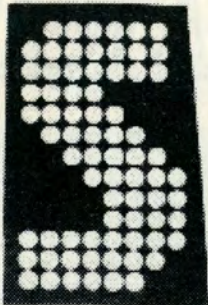


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MARIST
LITERARY ARTS SOCIETY
PRESENTS:

THE MOSAIC

FALL 2005

Fall 2005 Mosaic Staff

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CONTENTS

6 And They Were Not Ashamed

7 Diversity

HAPPINESS

8 The Shrink as The Devil

9 Untitled

NATURE

11 Across State Lines

12 A Christmas Story

13 And I'm Praying for Rain, and I'm Praying for Tidal Waves

*What's this all
about?*

14 The Observer

15 Match

HOPE

16 Application

18 A Section from: It's Never Too Late

HUMOR

19 A Space Between the Wall
The Dreamer

20 When Nobody Sees You

21-25 Performance Poetry

SADNESS

22 Consciousness

Untitled 23

LOVE

Repent 24

Clarity 25

If There are No More Sleeves, Grab Another Cup
'Cause that Cappucino Gets Hot 26

CHILDHOOD

Photographs 27

Ode to Recess 28
Woods of My Mind

SPOKEN WORD

Sunset 29

Shouldn't Have Stopped at Thirteen 30

Widening Heights 31

FRIENDSHIP

Mariana 32

The Creator 33

El Olvido 34
Mi Tierra

Writer's Block 35

PHILOSOPHY

Magnetic Poetry 36

The Burden 37

And They Were Not Ashamed
By Erin Gannon

I pack socks and a toothbrush,
A change of clothes, shampoo, and soap--
I do not pack pajamas.
They are for the naked.
Tangled as ivy we float;

We wear each other.
In the dark heat of blankets, I stick to you.
Our Eden is filled with the buzz of a laptop.
Post-its fall from the walls like autumn leaves.
I could abandon this garden we grew,

If I knew my bare skin
Would always remember the scratch of your cheek,
The soft brush of your fingers, like boughs against the sky.
If I could call up this quiet thicket of memory,
I could make it through one more lonesome week,

And go on to the cold, hard, bright
Land of pages, and pencils, and pajamas at night.

Diversity

By Nichole Boisvert

The salty waves
Thunder against the rocky shore,
Sending geysers of salt water into the air
Like those from underground,
Returning to their
Multicolored sulfuric pools,
In the shadow of
Saw-toothed, snowcapped peaks
With melting glaciers streaming down their sides,
Hurling over rocky precipices,
Making misty storms and glistening rainbows
That stretch across the sky,
From rim to rim,
As the jagged, rust-colored cliffs brush the sky.

The Shrink as the Devil

By Stephanie Slamka

I leave you to this
to take up all your pieces
and bring them to me
So I can sift through
the good, the bad, the necessary,
and give you back what you
might find useful in life
and for this you pay me homage
in the shape of money
and I drink my tea with a touch of sugar
because I have been successful another day

and when you crawl back to me
days, weeks, years to come
I'll tell you - lay yourself out for me again
and you spread your neurons
flat on my desk
I plug through them meticulously
later you leave with a prescription
and I drink my tea with a touch of sugar
because I have been successful another day

you come back to me
because now you are hooked on my help
on the sound of my voice, and the drugs I dole out
and all the things you get to tell me - I seem so inter-
ested, so caring
really

So I sit there and doodle on my clipboard, nodding my
head
Now how does that make you feel?
Stereotyping my office walls
You put a check in my hand
and leave with a smile
and I get to drink my tea with a touch of sugar
because now it is official
you belong to me



Kristen Gelormino

Untitled

By Kevin Duffy

Take me
Take me away
To somewhere
I can still remember
Before the empty bottles
Before the broken pictures
Before everything reminded me of you
When you come back
Just don't
I can't see your face
Your eyes see through me
Don't they?
I swear they do
Your hands pull through me
Don't you
Don't you feel me?
I'm still here
Different body
The same old thoughts
Jump through my mind
Like an old record
Playing the same imperfections
Again, again, and again
Where's tomorrow
All I see is yesterday
All I can see is the tears from yesterday
The pain
It didn't leave
But you did
You don't seem to change
Same cold winter nights
I swear those pictures come to life.

Across State Lines

By Erin Gannon

I've driven this drive a hundred times,
It seems. West.
Sometimes with the sun in my eyes,
Sometimes at my back.
I know it well, know that
When you're done-with-danbury,
Hey-bang-welcome! To the Empire State!
But I'm not all here,
I'm eastward.

I've driven it through black rain,
Ankle flexing angrily, drawing the distance between us.
I fly over the highway,
Waiting for that killer view--
Over the next rise--
Around the next bend--
There! Catskills! Freedom-dawning!
This is where I belong.

I've driven it through pale snow,
Slow and soft,
Stay, it whispers,
His bed is warm,
His lips kind.
What are you driving to?
Your window looks over the river,
But there is a crust of ice and loneliness on the glass.

Once I drove through dawn,
Watched the snow turn
Grey-to-blue-to-white
In wonder.
And though I know the
Half-frozen Hudson is home,
I've left a piece of me on your pillow.



James Sheehan

A Christmas Story

By Craig Ellsworth

Christopher feels as though he is simply working too many hours in those blackened coal mines.

With heavy legs and a sore back, he waddles and wades through the fierce snowdrifts to his front door (That's generous. Unfortunately for Chris, he hasn't a back door or side door with which to enter his home).

The snow blows at him from the east and from the west, but mainly from the south, pushing him on toward the house. His house, the pathetic thing it is, can only be seen by the sparkling Christmas lights adorning the door and windows.

Chris hates Christmas. The only good thing he feels about Christmas is that he can always see his house from a distance, as his wife insists on decorating to "help him fully appreciate the holiday." On days like this, it does allow him to appreciate its wacky customs at least in the very slightest degree.

But there are too many outside forces always making him more depressed around the holidays. First, he's been forced to work longer and longer hours every year about this time. He is hardly ever able to spend time with his wife anymore, a woman who always enjoyed Christmas growing up and who wants to be able to spend just one Christmas with her husband.

But no, they always need him deep down in the mines right on Christmas, and for longer hours every year.

Chris knew he was getting too old to sling yet another heavy sack of coal over his shoulder when he realized he couldn't naturally stand up straight anymore. It may have been from carrying too much on his back in those damn mines, or he could just be getting elderly. But the real kicker, if there ever was one, was when he realized that he liked the name Christopher better than Chris. Nothing makes you realize you're not as playful as you used to be as much as the day you realize you prefer the long of your name, and that you've preferred it for years.

Another big Christmas in his life was the grand old day --much like this-- when he came home through that great blizzard of nineteen-whenever-it-was to his wife and noticed her hair was graying. That made Chris -- Christopher -- give himself a good hard look in the mirror.

But he doesn't need a mirror to know that he can't see his toes anymore. He isn't pudgy, or husky, or chunky, or pleasantly plump like his loving wife. He is fat. He is plain old fat and he doesn't like it. He is too damn fat. He hates the stares he gets at the supermarket, and how his acquaintances (after too many rows, few friends were left) tell him he "can stand to lose a few pounds." He is sure to have high cholesterol and figures he should've dropped dead in the snow bank ten feet and ten years ago.

But Chris plods on, and feels the relief he's been aching for since he began his trek through the snow too damn long ago when his hefty boot scrapes the rough granite of his landing. He can't see the steps, and the howling wind and snow (perhaps sleet by now) slamming his eardrums like David Silveria disallows him to hear the scrape, but years of this same walk time and again at least give him that feeling in his feet.

But to Christopher this can't be seen as an accomplishment, for he knows he'll just be working longer hours next year and will have to take this same trudge, but perhaps a little later in the early morning, when perhaps (the only comfort) the snow won't be so bad.

All he has to do is turn the knob, and the force of the wind behind him takes the door in its grasp. Christopher nearly loses an arm as the door bursts open (a cliché that cannot be closer to the truth), and his entryway floods with snow.

With all the effort he has left, he steps over the threshold, moves the door back into the way of the wind, and puts all of his immense weight into closing it.

Chris knows he has accomplished his feat not so much by the clicking of the door, but by the largely decreased volume of the outdoors. The wind still howls, and the sleet still tats the windows, but the fury is no longer deafening.

Aching and shaking, he takes off his hefty winter coat, blackened through the night by his graveyard shift, and leaves it dead on the ground, to be picked up some other time after a sitting at the fire or a hot bath.

As he rips off his boot without seeing it, he remembers that the joy of a hot bath is out of the question. The last time he attempted such a stunt was probably over a year ago and that time he had gotten stuck like Taft.

A fire it is then.

With inhuman strength, Christopher pushes himself off the ground, taking his enormous torso with him. As he stumbles to the den drunkenly, his soft sock-footed feet thump heavily against the ground. The house rattles with each footfall, but Chris doesn't notice, nor does he care. He wants a crackling fire where he can warm his ample body.

The fireplace metal is as cold as the sleet panging against the window panes. There is no fire set, and at this Chris can do nothing more than sigh. His wife usually has the fire going, especially during such an evil time of year, but he can't be angry with her. He is simply too tired.

He is also too tired, too exhausted, to start up his own fire, so he just hopes to be able to get naked and cozy into a bed with an electric blanket and warm wife. Right now all he cares to do is turn on the former, not the latter. Oh, hell, he knows he's too damn old for that stuff, so why should he kid himself? Last time he had sex was... well, he doesn't remember having sex after 400 pounds.

About halfway to his bedroom he decides he won't even bother to undress. His wife will kill him when he wakes up for getting the sheets so damn dirty, but he's too tired to care. All that matters is getting some sleep, the kind of sleep so beautiful your whole body is floating, and neither earthquake nor atomic bomb can wake you.

That's the kind of sleep Chris wants to get to.

His bedroom door is closed, so much of his little remaining effort is expended just turning the knob, pushing on the door with a touch and letting physics handle the rest.

In his waking slumber, Christopher does not hear his wife's gentle moaning. Instead, it is her shriek that wakes him up to full consciousness, all gauges in the red, all senses on high alert.

Christopher is no longer an old man. He is no longer a fat man. He is no longer an exhausted man. He is now Mr. Christopher Nicholas Kringle, full of energy, full of life, full of rage, and Christopher Nicholas Kringle has just discovered his wife in bed with another man, a man much smaller, perhaps quicker, than giant Nick himself, but no matter. The man will not be getting out of this bedroom alive.



And I'm praying for rain, and I'm praying for tidal waves

By Jimmy Cross

An electric secret
masked in the open.
Black blossoming
the storm clouds

reflect.

Heart.

Mine.

The first drops fall, lightly
the
pace

increases.

Listen now to the beat.

A rhythm to the beat.

A rhyme of guilt and subtle fury.

Deep breath, let the sky
bleed itself out.

Nature.

Illumination.

One blinding flash

And what soul you saw has been
hidden once more.

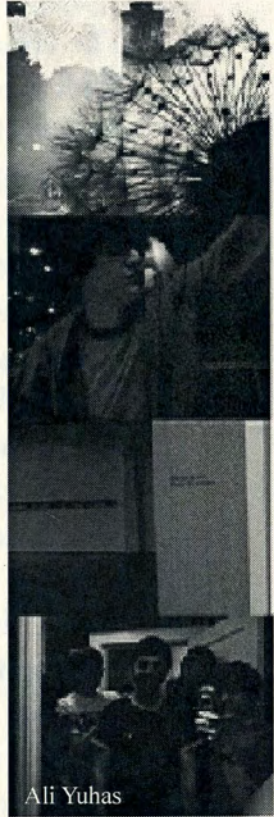
Silence.

The clouds roar in accusations,
true and painful

But I'm used to it by now;
your façade of sorrow.

Here comes the wave, keep your eyes
open.

It's going to be another beautiful
Midnight.

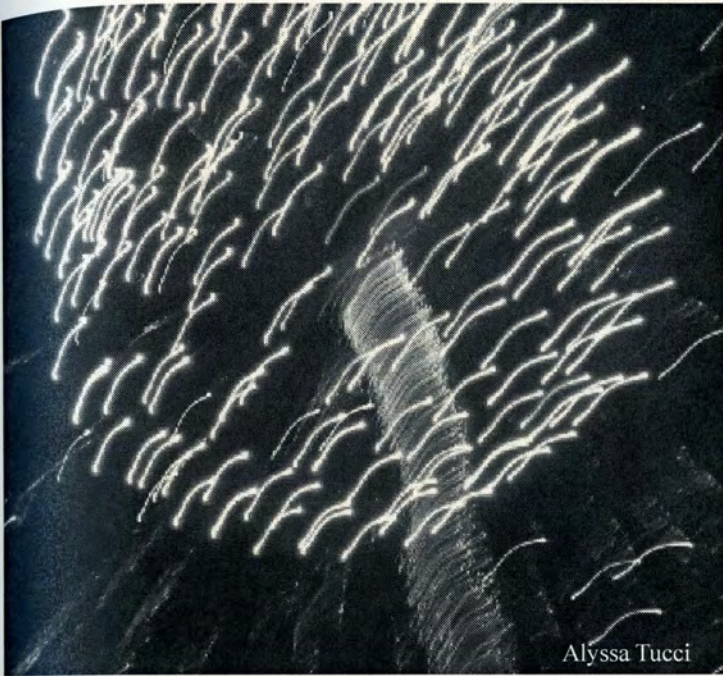


Ali Yuhas

The Observer

By Nichole Boisvert

The ebony sky is watching
With eyes of gleaming stars
As your Nikes pound the pavement
And your breath explodes
In frigid puffs of smoke,
Remnants of the fire in your eyes.
The ghastly sentinels
Guarding the path
Stretch their gnarled arms
And scrape your flesh
With their rigid fingers.
Your black path
Extends to the horizon,
Barely discernable by the faint white glimmer
Wafting from the moon.
Invisible arms of air
Brush across your neck
As your throat closes
And you gasp, fighting the frosty fingers
For your life.
The ebony sky watches
As your path rises to meet you
In the cold, hard silence
Of night.



Alyssa Tucci

Match

By Melissa Herpfer

All the stars were out.
Saturday night.
Freezing November.

You had a body like a diamond,
whole and perfect.

I wrote, "too sweet, too sweet" in my mind
because it was.

Ballooning out.
Everything was ballooning out.
Straining its skin.

I walked to meet you,
the grass was stiff like sugared straw.

A small heart tucked beating
under my breasts
swelled outward.

I will remember this,
and everything,
like just how warm the warm was
and just how cold
the cold.

A struck match in me just thinking.

Application

ByRisaPedzewick

My first job at CVS didn't pan out well. After spending a year making minimum wage and standing behind a counter asking, "Do you have an Extra Care card?" I said, "Fuck it," and decided to apply at the Royal Video Store near to my house.

I walked in and asked to fill out an application. The scary man behind the counter, who I would come to know as Ray, gave me a blank stare and told me to go over to a device that looked somewhat like a fax machine. Not quite sure what to do, I started pressing buttons and realized that the application was no longer in paper form but in fax-machine-looking-thing form. Welcome to the age of technology.

The first few questions were general: name, address, telephone number, social security number (so they can check my credit report and steal my identity), and age. The next few techno pages read like I was supposed to be five or mentally retarded, and didn't understand what I was doing. It made sure every time I clicked the "next" button that I was sure I knew what I was agreeing to. Yes, I do want to apply, I am in the store applying, but thank you, computer, you helped me make an important life decision today.

The next questions that came asked me how many days I would be able to work. "Zero days a week" was actually an option. Well, if I can get paid and not work at all, that would be very conducive to my lifestyle. I have a feeling that's not how it works, unfortunately, otherwise more people would pick that option.

"Have you ever been convicted of a felony?" No.

"Are you sure you have never been convicted of a felony?" Well, you *do* have my social security number so why don't you go look, and see if I'm lying?

Next came the really fun obvious questions.

"Do you believe it is ok to steal things from your employer?"

"Do you have rage issues?"

"If someone told you to 'sit on it,' would you get angry?"

My personal favorite ones were the "people-person" questions. They love people-people, and the managers are always people-people. Fake as they come, because every corporation is really just a friendly neighborhood store. The suits at the top of the corporate ladder really do care about each and every one of their customers, in their very own special way. These questions always ask if you like being alone a lot and if you are seriously depressed. Depression cannot exist in a friendly little neighborhood corporate store. The customer has to feel warm and loved.

Three hours later I am still filling out these kinds of questions. Even if I have a severe personality disorder, and get angry at the customers, I have enough common sense not to tell the fax machine that.

Finally the test is over and my brain can relax. I tell Ray that I am done. Ray looks as if he lied on his personality test. He tells me to come back on Sunday when the regional manager will be in.

I come back on Sunday ready to be the bestest fake people-person there ever was!

Hank is our regional manager. He is wearing a grin that looks like his cheeks got stapled to his ears. I go back into the office (where I note the positions of surveillance cameras, so that I am assured I will leave alive).

Hank starts asking me the typical questions in a very excited sort of manner.

"Why would you want to work at Royal Video store?"

Clearly I want to work here because I am poor and this is near my house. I tell him, "Because I want to be part of the Royal Video team and since I am a customer and like how this store is run!"

"Are you a people-person?"

Can't you tell by the really fake grin on my face? Then he asks one question that really throws me.

"What would you like to do with the rest of your life?"

Considering I am seventeen, I hope he doesn't expect me to answer, with "working at Royal Video store, of course." I tell him I want to be a writer and a director. This is true.

"Well, that's perfect!" Hank answers, "You can really learn a lot about making movies working here! We give all our employees three free rentals at a time, and we really encourage you to use them. That way when the

customers ask you about a movie you can give them a run down.”

I don't really see what that has to do with me being writer/director, but because he was very excited about it, I smile and nod enthusiastically. He seems like the kind of man who may have had a dream once, but then moved on to greener pastures, such as Royal Video management.

“How are you at retail?” “

“Pretty good,” I say.

“Here, sell me this pen,” he says and hands me a pen.

“Well, you can write with it. It's filled with a lot of ink so it won't run out anytime soon,” If I jab it in my eye can I just be hired already? “You can use it as a weapon if someone comes to attack you. It's also looks awful neat when it hangs out of your breast pocket!”

Hank then proceeds to tell me a million things you can do with a pen, like use it for a hair tie, or dismantle it and use it for a straw. I bet he has used a lot of pen straws in his life.

Finally I am done with my interview and Hank tells me to come back on Sunday for training. I am supposed to wear a white polo shirt and black pants. I have to be in uniform because I get paid for this training. Thank God for small favors.

Training at CVS was watching a half an hour video about sexual harassment and signing my name at the bottom of a piece of paper. It took about an hour total, so I assumed it was the same deal with Royal Video. Boy, what a surprise I was in for.

There was the obligatory sexual harassment video that I had to watch. You would think at a video store they could get decent actors and plot lines. There was an African-American actor, an Asian-American actor, a Caucasian-American actor, and a Female-American actor. Between the four of them they played out what happens when you steal, what happens when you harass other employees or customers, and how much fun working at Royal Video can be by playing trivia games about the different movies.

One of the actors was portrayed as a triple major in college and was using this job to get by and pay off some student loans. This is a realistic scenario. By the end of the video, he realized how much fun working at Royal Video was and had dropped two of his majors so he could work more hours. Thank God I am applying to Royal Video before I start college! Phew, that video really saved me from wasting a lot of money on a college degree!

After an hour or so of videos I am given a booklet of information about Royal Video that I am expected to read, memorize and then complete a twenty page exam on. Wow, renting videos out to the general public must be really really hard! And all the while the cashiers make it look so easy...

After more information about how to deal with the customer, the policies of Royal Video, and more info on sexual harassment and stealing, I am thoroughly exhausted and hungry. I check my watch and see that I have already been here for three hours and I am not done with the info booklet or the test. Between the pressure of time and pointless bullshit, I realize this entire process was created to break the spirit of the new Royal Video employee. Instead of outright brainwashing us like any sane person would do, they beat facts and trivia questions into our skulls until we can take no more.

I check my watch again when I am done. I have been there in the office for five hours. I am cold because I am in a goddamned white polo shirt and the air conditioning is jacked way up, and I am mentally exhausted. I leave the office and go up to Ray, and give him my completed test.

The best part was, while the questions were extremely specific and time consuming, Ray barely even looks at them before telling me I am hired. He gives me a date to come back and start work officially. I will never use any of the information I just wasted five hours poring over. But at least I have a brand new bright purple shirt with the Royal Video logo on it that I get to wear every time I am working. Now when I greet the customers with a warm smile, they can smile back at me. With pity.

A selection from:
It's Never Too Late
By Patricia Phillips

My last two careers were at opposite ends of each other – a reading tutor and a waitress. Five years ago, I worked as a reading and writing tutor to juveniles. I would spend two days a week at the local county jail, one day at the adult female correctional facility, and two days at Family and Children Services, a half hour from home. Starting out, this was the job of my dreams. I felt like I was saving the young hoodlums of America. If they could become literate, what need would they have to rob or steal? All right – I wasn't thinking clearly back then. But I came to realize that if I could make a difference with just one kid, it was all worth it, right? If so, why did I get burned out after only three years?

I remember my last day so clearly that it's almost frightening. After being reprimanded the day before for allowing one of my clients to have two lead pencils instead of one, I was in a "feel sorry for myself" mood when I entered the jail, but quickly snapped out of it when the director walked up and said she was sending me a "new one" today. That's how she would refer to one of my new clients. Her tone always made me feel as if she was talking about her discarded lunch garbage. I put on my super-happy face and said, "Great!" just to annoy the shit out of her. She returned her "you'll be sorry" look and walked away quickly, in case my goodness was contagious.

This "new one" turned out to be a nineteen-year-old female who was awaiting trial for murder. Howard, the C.O. on duty for my classroom, shared this information with me even though it's not allowed, and even though I've repeatedly asked him not to do this. I now knew that this petite little form sitting across from me, lost in her oversized orange jumpsuit, had stabbed her twenty-year-old sister to death because she would not get off the phone. She was younger than my daughter, and her innocent and somewhat apprehensive face made me want to reach across the table and reassure her.

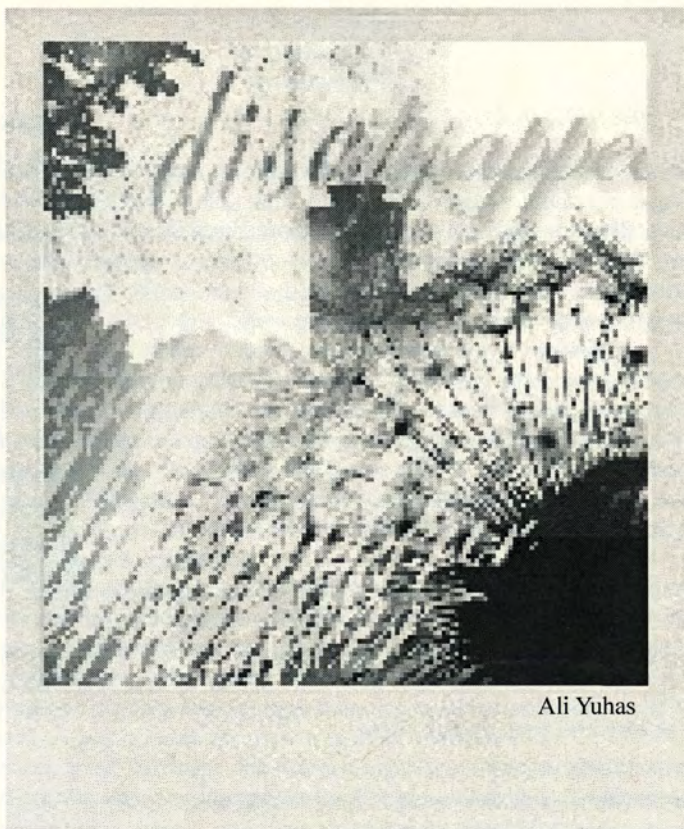
After testing her for a reading level, and discovering that she was at about fourth grade, I asked her to write a small paragraph about anything she thought was interesting. I expected to read something like, "I wish I could take it all back, and I really love and miss my sister." Instead she wrote, "I'm really pissed off rite now becauz she's probly goin to make me get the elektrik chair or something like that, and my man needs me rite now." While I'm reading this, and trying not to gasp out loud, she continues orally, "You know how that is, right teacher, you got on a wedding band, I bets you love your man, right?" I told her I needed to use the ladies room. I did not tell her it was because I felt the urge to vomit and I didn't want to mess the floor and have Howard pissed off at me. I called my supervisor later that day, told her I was burned out and was resigning. I never went back to the jail, or the correctional facility, or Family and Children Services. My little murderer had convinced me I needed time away from the big house.

A Space Between the Wall
By Michael Renganeschi

We saw you soar
Through the air in flight,
We saw you try with all your might
To teach us to love and not to fight.
We carried you on our backs when you couldn't soar.
We've held you towards the light
We've pushed you to the floor.
I've held you by your hand
When you didn't know the way,
I've given you my ear
To hear all the words you say.
But once there was a silence
A space between the wall,
I couldn't hear you soaring
But I could see you fall.

The Dreamer
By Erin Gannon

Listen: I follow your eyes when you look at the world.
I know what you see.
You see love and beauty and you cherish them.
Know that I cherish these things, too,
But they must not be miracles to be worthy of my loving eye.
Know that the shadows of the leaves in the wind
Are not evidence of puppetry.
Know that a child laughs not because the sound is beautiful
But because he must.
And know that the best definition of life
Is the one you write yourself.
Go.
Study the sunrise,
Marvel at mountains,
Weep at the winding river,
But do not muddy their dignity.
Do not bastardize October's trees.
Do not belittle the wonder of each spinning atom.
This did not happen overnight.
We worked hard, came far, to get here.
Know this:
We are more than someone else's dream.



Ali Yuhas

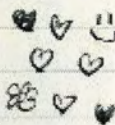
When Nobody Sees You
By Michael Renganeschi

You trip when you walk
And you fall down the stairs,
Nobody notices,
And nobody stares.
Because when nobody sees you
Nobody cares.
Your life is a play
You rehearse everyday
But nobody hears the lines that you say.
Nobody cries and nobody laughs,
Nobody cheers and nobody claps.
The theatre is full of empty chairs
And when nobody sees you,
Nobody cares.

- Performance Poetry -

1 / Poetry

* We at the Mosaic appreciate the value of the spoken word. We are especially interested in Slam Poetry, a form of literature that is written exclusively to be performed. Performance poets use a different style of writing that is especially conducive to the stage, making their work dynamic, exciting, and unceasingly creative. Over the next few pages, please enjoy the work of several of our favorite slam poets.



Regards,

The Mosaic Staff

Consciousness

ByIndigoNothing

Yeah I'm light

(Something like chiffon but as smooth as silk

right between infatuation and like

I'm light as a summer's breeze

like his touch pulling on my sleeve

to stop dreaming so light without sight

he says

but I'm just light in emotion and devotion

I am only an appetizer, a Pixar mini-motion

Picture this: I float like wisps of petals in sunlight

Light like the money in my account, like my sympathy for the south

I'm in capitalist clout, worrying only about

My designer shoes with no clue

Of the AIDS-ridden youth

Some my age left with no one to turn to

I'm light, though

As finickle as contemporary prose

I am revolutionary with my skirts by Bob Marley, clothing industry hoes

No stance, no thought, bought, sold, traded 'cause we're light

Light like our cares, like the struggles that go unknown... NOT

I'm light 'cause like so many of you

I refuse all not affecting myself

Simply)

As light as empty.

Nicole Richie, how many more pounds did SHE lose?

Untitled

By Frank DeBettencourt

Twilight leaking on my lips as my hunger aches and grows
for you

I know there is no good with you without you I feel lewd

In all the ways I make up for your absence

Does it make sense?

You've only held me against the truth and never brought in

Yes I'm talking about our pseudo-relationship, our attempt

Or maybe just mine 'cause you couldn't find the light I found

in your eyes

You was always lost in hers while you held me close by

Who cries when criminals tell lies... victim plights? In spite, I

Held the hand that hurt me every fortnight

Looking at the moon now with lips inked blue I can only

scream

Yo!

FUCK YOU!



Christine Dozois

REPENT

By IndigoNothing

I'VE BEEN SENT A MESSAGE

DEAR NON-BELIEVER ... REPENT

AND I CAN'T UNDERSTAND THIS PASSAGE

I KNOW I DRINK, SMOKE, WORK, AND TWIRK

YET I DO THEM WELL

WAS PROUD TO MOVE UP TO LEVEL AND EXCEL

"I'M GOOD AT THIS," I STAMMER

MURMUR AND QUIVER AS MY SPIRITS START TO STIR

I LOVE MY HABITS, CAN'T DO WITHOUT IT

SO WHAT I GOT HIGH?

REALIZED I FELT LIKE A BIRD IN THE SKY

LIGHTS OUT WHEN I GYRATE TO MY MOTION WITH A MARRIAGE NOT IN SIGHT

REPENT

DAMN IT, I BELIEVE!

I BELIEVE IN CHRIST

KNOW OF THE WORKS OF HIS MIRACLE BIRTH

SAW HOLLYWOOD SCARS THAT SPARKED

SOMETHING INSIDE ME

I CRIED DISTURBED, UNNERVED BY HIS PLIGHT

FAITHFULLY

DEAR NON-BELIEVER ... REPENT

HOW DARE HE OR SHE, THEM OR WE

JUDGE ME?

I LOVE ME, BUT CRY EACH NIGHT

I'M SEXY, BUT LOATHE MY SIGHT

I'M A HEALTHY HAITIAN CREATION OF INTELLECTUAL SATISFACTION COMPACT WITH

DELIGHTFUL BANTER OF A BIMBO PERSUASION AND CAN BURP MY ABCs (YES I'LL SHOW YOU LATER)

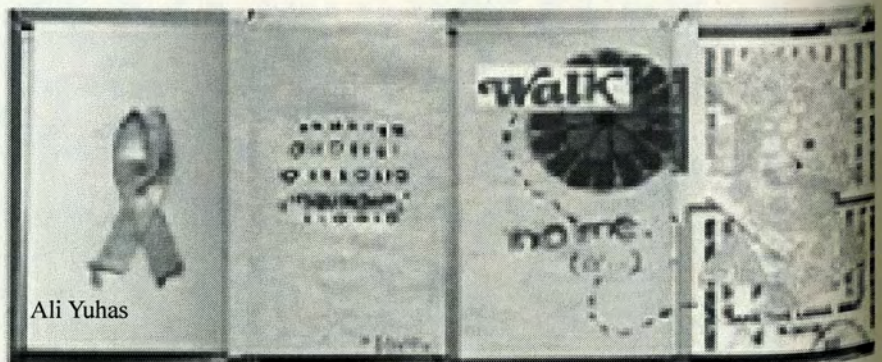
SO WHY?

WHY AS I'M HIGH, I'M THE LONE BIRD IN FLIGHT, FEEL LIKE NOBODY'S BY MY SIDE?

I'VE BEEN SENT A MESSAGE

REPENT.

REPENT.



Clarity

By Indigo Nothing

I am restless now without the anchor of some skin next to mine
I can't agree with myself that its love so I saunter between the sobriety of need
and the drunkenness of want
I want to be in love
but not with you but you will do for now
I envision those moments where there are flowers bought, romanticism done and
not dreamed of
so now I have the courage to say I deserve more and so now what
I feel like it was better to be with you, kissed by him, talked to
isn't it love
yeah it comes in pieces but together it's a whole that was closest to what I see on
TV
I know
I know
I need to grow but it hurts too much



If There are no More Sleeves, Grab Another Cup 'Cause That Cappuccino Gets Hot
By Jimmy Cross

Loathing

Inside my own big head
You try running from that
When it's already consumed
everything
before you;
everything
behind you.

A life of hiding from the pain that has
always known where I've been.
It is pathetic that I take every step
out
the
door

And search for you
anywhere.

Everywhere?
Sleep comes in the glorious twenty minute shifts.

Your Face
is seared into me; branded
are your infinite pupils, my cosmic safe houses.
Lonely now I am greeted by the shores,
and the ever flowing water.
You are alone, they say.
Why have you done this, they demand, again?
I lower my head and
reach for
your
Hand.



Kristen Gelormino

Photographs

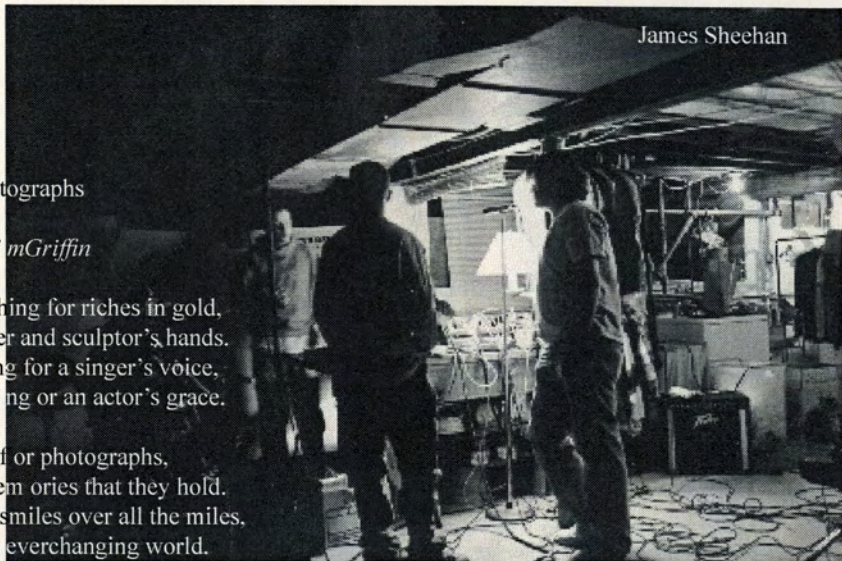
By Tim Griffin

I've given up wishing for riches in gold,
The eye of a painter and sculptor's hands.
I'm through asking for a singer's voice,
Soft feet for dancing or an actor's grace.

Now I wish for photographs,
And the fond memories that they hold.
All the sights and smiles over all the miles,
Snapshots of an everchanging world.

I wish for the wedding album,
And the tiniest of baby pictures.
The family photos through the years,
And the toothless grins still to come.

I wish for a life that exists somewhere,
In a future I hope I earn.
Maybe, just maybe,
A future you'll share with me.



Ode to Recess
By Marion Quirici

Things I never thought I'd miss
Come bounding back to mind
As I pass from class to class
With never a pause and never a break and
never a chance for rest to take.
It's nice outside.
The lush lawns smile in the sunshine
To mock me, as I grunt and grind
Under the floggings of my grinning professors.
When I'm loathe to keep working, I remember
a time when things weren't such a mess,
And I reflect on the days of Recess.

Things I never thought I'd miss come bounding back to mind
The monkey bars, the tire pit, the golden winding slide
The net of chains, like a spider's web,
The bully, crouched like the spider.
The three big swings, for which there was
always a race to reach — me first! # 2 on the quiz of your life which is 100% of your final grade...
The tire-swing — it made me sick.
The runners' track around the field
was rounder than the sun,
And at one side forever stood I make as little sense as a one way Nova going in the wrong direction.
The Tree! The Tree that gave us shade
With branches full of love.

We laughed and played
The best part of the day!
Boys and girls lined up for cootie shots.
The boys were cops and robbers,
The girls did stunts and cartwheels,
And me in my own fantasy
Would climb up all the ladders
To the highest perch! I stood so prim
Surveying my playground kingdom.

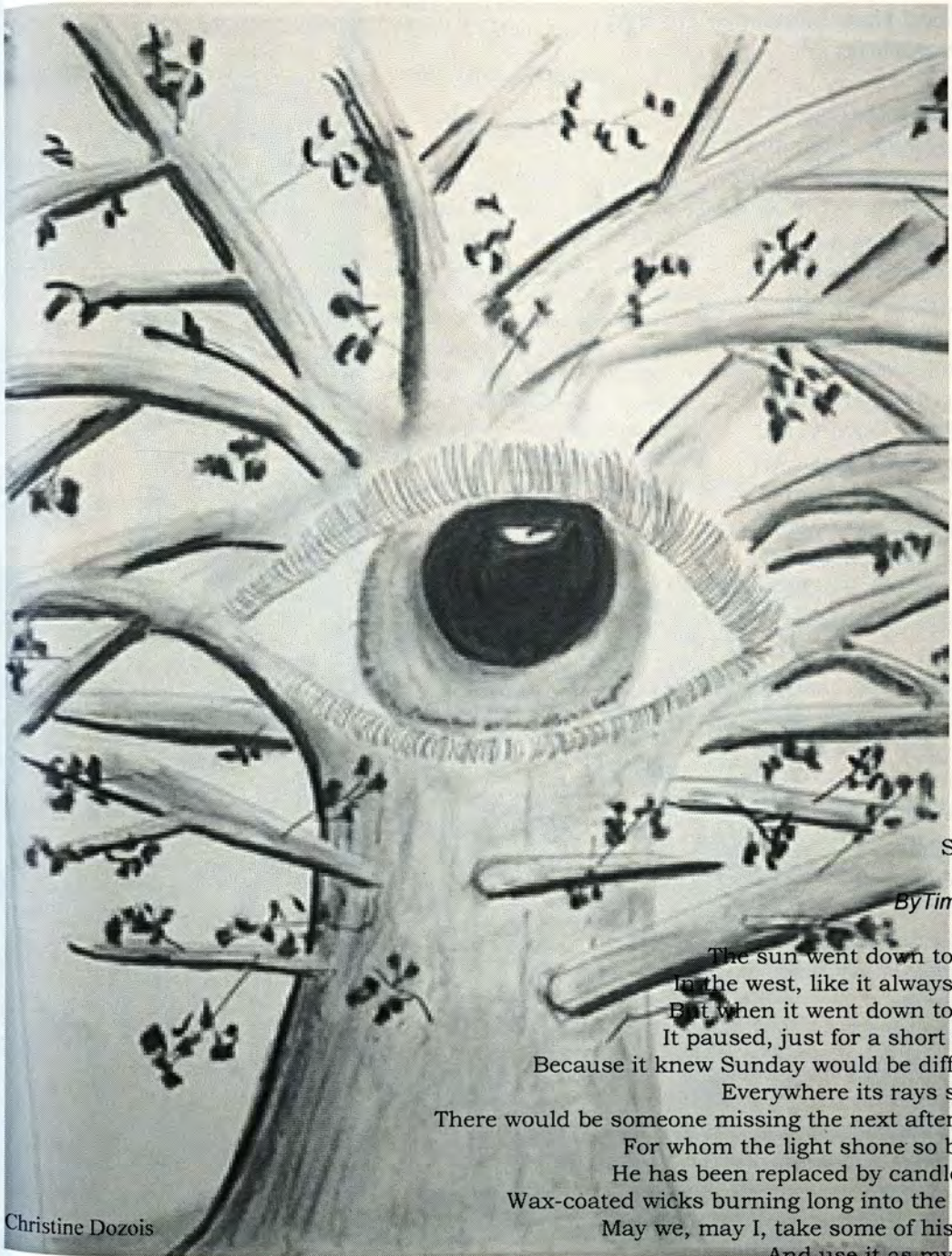
Alas, alas, those days are gone
When bars and swings spelled fun.
And now I work, head bent, nails bitten
Enjoy the weather? Who are you kiddin'?

But still...

I miss the way it made me blue
To get a pebble in my shoe.

Woods of my Mind
By Brianne Bendit

A road diverged in the woods of my mind.
Lost
No one to hold my hand
and
remind me to look both ways
and
where to step and how far to go
and
if everything will be ok.
Will it?
Oh, I get it.
One of those trick questions.
The answer is two jobs and a Chihuahua named Chalupa.
Supreme, not Baja.
How do you define innocent and jaded?
My final answer is:
I am a complex equation I can't solve.
Scared
Doubt
Confusion
Decision
Responsibility
Accountability
Freedom
Fly off the trees of my memory like a powerpoint slide show.
How do you know when it's time to walk alone?
How do you listen to your intuition?
When can you start trusting yourself instead of others?
I AM NOT twenty years old.
I am five and eight and twelve and sixteen and nineteen.
I know how to be these. This decade doesn't exist.
It is not me
Yet....
To grow up would be quite an adventure.
Take the risk?
Maybe next year.
There's a leaf pile with my name written all over it.



Christine Dozois

Sunset

By Tim Griffin

The sun went down tonight,
In the west, like it always does.
But when it went down tonight,
It paused, just for a short while.
Because it knew Sunday would be different,
Everywhere its rays shone.
There would be someone missing the next afternoon,
For whom the light shone so bright.
He has been replaced by candlelight,
Wax-coated wicks burning long into the night.
May we, may I, take some of his light,
And use it as my own?
Let the light be seen all around,
Because that candle can shine for us no longer.

Shouldn't Have Stopped at Thirteen
By Jimmy Cross

Tuesday morning
and last night has slipped
out of memory. The drool
on my pillow is not all mine.
He is nudging me
for a walk. A long night
for everyone. "Collar," I say,
and with one leap he's gone.
Feel for slippers in the dark
of my mind. Flip flops
will do for now. Grab
Some lettuce to get her
out of the cage. Slip
the collar on for two blocks.
The air has a slight bite
even with my pajamas on.
She is getting heavier.
So am I.
They are happy and frolicking
while I miserably stand there
and watch their joy.
I am jealous of a dog and a bunny.
Squinting through the sun,
I throw the ball again.
She chases and he lets her win.
Smart kid. That is why my bed
is empty. And has been
for weeks. A fit of nausea
rises from my feet. I steady
the lens onto them and call out.
Time halts forever.

They sit
on my wall now, young
and happy. But what you so not see
is me kissing her
like I never will again.
Only to realize that I
won't.



Christina Brodzky

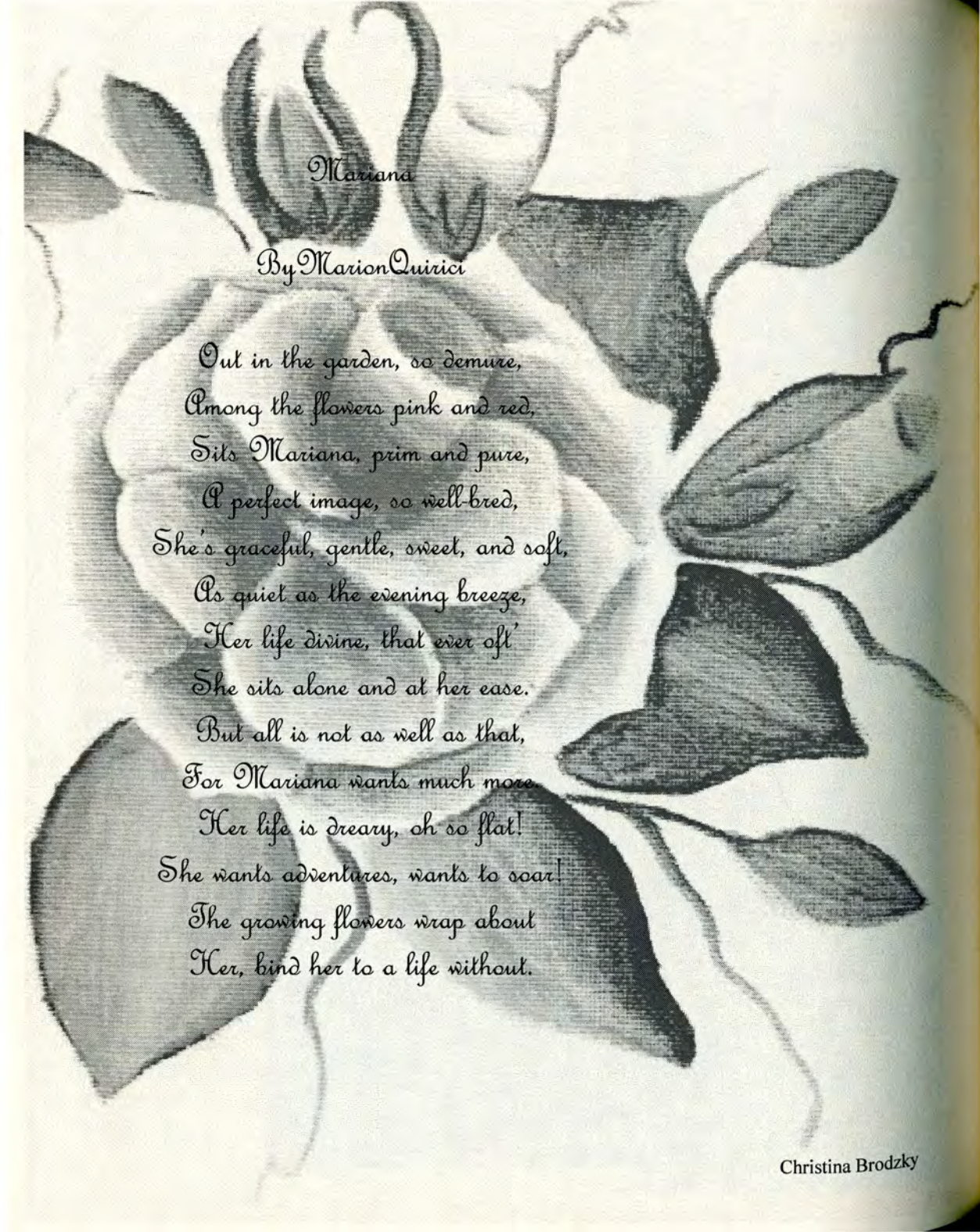
Widening Heights

By Tim Griffin

I almost had the glittering stars about me,
Their distant beauty whirling around my head.
But I was left with a seat in the clouds,
A nighttime dream of many jealousies.
But those wispy clouds kept me listless,
Because now I dreamed of so much more.
The clouds brought with them a promise,
Carried by the western winds.
"The stars wait anxiously," it said,
"but to reach them you must be light,
Unweighted by guilt long since expired,
Unhindered by the fear of the widening heights."



Christine Dozois



Mariana

By Marion Quirici

Out in the garden, so demure,
Among the flowers pink and red,
Sits Mariana, prim and pure,
A perfect image, so well-bred,
She's graceful, gentle, sweet, and soft,
As quiet as the evening breeze,
Her life divine, that ever oft'
She sits alone and at her ease.
But all is not as well as that,
For Mariana wants much more
Her life is dreary, oh so flat!
She wants adventures, wants to soar!
The growing flowers wrap about
Her, bind her to a life without.

The Creator
By Risa Pedzewick

I've died a thousand times
And lived a thousand more
I've lit the candle
That would make Hell's fires burn out
I've traced my shadow
With chalk upon the pavement
And been praised by Art Connoisseurs
That is falls nothing short of
Genius.

I can hear a song in the silence
of the softly falling snow
And I can unlock the secrets of your heart
With a flick of my wrist
Still, I sit here wondering
If it has all been in vain
too late do I see the truth in the matter
That we call life.

I'm afraid I've been telling you lies
That would infect your soul
And have hoped you would believe me
anyway.

I am not perfect
Yet far from usual
The webs I spin
Are poisonous
And the tales I weave
Could change the fate of man
Yet I am blameless in my actions
I do not write the words
The words write
Me.



Christine Dozois

El Olvido

ByAltagraciaE.Pimentel

como puedo amarte y odiarte?
es como tirarte de un edificio
y tratar de rescatarte
no quiero separame de ti
tampoco te quiero cerca de mi
amo como eres tan atento y responsivo
y odio tu manera de olvidarme como un archivo
no se que hacer contigo si aguantar
o dejarte en el olvido

Mi Tierra

ByAltagraciaE.Pimentel

Pienso en mi tierra
Quisqueya la bella
tan importante que alli a Colon entierran
la mas antigua colonizacion
que Espana cultivo con fervor
Santo Domingo, Punta Cana, y Santiago
lugared del alme que amo
La flora y la fauna crecen en abundancia
Y espero el momento de regresar a mi casa
"Santo Domingo conoci a tu madre, la Espana imperialista"
Que direncia hay a la vista!

Writers Block
By Brianne Bendit

Im a car on empty.

Im a singer with laryngitis.

Im the pen in my hand but I don't have any ink.

Better yet, it has ink it's just jammed inside.

Constipated.

I keep pressing against the paper but it remains white.

Flawless.

Those organized blue lines and obnoxious pink ruled edges.

I want to infect it.

I keep scratching the paper with the tip of my pen.

The fibers beginning to stretch,

The tethers unwinding,

My rage ripping it raw.

Everything has a breaking point.

I've reached mine. So has the paper.

The looseleaf tears apart.

I've destroyed a defenseless piece of paper. Wow, I'm pathetic.

I need better things to do with my time.

Chaos.

Ive penetrated through to the other side.

The paper is now incomplete.

Like my thought process.

There is a hole.

It beckons me. I want to jump inside.

Its a vacuum. Absorbing all my thoughts and holding them hostage.

All the words I cant remember,

The feelings I cant identify,

The inspiration I cant find to write.

Frustration.

The paper is mocking me.

Its blankness so empty. So intimidating.

A writers worst nightmare.

We have a staring contest. It wins.

I need to concentrate.

I need to focus.

I want to scream.

I want to write.

I want to sound profound.

Hey that rhymed, maybe Im getting somewh-

Never mind. That sucks.

I just need to start

Start something.

Anything

I think Ill start with Writers Block.

It has potential.

At least its a beginning.

Or is it the end?

The Burden
By James Burns

I steal other people's gym clothes. It's starting to become a problem. It didn't used to be; my theft used to be seal-proof. I used to be able to slide into a local gym undetected, grab the first set of unguarded gym clothes, and slide out in no more than two minutes. I was like a ninja. A gym clothes-stealing ninja. In fact, I would sometimes pretend that I was some sort of spy working for a mysterious underground organization, finding and stealing the evil corporation's newest weapon -- an atomic bomb, shaped like gym clothes. I would concoct elaborate scenarios, imagine the dark, dank headquarters where I would be given my missions. I made up imaginary comrades in the rebel group. There was Bradley, the idealistic kid straight out of the academy, a bit on the dumb side but charming as hell. I got nervous that my wife might be having an affair with him, but my wife prefers men with a good sense of humor, and also Bradley doesn't exist. Then there was Rudd, a big man, very rarely talked but always had your back. You didn't mess with Rudd and Rudd didn't mess with you and everyone was happy with that arrangement. Finally there was Zeddy, the computer genius who would somehow find a blueprint of the building just in time and tell us where alternate exits were. Before I left my house, I would close my bedroom door and talk to each team member so they knew what to do. Then I would drive to whatever locker area I had decided to go to that day and follow through with my mission, coming home victorious with someone else's gym clothes, usually a pair of running shorts and an oversized T-Shirt. If I was lucky, some sort of headband.

But recently I've been running into problems. I've been getting sloppy. A few days ago, someone caught me. I was in the local community college's gym, searching for unlocked lockers when I saw a pile of dirty clothes laying on the top. I grabbed them quickly, stuffed them under my jacket as is my trademark (Zeddy is always kidding me about that), and was just taking a few quick steps toward the exit when I saw three college kids, probably athletes, walk into the locker room. Now is where I used to shine, I used to be brilliant in these situations, I was a genius. I would calmly wave and smile to the intruders, maybe even say "hey" in a voice deeper than my own to indicate that I was one of them (I wasn't a grown man who steals other people's gym clothes), and walk calmly out of the room. This time I messed up. As I slowed my walk and went to wave, I noticed the guy on the left was looking at the top of the locker with a concerned look on his face. *Damn*, I thought to myself, *they were his. That's ok, just play it cool.*

"Hey guys," I said quickly, waving and smiling (as is my normal operation). I turned to leave-- even made it to the door-- when one of the guys said something.

"Hey pal, did you see my gym clothes anywhere?" the guy on the left said. I paused for a second and turned around.

"Umm, no, I don't think so," I said, suddenly aware that I was clutching his gym clothes under my jacket. I gripped them tighter.

"They were right on the top of this locker here," the guy said. I noticed one of his friends looking at my jacket. I looked down. Part of the student's blue T-shirt was hanging out. I didn't wait for them to put two and two together, I just dropped the clothes and ran. I sprinted home and locked all the doors.

"Daddy? What's going on?" my daughter asked.

"Robbers, honey. Robbers."

I know what you're thinking, and it isn't for the smell. Not that I hate it like most people, but I'm somewhat indifferent to it. People can get so weird about smells. My young son refuses to go into my parents' house for visits because he says it smells like dead people.

"How do you even know what a dead person smells like?" I ask him

"Mary brought one in for show and tell last week," he says.

"No, she didn't."

"Yes, she did, the teacher let us pass it around the class," he says. I think he's lying, but I should call the school anyway.

And it's not for the thrill of stealing either; I'm not a kleptomaniac. It's true that I enjoy going out and finding them, but the bulk of my enjoyment comes after I steal the clothes.

I steal other people's gym clothes for the sweat. I can't sweat myself, I have a genetic disease, none of the men in my family can sweat. It's recognized by the American Medical Association. When my son grows up, he probably won't be able to sweat either, which is a conversation that I'm not looking forward to. I'm going to wait a couple of years though. My father told me at a very young age, when I wasn't even sure what sweat was. I think that did more harm than good, because from that age on, I was very insecure of my inability to sweat. In middle school during gym class I would sit out so the other kids wouldn't find out my dark secret. My dad talked to the gym teacher, Mr. White, so he was aware of my situation. While I was thankful for this, from that time forward Mr. White looked at me in a strange, sad way, as though to say, "There's that boy who can't sweat, poor bastard, I can't imagine his pain." And he can't, either.

Once I steal a pair of gym clothes I walk up to my bedroom and lock the door. I have to be sure my wife is going to be out for a while. Then I put the clothes on. Its odd that I've never been able to sweat because when I put the gym clothes on, its feels natural --the sweat sticking to my skin-- it feels right. I'll stand in front of my mirror and just smile, finally at peace. I never go out in other people's gym clothes because I'm terrified of being found out, but in my room I pretend I go out to the local cafe. I sit on the edge of my bed, imagining a chic coffee shop filled with attractive college students, and lean back. I pretend to have a conversation with a group of the students about philosophy or movies, you know, whatever comes up in conversation. I pretend we all just got back from a rousing game of basketball, and came to the coffee shop to chill out. I look in the mirror the whole time, smiling happily with my friends. But this isn't real.

I've come so close, dozens of times, to telling my wife, but at the last second I always abandon the idea. I'm terrified she'd divorce me, I can see my entire life fall apart in front of me. So I continue alone, carrying my burden. I'll continue to carry it until I screw up completely and I'm exposed as who I am -- a person who can't sweat. The world will be shocked, no doubt, and I'm prepared for that. I steal other people's gym clothes, I'm not ashamed of that. It's just what I do. But as I said before, it's starting to become a problem.

