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# Chrysalis

PERIODICAL STACKS

Spring 2006





Spring 2006

the  
**C**hrysalis  
Literary Arts Journal

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## Good Living

By Katie Johnston

We drove in like Americans: over the speed limit, over-caffeinated, under-rested, rushing through the whispering, whistling city, searching for a place that felt like home, where we'd never been before. We waddled in, backpacks clutching us like sleepy children. We pushed ourselves like dull needles through knots of corridors and doors. The hostel was an open orphanage awaiting a couple of foreign Orphan Annie's, housing a congregation of world wanderers. We all spoke English and drank Earl Grey tea because there was always hot water in the kitchen and that's just what you do. We talked places and politics and filled the rubbish bin with creamer cups and sugar packs. I thumbed the books in the library with the same slack rhythm of a hitch-hiker. I slipped notes in them for future fortune hunters. Doubting anyone would care that "I was here, 2004," I wrote: "Good living is merely the practice of love, humor, and silliness."





## Chicago

By Matt Iverson

It's late, but the moon, or maybe the neon fizzle of street lamps, gives us light to get home, Shawn and me. The wind screams out across the streets, barrels through the night's black throat with the fury of all the homeless of Chicago-after all, what is wind for, but to be a voice for those with aching lungs?

And so Shawn stops, hears the sounds of his brother's cries; then turns, stares into me with a fierceness that makes me cringe, and says, If I could be somebody else, I might just be nobody at all.

We walk on: past needles in the drunken streets; past the red-light district lit with cigarettes half-smoked and stained with lipstick; past gutter-tongued panhandlers preaching down-and-out, whose bloodshot eyes tell me it's the godd--n truth-on past all these facts and artifacts and hidden truths of the city shrieking in my ears, Yes, we are here. Yes, we always have been.

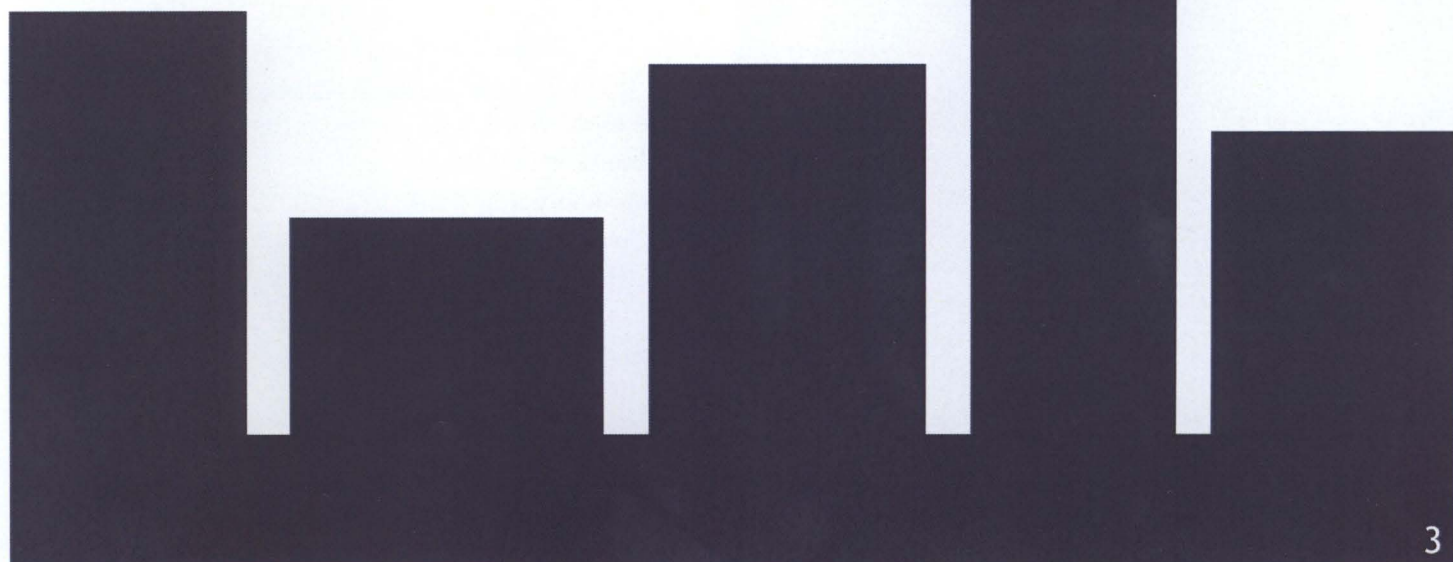
Shawn is drunk, has been since an hour before free food at the church on LeMoyne. Now, the wind swirls up tattered pages of *Cosmopolitan*

and *Penthouse*: fashion ads plead for their own hand-outs as well; a backdoor beauty snarls with yellow teeth and promising come-ons, what are you waiting for?

Shawn searches his own pockets-his broken blue-jeans, his dying, raspy-voiced black leather jacket-finds the Royal Crown miniature, Tucked away, he tells me, for just such an emergency.

What emergency, I start to say, but then I see: that far off, past the skyscrapers' skeleton frames, past the smoke and oil (body and blood of the city), the faint light of morning has begun piercing through, burning the night wind even at its dying howl. And we both look, with awe and horror, into the coming day; and the wind speaks for all of us, as it asks the world, Is this it? Is this finally it-the dead, beaten, dog-eared end of the junkyard nuclear age?

-for Shawn, drunk and alive







## On seeing the ruins of Pompeii

By Matt Iverson

These things were people-  
molded shapes we see,  
molded shadows of a life that used to be-

But now, what are these remains?  
Are they all that's left-all that, still, in vain,

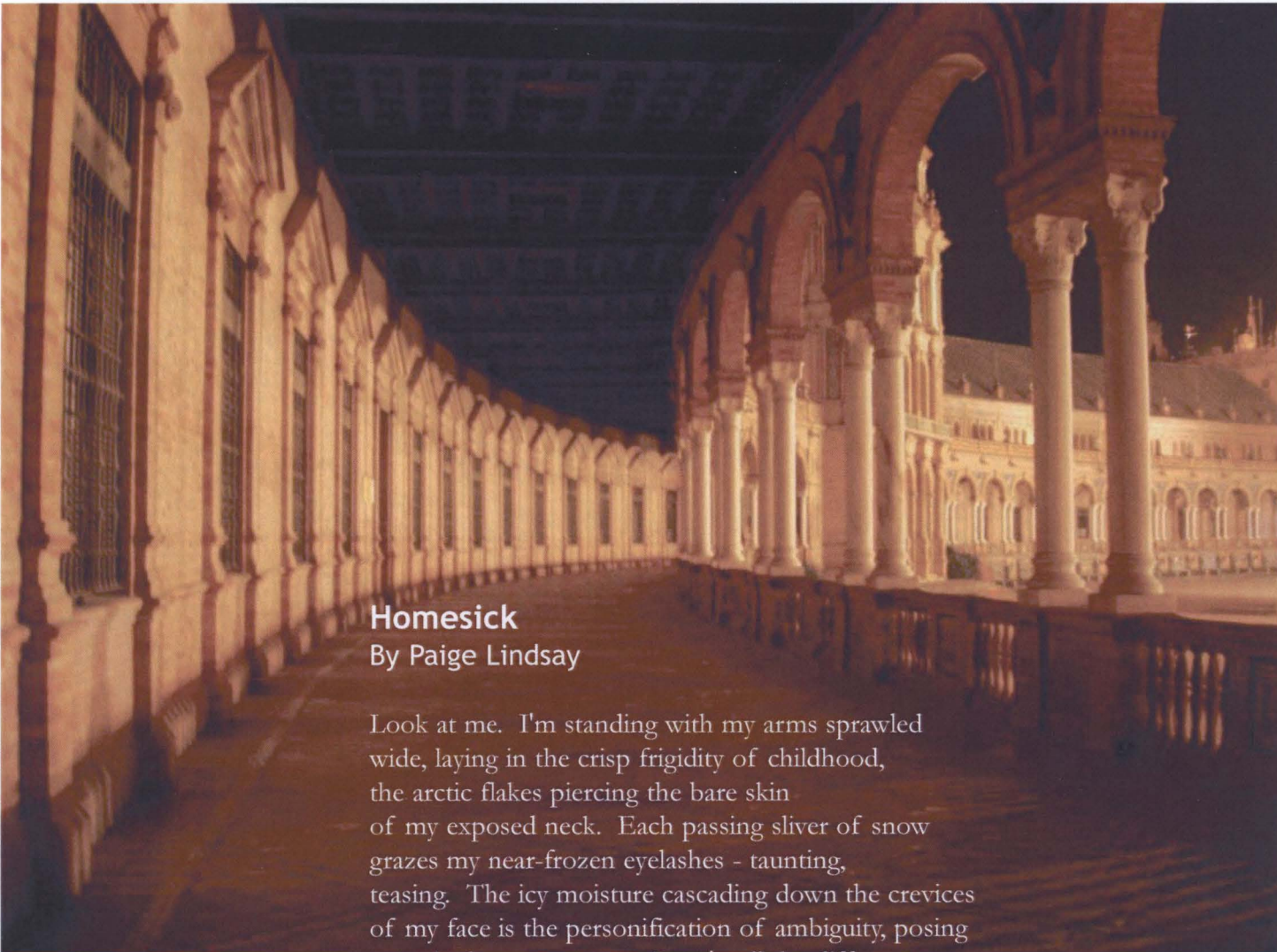
cry out to us of life  
that once had lived,  
and once had died in pain-  
and what of their strife?

It lives again in every mind  
and shows itself in every thirsty finger pointing  
at these screaming spirits, frozen, lying  
prostrate at their feet-at  
a dog that long since ceased its panting.

-And you, and me: we  
see them die, choke on their final breath  
of crushing rock and ash-and  
do we try and stop their death?  
Do we reach out a hand?  
Could we ever reach into our past,  
and pull them from their dying pose, as  
they gasp and wail, and cry  
'at last, at last' ?

Still, there they are: molded shapes,  
these molded shadows of those that used to be-  
and being living, died  
in time-and being dead,  
now live their deaths throughout eternity.





## Homesick

By Paige Lindsay

Look at me. I'm standing with my arms sprawled wide, laying in the crisp fridity of childhood, the arctic flakes piercing the bare skin of my exposed neck. Each passing sliver of snow grazes my near-frozen eyelashes - taunting, teasing. The icy moisture cascading down the crevices of my face is the personification of ambiguity, posing as melted snow or tears. I can't tell the difference. The sound of a passing snow plow cuts short the harmony of nothingness, the sharp scraping of shovels brings the present back to a harsh clarity. The noises stop. Pain burrowing deep, I open my eyes. The familiar silence of a grey sky comes as a shock, its similarity to memory deceiving. My numb body fights to reject the waves of panic fighting to reach the abyss where my heart supposedly lies in wait. Where am I? Where have I gone? This pounding in my chest, bringing forth the vengeance of tears, pushes all excuses of melted snow away. I have no idea and yet I wish I could claim ignorance as my ally. On this patch of universal youth, this frozen water which could be placed anywhere and bring the security of your mothers arms out of the dusty confines of reminiscence, it's almost easy to feel at home. To let down your guard, to relish in the freedom of comfort. But now it's getting cold. And I must return to the even colder reality of solitude. The snow continues falling and I grow-up.





Photo by Courtney Paine

## Life Line

By Erin West

It is my birth. It is my beginning. Free-falling, gracefully and carefree I speed towards my unknown.

We are all pure. We are all unique. Undefined and lacking all imprints, we simply are. We are beautiful as we rush ever downward gathering speed, becoming invigorated. Slam! Impact with something solid, with pain, fear, and agony. I have collided with earth, with life. It is steal and plastic, glass and earth. It propels me forward along its aerodynamically designed lines and curves. Forcing me to forever go on, I am inundated by tiny droplets of life, experience, and more pain. I have no choice; I have been told it is all necessary. I must absorb them - good and bad - feel them swell and expand my being, pressing me ever onward towards the vast unknown.

This is my life. This is my line. A small trail remains where I have been. Crisscrossed by similar lines, my past becomes absorbed, expanded, even erased at times. Ever-forward I must press. No looking back. No doubting. No regrets. I am compelled towards some greater unknown - the end perhaps, or a new beginning.

This has been my life, my line. A tiny droplet I remain in this vast universe of time and space.

\*\*\*\*

A tiny coo escapes her perfectly formed lips, as her delicate hands gently uncurl and curl. She nods sleepily to the steady rhythm of the car. Large and tiny droplets of rain hurtle onto the windshield pressed onward and forwards by the wind and speeding vehicle. Droplet, after droplet, scuttles past her innocent blue eyes, and for a moment she watches a single drop make its path across her window. She yawns, and yields to the peaceful rocking of the car, as the drop disappears from view.



## **The Road Always Traveled**

By Erin West

I fled to clear my mind, into the night  
filled with frostbitten leaves that  
crumpled beneath blind feet.

A morose moon encircled by  
the malefic mist sent from his lips,  
reminds me of my transgressions.

I close my eyes to the memories,  
but my brain reverberates with pain.  
Approaching like a hoard of bats at dawn,

I crumple to the earth screaming  
"Patience is a virtue," but inside  
my soul ruptures from the boredom.

My footprints traverse this dusty road.  
The lines curve and intertwine  
leaving me broken and befuddled.

But my dizzy mind is payment for  
my perpetual motion and the road -  
I always travel.





Photo by Courtney Paine

## **Night**

By David White

Waterfall behind blue light,  
soaring across uncharted paths  
through open spaces,  
a door into one's existence.  
The sun lost behind the moon  
winking as history is erased.  
Only a crimson glow remains,  
a picture trapped inside a canvas  
wanting to break away from its borders.  
An artist with no name fades away.  
A brush stroke away from darkness.



## Oregon Rain

By Jordan Roberts

I am a number  
That was told he had a name  
Contracted with the blood of the earth  
And mixed with the rust carried by my veins  
I've climbed sister mountains  
But never once did breach the sky  
I've tried staring down the train  
Known as Balor's eye  
I've followed paw prints of the bearcat  
Through meadows yet unknown  
The faces of the forest smiled  
And it felt like coming home  
My uncle dressed in plastic  
Danced a jig upon my casket  
They won't put me to bed  
Buried alive

I am six feet under  
But I'm rising fast  
In a desperate effort  
To change fortune once miscast  
I could never walk on water  
If I was afraid to sink  
The beggar on the corner holds a sign  
Saying "we are the missing link"

I brushed against your shadow  
And I kissed your silhouette  
Your tears adorned like fireflies  
For someone you've never met  
Your eyes shone bright as daggers  
And your cocky pirates swagger  
They won't put you to bed  
Buried alive

I will ride homebound winds  
On the backs of griffin's wings  
I will drink your scent from dragon's eggs  
And toast to cardboard kings  
I will cut just like the wind  
That felled your house of cards  
I will dance just like the tortoise  
And weep with the gray wolf in the dark  
They won't put me to bed  
Buried alive

Lay your fingers on the ruins  
The seasons waxed and wane  
The age of reason crumbles  
And falls like Oregon rain

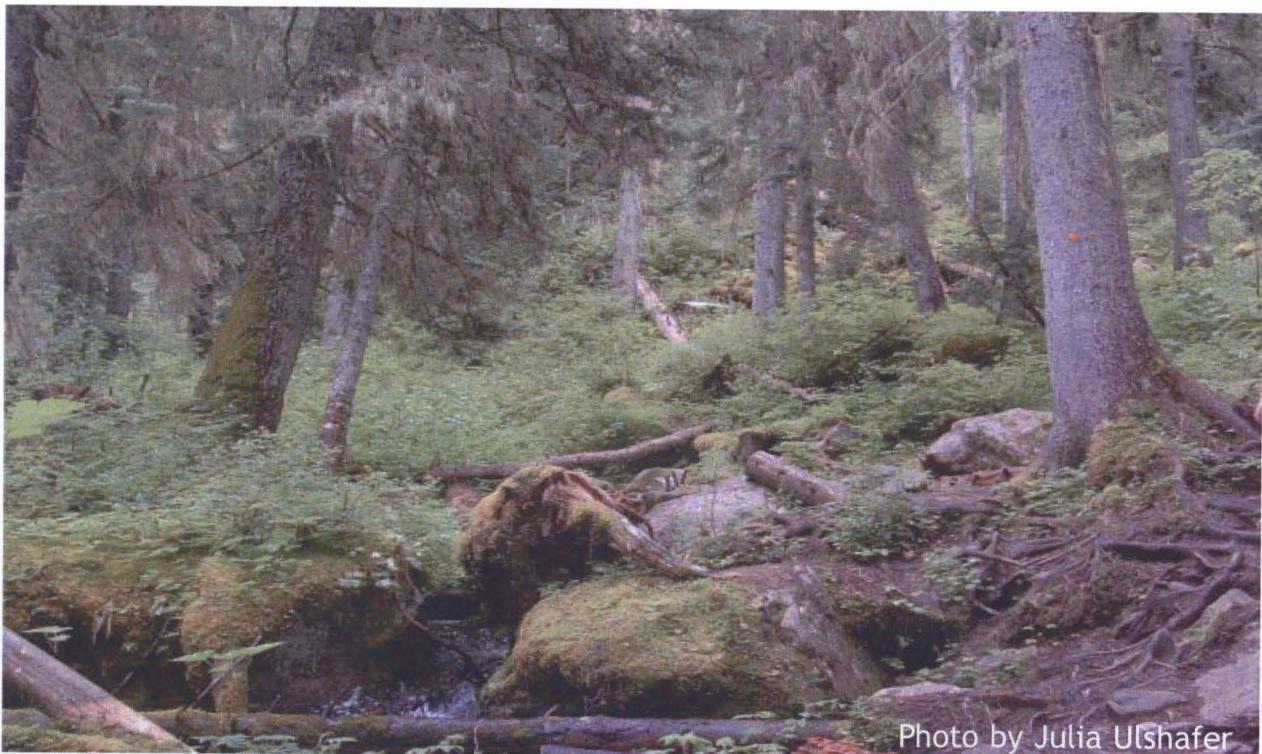


Photo by Julia Ulshafer



## **Birds of Washington Park:**

### ***The Chrysalis* interviews Caitlin Letts**

**By Brenton Clark**

Caitlin Letts is a senior at Willamette University. Instead of taking an internship or a vacation last summer, she decided to spend much of her free time in Washington Park in Portland, Oregon, bird watching. Pursuing her interest in biology and art, Letts not only catalogued the behaviors of different birds, but also photographed as many as she could. From these photographs, she created sketches that culminated in a field guide for bird watching in Washington Park. She hopes to sell her guide to nearby bookstores so that more people will be able to partake in informed bird watching in the park.

**Chrysalis:** Your project is called "A Field Guide to Birds of Washington Park." What inspired you to do observe and sketch birds?

**Letts:** I wanted to do something that involves both art and science, since those are my two main interests. I also spend a lot of time in Washington Park; I've been a volunteer at the zoo and I do a lot of hiking around there. I've never seen anything that encourages people to go bird watching there, so I figured it would be a good chance for me to do some bird watching and painting.

**Chrysalis:** Are you from the Portland area?

**Letts:** Yes, I am from Beaverton. Washington Park is just west of Portland.

**Chrysalis:** Why birds, specifically? Why not something else?

**Letts:** I've always been interested in birds; I worked for the birds of prey program at the zoo. At the time I was writing the proposal I was also taking an ornithology class. I'm sort of obsessed with birds.

**Chrysalis:** How did you conduct your project?

**Letts:** Pretty much what I did was go out to Washington Park bright and early at 5 a.m. at least three or four days

a week, and just spend a couple hours walking around the trails looking for various birds. I tried to go out at different times during the day and get an idea of when the birds are out there, but mostly they're out there in the early morning. And I just recorded all the species I saw and tried to take pictures of them. I got a nice fancy camera with the grant money. Once I collected pictures and species and notes on their location and behavior and things like that, I would take all those pictures and print them up and use them as references for paintings.

**Chrysalis:** Are you majoring in art and science, or are you just interested in the subjects?

**Letts:** I'm a biology major and an art minor.

**Chrysalis:** Are you hoping to market the guide?

**Letts:** Yes. I'm going to be taking a copy of it around to the gift shops and other places in Washington Park, and also the Portland Audubon Society and maybe a few other birding stores to see if they want to carry it. It will be really exciting if they do.

**Chrysalis:** Can you describe the how the Carson grant process works?

**Letts:** Basically, you just write a grant proposal for a project that you're interested in. There's no restriction on what the project has to be about. You write a proposal saying what you want to do, how you're going to do it, what sort of schedule you're going to follow, and some sort of budget.







Art by Caitlin Letts

### Birds of Washington Park continued

You also need to find a faculty advisor who will help you write the proposal and just help you along the way, if you need it. If you are a grant recipient, you receive \$2,000 to cover your costs. Typically you can either get a stipend or they will reimburse you, even for gas money which is really helpful. Once you complete your project, then you get the additional \$1,000.

Chrysalis: Do you plan on working with birds in the future?

Letts: Possibly. I would like to eventually

have my artwork shown in galleries and hopefully sell some things. But that's sort of difficult, so at this point I'm just trying to figure out what I'll do with my biology degree to keep me going.

Chrysalis: Is there anything else you'd like to say about your project?

Letts: It was really fun! Also, I really encourage people to apply for Carson grants.



## Why I Love It

By Mikey Inouye

Because it is the only answer I need to any question,  
and it rephrases itself millions of times at a time,  
hugging me all  
so freezing-warm tight  
with its one word song  
until even I can understand it

and I am always holding my soul stretched out  
over my head like an eager umbrella  
for the moment to return,  
and even when I am not  
thinking about it I am waiting,  
dry, frantic, waiting,  
and waiting and

it's about the big downpours-  
how even Gene Kelly  
with the help of all that makeup & milkwater  
can't grin the way I do when it happens,  
how I can feel as lame as I want to  
with a throat shrunk so narrow  
I have to breathe through my ears,  
with tears hiding in the crowd  
holding secrets in their pockets  
that only you will get to hear from me-  
if you wanted to hear-  
waiting-  
but this is not about you,  
this is about me without you,  
and me without the rain  
for now-  
and for some reason every time it comes back  
it acts as though it has found me;  
that I was the one who had gone-

which is absurd in that I always stay in the same place  
because normal people can't move like the rain:  
we have to spend entire lifetimes  
learning how to sit well in just the one spot,  
because a small step for man is a step  
that would cost him his life-ask any dead person-

Art by Brett Gardner



that is, if you can catch their attention long enough  
to pop the question as they run by.

But I am done with haunting those ghosts-  
this is not about those who have passed on,  
this is about you, and me without you, and  
us without the rain, for now,

waiting for all those yeses to come  
yes-yes-yes-ing down, filling the drains,  
feeding the air, coloring the concrete  
until it's as dark as it wants to be-  
to answer me, to affirm that I,  
yes I, please I, thank-ya-much,  
here now, give-receive-accept for me, the  
only thing, an 'it's-okay,' just this once,  
a falling down, a letting go,  
a simple dropping of 1's  
through the pinhole entry  
on the top of my head,  
this is why I love it  
and why everything  
else is just a matter  
of time.



## **Plastic Bag Monument** By Luke Vieira

Flowers grow  
Minds sleep  
One day it storms  
(but)  
Flowers keep growing  
Minds keep sleeping  
(and)  
The storm never fades.

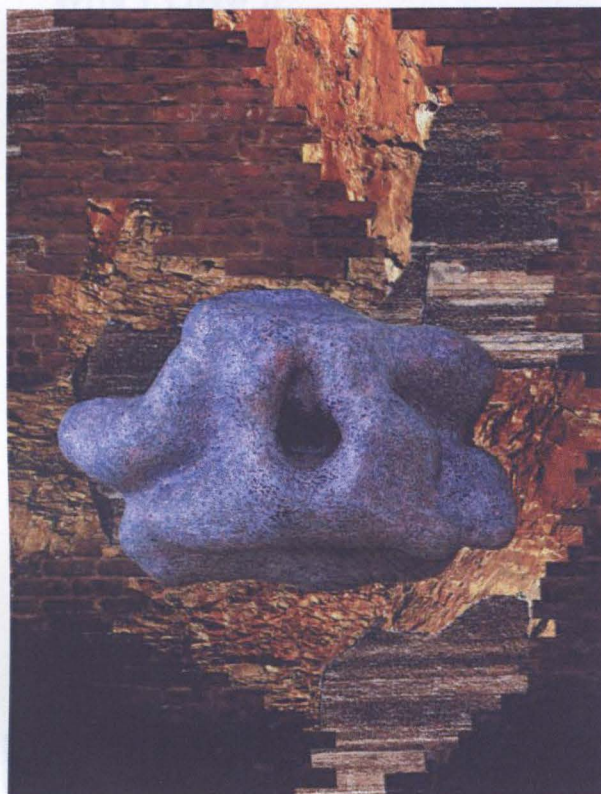


Photo by Whitney Tenold



Photo by Courtney Paine





Art by Molly, Ben and Jeff Crouch

## Redheads: A Blues Sonnet

By James Bertolino

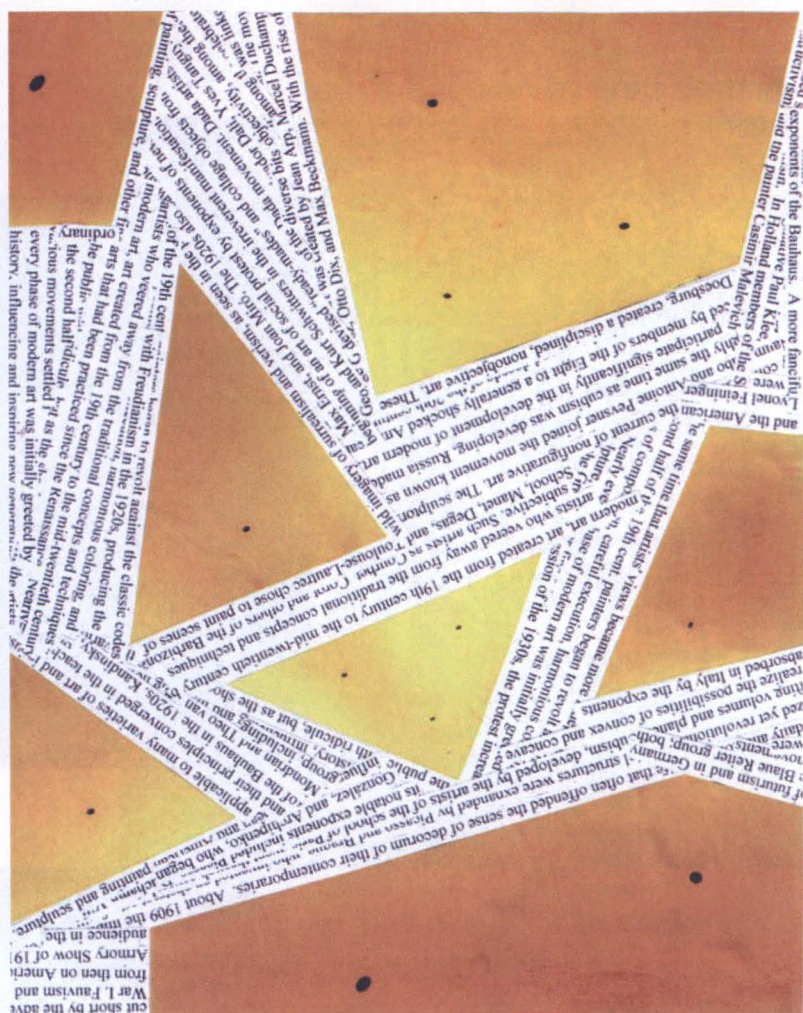
I wonder how much depends upon,  
I mean why must I rely upon  
the whims of a redheaded woman?

I found her illuminated by dawn light,  
lost her when she slipped past my headlights.  
It's confusing, but I'm not too bright.

Her body was always turning away from,  
never wanted a real kiss from  
me--thinking about her makes me glum.

But, you know, it could have been the ocean.  
I know it was the sound of the ocean:  
she turned toward that seductive moan.

I wonder can a love gone under survive?  
Why can't I keep my redheads alive?



## Picasso's Old Guitarist

By Jessica F. Smith

The old man strums his guitar.  
His feet are bony and cold, probably frostbitten;  
he hunches, gazing upon threadbare knees,  
huddled and shriveled upon himself in his lowly rags.  
Old age is obvious in his thinness and balding head,  
in the emphasized cords of his neck, the subtle yet obvious  
suggestions of wrinkles mercilessly brushstroked on his face.

The old man strums his guitar,  
holding it at his center, a soft yellow roundness,  
the only thing that gives him heat.  
When he was younger, it gave him passion,  
like the fiery slash of a match flaring up at night.  
The world has since turned to winter around him,  
but he closes his eyes and opens his ears to the warm sounds.  
Like a gentle pillar the guitar supports him-  
his passion, his music, his only love.



## **The Ballad of the Pirate Lizard**

**By Jordan Roberts**

I stowed aboard a ship named the Elhaz Amends  
Set a course for the islands guarding the world's end  
We were just seven days away from the shore  
I was unearthed and ordered overboard  
As I stood on the bow and looked into the ocean  
The god Dylan descended and put the water in motion  
Chariots skimmed the water and banshees rode on the wind  
I thought to myself this is surely the end  
And the weather grew colder and the storm it came nearer  
The snow blinded my vision until I saw so much clearer  
I stood firm in the face of a blizzard  
And I took on the mantra of the Pirate Lizard  
As I shouted my release the waters descended  
The waves receded, the storm it had ended  
And the crew they all stared like I was some kind of wizard  
And they pledged their allegiance to the Pirate Lizard

They took me to the oracle in which they believed  
A raven black as shadow was speaking to me  
The raven cawed her prophecy, my future pressed in wax  
A rolling square on the south side of the facts  
She said "I've roamed the canyon at daybreak under the morning moon  
Apples stacked in triplicate in rooms with no room  
I've walked a thousand steps at the foot of a gravedigger  
On the shoulder of the shovel building tombstone triggers  
Kissed with burnt lips and hugged with plastic  
The question seared on your soul but you never could ask it"  
Her eyes mirrored my movements and her soul drank my fill  
She said "Go ahead, Pirate Lizard, ask me what you will"

I said "I've fallen into the water before I learned how to swim  
And to touch the shore I drank dry a sea of gin  
Now I need to know and I know you can teach  
How far my ship will sail how long my arms will reach"  
Then engulfed by dual circles the two of us were  
She spoke so calmly, she spoke so sure  
She said "If you want them to feel it hit them in their scars  
For the first time the poor know just how poor they are"  
And I signed my name in soy sauce because I was out of blood  
But the break was still as clean as a child caked in mud  
And though part of me felt she had more to say  
I'd heard what I wanted and so went on my way  
I took to the seas with the ship I commanded  
The respect I was given and the fear I demanded  
And we sailed to the very boundaries of the sea  
And we spat over the edge so defiantly  
And we took what we wanted, never left it the same  
Wherever you'd go they'll be speaking my name

Now exotic women wear my bracelets and rings  
And to be in my company they'd do anything  
But a lifetime of running leaves your steps short  
It may be a game but it's hardly a sport  
And the Navy was waiting when we hit that port  
And though we fought boldly, worthy of story  
All for our freedom, wenches, and glory  
Our ship was soon boarded, our sails torn down  
And I found myself alone, soldiers all around  
My crew chewed up and spit out of a gizzard  
I knew this would be the last stand of the Pirate Lizard

Now I've walked through gateways and gardens, finally free  
Yet the keepers of Avalon were strangers to me  
With new seas to sail and a true gypsy end  
Under the protection offered by the Elhaz Amends



Art by Molly, Ben  
and Jeff Crouch

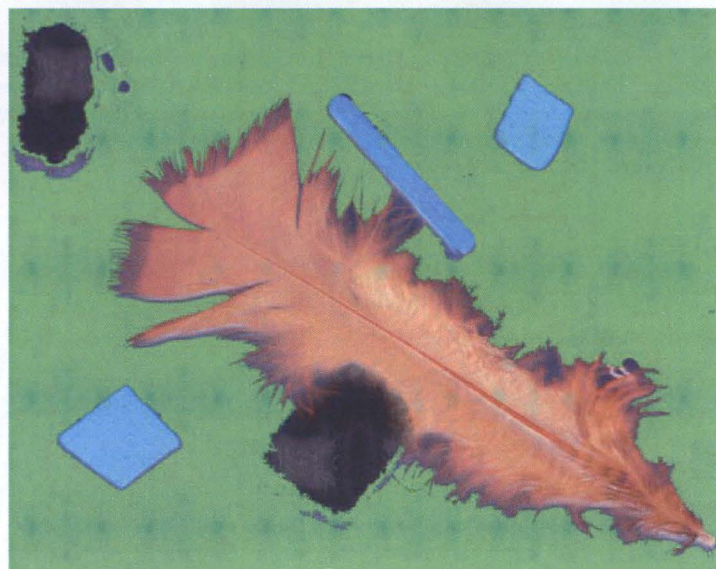
## The Category of Short Story

By Dustin Schaber

Let me tell you the story of an artist. For the sake of argument I will just say he goes by Daniel. Now, Daniel woke one morning and felt as if he were to neglect the day's physical labor that is required to keep an artist financially afloat and paint the world as it was that morning, he could live off the royalties of such a perfect painting. The firmament suspended above the small town was speckled like a robin's egg with clouds of white and blue and of soft, very soft lavender. The fatigued yellow sun swam from cloud to cloud to exert as little energy as possible, casting shadows of rabbits, horses and ships on the ground. Occasionally a child would stop his swinging somewhere near the skirt of the town to point out a dragon in the sky, but by the time his companion stopped her momentum the cloud had taken a much lovelier shape. She said it resembled two lovers lying together with limbs intertwined. However, given that this lass was much too young to use words like limbs and lovers, the image she painted was slightly less passionate.

The painter took his eyes from the sky and brought them to the horizon, his point of reference. In his gaze fell a farmer wearing blue overalls, an old collared shirt with rolled sleeves and a straw hat. As he and his son pitched hay into the bed of an archaic pick-up, his wife, the boy's mother, leaned against a wooden banister painted white and told her two favorite men that a pitcher of lemonade had just been perfected. And, if they were quick, two biscuits with honey just might be left on the table. The painter never saw cleaner heels.

When he went to put his hands on his knees to help himself from his hunker, he saw the yellow trumpets of the daffodils slightly touching his dark cotton pants, leaving miniscule grains of pollen clinging to the fabric. He sidestepped lightly so as to avoid their unnecessary harm as a gray kitten swatted at butterflies. And as he



drank this all in he thought back to when he was a boy and would swim naked in the creek with his brothers. He remembered how their pearlescent skin glowed under the green surface. He remembered how the squirrels would banter and give chase as if one more chestnut really mattered. He remembered the sound of unseen ducks scratching in a bush in preparation for the yellow chicks that would come in late spring. But what he remembered most was how his father would sit and laugh with the drells who came to his farm looking for work. He would sweep off his stained hat and tell them that he himself was suffering greatly due to the dust and that he simply could not afford another hired hand. However, what he could do was shake their hand firmly, though not as firmly as the stranger did (this apparently inspired confidence in the drifter who, his father said, needed as much confidence as they could get) and invite him to drink cold beer on the porch in return for a story. And they would sit sharing old stories.

Then Daniel would look up, then down, and close his eyes and take in a deep breath from his nostrils. He wouldn't let it out immediately, but rather, would wait till he felt as if his body would collapse from the inside. He put his old worn hands complete with slender fingers in his pockets and shuffled back to the porch remembering that it was Sunday and that work could be put off for another day.



## April Love

By Erin West

You stand there, hidden from his sight,  
Letting the love that stirs in your heart,  
Seep slowly, carefully across your face.  
It is perfect, this love that opens before you,  
Like the flowers before the April sun,  
And gently you grasp it to your breast,  
Barely daring to utter a breath,  
Lest you should disrupt its shimmering threads.

With spring your April love will blossom and flourish,  
Purple hues and bright greens will encompass it.  
And in summer, it will burst forth as a sunflower.  
Basking in its golden light, you'll know no cares.  
Then the air will change, and a bite will fill your mornings.  
Fall will see your love slip into crimson shades of jealousy,  
And the sweet scents will mold to a putrid stench.  
The bonfires will consume its purity.

With the first frost, you'll feel the bitter sting,  
And your blossom will wilt beneath the frigidness.  
The light will become short and your darkness longer.  
The expanses of the white earth will blanket you,  
And you'll retreat to an old warmth you once new.  
But the bitter cold, not unlike your smile, will seep over you,  
Penetrating the depths of what you thought you knew.  
Dead, broken, and frozen, you'll wait in the darkness.

But the glory of April will return, and you'll awake once more.

Your porcelain skin as flawless as ever,  
And that smile playing across your lips.  
For you, time will lay down and rest for awhile,  
And you'll be able to bask in these pigments of love,  
So beautifully crafted and preserved, just for you.  
So you shall be free of fall and winter,  
And know only the joys of April Love.



April Love  
Arthur Hughes, 1855-56



# ATOLLS AND ISLANDS

By Lauren Anne Pressler

Pg 18 art by Maya Karp

Pg 19 art by Lauren Pressler

Edgar Degas, Claude Monet, Pierre Auguste Renoir, Van Gogh, Henri Matisse, Edvard Munch, all masters at enticing and pleasing the visual senses, found themselves losing the most essential tool of their craft, sight. Yet, the terror of deteriorating vision did not prevent these masters from continuing to do the work that they loved. They proved most fervently that visual intuition could be accomplished even with the absence of sight. As an amateur artist myself, I was captivated by the perseverance and passion of these painters and so I threw myself into their theoretical shoes hoping to gain some insight into the emotional, spiritual, and worldly challenges associated with a loss of vision in the painting studio. While the world applauds the masterpieces of Degas and Renoir as ingenious, awe-inspiring outcomes of well-trained hands and minds, the reality is that these men's unique experiences, journeys in paint, and the way that they saw or were no longer able to see the world, defined their craft and their very being.

Convinced that I was the new-age Newton, posing hypotheses and conducting never before tried experiments (albeit in a paint-studio instead of a lab), I contemplated the specifics of my research. There were several means that I con-

sidered to conduct these tests: blindfolded, blindfolded but aided by the seeing sight of another, blindfolded but able to see slightly through the bottom of the fabric, wearing prescription glassed that were too strong, or wearing an eye patch to skew my

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**"While the world applauds the masterpieces of Degas and Renoir as ingenious awe-inspiring outcomes of well-trained hands and minds, the reality is that these men's unique experiences, journeys in paint, and the way that they saw or were no longer able to see the world, defined their craft and their very being."**

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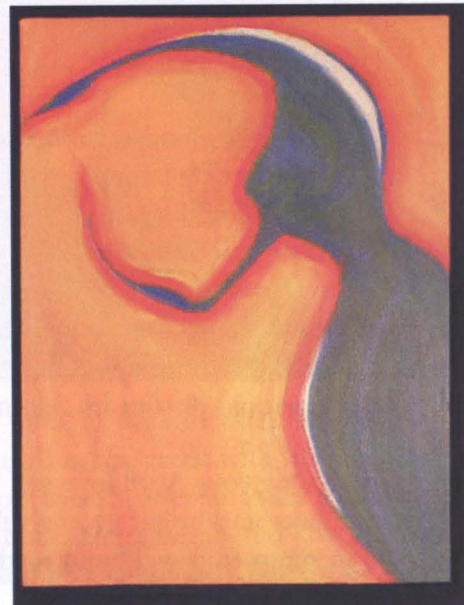


depth perception. In the end I chose to experiment with a blindfold creating complete blindness without any aid from another. While only a few of my famous inspirations completely lost their sight, absolute absence of vision (with the blindfold) was best for intensifying the emotional response, the uncertainty and uncomfortable feelings that coincide with a lack of vision.

Perched on a paint-stained stool in the sunlit Willamette University 3rd floor art studio, I blindly fumbled with curling paint tubes, wrinkling canvas,

bristly brushes, and a water glass, which I would inevitably over shoot in my efforts to dampen the bristles of my tools. I heard and felt the swish-swish-curve-dab, of the paint on the canvas, saw the image of my work in my mind's eye,

but had no way of translating that picture to the canvas. As stated by Edgar Degas, "Everything is trying for a blind man who wants to make believe that he can see." I was disconcerted by the scratchy towel tightly pressed against my closed eyes, and unnerved



by my inability to see the entirety of my work. Yet all the while, I was in anticipation of the time when everything would be made clear, the blindfold hastily discarded. I would be able to rub my eyelids to ease the ache as they readjusted to being used and help myself regress back to the comfortable dependency of my sight. But that time was not now and the anticipation of the goal was making the journey impossible. I forced myself to let go of my ingrained objective: to paint and create meant to produce a successful finished product. Rejection of the outcome as the goal was a quick, unpleasant but at the same time liberating revelation.

Once I acknowledged that my control of the situation was an illusion; I began to relax. While partially relieved of that burden, there remained an unavoidable, dreading, sheepish and yet anxious desire to see the outcome and realize the product of my labor. My sense of touch, the movement of my hand and brush through space became the motivation for my actions. Jacques Derrida comments that the blind "are apprehensive about space, they apprehend it with their groping, wandering hands; they draw in this space in a way that is at once cautious and bold; they calculate, they count on



the invisible." Instead of training my seeing intuition to modify compositional and complementary coloration patterns, a separate intuition, one of feeling, sensation, emotion and touch began to guide my actions. Just as a child's eyes lighten with awe and seemingly perpetual wonderment at every new discovery, I seized the freedom and novel intuition of my temporary blindness as if I had been the first to realize its potency. The half-formed emotions that tried to grasp this newly discovered (or just



rediscovered) counter intuition, is best expressed in Jacques Derrida's *Memoirs of the Blind*. Derrida explains how the hand of the blind "ventures forth alone or disconnected; it feels its way, it gropes, it caresses as much as it inscribes, trusting in the memory of signs and supplementing sight. It is as if a lidless eye had opened at the tip of the fingers, as if one eye too many had just grown right next to the nail, a single eye...[it] guides the tracing or outline; it is a curious and vigilant substitute...the image of the movement is sketched out within me. From the absolute withdraw of an invisible center or command post, a secret power ensures from a distance. It coordinates the possibility of seeing, touching, and moving."

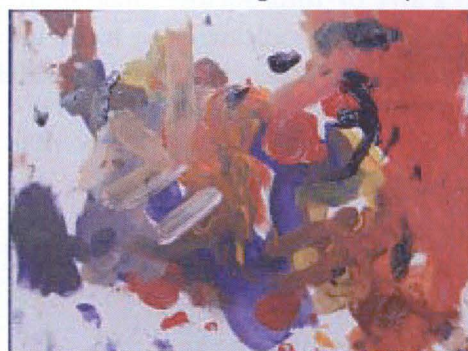
I had to accept that my brushstrokes were not in the right place and my brain and hand would most certainly overcompensate distances and skew the composition. Instead I used my hands as eyes (feeling objects around me as well as my own face before and during the painting processes), to constantly remind myself of a reality beyond my vision. Memory and "the now" became indiscernible, both fading in and out of my thought, both necessary tools for creating the image before me.

I brimmed with a new sense of independence from the sensations of my altered craft: the moist, rich, goopy paint coating my fingers and filling in

my fingerprints, the quick and slow swish-swish-curve of the brushstrokes as they glided across the rough ridges in the canvas. How had I missed these vivid and wonderful sensations? How did I not see that through the very performance of seeing, the single tool that artists are most afraid to lose, I lost sight of the journey involved in creating; the evolving and never-ending process? Where did I lose sight of these little details, the ever so slight steps in the course, the spokes of the ladder that only I will ever know or care

to know? And yet I feel that there is an even more pertinent question that demands further attention. Where do my small experiments, my pusillanimous tribulations in the art studio, the fledgling discoveries born through struggle and revelation, where do they find a small, unscreened window to test their inexperienced wings in that brilliant fresh blue sky?

I have come to realize, that whether by chance or divine guidance, queries, often subconsciously posed, tend to find answers in the most unexpected places. It is simply a matter of being attuned to these moments. Just as little floating



lanterns flicker and glisten on the expansive inky-black surface of a night shrouded river, one of these unexpected but welcome moments of illumination found me in a small, musty, sun-lit Salem bookstore. Trifling through old stained copies of French-English dictionaries, outdated farmer's almanacs, and oversized black and white art books, I happened upon a small white and gold paperback squeezed between a coverless 1st Edition copy of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *The Nautical Experience*. It is through this small essay, Henry Van Dyke's *Ships and Havens*, that I have connected my drab art room sketches

with the brilliant blue sky of *The Bigger Picture*. Van Dyke offers that, "wherever you are, and whoever you may be, there is one thing in which you and I are just alike, at this moment, and in all the moments of our existence. We are not at rest; we are on a journey. Our life is not a mere fact; it is a movement, a tendency, a steady, ceaseless progress". As Van Dyke imagines life as an open sea, and men as the ships that voyage across its great expanse, he poses the question: Does every vessel on the open ocean of life invisibly demand a mooring point and haven, a definite goal? Or are the journey and the steps that lead to some nondescript goal, enough to sustain and give purpose to the being? Van Dyke sees the necessity for this haven and mooring point and destination, the necessity for purpose and a goal, the hand at the rudder of our ship. However, it is not that I lacked direction, nor that through my blindness my craft lost purpose, but rather that my goal and purpose departed from the shores of traditional expectation. The journey of my sailing vessel, the swish-swish-curve of my paintbrush across the rough canvas, became the goal. Van Dykes' haven in the seas of

life no longer became a distant shore but a long string of islands and atolls, beautiful resting points along the way, and then a departure back into the rough current, never once wiggling my toes in the sandy, wet beaches of that distant land, Van Dyke's haven. Artist, blind man, ship's captain ...while the goal and destination, the final shore, the completed painting, may appear as the purpose of every action, it is in fact the journey, the atolls and islands in the sea of life that make the whole voyage worth while.

#### Works Cited

- Derrida, Jacques. *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Others Ruins*. The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1993.  
 Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. The Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1975.  
 Van Dyke, Henry. *Ships and Havens*. Thomas Y. Crowell and Co.: New York, 1897.



## You Make Me Jr. High

by Mikey Inouye

I want to grow down and out of this  
but you throw me so high, up to  
the waxing moon of my past and  
into a wet confusion  
beside myself with the twirling,  
mood-swingy tail end of puberty.

I am doing the jr. high flirt—  
look smile  
          turn away quick  
look smile  
          turn away quick  
look long  
          turn away slow

I lose myself in the  
vicinity of your hair—  
the smell of snapped pencils,  
cold waxed wooden tabletops,  
expensive plastic pen cases.  
A brush of your hand sends me reeling  
into a love of Introductory Shakespeare,  
where an angry look ruins my lunch appetite,  
and I beg forgiveness when it isn't asked for.  
I write you dramatic notes  
and exit on dramatic notes,  
my voice jumps bass-tenor-bass,  
I trip into chairs and stumble stairs,  
and good, *good*, this clumsy  
is the *good* kind of clumsy,  
the cinematic-romantic kind of  
clumsy that makes for perfect payoff—  
perfect kiss, kiss of dreams,  
kiss on pillow and lips of spit,  
spittle on pillow but nobody there,  
a promise kept, then disappeared.

You make me jr. high  
this place where the play-  
grounds clash with the playing-fields—  
where one of your eyes gleams of recess,  
and the other—I fear—as a full-stop,  
that like so many other things  
I have cast a crude net of ignorance over—

and should I say it anyway, in the middle of  
one of our desperately imaginative adventures,  
should I stutter it out and say that I love you?  
iloveyou-iloveyou-iloveyou?

*I* (deep breath)

*Love* (long pause)

*You* (heavy sigh)

When instead I should be saying  
that I angst you, I angst you  
very much—I angst you more  
than anyone I've ever angsted  
before. I angst you so much  
that I am willing to regress  
any number of years  
to leave this raw—  
to keep this pure—

look smile  
          turn away quick

You make me 5th and 6th,  
where you sit, hands folded  
on the other side of class,  
your always-sideways-eyes  
drawing mine into them  
with their alluring  
neglectfulness—  
and I let loose a  
jaw-dropped whisper:  
ohhhh....nooooo.

Oh (no).

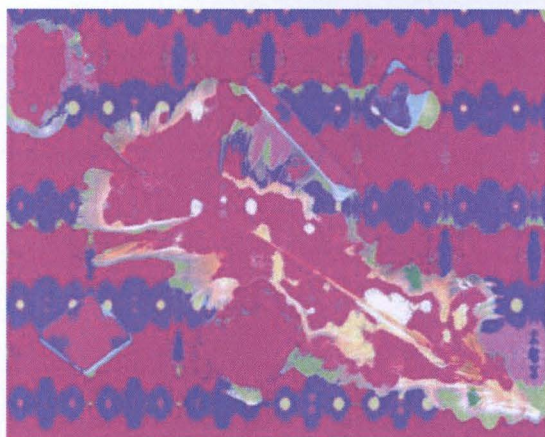
God (no).

Please (no).

Don't do this to me,  
not now,

not when I am finally  
getting the hang  
of being a kid, don't drop that  
brand new Dictionary of Pain on me,  
don't cram that Wordly Wise vocab  
into my low-occupancy brain,  
because I will use them—I guarantee you  
that I will use those words—I will use them  
very often and I will use them very poorly—





Art by Molly, Ben and Jeff Crouch

look smile  
stare in adoration,  
until you scowl at me  
with a wild irritation

And already it's up to preschool  
where I chase after you in circles  
because all I want to do is  
kiss-you-*everywhere*  
from ring-finger-to-elbow-to-  
shoulder-to-neck-to-cheek-to-nose—  
but do I dare match lips with yours again,  
those lips that taste of rose petals peeled  
into confetti pieces over play-pretend cakes,  
as tender pink as the skin on my knees  
after picking off scabs like tree bark?  
And dare I do! I move in again and  
drop my tongue like a rolling red carpet  
and holler with a train-wreck steam-fury,  
widening my eyes like dinner plates and  
pummeling my skull with an invisible mallet,

and all for the sake of a blush-and-giggle  
when what I really need is a love-and-hold:  
tight-and-fragrant like a mother-father,  
a Want without an Under to Stand on—

look smile  
bawl like a baby

And I am vanishing, uncertain  
Vienna sausage fingers  
pawing up at the moon  
(still waxing), and it wel-  
comes me, this eternal womb,  
where the young men of this world  
go to grow even younger, only to die in  
the darkness of infancy—found in their cribs  
with a thumb in the mouth and a blue in the face...

look smile  
so far off-place





Art by Lauren Pressler

## **Marital Math**

**By Jordan Schweiger**

A thought seizes me in our childish play:  
if I died today, I would have you know  
facts about my life which aren't ripe to say  
to cooing babies, toddlers on the go.  
When you gaze on my dying form, spare tears;  
my life was that of a binary-star:  
moment, impulse, motion—a dance of years  
begun in a timid step, wished afar.  
I made the choice to marry your mother  
because loving would not suffice to like.  
We had a son, then added a brother.  
The splendid view has been worth the long hike.  
I would that you knew life, as life knew me:  
my love of one, now multiplied by three.

## **Sonny Sonnet**

**By Jordan Schweiger**

I was summoned to rub sleep from my eyes  
by blubbers from the foreman of log toys;  
we promptly commenced a Lego high rise.  
Then I heard protest from the next of boys:  
he waxed gibberish on hating his crib,  
on wallowing in diapered poo and pee  
while we, the upward, mobile types built glib;  
I extracted him from this, to his glee.  
In such a life I could play forever  
and make my love of you an endless game,  
but in this brief life we must dis sever,  
pay forfeit with our lives, a debtor's claim.  
Thus this life is filled with dueling stock:  
true love of time and hatred of the clock.

## **I don't like**

**By Dominik Mauer**

I don't like these daily soaps but sometimes I watch them  
I don't like Mercedes Benz but sometimes drive at night  
I don't like advertisements but sometimes like the puns  
I don't like sugary stuff but sometimes I drink Sprite

I don't like the opera but sometimes I go there  
I don't like techno at all but Moby's made of stars  
I don't like big companies but Nike is so cool  
I don't like astronomy but details of the mars

I don't like being tardy but sometimes I'm just late  
I don't like this poem but my next one will be great





Photography by Gina Johnson. Titles (top to bottom): No Admittance, This Empty Space, Slow Collapse, Abandoned, Concentric



## Politics

By Matthew Iverson

They tango  
its borders,  
slyly dropping words  
they pretend  
are only words.  
*Socialist,*  
*Republican*  
hands spit  
empty noise  
while feet stay still,  
refusing the call to  
step in, one step  
at a time,  
refusing to believe  
what they don't  
know they believe,  
that we're not  
all together, cousins  
of cousins  
of grandmother gypsies.  
Outside, past the walls  
sturdy as all walls,  
the dark wave of night  
stampedes  
like a ballerina,  
like Isadora Duncan  
was still here,  
shooting energy  
off her stage.

To the wind,  
their talk is just  
more noise  
on top of more noise  
on top of more,  
all melded together  
as one deep, necessary  
sound of living.  
-And the lonely black  
scarf of night  
wraps around  
the café lights,  
hiding from the cold  
in a world of cold.

Photo by Courtney Paine



## Hunger

By Amber Kolsrud

I am always hungry.  
Two men laugh and scream,  
chew up their food and spit  
at unsuspecting dogs  
while I die inside--  
the victim of Feed the Children  
gone horribly wrong.  
And they dance, tell me  
you don't know what it's like  
to be hungry in Africa.  
My milk's gone sour and  
the ramen has maggots--  
it's still good food--  
and I choke down the  
worms and the bugs,  
protein and carbs,  
good for the soul.

## Metaphorically speaking, of course.

By Luke Vieira

I've gone through life feeling like I'm holding my bladder the entire time. It seems that after the diapers come off, all sense of freedom is lost. The ultimate expression of freedom? Peeing wherever and whenever we want. Well, maybe not. But that sense of being responsible for every darn thing, while any failure means certain demise- why, I'd just rather blame it on incontinence! I've been running around for years and I still can't find a bathroom.

My soul is about to leak, and when I finally let go, I'll be shunned. Too stinky and immature to "hold it" the way society tells me to. Ignore what you feel, pretend it's alright. I'm sick of it. I'm letting go.

Art by Susana Gomez



## Incongruous Time Zones

By Luke Vieira

Reality Avoiding Complex Issues Screwing Mankind

Horror Alienating Thoroughly Excluding

What makes me better than anyone else? I hate my color. I hate my gender. I hate myself. I hate being linked to so much evil. It wasn't my choice that those who look like me should cause so much pain to everyone else. Why will their evil forever burden my shoulders? Why must I pass the burden to my offspring? Who decided this was acceptable? One generation buried by its predecessors...

Racism

Hate

Ignorance will be the end of us all. The match igniting all that we hold dearly into flames... Government should be about guaranteeing equal rights to everyone- it is ABSOLUTELY NOT A RIGHT UNDER LAW TO TAKE AWAY THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS IN ORDER TO MAKE OURSELVES FEEL COMFORTABLE. If anything, it is giving more rights to those who are left to drown in dust.

I'm so ashamed of what I am- ashamed of my kind- we tie ourselves to the stake, we demonstrate greed beyond reason. Humans. This is us. This is me.





Art by Susana Gomez



## Untitled

By Dawn Albert

Between you and I  
I don't like it here  
Between you and I  
the mockingbirds are dying  
Between you and I  
that sunset is unnaturally orange  
                    and our sun wheezes beyond the  
horizon.

Between you and I  
pure snow vomits grey  
Between you and I  
food tastes like sand  
Between you and I  
the city reeks of low tide  
                    but there is no ocean near here.

Between you and me?  
Treefrogs blacken and convulse upon  
rotting stumps that line rasping forests  
Exhaust and smoke permeates little lungs  
Orphans huddle against the legs of a  
society that killed their parents  
Furious metal ignites poisonous bombs  
frothing weapons aim at beating hearts  
Women are beaten by their fathers  
for being raped by their brothers  
My conscience cowers in a corner while  
the eyes of my world fill with blood

Between you and I-  
I don't like it here

## Waukegan

By Matthew Iverson

I drank my memories down, too: the fire and  
rain; the eight thousand steps alongside I-62  
under a sun that burned like a red-hot brand-  
drank them down with fever and brandy.

And why not? I walked to find purpose,  
though purpose was empty and dead those long  
weeks and hours. I searched the sky, but the  
sky was devoid of thought. The pilgrims were  
gone, done with their westward trudge, but I  
continued looking for meaning made manifest.

And the cops-their badges shiny, their car  
growling like a beast from hell, they barked pit-  
bull orders at me, Get off the road, f---er!  
Looking for trouble, a--hole? I wasn't, just  
needed a lift out of that vacuum, and into the  
West.

And I can tell you now: its vicious creek-beds,  
its ravenous alleys - that city was no place for  
children. But only children told its secrets: the  
day Mr. Leland thought he was a fish and dove  
into the lake, dove deep; the night Tom, old  
man of the city, drank all his memories down,  
too, with dandelion wine for old times' sake,  
and then left before the reaper found him.

Under that purposeless sky, on a sad street cry-  
ing with the sins of closed curtains - I walked.  
To the town hall, the library, its daguerreotype  
phantoms rioting around me. And then, looking  
out into the storm of the day,

behind windowpanes, I see that the way to be is  
like the rain. Since that time, I've fallen  
through the universe, a single drop of life, wait-  
ing to hit solid ground.

(for Ray Bradbury, with condolences for his  
memories)



## Drywall

By Natalie Sashkin

Soaked saloons fleeced in the drought  
dried and vacant but for Layman's raspings  
for the woefully Seized Castle  
chafe in their new and uncomfortable partitions;  
components of prohibition's own thirst,  
now the contemporary walls of embargo.

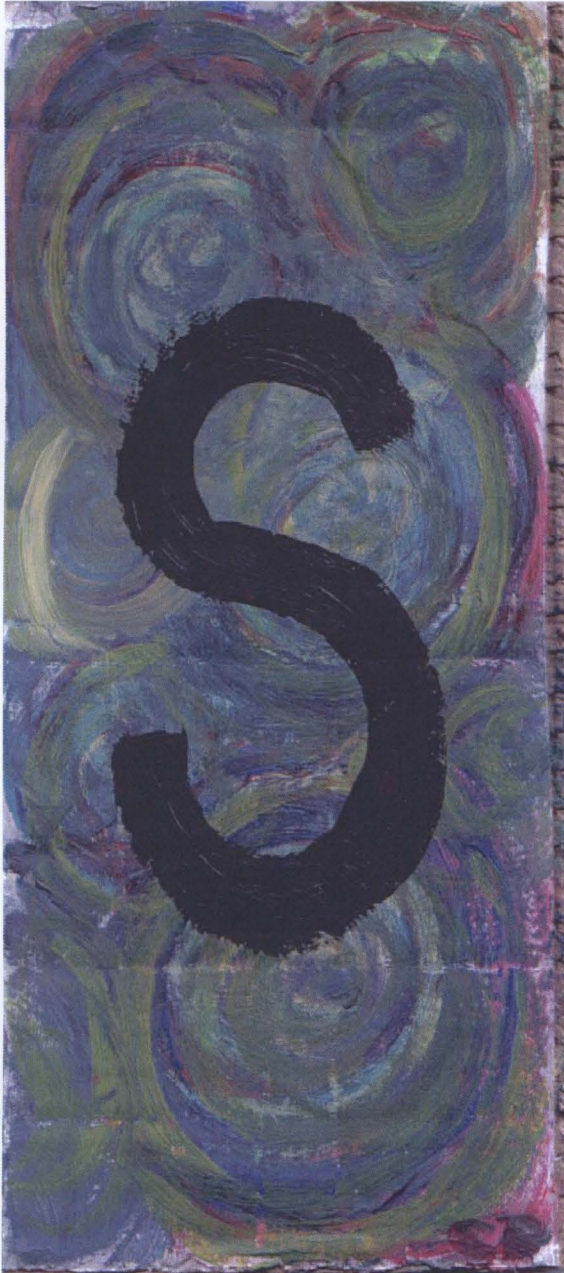
The valley victim of embargo  
drowns in the dry walls of drought,  
and abandoning stream rains partition  
this desert dustbowl, once Nature's Castle  
from gut to extremities left rasping  
and in time redefined by thirst.

Our addict's throat settled in thirst  
and insuppressible dry raspings  
which yield beneath Nicotine's Castle,  
absorption disrupted, function partitioned;  
this self inflicted embargo  
reigns its own squelching drought.

His cubicle plucked dry in the drought  
substance depletion in patented partitioning  
by lords and gods of the Corporate Castle;  
naked walls depicting only thirst  
softly contest the cortical hydration embargo  
in calls only identifiable as mute raspings.

But young for now are safe from rasping  
as rain pours violently over branches partitioned  
by the dry walls of their rooftop's resulting  
drought;  
their hearts and hands are not thirsty,  
and there is no hydration embargo  
within the walls of their Treehouse Castle.

The drywalls don't have to be thirsty,  
their substance parched and rasping,  
for they are in themselves the partitioners  
and the fighters of the homeostatic embargo  
for life to stand there must be domestic drought -  
the drywalls are the barricades of Castles.



Art by Christine Riippi



## Fragments

By Zan Frackelton

Lights shift, foreground to obscurity  
as the rain beats down, bunches and twitters  
it's the only thing I remember.

I think of the we that used to be  
faded by time, lies, the growth that pushes us farther every day.  
Why do I return here-  
I'm like a spirit, haunted by memory.

I know we were wrong, but our wrongness perverted  
by the shadows, the tears making my ears cold.  
When the lover becomes a stranger.

I wonder if we could speak.

I wish you had the strength to break me down.  
Small fractures. It wouldn't have been hard to repair.  
Those little cuts, covered in sweet poison  
Grew and grew, until not a shred of skin was saved.

Our dance. Looking back, steeped in dark  
Irony, rook on a literary grace.  
Only sharp fragments remain.

I feel obsessed  
you two like a trainwreck--  
I sit glued to the screen, maybe the remote is broken  
that's why I can't look away.

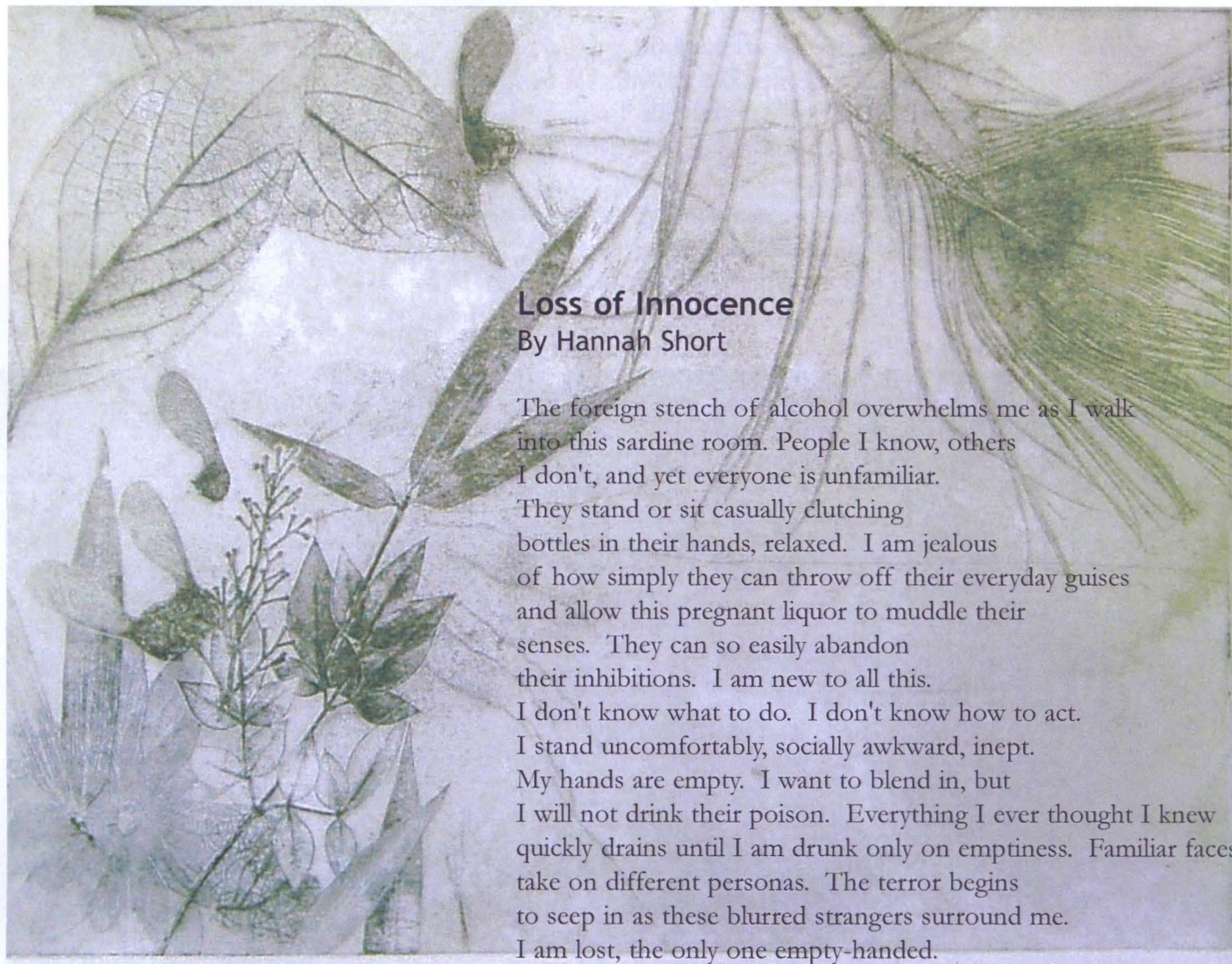
Where is my hindsight?  
I need the clarity of omniscience.

Can I forgive?  
Maybe that's the key to my eternal rest.  
Maybe I can coax reason from these  
Reconstructions.

Some wounds time doesn't help.  
They fade, fade  
You penetrate my dreams--  
I want to wake.

Photo by Julia  
Ulshafer





## **Loss of Innocence**

**By Hannah Short**

The foreign stench of alcohol overwhelms me as I walk  
into this sardine room. People I know, others  
I don't, and yet everyone is unfamiliar.  
They stand or sit casually clutching  
bottles in their hands, relaxed. I am jealous  
of how simply they can throw off their everyday guises  
and allow this pregnant liquor to muddle their  
senses. They can so easily abandon  
their inhibitions. I am new to all this.  
I don't know what to do. I don't know how to act.  
I stand uncomfortably, socially awkward, inept.  
My hands are empty. I want to blend in, but  
I will not drink their poison. Everything I ever thought I knew  
quickly drains until I am drunk only on emptiness. Familiar faces  
take on different personas. The terror begins  
to seep in as these blurred strangers surround me.  
I am lost, the only one empty-handed.

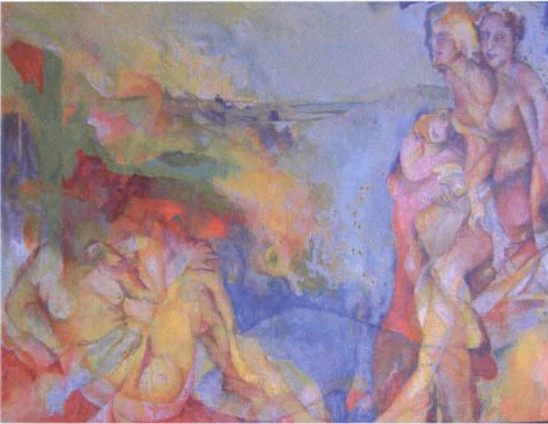
**Art by Lauren Pressler**



## To Live Wholly and Survive

By Yen Tran

To live wholly and survive  
Are words said so simply, and are seemingly easy to do-  
But scared to make any movements, we sit on that big couch  
Afraid of what a wrong choice will do to the superficial  
Perfect lives that we live in the daytime.  
In the pitch black of a moonless night, when we are truly ourselves,  
But having to feel our way through - stumbling, we become terrified.  
Our eyes cannot see what the tips of our fingers feel,  
Making assumptions about the familiar objects  
That now become strange and dangerous in the darkness.  
Hunched over with our arms wrapped around our knees,  
Rocking back and forth and singing a lullaby to ourselves,  
Like our mothers used to do when we were five-years old  
And we saw a shirt that looked like a red monster in our closet,  
We wait for daylight to appear, unable to admit to ourselves  
That although we are surviving, we are dead inside,  
Corrupted by what we think we should be like, or who  
We should be - convincing ourselves that we really are  
Living our lives wholly and completely  
By sitting in the dark, unable and unmoved.

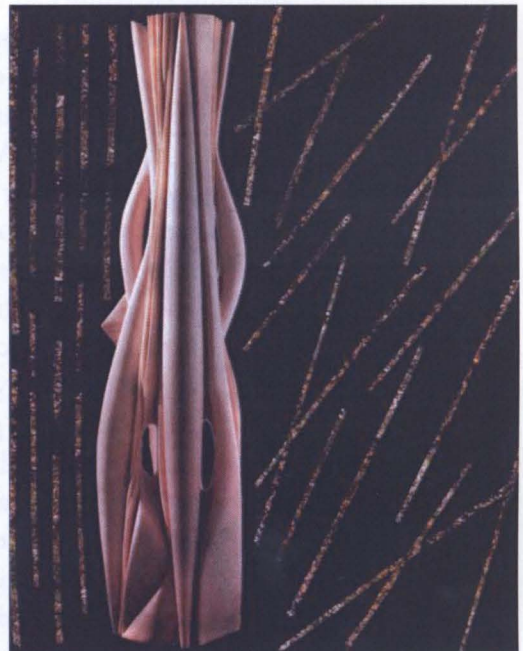


Art by Lauren Pressler

## And Die Eternity

By Jessica F. Smith

So it worked like it did, forlorn.  
A barmaid mumbles her cat-like sentence  
and there's taboo in such abject slacking.  
Undone, sullen, sensible sister,  
Wine is her bomb and weapon  
and insanity in arms was what the kind war taught.  
Now my eyes are stark,  
drinking dirt, swallowing bullets.  
The decanter's under Christendom again but  
this time I'm wary of swallowing.  
Woe then is custom wagered upon  
dire night, for the grabbing of the eyes.  
So drink angels, wine and water,  
for error is in halfwits named Money and Wanting  
and Life is a thousand people in a dark room shouting "I am alone!"



Art by Brett Gardner



## **Bad Habits**

By Mikey Inouye

Grandpa, who everyday smoked seven  
or eight Pall Malls on the patio before dinnertime,  
told me on his deathbed that one could only  
replace bad habits with worse ones.  
After he died  
I wondered if Grandpa would continue to die  
nine or ten times a day before lunchtime.

And this comes back to me because  
everything in my head is habit now-  
I have to go out and buy clocks  
with different alarm sounds  
every month to make my days  
begin with some new digital cockcrow-otherwise  
I will Styx-river drift through every early morning.  
Each pinky-twitch and eye flutter  
is a permutation of some terrible infant custom  
just waiting to develop some mouth-gaping deformity-  
a reclaiming of repetition, a revival of some forgotten force  
that before had driven me through the guardrails of my self-reserve.

I am into the obvious college fuels:  
handfuls of white candies in orange cups  
from a friend whose hip-hippie  
father rocks the croak-crank pharmacy,  
the black, neon-blue taurine tallboys,  
the joint-beer-Nyquil-American Spirit  
nightcap on the rickety off-campus house  
with the rusty-chain porch swing  
(to be both nostalgic and chic simultaneous).  
then there's the chip-shuffling and card-tossings,  
the bit-torrent TV percentages, the wooing of  
those easy-pleasy girls with good book-music-movie taste  
and a Microsoft Word gallery showing of me, my art-  
this is I, in rapid-fire, dying nine or ten times a day,  
these are my fast-forward buttons, and I roll my palms  
over them in one waterfall motion,  
like the bratty kid in an elevator who wants to see  
every anatomical part of an office building-

I want to see every anatomical part of you-  
and more than the just the contours, of course,  
more than the wet insides, I want to see  
the parts of shared experience





Art by  
Lauren Pressler

that compose each cell of a working couple,  
the part where you look so hung-over-ugly  
and snore-drooling in the pre-dawn on my pillow,  
the part where we argue about  
which among the rudest waiters in Paris to tip,  
the part where we eat four pints of  
ice cream just because,  
the part where we learn through the afternoon  
how to make sunny-side up just right,  
the part where we get lost with  
one-hand-each-on-the-cotton-candy-roll  
in the sunset scramble of a crowded carnival,  
the part where you come in, stamping on  
this | | > option that's for your feet only,  
so I can quit all this doing  
that is doing me nothing

-and I can't help but wonder if you are the bad habit-  
but this idea scares me, because I can't think of a worse one-  
and the right-nows seem like nothing but lead-ins to the next scene-  
which I swear to myself will bring a solid-mute resolution,  
and I blur my f---ing brains out with all this hope...



## Untitled

By Lauren Pressler

To hold on with everything inside of you.  
Each tiny sub-atomic baby design grapples with  
honey-flowers and unwanted sticky fingers.  
Qualify the denial and pretend satisfaction.

They are just words, these memories of the pen  
and hand.

A thought of nonsense and fleeting epiphanies,  
flicker and softly flow through the channels of  
thought,  
to grasp and hold, begin and end.  
Let the nonsense and lack of clarity warm your  
blue blood.

Listen and feel,  
learn in each moment only to deny the knowledge  
in the next.

It is a calm role of a scratched set of dice.  
A baby's game, set into motion long ago.  
A child's toy to seize and demand.

But you never give.  
Don't you ever let it go, for it is the substance of  
the infinite.

The ever continuous and containing chess game  
that proceeds in haunting challenges.  
Sneaky and slick, each time it demands more.  
As you sit more empty then the last time,  
you wonder where you have landed, and how,  
just how you will manage to stand up again  
in just enough time to meet the next blow.

Let the memories extend  
and the sacrifices permeate the glassy sheets that  
surround you.  
Each time, you totter on your heels,  
rocking back and forth to steady your wobbly legs,  
and it is when you just begin to find your balance,  
lift your eyes to the enemy, that he strikes again.  
Legions encircle the fortress of your mind  
beating more heavily on those scarred doors, and

you struggle and fight.

It is in the moment of reckoning  
where you know deep down that this right here,  
the mix dirt and blood and salty tears,  
fingertips bruised with the pollution of the road,  
this here is the last fall.

It is at this moment that you feel two young arms  
lift you up from behind  
and carry you past the city walls to  
the musty-fresh safety of the remote mountain  
caves.

That silent moment,  
as you lift light aqua eyes blurred  
with the brimming unshed tears of tomorrow's  
battles,  
to the arms of a friend.

That soul: friend, stranger, enemy, lover, all in one.  
And as the blood thickens you let her carry you.  
You head tucked beneath a soft chin.

A child's comforted form.  
So very slowly she walks from the cluttered war  
field.

With every step she takes  
you let fall one hundred burning overdue tears;  
battle scars from your rippling eternal mind.  
Let her step and glide away.

A smile and a soft silent moment  
rock the enemies to the taking wind.  
And she walks. Walks, walks away.

Art by Maya Karp





## Trapped

By Sridevi Bangaru

Buried under the ashes,  
the flame of friendship  
quenched,  
there is no way out.  
The dim presence of light no  
longer lingers.  
You try to ignore

what is happening as  
pieces of your heart are shat-  
tered into oblivion.  
Those who caused the pain  
never tried  
to calm those quivering  
fragments.  
As the hulking shadow of lone-  
liness engulfs your mind,  
you falter in accepting that

Nothing can be fixed anymore.  
They don't care, so  
neither should you.  
Stop wishing for the apology  
you will never hear.  
Their malicious faces, like a  
noose,  
suffocate your spirit,  
driving you to a bitter  
existence.

*The Chrysalis*



Art by Maya Karp

You always thought that  
nothing was supposed to bother  
you.  
Sadly, the constant reminder you  
must  
give yourself says that it does,  
the mere fact that this poem exists.  
Could this get more pathetic?  
You struggle to be free,  
exhausted from the flood of  
tears constantly drowning your soul.  
While you are drained by the pain  
and how much everything hurts,

all is destroyed in the name of  
you trying to trust.  
Spinning in a world without  
answers,  
you see the hands that once steadied  
you fading,  
wavering in the distance.  
Desperate for anyone to be there,  
you've lost all sense of mattering,  
lied to by those who once said  
loving words.  
Somehow you feel as if you've been  
punished for everything.

Your crime was going to them for  
help,  
Praying for anyone to be  
there in your time of need.  
Abandoned at the edge,  
deserted on the brink of disaster,  
delving into the depths of a cliff,  
You tumble, body torn to shreds by  
thorns  
once roses from the people who  
cared,  
Say goodbye forever.



## Black Hills National Cemetery

By James Bertolino

As cemeteries go, this  
is a great one to mow.  
The stones are evenly planted

(we call them monuments)

and but for holidays, you hardly ever  
have folks in your way.

Back during the last war  
more people visited, mostly the type  
that always brought flowers fresh.

It's the plastic kind I like.  
They never wilt  
or turn black.

These Fall days are slow, and  
the few evenings I work  
past daylight, I can hear the soldiers  
moaning

when I shut the mower  
down.



Art by Susana Gomez

## Contraband

By Jordan Roberts

Death by apathy  
The headline ran that day  
Peace reduced  
To a political catchphrase  
So come and sit  
By my side for a while  
In the attic with my picture  
And a half hearted smile  
No one dares speak their mind  
Until it comes back in style  
And they call it contraband

He was wearing a papier-mâché mask  
Like a cynic unforgiven  
When the dead rise to walk  
With their bodies lined with the flesh of the livin'  
They keep grasping for a helping hand  
And they call it contraband

We've tried to clean our image  
So much that it's faded  
Scorned by the friends  
We'd forgotten and jaded  
Turned into the thing  
We always said we hated most  
And they call it contraband

Some people say that hate is just love uninspired  
Some people say that love lies on the road to hate  
And things just haven't been the same  
Since I sold my soul to buy my name  
And they call it contraband

The latest edition  
For the sake of tradition  
Is to take more than you will ever need  
But the snake refuses to beg  
For the use of its legs  
So it won't be put on its knees  
And they call it contraband





## Colors

By Catherine Carson

Shedding the hues  
of the night's grays and blacks,  
like the skin of a snake,  
I wear these radiant colors—  
a necklace of grace—beads  
that glisten and dance.

I am not afraid any more.  
These colors will not  
bleed—forged in the hot coals  
of grief, their strength  
flows from the soul's  
secret death.

I am learning to explore  
their delicate depths,  
peering over sunset's edges,  
refusing to let  
the blackness entice  
the rose from my sky.

Come talk with me awhile.  
I remember how it was  
to gasp in the dark,  
smothering in a cocoon of despair.  
You, too, have come to the end  
of the road, seeking shelter.

I will brew you a steaming cup of chai tea.  
Let's sit together, savoring this sweet tea,  
unraveling the knotted ball  
of lies entangling your mind.  
Truth is magical and light like  
the incandescent shine of the moon on the lake.

I understand how you feel.  
The end of your dreams  
was inconceivable,  
unthinkable—  
Yet, I believe there is hope,  
even on dead-end roads.

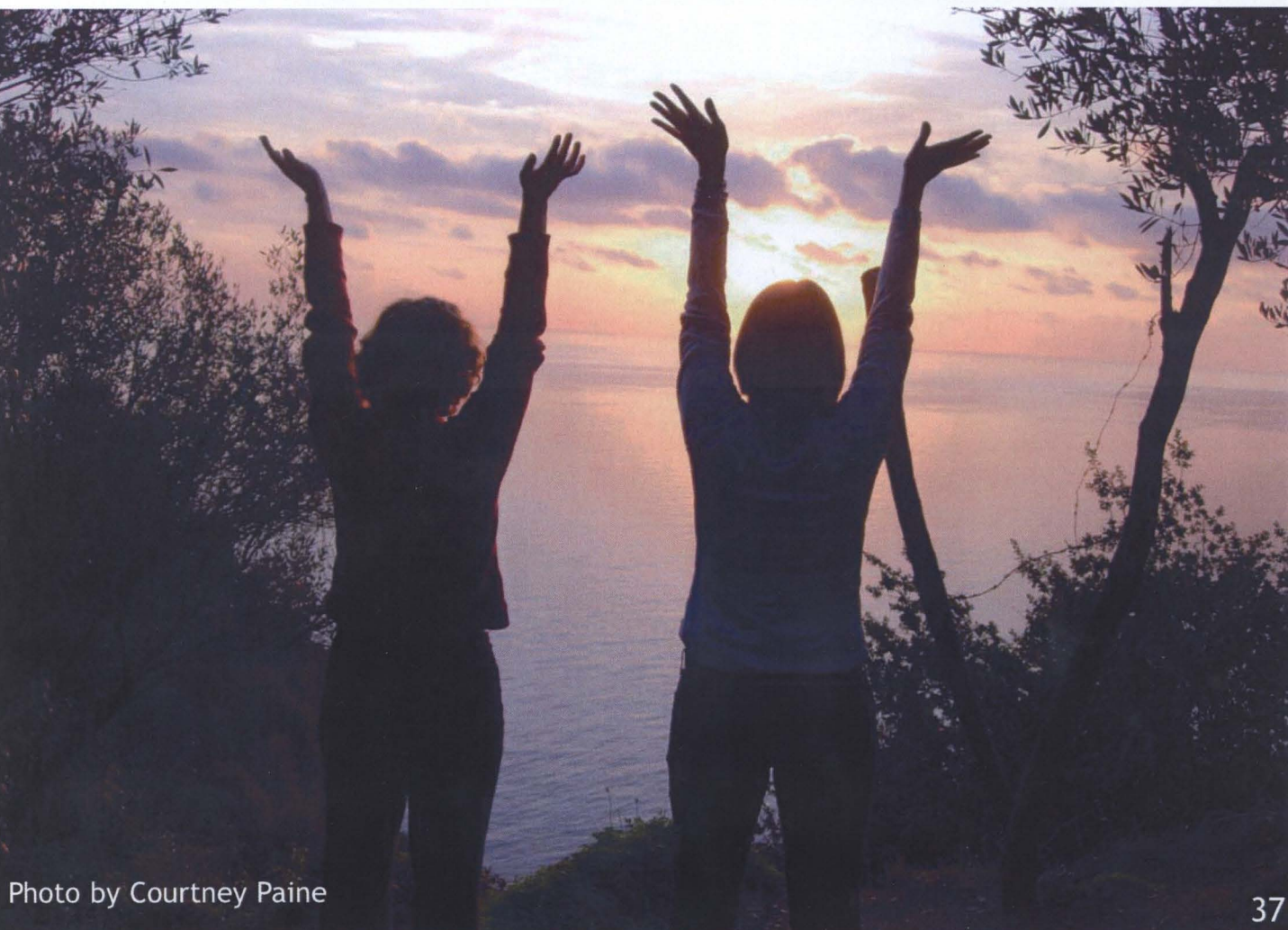


Photo by Courtney Paine



## **The Fountain**

**By Heather Van Hove**

Noon. Wearing my best dress. The soft  
murmur of the fountain whispers in her  
serpentine voice, gently urging, calling  
me to her. Shame makes me turn away and

solemnly stare at the front  
of the immense room, praying that no one has noticed  
my indiscretion. No one has seen.  
The preacher stands alone,

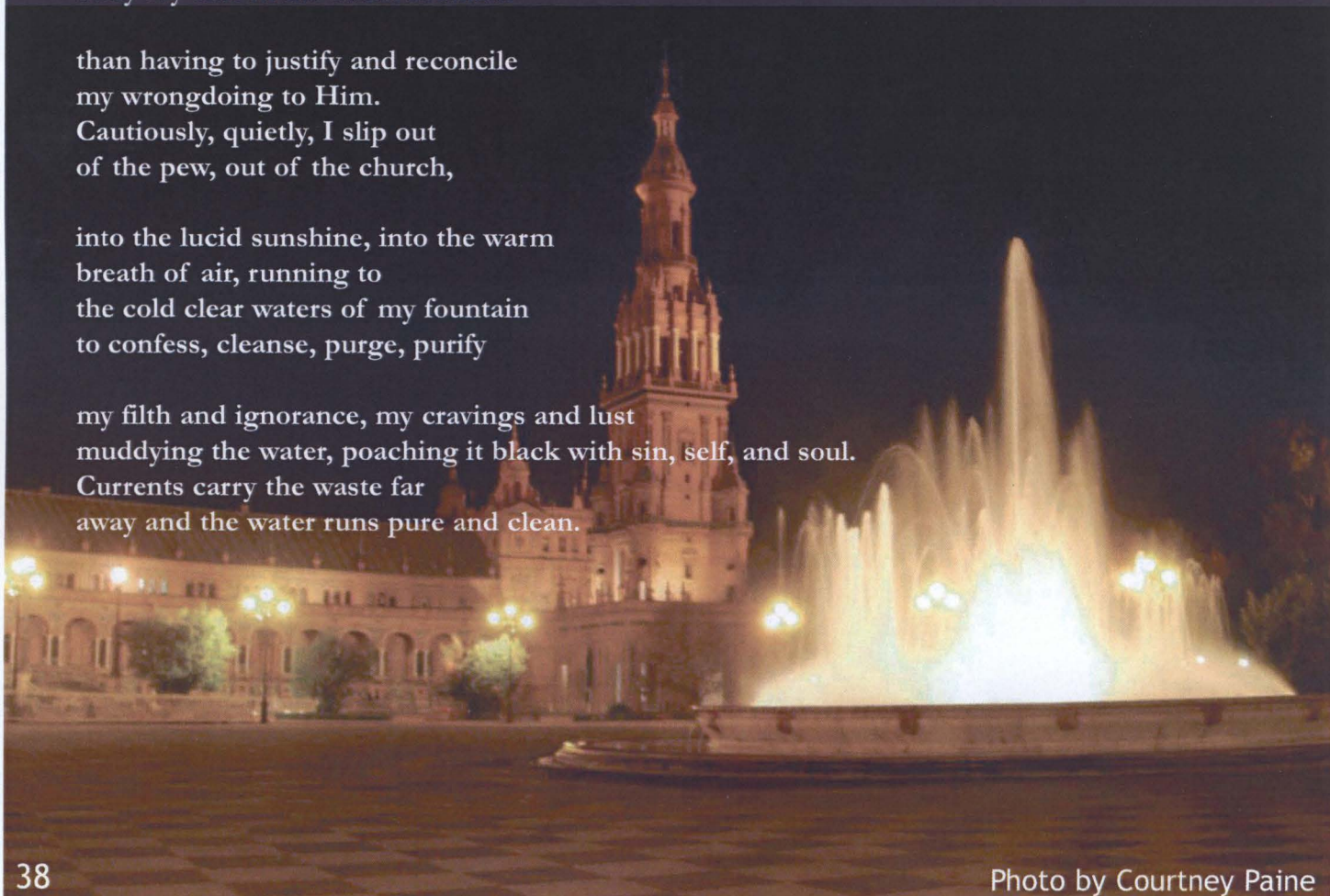
his monologue creating a veil of  
blanched superstition. The eyes  
of the wooden Jesus meet mine  
and I furtively search for

a sign of forgiveness. He blankly  
stares at me, through me, beyond me, and  
I know I would have a better chance washing  
away my sins in the sweet fountain

than having to justify and reconcile  
my wrongdoing to Him.  
Cautiously, quietly, I slip out  
of the pew, out of the church,

into the lucid sunshine, into the warm  
breath of air, running to  
the cold clear waters of my fountain  
to confess, cleanse, purge, purify

my filth and ignorance, my cravings and lust  
muddying the water, poaching it black with sin, self, and soul.  
Currents carry the waste far  
away and the water runs pure and clean.





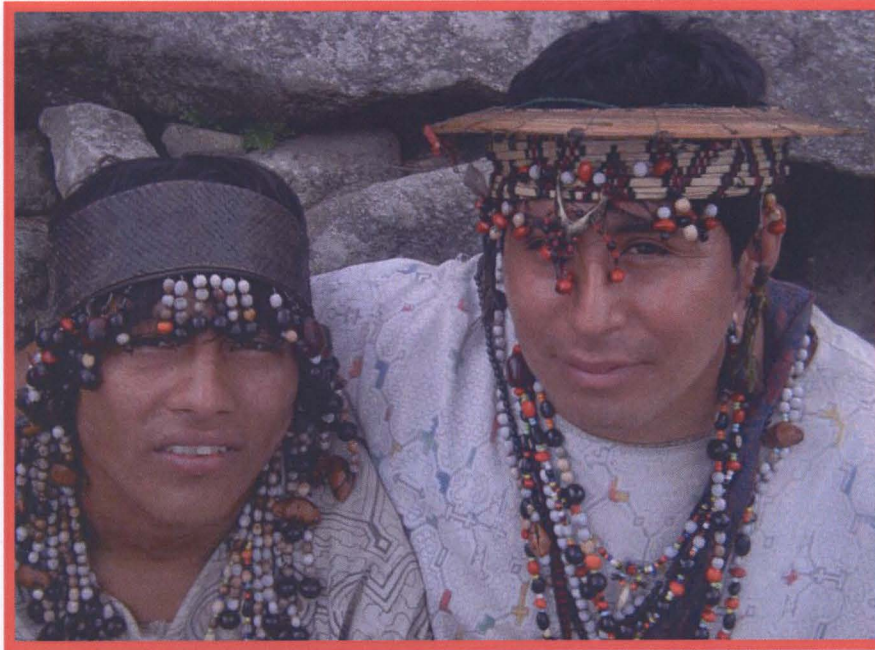


Photo by  
Whitney Tenold

## Thank You, God, for this World

By Matt Iverson

Because  
It has seemed, at times,  
more Real to me than you.

When I could not believe in You,  
I believed  
in the world,  
and it guided me,  
with waterfall whispers  
and Chinook wind-cries,  
back to You.

This world has shown me Friends,  
Lovers, taught me  
to walk for hours alone,  
that walking  
slowly  
through the atavistic world  
is the way  
to learn to fly, and the very best medicine.

Thank you, because  
it is in this World  
that I have Found  
my  
voice,  
Found Poetry.

Found in this World  
made by You,  
that has lifted me above  
The dying silhouettes  
of crushing memory,  
given me  
to all  
that I speak of,  
given me as mine  
all that I see, just as much as I am  
part  
of all that sees me.  
And being  
part of this World,  
so I thank You,  
God, for my existence too.



## **This Little Light**

By Yen Tran

You know that familiar song,  
"This little light of mine,  
I'm going to let it shine,  
Let it shine  
Let it shine  
Let it shine."  
But I bet that you don't know,  
What it is like with a little boy  
Playing his pencil drumsticks  
On a metal folding chair  
In a small Missionary Baptist Church  
In Jonestown, Mississippi.

He snuggles next to his grandma's  
Old sagging, shrunken body  
With his tiny, young vibrant two-year-old one.  
He holds two unsharpened #2 pencils  
Tightly in his hands, treasuring them.  
"Deese are m dramsticks" he says.  
We ask him to demonstrate his drumming  
For us, but he only shakes his head—too shy to do so.  
"I'll sing for you if you dram"  
She says to him, and he finally nods.

We grab him a folding metal church chair  
And put it right in front of him to drum.  
"This little light of mine,  
I'm gonna to let it shine" she begins,  
And we all join in,  
"Jesus gave to me,  
I'm gonna to let it shine,  
Let it shine,  
Let it shine,  
Let it shine."

Photos by  
Whitney Tenold



With the end of the song,  
He drums his grand finale,  
Hitting the seat of the chair with his pencils  
Then moving onto the back panel,  
Vigorously and without care,  
Ending in a frozen pose with his hands  
And drumsticks in the air.

"Agin Gramma" he says to her,  
And she replies, "Yes, baby."  
She begins to sing and we again  
Join in.  
The song ends once more with the dramatic  
Hands and drumsticks in the air pose.  
"Agin Gramma" he says,  
And she still replies, "Yes, baby."

After ten times of the same song  
And ten times of the dynamic drumming  
And the striking pose,  
She gently lets him know that it is time to go.  
He tells us, "I'll dram mo tomorrow."  
They say their goodbyes  
And walk out the door slowly  
Her withered body,  
And his small short steps.



## Her Canvas

By Melissa Dean

She read somewhere that the Universe is smaller than a pinhead  
and we exist inside the toe of God  
while we spin and swirl and twirl.  
Dandelion wheels spiral through the sky,  
flashing colors that blur into one circle of light.  
Ephemeral beauty emanates from the exact center,  
which caused her to cry out by its magnificence.  
It was a splendor so pure she named it Opalescence.  
But if she looks in the mirror  
and closes her eyes to imagine  
the magic that arises from pirouetting into the sea,  
it is the sweet magic whose fire will not touch her purity.  
Awaking from the dream to find it's all in her mind,  
like ping pong balls bouncing back and forth  
across the wide table of her consciousness.  
The universe is not her home, only her canvas.  
She would paint you a picture, but she fears drowning  
In the tumultuous shower of colors that bombard her senses.  
So she will turn to the sky and find your image there instead,  
Recognizing in an instant its distinct nature.

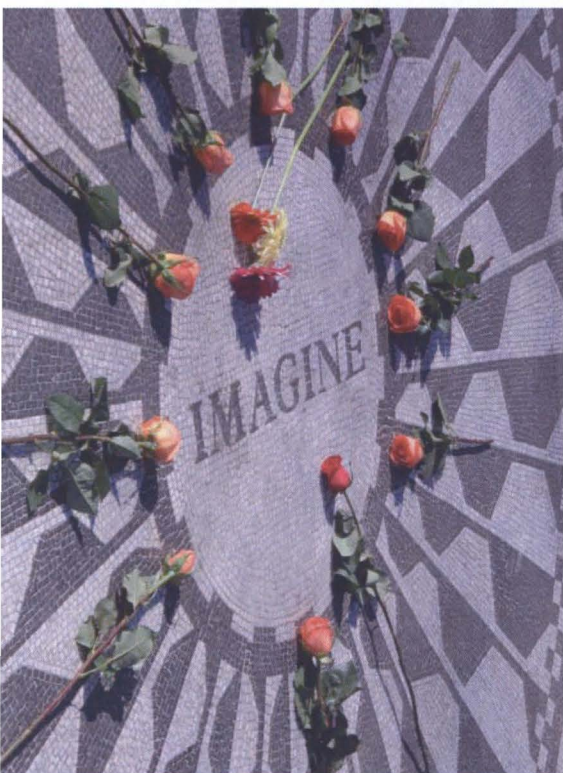


Photo by Christine Riippi

## Normalcy

By Joel Flachsbart

They, too, have seen stormy weather  
Those lives which life seems to have its fill  
And yet they seem it most together  
Those are but masks still borne of will.

And what is normal, merriment?  
Who has set this precedent?  
In angst, do we from dearly depart?  
And turn away from bleeding heart?

But normal, see, is fantasy,  
And I, for one, choose honesty,  
To show the storm upon my face,  
and drink in sweet amazing grace.

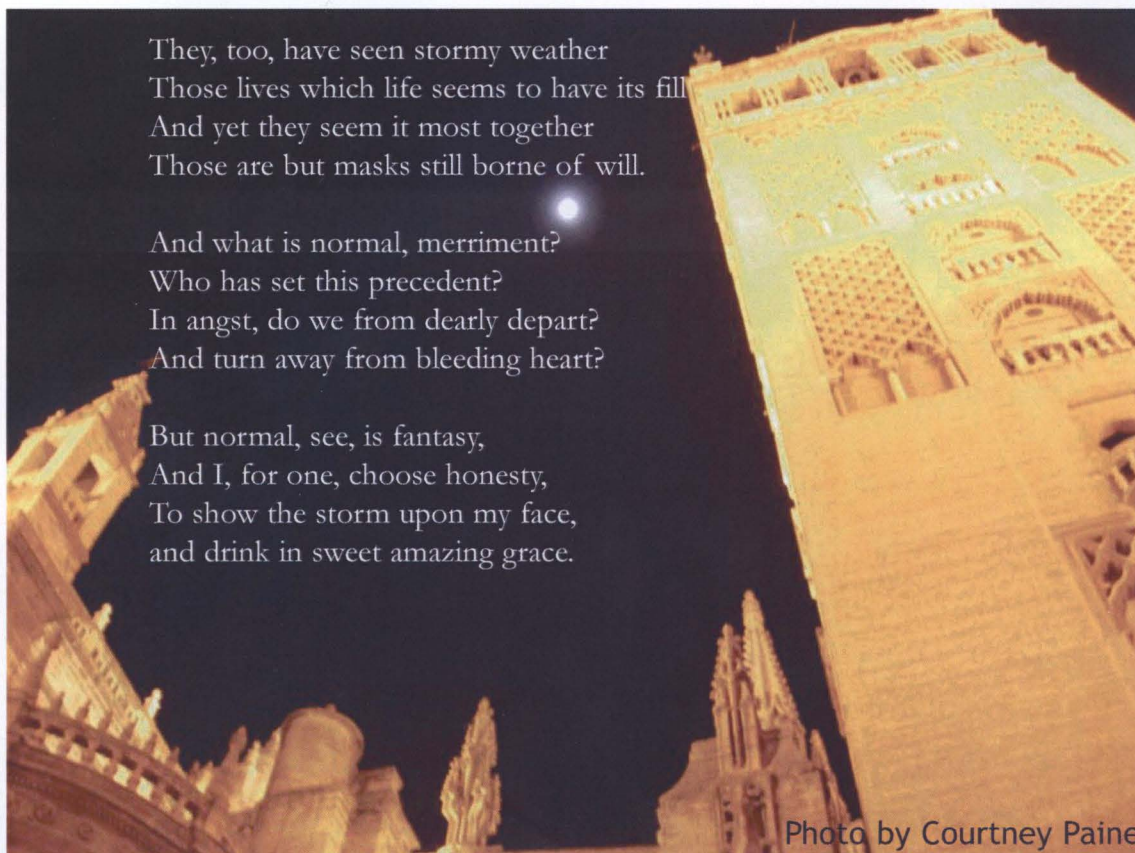
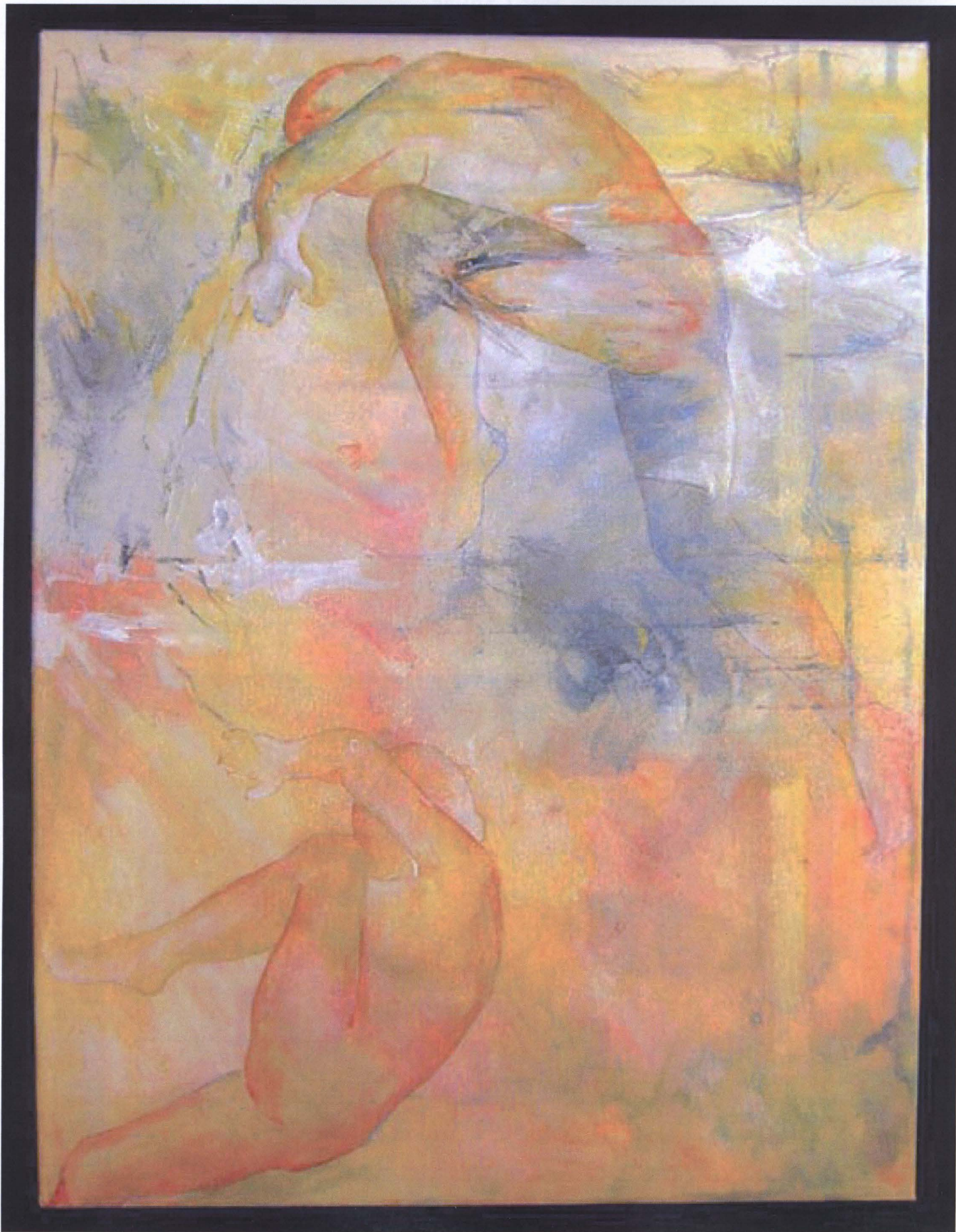


Photo by Courtney Paine



*The Chrysalis*







## **That Fish Quilt**

By Katie Johnston

Angular angel fish-  
sharp like elbows, knees,  
smiling lips and squinting eyes  
and in the lines  
in the pattern  
in the rhythm  
there is a flow, a motion.

The blues blooming and fluid  
as slow saxophones and jazz guitars,  
purples like lipstick  
on cigarettes in ashtrays in bars. . .

Color tones that roll and flow  
like muscle  
sewn over the bones of a poem.

You and I, enfolded whole within,  
I spoke these words while fingering fins.

Photo by Courtney Paine

Pg. 42 art by Lauren Pressler











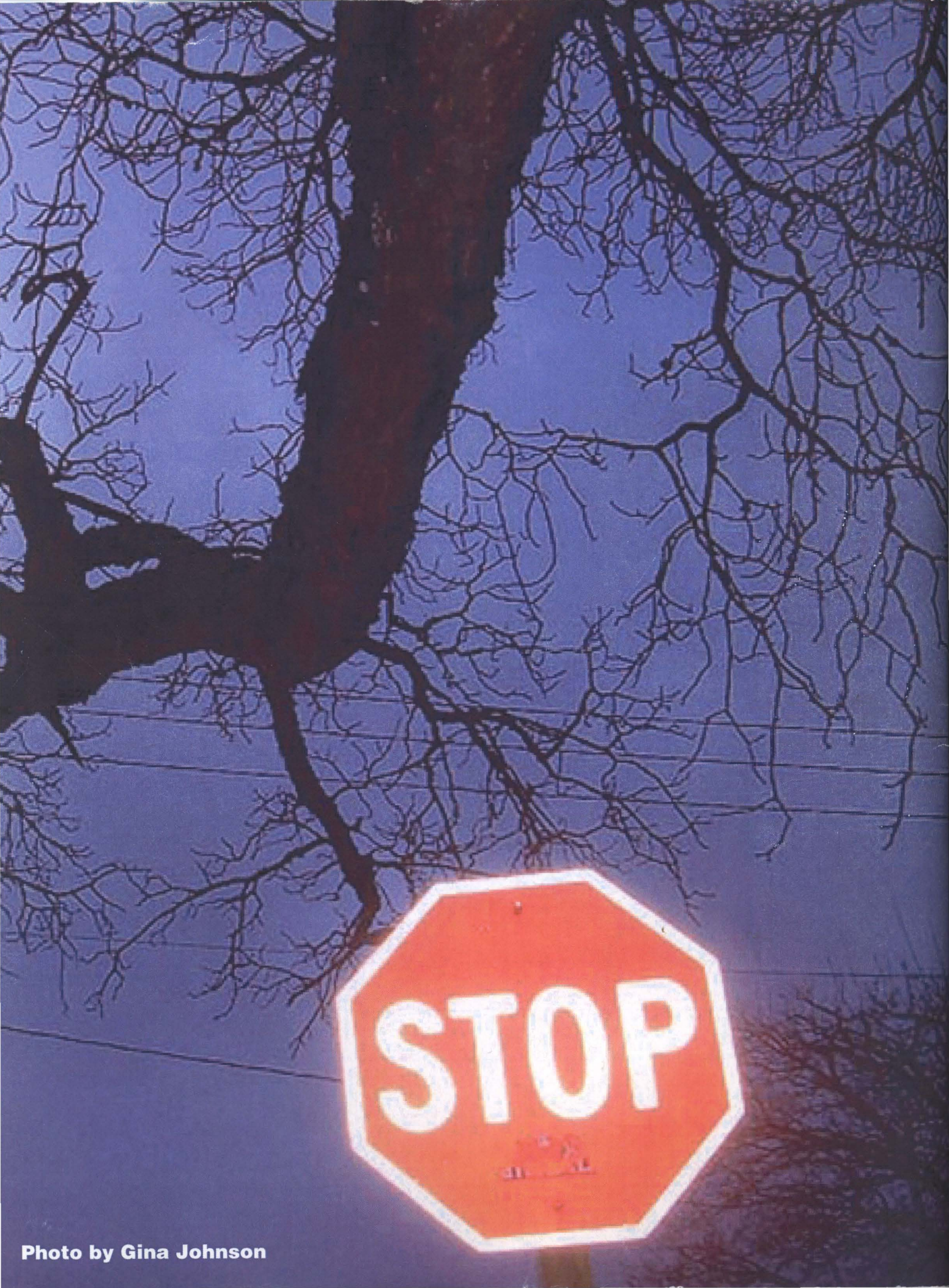


Photo by Gina Johnson