



Manuscript '03

M²⁰⁰³ Manuscript

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Art by:
Jason McDermott

Kicking a Can...

It was a crummy, dreary day. I walked across campus with a load on my back that no one should ever be subjected to carry. I never imagined that bounded paper could be so heavy. Everything seemed to weigh heavily on my mind, crushing my thoughts. Life seemed too unbearable for me – or was it that I was too unbearable for life and it was time for bringing my end? I may never know.

A can lay on my path. *Worthless little can*. I tried to kick it out of my way, but it remained in front of me. I kept kicking it as I labored just to get to my car. You know how that is – I mean, how difficult it is to just walk to your car at the end of a long day. It's one of the great mysteries of college life. How *does* one get to their car at the end of the day without being crushed by heavy paper?

I kicked the can full force. *Little insignificant can*. It skipped across the concrete, now dented, into a patch of grass. I made the extra effort to walk to it and kick it again, so it could not escape my fury. As I kept trudging along in this manner, I thought how impossible my bag was

being. Strapped to my back, it had me in its hold, with no way of escape...

Imagine – laboring this hard to go home when I do not want to return. Not that I wish to remain here either. Both are sources of distress and anxiety. Home life was never that difficult, but has been a daily struggle. College life is two years new to me, yet still I am a small, insignificant part of a big body. I am the older sister, the oldest daughter – a minor part of the whole. I am the young sophomore, the growing student – someone unseen.

The dented can lay in front of me. I nudged it along, trying to walk at a slower pace, but it was impossible. My legs began to buckle beneath me, giving up the fight to stand and live all day. They often give out, and it hurts as I try to straighten them. I cannot lift the burden above me without a struggle. I am the burden, the dented mass of human life walking about unnoticed.

Anger at my torn body rises within me. Life is heartless. I am tired—I am spent...I cry, brokenhearted, to the universe as others have. "Sir, I exist!" He does not look down kindly on me. I see him, frowning, hovering above my lifeless body. "However," replied the universe, "The fact has not created in me a sense of obligation."

Why! I can no longer support the crushing force of life! I need buoyancy! I need to be lifted up, out of the mire, *out of myself!* This torn, dented body needs new life!!!!

I crushed the pitiful can beneath my heavy foot. I felt like I took it out of its misery – out of being drowned in muddy puddles, thrown in piles of dust and disregarded as something useless. Why should it have to exist in this cold world, when there is nothing left for it?? It doesn't need to be in such a condition. Cold, confused, crushed, alone...

The sun broke through my dimness and dispelled the darkness. I felt its warmth, breathing in its fragrance as I continued on. The universe might have been smiling on me after all. I felt a glow within myself that brought me new life.

And then I paused. I looked back to where the crumbled, torn flesh of metal sat wearily on the ground. As I stood there, something occurred to me. I went back to pick it up, and went to my car. This one could be recycled.

Art by:
Janelle B. Weiland

Untitled
 Your dreams strewn across the starlit sky
 The crashing waves buffer the salty realities
 Your step over the wet rocks is faltering
 Moonlight gives a glimmer of future dreams
 Of the dreams of today and tomorrow
 Of the dreams only to be discovered
 The dreams waiting to be conquered
 Conquered in the shadows of the moonlight

-Katie Gianfagna

Art by:
Janelle B. Weiland



And although you may not see it now
 This love, is that way
 This love, the moonlight
 Lighting the way
 Giving rise of dreams
 Those dreams of today and tomorrow
 Guiding you and I, somehow, somehow
 Buffering the crashing waves of reality
 Lighting the shadows of big dreams

And as you take a breath of ocean air
 It encompasses all you are
 Breathing this love into you
 This love-
 Is the rescue of crashing waves
 Is the moonlight of dreams
 This love, is our love
 Captured within the shy strewn of our dreams

Raped Peach

-Laurien Rabadi

Into your woven basket I had fallen.

Plucked from my womb,

My tree of innocence.

Your dark calice hands had caressed my velvet skin.

Raising me to your wrinkled lips,

You violently tour my youth,

My soul.

Like a scavenging look thirsty wolf,

You fiercely devoured me to my core.

And as you finished,

Quenching your hunger,

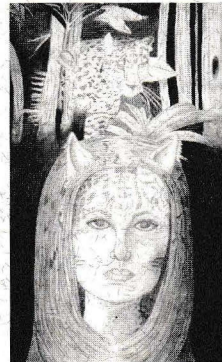
You flung me down to the basket;

-Captive like a caged animal,

Disabling me from flourishing once again.

The sun that once peered through the protective green leaves,

Now is hidden and lost as I lay here.



Art by:
Laurien Rabadi

Beggar

-Laura M. Osborn

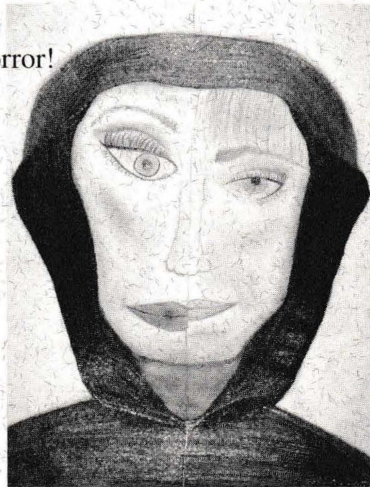
The bagman walks the streets with concealed truth;
"It's not what's in the bag, man." He says.
"It's what you can imagine it to be."
You stand staring and unphased, aloof.

Pigeons peck the ground for garbage and crumbs.
"Would you eat what I leave behind?" one says.
And you think to yourself with heavy heart,
"I'd eat anything, I'm only a bum."
Tall thin man sitting on corner with cup,
They pass you by with condescending eyes.
"Get a job you lush, you lecherous fool!"
But you slump, you can no longer stand up.
No more can you stand against the terror.

Life's been too heavy a burden to bear.

Instead, the concrete consoles you.

It confirms what you've come to know; horror!



Art by:
Janelle Wilson

Don't Tell Me How to Write, Please

-Mario C. Romanelli

Saying you're perfect
That's lame

That's another mind game

Hey, Miss Perfect Poems

That's enough

That's my writing style, tough

If I change the meter

Will you think that I don't need her?

University

That's gray

That's where rich kids go to play

University

That's right

That's where knowledge equals might

If I change the meter

Does that make me a leader?

Something for nothing

That's easy

That's creativity

Easy to come by

Nice try

Look inside your mind

If I change the meter

Will that confuse the reader?

Some real freedom

That's thought

That cannot be taught

What do leaders use

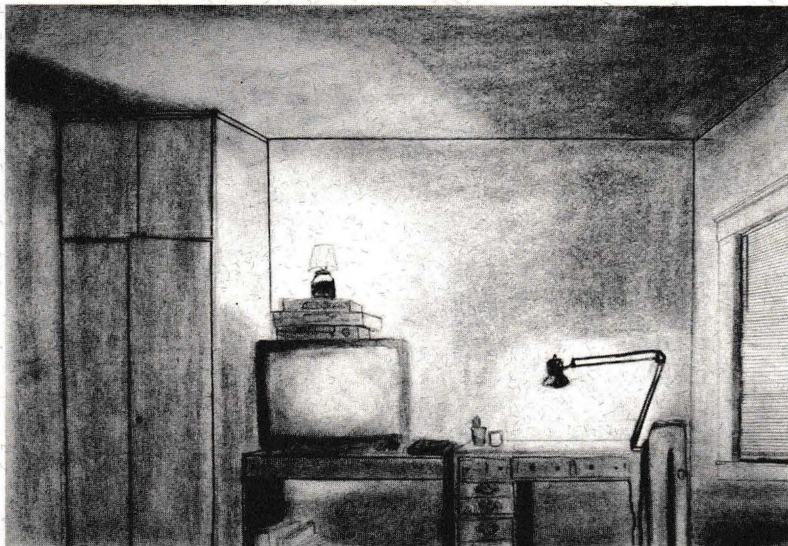
That's control

Find and kill the mole

If I change the meter

Does that mean I'm a cheater?

Art by:
Michelle O'Brien





"Speedy"

-Adam Polinger

Released from a workday's heavy labor,
I relax on a hammock on a Southern beach.

Obnoxious drivers aggravate me,
As gentle breezes brush over my skin,
Sitting in traffic mounts frustration,
Despite the tranquil scenery enveloping me.

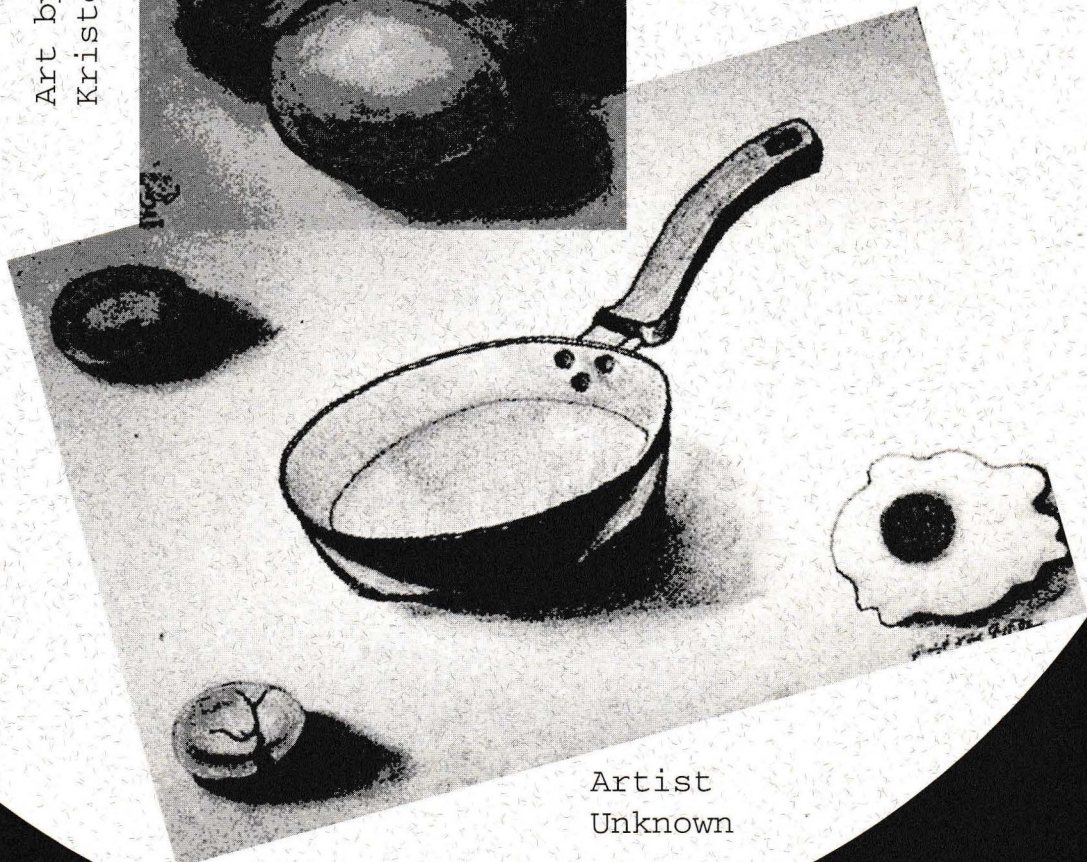
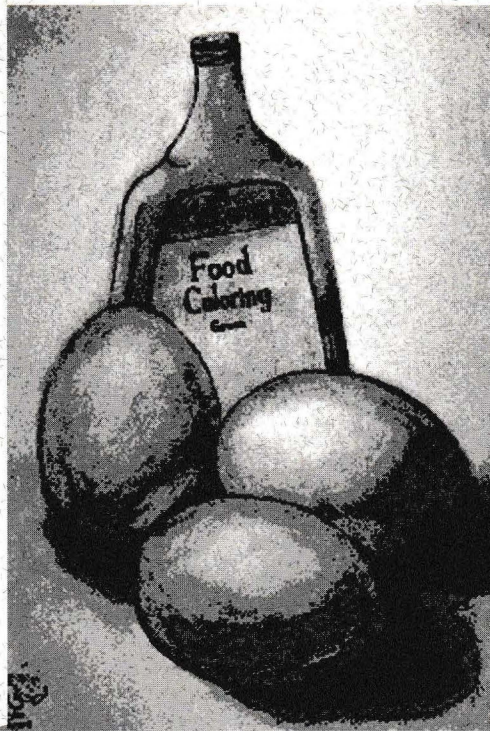
Exhaust fumes burn my nostrils,
While I drift quietly off to sleep.

Enroute to the dilapidated family that brings me shame,
I marvel at the security of keeping it all the same.

Southern Comfort and a moonbeam,
Sinful indulgence in a dream.

Daydream
-Pete Schmidt

Art by:
Kristopher Smith



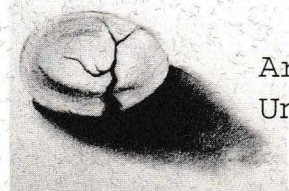
Artist
Unknown

PROLOGUE

Sissy Spencer trudged up the icy hill to the Castle Fashions dress factory, two large bundles of collars precariously hung down her back. She had no gloves to wear so she wrapped her hands in collars that she'd later stuff way down in the bags just before unloading them at the shop. Those collars doubled as handkerchiefs when necessary, but this night was so cold that Sissy's nose stuck together, the snot fused to her nostrils. Her wind-bruised cheeks looked as if she had third-degree burns. She was at least thankful that her chronically sore gums, a curse handed down from her absentee dad, had been numbed by the wicked weather. The ice crunched beneath her stiffened bargain basement sneakers, the bitter wind fought its way through the canvas into the holey socks to burn her toes with white-hot pain. The brutal chill, however, was no match for the cold hard stare that emitted from her glassy green eyes. A smattering of freckles spread across her nose and upper cheeks. Her thick strawberry blond hair had matted at the nape of her neck forming a knot that may have to be cut out. She wore an old, navy ski cap; though thin and worn, it kept her head warm. She'd have to hope her mom had gas to light the oven for baking some of the catfish Irv Whalen, the kind-hearted milkman, caught up Skeet Pond. She sorely needed a reason to stick her feet in while the oven cooled. Dunston was quiet that night. Most folks would have been picking their teeth by this time after dining on stew or maybe a hearty pot roast dinner. Sissy and her siblings would have been happy eating toast with jam and a cup of weak tea. Her stomach grumbled and a queasy feeling overcame her. The headache would come next if she didn't get some food in her soon. A couple of teen delinquents kicked up an icy corner. They were smoking pot and passing the joint from one frosted hand to another; their general attitude, lousy. One of the boys, the shorter one, spewed obscenities at the tall lanky eight-year-old as she lugged her load up Allardine Hill. She continued on past the youth, not paying attention to the vulgarity. She had learned to shut it out. As Sissy made her way past the jeers from the raunchy hoodlums, a couple of older ladies came out to sweep the wind-driven snow off their front steps. "Why did these snoopy biddies have to come out now?" Sissy murmured. The pitying stares from the women etched a shameful portrait in Sissy's mind. The two neighbors were yapping about something or other — probably the weather — until Sissy passed by them on the opposite side of the street. Both went silent and stopped their sweeping when they saw her carrying her cumbersome bundle. Sissy felt a sickly warm feeling rising in her gut and wished, for the thousandth time, that she would die. Perhaps, she could be reincarnated as an icy snowflake and blow across the street to sting in one of the old biddy's eyes. The ladies resumed their chatter, now muffled. Sissy knew they were talking about her. This night the bitter cold brought a wind of change to the young waif's existence — she began to plant a root of bitterness in her soul - one that could devastate many lives. "I hate those looks and I hate those jeers and I hate you, God, for making my life so miserable."

The Portfolio **(a novel excerpt)**

-Eva Sartorio



Artist
Unknown

Toilet Training

-Justin
D'Angelo



Artist
Unknown

Well son, it's like this...
Think of it as kind of like
watching an airplane land
You feel it coming,
the forward movement of the air
A natural feeling at first, like the wind
But then you know what it really is
You brace yourself,
look for a safe place
In that safe place you get set
Sit down, get comfortable
Unless you didn't see it coming,
then you just find that place and brace yourself
Then you let everything take its course
Glides through
Lands in its place
Of course, planes crash,
or have a rough landing,
but only sometimes.
But usually only if the plane is
brand new or really old.
But don't worry,
you'll get the hang of it

Winter

-Devon
Bartholomew

I was told that there would be a thaw
Of the winter that is here
And that spring is close
But it couldn't come fast enough

The temperatures drop
And the snow falls outside
But the problem is
That the inside does the same

Too much on my mind
And I wish I could find
Some answers to the questions
That keep going around

And until something changes
There will be no thaw
But things are getting better
And the temperatures have become stable

The decisions are major
And the problems are big
But there are solutions
And I'm getting closer to finding them

Art by:
Chad Altieri



freaks show ^{an} _{EXCERPT}

-Josphe DeAngelis

When are those stupid kids ever going to learn? I mean, can't they realize that they're never going to win? Here they come up again, expecting to use me as part of a freak show.

I'm really starting to hate playing the role of the bad guy who tortures these kids; that's not like me at all.

I know exactly why these kids pretending they're Scooby-Doo and the Mystery Gang came up here. For a long time now, rumors have been going around town that this house is haunted. One of the kids from this group made a bet with another smart-ass to stay in this house for one night. I know this because I can see the kids carrying sleeping bags as if this is some kind of camping trip. And this is not the first time that stupid kids such as this group did this. I scare them all off like nothing, and now, after, once actually enjoying doing it, I get sick and tired of scaring these kids. Can't they just be somewhere else that night and say they did it? I mean, there's an amusement park with a great haunted house about an hours drive from here and if these kids could really nag their parents enough to drive them there, they would get a scare and nobody would be hurt. It's gotten up to the point now when I just want them to leave me alone.

Like a lot of haunted houses, there's a story behind this one too. Sometime back in the 1950s, Mary and Samuel Stanton brought this house shortly after they got hitched. They were a rich couple who could easily afford a house like this. The house was once beautifully furnished and was the place to go to whenever the couple threw a lavish party.

Samuel was a businessman who worked in New York City and moved up here to get away from the stress of the city and to see what it was like living the peaceful life for once. Mary was more of the city type; enjoyed the bright city lights, the lavish apartment they once lived in, and the tons of stores to shop in. Now she had to live up here in this hellhole in the middle of nowhere. Mary spent most of her time at this house trying to make this place show her money. She spent her days doing the chores around the house from dusting the furniture to cooking meals for Samuel.

On the other hand, there was Samuel, who wanted to raise horses so he could ride through the mountains. He eventually brought home some horses and put them in a barn that he had built but it couldn't survive a heavy, frigid Pennsylvania blizzard a couple years before I first came up here. It now lies in shambles.

Here lied the problem, however, Samuel, who lived in the city all his life and just now decided to move up to the country, had little experience raising or even riding horses. He took riding lessons, but that didn't mean he could ride Seattle Slew. When Samuel did bring home the horses, he hired workers

to take care of them for him because the work was too hard for a rich snob like him.

Samuel had one horse he liked in particular, Tacoma. Every now and then he would make a poor attempt to ride Tacoma. Most of the time, Tacoma would run off with the screaming and crying Samuel who couldn't kick Tacoma hard enough to stop him. His faithful workers would have to ride up into the mountains to come to the rescue.

One day, Samuel decided to actually help wash down Tacoma. He took a sponge soaked in warm water and soaked and washed the sweat and bugs off his body. Unfortunately, he didn't know the golden rule off taking care of horses, never stand behind them. Samuel came around to the rear and decided to wash his buttocks when Tacoma kicked him in the chest. Samuel went flying and broke the fence. Tacoma kicked him so hard that Samuel's rib cage collapsed and one rib stabbed his heart, killing him instantly as the worried workers watched by.

Tacoma, who only acted the way Mother Nature intended him to, was put to death and then became glue. For Mary, it was all downhill from here. She slipped into severe depression. Mary stayed in the house 24/7 and had all the shades closed and distanced herself from everybody else. The house became lonely, dark and ugly. Mary refused to clean the house anymore. There were no more lavish parties. Friends would come up to visit her from the city, but she pushed them away. Eventually they wouldn't come at all. One day the lonely depressed Mary Stanton slit her wrist with a kitchen knife.

This lead to the notorious story about this house. Supposedly, Mary still walks the hallways of the house screaming out her husband's name, desperately hoping he would come back and they can live happily ever after.

There are three boys in the group this time, about eleven or twelve years old I would say. Two of the boys are a little scared, but they're hiding their fear not to show the leader of the pack. The hike up the hill is pretty tough without carrying the camping gear that these kids have. They're complete with everything as if they're climbing Mount Everest. Besides the sleeping bags, they have flashlights, candy bars to eat as a nutritious dinner, and CDs players just to try to avoid the gut-wrenching sounds I'm supposed to make.

They got up to about halfway up the hill on a staircase, which is basically rocks, and stopped to get a good look at the dump they were going to try survive the night in. From the outside, anybody can clearly see that no one has lived in or has taken care of this house in years. The window panes are all broken, the white lead-filled



paint is now peeling off the wooden frame of the house, the deck is about to collapse, and a bolt of lighting put a giant hole in the roof. But after a brief stare at the house, the kids decided to suck it up and take their chances.

The kids would be in for another shock when they entered the house. The once lavish house owned by a wealthy couple now looks like it's been bombed. The ghost-white blankets covering the furniture are snow-deep with dust. The weak wooden floors are teeming with insects and everywhere you step there's a tweak, creak, or some other sound to scare the kids. Light enters the house through the broken windows, but at night, this place is pitch black.

The boys barged into the busted wooden doors without knocking or being invited. They entered the living room with covered couches, chairs, desks, and bureaus.

Burnt wood from fifty years ago still remains in the fireplace.

One of the kids stared at a painting on the wall of a classy woman from the 1800s. The kids entered the dining room wearing looks of fear, including the leader of the pack, who probably forced the other two to come up here so he wouldn't be alone. In the dining room, there's just a long dinner table, which is also covered, that the kids put all their stuff on. After doing that, the kids

searched the house wide-eyed, looking at everything like there was something so fascinating about the dump.

"Man, this place gives me the creeps," one of the kids said.

"Hey Pete, tell me again, how the hell did you get us into this?"

Pete, the leader of the pack, explains the whole story to his friend, which ended up being the same exact thing as my story. The sun was still out, but was making its daily descent into the Pennsylvania mountainside. Once the sun goes down, then the party begins. The howling wind and the darkness usually would make the kids go running. If that didn't work I would normally do what a ghost should do, make strange noises, shake things, walk around, and, if I really wanted to have some fun, moan and groan a little bit.

As the sun went down, the threesome decided to start setting up their

sleeping bags and made a little fire from wood around the house. The mountains officially swallowed the sun around nine o'clock. The fire lit up the house, the only light in the house. The air turned chilly and the wind howled through the house. The kids stayed together in a circle around the fire talking about school, girls they like, cars, music, their annoying brother or sister, anything to keep their mind occupied. Sooner or later, the fear would set in. Pete, the big shot, tried to tell the other two that there was no ghost in the house and just to ignore it. One of the boys with the CD player put on some heavy metal garbage that he blasted into his ear that was close to making him deaf. The third hid his face under the sleeping bag like a little child scared of the boogie monster.

Now was my time to make my move. All the time I was hiding upstairs letting the kids go about their business. But, I haven't had fun in a while so, why not do it now. I slowly walked down the spiral staircase; just the cracking of the wood made the boys heads turn, except the one blasting the heavy metal. They returned to their business, and I crept up closer. I made my way down the stairs and crept into the dining room being careful not to make any noises to spoil the ultimate scare.

I stood right in front of them, staring right into their eyes, but I know they can't see me. My aurora made the kids shiver. The boy blasting the heavy metal into his ears looked straight into my eyes. He knows I'm here but he can't see me. I saw the fear of the unknown in his eyes. He tried to shove it off and turned on his music as loud as it could go. Now was the time to put the icing on the cake. I slowly crept over to the corner of the room, sat on the cold wooden floor, and looked at the kids and laughed silently to myself. Then I did my famous moan at the tops of my lungs.

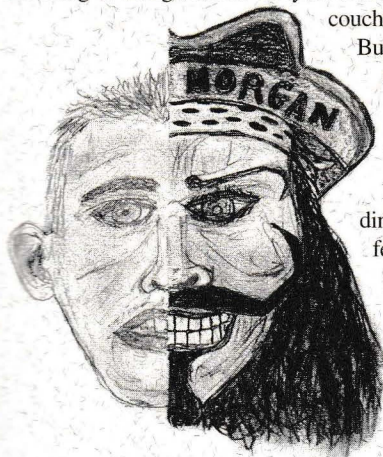
All three boys struggled to get out of their sleeping bags. Pete won the fight first and ran for his life straight for the door leaving his friends behind. One of his friends did the same, but the boy with the headphones blasting in his ears just stood in the center of the living room, afraid to move, looking around in shock and confusion, but couldn't do a thing in the dark besides the light of the dimming fire. This kid is stubborn; maybe if he didn't have his music on so loud he would have ran for his life like his friends.

"Pete! Andy? Where'd you guys go?" The kid couldn't see outside to see his friends running down the hill without him. After endless minutes of staring in the darkness, I just walked up to him slowly. At first, he didn't react to the creaking floor and the frigid air, but his bladder did. I got closer to him and the fear went to his head, and he dropped his headphones, ran out of the house, stumbled down the hill in his soggy pants cowardly just like his friends.

Ha ha ha, I won again. I reestablished my reputation as the evil ghost.

Art by:

Kevin J. Baranowski

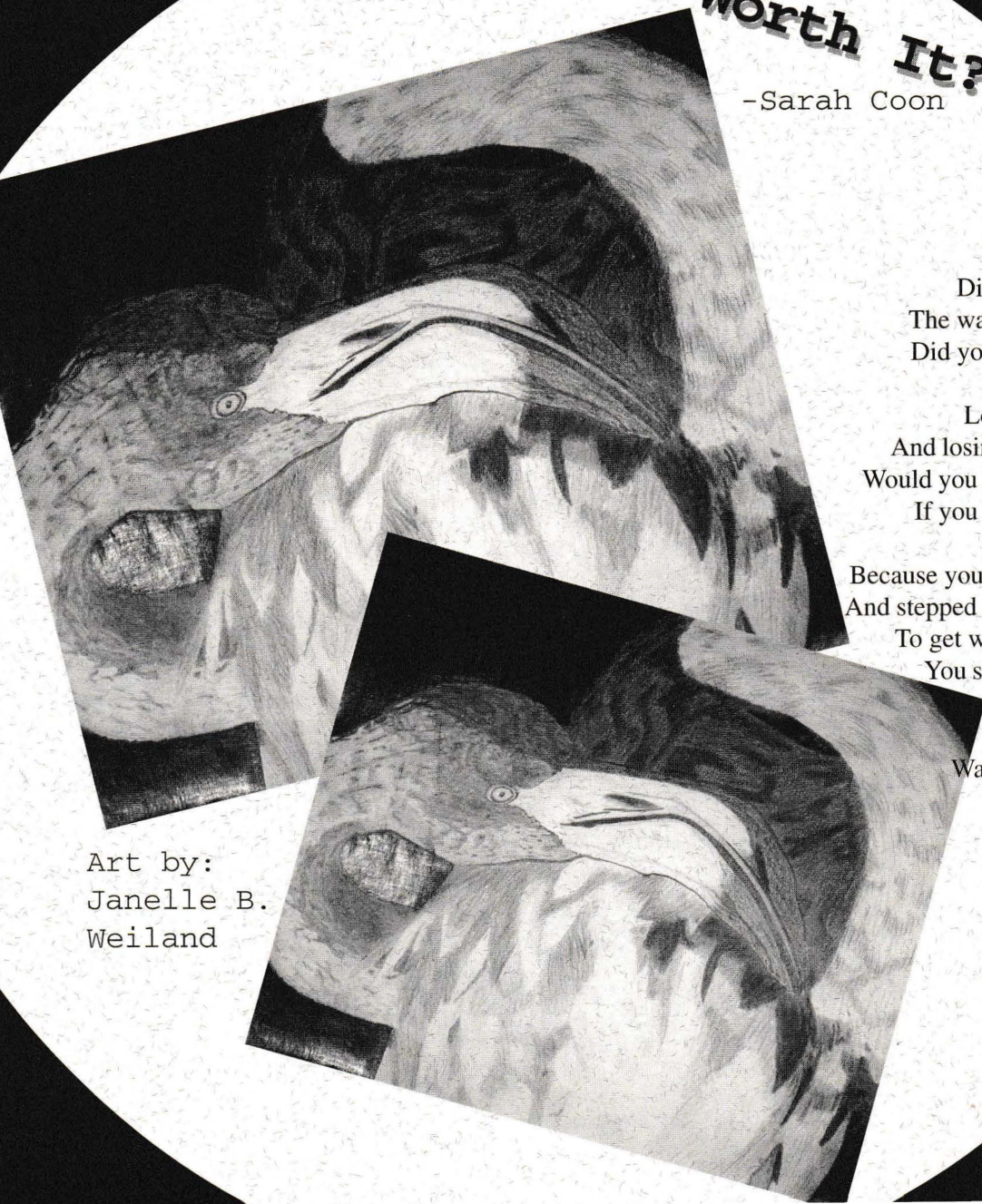


Was It Worth It?

-Sarah Coon

And in the end
Was it worth it?
Did it all work out
The way it was meant?
Did you get your way?
Was it worth
Losing your pride
And losing your dignity?
Would you renounce it now
If you had the chance?
Or revel in it?
Because you worked so hard
And stepped on so many toes
To get what you thought
You so well deserved.
So, tell me,
In the end
Was it all worth it?

Art by:
Janelle B.
Weiland



Bottled Up

-Devon
Bartholomew

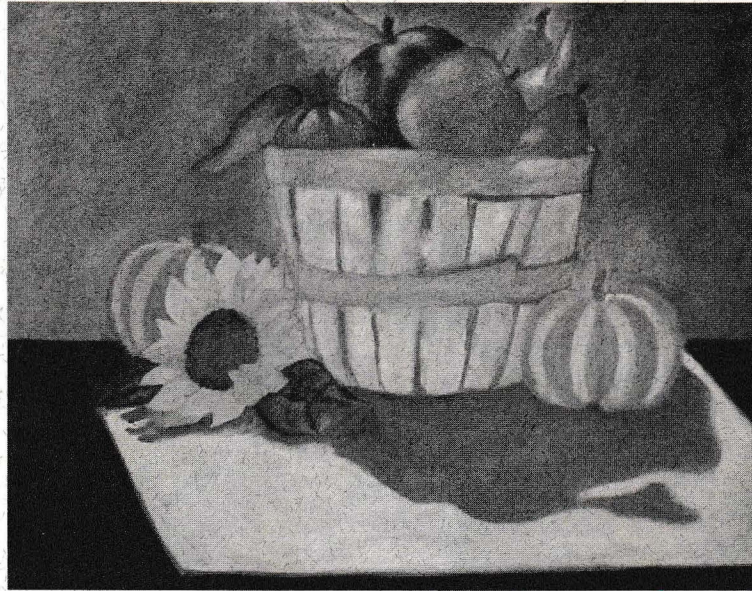
I see everything in color,
But my reactions are always shades of grey.
Everyone else thinks I'm duller,
But it's my insides that I obey.
I don't seem to show it,
But I do feel my emotions.
It's not because I don't know it,
You just have to make me put them into motions.
I only tend to let them find liberation
Through my playing of a tune,
Through my isolated meditation,
And through playing another character soon,
And if you haven't figured out by this time,
I like to express them in a rhyme.



Art by:
Janelle B.
Weiland

Terra Cotta Pot -Anonymous

clustered around the city's diamond square were the diseases of a sudden cold fall. the likely stories of the singular pacing of yesterday one year ago, i awoke to the sauntering footsteps of deranged mindset girl who just couldn't get the idea out of her head of only one seashell for her soul. this seashell is mine and there's gotta be more she'd say. Just for me she'd say. We were miles removed from desert beaches in a contracted form of autumnal misery. it grew cold. she died some time ago. that's what she said to me one night. can't say anything to make it better, might as well say yeah me too. chirst it's a game with two players a judger of souls who can only count to one and leave

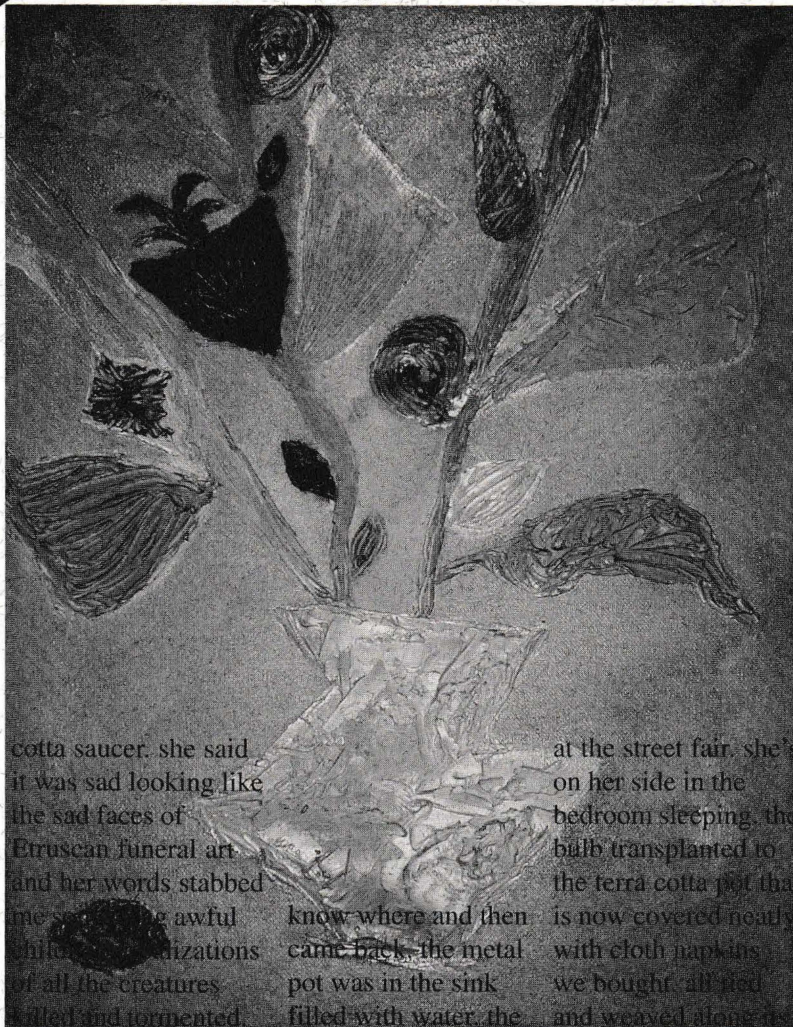


Art by:
Sandra Hughes

some one out. the door opened slowly to the stairway leading down from the apartment and she peered out of the small crack in the door wearing her white dress. it trailed along the dusty wooden floor who can say what she thinks. she peers past the door thinking old nutcracker thoughts of mystery and childishness. what

happened back in that room of childhood behind the kitchen. who's to say. no one believed her. but the details. can't escape the details what do you make of that. really I think you ought to go see some one. but why—it's not gonna do any good to make her suffer like that. there's a flower pot on the side table in the bedroom. it grows a

Art by:
Sandra Hughes



transplanted flower
she took from the
park. she was
mischievous always
stealing the beautiful
things. she came back
with her finger nails
muddy with life
holding the bulb. get
me something to put it
in she says. we put it
in a metal pot. she
said that wouldn't do
and for a week she
harped on me to get a
real pot. and for a
week i didn't hear her.
she cried and i left
and got the pot. it was
a nice terra cotta pot
with a small terra

cotta saucer. she said
it was sad looking like
the sad faces of
Etruscan funeral art
and her words stabbed
me so. the awful
children's organizations
of all the creatures
killed and tormented.

i put the pot on the
kitchen table and she
ran off i didn't know
where and i left to go
somewhere. walked
found myself i don't

know where and then
came back. the metal
pot was in the sink
filled with water. the

terra cotta pot was not
on the kitchen table. a
pair of scissors were
on the table. on the
floor shredded pieces
of the cloth and i

at the street fair. she's
on her side in the
bedroom sleeping. the
bulb transplanted to
the terra-cotta pot that
is now covered nearly
with cloth napkins.
we bought. all tied
and weaved along us

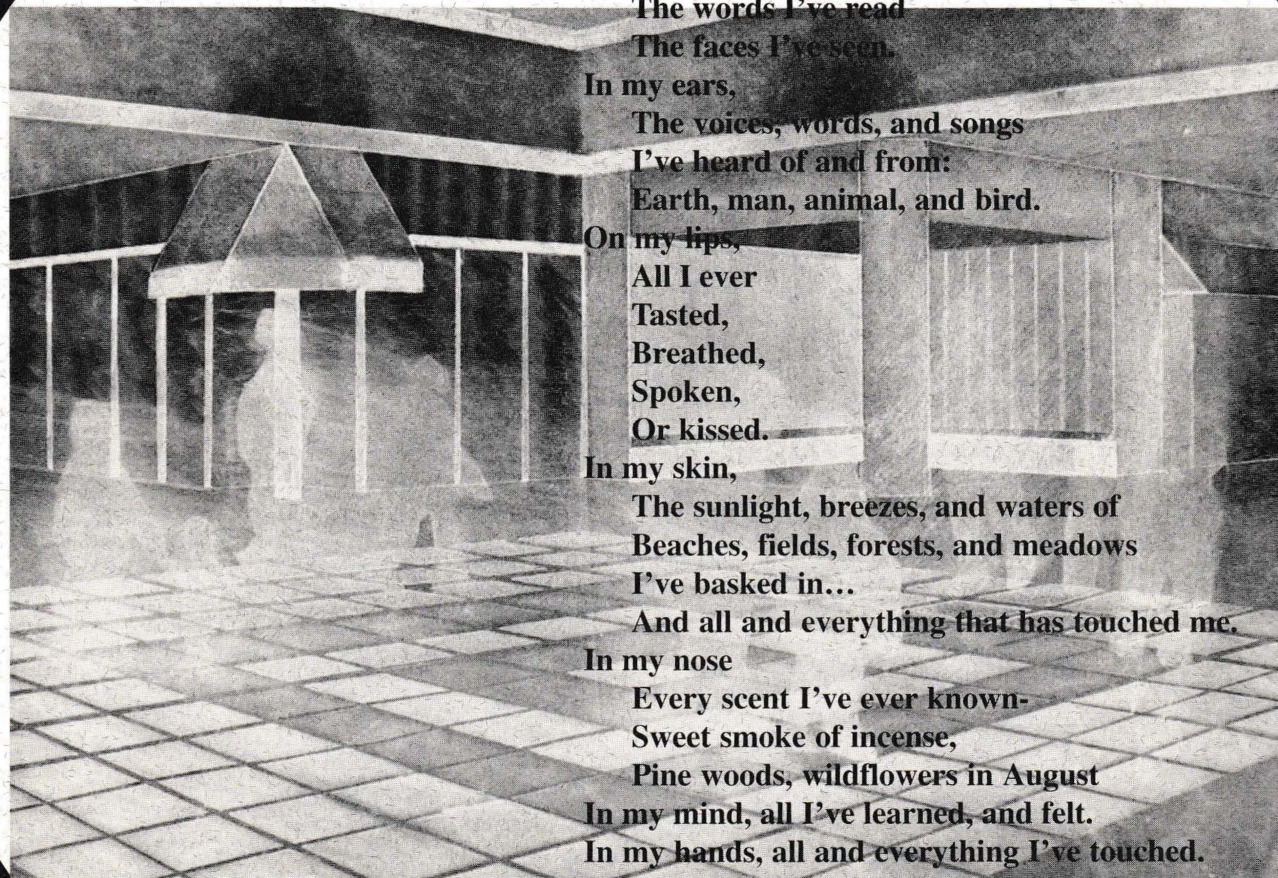
rounded body. even
the saucer is covered.
I take my jacket off
and my shoes and lay
down on the bed with

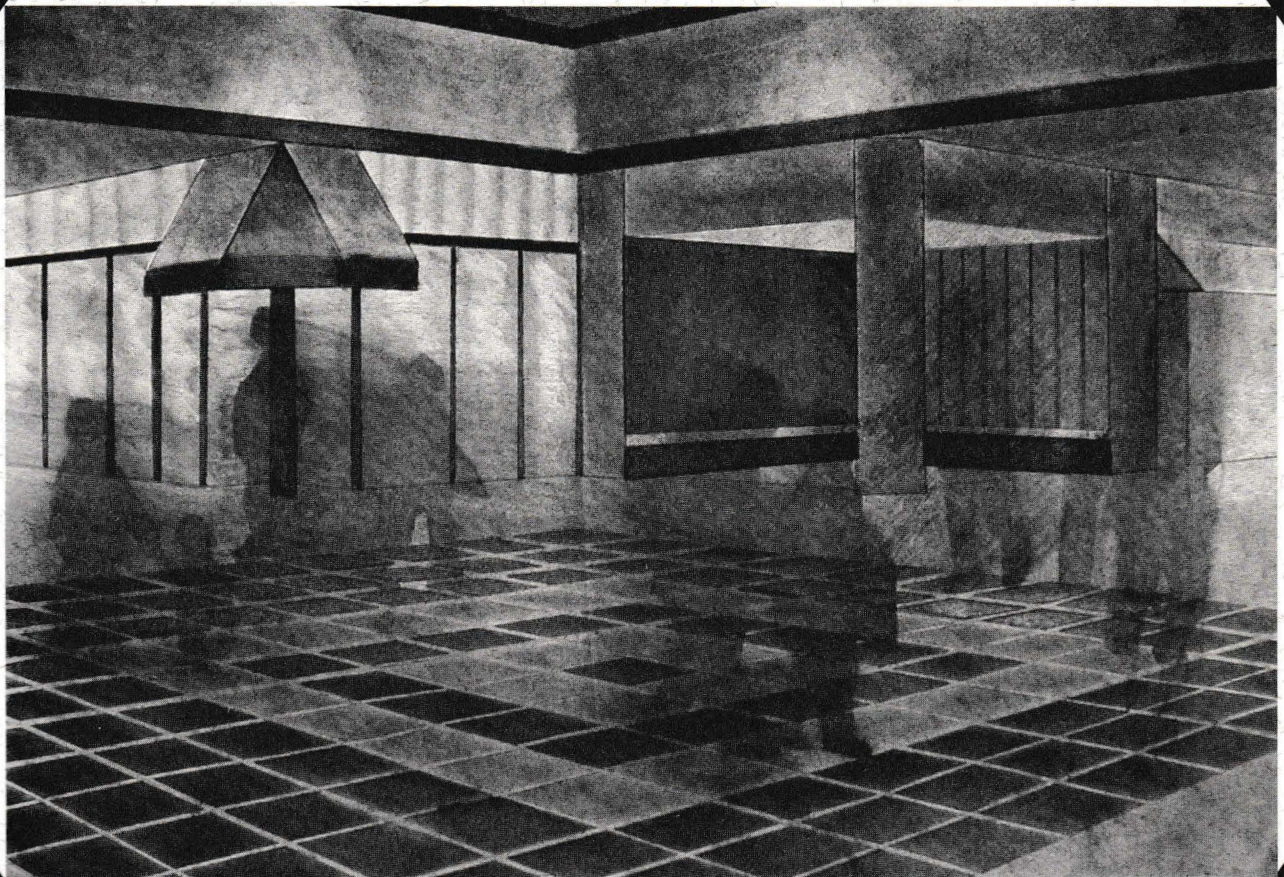
get up and get her an
old blanket. I walk
into the kitchen and
make a cup of tea and
think about what she
sees every day. she
never talks anymore
about the real world.
the things she says are
beautiful and weigh
on me like the
ponderous notes of
Mahler and I dream
things about the first
time I met her and she
couldn't get enough
of being outside.
slowly she started to
curl reclusive into
herself and not go
outside.

Sense Memory Being

-Sabrina
McLaughlin

In my eyes,
Are the roads I've traveled,
The words I've read
The faces I've seen.
In my ears,
The voices, words, and songs
I've heard of and from:
Earth, man, animal, and bird.
On my lips,
All I ever
Tasted,
Breathed,
Spoken,
Or kissed.
In my skin,
The sunlight, breezes, and waters of
Beaches, fields, forests, and meadows
I've basked in...
And all and everything that has touched me.
In my nose
Every scent I've ever known-
Sweet smoke of incense,
Pine woods, wildflowers in August
In my mind, all I've learned, and felt.
In my hands, all and everything I've touched.
In my voice, the words I've spoken and sung.
In my heart, all I've known and loved.
In my heart is my country.
In my soul, the land.
In my spirit the Earth.



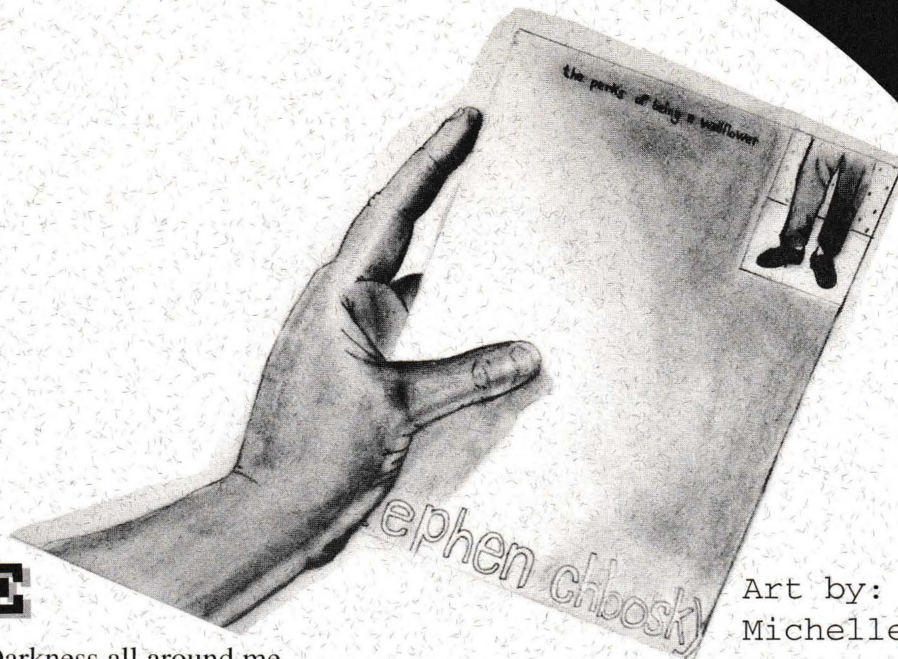


Art by:
Kristopher Smith

SOLITUDE

-Peter Nguyen

Darkness all around me,
Cold chills running down my back,
All alone, in total solitude,
I cry out, but no one can hear me,
Hands extended, reaching for someone,
All I feel is a cold wall,
A barrier that I cannot pass through,
Water slowly rising, my feet feel numb,
Is this how I am to end?
Not knowing love or happiness?
I feel my heart slowing, the blood rushing,
To my heart, to my head, how ironic indeed,
That at the end, my body is trying to save,
The two things that I cannot realize,
No longer fighting fate, water consuming me,
I float helplessly, realizing that in life,
You only have yourself and no one else.



Art by:
Michelle O'Brien



Art by:
Chad Altieri

CAPSID

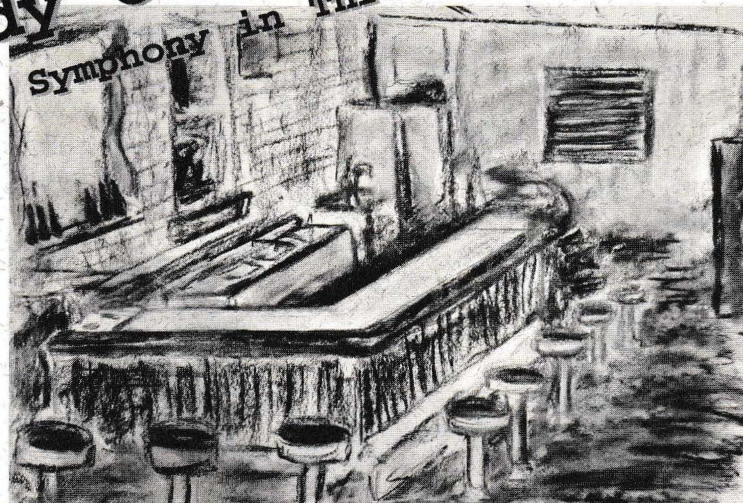
-Anita M. Zurn

Glazed eyes
Stare into her soul
This pleasant persona
Nothing but a capsid for anger
Anger she can't explain
These tears of blood she cries
This fire flashes in her eye
This capsid like all
Must open up then become again
Only one person can see
This anger she possesses
Only she can see
She sees it with a silver glimmer on her lens
She sees it in the red liquid that drips from her fingertips
All of her rage
All of her hurt
It's all drained from her
by her
She screams
This life will be no more
Back to good again
A new capsid has formed
Things will be fine
Until once again
This spore of mutilation
has replenished itself
once more.

"Rhapsody of Blues"

A Bittersweet
-Sabrina McLaughlin

Symphony in Three Movements



"The Deck"

*Movement One: The Weight
(pianissimo)*

It is
a keepsake of long winters of my discontent.

It is
a strange bag of bitter tea.

It is
whatever it is that makes me feel
smaller than my already

diminutive
stature.

It sometimes forces me to
avoid eye contact, and keep a downcast gaze
against my will.

It is
a shadowy presence
hovering in the background
of otherwise unmarred
sunwashed days.

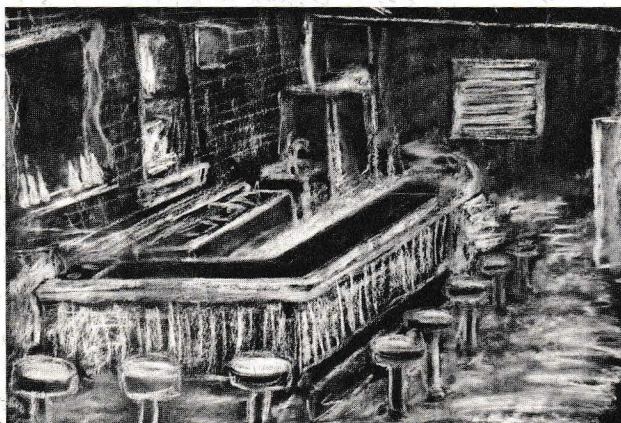
It is
my for-better-or-for-worse companion
(Churchill called it the "black dog that followed him around").
I'm sure he wished, as I do,
that it was not such a faithful cur.

It is
my double-blessing-curse
of feeling everything
magnified tenfold.

It was
nearly the conqueror
of my spirit.

Movement Two: Fighting Double Consciousness
(staccato)

It doesn't make any difference if
" millions of Americans just like me "
suffer from this malady.
No matter how many times they tell me
that it's nothing to be ashamed of,
I skate over the thin ice
that hides the darker waters beneath;
I still feel compelled
to skirt the issue
whenever someone asks me
what those little yellow pills are,
and why I take them once a day.
If I could step outside
of myself and look at me,
what would I see ?
Would I think I was weak ?
Or would I say,
what the hell is wrong with her ?



Movement Three: Pax
(fortissimo)

I don't look at myself that way -
not anymore.
I just imagine what old friends,
and enemies,
and friends-turned-enemies
would say
if they were still weighing
me down today -
"she'll crack up one day."
And that would be my cue to
step up and say,
Guess what ?
I survived.
One day the
karmic swing
will let you know
what that means.
So I let it be,
because I am busy
studying life's beauty.
Si, la vita e bella benedizione.
I will toast l'chaim!
Because I know now,
I'm going to be okay.

*fine. per adesso. **

**(trans., from the Italian: "The End. For Now.")*

Filled With Sin

-Mario C. Romanelli

FILLED WITH SIN I NAVIGATE
THE TWISTS AND TURNS OF LIFE
FILLED WITH MISCHIEF I AGITATE
AND FILL SHALLOW MINDS WITH STRIFE

FILLED WITH COURAGE I FIGHT
AGAINST ESTABLISHMENT AND AUTHORITY
FILLED WITH HEDONISM I IMBIBE
FEELING GOOD IS A PRIORITY

FILLED WITH THOUGHTS I PONDER
HOW NOTHING IS WHAT IT SEEMS
FILLED WITH CLAIRVOYANCE I SQUANDER
HARD-EARNED CASH ON FOOTBALL TEAMS



Art by:
Kevin J. Baranowski

filled
courage

FILLED WITH EMOTIONS I CRY
BUT ONLY WHEN IT GETS TOO MUCH
FILLED WITH PRIDE I TRY
TO KEEP SENSITIVITY UNTOUCHED

FILLED WITH LOVE I DEDICATE
MYSELF TO A HIGHER BEING
FILLED WITH ANTICIPATION I SIT AND WAIT
TO EXPERIENCE COSMIC SEEING

NO ONE OPENS THEIR MINDS
AND ALL CLOSE THEIR HEARTS
I'M SURROUNDED BY A UNIVERSE OF PEOPLE
WHO LIVE BY MORAL RULES
I CALL THEM FOOLS

against establishment
and authority

filled with hedonism

feeling

is good
priority

Art by:
Chad Altieri



He

-Laura M. Osborn

Acquaintances,

But no communication.

Chat-chat-chatter in the light air,

Floats away like feathers.

Do I dare ask entrance,

Or would it be an unforgivable sin?

He said that we are never alone,

But *His* men followed *Him* Home.

I like it when they look at me,

But not when they stand silent.

There is mourning in the air,

Even as *He* runs his fingers across my brow

To absorb the sweat with *His* gentle palm.

Once I knew them,

Those that walk among me,

And *He*,

Who ascended with clouds at *His* feet.

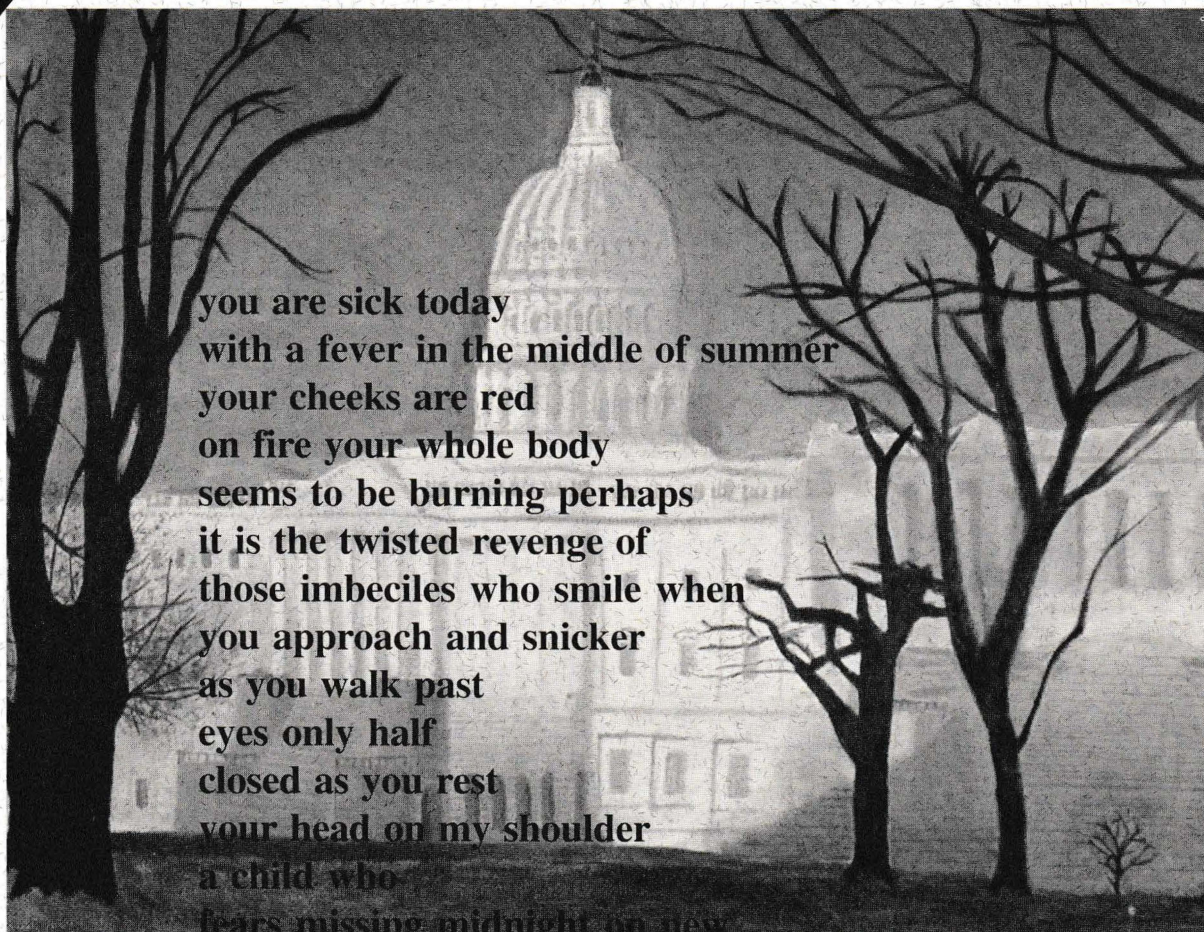
Here we sit,

Condemned to live

below.

And I the lowest of all, with worms and rats and serpents on my belly and in my head.

Art by:
Laurien Rabadi



you are sick today
with a fever in the middle of summer
your cheeks are red
on fire your whole body
seems to be burning perhaps
it is the twisted revenge of
those imbeciles who smile when
you approach and snicker
as you walk past
eyes only half
closed as you rest
your head on my shoulder
a child who
fears missing midnight on new
year's eve I would give
anything only to see
you well again smiling
laughing about
nothing

U
ntitled

-Anonymous

You have stolen from me
you modern-day prince of thieves
Ruthless and without mercy
you have robbed my soul.
Your secret deceit has blinded me,
and your seductive promises have
entrapped the very essence of my life.
How can I escape from your snare,
the complex web of vexes, hexes and hype?

Oh! You're a bear, hiding, waiting
to tear me to pieces; a leopard, silent
bewitching and indifferent to my needs.
You set the stage, the norm, the status-quo;
that all who pledge allegiance to you
must vainly follow.

You waste me, my time, my money.
Your mincing words pour out like fresh honey.
Waves run over my head; seaweed has
bound me - mind, hand and foot.
I am reduced to a mere fragment of my
former being.

Yes! You've entrapped me, sapped my creativity,
spoiled my diet and reduced my friends and family
to mere carbon-based pillows beside me. . .

as I worship you and feed off your guile.

TV, TV - YOU ARE SO VILE!

The BOX

-Eva Sartorio

A Family Affair (a novel excerpt)

-Eva Sartorio

Sharon stepped out into the fresh spring air, the seductive scent of Mediterranean delicacies followed, as if to lure her back inside. She stood for a moment, amazed and somewhat bewildered. They still want me, she thought. And after all that's happened! She turned slowly and took a hard look at the entranceway to the dilapidated brownstone unit – the address barely legible amidst the collage of graffiti – read 99 Winter Street. She shuddered, then quickly turned and strutted toward the midnight blue Grande Marquis.

Driving off, her head swam with thoughts of the past, both warm and hideous, mixed with the instant replay of what had just transpired with that strange, utterly un-American family. I guess I held up okay considering the circumstances, Sharon mused. But what's a girl to do? She popped in a vintage underground Bob Dylan tape, not conscious about him being "their favorite artist." After all it's been fifteen years since she's had anything in common with her ex and his family, including locale. She fled 1,500 miles south to Miami, barely escaping certain death, either by her own hands or from one of the boys.

Sharon laughed nervously while the music lulled. "Something is happening, but you don't know what it is – do you? Mr. Jones."

As the car veered down a vaguely familiar road, the haunting memories continued to play on Sharon's mind. Only the occasional potholes jarred

her back to reality. Rain patted softly on the windshield, harmonizing with the bluesy tune.

Why did Maria tell me that story about destiny? Was this some kind of joke? she thought, feeling manipulated but oddly a little special too.

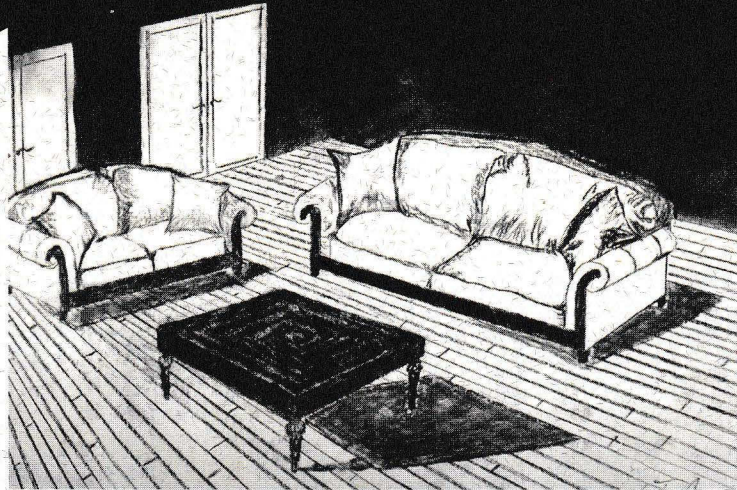
Maria had beckoned her to the kitchen table, the Italian woman's command central, used for cooking, sewing, card reading, and the occasional plotting that women do so well. She told Sharon a story about a man whose mother brought him to a prophetess when he was a young boy. This seer shared a vision about the boy's future and said,

"One day, after you have taken a wife, you will murder your mother and father."

No doubt this vision troubled the man throughout his growing years. And when he fell in love, he moved away with his new bride. The man became successful and shared a wonderful marriage when one day, his parents came to visit him as a surprise. His wife greeted them at the door, delighted to see them both. Since they had driven a long distance, the wife encouraged her elderly in-laws to take a rest while she went shopping for dinner.

The man came home from work earlier than usual and when he went into the bedroom, he found two people in his bed. Assuming it was his wife with a lover, he quickly retrieved his gun and shot both his mother and father to death. That was the story – hook, line, and sinker.

Art
by:
Tommy
Craparo



Sharon thought this gruesome yarn absurd, to say the least. But her mother-in-law stressed her point as poorly once again, with another unseemly anecdote in her pidgin English. Sharon obliged as Maria finished with,

“You undastand, Sharon? Destiny make this man kill his mama and papa. The prophetess said . . .” her piercing black eyes would convince even the Pope; a power emitted from those dark windows of her soul, invading Sharon’s psyche.

“You undastand?” she repeated, her will boring bizarre mental locutions into the younger, but not-so-fragile woman’s inner being.

“I guess,” gulped Sharon, taking this as her cue to flee the scene. She quickly stood, slipped into her green metallic trenchcoat, fluffed her luxurious strawberry-blond locks, and picked up her Gucci bag heading for the nearest exit. She systematically exchanged two-cheek kisses with hugs and pats to each of the three sons and their widowed mother, not a single emotion stirred.

Maria handed Sharon a plate filled with assorted homemade cookies to take home to her mother. Sharon was proud that she didn’t buckle under the scrutinizing stare of each of the men. She shook her head as if to shake off a bug from her hair and chills prickled her spine.

A few minutes later, she arrived at her mother’s place, pulled into the driveway and quickly made it

up the front porch steps. When she closed and bolted the door, a blast of hot air mixed with putrid cat box odor smacked her face.

“What on earth am I doing here?” she asked herself.

She hung her coat on the rack in the back pantry, slipped off her over-the-knee fashion boots and replaced them with the new pair of footsies her mom crocheted as a gift. Sharon accepted this peace offering presuming it was Mrs. Loggert’s new strategy to relieve her own guilty conscience. Sharon’s mom had a way of phasing out when her children needed her the most. Of course it took years of shocking situations with her fair-weather men in order to numb her senses to that point. Sharon did not want to wind up like that and purposed to turn the page to a new day in her life – one that still had some sanity and purpose.

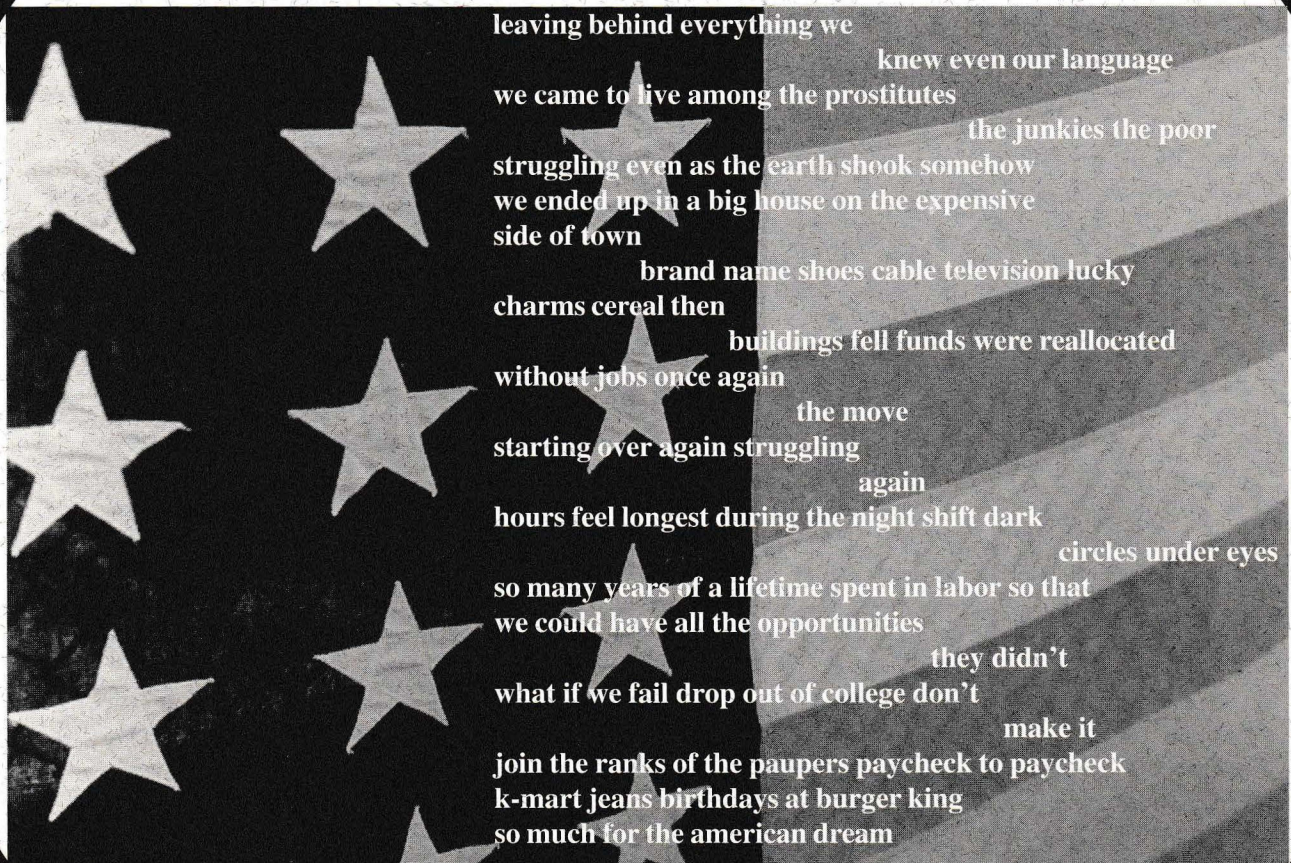
She fixed herself a cup of Constant Commentä tea and drained it quickly while perusing the local classifieds (like she was going to stick around for more than another day . . .) Then she climbed the lopsided staircase to the spare bedroom. She plopped down on the bed, taking slow deep breaths trying to relax her strained neck and back muscles.

It was a perfect day to stay in bed. She wondered why she didn’t think of it sooner. The rain beat steadily on the side roof, ricocheting onto the odd-shaped window near her head. Quickly, she fell into a deep sleep.

Un

nitled

-Anonymous



leaving behind everything we
we came to live among the prostitutes
struggling even as the earth shook somehow
we ended up in a big house on the expensive
side of town
brand name shoes cable television lucky
charms cereal then
without jobs once again
starting over again struggling
hours feel longest during the night shift dark
so many years of a lifetime spent in labor so that
we could have all the opportunities
what if we fail drop out of college don't
join the ranks of the paupers paycheck to paycheck
k-mart jeans birthdays at burger king
so much for the american dream

knew even our language
the junkies the poor
buildings fell funds were reallocated
the move
again
circles under eyes
they didn't
make it

Art by:
Adam Polinger

Into Colorado

-Helene Caprari

Blurred, gray and pushing through the cornflower blue diadem.
—May be a storm maundering the distance ahead—
Couldn't be *them*.

These mountains, like—Solid, swelled surf and pounding tide burst before us with color and character. The interstate takes shape as plains (the supine stage) slip behind and we enter the stories and players of reaching peaks and winding valleys.

We drink fluids not to get elevation sickness, notice road signs:
world's *worst* apple pie, and
watch for avalanches.

Thick sand, yellow like skewed tips of parched fields, travels in air like Appalachian leaves at Fall, shapes transient winds and lends voice to surfaces. The easy tap of—drizzle on aluminum.

The base of a corduroy wave of pine cradles an old steam train, polished and displayed, at the mouth of a quaint archaic station. The cars seen only by the depot's exit (or entrance), which is narrowed to a deep yawn by the stretching jaws of time.

Then—a blushing, granite adamant. She is both towering and elegant. Branching streams have smoothed her pebbles, even boulders. Her cool rivulets whisper an ageless and melodic vigor of youth that is grown into.

Ten thousand miles nearer to the melismatic empyrean, the sun—ripples through the periphery, aglow. Colors alight like blazing anthracite and the life driving through us invites a country of possibilities. This land courses through our pores in shaping currents

pressing on our abdomens, legs, chests and spines—exciting fingertips and always—the corners of our eyes. Pulses race, toes clench and our necks and shoulders perk absorbing the too quick flavors of life as would brine. Our spirits are engulfed—but forever athirst.

**"Objects are
closer than
they appear"**



-Ann Marie Miller

Manuscript

They Told Me This Wouldn't Happen

-Ann Marie Miller

I guess I never really thought about it this way before. But, I have lots of time to think now...I'm serving a life sentence, you know. Granted, in my situation, that may be only another year or two. I wonder if they keep my body in here until my life sentence is up. How long is a life sentence anyway? Some people live a few years. Others live for 90. But I digress...

Life really *is* like a circle if you think about it. You are born. You cling to your mother, the only person you know in this world. She feeds you, cleans you, and changes your diaper. It's the same now. Not that I really cling to the warden, per say, but that she is the only person I still see every day. She feeds me, cleans me, and changes my diaper.

They told me this wouldn't happen. The bloodsucking lawyers. "You don't pay until we get you money." I don't see any money, guys. All I see is my beautifully adorned white cinder block walls and the black metal bars on my windows. I feel like a bird in a cage. Now I understand my daughter who is active in animal rights. Only now do I see why she let Byrd, her parrot, out of the cage when she was 8.

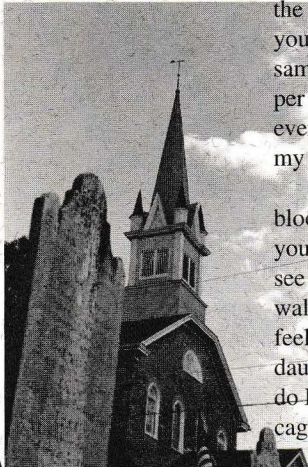
The deceitful lawyers. They said, "They'll never put a 74 year old woman in jail." I got news for you, buddy. They did! So, you are home sitting in your mansion, while I am here in my mansion. It's a very large house. And, I figure, there must be at least 50 bedrooms here. Each complete with its own private commode. And, since I'm not able to wash myself, the warden gives me a sponge bath every three days. That's service you aren't getting at your multi-million dollar mansions! If the atmosphere was a little bit more inviting, I could try to convince myself that

this place is nicer than the houses of the lawyers who tried to save my freedom and that this place is nicer than the houses of the lawyers who took my freedom away.

Not that I really had much to live for anyway. The man I loved for 50 years is gone. His pain is over. He is in a much better place now. I'm sure of it. He assured me that he would feel much better after I did what he asked. I always did what he wanted. Anything to make Frank happy.

It was about three years ago now. Frank was battling cancer. It started out as prostate cancer and then it metastasized and consumed his whole body. Sometimes I wonder if it hurt me more than it hurt him. Yeah, he did have to suffer as his body slowly deteriorated, but the drugs helped to take away some of his pain. I suffered too, you know. Watching the man I loved for the last 50 years slowly lose his vitality and will to live. That hurt...but I guess not nearly as much as the chemo.

But my Frankie was smart enough to realize what was happening to him. That's why he decided to do what we did. Frank came to me one day, it was a good day, in fact. Good day, in the sense that he actually had some color in his face. He looked much better than the sickly pallor I was used to looking at. Frank came to me that day and said, "You know, Mildred, I hate to think about what this disease must be doing to you. It's eating my insides alive, but you must be feeling utter and compete despair." I was thinking, yes, and I wanted to tell him that I agreed with him, but all I could think about was how he felt, and that lump in my throat prevented me from saying anything. "I know you agree with me, Mildred," he said, "Even though you can't tell me. I can see it in your eyes. Your beautiful blue eyes."



"R.I.P."

-Adam

Polinger

I looked deep into his set of stunningly blue eyes, thinking, this may be the last time I get to see these eyes for the rest of my life. You never know with cancer. One day he could be here, and the next day he could be gone.

Frank began to talk again. He said something about not wanting to go on like this. He said he wanted to "die with dignity," but I didn't think he really meant it. I passed it off as just another phase he was going through. But sure enough, my Frankie, I should have known it. He came home three days later with a .38 revolver. He told me that he went out the day that we had the talk to get it, but state gun laws forced him to wait three days while they ran a background check. "I wanted to tell them what I was going to do with the gun so they would speed up the process," Frank said, "but I figured that if I did that, I would never get my hands on this gun. I wanted to buy just one bullet, but I thought that would be overtly suspicious, so I bought a whole box."

He begged me for hours and hours to help him. We were sitting on the couch in the living room. I remember that couch. So much more comfortable than these so called beds that we have in here...even if it was covered in atrocious pink floral polyester. Frankie pleaded with me, told me that it was the best thing I could do for him at this point in his life, told me that he loved me. He threatened to do it himself if I wouldn't help him. So I agreed. "We've done everything else together for the past 50 years," I said. "And I want to be with you...But...but...I'll help," I whispered, as tears began to stream down my face.

Hand in hand, we ventured down into the basement. It looked different today. It usually sparkles in the light because of the new wallpaper we put up a few years ago, right before Frank got sick. But, today it had this noxious look to it. I took a deep breath. Mildew and moth balls. "This is where he wants

to end it," I thought. "Okay, Frankie. May God be with you."

He put the gun in my hand. I never held an authentic revolver before. He showed me what to do. "Just put it right here," he said, placing the gun on his forehead. "And pull." I told him that I loved him, told him that I wished that it didn't have to be like this. "This is the only way," he said. "You know I'll just get worse if I keep living."

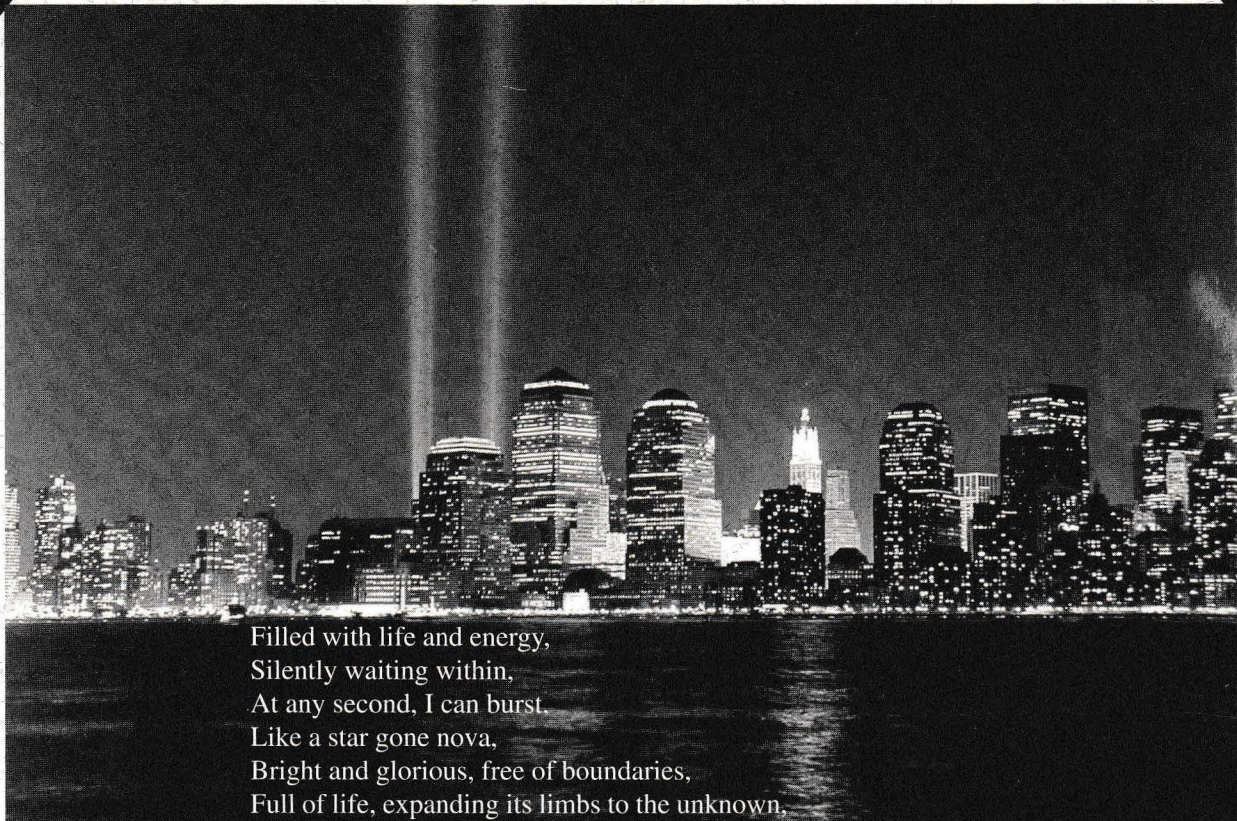
"I love you, Mildred," Frank said, "From the bottom of my heart, to the depths of my soul. I love you. I've always loved you. And I always will love you." I looked into his eyes. "Frank," I said, "I love you too. Thank you for everything. May the pain forever leave you, and may you rest in the grace of God. Until we meet again..."

I looked into his eyes one last time, closed my eyes, and pulled the trigger. The loudest bang I ever heard in my entire life echoed throughout the basement until the sickening thud of Frank's cancerous body hit the floor. I sunk to my knees and began to cry, holding his body as the tainted blood gushed from his head.

I don't know what happened after that. The next thing I remembered, I was in here, wearing this stunningly beautiful orange jumpsuit. The warden told me what happened a few days later. My kids had come to visit that day and they found Frank and I in the basement. My clothes were saturated with his blood, I was huddled over his corpse, crying hysterically. My kids called the ambulance, they called the police, and here I am. I talked to lawyers and all the legal suits and such. But, here I am. They told me this wouldn't happen! Frankie told me it would be okay! It's not okay, Frankie...it's not okay.

I'm exhausted. I think I need to take a nap on this anti-HoJo bed that I have. Thanks for listening to me. Maybe we can get together sometime when I get out of here.

"Title Unnecessary"
-Adam Polinger



Filled with life and energy,
Silently waiting within,
At any second, I can burst.
Like a star gone nova,
Bright and glorious, free of boundaries,
Full of life, expanding its limbs to the unknown.

Why, oh why, is it so hard to be,
True to oneself and live the dream
Instead, here I am, like a shooting star,
Burning to ashes, falling to the earth,
Alive for a short time, but only to die,
Not knowing what I could have been,
Dreams never realized, sad realization,
That reality is full of sadness,
All I wish for is to close my eyes,
Only to open them to see heaven up on high.

Supernova
-Peter Nguyen

CENOTAPH

-Helene Caprari

after Combat, i
am a curtailed breath
a wrenched movement,

among kyphotic heaps
slate barricades, i am
supposed beneath.



"Cemetary in the Spring"

-Ann Marie Miller

Art by:
Sandra Hughes

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Meetings are weekly in Kirby Hall on Thursdays at noon.

