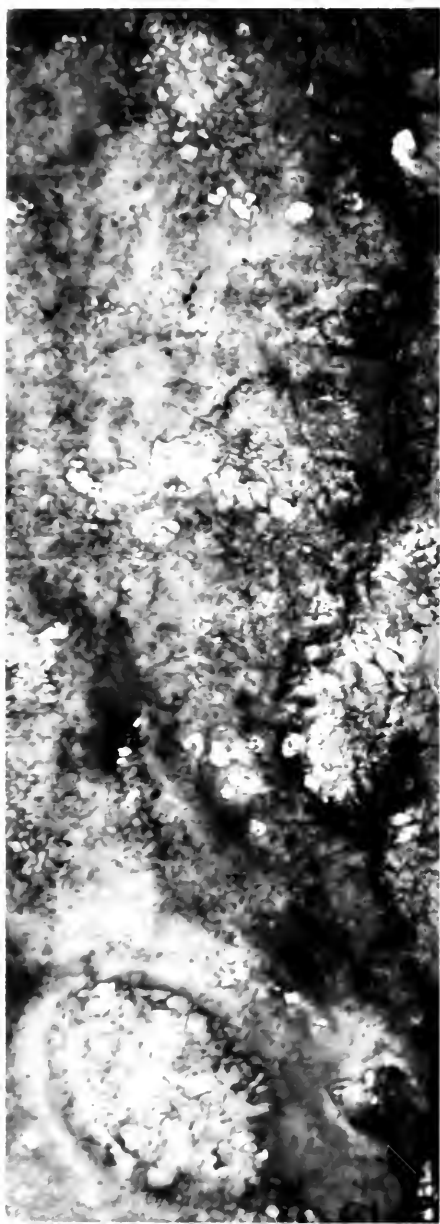


North Valley College

Voices

LH
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V6
Spring
2002



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Voices accepts for consideration submissions of poetry and fiction, as well as artwork in any form. Send submissions, along with a short biography and a SASE to: **Editors, Voices, Division of Composition and Literature, Rock Valley College, Rockford, IL 61114.** **Voices** assumes no responsibility for unsolicited contributions. **Voices** is published twice yearly by Rock Valley College. To become an editor, enroll in **JRN 139 - Small Magazine Production.** This 2-credit course is offered every semester. For information, call (815) 921-3324.

Cover Art by Risë M. Powers-Johnson

I could feel the devil
in all his sharp-clawed madness
screaming and tearing
biting and sliding
slowly towards my ego

My eyes rolled
and salivated
and I could feel god
pushing upward on my sparkling
and sober feet

So there I am stuck in a holy sandwich
swirling somewhere in the middle
when the thought comes to mind
that I feel
like a child
caught in between two parents
going thru
a very sloppy divorce

Kind of a funny thing to think
about while being
pressed in a godwhich
and I realized that
the devil wasn't pushing
I was pulling

The devil only set down
things in front of me
that got progressively heavier
god was lifting
I was pulling away
I gripped harder
he pushed more

Now my soul sits in ashtrays
and on the lips of smokers
lips that cover
the yellow coated teeth
Grunting and laughing
smiling and shitting
sucking away

at my soul
They sucked it all
and I was left with nothing
They smoked til their fingers burned
and broke and bleed.
They mixed it with my ashes and drank

My boots sat emptied in the corner
my feet sucked
like wet spaghetti noodles
from my now
dormant socks.

It was tragic,
the way they
sat there
looking up at
me
pouting and
whining
towards me
Crying some-
thing about
nails and hairs
nails and hairs
I cursed and then
apologized

The long legged
nymphettes
danced around
the rims
of the trucker's
mugs

Sometimes one would pull
on the arm of a slot machine
standing proudly
at the end of the table.
The little wheels would always think
Why did I end up on this side of the glass
instead of that asshole pulling the lever?



Raven Johnson



Jacob Potter

everytime i pick up my pen
i fear i will write just another cliché
i don't think i've ever written
anything of meaning
and it's a pretty sad day
when you realize
that your work evokes nothing
not like, not dislike
nothing.

So why
do i keep writing?

Well,

Maybe i write
to piss you off

Maybe i write
to keep my hands busy

Maybe i write
to love my grandma

Maybe i write
so they'll laugh at it and not me

Maybe i write
to get women

Maybe i write
to have just one god damn
organized thought

Maybe i write
to pray

Maybe i write
so they'll shut up about me
being unproductive

Maybe i write
to hear myself talk

Maybe i write
to stop these urges

Maybe i write
to prove i can

In your head
all ideas are clever,
you have to write them down
to realize how mixed up you really are.

— Randal T. Schultz

Do You See a Fool?

The twilight pierces my eyes
Is it over or has it just begun?
East or West
The road lies before me
A choice only I can make
East or West
Am I a fool to stand at the cross
roads?
If I stand still will time do the same?
East or West
Darkness versus light
Is the easy path always the
wrong way?
East or West!
Each road, destination unknown
Am I a fool at the cross roads?
No I am not a fool
I'll just turn around

Jerry

Today, tonight
No I might
Not love
Not wonder
Just my insides rumbling thunder
I can't eat
Can't think while looking in his eyes
Into the soul
Not outside
Inside deeper there it lies
In pools of water with no sides
I'm overwhelmed and drowning in surprise
Because it is all here in his eyes
No need to look any further

Lena Schultz



Test

He was a little dorky
And a little weird
I could hear his imaginary fans
As they cheered
He tried to make it sound casual
Just a little date
But he had asked a little late
Thank goodness my schedule was
booked
But I tried to make it sound sincere
I was sorry I was busy
And that would be for the rest of the year.

Invisible Wall

You were so sweet to me
I just couldn't take it
You were there I didn't want to see
you
You told me the story of your life
I didn't let you see me cry
You said you could make it rain for
me
It flooded
You said you would die for me
You did in my mind
I'm sorry because
I did pay attention to everything
you said
I watched you every day
Not looking at me
Even though you did out of the
edge of your eye
And in your dreams
I cried at home from your sad story
Because it was my story too
And now my eyes are flooded
Because I didn't say these things
to you

4 Poems
by
Lena Schultz

Holding the Sea

The horizon spreads
throughout the realms of time,
the oceans outspread the land,
the shores are boundless and full of mind,
but I can hold them in my hand.

Justin Oetfelein



Manifestation

I cry out in the night,
louder, louder I scream when
bluntly awakened I seem to be
in the dark, a hazy dark.
is this a dream, can it be real?
tedious is this feeling, I wish to complain,
when I open my two eyes precariously,
I envision the source, the dam
how could they let it get so clogged?
let me purify you, come come with me
Pour me into the glass of grace,
As if I were water in its purest form
and don't ever clog again.

Fatty Acids

The fatty acids,
will eat you alive,
they tickle you,
and itch you,
then crunch, bite, and
gulp you're gone,
to the acids of inside.

4 Poems
by
Megan Shepherd

Tourist Solid

- Torn apart by the thoughts that make me the individual I am - Mangled in the despair of my intimacy -
Devouring everything natural, biological, and neurotic in my path to find fate - Defy fate, defy fate,
understand it and appreciate its beauty - Voyaging to a better place with true people where I can evolve -

Lost Love

Tears released from my eyes,
In remembrance of my lost love.
I'm being embraced by the cool chilly
Wind.
I can no longer feel the warmth of my
Lover's touch.
For him my heart weeps.
If I could have a glimpse of his angelic
Face,
Or perhaps inhale the musk but sweet
Scent of his cologne,
Just once more.
Oh my continuous heart-felt hopes and dreams
Must be put to rest at last.

Crazy Situations

So much lost because of one night.
Why did I put myself in such a plight?
I must learn to think before I act,
It's hard when your mind is not intact.

From my mistakes I have learned,
Actions speak much louder than words.
I do not like what my actions tell me.
I am what I claimed not to be.

Am I just the same as the rest?
My strength has been put to the ultimate test.
I have an inability to focus on but one thought.
For my peace of mind I've continually fought.

Anousone Panyanouvong



What do you think?

What do you think about you and me?
Walking hand in hand for all of eternity.
Promising to love each other now and forever.
The two of us inseparable always together.

Vowing to share love until death do us part,
Never betraying the love in our hearts.
Sacrificing all, to be by the other's side.
Starting a life that'll bring such pride.

As I'm gazing longingly into my angel's beautiful
eyes,

I promise to be honest, never to tell any lies.
I'll offer nothing but the best,
While expecting you to put my fears to rest.

Falling asleep in your arms peacefully.
When I awake your face is the first I see.
My love for you I'll always cherish.
I pray your love for me will never perish.

3 Poems
by
Toy Lambert



Replicate

Mirrored image,
My excess,
Where I lie inadequate,
Fragment, puzzled pieces,
In union,
I love you.

— C.M. Hall

End of Eden

What is said to have happened to Adam,
When he lost Eve
Why did Eden turn to dust
Why do names become forgotten
And will it ever happen to me

Since when did cloud nine,
Come before cloud one
Who put the me in alone
Why do kings die
Why is history forgotten
And what ever happened to Eden

Alone in the dark,
Afraid of what's out there
And why do we forget
What we've lived through
And what ever became of me

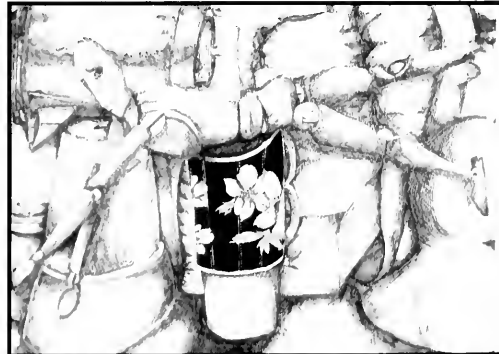
What happened to Eden
Will it happen to me

Or

What happened to me
Happen to Eden

Kristi Fane

— John Arn



Justin Oefelein

You tell me the click clack of my shoes turns you on,
How you know what my footprints sound like right
outside our door.

But do you know what my thoughts sound like
right before I knock?

If I took off my shoes, would you know it was me
on the other side?

You tell me it's like an echo,
my mind, not my shoes.

It starts off quiet, building up frequency, noise.

You tell me my mind is noise,
but what a beautiful sound that noise makes.

You tell me they're like the sunrise,
my eyes, not my mind.

They start off St. Tropez, end in the sun.

You tell me I'm like the sun,
I burn you with my gaze.

You tell me the click clack of my shoes turns you on,
not my mind, my body.

My intensity that rivals that fiery ball rotating
above us,

to which you worship,

on your knees,

to which I dream,

in my sleep,

with our legs tangled, and our eyes closed

so the noise won't escape from my head,

and interrupt your dreaming.

2 poems
by
Erin Monette

Jacob Potter



Rip up the rose petals you gave me,
with the tears that shred my cheeks into your image,
of my heart.

You have no reason
to love me.

But you do.

Kiss away my memories, with you as all I
remember.

I love to start over with you, again and again and
again.

Whoever said we were perfect?

Except you, late at night, when you whispered my
name, which sounded like confusion.

You have no reason
to love me.

But you do.

Graze my arm with your eyes,
that warms my body with chills, not knowing what
your vision will hit next.

Whisper my name with a heated breath that echoes
its way through my body, sending me over.

You say you're falling in love with me,
but I've already landed.



Paul K. Dyer

PEARLED DEW DROPS, DROPS

Pearled drops of you
melt into me.
wasted on a bed
of feathers.

— C. M. Hall

The Unbreakable Glass

Somewhere in my cabinet
Sits an unbreakable glass
I try to overmedicate it
But it just won't break

I throw it to the floor
But not a chip breaks apart
And even though
It is the ugliest color of green I have ever seen
There it rests on my shelf
Because it reminds me
That I am not always beautiful every day
I do have my bad moments
And I can take my wrath out on the glass

It doesn't talk back to me
I feed it aspirin and advil
It gets headaches a lot these days
Mainly from disuse
Just sitting and passing the time
Like I will when I am old
But hopefully I will not get headaches
And who knows if my skin will turn green?

— Linda Backeberg

IN YOUR ABSENCE

In your absence,
I'm tormented by words
that hang around my neck
Like a noose
bearing no meaning,
still.

— C. M. Hall

My Friend Anna

Once upon a time, when potato chips with ridges were only one man's vision, there was a young girl named Leonard. Leonard's parents had been told they were having a boy, so when Leonard was born a girl they decided to still call her Leonard, even though they named her Anna.

Leonard was truly a beautiful girl, despite her name. She had rosy cheeks and a smile that nearly took your breath away. Her teeth were evenly spaced and she had tight ringlet curls that covered her perfectly shaped head. Her giggle was so precious that people would make funny faces at her just to hear her laugh. Even her elbows were beautiful in their own way.

Leonard's only imperfection was the abnormally sized pinky toe on her left foot. It was huge. This was rather unfortunate because she thoroughly enjoyed running barefoot through the meadows and often found herself tripping on her rather large toe.

One spring day Leonard woke up and decided to put on

Anousone Panyanouvong



Anousone Panyanouvong

her favorite dress. The dress was light blue with a purplish haze. Along the hem was white eyelet lace, which brushed lightly across Leonard's knees. The dress was Leonard's favorite because it accentuated her adorable knees.

After buttoning up her dress, Leonard put on a pair of white sandals. All she could wear were sandals because of her large pinky toe. This made walking through the snow a difficulty, but luckily this story took place in the spring.

As Leonard walked out of her room into the hall, she found her two-year-old triplet brothers playing with their pet squirrel named Puffy Cookie. Her brother's names were Violet, Rose and Gerald. Violet was an impressive tap dancer for a toddler. His parents had him start taking lessons when he was only three and a half months old. Rose had quite the knack for journalism at his young age. His role model was Tom Brokaw, and the family often found little Rose taking notes throughout the evening news broadcast. Gerald also had a talent of his own. He could shoot a spark of fire from his earlobe, but only while he was eating pancakes.



Jumping over each of her brother's heads, Leonard exited the house and entered her backyard. The first thing she encountered in the massive backyard was the small water park her father had built in the corner of the yard. The water park had a wavepool, a large slide, kiddie pool (for the triplets), and a bright yellow slip 'n slide.

"Too bad it isn't summer yet," Leonard thought with a deep sigh as she glanced at the daytimer that was in her pocket.

Leonard continued to walk the perimeter of the yard. She stopped at all the various attractions her father had built in the yard, such as the petting zoo and ferris wheel. She even paid a nickel to see four midgets and a dancing bear perform her favorite song from "The Phantom of the Opera." Above all, Leonard's favorite part of the day was eating a peanut butter and honey sandwich for lunch under the large oak tree right in the middle of the yard.

After playing in the yard for nine hours and about seventeen minutes, Leonard decided to return home for dinner. The family ate macaroni and cheese with hotdog chunks while watching Tom Brokaw on the five thirty news. They sang the latest commercial jingles together as they cleaned up the dishes. Then the children's parents called out from the hallway that it was time for bed.

All four children grabbed their beloved blankets and walked toward their separate rooms. Each child had a tent that fit on the mattress of their beds. It was their mother's idea to get them tents so that they would think going to bed was fun--almost like camping.

Both the mother and father went into each room to sing a John Denver song to their children. As Leonard listened to her father playing the auto-harp and her mother singing "Thank God I'm a Country Boy" in a baritone voice, she drifted off to sleep. Her last thought before finally sleeping was "ahh, this has been a lovely day and I can only hope that my dreams will be just as good."

And that is the story of Puffy Cookie, the first squirrel to become a domesticated house pet.

— Sarah E. McDonald

Photos by Andrea Saladino



I wanted to write you a poem
to celebrate the day
But as the words began to form
some tears got in the way
Please don't think I'm sad
or angry, or depressed
Please just know I'm happy
for you cause me nothing less
I've made my friends my life you see
it's silly some might say
But nothing makes me prouder
than when they shine like you today
For I like to think I helped you there
that my love took some effect
Or that my presence makes you stronger
as I also seem to suspect
Since that's what my friends are to me
a guiding force like no other
Strong arms when my soul is weak
words warmer than the thickest cover
You are this kind of friend to me
always have been, always will
And I know that I can count on you
help me over any hill
The distance does not matter
it only draws us near
For in that space we realize
the ones we hold most dear
So I give to you this poem
to celebrate the day
All I ask is next time
help wipe the tears away

5 Poems
by
Allison Thompson

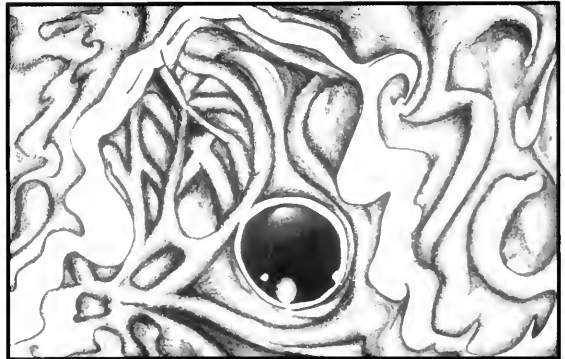
Every time I forgive
Try to reconcile
You wound me all over again
No satisfactory explanations
But I deserve them
At the least

I'm tired of looking at you,
tired because all I do is look,
since you won't let me do anything else.
No talking, no whispering, no laughing,
no secrets, no jokes, no fights,
no singing, no slapping, no tickling,
no staring, no sharing, no driving,
no lunches, no concerts, no shopping,
no anything we did when you cared,
no anything we did before her,
no crying, no hugging, no kissing,
maybe a little missing,
still mostly just looking.
But I'm tired of looking at you.

I should be mad
mad because you used me
as your sounding board
as a shoulder to cry on
as the butt of your joke
as your work break companion
as a rescue from boredom
You used me as your friend
but wouldn't let me use you
I should be mad at you
not miss you

Don't smile at me
Don't be nice and pleasant
Cordial and courteous
What gives you the right?
You forfeited it long ago
Around when you burned
our ties
I see no reason to smile at
me over ashes

Justin Oefelein





Anousone Panyanouvong

Sherry Pritz



Why do you touch me so softly, when my hands are so rough?
And why do your lips caress my eyes, when I can't look at you?
Why do you answer me when I whisper I love you, when that's all you've ever said?
And why can't you see through me when I'm so far away from transparency?
Why do you say you understand me when we have nothing in common?
And why do you say I'm hiding something behind my laugh, when all you see is my smile?
Why do you assume there's darkness in here, when I seem to be brighter than the sun?
And why do you want to solve me, when I'm a million pieces of a million puzzles, and you hate games?
Why do you say you love me, when we've known nothing but?
Why do you watch me when I can't see you, through my darkness that hides behind the laughter in my eyes, put together with different pieces of different puzzles that love your touch like a thousand kisses landing on my body, when you say you love me.

— Erin Monette

When the sky was blue

Once I knew how to fly.
It was a time
when
the sky was still blue

I soared and glided
around and around without even trying
dizzy in thin air

The endings of songs
streaked past in the wind
blinded by old tears
I swam past.
I didn't look back
or down.
for fear of falling
The toy people
What were they saying?
as I knew they would
my feet touched bottom.

- Maggie Thienemann



Rachel 'Ray' Manis

I am not a writer.
It is not my strong suit.
I choose not to play it
But the choice is not mine.
It belongs to that other person
Whom I know all too well.
The decision has been made.
The battlefield has been set.
So I close my eyes and let go,
And once again I'm defeated
By our words.

— Brenda Brinckerhoff

Rachel 'Ray' Manis

RVC Kids

RVC Kids

RVC Kids

RVC

RVC Kids

RVC Kids



"A garden is a house for flowers."

— Sierra Blakely
Age 7

Peace

Peace is what people want.
Every single day
Admire the beauty.
Could it be more pretty?
Even when cloudy and dark

— Justice Wind
Age 10

Friends

Friends are great
Friends are fun
There are friends for everyone
Some like cats
Some like dogs
Some like bats
Some like frogs
Some like foods that are hot
Some like foods in a pot
Gotta have friends
They're the best
Friends are great
That's the rest

— Krystal Phillips
Age 10



Brotherhood

Remembering Dr. King

Brotherhood rainbow
Recipe for peace
Overcome lots of setbacks
The dream for freedom
Hero to African-Americans
Every man's brother
Remember Dr. King.
He had a dream.
Overcome prejudice.
Offer peace.
Dr. Martin Luther King.

— Victor Wind
Age 10

"When I am sad, I go to my
room and read a book."

— Shawnee Younvanich
Age 8

The First Laugh

The energy and yet a sense of peace

How do children do it?

Be at complete peace?

Have complete innocence.

Yet, how does a person of such age become this person?

Think of your first laugh.

Your first laugh was one of your most joyous moments

When you first enjoyed something so much and colored it 'tickle me pink.'

Remember when you had so much energy as you could run as what it seemed forever and still have energy?

That was such a long time ago.

You will always have those memories.

Although the time has passed, you will always have that vibe and energy that you had when you were young.

I will never feel the same.

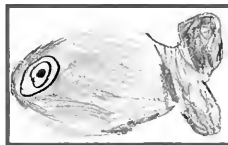
Yes, you will. Just remember your first laugh . . .

Always.

— **Brianne Wolf**
Age 12



Kayra Phillips
Age 9



Alexa Martin
Age 4



Olivia Leyba

"First Art"

Prescription for Earth

Our mother, the earth
has pain in both ears.
It hurts her to swallow.
She's raining some tears.

The earth is sick.
He air is thick.

100 years of rest,
that would be best.

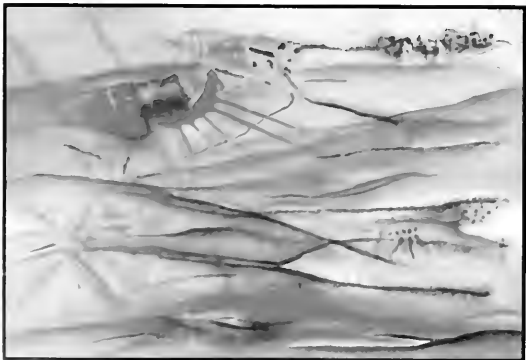
Earth has a fever,
but we won't leave her.

Plant trees and flowers
To help things survive.
Honor the Earth.
It will keep us alive.

— **Aurora Wind**
Age 10



Paul K. Dyer



John Donovan

Killing of the Killing

and of course there is this fear i have
with this screen and all these words
and when i know i have too much to say
 that's when i know im tilting
and falling, and oh, watch these hands fall from
 my eyes (who else hates feeling like jesus?)
as i remember that you are watching me
watching, like everyone else
and they say oh how can you not FEEL and i say
 how can you imagine me any other way?
well, yes, maybe my life is a little like someone else's
maybe it's that copy of *tropic of cancer* i keep in
 my pocket (my mouth?)
or maybe is the poetry i find under my pillow,
 under your shirt
and maybe im pretending
a sort of killing of the killing
well im FEELING this and you know more than
 i could tell you
so maybe i should close this skull
and maybe i wish i could pretend and bend
 and steady myself in your skin
after streams and explosions of words and
 (did i sound alive? were you nervous?
 oh i am amazing sometimes)
 pounding on this until my hands ache
well im fallen
and a little useless
oh god, can you touch me again...
oh god, im fallen

— Gillian Zekos

Legends

Fifteen hours, stuffed in a seat

Sleeping, squirming, eating

Rice, tofu, and

Shriveled up peas

The wall

Snaking over eroded hills

Worn by the thief of time

Stretching miles before my eyes

Tiananmen square

Bloodstained cracks

Soldiers patrolling youth

Workers dancing at dawn

Water buffalo

Plowing the farmer's rice paddies

Collapsing in his tracks

Replenishing my food

Tonight's delicacy

Fried dog, dumplings, pig's ear

Cat cooked to perfection and

Served with eyeball soup

Jokhang Temple

Surrounded by majestic mountains

Landscape with snow

Lhasa pilgrims in their holy khorra

Wild river

Rushing through the gorges

Carrying bodies to unknown graves

Soon lost for eternity for progress

China

Temples, pagodas and dynasties

Terra cotta men

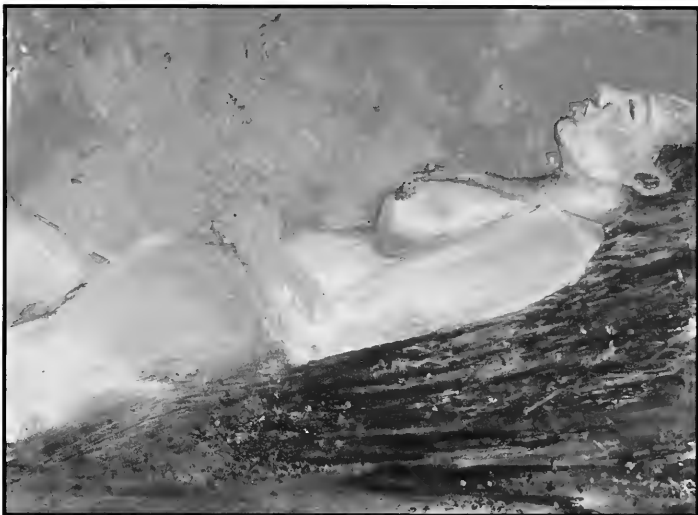
With a multitude of dialects

Overflowing with history

Rich in yellowed artifacts

Permeated in legend

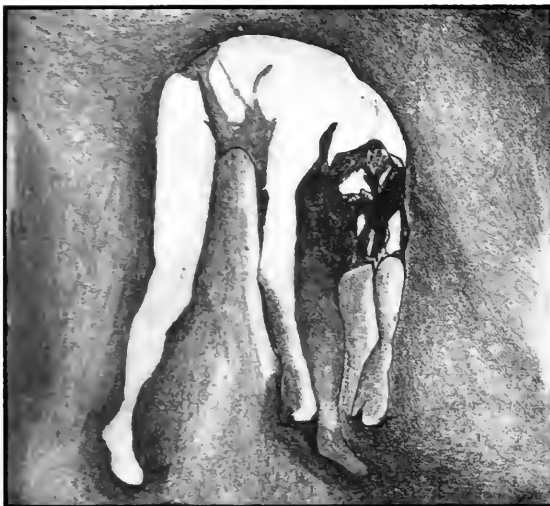
— Pat Benedict



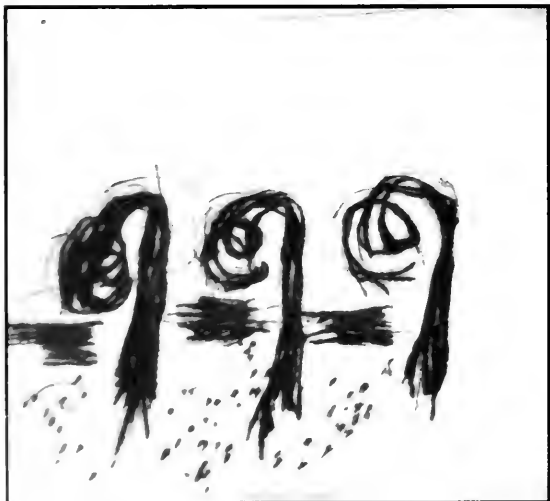
Paul K. Dyer

Oh you're my bone-shaker
stir me up make me all vibed-out nervy alive
I want to lay near you, your cheek against mine
like fine-grained sandpaper
and you are like that too...
gritty but touchable
you smooth away my rough-n-tough
bad girl veneer
too easily.
I am naked around you,
Even my eyes-
my eyes are no longer veiled
but I'm scared to be
so naked.

— Jennifer Beksel



Sandy Allen



Sandy Allen

Comfortably on Edge

Gas station
bright white light
blue moon of Kentucky
no such thing.

Take up my pen
hoping for solitude
hoping for answers
hoping for peace

Truck stop
stop golden light
sunshine of Vermont
no such thing

Look at the clock
as you wait for a visitor
hoping and praying
for the chance to do
nothing

Fruits of the forest
birds of the air
fish of the sea
no such thing

Sit
still
quiet
contemplate

Tweaked to the bone
tweaked to the core
calmly accepting
the chaos of destiny

Help on the way
Help on the way

— Nate Schwerin

Green Butterfly

The other day I saw a magnificent sight that made me wonder about that very fact. I saw a green butterfly flying towards the heavens. It kept going and I followed it with my eyes until it was out of sight. Then I kept watching for it to come back down. I know butterflies are small, so I kept scanning the sky for any sign of its return to earth. After several hours of looking, I realized that maybe that butterfly did make it past the grip of our gravity. Maybe, just maybe he is populating the moon with magnificent butterflies that can do anything they put their minds to.

— Ed Rader

Good Morning

he woke to an unusual sound not entirely unpleasant, just different. the birds weren't chirping nor were the crickets chirping, or whatever the hell the sound they make is called. in fact all was quiet. was this the dreaded calm before the storm, the peaceful time just before his alarm clock summons him awake for another shitty day to trod all over his dreams? or was this the "true peace" he had been trying to buy by meditating naked in the bathroom with a dozen candles burning, arranged in perfect harmony to the alignment of the planets or some distant dream of Atlantis, just like the books he bought on his maxed-out credit card say will align your aura? no, this was different than anything he had felt before. he hopped out of bed and literally bounded down the steps to the kitchen. he made his coffee in record time and when he placed the cup to his lips, it was the sweetest thing he had ever tasted. he then noticed his hip no longer hurt, nor did his fingers feel like they were in a vice while stale battery acid was dripped slowly over them. in fact he felt better than he had in years. no he felt better than he ever had. he ran upstairs at full speed, which was impossible for him to do in more than two decades, especially since he lost his leg last summer to diabetes. he stopped and hesitated, then looked down at his stump. there it was in all its glory, his right leg, not swollen or sore, just there, like it was supposed to be. he walked into his bedroom with his eyes closed, because he knew his way since his eyes were cloudy with cataracts and glaucoma, or at least they were before he woke up. he stood in front of the bed which had basically been his prison for many months now and realized he had to open his eyes to know the truth. he did and he was right.

2 Poems by
Ed Rader



Peter Gullato

Ruth Ann

The door is finally closed. Thank god for that. My sunshine fresh attitude about you and all people is present and accounted for. An expletive to describe my attitude towards the world would be proper, yet crass.

But that's me completely, the crude nuisance that reminds you of an in-growing toenail that drives you absolutely nuts, the scab on the top of your head that won't go away because you keep picking at it.

I can only be me, but you want prince charming on his gay horse to ride in and sweep you off your chubby ankles. Sorry mother, but just because you spawned me, doesn't mean you own me. I am not your currency.

So I will go on about my business and you yours, but we will continue to butt heads because I am your child and we are too alike. The end will come soon and we will never know that in two bodies reside the same damn person.



Caitlin Derrington

When the past prevails
When one compass's broken arrow shoots the regression towards
another day.
Flattery pacing the entire view
A room left to serenity
The passing of one life's motives
While spent years drip, clutch the splintered walls
Catch to the now fibered cracks left in the dankness of basement stair.
Dust, Death caught the dryness
Not to stir
Not to stir
Pour the water over the once solidified cracks
Listen to the creaks as wind from another field pours unto the foundation.
Forever is the thought chasing my breath.
While some cry for the forgiving nature of words,
I chose to heave my entire soul upon the open hearth.
Stones that lie, graves unspoken, became alive with one flick of a wrist.
Maybe I would walk this eternity away until the smoke that caught
my pace before reached.
Maybe I should have laid upon the floor until my veins strung into his.
You know how the rules get broken,
You shouldn't go to sleep right now.

— Sarah Reed

Another Shattered Being

Three steps forward
Two steps back
Mother May I
Know another feeling
Besides this roller coaster they call life
Does the roller coaster
Ever go up
Or just down to the pit of loneliness
Of Darkness
Of Blackness
I collapse in the cold basement
Of Despair
I need some help to get up from my knees

I can no longer see the light
I crumble
Mother may I please
Know any other feeling
Before I have to take
Two more steps back?
No you say . . .
Then as I wait here in my
Silent Misery
All I am asking is
Please
Forgive me

— Christina Valdez

My Dream

I opened my eyes to a dream.
I looked around and couldn't find anything wrong.
I found myself in a world where opportunity
 didn't knock, but came in for a cup of coffee.
It was a world where the truth didn't hurt.
It really did set you free.
I felt like I belonged.
It was my world.
No rules, no limitations.
I understood everything.
I didn't need anyone.
No more watching the clock and waiting for something
 to happen.
I could exhale and feel my burdens lift.
I could look at myself in the mirror and think I was a
 good person.
I could be happy without trying.
I no longer had to fake the smiles for show.
I found myself with no pain.
I had no regrets, no fears, no longings or expectations.
I didn't wonder why it was that I was always alone.
I didn't stare into the river and wish that I'd slip and fall.
I stopped hoping for a sudden death to take my life.
For a brief moment, everything was okay.
But, in the next brief moment, I woke up.

— Melody Nimsomboon

John Donovan



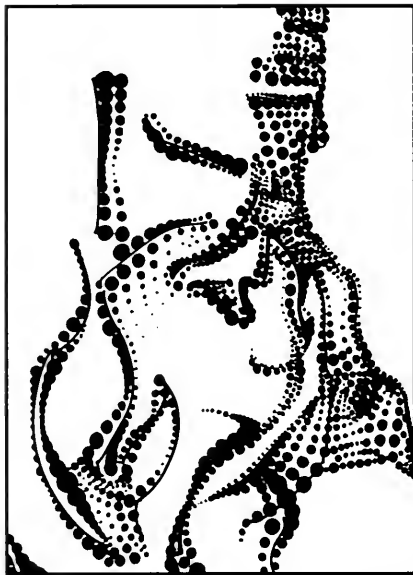
Togetherness

Touch your finger to my eye..Push
I want to feel what you give to me
Blind me with your hand, kill me with your
 finger
As sure as you, it will be uncomfortable
You say this has never happened to you
 I say I feel this often
Why don't we just do it together - Make it ours

— Paul Redel

Most won't see through
All this is paying off
Satisfying my desire for space
Keeping my distance will save me
Over and over I attempt
Failure has become a brother
Starting to hide was difficult
Everything was worth the trouble
Laying low is safest
Forget knowing

— Paul Redel



Devin Henry

Drunk in Beijing, Pining for My Lover

dear beautiful angel who exists now
only as a silent puppet in the parlor of my mind,
I dream of your breath bathing my skin
under the mothering of the moon.
I dream of trembling moments
suspended in
rhapsody
of shivering grasses and chirping stars,
freezing under the only eyes of a black velvet sky.

The moon broke through like a perfect rash
on the wood under the blue netted walkway.
Its light peppered the flavor of my white belly
as it shone to the prying gossip of the stars.

When in memory, your flesh burns through my skin-
I AM WAX
and melting in the heat of your shine.

These justified poetic words do not fall easily.
They seep through slow, slower than stopped time.
I wish I could stop time.
The words hit and hit hard they do.
I take the frozen breathes you gave me to keep my body "alive."
The coldness travels down my now brisk, shortened throat..
Before I know it this ice sensation
falls into each of my tarred lungs,
making every breath grow smaller, shorter, and cooler.
pretty soon the tingle from the words you breath have struck,
what used to be warm, heart pumping my entire body
with a cold false sense of your being
but maybe you were the one with the false sense of self
now no way to restate the stated. we must turn each a different
direction and direct ourselves away from the other
and begin again.

— Devin Henry

Observations of an Evening

eyeball meeting marks intersection
in the space below the ceiling
ENTER
the swirling united consciousness?
giggles rolling round synchronized in space
with the vibrations of sporadic brainwaves
the rumble down from onetoon
in circles,
like weightless stones.
Listless lounging creatures resting
in ecstasy across the plains of
my vision.
Senseless dulled
while memories (distracted)
lull the minds round the room.
existence, delightful existence.
Momentary!
now to now, tonowtonow
AND NOW!!!

2 poems
by
Emilie
Gustafson

Breaking

I opened the door of a moving car. There was no choice. The windows were glossy with spit, a man was barking at the wheel, sputtering, brutish. I remember the high pitch of his voice, the jerky diving, my silence like gasoline to his flame, the thought that I could die because lovers kill lovers in scenes like this. There was no choice. His words clattered like castanets around the smoky car. He said I was pathetic, I heard “prophetic.” Then I heard nothing but my lungs, my chain necklace sliding up and down my skin with each breath, the shriek of a branch-snapping wind in the woozy black night. I opened the door. I demanded, Stop the car, Asshole. And Jeremy, Mr. Hyde, put on the brakes.

He said, you get out of this car and it’s fucking over.

He said, Baby get back in the car.

He said, Nobody’s ever going to want you like I want you. I’m sorry I said some mean things. You’re not crazy. Now get back in the car.

Please, he said with a sound like broken glass in his throat.

But I cut loose anyway. I knew that trick, had seen it several times before.

So now it’s midnight at the Seven-Eleven. My shimmery stockings are wild with runs, thin ladders threading up my calves, my eyes are dry and dusty with mascara flakes. I am reading dog-eared pop mags like all the other midnight waifs. The man behind the counter---bald, porky, and oddly moist---watches me as if I will slip candy into my purse. When he’s not staring at me directly, he is watching the silver ball in the corner, then he glances at *Saturday Night Live* on the little TV on top of the slurpee machine. I want to go up to him and say, You’ve got the wrong girl, Mister. I’m a secretary to the CEO of a fucking Fortune 500 computer company. I could buy you. But I am scared by this. I’m scared I am a secretary, not the euphemistic “assistant,” let’s get real. Every day I take a memo it hurts my pride; when I bring coffee to his desk it’s worse than spit-shining his calfskin boots.

My heart shudders, then beats like a gerbil’s; I lose the rhythm, tense up, then find it again. I am aware that I started out beautiful and became hideous at some point this evening before I stepped out of the smoky confines of Jeremy’s Porsche. Something snapped, my tawny skin became cracked, and my red silk dress started smelling sour, like old milk.

Tonight something scratched my mind, ripping zipper-swift to my heart. Jeremy sneered. You are Teflon Woman, everything just rolls off your back---would you just be honest for once?

At the stoplight I was going to sock him. But I couldn’t. I can’t hurt people, everything just drives inward, caustic, burning to my core. It stays in my gut and sears through my pupils. There are so many things I have never done.

I go to the counter and ask for a pack of Camels, though I don’t smoke. He smiles at me, sweating. He asks me where my boyfriend is. I tell him he’s in the parking lot waiting for me to decide how to break my twenty, though I know Jeremy and the Porsche are long gone.

Understand that this was not the first time Jeremy erupted, but it was the last time I could take it. As Dr.



Jacob Potter

Jekyll, Jeremy was sweet, humble, and brilliant. He liked the brat in me. He was intimidated by my cleverness. He liked my skinny ankles and flat blonde hair. I liked the way he would whisper about all the stuffy corporate shitheads at my Christmas parties, and the way he let me trust myself.

He would break things. He would never touch me that way. I got a call from my brother, he thought it was an ex-lover, he punched a hole in the door. You'd think a smart woman like me would get a clue. You would also think, though, that a professor at a famous college would be more emotionally refined. Because he was smart, he wrote wonderful letters and atoned for his tantrums. I let it all slide for years. Until tonight; the wrist burn from his grasp, prisoner in his shiny Porsche, suicide drive. If he hadn't braked, I would have jumped.

—Moriah Peak

Searching

Have you seen my little boy? I lost him years ago.
Where he went no one knows.
He used to ride his bike all day. He was carefree,
and loved life. Will I ever see that baby boy again?
What's become of him, this lost child? Has he grown
into a good man, or has he fallen by the side of the road
called life, like so many others. So quick to grow up,
and now wanting to go back, isn't life funny like that?
Sometimes when I look in the mirror, I can see his eyes,
his smile, his hair. Has he changed that much?
As much as I loved that lost child,
I think I love what's become of him more.

— Matthew Welch

Prokaryotic Blues

For half a fortnight the thief came
during sleep,
on the soft, quiet pads of cats' feet.
Without fail, to exact and extract
my visceral fluids.
Night after night, then taking flight.
Drained in the darkness, slowly and methodically.
Once detected and inspected
a single cell was injected, infected.
Replicated, undulated, rapid multiplication,
replacing my life force with empty stain.
Now I am hollow and dry as the quill
of a large white feather plucked and discarded without vein.
Hear me filling up with the echoes of pain.

—Keri J. Shanahan

Were these strings all I had waited for?
The chords easily enticed my ears,
Tasted my skin.
To run would only be so careless;
To stay would be truly beautiful.
This one I will stay.

— Sarah Reed



Raven Johnson

Parting Haiku

Farewell to Rockford.
Mine the Iron Triangle.
For Miriam Rae.

— Jeffrey Michels



Brooke Funtstinn

Sugar and Spice

I hide Maxed behind Factor,
Wired and Manipulated,
and everything nice.

— C.M. Hall

Done

Here I am not...at the finish line...but
still not quite done...
Then I was standing in a line of people
with no wait...
It is exactly 2...but could someone please
tell me the time?
When did I answer the phone
with...Goodbye?
I know what I'm looking for...but I just
happened to forget...
You know...it's so hot out...but I'm still
freezing cold
I'm having a good night sleep, but why
am I still counting sheep
Someone tell me again...did I have a
plan?
Wow...that felt good, how about you
don't do it again
What..I can't hear you...so shut up
We can be friends... but do me a favor
and let's never talk again
Let's just pretend that it doesn't matter
and make things easier for both of us

— DeAnn Reynolds

Replicate

Mirrored image,
My excess,
Where I lie inadequate,
Fragment, puzzled pieces,
In union,
I love you.

— C.M. Hall

Freakshow

She would stack up the cups until they'd fall down
She would stand right there to get elbowed in the head
She stared with her lazy eye that drove us all nuts
And would yell because the cups were on the floor
Freakshow didn't have any legs, and only stood 4'11
but she was lucky to have wheels as feet
She couldn't move around since her wheels didn't
work on carpet
I wanted to tell her that we couldn't understand her
Leave
don't stand under my elbow,
next time I will make it hurt
I can't reach the bananas, I'll climb up the shelf
That was dumb since I only needed one bunch and 13 came
tumbling down
I should have used a stool
But I blamed it on the new girl, so it's okay
I am Freakshow
I have wheels for feet
I have a lazy eye and I can't reach

Jacob Potter



My pocket

A few people belong in my pocket...
I'm out of time so I'll let you know who
First because they are so dear to me
My parents...I want them with me, but minuscule
enough that I can do what I want
My sister...so she doesn't get in trouble, but she is
not quite big enough to do what she wants
My grandparents... so they can experience more
things other than bingo and fishing
My friends...so I don't have to ever let them go, they
can see what I get to see everyday
That boy...the one I tend care about so much... we
can add him in for safe measures...besides he's cute
Second, because there is no better place for them
Bin, yes Laden... he is definitely in my jean

compartment...as we speak... so I can squish him like
he needs to be... he's not causing any evils, is he...
That stupid broad, Michelle, you know, the one who
kissed my first real boyfriend... I'd like to show her a
thing or fifty...Especially if I put her in my tight-ass
pocket...so she can probably just kiss a little of what
is there
The jerks will chill with grandma, she'll use her
superhuman grandma strength and "wallop their
butts." Then we'll see what they have to say...

2 Poems
by
DeAnn Reynolds

CONTRIBUTORS

John Arn is a first-year student who still isn't sure about his plans.
Sandy Allen is an RVC student and enjoys hosting fabulous tea parties for her friends. She likes snails.
Linda Backeberg, an RVC student, plays oboe and electric guitar, and takes dance lessons.
Jennifer Beksell is an RVC student.
Pat Benedict just returned from 3 weeks in China and Tibet. She takes classes at RVC for fun.
Sierra Blakely is the proud daughter of RVC student Nicky Blakely.
Brenda Brinckerhoff has no idea how long she's been at RVC, and plans to go to NIU.
Caitlin Derrington is a student at Winnebago High School. She eats worms.
James Dewitz is a second-year RVC student who will soon complete his Jedi training.
John Donovan is an RVC student and a full time bird watcher. He loves producing his watercolor masterpieces.
Kristi Fane is finishing her AA at RVC and plans to pursue a degree in Art History at NIU.
Paul K. Dyer is a film student at RVC.
Brooke Funtstinn, a 3rd-year RVC student, dreams of winning a Grammy. She will record a demo this summer.
Keegan O. Goepfert is an RVC student.
Emilie Gustufson is an RVC student and a certified airplane pilot. She enjoys memorization and her cat, Einstein.
Peter Gulatto, a second-year RVC student, plans on teaching High School Art.
C. M. Hall is a former **Voices** editor now studying at Rockford College.
Devin Henry, a 1st-year student at RVC, joined **Voices** to share his perceptions of art and help others share theirs.
Raven Johnson, a former RVC student, won last year's Artistic Achievement Award.
Toy Lambert is a 2nd-year RVC student planning to attend NIU next fall to become a child psychologist.
Olivia Leyba is the daughter of RVC English Instructor Karen Courtney-Leyba.
Rachel "Ray" Manis has a demon in her kitchen. She has no idea how it got there nor how to get it out.
Alexa Martin is the daughter of RVC student and award-winning writer, Rebecca Martin.
Sarah E. McDonald, an RVC student, won this semester's prize for Artistic Achievement.
Jeffrey Michels is leaving RVC with his beautiful wife Lara for Northern California after 3 fabulous years.
Erin Monette is the President of the RVC Arts and Literary Club.
Melody Nimsonboon is a 1st-year RVC student studying to be a psychologist or teacher or writer.
Justin Oefelein, a student at RVC, studies graphic design and computer animation, and likes to draw.
Anousone Panyanouvong is an RVC sophomore who dreams of being a famous artist.
Moriah Peak is a former "Voices Grand Prize" winner.
Kayra Phillips and Krystal Phillips are the proud daughters of Kirk and Hope Phillips.
Jacob Potter, an RVC student, won this year's Grand Prize for Outstanding Contribution. He's majoring in art.
Risë M. Powers-Johnson is a sometime art student, writer and explorer who loves being outdoors.
Sherry Pritz is RVC's official photographer and the most beautiful woman on campus.
Ed Rader is fun-loving, enjoys walks on the beach and candle-lit dinners. Call him.
Paul Redel is a 2nd-year RVC student and musician who is slowly becoming a poet.
Sarah Reed is a 1st-year RVC student who plans to major in elementary education.
DeAnn Reynolds is a humble, lovable drifter at RVC only for this semester.
Andrea Saladino is an RVC student and a member of Student Commission.
Keri J. Shanahan is a nontraditional RVC student studying psychology. She won a writing award in 2001.
Megan Shepherd is a senior in High School who plans to attend RVC next fall. She enjoys beating up college men.
Lena Schultz, an RVC student, plans a double major in art and education. She wants to work on the next *Fantasia*.
Randal T. Schultz writes stuff and edits this magazine. Go figure.
Nate Schwerin is an RVC student who submitted his poem on a well-worn coffee-shop napkin.
Allison Thompson, an RVC student, is currently applying to journalism schools and accepts donations.
Maggie Thienemann holds both an MA and MFA in Studio Arts, and is currently taking writing and film at RVC.
Christina Valdez is an RVC student who loves Lucy.
Michelle Weis is an RVC student.
Aurora Wind, Justice Wind and Victor Wind are the siblings of RVC student Lena Schultz.
Matt Welch, a 1st-year RVC student, plans to attend the University of Wyoming to study literature.
Brianna Wolf is the proud daughter of RVC student, Beth Wolf.
Shawnee Younvanich is the proud daughter of RVC student Sunce Younvanich.
Gillian Zekos is an RVC student.

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Potter**

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Paul K. Dyer

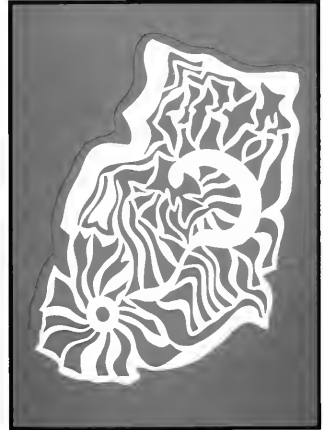


Wear Your ART on Your Sleeve!
Join RVC's Arts and Literary Club.
Meetings Wednesdays,
3:30pm, G-38.
Email: voices@ednet.rvc.cc.il.us

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Back Cover by Sandy Allen

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Keegan O. Goepfert

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