



The Muse



2000



The Muse

1997-1998

Dedicated to Saint Mary's College
and the last graduating college class,
the class of 1998.

2000



Caylin Spear

It is difficult and in many ways unnecessary to introduce work that is able to stand alone. However, the purpose of this compilation must be stated as the creation of something for students, by students. As the literary club and staff of the 1998 Muse, our job is simply to communicate the voices of our peers in a creative way. We have sought the poems, stories, and art that are well written and can be seen by a great spectrum of people. We wanted to create a magazine where people can show through words and pictures what they see, believe and feel.

So many people have responded to the creation of this magazine that we have not been able to publish all of the entries. We would like to thank everyone that did submit, whether the work was published or not. We have had a lot of ups and downs this year, but the literary magazine that was revived seemed to boost our confidence in the survival of art.

There have been many years where The Muse was forgotten, but this year it is alive once again with the help of the Saint Mary's community, the English Department, and the Literary Club. Saint Mary's, please enjoy this gift of poetry, stories, art, and life. Carry it on with you through the years, and keep the tradition of art and literature at Saint Mary's.

I would like to introduce the new Muse by saying as William Carlos Williams introduced Allen Ginsberg, that "we're the blind and live our blind lives out in blindness. Poets are damned but they are not blind, they see with the eyes of angels."

Caylin Spear
Editor of the 1998 Muse

2000

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2000

Independence

I don't remember what I said to my mother.
She left quickly.
Maybe if it ended quickly it never would have happened.
My sister was already gone.
She wasn't ever too fond of cheesy moments.
My brother hit me when I tried to hug him,
But he came back later to apologize,
And he's only eight years old.
When my sister left for Colorado,
He went to sleep.
He hides from things, too.
Like me,
I think.

Maybe that's why I remember so clearly
When my father left.
He was the last one to leave.
Standing in the doorway,
he smiled at me.
His smile, his only weapon against his tears.
It was a dad smile.
His eyes squinted slightly, pushed closed by his cheeks
And held there by his efforts not to cry.
I'd seen it before,
At my swim meet when I was nine
And I won the backstroke.
At every birthday party,
As I blew out the candles on my cake.
At graduation,
When the headmaster called my name
And I walked up to the stage.

I wanted to thank him.
I wanted to say I love you so much
I'll never really leave you.
But instead I said
Go away.

My mother didn't want to hurt me,
So she left quickly.
My father didn't want to hurt,
So he stayed.
Stubborn like Dad
I would not cry.
Go away, I laughed,
Go away.
And then he did.

He went away.

Liz Vaughan

Embrace

Take thee to the mystery.
Enwrap thyself to join creation's chaos,
So that myself pugnacious of surrounding adversity
May be in placid peace portraying solace.

If fear be thyself rejection,
Take immunity by the supportive popularity.
As thee approach a precious morosity,
Thy toe embraces first in neurotic sensation.

The thrustful force enervates thy body,
Sending thee under in discovery.
Contact rigid may seem so crass.
Thy desires release to be in Thee.

Breaking surface and retreat,
Strength of motor-skills push me to thy feet.
From crevice to kingdom in fleet,
Not now my time but ever to embrace one day.

Katherine Stephenson



Sara Birkemeier

2000

Beyond Existence

The people that turn away
From a life
less than ordinary
Are those that STRETCH
Beyond notebook computers
and Yale
They are those that
Live
Off more than money
They survive
off life
sometimes nothing but life
sometimes everything
But always life
Carpe Diem!
Comes a cry
Unheard
By those that only
survive with their
Cell phones
And fax machines
You call that more than Existence?
And you call those that LIVE
Homeless?
I think not
Their home is the world!
They are the ones that
Are not tied to mortgages
And Light bills
Not like us!

Katherine Kemp

Love

Once when I was little, the ocean carried away my watering can, and I sat down in the wet sand and cried. I loved my watering can. It was bright yellow with a green top and a red flower on the side.

I got up and stamped my foot, and then I stamped it again. I jumped up and down and did a little jig because I was mad at the ocean for taking away my precious watering can. I yelled at the waves and demanded that they bring my toy back to me. Instead they teased me by making me watch my watering can bob up and down in the waves far, far away from me. I went crying to my mom, but my watering can was too far away for her to get.

Mom told me to go on playing and pretend that nothing had happened. So I built a sand castle that was as big as I was, and I decorated it with the most beautiful shells. I played in the waves while watching my watering can float away from me. But I did what my mom said, I pretended that nothing happened. I played on the shore all day. I caught sand fiddlers with my hands and played tag with the waves.

It was a great day at the beach, even though I lost my little yellow watering can. Before we left, Mom asked me if I wanted to go on a walk. As we walked down the beach we watched the gulls fly over the sea and the pelicans dive into the water to catch fish. Then Mom pointed up ahead to a glistening yellow object in the sand. It was my watering can. The ocean had finished playing with my toy and had returned it to me. Mom said when you love something and set it free it will come back to you.

I remember the sun was low and the wind was cool when we left. It was just another relaxing, wonderful day at the beach, yet it was one I will never forget.

2000

Cops, Raccoons, History Papers and the Like

Last night I finished my nine page history paper. I gleefully pressed "print," but to my dismay, my desk-jet only spat blank pages at me. "Okay," I said to myself, "It's not due until 1:00 tomorrow. I can save it on a disk and print it up at school." I proceeded to save my paper, and placed the disk in a lavender plastic case with Lesley Guilmart printed on it in yellow paint-pen.

I awoke bright and early this morning, got dressed, grabbed a nutritious and fulfilling breakfast of Frosted Mini-Wheats and apple juice and rushed out the door. I clutched the precious computer disk close to my heart as I ran to the car, and placed it lovingly on the passenger seat. This history paper could sway my A- to an A.

I revved the engine of my dad's gray Honda Accord, waved to the schizophrenic man across the street (who happened to be beating his own vehicle with a stick), and drove off. I glanced at the clock on the dashboard. "Great," I said to myself over Bob and Madison, "I only have twenty minutes to make a thirty minute trip." So I pressed a little harder on the gas pedal and zoomed onto the highway.

I had just rolled through the exit at a frisky 75 mph when suddenly I saw the blue lights in the rear-view mirror and heard the wailing siren. "Yikes! I've never been pulled over by a cop before!" I got onto the shoulder and had the car in park before my foot even left the accelerator. I stopped so quickly that my beloved disk flew out the window, a lavender speck in the crystal blue sky. I lost sight of it as it glided into the woods.

I checked my rear-view mirror. The policeman wasn't even out of his car yet! I leaped over my car and into the grass. I used a rope and pick to climb the impossible hill into the woods. I whacked bothersome branches from my path with a machete, and I fought off snakes and squirrels. "Must have disk!" I grunted. Finally I reached a river. What would I do? Aha! A canoe! I jumped in just as I caught sight of the dirty purple case on the opposite shore. I paddled across the rapids, snatched the disk from the reach of a charging puma, and decided to swim back across the river.

Alas! The rushing water overpowered me and whisked me downstream. I

held the disk over my head and out of the water. As the rapids pulled me toward an eighty-foot waterfall, I floated under a low-hanging branch, and an albino raccoon snatched the beloved disk from my grasp with its shiny black claws. "NOOOOO!" I shouted. Then I realized that my arms were free and I could swim. "Maybe there's a chance," I thought.

I fought the current and collapsed on the shore. Gazing half a mile upstream, I could see the diabolical raccoon pointing and laughing at me. I took off in a dead sprint, desperate to regain control of my precious paper.

As I approached the raccoon, it scampered off into the trees. "Great," I thought. "Now I'll never get my disk back." I had to have it, though! I followed the raccoon into the woods. I had no sooner lost sight of it when I tripped over a dozing hunter.

I snatched up his m-16 A2 5.56 mm rifle with infrared scope and night vision capabilities and recalled my enlisted cousin's advice on weapon use. I pulled the bolt to the rear, loading a round. Stopping to catch my breath, I caught a slight movement in the corner of my eye. Moving my selector level from safe, past semi, to burst, I fired my round into the air. I jogged after the panicked footsteps into a nearby cave.

Adjusting my night-vision goggles, I entered the cavern. And there I saw it: a whole pack of albino raccoons. They obviously outnumbered me. I dropped my weapon and pulled a chocolate chip granola bar from my pocket. I traded the bar for my valued disk. "I have it!" I cried with glee, and ran back to the car.

The policeman just reached my car window as I slid in through the sunroof and fastened my safety belt. The cop tipped his hat and peered over his Ray-Bans. "Do you know why I pulled you over?" he asked.

"No sir!" I wailed. "Please don't give me a ticket! I'll have to pay the sixty dollars a month car insurance, and I'm trying to save up for a trip to Germany!"

"No, I just wanted to know what kind of tires you use."

"Oh," I sighed, relieved, "These are Good-Year Eagles, Aqua Treads.

Have a nice day!"

I drove off with ten minutes to spare. Sr. Hache would not mind if I came to class a minute or two late.

Lesley Guilmort

2000

Mud Pies

I watch
as you make your
mud pies.
Forming them carefully
smoothing the top
with your perfect fingers.
You sit
waiting for rain
to dampen the soil
for the plumpy drops
to splatter
on the dry sand.
You say
you love the rain.
Rain washes everything
away.
Rain
smoothes it all out
so we can move
without pollution.
Your hand
piles the earth-
generous handfuls-
onto the clay plate.
Your slick, brown, fingers
press the mud
forming it gently
into shape.
I watch you
out the window
making your mud pies-
a dessert
for the soul.

Sara Rose Nordgren



Caylin Spear

The Dreamer

Little man
with stars in the sky,
sits and watches
while time slips by.

A clock swiftly ticking
with seconds to pass,
while the sands of time
break the glass.

A little man, softly dreaming,
wakes to dream again
of time long past
and ages that have never been.

T. Burroughs



Vichie Posey

2000

B l u r

My first bite of focus flew by

just as music drives through ice.

We all spoon our way through time

Always the amber dirt,

never the lush petals of ivy.

Anonymous



Vichie Posey

We All Fall Down

Your whole life is a game of sort.

Live it large-cause life is short

Pick some daisies before you push'em

Play the deadly sins, all seven

Before you're rushed away to heaven.

Do what you want, all bark, no bite

Before you're out of touch, out of sight,

Be what you want, find out to know,

Be as out going as the sea is bound,

we all

fall

down.

Ashley Lawrentz

Untitled

Thoughts

Don't speak,

for no one listens.

Are you pioneers still,

starving in garrets?

Come visit my mind,

rejuvenate your senses.

The shallows of your world

are resistant to the slanted thoughts of others.

Come visit,

listen to my tonic thoughts,

they flow like quicksilver

through a glass tube.

Olivia Hock



Jane Fleury

2000

Nights

Night comes and I am here
And will be here when the morning breaks
For many nights and mornings I must remain
Rooted to the ground
My hair blowing in the wind which ripples leaves
And these seem constant
Only because I must now feel each one
My body is rigid
Movement is unheard of
I speak not
For I have no human mouth
My words are in the wind's music
And in the birds songs
Still alive but dead in my heart
Which beats still
Though it can never again express my emotion

Ann Urquhart

Missing Teeth

I had my wisdom teeth taken out this weekend
The dentist gave me some Valium and I was out cold
in two seconds
In less than an hour, four of my teeth were gone
never to be replaced

I wonder if I lost any wisdom in the process
Maybe those four teeth really were anchors into
my scholarly mind
At least then I would have a reason not to pay
attention in class
I could tell my teachers that all of my wisdom was gone
I wonder if they would find that amusing

I would

Ashley Hastings

Time Flies

In 1981 a mistake is made.

In 1982 a child has a child.

In 1985 the mistake gains a companion. His name is Brad.

In 1987 the only man in a little girl's life walked out.

In 1992 the little girl is violated. She still smells his sweat.

In 1993 a mother turns to alcohol for comfort. A father follows suit.

In 1994 the little girl becomes a mother. Her brother becomes her son. She feeds him, bathes him, teaches him to read and write. He loves her.

In 1995 she is torn away from the only life she ever knew. She begins a new one with a new guardian.

In 1997 she becomes aware that her life has been different from everyone else's.

In 1998 the little girl reflects on her life and wonders how she missed her childhood.

Sara Upchurch



Vichie Posey

2000

The Snow Magic

"Holly Moley!!" Jason shouted, jumping from the bed. In his white underwear from hanes and his white hairy legs he looked like a little excited rabbit who jumps and hops around one bush.

"Oh My God...mmmm...kha...kha...kha!!! What's wrong? Can you get your white ass back to bed? Honey! Don't open the window, please. It is cold."

"Look! It is snowing outside." Jason's face was looking on the white street with white cars with white trees and white houses. The big white snowflakes were falling down from a gray sky. The young girl put on her white shirt. Her black hair was all messed up. Her red lips were dry and her brown eyes were moist.

"Jason! I need to go back." The bathroom door slammed.

"Yes! Okay. I'll take you back. I just need some time to get ready." The closet door slammed.

"Gosh! I have so much stuff to do. I hope I can pass all my classes this semester. And you are Mr. Hanes is not a big help." The girl in the white sweater was going downstairs. Bump! Bump! Bump!

"You know, I could take you back earlier. And you had your choice." The room door slammed. Bump!!

"Oh! Shut up. You were the one that wanted me to stay." The girl was putting her black boots on.

"Honey! I never wanted to make you do something that you didn't want to do. You know I love you very, very much. Did I tell you today, my sunshine." Jason leaned over trying to kiss the girl. She turned her head and looked in his eyes. The flash of anger flew through her beautiful eyes.

"Oh please! ...Let's go!"

"Why you always like that?"

"Like what?"

"Moody and angry all the time. I was just trying to help you yesterday." Jason was putting his shoes on.

"Listen, my whole life doesn't make any sense. What do I want? Where am I going next year? Should I stay here? Should I finally leave all my dreams and ambitions behind my back? Or just forget it!" She hold her arm in order to open the front door.

"Honey, maybe you ought to go to counsel and just talk. You know it might help."

"What?" Finally, the door opened. What a big relief! She took one deep breath of frozen air. She felt the big white royal snowflakes falling on her hair. She felt a little girl again, back there in her own country. She felt the smell, the wonderful smell of snow. There was not any other smell in a whole world like that. She missed that smell of her childhood . She suddenly realized that her splinter which was in her heart for three long years was washed away by this wonderful wave of snow. This wave didn't bring painful memories from childhood in Russia. Instead it brought calmness and relief. She felt a little freeze in the air. She felt like she was born again. So, she never said good-bye to her dear granny on her death bed, she never visited her parents for the past three years, or sometimes she sat lonely and upset on week-ends. But now it all was worth it. This something was her old friend from childhood, her only friend -snow.

She carefully start walking towards the car. As a big snowball hit her in the back. She looked around, and she saw the most beautiful smile on Jason's face. He ran toward her.

"you are the most beautiful woman in the world. You are the queen of all snowflakes!"

She smiled for the first time this morning. Her hand was searching for his hand. Finally, she found it and she gently kissed it.

"I love you very, very much!"

"Wow ! What a change! May I ask who helped me to bright this beautiful face."

"Just an old friend of mine."

She smiled again, throw her head up and winked at him.

Irino Tsoy

2000

B i t t e r s w e e t

With your dark toffee pants and light creamy skin, you are vanilla ice cream.
White chocolate swirls curling on the ice cream topped with
Your sweetness, like a delectable maraschino cherry.
Your rich nature and smooth personality are warm hot fudge
coating everything.
And all of this is atop a waffle sugar cone showing off all your
different angles.

But you are not always tasty vanilla.
You can be *Rainbow Sherbet*,
Banana Twist,
or even **Rocky Road**.

It is always a gamble.
So I go to you everyday, hoping my mouth will water with delight;
Only to find my tongue curling with disgust.

I have lost all desire for ice cream.

Ashley Hastings



Kristen Davis

Untitled
Nous dansons au dessus
le ciel
nous nous appuyons sur
les anges
voler avec la pluie
nuitamment
les nuages oubliissent
les noms
nous n'avons un chemin
vers le soliel
Lee Posey



Through My Eyes

As I was walking down the road
I passed by a man who was hungry and cold
As I looked into his weary eyes
I saw a poor man with mornful cries
On his face he held a stare
Of hopelessness, depression, and despair
He held a cup in his hand
Hoping for a few coins from a kind man
Maybe it's the way society treats the common man
Maybe it's part of a conspiracy or a plan

Shannon Leath

2000

Copper Muscle

The hypnotic crackle of the fire absorbs the attention of my chilled figure. I sit among miles of untrodden earth and a crew of new companions. It is the eighth night of our adventure into the vastness of the Wyoming backcountry. We sit, huddled around the flickering fire, warming our bodies to the chill of the darkness as well as our souls to the challenge we are about to experience. We take turns discussing our hopes and goals. However, my mind is far from recognizing my goals. It is overwhelmed by the majesty of the city of stellar lights which flicker in the clear sky. Never in my life have I seen so many stars. I contemplate how I would ever describe their beauty to my inquiring parents and friends. I decide to keep the stars on this clear night as my secret, my own celestial world. I figure that any compromised tale of their beauty would be unjust. I look down at the pile of shriveling embers to notice that with just the right squint their flickering, dying bodies seem to reflect the stars.

We make our way through the darkness to a big tarp with eleven empty sleeping bags upon it. We slip off our mud caked boots and snuggle into our sleeping bags for a well deserved night of rest. We all have tents and other tarps, yet we seem to prefer the company of one another. The stories and antics of my friends are as sufficient as a soothing lullaby and a good back scratch. Nestled in the comfort of my polypropylene, I whisper "good night" and soon after, fall asleep.

I awake to the gentle kisses of the sun on my exposed cheeks. I am afraid to move, knowing that as soon as I do the warmth that settled against my body overnight will awaken and escape from my sleeping bag. Soft moans and sighs fill the air as an orchestra of watch alarms break the precious hour of dreams. We look like giant worms nestled in our sleeping bags with only our faces exposed. I giggle as I watch Daisy stand up and hobble, still in her sleeping bag, to her backpack. She shrieks at the impact of the frigid air against her skin as she quickly unzips the side. She frantically jumps up and down as she puts on warmer clothes. She acts as if there are hot coals beneath her feet. The rest of the crew soon follows her example. My socks are still wet. I attempt to scrape some of the dirt off my shirt which smells of the smoke from an old fire. I put on my clothes according to my prediction of the day's weather. I know that the morning temperature will soon melt away into a scorching afternoon, so I decide to bear the cold and keep the layers packed. Today is going to be a long day and only longer if I have to stop every two seconds to peel off my clothing. We are making a summit today. We were scrambling up the last, grueling, 1,500 rugged feet of Mt. Fitzpatrick. We have already climbed 10,500 feet in the previous days, but that journey only brought us to the saddle.

I finish my oatmeal and pack up my mug. We take a minute to secure our gear and strap on our gaiters. We are on the way. My legs are red from the cold air. Maggie, Daisy, and I laugh as we make exaggerated claims of frostbite and hypothermia. A great portion of the trip has been spent in extended laughter sessions at the fault of our exaggeration and randomness. I think the altitude has definitely had an effect on our humor. Only with our bodies grazing the sky would we find our far-fetched statements funny.

I enjoy the sound of my boots crunching the dirty snow. I look up only to see a giant wall of white powder about thirty minutes away. I had only many minutes left of casual, moderate terrain. After that, all my energy and concentration will be confined to the supervision of my feet balancing in the "snow stairs" created by whomever climbs in front of me. The blazing sun stares me in the face. Its' reflection off the snow only makes it more intense. Without sunglasses, this portion of the trip would be nearly impossible. The sun at these altitudes is most extreme. I reach in my pocket and pull out a small tin of weatherproofing balm. I apply it to my lips and nose, both of which are chapped and burned from the previous days. We move across the field of snow as if we are an army of ants marching toward a tasty crumb. The intense and vast surroundings make me feel as if I am a weightless speck of dust stuck to the immaculate face of a snow covered world. With each step I push the earth away from my body in my selfish quest for the sky. We march in silence as we contemplate the challenge we are about to experience. The great white wall snuck up on us in a subtle gentle manner. I find myself taking deep breaths as if I will receive no oxygen until I reach the top. We trudge on. We sing, we laugh, some sigh.

The incline becomes more difficult. A fall would be fatal. My strength proves sloppy as the morning crawls into the afternoon. The snow conquers every aspect of my vision. I feel as if I am climbing out of the steepest bowl. The technical motion of my body becomes routine as my mind slips into a starving daze. My foot slips. I fall flat on my face and begin kicking frantically until I stick my foot in the snow fifteen feet down the mountain. I stand up carefully and start to kick my own stairs into the mountain. I kick hard. I am discouraged by my failure, yet pleased at my own self-rescue. At the start of the fall I envisioned my body submerged in an alpine lake 3,000 feet down the mountain. My legs shake as I kick the stairs. I look up at the rest of my group. They are all clapping and making comments of my fall. I laugh as I hear Taylor offering me a score for various aspects of my tumble. I score well on composure and recovery. As I crawl toward my group I wonder that if anyone else had fallen would it have been more serious or less? I hope I will not find out. Taylor sticks out his hand as I enter his reach. I grab his hand and he secures my balance as I rejoin the group. "That was nice, I liked that", he said sarcastically of my fall. "Yeah, it was fun", I replied with the same sarcastic tone. We both smile and begin climbing again. An army of butterflies must have led a manifestation on my stomach when I slid down the mountain. Now I can't even speak. I vow to focus all my energy into my footsteps. My legs tremble as I look up to my destination in the sky. The afternoon slides by like traveled terrain. The day, magnificently clear, the weather, eerily calm. The bright snow glistens and sparkles as if the sun's warm rays are tickling its surface. The vastness is mesmerizing.

My adrenaline races as I reach the peak. I am tired and out of breath, yet I've never felt more alive, my senses never more keen. I feel the sun on my face and the earth beneath my feet. I smell the air and all its purity. I see the world from an aerial view. This is the closest my body has ever brought itself to the sky. I look around at my friends, all are as speechless as I. We grasp hands and scream with excitement. The view is like none I could have ever imagined. I never thought that the peak on which I am standing could offer so much gratitude to my soul.

2000

The butterflies in my stomach escape with each passing breath. An intense, heroic passion from my body settles in their place. For the first time in my existence, my body travels into my dreams to tour the quarters of my soul. I walk away from the group and stand alone with my feet grazing the edge of a rocky cliff. I reach into my pocket and pull out my lucky penny. I fondle it between my fingers as I look out at the world which has never seemed so worthy. I bring the penny to my lips and gently kiss it. I hold it close to my heart and drop my knees to the earth. I dig a shallow hole in the snow covered ground and bury the small token of my soul. I cover it well and return to the huddle of my companions.

I often think about that trip, and with every daydream, the memory of my lucky penny follows. I often wonder if the penny is still buried in the ground or if an avalanche or a furious gale carried it away. With that penny I left a piece of my heart, but I bought with it a knowledge of my soul and the utmost respect for my body. Now, as I sit in my reality, I shelter a selfish jealousy for my penny. I know that wherever it may now lie, I 'm sure I'd love to be there too.

Laura Eldredge Childs

The Cracked Rock

Cracked Rock, a society falling apart

Yet strong and still, holding a heart

The color fades, the crack grows as

Time thrusts like a society crumbling to dust

Silent if left alone.

Yet it's transformed, it fits the whole

Silver as the river and strong as a waterfall.

A Foggy day after a long rain,

That can be mistaken for its true name.

Slanted shrivled, yet standing strong.

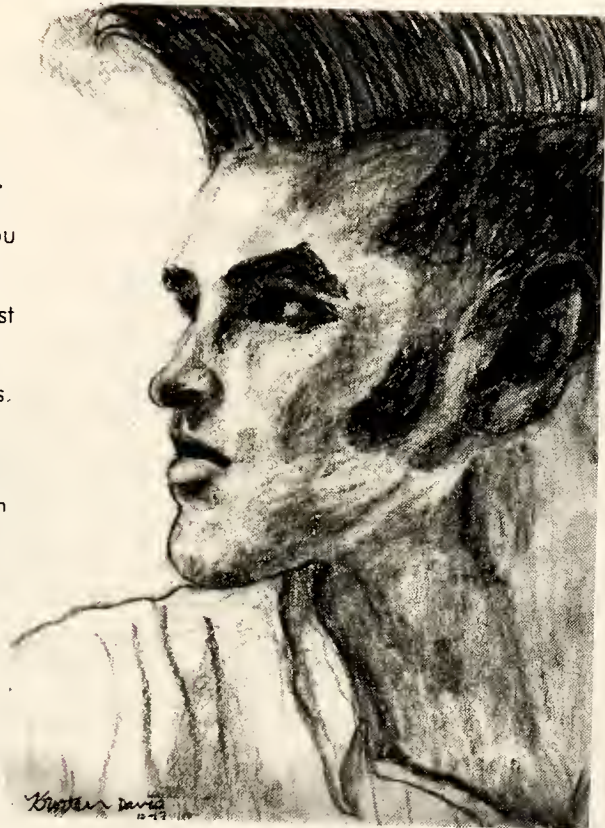
The desire to stay and live long.

Foten Shaikh

Haiku

Lying beside you
My head on your chest
You smell like kisses.

Sarah Rase Nordgren



Kristen Davis

Untitled

In the
end
of
the
day
she
may
be
dismayed
but
if
it
not
be
this
case
we
know
that he
has
been
replaced!

Serena Gangwal

2000

UNTITLED

I'm tired of the rainy days.

I'm tired of the inevitable,

just because of me.

But sometimes I can look out

over the night, and find some peace-of-mind

And to all the lost who are searching,

believe me, there's nothing out there

to find.

When the rain hits my window,

and trickles down the side,

I think.

Sometimes you fall slowly and uncertainly.

And sometimes you pour.

Secret

Down

As the lambent sky diffused into a world of gloom

The otiose girl loitered in a lonely world.

As they stared,

she often presumed 'how unfair'

She went about how she pleased,

which is why, I adore her most.

Oh please take me with you, gal

rescue me from this unholy place

which condemns me.

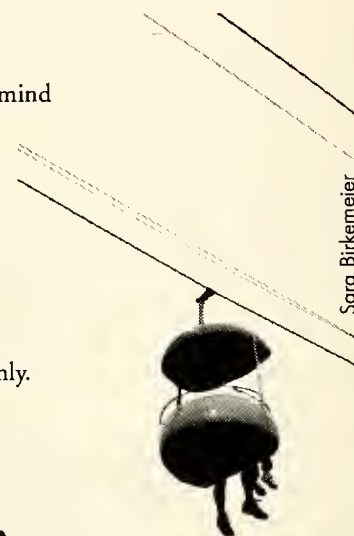
As I implored to her desperately

She passed by with that look in her eye

You're just another fool,

that wants to

Laina Rowat



Sara Birkemeier

Burning Desire

From the time I saw him, my heart fell for him.

I was mesmerized by his dark blue eyes, glittering with passion.

My burning desire emerged into fire.

I could still recall his seductive fragrance,

His handsome visage so infinitely tender,

The strong beatings of his heart against mine.

My heart ached for his deep admire

His heart I needed to acquire

Yet not for long could I endure.

My impatient heart wanted to scream so loud.

With rising agitation and temper, the rage pounded through my taunt heart.

His tantalizing ways filled me with eagerness

Trembling with anticipation for one more kiss

Waiting for him was so hard

My love reached so high a pinnacle,

Lucky was I for his heart was already there waiting for mine.

Our souls swam in currents of pure ecstasy and became one.

Wondrous shivers of pure contentment tingled deep in my spine.

Never knew love was so powerful until I fell in it.

The agony of two people in deep love is
all for the soaring ecstasy of their burning desire.

Foten Shaikh

2000

Untitled

The red balloon
skipping across the road
tripping over the white line of the turning lane
caught my attention.

I looked back in the rear view mirror
after the light changed
and I watched it some more.

I looked again,
too far away
to see it,
but wanting to see it again.

I remembered the movie
I saw in elementary school.
The Red Balloon.

Reminiscing
made me feel sad.

Reminiscing
made me feel old.

But the red balloon made me feel happy.

I remembered watching
the balloon floating over the city.

I smiled.

I wanted to see the movie.

But not now,

I wanted to be a child.

To feel how I felt,

To cheer how we cheered.

I wanted to cheer again

about something so simple.

I feared that someone would run over it
and pop it.

I feared that someone would miss
the red balloon.

Someone who would have appreciated it,
like I did.

I looked back,

too far away

to protect it.

Liz Vaughan

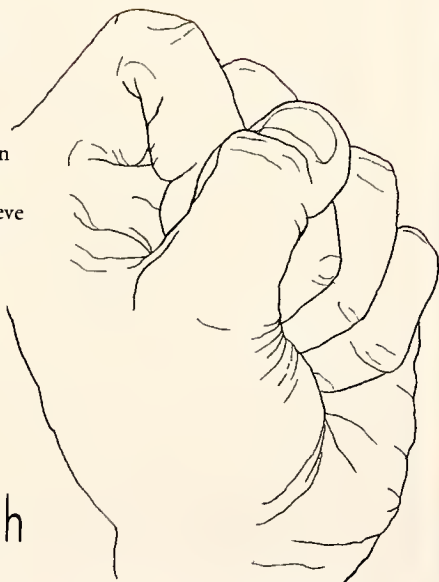
Untitled

We dance by the window to Johnny Cash
Reflections take me to the thoughts of the past
How our dark troubles weighed us down with guilt
If only you knew the love I once felt

Misunderstood I headed towards the door
You caught my right hand and spun me around
Pointed to a swan by the lake on the ground
A gleam of light in twin crystal pools

Now we twirl and laugh in the light of the moon
Begin anew tonight, like spring in bloom
Your hand clasps mine; precious dreams to achieve
All it took was a small spin to believe

Liz Thompson



Vichie Posey

The Watch

On top of the hill
the woman watches
hoping.
The slanted sky reminds
her of a banquet she
once dreamed.
Three lonely stars with
one lonely heart.
Her life seems to be
splitting and the temptation
of death is knocking on
the door to enter into her
heart.
Her hair swirls as her breath gets shorter
The wispy wind spins dirt
into her eyes.
The watch is over.

Sequento Blockmon

2000

Untitled

There's this place we used to run to when we were young and innocent....It was back through the woods past the streams and shrubs, past the monkey tree with the arm wrapped around it....you know the monkey tree....then we'd jump across the obstacles planning our escape if suddenly a horrid creature may have appeared....and through this trek our minds were thinking....I can't wait to get to god's place....

It's this enormous hill covered with moss trees and shrubs and between all the chaos there's a tiny path....My brother once told me that if I went to god's place and asked for anything it would come to me....magically...and being the kid that I was I would do anything for all the cool toys....So I ran up the hills through the streams and jumped over the fallen trees and scary hole....and finally I was there at the bottom of the hill....

I looked up to see what was the most mysterious and magical place....It was like the bottom where I was standing was in no comparison to the extremities of the world up there....a world of faires and spirits flying around and nice trolls making all sorts of magical spells....

I was lost for a minute in my fantasy hoping that I, too, would be the size of my thumb and would have green wings illuminated by my glowing eyes....then I looked up, closed my eyes and made my wish....I asked for everything and when I opened my eyes there was....the hill and the shrubs....the moss was still hanging placid and docile....there was nothing....

My faith was taken from me within that instant. My ability to fantasize and wish for the impossible and intangible had been squeezed out of my heart....like juice from a lemon....there I was alone lost in disbelief of my naive demeanor....so much for god's place....

Serena Gangaul

G r a s s

As I sit among the weeds
The leaves of grass
I pray
That this methodical humdrum of life
Will come to an end
But where will I go?
Among the weeds and wildflowers that open their arms to my presence
I believe I will fall
And then some more
Maybe
Or will it be among the open roaring hypnotizing sea?
All I want
Is to pick that fruit
Over there on the ground
But I can't actually reach it
Too low
Or too high
But low enough where my feet won't touch the sky
In the irrevocable night
Where my guard is let down
Letting him know who was weak
With that irresistible smile
That creeps
And stops when seeing you laugh or cry
And cry again
Because it hides the blows
Softened by kisses
Because he seems to tell every story twice
I take his hand
And find remorse
To where there is no end
He has no end
SO where do I go?
To the inviting grass that wants the soft caress of my body
But then it has grown out of control
Of the weeds
That are constantly feeding off the scavengers looming below

Caylin Spear

2000

Life on Cloud Nine

No one understands me. They think that I am screwing up. Mom and Dad always talk about me behind my back. They don't know I am listening, but I hear everything. They say I am going down hill, and they want to send me to Dr. Ezell, this shrink lady. The truth is I am living life. I am climbing the tallest mountain, and it ain't easy. I make my own path because my mountain has never been climbed before. The cliffs are steep, and sometimes I think I'll never make it to the top. So far I haven't given up, and that is a good thing because I'm not a quitter. I am a pilgrim, living on the edge, and there is no turning back.

So what, I go to concerts and come back with blood dripping down my face from the mosh pit. I broke my arm at one I went to last June. Life is about taking chances, and that is what I am doing. The doctor said, "Be careful." Whatever.

I am known as J.D. to most of my friends. J for Jason. D for Danger. My parents don't like my name, they keep telling me to grow up. I would, but I don't want to be like them. They don't know anything about life. They suck. I wish they would just back off my case, and let me live my own life.

To me there is nothing wrong with smokin' bud or getting plastered after breaking into the neighbor's liquor cabinet. Every time I toke up, I feel like I have climbed a little higher. When I stop, I can't go further until I smoke some more. Then I climb higher. The more I do, the higher I go. I don't know what is at the top but it must be beautiful. Everything is beautiful. When I am buzzing, I can fly. Fly away from everything except my mountain.

Mom and Dad just don't understand. They are clueless. One night I came home an hour late. I saw Mom crying in the bathroom. When I walked in she started asking me questions. I was going to answer her, but before I could she went off on how much she thought I was a loser. That pissed me off. I told her to shut the hell up before I hit her. I really didn't want to hear it. I went up to my room and punched the wall. There's a nice hole there now. Then I went to bed and dreamed of the top of the mountain. I can't stop thinking about it. The image invades my mind. I crave to see it, but I can never seem to get there no matter how high I get.

I met this guy Dan at school. He and his brother Deric used to live in New York. Anyway, I told Dan about the mountain, and he understood because he feels it, too. He said that some drugs make you climb quicker. Then he pulled out

some crack rocks, and we smoked 'em up. The feeling was so beautiful. I felt myself bounding up the mountain.

...thump....thump.... thump....

I wished it lasted forever, but good things never do. Now I crave the climb more and more. But since I started smoking crack, I can't climb on herb anymore. It just doesn't feel the same.

Acid is a different story. When I get bored in school, I drop hits like a girl and a bag of chocolate. She can't eat just one. Numbers pop off the board. The school food moves. Computer keys push themselves. Everyone knows I tripped at school, but no one cares. The geeks think I am a loser just like my parents and my little sister. They don't know anything. They think they are living life, but they are dead wrong. They haven't experienced life. I have. I am living on the edge, the only way to live. The pansies don't know anything that isn't written in a book.

Sometimes I want them to know what life is, but then I realize that they weren't made to live my life because they aren't part of the Chosen Ones. Cayne, Dan, Deric, Clark, Dawn, Misty (my girl), and me, we're the Chosen Ones because we are all trying to get to the top of the mountain. We're a gang bound together by a common goal.

Lately, we've been hanging out at the Luv Shack every weekend. It is an old abandoned and forgotten shack about a half a mile back in the woods at the end of East Eagle Drive, but to us, it's our second home. We have spent all of our time and most of our money, fixing up the place. The living room has four couches that we got at the Salvation Army, a grill and some tables. There is no electricity which sucks, so we have to use candles and oil lamps. The lamps are cool. Misty found them in her attic. There are two other rooms, but we haven't done anything to them yet. None of us really care if the place isn't perfect because the Shack's always beautiful.

Anyway, Friday nights are always Halloween for us. Except it is a little different. No one dresses up in ridiculous costumes, and no one goes around askin' for candy. We just meet at the Shack, and someone brings the treats. Last week Misty brought cocaine. That was the first time that I tried it. Oh, it was beautiful. Misty and me, we climbed our mountains together that night. I love her. I want her next to me, always so that we could climb side by side, forever. I slept with her that night in the attic. I can't remember if I used a condom. She had said she wanted something to prove we're together. I don't remember anything and neither does Misty, but I know that neither of us care about what happens just as long as we are

2000

together with our mountains.

Today is Friday, another "Halloween" for the gang. This time Deric's bringing something he got in New York. Dan knows what it is too, but neither of them will tell the rest of us. This week we've all been dying with curiosity. The only thing that they told us is that we will be able to climb like we never have before. I'm almost positive I'll get to the top of it tonight. No more waiting. No more wondering. Because tonight I am going to find out the truth.

Misty said that she has never seen me this happy before. I am so excited. Why does time pass so slowly? Clark won't be here for another hour, and I am craving the climb.

Tonight's special because all seven of us are going to stay the night at the Shack. Deric said that it wasn't a good idea to leave afterwards. This won't be the first time we've stayed the night there. Then we all stayed on our mountains, and none of us wanted to wake up.

When all of us get there, Dan pours lighter fluid on the grill, lights a match, and drops it on the moist coals. They burst into flames and the night adventures have begun. We all watch Deric as he pulls out a handful of metal spoons from his coat pocket and puts them on the table. Then he puts four syringes on the table and a bag of black powder.

Smack Heroin Black Heroin

I have only heard stories that increased my curiosity of this beautiful drug. It is said that it is like drinking mother's milk. Everyone is quiet, their mouths sealed with excitement just like mine. We're speechless. I never thought I would be able to drink its nectar and now it is right in front of me. We shoot up and pass the needles around and around only wanting more. Now everything is perfectly beautiful. I close my eyes and I soar, past the tree, over the cliffs and hills. I climb to the top of my mountain. I open my eyes and close them again. Heroin is the worst coming down because it makes you tired. But it doesn't matter! I can finally rest on the beautiful heavenly bed on the top of my mountain. No more climbing! No more waiting! I made it! I am at the top, and it is so beautiful, but unlike anything I ever expected.

M Birkemeier



Jane Fleury

The Way the Rain Must Dance

Shattering and avalancing
I am the heiress of scraped knees.
My spindle legs
and match stick wrists
make my days that are hunched.
But within my imagining
I too have taken
a dream of myself.
It gives me that chance of life.
I see an hourglass waist,
golden and bold.
It is what all the girls wish for.
It's the way the rain must dance.

Lee Posey

2000

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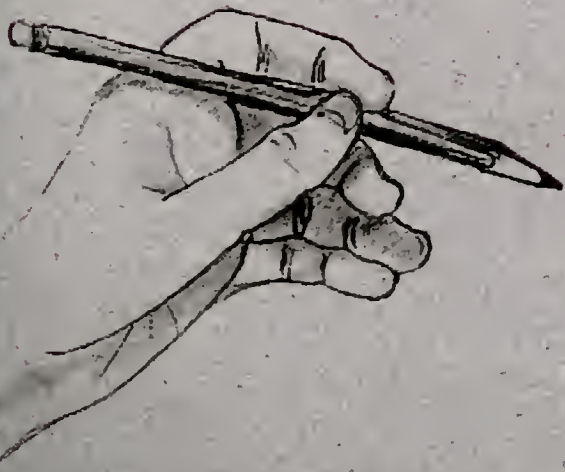
Lisa Wagner

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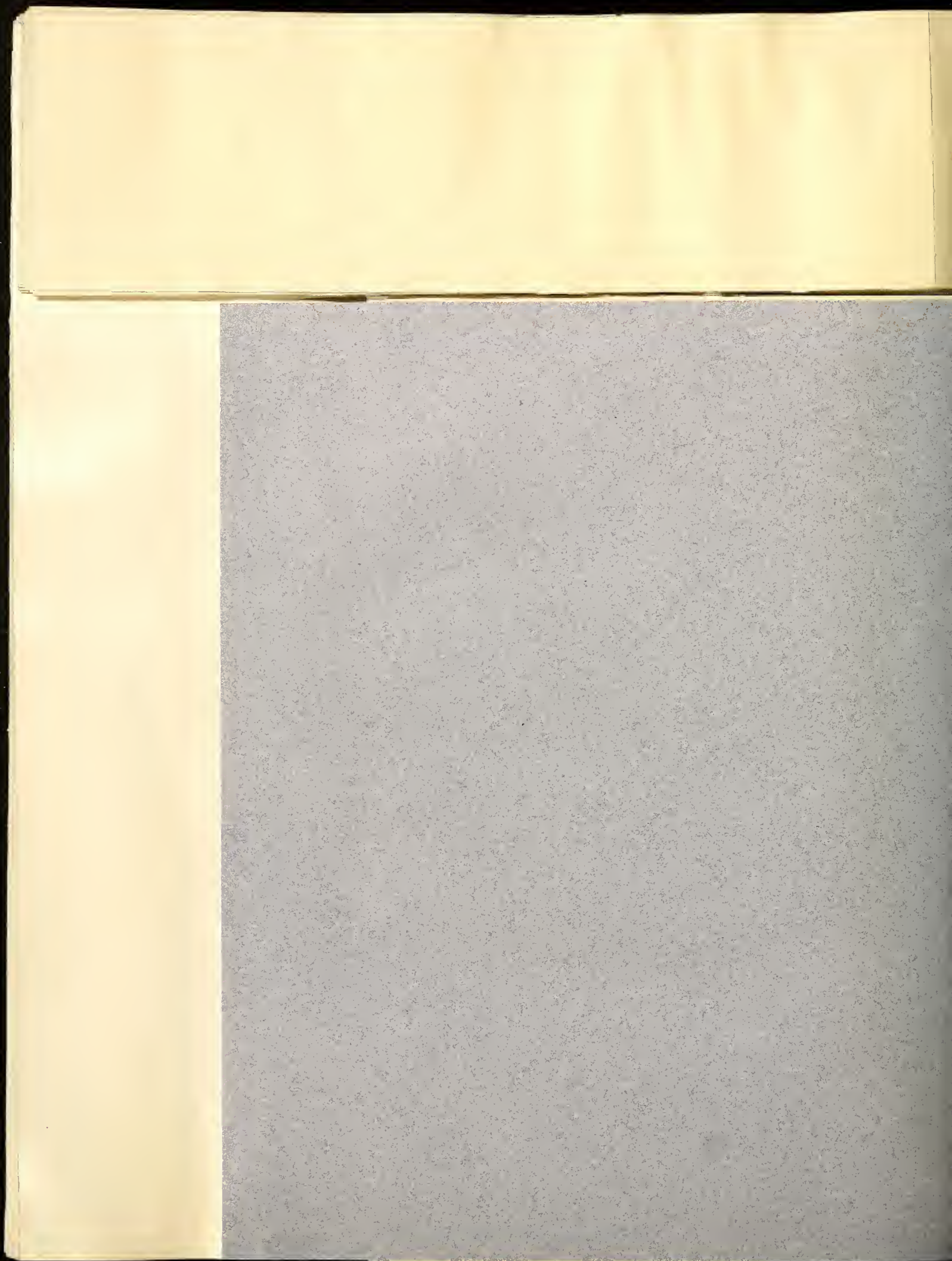
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The Muse



2000



The Muse

1998-1999

2000

"One can never consent to creep

when one feels an impulse to **s o a r ."**

-Hellen Keller



Kimmi Kresica

In a society where young women struggle alone in a desperate battle for self-worth and efficacy, Saint Mary's is a safe haven. Here, we feel free to speak out in our classes and in our personal lives. *The Muse* reflects our growing confidence. The girls who submitted their art and writing and those who enjoy their gift quietly are learning that self-expression is healthy and empowering.

The Muse is composed for students by students and includes not only writing, but art and photography. We thank the Literary Club, Student Activities, the English Department, and Caylin Spear, '98 for their support.

And now we present the 1999 edition of *The Muse*

Lesley Guilmart
Emily Birkemeier

2000

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My life is a child's treasure box
And I've had a share of my own
Never ever filled with diamonds or jewels
Rather, more precious treasures they hold.

Shiny fallen buttons
Found upon the floor
Bitty baby bows
Not worn anymore
Marbles and seashells
Childhood games to play
Tiny clay vases
Handmade alone one day
Small candle tidbits
With no heart to use
Beaded friendship charms
Best friends made for you
One penny found
Being all the world's wealth
A soft brown feather
Making you want to fly yourself
Gathered dry petals
Dogwood or Rose
Quartz stone pieces
Ever shining the most

All are the memory of life
Mementos, Friendships, and Laughter
Isn't it sad that we miss the simple things,
When the hope of a child's dreams
Is all we're ever after?

Kimmi Kresica



Katherine Kemp

Personification

Life is a golden girl
with all of her wiles,
ways, and ploys

Fate is a fickle goddess
who picks and chooses,
but remains ever coy.

Death is a little child
with destructive habits
who breaks her toys.

Love is a bashful teen
with delighted eyes
when she sees her pride and joy.

Hate is a spiteful thing
with no thought
for what it destroys.

War is a busy man
who took his game too far,
forgetting he was just a boy.

Jealousy is a spiteful woman;
envy in her eyes overcomes
grace and quiet poise.

Gossip is one who laughs
behind her hands,
and who strives to annoy.

Hope shuts the door
on those with spite and malice
and who break their toys,
but opens another
with a glimmering promise
of future joy.

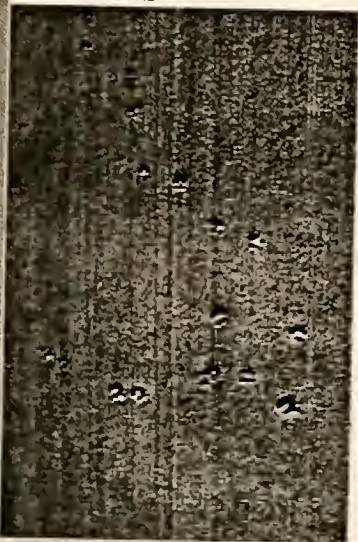
Tori Burroughs

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"I am not a vegetarian because I **love** animals, I am a
vegetarian because I **hate** plants."

Ragland 300

Ashton Parks



Dot and Lo

I have two dogs named Dot and Lo,
The two are sisters, but it does not show.
Their fur types are as different as could be,
Dot's hair is straight, but Lo's is curly.
Lo has big goofy ears and a sweet disposition,
Dot's very friendly and her tail's always swishin'.

I got my two friends at a Georgia state pound,
(Not a nice place to be hanging around).
I brought them home and they settled in,
That was when the training was to begin.

I started with Dot,

She would learn how to sit.

This I'm afraid, was not a big hit.
Next I tried to teach her to stay,
Which she still does not do to this day.

If there is one thing they truly adore,
It's to take long walks in the outdoors.
At the sight of their leashes they spring in the air.
I'll admit sometimes that their leaping is too much to bear.
Then they shoot out the door, eager to get going,
And it is quite some time before their trotting starts slowing.

Whenever my day isn't going so well,
I don't have to let them know; they can tell.
The perfect listeners, they never disagree,
They just lay their heads to rest on my knee.
They always greet me with smiles and wagging tails,
And are always there; they never fail.
The reason why they do is so simple, so clear.
Just show them love, and in their heart you'll be dear.

Megan Stein

2000

The Final Push

"Charlene!" came a loud and burly voice. The potbellied and slightly intoxicated Billy swaggered through the door.

"What do you want Billy?" replied Charlene as she exasperatedly took off her high-heels. She'd been on her feet all day long at the bank and didn't feel like putting up with any knuckle-brained comments from her husband.

"Charlene!" came the voice again.

"I'm in here Billy!" screamed Charlene from their bedroom.

"Oh 'ere you are." Billy peeked in around the corner of the doorway and saw his wife tying the drawstring of her sweat-pants. He was used to seeing her complete this ritual every night when she got home from work. Since she became manager at BB&T, it seemed to Billy that putting on her sweat-pants was all she had the energy to do.

"I just wanted to let you know that I was goin' huntin'," Billy said softly to his wife, seeing the stress build higher and higher.

"Again Billy? You told Billy Jr. and Cathy Lee that you'd build them a fire in the backyard tonight!"

"Yeah I know, but huntin' season ends in a month and I told Beufort and Jimmy that I'd have that twelve pointer that we all seen last week."

"Okay, so now not only do you do nothin' but hunt, but you also blow off your kids to do it!" Charlene was extremely ticked off. She was getting so sick and tired of her husband working from six in the morning until four in the afternoon at the packaging plant and coming home only to leave and go hunting until dusk.

"Listen Charlene, I'll do it tomorrow night."

"Whatever Billy!" She stormed out of the room. Her steps were so heavy that they shook the trailer and everything in it. Charlene grabbed the mail she'd brought in and plopped into her "plush" recliner. It helped her to relax. It was the only thing Billy had ever bought her aside from that camouflage bathrobe. Once again, all that there was to open were bills and advertisements.

Meanwhile, Billy took off his jump-suit from work and hopped into the shower. Despite his fight with his wife, he was excited at the chance to go out and hunt. He bathed with his no-scent soap and washed his hair with, "Scent-Be-Gone." Billy wouldn't dare go hunting without making sure that he didn't smell. He got out of the shower and put on a pair of boxer shorts. Then he grabbed his hunting "outfit" that had previously been hanging outside. As he ran down the hall, his wife stopped him.

"Hey Billy, wait! I'm sorry for jumpin' on your back, but I wish you'd keep your promises to the kids."

"Baby I'm going to keep my promise, just not tonight."

Charlene reached out to give him a hug.

"Charlene, you have on perfume don't you?"

"Yes, why?"

"Sweetheart, I just bathed so the deer won't smell me." Billy pushed her away before her imitation Giorgio perfume could saturate his clothes and walked out the door.

Charlene simply sat back down in her recliner and fell asleep.

It was about forty degrees outside when Billy settled into his tree stand. With his bow in his lap and arrow ready, he watched with anticipation. He heard a faint rustling about thirty feet away, and immediately his heart began to pound. However, it slowed quite a bit when he realized that it was only a squirrel. As he sat and the hours passed without a single deer being seen, Billy felt as if something around him was off . . . something just wasn't right.

The next morning Billy was up at three o'clock getting ready for work. Before he left, he kissed his still sleeping wife, whose frizzy dyed blonde hair smelled of the canned Spaghetti-O's she'd fixed for dinner the night before. It would be three more hours before the alarm clock on her side of the bed would screech for her awakening. Billy walked out into the biting morning air and jumped up into his jacked up Ford truck with "Muddy" written across the back glass. He started it up, and its duel exhaust rumbled even the trees. He pulled out of the gravel drive spinning out a few rocks (not to mention first gear).

Just as Billy could begin to see the first signs of morning over the never ending tobacco fields, he pulled into Beufort's Bait Shop. Rolling out of his truck, he dragged his feet until they had carried him inside. He walked to the back cooler and grabbed himself a Budweiser.

"See anythin' last night Billy?" hollered Jimmy from the front of the store where he and Beufort were propped lazily against the minnow tank.

"You know somethin', I didn't see a damn thing. I was out there fer at least three hours and all I saw was a squirrel and an opossum hissing at a frog."

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"That's a shame. Earl over at the taxidermist is just waitn' to stuff that big twelve pointer," snickered Beufort.

Billy let out a loud and smelly burp.

"Kiss my redneck ass Beufort; I gotta go to work!" Billy laughed at his own snide remark and threw a dollar on the counter for his beer.

"I'll see ya' later," called Jimmy.

"Yeah, bye Billy. Oh yeah, tell your 'redneck ass' I said bye too!" laughed Beufort.

*

"What are we going to do?" Charlie said to Alfred. They had been trying to answer this question for months.

"Well we both know that as soon as he gets home he's going to bathe in the 'no-scent' crap, that only makes us notice him more, and go sit in that tree. He'll pace back and forth in that small brain of his and scratch his male pride absurdly. Then when one of us gets brave enough to go and get a drink from the stream, he'll raise that semicircle of his and try to shoot us," recited Alfred. Alfred was the wisest of all the deer in Harnett County and had more points on his rack than any other, twenty.

"But Alfred there's got to be a way for our fawns to be able to run and play. Since that idiot bought this land, we've had to watch where we leave our tracks and be sure not to go where corn appears already shucked," replied Charlie in desperation.

"We'll just have to teach him a lesson about predator and prey that he'll never forget! Here's what we'll do . . ."

*

"Baby, I built the fire in the backyard for Billy Jr. and Cathy Lee," Billy hollered at his wife while standing in the doorway and checking the bottom of his boots for any red-clay that hadn't come off.

"Okay; thank you sweetie!" Charlene said as she wiped the bangs out of her eyes and opened a can of Spam.

"Well I'm gone," Billy told his wife as he walked over to kiss her good-bye.

"Where are you goin'?" questioned Charlene.

"I'm goin' huntin'; where else would I go?"

"But you didn't take a shower or anything!"

"Yeah I know, but I don't have time since I built the kids that fire."

"Okay, well, be careful. Luv you!"

"Luv you too! Bye."

*

Not even twenty minutes later, Billy was nestled snugly in his tree stand with his hands ready and eager to shoot. Over an hour had passed and yet Billy still hadn't seen one deer. He hadn't heard a buck grunt for a doe or fight with another for mating rights. It was beginning to get dark and Billy couldn't see more than ten feet in front of him. Finally, he gave up and climbed down out of his tree. He headed toward his truck when he heard a rustling noise behind him. He turned around only to see the biggest and most beautiful deer ever.

"Oh my God!" Billy said over and over in his mind. "One, two,.....twenty! It's got twenty points! Wait until the boys see this one, just wait!" Billy continued to think to himself. He went for his rifle that he always kept loaded behind his seat. Quickly, he brought it up and.....BANG!

*

The next day, on one side of town, everyone was rejoicing.

"Come here and look at this. Everybody come and look at the size of these tracks!"

"Gosh, it looks like a big one," said one.

"I wish I could get one even half that big!" envied another.

"You know, I bet this'll teach the other ones to steer clear and watch out, because we're smarter and more cunning than they'll ever be."

Meanwhile, on the other side of town, everyone was crying.

"I can't believe that this happened! He was so careful and always aware of what was going on around him."

"I guess they finally just got the better of'em."

*

So now you're thinking, how sad it is that that poor deer had to die. And it would indeed be sad if he had. You see, it's not the hunter who got the deer, it was the deer who got the hunter. His antlers seeming to reach all four corners of the world, Alfred trampled and stabbed Billy to death. With all of the strength of his ancestors, he triumphed for all "deer" kind. You can only push nature so hard and so far before nature is going to push back!

Scarlett Slaughter

2000

Habits

Munching on something

While I write

A list

Of things that won't get done tomorrow

Short poems and guitar picks lay scattered

Through my room

I don't pick them up

Listen to music

Sometimes humming along while

I wish for a voice in this room

Full of

Habits



Liz Thompson

Does It Matter

I was once popular, but it didn't matter.

I once had everything, but it was useless.

If only I had wisdom, and knew how to use it.

If only I had love, I could have shown kindness.

Why is it that the earthly things do not matter.

But the things from the heart last forever.

Jean Atkinson

Talking To Granny

I used to talk to you
After you died
Every night when I said my prayers

"Granny, I was in a horse show,
Did you see me?
I came in first.
Mom was so proud
I hope you were too."

That I made for you
The one with cute smiley faces
On both sides of big, bubble letters.

That day in the hospital,
The last time we met,
I came to give it to you.

You were asleep
So I sat on your bed-
Holding your wrinkled hand
Until you opened your sleepy, brown eyes.

You looked up
And just smiled
While I held on to you.

Your nurse Kera came in,
The one who seemed so nice,
But she said I had to leave.

I wish I could have stayed
But you looked so tired
That I left,
With one last kiss on the cheek.

Kera called the next day
And spoke on our answering machine.
In an anxious voice she said
You were ready to go home.

My eyes lit up
When I envisioned
You well again.

But there wouldn't be
Shopping sprees,
Dance recitals, or
Christmas pageants
With you.

While I jumped up and down
Mary Elizabeth Hadley

Mom began to cry
She hurried to the hospital
But begged me to stay behind.

The next day I would learn,
After a quiet dinner,
That, indeed, you had gone home
But I could not be with you.

I clenched the round, oak table
Tears flowing down my face.
I ran upstairs to my room
And sobbed into my pillow.

Mom came up
To comfort me
And even helped me cry.

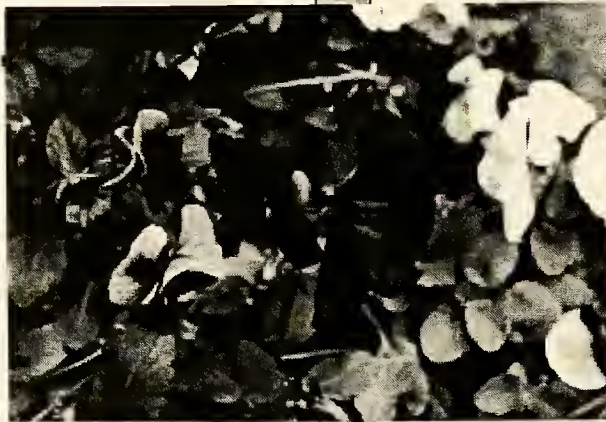
We both decided
To stay home
From your funeral.

Neither of us
Could face
One more good-bye

I missed you then
But even now
I cannot let you go.

I am no longer eight years old,
And yet I still need
To have you with me.

2000



Ashton Parks

Butterflies are
so lame
Not to offend
the trendy vendors
or hipsters who bear this emblem
Multicolor flutter
A page-flip through Delia's
away
Butterflies are
Carefree
And that is so tacky
Do they have brains?
Do they even have heads?
It's metamorphosis bliss
So lame

Ann Kochersberger

"Pessimists are just optimists

in bad moods."

Kissing Frogs

Once upon a time I pretended I was Cinderella
And you were Prince Charming-you just didn't know it yet
But I did

And we both grew up, but me first (lodies first)
And I knew you were there as I kissed frogs and
They didn't turn into Princes, no matter how much they or I wanted them to.

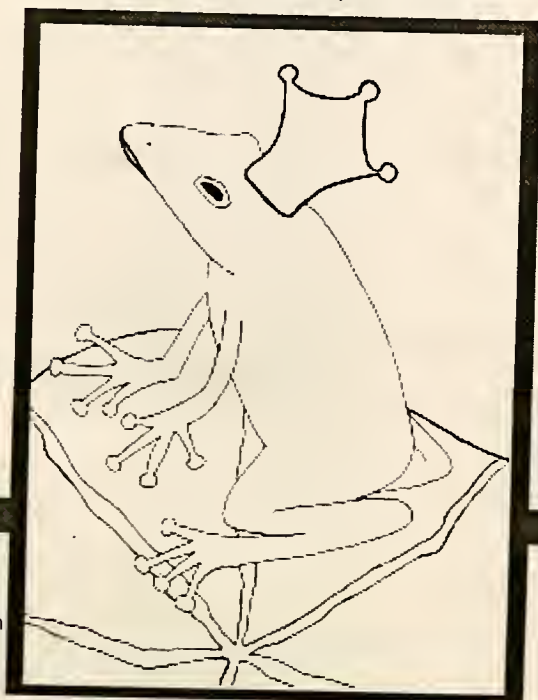
But I knew and you knew that
I was Cinderella and you were Prince Charming
After awhile, Cinderella lost her brooms and mops
Became beauty. Slowly, of course.

You were still around somewhere
More and more frogs-don't they ever stop coming?
I wish they would...do they scare away?

How many frogs does a princess have to kiss anyway?
I am TIRED of kissing frogs-stop hiding!

Or maybe you're just fighting dragons for me
Wish you would hurry and finish-Dad's started to eat frog legs...

My dreams are broken and torn
Aren't you ready to rescue your Princess?



Nicole Hough

2000

Unspoken Love

Tears of happiness stroll down my face.
He is there to catch my tears.
He is always there to catch them.
Good or bad.
He is dependable.
He is my love.

As we lay beside each other in the bed.
With our legs entwined.
I feel his slow steady breaths on my stomach.
We feel as one.
One soul with two separate minds.

His strong arms are holding me tightly.
He will never let me go.
He is my love.
There is an understanding between us.
An unspoken love.
A love which forces good on both of us.

I give him a small kiss.
And then release myself from his loving trap.
"I love you," I say.
As I walk out of his life forever.

Sara Frackelton



Michaela Idhammar

starry skies
drift by my eyes
and I turn
My head away

you're the one
single star
that I'm so scared
to lose

if I held you
in the palm of my hand
I'm afraid
you'd turn to ash

and I'd throw you
to the earth
and water you
with my tears

and maybe
only if
I'm lucky
you would grow.

Ashley Knoop

2000

Tales from the Veggies

The frigid shelves of the dimly lit supermarket were overflowing with fresh, crisp, preripened veggies waiting to be chosen by picky hands. The dimness of the early deserted morning tinted the front windows of the Take Your Pick Grocery and created an ominous, western ghost town setting.

"Geese, who cut on the freakin' lights?" squealed Tommy Toe Tomato in an annoyed tone.

"Hey, be quiet will ya?" came an exhausted voice from the huge shelf covered with ice.

"Now, now! Rise and shine you lazy bums. It's time to wake up and look scrumptious! Today is the day one lucky piece of produce will get chosen for the annual veggie advertisement!" Mr. Bell Pepper commanded.

"How come? I don't see the point in looking so tasty. No one in their right mind would pick some dumb, green Brussels sprout!" this coming from Russell, who being a Brussels sprout is known for his negativity.

"I hope I get at least one glance my way! My shiny, smooth, outer layer could attract anyone to shop at the Take Your Pick Grocery, right?" said Tommy Toe.

"At least little snotty nose kids like you prepared in their favorite red dipping sauce. Me? They'd rather eat boogers!" complained Russell

*

The media was bustling in the store

like elephants in water on a steaming summer day.

"Hey, be quiet. Here they come!" yelled Mr. Bell Pepper

"The flashing bulbs are too much for my eyes. I think I'm going blind. If I go blind then I'll need glasses and.... Hey! Nobody wants to see a tomato with glasses. My Hollywood days are over!" said Tommy Toe Tomato frantically.

"Whatever! First of all you are not going to go blind. Second of all, even if you do go blind and have to get glasses you will still get the commercial debut before me, the Brussels Sprout!" Russell said in a defeated tone.

Flash, flash. One by one the most perfect and beautiful veggies were being chosen and prepared for the photo shoot. Tommy Toe Tomato was definitely the favorite veggie. The glare off of his shiny skin wowed the photographers. Mr. Bell Pepper was also chosen. But he was not as likely of a candidate as Tommy. Russell sat back in a far corner of the crowded grocery store and watched as his friends got chosen for the publicity campaign.

"Why can't I be popular? I don't look that bad, do I?" Russell asked himself, looking down at the rough skin and bushy hair. "I don't understand. I have potential to be a star just like Tommy and Mr. Bell. I'm green just like Mr. Bell Pepper and some of my skin is as smooth as Tommy Toe's. Oh well there is no use in feeling sorry for myself. I'll never be a star!" Russell kept pitying himself as he waited to be picked for the commercial.

*



Ellie Childs

The next day all the veggies were so excited for Tommy Toe..... Wait a minute! This story is supposed to end happily, right? Russell, after all that feeling sorry for himself, is supposed to win the chance to be in the ad for the Take Your Pick Grocery. Well that isn't exactly how it happened. Not everything has a happy ending. Well, I'm going to tell you what happens to Russell the Brussels Sprout instead.

Russell wakes up the following morning after the photo shoot to find out that Tommy Toe Tomato has won the chance to star in the store advertisement. Russell feels so depressed, that he doesn't even tell Tommy congrats.

He simply sits in his corner of the produce section and sulks. "This is ludicrous man. Tommy isn't all that special. He's just a tomato with a smile, who after all those cameras flashing at him will go blind and need glasses. Then all those media people will come crawling to me, the Brussels Sprout, 'cause they won't want a tomato with coke bottle glasses," said Russell trying to boost himself up.

*
"Hey, Russell! You will never guess what happened to Tommy," said Mr. Bell Pepper in a panicked tone. "He looked so delicious in the commercial that some lady came this morning and wanted to buy him. So as of now he is being stewed, fried, or even pasted! All that sulking did you a lot of good, huh? You complained the whole time that you weren't getting picked for the commercial. Now you see that the commercial led to the death of one of our friends," said Mr. Bell trying to talk some sense into Russell.

"Man, you're right. I haven't even thought about the consequences of being a star. Gosh, I can't believe that I complained that whole time, when I really should have been thanking the god of Veggie Paradise for letting me be lucky enough to live in this great grocery store we call home.

"Well I'm just glad that she didn't buy all of us. She sure did look hungry. Even though Tommy isn't physically with us, he will always be with us in spirit," Mr. Bell Pepper said.

"Yep, he sure will be! Every time we see that ad for this great grocery store we call home," said Russell with a new, more positive attitude.

*
Well there you have it. Although Russell the Brussels Sprout was not the favorite of the public, in the end he found a new personality and went through a positive transformation. Yes, a veggie did die in the process, but that's how life goes. Sometimes things, people, and/or loved ones must die or suffer for someone else to learn a lesson. Russell did learn a lesson, and so this story comes to a very happy ending. As for the rest of the vegetables, they escaped from the store to become the talented traveling "Veggies." They all decided that they did not want to end up like their beloved friend Tommy Toe Tomato.

If you ever spot a Brussels sprout, a bunch of white grapes, or even a few dancing cucumbers, don't be alarmed. Just laugh and say to yourself, "Those are those anti-Hollywood veggies trying to find their way to safe Veggie Paradise to be with their friend Tommy. Aww . . . happy ending, huh?"

2000

O n e

If I could ask God one question,
it would be: Did I do something wrong?

I was born with Chronic Bronchitis because
my mother never thought to quit smoking
when she was pregnant with me.

I wore a diaper or nothing at all for days
at a time. I played in a garden of beer
cans and broken glass. I watched my mother
leave me alone...scared and alone...

I watched my brother struggle to write his name
when he was six. I saw my dad draw pictures
and words on the wall in his own blood
because he was not in his own body.

I watched myself pick up what was left
of my mom's Cinnamon Schnapps...
and throw it down in disdain and
disgust.

I watched myself make straight A's because I did my
homework in the dark car that me, my brother,
and my mom were sleeping in. I saw myself
break my step-dad's bedroom windows so
he could be cold like us.

And then I turn to God again: and the
question is gone. I deserve this life,
I earned my strength.

I've made my place here...

Sara Upchurch

"Something is only worth getting,
if it's worth loosing everything to get."
-Anonymous

My Failures

Not Listening- I told my father he was wrong for the first time,
telling him he was wrong for doing the right thing.

Telling a lie- I took my little brother's money
and bought fingernail polish at a drug store.

Walking out- I walked out of my little sister's life for two
and a half years without a reason.

Disappointment- I told my best friend she was a horrible friend
when I meant to say, "I love you."

Being quiet- I kept my mouth shut when the love of my life
was talking. I should have responded because now I am void of that love.

Irresponsibility- I turned my back on the only mother I have and
now she will not forgive me.

Failures- my life until now; I am changing.

Dani Baum

2000

"Holding resentment inside is like
letting someone you despise stay r e n t - f r e e inside your head."

"Don't look back, don't ever look back."

-Satchel Page



Bess Futrell

The Photo

Myself and Caper, my dog
Winding stairs behind us
Dim light from the window
Casts shadows on my face
Mom took the picture
When I was younger
My red sweater makes my
Dog's fur look even whiter
My smile is bright and joyful
It is a picture of few
That are accurate portrayals
Of my true and bubbly personality
Sometimes I wish I could
Return to the days when I
Could be so carefree

Mary Margaret Gamblin

My Disorder

If time would stop
and I could see
just how the whole world
looks at me.

Outside the box
of my own life, I'd find the
sources of my strife.
How did I get in such a mess?
What have I done to cause this stress?

Where did I start
to go wrong-
now so weak
after being so strong.

I lost my life,
lost who I am.
I don't know anymore.
I don't know anymore.

If I could step outside
my world,
maybe I would find-
who I was, my life before,
and get it back.

To Everyone:
Is fighting for
who you want
to be worth
losing who you really are?

Anonymous

2000

Blood Orchid

The ceremony of innocence was drowned in the
blood-streaked tide,
When man judged the judgment of others
He cued the sun and it was so.
He rose a hand and brought forth the rain.

Meanwhile the ants of society bask and tan
or hide under their umbrellas. Accepting their
damned fate, although it is served to them under
the guise of Life.

This Life (or whoever does the pitching) throws them a
low ball and they hit low.
This Life makes chaos and anarchy what the ants threaten
naughty children with, or the supreme ruler of all.
This life tells them that the world is all the eye
can see, and that "beyond" is a whimsical
word of the Elves.
THIS LIFE tells the worthless little ants
that this is the REAL WORLD...

and we are all in it...

Anonymous



Ashton Parks

A l'homme de ma rue

Je regarde le jour
déplier.
Je regarde le jour
tomber de la nuit.

Je vois des étoiles
dans le ciel.
Ils luient comme des lucioles
dans la nuit.

Quand je vois des étoiles,
je pense à toi.
Quand je vois des étoiles,
tu me manques.

Je suis languit d'amour,
quand je vois des étoiles.
Je suis languit d'amour,
quand je vois la lune.

Je vois la lune
dans le ciel.
Le clair de la lune
est comme un miroir.

Mais, je connais que
tu es sous la même nuit.
Et, je connais que
tu vois le même ciel.

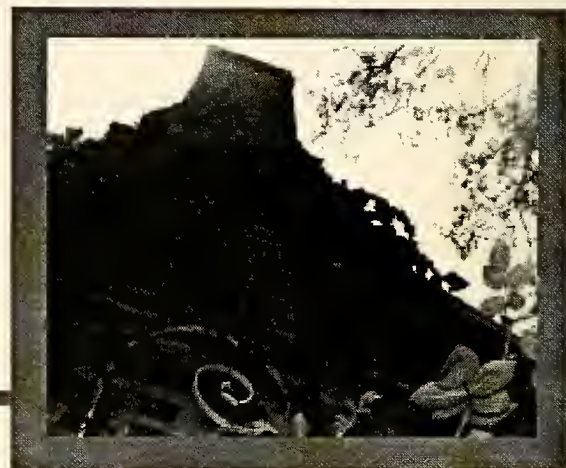
Quand je vois la lune,
je pense à toi.
Quand je vois la lune,
tu me manques.

Alors, je donne
un baiser à la lune.
Et, je te donne
un baiser aussi.

Et puis, je dis,
<<Bon soir>> à la lune.
Et, je te dis,
<<Bon soir>> aussi.

2000

Laugh as if you found the cause
that got my cowboy blue,
Lady, look freedom as an enormous sky
Falling into your bowl
Be the fat child
It's happening power!
Lily Dougher



Jane Fleury

"The **end** of childhood
is when things cease
to **astonish** us."

I am

(aren't I?)

I am sleeping
(are you sure?)

I must be dreaming
(can you open your eyes?)

I feel his breath
(is it hot?)

I hear his voice
(does he hear you?)

I feel his lips over mine
(is he kissing you?)

His body pushes me
(do you lay there?)

My mind is screaming
(is your mouth screaming too?)

I must be sleeping
(are you sure?)

Secret

A Love Poem

Repossess this fractured soul
I feel your heat as if you were laying next to me still

Quiet hands, soft teeth
I wanted to be beautiful for you
Was I?

Repossess this broken heart
I hear you shudder as if you were whispering into my head
Your eyes sang songs
I'd sleep wrapped in your silken hair

I wanted to intoxicate you
Did I?

Repossess these reckless eyes
Your ghost still speaks to me of dancing through moonlit gardens &
Dead whistling rock heroes
Jim Morrison's chartreuse lips
Roses crumbled to powder under our tangled limbs

I wanted to make the sun set for you
Did I?

Repossess these broken fingers
Nights without your affection have burned me
I wanted to fly with you

Did I?

Repossess these aching feet
A masochist's hunger

The mouth that drank hate for you
The face that shunned faith for you

The lover that died in you

The dreams that burned in you

Here lies the carcass of a woman that loved you
Her ashes still long for the comfort of your arms

I wanted to be next to you

Can I?

Deirdre Roebuck

2000

Airplane Food for Thought

I wonder if anyone else has noticed that the clock has ceased to move in quite some while? Whatever possessed Morgan to dye her hair that nasty shade of orange? She looks absolutely ridiculous. Oh wait, here it goes, we are now entering the last minute of what can only be described as a painfully boring class. I know this professor still lives with his mother. His tie is from, like, the Disney store.

Bring, "class dismissed."

Did I hear that right? Maybe there really is a God. Wait, there's no time to ponder that thought at the moment, I've got places to be.

All right, I told Jerry I'd be at the beach by 6:00 tonight. Damn, it's 4:15. I guess the cruise control at 90 will have to do the trick. Now, I have to focus, what is it that I forgot to pack? Thinking, thinking. Oh well, there's no time for this. I'm sure I can live without it for two days. Here I am, in the driver's seat as usual. Apparently driving to and from the beach is my life's calling. This is what I do. I drive. When I really get sick of it, I drive some more. What's really awful is that disturbingly unfamiliar sound coming from my untrustworthy engine? I play mechanic and turn the radio up nice and loud. Unfortunately this is only a temporary fix. When I get out of this denial that something's truly wrong with my car, I'll take it to the garage. At least I make this trip slightly more interesting than it's supposed to be. Sometimes, for instance, I like to wear a tiara on my head while I drive. It gives the other drivers something to talk about. The incense burning on the dashboard adds a lovely aroma to the atmosphere. The miniature disco ball I've hung from the mirror also adds an element of excitement. Every time I take a sharp turn I know that it could fly off and hit me in the head. It's happened before and it could happen again. Just call me a risk taker.

"And if you go chasing rabbits, and you know you're going to fall, tell them a huka-smoking caterpillar..." Eject! Eject! How in the world did I allow myself to listen to "White Rabbit" nine times in a row?! I don't think anyone can take Jefferson Airplane for that long without feeling appropriately eerie and strange. Great, I can look forward to days of this song running through my mind. Well on the bright side of things, I do at least know all the words. This silence is definitely a change of scenery. I kind of like it. My only problem now is quickly developing the skill to block out that noise coming from the engine, which seems to be getting worse. I wonder what Jerry's up to? He didn't have to work today. Maybe he's hanging out with that friend of his from school. I think he said his name was Lauren. Wait, Lauren would mean it's a girl. How come I haven't heard of this

"friend" before? I wonder if I should be concerned. No, I need to stop thinking before I get myself all worked up. What kind of name is Lauren anyway? Okay, don't be ridiculous, it's a perfectly normal name. I still have nothing to worry about though. I better think of something else. I see where this is leading.

"When the men on the chessboard get up and tell you where to go, and you've just had some kind of..." No! I will not sing that song.

"Some kind of mushroom, and your mind is moving on." Okay, now I really won't sing it, I just had to finish that line. Note to self, although burning incense in the car seemed like a good idea, it's not. I'm slowly suffocating from the smell of patchouli. What a lovely way to go. I should definitely keep this in mind the next time I have a suicidal episode. I wonder who would come to my funeral? There better be a large gathering or I will be thoroughly pissed. Jerry would be there front and center. He'd better be. Hold on, if I die he'll need someone to talk to. Oh my God! I bet he'd go running to this Lauren girl. He'll be crying on her shoulder and one thing would lead to another and...that's it, he's definitely cheating on me. We're over. It's done. I'll break up with him the minute I get into town. What am I going to say to him? I'll just state the facts. I'll tell him that there's no need to lie because I've gone over it carefully in my head and come to the only possible conclusion, that he has secretly been seeing this other girl from school. Wait a sec, exactly how did I come to this decision? Oh yeah, that's right, I've been sitting here in the car and apparently lost all sense of reason and the capability to be rational. Maybe I won't break up with him just yet. I'll be fair this time and wait until I have an actual reason. Time to kill the silence. What CDs do I want to hear? Where are they? Think. I remember, they're sitting on my bed waiting for me to put them in the car. I need to have a serious discussion with my memory. It has failed me way too many times. I guess the radio will have to do. I have no idea what stations this empty stretch of highway gets. I'll just have to see.

"Well, I went down yonder on the Chatahoochie . . ." Country, why didn't I see that coming? Why exactly has no one put a stop to this madness yet? Let's try again,

"And isn't it ironic? Don't you think? It's like rain on your wedding day, it's the good..." How the hell is that ironic?! It's bad luck that's all. Anyway, I seem to remember this song coming out, oh, like, ten years ago. It wasn't that great then so maybe it's time they give it a rest.

"And the Lord said . . ." Uh, no, I don't really think I need a religious awakening just yet. I am just so sick of these religious freaks preaching to me about going to Hell. I am doing perfectly fine sitting in the dark about the details of my so-called "sins."

"When I call your name, it's like a little prayer, I'm down on my . . ." Madonna? Okay, that's it, the radio must now be punished. Silence will have to do once again.

"Go ask Alice, I think she'll know, when logic and proportion..." All right, you win, I accept the fact that this song will from now on play continuously through my head. Oh look, a hitchhiker, he looks like he's had a rough day. It's miles to the nearest, well, anything. He'll be walking all day and it's pretty cold out considering it's January. Maybe I should stop and give him a...No,

2000

that's stupid, keep driving. I watch Oprah; I know what goes on. I'll just look the other way. Although he looks harmless in a homeless, bitter, Vietnam vet sort of way. No, don't be an idiot, don't be an idiot. Why am I slowing down?! This is crazy! My mom would kill me if she saw this blatant display of no common sense. Oh wonderful, I'm completely stopped. He's coming towards the car. I cannot believe the last person to see me alive is going to be this deranged-looking serial rapist. I am so stupid. I deserve to be killed. I could just take off. I still have time. That's it, I'll just drive off and this will all be . . . , "Hi, need a lift?" What am I doing?!

"Yeah, my name's Jake, but my friends call me Spit." Of course.

"Well, get in." Shut up! Don't say that!

"Thanks, I didn't think that anyone would stop," Jake, a.k.a. Spit, replied.

"So, where are you headed?" asked Jake.

"I'm going to see my boyfriend," my incredibly big, strong boyfriend who will not be pleased if I never make it there. Just stare forward and ignore the awful stench coming from the passenger's side. I wonder if Jake has considered the benefits of a full set of teeth?

"What do you do for a living?" I asked.

"I was in the Peace Corps for three years down in Guatemala. When I got back, I found out that my wife had taken our two kids and moved to Texas with some loser who claimed to be a cowboy. I fell into a severe depression and became an alcoholic. I quit my job and have been homeless for the last couple of months. Now I just go around and do odd jobs for money. That's why I needed somebody to take me to the nearest town.

"I'm going to look for work," said Jake. How awful! Maybe I should mention to Jake the method of incense-assisted suicide. I should also mention that studies have proven that soap does, indeed, work.

"So what's in the bag?" I asked.

"Oh, just some clothes, a couple of pictures of my kids, my gun," Jake said.

"Oh, really." That's it, I'm dead. He is going to kill me. I bet he doesn't even have kids. I bet his name is not even . . .

"Does the fact that I have a gun make you nervous? You look a little strange. It's not loaded at the moment—I just have nowhere else to keep it," said Jake, if that's his real name.

"No." Yes, what do you think, genius? Of course it makes me nervous. My life is flashing before my eyes and it's not taking long enough. I've got so much to do, so many things to see. I can't die because "Jake" was bored today and thought he'd add another to his rap sheet. This is what I get for trying to help out an alcoholic loser.

"It's only for protection, ya know. It's hard living on the streets," said Jake.

"Oh, I understand." I understand that I need to think of the quickest possible way to get you out of my car. What should I do? What should I do? I know, I'll tell him that my gas gauge is broken and that I'm actually running out of gas. Then, when we get off on this next exit, I'll send him in to get me a drink and slowly ease off. That's believable. Okay, maybe not the most brilliant idea, but I'm thinking under a lot of stress.

"I'm going to have to get off on this next exit. My gas gauge is broken and I'm actually almost empty," I said.

"Do you want me to pump it for you?" Jake said. Oh, that's nice, butter me up before you drag me into the cornfield and kill me.

"Sure, just let me find my wallet first. I'm not sure how much money I have with me." Where is my wallet?! Let's see, it's not in the glove box or in the side of the door. Of course it's not in my purse, that's way too logical. Where the hell could it be? Wait, I'm getting a mental picture. I can see it clearly now, it's sitting on top of my CDs waiting for me to put them all in the car. What a day. Remind me to smack myself the next chance I get.

"Um will you excuse me for just a sec? I'm going to go call my boyfriend and see if he knows where I put it." Pick up, pick up, pick up.

"Hello?"

"Jerry, I'm running a little late. I picked up this hitchhiker and . . ."

"You picked up a hitchhiker? What ever possessed you to do that. Don't you watch Oprah? You could..."

"I know, I know, I know, but there's no time for lectures now. I forgot my wallet, I can't pay for gas, he's got a gun..."

"He's got a what?!"

"Yes, he's got a gun, he's got no job, he's got nothing to show for his life, he has about three teeth, and he's surrounded by a foul and awful odor." Come to think of it, that rank smell has been lingering here the entire time I've been on the phone. Where is Jake anyway? Oh my God!

"Jake, wait! Where are you going?" Did he hear that entire conversation? I think he did. Great, what am I going to do? Oops, I hung up on Jerry. I better call him back. Oh wait, Jake's coming this way.

"Jake, I'm really sorry about all those awful . . ."

"Listen, I only had seven dollars and I was going to put it all into your tank but it seems that it only takes five to fill it up. I'm just going to grab my bag and I'll be out of your way. Thanks for taking me this far. You didn't have to do that." Jake said.

"Jake, I really didn't mean all those things I said. It was just that . . ."

"Forget about it. I understand why you were worried. Besides, I knew I wasn't lucky enough to find someone who was willing to accept me just as I am. Yes, I am aware that my smell is less



Deirdre Roebuck

2000

than pleasing. Showering just hasn't been my top priority lately. Anyway, this location is fine enough. You take care of yourself now. I'll just be on my way."

I can't believe he spent his only money on me. I didn't deserve that act of kindness. I should be shot, execution style, for being such a shallow, awful person. What's this note on my windshield? It looks like a page torn out of a book.

To laugh often and much;
To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children;
To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends;
To appreciate beauty;
To find the best in others;
To leave the world a bit better whether by a healthy child, a redeemed social condition, or a job well done;
To know that even one other life has breathed easier because you have lived.—
This is to have succeeded.

By Ralph Waldo Emerson

This is something I like to read when I feel like my life has been worthless, just as you thought of me today. Maybe now it will help you understand what a truly successful life is. About those things you said, don't give it too much thought. You were right to be concerned for your well-being. Besides, you were much kinder than most people were. Oh yeah, one more thing, don't you know how dangerous it is to pick up hitchhikers? I'm sure you watch Oprah. I could have killed you.

Jake

I am not a bad person. I am not a bad person. I am not a... Okay this isn't working. I still feel awful. What can I do? I never realized how shallow I could be. Well, I guess the only thing I can do is better myself from this experience. From now on, I vow not to judge people based on their appearance. There, I feel better already. All right, now I'll just put this out of my mind. I'm almost there and . . . What is that woman wearing in the car beside me?! She looks like she got dressed in a dimly lit basement. Stop. You're already slipping back into your old routine. Now, take a deep breath and try again. I will not judge people based on their appearance. I definitely need music. I wonder if the radio has thought about what it did and decided to behave. I'll give it a try.

"I don't care who you are, where you're..." Backstreet Boys?!! That's the last straw. This radio will no longer play. I'm putting it out to pasture. Here we go, silence again. I can deal with this. What should I think about now? It's almost as if my head is so full of ideas and questions that I'm drawing a blank as to which would be the best to contemplate. Oh wait, here it comes, the end of the song . . .

"And the white knight is talking backwards, and the red queen says 'Off with her head,' remember what the dormouse said, 'Feed your head.'" I suppose The Great Slick wrote this song as food for thought for people like me.

Dallas Coggins-Tuttle

For Claire and Her Friends

Standing under the cold grey Windsor sky
Watching silent faces

Red, wide eyed, shocked young faces,
Stunned and confused family faces,
Set and pragmatic old faces who are no longer surprised
But watch the younger, less guarded faces
With kindness,
Remembering their own lost tears and innocence.

And I remember again
That each year, each day, each moment
Is a gift, not a promise.

Carol Hotchkiss

Riddles

I dwell in the souls of all mankind

I am the eternal flame that cannot be extinguished

I'm the giver...and the taker

I'm the thunder and the rain

And the tears and the sobs

I have no explained origin

I've been made by God, gods, and various forms of bacteria

I exist everywhere and I'm in everything but I am invisible

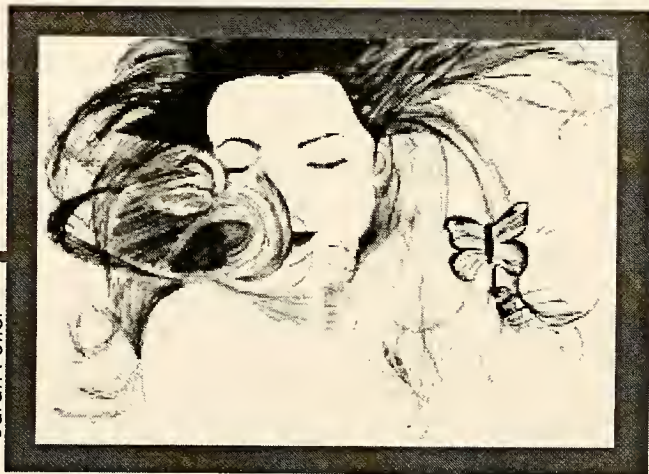
What am I?



Ashton Parks

2000

Perfect pretty girl I wish
I was you
make everyone smile
with your big eyes
see what everyone wants
as you toss your pretty
hair makes boys crazy and you
have a sparkling
laugh at the world
revolves around you and your
perfect clothes
we would die for 'cause you know
how to wear them.
You will go to the best
college professors will love you.
You can lead a class discussion with



Sarah Fuller

your perfect brain
can comprehend calculus and of
course you've had your fair share of
trauma and sad stories come to you
can relate.

You can conjure up tears and all the night
joke's on us. We plain, normal girls hate
you and follow you and wish we were you
dance for us. Pretty perfect girl.

I have, as a normal, plain girl, some extra
fat plagues me and I'm shy in public
doesn't see me
or my off-beat wardrobe
makes me uncomfortable the minute I
step outside
I yell about originality and you perfect
pretty girls
smile and overlook my presence, or lack
there-of, means I will never be one of you
anger me because I am insanely jealous
and seek recognition
is only for those who grab it.
My innocence makes me naïve and
immature is not a word used to describe
your purity and strength
is what keeps me on my feet and
fighting is not attractive so you don't do it;
you don't need to do it
makes me mad that my hair is wavy,
My skin is pale, my nose is long,
but if you had my looks
don't matter, because you would have
"beauty on the inside"
I am smart and kind and unrecognized,
You would still be perfect.

Lesley Guilmarth

2000

"I am **alone** in a world full of lonely **people.**" -Unknown



Jane Fleury

"One part of being **young**
is having people **tell** you what to do,
and the other part is **not liking** it."

-W. W. Upchurch

Sweet Memories

I won't accept the fact that you are not here.
I know you would not want me to cry.
Why did I take your life for granted when you were so near?
Why couldn't I have said goodbye?

I can still hear you laugh,
I can still sense your smell.
As I walk along the countryside's path,
I smile from the memories of the stories you used to tell.

I'd have hard times, but you would always know what to say.
You would tell me that everything would be all right.
We'd go on a wild adventure for the day,
and would return late at night.

Your character and humor would change the world
and touched all of our hearts.
You raised me from a little girl
And loved me unconditionally from the start.

You were the life of the party and a friend to all.
Never a dull moment, every second was a ball.
Everywhere I go and everything I do,
only reminds me of the things we used to do.

We would jet ski, fish, and swim around.
I'll never forget our Christmas in Key West.
Windsor will never be the same little town.
We had too much fun at all the Tea & Sea Fests.

I've lost the best shagging partner to join me on the floor,
so dancing to The Embers will never be the same.
I can no longer walk with you on Nag's Head's sandy shores,
but as I sail among the ocean blue I can only think of your name.

Our priceless experiences that I've grown so much from,
have taught me more than a book will ever do.
These sweet memories I will have for all of my years to come,
but I should have said more often how much I love you.

Claire Spruill

2000

The Beach

I came to the beach when I was two;
I wish I had remembered.

I stayed in a "flat-top" house;
I wish I had remembered.

The house is still there and I drive by it each day at home;
I wish I had remembered.

There are pictures of me at the beach;
I wish I had remembered.

I was naked, dashing through the sand;
I wish I had remembered.

I chased crabs into the water;
I wish I had remembered.

I scooped mole crabs from the sand;
I wish I had remembered.

I had my first mouthful of saltwater;
I wish I had remembered.

I tasted sand for the first time and ground it with my teeth;
I wish I had remembered.

My mom and dad watched me as I played and thought,
"What a wonderful little girl we have;"
I wish I had remembered.

Sarah McCauley



Michaela Idhammar

Comme Un Voyage Dans l'Océan

Comme un voyage dans l'océan,
Like an ocean voyage,
La vie est un aventure très difficile et longue.
Life is a very difficult and long journey.
Mais, c'est peut être amusant.
But, life can be fun.
Mais, c'est peut être excitant.
But, life can be exciting.

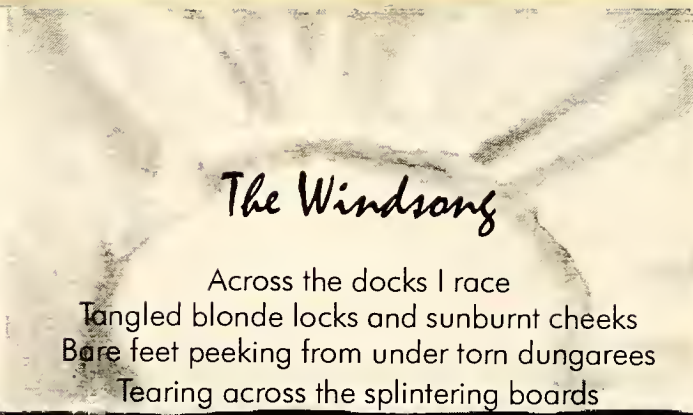
Comme un voyage dans l'océan,
Like an ocean voyage,
La vie commence dans un port,
Life begins in a port,
Avec beaucoup de protection
with lots of protection,
Avec beaucoup de direction.
with lots of direction.

Comme un voyage dans l'océan,
Like an ocean voyage,
On doit partir le port et voyage aux autre villes.
One must leave the port and travel to other cities.
Le voyage peut être dangereux.
The voyage may be dangerous.
Le voyage peut être vigoureux.
The voyage may be strenuous.

Comme un voyage dans l'océan,
Like an ocean voyage,
On arivera à la destination
one will arrive at the destination,
Après trouvant contentement,
after finding happiness,
Après trouvant accomplissement.
after finding success.

Ven Rajarathiman

2000



The Windsong

Across the docks I race
Tangled blonde locks and sunburnt cheeks
Bare feet peeking from under torn dungarees
Tearing across the splintering boards

And there before me she stands
So immense and so incredible
Anchored and equipped
Awaiting the cluttered deck
And the wind humming through her sails

Lured on by the clipper
I climb aboard
Sunlight filtering through the rigging
And osprey singing the melody of the waves

My callused hands stroke the railing
Though they really ache
To unfurl the genoa
And hoist up the main

Racing pelican and porpoise
And winning
Whirling over white waters
And dancing on waves

I linger there
Till evening stars shine
On a silky sea
Listening to endless whispers
Of bay breezes

Mary Ellen Cox

Lemon Juice

Lemon Juice in August
THE ONE pulling on it during algebra
Clairol and Blue Kool-Aid
Tree branches, bushes
Bangs, Curls, Braids
Tugging at tangles in the morning
Frowning and yelling before a Date
with the New One
Flying out windows on road trips
Chewed on while baby sitting
Silver flashes-the final snip
10 years fall to the floor
Barber sweeps it up with ignorance
I reminisce about
the history of my hair
it drops into a trash can
and the barber tells me the cost
He doesn't ask about the lemon juice

2000

A Night of Misplaced Desire

Frantic search for love, emotional desperation
Temptation of evil and drunken promises
I heard Eve speak in my own unworthy ear
I make no excuse: I believe because I wanted to.
Nothing will ever be the same again
Thrown out of perfect years into the cruel sea.
She cares not of weakness, dreams, if only...
Mother Ocean, justice to mankind makes no
 Exceptions for silly believers of impossible
 tales and lies.
She knows the Truth, the Nature, the careless
 deed, the impulsive heartbreak
The undeniable sin.
As if I murdered the old image of who I once was.
The innocent victim lies silent, torn, broken
Where can I find repentance if not on this Earth?
If not from those who I love?
Who does not fear and loathe a sinner, a murderer?
Drowning, ocean spitting on my face.
My octopus arms clawing through the cold, misty air
 for the ghost of my old self floating in space
 above my wicked form.
Waves tumble and salt water sings.
Show some mercy! I call out
The water stops to listen for a moment, then
 with tremendous hilarity, crashes onto the
 shore mocking my dramatic fall to sin.

Liz Thompson

"All my life

I've wanted to be somebody.

But I see now I should
have been more specific."

-Jane Wagner



Kimmi Kresica

Gracious Morning

Wake up and go
Live

Let the sun kiss your skin
Let your heart become loved
Learn to love, to be loved
Walk in paths never walked in
Find stars never seen
Become what you wished to be on
those very same stars
Look up

Thank the moon, the stars, the sky
Thank your God
You will get hurt
Crying becomes inevitable
You had to accept this when
you breathed your first breath
Accept life
Accept yourself
and there you will find happiness

Patricia Keeton Crowder

2000

"I broke something today,
and I realized I should break something
once a week.... to remind me how fragile life is."

-Andy Warhol



Kimmi Kresica

And They Danced

With fire in their eyes
and clouds
under their feet
They danced...

Oh how they danced...

Whipping
Spinning
Wanting to fly
Leaping
and flying
tendrils float around
their bodies...as their
bodies told the story.

The story
Of grace
Of shame of love.

They danced and danced until the rhythm seemed to be
keeping them going...

And...Oh...How they danced!

Sara Upchurch

2000

The Muse Production Staff

Virginia Boyd, Advisor

Emily Birkemeier

Sara Upchurch

Lesley Guilmart

Tori Burroughs

Deirdre Roebuck

Brooke Turley

Becky Catchings

Anne Kochersberger

Other Members

Katherine Kemp

Amanda McLaurin

Kathleen Kelley

Jane Fleury

Special Thanks to Our Contributors

Mary Grady Bell

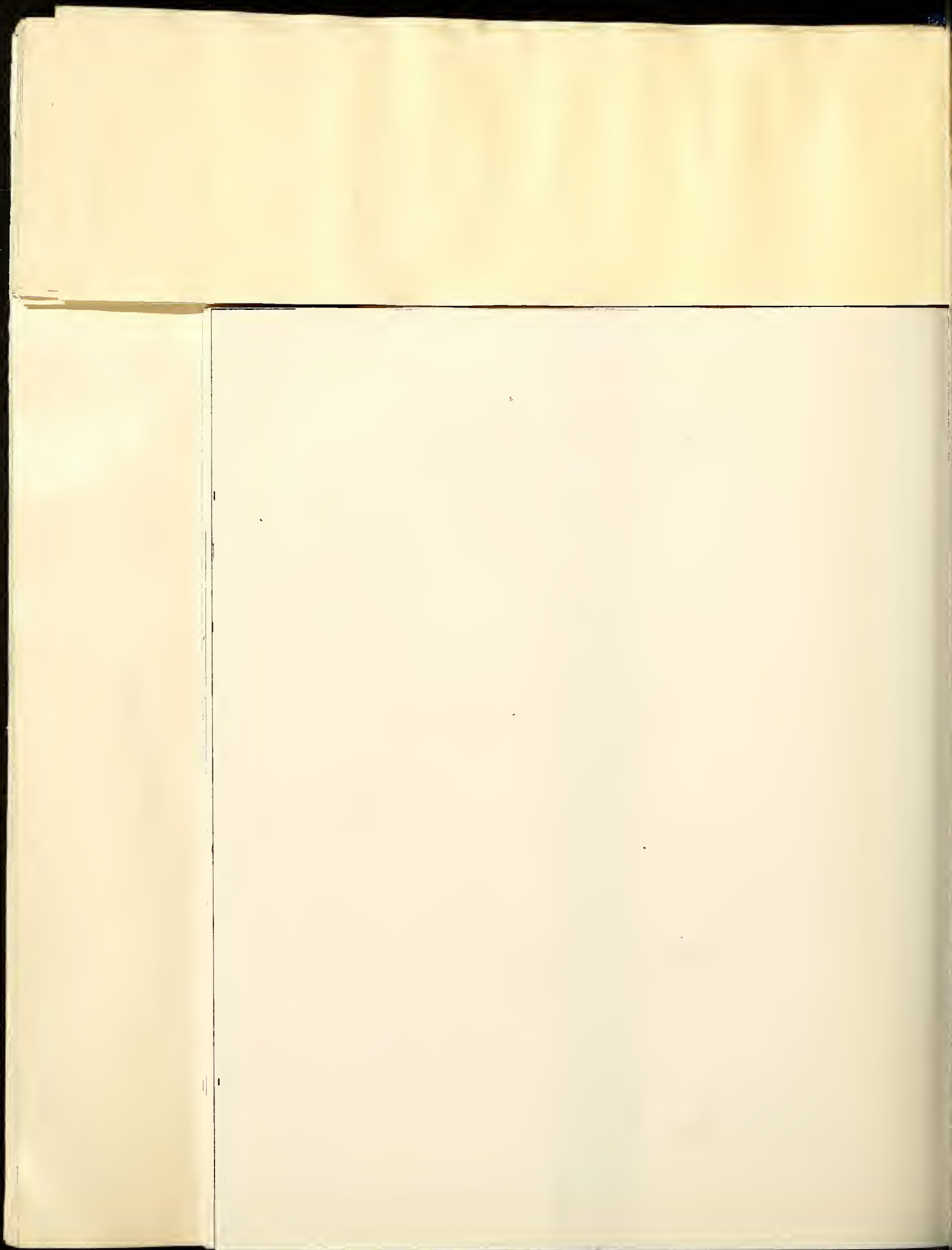
Bill Rickman, owner of the Island Bookstore in Duck, NC

Sara Upchurch

Student Activities

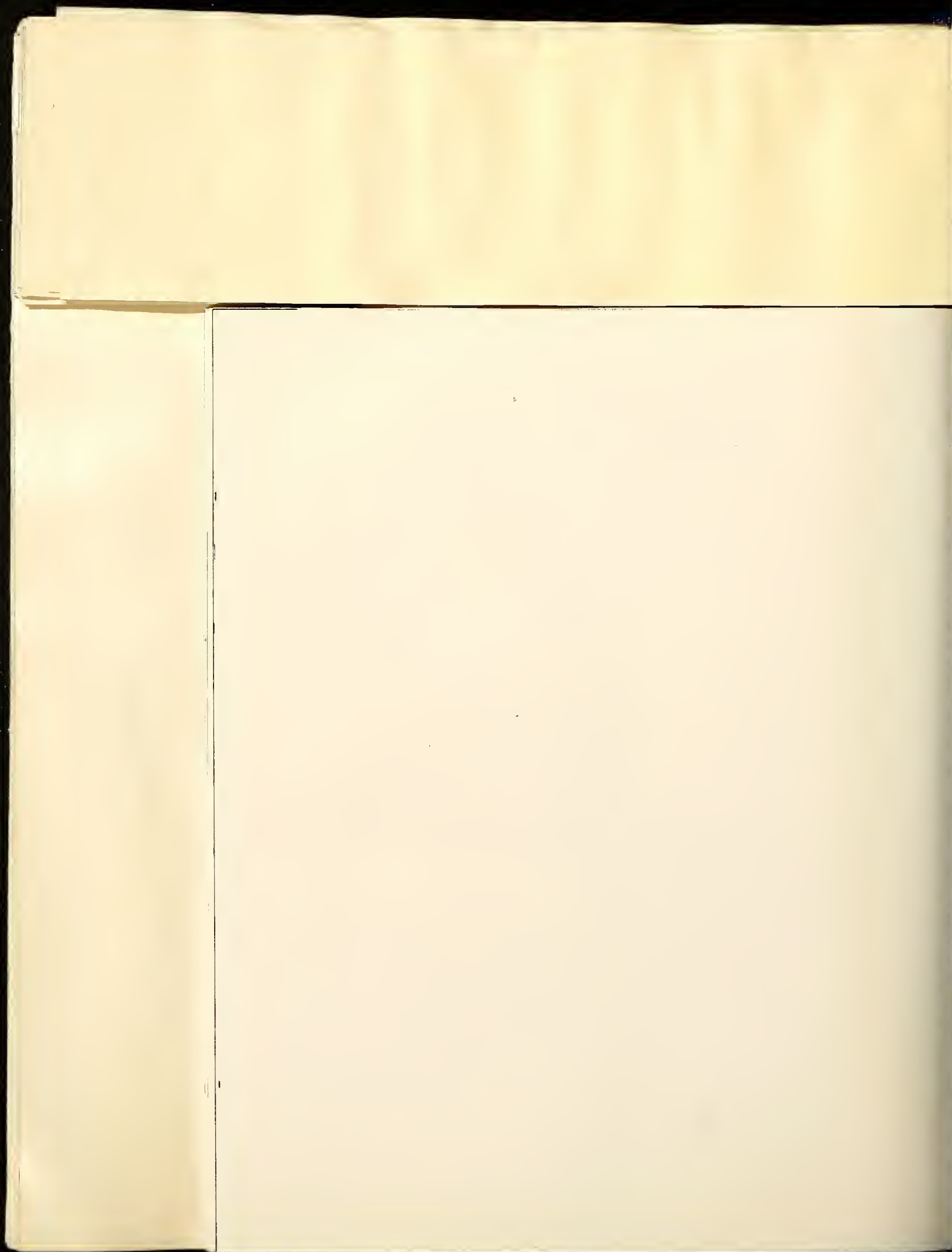
Krispy Kreme

2000

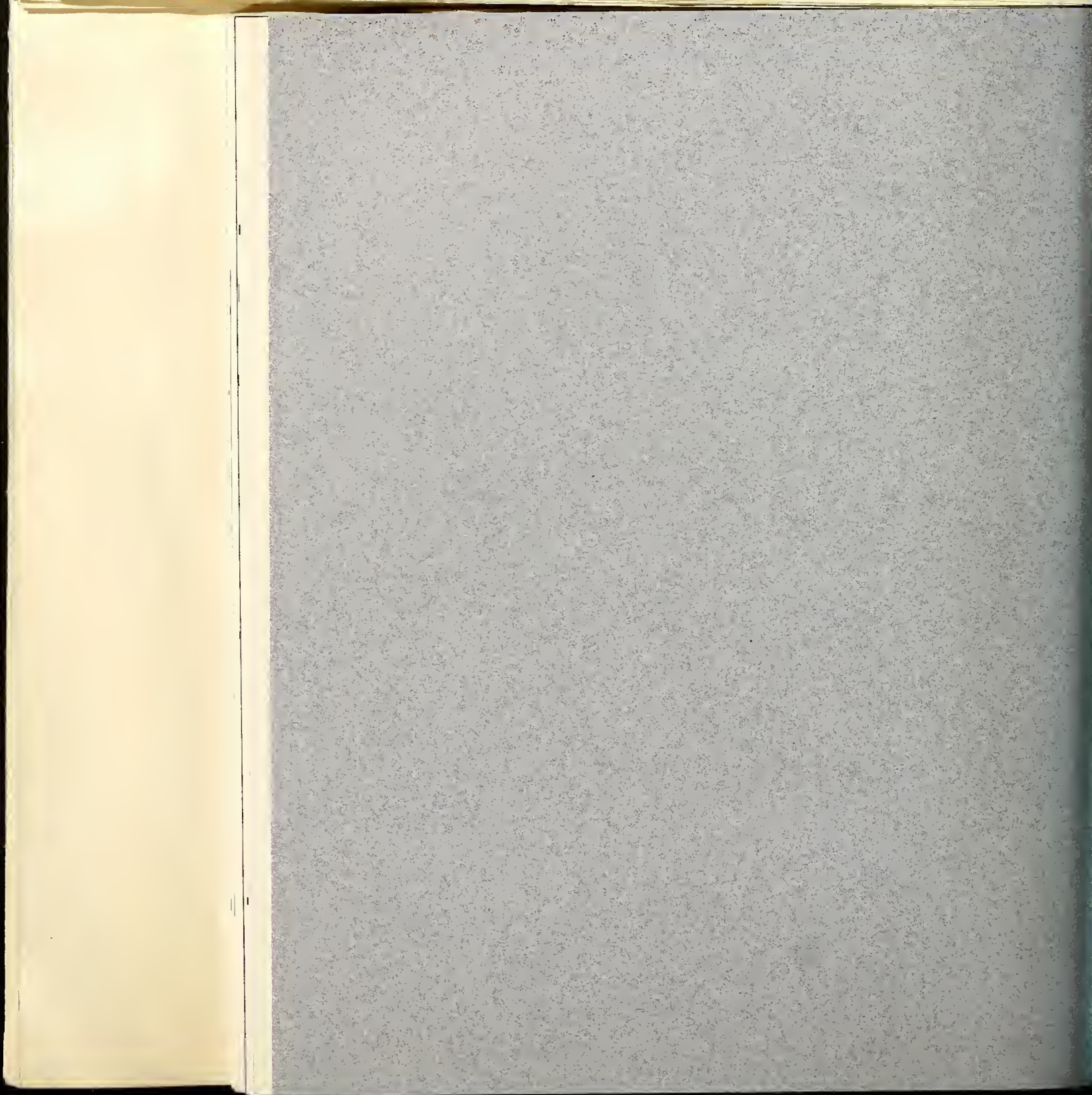




2000



2000



The Muse



M. 98

1999-2000



1999 - 2000

*Come Muse,
Inspire Us...*

1414 - 5000



Night
By Ashley
Davenport

As the
chickets
chirp
Luminous star
dust will
release my
dreams
My secrets
are unlocked
about my love
Even in this
mystical night
Silent death
will come
It is all a
Fantasy



Memory

Wandering m

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P

U empty paths

D

O

W

N **narrow** halls

D

P into Memory.

EE

s

attempting

d

freedom

A brilliant starlit **night**

r

from

feelings of regret

a

Memory.

rages of embitterment

w

p

HURL

u

Memory is **DECEPTIVE**

what was

NOW

isn't

so tantalizingly teasing

T H R O W I N G all failures

against the chains of Memory.

I Watched as She Ran

She ran. Her hair flying behind her and the wind stinging with rain—she ran. The sky so black—no stars—only moon. A halo of light engulfed it—a sky so wide. The hard ground pounded under her feet and the tall grasses smarted against her legs, but she ran on, not noticing.

From far away in the distance I could see her running. As fast as her legs could carry her, she ran, but to where? From whom? Maybe I'll never know, but this isn't the first time that she's been here. So many times before they came together...she and the young man that is...I can still remember the first time—on their backs, stary-eyed and dreaming. He knew so much; he had so much to say. She looked at him in adoration; he was life, he knew life, he showed her life. They would come and talk for hours. No matter the season he was barefooted, T-shirt and shorts—an occasional wool sweater. She wore jeans and sweaters; they were comfortable around each other. The only sound to be heard was the chirping of the crickets, but she would lay her head on his chest, perfectly content to listen to his breathing and the steady beat of his heart. The sky, the field, the grass; it was all theirs. He pointed his finger and named the stars for her. One comet in particular, but that was the only year that it lit up the sky. They continued to come. The months passed. Always the two of them. Some nights there was nothing to say; others, not long enough to say it all.

Then, for some reason or another, they stopped coming. The summer moon hung high, and the warm flashes of lightening lit the horizon, but I never saw them once. The comet began to fade as it moved farther and farther away...

And then they came. It was the last time that I saw them together. His hair was shaggy, hers was long. He was a little stockier, she was a little thinner. They talked, but no longer of the stars, their dreams, or the future. He talked of Maine, she of Wyoming; he of college, she of high school. He held her like he used to, but his heart skipped to a different beat. They drove away in his '89 Bronco stirring the dust up one last time...

And now she's back:

Running only to run, running because she could no longer lie there looking up. Arms outstretched—running—towards what? From what? Why? Questions. No answers. Gasping, flinging to the ground—the air, so thin—Raining. Or is it? Streaming down her face, face down. The earth, the smell, running through her fingers...slipping through her fingers—hands to fists—tearing at the grasses. Pounding.

I hear her cry out—

"Why?!" She pounds and cries out, "How?!" As if in agony—as if her heart were breaking—or maybe as if it were broken. I look at her, so small in such a wide space, and I wish that there was something that I could say...

Her heart racing, raging—mind goes blank. She rolls over and looks again. The hallowed moon—still silent, no answers. It shines down. Beautiful once, mocking now. Alone she looks. Always alone these days. The field seems bigger. Lonelier. Wide-eyed around her.

Far away, trees; farther still, the road. The same road they drove down so many times, but is it the same?

So cold and empty. Is it the same? It must be hard and lonely. This place, she knew. This place was almost sacred. Their place. Her place. Or was it? Well she's here, isn't she? I don't see him. She's the only who's here while he's gone away; old life behind. And she's here; alone, claiming it for her own...

Determined now, chin up. The memories, they're hers. He can't have them, she tells herself, he took enough. She stares, she sighs. She stares, she cries. The moon, the halo, the grass, the wind, the rain...she sighs.

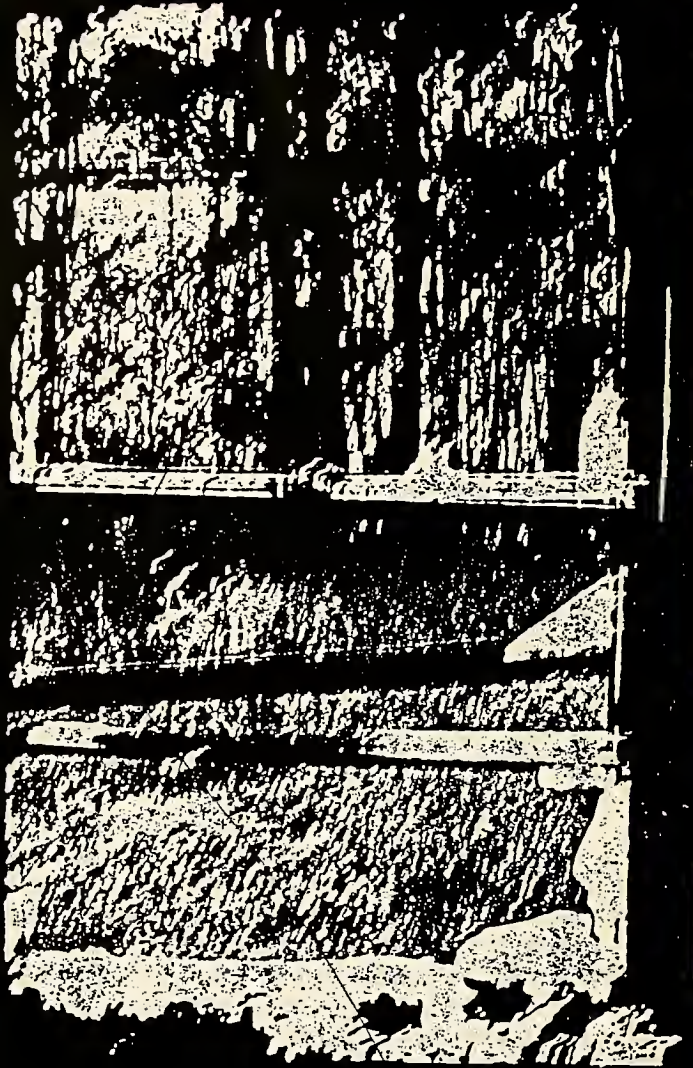
I watch as she smoothes her hair, straightens up, and leaves. She ran.

And I ran with her. I guess I always knew that things would end up this way; I always knew that he would leave. But sometimes, when the moon was so full and the sky was so bright with stars, it was easy to tell myself that it would stay that way forever. It was easy to step aside and watch from a distance while she, or rather I, loved and lost. I can see all that now and luckily, through the rain, I can still see the moon...

—anonymous

*My eyelids feel like lead
I'm slumped down in my chair
There's a storm inside my head
My mind is unaware
What's this that you're giving me?
Oh! It's Adderal, I see.
Wow! What a shock!
My eyes fly open
I'm wide awake for sure
There will be no more mope'n
I've found a miracle cure.
Distraction is a thing of the past.
It's practically obsolete.
As long as my neurons last,
My life will be complete.*

...Rebecca Efron



Adderal



For Him

*Cigarette tongue flip
Vodka jaw lick.
Thrown down on a bed of
Secrets and miscommunications
Round dive at it again.
Devious man sweat drying every
Gland
Junk experienced laid back on my
Chest
Understanding ardor black cowboy
Boots so twisting in peachy blonde
Morning fever.
Soul losing hate love saturated in
Musty white day sheets.*

Flotation

*Encased, the world outside is filmy
Shimmering, mystical, magical...hazy.
The sounds outside come in as through a tunnel
Echoing, vibrating, wobbling
I dare not touch, for it would ruin
The tranquility, of my world,
My state of being
Airy, light,
As rain on roses, or fresh pink bubble gum, like frosting
Whipped just so.
Heavily scented, holding in, all that
Is inside, smelling like bubble gum, pink, baby's breath, as though the
Outside world ceases to exist.
Which it does until
POP!
And my bubble is burst
Tranquility is lost
And I return to the outside,
To the real world again.
-Bierrie Bindeman-*



Ode To Beverly Hills. 90210
By Anonymous

Oh my dearest Beverly Hills, 90210
For nine years now, I've watched your family grow.
First it was Andrea, Brandon, Brenda, and Kelly,
Steve whose socks are oh so smelly.
Don't forget David, Donna, Dylan, and good old Nat
Who in his old age has gotten so fat.
The Peach Pit was always the place to be
If they weren't there, you could find the gang with Cindy.
As Brandon and Brenda's mom and dad,
Jim and Cindy are totally rad.

I watched every day of those tough high school years,
Sometimes laughing, other times in tears.
While all other shows were playing reruns.
You guys were still out there, having summer fun.
Immediately you attracted viewers of all ages.
As you did, they increased the cat's wages.
The group graduated from high school to college,
Always wanting to gain more knowledge.
The whole time I was right there,
Glued to the TV with the 5:00 glare.

They were friends then lovers, lovers then friends
Of course some relationships seem to never end.
Donna had many, Brenda, a few.
Kelly always ended up saying "boo-hoo"
She dated Steve for about year,
Then it was Collin, the dealer, who bought her crack and beer.
Brenda and Kelly, over Dylan they fought,
During those hard times, I was extremely distraught.
Kelly turned to Brandon, because he was so strong.
Oh my gosh, they lasted so long.
In her white dress, she walked down the aisle,
They didn't tie the knot, but sure did have us guessing for a while.
Though feelings deep inside still burn.
Donna's list includes David and Ray,
Responding to the way they treated her, she exclaimed "NO WAY"
As she jumped from guy to guy,
Friends and family asked the question "Why?"
"Why not David, why choose that other scum?"
You might as well be dating a burn."
But before too long,
She proved them all wrong,
Noah was rich, handsome, and smart
Most importantly he possessed a big heart.
From girl to girl, the boys were passed,
Those relationships fizzled out so fast.

Andrea moved away, she and Jesse had a baby.
When asked if she would return, her reply was maybe.
Brenda vanished too, but what's her story?

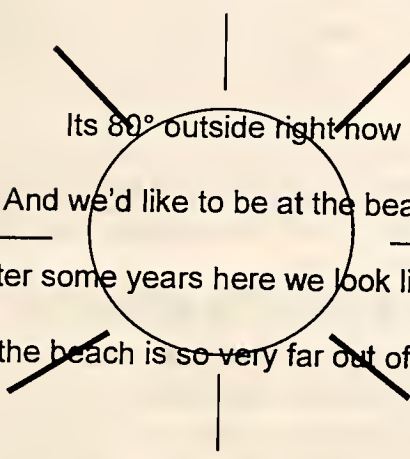
But when Dylan left, we were all scared.
He had just witnessed the killing of Toni, his wife
We were fearful that he might try to take his own life.
This tragic possibility, thank God, did not occur
The reason for his absence was totally pure.
He needed to find himself, let time heal all pain,
Somewhere dry he needed to go, Toni was shot in the rain.
When Dylan came back, we were all ecstatic
That Thanksgiving episode was extremely dramatic.
After the almost-wedding, Brandon was devastated
Trying to get over the hurt, he even meditated.
The only solution was to leave this town
Go someplace where Kelly would not be around.
Way before Brandon left, Valerie arrived at the Walsh house.
She broke her promise to be quiet as a mouse.
During her three years on the show, complete chaos she caused.
Therefore, when she left, no one even paused.

Gina shows up, a devil in disguise.
If there was an evil contest, she would win a prize.
Everything about her is almost identical to Valerie
Except for the fact that she counts every calorie.
She hooks up with everyone, plays with their mind
Then dumps then saying "Your just not my kind"
Steve and Janet are now married with a child,
When he first held the newborn, he cried tears of joy and he smiled.

People may make fun of you, and people may mock,
But Beverly Hills, 90210, I know that you rock.
I know that some Wednesdays I'm in a bad mood and it seems like I don't care,
But the truth is, I'd be a mess if they take you off the air.
You are what gets me through each week
During our time together, no one may speak
Some of our family left, new members came
But the five digit zip code was always the same
Many people skip you to watch Dawson's Creek
But compared to you, that show is just weak
I love you, I love you what's more to be said
If I were without you, my soul would be dead



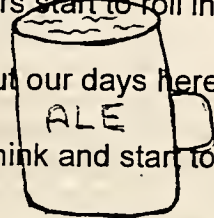
Ode to Graduation



Its 80° outside right now
And we'd like to be at the beach,
But after some years here we look like a cow,
So the beach is so very far out of reach.

Our teachers hate us now because we've long stopped caring
About our homework and grades
We're working very hard at being cunning and daring
By sitting in the back of the room and pulling down our shades.

But as the acceptance letters start to roll in and we start to ponder,
About our days here,
We sit and think and start to wonder,
with whom will we drink our first beer.



my disorder
part II

You might not know me, but I am one of you. I am also a Saint Mary's girl. Last year, I submitted a poem entitled

MY DISORDER

This year, I will try to tell you more

For the past 18 months, I have fought depression and an eating disorder. I have been fighting a war inside *my own mind*, against **MYSELF**. I still struggle sometimes; I am still healing.

MY DEAR SISTERS, please be careful not to become trapped in such dangerous habits as I did. I never thought that something so life wrenching would happen to me. I thought I was stronger than that. I could never see myself with those girls on TV who eat nothing but celery or visit the toilet after every meal. Those who know what I've been through often ask me,

— HOW DID THIS HAPPEN? —

When did this start??

To that, I have no answers. It is impossible to pinpoint a day, a certain remark, or a particular news article that triggered me to think...

THAT I MUST LOSE WEIGHT AND KEEP IT OFF IF I EVER WANTED TO BE BEAUTIFUL AND LOVED.

In my case, the environment at Saint Mary's had a MAJOR INFLUENCE. We are always speaking of someone who is, SO GORGEOUS or SO TINY...

Those comments can be so DESTRUCTIVE!!! They establish the false ideas that only the thinnest and most disciplined are worthy of attention. Girls thrive on this gossip; and there are no guys nearby to silence our words, even if they are meant as complimentary. I do not blame Saint Mary's, or think that I have risen

ABOVE

My friends here. I only relate my HUGE victory to warn you: *What you are saying may have more effect on someone else than you realize.* And that other person may not consciously realize it either.

NO ONE who struggles with an eating disorder ever says, "Okay, today I'm going to stop eating." The choice is not that simple. If it were, I probably could have **STOPPED** myself. By the time a dangerous behavior overshadows everyday life, it is so ingrained **THAT** it comes naturally. I didn't realize what I was doing; my family and friends couldn't see it coming. People with my **LIFESTYLE** get very good at hiding it, and they will often do whatever it takes to stay the way they are.

I will not tell you that overcoming an eating disorder is a

Pleasant Experience.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE HOW MUCH YOU WORRY ABOUT EATING, TALK TO SOMEONE WHO WILL LISTEN. **IF YOU HAVE A FRIEND WHO SEEMS UNHAPPY AND "NOT HERSELF", PLEASE TALK WITH HER OR CONFIDE IN AN ADULT WHO MAY HELP.** IF YOU ARE A TRUE FRIEND YOU OWE IT TO HER She probably won't want to admit it or talk to you about it. If you are a true friend, you owe it to her to do something. She probably won't want to admit it or talk to you about it. But if you love her **ON HER.**

It is the hardest thing that I've ever had to do. But it's also the most important. Admitting that I'm **TERRIFIED**, dealing with it all, and gaining weight is not fun. It can take a very L-O-N-G time. But I promise you

It will be worth it

When you can go to a restaurant and not be petrified of what is offered, you have found so much freedom!

This piece, like my entry to last year's magazine, is anonymous. I still struggle with the social humiliation of admitting an eating disorder. Many in our society would think that I am **IRRESPONSIBLE** or **JUST PLAIN STUPID**. And I don't want you to watch every morsel I put in my mouth. You have better things to do, and so do I.

TO ALL THOSE WHO ARE STRUGGLING: I am praying for you.
TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE BELIEVED IN ME WHEN I COULDN'T BELIEVE IN MYSELF:
I could never put my gratitude into mere words. I love you all.

Who'll Stop the Rain

I'm standing here on a street corner, somewhere downtown; I'm not sure exactly where, but it doesn't really matter. It's one of those gloomy days, all gray, foggy, and cold. The gloominess kind of penetrates its way into me, so I just stand here on the street corner. Man, I am so hungry! My stomach growls as I think about how good a slice of cheese pizza would be. I should probably be going home or to a restaurant or something. But for some reason, I don't feel like going anywhere. I really don't. It's just kinda nice standing here. There are so many people out today—dressed in their warm winter clothes—talking about where they're going and what they have to do. I wish I could hear what they're saying! The foggy weather seems to drown out most of their sounds. I realize that my head is kinda foggy right now, too. Actually, it's somewhat noisy around here if you think about it. Those damn cars keep driving by and rumbling their tires when they cross the bridge in the distance off to my left. But all I'm really listening to is myself thinking, and all that stuff is just way back in the corner of my head and so everything sounds quiet in a way. It sounds foggy, like the weather.

How long have I been standing here? How did I even get here, I wondered. What day is it? That's right, Sunday. Sundays are always kind of foggy. Maybe not because of the weather but because nothing really happens. Everything is closed, mostly (except churches of course). Woah, it's so dreary out. I keep expecting it to just pour rain. Man, I love it when it rains. It reminds me of Megan. Megan loved the rain. She thought rain was the most beautiful thing in the world. And I thought that Megan was the most beautiful thing in the world.

Megan and I shared many moments in the rain. I mean, we met in the rain, we first kissed in the rain... She always talked to me about the rain, she thought that it was really something special between us. She was kinda funny like that. I mean, she thought that everything meant something beyond the way it seemed. I have to admit, though, sometimes I believed her. For example, I remember the pool—Man, that was so awesome! We were sitting next to each other in lawn chairs. We didn't really know each other then, but did we ever talk! That was something about her that I remember—I could always talk to her. Anyway, so then we were sitting there talking and all of a sudden it got really windy. Scarlet red umbrellas somersaulted across the patio as the lightning pierced the threatening sky. I swear, I have never been so scared. I lived close by so I told Megan to come to my house instead of driving home. The thunderstorm caused a lot of accidents that night. I'm glad that she was safe with me. We ended up making s'mores in my fireplace and had a huge marshmallow fight. We looked like gooey marshmallows!

This other time I remember, she and I went out to eat at a fancy Mexican restaurant called Maria Bonita. It was really our first date so it was pretty special to me. I had it all planned out where we could sit outside on the patio with the birds chirping and the sun shining. But of course when we got to the restaurant, wouldn't you know it, it started raining. Not just drizzling—but REALLY raining. But that didn't matter to Megan. She demanded the waiters seat us outside on the patio, even though it was pouring. And they did, too. We sat underneath an umbrella in the rain, and we spent the whole lunch there—just her and me. It was so awesome. Man, was it awesome.

Another time we took a walk together in the park. We took many walks together in the park but this time I remember well. We talked about everything about life and all, like we were really smart and knew the way the world worked. Anyway, when we were way out in the woods it started raining. Just like that. We were soaked and all, but it was weird because we never mentioned the fact that it was raining. We just walking and talking like everything was normal. I loved that, I really did. It started raining harder and harder and we looked at each other and smiled. Her makeup got all messed up and was wearing cut-off blue jeans and a white tank top. I bet all the guys would ask if she would win a wet T-shirt contest. Hell yeah she would win. But her imperfection made her even more perfect there in the rain. She took my hand in hers and it wasn't just the touch of a hand—it warmed my whole body. I then turned towards her and our smiles faded away. All of a sudden, it jumped back on her face and she came right up and kissed me on the lips—just like the sun was shining for both of us. I didn't expect it at all—I really didn't. I think that her red lipstick even got on me, but I didn't care. She pressed herself up against me and gave me a hug. Then she moved back and laughed and kind of skipped along a little ways with my hand in hers. I think that's the best I've ever felt, I really do. After a while we stopped again...

"Sir!"

All my thoughts suddenly jumped out of my mind. There's a man here standing next to me, yelling for some reason. Man, he must have been yelling for some time now. I guess I just didn't hear him.

"Are you alright?" he questioned. "What's wrong with you? You're just standing here, staring into space. Want me to get you a cab or something? It's pouring!"

I look the man in the eyes and then look around me. Woah, the sky is so dark. Is it dusk already? Man, am I drenched. The rushing sound of the rain fills my ears. How long have I been standing here? It must have been hours. My clothes are soaked. I can even feel the water begin to seep into my socks. My shirt is kinda stuck to my chest, and my jeans feel so heavy like they're going to fall off. Man, the rain is really coming down. It's funny because even though I'm so wet and it's really cold outside, I still feel warm in a way. It reminds me of when she...

"Sir?!" That man is still yelling at me. I guess I should talk to him before he goes insane or something.

"I'm okay," I tell him. "I kind of like the rain."

"But you're drenched! Come on, let me get you inside or something."

Why won't this idiot leave me alone?!

"No, really. I'm okay. I feel fine. Never better. Just let me stand here a while longer. I like the way the rain feels. But you should go, really. You don't want to catch cold or something."

"Whatever. Dude, you're crazy." The guy just turns and walks away. Poor fellow. He should just enjoy the rain. I mean, it's kind of nice if you think about it. The fresh smell even drowns out the odor of the car exhaust and hot dog vendors from the downtown mall. Man, I'm so tired. I think I'll just sit here on this curb for a while. I have to kind of re-adjust my jeans because they're so wet and stiff. That's probably the only thing I don't like about jeans—the way they are so hard to move around in when they're wet. Wow, the rain feels so good washing against my face. I tilt my head back and let the drops splatter on my tongue. The street is pretty lonely. No one is walking around like they were before. I don't know why really, There aren't many cars around either. Maybe it's because it's Sunday and there aren't many things open. I don't like Sundays that much. They remind of when Megan left. She left on a Sunday you see. It was my twenty-first birthday. We had just gotten married at a small chapel in the country. It was even raining that day—it was so perfect. I loved her so much—I still do. God, I loved her. Why did that asshole have to blame her death on the rain? Of all things, he blamed her death on the rain! It was too dark, he said. Too foggy—the rain was blinding. "I'm sorry... I'm sorry," was all that he said. His Explorer smashed our small gray Nissan—smashed the passenger side to pieces. He could never shatter Megan's soul though. Not one thing or person could ever shatter her beautiful soul. I remember I pulled her out of the car and held her trembling body in my arms on the grass beside the highway.

"Look, Paul, it's raining," she quivered.

The rain washed my salty tears down my face. Our lips met one last time.

My body is getting kind of cold here in the rain. My teeth even chatter every now and then. Now I'm kind of cold and uncomfortable I don't know exactly why, I just am. My head begins to feel dizzy and spins around like the water in the puddles, swirling in the street. Everything is blurry and I turn my head to see someone in a yellow raincoat skipping towards me. It's Megan! It has to be. I want to get up and run to her, but my body won't let me for some reason. My eyes don't want to stay open, but I figure I've got to stay awake until Megan gets here. When I'm with Megan, everything is all right.

She throws off the raincoat and there she is. She's in those same shorts and that cute whit tank top. Her blonde hair is pulled into French braids. Man, she is so cute when she does that. She starts skipping towards me and laughing. She gets closer and closer. I think she looks like an angel. Now she's beside me—I can see her face—her eyes looking into mine—She smiles and I smile back at her. Everything is blurry except her face, and all I can hear is the pounding of the rain on the pavement. Her crystal blue eyes sparkle, and I feel her hand on my cheek as she leans over and kisses me with her bright, red lips—kissing my lips, which must be blue by now. I close my eyes to accept her kiss and suddenly a feeling of warmth spreads throughout my body. The rain stops and the sun peers out from behind two clouds.

"Man, it stopped raining!" I exclaim loudly. I remember Megan always stating that it never rains forever.

I decided that I can go to sleep now—it's okay to rest because I realize that Megan will always have a special place in my heart. So, I lean against the curb and drift into the most wonderful slumber ever. Only...it's not raining. That's right, it never rains-forever.

--anonymous

Untitled (for Jason)

We met
because of fate,
pressure,
and failure
In a world
where we didn't know
who we were,
I always shook your ground
with every step I took
closer
and it scared you
when I would not back down;

I still pursued
but you would never listen
you were too absorbed
in your land of dragons
and demons
and chronic pain...
I have to admit
at times even I thought
you would always be the same;

*but ain't it funny
how things change?*

Now roles are
reversed
and I am in
my beginning tickings of need,
and I want to run
but I turn around
and you are there
walking after me.

-Sarah Everette



Solitary

Sarah Rose Nordgren

*When my past is packaged up
stacked and chunky
in blue ribbons on the floor.
it barely fills an old tequila box
and looks at me blankly
from the open lid.*

*This day is so clean and blue
and it stands solitary
around the intangible chaos
of history and future-
which doesn't really exist after all.*

*And I'm a different person
now thin and shorn and clean.
blue in this moment.
free of hasty scribbles
and devoid of barkchips
and dusty blackboards.*

*This day is my life
and all the ridiculous dialogues
are silenced in their boxes,
and tied up with blue bows
like me in this minute.*

Addiction exposed


tormented silent
i lie to them all
until the exhausted mask
decides it will fall
behind the face
who smiles its empty bliss
a lonely crying child
is lost in all of this
alone by choice
i have pushed away
the listening ones
who promise they'll stay
but trust them, do i?
What pleasure is found
in the hidden memories
that claw all around
inside my middle and
reach through the flesh
of sheltering walls
longing to mesh
with the audience outside
but afraid to admit
that I'm wounded and weary
and ready to quit



BAW
198


Valedictorian Speech:



 These are the days of our lives. These are the days that we are finding ourselves, most impressionable, most energetic, creative, and emotional. We should be uniting, sharing ideas and information, spreading our love and energy through our student body, and shining out to the rest of the world. We should be changing the world, speaking our minds, and expressing our feelings. We should be doing what we love and learning from these very experiences, for only then will we know how we want to spend the rest of our lives! But no!

We compete against each other. We knock each other down. We are forced to do so by a society that demands that we be accepted. We must be accepted by the wealthy, the mainstream. We must be accepted by a most selective college, in hopes of being part of the wealthy mainstream ourselves someday. We destroy ourselves in this process. Even given how hard we try, we are still afraid. And we should be!



 The world is unpredictable. But there is one guarantee, and it is not a certain amount of money or a certain acceptance letter from the University of Hell. It is not even an invitation in the mail to your 80,000 square foot pad or to a \$500-a-plate dinner party with Puff Mamma and Daddy at the head of the table and an endangered species cooked to perfection as the main course!! It is the content of your character, as my brother MLK Jr. said. It is your self-satisfaction and confidence, your willingness to connect with those who are different from yourself. Show them love and respect and this is what you will get in return. "I will get by", as my brother Jerry said. The world is yours to discover, just be sure you know what you want. By the way, I am not the Valedictorian.



They left the lights on,
though I told them not to.
They left the lights on,
and burned a space in the night.
They left them on,
In the vague hopes that something would return...
they sit by the door with a newspaper and hope,
even though I told them not to.
They cross their legs,
stare at their watches...
minutes slide by, gone and lost forever,
disappeared along with what they rest their hopes on.
They sit and twist and fidget, worried for a fraction of a moment.
The lights continue to burn,
and their hope fuels the lanterns as the electricity dies,
but humanity never comes sauntering back.
I told them he wouldn't.

”

--Tori B.

That Much Closer

Every paper I write
brings me that much
closer to the
borderline insanity
section of the supermarket.
It's beside the
condensed soup.

Katherine Kemp

Fantasma

*Written by Elizabeth L.
Sewell*

*Innocent desires
Crashing empires
Enigmatic flash Martyred ash
Bleeding rain
An euphoria feign
Hesitant miss
Infinite bliss
Foreordained crown
Let me drown
Do you bleed inside?
Were you satisfied?*

*If your love is true
And true are the beats that run through
Your veins
Then love me for who I am
And not for who you want me to be
I will chill
I will burn
The flesh
But if you live through that
And we make it
Then our souls will be strengthened
So if your love feels real
Make sure you are ready
To fall or rise
You are now on a cliff
If you jump then you can fall or fly
But if you stay you shall neither lose or win
So if your love is true
And true are the pulses of your soul
Then love me for who I am
And not who you want me to be
Sara Frakeltan*



NEXT GENERATION

WE DANCE, CRAZE, RAVE, AND ITS ALL THE RAGE...

BUT THEY SAY:

DON'T JUDGE A

BOOK BY THE COVER

YOU NEVER KNOW

WHAT YOU MIGHT

FIND

BEHIND THE CURTAINS

THAT DON'T

OPEN

YOUR MIND- EXPAND YOUR

FAITH

IN GOD, IN NOTHING,

IN LOVE, IN HATE

THOSE THAT HATE YOU,

BLOCK THEIR EXISTENCE

FROM YOUR

MIND

YOUR MANNERS, SAY PLEASE AND

THANK YOU

FOR BEING WHAT THEY SAID

YOU COULD NEVER

BE

EVERYTHING, DO IT ALL AND DON'T

STOP

AND SMELL THE FLOWERS.

DON'T LOOK BACK

TO THE FUTURE AND

EMBRACE IT ALL, MAKE

YOUR

ART

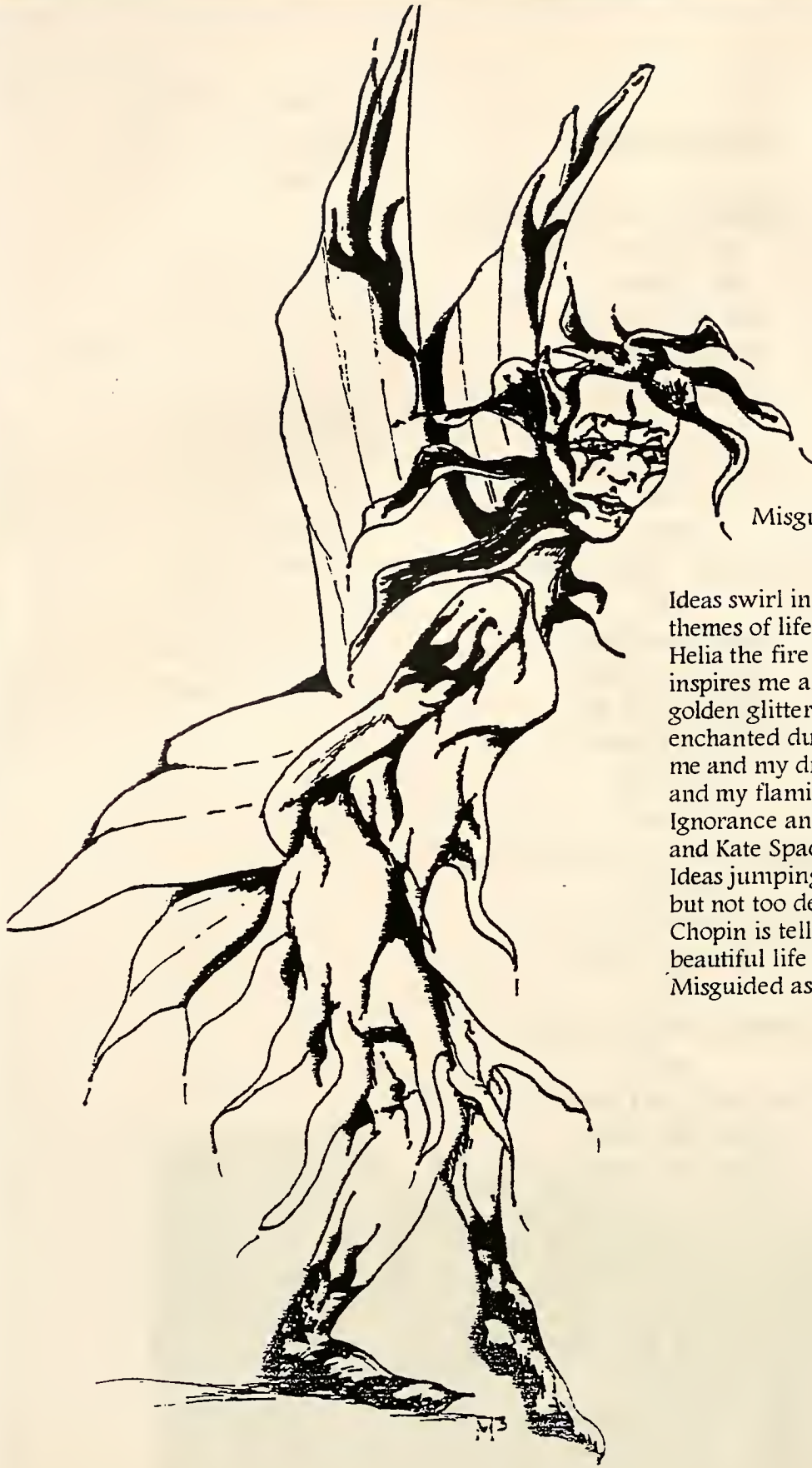
OF WAR,

LOVE AND NURTURE YOUR

LIFE

IS NOT A RIGHT, IT'S A PRIVILEGE.

-SARA UPCHURCH-



Misguided Aspirations

Ideas swirl in a sultry circle-
themes of life and soul.
Helia the fire faerie
inspires me and s p r e a d s
golden glitter dressed as
enchanted dust covering
me and my dreams
and my flaming scarlet tunic.
Ignorance and Apathy
and Kate Spade purses-
Ideas jumping across my mind
but not too deeply, for
Chopin is telling of
beautiful life without
Misguided aspirations.

-Kathleen Kelley

a car and nevada and
sundays rushing by in
mad succession
like days
and days and
days
in flashing battle
with the thin layer of sanity
that seems to slip
and subside with every mile marker past.
swollen bodies of armadillos
and carwrecks,
and decapitated designated
drivers silhouetted in a
vibrant collaboration of black on black.

desert shifting
into fourth around a
turn between rocks.
i listen to sounds
twist(out[around]me).
in angry grays and
bloated dandelion yellows
that sink into the rustic sand around
me and melt out
of
sight.

-jodi villers


A Sonnet For My Love

*My love for you pulsates within my veins
My heart beats for our love so sweet and true*

*This natural light takes away my pains
And fills that space with desire for you
I long to be with you all day and night
Under the sun and moon and changing sky
When you hold me everything is right
You shield me from those things that make me cry*

*You are my past, my present, my future
I yearn to grow old with you by my side
You are my one and only love so pure
The love I feel for you I shall not hide
My love for you gives purpose to this life
And puts an end to all the endless strife*

...Becky Catchings



Indiana

Behind a bush sweat runnin' down my cheek,
Through the dark dense forest my beady eyes would peek.

The man chasin' me is not my color,
He is a white monster and can be no other.

I's see how far he is from me.

Thank God my body he don't see.

All of a sudden there were men all around,
They searched and searched but I could not be found.

I turned around a little too relaxed,
And when I moved a twig I cracked.

The men all stopped eyes ablaze,
Their flash lights coverin' the forest with a haze

The words of my master rang in my ears,
His words only added to my growin' fears.
I heard the men behind me their breathin' was hard,
I knew they had weapons maybe even bars.

I ran as fast I could,
I knew they would catch me I knew they would.
However God was right with me that night,
He seemed to calm my growin' fright.

Through the forest I couldn't believe,
I knew my eyes were trickin' me.
The sign read "Welcome to the state of Indiana",
I told myself come on Savannah.

I passes the sign but kept on runnin',
But soon I got tired and didn't care if they were comin'.
As I took one last stride I hit the ground,
When I came to twas noone, noone to be found.

No men were chasin' me, none that I could see,
I'se free, I'se free I'se so happy.
I went to a house askin for food,
A woman said she'd give me more if she could.

Today I am a happy mama of three,
Again all I think is I'se free, I'se free.
So to anyone who felt trapped like me,
With God's help there's always a way, a way to be FREE!

-Tiffanie Agee



June 8, 1967

I arrived home from school early today. Tomorrow marks the beginning of summer, my favorite season of the year, and my fifth grade class could hardly contain themselves with the anticipation of months of fishing in Brown Creek and climbing huge sycamore trees. My teacher, Ms. Ellis, dismissed us early. She said that there was no sense in her keeping us there any longer. It wasn't as if we were benefiting from her teaching anyway. As far as we were concerned, it was already summer and we were dreaming of the good things to come. On my way home from school, I stopped at Persey Flowers General Store as I do each day after school. When I walked into the store, the screen door slamming behind me, Mr. Flowers asked me if I was glad to be free from my studies for awhile. I said that I was mighty glad for it to be summer, but that I would miss dropping in the store each day. I guess I said something right because instead of one piece of licorice, Persey gave me two. I don't know why but Persey looked unusually sad when I left the store today. He looked as though he had just had a bad day, but I would soon come to discover that it was much more than that and it would affect my life in a way that I never dreamed possible.

-Miranda Satterwhite



Our Seniors

We are well aware that you last
days are drawing near,
which only makes us hold our
cherished memories ever so dear.

We came along after many of you and
you kindly invited us under your wings,
not knowing what the next 3 years might bring.

There have been bad times, and oh,
there have been good,
but to others the relationship between
our classes will never be understood

You have served as shoulders to lean on and
ears to listen...true friends that are rare to find.
Your kind deeds will leave imprints on our hearts
and your warm smiles will forever remain a picture
in our minds.

Knowing that next fall we will not
have our nightly dorm talks,
or meet each other in the halls for
a cross-campus walk.

So our junior class wonders what we will do
next year without your voices,
who will we look up to? How will we make the right choices?

Then, the thought enters my mind.

Maybe in 40 years we will tell our own girls
of good ole SM's days and fun.
Of course we will leave out those weekends
of laughing and dancing and being up so late
that we would make a toast to the
rising of the next day's sun.

Though we will miss you greatly we wish
you the best on your journey to new places,
but remember to visit us some and
promise to never forget our faces.

There are few things in life that stay
the same, but memories remain true.
No matter how much distance and time
separates us, we will always, always love you.

-Claire Spruill

Soapy Cat

eyes closed
shut tight
miserable
to the delight
of the picture
taker.
Wet like
pavement
after the storm.
paws
hooked like
crooked
tree branches
over the side
of the bucket.
surrounded
by large
frothy egg whites
really bubbles
but who can
tell the
subtle
difference.

--Jaime Cathell



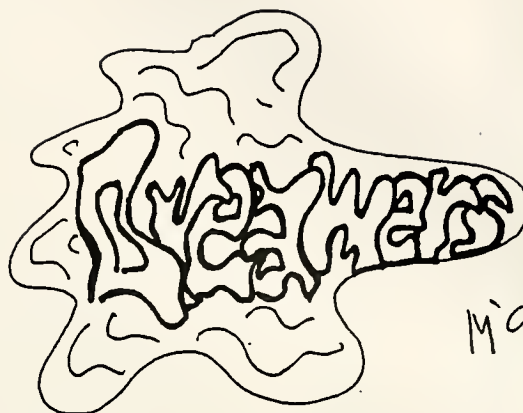
Untitled

Books-they give you ideas
Yes, they gave me ideas
showed me how to survive
taught me how to understand
to read and comprehend

Gave me no limits to knowledge
or to what I can imagine
They opened the doors to so many things
to love, life, character, truth

But above all else-
They taught me how to dream
(And I thank whatever's out there
that I was taught to read...)

-Kimmi Kresica



Sonnet I

*How often do I think of you?
You'd be surprised to know
I'd sit and dream of what you do
Wondering where your life will go.
Will your fisher's line ever come near mine?
Or are these boats too far away
Will your bait forever be confined
To me you love's at bay
The fruit of your vine is unknown to thee
They are often found abandoned on the beach.
I love you dear and I love you true
I just wish you knew that I loved you.*

--Alex Marshall-Brown

1850

...

...

...

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...

...

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...

...



Thanks, Thanks, and a Few More Thanks...

The Literary Club would like to express its deepest gratitude to all individuals who helped to make "The Muse" a successful venture for the 1999-2000 school year.

We would most especially like to thank the Creative Writing Class and Mrs. Virginia Boyd, our adviser.

In addition, we would also like to thank our family members and friends who ever so patiently listened to all of our whining and complaining as we dealt with deadlines throughout the trials of publication.

Thanks so much to you all!

The Literary Club



THE MUSE
2000 2001



The Muse

No matter what anyone tells you, words and ideas can change the world.

-Dead Poets Society

Volume 93
2000-2001

THE WEST

THE WESTERN STATES
AND TERRITORIES

THE WESTERN STATES
AND TERRITORIES

A Little Editor's Note...

Back in September of 2000, I had been rather dismayed to hear that the Literary Club no longer wished to produce *The Muse*. This did not make me happy, but I had neither the ability nor the direction to avert that fate.

It is true that *The Muse* takes constant persistence and dedication, if not a little innovation. After 122 years, it has lasted as a continually adapted reflection of Saint Mary's and her own changes.

Luckily, when I was looking into a second project for the new Senior Pathways program, I was able to rescue *The Muse* for another year. However, "No one gets there alone."

The journey of this little booklet has been through lots of meetings, e-mails, lunch tables, bright pink submissions boxes and afternoons digging into the archives. In addition, the enthusiastic support of the Saint Mary's community has made this project ultimately possible, as well as enjoyable.

In a personal way, I feel this work has been a culmination of my own experiences at SMS after four years of growth and change. From the N&O to *The Muse* and from little yellow butterflies to the green hat, you and all of your support in this rough year have given me back my strength, my voice, my spirit.

I hope the same is realized in each person published here, and all of those who read.

K. Kresica
May 13, 2001

~ Perspective is a matter of where you stand.
Important in drawing, and even more important in life. ~

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Ona-Maria Lindo	12, 14
Mrs. Vickie Posey	4

The Muse 2001 is also available via the Internet on the SMS website:
<http://www.saint-marys.edu/>

Kindred Spirit

Take my hand and walk with me,
'Round this sandy bend...
Where sunlight smiles on crescent waves,
And love shall never end.

Let your heart behold the hues,
Of sunset's crimson skies...
As sun's last rays reach up to dip,
The clouds in golden dyes.

Never could a master's hand,
Portray this sacred place...
Or paint the beauty of your soul,
That glows upon your face.

We'll trod with slow and gracious steps,
Our footprints by the sea...
And thank God for this special place,
And for leading you to me.

This path we take shall be our own,
Sweet walk through beauty's grace...
Where we shall stop and share the time,
In Nature's warm embrace.

—Jennifer Maupin

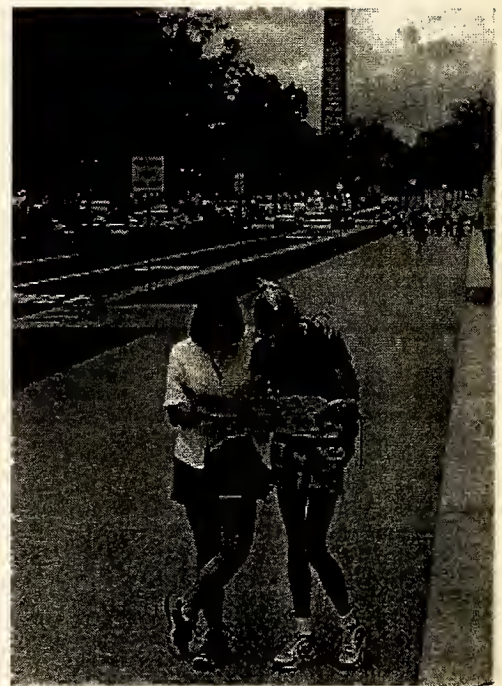


Photo: K. Kresica

Black

Some days I am red.
A murderous maroon,
A deep bleeding crimson,
Bright flaming scarlet. Because Sometimes
I get angry at the world
And the blood gets in my eyes
And it's blinding. And sometimes
I want to scream and cry, for good
Or bad, and my throat gets raw
And my eyes burn with the effort and
It's numbing. Then there are days
When the planet is my best friend
And I'm ecstatic and need to be seen.

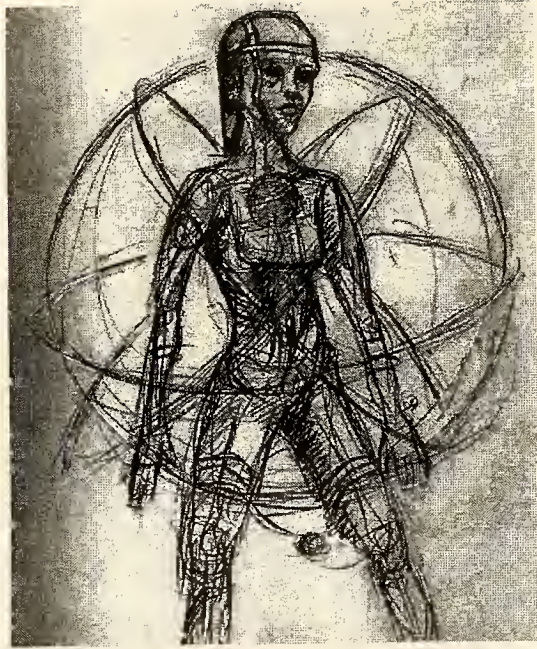
Other times I am dark, dark blue,
The color of oblivion, so good for
Floating through endless abysses. For
All those
days when it seems as though
I've been running all my life and I
Just want to stop. For the days when
The flood
is never-ending and I don't know
Why. And finally the
times when I think
Of something someone once told
Me. how I could get off a bus and just
Disappear, and the thought has
Never left. And I just need to fall out
Of the spotlight.

And then there are days like today when it all
swirls together like a finger-painting hung on the refrigerator
for all to see and it's an indistinguishable
venomous
black.

Jillian Lea



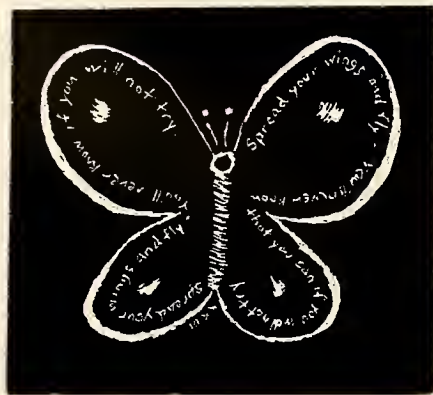
Wesley Allsbrook



Wesley Allsbrook

**The Mesmerizing Spirit
of fantasia**

**Decadence and romance
on fall
Century erotica, flaring gypsy skirts
costumes from
Perfect timing of bohemian fantasia
mesmerizing star
Create, inspired that lost world
of night
Shows how young, how expensive
so many
An enormous pleasure
see beautiful
Grown-up, reflected the spirit
felt truly
As a place where considerations flourish
for once
Always priority as inventive eclecticism
obscured time
Great pieces on still lips
rare take
Institute the genuinely modern,
old idea
Partnership a tribute of influence
coordinated air.**



"Anne"



Photo: Mrs. Vickie Posey

A Day in the Life

Get up with three kids
 One doomed to die
 Husband comes home twice a year
 Sleeps around in between

Risk life in every
 Intercourse

Act of

A teenager lives alone
 Another house

Young siblings without income

Wife branded a whore
 The streets

Beaten Thrown into streets

A man desperately sick
 Without even a kind

word

With colleagues
 every third one fatally ill

Neighbors stoned to death

Friend admitted the plague
 Leisure occupied by funerals

Go to bed

Adults will not live into their 40's

You and neighbors Political and

Popular leaders

Act as if

Nothing is happening

"Junior"

Ripples of a Shooting

On April 20, 1999
two teenage gunmen
entered their high school
and started shooting,
they killed 13 people...
I remember crying
during the moment of silence
that we had at my old school,
I lost something that day
I lost my sense of safety
I lost my security blanket...
That summer
I lived life as a hermit,
I was always playing
hide and seek with myself,
I was always hiding
and ducking
and covering
and never seeking out
the root of the problem...
it grew until I was
completely smothered by it,
the doctors said I had
agoraphobia,
they said I had
social anxiety disorder...
and maybe they were right,
but I think
I was just afraid of
living life
without my security blanket...
when I was little
I used to hold my blanket
close to my neck
when I still had
a fear of vampires,
if I was hiding
under my blanket
then they couldn't see me
they wouldn't be able
to find me...
I lost something that day
I lost my security blanket.

Sarah Everette

Carmen ad Cornum Arbore
(Latin: Ode to the Dogwood Tree)

As softly as the wind blows,
It brings the gentle touch of aroma,
'Tis sweet and noble,
Full of springtime beauty it holds.

With each gentle bob,
It looks like a fair lady bowing,
Up and down and full of grace,
Which it possesses in itself.

While each gentle stirring,
Discovers its grace and beauty,
But also its agility and strength,
Despite the thinness of its branch.

Though its rugged appearance,
Of its strong branches,
Shows its true symbol,
Of Christ on the rugged cross.

With petals of four,
Similar to the cross Christ bore,
Red tinted ends,
Portraying Christ's blood-stricken hands.

With strength and boldness it stands,
With courage and valiance,
Due to Christ's upright death,
Full of faith and against His foes.

Each Easter it doth bloom,
As a sweet reminder,
Of Christ's love for us,
And His death on the rugged cross.

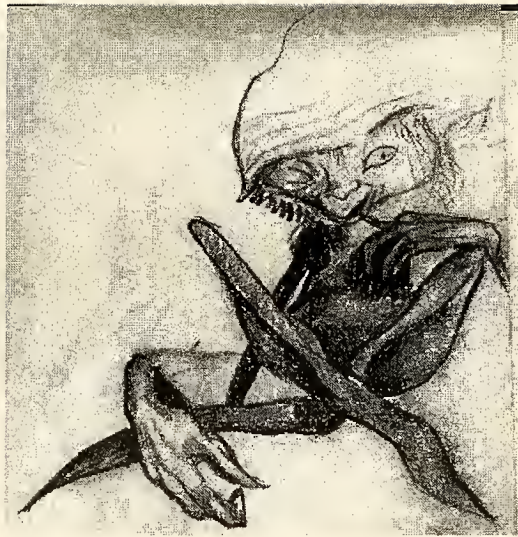
With its lily white cloak,
Symbolizing purity,
Of Christ as a pure and holy sacrifice,
On the cross He died for us.

With beauty and grace,
It grows with no bounding end,
As Christ's love for us,
Which knows no end.

The green hues,
Included in this blossom,
Shows the growing hope,
Of Christ's love for others.

Jennifer Mandeville





Life

Life is but a river,
Flowing down a mountain,
There are rocks and stones
Waterfalls and gentle flows.

But it is always going,
To the same place,
Where trees blossom
And plants grow.

It is all so natural,
But weird when things go wrong,
Things disappear
And I wonder is it worth it?

Then friends fly to my mind
And somehow I know,
Everything will be all right.

Blue skies no one dies,
Bluebirds fly, houses rise,
People below sing real low,
Snow blows and water flows.

Sweets are necessities,
White gowns glow,
Angels show themselves,
To the prettiest below.

Beauty shows no boundary,
And is on the inside,
Rather than the out,
I show no sympathy to those,
Who look down their nose.

Birds fly, blue skies,
Is the perfect place,
For people to enjoy,
The long happy lives they look for.

Anonymous



Illustrations: Wesley Allsbook

Sage and Chamisa
Alice Volkmar

I love the smell of the desert. Ever since I was small, the spiciness of undeveloped New Mexico has been the entirety of my emotions swirled into an all-encompassing breath, which I would, will, and do inhale with every waking moment. In the heat of the sun, the resin of the tiny piñon trees dances to your nose and beckons you deeper and deeper into the wild land of lizards and cacti. My favorite is that magic hour or so after the rare treat of rain, when the chamisa and chapparal bushes are at their most fragrant, making the freshly washed haven a silent fiesta. The entire land seems surprised, enveloped in ambiguity, almost smarting from the shock of the gift of water, yet thankfully absorbing the gift of life.

One of my favorite activities in the world is going for a walk among the prickly pears and desert roses. People always think of tumbleweed and sun-bleached cow skulls when they think of the desert; they like to ignore the signs of life.

"The desert--well, that's barren, empty. A man could die real easy out there," I would hear the gringos say to each other over their purchases of trinkets in the Plaza where the Indian women, young and old, would come to sell their handmade wares. I didn't understand how anyone could think that the desert was empty, when it was overflowing with much more than one could ever imagine. It seemed silly to me to think that it would be easy to die there too, but I supposed it would be easy for them, with their silly foreign ways, not paying attention to life around them and letting themselves slip into death. Like not standing as still as a rock when one heard the telltale rattle, or not shaking out one's boots after a night by the campfire. After all, they could find the same dangers in the courtyards of their rented adobes.

Not that I haven't had my share of danger out there. When I was younger once I got lost. I was scared to death. I know every single rock, plant, hole within a 5-mile radius of our house, but I was exploring the ravine by myself. I was about 13, and I hadn't meant to be gone for very long, but a horny toad had caught my eye. It was beautiful, and I followed it carefully, hoping that I might capture it with my camera. But I could never get it just right. The light was at the wrong angle; he moved at just the wrong moment. We moved slowly deeper and deeper into the unknown, and by the time I noticed where I was, I couldn't recognize anything. I was scared to death. I'd heard a million ghost stories from Mamacita, I'd heard the coyotes—or perhaps the spirits, howling at night.

Dark started to fall, and I knew it would be a long time before I made it home. I decided to stay where I was, because even though it was getting to be cold, I didn't want to get anymore turned around. I was only wearing the T-shirt and jeans that made up my basic uniform, which I had to peel off at night sometimes with the layers of dust or mud or even prickles, should I have fallen that day in the cactus, reaching for the ripest prickly pear or a pebble glimmering with mica. Something people don't realize is that even in the summer you need something as soon as the sun goes down. I hadn't brought a jacket, but I had expected to be home in plenty of time for dinner. I knew that the night would turn dreadfully cold, because it was only May. It would also be a long night, because you don't sleep when there are scorpions and rattlesnakes.

I found a large warm rock, and hunched up, more out of fear than need for warmth. The worst part was the shapes. In the safety of the sun the life of the desert amazed me. Under the full moon, though, there was a different quality to the shapes and movements of the desert inhabitants. It was somehow otherworldly, like I had stumbled into some parallel universe where the normal laws of nature didn't apply. I felt lucky not to be in Arizona, where the Saguaro loom like strangers, standing in groups as if gangs or angry crowds, disgusted at your trespassing in their territory, expressing themselves as they only could under the light of the moon. The moon is a magical thing, reversing the power of the day. What by broad daylight seems weak and unassuming has great force, though perhaps purely psychological, by night.

I sat on my warm rock and tried to think about anything and everything beside the dark figures forming and dissolving again in the darkness. I thought about my friends, and our warm kitchen, and even my tenth birthday, when Papa and I had made a special trip to San Francisco that was the most fun I had had since Mama died. Again I had to distract myself, because I had already cried once, and if I continued to think about Mama then I knew I would cry again. I was almost more afraid of that than the shapes, because I was incredibly worried about dehydrating and not even having a chance to make it home. So I thought about the apricot tree in the front yard, with the glorious blossoms threatening to set fruit already, so that they would ripen by the heat of the July sun. But that only made it worse, because then I remembered the story Mama told me about how she and Papa planted it when I was born, and it was blessed and protected by Santa Teresa, who of course protected me too. I always wondered whether if I died, the tree would wither too, and I felt certain this night that it had curled up into itself as I sat in my tight ball on the rock. Maybe if I prayed hard enough Santa Teresa would show me how to get home, or tell Papa where to find me. My thoughts wandered, and I lost complete control of them that night. I sat there, thinking of Mama, and the horrible cancer that had kept her in her darkened room for months, and how I hadn't understood why she couldn't come out into the beautiful sunshine, or the majestic moonlight, or even the weak twilight. Why she didn't come to revel in the fiery sunsets like she always had, why she didn't steal into my room to wake me so that I didn't miss the beautiful sunrise. When I was younger, I had always known that she hadn't been born like normal people, but somehow had sprung from nature, like the gods and heroes of her stories. I had a secret belief that Mamacita had found her among the bushes as she gathered herbs one morning, or perhaps she had simply walked out of the wilderness to the door, or even just appeared on the doorsteps. In the dark nights and days after she died I would console myself trying to think of how she had been born from Mother Nature into our world. The hardest part though, was understanding that she hadn't turned her back on nature, but was simply imprisoned in her body, which restrained her from going into her most natural habitat.

I didn't even realize it, but I was sobbing by the time I heard my name. I thought it was Jesús, come to take me home. I felt myself being wrapped in warmth, but I couldn't see anymore for the tears, memories, and sleep blurring my eyes. There was soft sonorous noise, and then deep and unending blackness, swallowing me into its great belly.

When I next found the strength to open my eyes, Mamacita was sitting by my side reading, and I was tucked in bed so tightly that I felt like I always thought the baby must have felt when they wrapped him in swaddling clothes. My curtains had turned orange as they fought to keep the harsh sun out of my room, when it wanted to visit its child and only turned aggressive when it was refused. I thought that I had died and woken up again. Mamacita heard me stir and looked over to me, and she lay down her book and rested her cool hand against my forehead. I still did not fully comprehend where I was, and started to try to talk. She shushed me, but I could not have spoken anyway, for my throat was so raw. I was freezing, despite the great weight that seemed to be on me, and I wondered if it were blankets or a spirit sitting on my body. She murmured to me, saying how worried everyone had been, and how glad they were that I was safe at home, and how Papa had somehow known where to find me as if he'd been led there by a saint or a ghost among the shapes. I had given everyone the fright of their lives, and she was just so glad that I was there. I had been asleep for two days, and the doctor had come many times. Then she made me swallow a bitter liquid that she said would make me feel better, but I only wanted to be sick. There was a mug of weak sage tea, but it seemed to be the spiciest brew I had ever tasted. For a moment, Mamacita's hushed tones, which had comfortingly not ceased since I opened my eyes, became strained, and then she was silent. I thought I saw a tear glint in the weak light, but I couldn't be sure. She busied herself with tucking me in tighter, and even though I could barely breathe, I felt soothed from a grievance I had not recognized until it was gone.

A light tap came at the door, and my head moved slowly, as if I could not control it. At first there was a crack, which widened until I saw Papa's face peeking in. He looked tireder than I had ever seen him. I found out later that he had not slept since he had carried me out of the desert so long before. He had only dozed, sitting and smoking his Players by the pack. He smoked cigarettes when he was nervous, which was very rare. He moved quietly into the room, and when he hugged me I knew where I was. Even though his voice sounded strangely choked as he strung words together, the sound was not necessary to convey the meaning. I felt safe. I knew I was home.



"African Flowers"
Katherine Glenn

Our School

Mr. Richard Truscott

The Grinch was not scared to visit a new school
He wanted to show he was nobody's fool
He came to the Carolinas to discover his place
The previous misery he left without trace.
And what did he find
Something he didn't mind
Because here on a campus with buildings of brick
and East and West Rock with their walls so thick
is a land where the colors are light blue and white
with atmosphere that feels really quite right.
It's hard to imagine the Grinch's positive approach
Since he usually acts like a mad roach,
but in an environment as good as Saint Mary's
You could reignite your belief in the fairys:
Everyone seems to work together
Every day whatever the weather.
The students seem happy now there's a trick,
instead of requiring smiles using a stick.
Education that's not done just for show
positively does make the heart glow.
To the Grinch, at least, students boarding and day
are part of the whole and together will play
Along with all of that learning in classes
that while sometimes hard almost everyone passes.
Watching girls succeed without guys
Shows that separation is wise!
The girls value honor, truly they do
Those who don't find second homes here are few;
Seniors have friends for all their lives long
which they made while learning what's right and what's wrong.
My poem cannot finish without a mention of chapel
Going forth into the world with a spiritual map will
have graduates prepared strongly for strife
with someone to rely on for the rest of their life.
The school Smedes founded so long ago
Has found the right path along which to go
Clouds have been replaced by the Sun
As we all are important here, every last one.



Photo: K. Kresica

Staring up into heaven's great expanse
I wonder at Mother Nature's supreme glory
Twinkling stars shine bright against an awesome black majesty
While wisps of blue-white clouds float lazily across the night
The brilliant orange crescent hangs delicately in the sky
As if defying the basic law of gravity
Tangled tree limbs stretch their hungry arms towards heaven
As their web of roots plunge deep into the earth
Gently rolling hills are covered by lush, fertile grass
And from this bed of life sprout flowering green foliage
Fragile blossoms of color add to the beauty of it all
A delicate stream trickles by, gurgling softly as it goes
Slipping almost soundlessly o'er smooth rock
It brings life to the earth around it
Tangles of greenery tumble over into the stream,
Eager to consume nature's rejuvenating ambrosia
As I lay there in perfect, wondrous awe
A gentle breeze caresses my body and fills me with reverence
This is truly Mother Nature in all her glory

Stephanie Anderson



Photo: Ona-Maria Lindo

"Morning"

A Found Poem from Kathleen Woodwiss's
A Rose in Winter

In the eastern sky
shafts of vibrant color
Radiated
from the dawning sun
thrust through
mottled clouds
bathing
white faced cottages
with a rosy hue.
Mornings blushing light
Penetrated
the crystal panes
of chamber windows
rousing her
from a restless sleep.

Anonymous

La Grenouille



A Toulouse, un jeune prince habitait avec sa mère et son père dans un grand château. Le prince qui s'appelait Marc avait vingt et un ans et il avait les cheveux court et frisés. Et aussi, Marc avait le visage carré et avait le teint bronze. Les femmes à Toulouse aimaient beaucoup Marc parce qu'il était toujours heureux, très sympa et très costaud. Les hommes l'aimaient aussi puisque Marc était débrouillard, dynamique, et sportif. Toutefois, Marc aimait une belle fille qui s'appelait Isabelle. Marc et Isabelle se sont fiancés et ils voulaient épouser.

Un jour, il a fait une promenade à cheval au bois près de son château pour la détente. Pendant qu'il se promenait à cheval, il a vu une petite grenouille. Tout d'un coup, la grenouille a commencé à lui parler et elle a dit "Monsieur, venez-ici, s'il vous plait." Marc était désorienté mais il lui a obéi. La grenouille a continué, "Je m'excuse de vous déranger, mais j'ai un petit problème. Est-ce que vous auriez la gentillesse de me rendre un service?"

Marc a répondu, "Bonjour petite grenouille! Qu'est que vous voulez que je fasse?"

"Pouvez-vous m'embrasser?"

"Euh...Ben...Voyons...Bien sûr!"

Marc a très vite donné une bise à la grenouille parce qu'il ne voulait pas embrasser la grenouille.

La grenouille a dit, "Merci beaucoup, mais je suis vraiment désolée.

"Pourquoi?" Marc a demandé.

Avant que la grenouille ait pu répondre, Marc est devenu une grenouille et la grenouille est devenue une belle femme.

La princess a dit, "Au revoir, mon ami!" et elle est partie du bois. Marc était très confus, et il ne comprenait pas ce qui s'était passé. Il a commence à se fâcher; ensuite, Marc a commence à pleurer. Sa famille manquait à Marc et il ne savait pas quoi faire. La famille de Marc était très triste parce qu'elle pensait que Marc était mort dans le bois. Isabelle n'a pas épousé un autre parce qu'elle n'adorait que Marc.

Marc habitait tout seul dans le bois pendant un an, quand une belle princesse est arrivée. Il pensait que si la princesse l'embrassait, qu'il deviendrait un prince de nouveau. Il ne voulait pas que la princesse devienne une grenouille, mais sa famille manquait à Marc. Il a dit à la princesse, "Excusez-moi, est-ce que vous pourriez venir ici?"

La princesse a répondu, "Bonjour petite grenouille!"

"Bonjour! Pouvez-vous me rendre un service?"

"Euh...Bien sûr. Quoi?"

"Pouvez-vous m'embrasser?"

"Euh...Pourquoi?"

"Si vous me donnez une bise, je deviendrai un beau prince."

"Ben...Bien sûr!"

Il se sont embrassés et Marc est devenu un prince de nouveau. La princesse est devenue une grenouille et elle est devenue très confuse. Marc lui a expliqué ce qui s'était passé et il s'était excusé. Marc est parti et laissé la princesse dans le bois et il est rentré chez lui.

Ses parents pensait que Marc était mort dans le bois, mais ils étaient très heureux qu'il soit rentré. Marc s'est marié avec Isabelle, et ils ont eu beaucoup d'enfants. Ils habitaient heureux à tout jamais.

*L'histoire de Ven Rajarathanim
L'illustration de Wesley Allsbrook*

Sonnet

Angie Raines

When daylight fades and slowly darkness creeps,
Alone I lie surrounded by the night;
It penetrates my mind and makes me weak;
and smothers everything that once was bright.
And when I think the darkness will prevail,
My hope is lost, I can no longer see,
And in my blindness I am doomed to fail
But suddenly my thoughts return to thee.
And like the morning sun the dawn does break
to brighten up the darkness of my mind
And in this morning's coming I awake
To bright horizons and your sweet sunshine.
Your light will always shine within my soul
This everlasting brightness I behold.

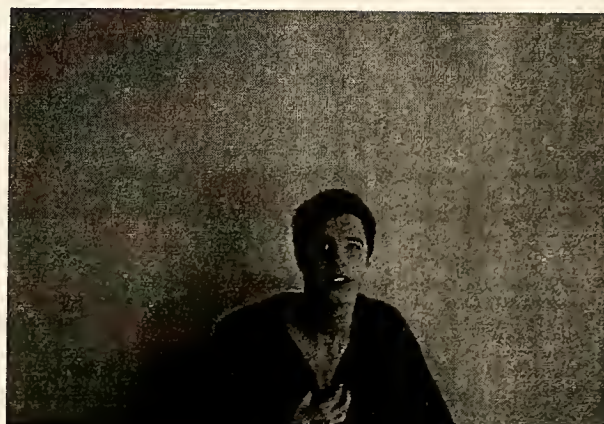


Photo: Ona-Maria Lindo

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lady love

and lust attitude.



K. Kresica

Somewhere something incredible
is waiting to be known.

Carl Sagan

Fear

**I fear growing up
And leaving home
And having to get by on my own,**

**I fear independence,
Even though I crave it in a sense,**

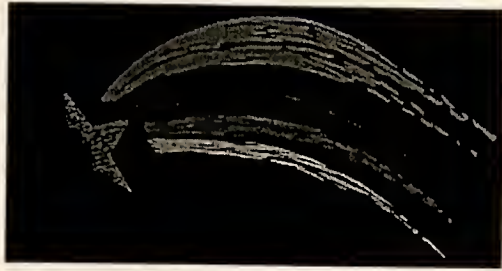
**I fear that I won't see my parents smiling faces upon the next sunrise,
Or see the unconditional acceptance mirrored in their eyes,**

**I fear life
As do many people I know
But I accept this fear
And embrace it
Because forward is the only way to go**

**But I should not be afraid
Because
I can't hide from life
Or change it**

**The only way to get through life
Is to live it.**

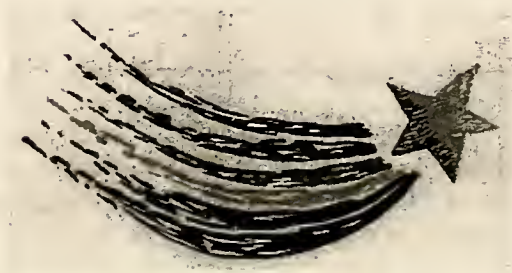
Anonymous



"Into Her"

As he turns to her
the sun reflects off the water
into his brown eyes, causing them
to flicker as he gazes into her.
A cool breeze blows and his
arm trembles as he reaches to
tuck her hair behind her ear.
He has the ability with one
glance to break into her heart
as nobody else can.
His voice quivers as he begins
to explain his heart to hers.
He quickly realizes that no
words can describe the way
he feels at this moment
about her; only he sees the
salty tears appear and well
up in her sky blue eyes.
He knows that she understands
and the touch of her hand
tells him she feels the same.

~ Liz Dodd



Shooting Stars: K. Kresica

Tandem

Jillian Lea

My life began with a death. Robert, my childhood friend, called me long-distance from Baltimore with big news. After the requisite "Hellos" and "How are yous," I sensed that something was wrong. After a long pause, Robert said, "Dierdre sit down. I have some bad news, and a big favor to ask."

That was how I learned that Robert had AIDS. He hadn't even known until the disease was full-blown, and by that time it was too late to do much other than make him feel comfortable. My intelligent, handsome, comical companion was dying, and it was about a week after the phone call that he came to Boston to live with me in my modest apartment. It was at this time that I experienced the worst writer's block I have ever had, so to fill the time Robert and I had many long talks, reminiscing about old times and discussing the future. He knew that his future would be short, but he had already resigned himself to his fate, and I tried to do the same. I talked with Robert while I made dinner, folded laundry, arranged his medicines. I took him to the hospital for check-ups and sat with him in the waiting room, supporting him and never showing him any sign of my fear.

It was always while waiting for Robert to finish with the doctor that I was the closest to breaking down. At the hospital I felt the most vulnerable and alone, so I find it ironic that the hospital is also where I met the love of my life.

I discovered Michael one day when the tests were taking an exceptionally long time and I was growing weary of waiting. I attempted to find the cafeteria, but as I traipsed through ward after sparkling ward, I realized I was lost and felt a mild panic take over. The reek of sterility was pervasive; the lights glared at me with a frightening coldness. I loathed the smooth surfaces and the echo of shoes in the hallway. The constant hum of machinery, mechanical lungs, computerized heartbeats, artificial life. My breath caught in my throat.

I picked up my face. As my footsteps became more frantic, I looked down each hallway, disappointed that I could not see what I was looking for: home, friends, normalcy. It was if I could take a right and suddenly be back in 1970s suburbia, riding bikes and drinking lemonade. But the fluorescent lights blinded me, and I still hadn't found the cafeteria. I turned left, praying for a gift shop or lobby, when I was stopped dead in my tracks. I had run full force into a very large man.

He was at least six feet tall, and I stared up at him like a deer caught in the headlights. I looked at the gorgeous man in front of me and hoped I could play off the embarrassing ordeal with a mumbled, "I'm sorry."

I started to go around him, but was restrained by the soft grip on my arms. I glanced back up at his face, surprised by the concern that appeared in his furrowed brow.

"Are you okay?"

"Oh, yeah, I'm fine. Sorry about that, I was just looking for the cafeteria." I still felt somewhat frenetic, and my eyes roved about, seeking a potential escape.

"I can take you there."

"Oh no, I'll find it. I mean, I wouldn't want you to go out of your way...I'm sure you're very busy and -"

"It's no trouble at all," he assured me. He had a slight accent, English, probably Irish. Yes, his nametag said Dr. O'Connor, Pediatrics. Every second he was becoming more attractive; I had almost forgotten how much the lighting scheme had upset me. "I'm on break. I'll join you for some coffee, it that's all right."

Of course it was all right. He looked very Irish, too, big and well built, with dark curly hair and blue eyes. Like a carpenter, maybe, but not a doctor. "If it's really no trouble..."

We walked quietly to the cafeteria. By the time we got there, I had calmed down sufficiently to tell him my name.

"Dierdre Buanond. It's spelled funny, so people can never pronounce it, but it's boon-an."

"That's an Irish name if I ever heard one," he informed me with a smile. The coffee was bitter and burned my throat. "Do you know what it means?"

"My name? No," I replied. His blue eyes sparkled with knowledge.

"Well, Dierdre means sorrowful, but Buanond is 'enduring,' so whatever is going on, I'm sure you'll get through it."

We conversed until he asked me why I was at the hospital, at which point I remembered Robert. I felt a slight pang of culpability at my forgetfulness, so I gave Michael my phone number and scurried off to find Robert and fill him in on the day's events.

Amazingly, as the winter transformed into spring, Robert's condition appeared to improve. He felt well enough to volunteer at a clinic that put him in contact with local schools. He was often out at speaking appointments, addressing the area youth and informing them about AIDS. I took this as my cue to spend less time at home, also, and I began to spend more and more time at the hospital. At first I went to see Michael, to bring him lunch and join him for coffee, to hug him and kiss his neck. His warmth made the hospital's chill abate and the alcohol smell dissipated into his cologne. It had been a long time since I had tried to write, so I decided to volunteer in the children's ward. This, admittedly, was in part so I could see Michael, but also because the kids made me smile. It was the only place in the hospital where I did not feel submerged in death, and it also kept me away from my apartment and the inevitability of Robert.

During the day, I played with the children and read to them; we painted and sang together for hours. I never say the sadness of the place, but only recognized the bright laughter of the kids that had the strength to play. Although some of them left every now and then, I never seemed to understand where they went. I assumed that they got better, and this denial was my refuge.

In that first month, one child in particular struck me as special. She was seven, and her name was Janie. Janie had beautiful brown eyes and a smattering of freckles across her nose. She told me that her hair was brown, and I could tell by her fuzzy head that it was dark, almost black. Janie had leukemia; she was terminal.

I felt inspired around this little girl, so much so that I wrote an amateur children's book, and she drew pictures for it, a family with a cat, a blue bicycle, the grinning yellow sun. When Janie was tired she would listen to music. She asked for my favorites; I brought her Simon and Garfunkel, and the Beatles. I showed her Yellow Submarine and she delighted in the pop art and funny animals. It was these moments of music and drawing, normal childhood activities, which blinded me to the truth. I only saw that Janie was tired from playing, not that her illness was completely draining her.

Unfortunately, the same characteristics I blocked out I found I could not get rid of at home. Robert was deteriorating, and I tried to get out as often as possible. Robert's friends from the clinic came to my apartment to help out while I was gone. In the morning, I cooked him breakfast and chatted for a little while, then kissed him on the cheek and ran off to be around people I cared less about. I believe that, subconsciously, I thought I couldn't be hurt as much by someone I wasn't as close to, but this too, proved wrong.

I went to the hospital on a Tuesday early in June. It was hot outside and I had picked some flowers to show Janie. I went directly to her room, but it was empty. I called her name once, then turned around to see if she was in the play room, but was startled by Michael, who had rushed into the room behind me, disquiet in his face.

"Where's Janie?" I asked innocently. He did not answer. I grew more demanding, "Michael, did you hear me? Where is Janie?"

I was swept with a sudden realization, but I didn't want to believe what I thought. The flowers slipped from my hands. "Where is she?"

"Dierdre," his eyes were imploring. I began to breathe harder, and he steered me out into the hallway.

I began to babble, "No, no, no, Michael, not now..."

I turned to face him, my breath catching, turning into sobs, gasping for air. He grabbed my arms and looked hard at me. "Dierdre, don't."

I struggled against him, pulled loose and ran, not caring where I was going, needing only to be somewhere else. I stormed down the hall, tears blurring my vision, bright lights assailing my eyes with a vengeance. The smells invaded my consciousness like never before, and I felt the necessity to flee the hospital with its hard walls and the waiting room's forced comfort.

I pounded through the corridors, this time not looking either right or left, not searching for blue skies and daisies. What are flowers to Janie? I thought. She cannot touch them and smell them, what good did they do her? And the sky was already blue outside and the sun shone, but its brilliant smile only mocked me. Did the sun make any damned difference?

I kept going until I was past the lobby, outside, and in the hospital's extensive parking lots. I whirled around trying to remember where I had parked. I heard Michael yelling at me, "Dierdre, please come back! The other children still need you. Come on, please! What do you want me to do? I couldn't do anything, Dierdre! Please!"

I ignored him and scrounged around in my purse for my keys. I knew I would only upset him if I went back inside; so let him call me, I thought defiantly. He can leave a message begging me to pick up the phone, while I lay on the bed crying at the sudden loss. I would be alone in my home until he came over to comfort me-

It was at this point that I remembered Robert. I was appalled at my selfishness-he was alone, not I. I jumped into the seat of my car, wiping the streaming mascara tears from my eyes, and turned the car on. All of a sudden, I felt horrible. I sped home, disregarding the speed limit, and flew out of the car, rushing up the stairs and throwing open the door.

"Robert!" I yelled, running into his room, where he was fast asleep. Looking up at him, my first thought was that he, too, was dead. I commenced bawling, at which point he woke up, startled.

"Dierdre, what's the matter? Are you okay? What happened?" Robert asked. I jumped into his bed, landing on his leg, but rather than complain, he immediately wrapped his frail arms around me while I sobbed convulsively. His altruism made me feel even guiltier, and I tried to speak, but my attempts were stifled by my cries.

How could I have avoided him? I needed to escape, I wanted to be around people with safety, and all I got out of it was a false security and a scarred conscience. Finally, my lamentations subsided, and I explained what had happened.

"I am never going back, Robert. I don't know what I was thinking in the first place. I hate those institutions of death!" I exclaimed melodramatically. "From now on, I am going to stay here with you and we are gonna talk and laugh and draw and-"

"Dierdre, I am dying. I love you, and I love your company, but 'never' is a pretty strong word. What happens when I am gone? You can't lock yourself up in here and miss me all day long," he smiled wanly. I noticed how fast he was fading, and picked up his hand. I traced his lifeline with my finger until it ended. I wondered if palmistry really worked.

"No, you, my darling, must go on living. Promise me you will not cry too long for me. Limit yourself to two years of mourning, okay?" he joked.

I sighed. "I love you."

"I know."

It has been a year since Robert died, and now I find myself seated again at the hospital, back in the children's ward. For a while I thought it would be hard for me to get so close to one child, one individual for whom life is so fleeting and unsure. But it was easier than I thought. I cannot leave the children now; I have taken up writing children's books professionally, and these kids are my muses.

I sit this time with a boy named Charlie. He is obstinate and playful, funny and compassionate. Michael has warned me that Charlie may die, but this doesn't stop me from sharing with him my beloved pictures, songs and photographs. I show him Janie's illustrations; he draws himself on a bike and dedicates it to her.

"See," he points out excitedly, "there are no training wheels. I don't need training wheels anymore. Most kids don't, but they maybe need their Mom or Dad to run beside just in case they fall off."

How true.

The heels in the hallway are my own this time, and the sound no longer irritates me, but rather I find it strangely comforting. Neither does the incessant hum of machinery grate at my nerves. I know it means life, if only mechanical. At least it is not the silence of death.

I see Michael and kiss him; he says, "Don't wait up."

I lie and assure him I won't, knowing that I will languish in bed, anticipating the arrival of his body heat. He was there for me when Robert died and he will be there when the new children are gone. I need him with me to keep me warm; I need him to run by my side in case I fall. I know he will catch me. Besides, my life has just begun.

"All the darkness in the world can not extinguish the light of a single candle." -Francis of Assisi

1984

Sarah Everette

I was born the year that Orwell
predicted our doom,
we had an actor for president...
so I guess
his predictions were true,
I was a child
from the Cabbage Patch,
I played dress-up
in cut off sweat shirts,
high heels,
and my mother's fluorescent eye shadow,
I worshiped Big Bird
and that chick in "Flash Dance",
I raised hell in my neighborhood
on my Big Wheel
and blinded everyone
with my hot pink stirrup pants...

I was born in 1984
the year that Orwell predicted
our doom.



Exploring New Frontiers - Kresica

Live and Learn

Sip your champagne while it flows,
Learn from clear water streams.

Dance your nights away,
Learn from stillness.

Sing aloud the songs of your heart,
Learn from the silence.

Laugh fully with joy,
Learn from your sorrows.

Taste the fruits of life,
Learn to plant seeds.

Exhilarate in sensual awareness,
Learn from sensitive touch.

Enjoy the look and feel of gold,
Learn from the pottery.

Educate your brain,
Learn also with your heart.

Stand strong in defense of your beliefs,
Learn when you kneel to pray.

Celebrate your successes,
Learn from your mistakes.

Absorb the light of day,
Learn from the darkness.

Gather all that you can,
Learn from your losses.

Seek beauty always,
Learn the truth.

Experience all that is grand in life,
Learn that life is grace.

~Mr. Ed Koffenberger

Tomorrow
(For the class of 2001)

Tomorrow is near,
graduation will soon be here.

I'll put on my cap and gown,
while watching my mom fight her frown.

I'll talk to my friends,
about our years at SMS coming to an end.

There will be talk about the past,
And all the memories that will forever last.

The memories of 9th grade in East Park,
how we all felt lost in the dark.

The papers of 10th grade,
that memory will never fade.

11th grade, finally upper classmen,
powder puff we would win once again.

12th grade finally came,
it became hard to keep us all tame.

Most of all we will remember all our friends,
who will be with us to the end.

Who knows what tomorrow may bring,
but forever the School Hymn we will sing.

Tomorrow comes fast,
so make each day last

Tomorrow is finally here
GRADUATION, a time to shift to the next gear.

Carolyn Collins



Carver's Falls, NC - Photo: A. Kresica

Alone
like the tree stands alone
here am I
that one leaf that is about to fall
the lost chirping bird,
like the lone wolf howling @ the moon on an Autumn's night,
the glistening of Atlantis @ the bottom of the sea,
the vulture waiting for death to come,
the fire that is your soul slowly dying,
Again I am alone,
lost in a crowd of people,
no voice to be heard,
the fading spirit no one believes,
here am I
Alone, now and forever

Anonymous

A Gathering of Thoughts...

Good writing inspires good writing.
-Anne Haynes

Poetry is the clear expression of mixed feelings.
-W.H. Auden

**No great artist ever sees things as they really are.
If he did, he would cease to be an artist.**
- Oscar Wilde

Communicating is something so simple and difficult
that we can never put it into simple words.
- T.S. Mathews

To be great is to be misunderstood.
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

The average pencil is seven inches long, with just
a half inch eraser – in case you thought optimism was dead.
-Robert Brault

If
you will
practice being fictional
for a while, you will understand
that fictional characters are
sometimes more real than
people with bodies
and heartbeats.

- "Illusions" Richard Bach

I keep my ideals, because in spite of everything,
I still believe that people are really good at heart.
-Anne Frank

There are more worlds than the one you can hold in your hand.
-Albert Hosteen

Every moment in life, whether born or joy or born of sorrow,
has the potential for grace realized.
-Author Unknown

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Thanks ~!
Kimmi K.



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2001 - 2002

THE MAG

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Preface-Jillian Rose Lea

This is a collection of stories, poems, songs, pictures, lives, loves, hardships, heartbreak and happiness. We are all connected by these words, like an invisible string, we all hold deep inside. Believe in what is tucked between these pages, because the hopes, dreams and passions within belong to us all.

Strands of a Golden Dream-Lindsay Speros

We were a beautifully sculpted lie,
Barn of the wards we spake
With your pale eyes so impossibly closed,
Reaching for something in your past
I could not replace and you could not escape.
I thought you left me with a life,
As I took my sweetest breath.
Later I would see all you left were
Strands of a golden dream I had one broken night.
I remain tainted by glimpses of an unwanted reality
That I refuse to confront, because
The pain is all you left for me, and letting go of it means
Leaving you behind to
Fade...
I struggle to hold on so some part of you will never leave me,
And as I do, the stars shining over me come crashing down,
...Again.
And I can't even hear the sound of the girl in me.
I strain to hear a murmur as she reminds me of the innocence,
But she is drawn by the thickness of your touch
And the feel of your smile.
It's not you being gone that pulled me down,
But it's thinking about it that holds me here.
I have been unmasked, but I want it back;
I had a real laugh, but it tripped into the sea,
Leaving me with nothing more than
Strands of a Golden Dream.

Changes-Kate Koyiades

Said out Palaraid
Smudged letters
There's his middle name
I remember how I smiled behind that stupid Palaraid
As he ate
That stupid, stupid damned banana split
It's a little blurry
But you can see his face
With that stupid smudge of damned ice cream
And those tepid blue eyes
How stupid of me to think
That a summer of stupid banana splits
Would ever change him
With that stupid damned arm cranked in the picture
As if to say
"Great split, bra"
How stupid
How fantastically stupid
And how beautiful he was

Ana, My Angel-Amanda Atkinson

Finalist in the 2001 Raleigh Fine Arts Society Short Story Contest

Second Place Award in the Saint Mary's 2001 Non-Analytical Essay Contest

"Never in my life have I ever felt loved...well not never, but at times like these it's enough to cancel out all of the times I did feel it. Even then it didn't really feel like love; affection, acceptance maybe, but never love. My dad has always been such a jackass, always comparing me to my older siblings, especially my brothers. No matter what I do great, John and Daniel have done something greater. The strange thing is I can find everything in the world wrong with them...with the way they choose to live. John is a lawyer, a very good lawyer. Good meaning he usually wins his cases, not necessarily that he is a good person. He goes through women like a roll of toilet paper, and treats them about the same too; dating two, three, sometimes even four girls at the same time...and is proud of it. Daniel is even worse: a world-class chef, born with so much talent and creativity, yet he consistently ruins every glorious opportunity that is just handed to him. Luckily for him, the offers just keep coming. He is a very serious alcoholic, the only real one I know. I've seen plenty on TV, but Daniel is my first authentic one, and I have to say David E. Kelley did some hard-core research in creating the character of Bailey on Party of Five. He is a raging alcoholic too with all the same symptoms as Daniel: losing job after job, ruining nearly perfect relationships, and hurting everyone around him. Dan will call me every now and then to tell me about a new position he's been offered as the head chef in a new fancy restaurant, once it was even on a cruise ship. But most of the time I just make a silent bet with myself on how long it will be before he is fired for drinking on the job, or just not showing up because of one of those monster hangovers he gets after a 'bad' night. There's really only one male in my life who I feel like I can really count on...I know I'm talking a lot, but I just have so much to say..."

"No, no this is great, keep going. Can't you feel the tension and stress escaping with every word you say? I can see that you've been holding this in for some time...just let it all out my dear. I promise you will feel like a new person once you get all of this off your chest."

"I guess you're right," I said, "I do feel better. I mean it feels good to let someone in on my secrets, and to know that you won't tell my dad, 'cause if he heard what I was saying about his boys he just wouldn't understand; he doesn't see it the way I do; he never has. You won't tell him...will you?"

"Oh goodness no, I am prohibited by law; it is my duty as a professional to keep all client information confidential. You have nothing to worry about."

Maybe this therapy business wasn't such a bad thing. When Mom first suggested it, I figured she'd lost her mind. I always thought these places were for crazy people: the one's who cry because it's Tuesday, or won't step outside their house because they're afraid of catching a virus. Jacob thought so too. Turns out all kinds of normal people go to therapy; I'm even pretty sure I saw Susan Clark coming out of here just as I was walking up; I never thought she had a problem in this world. She only has the most perfect family, perfect grades, a perfect body, and her quarterback boyfriend, Ben Hunter, who is also said to be perfect in more ways than one. And I could swear I saw Ana Beck in the lobby. I didn't know she stopped praying long enough to have a sad feeling. She was always trying to get me to go to youth group at her church, and it didn't sound so awful, but Jacob said those people were strange. I guess everyone has their own problems that no one else knows about. I know I'd never tell my friends about the way my father makes me feel; they really just wouldn't get it.

I used up the rest of my session just sitting there quietly, thinking to myself about Dad and all the things I hate about him. Sometimes I felt bad about my hostility toward him, because he had been very sick off and on for several years now, but that was no excuse for his attitude. Linda didn't seem to mind; she probably knew I just needed some quiet time so she sat there too, scribbling something on that yellow pad of hers.

"Well, I guess I'll see you on Monday," she finally said, "we'll just pick up where we left off."

"Um, sounds good," I said quickly lifting myself out of the huge brown chair as I glanced up at the clock. Had it really been an hour? Wow.

Mom would be waiting at home for me; she'd probably ask lots of questions. I'm not even sure how I feel about all this yet; much less am I ready to discuss it with her. Where could I go to think for a while? Jacob's...I'll go there. He always made me feel like a princess and that's exactly what I needed right then, having just gotten myself so riled up about Dad and the guys, who treated me like the complete opposite of royalty.

"I love you so much; with all my heart," I sighed as Jacob pulled me into his arms. He looked as though he had been crying. I would ask about that later, but for now I just wanted it to remain silent as Jacob and I melted into one another. We stood there for a few more minutes that seemed like a few wonderful hours, and then we began to talk. I always felt like I could tell Jacob everything, and I did. He just sat and listened as I rambled on about my dad, the boys, and therapy. I could see his eyes burning and his muscles tense up as I spoke about my father. It killed Jacob that he couldn't defend me against the pain I was suffering; he wanted so badly to save me.

"I can't wait for the day when I can take you away from here," he said quietly, and pressed my hand into his.

Jacob and I had only been together for a few months (actually it was four months and twenty-two days), but we felt so perfect together. It was almost like we knew from the start that we'd be together forever. After being with Jacob, I know I could never be happy with anyone else.

I could see the sunlight dimming outside. I was seventeen years old and still had to be in before dark. Jacob kissed me in the doorway, and then watched me walk along the path to the sidewalk that lined the street. I loved the way I could feel his passionate eyes resting on my back; I even knew when he had closed the door, because that chilling feeling set in, just as it did every time he and I were apart.

From that day on there would be no more therapy for me. It had been helpful, I thought, but Jacob didn't like the idea of me telling our secrets to a complete stranger. Besides, talking to him was just as comforting for me. I knew Mom wouldn't take it well, but she never really fought me; she knew I got enough of that from Dad.

I walked along with the orange sky above me, trying to work up the nerve to just go back to Jacob's and never go home again. That's what I wanted to do, to leave all of my problems behind and just drown myself in the one bit of happiness I had in my life. But I just kept walking like I did every day, my mind racing with all of the emotions that had been stirred during my time with Jacob; I was hopelessly in love with him.

I was thinking so hard in fact that I did not see or, surprisingly; hear Ana Beck until I was practically face to face with her.

"Leah, hey," she said loudly, even though she couldn't have been more than eight inches away from me. "I tried to catch your eye when I saw you earlier at the Parker Building downtown, but you must have been thinking about something important, because you never turned around even though I called your name like four times."

"Sorry," I murmured.

"Well I've got you now and that's all that matters," she smiled. "We are having a special lecture a week from Thursday dawn at the Christian Faith Center, a woman named Barbara Thomasan who speaks all over the country about the troubles teenagers face and ways that bringing God into our lives can help us solve th..."

"Thank you Ana," I interrupted, "but Jacob and I are celebrating our five month anniversary that night, and that's really important to us. So, I'm sorry, but I won't be able to make it."

"Oh, I understand," she said smiling, but quieter now. "You two do seem to enjoy your time together. It's at six o'clock though if you change your mind; maybe Jacob would like to co..." she looked down. "Well, try to stop by if you can."

She walked off and crossed the street to her house which was just a few houses past Jacob's. I always felt bad blowing her off, but people like Ana just didn't understand what it was like to be in a relationship; it takes time and commitment, and with the pain in the ass family I already have to deal with, there is no time left for lectures on things that are the farthest from my mind.

You could have cut the tension at dinner that night with a knife. Apparently Mom had failed to mention to my father that she was sending me to therapy, and he had not approved of the idea at all. Of course had I told him that I planned not to go again before the meal, he would have had a different opinion completely. I hated it when he was angry with her, almost more than when he was angry with me. She did so much for our family, for Dad, and received so little credit; too bad she didn't have someone like Jacob to help her forget about it all.

The weeks went by faster than I could count them and nothing seemed to really change. Actually there were changes taking place everywhere around me, but I couldn't see them. I was spending practically all of my time outside of school with Jacob. In fact, some days we just wouldn't go to school; we'd go to his house and lay around together all day, hardly saying a word. I was beginning to feel as though I relied on his presence to stay alive, like I would stop breathing without him there. Nights alone in my bed without Jacob were pure hell; he was all I thought and dreamed about every second of everyday. He was my only source of joy.

I couldn't see it then, but I was slowly killing my mother. She had so much to deal with at home, with Dad, and work. How could I have been so selfish as to exclude her completely from my life? She needed me, especially then.

Everyone always told me I was getting in way over my head with Jacob. My friends tried to tell me what they saw happening to me, but I would have none of it. I loved him and only him, and that was all that mattered. I had no clue that I was trapped in a downward spiral and falling quickly.

Now that I look back, Jacob did always seem to be talking or thinking about death. I just never saw it coming.

One day it reached its peak.

"How much do you love me?" he asked, as if he really needed to.

"You mean everything to me," I said in a curious tone, "you know that."

"I know," he sighed.

"Well, then why did you ask?"

"I've been thinking for a few days about our lives, and how much I love you, and well...never mind, you'll think I'm crazy."

"No," I exclaimed, and my eyes grew wide as I waited for him to continue.

"It's just that life here is so pointless. I mean, I have nothing to live for, other than you...Honestly Leah I've been considering moving on, and I think you should come with me." He looked down.

Tears filled my eyes as I suddenly realized what he was saying. He could see that I was upset, and began to stutter.

"I mean, well, we've both just been so unhappy lately...and, um...I feel like it might be better to go ahead and start over as soon as possible...maybe our next life together will be in a more peaceful setting. I understand if you're confused, but you have to admit, it really seems like the best option."

I was speechless. I could see Jacob searching my face for some kind of reaction, but there was none. I knew he was unhappy, and of course I was, but I had never really thought about ending my life.

"Just take some time to really think it through," he said. "My dad has this pistol under his dresser; and I promise you, they say it is completely painless...just one simple move and the hurt is gone forever. Think about how much we mean to each other...I love you Leah."

I got up slowly and began the walk home without a word. I felt totally disillusioned, but my mind was racing. I just stared straight ahead while I was walking, considering what Jacob had asked of me. He had never asked so much ever before in our time together. It sounded so awful, yet everything he had said was true. Our lives were miserable except for each other; we really did have nothing to live for. That was it, Jacob was completely right. I loved him. He was all I needed, and things weren't going to get better at home any time soon. I had to do it.

I decided to take one last walk around the block before I went back to Jacob's house to make that ultimate sacrifice. I took great notice of the strong solid lines of the houses and the soft colors of nature. I had seen these every day of my life, but never really appreciated them until now. I heard the sounds of children playing and cars humming that I had always blocked out in the past, and slowly inhaled the fresh spring air that I used to just breathe without a second thought. Finally, some pleasant memories; these I would be able to take with me.

As I rounded the corner onto Sinclair Street, the small church building appeared. I had been there only a few times in the past five or six years; I lost interest after elementary school. Mom always tried to make me go, but I had an excuse every time. As I got closer, I noticed small children playing and shouting in the fenced-in playground that had been built out back only a year ago. The old one that I used to play on was a trash heap compared to this one. I looked past the church at the blue car parked down the street. Once again, I didn't see her until she was almost on top of me. It was Ana Beck.

"Hey Leah," she chirped as she bounced to a stop in front of me. She had seen me out the window from inside the church and had come running out to pester me again.

"You know we're having a Bible study this evening if you'd like to join us. You haven't missed anything; we're getting ready to start."

I couldn't believe her persistence! So many times she had begged me to go to some church function or another, and every time I had blown her off. What possibly made her think that I would be interested this time?

"I'm really sorry Ana, but I'm on my way to Jacob's. I promised him I'd come over tonight; we have some things to talk about...so, if you don't mind, I need to be going."

I felt bad lying to her like that, but after all, she had no idea what it was like to be me, much less what I was preparing to do only a few minutes after. She glanced away, disappointed, and I walked slowly around her, focusing once more on the blue car ahead of me.

Jacob didn't seem very surprised when I showed up back at his house; he knew me too well. Without speaking, he turned back towards his father's room, and I followed him, trembling. He was like a machine the way he moved straight for his goal, an end to his suffering.

The last thing I remember is Jacob leaning down towards the floor and reaching his long slender arm beneath the dresser, which rested against the wall and was supported by four decorative feet. From that point on, all I can recall is a blinding white light, perhaps some soft music. It seemed like only a few moments had passed between that instant and the warm afternoon a couple weeks later when I awoke to find myself in an oversized bed at Chesapeake Memorial Hospital.

Sunlight was streaming through the window. I followed the beams of light with my eyes all the way across the room until they spilled onto the floor and disappeared into the shadowy corners. I felt so tired and suddenly noticed a throbbing pain in the side of my head. I noticed some papers on the table to the side of my bed. I turned sharply and reached for them and screamed in agony when my pain surged with ten times the intensity it had only seconds before. I closed my eyes for a few moments and attempted

again to grasp the papers. They were, in fact, newspaper clippings. A chill slid down my body as I read the large bold type: "Teen Girl in Coma After Attempted Love Suicide." I read on to discover that Jacob had died instantly; but that I was found in a pool of my own blood, unconscious, but still breathing. A neighbor who heard the shots had called paramedics. I dropped the thin pieces of paper and watched them float to the floor.

I heard soft footsteps shuffling down the hallway toward my door. Hoping it was my mother, I sat up in bed and tried my best to smile. All I wanted to do was hold her in my arms and tell her how sorry I was for the anguish I must have caused her.

A shy yet cheery Ana Beck stepped into the doorway. I remembered talking to her in the street just before going back to Jacob's.

"Your parents are in the lobby down the hall," she smiled. "They'll be so happy that you're awake; they've been so worried."

She turned to call out the door.

"Wait, Ana," I whispered quietly, "will you stay for a minute?"

She walked slowly to my side and sat gently on the edge of the bed.

"I guess that was a pretty selfish thing to do," I sighed, "I mean to bail out the way we did...the way I tried to...when everyone else has it just as bad or worse than we did."

"I don't think so..." she started.

"No, I know it was," I interrupted, "it really was. I can see that now"

She just smiled at me and patted my hand with hers. She had never given up on me, even when I had.

I made a pact with myself to begin a new life that day. I was going to live each day to the fullest and take my problems in stride. The best part was I had a true friend who was there to guide me through. Ana was walking towards the door to tell my parents that I was awake.

"Ana," I called, "You think maybe once I am up and walking again I could come to youth group with you sometime?"

She smiled and disappeared into the hallway.



Taylor
White

The Ascent-The Rev. Dr. Patricia Geerdes

We remember
When you climbed the mountain
Didn't we go easy over the low hills,
Didn't we sing and lope along together
Gathering the gaze of grazing cows?

When we stopped to rest
And picnicked on the grass,
Weren't the star flowers
A magic carpet for our feast?

You left us there
And we said farewell,
And kissed farewell,
And said that on the other side
We'd meet again. Farewell.

Our eyes farewellled you
As you entered the stand of trees.
Did the pines smell clean and were
Their needles slippery as you climbed?
And were there birds?
What kind of birds were in those trees,
And did they sing? What did they sing?

We lost you in the trees
And when we saw you once again
You had begun the hard ascent.
No longer hills, but hard rising.

And was there a path
Or only animal spoor?
Or had no one ever
Done this climb before?
From where we were
It looked like rocks on top of rocks,
And stone on top of stone.

We saw you tangled
In the mountain briar,
They were tearing

At your clothes.

We saw you
Fall down in the thorns
But you rose up
And you went on.

Someone had binoculars
And we shared them round to watch
You feel for footing on the granite.
Going higher you seemed smaller,
Did we, your picnic pals,
Grow smaller too?
How is it now up there,
Where there is only air
And wind and stone,
From up there, do we look
Like puppet dolls to you?

Pinioned on the cliff face,
Spread-eagled on the mountain wall,
We gasp our breath
Terrified you'll fall.

Do you dare look back,
Look down,
To see us on the ground?
Clawing to the top,
Is there ice up there?
Is the snow soft
Or is it hard like stone,
Does the wind tear
Your breath away
Are you cold up there?
We shiver for you up so high
We shudder for ourselves
In fear of far off cold.

There's no way around this mountain.
Hard on stone, stone on cold
We have to climb where we belong.
Holding to hold on,
We are climbing to grow strong.

A Ballet Dance- Deann Parker

As the curtains begin to rise, she feels her beating heart
The weight upon her shoulders brings her knees to shake
Her life is bound by this moment of freeing dance
On this stage, where she lives, she will get her chance
Each move must be perfect
Each step must be great
She knows the crowd is watching, silent and so true
Watching every move she makes in her royal blue
She makes her last point
Spins her last turn
As the curtains begin to close, the finish ends the start
The weight of the world is off her shoulders, and now in her heart.

Me, In a Nutshell-Hallie Moore Sessoms

Sometimes I sit here and wonder why I have to do things like write a poem for English class
Hoh.
Well, I do it anyways.
Go figure right?
But you know, it's not always bad to look at your own reflection in a piece of paper.
Like me,
Seventeen.
Form-girl.
Self-conscious as I could possibly be, but you'll say it don't show.
Scared of letting everyone down but I'm tired of trying to live up to their expectations.
That's me in a nutshell.
Me,
Trying to be deep,
Funny huh?
But, I'm not Longston Hughes, I won't try to copy him.
But if the real me is what you're looking for,
You won't find me in a classroom.
You won't find me on a playing field.
Hell,
You won't even find me driving my car.
But you will find me,
Standing by that bonfire,
Leaning into his muscled chest,
Storing at a yard littered with the remains of that party,
And we watch,
Cars sparkling in the glow of the headlights pulling out into the night,
Cigarette butts strewn about,
They're fireflies taking their lost breaths on the chilly spring air.
Burning, kind of like our faces standing by the leftover cars,
Talking, like we always do,
Drunken like we always were on the rush of each other,
Yet we are laughing, like we always did.
Whispered undertones of lust,
Littered about like those cars,
But on the gravel drive.
That's where you'll find me,
My hand entwined in his,
Warm inside the pocket of his coarse work coat,
He takes a deep breath and I feel it shiver across my hair.
This is where I am supposed to be it seems,
Not in class writing about the Monroe doctrine,
Not at practice running suicides,
Suicide.
That's what it feels like whenever I fly past his driveway on my way out of town,
Sixty-five turns to seventy,
Turns to eighty before long I'm running ninety down a highway without signs.
I wish Billie could explain to me why the girl must always sing the blues.
If you were looking for me, well that's where you would find me,
But don't expect me to go with you.
I'm too happy here amongst the litter,
Too happy with the dying embers of the cigarette butts,
Burning at my tired feet.
I'm too happy with his confusing blue eyes,
Our hands buried deep in the pockets of his coat,
My eyes focused somewhere far beyond this place,
Ears focused right here.
His heartbeat is all my troubled mind can hear at this point.
You love how I've gone so deep into my heart with such a simple assignment,
I can't take someone else's work and make it my own.

But his eyes,
I'd give everything that led me here to erase them from my memory,
And find myself again on rumbling fields, or in screeching classrooms.
He made me into his own work the minute he first sliced through my innocent gaze with his crystal eyes.
Damn, he knew it too.
Oh, My reflection in this piece of paper is looking pretty rough.
But strangely I feel better.
Maybe I should write for English class more often.



Blank-Sarah Todd

I met you and you said hello
I know you through friends
I like you because we connected
I love you because
I listen because I understand
I speak because you need to hear it
I walk because I was given the gift
I see because there are things that need to be uncovered
I taste because food is a mystery
I feel because new things should be discovered
You met me just by chance
You knew me by a glance
You like me because we are alike
You love me because I love you
You listen because you have a willing ear
You speak to spread your voice
You walk because you're leaving
You see what is wrong
You taste because everything is bland
You feel alone because there is no one else
We met because of fate
We know because we've taken the time
We liked each other because we thought
We loved

ADAIR CALAMOS

Chronicles of a True American Stud-Meg Sparger

God, I was a stud. Seriously, most men over 40 get older by the day – not me though. As I stopped to pose in the mirror to admire my 5'7", 280 lb. body, I congratulated myself on keeping my looks up. I stepped over the beer can pyramid in the den - you wouldn't believe how hard those things are to build on shag carpet – and I collapsed into my big brown chair. My chair is tough competition for the best seat in the house, that is between the duck taped beanbag and the futon that Chuck barfed on New Year's Eve two years ago. I picked up the yardstick beside my chair and scratched my back. I always hated those spots on your back where your arms don't reach? My mind wandered back to yesterday and my trip to the beach. I had on my navy Speedo and khaki fishing hat, and I was relaxing on a towel. Suddenly, the biggest blonde knockout walked by; she had legs for days and reminded me of Lynette back in high school. Well, before she dumped me and jumped the first bus to Santa Fe. I pulled out the worn picture of her in my wallet. She could drink a six-pack in ten minutes flat – what a woman.

"RRRRRING!" The sharp ring of the John Deere phone interrupted my thoughts.

"Yehellow?" I picked up.

"Dwight! You gotta git down 'chere! Paul and I are seeing how many shots of Jack Daniels it takes to get his cow drunk," my buddy Chuck was hollering in my ear. It was going to be another exciting day in Peachland, NC.

"Aw Chuck, I dunno. I was all relaxed here at home. And ESPN bodybuilders is coming on next – I want to see if Mandy is working out today," I replied.

"I'm gitting kinda scaret about you Dwight. You need to git out more."

"I git out. I just don't feel like it today, that's all."

"A'ight, then. I'll try you later." Chuck hung up.

I always enjoyed Chuck and his cow's company, don't get me wrong, but I wasn't in the mood today. Besides, I could hear bits and pieces of their "work" from the edge of my property.

"Holy mother of... look 'et her jump Chuck! I ain't never seen no cow do 'et beforell" Ralph was hollerin' as I stepped outside.

"I'm kinda worried 'bout Dwight. I think he thinks that Lynette might think she wants to think 'bout coming home," Chuck said to Ralph.

"Ya don't say..."

The boys knew about my little infatuation with Lynette. It didn't really bother me that much. I mean, when a man loves his woman, there ain't no shame in telling people. My thoughts were then cut off by a loud "MOO" followed by a crash, as Paul's cow stumbled over a haystack and collapsed onto the fence.

Their conversation wasn't news to me anyway – I'd rather get inside and watch "Body Builders."

"And 17..18.. c'mon, two more guys...19...20!" I sat with my eyes glued to the television as Mandy bench-pressed 350 lbs. She reminded me more of Lynette every time I watched her. The big red hair, piercing green eyes, and my God those calves! You could bounce quarters off those things. I hadn't thought about Lynette in a pretty long time. That is, until I got the letter. Something about coming back into town soon – she's tired of Santa Fe. She wants to come visit and take me for a spin in her new Z-71.

I was pulled out of my thoughts by the closing tune of "Body Builders." I popped another tape of Mandy into the VCR. She was so much like Lynette, in all 27 videos I had.

It was two months later when I got the call.

"RRRRRING, RRRRRING!" That little green tractor was ringing off the hook.

I answered it, thinking it was Earl calling for my fried raccoon recipe. To my surprise, a deep feminine voice replied with a throaty "Hello, babycakes," and a little laugh.

That was it. I mean that was her. Her, her, THE her – Lynette was on the other end and I was shaking so hard I could barely hold the tractor wheel to my ear. With my hands trembling uncontrollably, and my voice cracking like it used to when I was a wee little farmhand, I tried to talk. "L-L-Lynette?" was the only thing that would come out of my mouth.

"Yes, little Dwighty, it's me. I'm home and if you want, I'll be over there faster than a possum running from a mack truck on the interstate," she said with her Santa Fe sophistication.

"I, ah, well, I um guess I'll be seein' you shortly, then. Them bob cats can run mighty fast," I told her, impressed with my witty reply, and I hung up the phone.

Holy bejesus! Had she always been that forward? Was I ready? Could I handle this? Maybe I was taking her too seriously. I didn't want to come on too strong – she'd get a little angry. I mean, a pissed off lady is 'bout as useful as a CD player in a bulldozer. My stomach lurched and I lost feeling in my toes. In a futile attempt to calm my nerves, I flipped on my radio. Unfortunately, I was only met with the sounds of Conway Twitty, "Hi. Hello, darling. It's been a long tiiiiime since you left me..."

I really didn't need this.

With frustration, I picked up my yardstick and knocked over the radio. It was pretty clear that Conway wasn't helping with this one. Then I tried to occupy myself by attempting to figure out exactly how many shots of Jack it really does take to get a cow intoxicated, but until I heard the distinct vrrroom of a Z-71 I couldn't calm down.

I took a deep breath and began to walk outside. Stepping through the hole in my screen door (we tested Poul's cat for rabies in my kitchen last year and I hadn't fixed it yet), I walked towards the driveway on a cloud, my eyes locked on the most beautiful thing ever put on God's green earth. Damn, that was a nice truck.

Tearing my eyes away from the 10 ft. antenna with a pang of sorrow, I looked down to see a big black door open and a snakeskin stiletto peek out. Slowly, a tan ankle appeared followed by the same large muscular calf that got my motor running 20 years ago. My heart leapt when I realized that Lynette hadn't changed those legs. Another leg was gradually put out of the car, followed by a loud grunt from inside as they hit the ground. The next sight was one I'll never forget - I think it will stick with me to the grave. As I stood there captivated by those calves in the sunlight, Lynette stepped out of the car. Actually, it was more of a waddle than a step...or maybe a roll. I was frozen with fear - this was no Mandy!! This was some whale of a Lynette - I was surprised she didn't need a dump truck to haul her around.

"Hi-a babycakes," she said as she walked towards me and reached out to pinch my bottom with stumpy fingers.

Too shocked and terrorized to run, I stood there, not speaking, not moving, and most definitely not looking. What had I been thinking?!

The massiveness that was Lynette moved closer.

"So what have you been up to, sugar toes? I've been thinkin' of you for such a long time. I hope that you have been thinkin' of me lots," she was talking very slowly, moving her large lips around each syllable, and all the time giving me this seductive glare.

I could NOT handle this.

I managed to sputter out some words, "I um, ah, well, I've been, you see, working on, ah, some um, things here, and just, you know..." I troiled off.

"Oh I know, baby. Why don't we just go inside and git comfortable? Maybe we can find somethin' to do in there." She raised her eyebrows suggestively and put her pudgy hand up on my shoulders.

I jumped. I mean, a man can only take so much. Taking a deep breath, I took her hands off me and spoke, "Look, Lynette, I just don't think that this is gonna work. I mean, I can't do this. I think that you should leave."

She looked up at me with Satan in her eyes. "Well, if THAT is how you feel then I've got somethin' for you!" she screamed. Moving faster than any fat person I've ever seen, she leaped into her truck and reached into the glove compartment. Pulling out a .22 she rolled the window down and started shooting.

I ran like hell. I didn't notice then that she shot the tires out of my El Camino, put several holes in my outhouse, and ran over my plastic yard geese. I was just concentrating on running from the crazed Shamoo that was shooting up my back yard.

I hit my back door just in time to hear the squeal of tires on asphalt as Lynette drove out of my yard. Running my fingers through my hair, I walked into the den and sat down in my recliner. With a sigh, I pulled out my wallet and found the old picture of Lynette. I examined her face, her hair, her calves...it was all ruined. Initially, I felt bad about being so shallow - I immediately didn't like Lynette because of the way she looked - but it was kind of hard to keep this in mind when the hoss was out for blood. I thought some more on it, and I began to see that this whole Lynette thing had been wrong. Numbly, and without really realizing that I was doing anything, I began to tear the picture up into little pieces. Watching them fall into the carpet I knew it was all over. No one ever found anything in my shag carpet once it got dropped.

I retrieved a garbage bag from the kitchen to attempt to pick up the pieces and on the way, tripped over some empty Wild Turkey bottles. I took a good look around my house and was disgusted - I honestly had never paid attention to how much of a dump this place was. Throwing out the remains of the picture and the bottles, I began to look for other things to clean. I trashed some old deer corn, picked up my dirty hunting clothes, and tossed some tacky monkey figurines. Finally, I came upon my set of Mandy videos. At first I was tentative about throwing them out, but after reminding myself that I only had them as a memento of Lynette, I put them in the bag without blinking. I must have hauled 15 bags of trash to the road that day, but once I vacuumed, swept, and pressure washed the walls, my house was a sight better. Just as I was sitting down to take a break, my phone rang.

"Hello?" I picked up the tractor.

"Dwight, buddy, it's Chuck. How was the meetin'?"

"I ain't ever seen a woman like that, Chuck! She was all fat and nasty, and she tried to get in my britches. Then, when I told her to back off, she got in her truck and started shootin'!!" I told him all about my encounter with the Big One.

"That's terrible, Dwight. But look, man, we're goin' cow tippin' tonight if you want to go with us."

For some reason, the idea of busting out my camo and going into the woods didn't appeal to me this time. "Nah, Chuck, I think I'm going to pass this time. Have fun, though."

"A'ight, man. You don't know what you're missin'!!" and Chuck hung up.

I didn't know what it was, but I just didn't feel like my old self. I sat back down to think - I definitely needed a change. Being wrapped up in the image of Lynette had hurt me in so many ways. For God's sake, I owned a JOHN DEERE phone! I knew I had to get out of this place - I had been dragged down enough already.

Later, I began to think about the irony of the situation with Lynette. I always imagined that a beautiful, intelligent woman like Mandy would turn my life around, but in this case a very large, irate woman with a weapon was the cause of my change. It was this realization that made me want to turn my life around. I knew that I had concentrated way too much on the idealized image of Lynette instead of worrying about myself and where my life was headed. I wanted to move past Lynette and stop hanging around guys who got their farm animals drunk. So, I packed up the few things I still wanted in my house, loaded the El Camino and left Peachland for good. I found a new home in McFarlan, NC - it was clean, spacious, and it even had indoor plumbing. Deciding that my car was getting a little raunchy, I went out and bought an older Explorer. It also occurred to me that I was a little thick in the middle. Therefore, I started to work out, and I trashed all my wife beaters and overalls. A new job at a drug store was my next accomplishment, and I discovered that it wasn't a bad place to find a date. All the ladies loved my Peachland accent. With a new house, a new car, and a new look, I congratulated myself on doing so well after leaving Peachland. I really was a stud now.

I-Jillian Rose Lea

I introduced myself to your gods
I drank your holy water and
Bathed in your fountains
Accepting what had been offered to me
I abandoned hope for blind trust

I was mistaken
I was abused just as you
Abused your faith you
Poured
Sorrow on me and
Deprived me of my
Solitude
And when I smiled at your idols, they laughed back
You made a mockery of me

Naked
Stark and White

You are red to me
You are dead to me
You are always so green

Playful and lying
Under the orchard's sheltering boughs
But I have seen what happens when a strong wind blows
And the aftermath of what there transpired is not
Something I
Would pay to see
Again and
Anyway
Your show broke me the first time around
And you are not worthy of my cents



Vickie Posey

A New Day Is Born-Stephanie D'Atri

Pondering. Observing. Believing.

The bright orange sun awakens over the horizon

The clouds brush away and the fresh dew on the grass glitters amidst
the cool fog quietly falling over the wet blades of green

The first ray of light that shatters the crisp air falling onto
an open pasture of peace

A calming breeze sweeps across the glassy solitude of the deep blue waves

A new day is born.

The first sounds of a baby bird learning how to fly

The red orange hues and the conditioned yellows of the newly-turned fall leaves
sway softly in the wind harmonizing with each passing moment

Purple monarch butterflies fluttering about the yellow daisies,
soaring higher and higher without a care in the world

The sweet trickle of gentleness as the stream allows the clear water
to flow briskly through

A new day is born.

A warming smile from across the distance

A kind heart to fill a gap in your soul

A face in the crowd

A moment – that's all.

A strengthening hug – a soundful bliss

An open mind

A shoulder to lean on

A promise – that's all.

Strangely enough the world continues to seek out
the precious gifts life presents to us
as the sun rises again.

Two eyes seeing you for you

A prayer for the hopeless

A sigh of concern – a pleasing remark

Unnecessarily earned.

We all sometimes forget the simple pleasures in life –
the overlooked blessings in disguise,

The beauty of life.

So take each day for its meaning, its pride

And go on to the next

Feeling renewed and aware

Expecting not another day to be as beautiful

Live life, breathe life, and absorb life –

Live it for the rainbows of today and the hope for tomorrow.

Pondering. Observing. Seeing.

The bright orange sun awakens over the horizon

The clouds brush away and the fresh dew on the grass glitters amidst
the cool fog quietly falling over the wet blades of green

The first ray of light that shatters the crisp air falling onto
an open pasture of peace

A calming breeze sweeps across the glassy solitude of the deep blue waves

A new day is born.

Dante's Wood-Emily Boone

You walk through Dante's wood every day
only seeing it at night,
when you can't really see anything but yourself.

I fear Virgil will not lead you, but further in.
You will suffer in hell if you do not leave this forest of error at once.

Avoid the leopard, lion, and She-wolf.
For they are only temptation, without real substance.
They are only temporary happiness.

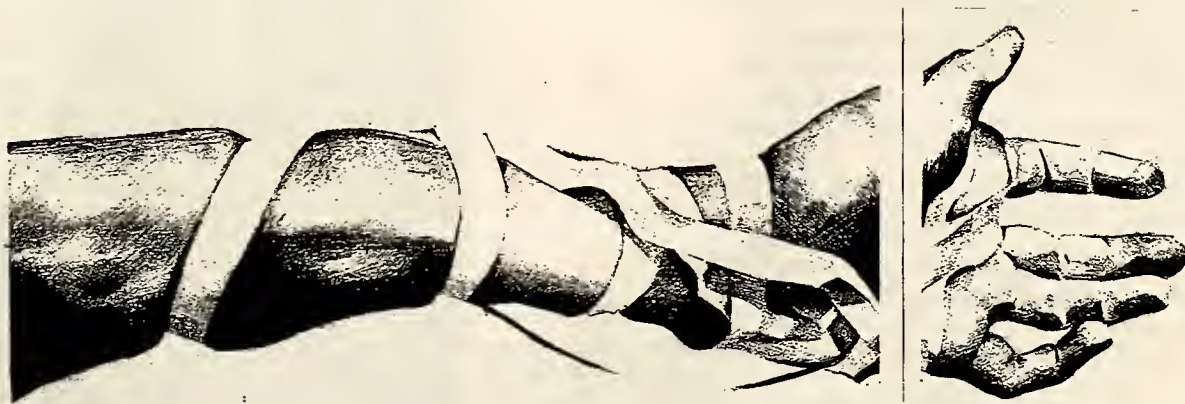
Your goals are empty, and so shall never be realized.
Your life being wasted, never to feel the touch of real love again.

What prompted you down this path?
You do not belong in this wood.
You were supposed to be someone.
You were supposed to be my brother.
Come home where you are wanted.

Your good intentions are never backed up,
and only pave the way towards inevitable doom.

The further you travel, the darker it gets,
so why continue?
Only harm will come.
Save yourself before the wood becomes too dark,
and all hope is lost.

Take the chance,
see the real you,
follow the light.
Come home,
home is where you belong.



Wesley Allsbrook

The Perfect Moment-Hannah Small

I walked up in my perfect Christmas dress
Climbing on his tall chair was a struggle for my short chubby legs
My brother and sister stood beside us
We all stood still with our big grins of sheer joy
While our moment of time was caught with a bright flash.

Fleeing the Flea-Martha Bradley

A fleo, you cod? You attempt to persuade me with a flea?
A true gentleman would not choose such a way,
In which to woo a lady.
Nor would he choose such o place
(Intended for the creation of love most tender)
Where fleos roam freely from mine to thee.
You protest, but I see through your rouse—
A most low and dishonest plan
To free the maid of her maidenly dues.
And like the flea, you steal life bit by small bit—
A slow erosion of the very virtue upon which my future depends.
Your integrity, therefore, obviously lies, flagrant and loose,
Rather close to that on which you sit.
You allege that within this flea we have a union made,
But like virgin oil and dirty water,
Never and nowhere will our lifesources meet—
Not in this bed, nor in this pest,
Nor even until God's Truth, made manifest, arrives.
So watch, you fool, you silly dolt,
As I crush the fleo between my nails,
And so endeth our relationship before it could begin.

A Smile and a Kiss-Jillian Rose Lea

A smile and a kiss
 Sharpen infant tongues
 Into glittering shards of light
 Glowing shattered words fall on injured ears.
A sad soft melody streams from open lips and
 Another kiss
 Stays the trembling
 Staggering notes with inhalation
 Exhale inhale
 And silence the raging
 Nothingness
 With blind ambition
Hands are good but tongues are nicer
 Promise to bite gently
 And stab with one slow erotic kiss
 Gazes with exotic eyes
 An eccentric mind
 Claws the audience in their beautiful
 Faces;
 Slides streamlined into thick clothing
 Tears the fabric
 Melts the fibers and
 Winks
And then
 As a silver breath
 Rips through the wharf of silky madness
I am rock and stillness
I am transparent sadness
I am bleeding, I am numb.



amanda
attinson

Sweet as Lemons-Lindsay Speros

*Finalist in the 2002 Raleigh Fine Arts Society Short Story Contest
Editor's Award Winner-Best Short Story*

"Sweet tea, please." Isabel had a voice that sang like a breeze does through screened windows, but on occasional word could cut like a knife.

"What? I'm sorry, ma'am. We don't have that here. We have unsweetened tea, ginger ale, club soda, and fountain drinks. A bottled water, perhaps?" The waitress lowered her order pad and traced her jaw line with her pen as she attempted to appease her customer. The falseness of her smile rivaled her grating, high-pitched voice that peaked every other syllable. Isabel knew this girl had to have been a flight attendant.

"Oh, yes. I keep forgetting. No sweet tea up here. Unsweet with lemon then, and please don't call me ma'am. I'm much too young for that. Much, much too young." The striking girl spoke with her head hung, meticulously brushing away the bits of black paint she had just chipped off the wrought iron table.

"Sure thing. Be right out."

"Yeah... thanks," she slowly replied, glancing up only for a sliver of a second. Her flashing green eyes barely made a hint of eye contact before she rapidly lowered them. She extended her left arm and flexed her wrist to make sure she had gotten all the black paint out from underneath her fingernails. "Hmmm," Isabel softly purred, noticing the comfort she took in the lack of her former engagement ring. "That thing was so heavy," she thought to herself as an amused smirk spread like wildfire across her structured face. The left corner of her mouth turned up as she bit the right side of her lower lip, tasting the gloss that reflected the pounding summer sun. She slid her hips forward in the chair and arched over its back. Her hair tumbled over her shoulders when she let her head drop, and her long neck lost all grace wrenched into such awkward form.

Her straw hat crinkled under her delicate hand that held it on as she stared up at the buildings, blinking incessantly at the sun. She knew staring up made her look like a typical Manhattan tourist, but she did not care. Four summers, falls, winters, and springs in the city had not lessened the buildings' appeal or intrigue. Sprawled out in her chair, she lifted her right leg over her left and crossed them just above the knees. "Thank you. It has been a pleasure doing business with you," she playfully whispered pretending she had closed a deal on one of the apartments visible from her corner shop seat.

Wiggling to get comfortable, her high-heeled shoe slipped off and clicked as it hit the sidewalk. She did not notice, and if she had she would not have cared. Like a cat sitting in a stream of sunshine filtered through a window, she draped her long arms and legs over the chair. Most people would not choose to bask in the sun on Fifth Avenue at noon, but anywhere was fine with Isabel, just as long as no one talked to her and no one touched her. She craved the isolation, and little ever threatened this solitary existence. After all, no one touches anyone in New York City. No matter how crowded the sidewalks are or how tight an elevator is packed, physical contact is never made. An occasional briefcase will swipe the cuff of a stiff jacket, but nothing more. Talking is unheard of; eye contact is the cardinal sin. Common greetings and polite gestures simply do not exist in the city. Everyone is frankly too busy and too self-absorbed to care how anyone else is doing or to hope that they have a nice day. Isabel cherished the independence and lack of confrontation she found in the city. Startlingly, her silence was what enabled her to be as uninhibited and curious as a child as she could ponder a single thought over and over. Although she came to the city to escape her naiveté and innocence, these familiar comforts surfaced often.

The sun pulled tears from her eyes, so she pressed her eyelids closed and allowed her mind to sail. She hardly moved, aside from the slow swinging of her leg. Her bare toes rhythmically brushed the smooth concrete of the sidewalk, and soon she was overcome with a memory that visited her often. Perhaps its frequent presence in the forefront of her mind was due to the joy it brought her. It disturbed her that she found so much pleasure in remembering the pain she had caused someone else, but she took comfort in remembering that it was merely compensation for all she unintentionally kept from her.

As she sat there slipping into her post, the obnoxious horns disappeared, the rattling tin cups held by rogged hands became silent, the scuffles of knock-off shoes faded from her existence. The EWs, Isabel's nickname for Empty Wives, and their chatter about new Harry Winston diamonds removed themselves from her perfect existence. Normally, their pathetic attempt to replace their cheating husbands with frivolous shopping disgusted Isabel, but that day, she did not let their sour lives affect her. The only thing she noticed as she let herself drift away was the breeze that tickled her back and cheekbones as it carried her back to a time she could not let go of.

The thick stench of the air turned sweet and moist; her clothes turned into her favorite white bathing suit; her skin turned sticky and golden from hours in the southern sun. She had returned again to the familiarity of her old life. In her memory there was nothing but crispness defined by grass as green as her eyes, a straw hat, a white bathing suit, a cobalt blue swimming pool, and a sky the color of the water

she rested beside. Leaning back on her hands, she bent her left knee up and dropped her other leg into the pool. It brushed the smooth concrete wall as she circled it in the water. Complete tranquility consumed her, and nothing was worth her attention except the way the clouds sometimes passing across the sun would make everything a slightly darker shade.

"Hey, You." His voice sliced Isabel's heart, as it was a reminder of the lie she had been living for so long.

"Hi," Isabel replied icily as she turned her body around to face the voice behind her. She pulled her knees in close to her body and wrapped them in her arms. Tucker could see nothing but legs and the top of a pale straw hat.

"You could just wear sunglasses, you know."

"I know."

"Well, why don't you?" He smiled a gorgeous smile that was genuine and tender.

"I'm content, Tucker," she said with bitterness that could rival the pecans that sprinkled the pool deck.

"I can't see your face."

"You know what I look like."

"I still love to look at you."

"The sun."

"Yeah, it's an incredible day, isn't it? Just look at that sky." He placed his hands on his waist as he lifted his face.

"I meant the sun is too bright. It burns to look up to you."

"Well, that's good news. I was beginning to think my own fiancé didn't love me anymore."

"Fancy that," Isabel mumbled sarcastically.

"I'm sorry, darling. What was that you said?"

"Nothing. Just humming."

"With clenched teeth? Oh, alright." His naiveté aggravated Isabel so much she shivered with anger at how stupid he was capable of being. He had annoyed her somewhat when they were children and he would build sandcastles in ways that did not suit her, but ever since they had acknowledged their mothers' wishes and become engaged, he had grown intolerable.

"What is it that you want, anyway?" she asked without a hint of gentility.

"Can I not come speak to you without a reason?"

"You always have a reason. What is it?" There was no polite intonation in her voice; the question was tainted with sheer demand.

"Well, the Humphreys want us to come over for martinis and dinner."

"No."

"Why so abrupt... and distant? You won't even let me look at you. I hardly know you anymore," Tucker's voice quivered as he swung his head back and forth. His wavy blonde hair shook with each exasperated flinch, but his delivery could not have been sweeter. "I walk down here to have a nice conversation with the woman I am in love with, and she has yet to even look me in the eye. What is the matter with you?" She wanted to be within an inch of his face, screaming the answer at the top of her lungs as she jumped around, flailing her arms as if she had been possessed. A surge rose to her throat that commanded her to scream at him, to tell him she cannot stand his perfection, and to tell him she does not love him, never has, and never will. She wanted so badly to feel her throat burn from the scratching words shooting out of her mouth like bullets into his perfect skin, but she merely sighed. Her back heaved in desperation, and her left hand flopped into the glassy pool and created ripples that shattered the reflection of the sun on the blue. Her statuesque body masked the intense anger and regret it contained.

"For some reason I think there is something more that you aren't telling me, but I can't put a finger on it," the man said, further proving his inability to understand this masterpiece in front of him. He bent down in front of her and slipped his hand under her hat. With a gentle hand he tried to lift her face to his, but she resisted, cocking her head to the side and placing it so that her kneecap fit just below her cheekbone. It pushed her cheeks forward so that her red lips puckered, and she was reminded of how she used to make fish lips in front of mirrors when she was a child. She could feel the skin on the back of her knees getting slippery as the summer heat took its toll. "C'mon, darling. Talk to me. Tell me what you are thinking."

"I'm thinking about the wedding cake, actually. I think I want chocolate icing." Lying had become easy and common for Isabel.

"What? You can't have chocolate icing on a wedding cake. Sweetie, don't be ridiculous."

"And I want a green wedding dress. Is that alright with you?" Isabel's voice was strange because her knees pushed her jaw to one side.

"It's your wedding. You can do whatever you please, but don't you think we should be a bit more traditional?"

"No."

"Next thing I know you are going to want to get married in a billiard club," he laughed, hoping to lighten the tone of their conversation. He denied the severity in her voice.

"That reminds me. I don't want to have the wedding on your father's plantation. I am so sick of having to do what everyone else wants me to do. This whole wedding... No... The whole engagement is your parents' doing anyway." For some strange reason that last remark did not even faze Tucker.

"Well, having it there would really mean a lot to me. I haven't cared about what you've planned for most of this wedding because all I care about is getting married to you, but that is one thing that I would really like to have some say in. I have a lot of memories there, and it would be very special for me to share that with you."

"NO. Do not argue with me," her voice deepened as she started to swirl the tip of her index finger in the water and became as captivated as a child by the designs the water made and the bubbles that sometimes popped and sometimes rested on the surface for a few seconds.

"Did you hear me?" he asked, getting a little sharper in his tone.

"Hear what?"

"What I just said."

"Obviously I didn't or I would know what you're talking about."

"I was just saying how I love it when you curl your toes up like you are right now."

"I honestly don't care." Isabel grew colder with every word. "They are just toes, and that was incredibly unimportant."

"That's enough. I have been unbelievably patient with you this afternoon. I have consistently shown undeniable respect for you, but I must say you have outdone yourself today. In five years together I have never seen you act like this."

"What? I hope what you said wasn't important. I wasn't paying attention," Isabel said, barely audible. She had quickly lost interest in the water and was now rubbing the tips of her water-soaked fingers and studying the puffy lines that made them look like raisins. Tucker jumped to his feet and slammed his hands down on his crisp, white bathing suit. The sound startled Isabel, and she quit trying to smooth out her wrinkled fingers.

"TALK TO ME," Tucker boomed. He had lost all patience with Isabel. Like a child cowering in a corner, she retreated, and pulled her shoulders up around her neck. The echo of his outburst caused her to shiver. "Oh, darling. I am so sorry. I didn't mean to frighten you. I really didn't." He placed a light hand on her warmed shoulder, but she rapidly shrugged it off.

"Don't you dare touch me," she countered in a deep whisper, pausing between each word emitted through clenched teeth.

"I didn't mean to yell. I'm just frustrated," Tucker paused and stared at the puddles around his feet. "It's just that I love you so much, and I feel helpless when I can't take care of you. You are like a baby. You don't communicate what's wrong, and I can't help you. It's awful, darling, just awful. I wouldn't trade you for the world, but you have to help me understand. Tell me what's wrong with you."

"I'm thirsty."

"No. I meant for you to tell me why you are acting like this."

"I can't. I am too thirsty."

"Well, I will go get you some water and call the Humphreys to tell them we won't be coming tonight."

"No. I want sweet tea."

"It's bad for your teeth. How about a nice glass of lemonade?"

"Sweet tea." Isabel seemed meek and dejected.

"I will make you some lemonade. Understand?"

"That will have to do." She never would have admitted it, but once mentioned, the lemonade actually sounded better than the sweet tea. She felt like she was five again and sitting at the ornate dining room table with a china plate full of lima beans in front of her. She always hated not being able to eat the foods she had once refused but later liked after being forced to "just taste."

"Here. I freshly squeezed it using those lemons the Malones sent us from Florida. You know they have been living in their Florida house for the past couple of months. Did you ever send them a thank you note for these?"

"You didn't bring me a straw," she pointed out as she placed the glass beside her.

"Darling. You can drink it without a straw."

"I don't want to."

"Here's your glass. You can drink it without a straw just this once. Now did you ever write that thank you note?"

"No."

"Why?"

"I forgot."

"You just forgot?"

"No. Actually, that was a lie. I just didn't want to."

"You just didn't want to?" his eyebrows rose as he stared at Isabel incredulously.

"No."

"'No' you didn't want to or 'no' I was wrong and you did want to?"

"'No' I just plain didn't want to."

"Fine. I will write one this afternoon." Tucker spoke softly, unable to scold her. He did not understand why he felt this way, but he could never bring himself to correct her. She seemed too fragile and impressionable, and the thought of seeing her cry was unbearable to him.

"Well, will you tell me what's wrong now that you have something to drink?"

"Nothing is wrong. I was just thirsty."

"So you're better now, Darling?"

"Sure."

"Will you actually look up at me now? I won't believe you until I can see your eyes."

"No."

"Why are you acting like this? I can barely breathe when you are not yourself. My life would mean nothing without you. It's the most indescribable thing. I watch you sitting out here by this pool everyday, happy as a child, and I know I am the luckiest man in the world. I have you, and I want nothing more than for you to know how much I do love you."

"This is not love, and you do not have me."

"Excuse me? What are you talking about?" By this time he had again bent down to her level and was stroking her shoulder.

"You said, 'I have you, and I want nothing more than blah-blah-blah.' You do not have me," she spoke with a hiss, still staring down at the water. It had again captured her interest as she dipped her whole hand in and out of the water. Each time she pulled it out she watched the water trickle off the tip of her fingernails until there was not another drop. Only then did she plunge it back in. "No one will ever have me."

"That ring on your finger says otherwise. I think I do have you, Darling."

"You sure about that?"

"Yeah." Even with this reply she did not look up at him. She just swirled her hand in the water.

"Darling, what are you doing?"

"Nothing," Isabel calmly stated in a high-pitched voice. She rolled over onto her stomach and stared at her reflection in the rippling water. She saw a gleam in her eye and even a wrinkle from the amused grin spreading like wildfire across her structured face.

"It's always nothing."

"Well, it's never something," she said giggling as she rolled onto her back.

"There's that face I wanted to see. I cannot believe how beautiful you are." She sprawled her arms and legs out over the deck and sighed as she stretched herself across the smooth concrete. Her hat cast a shadow that cut diagonally across her face to her collarbone. Squinting the one eye that was in the sun, Isabel looked up at this man who would never understand her. She lifted her left hand to hold her hat on her head and smiled so big her cheeks hurt.

"Why the sudden smile?" he said.

"Oh, no reason in particular. Something funny just popped into my head."

"Darling, you know I hate it when you do that. It makes me nervous," the man said laughing.

"C'mon. Tell me what you were thinking. I bet I'll think it's funny, too."

"I bet you won't."

"Try me."

"It's a surprise."

"That's funny?"

"I told you I don't think you will find it very amusing, and I know I am right."

"Well, I don't know what it is yet, darling. I still may get a laugh or two."

"Or maybe you won't. You will just have to see," Isabel's tone was coy as she thought about how she would leave him- for good. "Here, Darling. Have some lemonade. It's too sour for me. I want to make my own, thank you. Goodbye." She stood up and began to walk away from Tucker after handing him her glass. She felt a tinge of guilt, but not enough to change her mind. She was gone forever. "And by the way," Isabel said, turning. "I always hated being called 'Darling.' It's so juvenile, and I am not your child."

"If it bothers you, I will never call you that again," the man complied.

"That's the one thing you've been right about in the five years we've been together. You will never call me that again." He still did not understand. "Why don't you go for a little swim?"

"Sure. Meet you back at the house?"

Isabel did not even consider replying; she just kept walking. She stopped by her room to grab a suitcase full of clothes and was gone by the time Tucker got back to the house, but not before she called the Malones to have them ship up another box of lemons signed *I'm gone for good, Darling*. That morning,

Isabel had a revelation while sitting in the thick silence of the wet, summer air. Its oppression had been overwhelming, and it reminded her of the lie she had been living for years. She had been slowly suffocating beneath a thick, black blanket that was only meant to protect her. Though triggered by nothing more than wanting a glass of sweet tea, something snapped in Isabel. She knew it was petty, but she decided that if for some reason she could not have something she wanted, it would not be because of him.

"Here you go, ma'am," the waitress said as she placed the glass on the table. Isabel roughly jolted into reality and sat up quickly, straightening her skirt and slipping her foot back in her shoe.

"Oh. Thanks." For the first time ever, Isabel did not bother asking her not to say ma'am. That took too much energy, and for the first time she kind of enjoyed the way it sounded and the way it made her feel, though only for a second.

"Sure thing. Well, enjoy. If I can get you anything, let me know."

"Thank you very much," Isabel replied sweetly even though her fingers stung as she squeezed the lemon slice against the rim of the glass. The water on the outside of the glass trickled down her fingers as she poured the lemon-tinged tea into her mouth. For a second, the sour seemed almost sweet on Isabel's tongue, but she realized she was just making excuses. "Miss!" she called into the corner shop.

"Yes, ma'am?" Ma'am again.

"May I have a water? I just can't drink this," Isabel said, laughing at her own peculiarity. "Some things are meant to be sweet, and if they aren't, it just doesn't feel right. And I'm not going to pretend it does."

Ode To Bitterness-Katie Jones

Title By: Meg Sparger and Jillian Lea

A Marshall I wanted to be,
But, oh, I lost by three.
I heard a lot of people voted for me,
But not enough, obviously.
If enough people had been there that day,
The election might have gone another way.
I didn't get in to AP,
Although my teacher recommended me.
I think my grade was a B,
But what the hell, it might as well have been a D.
Jesus will remember,
His birthday's in December.
The tree looks like an ember,
And I am very limber.
Jesus won't forget
Habeus Corpus is a writ,
At communion a candle was lit,
This poem sounds like ****.
Jesus is watching now
Oh look, there's a brown cow.
If you get hit it sounds like pow,
This poem should end, but how?



A Question Unanswered-Anna Johnston

I often wonder about
Myself
Herself
Himself
Who's elf is it?

I spin-Jillian Rose Lea

I spin
 Colorful webs of
 Deception
 Sparkling lies
 Made obsolete by the heart worn on my trembling sleeve



What if I jumped?-Anna Johnston

If I were to jump...just what would you do?
Would you laugh?
Would you cry?
Would you jump after me too?
What if I jumped? Would you be there until the end?
'Til I got out, and got back in line...
and jump-roped again?

TAYLOR WHITE

Come in Darkness-Jillian Rose Lea

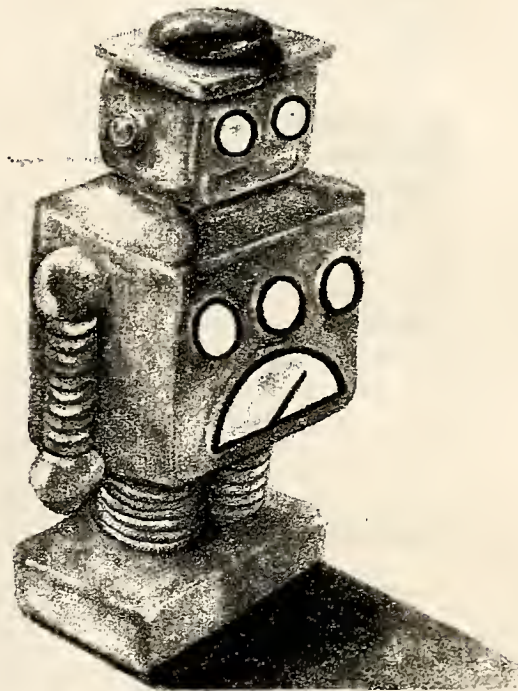
Come in darkness swiftly
 Softly falling
 Dream-man calling me to sleep
Come with shadows hiding
 Gently sliding
 Dull roar lulling me to sleep
Come in dreams surrounding silence
 Floating through the pouring rain
Come to me in dreams ecstatic
 Leave when sun shines bright again.

In Like a Lion, Out Like a Lamb-Hallie Moore Sessoms

The floodlight illuminated my tangled long hair,
And the cigarette at my fingertips slowly burned as I crept around the corner, awaiting the imminent drop
of my stomach, closing of my throat,
All these physical effects your face seems to have on my weak body.
You sat there like a vision, staring clearly into my scared face,
Body hunched over a single lit flome, while a bottle busied your gentle hands.
It was more than I could take.
Look at me, look at me, damn you...
I chanted over and over in my brain.
Heartbeating wildly, oh and my hand shakes as I slowly raise the narrow distraction to my lips.
Anything to pull my mind away from you, but it doesn't work, it never did, and never would.
Looking back with an empty gaze on these memories I have of you, leave me with nothing more than a
sense of loss, a burning hole in the pit of my stomach that screams your name with deafening silence.
I couldn't look you in the eye, it was more than I could take and yet again, I can't stay but for a moment of
your precious time.
Look at me, look at me, I have to go...
I turn to sink down the stairs, carefully sure to accent the nonchalance that I'm faking.
I refuse to give you the satisfaction, once again, of my face turned to you.
Begging, pleading, screaming, for some bit of evidence that it's really not all in my mind.
I hear love sucks but no, I know it is just that's slowly eating away at everything I hold dear about myself.
My gravitation shifts away from me and into you.
I won't be happy until I get you where I want you, which is looking at me with this lust in your eyes.
I want to watch you, watch me, turn my back and walk away.
Walk away.
Look at me, look at me, don't make me look back at you...
Watch me walk away,
And take a drink.

Brave New World Blues-Dr. Steven Esthimer

Nobody loves me, I'm so sad and all alone
Everybody's left me, even my doggone clone.
I've got the blues,
I've got the lonely brave new world blues.
Even my clone has disowned me,
I've got the high-tech rejection blues.
First my wife, she left me, then my dog and my parakeet, too.
I got so lowdown lonely, I didn't know what to do.
Well, I looked in the yellow pages,
 Called a doctor on the telephone.
The doctor said, "I'll fix you up, and make you the perfect clone."
I figured this was the answer, to find me the perfect friend,
So I gave the doctor some DNA and let the cloning process begin.
At first my clone was friendly, just as charming as he could be,
But then he turned and walked right out the door,
 Good God, he was just like me!
So now I'm real sad and lonely, this cloning stuff's got me blue.
I'm better off all by myself,
 Because one of me's better than two.



TAYLOR WHITE

Waking Up at Saint Mary's-Anna Johnston

When I first wake
I sit up in bed and say,
"If there's anything in the world,
it's the morning that I hate."

I hate the red alarm
I hate it when it goes off
Oh, the monotonous beeping
I wish that it would stop.

I hate that stupid sun
Piercing through my blinds
I hate it when it comes
Into the creases of my eyes.

I hate the annoying birds
That drag me out of bed...
I hate the stupid morning
And I wish that I was dead.

I hate the cold water
That shivers my skin
I hate a morning shower
And I wish that it would end.

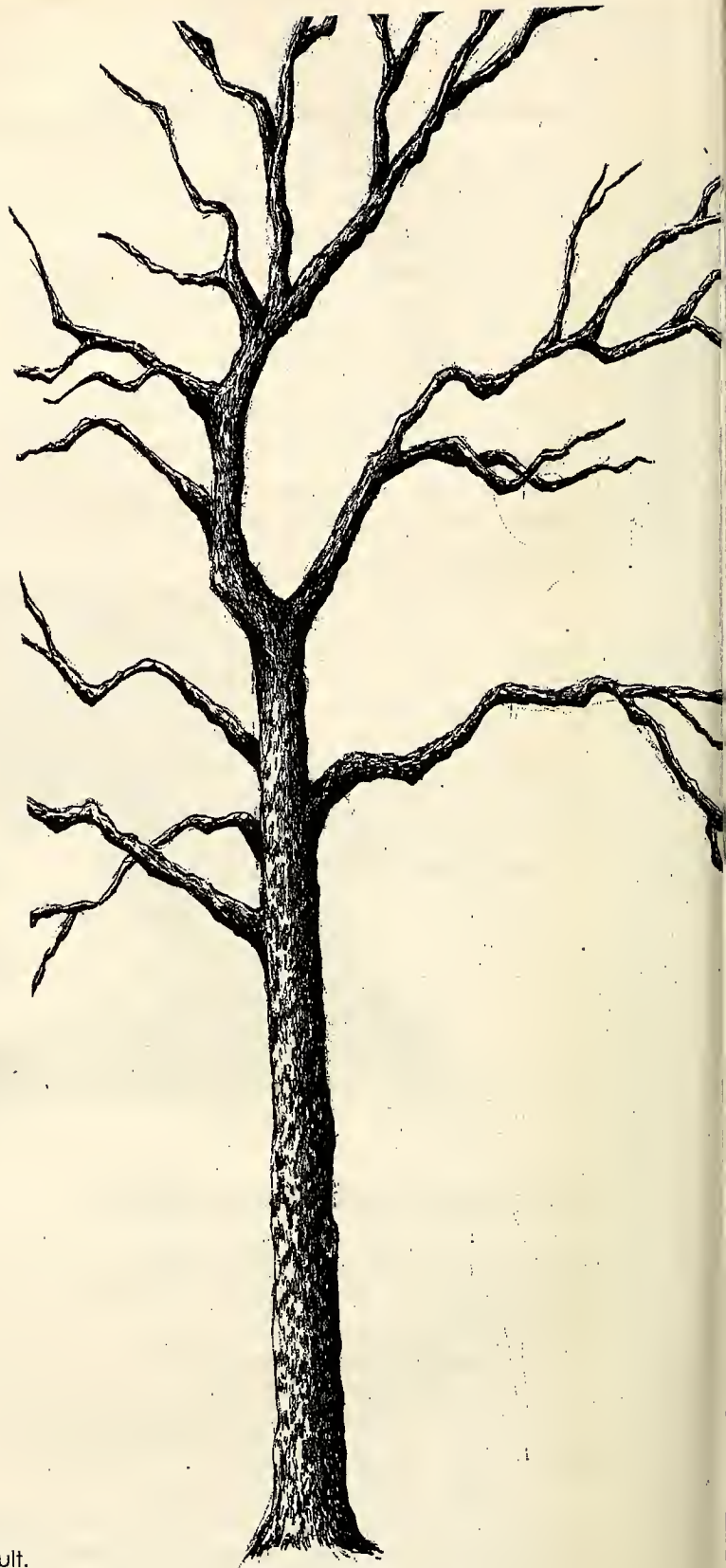
I hate hearing noises
Of people stirring around
I really hate the morning
And the stupid morning sounds..

But what I hate most,
Is that when the day ends...
Night will surely pass...
And Morning will come again.

I don't like morning.
The morning is just no fun.
I'd like it a whole lot better,
If the morning wouldn't come.

Untitled-Sarah McCauley

You call me selfish.
I **am** selfish, selfish for wanting a life.
You call me lazy.
I **am** lazy, lazy for wanting a minute's rest.
You call me irresponsible.
I **am** irresponsible, irresponsible for not being an adult.
You call me unbelievable.
I **am** unbelievable, unbelievable for being human.
You call me stupid.
I **am** stupid, stupid for trusting you.
You call me ungrateful.
I **am** ungrateful, ungrateful for wanting only the best.
You call me nothing.
I am **not** nothing, not nothing, because I'm **not** like you.



Anne Barnard

An Apology-Val Rayno
Editor's Award Winner-Best Poem

Soft glistening petals of snow kiss the ground,
Melting into the whiteness of one.
It stops as quickly as it began; the sound
Of silence echoes under a hidden sun.
These shades of gray fade like the day
And I long to gaze at bright, twinkling stars
With you on a cold dark night, far away.
Without you, sugar grows sour; it chars
Loneliness and revolves into isolation.
I could never tell you how I miss you,
Or how down is colorless desolation.
How can I tell you that this drama hurts me too?

The white coldness storming in swirls reminds me
Of the graceful dancing of the moon
In your eyes. A glowing fire, you seem to be
An elegant tempest, like a blizzard, soon
To be rising and falling like the waves
In the sea. A river of tears keeps streaming
Through a confusing dream that never solves
Any peace. My mind won't stop racing, screaming
My stupidity. You loved me, and frightened,
I wounded you. But I never had the right
To defy myself and you in confusion.
Even with time, clouds of doubt block slow grasping light.

The night grows cold, with the clock whispering,
Yet I can't stop thinking of you and me.
At daybreak, we awoke to the church bell's ring.
Now footprints break a serene blanket and the
Shouts of children play in the air of exhilaration.
If I could capture time, understand its mystery,
Its eternity and predetermination,
I would dispose of it all, and become a child, very
Ignorant, like I used to be, so when I read
Of what is perverted and against nature,
It would be much easier to believe what it said.
but, maybe, for what we were, there is no cure.

I could never be all you expect me to show.
It's true, if I had faith enough to believe in it,
I might let the pureness of white snow
Fall over my body like kisses and rid
Myself of this sin and transgression.
But I'm sorry. I'm sorry for loving you;
I'm sorry for this poor apologetic confession.
And you, you'll always be the flawless angel who
Never fell into the ensnaring hands of conformity,
Or even felt compelled to deny misread passion.
And I'll always be too much afraid to feel anything but pity
For you and me. And I'm sorry for that, too.

Steel Elevation-Hallie Moore Sessoms
First Place Award in the Saint Mary's 2001 Non-Analytical Essay Contest

I hate steel. I hate the steel gray color of this city, the steel gray feel of this building, the modern steel furniture that sparsely decorates my flat. But most of all, I hate the steel cap on this bottle of vodka. I stare out into the cold blankness of the city, pondering how similar this building is to the bottle on my desk. This bottle and the building are both made of steel and glass. Both monuments to happiness and success from the outside, both accented by stunning design and eye-catching titles etched in the appropriate places. All the while they're containing nothing but misery and depression on the inside, two emotions masked by the hustle and bustle of workaday America. I sigh as I realize that even the most innocent looking objects, an inanimate building, a glass bottle, can often be a facade for the evil of this world. I thought, picking up the bottle and turning it from side to side, well, I thought that maybe I could stop. Maybe if I just stomped my foot down and said "No!" the way the women do on the Nicorette commercials, maybe then I could betray my loyalty to this bottle. Sometimes I feel almost as if I owe this bottle something for my success. I know I shouldn't but I do. It is just the same as the debt I felt I owed my first love Craven when he asked me to be his girlfriend way back in high school. I felt I owed him something for stooping to my level from his god-like pedestal and so I gave him that one thing he asked for. At the time it felt as though I was giving over my life, already handing out the only gift I would ever have to give anyone again, how little I knew then. I know now what it is like to truly give your life for something you don't love. I have given my life to the bottle, given my life to the glass, given my life to the burn. I never loved the bottle, but I always respected it. Since that day in Melanie's car, the day I first found the complete submersion into blankness, from that tiny shot of Kitty Hawk vodka, I knew it would always have a certain level of power over me. The taste of the alcohol reaches me at the strangest times: in bed with Strat, at board meetings. Times when it shouldn't. It even reaches me when I smile after brushing my teeth. Nothing but the burning will cease the pounding in my head. I crave it, demand it, yearn to feel it on the back of my throat, knowing that with those first few shots, the blaring of my stressful life will quiet down to nothing more than a quiet hum. I can remove the cap and know that I will soon be in a humming nirvana. But even some Buddhist priests claim that nirvana cannot be reached without disastrous damages to the physical body. How right they are. If only I could stop. It is killing me and I know it but I can't stop craving the burn. That cap should stay in my way. If only it weren't so easy to take off, so tempting, promising to release me from this hell I call my successful life.

I glare at the gray and white tabletops of our kitchen, staring as though the meaning of life were written right on those sparkling slabs of marble. The slamming down of a glass bottle interrupts the beginnings of my humming brain.

"Goddamn it Victoria!"

I jerk up quickly, reflexes working at a drugged pace. I wiggle my fingers and realize that I am not sober anymore.

"Do you hear me?" A strong deep male voice resonates off the hospital white glare of the track lighting in our kitchen. He picked it out, not I.

My eyes slowly move to the left and rest on the navy pique dress shirt. I become infatuated with the perfect diamonds within diamonds. The corners of my mouth turn up in a smirk, as I tilt my head to the side. My careful stare slowly makes its way up the dress shirt to the tan neck and eventually to the hard-lined and strong-jawed face of my husband of four years, Bradford Stratton, affectionately known as Strat to our close friends, unaffectionately known as Strat by me.

"Yes?" I managed to huskily grunt out of my dry chapped lips.

His deep aqua eyes thin until they resemble the tan creases on his forehead. His neatly manicured left hand grasps a large, empty, clear bottle. I notice that his left arm sleeve is carefully rolled up so as not to damage his expensive Italian silk shirts with the heavy scent of the alcohol.

"I bought this damn bottle two days ago! Now look at it! I can't even stand to look you in the face!"

His words flow through me. They disintegrate into the alcohol that flows through my veins. Evaporating into nothing. I never even notice their original presence.

I feel like everything in this house is black and white, so it seems ironic that my relationship with Strat is too. He married me out of love he said, but he and I both knew it was simply a marriage of necessity. I was the only way that Strat's company wouldn't go completely Chapter Eleven. We exist in our own little spheres, he in his world of New York society and cocktail parties, me in my world of steel. Black mixed with white.

I quizzically glance back up into Strat's eyes and find more steel in his gaze. I watch him dramatically gesture from the bottle to me, back and forth, over and over. I feel like throwing up.

"...I mean it's not like I was planning on serving Absolut to the Peterson's anyways but still, Jesus! You know I keep the one bottle around for show! Marcus!"

The tall driver's footsteps are heard before his lanky and graying body is seen. Sometimes I think that the Absolut isn't the only thing that is kept around for show.

"Yessir," his aged voice queries with a layer of falsity that I've only ever heard in movies. More facades. I almost cry out in laughter but think better of it when I take a deeper look into his dark gray-green eyes. He has the look of a creature that has been stepped on, kicked, abused since birth. My emotions change as quickly as the tide and I feel like crying for the first time in years.

"Haul down to the ABC store on 36th and Park. I want a new bottle of Regulator vodka before the Peterson's arrive. Oh and while you're at it, grab a bottle of Rebel Yell for that damn southerner Montgomery who no doubt will make an appearance tomorrow night."

With a nod old Marcus retreats from the room, stopping only to quietly exchange the keys to Strat's navy Jaguar for the keys to his own silver Taurus. Marcus always knows where he stands. Why don't the rest of us? My eyes follow him until the door quietly clicks. Metal on metal. The story of my life.

Strat has lost all interest in screaming at me and is now concocting something at the sink. Pulling out a funnel, he whistles the chorus from *Peter and the Wolf* before turning on the sink to rinse out the empty bottle of Absolut.

"Darling, you know I didn't mean to yell so much. It is just that, well, I like the taste of Absolut but there is no way I am serving it to fools who don't know enough to appreciate it! Thank God for my ingenious scheme. Ah yes, I can just hear Frederick Peterson right now; 'Why Strat, I do hope that is Absolut?' and I answer with a scoff, 'But of course Frederick!' and he always answers, 'Wonderful, you and Victoria are a class act! Nothing but the best!' Oh Vix, if only they knew they were drinking Regulator instead of Absolut, can you just imagine the look on their faces?"

With a completely unenthused nod, I spin around and leave the room.

I step into my colorless office, quietly closing and locking the door behind me. I lean up against the icy metal door and breathe a deep sigh. The alcohol still burns in my throat but it seems to have lessened to a dull prickle. That scares me. The humming in my head has also been drowned out, first by Strat's screams and then again by his egomaniacal speeches on his personal genius. I began to panic, needing to feel that burn, needing to simply hum again. If I can, maybe I can make it through yet another socialite dinner. What a pathetic existence, I think to myself as I step around my desk and gently sink into the comfort of my plush, leather desk chair. What kind of a life is it to mask your emotions with an altered smile and with arms accented in clear, perfect, stunning diamonds? All they seem to be are status symbols in a world that revolves around only the perfect and stunning and clear. I wish that I could just melt away into that lifeless existence, an existence void of any of the troubles and pains of my everyday life. I can feel my tension building deep within my brain and decide that today is not the day for thinking. Reaching down into the lowest drawer of my desk, I pull out a small and beautiful Waterford crystal glass, with a diamond bias cut design. Setting this ever so carefully on my desk, I reach in a second time into my secret drawer and pull out the last of my travel size bottles of vodka. I pour the entire bottle into the glass, knock it to the back of my throat, clanging the glass down without even the slightest grimace upon my face. With a deep breath, I spin around to face the window, unable to find comfort in any part of the jagged skyline and dark buildings. I turn halfway around again and settle deeper into my chair. My eyes slowly begin to succumb to the humming in my brain and I can feel them beginning to close with a sluggish pace. With a final nudge of my head, I close my eyes completely, but not before they barely focus in on a yellow Post-It. It reminds me of an appointment with Dr. Zeitgler set for tomorrow morning.

It's been four days since the transplant. Four days since they took that rotting piece of gray flesh out of my body and replaced it with the new, vibrant, healthy pink liver. I've been lying here in this bed thinking about a lot of things. Wondering where this liver came from, who died and gave me, a fall down drunk, a perfect little piece of their perfect body. I didn't deserve this. Why couldn't they just let me die? I wouldn't have minded, really I wouldn't have. I need some change of scenery, maybe that would have been just the thing for me. I need to get out of this whole situation. I sit back and try to remember why I started drinking. No wait, I don't care about that anymore. I just want to know why I kept drinking. His name wafts into my brain and then, without my willing it there, I realize I can't get rid of it. I close my eyes and try to remember, try to remember but I want to forget.

I groan as I attempt to roll over in the bed. The chrome rail guards my space. My side is killing me. I press the button for the nurse and know that it will be awhile before someone comes. She is probably down the hall flirting with the new night guard on duty. I reach out and grab a stack of messages on my bedside table; there is one from Dr. Zeitgler that I pick up immediately and examine. He says something about wanting to see me about the donor of my new liver. I am completely confused but the pain in my side hurts too much for me to bear, so I roll over and try to go to sleep.

My eyes slowly open as I lie there in my hospital bed. The bright yellow ceiling is the first thing my eyes focus on. Then I smell it. That cologne I had so long ago given to Strat. I know this is the first time in years that he has worn it. He wants to recapture our good ol' days, as my Daddy would have said. My stomach flips at the thought of having to lay my eyes on his face. I wish I were dead.

"Well darling, the cat's out of the bag now isn't it?"

"What do you mean by that," I challenge in a groggy tone. Morphine. Great stuff. My tongue is thick and heavy and has a metallic taste to it. I still haven't looked him in the eye.

"Well what do you think I mean? Babe, up until now, everything's been perfect. No one had to know about your little problem, but it's tough to hide a failing liver! I'm just wondering how you feel. You've ruined your own and more importantly, my reputation!"

"Strat, can it. Leave me alone. I don't care about you and your damned reputation; in fact I am glad that people realize what is really going on in our lives! Yes Strat, I am a drunk and you are an asshole. I should know. I'm the one lying in bed with a brand new liver because of it! Hopefully, the next time I try to die, I can do it with some dignity. I know class is important to you and your 'friends.'" I place a lot of emphasis on my last words and I attempt to push myself up to a sitting position for more effect, only to find my arms strapped down to the bed.

"What in God's name is this! A psychiatric ward?" I wonder aloud.

"I only wish they'd sent you there earlier. Maybe then I wouldn't have to deal with all this crap, Victoria! I'd love for someone to take a good long look inside your head. Or what's left of it." These last few words he mumbles under his breath. He still thinks I can't hear him.

"Leave now Strat," my voice is deadly certain for the first time. "Leave now."

He throws a bundle of roses down on the ground and storms out of the room. He doesn't take the scent of his reeking cologne with him.

I'm sweating, uncontrollably. I need the burn. I need a drink now. That is the problem. My heart is racing and my breaths are coming short. I realize that the restraints on my bed are no longer attached to my arms so grab my IV roller and stumble into the hall.

"Mrs. Stratton! What are you doing out of bed at this time?" the alarmed night nurse clucks her tongue at me and begins angling me back towards my room.

"I need my messages. Have there been any for me?"

"Of course there have ma'am, but there is surely nothing you can do about it tonight. Let's go back to bed then!"

"I really need my messages. I need them immediately. I must leave some important voice mails for my boss in the morning."

"Well, ma'am, I don't think I should..."

"Do it, please," there was that calm tone again.

She stops in the middle of the hall, blushes down at her spotlessly white, orthopedic shoes and mumbles a faint "yes, ma'am," before she scuttles away. I climb back into my bed, my sides aching.

"Here are your messages ma'am," the young nurse whispers without looking me in the eye.

I reach over and pat her right hand as I take the messages from her left. With gratitude, I say, "Thank you so much." I watch as she smiles and clears her throat, re-tucking perfect sheet-comers and handing me the phone.

"I hope you get everything straight, Mrs. Stratton, so that you can get a good night's rest."

I smile as she walks out of the room, and I turn to my stack of small papers. As I had expected, they're all from Will Washington, my boss and editor at *Splash* magazine. A ghost of a smile crosses my lips and I pick up the phone, dialing quickly to the mainframe board.

"Welcome to *Splash* magazine, where we take you and remake you in a thousand different ways! If you know the extension you wish to call..." I wonder if it's about time for someone to remake me. I want to be remade, remodeled, redesigned.

4444. I dial and wait to hear Will's comforting voice.

"You've reached Will; you know the drill."

"Hey Will, it's Vee," I use the nickname he'd come up with at one wild Christmas party a few years before I was roped into Strat, "I am just calling tonight to tell you that I am OK, and I will be back in work on Monday. Guaranteed. I wanted to discuss the layout for Fiorucci with you over the phone to make sure it all goes perfectly. I can't stand this hospital bed. I miss you and Patricia. Send her my love. Come see me please. I really am about to go insane and I think they know it because they put these straps...."

"Beep, Beep, BEEEEEP."

I figure he'll get the picture. I'll see him tomorrow. I pick up the phone and consider whom to call next. Patricia, my secretary? My mother? I glance over at the dresser and became conscious of the fact that someone has taken Strat's roses and placed them in a beautiful vase. Someone is always there attempting to put my shattered life back together. It never comes out right for me though. That's when I decided. I'll call Strat, at three A.M. I figure I'll catch him in some sexual rampage and end the charade that I called my married life, not to mention I'll get what's left of my money back. I actually hope he's cheating. God, I hope he is, please let him be, please. I need an excuse, I do. I need an easy way out of all this mess. God, please let there be a girl there.

"Hello?" a slow, sleepy male voice responds to the ringing phone.

"Hella, Strat. I didn't mean to wake you up. " The lie flows easily out of my mouth.

"Vix! What in the hell are you doing up this late? And on the phone, darling you need your..." He sounds concerned, but I know he's a pro at pretending. There is no girl there. I have to do this on my own.

"Dan't 'darling' me anymore, Strat, please understand that I have to talk to you."

"Why? Can't this wait Vix, I mean really..."

"No Strat, it can't wait. I can't waste any more time on this, not anymore time. Don't you understand Strat? This isn't right. This has never been right. Look where I've ended up because of it. It's not your fault; things just look clearer now to me, newer. There was never love and there never will be. I need something real in my life now Strat. You need it, too."

I hang up the phone, breathless myself, with this sudden new power I have as a free woman. I place the message slips on my bedside table and nestle back down into my bed.

Will calls the next morning. I talk to him on my cell phone as I am packing my things up in my hospital room. I am smiling and laughing, flirting with him like I have wanted to for so long. I was always loyal to Strat, even though I didn't love him. Now that is over. I feel the burn in the back of my throat for a split second. Will doesn't want me to come in to work for a while, even though I think I am feeling up to it and the doctors all say that I am going to be fine. After a long argument, we finally agree.

"All right, you talked me into it. I will be gone for three weeks. I think want to see California."

"Great Vee, sounds like fun. Want me to make your airline reservation?"

"Nah, I am just going to run by the flat and grab a couple of things, take the keys to Strat's Jag, write a check to Marcus to tide him over and tell him to be gone before Strat gets home. I'll be staying at the Waldorf for a couple days or so, then I'll start my drive to California."

"Hell no you aren't! What if something goes wrong with your liver? Hmmm, real smart to go traipsing across country within a couple of weeks of an organ transplant, especially when you are a woman, an attractive one at that, and you're by yourself. Don't you want some company?"

I laugh at his smooth compliment. He always made some innuendo to my looks and I always laughed.

"No, thanks though Will. But, you'll be the first one I'll call if I get lonely, I swear. This is something I need to do on my own."

I hang up with Will and turn around when I notice a shadow cast across the floor at my feet.

"Good morning Mrs. Stratton, how are you feeling?" It was Dr. Zeitgler.

"Good Morning Doctor, I got your message from yesterday. I still am in a little bit of pain. What did you need to talk to me about?"

"Well, I am unsure of whether or not you know this, but the donor of your liver was a young man from out in the Midwest, a tragic death in a farm accident. At my office, just the other day, I received a letter from whom I believe to be his family. The letter was addressed to a "V. A. Stratton." I know that there is a donor and receiver organization located in St. Louis; therefore I am guessing that was how they found out about you. I was going to allow you to read this immediately after you regained consciousness, but we have a policy to make sure that recipients of organs are fully recuperated, in a medical sense, before we give them any information about their donor and their donor's family. I thought you would like to read it since you are leaving today.

A letter? Why would they send me a letter? Should I read it? No. I can't read that, that would make my liver mean something. It's just an organ. But, it was once an original part of someone.

I tremble as I take the letter from his thin, expert hands. He wanly smiles and shakes my left hand.

"Best of luck to you, Mrs. Stratton. I have a list of liver transplant experts on the West Coast at the front desk for you. I still don't agree with your decision to travel like this, but if you must, I understand."

"Thank you so much again for everything, Doctor."

"Na," he said pointing to the letter, "thank him."

May 4th, 1998

Dear Victoria Stratton,

I am not a talented letter writer. I am just a farmer. I have written and rewritten this letter to you so many times that I almost decided not to write it at all. You see, three weeks ago, my eldest son died. His name was Sam, he was seventeen, in fact, it was his seventeenth birthday when he died. Sometimes I blame myself. Sometimes I blame God. There is a hole inside of me now and I don't know if it will ever be filled again.

Sam was a great son. He could bale 150 acres of hay in a day's work and then still have enough energy to feed the orphan calves we have around every spring. I know that doesn't mean a lot to you in New York, but to me it meant everything. I am not writing this letter to upset you in any way ma'am, I just thought maybe one day you might like to know the truth about the boy who is still living inside of you, at least that is how I think about it.

Like I said, it was his seventeenth birthday, and I sent him to check the level of the grain in one of our seven grain elevators on our farm. We keep the freshly harvested grain in these elevators to feed the five hundred head of cattle we have on our farm here. Well, we used to have a problem with varmints getting into our elevators, possums and things, so I got Sam to install some new-fangled lock system so they would stay out. When Sam went up to check the level of the grain in Elevator Four, he tripped the lock and was trapped in that huge silo. They are state of the art, or at least they were about forty years ago, built back in the days when steel was used to build everything. Well, there was my son, suffocating in the airtight grain elevator. I don't know if he screamed or cried. I never will know, but if I know my son, he took it like a man, probably worrying, not about himself, but about his mother and brothers and I would like to think that he thought about me, as he slipped out of this world and into the next. I miss him.

But when we found his body an hour or so later, and I took him to the hospital, they told me that several of his organs were still capable of working and would be perfect candidates for the donor program. I don't know where his other organs went, but when I find out I plan to send them letters too. You were the first name I got back.

I know my son would've been honored to give a part of himself to help someone else, which was always his way. His mother and I are proud to know that he's saving someone else from an early and death. We hope one day to meet you, but right now things are still too hard to accept. Please take care of yourself and that part of our son within you. May God's blessings shine on you, as our prayers always will.

Sincerely yours,
James Simpson

I've been on the road for five days now. I only drive about five or six hours at a time. I take it slow. I've started smoking. I love the natural taste and it keeps my mind off the liquor, really it does. Once I made it over the Alleghenies, I knew I had most, if not all, of that steel behind me. A wave of intense relief crashed over me. I pulled over and I begin to cry. First I cried for Sam, and then I cried for myself. I read the letter over and over. My tears streamed down the page, melting the words into black rivers. Afterwards, after I had cried out all the smog and muck, all the residue from my metal life, out of my body, I stood in awe of the majestic mountains around me. Blues, purples, oranges...there is finally some color in my life. That was days ago, yet it becomes more obvious with each passing moment. I have escaped. I have escaped Strat, I have escaped death, and I have escaped the domination of my false self. I know that now. As I drive through golden wheat fields somewhere in the Mid-west, maybe I'm in Oklahoma, maybe it's Kansas, maybe I am near the Simpson's. I don't really know, and it doesn't really matter. All I know is that finally I feel like I am making my way home, wherever that may be. The only things I see that even remotely resemble the steel gray of my previous life are the giant grain silos that spot the horizon every once in a while. When I see them, I instantly avert my eyes. But then I think, without them, I wouldn't have this life to live again. Without Sam, without those silos, without that hard steel, I would never have had this opportunity to find out what I need in life, to find out who I am. I look down at my lap and smile. There is yellow all around me. There is green all around me. Even the simple black and white of the cows, real, living, breathing cows, seem vibrant and colorful to me. I am alive. I am made of glass, but I am also made of steel.

Smoke and Lust-Jillian Rose Lea

This morning the fog crept away
Leaving me in a haze of
Navy blue and lightness
All alone with you
And my boredom
Languishing like Daisy Fay
I peel another orange
Hoping vaguely that
Someone will turn on a fan
But I just open another window
And turn back to my coke can
A miraculous catastrophe
Inhaling I make my way
Into your eyes
Falling in the darkness
You brilliantly say nothing
I observe the red glow
In your fingertips and
Turn on the lights
Another day
My lazy lover
Will close the window
Turn off the lights
Peel me an orange
Bring me a fan
Abandon his burning
For my fire
But as for today
It is too humid
For love, leave me
To my smoke and lust.



WESLEY ALLSBROOK

Catallus' Spring Travel-Translated by Emily Boone
A Dedication to the Class of 2002

*"Iam mens praetrepidans avet vagari
iam laeti studio pedes vigescunt.
O dulces comitum valete coetus,
longe quos simul a domo profectos
diversae varie viae reportant."*

Now the trembling mind yearns to wander.
Now the happy feet grow zealous.
Farewell, O sweet company of friends.
In different ways, those who set out together from home
now scatter,
to return home,
in different ways, on different routes.

Epilogue-Hallie Moore Sessoms

Never let your academics get in the way of your education, a smarter man than I once said. This is the meaning of this work. These poems, stories and other expressions of creative thought come from the heart of the author; from their most joyful mindset, to their most depressed, and everywhere in between. Take their words with you when you have finished, for the education you can reap from their thoughts is arguably far more valuable than what you may receive in the classroom. The human spirit is depicted in these words, and in that lies a certain humility and beauty that many of us can only hope to achieve.













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