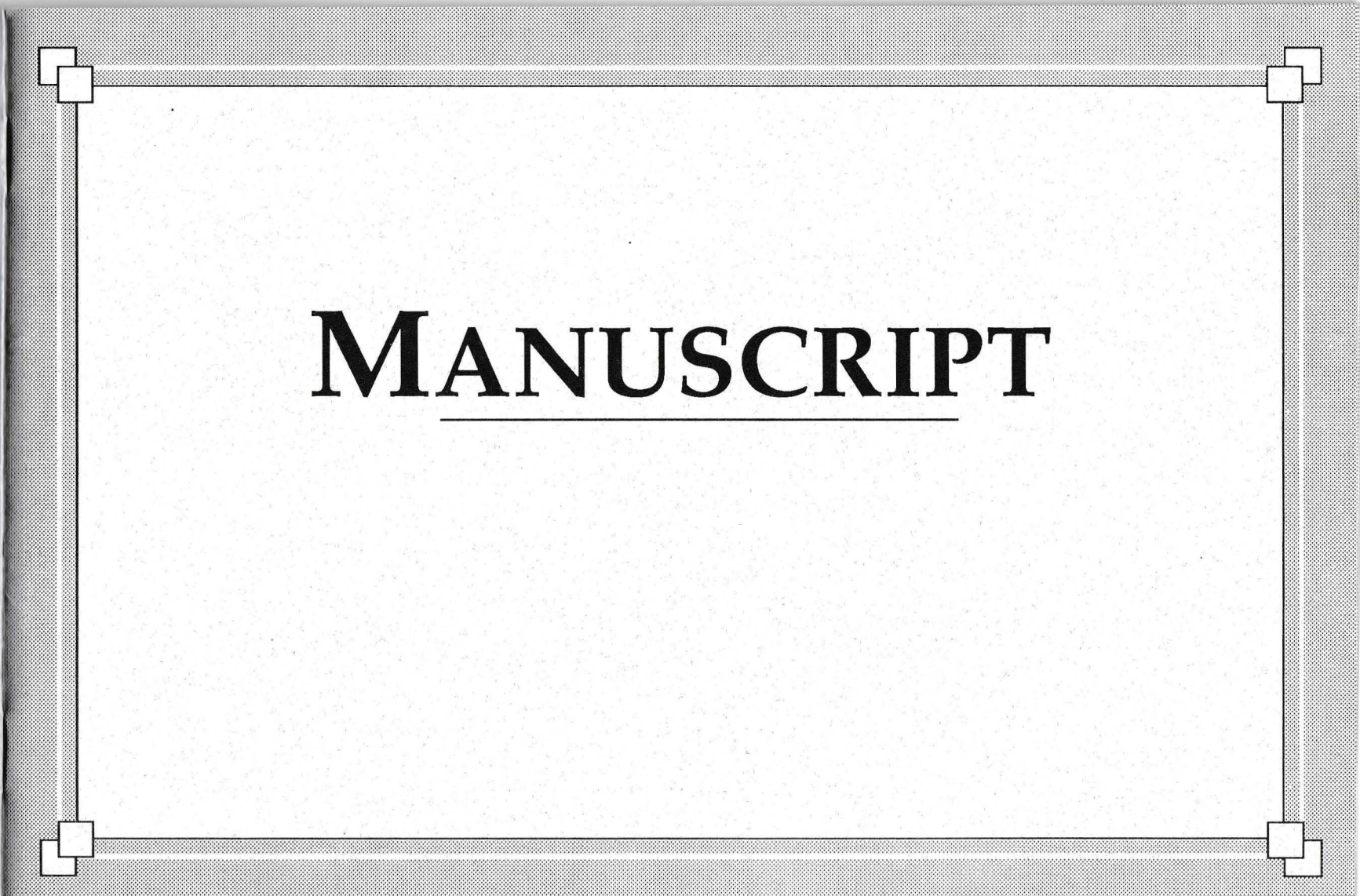


MANUSCRIPT



MANUSCRIPT

1996 CONTEST WINNERS

Art

Tiger Racing Rocket...by Christopher Sleboda

Short Story

Saturday Hero...written by Edward Philbin

Short Story

Early Morning... written by Jennifer Carey

Poetry

Hierosgamos...by Ann Peters

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Volume XLIX
MCMXCVI

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Manuscript meetings are held every Thursday at noon, on the third floor of Chase Hall. If you would like to get involved in next year's publication, please feel free to join the weekly meetings.

The Tale of The Manuscript

Once upon a time there was a bunch of lunatics in a small cage on the top floor of Chase Hall. They were a merry band which enjoyed frivolity and carnage on a grand scale.

One day the leaders of this jovial bunch had a vision. In this vision they pictured a magazine in which the masses of Wilkes University could vent their spleens. The fellow lunatics concurred.

They gathered in a circle around The Mac and spilled their blood upon the pages of what would be called Manuscript. A cry went out across the campus:

"Fellow lunatics, lost souls, undiscovered scribes! Join us in hurling out wanton designs upon the pages in a childlike and naive manner."

They gathered the pages together...





Madwoman

I alone

|

without

I lay on your side
of the bed
and whisper
whisper to myself all of the nothings
(another smoke before you sleep?)
you said
to me forty
forty years ago all
thrashing in my head

I alone

|

with

Your ashtray still resides
quietly on this ancient table
for forty
forty years it feeds me

for here shining in the sunlight
are the remnants
of the cigarettes your lips encircled
endlessly
endlessly
they were integrated into your flesh
they were part of your breath
so here I feed
that I may be your other half
I lick my finger
and place these
ashes
ashes
all falling down
on myself
and taste this bittersweet
to quell my thoughts my thoughts twisting in violence
with this sacrament I obtain silence.

--Ann Peters

One Nestled Over the Library Lantern

As I look out the second floor window of the Wilkes University Farley Library, I see a lantern swinging on a chain. This lantern is a three dimensional hexagon with a black metal frame. Within this framework of the painted metal that makes up the top, bottom, and edges of this lantern are eight pieces of glass fitted together. There are four pieces of glass on the upper half of the lantern and four on the bottom. Within this outward body of glass and metal are four oblong bulbs that give the surrounding area light.

At night, this lantern shines like a beacon to anyone who wishes to go to the library to study or find a book. During my three years of study at Wilkes, I cannot remember a time when this lantern did not shine at night. Not only does this lantern show the way to the library, it also swings back and forth like a pendulum. It swings consistently

whether it is summer, winter, spring, or fall. Yet, since last spring, something about this lantern has changed.

As I look closely at its top, I see a small shapeless pile of dried mud with a few straws sticking above it. They have stayed on that pile throughout the summer storms. A person who looks at this mound now would not be able to recognize what it once was. Yet as I reflect upon what I saw last semester, I remember that this small caked pile of mud and straw on the lantern top was once the foundation of a home: a robin's nest.

I remember last spring while studying for an exam, I saw a robin fly back and forth from a tree or the ground to the top of the lantern. She brought twigs, grass, straw, and even a computer paper feedstrip as material for her new home. I had never seen a robin or any bird, for that matter, build a nest.

Yet with the benefit of the library's full size window, I was able to see this robin pursue her task. She worked diligently for many hours, more diligently than I was studying.

As I watched the robin build her nest, I thought about how unnatural it seemed that a bird would build a nest on a lantern rather than a nearby tree. I wondered if the nest would collapse as the lantern swung back and forth, or if the bird would get dizzy. I also thought about the computer paper fringe. It looked odd among the grass, twigs, and straw. Yet she must have known that paper comes from trees as she found it suitable material to use in building her home.

Later that spring I saw the same bird nestled in her nest. As she sat there, she moved in the same rhythm as the lantern. Her neck curving back and forth as though she herself became part of this pendulum-lantern.

One day I noticed that she looked as though she had grown fatter, unless--well, it might be possible that there was something under her. I

looked closer until I was almost touching the window. Something was underneath her. Wait-- it was some things--living things, four robin chicks.

Soon I made it a habit to study in front of the second floor window; yet, I found myself studying the birds. One afternoon I noticed that the mother robin was not in her nest. I wondered where she might be and what happened to her family. I pressed my nose against the window so that I could see the chicks and be assured that they were safe in their nest. To my great relief, I found them all snuggled together and sleeping. Yet for a moment, I feared that the mother might have abandoned them.

My fears were relieved when I saw the mother robin return with food. Suddenly, like a child on the morning of his or her birthday, the chicks awakened and lifted their heads out of their bed in anticipation. They opened their mouths and started chirping, and the mother started dropping food down their beaks. As soon as one chick was fed, it cried for more. I noticed that the mother did not give all her babies food at once. When her beak

was empty, she flew away again to the nearby tree to find more food. In a few minutes, she came back with more. She did this until all her children had enough to eat.

After a few weeks, I noticed that the chicks were stretching out their wings, preparing to learn how to fly. When I saw these birds do this it reminded me of my own adolescence. There were times I wanted to fly out into the world and be independent. There were doubts and second guesses about what to do, whose advice to follow, and whom to trust. Yet even as these adolescent birds beat their wings, they were not strong enough to find the food on their own. They still needed and accepted the food that their mother brought them.

Finals were just beginning then. Soon these birds would be leaving their home. The independence that they longed for as they beat their wings would soon be theirs. On the day of my last final, all the birds were gone.

Now the birds and most of the nest are gone. Yet every time I look out that window, I have the

memory of the bird that nestled over the library lantern and the processes of life that I was able to see: the nest-building, the birth, the sheltering, the feeding, the stretching of wings and, finally, the flying away to build one's own nest.

--written by Glenda Race

Anastomosis

An electrical connection is made
when I plug in my toaster
when I turn on the tv
when lightning strikes the ground
when you come up behind me
and lift my hair
to gently kiss the freckled skin of my neck
while softly sliding your hands across my belly
showering fire like a sparkler on the 4th of July.

--Karen Ziagos

Who Am I

Why are you not here with me
No I'm not blind, I can see
Means nothing to you if I live or die
Still I wonder, who Am I

Why can't you care or just pretend
All I want to do is talk with a friend
Lover I need not, they just lie
Question with no answer, Who Am I

Batter at the plate, pitcher on the mound
Fourth and ten quarterback frowns
Lose again I begin to cry
Life's a mystery, Who Am I

Hold my hand, a hug and kiss
Always so close we always just miss
A fish in the sea I begin to fry
If I'm not good bait, then Who Am I

Struggle to the top only to fall
After every step I face a new wall
Am I just a crumb from the pie
Who knows, Who Am I

Companions around to give me some care
Why does life always seem so unfair
Cute, innocent, unsure, and shy
That's fine for them, but Who Am I

--*Bob Chmiel*

Chic to Chic

*She was wearing white,
genuine simulated
pearls. Opaque luster.*

*Near-soft, cashmere-like,
a pink, acrylic sweater
sheathed her youthfulness.*

*The footnote was an
embroidered asterisk on
her jeans hip pocket.*

--Donna Bytheway

Our First Kiss

Lips slightly part.
The corners of his mouth begin to rise,
Half-smile, half-smirk.
Blue eyes like a clear summer sky at night
Sparkling, teasing, tantalizing.
He sees me blushing.

Full, sensuous lips part again.
A million sparkling teeth set free to shine
Like diamonds in the rough.
His eyes sparkle, grow devilishly dark,
Teasing, taunting, kissing me.

His perfect lips gently caress mine.
A love is born in his smile.

--Joy Zimmerman

THE TRIAL OF MAN

As I dance upon the grey sand
The ocean beckons me.
I am an infant in the midst of time.
Full of wonder and delight--
I see only innocence.
My journey has yet to begin
Already I am being tested.
I look into the face of Eternity
The temptation is strong
To know her secrets.
I must live first
So I may understand.
Heading to a future unknown
I am eager
To accept Truth's challenge.

Along a fairy pool
With velvet banks of baby green
She sits, content and waiting.

A slender finger dips into the mirror
Ripples disturb the surface
Where rose petals silently float.
A unicorn, big and bright,
Appears before her.
His eyes hold forever sadness.
And she understands.
Then I understand.
She is the soul of love.
Pure and kind;
He is the heart of magic
Strong and wondrous--
Children of Beauty
Cast out by man.
I watch
Horrified
As they disappear into the water.
I try to shout
To stop them
"I still believe!"
But my one voice is only a whisper.
I am the only one who sees.
Of their passing,
I am the only witness.

The world is now a desert
Littered with monuments
To the sins of mankind.
Mountains of death,
Rivers of blood and tears,
And under my feet
Lie fragments of dreams
Crushed and hungry
For one true soul.

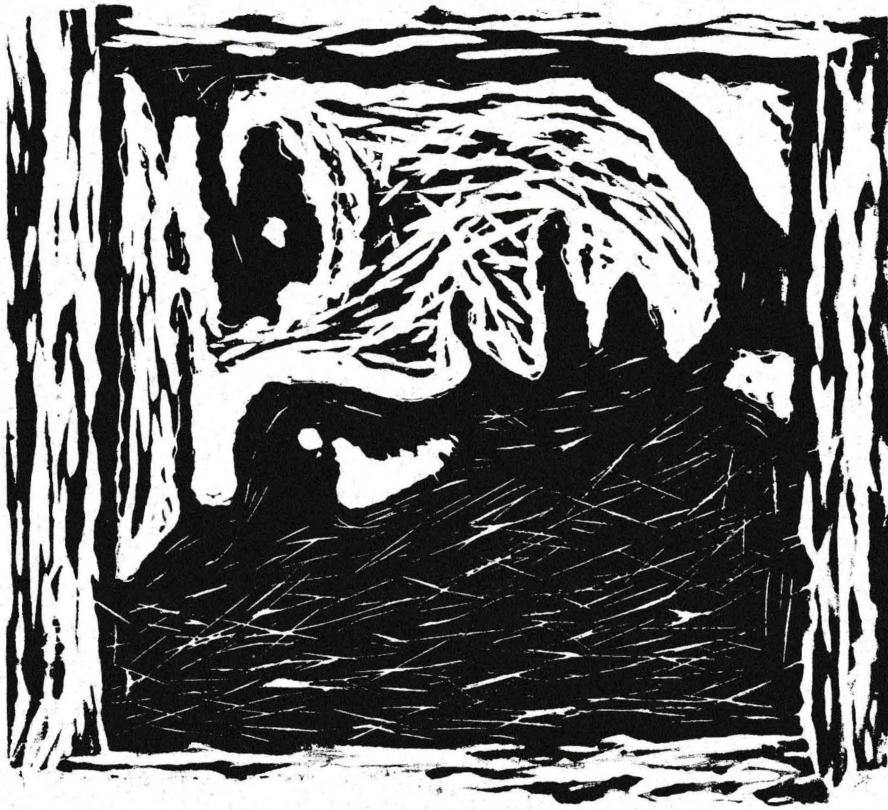
You have destroyed
That which should have been cherished
And laid waste to the truth.
You have done that which
Was never meant to be.
Rejected Nature's gifts.

Alone upon a barren hilltop
My journey is complete.
I am old in body and soul
My pain is strong
My knowledge--eternal.

As I cry with sorrow,
So shall you cry
When the waters flood.
As I shake with fear
So shall you shake
As the earth beneath you crumbles.
I burn with rage and the fires rise
To destroy those who have destroyed.
My scream is the wind which lifts the sand
That covers the truth.

I have been the child of time,
I have been the witness,
I have judged man's evil heart.
Now I will punish.
Do not beg of me a tear
For as you have had no mercy--
Nor shall I.

--Betsy Rozanski



Unraveled.

I have walked without him for a year, walked without his arms around me. I used to feel his arms were a warm, dark cage that encircled all my movements. I used to think if his arms parted, if the circle broke, I would be free.

He wove himself into me gradually. A glance here, a smile there. Subtleties which could have been dismissed by the rational mind as mere pleasantries of exchange became the fuel for first my thoughts, then my being. Each smile, each gesture became a sharp echo that resounded for weeks, hollowing the inside of me until I stood a barren void.

It was a year before we spoke with meaning:

- You do not want to know me.
- Yes, I do. Tell me what you want to.
- I do not speak because I want to, I speak because I have to.
- Do you smile because you have to?
- Yes.
- Why?
- That is a silly question.

-So, answer it.

-No.

-Speak of the meaningless things of which others speak. Speak of your day, or the weather.

-I do not speak about the weather. You do not want me to speak about the weather. And if I told you about only one day of my life, you would know the whole of my existence.

-How fucking pretentious.

-Think about it. Do you do that much? Think, that is.

-I think.

-Oh, you do. About what?

-A lot of things.

-Name them.

-Why? You won't.

-I will.

Needle through cloth, he leaned toward me with his sculpted coal eyes, placed a solitary kiss upon my forehead and spoke. Of being a soul covered in a shroud. Of the perception of the absurd. Of deep chasms and hollow chambers.

-I know those chambers.

-You have the face of a child, it has never been twisted. Your laughter is soft, not sharpened by knives. You sing when it is quiet. Your dreams are nightmares, for you need no escape. You do not know these chambers. They are my private chambers.

His words, his kiss swirled around me like a hurricane. Rain and fog spinning faster and faster, pulling me toward it. I glimpsed. Him.

He saw I glimpsed and from that time we became inseparable, woven into an ornate tapestry. Hand in hand, arm in arm, body in body, mind in mind we walked together.

I would speak of joy. He would speak of grief, and I eventually became silent, for I no longer glimpsed, but saw. All that I had known with vivid certainty he slowly painted with charcoal into shades of gray, then black. The shadow in his soul became the shadow in mine: it hung in the air suspended and eternal, like all the moments between us.

We became frozen. Hours we would sit, our words feeding our inertia:

-We must go.
-No... No.
-Yes, I am no longer alone. I would

rather go with you. I have have no courage.

-Neither do I.
-Then we must go.
-I must stay.
-You cannot. You wanted to know me. You cannot stay and know me.

The cool steel against my skin. Hearing the slow grinding screech of metal resisting metal. The vicious jaws of the trap hanging inches from my head, waiting patiently to squeeze my blood and bones out of my shell and spill them as a lifeless sacrifice to the demons within.

-Put it to your temple. Inhale. Feel how soothing its icy touch is. Put your finger on the trigger. Exhale. Pull. Listen to the click of an empty chamber. Imagine the bullet ripping apart your flesh. Feel the release of disconnection. Feel the victory of separation. Imagine. The cessation of questions. The quelling of your vicious circle of thought. Feel.
-I will not feel, not like you. I do not wish what you wish. Put it away.
-Come with me. Come.
-I will not.

-Know me. Come.

-No.

-Yes.

I could feel the beginning of movement trembling in the core of his arm. A second of withering silence between us.

-It is time.

I touched his arm with a long, lingering caress, and sunk my nails into shadowy depths of his flesh.

-You cannot stay and know me.

-I do not wish to know you.

His face was solid with desperation and betrayal. His arm quivered with pain and the attempt of strength. We were a slowly moving chain of interlocking limbs and eyes slithering across the floor. His finger began to creep forward toward the trigger. Fully grasping it, he fired.

I was showered with his blood and his grief.

I have never visited his grave, but I know it is a shallow indent in the earth. The small sound of leaves resting on the ground are his footsteps. The solitary whistle of the wind through the trees is his voice. The world is his phantom embrace encircling me. He wove himself into me gradually, but fully.

Our tapestry hangs on my wall, the threads of it only slightly unraveled in time.

-I know those chambers.

-- written by Ann Peters

(The beauty of a man is not the beauty of a woman)

For Jeremy Irons

Centuries have passed since love poems
were passed around like Playboys in junior high school,
since a woman swooned over a few lines of calligraphy,
since a man believed in a word's ability
to inspire a stranger to love him.

It is the twentieth century.
If I try to describe your jaw's
ability to capture light in its angular contours,
or how my chest splits like the San Andreas when you speak,
I get lazy
and say
"you can rent all of his movies at Blockbuster."

(it is so unexpected)

It is the cigarette, gracefully handled by your long fingers,
inhaled desperately by your mouth,
that Shakespeare could only guess at,
that Petrarch purposefully avoided by devoting
a life of verse on a woman who did not want him.

When you held the cigarette above your forehead,
the heel of your hand against your brow,
the cigarette smoke rising over your hair
your head bowed
your eyes closed
for a black and white photograph for Saturday Night Live,
did you know you were beautiful?

Michelangelo
would die his death a hundred times
over the beauty of a boy

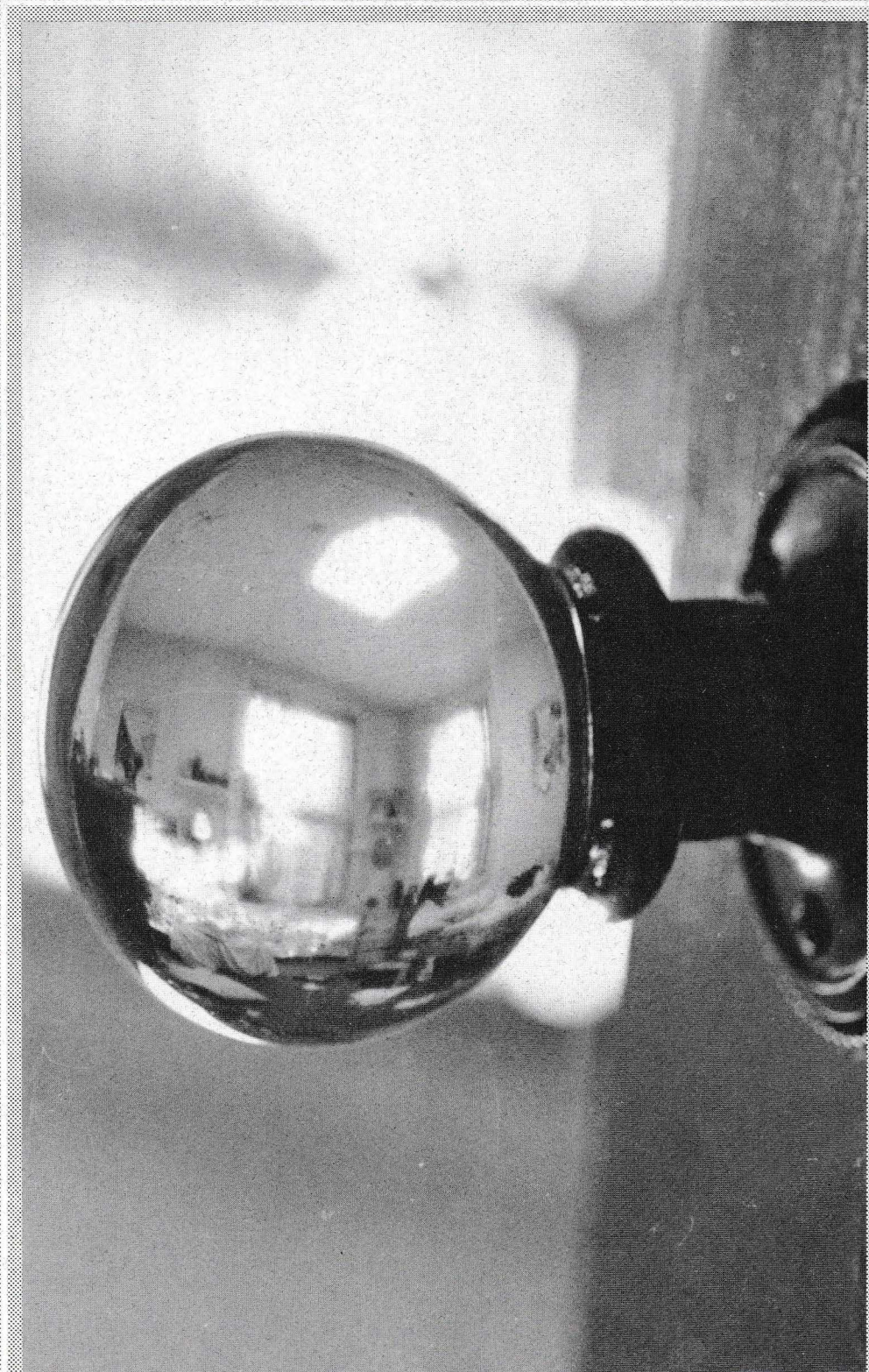
You will die before me,
but now is how I want to remember you,
in a soldier's uniform,
in a Victorian hat,
in a tank top,
in a tuxedo on a stool next to a grand piano,
smoking a cigarette.

--Tracy Youells

Coming Home

The sky was pure black. Dark cloud forms moved slowly overhead. They melded into odd shapes which blocked out the stars and cast strange looming shadows all around me. I suddenly felt very cold and looked for some comforting light. All I found was a frightening moon, so huge it seemed closer to the earth than it had ever been. The moon floated through the sky emitting an evil yellow glow. The dark clouds in front spread the light out around it so that it had no definite edge. I began to hurry home walking as fast as I could, almost running. I had to get away. The sound of my shoes against the cold, hard pavement echoed in the dreary silence. My heart pounded in my chest, and my ears rang with the quiet of the night. I ran, but the huge, glowing moon floated through the black night, following me home. Suddenly, I saw my house, and I was free from the terrors of the night.

--Joy Zimmerman



On Country Roads

This story both began and ended such a very long time ago, when life was simple and forgiving. I still remember what it was to live so freely and feel so alive. I often fear the memories of past occasions will leave my mind, in the way that most thoughts do, when newer ones take their place. But this day I shall never forget.

In the time I still remember, I myself met a stranger. An old man, sitting peacefully and still, along the edge of what to a young mind seemed a primeval forest (but was actually just a rather healthy growth of maple, oak, and pine). He watched my walk from the corner of his eye. Just when I had suspected he'd rather be alone, one hand, worn rough by its labors of love and living, beckoned me to his side.

We simply sat for a time, paying our respects to nature. He was first to break the silence.

"Well, Son, what would you say most folks aim for in this life?"

This wasn't what I had expected, but it took only a moment to catch his meaning.

"I suppose there's a goodly amount of wantin' going on for money and fame. And I know there's a lot of dreamin' for love."

He only nodded and stared ahead. I knew that wasn't really the question, and have since learned that old men have a powerful amount of patience when getting to the point.

"And what do you wish for?"

"Ah," I said, "that's easy--I want to be a writer most of all."

"Are you good at it?"

"Not yet, I've got to get some experience, pay my dues, suffer some, that sort of thing--then I'll be great."

He considered that a moment and asked another.

"What is it you would give to be great right now?"

"I'd give anything."

I guess I was too busy dreaming

and planning to notice his quick look of pity. Or perhaps I didn't want to notice. Finally, I came back down to earth to find him studying me carefully.

"What is your life like? Is it good?"

I assured him I was happy enough. I had a home and money in the bank. I had love from family and friends. I had my education. I had food on the table and comfort in my bed.

"What would you really give to be a great writer now?"

And as before I answered, "I'd give anything."

Presently, the old man pulled himself off his perch and began to stroll lazily down the road. He stopped after a little way and turned to me.

"One more question, child. Would you REALLY?"

And as I watched his solitary figure travel the path I had not yet chosen to take, I knew.

--written by Betsy Rozanski

Saturday Hero

He walked up the passageway onto the terraces. Cold, sterile concrete rolled under his boots as he held a can of Smith Wicks to his mouth. Cold, miserable, depressing. A steady rain fell...

It was a nameless division four team in a nameless kind of town. Boarded up factories. Council blocks. How beautiful.

The team was Chariton FC and he didn't know who the other was. Ray didn't know who *he* was. He was actually starting to convince himself that you can't run away from life. Reality in all its mystique is actually quite real. It keeps following you. Creeping up when you're in the loo. Having a few too many down the boozier. Standing in the rain at Chariton football grounds.

"Boring! Boring! Bloody Boring!" he said to himself.

"I'm glad England doesn't owe me a living, Nidge."

"Yeah, the sun never sets on the Union Jack."

Nidge was one of the lads. A regular supporter every Saturday. On the dole and on the sauce, he was lucky if he could afford a night at the pub, but somehow he was always there for the team. If you could call them that.

"Feckin' wanks," he murmured in an almost indecipherable drunken accent that smelled and sounded of Scrumpties.

The game started. No one wanted to be there. It was just an escape from life. They sat pissed and wished they could afford tickets to Liverpool or Millwall or even Notts County. Shivering together to keep warm, it was almost like a punishment for them.

Ray met Nidge at the appropriately named Working Man's Pub. Except for the fact that there was no work in Chariton, it was a nice pub. He was shacking up with Nidge and washing dishes under the table at the pub. Trying to live on the jib. Much like Ray, Nidge didn't have a future. Nidge also didn't have a past nor did he really seem to give a shit. Ray was impressed.

"I hope they lose," Nidge murmured.

"Wot?"

"Those tossers!"

Nidge hurled an unopened can of lager onto the pitch and it burst, spraying the contents on a nearby player and ref. The coppers didn't even show up at Chariton matches. They'd be better off with suicide consolers for the fans. The rain kept falling. Ray pulled the queen out of his pocket and tossed it

onto the pitch. The ref picked it up, looked around and then put it in his pocket.

Could it really get any worse than this or was Belfast the cream of the crap? The Charlton striker moved in for the kill and nailed the ball off the goal post. A soft grumble arose from the crowd. Something along the lines of "why do we waste our time and money on the likes of you?"

Finally a second shot found the back of the net and the crowd actually seemed to notice that there was a match going on. 1-nil, Charlton. And the match went on.

Lost in the murk of a sunny English afternoon Ray watched his feet. The way the water beaded on his boots. The third eyelet on the left foot precariously dangled on the white lace. "Wake up you wolly!"

Nidge kicked him so that Ray could see that their firm had arrived. The whole lot was looking quite splendid in the regular Saturday attire of a football hooligan: steel-toed boots, sheepie jackets, team colors worn on the neck, the chest, the skin, the laces. One of the group was Kev, who had a really bad tattoo of the Union jack on his left forearm with the words 'Rule Britanna' nicely misspelled above.

"Oi, Ray, you ready for it tonight?" he inquired.
"Yeah, I suppose."

Steam rose from their nostrils like testosterone rampant bulls. Ray was sickened. Every Saturday the same thing. Go to the pub. Get pissed. Sing about England. That same stupid chant "England, England, England!" in the same out-of-tune rhythm. Go to the match and watch Charlton Lose. Sing more songs about the Falklands, the other fans' sexual habits toward farm animals, how Charlton really did stink...

Then attack the other fans and drink and sing some more. Get your face slashed. Make page 12 in the daily right under the weather report.

Kev played with a six inch linoleum razor. His brother Chris and their pal Dave kept kicking the terrace floor with their boots as they clasped a pipe and a knuckle duster.

"Woooooooh, Charlton are wankers wankers!" the other side rang out as Bobby Gelson missed the penalty kick. The score was suddenly 1-1, then the final whistle blew.

No one cheered, they just left. There is nothing worse than a tie game of footie. No shoot out, no extra time, just a tie.

The winter night had already begun to creep over the gutted ruins of the mill district as Ray grabbed a can of lager and some bacon crisps from the concessionaire for the walk home. As the last rays of light bent to the west, the situation outside the

grounds turned ugly. Kev, Nidge and the rest of the firm ran off to find the St. Edmund's supporters at the train station. Ray followed but walked instead. He could hear more chanting. The boots meeting the pavement, flying bricks. The soft thuds and sounds of broken glass echoed off the walls and Ray didn't even care.

He walked into the chip shop where the shop keeper had a slight look of apprehension about the goings on across the street at the station. Kev and Dave were kicking a St. Edmund's fan. Blow after blow landed upon the crumpled soul. He shielded his head and did not move. One rather large Charton fan was fighting two knife wielding 13 year olds. They were doomed from the start as a pipe met one's head. His friend conveniently fled to the station steps with his new friend and the pipe following close behind.

"Lots of vinegar on those chips, Mate."
"That'll be a pound fifty."
"Cheers."

This would be supper. Chips with vinegar and a Carlsberg Special. Suddenly a Charton fan ventilated the chip shop door with his body heaving on top of the glass.

"Where's the cops? Where's the cops!"

The shop keeper was getting angry. He pulled out a bat. Luckily no St. Edmund's fans appeared. The weary fan got up and

joined the ruckus again. Ray munched on and read the greasy two-week old copy of *The Courier* that held his chips. Whatever happened was over. Some panda cars and a Landrover pulled up. Several police in riot gear entered the station. The sound of the ambulance heralded its arrival. Ray started up Gillina Avenue under the railway bridge toward his flat. Nidge appeared, holding a blood soaked St. Edmund's scarf.

"We did 'em good!"
"Better watch out, the old bills come round."
"We smashed 'em right proper, eh, Ray!"
"Yeah, right and proper."

Nidge was as ecstatic as a boy at Christmas. They had routed the St. Edmund's supporters, and from his jumpy diatribe, it looked like a few had been done in for a trip to the hospital.

"We got 'em good, where were you at?"
"Oh, ah, um, yeah, getting chased by, um, Barmy Billy."

That was an honor. Barmy Billy was probably one of the most violent hooligans in any division. He was banned from every ground and pub this side of Manchester. A former Chelsea Headhunter, he fled from the Scotland Yard's football investigators and hasn't really been seen since. Kind of like the Elvis of the terraces.

"Wot, where's he at, eh?"
"With those suedes."

"Rottin tossers!"

It wasn't too hard to fool Nidge, considering the shape he was in. They made it home without further incident but Nidge still wouldn't shut up.

"Then Kev knocked 'em one in the head and I..."

"Really."

Ray sat back on the recliner. His fingers felt the shape and texture of the cigarette burns, the spilt beer caked into the material. Nidge pogoed around the flat, singing something about birds crapping on St. Edmund. The Carlsburg can slowly compressed in his fist.

Tomorrow would be another day. Sunday. When they would all revert back to being boring, sober unemployed English youth. The rain became steadier, pelting an aluminum shed across the alley. A train slowly crept by on the trestle. Ray could see in the windows of the Inter-City and the St. Edmund's fans were quiet. Another rainy day.

-- written by Edward Philbin



Hope Chest

"With this Name, I Thee Absorb"

he said.

*she remembered the day
when she exclaimed with breathless innocence
to all that might listen
the sweet promise
the scared covenant
that she was now to be*

Mrs...

"With this Ring, I thee Covet"

he said.

*she gazed upon his
face with radiance as
he placed the
exquisitely
crafted
shackle
on her finger known as ring
and sealed the contract
with a kiss*

"And so these Two shall now become One"

*stated the man in black
his words reverberated through the arches
echoed through the hollowness
and died in stillness*

*for in that space
at that moment
she knew*

*she knew the symbolism of all
of all acts of consummation
were but confirmation*

*of distance
for his flesh mind spirit soul
would collide with hers*

*but each would
remain separate
alone*

*she would not be
absorbed
into the guise
of union...*

*the proclamation of
the preacher
was but
false prophesy*

*her cheeks flushed she wept for
pure joy in freedom and
gazed upon his face
with what was perceived as
love
but was
Epiphany.*

--Ann Peters

sanitary

kneeling-her body
resisting, one knee-one hand
her intuition persisting one knee-
one hand her means of existing.

hair pulled back sloppily-to the tone
of top 40. smock bought on lay-a-way, sale, two-for one.
fueled by eggs-scrambled, toast-burnt, coffee-straight-black.

make it clean-shining
a sanitary world for sanitary living.

people pass by-she changes her focus-part of her job
not to be noticed.
all mandates acknowledged, suits and skirts-pumps and loafers,
pressed and laundered-stylish and stainless.

bleach for germs viral
counters and toilets and urinal spiral.

her hands-cracked corroded. aching unknown. quit using lotions
ointments. especially clean when beauty is gone
saturated with detergent-issue of management.

remove the filth-unwanted
in the corners-beyond the regulated.

gum to scrape-stains to remove, the wrinkles of tile-enclosing
her brain. creature of habit-ghost of society. forgotten was
jesus
swept away is her genius.

and when-
removed is the dust-scrubbed, bleached are the stains
standing-groaning one hand-one
knee monetary means. one hand-one
knee momentary salvation.

--david a. koschak

Standard Shifting

I pull up in your driveway
and see our lawn mower
poking out from behind the stairwell
our garbage cans sit quietly
their lids securely placed
I shift into neutral

the car doors spring open
emptying our children onto your
perfectly smooth blacked top.
They run up your back porch
into your kitchen dropping their bags
onto your fresh unscuffed linoleum
I shift into reverse

holding down the clutch drifting
slowly backward toward the street
scattered with grey dirty gravel green
shattered glass a dead squirrel and
leaves briskly blowing in the fall wind.
I look back once to see them wave

I quickly shift into first
I gently push on the gas
I slowly release the clutch
I shift again.

--Karen Ziagos

POP

Oh yeah
He loves me
He loves me, like no other man could
He takes me into his moist gray matter
He covers me with his honey wet slobbering
He feels that he has made up for the pain
Once he feels gratified
He kicks my ass and tumbles me
Violently out of his head
I can no longer surrender
I have no more sympathy
I rise to my ability
The ability someone once said I had
I take that
cold
steel
Silencer
out of the night stand drawer
and
SUDDENLY
take the monster out with
one
cold
Sterling
Silver
pull of the cool satisfying metal.

--Tarah Trivelpiece

for E.G.

He brings me bits
and pieces of himself
(shoe strings and stories)

to fashion a nest
for his comfort
and shelter.
(blue birds and mocking birds need not apply)

I build of slippery words (his)
and torn sheets (mine)
honest softness
for lean, naive eyes.

Supple twine
and snippets of laughter
cradle him as he makes a meal
of my mouth.

My appetite he evades
fitfully and blindly
(don't talk . . . never expect that)

and in his subtle devouring of me,
bit by tender bit
this hungry bird
offers me much.

Feeding time is over.

--*Marisa Rae*

Hierosgamos

divine marriage

He is born during the time of darkness
and his presence brings
the first gleam of light
to the land.

His youth is the divine
undercurrent of energy
which creates the
dynamic universe.

She is the darkness from which he is born.

She is his mother.

Her darkness sustains his
life of light.

Her ancient body
is weary from the birth.

She brings her child to her breast
to suckle her passivity.

Under the depths of barrenness,
Life seeps into the landscape.

His youth is
dissolving into maturity
He offers her his hand
to sustain her
He gazes upon her countenance
and hears the call of eros
echoing through
his consciousness

Her exhaustion is
slowly fading.

She grasps his hand
and absorbs his strength
She gazes upon his countenance
and hears the call of eros
echoing through
her consciousness.

The landscape is lush
with the Creativity of Existence.

He caresses her cheek
with the wind

He kisses her.

She strokes his hair
with the light of the moon.

She kisses him.

Their bodies intertwine.

The duality of opposites
transforms

into
the harmony of
union.

He is spent.

She is renewed.

A Shadow is cast
upon the landscape.

His face becomes pale
as the blood of life
drains from his body
He is dying.
He rests his weary head on
her belly, which is swollen
with child,
and dies quietly.

She is saddened as she watches
her consort
lose his life to her.
She weeps.
She tenderly caresses his hair,
but there is nothing
she can do to comfort him.
She sighs as he leaves her.

The landscape is cold
with the barrenness of Death.

She is alone.
but there is life within her.

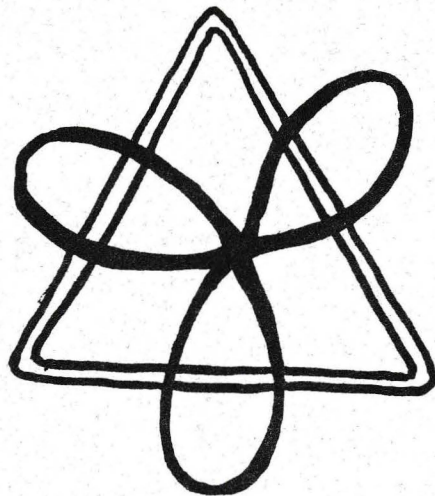
On the darkest day,
the pain of Birth comes.

He is born during the time of darkness
and his presence brings
the first gleam of light
to the land.

She is the darkness from which he is born.
She is his mother.
Her darkness sustains his
life of light.

They are God.

--*Ann Peters*



Juxtaposition (Nosferatu)

Look into these shadows, these eyes
touch me with your withering grasp
sink your desperate claws into my flesh
you will not know me

Scream your scream it becomes- my voice
scream your hatred it becomes- my passion
scream your fear it becomes- my desire
you do not know me
scream your existence it becomes
MINE.

Within my stillness
I Hunger. I Crave. I Covet. I Desire
the shining presence which radiates
from the mortal eye
I Feed.

When I puncture their flesh and taste their
essence their lives become
my stillness
presence lost,
Alone.

I Hunger, I Feed.
I see her lying supine on the grass. She is
nebulous, for the rain appears to melt her
into the earth. I am beholden
to her existence.

I Hunger.

Her eyes...
Her eyes.....

I cannot penetrate her...

Your eyes are beautiful.
Yes.

I am laying quietly on the earth
letting the rain, the darkness
wash today into yesterday.
I hum softly
to shatter the stillness,
but sound permeating space
provides
no salvation
from
Loneliness.

His footfalls are silent on the moist grass
but I feel the stillness
of his approach.

Because I like the rain, and the quiet.
Yes, I come here often.
No, I don't mind.
I understand.
Interesting...
No, I don't believe in salvation.
Do you?

He leans toward me gradually, and
cups my face in his hands. His touch
his caress brings quiescence to each
molecule of my skin.
He looks into my eyes,
but his are cast in shadow.
My eyes are beautiful.

Her taste.....

I Hunger.

She will know me...

His kiss is warm, lush, sensuous.
Spring-scented rain. He tastes my cheek,
my lips, my neck. His teeth nibble and
massage my flesh until one piercing bite
burns, sears, melts my icy flesh and drains
the fire from me. I only desire blindly as I
sink my teeth into his wrist...

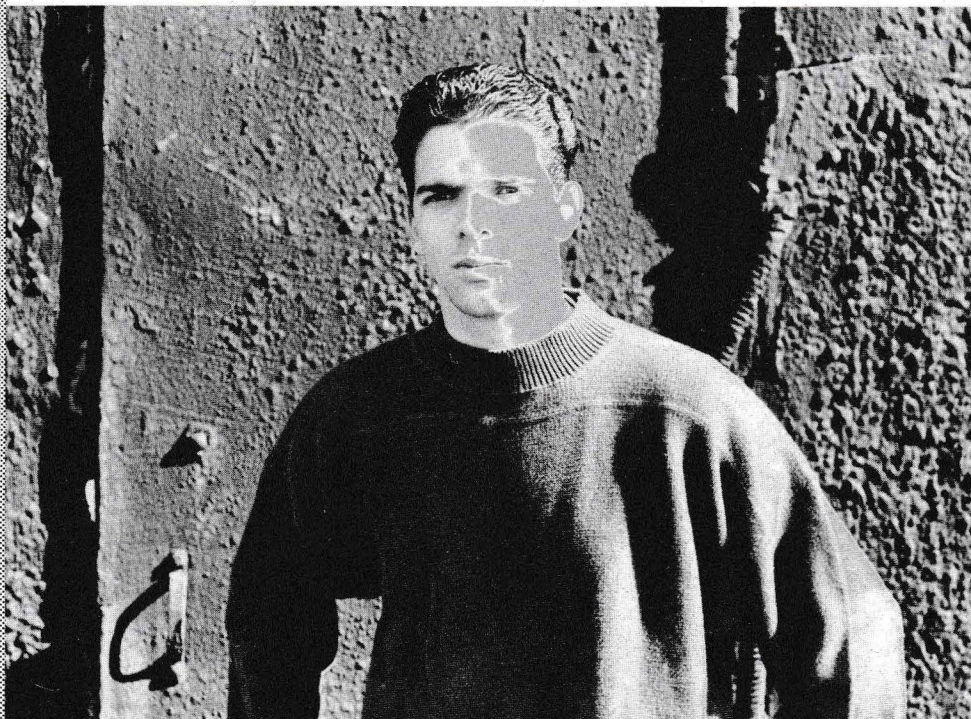
For one divine moment,
I felt the cataclysm of
communion
My existence was torn to shreds by
peace.

My eyes...
For one second my eyes...
I was.

She looks at me, her eyes are cast in shadow
My Lover, My Child.
The presence is gone.

*I feel so still
I Hunger.*

--Ann Peters



Early Morning

I hate it when I wake up and feel the fur growing on my teeth and tongue and I know it's not going to come off for anything short of at least ten minutes of good hard dedicated brushing, and besides that it's just one hell of a way to start a day. But that's how I started this day and there wasn't any way to start the day over because it just goes against all laws of nature to think you could start a day twice.

I looked at the clock which told me it was only nine o'clock, leaving a lot of hours left in the day to kill. I went to the window and looked out to see the morning marchers. This

is a group of people who spent last night engaged in some twisted acts of sexual misconduct and now in the early day's harshest light they are forced to make the walk of shame back to their own humble abodes. You can easily spot these people because they are haphazardly dressed in the previous evening's clothes with their pockets bulging full of some neglected undergarment that they failed to put back on during the shameful rush of morning departure.

The reason I had such a good view of these marchers is that my apartment was near a college campus, which is a location that always seems to throw you right in the path of the walk of shame. I'm not the only one who noticed this early morning trend, the Mormons also noticed and started sending agents to pass out Bibles to

the freshly sinned, thinking these agents of holy literature could maybe get them at their most vulnerable. I was thinking of capitalizing on the scenario that unfolded itself beneath my window by taking a commemorative photo of the Mormon, the sinner, and the sinner's newly acquired Bible-kind of a keepsake. I'm not sure however if my "capturing of the moment" would be well received.

I have my well deserved copy of the Bible, actually I have seven copies, not because I'm any more in need of Biblical Salvation than anyone else but because there is always a Mormon, Bibles in hand, posted at the entrance to my apartment building. I don't think it's fair that I have to accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Salvation every time I want to enter my building.

With seven copies you eventually get to flipping through the Bible, which is probably one of the hardest books to just flip through-- it's not a coffee table sort of book. It seems any part you open up you're being told about some new violation of morality you're in danger of committing.

I think the biggest problem I have with the Bible in general is that it is one of the largest works without one goddamned joke in the whole thing. How could you write such a large volume of work and not throw in one humorous passage just to keep the audience interested? I think I could take it a lot more seriously if there was a joke in it. Who can believe in a God without a sense of humor? Not that I think it should be God's book of comedy, but one or two jokes wouldn't hurt, especially

in Genesis. If there is any story that could use a little humor to ease the tension, it's the story of Original Sin.

One Fine Afternoon

When you reach a certain level of boredom you eventually end up in the same place, the Mall. As much as I absolutely despise the Mall, it's one of the few places you can wander around anonymously and kill some time. In and out of shops that all seem to look the same, I wasted another afternoon and thought that if they only built everything in the same Mall Style then no one would ever have to see daylight, as if what was inside this place was less dangerous than the outside world.

I passed The Gap and stopped in just to see how many new styles of t-shirts they

could have possibly invented and came upon a group of girls contemplating which outfit they should buy. I have a real problem with outfits. I think that outfits are killers of creativity which may sound like I am overreacting, but if you think about it, I'm not far off. People would be in an uproar if the powers that be imposed a uniform on society yet here I am wandering around the Mall watching these girls all buy the same outfits that a million other girls own and that was put together by some person with the title "Director of Outfits" at the Gap.

Fed up with this scene, I went over to one of those department store make-up counters to see exactly what the going rate of beauty is these days. Here I came upon another group of women who had already had their outfits bought

and were now buying their faces to go with the outfits. These beauty worshipers had a plastic tupperware aspect to their entire appearance which made me question how many of their "beautiful" features they were born with and how many of them were only recently acquired and written off on their tax forms as necessary expenses. Sure, I guess there was a bit of jealousy in my thoughts because women three times my age had breasts that were an inch below their chin--without a bra. And I suppose this jealousy is what prompted me to walk by them chanting in a very childlike, nursery rhyme way "At least my breasts are real." This caught the attention of one of the women who looked at me in disgust, which is fine because she probably would have looked at me that way anyway since I wasn't wearing

the right outfit to join her club. But then she just snubbed me and pushed her breasts higher up which will only go up so much higher before this woman and her breasts both realize that they are not outside the laws of gravity. She will be cursing Newton that day.

Day's End

I'm not the sort of person who ever has planned night time activities, which is fine by me because I think planned activities always leave you with a feeling of being let down. So I just called up some friends and we went and had some coffee and tea and someone got the inevitable chocolate milk because he "just doesn't drink coffee" as if that was even the real point of hanging out to begin with. And I guess

we just over-analyzed everything we possibly could and someone from the next table mentioned the phrase "Generation X" and said we were going nowhere and I just replied that I could get into my car anytime I wanted and drive anywhere the fuck I wanted to go, so what did he know anyway. I knew this had nothing to do with what he said but I just felt like saying "fuck" so it worked out well.

Then one of my friends went to use the phone so I leaned over and stole a couple of her greasy fries that seemed to lack the main ingredient of potatoes and the man at the booth across from me told me I better watch my waistline. I thought this was funny coming from a man who sat in front of a plate of two eggs over easy, bacon, sausage, and some other unidentifiable object that

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always went on those combo narrow their chances, as if
platters, but I refrained from they had a chance from the
saying anything and just laughed start. Then I told them to fuck
in that fake way I do when I off and they called me a
just can't be bothered. My lesbian as if I could only
friend came back and I told her possibly resist their charms
what happened and she just if I had no interest in men
shrugged and said we needed altogether. I didn't really
more coffee, which I kept mind so much because men never
thinking would only prolong interested me that much anyway
the agony of this day, but what and I knew these walking
the hell, the day always did examples of sex on a stick
seem more tolerable at night. would find some girl who

Then a group of guys tomorrow morning would be making
walked in smelling of some the walk of shame past my
cheap cologne they thought window. There they would
would be useful in getting them receive their own copy of the
laid but instead just warned Bible from the Mormons, which
you of their presence ten would make their walk of shame
minutes before they actually even more shameful. This day
came into view. And of course would then begin all over again
they sat in speaking range of but under the deceptive new
where we were and they came name--Tomorrow.
over and I suppose tried to hit --written by Jennifer Carey
on us, not as specific
individuals but as a group,
hoping this way they wouldn't

Free Style

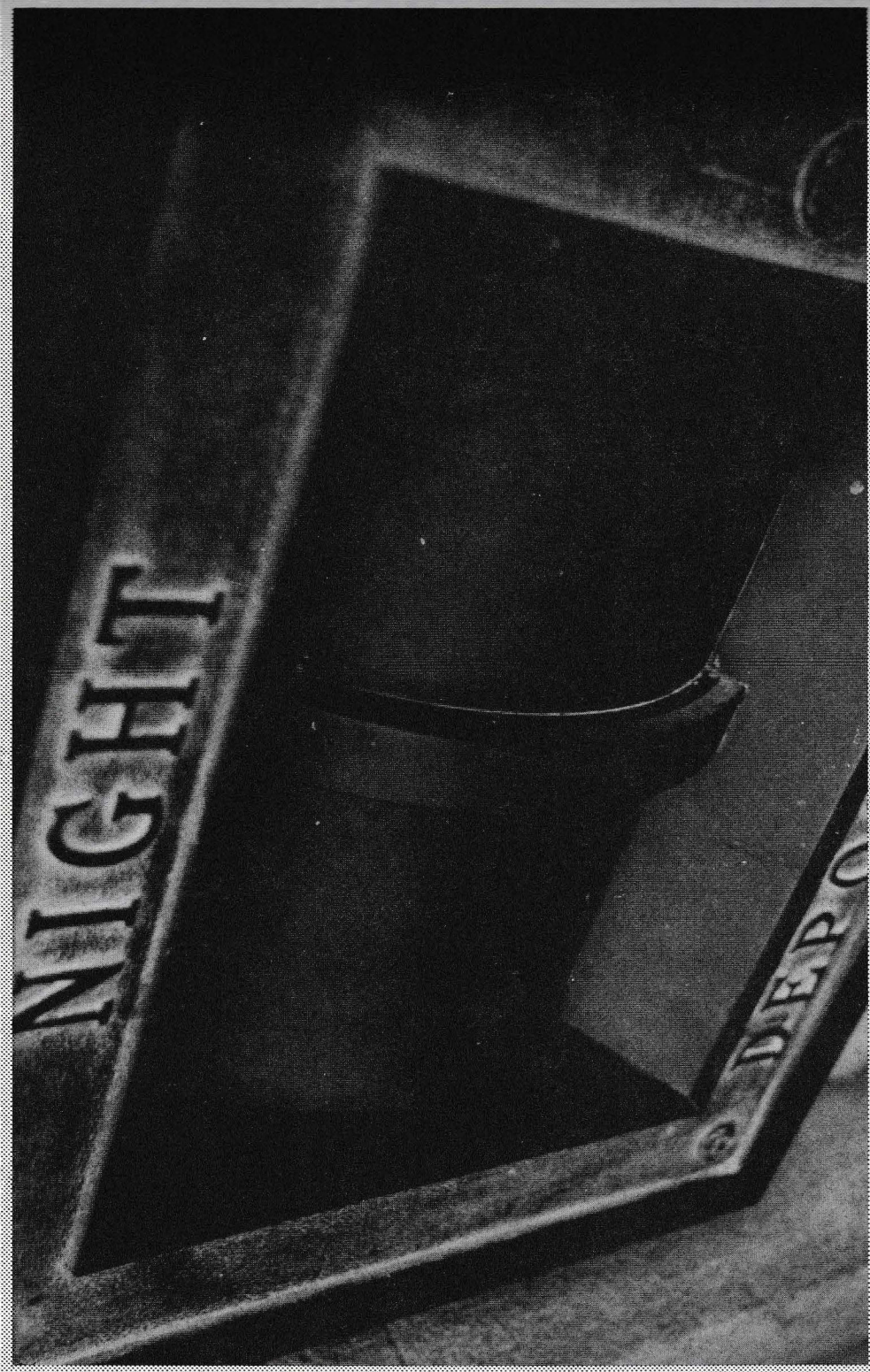
Take your hands
run them free style
up and down my soul.
Pick out the pieces.
Don't be afraid.
I'll be sure to get rid of them,
anything for you.

Lose your trust,
badger your mind
is my love for you real
or 'am I a worshipper of men --not you.

I dream the dream lovers
tend to live.
I hold your bleeding charity in my hands
you hold my beatless heart.

Go ahead run your hands
free style over my soul.
Don't be afraid--
anything for you.

--Tarah Trivelpiece



Motion Sickness

You get up in the morning from a bed that isn't yours and you put your feet on a cold floor because you left your socks draped over the chair by the window. Next door, you hear the woman who escorted your neighbor upstairs last night sneaking out. Her name is apparently Nicole.

Upstairs someone flushes the toilet as you get into the shower. You haven't put your contact lenses in yet so you don't see the mold on the ceiling or the cigarette burns in the bedclothes. The bathroom steams up quickly because it, too, is cold, but you don't mind because now you can't see yourself in the foggy mirror. You sort through bottles in a nylon bag--shampoo, astringent, saline solution, mouthwash. It doesn't matter any more what you put on your head or over your face or in your mouth.

You put on your underwear and look at your body in the mirror, bread-white, and a little doughy, too. You need some sun, a vacation--but all you see when you look out the window is a lot full of Ford Tauruses, Buick Centuries, Chevy Luminas. Some blue, mostly gray, a lot like the

skies above them. The border of the parking lot boasts a Wendy's, a Pizza Hut, a Roy Rogers, all with the neon lights out, looking like whores in the morning. You dress. You comb your hair. You decide you will buy yourself a new wardrobe, you decide you will get a new haircut. You decide you have had enough, you will quit--tomorrow--and go to New York to make your fortune. You were always told you were brilliant.

You decide to study art, take up an instrument--do something bohemian. You could be an assassin, be forever psychologically analyzed on a segment of *Biography* on A & E. You could sell off your belongings and go live at the shore and contemplate life. You could go back to school--be a doctor, a lawyer, a clown. You could open a restaurant, serve the finest cuisine, be on CNN, feed the President. You could buy an ice cream truck and drive around serving happy children with big smears of ice cream on their faces, frantically trying to lick their soft-serve twist cones before the sun melts them into brown-and-white puddles on the sidewalk, twist ice cream all over the kids' hands and clothes. You could be a psychic, learn how to read tarot cards and palms. You could drive a truck and see America. Or join the Coast Guard, rescue those lost at sea.

You could drive to Hollywood, wait tables and try to break into the movies. You could write movies. You could get religious and go off into the mountains to pray. You could wake up every morning, eat bran cereal, and run 20 miles, win a gold medal in the Olympics and make commercials for Nike.

You pack. You think about stealing a towel. You decide not to. You take the shoe mitt. You hoist your suitcase down the stairs, the wheels bumping each step along the way. Breakfast is a resilient pastry in plastic shrink-wrap. It reminds you of bubble gum cards. It tastes a lot like the gum, too.

You turn in your key. The clerk acts as though she'd never seen anything like it before. You feel sick. You think about all the diseases you have not had--scarlet fever, beriberi, polio. You feel faint. You sit on the green-and-orange plaid couch a few feet away from the clerk. She is saying something about a room charge for the adult movie channel. You don't remember watching any movies.

You would like to go home, but don't remember how to get there. You've been away too long and it takes too many highways to get back. The clerk is going on about how she will put

the extra charges for *Hollywood Chainsaw Hookers* on your card. Other guests want to check out. An important man in an important suit is in a hurry. A woman is interrogating her boyfriend: "why don't I turn you on anymore?" A trucker is opening a beer. The morning news is on. An American has been killed abroad, shot in the lobby of a hotel. No one else notices. You watch the cars whizz by on the interstate and become lost in the rising drone of rush hour.

--written by Meliane O'Donnell

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Bow to the Binary
Ye peons of new
For little ones and zeros
now control you

--Eric Werner

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**In the Womb of Kali--
Hindu Goddess of Death/Destruction**

In here, there is no light to dispel
the shadow of my ignorance.
There is tranquility.
The comfortable rhythm
of Kali's beating heart.
The solace of her unfailing breath.
She never sighs; never gasps.

The stillness shatters.
The suffering begins.

The passage is narrow.
I suffocate with compression
of her flesh.
I gasp for air, for life.
She continues to breathe unaffected.

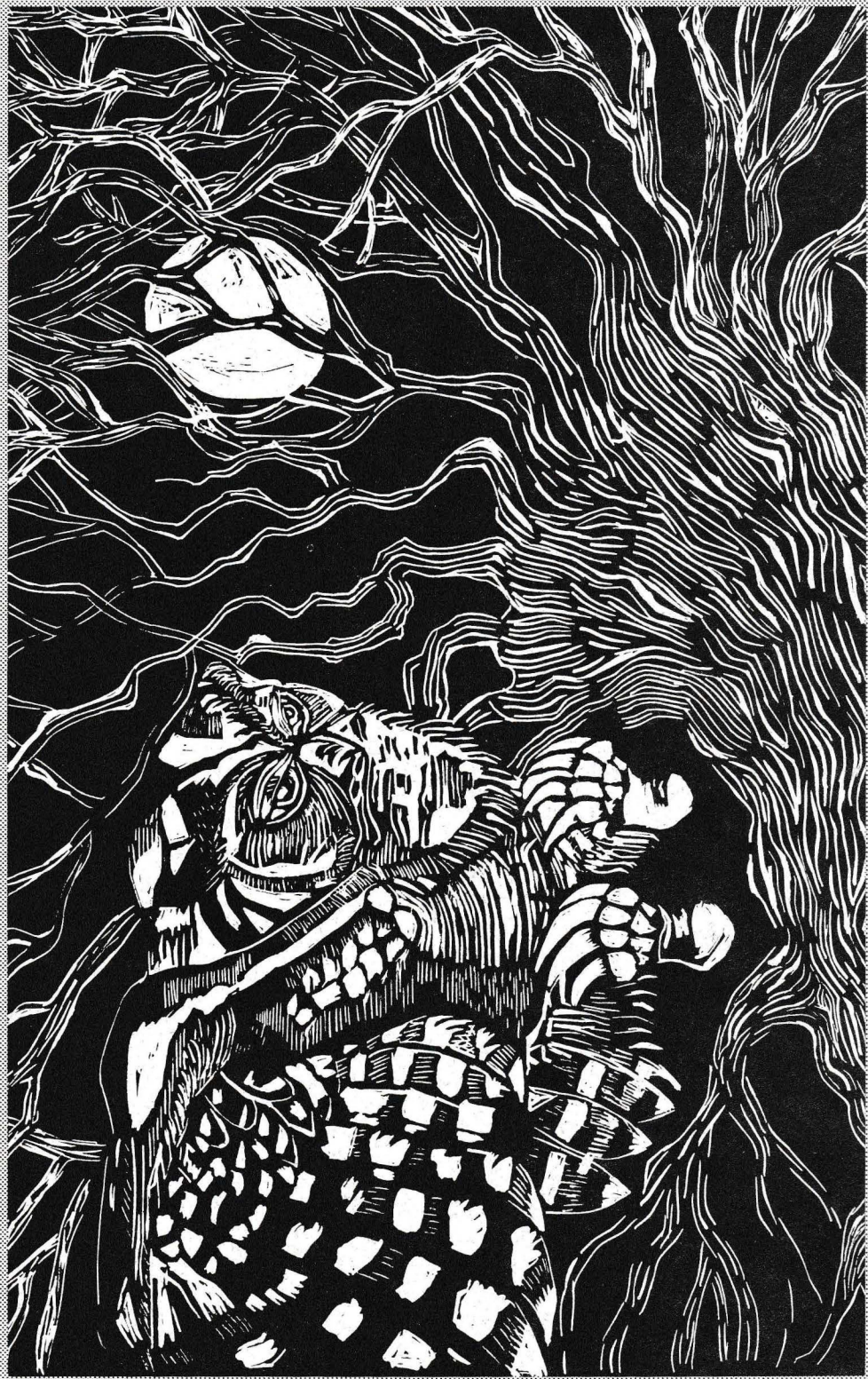
She pushes and pushes until
I arrive with a futile scream.

The air is cold and unforgiving at my destination,
but I can breathe.
The light is blinding.
Shadow gives way to an infinite multiplicity.
Perception is dominated by the haze of abstraction.

The cord is not cut.
Our tie is not severed.
It twists and turns with my movements.
It wraps itself around my neck
and threatens strangulation.
As I move it,
it moves me-
the beautiful, strange dance
that only two soul mates can perform.
The dance is as transitory as it is eternal.
The cord wraps itself like a serpent
in an eternal ring around my flesh
and draws me back into her.

All that was I will never be I again.

--Ann Peters



YANKEE MAGIC

The ball was solidly hit. Darting to his left, the Yankee shortstop fielded it on one hop and delivered a throw to first for what seemed to be an easy out. However, the ball sailed over the first baseman's head instead, and the runner was aboard.

"Damn!" I threw a pillow in the general direction of the television. It was a good thing there were a lot of them around me, because by the looks of things, I was going to need them.

The next batter stepped up to the plate and promptly slapped the ball into left field, advancing the runner to second. What had seemed like an easy inning moments ago was now escalating into disaster.

I sighed, turning my attention from the game to the window. Rain splattered against it and gushed down the glass in torrents. With any luck the storm would soon hit New York.

No such luck. It was a clear night at the Stadium and the Yankees were now behind as usual. The Red Sox scored two runs to take a 2-0 lead. Finally, someone flew out to centerfield for the last out of the inning.

A Jeep Cherokee commercial came on, and I stared at it, not really watching. I tried to remember exactly why I was such a Yankee fan anyway. It wasn't like they had won anything in fourteen years.

Actually, it had been that way for as long as I can remember. There was just

something about the sense of Yankee tradition; so many legendary baseball greats had played for the Yanks. Even though the legends were all dead or retired now, their spirits lived on. It was almost like magic.

I was jolted out of fantasy land by the clap of thunder from outside my window. The storm was in full force now. The window was slightly open; I debated getting up to close it, but then the game resumed. At the time the game seemed more important.

It was the Yankees' turn at bat. I watched with resignation as they went down without a fight, and the inning ended.

So much for magic, I thought; I could do better than that.

The next few innings

went the same way. Although the Red Sox didn't score, the Yankees didn't either. I became increasingly disgusted and pondered going to bed instead. The game droned on and I was lulled in and out of sleep. Somewhere in my dazed state the Yankees managed to get two runs and tie the score.

Suddenly, out of nowhere, a streak of lightning flashed through the open window I hadn't bothered to close, scaring the hell out of me. I bolted upright, disoriented, and adjusted my cap. Cap?

"You're up!" said the manager and pointed to me. "Get a bat and start swinging."

I raced over to the bat rack and selected an appropriate bat. Donning a helmet, I ascended the steps from the dugout.

I made my way over to the on-deck circle and began swinging, taking the situation in. It was already the bottom of the ninth. The score was still tied, 2-2. There were Yankees on second and third with two men out. The batter before me stood at the plate.

I realized instantly that this was a pressure situation. At that moment, I took back everything I ever thought about being better. I stopped swinging and prayed for the batter to get a hit. I prayed for magic.

"Ball four!" yelled the umpire. Not quite the magic I had in mind. My teammates, on the other hand, were going wild in the dugout and began chanting my name. Before I knew it, the entire stadium was chanting my name.

I stepped to the plate,

trying not to betray how nervous I was. The pitcher glared at me from the mound; he was obviously not happy about the walk he'd surrendered. Unfortunately, he now intended to take it out on me.

The pitcher wound up and fired to the plate. Before I could react, the ball whizzed past my waist in a blur.

"Strike one!" screamed the umpire.

I stepped out of the batter's box to collect myself. I had never been so tense in my life. The desperate looks on the baserunners' faces weren't any consolation either. I took a deep breath and stepped back into the box.

The pitcher also took a deep breath and delivered the pitch. It bounced in front of the plate into the catcher's glove.

"Ball," said the umpire.

I relaxed a little. Three more pitches like that and we'd win. I wouldn't even have to do anything! *That* would be magic, I thought.

Shaking his head, the pitcher denied the sign and waited for another. When he received the one he wanted, he nodded and pitched. The ball danced along the outside of the plate. I was tempted to swing at it, but frankly, I was too scared. Good thing.

"Ball two," said the umpire. The pitcher yelled a few rude comments in protest and retreated to the back of the mound. Apparently he saw nothing wrong with that pitch.

He set himself and fired a fastball right down the middle of the plate. I knew this was my big chance to be

a hero; it was the pitch that pinch hitters dream of. Visions of Ruth, Maris, and Mantle danced through my head. I closed my eyes and swung with all my might. I felt my bat make contact with the ball. I opened my eyes to see it soaring through the air; I began the home run trot I had fantasized about for so long. There was a cheer as the crowd rose to its feet. It was going...going...

"Foul ball!" yelled the umpire. Damn. I sighed and trotted back to the plate. The crowd sat down.

The pitcher nodded once again at the catcher and pitched. The ball whizzed past my eyeballs.

"Ball three," said an umpire.

I was now in a tough position. A full count, two outs, bases loaded, bottom of

the ninth, tie game. If there was ever a time for that Yankee magic, I could use it now.

I tried to concentrate on the situation at hand and put myself in the mind of the pitcher. With a full count and the game on the line, there was no room for the pitch to miss; it had to be a strike. I decided the next pitch was going to be a fastball and I was going to be ready for it. I beared down in the batter's box and glared at the pitcher with my meanest look.

The pitcher glared back. He wound up and fired. Yes, the pitch was indeed a fastball, but I was nowhere near ready for it. Instead of heading for the plate, it was headed for me. Before I could react, the ball clouted me hard in the arm. I winced in pain, clutching at it. The last thing

I remember is seeing the trainer and the manager rushing toward me as I blacked out.

I awoke to the roar of the crowd. I sat up slowly, rubbing my arm. It throbbed; I had to stop laying on it like that. Rubbing my eyes, I attempted to focus on the TV. The final score flashed on the screen.

"Holy cow!" said the announcer. "The Yanks pick up a run in the ninth on a hit batter to win it. Final score: New York, 3; Boston, 2. That's all from the Stadium. Good night."

I smiled as I clicked off the TV. Just like magic, I thought, and went to bed.

--*Kerrie Barney*

Pedigree

Careful my idealistic son,
Product of a varied terrain:
The Viking fjords,
The Danube plain;

For a pride in your pedigree
Inspires thoughts of nobility,
Creativity
And dignity;

Fully aware that your genes are
Nourished by an ancestral feast:
Ibsen and Grieg,
Bartok and Liszt.

But wild blood of a baser strain
Also free in your body run:
Eric the Red,
Attila the Hun.

--*Dr. John Orehotsky*

Unclenched

Slippery heat slips between
my crinkled toes
and ascends
to the point of roughened knees
and tensed thighs.

My legs stretch out into the sheath
of feverish devotion
and native fingertips quiver
with murky expectancy.

The gnarl of my back eases into
rivets of kneading fervor.
How many miracles can there be?
Drops of tiny mirrors
freckle

the affection of my skin
and punctuate
lines of
jaw
breast
and belly.

My palms grant
themselves honesty
and yield up

my day
into hot
foamy pink bubbles.

--*Marisa Rae*

S & M

I'm twisted,
half-horizontal on one hip,
leaning against the back
of a chair, motionless,
one leg out-stretched.
He's gripping the back of my
calf with one hand, the other palm
presses my leg into his knee.
He's painting my skin with needles.

Needles have a strange way
of speaking. They buzz steadily
when guided through the curves
of a design, complain loudly
when boring deep, whine when empty.
He dips them into a paper
cup of ink,
revs them up, and attacks
his road course that is my calf.

His pinky, wrapped
in a moist paper towel
wipes away blood.
Orange and blue flow toward my ankle
Green smatters my knee.
The sharp sting of a cat scratch dissolves
into the dull thud of sunburn.
My skin doesn't shrink from the needles like
junkies' veins, it accepts
the ink into its cells and welcomes the vibrance.

I smile at the needles.
He smiles back, and takes
a snapshot of my bloody beauty
and tacks it to the wall.

--Tracy Youells

Falling from Ascent

There is a difference between one hour and another hour in their authority and subsequent effect. Our faith comes in moments...Yet there is a depth in those brief moments which constrains us to ascribe more reality to them than to all other experiences.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

When I am quiescent, it seeps into my awareness. It swirls and twists the divisions inside my mind between reality, illusion, and experience.

I remember what you never will remember.

You will never see, never feel, never long for when...

Hand in hand we talked in the canoe as it drifted gently with the current of the stream. We talked of life, and love, our passions and our

ideas and the ideas behind those ideas, but those abstractions did not separate us from the immediacy, the power, the beauty of each moment undivided in time. The silvery dew upon the grass, the cadence of your voice, the terrain of my mind were all interwoven into one fabric. I was, you were, caught in Indra's jeweled net. The mist upon the water spiraled into the grass, into the sky, dissolved the boundaries between heaven and earth and left in its wake infinity.

I remember looking into the depths of the endless sky speckled with starlight and clouds and wanting for nothing...

We came to the shore and docked. We walked along the water and through fields touched silver by the moon. Miles we walked within this ethereal landscape until we came to town. Transcendence was replaced by harshness, cacophony, and filth. But still, we were together.

We descended the stairs into the basement of the still-standing

ruin. I remember the chill, the shadows, the faint yet overpowering scent of mildew. We kissed under the light in the center of the room. The bare bulbs, coated with dust and dead insects, illuminated the moss green of your eyes. The gunfire was quick. Your blood splattered and seeped onto the dirt gray floor. You were gone. My shoulder was moist from the blood of my own wound. The smell of blood mixed with the smell of the smoke. Disorientation. All of it dissolving into madness. All I felt was my blood, then the flames. I felt them as I saw them. They caressed and danced upon the threads of my clothing, then began to sear my flesh. The stench of me burning, the agony. The feeling of being charred, of turning to dust. At once the fire seemed to consume me, all of me, all in my awareness. Then, quiet.

I was a pile of ashes on the floor and I rose. You rose. We were there. We were ghosts, skeletons, and we were free. The hands we did

not have clung to each other and we continued to rise until we stood together. We were joy. We knew no boundaries. We left the fallen ruin and walked together, laughing.

I was first aware of light, then warmth, then solidity. And I realized I was bound. Trapped. I could smell the bacon my father was cooking. I could feel the gentle roughness of the touch of the sheets against my arm. All of these sensations were separate. Harsh. I shielded myself with my pillow from the blinding bright warmth of the sunlight penetrating the wispy curtains. I closed my eyes, but I could not go back to where I had been.

That time out of time will never be gone from my memory, my consciousness. I could not forget that feeling of being unbound. I could not forget such bliss. I wish you actually could have been there. Perhaps if you had been, I would not feel so alone now.

Five years and seven months have passed. I will always carry those moments with me. Sometimes I ache because my body feels so excruciatingly heavy. As if I were mist chained to lead. I have tasted beauty, union, spirit, the freedom of infinity, and I long.

--written by Ann Peters

Free Bird

The eagle raises his wings
As the wind lifts him gently into the air.
He glides over the earth with his head held high
As if he knows the whole world admires him.
He soars over the barren desert
Not knowing what will happen to him next,
Not caring,
Letting the world pass peacefully by.

--Joy Zimmerman

The Night

*I lie on the sand
Staring into the dark sky.
The shimmering stars cast their light upon me
As I listen to the sound of waves crashing
on distant shores.
The night is cold.
And I long for my true love.*

*He is out there, somewhere, in the midst of this
confusion.
We have not yet found each other.
But we will.
One day.
One night.*

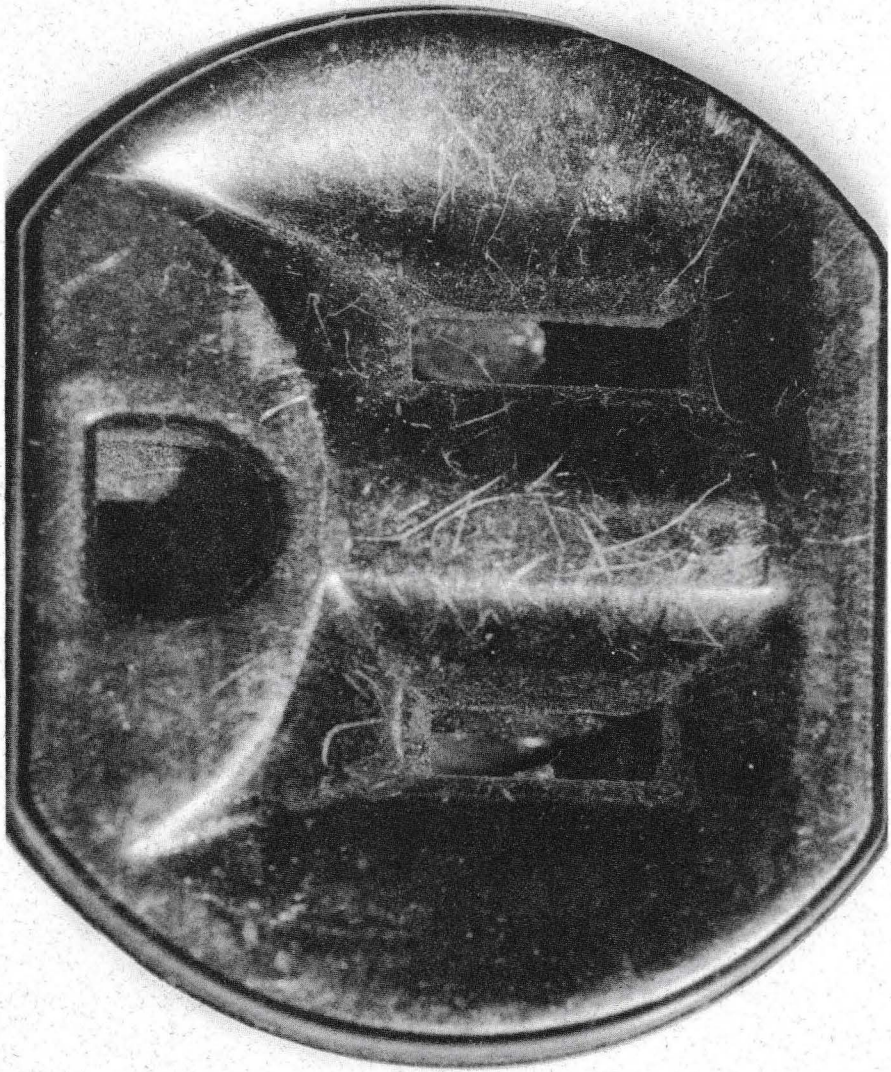
--Joy Zimmerman

Pennies in the Water

*I took a walk alone one day
Searching.
I stopped at a bridge
Worn old by the steps of dreamers.
I'd been there before
As the pennies in the water
Would have sworn.*

*I looked down below
Hoping to see
Something I'd missed
In the many times before.
I knew
As I turned to go
I needed the money more
Than I needed dreams
That wouldn't come true.*

--Betsy Rozanski



...they distributed their magazine to the fair folk of Wilkes University and the fair folk did cringe. And they proclaimed:

"Those people scare me! I didn't know we **had** a literary magazine."

And the lunatics did smile and revel in their accomplishments. And laughing, dancing, and tumbling the mischevious Mac out the window...they lived happily ever after.

The End.



WILKES UNIVERSITY
MANUSCRIPT