

Mosaic



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Special Thanks to the Advertising Club

Body Shop

The *Glamour* March or April cover reads
"The Rush of Getting Fit" and "Trim Your Thighs
In Just a Week." It plays upon our needs
And fears; we yearn to wear the perfect size.
Truth hides between the season's lip stick shade
And Styling Spritz. Starvation. They are not
The Perfect, though they seem it. Models made
To say they sweat and work, they swim and trot.
And yet, I wonder. Don't they sometimes binge
Then purge? Do knives and suction sometimes play
A part in what we see? The truth we cringe
To think of. Full of hope, we rush to pay.
We pay to find and make the perfect "me."
And yet true beauty we will never see.

Lynaire Brust

AIDS Fear Slashes Vampire Attacks

Ethnographers this week reported a new threat to cultural plurality on the planet Earth, as yet another pre-agricultural people is wiped out by disease transmitted from a more technologically advanced civilization. The essentially nomadic Vampire Tribe once roamed freely on the European and North American continents in search of indigenous food sources. Before being threatened with extinction, the Vampire led life in idyllic harmony with their natural environment. occupying a unique position in their immediate food chain, these nocturnal hunters had established a secure ecological niche for themselves. A plentiful food supply ensured them much leisure, enabling them to develop a rich and complex culture.

In examining their highly evolved religion, for instance, we find them preoccupied with achieving sanctification and renewal of life through degustation. Elaborate gestures and incantations constituted important preparation for the taking of a communion-like meal in which eater and eaten mystically became one. Several key rituals invested the act of eating with erotic as well as sacred meaning: participants at certain midnight services performed ceremonies of simultaneous penetration and ingestion, experiencing ecstatic regeneration of body and spirit.

The imminent extinction of this tribe, together with its unique cultural legacy, represents an irreplaceable loss to the human race as a whole. Anthropologists cite contamination of Vampire food supplies as the cause of the deadly viral epidemic which has all but exterminated them. Those who have avoided infection by abstaining from polluted foodstuffs have merely condemned themselves to slow death by starvation.

A few members of the tribe have attempted to adapt to the fatal change in their habits by obtaining their nourishment from virus-free, Red Cross emergency stockpiles. According to anthropologist Clayton Kienzle, this adaptation will not prove sufficient to sustain survival of the tribe as a distinct ethnic group. "Whenever primitive peoples become dependent upon the products of civilization for their livelihood," Dr. Kienzle explains, "there is concomitant loss of cultural identity. Even if a few isolated individuals can survive on Red Cross handouts, inevitably they will lose those traditions which made the Vampire a proud and self-sufficient people."

Judith Saunders

A Concise Confession

Father Booth looked out the rectory window and watched his parishioners slowly gather in front of the church. The women drifted away from their husbands, and in their small groups they laughed and gossiped. He imagined they were talking about him. The men formed a small circle and stood quietly smoking and watching the horse carts go by in the street.

Booth heard the church bells begin to ring. He knew he had three minutes before everyone would be seated, and had another three minutes after that until they would become impatient for him to arrive. Then he would enter the church from a door behind the altar, and they would become his for the next two hours.

The bells stopped ringing, and he watched the women make last-minute adjustments of their dresses and primp their hair, then quietly file into the church. The men took one last drag from their cigarettes, removed their hats, and hurried inside after their wives.

Booth liked the pattern of Sundays, and had been there so long he stopped wearing a watch because he always knew what time it was by what was happening. He could hear the muffled sound of the choir as they began to sing, and he buttoned his shirt in a mirror. He knew there was a light breeze from the way the leaves skittered across the square outside of the church, and he walked over to his desk in the corner of the room.

He sat in the soft leather desk chair, bent down, and opened the bottom drawer. There was a small vanity mirror and comb in it, and he took them out and began to comb his hair. At least I still have my looks, he thought as he watched himself in the mirror. He jammed the comb in his pocket, put the mirror in the drawer, closed it, then got up. He left the rectory, ran across the small yard between it and the church, then went inside. He could hear the people murmuring and shifting in the pews, and knew it was time to start. He ran the comb through his hair once again before walking into view. He hated to look untidy in front of his people.

"Good morning," he said. "And God bless."

The people murmured.

So many faces, he thought as he looked over the parish. All dressed in their best clothes, and looking better than they ever do, and it's all for me. He smiled as he was thinking, and the people smiled back. Father Booth was their favorite because he was such a happy fellow.

An altar boy asked everyone to open their prayer books and they all began to pray. Booth had his open in front of him on the lectern, but didn't look at it, nor did he pray. His mind was on the people at his feet. So many women, he thought.

His eyes wandered through the crowd, and periodically fell on his favorites. Mrs. Cash, he thought as he stared at her singing and sweating body, was a lot of woman. Though, he thought and smiled, she wasn't too much for me. His eyes moved on, going up and down each row of pews.

Miss Brown, he thought as he stopped on another, was too attractive for her own good. He anticipated receiving her confession, but his thoughts were interrupted by the silence of the crowd.

"I'm glad to see you all here today," he said. "Together to worship the Lord." He could see some of the people smile, and others stared at him with blank faces. He noticed that some of the women turned away when he looked at them.

"My sermon today is about trust," he said. "About trusting in the Ways of the Lord." He paused. "As well as His servants," he added quietly. None of his sermons were new. He had a cycle of them and never veered from it. He felt that it was too much work trying to think one up every week when he had the other needs of his parish to look after. No one seemed to notice the repetition, and even if they did, he was sure no one would question it. After all, he thought. Why should they? I am a priest.

His voice rattled on, and his mind wandered as he talked because he had the sermons rehearsed for years. His eyes prowled the crowd, up and down the pews, and he smiled when he saw that she was there today.

Her name was April Bloome. A sick joke by her parents, he thought when first introduced to her. She was young, mid-twenties he estimated, and was the most-faithful of all the parish. She came to church every Saturday night and Sunday morning, and every time he held mass during the week. She was the daughter of the town grocer, and unmarried, which was rare for a girl of both her beauty and age.

It hurt his eyes to look at her, and the white dress she wore whenever she came to church made it worse. He dreamt about the way her long, blonde hair would feel as he ran his fingers through it, and the way her body would feel underneath his, but dismissed such thought because he knew she wasn't like that. Unlike the other God-fearing women of the parish, that is, he thought and smiled again. The parish was

always amazed by how happy and smiling he was.

He finished the first half of the sermon, and the choir began to sing. He walked from behind the pulpit and sat down on a chair behind it. I'm not as young as I used to be, he thought. It was a long hymn, and he was grateful for the rest. His eyes continued their slow round of the crowd, but he always came back to April. I hate her, he thought. So clean and pretty. Who does she think she is? A saint?

She looked up and noticed that he was staring at her. She smiled at him. Burn in Hell, he thought. I can't stand this. How can she be that way? She's not human. I'm weak. We're all weak. He crossed his legs and folded his hands on his lap.

The choir finished singing, and the altar boys came out from behind the altar and walked down the main aisle, swinging incense braziers as they walked. The people turned to watch them as they walked by, and Booth followed them with his eyes, but when they walked behind where April was sitting, he started staring at her again.

How can she be like that, he fumed. Why can't I? Why can't I sleep at night without someone next to me?

The altar boys finished their procession and walked behind the pulpit. He stood silently in front of the parish, and felt their hundreds of eyes weighing on him, and suddenly became frightened that everyone there had realized what he was.

Oh, he thought as he began the second half of the sermon. Am I the only one who sins? None of you desire? Who listens to your confessions? Who do you think recognizes your voices? I know all of you. All of your sins. None of you are any better than I, so you can just stop acting. He realized that, as he continued the sermon, the sneer in his mind showed on his face, and he stopped thinking about it and smiled at the crowd. They seem so happy when I smile, he thought.

He finished the sermon, and, as the final words about trusting in the Church and its servants resounded in the air, he thought he could see some of the women shift uneasily. There was a long silence, and he felt as though he could still hear his voice echo in the quiet, still church. He nodded to the choir, and they began to sing while he walked into the small anteroom behind the altar and began to prepare the communion.

He closed and locked the door behind him as he entered. He fumbled with his ring of keys and unlocked the cabinet where he kept the communal ingredients. He prepared the host, then squatted down and felt along the back of the bottom shelf. There was a bundle of cloth and a

small box hidden in the back, and he picked them up and put them next to the communion on the cabinet top. He carefully unrolled the wrapping and exposed the large pistol in it.

He picked it up, its hard wooden grip cold in his hand, and thought about how much heavier it was than he remembered. It can't go on, he thought. I can't stand it any longer. It has to be done, I have to do it, for the good of the parish. Now? No, no one will see. When, then?

He opened the gun's chamber, fumbled with the box, and bullets spilled from it and rolled across the cabinet top. In the distance he heard the choir fall silent. Jesus, he thought as he scrutinized the bullets, chose a single one, and loaded it into the gun. I better hurry.

He snapped the cylinder back into place, and put the pistol in his pants pocket. He picked up the dish of wafers, unlocked the door, and went back into the church.

The people watched him as he entered and walked to the altar, and the altar boys came up and flanked him on both sides. There was a carpeted step up from the pews to the altar, and each person would get up from their seat and walk up to receive the sacraments. Booth reasoned that, since in the end all go to meet their maker alone, they should take their communion with Him alone as well. The men would take theirs standing, but the women, to show their humility before Him, would take theirs kneeling on the step, their faces near Booth's waist. I like it, he often thought. It gives me something to think about.

It was a long, boring part of the service for Booth, but the pleasure he took when the women came up made up for it. Some approached innocently, and he looked down at them as little children, and then came the ones whose sins he knew, and he would stare down at them and make them linger at his waist while he considered new penances for them. He did not fear being found out, because he knew that none of the women he had been with ever doubted the Ways of the Lord or His servants, but, if they ever did, that was why he had this sermon. Just in case.

He wandered in his musings about the parish women when he noticed, out of the corner of his eye, a white form stand up. An avenging angel to punish me? he thought, but knew better. No angel would come to Booth. It was pure and white and he could feel pain beyond physical pain when he looked at her. April Bloome stood up in the pews and slowly made her way out to the aisle.

Get thee behind me Satan, he thought as she slowly walked

towards him. He began to feel sick as she came closer. He became hot and his stomach began to hurt. He loosened his collar and leaned back against the altar to steady himself. He hoped that none of the people could see his sweaty face.

She was slow and graceful, and her white dress swung in the slight breeze she made as she walked. He counted the number of steps she made as she walked, and with each one he felt sicker. She's beautiful, he thought. I want her. No. Courage. God, he thought in the first prayer he remembered saying in a long time. Give me the strength to see this through.

She smiled as she came closer, and he stepped back when her face drew up to his waist as she kneeled on the step. He looked down at her with all the fear and loathing he should have had for the Devil. Why are you so better than I? Why am I so weak? He looked up at the rest of the parish, all watching him. Why are we all weak? Where do you get the strength to be what you are? he thought and looked back down at April. Are you a messenger from God sent to remind me every single day you come here just how weak I am? Don't you think I know that? But I am no longer. You, your righteousness, has made it clear to me and have given me the strength to see and do what must be done. He smiled down at her and she smiled back. A dizzy spell overcame him as she closed her eyes and tipped her head back, mouth open, for her communion.

He put the host in her mouth, and watched her slowly chew it, her eyes still closed. Strength, God! I beg you! Strength!

"Bless you, child," he said as his vision clouded and he felt faint. He fumbled with the gun as he drew it from his pocket, held the barrel in front of her face, and pulled the trigger. The report exploded in the quiet church, and her head became a red spray that covered him, the altar boys, and the people in the pews closest to the altar.

His hand was slick from the blood, and the gun slipped from his hand and fell to the floor. Through the smoke he saw April's body teeter on its knees and his eyes followed it as it fell backwards onto the ground. He watched the blood pour out of what had been her head and onto the floor, and his conscience suddenly cleared and he felt much better.

Lawrence Deneault

Thoughts of a Madman

Mad; lunatic; crazy; crazed; not right; cracked; touched; bereft of reason; unhinged; deranged; unsettled in one's mind; insensate; reasonless; demented; daft; insane; me; here; ten years; ten years; ten years ago; Mom; mother; mama; matriarch; dam; dam; dam spelled backwards is mad; mad; mad me; Father; sire; dad; daddy; papa; governor; affectionate; tender; sympathetic; amorous; passionate; devoted; adorable; lovely; sweet; attractive; seductive; winning; charming; enchanting; captivating; fascinating; amiable; angelic; seraphic; Dad; father; vicious; unworthy; felonious; nefarious; satanic; ten years; ten years ago; monster came; Mom, whined, whimpered, cried, begged, pleaded, beseeched, supplicated, implored, "NO! DON'T! DON'T HURT US!" Monster, indifferently, callously, carelessly, regardlessly, struck, smacked, spanked, beat, pummeled; "MOM!" Monster roared, "BITCH! CUNT! SLUT! TRAMP!" Angel fell; Mom; lifeless; dead; Monster; Fallen Angel; joined; mother unrecognizable; monster thrusting; kitchen; knife; monster; stab; perforate; pierce; enfilade; spike; spear; gore; puncture; monster gone forever; forever; "Rot in Hell." Me; doctors; loved my mother; my mother; I loved; said doctors; me mad; lunatic; crazy; crazed; not right; cracked; touched; bereft of reason; unhinged; deranged; unsettled in one's mind; insensate; reasonless; demented; daft; insane...

Jon Cerabone

Blackened Hearts

Taurus rising in this
Mystical Prince.
Mine is NEVER mine,
What seems to be
is just an illusion
full of black magic and confusion.
Warlock potions and trickery
suffocate the soul
creating its own misery.
Holding this wand,
never to be forgotten
is that special bond.
Let this night remember
these two lovers,
for they will never see
this bed again.
This loft turns
dark as a cauldron; burns
the flesh and scorches
the lifeline. One falls in,
the other, the other glances
turns away and soars
with his fiendish mind
to swoop on the next,
the next to be entranced,
by his wizardry.
Say goodbye, say goodbye;
hello never comes again.
Gather the tormented cries,
hide them away from wandering eyes.
The CHASE is over, Mr. Voo-Do is gone.
Emerge with courage, move on;
relish yourself in the VANITY of the mind.

Jason T. Suttle

A Hard Lesson To Learn

Please refrain from stimulating my admiration
because someday you will never have known me.

Impressions last only long enough to feel the pain
of separation

isolation.

mentor

sage

foe

Take your impact back.
Don't understand me so well.

We trudge together through jungles of words.
You, always walking a step ahead,
prepared to untangle the dense metaphor
which may prohibit my entrance
into a clearer land.

We have only just learned to appreciate one another,
to stand together on a common ground of ideas.

Not quite fully directed yet,
but left alone to find my way,
carve out my own path --
abandoned by my trusty guide,
my inspiration.

There are newer puzzles for you to put together,
to mold and shape
-- to complete.

You are finished with me, I suppose.
The last piece has been placed.

How ignorant you are.
How much more ignorant I still am.

Soon enough the new shipment, will come

intimidated

curious

empty

It's your task to open - then fill them up
so mommy and daddy can be so proud of them then.

The knowledge received will never leave my side,
Although you won't recall having taught it.

Maybe sometime

while discussing Shakespeare

(To be remembered - or not to be - that is the real question)

an ambitious hand will go up

questioning

craving comprehension

thirsting interpretation.

And for a flash,

not a frame more,

you will picture me and grin.

Probably not.

Janet DeSimone

Biblical Sport Shorts

Has anyone ever struggled over trying to explain why man is so obsessed with sports? Speaking from the perspective of a man, I am fascinated at watching the struggles on the playing field, court, diamond, whatever. My wife cannot understand it. I know I am not alone in this, witness the terms "football widows" and "couch potatoes" which have been used frequently to describe modern marriage partners. Through careful research I have been able to find the source for all this - it is a basic nature of God which He has endowed to all men. In fact, sports were part of the motivation for the creation of the world! According to my research, God was at a cricket match and became totally engrossed during one of their long innings. Even though "one innings" can last several days and a match may take as long as five days to complete, it was not enough for God. He wanted the excitement to continue forever and decided to create our world. This is reported in the opening of the Bible: "In the 'big-inning' God created the Heavens and the Earth." (Gen 1:1) Thus, right from the start, man's nature was connected to sports.

This interest in sports is reported all throughout the bible. In fact, Noah was quite a baseball player. The reason it took him forty years to build the ark was that he could only work on it during the off season. Of course, this was all with divine permission as evidenced in Gen 6:14, where god advises Noah to "pitch it inside and outside." This might explain why Noah ended up drunk in his tent after the flood. Either he was totally despondent at having an entire season washed out, or possibly he did too many wine commercials after retiring from the game.

It is also a little known fact that Moses was a famous baseball player; the star center fielder for the Israelite team. When Moses was trying to get his people set free, one of the tests he had to pass was a baseball contest against Pharaoh's team of wizards. Moses saved the day in the bottom of the ninth with a spectacular catch in center field. "And Moses put forth his hand and caught it!" (EX 4:4)

Although Moses was a star in the field, it was his brother Aaron who was famous at the plate. He hit more home runs than anyone else in Old Testament history. In fact, he was becoming more famous than Moses and had to play using another name; "Henry", to escape the jealousy of Moses. This is evidence that history repeats itself, for the greatest home run hitter in this age was also named "Henry Aaron".

This conflict between the brothers was not unusual, for the problem of jealousy and rivalry between famous sports figures was

common in those days. One of the reasons there was so much bad feeling between David and Saul was because David's team pitched the first no-hitter in recorded Biblical history against Saul's team. This is reported in 2 Samuel 2:14-17 "Let the young men arise and play before us ...and they caught every one ... the men of Israel were beaten."

There is more evidence that the love for the game continues throughout Biblical times. With all his emphasis on body-building, Samson was too slow to play in the field and is the one who established the position behind the plate. "Samson went and caught." (Judges 5:14) Joshua was also known for his technique on the mound as mentioned in Joshua 4:20, "Joshua did pitch".

In those days, baseball language permeated the common language of the day. Evaluations were made using baseball language. Solomon, in fact, compared a beautiful woman to a base hit when he praised her by saying "You are fair." (Song of Solomon 1:15)

The boisterous fans were also around in those days, second guessing every coaching decision and/or giving their valuable advice, asked for or not. For example: "Why did you steal?" (Gen 31:27), "Make a plate!" (Exodus 28:36), and "Shall we sacrifice?" (Exodus 8:26)

This interest in baseball continues into the New Testament, as many of the parables of Jesus were actually baseball stories. This is found in the parable of the prodigal son where Jesus says "He ran home." (Luke 15:20) Actually, sports abilities in those times were so important that one of the qualifications for becoming one of the twelve disciples was whether they could make the baseball team, probably to play in the church leagues. In fact, this was such an important qualification that Simon Peter was nearly not chosen. His relief at making the team is implied in Luke 5:10 - "Jesus said to Simon 'Fear not, from on you shall be catching'".

This interest in sports was not just limited to baseball and cricket. Moses, in fact, was also quite a tennis player. The Bible refers to this when it says "Moses served in Pharaoh's court." (Exodus 5:1) There are no direct references to women playing tennis in those days, but their tournaments could have been sponsored by the tobacco companies, as women were reported to be smoking at that time. This is revealed in the story of the first meeting of Rebekah and Isaac. Rebekah had consented to marry Isaac sight unseen. We can imagine the anxiety she feels when she first comes into town and sees him at a short distance. The first thing she does is to try to relax with a cigarette. As referred to in Gen 24:64,

"And when Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off her camel." You've come a long way, baby!

Joshua has been mentioned previously for his prowess on the mound, but his interests, like modern man, ran to more than one sport. Joshua's other success was in motorcycle racing. The bible mentions this when it reports "Joshua's Triumph was heard throughout the land." (Joshua 11:24)

Thus, we can see man's interest in sports comes from an inner spark placed there at the original time of creation. This explains why so many of us religiously follow our teams season by season. If others around complain you are wasting your time in this way, don't try to rationalize your behavior. These inner spiritual aspects of life cannot be explained, they must be experienced. Just take another sip from the communion glass and crunch the sacramental chips!

Walter Lowe

There Are Frogs Singing Songs In A Bog By The Side Of The Road

There are frogs singing songs in a bog by the side of the road.
In the dusk there are frogs' high songs.

By the side of the road there are blossoms on red maple trees,
in the yard, crocuses,
two weeks grown, and green plants,
where last month were none.

At evening is light,
through clouds in the slant sky,
and by day, a softer air.
Birds call again.

In April are big changes
and small rain.

Brydon Fitzgerald

One in a Million

He walks along
the road with
bottle in hand.

He dreams of
what could
have been.
He dreams of
what should
have been.

He walks along
this strip of
earthen asphalt
and notices
the clouds.

The black clouds.

His legs begin
to pick up
the pace.

The ebony clouds
embrace
and begin
the chase.

His mind sends
signals to his venerable body;
have to move faster,
have to move faster.

But his mind is not
what it used to be.
His body is not
what it use to be.

Rain, splashing.
Heart, palpitating.
Gods, clapping.
Sound, deafening.
Rest, needed.
Shelter, sought.
Eyes, search.
Oak, found.
Sky, lighted.
Hairs, stand.
LIGHTS OUT.
All is black.
All is black.
All is black.

Blackthorn

Reunion

As his camera eyes opened ever wider on the panorama spreading before him, memories sprang from behind trees, jumped up with the carp from impressionist lakes, sounded in the conversation of unfearful mallards, swept him away with the gentle winds of June in Minnesota back a quarter century to the wakening--to the death of certainty, to the birth of joy.

The campus was pristine, the clean that comes from the absence of sin. Nothing bad could happen here. It was a beneficence, a massage for the soul. The chapel stood guard, ever the fortress; the library held the breadth of human wisdom in its arms; and no men met without a nod or smile. It had always been this way, but it was not the way he knew it.

He was not sure why he had come. It was costly, and he had never been fond of nostalgia. But he knew that accuracy comes later and impulse is blessed. He trusted his instincts and went with them.

As he rode to the dorm where he was staying, he began his collection with slides of standing monuments: the diner where they went for mud ugly coffee, the off hours place where the seniors bought booze, the roof where they did in the pizza truck, the shack where they got their rival's goat. Oh, and wasn't that the old lady's house--passing her by each night on the way to his room, the bible on her lap, a line of inspiration for each half hour of silent prayer, some of them probably for him. And that time the tornado tail hit as he hurried to work only to be outrun by serious trees, five feet across one of them measured, and the women on the roof leaning out into the wind getting a feel for power. But the stump was gone now and the building too. Had it been there? Yes, it had double glass doors.

He laughed and there was bitterness in it. It was the revenge of his middle years--after the deportation. A prank really, get some guys to steal the doors that held the women prisoners. Ten o'clock they locked them up in those days. It controlled the men as well they said. Didn't chastity mean control? The revenge was bitter sweet, the thin old house mom sleeping under three blankets in the opening while the crew scoured the ground for the doors. But inspiration was the hiding place, and they never found them, not till Hans the watchmen said they would fire him if he didn't get them back. You can't see glass in a lake.

He hummed as he climbed the stairs testing the resonance. How

often had he sung in the well. He had brought his banjo just in case, but it wasn't his voice he longed to hear. He used to sing to her at dawn, sometimes on a dare climbing a tree to shorten the distance. But she would not be at the reunion, and he was surprised when he found himself listening for her. Anyway, she was not in the dorms.

He was busy all that day. There were people to meet, intimacies to remember and shortly to forget again, eating and drinking, laughing and speaking with old friends and a few he had not gotten around to the first time. Funny how voices and gestures remained as images set and sank. And though the warmth was as he remembered so too the limitations. And to his surprise he realized it was not the people he came for. The poignancy did not lay there. It was in the place somehow and the vibrant sensations it conjured and restored. He shuddered. What was it?

The next morning, when his alarm mistakenly told him it was time to get up, he continued the search. Sunrise was glorious--deep dew sparkling, smells everywhere, half familiar birds vociferous as he approached. He prowled the empty paths laughing when he caught himself checking for the worms which used to litter the walkways after rain. As he looked around for available company, he remembered the ache which would not go away.

On that bridge, wasn't it, wrestling Shelly for her pants. Off she said; curfew he insisted. She always was too bright for her britches. Crystal's eyes clear as emeralds, perfect fingers playing piano. The night Tom was away protesting Cuba, and the music between them, I love you Porgy, his hot hands. Rosemary touching him under the bridge table, and the walk they didn't take. And the marigold queen he so offended. Boyfriend gone; he was here. Why not make the offer? The exchange of poetry, whispered passion, moon in Hollylocks golden hair. Oh, and the tragic Mariella, Spanish beauty with long red tresses and freckles to match. She would die with pregnancy, she said, and couldn't be a woman without. Living on stolen time, couldn't take the chance of an accident, an heir essential, but the father must not know. What to do? Her simple proposal: take six lovers all the same week. Walter Reed hospital, baby fine, goodbye to all--and the wooden flute with the six note scale, one for each lover she said when she gave it him after. But he couldn't find her all that day.

She was not in the theater where once she glowed. Or on the wall mural now repainted. Not in the yearbooks either; no still could capture

her. "Where are you?" he shouted to the messenger wind.

But he knew now why he was here. He had come for the poetry of yesteryear, to taste of it again, to remind himself of the passions still possible before the banquet of life grew cold. It was the class of '64 to him, or of any other year. He felt more alone than usual that night.

When he woke on Sunday morning he knew where she was. He would have berated himself for his slowness, but he hadn't time. They were never indoors. Well, sometimes. That was how the trouble began, the crime they had committed. But it was she who got the boot, boys will be boys they told him, she who paid the price of exile for having the temerity to display affection--for him, for life, for herself. For kissing him in the student union, bizarrely misnamed, she had shown that she was not their kind of women and was not to return. His pace quickened as he headed for the second bridge.

"The arb" was a sylvan setting of lakes and woodland isles, traversed by footpaths and a few rustic bridges. It was a throw back to earlier times, to when the earth mattered and man was more inhabitant than boss. And in this upright Christian community, it served the pagan rituals of passage. Campfires burned, liquor flowed, the juices of youthful desires mixed in a variety of songs and dances. Here lay the darkness which hid the deeper passions from the light of discovery and organized retribution. The arb was Eden, the forest primeval, and its lush foliage would soften the various falls.

It was here they played, rolled down hills when the squeaky snow let them, slogging through mud when spring finally came, hiding and seeking they knew not what to call it, singing wide open to the joy and the pain. When she needed him, she would write on birch bark, and he would know it was time.

He called her name, but she did not answer, and he could not find the second bridge. He withdrew to try again. A classmate waved good morning. He asked her if she knew. "I can't find anything in the arb in daylight."

A bird squawked, unmelodic, powerful. It was her bird, the grackle. "They taught me to sing," she once said, not with sweetness of course but with a grainy reality that took it all in, yes, even the rage, and spit it out again.

When he entered the island of the grackles his stomach churned with a blend of fear and expectation. It was where they went when they wanted to be alone. It was so overgrown that they were rarely interrupted.

He had gotten most of the way around, pushing aside the bushes, side stepping the thorns, when it happened. Iridescent purple flashed in every direction, and then in complete accord they turned and met him face to face. One grackle landed on every tree making a circle around him. Eight in all he counted. He stayed very still and absorbed the sound. It was a cacophony of communion. After a while a red winged blackbird flew down to see what the fuss was all about.

He did not know when he began to cry. He did not care. He cried for his lost love, for his lost youth, for lost time. But there was joy in it too, and triumph and delight. For that was her message. That was her magic. That was her gift. It had stayed with him all those years, and, forgetful though he sometimes was, it was with him still.

Kenneth S. Moss

The Odd Egg

Odd it is to find egg
squashed, dull yellow egg
stuck, like a magnet
to my fingernail
My clock is not quite set and my visions are trails,
winding, twisting like
an awkward staircase
going...going nowhere!
The huge red glare,
burning me in the head,
causing that bad ache,
which eats upon lackadaisical moods.
It's that Emma from grateful Jane.
Why? Why do this Jane?
Our minds are of the new and
modern, and thrive on that
which is of the day.
Such as the odd egg.

Jason T. Suttle

Wall clocks mark the minutes
Around which we base beliefs.
My lover laughs loud in the doorway
Reaching out, holding handfuls
Of his heart as gifts for me.
I sit naked near a broken window
Shattered by dead silence.
Asking time to tell its tale tonight.

Time reaches through space, taking my hand.
As phantom ships we sail, over centuries,
Elfin princes smile while moon drops
Sprinkle us with fairy dust and laugh.
Swooping, forming circles high in lofty lands
Over fields forgotten where nightingales tickle
Invisible harpstrings in infinite skies.
Past forget-me-not meadows toward paradise.

We rest for awhile, then return home
To the clocks and the locks
And all that misunderstand time.
My lovers lies, unaware of my flight.
Lonely, he listens as clocks tick on in his ears.
Smiling, I hear them no more.

Christine Sheeran

I'm just sitting here
chipping the icicles off my heart
the blood is flowing through my veins
but feels chilly inside me
the nausea builds
but then subsides
my head reels
but I'm still conscious
sleep washes over me
and I see his face
he has no eyes
and I see he has a hole in his chest
gaping open
where his heart used to be
and I look over at the box
made of stone and steel
and the padlock that keeps the contents safe
there is no key
if there was
wouldn't he open it?
I awake and my face is wet
so I take my chisel
and continue to chip at the ice.

Jen McLaughlin

Genocide

Hello, my name is Judas Adams and I am responsible for the extinction of the human race. That's right me, a mere tax accountant from Maryland, responsible for the end of all mankind. The two odd things about it are that, one, I managed to do it perfectly legally, and two, no one really seems to care.

Let me explain myself a little better, I can see you don't really understand. Before I do, however, I need to back up a bit in time, about three hundred years. It all started, I guess, when artificial replacement parts started to become popular. At first, as you know, it was unusual for some one to get an artificial heart or liver or kidney, but science got better at constructing replacement parts. Not only did they develop better plastic and metal ones, but organic replacement parts as well.

It was the development of the organic replacement parts that really got the whole idea of replacing old body parts moving. People back then didn't like plastic and metal as much as the organic type. Silly isn't it. Plastic works just as well as the organic type and they are so much more fashionable.

Anyway it became more and more routine for people to replace worn out parts of their body with brand new parts. As you might have guessed, people were living longer because of this. Well it wasn't long before the government decided they had to step in and establish some form of regulation. Thus the CMC (Cybernetic Monitoring Commission) was established. Its main job was to monitor the development and effects of artificial replacement parts. This later evolved into the PCB (Population Control Bureau).

Basically, what the Bureau decided was that with all these people living longer, eventually we were going to run into the problems of overpopulation followed by food shortages. They were, of course, right. We probably would have. The PCB, though, was able to have laws passed to prevent such a situation from ever occurring. These laws were officially entitled the Longevity Laws.

Basically what the Longevity Laws say is that if a person has an alteration done to their body that at least doubles their lifespan, then that person must be made sterile. If that person is no longer of child-producing age such an operation is not permitted. It is not difficult to understand why these laws more commonly became known as the Neuter

Act.

So it went on through my grandparents' and parents' time without a hitch. My grandmother was the first in my family to have such an operation. She had to have her lungs replaced due to fifty years of heavy smoking. Then my grandfather had to have his kidneys replaced. Both my grandparents, needless to say, were still fertile at the time of their respective operations, but were sterilized afterwards. My mother contracted some strange liver disease, after having my brother, and needed a new liver. So she too was made sterile. You get the idea of how things went. People were living much longer. As a matter of fact, not all that many people were actually dying.

By now you're probably thinking my family history is pretty interesting, but what about the extinction of the human race. Well I'm getting to that. You see there came a time when my father needed a new heart due to heart disease. The problem was he had already become sterile through a more natural method, mumps, so could not have the operation. So I started thinking about what I am sure others had already thought about in the past. Why couldn't I take the place of my father in being sterilized? I was fertile and had a son and daughter to prove it.

So I brought the case to court. My argument was that if the point of the law is to limit the population and not the individual who wants the operation, what does it matter who is made sterile. Well, I lost. Their closing argument went something like this: If someone commits a crime, the son of the perpetrator cannot go to jail in that person's place. Funny, I never thought of living longer as a crime.

Well, my father's condition was becoming more serious. So I took my case to a higher court. I lost again, but was given a temporary settlement which was this: my father was to be put on a heart-lung machine until all of my appeals were settled.

So on it went until I finally made it to the highest court in the land, the supreme of supreme courts if you will. I argued my heart out, trying to convince the judges that living longer wasn't a crime and shouldn't be looked upon as one. Well, I won my case. Partly because everyone saw the true humanity in what I was saying, partly because I had an excellent lawyer, but mostly because the judges were getting up there in years themselves.

So my father had his operation. I was of course made sterile, but the family was once again happy. The one thing I didn't realize, and this was my fatal flaw, was that I had set a legal precedent. The greatest

crime ever to be committed against humanity was setting a legal precedent.

The precedent I set made an amendment to the Longevity Laws. The amendment was this: if the recipient of longevity is him/herself no longer capable of producing offspring, then another consenting adult can take their place.

This sounds perfectly legal and harmless doesn't it? I, like the majority of the world, thought so. However, we were all forgetting human nature's strongest desire, which is to live forever. So people who already had life extending operations could have a second or third or fourth as long as they found someone to accept sterilization in their place.

It got to a point where people could practically live forever, barring accidents. My grandmother was the victim of such an accident. She was struck by lightning while playing golf. What a shame she was only 206. Then there was my Uncle Henry, who refused to go to the organ service station for a tune up. As a result he died from metal fatigue.

Well about fifty years ago the PCB decided to do a census study into how many people were in fact sterile. Well what they discovered was that in the entire world there were only 5,732 fertile people left. The problem was it took three years to finish the study and by the time they tracked down these people they discovered only two males who were fertile and one female. The female they were looking for was a thirty-five year old by the name of Lilith Adams, my granddaughter, who only three days before they contacted her had been made sterile so I could get a new liver.

You are probably thinking why don't they just reconnect something and have fertile people again. That would be impossible I'm afraid, they were very thorough in their sterilization techniques. There was talk some years back about producing test tube babies from different cells of the body. These experiments were deemed illegal and the scientists were sent to prison for life (which can be a very long time, nowadays). The government said that they were threatening to create overpopulation and famine, a crime against all humanity.

That's the problem with being immortal I think, no fresh ideas are coming around anymore.

My grandfather just got remarried to a 175 year old receptionist from San Diego. Imagine that, she's half his age. I myself just turned 187. On my birthday my father was telling me to stop punishing myself

for my heinous crime, that no one really cares anyway. He says everybody is too old to worry about children. After all there hasn't been any in forty or so years. My father's always saying "you don't live forever, so live it up while you can." He is right about one thing. No one is truly immortal, no matter what medicine can do. After all accidents will happen.

Matthew Corcoran

Melancholy

Gushing tears, Maudlin sentiments,
Doleful hearts, Communal feelings,
 Come from sorrow.

We purge our hearts of anguish,
To last through the bad times.

Though we look be different,
Our emotions make us the same.

Nothing more,
Nothing less,
Just as it is,
Sorrow should come,
And
You and I will feel as one.

Edmund Ryan

Preparing for Winter

Inner ear ringing with nails,
a tremble jumps the forearm:
splitting a log with the arc
of a single blow!
It feels good --
like you've halved
the knots of frustration --
the two halves lie opened
sheathed in a penumbra
of their raw newness, ready
for the combustible world.
But after a couple of hours --
like anything else,
including philosophy
or catchy tunes --
numbing repetition
screams in the sockets
of your flailing arm.
You begin to imagine
the blade halving
your own coconut.

Kevin T. McEneaney

We See The Blue

I'm not much for political rhyme,
I don't know much about my time,
nor history,
as the details are cloudy,
the specifics unclear.
But the essential ideas of it
my thoughts keep near.

There were days of hippies
 What they were crying for
 Loving for
 Living for

There were days of soldiers
 What they were crying for
 hating for
 dying for

What I do know is a feeling
what they say about my generation
can't be true.

It's hard to care,
when we're taught to ignore the blue.
Ah, but despite what they teach,
some of us still do.

I know something of Sarafina,
tearing down trees,
addicted babies,
toxins in seas.
I know evangelists teeter-tot with terrorists,
satirical heart hangs flags from his cart,
a child is told not to tell,
a women is going through hell.

I know a new disease is spreading
and no one knows where it's heading.
These are days of hippies and soldiers
of my time, crying for what they know is not a game,
they go by different names.
We can't stop what's going on, it's true.
Ah, but we see the blue,
At least we see the blue.

Bonnie Rogers

HAD MY FILL

I've had my fill of great passions,
of loves that are close to hate;
of desires replete with pain.

I've had my fill of silent sobbings,
unanswered telephones, empty promises
and calculated laughter.

My love is not like a red, red rose;
or even an amazing sunrise.
This love does not plunge depths,
ecstasies, agonies, denials.

Rather,
my love is like a
downy quilt;
soothing and soft.
Or
like kneaded bread,
sensual...succulent, and somewhat sticky...

Victor J. Clark

Madness

The fires fight the windows of my mind.
As I gently let my torturing orange fingers
caress the atmosphere-- I will not be
engulfed by the human flesh by my side.
You will not extinguish my intensity with
rain---

I will not permit you to trickle upon the
boundaries of My Being!!

I will burn thee with my fierce firing tongue.
Before the setting sun or rising moon.
Attempt to see through my golden color---
And, thy will be engulfed with my rage.

Maureen Lennon

Visually Raw

Within the tightly bound books
that stand noble on the shelves
a ray of ancient pride seeps through every masterpiece
the creators of these words
left behind treasures
for the people of yesterday
Works of art correlated by brilliant minds
to dare battle the steel of classics
would be to disgrace the past
pages past
leaves today the naked reader
a new hop tossed to the tomorrow
a wish of new development
Allow the full minds to drip
saturated with supreme passion and shameful emotion
Explode, majestic spirits
upon paper with insightful bold ink
rip out your warped modern heart
let it bleed upon your paper
A dream transformed becomes visually raw

Bonnie Rogers

Such Nice Kids

"Hi, Mrs. Parker!" Matt calls.

"Hello, Kids!" Mrs. Parker waves to the Ryan twins, Matt and Sara, biking home from school.

"Who's there, Ellen?" Mr. Parker asks from inside the screened porch.

"Just Matt and Sara, dear from around the corner."

"Oh, yeah. Good kids, them."

"Aren't they? Such a sweet pair! Pity them losing their father, and they were so young."

"Damn shame," agrees Mr. Parker. He goes back to reading the paper, and Mrs. Parker goes back to weeding the garden.

Matt and Sara coast neatly into the driveway and lock up their bikes. Sara jogs up the stairs to the door; Matt gets the mail.

Once inside, they hang up their jackets in the hall closet. Matt leaves the mail on the hall table, and they go to their rooms to get changed out of their school uniforms.

Back in the kitchen, Sara pours two glasses of Hawaiian Punch. Matt finds the remainder of the apple pie from last night and cuts two generous pieces.

"Flip on the answering machine," Sara says. Matt does so.

The first message is from the orthodontist's: don't forget the twins' appointment on Tuesday. They cheer; Tuesday is the day their braces come off.

The second is from the dry-cleaners: Mom's suit will be finished on Saturday, and would she mind picking it up?

The third is from Patrick. Matt and Sara look at each other and groan. Patrick is Mom's boyfriend, a history teacher at the public high school. He thinks he's too cool. Matt and Sara think he's little more than a worm.

On the tape, Patrick is his usual sappy self.

"Hi there, darling, it's me." Sara gags.

"I'll come around six-thirty tonight. I think having dinner with the kids is a great idea. Oh, and by the way, there's something very important I have to talk to you about. I'll see you tonight."

That is the last message. Matt and Sara are silent, thinking about what the very important something might be. Sara rewinds the tape and erases it. Matt puts their dishes in the dishwasher, and they thump

upstairs.

"We're going to *have* to do it tonight," Sara tells Matt.

"I don't know. I don't think we're ready yet. It's a really heavy spell." They go into his room and shut the door. A small framed photograph of the three of them--Matt, Sara, and their father--stands on his nightstand.

Matt digs under his bed. "See, it's got to be heavier spell. Patrick's more strong-willed than the others were."

He finds the book. It is bound in red leather, with a pentagram embossed on the cover in gold.

They sit on the bed and page through the book. They find the spell somewhere around the seven hundredth page. Matt has highlighted it in fluorescent blue marker.

Sara reads aloud what they need. "O.K., we need: a lock of his hair, a piece of cloth from his clothes, a black rose, some of our blood mixed together, a branch from a tree that grows in a graveyard, and the...heart of a *frog*."

"Oh, gross!" Matt exclaims.

"That is so disgusting," Sara says. They shudder and wrinkle up their noses.

Matt slams the book closed. "Well, come on. We better go find a frog. Mom'll be home in an hour."

The book goes back under the bed. They thump downstairs.

"Do you know the difference between a frog and a toad?" Matt asks Sara as they zip up their jackets.

"Yeah. Toads have warts."

They remember to lock the door behind them.

Patrick is all smiles when he comes over. The twins politely say hello. They are well-scrubbed and neatly dressed.

"So what did you two do this afternoon?" Mom asks them.

"Nothing much," shrugs Matt. They had to go to the pet store to get the frog.

"We just goofed off a while," adds Sara. While Mom was in the shower, they put the frog in a box and ran a hose from the tailpipe of Mom's car into the box. Then they started the car. The frog passed away peacefully.

Patrick is nervous; he feels like the twins are watching him. At first glance, they don't look at all similar. Matt is tall and dark; Sara is shorter and blonde. Their eyes are exactly the same: large, deep, dark,

dark brown eyes.

Sara reaches for the mashed potatoes and accidentally spills them. Most of the potatoes go onto the sleeve of Patrick's jacket.

Sara leaps to her feet, apologizing.

"I'll just take it out to the kitchen and wipe it off," she offers. Patrick gives her the jacket, and she whisks it away into the kitchen.

Sara wipes the potato away, then pulls out from her pocket the tiny pair of manicure scissors. She cuts an inch-square piece of the lining on the sleeve and slips it into her pocket, along with the scissors. She goes back into the dining room and, smiling, gives Patrick the jacket.

After dinner, Mom goes into the powder room to fix her makeup. Matt has Patrick's coat.

"Here you are," he says pleasantly. There were some hairs on the collar, and he has swept them off with the lint brush. He helps Patrick on with his coat.

"Much better," Matt smiles.

Mom kisses them good-night and quietly thanks them for being so pleasant to Patrick. They smile and say it's O.K. Mom and Patrick leave.

Matt and Sara wait until they hear the car pull out of the driveway. Then they stump upstairs to prepare for the incantation; it must be begun exactly at sundown.

Under the biggest tree in the backyard, they spread a blanket out and lay everything that they need on it: the pot, the daggers, Patrick's hair tied up in the cloth, the black rose, the branch from a tree that grows in a graveyard, and finally the body of the frog, neatly pinned to a Styrofoam meat tray.

Sara takes the pot and throws some of the purple powder into it. She pours a little water on it, and a bright purple flame ignites. Sara holds the blade of one of the small daggers in the flame for a few moments, then turns to the frog. She attempts to make an incision down the frog's chest, but fails."

"Oh Matt, *you* do it. You did better than me when we had to dissect the frog in biology last year."

Matt groans and takes the dagger. He deftly opens the frog's body and removes the heart. He lays it on a folded tissue.

"Here. Bury this by the fence." He hands her the carcass, wrapped in paper towels. She takes it, making a face, and digs a shallow grave.

Matt dumps the flame onto the ground and wipes the pot out.

The alarm of Sara's digital watch beeps.

"Sundown. Let's begin."

Matt and Sara kneel on the ground, the pot between them. The book is beside the pot, opened to the right page. Matt consults it.

"Um...mali dei noctis, audite," he says. Sara throws the cloth into the pot.

She intones, "Elai agai xatar." Matt throws the branch in and checks the book again.

"O.K., now we take the rose and tear each petal off, one by one. When they're all in, we say, 'Numa sele onu.'"

Matt and Sara carefully pull each petal off and place them in the pot. They chant the required sentence.

"Now the frog heart." Matt puts it in the pot.

"Give me a dagger." Sara hands him one and takes one for herself.

"You know what to do, right?" he asks. She nods.

Together they chant "Maeja lykes kyo." Then they hold out their left hands. They each have numerous fine white scars across their fingers and hands.

As quickly as they can, they draw the daggers across the palms of their hands. Sara howls, and Matt bites down hard on his lip. With a great effort, they clasp their bleeding hands together and squeeze. The blood squirts up and over their knuckles. The pain is extraordinary.

Their blood slowly drips down into the pot, over the frog heart. The heart begins to beat.

A gray-silver-blue cloud forms over the pot. A deep foggy voice hisses, "My masters, what do you wish of thy servant?"

"I wish," Matt says evenly, "that Patrick Elliot MacElready be neverborn."

"I wish it too," Sara adds.

"It shall be done," the voice says. In an instant, everything disappears. The cloud is gone, the contents of the pot have vanished. Sara looks down at her hand. The bleeding has stopped, and the skin is healed. It looks as if nothing had happened to it at all.

They gather all their supplies and take them inside. The book is tucked reverently under Sara's arm. If all has gone well, Patrick will disappear tomorrow morning. No one will remember him, not Mom, not his friends, not even his parents. All traces of him will be erased. It will

be like he never lived at all.

Matt and Sara know that the ceremony has worked and are delighted. Since Mom started dating three years ago, they have used the spells in the book to get rid of her boyfriends. The book belonged to Daddy.

Matt feels that they will soon be ready for the last spell in the book. It tells how to bring the dead back to life.

Lara Wiczezynski

God of innards
dripping intentions out of
rows of patterned parallels
frantic fighting bleeds its
residue to neatly fildness
evidence of disembowelment;
conclusive and sentenced to
a penance of waiting, watching
the idle eyes peruse their safety

Ahh--a tool of reaching
toils with teaching, stacks 'em up
and takes 'em out--Another drops
some off.

God of innards blessed these bindings,
filled the space with trailings off
wandering through worlds unlocking
staleness whiff of planet skinny-stick
dwellers, how poignant! how profound!
how at the ready, poised and primed
to jump out and ricochet off
to other pewed up reference
to other spewed out preference.
O it's wild tonight to be in service
of the God of innards
and rest my head, snoozing
on his tabernacle.

John P. Kolwaite

Just Another Night

It was late as I drove down the forgotten street
A figure stood out on the corner
She was clothed in the attire of experience
And wore the stance of availability
There she stood offering herself
On just another corner on just another night

I pulled up to the curb and lowered the window
She approached with a confident air and got in
"What's your pleasure?"
Just the usual line on just another night

I turned to her and noticed how young she was
"I'm sixteen" she answered as her eyes stared back at me
"but I've been around a while"
Sixteen? Sold out already at sixteen?
"Hey, it's okay, I make a living, I don't mind"
She didn't mind being bought and sold and thrown away?

"Well, I don't mind that much anyway, Except sometimes
I miss home but I can't go back you know My
daddy used to say I was his pretty little lamb but
I guess I'm not so pretty anymore"

And her hard eyes dissolved into tears and I could see
her still-innocent heart bleeding
The victim of a victimless crime, a sacrifice to human
desire
Let me help you I said too late
For her spirit had already been crushed and she lay dead
On just another corner on just another night

Gilda Bonanno

A place I've never seen.
The leaves whip around me.
Instigated by more than the wind.
A thousand voices call my name.
I am alone.
The man at the podium screams of perfection.
I scream back.
No perfection can be promised by such a sinner.
Stealing from the helpless.

Caught in the snow
the hot coals burn my feet.
I scream to the voices.
They can't answer.
Freedom must never be realized by such
voices as I've heard.

Kathleen Brault

The People You Run Into!

The very existence of a man like Mike had slipped my mind. Social perceptions have changed since I was a rebellious student investigating various life-styles and modes of thought. I'm now working for a large corporation, mid-level management. I didn't make it big, I'm not going anywhere, but I've got a job that doesn't annoy me too much and the pay is fairly decent. My college hippie days were filed away in some lost folder that I never consulted. It was quite a surprise to see Mike pumping beer behind a small-town bar in Vermont. I recognized him from the mustache. Still the same, though age had scratched the clear glass of his youth.

My wife and I were up skiing for the weekend -- well, my wife was skiing -- I just cruise the bars that surround whatever lift is hoisting her up into the clouds. She's usually in bed by the time I fumble outside the door with the motel key. She doesn't drink and wishes that I wouldn't. I don't ski and wish that she wouldn't. She ends up so sore from skiing that she doesn't want to make love while I'm so drunk that I probably couldn't. But we love one another and have a good marriage. I must admit that drinking in bars is a needlessly expensive habit, but the same could be said for skiing. At least there is the illusion of thinking when you drink.

If Mike had ever again popped into my mind, I would have guessed that he would have been eking out his days in some psychiatric ward, a zombie prisoner of daily medication. Twenty-five years ago Mike and I were housemates in a kind of casual commune. I was only in the house for one semester of my last year of college. Everybody in the house was zonked out on drugs and I think I was the only one who ever completed a degree. Half the residents -- about a dozen, I recall -- literally lost their minds doing drugs. Mike was the self-proclaimed drug-guru of the group.

I remember one crazy guy in the gang -- something of a handsome James Dean -- Fred was his unlikely name -- who parked his Harley-Davidson motorcycle in the living room. One night when he was madly racing on amphetamines he took his bike apart. The nuts, bolts, odd bars and sieved grids lay all about the room as if some spoiled child had scattered an

enormous jigsaw puzzle across the frayed carpet. Everyone was afraid to set foot into the living room for fear of screwing up Fred's cycle. A few days later Fred swallowed a handful of bennies and assembled the whole bike in fourteen hours. I looked in when he was almost finished. He was raving at the bike. He was talking to it about his father, cussing his father out. I said hello a couple of times but he didn't seem to hear me. Just went on yelling at his father and how much he hated him. Next day I heard that he had left for Wyoming to have it out once and for all with his father. Fred called the house collect from Indiana, just to let us know that he was safe, doing fine -- he had plenty of bennies to keep him going -- driving non stop to Wyoming. It was the second week of January. He said he had no problem with the snow, but he had run into some slippery sleet. He settled down on his father's ranch and never came back for school, his clothes, or stereo. I think someone did send him a small check for the stereo. I wore his fedora until I left it in a movie house. Nice brown felt.

Anyway, I was shocked to see Mike behind the bar polishing glasses. The decor of the empty bar -- there were three other people solemnly drinking solo -- consisted of period movie posters: Bogart, Monroe, Newman, Harlow. This was not exactly original but it gave a sophisticated atmosphere to a country bar.

The reason I thought Mike might have ended up in a sanitarium was that the last time I had seen Mike, he was resigning himself to going back into the slammer. He had another year to do. It came about like this. One day after a marathon LSD trip, Mike announced that what he really wanted to be in life was a guru. He thought that Timothy Leary was the greatest prophet since Mohammed and Jesus Christ. He took a short correspondence course and got a certificate from California proclaiming him to be a duly ordained minister of the Anarchist Church of North America. The central tenet of his new religion was that all drugs were legal sacraments of his church and as holy sacraments they could be administered by him to his disciples at his discretion. He also believed in free sex and possessed a harem of two. Delighted at flunking out of school, Mike began the epic project of converting the world to his new religion.

Mike pursued sloth with a zeal that was unusual, yet he was assiduous in keeping a drug diary. In it he recorded 300 plus acid trips and the intimate effects of any other drug he could ingest. To kick off his religious movement he decided that he would challenge the American legal system which unreasonably denied psychedelic self-prescription. Sanctified by the possession of fifty-six assorted drugs, Mike strode into a local police station in Suffolk County on Long Island and announced that he had arrived to convert the police to his new religion. He showed them his minister's certificate, his drugs, and his drug diary.

Mike's loyal girlfriend Sally went out and got a job at the local fast food Jack-in-the-Box in order to begin raising bail money. (Someone in the house who loathed the Jack-in-the-Box operation shotgunned the neon sign one night that month and we all had a good laugh at that.) Bail was astronomical and Sally concentrated on raising money for a lawyer. She somehow managed to raise a few thousand dollars. I begrudgingly chipped in a Jackson.

While Mike shivered in his cold cell, his other girlfriend, Wanda, began to freak out. She continually dropped acid and slept with everybody in the house but me. She slept with anybody who happened into the house, sometimes three or four guys in the same day. For two weeks she lived in nothing but a sheet and did not bathe. Her parents stopped by one Sunday to see her because they began to be concerned about her welfare. The next morning an ambulance pulled up in front of the house, and she was taken away in a straight jacket. We never heard from her again.

Sally, meanwhile, had found a lawyer who was confident of getting Mike off the hook. The drug diary was solid evidence of insanity and the lawyer was sure that Mike would get off with a year at a mental resort. Mike, of course, indignantly fired the lawyer and defended himself in court. The judge took pity on him and gave him two-and-a-half years.

By the time of the trial I had left the house, but I heard that Mike was heroically optimistic about the ordeal. He said that if Jesus could be crucified, he could do some time. In the end history would vindicate him.

One summer weekend, a few years later, I drove up to

Vermont to visit John, who had lived in the old college house. He said that Mike was living only an hour away and why didn't we visit him. Mike and Sally had rented a small farm on the Vermont border. He was a fugitive. Canada was only a half mile out the back door and he had a little red Honda scooter to get over the border in case the cops came. Sally was working as a waitress in town. She stilled ironed her long blonde hair.

Mike had found the prison personnel too worldly for his soul. It was a minimum security prison and skipping wasn't too difficult. Sally met him at some twilight corner with her yellow Beetle, and they sped off into the sunset.

After a couple of years, Mike tired of being a fugitive. He was practically under house arrest. For two years he had never stepped out of the house. He couldn't go into town to pick up a loaf of bread, buy clothes, do anything. None of those whom he had considered to be his followers had ever visited him. He was shut out. He wanted to get back into society to "change the system."

During the lonely nights at prison Mike had invented the Board Game of Spiritual Enlightenment. With a straight face he declared that if you played the game enough times you would automatically be enlightened. How many times? I asked. Two or three thousand, depending upon the karma of your previous lives, was the answer. He began to enthusiastically explain the game to me, but it seemed to me a less interesting version of Monopoly disguised with spiritual tags. He used green army soldiers for markers.

When I found out that the game took three or four hours to play, I went out for some fresh air with John. We wandered about talking in the woods for an hour and then came back. Mike was sullen because we didn't want to play, but Sally was playing with him while she was simultaneously cooking dinner for all of us. Sally was a living saint. She had a mischievous sense of humor, and was quite attractive with very narrow, pointy breasts, and the most beautiful eyebrows I've ever seen. She always stuck by Mike whose gaunt, pock-marked face was not exactly handsome.

Next morning over a breakfast of hashish coffee and sugary store-bought doughnuts, Mike announced that he had

decided to turn himself in and finish his time. He was turning himself in within the week. The only reason that he hadn't done it last month was that he wanted to get in his five thousandth play of his board game before going in. He wanted to be spiritually prepared. Sally would wait the year for him, and they were going to get married when he got out even though Sally's parents were opposed to the marriage. And when he got out of the clink he could set about the serious task of saving people's lives by marketing his game.

The past whirled through my mind, aided by the deadly silence in the bar. There wasn't even a jukebox to soak up my quarters. Through some small talk I found out that his wife owned the bar. I don't know why, but I was glad she wasn't there. To tell the truth, I began to grow a little uneasy. He was his usual surly self, and I didn't want to identify myself to him. I didn't want to ask about the Game or the Spirit World. But most of all I didn't want the name of Sally to come up. Sally was probably already in bed, waiting for me. While Mike went back to jail for his second stretch, I courted, bedded, and married Sally. And have been happy with her ever since.

I complimented Mike on the movie posters on the walls.

"Idols," was his surly reply. "False gods for the ignorant masses." Mike's habitual glazed look vanished and his pupils were pinpoints of fire. He hadn't changed one iota--the same old self-righteous bore!

I'm quite sure that Mike didn't recognize me. Although he still looked the same, a quarter century has shortened my hair, scrapped my beard, and made me hefty. Mike still had the air of a wounded rabbit about him.

If I had identified myself to Mike--without even mentioning Sally, but he would have heard, would have asked about her--it probably would have caused him some pain. So it was better not to. Nor could I mention to Sally that I had run into Mike.

Mike had always resented the way I had consistently refuted his philosophical claims. I say claims rather than theories because Mike could never think anything out. In fact, I'm sure that he always thought that I was crazy. I never did believe that acid or games brought about Enlightenment. When I offered to

buy him a drink, he righteously declared that he thought that it was immoral to drink but that there were other mind altering substances that were beneficial to the soul. I left him a fin and wandered out into the night which was a swirl of snowflakes. I stumbled in snow, and by the time I found my car my hands were wet, and half-frozen.

Driving back to the motel I was cheered by the thought that even though Mike appeared somewhat unhappy with his lot in life, he was, however, adjusted to the daily insanities that our ego and the world's dementia subject us to. What more could one hope for? Release from the spinning-wheel of Illusion? Entry into the dark doors of death from which we never return?

Was I a thief? Had I stolen something precious from a man who was inferior? A giant snowflake clotted, melted on the windshield as my wipers swept it away into oblivion. But Sally really loved me, and I, her. In love and war, all is fair. Sally never spoke about Mike, and she always pretended that those wild, college years never existed.

Kevin T. McEneaney

Easily learned, impossible to teach,
love's painful lesson is now what I preach.
Beware of fleeting, flying romances,
Loving sparks by whispers, fueled by glances;
And keep thy heart safe under lock and key,
Be wary of thieves, guard it carefully.

To bear a soul is a dangerous feat,
Yet bear mine I did, and felt quite complete;
Trust, as the double edged sword it can be,
When used in malice can cleave easily;
Once I felt warmth from the shade of her eyes,
Once I felt kindness, kept sheltered from lies,
Once I felt needed and listened to cries,
Once I felt blessed, none happier than I.
I sought not much-a silent opiate to soothe,
My melancholied mind by bearing peaceful truth,
I gave too much-an open heart; a blinded fool;
Willing, waiting, and eager to be used,
Now her sharp, frozen gaze chills to the bone
For unknown past sins I'm made to atone.
It makes one wonder, and give pause to think,
Why Loves emotions are pushed to the brink.

Once Venus, my personal advisor
Brought fortune, yet now she's none the wiser;
By what logic does Cupid aim his bow?
I do believe he jests, and does not know
The pain, through folly, he does attract,
When Love's careless mirror too strongly refracts.

For those who've never felt Her stinging kiss,
Then have no fear; very little have you missed.
'Tis not some holy gift of grace
That comes and lifts you out of place,
So end this fevered, fruitless, futile chase.

Women fear truth, the artful deception: the lie
Is their favored weapon; it always gets them by.
And every man, if man he truly be,
Will fall to their powers, ultimately.
We know the consequences, and yet still,
We pursue and we chase, seeking our fill,
Yet dare to go on bravely through the night,
One day you'll feel love; one day you'll feel light.

Ed Strother

Fish were jumping out of the water
To dance upon the moonbeams, while
The full moons light shine upon the
Majestic water. An owl was hooting
In an old oak tree, giving new life
To the cold autumn wind. A few deer
Wandered out of the darkness of the
Forest, to get a drink from the sparkling water

All this was happening while many people
were at sleep, recuperating from a hard
Day's work, and getting ready to do it all
Over again tomorrow. When the factory
Whistles blow, and the air becomes dense and
Hazy, the wildlife retreat to a safer ground,
They seem to know that the world which
Belongs to man is dangerous

Waiting for their world to return, while
Safely hidden in their shelters, for their
Shelters keep them safe from man, and not
From nature. They anticipate dancing upon
The moonbeams in the clear night air.
Then they go to sleep, without a care.

Mark Lien

My Grandfather's Chair

the room is silent
his chair is bare
his presence is unknown

the family is silent
something is missing

the place where he liked to sit
is cursed with a vow of silence

desolate and alone i climb
up to the chair and cry
as i rest my weary bones

my grandfather's chair
is empty and bare
he is somewhere- watching

my grandfather's chair sits silently
and looks for the love that it once shared
my grandfather's chair looks inviting
to my confused mind

Maria Licari

Colorblind

"Out of all the able-bodied fine black guys on campus you go and mess with a white boy," Eriqua said.

I had expected her to react this way and had already decided to ignore her. I don't understand why people always have to make somethin' outta nuthin'. 'Specially when that nuthin' is my business.

"What does he have that a black man doesn't have?" she asked, following me to the bathroom. I knew she'd follow me; that's why I headed for the bathroom instead of one of the other rooms. Before she could even think about following me in I, closed the door in her face.

As I sat on the toilet I couldn't help but let out a sigh of relief. This is the only place where I can get my head together. Hey, I look at it like this- Some people go for a walk, others work out, and I go to the john to get my shit together.

"I'm not trying to bother you," I heard Eriqua say. "I just want..."

The sound of me flushing the toilet stifled the rest of her sentence. After that I turned on the water to try and block her out. It was amazing and somewhat pathetic how determined she was to continue this conversation without me. Heck, I can't even piss in peace.

Glancing around the bathroom my eyes met hypnotizing glares. Embellished posters of Babyface, Bobby Brown and Christopher Williams were on the walls. Staring at these gorgeous men, at this moment, was no consolation for me. I didn't know what was worse--sitting here in the bathroom listening to this nagging slack heifer or staring at these men knowing I could never have them.

When I looked up from Christopher I noticed the clock said 4:30. I was supposed to meet Joshua at 4 o'clock. So I decided to surrender.

Eriqua was on the floor waiting by the bathroom door when I walked out. Boy was I tempted to kick her. If not just to shut her up, then for the amusement.

I don't see why the color of Josh's skin, or anyone's for that matter, should make a difference. Josh was a good looking

specimen. So far he hasn't gotten on my nerves. When he does start I'll just give him his walking papers and then that will be the end of that.

Walking into the bedroom I flung my sweater on the bed, kicked my shoes under the bed and slipped off my pants, which I left on the floor.

My disarray annoyed Eriqua. I had decided to clean up earlier, but that was before she started to get on my nerves.

I took my dungaree skirt off the chair and slipped it on. This was the skirt I had on when I met Josh...

"Alright. Alright," Eriqua said. "Fine. But let me ask you this. If the two of you have an argument and he calls you a black bitch or a dumb nigger whatta ya gonna do?"

"The same thing I'd do to anybody who used derogatory language with me in a heated discussion," I said shrugging my shoulders and smacking my lips together to even out my lipstick. "Snatch them up and beat them into bad health."

I could see she was resolute to putting me in a high state of pissidity so I quickly grabbed my car keys and left before this turned into a big brouhaha.

It was real cool when I got outside. I was hoping Joshua didn't want to go out when I got to his house. I'd like to get to know him better before I started defending our relationship to Eriqua.

She has got to go if she keeps agitating me. I didn't leave home just to have someone nag all the time. She was always getting bent outta shape for such trivial crap.

George Michaels' "I Want Your Sex" was playing on the car radio when it turned it on. How appropriate for the situation. Since the moment I met Josh I've often wondered about his bedside manners. If he is as dumb as good as he looks then I'll never know. If it's one thing I can't tolerate, it's stupid people.

Don't get me wrong now. I don't mean people who lack intellectual qualities or who are not as smart as I am. I'm talkin' 'bout people who are short on common sense and are so arrogant that they think they know every damn thing there is to know and don't know jack shit about the world or people around them.

Lord how I hoped Josh was different from the others. Please don't let him be another dog. I'm so tired of dealing with

mutts that can't be trained.

Men, to me, are all dogs. The only difference between men is the type of breed they are. Some are collies, some are puppies. Then there are the pit bulls and those are the ones I stay away from. There are all kinds. But the bottom line is if I can't do anything with them I just leave them at the pet shop. My mama didn't raise no fool, and I am not a glutton for punishment.

Josh was waiting by the door when I pulled up in front of his building. I was sure glad that I was in the car, out of his sight, because when I spotted him I could have sworn I started to salivate.

He was wearing short pants and a tank t-shirt. Damn, he sure did look good. He wore it well. His legs were so defined and muscular and when I looked up at the rest of his body I just knew I died and gone to man heaven.

Oh please don't let him turn out to be a jerk, because the state that I'm in right now I'm likely to lose all my senses and forget my tact and pride just because his body was doable.

Getting out the car I noticed Josh didn't seem too thrilled to see me. His dimples weren't showing like the first day we met, and he didn't even meet me half way. It was now 5:40 and I was supposed to be there at 4:00, so maybe that was it.

"Hey Josh," I said, trying to read his mood. But as soon as he answered I didn't have to try because he made it all too clear that he was heated up. His behavior brought me back to reality quick fast.

"Where the hell were you?" he shouted. "You were supposed to be here at four. Don't cha think that I have better things to do than wait around for you?"

As dumbfounded as I was, brotherman was not going to get away with talking to be in that manner. "Excuse me," I muttered with my head tilted to the side.

As if what he had just said was justifiable because of my tardiness Josh walked over to the passenger side of the door and ordered me to get in.

"Hold up," I said remaining behind with my hands on my hips. "Now I know you don't think you're getting into the car with me after your unwarranted outburst and expect me to

overlook it. Now I am late and I'm sorry. Or at least I was," I added. But don't you think you should have had the decency to wait and hear why I was late?" I questioned.

Josh turned around to face me and leaned on the car. My female intuition told me that he wasn't used to females with backbone. He held his head down for a couple of seconds and then slowly looked up at me, from head to toe. Upon reaching my face I saw those loveable dimples emerge into his cheeks.

"Look I'm sorry for blowing up," he said. I just hate to be kept waiting. That's all. Now if you don't mind, can wa go now and you can explain to me in the car why you were late." He held out his hand for me to come.

"Look Josh," I said, remaining where I stood. "Before we go any further let me make myself clear. I don't like to argue over petty shit. If something is bothering you or if I've done something that irks you please tell me by communicating with me in a fashionable manner. O.K.? because that's the way I am."

After that I walked over to him and gave him a peck on the lips. When he didn't respond I asked, "Do you still want to go?" His yes was a little weak and that's when I knew that I would have my hands full. Yes, He was trainable. I still believe that it doesn't matter what color a man is. It's nuthin' but the dog in em'. That's all that counts in my book.

Michelle F. Barrott

The Trip

With the sunrise.
I see all the lies.
In the morning
when I wake up
I get bored
with my mind
and off I fly
to the unexplored
regions of the
multiverse.
In my stupor
revelations come
from here and there.
Revelations everywhere.

In the afternoon
I lose track
of time
and drink
tequila and lime.
Further into
oblivion I venture
Further into
paradise.
Paradise, paradise, paradise.

Then the night arrives
and my mind thrives.
A new perspective.
A new philosophy.
How could I be so blind?
Falling deeper
into the ocean.
Sinking oh so fast.
Then from my mind
comes the realization,
that nothing lasts forever.

Thus I sigh:
Why oh why can't this
last a little bit longer?
Just a little bit longer?
That's all I ask but
the air will not respond
to my thoughtless questions.
Thus I resign to my fate
and wait for the silence.

Blackthorn

Insanity pervades,
That which the self
has not made,
but instead melts
and does not discern
all of the concern.

Is it ME? NO!!
It's just vanity,
that feeds
on my civility!

Jason T. Suttle

Walk Like I Don't Care

Some days I walk like I don't care,
Those are the days I care the most.
I remember it well - All was well
Immediate rush - Thorough fascination
Staring straight
Body swaying
Took to writing
Band kept playing.
The party is over but not dead and gone
A finer time I haven't known.
Today my head is hung low
Shuffled footsteps, limp-like arms
The sun, the moon, and all the stars
Some days I walk like I don't care.

Bonnie Rogers

Mushroom Harvest

Skipping through the green pastures,
randomly bending down and
plucking mushrooms from the earth's rug.
Large, plump umbrellas with thick handles
are hard to hold on to,
but simple and delightful to ingest.
Ah, nature's form of anesthesia!

Mushroom picking is no easy task.
Collapsing on the grass,
we delve into our picnic basket and
pull out a bottle of Zinfandel.
Aside from your being called to defend
a piece of cloth with some stars thrown on it,
'67 wasn't a bad year. I suppose.
I guess the wine will serve its purpose.
Hopefully it will destroy the bitter taste of these
capped fruits - or are they vegetables?
(Then again, maybe they're neither.)
Well, then what are they?
(Could they be symbolic?)
Of what?

(Freedom?) From immediate reality, but not from life.

(Ginsberg?) A poor man's Kerouac.

(Destruction?) Ask the ancestors of Hiroshima that one.

(Draft cards?) Idiot! Yours should have topped the
bonfire.

But, we musn't grip so tightly to yesterday.
At least not as long as we have so much more
mushroom picking to finish.
Hurry now.
Quickly. Drink your wine and then
shroom -- zoom ---
off to the mushroom patch.
We must gather enough to get us through the long winter
that's approaching.

Skipping through the green fields,
frolicking together,
tripping, stumbling,
out of sight,
out of mind,
laughing
crying.

Janet DeSimone







