



Spring 1996

THE
ASSON



Submission Guidelines and Expectations for The Jason, Willamette's Literary Magazine

What may be Submitted:

The Jason is primarily a literary and fine arts magazine. We welcome all forms of creative writing including: poetry, short fiction, and creative non-fiction. We also welcome visual artworks such as (but not limited to) line drawings, prints, and photographs. Works of reasonable size may be submitted in the original. For all 3-dimensional artworks and larger 2-dimensional pieces we encourage the artist to submit a photograph or slide of the work.

As the Willamette Undergraduate Research Journal has recently been revived The Jason requests that all academically based writings be submitted to them for proper recognition.

Guidelines for Submissions:

Literary Works: Due to space constraints and a desire to publish a wide variety of works we ask that all written submissions be limited to 10 typed pages. Submissions should be typed and double spaced. We ask that the writer submit three copies of the work and that each copy have a cover page giving the author's name, box number/mail address, telephone number and the title of the work. We also request that any identifying information be removed from all consequent pages of the submitted text.

Visual Art Works: All submissions should be submitted with an accompanying page giving the artist's name, box number/mail address, telephone number, the title of the work and the media used.

All submissions should be in some sort of a folder or file that will keep them separate from other submissions, and all multi-page works should be stapled to avoid mixing submissions.

As there are many writers and artists on Willamette's campus that wish to be heard The Jason has limited itself to publishing no more than two works by a given writer/artist in a given field. Due to the incredible number of submissions made last semester by a limited number of writers/artists we have since decided to also limit each writer/artist to five submissions in a given media. We trust that you will be able to select your best work for us to review. This policy will however allow those people with multiple talents to submit up to five written works in addition to five visual art works with the possibility of having two of each accepted for publication.

Who may Submit:

While The Jason is a student run publication we would like to recognize that the students are not the only voice in Willamette's community. The Jason, therefore, would like to make it clear that submissions from graduate students, faculty, administrators and staff are just as welcome as the works of the undergraduate student body.

How to Submit:

There are three means of getting your submissions to The Jason:

The Writing Center: In the Writing Center there will be a collection box for all submissions.

Campus Mail submissions may also be sent to Box — for direct delivery to the Submissions Coordinator. Art works may be sent via special delivery so that the Submissions Coordinator has to sign for pick up.

E-mail: Written works will also be accepted via e-mail. We ask that submissions sent via e-mail be sent only by the author to avoid confusion. Our e-mail address is:

thejason@willamette.edu.

Acceptance Guidelines and Procedures:

The goals of The Jason are to publish the highest quality and widest variety of voices within the Willamette community. We look for works that contain an individual voice or experience and express themselves with style and creativity, as well as technical merit. In order to achieve these goals acceptance of works is decided in the following manner:

— works are received by the Submissions Coordinator who removes the writers name and other identifying marks from the work. (This process is somewhat altered for visual art works where the artists name is often already included in the work.)

— the staff is then split into two committees, each of which is responsible for careful reading and/or review of either text submissions or art works. The entire staff is to look over all submissions but these committees provide insights into works under discussion.

— considerations are made upon the emotional impact of a story, the intellectual stimulus, technical execution and over all presentation of the work. These considerations are not necessarily in this order of importance and are not limited to the range of issues considered.

— once works are accepted the writers are revealed and discussion is undertaken if any writers/artists exceed the two works limit.

— writers and artists are then notified.

Note: All text submissions are scanned into the computer. The Jason assumes that all technical and grammatical errors are the responsibility of the author and does not alter the text in any way. For poetry we try to maintain the form and appearance of the work as it was submitted.

Because there is not money enough to publish a magazine that will allow every artist to be heard there are many reasons why a work may not be accepted that does not reflect on the quality or value of the work. For those writers who are interested in resubmitting works to The Jason (that were not published immediately) and for writers considering submitting their works to other magazines or presenting them in other forums the Writing Center is willing to work with the author on the work. For those students who request it The Jason is willing to provide a copy of the submitted work with written comments to the Writing Center. The author may then set up an appointment with a

Writing Center Consultant to go over the work, as well as the comments given by The Jason.

Return of Submissions:

The Jason takes full responsibility for returning all submitted art works to the artist as soon as possible. These returns will be made through the campus mail room via special delivery, unless it is specified on the cover sheet that the artist has another address. At that point attempts to contact the artist will be made. For text submissions we will keep a clean copy of the text on file for one semester after the work is published, the writer may contact us if they wish to have a copy returned to them. For those writers who request a Writing Center consultation a copy of their works and the comments will be turned over to the Writing Center for review.

Stats on Fall 1995 Issue of The Jason:

- over 200 submissions submitted by 42 writers/artists

- of these we published 26 writers/artists (no one having more

than five works accepted in a given media)

(112)
100

The Jason

Literary Magazine of Willamette University

Spring 1996

Editorial Staff:

Eric Mulder
Brian Kinyon
David Byrnes
Gary Sweeten
Brook Gauthier

Advisor- Professor Michael Strelow

The Jason is an official publication of the Associated Students of Willamette University. Submissions are accepted from all members of the Willamette Community. Entries are judged on basis of majority vote by The Jason editorial staff. Staff members are not allowed to vote on their own material.

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Icicle Man

S. Andrea Timm

Your smile is a layer
of winter: A whimpering echo
of an avalanche.

(I can hear the milky
gusts rattling the shards of
your shattered specters,

bone-shaped and dreary,
when you laugh, and I can
see the icicles forming in

a rigid row above
your festering brow as you
retreat.)

We danced naked
circles around your cotton
ears, hoping your were

listening and that you
would play. We gathered
up antique ink sewn

among flat, fibrous
sheets and burned it at your
feet in the name of

POETRY.

You left us looking demented; silly,

Now we stand outside,
adding up our missing fingers
and toes, imitating

dragons by
exhaling fire, hurling
stones:

But the rocks we
throw just turn to feathers
in the snow.

The Elk Men Give the Love Flute

Melanie Dunn

The Elk men come carrying
hoops covered with feathers, fur
and scented bergamot leaves.
They come when you are dreaming

of your dark Lakota girl.
Her raven eyes dart under
midnight lashes. Sad. Her ears
are closed to your words of pearl,

The Elk men give you the flute
filled with the songs of all birds
and animals, With it you
can speak to her heart

like the plains' last, noble bull
elk singing his bride a lullaby.

There is Something Deadly (Forgotten)

R.O. Brown

There is something deadly (forgotten)
you know about me
my lips, arched back
pounding blood
(where can I put my arms this close?)

Rising off, release sprung,
a closing fist around that sometimes purplest
heart
a burnt offering consuming itself in the folds of your hearth

You took my offering and left for the glade of the Nymphs,
or perhaps for Olympus;

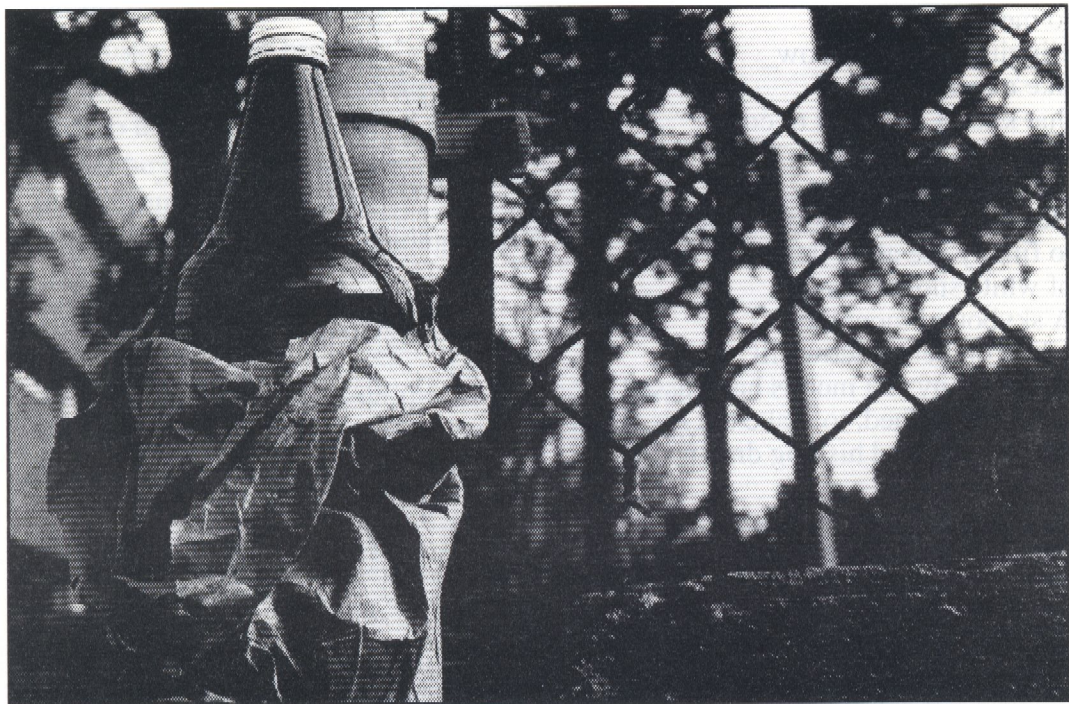
A fire quenched with gasoline:
55 gallon cascades of blond,
fuel injection fingers

Your tongue knows where it's been

Shining in the Dark

by [illegible]

[illegible text]



room tremble and a fine dark light glimmer

"Jungle Fever", David Byrnes



Untitled, Jen Tadaki

Death Through a Knot Hole

Sarah Graves

I often wonder how much fate God has dripped into my I.V. I have sat patiently for hours wondering how much the clouds drifting over head are trying to tell me and how many women I pass on the street or catch a glimpse of through a store window are shades of my future self. The future I willingly leave to the fog, for I do not wish to see too closely the lines of pain on my face to be or to be able to anticipate those happy moments that will bring light into my world. But I am forever looking back.

I can see through the knot holes in my life. Like peering through a faulty fence that divides now from then. Past memories are vivid and bright with the years around them hazy, blocked off by those scratchy boards that give you splinters if you lean too close and peer too hard through them. So you let the rest of the time be and enjoy this vivid if faulty display.

This time I am small the day is long and I do not understand the frown on my mother's face or the way she smiles through the shadow of the afternoon. At three years old, I know my grandfather is dead. I know because my mommy told me and I went to his funeral sitting on my daddy's knee straining to see my grandfather, waiting for him to come out of all of those flowers. To catch a glimpse of the man who drew smiley faces on my tummy, leaving my chubby belly button as the apple in the farmer's mouth.

I didn't see my grandfather at the church. And church was pretty boring anyway. The man who stood and talked went on forever and everyone looked a bit upset and I didn't understand why. I sort of wanted to be home with my sister who I bet was playing with Grammie's dog right now. I felt important though. I got to go with my daddy and I was sitting on his dark blue legs that wouldn't bounce me right now because this wasn't the time or the place.

And then we went to Grammie's house and there were a lot of people there. They weren't so quiet anymore and everybody was hugging a bit. And there was a lot of food. But not so many goodies. I liked to go to Grammie's house because she always had good things to eat. Sometimes when we rode home late at night in the car she would give us those granola bars, the ones that had two in the package. Most of the time I had to share with my sister, but sometimes I got both pieces.

Grammie has a good house. She has great way-high swings that Grandpa pushes us up into the sky. He is a good pusher because he is so tall. But today he isn't here.

I am sitting on the bench with my plate of food watching people as they come out of Grammie's sliding door, the one the big dog, can open with his paws. He is a scary dog. I don't like big dogs, they jump. Then as I am sitting there with my big sister I see Grandpa. He walks out the door into the back yard with a tall lady. I get so excited I wave. But I am in a silly mood, everyone else is too serious and so I just wiggle my pointer finger at him. Then Grandpa wiggles his finger back, and I realize. That isn't Grandpa. I am embarrassed. I waved silly at a man who is big and tall like Grandpa and he has grey hair, and saggy cheeks with friendly eyes like Grandpa but he isn't. No, it's Great Uncle John, Grandpa's twin. I suddenly feel a little sad. I can't wave at Grandpa anymore. And Grandpa would have come over and given me a big way high hug and picked me up by my ears and taken me to go swing. He wouldn't have given me a finger wave.

Breathing

Jennifer Hess

I'm wearing your shirt
looking down at my own tummy
watching the tiny rise and fall
(over and over)
and thinking
How once your broad chest
Filled this same purple cloth
Breathing
And how, now
Your body is a pile of ashes
hidden behind concrete
wall, somewhere.
So, now
I wear the shirt
(I wear the shirt.)

Strange Flavor

S. Andrea Timm

Heather-Gray-Suit takes cream in his coffee,
Midnight-Blue-Suit refuses to add anything
that could potentially alter the taste
or modify the texture,
so he takes his black.

(No contaminants, please.)

Pin-Stripe-Suit-Mulberry-Tie, needs
regular to jump start his
bleary brain in the early a.m.,

Beige-Suit-No-Undershirt takes decaf
because he has holes in his poor
tummy the size of quarters,

And Earth-Brown-Suit-Bow-Tie brings in
his Starbucks 16 oz. stainless
steel thermos (it keeps the hot hot
and the cold cold) which he cannot open
himself because he broke his wrist
playing tennis and gets it filled with
a dollar's worth of half and half.

Navy-Blue-Suit-Suspenders-Matching-Tie
takes skim milk in his coffee
because his wife wants him thin,

And Smoky-Gray-Suit-Argyle-Sweater-Vest
adds a little bit of whole milk
and drinks his coffee out of a mug
that says Jack.

(There is a tiny chip in the handle.)

Black-Suit-White-Handkerchief-In-Pocket
likes his very, very hot so he can sip
slowly, savoring those muddy waters,

And Hunter-Green-Suit asks for ice cubes to be added.

(He has a delicate tongue.)

Cream-Suit always gets his coffee in a small
paper cup because his bladder
doesn't hold much,

And Red-Suit-Patent-Leather-Pumps

needs a large one to go.

(No lid, room for cream and sugar.)

Mr. Tsung, he doesn't speak much English,
takes out his black wallet still held
together by one yellow seam,
removes a one dollar bill with his trembling,
weathered hand, and sets it gently onto
the immaculate, white countertop.
("Coffee," he says, pointing, "Coffee.")

Myth

Stacey Caillier

Could I love you any more if your Grandfather had been Norwegian instead of
Yakima?

The snowhair boy I met yesterday
shook my hand, my veins so blue
you told me you had fished along their river banks.

He told me that ferrets are his second favorite animal.

I told him a story about Ferret and Horse.

He told me I have been hanging around Indians too much.

Was I wrong to walk away, my eyes so green you told me you had hung your sage
upon their branches, without a souvenir?

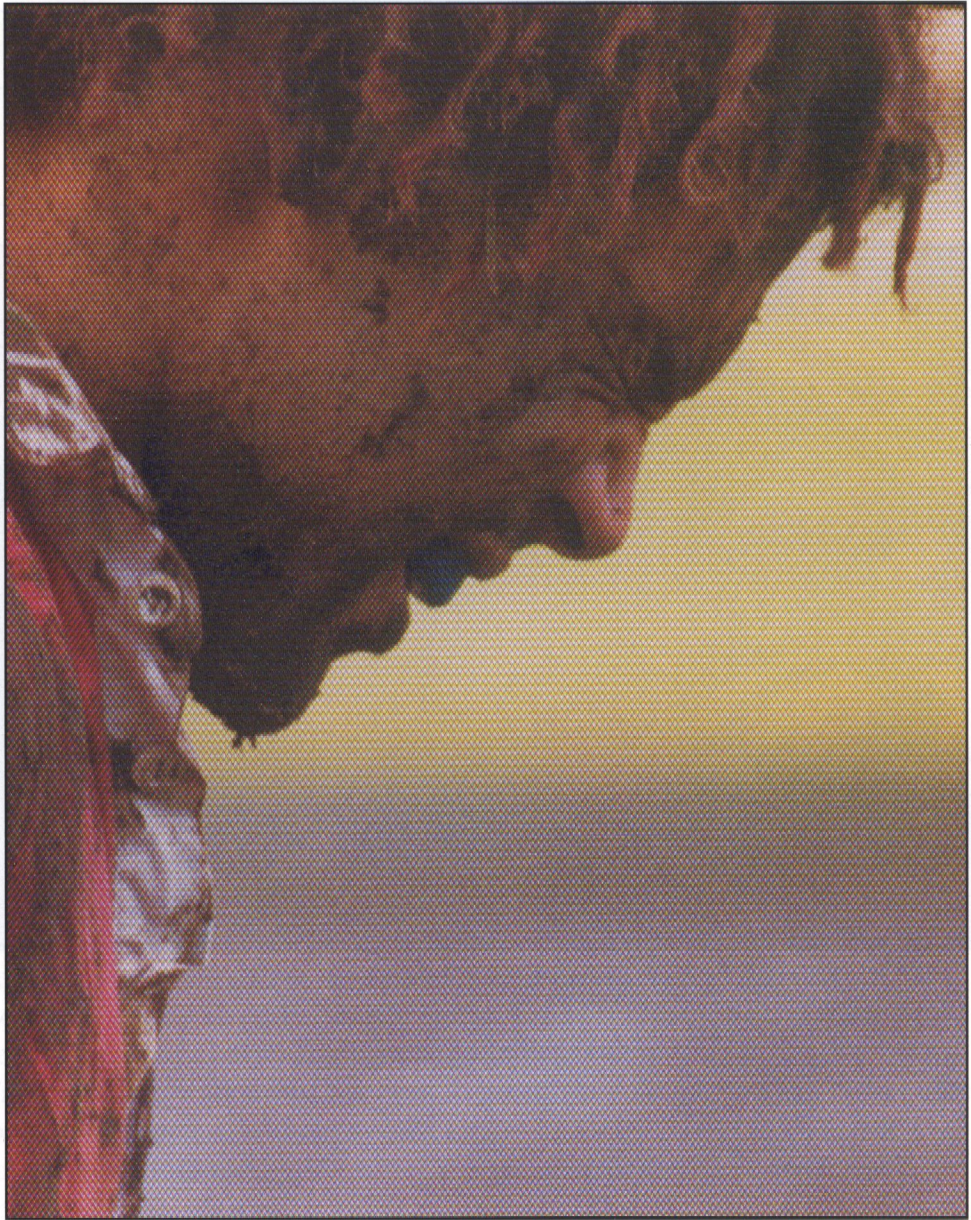
But you have told me,
that is our trick, his trick.

So sit beside me now under this blanket
so red we are fire, antelope, and birth blood.

Sit beside me and tell me a story.



Untitled, Haley Pepper



Untitled, Haley Pepper

Willamette Flood Blues

The Eng. 116-03 class:

Gina Ahnen, Brooke Borders, Kaylyn Charriere, Erin Ching, Laila Cook, Creslin Derkacht, Mark Gano, Justin Gray, Mags Greenlee, Brian Harry, Matt Haskin, Karl Hochtl, Jennifer Isley, Leo Kowalski, Dana Lederhos, Corina Mallory, Fran Michel, Jenny Nelson, Dave Osborn, Laura Ragee, Peter Riley Osborne, Cindy Rosenberg, Derek Thiem, Lysha Wasser

The rain started fallin' and it didn't never stop.
The rain started fallin', no, it didn't never stop.
The river started risin' and it ain't gonna drop.

The Mill Stream was flowin' and Goudy was goin'.
The Mill Stream was flowin' and Goudy was goin'.
Looked out my front door and folks they was rowin'.

I been sandbaggin' all night and day and I need a nap.
Been sandbaggin' all night and day and I need a nap.
My knuckles are bruised and I'm sick of burlap.

I got the Willamette flood blues.
I got the Willamette great flood of 1996 blues.
I got sewage in my basement and water in my shoes.

I woke up this mornin' and the basement stunk.
Woke up this mornin' and the basement stunk.
I'm tired, it's cold, I think I'll go get drunk.

I can't do my laundry and I'm out of socks.
Can't do my laundry and I'm out of socks.
I'd throw in a load but the law would come knock.

Water, water, everywhere, and none of it is clean.
Water, water, everywhere, not a drop of it is clean.
I got the Willamette flood blues, I know you know what I mean.

Awakening

Melanie Dunn

One morning while he was gazing out
the window (drinking his coffee black)
a thought arose. He realized he
no longer woke to watch the sun rise.

You're my sunrise, my only sunrise,

Before, he'd wake early and run ten
minutes down the beach to sit on his
rock (half-buried in the sand) and watch
the sun rise over the waves. But now?

You make me happy when skies are grey.

The alarm clock nagged him "rise and shine!"
He hit the snooze bar, then rolled away
from the clock and curled up next to Her.
Yes, her furnace body made him rise.

Without a sound she kept him near Her.
He didn't see the sunrise that day.
She always had her way — only took
one look. He couldn't resist that look.

You'll never know how much I love You.

And he. Well, he memorized their first
kiss (the sweet glide of her tongue on his).
And learned to put the toilet seat down.
He also learned how to crave. The curve,

taste, texture of her lips on his own;
the rising, falling silhouette she
cast on the wall when lying on her
side — all of this was his sunrise now.

Cracked

Paul Jungwirth

Hurried headlights flash on a sidewalk of wet bricks,
A spinning disco ball for high heels and leather oxfords
Waiting their turn to forget the little plaza
Where the bricks give way to cement run through with
Rivulets of moss like some spilled exotic drink.

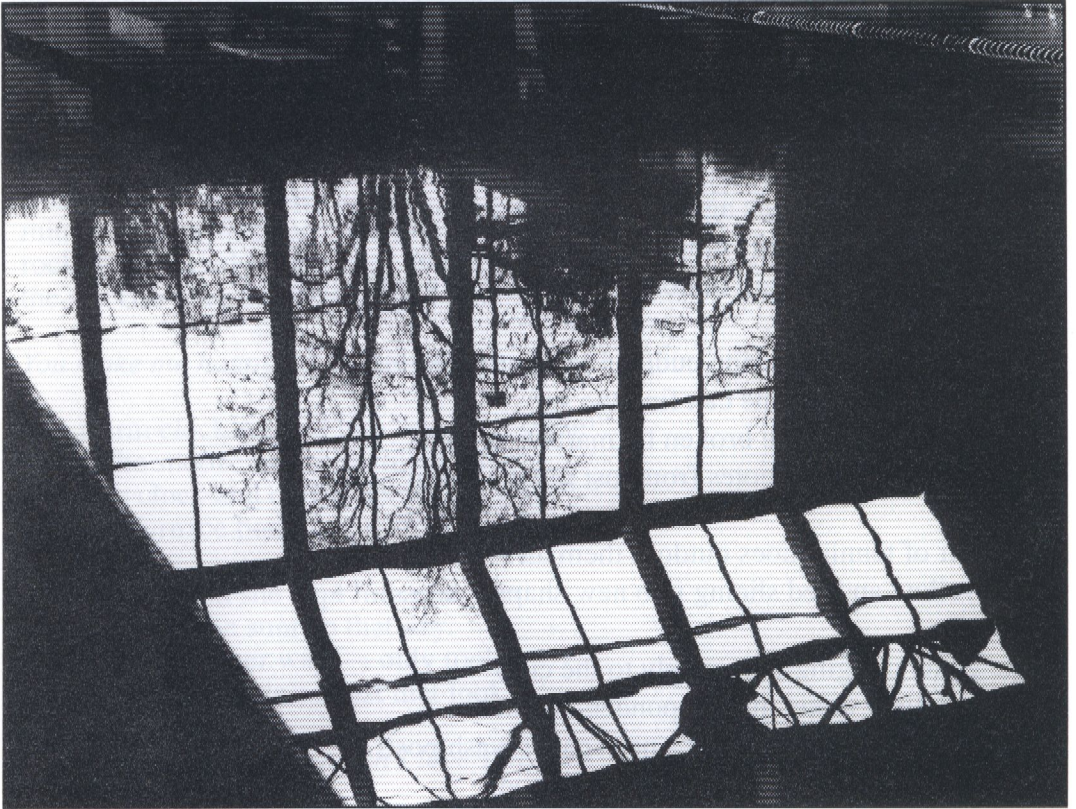
An aged brown bag rests against a wall flaking paint,
But the bottle is probably empty by now,
Slowly refilling with rain tumbling from the uneaved building.

Where water cannot escape puddles catch street lights;
On too early but' no one can find the sun.
The depthless pools are broken by marbles of rain
Falling hesitantly like notes from lost night's guitar —

But a pair of tennis shoes outdoes them all — sends water
White yellow and red slicing into new shapelessness.

In the gutter clinging desperately to the curb
A losing lottery ticket quietly ponders its future.
The headlines from last week's newspaper wash post;
They will no longer clothe the plaza's brood.
Small feet in foolish sandals stop near a lump of clothes,

But only for a moment before they slide backwards
Onto the shining safety of the bricks.
A golden penny falls, touched by a tip of moss;
Lincoln's eyes stare up into the rain.



Untitled, Haley Pepper

Evenings

Paul Jungwirth

Chris and Scott are playing at the base of the olive tree in our front yard. I can see them from the kitchen window as I collect the ingredients for tonight's spaghetti. I have to constantly watch them. Last week they were stomping on ants' nests, and I had to wash the tiny biting insects off Chris with a hose. Chris is thirteen, and Scott is only eight. I can't tell what they're up to now, and that makes me suspicious.

My wife is working late at the hospital tonight, and if I make the sauce now I'll be able to just dump some noodles in water when she gets home. Besides, I finally picked up Chaucer when we were all at the library the other day, and so far I haven't even started a single story. There isn't much daylight left, and reading outdoors always helps me get through poetry. And if I'm outside I should have an easier time keeping Chris and Scott from burning down any houses.

I cast a glance out the window to make sure they haven't disappeared and go find the pot. I forgot to leave the hamburger meat on the counter, but a little time in the microwave will thaw it out nicely. While waiting, I find an onion and some garlic in the refrigerator and pull out the cutting board. Cutting garlic is interesting. I do it like the professional French chefs in those gourmet restaurants. First I lop off the ends so the dry outside layer peels easily. Then I lay the butcher knife over it and strike down quickly with the palm of my hand. From a rocking canoc to a nice stable raft. I can dice it easily after that. I've only cut my hand once with this method, and that was a long time ago.

I think Scott is trying to get Chris to climb the olive tree. I guess that's better than taunting him from fifteen feet up. Children can be cruel enough when they're both normal, but Chris's minor case of Down Syndrome has lead to some real problems between the two. Scott masters everything so easily, and he never fails to point out Chris's failings. I'm worried that this is what today's tree-climbing episode will turn into. Scott's latest report card is stuck to the refrigerator with a magnet from the Grand Canyon. I see it as I pour myself a glass of lemonade.

The children at school are even worse than Scott. They taunt Chris without inhibition, and there is no one to protect him. They don't realize what they are doing, but that is poor consolation for me. Last year Chris had to be sent

home over a dozen times because he wouldn't stop crying over something a classmate had said to him.

The microwave chimes like it's expecting a Milkbone dog biscuit for a job well done - always optimistic. When I was a kid we had a big golden retriever my dad and I would take out into the woods looking for open meadows to run and tumble in. We always kept a full box of dog biscuits in the cabinet. She even knew how to shake. Rebecca is allergic to dogs.

I put the meat in a pot to brown. First I break it up with the wooden spoon we keep in the drawer under the toaster, then I turn the knob on the stove to medium-low. We still have an electric stove; I admit it. I see those gas commercials all the time — I certainly watch enough television — but we don't have the money to buy new kitchen appliances right now. And this electric stove seems to work fine anyway.

Chris is trying to balance with his right foot between the branching trunks of the olive tree. He keeps putting his left foot back on the ground. Scott is standing behind him and encouraging him. I wonder if I should let this futile play go on or not. One more failure for Chris. I guess I should count my blessings; he isn't as bad off as a lot of the other handicapped children at his school. He doesn't need a walker and doesn't limp too much, and he's capable of some deeper thoughts on occasion. He remembers things easier than you'd expect, too. I wonder if this last one is good. He seems to concentrate on his failures quite a bit. Of course, everyone else does too.

Onions aren't quite as fascinating to cut as garlic, but they're a challenge since you don't want to cry and you've already been cutting garlic. I've always done the garlic first, because otherwise I tend to lose the uncut pieces among the onion peelings. For onions I like to use a serrated knife instead of the butcher knife I chop the garlic with. It isn't as impressive, but it isn't a very sharp butcher knife either. After this is done I dump the onions in the pot with the meat and garlic and wait for them to soften.

Now I open the cupboard and find cans of stewed tomatoes, tomato paste, and crushed tomatoes among the many cans of Campbell's Soup. Fresh tomatoes work better than crushed ones, but it's been a while since I've been to the grocery store, and even that serrated knife is a pain to use on tomatoes. Still, canned tomatoes remind me of canned spaghetti sauce. That stuff is pretty disgusting; I'd rather make my own any day. Sure tomato paste doesn't look too appetizing, but

once you stir it in with everything else it disappears quickly enough. And I only tried spaghetti without it once.

I get the can opener from the same drawer in which we keep the spoon. I remember opening cans of tomato paste with a Swiss army knife back in law school. I guess I've grown out of that now. I don't even go backpacking anymore. Over the counter I can see the medical books lining the shelves in the family room. When Chris was born, Rebecca and I realized that one of us would have to give up our career, and we figured if she was a doctor then we'd be able to get the best treatment for him. Seems silly now, but we thought it was the greatest idea at the time. I threw out all my law books from that one year at UCLA. Pretty stupid. I should have sold them; we were really short of cash back then. I don't know how long these student loans will take to repay. Rebecca'd better be an awfully good physician.

Sometimes I let the onions go too long, and then they get soggy, but I don't think I've ever added the tomatoes while they were still too crisp. You have to add the canned stuff thickest first, because otherwise they splash all over the place. I remember making spaghetti for Rebecca in grad school and practically drowning the stove in red juices. She laughed and said she'd never trust me with acid and water.

Chris and Scott are still at it. One thing about Chris; he doesn't give up easily. In anyone else I'd say that's a great quality, but for him it makes his defeats all the more traumatic. Scott looks bored. He isn't really watching Chris too carefully. Not like he needs to, of course — Chris's left foot is still on the ground. Everything comes so easily for Scott that he lets himself get frustrated when he can't figure something out right away. I remember trying to teach him how to ride a bike when he was five, Without those training wheels he just couldn't stay up. I'm pretty sure it was a confidence thing, because he did fine when he thought I was holding the seat behind him. Scott's lack of faith in himself is one reason he picks on Chris so much.

I always splatter tomato sauce when I'm stirring everything together. I guess it's because I mix too quickly. After all these years of making spaghetti, you'd think I'd have the hang of it by now. At least I've managed to limit the drops to around half a dozen. It used to be much worse. Stirring in the seasoning isn't nearly as difficult since the sauce has already reached the right consistency, but breaking up that tomato paste while not splashing the watery stuff is pretty

difficult. I open the cabinet where we hide the spices. It's always disorganized. Typical of something no one uses but me, Eventually I find the oregano, then basil, parsley, and pepper, and then I'm interrupted by the telephone. I dread phone calls at this hour, because it's usually Rebecca saying she'll be home even later than expected. The first month sitting at home idle and lonely was the worst. I glance out the window to check on my children before I pick up the receiver.

"Hello?" I ask. It isn't my wife, which relieves me. And it isn't a teacher calling about Chris. It's Mike, a good friend of mine. Is he calling me from work, I wonder?

"Hey, a bunch of us are going out to the ballgame Saturday and we were wondering if you could make it," he says.

I look at the calendar even though I know I've got to take Scott to the dentist's office that day. Rebecca is going to some convention in the city this weekend. Lately she's been working extra-hard to impress the other doctors. And to bring home a nicer paycheck.

"No, sorry Mike, I'm busy Saturday. Maybe another time, okay?"

"Yeah, sure," he says.

I'm surprised they still call me. I haven't done anything with them in ages.

The sauce usually turns out better with fresh basil and parsley, but dried stuff will have to do tonight. One of these days I want to try using cilantro instead of normal parsley, but I try to limit my experiments to nights when no one else will be forced to eat it.

I haven't experimented much since college.

I'm forgetting something.

Maybe it's just the dried basil and parsley. Chris and Scott are still under the tree. Chris actually has both feet off the ground now. I can tell Scott isn't impressed, but I am. And worried, of course.

I shrug off my discomfort and mix in the seasoning. The pepper grinder is empty, so I open the cabinet again and look for pepper grounds. The box of brown sugar is standing right at the front, and I want to smack myself. I set it on the counter and go back to looking for the pepper. Finally I find whole grounds behind a big thing of nutmeg. I don't know why we bought so much of that stuff. We didn't even get eggnog last Christmas, and that's just about the only time you

ever use it.

Chris gave Rebecca and me a finger painting that Christmas.

Once I've filled the pepper grinder and added the right amount of the rough black powder to the spaghetti, I go fetch a metal spoon for the brown sugar. You can always tell when I forget to add this. I forget a lot. Sometimes I just don't bother. I need about two tablespoons full, and it's always a battle to break up the block of hard sugar. After a few minutes I set the spoon down and go get a knife. I want to pound the box against the counter, but last time I did that I cracked a tile. Heat keeps building up under the sauce, so I have to set the box down and stir before the bubbles spew red coloring all over the place. The knife doesn't really break off chunks of sugar as I'd hoped; it just makes thin holes that disappear with the next stabbing. The poor bag that's supposed to keep this stuff fresh is really getting shredded. I wonder if there's such a thing as fresh brown sugar. The box itself has six new cuts from the knife by the time I manage to loosen enough sugar to make two tablespoons, but I can finally add what I like to think of as my secret ingredient.

I make one final trip into the spice cabinet for the bottle of bay leaves. I twist open the cap and try to pull one out. There are only three left, so they're way at the bottom. The neck is much too thin for my fingers. Do they think three-year-olds are the only ones who cook or something? I drop the leaf twice, then give up and extract it with a pair of forks like I'm some kind of dentist.

In a flash it occurs to me that I haven't looked outside in at least ten minutes, and my eyes immediately go to the window. Chris is standing on a thick branch three feet above the ground, and Scott is watching, amazed. I look at Scott, the grass under the tree, the branch, and finally Chris. I add the bay leaf and stir.



Untitled, Nate Vonnahme

Court Street

S. Andrea Timm

Spiders have spun glass webs across the windshield of
a spineless, black automobile, its back shattered and
permanently hunched, where some sacred skull clings

to the slick vinyl, fixed by a cluster of demented tissue,
a raw, pinkish cellular glue. It is one inch by one inch,
a perfect square, and the passenger whose skull is chipped

IS SCREAMING

for his gun the blood from his head, diluted by
the flawless, naked rain, streams down over his yellow
plastic slicker, composing an orange the color of

flames and the driver isn't breathing and the driver
isn't breathing-he's dead-and the passenger is
screaming for his gun he's screaming for his gun and

everybody knows that if you shoot the man behind
the wheel you will certainly crash and the neighbors
are all out in their powder blue slippers and matching

Robes, their pulses rapid and unrelenting in their
contagious ears, they raise their voices to the shrieking
sirens of police cars and submit to the chaotic melody.

Breakthrough (Made While Thinking of Hugging Someone) *for Karen*

R.O. Brown

Strange that having this
body precludes knowing
any other Strange
that

this body precludes
knowing any
other body Strange that

this precludes knowing any
nothing

That knowing this
body allows knowing
nothing else Strange

that knowing

this body allows knowing
nothing

Strange knowing this
body allows knowing
no thing strange Knowing
this body allows
knowing no
thing else

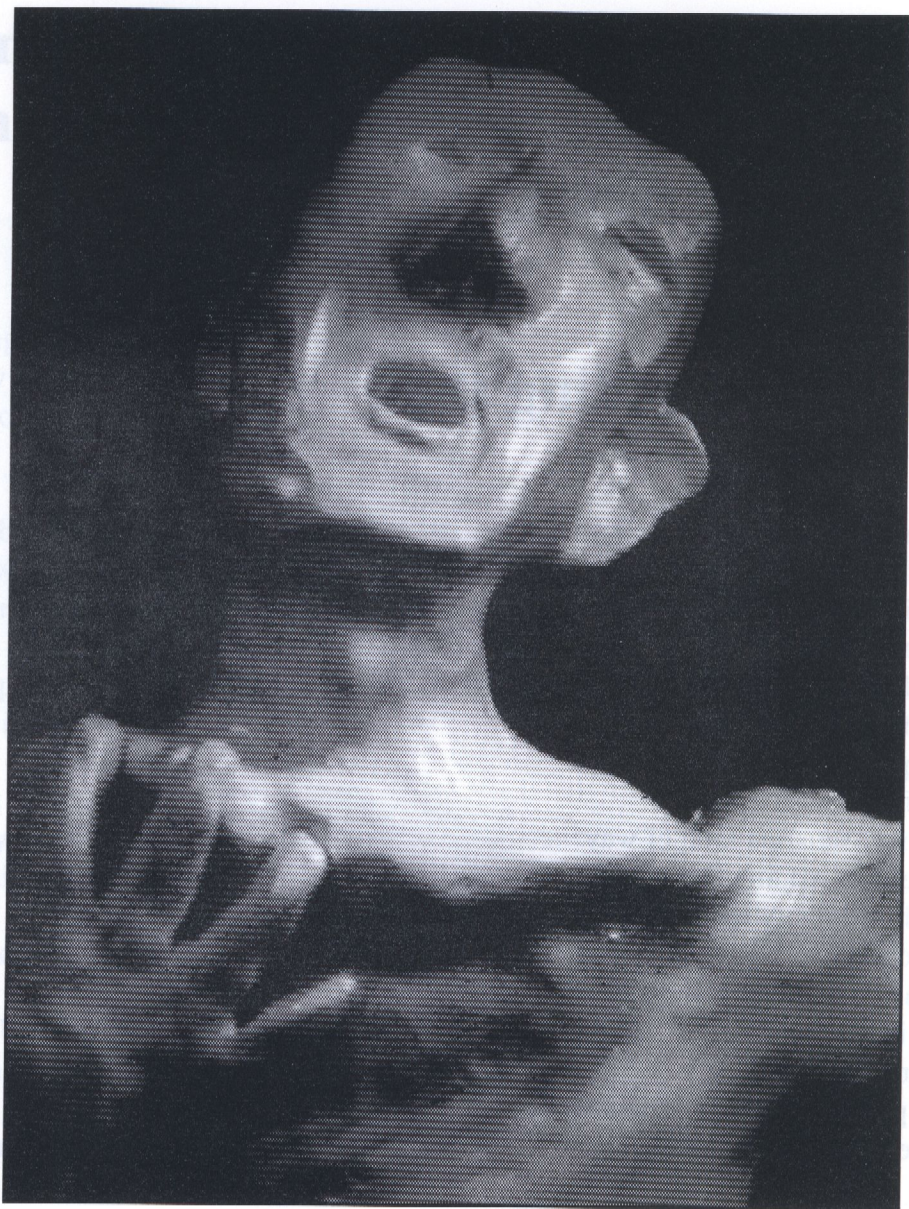
Strange that knowing
this my body allows
knowing no other body
allows knowing

nothing strange

Balance, Finding the

Jennifer Hess

I should be sleeping
I know I should be sleeping
and it doesn't help to know it
Because I'm not
Neither am I doing anything productive
I'm feeding myself U2
& sipping doctor pepper
Staring at piles of books
in a self-satisfied kind of way
Instead of reading them.
I will feel every minute
tomorrow
in the flesh under my eyes
and in the force
of gravity.
My poems are always unbalanced.
I need a shower.



"Man Without Passion", Sky Evans

wild raspberries

Melanie Dunn

raspberry drupelets. moist
with late-morning sweat

beading on tightly clustered
red-purple orbs — blood-filled

ticks. skin pulled taut
over luscious flesh (not

unlike the precious swelling
of an expectant belly). growing

rampant — unexpected guest —
like a cancer ripening in my breast.

fruit now overripe, rotting amidst
thorn-screens and locust

wings, black bramble skeletons
scrape against a welted crimson sky.

about december 25, 199n

Mark Furman

draped on trees and gutters
poking out plastic reindeer snouts
pumping waves and/or particles
sheets of festive reddish greenish whiteness
sucking rivers, tired old bones, broken atoms
fattening the utilities lobby
for the love of christ

Remains of the Dignified

Heather Parkinson

Let out the little loser,
extracurricular, fast and loose,
rank with stench, speedy
moonlighter, aswarmed with time, cooped-up,

overwhelmed with impotence,
wrought with marvel at a singular world,
flailing legs, sprawling out (still)
to rest in the reeds near the river.

The real-life carrier camouflaged
nullified, counterpart a primitive tribe
greened, yellowed, the futility of being
overwhelmed by puniness.

On the road to meet persons,
A suggestion by the masses to stand (proud)
astonied beneath a secular sky,
still as the sun careens, sways,

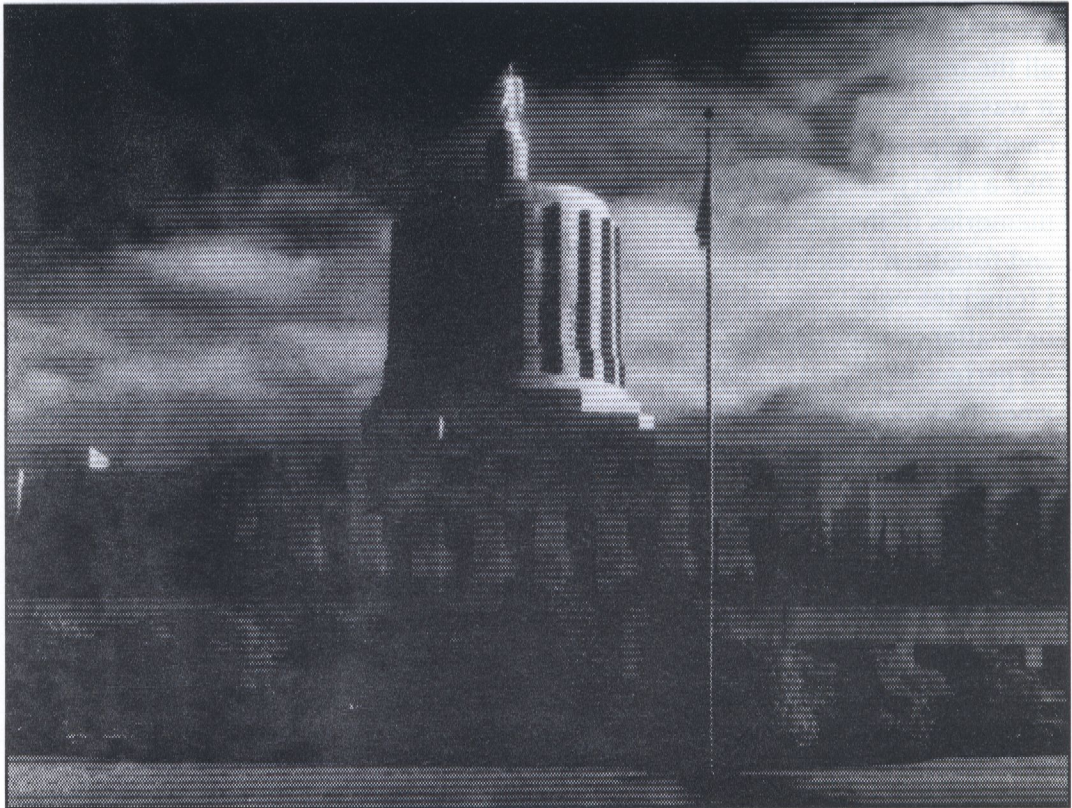
east to west, all marvel
at the vantage of the sun from the high point
where the girl lies, brown, atop a caraded rock
smoothed by afternoon sun and lifeless cuckoldry.

the coat was red

Melanie Hawkes

the coat was red
having been locked away
for years the red shone
all the brighter
it was a mystery this coat
candy apple red
like a cherry of a sportscar
memories of the fifties
and forgotten sock hops
i found the coat
only after mother died
- a perfect fit -
when had she ever been
 this small?
i still wear her sweaters
 down to my knees
 sleeves rolled to the elbow
rainbows of purple and green
when had she ever worn red?

Remains of the Old (by Andrew)



Untitled, Haley Pepper

Little Red Ride

Amy Boatright

Once upon a time I was living a lie.

"It's five o' clock already?" I exclaimed as I looked down at my watch. "Damn it, I'm running late! Oh, my poor, dying mother won't get her medicine on time. She's wilting away by the day, the poor dear."

"Why can't you leave the bottle over there?" my husband asked innocently. "Why can't your mother take the medicine herself? We never have time alone to spend together anymore." There was such a strong sense of sweet longing in his voice that I almost felt sorry for him. But then I remembered my mission.

"My mother, the poor thing, she is bed ridden. She can scarcely move. How do you expect her to take the medicine herself?" With that I wrapped myself in my jacket beautifully constructed of the finest red wool, grabbed the basket full of medicine and walked out the door.

My husband sat down in his soft chair made of green velvet and heaved a long sigh. "Sometimes I wonder if she even loves me anymore." As a blank stare covered his face he moaned, "She won't even let me meet the old woman. Too sick for company, I didn't know such a state existed." He heaved another sigh, comforted himself in his chair, and fell asleep.

Meanwhile, I was prancing into the woods and humming to the pleasant sound of bluebirds. This was my favorite part of the day. The other parts were filled with cooking, dusting, scrubbing, mopping, washing dishes, doing the laundry, and a hundred other monotonous tasks. And then after all of that, my husband comes home. He sits in his chair and completely ignores me. Everyone ignores me, my husband, my neighbors, the women at sewing circle, everyone. No one cares about me anymore. But not here in the woods, here I am welcomed. The birds sing with me, the trees wave hello, the grass and the flowers dance with joy when I walk beside them. Here I am loved. Here I am wanted, here where... Just then a loud cracking noise broke my train of thought. I whirled around to see what it was. I saw a large shadow drawing nearer and nearer. I hid behind a large tree, but my bright red coat was showing on either side. Then something jumped in front of me! "Wolf!" I cried. "What are you doing in the woods?"

"I live here." he calmly explained. "This is my territory. What are you

doing here my little red ride?"

"I am doing just as I told my husband. I am taking this basket of medicine to my dying mother."

"You are a very good girl, my little red ride." said the wolf in a sleazy tone. "I have been waiting for you." He took a step toward me and pinned me up against a tree. "I miss you from day to day, you know that don't you? I need you." He put his arm around my neck. "Let's forget about your poor mother for right now." he insisted. "After all, she has been dead for at least two years now. What do you say we go back to my place and free our minds with some of the magic you're carrying in that medicine bottle."

I looked up at him with a frightened little girl look, as I always did, and said, "My mother told me never to talk to strangers." With that he picked me up, swung me over his shoulder, and carried me off to his little house in the thickest part of the woods.

As my husband awoke from his evening nap, he looked around the room and shivered. "Why does it have to be so damn cold in this house? Doesn't that woman know how to start a fire? I didn't spend days building that fireplace so I could sit in a cold house after a hard days work." He slowly picked himself up and went out to the woodshed to get some wood for the fire. "Damn it!" he yelled. "Out of wood, out of food, we're out of everything, and she's out of the house." He walked over to the side of the house, picked up his axe, and mumbled, "I work hard all day long, then when I come home and want to relax, I have to go trudging into the forest to chop fire wood." He reluctantly put on his coat and boots, and left on his journey into the woods.

At this point I felt as if I was flying. My lover had his arms wrapped around me and was kissing my neck up and down. I could feel the coolness of his silk sheets on my back and the warmness of his breath on my chest. I was in heaven. "What big arms you have!" I whispered.

"The better to hold you with," he replied.

"What big eyes you have!"

"The better to look at you with."

"What sharp nails you have!"

"The better to pierce your skin with, my little red ride." Upon saying these words, my lover jumped on top of me and devoured every last bit of purity I had left.

Around this time my ignorant husband had wandered deep into the woods, searching for the perfect tree that would yield the best wood with the optimum burning potential. He was very anal in this respect. He had been analyzing every tree and scrutinizing over every inch of their trunks. "This wood's too hard. This wood is too soft. This is too old and brittle. This is too young and wet." It probably took him hours before he found himself the perfect tree. Ah, but when he did, the feeling of pleasure was overwhelming. He lifted his axe to take a destructive chop into the perfectly shaped, perfectly aged, perfectly beautiful tree. Crunch! The chips of bark surrounded him like rain. Crunch! "God this feels good!" He exclaimed. Crunch!

"Aaaaaahhhhhhhh!"

He looked up from his chopping. "Is someone there?" he yelled off into the distance. uhhmm, must be an owl."

"Aaaaaahhhhhhhh!"

He looked up again. "No, that definitely is not an owl. It sounds like someone is in trouble." With that he gripped his axe and ran toward the sound way off in the distance.

That is just like my husband. He couldn't decipher a scream of pain from a scream of pleasure if his life depended on it. Maybe if he cared about me half as much as he does about finding the perfect tree, that wouldn't be a problem. But it was, and a big problem at that.

My husband came dashing into the little house just as the wolf was devouring me. His face fell to the floor. He stood there, in the middle of the room, completely motionless. My lover didn't move either. Everything was still.

"Mr. Wolf," mumbled my husband slowly, "I am now going to save my wife's life." With that he swung his axe over his shoulder and buried it into the heart of Mr. Wolf.

My husband didn't save my life. He didn't save his either. My life was never in danger, neither was his. Yet he split his own head, right down the middle with that very axe.

And I still remain ... eaten alive.

The End



Untitled, Jen Tadaki

Descent

Katie M. Hinnenkamp

The bus winds down in wide circles,
And, gathering momentum at every curve,
What I was overtakes what I am.

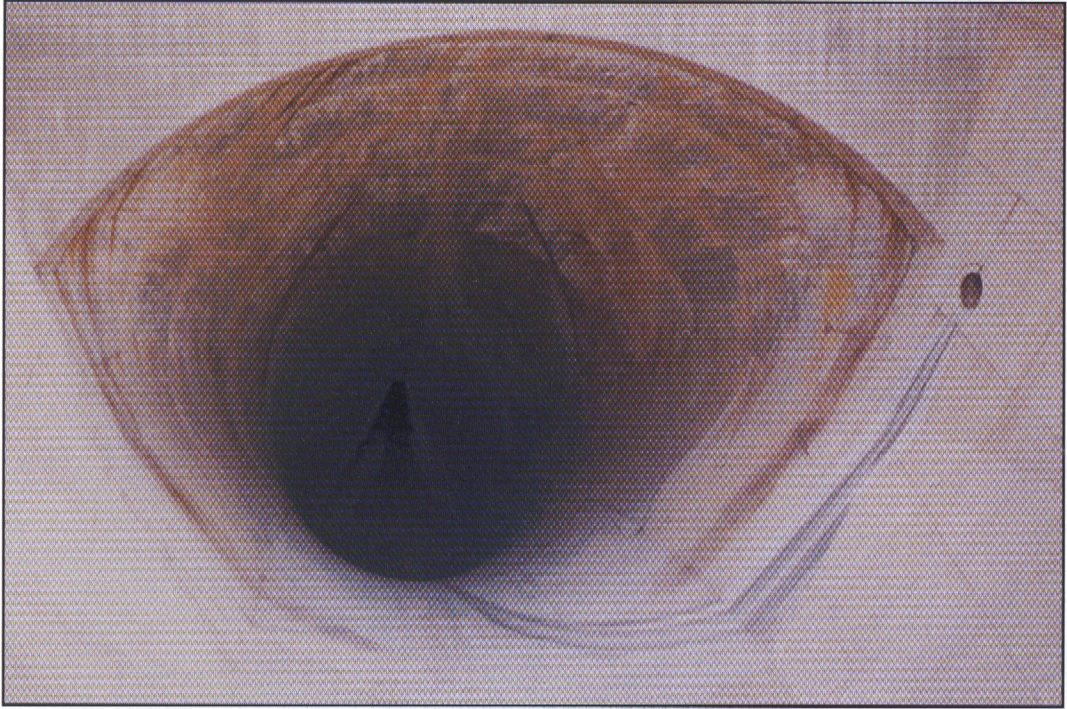
Everything, everything shoved into the bag at my feet,
Slides forward, pulled by gravity,
As the bus winds down in wide circles.

I kick it back, back under my seat,
Stomp upon it in hopes of hearing things break.
What I was overtakes what I am.

I lift my gaze forward, out the driver's windshield.
A broad crack trembles in clean sunlight.
The bus winds down in wide circles.

The back of the seat in front of me is polished aluminum.
My reflected stare defies me,
Now what I was overtakes what I am.

Spiraling rapidly down the mountainside,
I gag at the gory violence as
The bus makes a final wide circle,
And what I was smashes flat what I am.



"Tunnel to Hell at Hoover Dam", Marjorie Ogilvie



"Brother and Sister Playing in Fountains", Marjorie Ogilvie

Adventure Kalispell Style

Kristian Skybak

With the plow grating nearly a hundred yards ahead, the roads were no longer veiled in snow. Instead it was filling driveways, surrounding cars, and even sometimes drowning citizens. For just a second I considered my car's inconspicuous form directly behind the behemoth, trailing unseen through the city streets, shielded by the snow cloud in its wake. But all kinds of stuff passes through my head in a second.

I could really have cared less about where the snow was, as long as it was white and cold. It was a Friday and I was going out for the night doing whatever for as long as I could. My little Toyota Corolla handled the ten minute drive into town with the same manner as always, pitifully. Not the least bit gutsy or handsome, the little thing usually couldn't muster enough courage to accelerate up a hill. You could even take the key out while driving and the thing wouldn't miss a beat. Unfortunately, there was a time where I had it going up such a long incline that it slowed clear down to fifteen miles per hour, on the highway! So many vehicles were spitting fire at me from behind that I had to seek refuge on the shoulder. Somehow I think the thing felt more comfortable over there amidst the gravel and rubbish. I remember looking around at all my friends faces whom obviously I had shamed. While a car is in reality just supposed to get you somewhere, sometimes I don't think mine is worth it.

Finally I left the rumbling snow plow behind, taking the familiar right turn to my best friend Adam's house. I parked on his lawn as I always did, just so his mom would have room to squeeze into their little garage. Now that I think about it, not many cars ended up on their lawn, so maybe it was an indication of the special privileges I received as his best friend. Slowly I tiptoed around to the back of his house, hoping maybe I could sneak in and get him in a headlock or vulcan death grip or something. Yet he had picked up the sound of my thing sliding into the driveway, and I caught a glimpse of him through the window, the hilt of a sword and a hockey stick firmly stuck in each fist. I burst through the door, letting an excited "aaaaaawwwwwyeeeeaaaahh" into his house. He was beaming. Gently he handed it over and I wrapped my fingers around the carved ivory hilt. Japanese dragons and golden eyed tigers squirmed in my grasp. Oh my god I said. Oh

my GOD I said. I felt it's weight and stroked it. It was heavier than I had imagined, and in my mind's eye I pictured what kind of gruesome wounds it could inflict. I had never held a Katana, only dreamed of it. Yet in my dreams I was also a person fully skilled in its use, not your typical high school student.

After we had finished our worship, we inkled for pizza, and requested our usual two large pepperoni pizzas from Little Caesar's. Francine took the order. We said hi. It worked out well that the cheapest pizza always tasted the best to me. Adam ate pizza more than your regular Joe, thanks no doubt to the fact that his mom wasn't home as often as the regular Joe's. It's not like she was a bad mom, she just had to work more than suggested by the surgeon general for them to get by. We each had one pizza, and I must say that I did finish mine first, due to the fact that I was often accused of not learning to chew. Next we turned into vegetables. There was a Calgary Flames game on our single Canadian channel straight out of Lethbridge, and we had some time to kill before we took off. Adam and I were what you call 'hockeyholics'. We would frequently start slobbering all over ourselves in the dead of Summer if even reminded that Winter was destined to come. Preferably we lived to play on ice ourselves, but we were learning to watch pros do the same at least as long as winter kept bay. Soon we were entrenched in the couches, hockey sticks at the ready in our laps. Sometimes I considered that we might get more time with our Koho sticks off ice than on. Every now and then the Flames would execute a play with such pure beauty that our eyes would roll back in our heads and we would sag into the cushions, twitching. Adam continually would go off about how astounding the goalkeeper was, Trevor Kidd. "Indeed", I would say. But I secretly knew that he was in the clutches of a Canadian sports broadcast. They could make it seem like any Canadian puck handler was Jesus on skates.

Just before third period began we caught the sound of our friend Gabe's Volkswagon camping bus pulling in, with his stereo playing The Red Hot Chili Peppers barely loud enough for their 'Skinny Sweaty Man' to invade all of the neighbors' houses. He parked right in front of the garage. We got our coats, I turned off his T.V., he locked the door, and we loaded in the bus. Joining us were our friends Dan, Chris Hanchett, and Chris Hanson. Dan was always a really great guy, but at times he was as hyperactive as a Chihuahua, and he would shit at the sight of cops. Chris Hanchett loved to carry around his blowgun and shoot fruit,

while Chris Hanson was the kind of guy who was very moody but still pretty cool. Both of them were puffing on cigars. They offered one to me, yet just like the last time I had to explain to them what my asthma did to me.

This was one of those Fridays where we were determined to do damage to stuff in a harmless way and maybe piss off some older people. Since it was a Friday, there would be plenty of kids 'cruising', which basically means wasting gas by gesturing and waving at whatever hot stuff you see. Wow. Gabe's Volkswagon always shuttled us around town, with the bunch of us taking turns driving. Green, rusted, loud, and sluggish to the inexperienced, the beast was the highest form of transportation we could imagine. It rolled and pitched in the corners, caught air on the right kind of intersection, and when you got tired you could just pop up the camper shell and call it a night. The height of the cab and the sliding door gave us the most pleasure. In the tight corners we would open the door, latch onto the gutter, and let the physics of the moment swing our bodies outward. On a warmer day we would take turns climbing onto the roof and enjoy the breeze smacking us upside our head.

So we were out of the starting blocks and headed down Idaho Street. I was reclining in the back seat with my dirty feet on the dirty stove. Adam and Chris Hanchett were ready to go, crouched in front of the slider. With mustard bottle at the ready, they hailed for Gabe to find an unsuspecting carload of girls. I closed the drapes and had Gabe put in some Helmet, the perfect instrumental combo for our mission. Finally Gabe rolled up to a light where we had the perfect position, right next to a pretty Honda that was looking to turn right on a red. BINGO. They didn't have a clue what kind of demonic nightmare was about to ruin their little bubble-gum world. Just as they eased into the traffic flow, Adam unloaded on them while Chris held the door, and they turned around barely in time to see us squirt but not early enough to stop. The trajectory was perfect, allowing her front windshield a thorough caking. As they drove off we were just able to get a load of their faces, huffing and puffing. The five of us simply looked at ourselves, proud to be an American, and proud of our high grade dijon mustard. Some of us just went 'ahhh yeeaaah', others exchanged handshakes, and somehow Dan was riding shotgun clean upside down, gasping for breath and clutching his sides. He must have gotten a clean look at their faces, it usually set him off. An outsider would have hustled to clear his air passage, but an outsider would not have been informed concerning Dan's death throe laughter. It always

made me laugh just watching him go off like that. This whole situation repeated itself from Honda to Caddy, until we felt like our chances of making the Saturday newspaper's crime watch column were writ in stone.

Following our excitement we zoomed for our favorite hideout, one even Billy the Kid would have been proud of. For the last block we drove in stealth mode, or at least our lights were off, you couldn't really call our craft stealth in the quiet category. We parked a block away and silently crept through the night to a dark building in a darker alley. Grabbing a steel pipe running up the length of its side, I glanced at the thirty foot path to our roost and licked my lips. I was up in a snap, but the rest of the crew looked a little less natural. Especially Dan, who was scared of heights. But he wasn't about to let it stop him while we watched. He just looked a little more relieved than the rest of us once free on top. You would never think a cold rooftop could be so beautiful. From our pedestal we had a bird's eye view of Main Street, crammed with an odd number of cars for such a time of night. We pecked over the edge to across the street where various shapes and sizes of people came and went from Strand Cinema, in their separate little world, far from aware of who watched their night out.

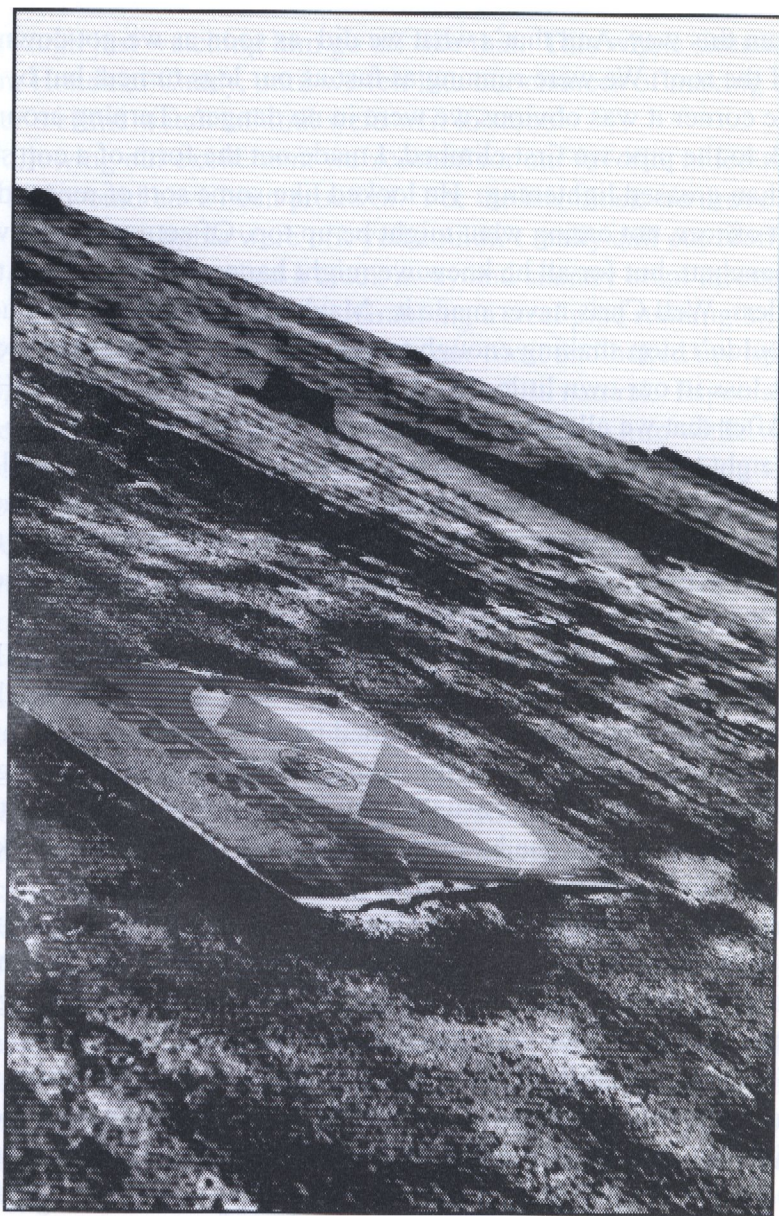
And I thought the roof was just a little more to me than everyone else. Ever since I was a little kid I had been caught up in comic books, absorbing tale after tale of Spider-man and Daredevil. They were always swinging back and forth on the rooftops of New York City. Everything that held any real importance happened to them up there, from nabbing The Kingpin to romancing their super-hero chicks. And this always added a little excitement to the rooftop, making me feel like a little more than I was. Usually the stars would be out, and we would be sheltered from the rest of the world, alone with the twinkling, like eyes staring down on us and telling us it was more than just a Friday. Adam and I would just lay down sometimes and talk astronomy, and every time he would point out the 'seven sisters, like I hadn't just been told that last Friday. Then we got off the tar paper to slink away towards the other roofs, trying to see how close we could get to being seen so that we could have a chuckle later. But Chris Hanchett felt more like smoking one of his cigars, gently leaning back and pushing the smoke into the night. We were nearly fifty yards away when we heard a voice crashing through the silence.

"HEY! Who's up there?" We all froze and our eyes rolled over to Chris. I should have been muttering 'sweet Mary, mother of Jesus', yet instead I yelled

to Chris to run this way. And that's what we did as soon as we got down from the other side of the roof. We were running as fast as our legs turned, but by the time we got to the corner it was obvious we were in no danger. Turning around and looking back to the pipe we first climbed, I made out the form of a cop shuffling up quicker than greased lightning. He looked like some sort of renegade law enforcement officer, not caring what might be up top. Of course we knew it was just Chris Hanchett, but for all he knew we might happen to be shotgun toting drug smugglers. Well Chris never made it. Maybe he was just pure unlucky or maybe he couldn't stop shaking enough to climb down our secondary exit. We mourned his loss in our own little way, popping in REM's 'Everybody Hurts' as we drove. After that we all knew inside that the night was history, since it just didn't seem right to be causing mischief furthermore with Chris in a cell perhaps. However, I suppose I could have pulled out some loyal speech saying that the Chris I knew would have wanted us to push on. But Gabe just wheeled the VW back to Adam's crib and dropped the both of us off. We all exchanged secret handshakes and said next time, with a little wink.

Adam and I tried to stay up as late as we could playing Sega NHL Hockey '93. But he had been training with his Montreal Canadians for so long that I got sick of cremation after a few games and rolled out my sleeping bag on his living room floor, with my body right over the heat vent. We talked for as long as we could about whatever; which was usually girls, hockey, and school. Just about the time I realized I had reached the bottom of my bucket of thoughts, I looked over at Adam and noticed he had conked out.

I was exhausted but for some reason hadn't given in to the Sandman yet. I knew the night had been a memorable one, something to tuck away. While nothing near monumental occurred that night, it had plenty of little things for remembering. Sometimes the clearest memories are just a second long, passing in the blink of an eye. A brief instance, if intense enough, can hold more memories than any time or place. The expressions bottled inside the Honda, the feeling of terror splitting me open on the roof, and the heavy pull of the Katana in my grasp all will resurface in my mind forever, yet not even lasting a second. And just a second was all it took to imagine my little Corolla huddling in the shadow of the snow plow. This second holds more than one would think.



Untitled, Christian Cutsforth

Form Letters

Stacey Caillier

I do not like opening envelopes.
I do not like to tear
seams that saliva has set
and I do not want to know
what you think of me-
if my arm looks like a trapeze
for fleas
and my smile is too often
an O.
No, I do not want your regrets,
your declines, your ripped money,
your vintage wines.
They make me ill.
They make my feel
like I am back in the bread line
between these old oak pcws
reeking of turpentine.
And my legs are tired of this standing.
I am tired of hollow Amens.
These blessings delivered in shredded trees
cannot offer a girl with arms like a trapeze
anything
that could take my fingernails
out of my mouth
and this candlewax from my ears.
If the envelopes could talk
they would tell you
it has been there for years.

Dead Man's Rock

Lisa Christine Lambert

The stone's name is Dead Man's Rock. The name makes it sound more like those scary stories boy scouts tell each other around camp fires, but it is an actual rock. People notice it because of its blueness. From a distance the rock looks like its just pure cobalt blue. When you get closer, though, it's covered with blues and grays swirling like a fingerprint. The rock is smoother than a fingerprint, though. It is completely slick. When we were little, Carnie tried to convince me that someone had swum out to the rock and poured wood varnish over it. The varnish had started at the top and run evenly down all the sides of the rock, covering it with a shiny, smooth shell.

Of course, Carnie was lying. Only one person had been able to swim out to the rock, and that had been the dead man. You still have to wonder, though, how the rock has stayed so brilliantly blue and perfectly shiny. This desert, like all deserts, fades things until they are coarse and a bland shade of tan. Maybe the lake around the rock keeps it cool, and, somehow, blue. But I don't think so. The water is as hot as the sand. The lake looks like the sand, too. It never ripples or waves. In cartoons when people come upon water in the desert, the water looks fresh and soothing, and its so clear it reflects the light of heaven. The water around Dead Man's Rock is murky, and doesn't reflect anything. Sometimes you don't even realize it's there.

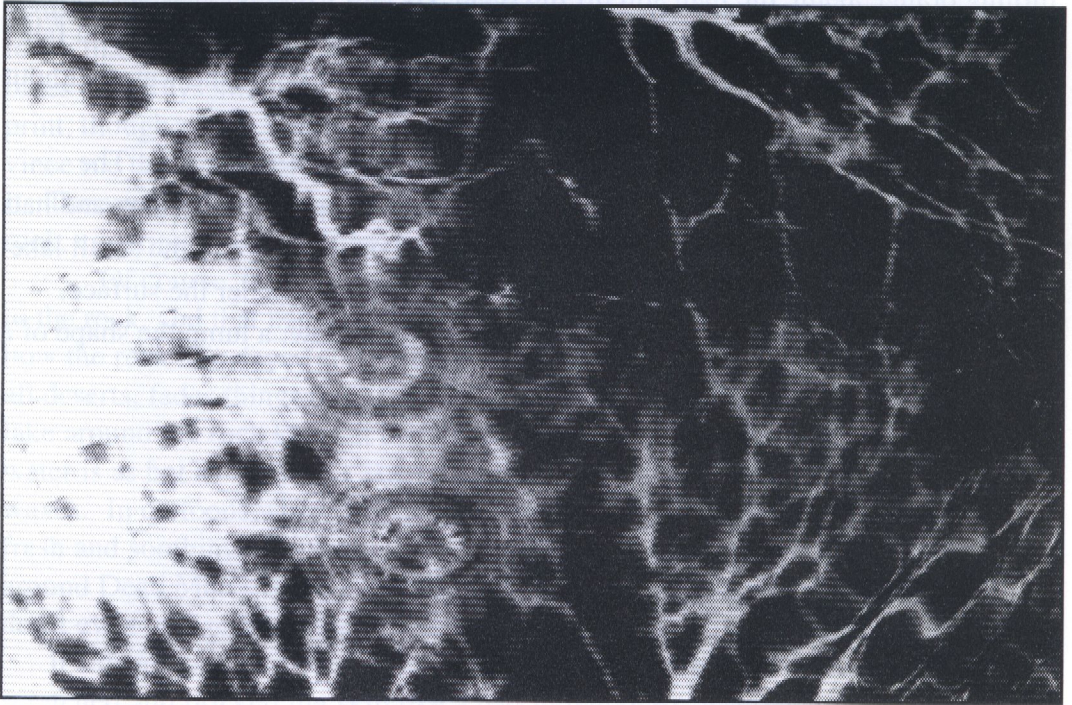
It's deep, too. I've waded up to my thighs in that lake. The grains of sand scratched and pricked my skin like a bad Indian burn. There's a shelf or ridge or something in the floor that I nearly fell off of when I was wading. From there out, the water just gets deeper.

Carnie said it was an awesome sight when she and her father discovered the dead man lying on the rock. The sun had just come up and the sand and the water were a dull orange. The man looked like a bronze statue, he was so still. His left arm and his left leg were bent flat against the stone. His right arm shot up over the top of the rock. His right foot stayed in the water. It looked like he was trying to crawl to the peak of his tiny mountain. His clothes were caked with sand. Carnie said his eyes were closed, but not squinted against the now risen

sun. She said that's when she knew he was dead, when she looked at his eyes. Her dad still called out to the man, but there was no answer.

The police and paramedics came. No one wanted to try to swim through the thick water to get the man. They called to him, and they watched him. Not one millimeter did the man move. Just as the sun was setting, and everything was turning orange again, the man slid off the rock. He slid without pause and without hitting a bump. Carnie said its like when you're ice skating and you fall on your butt, but you keep moving forward. His body sunk into the water without resistance.

Last night, I snuck out and took the truck to Dead Man's Rock. The moon was a full circle. It looked as if the rock had been part of the moon and had just fallen, silently, to its place in the water. I stood on the shore of the small lake and looked at the rock. I imagined the man's body floating under the surface, with his hand still reaching for the stone. He is a lump now; a lump the shape of a man, covered in tan, devoured by the sand.



Untitled, Christian Cutsforth

why I don't smile

Kevin Rogers

Sick of being ignored, sick of being the second-class citizen that I am, I went and got myself a gun.

Late at night, when nobody else is around, I fill up all of the chambers with their bullets. I then pick up the gun - which is a lot heavier than you might think after seeing such machines used effortlessly in so many movies - and I put it against my temple.

A cliched method for sure, but who knows? Maybe in death I won't be a freak. But I relish the fact that I am one. I figure it's better to be some eccentric motherfucker than the one of the carbon copy imitations that I have to deal with everyday.

I never pull the trigger. I just like the feeling of being two pounds of pressure away from becoming just another pathetic statistic. I always wanted to die how I lived.

Killing yourself is the biggest test of courage that there is, but once you've done it, everybody's too upset to comment on your valor. Or they say that it was a dumb thing to do, and fuck-ups like that deserve to die anyway,

Another day, another beating. That's my story; a story that I'll never tell.

When I eventually put down the gun, I half expect a smile to come. Tears flow instead, but every time, I wait for the smile.

People tell me that I never smile. I just shrug and say, "Smiling people look like fuckheads."

Eddie and I always wanted to do it together. That Tuesday after school, I opened his door without knocking like I always did, but his time I found him on his knees in the middle of the kitchen, blood running from his ear, spilling on to this chest, back, and on to the floor. He had a forced smile on his face, but was weeping at the same time. His eyes were glad that I was there, saying, "Sorry Man, I couldn't wait."

My first thoughts were to tell him to get that stupid smile off his face because it made him look like a fuckhead, but when he finally gave up, and fell face first in to the pool of blood that stood before him, I too fell to the ground, weeping.

Years later, I realized that life is rarely as bad as you make it out to be. Ah, the foolishness of youth.

Inspired by Virginia Woolf

Jennifer Hess

I have this thing.
This weight, this raw itch, this old wad of skin,
this suitcase to unpack and repack endlessly.
I have this thing.
And I can share it, see
Say, with you
With you? I can share it with you.
Or not. I can decide.
So now we're close. I unpacked, I
itched, I cupped my hands and showed you
And you drank
You drank me
And now we're close.
So I'll pull back (shaking)
'Cause that's my thing on the floor, a decapitated
thumb, pulsing & bleeding & sighing & maybe humming
a little
to itself
And I look
And maybe you look
too
Or maybe you look at me
Or not. You can decide.
Either way.
I have this thing.



"Alas, poor Yorck, I knew him, Horatio", David Byrnes

Kitchen

Katie M. Hinnenkamp

Early, a quarrel with the landlady.

Back home, Zeus puffs.
Damn it, bitch. He fumbles,
taunts. *Lazy whore.*

Voracious and queasy,
Lorena gnaws rancid aspirin
and slices yesterday's ham
with lightbulb shards.

Her ovaries itch as Zeus,
holy villain by the window,
closes his zipper.

He washes and cloves the toddler
and pushes her into the oven.

Amazed to the cunt
Lorena whispers rambling regrets
past her sacred valentine.
Her tasseled query raves and rolls
like a banshee in a jar as,
under all the romance of a swaying lamp,
Lorena (*the slut*)
pulls yolk
from white.





Drawing by Sky Evans