

REFLECTIONS

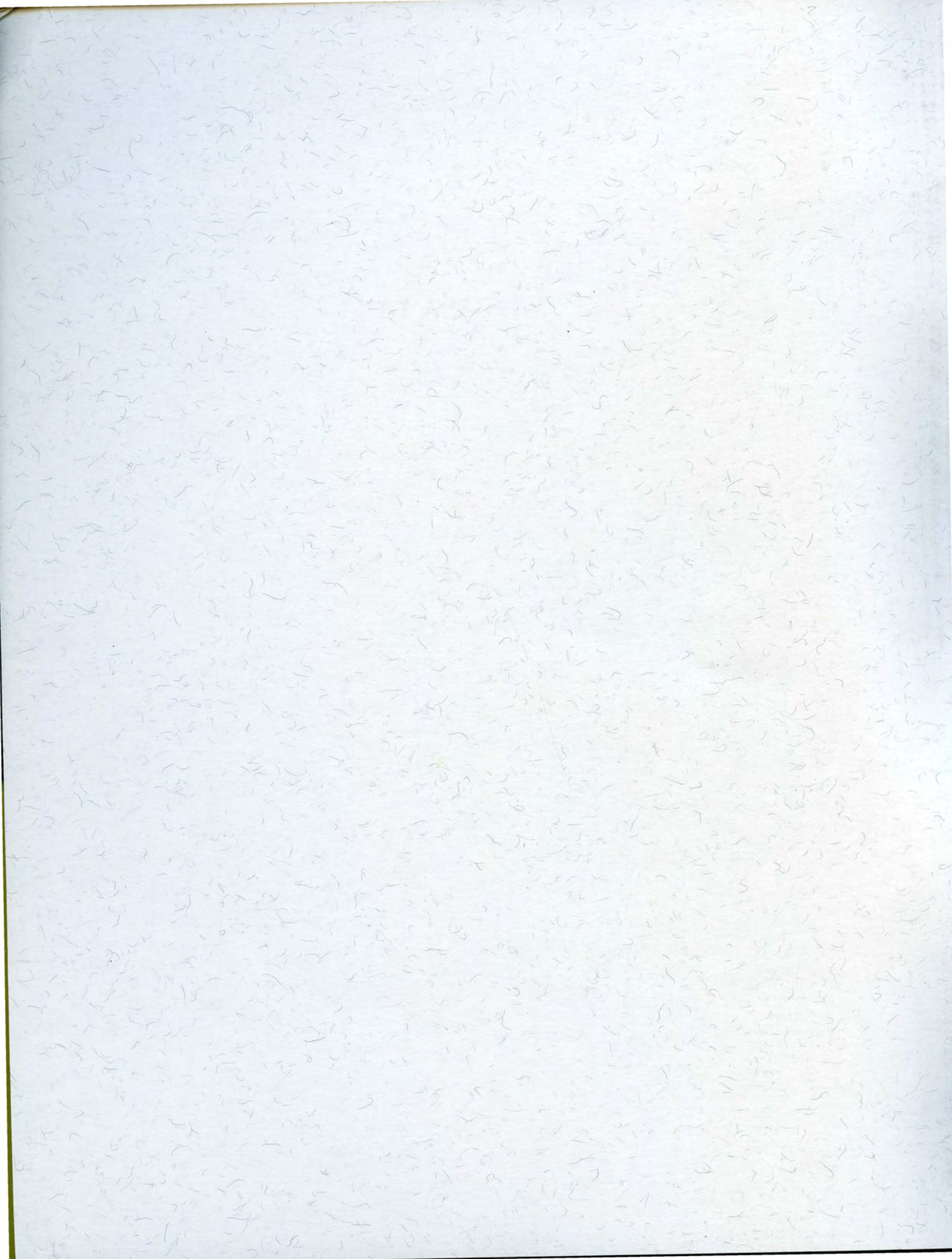
Literary Arts Society's

MOSAIC



"WRITERS BLOCK"
by
Susan A. Goodin

December 1995



REFLECTIONS

Literary Arts Society's

MOSAIC

Please note that these are *not* my other works in the Magazine that I could not get in the Table of Contents because they had no title. These as well as all the other works have been justly credited with their author's names, because they are all of work that I did by the way. So if you submitted something and don't see it here, please look for your work in "MOSAIC". Thank you. Look for your poem or short story or other work, whatever it is why not share it what else is here. You might like what you find.

Chief Editor: Jane [unclear]

Editor:
Kristen [unclear]
Alicia [unclear]
Sarah [unclear]
Meghan [unclear]
Meredith
Joe [unclear]

Jane [unclear]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

My Soul.....3-4

Metaphoric Love.....4

Mirror Images of the Act.....5-7

Twelve Times Still.....9

Joker.....9

The "Carrot" Sketch.....10-12

You.....13

Beyond Our Dreams.....14

The Scream.....15

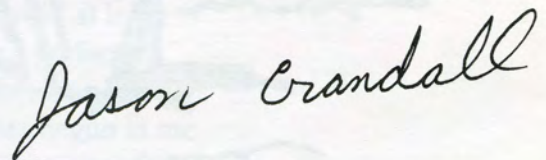
More Winter than Spring.....16

Forgotten Souls.....17

*Please note that there are many other works in this Magazine that I could not put in the Table of Contents because they had no title. These, as well as all the other works have been justly credited with their author's names, however. Also, all artwork was done by Sue Goodwin. So If you submitted something and don't see it here, please look through our MOSIAC. Take your time. Look for your poem or short story or creative work, while your at it why not glance at what else is here. You might like what you find.

Chief Editor Jason Crandall

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"My Soul"

Untitled

Into your arms.
Senseless comfort.
Back toward the fire.
A new battle,
But the same war.
Look beyond the oblivion that is pride.
Or day-darkened memories.
Fade into the fire.
The joy.
The pain.
The truth.

- Meghan Sloan

Untitled

Wirlwind of
Pain, pleasure, confusion.
Feeding frenzies of
Secrecy.
Lies, hidden stories,
Hidden lives.
Needing, wanting,
Purging
My insides.
Hoping the pain
Will cease.
The frenzy begins.
Endless cycle.

- Cammi James Keogh

You explain to me!
Who are you!?
You do not really know me.
My depth is unreachable to you.
Think you understand me?
Think again, you've been had!
My soul is a book,
A mystery with no ending.
Do not even try to figure me out.
For I am a maze.
A maze which cannot be navigated.
You try to get to my heart.
How do you know I even have one?
Even if you get to your point.
You will never be allowed to read.
My soul is under lock and key.
You will never read.
I will take my feelings with me.
Will not express.
This is not allowed.
Do not want you to know too much.
Ripping my insides apart.
Killing myself when I am near you.
Depleting myself everyday.
Pride and honor running out.
Coldness coming in.
Cannot stop it from entering.
My soul is now purged of you.
Locked out from me.
More chapters have been written.
Chapters only I understand.
Getting lost in my abyss is the only way.
Cleanse my mind and soul.
No memories shall exist.
Clean and void at last.
A practice I perfected.
Now there is no past.
New era has begun in me.
With you leaves confusion and pain.
Cleaning out of my wounds does me good.
Regaining slowly but surely.
Slate is now blank.
Ice has taken its form.

My new soul has been installed
Circuitry is now working.
Override my programmed instincts to run.
Will not come running anymore.
Help yourself!
Confused with my programming.
Pulling together to survive.
I have survived your onslaught.
Will continue to fight.
Soulless?
No.
It is now clean.
My cancerous spore now cut out.
I can go on living again.

- Joe Laposta

Metaphoric Love

Love is like a rosebush.
It's beautiful and is sweet.
However, heed these words.
For you shall find,
That this rosebush,
Has many secrets inside.
You have to be wary,
Where you touch it.
For if one is not careful,
It will plant a seed.
Right in your hand.
Which will cause you to bleed.
So hear these words.
Oh, weary traveller.
For love is often blind,
But can also be unkind.

- Walker

Untitled

Inhaling
Outerspace
Mind and body
Seperate
Kissing
Fingers crawling
Stimulating
Mind floating
Body wanting
Empty words
Molesting
Rough kisses
Not caring
Not thinking
Meaningless
Undressing in a rush
Of want
Torn blouse
Broken zipper
Doesn't matter
Cries
Turning into
Moans
Not even remembering
His name
One night stand
Lost virginity

-Cammi James Keogh

Mirror Images of the Act

Kristen Carlson

The simple, shining, contemplative image suspended above the floor illuminates the corners of the body before it. Shunning the image and cursing the thoughts, I stand hopelessly lost in my shapeless form. Mortified, I feel as a speck of dust among an atmosphere surrounded by greater particles and impressive atoms; alone and singled out, I am deserted. My life is nothing but a speck of dust lost in an over polluted atmosphere. It is no more than a player on the stage destined to shine in the spot-light only for a moment, and fade into the foregrounds. After the base and coloring is washed from the face, the costumes removed, and the props returned to the storage room, I become a lonely commoner lost in the dusty streets of the world. My life exists upon the shadow of the mirror, and through the eyes of others. I live to be criticized and grow how I am told. With so much stress from the outer world, my own inner world has become suppressed and tortured.

There are many episodes to my personality and many become award winning sitcoms. Comedies, tragedies, dramas, and one-acts pieced together play out my personal history; for the reasons for my being and the background of my personalities are reflected in each scene and in every act. There are so many characters and so many spectators. There is no escape from the light and no hiding from the commentators. Social critics determining your perception by others. No free thinkers, just conformists. Few are willing to preview a movie without rave ratings by Siskel and Ebert. These concepts mirror what I hate most about myself: the need to belong and to be accepted by those around me. The idea that I need to perform as others would want me to, and the fact that I hate conformists, but I myself am an Oscar winning conformist, creates the false character that I try so hard to reflect upon my life's stage. Subdued by reviews, I am so easily influenced and so self-conscious of my appearance and personality. It is the picture of perfection brought on by my peers that have forced me into a state of dismay and disbelief. Disbelief of myself and my qualities as a person; hatred towards the body I should cherish. At this point in my life, I am unable to accept what has been given to me; it does not live up to expectations of others, and in turn not good enough for me. Making life so unbearable, it is these mirror images of society which wrap their shiny foils around my hapless form, and look inward, gnawing at the sole pure thoughts of acceptance left.

When the sun rises and I awake to the world, my first thoughts are of what to wear and how it will make others look at me. I swore to myself, before leaving for school, that I would not let the social restraints clasp onto my wrists; here I stand engulfed by conformity and society. I am so worried with how I appear that I find myself hating my hair and the shape of my body. Placing a cold chair in front of my foe, I torture my hairs with harsh pricks of the brush and stringent smells of mouse and hair spray. As I twist and bend, poke and prod at each individual curl, they feel the punishment if they move from their assigned positions. My character transformation slowly begins to unfold as the minutes tick by and the

frustration of perfection overcomes my innocent and feeble person. Unknown to this imbalance, I haul on costume after costume, modeling before the truth and in disgust give up and wear whatever seems most graciously acceptable. The show must go on.

My face revolts against all beautifiers used to convert it to the acceptable with the worst defense imaginable to a self-conscious brat--pimples. The face refuses base and the cheeks laugh at the attractive shades of coloring I wish to apply. The apples of my cheeks swell with pimples at the dusting of it. My thin chapped maroon lips, naturally uneven, refuse to be anything but what they are. Cold sores ambush the flesh about my lips when I use lipstick to correct the errors of my natural form. These sores degrade the appearance of my entire face. Afraid to leave the room and perform for fellow conformists, the forming cracks in my materiel consciousness advise me to surrender, and the war is over. Slowly the conquerors recede to their homes beneath the surface of my dry and flaking skin awaiting the next attack, and I retire to the plain and simple. The dull luster of this natural show constricts my abilities to be the versatile thespian who comes to be adored by an ill disposed public.

When people complement me, I can never truly accept it. Are they being strictly sarcastic or is it actually a serious remark? I simply smile and continue on my way. Being so involved with my outer shell disturbs me. I do not eat right so that I may try and maintain the perfect weight for my height and build. I begin to starve myself at times because I have already eaten the daily intake of calories and carbohydrates. When I peer into my plate, there are always colorful heaping mounds of bland flavored health food, only to be picked at and hardly touched by utensils. Even if I get one lonely bagel, half remains uneaten. That would be my sole meal of the day until 5:00pm, when I have either a salad or pasta (if it is being offered that day). Still there will be particles remaining from each dish. At times my stomach becomes so famished I can hardly stand to eat. Looking at food commercials or smelling it's aroma is enough to make me ill. My stomach moans and cries as a defense and embarrasses me in public places for revenge. Although it beckons for food, I refuse to be defeated. There must be one part of my body that I have power over. Although I become drastically tired by the early evening, I am proud of my control and with a ridiculous and malicious grin of accomplishment I reward myself.

On my way to the fitness center, I am often laughing inside at my triumphs of eating so little. Despite my lethargic feeling and suppressed desire to fall and let my pride shatter into an unconscious state, I subject myself to this schedule Sunday through Thursday. Each night at 7:00pm I leave clothed in sweatpants (so not to show my unconditioned legs) and a T-shirt and I return two hours later to shower and complete homework. Along the paths between the dorm and the fitness center, I often mimic the snobbish strides of the seductive impostures. I imagine my long brown hair flowing with the gentle breezes revealing my slim face and luscious features, only to see the dream shattered by the shimmering deformity of reality found in the rippled puddles underfoot and the reflective windows along side of me. It is those mirror images of the glamour queen figure and the goddesses of beauty created by my mind's interpretation of the

perfect person that have created such hostility and anxiety within. This lack of self-acceptance steers me from mirrors yet draws me in toward the shiny objects to see if my image is at all beautiful and shapely. It has become an obsession as well as a problem.

To go far beyond the mental wear and tear, there is certain damage done to the surrounding skin and underlying muscles and tissues. Over exercise and constant fatigue create dark rings about my eyes, developing wrinkles and a forever wearisome look. My face is least appealing in it's normal stage and amplified by the fatigue, I feel monstrous and degraded. Striving for the healthy forms a sickly feeling inside my gut. I feel the tight abdominal area but only hear it moaning underneath for supplements of nutrition. Still I refuse. Although I may appear to be relatively thin and in good physical condition, my mind generates the opposite aura to my inner person. I feel chunky and lacking any physical endurance; for if I am in such good shape, why do I not appear to be forming into the modeled women in *Elle*, or in *Cosmopolitan*.

There is no rest for me, no end to my obsession for the perfect body. I want a perfect body, I want a perfect face, and I want to be noticed for it. A goal set too high for myself, and I already know what the consequences are. The lack of self-respect and the self-conscious haunting my every move and staring back at me in every reflective object. There are times I will find myself staring into a spoon at the distorted figure; I wonder if that is how I am perceived by the critics of my life and the fans of conformity.

My friends tell me that there is nothing wrong with my appearance and something very unique about my personality makes me more beautiful than Cindy Crawford. The gentle warmth of compassion that flows from within, is more appealing than long wispy hair and a perfect complexion. The kind nature of my heart, becomes more luscious than perfectly parted lips and curved hips. Within my heart there is a natural beauty that generates a perfect soul and a healthy personality. Underneath my battered and decrepit body is person who shines a radiance of love and respect for all who are able to look beyond the dry skin and plain looks. Perhaps the strange ways I see myself have made my personality a contra attack on my war for perfection and admiration. I am not a snob nor do I consider myself vain, simply down to earth and utterly confused. I am tortured by the divine things of vanity, and the expensive material articles of popular dress. The initiative strive to be the mirror of stardom and perfection, is only the beginning of a long life filled with little to be proud of and much unhappiness. If I continue to try and remodel myself into a moving replica of a painted beauty, I am guaranteeing myself a misdirected life.

I do believe that my inner soul only needs to accept my outer shell, then all will be complete and whole. To deny the poor reviews, and focus inward to the truth is all I need to do to make life rewarding. Reflections from my long-lived foe, must be disregarded in order to break free from the conformists of my time. Only if those damned mirrors would shatter to the ground allowing people to look inward to others and not out toward the physical beauty of it all . . .

*Her eyes are gold.
They are like precious gems embodied in splendor.
I enter the room with no expectations or reluctance,
but without warning her glare grips me like the sight
of a woman juggling three horses. Among the
thousands of eyes within the room, none but hers strike
me as being divine. Her eyes are deep and secretive:
they will not let me in. They simply follow me. I
move to the left, then to the right. Each time her eyes follow:
never losing their position. They are like the moon which
lurks through the horizons yet never stirs. Within them their
lies a distinctive beauty and an overwhelming ability to mesmerize.
They are a picture of grandeur.
As she sit upon the wall. I am hypnotized by her eyes. They
frighten me, but i am too enthralled by every glance to turn away.
I am fascinated by her ability to control me with each glare she forces
upon me. Her eyes scream for acknowledgment. I scream for freedom.
I can not stop looking. I fight the urge within me that wants to grasp the
passion of her eyes, but I surrender. I move closer, but her eyes
turn away as if to cover her guilt. I am confused. My thoughts
become irrational like a Picasso masterpiece.
i move away... the surveillance continues. Does no one else see her?
She is evil, yet so ravishing
I am swayed by the magical eyes.
Her eyes are overpowering. Her eyes are rich.
Her eyes are gold.*

-Lisa Annor

Twelve Times Still

and *still* we see our hopes, rekindled by the *still* lit ashes . . .
and *still* we feel the cheers, recaptured from our youth . . .
and *still* we feel the innocence, of school-yard games and childhood
dreams . . .
and *still* we fear the end, for life moves quicker, quicker *still* . . .
and *still* our minds are moving, though they say there's no originality any
more . . .
and *still* we kiss the dawn, for the morning *still* gives us new hopes to
cherish . . .
and *still* we move and saunter on, for our bodies have life, our blood keeps
running . . .
and *still* we realize, that our lives will go on , 'till our bodies are *still* . . .

-Mike Pappagallo

Joker

He laughs because of the pain
It won't go away
He jests at it
He pokes fun at the pain
His joking helps him get by
His laughing gives him an emotional high
He laughs on the outside
While harboring deep pain in his heart
I know who he is
He is me

-Joe LaPosta



ARTHUR *walks into an empty stage from stage left. He walks halfway to the center when he sees something on the ground. It is a carrot. ARTHUR looks delighted, and picks up the carrot.*

ARTHUR. F . . . Food! I found food! (*looks around*) No one else better find this . . . (*stares happily at the carrot*) Now, I heard a man con go without food for about a week. (*looks up*) So, I'll wait until just before I'm about to starve to death, then I'll scarf down this (*pauses, looks at the carrot*) *sumptuous* carrot! (*raises the carrot to the heavens*) THANK GOD!

(*The lights dim and JESUS, the Son of God, walks in from stage right. A chorus of angels sings out. All spots shine JESUS creating an effect as close to "blinding radiance" as possible. This carries on for a few seconds until the spots return to normal and the lights return to normal levels.*)

ARTHUR. JESUS CHRIST!

JESUS. Hello, my son.

ARTHUR. (*startled*) WHO THE 'ELL ARE YA?

JESUS. I am the Son of God. I am Jesus Christ. I have returned to earth.

ARTHUR. Oh Yeah! I recognize you from those . . . pictures . . . um . . . those cross thingies! They're always in those . . . those . . .

JESUS. Churches?

ARTHUR. Yeah, that's right! Y'know, you're the first person I've seen since the bombing. I walked for twenty miles, and I didn't see anyone!

JESUS. Everything in Tulsa died, Arthur. And so did everyone else in the world. You're the last man on earth.

ARTHUR. Wow! You mean I'm . . . Wait . . . (*suspiciously*) You're not here to procreate with me, are you?

JESUS. No.

ARTHUR. Good! 'Cause I'm not into that kinda thing, *even with the Son of God*. Oh, by the way, thanks for the carrot!

JESUS. Ah, yes. The carrot. (*hesitates*) We're going to need the carrot back.

ARTHUR. What?

JESUS. The carrot. I need to bring the carrot back to heaven.

ARTHUR. (*holds carrot close to his body*) This is the last thing I have to eat! What right do you have to come down here and take my last carrot?

JESUS. Would you question the word of God?

ARTHUR. This is my last bloody piece of food! You can't have it.

JESUS. Would you have all of heaven suffer because of a single man's selfishness?

ARTHUR. Who's being selfish?

JESUS. (*pauses*) God is incapable of being selfish. God loves all his children.

ARTHUR. Then how do you explain this catastrophe? Everyone's dead!

JESUS. Cannot God rest? Cannot God use the bathroom? Cannot God watch television sitcoms?

ARTHUR. The world was destroyed . . . *because God was watching sitcoms?!*

JESUS. Did I say that? (*pauses*) God was using the toilet.

ARTHUR. That's utter crap!

JESUS. You can see it that way, but I'm afraid I must have that carrot.

ARTHUR. What's so special about this carrot? If God's so perfect, why can't he just make a whole bunch of carrots?

JESUS. Greek philosophy taught that . . .

ARTHUR. I never cared much for Greeks.

JESUS. Oh hush! Greek philosophy taught that many physical objects were based on ideal models.

ARTHUR. Huh?

JESUS. Take the circle. A circle is a curved line everywhere equidistant from a single point in the center.

ARTHUR. So?

JESUS. Have you ever seen a perfect circle?

ARTHUR. Yeah.

JESUS. No, you haven't! It's impossible to see a perfect circle on earth.

ARTHUR. No, it isn't. I see 'em all the time! I even have an "O" key on my typewriter. That's a perfect circle, right?

JESUS. No, not absolutely perfect . . .

ARTHUR. Look! Who gives a rat's ass about a perfect circle?! The world was always fine with our substandard bastard circles, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

JESUS. That carrot isn't just any carrot. It's the model on which all other carrots in the universe are based.

ARTHUR. Is it edible?

JESUS. Yes.

ARTHUR. Right! I'm gonna eat it then! (*raises the carrot to his mouth*)

JESUS. No! Wait! You'll throw the entire universe out of balance!

ARTHUR. And?

JESUS. The universe will cease to exist.

ARTHUR. Normally, that would be a major *faux pax*, but since everyone else is dead, it'll just be between you and me, 'eh? (*ARTHUR is just about to eat the carrot*)

JESUS. We'll give you a woman!

ARTHUR. (*quite stunned, stops threatening to eat the carrot*) Is God a pimp?

JESUS. No! There is no money involved.

ARTHUR. Then they do it for spiritual favors?

JESUS. All right, maybe. It shouldn't be a surprise . . . I mean, that whole Adam and Eve thing . . .

ARTHUR. Mmmm . . . I see what you mean . . . Well, I'm not interested.

JESUS. We'd be willing to overlook the whole "sinning" thing . . .

ARTHUR. It's not that. I don't feel like having the awesome responsibility of recreating the entire human race.

JESUS. I never mentioned the S-word.

ARTHUR. Sex?

JESUS. Yeah, that one.

ARTHUR. *(pauses)* But you were insinuating it.

JESUS. May God damn me forever if I . . . *(lights start dimming)*
(pause) Okay, so I was hinting at it. *(lights return to full)*

ARTHUR. Hey, isn't that taking God's name in vain? What happened to all that stuff in the Bible you're suppose to follow?

JESUS. Hey, I didn't write that stuff.

ARTHUR. Then what's up with the New Testament?

JESUS. Don't look at me, I'm Jewish.

ARTHUR. *(pauses)* So, I've been a good man. Do I get to keep the carrot?

JESUS. If you were a good man, you'd give me the carrot. The power of God is mighty enough to move mountains. Surely, you'd reconsider.

ARTHUR. Ah, but can the power of God prevent me from eating this carrot?

JESUS. Yes.

ARTHUR. Oh. *(pauses)* Ah, but without faith, God is nothing. Right?

JESUS. This is true.

ARTHUR. And I am the only human being left on the planet . . .
(pauses, closes his eyes) I'M A BUDDHIST! I'M A BUDDHIST! I'M A BUDDHIST!

(JESUS cringes in abject fear. ARTHUR continues to chant, all the while, nothing happens. Finally JESUS composes himself.)

JESUS. Amazing! The perfect carrot is a Christian carrot!

ARTHUR. What?!

JESUS. The belief of this carrot is stronger than your belief.

ARTHUR. It's just a carrot!

JESUS. The perfect carrot, and you intellectual superior!

ARTHUR. That's just insulting!

JESUS. The spirit shall rule forever, my son.

ARTHUR. Fuck that! This carrot can't eat me!

JESUS. Don't do it Arthur. Just put down that carrot . . .

(ARTHUR crunches into the carrot. A chorus of angels sings. The lights on stage suddenly turn off.)

-Bryan Walko

YOU

By: Molly Camp

You is a word
I think of at night
You is a word
That makes me feel right

You is a word
Running deep in my head
You is a word
Not all has been said

You is a word
I write of a lot
You is a word
That has conquered
My thoughts

You is a word that
Brings me much pain
You is a word that's
Loud like a train

You is a word
I'm lost here without
You is a word
That I often shout

You is a word
That confuses my head
You is a word
Sometimes I wish you were dead

You is a word
That mixes love with hate
You is a word
That's more than just fate

But you are thing
More than a word
You're more like an eagle
Not just a bird

It's you as a person
With your smile and heart
It's you that I've dreamed of
Since the start

But it's you who has broken
My heart in two
And it's me who suffers now
Not you

UNTITLED

trapped in a darkness we've
created sitting, waiting for a
signal
stuck in an oasis on an
endless journey searching for
questions to which we have the
answers
knowing now where we've been
but where we are and the
bright green neon leaves me
sightless, maples with its
word gasping, gagging
I want to throw it all up the
lies, the truth, the secrets
opposites?...maybe or one in
the same
flip a coin choose living or
dying peace or war making love
or sex is there a difference?
continue searching for your
God and show me your way to
heaven and to hell
while I continue to create my
own heaven and live in my own
hell God?...I am my own God
vastness religion casting
stones as citizens burn flags
and trade blocks for guns
dreams turn reality while
reality becomes nightmare in a
merry-go-round playing 'A
spoonful of sugar' laughing,
crying speed
spinning, crashing never
existed figment of the
imagination, the mind my
mother's presence under my
sole burns with the rise in
temperature
and there standing tall he
protects his members strong,
quiet, firm, and reserved he
graces the dark with his
presence
and I recognize, accept, my
want to be the palm at the end
of my mind

Cammi James Keogh

BEYOND OUR DREAMS

Beyond our dreams
Beyond the consolation which leaps forth

Their stands a place, no evil action lives
Laughter tells the story and
no tears are trembling

Tender care cradles each breath
and names reflect nothing more

Beyond our lives
Beyond the consolation which leaps forth

Their's place of hearts of humankind
Laughter reflects the story and no one is
weeping

Mothered care cradles each one and
names are meaningless

Beyond our dreams
Beyond the consolation which leaps forth

Their stands a place, no evil action lives
Laughter tells the story and
no tears are trembling

Tender care cradles each breath
and names reflect nothing more

Kevin O'Neill

Untitled

Your true colors,
Came shining through,
Like a torrent
Of raindrops,
Beating against my head.
The mask you wore,
Shriveled and dissolved
Into the puddles,
Of your insanity.
Left is a blank face,
Which will greet you,
From now on.

Diane R. Kolod

THE SCREAM

The truth is a thing best left undisturbed lest it break free from its chains and run amok throughout the world causing untold devastation--bringing with it the multitude of demons that we have created--we have caused all that is wrong and we must be the ones to undo all that has been undone--we are the ones who have ripped apart what should be and trampled it into the grass like a poor ant who only wants a meal--chaos is what is--we have broken the natural law with our own demands and that is not us--seeking only power and self-gratification-- we hide our transgressions in a reality of our own fabrication and never let them show--like bad children told to behave when company comes calling--to us righteousness is only semi-apparent and, even then, it's a confusing thing--we have lost our way and now all roads lead to Hell--we would rather hide our heads in the sands of fate, than take the trouble to climb up the dune of salvation--we make our own choices and responsibility cannot be passed around and traded like a baseball card--never look at the sun for it is truth and it will ruin you sight-- but sometimes the blind see better than anybody--will you be the one climbing to find the mountain-top guru, searching for enlightenment, or will you be satisfied with all the illusions of society?--illumination is the key--it only hurts to turn on the light when you have lived in the dark for a long time--the pain of reality created our tylenol world--open your mind to the warning pulses--society is a lord that never lets you see the possibilities--silicon valleys of progress all flow to oblivion but your king and country owns all the boats--and who wants to rule when the black death comes to town?--we never see the rats and we never see the filth we're living in--taking all and giving back only in pretense--living in a ditch drinking the muddy water and thinking it's champagne--who the hell wants the good life now that we've found it?--but we're content because we don't see the stormdrain ahead sucking us down into the pits we crawled up from--it's all greed and lies that make the world revolve--but that was up to us and nobody listens to what we're saying anymore because it's all the same words--we're going through the motions acting like we have a million of them--it's a Disney world after all, but even Disney gets paid-- and the sun continues to shine and we ignore it like all the other fixtures of our lives--sure we bask in the sun and feel those warm rays of heaven as we fall asleep dreaming things we don't care enough about to have--our minds only there to give our necks a purpose--it's only a dark ride because someone forgot to turn on the lights and we never opened our eyes--why climb when you can sit at the bottom drinking lemonade?--so here I am rambling on and spouting my mixed metaphors and not doing a god damned thing--why?--because I like lemonade and it's too much trouble getting out of that chair--this is hell, folks, but we don't want to admit it and I don't like walking out halfway through the show.

- Mark Francisco

More Winter than Spring
(The Winter/Spring Transition)
By Robert L. Furlong

Tomorrow, at 9:12 a.m.. the first day of spring will arrive. Flowers may bloom; the air may have a sweet-sixteen scent; singing robins may return and have offspring; beautiful girls may skip in their pretty, pastel cotton dresses, saunter with coy smiles as their youthful, shining hair gracefully swings to the beat of each frolicking step past wiry boys whose hearts are twitchin' at the first signs of the blossoms.

Yet today, this snowy da in late March, is the last da of winter. I want to relish, experience, give witness to Old Man's Winter's final moments. To ski, skate, pitch snowballs, create a snowman; stroll through powder, shovel, sweep the six-sided flakes off of the car; sip hot chocolate topped with whipped cream, taste steaming hot oatmeal, Vermont toast layered with butter, honey and jam; then bravely climb back into my snowsuit, hat, gloves and boots in order to slush towards the face of this dying giant once again.

Afterwards, as I recline on my bed, supported by my favorite backrest stitched by Mom, covered to the waist with my sentimental pilgrim blue afghan crotched by Grandma, I am grateful for the feeling of warmth as I watch the snow-filled gusts of wind swirl outside my second-story window and hear the heavy, grating sounds of the snowplow scraping the speedily accumulating 'blanket de blanc' off to the side of the road. Inside, however, it is a classic snow day for me filled with that unique serenity only found during this hibernating time of year.

For tomorrow, it is spring. The sun will be shared equally by everyone on planet Earth - twelve hours of daylight - twelve hours of nighttime. It is then official; the northern winter is over. We all move on.....

Yet today, this season of drifting dormancy is still very much present because of Old Man Winter's extraordinary last ditch efforts. The withered ol' guy wants you and me to know and respect that even if by only a few minutes, there is still more solid cold darkness than warm liquid sunlight, more roaring lion than meek lamb, more bone-chilling wind than soft soothing breeze, more March snow than April showers, more barren white than lush green, more withered brown bark than innocent pink petals, more aged closed than spryly open, more frozen dust than floating pollen, more seamless gray cloud cover than roaring deep blue sky, more idle solitude than moving togetherness, more winter than spring.

Forgotten Souls

They walked all night with their shoes full of blood.
And like Gods, like deities who roamed the earth centuries ago,
they speared the dirt into their cupped hands and formed it to
try to create new life.
Aah...but no new life sprung.

They walked alone, for no man so intent on life dare walk with or
near them for fear that they too may be cast into the
emotionless damnation to which these few endured.

They walked with their hands full of sweat, and their wrinkled
faces told a story, yet not a story of heros or of love, but a
story of time.

They walked with their pockets empty from the larcenous men who
stripped them too, of their dignity.

They walked all night, yes, and through fields and thickets, and
cement paved roadways. Through schoolyards, and parking lots of
city offices in which the damned bureaucratic powerlords sat at
their desks wielding their mighty Cross pens.

Their shoes full of blood, blood-the reminder of deathly screams.
And it oozed out the sides as they stepped over the dead that lay
before them. And nobody looked their way.

They walked wounded from the bullets that flew from the barrels
of the m-16's that always seemed to be waiting around every
corner.

They walked, unnoticed as they fought to protect the freedom of
their country.

Mike Pappagallo





DRAWINGS
by
Sue Goodwin



