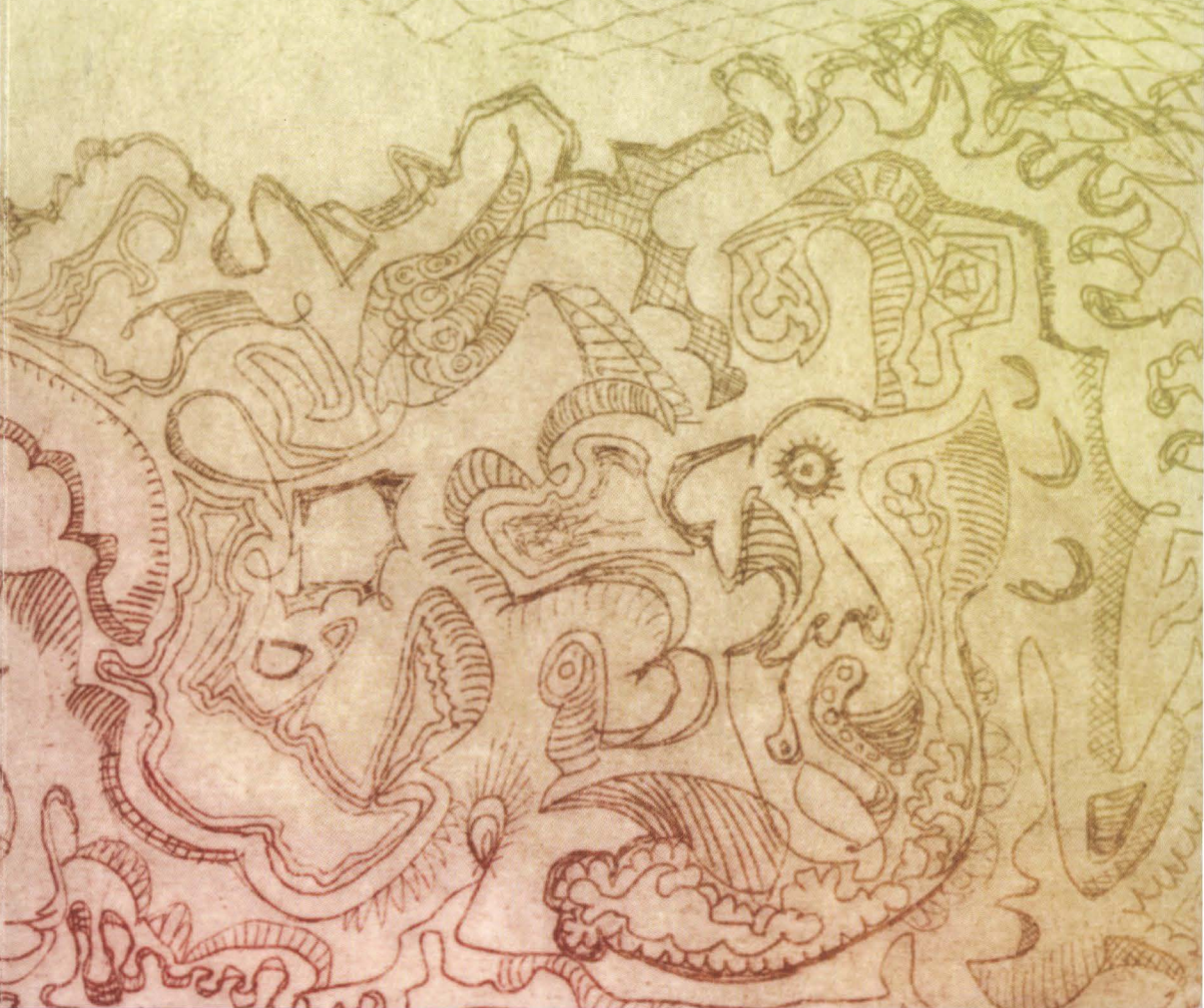
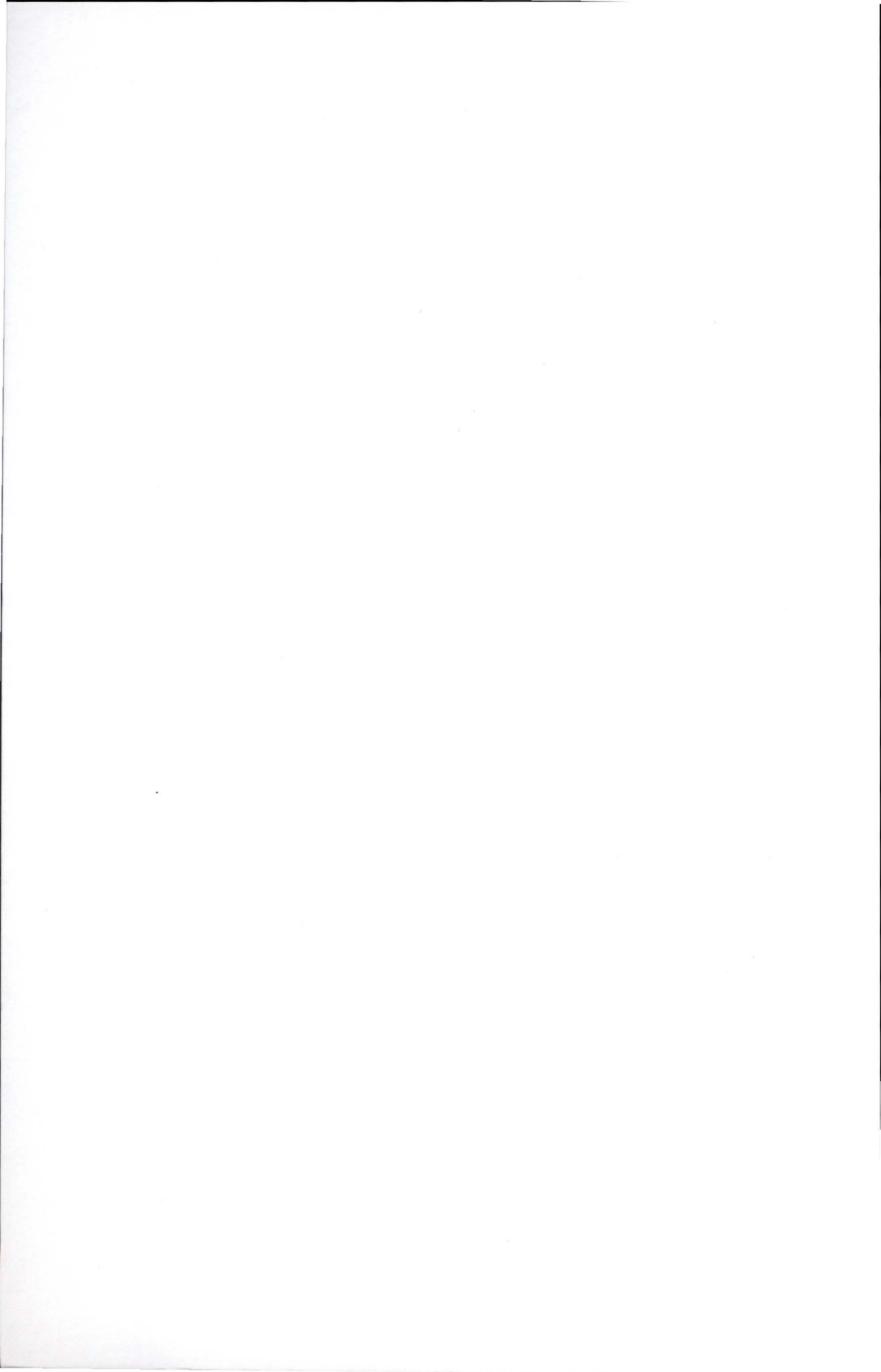


PERIODICAL STACKS



The Chrysalis 2010





The
Chrysalis
2010

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Clay
Adam Lozier

Or to render time and stand outside
The horizontal rush of it, for a moment
To have the sensation of standing outside
The greenish rush of it.

— Robert Hass

My mother's pottery speaks
Like earthen poems
Or nurtured voices singing,
As though the clay itself
Had given birth.

Her hands' words work
In rhyme,
Slipping, curving slowly
So as not to strip their meaning
And their purpose
From the mud.

Blinded by her love
And all her past encounters,
The Seer here throws her stories and her dreams
For those whose hands might trace
The wordless Braille:

This first man,
His brown body pushed outward from the clay,
This first man persistently pushing is
The root of my earthy origins,
And in curious reversal
I now cradle the graceful smiling
Of my mother's hands upon the earth.

In the differences of flesh,
Of fingerprints remembered,
My palms pressed against the clay
Listen again for the dark mirth
Of my mother's tongue.

Love Song #109
Madison Niermeyer

I have planted a garden in the windowsill
it is difficult to do this year after year
to sow seeds into brick
and truly believe they will grow.

It's been almost a decade
and I was starting to think that it was time
to try something new
but then my eyes followed the wind
out to the yard
where the planets are decaying on the front lawn
and as Jupiter's ashes mixed in with the compost
it gave me just enough hope

to open the window
and let in the rain.



Photograph

Oregon Country Fair
Claire H Lindsay-McGinn

storm warning
Susa Lynn

i hear it on the horizon
crawling over the hills
i love the moment it breaks
when the sky opens
just before the crash
i want to run until i stand beneath it
until it opens upon me
washing me clean
it echoes all around
i feel it in my bones

As They Once had Danced
Teresa Sifferman

It was cold that night. Ward shivered and clutched his rifle closer to his body, but his hands felt thick and useless with the chill. His breath puffed out into the winter air like cigarette smoke in a café; suddenly he saw, or rather felt, himself there in that familiar haunt. It was warm and smoky and the flickering lights of the candles cast long shadows that grabbed at the faces of the patrons. It was autumn then, the last time Ward was there, when he had told her he was to be shipped out. She promised she would wait for him. He hoped she was telling the truth.

Ward shifted his weight from his right foot to his left and sank deeper into the snow. It squealed in protest. There were still many hours left in his shift and the stars were already hung in the sky; they looked like they were poised to fall. No light came from the moon that evening; there was only a black mask in the spot that it should have been. Ward wondered if she would do that—cover her face in a black veil—if he were to die here.

He had come close to dying on the front lines several times already: the bullet that grazed his temple, the shrapnel that embedded itself in his comrade, the mustard gas that burned his skin. He preferred not to think about that now. Those thoughts were to be saved for later, when his nightmares pressed on his body in a paralytic terror.

It was in these moments that Ward missed her the most. He would roll over to press his face into the warmth of her neck, only to hear the whimper of another dreamer and see the grotesque form of his snoring neighbor. Then he would feel a pain like something were rubbing his insides raw, and he would not sleep for the rest of the night. He often volunteered for guard duty just to avoid such nights.

Ward shivered and glanced around. The thin trees of the copse were just visible, their barren arms tangled together furiously, tearing at each other, clinging and repulsing all at once. One night after he had drunken himself into a heated stupor he had seen lovers dance like that, or maybe that was just how he remembered it. They had cleared the center of the café for their impromptu meeting, surrounding themselves in the round with an audience of empty chairs and empty tables. Fingers interlaced, they circled each other, drawing nearer like vultures to sweet-smelling carrion only to drift silently away a moment later.

Would they be the same? Ward wondered numbly. Would it be the same when he returned, if ever he did? What if he came back a changed man? What if he was sullen and shrank from her touch? What if she shrank from his? Would what they shared before mean too little in the face of what would pass as they were apart?

Ward felt a sudden wave of heat and sickness flood his body and he clenched his eyes shut against it all. A second later his eyes flashed open, suddenly alert. Something was moving in the trees.



Oil Painting

Selling Nothing Normal
Matthew Soma

Ainsworth House
Kali Boehle-Silva

Did they see, as they stood here
looking off into mist-cloaked hills
the curves of others held hidden
in their memories?
Did these outlines before them
hidden by sunlit leaves
meld and settle into the ones always first
in their minds?
What drove them here
these pale-skinned adventurers
fugitives of Civilization
and slaves to it:
in fifty years
they had parceled out these curves of land
laid down the roads that still stand
colonized a people
who only appear in their accounts
as houseboys, cooks, maids
and workers on their plantations?
Who remembers them, their loves
and fears and dreams
caught as they were
in the relentless progress of history
they helped create?
They left behind buildings
no longer remembered as their own
which now keep vigil
hunched over the hill in stones
and others live out their lives
in the space they carved out for themselves.

Morning on Brown Field
Colin Wilson

Bleak twilight, fog hanging low.
Hoarfrost clinging to shivering blades of grass,
encrusted stalks caught just as I am —
somewhere between day & night,
somewhere between frozen and just warming up.

We, the grass and I, are things immersed in a viscous silver substrate,
longing for the not-yet moment when we will be transformed
into something iridescent, something stelliform
in the radiance of the morning sun.

If only for a moment...

If only for long enough that someone, anyone
might see us in this one glimmering instant,
our shivering seconds in the dawn's luminescence —
before our diamond shells are broken,
before our rimy carapaces melt.

For how will I manage to stand after I have softened so,
like the grass in the mid-day sun —
will I soon bend instead of breaking?
Will I yield soundlessly underfoot, without complaint or resistance?

Will I, like the grass,
simply slough my brittle husk, my crystal case,
to vacillate with whatever wind blows?



Photography

Skogskyrkogården
Claire H Lindsay-McGinn

just like that
Emily Moore

oh, but she was just like rain
when it hits ash
from ashtrays left out
on porches in autumn,
like rain on cold ash,
strewn by frigid breezes,
putting finger-dust dimples in the grey.
she was just like that,
and I wished to god
for some breeze, thin and cool,
to stir me up
so I could bathe in her deluge.

Too Young, Too Old or Maybe just Too Long
Kristofer Smiley

Today I took a break.
I took off all my clothes
and set them
neatly folded
upon my sagging couch.

I went out to a certain place
where forest and Pacific speak.
I went to meet myself out there
with whiskey,
honey peanuts
and dried out pepper meat.

I could not meet myself today
— I got too drunk.
The peanuts were too sweet.
The pepper got into my nose
and there was nowhere nice to sit.

I did not leave my house today,
I only sat on my kitchen sink.
Instead I drank some whole fat milk,
and thought of my dead friends.

Ode to a Spider
Scott Klein

Tiny spider
on my paper,
how you surprised me.
I saw you,
and you brought life into me.
My heart raced,
afraid of such a tiny thing.

And when you saw me,
you too
were nervous,
so you fled.
You were like a grain of sand
overwhelmed by the roar of the great ocean next to you—
lost in the magnitude of this world.
but in my room
on my page,
I noticed you.
you were not lost to me.
And though you were so small,
I noticed the sand instead of the ocean.

As I considered your fate,
I thought of the adrenaline
that pumped through my veins.
I thought of the break
you caused in my monotonous day,
so I decided to repay you
for your kindness.
Instead of putting you outside
to be lost in the ocean,
I decided it would be better
for your world to remain small;
for your world to be the size of my room.
So I set you down.
You quickly disappeared,
lost to me,
only to be found
if fate blesses me twice.



Photography

Three Colors: Green
Ewa Pater

And I Just Want to go Home
Till Gwinn

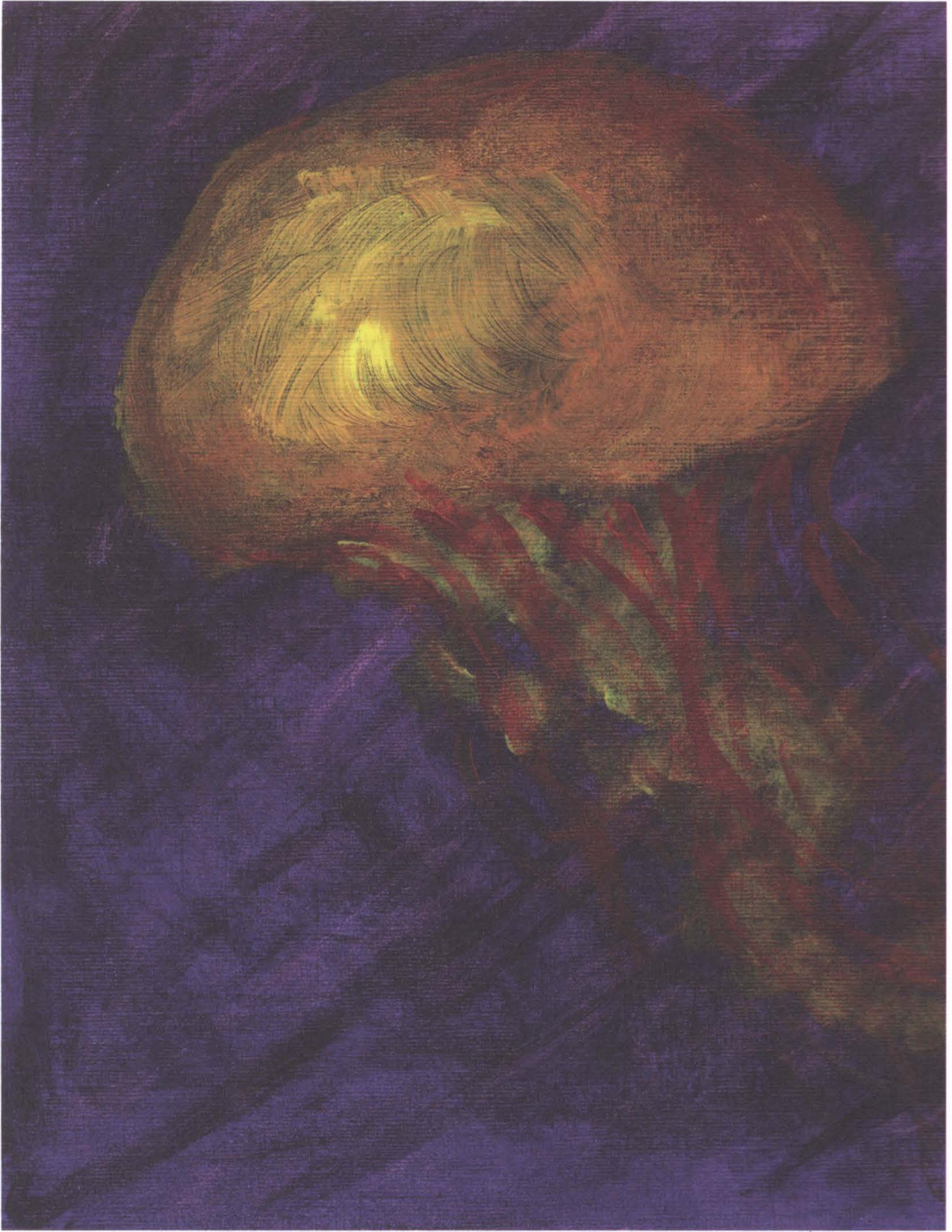
Please madam Adam,
let go of my heels and let me run.
I have no body to sell,
no secrets to tell,
I just want to find
a snowy Atlas Mountain lined with
tiny crying flowers on the slopes being pushed
on by the winter wind.
There I find my home.
I promise this time!
I will find want:
A personal, death free,
chrome Babylon.

Chrome Babylon
Donna Henderson

Renamed Al Hillah,
mound of mud-brick
buildings, tell of debris,
hell on a hill replacing
the once-holy city that thrived
on the fertile Mesopotamian
plain between the Tigris
and the Euphrates; city
with your eight gates
& hanging gardens

this was before the centuries
of sieges then revenge
for the sieges gutted
& emptied you,

your ruins occupied now
by the tank wheels
steel will and petroleum
thirsts of America,
what was left of you
leveled to protect you,
your geographical self
& the mystical
city of the apocalypse
you represent
both resembling Detroit and Flint
in their death throes.



Oil Painting

Deep Sea
Shannon McDonell-Bryant

Chaos

Kali Boehle-Silva

Today I ponder the mathematical concept of chaos
(by which I do not mean the mythical
abyss or gaping maw of nothingness
or even utter confusion and disorder,
but a system deceptively simple
victim to the slightest shift in initial condition
which causes it to behave in ways
that our minds, used to linear patterns,
find themselves too slow to follow.)
as I walk on the edges of winding streets
tributaries of dust and garbage edged
by tin-roofed houses and thin-legged
children. People cross and recross
the street; spinach leaves fall
from piles of greens on tables
that sit in front of blue-faced shops
while a chicken tugs fruitlessly
on the rope tying it to the leg of a chair.
From the hill the twisting roads run
quickly downwards, losing
themselves among illegal
power lines and charcoal smoke.

I wonder if I bought one of the postcards
with aerial images of Kibera's
rusting tin roofs and sagging laundry
lines selling in the tourist
shops a mile down the road
the elusive equation would unfold itself
in the turns and shadings
of the narrow roads and one-roomed houses
leaning close against one another. Perhaps
the answer to the problem
of slums can be found
through a careful application
of the right laws, can be
mapped out as neatly as another
equation I saw once on an overhead
projector in a math class

as we discussed how
non-linear differential equations
at order above three will at times
blossom into chaos—taking
the form of butterfly wings, ferns
or clouds. If we drew out the
patterns of daily life in these
streets and muddy yards
the trajectories of children
captured them in brief moments
of stillness, traced them back to their
beginnings, could we find
the small, insignificant errors
in rounding or calculating
that sent the best intentions
of city planning, slum upgrade
and poverty eradication
spiraling off into unpredicted
directions and deeper fractures?
Would we find a solution
or at least the original equation
with which we could return
to our computers and calculators,
key in, and receive a reply?
Or, like in the classroom lit
by the glow of the projector
would we study the image
note down that the equation
though mappable, is still
beyond our ability to solve,
close our books, and exit the dim room?

Untitled

Brin Manoogian-O'Dell

Down on the Hocking River Road,
High overgrown and hardly seen,
There lies a mess with seven-six
Emblazoned on its side in green

The axle is snapped clean in two
The tank with dented, fading sheen
Abandoned since the day it crashed
And ruptured to bleed gasoline

The insects in the summer dusk
Drown out the river's call below
How did the tanker end up here,
So near the Hocking's lazy flow?

It started in some jukebox bar
Leaning close on the highway berm
When Creedence drifted through the smoke
And bullets through Rhodes's second term

A trucker by the name of Bill
Was boozing up and getting mean
He knew that he had three more days
To move some gas to Bowling Green

Bill was good and firmly sloshed
When through the door red shadow poured
It pooled up close to people's feet
Rose up and gave a might roar

More fearsome than the Communists
And those Brownshirt boys to boot
It scared every one of those bar-flies out
A wave of blood close in pursuit

Some of them hid in the bushes
Some ran off through the trees
Bill jumped up quick into his truck
And took off down Route Thirty-Three

Not far ahead was the wrong turn
That shortly spelled the end of Bill
The red wave broke right over him
And faded in the petrol spill

The sheriff found him the next day
The cab windows were all broken in
Bill was hanged like a White-Tail deer
Drained and dangling from a tree limb

The source and nature of the wave
Both remain unknown to this day
But glimpsed by some within its depth
Were helmets shading demon eyes



Photography

Three Colors: Blue
Ewa Pater

Steam Engine
Niklas Fischer

This joint charges me \$8 to be sad. I walk up to the bar and order the usual: pint of PBR and a shot of whisky. I take solace in the fact that even in Chicago, an ocean and half a continent away from everything I call home, the usual remains the same. The first band is upbeat blues, like B.B. King with a slapping base line. I keep to the usual and spend an unusual amount of money. By the time the second band comes on I am vibrating to the slow and depressed swinging of my spinal chord. The second band is what I need: two black men, two guitars, two microphones. I thought I wasn't racist but I really want these men to be black. Looking around I realize that most people in the audience want these men to be black, too. The faces in the crowd don't look like they're from Chicago. Their faces don't exhale Chicago, their feet tap in the rhythm of the beat but not the rhythm of Chicago. Chicago has a distinct rhythm. I got to know the city's beat when I listened to a street musician on the corner of Michigan and Ontario.

He was playing a saxophone. Some tunes were famous jazz standards. Some tunes were Chicago. The jazz songs he played by himself, the Chicago tunes he played with the city. The people around him did not seem to realize this, but he was in perfect beat with the noise the street lights made to guide blind people across the wide streets. For the first time I liked the high obnoxious beeping of the lights. It was so simple. Instead of tapping his foot Chicago tapped its blind people into the rhythm of the songs. For the short stretches of green light, Chicago, the man, and his saxophone swung in harmony. The song became Chicago and Chicago became the song.

The songs in the bar are not Chicago. They were Memphis or Jackson or Nashville and the people who listen certainly don't differentiate. Well, 'fuck them,' I think and down another whiskey. By that time my sadness costs me up to \$30, which I could have spent on a hotel room. Later I realize that \$30 would barely cover the adult channel fee in a hotel in Chicago.

It feels good to be sad again. It always had because I had known it for so long. It had become a matter of habit. There were times when I would not have needed to be sad; I would make an effort to be sad. It had transformed into a habit. Here it feels good. My broken heart fits the cracks of Chicago like tar that covers the cracks in the planks of a rotten boat. I know Chicago as well as anyone because I am here with a broken heart and I am willing to

acknowledge it. 'I might just be sick,' I think, and use my teeth to scrape the film of nicotine off my jaundiced tongue.

It must be late since even the blues gives out. I decide to talk to these guys. During their show they said that they had lived in Chicago all their lives, South Side born and raised. I decide to call them on it. I hate myself but I can't help it.

"Good show, fellas," I start.

"Thanks."

"Can I buy you guys a drink?"

"Yes," the taller of the two says. "Whiskey."

"Shit, man, we don't drink anymore, remember," the smaller one looks at him with a sly smile.

"Right, right," the other mutters and turns to me. "Well, thanks anyway, but we don't drink anymore."

I feel stupid holding my glass now so I empty it. "How long you guys been playing?"

"The guitars since we can hold them. The blues since we can't hold it in any longer," the shorter of the two replied without looking at me. I contemplated this for a while, wondering what to say next.

"My name's Fish. Well, it's not my name, but my friends call me that," I blurt out like an idiot. They look at me, then at each other and seem to debate whether I'm a complete fool, a drunk, a good guy, or all three of them.

"I'm Bigger," the taller of the two says, "and this is Shorty...well, these are not our real names, but our fans call us that."

"Do your friends call you that as well?"

"No," he says laconically and they turn towards their guitar cases.

I am not sure whether they are making fun of me or not. I decide that they are and so I might as well be fucking with them too.

"You ever play 'Sweet Home Chicago'?"

They exchange a weary look. "What do you think?"

"I know, I don't like that song, not on a guitar," I say just to annoy them. At the mention of this, however, Shorty looks at me sharply and studies my face which is half paralyzed by alcohol.

"What do you mean by that?"

I take a breath. "Well, I don't know why, but I feel it should be played on something else. The guitar, I just don't get it, you know." I

am amazed by how stereotypical I can sometimes be and I wonder if they would like to spit in my face.

"Have you ever heard it on any other instrument?"

"No"

"Would you like to?"

I am surprised. "Ye...yes," I mutter, not sure what to think of this.

"Come out back."

I follow them past the stage through a dimly lit corridor and a fire door into a small back area. There are two empty wooden crates standing on the dust illuminated by a small red light over the door. I can make out faint lines of a mural on the back wall of the club we just left. I can't say what it reads though.

Bigger and Shorty sit down on the two crates. It appears as if this is not their first time to sit out here. Bigger lights up a cigarette and so do I. Shorty looks at me sporadically as he is rubbing something against the front of his shirt beneath his jacket. After a while he slips his hands out into the open and shows me his right palm. A small harmonica throws back the dull red glow of the light. Without saying anything he starts playing. Bigger and I watch him play.

I have never heard anything like his playing. He starts off very slowly, taking deep breaths through the instrument. Then he picks up his pace carefully and inserts little puffs in between his breaths. As he grows faster his cheeks are working like a train. I wonder if he's hyperventilating. I want to ask him if he's ok but Bigger lays his broad hand on my shoulder and signals me to stay quiet. He looks at me and slightly shakes his head. I don't know how to take this. Suddenly I realize what song he is playing. It's 'Sweet Home Chicago.'

"Right on," I mutter. Shorty immediately stops playing.

"Took you a while to recognize it, did it?" He gives me a small smile.

"I never heard it played like this before. Where did you learn that?"

"My grandfather taught me. He wrote it," he says as he wipes his forehead and lights up a cigarette Bigger has put in his mouth.

"Robert Johnson wrote it." I won't let them completely screw me over.

Shorty jumps from the crate. "What the fuck do you think you

know about this song?" He's glaring at me viciously and barely reacts to Bigger who has laid his hands on Shorty's shoulder just as he had on mine a moment before.

"I know that Robert Johnson wrote this song." I try to sound firm but they can see that I am scared and holding on to this one inane fact like a rat which has bitten a human toe in terror and cannot let go for a greater, unidentifiable fear.

"You know about how black people came to Chicago?" Bigger asks me.

I don't take my eyes off Shorty as I try to remember my high school history classes. "Great migration north, they were leaving the South to find work and better lives, I reckon."

"You reckon right, buddy, and how did they come up here to find work and better lives, what do you reckon?"

I still can't take my eyes off Shorty. His face is as if chiseled from a block of granite. It's not as if he is looking at me but at a cloud or a curtain veiling something he can only see in blurry shapes.

"You hear me?" Bigger gives me a slight push.

"Ah...train, the train, they took trains," I mutter and turn towards Bigger.

"That's right, well, some of them did. Now I'm sure you learned about what they did to black folks down South. Just try to imagine what it meant to them when they saw that train coming, when they heard its whistle blowing. Can you imagine that?"

I saw what he meant. "No."

"Now that's why you don't know shit about who wrote that song and why Robert Johnson sure is not the only one."

Bigger throws his cigarette to the ground and crushes it with his foot. Shorty imitates his movements and they both get up and turn towards the door. I feel ashamed. Bigger turns to me.

"You ok?"

"Yes, sure, listen, I'm sorry..."

"You're not the first one."

He pats me lightly on the shoulder and pushes the door open.

"Wait," I shout, surprised by the volume of my voice. "What was that sound? Why did it sound so different, almost like a train?"

Bigger smiled at Shorty and then at me. "Have you ever heard a steam engine take on speed?" He turned away and walked through the door. Shorty followed him without a word.

I light another cigarette. I just heard a steam engine play 'Sweet Home Chicago.'



Photography
A Sense of Wonder in Venice
Mary Ochs

Prufrock in Portland
Leandra Stanley

Je marcherai les yeux fixés sur mes pensées,
Sans rien voir au dehors, sans entendre aucun bruit,
Seul, inconnu, le dos courbé, les mains croisées,
Triste, et le jour pour moi sera comme la nuit.
— Victor Hugo

Extravagant words, elegant clothes, arrogant people,
Intelligent phrases, nationally known scholars, Princeton and Harvard
alums,
Accepted verbosity shared over
Champagne, caviar, crème brûlée

Ladies fasten their hair in tight buns,
Don dresses cinched up their backs,
Perfectly pinned brooches,
Gentlemen sporting suits and top hats
Cummerbunds and spectacles perched perfectly
In the eyes of audacious adventurers and explorers,
A pocket watch ticks in perfect time.

They dance under a lonely moon
Filled with a passion that will end too soon

Aristocratic soiree,
Why have I dragged myself here?
Tuxedos, dinner gowns,
I cannot even afford a thread of that woman's scarf
I wonder if they can tell
That I pinned my own hair,
Buckled my own shoes,
This dress does not belong to me,
But they tell me I look gorgeous tonight.

They dance under a lonely moon
Filled with a passion that will end too soon.

Public transportation
I did not have a car to make my grand arrival in
The bus driver was rude
The man to my far left smells like popcorn
But you were on the bus
Seventh row back, right window seat
I wonder if you could tell I was wearing a borrowed outfit

How couldn't you know?

Fancy Dress
unfancy transportation.

But it felt like you knew me
Everything, oh stranger on the bus
Did I ever tell you of the time I almost got stabbed on public
transportation?
Or of the rapping, middle aged, businessman?
You can't remember, but I feel as though you've been there all along
You're no stranger at all.

She broke her heart the other day
Thus my heart was broken,
He broke her heart next,
The one left untouched was you.
What is it that makes us not good enough?
Too much or too little of what?
Isn't it you, not me?
Clichés that are worn out before they're even said.
I bet it's my hand-me-down dress
My home done hairdo
My lack of knowledge about which of the four forks I am to use first

Do I dare interrupt this conversation about communist dictators?
To ask with which of the thirty utensils I should use to eat this
Extremely small piece of what appears to be some sort of meat first?
Who would've thought we'd be going to the same place?

Your eyes catch me with striking familiarity
I've known you somewhere else
I've met your passion,
Felt your skin,
Smooth, beautiful,
Smelled your scent,
Pleasantly intoxicating
But your eyes, capture me
Burn deep into my soul
Reading my every thought
Putting me on the line between bliss and insanity

I have been the face of strength to the masses
While you know I have wasted away behind this facade
Blanketed in sorrow
And trapped in a haze that has risen from the ashes of what was
Ignorance and naiveté
This impurity and foulness
Has yet to make your love waver
And for that I fear you

I've seen the pain in the eyes of the starving men on the street
Young people stripped of their childhood
Sad women fixing their hair perfectly just to go to the grocery store

Of all things I could be doing
All the people I could be helping,
I'm here with you
In this place of security
Just you and me
The only place on the planet where I would desire to stay forever
With memories of the greatest times and worst times
Did you gander at me?
I still have a borrowed outfit.
You have seen me falter
I've seen you in the beginning of your end
I've seen the face of death take your baggage and check you in
For a flight to nowhere.
In short, I was terrified.

And could it be worth it?
After everything? Ups, downs, coffee, tea?
Amongst the small talk and huge talk between you and me?
Did I bite off more than I could chew?
Or have you picked someone who lacks the strength to hold you,
Like you desperately need to be held?
One day...
I'll tell you everything...
Rest my head on your shoulder
Hoping you'll tell me the same
The true story
No more lies.

Would it have been worth it?
After the teacups, lemon cakes, the laughter, the sorrow
The music, the theater, the everything...
And so much more.
How can I possibly put this into words...
Tell you what I mean?
I am no princess or queen
No Juliet or Cinderella,
No first lady, no damsel in distress,
Save me, rescue me, none of that.
Let me save you.
I'm still wearing a borrowed outfit
Stuck trying to fit the mold of what the world wants.
Honest, trusting,
Wary, frightened,
Cautious, spontaneous,

Conforming, Rebellious,
Often almost ridiculous
Never the player, always the played,
The gullible fool.

They dance under a lonely moon
Filled with a passion that will end too soon.

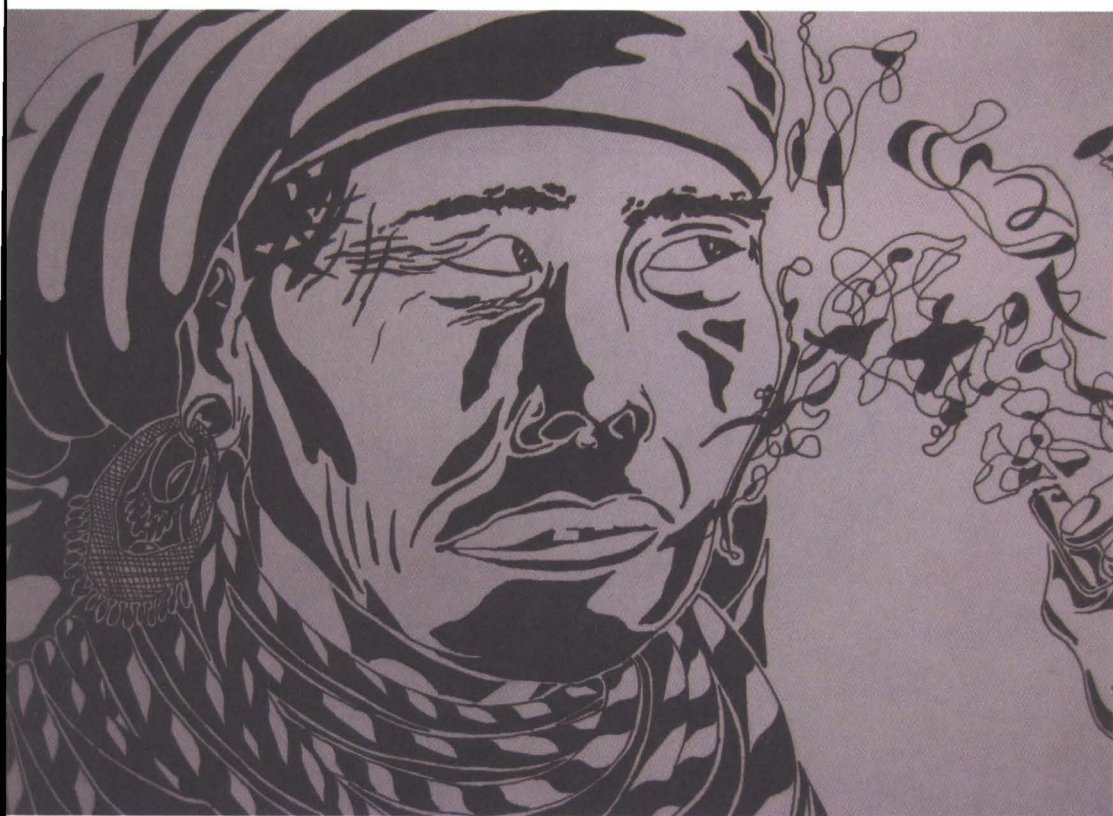
Should I wear my hair down?
Should I drink this lemonade?
I'll wear dark sunglasses and long sleeved cotton shirts
I've heard the children singing arm in arm.

But they won't sing for me.
For I am the hand-me-down stranger.
I've seen them skipping down the street
Through the paths in the park
Playing in the daisies.

Until we are back in the bus
Just you...me...
the bus driver...
and the man who smells like popcorn...
In outfits that aren't ours,
To a party where we don't belong
On a road that leads to nowhere,
And we wake up in a place where no one can hurt you.

The Woman whose Door you Should not Knock On
Lauren Ballinger

each day sang
and sang her opera, her shrilling opera,
her voice sheering the air,
like a blade. Traffic rose
outside her door, every hour, every day,
morning, noon, night. If She could sing
the stars, she would.
On one side, her neighbors the DePrees
turned their backs to her
and went about their lives.
Who she was, I don't know
but I've seen her shadow—dark.
Her voice her only friend it seemed,
her crystalline voice. As if
to her singing was all there was.
Years later, I returned to my old block.
Sing sing sing her songs
crisply down a decade's journey.
On her other side lived my ma and pa,
Across a mysterious alley, often filled
with cats she must have fed
and cared for. But if a knock came to her door,
as mine did in 2004
and another in 2005
it came back nothing—silence
emerged for once,
happy silence
that would stay
until you retreated
down the steps and
crossed out of her world.



Ink on Paper

Ink Drawing
Matthew Soma

Window in English 201
Aimee Walton

so much depends
upon

a second floor
window

grey with cold
sky

above the old
man

i eye
Cameron Hill

from eyes, i
eye you, for a
moment wandering,
in the shadow by a lie.

still, a moment devotion, behind
eyes lies an i,
or a lie.

sigh, i lie,
"aye," for i eye
no i, in blue
eyes nor within,
pale eyes.

Speaking in Tongues
Angela Boston

Why is the man in the grey suit talking gibberish at me?
does he think that my soul will swell up and swallow me with the words
that bubble through his larynx,
choking him?

Those sounds stuck in his throat
ache to be heard as phonemes
combined into morphemes,
fighting to break through the Supreme,
gather the courage at last to blaspheme,
but the mangled, caustic mass just floats
down
stream.

Someone said those were God's words.
Those misshapen syllables,
hacked and beaten and boxed and
meaningless.
No god would do that.

I've seen Gaelic words peppered with English
weave tapestries from knots threaded through young ears,
lifting tiny feet right up off the ground to
tales of Navajo spirits and
chants of Maori legends.

I've seen a woman sing,
the strength of her diaphragm pushing through the open window
lifting up the burden of the world to whoever might take it.

I've seen a young man weave crystalline threads of language together
with the rising and falling timbre of his voice,
pulling the people behind and before and after me
into words that reached up farther than any of us could,
waxing slowly into ideas,
and ideas into movements
And in that moment, I filled up —
my heart beating through my chest,
down my arms and out my fingertips.

Old men rock, barely heard,
on porches of planks and fable and
the woman by the window blows words straight into me,
the vibrations of her strain making me feel each bone in my body
until I creak and gasp and feel how much I do not know,

I don't believe in deities
and delusory destinies
but this fragile attempt to communicate
is the closest thing I've heard to holy.



Oil Painting

Self Reliance
Erika Foldyna

The Windowsill
Mary Benke

I read the book today.
Was it really that good, she said.
Yes, it was.

I read it. It was good.
Did you read the whole thing, she said.
Yes, some parts.

I liked the part on whales.
What about parasites, she said.
Yes—well, no.

I read your book today.
I haven't finished it, she said.
Yes, I know.

It was really good.

I looked outside today.
Did squirrels eat the bird feed, she said.
Yes, they did.

I've always liked that spot.
Because of the sunlight, she said.
Yes, the shade.

I looked out our window.
You saw through all that rain, she said.
Yes—well, no.

I sat, viewed our forest.
Weren't those trees cut down, she said.
Yes, they were.

The weather was perfect.

Apocalypse
Aimee Walton

I was going to burn my every word
today, I thought I'd look for fires
or opportunities to build
a fire
and secretly, somehow
with shadows flickering on lashes
and commotion, smiling,
I'd flick them in
teeth flashing
and the pages of
a stack! of journals would
float—blackened crisps of ash
into the night.
And maybe they would
land in my hair
like grace,
or snow no longer fresh.



Photography

Three Colors: Red
Ewa Pater

Brief Moments
Isaiah Swan

No one ever thinks about walking down a crowded sidewalk. Why would we? We do it every day. It's a busy city in a small world full of people that share nothing but the desire to go somewhere. We shuffle, dodge, and skirt, weaving to and fro, in and out, down and up. She sidesteps left, I squeeze up, he walks through. We interact. For one instant, you connect. Two lives, each more painful and hopeful and joyful and sad and happy and real than any psychiatrist could ever possibly comprehend, meet for a single instant. Then you pass. You never see her again. The instant she rounds that corner, she could be mugged, or hit by a car, or have a heart attack, or trip on her long black high heels, bashing her head in against the green metal trashcan with the banana peel on its lid. But you'd never know.

I spend most of my time at work. I'm a cashier. I stand behind the register. The whole world files by, one by one, pushing their lives in front of them in squeaky plastic carts with uneven wheels. They pull out this and that, then put them on the revolving belt, sending them to me. I pick each item up, turn it over to find the barcode, and interpret it with my scanner. I then look up, smile, and tell them exactly how much they're worth. They enjoy it, I think. The middle-aged man in the black coat puffs up slightly as I confirm the price of his new 15-inch laptop. \$549.00. He looks around as I say it, wondering if the rest of the world recognizes his achievement. The rest of the world stands hunched over their carts, quieting their squabbling children, reading voyeuristic magazines and comparing candy bar prices. But then, as he slides his card, he looks at me and rests in the knowledge that I must've noticed because that's why I'm here. He takes his receipt. Then he puts his computer in his cart and rolls it out the door. The next one walks up into the spotlight with a stack of DVDs. Chick flicks. Ah, I say. My girlfriend loved that one. We saw it in theatre, in plastic seats with gum on the undersides and shadows of teenagers kissing stuck to the back cushions. She smiles, quoting her favorite scene, when the handsome star with the bare arms and knowing smile first sees the pretty blond workaholic who writes for the magazine. I laugh, handing her the receipt. She pays in bills and walks out the door. They all do, eventually. They all walk out the door without a backward glance.

I like romantic comedies. It's nice to know exactly what's going to happen, to know that it's all happening according to plan,

and that the plan is two people kissing from a balcony overlooking a bright city street as the audience awwws through mouthfuls of popcorn. There are tense moments, though. Remember when he told his friends he was only dating her for the money and the blond hair billowing in the breeze? The jealous one with the black hair and full eyebrows told her, hoping for something, anything, to convince him there was still a chance for him. But don't worry, the right one, the one with the charismatic laugh and true love in every kiss, will prove his devotion in front of the fountain with the silent doves with clipped wings. She will smile, tears pouring down her pure white face, and wrap her arms tightly around never-ending bliss as credits roll naming party-boy pothead actors and ditzy actresses who have been divorced twice already and are now drunk in the backseats of limos, giggling in the laps of opportunistic pool-boys. But I still like them. I like knowing that, someday in the next hour, the walls will come down, and two people will see each other for who they really are and like what they see.

I eat lunch in the break room, usually, unless my girlfriend calls asking me to take her to lunch at the cheap Italian restaurant a few streets down. I bring a small sandwich, cut in squashed triangles carrying three slices of ham and a thin spread of mustard. I fill up a paper cup with lukewarm water from the white water cooler bubbling serenely in the corner next to the bulletin board covered in notices of dreams deferred and silent tears in dark bedrooms. I sit down at a round plastic table covered in names carved with dollar pocket-knives by fired dropouts now dying on bean-bag chairs in front of black-and-white movies. Other workers pop in and out, chatting and laughing over clueless customers and overstressed managers, hoping to believe in just a hint of superiority for just a few minutes. The overweight girl from the stockroom with the exposed bra straps and makeup applied in front of a dirty mirror before every break sits down next to me with a piece of chicken. How are you, she asks. How's life in the spotlight, in front of the real world full of people trying to scratch out a living just like you and me? It's good, I say. I like opening the till and handing them back a laugh to hold them over if only for a little while. You know they're fake, she says. You know the smiles are dropped on the asphalt with the receipts and loose change the instant they no longer see your expectant face hanging loosely above a cheap paper name tag they didn't read. I know, I say.

I know.

Sometimes my girlfriend will call. Why don't we meet for lunch? I need someone to tell about my day that's only half-over so I can know that someone recognizes what I've been through and can congratulate me on the astounding accomplishment that I still exist. Sure, I say.

That's why I'm here.

I drive there in a small car with a crack in the upper left corner of the windshield and a right side-mirror containing a senile old man in a dirty pickup that is closer than it appears. The radio is on a classic rock station still singing songs of a decade when it was okay for a young couple without a dime in their pockets or a life marked out in college degrees to make love in the mud under a clear blue sky. The light turns and the car in front of mine stops slowly, with care. I hesitate for a moment as I consider a smashed hood and failed airbag and my head shoved through the steering wheel and peace as I realize that there's nothing the paramedics can do and that I won't have to sit back in a rocking chair on a crumbling porch holding the faded picture of a long-dead wife in a yellow dress. I shake my head and push down on the brakes, the rest of traffic none the wiser. Then Free Fallin' comes on the radio and I sing along, loud and off-key, as the lady in the car next to me applies makeup with practiced hands while talking on her cell-phone to a bored friend waiting for her husband to come home so she can wrap her legs around his waist and pull him to the living room floor.

I always listen to music. I usually listen to rock, though I do not tie myself down to that one genre. I like rock because it has no subtlety. Where pop artists draw you in with catchy beats and deep v-necks exposing spray-tanned stomachs, rock blares out of my speakers, bashing against the walls in useless frustrated pain as I don't scream along as loud as I can out of fear of waking up the neighbors. I collapse slowly onto my desk, banging my head repeatedly, softly, on the corrugated wood. Then I search for the soundtrack to Beauty and the Beast to taste innocence and giggling in front of a fireplace as a monster and my darling girl dance in a ballroom colored in stars. I try. I try as hard as I can to cry, just a little. To prove that childhood dreams are still alive.

My girlfriend is already seated. She orders a large bowl of pasta covered in white sauce made from a can by the chef with

the crooked cap. She takes a large bite in between the sentence about a jackass customer and the one about the bitchy boss with the clipboard of regulations passed down by an invisible corporate manager that committed suicide last week by drowning himself in a toilet bowl in the bathroom next to the custodian's closet. She continues through a mouth filled with food that dribbles a little down her chin. She catches it with a napkin and a frown. She doesn't look at me, not anymore. Her eyes go behind me, through me, to the promise that someday she will be able to rest on a couch with a big puffy blanket and an arm around her shoulders. I sit there, in that booth. I bob my head, and say that of course you will. Of course you will one day wake up to a glorious sunshine and the smiling face of the man you deserve in whose place I now sit like a cardboard cutout in a crowd from a low-budget movie about a football player scoring the final touchdown of the most important story ever told. She nods, accepting.

She borrows my car, dropping me off on the way back to the low-budget clothing store selling jeans designed by rappers and young girls playing with Barbie dolls in front of microphones to the applause of hundreds of screaming fans wanting to sing their own songs while rolling down green hills with grinning boys and messy silk hair. I clock in and head back to my register, clicking on the numbered light floating above my head that lets the world know it's okay, the wait is over, you can now get back one minute faster to your soap operas and interviews with celebrities you never cared about before they drove home drunk after a night of knowing everyone loves the people they pretended to be last year. The old lady with faded purple cardigan shakily places on the conveyer belt a package of gum and a book about a young married couple solving mysteries under a French sun. I run them through with a smile. \$9.98. Would you like a bag? No, she says. No thank you. And she sits in her car for hours, reading about days too beautiful to have existed in a world of fast-moving mobiles and looming nursing homes.

My girlfriend calls me. I'm beat, she says. We should watch a movie tonight. What movie, I say. I don't really care, she says. I think of *The Lion King* and crying in each others' arms on the floor in front of an African plain and the love tonight. I tell her I'll buy the newest thriller after work. She says that's fine.

I take a bus home. I sit in the back, watching the passengers

argue and gossip about television and politics and dirty busses full of old people and high-school dropouts dreaming about finding a world worth living in. A young woman with a four-year-old sits next to me. The child looks up at me with bright blue eyes. What's your name? he asks. It doesn't matter, I say. You'll forget it by the time your mother grabs your hand and tugs you off the bus. He nods, acquiescing. When I grow up, he says, I'm going to be an astronaut. I'm going to float above you all, isolated from the world by a white suit with a shiny faceplate. I'm going to leave you all behind. I say good for you. That's the only dream worth having. He beams.

When I get home, I start up dinner. I mix up some pizza dough with leftover flour and yeast that must be in water at a temperature of 115 degrees or else some will not activate and will sit in the dough silent and unmoving as the rest rush forward expanding their horizons under the bright light. I open the oven door and take out the now-puffed dough. I knead it slowly. Then I pound it. I pound it until the crust is so thin you can see the white mat behind it. Then I even it back out. I pour a light coat of red sauce, then a heavy layer of cheese. Because that's how she likes it. I know because our first date I made the same pizza and put on the same amounts and she giggled as she tried to bite off the elastic cheese dripping from the pizza and down the side of her mouth in thin white strings. I laughed and reached over to wipe it off with my finger. She let me.

I put the pizza in the oven and sit in front of the television for a few moments before she arrives. Channel upon channel of cops repeating the same line of dialogue across countless cities with the same five people in each one. Remember when television was interesting? When you could sit in front of it for hours watching the same rabbit hit the same hunter over the head with a frying pan every Saturday morning? And you would sit there in blue felt pajamas with microwave pancakes and syrup and a large grin as your parents told you to turn it down it's not even 7:00. But you never listened. You never looked behind you to see two tired shapes facing away from each other in the same bed hoping to forget for just a few more hours that another day is here.

It's 8:00. She hasn't shown. I eat a slice of the pizza by myself in front of smarmy detectives and dying prostitutes. Then I tear off chunk after chunk with teeth and hands and dry eyes. I eat until all that's left is crumbs and a bit of crust that she will pick up

and nibble while telling me about the boss needing her to work overtime and the busy intersection downtown and the cell phone sitting in her pocket with my number on it that she never used. Then I carefully wipe the corner of my mouth with a Kleenex from the small cardboard box behind the lamp on the scratched end table and just breathe.

When she enters, she sits down on the couch with a sigh, taking off her jacket and throwing it in the corner next to the door so she can easily find it when she leaves around 11:00 to get some sleep as I stare at her smooth back walking out of my door and into my car and driving off to an apartment I've never seen.

I put in the movie, and we sit back and watch. She has her arms crossed tightly across her chest and her foot taps incessantly on the brown carpet. I do not reach out my arm to touch her leg. I do not touch her ear with a grin and a whisper as she looks at me with adoring eyes and a smile she's never shown anyone else because no one else could make her feel the way I do on a cold night in the middle of the week.

We watch in silence. A tough man in a suit and dyed-black hair, carrying a shiny pistol that changes model every few scenes, runs down alleys from faceless villains on motorcycles. Our hero turns around and with a single shot pops the tire of the frontrunner, causing a collision then an explosion flinging helmeted crash-test dummies against brick walls as limbs snap and the hero smiles and I laugh aloud to no one in particular because that's what I'm supposed to do. The movie ends with a kiss and innuendo as the hero looks into the camera over the shoulder of the moaning woman in the red dress with an open back that reaches all the way down to the line it won't cross. And I wish I actually felt something.

I turn to look at my girlfriend. She sits there, legs crossed hand on her knees, looking at the screen at nothing in particular. What did you think of the movie? I ask. It was good, she says. I liked how the hero was stronger than you and could make any woman melt like butter down the side of an arm hard and smooth as ice, but he chose the one girl, the secretary with the bright smile and evil boss until the hero ran through her office blowing holes through her mundane life like she always wished someone would.

But then she starts crying.

She cries into her hands, tears and snot running down her arms, her cheeks red and blotchy, her makeup staining her fingers

black. She cries for an hour, her pants collecting falling tears, her sobs uncontrolled and quiet. And I sit there on the next cushion over, watching from across the gap between a man and a woman and an expression and an emotion and a smile and a scream and two lives that happen to be sitting next to each other on a couch in a small living room in an apartment in a city full of people just like you.

She eventually stops crying. She wipes of her face and tells me thank you for the wonderful evening. I nod. She gets up, collects her coat, and walks out my door without a backward glance like I always knew she would.

I sit on that couch for half an hour. Then I get up, throw the empty tin tray into the sink, the sauce-dotted Kleenex into the trash, walk into my bedroom, and power up my computer. I open a browser. I sit there until 2:00 in the morning, scrolling through site after site, watching videos of marriage proposals and young women laughing.



Color Photography

La Flores en Sevilla
Mary Ochs

Mr. and Mrs. Calvin
Graham Abbott

To me,
You are the perfect couple.

I've always thought so:
The way you shout "Honey, I'm home!"
And the way the two of you burst
through Calvin's bedroom door
whenever the audience wants a reminder
of how it feels to fear the dark.
Even the sly glance across the dinner table
(you may think we don't notice, but we do)
tells us how madly in love you really are.

Your comfort with each other
seeps around the seams
of the clothing you repair
and the shingles you patch.
You no longer even need
to know each other's names
(apparently, neither do we).
You simply look,
and you need only speak,
and somehow it makes sense.

To me,
You are the perfect parents.

I've always thought so:
The way you gave your
six-year-old a cigarette.
And the way you
comforted your fugitive
when he dropped your binoculars
even after you specifically told him to be
careful with them more careful than anything else.
Especially the way you scold
and punish him so severely
and yet, the next day,
Everything is clean again.

You put up with a lot,
You deserve more than you get,
And no one stops long enough to notice it.

So sometimes I wonder how you manage:
I know that I can see it happen,
but it's so hard to believe
that even after the homemade parachutes,
the nails in the coffee table,
the mysterious machines made from boxes,
and the extortion from endangered baby sitters,
somehow you've made it this far.

And that's why I'm really here today:
I only have one question.

Seriously, what's with the tiger?

You Make Me Nervous
Emily Moore

Your name's the ember in my pocket—
it burns holes through my jeans,
and I know I've lost the thing you always wanted
(Lost the way you thought I think).

I think now in a way that startles,
Learning slowly, as things shift—
I'm coming round now, all full-circle;
But even so, you're still my favorite "if."

Olive and wine, acrid, pungent, sweet:
I think that might be how you taste, or
How you'd taste to me—
But should I reach, and pluck, and bite,
(Aftertaste of ash) and smile,
Would you smile back?
Would it be alright?
Maybe then—but I'll wait a while.

And We'll Wait
Emily McNeilly

We have spent four hours, and
four years and
forever
on this couch:

Our shoulders touching,
our hips angled away.

I have kept time by your breath,
and read volumes in every hitch.

We have always set the chocolate,
round of cheese and bottle of wine
in the corridor between our bodies.

A structure to stand for your independence
and the man I love.

This is how it has always begun.
We have always waited.

But Time and we drain the bottle, and
the chocolate
always
melts.

We devour the edible barriers.
And are left —
hungry.



Photography

Distance In Silence
Cameron Hill

The Hardest Thing
Kristin Svenson

The hardest thing to admit
is to an oak tree nothing less
than the bitter taste of winter's breath
upon its boughs.
When the wind feels like fire
and the sun seems a shadow
and the moon and the stars
all dance together in a snowstorm
of rancid raindrops;
When the April rush
and the August harvest
mold together in a ravine of
melted rock and ash,
and you look inside yourself
seeing clearly for the first time:
knowing, but not understanding that
the hardest thing to admit
is the truth.

love song
Susanne Lynne

i am returning to the earth
slowly
bit by bit of me
is sliding away
from electric lights and hot showers
falling into midnight fires
hidden bedrooms of earth and trees and grasses
and early morning bathing
in the crisp refreshing waters of our creek
my hair smells of peppermint
i cover my body with clay
bits and pieces of my civilized exterior fade
and i've never been more beautiful



Pencil on Paper

Anna's Hummingbird
Delora Hilleary

Morning
Rebecca Jolliff

I sprained my ankle coming here today—
twisted it, meanly, on some jutting ledge
of limestone. Meddlesome rock. I thought
you should know what I go through

these summer mornings. Not to mention
getting up at five. There was a time,
you know, when you came to me, or
your grandfather did. Rosy fingers

climbing over a neighbor's corn field,
waving me a warm hello and making
my heliotrope bloom. But now,
those fields are houses and we meet

here. The walk keeps getting longer,
more obstacles to cross, more sights
and sounds to thwart my morning view.
Today I passed more broken ground,

a new elementary school, I suppose, maybe
a church. And I was mulling over this when
that ledge of rock beside a little lingering
pond made me doubt these morning

outings. I just thought you should know.
The way back won't be easy. But
now I'm sitting here, and you smile
as you rise yellow beyond the ridge,

spread your glow over everything, new
and old, mean limestone and freshly broken ground.

I Sat Down to Write you a Letter
Madison Niermeyer

To paint you
blue dusk
and the glow of the street lamp.

to remind
of our tepid beginning
when we sat
and watched the world tumble down as snow.

I sat down to write you a letter
but could not finish.
The moon was too bright
as it swallowed the river
and I was too small
in the shadow of the moon.

Editor-in-Chief: Madison Niermeyer

Executive Editor: Angela Boston

Layout Editor: Olivia Lawther

STAFF

Mary Benke

Noah Church

Isabella Guida

Samantha Huntington

Rebecca Jolliff

Breanna Lee

Violet Martin

Hayley Pistoni

Sarah Spring

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NOTES:

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Contributors

- Shannon Nelson
- Kali Boehle-St...
- Brian Monod...
- Ewa Pot...
- Niklas F...
- May O...
- Leon...
- Lutz...
- M...
- A...
- F...
- V...
- F...
- V...
- A...
- V...
- D...
- R...
- M...
- A...
- C...
- T...
- C...
- K...
- S...
- T...
- D...

CONTRIBUTORS:

Shannon McDonell-Bryant
Kali Boehle-Silva
Brin Manoogian-O'Dell
Ewa Pater
Niklas Fischer
Mary Ochs
Leandra Stanley
Lauren Ballinger
Matthew Soma
Aimee Walton
Angela Boston
Erika Foldyna
Cameron Hill
Mary Benke
Isaiah Swan
Graham Abbott
Emily Moore
Emily McNeilly
Kristin Svenson
Susa Lynne
Delora Hilleary
Rebecca Jolliff
Madison Niermeyer
Adam Lozier
Claire H Lindsay-McGinn
Teresa Sifferman
Colin Wilson
Kristofer Smiley
Scott Klein
Till Gwinn
Donna Henderson

