

DENALI

2014



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Denali 2014

Lane Community College's Annual Literary & Arts Publication

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2014



Crow
Jessica Hemrick

Denali

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Evening Colors:

Hot Mama's Open Mic Night

Nicole Taylor

Six guitar cases and one banjo case rest in the corner, near the restrooms, beer specials and near the bar.

Katie plays originals on her blue guitar sweet folk songs and ballads between squeaks from the speakers that hippie and Old Sal, our co-host is adjusting.

Old Rollin Joe plays his Horner Comet, his fat old harmonica and he plays banjo from songs, *Forever Young* and *September Rose*, from his CD's, *The Legend At Last*.

Gabe plays Rose's blue guitar with friends, one violin and two banjos. The blue butterfly. The young hands fly through this navy, midnight blue guitar.

The tall guy in center sings *I'm Going Down under the Burlap Blues. I'm Going Down in the Burlap Blues*.

Old Jimmy plays his Takamine, his shiny beige guitar with "Jack" on his strap. He plays sad twangy old songs, *So Old* and *Love Me Like You Did Yesterday*.

Young Lex wears black hair, hat and plays a black guitar and sings *If I Die Young* and *Don't Let the Music Die*.

Marilyn, Holly Hobbie, in her bright pink hair plays her "experimental noise" from adjusting knobs on sound equipment, last week with her pink guitar. Sal really enjoys this but others walk out, at least for a smoke.

Joe and Autumn play and leave, *Going on Down to Alaska* and *I'm Going to Jackson. Well, I'm going down to Jackson and I ain't never coming back*.

Sometimes he reads Beatnik poetry or his powerful political original poetry.

Two young waitresses keep busy, cleaning cup and counter before closing, and trying not to break more while delivering more libations.

Two colorful creatures, one from *Where the Wild Things Are*, watch behind the bar and I watch the customers visit, laugh, sometimes too loud and not listening to those behind the tall mic.

Harp of Water

Sandy Jensen

There is a bear in Gorky Park, one of the wild bears who used to be white – at least they were the night everyone saw them fall at once from the sky.

They were young spirit bears who hit the ground rolling and running, tumbling and fighting in the way brothers and sisters are said to do.

By dawn they were gone, out of the park, out of Moscow on their long migration cross-country to Siberia, where every year they were expected and greeted with a festival.

This particular year, Nikolo Rosso brought his family and traveling circus to Ludvo for the Spirit Bear Festival. They pitched their ragtag carnival outside town in the muddy tundra, creating a Spirit Bear Lane in such a way that the long line of homecoming bears would have to parade between sideshow tents, shooting booths, and open kitchen spaces.

The flame-haired Rosso women cooked seal meat and from spawn under the sharp eye of Old Lady Oleska Rosso on smoky little coal braziers. These delicacies they threw to the hungry young bears as they paraded by on the last mile of their journey to the Blackwater Sea.

They were young bears, and curious bears in those spring weeks of their migration, watched over by the great father and mother constellations Ursa Major and Ursa Minor.

One young bear did something the Spirit Bears really weren't supposed to do, or at least never had done—he slowed down on the triumphant sweep through Nikolo Rosso's little impromptu village to look around.

He stopped at Old Lady Oleska's kitchen, and rather than snatching seal meat tossed to him on the run, he surprised her by sitting back on his haunches. He looked at her quietly.

She was a canny old traveler. She knew what to do because the legends and songs she had memorized when she was young told her this could happen and she must feed this suddenly special bear from her own plate.

And she readied the plate of meat, Oleska hummed. She heard a musical rumble and looked up in some surprise – the bear was humming tentatively with her. She furtively sign to Nikolo, who was doing a brisk business with the locals selling the dark hooch that gave the Blackwater Sea its name.

Out of the corner of his eye, Nikolo had been watching this bear sort himself out of the herd, and so he came cautiously over at Oleska's motion.

"Musical bear," Oleska whispered, and you can say she betrayed the bear who became known as Orpheus, or you can say she was just an agent of change, but a collar, some firm management, and Orpheus began a new migration with the Rosso family.

Oleska undertook his musical training. He learned to hum beautifully. In their own way, Oleska and Orpheus became friends, or perhaps she was more of a mother to him. He always had enough to eat. He was kept well-groomed as his white hair slowly changed to brown.

By day, he hummed to the villagers who came to see the traveling show, and by night his silver eyes glittered as he listened to the wild fiddlers play and watched the flame-haired girls whirl around the fire. He saw coins spin and saw the girls led one by one away into the dark of the canvas tents, but he was a bear, and none of this meant anything to him.

On one swing far to the south by the Georgian Sea, two new things entered the life of Orpheus: somewhere Oleska obtained an Irish harp, and it was she who taught him to play it.

The other wonderful thing that entered the life of the little traveling family was a new cart that Nikolo added to their caravan. This was a cart built all of glass with painted wooden shutters, so that it could be all closed up on the road.

Orpheus watched the construction of this cart with great interest. Everyone was excited, but he couldn't figure out why. When the resident of this new cart was brought home, he was chained at the other end of the compound.

That night, Orpheus quietly slipped his collar, and in the warm moonlight of the South, he was like a large shadow moving down the backside of the tents, stepping carefully over all the guy wires, to the new cart.

Because it was warm, the painted shutters had been left down and the great glass aquarium was open to the moon and stars.

Orpheus, no longer the white Spirit Bear of his youth, but now an adult male in his rich, dark prime, stood on his hind legs to look into this marvelous thing, a tank of water. He could hear the faint motor of an aerator.

Orpheus felt his heart slow for moment when he saw the woman floating in the tank. He was afraid she was

dead, the way her luminous green hair floated in the slight current. Then he saw the gills behind her ears fluttering rhythmically, and he understood she was just sleeping.

As he looked in, she came awake and looked at him with no alarm. He saw her tail then, its long, muscular length, green and silver in the moonlight.

Perhaps she looked sad; perhaps he felt happy, but Orpheus began to hum. The mermaid swam close and put both hands up to the glass to meet his enormous paws. Thus began a great friendship. Nikolo and Olesky and all the Rosso family realized this unusual love had thrown an aura of grace over their traveling show.

For years they prospered as the word ran out ahead of them of the musical bear and the mermaid. Orpheus played the harp, and the mermaid they called Rusalka would swim and tell stories with her hands and hips and eyes and graceful tail, stories of her own people, of the volcano goddess and the adventures of her younger sister and the handsome king they both loved.

No one understood her, but she danced her stories from the heart, and Orpheus loved her and told her so with this humming and his heart. Often when the moon was full, they would touch paws and hands together through the glass. He would hum, and she would sway gently to the night and the music of the bear.

These things happened long ago. Golden days go because golden days must; evil creeps out of the hills as raiding bandits. There are always betrayals, and beautiful things, if not violated, are taken away by night and released to a cold and foreign sea.

Orpheus never knew if Rusalka survived her return to the sea, but in his bear's imagination, and in the power of his traveling heart, he held her and traced her difficult journey south ever south to warmer latitudes.

In his heart and mind, he felt when sharks would circle and held them back. He brought food to her by the power of care, and so she was sustained and nurtured until, in his mind's eye, she was approached by others of her own kind and taken in, and she began a new life.

The carnival was in smoking ruins when he and Oleska escaped from the high-pitched screams of the bandits wheeling their horses through tattered tents with their long streamers of fire.

The two old friends wandered across the vast depths of Russia for a few more years. Orpheus would hum songs he learned from Rusalka, and the very very old woman would play the harp for seal meat and bits of bread.

One very cold night, the two slept curled up together. But in the morning, Oleska did not awake. Villagers took her away and shooed Orpheus along. He began his long mindless rambling across the landscape.

One night, when he saw the lights of Moscow in the distance, he rested. By pale dawn light, he saw a long line of young white bears coming toward him. He watched as they passed by, then followed their trail in the snow back to Gorky Park.

As always, the people fed him there, and he hummed to the people and played his harp until they turned away with a sudden urgent anxiety for their loved ones. Mothers looked for their children and estranged lovers sought each other among the trees.

He played his harp in Gorky Park until his parents in the wheeling constellations of Ursa Major and Ursa Minor came around again. They looked down and heard him play until their hearts broke with pity, and they brought him home to take his rightful place among the stars.



Reflect
Gina Alexandi

Graying Decay

Sai Marie Johnson

Riddled in gray to the point of wretched decay

Subtle in silence

It all comes with a price

The cost of a life of splendor

Magnified by the beauty of everything around

Hushed by the sounds of society

Quiet endeavors

In an effort to stroke the Heavenly host

Fallen from the grace of perfection

To become a shell of what once was.

Forever bound to the solitude of reality

Love lost to the bittersweet heartbreak of

Experience.

Shadows on white washed walls cast a silhouette of
acceptance

As innocence flees, and wisdom takes her place.

An empty void of hallowed space

Tis all that remains...

{Untitled}

Chris Gierig

Water cascading down filaments of spider webs
woven from finely manufactured silken ether.

Realms of ice slowly glaze slivers of
Spectacular color over my eyes.
Decisions based upon doldrums of solitude
seek suffering entrenched in daily experience.

Dreams wrapped around life as slowly burning embers
fluctuate passionately between thoughts
contemplating dying or living.

Seasons

Eve Hanson

Upon a chair sits
a boy. Lofty thoughts
like unyielding steel
frozen under hard packed snow.

With his eyes perceive—
wondering, exploring like
birds, the spacious trees,
emerging garden pathways
among budding fields of grass.

His mind filled with awe,
delves, celebrating truth, life—
waves over hot rock,
freedom to climb sculpted paths
that lead to fruitful orchards.

Feeling connected;
settling, accepting of
briskly swirling leaves
enveloped in colored paths,
resting in fields of splendor.

Envoy
Such are the seasons
of life, of love, of learning.
We get stuck in us
until we blossom with change,
accept the lessons of life,
and use them to live.

Nebulosity

David Killeen

The first time was on the bus next to the Asian woman. That morning at the bus station I had been afraid, but that was a different sensation. The fear had had an object: the threat of discovery. While I was sitting against the wall of the terminal, I looked up and saw my father's friend seeing someone off on the same bus I was taking. At one point he turned his head and looked right at me. But I took the next bus, and the feeling subsided; it wasn't until much later that I experienced the gravitational collapse.

I had experienced no remarkable impressions at all that morning. I awoke early, and settled finally on a short note over a longer and more crudely articulated one in explanation of my behavior; I affixed it to the alarm clock, and set it to go off later in the afternoon, placing it in the closet where it wouldn't be discovered prematurely. I left the house early – they were accustomed to me leaving at that hour, there wasn't anything suspicious in that – and walked the two miles to the bus stop on that black and windy winter morning. As I crossed the sports fields of my high school, where I hadn't resumed classes with the others that week, the sharp wind swept my hat off in the direction from which I'd come. Even this only elicited a smile and slight pleasure at the suggestion of the imagination.

In the days, and months prior to that as well, I executed plans and deliberations with the same lucid calm and unemotional resolve as the events of that morning. I applied for a passport, and my mother picked up the mail the day it arrived. A project for class, I told her. Afterwards I discarded Canada as my destination because I was afraid of being picked up at the border for being underage. So I exchanged my ticket for one to Phoenix, which was in any case a better choice for those months. My friend implored me not to go (he would be the only one I would tell). Balls of paper, he said, as he sounded for another meditation on the bottom of the pool in his backyard. Stay, he resumed, as he resurfaced. Stay, and try to work it out with him. No. I wouldn't be subjected to the same treatment as my brother. I wouldn't be told what to do with my life. (It wasn't until much later that I realized this had been only half.) I went to the cutlery store in the mall and purchased a large kitchen knife for security – a knife which would soon be so rusted and dull that it was unsuitable for even cutting carrots.

I see myself performing these preparations like I see myself in every memory of my life till that point: diffusely, as if through a veil. There I am, mechanically bending, moving, a Platonic silhouette cast

by a posterior illumination; a manipulation of unseen hands. When I boarded the bus that day, I was still this shade, and even when it left the limits of Portland. But sometime later, next to the Asian woman, I experienced the gravity of an evolution; a white dwarf settled into my stomach, drawing blood from my enfeebled extremities and brain, effecting a peculiar state of Mind. It wasn't fear, or freedom. Just beyond the apprehension of thought, there was something that remained on the periphery in dreadful elusiveness. It was a glimpse through a rent in the veil of Nothing beyond. It was the echo of a primal ache; the anticipation of a new world.



Balance (#4a and #4b)
Stefan Streck

Frosty Leaves
Nicole Rund





Spiral Walkway
Kathy Torvik



You Made Me Angry
Karen Seaton

Spilled Milk

Shyana Swanson

“The milk has gone sour,”
she says, apathetically.
“I’ll run down and pick up
a fresh jug.”

And I stood there, alone.
Seconds felt like hours,
and the hours turned to days.
My eyes so violently
leaked with rage,
that when you returned,
I took your fresh milk,
and made it sour.
I threw it ever-so-beautifully
against your beige wall;
it was the most magnificent
piece of art I had ever seen.
So, I added your new bag of flour,
for creative flare—
it’s dust was a winter’s storm.

And you stood there,
staring at my masterpiece,
with eyes mirroring mine,
and you ever-so-gently
fell to your knees.



Black and Blue
Lynette Slape

Talking During a Blizzard

Cole Sherlock Hersey

“Why?”

“Why? What are you talking about? What the hell kind of response is that? This is our home.”

“Well, why? Why is it that bad? You’ll make money. It’s not like you haven’t sold stuff of importance in the past. What about your dad’s old Buick, the one you said you used to ride around in ever since you were little. Just look at it.” Catherine pointed to the snow outside, rising in front of their hill. The trees looked like their leaves were about to fall from all the snow. “When was the last time you went up there?”

“I can’t remember. But that’s our hill. Jesus. It’s been a part of my family for...I don’t know. A long time.” He could feel his face warming up and his heart bounce.

“Perfect time to get rid of it.”

“Would you give up your arm?”

A pause as she thought, “Which one?”

“You’re relentless.”

“And you’re too stubborn. I know how long it’s been in your family. We’ve been living here for the past ten years. But where’s your job? Where’s my job? There are no jobs in this town. It’s too small. We’ve been scraping by with our savings and barely anything is left. Do you understand that? Your treating that plot of trees like it’s alive.”

“Don’t say that.”

“Why? Is it alive? Well sure, the trees are, but their seeds will grow after they clear-cut it. It’ll all be the same hill in thirty years.”

“What if we had had a kid, would you suggest we sell them to some kind of study because we didn’t have jobs? What the fuck.”

“No. That’s not even the same situation. Plus those loggers already offered us a lot of money for it. Enough for us to get out of this place.”

A pause filled the room. The lamp above their head at the dining room seemed to grow brighter the longer the pause went. She sipped the mug in front of her. The tea was getting cold. The porcelain sink was filled with dishes, building up. But the rest of the house was clean.

“Where did you want to go?” Catherine asked.

“What?”

“I remember when I met you, you said there was some place you wanted to live. Where was it?”

“Paris.”

“Shut up. You hate the French, ever since college when you met that one guy who told you he thought I was cute.”

“He was from Paris.”

"Whatever. Where was that place again?" Catherine asked.

"Buenos Aires?"

"No."

"London?"

"No"

"Barcelona."

"No."

"New York."

"Now you're just naming big cities. You hate cities."

"Exactly why I want to stay here."

"Was it Vancouver?"

Looking at Catherine's eyes, he remembered why he even brought up selling their home years ago, why they even moved back to his old town. It was all for another move, to leave the old house. At least that's how the dream began.

"It was Venice." David said.

"Really?"

"Yeah. I'm pretty sure."

"That makes sense. It's just an ocean."

"I don't like loud places. The ocean is loud but in a quiet way."

"We could move there with the money."

"I don't want to move okay."

"But what's great about this place? All your friends left, and look at what they're doing. Paul is painting in New York, doing well. Denise just left for Amsterdam to work with some magazine as a graphic designer. She's doing well. I remember she told me she was glad to leave this place. She said it smothered her. And all you do is paint, ever since I met you, you were always painting. But for the past year I haven't seen you touch a brush once. With the money you could get from this place, you could live in Venice for years and just paint. Maybe we'd have to work part time."

"Those people aren't me. I don't have the same kind of ideas that I once did."

"Then let's travel. You can—"

"But I don't want to sell this place!"

The yell took the noise out of the room. The faucet trickled once onto the dirty dishes in the sink. The snow was blowing harder outside now. You couldn't see their hill any longer. It was all just white outside, no trees. The light in the dining room seemed to warm up, growing brighter again. He felt himself shiver all over.

Neither of them could remember the last time they looked up to the woods where David used to play as a boy. The white covered the hill. Catherine drank the rest of her tea.

He looked up and saw a moth flying around the overhead light where they sat. It couldn't get hurt in here. But by the light outside on the porch that looks to the hill? Yes.

David looked out the window to the snow. Still a blizzard out there. Catherine looked to her cup, empty, just a tea bag.

Then, "Just not to some lumber. I want to keep it safe." David said.

He looked to her empty mug, got up and boiled water on the stove. Standing, waiting for it to finish boiling so he could fill her cup, he said, "You're right though. We should sell it, just not to them. We can find someone to buy it that won't hurt it. Right?"

"You've lived here your whole life. You should know the answer."

"I'm not sure."

The water finished boiling. He poured water into a new mug; the rest went into her cup.

"Thanks." Catherine said. "We'll find some good people to buy it, and then, we can travel. That'll be good for us. It's good to not be so stagnant."

David nodded his head as he looked to her from across the table. He looked worried.

They watched the blizzard through the window. David saw a coyote, just in front of the trees on the hill. The coyote stopped in its tracks, sniffed the air, silhouetted by the snow, and looked at the light coming from David and Catherine's little window.

"Look." He said, pointing to the coyote, dead still.

"Oh yeah. Look at him out there. He looks like a statue." They began to watch him smell the air.

The coyote walked away, out of the open space in front of the hill, and went into the trees.

"Think the snow will have stopped by morning?" Catherine asked.

"Maybe."

Your Son

Amanda Daniels

Though our time was short
Your hearts I charmed
'Til I breathed my last
In Daddy's arm

Why god choose me
Who can say
To send angels for me
On Father's Day

But I have not left you
Just went before you
To prepare the way
For when you follow

I walk beside you
As the wind
And often guide you
As I whisper

Now form a smile
You need not weep
Until you join me
My memory keep

My life isn't over
It has barely begun
I'm just waiting with god
I Love You... Your Son

In the Beginning

Elaine Brown

Ancient earth and primordial water
Beautifully born as flesh and bone
Spirit wind bellows back and forth, into one and out of another
Uncontrollably uniting us as we breathe
The sacred and profane arise
Indistinguishable and interdependent
Life from death and death from life
This is The Way

Gypsy Dance

Elena Daniels

I have a gypsy tree in the field outside my back door.
She sways with the song of the wind and dares the storm to take her down.
My daughter can scale a rope with the same fiery spirit,
And before I could put her in a gymnastics class
She scaled the living room curtains until her hands touched the ceiling.
But I couldn't be mad at her and the bent curtain rod
Because I want her to know
She should challenge the ceilings in life,
Those that dare to keep her small
Those who dare to make her any less than she is.

Like my gypsy tree in the field
We women can stand rooted to the earth
Take strength in the thickness of our trunks
And beauty in the delicacy of our skin.
We give birth to new life
Which may sometimes simply be a new idea.
Like "How would life be *without* war? Let's try it!"

And when my daughter finds out that they will pay her
Just 70 cents on the dollar compared to a man
For the same exact work
Even with her laureate degree,
I will remind her to laugh loudly
To whip around in her skirt and be a woman
To climb to the ceiling with her spirit
And refuse to move like a man.
For mankind isn't always kind. And it's kind-a screwed up.
And we don't always know how to bring about change.
But we women, we know how to dance...
In our backyards
To sway with the wind, keeping our gypsy spirit.

The Match

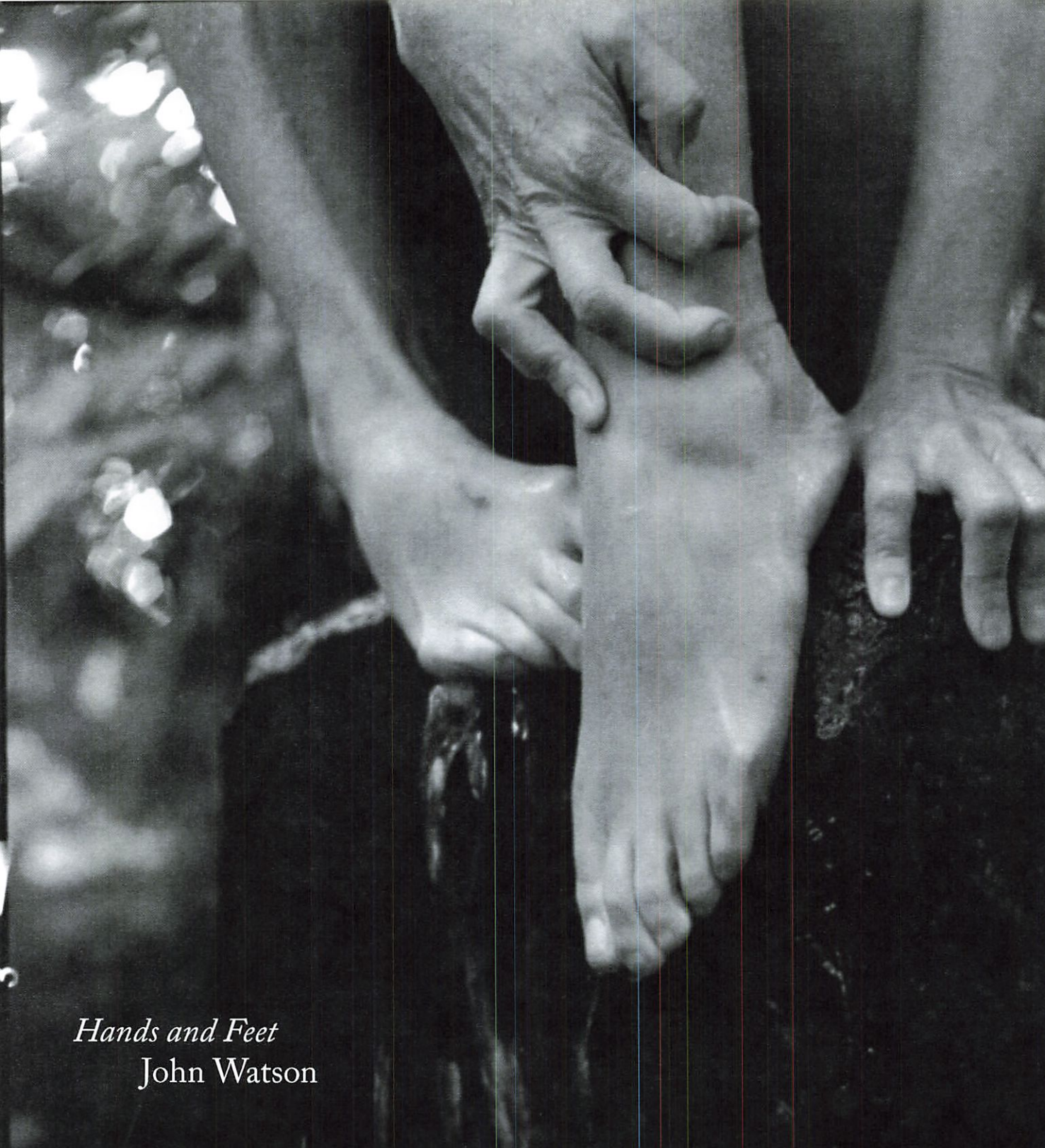
E2

I can see a glimmer bringing a picture of peace, friendship and comfort. A scene of a Father and Mother, enjoying the image of kids at play. The vision soon fades with the light of the Match, leaving me feeling lost and cold.

I am not hungry or homeless, but I feel like the Match Girl...Hoping for a Match that will not burn out in a season, but one that will stay lit. Another glimpse of "home sweet home" with pictures and images that come with the light of a new match. The light seems to flicker and only lasts to the end of the stick, leaving burn scars on my fingers. I sit with the matches in my lap, and a yearning to be in the images of love and home.

I take a handful of matches and light them to see if I can keep the picture in focus; instead, I am burned to cinders, and instead of being lifted up to Heaven like the Match Girl, I sink to the depth of depression and depravity.

Beware of playing with fire, you will get burned.



Hands and Feet
John Watson



Dear Friend

Amanda Daniels

Being in Prison
Is long days and nights
It's waiting for letters
That nobody writes

It's waiting for visits
That never take place
From so called, "loved ones"
Who've forgotten your face

It's wondering how time
Could go by so slow
It's prayers that are answered
But the answer is, "no"

It's depending on people
You thought were your friends
It's waiting for pictures
That nobody sends

It's wanting to trust
But feeling that dying
It's when they say, "don't worry"
You know that they're lying

It's just sitting around
With nothing to do
Except finding out
Who really is who

It's feeling your heart
As it turns to stone
As you learn that you
Are all on your own

But I'll do my time
With my head held high
And I'll walk with pride
'Til the day that I die

And I'll wait for the day
When again I'll be free
While I pray that you're never
Left lonely like me.

Color My World

Laura Reitz

It was 1960. John F. Kennedy was newly elected, the Beatles had formed in Liverpool, the U.S. had become involved in Vietnam, and civil rights had moved to the forefront with the famous sit-in at Woolworth's lunch counter in Greenville, NC by four black college students protesting a lack of service because they were Negro. Captain Kangaroo had a sidekick named Mr. Greenjeans, and Barney, the purple dinosaur, wasn't created yet, nor was Sesame Street with a big yellow bird. Some families still had black maids, though times were changing. That was the summer before I began kindergarten.

I was an early riser as a child. I would go outside at dawn and patiently watch morning glories bloom, in blue and hot pink, before the dew on the grass was even dry. Mom would leave out a salt shaker and tell me if I could shake salt on a bird's tail I could catch it. I tried hard, but never got close enough to succeed. While I was still chasing the early birds, the milk delivery man would see me and laugh heartily as he walked to the door with clanking glass milk bottles. I can still hear them in my mind.

Mom would call me in, park me on a barstool and give me a box of Cocoa Puffs, a bowl and milk. After several refills of cereal the milk would turn chocolate. One particular summer morning, sitting at the long kitchen counter that was similar to Woolworth's, I was eating my breakfast, facing the open jalousie window that looked out over the side yard. I saw the tall, skinny, black garbage man walk to our trash cans. He was a jovial, toothless whistler and came about every third day. In 1960, black folks were still called colored. My parents refused to use the "N" word, but it was a time when there was still a lot of disrespect by ignorant whites towards dark skinned people. We also never owned any white sheets since we lived in an area of the south that had Ku Klux Klan activity. If white sheets were draped on the clothesline it might be a signal that a Klan member was active in that household. Mom always made sure our sheets had brightly colored flowers on them. The laundry was still hung outside on the line so that perception was important to Mom and Dad. Ninety

percent of homes had at least a black and white television, but only ten percent had a clothes dryer.

When you are four years old though, you don't concern yourself with anything but having fun and playing outside. I had not yet paid attention to the differences in skin color, but that summer morning I noticed. I saw him pass by the window and as I lifted my spoonful of chocolate cereal I blurted very loudly, "Hey! He's a chocolate Cocoa Puff man!" I was immediately shushed by Mom, "Be quiet! He will hear you!" Did she say that to scare me or was she trying to teach me a proper decorum?

A few days later, I woke early but skipped the salt shaker routine. Instead, I went outside behind the house, near the trash cans, with all my tempera paint and watercolors. I took off all my clothes and painted myself head to toe with every color I possessed. It wasn't long before I heard the trash truck coming down the street, so I hid behind the rubbish cans and bushes. Whistling as he approached, he reached our cans, and out I jumped in all my painted glory! "Look! Now I'm colored too!" I yelled joyfully. He laughed really hard. I was just trying to be like him. He was like my favorite cereal, he was always happy, and he could play outside in the morning. Age, gender, and color did not matter. Instead, I saw a friend I had not yet met.

Hearing me from the kitchen window, my mom came outside, and seeing me naked and painted embarrassed her. She was also very apologetic to the garbage man who was still laughing. I got spanked, scrubbed harshly, and my paints were not replenished for many months. When I explained to Mom my reasoning she wasn't as mad. It was worth it, because I had made a new friend. "Good morning, Miss Laurie!" he would say each time he passed by the window. I don't remember his name but I used to look forward to his greeting on those summer mornings. Childhood times of innocence and devoid of prejudice—that is how it should always be.



Coil

Nicole Denny



Shine at Dawn
Karen Biggs

The Warrior Daughter

Leo Rivers

The beltway like a cyclotron
degaussed her moral compass
and within, the worlds in collision
beat her lambskin
into an Empress Wu
of porcelain perfection
and clockwork calculation

she could have gone to Boston
and edited trade paperback editions
of Newbury and Pulitzer Prize winners
- glib and semi-shaven

she could have gone to Los Angeles
and scripted PBS documentaries
detailing Inuit teenage drug-use or Brazilian
super-slums, but no

she being the over-achieving best-of-breed
daughter of Sons of Men given
to Military Careers
the Seventh Generation and First Female
of them

she chose the Army and Intelligence
it was her decision
to disappear into the Nameless
of an Acronym
and learn Arabic and Chinese
and the Kung Fu of passing through
the firestorms of Politics in Washington
like a neutrino through the sun

she is impeccably invisible.

she is zero divided by one.

you looked right at her
what was the color of her hair?

air

she was the color of empty air.



Rainbow

Matt McWalters

Ambrosia

Wayne Hoogendoorn

Beautiful collage of colors dancing in the breeze.

A bouquet of fragrances wafts, drawing you closer to the epicenter.

Soft feathery stigma brush gently over as you drink up the sweet nectar provided.

Rush of heat pours over your body.

Numbness fills your head.

Vibrant colors blur, then fade till...



Up In Flames
Rosie Lockie

Shoelaces

Michael Maring

They said, "Put your jacket on, it's chilly, and tie your shoes before you trip. Make sure to keep an eye on your brother." We didn't listen. We never listened. We were in a hurry to get out.

"Slow down! Tie your shoes before you trip. Watch out for your brother!" They yelled. They were always yelling. We had fifty cents between us and could hear the music from the ice cream truck. The door slammed as we ran faster.

"No pushing, no shoving. Keep your hands to yourself. Your shoes are untied." They didn't speak our language. We hadn't seen each other all day. It was our way of saying we missed each other. I made sure we got home okay.

"Look both ways before you cross the street, and tie your shoes!" They screamed. We stopped, toes gripping the edge of the curb. There was never any traffic, but we shook our heads both ways and ran to the park.

"Be careful and be home by ten. Make sure your brother sticks with you, and for Christ's sake, tie your shoes." They warned. But the girls were waiting at the river under a harvest moon. We had a twelve pack and a bottle, but no clocks.

Then one day, we were pushing and shoving each other as we ran across the street, when my brother was hit by a bus. Flesh and bone dried to white powder and blew away on a searing wind. There was nothing left, but a pair of beat up high tops with the shoe laces dangling. I looked up and down the street; bent down to tie my shoes, pulled my jacket tight, and walked away.





Matt McWalters

Chocolate Freedom

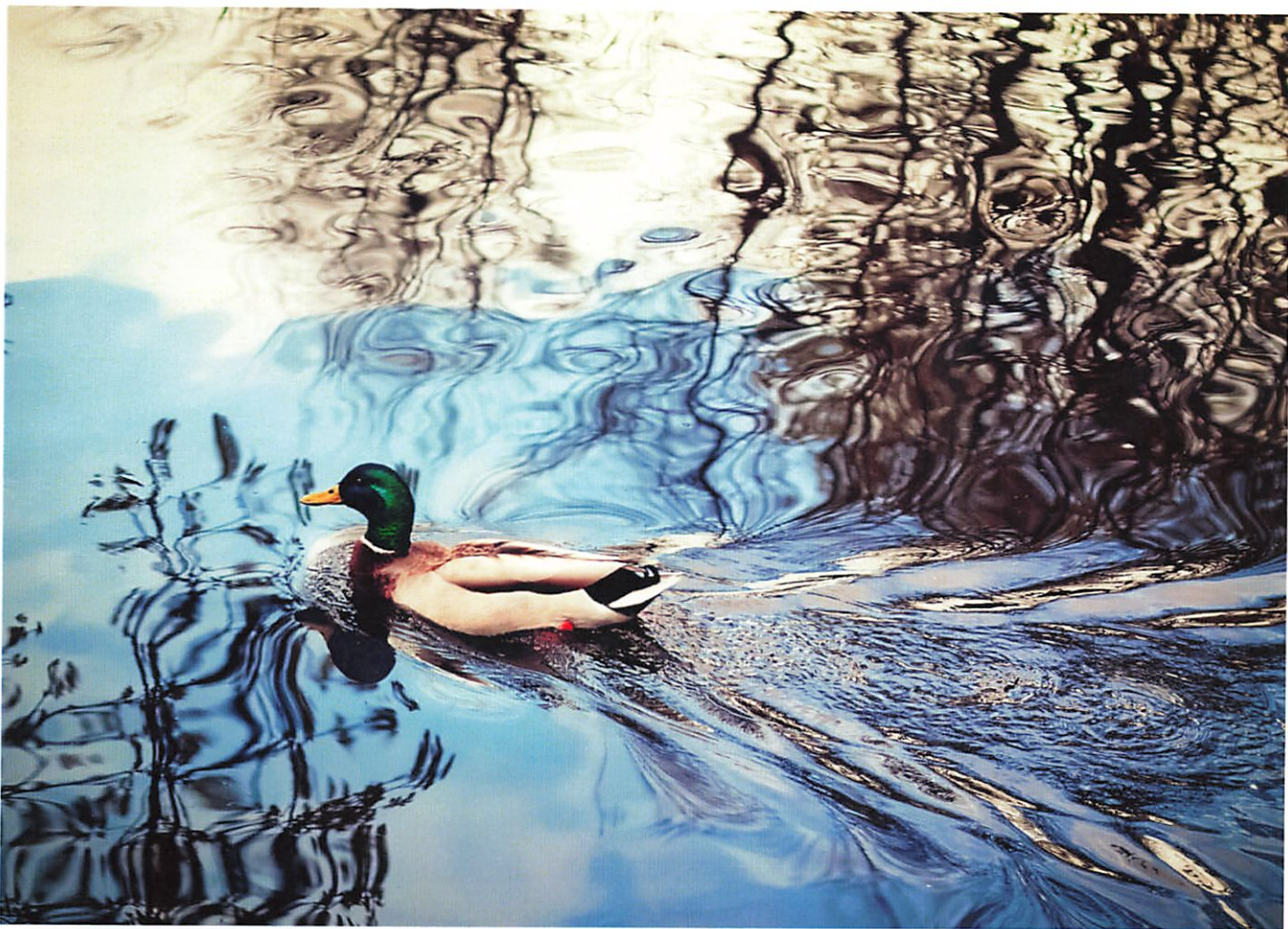
Megan Sanchez

I have spent my whole life waiting to do something. To get out and explore the world, to see everything I could. To know that my life has meant something in the big picture, to give a little of myself to something or someone else, but I cannot do it alone. I need help. I have everything I need to be on my journey and to accomplish what I want. I just need someone to pick me up, and take that first step with me. I lay here every day, waiting and hoping that someone will want me. That I will be the one they chose to take with them beyond those sliding glass doors. Please, please, if there is a God out there in this vast chocolate world, let someone take me!

The days keep passing and my hope starts to dim more and more. A little girl walked past and begged her mother to have me, but to my dismay, her mother was set against her knowing me. A man came and stood by me. I thought he was going to take me, but he chose Almond Joy instead. I broke down that night to Kit Kat and Reese's; it was the first time either of them had seen my Rice Krispies show. Licorice over heard me and started rumors the next day with the Jelly Belly's and M&M's that I wasn't candy enough for anyone to want. Things seemed to get worse after that. Anytime a candy was chosen over me, they would all start laughing, and making jokes. I had lost all faith at that point until Whatchamacallit told me to man up.

How was anyone going to want me if I didn't want myself? He told me, I needed to have the faith in myself that I was searching for in others. If that didn't work, that I could always remember that when people saw my red wrapper and my 100 Grand printing they would know what I was. When I gave Whatchamacallit a blank stare, he raised his eyebrow and said, "Hey, at least when people talk about you they don't just look at you and go, hmm, what is this? Oh it's a Thingamagig!" This made me giggle to myself, knowing that he and Thingamagig didn't get along well. They had a long-standing family feud, something to do with one stealing the other's pet gummy bear.

After listening to what Whatchamacallit told me, I really took to my soft nougat core the meaning of it all. I realized he was right, and if I was going to find that one special person that, I needed to work on myself first. Every day I wait, and when another candy is chosen instead, I don't get upset. I don't listen to Licorice or the others making fun, or tossing their snide comments in my direction. I simply lay there, wave my wrapper to the candy leaving and wish them the best. I know now, that my day will come. My purpose will show itself and soon I will get to see the world. I will get to go hand in wrapper out those sliding glass doors.



Just Keep Swimming
Jessica Hemrick

Unprotected Life

Elaine Brown

If I absorb what touches my skin,
If I leave traces of myself on everything I touch,
If I inhale the gaseous expulsions from nose, mouth and anus,
If I spew forth particles in the same manner

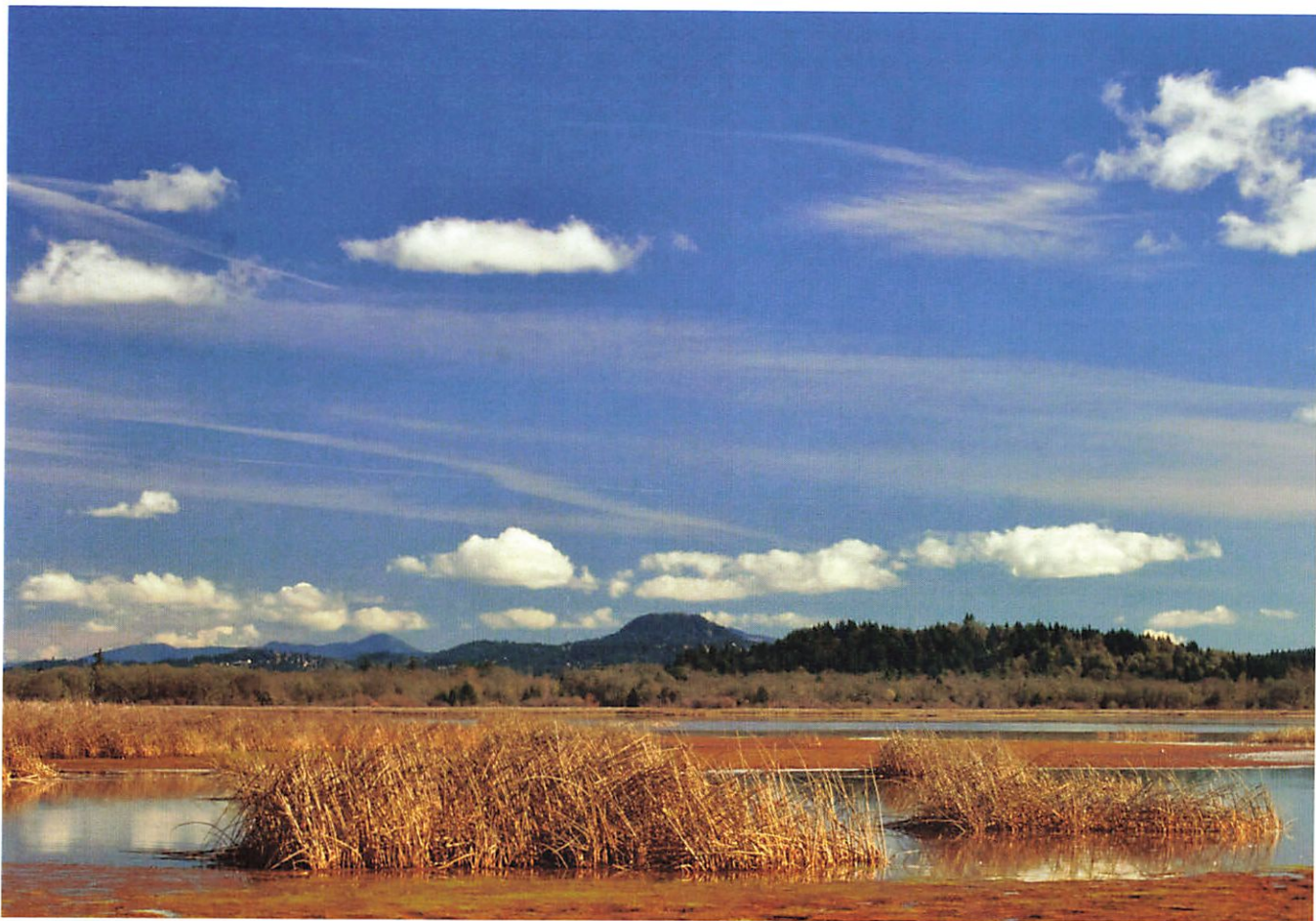
Who has consumed me?
Who have I consumed?

If I have touched semen and blood, mucus and vomit, urine and feces, and
If I am, in part, those others, who are only known to me by what they left behind,
and
If my leavings have been, willingly or not, made part of what you call you

Who, then, is who?

If the principal of quantum sensitivity dictates that the beat of your heart
Changes me at the most elemental level, and mine changes you,
If we are subtly, unstoppably changed by the presence of each other, then

I must care for you in order to care for myself, because
I cannot tell where I end and you begin



Imagine
Gina Alexandri



Starfish
John Watson

{Untitled}

Shyana Swanson

I need a bigger
box
to hold our memories.
If I could
somehow
contain you
with this cardboard
maybe
you will live forever.
And I can
open you up
whenever my
memory of you
gets cloudy.



Ceramics
Sage Garrison

The Cartography of Desire on a Quarter Inch Tilt

Samantha Krop

I live in a place on a quarter inch tilt.
Cabinets close themselves and pencils roll
Toward the back wall.
From my tilted window, I watch the earth
go about its business
At an angle.

Perched as an alien on my quarter inch tilt,
I observe the sleepwalkers
Moving, not seeing,
Pinballs on a predetermined path.
Struggling only in an effort to decipher
Themselves.

On my quarter inch tilt I desire
Feeling:
Guttural sobs that rack the body,
A thaw.
Endless sky,
Rippling fields of grass,
Wet soil and the silent knowing of a
childhood friend.

On my quarter inch tilt I long for certainty.
To tell the truth,
For once,
To say what I mean.

On this tilt I put on a lioness front,
Poised and pensive: smoldering.
A small child in predator's clothing.
On my quarter inch tilt I ache to get it right
until I boil over
And erupt..

Living on a quarter inch tilt is pleasant
when the level world is sick,
Bleeding from its core, being consumed.
It's a pleasure to be a bit askew
From its carefully maintained insanity.

On my quarter inch tilt
I refuse to adjust.
to the willfully sick and erect.

I situate myself in solidarity
with the living and the out of line.

For Kesey

Michael Maring

Don't tell mother
Billy got a razor
And let himself
Out into the cool night

Crank the Ratchet
Tighten the vise
Stars float before
Her eyes

Lightning flies
Look down at the drool
Look up see the
Holes in the sky

Mac don't know
Jack anymore

Chief sits on
The corner and
Sighs

Some fly east
Some fly west
None of us leave
The cuckoo's nest

Newborn

Cody Calaway

click

A father takes a picture of his newborn son.

“Man...he looks just like me...it’s creepy.”

“Creepy?” His wife asks. “He’s your son.”

“I know but...it’s just weird...” he replies. “We made a life and...it was so easy.”

click

“Yeah, well, that’s just nature, hun,” she responds.

“I wonder when we become self-aware...is it always there once we’re born or...” Suddenly turns toward his wife, “What’s your oldest memory, Suz?”

“Um...I remember my father’s face. I think that’s the oldest one.”

“Well, maybe that has something to do with it,” the father replies, “Recognizing yourself in another like you and then suddenly there is a lever switched or a button pressed and then, bam.”

Silence as the man is focused taking pictures.

“Man, I love this camera. It’s now my favorite. Look at these pictures.” The man shows his wife the pictures through his view finder and after a moment he contently expresses, “I’ve named it Adam.”

“You name your cameras?” The wife scowls quizzically.

“Yep, that’s Scarlet and Rex over there.” The father nods towards the baby’s room where he keeps his other cameras. “But this one...this is Adam.”

click

“Look, turn that thing off, put it away, and actually interact with your child for once,” The wife commands.

“Ok, ok...jeeze.” The father removes the battery pack to charge and walks into the baby’s room. He places the camera down so that it is facing his other two, smiles and walks away.”

The cameras face each other in silence.

click

Grandma

Sabrina Smith

I liked the two lane highway drives with momma best. We used to drive all the way out of the trees and into Momma's country: Umatilla. "Full of Indians and thieves," Momma liked to say. I thought it looked like tortilla but it didn't sound that way when Momma said it. She liked teaching me stuff in the car. She taught me how to know where we were going by the following the thin black line that ran up the map. Momma always said that where we were going was where, "we was headed." I had to be real careful to say that last part real quick because my tongue wanted to lay lazy in my mouth and not get it all out in time. At the passenger window in Momma's Camaro I'd wipe my hand cold trying to see her reflection instead of mine. She liked to sing to the songs on the radio and when she did that I could study her real good without her noticing. I thought back then that I might've been that no good bastards kid and just another burden on her, but I loved her. That should count for something I reckoned.

We took these trips at the end of the month because that's when the rent was due and Umatilla is where grandma still lived. It would be after we got in the car and then I'd say, "We should get there before dark now," and Momma would say, "Yeah. That sounds about right Pumpkin." She called me Pumpkin when she thought I was like a baby and in the car I was always her baby girl. When we first got to town we'd go to this old hamburger stand that made malts and milkshakes. First Momma would walk outside and over to the payphone that was butted up against the bathroom outside, back from when everything was segregated. Momma had been coming to this place since she was my age—going on nine but feeling eleven.

I liked grandma best, out of all my ma's she was the nicest. She always had cookies in a jar by the fridge and tea in fancy cups. Me and grandma would walk to the park by her house and feed the squirrels while Mom went to visit her high school friends. When me and grandma was alone she would start up asking about my school work and then she'd ask who momma ran around with, which meant, "Did she have a boyfriend that was nice back home?" Finally she'd ask me if I'd seen my dad lately. Grandma's how I come to know that momma and dad got married real quick after my brother was born so folks around town wouldn't say he was a bastard. I didn't know what a bastard really was back then but I knew old folks didn't like the word getting used unless they were the ones who was sayin' it. Grandma liked to call daddy "a lazy bastard". I'd look at her crooked every time she said it hoping she'd see me not knowing what she meant and explain but she didn't. She just would hand me a cookie and kiss me.

The blue suit seated behind the table cleared her throat and brought me back from my

daydream. Grandma had been dead three years almost to the day I thought as I tuned into the nasality of the voice assaulting me. "Honey, did you hear me?" it pleaded. When I didn't respond she continued, "I asked how long have your parents been separated." It was supposed to be a question but it seemed to me more like a statement so I answered it that way, "All my life." The radio behind her played "Evil woman", I like this song and thought it would be more pleasant if she'd let me just listen to it instead of going over stuff about school and my options that I didn't much care about. Back in this same blue room where all the kids in my class went around and shared a feeling, kid stuff really like any of us are going to tell anything important to a stranger when small town life is all about family. Outsiders don't ever understand that, they think that they can tone down their talk and fit in, but they don't.

I knew that Momma would've wanted a cigarette right then, had she been in the office with me and that's one reason that she wasn't there with me. The real big reason was I had burned the fancy little gold letter headed paper as soon as I'd opened it. Momma didn't get the mail, I did and for some reason these city types never did know that so I liked to think of it as, "what momma didn't know wouldn't hurt either of us."

"Do you know why you're here?" the falling glasses questioned from the high back chair. I wanted to say, "Not to give me a million dollars and a new pony. But I didn't" I answered with what she wanted to hear hoping to get this formality through with quick. I greeted her eyes and smiled clearly content with myself. "You think I'm special," I stated before looking back out the window that had first attracted my attention. There was an old cedar at there and it reminded me of home. Her voice lifted at the end, "You are special." Without her consciously taking notice her fat fingers began caressing the pearls that were strung around her neck. I knew right then that she was nervous and that we'd be done soon. Good, I thought, I can go back to history and learn what I'm supposed to know about cowboys and Indians.

"You've done really good so far. I just wish one of your parents would've come in today so that we could talk." I wanted to finish, "So you could talk to them like I wasn't here, no thanks Lady". I nodded and let my silence carry me back out into the courtyard. For the first time I noticed the dirt under my fingernails and hid them quickly in my lap. For the first time that week I thought about the gun and its final resting place. The gun was small with a pearl handle that matched the color and size of my grandma's palms. She'd acquired the gun in her third marriage, "The Rodeo man" she was fond of calling him and for that reason I didn't remember his name. I'd dug the guns grave with my own short fingers five days prior after all that rain last week. I knew that Momma would be headed straight to hell for shooting that bastard last week but I didn't think she needed to get there just yet, but maybe I was wrong and she'd been there a long time already.



Fly

Jalen Miller

Rainier Is Next To Go

Leo Rivers

white clouds make
grace-like gull wings
in the upper sea
— a cursive yet stiff wet brush stroke
— a wry brow wrapped
over the snow made eye
tip top
of the volcano.

there is no peace in wildflower
won military battlefields
nor paper-house zen
temples where an old monk in
full lotus snores
like the old growth shawled
breast of the volcano.

old men
 after the first heart attack know
women after their first
 childbirth know

silence is not the only
 thing to know
about volcano.

Put Down the Guitar

Victor St. Petersburg

he drank himself to pieces
to forget about everything
and how he lost it
was gonna cry himself to sleep
as he was heading for the door
in walked a pair of breasts
soon he was acting he was sober
she was acting unimpressed
so he laughed and smiled and he really sympathized
with her trite wasted words and her oh so hollow eyes
she was a beautiful girl and that was all that she was
but at a time like that it was more than enough for him
she took his best years
but gave him good advice
about the places he shouldn't go
with the friends she didn't like
don't smoke so much
i don't like your car

buy me a ring
put down that guitar
he just laughed and he smiled and he really sympathized
with her trite wasted words and her oh so hollow eyes
she was a beautiful girl and that was all that she was
but at a time like that it was more than enough for him
she said put down the guitar
she said put down the guitar
she said put down the guitar
he'll never put it down
so he laughed and he smiled and he really sympathized
with her trite wasted words and her oh so hollow eyes
she was a beautiful girl and that was all she would be
and after a while it just wasn't enough for him
needless to say
that was all that she wrote
you'd think he'd be a happy free man
but his heart was still somehow broke
so he went back to the bar
to drink himself to death
feeling sorry for himself
when in walked a pair of ...

Swans on Dark Waters

Laura Reitz

“I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth. No single space project will be more exciting, or more impressive to mankind, or more important and none will be so difficult or expensive to accomplish.” —President John F. Kennedy address to Congress, May 1961.

In the early 1960s my dad was working on projects for the U.S. space race. We lived in Orlando Florida just an hour and a half from the launch site, Cape Canaveral. He often worked on secret projects at secret locations but always arrived home by the weekend. At my age, about 6 years old, I had no concept of space, but then neither did most adults. The Twilight Zone was as close to anything imaginable with an occasional TV episode featuring space aliens. It was real men that chose the Mercury Seven, the original astronauts who would change fantasy to reality.

Alan Shepard was the first American in space, traveling on Mercury 3, in May 1961. His flight was one-hundred-sixteen miles above the earth for a duration of fifteen minutes. Less than a year later, in February 1962, John Glenn became the first American to orbit in space on Mercury 6. It was referred to as “Friendship 7” by Glenn in honor of the seven original astronauts. The orbit consisted of three times around the earth in five hours. He sailed through quiet space seeing constellations such as Cygnus, before returning in a violent, fiery, descent toward earth and the splash down into the dark water of the sea.

The space race was in full orbit. The goal carried on and under President Nixon, in July 1969,

Apollo Eleven landed with astronaut Neil Armstrong who set the first human foot on the moon, followed by Buzz Aldrin. An Apollo One patch and an American flag, made by Sears, were planted on the moon's surface to mark the moment in history. The patch was in remembrance of Grissom, Chaffee, and White, who died trapped in the Apollo One capsule fire in 1967.

Every Saturday that wasn't rainy, my dad would walk my sister and me almost three miles to the downtown city park, a forty-three acre park with a twenty-three acre lake that was circled by a wide sidewalk. The center of the lake had a huge fountain that changed colors at night like a small version of Aurora Borealis in the mist. The lake was surrounded by large, climbable oak trees and towering, straight palms with feathered fronds that curved from the top as if reaching to the ground. Coconuts rested at the top looking like they could burst and disperse white milk into falling trails of vapor. There was a cherry red Chinese pagoda on one side and a playground on the other. Along the way we always stopped at the Winn-Dixie for Nehi orange soda, loaves of bread and salad greens.

Lake Eola was filled with swans waiting to be fed. Feeding the swans meant mustering bravery. These birds were as tall as my sister and me. Brazenly eager to be fed, but maintaining a protective decorum when their mates were close by, they could have easily overwhelmed us with their massive wingspan. When the bread and the greens were gone the swans would return to the water and gently, gracefully, glide away. They arched their long necks, looking down into the water, seemingly thoughtful as they quietly drifted. Almost like being in prayer.

There is a myth of Cygnus, who was a friend and relative of Phaeton, the son of Helios. Helios was a god of the sun and drove his chariot from the east to the west, around the world each day. Phaeton stole the chariot one day and had difficulty controlling how close to the earth he would come. An angered Zeus threw a lightning bolt, striking the chariot and sending Phaeton into the river Eridanus. Cygnus was so upset

when he could not find Phaeton beneath the waters after he made many long attempts, that Zeus and the other gods felt sorry for him and turned Cygnus into a swan. The swan forever looks down into the water pensively, with its neck arched, as if to find Phaeton. Eventually, the gods placed Cygnus into the heavens as a constellation.

The outings with my father were far from dull even when we tiredly walked the two plus mile trek for home. He would take turns letting us ride on his shoulders, six feet closer to space. My dad—designer of space chariots and rockets of red glare, supporter of star sailors and dreams, provider of food and comfort.

Over time, his work saw its way through the space shuttle years. I was thirty and living in Washington D.C. but had flown home to visit. We attended the launch of the space shuttle, Challenger. The Sunshine State was not warm but the day was vibrantly blue, cloudless and cold at thirty-one degrees. Uncharacteristic ice hung on launch pad thirty-nine-B. The Challenger had already been delayed at least two days, but on January 28, 1986 it left the ground at eleven-thirty-eight a.m. The ground shook, the sun gleamed, the air roared. The trailing, thick, white plumes looked like cursive sky writing that bid farewell. Seven humans left the ground for heaven. Seventy-three seconds later the Challenger exploded, its pieces falling, followed by an unsurvivable crash into the ocean. I saw my father change, forever somber. His shaken head bowed low, instantly stoic and inwardly angered. He had agreed with two of Morton-Thiokol's engineers that the conditions were too risky for launch. They knew what had just happened. The Roger's Commission became a necessary formality but someone should have listened sooner.

Eight-thousand-three-hundred-eighty-six days later, after many thoughtfully disturbing years, my father died. I was living back in Florida and had visited him that morning of January 2009. The following evening I left the house to wander and think, taking my camera with me. I did not purposefully go to Lake Eola, but that is where I ended up. I watched the swans glide. Mother birds guided the young cygnets toward the nests to be guarded by a floating father swan. As dusk darkened over the water, I looked at a swan

through my camera lens just as he curled his neck and tucked his head beneath his wing. Calm, supported by still water. This bird's form took on the shape of a human heart. Its neck mimicked the great aortic vessel. The shoulders and wings were the chambers; the atria and the ventricles. Subtle lines of the white feathers looked similar to the fibers that carry electrical impulses that energize the heart muscle to pump. No movement was apparent, no quivering in a last attempt to remain awake. Just restful floating, at peace like my dad.



Heceta Head Lighthouse at Sunset
Jessica Hemrick

Dust Bunny

Jenn Scott

Selene's ex-husband cheated on her with a buxom stripper he met in a bookstore in Vegas before he was sent to prison for various fraud charges. Charlie had swept her off her feet at seventeen— still in high school and a head full of nothing— and he brought her to an illegally staked-out claim to a land that was nobody's. She was left with his geriatric three-legged hound that had cataracts in both eyes, sixty-four dollars, and a mobile home that had already been through one Kansas tornado in '89. Somehow, it ended up in the desert.

Once a month she drove eighty-eight miles in Charlie's '88 Chevy to the post office to pick up a check from her mother who paid her to stay away. Then she went to the nearby grocery store to cash it and pay for food, toiletries, and a case of Strawberry Hill, after which she made a visit to the truck stop for pie and coffee and to soak in the lusty stares of the young, lonely, and often married road cowboys. But she would never take any of them up on their offers of company.

Early mornings she would take her coffee and the hound outside on the half-finished, unstained cedar deck. Together in silence they watched the light of the sun set fire to naïve, now fuchsia clouds, as that relentless orb rose over purple, jagged mountains which chafed against an unforgiving country of dust, sharp weeds, and creatures that were brown. Sometimes she brought the radio outside with her when she felt especially lonely. After three years she picked up a moderate amount of Spanish—pero ella no podía comprender.

She had recurring dreams.

A knock on the door—just one. She opens it. Looks outside into a blue sky and notices an approaching dust storm in the distance. No one's there. Then, a small "A-hem!" She looks down and sees a pink jack-rabbit who introduces himself as Gomez. She and Gomez have a short conversation. It is always different. This time it is a discussion about the misfortunes and regrets of Coyote. Selene tries to change the subject, but Gomez insists on his point, having the last word. Then he grabs a passing hummingbird and hitches a ride into the oncoming dust storm. When he disappears, the dream abruptly ends and she wakes.

She doesn't try to interpret this dream, nor the others.

Their message would only pull her away.



Abundance
Jenn Scott



Ceramics
Sage Garrison



Sunset

Matt McWalters



Sentinel

Rosie Lockie

Descent Into Self-Defense

Jena Williams

I am not a dangerous person.
I go to church every Sunday
and pray every day.
I am terrified of confrontation.
Even the idea of yelling is scary.
“Police say woman attacked on bike path.”

I am not a monster.
I sleep with my window open no matter the weather
because I worry about suffocating.
I stare at a screen until my eyes hurt.
Television, Music, Movies, News.
“They were asking for it.” No, they were not.

I am not a killer.
I ride the bus everywhere I go
because I am afraid of driving.
I would rather stand than sit between two people.
Show me there is some good out there.
Do not sit next to me, please.

I am not a dangerous person.
My keys are clenched between my knuckles.
My hand is on a can of mace
and my stun gun is purple.
Fifteen million volts. I keep it on my belt.
I just want to get home safely.

I am now a dangerous person.
But I did not start out that way.

Fauna

Jenn Scott

Most mornings I enjoy taking a constitutional out in the fields. I'll get up at five, brew my Folgers, go outside when the clouds are blazing in oranges with the sun's newfound sense of purpose, and get on my ATV and check the crops—I have to make sure no varmints are stealing my product. I just don't trust them. The farm is all I got these days—that and the new business. Some say things are better now. I don't know. Things were pretty good back then—without all this new morality. Yep. Things were pretty damn peachy until the animals started talking.

That's right sir, once them critters started yappin', lab animals began negotiating with morally ambiguous scientists, and in a deal of acquiescence, many lab rodents agreed to participate in some of the more harmless experiments in exchange for generous stock in cheese. The chimps, however, downright refused. House pets humbled their human companions with revelational, voyeuristic witness accounts of very personal, closed-curtain activities and sexual acts. They could have blackmailed us, but they didn't. The fish in the seas made an agreement with the commercial fishing industry for rights to limited fishing in exchange for our tidying up the oceans. Birds became flight controllers and reclaimed most of their air space, but negotiated *some* flight paths to the planes in exchange for stopping deforestation and all them pesticides. But I ain't seen a plane in months. As far as the pesticides go, that's why I gotta be so darn vigilant in my fields. Just about when the bees were about to buy the farm, the whole gang began talking, and what bees were left met up with the birds and plum took away all use of pesticides. I suppose that's a good thing for the crops—but the insects! Those insects are hard to drive a bargain with once they get munchin' on my latest rhubarb. They usually stay in their own field, but sometimes stragglers can get greedy. Can't kill 'em...

unnaturally anyway. Gotta “taaalk” it out with them. Like I said—things were easier.

The desert dwellers—snakes, scorpions, antelope, camels, coyotes, tortoises, tigers, whatever the hell lives out there in the Middle East—recognized the crisis there and served as sentinels to conflict and warfare, vowing to bite, stampede, and sting all who participated in violence. We don’t need no troops over there anymore. Hell, we ain’t got no war anymore.

You would think warfare between human and animals would have ensued, and it almost did, save for the naturalists, biologists, and farmers who knew the animals could bargain not only with us, but with each other. They could rise against us quite easily...could annihilate us if they wished, but after being silent so long in observation, they watched us, gained wisdom, and after speech they—most of ‘em anyway—were our superiors in intellect, diplomacy, and compassion. They taught us their plight, and ours, in the “clutches of our own ignorance.” The ads on TV remind us of that daily, which is why I got rid of my damn TV.

Oh, we still eat meat occasionally—hell, we’re carnivorous. Even the carnivorous animals have to have their meat. I bet you thought it’d be a vegetarian paradise after those animals began spewing forth words, but naah. They just made us more conscientious-like about it. The cows don’t mind much about their role in things. Neither do the pigs and chickens. Not anymore. They’re all spoiled to high heaven now before they go through processing. They even have a kind of spirituality, like the Indians I suppose. They talk about some great spirit, but they never try to convert any of us. Damn good thing too. I’d be the first one to get excommunicated.

The occasional murder trial still crosses the headlines: “Man commits heinous crimes against bovines in violation with the Montana Livestock Convention of 2026,” and so forth. The elephants preside over these kinds of trials, alongside human judges of the highest caliber; although, they have to carry out their duties by satellite. Have you ever tried to move an elephant out of Africa, especially for a trial? They hate travelling. Occasionally, hyenas and other such varmints will go on a rampage for no reason...but they

would be tried in a court of law like everyone else.

Some say there are rogue factions of wild animals out there, waiting for humans to screw up—waiting to strike. I don't know about all that, although I do lay awake some nights wondering about the nocturnals.

Yeah, those animal rights activists, those damn PETA crazies, felt pretty smug after the fauna began talking. Animal rights actually meant something after that.

The animals made us better humans overall, I guess. But it's been a pain in the ass for some of us. I used to be a taxidermist. Turns out the little buggers don't appreciate being stuffed post-mortem and mounted for display in hunting lodges—something to do with “death with dignity” and all such nonsense. After a few years of unemployment though, in an attempt to re-invigorate the economy when folks such as myself lost their jobs—you know, due to them being unfriendly towards the animals and all—I was approached by a diplomat for House Pet Relations who wanted me to get to work on mummification for house pets. Apparently, they like the mummification process as a funerary custom. So...that's what I do now.

I suppose things are pretty good these days. Everybody is getting along for the most part, even the humans. I can't complain too much. The animals *have* been pretty decent caretakers.

Every now and then though—when I'm out in my fields placating those greedy locust bastards—I swear I can hear the corn whispering.



Piano Kitty
Nicole Rund

Forever Frozen

Victor St. Petersburg

the demon put his hand on my head and said softly

i'll give you whatever you wish name it

i'll give you power

i'll give you fame

i'll give you wealth

i'll give you women

anything

i said i want tomorrow to never come

i want this bottle to never run dry

i want my lover to lay here with me forever frozen in time

the demon laughed shook his head and said i won't do that

a real life in the daylight and a sense of it all slipping away

is what you pay

but i'll take your guilt

i'll take your pain

i'll take your sorrow

i'll take your shame

all away

i said i want tomorrow to never come

i want this bottle to never run dry

i want my lover to lay here with me forever frozen in time

night may fall

but only day breaks

The Magic Moon Boy

Lynn Reichman

I

My grandson sits as he stacks the colors higher and higher. Vivid, clear and simple like a child's world; purple, yellow, red, blue, orange. "It breaks!" he exclaims with a toddler's glee as the blocks fall. "Can you put them back together?" I ask. "Yes," he smiles assuredly, with his angel face. So sweet, almost too beautiful, and maybe too good. So mature beyond his years, I wonder, does he sense the undercurrents that could sweep him away? But I watch and see how relaxed he is as he plays. Life seems safe to him for now, children can be so lucky in what they don't yet know. He's my Magic Moon boy; when he is with me, at my forest home, in town, even in the books we read, he always looks for the moon and he shines softly, gently.

II

His mother, my oldest child, was blinding sunlight. Burning, consuming. The children's therapist said "I feel like I've been run over by a truck," after an hour with her. "I know" was all I could answer. It took years until a partial diagnosis of brain dysfunction and severe learning disabilities. But there was more they couldn't figure out then behind her extreme moods, odd sensations, and frantic impulsiveness. But oh how she could dance, and do gymnastics with ease, flinging herself into life. But still the problems stretched through her growing years like a rubber band, until stretched too far they snapped in her teens and her life spiraled down.

III

"Can I see your hand?" I ask the Moon Boy as I try to gently open his fingers while we play on the toy covered couch. He clenches his small fist even tighter. "Look, there are lines on my hands," I say brightly as I hold them up. He peers at them, happy at his new discovery. "Can I see the lines on yours?" I try again, and he curiously opens his right hand to my seeking fingers. A very unusually long head line; I'm pleased but not completely surprised at this intelligence I'd sensed. His heart line curves smoothly upwards to just the right

place of calm caring. Yes. But as I try to check his life line's span, his fist tightly closes.

Maybe it's best not to look. In his mother's fragile, confused, flimsily reconstructed world, with her attention often turned inward towards herself, what are his chances? Already he almost seems to have to take care of himself in many ways. I worry in resigned sadness because I know that my cancer ridden body won't be here to take protect and help take care of him long enough.

IV

"Grama, the moon!" he calls to me as I walk out their door on my way home. I go back and lift up the pajama clad boy, carrying him out far enough on the grass until we can see the crescent moon between the tree branches. His round face lights up; glowing. He is a storybook perfect child. And I leave thinking, "What will he do, will he be able to put the pieces of his life together again if they eventually fall?"

Me, My Brother, My Sister
For Nathan

Sarah Berry

My sister can swim laps and learn drills.
My brother does hip-hop and various sports.
They've both been in plays.
I am content but,
What am I missing?
Don't be mad when I'm not a team player.
I do best in the spotlight, a star actor.

My sister can drive and create essays.
My brother makes posters for his class.
They both use cursive.
I am content but,
When can I do these things?
Don't be mad when I refuse to sign or type.
Hand cramps are inconvenient when I need them so.

When angry, my sister writes, my brother takes deep breathes.

They've both yelled (often at each other) before.

I am content but,

How should *I express* anger?

Don't be mad when I pull film out or tear my books.

I can't journal; I won't pretend I'm not angry.

I can't even yell how I feel at you!

Don't be mad when I don't sit still for pictures,

or don't give you a hug,

or become loud during a movie.

I hate the flash; I may not like your perfume; I thought you like this scene, too.

My sister goes to college, but I'll never have a class with her.

My brother builds grand things with Legos, but I don't have the patience.

Then again, I am not my brother or my sister.

Treat me—and accept me—as a person, like you would anyone else.

I am mentally retarded and I have autism, but I am still human.



Enchantment
Kathy Torvik

Since 1971, Denali has published the literature and art of Lane County residents and Lane Community College students. We strive to give both new and established artists and authors the opportunity to share their work with the community and be heard. As a student-produced magazine, Denali seeks submissions of quality and spirit and strives for professionalism as well as fun in all of its endeavors. Submissions are selected based on the various personalities of the editorial board as well as for the consideration of the Denali audience at large. As this year's editor-in-chief, I have enjoyed this experience tremendously, and I wish to thank my volunteer editorial board, Victor, Cody, and Chris. Without you it would have been a lonely journey of exploration through all the wonderful submissions. To Denali's readers, I certainly hope you enjoyed this year's issue and I hope that you will consider submitting next year. Please tell your friends about Denali and make us a local favorite in your perusal of local art and literature.

Jennifer Scott, 2014 Denali Editor-in-Chief

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Dark Hands

Kathleen Schulman