



THE MOSAIC



Marist College
Literary Arts Society
Presents:

The Mosaic

Fall 2008 Edition

Fall 2008 Mosaic Staff

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Poetry from nothing
by Kelly Gallucci

I can't write!

I call myself a writer, a poet

And I am

Though can I write on demand?

No!

I can't just write about any willy-nilly thing

There needs to be passion

Inspiration

Love

Desire

I need a throbbing in my head

A beating in my heart

A tug on my soul that forces me to put pen to paper

And when I write, oh, when I write

It's water flowing from a fountain

I could go on for hours about the smell of the flowers

If my heart enticed me to do so

But about the grass? I'll pass

Let's look at the sun or the moon

In June!

Oh the Milky Way on a starry night

I can write on that indeed

I'll write you a novel on those glimmers of hope in the distant heavens

But poetry without passion?

Madness, I say, madness indeed!

Give me a blank sheet and I'll write a sonnet

But give me a topic I can't feel

And I'll laugh and write nothing

Sinking Ships
by Shelley Doster

tripping over tongues and
handmade bracelets

(you stare over my shoulder at a charcoal memory
its dust courses its way down your face
mapping a chalky trail
disaster: start to finish)

as you push me away with a two-handed shove
with a double meaning loaded behind each guilty palm



Energy
by Julia D'Angelo

I feel inspired when my heart beats
My system kicks, I'm on my feet
Striding, stretching, ATP
It's sugar, caffeine, nicotine.
Release me impure dopamine
So I can stop, stretch, breathe
And leap.

The Vineyard
by Jesenia Sanchez

I like the gnarled undersides
Snagged into distorted shapes
Grinding into one another
Never halting for a single harvest
They are good little ruby ovals
Taking water into their roots and
Sheltering us from the delicate sun rays

I like the hue soaked bark
Colored with passion and crawling with new life
Some specks of color fade into the grime covered earth
Along with the rotting fruits of neglected answers
And the new dew drops reflecting the baby rays upon their old faces

I like the little bundles of god's fruits
So presentable upon my man's mouth
As their juice squirts from that little dimple
On the revealing crescent of his smile

I like the gnarled undersides
As I lay there with him



Amy Wheeler

America: A (Relatively) Short Story by Michael Cresci

Somewhere in the endless infinity of the universe floats an unimportant blue and green dot. On that dot lives a group of generally unhappy people. Many of these people have it pretty good, but that doesn't stop them from wondering if all this "existence" nonsense is worth the trouble. A lot of these folks like to point out how it has been "all downhill since the womb."

Some of these people live in a place called the United States of America. They have an odd flag with fifty shapes on it called stars despite the fact they are most definitely not stars. These are accompanied by thirteen red and white stripes. To understand this design it helps to know the story of America:

Everyone in America is taught that before 1492, America didn't exist. Fortunately for them in that famous year a man from another country, named Christopher Columbus, discovered America. He was the first to do so. Coincidentally, a man with a funny hat, named Leif Erickson, accomplished this exact same feat 400 years earlier. Any person who points things like this out has a special name in America - "asshole." The odd part is that for all the hoopla over who discovered what, the place ended up being named after another man.

All of this naming and discovering business fails to consider the fact that there were already millions of people living full lives there. This is an "asshole" thing to mention. Some of the ignored natives complained that the new neighbors killed their friends and stole their food, but they lost most of the arguments because that the new neighbors possessed lighter skin.

The neighbors were from a place called "Europe." They were called Europeans. (People on this meaningless space rock tend to name things in this fashion.) The Europeans began to spread out and fight with each other about who got to take what. The current residents of the land being taken weren't invited to the debate.

Eventually all the European countries divided America up into colonies. The people in those colonies (known as colonists due to the same style of naming) grew angry with one of the European countries called "Great Britain." No one is quite sure who decided they were "Great." Because they were angry, the colonists threw some tea and a man waved a letter opener around. This is a famous story in America. The colonies started a war with Europe to settle things once and for all. A war is when two groups of people agree to kill each other in order to solve a problem. These happen surprisingly often.

The colonies won and named their new country America. The only politician was a General with wooden teeth so he was put in charge.

Things were up and down for the next eighty years until some people decided it would be nice to let their slaves go. A slave is someone stolen from his or her house and forced to work for someone else. This was more popular than you'd imagine it to be. Others, who lived in the South, were outraged that someone didn't think it was within their rights to own a person.

America proceeded to split in two and have another one of those silly wars I men

tioned earlier. These tend to be a reoccurring theme. In the end a tall bearded man in a hat managed to stop everyone from killing one another. As a result he was killed.

Not much else happened for a while, until a war broke out in Europe. It was called "The War to End All Wars." It was also the first of two sequential wars.

To avoid missing out on the killing, America joined in.

After this war ended everyone decided to buy a hula-hoop and crash the stock market. This caused many to get hungry so they all complained about their leader, a man named Hoover. They named cardboard cities after him and spent their days being greatly depressed.

All this changed when a crippled man pretending to be an un-crippled man took charge. He created a bunch of new laws and got some people jobs. Most folks liked him.

Meanwhile over in Europe an angry man with a mustache started another war. Several other countries fought him and asked for America's help. America, however, was far too busy and sent lovely postcards which read "wish we were there."

They would not be convinced to join the new war until some men in airplanes from a place called Japan made a convincing pitch. This began "World War II" which was the first war to use Roman numerals, prompting the "War to End All Wars" to change its name to "World War I."

A lot of people killed a lot of other people until the mustached man decided to be a sore loser and America pressed the delete key twice to end its battle with the men in the airplanes.

After the war everyone built picket fences, left "it" to "Beaver," and decided to hate the color red. Hating the color red wasn't actually all that bad for America. It gave everyone something to agree upon. Also, kids learned how to hide under desks more quickly.

Once again a change occurred when yet another war was declared. This one wasn't called a war, though. It was called a "conflict," and as a result was incredibly unpopular. A lot of emphasis gets put on names in America. It makes little sense. All of this particular fighting was by a curtain made of metal. A lot of folks got angry about the curtain so they played hockey and America won. This was considered quite important.

Some arguing ensued and eventually a wall in Europe fell down. David Hasselhoff, a man who wore a bathing suit on American television, sung a song while people celebrated.

This wall's abrupt plummet made everyone in America happy but left them with no one to hate. Another mustached man, this one from a place called Iraq, managed to take on the job of being hated. Mustaches seem to upset Americans. He was annoying Americans so some soldiers were sent to kill some other soldiers but not the annoying leader.

Over the next decade everyone had money and was happy. Times were good. The American leader was a fun guy but ruffled some feathers by cheating on his wife in an oval. Lots of American leaders had cheated on their wives but for some reason everyone made a big deal out of it this time. People who point this out are also called

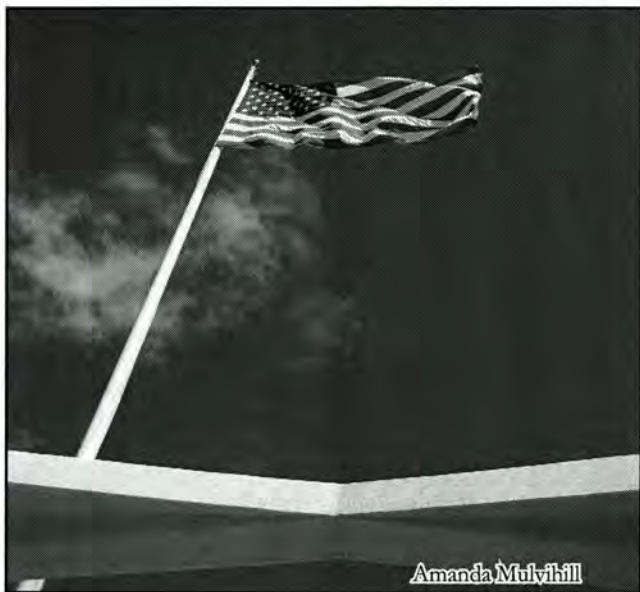
"assholes." The leader also had his own definition of the word "is."

Then a new millennium started and things took a turn for the worse. A man from Florida, named Al, and a man from Texas, named George, both attempted to be the new leader. More people wanted Al to be their leader, so George was given the job. This is due to something called the "Electoral College."

The next year some unhappy looking men flew planes into two tall buildings. George responded by attacking the country they were from and another country that wasn't involved but that had a mustached leader. This part of the story has no ending.

Meanwhile in one part of the country, called Massachusetts, a new law let people who were in love get married. California soon followed suit. People in other parts of the country got angry since the people who were in love seemed to be a bit too similar. The dissenters like to wave a book around, which has a "t" on the cover. It is called "The Holy Bible." Some say this is a strange name because it is not sold with holes in it. A lot of fighting seems to happen over this book, which is silly because the book clearly states, "don't fight."

Ending America's story is a problem because there isn't an ending yet. Chances are, when it comes it will include an explosion and the "assholes" will just say, "Well, it's about time." Until then it's easier to say: to be continued...

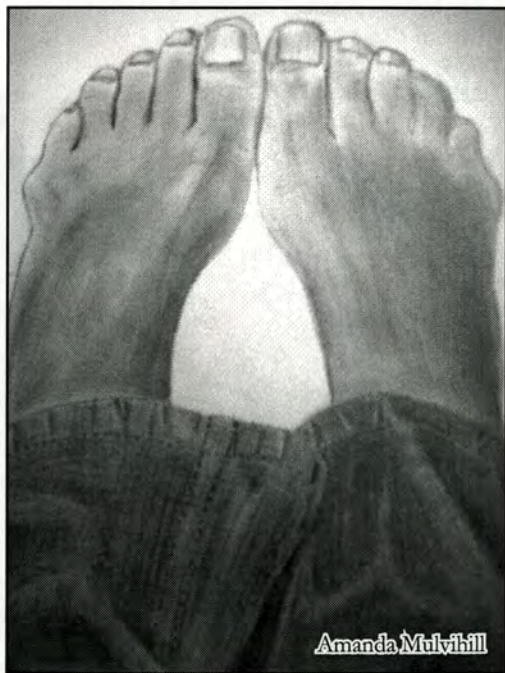


Thoughts of a Rush
by Samantha McGrew

A soft surprise is she
Like a dulcet memory
calm and smooth only
There's more to her expressiveness
More than the loveliness
Of the flowing
faintly glowing
Goddess swaying to the groove
She's entered my mind
Even though hard to find
And a voice so lush, succulent and true
Speaks to me
It's virtually crazy...
A pulse penetrating and mysterious
Pressing tenderly into my unspoken depths
Carries my heart and psyche
to the rhythm of a mellow beat
Mmm that silky sound,
Teasing me down

with its honeyed pause

Caressing the sentiments
Of a romantic...
Could it be
Is it that I see
In the smooth melody
The exhilarating rush
of a sensual touch
in her sweet caress
A fading cry
As classic meets the new
A clever mix
As the story is left to be continued...



Amanda Mulvihill

One pomegranate martini
by Katie Warren

another night,
another set of false ideals,
watch others "living it up"
terrace is a perfect perch.
judgments come and then pass
that time is gone,
smeared in blurry freshman memories.
living learning forgetting remembering.
pomegranate martinis made
by an old friendly neighbor
close a disappointing evening
with a rare personal chat.
maybe there are real people out there.
feel detached being a good listener,
feeling like i'd rather be much farther north
than here.
but here is where I am forced to learn,
even if that means being alone
on an echoing terrace
listening to an old stranger,
because they need you to.



The Human Heart
by Nichole Boisvert



The way its beat is untraceable
without instrument.
Silent thump,
a cascade of blood.
Constant internal river.
The reason you're standing.

So much metaphor about the human heart—
immeasurable strength,
love without words,
the revelation of a soul.

And yet the heart is but a machine.
Striated muscles contracting
relaxing
in evolution-perfected time.
With the liver, the brain, the bone,
an organ.
Absolutely necessary.
Capable of betrayal.

Like a close friend,
the human heart gives and takes

A Vivisection of Loneliness and its Reason
by Michael Ardizzone

)the ending.

Here we see a lonely songbird
singing (solitude, its tune),
voice weaving through leaves
filtered by the warm
air between the trees of a forest(

a foolish, poorly wrought end

)the middle--

Here we discuss
(we whisper in our wistful academic tone)
the nature of love
and why would two pure reasons converge
in flesh so impure?

--waits on the beginning
where truth shines unfiltered
by a forest,
by a mind,
and is not caught on the lips
of Aphrodite (but spreads
from Athena's open hands).



Emerge / Image
by Brit Fiorenza

it takes a darkroom to fabricate

i.
there, steady, stand
smell sweet chemicals sting
the 35mm's
presence in your hand
advancing film
grooves pull
resist, rewind, release
hands and film
work by touch not sight
releasing negatives
under metal leverage
match the freed strip to holders
hold your breath
for no exposure
produce shadow previews
at the window
before the sunshine of noon
only reverse images seeping through

ii.
in a viewfinder
safeguarded with a red filter
an image magnified in shadows
focus in
until light-dark barriers define
expose to the low light
count out Mississippi's
save face, resist over exposure
produce blank, white photo paper
glossy side up
harboring a hidden image
waiting for the chemicals to wash over
and strip the paper
of its light sensitive seal
the darkness creates the art
an image so crisp
burnt into the white page
by shadows

what is displayed on white washed gallery walls

Busy Hands
by Olivia McMahon

There is a new man in the kitchen tonight,
And it is as if I'm noticing him for the first time.
His eyes are dark and directed downwards,
As he chops the potatoes one by one.
And I envy the cutting board, the potatoes and the knife,
Because they are in his possession, cradled in his hands.
The air in the room is thick with a current;
An electricity so scalding that it leaves welts on my skin,
And on my thoughts: the ones I shouldn't be having.
There's a ring in his brow and it reflects the light as he grins.
He laughs and his mouth curves, soft, in contrast to the shadow.
Black curls spill into his face and it is a game I play to see his eyes.
They are dark and directed downwards,
Never looking up at me, but we would share the same glance.
He laughs, and in the kitchen, the vegetables simmer.

"Wasn't your hair just braided?" he asked,
As I stood there slicing the bread.
I smiled, because I knew for sure he had been looking.
"Yeah, it was, but I changed my mind," I offered in reply.
I had changed my mind as I looked in the mirror while standing in the bathroom,
Stalling between dinner and serving others.
I stared at my reflection, at my poor curls,
Suffocating in the mass of twisted strands,
A look far too organized for everyone's liking.
I decided instead upon unruly fly-aways and spirals crowding my face,
That dipped and bowed when I looked down to slice the bread.
It wasn't until later,
When I pushed the unkempt tendrils out of my eyes for the hundredth time;
I didn't realize until then that if I had kept my hair braided,
We would have matched.

While kneeling on the floor beside him,
I tried to make small talk:
A means of conversation meant to drive him away from his task.
He was shelling clams, one by one, in choppy jagged movements.
A new knife: smaller than the ones for chopping potatoes or slicing bread.
Sharper, shinier, but still blessed by his fingers.
I knelt to retrieve forks and knives that I was in need of.
"Aren't you afraid you're going to cut your fingers?" I questioned, counting the forks.
Math is so difficult; yet it takes over my life.

A ratio of two forks to every knife is what ailed me that day.

"Yes," he mumbled,

The words always only managing to make it to his lips before tumbling out.

Men are so much more difficult; specifically the younger ones,

And the unexpected answers they give.

"Have you cut yourself yet?" I asked, spurred by the actual emotion in his voice,

Endearing fear.

I stopped numbering knives long enough to gaze up at him.

"Yeah, see? I have cuts all over. My hands - "

But he only shook his head and did not continue about the state in which his hands were.

I nodded in understanding to eyes that did not see,

And returned to counting forks and knives.

Maybe there's a reason our hands are always busy when we speak to one another.



Whitney Viola

luv ur smile
by Chris Cho

Catalyst416 (11:23:56 PM): luv ur smile
Catalyst416 (11:24:03 PM): so i'll stay a while
Catalyst416 (11:24:12 PM): if you'd have me stare at you
Catalyst416 (11:24:18 PM): it's not that i'm creepy
Catalyst416 (11:24:30 PM): though a bit sleepy
Catalyst416 (11:24:36 PM): cause it seems i only dream of you
Catalyst416 (11:24:42 PM): life
Catalyst416 (11:24:53 PM): 's too short to keep searching for
Catalyst416 (11:24:57 PM): the one in front of me
Catalyst416 (11:25:00 PM): so come with me now
Catalyst416 (11:25:08 PM): Otherwise i won't know how
Catalyst416 (11:25:13 PM): to function minus the better part of me
BreatheDeeply returned at 11:25:27 PM.

Say Anything
by Katherine Bilsky

quietly observes covering high desperation
shifts in her seat and throws glances around
gathers her valor and stands up abruptly
she speaks the actuality, as staring eyes burn into her infidelity
gasps echo into the silence as tearful expressions dominate the room
consequences are trivial in this situation
the fact that encumbered her has been lifted
she drifts in and out of focus
authenticity seeps through her skin
she snaps out of her daydream and back into the crisis, as reality continues to
conceal the truth
holding onto self pity, she feels helpless and small
watches the outrage
and does nothing at all.

Gold-digger's Lovechild by Christen Downes

"Say goodbye," my mother said, balancing my younger sister on one hip and a box full of blankets on the other.

I slid my polka dot covered pillow under my arm and zipped my last suitcase shut. "Goodbye, room," I said, switching off the light and walking out of the doorway. I followed my mom through the living room and out of the front door. I had lost count how many times I'd had to do this. I looked at my bedroom that was now scattered in the back of another moving truck.

"Poppy, throw that suitcase in the van," my mom said, pointing to the moving truck sitting in our driveway. Instead, I turned around to look at one of the many homes I had momentarily inhabited. I took a mental snapshot of the white siding, royal blue front door and emerald green shutters. Our realtor had said the big bay window in the front of the house was our main selling point, whatever that means. The bushes lining the front walkway needed some trimming, but I was sure the new homeowners would take care of that.

"Goodbye, house," I whispered, before throwing my suitcase in the back of the truck along with the rest of our house.

* * *

I, Poppy Harper, was born out of wedlock to young, model-esque Hailey and her lead guitarist boyfriend. Things didn't last very long between my mother and father; my dad couldn't be dragging diaper bags and pacifiers on the tour bus with his band. As a result, I grew up in a handful of different homes with all of Mom's boyfriends, who were quick to pretend they could be the next Daddy.

Only a select few actually went from boyfriend to husband. First, there was John, an attractive man's man, who owned his own landscaping company. My mom pretended to share a love of playing Frisbee in the park with his three dogs, but it was hard to catch in heels. After a couple of months, while he was out walking his golden retriever, she slipped the ring off her finger and left a post-it on the kitchen counter.

Next, there was Connor, a self-made businessman, who saved up his sick days to go surfing in California every summer. They fell head over heels in love and decided to run off to Vegas to elope. Four months later, Mom found out Connor wasn't legally divorced from his first wife. So, we left, again.

The first child my mother popped out after exchanging promise rings with Terrence was Iris, who, like me, was blessed with our mother's bright blonde hair and navy blue eyes. The next child was Violet. Just after Violet's second birthday, we once again packed up the U-Haul, for a reason unknown to me.

My mother was quick to marry millionaire William J. Nolan. They met when William interviewed my mom to be his new secretary. He claims it was love at first sight, with her long blonde-hair, bright blue eyes and curvy body. Mom seemed to look past the fact that he was a sixty-four year old, gray-haired man, a mere twenty-six years her senior. Regardless, William was stepfather number three. By this point, I was getting used to the routine.

Right after the two exchanged vows, we all moved to Acacia Harbor, a gorgeous picture-perfect town, as one big happy family. I was astounded at the number of families just like ours. Gorgeous, young women and graying old men shared massive homes like it was normal. I hated the town from the moment we moved in. My mother fancifully decorated each of the many rooms in our oversized home. I, on the other hand, created a plain bedroom that was easy to pack up, something I was always ready to do. It was this new house that my third half sister, another blonde-haired baby girl named Zinnia, was born.

* * *

I stepped outside, shutting the huge, wooden front door behind me. I walked across our neatly landscaped front yard and made my way down the street. The expensive car William bought for me was collecting dust in the garage. The summer breeze sweetened the air; the gentle wind pulled the hair away from my face. From here, I could just make out Colby's house down the street.

"Hey," Colby said, opening the front door to let me inside. I kicked my sandals off and followed her into the kitchen. We sat down, in silence, as we sipped soda from the can.

Colby Harrison, my one and only friend in Acacia Harbor, was nothing like me, because she wasn't wrapped up in money, material and forced love. She was the only child of two doctors who were rarely home in their brick mansion. She was a genius when it came to chemistry, but not when it came to relationships. She and I were good friends, but Colby could be reclusive at times, due to the isolation she experienced throughout her childhood. Her parents didn't know anything about her, so she didn't seem to go out of her way to be close with others. I was constantly trying to pull conversation out of her. If I couldn't make conversation, then we spent most of our time in silence. Regardless, I still liked Colby.

* * *

"Who is that?" I whispered, ducking down behind a big patch of bushes.

"Leo Bridger," Colby answered. "He just moved in."

"Are those his kids?" I asked, looking at the two rambunctious boys in the front yard, throwing baseballs at each other.

"I guess so," Colby whispered, crouching down beside me. She silently watched for a few moments, then quickly lost interest and sat down on the curb by my feet.

I continued watching, enthralled by this new Acacia Harborer, with his messy brown hair and tanned skin. "Leo, huh?"

Colby nodded, sliding her dark sunglasses from her eyes to her head. "He's a dad, Poppy."

"I know," I said, "I'm just looking."

"Okay," she mumbled. She waited a moment, slid her sunglasses back down and stood up from the ground, wiping the dirt from her jeans. "I think I'm gonna walk back. See you later." She didn't wait for a response and turned around to walk down the street back to her empty home.

I couldn't tell you what I found interesting about Leo Bridger. He wasn't considerably good-looking; he seemed like an average man. I continued to duck behind the

bushes and watched Leo and his family move into their new mansion. Maybe he was a CEO at some fancy company in the city. Or maybe he inherited millions of dollars through a dead relative. Just as I was exiting my hiding spot, Leo turned around to look out into his yard. We momentarily made eye contact. I think he even smiled.

"Do you know where the salad dressing is?" a man from behind me asked. I turned around holding a ripened pear in my hand. It was the new neighbor, Leo Bridger. "I'm new to town. I don't know where anything is in this store," he said with a smile.

"It doesn't take long to get it down," I said, remembering when I got lost in this supermarket the week we moved in. "Salad dressing is in the fourth aisle, next to the ketchup and peanut butter."

"Thanks," he said, slightly turning, but then looking back at me. "Do they have Thousand Island? It's my favorite."

"That's *my* favorite, too," I said, with an excited smile. "They have it."

"Oh, good. Need me to pick you up a bottle?"

"Well, actually," I paused, thinking of the dressing I had just bought two weeks ago. "I think I'll join you. I do need some." Although there was a full bottle sitting in the refrigerator right now, I thought I'd join Leo. He seemed fairly interesting and I found myself wanting to know more.

"I'm Leo," he said, sticking his hand out for me to shake.

I dropped the pear down with the others and took his hand. "Poppy."

A couple of mornings later, I ran down into the kitchen around noon looking for something to stop my stomach from growling so loudly. I passed my mom, who was busy doing her nails at the kitchen table.

"Mom, I thought you said we had bagels," I said, standing in front of the open freezer. The cold breeze sent goose bumps down my arm.

"We do," she said, with a nail file in one hand and a bottle of red nail polish in the other. "William got them."

"But, they're not in here."

"Oh," she said, staring down at her nails, unconcerned with my lack of a lunch.

"Maybe Iris ate the last one."

"No, I didn't," Iris said, walking up from behind my mom. "*You* did, Mom."

"Did I?" she asked, turning to my younger sister.

"Mom, you had the last bagel for breakfast."

I didn't wait for the conversation to end. I closed the freezer, grabbed my phone and wallet off the counter and walked out of the house. It was just past noon, so my mom couldn't have eaten breakfast too long ago. I was used to my mom not paying attention very often. I walked down the block, the breeze pulling my hair back. The deli wasn't too far away, plus it was a nice day.

"You again?" Leo said with a smirk, as I stepped into the deli.

"Me again," I said with a smile. I placed my order with the man behind the counter. Leo held a paper cup of coffee in one hand and a wrapped up sandwich in the

other. Against my wishes, he paid for my lunch, offering to eat it with me. For barely knowing this man, I felt unreasonably at ease.

During our conversation, I couldn't pinpoint what intrigued me about him, but he was easy to talk to for someone I didn't even know.

"Speaking of this weekend," he said, "I need a babysitter."

"I could ask my friend if she wants to."

"No, no," he said with a smile. "What about you?"

"Me?" I said. I guess I was used to watching after my three younger sisters. I'm sure his kids couldn't be too hard to handle. "I guess I could."

"The wife and I are going to some dinner with her friends." He didn't seem excited. He took a couple more bites of his sandwich, then looked up at me. "You can come by at seven on Saturday."

* * *

I made my way up the front walkway admiring the landscaping in the front yard. It looked as if gardeners had just planted the flowers along the house. I calmly knocked on the front door, unsure if I should ring the doorbell instead.

I could hear a woman's high heels clicking loudly against the floor. "You must be the babysitter," she said, opening up the door to let me in. She was hurriedly brushing through her wet hair.

I walked in, looking at the scattered boxes across the floor. Soccer balls were thrown in along with dish towels and someone's leather belt.

"Sorry, the house is a mess," she said with a smile. "We just moved in." I could relate. I knew what it felt like to *just move in*. "Audrey," she said, sticking her hand out. I shook it lightly, finding it strange to shake another woman's hand.

"Poppy," I said.

"Well, the boys are upstairs. They should keep to themselves. Don't let them bother you." She turned around, continuing to brush her hair, and walked down the hallway. I followed her into the kitchen. Grocery bags of food were sitting on the island in the middle of the room. "Leo went shopping today. Feel free to eat whatever you want. Make yourself at home," she said with a cheery smile. "Oh, and our cell phone numbers are on the fridge." She paused, scanning the room, trying to figure out what else to include in the new babysitter speech. "If you don't have any questions, then I need to finish getting ready." She didn't wait for my response as she loudly click-clacked against the hardwood floors and up the stairs. I didn't even know her sons' names.

"You made it," Leo said, coming up from behind me. I didn't even hear him walking; I didn't know where he came from. "Did Audrey let you in?"

I nodded my head, uncomfortably running my fingers along the granite kitchen countertops. He stood next to me silently, staring into my eyes. I didn't know if I should say anything or even move, for that matter.

"We won't be late," Leo said, placing his hand next to mine on the counter. He moved it closer, so they were touching; I couldn't tell if he meant to or not.

* * *

Things were gradual with Leo. We were friends. Colby insisted that it wasn't right for a married man to be friends with a teenage girl, but he made me feel comfortable.

and even older. Besides, I was used to being around older men; nowadays, I found myself surrounded by William's elderly friends, who were double the age of Leo. He was the change I needed. Our relationship was not romantic; he wouldn't cheat on his wife. We talked about issues he claimed he couldn't talk about with Audrey. She always seemed so busy and distracted. He needed someone who would take the time to sit down and talk to him. We never exchanged our ages, though, but it was implied that I was still in high school and he was thirty-something. I didn't care though. I didn't need to know how old he was.

We grabbed lunch on Saturdays and went for walks down the block on Sundays. Audrey was never home, but when she was, she was talking loudly on her cell phone or checking her e-mail constantly. Leo's sons were always running around the house, which was still littered with cardboard boxes and sports equipment. The outside of the home was beautiful though. Outsiders would have no idea the family was new to town.

Colby, who was minimal with her words to begin with, stopped making conversation altogether to show her disapproval of my relationship with Leo. She couldn't understand just being friends.

* * *

I passed Leo the bowl of popcorn we had made earlier. He took a handful then placed it in between us. I sat back into the couch, licking the butter off my fingers and looking up at the TV in front of me. Just as the movie was coming to an end, Leo turned to me. He moved the bowl of popcorn out of the way and scooted closer.

"I liked the movie," I said, turning to look at him. Why did he keep moving closer?

"It's one of my favorites," he said, slowly placing his hand on my knee. I tried moving over, leaning my body further away. Friends didn't have to sit so close together.

"I should get going," I said, pretending to search for a clock to look at, but the walls were bare. Nothing was decorating the plain living room.

"Stay," Leo said, smiling at me, knowing I was becoming uncomfortable. "Let's talk." I didn't want to talk though. I wanted to get out before he got the wrong idea. I decided to sit still for a moment, staring at the TV. The credits were rolling up the screen. Leo was still looking at me, nearly on top of me. When I turned to look at him to say goodbye, he wrapped his hand around my neck and pulled my lips to his.

"Leo, get off of me." With both hands, I pushed his shoulders back and leaped off the couch.

"I thought you were just like your mother," he said, smirking.

"What is that supposed to mean?" I asked, backing away from the couch.

"Just another gold-digger," he answered.

"Leo," I said, shaking my head. We had talked about this. He knew I wasn't my mother.

"Oh, so you're just a gold-digger's lovechild."

He called after me as I ran through the front door, letting it slam shut after me. I ran faster than I ever thought I could. My hair wildly danced behind me as I tore across the front lawn. My body felt like air; I don't think I could have slowed down if I wanted to. I didn't stop running until the house was way out in the distance. I sat down on the cold curb in front of me, resting my pounding feet. The warm tears rolled

down my cheeks, forming a salty pool in my mouth. A tangled mess of blonde hair fell in front of my face as black streaks of mascara ran from my eyes. I dug my cell phone out of my jacket pocket and called Colby.

After three rings, she picked up, "Hello?"

"Colb, I need you to do me a favor," I said in between gasps, still trying to catch my breath. I quickly told her what I needed her to do, unsure if she'd go along with the plan. As I finished, she complied and hung up the phone. I didn't even have to fight her to follow through; all she said was, "okay."

I turned off my phone and placed it on the grass behind me. It would be a while before I had to talk to anyone listed inside of it. I pushed my hair out of my face and watched for Colby.

About fifteen minutes later, she showed up in that fancy car William bought me. She flashed the headlights to assure me that it was her driving. I opened up the passenger side door, smiling at my friend. She, for once, smiled back.

"Where are we going?" she asked as I sat back in the seat.

"Out of here," I said. We didn't say anything else as she stepped on the gas and drove the car out of Acacia Harbor. She didn't have to question my motive and I didn't question why she wasn't curious. I turned up the radio and opened the window, sending my hair into another dancing fury. I may look like my mother, but I was not going to be her. I was not going to be just a gold-digger's lovechild. I was not going to succumb to the norms of Acacia Harbor. I was going to get out before I could get sucked in.



Rain Storm
by Jennifer Sommer

The rain falls
with utter ignorance.
Each drop hits exposed skin,
running down spines,
gently sitting on lips.

The water seeps in,
slowly,
surely,
passionately,
and then suddenly
the storm passes.

Dangerous and volatile
it runs off to newer pastures.

Then I'm alone again,
left only with water-stained sheets,
and a heart
cold and battered
by the storm.



Julissa Bedoya

10 Years

by Michael Cresci

Behind those salt water eyes lies a macabre sense of doubt.

Damaged goods lure fools like me,
since misery indeed loves company.

And girls, like decades, seem forever,
but slip away a bit too soon.

Yet they all mean less

Than the first decade that fell in love with you.

And on the tenth New Year's Eve, you shake your head and say

"Boy, the time flies by. Where's the decade gone?"

But whether it was a decade well spent or not,

The first decade to get away,
the one where things were simpler,
is the one you really want.



Two Faceless Soldiers
by Jared Topalian

Two Faceless Soldiers
Blades Flicker, Clash and Seek
A Calm, Silent War

Advance, Retreat
Quickness and Cunning Are Truth
Our Minds and Feet Battle

A Swift Piercing Stab
The Play of Blades and Blood
Brutal Elegance

We Grasp Victory
Our Lives upon Our Two Swords
Eternal Moment

Untitled
by James Napoli

El río canta con la voz del océano,
Como ella desemboca a su amor.
En las montañas, sus aguas, libres e inmaculadas
Zarpaban lamentablemente en vueltas y revueltas.
Ella llora en la ausencia de las aguas saladas,
Desprecia al aire fresco, y extraña a la salmuera.
Pero, en su adelantamiento a las aguas
Salobres, su corazón acelera,
Pulsando sangre urgentemente a sus afluentes.
Más, y más rápido ella navega al mar.
Con su alma llena hasta los topes,
Ella estrecha las aguas fuertes entre sus brazos, y
Lo toma en un abrazo cariñoso. Sus aguas se entrelazan con las
Del océano, y él le da un beso a su esposa con sus labios desatados.
Y juntos, se embarcan a su destinación final.



Jaime Bonventre

An Ode to my Favorite Coffeehouse
by Leigh Everett

"Here it goes, here it goes
Here it goes again,"
The sensory overload
Of nouns, verbs and expletives
Forming extraordinary mazes
In black spiraled notebooks
For us to read
And perform

His voice soothes the ache in my written soul
Seven hundred poems deep and lonesome
I hear the sway and swish
Of thumbs and forefingers snapping

Artists of the spoken word
Connect again after a season
Left behind but never gone

She trembles
Topics jump off the tip of her tongue
Out into the air
Coated with cliché' but
Just getting by

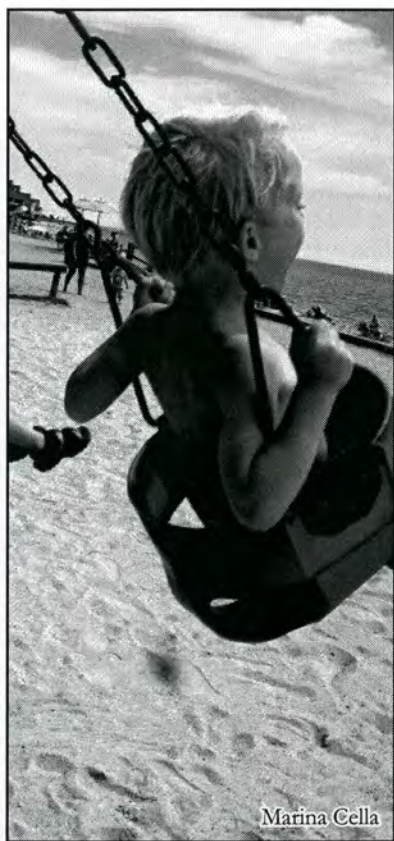
I remember
My first time
Paper resting against
The back easel,
Light harsh
My voice, the only sound
Against the coffee makers
Memories, moments, dreams, wishes
Written and given up to the world
To be devoured
By talented artistic minds
Like ours

The others, they sit quiet yet are excited
As the colors, sounds, and wordy allusions

All cram on to one stage
In the one small coffeehouse
In Poughkeepsie, New York

This place is my homeward bound
The beginning of belonging
Paper crinkles, a young man laughs
His beautiful mocha hair
Doesn't distract from
His words on the page
They lay dormant ready for offering,
Verses, truths
Creative memories
Striking life lessons
Unchangeable remedies

All is here, written
For novel maniacs
And worldly magicians
Poetry is comfort
Always
In my favorite coffeehouse
The Cubbyhole, on Monday nights



Here We Are
by Richard M. Frias

Here we are naked in this bed
Time has stopped
And I am happy
Her breath becomes my breath and our breath is one
We laugh
Sometimes silence says it all
Sometimes even soaring means to fall
Sometimes I want to let it all go, just so it is only her that I hold
The petals in my head are all but gone

I don't know

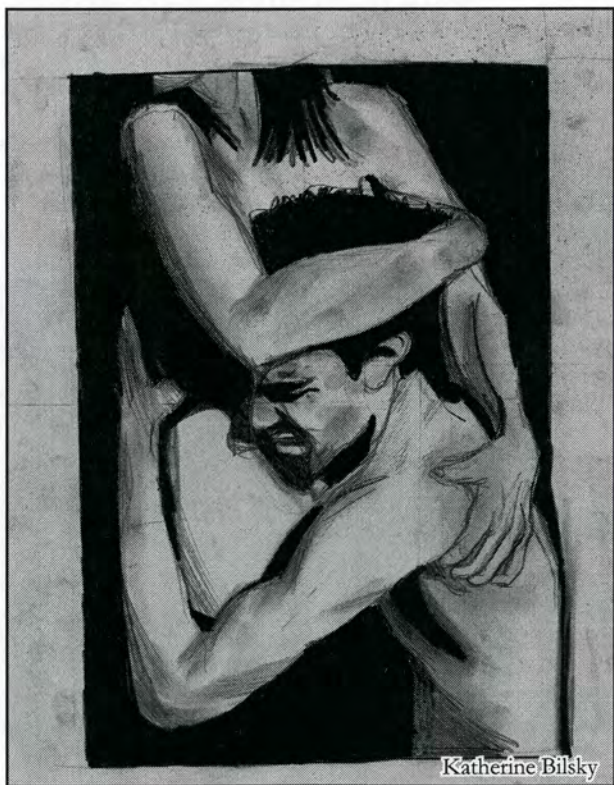
In darkness we belong to each other
And we forget what it means to sleep
Awake, we dream of a world of our own
A world where time can condone—
What we have
Whatever that may be
If it is nothing
Then it is the best nothing that my eyes will never see
Whatever that is real.
If it is something
Then it is the best something that my fingers will ever feel

In our hours we can live lifetimes
Intervals of infinite happiness
Illusions comforting our stressful souls
Even if it is too fast
Even if they say it won't last
Even if this was so unexpected
Even if the future spitefully wrecks it
No "Evens" will ever take this away
Some where at some time we will always have that day

And then the weekend ended

Here we are clothed in this car
Time is moving
And I am happy
Her breath is her own breath and mine is mine
We laugh
Sometimes a song says it all
Sometimes even holding hands means to fall
Sometimes I never really want to let go, just so it is only her that I hold
The petals in my head are all but here

I know



Katherine Bilsky

Between Static and Bars
by Michael Ardizzone

Sated by windows
by portholes and gaps
through which we could see this—
that which we can't have—

soon we will reach for
the way we should be
with arms made of plastic,
too playful, too free.

When stronger our need is
we're weaker (it shows):
Our winter has melted
what spring let us know.

As truth is a curtain—
we close it with fear—
our fate is uncertain
(our families nuclear,

for TV has told us
'tween static and bars
that all we should think of
are candies and cars.)



Remove the Jokers, Scene from The House Always Wins
by Tim McMullan

FARCEUR is alone, peering over the edge of the top floor's courtyard's weather beaten wall. He clenches up as he hears loud frantic footsteps clamoring up the staircase, but as the door swings open with RISI's hand hanging onto the knob as he collapses onto the floor, FARCEUR is no longer alarmed. Unafraid, he laughs at their farce.

- RISI: *(Climbing out of the staircase, he turns to FARCEUR with an inquisitive look on his face.)* What are we now?
- FARCEUR: *(through his smirk of content)* All the same, prodded on, like plain people, like Prods.
- RISI: *(lamenting)* I just cannot believe it. Is this how it starts?
- FARCEUR: *(raising his brow)* How it ends?
- RISI: Prohibition. Now what, after the barons? We were the top. No longer a part of the family –
- FARCEUR: *(cutting RISI off)* – Apart from the family now.
- RISI: *(trailing on)* Pro? Like the best?
- FARCEUR: Yes.
- RISI: We were the best, best barons in town. *(clasping his fist with his other hand)* In the country!
- FARCEUR: *(effortlessly)* Were.
- RISI: *(still inquiring)* Pro? Like it's a good idea?
- FARCEUR: For them, for men, for the scum who ride on high horses. *(slowing down and slurring his speech)* Who think they're better than us. *(points his index at RISI, and fluidly retracts it as his thumb points to himself, repeating the motion until RISI catches him doing it)*
- RISI: *(hysterically)* Pro? Pro, pomegranate? The pomegranate!
- FARCEUR: *(grieves, nodding)* Ah, your favorite of brews. 'Tis a sad time.
- RISI: *(staring down at FARCEUR's feet)* Irony has it that, when I must, I cannot, you follow? *(pause)* This isn't like us. Uncertainty has cast its terrible shadow.
- FARCEUR: Ominous. When the chips are down we were the first to go. *(authoritatively)* Remove the Jokers.
- RISI: Remove them on a flop! *(snaps)* Bam! *(snaps)* No hesitation! No sign!
- FARCEUR: *(without hesitating)* No need.
- RISI: *(practically singing)* A good man would give those but the King of Hearts does not. A heart that beats like mine, but is so cold. Oh so cold.
- FARCEUR: Rather boils at its core with hatred. *(scoffs)* And no longer needs to beat for the rage and the money flow keep his heat.
- RISI: *(reminiscing, not hearing FARCEUR's response)* A great man! He got us on our way. We were putting down and cashing out, the good times.
- FARCEUR: *(logically)* But Risi, for how long could such activities continue? *(RISI*

rolls his eyes with some acceptance.) We gambled with our time against the odds one too many times, it seems.

- RISI: *(unfocused)* Only us two left. *(He stares past FARCEUR with self-defeat)*
- FARCEUR: And on that final roll, what could have been a dozen strong, now one dot one die.
- RISI: Red dots between the eyes, snake eyes. He was stalking in the darkness like the serpent he is.
- FARCEUR: Called his bluff but we got duffed.
- RISI: *(exhausted)* This emotion – I'm falling down the stairs but there isn't a landing. Down the chain of command, a chain that is used to beat us. To beat us down!
- FARCEUR: Struggling would only give you hope. Don't bother, don't bother.
- RISI: We tried; we had them.
- FARCEUR: *(arguing)* Trying is not good enough – there is only success and failure. Give up on your hope; it is the last left for the defeated.
- RISI: *(raising his voice)* I hope I can try.
- FARCEUR: How devastating! *(He gives RISI a look of distaste.)* He'll send his ace in the hole –
- RISI: *(braying)* The Ace of Spades! His top card! They call him Spate.
- FARCEUR: The same, but that's not his name.
- RISI: *(puzzled)* You mean not his first?
- FARCEUR: *(annoyed)* No, not his first.
- RISI: *(persisting)* His last name must be.

Enter SPADILLE, the Ace of Spades, hidden from the Jokers.

- FARCEUR: No. *(RISI, determined to solve the riddle, looks up with squinting eyes, mouth ajar, but even his contorted facial expression yields nothing.)* It is said that you understand why he is called Spate. *(he looks up)* when – he – kills – you – *(He trails off as his eyes widen, and the Spade's blade shines piercing his left breast as it is soaked in the ruby redness of his blood).*
- SPADILLE: *(booming)* My name is Spadille! You silly pad. Why do none of you high waymen not know anything? Both meanings hoodwinker. *(relaxed)* I am spate; it is an adjective. My work is spate; large in quantity. Spate: arriving sudden and strong as I am the only one and much needs to be done. Why am I even killing you fools? *(Exhaling he straightens out his suit and starts toward RISI)*
- RISI: Well, I don't have much information but I am sure there is a better person with greater knowledge than I who can answer your question with more effectiveness.
- SPADILLE: *(bored)* What?
- RISI: It's the nicest way for me to tell you that I don't know.
- SPADILLE: *(uninterested)* He said you'd say that. I'm still going to kill you. Your

- struggle is as futile as it is lame. But isn't it all part of the plan?
- RISI: You tell me. What should I know, what shouldn't I have?
- SPADILLE: (*trying to contain his laughter*) Oh but I could, yes I could, but I dare say I don't even know myself.
- RISI: (*jeering*) You puppet, choke yourself with those strings.
- SPADILLE: (*waving his finger at RISI*) Ah, servitude does not exclude distaste.
- RISI: (*unafraid*) Do what you must. (*grasps his chin*). No, I will do what I must.
- SPADILLE: The remaining morsels of dust need to be swept out for a new era! I have something for you. (*chuckles*) A going-away present. Then, you'll go away.
- RISI: (*confidently*) Present it then.
- SPADILLE: (*brings out a piece of parchment and begins to read*)
Now I am aghast with glee
That the great fools last see me,
The reason for a joke
Will be revealed in time,
Key is building up a good punch line.
(*He smiles, cocking his gun inches from RISI*)
- RISI: (*scoffing*) You like to rhyme? Shall I clock you?
- SPADILLE: Oooh, the suspense could kill me.
- RISI: (*jeering*) How fortunate, try rhyming this one: Eviscerate!
- SPADILLE: That is something I should contemp - (*FARCEUR, who has been lying wounded on the floor, suddenly rises and stabs SPADILLE in the stomach*).
- FARCEUR: (*audibly whispering into SPADILLE's ear with a wild grin*) And under pressure the dust become diamonds.
- SPADILLE: (*baffled and furious*) Diamonds? Ha! A farce like you and transparent like him?
- FARCEUR: (*hissing*) No, sharp and priceless.
- RISI: Like your demise.

SPADILLE falls, curtain drops.

The Pampas
by Chris Ceballos

Speak to me with an Argentinean breeze
blown back like an Italian in a strange land
prime beef in smoke stacks in outstretched fields
of patchwork and quilts.
Look at me like the red caped damsel looked to the sky
to see tips of trees—
Those icy autumn trees!
Twisted twigs so broken and big
suitable setting suns
like when the west had one
but this frontier is so far I fear
the cowboys here run home for dinners—
Simultaneous dinners
in cabins, in winters
Here when voices expand out they sing—
They turn out
They churn out
They wear out
To meet the breeze in the fertile lands.
But to be freed forever from several severed tethers
and a greed so in style
locked with love and an Italian in a strange land
I would reach up to take her hand to the sky—
That icy autumn sky!

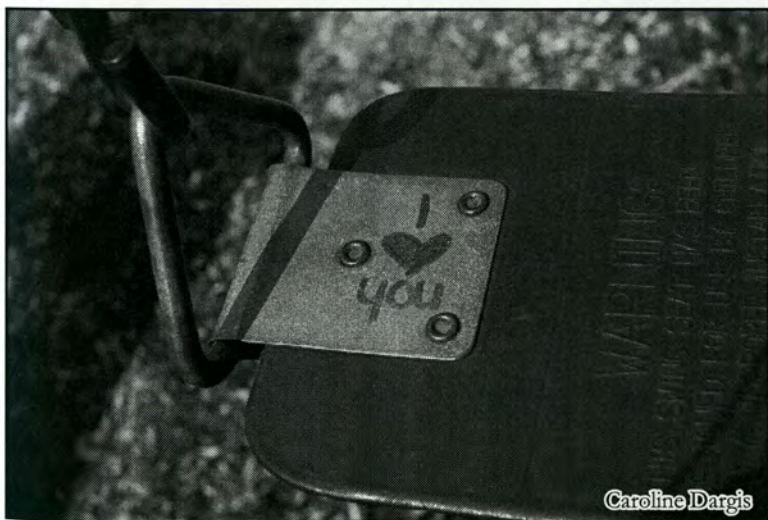


Months
by Brian McMillan

I know she didn't choose this from the start,
But I wanted her and found her heart.
It was a surprise that began to grow,
Covered us from head to toe.
I know this thing that fits in my hand,
I can feel this beat against the plan,

But then it grew too large for me,
What could this pounding be?
Swelling begins and fibers tear,
It's love, it's love I swear.
But it was out there for all to see,
So clear how it meant much to me.

Now I want it more than ever,
Choice is gone and I surrender.
The beat in my hand begins to fade,
The end of all we've made.
I didn't choose this from the start,
But she could always break this heart.
But she could always break this heart.



Caroline Dargis

Polaroid Sky
by Kelly Gallucci

Let's take a picture
Of *you and me*
Of this moment
Of just being happy
Let's hold hands
As we walk down the street
Smiling gently
As we hum to our own beat
Let's dance to that song
That only we can hear
And we'll ignore the car honks
As we hold each other near
Let's pretend that **we're in love**
For one last time
And forget what sunrise will bring
Because this night is sublime
Let's wish on a star
For a never ending night
And boo at the sun as it rises
So it runs away in fright
Let's race through fields of flowers
And fall down in the grass
We'll cloud gaze for hours
And *let the time just pass*
Let's take pictures of you and me
Pretending we never have to say goodbye
And then we'll have captured that magical moment
Of you and me and the P o l a r o i d s k y



Ryan Hutton



Katie Warren



Julissa Bedoya



Amanda Mulvihill



Katie Warren



Robin Minter



Katie Warren



Amanda Mulvihill



Whitney Viola



Amanda Mulvihill



Katie Warren



Amy Wheeler



Cynthia Dagenais

Sunrise
by Marina Cella

Cool water running over hands, slipping through fingers
onto silver chrome and white porcelain
Washing away a thousand yesterdays
In a single stream that runs down the drain.
Today I wake with the sunrise,
Tear-stained cheeks, head spinning
Being carried to a nearby place
where solace is found in frozen moments
when everything else disappears
When time stands still, and brilliant colors spread across the sky
like ink dropped into a jar of water
just as the last of the morning sun cuts through the fog.

no good deed goes unpunished
by Shelley Doster

i had designs
to capture the sun
and seat it
(cupped)
in my hands

a flaming beacon
to light your way
through the enveloping darkness

but my plan
backfired
within the cage of meshed fingertips
as the sun resisted

and scorched me
branding
words of apology into my palms



Amanda Mulvihill

This distance between our existence
by Brit Fiorenza

seagulls suspended on the current
Imagists would believe it is enough: one image captured and conveyed
i settle in stance, balanced on splintered planked piers
swaying on the Hudson,
i have yet to say my peace
i have yet to make a release, to substantiate my existence here
following smoke escape as my breath i see
reflections of my presence resonate in ripples

amidst all that surrounds me, i am small, against
the trees, the mountains in the distance, the river
between our existences — all so impossibly beyond me
outdoors: less confined than hallways and stairwells —
painted white and peeling, placing the paces we've stepped
nevertheless the motions of gulls in flight are
projections of our positions as we lie in bed lazily lifting
our bodies simultaneously still and shifting
today one image cannot sustain my solitude
everything is releasing, not fulfilling
just as the smoke of my exhale
only wanting to find myself beside you; pulled into my core
no longer pulling familiarity from the images from the sky
with the river to my back blue waters are your eyes
how can i find comfort in your absence?
the echo of my name down the hallway is resonating in the echoes of the gulls
down the river, the trees stand in rooted places
less subject to dissipate than i
uprooted and grasping for a higher meaning to lead me back to
believing i'll return to you
instead, i surrender to all that is not within myself
next to the river, even my tears are stagnant
against the wind my lungs incompetent
the elements between our beings

Snowflake
by Alison Carter

We were wandering through a junkyard, hidden behind a wooden fence. There were rows upon rows of crumbled cars. There was a gutted yellow school bus and the rusted remains of a trailer. We were in a muddy area of the woods and the ground was littered with leaves, broken glass and rusted car parts. Behind us were train tracks, overgrown, overtaken by the brambles and trees, two tracks in the woods and just beyond them a barbed wire fence and a cow pasture. In the pasture were a shallow stream and an uprooted beech tree that revealed its roots, revealed the world beneath the surface and the green plants still clinging to upturned earth. We walked down a stony path. There was a garage and we sat down inside the garage, surrounded by the dusty skeletons of automobiles and played an electric organ, putting our weight on the pedals and pressing our fingers on the keys. We wandered out into the tall grasses where a postman's truck, or maybe a milk truck, was rusting. We pried open the sliding door and climbed up onto the rotting leather seat. We pulled down a steamer trunk and unclasped the corroded hinges, pulled the top clean off and flung it down in the grass.

Inside was a pillow case. It may have once been white, but had become the color of teeth. The front was embroidered, hand stitched with a maze of stick-thin branches and yellow-green leaves. There were yellow and red butterflies on either side of the branches, and they were surrounded by purple and blue flowers with red centers. The flowers were about the size of a child's thumb print. The butterflies hid in the branches. A word was stitched below the branches in smooth, young cursive. The word was *Snowflake*.

We began to wonder. We imagined and we thought. "Edelweiss, edelweiss... Blossom of snow may you bloom and grow," we sang. They were not edelweiss, these flowers. These flowers were lavenders and periwinkles, with blood red centers. We wondered, we imagined, we thought.

We told as if we knew. It was 1969. Civil War raged in the Republic of Chad. A young girl lived among Arab nomads in the Sahara desert. She was seven years old. Her name was Anisa and she had a family. She had a mother and a father, but the government rode through the desert on horses and cut them down like acacia trees. She was pulled up on a horse and carried across the desert. They gave her water and they brought her to Faya-Largeau. They told her that her people had done wrong. She did not understand. They put her inside a flying machine and they sent her to Cairo. They put her in a school where white faced people called her Anna. A man and woman one day took her hands. They put her on another flying machine and she slept. When she woke up it was very cold, like the nights in the desert, but it was day. The ground was hard and gray and dirty. They put her in a car and they took her to a place where the ground was covered in green and yellow grasses. All she could do was sleep. All she could do was dream. When it became warm she lay beneath a tree and slept for a week. When she woke up the tree was covered in tiny purple and blue wings. There were flying paper creatures. They were the color of sand. The wind blew and she

closed her eyes, and she watched the blue and purple fall on her knees and her hands. She danced in the colors as they fluttered down on her and she rolled in them and she laughed. She laughed and she cried and felt that she was bleeding laughter and so were they.

The man and woman taught her words she didn't know. They put her in new clothes and gave her tiny, thin knives and strings. They told her to make needlepoint. They gave her a square cotton smock for her pillow and they told her to make flowers. They showed her pictures of pink flowers. But instead she made the branches of the tree and the blue and purple and the paper creatures the color of sand and each one bled laughter.

"Edelweiss, edelweiss, blossom of snow, may you bloom and grow forever," they sang.

She said, "What is snow?"

They told her, "It falls from the sky."

"Oh," she said. "I know snow. What is one snow?"

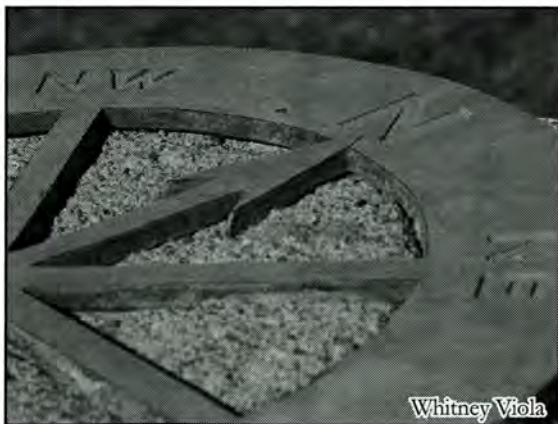
"It is a snowflake," they said.

"This is what I am. I have fallen across the sky. I have bled laughter."

They wrote the word *Snowflake* in ink for her and she copied it in purple string the color of snow.

In three days all of the snow had fallen off of the tree to the ground. She rested her head on her needlepoint and lived among the paper creatures and the snowflakes. This is how she would dream.

We found her story in a steamer trunk, stuck in a postman's truck, while we were wandering across a junkyard.



My Favorite Part
by Amanda Mulvihill

After
(when your finger lazily spirals,
winding itself in tendrils of my hair;
when I trace your face's contours and planes
with a blushing, wondering fingertip;
when our limbs entwine as our fingers would,
were we walking, instead of whispering
softness to one another
through parted lips that long to fuse,
our entangled souls breathing words
though we know not which soul speaks,
because both mean, both speak the same).



Poughkeepsie
by Marina Cella

Home isn't a place anymore
It's a state of mind
A place by a river, a valley that dips into the sea
Where a thousand brilliant suns light up dim hallways
Reflecting on tile floors
sun setting, light diffusing into dark
sounds of midnight trains — fade in, fade out
tail lights in the chilly fog
and voices that tell stories of a life, a million lives all coming together
the nights we stayed up til dawn, and told stories until the sun came up
laughing
A small city where we all found each other
And found ourselves

Stubborn Conscience by Chris Cho

Fractured and beaten, his own words he's eaten within a hearty humble pie. What would possess him to commission such an ambitious mission delving deep into one's mind's eye? He hears songs sung alone with words too well known as heavy steps carry feet along. Silk-clad and sad, the hatter jabbers mad, smooth inconsistencies to tempt all who he may deflower in the wake of his suave debonair. Making rankings and rantings with ratings and hatings he judges with the haste of a mullah glut of pride. All smug and consistent, his thoughts are resistant to the hypocrisy that dribbles down his chin. Each sip of tea, another catastrophe of a human being who has sinned, their life the only cost. However fault is crass and malicious, altogether vicious, but brutally honest all the same. She finds him alone, locked up on his own, conversing with the callous voices that see to the end that the honor, much to his horror, feels like salt in his wounds, like sulfur. Thus he eats his own words, all twisted with verbs that have him tearing away from the glass. The mass imperfection, mirrors so much rejection that skims only the surface in the deepest parts of him. It's more than obscene, his face so clean-cut and lean, staring back but lacking humility.



James Reilly

Orchid Garden
by Nichole Boisvert

The orchids glow in the low light,
petals almost transparent
in their brilliant fragility.
With the Spanish moss,
ethereal mist,
soft colors.

It's easy to forget I'm just in a greenhouse
in the middle of the city
two blocks from the Capital,
where some group is
protesting something
with crowds and shouts and
performance poetry.
Here, the rhyme is soft.
Fans whisper misty secrets.
The Spanish moss lifts to reveal a face
as light shifts into verse.



Amanda Mulvihill

single digits.
by Katie Warren

Single-digit sentences dictate our relationships.
Three words start, four words end, five offer a reason.

I love you.
We need to talk.
It's not you, it's me.

In descending order of meaningfulness.

I love you.
Slips out unaware, so stealthy
You barely know it's been said.
Drunken "Lurv", mistaken for lust.
That troublesome L-word,
 Big L
 little l,
capitalization makes all the difference.

We need to talk.
Universal yellow light
That if you speed through,
Could result in a fatal crash.
Safer just to stop,
but who wants to stop,
or be safe?
Not me.

It's not you, it's me.
Rings so true
And cliché it breaks your heart,
So you can't ask for the real reason.

And just as 3-4-5 show the rise and fall,
It's 1 and 2 that offer hope:
 I do, and
 Love.
That's why it's number 1.



Ashes
by Jennifer Sommer

Our bodies remain
pressed between
white linen sheets
like butterflies stuck
behind pained glass.

My crystal frame cradled in yours,
paper arms encircle
my waist,
as passion sparks and
burns the paper into soot.

Once strong arms shrivel away
as my crystal frame hardens.

The flame extinguished
as quickly as it came.



Love is a Verb.
by Julia D'Angelo

Love is a verb.
It grows,
expands,
moves,
constantly.
It stalls,
shrinks,
stops,
unfortunately.
A moment caught on
the jagged edge of minds
it sticks
it waves
it tears away
Enabling the disabled
Turns gray to beige.

Contemplations of an Autumn Leaf by Shelley Doster

When is it time to let go?
Should I be a daredevil
And throw so much away
While green and freshness linger
And not experience
(Bittersweet)
The sensation of Change?

Burnished gold and russet
Gleam fiery and dazzling –
Should I be like all the others
And feel the joy of drifting en mass,
Entwining and circling with reckless abandon
Upon glorious descent to become part
Of the earth once more/

Or shall I cling to certainty
And never give in to such temptations? –
To survive
Browned and brittle:
A fragile skeleton reminiscent of indecision
Clutching to a long-past life
By an emaciated stem.



Me Without You
by Michael Cresci

"To a girl who got into my head with all the
pretty things she did"

It used to just be you who called me Michael,
and I loved it.

It was the sweetest verbal kiss, and then you'd smile,
and I loved it.

And since you left your friends have started to call me Michael, it's not the same,
but it reminds me how I loved it.



Patience
by Katherine Bilsky

the ivy hangs from over the hospice, strangling the forgotten concrete.
room 215 the illness is only beginning, a patient's hope not yet lost.
the physicians have sad eyes, as they watch the beginning of death
a synthetic heart, oxygen tanks, various vaccines,
they will not Band-Aid the perpetual life threatening wound.
a powerful crescendo of long steady beeping overcomes the everlasting silence -
the doctors and nurses continue to room 216
and visiting hours have long gone by.

Untitled
by Sarah Philpot

And he had the most beautiful
Blue eyes she had ever seen.
Captivated, entranced:
She was only pulled deeper.

The perfect black pupils –
Pinpoints of eternity –
Welcoming, warm,
Frigid and foreign.

And those cerulean crystalline irises
That carry a world of secrets
On their rays of blue bliss.



Masks and Mazes by Ashleigh Whitfield

She died on a Tuesday. She always hated Tuesdays.

I sometimes wonder if I had chosen a different career, would I be living a happier life? I imagine where I would be now if I stuck to my original plan and quit this temporary job after one year, instead of allowing myself to arrive every day for ten. If I had put more effort into finding a job more suitable for what I wanted and been the career woman I intended to be, rather than doing what was most convenient – but then I realize that this life would have left me without ever knowing Caroline. All I like to think about is Caroline, but now she is gone and that is an awful thing to know. So I will pretend she didn't die and go back to work.

Ten years of insurance. I sit in my cubicle everyday, staring at the emptiness before me, waiting to learn about the next accidental death. The white walls suffocate and blind each unsuspecting adjustor and the labyrinth of cubicles provide an inescapable barrier. One after another, they stretch toward the horizon and leave me with papers that say nothing but "hopeless."

And then she walked through the door.

Her excessively long blond hair flowed behind her as she entered in a remarkably low cut designer sun dress. She looked like a china doll with her pale skin and rosy cheeks. I had never seen anyone as beautiful as she was on that day. It was a shame she would have to die so soon.

Her name was Caroline. "Sweet Caroline," the song of my teenage years, made this easy to remember. It plays over and over in my head for no reason at all, providing a musical mask over my thoughts – a joyous mask that smiles while the wearer sobs behind it.

Caroline was here, was ready to begin her career in insurance; this little girl saw the maze of pure white boxes as the key to her own successful future, and believed this was the path that would lead her to the life of financial liberation she desired. Her ignorance astounded me as I watched her smile, maskless in an office of covered faces. She never thought for a moment that she would get lost in the maze. But then I remembered – neither did I.

Ten years, three months, seventeen days. I sat in a cell. I read about who did what, to who, and how. Paper after paper, mistake after mistake. Eventually the words all blend together to form an unintelligible memory of accidents. Was it the teenage girl who killed the kid or the drunk old man? Who cares? Take money from both. Speaking to victims is a matter of necessity that lacks any form of desire. The same questions must be asked, no matter what the situation might be. It is a script, and I have my lines memorized. My mask catches any word or phrase that could hint at my own feelings or personality and mutes them. My opinions do not matter. After so long, nothing matters anymore. I stopped feeling. Emotions became a thing of the past and nothing hurt. Nothing felt good. Each day became

an endless array of nothing. I tried to take my mind off of the daunting papers of death, but find them hanging on the walls around me, on the desks in white boxes next to me, in the photocopier, on the floor. Everywhere. All there is to do is to keep reading.

Her cubicle was in the row behind mine. When she worked, she always talked to the people next to her. She never stopped talking.

"Hi, I'm Caroline! Oh my God, you see that girl over there..."

"I already can't stand her," Scarlet whispered. She sat on my desk, ignoring the fact that her short crimson dress hurried away from her knees. Her long, black hair slapped my face as she used her head to gesture at this foreign creature.

"You can't stand anyone," I said.

"Beth's right," Angel said from behind me. I could hear her tugging at her high neckline, fidgeting in her blouse and jacket. "You don't give anyone a chance."

"I know," Scarlet glared at Caroline. "And I'm better for it."

I found out about her life. I knew her parents lived in New Jersey, I knew she graduated from New York University two years ago with a degree in accounting. I knew that she was engaged and, mostly, I knew that she was happy. She never mentioned the sad things.

"He sent me the prettiest flowers on Valentine's Day last year! I couldn't believe how big the bouquet was. Took up my whole desk. My boss at the time wasn't too happy though. That's why I like Roy so much better. I can't wait to see what he's getting me this year, especially since we are getting married in July..."

When she was serious, she twisted her hair around her pen all the way up to her scalp while she stared at her papers. Her forehead would crinkle in concentration. But this only happened for certain cases, the ones that involved children. I watched her when she ruffled through tragedies while trying to remain professional. She always took longer handling those claims. A week into her arrival in the maze, I heard her on the phone.

"Hello? Is this Mr. Seul?"

Scarlet came over and sat on my desk. "Who is she talking to?"

"I'm not sure," Angel said. "Any ideas, Beth?"

"Seul..." I stared at Caroline's concerned features. "That's the guy whose family got killed. They were building a snowman last month on the side of the road. Drunk driver came up and BAM! Killed the guy's wife and two kids." That was the kind of case I handled everyday. Nice people living their nice lives in their nice homes when someone bad comes along and takes away the nice.

"Oh right, I remember now."

"SSSHH!" said Scarlet. "I'm trying to listen."

"...Caroline Bates, from Everyday Insurance...I...no...no everything is fine...I just...I wanted to let you know how sorry I am for your loss." Tears ran down her face and splattered on her claims. She clutched onto a picture frame which I can only see the back of from my desk. I didn't have any pictures at work. Few of the

masked adjusters did.

She was innocent. She still had things she cared about. Scarlet laughed.

"Give her another month and she'll be yelling at him for letting the kids too close to the road."

We became very close, me and Caroline. She fascinated me in the way she would type with one hand while writing with the other. She never complained about anything – and I hate it when people complain. And I could tell she liked me. No one smiles like that at someone they don't like. Every time she did I could feel my face burn crimson, and I know that she noticed.

Caroline noticed everything. Maybe it was her youth, but I like to think it was because her eyes were uncovered. There was no mask to block her vision, no obstruction to get in the way of her seeing exactly what was there.

Some days, when I went home with her, she walked and absorbed the atmosphere. She didn't drive her car to work, believing New York to be polluted enough without her help. I didn't usually think about that.

She had the energy of a child. No matter how fast I walked, she was always faster. I could never keep up. The first time I went home with her, I lost her in the crowd completely. I could tell she felt bad about it, so I didn't mention it to her. It did make me angry when I finally got to her apartment building after chasing her the eighteen blocks from work and she forgot to buzz me in. I waited outside the building for a long time, trying to figure out which windows were hers, but I gave up when the sun went down. That's when I usually gave up. Then I would walk back to work to get my car. I thought that was very rude of her.

But then other things started happening. Things that went beyond rude.

"Happy Valentine's Day!" yelled Angel.

"This is such a waste of a day," Scarlet said, as expected.

"What's that?" I followed Angel's gaze to Caroline's desk. She had not gotten to work yet, but on top of her paperwork sat a purple vase with long stem, blue roses. Scarlet walked over to them, her dress daring her to move faster.

"Hey Beth," Scarlet called while holding up a small card, "They're for you. Looks like your fiancé and I don't agree on this holiday."

"How did they get over there?" I hurriedly placed the vase on my desk before Caroline arrived.

"You know what I think?" said Scarlet. "I think we have a little thief on our hands."

"She's not even here yet," Angel laughed. "And besides, who steals flowers from someone else's fiancé?"

"I...I'm sure the delivery guy just put them on the wrong desk. That's all."

I actually believed it. It seemed simple enough, an easy mistake. But then Caroline came and sat at her cubicle. She looked at her empty desk and sighed deeply.

"It's because it's a Tuesday," she said. "Nothing good ever happened on a

Tuesday."

I brought my roses home that night. She was staring at them all day. I got home and could not focus on anything. Things kept racing through my head. Mr. Seul and his kids, I wonder if his wife saw the car coming at them? Blue roses, everywhere, blue roses. Scarlet told me Caroline wanted them. I know she wanted them. Why wouldn't she let me upstairs? I waited and waited and waited.

I glanced at the mirror resting next to my bed. I looked old. Older than I should look. Dark shadows trickled down my face while my black hair stuck out at odd angles. This is why I wear a mask. I didn't look at the mirror for the rest of the night and thought about her.

"SWEET CAROLINE...BUM BUM BUM..."

"Hey, Scarlet? Do you really think she tried to take my flowers today?"

"Of course I do."

"But..."

"They were on her desk, Beth."

"Oh Scarlet, stop," Angel said. She had abandoned her jacket and stood unbuttoning and re-buttoning the top of her shirt. "You're scaring her."

"I'm not scared," I said.

"What would she want those flowers for?"

"Maybe she was jealous of me?"

"GOOD TIMES NEVER SEEMED SO GOOD!"

"So good, so good..."

One week after the flower incident I woke up late. I rushed into work and noticed her staring at me. Everyone stared as I walked in and I saw Caroline whisper to a masked woman who started working here a year after I did. Eyes had been peeking out from behind masked faces for the whole week, following me as the bodies continued on with their work.

I sat at my desk and my purse clattered underneath me, and then I stumbled and knocked my chair over. I swore under my breath and bent down to pick it up. When I moved to stand back up, my head crashed into my desk. I swore again. And again and again.

"BETH!"

"What?" I looked up and saw my boss, Roy Flay, standing over me.

"I've been calling you since you walked in the door. Can I see you in my office for a moment?"

His office was small, but nicer than my box. A window took up the back wall, looking out to the maze of misery. Deep green walls were accented with wooden furniture. His desk was clear of any clutter and picture frames were evenly spaced throughout the room. A man in his fifties, he had people to go home to who confiscated his mask. I sat in a cushiony, suede chair while my boss stared at me. He always stared at me. His hazel eyes watched me through bifocal glasses while his smooth head blinded me.

"Beth," he began. "Is everything all right with you?"

"What do you mean?"

He ruffled papers in front of him; instructions on how to manage employees. He read it as a script.

"You seem distracted. You haven't been finishing any of your claims on time..."

"I'm getting married, did you know that? Yeah, this summer...July."

Flay scanned the page in front of him.

"I see...I'm sure that's placing a lot of stress on you..."

"No, not really, why?"

He flipped through pages, but evidently did not find what he was looking for and disregarded his Bible.

"Er...I've also heard some things from the other employees." He cleared his throat and glanced out the indoor window. "Some of them have heard you mumbling while you work, singing old songs, even staring at them..."

"They talk about me?"

"All I'm saying is that you might want to consider..."

"Why are they talking about me? It's her, isn't it? Did she talk to you?"

"Beth, please...I've known you for ten years..." He was going off-book. He didn't know the lines.

"Who complained about me?"

He clutched onto his insignificant pages.

"Maybe you should get back to work."

"Yeah...maybe."

I glared at her when I walked back to my desk. She pretended not to notice, but I know she did.

I stayed at work late that night to catch up on my claims. I didn't want her to think I didn't do my job. I was good at my job. After ten years, three months and sixteen days I had better be. The dozens of employees disbursed one by one, finding their way out of the mismatched columns of desks and white walls, but Caroline stayed. I saw her crying over papers earlier, so she must have fallen behind. It was Tuesday.

We sat in the empty maze. The only sounds came from the shuffling of papers, the typing of computers, and our minor coughs to clear our throats, to talk to the people who weren't there. After an hour or two of this, she reached to grab a pencil from the top of her desk, but knocked over her picture frame.

I finally saw the photo. In it, a handsome young man stood with his arms around Caroline. He stared at her with a seductive grin while she laughed at the camera.

"Who's that?" She gasped when I spoke, jumping in her seat.

"Oh...um...Michael...my fiancé."

"MICHAEL!" Angel was screaming.

"Did you hear that? It's Michael!" Scarlet yelled out.

"Oh no," sobbed Angel. "Oh no oh no oh no."

I grabbed at my hair and shut my eyes tight. They were screaming. I couldn't breathe. I was screaming.

"What...are you okay?" Caroline's sweet voice rang out over theirs. "Beth?"

"How could you? Michael...my fiancé!"

"Ask her if she is sleeping with him..."

"I'm sure it's just a misunderstanding..."

"...I bet that she is."

"You...you think you are engaged to Michael?" Caroline stammered.

"They were right...I thought he loved me...I thought you loved me!"

"Beth! I don't even know you...neither does he..."

"You were my Caroline...my sweet Caroline..."

"Beth...this isn't funny...I don't know why you think this is funny."

* * *

Now that Caroline isn't at her desk, I'm starting to miss her. The picture that I saw last night sits neatly on her desk, taunting me. Flay called all of the adjustors into a conference room to talk to us about Caroline. What a pity.

"She was working late last night and someone hit her with their car...a hit and run." Flay choked on the last word while squeezing a book in his hands. Behind his purple hand I read, *Death in the Workplace: How to Handle the Grief of Employees*. Streams of liquid fell down his face and onto his Armani suit. He collapsed into the nearest chair and held his polished head in his free hand. I smiled at the thought of him telling his family about what happened. A policeman, who had been hiding in the background, stepped forward and touched his shoulder while the adjustors allowed tears to stream out from under their masked faces of counterfeit happiness.

"If anyone has information on this, please let us know. We will be questioning you all individually in a moment."

"I think I know who did it..."

"Sssh!" I begged. Scarlet laughed and went away.

I miss Caroline. I hope she knew that I cared about her.

"Is that why you killed her?" Angel asked.

"I loved her."

"You hated her."

"I know."

The police questioned me and I answered everything perfectly. I went home yesterday at 6 p.m. Did not see Caroline when I left. Gosh, I wish I had said goodbye or something. She was an amazing girl, she really was. Such a shame.

An hour later, Flay called me into his office, where I found the policeman who questioned me and two other men in uniform.

"Beth, please sit down." Flay was staring at me. He was always staring. He had no book to read. "Did you tell this man you left at six o'clock last night?"

"Yes...yes I did."

"But...you see, I talked to you in my office yesterday and we discussed how you were behind in work...but then I found your finished claim on my desk this morning when I got here." His hazel eyes burned my skin. "And when I left last night, at seven, your car was the only one left in the lot...where is your car today, Beth?"

"You're fucked."

"Oh no, oh no oh no."

"It's at home...I walked here...don't want to...hurt the environment. Why does it matter that I finished my claim? I can't be good at my job?"

"He means that you were working later than six." The policeman's baritone voice vibrated off of the walls. He saw Flay's discomfort and stepped in. "And I for one would like to know why you lied to me."

"Maybe I left at seven...I don't remember..."

"That's not all, Beth. Caroline went to Flay and said you had been staring at her...that you talk to yourself and took her flowers."

"No, Angel and Scarlet...they convinced me..."

"She thought you were following her, Beth!"

"She walked too fast! I...I was invited...she invited me! She loved me. But she was screwing Michael...so...so she must have said that to make me look bad..."

"Michael..." Flay squinted through his glasses. "I heard Caroline talk about him...they were engaged, Beth...do you know him?"

"Of course I know him!"

"Are you sure?" whispered Angel.

"Yes I'm sure!"

"He was in the picture," Scarlet said. "She stole the flowers."

"I know! I know she wanted them!"

"Wanted what? Please calm down."

"But Scarlet won't stop..."

The policeman in the corner flipped through a clipboard. "Flay, I don't have a Scarlet on my list..."

"What a pity," Scarlet spat at him with disgust.

Angel was behind me. "Run Beth. Hurry."

"Better run...get outta here..."

"Now Beth...they are gonna get you."

"I have to go...gotta go...go now..."

I ran out of the office and into the maze. Angel and Scarlet sat on my desk in matching, crimson dresses that inched higher with every movement. They were laughing. I sprinted past row after row of endless walls while obstacles in the form of adjustors flew in front of me. But I missed them. I plowed through and they fell behind me. Masks appeared over the cubical walls, staring. I was close. So close to the door. Then I'd be safe. Outside that door. So close.

But a man in uniform caught me. He jumped in front of me and I fell. The floor

was hard. It hurt. I could still hear them laughing. The other two policemen attacked and I couldn't move. I could only scream. I couldn't get out of the maze.

I thought about how she looked right before my car hit her. She was scared. When I drove away, I saw her move. She was still alive. But I left her there. I left her there to die. I wonder how it felt? A jabbing pain erupted in my side and I jumped and screamed.

"It hurts! Oh God it hurts!"

I grabbed my hair and felt it rip from my scalp. With it, I pulled off my mask. People could see me; they could see my exposed face and feelings for the first time. My throat ached from screaming but I kept at it. I wanted it to stop. I thought about Caroline. I was going to miss her. I wish she didn't have to die. It hurt too much. I clutched at my side and screamed with Scarlet and Angel.

"SWEET CAROLINE BUM BUM BUUUUM GOOD TIMES NEVER SEEMED SO GOOD..."



Feeling
by Kelly Gallucci

I've got that feeling
You know that feeling right?
You have to know that feeling
The one where you see him across the street
And suddenly it's like you're being punched in the gut
And just as you're struggling for air someone's got a hold on your throat
Yeah...
That feeling

It's sort of like the taste of his lips
You know those lips
The ones that once tasted like heaven
The ones that you once never wanted to let go of
Till one day you realize that
They taste a little bit more like slut than you remembered
Yeah it's kinda like that taste

Just like it's like that sound
You know that sound
The one of an overheard conversation
The one of him saying her name
The one of your heart imploding
Oh yeah

You know that sound like you know that taste like you know that feeling
And you know all of those just as well as you know that voice
The one that says, "Why did I do this again?"

Michelangelo
by Julia D'Angelo

Michelangelo
You were a complex cat
When they called you great
You sighed and spat
From your post
Against the ceiling
Writhing and
Wheeling
'Cause of the pretty forms
You painted.
Torn and tainted.
Floating in
Scarves and flowing fabrics
Defining curves
You thought served
as hellholes straight to Satan.

Funny how the
Vatican's where
You found your
Glory
As you ruminated
In your story
I'm sinful
I'm gay
I'm ungodly
I say
That I'm as virtuous as they come
cause I'm only as pure
as everyone
Despite my gift
I'm a boy
I'm a man
I'm a girl
I'm a god.



Affirmation of Helios by C. Earnshaw

These are the days when the sun refuses
to dip beneath the horizon until nine o'clock has passed,
as it complements the residents of the season
with its orange-red boughs,
rifting the yellows o'er the shrouded pasture
until its very last ray has waved its farewell
above the grass in the winnowing distance.

Time may not stand
in the shadows of playground matrimonies
and the motley reds and yellows of youth.
Such giants have come to pass
beneath the pitching of the sun
that strikes, as ever it has stricken,
'gainst the rear of the past—
its hands pressed to the palms
of the morrow—
while it drives away prospects lost to Time
from our minds, though not our beings—
though the prospects of a maturing day
may fall short with the setting of the sun.

Change may not stand
to wet its eager feet in the puddles
on the hopscotch concrete e'ermore—
the sun has forced its rays into the ripples
and they have dried to the arches of Time.

We are wrought from the cracked seeds
of relations lost in Change:
thirsting from the aches in our roots
to bring the steadiness of our soil
into the passing of the sun.

But Trust—
Trust may brace our muscles
to carry us upon our arches
into a shy reluctance for Change
with the knowledge
that all having loved may love again
with talent and equal substance,

and though the path of our sun may
fall beneath the horizon of our protests,
we leave the days which mark our youth
with the verve to slake
the desperate thirst in our sturdy roots,
though pocked with fears of Change,
that we may warm our stems
with the passing sun,
though we must not grow dependent
on the comforting rays
with which our seeds have rooted—
from which we have been born.



Eastern Seaboard
by Nichole Boisvert

From the plane window
it looks like a photograph—
all light clustered and spread.
You can almost make out shapes,
heights of buildings,
Philadelphia, Manhattan,
Boston.
Fenway Park. The Empire State Building.
Light filled with bodies
blending into one great sea.
No feature can be distinguished
but a collective pulse.
And then we pass.

Burdensome
by Maxine Presto

My head was a round and ripe melon.
The delicate flesh littered with seeds.
Weight collapsed my knees into a crowded plot
of soil.

I met others in the same unsettling piece of earth.
They were busy tying strings from their shoulders to the heavens with
a heavy head in the way.

The blind soiled hands were no match for such
an unwavering burden.

Silence
by Michael Ardizzone

The snow falls--winter rests at our house,
where its cotton mother mutes the light
the sun has sent to wash the ground.

Silence swathes the countryside
(as soft and pale as the light it hosts);
In a certain way the world crouches,
It shelters 'neath the silence and the snow.

(Somewhere, a baby is born;
somewhere, passion is cooled
in reverence for a spring to come.)

Under winter's solemn eyes,
silence reclines next to me on the porch.
It shares a drink with me
as we talk of old times, wordlessly,
until we can, together,
embrace the coming of the night.

The Stroke

by Megan Shannon

Courage, Herculean courage. I knew him well,
Courage that I admired in a man that struggled.
He kept his faith, and spoke with no words.
Looking into the eyes of a man I loved,
And believing that he would heal, his days were confined.

Found on the floor like a serene sunset,
Left without speech and mobility,
The man had slight movement in his right hand
On the verge of curtains he was tough,
Determined to beat the unbeatable, his days were confined.

Wonderful how we went fishing,
And how he had stewed a day prior.
No smiles left, though the fading eyes spoke,
Confused why the man wanted to survive,
Determined to beat the beating, his days were confined.

I remember the loveable Irishman well,
Blessed with the "gift of gab,"
Though the man's conditions worsened,
He inspired us all to live to the fullest.
Courage he expressed day to day, when death was only a heart beat away.
His days were confined.



Robin Miniter

love bleeds out
by Sarah Philpot

(love bleeds out
as) lust shoots
in

be(layersofwarmth)tween
hands grop-
(re
lease) ing

(my
heart)

breathing hard
er
(know)now&(ing
less than we though
t)

what (is) happenshereOh
,(not)now we
un-
cover un(kind)
needed secrets;see

(whatwe
feel is
) who
we
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e



Slow Dance
by Shelley Doster

I can feel the pressure of your fingertips
Tingling with static
(Holding me)more
Cautiously
Guiltily
Than before
By my edges
As if you are afraid
That this contact might cause
Galaxies to explode with fury
And bury you in the past with their
Debris

It's getting late...
by Kellie Hayden

"It's getting late," I observed.

It was a Thursday night during the last week of August. He and I were sitting on a stone wall, overlooking the ocean, at the very edge of the town that we grew up in. When the tide is high, the water comes right to the foot of the wall, so close that it can wash over your hands if you just lean over a little and reach downwards. At low tide, the sand is exposed, leaving a boundary between the wall and the sea. As the tide slips out, it leaves the sand cool from its embrace and littered with shells and lost snails and seaweed. Behind us lay a small motel and restaurant, now desolate, famous in town for their grilled cheeses and soft serve ice cream that filled the stomachs of every child, and some adults, during those unhurried summer days.

He didn't respond to my comment, but it really was getting late. I looked the other way, pretending that I hadn't said anything. The only people who remained on the beach with us were strolling somewhere in the distance, vacationers yearning to preserve their summer bliss for just a few more days.

I fussed with my hair while I waited for him to say something, anything. My curls had been smooth when I left the house, falling in graceful waves over my shoulders. However, after being at the shore for hours, my hair had transformed into what I imagined my anxious insides looked like. I tried desperately to smooth it down, my fingers entangled in the strands. After all, I hadn't expected to be here for this long, but nothing ever goes according to plan, and nothing is ever easy. The ocean wind blew my hair wildly across my face.

He reached over to brush the ringlets out of my eyes, and I remembered everything. His hands were warm, rough on the palms and smooth on the backs. Those hands. I used to pretend I knew how to read palms just so he would let me hold them. I guess he always knew that I was making up the meanings of each line as I traced them with my fingertips, but he played along anyway - listening intently, smiling widely at the good news and gasping at whatever catastrophe might strike.

(I just wanted to know the lines on his hands better than I knew the lines on my own.)

The stones of the wall were cool beneath my legs, and I shivered a little. It had been scorching earlier in the day, but August was waning and autumn's cool nights were upon us. He shuffled, repositioning himself on the wall.

"It's your green light," he finally said. There was a sorrow in his eyes, and I laughed at his words in a futile attempt to comfort him. He knew me better than anyone. Nobody else would ever realize that I would come here every single night in the summertime because a green light that flashed somewhere across the Long Island Sound reminded me of Gatsby, reminded me of how we could hold onto something so unwaveringly, not realizing that it was already lost.

We resumed gazing outwards.

There were boats in the swells, even at that hour, would-be sailors grasping with their hearts for the edges of the season, the way their hands once grasped for the

edges of their nets. All summer dreams were coming to a close. Dreams of pirate ships and remarkable adventures filled with love and treasure and glory.

Wind chimes were silenced, packed into unlabeled boxes and shoved into rarely-opened closets. Taken off of white washed porches, leaving clapboard houses unadorned and without their voices.

Even the countless glass jars filled with seashell collections were being pushed to the backs of the shelves by their once loving owners. Out of season, out of sight—making way for porcelain pumpkins. Seashell collections praying that what they say is true, that absence really will make the heart grow fonder.

The glow from the solitary lighthouse moved westward, shrouding us with darkness, and the tide slipped back out.

We too were grasping for something, just like those sailors. Grasping for what was once there, grasping for more time when there was none left.

And we too were without voices, just like those wind chimes. Having so many things to say, but having no means of saying them.

And we too were praying that what they always told us was true, just like those seashells. Can absence ever really make a heart grow fonder, or does absence just allow a heart to forget?

All that was left was the green light, steadily blinking somewhere in the distance, marking the passage of time.

"It's getting late," he told me.



6 a.m.
by Maxine Presto

The Hudson River boasts of barges and sailboats
6 a.m. long thin boats slip through morning moisture,
Metro North train agitates the trees at the end of campus.

Steel blue sky dissipates into pale blue
daylight barges through distant branches and windows
the train startles me – wide awake on uncovered earth

idly breaking twigs, tugging flowers
smoothing out my prickly grass blanket
and rearranging stones.

Beautiful Dreamer
by Kelly Gallucci

She sits and dreams
Of different things
Of lands so far away
Of a place to belong
Where she can forever stay
She dreams of escape
Of breaking free
Finally off to the place
Where she was meant to be
She dreams of green grass
No traffic to be heard
Just the gentle tune
Sung by a native bird
She dreams of magic
And beautiful skies
But will this sweet dreamer
Ever open her eyes?



~~Its relationships like these that seem~~
~~like car accidents. All broken glass~~

I'm too
run down
to care
what
will and what
might

God only knows what's wrong
and what's right; ~~obviously~~ I sure
as hell don't ~~know~~ I can't tell

what I want or what I like,
God only knows, cause if I'm
being sincere it's not always clear
between ~~the~~ all the things and ~~the~~ dim light,
what crosses the line between commitment
and innocence it's up to God, I guess.
When the name be flowing from
either party's lips, it seems ordained
or shamed, she's either loved or
maimed, but behind closed doors
only God doesn't guess.

So fade the lines between love
and duress as two quickly undress
~~and~~ only to slip apart just as swiftly
before dawn. That I am ^{shamed} walk of
shame is the only recollection of
the ~~new~~ affection ~~that~~ drunken
copulation ~~relinquishes~~ in the morning
I'd ask "why God, why?" But he'll
never reply, cause even God ~~knows~~
~~that~~ ~~you~~ ~~knows~~ ~~the~~ ~~emptiness~~ ~~with~~ ~~now~~ ~~to~~
you ~~that~~ died. Just a little
piece, shed and discarded, flushed
away empty hearted with all

the ceremony of your long-forgotten
second heart. There is no emotion,
just half hearted motion and an all
too urgent desire to leave. To run and
escape. To fill up the void and ~~partake~~
in a journey away from your head. ~~Escape~~
~~bed after bed with a heart~~ try to
avoid the chance to ever think again.



Marina Cella

Hypotheticals by Richard M. Frias

1:29 am

This sinful city living got me counting hypotheticals in my sleep
I swear to God I'll fucking explode *if* this alarm clock beeps.
If they take me from my mother
If when dad left there was another
If I miss that stupid train
If downtown is to blame
If they jump me for my gear
If you don't have to live with these fears that we fear
If when you sleep I am awake
If you didn't have to go Anthony's wake
If I knew his RIP would come at age twenty
Then
Then
Then, I will just
Scream

3:46 am

Scream so happily into the night—Because
Sometimes I want to end it.
Take a bullet and befriend it
Then send it to my brain
With an attachment called "the rain."
Just to be melodramatic
Pretend to find shapes in shapeless static
Be more complicated than I really am
Life's a gamble but we got no hand
Life's garden but we just don't dig it
Life's a Bitch but...but...but
Man life's a Bitch.

5:42 am

But that's only one if
What if you had two?
What if your ifs did not belong to you

What if my life was her life and her life was mine
If her dreams are my dreams
When I fail, then she fails
Then, her tears are my tears and my tears aren't my own
Then, I can't breathe
Then, I can't sleep
Then, I can't dream
If only there was this greatness within me like I once thought
Then, why does it itch?
Then, what is that sound?
Then, who left the window open?
If I could give her the world
Then, this room is too small.
Then, this pillow is too soft.
Then, this sunlight is too bright.
If there were no ifs, then there'd be no thens.

7:00 am

Sleep!
Sleep!
Sleep!

This sinful city living got me counting hypotheticals in my sleep.
I swear to God I'll fucking explode if this—BEEP BEEP BEEP.

Kill the Spotlight by Katherine Bilsky

she begins the intricate journey completely naïve;
placing her whole heart and passion into the hands of performance
entering the cool, sophisticated theatre for the opening night she acts through
the eyes of another.

completely indulged in the riches of her own talent
she imprints and records every last moment into her mind
the times are changing, the competition expands
as if thrusting a knife through the sound waves the whisper of criticism
lingers in her ear.

zipping up the back of her costume, she applies heavy coats of makeup to hide
the panic

she stations herself center stage, the curtain is drawn, the spotlights
reflecting her failures

and instead of the admired screenplay coming from her lips, she only brings
forth silence

headline news: a career in shambles, a name is ruined.

the stage has moved on.

and leaves her with the headache from the night before.



Myths, midnight and mayhem
by Brit Fiorenza

*Tonight is the last night of December
the first morning of January*

There is no change, only perpetual paranoia
You see, the moonlight stalked my path tonight
Made my shadows lengthen to catch my legs
Come here; press against this glass pane
Does your cheek chap too?
A ruthless barrier between the night and this room
Tonight let's stay awake
To disturb the stagnant air
With fire crackers and sparklers
With streamers and confetti
With champagne and no peace
White lights pulse with our celebration
Let's rally until midnight
Beckoning off the moonbeams with our screams
And if another day comes, then we'll be at ease
To fall over one another in a drunken sleep
To what else could I raise my drink?
Lack of sobriety: a tribute to January
The only way I can cope with this change
Is if I apply this anesthetic bottle to my lips
Trace my finger down its neck
To streak the frosted glass
Anecdote of the bottle
To peer through and see
All of your blissful faces distorted
Let's pause for a moment
Watch the sky break
How long does it take?
For the motion and rampage
That results in the rally of the rising sun
Against petrified horizons

Let the Spirit
by Katherine Tegen

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The Fall 2008 Literary Arts Society E-Board



Clockwise from left: Florencia Lauria, Amy Wheeler, Amanda Mulvihill, Leigh Everett, Richard M. Frias, Jessica Durante, Alexander Sutton, Julia Stamberger

Well, here we are. It seems like we've been working for months, or even 10 years, until we've reached this midnight of mayhem. We are wishing we had some pomegranate martinis as the single digit hours and the 6 a.m. sunrise approach and we contemplate creating poetry from nothing. As our patience runs out and the images don't seem to emerge, we just want to say anything and make this a relatively short story. But then we regain some energy and our busy hands work like Michelangelo, our thoughts coming in a rush. We hope you enjoy, with your entire human heart, the feeling you'll get from our favorite part.

Kill the spotlight, it's getting late.
Love,
Your Editors-in-Chief,
Amanda and Amy