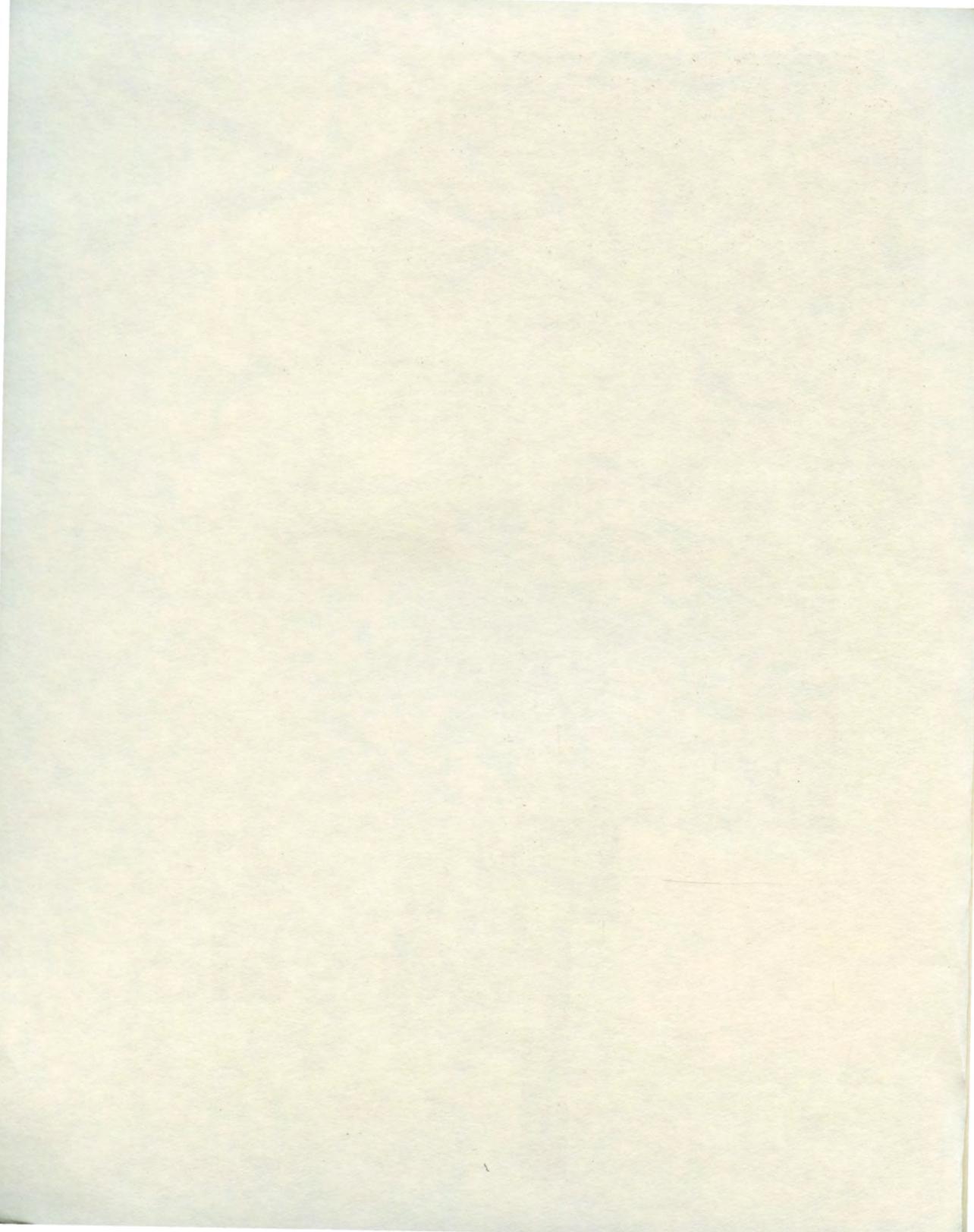


The Mosaic



Marist College  
Literary Arts Society  
Presents:

The Mosaic

Spring 2006

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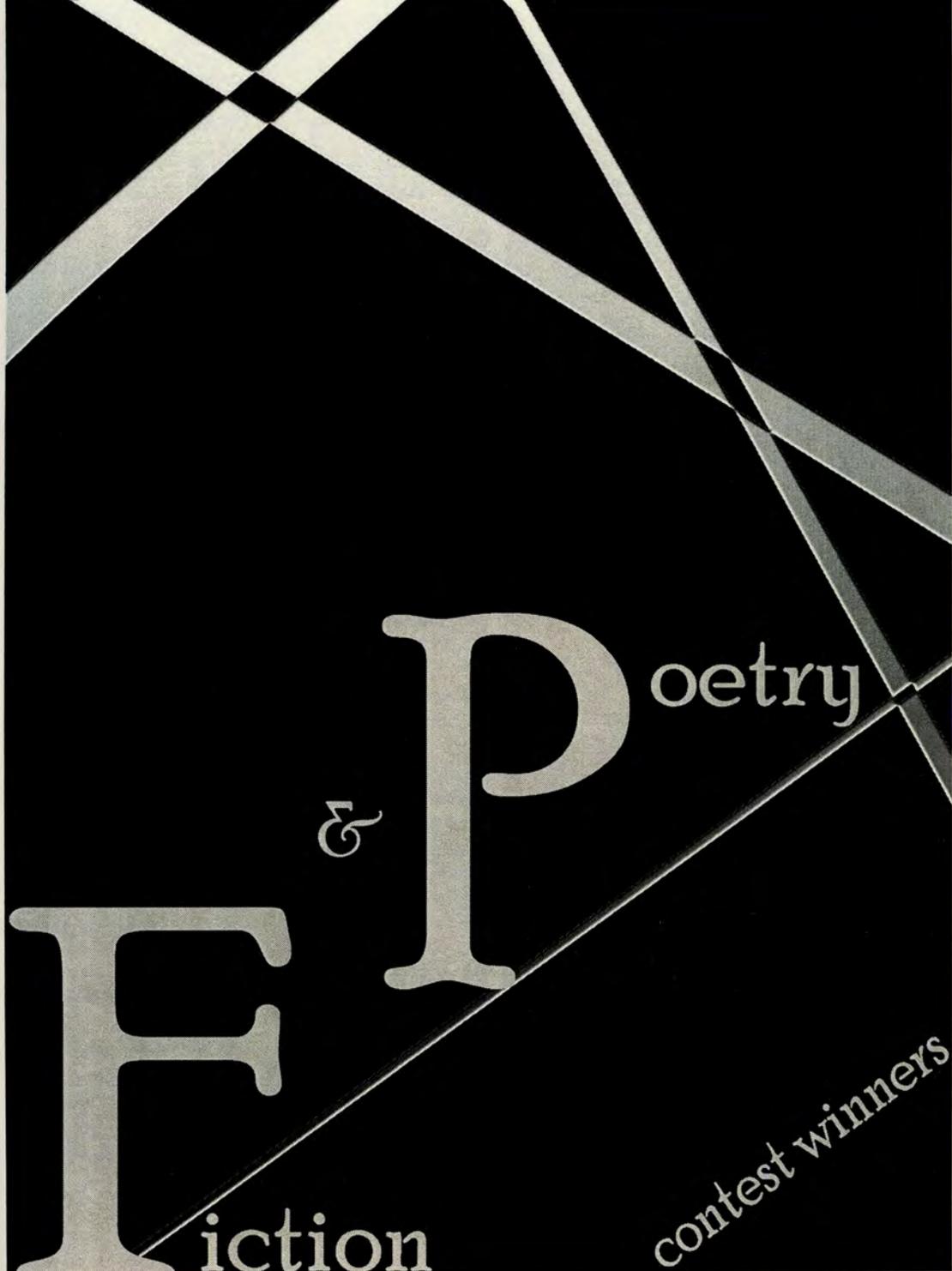
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Special thanks to Professor Thomas Zurhellen for his continued support

Thank you to Bria Soucy for her the cover art and section cover artwork



fiction & Poetry

contest winners

Poetry Winner

An Elegy for Eyes Closed

I saw it on Tuesday when no one was looking  
and that shadow of gray not yet black  
with the wind whipping up and my chin tipping up  
and the spiraling droplets  
specking the sidewalk.

I was dizzy with spinning  
round the lampposts  
reveling in umbrellas and  
bright gold galoshes,  
when the globe lights that looked  
like strung paper lanterns  
melted into the darkness.

So suddenly, I could not stand,  
could not breathe, and the trees with  
their stomachs to the sky  
began to murmur:  
this is not the start  
of a shivaree  
can you not hear it?  
The sound of two hundred and  
twenty-two pool balls tumbling down  
a staircase and the crack of  
white china fissures splitting the slate.

I was gripping the grass,  
great muddy clods of it comes loose  
in my hands and I disillusioned I  
crawled towards anywhere, my arm  
grazing something and turning,  
I met a half-familiar set of eyes  
too wide to see but strait ahead.

And I was screaming with words  
lost before leaving my mouth,  
that we had to get out,  
motioning with sullied fingers to  
a door, hazy through the rain, white  
like hope  
but the face that belongs to those eyes,  
small and pale and uncomprehending.

Nothing was helping:  
not yelling, not sobbing, not pulling a wrist  
those toes  
curled into the earth like roots ten feet deep,  
and I -  
I could not just leave with the sky falling down  
But someone would come  
and I had to get out  
this is not the start  
of the shivaree  
And I covered my ears and I didn't look back.

I was thinking  
something should have been done -  
but who am I?  
I was slipping inside  
and no one was coming because  
no one was looking and  
outside, the dam was coming undone,  
as I sunk with my back pressed against the wall  
and tasted the salt on my lips.

Amanda Hurlburt



An excerpt from *Willy Wallace, Jude, and The electric Shoes*  
By Jessica Bagar

I watched, fixated, as she made her way across the sea of bodies to the sticky bar, cigarette smoke curling around her delicate face as if she were on fire. She moved easily through the crowd, martini in hand, her slender body contorting itself to avoid any unwanted collisions. Jade locked her emerald eyes with my own and mouthed let's get out of here and I complied obediently, gathering my coat and scarf and paying our tab as I have done so many times before. Jade took my credit card from the bartender, a new, skinny guy with bland features and patches of scruffy facial hair, and slipped it into my hand as we escaped into the frigid winter night. I could see wisps of her blonde hair escaping from under her olive knit hat, the one I had bought her last winter, as she drew her coat closer to her small frame, hastening her step to keep up with my long strides.

"God, I love that place," she said brightly, the tapping of her patent leather stilettos bouncing off of posts lining the street. "You can go every night, every night, and it never gets old. I'll never get sick of it, even if that damn bartender put a black olive in my martini. I hate black olives." Her voice, a sweet mixture of vodka and cigarette smoke, made its way through her scarf, which she had meticulously encircled around her neck and mouth and into my ears and warmed me in spite of the December chill. She stumbled into me as she reached for my hand, allowing a muffled yet fervent *Shit!* to seep through her scarf. I paused to let her regain her balance and then kissed her nose; after eleven years and six or seven break-ups, I still knew that one day I would marry Jade

An excerpt from This Morning's Minion  
By Alex Tingey

Brian swung the rifle from his hip, accelerating in a tight arch, to his right shoulder and as he steadied his mark he drew in one last breath and squeezed. He didn't see the bullet strike the squirrel's right shoulder. He didn't hear the chatter of claws scraping against rough bark in a final attempt to hold on. All Brian saw was the squirrel falling, unabated, from his tree top gallows, unhindered by the hangman's counter weights, onto a twisted knurl of roots that breached the snows surface thirty feet below.

Only the slight rustle of leafless branches in the wind disturbed the eerie silence following the shot. Brian rose stiffly from the ground, brushed off his pants and flicked on the safety. He covered the majority of the distance to the tree in an adrenaline fed rush to euphoria, slowing down as he regained sight of the fallen animal. Just as quickly as the wave of endorphins crashed his cerebral cortex it receded into a pit of guilt and overwhelming sadness. Brian stood awestruck at the squirrel; it was smaller than he had expected and it was dirty. Flecks of blood marred his white underbelly and one stream crossed his chest below the elbows. Brian poked the squirrel with the muzzle of his rifle and a few drops of urine dripping from his lifeless body. Its left ear was ragged along the edge, its eye glazed over in the cold. He noticed its uneven whiskers, the white spot above its nose and its yellowed worn teeth, the squirrel's mouth slightly agape.

The right fore limb wasn't there anymore wasn't there anymore; all that remained was a tattered red hole that bent its back into a pronounced arch, as if it had tried to dodge the round.

Brian pulled a cigarette from his jacket pocket and lit it with cupped hands. He drew slowly and held his drag for a moment before dissipating into the prevailing winds. He smoked it to the filter and dashed it gently on the snow beside him replacing the soggy filter in his pocket.

Brian left the squirrel where it lay and picked his way down the slope off to his right to eat his lunch in lee of the wind.

He'd never killed anything before besides ants and bees, and this powerful experience was mind numbing. Brian pulled out a flattened ham sandwich and took a bite, staring off into the endless white snow in front of him. All he could see was the look on the squirrel's face as it lay there lifeless not but a moment, yet already so far gone. He thought how it must be to die, how it must feel or if it even would. He found himself asking if the squirrel had felt his body free fall from the branches, and whether or not it felt the wind through its fur.



Amanda Hurlburt

## HONORABLE MENTION

Selection from "Looking for a Grande Purpose with an Extra Pump of Meaning"

By Jessica Mutascio

"I think it is about time someone removes that stick from his ass," I say to no one in particular when he leaves. Reluctantly, I clock in at the computer register and open up a till. I never bother counting it like we're supposed to, finding it just as easy to assume whoever used the drawer last had been honest with their count. I'll admit it; I'm lazy when it comes to details. They don't pay me nearly enough to care about stuff like deposit accuracy. Briefly glancing around the store, the place looks empty until I make out Grande Soy Chai sitting over in the café area, studying a mess of books and papers spread out before him on one of the tables. This guy has been coming here so often in the past year and a half that I hardly notice him anymore, blending into the background like a chair or one of the display units.

I don't bother learning the names of the regulars. I tried to at first, Leroy stressing the importance of making each customer feel special, so that he or she would come back to the store to make future purchases. But after meeting and chatting with some of these people, I found myself wishing most of them would overdose on caffeine and never return again. Having nothing better to do than come in here multiple times a day and blow money on involved, extravagant drinks, many of them had also taken to complaining. There are few things more frustrating than having to remake a beverage countless times until it fully meets an individual's exact set of detailed taste requirements.

So to keep contact and bitching to a minimum, a few of the other baristas and I refer to the regulars by their drink names. Knowing exactly what they want gets them in and out of here faster, and makes the transaction a whole lot easier.

"Hey Libby, what the hell were you doing back there?" Marie waits for two shots of espresso to finish pouring and motions to my chocolate-covered apron, grinning widely.

"You know, taking my daily mocha bath. I can't get enough of this stuff," I respond, smiling back. "How's it been so far today?"

Marie is one of the only people I enjoy working with at the store. A tall, slender strawberry blonde just a couple years older than me, she's one of the quirkiest individuals I know. Neon green glasses with rectangle frames outline her mischievous bronze-colored eyes, which are constantly observing the people and events going on around her. Even though we're required to wear black or brown shoes at work, she insists that her tattered hot pink Converse are close enough, letting Leroy's chiding roll off her like raindrops on a tarp.

"Leroy, honestly," she'd begin. "No one can see my shoes behind the counter. Wouldn't you rather me be comfortable and working instead of standing around complaining about how my feet hurt and getting nothing done?"

Only Marie can get away with an excuse like that. She's been here twice as long as any of the other baristas, and knows exactly how to manipulate our manager when it comes to getting around frivolous policies. Refusing to take this job or anything else too seriously, she spends most of her shifts avoiding work, getting hyped up on free caffeine and making fun of customers after they leave.

Marie hands off the drink she has just finished making to the customer waiting at the counter, and replies, "Eh it was kinda busy an hour ago. Been pretty quiet since then, actually. Leroy tried to get me and Tara to scrub down the store since there wasn't much to do, but I convinced him there'd be more time for that tomorrow."

"Oh you bitch," I say, only half-joking. "I'm working tomorrow. Thanks a lot."

"Anytime," she laughs and changes the subject. "Hey so I gotta tell you about this dude that came in earlier—such a tool."

"What happened? I ask, perking up a little at the thought of hearing one of Marie's funny stories.

"Okay," Marie begins. "So this guy walks up to the door while I am changing out the pastries. I lookover and he's tying up two golden retrievers to the bike rack out there. Anyways, so then he comes inside and I ask him what he wants to drink. He goes, 'I'll have a Triple Venti Two-percent 179 degrees—'"

"Wait, 179 degrees? Are you shitting me?" I interrupt. For steaming milk we have these basic metal thermometers to make sure that it gets heated somewhere between 140 and 160 degrees, as instructed by the health code. Other than offering a very approximate temperature, these thermometers are pretty useless when it comes to specifics.

She laughs. "Wait, wait. Just listen. He goes, 'I'll have a Triple Venti Two-percent 179 degree Caramel Macchiato with a layer of caramel, a layer of whipped cream, and another layer of caramel on the top.' I probably stared at him for like thirty seconds with my mouth gaping open. I mean, who the fuck orders something like that?"

"You've got to be kidding me," I say, also astounded.

"I kid you not," Marie continues. "So I ask the guy if he wants anything else with that, and he goes 'I'd like two apple fritters for the dogs.' I'm like 'For the dogs?' And he explains to me in detail how he's visiting his cousin, and at his hometown Starbucks, he always gets each dog an apple fritter every day because otherwise they get upset with him and bark all night long, or some shit like that."

An excerpt from House of Mirrors

By Shanen Lloyd

Once in the door, I head straight for my desk and record my day's events in my journal. The red ink still wet on the paper, I sit by the window and think to when it all began, my sickness that is.

I could not have been older than five. In the park, there was a clown entertaining the children and their nannies. My nanny at the time, whose name escapes me now, took me over to see the show. Upon seeing the colorfully painted face of the clown, I had a convulsive fit of terror. My screams could not be tamed and a doctor was called. It was the first face of detain, with color and features I had ever seen. I imagine I was born this way, with my mental defect-as they call it. When I look into the face of a person, I see a blank slate. Literally. There are no eyes to read a person's emotions, there is no nose, there are no lips to lust for. I see nothing, and that is my ailment. People seem horrified to imagine a head without a face, to me it is not frightful. It is just lonely.

I do, however, know what faces look like. I pour myself a glass of scotch and turn on some Beethoven. His music brings peace to my soul.

At the age of sixteen I locked myself in my dorm room at the Boy's Academy I attended with my first bottle of vodka and a .35mm revolver. I sat in my cubicle and cursed at the academy jacket, I spit at the photos in their wood carved frames at the people I couldn't recognize, I tore down the pictures of artists and great minds I once aspired to become like. I poured myself vodka in a glass with the school emblem printed on its side. I drank the rancid liquid quickly, swallowing it until the glass was empty. Then I smashed the glass. I closed my eyes-the eyes I had never seen the true color of, the eyes people told me were a brilliant blue. A moment later I opened them with fury and intent. Standing up I stumbled across the room to retrieve my gun; my exit; my escape. As the alcohol clouded my mind, I walked into the wall with arms outstretched and looked up at myself in the mirror.

For the first time in my life, I saw my reflection staring back at me.

Desperate and foggy eyes, I saw my nose with the bump in it from the football game years ago. I saw my lips quivering, bloodstained and chapped from biting it in frustration. In that moment I no longer hated breathing.



Mike Guenther

An excerpt from Willy Wallace, *Jude*, and *The electric Shoes*  
By Jessica Bagar

I watched, fixated, as she made her way across the sea of bodies to the sticky bar, cigarette smoke curling around her delicate face as if she were on fire. She moved easily through the crowd, martini in hand, her slender body contorting itself to avoid any unwanted collisions. Jade locked her emerald eyes with my own and mouthed let's get out of here and I complied obediently, gathering my coat and scarf and paying our tab as I have done so many times before. Jade took my credit card from the bartender, a new, skinny guy with bland features and patches of scruffy facial hair, and slipped it into my hand as we escaped into the frigid winter night. I could see wisps of her blonde hair escaping from under her olive knit hat, the one I had bought her last winter, as she drew her coat closer to her small frame, hastening her step to keep up with my long strides.

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Amanda Hurlburt

An excerpt from *The Long Way Home*  
By Brian M. Rivera

"Hello?" she answered Groggily.

"Mom, I'm sorry to wake you," a voice said quietly.

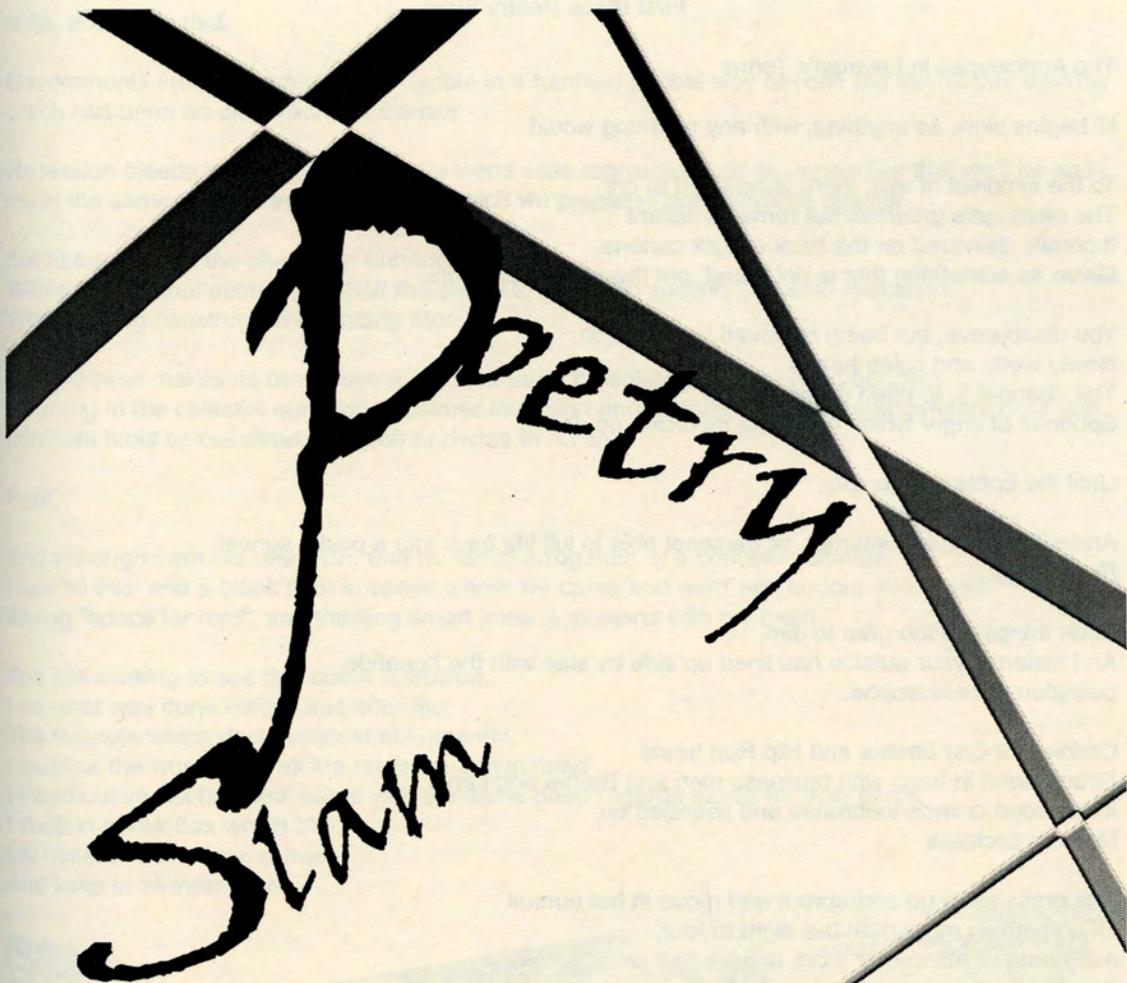
Audrey Cole was speechless. She tried to think but couldn't. The voice was strangely recognizable. "Oh my God, it can't be," she thought. She could barely form the word, a word she hadn't spoken in so long and thought she never speak again, "Grady?"

She waited a moment for a response. There was nothing, just silence on the other end. She sat trembling, holding her breath: "Hello," she whispered. Her voice was answered with a "click." She sat in bed shaking, still clutching the phone. Suddenly, she heard a shrill ring, like a telephone, but it couldn't have been—the phone was in her hand, off the hook.

Audrey shot up in bed in a cold sweat. She had been dreaming. Yet, she was awoken by the phone on her nightstand that was ringing eerily. She stared at it and then looked back at her husband who was still snoring loudly. She looked back at the phone, reached over slowly and picked it up. She brought the phone close to her ear, but then stopped.

Audrey sat, holding the phone in her hand, trembling violently. There was a soft light barely beating against the pane of her bedroom window and she could see the snow swirling quickly in the light. A single tear rolled slowly down her face as she turned toward the nightstand and gently hung up the phone.





**Slam**  
**Doetry**

performance poetry

## First Place Poetry Slam

### The Apocalypse in Layman's Terms

IT begins slow, as anything, with any meaning would.

To the simplest of eye, there is no need to cry  
The news gets grimmer, but remains distant  
It comes delivered on the back of milk cartons.  
Given as something that is not found, but thankfully, not yours.

You disapprove, but being removed turn back to  
Newly weds and celeb heads  
The channel 5, to often prescribed,  
Spoonful of sugar which helps the medicine go down.

Until the bottle runs empty.

And with no TV set, internet, or percoset able to lull life back into a pastel sunset,  
Reality hits.

Soon things get too grim to dim,  
And instantly your outside has lined up side by side with the bonafide  
definition of catastrophe.

Children of City Streets and Hip Hop beats  
Strand hand in hand with business men and Barbie and ken  
In crowded crowds inebriated and liberated on  
Molotov cocktails

The grass roots go and uproot and move in hot pursuit  
Of something more than the eight to four,  
mind bore at the corner store they've had since before  
they knew what was money was for

All the while NASDAQ and Dow are now measured  
like threats in color coded cases and  
expletive phrases which amazes even the most skeptical of gazes

Roadways and alleyways which in no way had been for sin therein  
Now find themselves amidst philanthropists  
who exist by selling hand guns to toddlers

You hope and pray that what you see today may in some way be limited to the USA.  
Yet you soon find this first hand brand of mayhem  
Somewhere swam beyond Uncle Sam and this notion of utter commotion now makes  
motions across four different oceans.

In parts elsewhere the malnourished have flourished and transformed and reformed into the well  
informed. With knowledge in hand they stand and demand that all understand they are more than

stats, and that's that.

Governments crumble, rumble, and fumble in a tumbled jumble way beyond the day to day disarray which has been an okay cliché of dismay.

Recession bleeds into depression and a world wide regression and its impending that we'll be ending in the same warfare and despair for which we prepared and prayed against.

But before we get the chance to enhance world  
With some mutual destruction, half the calories, improved suction, pollution reduction,  
World ending construction of ending function.

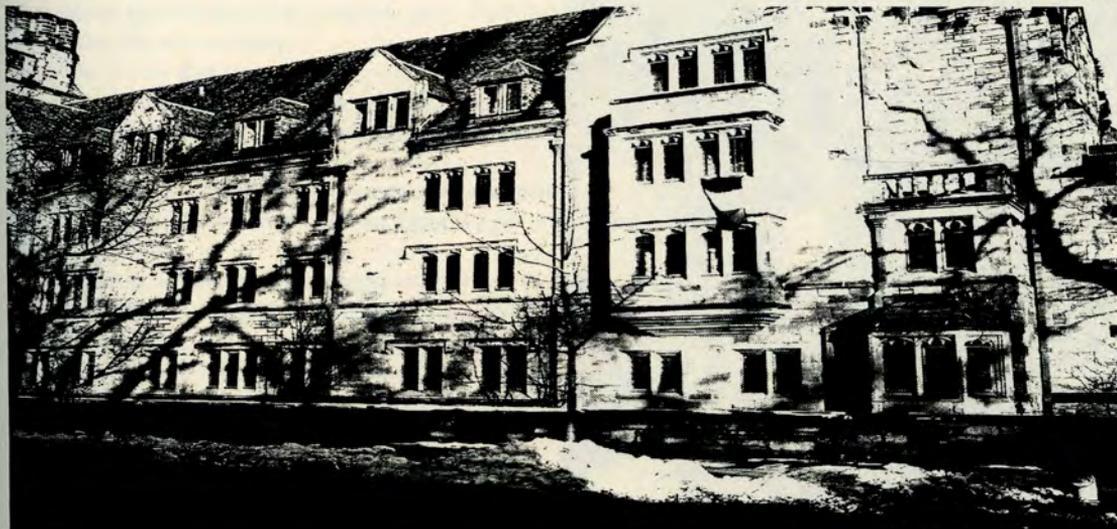
The universe makes its own move to remove earth by solving and resolving our own  
Involving in the celestial question of cosmic invention and intention and with omnipresent clout and  
no doubt blots us out without reason or rhyme in no time.

Poof.

And although I am but one man, and no fan of arrogance or a conceited stance,  
I see all this, and a blank spot in space where we came and went and bought and spent  
saying "space for rent", and thinking smart know it all starts with my heart.

And not seeking to see this come to fruition,  
I do what was done before and after me.  
The footnote which denotes most of humanity.  
I swallow the words with all the meaning and instead  
I Hand out verbal hallmark cards with the same deep regards saved for post cards.  
I keep in a lock box which blocks  
My honesty from running free.  
And keep in all inside me.

Andrew Slafta



Amanda Hurlburt

Poetry Slam Finalist

Tainted Eyes

My reflection is a rejection  
A screaming skeleton  
Bodily bare boned and naked,  
To unveil my question

-Will I ever blink the same again?-

No, I answer.  
For my eyes have been tainted by the realist realities  
And motionless thoughts tear right through me -

I am there -  
Bare-skinned bodies  
Scream starvation  
Children crying  
Rags not riches  
Dirt for dirt  
Mothers begging, oh sweet begging,  
Crying, pleading, reaching touching...

The hands, the begging hands - reaching out,  
yet remaining untouched

My eyes have never crossed such boundaries  
My heart has never pleaded so desperately  
My thoughts have never questioned so much

-All reality, all unjust-

And here we are playing Hollywood  
As our eyes are blinded  
One way minded  
We turn our heads  
Walk away - NO, this not exist in our world,  
So bubbled up we float away  
Ignoring reality by the day

Step out, strip your skin  
Falsity consumes our minds - our American minds  
Land of the free home of the brave  
Free we are not, for our minds are trapped -  
To visions we are ours travel down  
And redirect to our selfish souls that we call ours

To the untainted eyes -  
Fair dealings do not exist in this so called melo-  
dramatic world,  
We call ours.

Michelle Ortiz



Michelle Matarese

## Poetry Slam Finalist

### The Woman that Inspires Me

Y Hubo Alguien, una mujer, tan Preciosa.  
A child from an interracial marriage,  
A father from Africa and a mother from Cuba.  
She was too light for some and too dark for others.  
Many were blind to see the beautiful person that she was.  
Years of neglect burdened her life.  
A want to and a will to change the world, was shadowed by society.  
This man, not much accepting of a foreigner, outcasted her.  
Years she struggled, Nadando Contra la Corriente, just to spend her word, her culture,  
and her sound.  
She moved to New York, to a Land of Opportunity.  
Her parents made sacrifices, which enabled her to overcome many obstacles.  
Nora Morira, her father, "t? eres como una estrella."  
For the years you have shed and for the mucis that you have created,  
Yo "canto su historia"

You have given me so much,  
helped me discover my identity and  
lifted my head when it was hung low.  
You would speak and I would listen.  
Your comforting voice, so pleasant, so sweet, spoke to me in ways no one else spoke.  
We developed a bond, which I am glad to say, is still strong today.  
It didn't matter to you what I looked like or how old I was.  
What mattered was that I had a good heart.  
One that is now full of passion.  
Your hands guided my hips to move, your rhythm took over my feet and let them flow  
throughout the dance floor.  
You showed me this new world,  
one of such freedom, where the people no longer discriminate.  
It doesn't matter how much wealth one possesses, the clothes they wear, or the job that  
they have.  
Despite so much negativity, you were still triumphant.  
You looked past everything and managed to get into many's souls,  
especially mine.  
You helped mold me into the young woman I am,  
Strong, Intelligent, Beautiful, and most importantly, Proud!  
Proud to be who I am  
And blessed to be introduced to you.

In reality, No Hay Nadie Como Ella  
So rich, so beautiful, so adoring.  
The woman that I speak of is...SALSA!!!

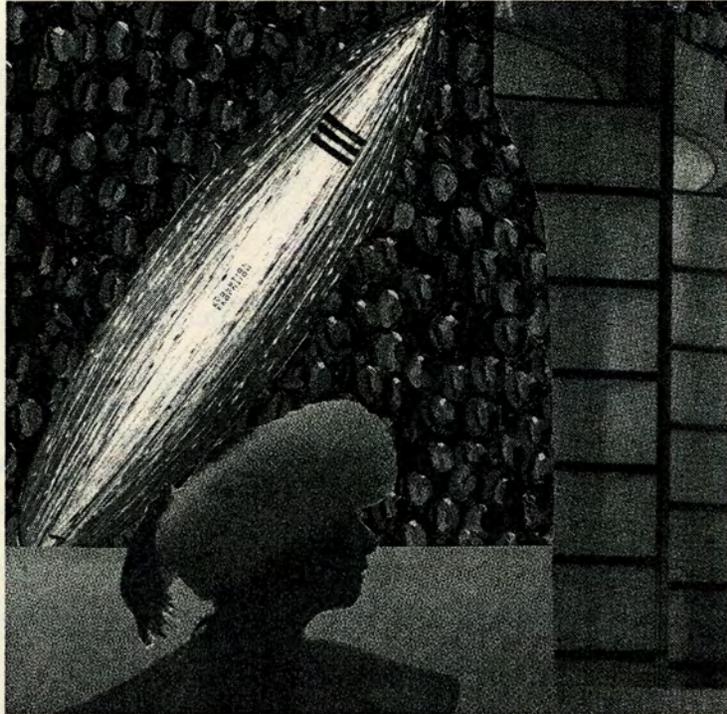
Melinda E. Martinez

Faux-poet's note: Tyler J. Anderson really hasn't died, nor was he injured in the making of this poem. And even if he was, I'm sure no train would ever want to suffer through this catastrophe. (Sorry Tyler.) Anyhoot, inspired by one of our beloved Flamehead's homework assignments, I figured it'd be cool to focus on the one thing everyone wants to know about but they NEVER TELL YOU in obituaries. I aim to please .:

Tyler J. Anderson ... What a Shame:

Tyler J. Anderson went out with a bang  
This past Sunday; he got hit by a train.  
It wouldn't have ever happened had it not been for the plane  
That fell from the sky due to a pilot insane  
Who had one too many tequilas with Stewardess Jane  
(See, they'd left the controls to play a quick game  
And ended up cleaning this remarkable stain  
Of which I won't speak this lifetime or next -  
Let's just say it was THE MOST incredible sex).  
Anyway, this pilot shouldn't be to blame,  
After all, whatever happened to what's-his-name?  
You know, the copilot, Mr. Stephen Furstane ?  
Well, it doesn't matter, 'cause here's what they're sayin':  
Tyler J. Anderson, redhead and almost legal to drink  
Was just struttin' along, justa havin' a think,  
When out from the sky fell this big old plane  
Right into the highway's speediest fast lane,  
And out swerved this truck to avoid a major bang,  
It drove right across the train tracks; my, what a clang!  
As the jet fell to pieces and the truck snapped its frame.  
Now, the poor conductor of this crazy train  
Decided it was best to go against the grain,  
And roll off the tracks, lest he damage that van  
Though, all his efforts were done in vain  
Because as that locomotive sped straight for 5th and Main,  
(The closest street the better, he ascertained)  
Our boy Tyler J. Anderson was in high spirits walk-ing,  
(To say he didn't see it coming would've been a bit mean).  
Well, you can guess what happened, all details refrained,  
Let's just say he didn't feel any pain -  
Though the body recovered was terribly maimed.  
Good to die young and while he's still sane,  
We will all miss him, that crazy Flamebrain!

Jess Friedlander



Exit Center Stage

No more lying  
No more chasing  
No more deceiving

No more wishing  
No more longing  
No more dreaming

No more drama  
No more tragedy  
No more pain

No more hatred  
No more happiness  
No more grief

No more regrets  
No more wondering  
No more what ifs

No more tears on the pillowcase  
No more long walks beside the river  
No more talks of forever

I'm done  
I'm gone  
I'm tired of it all  
Just want you to be happy  
Even if I am no longer there.

RJ Langlois

## Imprisoned

Sometimes I feel the walls closing in  
Like I'm fighting to keep my head above water  
But the tub is filling too quickly  
My hands are chained to the bottom  
And I used up all my superhero powers  
On that damsel that ended up causing me distress  
And there's nothing left for me  
Except to accept the sinking

And sometimes in the midst of all the struggles  
I feel that I just might make it  
If I stop waiting for the obstacles to be over  
And my life to finally begin  
And instead I just accept that this is my life  
Accept that happiness lies  
Tragedy is the truth  
That slaps me in the face  
And the balance of two is what keeps me grounded

Jessica Campilango

## Masterpiece

Once a stranger to all that was bad  
She was eager to try what she never had  
She knew it was wrong but she did it anyways  
This was the end of her innocent days

She grew up way too fast that year  
We always saw her laugh we never saw her tears  
But deep inside she cried and she cried  
You could see it in her eyes

And when deep inside she cried and cried  
She also learned to cheat and lie  
Life to her was just a game  
She's like a painting left in the rain

Bold beauty  
Turned into dare-devil  
So sturdy  
I now see her weakness

## Pure Perfection

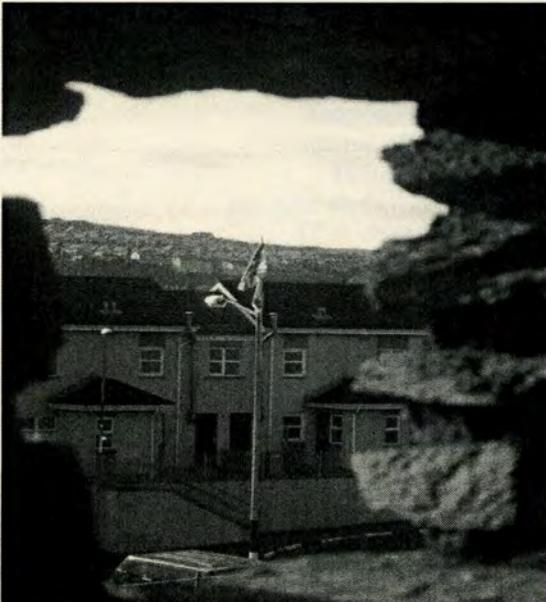
The way she used to be  
I want her  
Back that way

But now all there is to her is this  
A bunch of regrets and a wish list  
I want to bring her back to the bliss  
But all she does is cry and cry

And to the world she cries and she cries  
She lies, and she cheats, defies  
She wonders why they didn't stop her game  
She's like a painting left in the rain

A masterpiece that's never gonna be the same  
She's like a painting left in the rain.

Christina Torres



Allyson Corcoran

## Napoleon In Rags

I had a dream that I was a folk rock singer  
strumming six strings on a dark smoky stage  
in an old dusty bar in some nameless southern  
town forgotten by their fathers, brothers, and  
their gods but wherever I may find two ears  
and a smile well I, I'd sing all night

and I would walk from the east coast to the  
west a minstrel boy singing songs about love  
and politics playing town to town for a drink  
and a hand urging you and me to take back  
this land from the tyrant, the sword, and the  
noblemen's grasp returning to the soil

I'd rise up and shout till my lungs turned blue  
a billion voices in unison screaming "we're  
through" with the cowboy on the saddle charging  
blind into the fight so righteous with divinity  
he only sees his side watching sword in hand  
barking orders at the sun while the son fights  
for his life

then it all turned black

I see a preacher's son hold a silver gun  
while a million hands just hold their tongue  
and a holy man with a pilgrim soul  
strikes men dead for what their father told  
a man in red directs the lifeless choir  
as the ghosts march on to the sacred pyre  
the host of great white gods adjourn  
and they laugh with glee as the city burns  
but the hill turns black on the foolish king  
as his throne of thorns begins to sink  
the sunrise east of the mountains gleams  
like the serpents tongue in the bloody sea

and I awoke in my bed to the same sad song  
playing loud as hell on my alarm clock  
and I think maybe I should just stand up and  
raise my voice only I'm just too fucking weak to  
make any noise but maybe when I'm brave  
enough to sing the words I wrote I'll find my  
way home

Matthew Maynes

Apostrophe to the Rose

You have grown in  
The light of a smile,  
Been watered by tears,  
Born witness

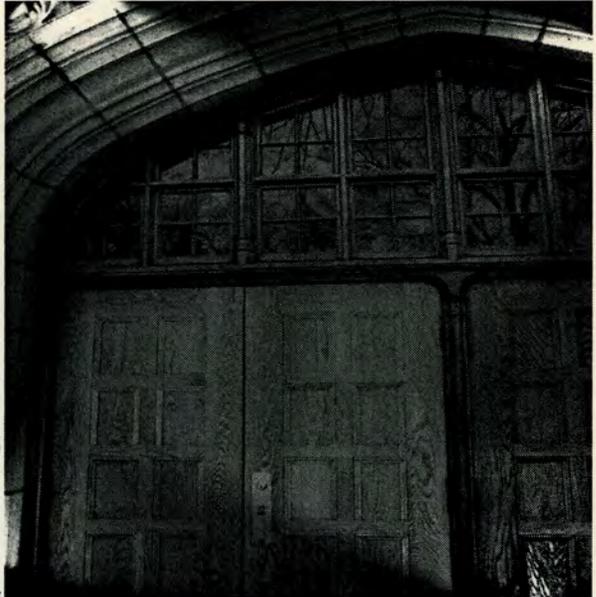
Tot eh black-haired girl's exhilaration  
After the curtain fell

On opening night,  
Displayed a couple's love  
On his jacket their wedding night,  
In her arms "just because",  
Under the papers in the garbage after he walked  
out,

Felt tears falling  
On your leaves like pearls-  
The casket prayed over,  
Love leaving only a memory.  
Crimson rose,  
Pressed, drying  
Between the pages of a Bible-

Whose story do you hold?

Nichole Boisvert



Amanda Hurlburt

They call it estuary.  
 The sign even bears  
 An emblem of a fish.  
 The water is so contaminated now-  
 So murky you can't see the bottom-  
 That I cannot think of any fish  
 Wanting to call it home now.  
 The few that do swim gloomily  
 Meandering in the melancholy water,  
 Recalling the days when the water was so blue  
 It reflected the trees like a rippled photograph,  
 Recalling the days when the water teemed with  
 schools,  
 Predator-prey, Darwin, nature's way,  
 Recalling the days before trains shook the banks  
 Dumping silt and soda bottles,  
 Recalling the days before man interrupted,  
 Recalling,  
 Recalling.

The Playa

Ham sandwiches and deli delights  
 Kisses, bites and wild nights

Tables, chairs and refrigerators  
 Busy, not now or I'll talk to you later

Bear hugs and claws and doggy...well you know  
 Getting on top or getting down low

The bedroom is an oven and the sheets are on  
 fire I'd prove it to anyone who'd call me a liar

Breaking in the bed and tearing down the walls  
 Outside, my car or in shopping malls

Co-workers, friends or an occasional girl  
 It's Valentine's Day; I'll give her a whirl

Nichole Boisvert So stop at my door, I'll open it for you  
 And bring all your friends, it's better with more  
 than two

It's not a one-night-stand; it's the thrill of your life  
 And it'll be more than once if you don't tell my  
 wife

Chris Wieland



## Water-Logged

Somewhere it's 2 o'clock in the morning  
And the rain is hitting the pavement  
With the same wrath with which  
He used to strike my face  
It's cold and I'm lonely  
And all I can think  
Is how I've just got to get out of this place

I head to water  
The place I fear most  
I step into the boat  
The rain won't let up  
And my light is fading  
I know I won't make it  
A mile off the coast

I'm tied to the mast  
With imaginary chains  
Let here feeling  
Unnecessary pain

I'm in the middle of the ocean  
And my boat is sinking fast  
And all I want to do  
Is have something to hold on to  
Cause I hang on your every word  
But lately there's been nothing  
Only silence

Silence is slippery  
Leaves me with nothing to grasp  
Simply alone and stranded  
On this god forsaken make-shift raft

I'm merely a pebble  
Sinking to the bottom of your angry sea  
I won't even make a ripple  
Cause I've given that easily

I can no longer see the shore  
Of that god awful place  
And you can no longer see the pain  
On my god awful face  
Here I am sinking to the bottom  
Choking on the water that slowly fills my lungs  
My eyes wide open  
Burning every inch of the way  
And I die watching you  
Clinging to the life vest of your words  
Holding on to the thing that can save me.

Jessica Campilango

## The Gardener

There he knelt. Chiseled from stone,  
by a man who knew not of his craft.  
The statue was scratched and scarred,  
hindered by ages and conflict.

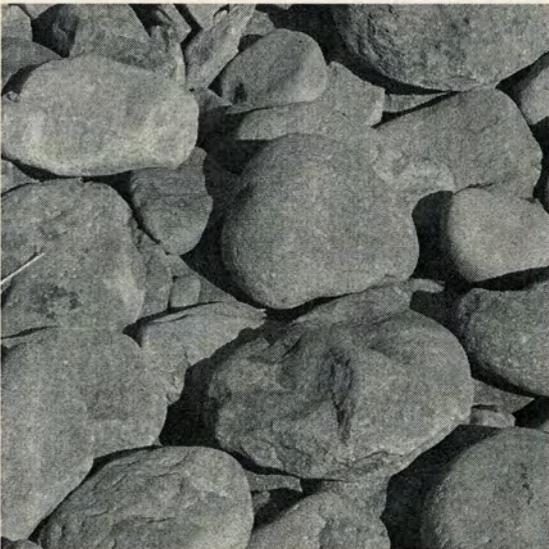
He moved at the pace,  
one would think a stone would.  
Slow...Steady...Cautiously...  
Tilling the soft earth.

Unmovable from his artwork,  
he sowed the souls with solid care.  
His technique took generations,  
mastered by his own hands.

The brothers and boys,  
he learned to love  
Now planted with  
the peas and marble.

Fashioned he was from hard stone.  
Unbreakable, unyielding, coarse.  
Carved into granite he was not.  
Yet, in his garden, he wished it.

Derek Kaleida



Allyson Corcoran

## Me and My Dad

Of all the sailors sailing upon the sea,  
Blanketed with a calming glee,  
None could be as glad as,  
Me and My Dad.

With the cool breeze in our face,  
Illuminated by each other's grace,  
Those twilight hours we sailed in search of what  
the ocean had,  
Me and My Dad.

For you see, this is where it came to be  
Where the sea took my father away from me,  
No longer letting us share what we once had,  
Me and My Dad.

In our sea is where my tears still fall,  
One by one, the current takes them all,  
Within the water I can see our reflection,  
And how it makes me so glad,  
To once again see,  
Me and My dad.

Here I can find him to guarantee,  
He flows between where the heavens kiss the  
sea,  
Here I can find solace in what we have and had,  
Me and My dad.

No matter what, our sea shall stay,  
And my dad will never be far away,  
No matter the days that make me sad,  
It will always be,  
Me and My dad

Justin Calderon

### Infant Soldier

Conceived by a union of genuine love,  
from a man of pride, honor, and courage,  
and a woman of beauty and grace,  
I am a child,  
who life is a testimony,  
love can create life.  
My father struggled for his country,  
even jeopardized his safety.  
My mother struggled with her heart ache  
and sacrificed her life.  
I am the product of her sacrifice.  
Her death was my first breath.  
My welcome was her farewell.  
My heart beats the song of their romance that  
once was.  
The red blood in my veins  
is equivalent to their passion.  
I embody their feelings  
and am a combination of their souls.  
My appearance is their mixture.  
I am who I am  
because of my creators.

Melinda E. Martinez

### Heaven's Sonnet

Amidst the beaming light and the clouds break,  
Lies a place where we can only dream to see,  
Every soul flying hither to awake,  
Glad to at last fulfill their destiny.

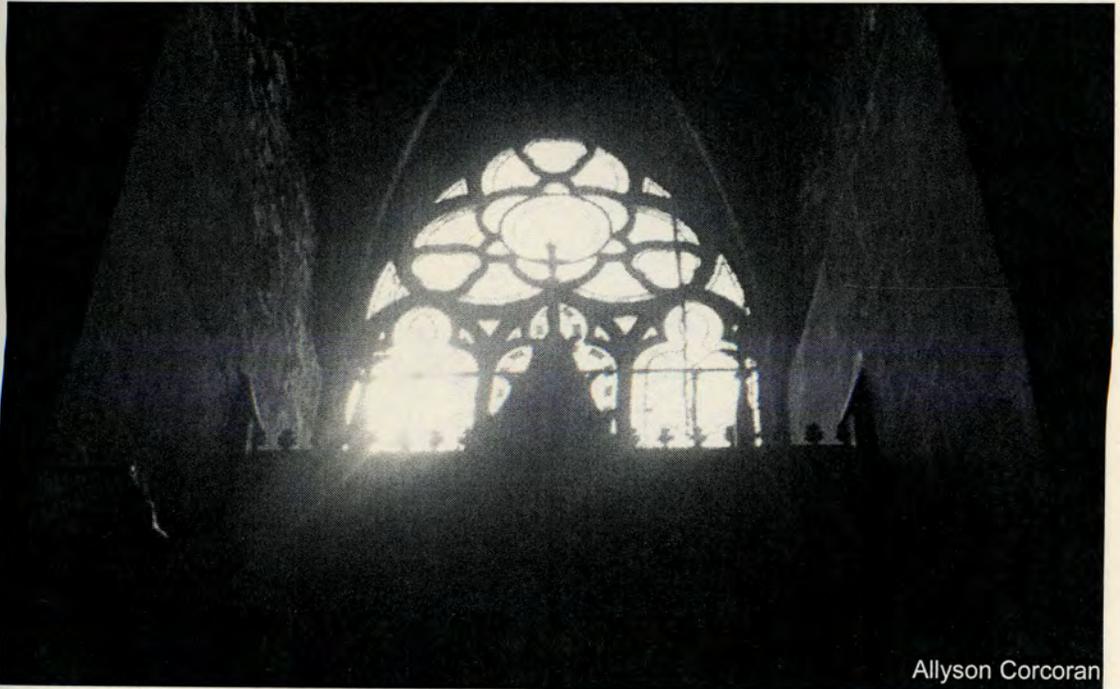
Shades of purple and gray absorb the sky,  
Nesting such a placid, tranquil abode,  
While seraphim whisper a lullaby,  
Bestowing you with what the heavens hold.

Where beauty's maw holds bountiful grace,  
And light glistens you through the new frontiers.

Man psyche could never draw such a place,  
So gorgeous that none can harbor their tears.

At last once that day comes, here we shall meet,  
When our lives are satisfied and complete.

Justin Calderon



Allyson Corcoran

## Cornered

Confined to enclosure  
A comfortable cell.  
Consumed by one's conscience  
As amazing as a cardboard box at 6.  
Dreams are found  
In such small spaces.

Cornered we are in such places.  
These are the times, we grow.  
Succumbing to ones surroundings  
Engulfed, in the effort.  
We contort and then control.  
Allowing a venue for confidence.

In these situations derives defiance.  
Character is created  
boys become Men.  
The cardboard becomes wet.  
Tears easily, allowing escape.  
A new look, to look for.

Derek Kaleida

## Autumn Memory

Her smile peeks,  
Alighting her face-  
A sunrise.  
Royal flush  
Creeps up her cheeks,  
As mirth glitters in her eyes,  
The final and most beautiful stars  
Of the diminishing night,  
Before her lids  
Slip over them,  
Leaving them to delight  
Another part of the world.  
The gentle trees  
Cradle her,  
As her spirit  
Dances in the breeze,  
Beneath a canopy-  
Crimson, green, orange:  
Her smile remains,  
Like the sun  
To grace the skies.

Nichole Boisvert



Bria Soucy

## Da Blow

It an innocent child on the ghetto streets of war  
Grew up so young, the fast life they adore  
They live in a building with drug use and crack  
whores  
Bullets fly through the window, gotta get down to  
the floor.

You hear those feigns say, like Snapple this is the  
best stuff on earth  
Mothers are pregnant, their seeds are a crack  
babies at birth  
Some of the poor things came out dead looking  
like baby smurfs  
The block is like a maze controlled by different  
turfs  
So be careful where u ride cause u may hit the  
dirt.

You really should see it; they say this stuff  
destroys lives  
They shoot it in their veins their pupils become  
enlarged  
They feel good for a minute, the then...but then,  
They are stuck  
Stuck like a pole  
Stuck like a tree  
Stopped like a parked car  
Standing still from frost  
That stuff in the veins knows who's the boss.

It destroys neighborhoods, for that people could  
see  
You know in New York City where are the blocks  
you want to be  
Coming in,

Michelle Matarese

It's like the gates that meet you in the underworld,  
with demons ready  
to great  
you on the other side; your soul is a slave to  
them for life.

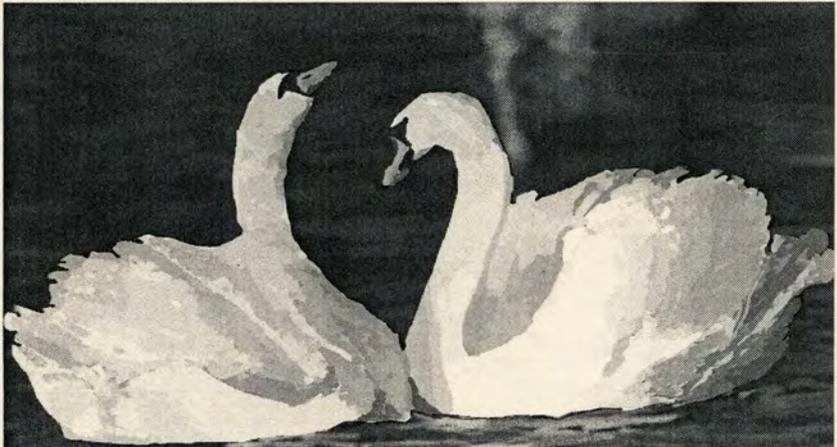
Living in the streets  
Needing money to eat  
Filthy dirty feet  
Start knocking on doors  
Begging for more  
Chasing the very first high they had before

That's all that it is....it's a game  
It's a game played, that leaves you in shame  
It's a game played which they can't tame  
You can't contain  
But who takes the blame  
Your life adds up to a lame  
You cry as you look at old picture frames  
It's true to say mayne  
It leaves your life in shambles  
A life full of pain

Sniffing it, lining it up,  
It's your friend you gotta hit it up  
Injecting it, making it, cooking it  
Its Its

Da Blow

Mike Moon



Ready set go. So what it was that this little boy grew on up into an older boy; and someday that's right you guessed it he would grow up even further through the stages of man developed over millions of years by evolution. He'd go on and grow his-self all big bad and strong. But right now it's the middle life for him; an old enough to be called a man but still feel like a child inside and from somewhere feeling different and out of place and weak because alone when he woke up it was like a different world. It was as if something primal awoke from the way early far inwards of his brain, something that had been created early in the stages of formation in the human mind And it would be powerful and take control of everything within him; it would be thoughts and impulses and rationales. But this thing would die when he went out in public; it was as if the boy killed it every time he stepped outside the safety of home and interacted with the outside world. Like in order to communicate and be with that mass he had to put up walls and those walls were created as an external barrier but were built too hastily and with too much emotion to ensure they would be done right so they came to cross borders and impose on the inward world. These walls cut the creature into pieces and hold it down boxed it in and then death. But it was becoming okay because he then one day met a girl and it was like gasoline matches fire start of the race go because she could make him get up and go; move into the face of the world and impose his nice little self all up in it and force himself in like everyone else and feel connected to the action. She herself was terrible and tragic and the final and transcendental irony of the world. It was as the entire universe was composed of one certain substance, and the girl was made up of a separate and distinct substance and what happened was that both of their molecular structures were shaped so that resonance was possible and the resonance from each was at completely different frequencies causing horrible shocks and distortions between herself and the rest of existence. Time-space and the girl fought bitterly. She shrieked and tore against reality and the all of it. Tragic and beautiful because that's the way it was and that;s the way it is because during their song she rant he blade down and he watched with self in hand and that was whoa now hey there where did you get up and down go and where is rationality and whose on second because it tastes good with penny flavor and then choking kissing drinking breathing and later he's inside of her and that is the time in which he feels really alive and connects to the everything of the world; fully involved in one of he more sacred and repeated acts of the all around gum and that is right up until the time of release because that was multiply parted and he would feel like was truly getting free of the world because he never felt connected to otherwise but he still felt imposed on by it and its rules but then connected and then truly free and extremities tingle pulse throbs and he becomes light headed. And during this she feels the resonance subside and the whole because the void is filled and making someone so out of place and useless feel good. Head to head is how they do it back and forth to a steady quickening inner beat and lined up together smash bam down as a team and kiss pulling her close wrap around each other tightly and the mingled sweat smell of sex to fall asleep while the line between the two of them is still blurry and it will be until she rolls around asleep and the membership pulls out; a sad and dreadful moment that we all knew had to come and had been dealing with from the beginning. The lines can only be blurry for so long before they must go back to righty right and we must loose ourselves in these lucky moments and the shear pleasure and awe of them and we must treasure them for what they are.

Hugh Knickerbocker

## Alien Parasites that Cause Poetry

One fine spring day I was sitting as I am often  
won't do,  
Listening to the transmission sounds  
Sent from the CIA,  
The sort that I tend to pick up  
On the metal fillings in my teeth near my brain.

I recognized the voices as that  
Of Isaac Newton and Kublai Khan  
Newly back from cryogenic stasis  
The one you need right before  
The interjection-infusion of nanomachines  
Put directly into the bloodstream

But I'm sure an intelligent person such as yourself  
Would have already known such a thing.

"Sir," Mr. Newton began  
"I'm afraid I have quite disturbing news  
It seems that the plan that you so brilliantly made  
And so cunningly put in place  
Has been found to have a certain flaw  
That might make troublesome our reign."

"What is this?" bellowed the mighty Khan  
"Do you dare to question our alien lords?  
The wisdom of the great and powerful masters  
Does not have any flaw!"

"The parasites are all in place.  
We have put them everywhere.  
In the food and in the air  
In the paper they do read  
Ten times as much in the diet soda  
And in the light waves from TV!"

"We have nearly covered the entire earth  
With our insidious disease,  
I fail to see what could be wrong  
When they all accept or do not see  
The continued omnipresent shadow rule  
Of the alien bourgeoisie."

"It' seems, great one, that some human minds  
React strangely to the mites.  
They cause the mind to speak to itself in riddles  
And nonsense of all kinds  
And these things often jump quite readily  
To the paper from the mind.

This would not be such a problem  
If the cause were not so dire  
It seems the drivel comes from the inner mind  
That somehow sees the bug  
And tries to warn all those around  
Of the rot and mangle going on inside."

Kublai Khan thought for a while  
And straightened the furry hat on his head  
"So this flaw, slight though it be,  
Could allow the cattle to see our scheme  
Find the little blue claws with wings  
And expose our whole elaborate regime  
Before our iron grip is assured  
And the Soul Harvesting mine complete"

"This is serious," concluded Kublai Khan  
"You were right to come to me.  
Hasten to solve this problem  
And do it with all speed.  
But do not worry for our masters  
Should this plan still not succeed  
For they still have their death rays  
And that is all we need.

Emma Hagan



