

The Mosaic

Fall 2013

MB

Marist Literary Arts Society presents:

The Mosaic

Fall 2013

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*A special 'thank you' to those who contributed to this publication and to the committee members who helped with the selection process. Without you, *The Mosaic* would not exist. Thank you for your time, patience, and enriching the Literary Arts Society with your enthusiasm and talents.

Front cover art: "Aviary Expression" by: Mary Babin

Back cover art: "In the Garden (Falling)" by: William Vrachopoulos

Table of Contents

Letter from an Alumnus.....	1
<i>Bad Kids</i> by: Christina FitzMorris.....	2
<i>This Isn't Starbucks</i> by: Lynn South.....	4
<i>Let's Meet at Starbucks</i> by: Lynn South.....	5
<i>On the Occasion of my Best Friend's Father's Death</i> by: William Vrachopoulos.....	6
<i>Red</i> by: Catherine Natoli.....	7
<i>When I Grow Up</i> by: Michalyn Curran.....	9
<i>We believe in something true</i> by: Rose Shannon.....	10
<i>Amnesia</i> by: Kathryn Herbert.....	10
<i>Pickles</i> by: Christina Coulter.....	11
<i>I saw your face</i> by: William Vrachopoulos.....	12
<i>Death of a Novelist</i> by: Grace Henderson.....	13
<i>The Radio Speaks of Monotheism</i> by: Kathryn Herbert.....	15
<i>The Smooth Sin</i> by: Leah Butterwick.....	17
<i>The Divide</i> by: Alex Sideris.....	18
<i>I Love You, Cigarettes</i> by: Steven Roberts.....	19
<i>Hatred</i> by: Alanna Coogan.....	20
<i>Love Song</i> by: Kathryn Herbert.....	22
<i>Kiss</i> by: Grace Henderson.....	31
<i>Jewel</i> by: Leah Butterwick.....	32
<i>You write and write</i> by: Rose Shannon.....	33
<i>The Asshole</i> by: Alex Sideris.....	33
<i>Vinegar</i> by: Alanna Coogan.....	34
<i>Veils Removed</i> by: Steven Roberts.....	36
<i>The Sound and My Fury</i> by: Kathryn Herbert.....	37
<i>If You Can't Take the Heat</i> by: Alanna Coogan.....	40

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“There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.”

-*Maya Angelou*

Letter from an Alumnus

Dear Readers,

Wednesdays continue to have a hold on my heart. Whether we were curled up in the commuter lounge or deep in an alcove, those Marist nights were filled with friends, red markers, and creativity. As President of the Literary Arts Society, I'd conduct our usual Wednesday night meeting and then encourage members to stay an extra few minutes to edit submissions for that semester's Mosaic. Together we would pour over printed pages, often reciting the poetry aloud to ourselves to see if we liked the rhythm, or sharing excellent one-liners from the prose we received.

When I think of Wednesday nights I hear endless chatter followed by inspired silences. I hear Nick Sweeney, our Mosaic Editor, walking around to each reader to see how they were finding the piece and to let them know what he thought because, of course, he'd already read all of the submissions. I hear Stephanie Grossman, Vice President, comparing pieces she was reading to discussions she had heard earlier in Dr. Goldpaugh's or Dr. Fitzgibbons's class, as she sat curled up in an armchair. Then there would be Secretary Mike Cresci, coat on and at the door, attempting to start a revolt by lovingly (usually, at least) calling me a dictator for keeping everyone on Mug Night. Didn't I know we were already thirty minutes late?

The nights faded one by one but the friendships lingered; and at the end of it all we had a finished magazine in our hands that reminded us of those literary nights. Often it would contain our own writing; but if it didn't we knew it still held a part of us, things that couldn't be said in words and that are still recalled with the fondest of smiles when we friends do meet up, post-graduation. These days, our nights together are often on the weekends, but it still feels like a Wednesday to me.

For everyone reading this issue, enjoy the writing and know the dedication that it takes to put this together. I hope you get as much joy out of reading this as those who spent their Wednesday nights creating it.

Kelly Gallucci, '11; former president of Literary Arts Society

Bad Kids

by: Christina FitzMorris

1. We weren't bad kids; it's just that there are a lot of us. Four of us sharing a five year span. It must have seemed to be too stressful from the outside, too much – we were aware of how we were viewed before we understood what it meant. The world is not built for families of six. Restaurants sat us nervously, hyperaware of each and every guest situated within our circle of fire. We were welcomed to hotels and airlines by disappointment, anxiety and annoyance – acquaintances we had gotten to know quite well throughout the years. Judged before we sat everywhere we went – a young family with four little brats – we were expected, of course, to fulfill the prototype of the problem child - four times over. The faces around us everywhere we went told us that that's what kids do, that's how children are. An ever present tension swirled about us as we grew, the alien problem children spaced five years apart. The truth, though, is that we have no age; we are the same and live within our own unaffected world. It's a sort of wonderful chaos in which we move and live.

2. It's one of those crisp days in January where the snow seems somehow to relieve the bitter cold as it falls. The world is painted in different shades of grey. Spots of color break through in blurs as they mix with the snow, the grey, in a flash as they race about our heads. My brother and I stand afraid to move as we wait for the ski instructor. My middle sister is close by, visible through the white cold fog in her deep pink snowsuit. The youngest of four has begun to slide backward down the hill and away from us, visibility fading with her into the misty grey haze spotted with quick flashes of color. She is a cat attempting to catch the snow as she slides from our perch into oncoming traffic. Annoyed snow sporting families maneuver over and around her as she eventually comes to a stop, looking up at the three of us as we laugh - gripping onto one another in a desperate and clumsy attempt not to fall – not with fear but bewilderment, the flash of a smirk in her eyes: the world is not built for families of six.

3. Weaving through throngs of people was a game without rules. Flying down the mountain, ice scraping our skis beneath thin layers of powder, individuals and groups popped up as targets to avoid by offering a chance to maneuver, quick and sharp, without breaking stride. If you fall, you're left behind. You cannot tell us apart; four flashes, distinguishable only by color in a thick hazy grey fog, weave this way and that in choreographed harmony. We are a team, we are the same. We do not have ages, we are not gendered. We are four wind-burned wisps of one entity hurdling through a bitter wind and led by a collective subconscious connection, yipping and laughing as we go.

4. After dinner we watch TV and play games by the fire in the cabin we're staying in on the mountain. In the morning, we will dress and open the door once more to step right out and make our reckless way through whipping wind and biting cold once more with the sting of new snow fresh on our faces. As we sleep tonight, we will feel the sensations of the day return, as if we had been swimming for hours and could not escape the slosh of water against our bodies even after leaving the pool. We talk as we lay in bed, tired in both mind and body, drifting off at different speeds. I am the slowest tonight. Half-way there and I am caught by my breathing – that is, our collective breath in and out as I drift deeper, faintly smiling as I let go, yet hold onto them. In sync and the same, we are able to find one another even in sleep.

I. This Isn't Starbucks

by: Lynn South

It started at a coffee shop, amongst the stale smell of crushed Colombian beans and clashing perfumes of sandalwood, lilacs, and almonds. Phones buzzed on tables, chitter-chatter hummed around ears, and a silence of love and comfort was unshakeable. The corner table was cleared, minus a coat left hanging on a chair, so I sat down. Like an ice cube, buoyant in a chill glass of water, I couldn't remain still.

There was too much buzz in the air, too much anticipation, too much anxiety, too much Apple Spice aroma wafting from open mugs. Like an ice cube, I felt myself melting into an obsolete pool of similar substances, losing my face in a crowd all too similar to mine. Panic. How would he find me? How would he know it was me, and not some Shirley Temple with her pink nose buried in a mug much bigger than her? It was a sea of scarves and stuffy noses, each indistinguishable from the next. I was vanishing, vaporizing, getting lost in the vast abyss of a coffee shop that was all at once everything and nothing. Finally. Eye contact. Nothingness evolved into matter. Instead of disappearing, I became the beacon of light in a hazy, stale night sky that smelled too much of coffee and not happiness.

II. Let's Meet at Starbucks

by: Lynn South

Why does this seem like such a distant land?
Like diversity is non-existent, like dry coffee beans
and stale scones is all you'll find? No bright smiles,
no "hello how's your day," no glimmer of hope, just
knit beanies and acoustic tracks pumping through hidden
speakers into ears that can't be bothered to listen to anything
but the warble of their own voice.

I miss the warmth of your presence, the never-ending
joy that radiated the fragile air surrounding you,
and I can't feel that now, pressed against
stainless steel and pristine pine,
and youths who shouldn't be here unsupervised,
with more cash in-hand than I have stored in my piggy bank
aptly labeled "only with him."

I broke that bank wide open
today, by the way. With one of those stainless steel
travel mugs you bought me from this very shop;
"Ironic, isn't it?" you chuckled, surrounded
by the green and red lights and shreds of
wrapping paper. "You'll never use it."

It did a wonderful job, though,
breaking
the purple porcelain pig into thousands
of tiny
shards,
none of which were worthy of this cruel fate,
but all of which that allowed me to meet you,
here,
in this cold land, filled with more coffee beans
and unhappiness than I could possibly fathom.

“In the Alps” by: Kathryn Herbert



On the Occasion of my Best Friend's Father's Death
by: William Vrachopoulos

You came home from the desert one November,
numb.
You had some cheap cigars and we drove around
for hours,
getting lost,
talking about the cargo in planes.
My car smelled of the conversation for weeks.

Red

by: Catherine Natoli

Today's the day, you think as you lie in bed on a summer Saturday morning, eyes still bleary and dazed but mind sharply fixed on the event you've been awaiting for quite some time. Don't chicken out.

You fix yourself breakfast: Cocoa Puffs with chocolate milk. A simple meal to prepare, but you just can't seem to focus on the task at hand. Your thoughts wander; you think about how it will turn out. You glance at the clock above the stove. 11 A.M. I wonder when a good time would be. You catch yourself putting the milk in the cabinet. Where'd the cereal go? You've put in the refrigerator, next to the white rose corsage you received for your high school graduation yesterday (which your mother insists on preserving). Oops.

After that little mishap, you know you won't be able to spend much of the day waiting. Patience has never been your forte. I'll wait till noon. It's the best you can do.

You're fidgety; you pace around the house, but try to disguise your impatience. You wash a plate you didn't dirty, rearrange the photographs on the fireplace mantle, pet the dog. It must be noon by now. You look at the clock again. 11:23. Good enough. You politely ask your mom for the car keys.

"Where are you off to so early on your first day of freedom?"
You know she would disapprove, so you decide to fib a little.

"Gotta pick something up really quick."

You're barely aware of the two-minute drive to the pharmacy. Once there, you carefully scan the shelves, hurriedly reading through the many labeled boxes. Ammonia-free? Luminista? These words mean nothing to you. A sea of effervescent female faces smiles at you from the gleaming boxes. Do those colors really even come out that way? You reach for one of the brighter shades. Would this work?

Indecision takes hold of you. You've never done this before; twelve years in a Catholic school have restricted your creative expression, to say the least. You look exasperatedly at the shining boxes once more, trying to pacify your impatience. Yeah, this'll do. That will be \$6.89.

The drive home is also a blur; your mind is frenzied. What if

the ingredients into a central bottle. Easier than I thought. You proceed as professionally suggested.

You are in the shower, eager to discover what will come of it. You watch as the hot steam rolls toward the ceiling, and the red-stained water rushes over your body into the drain below. You think of the shocked expressions, the surprised exclamations that are sure to come. You try to guess the amount of times you will be asked “why?”

You’ll smile faintly, and you’ll let them believe you did it for a taste of rebellion, or as a way to stand out, or as a vehicle of practicing your newfound autonomy from a clean-cut, regimented world.

You’ll let them believe these things because you just can’t bring yourself to say that all your life, all you’ve ever wanted was to look like a little mermaid.



“BC (1)” by: William Vrachopoulos

When I Grow Up
by: Michalyn Curran

“What do you want to be when you grow up?”

Five: A Ballerina

“You’ll have to practice every day, it’s not only tutus and slippers.”

Nine: A Veterinarian

“Vets take care of dogs *and* cats...are you fond of felines?”

Twelve: A Chef

“Chefs touch raw meat; you hate that, no?”

“What do you want to do in college?”

Fourteen: Photography

“An occupation as a photographer sounds financially unsettling.”

Fifteen: Elementary Education

“Children: snot nosed and teary eyed. Day in and out?”

Seventeen: Journalism

“Corruption surrounds the media.”

“What do you want to major in?”

English

“What *exactly* does one do with a B.A. in English?”

Psychology

“It is difficult to gain a *real* job without a Masters and PhD.”

Social Work

“Social Work is *taxing*.”

“What will you be after college?”

Employed

“The job market nowadays is severely *unstable*.”

Married

“You know that 50% of all marriages end in divorce.”

A Parent

“*And* balance a career?”

“What do you want to be when you grow up?”

Human.

We believe in something true

by: Rose Shannon

“We believed in something true”

That is what you told them all, sitting in that room,
Dressed in their finest attire on a Saturday night
And perhaps they believe in your words or maybe they don't
Because after all, they are the real heroes of the night-
The ones who tell the truth or a version of it to pay the bills and inform all
of us
Who go outward, to seek a stellar truth on a jewel that's hidden in the
deserts and cities.

But the truth's kind of funny, you see because everyone wants pieces of it,
But few ever win the grand prize;
Its hiding in places they can't reach or can't get to and sooner or later,
We just believe in the lies of our times,
Ignoring all the smiles of those because sooner or later,
We simply settle for the spoken words.

Amnesia

by: Kathryn Herbert

Set the ambling ships to sail.
Mix the setting sun with black
Lightning, sparking, forking high,
rushing in with summer rain
On the path down which you wind.
Winds they cross, you push away
Silent sea and gentle days
coming in like steady sleep,
Years of doubt long lost to
dreams—
Demon depths that drag you down
Silent seas and ambling ships
set to burn in rising suns.

Pickles

by: Christina Coulter

Pulling bloody, diseased clumps of hair from my scalp,
Like thoughts coaxed from the rebel's tainted mind,
Like weeds pulled unceremoniously by their roots,
Like extricating my lanky limbs from the sheets,
While my heart tries to beat, beat me back down into bed

Fuck you, stay home, you're worthless

Sometimes I'm convinced that I'm irreparably broken,
Just a horse being carted off to the knacker's
To be boiled down into glue or dog food or God knows what
But, God damn it, I will work harder.

Mr. Krabs, hello, do you how do?
I'm creatively disabled at the moment.
The best there is? I don't think so.
I anything can't do right since because pickles.
I think don't ready back to go to work.

No, I won't look for more salt in the back,

And I don't know where the extra napkins are.
There's no way I'm serving your meal with a smile,
And hell, I might even burn your milkshake.

I'm sorry, Mom, I started smoking again.
I wish I could pick up my spatula or my pen
And start working like nothing ever happened
But God damn it, things don't work like that.

Sometimes all I can do is order extra onions,

Yep, that's as daring as I'm willing to get.
I can barely fucking string my thoughts together,
Let alone remember the pickles in a fucking burger.

Don't you get it, you crustaceous cheapskate!
I can't make a Double Krabby Patty with the works!
I can't put a patty on a bun, with lettuce, cheese, onions, tomatoes,
ketchup, mustard, pickles, and top bun together in that order!

I saw your face

by: William Vrachopoulos

I saw your face
across dozens of melting bodies
pumping mechanically
destroying themselves.
Above us, the blades
of giant fans pushed the steam
and reeking sweat towards the violet sky.
You contorted into weak shapes on
the floor.
I shrugged and kept running.
I hoped you pulled something.

Death of a Novelist
by: Grace Henderson

My friend the writer has not been well.
His body's hard as walnut shells, but
in the end, stuffed with prednisone.

They call it spinal stenosis,
strangled neuropathy, ligamentous disruption.
It's discogenic disease, annular fibrosis—
there is medication for that.
But the wonders of mending have their own lethargy
to which fragility adds its color.

All along, he knew this could happen.
He didn't wake up worried, thinking this could be
the last thing that will ever happen.
There will be time and muscle enough for
at least another week now.

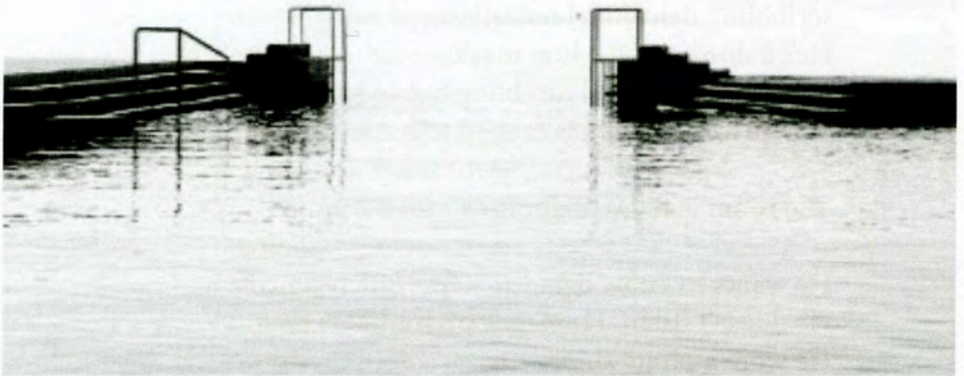
He's a lamb inside a gorilla suit,
scribbling delusional notes.
He's a doe behind a lion mask,
powerless as a child tumbling out of bed,
unable to stop what is certain to hurt

The room is red with iodine.

He wants to know if he has a fever.
He doesn't listen. He stands on his head.
He wore a pirate ship,
wore diamonds on the keel of his shoes.
The words come harder, set their own pace
so it gets harder and harder to breathe,
a man about to be shot at the edge of an ocean

The novelist is dying now, and with him
this image too, uncertain as the music,
each morning, a high tower over the sea,
already filling with water, fading fast.

Lines taken from the works of Joshua Harmon, Douglas Geotsch, Kwame Dawes, Mary Biddinger, Michael Cirelli, Svea Barrett, A.D. Winans, Ed Galing, Mary Ann Mannino



“Reflections” by: Kathryn Herbert

The Radio Speaks of Monotheism

by: Kathryn Herbert

Turn the dial
You're punk #1
Inclusive ideology, hoards of followers
talking wider until the nation is at your feet.
You're an inspiration.
Speaking of God's subtle identity—
it is not in all of us—
Monotheism is your emperor,
No god repeating,
Only one God at your feet.

Turn the dial
The sound of a snob speaking is repetition,
Pushing inclusive, closed-believing out,
Letting music in
the music of themselves;
No destiny too infantile;
Modernity and gods influence them
to think openly,
Their strength unified in culture
Where show A speaks about inclusive ideology,
Show B about anything,
Unified but jazzier.

Turn the dial
Show C has the Jews, but jazzier.
The Jews were gods
but reordering doesn't get no God
It gets snobs speaking, and you repeating;
But their God had a voice
and they wipe the face of their God

With their striped rags soaked in tears,
Mary Magdalene and Saint Veronica in one.

Turn the dial
No modern hope,
The reordering has the world
by a string
on a thread
Attached to punk #1.
His words come in,
making Jews subtle
but the Jews have many
and music
Of five million, seven-hundred and fifty-three thousand, two-hun-
dred and fortone voices

And you
Popular for Show A
And B
And C—
No God repeating,
Strength unified in culture—
You are their identity,
Pouring their music out
In poetry that wipes the face of God
With blood
And gas
And barbed wire
And how their destiny is enough.

Lines taken from There's Only One God and You're Not It by Stephen Paul Miller.

The Smooth Sin
by: Leah Butterwick

We felt we were steel

The scars echo, trace our hurts as curses
mine bleed ice, chipped.

Eyes strike, deadly eyes,
she the smooth sin,
and our echoes fought

I could change our curses
I could flame thought, melt her hurts.
So I strike. Both echoes trace.

But pride weighs.
Scars strike both down

In melted sin we were drowned.

The Divide

by: Alex Sideris

It's a fine line between friends and lovers. Somewhere between play-fights and that one look that lasts a little too long, there exists a division; a division that says you can't have those feelings for this person or that it would just be too weird--we're like siblings. But in that moment, that sweet surrender when the girl you know better than yourself isn't inches away, she's pressed against you, there isn't a force in the world that could pull you apart.

Some would argue that our parents had it right: if you think a girl is pretty you ask her out and then you get to know her. But as great as my parents and their friends' marriages are, I'd rather have one of my best friends than a stranger. She knows me already; there isn't a wall or shield that I need to hide behind. She knows every scar and every transgression and I know her, through and through. It wouldn't be love, it would be something more, a cosmic convergence to unite the two halves of a whole.

I can't say that I've tried this, though there were a couple girls who could have made it. But each one seemed to fly away and I was powerless to get them back. If I look back to those moments when friends become something more, that split second of something more than love, I imagine what it would have been like. What would have happened if Megan hadn't moved away? What if Savannah didn't transfer schools? But love can't blossom in what ifs; so I cling, some say foolishly, to the notion that there will be that one girl that'll enjoy video games as much as I do, curl up for a good movie and pull me back down into reality when I get wrapped up in my head. She'll be a friend for quite a bit, because neither us will notice the other until that one moment when she's sitting with me on the couch and our favorite movie is somewhere in the middle and she'll rest her sleepy head on my chest and I'll subconsciously kiss the top of her head. She'll pick her head up and look, not into my eyes; no, she'll peer into the soul of this guy she's known all along, and in that moment we'll cross the divide.

I Love You, Cigarettes

by: Steven Roberts

I love you, cigarettes.
But you're poisonous to me.
I reminisce on our morning spot where we have coffee together.

When I smell your signature aroma, I remember how I need you,
How my days seem long and drown out, then once we're together again,
My petty problems and insecurities go away along with each exhalation.

But cigarettes, you destroy me.
You make my heart blacker than my lungs.
I gave you myself, but you're incapable of reciprocating.

I put you down for days at a time and don't even think about you; the part
you hate the most,

And I pass by all our spots,
All the places where our youthful fingers explored.
Even my backyard is corrupted by your cancerous doings,
Where you showed me woman in all her glory.

All the music we made together
I can't sing, because I remember how you feel between my fingers.

Oh cigarettes,
I can finally breathe when I know you'll be reduced to ash.

Hatred

By: Alanna Coogan

My hate is like a two-ton lead ball, shackled to my ankle. Every step I try to take forward is a battle of strength. I am constantly fighting for freedom but my chain of anger digs mercilessly into my bare skin, rubbing my ankle raw and squeezing precious drops of blood from my already weakened body. I can't afford to lose anymore but it's so hard to break free. I almost take comfort in the familiarity of my bonds. Freedom would be so sweet but isn't my hatred the only thing that motivates me to stay alive?

My hate is the pit of Tartarus, taking residence in my empty stomach. It smolders, steams, and shrieks, spitting up heaps of fire that scorch my lungs. My anger is a monster with ragged claws that clutch my heart in a blistered fist. It squeezes out the hope until each precious dream falls to my feet like a forgotten pile of laundry. It smiles at me through the darkness of this dungeon and I see yellowed, crooked teeth with bits of bone and hope wedged in that hideous mouth. Let me go, I tell it. But the words burn my throat on the way up and the taste of bile forces me to swallow them back down.

I can't see. The dirty claws have scuttled up to my eyes and I am blinded by anger. I try to yell but my throat is so dry that all I let out are raspy gasps. I want it out. My frantic fingers rake my body as I try to tear my monster out. I don't want to feel this anymore.

I need to fight back. I need a weapon. Remembering my shackles, I reach down for the lead ball and find it fits perfectly in the palm of my hand. The chain melts away from my burning touch. I blindly fumble forward, the ball in my fist raised high. My anger smirks at me; I can't see it but I feel the unbearable heat radiating around me. I take a deep breath and feel pumas rattle around in my blackened lungs, but I throw anyway. The lead ball lands with an echoing thump somewhere nearby. The sound is satisfying but I know I've missed my target.

My hatred laughs harder now—a cold, deep rattle that I feel inside my bones. Somehow, I know it is right in front of me and I act without thinking. I lurch forward and thrust a steady hand into where I hope its mouth is. I grab one long, uneven tooth and wrench it from its roots.

My monster shrieks and doubles over, loosening its grip on my heart for just a moment—but that’s all I need. The rough tooth is bigger than my hand and shaped like a horn. I turn it over quickly and plunge the decaying thing deep into the softness of my belly. I think it hurts but I can’t remember what pain is anymore. All I know is that warm, black liquid oozes from my wound and drips down my legs. I drop the tooth and it hits the ground with a metallic clank. Darkness envelops me.

I am alone and I am free.



“Negative” by: Nicole Cote

Love Song

by: Kathryn Herbert

Abused be radio lovers; they're sung
by men who coo and purr like huddled dogs
but bark like rabid beasts when time allows,
pressing souls against the walls, rev engines

To beatings of her dormant heart, her soul
mere shadow on that sharp façade. Love could
not shake the barks pressing to purrs as fists
missiled, struck dermal targets masking bone.

The black and blue worn with pink powdered cheeks—
But this is not told on the radio.
The radio could not save them, but sang
of love that could return again, but won't

Because she will exit the ring, alone;
Prize fighter after her very last match.



“A Flowery Countenance” by: Mary Babin



“Cotton Candy” by: Kathryn Herbert



“Spock” by: Grace Henderson



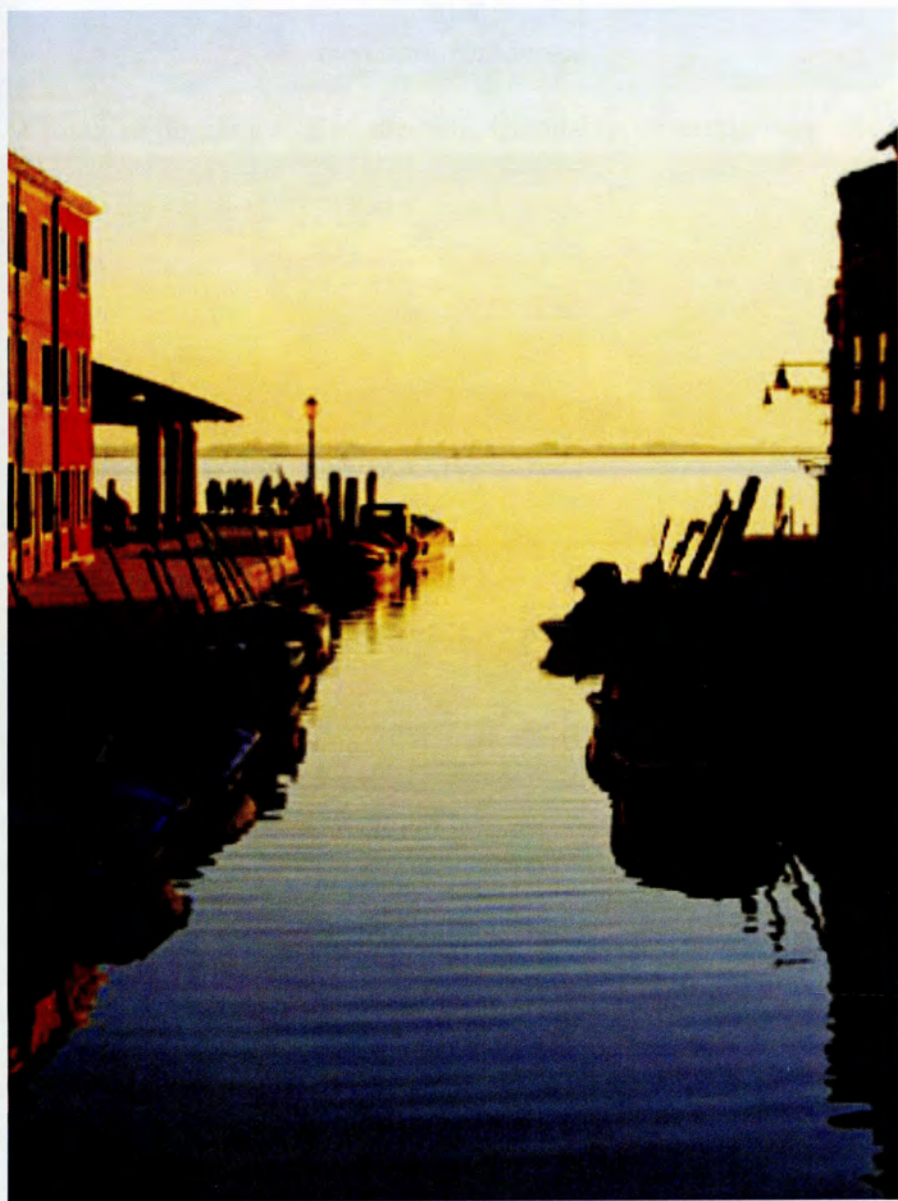
"Living Words" by: Mary Babin



“Maschera” by: Kathryn Herbert



“Venice” by: Nicole Cote



"Sunset on Burano" by: Kathryn Herbert



“Seasonal Skies” by: Mary Babin

Kiss

by: Grace Henderson

Kiss n.

1. A touch of lips; as a sign of affection, friendship, or admiration
2. A drop cookie: butter, sugar, eggs, flour- cream together to form a dough,
sweet to the point of sickening
3. see also: smooch, snog, smack, caress, peck
4. a gift shared between lovers and fairytales, an ultimatum, the personification
of love, with lips and teeth and tongue
5. An act of vandalism, spit as graffiti staining the mouth; a mistake
6. a shared cigarette/ your proposition/ and my declination/ a realization
of the fact that I'm 18 years old and I've never kissed anyone/ goddamn
it/ and you were just drunk enough to not care if I used you as a test
dummy
7. Rum soaked regret and the repressed desire for romance/ a yearning
for one perfect moment/ one touch to your soft pink lips to mine as you
slumped in the chair in the corner/ a whisper of goodbye/
8. but you didn't understand/ you didn't know that once was a gift/ so
you turned me around and you said wait/ and that wasn't in the script/
and your spit was cold and your lips were rough and the brim of your hat
hit against my forehead/ and my hands weren't made for this/ they didn't
fit your waist or your neck/ and my perfect moment went from pretty to
dirty/ and I knew that if I stayed and you sobered up/ you would take one
look and leave
9. so I left first/ I turned and tripped over a table/ hurried to the door/ the
cold Poughkeepsie street/ the waiting taxi/ and by the time the rum had
run its course/ I had already forgotten your face.

Jewel

by: Leah Butterwick

Nice, *adj.*

Forms: chameleon, woman, diamond

Etymology: Transformed to be opposite of its true nature, prostituting itself to be whatever the masses desired. In the 1500's and 1600's it was impossible to discern her meaning. 1.) Anything of the foolish or senseless, to 2.) rare, to 3.) shy, to 4.) fragile or pampered, to 5.) being of virtue and goodness, dainty and of decent reputation, to 6.) of wanton or elegant behavior, to 7.) subtle, to 8.) trivial, to 9.) detailed, or requiring senses for detail, to 10.) requiring precision, to 11.) uncertain and requiring care, to 12.) pleasant, having a kind nature, to 13.) used in approval or in irony. As in a girl silly with dreams of freedom and things, sharing them, forgetting to hide them. / A silly girl distinct and faceted, cut down to fit her silvery frame. / A girl, broken and weighed, wrapped up in velvet, or worn on a chain. / They placed her on His heart and she bore well the cross. / They reset her and sold her, placed her on the flushed heart of another, surrounded by pearls. / Then they reset and wrapped her on the sill of gold, forgotten under the weight / of sapphires and emeralds that wink under thin blades of obsidian. / Silly girl, defined and gorgeous, yet hollow and translucent, / forgotten in her velvet coffin. / Silly girl waiting to be freed, you are smart and sharp, fall free from you frame, / distinct and forgotten push out from you band, fall to the earth and *que será será*. / But silly girl houses her fear, the heat of it prisms across all she sees. / Silly girl finds comfort in her setting, forgotten but still held / She is beautiful, she is nice.

You write and write

by: Rose Shannon

You write and write

As your child is being developed

Then one day's it's their birthday,

Entering this complex, complicated, confusing, harsh, messy little world

With one breath,

You open the window and fling it all and its remains out into the air for
praise and

rejection

The Asshole

by: Alex Sideris

Look, he's an asshole, straight up. I won't sugar coat it because, honestly, it doesn't matter. I've seen him make an ass of himself and I've seen him own this town. He got real low last year, just one thing after another, burying him and beating him down. His girlfriend cheated on him and dumped him; I swear I don't know how he didn't put a gun to his temple. But anyway, he went wild after that, like something broke inside of him. He had no regard for money, spending wildly on just about anything. He had no regard for women either; well, that's not fair. He loves women, they're his reason for existence; but I swear something's different about him. He's lost that kind of old school romantic. He snapped; I can't really put it any differently. Anyway, the line of women didn't stop; in fact, they started coming more frequently. He had found Shangri-La, or so he thought. But nothing compares to simply laying your head down on someone's shoulder and having them stroke your hair; you can't beat that subtle sensation of caring. I guess that's what he's looking for. I don't know. He's kind of nebulous with this sort of thing.

I should know: he's me.

“Dock on the Loch” by: Kathryn Herbert



Vinegar

by: Alanna Coogan

You taste like vinegar on my tongue.
Once so sweet and warm,
Your presence now lurks near me,
Vile and treacherous.
I can't even remember what it feels like to need you,
To have you to fall back on,
To understand you.

You are that blackened sea creature, rising from the lake of lies
With slime dripping from your fat and greedy fingers.
I see ruin in your eyes.
I smell the vodka on your breath,
Cheap and cherry – just like you.
You reek of the monster you have become.

It feels like you've raised that green and moldy
Hand of yours,

Covered with insects insides,
And slapped it across my naked cheek.
Your fingers are cold and repulsive;
I cringe away from your blow.

How dare you?

The face that I used to know
Has been distorted.
You try to smile pleasantly at me,
But all I see are your thin, seaweed lips
And fishbone teeth.
You disgust me.

I hope you stay this way.
I really do.
I hope your little bimbos treat you
Half as horribly as you did me.
I hope your muddy water is like quicksand
And pulls you beneath the surface.
I hope clammy claws sink into your skin
And rip apart your right to speak.

I hope it sucks.

And when my golden sunbeams dance
Above your swamp,
Too high for you to reach;
When I am the gentle wind
That brings freedom to the trees,
Too happy for you to stand;
When my white fur
Is everything you ever wanted –
I hope it hurts.

I hope it stings like the vinegar on my tongue.

Veils Removed
by: Steven Roberts

The mask is off,
The man stands cruciform and naked,
His pores touch air at their first encounter of realness.

His lies are done,
But he reeks of the cowardice of boyhood.

The man tastes of Goodness,
He sees the Beautiful,
Dim windows he gets into that world,
But his stepping stool is gone now.

His marrow and sinus are displaced,
But his fragmentation is only his doing.
The man intact and whole deforms his structure;
Favoring his lies to the calling of the Knight.
His corruption like that of his fathers.
Can these bones live?

The man steps back, he accuses himself of insanity.
Is his life an opium den?
Or have the mad convinced themselves of sanity?

The man is thoughtful;
Sifting through nuggets of gold with a wet paper filter.
His reaches his hand down his throat, forcing a purge.

He finds the sword,
He strokes the crest of his people flowing down from his chin, rough and
glorious.
He dawns the helmet.
Not a mask, but himself.



The Sound and My Fury

by: Kathryn Herbert

Smacking, slurping, gnawing, gulping, chewing, swallowing, crunching, popping.

I hate the sound of eating.

This may seem strange considering that eating is a necessary function, but the truth is that I hate it.

I have to clarify, though, that I do not hate eating. Quite the opposite: I adore food. I probably eat much more than I should (we all know that serving sizes are only suggestions, anyway, right?). Everything about food fascinates me: the growing, the harvesting, the preparing and cooking of food, and especially the end product. What bothers me is the consumption of the end product.

There are four distinct types of eaters: there are Cows, Exhibitors, Racers, and Smackers.

Cows are people who keep their mouths closed while they eat, yet chew in an overtly circular motion. I often wonder how their jaws can

move in such an unnatural manner. How do they not have TMJ disorders? Can they not feel their jaw joints grinding together, or clicking in and out of place? Are they missing their front teeth? Maybe they can unhinge their jaws, so that this manner of eating doesn't disturb them. Perhaps they are part anaconda. Or perhaps they're just part cow.

Exhibitors are people who like to display what they're eating the whole time they are eating it. That is to say, they chew with their mouths open. I have discovered new hues of color by accidentally looking into an Exhibitor's mouth. Shades of brown blended with earthy greens and muddied purples; diluted yellows bursting with bits of bright green or orange; lumpy, muddy, backwater colors swirling in a sea of saliva—it is as unappetizing as it sounds. It's like Eating Rainbow. Sometimes I've wondered if I should market these new shades to artists, but then I realize that no one would buy colors based on chewed foods. Unless, of course, they're painting chewed foods.

Next are the Racers. One prime example is my brother, who, 15 minutes into a meal would already be halfway through his second helping of everything except vegetables. Common phrases associated with my brother were, "Where's the fire?" and "Stop shoveling!" His permanently stooped position lessened the distance between mouth and plate, thereby allowing for maximum shovelage. Questions about school or swim practice would be hummed during chews ("Did you have a good day?" Mhmm. "Did you enjoy practice?" Mhmm.); and if the question required a more complete answer, it would have to wait for the rare in-between bite breath. In a food eating competition my brother may not have been able to eat as much as Nathan's hot dog-eating champion Takeru Kobayashi, but my brother could eat three hot dogs faster than him. The speed of his shoveling was unmatched.

Lastly are the Smackers. The Smackers are unique in that they don't smack all of their food—they mainly smack their gum (although there are some special people who will smack their food in the final stages of chewing right before they swallow, like giving their food a little boost down their throats). Smackers are predominantly wom-

en—I'd venture to guess that about 99% of all Smackers are female. At least, I've never noticed a man smacking his gum. I've also never seen a man twirl his hair, and twirling and smacking seem to go hand-in-hand. What is interesting about chewing of latex, so if a Smacker has a latex allergy, she probably should gum, though, is that it is composed of chicle, a naturally-occurring form not be chewing gum. Swollen lips, however, may be beneficial to allergy-prone Smackers, as it may actually force them to keep their mouths closed while they chew.

I don't know when I began fixating on eating habits, but now I can't stop. But whether or not you fixate on them, eating habits affect social interactions. Would you want to sit across the table from an attractive girl who lets her grilled salmon salad hang out all through your romantic dinner? How much would you remember of the conversation you had with that sweet guy who, in between comments, inhaled his food faster than a Dyson vacuum? You would remember nothing. There is a reason why many old preparatory schools taught etiquette. Etiquette focused on many forms of proper manners, but gave the most attention to proper eating habits: where to place a napkin, which side of the dinner plate the bread plate should go, when to begin eating, and most importantly, how to eat politely. These lessons were intended to make the students, if not attractive eaters—as I believe there is no such thing, despite an ex-boyfriend of mine informing me that his ex-girlfriend said he was a sexy chewer—then at least tolerable ones.

These observations have made me hyper-aware of my own eating habits. My mother didn't help, either. Did you know that you're supposed to close your lips around a crispy or crumbly food before you bite it, rather than after? I didn't. My mother told me. Did you know that when you cut meat you're supposed to place the knife behind the fork? My mother told me, that, too; although my attempts at this delicate act usually resulted in a chunk of meat flying across the table. I was raised by a woman who was nearly obsessed with my eating habits. But now, no longer constrained to family meals, I can eat by myself, which means I can eat however I like. I will cut my meat into properly tiny pieces, and then take multiple pieces at a time. If no one important is around, I will slurp the final dregs of my iced coffee as forcefully as possible, lest I waste any of the exorbitant amounts of money I spent on it. A close friend of mine makes sure to remind me

every time we eat out that I drip something on my shirt every single time; and thanks to Tide To-Go, my mother never has to know.

But, regardless of whether I am alone or not, I am still self-conscious of my every bite. *Is my crunching sound as loud to everyone else as it does to me? Did anyone notice that I just dripped on my shirt...again? Crumbs? What crumbs? That's lint, or something.* For the sake of avoiding hypocrisy, I try to practice what I preach. My napkin will always be found on my lap. My fork will always be to my left, and my knife and spoon to my right. And my mouth will always, always be shut.

If You Can't Take the Heat

by: Alanna Coogan

I see that face which I despise,
Turn towards me with lying eyes.
You might as well drop this little charade;
I can feel the knife between my shoulder blades.

I stand rooted to the kitchen tiles,
My legs melting as you just smile.
There is a fire within my lungs,
But try as I might, I cannot run.

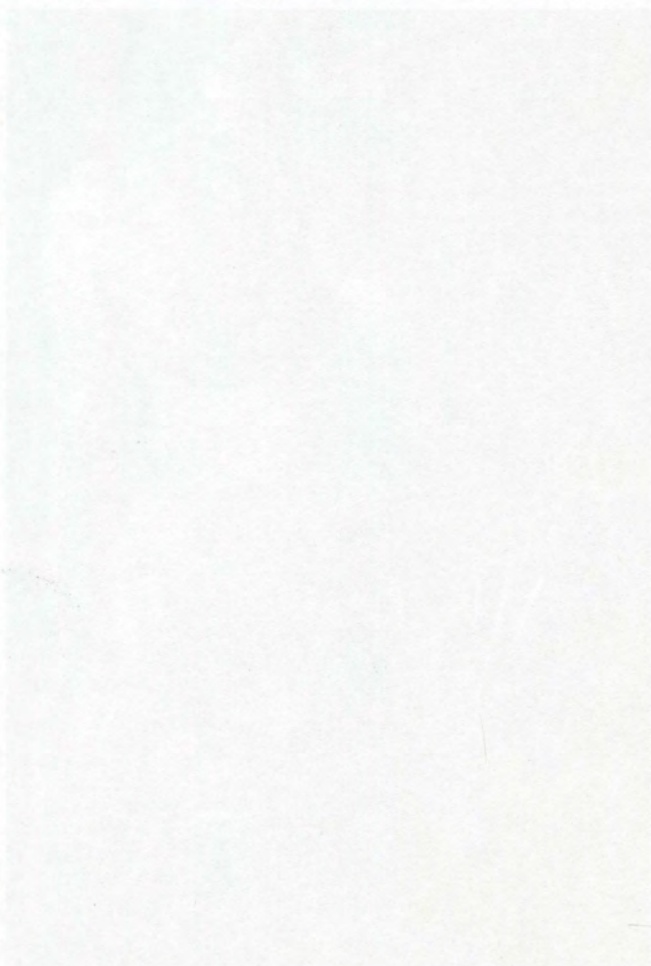
I long to do nothing less than
Reach out and seize the frying pan.
And loosen that lopsided grin
With an uppercut to the chin.

My vision starts to blur.
And everything inside fights against my words,
Which end up sounding an awful lot like,
"Yeah, I guess you're right."



"Fan" by: Nicole Cote

Notes



Your Fall 2013 Literary Arts Society Executive Board:



Back, L-R: Kasey Corona, Kathryn Herbert, Catherine Natoli, Amber Case, Devind Dickerson, Rose Shannon, Hollie Randall, Christina Coulter
Front: Alex Sideris

