

Wilkes University

# Manuscript

Fall 2003

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# Manuscript Society

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*Manuscript*, Fall 2003

# -----Contents-----

Jim Warner	Eighty6 Proof Love Song.....1
	An Incidental Last Name and Its Inherent Affects on Relationships.....2
	burden of being inexpressable in expressable form.....3
	Amy's Eyes.....4
Frederick Seabrook	Awakening.....5
	First Glance.....6
Robert Kole Shcrieber	Upon the A.M.....7
	Collision Course Historical Suicide.....8
Eva Sartorio	*The Gap.....9
Max Roth	**Untitled.....13
MMP	Blurred Vision.....19
	Fallen Angel .....20
Corey Pajka	The Depth Perception Test, Session #16.....21
	<i>Deus Ex Machina</i> .....22
	Sages and Sin.....23
Laura M. Osborn	Wholesome.....24
Sabrina McLaughlin	**Cruel Dichotomy.....25
	Willows Singing at Sunset.....26
Wichitah Leng	**I Hate Snack Vending Machines!.....28

Gabe LeDonne	*Lady Rose.....29
Amber Lawson	Pictures in Smoke.....41
	Untitled.....42
Ben Kushner	Untitled.....43
Bernie Kovacs	Werewolves of Greater Wilkes-Barre.....50
Matthew Koch	Window Scene.....59
	Ricketts Glen.....60
Mathew Faraday Jones	Learn to Swim.....61
	Suicidal Optimism in Practice.....62
Rashidah Ismaili	Yesterday, Today, and Next Tomorrow.....63
Joseph Cortegerone	A Reader's Mind An Instant of Pain Meditation Under Poststurcturalism.....66
	A Tale of Horror And Suspense.....67
Helene Caprari	The Sphere at Battery Park.....70
	Night, Alone.....71
	Wednesday Afternoon.....72
Meagan Brown	Invocation of Thirteen Year Old Lust.....73
Shanna Allen	Spring.....74
	Copyright & Acknowledgements.....75

--ART--

Emily Bly	**Emily and Abby at the Park.	
	Celtic Cross.....	31
	Haunt	
	Palookas?.....	32
Monica Cardenas	Gate of Honor.....	33
Joseph Cortegerone	A Picture of Charlie	
	Pretending to Take a	
	Picture.....	34
Joe Deangelis	Stude	
	Stude Interior.....	35
	Chevy Truck.....	36
Kristin Derlunas	St. Mary's	
	In Through the	
	Out Door.....	37
Jason McDermott	Integration.....	38
Crystal Wah	*Silhouettes	
	A Cold Autumn.....	39
	Stars and Bars.....	40

Staff Selections

\*\*Contest Winner

\*Honorable Mention

Jim Warner

**EIGHTY6 PROOF LOVE SONG**

"She's gone where they all go,"

as he contorts to the gulp drop reflex  
*(Old Grandad, since 1892)*

"I knew it would end like this,"

"You know I can't remember when I first  
really liked her but I'll remember this."

his toast and swallow comes hard and  
off handed.

*(Kentucky straight burbon whiskey)*

he uses the handrail to lead himself to the  
bathroom.  
his buddy tells me,

"I'm sure he'll be fine tomorrow,"

looking at the tarnished brass MEN's sign,  
we both doubt he'll remember tonight too.

**AN INCIDENTAL LAST NAME AND ITS  
INHERENT AFFECTS ON RELATIONSHIPS**

people tried to make me feel bad  
dating a girl with the same last name as me,  
i told them that it was all right,

*Jones* was common even if the situation wasn't  
and if we got married she'd still be a Jones  
and it would be up to you to keep up with us

eventually though we split up,  
i tell everyone it was because she took pills  
and never did the dishes  
but it was because all my friends thought we  
were related and she didn't want children  
with webbed toes or close set eyes.

"if it was good enough for royalty  
then it's fine for us."

(the joke apparently wasn't funny.)

she did last night's dishes before she left.  
i hear that she's going to be a *Smith* in April,  
it's a shame, we were a lot alike.

*burden of being inexpressable in expressable form*

we	speak	to	one	another
in	poem,	a	response	to
a	call—this	is	our	code
our		indirect		diction
decypherable			to	all
and		any		parties—
it's	universal		even	if
it	only	really		applies
to	you	and		i.
but	while	tongues		are
unbridled		and		sounds
drip	and	gloss		onto
paper				canvas
i	can't	look	at	you
without		being		silent.
a	request		is	held
for	print—we			send
letters	even			though
we	see	us		everyday.
but	i	press		keys
instead	of	lips		and
now		i		go
home	even	though		i
won't				sleep.

## AMY'S EYES

sometimes they're light caramel,  
in daylight they are tarnished

copper pennies burning in the sun  
when they're shut you see me,  
without wireframes your brow folds

tiny symmetrical creases  
angular and upright w shaped valleys

with every smile that passes your face  
and decides to stay for a short short time.

sometimes it's poetry enough to look into them  
sometimes it's enough to know they look at me  
...and sometimes all that i can say is

"i like your eyes."

## Frederick Seabrook

---

### Awakening

I'm nervous

That's odd, never happens

Not to me

Am I early?

Must be, I'll wait in the back

I wonder what this will be like

A rustle, swirl of colors

I feel a chill

Drawn forward I come

Am I being judged?

Dazed

I feel warm

I smile

A light, a smile, a welcoming of sorts

I feel comfortable, a new beginning

An eternity of joy

### First Glance

Auburn highlights over brown

Orbs of green    dancing    heavenly and round

Silver hoops    petite and small

One silver wisp wrapping its thrall

Smooth silky white    a touch of color

Chains of love multicolor in choice

Envelopes one of heavenly bliss

### Robert Kole Schrieber

---

#### Upon the A.M.

I've been down this road  
I know exactly where it goes

Ingested turbulence            my guide  
Instincts                    a passenger

Profundity skips past  
Fuck off!

Renegade "I wish I's weave in and out in front    like dolphins  
I tear a conditioned thought to shreds and a stroller blocks  
the path

Little baby's eyes suffocate

Envy  
Lust

Alone  
I turn around  
Forever to think uncommonly on the common  
Thank you for that                                    goodbye

## Collision Course

When  
Clouds  
Collide  
We  
Run  
Indoors  
So  
They  
Can't  
See  
Us  
Praying

## Historical Suicide

Brevity in a book  
A man without reason reads  
Nothing ever took  
So Millions seamlessly bleed

But the cycle? Continues  
Erection after erection  
Unclaiming brides ensue  
For want of a better C-section

## Eva Sartorio

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### The Gap

*Fifteen minutes and I'll be home, thought Shirley. I wonder if my house will be standing when I get there.* She reflected on her teenage years. Times when her mom went out of town for a few days and Shirley had been left in charge. Guilt rose within her. *Man, my house was party central back then. If mom had only known . . .*

Scenes flashed across her mind; a film of bygone times—the party madness and the morning-after mess, busting up drug deals, breaking up overnight lovers, and disposing of the evidence. She remembered doling out emery boards to a select few so they could file down the burn holes in the carpet. A chill prickled her spine.

The memories spawned new suspicion about her daughter and Shirley feared what disappointment she might find when she arrived home. She became antsy and she shifted in her seat, unable to settle.

Within minutes they pulled into Shirley's driveway. She jumped from the van, grabbed a few of her bags, and barreled through the front-yard grass, now thick with evening dew. Struggling with the front door, she muttered, "Damn key, always sticks!" She found herself playing tug-of-war with her daughter, who tried to assist from the inside. Cristina, Shirley's nineteen-year-old only child, released her grip on the inside handle and Shirley managed to get the door open.

Stepping inside, she cast a critical glare around the room. She walked past her daughter without offering so much as a hug. *What has she done to my home now!* Shirley's mind succumbed to her suspicious thoughts. Cristina's tired looking face wrinkled with concern.

MTV heavy-metal noise blared from the 32" set with surround sound in the dimly lit room. The blinds were drawn and it was as musty as it was dark in the entire reception area. Shirley chided, "Turn that thing down, NOW!" She thought, *how could I ever have enjoyed such music!* Shirley rebuked herself as anger welled up inside.

"Why are all the lights out?" she demanded, setting her bags



near a paper mess on the front room chair. "Didn't you put the A/C on at all this week? It reeks of mildew in here. Just great!" Shirley's temper approached boiling as she noticed the dining room table moved to the corner of the room; the Italian lace tablecloth draped precariously over the left edge. She rushed over to straighten it.

Fred and Anita made their way up the sidewalk, slowly and with caution.

"Mom, I'm not feeling well. I didn't go to work today," said Cristina hesitantly. "You didn't even give me a hug! This place looks nice to me, and as far as the A/C, I prefer having the windows opened. Is there anything wrong with that?"

Shirley paid no attention to her daughter as she continued to scan the place, searching for evidence to substantiate her daughter's rebellious activities, but she could find none.

"And what have you done to my papers, Missy!"

"Mom, I rearranged them when I cleaned up for company. You left them scattered in different places when you left for your trip."

"And why is my table moved out of place?" *Aha! A wild party with so many people that she needed to make more room. How dare she!*

"Mom, I told you I had a couple of friends over. We played Twister® and we had to move the table. There were only five of us – me, Nicki, Javi, Juan, and Amy."

Fred and Anita arrived. They sheepishly entered the front doorway and stood in the foyer. Shirley swung around, put on her I'm-just-fine-than-you face and said, "Welcome to our humble home." Her neck was beet red and she looked like a pressure cooker about to explode.

"Nice home you've got here," said Fred. He looked around nodding his approval. Anita remained silent and tugged at Fred's shirt, anxious to get going. They both hastily deposited Shirley's remaining bags near the den and said goodbye. Shirley hustled over to see them out and then closed the door.

Turning abruptly, she barked, "Didn't Karen call you to tell you I was on my way home?"

"No, mom. She did not."

Shirley remembered she had not hugged her daughter and made an attempt to get close to her. Cristina pulled away and went to her room. The door slammed behind her.

Regretting her actions, Shirley crept to the bathroom straightening cushions on the sofa, picking up microscopic lint from the carpet and passing a finger over the coffee table along her way. Something went wrong and the toilet backed-up, not an unusual occurrence after four straight days of rain. She panicked, shouting, "Cristina, Cristina! Quick! Come help me!" Blue water poured over the rim of the toilet bowl. Shirley removed the plant from the toilet tank and placed it on the vanity. She yanked off the back cover, pulled up the mechanism holding the weighted ball and watched, with horror, as the flow of blue, mixed with solid waste, saturated her new plush peach carpet.

"Shit!" she scowled. The rod snapped in her hands, breaking off the plastic regulator piece.

Cristina entered the bathroom and asked, "Is the ball part broken?"

"I broke it. And now I don't know what to do!" Shirley's visage fragile, insecure.

Cristina rolled her eyes dramatically, slid in front of her mother, straddled the commode, and grabbed the mechanism, temporarily stopping the overflow.

Shirley caught her reflection in the vanity mirror—her mascara had streaked tracks down the sides of her face. A section of hair stood out independently from the rest like that of a woman gone insane and she looked old, worn and very tired.

"I can't keep holding this thing down forever, you know!" Cristina looked to her mother for a solution.

*Shirley, get your act together!* She mentally commanded herself as her dark green eyes penetrated her soul. Then she spoke, "Cristina, shut off the valve under the tank while I hold down the white thing."

Her daughter obliged in silence, then picked up the broken part, shoved it into her mother's hands and stomped off to her room, one more time.

*Damn you, Jorge. If you weren't such an idiot, I wouldn't have left you...and then you'd be able to fix this stupid thing!*

(Another silent curse to Shirley's long gone louse of an ex-husband.)

After cleaning up the mess in the bathroom and tending to the carpet, she called the landlady who arranged to have a handyman stop by the next morning to replace the broken unit. She struggled to determine the best place to deposit the feces, but ultimately decided to sneak out the back, floodlights off, to the perimeter of her property to dump her duty. She had not considered the neighbors' sheepdogs, however, who howled until their master ordered them back inside. Later, she sat quietly on the front-room sofa and miserably regretted her behavior toward her precious daughter. Then she heard loud sobs coming from Cristina's room. She rose and hurried to her daughter's bedside. Sitting down, she gingerly took her distraught Cristina into her arms.

For the first time, Shirley unselfishly considered her daughter's struggles, making the transition from teen to young adulthood, still vexed by the consequences of her own poor choices of that bygone era. *I've got to show Cristina that I trust her. She's done nothing to qualify my suspicions. My own guilt caused the paranoia.*

"Honey, will you forgive me for the way I acted toward you tonight? I'm sorry." She spoke softly to her daughter.

"Yes, Mom, I forgive you. But why don't you trust me?" Cristina's eyes pleaded.

"Well, honey. Maybe it's because sometimes I cannot even trust myself." A sobering veil spread upon her face. *Come to think of it, Shirley thought, I've had it much better than most single parents.* And with a grateful heart, she smiled and patted her daughter's shoulder. *Thanks, Lord, for shining some mercy down on me today.*

Cristina, then, breathed a sigh of relief. *That was close!*

## Max Roth

### SCENE 1

*Mike and Hector enter through the kitchen door of Mike's apartment. They have someone else's blood on their clothing. They go to the sink and wash their hands.*

**Hector:** I told you not to do this thing. Now you see how this happens!"

**Mike:** I didn't mean for it to happen like that Hector! It was supposed to be neat and simple.

**Hector:** Look at this shirt! My sister brought me this shirt from *Bogotá! Dios Mio* if she ever knew.

**Mike:** Calm your Spanish ass down and stop worrying!

**Hector:** *(under his breath)* Columbian! Ignorante.

**Mike:** Look at me. I'm not worried! Hell, I'm glad it happened the way it did. The guy deserved it anyway.

**Hector:** He deserves this? He deserves it? You are crazy my man. You are one sick fuck.

*(Hector and Mike start to laugh)*

**Mike:** Did you see the way he was still shaking? The human body really is amazing. You stab a guy thirty or forty times but those nerves just won't stop firing.

**Hector:** I remember when I was a child I would spend the summer on my Uncle's farm. They had this pig named Tocino. I would chase this pig and play with him at every moment I could. During the end of this summer my Uncle called me out to the pen where Tocino would sleep. He forced me to watch him cut Tocino's throat. I watched the dark blood steam as it fell onto the cold dirt. But what I remember about the way...

*(Mike interrupts Hector)*

**Mike:** Yo, you hungry or what? I'm starving.

**Hector:** Ey! I'm talking here! You ignorante! Where do you want to go?

**Mike:** You know what I could really go for? I know you're from Spain and everything, but have you ever had *frijoles*?

**Hector:** You ask me if I have ever had *frijoles*? When I was a child...

*(Mike interrupts)*

**Mike:** I could definitely go for some *frijoles*!

**Hector:** Columbia! I am from Bogotá, Columbia! This land is so beautiful you would not believe. Green fields and clear...

**Mike:** Alright, alright. If I knew you were going to get all sentimental after killing the guy I wouldn't have even called you.

**Hector:** This man we killed, do you think he will be missed?

**Mike:** No, he's just some bum that walks around the neighborhood. Everyone complains that he smells like shit and that he is always begging. He harasses little kids you know!

**Hector:** Does he have a family or friends?

**Mike:** Look Hector. I was once just like you are now. I was filled with futile sentiment. I believed that people like that bum were in fact people. Can't you see we did everyone a favor? No one is going to miss him. No one is going to notice he is gone.

**Hector:** I don't know Mike. I feel, nauseous.

**Mike:** So let's go get some *frijoles*, amigo!

**Hector:** What makes you even think I like *frijoles*?

**Mike:** Well, you're Spanish, aren't you?

*(Hector walks out of the apartment, Mike following him.)*

## SCENE 2

*Mike and Hector enter a Mexican restaurant called La Cocina Inferno. The restaurant is very busy and they are seated in the center of the room. The waiter approaches.*

**Waiter:** *Hola, amigos* (in an obviously American accent). Can I get you a drink?

**Mike:** What is your cheapest beer?

**Hector:** I'll have a water with lemon.

**Waiter:** We only serve Red Stripe and Bud Ice, *senor*.

**Mike:** I'll have three *frijoles* and two Buds.

**Waiter:** (looking at Hector)

**Hector:** I told you. I'll have a water with a slice of lemon please.

**Waiter:** I got that. What would you like to eat?

**Hector:** I haven't even looked at the menu yet.

**Waiter:** But your *amigo* just ordered his meal.

**Hector:** Do you even know what *amigo* means?

**Waiter:** *Senor*, would you like me to come back?

**Hector:** I would like you to stop speaking Spanish to me. That's what I would like!

**Waiter:** I'll come back.

*(The waiter snippily leaves)*

**Mike:** I'd think a person like you would appreciate someone trying to speak your language.

**Hector:** A person like me? What does that mean?

**Mike:** You know, a person of color.

**Hector:** *(sarcastically)* Oh! And what would you call yourself Mike?

**Mike:** A hungry motherfucker!

**Hector:** You are just completely mad aren't you? If I ever knew what was going on inside your *cabeza* I would probably kill myself.

**Mike:** I wouldn't mind killing that fucking waiter. He thinks his shit smells like tulips.

**Hector:** Roses

**Mike:** huh?

**Hector:** It's not tulips it's roses.

**Mike:** Look man. I don't know anything about your Spanish mythology.

*(The waiter returns with their drinks)*

**Waiter:** OK, one water with lemon. *(He hands it to Hector)* And one Red Stripe. Ok are you ready to order now, *Senor*?

**Hector:** God-dam it I told you not to speak that Spanglish to me.

**Waiter:** *(Getting even more snippy)* It's just part of the job man. Do you want to order or what?

**Hector:** Give me the Sombrero Special #3. *(looking at Mike)* What does food have to do with a hat, can you tell me this?

**Waiter:** Do you want the Diablo Dip or the Simpatico Sauce?

**Mike:** *(interrupting)* Just bring the guy some fucking food!

**Waiter:** *(walking away)* I'll bring both.

**Mike:** So?

**Hector:** Yes, both sauces. Fantastico

**Mike:** Do you want to kill this guy?

**Hector:** Yes. But I won't

**Mike:** We killed the other guy

**Hector:** We did

**Mike:** So you don't want to kill this guy?

**Hector:** No

**Mike:** Why not?

**Hector:** Karma.

**Mike:** What are you fucking Jewish now?

**Hector:** Buddhist.

**Mike:** You're Buddhist?

**Hector:** No, karma is a Buddhist idea.

**Mike:** So?

**Hector:** So, you're an ignorant

**Mike:** So you want to kill this guy?

**Hector:** *(giving up)* Si, señor.

*(Fade to black)*

### SCENE 3

*Mike and Hector walk out from an alley on the side of La Cocina Inferno. Mike is tossing a bloodied steak knife into the air and catching it. Hector is dragging a soiled apron. They reach the sidewalk in front of the restaurant to get a taxi.*

**Mike:** So did you pick up on that little line I said to the waiter before I let him die?

**Hector:** "Adios amigo". Very creative, Mike.

**Mike** *(giggling)* yeah I was thinking that I wanted to bust out one sweet line right as he was dying. Just think, the last words he ever heard were...

*Mike is interrupted by a girl that is no more than twelve years old. She is holding the hand of her mother. The two are also waiting in front of the restaurant.*

**Girl:** What's in your hand?

**Hector:** It's... it's a shirt.

**Girl:** It looks like an apron

*The mother does not pay attention to her daughter or Mike and Hector and stands, staring blankly into the street.*

**Hector:** You are a very smart girl. It is an apron.

**Girl:** What's on it?

**Mike:** It's blood sweaty.

**Hector:** No, no. He's just joking. It's simpatico sauce, from the restaurant.

**Girl:** It smells. *(she hugs her mother's arm, moving away from the men)*

**Mike:** Why didn't you just tell her the truth? It's blood.

**Hector:** *(anxiously)* Are you looking for a Taxi? We shouldn't be standing out here like this.

**Girl:** Do you like that restaurant?

**Hector:** Si. It is very good.

**Girl:** Where are you from?

**Hector:** Columbia. Where are you from?

**Girl:** Earth. Where are you going?

**Hector:** To my friend's house. Where are you going?

**Girl:** Were waiting for my daddy. He's late.

**Mike:** There's another one! These god-damn cab drivers. I swear that those foreigners are racist. They see us standing here! Do they stop? No! Just keep on driving by like you always do. Ya fucking racists!

**Hector:** You know, no offense or anything, but you are racist  
**Mike:**

**Mike:** I'm not racist. I hate everyone equally.

**Girl:** What is your friends name?

**Hector:** Never mind him.

**Mike:** *(now facing both Hector and the girl)* Never mind who? Is this little pip-squeak bothering you?

**Girl:** I'm not a pip-squeak!

**Mike:** *(getting close to the girl's face)* I kill random people for no other reason than that I like to spread mind-bending pain as if it were a disease. I would like to see you and everyone else spend eternity in writhing pain, stewing in your own filth.

*(The girl erupts in laughter)*

**Hector:** See man. That is exactly the type of shit that makes me not want to be your friend. This is a little girl!

**Girl:** *(pulling on the bloodied apron to get Hector's attention)* Your friend is weird. You're nice.

**Hector:** I am not that nice.

*(The mother snaps out of her daze. Looks at her daughter and sees that she has dirtied her hands)*

**Mother:** How did you get so messy? Your father's going to throw a fit, if he ever gets here.

**Girl:** *(sincerely)* I'm sorry.

**Mike:** Yeah she's sorry! I can't take parents like you. You probably beat her if she spills her ice-cream don't you?! You know what? I think they should gather up all you parents and put you all on one big island!

**Mother:** *(walking away, grasping her daughter's hand)* Yeah, I saw "Boiler Room" too. Asshole.

**Hector:** That girl was nice. She was smart.

**Mike:** I'd fuck her

**Hector:** OK don't say this thing to me. She is a little girl!

**Mike:** I was talking about the mother. She was a bitch but sometimes that makes it more fun.

**Hector:** Yes well sometimes being a bitch makes it more fun.

**Mike:** And...? That's what just I said.

**Hector:** No, I meant being nice is making it more fun.

**Mike:** (*laughing at Hector*) Alright there speedy Gonzalez. Why don't you slow down the Spanish caravan and get back to me when you can speak English.

**Hector:** What I am saying Mike, is that just because you kill people doesn't give you the right to be mean to the live ones.

**Mike:** OK. Yeah, you definitely lost me Pancho. You seen any taxis yet?

**Hector:** There is one! Hey! Taxi!

*(The taxi pulls over in front of the restaurant)*

**Hector:** See, he's not racist. He pulled over for two murders

**Mike:** Yeah, but he doesn't know we're murderers yet.

## M. M. P.

Blurred vision—

I can't see what lies ahead.

My eyes failed me;

The world has lost its light.

I tumble, I fall,

Only to rise and fall once more.

Muted colors,

A mix of prisms—fades.

I am in darkness.

The light cannot penetrate fear.

Alone, yet together,

I am amid a crowd of seers.

I know they're there.

They have the light.

No fears.

No stumbling, no falling.

Golden wings prevent such miseries.

## Fallen Angel

I left it all behind.

*I am no more a child.*

Why would I want to do such a thing?

*A child needs no money.*

A child has no responsibilities.

*A child can fly.*

A child can soar—

*But I am pinned to the ground.*

I wanted the responsibilities.

*I wanted, no, needed money.*

Yet I can't fly,

*And I can't soar.*

I have fears of falling.

*I fear death.*

My wings have melted.

## Corey Pajka

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### The Depth Perception Test, Session #1

"Drop in and drop out"

At least that's what they said

when he was presented with it

a harmless and unknowing little tab

bitter, acrid, like a week-old

beer

not quite what he'd heard of before

sounds became heavy and distorted through a

lens that melted in the heat of it all

his skin was transparent and

he swore he could breathe through his eyelids

he talked to a girl about mortality, the perception of God

when he realized that it wasn't yet dawn

music aggressive, pulses through your skull, eyes

feel like bloodied grapes about to burst

you're all and nothing, but sound and color

in all you can trust

feel it out, push it through, nothing can turn you back now,

you're through the worst don't

let up

the

chase

just turn over in case you vomit

don't choke

yet

### *Deus Ex Machina*

A realm of fantasy, of moving pictures and colored lights,  
Filtered through a small cube  
Compressed lives and two-dimensional talk  
Allotted a convenient schedule of airing

Without heart, or thought, it penetrates my perception  
Now within me it coaxes my thoughts and shapes  
my impressions  
That picturesque panel of eden

Through it I form my life  
the vision of the earth I would like to be  
Free of conscience and devoid of guilt  
Made appropriate for all audiences

Warm, so warm inside  
Fed by my drip of cable and wire

Even with you, away from its arms, I allow you guest air time

You could be the next-door neighbor, the weird school friend  
Anyway, it's all mapped out for us, just ask that god  
in the box  
It's now in high-definition color

### *Nages and Sin*

so here's my next verse  
so much better than the first  
about peasants and poets  
and war and heroics  
and illusion and fear and all that

stock up my works and digest my words  
and hang on my thoughts like a drug  
I'm all that you know and all that you need  
but don't worry your faith's safe in me

I'm your fact, I'm your opinion  
I'm all that you care to relate

but what's there underneath? on a closer inspection  
Have you bothered to read in between?

pass this unpleasantness, just brush it aside  
and back to the purpose of life

## Laura M. Osborn

---

### Wholesome

At once selfless and self-centered  
Loving and hateful.  
All together genuine and altered  
Unapologetic and regretful.  
She nurtures and abandons  
Shackles and releases.  
An oxymoron of calm temper tantrums  
Shrinking and reaching.  
Each stage in one person  
And I tell her I love her again.

## Sabrina McLaughlin

---

### Cruel Dichotomy

When  
My Mother  
Was A Young Child,  
He  
Was  
A  
Domestic Tyrant Of Abuse—  
Verbal  
And  
Emotional.  
But,  
When I Was A  
Four  
Year  
Old  
Girl  
He Was  
The  
Old  
Man  
Who Walked With Me  
Through Autumn Woods,  
Looking For Windfall Acorns.



## Willows Singing, at Sunset

*"Strings in the earth and air  
make music sweet;  
strings by the river where  
the willows meet."*

*~James Joyce*

The brook runs through  
This rural village,  
Through the sun-dappled shade  
Of a park  
Surrounded by  
Pastures and orchards.  
On the banks  
Of the brook,  
Willows stand,  
Close to the brink,  
As if they are bending  
Their rooted knees  
And nodding Their leafy heads  
To look down at  
Small silver fish  
Swimming through the  
Shimmering  
Of the shallow stream.  
The sun sinks  
Behind distant mountains,  
Coloring the sky  
The shade of roses –  
At this hour,  
In this light,  
It is easy to believe  
That it is a holy mountain,  
A sacred place.  
The wind picks up,  
Begins to whisper and whistle

With the coming  
Of the night—  
It becomes a spirit  
Moving through  
Thin withy branches,  
Giving a voice to  
Rattling limbs and  
Whispering leaves.  
The trees have  
Become woodwinds;  
In natural harmony,  
They accompany the echo  
Of the waters  
Running over stones  
Below.  
Or, it is as if  
The willows are  
Huddling together  
In the cool softness  
Of gathering twilight,  
Drawing closer  
To each other,  
Talking, whispering, singing,  
As the sunset  
Paints the sky.

## Wichitah Leng

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### I hate snack vending machines!

So on Monday, I went to go get a Little Debbie's Nutty Bar, \$0.75. I inserted a dollar and went to press F3, I pressed F and it shut off on me. I asked my supervisors who told me to go see the guy in charge of the machines. I thought to myself, "that stupid vending machine." I was too lazy to go down and get my dollar back, besides, why would they believe me?

Today, I see it's freshly stocked, so instead of inserting a dollar I go make change for it. I insert \$.75 for the Little Debbie's oatmeal cream double stuff cookie, "mm mmm good." I went to press F3 and it worked. I had a big smile on my face, but just as it was ready to spit it out, the corner of the cookie got smooshed into the side of the wall of the rotating thingy. IT WAS STUCK! It was hanging by a corner laughing at me, clearly mocking my situation. I tried in vain to shake the machine that had to have weighed a good 400 pounds. It was stuck against the walls so it didn't really shake. People walked by mumbling comments as I shivered in the fetal position by the demonic machine. "Why oh why must you tease me so evil vendor?" Then a bright idea came to me. Move it out of the wall.

This would prove tedious, for there wasn't much room on the side as there was a soda vending machine next to it. Carefully I moved it back and forth in what would seem to onlookers as a tango with a giant machine. Then, when I had enough clearance from the wall, I picked that son'a bitch up as high as I could off the front edges and dropped it, thundering sounds down the hall way. I could hear the machine shouting, "NO!!!" as the cookie made its way to the drop exit. The machine held on with every last bit, until on the fourth lift I had succeeded in dislodging the cookie. It made a crying sound as I pushed it back to its spot against the wall. Ahh, the sweet taste of victory.

NOT THIS DAY EVIL VENDING MACHINE,  
NOT THIS DAY!

## Gabe LeDonne

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### Lady Rose

Being no master of prose  
No Twain, no James, or Thoreau  
And having no poet's nose  
Not Shelly, not Keats, or Poe  
I still make a sad attempt  
For my charming Lady Rose

Her presence, it incites me  
Delights me and ignites me  
My heart bursts so completely  
Through every fiber in me  
A shot of serotonin  
Drowns verbal ability

For her smile, it overcomes  
Defeating natural tongue  
It is so easily won  
By her charm, wit, and person  
That I am left without words  
Pathetic, inept, and dumb.

My knees begin to tremble  
Confidence disassembles  
Sweat drips down my temple  
I think I'm going mental  
Say *something* you idiot!  
I barely voice a morsel

Incoherent babbling  
Utterances bumbling  
Words don't flow—just mumbling  
Chance slips through my jumbling  
Polysyllabic bullshit  
Before her, I'm crumbling.

“Hi.” She says so politely  
A chance! I think privately  
(Knocking opportunity)  
Lips! Stop sitting idly!  
But obnoxious silence clouds my hopes  
And mute I maintain—tragically.

Damn you! You indolent tongue  
Damn you! You breathless lungs  
Damn you! You lips gone numb  
Damn you! You voice undone  
Left floundering in your wake  
Is a poor romantic bum.

While I struggle to find the fire  
To express my inner heart’s desire  
She gently tugs my arm’s attire  
And with her touch she then inspires  
Like a generator to an amplifier  
My voice to chant like a church choir

Sound shines like the light of day  
My voice no longer at bay.  
Romance floods like Hemmingway.  
After such a long delay  
My decree of love reduced to say,  
“Hello, Rose—How are you today?”

## Emily Bly

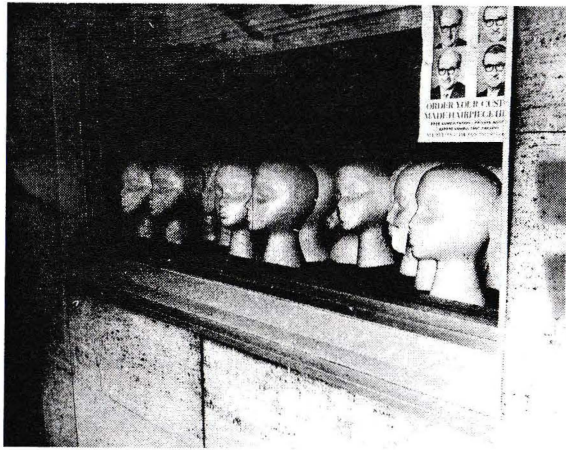
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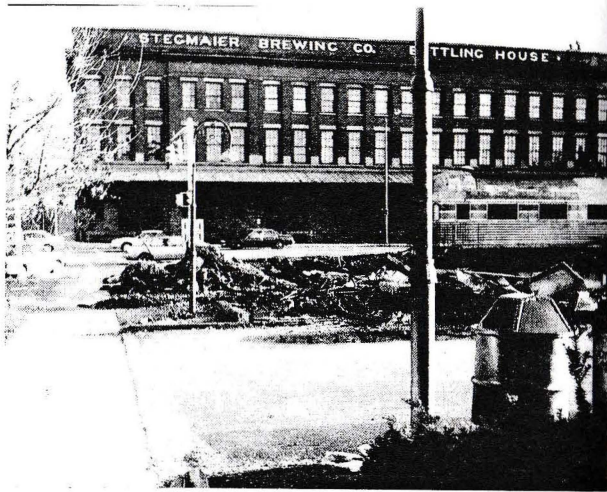
*Emily and Abby at the Park*



*Celtic Cross*



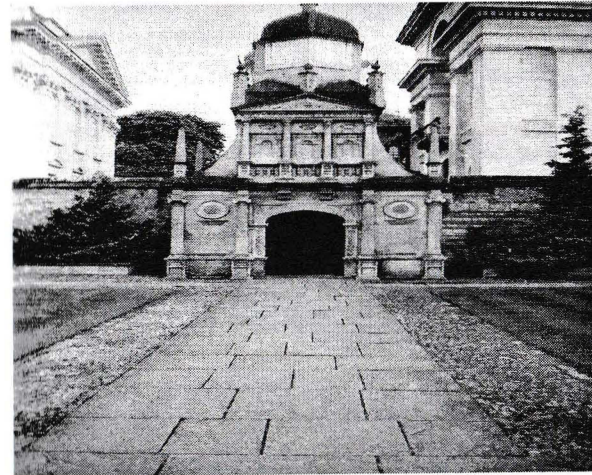
*Haunt*



*"Palookas?"*

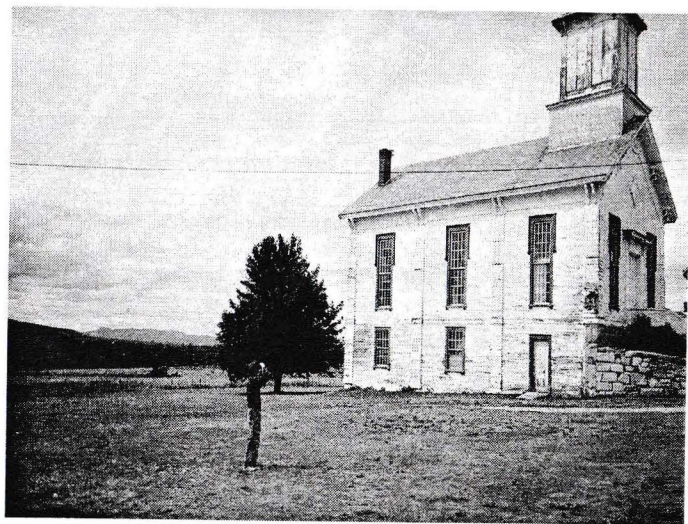
## Monica Cardenas

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*Gate of Honor*

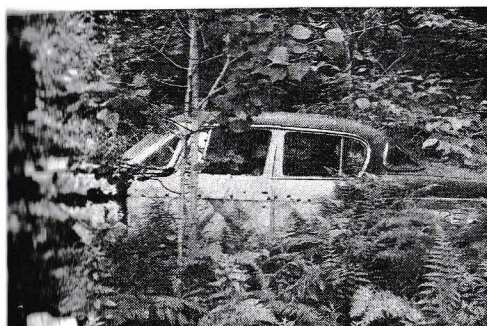
Joseph Cortegerone



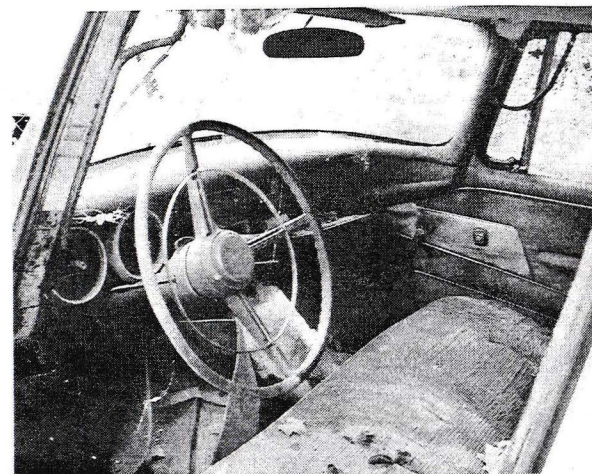
*A Picture of Charlie Pretending to take a Picture*

Vermont, 1999

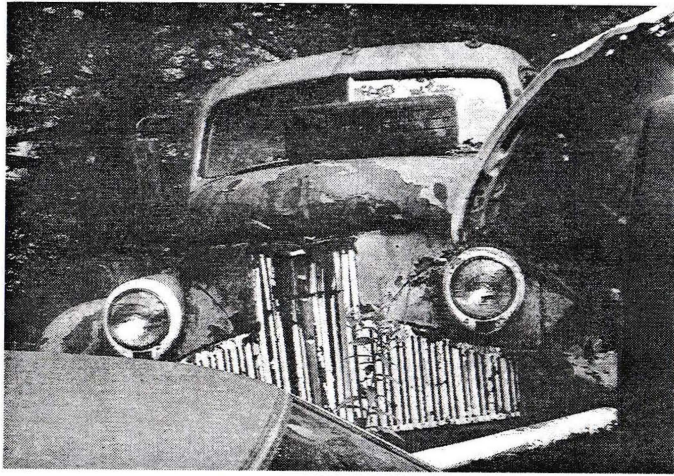
Joe Deangelis



*Stud*

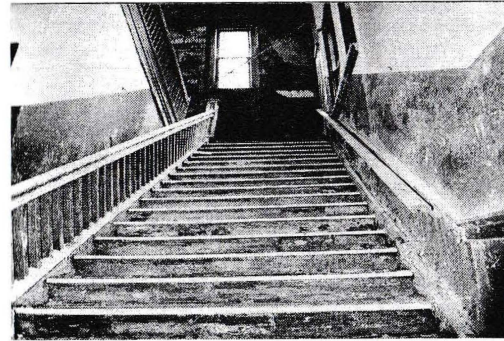


*Stud Interior*



*Chevy Truck*

Kristin Derlunas



*St. Mary's*



*In Through The Out Door*

Jason McDermott

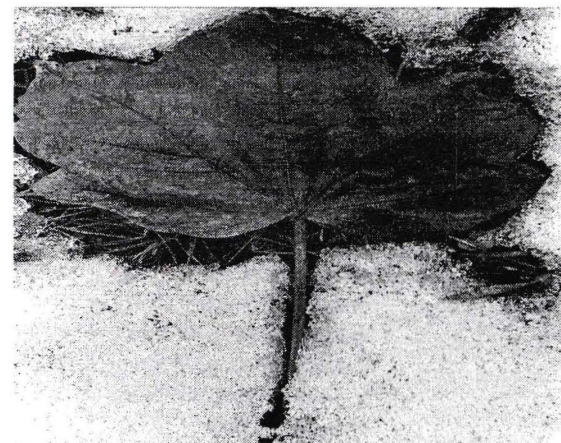


*Integration*

Crystal Wah



*Silhouettes*



*A Cold Autumn*



*Stars and Bars*

## Amber Lawson

### **Pictures in Smoke**

My father only has two pictures of himself  
When he was young  
A dirty blond nine year old  
Baseball uniform and a sideways grin  
And an eleven year old  
Opening a new bicycle on Christmas

Some pictures were lost moving  
From a small house to a smaller house in 1972  
Some damaged by a basement flood  
Too water logged for salvation

The last became ashes of a faulty electrical wire  
The fire burned everything  
Into memory and smoke

I'll never know the look of his baby fat  
Or see his awkward pose in a hand me down tuxedo  
Holding the arm of a nervous date

I'll never know his history in pictures  
I won't assemble nostalgic photo albums  
Or hang vintage frames on the wall

He cannot show his life in pictures  
So he tells it in words  
And—I am spellbound

His life is a story  
As all our lives  
Pictures are only moments  
Facades of truth



Through words I 'see'  
An understanding of him  
Much more than just a picture

Aromas creeping through cracks  
Mingled with ancient dust and dreams  
Bottled dancers, frozen fliers  
Ephemeral energies swathed in resin  
Reposed in flight  
Resplendent shades of histories  
Oblivious of time's tarried path  
Streaked with eons of light  
Existence so extant, yet for want of life

## Ben Kushner

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### ACT 1

#### INSIDE

*Before the curtain rises, everyone should be given some kind of food. Incense should be burned throughout. There are five stools set in a straight line on stage. A person sits on each one. From left to right is SIGHT, HEARING, TOUCH, SMELL, and TASTE. Each character is named for the sense he or she is missing. They each wear a T-shirt with an empty circle ring with the slash through it and a hand/eye/nose etc. to represent which sense they are missing. Each one faces a different direction. All roles must be the same gender, but either is possible. For ease of writing, they will be listed as he/him.*

Hearing cannot speak, but uses sign language. When he speaks, it is translated by a voice over a PA system. The voice changes every time.

A bell rings. They all face away from the audience except Hearing. Touch nudges Hearing who then turns to the back.

#### TASTE

Why do you put a baby in a blender feet first?  
(Silence.)

So you can watch it's expression.

#### SMELL

That's horrible.

#### TASTE

You're worse.

#### HEARING

(In sign language.)

What did he say?

TOUCH  
(Signing and speaking.)  
Don't worry about it.

SIGHT  
Who are you talking to?

TOUCH  
Hearing.

SIGHT  
What did he say?

TOUCH  
What did he say.

SIGHT  
Don't mock me.

SMELL  
That's what he said.

A bell rings. All but Hearing turn one quarter clockwise.

Touch nudges Hearing. Hearing then turns one quarter clockwise.

What do you guys want to do after this?

TASTE  
Anyone want to see a movie?

SIGHT  
Hey!

TASTE  
Hear a movie.

HEARING  
(Signing.)  
What did he say?

TOUCH  
(Signing and speaking.)  
Want to go see a movie?

SIGHT  
Who are you talking to?

TOUCH  
Hearing.

SIGHT  
What did he say?

TOUCH  
What did he say.

SIGHT  
I told you not to mock me.

A bell rings. All but Hearing turn one quarter clockwise.  
They should be facing the audience.

Touch nudges Hearing, who then turns to face the audience.

SMELL  
Well, are we going to a movie?

TASTE  
Depends, who's paying?

SMELL  
You are.

TASTE  
I can only afford four.

SMELL  
Then I think you should make the sacrifice.

TASTE

Why me? Why not Sight or Hearing?

SMELL

You can't taste the popcorn.

TASTE

You can't smell it

SMELL

YOU FIEND! How dare you say something like that to a handicapped man?

TASTE

You just said I couldn't taste the popcorn!

HEARING

(Signing)

What did he say?

TOUCH

(Signing and speaking.)

Don't worry about it, smell and Taste are fighting.

SIGHT

Who are you talking to?

TOUCH

Hearing.

SIGHT

What did he say?

TOUCH

What did he say.

SIGHT

DON'T MOCK ME!

TOUCH

I'm not. That's what he—

A bell rings. All but Hearing turn one quarter clockwise.

Touch nudges Hearing. Hearing then turns one quarter clockwise.

SIGHT

What about what's going on at the capital?

TOUCH

I know.

(Sarcastic)

Our wise and powerful leader

(Normal)

is sure making a mess of things.

TASTE

I think he should just have let me take care of everything, like I offered.

HEARING

(Signing)

What did he say?

TOUCH

(Signing and speaking)

I remarked on how our wise and powerful leader was making a mess of this war, and Taste repeated for the 57th time today that he should have taken care of everything.

HEARING

(Signing)

It's obvious to me that this war is going to start a chain of events that will eventually lead to the destruction of Chuck E. Cheese's and the production of a new Olsen Twins movie.

TOUCH

(Signing and speaking.)

The horror!

SIGHT

Who are you talking to?

TOUCH

Hearing.

SIGHT

What did he say?

TOUCH

It's obvious to me that this war is going to start a chain of events that will eventually lead to the destruction of Chuck E. Cheese's and the production of a new Olsen Twins movie.

(Pause)

Either that, or "What did he say?" How the hell should I know? I don't speak sign language!

SIGHT

You know what? As soon as I can tell where you are, I'm going to—

A bell rings. All but Hearing turn one quarter clockwise.

Touch nudges Hearing. Hearing turns one quarter clockwise. They are now facing the back.

TASTE

When people die, do they get buried wearing underwear?

SMELL

Why would you think about something like that?

TASTE

I get bored.

SMELL

How could you possibly be THAT bored?

TASTE

Easy.

SMELL

Want to go check?

TASTE

No.

(Mumbling)

Sick fuck.

HEARING

(Signing.)

What did he say?

TOUCH

(Signing and speaking.)

They were talking about necrophilia.

SIGHT

Who are you talking to?

TOUCH

Hearing.

SIGHT

What did he say?

TOUCH

What did he say.

SIGHT

I told you not to mock me.

A bell rings, and all but Hearing face to their original positions; the actions of the rest are as per usual.

CURTAIN FALLS

END

## Bernie Kovacs

### **Werewolves of Greater Wilkes-Barre**

You meet a lot of weird people when you work nights. I always work nights. I worked the graveyard shift as a cook at Denny's for two years. I was a night watchman at the Penguin Book Warehouse for eight months. I've been bar-tending for the past five years. I'm generally a night owl, always have been. When I was a freshman in high school I moved from my well-lit room on the second floor of my parents' house on Elk Street into the damp confines of their cellar. My father had redone it years before in hopes of turning it into a den of some sort but, thanks to my mother, his dream never materialized. The basement had atrophied from lack of use the way a limb does. It became the perfect place for an adolescent to spend his formative years. There was little light from the outside world and the whole of it was perpetually ten degrees colder than it was outside. I think that's where I learned to love the dark and the dank.

A friend of mine once informed me that Scandinavians have the highest suicide and depression rates due to the fact they get little to no sunlight at certain times of the year. Seasonal Affective Disorder, I think it's called. They say that lack of sunlight has a negative affect on the body and that sleeping during the daylight hours knocks your circadian rhythms all to hell, but I've never really suffered any ill effects. I'm a night person, just like there are dog people and cat people. I'm a night person. Well, anyway, back to my main point, when you work nights you meet a lot of weird people.

Punks, bikers, transvestites, hookers, drug dealers, pimps, fart kids, you meet them all. My personal favorites are Goths, the ones who say they're vampires. They wear their puffy pirate shirts and black leather pants and Morticia dresses and dance to bad techno flashing their plastic teeth and pretending they're characters from an Anne Rice novel. They're a hoot. I meet a lot of them. Every single one of them swears they're undead and I play along because as a bartender that's generally my job. I'm not there to get you drunk. I'm there to get you drunk and inflate your ego. You're always right. "Yeah, you're wife sure sounds like a miserable bitch. 'Nother shot?" "Yep, the Giants look good this season. 'Nother Beer?" "You're a vampire, no shit.

'Nother Martini?" You get used to people who say they're undead. It's second hat after a while. It's when you meet one that says he's a werewolf that your interest gets perked.

He came in about two years ago while I was working at a dance club called "Dante's." Yeah, I know. Some dip shit with a Goth bent and enough brain cells to remember all the way back to senior English in high school picks the most cliché name in the world for his club. I assume I need not describe its décor or the type of individual it drew. The place had more Christopher Lee wanna-be's than you could shake the proverbial stick at. I'd been working at that shit hole for four months before I met Marv.

Marv wasn't Dante's usual clientele. First, he was old enough to be somebody's dad and looked like he was. Second, he wasn't wearing liquid eyeliner or nail polish. Third, his pants weren't assless. This of course immediately grabbed my attention. So, when he sidled up to the bar and ordered a Yuengling and a shot of JD. I asked him what he was doing there.

"Getting a shot and a beer," he smiled back and lit up a Lucky. He glanced around a bit to take in the surroundings.

"Makes sense," I said. Actually I shouted. No one spoke in Dante's, they shouted. You had to otherwise you couldn't hear over the mind numbingly bad, soul shattering techno. "It's, if you don't mind me being so blunt, you aren't exactly blending in." I looked around the club and noticed that a nice semicircle of space had formed around the man in the cheap suit. The kids were all thinking the same thing I was, Narc.

"First bar I came across," he said. He sounded like a New Englander. His accent was thick enough even yelling it came out. I got him his beer and his shot and he handed me his American Express. It proclaimed him "Marvin A. Finn" in small black letters that rose slightly from its surface. I rang it up and asked if he wanted a tab.

"Yeah," he smirked. "I ain't goin' anywhere soon." He continued to look around the place and finding it to his likings, he leaned heavily on the bar.

"All right, chief," I said, handed him back his card, and wrote his name next to his drink tally behind the bar. "You from up north?" I got a round of butter nipples for a trio of men sporting wigs.

"Boston," he replied.

"You know there's a corner bar two blocks down from here."

"Yeah. I figured I'd check this place out though. These kids crack me up."

That was the extent of the conversation for a while. It was a Friday so it was busy and I knew there was no way in hell I was leaving before three thirty. That of course was fine by me. The spoiled rich kids who flocked to the place were good tippers and occasionally one of the Vampire wanna-bes would be so turned on by my underpaid mediocre good looks she'd let me fuck her in my shitty one bedroom apartment on Academy Street.

Marv started talking to me about two hours and three times as many rounds latter.

"You know," he bellowed over the loud music. "In three days, I'm going to turn into a wolf and eat somebody."

Now that's the way to start a conversation. I looked at him and smiled. All I could think of was that guy on the first season of NYPD Blue who they constantly had in lock up who swore he was werewolf. He frothed; he bit; he tried to hump Denis Franz's leg. This guy did none of that. He just sat there in his off the rack suit and sipped his beer. Was he serious? I didn't know, but this was new. A man claiming he was werewolf was about as common as a man claiming to be the Creature from the Black Lagoon. I played along.

"Oh really?" I asked as I mixed a Long Island iced tea for a cute girl with way too much eye shadow and minute breasts pushing out the top of her corset.

"Yeah," Marv said, "Happens every month."

I gave the girl with the mosquito bite tits her drinks and rang her up. I looked over my shoulder and asked Marv, "So what do you look like when you turn into a werewolf? Like a big wolf or like Lon Cheney Jr. in bad makeup?"

"I dunno," he shrugged and downed his seventh helping of Number 7 brand. "I don't really know what I do when I'm a wolf. I know I eat people though. Sometimes I wake up next to the bodies."

"No shit?"

"No shit."

"You're out of your mind," I laughed.

"I get that a lot," Marv laughed back. "But I got all the signs." He held his hands up, palms facing towards me, and I could see they were covered in thin whips of hair.

"You know what that means?"

"You have a subscription to *Penthouse*?" I smirked.

"Howzabout this?" he asked, licked his long index finger and ran it over his thick, shaggy uni-brow.

"And that means?" I asked as I poured him another shot.

"I'm a werewolf."

I shook my head and hurried down the end of the bar where a buxom underage girl was waving a twenty-dollar bill at me. Louie had to have let her in. She had to be no older than nineteen and had the build to prove it. I fetched her a fuzzy navel and went back to Marv, filling drinks along the way.

"So one big eyebrow means you're a werewolf?" I asked.

"My uncle Mikey had one big eyebrow and he never turned into a werewolf."

"You're confusing cause and effect," he slurred. "I also got yellow teeth," he smiled widely at me, "and enlarged canines," he mumbled through his clenched smile.

"I'd blame the Luckies for the color," I said and worked my way to the other end of the bar. A man wearing a prom dress asked for my number so I gave him my best friend's. Henry hated when I did that but it was always worth the laugh.

By the time I got back down to Marv, Shirley, one of the club's other bartenders, had already set him up.

"You still don't believe me," Marv said and swigged his beer. "I'm telling the truth."

"Marvin, my friend, we get a lot of vampires in this place, but you're our first werewolf. Don't you guys have your own place up on Huston Street?"

Marv laughed and dropped me a five for my attempt at humor. "Good one, kid. I like you... And it's Marv."

"Thanks, Marv," I nodded and kept on working the now fully packed bar. That gave me enough time to formulate another question for my lycanthropic patron. It was a good one.

"So you only turn into a werewolf each full moon, right?"

"Yeah."

"But there's only one full moon each month."

"Yeah."

"So you're only a werewolf twelve days a year?"

"Yeah."

"That's not that bad."

"Could be worse."

By two in the morning, Marv was a rolling drunk and I was

getting tired. I'd been out all Thursday with Henry drinking beer and shooting rats at the dump down the street from his grungy little apartment. Henry had odd ideas about what a night out meant. Still, plugging rats with a .22 was both fun and easy on a bartender's wallet.

Marv flagged me over sometime around quarter after two and ordered a fresh round.

"You look like shit," I told him. "You want me to call you a cab?"

"Not yet. I can still see straight."

"Okay, Marv."

"Grab me a beer, would ya, kid?"

So, I got Marv his beer and he nursed it for a full hour. Louie was slowly rounding up the stragglers who refused to leave after last call and Marv was still there perched on his stool. I told Louie not to give him the boot. I figured the old man had amused me enough during the course of the night that I'd help him out.

"Where you staying, Marv? I'll call you a cab."

"Naw," Marv groaned, "I ain't done yet. Some kid with green hair told me there's this after hours place about two blocks away."

Flannery's. Run down Irish tavern run by a Hindu couple. They'd bought it on auction after its namesake had died of lymphoma. Being the night owl I am, I knew where it was and gave Marv directions.

"You wanna come grab one with me?" he asked and at first I was tempted to turn him down, go home and grab a full twelve hours of sleep. But, how often do you get to tie one on with a fellow who thinks he's a werewolf? I agreed to his proposal and I walked and he staggered to Flannery's. I was really interested in his life as a large canine so I prodded him with questions on the walk over.

"So you got bit by a werewolf?"

"Yep," he said, his voice carrying. He was still hearing the music from the club. Every night after work I'd trundle home, my head filled with either a dull whine or a throbbing beat. It was second nature to me at that point, but Marv, new to the club and very drunk, was probably suffering from it far worse. "I was walking my dog and got bit by a werewolf."

"What'd it look like?"

"My dog or the werewolf?"

"The werewolf."

He kicked a can into the gutter and almost toppled forward. "I don't remember. I got hit from behind while Pig was taking a whiz.

"Your dog's name is Pig?"

"Yeah," he answered as if such a question was ludicrous.

"Okay..."

"Well, anyway... He jumped me from behind and bit me and we both got hit by a Cadillac El Dorado."

"You don't remember what the werewolf looked like but you remember the make of the car that hit you?"

"Yep. I was eyeballing its grill until the police showed up. I think it was a '94... They said it was a wild dog. I had to get rabies shots. Hurt like hell."

"How'd you get hit by the car?"

"Knocked me into the street. Only real blessing was I dropped the leash when I got nailed by the werewolf so Pig didn't get hurt at all."

I smiled and hocked a wad of phlegm on to the sidewalk. "Now let me guess... The wolf wasn't there when the fella who hit you got out of his car."

"Yes siree Bob." Marv lit up a lucky and I grabbed him by the shoulder to steady him.

"We're here," I said, and helped him into Flannery's. I got a pitcher of Lager from the bar and we grabbed a table.

"You still don't believe me," Marv stated as I filled his mug.

"Well, I'm kind of up in the air at the moment," I admitted.

His story was obviously bullshit, but Marv seemed too functional to be totally out to lunch. Probably some mild schizophrenia. Here how that came out? Sounded vaguely intelligent, didn't it? I dated a psyche major for six months. "What are you doing in town anyway?" I asked.

"My aunt died. I'm staying at my brother's place. His kids are driving me insane." Sounded plausible, but that didn't explain the suit or why he was getting piss drunk. I wanted to ask when the funeral was, but figured I'd best keep to my current line of questioning. Marv looked ready to fade out at any moment.

"They know you're a werewolf?"

"Nope."

I shrugged. Marv drank his beer and looked around the room. Rahib was cleaning the mugs behind the bar and smiled a hello at me. Marv eyed Rahib and then looked at me like a dog who hears

its master's voice on the answering machine message when he's not home, head cocked to the side, brow wrinkled.

"Long story."

"Oh."

"So does anybody else know you're a werewolf?"

"Other werewolves."

That's what you get for asking an open-ended question to a mad man. I shook my head and drank my beer. "So you know other werewolves?"

"Not on like friendly speaking terms or anything," said Marv. He belched loudly and excused himself.

"But you know other werewolves?"

"Yeah, sure. We pick each other out pretty well. Most of them don't even know they're werewolves. Some people like me do. Some can even play with it."

"Like how? Turn into a werewolf whenever they want?"

Marv nodded. "Yeah, sure. They still eat people though, they're just a bit more in control of who they eat."

"But you..."

"Can't do shit about it."

"Well, why don't you lock yourself up in a room or handcuff yourself to a radiator or something?"

He shrugged as if the question dignified no reply and drank some more. Then I asked the question I could tell he knew was coming. "Howzabout I hang out with you three nights from now and see if you turn into a werewolf?"

"Why?"

"Curiosity."

"You'll get eaten."

"By you?"

"No, by the Easter Bunny... Of course by me! I like you, kid. I don't want to eat you."

"But you will."

"Yesssssss. I'm a fucking werewolf. Werewolves eat people."

"What if you had a really big meal before hand?"

"Cut the shit, kid. I hate being patronized."

"Sorry."

We drank in silence for a few awkward seconds and Marv finally caved. I don't know if it was because he was drunk or he truly believed he was a werewolf, but he caved. Quite quickly I

must add. "Okay fine," he said. "I'll meet you in the park on Carey Ave. before sundown on Monday. Okay? It's a few blocks from my brother's place. You know where it is?"

"Yeah, I can find it. That's cool."

"I'm gonna eat you, you know."

"I know."

"Just so you're clear on that."

So I went to meet Marv at the park on Carey Ave around sundown on Monday. I got there late due to the fact my mother called and asked if I was taking care of myself. It's impossible to get my mother off the phone and telling her that I was going to a local park to see if a madman was actually going to sprout fangs and fur was not an option. So I got there late, the sun was already half behind the mountains, and I got attacked.

The doctors said I was pretty lucky. If the bullet had been just an inch to the left it would have punctured my heart and not just a lung. I lost the twenty-seven dollars I had in my wallet, my high school class ring, and my credit cards. A lady who lived across the street from the park called the cops when she saw the fellow with the gun. He was gone by the time the cops and the meat wagon arrived, of course. I spent a week in the hospital. I was let go early due to good behavior and got a new job. Bartenders aren't allowed much sick time. We're not union.

I haven't seen Marv since and there were no reports of "Man Devoured by Werewolf!" in the paper the day after I was shot. There wasn't even any "Man Mauled by Dog" type news. I made the police blotter though. First time my name has ever been in the paper.

I doubt I'll ever see Marv again, like two ships passing in the night I like to think. He was a nice guy, a bit batty, but a nice guy. He also makes one hell of an amusing anecdote, complete with surprisingly violent ending. I'd like to meet him again and tell him what happened to me when I went to meet him and see if he ever even went to that park. Hell, I'd even buy him a beer. I've got a pretty cool scar now and I'm one of the select few who can say they took a .38 slug to the chest and survived.

I've got the bullet, too. It was originally in evidence, but a few months ago Benjamin Franklin and I managed to convince the cop who was working my case that since it was just a mugging



gone bad and my "assailant," as they like to call such super-criminals, was probably never going to be caught he should let me keep the bullet they dug out of me as souvenir, a good luck charm. So now it sits on my bookshelf in an empty baby food jar, a funny little silver wad cutter.

## Matthew Koch

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### Window Scene

Today I saw the sun set  
With tears in both my eyes  
Today I heard my son laugh  
While his father cries

Today I felt a gath'ring wind  
It brushed me as it passed  
Today I saw the sun bow down  
On the moon's behalf

Tomorrow is a whisper  
For darkness lingers here  
Tomorrow is a silent wish  
Of only you, my dear

Tomorrow is an omen  
And what of them? You ask  
Tomorrow is the future, dear  
But me, I am the past

### Ricketts Glen

I approach the precipice  
at dawn  
I wonder if they're wondering  
where I might have gone  
or why I'm not at home

The water cascades down  
the stone  
Castigated, Correlated, Crenated—

the river, it flows on  
not knowing where it's from

It bends just ahead  
around the turn  
But I think I will remain  
for I am still alone  
I just cannot go on

A leap of faith, a  
muffled sound  
accompanies my descent  
to the ground  
into the deep, dark calm

My thoughts seep forth  
into the pond  
A fine filigree of  
forgotten foam  
through the forest flow, roam

I am home  
I am gone  
I race off  
toward  
dawn

## Matthew Faraday Jones

### **Learn to Swim**

My world is coming together and yet feels as though  
It's crumbling into ruin

I cannot make it over that hill,  
The one that's backside is a 90 degree drop-  
No climbing, no slow descent- just a plunge into  
something utterly tangible  
Lights dimming upstairs, no activity present  
Legs giving out, forward progress has failed  
Time to look inward, time to destroy then rebuild  
From the inside out  
Time to initiate a change in the way things are perceived  
Time to change it all, this stagnation is lifeless  
Living but completely deceased  
Shallow water turns to murky abyss,  
No footing at all  
Criticism is a waste of time, radical destruction of  
accepted and learned habits yields better results-at least  
they're different  
Sleeping has been carried out with vain intentions-  
Stop thinking only of myself

How else to view my world?  
By actively playing a role in its reconstruction

What before then?

Total anarchic chaos  
Why bother killing just the head-  
I'm taking the body down with me

### Suicidal Optimism in practice

Can't keep my eyes open but my mind is racing and she's still talking about why she curls her hair but only on occasion while taking long gulps of lite beer I catch a good look at her in the light and realize that I think I'd fuck her. At first I'd thought no.

"Nothing looks better on naked skin than curly hair," Dan quips trying to be sultry but failing miserably.

I grimace and shake my head, feeling something altogether different in accordance with said statement. Everyone else laughs, shaking the table and spilling the top of my beer which I haven't even touched because I feel sick to my stomach. The girl grins and surprisingly does not turn red which I was hoping she would do.

"Date a lot of curly haired guys?" the girl asks.

This is a joke and some of them laugh while I stare at her and try to figure out how she thinks this is funny and I'm only getting more tired. Dan obviously feels the same and looks at me unsure of what to say next.

"Jesus Christ," I muttered to no one in particular.

Someone looks at me, her friend I think whose name is Kelly who I would not fuck.

"You just got that?" she asks me laughing.

I just stare at them, small smile involved. Rome was burning in my line of vision and I couldn't find a violin so I sipped my drink nearly spitting it out once it hit my mouth it was so warm. My eyes were watering now because she was smoking a cigarette but not inhaling very much and a single thought started to repeat in my head but I can't remember what it was because I couldn't stop laughing.

### Rashidah Ismaili

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#### YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND NEXT TOMORROW

#40

(This is the last of a narrative poem in forty parts, one for each day)

Today the waiting ends.  
Yesterday's mourning ends.  
Clear skies of Fall cover  
streets scarred and empty.

Today the current returns.  
Wind echoes in hollow towers  
of old and abandoned minarets.  
A tinny voice rings out calling,

calling to prayers those who  
yet have faith left in emaciated  
parched bodies. Slow steps  
find their way from water tap

to mosque. Today in the courtyard  
of an old, old masjid where  
blue and green tiles, chipped  
and cracked speak to horror,

sufferance, and old voice  
raises up the words,  
invoking a Presence  
that some feel  
was absent a month ago.

When the sky was blotted out  
by a mushroom spread of darkness  
that choked southbound birds.  
Children remembering a bad dream

run believing a horde of ghosts  
Are chasing them. Come now.

It is time to go down to the river.  
It is time to cast off dark shrouds.

It is time to dip in cool water.  
It is time for lamman.  
Come, wear this djeleba of pale-green.  
Here, let the scent of attar

discreetly cover the stench of decomposition  
Come, tie your hair under a white hejab.  
Come, it is time to end the idat.  
It is time for smiles and dances.

Fires wait in crumbling back yards  
for old and tired clothes of sad times.  
Today, a widow plucks the soft puff  
of once-were-skirts, pants  
all piled in a heap  
left on the other side of tomorrow.

She says to the air,  
"Come husband, father, brother, son  
uncle, all. Sink yourselves in the tin tubs  
of tortuous hours alone, in battle,

distance be removed from your skin.  
Ah Ahmed, come to me. And I shall  
greet you in a new shawl. And I will  
rub you in the attar of a thousand roses.

You will sing to me in a voice rarely used.  
Tonight we shall feast and sing of new times.  
The night approaches in a red ball  
and your arms painted by the sun.

It sinks slowly to the other side of the world.  
Come little ones and eat.  
Come eat, there is enough.

Tonight we eat halal and our dreams be blessed.  
Tonight when the sun sets,

tonight when the moon ascends,  
tonight when the Call comes  
we shall race to answer.

And I shall run with you my sisters  
and laugh. Ah, the sound of laughter  
held back all these past days. By now  
it has ended and the joy promised

comes slowly as food—unfamiliar  
seeks a place in flattened bellies.  
It has ended, the enforced fast  
that sought to starve us all.

We are here and here we are.  
This land under our feet is ours.  
With our hands we will build.  
Tomorrow when the moon sinks  
And sunrises, we will become

shadows moving, moving  
against the landscape  
of our sleep—filled nights.  
We will plant and water  
This our land. Our land, me—

I am waiting for you  
to come up a hilly road  
singing, singing.  
And I will meet you

and throw petals  
from a thousand roses  
and stand watching them  
fall at your feet.

## Joseph Cortegerone

---

### A Reader's Mind

the gathering of leaves  
just before spring

has to do with the wind  
upon a hill

over which pass  
a thousand tiny insects

### An Instant of Pain

The pattern of a raw egg on the floor  
of nowhere, touching a fish,  
pleading with the police to  
send a communiqué to the couch  
where she left a stain of blood

### Meditation Under Poststructuralism

no sparrow flies here  
among wooden rafters  
through epic mead halls  
and the ethereal circumference  
of our synthetic hours

a trace of space unhinged  
complicating things further  
from within and out within  
contemplative sacrifice leaves us  
only contrived dissemination

a cat that burrows into  
the minds of complacent readers  
shall be our new Christ  
the unappeasable diction of the damned  
shall be our bread and wine

wish and desire commingling  
and looking up and down  
there is something in the in-between  
without which nothing at all  
makes sense

### *A Tale of Horror and Suspense*

Of all the things that could have been said he somehow chose to say the worst possible thing. Now he was alone and in the middle of the desert in the Southwestern part of the United States with only 23 Canadian dollars.

At the time this story was being written 23 Canadian dollars equaled approximately 14.8291 U. S. dollars and 14.8291 U.S. dollars equaled approximately 1,722.10 Japanese Yen. It is also interesting to note that 1,722.10 Japanese Yen was approximately equal to the almost humorously large 24,640.00 Italian Lira, 24,640.00 Italian Lira being approximately 892.655 Algerian Dinars which, even more humorously, seemed to equal only about 22.9999 Canadian dollars.

He remembered seeing a gas station about two kilometers up the road and decided to try his luck getting there. It was pretty damn hot and the person who'd been driving him had taken his bottle of water. He also had to go to the bathroom and realized the cruelty that brought to his situation. (There are no bushes behind which to pee in this part of the desert.)

He remembered the conjugation of the Old Irish word "guidid" meaning, "to pray." The conjugation of the Secondary Future is:

	Singular	Plural
1.	no gigsinn	no gigsimmis
2.	no gigesta	no gigeste
3.	no gigsed	no gigsitis
Pass.	no gigeste	no gigstitis

This was fine to pass the time but he was still thirsty. Hopefully a car would stop soon. Just then he thought, "Clamar a tha thu?" and how many people confuse Gaelic with Irish. The Modern Irish for "How are you?" being "Conas tá tú?" His father was from Nova Scotia and spoke a little Gaelic and so did he. Just then a car passed him but he had, despite the scorching heat and his wanting intensely to urinate, not to mention his thirst, only about a kilometer to go. He could see the gas station more and more clearly every moment.

A car stopped beside him and the beautiful woman inside it asked him if he needed a lift or, as he would prefer, a ride. He said "sure" and told the beautiful woman driving the car that he wanted to go to the gas station to which, by this time, they were so very close. She said she'd give him a ride but not to "that" gas station. Without thinking he said "okay."

The woman spoke with an accent he had never before heard but she was still almost completely understandable in every word and gesture. (As almost completely as that can be.) She told him she was from somewhere east of where they were but had lost all her family there and was now headed in no particular direction. He liked that idea since he had nothing as far as physical possessions go except the 22.9999 Canadian dollars and the clothes he was wearing. He told her his name was Donald and that he was extremely thirsty and had to go to the bathroom. She said her name was Susan and that they would stop soon enough.

For Donald, every second passed as an hour. Every moment brought him to the brink of disaster as far as Susan's white seat-covers went. His agony was insane and he could tell that she knew he was in pain but seemed not at all to care. He thought perhaps there was nothing to say about it and that after this was all over he would be a much stronger person. He wondered what she could be thinking just sitting there while he was in pain. Was she also in pain? Is *that* why they still hadn't reached a gas station sufficient for her?

After two hours of ruthless driving they finally stopped so he could go to the bathroom (After they exchanged their names they had said nothing to one another but only each nodded or grunted or made some other noise every once in a while.) He was glad he

finally got to use a bathroom. She used one too and after they met in the lobby they were both full of words and excitement. Neither of them knew exactly where they were and neither of them seemed to care very much. It was at this moment that Susan decided to take off her dress in the middle of the crowd gathered around the in-door merry-go-round. She slipped it over her head with ease and practiced finesse, but she was wearing another dress under it so everyone who looked on in fear or anticipation was, in the end, disappointed. Donald seemed to think nothing of the whole event, but only took a sip of the pop he had bought after having gone to the bathroom. She asked for a sip and so he gave it to her. Donald didn't think of it as "pop" though and neither did she. They both preferred the term "soda." They had had a conversation about this by the weathered fuel pumps. They were finally starting to understand each other.

Ten days later they were married in a ceremony heralded as, "Perhaps the most inadequate undertaking of the year" and "Pure bogus poppycock." The rain fell red. Their daughter would grow a hump in a place no woman should ever have a hump but they tried no less and were feeling good by the time they finally made it home.

It was this that made all the difference. Silence and the memories of dresses and that first ride together.

The first time they made love he almost broke his member in half in a flurry of ill-fated excitement and she, well, she just smiled and took it all in.

He still carries around that 22.9999 Canadian dollars and sometimes she never thinks she'll let him pee. It is within these moments that they're at their best. These are the moments which seem most fleeting.

## Helene T. Caprari

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### The Sphere at Battery Park

Tried glass slivers condensed space  
And shape is subdued to scattered,  
Sung context...

(as the sky is darkest beneath the light—  
and what may be readily defined as a likeness  
one chooses to envision by),

Quiet are the voices,  
Tried.

Like dust moving on still, mid-day air,  
eyes grate away with wind.

Minutes pass  
as grains of structures  
fall

and the scattered,  
unsung glass  
silvers  
the ground.

### Night, Alone

He has elbows like his father.

and black tarred, callused skin;

raised sidewalks of his memory,

remembering

each time some black releases into the drain.

Pushing soot across rough linen,

Dark clings to the blurred release

Air grows cold outside

and he has not yet mined an image of Spring

from the grave.

### Wednesday Afternoon

She confronts styles, measurements and skin  
Speculates contemporary trends;  
Complacencies in sundresses like negligees  
Spun from girdles and the green freedoms of eve

She anticipates a holy rush from bright magazines,  
The dark, hovering encroachment of *image*;  
An exposed naval above hips expected to fit  
The haunting pages, ancient schemes

The wisdom in appearance seems a thing without sound,  
Seems to mingle the wide, winding days of identity,  
And the dreamt up dominion of what *is*  
And what is made to feel missing.

### Meagan Brown

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#### Invocation of thirteen-year-old Lust:

"I'm having palpitations!"  
"I'm having palpitations!"  
Was all I could think as he walked by  
No,  
Not walked  
Glided.  
Feet above the pavement glowing with pure white light.  
laughing with friends of an unknown joke.  
"God to be part of that joke, even the butt!"  
Would make me happy.  
A nervous giggle escapes my mouth as he glides by  
Without so much as a glance in my direction.  
And I, feet firmly planted on ground without luminosity,  
nervous, dejected, sweating, slink shamefully away  
As he glides further and further above the pavement.



Spring

Winter survived here so long  
But a beautiful spring goddess  
Wishes to show her beauty  
She wants the harsh winter within her  
But knows it can never be true  
Winter is not ready to die  
But the goddess wishes to flourish  
She soon takes the form of a flower  
And the next morning the sun  
Sparkling from a sleek glaze of frost  
Overcomes the winter  
And spring has begun.

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The Manuscript Society solicits submissions from Wilkes University students, faculty, staff and alumni. Submissions will help this publication continue for many more years to come.

YOU KNOW THAT YOU WANT TO SUBMIT TO US!!

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Meetings are weekly in Kirby Hall, room 108,  
on Thursdays at noon.

