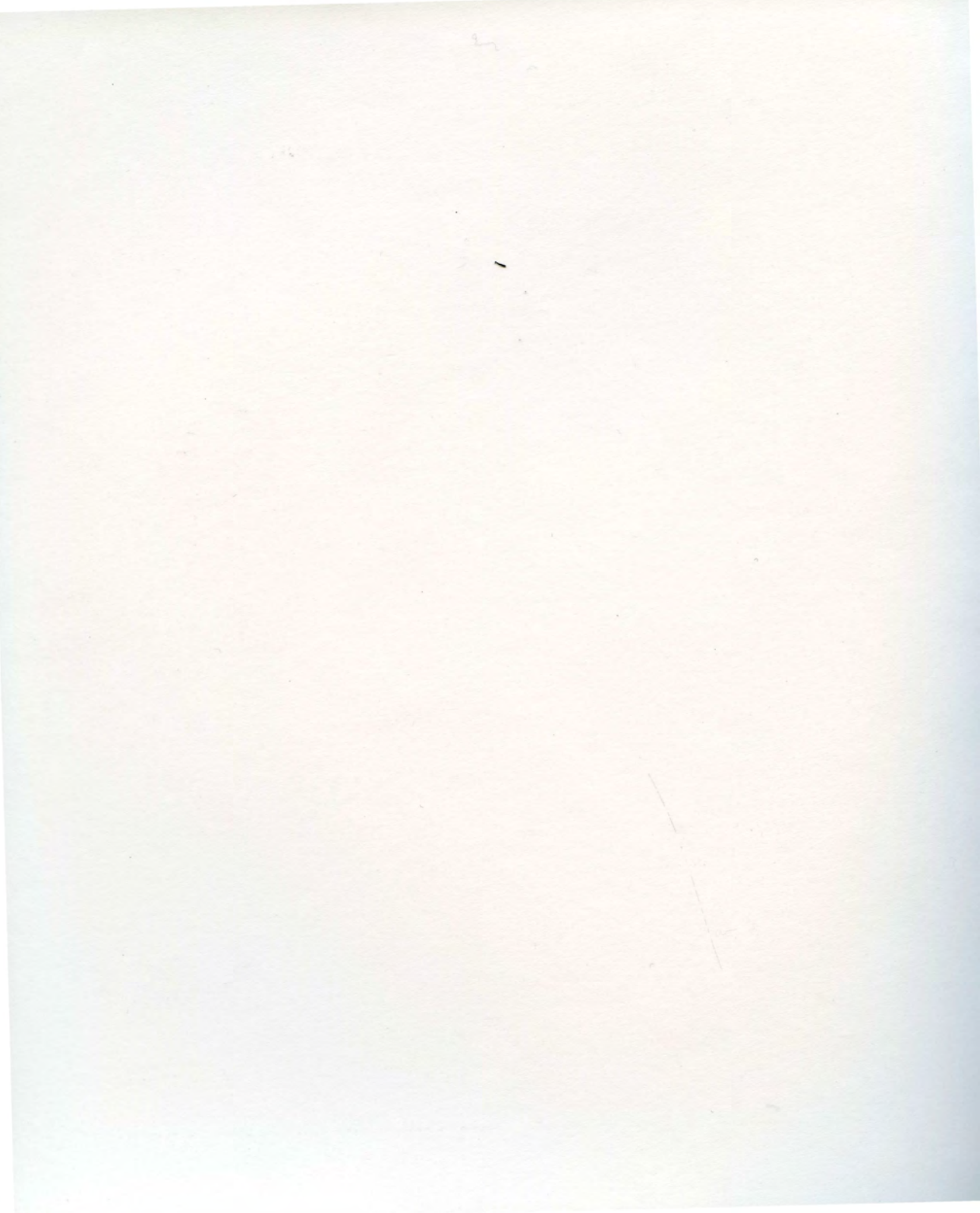

**Literary Arts Society Presents
The Mosaic**



**Green Leaves
Spring 2003**



A Special Message from the Chief Editor

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincerest thanks to all those writers and artists who have contributed to the Spring 2003 *Mosaic*. This is my last semester as Chief Editor of this publication. To say that I am impressed with the submissions is an understatement. The Spring 2003 edition of the *Mosaic* represents work from some of the most talented students I have ever seen. I urge all of you to keep writing, painting, and taking photographs because creative expression, in all of its forms, is the most profound expression of the human experience.

I hereby leave this magazine and its heritage in the hands of my successor, Dan Buzi, who has worked tirelessly on this and previous editions of the *Mosaic*. Thank you for all your time and help over the past two years.

Chief Editor: Ann Metz

Advisor: Dr. Richard Grinnell

Front Cover Art: Painter by Caitlin O'Hare

Back Cover Art: Rounders by Micheal P. Marszycki

“I was 21 years when I wrote this song;
I'm 22 now but I won't be for long.
Time hurries on,
And the leaves that are green turn to brown.
And they wither with the wind,
And they crumble in your hand.
Hello, hello, hello, hello
Goodbye, goodbye, goodbye, goodbye
That's all there is
And the leaves that are green turn to brown.”

—Paul Simon, from the Sounds of Silence album

“April, come she will,
When streams are ripe and swelled with rain.
May she will stay,
Resting in my arms again.
June, she’ll change her tune,
In restless walks she’ll prowl the night.
July, she will fly,
And give no warning to her flight.
August, die she must.
The autumn winds blow chilling cold.
September, I’ll remember,
A love once new has now grown old.”

—A Child’s Nursery Rhyme, from the Sounds of
Silence

Table of Contents

1	Untitled	Dan Buzi
2	Titles are Meaningless	Scott Cooley
3	Racism Now	Indigo Nothing
3	Hate	Liz England
4	<i>Cezanne</i>	<i>Caitlin O'Hare</i>
5	Narcissist	Becca deSimone
5	Fuck me	Indigo Nothing
6	Mission Street	Steve Foceri
9	<i>Connect</i>	<i>Matthew Cassella</i>
10	Illumination	Ann Metz
11	Depreciateing Debauchery	Anna Tawfik
12	<i>Untitled</i>	<i>Dina Gregory</i>
13	System	Braden Russom
14	Misery	Elizabeth England
14	<i>Deception</i>	<i>Sonya Pedersen</i>
15	Anthem	Indigo Nothing
16	A Marine	Toni Williamson
17	<i>In His Hands</i>	<i>Sonya Pedersen</i>
18	<i>Slow Extension of Extremity</i>	<i>Jess Licciardello</i>
19	Synthesis Attempt	Braden Russom
23	<i>Sultry</i>	<i>Caitlin O'Hare</i>
24	Missing October	Courtney King
25	Untitled	Michelle Parson
26	Bacon	Elizabeth England
26	Nursery Rhyme	Dan Buzi
27	To Bartholomew, the Almighty	Ann Metz
29	Morning's Grey Light	Courtney King
30	<i>Rock and Water</i>	<i>Sonya Pedersen</i>
31	The Boat Dreams from the Hill	Steve Foceri
34	To my Mother (about a girl)	Sean Prinz
35	The Art Lesson	Becca deSimone
36	<i>Georgia O'Keeffe</i>	<i>Caitlin O'Hare</i>

37	For Elise	Ann Metz
42	<i>Literature</i>	<i>Caitlin O'Hare</i>
43	Fast Thinker	Scott Cooley
44	Priceless	Becca deSimone
45	The Opposite Sex	Jay Meyer
47	Departure	Michael Trayner
47	<i>Mary</i>	<i>Michelle Parson</i>
48	For Col	Rick Ambrosio
49	This Place Here	Steve Foceri
51	<i>Pink</i>	<i>Matthew Cassella</i>
52	"Emotional Suicide"	Courtney King
52	Untitled	Becca deSimone
53	<i>Back and Feet</i>	<i>Sonya Pedersen</i>
54	Snow Day	Braden Russom
55	Marriage	Elizabeth England
56	Self-Infliction	Scott Cooley
57	Shoots and Ladders	Becca deSimone
58	<i>Symmetry</i>	<i>Sonya Pedersen</i>
59	Bartholomew, the Magician	Ann Metz
61	<i>Suicide</i>	<i>Jennifer Mauer</i>
62	<i>Eastman</i>	<i>Caitlin O'Hare</i>
63	No Women	Theresa Edwards
66	Wedlock	Michael Trayner

*Note: Italicized print denotes works of visual art.

...and writing the true non-linear,
Denying our ancestral desire *for* the
flesh how do I sing the song of a *god*? that refuses to be sung

Of the lord Jah Jehovah Allah Yaweh
Brahman
Vishnu
Shiva
I am the great I am

¿E'lo-I, E'lo-I, la'ma sabach-tha'ni?

Star dust to star dust
Man body to woman
Child in the field
The rocks amongst sand
Wind over waters
Water over land
Land over spirit
Spirit - in hand
- is hand Whitman sung
the body electric

What can Shiva do?

April *is* the cruelest month
ful of dust

What did he know?
is useless

Eliot saw fear
is the common
abhorance of
Shiva making dust from
Vishnu's preservation
Of Brahman's creation
Which loves the dust
Beginning always from the end...

Titles are Meaningless

By Scott Cooley

Is solace found in your eyes or is it your counterfeit warmth?
Amid tainted scars and broken promises I grasp for something/anything
Still waiting and always anticipating I find only a void
To believe otherwise would only be considered blind faith
So play your broken and withered melodies of sorrow and lost beauty
I won't know the difference either way, will I?
Who are we kidding, we know blind leading the blind is futile
If this pen, this song, this fragment of an idea, this hope-or lack of- means
anything, then don't stop
But if disillusionment, wrath and pride are all I'm holding onto then don't persist
There was a time when I would dare to venture
Unfortunately one can only take so much self-loathing
Need it be sympathy, pity or love...keep it coming
I hate to say I told you so, but I was write again-unfortunately
So continue this charade and hit the repeat button
I know I'm not going anywhere, so make yourself comfortable
So for now I'll play that card, listen to your/my melody, smile, laugh and pretend
this is just a stage

Racism now
By Indigo Nothing

Free flyin' I saw a lynching
Stopped a second to what I was missing
Saw a woman whose name I won't mention
Struggling to loosen the rope's tension
See I saw all the lighting
Watching in awe at the slow burning
Not like the of days where everyone was yelling
Here the people were whispering
Kill the nigger! Kill the nigger!
Kill her for not withstanding
The subtle mixture of smiling with racism underlying
As a conclusion to a resistance of intimidation
I saw her die but rest as an implication
That a higher institution isn't at all near redemption

Hate
By Liz England

Hate is the dark red of fresh blood.
sounds like the hiss of a cobra and the scream that follows its bite.
tastes like horseradish and raw meat, strong and rancid.
smells like sweat and burning cinders.
looks like broken homes and barren deserts.
feels filthy and dishonest and empty.



Cezanne by Caitlin O'Hare

Narcissist

By Becca deSimone

So selfish and undeserving,

I want to drain the sunshine from your eyes
And drink the left-over juice squeezed from inside.
Taste blood in my mouth from biting your tongue
So you don't say anything cruel.

Fuck me

By Indigo Nothing

I bend illogically for a beginning not begun
Strumming to your tune unheard by me
I'm offbeat but I think you like that
Sick, little, familiar one
You twist your lust around my body out of
I dare say...
You being out of practice
I'd say lace lingering fantasies
Full of huffing, puffing, wanting, needing
Kneading my breasts into this non-existent love
Sssssssshhhhhhhhhh
I can hear your lies if you stop fucking me
You don't have to love me
Don't worry

Mission Street
By Steve Foceri

“It’s not open,”

“It has to be,”

“No. Look, it’s closed, all the lights are turned off.” My heart sank as Paul spoke the truth to me. It was the middle of the afternoon and the Mission Street Liquor store was closed. We were sixteen; this was our only liquor store in our town. Clinton was still President. Our new fake ID’s were made at a Chinese photo shop that was located on Canal street on the lower east side of New York City. It was going to be our day to test them out.

“Shit, where else can we go?” I muttered.

“That gas station that sells beer, the Mobil, its only a mile. Come on,” Paul lit a cigarette and started walking towards our next endeavor. “Fucking Sunday. I hate Sunday,”

“Who cares, it’s August. We don’t have school tomorrow.”

“Yeh but I got work, just as bad,” Paul said between breaths.

“Well I don’t. I just want to get drunk.”

The Mobil station was in the southern side of our hometown. The walk there wasn’t long, but the area bothered the both of us. The southern side of Pelham bordered the Bronx and the neighborhood was overrun with scum. The liquor store on Mission Street was a local hang out for junkies, drug dealers and unemployed men. They usually stayed in the parking lot in front of the store. A common sight was to see them using food stamps to buy five or ten cent pieces of gum and then using the change for their darker deeds. But that was none of our business. Our goal was to buy something to alter our state and to consume it in a near by (hopefully less populated) parking lot where no one would bother us.

The Mobil sold us beer without even looking at our new fake ID’s. I can remember mine very well; my name on it was Steve Splitrock. Paul’s was something like Kurt Bertnick. The names didn’t make a difference to anyone else.

“How about there?” Paul pointed to an almost empty parking lot.

“No, I think the cops will come by and check this lot or somebody will rat us out. I don’t know, this isn’t a good spot. Lets go to that junkyard. I’m sure no one will be there.”

We headed off. When we got to the yard it was almost deserted. We sat down against the fence, just off the main road and opened our beers.

“So when are you getting a car?” Paul asked me.

I lit up a cigarette and shrugged my shoulders. My mom had talked to me about getting me a car, but I hadn’t really been given an answer as to when I would receive it. We sat back and drank. It didn’t take much to get us drunk back then. When the beer was finished we tossed the bottles over the fence into the junkyard and walked home.

“We should hangout tomorrow,”

“I get home from work at two, call me.”

“Yeh, take it easy Paul.”

High school went quickly and college came upon the both of us like an alcohol-induced fog. I didn’t see Paul my entire freshman year and finally caught up with him as a sophomore during Christmas break. On a Sunday we finally hung out.

I lit another cigarette as we drove in Paul’s car. We were headed to Mission Street, so Steve Splitrock and Kurt Bertnick could purchase a bottle of whiskey and find a place to get drunk.

“Hey, I got this new CD for Christmas,” Paul handed me an album by The Police. “Put it in, it’s their best one.” I followed the orders of my friend and started the CD on the first track. The song wasn’t that good. When we reached Mission Street, the liquor store was closed. On impulse, we decided to head to a beer distributor near Rye, New York, just a half hour north.

It didn’t take us very long to reach the highway. Cruising along in Paul’s Jeep at about seventy miles an hour, neither of us noticed the driver of the white station wagon in the right lane. The station wagon was going at about the same speed that we were, and must not have realized that his lane was about to end in less than a quarter of a mile. Having driven this stretch of road

many times before, Paul and I knew that the right lane ended soon but we never even noticed this guy driving right next to us.

The Police album was still in the CD player. I wasn't really paying attention to it; in fact, I believe both Paul and I were wondering if either one of us had any cigarettes left. The right lane ended. The driver of the station wagon tried to pass us but swerved and almost hitting the rail. His car barely missed our Jeep. Paul tried to avoid a collision but lost control and crossed over into the left lane and hit the concrete divider. The impact caused the Jeep to rollover; the cars behind us slowed to a stop and thankfully didn't end both of our lives right then and there. The white station wagon sped away.

I made it out before Paul did by punching through the passenger side window. It took Paul almost a minute to unbuckle his seat belt before he too left the Jeep through the passenger window. We were lucky. The Jeep and Police album in the CD player were the only casualties; we walked away without any serious injuries.

When the State troopers showed up with the Fire Department to clean up the fuel from the crash they were both surprised that we were ok. I remember Paul and I asked every one of them for a cigarette, but none of them had any. An ambulance was called, and even though none of us had any real injuries AF-they took us to a New Rochelle hospital.

"Fucking Sunday. I hate Sunday," Paul said blandly while we both rode in the ambulance.

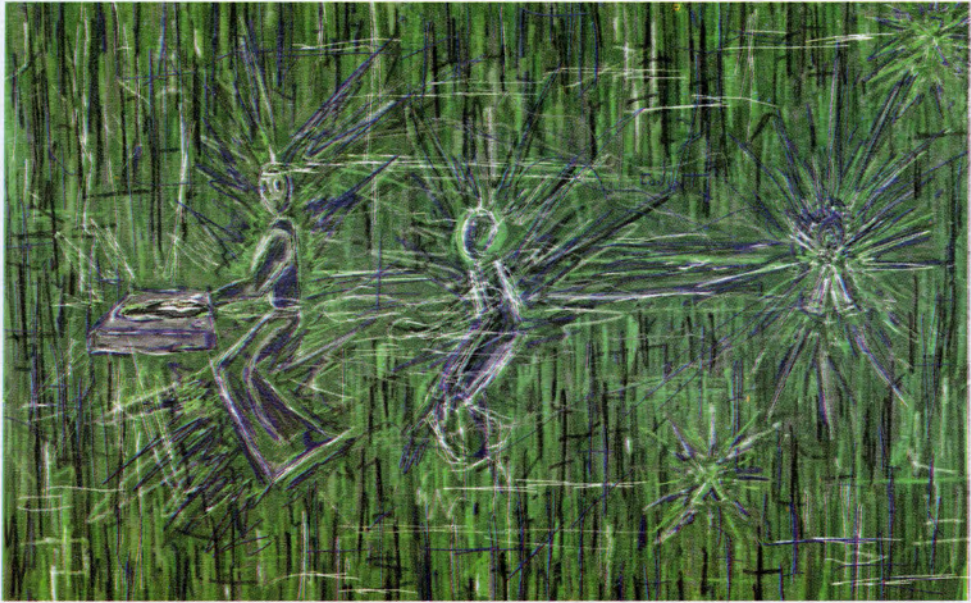
"Do you have a cigarette?" I asked the ambulance driver. He didn't look at me, he just handed me two cigarettes and muttered something along the lines of "here's one for your friend." We smoked the cigarettes in the ambulance, knocking the ash off of them onto the floor.

"You wanna hang out tomorrow?" I asked.

"I don't know. I'm not sure what my parents are going to say about the car."

"Well, call me later on."

"Yet, I will." The ambulance pulled into the hospital parking lot, Paul got out first. As I got out, I took notice to the look on Paul's face as he turned to me and said, "I probably should have just hit that station wagon." I just nodded my head and stamped out my cigarette on the concrete.



Connect by Matthew Cassella

Illumination
By Ann Metz

We wanted them to awaken us,
Those dolls whose eyes are always open
Yet never see what smolders
Beneath the aging coals.
To them we were only gray dust
Concealing live embers
But they never remembered
The ugly ashes or
Stirred the fuel into a frenzy
Of crackling flames.

Their eyes might have been
Illuminated once again,
Tiny glass spheres of fire
Burning holes through black pupils.
But dolls never cease to sleep.
They are intent on leaning
Limp porcelain frames against the wall,
Legs ramrod straight,
Clothed in blue ball dresses
And curled blonde tresses.

They in the dark, blind and deaf,
Cackle at our remnants.
See, we are strong, they say.
The flames die and we won't revive
Them because they show too much about us we cannot hide.
They show us we do not live,
That we all look alike,
That we are naked cold flesh

Stretched over boneless frames,
That we are only children's playthings.
And so they do not stir these embers.
But we flames remember.
We remember the truth they made us consume.
We remember.

Depreciating Debauchery
By Anna Tawfik

"Gold and diamonds?"
No, just copper and glass
Nope, just me
Consider me under another rubric of circumstances:
The evil I
It's not quantity or even quality, he preached, but *quality*
Look it up under fictions
Manifest yourself to me otherwise;
Regard me in size 10 font on the software of your mind
Give me an averted glance
Uplift my spirits only to reject them once in the air
Hold my hand only to crush it
Once, he told me it was a crime not to think at all
Well, I say it's unforgivable to think the wrong way on a one-way street
It's like standing for a bath
"A bath of nails," he said smirking at me



Untitled by Dina Gregory

System

By Braden Russom

Today I'm remembering pieces of
childhood. Little flashes coming to
the front of my mind like tiny light
bulbs, bursting their glass shells and
screaming luminous into space.

Those one-piece pajamas
with zippers from neck to crotch,
little plastic shells covering the bottoms
of my feet. How gloves smelled after
an hour on the radiator. How they
smelled after two hours. What
it felt like when I threw that snowball
into your ear from my banana-seated
Huffy, and saw your face screw up like
it was being pulled from the inside.

How confused I was when Santa Claus died,
that I left cookies and milk for God instead.
How he'd die soon after. That I don't even eat
cookies anymore, and I only drink milk in coffee.
That I haven't thrown a snowball in four years.

Misery

By Liz England

Misery is black a
pool of oil.

It sounds like the cries of children,
their pain and suffering revealed in their sobs.

Misery tastes like stale bread
a rotten apple.

It smells like freshly peeled onions
the slow stench of stagnant water.

Misery looks like a car speeding past,
showering people with mud and slime from a storm just past.



Deception by Sonya Pedersen

Anthem

By Indigo Nothing

The bombs bursting in air gave proof that our flag was there
Our flag had bombs bursting in air
Green light shafts moving through their bare
Bare streets, bare lives we are making for the better
The betterment of the people who don't want our help
The bombs bursting gave proof that our country needs examining
Unpatriotic, chaotic, hypocrite, war lovers
Tax voters, government sirens for 911
It's sad to say our time has gone
The number has already imprinted itself in phonebooks
Our children will it look up
They'll understand another Vietnam
Oh say does that star spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of blind for the mind of the slaved
I'm the words of the brave
The thoughts of a divided U S of A

A Marine

By Toni Williamson

He watched every war movie ever made. He played in camouflaged fatigues. He stood tall and saluted whenever he saw the American flag or heard the Star Spangled Banner. From a very young age, this little boy knew he would one day walk among the proud. He knew that he would be a soldier. The only decision he had to face was which branch of service to join. There was his Navy Seal period when he took swimming lessons and scuba diving lessons to perfect a sport he already did so well. There was his Army period when he would crawl through the imagined swamps in his backyard with his little face covered in mud so the enemy wouldn't detect him. There was his Air Force period when he collected every fighter plane ever made and hung them all over his room.

It wasn't until he turned sixteen that he made his final decision. If he was going to do this, it was going to be the toughest challenge of his young life. He was going to be among the strongest, the bravest, and the best. He worked hard in high school and graduated at the age of seventeen. One month later, he was on his way to Marine boot camp. It was a gruesome thirteen weeks. There were many days when he wondered if he had made a mistake. But he persevered. He graduated boot camp and he graduated weapons training school. He made it through his specialized skills course as one of the highest in his class.

Today he fights for freedom in the Iraqi desert. Not just his freedom but also the freedom of all Americans. He is eighteen years old and he is willing to defend his country against terrorists so that all Americans may walk the streets with no fear. He has put his young life on hold so that the rest of us may never have to endure another 9-11.

This is a place where nerves are frayed, the enemy is heartless, and the sandstorms are merciless. This is a place where Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine unite together to form an impenetrable force against evil. There is no social elite among these men and women. There is no racism. There is a mission to be accomplished and they are determined to win. They stand together as one - with pride and honor. They represent the United States and they are fighting for the American people.

This Marine is where he has always wanted to be. He is doing a job he has always wanted to do. This young Marine and all the soldiers of all the forces deserve the respect and gratitude of the American people. Remember them in your prayers.

Semper Fi



In His Hands by Sonya Pedersen

slow extension of extremity

if only it didn't feel so good
if only it didn't feel so good

if
only
it
didn't
feel
so
good

Then I wouldn't do it

You hedonist

disapproval

Personal Jesus
Living-doll

Amongst the masses

Twenty in your

Orifice

hazardous like a code orange terror threat.

On a scale of blue to red that is.....

personal jesus personal freedom its not a war on drugs
it's a war on personal freedom

personal jesus freedom

personjefreedus

the person who freed us

freed us

what can I get for free?

I don't care what it is as long as its free.

You cant spell freedom without free.

You cant spell anything really.

you discursive symbol

you

(shaking finger)

person

nosrep

nasty Norse noose nuked nice narcs nose to nose

Synthesis Attempt
By Braden Russom

“Where we going?” I asked, sitting in the passenger seat of Tim’s green Plymouth.

“Nowhere.” I knew this to be code for “If I told you, you’d probably whine about it.” I kept quiet and looked out the window. We were on a stretch of road that didn’t look familiar to me. Of course most of the roads out here didn’t look familiar to me. We were fairly close to a city, which in normal circumstances would mean we were in a suburban area. The thing about Troy though is that once you get outside of it, you find yourself in the boonies, wondering where the ghetto went and how all of a sudden you’re in a scene from *Children of the Corn*.

Eventually Tim pulled the car onto the side of the road. Out his window was a large field, thinly covered with shin-high weeds and spotted with little shacks. He got out of the car and I followed.

“Where the hell are we?” I asked

No response. I was accustomed to this sort of thing from Tim. Every once in a while he’d get some idea in his head and I had little choice but to come along for whatever it turned out to be.

By this point, I was really starting to panic. I had been on the tram for at least 25 minutes, which I knew to be too long. Had I missed my stop? Had I gone the wrong direction? I swear there was no bridge this time. Dammit! This was not good. Looking through the windows I was certain that I had never seen any of these buildings before. How could I have missed a *river* for god’s sake? Or a huge bus station. Or the giant neon Staropramen sign that I swear must be visible from space. I must have taken the wrong tram. Now here I am, sitting alone on this wire car with no idea where I might be, or how to get to where I need to be. Oh yeah, and nobody in Prague seems to speak English. Great.

“Y’ever seen *Deliverance*, man? This is weird”

“Nope.” Okay, fair enough. We were walking across the field, he leading the way and I following, towards the house that stood along the edge of the tree line. Weeds whipped against my ankles and crickets jumped out of our way as we clomped across their homes. My toes were browning quickly from the dry dirt that we kicked up with every step, and feet had begun to itch from the crabgrass. I wanted to ask what we were doing, but knowing that I wouldn’t get a straight answer, I held back. We reached the house to find a very sturdy deck encircling the place along the floor line of the second level. It appeared to be professionally built which made the house it surrounded seem even more dilapidated. I followed Tim up the stairs and around the deck until we found the front door. A few steps inside and I was beginning to realize where we were.

“This is Jack’s place, isn’t it?” I asked.

“Yep” he said. I don’t know how I knew, but I knew. Jack was Tim’s favorite uncle, who three days before had begun the last week of his life. The tumor in his brain had been killing him slowly for months and Tim had watched it all through confused, 17-year-old eyes. I’d never spent time with the man, seeing him in passing at family occasions and exchanging smiles and handshakes. Now I was at his house, rummaging through the incredible arrangement of clutter on every surface. This was our last day of summer. The following day Tim would leave for college and things as we knew them would end. Our friendship of seven years would change dramatically from the every day companionship that we both counted on to get us through the days at military school, to something else entirely that neither one of us had any preparation for. The 30-minute drive that separated our houses now became five hours that separated northern Vermont from southern New York. 4 days later, Jack would die, leaving all of those things in that house without an owner, and making Tim and I the last people to ever enter a house that belonged to him.

Prague is a city with very strong moods. In my short visit, I experienced a couple of them. Heavy depression on gray days, taking the train through slums where burned out cars rusted in front of graffiti cement

walls, broken glass a sparse gravel on the walkways. Shame and fear of the past in the Jewish ghetto, where the cemetery's gravestones are crammed so tightly they look like jagged vertebrae on the back of some giant prehistoric beast. Pride of the sort that makes you close your eyes, lean back, and sigh deeply as you lean over the walls of Prague Castle, scanning the whole city and seeing the flags of world embassies: Brazil, England, the United States. Slack-jawed, numbing awe, standing in front of stained glass windows so bright and colorful you expect God himself to come glowing through them at any moment.

It was here, in this wonderful, multi-polar city of confusing emotions and surprises in every cup of coffee that I was completely stranded for the first time in my life. Soon after I realized that I was on the wrong tram, it came to a stop and, instead of turning around and going back the other way, opened it's doors and ejected me into a small corporate park in the nighttime ghost town business district.

"So...now what?" I asked, staring at the huge, heavy traffic light.

"I'm taking it home." He said, all the while standing over it with fists lightly clenched and a look of defiance on his face. We had found the light in one of the sheds Jack kept on his huge property. It was battered and a couple of the colored glass gels were cracked and missing pieces. After an hour of pulling and twisting we had taken it out of the closet, out of the shed, and onto the grass along the side of the road. We had but cut our hands in the process. I think we both knew it wasn't going to fit into the car, but by then it didn't matter. It was going home, and we just had to figure out how.

"Let's wait a minute, huh?" I said. I had grabbed a couple bottles of water from his house before we left, and by this point we were both pretty thirsty. We wandered over to the car and sat on the trunk, facing down the road that went straight on for about a mile before bending around a corner and disappearing.

After a few minutes he looked up from his shoes and said "Y'know man, I didn't plan on this"

"On what?"

“Any of this. School, people, anything. Everything.”

“Yeah, I know man, I know”

We finished our bottles and threw the empties on the grass. The light stood on the grass dented, cracked, and streaked with our blood. We didn't move though. We just sat there, backs to the sun, leaning forward, elbows on knees, looking down the road.

“What's the deal with this light, anyway?” I ventured, thinking that now that we had nearly finished our task he would be a little more open to telling me.

“Iunno. Seems worthwhile though, doesn't it?”

“Yeah, guess it does. Kind of a pain in the ass though, don't ya think?”

“Yeah but so are you.” I laughed. I knew he wasn't kidding, but I knew what he meant.

“True, but at least I'm good looking.” We both grinned. Jokes are always better shared.

“Ok, let's get this thing home.” he said

“Word.” I said, hopping up from my seat and walking slowly, distractedly over to the light. “Let's take it home.” I thought. Indeed.



Sultry By Caitlin O'Hare

Missing October
By Courtney King

Clouds travel north along the Hudson
Grey-on-grey water and sky
And the fading light of day
Reaches back into the hills
Drawing forth an unruly flock of geese
And an unusually warm autumnal day.

Glass panes separate the world
An universe of tiny boxes and
Of course, the mechanisms of modern life.

As dusk settles behind the overcast heavens
I find myself longing for the light of winter
Or maybe the darkness of summer –
Both cool and crisp like the leaves clinging
Restlessly to the tree tops and eaves.
I miss October.

The skeleton of a too-naked tree
Presses itself against the palate of sky
Leaving, if not a lasting impression,
A deep one on both heart and mind.

So, pressing palm to pane,
I reach forward to the clouds above,
And falling without gravity
I find October is merely a state of mind.

Untitled
By Michelle Parson

She used to clean houses. She would take me with her on Tuesdays after she picked me up from morning kindergarten. I would empty the small bathroom garbage cans and stand on sinks to help her clean the mirrors. When we would clean children's bedrooms, she'd make their stuffed animals talk—I mean the stuffed animals would talk to me in high gravely voices that sounded like my mother's on some days. Oscar was my favorite. Despite his ill manners, he always told me he loved me.

My mother was beautiful. She had blonde wavy hair and light skin with freckles. She tanned very well in the summer; turning a golden brown. Her eyes were a dark chocolate brown with light green speckles you could see on sunny days. She was short, but she wore her height well. At five feet tall in one inch heels, my mother was often mistaken for a 16-year-old kid in cut-off shorts and tiny t-shirts.

Every time I look in the mirror, I see her staring back at me—with the same birthmark on her face, the same dark brown eyes, pale skin with speckled brown dots, the same button nose, and the same laugh lines that delicately surround her lips. Although if she were standing next to me I'd tower a good inch over her.

If she were alive we'd smoke the same cigarettes and wear the same size shoes. We'd wear our hair the same length and style. We'd have the same last name and the same dreams for my life. We'd share sweaters and blue jeans with holes in the knees. We'd read the same books and sit on the couch with our legs folded the same way. We would have the same facial expressions and hand gestures.

I wouldn't be writing this if she was here.

Bacon
By Liz England

I have devoured
the pig
that was your pet

which you were probably
keeping
for company.

Forgive me.
It was succulent,
so juicy
and so crispy.

Nursery Rhyme
By Dan Buzi

When I was five
And still alive
I knew no thousand ways to die

And now it seems
Though sad to say
I find new ways to die each day

To Bartholomew, the Almighty
By Ann Metz

All hail the Game show God!
The Mouthpiece of Jesus!
The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!
The Lord who reigns on high,
Bartholomew, the Almighty!
He walks on water,
Treading on the heads of
His contestants and lovers,
Crushing them under
The Dead Sea waves.
He wants to imitate the Pat Sajak
Wheel of Fortune Act.
Take a spin and you might win
A Jackpot or end up Bankrupt when
Bartholomew's rubber soul goes flat.

Five loaves of bread and two fishes
He stole from the mouths
Of the five thousand to feed his own greed.
(Oh wait, I mean five loaves of bread
And two chickens—
Bartholomew only eats chicken).
It's fitting fare for a man
Who is *like* God
But really only a *counterfeit*
Version of the Savior,
Our Christ the Lord
Because he makes his devotees
Go blind from watching too many
Revolving wheels and reruns
Of rehashed television trash.

He'll serve you the same meal,
Warmed through twice,
And tell you he made it from scratch.
That's Bartholomew's brand of miracle.

Question his deity and his devotion
To you evaporates immediately.
Just like Harry Houdini
He does the disappearing act,
Leaving you trapped in his torture box,
Body sliced into jigsaw pieces.
But you must wipe away the blood
And vacuum the broken glass.
It was all your fault anyway,
That's what he tells you.
He's without sin so let him
Cast the first stone!

Bartholomew the Almighty
Is the Game show God,
The ruler of a million television viewers,
And the Father of all Lies.
And you?
You were only one brief stop
In his thirty minute time slot.
Just a transparent Vanna White
He couldn't wait to shove
Out of his own spotlight.

Morning's Grey Light

By Courtney King

I am not young enough to know everything.

- Oscar Wilde

An hour's drive is no place
To put my hopes for the future
And with the muted grey sunrise
Playing with my eyelids
I suffer the indignity of hypocrisy
Alone but with the radio,
As if it were any consolation at all.

Trying to outrun a nighttime, lifetime
Of mistakes and regrets, I find myself
First in the quiet country, the only car for miles
Here, with the rolling hills and roadside birds
I am angry and unusually cold for July.
Then, I find myself roaming the city's streets
Their eerie stillness the antithesis to
My furiously beating heart and mind

The insomniatic whirr of the road
Propels the car and daylight
Six twenty three A.M. and I'm listening to
"Captain Jack" and "With or Without You"
I smile my own bitter smile
And remember how I tried my hardest
To manage a look of disgust not an hour ago.
The only such look should have been
Directed at me from my many reflections
And I'm sorry, though I don't know
Exactly for what or to whom... But I am
Or maybe, it's just the dull warning
Of my oncoming hangover and dry mouth.



Rock and Water by Sonya Pedersen

The Boat Dreams From the Hill

By Steve Foceri

The boat on the hill never goes to sleep, anchored to a place where it just dreams. The boat is beat; it's never going to be afloat now. Thirsty, it looks at the foam upon the waters.

It's master keeps on patching and repainting; thinking about his pension plans. But the boat is out to pasture; it seemingly never had the chance. The boat dreams from the hill; "I want to be a boat. I want to learn to swim, then I'll learn to float, then I'll begin again."

The boat remembers a confident shore hand. Mid-surf, where the fishing is better in such rough weather. Never fearing the water. No fears of capsizing or sinking and always pushing the limits of its construction. His master keeps on patching and repainting; thinking about his pension plans. But his boat is out to pasture, seems he never had a chance.

Bought at an auction, on a dolly ever since. It sits on ice patches where it watches the world go by. Its spirit is beat, but the boat still remembers its carpenter's sure hands; missing the fishy flutter of its rudder. His master keeps on patching and repainting. Thinking about his pension plans. But this boat is out to pasture, it seemingly never had the chance. "I wanna be a boat. I want to learn to swim, then I'll learn to float and I'll begin again. Begin again!"

Once out at sea, the boat was always full ahead. Rough seas, never having been a danger; the boat knew the hotspots, a place where it could please its master. Midnight, they were fishing in a deep black ocean. Still he keeps patching and repainting; always thinking about his pension plans. Today his boat is out to pasture, it seemingly never had a chance.

Boat remembers the once great things he has done. Round the cape, through the inlets in rough weather. Today I'm beat. I'm never going to be afloat now. Midnight, I'm still drinking at the local hotspots. I tried patching and repainting. Thinking about my own future plans. Yet my body seems like it's been set out to pasture. I feel I've never had my chance. "I want to be a

boat. I want to learn to swim. Then I'll learn to float and I'll begin again. Begin again!"

I've always been the boat. I used to know how to swim. I once knew how to float, but I have to begin again. The boat knew the hotspots, before it became a hull. I used to be out at sea in all of the worst storms. Today I just watch the water, from a safer place; the mid-surf is too rough for my hull. But I keep patching and repainting. Thinking about my future plans. I don't want to be left out to pasture. I need to at least have one last chance.

I can remember, my carpenter's sure hands. Building me up, keeping all of my planks together. I'm not sure if he needs me to be his boat now. Midnight, I'm still fishing in my seas of darkness. Unanswered questions plague me, while I am sitting on my hill. I hate seeing the other boats passing me by. I feel the ice creak up in my joints. All the patching and repainting can't repair my lost rudder. All of the future plans of the water fade from view as my planks rot while upon this dolly. Sometimes the rainy days drop boyish wonder, but it only serves to swell my planks.

The boat on the hill is never going sea. A swell of memories flood back, the younger years of my life all spent on the water. Still the ice patches under my newfound wheels freeze my hull onto the earth. The cold steel underneath my rotting wooden sides reminds me just how empty the ocean feels without me. So I still keep patching and repainting. Always thinking about the pension plans. I won't let myself go to pasture. One day, I will have a chance.

I am the boat on the hill. I'm anchored to my own empty dream. I was once much more than this. Today I know only the hill, and all that was once water is now hard earth. Once a great boat of rough waters and dark oceans, now a hull that sits on wheels. Never can I sleep again, but all I do is dream. I am so much better than just a rotting hull, but I can no longer take a chance on the rough surf, the cold waters or the narrow inlets. I don't remember how to float anymore; it's no longer useful to me here on my hill. But I keep patching and repainting. Thinking about the future plans. I don't want to be left out to pasture, but I can't really get a second chance. The second chance to be the

boat again and not lose my faith in my carpenter. The boat, anchored to a fixer upper's dream.

The future is something we can only hope to prepare for. If the hull of a boat cannot seal its leaks it will sink in the dark cold ocean. The carpenter's hands that made the boat never leave it. However, not every boat knows that and far too many hulls begin to crack; splitting under the pressure of all the unanswered questions that the ocean brings upon it. The planks swell up with the dark water of the unknown and the weight of the world sinks its spirit. Then what little that is dredged up from bottom will never go to sea again.

Sometimes, parts of the boat can be salvaged, but all the patching and repainting cannot build it back up to its former glory or the innocence it once knew. The fears of sinking returns and the boat cannot remember how to float anymore; that's how the boat comes to sit on the hill, a safe distance from the water. Anchored to a fixer upper's dream, there I missed the final chance to begin again.

To My Mother (about a girl)
by Sean Prinz

Passing by the soft gray apples
I pull the cart over to pick out the fuzziest watermelon,
And in disgust I leave with what I came with.
Only, maybe, through the doors I stand a bit lighter.

Have nothing to lose?
Fine! Chop a rich man down to the street.
You'll see - he'll live in disbelief.
Oh - you will too when she tells you it was all a ruse.

It really was just banter!
You chose her over me,
Like a beggar choosing a whore over a deity.
(It makes even Jesus want to ravage her!)

You promised me a drink - thrice!
Even Pavlov can't fool me that many!
Without reward - how that bell rang in darkness or when it was sunny.
I found myself making shoe polish do, but only twice.

On that awful day in September,
Would you take that plane and fight?
I wouldn't if you were on that flight,
Knowing you'd end up an ember!

This is my goodbye to you liar!
The apples will redden one day, just not yet.
Next time I will chose with more care than times past.
I stand now, a pitted prune just wandering and wondering.

So tell me mother:
How did she hide so much of herself, even when I was inside of her?

The Art Lesson
By Becca deSimone

We were like a shooting star,
flying through the stratosphere so bright and flaming,
painting an intricacy with our fire brushes.

Orange and glowing,
heavy and winded,
you and I challenged the art of manipulation.

The two of us flying,
suspended over speeding cars and fallacies of romance.

It was only you and me, the fire and the burn.

I was hoping we could heal each other,
I was hoping I could taste your essence;
instead I'm left disfigured by your scorching heat,

once bearable intoxication.



Georgia O'Keeffe by Caitlin O'Hare

For Elise
By Ann Metz

SHE had emptied his soul of its contents, slowly over the years, like a parasite concealed in the bleak recesses of its host's intestines. Now she gorged herself to satisfaction on the remains of his life as he lay incoherently under the blue, threadbare sheets and moth consumed quilt. He muttered her name through white, cracked lips. *Elise. Elise. Elise, I cured you. The songs, the songs kept you alive.*

The doctor leaned over the patient, checking the erratic throb of the pulse. He glanced at the stoical woman rocking in the chair beside the open window. She played absently with the chord that joined the curtains, humming a familiar piano tune.

"I cannot do anything ma'am. Your husband is going to die."

"I know," she replied stiffly, meeting the physician's sympathetic eye with a composed chill, shrugging carelessly.

"He's been ill for a long time. After he wrote that last piano sonata, he came home from the river white with the fever. I knew he was going to die then."

The doctor reached out a comforting hand and reflexively Elise recoiled. "Yes...well, I'm sorry there's nothing more I can do. Keep him comfortable and call me in the morning," he said, looking away from her.

He stepped over to the door, his coat swishing softly in the silence, but the woman did not follow. She had lapsed back into the hypnotic motion of the rocking chair. *Elise, Elise. I gave my heart for you. Doesn't that mean anything?*

Elise paused and gazed fixedly at the invalid shuffling restlessly under the covers. The movement reminded her of a butterfly squirming in its cocoon. *Elise, Elise, Elise...*

Three years ago she had been in that same bed, cloaked in those same covers, and he had entered by accident, looking for the owner of the theater. Desperate for company, she convinced him to stay, and one hour became one year. He gazed into her pine green eyes, his reflection reunited with its counterpart. His kisses were invigorating cold rushes of water current that

made her head spin with ecstasy. He smelled of earth and woods and mint. Fresh. Animate. Not immobile, some prehistoric fossil. She began to feel death relinquish its bony grip and with renewed energy she stretched her arms skyward to break through the surface.

They were married in her room. No temple, priest, flowers, or relatives. The Justice of the Peace came and the ceremony was completed. The dead and the living joined in one flesh.

Recovery arrived in increments. All the while she watched as her husband paid the medical bills by writing piano music for the orchestra and performing night after night at the theater. As she lay in bed, she could hear the airy melodies of the piano as they crept into the silence of the night, creating ripples of noise that reached out and returned, reached out and returned.

At first, she loved the piano. It soothed and comforted her in the darkness as a mother's voice humming lullabies quiets the terrified child. The music enfolded her lovingly in tender arms, floating placidly above the night. Her spirit seemed to detach itself from the core of her body, rising and rising with exhilaration to places beyond the borders of the room, past the confines of the dilapidated apartment. Her spirit exceeded all barriers.

But when the music stopped, she hated it. The wind that held her suspended aloft suddenly ceased, and she tumbled into the bed with shattering force. She would drown in despair, sobbing brokenly, and when her husband returned he was shocked to find her more ill than when he had left.

He took her to every doctor in town. The prognosis was certain death, unless he could afford to pay for a new treatment. He was seized with a fit of madness that often accompanies passion—he would sacrifice himself for her. He would never stop playing his piano until she was better. His music would save her life.

Every night he performed in the theater, his audience applauding wildly, demanding encore after encore. He slept but a scant few hours after each performance, rising at the earliest light of the morning with the sound of his wife's incessant coughing. He spent the day composing new scores. She too, demanded encore after encore.

“Oh Victor darling, *don't* stop playing. The music is just so *lovely* and I *feel* so much better. Play that melody again! It makes me feel so *alive*.”

And Victor played for her life. He fancied that the notes of his music were the molecules of oxygen that kept her animate. His fingers struck the piano keys with intensity and urgency. Sometimes he neglected to eat for hours or days at a time. Dark, heavy bags of fatigue formed under his eyes. Night after night, day after day, he played for the ears of his insatiable listeners. Encore, encore, encore, they cried out...

Finally, Victor had accumulated enough money to pay for Elise's treatment. On the night after her operation, the doctor told him that his wife “would live beyond the shadow of a doubt.”

“Her recovery from this illness is remarkable,” he told Victor.

Victor received this news with a sad smile and glazed eyes. “Yes, it is remarkable. It is remarkable,” he murmured. Victor thought, *I saved Elise. My music made her live.*

Elise did recover, fully. But now, she hated the sound of the piano. That which had once drawn her from the grip of death came to symbolize confinement and illness.

She looked about her apartment and detested its drab aura. She no longer looked at Victor, repulsed by his bony frame and pale face. No matter what he played or sang for her, Elise was not satisfied now.

“It's not the same, it's not the same!” she shouted, stamping her foot with childish displeasure. “There's something different! Have you had the piano tuned recently? Did you spill something on the keys?”

When Victor stared mutely back at her with expressionless eyes, she fled deeper into a rage.

“Oh, just stop playing that awful tune! I hate it! I hate it! I HATE it! And YOU...look at YOU. I can't stand the sight of you; you're so sickly and white...like...like a bed sheet. It's repulsive!”

Victor's lower-lip often trembled at these words and he would slowly rise from the piano seat, gather his ripped jacket in hand, and leave the apartment. He began to spend his nights by the river, walking incessantly for hours at a time, the moon shadowing his steps, indistinct murmurs falling from his lips.

He returned at daybreak to his home, only to be met with the red, enraged face of Elise. "Where have you been? What have you been doing? Twice your boss called in to see if you were here and he demanded to know when you would be returning to work. Victor, do you want us to end up on the streets? You have to play, you have to write more music!"

Victor withdrew to the river and composed one last piece. He called it *For Elise*. The audiences loved it. Encore, encore, encore, they roared. For Elise, for Elise, for Elise...

One night, he returned home, much paler than usual and trembling. His hands were bent at the wrists, like claws, and they shook uncontrollably.

"What is it? What's happened?" Elise demanded sharply.

"I can't play, I can't play," he whispered hoarsely. "I've forgotten how to play. I can't do it anymore."

He glanced up, eyes burning with terror.

"I don't know the notes anymore, the meters, the melodies...gone...vanished."

"What are you blubbering about?" his wife demanded. "What do you mean you can't play?"

Victor collapsed on his knees before his wife and took her right hand in his left hand. "Oh Elise!" he cried out in agony. "Oh Elise, I cured you with my music. Why don't you like it anymore? I wrote it all for you. My songs, my songs kept you alive. Oh, please Elise, listen to my music! Love it again. Let me play it for you. I can't write or play the piano if you hate it so...but it isn't such a terrible thing. It cured you! It kept you alive! Why hate the thing that preserves life?"

"Get up off the ground, you sniveling fool," she growled. "I hate your music and I hate that infernal instrument. I will NEVER love it again."

She wrenched her hand free of his and walked away.

That night, Victor sank into delirium. Elise sat by his bed side, listening to the same words repeatedly fall from his lips: *Elise. Elise. Elise, I cured you. The songs, the songs kept you alive. Elise, Elise. I gave my heart for you. Doesn't that mean anything?*

The invalid squirmed restlessly in his threadbare sheets. Elise watched, unmoved. She was free and it did not matter. Outside, the butterflies flitted in the April sunshine around the flower box. A robin swooped down from the trees and captured an unwary caterpillar.

Elise stopped rocking in her chair. It was strangely silent in the room. She looked over at Victor. His lips were motionless. No breath exited from his nostrils. His limbs were frozen in a contorted posture.

Elise felt his cheek. It was rapidly cooling with the onset of death. She walked quickly to the door and out into the busy street below.

Somewhere distant, the faint sound of piano music drifted in with the breeze.



Fast Thinker

By Scott Cooley

Look at me, I'm a 'Fast Thinker'
Academia deemed me divinity
Close your eyes and swallow my dialect
Stimulate your taste buds but don't open your eyes
Dance with my mesmerizing tone
Search no more, you're lost
Patronizing, patriarchal and pompous am I...you love it
Starving for so long, satisfaction is not far
Dizzy with my ambiguity and thirsty for persuasion
Look no further with your closed lids

Priceless

By Becca deSimone

Falsely sparkled and misleading clarity like a diamond, mirrored images from angular eyes, misconception beaming from side to side, feeling as impermanent as you.

A glorious resolution to define, stigmatize, exasperate the situations we find ourselves drowning in, as a helpless child would scream while suffocating beneath her illusions.

The jagged little edges of your jewel-like character cut.

However engaged I am in your graceless beauty when your naked sweat smothers me, I am flesh eaten and deranged under watchful eyes.

I touch your ring of impurity, shimmering in its beloved glory, and bleed as a fiery sunrise screams into the morning, spindly and consuming, abated as hour's progress.

Words seethe from under cracked lips, juicily melting within a stank breath of recycled manipulation, and still after all this ticking of time, I cannot dismember my confidence

when you decide to love me.

The Opposite Sex

By Jay Meyer

“I guess you should take a piss now so your bodybag isn’t as heavy. At least do the paramedics THAT favor.”

He stood with uneasiness and lack of conviction directing the pistol at my head. I was down on my knees right here, but this was no different than the rest of the night.

I guess you want to me to tell you how abused and taken advantage of I felt? Just because I’m a woman, I become the victim? We’ll save such things for the Lifetime original movies, shall we? What I want to tell you is how quickly a situation can change. What I want to tell you is how one’s future can form in an instant. What I want to tell you is how much quicker I am than a bullet.

Perhaps you can relate to this and perhaps you can’t, but here is a man with a racing heartbeat who is so sure of his position as the victor in this standoff. I wonder if the thought of defeat is even going through his mind. I assume not, since he has the gun and I have nothing. Unless you count my whitened clenched fist hidden between my thighs. I doubt you can understand how fast I had to be. How fast I had to be to see the bullet only grazing my right shoulder as I stretch an open left hand to yank out the electrical cord for the only light source in the room. How fast I was as my clenched right fist makes explosive contact with his face. This is the second time I thank God for the giant diamond on my ring because I can’t imagine my knuckle being able to slice his cheek. The gun quickly changes hands in this scuffle, and why not? It’s an instrument for our use and it doesn’t care who holds it with a vindictive grin or who is in front of it with tearful eyes. So I use this weapon for my own purposes, just as I used my ring, and just as I used all your minds.

I forgot to mention that didn’t I? Of course I can’t read your mind, but this is damn near close. He had the gun. He was larger. Taller. All that was physical and his place on the battlefield was secure. Why shouldn’t he win? A quick change in power puts me in control, but I had the power well before he walked in the

the room. You see? I'm a woman. And since my birth and generations before that, you deemed me weaker. And the optimist in me hopes that your future generations still see me as weaker. For if I were seen as stronger, how could I get paid for getting away with murder?

So if you need my services, I won't be found in the dark alleys or damp underbellies of the world. You'll probably see me topside in the light of day with a smirk that speaks louder than words. Just hope you aren't the one on the ground using the carpet for a urinal.

Departure

By Michael Traynor

In this world,
There exists a cruel irony,
That a woman would
Give birth to a dead child,
Nine months
Boiled down to a moment,
And that child
To whom she has fed
Tender life
Is whisked away
Without touch,
And she holds the
Empty air to her breast,
Cradling the shards of
What should have been.
I, too, know about parts,
And how they betray
With their absence, and
How everything
Boils down to
A moment.

*Mary By Michelle Parson*

For Col
By Rick Ambrosio

I'll remember it's okay,
Even though the world has past me by,
And my smiles are often faded.

I'm rough around the edges
And the coarseness contends with your eyes.

I still sometimes feel you don't get the best of me,
And I can't help but say its true.

I'm not a good man,
I'm a weak friend,
I'm a bad teammate.

But I think you should know,
That when I look at you,
The world stops moving.

I forget to breathe,
And I get caught up in the moment.

We are always too far apart,
But you give the space between us meaning,

And in a way your hand is always long enough
To touch my cheek,
And say it's okay to be me.

This Place Here

By Steve Foceri

Dead dog tracks pace the entrance at 6 Canoe Hill Road. There, a place of discord and energy, myself and two other friends play music with the sole hope of one day making a living without really working. This room when filled with sound can be a frightening thing. The noise can be surreal, but when it stops, the silence is more than just deafening. Time can freeze in a place like this. Memories are made here, and all egos must be checked at the door. Here few things matter.

From the outside, this place may appear like any normal home. In its own sense, it is. My friend lives here, yet our lives are anything but normal. Normal people don't work at such minute things with such a passion. Normal people don't spend every unearned dollar on musical equipment. No one normal dares spend their time in this house. The lack of sanity is a most refreshing aspect of this place.

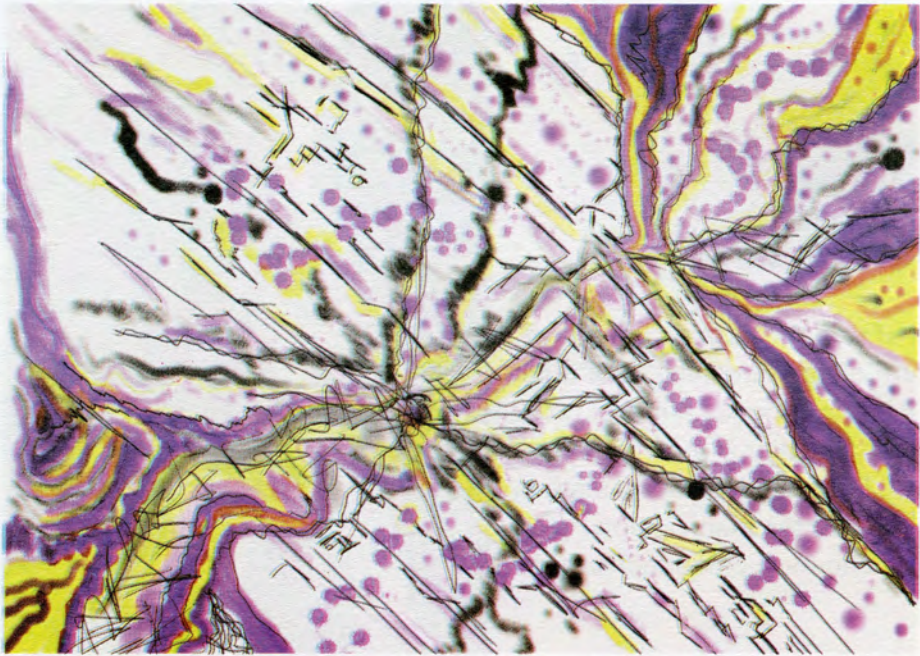
This place is nothing spectacular. Here, music rules. The shock of the amplifiers and strength of the drums become something normal. The hiss of the PA system and electric blue shocks its microphones emit are memorable moments. Seeing our guitar player getting hit by a blue spark is laughable, a moment we can all recall with great enthusiasm. Here everyone is on time, even when they are late. Everything is in tune. Consistent chord progressions chop through the cold air, crunchy, coughing lyrics join them. We try our hardest, playing until we hurt. This is not just music to the three of us; this is a sport.

The snow outside is sometimes our only audience at this place. Other times friends stop by to offer input. Mostly, we're by ourselves. The dead dog tracks are frozen in time by the snow, our summer memories of him gone with the warm weather. Our drummer's home made of wood and stone, a place of overwhelming noise and deafening silences, on a dirt road in Millbrook is my own second home. Where my greatest investment sits, where my free time is spent.

One couch seats three people here. One van fits more than it should. Three friends sacrifice their lives for something that they all believe in and none of us have any money. This place may not be spectacular, it is far from perfect, but it is what we have. This basement, those amplifiers, that bass, those drums, that guitar and us three, that's really all we have. And we are more than happy with it.

But things are coming to a slow end. As time goes by, there is little left to drive us. The times we have spent have made us complacent. We are used to each other, and that is dangerous. Ideas between the three of us run short and our works sorely reflect that fact. In the end, this will all have been just a good memory, a passing dream.

We trudge on, we can't quit. To stop now would be madness. Only time will tell what becomes of the three of us, and our music. But this place here holds us tight and we never want to let it go. Dead dog tracks lead out the driveway, back to the main road. Where all reality begins.



Pink by Matthew Cassella

“Emotional Suicide”

By Courtney King

Tongue tied and tight in darkness
With all the words I never said
Body shakes and sweats cold
With everything left undone
And Neitzche claimed that
Every bout of laughter is a dying emotion

Laugh!

Too much

Too loud

Too long and hard

So it is in the gasping breaths of the
Suffocating sarcophagus of night
That I have finally come to recognize
When laughter is most important
And like a madman screaming at the sky
I let loose the manical howl of abject
And complete emotional suicide.

Untitled

By Becca deSimone

Under crumpled sheets

You'll find wrestling toes.

Honesty or misdirection

I'm not scared anymore.



Back and Feet by Sonya Pedersen

Snow Day
By Braden Russom

There's something therapeutic about shoveling snow
Something odd and wonderful in those jagged piles

Something turned up by the swing of the arms
By the scrape of the blade on the pavement

Something about it's whiteness
The way it falls lightly on my hands

Like that red feather boa you wore that time
When your roommate took a picture

The one where you're winking, with rabbit ears on
And your hair clipped like a curtain for the side of your face

I think it's the feeling of clearing a home
In the hours that follow a storm

Or maybe the sense of reclaiming your life
Out of God's little tricks of the weather

Marriage
By Liz England

Everything you hate in life
Always comes back to haunt you.

The person who

Snorts when he laughs,
Gobbles down food that took hours to cook,
Eats the last of the cake before you get a piece,
Leaves the hair in the shower drain,
Always reminds you to do your chores,
Belches at dinner parties,
Hogs the blanket,
Loses the remote,
Leaves the toilet seat up,
Takes all the pillows,
Can't admit when he's wrong,
Can't admit when you're right,
Turns your white shirts pink,
Leaves cigarette butts in the dishes,
Can never let things be,
Demands too much,
Thinks he's better than you,
Borrows your toothbrush,
Drinks from the carton,
Picks the best roses from the garden,
Picks his nose when he thinks no one is looking,
Leaves soda cans strewn throughout the house,
Makes jokes in bad taste,
Is always late.
That is the person you're doomed to marry.

Self-Infliction

By Scott Cooley

I fear every successive swipe and the demons with which are associated
But an idle mind yields fear
So get to living because dying is too attractive and indulgent
Stop thinking and get to distracting
Deprivation of contemplation would be but a blessing
I pray for the days when I can utter your name without a glimpse of anguish
But an idle mind yields fear
The only threat I can identify lingers within
Amid torn thorns and rigid edges is where you'll find my stuff
Safe to say this pen (ME) is my mortal nemesis
Melody, tone, meter, verse and chord are no ally of mine
But an idle mind yields fear

Shoots and Latter's
By Becca deSimone

Here we are again on this starless canvas of black,
strewn bloody across the night sky.
Our hands gloved with belligerent love,
the cruel irony strangling our bruised throats.

No more yelling,
I'm through with your brown eyes.
I'm cracked again,
from my head down to my heart.

Tingling spine and blurry sight,
mouth is dry,
eyes too.
You've taken everything from me tonight.

You've beaten me down and I disregarded the pain on the downward push.

We felt so right together,
but you smashed me with your condolences and crushed me with your sympathy.
Realize I have no time for your pity.

You must have trampled me on the storm out of the door,
after you blew me away.

My legs are torn apart still,
this time lumpy and poking,
bones jutting because I just can't seem to

walk away.



Symmetry by Sonya Pedersen

Bartholomew, the Magician**By Ann Metz**

I am Bartholomew, the magician. Have you seen my famous show? I have wrestled to free myself from chains, submerged in freezing water. I have been buried alive, but have come back from the dead in three days. I have sliced a woman into pieces (my secret fantasy as a boy) and sewed the parts together again in my secret torture box.

I live for the crowd, for the sharp inhalation of breath and the thundering roar of a thousand voices as I emerge triumphant again and again. The love of the crowd is my greatest pleasure. Their adoration means more to me than the love of any person or the money that I earn. As long as I hear the voices of my adoring fans, I cast away all other things from me. I perform for them. The mass of humanity swells my heart to its fullest capacity. No single human being can begin to replace fame.

All my miracles have been successful. Well, all except for one. That was the time I broke a woman's heart, but could not put it back together again. It was an act that I rehearsed many times in the privacy of my own thoughts, however, it was an act I had never tried before the eyes of others.

Her name was Sara. She came to work for me as a housekeeper, but soon I convinced her that her talents were wasted holding brooms and dustpans. I planted the dream of fame in her heart.

Sara was a born artist. Soon she was competing with me for the most sensational parts of each performance. She freed herself from the iron chains in the tank, while submerged in the frigid water. She spent two days and nights in a coffin, and emerged on the morning of the third day. She flew through the air in fantastic leaps on the trapeze, leaped lithely across the tightrope.

Then she began to surpass me in reputation. Now, people yelled out her name instead of mine. The crowd's cheers for my partner drowned out the half of the audience cheering for me. *Sara, Sara, Sara!*

Sara did not notice. She and I became lovers. To her, it was more important to be loved by another human being than to receive the love of a hundred impassioned viewers. I told her I loved her, but it was not true. I only wanted what she had stolen from me. I did not care about her.

One night, I had her step into my magic box. This was usually done by another volunteer from the audience or a stagehand, but I had a different plan this night.

Sara climbed into my box, smiling graciously at the audience, and then blowing a kiss to me. There was such loving trust in her eyes.

The fool, I thought. I'll put an end to your show.

I covered it with the top panel, and inserted the knives. Hastily, before the audience saw the blood seeping through the cracks, I closed the front curtain. I heard her cries in the box, the desperate scratching and clawing of nails against wood. Outside, the audience was very quiet.

They heard the cries and were waiting for me to perform another miracle.

I altered the real torture box with my usual stage version. I pushed the other into a dark corner and opened the curtain.

“Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, children of all ages....” I bellowed as I opened the second box.

A collective gasp filled the theater.

There was blood all over my hands, but the box on stage was empty.

“Sara is not here. She has risen!”

A long silence, and then muffled cries and exclamations. At long last, applause broke out and swept through the crowd.

They believed me, they believed me!

A miracle, a miracle, were the words that repeated over and over.

Indeed, I am Bartholomew, the magician and miracle worker. Indeed, how great is the love of my audience. For it, I would commit a hundred such murders again and again. I live only for them.



Suicide by Jennifer Maurer



Eastman by Caitlin O'Hare

No Women *
By Theresa Edwards

In the misty sleepy hours before dusk, the bus ride always brought her mind to the far corners of reality, fantasy pulling her strings as she glided into a daydream.

1969. . . . *No Women Allowed* read the small, delicate words on the door of McSal's saloon on 16th St. near 5th Avenue. A New York journalist convinced that "quiet workingmen sipping their genial ale" were the only ones allowed to step beyond the powerful sign would have choked on his words had he witnessed her visit. WorkingMEN. . . not WOMEN.

Yet she . . . she had opened the heavy wooden doors of McSal's threshold and dissipated into the rusty, marvelous air inside its walls. As fantasy pulled, she floated within the ancient splendor of the men privy to every conversation imaginable, enthralled with the ambiance and aroma of the dark, delicious room. The antique ice chest that supposedly had been used by the local elephant trainer (ice chest slanting because of a slip on the part of the elephant) and the large gold safe that seemed to hide something of everyone's past were just as she had read and thought of often.

Of course, the men—all the men, every size, every mannerism, every smell, every style, eating raw onions and drinking some of the finest ale in the country. The smell overwhelmed her, reminding her of her father; he loved raw onions. She grew very tired, however, as she journeyed through each round partition of men at tables-in-chairs. The tables were dark cherry wood, polished each morning she guessed, set each afternoon with the finest of heavy-duty tableware like the set her mom always used when her uncles (her father's brothers) came to town for her mom's homemade lasagna. The burgundy-covered chairs with their overgrown arms and backs conformed to each man's structure, each man's life.

She needed to sit down. There was an empty chair over by the window. No one had noticed her except the cats. Three male cats (she had read

somewhere that even McSal's cats were male) eagerly watched as she invaded their territory of tradition. She moved slowly towards the chair and each step felt shorter and more scuffled than its predecessor did. Five steps moved her only one step closer to that chair; ten steps brought her back to step number one. The cats snickered as they headed for the windowsill to perch, sniff and purr . . . perch, sniff and purr.

Desperately foolish she demanded their attention, "Don't laugh at me; help me get to that chair. "I'm tired; I need to sit down," she scolded.

"She needs to sit down.

She needs to sit down.

She needs to sit down.....She needs to sit down," voices echoed through the walls that surrounded her.

Margo needed to find that chair she had just seen, the only one not filled with the warmth of a man. Warmth. Are they warm? They-the men, especially the men in this place? Margo saw there was no possible route to the safety of the chair. For no matter what she did, she could not step forward more than ten steps before she was back to where she began-perhaps another Alice? Perhaps she could rest on the sill near the chair. Possibly she was only worthy of the sill with the cats - but, of course, the male cats. Like Mark's cat Tulli who forever sprayed his damn gendered excretion. Was it Mark's cat or Toni's? It was definitely Mark's-male cat with male person. Toni-female and blond, a best friend with female cat. But both part of the past, not nearly a piece of the daze or whatever it was that continued to pull Margo farther into a haven that posted its sign, *No Women Allowed*.

There, on the sill at last, she watched the kitties scatter nervously, like the cockroaches in her Aunt Sophie's kitchen.

"No, come back!" she pleaded.

Outside, the streetlights glared onto an approaching silhouette. Margo gazed at a woman scuffle toward the window and listened as the woman began to bang on the pane, pleading for someone to help her.

Margo screamed for someone to help, yet no one responded. The men were too busy in their gluttonous rituals to notice them-the two women.

In what seemed like no more than an instant, Margo reprimanded the men as she tried to move towards the door, "Oh, but it's ok to allow mothers to give birth to you, feed you from their breasts, change your diapers, hold your hands and tell you all is fine. Yet never allow even so much as a mother's memory float by or bang on a window when you're mixing with the others of your kind-males from mothers' wombs. Help the woman!" she screamed again.

Murmurs leapt from each man's mouth as they finally acknowledged the women's presence: The sign. . . the sign. . . the sign.
The sign. . . the sign. . . But, the sign. . .

The sign. . . the sign. . . But, the sign. . . .

Margo angrily protested, "Forget about the sign!"

.....

Rumors roamed the streets of New York back in 1969. McSals closed for many months. When the saloon re-opened in 1970, women were allowed inside the musty place where many men died because of a sign on a door.

Margo moved away from the city.

*** A newspaper article about an old alehouse in Manhattan inspired me to write this story; however, it is a fictional account and has nothing to do with the establishment's historical events. ©2000**

Wedlock

By Michael Traynor

Look at my face.
Look deep, at the tissue
Loosely wrapped about my brow,
Table scraps, rotted meat
That puckers at the edges,
Expelling its sickly spume.
It is a love letter,
Its calligraphy once wary
As a newborn,
Each penstroke blushing
Black and impeccable,
But now has succumbed to
Its every unsmoothing,
A fibrous thing,
Diaphanous,
Coming to rest in a trunk
In the attic
Under the fossils of
Forgotten family portraits,
A tarnished slice of
Pseudo-cloth,
Indecipherable.

Stare until your eyes
Begin to swirl.
The chewed up flesh,
The compost,
Infused with wormy greens
That embrace and entwine,
A helix of maggotty sinews.

I have made myself up
Like a circus clown,
Or a teenage girl
Who knows nothing of
Approximation,
The pastels shrieking out,
So exaggerated.
Look at what I've done,
The eye pits,
The stale breath,
The lips a gutted trout.
A foul color bleeds
When I smile.

I stand before you
In my gown of tattered flesh
On our wedding day,
Taking my vows like medication.
Look deep, into the face
I've made for you,
A face designed to tear and
Spit and writhe.
A face meant to injure,
To terrify.
Look until your lip
Begins to quiver,
And when you're through,
I will ready myself for
The fall.
Oh husband,
Take the veil from
My weak, jaundiced brow,
Let it fall about my face,

And when it's done so,
Pull it tight around
My collar,
A plastic bag
As airless as the cosmos.
I may tear and spit and writhe
As I am programmed,
But not for long.
I will topple to the altar,
Limp as a doll,
Its sutures burst open,
Spilling its insides in
Fluffy, white blooms
That seem hardly fatal.
A child smiles, its cheeks
Unlined and supple,
The groom's nephew, no doubt.

Fix your gaze, dear husband,
On this face I've created for you.
You may dance on my bones
If it pleases you,
And I will not rise to prevent you.
All I want is your eye,
Every one of them,
Tethered to the cool of
My tombstone.
A happy wife,
Though decayed,
For I will have won you,
If only in pieces and parts.
If you like,
You may grind up my bones

With your dancing,
Flush out the goopy marrow,
For in fifty years,
I will be golden,
Reborn,
And that makes for
A suitable marriage.

