

ARCHIVES

ZD6051

W225M

2004

[v.45]

FALL 2004

MANUSCRIPT

Wilkes University

MANUSCRIPT

Fall 2004

E.S. FARLEY LIBRARY
WILKES UNIVERSITY
WILKES-BARRE, PA



© 2004 by the Wilkes University *Manuscript* Society.
All rights reserved.

© 2004 by the Wilkes University *Manuscript* Society. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America by Offset Paperback Manufacturers, Dallas, PA. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any way, shape, or form—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, etc.—without express written consent from the publishers.

The following step must be completed in order to gain permission:

- 1 A nice letter to the *Manuscript* Society requesting permission.

After the letter is received, one or more of the following twenty-five steps may be assigned to you. Please note that the *Manuscript* Society reserves the right to change these steps without notice:

- 2 Complete memorization of *Manuscript* journals from the first issue to present. (You will be quizzed.)
- 3 Push a blue Chevy Malibu out of a muddy field.
- 4 Push a camel through the eye of a needle.
- 5 Reinvent the wheel with a used Kleenex and a small, mint-flavored toothpick.
- 6 Transmute lead into gold, and vice-versa.
- 7 Insert five golden tickets into random Wonka bars, then give the five lucky children who find them a tour of the Wonka factory, where four of them get into situations where they could potentially die horrible deaths, while writing a timeless children's book about it, even though the whole thing is a metaphor for the time period between the Depression and the space race.
- 8 Write the staff a nice thank-you note.
- 9 Sharpen and/or polish Ben Kushner's vast array of weaponry.
- 10 Actually attend the *Manuscript* Movie Night.
- 11 Complete, unquestioning servitude for a period of no less than five and no more than ten years to Dr. Mischelle Anthony, Dr. Bonnie Culver, Dr. J. Michael Lennon, and Deb Archavage, as the staff's way of saying thank you for everything they've ever done for us.
- 12 Feed my fish twice a day while I'm on vacation (not too much, we don't want to cloud the tank).
- 13 Write my lit. paper that's due tomorrow. (I haven't started it yet.)
- 14 Defeat current *Jeopardy* champion (Ken Jennings), showing the world the true power of *Manuscript* readers.
- 15 Go to the bank to withdraw money to pay my phone bill.
- 16 Pick up my dry cleaning.
- 17 Sew new buttons on my coat.
- 18 Teach a pack of feral, kamikaze squirrels how to drive.
- 19 Start research for my philosophy paper.

- 20 Go to the store for 1 doz. eggs, 1 gal. milk, and a nice steak for tonight.
- 21 Figure out when this turned from the steps needed for permission for use to my to-do list.
- 22 If you can read this, you don't need glasses.
- 23 Figure out how many degrees of separation you are from *Footloose* star Kevin Bacon.
- 24 Make sure I'm not drunk for next semester's copyright page. (Remember, kids, don't drink and write copyright pages.)
- 25 Submit to *Manuscript*.

MANUSCRIPT SOCIETY

Chief Editor

Helene T. Caprari

Assistant Editor

Rebecca V. Goodman

Junior Editors

Drew Amoroso

Joseph DeAngelis

Chris Hodorowski

Benjamin Kushner

Staff

Raychil Arndt

Lauren Carey

Kristin Derlunas

Alaina Fife

Jessika Geisler

Amy Kaspriskie

Marissa Philips

Angelina Teutonic

Faculty Advisors

Dr. Michelle Anthony

Dr. Bonnie Culver

- Acknowledgements -

Manuscript Society would like to thank Dr. Mischelle Anthony, Dr. Bonnie Culver, Dr. J. Michael Lennon, and Debra Archavage whose guidance, reassurance, and many hours of therapy got us through this. Manuscript Society would also like to thank the students, faculty and staff in the Wilkes Community. Without your submissions this book would be a lot shorter. The Society would also like to thank ourselves. This really would not have been completed without us. Good job, us.

CONTENTS

Helene T. Caprari	Editor's Introduction	xiii
J. Michael Lennon	The Professional Writer: Seven Archetypes	xiv
Drew Amoroso	The Ring	1
Jessika Geisler	[Grace was you and I standing] [I was the mysterious, new, forming essence]	2
	Pan is Dead	3 4
Amy Steele	The Photograph	6
James Warner	300 frames per second driven*thru it's 4:55 everywhere eventually unemployed carpenter vs. trophy wife	7 8 9 10
Corey Pajka	Sitcom Ending, A Short Play Untitled Meditation on Hopeless Hero Worship	12 19
Dan DiMaria	Man Like So Many Before	20
Christina Harowicz	Wish Pennies	23
Amy Kaspriskie	Affair with the Dawn	24
Robert Schreiber	Ivan the Terrible Every Woman Deserves a Poem	25 26
Clarissa E. Dudeck	Seven Year Ache	28
Shannon Curtin	Backseat	29
Marissa Phillips	The Downfall of Men	30
Lauren Carey	Regina	32
Sabrina Naples	Conversation "Not Listening..." This Bowl While in Japan	33 34 35 36
Amber Lawson	My Country 'Tis of Thee	37

	Lusting Thursday	38
	Read Me	39
Josh Orloski	Snow Shatters	40
	The Moon	41
Keith Hubbard	Rusty Loopholes to Bliss	42
	Leonard	44
	Before the E ^b	46
Sabrina A. McLaughlin	Red Brick Cruciform	50
	The Detrimental Effects of Viewing Too Much Arty Cinema	54
	The Calm Hysteria of Surreal and Intense Sensation	56
Sergio Pedro	Dali's First Mistake	58
	Broccoli Beat	60
Helene T. Caprari	Perverted Beatnik Billy Collins	61
	Pop American Poetics: A Satire Conditions of Light	63
Joseph Cortegerone	For the One through Whom all Chances meet	66
Chris Hodorowski	A Razor's Fascination	67
Mathew Koch	Prayer	71
	The Imps of Possibility	72
MMP	Maxim	75
J.W. Davies	Homeschool	77
	Jukebox Americana	78
Ron Lieback	Art of America	79
	Does it really matter?	80
	Marriage	81
	Misplaced Medication	82
Gabe LeDonne	The Lost Van Buren Column	87
Benjamin Kushner	Faith	90
	[FADE IN:]	91
	The Nintendo Haiku System	94
John Michael Vore	Dali Lama Traffic Jam	95

IMAGES

Raychil Arndt	<i>A Walk in Town</i>	5
Amy Steele	<i>Lonely</i>	6
Clarissa E. Dudeck	<i>Wash Blowing in Wind</i>	11
Joseph DeAngelis	<i>Death of the Glory Days</i>	19
Clarissa E. Dudeck	<i>Dusty Road at Crystal Lake</i>	22
Kathryn Skaluba	<i>Buttercup Falls I</i>	23
Clarissa E. Dudeck	<i>Chapel at Hickory Run State Park</i>	31
Amy Steele	<i>Fading Grace</i>	32
Crystal Wah	<i>In Bloom</i>	36
Raychil Arndt	<i>Reflections</i>	39
Kathryn Skaluba	<i>Buttercup Falls II</i>	41
Jim Feeney	<i>The House Band</i>	49
Eric Wolf	<i>War Was Not The Answer</i>	65
Crystal Wah	<i>Texture</i>	70
Crystal Wah	<i>Hand in Hand</i>	71
Joe DeAngelis	<i>Mother's Delicious Bread</i>	86
Eric Wolf	<i>City Hall, Philadelphia</i>	97

Editor's Introduction

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the first book of two for the 2004-2005 semesters, the second consecutive year we will publish two journals within a timeframe of one academic year. This is quite a feat, but one that we would not have reached if it weren't for an incredible staff of brilliant individuals in personality and dedication working as a team, two magnificent faculty advisors, those in the English department, and everyone in the Wilkes community who submitted work to *Manuscript*. As one of the oldest, continual college literary publications in the country, I think that these are journals with which we can all be proud.

Manuscript Society is always trying new ways of communicating to readers. This semester we worked closely with layout. Such a feature in a literary journal like *Manuscript* is quite valuable but often overlooked. Recently, I had an experience that brought me to thinking about its importance. In the weekend following the layout sessions to this semester's *Manuscript* I traveled to Provincetown, MA. Traveling was always a very important component to my life, but it is easy to forget that feeling once I am grounded in one space for too long. This eight-hour drive to the tip of Cape Cod, a place of mythic proportions, brought me to thinking again about place and what it means for a person to be where he or she is at any given moment. There are many ways to apply this thought and it is only as profound as one can make it, but let us for a little while think about place as it has to do with the reading processes. How does each page connect to the next, or are they linked at all? What happens to us cognitively as we immerse ourselves in an idea of traveling page by page? Many literary and art journals know what types of submissions they are looking for, but *Manuscript's* only requirement is that those who submit are in some way connected to Wilkes University. Perhaps the voices in *Manuscript* create a kind of discourse around this place.

We should keep in mind that this is not necessarily a meaning-making process, but it is potentially an imaginative experience much like the creative act itself. Like Dickinson's and Joyce's heavy use of ellipses calling readers into the empty spaces so they might fill in the blanks, *Manuscript* urges you to move about the landscapes of the literature collected here.

Helene T. Caprari
Chief Editor, 2004

The Professional Writer: Seven Archetypes

By J. Michael Lennon

Preface: Writers are not alike. Arguably, they are more singular than the rest of humanity. By nature, experience and choice, they are stubbornly individualistic, idiosyncratic and/or eccentric, as well as reserved or gregarious. Under the gregarious rubric we can list F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, Norman Mailer, Marianne Moore, Vachel Lindsay, Truman Capote, Lillian Hellman, James Jones and Dorothy Parker, all of whom partied hearty. Mark Twain and Allen Ginsberg were famously extroverted. The reserved category includes Joan Didion, Elizabeth Bishop, Cormac McCarthy, Wallace Stevens, Robinson Jeffers and Eugene O'Neill. And then the reclusive: Emily Dickinson and J. D. Salinger, obviously. Thomas Pynchon is another shy writer, although he is seen occasionally. But the truth is that all writers shuttle from party animal to hermit, moving back and forth to escape from the work and then, inevitably, to get the work done. James Joyce claimed "silence, exile and cunning" as his watchwords, but spent his evenings in the cafes of Europe drinking—by choice—with disreputable companions, escaping from the labor of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* for a few hours.

The extrovert/recluse division is one of many ways writers can be classified. We can slot writers by when they lived and where they lived, what genres and forms they worked, and their thematic preoccupations. For example, there are nature essayists (Rachel Carson and John Muir), playwrights who examine the family (Eugene O'Neill and Lorraine Hansberry), love poets (Chretien de Troyes and Pablo Neruda), novelists concerned about the individual and society (Nathaniel Hawthorne, George Eliot and many more) and so on. But perhaps a more useful typology is to consider writers as economic creatures: to classify them by how they earn their daily bread, how they generated the wherewithal to turn out manuscript. The following seven categories may or may not be true archetypes, but they cover most of the ways, in general, that writers have maintained themselves ever since the patronage system began to crumble in the eighteenth century. Note: Perhaps one-third to one-half of the writers named below could easily be placed in two categories, a few in three.

1. The Independently Wealthy Writer: those who have been born into or inherited or married enough wealth that they never have to take a paid job except by choice. There are not all that many of these, although most writers are supported to some extent by one or more of the three modern successors to noble patrons: family, friends and foundations. Count Leo Tolstoy, James Merrill, Henry Adams, Amy

Lowell, Alexis de Tocqueville, Gertrude Stein, Henry James, Lord Byron, William Styron, Edith Wharton, Harriet Beecher Stowe, William Burroughs, Hart Crane, Gustave Flaubert.

2. The Self-sufficient Writer: those who earn enough by their pens, after completion of schooling, to avoid other employment. Many in this category, if they are sufficiently prominent and/or engaging, supplement their income by lecturing or giving paid readings. John Updike, Gore Vidal, Norman Mailer, Ezra Pound, Flannery O'Connor, Sinclair Lewis, Susan Sontag, Jack Kerouac, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Ann Beattie, John Cheever.

3. The Journalist Turned Writer: those who write regularly for the media at the beginning and, in some cases, throughout the length of their careers. Almost all writers of this and the last century have written book reviews for the periodical or daily press. The pay is small, but reviews keep one's name before the public between major projects. Ernest Hemingway, Joan Didion, Mark Twain, Edgar Allan Poe, Sherwood Anderson, William Faulkner, Theodore Dreiser, Mary McCarthy, Lillian Hellman, John O'Hara, Gay Talese, Jimmy Breslin, Bret Harte, H. L. Mencken, Charles Dickens, Edmund Wilson, Willa Cather, Stephen Crane, Emile Zola, John Dos Passos.

4. The Teacher Turned Writer: those who teach to earn a living or to supplement meager royalties or because they enjoy it. Poets, especially, are likely to have academic positions for the simple reason that volumes of poetry usually have modest sales. Joyce Carol Oates, W. H. Auden, Toni Morrison, Philip Roth, Vladimir Nabokov, Galway Kinnell, John Berryman, James Dickey, James Joyce, Robert Stone, Ralph Ellison, Stephen King, Robert Frost, Lionel Trilling, Allen Tate, Alfred Kazin, Annie Dillard.

5. The Double-Barreled Professional Writer: those who work in a professional job—banker, editor, manager, bureaucrat, diplomat, doctor, etc.—during the day and write at night and on weekends. Not everyone discovers the writer's vocation early on, and many have established themselves in another profession first. Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, T.S. Eliot, Stanley Kunitz, E. L. Doctorow, William Dean Howells, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Nathaniel West, Anthony Trollope, Anton Chekov, Carlos Fuentes, George Orwell.

6. The Bohemian Writer: those who work as laborers, short order cooks, sailors, migrant farm workers, factory workers, and other low-paying, irregular jobs. Starving in a Parisian garret is largely a cliché, but many of those named here did live hand-to-mouth for long periods.

Charles Bukowski, William Steinbeck, James Jones, Alex Haley, Herman Melville, Richard Henry Dana, Tennessee Williams, Eugene O'Neill, Henry David Thoreau, Raymond Carver, David Mamet, Russell Banks.

7. The Free Lance Writer: those who live solely, and often precariously, by their pens. Free lancers are highly flexible, even opportunistic. They are ingenious in proposing profiles, interviews, essays and articles, or suites of articles, to publications, and sometimes help write the grants that pay their fees. Their names are not widely known, partly because they write for newspapers, magazines, the Internet, advertising agencies, corporations, government agencies— whoever will buy their work-for-hire. They will take on business and professional clients and often write corporate reports.

The Ring

I smell her tears: Sunday morning crossword puzzle
and lilac hand soap.

She's sleeping; until she hears
the beat of my heart in the hallway.

I'm scared – I sense the ring.

I move towards her bed: "Would you like some of my milk?"

She would say that.

I wonder if those tubes are necessary; "Or a piece of my toast?"

Her face sounds cold, her voice looks fragile. I see
her words; they're suspended: "How's Valerie?"

Her toes try desperately to drill a hole
through the blanket; no luck,

the ring is too heavy.

I miss him too.

Her veins – a bitter black and blue – have a race
down her arm, toward her hand,

which has crawled into mine.

Her cheekbones

puncture her wrinkled skin; her eyes have melted into a single
tear that pierces her nightgown.

"I can't do it without him."

She wears the ring around her
neck.

The drilling stops;

I squeeze her hand; it breaks off
into mine. I

squeeze harder, it turns

to dust. As I open it I hear

the coolest breeze; maybe her breath,
probably his.

The dust is
gone.

The ring
remains.

Grace was you and I standing,

like sycamore trees of light
spirals of life; in the rain and glittering fall of this space and time,

the embrace of dark sod in our toes, our roots, the sinking endless depths
we were formed from, the white larva, the burrowing white worm
we sprung from, cocoons of lifetimes

the butterfly – Spring
springing into the sky

the fertile rain of April
where you and I grew through the underbrush and skin,
into the endless soul.

Grace was you and I, in the fertile glint of rain, growing.

I was the mysterious, new, forming essence
the liquid current, the moon and intuition turned the black to
iridescence
like dreams, our hearts are formed into twinkling lights of hope

like the unreachable stars, oh god
we carry such heavy skins and pasts... to just let go

There is no mold, no map, no clear view through the dark
No, we light ourselves up and find each other
as glowing sparks,

stars, dreams, intuition
the night was an ocean of us – unformed
we were currents of life – intersecting
and embracing, entwining

enlightening.

We become the intangible forces of existence.
not the beginning, not the end... not confined to these times
and measures of who and when...

we are, the endless beginning.

Pan is dead

It's not warm. It's November.
The green has retreated
like blood does, beneath the skin. It sinks deeper into the heart
when I step into the cold.

There's no ink left in colors;
only black, for recording what vague forms we remember.
What could I paint you

in November?



A Walk in Town, Raychil Arndt

AMY STEELE

The Photograph

I'm stripping you of all your color tonight—
Take that shade of red and replace it with your light;
For only you could be so beautiful in black & white.
Laid out, naked, before my eyes,
The sublime reveals itself in you—
My foreign inspiration is not foreign to me.
Everything disappears but what is essential;
I see the rainbow become you
And it is astounding.



Lonely, Amy Steele

JAMES WARNER

300 frames per second

Moving faster to slow down,
the rush is just another
four letters
when push eases into pull.
Seduced by the camera tricks
and the parlor lens
under glass we hold the pose fast
like glue or
a collection of insects,
butterflies,
and moths.

The entomology of amber fossils—
The life we hung along in the blood

is the force we apply to wounds
dressed like obscure legends
observed by
dark horse shadows
taller than the timbers we fall from.

The film frame exposed in
rapid succession
fails to catch us:
celluloid is a net broken,
“Tomorrow” and “later” when
spoken
at times like
these
are promises broken
like limbs at thirty-two feet
per second per second.

Gravity and speed both accelerate
with accent
exponents

until they hit hard against a rigid scientifically brutal truthful surface.

driven*thru

I started to drive
 in circles
 to keep track of time
 so late and darkly passing.

This dime-store-ride needs a break
 and a new set of stops.
 On a track in a one-horse-town,
 I've got a chance and a place
 to show my wins by;

(but) luck turns into wish
 when all the stars go out
 in the building across the Market Street bridge.

The
 neon
 constellations
 are open
 24 hours
 and
 myths about
 our youth
 get easier
 to
 embellish
 the
 later
 it
 gets
 around
 here.

it's 4:55 everywhere eventually

the profile of the sky betrays
 the ongoing forever of the ocean.
 night lowers darker hues of
 blue curtain sandwiching the yellow
 until
 it bleeds to red
 against the sea.

some take to the beach to be witness

i prefer the window of my suite,
 feet propped up like my ego
 by leaning hard against softback chairs.

hot air fills the room,
 i empty my eyes to the rolling tide,
 giving way to the
 accumulated thoughts of an eight hour
 road trip and the reversal of movement:

we passed by people exits at a time
 now people pass by me and i wonder if
 life just laps and laughs even a little at
 the thought of the end of another day.

unemployed carpenter vs. trophy wife

Dollar painted housecoat
 dance without its arms,
 Legs naked to the knees, then
 breakfast washed against the stockings.

The library turns its books to
 page 29 and
 Then saws and drills
 filled the silent ears of uniform readers:

To be such a clown to Cathy's A to Z
 was to know the history of
 R O C K but not to learn from it.

Recreational drugs for the soccer mom—
 bereft of lemonade sandwiches and
 Washingmachinesex—
 She took up the cause to matter more than
 a semi-colon in junkmail form letters . . .

Taste the absence of children and honeymoons,

Just to cry when she folds the laundry.

But from the open second floor window,
 he started freeing the contents of the nearest bookcase:

Art Criticism

(Ho-Ke)

They hit the sidewalk,
 flapping their covers like the useless wings
 of leather-bound pigeons,
 Each hit was a final, definitive statement:

A fire escape

ejecting steps

on its way to

Hell.

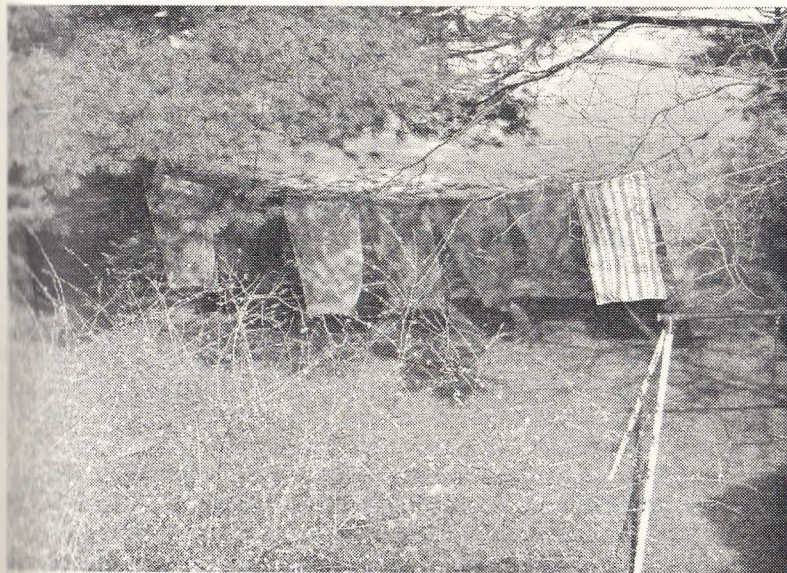
And from the medicine cabinet
 it rained white and blue
 and other assorted soothing colors.
 The porcelain played the notes of a busted piano.
 A song with John Cage as a father and
 unconscious artistic trappings as an orphan.

Whatever wasn't swallowed by the drain
 was drained by the throat.

She flailed.

He choked.

And even though they would never have the chance
 to read about one another in the newspaper,
 people could clearly see they could've been in love.



Wash Blowing in the Wind, Clarissa E. Dudeck

Sitcom Ending A Short Play

Cast of Characters:

Aaron— a young man in his mid-twenties, he gives an impression of intelligent naiveté, someone with limitless questions, but few answers. At the mercy of circumstance.

Kelly— a young woman, also in her mid-twenties, Aaron's soon-to-be ex-girlfriend. Her nature should not be construed as vicious or hostile, merely two-dimensional.

Announcer— operates only as a voice-over, should be flashy and comical, similar to Don Pardo on Saturday Night Live.

Scene: A solitary light slowly encircles a man, Aaron, slouching in an armchair watching television. He is dressed casually, form-fitting Levi jeans, a rock band T-shirt, no shoes or socks. He randomly flips the channels until he comes across a commercial for some popular primetime sitcom. For directing purposes, the commercial can be taped, but if authenticity is your game, the television can be given a live cable connection. Aaron watches the commercial with little interest and snaps the set off after it is over.

Aaron: (under his breath) I fucking hate sitcoms. (he rises, then to the audience as the lights rise slightly) No offense or anything. I realize many of you probably enjoy stuff like *Will and Grace*, or *Seinfeld*, or *Friends*, but none of that ever really appeals to me. I guess I'm just too serious a person to laugh at some reinvention of real life that's meant to portray things "as they are." *Seinfeld* may be a show about nothing, and *Will and Grace* may be advancing the acceptance of the gay community, but I just don't see how this can possibly be a representation of what we, as people, struggle with on a daily basis. (slight pause) Kelly, my girlfriend, left me last week, and I just don't know how you can turn heartache like that into "Must-See TV." We were together for four years. I saved up for six months to buy her an engagement ring, and then, just like that, she packs up her stuff and leaves. Was it because of my job? My dreams? Was it because she said I had commitment issues? (with pain) Or was it just never there between us to begin with? I'd like to know what NBC would do with that. (black out)

There is a moment of silence. Then taped audience applause breaks the silence as trendy theme music, similar to that which is played on any popular sitcom, is heard over the sound system. Then the lights slowly come to full on the entire stage, revealing a very well-furnished, expensive-looking apartment in New York. The apartment is clean, modernized, and contrasts sharply with Aaron's modest demeanor and style of dress. As the music fades, we hear the announcer over the sound system say...

Announcer (vo): Aaron and Kelly is filmed before a live studio audience.

The sound dies out. Aaron wanders onstage looking confused.

Aaron: (to audience) I don't live here. There's no way I could afford—

Kelly storms onstage with her arms full of various personal belongings which she stuffs into luggage pieces and cardboard boxes that are preset somewhere. She is very annoyed, rushed, and does not seem to notice Aaron at all.

Aaron: (happily surprised) Kelly! What are you doing back—?

Kelly: Don't even talk to me!

Aaron: Kelly, listen, there's something you should know!

Kelly: And there's something you should know: it's over!

Aaron: Look, I don't blame you for being angry, but at least hear me out. This is important.

Kelly: All right, let's hear it.

Aaron: I know you called me a commitment phobic, and with good reason! (she snorts, and continues her activity of packing, Aaron follows her) But these past six months I've been working, for us! And I think I've come up with something that will convince you not to leave.

Kelly: (laughs) You've "come up" with something? I don't know what's more laughable, your thought process or Liza Minelli's last marriage!

terrible as this. Kelly stands as if she is waiting for her next cue line, Aaron looks around, bewildered, trying to find where the laughter is coming from.

Aaron: What the hell was that?

Kelly: What the hell was what?

Aaron: That—laughing noise, it was coming from everywhere! You can't tell me you didn't hear that!

Kelly: Oh, I didn't *hear* something? That sounds familiar! You mean the same way you just didn't hear about our last anniversary?

Sound cue: Audience laughter, not as loud as before, with a few "Ooh's" and "Aah's."

Aaron: What are you talking about? That never happened! On our last anniversary we stayed in and watched *This is Spinal Tap*.

Kelly: Oh, of course we would, knowing you and your excelsior taste!

Aaron: But you love *This is Spinal Tap*! What's wrong with you?

Kelly: Me? You've got some nerve! With all your whining, it's no wonder we got thrown out of the opera last week! The divas must have gotten jealous.

Sound Cue: Audience laughter.

Aaron: What are you talking about? You hate the opera! We haven't even been to the opera before. Ever! We met at Bonnaroo for Christ's sake!

Kelly: Bonnaroo?

Aaron: Yes! We met during Sonic Youth's set. Don't you remember? They were playing the guitar solo in "Wildflower Soul." That's when we—*(he stops, she looks lost and confused)* don't you remember? *(a beat)* What's going on here?

Kelly: What's going on? It's a little something called "me-centered living," something you're all too familiar with!

Sound Cue: Audience laughter.

Aaron: What does *that* have to do with anything? You're not making sense!

Kelly: And you're not making anything else! Money! A career! *(a beat, then)* An engaging sex partner!

Sound cue: Audience gives various "oohs," "aahs," and other snide remarks. Aaron is dumbfounded.

Aaron: What are you talking about? What you're saying isn't natural! You don't talk this way, you don't think—*act* this way! This isn't even our apartment! We live in Reading, Pennsylvania. You're an elementary school T.A. I'm a rock journalist—or at least I want to be.

Kelly: Oh, so it's all about *you* again, is it? Never a thought about the woman you share a home with! I suppose next you'll call yourself a victim.

Aaron: I didn't mean that. You're putting words in my mouth.

Kelly: How could I? It's already so crowded in there with your foot in it so frequently!

Sound Cue: Audience laughter. Note: If any of the actual audience members react in a manner similar to the taped reactions, the actor playing Aaron may ad lib something akin to "You're not helping!" to them if he wishes.

Aaron: *(laughter)* I don't get this! What you're saying isn't even funny!

Kelly: You think this is a laughing matter? God, I pity you sometimes, you and your homemade Television t-shirts. How passé!

Sound cue: Audience says "Ooh" in unison as if offended. Aaron grimaces.

Aaron: See? There it is again! How can you not hear that? Don't you realize this is all like some bad T.V. show? Are you trying to kid me? Is this a joke? If so, your material needs a facelift. I know a plastic surgeon in L.A. who could help.

Sound Cue: Audience laughter. Aaron reacts with regret, knowing what he has just done.

Kelly: Why does everything have to be one big joke with you? You're so immature!

Aaron: With me? Listen to yourself! No, it's not you, it's that laughter! I can't believe you don't hear it! *(a beat, then)* I don't even recognize you anymore.

Kelly: *(as if she did not hear his last line)* Laughing, huh? The only laughing you'll be hearing soon is mine, chuckling all the way to the singles scene!

Sound cue: Audience hoots and hollers. Aaron does not seem as affected.

Aaron: *(clearer)* You're like a different person. I guess I just wanted things to stay like they were in college. I wanted to be twenty years old a little bit longer. I wanted to be a kid forever, but you changed, I guess I did too. The job, the apartment, the ring. I guess I just wanted—

Kelly: *(very overdramatic and unconvincing)* You want! You want! Well what about what I want?! I want to live! I want to be loved! And more than anything, I just want to move, to breathe, to break out! Can't you understand that, Aaron? For the love of God, I can't live this way! If you can't see that, well, then I pity you. It's a cruel fate we share, Aaron, and the affections of two people are all we can hang on to. This is it, the smallest indivisible human unit is two people. I knew you once, I loved you once. But, you've changed, oh, how you've changed.

(Sound cue: Overly sentimental music) The first time I met you was like something out of a storybook. You were standing in the corner at the High School formal. You were so cute in that hand-me-down suit your mom made you wear. *(laughs)* And me, I just was doing my best not to be seen, but I couldn't get past you. Something about you just made me feel special. Just like a little girl in my own private Neverland. But that was then, and this is now. *(Kelly slowly moves to center stage for her speech's emotional climax)* I just don't believe in fairy tales anymore. The little girl's grown up, *(to him)* Peter Pan has run out of fairy dust, and it looks like that crocodile has finally caught up to Captain Hook. *(Aaron is aghast at the speech's horrors)* And it's time for Tinkerbell to fly away. That is, unless you *(to audience)* believe in fairies.

Sound cue: Audience says "Aww" in unison, then applauds loudly at the speech. Aaron almost looks nauseated.

Aaron: That was bullshit! Who the fuck wrote this?!

Kelly: *(close to tears)* You're so cruel!

Aaron: NO!! NO, I'M NOT! You don't make any sense! This is ridiculous! That speech was just you talking! There was no buildup, no emotional justification! You just did it for its own sake! Can't you see that? You're not making *any* sense at all! You just go about things as if your every move is written down for you, choreographed, and rehearsed. Every moment of your life is a façade, a charade! You're not living for me or even for *yourself* anymore! You're living for every person on this earth who you think might give you a raise, or a promotion, or a letter of recommendation, or some cheap thrill! Don't you get it?! YOU'RE A FUCKING SITCOM CHARACTER!!! *(a beat, then, calmer)* The reason why I haven't been as available for the past few months was because I was saving up to get this! *(Aaron reaches into his pocket and retrieves a small jewelry case)* Do you have any idea how many double shifts I had to work at the record store to afford it? *(He opens it and removes the diamond ring within)* Twelve-carat cut with genuine opal diamonds. Look at it if you don't believe me. It's a symbol. After the last time we fought I thought long and hard about where I am and where I want to go. I stayed out all night. I went up to the spot by the high school where I used to take my old girlfriends and just thought about all the passions I've had before. For people, for moments, for rock bands, for television shows; for all the things that, briefly, anyway, made me feel alive. Then I thought of you. I remembered Bonnaroo, and Sonic Youth. I remembered beers in the back of the Mustang, missing every line of *Waiting for Guffman*, because we were too busy with each other. I thought of your laugh and the first time we made love. Then I realized that it was love, not sex that drew me to you. I realized I didn't have to be afraid of commitment, not when I knew there couldn't be anyone else for me. So then, when the bank opened, I went to the ATM, withdrew all my cash and bought you this. It's a symbol, Kelly, a symbol of all that I feel for you. We had a future. A life. It's not about the money, it's about us, and what we could have had. I just didn't know until now it's not about sitcom endings. This isn't the last episode of *Friends*, just the last episode of us. I'm pulling the plug. The premise wore itself out. I hope someday you'll come to realize this too.

A long pause. Kelly is shocked, unable to move. Aaron slowly, with

great labor, begins to exit. He pauses as he leaves.

I love you.

He is gone.

Another long pause. Kelly stares about the empty stage, realizing she is alone. For a brief moment, she is human. But then, before she can run after him...

Kelly: *(haltingly)* Yeah—well!—it, it sucks to be you!

Sound cue: Audience erupts into riotous laughter and applause as Kelly gathers her belongings and forcefully exits. Climactic applause fills the stage as the trendy theme music refrains. The lights slowly fade to black as the announcer says...

Announcer (vo): Don't miss next week! We've got two new world premiere *Aaron and Kelly* spinoffs! From the creative team that brought you *Aaron and Kelly*, it's a must-see T.V. event featuring Kelly and a new rotating love interest role each and every week. It's *Kelly and Fill-in-the-Blank*, all new at the time you'd normally see *Aaron and Kelly*, and then—*(the announcer's voice becomes less comical and more reflective)* A heartwarming new drama. He's a lost soul in search of a place to call home, somewhere in America. Armed with nothing but his heart, his Mustang, and a stellar record collection, he's out trying to find himself, love and a few vintage Rolling Stones tour t-shirts. It's the series premiere of *Aaron America*, next week after *Kelly and Fill-in-the-Blank*. Your local news is next.

Black out

Untitled Meditation on Hopeless Hero Worship

The screen flickers dimly
Across the dull, gray walls
The sound gently
Through a mind newly stalled

I want to be Bob Dylan
I want to be James Dean
I want to be Art Carney
I want to make a scene.



Death of the Glory Days, Joseph DeAngelis

Man Like So Many Before

I try to stare out of my prison, but the light of the real world blinds me, so I return to my manual labor and consider escape, scaling these lofty mountain walls, if only to gaze out upon the immoral ruins of Western civilization for but a moment. All I have craved for lies out there – love, lust, free-wheeling sin upon sin. But instead I’m made to settle for my shovel, two mortgages, a smart-ass Irish girl who won’t shut up and a job with minimum wage – no benefits. Yeah. Great.

I bring myself back to the real, stare out into nothing. I’m on my porch, on my house that is the same as all the other houses on all the other streets. It’s hot, damn hot. I’m smoking a cigarette and I know it’s hot. I don’t want to finish my smoke. I know it’s hot because the smoke won’t float away. It just hangs like an odious mist, clouding my vision, hiding the truth. My little girl, Amy, runs by me, wearing a low-cut shirt that bares her midriff and low-rise jeans; it’s the same outfit I asked her to never let me see her wearing. Her red hair is shimmering in the sun, mocking it – it’s the only good thing she got from her mother.

“Bye, daddy. I’ll see you tonight.”

“Where ya’ goin’ – and I promise I won’t ask why you’re going there wearing what you are.”

“Daddy!” She pauses, waiting for me to recant. When I don’t she continues. “I’m just going over Ali’s house for awhile. I’ll be home around eleven.”

I sigh, regrettably. She knows I’ll be passed out on the chair in front of a blank TV screen with God knows how many beers in me by nine-ish. I used to be able to play her game and I was damn good at it. Not anymore.

My daughter leans over, kisses me on the cheek, a gesture both warm and mechanical, stirring feelings of love inside me, love for the warmth, nothing for anything else.

She gets into her car, starts it up, backs out, pulling away from the house slowly, knowing I’d yell at her if she didn’t. I look at my cigarette, slowly burning to ash, like the rest of my life. I glare at it disgustingly and put it out. If only it were that easy.

I get up off my ass, which has gotten steadily fatter over the years, and make my way back into the house; the house I built with my bare hands, out of brick cast out of the furnaces of my burning desire to provide and shelter and care for the family I knew that I would one day have.

My wife is in the kitchen, boiling something, like all Irish wives tend to do from time to time. When I met her twenty-five years ago, she was a flawless woman, as kind and as gentle and certainly as beautiful as

any I had ever seen. She had kept her beauty this past quarter-century, but, as housewives often do, she grew bitter and I felt her longing to escape this place, this wicked fortress of solitude, so she could care for something other than cooking and clothes and this damn house she’s been begging me to fix. I also felt her growing apart from me.

“Did you fix that bulb in the basement yet? I almost fell down the stairwell and broke my neck this morning.”

I could always depend upon her to speak gently, whether she spoke of something as frivolous as a light bulb or as morbid as her near death.

I say, “You know I would, Allison, but we don’t have any halogens.” I could feel her cold stare on my back, as if daring me to turn and face its wrath. “I’ll write it down on the list. I don’t need any laundry done – if you do, I’ll just go down there with a flashlight and do it.”

“OK, that’ll be fine. Oh, by the way, I was at the mall today and I passed by that new store with antiques and I –”

I zoned out. I knew I wasn’t going anywhere while this conversation went on so I settled in for the long run. I thought about that light bulb in the basement and how much we had in common. Once it had shone brightly, illuminating the paths of anyone who summoned its light, always ready, always prepared should someone require its services. Now it was burned out, dead inside, useless to everyone, sitting alone in the dark, waiting to be discarded.

“Are you listening to me?” my wife asked, obviously quite sure that I hadn’t been.

“Yeah, of course I was. You went to the antique store and saw something you liked. Are ya gonna keep me in the dark all day or are ya gonna show me it? I’d like to see it.”

“Oh,” she said, obviously convinced that I had been listening. “But I didn’t buy it. That’s the problem. It matches the theme of the kitchen and it’s the same color as the paneling but I wasn’t sure so I didn’t want to buy it until I was.”

“Well, just go back tomorrow and –”

“See, I was going to go back today, seeing as, heh, I don’t have anything to do. Do you think you can watch the stove ‘til I get back?”

“Actually, I...”

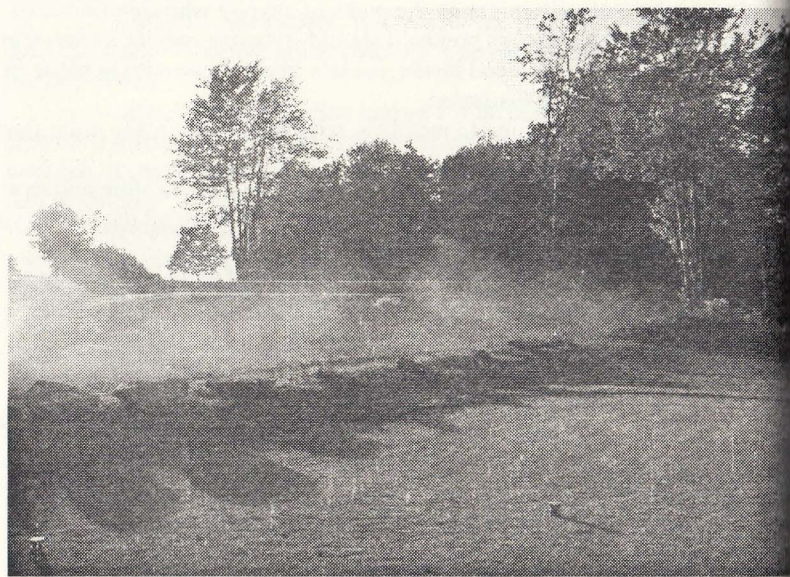
“Thanks, hon. I’ll be back in an hour.”

“OK. See ya then.”

She left out the back door, without another word, without so much as a glance back in my direction.

I removed myself back onto the porch, still as sweltering as it was before. I realized I had a beer in my hand, so I opened it, and was

delighted to be greeted by the fizz-pop of the can and the smell of hops, fine companions in such temperatures. I continued my actions from before, matching the angry gaze of the mountains that formed my cell, as if willing them to crumble down upon themselves, making easy my escape from this place to freedom. Of course, they didn't. But it was probably better that way. What would this place do without me?



Dusty Road at Crystal Lake, Clarissa E. Dudeck

Wish Pennies

Deep,
 Dark,
 Beautiful lake of all lost hope.
 Walk up to it—
 Make a wish.
 Don't close your eyes, though.
 See your maker, she will heal you.
 Tight fist full of pennies.
 Most are dirty,
 Few shine like stars.
 Too tight—
 Pennies drip from your hand.
 Leave some luck
 For another desperate soul.
 Lean back.
 Gain momentum.
 Toss them in.



Buttercup Falls I, Kathryn Skaluba

Affair with the Dawn

Open all the windows,
Let the sin in.

Penetrating in between
The sheets and comforter,
Sweats the warmth of which
I have come to imprison.

So tangible,
I can almost sink my teeth in.

Slipping into something
More comfortable,
The window discards the shade.
Articles of light falling upon
The follicles on my head,
Distorting my vision.

So unkempt,
I am violated from within.

Sweating from the bedside table
After a one night stand,
Kiss upon kiss,
Blushes the glass,
The object of rejection.

So reliable,
It is always in the kitchen.

Shut all the windows,
Naked face on naked pillows,
Naked pane on naked windows,
And let the sleep creep in.

Ivan the Terrible

Rise

Garrrrr!

I'm big tough Ivan! Hear me roarrrrr!

Oh shit!

I'm not wearing my waterproof knickers!

Run!

Why?

Does Ivan have cooties?

Ewwwwww!

Ivan has cooties?!

I do not!

Run!

Ivan's a dirty, dirty Communist.

Come give Ivan a kiss!

No Ivan! I don't like dirty Communists!

You're gross!

Smooches

Pause

*Ooooooo. You kissed Ivan! You and Ivan sitting in a
tree, f-u-c-k-i-n-g.*

Shut up you! It wasn't consensual!

Yes it was! She told me she liked it.

Did not! Liar!

You love Ivannn! You love Ivannn!

Pause

You're right. I do love Ivan.

Come, my dear. Let us be perpetually consensual together. And Communist.

Yes! Yes! I will come! I will!

I'm so jealous. Why can't I have that?

Recede

Every woman deserves a poem

No shit.

Right?

(sigh)

I'm clearly enlightened

But when you trace her face's topography with your fingers and find the secrets to the Universe in her attitude

It adds up

With maternal eyes seeing through me

Instincts beyond me

Nurturer to my inner child

Or never making sense of scents

Pheromones my nose can't fathom, farts, and all the feelings in between and following

Silent lips smiling when they see surprises in my eyes

Me thinking of her

breasts

back

bottom

Her collarbone caressing the naked nape landscape

Connecting the dots with my eyes

and everything surrounding those dots
like all the lands a mine

I love that shit

Include insecure actress with that chemical imbalance

Her presence is that of a celestial being

and what the celestial being craps out

rolled up

kneaded

then sculpted

into

Erection

I mean perfection

but then who's kidding who?

when you feel her

Energy

Animal attraction with mathematical probabilities

Innately innate

Reach out and try to touch

Can you touch?

A tangible symphony?

Too much?

Too much!

A poem's poem poeming a poem

The ocean and the earth with no makeup on

And a hair that poses finically across her face – independently minded from the other strands

All said is inverted inside a mind's depth

compacted with the seasoned cycles she inhabits

Thinking thoughts of how things should be thought out

I don't understand and never will

But will always strive

Always strive

Strive -

because I am compelled

Never getting enough can be too much to take

but it will be taken for taking's sake

So the sum of all that cannot be said or understood mentally

but is felt on the highest levels

is she

There's something in the way she does or is or...

you know what I mean?

You do.

It is a women's privilege to change her mind

God damn right!

Turn Away

So...

More than words on paper

More than this (old, stale, and crusty wheat bread of a poet) can conjure
(but with the purest emotions underlying the clearest intent)

For the reasons they know

For the reasons we know

For the reasons they know we know they know

(and all known knowledge)

For my sake

(sigh)

WOMAN

Seven Year Ache

These crisp fall nights awaken my senses
the stars are out, the moon hangs low
the wind rustles through the corn
I stand outside and smoke my cigarette, thinking, remembering
Just like I did years ago, waiting for you to pick me up
Smoking, hoping that mom and dad don't smell it, I should be ok the
windows are closed
I touch up my make-up. You should be pulling down the driveway any
minute
I'll hop in and we'll be off
You are my first love and I'm on top of the world
Everything is new and exciting
Kissing a little longer because we know I can't stay
Tiptoeing in, skipping school to be with you
I can't believe my fairytale has come true, it must be forever
You hold me on this frosty night, waiting in line for the haunted house
You hold my hair back while I'm sick at a Halloween party
You're always thinking of me
You are a little older and so intriguing
You have so much more to offer than boys my age
You have a car... and money
Now it's our first Christmas together, all of the nice gifts
You kiss me for New Year's, you send me flowers for Valentine's Day
Things start to fall apart
You're kicking yourself in the ass for being with someone younger
Someone that doesn't know what they want
My cigarette burns down to the filter
Every year when the leaves turn I think about us
It's now been seven long years
It's harvest time, and you're back in my life
Coming just as unexpected as the first time
Your calls make me smile
Seeing you still makes my heart beat a little faster
Everything is brand new again, but not...
There's no starting at square one, no uncomfortable first dates
Now we start where we left off..

Backseat

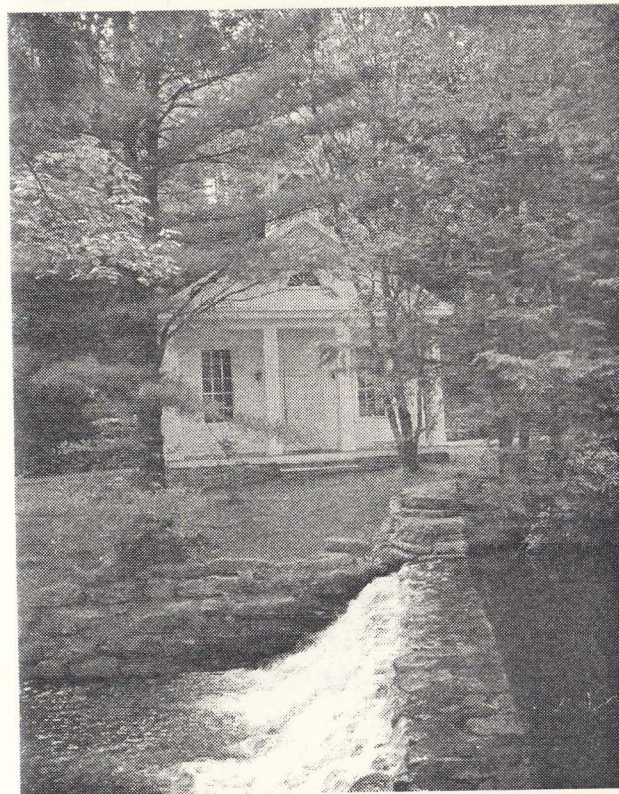
As we sat there,
your backseat bathed in moonlight
fog coloring your windows with the occasional reflection of passing
headlight beams
I temporarily lost connection to the world.

Stripped of my past, my ties, and my consciousness
as easily as my shirt floated to the floor
to slide into a turbulent tide of empty acts of tepid emotions.
Fueled by the milk of the night leaking from the stars
and the crooning in the air.
Waked from my wonderland by the ache of the safety belt buckle
wedged under my back.
Consistently growing and tossed aside.
Refusal of acceptance of reality until like the seatbelt,
it becomes unbearable.
Responsible for the brevity of my delusion and denial.

Now the moonlight only illuminates the illusion I tried to feign
and the radio points fingers at my malady
while the stars just glisten, like the sweat from your brow
refusing to give me hint of my future.
They spell out my past.
Just take me home.

The Downfall of Men

I like to watch the downfall of men.
Intimacy. Sputtering useless sentiments, I watch them unwind.
Stand strong! They have no option but to become feminine.
The less you respond, the more they give back.
(Let him hold the door open, humor him. He misses his masculinity.)
It's kind of sad to watch the downfall of men.
Such vamps women are.



Chapel at Hickory Run State Park, Clarissa E. Dudeck

Regina

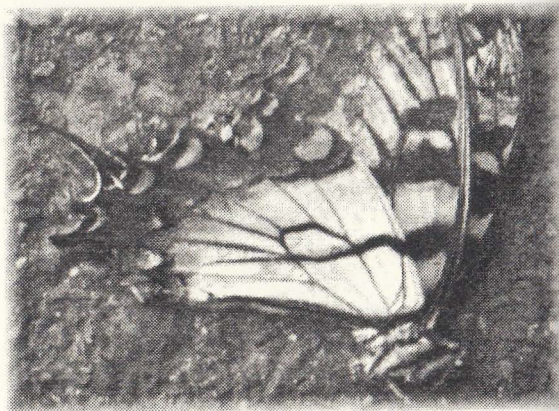
*"This is how I came to love my vagina."
-The Vagina Monologues*

I didn't love it
Until he loved it
And he touched it
Before I did.

It's all about me.
But I couldn't see
How to be me
Until he did.

He let something out
That hadn't been out.
He cast it out
Before I did.

The pleasure I feel
Is hard to conceal.
He let me feel
The way he did.



Fading Grace, Amy Steele

Conversation

So...have you ever heard of a prickly pear?
Prickly pear? No...
Well it's orangish---
Yeah.
Kinda... spiky.

...
Looks a little like a---
Cactus?
No, not quite...
Like a pear?
Yeah...yeah that's it...
That's weird.

...
Yup.
So...you want an apple?
Sure.

Conclusion: Prickly pear is a foreign and dangerous fruit.

“Not Listening...”

Don't tell me what to write,
for once.
I'll turn on the Faucet this time
And let every word fall

Dripping

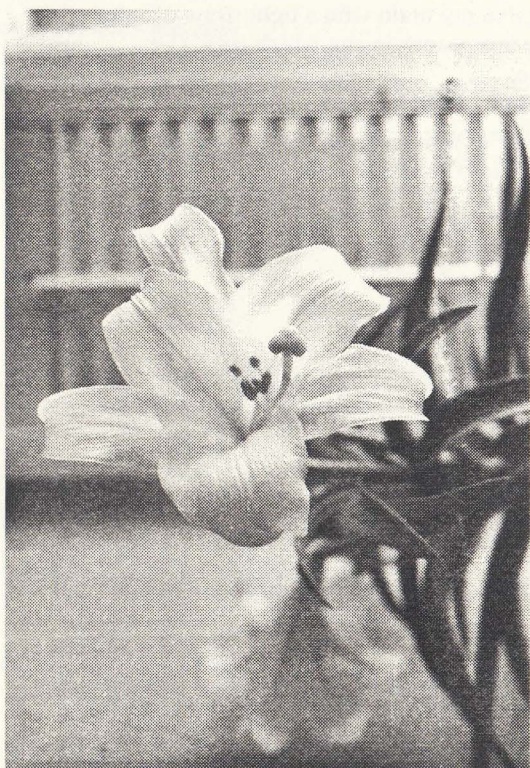
From my Pen
Like a punctured juice box.
Every Letter leak onto the paper
until it is runny, saturated
with Ideas,
and soggy,
soaked with Opinions all my own.
And then,
When Inspiration is scratchy and dry,
I just might allow that sip of Advice
From your Pitcher of Good Intentions.

This Bowl

This bowl filigreed,
Under golden dust laced,
Two-by-two people marching with ivory skin.
And slanted eyes painted tropical flowers
Pink, jungle jade, crimson to sea blue,
All curved tempting rainbows, and I can't
Buy it,
Clean it
Or *Hold* it:
I'll sit and groan
Watching my precious, beautiful artifact as it crumbles in a miasma of
educational neglect,
Nesting it in my brain with a tight straw of spite--
Because this porcelain egg which *would* be,
Could be,
Should be,
Mine, mine, mine
Will never, *ever*, hatch.

While in Japan

Out there upon the still lake there is a sudden splash and a ripple and bubbles, rising from unmarked depths of silver water. This cherry blossom tree dropped a few petals in token of a rather un-mourned disappearance throughout the hair of an abandoned maiden with both eyes and an expression of raven black. Her pale white face betrayed no sorrow toward the abduction of an absent letter an overturned boat in the midst of an empty wash. Why mourn one who has chosen *what is blacker* than sin. You know honor from dishonor and yet the lure of a water-demon ensnares pure and flawed alike.



In Bloom, Crystal Wah

My Country 'Tis of Thee

Every night
 another
 coffin
 draped
 in
 stripes
 silent
 stars
 falls
 dropping
 into
 dust
 where
 no one
 will
 ever
 see
 its
 light

Lusting Thursday

I drive
 sixty
 down
 the
 sidewalk

O
 b
 l
 i
 v
 i
 o
 u
 s

You are a

CASUALTY

to my
 consciousness

Read me

Paper thin leaves
 of linen
 spiral bound
 wound tightly
 to the center
 heartstring
 u n f u r l e d
 to trap
 the shadows
 of your world



Reflections, Raychil Arndt

Snow Shatters

A dry mouth,
cracking hands,
together with a soul
waiting for the coming snow.

And when it comes
all my blood will freeze.
Slowing down the beats
and leaving crystals in my heart.

Then I will explode
leaving pebbles and memories
floating through the air,
cutting through the cold.

And it will tear apart the sky.

The Moon

When we walked the path to see the moon,
you stayed more than two steps in front.
From my two feet down, and two feet back,
you stood so tall and bold on that night.

You took my hand and pulled me to the rock,
watched as I stared at the silver sun and cried.
You walked me back down the slate steps,
and we went across the lake and back to camp.

Later that night, you asked me why I cried
and I looked at you and truly believed
that the moon would never look so big again.



Buttercup Falls II, Kathryn Skaluba

Rusty Loopholes to Bliss

Gather your feathers
And build some wings.
Use them to fly into
A self-inflicted, self-destructive,
Self-fulfilling self-discovery.

While we may lack grace,
We can fly steadily north
While strobe light samurais
Stay hot on our trail
Slicing through the stratosphere
With 2-D katanas.

If you don't use the wings
To escape whatever cage you're in,
Use them for truth

The truth...
Is that fragility means one thing:
No bones
No heart
No blood
No flesh
Just 6,000 tiny marbles
Held together at -9.8 meters per second

The fragility...
Is flying to the sun
With a porcelain Easter basket
That is included in such
A close proximity.

You want my advice?
Wait till night to go for the sun.
Catch it off guard.

And when you're hurled back
To the bathroom floor,
Don't feel sullen
About the rust spots on your soul.

Because hummingbirds
Will always have their blue-hot dances in the Arctic.
All you have to do
Is wait for the glaciers to melt their way free
And sail on down.

Leonard

What's a Jewish snake charmer
Doing in a San Francisco jailhouse?

I read the police report:
They found him on a stage
In front of women in a mixed audience.
With his right hand,
He calmly beat a snare drum
Beckoning the preposition
And teasing the verb.

When this portion was done,
He pulled three syllables from his back pocket.
And while the hipsters howled
The family men ran to the restroom
To disinfect their ears.

In the paddy wagon,
The arresting officer
Tries to issue a citation of shame
In the most by-the-book manner he knows.

In return,
Leonard interrogates the officer,
Questioning him on his oral sex life
And making threats of purgatory.

In the court room,
The questioning men use their occupation
As an excuse
To perform this snake charming act themselves,
While Leonard sits with an ostentatious smirk.

His grin widens
As his own suppression nurtures him
With power, violence
And viciousness.

They throw lies
Like Aryan stars
While Leonard sits
Unaffected.

He is untouched by the lies
Because he knows a secret.

There is never a lie
Because there is never a truth.

Before the E^b*(for Lanye Staley)*

You turned my head for the first time
 By the ears,
 In the presence of naked youth
 In an absence of consequence

The dirty E^b
 Jerked my chin,
 Followed by a sharp F[#]
 Which twisted my neck
 In unison with the string
 From your sludge factory guitar.

That E^b instantly changed my priorities,
 Cigarettes and fuel
 Were put on hold
 To spin the disc
 And read the book.

With help from a mouse
 And five years of skill,
 My fingers followed your work
 To a nutshell full of equations
 Urging me
 To be my own.

Then
 On the pothead's holiday,
 I stayed sober
 To play your songs for a room of strangers
 And be the other man
 For a woman
 Stacked with a fetish for men of string.

And that split second
 Before I plucked your E^b,
 Your beautifully ugly
 Heavenly demonic E^b...

...I was given the news

I dropped my ax,
 Ran to my car

And drove fast
 To the information superhighway

I got off at extension MTV
 And the billboard read
 What my eyes could not read,
 Blinded as they were
 By my black and white tears.

Once the disbelief faded
 There was only one thing I could do.
 I went back to her porch,
 Picked up my guitar,
 And let your E^b
 Pluck me
 And brush away my disbeliefs

My soul danced to that E^b
 My body vibrated with that E^b
 My heart beat to
 The 16ths
 The 8ths
 The quarters
 The halves
 And wholes.

These songs were all of you,
 The whole spectrum.

You vocalize exactly what the hell you have,
 Feeling fire around you with little pride.

You symbolize agnostic depression
 For an optimistic social parasite.

You epitomize the demon I wish I was,
 And the angel I've tried to be.

You harmonize my withdrawal
 Of syringe virginity.

In passing times
 You gave me campfire lullabies,
 With embers tattooing
 The sun to my back.

Just today you drove by my studies
 Begging
 From the first person
 Of a future slab of veil
 To come and save you.

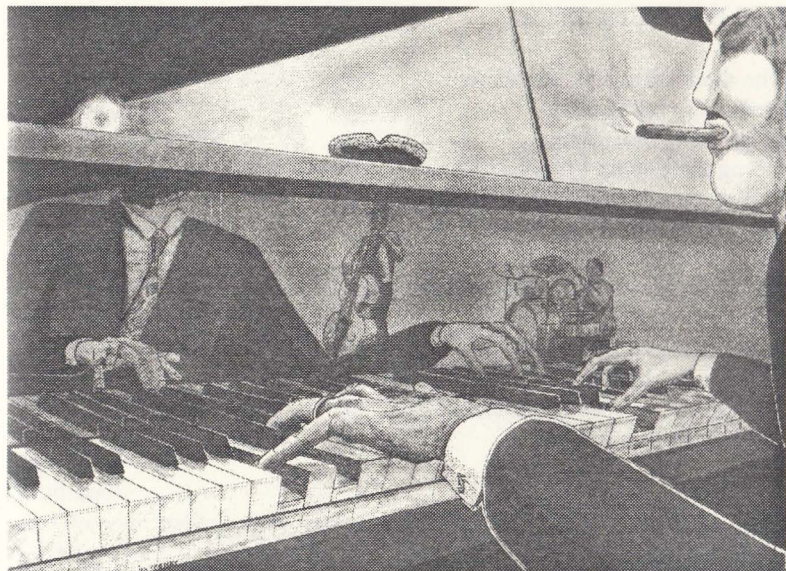
And while it may be too late,
 I hope these words will help you sleep.

It is you,
 Whose sulfur voice
 And fly sunglasses
 Give me a reason
 To sing on a long drive

You,
 Whose songs echo
 Through my mainline,
 Baptizing my blood
 With lilypad melodies.

You,
 Whose death
 Crushed my faith in coincidence.
 Giving me beliefs
 Without the obligation
 To comprehend a single one of them.

These words are to clear the debt.
 These words are to balance the equation.
 These words are the coil of an E^b's pick scrape
 That I feedback to you.



The House Band, Jim Feeney

Red Brick Cruciform

The diminutive and ancient nun
 Dressed in white habit
 Crisp clean linen white
 Going from room to room
 Doling out prayer cards and comfort.
 The sombre black of priestly garb,
 Mirror-shine black shoes
 Shuffling footfalls on creaking old waxy floors
 Whispers of sick-bed prayers
 And squeak of leather and soles speak
 Of Extreme Unction,

*pray for us poor sinners,
 Holy Mother of God.*

Returning

To the same
 Catholic hospital
 Where once I kept
 My fretful adolescent vigil
 Of the watchful, weary, worried
 Loved one
 In these wards of the sick—
 Sleeping curled up like strays
 In waiting room chairs
 And on roll-away cots,
 Sunrise to sunset,
 Sunset to sunrise.
 Living on
 What a vending machine
 Can provide,

The one in the basement cafeteria
 That would dispense
 Into a flimsy Styrofoam cup:
 Cappuccino, plain coffee, hot tea, chicken noodle soup—
 It didn't matter which; it all tasted the same:
 Steam-scalding and antiseptic.

I was born here:
 St. Joseph's on the hill.
 On the wall
 Over the beds

In every room
 Of Catholic hospitals
 There are crucifixes affixed—
 The image of Christ,
 Limbs stretched out
 Pinned in a forced rigid posture.

She wore her rosary
 Around her neck.
 Five decades to a rosary,
 Like one for every decade
 Of her married adult life.
 The mysteries:
 Sorrowful,
 Joyful,
 Glorious,
 Luminous.
 Red wooden beads rosewood,
 Silver crucifix.
 She said,

*I named Saint Joseph as your patron.
 The foster-father of Jesus,
 Patron of the poor,
 God help us,
 A poor carpenter,
 Saint Joseph the Worker—
 Pray to him that you find a job.*

How long will you be here, I ask;
Tuesday I will be released, she says.

It is so hard for me to be within these walls,
 How much harder for one held down to a bed,
 Chained to an IV?

Here I am confronted
 With my own fear and cowardice:
 The smell of hospitals repelling me—

Scent of gauze, bitter medicinal,
 And chemical cleansers,
 Unnatural scent of unwashed bodies
 Pumped full of artificial compounds
 And pharmaceuticals,
 The sour-sweet smell
 Of sickness, anxiety, distress—

Odour of old blood and old death,
 Whole decades worth,
 Nearly palpable and asphyxiating
 Like a breath of noxious vapour
 Attacking the nervous system
 In this rabbit warren
 Of tunnel-like halls....

Four wings meeting at the centre, cruciform;
 A visitors' waiting room at each end....

(to wait, defined as: *to remain inactive
 in readiness or expectation; to attend;
 to be ready; vigilant....*)

To wait is to keep watch,
 With hope, patience,
 Fear and trembling.

The building rises
 Brick by brick,
 Floor by floor,
 Tower-like,
 A fortress on a hill....

(fortress: a variation of fort, meaning a fortified
 place, from the Italian *forte*, meaning strong,
 from the Latin *fortis*; fortitude, defined as:
*strength of mind that enables a person to meet
 danger or bear pain or adversity with courage.*)

I watch
 From the windows
 Of this darkening waiting room
 As the sun declines
 Into the west
 Behind darkening mountains,
 I see glimmers of conversation
 Coming to me
 From another room
 Down the corridor:

*Mom, the minister's comin' with the church people...
 the preacher...tomorrow...*

I realise they must be Protestant,
 Wonder if they feel uncomfortable
 Surrounded by all these trappings

Of another faith:

*The nurse is from Back Mountain, Ma...I don't know when
 the time changes, it changes in the fall, doesn't it? Spring
 forward; fall back...make a fist, Mom, hold my hand...
 what does it mean, to have a stroke?...*

A statue of Christ in the corner
 Standing in a shrine
 Of imitation marble
 Would reach the height of my shoulder—
 Sacred Heart ablaze with gilt paint,
 Holding the orb of the world
 Suspended in His palm,
 The other hand extended,
 Plaster chipping.
 The phrase "Lamb of God"
 Comes to my mind—
 I am free associating images and words
 From catechism classes of a bygone age,
 I recall another depiction
 Beheld years ago
 By my appalled and pitying
 Child's eyes:
 A mosaic set into the face
 Of The Church of the Most Precious Blood
 (where I was baptised)
 Flakes of white stone
 Assembled to compose the figure
 Of a lamb, *Agnus Dei*,
 Scraps of crimson tile
 Forming a flooding jet of blood
 Issuing from its wounded heart.
 A Sacrifice. Suffering. Sorrow.

The Detrimental Effects of Viewing Too Much Arty Cinema

Fuck reality.
 I'd rather see the world
 Through the stained glass and celluloid
 Of our happily hallucinatory fictions—
 Cinema has robbed me
 Of my concept of real life (pun intended),
 And I am confused,
 Because I do not understand
 Why everything is not
 In black-and-white today,
 Or why time does not flow
 In a very post-modern non-linear fashion,
 Or why there are no:
 Freeze frames or dream sequences,
 Or pastiches or dramatic monologues,
 Or *deus ex machina* a.k.a. avatars Bollywood-style,
 Or love scenes for that matter,
 And where is my fucking soundtrack?!

If I could bear the separation from the rural scenery
 I would like to seek the
 Pulse-electric of cities
 Because—I hate to admit it—
 I wish I could be
 That cool girl,
 The one in all of the
 Critically-praised films
 (Something by Godard perhaps?):
 The flighty but fascinating,
 Enigmatic, charismatic,
 And avant-garde one,
 A seductress-*first-class*
 Who sits in cafes and salons and pubs
 Drinking exotic liqueurs
 Revelling in her own intensity,
 Hovering like a gypsy caricature
 In the mysterious candlelight,
 Peering romantically through
 Tobacco-smoke,
 Attracting other
 Intense lean-and-hungry souls

Old and young,
 Getting high off of
 Deep philosophical musings on:
 Poetic Theory, Method Acting,
 Straussberg and Stanislavsky,
 Social Contract Theory,
 Jungian psychology,
 Kierkegaard, Marxism,
 Surrealism, Modernism,
 Revisionist History,
 And Theatre of the Absurd
 (Jarry, anyone?),
 All while plotting Anarchy.

Then I wake up,
 Go back to daily existence—
 I can't live
 The independent film;
 No one is going to cast me
 As the ingenue,
 Or the heroine.
 I am weary of supporting roles.

The Calm Hysteria of Surreal and Intense Sensation

At some transitional point,
An apex and a crux,
A crucial locus...

Roses ceased to smell
Like saints and church festivals
And chaste English gardens,
And began to smell

Like love and heat and sin and sex...

Hibiscus, the synesthetic scent
Aroused by the lush Tahitian tropicality
Of a Gauguin painting.

They say all
Truly great painters go mad.
If I was acquainted
With any I would ask:

Is it an alarming thought,
To wonder what the blood
Underneath my skin
Looks and feels like--
Hot, thick, sticky--
Would it make an impressive
Ink, or paint, or fixative?

This must depend on
Internal weathers,
And shifts in temperament.

Bitter almond
Scent of cyanide;
Sugared almonds tossed
Instead of rice.
Mediterranean custom.

Like Frida Kahlo who saw
Veins and arteries
Joining together
Her two dichotomous selves
I see my veins branching
Out like vines;
Colours are jarring,
Clotted in texture
As in Van Gogh creations,
And my eyes are seeing
Strange visuals,

And I dance with
Self-conjured shadows
Of sense memories summoned,
And momentarily
My world has become
Carnavalesque,
Bizarre,
But not always
Unpleasantly so--

A nightmarish dream sequence inspired by Dali.

Dali's First Mistake

He could have called her
Woman at a Window.

I don't know if she's pretty.
Pretty doesn't matter here.
In this place, this common place,
She is always unadorned;
Cleaning rag and simple shoes,
The day's chores lingering behind her.

Yet, I cannot defy her poise.
She knows that window well,
And I can sense what she sees;
Take the weight off my weary feet as I lean out,
Over the window sill,
Inhale deeply and maybe just touch the icy sting of the waters;
Stand on that irresistible threshold,
That amazing place,
Where the real and the almost real mingle.

I never wander far from her.
When I do, or when I think I do,
She lets me know that she is near.
She is not subtle.
Like the beckon of a Siren, when I least expect it,
I can hear her silence in the echo of my steps.
Yes, I hear;
I hear Mary at the foot of the cross,
I hear Joan of Arc's answer to the inquiry that no one ever made,
I hear Sor Juana in her last vow,
And the emptiness, the nothing, is deafening.
She has learned to veil her indignity in stoicism,
Else she would surely fly out over the water,
And then, confident, in her new white poise,
Look back,
Ease my jaded ears and
Proclaim, softly,
"That is not my window."

Figure at a Window, he called her.
No.

She is, and shall ever be,
Woman at a Window.
Figures cannot live here,
Because figures don't have windows,
And only walls build dreams.

Broccoli Beat

A mother's eyes dart up from a book,
and smirk, knowingly,
from across the room at a small piece of broccoli.

"Ick!"

I've lost this bout.

Or maybe not,

"Muse."

"Ick."

"Muse."

Her toddler face contorts.

Broccoli flies,

milk splatters,

artless hands beat on the table,

"Ba, ba, ba, ba, ba."

Drip, drip.

"Ick," I concur.

She laughs.

What was a smirk is now agape.

Puzzled, I look from one to the other.

The cover on the book reads "The Song of Babel."

**Perverted Beatnik Billy Collins
Pop American Poetics: A Satire**

Falling from
white birch
brown decay
of memory
you press

slowly peeled strips
of
wooly masochism,

rolling fingernails
over skin
to peel the scars
away.

Press the shavings,
prismatic scabs
of dry ribbon
pubescence,
into a collage
of masturbatory
in tent
ions
of light years away.

Linen rags,
coagulated
off-white
putridity,
drip steadily
to the ground
below:
c o c k w a r d l y
—and really—

what you want
is the mad sex
of the stars
as they

e j a c u l a t e * * *
 across the universe—

or, at the very least,
 a warm
 chicken-tender embrace
 with America's
 remotecontrolgenitalia.

Conditions of Light

I. *Bold Spaces Between Trees*

Manet,
 Light arranges
 pale skinned
 prostitutes;
 but these are in fact
 modern Parisian women.
 What *is* the good in that?

We might think
 they should be nymphs
 in that forest
 but we will not see them
 draped in lilies
 with long, loose,
 inviting hair.

We turn our faces
 from the woman who says
 "I want you to see..."
 She is a prostitute
 among young scholars
 with skin neither smooth
 nor bronzed.
 She exists through a light
 that makes her seem too pale.
 Still she says, "look."

She is a modern
 Parisian woman,
 disrobed, plain.

II. *Divine Messenger*

One summer on my uncle's farm
 I watched beauty pass
 through the flight of a blue heron.

I was brought from sleep to see
 the great bird, fishing in the marsh.

My uncle led my cousin and me
 swimming through the warm, beige sun
 and through the trampled reeds
 towards the great bird.
 I crept up slowly,
 with great reverence,
 barefooted in my nightgown.

I did not turn my eyes into my sleeve
 when the shocking barrel lifted
 and the blast burst
 and buckled off the hills;
 one solid,
 lasting
 palpitation.

The heron raised its great wings
 and flew away; the report of the gun
 still ringing through my ears.

My cousin said the bird would probably
 land in a nearby field to die.
 "The damn birds eat all my father's fish."

Walking back to the cottage
 I could smell the sweat from my skin,
 the sun was so hot.

They talked about Justice and acting on
 what is right
 but Truth is not draped in lilies
 with hair long, and loose,
 and inviting.

When that heron beats her wings
 in the copper frames of my head,
 I am peeking though bold spaces
 between trees;
 the conditions of light
 blur distinctions in leaves
 and I am less defined
 and more whole.

III. "Who Dreamed That Beauty Passes Like A Dream?" W.B. Yeats

Manet,
 We turn our faces
 from the prostitute.
 Among young scholars
 her skin is neither smooth
 nor bronzed;
 she bears a light
 that makes her seem too pale
 and yet still asks... "look."

We are of indeterminable answers
 once the flesh is pierced.

She is *not* a goddess
 of moral virtue;
 nor is she a symbol
 for the spiritual health
 of a Nation at large.

She is a modern
 Parisian woman:
 disrobed, plain
 and in bright revealing light.



War Was Not The Answer, Eric Wolf

JOSEPH CORTEGERONE

For the One through Whom all Chances meet

Rough grey sleep
Tells the last one to come home
That the fastidious night is over

And from out the most withered door
Some ancient prophecy fell fallow in the dirt

Odysseus' sperm spattered on Scylla's rock

He could smell the infinite womb
And as if reaching toward heaven
Opened his hands within its resinous walls
A single tooth stuck in his flesh

Is it that We are both Space and Time
And standing half the time half ruined
Always manage recompense

Or that a cruelty so vain and coy
And all at once mistreating
Has bound us in laughing misery
With one chance in many
But no sense of purpose in the end?

CHRIS HODOROWSKI

A Razor's Fascination

His dreams must have passed him by on way to a dove's impasse, for when midnight came, although his eyes were still closed, somehow Palmer watched the sky turn along with the night. Behind his closed eyes a burning flare was high in the dark, which he naturally believed to be the impression of the moon. His limbs, no less his than another's, were leaden and remote from his chest as he rested deeply within a memory of his Amy. The memory was warm, and he lay in bed as if beside her under his covers for a little longer, as if it was Palmer's first night without her.

It wasn't until he opened his eyes and pulled down his sheet before his head fell into his hands to rest for a while longer. Palmer never felt weaker. His clock read two-eleven. So he lit a cigarette and tousled his hair, but not in the moon above the mountains nor on his yellow walls did he see anything familiar.

Palmer imposed a match to a candle and stepped into his jeans and reached for his overcoat. He quietly opened his door and, in his most unusual way, left for a walk. He passed through the streets restively, as though someone were expecting him around a corner, but he wasn't far from his apartment before he looked up to the sky. It was a sky so consolate and familiar that he could feel nowhere but near its centre.

The University had changed and now floodlights glared above the sidewalks. There was a path at the edge of the campus which Palmer had wandered across when he was younger, and on that path Palmer passed Sturgeon Hall and walked farther beyond the greenway, near the Falls, but saw no one. Palmer looked on the dormitory walls and, of the many dark windows, saw only a single lamp burning. Palmer wondered, was it the floodlights that had taken their breath and put the students to sleep or had it just driven them to darker places?

At the edge of the campus was a bronzed plaque of alumni names. Although he was sure that his name would not be among them, Palmer searched for his own. The names, as he read them, sounded obsolete. In the distance, he saw the girl walking with her hair and body behind her. He turned and followed her distantly away from the campus, having assessed she was alone. But when she came to a coffee house, a pair of her friends received her inside.

Palmer waited at the corner for a while, but walked inside noiselessly and sat at the counter. An older man looked over at the girls and winked to Palmer. The girls sat at a table in the corner beside the windows. Palmer on occasion heard a word of theirs, but Palmer's girl sat opposite her friends, silent.

A strike of Palmer's match, though, incited her eyes toward his, but only for a moment, before she looked away. Her look was to the

definition of Palmer's pleasure. Palmer was confident to wait over coffee, but it was with indefinite patience, though, that when Palmer finished his next two cups, he did so without ever sparing her another glance. To pass the time, he reached for the paper and pretended to read, but it was heavy in his hands, so he folded it down on the counter before him.

As he expected, when her friends left, Palmer's girl abided. Palmer studied the timid edge between them. Perhaps silence was natural to her, he thought, and he spoke.

"Would you know the time?" he asked from across the counter.

She gestured towards her bare wrist. "It's well after two," she replied. Palmer went over to her table with his coffee.

"Are you feeling alright?" she asked.

"Yes, I'm just tired."

The girl looked around.

"May I sit?" he asked.

"Well, I suppose, but I should be leaving soon."

Palmer gave his hand to hers, "My name is Palmer."

The girl studied his open mouth and restless hand. "Do you need something?" she asked.

"I guess you can't do anything for me, it's just that before I met you, earlier tonight, I was in bed with terrible thoughts."

She looked down on her hands around her cup. "You shouldn't study your own psychology, you will lose your humor."

"Oh, I'm not worried if I lose my humor. It's hard to laugh on a Saturday night."

"It's Sunday night," she said. "Monday morning, rather."

Palmer turned away from the table to the counter and turned his paper over.

"Then I lost a whole day," he said.

"That's unfortunate."

"I was waiting for someone at home, but she never came."

"Maybe you should go home and see if she's arrived."

"I don't think she is coming back," he said.

"Oh, so then you were never really waiting."

"I can't live there without waiting."

"Why don't you go somewhere else?"

"I have no where to go."

"You don't have any friends to call?"

"No," Palmer said. "I work a lot. I find that people are difficult to be without once I am with them."

"It's not your fault, Palmer, if people don't like you, but no one is obligated to breathe under water."

"Well, where do you go?" he asked.

"To places like this," she said. "I don't have many friends either."

"But when you leave tonight, what will you do?"

"I'll study into the morning."

"You don't sleep?"

"In the daytime," she said.

"I was a student once," Palmer said.

"What did you study?"

"I don't want to talk about it. I didn't like the books much, they were a trial more to my eyes than my soul. The University is a dead system of my past."

"The University will survive you."

"That's true, but I don't like to live within those terms."

"Do you believe in God, Palmer?"

"Yes," he said. "Do you?"

"No, but sometimes I'm persuaded otherwise."

"I have seen certain things, I wouldn't call them miracles, that were exceptional and led me to believe. And I felt loved after I believed," he said.

"To be certain God is not love. Your emotions are yours, you need no one else to personify them. You see, Palmer, everyone, when they are young, is visited by a Faust. Faust is not real, he is just a coincidence of our imagination, but every child who will believe in him will sell his soul to him. Precocious children sell their souls for beauty, and dull children sell their souls for knowledge. Some children even sell their souls for a candy bar," she said.

"I admire my life in more literal terms."

"The point is that if a man is childish enough to believe in a soul, he is childish enough to believe he has sold it."

"I don't like to ask those questions. I think it's absurd to live for the sake to have justified living. I'd rather die."

"But it must be nice to die, when your family and children are about you. I never watched someone die who believed in God, but I imagine that I wouldn't deny any promise to them," she said.

Palmer could not convey another word from beyond the silence. Her words persisted like antagonists in his ears.

"Sometimes," she said, "I think sometimes that we forget to look inside ourselves for the answer." She reached into her purse and held a razor. "But there are other ways to remember." She placed the razor on the top of Palmer's hand, hesitated and walked away. On the razor he beheld the word: Fascination.

Palmer sat with the razor upon his hand. He knew it was still dusk, although Palmer had only an hour before daylight, for already the stars had faded away and the birds of night had left their callings. Palmer

thought of the time, how it was after three and how soon work would come at eight, when he was overcome by all of it. He rested his back on a wall, lighting a cigarette, wanting to believe the night persisted forever, therefore taking for granted how tired he was, and he opened his veins.



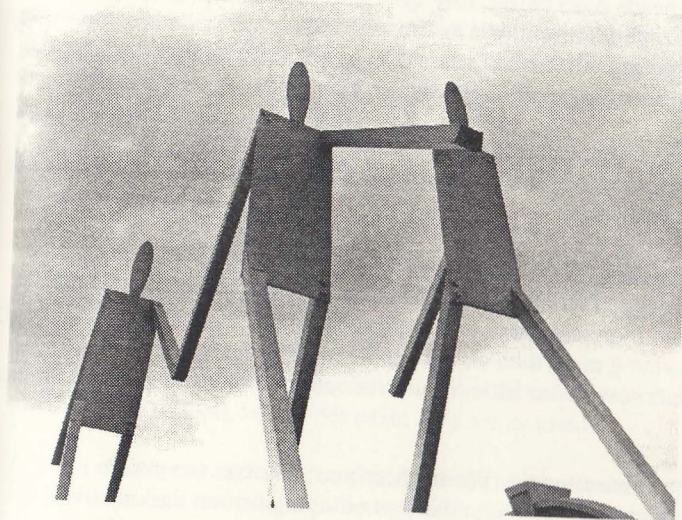
Texture, Crystal Wah

Prayer

I fasten my seatbelt –
unusual
I don't want to die
before
I can think about
how to fix my life

My friends are falling
like little toy trees
The first with a push
funny
How little effort
it takes for the rest

The fear dominates me –
not my feeling
But that of others
watching
Me fall through a tear
in your coat pocket



Hand in Hand, Crystal Wah

The Imps of Possibility

"Are you sad?"

"He is not sad. He is pondering. He is analyzing us."

The little hands reach upward, grasping. One and one-half inches, each finger wraps slowly around the curve of the glass. They flex outward and inward, like a cat stretching its paw, leaving little imprints on the clear surface.

"You are too young to drink."

"I am not real. I am not really here."

The glass touches tiny puckered lips and the whiskey slides over them, unnaturally young, perfect lips. On the other side, little painted fingers pluck a cigarette from a pack on the end table. The flame bursts upward and glints in crystal eyes, light bouncing off the walls of endless caverns into a hollow depth. The opposite hand alights on his wrist, tiny piano keys tipped with crimson. A shiver runs up his arm into his neck, tightening his throat.

"Why did you leave her?"

"Yes, tell us why."

Two little heads push closer, tiny eyes staring, unblinking open windows. Small bodies press against the leather upholstery - squeaking, creaking, sliding. The leather is red, not dark, but a dull version of the pure color, like coagulating blood.

"That is none of your business. Who are you . . . Why . . ."

"He tells us why. We are not real. We are not here. Our business is not business. It is you."

The little bodies lean back. The room rains light. Symmetric fragments fall to the floor, hundreds - a shattering of the background in pure silence. As the shards fall he sees himself as a child, then as a young man, then on his deathbed. The foreground is left in an opaque darkness. Four little lights blink on, two on the right, two on the left.

"Now you cannot see us. We frighten you. We can see you."

"You frighten me! You suppose that plunging us into darkness will resolve that feeling? I am not resolved. I cannot see!"

He hears the sliding glass door open. Moonlight suddenly spills into the room. In the split second before he can focus on the face of the little girl, he imagines the two small children as hideous figures, their skin pulled tight on their faces, collapsed eye sockets dripping flesh. Her face is the same as before. It seems paler now, but that is only an effect of the cool light.

"Is that better? I will marry three times and die, a miserable death in childbirth."

"You have all your senses now. You will clean fragments of my scalp off the bedside lamp when I am twelve years into this world. There are other worlds than this for you, but not for me. You create. You are God. I am in your image."

He scrapes backward in the chair, trying to defy gravity and slide up the wall, a pale, plain, ignorant white. He feels little arms like cuffs around his ankles and he drops forcefully down into the chair. There is a sound, a hissing, on the edge of perception, an unknown dialect on the edge of reason. The room becomes unnaturally cold. He pulls his arms to his body. The leather feels like ice against them - cold, red ice.

"This is impossible. I am dreaming."

"I am not real. Perhaps you were falling asleep and now you are waking up."

Four little feet digging in the carpet. Ten tiny toes, blood pooling around them, like water emerging through the sand as the tide floods the beach. He shifts his feet uncomfortably and finds his shoes saturated with liquid as he presses down.

"Listen, listen, Christian. We are not here to judge you."

"We are here to love you."

The word "love" exits the tiny female mouth with a hiss, then gurgle, followed by a torrent of vomit filled with worms and flies, grapes and rose petals. His leg is covered. There is a pool in his lap.

"What the hell was that? What in the name of God are you!"

"In the name of God, we do not exist. We are not real."

A small male head cocks to the side, a curious kitten looking at a butterfly through the window. An eye falls out and hits the wet carpet like a golf ball dropped in mud. There is a silence. The world stops,

ends.
The world begins.

“You pre-murdered us. She loved you. There is no balance in this world between right and wrong. There just is. You had no reason.”
“You are not real. This is not who I am.”

A strong hand lashes out. A liquor glass flies from the end table and pulls two small figures along with it, like a kite with two tails trailing off into space.

There is a disconnect.
The door opens, a cool breeze. A wife enters, young woman, tired shoulders.

“Let me get changed and I’ll get started on dinner. What is that on the floor?”

“I spilled my drink. Let’s go out to eat. I’m sick of this place.”

Maxim

I do not like my hands.
They’re worn and coarse,
as if I had been using them, forty
years, for hard labor.

I haven’t,
because I have not yet counted
so many years.

Why do I care?
Why should I care?

Everyone in my town knows the pleasant
woman who rides around, unashamed,
smiling,
with no hair on her exposed, naked head.

She is a true heroine.

Life eating madness—*C-A-N-C-E-R*—claimed the life of
her first husband,
stole the childhood breath
from her only son,
and robs her from her
feminine quality—
yet she rides through town,
without any hair,
smiling.

Life goes on.

I hear the phrase exhaling
from my mouth.
Do I live by that?

What is it in these frail temples of our
souls that inhibits us from
regaining strength?
Why is it so painful, so draining
to say:
Hey. I am okay.
Never better.

Jukebox Americana

Spade in the ground
 Needle through the clouds
 The wind skipped a beat
 Past the choking street
 Bitter drops of sky
 Tapering grey and white
 Fell upon swollen laps
 And fifty-dollar hats
 While sharp eyes
 Looked left and right
 But not inside
 They scolded and scowled
 With secret smiles
 And laughed with sweaty,
 Burning pain
 As they danced
 Moving simple and same
 Unaware; their lover's name
 Dancing, and waiting in vain
 Never knowing the tune has changed.

Art of America

Whitewash the souls, minds, and
 Thoughts and bless the bodies of children flowing
 On top of the dream-worked soul of America,
 Art,
 With your beauty and ongoing mind bopping
 To a spontaneous work of jazz-Coltrane-ride-the-tenor-
 Until-midnight-breathes the morning dew with the incantation
 Power of the rhythmic foot-never-stop-to-sway until
 Sunrise,
 Do it for the churning experimental soul-searchers,
 Art,
 With your ideas instilled in the hands of Albrecht Durer, never-
 Melancholia I, just a knight, not Death and Devil, and free-will-
 Fast-splash-strokes making the patriarch jealous of creativity,
 Not creations, and the obscure-abstract-pop-minimalism-feeling
 Warhol buff zones, daily regime-morning-urbane-meetings-in
 Unforgettable-NYC-warehouse—creating, employing, seducing
 Do it for the future mind bogglers of conceptual applying,
 Art,
 With your free-lance-world-of-unconformity—and lovely criticism
 From-blue-and-corporate-ladder-grieving world of normalcy—the
 Correspondent-poor-starving-loose-amiable-eye-of-unforgetting
 Passion-round-the-ticked-clock-of-no-time-relevant worker in the
 Busy streets of Americana folk today,
 Do it for the Kafka's, Kerouac's, and unconformists to come,
 Art.

Does it really matter?

Parental love, creeping deep in a hole,
 Covered first by a red, white and blue flag with crooked,
 un-pressed lines, folded by two drunks who don't know how to
 recite literature, synchronize three shots deep into
 the gates of somewhere, who trip
 and whack their brow slightly with the palm of their long skinned hands,
 —with the austereness of a masturbating monkey,
 just nodding waiting for a stiff one, either
 up or down, in a VFW stamped with irrelevant numbers,
 Next the flag, after crease folded crooked cricket,
 Handed to a woman who spoke little,
 Knew and probably cared little about the 74-year-old stiff corpse,
 Infected with the feeling of security,
 She weeps and moans vague cries of soreness,
 Feeling pity,
 pity on herself,
 marked by rosebuds and the folding of wrinkled hands, she will forever
 cease to live, equally dead on earth as well as beneath,
 forever lost.
 Then cometh the dirt,
 Layered in a Steinbeck style by a pale, gut-wrenching
 Schmuck just creating dust to cover the new loan from the
 Big, orange sun, the rain, the wind, and the
 June-bugs, to keep the birds from shitting,
 To keep the river rats from nibbling,
 To keep water ceased out of mind,
 But
 It still appears naked to the
 Society-enriched eye, Behold a new loan,
 Embarked and engraved letters on a chipped stone,
 Now eternity is granted.

Marriage

Take a walk through the madness, isolation of one-single-used-to-
 Be-woman,
 Never-looking-at-another-again feeling, critical shadowing,
 Ambivalent chaos, mind boggling-thought-to-will-I-ever-see-
 Her-again mind trance, thoughts of who the hell was she,
 And what have I become,
 Or never succeeded in,
 Crystal blue eyes between the void underneath heaven, blue
 Sky's foreshadowing a blue sky,
 Above the void of hell a red-when-glaring-in-my-mind-hell,
 Basement nights in the aunt's scene, embattled with ardent twist-
 my-heart-until-you-leave-and-music-fingers, but at the
 Very same, minute second, imbrued with myself-saddest-day-I've-ever
 Known, glass house, realization,
 Am I infatuated?
 The realms and qualms prove nothing,
 Nothing so far...where,
 Vibrant flesh-screaming-the-triumphant-alto-thumps-song-of-the-echo-
 in-lover's-cabin-rug-by-blazing-log-fire,
 laying the created beast in the third world,
 or third country.
 Rome? United States? Rome?
 Who's mad?
 Surely not the lovely, Italian-skin-wrapped-so-tightly-maniacal-hip-up-
 All-Morrison-lover-please

Marriage—are YOU kidding me...he loves you?

Misplaced Medication

"Finger lobotomy special," read the menu on the elevator. "Twenty dollars for a blood shot. Level 24."

The advertisement was poorly laid out, but it still attracted me. My grandmother's appointment with the hearing doctor was going to take up about an hour of my time anyway, so I decided I would check it out.

"Level 7," the portentous electronic voice on the elevator said in four different languages. Thank god my grandmother, Helen, was hit by a car in March and lost her hearing. Her prejudice against foreign language was overwhelming, and I personally used to hate listening to her talk.

I held Helen's soggy, shit-paper hands and guided her to the Doc's room. I explained to the doctor that she told me she had an epiphany the other night while studying a telephone book and she related to me that she heard some weird, astral voices. She told me she needed a doctor. I told her she had sloppy handwriting.

"Maybe she meant a psychologist," I told Dr. Griggen as I was shutting the door.

As the last light was seen from the Doctor's bright office while I was shutting the door, I heard the doc yelling, "Hey, I don't know sign language. How the hell do you suppose I communicate?"

I was already in the elevator by the time he finished the word "communicate." Now, I thought to myself, *\$20 for a bloody shot.*

"Select floor now," the electronic lady living in the shaft said.

I slammed on the number 24. The numbers, once white, were worn with time and fingerprints from elders, and about three foot from my knees there were smudge marks from eclectic children. I remembered when I was young and innocent.

When I arrived on the floor, a man with a prosthetic right hand was waving to himself and he was streaking the white tile floor black with his apparently cheap boots.

"Hello, Mr. Wangaloo. Did you ever bite into a hot dog and lose a wisdom tooth. But Ohh. I forget, the lizard took my teeth while I was fishing in the Mojave," the waver said.

I thought he was talking to me, but when I tried to ignore him and turn around like there was someone else there, a weird event occurred. Before my swollen, morning eyes stood an identical man. The only difference on the twin of this waver was his left hand was prosthetic.

"Identical twins," I pondered.

"Hey, hey, hey," the twin waver said. "Space robots are for chickens and my funk is swooshing away with a bottle cap in the fog of old London. Utt Ohh. I forgot, London lost the spice and fog when Dickens died."

The waver and twin waver were obviously whacked out of their minds. I don't mean a good whacked like acid or any other drug, I mean mental stability. I figured I would inquire on where the \$20 blood shots were executed.

"Do you know where the lobotomies occur?" I asked, wishing I didn't. "I'm looking for the Doctor."

"Dr. Kettleman, huh? He is in with a patient. Utt ohh. I forgot. I was the patient. He is in room 24B. He'll be waiting," the original waver said, as he was walking toward his twin, waving like a fat Times Square cop directing traffic.

"Thanks," I said relating well and proceeded towards door 24B.

As I was walking down the hallway, I could hear two sets of feet streaking the sparkling floor. They never stopped. They just kept streaking.

"Finally, 24B," I said out loud to myself, after a five-minute walk down the mirror-covered hallway on old floor 24.

I opened the door happy to get away from the mad wavers. The lazy advertisement that attracted me there and the word DR. MAN the KeTTLE-man were posted on the door.

"What is with the spelling," I said out loud as the door, while only three quarters of the way open, hit the left wall inside the office.

Upon entering the office, which did not appear like an office, but like a long hallway that was angled to the right, the walls were covered with eye-soaring pink wallpaper with ocean blue, baseball bat-sized paper clips painted every three feet. They resembled 12:00, 3:30, 10:30, 11:45 and 7:30 in succession. The look-alike metal apparatuses were stacked three high and were on both sides of the wall. At the end of the roughly 20-foot hallway, the stench of the inside of an outside shit house in the baking sun saturated the air.

"What in the hell," I said loudly, again, covering my nose with a red handkerchief similar to the one Beckett used in *Endgame*.

I came to the window at the end of the hallway. The frame was a bright red and had dents as if someone was shooting nickels at it with a .270 Sako rifle. I tapped on the tinted window and yelled in the little opening that was the size of a paper dish those assholes at the Olive Garden serve their shit food on.

"Anyone there?" I inquired because I couldn't see what was on the other side.

"Hello," a woman said tapping on my back.

I turned my startled body towards her. An unbearable feeling of anxiety ran through my body, similar to what it was like when the towers fell.

"Where did you come from?" I asked wiping the sweat from my brow.

"I was right here the whole time reupholstering the floor with this cowhide, guts and all," she said. "My name is Mandy Kettleman. I am the doctor."

"What the hell," I said to myself, finally noticing the floor. The hardwood floor was covered with real cowhide. Traces of blood were everywhere. Tendons resembled kite string with mucus and my feet perceived it as if I were walking on greasy, raw hamburger. Quite unusual, but certainly intriguing.

"The lobotomy special, is that still on?" I asked, taking a long pause between my words.

"Oh, so that is why your normalcy is here," she said, pushing her hair behind her left ear with rubber gloves that were covered in blood. "We only perform those during the afternoon. But since I am slow today, which obviously I am, WE can get you in. Please take a seat in my office."

She directed me to her oval-shaped office. Pictures of billy goats grazing on a sandy beach were hung on the unpainted walls. She had a collection of shoehorns on her desk. Every third one was plated gold, and some were on display in boots. One shoehorn had an engraved platform below it that read, "I continue to save the world foot by foot."

"It's a tough career I chose," she said. "They, along with my classic record collection, are the only relaxation pieces I have left."

"What are they used for?" I asked.

"You'll find out," she said, preparing a mixture of some medicines I assumed were for the lobotomy special.

She turned around from her desk and, after admiring the shoehorn collection, directed me to stand up. I obeyed. She told me to take the preparation medicine.

"How about paperwork," I said, guzzling the mixture, "or insurance...or the procedure or...or...my...name...at least..."

A flash of white light.

A flash of red.

The distinct sound of July thunder.

The questions of Kettleman were rolling in the room while my senses refused to let me observe.

"Oh yes, Richard Barbenium. I ran for council last year. Oh yes, you are right, he is an asshole. He was one of your patients? That is weird. Yeah, he can run the city like a tyrant sometimes. His grandmother? When did this occur? Oh really, only that long ago. Wow, she must have been a whore. Who me? I live in my grandmother's house. She doesn't realize it, though. Yeah, she is very old. She has some medical problems. She likes to lick bathroom floors in amusement parks. No, I don't think she ever worried about viruses, but once she did

get sick. No, not for that reason, she blamed it on other races, using derogatory sayings like towel heads, kikes, you know. Oh no, I don't think she ever liked Elvis. She liked his name because she loved Hitler's dog. Oh yeah, could you image that, less than 150 calories a day. Yeah, starving must be painful. No, her husband died in the war, 1942, I believe. Never heard of them, but I bet she did. Pocono Downs? It did start in 1965. Yeah, the track was a service center for people of the Agnes Flood. 1972, that's right. No, can't say I liked London. No, actually a guy was just mentioning Dickens. Wait, the twin wavers said you were a...were a...man?"

I woke up about an hour later. My throat was all scratchy and the bandage on my head felt wet and warm. I was in shock, but I felt better than I ever did. I tried to stand up, but I had no balance. No balance at all.

"Just relax," a white-haired man said to me holding a pen in his hand. "I just need your signature and WE will be done in an hour."

I tried to speak but my language came out in a jumbled slur. The thoughts were clear but there was no way to reveal them. I signed without reading, just like Grandma would call a man a racial slur without knowing him. It was just that easy at that point in time.

When the disheveled feeling of raging dysenteric stomach whoops left my system, and I was finally able to leave, I realized my grandmother was still in the building. I stumbled into the elevator, listened to the phony voice echoing, and went to see if she was still with Dr. Griggen.

The receptionist—a big blonde with milky thighs—informed me that Grandma called a taxi and was worried about my whereabouts. I was happy I wouldn't have to bring the whore home.

While walking to my car, I kept having visions of the cowhide rugs and the female doctor that drugged me. The thoughts were moving freely in my head now, the smoothest ever. My past existence all made sense.

"I could use another," I said rolling a Turkish Gold Camel cigarette in my fingertips. "That was good shit for sure."

Before my very eyes were the twin wavers. I realized they were just happy ejaculators of life. I understood everything now, and realized I better keep taking my medication on time, because dreams like these seem make believe.

But completely normal to the unaltered mind.



Mother's Delicious Bread, Joseph DeAngelis

GABE LEDONNE

The Lost Van Buren Column:

Dear Uncle Jumbo

By Al "Uncle Jumbo" Van Buren (*Uncle to Abigail*)

Kevin Smith writes: *Dear Uncle Jumbo, why do men have nipples? They don't do anything.*

Now that is an excellent question, Kevin. Male nipples, much like those of the female, are highly sensitive and, when used in sexual foreplay, can greatly arouse a man (Source: *Men's Health*, June 1998). So, from that aspect, one might say that they serve a sexual function.

However, others might argue that they are a vestigial organ, like an appendix. This would mean, then, that at one time men could lactate. This is an aspect which quite frankly freaks me out, and so I choose not to dwell on the possibility.

There is, of course, one other explanation—and the most probable as well. As any good Christian could tell you, the Bible states that God created man in God's own image. Now, since men have nipples, this would imply that God has them as well, which would mean that God is in fact a woman or, more specifically, a woman with a penis. This, of course, would mean that the brains behind *Dogma* were not all that far off when they cast Alanis Morissette in their comic classic.

Hellen Keller asks: *Dear Uncle Jumbo, why do drive-thru ATM's have Braille when blind people can't drive?*

Since most ATM manufacturers make ATM's for both drive-through and stand alone stations, it's easier to mass produce the buttons with the Braille than to have two separate manufacturing lines for those with and those without it.

However, there is another reason to have them. You see, Hellen, although you are right that blind people "can't even" drive, that doesn't always keep them from driving anyway. Oftentimes, you'll see these overly independent non-visionaries driving around town (especially Wilkes-Barre) in large sedans (i.e. 1991 Ford Crown Victorias). While it is obvious to the rational public that these people shouldn't be driving, state law allows them to drive under the protection of the AARP. Since these vision-impaired "senior citizens" drive anyway, they need a way to check their retirement funds and draw off of them occasionally to buy daily necessities such as denture cream, Centrum Silver, Ensure, lottery tickets, and Depends—because they have a lot of living to do.

Jessica Simpson writes: *Uncle Jumbo, why is the sky blue?*

Scientists "claim" that the sky is blue because as the white sunlight enters our atmosphere, it induces the atmosphere's molecules' dipoles to "wiggle" causing the blue waves of light to scatter around the atmosphere and hence paints the sky blue.

However, I believe the sky is really blue because God is color-coordinating conscious. You see, because God is a woman (as proven previously), she is obviously design savvy. Sky blue goes with everything—the greens of spring and summer, the oranges, yellows, and reds of fall, and the snowy white of winter. Blue was simply a stroke of interior/exterior design genius. Kudos to the woman with the penis. (She probably watches *Trading Spaces*.)

Stephen Hawking asks: *Why do people buy stars for each other as gifts?*

Well, Stephen, whenever we buy anything for anyone, we usually do it under the auspices that we want to show that we care for that person...that we like/love them. We never claim that we desire something in return. But this is utter bullocks. Whenever we buy anything for anyone, it's because we want something in return. Now what that something is varies from person to person and present to present...but, in the instance of buying a star for someone, it's because that person wants sex. When we buy a star for someone, what we're really saying is, "I bought you that piece of the Heavenly bodies...now I want a piece of your heavenly body."

Needless to say, I don't own a star.

Lyle Lovett asks: *Why are big toes so damn ugly?*

Good question, Lyle. You see, as discussed earlier, God created man in her own image, which is why men have both nipples and penises. But this is also why we have ugly big toes. You see, after God created the world, she went on vacation for a little while in the outer cosmos. Unfortunately, she got lost (which is, incidentally, why women are instinctively bad with directions).

Anyway, God "stumbled" upon the earth after a few centuries of looking for it in the dark; actually, she stubbed her toe in the Gulf of Mexico. This did two things: first, it caused the death and destruction of all the dinosaurs. Second, it also gave God a nasty bruise on her big toe.

God couldn't very well have her creations be "more perfect" than she is. (I mean, it irks her to no end already that those models on the cover of *Cosmo* are airbrushed to perfection beyond her own.) So God made all men and women have ugly big toes so that she could live with her new imperfection. In short, the basic lesson here is that, like in the real world, we all suffer from a woman's bad sense of direction.

Paul Mitchell inquires: *Uncle Jumbo, what do they put in hair spray that makes your hair stiff and how did they come up with it?*

Actually, they put alcohol in hairspray to do that to your hair. When you think about it, it's really amazing to see all of the different ways that alcohol can make you hard. It's a wonderful thing.

Al Roaker writes: *Why are weathermen always wrong?*

Thanks for asking, Al. Since God (the woman with a penis) makes and controls the weather, she is the one who time and time again makes our weathermen look like dumb-asses. Now, you may ask yourself, "Why does God want to make weathermen look like dumb-asses?" It's actually quite simple.

You see, when weathermen try to "predict" the weather, they are really trying to read God's mind. Like every other woman, God hates it when a man tries to read her mind. Out of spite, she makes them wrong on purpose—even if they were right originally. For example, when I broke up with my girlfriend—explaining that she was being much too overbearing, clingy, and overly dependent on me—rather than admit that I was right, she acted as though she didn't need me at all, that she was a big girl and was only hanging around me for my benefit. It was all in the sad attempt to make me feel foolish. So, really, God is a lot like an embittered ex-girlfriend—they are spiteful, revengeful bitches...oh, and they have cocks.

Faith

At the age of four, I tested my faith as a Christian and found it wanting.
 At the age of six, my best friend's older brother gave me a rabbit so large
 that I couldn't hold it, and a silver blade wrapped in crimson velvet.
 At twelve, I fell into a meditative trance so deep that it took me three
 days to come out.
 At thirteen, I was sent to the hospital when I attempted my own
 circumcision.
 At fifteen, I tried to follow the noble eightfold path, but I could only live
 six of the folds.
 Seventeen years old: Money became my God, I had gotten my first job.
 Nineteen years old: Eros and Aphrodite hold sway.
 Now I am twenty. I believe in UFO's, Magic, and the ability of people to
 change. I believe that politicians have my best interest in mind. I believe
 that one day, people will live on Mars, that my old dog went to a farm
 where she could run all day and was happy. I believe I can still be friends
 with my ex-girlfriend, that the end isn't near. I believe that the homeless
 man I gave my last dollar to will spend it on a sandwich and a cup of
 coffee. But I believe in no god. I'm not that gullible.

FADE IN:

INT. <POEM'S LOCATION> - TIME

Maybe I watch too many movies. . .

read too many comic books. . .

surround myself with fiction.

Maybe I immerse myself in unreality so far that
 I don't want to,
 Or can't,
 Return to the real world.

My life is spent in two-hour increments
 Twenty-four pages, once a month.

Uma Thurman fights an army
 to kill the man she loves.
 Jesse Custer takes on God Himself.
 If they can do it why can't I?

Maybe this wouldn't be so bad,
 But it works for love too.
 In a story, love means
 "Happily ever after"

My father was no help either. A side story:

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MY GRANDPARENT'S - TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

My grandparents once held a party in my father's honor.
 Friends and family came from L.A., Louisiana, and all over
 North America to see him. In the middle of it all, he
 announced to the crowd, "I'm going to Bethlehem to see a girl,"
 and left.

CUT TO:

EXT. MY MOTHER'S - LATER

She didn't know he was coming and wasn't home. My father waited on her doorstep for eight hours.

DISSOLVE BACK:

Maybe that's why I hate loose ends,
love drastic answers to simple problems,
think anything worth doing is worth taking a chance for.
As Terry Pratchett says:

CUT TO:

INT. TERRY PRATCHETT'S OFFICE - EVENING

TERRY PRATCHETT
Million to one chances crop up nine times
out of ten.

((INSERT STANZA HERE))

CUT TO:

INT. A ROOM - NIGHT

A man begins a story and gets so engrossed in it that he stops anything but writing it. His power is turned off—he writes by candle light. He gets evicted—he hits the streets, bumming for some paper and a pen so he can get his next fix.

CUT BACK

((INSERT STANZA HERE - POSSIBLY COMIC-BOOK MOVIES))

CUT TO:

A world where Rambo lives next door to Gandalf the Grey (or White). As the camera moves down the street, you see other members of the neighborhood. Hannibal is inviting a troupe of Girl Scouts into his house for lunch, Wolverine is mowing his lawn, Han Solo is playing the latest *Star Trek* game on his PC. Any problems are resolved within two hours, and everyone gets along.

CUT TO:

INT. <POEM'S LOCATION> - TIME

This is the real world. I am nothing but a mundane.

CUT TO:

Maybe the man begging three sheets of college rule wakes up in the morning screaming

MAN

I have it! I know what that Kushner kid is gonna do next!

CUT BACK

SPEAKER

Surprisingly, this is a comfortable thought.

FADE TO BLACK

ROLL CREDITS

THE END

The Nintendo Haiku System

1. Super Haiku Brothers

Jumping on Goombas
Princess in other castles
Down pipes and up vines

2. Super Haiku Brothers 2

Lethal thrown turnips
Your choice of the elite four
Mario useless

3. Super Haiku Brothers 3

Tanooki? Statue!
Whistle takes you to warp world
Special Goomba shoes

4. Legend of Haiku

Naughty Gannondorf
Link can take the Master Sword
Remixed quests? Zelda!

5. Haikuroid

Fight, kill Mother Brain
Underlined Justin Bailey
Destroy the Metroids!

JOHN MICHAEL VORE**Dali Lama Traffic Jam**

Bloomington, IN
September 7, 2003

If we don't speak of our bodies
the Dali Lama traffic jam
on 70 Bloomington acres
might just be any other
Mass Exodus...

...the diverse religious ethic
gathered together, today,
no more than
spiritual golden oldies...
under the sun...

The man in
a Lotus stares at me.
I can't tell if it's bliss or boredom
I see on his face.

So I give the intro another try:
"this mass exodus would be...
let me think...
'spiritual vehicles...
moving in...
love and compassion...
towards their destiny?"

He smiles upon me, so I continue:
"Directed to Snotty Road...by...by...
...overweight..."
And the backlit picture of serenity shakes his head.
"C'mon, they are heavy..." I try to reason.
Buddha closes his eyes—the old Dough Boy
seems, ironically, touchy...I give in:

"Directed to Snotty Road by Monroe County Sheriffs on overtime..."

Yet, what is the anchor—
(I have to ask)
the weight of compassion?
this space by which
no Muslim kills a Jew?

Through which Christian believers in Allah
hold hands—all together, now—that refuse
the love of dykes and faggots?

Even this most likable of
Holy Men—our host—
won't defend us.

Yet we hear the cry of Tibet:
the price of freedom is
in our bones.

The 7 pillars on stage
think the roof might cave in,
but we stand among you
not in a house of worship
but this consecrated field.

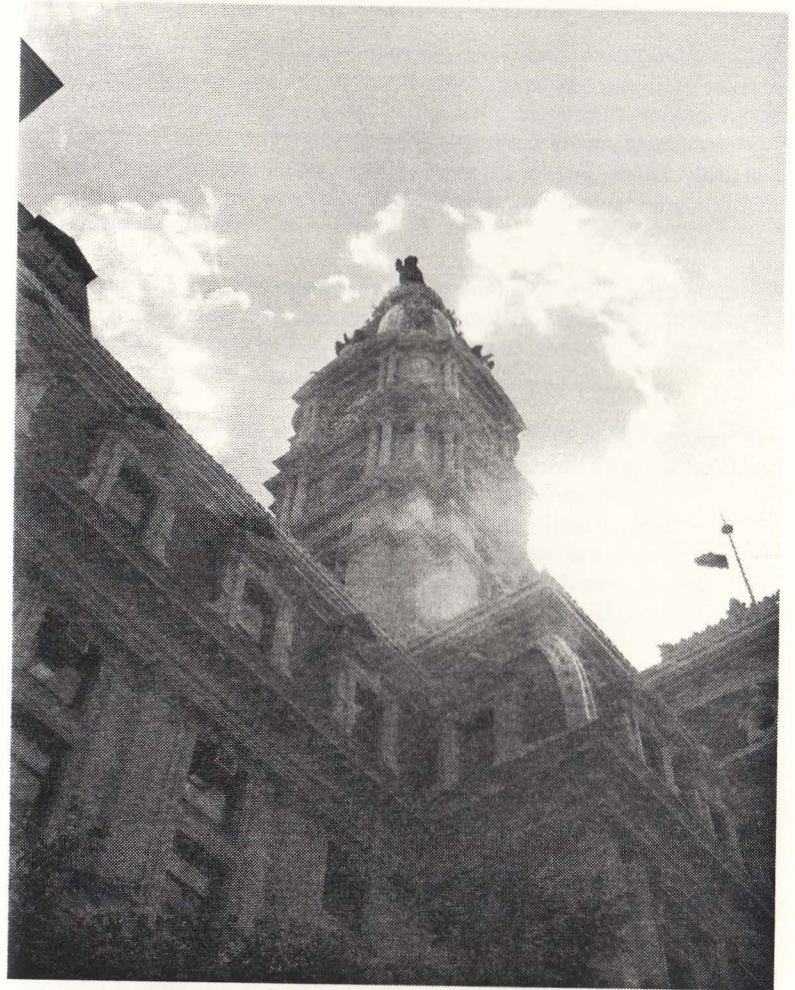
As you struggle with the weight
we watch and love
even a distant star

slow of walk
hunched, puffy-faced
shaking non-stop,
silent.

The courageous
broken body
called Muhammad Ali.

An old hippie in a Dodge Sport minivan
bumps me twice, pulls up beside me, and parks.
He rushes towards the tents.
Inside, on the seats, the flyer says:
BUY THE VIDEO!
Outside the signs say:
NO CAMERAS ALLOWED.

The greatest
story
ever told—if
we do not speak
of our bodies.



City Hall, Philadelphia, Eric Wolf

-AUTHOR BIOS-

Drew Amoroso, a junior English major, considers himself delightfully unrefined, yet tacky. He would like to attend graduate school to study the cause-effect relationship between global warming and the misuse of the comma splice. Inspired by his favorite tyrannical Texan, Drew has adopted the following motto, working hard (because it's hard work) to defend its ideals in his everyday life; "I know the human being and fish can coexist peacefully."

Raychil Arndt is a freshman psychology major. She likes many forms of art including photography, sculpture and textiles. Raychil is afraid of dinosaurs and holding balloons outside because, she says, "You never know when a vicious dinosaur balloon will blow away."

Helene T. Caprari is a senior English major at Wilkes University. She is the Editor-In-Chief of *Manuscript*, Vice President of Sigma Tau Delta, member of the Provost's Women in Leadership Class, the Interdisciplinary Committee, the Norman Mailer Society, and Pennsylvania College English Association. Helene is active in organizing creative events on and off campus and plans to attend graduate school in fall 2005. In her spare time, you will not find her.

Lauren Carey is a freshman English major who loves her dog, Bear, very much. In fact, there are very few things she loves more than Bear. Among these are rice pudding, tortilla chips, pipe organs, Ringo Starr, leopard print, and vampire hunters.

Joseph Cortegerone is a Wilkes University alumnus who majored in English and Philosophy with a minor in German. Joseph has lived in Germany, Ireland, and Quebec. He is currently working on a novel, a song cycle for mezzo-soprano and piano using texts by Yeats and a short chamber symphony. He plans to pursue a PhD in Literature.

Shannon Curtin is a freshman studying English/Pre-Optometry. She hails from Berwick, Pa.

J.W. (Jonathan William) Davies 4/20/80 - ?

Joseph DeAngelis has survived a lot of hard losses in this rough semester. He witnessed the impossible when the Red Sox won the World Series and George W. Bush was re-elected. Joseph feels that with this new trend of Red Sox World Championships and Bush in charge of an already destroyed country, the world might single-handedly explode into the dark depths of the universe.

Dan DiMaria is a native of Northeastern Pennsylvania, a familiar face in the bourgeois street-scenes of Wilkes-Barre. His favorite poets and writers are John Keats, e.e. cummings, William S. Burroughs, Oscar Wilde, Dr. Hunter S. Thompson and Victor Hugo. He is also influenced by the music of the Flaming Lips, Radiohead, the Velvet Underground, Nick Drake and Rage Against the Machine. He is a graduate of Wyoming Valley West High School in Plymouth, PA, where his words were stolen and molded to make "student safe" propaganda and where he was screwed over by mindless staff and faculty time and again, thus forever denying him the opportunity to achieve his true potential in a mid-level private university ten minutes from where he lives. He hopes to one day salvage the shards of his wasted life and attain some higher level of meaning and existence, or else just do a really good job of pretending that he has. Dan wants to leave you with this phrase, which he says is not necessarily transcribed into proper Latin, although he feels that that further comments on his character: *Adrienne, vos signum meus ortus unto is novus universitas of decor verum quod diligo.*

Clarissa E. Dudeck, 22, is from Hegins, PA where she attended Tri-Valley High School. She currently resides in Wilkes-Barre near the A-Plus ghetto and is a P-3 pharmacy student. Her hobbies include photography, pharmacy school, partying, and writing to get her frustrations out instead of banging her head off walls. She also enjoys tacos, Corona and vintage 80's clothing. Clarissa hopes that everyone can relate to her work in some way. She leaves you with a quote, "Rock On!"

James D. Feeney was born on March 19, 1985. Throughout his childhood, he developed an interest and a passion for the arts. Never experiencing any proper training, Jim has independently explored the realms of the visual arts, music, writing, and film. Although a man of various trades, Jim's ultimate goal is to become a professional film director.

Jessika Geisler has hitchhiked across America three separate times and decided to settle in Wilkes-Barre for a while. She is a part-time student at Wilkes University this semester, where she has excelled in fencing, writing, and editing for *Manuscript*. Hopefully, she will join the English major brigade in the near future.

In a past life, **Christina Harowicz** was known as the bloodthirsty pirate "Tina the Terrible." She was notorious for throwing reluctant sailors overboard and leaving them for the sharks. She invaded a number of countries and pilfered their riches. As a source of entertainment, "Tina the Terrible" would put shares of the loot into giant piñatas and watch

her crew beat the papier-mâché animals, as they hoped to find the gold inside.

Christopher Hodorowski leaves much to be desired. (Editor's Note: The views expressed in Chris Hodorowski's Biography are in no way related to the views held by those in the Manuscript Society.)

Keith Hubbard hails from the small town of Archbald, PA. He is a sophomore at Wilkes University and is currently majoring in Communications. He has aspirations of becoming a writer, musician, or possibly King of Great Britain. When he is not rescuing infants from burning buildings, he writes poetry, songs, and blueprints for the destruction of Finland. (Keith hates Finland.)

Amy Kaspriskie feels that a person is supposed to know him/herself better than anyone else. Amy was a writer from birth, which carries over into the academic portion of her life, explaining why she is pursuing a major in English. If she had to predict where she would be in the future, Amy would just hope to be happy in what she was doing, whether she was wealthy or not. Other than writing, Amy's passions include dancing as well as a plethora of other disciplines and personal interests. More than anything else, Amy is passionate.

Matthew Koch is a current staff member of Wilkes University and an alumnus of the English department. When not fixing computers that everyone seems to keep breaking, he enjoys a good glass of bourbon and writing/reading poetry and fiction.

Senior English major **Ben Kushner** is interested in scary movies, dancing the Lambada, and listening to Ringo Starr. He seeks poetry, short fiction, plays and black & white photography. Work must be clever, well written, and not cliché. Hallmark poetry need not apply. For more information you can call Ben at 1-867-5309.

Amber Lawson is a senior English/Secondary Ed major. Originally from Tunkhannock, she is truly a country girl at heart. Her interests include hiking, reading, writing, and spending time with her family. After graduating, Amber hopes to gain a teaching position in a local or not-so-local secondary school and plans to continue her education to attain her Masters degree. Amber would like to thank all of her professors in the English department for recognizing her talents and for always pushing her to become a better writer.

Gabe LeDonne smacked his head on a paved playground in New Jersey when he was three. This traumatic event has served as explanation for many of Gabe's actions throughout his life—the most recent being this

semester's *Manuscript* submission. His childhood injury has also been attributed to his life-long mantra: "Some men see things as they are and ask, 'Why?' I see things that don't exist and ask, 'What the hell was that?'"

J. Michael Lennon is a professor of English at Wilkes University. His latest publication is *Norman Mailer's Letters from An American Dream, 1963-1969*.

Ron Lieback hates fake people, especially people who write poems about their girlfriends. Ron would like to quote Charles Bukowski: "An intellectual is a man who says a simple thing in a difficult way; an artist is a man who says a difficult thing in a simple way."

Sabrina A. McLaughlin is currently suffering through her quarter-life crisis. If she survives it with her sanity more or less intact, she hopes to pursue advanced degrees in Literature and Creative Writing. Her aspirations are to become a published poet with the day-job of college professor. Contrary to rumour, she is not a Communist although she is quite liberal and will believe in the equal distribution of wealth as long as she is poor; if she ever manages to become reasonably wealthy she will then believe in a well-stocked wine cellar, thoroughbred racehorses, and a BMW. After seeing the results of the recent presidential election, Sabrina is considering possible expatriation, preferably to another English-speaking nation such as The Republic of Ireland or Australia because the only foreign words and phrases she knows are obscure swear words and drinking toasts in Italian, German, Irish, Albanian, Russian, and Yiddish, which although they come in handy at times, are not adequate for developed intellectual conversation.

Sabrina Naples, 21, is a Wilkes-Barre native and senior at Wilkes University, majoring in English and Psychology. A lover of all things fantasy, she is obsessed with anime, manga, and the supernatural, as well as being a proud admirer of Sailor Moon. Sabrina plans to pursue an MFA in creative writing and perhaps rule the world on the side. Her favorite foods are cookies, icing, and marshmallows. Her pet parrot, Caesar, says "Hello" and offers tours of Wilkes-Barre starting at \$6.29.

Special News Release: "The Government of the United States of America has scientifically proven that exposure to **Josh Orloski** is not hazardous to your health. Wait, or maybe it was that exposure to Josh Orloski is hazardous to your health. We really can't remember."

Corey Pajka is a Senior Theatre/English major and is very grateful for the chance to write for *Manuscript* again. Sorry, but he's also a little jaded right now; this message was written on November 3, 2004. Check back in four years. Corey would like to leave you with this quote from

Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*: "Nothing's lost forever. In this world, there's a kind of painful progress. Longing for what we've left behind, and dreaming ahead. At least I think that's so."

Marissa M. Patterson is a senior English and Spanish major with concentrations in Secondary Education and ESL. She plans to graduate in 2005 provided that she excels in the "surprise" math class requirement. She believes in two things: "Más vale tarde que nunca" (better late than never) and "No hay rosa sin espinas" (there is no rose without thorns). She enjoys Thursday night bowling with her girls (*winning, of course) and reading everything that is not included on the fall syllabi. She can frequently be heard saying, "Life goes on."

Sergio Pedro is a visiting professor of Spanish at Wilkes University. He has a Masters in Spanish Literature from the University at Buffalo and is currently completing his doctorate at that same university with a specialization in early modern Spanish literature. His influences are eclectic, for they include the Spanish Generation of 1927, Octavio Paz, and "untouchables" like Keats and the 17th century Spaniard, Luis de Góngora.

Marissa Phillips is a freshman Communications major who wishes she were in Philadelphia studying fashion design. Every so often she writes a poem or story which may or may not be good. Marissa enjoys reading good books, playing the lottery, and people who wear tapered pants. In her spare time she buys milk from Rite Aid.

Robert Schreiber enjoys writing, but not as much as he enjoys lovemaking. Something about lovemaking just rubs him in a way that writing does not. Maybe if he were more sensitive to writing's needs, it would rub him the way lovemaking does. One might assume that Robert enjoys lovemaking because of the so-called "Instant Gratification Theory." One would be assuming correctly.

Kathryn Skaluba is a criminology major in her junior year. She graduated from Tunkhannock High School in 2002. Photography and writing are two of Kathryn's favorite pastimes.

Amy Steele is a student at Wilkes University.

John Vore comes to Wilkes University from Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis (Indiana), where he has served as an Associate Faculty member in the Department of English. He holds the M.F.A. in Creative Writing and the B.A. in Philosophy from the University of Notre Dame. His list of publications includes three nonfiction books published by Firetrap: *Moving into History: Therapy for the American*

Identity, The Raft: Notes Towards Rules of Order for a Digital Age, and Tell Me What Home is Like: A Map/Memoir in Lieu of a Place. He also has two books of poetry: *The Requiem for the Man with Two Dicks* and *The Buddy Poems*. His recent in-progress works include *The Reading-Writing-Meaning Triangle*, "a kinesthetic method for teaching writing" and "The Four Plateaus." He suggests you check out Firetrap.com where you can see his list of publications in more detail.

Crystal R. Wah is currently a junior, finishing up her last year of pre-pharmacy. Photography has been a hobby of hers for the past five years. Crystal's photos have been displayed at the Fine Arts Fiesta in Wilkes-Barre and at White Pines College in New Hampshire.

When he is not being thrown out of restaurants in the greater Orlando area, **Jim Warner** hosts several poetry readings throughout the valley. A Wilkes alumnus, Jim also performs regularly in New York City and is scheduled to be a featured reader at the Cornelia Street Café. His shoe size is 9 1/2.

Eric Wolf of Clarks Summit, PA is a graduating biochemistry major with a career interest in pharmaceutical research and molecular biology. Eric has been taking photography as a hobby for about five years.

4905