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Manuscript Spring 2012

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1947 Foreword

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

Mission Statement

The Manuscript Society of Wilkes University has been publishing its creative written and visual art magazine, Manuscript, continuously since 1947. Currently, the student-led editorial staff publishes two issues a year, and copies are complimentary.

In preparation for a career in editing, publishing, or creative writing, any Wilkes student is welcome to submit to or work on the editorial board of the Manuscript Society and critique a variety of creative pieces, including visual art, from the Wilkes faculty, staff, students, and alumni. This process includes creative workshopping, copyediting, and layout. Recently, the Society produced a hardback edition of the Fall 2008 issue and a woodblock cover design in Spring 2009.

Wilkes students may elect to enroll in ENG 390. Projects in Writing: Manuscript for one (1) credit of coursework. Meetings are held during club hours each semester. Monthly campus poetry readings are open to the Wilkes community and greater public. The end product is a published, award-winning magazine.

STAFF

Executive Editor:
Ashley Bringmann

Assistant Editor:
Holly Evans

Copy Editor:
Elizabeth Voda

PR Editor:
Miranda Baur

Staff Members:
William Billingsly
John Carroll
Jeffrey Ford
Vicki Hevener
Bethany Guarilia
Jason Neare
Lennae Thompson
Chris Waugh

Faculty Advisor:
Dr. Sean Kelly
Dr. Mischelle Anthony

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Elephant Wish by Jami Kali

I take boys to stormy canals
to swallow the rain in their blood.

Shadows spread beneath our forest
and foul chants rip at that yellowed sun like

Sweet sweet symphony fingers crushing through
time.

A drooling hound must worship a drunk friend
like you.

The Bug House by Holly Evans

Beetle's dust settles on the floor.
Six wooden planks and one square
Two nails, one nail, two nails-

Dead skin and torn pages outline the cracks of
any structure.

The door is marked as a fire exit,
And the hanging lights protect the hair on an
angel's head.

All of the beds are witches that take flight at
3:00 AM.

The old man who sleeps seating up
Taught me a magic trick once,
While his wife sucked her thumb.

She wears a green nightgown
And stirs jelly beans in a mason jar.
"How many stirs till' Heaven?", she asks.

Their fingers are picked to the bone like a
piece of chicken.
There are bricks missing from the fireplace,
Like the teeth missing from their mouths.

The trees outside the window mimic a fence.

Each branch connects , trapping the birds in their nest.

I lose a limb trying to wiggle free.

The Running Girl by Bethany Guarilia

Dry grass cracks under his feet. Wind bites his ears, filling the empty space of the park with a cold breeze. In summer, school children's sneakers would kick up the dirt, and laughter would fill the spaces of the baseball field and rusty old playground equipment. Now there is only a teenage boy dressed in a hoodie and old jeans. He leans up against the fence of the baseball field, breath steaming in front of his face.

He watches the small blue-painted house across the street, and an old red truck rattles past on the narrow road. Waiting. Somewhere, a bird chirps, and pine trees stand like sentinels.

Footsteps trespass on the park's silence. The running girl's hair flies around her face, and dried mud covers her sneakers. Her shadow stretches across the grass and touches his feet as she jogs closer.

"Hey," she says, brushing the mess of hair out of her eyes. It makes no difference with the wind.

He walks closer and pulls her into a tight hug.

"I've missed you," he whispers into her hair. She smells like sweat and perfume. She pulls back from his hug, smiles, and kisses him deeply. He caresses her hair, and, after a moment, turns his head away.

"How was your day, honey?" he asks, smiling.

"Good." She shrugs. "I was busy. Mom wanted help cleaning the kitchen." She heads for the swing set. He watches her without moving as she walks ahead of him. She doesn't look to see if he follows. By the time he catches up to her, she starts swinging.

"Didn't you clean the kitchen last week?" he asks, holding onto the frame of the swing set. His hand pushes the loose back leg firmly into the dirt. "That's why you couldn't hang out."

"Oh yeah." She laughs. "Mom wanted to do it again since my aunt is coming over."

He doesn't reply but looks at his hand pressing the swing set down. "I'm always afraid this thing will tilt over on you."

The chains of the swing rattle as she pushes herself higher. He feels a brush of wind each time she swings past. He pulls a camera from his pocket and tries to capture her in the frame. It's no good: one picture has her hair and the empty space behind her, another only her sneakers and pale legs. She watches him and laughs.

"Come on," she says, laughing. "It's not gonna fall over."

He gives her plenty of space as he moves to the swing next to her. He sits down slowly, watching the back leg of the swing set move up and down in the dirt. His feet never leaving the ground, he rocks the swing back and forth.

"You haven't been calling me as much as you used to." Trying to watch her hurts his

eyes, so he looks at a spot on the ground beneath her.

"You know I've been busy, Sam." She keeps swinging.

He looks down at the worn denim on his knees. "I know," he says quietly. "It seems like you only say my name when you're annoyed at me."

As she swings forward, she pushes off and jumps, landing firmly on the ground and pressing a hand down to keep from falling. Her sneakers and handprint mark the ground.

"What did you say?" she asks, catching her breath. She pats her hands together, but it doesn't do much to clean off the mud.

"I know you're busy," he says, looking into her eyes, "but meeting like this, is it really enough?"

"You're right." She bites her lip and grabs his arm to get him off the swing. "Let's go for a walk." He reaches for her hand, and she scratches her arm instead, not looking at him. She leads him toward the woods at one end of the park. Dead leaves and sticks crunch under their feet. She stops when tall shapes of trees cage them in.

"Today definitely needs something more," she says, facing him and running her finger up and down over his chest. She leaves specks of dirt on his hoodie. "I was hoping you'd ask."

"Um, you were?" He stands motionless, looking into her eyes. She pushes his chest until he's against a tree and moves until there is no space left between them. He turns his face away from her kiss, but she kisses his neck,

sending jolts down his spine. He raises his hands to her shoulders as if to push her away, but his hands freeze in the air. She captures his mouth, and he closes his eyes, settling his hands against her hips.

He has told himself that this is love. Warm breath and the caress of her hands are the only connection they have to each other now.

"I have to go," she says suddenly, looking at her watch.

He tries to catch his breath. "I'll talk to you soon."

She smiles briefly, brushes off her nylon shorts, then jogs out of the woods, the sound of her sneakers fading into the wind.

"But when will I see you again?" he asks. No one replies.



line by Jonathan Sytko

A Cheap Gift by James Wismer

Heart of Iron
Heart of Steel
Wire Mesh
and Icy Feel
So, Why on Earth
Does she find
This petty trinket
So divine?

Begs 'N' Barks by Jami Kali

Whenever the neighbor's dog barked, Joon thought of Grib and his Border Collie. The farm Grib inherited off his dead uncle came equipped with three and a half acres of land, two female peacocks, a couple semi-bald chickens, and the collie named Chloe. She had a benign, three-pound tumor dangling from the loose skin on her throat and she loved the idea of fetching sticks. She'd select a stick and drop it at Joon's feet, running about a yard away to turn back and bark in Joon's direction.

Feeling fatigued after work but still alive enough to toss a few for the old dog to fetch, Joon would bend down, pick up the stick and throw. But Chloe, with a cataract over one eye and blind in the other, couldn't tell that anything twiggy and wooden had whizzed passed her sixteen-year-old canine skull. She'd wag her long tail, smile with black lips around a lolling, pink tongue, and keep begging with barks for a quick game of fetch.



A Little Color by Kat Dodson

Dirty Mouth by Bethany Guarilia

She stands in front of the mirror,
Armed with a container of floss
And a lime green toothbrush
Cold-sore lips open
To examine her reflected image,
Pale under harsh light
Inhaling the scent of peppermint,
She brushes with vigor,
Leaving no taste of bitterness.
Next, the floss—
Drawing a sharp line between tooth and gums,
Blood staining them red
If she scrapes it away for long enough,
She will be clean.

Rose in a Thorn Bush by Justin William Jones

"Did I tell you about the love of my life, Daisy?" the fat biker asked as he took a large gulp from his extra-large mug.

I was in mid-swig of my own bottle of Yuengling lager as he slurred out the question from his flabby cheeks. I kept the mouth of the bottle to my lips for a moment and closed my eyes, willing my nerves to calm themselves. After swallowing the mouthful of one of the best beers in the nation, shipped from the coal region of Pennsylvania, I opened up my throat and chugged the rest of the bottle before placing it back down on the bar and sliding it to the edge so the barkeep knew to get me another.

"Yes, Bill," I responded, his name quite ironic. "I'm pretty sure you just told me about her probably twenty minutes ago before you went and took that nasty shit that you still smell like now. Something about a chick from Hell's Angels that you met up with in Colorado and ended up getting a tattoo of her face on your ass."

Biker Bill squinted his beady little eyes at me for a moment as if he was going to get physical because of my tone, but then he nodded and smiled as he took another swig of his beer, his face unable to contain some of the golden brew from escaping the sides of the glass and beading down his thick black beard which was

knotted in multiple knots. "Do you want to see?" he asked as he struggled to get off the small barstool. "I mean, words can't do her justice. You have to see it to believe it, man!"

A sudden image of Biker Bill pulling down his size 50-waist denim jeans and showing me his hairy ass, most likely covered in dingle berries, flashed through my head, causing me to gag a little as I shook my head and reached out and grabbed Bill's shoulder, gently pushing him back down in his seat. "No offense, Bill...but I'm pretty sure the lovely lady behind the bar doesn't want to see your man-ass."

The bartender had chosen the perfect moment to come over to our side of the bar to check for refills, for had she not come, I might have been plagued with an image that may have haunted my dreams for days. She had noticed that Bill was starting to mess with his belt, so as she approached, her face began to show a little bit of regret for waiting on us, but when she heard my line and made eye contact with me just as I winked at her, her face lit up like a fuse.

"Same?" she asked me, trying to contain her smile by chewing on her lower lip as she nodded to the empty bottle of Yueng now in her hand.

She was cute, I gave her that. Were she at one of my V.I.P clubs, though, she would get lost in the crowd because in LA or any other big-city hotspot, average looks were equivalent to the girl with glasses and braces in high school. Here, however, in a biker dive bar on the outskirts of the City of Angels, surrounded

by drunk Hell's Angels and wannabe biker gang members, she was the angel.

"That is if you don't mind getting me another..." I paused, acting as if I was trying to remember her name even though she had never given it to me in the first place.

"Oh! Rose, the name is Rose!" she said, her cheeks resembling roses. "And I don't mind..."

Satisfied that I had her name, I smiled and watched as she turned away from me to throw the empty bottle into the recycling. Biker Bill chuckled beside me but I didn't look at him as I watched Rose open up the cooler and bend over to search from a bottle of Yueng in the ice. Rose had quite the ass on her, and her Daisy Dukes left little to the imagination.

"Rose...that's a pretty name..." Bill slurred as he stroked his mane with huge, pudgy fingers. "That makes sense, really. All the pretty girls have flower names. Daisy was as sweet as a Daisy, and Rose is nearly as beautiful. I even knew a girl named Tulip once...she was a fine piece of work alright...but Daisy didn't really like her...she ran over Tulip's hand with her bike once. Tulip didn't seem much like a flower after that...kind of hated me, to tell you the truth. What kind of flowers do you like, Raz? I like Pansies..."

"You don't say..." I mumbled as Rose turned around with an ice-cold beer and handed it to me, my fingers closing around her own for a moment during the handover.

Biker Bill continued on his exposé on flowers, but I tuned him out as I stared into

Rose's hazel eyes and saw something in there that made me question how the hell a girl like that ever ended up in a place like this.

"Thanks, Rose."

She smiled and nodded, still chewing her lip in nervousness as she glanced down the other end of the bar. I think she was hoping that no one was ready for another drink so she could stay in this moment with me, but how could I ever know that for sure?

"How'd you end up in this dump, Rose." I asked, making sure to smile politely so she didn't take the question the wrong way.

She blinked, surprised by the straightforward question, but obviously not put off by it because her smile remained. "Oh, you know..." she said, choosing her words. "I go to UCLA and I get enough aid to scrape by, but I'm not much for scraping by. Always been a go-get 'em type of girl. I was a bartender back home, but my license expired and I don't have the money to take the classes again, so here I am."

"Yeah," I said, looking around at the dimly lit bar, filled with bikers drinking and playing bar games like pool, darts, cards, even strip poker, which was weird, because...you know...male bikers... "I doubt this place checks to see if you are legal, let alone have a valid pending license."

Rose giggled and looked at Bill for a moment, wondering if I had offended him, but he was just staring into his ale and reciting every flower he had ever come across in his life.

"Back home, you said. So not a native of the good ole' El Pueblo I assume," I said before a swig of my beer, eyes back on Rose.

"Yeah. It's a long and drama-filled story about how I ended up out here, but I hail from Louisiana. Always wanted to get out of there, because I don't know if it's obvious, but I'm not your typical Southern Bell. Had dreams of being in the big cities...didn't see this in my future, but I'm 24, my future still awaits," she said, totally digging being able to have a conversation with someone who could read over the third-grade level.

"What are you looking to get your degree in at UCLA?" I asked, enjoying a conversation with a member of the opposite sex for the first time in a very long while.

"Well, don't laugh at me, but...I'm an English major. I want to be a writer," she told me, flushing even more.

"Wait, wait. Don't laugh at you? Why would I laugh? That's something to be proud of, Rose. I mean, the written word is a dying art form. People laugh because they don't see monetary gain from such a degree, but seriously...I'd love to read some of your work sometime."

"Really?" she asked, her voice pitching a little in excitement.

"Absolutely. I'm a little bit of a writer myself, you know. Dabble here and there..."

"Oh really?" she asked, leaning a little closer. "And what do you write about? Tell me it's romance...you look like a romantic type of guy."

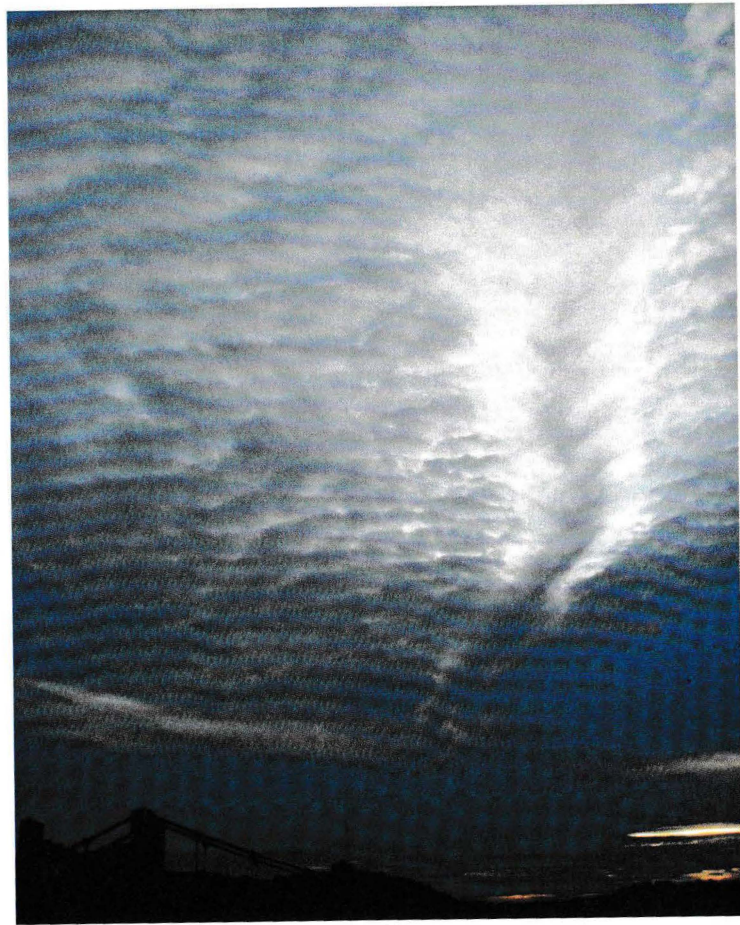
"Well, actually...it's kind of funny. I write for this thing that I got into when I was really young. It's not published but it's a competitive thing with a lot of egotistical writers...I do it on the side of my other professions, but if you ever want to check it out you can find it at X..."

"Barkeep! Need some shots down here!" a biker chick yelled from the opposite end of the bar, or at least it looked like a chick, voice was definitely manly.

"Oh jeez, I'll be right back," she said with an embarrassed smile as she hurried over to the group of biker chicks, all yearning for Tequila or something of that hard liquor nature.

I smiled to myself and looked around the bar. Soon, I would get to business with these clowns. But I wanted to know more about Rose first...

"Ever smell a bouquet of Tulips? Simply amazing!"



Robert Would Approve by Miranda Baur

Choices by Jami Kali

Three identical triplets compete to find love
in a televised nation sitting side by side
under Jerry Springer's thigh.

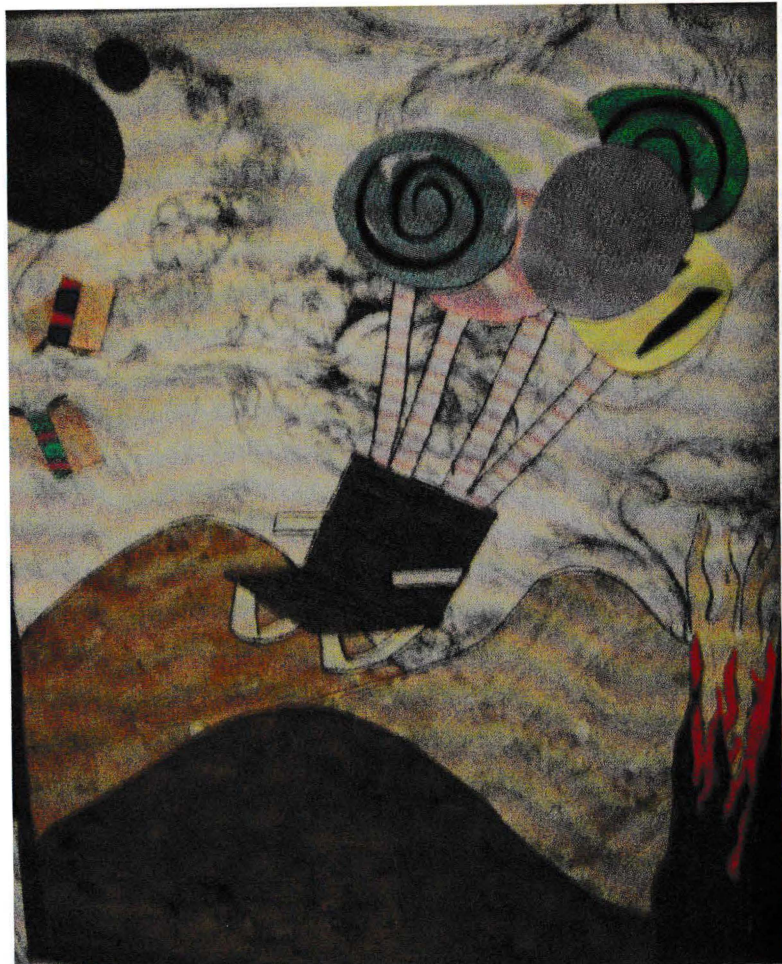
"We can paint the town red or any other color,"
says Triplet one.

The second sucks in her cheeks like a china
doll:

"If you're looking to have a good time then look
no further."

But Jimmy, a shy Kentuckian with a white-outed
past
feels a twitch in his groin when contestant
number three
sporting the same black minidress as both of her
sisters
struts across the stage to her seat.

"Most people think I'm a good girl
but that's 'cause I haven't let them inside."



Up by Ashley Bringmann

Barn Cat by Holly Evans

She watches the farmer from the doorway.
One paw over the other, tail lain still
Her nose, dried from the hot sun.

She follows every muscle-every tendon
That moves in his body.
She rubs against the rough dirty wood that
frames the door.

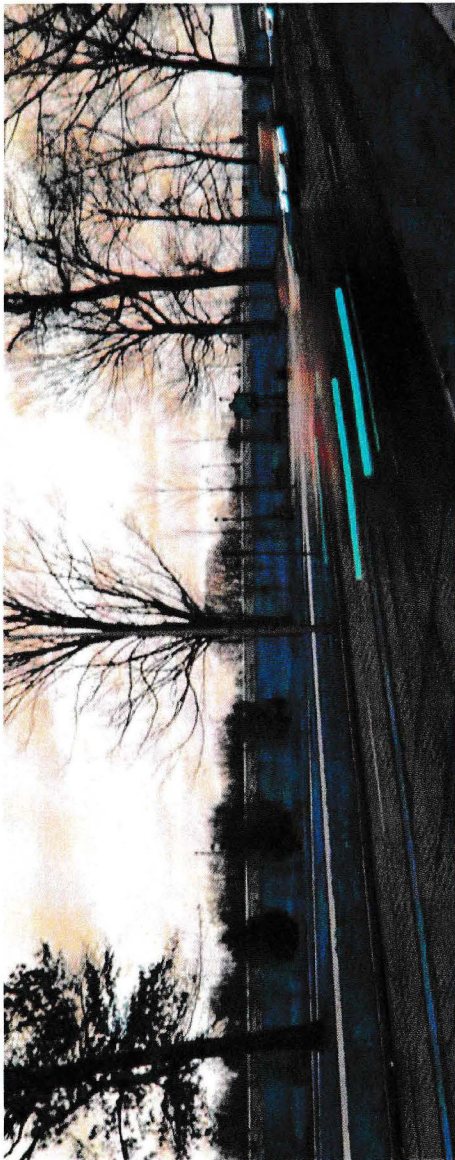
Her coat turns from orange into a devilish red.
There's a swelling that begins in her belly.
She falls into the hay, panting and purging.

Mice crawl over her stomach, like ants on a hot
peach pie.
The stallions gawk in the field
While the dirty doves gaze in the rafters.

The slits in her eyes grow wide,
Resembling the pupils of daughter of all men.
She releases a hiss.

The farmer takes the barn cat's
Heavenly sacs to the kitchen.
She watches his knife.

Laser Beams
by Kat
Dodson



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Distorted Continuity by Brielle Stanton

Cracked edges once so smooth and strong,
she is a fissured egg pouring out
slamming the frying pan, sizzling
once she hits the floor.

Scrambling through swinging doors, white coats
flash,
wheeled momentum gaining, passed off
to hands wrapped in latex and feet engulfed by
blue polymer sheaths.

Bone twisted to a point, a dagger
reaching the marred epidermis, splintering
from glossed wood, it pierces inflamed skin,
taking in outside air.

Spiraling like branches, crunched under toe,
unleashing its rage through muscle torn
and exposed, the flesh breaks free as
the yellowed bone bares its teeth,
varnished with blood.

"Immediate debridement" they yell
rushing with saline and scalpels,
the throbbing ache escalates with every jostle,
beat and exhalation.

Invasive scent of anesthesia
forces itself into her nose and mouth, blurred
blinks of masked creatures fade away, voices
echo
only to retreat in the distance.

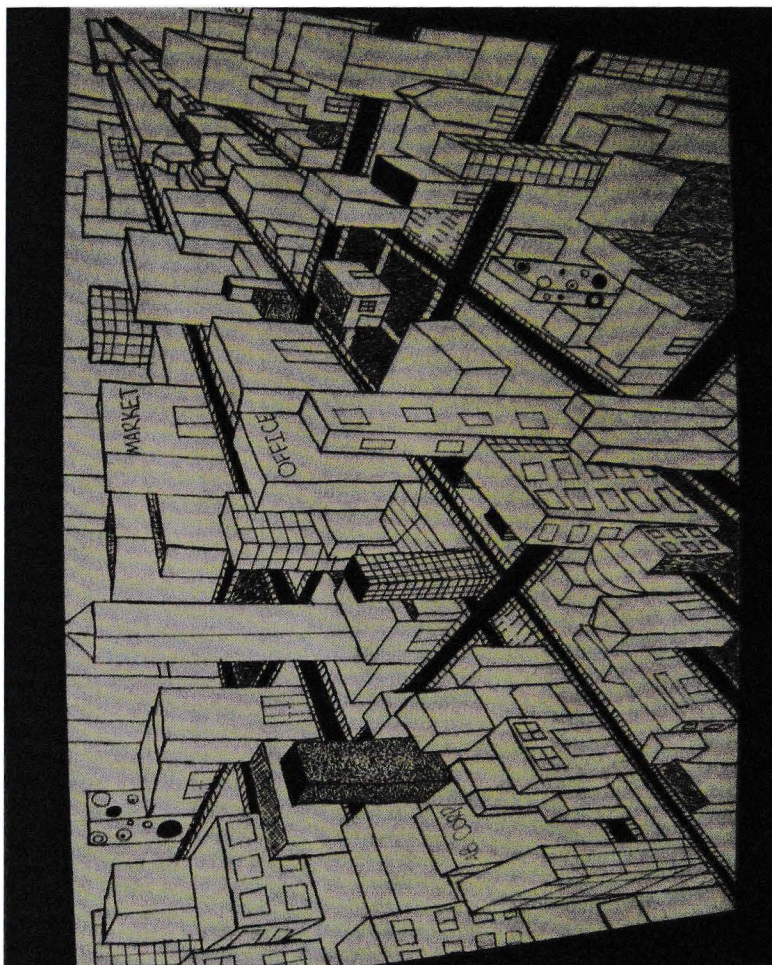
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What's Done in the Dark by Bethany Guarilia

Every morning you try not to count your teeth. It's not an easy urge to be rid of. You open your mouth wide to floss the back molar and remember the feel of choking on it. But it was too big to swallow: you had to spit it out in a spatter of blood.

You like to think that successes are built on your own choices. But then your wedding ring glints in the light, and the gold band burns your eyes as if you had stared right into the sun. You've known since you were eight, but there is no such thing as choice in a small-town Southern Baptist family.

He was just a waiter, hadn't even gone to college. There was a sort of choirboy look to him, a simple admiration that struck you to the quick. Weakness has always been your enemy. It took a long time to admit you wanted him; it took even longer to hope for more than just being his friend. Your loss of control shamed you even more than his rejection. In your dream the night after it happened, he stripped the skin from your body and you put yourself together again, piece by piece of agonized flesh.



CityScape by Ashley Bringmann

Deep by Miranda Baur

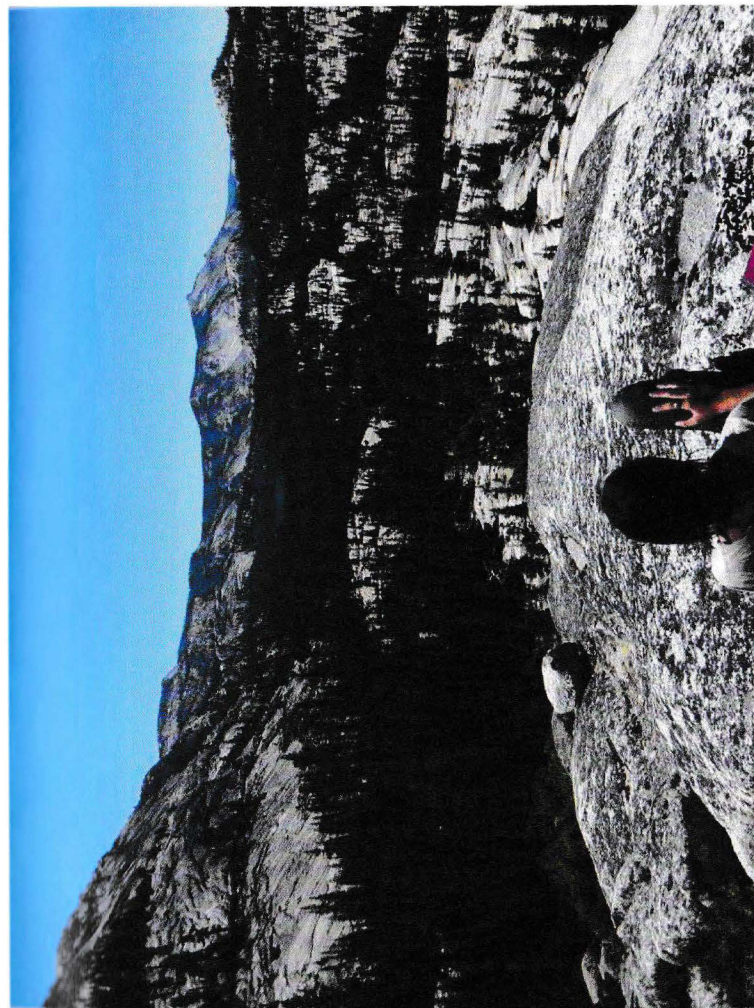
When strong winds blow,
I feel pieces of skin escape from my body
like browning leaves unhande from their
thinning oak mother.

They tumble through earthly breath
and land among bedded grasses and veined
sidewalks
to nourish weeds that men in blue suits uproot
when the first Spring warmth wets their brows
and makes them sneeze.

Some of the pieces are carried to the river
where they slide between scales of dark fish
with fat, leather bellies and black, button-
sized eyes
as they swim among drowned sticks and stones
searching for filtered, green light and
glittering hooks
until Winter when their heart beats stutter
and they pace in their mud bed to keep warm.

Soon, I will be trapped by bare bone
with a pumping heart and sagging stomach
beneath my winter coat.
And we'll embrace as if I were whole
when we meet on white grounds in fierce
sunlight.
Your fleshed, red hand shading your eyes.

You'll ask if I remember summer.
But without skin, all memories of you are faded.



#unyata by Jami Kali

Beauty by Jami Kali

shaped like lightning
branches off in broken bundles
bleeds through burnt skies
dabbed with clouds and black-winged birds.

shaped like thunder
seizes summer days
rolls over red hills
slips under black heels stained with sweat.

shaped like a pistol
pummels the heart

'til its pieces are poor excuses
for something less porous and prouder.



Pink Glow by Kat Dodson

Moonlight Sonata by Justin William Jones

Every inch of my skin prickled as I slowly nodded my head to the polyrhythmic motif of Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata." Always a fan for the classical, just being able to hear the cords of the two-century-old masterpiece made me shudder in excitement. For long after Ludwig had pressed his last key, his music lived on within the halls of this mansion. It was only fitting, really, for just as her fingers resurrected the utter beauty of what the German visionary had created in 1801, the walls which the piano's music bounced off of were newly resurrected, my family home fit for a king once more, the fire which consumed it all those years ago nothing but a distant memory.

The wine glass nearly slipped from my grasp, I had become so involved in the movement. Opening my eyes, I smiled at my own reflection. While the dimly lit master suite did not lessen the bruises and cuts on my face from my recent street fight tussle, the dark shadows and splotches allowed me to recognize myself for the man I had lost track of a long time ago. Even dressed in one of the finest Gucci Tuxedos my money could buy, the change from Playboy to a man who no longer had anything to lose was evident within a single glance.

My smile faded, but a ghost of it remained as I pulled loose the bowtie which had been choking the life out of me all night before yanking the top three buttons of my shirt loose. Reaching up with my free hand, I rubbed at the

agitated skin around the base of my neck while tipping my head back and draining the rest of the wine in my glass.

"Welcome back to the real world," I said to my reflection with a wink, knowingly embracing the warm and gentle intoxication that came with drinking a large amount of wine.

"Moonlight" picked up and I glanced at my bed, wondering just when I'd be able to turn in for the night. That was a question that would answer itself in due time, but for now, I had a date to finish up downstairs. My smile returned and I moved to the music, making my way out of my chamber and entering the main upper-level corridor. My feet padded against the plush carpeting as I spun once before nodding to the portrait of my long-gone parents that took up most of the wall at the top of the stairs. I felt like it was necessary to acknowledge their presence since they had invested thousands of dollars into a painting of themselves that stood loud and proud, "painting" the picture of a loving couple which they never were.

They were hypocrites and I kept them there so the world would know it.

Not fond of the aggravation that always came with thinking of my deceased parents, I focused once more on the music as the piano played the strongest movement of the piece, the open lobby of the home serving as a rock band's wet dream with the acoustics it provided. As I descended the stairs, I began to wonder just how much she had practiced this movement to be able to play it without missing a note. Impressed, I

couldn't help but smile as I reached the bottom of the stairs and hooked a left, traveling the medial distance through the main hall and into the sitting room of my mansion.

For effect, I always had the lights in this room dimmed to nearly shut off, allowing the massive fireplace at the end of the room to do its work. The piano was situated in a nearby corner, allowing the dancing light of the flickering flames within the hearth to gyrate across her bare back as she played. I paused, not wanting to disturb her just yet, so rather than clap or do something else to express my appreciation of her talent, I stepped over to the wine rack. She continued to play the German masterpiece, unbeknownst of my presence as I rested my empty glass atop the marble top of the rack and regarded the open bottle which waited there for me. While it seemed like a necessity of rich folk to collect wine, I did so out of my craving to taste the best wine man could provide. I didn't do it to show off my wine rack and let people know that I had been saving that two-hundred-year-old bottle for the greatest of circumstances. In fact, the bottle that now lay open before me was imported from Italy and probably cost a few grand at least, but who the hell cared as long as it tasted divine? I had already drunk enough to put a younger person into a wine rage, but I prided myself on my ability to stay calm and collected while drinking nature's booze, so it didn't bother me as I effortlessly poured another glass, leaving only enough for maybe one more in the bottle.

Letting the wine sit in the glass for a moment, I walked across the room and leaned against the fireplace, letting the warmth coming from it crawl up my pant legs to the point where my leg nearly burned. Not minding the heat, I swished the wine in my glass for a moment before tipping it back and taking a gulp. The music she played was astounding and I couldn't help but wonder how I'd become so lucky to have come across her at LA Opera.

She played on and my eyes rested on the skin of her back, her shoulder blades moving under the smooth and finely bronzed ectoderm. She wore a red strapless dress made out of the finest of linens, which she had scrunched up to allow her legs some breathing room as they worked the pedals of the piano. She was sophisticated and of the gentry class, but how she had become so well off, I had yet to find out. I hadn't been able to even get a last name out of her because she insisted that such things were unnecessary upon an inaugural meeting. All I could wrestle from her was that her name was Cecile and she absolutely loved anything classical.

When she had entered my home, I swore she moaned out a tiny orgasm. I must admit, even I was turned on by how amazing the place looked. It had turned out even better and classical looking than it had before the fire that consumed its original design..

Thinking about her excitement, I couldn't stay in the shadows any longer. After one more gulp of wine, I placed the glass upon the

mantelpiece and stepped forward, my hand resting on her shoulder, some of her long chestnut curls tickling the top of my hand as her head turned in acknowledgement of my presence. Instead of being startled, she fed off my presence and entered the final stage of the first movement as if her play could raise Beethoven from his grave just so he could hear her creation. I left my hand there as she played the last minute away and as she reached the final line, I leaned forward and whispered into her ear...

"I'd love to have you play in my home forever."

She hit her last note and then her entire body released itself from the tensed state of relaxation that always took hold of a musician. While the body needed to be relaxed to play without error, that very same state of relaxation tensed the body up to no end. Her shoulder seemed to melt into my palm as she turned her head, her nose rubbing against my cheek as she whispered back...

"Well, isn't that a little creepy of you to say."

She was only joking, for when I turned my face towards hers, her eyes twinkled in the firelight with the same mischievousness they had when I sat next to her at the Opera. Our fates entwined the moment we met, two lonely souls out to enjoy the wonderful sorrows only the Opera could bring.

"Is it as creepy as knowing that Beethoven himself once rested his fingers upon the keys

you were just raping?" I replied with a grin, knowing she'd be hooked.

Her eyes widened at first, but then narrowed in disbelief. "Does that line work with all the exotic women with a taste for the classical that you bring home with you from the Opera?"

I smiled, my lips dangerously close to her own. She reacted as any infatuated girl would, her eyes fluttering closed and her lips beginning to relax before starting to pucker, expecting the pressing of my own against them.

I smiled and stood up again, "You're the first exotic woman with a taste for the classical who has graced my home with your presence, so you'll have to let me know."

Her eyes opened and I could see disappointment for a moment as she realized that I wasn't in her clutches just yet. She sighed a little before her grin returned and she turned in the seat towards me.

"Well, then, Mr. Thomas. Do you have proof that the great Ludwig Van owned this instrument? I mean, it is clearly a Conrad Graf, which makes it one of the finer pieces of equipment I have ever had the pleasure of performing on, but just because Beethoven played with a Conrad Graf does not make this one THE Conrad Graf. So tell me, what makes this one different from any other poser?"

It was my turn to smile in surprise. I had already concocted a story explaining the brand of the piano, but she knew just as much about the instrument as she did about playing it.

Impressed, I nodded my head and moved towards the side of the piano, my fingers running across the bottom of the lid, searching by touch for the latch that would open it up and expose the inner workings of the string instrument.

"Well, Ms. Cecile, since you seem to know everything about the composer, then you'd know that Beethoven branded each of the pianos he first composed a piece on. He did so with a pen-knife just inside..."

"The lid...right above the strings!" she replied in excitement, her hands clapping together as she eyed my hands and then the top of the piano.

"Exactly. So you want your proof, m'dear? All you need to do is look inside..." I said, delaying the moment, staring at her face and her perfect chin and the pouty red lips of hers, wanting to remember that look for the rest of time.

My finger found the latch and I pulled it back, unlocking the lid from the base of the piano and slowly raising it up, allowing the firelight to enter the inside of the instrument and causing the strings to almost glow in a surreal light. Cecile chirped in curiosity as she stood from the bench and poked her head inside and tilted it to where the carving should have been.

"I...I don't see it?" she said, her voice echoing off the walls of the inside of the piano.

"Just a little closer, it's small, but you'll see it, I promise. And when you do, it'll

be the best feeling in the world, seeing something that was left behind so long ago..." I tapered off, my eyes shifting the portrait of myself that hung above the fireplace.

My eyes narrowed as I gazed into my own painted face and it smiled back at me.

"I really don't see it. Is this just a joke to get me to bend..."

Her words were cut off as the lid slammed down atop her head, the force of the heavy wood coming down enough to make the sound of her neck snapping in two more audible than the crackling of the fire. If the blunt force to the head hadn't crushed her skull and scrambled her brain matter all over the inside of the piano, the snapping of the neck sure would have finished the job. For a second, I braced for a fight as if some winged demon had dropped from a perch high above and landed on the lid, forcing it from my grasp and crushing the woman I had had grown extremely fond of in such a short period of time, but this was just a faux reaction.

The only demon in the room was me, and my hands rested atop the piano lid, tingling from the effort of slamming the lid so hard. Taking a deep breath, I ignored the blood that had begun to drip through the bottom of the piano and stain my brand new carpet as I walked to the fireplace and retrieved my wine glass. I looked into the deep redness of it for what seemed like ages before taking down the rest of it until there was not a drop left.

The empty glass was tossed into the fire before I began the clean-up, wondering just how

hard it would be to expunge of the trail of blood which led from the piano to my office before disappearing at the foot of one of my bookshelves. But that would be fixed soon enough; for now, I reveled in the knowledge that Cecile would forever be playing the Moonlight Sonata from deep within the catacombs of my mind..

While her body rotted in the catacombs below my home.



Credence by Jami Kali

We Missed It by Nicole Negrone

Moments like this seldom happen
unscripted.
Silent we stood, adjacent a building
filled with words.
The night was dark and sidewalk
sprinkled with people,
Just enough to peer googley-eyed at a
kiss that never happened.
What happened -
an embrace and a drumroll.
Our beats separated, and all that
lingered was my hand in yours.
from there we departed
leaving only a backward glance, a
sweet smile from gorgeous mouths and
four words:
write me a letter



Mulch by Sonja Heisey



Climbing by Kat Dodson

Recurring by Miranda Baur

Every moon when the tide is low,
you resurface among the infinite ocean waves of
my memory.
Your emerald, crocodile eyes rise,
and a tear of salted time lingers on the tip of
your sculpted, porcelain nose.
Your head bobs like wood from a pirated ship -
alone, dismantled;
swallowed by the ever-salivating sea.
Now drifting upon her rocky-bottomed tongue
until your cheek bones dissolve to foam
and your teeth sink into the coral reef.

I wrap my arms around your head
and kiss your matted seaweed hair,
pulling snails and urchins from your scalp.
(Oh, Love, how cold! How damned!)
You wheeze as brisk waves
rise to meet your voiceless blue lips.
And I pull you higher
as a captain pulls his anchor,
yet your body remains veined with sand and
stone,
and your toenails have grown into the shells of
shadowed beasts.

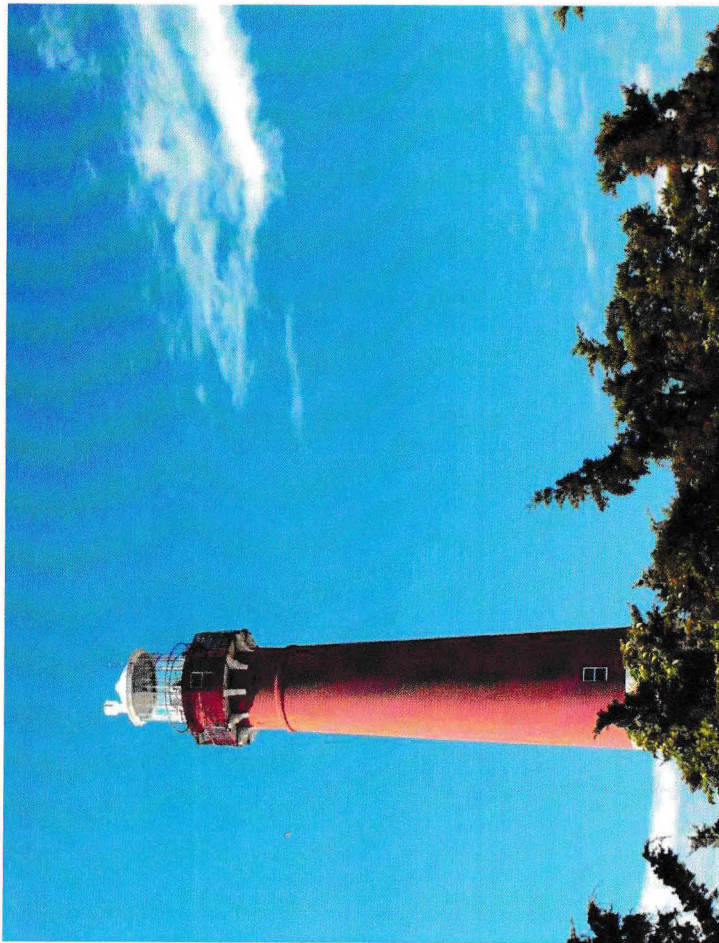
Your nose brims the all-knowing tide
and your eyes become glazed
like a quick-winded fog as it sweeps across the
moon.
I see emptiness in your stare
and hollowed brow.

My hands glide to the crest of your head.
They quiver as every finger stumbles over clumps
of dark hair
until thumbs meet.
Together, they push your head into blackness,
holding you still until the bubbling subsides
and the sea draws you back into her mouth,
leaving nothing but rocks and hopeless crashing
waves.

From my eyes, the ocean grows.
And through the mouths of shells, I hear you
singing.



Drippy Novocain Hearts and Dirty Unemployed
Husbands by Jami Kali



Ivory Tower by Jonathan Sytko

Emergence by Bethany Guarilia

Julie's knee itches from the heat. The air conditioning system in the classroom doesn't quite work right, something about budget cuts, and Julie has to look at what the teacher wrote on the blackboard because she missed what Ms. Fields said about their journal assignment. She can feel sweat between her shoulder blades.

"Write about your earliest memory using the five senses. Be as descriptive as possible."

Julie thinks of Aphrodite, who rose fully grown out of the ocean. She doodles a scallop shell on the corner of her paper and a little stick-figure version of herself standing astride the shell: curlicue waves in smooth graphite. Aphrodite would know something about having no past and no parents.

She imagines a castle of coral and seaweed under the waves. Maybe pearls grow into mermaids if enough time goes by. This won't do.

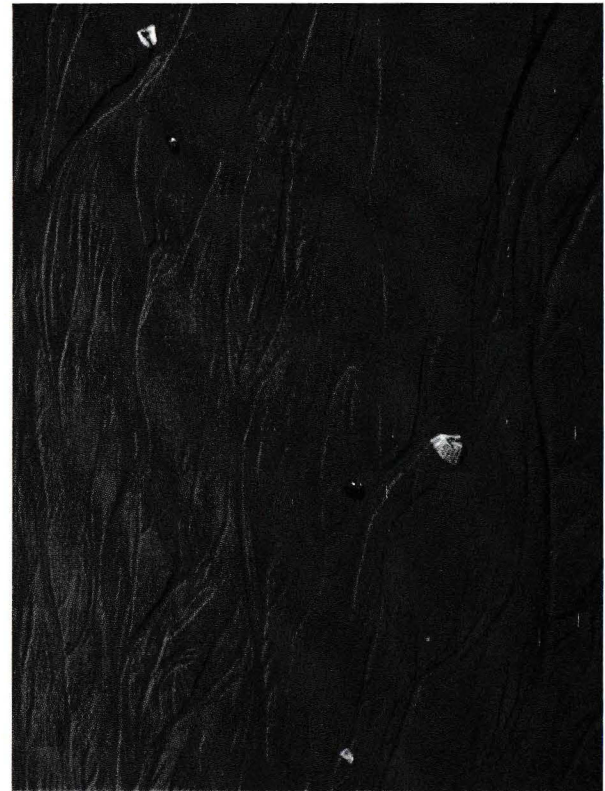
She closes her eyes and thinks back. Standing with her feet in the sea and her hand stretched out to catch raindrops. Each drop a tiny, transparent pearl. The sky and sea are slices of mirror-image gray. Her life began with water.



The Calling by Jami Kali

Self Respect by Brielle Stanton

Hush now - dry, wet eyes
Remove the jagged arrows
That pin soggy hearts.



Water Patterned Sand by Jonathan Sytko

Across Delaware by Holly Evan

Your neck in my hands pulses.
It's thick like branches,
Tree branches that grow on Arcadia.

The ring of green around your pupils spins like
the hands of a clock.
Your eyes keep time, George.
They throw me in and out of reality and space.

My fingers wander around your hair,
Thick like my favorite wool sweater.
There is no one strand similar to the others.

My skirt flows in the wind like flags on a ship.
You catch it in your hands, fearful that I may
fly away.
You always catch me, George.

Young birds fly over our heads,
Singing their harmonious songs without words.
Spring must be coming.

I have loved you for thirteen months, two weeks,
and four days.
You would know that, George.
All of this time is sealed in your eyes.

What goes on in your head?
I would give everything to harbor within your
membrane.
Deep crevasses made for hiding.
Let's make a garden, George.

Warm beds on thawed ground.
Yes, let's make a garden.

My hands around your neck pulse,
Like two chainsaws, violently.
They clear away the dead bark from the weak
tree.

Your eyes are dark and faded.
You're getting old, George.
Those black marbles remind me every day.

Your hair is grey and greasy,
Like that dirty scratched pan I keep in the
oven.
Not one strand stays in place.

My dress weaves in the wind, like flags on an
army base.
If only the breeze was strong enough to float me
away.
You wouldn't catch me, George.

Large crows walk around our feet,
Pecking at our dark patent shoes.
Winter must be coming.

I have stared at you for thirteen years, two
weeks and four days.
You wouldn't know that, George.
Those eyes never stare back.

What goes on in my head?
I am a hollow skull that you would adore

decorating the house with.
Empty bones lining the shelves of our home.

We planted our garden in dry rocky soil.
Artificial flowers are pickled in a red vase,
it's an experiment.
Those silk petals are hot, George.

Your hands holding my neck shake.
My cool skin warms your frigid flesh.
They remind me of two rocks, waking with the sun
on a plateau.

Your eyes, more bitter than a mirror.
I'm getting old, George.
I'm reminded when I catch you staring at me.

The curls in my hair fall.
They are loose like the springs in an old car.
No strand moves the same.

Your tie waves in the wind, it's a clean white.
The air whips fast, it's strong enough to take
you away.
I have to catch you, George.

We feed the bird that makes it's home in our
yard.
Handfuls of dusty seeds moisten our palms.
Summer must be coming

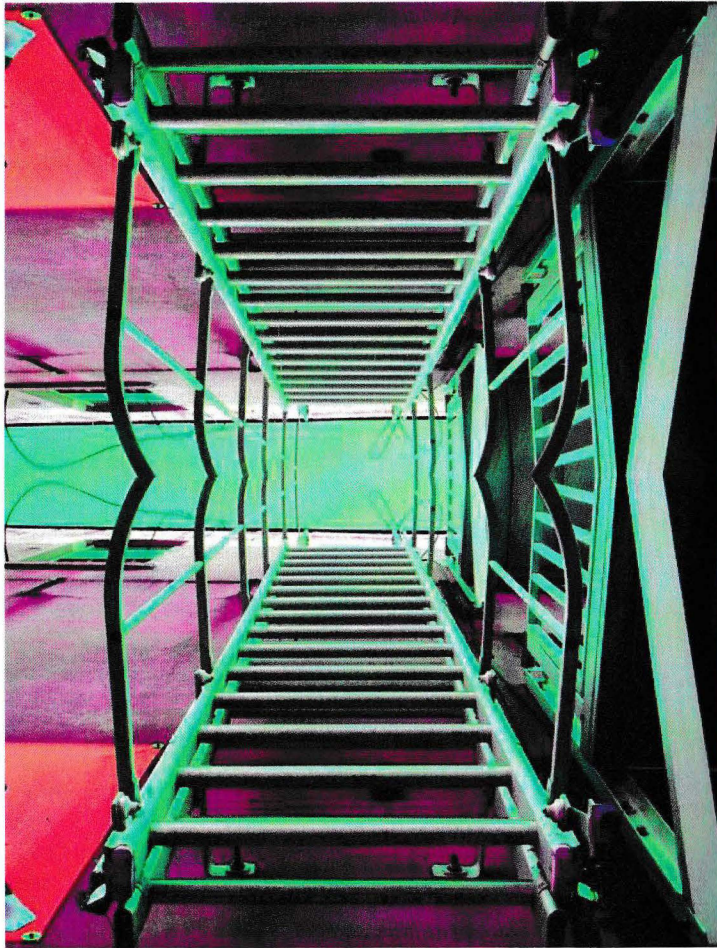
I have lost track of our time together.
Remembering dates never suit me.
You know that, George.

I have found the secret to our thoughts.
We corrode each other's brains, like a thick
poison.
There are crisp burns in our membranes; too many
holes to hide.

We have finally finished our garden; watering it
with cranial arsenic.
The seeds nest snug in the holes.
It's our garden. George.

Only a 6-word Memoir by Ashley Bringmann

Those who date dumbasses, are dumbasses.



Rabbit Hole by Kat Dodson

The Dismantling by Nicole Negrone

I come to you in complete humility
Until you I have been disenchanted
And having been imperishable for a time
The plot, my love, the dismantling
It began with a caress that opens my lungs
Proceeded inevitably by enjambment
Do I defy these monsters:
mistrust, deceit and...
The plot thickens
How did you find your way through lazarus
The anthem in my chest has changed as well...
Laboring against the fall has been
reverted...this new labor...
The labor of love, is exasperating
Without stop it lingers in my mind and thought
What is it but insanity
When it and displeasure reside within this vault
Its hindrances quickly resolve
It lies in deep slumber until radically..
to be continued...



She Said It Didn't Hurt by Miranda Baur

Reflections on a Photographic Exhibit,
"Let Children Be Children: Lewis Wickes Hine's
Crusade Against Child Labor"

by a Group of Pre-Service Teachers and Their
Instructor (Ed 385)

Working in the cold, they learned "to sing the
notes of woe,"
not so very long ago.
Pain all over their bodies, no time to hurt.
Most lied about their ages so they could work.
Five years old.
Not enough money or food to go around;
'will do anything for money.
Early and dark mornings, wanting to go back to
bed.
Sad and tired faces must keep working.

Breaker boys
not old enough for school, but working twelve
hours,
"Little black thing[s] in the snow."
Fifty pounds of coal dust in their lungs,
alive for work in the morning and dead on their
families' porches by night.

Newsies.
Little boys on the streets
with no shoes on their feet.
Selling people the news when they're living the
cruellest "news" of all,
even in the saloons.

Pounding the pavement, feet uncovered, 'must
sell the news.
Sleeping on the steps "though the morning was
cold."
Newsies, waking at four, "rose in the dark, and
got with [their] bags."

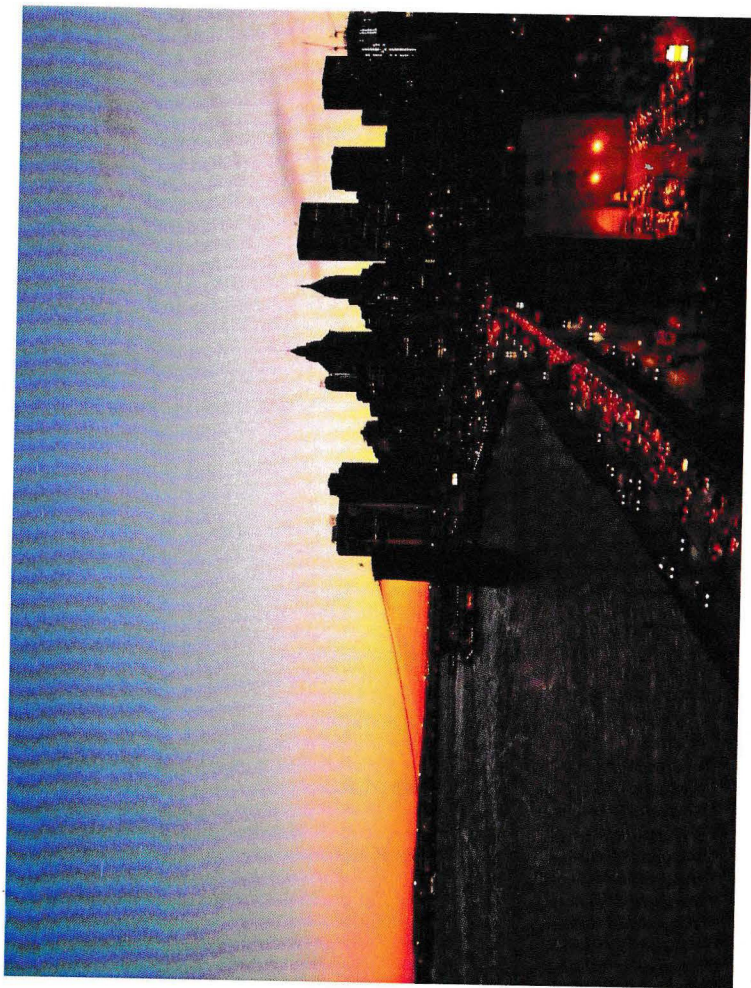
Farmers
gathering potatoes in the hot sun, covered in
dirt,
both girl and starch.
Little fingers sore from constantly picking.
Pick, pick, pick.

Shrimpers
picking out shrimp
while legs became limp.
Family needs money, so lie about your age.

Garment workers
bringing home "homework." 'must finish the seams
and zippers.
Five children work, four still too young yet.
Carrying "homework" over their shoulders to take
home.
What happened between the generations, those
"who ma[d]e up a heaven of our misery"?
They worked too hard not that long ago.

Think about today's children who go to school
and love to play.
The "children" from back then
had to grow up way too fast.

So we answer the sweep when he cries, "Where are
thy father and mother?"
We're here we reply.
We're here in loco parentis.
We'll heed the call.
We're your teachers, all.



Somewhere Over Manhattan Bridge
by Meribeth Derkach

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Gatsby by Jonathan Sytko

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Author and Staff Bios

Miranda Baur needs a new pair of shoes.

William Billingsly is a student at Wilkes University.

Ashley Bringmann would tap that.

John Carroll would **also** tap that.

Meribeth Derkach is a Pharmacy Major at Wilkes University.

Kat Dodson is lurking underneath your bed waiting to take photos of you while you sleep." Adding "...and post them on fetishist websites

Holly Evans ☞☐✕■& ☒☐◆☐ ☞❖⊕●◆✕■ℓ

Jeff Ford is a senior English major at Wilkes University.

Bethany Guarilia is a future biology teacher who loves music and writing.

Sonja Heisey is a graduate of Wilkes University.

Vicki Hevener is a English Major at Wilkes University.

Justin William Jones used to run this thing. Now he's just in it, being awesome and all.

He still needs a writing job, so if you need someone to write your papers or anything...

Jami Kali prefers wandering to waiting and picks human faces over blank screens.

Jason Neare is a senior English major at Wilkes University.

Nicole Negrone is a student at Wilkes University.

Brielle Stanton is a junior biology major from Vestal, NY who enjoys writing, dancing, and spending time with family.

Jonathan Sytko is a freshman in the pharmacy program at Wilkes.

Lennae Thompson is a student at Wilkes University

Elizabeth Voda is senior English major and totally awesome.

Chris Waugh is a comrade to all.

James Wismer is actually pretty good looking.

Ed 385- The pre service elementary teachers who are the authors of this poem are the members of Ed 385: Classroom Management Class, taught by Dr. Judith Gardner. They are teachers who are

dedicated and care about all children,
optimistic about education, and women of
character who will change the world because they
teach. *Amanda Fasciana, Cara Goughenour, Rachel
Greenlaw, Courtney Malast, Amanda Peters,
Jessica Short, and J.Gardner*

Their poem is dedicated to: Sadie, Olga, Rosie,
Salvin, Victoria, Manuel, Willie, and Angeline,
and All "Expendable" Children Everywhere Who
Sing "the Notes of Woe. " With special thanks
to William Blake's "The Chimney Sweeper" (from
both Songs of Innocence and Songs of
Experience).

