

MANUSCRIPT



M ANUSCRIPT.

This revitalization issue is dedicated in memory of Dr. Stephen Schwartz, a Manuscripter whose words will always remain.

.Spring 2007.

The *Manuscript Society* would like to thank the Wilkes University community, and especially Dr. Mischelle Anthony, Debra Archavage, Bridget Ferdinand, Jennifer Hill-Kaucher and Dan Waber of Paper Kite Press, and all students and faculty in the Division of Humanities.

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The first issue of *Manuscript* was printed in 1947 when Wilkes University was Bucknell College. One issue of *Manuscript* was published per academic year from that time until the Fall of 2003 when staff and editors began printing two journals per academic year. Four-hundred copies of the Spring 2007 *Manuscript* were printed and distributed in this current semester. The publication is distributed without purchasing fee. To receive additional copies please write to the Division of Humanities, 84 W. South Street Wilkes-Barre, PA, 18766. Anyone from the Wilkes University community may submit creative works to *Manuscript*, including students, alumni, faculty and staff. All writing submissions must be submitted electronically via e-mail at magazine@wilkes.edu, unless otherwise noted. Those inquiring about submission requirements should contact *Manuscript* via e-mail. *Manuscript* accepts up to five submissions per person, per category. All submitters must include proper contact information and a short (fewer than five lines) biography. No submissions will be reviewed unless all of this information is intact upon reception. All submissions are reviewed blindly. Any resemblance to actual

The Manuscript Society



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With this issue of *Manuscript*, a new publication is launched on the Bucknell University campus in Wilkes-Barre. Those who have been responsible for its coming into being earnestly hope that through your efforts and the efforts of those who come after you this magazine will develop into a college tradition of which we may be proud.

The Editors

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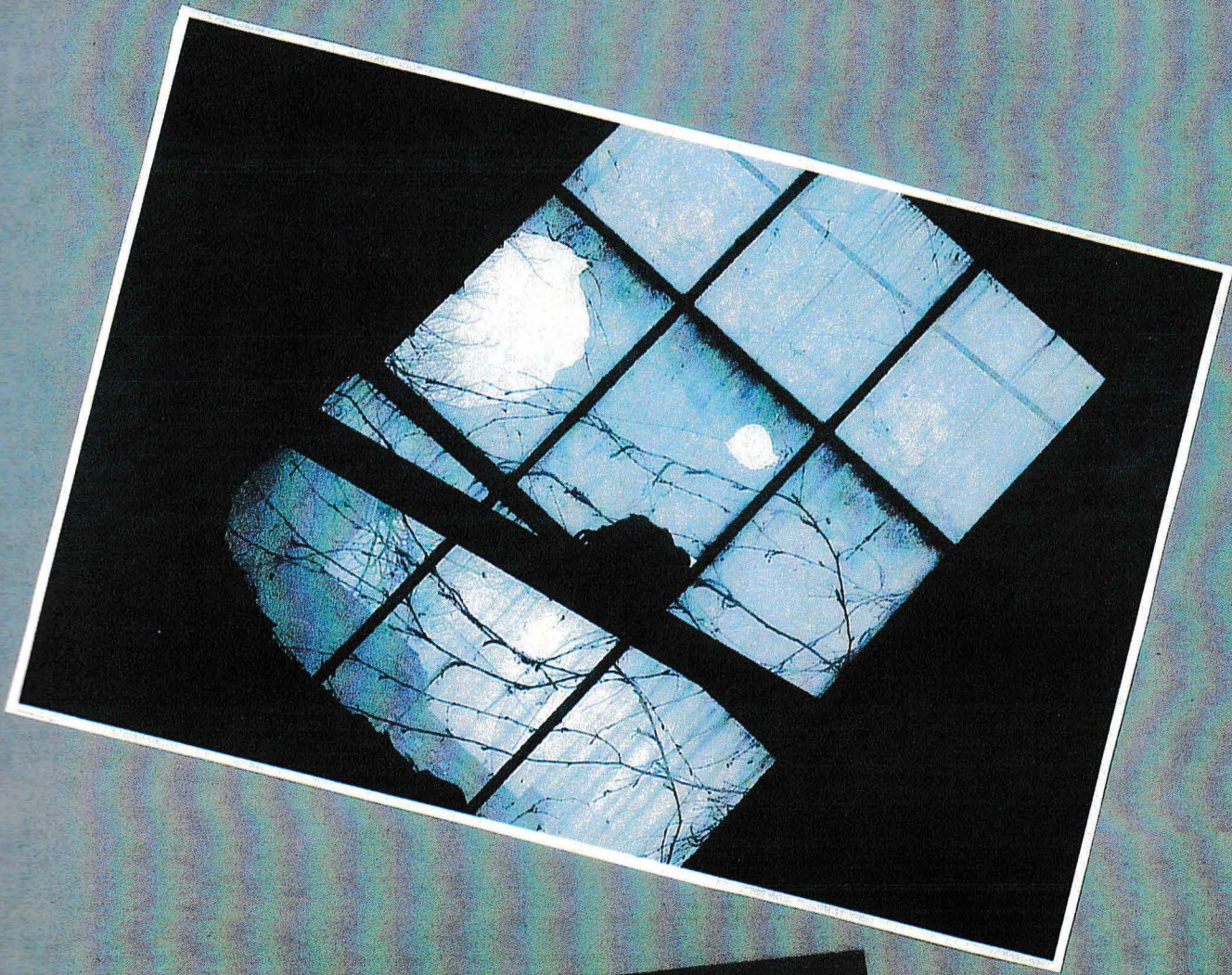
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Twisted
Twisted



Jami Butczynski
Butczynski

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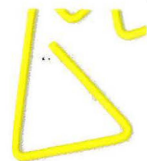


8

"JOHN"

LAUREN
CAREY

Stefanie McHugh



My Date with Mr. Darcy

I have a scrap of paper sitting on my purple bean bag chair, hastily ripped from a notebook and scrawled upon, with his phone number in spiky, twitchy handwriting. It's just sitting there, on my bean bag chair, not living up to its full potential, but not being thrown out either.

What do I do with it? Is there a point in adding him to my phonebook? Should I put the paper on my desk along with the five hundred other scraps of paper with movie and song titles, notes to myself, ideas for cartoons, minor sketches, only to get lost? Should I tape it to my wall under my vintage Hawaii postcards? Should I leave it exactly where it is on my bean bag chair, on top of the green elephant pillow, stationary until things change enough for it to be either disregarded or put to use?

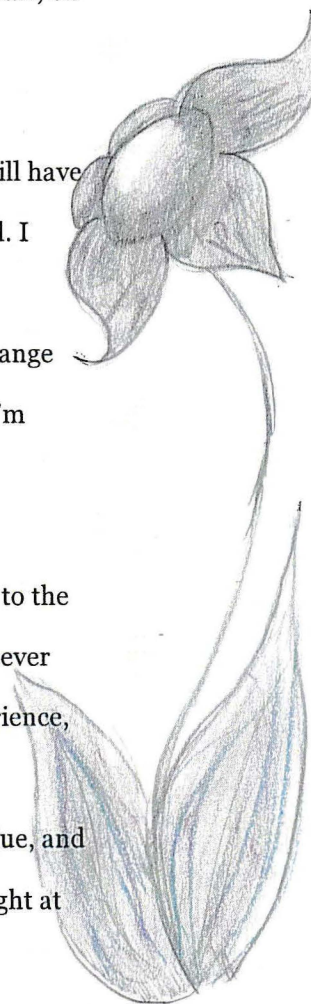
It's right there on the pillow. Some numbers that, when dialed, reach a line that will have him at the other end, the potential to connect our voices even if we don't say anything at all. I think my cat stepped on it.

I have no reason to call the number. I see him at work every single day. It's just strange that I have it. No more strange than anything else that happened that night. I don't think I'm ready to move the paper yet.

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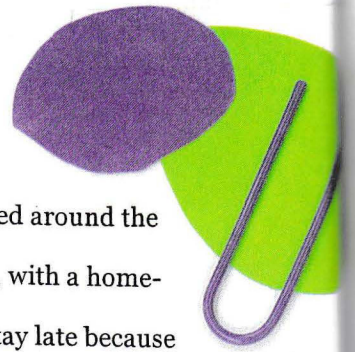
Today was one of the most surreal days I've ever had, from the moment I woke up to the very end. I woke up at four in the morning to get to work by five-thirty, a schedule I have never kept in my life. Driving in Hawaii before the sun has even begun to rise is a beautiful experience, and I felt a little enclosed, a little protected, a little special, though I can't for the life of me imagine why. The edges of the horizon behind the black palms started to turn green and blue, and I wanted it to stop right there. I wanted the sun not to rise that day, no more than it was right at that moment, and then slip back down around eight.

It was inventory day at my record shop, so nearly everyone came in around five-thirty and we spent the day counting every single thing we had in the store, with the knowledge that it would be about twelve hours before we were done, but not knowing that twelve hours would become fifteen hours before we left.



CARLEY LIBRARY

Stefanie
McHugh



Seeing my co-workers at such an early hour, all whining, sleepy and huddled around the cooler full of iced cappuccinos made me feel somewhat more connected with them, with a home-based version of them. It was the same way I felt in school when everyone had to stay late because of a snow storm that was too dangerous to send us home in, or when we had a special day that allowed everyone to come in wearing their pajamas.

When everything was finally finished and we got permission to go home, Liam seemed careful to stand next to me and time his own departure with mine. With anyone else I might have made some exhausted conversation about what a long day it was, or how I couldn't wait to get home and sleep for three days, but Liam is even less fond of small talk than myself, emphatically so, and I chose, as usual, to remain silent until he spoke.

He asked what I had planned next. My real plan, since I had been working from pre-dawn to post-dusk, was to go home, collapse on my bed, and not move until I was good and damn well ready. But for some reason I said, "Nothing, you?"

"Would you like to go get something to eat?" he asked.

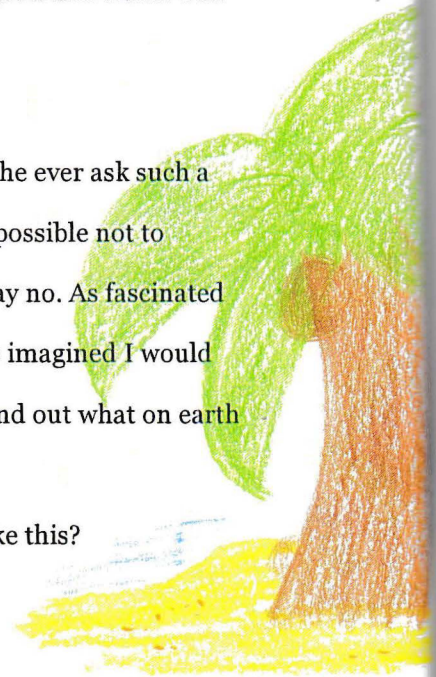
I was thrown. I'd imagined once or twice what would happen should he ever ask such a thing—considering what everyone I know has said about him, it would be impossible not to imagine it—and I always supposed I would be too shocked and intrigued to say no. As fascinated as I am with different people and as curious as I am about who he is, I always imagined I would have to say yes, if for no other reason than to learn about his character and find out what on earth could have motivated him to ask such a thing.

He is such an oddity. How could I possibly pass up an opportunity like this?

I said yes.

~~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

We took my car because his had been stolen a few days prior. I always knew that the day my car was at its messiest would be the day a boy unexpectedly joined me in it. The car was crammed full of CDs and beach towels, a busted headlight, gym clothes and some sand. I started shoveling off the passenger seat, flinging everything in the back, mortified at the fact that one of my bras was among the flotsam.



Stefanie McHugh

We drove down the street to Denny's, the simplest, easiest, most noncommittal place I could think of. The entire time, my heart was pounding. I was so anxious. Was this going to be awful; had I made a huge mistake; were we both about to have the worst, most awkward night in history?

There was no more reason for me to be anxious than ever, but I was shaking all over and my face was burning and my hands would not keep still. I'd forced my mind to relax, but I couldn't calm my body down.

I ordered pancakes, he ordered eggs over easy, and we talked. With Liam, conversation is never a struggle and never bland. He's intelligent and interesting and funny, so despite his being possibly the most intimidating person I know, talking with him is always a fascinating experience.

One of the things we ended up discussing was how he never understood why guys got embarrassed and quiet when their women called them at work, never wanting anyone to overhear. He said he used to work at this diner and when his girlfriend-at-the-time called him he adored it; he'd say, "Hey baby, what's going on? Just called to say you miss me?" He said she loved it, and it made all the girls he worked with snicker and go fluttery. He said he used to grin at them and say, "Jealous?"

I laughed so hard at hearing this come from Liam, of all people, that I nearly snorted my soda up my nose.

I said, "Please tell me that's how you normally act and you've just been subdued ever since I met you for personal reasons, and at any moment you'll revert to your old ways."

Typically obtuse, he said, "Why, how have I changed?"

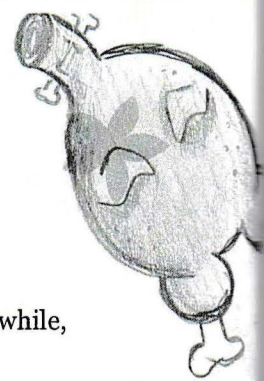
"You do *not* strike me as the type to call *anyone* 'baby.' Matter of fact, you don't strike me as the romantic type at all. But that's not meant to be an insult."

He shrugged, leaned in and murmured, "Remind me to tell you something disgusting later."

"Ah well," I said, grinning. "If it's disgusting, you can be certain I will remind you."

"That guy," said Liam, pointing out an older man at a booth across the room sipping coffee, "was just checking out your cleavage."

"Really!" I said, delighted. "Did he seem impressed?"



“He seemed *interested*...”

“I don't mind, really,” I said. “Lookin's free.”

“And it's understandable, I mean, he's an older guy, probably hasn't gotten any in a while, and you're a young woman with...”

I looked at him. “Bodacious ta-tas?”

“An expansive bosom...”

“What a nice way of putting it,” I smiled, entirely satisfied. “Nah, to me, it's not disgusting unless he *does* something disgusting. I mean, if someone I didn't know, no matter who they were, walked up and gave me a swat on the ass or something, that would be completely uncool.”

“Come on, if Adrien Brody did that, if he did something like just pinch you somewhere—like on the elbow—what would you do?”

“I don't know,” I said, giggling. “Get the vapors, probably.”

“The vapors?”

“Yeah, y'know, ‘Why Mr. Darcy, I believe I'm getting the vapors...’”

I don't know why I said “Mr. Darcy,” I guess I was just groping for a name and it came more quickly than any others. I thought it would go unnoticed, considering our topic of conversation.

“Mr. Darcy...” said Liam, in a prolonged, considering tone, almost like a sigh. “I never did like that story.”

“I suppose I shouldn't be surprised,” I said. “Most men don't like Jane Austen. It's a time and a culture they just can't relate to in the least.”

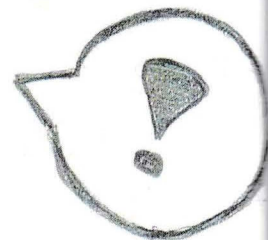
“I don't think it's a matter of not being able to relate to it.”

“Maybe you relate to it a little *too* well?”

“No. I just never liked the story.”

I sighed and left it at that. *Never* depend on Liam to satisfy your literary sensibilities.

He seemed comfortable, much more comfortable than I was. We bickered about the check and I pulled out a twenty that he refused to touch. He got us separate checks and called me devious when I set my money on the counter and told him to handle it while I went to the loo.



~~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

Stephanie McHugh

Parked by the side of the road outside his home, I felt wave after wave of panic and anxiety overtake me. Is this the moment of truth; are we going to have to actually acknowledge that we just spent time together; is this even a date; does my car smell; what do normal people do when this happens? Are we going to, like, hug or something?

There have been only three instances of physical contact between myself and Liam, and I remember them because they have all been so rare and so strange. The first time, I briefly touched his elbow to warn him that I was squeezing past him. The second time, he poked me in the arm to get my attention while I was daydreaming. The third time was when he tapped my foot with his foot just before he asked me to dinner.

Luckily, he seemed just as eager to ignore the situation as I was. He gave me directions to get home, asked if I wanted to exchange phone numbers, made some light teasing remark about my handwriting, then said, "See you later," and exited stage left.

I shook all the way home and did not stop for at least an hour afterward. I kept saying to myself, "How strange, how strange...what a puzzle..."



EARLEY LIBRARY

Isabella

The pop quiz
whiz kid
had a Spanish name

for his imaginary
girlfriend. In
time-tested teen logic

a foreign name made it
believable. Verisimilitude
didn't fly and neither did ten

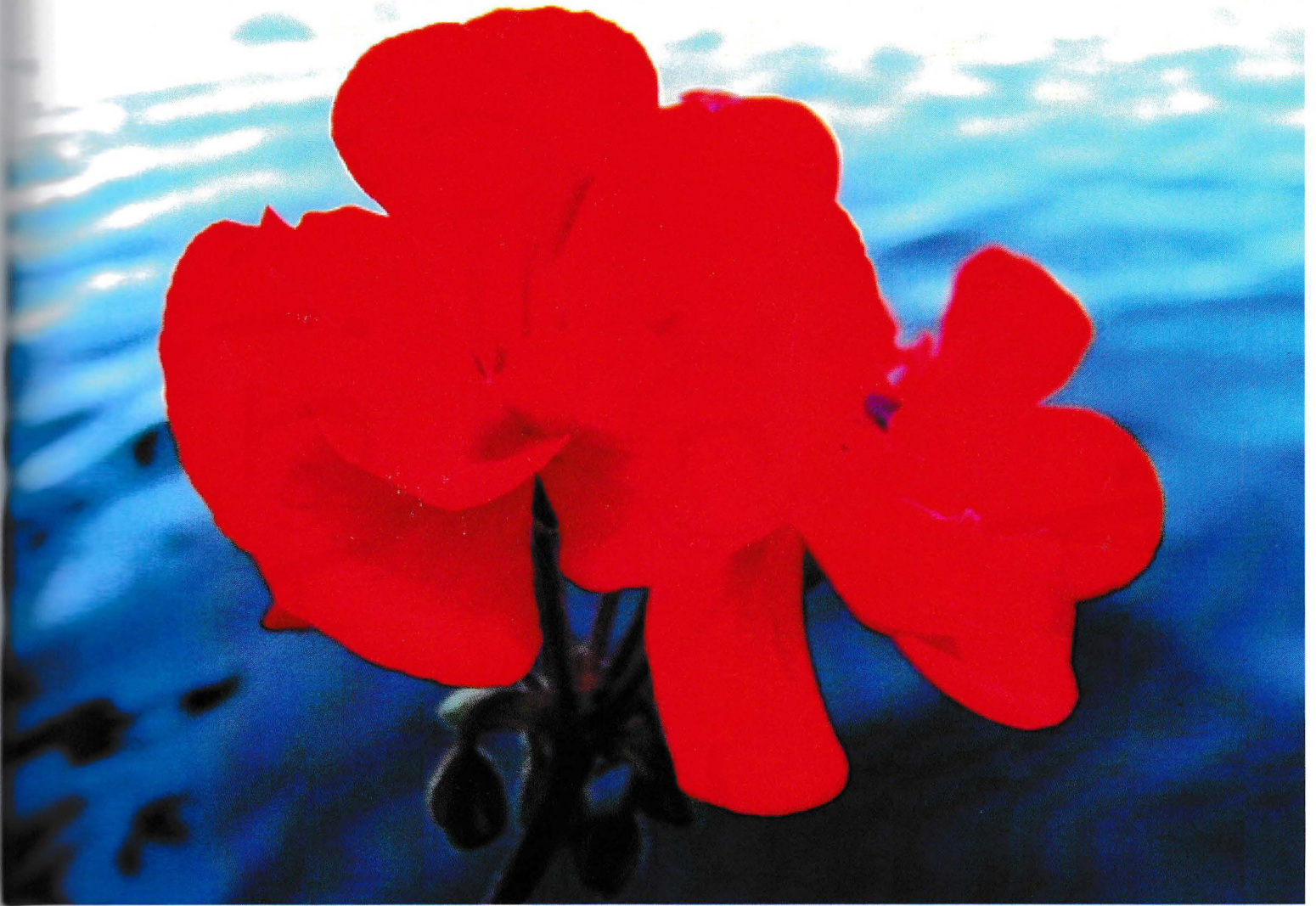
cent names in a dollar store town.
Lunch box mentality
meant sons who took lunch money had

fists like frozen hams. The
nose bent slightly in the
mirror. He was too smart

not to see the left hook:
"fags like you don't have
girlfriends."
Wrapped in a family quilt

the nose radiated pain like a
knobby antenna, picking up
the faint
chords of a flamenco.

by Jim Warner
(My first poem in 's)



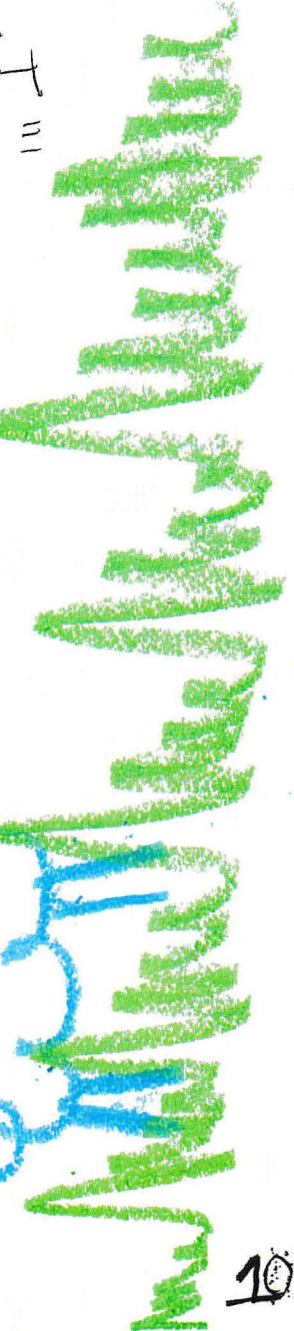
"21"

- Jim Feeney 9

G, R U A U ?

Y U ? B A J ! " X U . "

I C A Q - U .



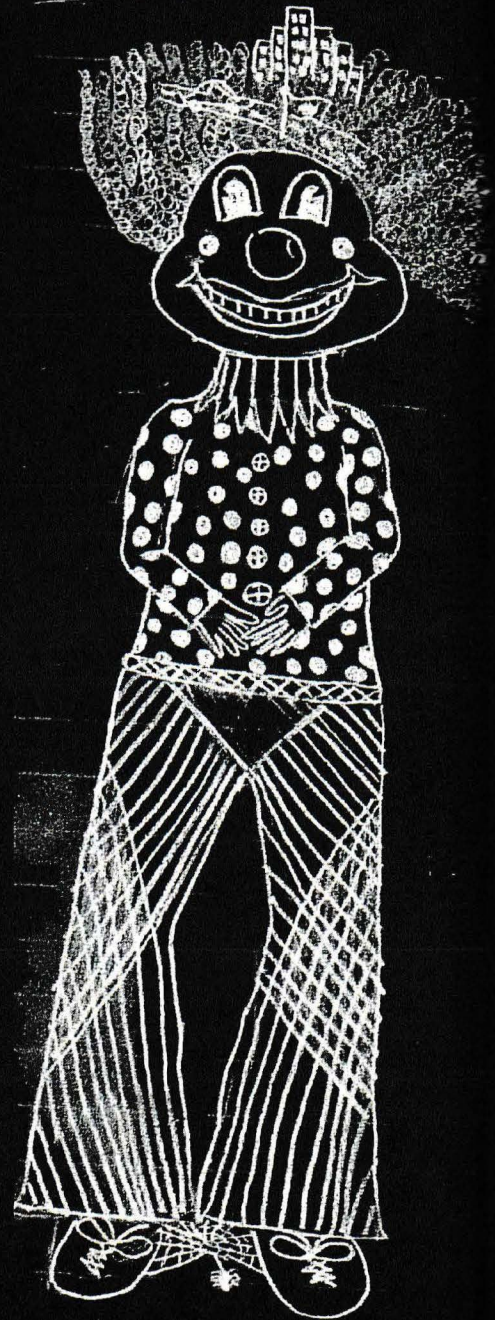
"ABC Hai KU"
Gee, are you a ewe?
Why ewe? Be a jay! "Ex-ewe."
"I see a queue — you."

Lowell
Candy

Clown in the Closet

He closes the closet doors every night,
But I still see him quivering under the quilt.
Through the gaps in my cage shines in the light,
And I've broken out of the trap that he's built.
Oh, little old me...the size of an elf
Gets to spend every day...sitting on the shelf!
Faded yellow spots have appeared on my skin,
And a spider spun a web between my shoes.
I smile a deceiving plastic grin—
Even though I've never felt so abused.
I've become part of his imagination
Causing him terrors for my aggravation.
My hair, now a residential neighborhood,
Never used to be a home for dust mites.
Inside my red locks was where their structures
stood
Forming a community of equal rights.
From the corner I spy with my black and white
eyes...
A boy clutching his pillow as he cries.
He can never confine me or put me away;
I will escape from the closet everyday!

By Lauren Salem



Playing Pretend

It was like us, at the time
Thinking the fate of our lives would be
determined by that one night

Skirts cut high, inhibitions far too low
We flaunted the sexuality we didn't quite yet have
Hinged our lives on ideals we didn't quite yet
understand

The smell of smoke still reminds me, reminds
us, of those days

(on the streets, late at night)

When we played pretend



MARISSA
PHILLIPS



Sarah
Doman

Little Yellow Dress

My little yellow dress,
Pulled afresh
from the binding shadows of childhood
that were once so prevalent,
reminds me of a time
when twirling around and around
in the backyard
was all that really mattered.

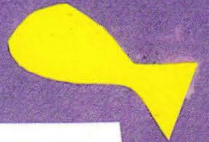




DRL

Butterfly
Convention

"Koi's"



Zach
Depe w

Lauren
Carey

My Childhood (dis)Illusions

When I fall asleep
My collectable Barbie dolls
(still in their boxes)
Magically escape the cardboard
And have a dance party
Under my bed.

If I watch
Alice in Wonderland
Seven times a day
(ritualistically)
I will, at some point,
Find that the white rabbit
Is so incredibly proud of me
That he will invite me
To play croquet with the king
(not the queen, she's nasty).

If I start to shave my legs
And hide it from my mother
(forever)
She will remain
Under the impression
That I have not yet
(and never will)
Reach puberty.

We think
if we lie it out on the floor

like a

Big Toy Train

WE CAN SEE WHERE WE'LL GO

And how to

But I think we're both set there
And when fastened we pull in different directions

Stalemate

-of-
US

But I will not be your box car

And I don't like to be followed
But I hope

When we pull into our stations

yours is beside mine

Shannon Curran

...HOW SMALL WE
REALLY ARE...



Charles W. King III

Can You Count the 7?



Zach
DePau

Laurel
Carey

The Hatbox

A Memoir

I loved picture day. The thing about picture day is that you get to look back on it years later and say, "I remember what happened to me in 8th grade," or "Did I really look like that? What was that haircut all about?" This was especially true for picture day with the band. High school marching band uniforms don't flatter anybody. You can look like Cindy Crawford at her peak and once you put a high school marching band uniform on, you look like the biggest loser to walk the face of the earth. This effect is magnified a hundred times over when you are an awkward looking 8th grader with curly hair and braces. But when I look at my 8th grade band picture, I don't think about how awkward or silly I was. I bite my lip and feel the scar tissue.

It was the end of August and the band camp activity for the day was to get into our bulky wool uniforms for formal band pictures. Being an 8th grader, I was among the last to get my picture taken. So I had time to mull about the band room and get myself ready. I fixed my hair—as much as curly frizz like that could be fixed—and put on some shimmery lip gloss. I heard Miss John, the band director, yelling about how we were supposed to have our band hats in our individual pictures. I hadn't gotten my hat out of the closet yet, so I stopped primping and went to retrieve it.

The hats were each stored in their own individual black plastic box. These boxes were stacked up one on top of the other in a closet on the far end of the band room. I had to wait for the people whose boxes were sitting on top of my hat box to get theirs down first. I was standing next to the towering hat boxes when one of my 8th grade comrades decided that he wasn't going to wait for anybody to get their boxes down. He just pulled his box out from the middle of the tower. Twenty or thirty hat boxes came crashing down on top of me. One of them hit my face and smacked right into my lip.

As it turned out, the impact had caused one of my teeth to cut clear through my lip. I, of course, didn't know this at the time. All I knew was that I

got hit in the face and my lip really hurt. I started to panic because my picture hadn't been taken yet and I didn't want 8th grade to go down in pictorial history as the year I had a fat lip. I slumped down onto the floor and started to cry.

One of the band parents, Mrs. McDaniels, came up to me to see what was wrong. She got one look at my fat lip and I could tell by her eyes that it was worse than I thought it was. That just made me cry more. My makeup was ruined—I looked like a big, swollen, red mess in a band uniform. It couldn't get any worse. But we all think things like that when something bad happens. The fact of the matter was (and almost always is), things could get worse—and they did.

Mrs. McDaniels couldn't find any ice for my swollen lip, so she got me a cold can of Coca-Cola from the refrigerator. The photographer called all the 8th graders over to get in line for pictures and I got myself up and went over to a mirror to assess the damage. There was a fair amount of blood, so I couldn't really see how bad the cut was. I cleaned my face off with a wet paper towel and tried to put on more lip gloss. I figured I looked as good as I was going to look given the circumstances, so I got into the 8th grade picture line. Mrs. McDaniels stood with me to make sure I stayed calm.

When I reached the front of the line, I explained my plight to the photographer. The cut was on the left side of my lip, so I'd have to pose with my right side facing the camera—that way, my injury wouldn't be nearly as visible in the picture. The photographer seemed a bit thrown off by this. He had his little masking tape marks down on the floor indicating where a left-side-front facing person would stand, so he wasn't prepared for my right-side-front problem. After about five minutes of minor light re-working, he got me ready for my picture. He kept telling me to smile, and I kept telling him that I was smiling as much as I could. I think he failed to realize the severity of my injury even more than I did. But he got my picture taken, and that's all that really mattered to him.

I was relieved to take my band uniform off. Once I was out of the woolen monstrosity, the band director told me I could go home and have my mom check

out my lip. I didn't bother calling her for a ride, since I lived very close to the school.

I walked into the house and my mom took one look at me and said, "We have to get you to the doctor. You'll probably need stitches."

That was unacceptable. I was (and still am) terrified of needles, pins, injections, and anything else that punctures my skin. I went from being upset about a cut on my lip to being even more upset at the prospect of having a doctor sew up my face. At the thought of this I broke into tears once again. I kept crying in the car all the way to the doctor's office.

The doctor took me right away and began inspecting my face.

"By the looks of this," he said, "it seems that your tooth punctured your lower lip."

"What?" I asked, startled.

"Just what I said. Your tooth went through your lip. Technically, it's a human bite. When was your last tetanus shot?"

My mom said, "I think it's been a while."

My fear of needles went into overdrive. I thought I was going to get stitches and a shot in the same day. It was my worst nightmare.

The doctor continued looking at my lip and he said, "But I don't think I'm going to stitch this up. Given its location, stitches would lead to worse scarring than just letting it heal on its own."

I let out an audible sigh of relief. The tetanus shot was still coming, so the relief didn't last long. The doctor left the room and told me that a nurse would be in soon to administer the shot. It took all of my energy and focus to remember to breathe. Everybody told me that I'd get over my fear of needles. I remember being in first grade thinking that by the time I was 12 a shot wouldn't be a big deal. But there I was—an 8th grader hyperventilating over the thought of getting a tetanus shot.

As I was sitting on the table in the exam room, I had a flashback to my first tetanus booster shot. I remembered being in pre-school. The doctor stuck

the needle into the fleshy part of my left arm between my elbow and shoulder. The area surrounding the injection site got sore and tender. I spent the whole next day struggling to play with the blue Play-Doh at school. I was just so sore.

I didn't want to be sore again! Everybody in band was going to be at the big band picnic and dance that night. The band dance was always the same day as picture day, and I had big plans for that evening. I'd be damned if I was going to let a tetanus shot ruin my evening. I wasn't happy about it, but I let the nurse stick me in the arm. Then my mom and I went home.


I tried to get my face to look as normal as possible—not an easy task. I couldn't really cover the wound with makeup for sanitary reasons. So I tried to up-play my eye makeup in an effort to downplay my hideous injury. I had to resign myself to the fact that it was absolutely impossible for me to look good. The fact of the matter was that I had a quasi-self-inflicted human bite on my face and there was nothing I could do about it.

Once I got myself dressed, my mom drove me over to the school for the dance. The lights were dimmed in the band room and Limp Bizkit's "Nookie" was blasting from a makeshift DJ station in the corner. All of my friends were running around, dancing, and having a good time. As soon as I walked in everybody started asking me if I was okay. I proceeded to tell everyone the story about the "human bite" and the tetanus shot. Most people responded with the standard teenage "Whoa!" upon hearing my tale of, well, woe.

The night wore on and the slow songs started to play. There was an 11th grade boy that I wanted to dance with—and after a little bit of begging, he agreed. It must have been the fact that there was a lot of moving, sweaty teenagers in there, but it started to get really hot in the band room. I placed my hands firmly on the shoulders of my 11th grade dance partner, and we started to slow dance to some stereotypical late-90s R&B tune.

"Is it warm in here?" I asked.

"Maybe a little," he said.




It was obvious that he didn't feel as warm as I did. In fact, I felt so warm that I started to get dizzy. My lip started throbbing and I could feel the sweat dripping from my forehead. I could barely hold myself up, so I started dancing closer and closer to my 11th grade partner.

There wasn't a bathroom nearby, so as soon as the song was over I bolted outside and started throwing up in a gutter. Nothing compares to the feeling of vomit creeping its way into a fresh human bite—as if a human bite isn't bad enough. A few of my friends (including my 11th grade boy) ran out to see if I was okay. Once I stopped puking, I tried to explain that I had started feeling really warm and then I got nauseous.

I called my mom for a ride home. When I told her what happened, she said it was probably the shot. Tetanus shots do funny things to the system, and the heat in the band room probably pushed me over the edge. All I knew was that what was supposed to be a fun-filled evening of squealing about boys and dancing with my friends turned into a nightmarish evening filled with sweat and vomit. I just wanted the day to be over. It was the kind of day I wanted to forget. But it was going to be impossible to forget, because it was picture day.

High school picture packages usually come with the option to get a refrigerator magnet with the picture emblazoned on it. My mom is a big fan of the refrigerator magnet option, so the refrigerator in my house is covered with high school class pictures, swim team pictures, baseball team pictures, and band pictures. Every time I want something from the refrigerator, I'm forced to remember that day. I look at the smile on my face and I can remember exactly what I was thinking.

"I'm going to hate this picture for the rest of my life. I hope nobody ever sees it again."



Sociology 101 – 3 semesters past

I'm a hyphenated American
Remembering the way I used to make headings in my 6th grade Science tablet
the majority group here
the jeans that people where
all my troubles lie in my bored shoes
weather my attack of ink upon the page

punctuation.

Even my hair is daydreaming
Suppose I was the button-hole
The odd line in the plaid pattern
Bored by the "borealis"
Board by the shiny tabletop

What does that mean?
My corporate institutionalized mind
rests not on the dollar, but the time,
but the kind of scab on the foot that would turn me down.

Extreme power channeled from the wider world
resting silent on the desk
The moving hands remind that we're alive
remind of classes past
remind of a navel exposed
remind of thousands of days spent this way

My exhaustion yodels for attention
driving my hand and brain
You're reading what I'm writing, most of which will never be read.
The words are already written as you read but I am still writing anew on your mind.
It's mine.



Sam Chianelli

Jane Austen
101

Tentative Schedule

Week One

January 16 ~~Syllabus and Introduction to Taste, Culture, and Aesthetics~~
January 18 Jane Austen: *Pride and Prejudice*, pp. 3 - 89 **Volume 1**

4.
100
89
79

Week Two

January 23 ~~*Pride and Prejudice*, pp. 89 - 158,~~
January 25 ~~*Pride and Prejudice*, pp. 158 - 254. David Nokes "Bath and Southampton," pp. 264 - 267, and David Spring "Interpreters of Jane Austen's Social World: Literary Critics and Historians," pp. 392 - 398~~

Week Three

January 30 William Wordsworth: "The Thorn" p. 252, "Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*" p. 272, "The Ruined Cottage" p. 280
Samuel Taylor Coleridge: "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" p. 430, "Kubla Khan" p. 446, "Frost at Midnight" p. 464
February Joanna Baillie: "Mother to Her Waking Infant" p. 220
Percy Shelley: "Mont Blanc" p. 762, "To a Skylark" p. 817, "Defense of Poetry" p. 837

Week Four

February John Keats: "Ode to a Nightingale" p. 903, "Ode to a Grecian Urn" p. 905, "Lamia" p. 909, Felicia Hemans: "Casabianca" p. 868
February Thomas Carlyle: *Sartor Resartus* p. 100
John Henry Cardinal Newman: from *The Idea of a University*, Discourse 8 p. 1041

Week Five

February 13 Alfred Lord Tennyson: "Mariana" p. 1112, "Lady of Shallott" p. 1114, Elizabeth Barrett Browning: Book 4 *Aurora Leigh* p. 1097
February 15 Robert Browning: "Porphyria's Lover" p. 1252, "My Last Duchess" p. 1255, "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came" p. 1266, "Fra Lippo Lippi" p. 1271

Week Six

February 20 Emily Bronte: *Wuthering Heights* pp. 3 - 195
February 22 *Wuthering Heights* pp. 195 - 258

Week Seven

February 27 Martha Nussbaum "Wuthering Heights: The Romantic Ascent" pp. 394 - 410
Choose two of the reviews of *Wuthering Heights* pp. 280 - 301
March 1 Matthew Arnold "Sweetness and Light" p. 1398

Week Eight

SPRING BREAK

Week Nine

March 13 Dante Gabriel Rossetti: "Blessed Damsel" p. 1443, Christina Rossetti: "In an Artist's Studio" p. 1463, "Goblin Market" p. 1466, Gerard Manley Hopkins: "The Wreck of the Great-Grandeur" p. 1516, "Carrion Comfort" p. 1521, "Pied Beauty" p. 1518

Love you!
Loves you!

Deep Sea - GIGANTICISM

FAVLEY LIBRARY



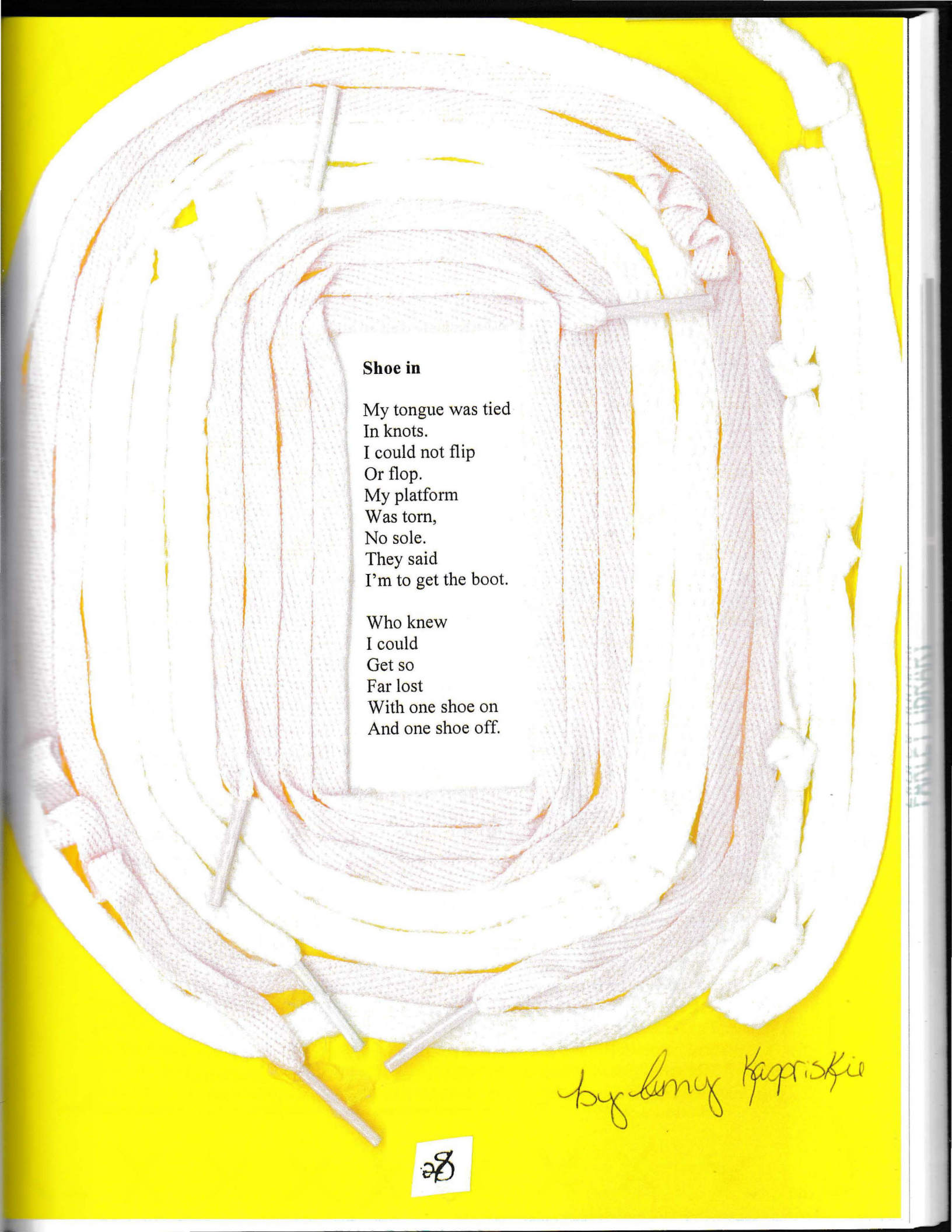
Picturesque Trails

Note Trailbits



27

PAVET LIBRARY



Shoe in

My tongue was tied
In knots.
I could not flip
Or flop.
My platform
Was torn,
No sole.
They said
I'm to get the boot.

Who knew
I could
Get so
Far lost
With one shoe on
And one shoe off.

by Lenox Kapriškie

By
Jennifer
Haneza

Bold Counsel

11-16-06

His Fidel Castro hat fell over his eyes. He was protected. With oversized headphones hugging his neck, he sat motionless, his eyes peering over the unread pages. Wispy clumps of matted hair crowned him king of our people.

I was always proud of him. I looked him up and down (as I often did when he wasn't looking). He was wearing a new shirt; I could tell because it was clean, the only clean thing he owned. In a few days, it would join the party of dirty layers on the floor. White cotton, stained brown and gray with filth and smoke. I could not bear to think of it any longer. My thoughts shifted to the chaotic storm that brewed against the windows.

The storm clouds mimicked the color of his eyes, and I found this much too ironic. He was the stormy sea on which my thoughts often departed. I stared at him quite often and pondered to myself whether I found him gorgeous or hideous. My mind was never fully decided, and there was no in between. I'd often look at him and wonder what he was thinking, where his mind was, or what color pills he had taken that morning.

He is good to have around; he gives me useful feedback. He's my barometer of paranoia, and when it is high I am warm and uncomfortable.

He is strong, but does nothing; he is brave, but he hides; he is brilliant, but clouds surround him.

I'd follow him in a procession to his dingy two-room world more times than I could recall. I'd meet with him in a thousand dreams, some in which my body rested motionless, ignorant of time and space; some in which I sat on his couch laughing.

He was the kind of person I had constructed in my head before I had tasted of freedom or substance, the kind of boy I had pegged to my father's generation. Through many conversations, I began to notice the elevation of my mind. Perhaps he had provoked this through his own display of intelligence, perhaps me with my self-consciousness. Either way, I was not going to be comfortable around him if he deemed me an idiot. I was out to prove something and his rebuttal to that statement would likely be that he was out to prove nothing.

When the tempest had stopped, my thoughts turned to him. I knew he was somewhere quiet, feeling uneasy, trading beads for spices. I had no fear for his safety anymore, though now he was more so at large, and I should have feared he'd not return now more than ever. He was a roaming, freelance cat, leaving shedded fur on everyone he met.

I'd run into him some evenings, his breath deep and suggestive of his prior activities. I needn't ask where he'd been. I knew the six or seven places he went, though I only accompanied him to one.

I'd always feel dark when I looked at him. I often wondered why I did, why I sought the approval of a man wearing one red ladies' sock and one dirty, off-white men's one. I felt that if I had his permission, I'd own the world. It took me ages to realize that I'd never have either of those two delights.

There is a collection of plastic garbage containers, none of which are ever emptied. They wait for him, outside and to the right of his door, in poised positions. Their location is mockery; he will never use them and they will never be used.



I'm frightened because somewhere, out there, someone knows my life is a poem found. And someone is keeping my secret. And then, down the block, someone is telling. *You come into me with that soulful look on your face. You come in lookin' like you never done one wrong thing.* Please open your eyes. The ceremony is about to begin.

And as I revert back to my instinctive stance, *You sir, become a knight. Arch Duke of Anarchy, Cousin to the Emperor, the Opiate Lord.*

The room was vast and virtually undivided, save an ugly outside door that led into a small, cramped quarter, where lay a patterned cat, tattered mat, *Where's Waldo* hat.

I was astonished to find that he, the most free of minds, had been leaning to the right. How shocking; the faucet drips droplets into oblivion. I know him now that he is moderately left behind. Water droplets indicate to me that the white mist has already ridden the river of red into the matter of gray.

I was with him once, one night, the Counsel was meeting. I was the only woman there, and I was invited, with much reluctance on the part of my biggest fan, to partake in the evening's festivities. I was already there, and then, in the literal water closet. I leaned against the sink, he sat on the floor, a mirror perpendicular to the toilet.

"Read to us," my fellow counsel-person said. "Read us your work."

I hate that, when they call it work. This isn't my work, this is my play. If this ever became like work to me, I'd perish beneath the racks of grandma sweaters at one of my dead ends. Dead-endedness. Now *That* is the question.

Now I'm in. No more thinking, "How did he think?" No more, "How did he do it? How was he this great?" I know it, I've learned it, been taught the colors of the flag and I can recite all three back to you without even looking. Everybody needs me. That's why I'm here. *Not because I'm strong and wise, but because you're weak and disillusioned.* I illustrate your ugly grayness and disguise it with femininity. If I were you, Jim Morrison, Czar Nicholas II, Plato, or God, I'd have this crazy scheme to mess with everyone's heads, too. I do not blame you, now that I'm in. I take my position, never at the head of the table. "...at best a philosopher / at worst a believer." Your words ring true in my head. I really wanna stay here all night. I'm auditory and you wouldn't believe it; the things I capture while your eyes shift silently and your ears close completely. That's why I'm strong in words. I've seen two thousand paintings, made ten thousand scribbles, patterned them to meet humanity's standards, and now I've painted in poems, just like you.

It all laid very organized on my sudden and safe floor.

Everyone left with a lighter. It didn't matter whether or not it was the one with which he came.

1-17-07

The Real World is an adjectival phrase for the life that is all around you. You are immersed in it, until one day an adult tells you, "That's not what it's like in the Real World." Eventually, you come to realize that nothing is like it is in the Real World, and so the Real World must be fictional. In the Real World, people don't behave, dress, or live like you do, so you are part of something bigger, some undermining scheme of the Heavens, God's own grandeur. You are exempt of praise and punishment because you



cannot possibly hold Real World standards; that is, if the Real World is a figment of society's imagination. I'm here to tell you that it is. You're not wrong or right, you simply are, and your reality is what you make it. Make it good or bad; it is all relative to the universe, and there is no divine providence in whose eyes you will be viewed as a sinner. That is, of course, unless you desire there to be.

My darling dirty hippie once told me that we, the children of post-modernism, create our own reality. While pondering post-modern principles one night, it occurred to him that he was Hitler. "It hit me, I am Hitler!"

That same realization came to me early one morning. The distant warm windows lit light stationary fire flies amidst the damned and degraded city night. I screamed to my two companions, honorary members of the Counsel, to run away from me. I dashed out onto the middle of the street into oncoming traffic, raving that I was responsible for the deaths of 6 million people over 40 years before I would take my first gasp of air. All of the souls, for whose death I felt guilt, were brutally murdered not by one man, but by one man's mind, and this mind was not mine. In the morning, I reached the conclusion that post-modernism is tragically flawed. Is that real? Is that Real Life? Thinking you're a murderer? The only person I ever tried to kill was myself, and it never happened, so I am only guilty of attempted murder.

1-22-07

4 "Why am I here?" I asked suddenly. He looked at me harshly. Then lightly. His facial expressions morphed, and he became kind.

"You could have died."

"Yes, yes I could have. You almost died the same way, too. Why do you care?"

I didn't know he cared about me, but I was so glad that he did. I made him out to be such a tragic figure, a falling Christ carrying his own end, but he was me and I was him. Most importantly, we were each other, and his blood was no more valuable than mine. We were relics of a lost generation trying to make our own pathway through time.

"I quit the drugs," he said.

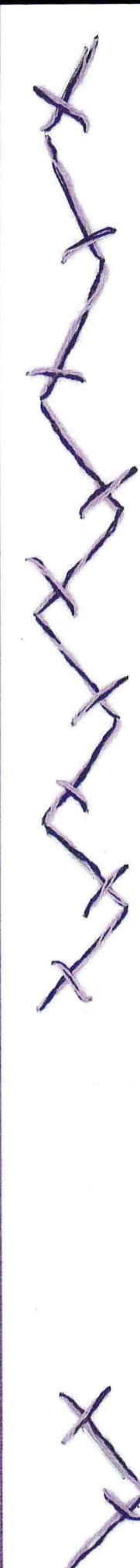
I didn't care that he quit, but it was the way he said it. He didn't seem proud, he seemed ashamed. His blood ran clean, so too did his conscience, and he wandered the room like a fevering pirate, thirsty for a mirage.

Where had my brother gone? I called him my brother, and I always dreamed that someday God would grant me the ability to intertwine our souls forever.

And so there was a break in time. His reality became my fiction, and my dismay became his satisfaction. Nothing new there. No news is good news, and the news here struck me across the face. We were close together. He sat near me. I reached out to touch him, but I cowered away and replaced my hands back on the sofa. I felt filthy. I almost got away with looking at a god, casting my mortal gaze upon the unfathomable. What a filthy peasant. I shifted my weight from my thighs to my knees. I rose and walked shakily across the cleared floor.

So what did he think of me now? This tired, worn-out saint. Sick of his duties to God and his brethren. Now it was time for him to turn to me, save me, my one lone soul. "Good luck, man," I mumbled. I shook my head and stared deliberately at the ground, refusing him the thing he could never grant me, an eye-to-eye conversation.





Once, he and I had sat and talked till 4 AM. We were inside and outside of each other's minds that night, but the night ended abruptly, with a courteous goodbye and a door slam.

We shared some friends, which I found strange. I often felt as though neither of us had any friends at all, hence why we should befriend one another. His remoteness indicated to me that he did not feel the same. He never sat next to me; not even the force of circumstance could make him my couch-mate. He'd sit as far away as he possibly could, cast his eyes toward the floor, and mumble to me when communication was necessary.

And this is how I met him. I don't remember exactly the first time I saw him, but I remember the first time we spoke. He looked as though he was weak and trembling. His trademark headphones clung to his chin like my hands clung to the sides of my chair. He spoke first. He seemed very strange to me. We had been in situations to talk dozens of times before, but he chose this one. He was ready this time, when I had finally convinced myself that this strange wanderer would never say hello. I was certain that he didn't care to know me. The first time we met, he seemed like an angel, bowing down to me in my time of need. I knew he was in no state of mind to be rejected, so I opened a warm conversation with him, the remains of which I wrapped my coat around and carried with me for the next few hours.

It is ironic. Our first meeting was so unexpected; I was vulnerable and needy, and yet I awaited our departure with great anxiety. Now I dread our farewells and they remind me of the waiting room when you know you're going to get a shot. Mom says, "No, honey, you had one last time," but you know all too well the truths that lie behind that door.

I never knew what was behind his door. Sometimes the filth and smoke would engulf me before I had a chance to fully enter the room. Sometimes the door swung open without resistance and a cleared path guided me to the sofa. Sometimes he sat smiling; sometimes he sat disillusioned, distilled, distant, and I dare not stir his resolve. I was a frightened firefly, too, ramming my mind off the fluorescent light.

12-13-06

It's two hours into morning, I walk quickly back from his place, trying to clobber my shoes on the ground so it sounds like a man walking. "Protect me, God!" is all I can think. Jesus Christ it's late! No problem. That car speeding by should get a muffler. What's wrong with that mother... oh no! I can stumble well, that is, until a pothole tries to make love to my shoe. Dear God!

If nature has found hell, then what will I be? I'm something strange to me and he is trying to *understand* me? This cannot be. This cannot be. This cannot be...taken for granted. Over the hills and far away, my heart is pounding in the backroom. The white ceiling and off-white walls. The green carpet and the gray table. The only table in the place. 'Cept the wooden chest that we call article and friend.

I live for my dream, I've decided. But I haven't figured out what that dream is. I'm ready to sing any song like anyone, but what would it mean? I can take a Dylan hit and jazz it up a bit, make it faster, make the words flow quickly so you're not in agony waiting for the next verse. But why would I? Make a million bucks? At what cost?

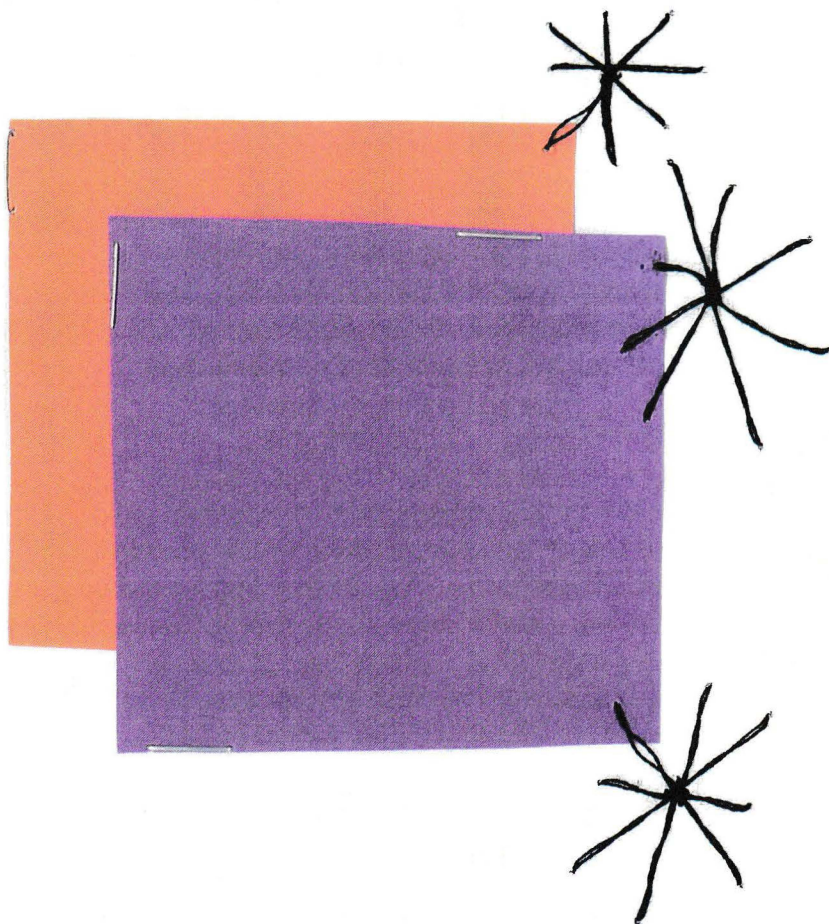
He was sick too. But he chose different poison. "The meds you're on don't mix with this," he told me, as the cup slid from my hand into his.

"You're on the same meds," I thought. "The same exact ones, and yet you can mix. Why can't I? Am I weaker? Am I a child? You are five days younger than me."

A+, the mark of a true genius! And that was both of our blood type. He and I could give the gift of life to one another, if need be, or if we so chose. I'd bleed a thousand times for him before he'd shed one drop. That sick twisted fiend. And yet, I loved him dearly.

And what happened? He moved away, back over the mountains. The gate to the two-room Counsel chamber was bolted; the posters on the windows removed; the smell of urine, cat, and smoke dissipated from the carpet.

I tried to realize that he was no god, he was a man, and he chose to live like this. But his indifference made it hard for me to walk away and forget. The city is vast and ugly, but it ain't so bad when you have a little shelter where you know that if you wait on the cracked cement stoop long enough, your savior will arrive to let you in and offer you a Styrofoam cup of red tea with no sugar.



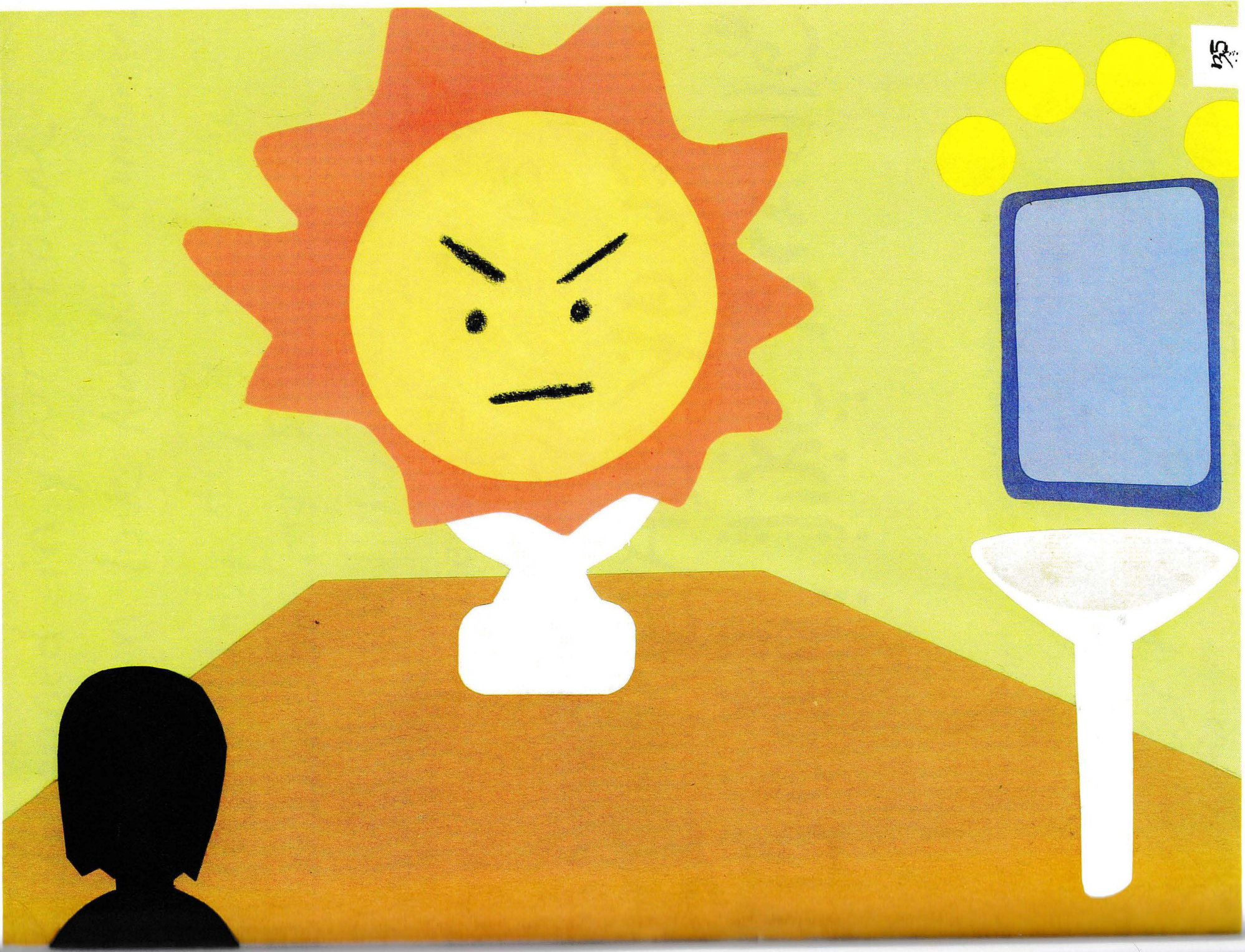
Regarding Your Rules



VAMI
BUTCZYNSKI

77

PAVLE LIBRARY



Cocooned in your room
wrapped in love And down comforters
The lullaby of your breath,
WARM on my SKIN
The moon light filters through the window
pane
throwing shimmering shadow across your
hips, lips, fingertips.

I READ YOUR
Body like Braille

The dichotomy of coarse to smooth
lulls me to sleep.

like waves upon the ocean
of the night.

By Racy Muir

Composure

On days like this
clothes cling to bodies
skin sticks to skin

Deodorant is applied
and reapplied again

But sweat stains still show

Harlot-red lipstick melts on the bathroom floor—
and clothes slip off greasy

The heat mandates our composure

But we've lost all self-control



Safely and Maturely
(Christian Hardcore)

PVC absorbs us well,
The catch-all for that thing that happens
With your eyes and secretions from everywhere else
Though leather is still better

I want to cry when those marks drift from indigo to
Near-translucent green with a hint of ashen primer
And those ridged indentions, the style of sweat
On my upper lip

I hate admitting blood tastes only like copper

M. Faraday Jones

FALL LIBRARY

By Kacy Muir

DATE WEEK WEATHER

our love was photography

You were just a pin-up on my wall
HELD UP with thumb tacks on cardboard

that I did not hesitate to take down.

The Corner of Riverside & Main

Chairs and tables
Succumb to the cold, green-tiled floor

They hold true remaining glued to the concrete beginning
Of an old cafe in the city, nearing its end.

M. Faraday
Jones

Non Sequitur Romance

No superlative exists with irony of this caliber
Everything seems to be in the right place but this is not a mere writing act
—a transcendent feeling act is more appropriate—
I've come to see myself as many things but I like only one,
and I think it suits me

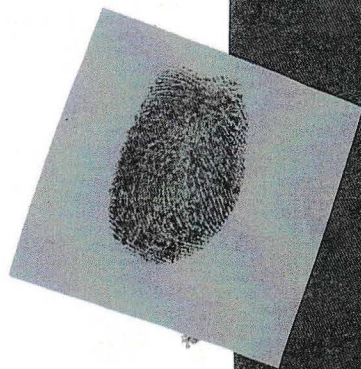
Because a girl like you cannot happen

I've forced meaning upon whatever seemed to lack it
and I've found twenty dollars on the floor of a bar
There is no greater solitude than being mired
in belief, coincidences are anything but

I'm doing you no justice, I can't transfer an imprint

Either way this has already run aground and drifted back out into a dissonant brine
subdued sea green and ice blue reef,
no narrative form exists,
a dream is nothing but what it says,
I have to live with it

And I still have never met a girl like you before



Conrad Miller

Eye(s) lie

Eye(s) lie masturbating hot glass clenched in hand
With two lips pressed to meet hot air
You will meet me in the sky,
And Eye without a care

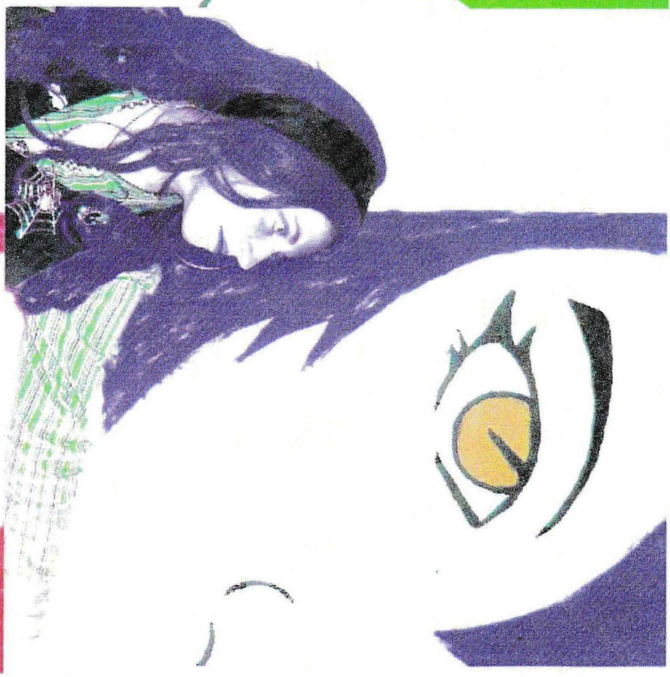
The envelope your life ends in:
Blank walls of absence turn bleeding
Hot cinders into the darkness,
Hot life into the vagrant
 vacant time replaced with needing
 vacant minds like toddlers teething

And Eye can see that Eye was blind
By your flame and gentle guide
You can make me feel alive
As Eye(s) lie here to Eye.

CLARISSA

7a

MARISSA
PHILLIPS!!



Festival of Flames



Chloe

Candle in Heat

^
A Glow
Sparks to
Flames
And heat

Melts me away
But through
Midnight
I will burn
As my wick
Frays and
Blackens
Dropping Ashes
While time
Devours my
Core but I
will burn for
You and only you
Because
Your match
Lit my fire

*Lawren
Salem*

There Have Never Been Words For This

There have never been words for this.
It's more easily explained in actions.
Like when you flutter your hands to imitate a hummingbird,
Only imagine your hands are in your chest,
and it's not your hands at all, but some inner force of life you can't quite put your finger
on.
And you wonder if you imagined it.
And briefly you ponder the possibility of chest fluttering as a sign of cancer, or a heart
attack,
Or multiple organ failure.
Since you believe that if this feeling continues you'll surely die of exhaustion.
Death by Happiness, it'll say on your death certificate.
And you find yourself thinking and saying impossible things.
Whispers and coos of romance novel quality.
Your mouth is embarrassing your ears again,
And your body is no longer sure just what person it houses.
Your heart and your brain no longer communicate fluidly
Your heart speaks Navajo and your brain works in binary.
But somehow you know that all is right, and that everything is ok
Because you both communicate through the Morse code of your staring, blinking eyes.
And he touches exactly where you want to be touched
At the exact time you want him to touch you
And you never uttered a word
Or made an influential move.
He just knows.
And he says what you're thinking
Before you can figure out how to frame it with the right words
That will set off the moment perfectly.
And there is no shame
And there is no hurt
And there is no lack of communication or appreciation within these moments
Every day is better than the one before
And you want to thank God and the stars and his mom
And the entire staff of Wilkes University
For allowing something so wonderful to happen.
And the best that you can do
To truly show your level of admiration, gratitude, love, and devotion
Is to write something
And hope that it comes to close to describing a feeling
For which there are no words.

Shannon Curtin

Sunset in NEPA



D. R. C. J.

By Conrad Miller

Nevermind

I have ever not you met
But I not never tried
I not ever said hello
Not never I say goodbye

but I sigh
and I mean hell

- o goodbye to you
so never I see you
so nevermine eyes muttering,

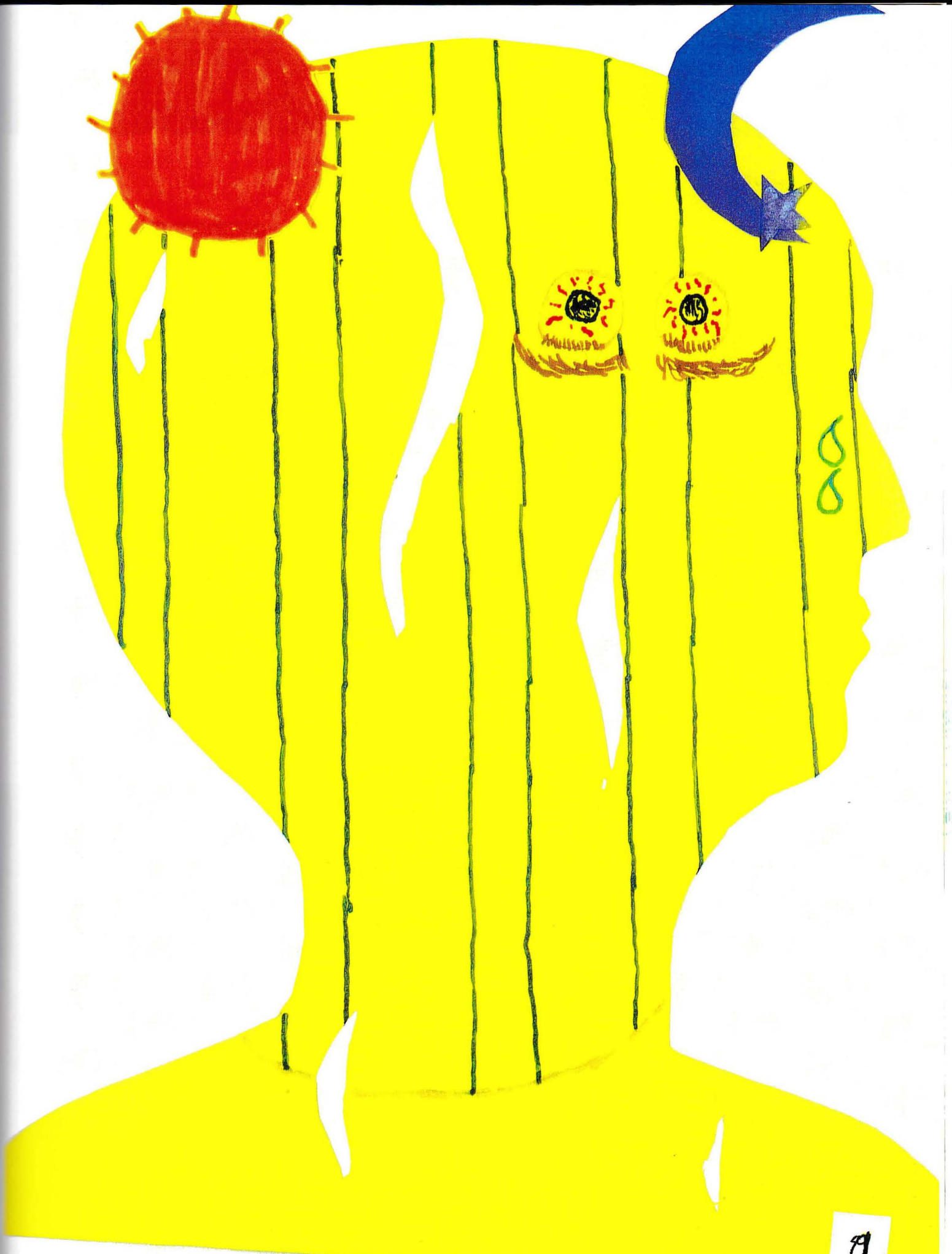
“nevermind”

Emily D's Fallout

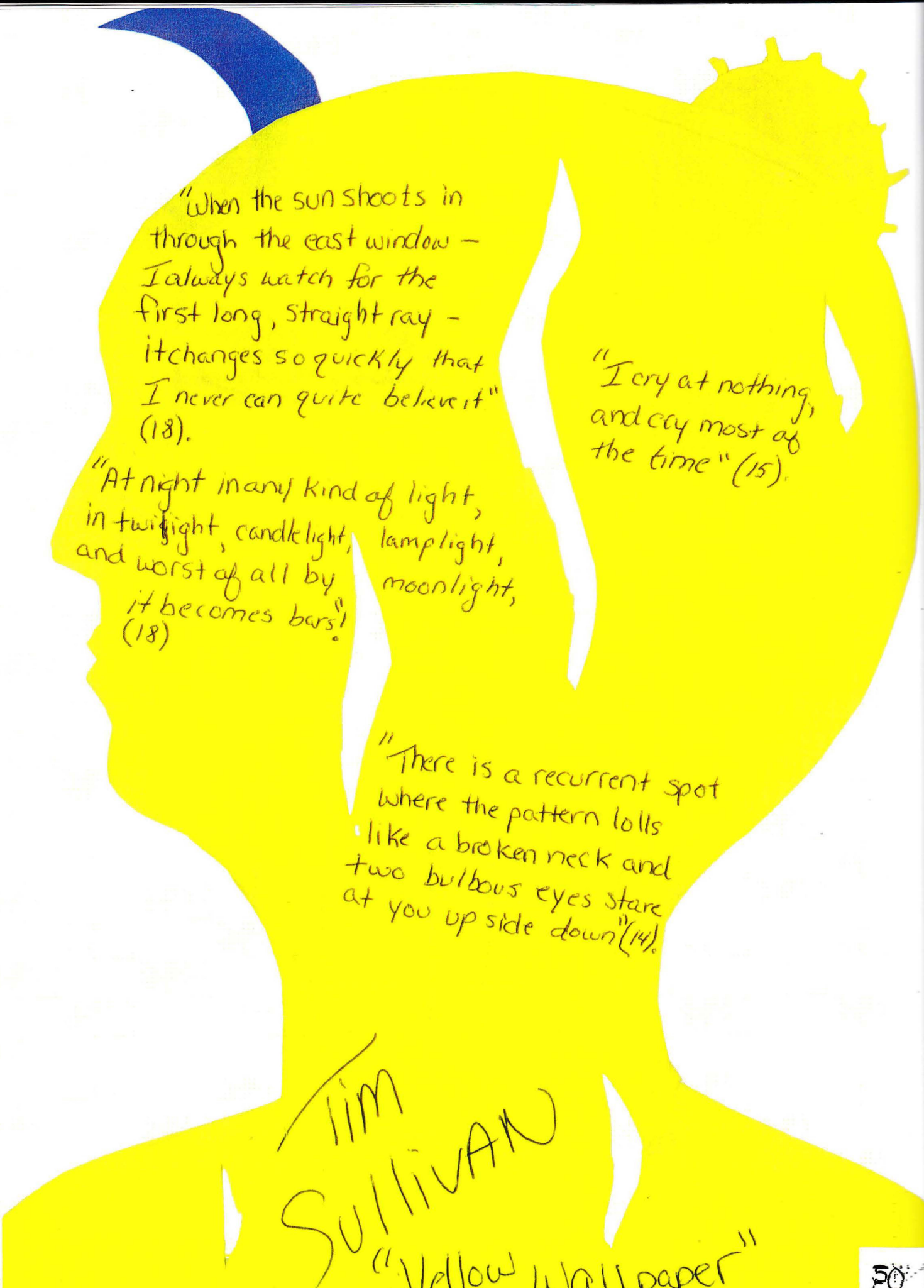
I dreamt I went through your car,
Your things,
your thoughts,
your way of seeing.
I dreamt you brought me flowers
From Heaven,
from a white pageant earth,
from your ego,
But as I dreamt,
I realized they were flowers for another girl,
flowers for another time
and I thought
I'd collapse right there,
Thought I'd die,
knowing you'd forgotten me.



Aleksandra
Djordjeric



ADAMU 1990



"When the sun shoots in
through the east window -
I always watch for the
first long, straight ray -
it changes so quickly that
I never can quite believe it"
(18).

"At night in any kind of light,
in twilight, candlelight, lamplight,
and worst of all by moonlight,
it becomes bars!"
(18)

"There is a recurrent spot
where the pattern lolls
like a broken neck and
two bulbous eyes stare
at you upside down" (14).

"I cry at nothing,
and cry most of
the time" (15).

Tim
SULLIVAN
"Yellow Wallpaper"

It's Easy Being Green



Jami Butczynski



Habitat

She walks the beach,
Naked,
Soul in hand,
Looking for destiny,
for the unattainable,
for a mirror,
perhaps to see into God's world.

Aleksandra Dondjelić

- Enjoy.

Inhuman

Jerry Doberman had finally achieved everything he had so ruthlessly fought for. He capitalized on the technological advances in gene transformation and the growing disgust for those whom society had since considered to be useless. He'd given these outcasts a purpose, and an important one at that. Congress and even the President herself had helped him pass the legislature needed to carry out his deeds, and twenty years later hunger in America ended. Jerry had taken his time to ensure that his factory farm was the most cost-efficient monopoly anyone had ever seen. Jerry earned more money than he knew what to do with. When it came to the Americans that had formerly been starving, he frankly never gave a damn about them in the first place. The whole time it took to get to the top he had only been hesitant at one moment.

Decades earlier he first had the idea of the Belows. He was with his friend Mark Carle at the bar. He had been slightly drunk, but sober enough to talk sensibly. He told Mark his brilliant idea, "You see, back when the government started using everyone's pets, the people who owned the farms made a fortune. I have another group in mind that we may be able to use for the same purposes..." He continued, but he was too drunk to think about Mark's daughter and how his plan would affect her. When Mark heard what he planned, his grey eyes became colder than usual and he left the bar refusing to listen to Jerry's apologies. Weeks went by and their friendship slowly dissolved. Jerry eventually moved to the state of New Canada and never saw Mark again, nor did he doubt the brilliance of his idea.

Thanks to Jerry, America had so many new foods all made from what came to be called the Belows. Foods like Belows steak, Belows ribs, Belows fingers, Belows tongue and liver all graced the plates of every household. Belows milk made an excellent drink choice as well. Jerry liked to boast in ads about the delicious taste of Belows compared to other foods. He told the masses everything they wanted to hear through marketing. Women were told how Belows meat helped make them sexy and how it aided in weight loss. "Just three servings a day and you can look like this," says the impossibly attractive woman onscreen as she digs in to some Belows breast. Men were told that they were only "real men" if they ate Belows. Kids were distracted by their favorite cartoon characters promoting it. Even seniors were convinced that eating Belows helped slow down aging and prevent bone loss. No one could resist America's favorite food.

Kelsey's favorite food was Belows pepperoni on pizza. She sat in her Government class daydreaming about lunchtime.

"Kelsey. It's your turn to present," said her teacher, so she got up and paced slowly towards the front of the room.

"The 40th amendment to the U.S. Constitution states that in order to be considered a human being one must have a Functional Intelligence Test (FIT) score of 7.3 or higher. Anyone who receives a FIT score *below* 7.3 will be considered a non-human animal and shall receive equal treatment as such."

"Very good, Kelsey. Lisa, it's your turn now."

Across the hall, in another classroom, Mr. James Sycamore was teaching American History.

"In Pre-Twenty-Second Century things were much different in American culture concerning the way we ate. There was actually a small percentage of people who

By: Jonathan Miles

abstained from eating meat because of concerns for the animals' welfare. They were called vegetarians." Portions of the class began to giggle at the word—the same word they used synonymously with the word stupid. A boy muttered, "This class is vegetarian." A bunch of students near him giggled.

"Class, be quiet. Now, I know it seems rather strange to us but these are Historical facts. Now, there was also another group even smaller who refrained from all animal products. I shall not say that name in this classroom since you are too young to hear it."

"Sycamore is vegan," the same boy whispered.

"I heard that. Suspension," said Mr. Sycamore. "I will not tolerate the use of such obscenities in my classroom." The boy left the classroom, brimming with anger. He awoke late in the night and could not sleep so he turned on his wrist TV. Flipping through all two thousand channels he finally fell asleep, but the wrist TV stayed on as a man in a brown suit explained:

"Later in the Twenty-First Century, scientists found a way to alter human DNA for the purposes of making Belows safe to consume. Before this discovery, neurological damage upon Below consumption was common. Thanks to the advances in science Belows food products have become a staple of the American diet. Not only are they safe, but also high in protein and vitamin B12."

Meanwhile, at his mansion, Jerry was brimming with happiness. His son was turning five years old soon, and he had the best wife a guy could ask for. He was almost sorry for the families who lacked such gifts. He sat down to dinner as he and his family enjoyed some Belows thighs. He glanced at his beautiful wife thinking of why such an amazing woman would be with a guy like him. He could not imagine life without her. He smiled at his son Billy. Billy was only in first grade, but he was already at the top of his class and he was a three sport athlete. Plus, he had a FIT score in the 95th percentile. Jerry thanked God and asked him to continue to give him what he rightfully deserved. Seconds later, a nearby window burst apart and flying through it was a message tied to a Belows ham. The message was written in some red substance. "You made my daughter suffer and millions die, but they were all still human. FIT score does not make a person human. The 'Belows,' as you call them, still suffered and so will you."

Jerry trembled at the thought of extremists coming for him and his family. He looked terrified as he tried to console his wife and son, who were both crying.

"Don't worry. We're going to be okay." Only he didn't sound convincing at all.

And as the crying died down the downstairs door exploded inward and ten people dressed in black entered the house. Jerry ran towards the nearest door and locked it.

"We'll be okay. Now just let me dial the police," Jerry reassured his family. He began to dial on his wrist cell when two more black clothed figures came in through the window. He was too stunned to react when the first figure punched him in the face. He went down hard. The second figure walked over to the nearby door and unlocked it, letting the other ten in. The first, who had given Jerry a bloody lip, shot one titanium bullet into his wrist. Jerry screamed in pain as the bullet entered into his wrist, exploded, and then cauterized the wound, leaving him full of blood.

"Special bullets," one of the figures said in a male voice Jerry couldn't recognize. "Twice the price. Twice the pain." Jerry scrambled, desperate, to his feet to protect his wife and child. Five of the figures grabbed him and held him down as he watched his

wife be brutally raped and his son be mercilessly beaten. Their cries each echoed into his ears while he was forced to watch, horrified.

"You animals! You monsters!" he yelled. They covered his mouth. "Quiet now or you'll miss the show," one said. The screams seemed to last for hours until his wife and son were unconscious. Then it was Jerry's turn. The last thing he heard was a faint:

"All right, boys. Beat him as hard as you can but leave his head alone."

Jerry was held to the floor and beaten to within inches of death.

*

*

*

With an eye squinting at the bright light and white walls of the hospital, Jerry was slightly glad to be alive. At the same time, he was in immense pain from the beating he had taken. Every inch of his body was throbbing in misery. He tried to speak, but his lips were becoming numb.

"Doctah, wha es goin o?" he cried out. "Whe es my wif and sa?"

"Good, good. The drug is kicking in. Soon no one will be able to understand you," said a voice from the man in the white coat facing away from him.

"Wha er ooo tallin abou?"

"Oh yes. You don't know yet." The man turned around and Jerry's eyes widened at the sight of the same cold grey eyes he'd seen years before.

"Wha tha fa di ooo du wiff my famiwee?" Jerry shouted, bawling as he spoke.

"I am so sorry to tell you, Jerry, but they suffered a little brain damage last night."

"No."

"Yes. They did, I'm afraid. They were tested this morning and your wife's FIT score is down to a 5.1. Even worse, your son's score is down to a low 2.3."

"Yul a lial!" Jerry bellowed.

"No, I'm not. I take offense to that. Now, if you really want to know the truth, they were shipped off to your factory farm this afternoon."

"No! No! No! Noooooo!" Jerry wept and mumbled noises as Dr. Carle smiled.

"I have more bad news, Jerry." With that he calmed a bit. "We tested you this morning as well and your FIT score has dropped to 1.0. It is too bad."

Jerry meant to reply with, "That can't be. Someone must have switched the results," but all that came out was more or less dribble. The doctor was right. His words were incomprehensible. He struggled to get out of the hospital bed but he was strapped down tightly.

"See you at dinner," the doctor laughed. Then he buzzed in two large men who carried Jerry down to their truck. Jerry cried and screamed all the way to his farm.

On the way to the farm, the drivers wondered if somehow Belows could feel pain or know what was going on around them. Eventually they decided, "Who cares? They aren't human."



"An Evil Factory"

56

- Jim Jensen

The Bride

I gave my lover chocolate
a licking stick of melty goodness

He placed it in his back pocket
sitting down upon my chair

The warmth
melting the molded face of the lollipop

That was once the wretch—
born of Frankenstein

A nameless face

How literal

By Kacy Mair

kickin' back & killing time, somewhere outside Baghdad

see he had this picture of a camel.
it was only one of many he had
but for some reason i remember
this picture of this camel.
they had put a desert cami hat
between his ears,
a pair of aviator shades
perched on his roman-nosed snout,
they propped an unlit cig
between his droopy lips
(sorry, it was a Newport;
i wish i could tell you it was a Camel,
it would make a better story,
this one i stole from him).
it was cute.

the camel looked as if he enjoyed
lookin' all cool and bad-ass
in his new GI attire.
you see, these diversions
become necessary—
you understand?
no. you don't.
you can't. or you won't.
can any of us?
these diversions,
they are necessary,
you see:

pretty postcard pictures
of date palms
before the mortars started falling on them,
ominous yet picturesque crossed swords
arching over the road into Baghdad
from al-nasiriyah,
and playing with camels,
nestled between
the other pictures.
the other pictures,

the other pictures,
of the bullet they took out of his leg,
longer than a big man's trigger finger,
of dead men, and women.
of his friends.

who were killed.
of burning humvees
hit with IED,
the men inside frozen,
caught in motion,
stepping out of the vehicle
trying to escape the fire,
the rounds of ammunition
popping off in the heat,
even as they turned to ash
and charred bone,
nothing left but a statue,
a form of grey human ash
and skeletal frame
still wearing scraps
of torn fatigues
and blackened combat boots.
uncanny how the clothing remains
in recognizable tatters,
shrouding the body,
after the fire.

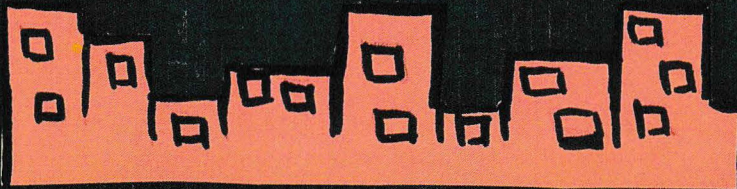
Sabrina
McLaughlin

the name of this city means peace

one of the militias
set off several bombs in the pet market
and fifteen civilians were killed.
i think about how many of the people
inside your average american mall pet store
at any given instant
are children.

somebody brought their daughter
to that market
on that day,
to buy her a puppy or a kitten,
maybe a monkey on a leash,
wearing a harness,
peeling dates with its little simian hands,
you couldn't help but laugh at it.

someone brought his young son
to that market, on that day,
to buy a pretty parrot
for his mother's birthday,
so many colours...
beautiful bloodied feathers
floating in the air
like grace
coming to rest among
the guts, the limbs, the detritus.



Sabrina McLaughlin

الشمس إله



"Sun God" Keith Mosher
Keith Mosher

Soldier

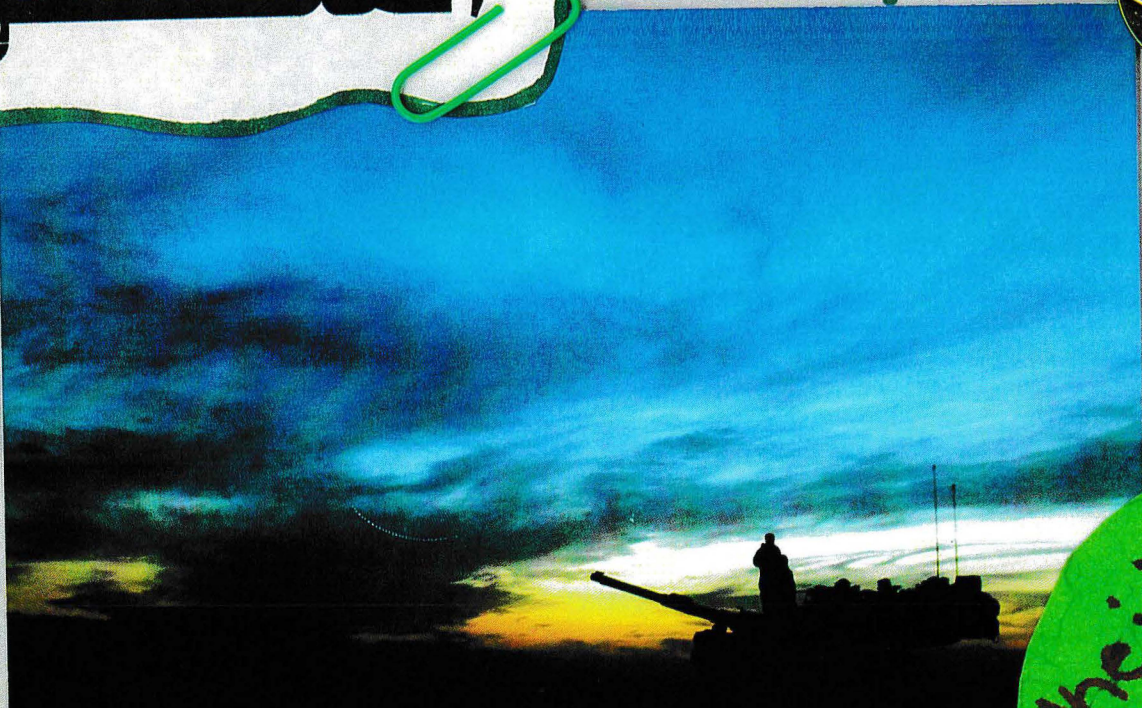


الجندي



Twilight

الشفق



Keith
Osher

map that narrative onto us

gran'ma watches the war news
from her wheelchair.
i watch with her.
she cries and says
they should let those poor boys come home
(she forgets there are girls now too).

two of gran'ma's big brothers were in the Big One
(she had so many, i forget how many there were altogether).
Uncle Mikey was in Anzio
and came home bristling with medals
(he was a Marine).
Uncle Jimmy was with the division
that liberated Dachau—
he brought horrible pictures home
but in the same pack
there were pictures of him
cuddling German girls with big tits
and tall horse-trooper boots
on his lap.

both of gran'ma's sons chose the army,
but they were too young for the 'Nam.
to this day my citizen-soldier drunken uncle
cries into his whisky for missing it,
every conversation i have with him
ends with his recitation of "Dulce Et Decorum Est..."
(he wants it engraved on his tombstone;
he wants to be buried at the Guard cemetery down at the Gap).

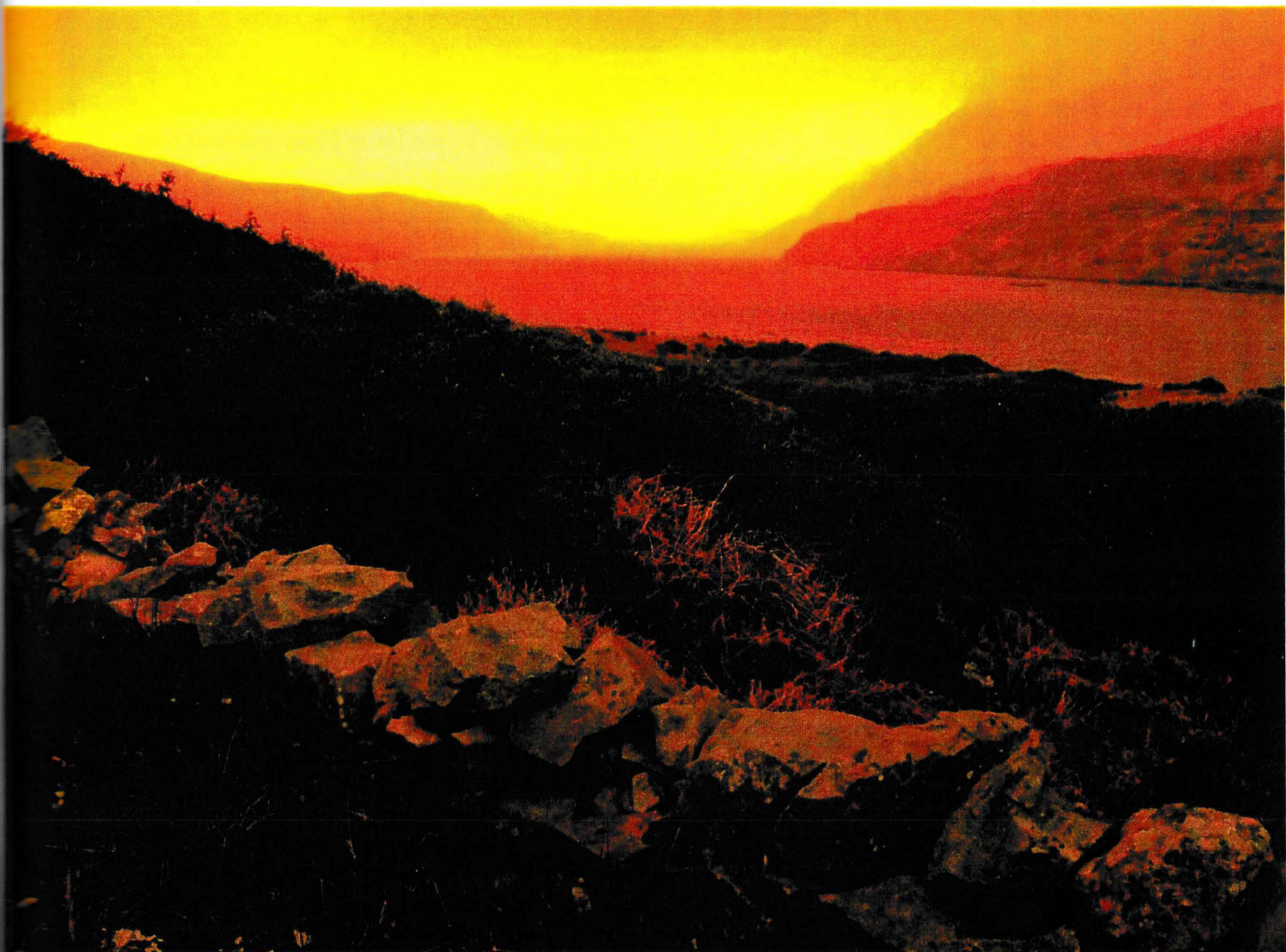
as for me i wonder what would have become of me
if i had grown up an Air Force brat on one of those PACCOM bases—
would I have married young? and married some goofy young airman
from dad's jump school?
or maybe I would have marched straight to Lackland or Colorado Springs,
following (or flying) in daddy's footsteps.

i keep granny company and with me she watches the war on t.v.—
Baghdad ER, all the things that bombs and bullets can do to a body.
she cries; i don't. i stay silent,
and in spite of myself i am thinking of someone now,
and i become every one of those women,
and the face of every good-lookin' soldier
reminds me of him, is him,

they are kicking in doors in my brain,
they are laughing with the translator
who made the crack about somebody's sister—
“don't fuck with me hajji!”—
i have to raise my voice for them
because they are losing their hearing
from the mortars and the shelling,
we share a cigarette and slam each other up against the wall,
they rest their war-weary heads just above my breasts,
when i close my eyes they press close and heavy
against me in my bed
(desert nights are very cold,
it is so hard to feel warm again),
they sleep with their rifles
like little boys tired from their war games,
they keep their sidearms under my pillow,
they wake me with their nightmares.

Sabrina

metamorphosis



"A thought Westward"

-Jim Jones

120



Ten Minutes to Live

“No time! I got no time left!”

The pounding of my heart told me it was about to go off. As my concern grew, my train of thought was interrupted by some jackass security guard.

“Excuse me sir, what do you think you’re doing here?”

I pulled out my I.D. and shoved it in the guard’s face. “I’m here to chew bubblegum and save your ass, and I’m all out of bubblegum.”

* * *

I looked around; more than 500 faces, twelve heads of state, six professional basketball players, and hundreds of civilians that had no idea what was about to happen. All these people, gathering to hear one man speak, little knowing that his speech was about to blow them sky-high. A twenty-kiloton low-yield nuclear bomb was planted in the base of the President’s podium; the State of the Union Address was about to get a lot hotter—ten thousand degrees hotter.

Renegade General No Dong Jhong of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea had said, two years ago, that America would burn under atomic fire, and he’s about to live up to his promise.

“Madame chairperson, the President of the United States!”

The President stepped out from behind the red, white and blue curtain, waved to the crowd, and stepped up to his podium. Tick. Tock. The President began to talk about social security. Tick. Tock. No child left behind. Tick. Tock. Now, the war in Iraq.

“This is a desperate time in America’s history. We are constantly faced with the threat of terrorists. We must Send. In. The. Troops!”



I kicked open the door to find a thousand shirts and ties staring in my direction, trying to see what the hell was going on.

“Mr. President! It’s a bomb!!!”

As I pushed my way through the crowd full of terrified Congressmen, two familiar senators tried to hold me back—Hillary Clinton grasping my left arm, John McCain holding onto my right. As I struggled to power my way through, I screamed at them, “This is more important than politics!” Then I took a step back and swung them around into each other, cracking their skulls together and knocking them to the ground.

“You know, you really should put your heads together more often.”

I saw a clear path to the President’s podium ahead and I continued my sprint towards the mother of all bombs. Just as I thought salvation was at hand, four masked Korean terrorists dropped through the ceiling.

They quickly took control of the stunned crowd with their AK-47s, and as the helpless audience looked on, one of the terrorists stepped up to the President’s podium and removed his mask. A hideously disfigured face began to speak.

“I am General No Dong Jhong, and for years you have persecuted my people! Now I am here to take vengeance unless you listen to our demands! Whatever we want from you, we will take!”

The crowd fell deathly silent: I alone knew what had to be said.

“Mr. President, I propose a bill to give them a fist in the face and a boot up the ass!”

At that moment, each and every Congressman, regardless of political party, race, or religion, all rose to their feet and exclaimed, “Here, here!”

I leapt upon one of the terrorists watching the crowd and snapped his neck. I picked up the dearly departed's AK-47 and shot at the hundred-year-old chandelier hanging from the ceiling. The chain broke, the chandelier crashed to the floor, but the other two terrorists broke its fall. Unfortunately, the fall broke them. And now it was just me and Jhong.

"Even if you manage to defeat me, the deactivation codes for the bomb are all up here," he exclaimed, pointing to his head.

I walked up to his podium, grabbed the President's microphone, and jammed it into his cranium.

"Mr. Jhong, you have the floor." His lifeless body collapsed to the ground.

With that deed done, I focused my attention to the bomb still ticking at my feet. Thirty seconds to live. I removed the bomb's outer casing, looked at the wires, and suddenly realized I didn't know how to dismantle an atomic bomb. Twenty seconds to live. Sweat began to pour from my forehead as I frantically debated with myself what to do with this.

Ten seconds to live.

"DAMMIT!!!"

Five seconds to live!

"I don't know what to doooo!!!" I screamed in frustration as I slammed my fist down onto the bomb.

One second to live!!!

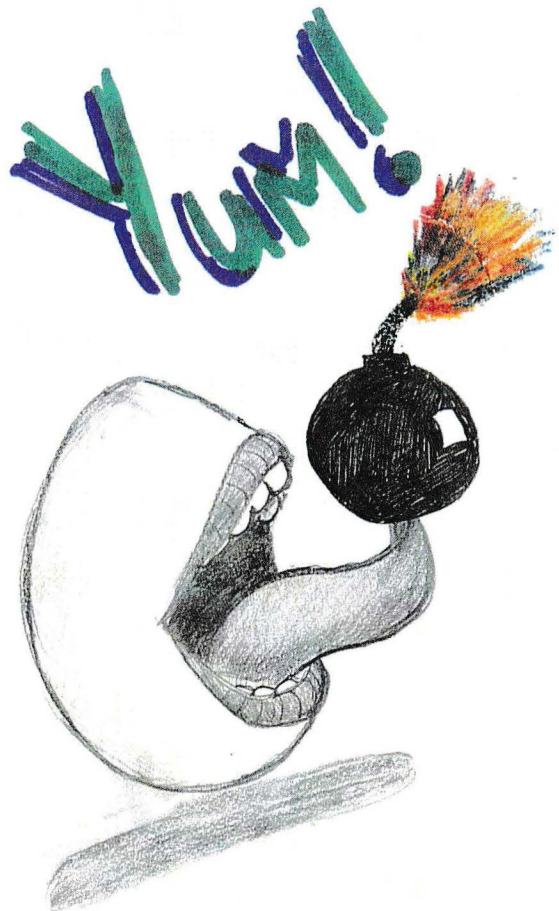
Still... One second to live?

Apparently my mighty fist of justice managed to jostle loose the plutonium core, turning the bomb into a large paperweight.

I stood up, wiped the sweat from my forehead, and turned towards the door when the President yelled after me.

“Wait! You’re a great hero! America needs you!”

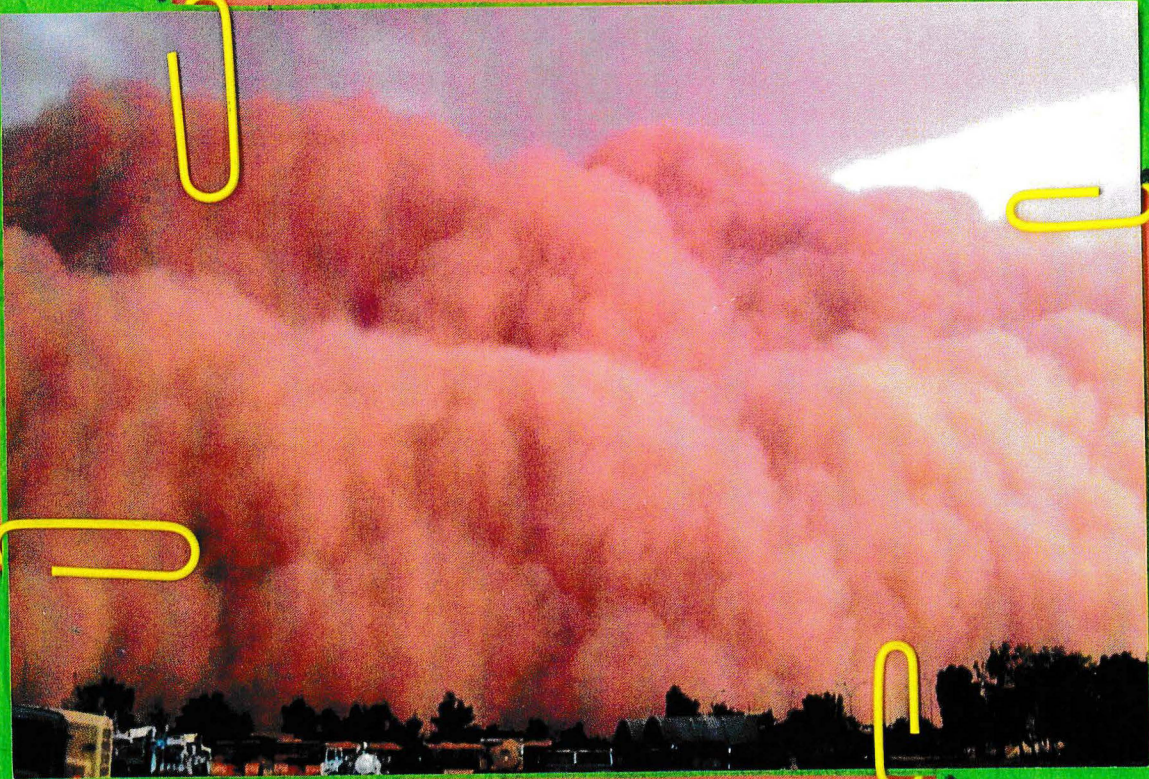
“Mr. President, the Union is strong.”



العاصفة

الرملية

Sandstorm



U.S. ARMY

Keith Mosher

Keith Mosher





"Memories of
Freedom"

- Jami Butczynski

the phoenix

With silent flames the morning breaks,
A sky of twisting billowed shapes,
The Crimson blaze now rising strong,
Sings melodies of a silent song.

Awake and rise you treasured one,
And dream until the day is done.



On wings of fire flying fierce,
We sleep upon your mourning tears.

And when the sun falls 'hind the trees,
And nothing's felt but Autumn's breeze
I'll wait for all your burning light,
To quench the darkness of the night. ♪

Kyle Cartwright

Conundrum

I had not slept well in the past few days. My limited happiness in life was being infringed upon by two people, both better looking than me, who exhibited their sexual liberation every night while I tried to submit myself to a state of unconsciousness to merely be unaware of my existence. Better yet, I had to succumb to the ceaseless symphonic piece of moans and what resonated through my walls as slabs of meat walloping each other. I was 27 years old, single (of course), and the most unimpressive schmuck any girl could possibly choose as a date.

I found myself at work, furthering my miserable reality by writing programs for *Kennedy and Dawson Electronics*, a small company that focused on the computers on microwave timers. My current job was to make sure that the microwave's pitch alerted people that radiation was still being emitted from the machine, and not to open the door unless they wanted tumors the size of cats. It was the typical nine-to-five shift, where you would find me, along with many other freedom-loving Americans, caged in a cubicle to perform menial tasks that most foreigners could beat us at.

God, I hated my fucking job.

Another addition to the already miserable setting was my boss, Kenny Filmore, who was currently competing for America's Top Asshat on CBS. Everything about him infuriated me to no end, mainly his ridiculous tie assortment, lack of coding knowledge, Business Administration degree at Bumble-Fuck-Community-College, and the air that he had about himself that he was running a tight ship. If this idiot was capable of running any ship, it would've probably been the Titanic, post-iceberg.

Kenny strutted up to my cubicle, his chasm of a mouth open to reveal 70-some teeth reflecting unbearable rays of light back at my eyes, temporarily blinding me for a moment.

Jesus Christ, what a freak.

"Hey buddy, how's the uhh...thing, going?" Kenny said, exhibiting the communication skills of a cross between a chimpanzee and Nicole Richie on a heroin binge.

"It's going fine," I replied, turning down the scathing tone in my voice to slip under his radar.

Kenny nodded incessantly before returning to pester anyone else he could possibly annoy. I preferred to keep my mouth shut because, all in all, the less time I could spend with that meathead, the better. Avoiding my potential conversation with Kenny, I zoned out. I just didn't want to be there.

Kyle of the Cartrights

I spent the next few hours staring at the screen for a sign, some reason for me to leave work early. Since neither Jesus, Mohammed, Buddha, or Vishnu (I don't bother God, he seems pretty busy) didn't appear on my Windows XP rolling hill background, I was led to believe that the ultimate plan that is set in motion for me, in fact, hasn't set in motion yet.

After work, I made my way over to Urban Jungle, a club like all the others, chocked to the brim with ecstasy dropping raveheads that definitely would liven up my night. Accompanying me were Bruno, Teddy, and Grant, my three best friends from high school. We always stood outside the club—there was no reason for us to ever want to enter such a place. Only two factors kept us there, the fact that Bruno was the bouncer at this *respectable* business, and the fact that we could spend all night counting the alcohol and drug-fueled hook-ups that would soon take place. We were cynical bastards.

Teddy sighed before pulling out his cell phone. Teddy and I had gone way back, if that even meant anything. It wasn't that we were compatible personality-wise, it was just fate's way of placing both of us in the same grammar school, high school, college, and job. We didn't always get along, but it was relieving to know the person with a cubicle next to you was suffering on a similar level during that time period.

One reason Teddy and I were not compatible was that he was happily married. This furthered my drudge into a self-depraving emotional crisis. He had a curfew at 10 pm, lucky bastard. Man, did I just want a curfew.

Grant squatted up against the wall outside the club, playing his Nintendo DS. We were all unsure whether Grant grew up beyond sixth grade, but we had given up on him. Hell, it was unclear if the guy even hit puberty.

"Dude, check out what Spot did!" Grant exclaimed, tugging on Teddy's shirt sleeve like a child at a theme park.

"Who the hell is Spot?" I said, shaking my head in disgust.

"My Nintendog, c'mon man...get with the times," Grant stated, raising his chin in pride over his recent video game accomplishment.

I rolled my eyes and focused on the crowd. I had counted twenty-nine hook-ups so far by 8 pm. At this rate, we may have found a record. As my depraved social assessment continued, a drunken partygoer stumbled outside and eyed me up. I froze in fear like Muldoon in *Jurassic Park*, staring as she slung her arms around my neck.

"Hey honey. Yur' haaaaaaaaaawt," she said, blessing my olfactory senses with the scent of vodka and pot.

Lord Kyle Conright

I panicked. The girl was incredibly attractive, almost to the point that I thought this was all a sick joke. I tried playing it cool, attempting to recite any suave one-liner from my vast library of pop culture trivia.

The Fonz? (No, Henry Winkler became a sell-out.) Andrew Dice Clay? (I don't need a sexual assault charge tonight.) Han Solo? (God Dammit, I'm not that cool or good looking.)



“My density has brought me to you,” I whispered softly into her ears.

Oh, fuck you, George McFly. You and the rest of the Back to the Future cast.

Her emotionless stare persisted, unaware of what happened. She was too drunk to notice my verbal blunder, but was still receptive to any physical blunders. God, I hated my good blood circulation.

Disturbed by the rise of the Leaning Tower of Pisa, she got up and walked back into the club. I blushed for the first time since 7th grade and glanced at my companions, who all exhibited a bewildered expression.

“Wow, that was a *conundrum*,” Bruno said in a Sylvester Stallone drawl, smirking the entire time. My good friend Bruno could have been a shaved Sasquatch or Wookie. I was unsure of which category he distinctly fell into, but the idea of a gigantic hairless beast was definitely close enough. Bruno was planning on writing a novel depicting his life as a bouncer, and to achieve such an aspiration, studied the dictionary extensively. This led to his weekly goal of implementing a newly learnt word into his everyday vocabulary, making the seemingly dull shift of a bouncer seem oddly ironic. It had gotten to the point that I could remember which week he had implemented the word into his rhetoric.

“Oh Jesus Christ, shut the hell up with that,” I sneered, staring down at the obvious bulge.

“Hey, don't *disparage* (2nd Week in May, 2004) me,” Bruno replied, raising his head upwards.

Bruno's looks, accompanied with his glossy-coated bald head, would send most people running like the Japanese from Godzilla. I knew that despite being capable of breaking the back of an elephant if he chose to do such, he was the largest pacifist I had ever seen in my life. Bruno revealed his canines for a second before breaking a smile—he knew he was only capable of scaring the piss out of people with his demeanor.

Our group stood there as the recent events attempted to escape our short term memory. Our hook-up count stopped, Grant's DS went on sleep mode, and Teddy stopped texting his wife. We knew it was by far one of the weirdest events to ever happen to us.

- You know that kid who sits in the back row of Creative Writing class?
- The goofy looking one?
- Yeah, I think his name is Kyle Cartwright, but don't hold me to it.

I continued my hook-up count. Assuming the average rate of hook-ups was twelve every half an hour, I probably missed out on four by now. Placing my head up against the wall, I stared at the sky, partially exposed by the giant searchlights of the nightclub that were patrolling the skies for nothing. My mind began expanding beyond the physical realm, aiming to answer the greater things in life, when Bruno muttered:

"Did you check out the *voluptuous* (1st week in Dec, 2003) knockers on that chick?"

I grabbed Bruno's pocket-sized dictionary and hurled it across the parking lot. It nailed the roof of what seemed to be an Audi, signaling everyone in a three-mile radius that there were car burglars on the prowl.

"Why do you have to be such...such a *hooligan*? (Last week)," Bruno spat before chasing after his pride and joy.

I would have responded, but my action did seem a little over-the-top. As of now, Bruno was looking like a complete ass, fishing around for a pocket dictionary amidst the incessant honking of a car alarm. Bruno eyed me up before returning to his position as the bouncer.

The silent treatment continued as us four losers wasted a perfectly good Friday night outside a club, merely to piss away time and laugh at other people's misfortune. This guilty pleasure was interrupted by the sound of the doors violently swinging open. I awoke from my observation of the nightclub patrons to notice a figure cut into my peripheral vision.

"Did you feel up my girl, homes?" the figure said, despite only reaching a height of my eye line.

I didn't know what to say. Sure, I did release a chubby when she swung around me like that, but who wouldn't? I didn't do anything, I couldn't do anything. It was the first time in three years that a girl got even that intimate with me, and the fact that I suffered from *rigor mortis* didn't make me the bad guy at all. Besides, it was her vodka and pot-induced decision that made her choose me as a likely candidate.

"I...I...who again?" I said, glad to not have quoted *Back to the Future* again.

"I'm giving you one last chance, bitch. Tell me, did you try feeling her up?" he said, squinting his eyes like a miniature Hispanic *Dirty Harry*.

"Yeah, well. Maybe I did?" I replied, unaware of the error I made.

He signaled for his three-man crew to grab me, which in turn prompted me to shake, rattle, and roll my way out of their grasp. My instincts told me to run as I sprinted

Interesting Fact!

Kyle Cartright wants to be a ninja.

my way down the parking lot. I passed the continuously honking Audi, which was still maintaining its job as I heard a loud pop.

I had never heard a gunshot in my 27 years on the planet. The fact that a tire to my right deflated after the noise led me to believe that it was definitely a new experience. Screeching several expletives at the top of my lungs, I dove into a line of cars, rushing past them to make some room between the gun-toting partygoers and me.

A car hit the brakes in front of me as I saw Bruno and the rest of the gang waving me in. Apparently, while the Mariachi brothers were firing at me, my friends got the car and prepared to hightail it out of there. I dove into the backseat window and wiggled my way in as Teddy hit the gas, prompting me to rattle around like a fish on dry land.

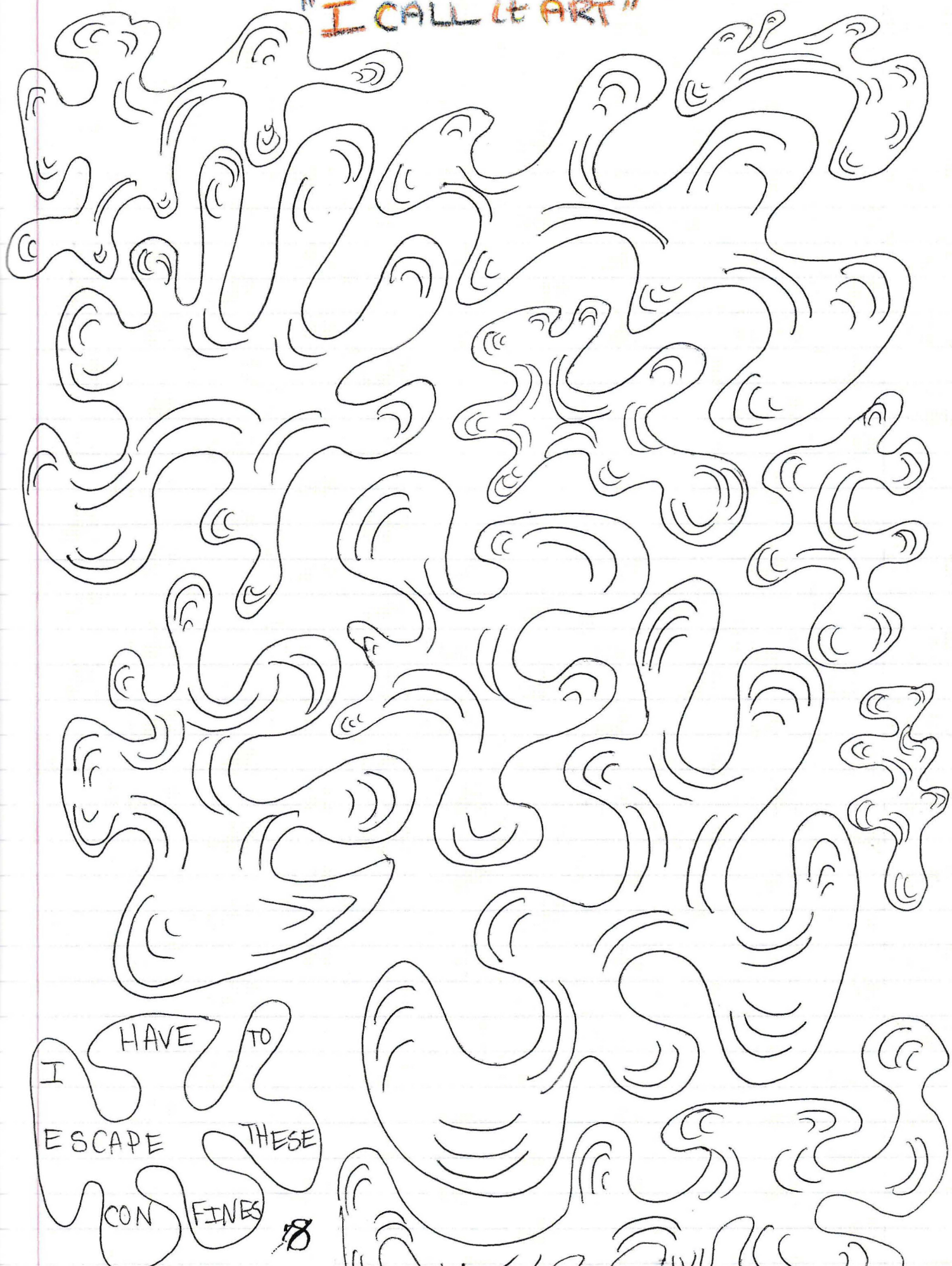
As my adrenaline rush plummeted, I gazed around the van. Grant was sitting next to me, resuming his Nintendogs game. Teddy was nervously text messaging his wife, probably over the whole "incident." Bruno was in the front, mouthing several of his weekly words to himself. Yep, things were back to normal, besides being shot at five minutes prior.

In a matter of minutes, the car slowed down as it approached my apartment. The building itself was a marvelous fortification, capable of protecting me from any gun-toting gang members looking for revenge. Breathing a sigh of relief, I reached for the door handle, glad to find something stable after spending my time dodging bullets. I staggered out of the car and neared the door of the apartment before turning around at my own personal A-Team.

"Tonight was...it was..." Bruno said, pausing for a moment as if the words flew away from him.

"A conundrum," I said. "Definitely, a conundrum."

"I CALL IT ART"



I HAVE TO
ESCAPE THESE
CON FINES

8

AUREN CAREY | AUREN CAREY | AUREN CAREY | AUREN CAREY



"Epic Castle"

~~Jim Jensen~~

19

Trajectory of a tower

Initially, a swell of obsidian for us,
lumbering out of the terrestrial tar,
parallel to the skyscrapers,
a monolith of arbitrary stature and
resigned shock for those short in supply

Does it stand for the hidden narrative
festering in stalled silence safely inside,
deeper than its detractors would think or
steal reason and talent to describe?

thinking it to be a necessary protrusion
may be better, a maze manifested from
take-it-or-leave-it mindfulness, a piece of
coffee counter talk and lunch time lecturing whose
variables and vexed views do not change
the fact that it exists, plotted in latitude and longitude
by those blessed with secular indifference

I think the former is right, they seem
driven to make it their own, to warp
a personal mystery
into a domesticated and docile pet,
ignorant to any intentions listlessly lurking
backstage at the Theater of Choice,
(tickets stolen from the supportive)

but they remain destined for departure to the desolate
purgatory of the self-serving,
the hunter and the succubus...

Now we should dismiss our subject,
the monument to a future
of its own choosing,
that opaque frontier of potentials wrestling through unknowns,
constrained only by will yet
realized through the very same,
free,
we can agree now, of course, on course

m.

Faraday

Jones

Requiem

*Allow this freezing water to fill your burning lungs.
This therapeutic melody is a song that's left unsung.
You see me laughing now but it's counterfeit and cold,
And now we cry in unison, a harmony of souls.*

*Falling from this broken sky, as clouds begin to part,
It's cracked wide open now as tears rain from my heart.
The sun is shining brightly, rising from the shore.
It knows not of our sorrows and rises ever more.*

*Can you feel its rays ignite these gentle rolling waves?
It still sets the sky on fire but nothing feels the same.
These tears of sullen sorrow fall towards the burning sky,
And reflect my sweet emotion in the tears that sting my eyes.*

*My heart seems to be gone now; it's in your hands to keep.
These tears make it hard to read the words in front of me.
And in my mind I know now, that there is little use for tears.
These words that I have written, you can hear them, loud and clear.*

Charles Kraus II



5*12*2004

Kyle Cortright

Room 551

Eric awoke to the pulsating pricks of his throbbing brain as he picked himself up off the ground. At this point his cranium wasn't being too cooperative. There was little he had remembered, and the fact that he found himself locked in an apartment was creeping him out. The room was poorly illuminated with the exception of the scraps of light seeping through the boarded-up window to his left. It was apparent that the place had been abandoned for the last few years, resulting in a desolate ambiance that thrived throughout the dwelling.

Fumbling around the room, Eric discovered a ceiling light and pulled the chain. Eric was surprised when the bulb glistened, revealing the room in much more detail. The building was still being supplied power. Eric squinted at the bright flash, he remembered drinking last night and his hangover was not helping. It was a site of unearthly decay, the walls shedding their skin to reveal the frame that held it together. A bronze plate haphazardly adorned the wall, reading "551." Eric paused to reflect on it before deciding it must have been the plate on the door to the room he was in. Somebody had moved it. He placed his hand over his forehead in an attempt to push back the throbbing lobes of his brain from bursting out of his head like a prison riot; this was one of the worst hangovers Eric had ever experienced. The events of last night seeped in slowly, reminding him of how bad his alcohol abuse had gotten.

There wasn't much to remember. Eric vaguely recalled a party at Donny Morrison's house last night. Donny's interest to throw a party resulted in a plethora of severely intoxicated college students stumbling around the house like the living dead. Eric arrived with his buddy Randall, his pasty white, 130-pound friend whom he used merely as a comparison for all his severely intoxicated prey. Randall was Eric's dynamite during fishing season.

However, the night didn't turn out as well as Eric had hoped. He hit the hard liquor fifteen minutes after arriving. This led to Eric being smashed before half the people even got there. In the land of the buzzed, Eric was near comatose already. He recalled dancing in front of his latest "targets," trying to show his moves, "The Flex" and

Kyle Cartright

"The Van." Both resembled the sloppy hobbling of electric shock therapy patients, but to Eric, he was John Travolta.

The night furthered into a downhill luge as Eric passed out in someone's car. It wasn't his, as the leather interior of his '94 Pontiac "God-Damn" wasn't there to soothe his senses. The car was his obsession, almost to the point that he would sleep in it whenever he could, returning him to a state of comfort comparable to his development in his mother's womb. For Eric, he scored little more than a headache and a trip to God-Knows-The-Fuck-Where.

Shaking the dice in his skull, Eric peered to each side of the apartment, glancing for any means of escape. He made his way for a door, slightly flirting with the knob before coming to the conclusion that it was locked. Somebody placed him in here, and looked to keep it that way.

Disregarding the uneasiness brought about by the room, Eric assessed his options. The windows were boarded shut, and he didn't want to make any more racket than he already had by trying to wiggle them free. Softly stepping about the room, Eric peered at the wooden frame holding up a wall. The gap in the wall was an inch or two in width, reinforced with a steel bar running through it.

Eric peered into the hole, looking for any sort of sign as to where he could be. Past the rift in the wall was an artifact of a television, the bi-ped models seen as a center of entertainment for a family around the 1950s. Eric could envision the happy Americanesque family perched around it with TV dinners and Ed Sullivan. The particular model in the room, however, was corrupted, coated in a layer of rust and grime that resembled blood, a crimson sheen that reflected tainted light from a solitary light bulb hanging over. The television was on, sending a staccato of shrill static that pierced the room. Eric was too perplexed by his situation to have even noticed the noise until now.

The television had no expression. It whined in electric pitches, vibrating sound waves off Eric's spine that sent his back rigid. Eric could feel that he was being watched, much like the TV, the unwavering attention of a spectator, analyzing how the scene would play out. He gasped and retracted his view from the peephole, analyzing his

© Kyle Cartwright?

surroundings again. A series of unnerving pricks jolted him, leaving him to strive for the minute comfort offered by his only light source. Eric wanted to stay near the light.

His hands shook as he backed into the radius of the light bulb, securing a portion of plywood as a club. Eric was being watched, the presence of his watcher slithering closer with every coming second. The room had gone against him, aiding his captor by enshrouding itself in the dark. Eric clutched the plywood, running several splinters into his hand as he raised it above his head.

"Where are you?" Eric cried, darting his eyes in every direction possible. He was backing away from the door, watching the idle knob. There was something behind it, something malevolent.

"I said where the fuck are you?" Eric screamed, a series of tears and spit fluttering from his mouth.

Eric could see the support beams of the room begin to implode. There was something constricting the room, closing its grasp around Eric. The windows hissed as air crept through the boards. Staring down, he could hear the floorboards moan with every single step. Eric was soon going to die.

Backing up further, Eric disappeared from the light source. He was going to hide and watch, much like his captor. If he kept a cool head, Eric could turn the tide, but it would require perfect timing. Slowly stepping backwards, Eric began to crouch, eyeing the door feverishly, much like he had eyed those girls the night before. This was simply a game of cat and mouse.

Eric hunched over, ready to charge the person behind the door in an instant. His palms were both sweating and bleeding now, clenching the plywood with such tension that his skeleton began protruding through his skin. Tearing up from the sheer anxiety of the situation, Eric backed once more towards the wall, ready to pounce his captor. His backwards motion was blocked by a force looming over him in the same overbearing sense of dread that had encompassed the room, it was *behind him*. Eric winced at the discovery, slowly turning towards it. As his perception shifted towards the masked figure, a parched, wispy voice embraced Eric's ear:

"Cat and mouse."

by Amy Kaprielian

PhotoGENEic

It develops on each sofa
Like bad pictures of myself
That impulse to
Ignore an open mind
And indulge in the patterns
That stitch me hole.



DRL

Ghostwife

LOOKING BACK ON MEMORIES



Cindy Jane IV

Divine Beautician

Who is going to perm my hair when I die?
I refuse to walk into Heaven wearing
hot rollers.

I won't trust the mortician to do it.
What does he know?

He knows balms and caskets.

He doesn't know perms.

So if I die on a Thursday,
my perm will be a week old.

Call up Inez at the beauty shop
and tell her I've kicked it.

She'll know what to do.

(She charges \$12 for a perm.)

Yamen Camp

by Amy Kaprisky

grandPA

He breathed smoke
Lips like subverted volcanoes
Rooted rough sores
Clotted as veins pulsed ore
Upon the surface methane scorched
Lines cast in his face
Contorted hook coaxing cough.

His stomach mined
And ash bellies surface
Care of potbelly stoves
In the mountain's hearth
Casting shadows of coal
Integrating black eyes
As punched open sores
Into the deep valley wound.

And the canary falls dead
In his cage.

Winter in the
North Country



DRC

Wake Me Up



Jami
Butczynski

Silence

I think
that for the first time in my life
I have nothing to say.

By Amanda Kunkel

Biographies

Jami Butczynski—What can we say? Well, she's very busy and did not send a bio, so we made one. What we do know about Jami is that she takes wonderful photographs of the unconventional. She is an English major and Women's Studies minor at Wilkes, graduating in 2010.

David Carey is an adjunct faculty member in the Division of Engineering and Physics. He is investigating amateur photography. Most of his pictures are taken by accident. Every once in a while he stumbles onto something worth sharing. The *Butterfly Convention* was one such instance. After taking the picture, he was spotted by one of the butterflies and they are now after him. He is in the butterfly witness protection program.

Lauren Carey is a junior English major, and she one day hopes to be the belle of the craft show circuit. Until that day comes, she will try to maintain some sort of composure (and avoid getting carpal tunnel syndrome).

Sam Chiarelli is a frustrated Arsenal supporter who likes to play guitar. He's putting the finishing touches on his first book, ladies. And he would like to add that being an English major is bloody brilliant.

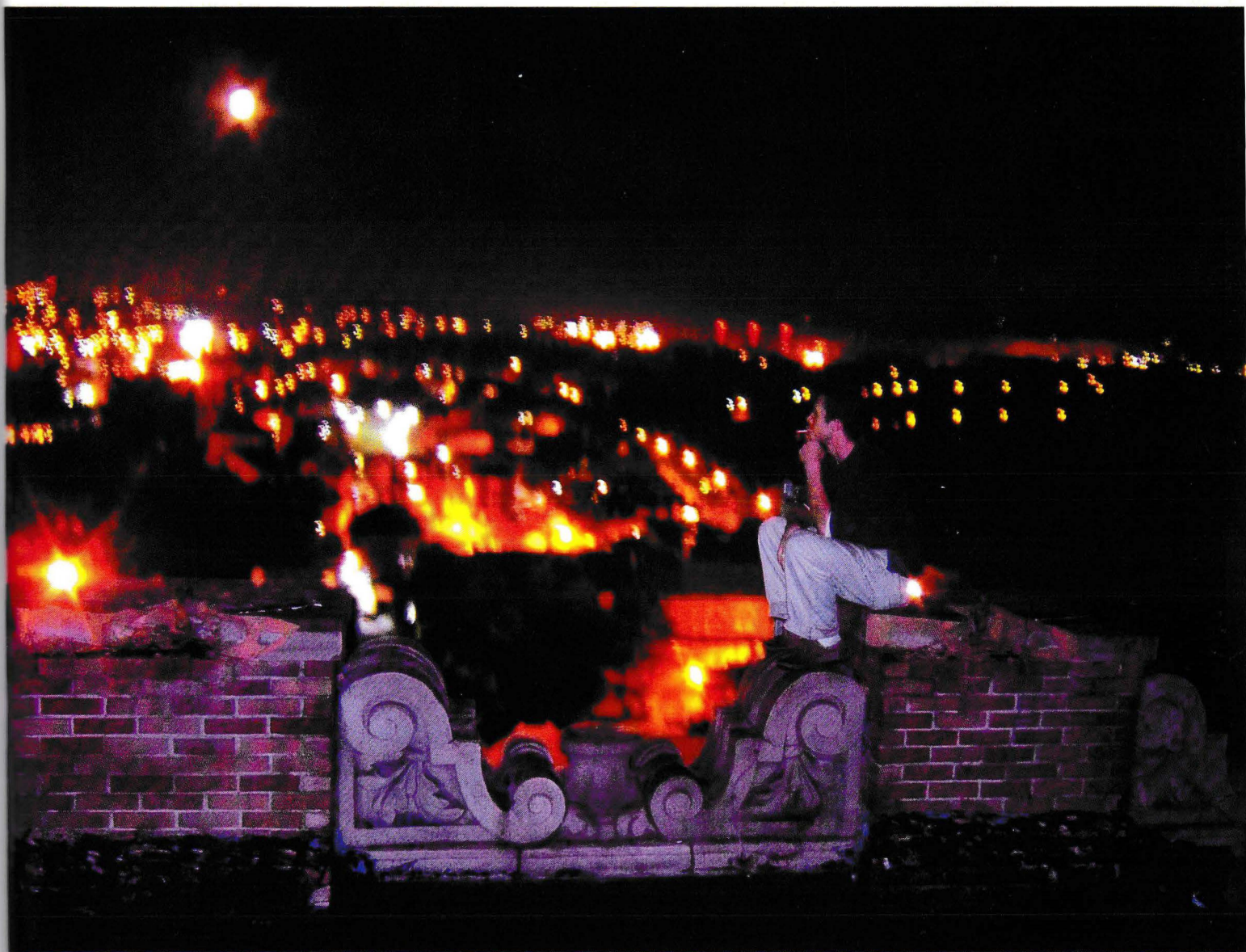
Kyle Cortright was hungry and bought Cheetos for a snack one day. Now his fingers are orange and nobody will give him a high five.

Shannon Curtin enjoys writing poetry, coloring, and chalking sidewalks.

Zachary R. L. Depew is a freshman at Wilkes University. He is currently studying Accounting and enjoys playing his many guitars. On a typical day he tries to get all his work done as fast as he can so he doesn't have to do anything the rest of the day. He's a fun person, and you should meet him.

Aleksandra Djordjevic is a poet who enjoys the beach and the spring sun. She is a graduate student who will be finishing her master's degree in Creative Writing in June. She hopes one day to be a famous writer, inspiring others to write and to love doing it.

Sarah Doman took a dessert survey to find out what psychiatrists think about her. She chose strawberry shortcake, but enjoys carrot cake as well. It says, "Strawberry Shortcake—romantic, warm, loving. You care about other people, can be counted on in a pinch and expect the same in return. Intuitively keen. Can be very emotional." However, carrot cake says, "You are a very fun loving person, who likes to laugh. You are fun to be with. People like to hang out with you. You are a very warm hearted person and a little quirky at times. You have many loyal friends." Remember that you can be anything you want to be, even if it is strawberry carrot cake. She thanks the Education and English departments for their support, encouragement, and knowledge and hopes she will be able to give her students what Wilkes has given her.



"Observing Last Days"
(A memory of the Sterling Hotel)

A. - [initials]

Dearest Manuscript

Important Documents Enclosed