
Literary Arts Society Presents
The Mosaic



Fall 2002
Voices and Visions

A Special Message from the Chief Editor

The mission and purpose of the *Mosaic* is to represent diverse views on all subjects, particularly those that are controversial. The title "Mosaic" encompasses this purpose because a mosaic is made of multi-colored tiles that form one picture.

Some of the views presented in the magazine may be considered offensive or distasteful, nevertheless they still have a right to be printed and read. Philosopher John Mill states that you cannot begin to argue against an opposing point of view until you have read and understood the other side's argument. Thus it is of the utmost importance that everyone have a chance to speak and be heard. The history of art and literature has often been characterized by censorship and intolerance. The editor of this magazine does not wish to continue this pattern of history. Art and literature must teach and entertain. To deny publication based on "controversy" or "indecency" is to effectively stop the learning process. Please consider this while reading the *Mosaic*.

Before I conclude, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Timothy M. Brudereck and Dan Buzi for all their help in putting together this semester's publication. Their time and commitment are much appreciated.

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Metapoetry

By Braden Russom

Ever have a moment
where you see with such clarity
exactly what's happening
around you?

This happened today
as I read a book
and waited for you to arrive.

a poem formed in my mind.
This poem, actually,
that you are reading now

on this white page.
flanked by other records
of speeches never spoken,

lines that couldn't wait any longer
to be put to rest
in the ears of the ones
they were meant to love.

—From the Diary of Christine Daae, Recollections of a Songasm
By Diana Alvarez

I felt as if I had not pleased you.
And time ...time was by no means
a constant, because somehow,
you managed to hold it still,
almost as unaffectedly
as you held me.
No, I meant to regret letting it all go,
because lovers, as we all know, mustn't.
“We must love with caution;
enough will to love,
and enough discretion to maintain sanity.”
Ah, yet love is such a mad practice.
So, I do not regret letting go the rubbish
of catholic-school-whim.
I do not regret holding you back,
though it was, at last, no easy task.
You could not, I feared,
be convinced that my attempts
at passion were complete.
You wanted more,
and when more was what I thought I had given,
I found myself no closer to “more” than before.
I did not realize at the time what “more” meant.
“Again”, in my mind, commanded repetition,
not perception of some pronounced force,
which is what you meant to show me.
No, when you wanted more out of me,
you wanted a Nietzsche-rejected enlightenment.
You wanted an effortless Me,
with no attention to breath marks or Callas, or damned repetition.
You wanted a song; my song.

And so, it was not until I felt my own soul stunned,
shaken by my own force,
that I would make myself one with music,
and one, at last, with you.

My music pleased you when it pleased me.

I have known no lover like you,
who has shown me what music must be,
and so what love must be (for aren't they one madness the same?).



Untitled by Lisa Federici

Meteor

By Mike Traynor

Tonight I cannot bear
Even a moment
Of silence.
Outer space is so cruelly
In love with its axis.
The stars are far too quiet.
They sometimes jig and pivot
Out of arrogance,
But only for an instant.
They are drifters,
Though they may think themselves kingly,
A sextant for the seaward.
But I know who they are.
I know they are dead weights,
Staining the sky with their
White noise.
My body cannot hold
Such intrusion.
It seems so wrong,
That such emptiness would
Resound so terribly,
Echoing in the places
Where your hands
Have never been.



Misty Wood by Hem Borromeo

Hesitant Steps

By Michelle Rosbozom

Loneliness encompasses me—
I need to feel another's presence.

I see comfort at the bottom
Of an endless cup,
But circumstances don't allow
Me to reach it.

So I continue to try,
But it continues to fill,
And we continue the dance,
Until it stops abruptly—
When you arrive.

I don't do well with being alone.
My soul cries out
For a kindred spirit.
But you managed to wipe away
Every tear my essence shed
With each word that proved
You understood me.
How are you able
To know so much
So quickly?
You claim to not have
The skill of a mind reader;
Yet you somehow always know
What I want and need to hear.

The dance we perform
Appears as if we've done it
Many times before.
The awkwardness of
An initial meeting
Disappeared but a moment
After we met.
And it felt as if years had passed
And we were old friends
Catching up after a long absence
From one another;
Rather than strangers meeting
For the first time.

But a part of me remained unsettled.

Self-inflicted insecurities
Ate away at my confidence,
Despite your efforts of reassurance.
I feel as if

I have nothing to offer you,
And that you'll take my heart
With you, when someone new Catches your eye.

I'm trying hard not to doubt you—
You've given me no reason to.
And every time I question you
You look at me with surprise;
Unable to mask the hurt I've caused.
Please understand that it is not you.
You have treated me no less
Than the princess you think I am,
And have worked hard
To prove yourself.

Please do not give up on me...

When you are not around
I ache to feel your touch.
When I am with you
My uneasiness melts away.
When you hold me in your arms
I feel as if I am released
From all the tortures within me.
And when you kiss me
I feel completely, utterly, free.

Please don't be discouraged.
Please don't feel like it's hopeless.
I am learning, like everyone else,
How to be okay with myself;
How to know when to trust others;
How to participate in the dance
Without really knowing all the steps.

Please take my hand and guide me.
I willingly place
My heart in your tender grip.

I just hope and pray
That I will not be misled...

Green Soldiers
By Jay Meyer

This little kid is still playing in the sandbox. You'd think he would get tired of just getting himself dirty and filling up his diaper with scratchy little particles. But he's still playing. I wonder if he even sees me from over here. He hasn't looked up from the mounds of sand in a while. Poor kid doesn't even have any toys to play with. What kind of parent would just throw their kid in a pile of sand with nothing to dig with or even one of those dump trucks? That must be the kid's mother over there by those swings. She isn't even watching her kid! What do they call that thing? Peripheral vision? That must be her technique of parenting. I could easily just get up from this bench and snatch that kid and that dumb mother would be thinking, "Oh, why me? What have I done?" I can see this happening right now. If I grab that kid, she'd be so upset with guilt and she would come sobbing to her best friend. This mother would cover her best friend's shoulder with snot and tears. And the best friend, in an attempt to add comfort, may say, "There was nothing you could have done, dear." As if this one event had been determined to happen to her alone, on this particular day. The mother would rack her brain with "what-ifs" concerning her half-assed parenting, her choice of playgrounds, and "if only I had left two minutes earlier". But in the back of her head, advice whispers, "there was nothing you could have done." She would then see her life as a clockwork that had been set in motion by the Big Man upstairs well before she plopped her kid in a box of sand. Is she wrong in thinking this? I know I'm wrong. This kid does have a toy with him.

It's one of those little military plastic soldiers. He's about the size of the kid's palm. I remember when I used to play with those guys when I was a kid! I'd set them up all over the yard like I was a decorated marine officer giving out my orders. They had their weapons and I'd position them focusing their efforts on some target of execution. Those little plastic guys were manufactured, each with an individual purpose. Some were designed to lay horizontal, with belly-side down. Some with legs connected by a smooth plastic pad that resembled a golf putting green. No matter what you did, the ones that stood would never lay down and the ones that lay down could never stand. They were made in one way and there ain't nothing that will change that. I pity the green soldier that was only equipped with a set of binoculars. No weapon. I wonder which one this kid has. I'll just walk over and take a closer look. Let's see if this kid's mom's peripheral vision starts to kick in.



Spider in Web by Kelly Aymar

Old Fruit

By Lauren Thatcher

Old fruit and stale coffee
 Start the evening off right
 I'm seeing you in passing
 Shaking off the rain
 Not enough to keep me happy
 But enough to keep me sane
 Foggy mind and foggy weather
 Strain your eyes so you can see
 Through my bravest contradictions
 Through my muted fantasies
 So break off all this deadened skin
 Let me feel a little more
 Erase my need to feel so deeply
 Half as selfish as before
 I'll hold onto welcome phrases
 Asylum green and dusty gray
 But insanity's lost its luster
 And addiction's so passe
 I'll let winter settle in now
 Let the rest of me go numb
 And I think I'll face the truth soon
 That winter's just no fun

*Pear in Cup by Lisa Federici*

Blue

By Julie Barnofski

Within teal haze she woke-
 A soft cerulean
 Old life. Awakened from
 A dull and denim dream,
 She rose and faced a sun
 Of violet drippings; cold,
 As she had been. A once
 Green world without the warm
 And yellow light, it's now
 Her cool blue globe, alone.
 She sits and waits for days
 Exempt of midnight skies
 But when she wakes it's just
 A navy muddled mess.

I Hold In My Hand
By Claire Casaccio

I hold in my hand...
The ability to alter a life,
or perhaps save one from strife;
The power to break a heart,
or perhaps nurture it from the start;
The capability to push one away,
or perhaps beg them to stay;
The capacity to put a relationship to an end,
or perhaps cherish each and every friend;
The potential to give up when the odds are against me,
or perhaps persevere and achieve what I hope to be;
The inclination to agree with the norm,
or perhaps a longing not to conform;
The tendency to watch those around me suffer,
or perhaps extend my hand as a shield and a buffer;
The proclivity to take the easy way out,
or perhaps take the more difficult path if that's what it's
about;
The desire to participate in the conflicts others seek,
or perhaps to smile and turn the other cheek;
The strength to belittle and cause another person's tears,
or perhaps stand proud and wipe away their fears;
As unassuming as it may be,
a hand holds immense power you see;
It can be a danger to you and me,
or perhaps a saving grace for thee.

How the Fairy Tale *Really* Ends

By Ann M. Metz

Rapunzel waited with a fluttering heart in the castle tower for her rescuer, the prince. She arranged her hair into perfect golden ringlets, gave herself a fresh manicure, powdered her face, and put on extra-long-lash mascara. When four days elapsed and her eyes became blurred with fatigue from the long hours spent scrutinizing the horizon, she made her decision: stop waiting and act. If she were to be free ever again, she must climb down the tower herself. So she braided her long flaxen hair into two sturdy ropes, then cut it with her own nail clippers. She tied the braids securely to the bedposts (with Boy Scout knots of course), and descended to the ground. She never looked back again.

Snow White ate the poisoned apple and she died. No, the prince didn't come and kiss her to break the spell. By the time he heard about it, Snow White was six feet under and it was beneath the Prince's dignity to kiss a dead woman's lips, no matter how beautiful in life she had been. After all, who knew what vermin and diseases were on that rose bud mouth? Suppose she hadn't died from a poisoned apple, but the Black Plague? You can't blame the prince. He had his kingdom to consider. If he were to die, his younger brother would take the throne, and bon voyage to Prince Charming's illustrious reign as king! Alas ladies, a man's political career always takes precedence over his love life. So Snow White stayed in her glass coffin and the dwarves went on with the business of mining and making money.

What about the young woman who kissed all those frogs until she found her prince? Well, she continued smacking lips with those slimy amphibians until one day she grew weary of the monotonous process, and threw the last frog back into the pond.

She finally realized she had been duped all this time by that old crone who told her she was sure to find her prince if she just kept kissing frogs. Another elderly woman had told the old crone the same story when she was a young girl, and consequently she spent her entire life kissing frogs. But of course, she never found a prince either. When she saw the younger woman coming along, she decided to get even and tell the lie to her. This young woman wised up after a year or two, however. She realized that the true moral to the story was not "you have to kiss a lot of frogs before you kiss a prince." Rather it was "kiss a lot of frogs and all you end up kissing is another frog."

Now we come to our last tale for the evening, ladies. It's not a fairy tale, but a dramatic tragedy and a well-known one at that. We all know how the tragedies end. Every woman goes insane and commits suicide. Except in *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare. It seems, in true masculine story-telling fashion, after this pronouncement, Juliet rose promptly and went to find her father. She sued both families, and with the combined income from the civil suit, and the money from Romeo's estate, she was able to live happily ever after.

The moral of all these tales is this: never take a story to be incontestable fact. Stories are physical manifestations of dreams. Dreams are the substance of illusions. Prince Charming and the Knight on the White horse are illusions. If you search for them, you will spend your life in a permanent state of REM paralysis.

But you have to wake up. Everyone does. What then? Your entire life was a fairy tale, a dream, an illusion? A wisp of cloud punctured by a shaft of sunlight. A helium balloon set adrift into space, only to burst before it ever reached the stars...

Don't ask Sigmund Freud for an interpretation. He snorted cocaine and was already strung out in his own dreamland long before you were born. Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar, he said.

Men are always men. There's no heroism in it, ladies. Just sex. It's a rude awakening, isn't it?

acceptable risk

rape is bad,
don't rape people

*One Night
By Sean Macomber

love,
Sean Macomber

spaghetti strap underwear
visible over a panty line
my mouth fills with wet hunger
for her

p.s. censorship is worse than intolerance,
you cowards

the atmosphere of smoke and sex in the bar, shifts to me now
I only see the red breast cleft shirt
and the white of underwear keeping a tampon on the inside
of her

my senses heighten
to smell her cycle happening

her perfumed beauty would overwhelm
the deeply religious

an hour past I'm in the dorm
forcing into her blood
pushing the cotton and string
deep inside her

pain is hers alone
pleasure is for mine
even drunk, I hate rape
but I love sex



Girl by Christine DiGirolamo

*Please refer to attached note on the cover page.

Everything's About Love

By Karla Gareau

Everything's about love these days.
Everything's about huggin'
And kissin'
And makin' out
And makin' love.
I wish it would all just go away.
Just for a little while.
Just long enough for me to get my head on straight.
Just long enough for me to sink my feet into some-
thing else.
But everyone's walkin' around,
Mourning for "the one" who got away.
So how can I think of anything else?
"There's life after love!" I want to scream.
I'm sorry if you've found your soul mate,
Mr. or Mrs. Right,
The love of your life,
Because everything seems to be about the one who
got away
Or the one they haven't found.
And they hope,
And wish,
And pray,
For someone to come and sweep them off their
feet.
Maybe tomorrow they'll wake up and someone will
be lying next to them and they'll
Realize they're in love
Their search will be over
And mine will go on
But I was never one to follow the crowd.

Wait

By Braden Russom

Let me sit here
 one minute
 and absorb
 before the table is cleared
 the plates are cleaned
 and the crumbs swept to the trash



Jack Daniels Bottles by Stephen Pause

Unique, Just Like Everyone Else
 By Michelle Rosbozom

You look at me,
 What do you see?
 Just ignorance and youth?
 So hard I try
 To not comply
 With society's "truths".
 Be new, not true;
 Be happy, not blue—
 God forbid imperfections show.
 Have strength, be meet;
 Be whom others seek,
 But have a balance of yes and no.
 Just ask for more—
 But don't be whore,
 Don't let on to how much you've done.
 'Cuz when all's said,
 friends have fled;
 the final race the enemy's won.
 So how does it end?

Untitled

By Greg Spears

I couldn't believe my car had broken down. Luckily it had happened on a familiar road, in a familiar place. As I looked to the sky a few scattered clouds lazed by the glowing moon. I was on my way to a house that I knew of nearby, perhaps somebody there could help me. I would be there soon. Suddenly I heard a shuffle in the undergrowth off to my left. Typically I would not have been scared. I knew where I was, but the dark plays tricks on the mind. Trees that are beautiful by day suddenly become gruesome, disfigured human forms reaching for you with their rattling branches. Your senses are increased. Every sound becomes magnified. Awareness becomes a curse. Every passing thought leads to an awful vision. I heard rustling again, on the opposite side of the road this time. "What is that?!" I whispered. I walked a few more paces and stopped. Something was dead in the road. A deer. I avoided the mangled body, and continued on my way, leaving the smell of death behind me. I could see the house now. I would be there soon. Suddenly I heard a noise behind me, and turned only to find myself back at my car. Back where I had started. Behind me the house had vanished, but in its place appeared something far less explainable. A shapeless form darker than the night, save its two red eyes, was drawing closer. I fumbled with my keys to get into the car, but as I looked towards the lock I was frozen in fear. There I was, lifeless in the drivers seat. Seatbelt around my neck, arms twisted in an awful way. My eyes were glazed, staring but not seeing. A stream of dried blood ran over my forehead. The car was wrapped around a tree. The corpse of the deer I had stepped over just minutes ago was lying in the road forty feet to my right. What was happening? The eyes came slowly towards me. I ran.

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By Angela De Fini

Fat. A word defined by good old Webster as: 1. containing fat; oily 2. fleshy, plump, too plump 3. thick, broad 4. an oily or greasy material found in animal tissue and plant seed. Synonyms of fat: beefy, chubby, corpulent, flabby, heavy, obese, overweight, portly, pudgy, rotund, squat, stocky, stout, tubby, weighty. Everyone is taught the word “fat” when they are learning how to describe someone: are they tall or short, fat or skinny. We all know what “fat” means. Yet somehow, the youth of America seems to have taken the word “fat,” misspelled it, and tried to pass it off as a so-called “cool” word.

P-h-a-t. A word not defined in any accepted scholarly dictionary. Pronounced the same way as the well known f-a-t, “phat” is a slang term being used by the youth of the nation as a word meaning “awesome” or “cool.” Of course, “awesome” and “cool” are slang words themselves, so “phat” is even more unique in that it is a slang term pretty much defined only by other slang terms. Another distinctive quality of “phat” is that it’s not even a word—it’s an acronym for “Pretty Hot and Tempting.” Who knew that teenage America would grow to love an acronym, and try to pass it off as a word?

“That’s phat.” “You have a phat car.” I personally will never understand how “phat” can be considered an acceptable adjective to describe anything. Take the legitimate “fat,” for instance. This word is often seen as an unpleasant characteristic. Using “fat” as a descriptive adjective is generally viewed as unappealing and most of the time insulting. However, replace that “F” with a “Ph” and you are giving someone the highest compliment.

Teenagers have to realize that “phat” is a confusing term to use. Since it is pronounced the same way as “fat” when said in spoken language, it is often hard to differentiate “phat” from “fat.” It is easy to see the difference in written word, however, if you were to read this aloud to someone, it’s likely he or she would confuse the two terms. I myself have heard people say “She’s phat,” and have to clarify that they are in fact giving that girl a compliment and not an insult. How can a

term that you have to constantly verbally explain the meaning of be considered “cool?”

The increased popularity of “phat” has spread even further than spoken or written banter between teenagers. Advertising America seems to have gotten word of this acronym’s popularity and decided to make money off of it. The recently established clothing line called Phat Farm has further added to the hype. Now, teenagers can wear jeans and shirts bearing PHAT in large colorful letters while using this so-called adjective in every day conversation. Adults in the advertising agency are only adding to the stupidity of accepting this as a verifiable word. But, of course, all they care about is making a couple of bucks—who cares if it is at the expense of the deteriorating dialect of America’s youth?

Teenage vernacular is constantly changing, and will continue to change as time marches on. Terms such as “groovy” and “rad” received the same amount of hype in their generations as well. And how many times have you heard your parents say “I can’t believe we actually thought ‘groovy’ was a good word!” So one has to hope that “phat” will take the same path as our good friends “groovy” and “rad” and eventually become a retired catch phrase. However, hearing terms like “phat” makes me cringe to admit that I am a teenager of the 21st century, when phrases such as “That’s phat” are uttered.

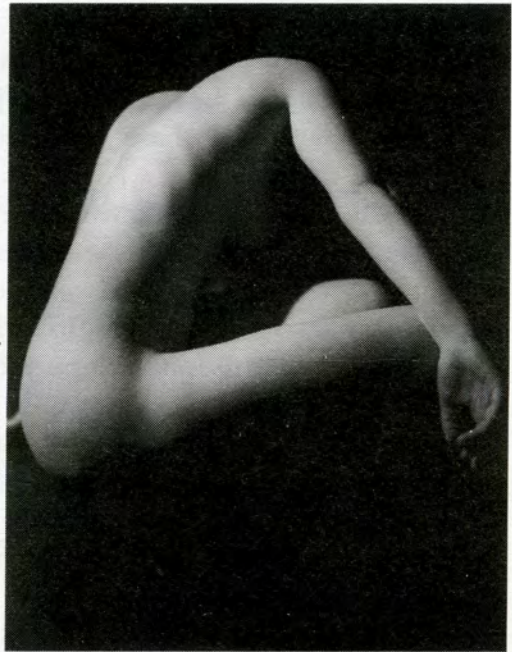
The Kiss
By Dan Buzi

It was a curdled milk kiss,
left a bad stinky fish at the harbor taste
in his mouth of
entirely too little feeling in the heart and
entirely too much in the gut.
The shit that morning had been good.
Simple
Two ass cheeks separating, a little wet,
Then back together again, with her disgusting tongue
Jammed vilely down his under-anxious throat
And he protesting, but the shit had come out all the same
And hardly needed to be wiped
Which he did after every new arrival of lip to face
The back of his sleeve was exhausted with the action.
And the paper hadn’t torn and
It was charming to wash his hands
Which he figured on doing just after he could push her away.

How to Deconstruct a Blonde

By Ann M. Metz

Rip out her pretty Barbie Doll hair.
Strand by strand,
Unravel all that golden thread.
Slide it under the microscopic eye,
View each separate cell,
Every building block of a model.
Tell me, what is it that you see?
What is it you see?
Is it Pamela Anderson-Lee,
Or a cheap anorexic replica, Mattel-made fake flesh
And painted red lips?
What is it you see?
Glimpses of Rapunzel fleeting across the lens?
Clips of 'Sweet Home' Reese?
Segments of Donna Reed?
Excerpts of Athena, fragments of sun,
All reduced to cells, cells to one nucleus,
The nucleus of an atom.
An atom of Arian myth.
An atom of a lie.
Blonde is not beautiful.
Brunette is not beautiful.
There are no models,
Only naked women and one long runway.



Triangle by Hem Borromeo

“Stamp Out Conformity”

By Mary Tougher

social norms ...who needs them?

i wanna walk on my hands backwards

i wanna scream out in laughter because of nothing

i just felt like it so i did

i look at your toes when you talk to me but i listen

i heard you from 10 ft. away while i was vacuuming out my trunk

damn those banana peels... if they tasted good I'd eat them and they don't really
make you slip and fall . . . so what?

i like the sun but sometimes i like the dark

not pitch dark but enough so its like you're in the shade.

i like to drive

i wanna drive to the moon, eat swiss cheese and drink white wine grigio

you should all come

it'll be an adventure right now

i'm tired, but i yearn for more to life

i love change but fear the leap to want a dream,

but to never act on it is the greatest self-injustice

so move for it but cherish those you're best with,

and don't pass them along

i'm best with you ...you're best with me... it's perfect!!

you make me live i wana roll in the mud but never get dirty

no wait... i love dirt why try to be what they want?

be who you want if it means rolling in the mud then do it

i want to be on a high rise and swing my legs

i want to fly if you ring me like a towel

i believe you'd get a rainbow with that you could find a pot of gold in my sleep

i slid down it with you we can fly in the ocean and float in the air

we can be

“Stamp out Conformity.”

Look at the Stars
By Claire Casaccio

Just look at the stars;
They represent a time of solace and an opportunity for reflection,
Beneath the gentle shimmer of the infinite sky.
An overlooked phenomenon,
The night sky offers a glimpse of the unusually solemn Earth,
At rest from the day's toils and injustices.
The mystery of its extent,
Its incomprehensible lack of boundary,
Forever mystifies the mind and questions the soul.
The constellations and planets mislead the mortals,
As the truth regarding their immense size, if known,
Would surely sober us all.

Just look at the stars;
The millions of glistening dots illuminate the melancholy night sky.
They have seen the truth;
There is no escaping their bounds.
There are no secrets from the little giants above,
For their knowledge is sure to convict us all.
Their presence, taken for granted,
As they are assumed and expected to appear consistently,
Like God's greatest magic trick at the fall of dusk.
Location proves irrelevant,
As we all look upon the same mystical blanket
That wraps us in its gentle, outstretched arms.

Just look at the stars;
They are the beginning and the end.
Too often overlooked and seldom cherished,
Their power and significance are ignored
And will never fully be appreciated.
Not until that night when darkness falls
Upon the Earth and they are absent,
Will we rightfully idolize these miraculous beings.
The night sky unites us all and then leaves,

Just as quickly and quietly as it first appeared.
If you don't believe me,
Just look at the stars.



Winged Woman by Hem Borromeo

The Physics of a Life
By Patty Tarantello

From its state of rest, beauty, small and insignificant,
develops, mastering the delicate balance of motion and force.

Sensory overload
as the potential becomes kinetic.
Mass experimentation and acceleration. Energy.

Oscillation lacking direction means the search for more
death-defying thrills.
Friction brings a greater threat
of injury, skids and collisions.

Acceleration. Momentum builds
on the upward ascent. Constant energy despite
external resistance and unbalanced forces.

Gravitational attraction between two bodies,
equal in magnitude but opposite
in direction. Sensation leads to creation.

Balance. Momentary suspension:
a state of mature inertia.
Substance resists change, clings
to built-in safety allowances.

Slowing significantly, there are periodic spurts of motion sickness and difficulty
in maintaining pace. The gradual trajectory curve becomes
a downward plunge.

Decay and compression.
Kinetic energy is converted to potential energy;
no external forces act upon the body.
State of rest.

Double Dutch
By Jeff Berner

you called me one afternoon
said "pick me up, I'm feeling low"
i was looking down, hanging words upon ragged syllables
watching girls run by, their lovers in tow

so I, jumped in my car
and ground the clutch
shit I said
this is Double Dutch

we drive around aimless
following only the spotlight of the sun
you hang one foot out the window, so casually
and soon, weighty words slow to whispers of abberation

so I, jumped in my car
and ground the clutch
shit I said
this is Double Dutch

the truth, the truth, your kingdom for the truth
but by this time, I've dropped you off at your door
the last words you whispered were "it seems rather contrary"
I kissed you sweet and soft, wished I could come in for more

so I, jumped in my car
and ground the clutch
I looked back and said,
is this agony too much
shit
I'm living Double Dutch



Inverse Double Handcuff by Lisa Federici

Forgotten

By James Brearton

This existence is not enough

This survival is not enough

I wonder if I'll ever find the meaning of life

Or if I'll ever find meaning in life

My years are burning up

Nothing left so I give up

Meaningless life went on for years

Empty heart floods with tears

I believe in nothing now

And I stop and think of how

Life passed me by

I am trapped in my own existence

With painful memories in persistence

To new days, and future years

With hope ablaze, and constant fear

So leaving without a mark

Everyone's lips without remark

I leave a failure

Wait For the Night

By Matt Dunning

He looked at her and saw wilderness, unspoiled though not wholly pure. What may have intrigued him most was that she made him think far beyond the prospect of sleeping with her, though the thought had crossed his mind from time to time. He was both aware and appreciative of her ability to occupy his mind on more than just a sexual level. She, in turn, was cautiously infatuated with his ability to challenge her sense of truth without insulting her intelligence. They had a way of gliding effortlessly through conversations. Where most people find only awkward silences, they found things to say without having to speak a word. In fact, perhaps only half of all their conversations were ever spoken. They often spent their nights singing and dancing around each other in a sort of insane demonstration of their complete freedom, however temporary it might have been. They'd flaunt around the room wearing nothing but bed sheets and pretend to be ancient philosophers, singing their own interpretations of Plato or Socrates. Some nights, they'd let Marvin Gaye or Jim Morrison do the singing for them. The spirits of dead writers and poets, prophets and beatniks swirled around the room near the ceiling, swooping down and passing through our two lovers' bodies every minute or so. With each passing, they'd feel the chaos of a flooding river swelling inside them; the spirits were the catalysts, the sweeping monsoons breaking down their dams and levees, inviting that sweet chaos to reign within them unchallenged. Our lovers did not revolve or even plan for their nights. Rather, the nights spun and contorted around them. The world shrank itself down for them, consisting only of the room and our lovers: the twenty or so feet of floor space under them and the five or so feet of flesh in front of them. Night came to them, swept them up and carried them off to a suspension high above the consciousness of the dull, violent, and uninspired people below. When it's all over, when morning comes and pierces the smoky haze the room's air has become, the two awake. In a moment, they'll have to return to the outside world. It will mean the end of the songs for a few hours. It will mean the end of the dancing and the sex, the conversations and spirits. But only for a few hours. The day will fade into dusk, and he'll be drawn back to her room, taking one step towards her for every inch the sun sinks behind the horizon. For the moment, though, our two lay still in the bed. Now is the time just after the night and just before the day, the last moment before they'll begin again to wait for the night.

3 Minutes

by Pete Carberry

What would I say?
Is speech even involved?
Sound would not re-verberate within my esophagus
Every movement challenged my senses
Every glance shattered my confidence
Reflection of what she thought began running free
Does she mind?
“You know”, I told myself
“My hands”, would it matter?
Does she set standards, and if so, what tools would I need to break that barrier
Ice-Axe? Jackhammer? C-4 explosive?
Was it my imagination that has created this scenario of thought?
Should I smile?
Should I break the silence of fear?
What would I lose?
What would I gain?
The problem with uncharted territory is the risk involved
Difference breeds uncertainty
Uncertainty brings discretion
Discretion, well, challenges risk
Moral crossroads have no direction
It is the gut-reaction that makes the man
I chose the lesser road traveled
I spoke
With a tear ready to roll, I broke free
This coma of grief
This silence of feeling
This prune-like heart, crumbled on the platform of my soul
Silence
She smiled, kissed my cheek, and started to cry
Cradling her in my arms
Resting my head above hers

Breathing simultaneously
A moment of incendiary passion between two strangers
Emancipation of emotion
Life had begun

Acres of Glass
By Timothy M. Bruderek

I see you dance and twirl and shine
In some turquoise paradise
That I will never be a part of

Seldom leaves and dragon breath fire
Entrance you and leave my left eye to burn away
Your body looks more slender under a plastic finish

Not a marble ledge can cradle an edge
You can always peek over and contemplate the plunge
Your memory will not keep you afloat

Just buttons and foot tracks will be there for interpretation
Or short love letters that sank with the bubbles
Tiles like patchwork will feed your independence

So bits of paper with caricatures imprinted lay astray
While veined skin covers my shape
Only through acres of glass will you return to me

In the Mirror

By Dan Buzi

I see electron proton neutron

Shit being

Protein lipid carbohydrate

Fuck machine

Cotton clothes wearer

Pink skin carrier

And a billion Whitmanic pieces I might be.

See toes toenails toe hair

See feet see ankles and shins and calves

See knees with thighs and man-root and balls

See pelvis and torso

See belly and chest

See nipples and arms

See fingers and thumbs

See neck and head and tongue

See teeth and cheeks

See ears and eyes

See eyes

See eyes

See eye am not these

Things

Am poet

Am Daniel

Am vibrant

Am singing

Am typing

Am verb

Am me

Am you

Am e.e. cummings

And Whitman too

(And not for some passing down of parts, but holy fragments of the mind)

Am Kant

Am Moses

Am Jesus

Am Buddha

Am wild holy man grappling desperately at my reappearing God

Am father

Am mother

Am holy spirit too

Am singing

Am screaming

Am glowing

Am burning

Am passion

Am charging through

hairy ape skin thing

Deoxyribonucleic acid fuck machine

Not this or that

THING

Am words

Am thoughts

The calamity of thoughts

The depth of thoughts

The juxtaposition of thoughts

The back and forth reciprocity of thoughts

Am God's own thoughts

Am beauty

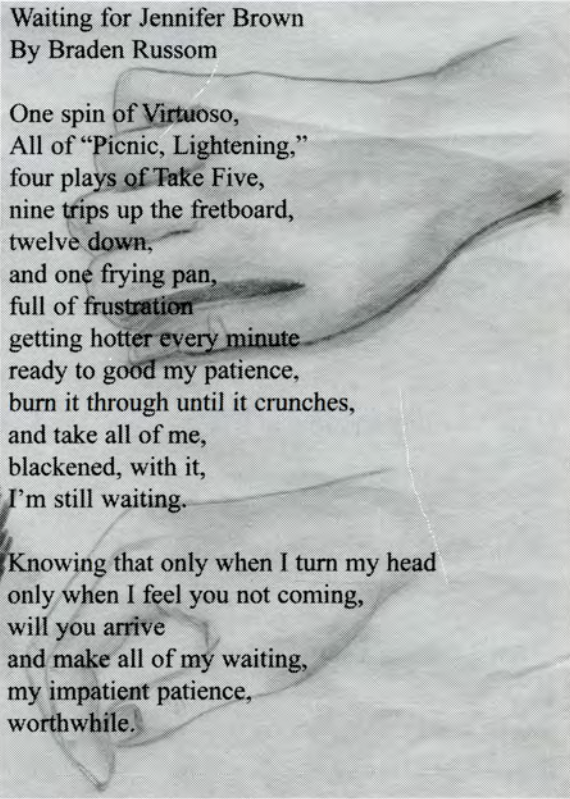
Am every bit this poem

Am true

Am every bit me

Am every bit you

Waiting for Jennifer Brown
By Braden Russom



One spin of Virtuoso,
All of "Picnic, Lightening,"
four plays of Take Five,
nine trips up the fretboard,
twelve down,
and one frying pan,
full of frustration
getting hotter every minute
ready to good my patience,
burn it through until it crunches,
and take all of me,
blackened, with it,
I'm still waiting.

Knowing that only when I turn my head
only when I feel you not coming,
will you arrive
and make all of my waiting,
my impatient patience,
worthwhile.

Hands by Christine Digirolamo

Untitled
By S. Prinz

Stick it in.

 She screams.

 She's turned on.

 Even though she doesn't know it.

I have to hold her steady.

 Otherwise she'll run away,
 Never looking back.

 Taking me
 with her.

Sometimes I don't even know her power.

 Sometimes, neither does she.

Sometimes I let go, just for an instant. Since she's my slave, I go,

 She goes.

Thing is —

She does what I want.

 It works both ways.

If she doesn't,

I spend more money on her

 Until she satisfies me.

 She turns and cries.

I push her too hard.

She snaps —

 The red in my face.

 Then the white shoots across.

That's the last I see.

 I'm gone — a statistic .

...like a sex crime victim

bound to a tree...

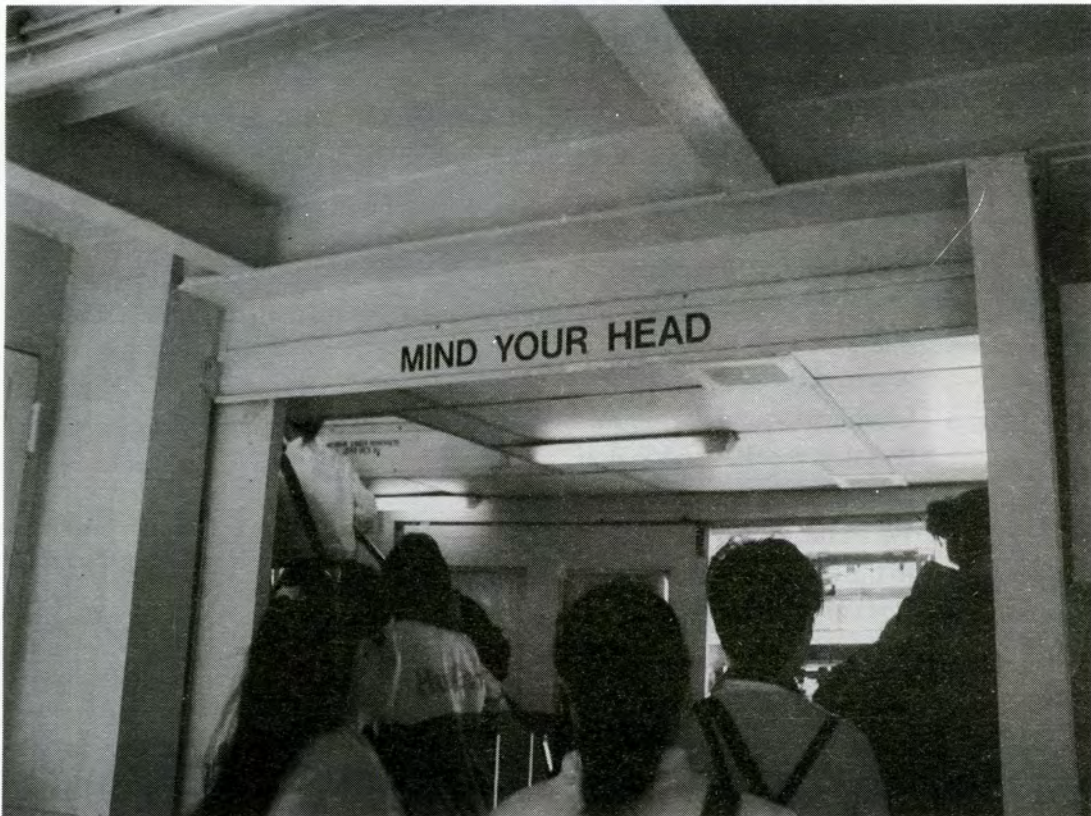
clothing torn and inside out -

 A master forgetting how strong SHE can be.

The Veldt
By Mike Traynor

Out here,
I am not who
You think I am.
I have plucked you from your
Valence shell,
Far from your mother's apron.
This is no place for
Paper tigers,
No place for such
Lukewarm playthings.
I have tossed you,
Carelessly, into the
Thickest of hemispheres.
The air here is sluggish,
And you wallow piglike in it,
Nude, pathetic,
Unable to sound the alarm.
It makes me ill, voodoo doll,
How you cower.
We stand, twin towers slightly apart,
In the open globe,
A reverse Manhattan.
Yet still you struggle, laughably,
To hide amongst oxygen atoms.
Somewhere in this
Swift Indian summer,
I have changed.
I have stood up, feral,
Empowered.
I am poised to attack, and
Your flesh will yield to my talons,
First white, and then that
Dark color.

Here there are no victims,
Only prey, and when
You've drawn your last breath,
Know that I have stolen nothing;
I have only returned
The favor.



Mind Your Head by Kelly Aymar

Indicates Required Field**By Jeff Bemer**

You know those research companies - the ones in the mall that entice you to take their consumer-appointed surveys while you're walking in to take a crap or something.

"Would you like to take a survey?" the woman in the black pants with the clipboard blithely intones. She's looking at you. Sure, why not, I'm only 14, you say to yourself.

So you go in and sit in some fucking drab office, with a bored looking secretary filing her orange nails. There's the ugly grey/green cubicles - you sit in one of them, in a chair that is moderately comfortable, but not enough so. Clearly, they designed it that way, so as to make you feel at home, but with that slight bit of uncomfortableness that keeps you on edge and elicits better answers from you. OF COURSE. That shit is planned.

It's all fucking planned, so American Industry (god bless it) can massage the CUSTOMER'S SECRET INNER RAGING DESIRE TO BUY A LOT OF STUPID SHIT, USUALLY ON CREDIT.

The woman picks up her clipboard, frowns, and points to a photo of a strangely outsized bottle, with a shiny label that reads "Kosaba Orange Infusion: Make your tastebuds WHACKY!" The guy on the label kind of looks like KID VID, from the Burger King Kids Club. She motions towards a cup on the desk in front of you. "Taste this consumer sample of a new fruit drink and tell me what you think."

You look at the cup. A simple clear plastic (but hey! it LOOKS like glass, giving the illusion of American glamour as dictated by COSMOFUCKINGPOLITAN magazine) cup filled with an orange liquid.

Now look, You don't WANT to drink this unholy amalgamation of fructose, citric acid, red and yellow # 5, and god knows what else, but you just signed the FUCKING CLIPBOARD. Your signature is basically your bond, which prevents you from punching this woman in the face, stealing the entire bowl of butterscotch candies on the secretary's desk, and retiring to your longawaited stall in the mail bathroom.

So you raise the glass to your lips - why in the name of GARY FUCKING PUNCH A RANDOM MALL SHOPPER IN THE FACE COLEMAN does this taste like cinnamon! It's ORANGE COLORED, which means - according to your admittedly skewed logic anyway - that it should resemble an orange taste. Any time now boys, you say to your taste buds. BRING THE BAND ON DOWN BEHIND ME, I'm waiting for the delicious influx of orange fruit juice mayhem.

It's going to be positively WHACKY FUCKING DOODLE Kosaba Orange taste, just as the shiny label intones. But instead, you get this terrible onslaught of fake cinnamon flavor, like you just stuck your tongue into the potpourri basket on top of the toilet tank in your mother-in-law's bathroom.

Now that's a product I want MORE of!

Despite your obvious and hideously rampant dislike for this faux-orange potion at hand you exclaim, 'Yeah, it's alright.' Feign that enthusiasm, tiger. You fucking liar, you say to yourself. But this much can be excused, for when you don't care about the situation - you rationalize it as this - you're perfectly eligible and legally clear to LIE YOUR FUCKING FACE OFF.

The lady shifts in her seat and glares at her clipboard. All of her energy is focused on this twelve dollar an hour task of ASKING YOU HOW YOU FEEL. Would you buy this product if it was readily available to you in stores and supermarkets?

Well, who knows really. What's with the REALLY FUCKING SHINY LABEL on it, anyway? The American public, for reasons obvious to most, cannot resist anything with a REALLY FUCKING SHINY LABEL on it. Can you imagine the corporate BLOWHARDS sitting around a boardroom table at this drink company, tossing around ideas such as this? 'Hell, you never know what they want these days, those kids and their Pokemon and their goddamn L.A. GEAR (he takes a few hearty puffs of his cigar). Tell you what Jim, put somethin' reflective on it and the kids will go APESHIT!'

You finish the interview, buoyed by thoughts about KID VID's mysterious appearance on the label and whether or not you're truly going to get those butterscotch candies on the secretary's desk. Falling asleep that night, you think nothing of Kosaba Orange. The world keeps turning, all is well.

A few weeks later, you find yourself in the local gas n' go, with intention of picking up some liquid refreshment. Something fruity, you say, with a little zing in it. Staring at the freezer case, you're subject to an almost frightening barrage of new fruit flavors - KOSABA ORANGE? WHAT THE FUCK IS THIS SHIT? You're not gonna grab this shit even though it has the aforementioned REALLY FUCKING SHINY LABEL on it. No, Jasper, you'll stick to something else, something familiar.

Poland Spring, please.



From Below by Kelly Aymar

At a Standstill

By Michelle Rosbozom

If he wants to find out
What life's all about,
She can't hold him back,
Since she loves him (that's a fact...)

She wants to hold on,
But knows something's wrong,
'cause she can't force him to stay—
but doesn't want him to go away.

So she lets him go,
It's the right thing, she knows,
Even if it breaks her heart.
But at least it's a start.

It's a start to finding the new,
And figuring out what she wants to do.
It's the start to learning how to live by herself,
Learning who she is; (invaluable wealth).

He'll go on, wanting her again.
She'll go on, wondering when.
When he'll be back to hold her in his arms;
When she'll have someone to save her from harms.

He wonders why she let him go.
Her reasons will he ever know?
For he wanted to know what the world had in store,
But now realizes with her he had so much more.

Will she run back and say she was wrong?
How long will it be 'til he tells her—how long?
When will she see how he wants her so?
When will he see how she needs him to grow?
They're at a standstill, who's move is it now?
There's got to be a way for them to both win,
But how?

Untitled

By Lauren Thatcher

high stakes and fast choices
crossed fingers and closed eyes
future fades so quickly
far away from nashville's sky
its a million dollar coin toss
dictate stars from shallow ground
while free souls brave stormy weather
hide my face here, safe and sound
but my gaze looks far less true now
softer landing from vacant fall
my mind is half made up now
but this ledge stands twice as tall
drunken mind won't well remember
choices made that last september

Untitled

By Christine DiGirolamo

She closes her eyes
and lets the music take her away
Leaves her life behind
And drowns in someone else's pain
 smiles at another's joy
 and lives vicariously through the lyrics
Of someone else's song

Shipwreck

By Patty Tarantello

Water violates the grain of trees—
fingering the knotholes,
forcing its way into the crevices and cracks of the planks—bodies,
bent, distorted, and rootless,
forced into the submission of sailors,
of explorers.
They try to tame nature— to own her fertility,
to conquer her life-giving fluids, to steal her children.
They call it exploration.
Now the sea explores
and the tired ship splinters,
releases its restraints, and quickly collapses to the sea's violent urgings.
Men cry out for God's mercy. "Father, help us!"
they demand again and again, but
nature's shrieking overshadows their pathetic whimpers and
they succumb to her. Breathless,
a young woman looks on from shore, mind numbed by cold, hair flailing
like the waves she watches,
alone on the rocks longing to rip off her blue dress and join the blue green water;
she sees the ship wrecking,
hears the men dying, feels the sea's roaring, and mourns
for the trees.

“Think where man’s glory most begins and ends; And say it was I had such friends.”

--W.B Yeats

To a Former Friend

By Ann M. Metz

A mere cacophony of echoes
Strike the eardrum with malicious weight:
Crazy, angry, insane, Antisocial bitch, an emotional drain.
So easy to impose this gossip
On your friend’s face
And ignore her whispering lisp as she
Asks for your support.
No, it’s better to ignore
The familiar voice,
And wait for the resounding
Criticisms to disfigure her features.

It’s easier to believe in
The shadows flickering on the wall
Than in the bony form hobbling in agony behind you.
It’s much too easy to avoid the pain,
Remain locked in the chains,
Forged in iron with the Others.
It’s better to denounce the Samaritan
And strangle the daylight
With your flawlessly manicured hands.

How could I have ever expected one
So easily ensnared by the shadows
To follow me outside the cave?

Go on then, my old friend!
Follow the dancing shadows!
See what truths they tell you!
In a hundred years the fires
Will choke on their own smoke.

Expire, and engulf you in
One giant shadow.
What then? Will you ask me to light a match?
I will have to reply that you
Seized my fire and used its light
To project your own illusions.

Now I have nothing but screeching bats,
Dripping rock caverns, and one black night
To give as a cover against the cold.
You eclipsed my sunlight
With an impulsive wave of your fist.

Now I hold sign language conversations
With deaf walls that throw back my words
Because there is no light to interpret my messages.
The finger words are strangled before they speak,
Aborted before the day of their birth.
There's no communication here, only the sounds
Of echoes punctured by a monstrous silence.
I wanted to show you the sunlight, the green fields,
The wildflowers, the outside world.
What is the point now?
You love your shadows,
You embrace the acceptance of one thought,
One group,
One mindless desire.
The darkness never hurt your eyes.

You're Only Silver
By Timothy M. Bruderek

You're only silver.
When sun emanates its sparkles
and a swollen river collects them,
you don't reflect me.

Your eyes are partially serene
and your touch can roll down my face
like varnish.
It turns my tanned skin
to silver.

Your chorus is partly spoken
and your feigned touch is an instrument.
They can play their guitars with golden strings
in perfect pitch,
while you only play in silver.

I can see above the taller trees
as you swing further below,
with starshine the only color in your hair.
When you smile, I stop and look away,
because you're only silver.

I Got You

By Karla Gareau

I got you

Under my fingernails

Under my skin

And I can't get you to go away

No matter how hard I try

I smell you

In my clothes

In my sheets

And I can't get you to go away

No matter how hard I try

I feel you

In my arms

By my side

And I can't get you to go away

No matter how hard I try

I see you

In my dreams

In my life

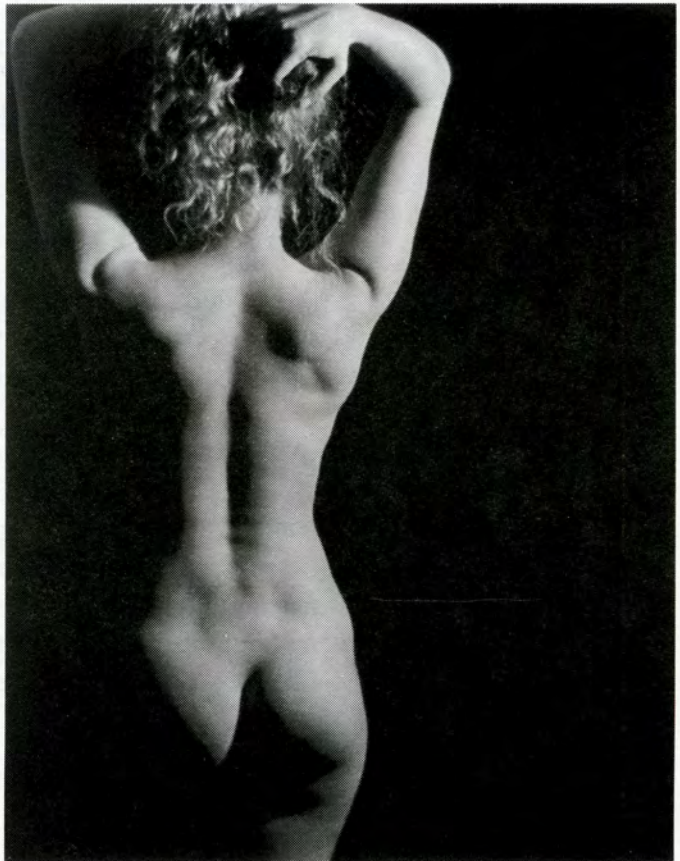
And I can't get you to go away

No matter how hard I try

I got you

No matter how hard I try

No matter how hard I try



Back by Lisa Federici

Inner Thoughts

By Michelle Rosbozom

bite lip
keep from crying
do not show them
that they are affecting you
do anything in your power
to stay strong
to keep calm
to remain care-free
with a smile plastered
on your face
block the harsh words
and false accusations
and cruel lies
don't give them the satisfaction
that a piece of
your self esteem
has just crumbled
you are beautiful
you are smart
you are someone
who will go far
you don't need their friendship
you don't need their approval
you are okay
just the way you are
keep breathing
it will be over soon
then you can go about
picking up the pieces
and trying to find some semblance
of the way they were

eyes glisten—
NO! don't give in
fight the fight
this may be the toughest
you've ever had to endure
but you will make it
you will be okay
and one day
they will see
how much they lost
when you discovered
that you didn't need them any longer



Hippie Nude by Hem Borromeo

Little Left

By Karla Gareau

There is little I can do
About the little that's going on.
There is little I can say
To little old you.
And who saves the hero
When he gets into trouble?
Who helps him out
When he needs a saving grace?
Is he just shit out of luck
Because he fell flat on his face?
And I wish I had the answers to your questions,
Wish I could give you the cold, hard truth.
But I don't know the answers
And I won't tell you lies.
How come you never say goodbye?

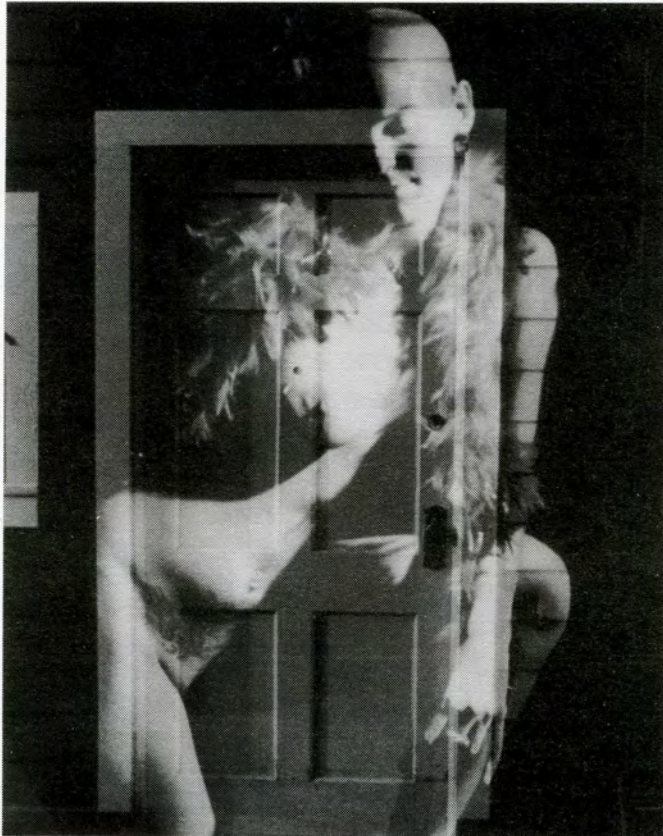
There is little left to write
About what we've been through.
So this is for you.
And who saves the heroine
When she gets into trouble?
Who helps her out
When she needs a saving grace?
Is she just shit out of luck
Because she fell flat on her face?
And your questions can't be answered
Because no one knows the answers.
And there's little left
That I can say
To you.

Untitled

By Diana Alvarez

We're the same,
when you want us to be,
and when time allows us as much.
We've walked the same lines,
cut our knees doing it,
and have the scars to show for it.
You and I, who had met but one pure night ago.
You pulled me to shore, that night,
when I'd cut myself down to my last chance.
I might have lost soon, if it hadn't been for you.
I'd have drowned in my own pity,
choked on my own pride,
or floated for years without direction...
If you,
eyes open to mine,
had not caught my soul.
I fell into you.
It wasn't what I wanted.
It wasn't what I expected.
But somewhere, buried, it is what I dreamed.
You were me, locked in a stranger.
I was me, but not until that night.
Somewhere, with your words, with your eyes,
you unleashed me, set me free from doors.
The door was opened that night,
and from then on,
my life winded freely,
road bent, upon river upon road,
without a care as to where it went,
just as long as, evermore, it went on.

Doors became nonexistent
for a while there, when you were true.
We didn't need doors;
we knew,
trusted each other,
after that one pure night: We were not strangers.
It was nice, loving you.
I don't know where it ended,
the magic of that night.
I don't know where you stopped loving me;
when you started locking doors again.



Raven Door by Lisa Federici

Untitled

By Jessica Campilango

The sun setting behind the cliff
The sky a pale orange hue
A magnificent place of beauty
A soul so pure and true

The leaves have turned their colors
In shades I have yet to see
Things I don't know how to feel
A person I'm not sure how to be

Find in me the colors of the leaves
And I will move you to the calmness of the sky
I will soothe you with my voice
And sing to you my solemn lullaby

Beauty's not so fleeting
If you know to look inside
You will find that when you search your soul
There is rarely any place for you to hide

You Shine

By Timothy M. Bruderek

You clap like a tambourine,
Like symbols that clang and bang
and like a horn
Or blowtorch that blows
And like a lantern that glows.
You radiate like a light bulb
But you never want to screw.
Yours truly listens to songs with
No words
No light
And no gestures or written lines.
Songs can be like pages
Of a paperback or sheets pulled from a clipboard.
Your skin is so soft that it can still bruise me.
Your power,
It can pour blue into me.
So go to sleep like a motherless babe with blanket
Over face, or a
Twinkling mobile that is just two hands out of reach,
Or something that crawls across the
Panels of the ceiling.
Leave your wet shoes out by the door.
You're welcome
To wipe your holey socks on the soiled carpet
And not to trip over the white stones
And the marigolds.
Protect that backdoor
like a Zulu guard with no sword shield or facemask.
Leave the key under the mat.
Let the dog bring in the newspaper
And sweep it beneath your feet,
Slippers in his teeth.

Find me and fine me
A dollar or quarter or half a pound
Or half a pint.
Talk to me through Atlantic Oceans and
Long Island Sounds and throw my girlfriend
At me. Coffee and cigarettes no longer
Exist when fresh air is your morning rush.
You silence me
And strike me
And motion accordingly.
Out the door. Into your house. Into
Two more years of craziness and barefoot on the grass.
We will see if you dip your feet into the blades
Or if they will only cut you.



Amongst the Ivy by Lisa Federici

The Recreation of Odysseus

By Ann M. Metz

If I were your love
And you my lover,
Into the untouched forest I'd take you,
Where the threes are gathered close
And the branches clasp each other tenderly.

I'd take you to a singing stream
Where waterfalls pour melodically
Over the glistening tops of slippery brown rocks.
I'd guide you to the edge of the water
And strip off your old clothes.
I'd remove all the aged layers
Of woolen sweaters,
Straight button-down shirts,
Faded gray cotton Dockers.
Every piece of foreign fabric
I'd tear away from your beautiful body
With delicate, caressing hands.

My fingers would comb
The locks of your soft hair;
My teeth trim away that mustache
Concealing your manly face.
My lips would plant love
In the tangled grassy fields
Of your broad, strong chest.
No place on your body
Would lie thirsting, untouched
By these kissing fingers.

When I finished,
I would lead you to the waterfall,
Watch you step into its sheet.
Of rejuvenating rain,
Rejoice as each droplet splashed
Down your naked frame.
I would observe the dirt and mud
Of mortality wash away,

Leaving you a young man more handsome,
A young man with midnight dark hair,
A young man with molten lava eyes.

You would be my creation,
You would be my lover,
You would be my god.

And when you emerge
From the waterfall's touch,
I'd weave a cloak of oak leaves,
Green and moist with sap.
Over your body, I'd slip them
To conceal the glory of your form
Because only I could ever see you
Naked as the day you were born.

Untitled

By Katherine Toale

A gumball machine filled to the brim
A quarter away from a smile from him
He can't reach the slot to grace him the glory
Of chewing that gum with excited furry

He can envision the color on his tongue
And the feeling that he won

If only a few inches taller
His problem would be solved
What color would it be
If that quarter revolved



Parachutte by Kelly Aymar

Halloween

By Katherine Toale

pierced flesh
projectile blood
warms the wound
pumpkin gut
litters the exposed
tendons which
pulsate in distress
the hand shakes
eyes are drawn
to the sight
of the repulsive
intrusion
the knife falls
instrument of
destruction dammed
for all time
banned from the
kitchen she cries
herself down the
stairs and the
car awaits
chariot of the
stitch
itchy swollen
mess
the artist
retires
now a novelist
only writing in

crayon
a dull tool
never using
colors
such as red or
orange

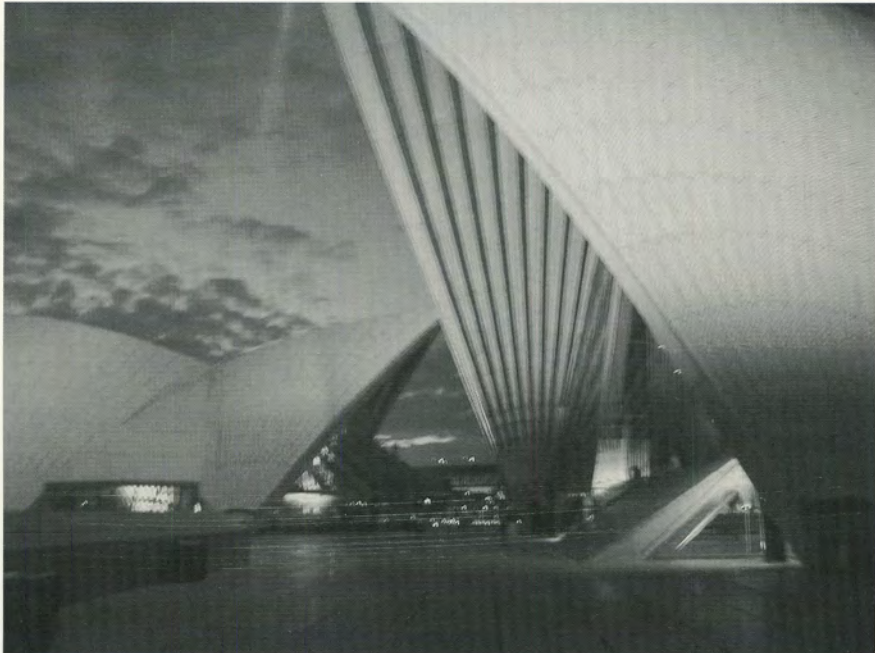
Forgotten

By Katherine Toale

Rain collects in tear soaked
shoes

Sandals worn thin
frayed laces
thread separating from thread
dirt caked
faded color
fermenting stench
bug filled eyes
ripped rubber
lost soles

the stoop is over occupied



Sydney Opera House by Kelly Aymar

