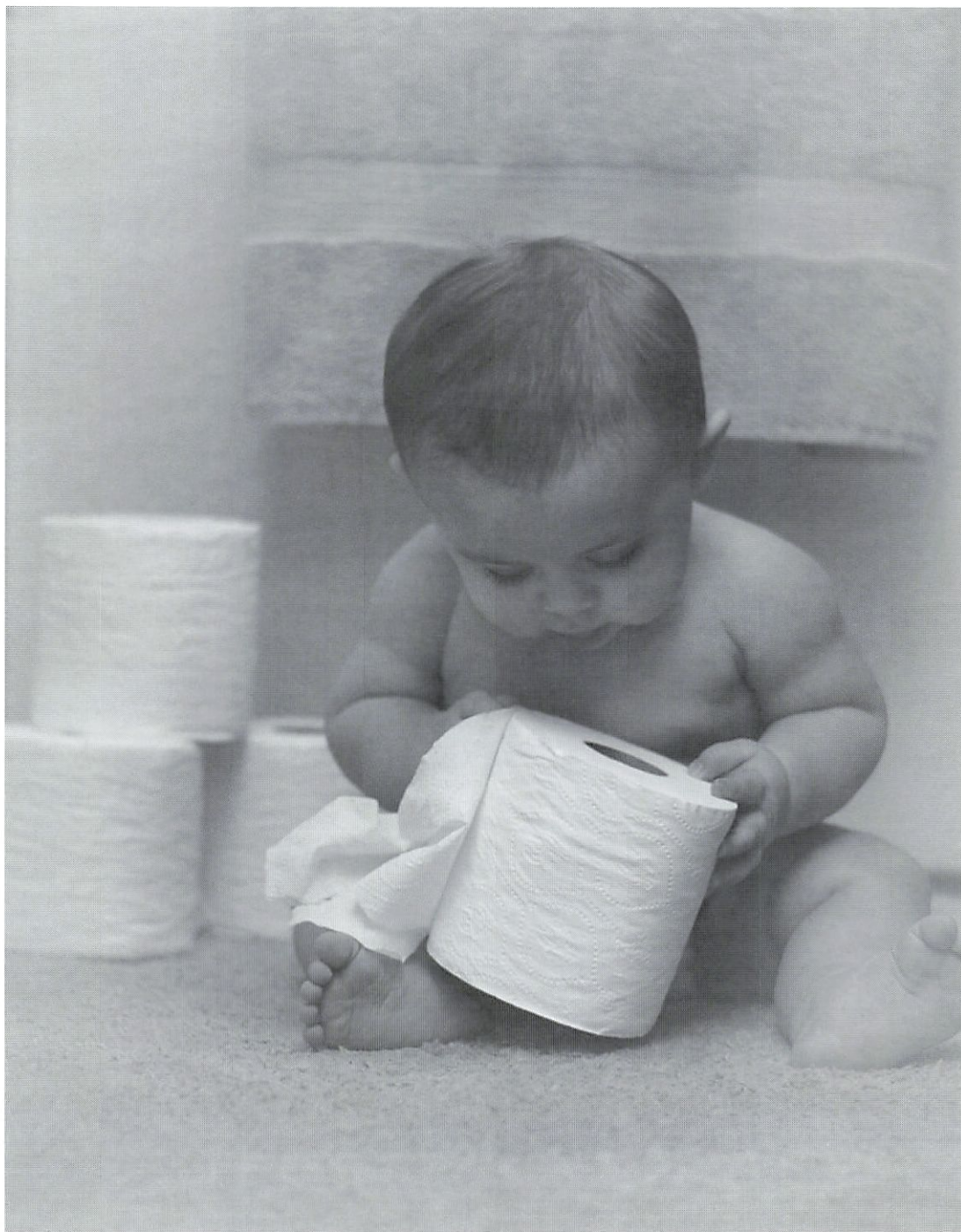
Frosty Morning



Susan Starr

2013

Curious George



Erin Wood

DENALI

Untitled

Theodore Griffiths

My heart she is heavy,
My mind he is weary,
She aches for him to cease his travels.
He searches for her through eternity.
“Here I am,” says his beloved,
And he hears those words echo throughout
his travels, among all he meets.
No wonder his travels never cease.

2013

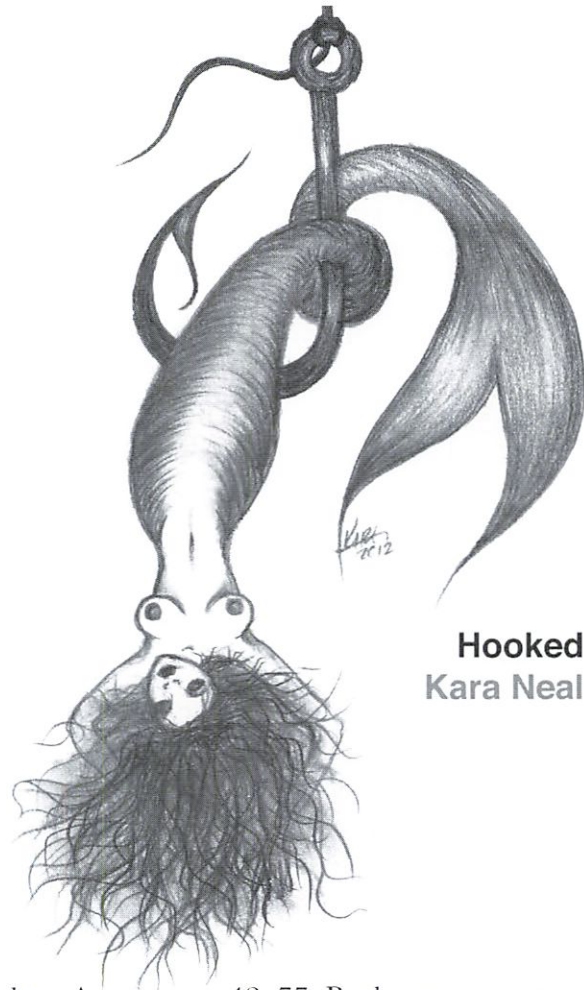
Nicole and Bucky



Susie Morrill

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Denali has been a publication of Lane Community College since 1971. Denali is an annual student-produced magazine, publishing art and literature from residents of Lane County. We strive to give both new and established artists and authors the opportunity to share their work with the community and be heard. I hope you enjoyed reading this magazine as I did creating it, and that you spread the word about this magazine now available to view online at lanecc.edu/denali.

—Corinne Dortha Mooney, 2013 Denali Editor and Production Manager.
“I trust that this will be my legacy.”

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Make Art

Amy Sanders

Art reveals secrets.
It tells what's in the soul,
Sometimes softly,
Sometimes passionately,
Provocative and genuine
Don't hide - reveal yourself
Is it safe?
No, but it's real.
Don't be quiet.
Bare your soul.
Reveal your secrets.
Make art.