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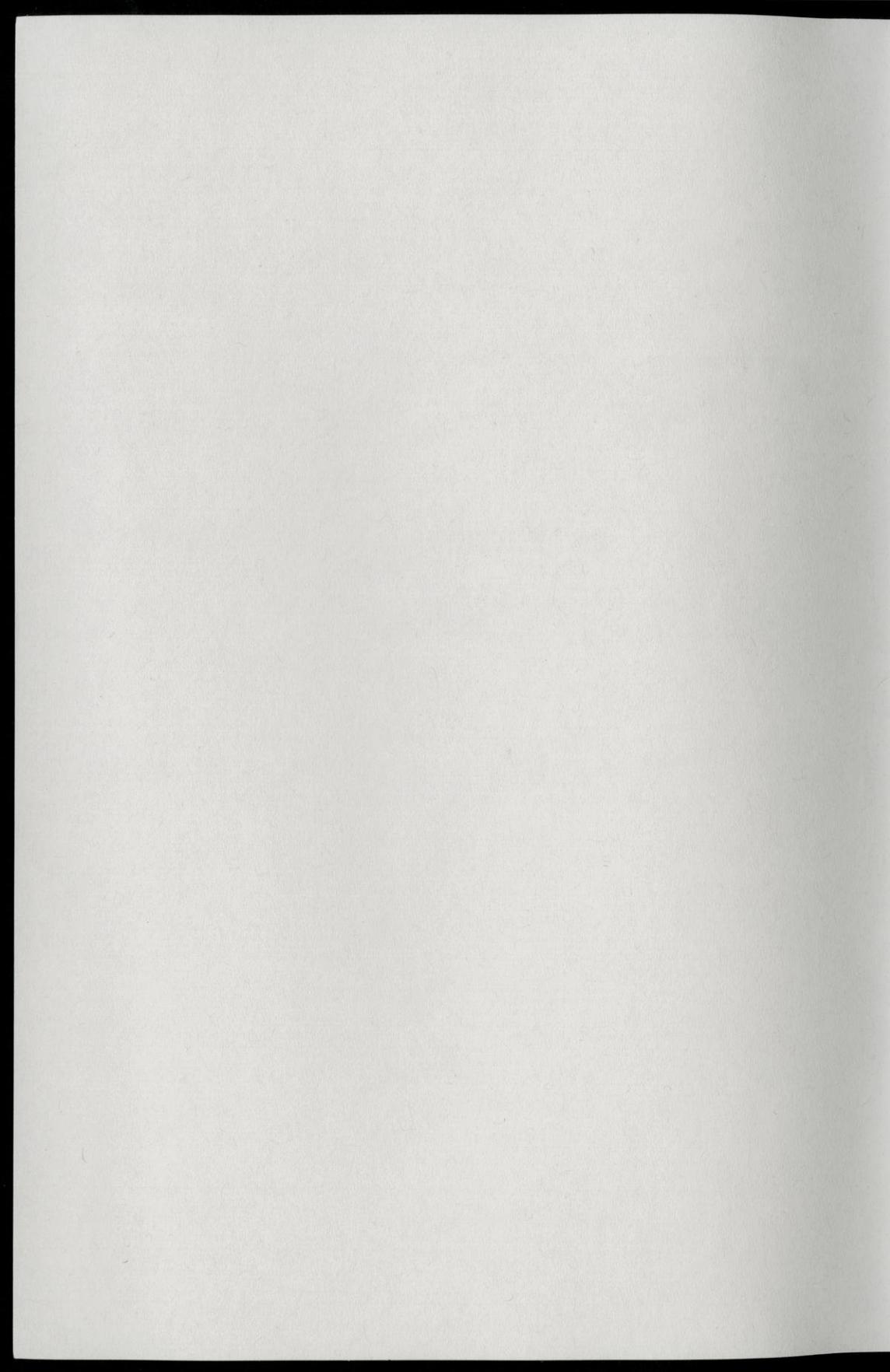
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The Windy Hill Review



Reflections



THE WINDY HILL REVIEW

26TH EDITION
2004

University of Wisconsin-Waukesha

1500 N. University Drive

Waukesha, Wisconsin 53188

26th Edition

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*Editor's Note: These authors were not anonymous by choice; names were lost in the production of this edition of *The Windy Hill*.

Acknowledgements

The Windy Hill Review has been published for 26 years now. It has been a wonderful triumph to be published, and to have the pleasure of being the editor-in-chief. There are a great number people that I would like to thank for their help. I will begin by saying thank you to my hard working associate editors, thank you Molly McQuire and Justin Ganser; I couldn't have done it without you! Secondly Professor Gregory Ahrenhoerster, you where an enormous support, and I enjoyed working with you this year, thank you for all the advising! To our fabulous art consultants Barbara Reinhart and Jeff Noska, both of you where a great help to our magazine.

I have aptly titled this year's edition of *The Windy Hill* "Reflections". I believe that this title is the most appropriate not only for all of the pieces that grace this edition, but for life in general this past year.

It was also a great joy to be a part of a first for *The Windy Hill*, thanks to Leslie Barczak who submitted a photo that now graces our cover. Thank you, Phil Zweifel (who began the literary club), you have given much to me, and made great contributions to our club.

I would also like to thank everyone who submitted their work, because we wouldn't have been able have produced this magazine without them.

Lastly, I give my endless gratitude to everyone who gave me their never-ending support over the production of this magazine.

God bless to all who read this, and good luck in all future literary and life endeavors!

Sincerely,
Ann Marie Pilot

A Poet's Alphabet

Carol Deprez

A is author with profound things to say
B is bibliophile, sincere book devotee

C is chapbook, petite volume of verse
D is doggerel, is there anything worse?

E is edit, oooh it stings to finesse
F is free verse, with rules nonetheless

G is giggle or guffaw, a limerick's intent
H is haiku—succinct, eloquent

I is iambic pentameter, ta TUM five times
J is journal-daily, raw-material lifeline

K is kudos, a most welcome reply
L is literati, poets qualify

M is muse, an elusive, fickle paragon
N is nursery rhyme (Poetry Intro-101)

O is onomatopoeia, splash, zoom, hush
P is paper and pen, poets' canvas and brush

Q is qwerty, making keyboards sing
R is rhyme, like zing, ping and fling

S is syllable and sentence, poetic grist
T is theme, e.g. message or gist

U is unique, a fresh perspective
V is vision and voice, accordingly subjective

W is workshop for support and inspiration
X is x-tra review and emendation

Y is yackety-yak, verbosity pollutes
And Z

Z is zeal, the essence of poetic pursuit

Nightmare

Carol Deprez

In solo trance of deepest slumber
Where recollections roil and lumber
In dimmest shade of muddy umber

A biting insult, impulsive and brash
Regretful action, bold but rash
Trust decays to tindered ash

Agitation roams a cranial trail
Inner voices rant and rail
Unsettled matters portend ail

Faces haunt, features scare
Expressions cryptic, do they care?
Translucent, transparent, now just air

Illusions conjured to impart
Sense from senseless or a part
Of inner sanctum, psyche art

The conscious brain is turned upend
As shifting images stir and pend
Shut-eyed reality seeking end

A Simple Villanelle

Carol Deprez

Simple pleasures provide genuine zest
Nana's cinnamon walnut coffeecake
Embrace the humble, shun the rest

Immersed in words, language blessed
A triple-to-triple scrabble sweepstake
Simple pleasures provide genuine zest

Squinting at shapes, a cumulus quest
Shooting star with its lucky-wish wake
Embrace the humble, shun the rest

Soft-cooing dove, gentle arbor guest
Foghorn forlorn, night's bluesy bass ache
Simple pleasures provide genuine zest

Cocooned in devotion, new chick's cozy nest
A dad's proud regard of his newborn namesake
Embrace the humble, shun the rest

Elemental philosophy yields life's best
Pretension and complexity, do forsake
Simple pleasures provide genuine zest
Embrace the humble, shun the rest

OLIVES!

Megan Marks

Of all the fruit I love, the olive is what I live for.
Grow green as the color that makes you insane.
And bleak black as the bottom of the ocean floor.
They render round rinds, wet like the rain
And a tangy tart treat that you cannot ignore.
I avail the arrival of these ovals like cocaine.
So I eat eighty two and pass out on the floor,
Begging for more,
Addicted hardcore.

Tales of Toto

Carrie Gaulke

We all went on a journey, but I was over looked. I helped get rid of the Wicked Witch, and I followed the yellow brick road. I uncovered they real wizard and helped Dorothy get back home. I didn't need more courage. I already had a heart. I didn't need a brain because for a dog I'm pretty smart. I led them on their journey, and got them what they searched for. I don't get credit because I'm always over looked. I'm the one who's always loyal, always true. I stuck by them all beginning to end. I was always there as your little black furry friend. I got you home safe; it was not big deal. But who got all the credit? Those silly ruby slippers and the clicking of her heels.

A Lady's Blues

Stacey Maddex

It withered souls of the lonely bird
The hopeless doldrums of love gone astray
And the bluesy sounds of Billie Holiday
Singin' her sad, sad song.

Its Ella's time to take up the rune
Before sunrise begins the next day.
The dreadful tears ev'rybody sheds tonight
Before the clock chimes the morning.
The broken hearted know how to sigh.
The desperate plight of the loveless
Goes on.

There are women who know how to cry.
Bessie's bell rings out and moans
Of the man who done her wrong
Ain't no use of getting him back
It's already tomorrow today
The broken hearted know how to sigh.
The desperate plight of the loveless
Goes on.

These are the women who know how to cry.
If ever you hear them don't be afraid
Let their spirits carry you on.
You never know what a good cry will do
Until you hear their songs
The broken hearted know how to sight.
The desperate plight of the loveless
Goes on.

These are the women who know how to cry.

Reading Night

Robert Kokan

Jazz night with a poetry twist
Another evening of new bohemian blues
and anarchist ideas
The professor of prose
wings angelic
Beatnic beard and a little devil's dance
The bebop tiptoe madman expounds
poetic demons, monsters, midnight's dark hat
His vibrant voice of grit and gravel
scrapes away our skin
His eyes a fire of intense intent
And his soul so far down
into the blue-magic IT
that sweet-angel moment
when everyone in the world
is cocked-ear listening
strung together electric
on a long downward tumble
held one hand to another
by his passion

his fire
that for eternity's minute
there is no breathing
and we are caught and cut
by each razor sharp razor-wire word
His voice inside of us
twisting a knife
Our blood in puddles
spent
laying lifeless on the floor



Depot Restaurant

Robert Kokan

An old train station
its days of passengers gone
Now it's a restaurant
where you can sit by the window
not thirty feet from the tracks
and if you're lucky
you can watch an old highball freight
or a speeding westbound Amtrack
while you're eating your eggs

First you hear it
that horrible horn
The distant rushing rumble
approaching fast

Then you feel it
closing in
Vibrations in the floorboards
Then it's right there next to you

All that metal and lights and wheels and
bells and cars and flashing sparks and hell fires
All that in commotion
That destination anticipation
The rumbles rhythms faces horns
The terrible clacking bending groans rails
All that freedom and motion and power and
POWER
and then?

And then silence like
Well like after an orgasm
the air still slightly stirring
like something old is now missing
breathing with the question
WHAT JUST HAPPENED HERE?

George

Robert Kokan

Old young George bicycles into the city
on lost rubber wheels of his own intervention
Farthest from home he's ever been
Everything he owns is with him
in a crooked cart tied to his failing fender
Wrinkled papers, candy bars, comic books, a button less shirt,
a single shoe, flashlight, soda bottles
toothpaste no brush useless treasures
no map, no money
In child-eyed confusion he asks me which way is farther
Tells of plans to pawn his binoculars
to get money for a vacation to the Dells
Says that going
is sure to cure his blues

I say
Yeah Georgie, it'd cure mine too
but that's a hundred miles
and empty pockets
carry only sadness and sorrows

I watch his face fade
his dream turn into another sunset
another shadow
His plans of escaping lie broken
like the rest of his world

Impossible now
we both
turn our ways
toward home

Secondhand Shoes

Nick Macaluso

An up-and-atcha' demeanor.
It's enough to give a wizened eye the blues.
Dirty lenses held together by cheap glue.
I've seen many a soul like her,
Wearing secondhand shoes.
She can't be a shade under forty-two,
But she's a perpetual beginner.
It's enough to give a thankful guy the blues.
They groan when her name's on the crew,
Foolish to think they should know any better.
They don't have to wear secondhand shoes.
On the street we lower our heads to insulate us from the truth.
Frumpy Sammy is beyond the suburbs, where the truth is unfettered.
It's enough to give an open mind the blues.
Childish eyes starving for a clue,
Wrinkled shirt, mangled rubber
On her secondhand shoes.
It's enough to give you and me the blues.

Old Soul

Nick Macaluso

A stiff twilight, rhythmic rain, Smudges the red regulator.
Pulsating like volcano's blood, heating my taxed brain—
It kindles the candle of the Imaginator.
I think of elapsed lives, the costumes I've worn,
A delicious fantasy continues past the shifting regulator.
My spirit's travels, the vessels in which I'm reborn,
Maybe mason, Templar, king or assassin,
Perhaps a Swedish clog champion named Bjorn!
Not impossibly a screen idol with a divinely chiseled chin,
Or a musician-like Otis Redding or Keith Moon—
More pleasing than a reverie as cobbler, cleric or king; more civilized than
assassin.
I'm sure you find this delusion ample fodder for lampoon,
But what if I'm right—we're just old souls trampling through time in
different outfits,
Even you could have been Buddy Holly or Toshihiro Mifune!
The trance fizzles when my tires sidle up to the curb: into reality I must
exit
Into the stiff twilight, the calming rain.
The remnants of a delightful excursion wait until I slumber, the perfect
time for a fancying transit.
Through a window I see car's eyes—the light pulsating like angel's
blood—enticing my ardent brain.

Untitled

Molly McGuire

Dancing out across the floor, my eyes found his.
The kind of man I'm looking for,
Slightly thinning hair, born slightly too soon, but
The clothes he wore, the lines on his face, the way he
held his cigarette
Between the thumb and forefinger,
I knew he could be my Bogart.
A man who was stronger, older, more refined,
He sat at an empty table, in the company of his drink,
Like a scene in Rick's Café.
He looked me right in the eye, smiled, like a man who
had no fear
Was there a signal behind that steady gaze
Or was it just the champagne
Then again, I'm no Ingrid Bergman.
I dropped my eyes,
I've seen the movie,
I know every line.
Too shy, too scared to see the final scene, I got on the
plane before the start
No lies, no heartbreak, no teary good-byes, only the
torture of knowing
We'll never have Paris.

Sestina for Rain

Molly McGuire

I see nothing but the gray haze of rain
Yet imagine I see myself, a big blob of red
Against the dull horizon. I try to smile
And lift my arms, feel the drops on my fingers and dance.
Try to take in the moisture, to remedy the dry spell
In my mind -- how long can it last?

I will love the storm while it lasts,
Though it brings with it the stifling gray sky. Rain,
The way it smells, the way it runs down my face, casts its spell.
I am reminded of all the books I've read,
Curled up under blankets while the droplets danced
On the rooftop, clattering, as I snuggled further under
the covers and smiled.

If I start to despair, won't you give me a smile?
My mind is fertile, it only waits for water. Last
Night I performed a ritual dance
To make the thoughts and words fall to me like rain.
Still nothing comes, so I stare at my red
Eyes in the mirror, read tarot cards, mutter spells.

Won't you call me, so we can sit down for a spell?
You save my mind from the desert winds when you smile.
And every time you touch my coat, and remark at its redness,
It's as if your awe at seeing me will forever last.
I wait for your voice as I stare at the rain
And try to make the words on the page start to dance.

I sway into a clumsy dance,
And when I sit down again, I'll spell
Your name on the window. Right now your vision reigns
Over my mind, your eyes, your soft smile.
My head is too dried up to recall the last
Time, when I didn't want you at all, because I found out
you weren't very well read.

I walk, dressed all in bright red
To contrast my mood. Shall I brood or dance?
My feelings change so quickly, I can't make one last
Even the length of a poem. I chant some voodoo spell
To make you call. Until then I won't smile
Or go outside to run around in the rain.

I wait for my red phone to ring, I can feel your spell
As I dance and wait for the clouds in my head to smile
On me at last, and bring some rain.

Sonnet # 12 & 35

Molly McGuire

When I'm left with my fear of being unknown
With no one to hold me, keep me from harm
You save me from the pain of being alone
And wrap me in sentences, good as arms.

Your words pour out of the stereo
As if they were written with me in mind
Whether about hard rain or Fennario
My soul does a leap for every line.

I wish I could tell you of my pain, so
Hey, hey Bob Dylan I wrote you a sonnet
Your words hit me like a freight train, oh
Don't you know it breaks my heart, doggonit

That I was born several years too late
Guess you'd blame it on a simple twist of fate.

Villanelle for your Voice

Molly McGuire

Your voice rumbles through the room like a diesel truck
And echoes inside the scattered glasses strong and low.
I would leave this place with you if I had better luck.

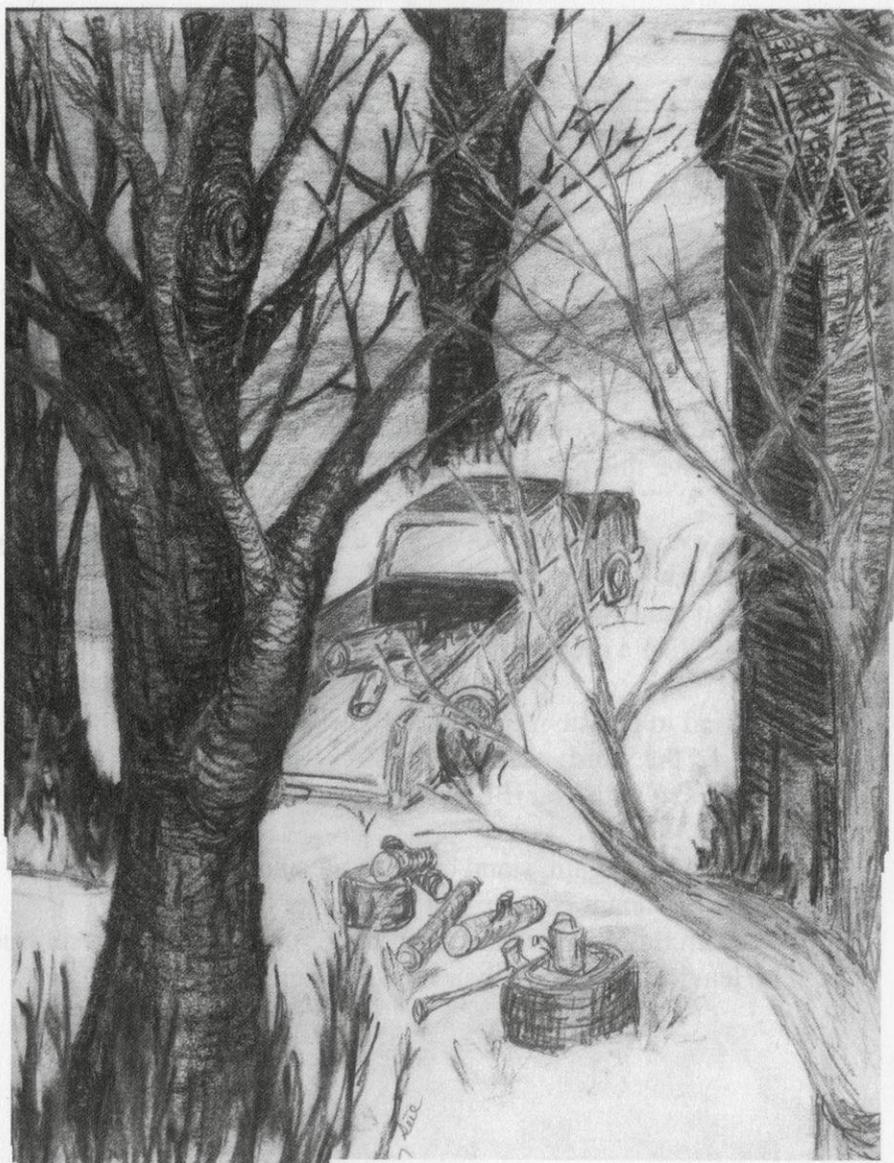
I think I have never met a man with such
A voice, as it travels to my ear soft and slow,
While rumbling through the room like a diesel truck.

Your words rasp like coarse steel wool, until you stop to suck
The last few drops of your beer, and I know
I would leave this place with you if I had better luck.

You say you can't sing with such a terrible voice. I disagree very
much
Because it dances soft and graceful around me, even though
It rumbles like a diesel truck.

If you tried to pursue me, I know I'd be stuck.
If you said the word, so deep, I couldn't say no.
I would leave with you if I had better luck.

When I see you again, stand close to me and pluck
Out your dissonant chords, and maybe we'll go
Away from this room where your voice rumbles like a diesel truck.
I'll be leaving with you when I have better luck.



Autumn Afternoon

Ramon Klitzke

Warm lazy sunshine reaches down
to cool golden summer's loving.
It leaves lingering fragrances
that stir the dusty ashes
of other loving summers
too musty to remember well.

My might-have-beens
are long forgotten wine
shimmering in the goblet
of an autumn afternoon.
I dare not drink deeply.

Skeletons of summers past
dance in the sunlight,
or do they weep?
I cannot tell.
It depends on what music
resurrects their bones
from the sepulcher of time
where they sleep.

Now the autumnal dusk
awakens inky phantoms
of wistful summer loves
once more before a river
of moonlight smothers them.

Moon Prayer of an Old Pawnee Warrior

Ramon Klitzke

Oh Great Mother of the nighttime sky
Look down upon my tears
Hear my prayer

Many summers ago I wooed a fair maiden
She looked upon my lodge
and found it good
Two horses and a buffalo robe
I gave her father for her hand

She entered my lodge
and her laughter warmed it
Her smile was the morning sun
Her face was a prairie flower

We lived as one
My hunts were good
I brought back trophies from the wars
There was no hunger in our village

One early morning
a tiny cry filled our lodge
We were three
He grew to be a strong warrior

Then the Winter Death
walked among the lodges
walked with the buffalo
on bare white plain

Now the lodges are silent
The Council fire is out
The buffalo are gone
My lodge is empty
There is no laughter

Only the cry of Brother Wolf
pierces the cold air
of the empty plain

Oh Great Mother of the nighttime sky
touch my face with your light
point me to the path that leads
to the final hunting grounds
of my fathers

Hear my prayers

Cool Freedom

Ramon Klitzke

I wrap this Army blanket round
me tight, watch cars buzz
by like bees aiming for blossoms.
This dark corner of the viaduct,
is my world, protects me from
worlds with queen bees who'd
chain me to sweat work days,
maudlin nights, slavery.

Queen Muscatel is my lover now,
faithful, true, there when I need her
to soothe the fire that grips my bones.

If there was another time,
another queen who chained
my soul to another world,
I forget.

Better to be free
in my world than a slave
in somebody else's.

The couple

Janet Leahy

walking slowly
through the bustling mall
inner arms entwined
canes on either side
their equilibrium
a delicate balancing act

the metronome slows
to the shuffle
of each deliberate step
they look fragile
holding on
to a lifetime walking together

around them
shoppers move to a different beat
they rush through the maze
chasing time
I slow my step
to see the rhythms of life mingle

Sevenfold

Janet Leahy

you never returned
with your space struck eyes
with your love stories
of speed and fire
you who glided with ease
into weightlessness
awe struck
by your wondrous adventure

what did you see
as you spun in orbit
around our spinning planet
could you see our borders
of race
religion
ethnicity
could you see our killing streets
and hear our taunts of war

we waited for you to come home
went out to watch your return
your roaring requiem
fell into our hearts

our grief sevenfold

*in memory of Columbia's
seven astronauts
who perished February 1, 2003

Flyover

M. Haasch

The sun was shining, and it was the first time in years I had noticed it doing so. Amber rays of heat shot out of the sky, and I suddenly didn't feel so cold and lonely. The weather was actually warm, with a slight breeze as opposed to the howling wind I understood was normal. The drab, gray sky which I had grown accustomed to was replaced by a clear blue sky with a few clouds. It was the first time in ages that the weather seemed worth remembering. Then I noticed where I was. The houses of multiple shapes and colors were larger than in my current neighborhood. The street was so familiar, not just by sight but by texture. I took off my shoes and felt the bumps of the road attempt to pierce the calluses of my feet. It felt soothing and yet awkward simultaneously. Wiggling my toes, I was overjoyed to feel the heat that the sun bestowed on the blacktopped spots of the road. From then on, I simply decided to walk forward.

As I walked, my perspective seemed to be shifting. At first, my vision seemed blurred then stretched vertically and horizontally, like a piece of plastic wrap being tested for durability. Now, I could see not just what was in front of me, but I had a sense of what was ahead, as if I had a bird's eye view of where I was at the same time as being there. I could see the whole street and its river-like tributaries of rock and tar. It twisted and curved like a snake. The lush greens of the grass, the gray and black specks of the road under foot, and the similar roofs to the boxy houses, they all called out to me. I breathed in, the air having a significant flavor. Then I realized and recognized where I was. I was home. This is where I grew up. As I trudged forward, I looked down and noticed that my feet didn't exactly make contact with the road underneath. I looked again in utter disbelief, yet it appeared as if there was a glass plate between me and the road, which I could still feel on my heels. I decided to move onwards.

Pang. There was a loud noise, like a mallet hitting a mixing bowl; its very sound reverberating through the air. Creepy music then began to swell all around me, and I looked behind me to the apparent source. My mouth agape, I beheld a modest-sized orchestra of 70 or so people, each holding onto their prized instruments, and there, lurking behind them, was the largest pipe organ I've seen. And it was all 10 steps behind me, I glanced closer, and saw a man with a bow for a stringed instrument, and instead of that, he had a slender pane of Plexiglas. They did nothing. I noticed the music had stopped, and that they hadn't played since I began turning around to see them. I simply responded by gawking at them and raising a quizzical eyebrow. I swiveled, took three steps and as they started to play again, I turned on them, only to find that instead of being 13 steps

away, they were still 10, and that they had again stopped playing when I had turned. I turned forward again, and they started up with the piece as if they never stopped playing in the first place. Its very large and frightening sound seemed to tell me that I was surrounded by something that was bigger than I expected, and far too complicated for me to understand. The timbre was rather fine, the strings balancing from lush whole notes to shrieking pizzicato, coupled with the main with the glass sheet, which caused my hair to stand on end, swift like some kind of cadet standing to attention. Nevertheless, I pushed on. As I walked, I noted that I didn't make any jerky movements as I transferred my weight from one foot to the other. It wasn't like walking at all, but like drifting on water or gliding, only at the pace of a walk. I stopped again, this time at the edge of my yard, or what used to be my yard. My feet were back in touch with the soil and grass, and I could feel the cool tendrils of green blades between my toes. I crouched down, and then lied on my stomach, sticking my nose into the grass and taking a large whiff as if it were some costly perfume. My eyes crossed and I shuddered and convulsed.

After I lodged my brain back into place. I kept walking though the yard as I did before, still light and shiftless, yet feeling the wet embrace of the grass I made it to the house, noting that the topiary was just as I recalled, in that it was still there, existing, sitting in place. The brickwork was still the right side of crimson, and the garage door which I had approached still sustained some charcoal marks from where a dirty tennis ball trail struck it repeatedly. Just above it, in a small overhang, was a button. I pushed down on it, and with a cry of "open sesame" the door opened. I turned and the orchestra was there, now silent. I turned back, and it coalesced with hulking, powerful brass chords, just waiting to build up to some finale, or maybe not.

I went through the door which led to my house from the garage. I turned again, not to the faceless tuxedoed mob with instruments, but to a beat up red wagon. A gleaming red fire-truck, and underneath that, a kind of multicolored contraption which worked by pouring water through the funnel at the top, and as it went through the gear-like workings, its moving parts rotated like a windmill, operating under the same principle as a Mississippi riverboat. I shed a tear for that blue, green and yellow thing, for the moments I had with it, and those I wish I had left. My eye shuddered, and another came, salty against my trembling lip. I went to the door, turned the knob, and went inside the house.

The interior was changing at a constant pace. As I moved forward, I tripped on a table that wasn't there a second ago. Then it moved again, its dark wood and marble center shifting endlessly from one side of the room to another. The loathed fish painting suddenly disappeared. The television

went from a miniscule 80's model Zenith to a late 80's model RCA, and finally to a largish, 90's Sony. The carpeting at the same time went from an awful orange and brown pattern to the black underneath, and then to a bland gray, soft and kind to the skin of my heels. I shifted forward again only to fall over a couch that changed rapidly from a beat up orange flower pattern one to something a little more country, with a light plaid motif. Getting up, I trudged on my way to the next room.

The hallway now donned the awful fish painting. The fish's beady eye gazed at me, and its mouth was wide open to catch a lure. My head swiveled to see my brother's odd room, which had alternated from the same carpeting as before to the new gray, a rickety bunk bed, a weight set and a computer desk swiftly vanishing. Except for the desk, which remained brown, solid, and taciturn. Pictures and posters shifted and vanished on the wall, one with Roger Daltry and his cohorts was replaced with one of Robert Plant and his posse, until all that was left was a bare wall. The room was empty, except for the desk. This didn't shock me. Nothing did. At least not until a child, a boy, snuck up behind me and stood in the center of the room, as silent as the desk. I shook my head and left the room, alone with its deafening roar of nothing.

Mildew adorned the solitary shower stall. The spigot still dripped after years of docile waiting. After noting that there was no reflection in the mirror, I choked on the memory of hiding from my father in this very bathroom.

Oh, I was clever, leaving the door wide open. If I had shut it he would have heard. Hiding in the shower, the shower with glass doors, where he wouldn't see me. Rubbish! Anyone with eyes would've seen me if they came into that room, and he did, and I dreaded the whole time hiding and the moment he actually found me.

I pranced past the kitchen, into the living room, where I looked out at the tree. Much older than I'd ever care to be, and still too tall for me to climb unaided, it stood there, as if shrugging its arm like branches in confusion. The wind forced it to sway, yet not in a way to reflect the weather turning bad. It was beautiful, stoic. It was *my* sanctuary when things got ... But it was my sanctuary and mine alone. I couldn't take her with me. I was a coward. For across the grand stretches of dead air, through the walls and windows, I could still hear the cries. Even now I was helpless, the world outside unchanged, while this house went about its business, years by the minute.

I saw the orchestra through the window, refusing to play upon my spotting them. I gave a "harrumph" that reverberated throughout the whole room.

I began to climb the stairs, which suddenly became wood instead of carpet. I immediately slipped on the fifth step and fell, with all the memories of tripping up and falling landing right on top of me. I gave a large clunk as my bulk hit the floor, which felt like a belly flop, yet sounded like punching a thin man in the back

After a second attempt, I was up the case, and I noticed the upstairs bathroom still had the same tile. The only damn thing in the house to remain. My mind stretched and ached, trying to count the times I would measure the distances between two tiles of the same color, interspersed within a sea of white and a few specks of various basic color. I looked in only for a moment

Finally settling on my own room, I sat on my bed, covered in the flotsam of broken Lego sets, a vast army of different toys and blankets which kept changing. The boy had returned.

“Take me with you.” He said.

I remained silent, as I did when I lived here.

“Take me with you,” he now begged. Like a child his age so often did.

“I ...I can't. I don't know how,” I sputtered, barely making audible noise above the swelling music. Yet he heard me. He cried, tears streaking down his pudgy cheeks. I didn't know what to do. I hated myself for not knowing, because I always felt I never really knew what to do when any difficult situation came about. I just turned and left. What shocked me the most was the boy's cries. They slowly turned from a pleading whimper to a laugh, and then a mad cackle, that rose to join a dissonance with the crescendo of the orchestra's brass finale. I winced at the noise as I left.

My True Colors

Jessica Betts

Sometimes when the sky is black
With cloud cover, ask me
Mistakes I have made.
Ask me whether I have lived openly
And honestly with myself and others;
Others who have plagued me, to
Let go of who I am.
Ask me if now I have been able to
Reach my goals, out of this pain.
The dark sky only reveals its stars
When it feels like it. Maybe,
I do what the sky does,
Maybe I only show my true colors,
When I feel like it.

Chaos Rules in this Room of Mine

Jessica Betts

Open the door slowly, making
Sure nothing jumps out.
The smell of something sweat-dripped and piled high,
Hits you first.
Watch where you step, for
You might wrinkle something clean.
Doesn't matter now, now
That chaos rains on
Dry fields and
That my clutter will be my ruin.
My grandfather once said,
We will kill ourselves in
Our own filth. The truth is
Often found in the old,
But not always in the wise and powerful.

Northern Lights

Jessica Betts

Lying flat against the hard
Wood that supports me over a
Wet mirror:
I look above the heavens glow
Green and yellow,
They wisp and curl,
Like a horse's mane or
Create a wave of colorful cloth, doted
With diamonds.
It moves around my heart, warming it
To the possibility of
Life.
Ideas of endless ability swarm
Around my mind in color,
Brighter than those in the sky.



Pondering

Shalyn Miller

Lord, it cannot be as you say.
What am I going to do with a baby?
It's impossible, yet I must obey.

How will I provide for this babe?
I pray everything will work out.
What am I going to do with a baby?

How has this all come about?
The Savior of the world? Who will trust?
I pray everything will work out.

This child who is to be called Jesus,
Wonderful Counselor, Everlasting Father.
The Savior of the world, Save us!

I am blessed to be his mother.
All praise to Him be given,
Wonderful Counselor, Everlasting Father.

He will wash away the world's sin.
Lord, it must be as you say!
All praise be given to Him.
It's not impossible, I will obey.

Wonder

Shalyn Miller

As I talk to the master creator
The one who created it all
I sit and I think in wonder

Listening to the call
So much infinite power
The one who created it all

When words so simply showered
Made light and earth and me
So much infinite power

So much I will never see
So much I have yet to learn
About the light and earth and me

I ask myself in turn
Who? Where? When? Why? How?
For so much I have yet to learn

I fall to my knees and bow
As I talk to the master creator
Who? Where? When? Why? How?
I sit and I think in wonder

Pastor

Evoking, Perceptive
Preaching, Teaching, Challenging
Compassion, Knowledge, Eagerness, Attentiveness
Changing, Thinking, Listening
Silent, Reflective
Congregation

Weathered Porch

An old weathered porch
Ancient withered potted plants—
Cold metal lawn chair

Noisy Cricket

Noisily chirping,
Searching, finding, squishing you:
Silent, dead, cricket

Friendship?

Shalyn Miller

Our friendship was like spring time,
Fresh and new like a warm spring breeze.
Like a water fountain bursting and flowing
With energy contained but never ending.
Like an incubator warming and detrimental
With the new life it brings forth.

Our friendship is like trying to find your way in
Murky water, confusing, unclear and cheerless.
Like an undercurrent, deceitful and unexpected
You don't realize its effects until it's too late.
Like a million piece jigsaw puzzle, complex with no
Chance of being finished before some of the pieces are lost.

Someday I hope our friendship will be like an heirloom
Quilt full of memories, priceless and comforting.
Something I will always cherish, when wrapped
Around me, its warmth is always felt.

Butterfly

Shalyn Miller

You're like a beautiful butterfly,
Floating around not sure which direction
You're headed. You go from person
To person, sucking nectar from one
Person at a time, then you move on
Without looking back, not even a glance.

Why do you not look back or glance?
You're in such a tizzy, like a butterfly
Flitting around aimlessly. What's going on?
Are we no longer going the same direction?
Where are you? I thought you were the one
Who would always be there, the one person

Who saw me for who I was, the person
I am, one you don't notice at first glance.
Was there ever a time, even just once,
When you saw me as I see you, butterfly?
Did you ever look my way for direction?
Or stop and wonder what's going on?

I watch you while you move on.
Who is your flower of the month, the person
Whom your obsession will rest on? Which direction
Did you go this time? Backwards I glance
Over my shoulder to see you, beautiful butterfly,
You who caught my eye, the one

Who stole my thoughts for but one
Moment. I too will move on,
But I will never tire of watching you, butterfly.
After all, of what worth is a person
If no one stops to glance
Back at them and see what direction

They came from, and what direction
They are headed? Were you the one?
Or was I wrong from first glance?
Maybe I should move on
Because you're a completely different person,
A completely different butterfly.

Which direction will I choose? Will we be on
The same path once again? Will I be the same person
Then? I take one last glance, and see only a butterfly.

Jingle hell

James Kaczmarck

I hear the jingles; Gypsy tambourines,
Across the road there, as if were a dream.
Was concentration camp: Janowska Street.
Was World War Two. The Nazis. Dancing feet.
Lived inside fence, in segregated cage,
but kept own clothes. Together. Could not gauge.
Were "happy" that way, for some little while.
Were not bad off as Jews. Would sometimes smile.
Till dark one night, were loaded into trucks.
Entire Gypsy band ran out of luck!
Were silent: fiddles! Silent: tambourines!

Pine Ghost

James Kaczmarck

Interspersed amongst the pine trees
Silver maples her dad planted.
Sure, agree the things are pretty,
But they also spread like quack grass,

Yet they aren't as bad as lilacs,
Which I planted marking lot lines.
Since I do not cut the grass,
The lilacs sprout just everywhere.

Some are runners from the old stock.
Others must be spread by birds.
Really can't do much about them,
Only let them take their course.

Pines I planted dozens years ago,
Too have seeded our three acre lot.
Won't be long the pine woods will be king.
Lilacs, maples will be crowded-out.

What was grass, reforested white pine.
Her dad wouldn't recognize the place;
Him now gone for twenty years, and more;
Yet, sometimes, I sense him, through the pines.

Cold Man's Dog

James Kaczmarck

A somber sun valiantly attempts
to break through a gritty gray
overcast; a mere ocher disk, so
dim that on can stare at it, without
a blink, without a blink; and me,
damp to core, out walking the dog
I have no longer have; out of habit,
simple habit.

*C'mon, Spot! Don't dawdle!
Do you have to mark every
damned vertically? Spot,
C'mon now!*

I give a sharp tug on an imaginary
leash; hear an imaginary yelp, kinda
give a laugh to myself, mutter half-aloud,

*Damn Spot! Ain't you outta piss
pretty soon?*

(Passers-by stare obliquely at me)

But shouldn't yell at Spot that-a-way.
He's sure a comfort to this old guy.
Oh! I know he's gone. Maybe even
to hell, for all I know, him always
pissing on everything, and all, but
old men need a companion. So I
take him for his morning rounds,
whether he's still here, or not.

*C'mon Spot! Damned dog.
I'm getting cold. I'm getting
cold, Spot. Damned cold!
C'mon! Cold. Cold. Old.*

Luna

Cecilia Rodriguez

Inside the window, I quietly
look for her in the sky
wanting to feel her dancing, flirting,
fragrance,
the girl moon of my past.

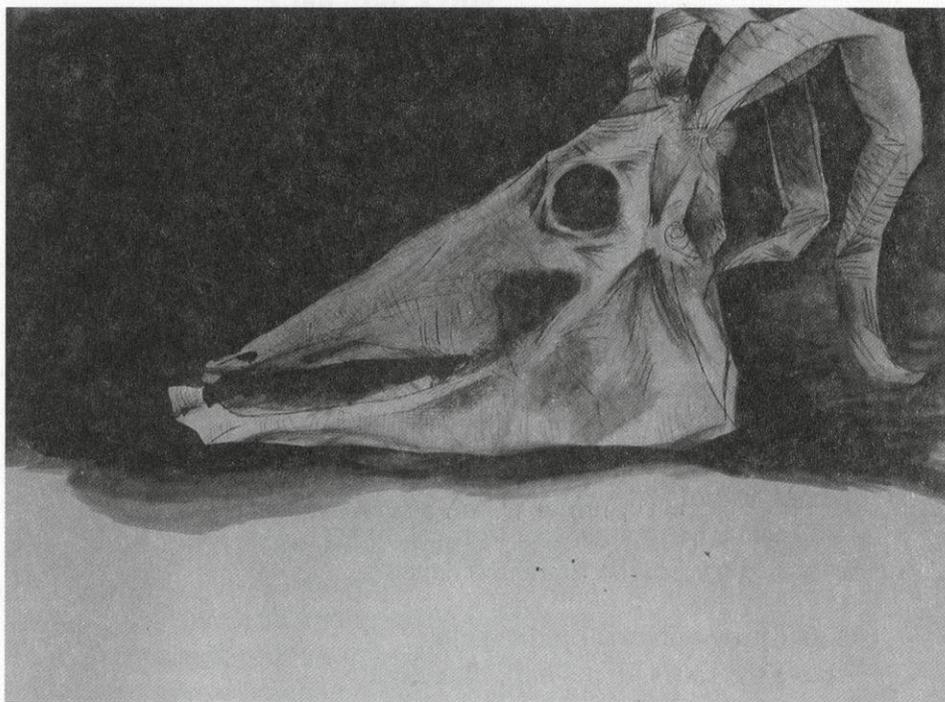
The moon of my youth,
a warm, gentle, feminine figure.
A gypsy lover slowly follows her.
She veils her face anticipating
a serenade beyond the clouds.
Where is she?
Did I leave her behind in a tropical night,
or in a sultry Seville flamenco dance?

Outside my window I look again.
Above the roofs, in the dark blue night,
I see the clouds flying, the stars staring at me.
The moon is out but I don't see my friend.
Where is the gypsy girl moon
with dark, amorous eyes and black hair
covered with lace?

I cannot find her!

A sleepy old man comes out of the moon and looks at me, puzzled.
"What girl moon are you talking about?"
"This is America.
There is no girl in the moon.
I am the one who lives here."

Inside the window, quietly,
enfolded by orange blossoms scent,
I find, in a shadow cast by the moonlight,
my old girlfriend, the gypsy moon.
I slide down the wall and
I sit next to her.
We whisper, laugh and remember.



The House of Slamming Doors

in the house of anger
the house of slamming doors

i stood in the bedroom and listened to the bed whine about how lonely it was to sleep alone. it woke me up with its sobbing.

i left and the door slammed 'deal with it!' and the echo returned 'get bent!'

in the house of anger
the house of slamming doors

i stood in the living room and listened to the couch and the armchair bickering over who was right and who was wrong. they never listen to each other.

i left and the door slammed 'shut up!' and the echo returned 'bite me!'

in the house of anger
the house of slamming doors

i stood in the dining room and listened to the table chairs denigrating the dishes; the dishes thought they were so much better when obviously they were not. the table and chairs were the only ones who actually were.

i left and the door slammed 'grow up!' and the echo returned 'fuck off!'

in the house of anger
the house of slamming doors

i stood in the kitchen and listened to the cupboards complain the nothing was ever put away right and their way was the best way, the only way. anyone who did it differently was stupid and wrong

i left and the door slammed 'fine! do it your way!' and the echo returned 'up yours!'

i went to the basement who moaned 'how unfair! at least the attic has windows'

i went to the attic who cried 'how unjust! at least the basement gets visitors'

i went up and down and in and out and the closets and floorboards and furniture all had something to say and nowhere

nowhere was there a door that didn't slam 'fine!' and 'get bent!' and 'fuck you!' and nowhere

nowhere
nowhere
was there a door
out

Woman

you have never treated me like a
woman

never looked at me as you have looked at other women with that thing in
your eyes (desire? attraction? lust?)

that thing that acknowledges me: a
woman

me: a member of the opposite sex; someone to try to impress and
win over.

never allowed me to have feelings as a
woman

never a chance to be what i am: a
woman

and now,

now that these feelings come up, now that i act like the
woman

i am; the

woman

who loves you and hates seeing you with another, you say you don't
understand. you see me as a friend, your best friend and so i am but i'm
also a

woman

see me as a

woman

frame it in that context

me:

woman

you:

man

and perhaps you'll begin to understand: your friend is happy that you've
found someone but the

woman

is not. the

woman

suffers for never being acknowledged; the

woman

struggles behind the guise of a friend and cries out "why not me? am i not
a woman?"

Smoke

lost in the woods and far from home
trying to beat a track out of the trackless
forest
i pause for a cigarette
and as the smoke veils my eyes
i think how
it's a little like death
to outgrow the only friend you have
it's a little like death
and a lot like life
when did i become the strong one, the sane one, the responsible one?
how did he who was so much more mature, more worldly, more urbane,
more everything, fall behind?
and when? why didn't i notice?
i always scurried along behind; wanting to be his equal; hoping like mad
to catch up in wisdom and grace and wit,
always a little too slow; too unwieldy
i thought i would be left behind. i would have
been crushed but i would not have been surprised.
and suddenly, while watching my feet to make sure i kept them to his
path,
i overshot him
i never expected this: to be the one that outpaces him
how do i work this? i was unprepared.
how do i grasp this? it dissolves like smoke
and i think how it's
a lot like death
and a little like life
and everything in between
to out-super your hero
forward then;
and let my footsteps blaze *his* trail
(pray for me that i don't stumble. he has always been my guidepost and
without him ahead of me, i'm traveling blind)
'til we can move together into everything in between
love loss and the great unknown
life death and everything in between
traveling the path together
ahead, behind, or side by side
catch up when you can

Untitled

harvest home and marriage bed
you come to see
(for you and for the other
but really only for you)
the little pink rose
open and close open and close
and i prayed for
the sleepy banked furnace glow of you
harvest home and marriage bed
pressed along length to length
and hoped for the long hard line
drive that allows him
to slide into home
harvest home and marriage bed
locked and docked and breathing the
same breath watching the little pink
rose
open and close open and close

Want

and it's hot and steamy
and i'm so very tired
and the wind smells of rain
and i need a cigarette
and the pavement burns my feet
and it's been dark for hours
and the lightning glimmers
and the thunder mumbles
and the rain plashes down
and everything i want tonight is in your arms
and i don't really love you
and i don't really love anyone
and i want you

and i want you

and i want you

Light

these cruciform figures
marching up the hill to
meet the satin sky
hold a ball of light in
each hand
they fling their rays at the
cosmos
as if to say to the sparkling
stars
“we don’t need you. we’ll make our
own constellations, thank you very much”

Man Tree

i would like to get a man
and paint him as a tree
that fabled tree with the serpent
that one that God forbade
his head green and lush
his arms gnarled and strong
his legs and feet the trunk and roots
his balls red
his cock the snake that tempts
woman into the knowledge of herself
i want this
painted man tree
to climb into his branches and
tempt the snake right back

River Stones

i bought a package of river stones
“hand picked in China”
and i wondered
just how many rivers are there in
China
and how long can you go on
pulling stones from these rivers
and what happens to the people
making subsistence wages
when the rivers
run out of stones?
think:
each stone represents thousands
of years of patient river
smoothing
then man comes along
and plucks the stone from its
centuried home
to use for decorating
and how long will it be
until the rivers are full of rounded
patient stones again?

Free Gift

Kristy Pallagi

Everything is finally right.
The pieces all fall into place.
God shines through and I can see the light.

To the heavens I lift my face.
Tears roll down; Tears of joy.
The pieces of my life fall into place.

God gives us life to enjoy.
He gave us His son to give us life.
Tears roll down; Tears of joy.

And if everything else was sorrow and grief,
He would be more than enough to sustain.
His son died to give me life.

Amazing how I was able to obtain
this gift, given to me without a price.
He is more than enough to sustain.

Living for him will suffice.
Everything is finally right.
This gift, given to me without a price.
is Christ. He shines. He is the light.

Flippin' Burgers

Justin Ganser

I was young and wrote a poem
Its rhythm and rhyme smooth-tongued
About flippin' burgers, was the theme;
A satirical little poem

Laughingly, I wrote this one line:
"What goes up must come down,
Mr. Burger, flippin' clown"
Or something similarly fine

How I admired my wit and humor
Turned against those with little skill
After all, I would never sink so low as them—
If only I knew what was in store

What I mean is clearly seen
When I answer a much asked query
"So, where do you work?" is all it takes
To taste fresh humiliation purely

Yes, burger flippin' is my trade
When it comes to men, I'm self-made
The vain glory I savored is long gone
Times have toughened, that's what's gone wrong

Can I now recoup that stupid poem?--
The one that drives the truth right home
"From their seats, the proud, cast down"
It's true; I now work for Ronald the clown.

All this I do write, sitting for lunch
After a morning of much needed school
How I desire to free this wry fool
Eating a burger, while I write too much

Golden Fields (One Lone Tree)

Justin D. Ganser

Spinning rubber whines as a truck courses its road
In through back country seldom seen through city eyes
Some lone man steers his hard-earned possession
In silence considering the day gone by.

The season surrounding, most beauty of all
Hills rolling with colors mingled in chill breeze
Field browning alive, with the last of its pests,
Sighs from the heat and exhaustion of summer

Of all, though, hypnotizing wide eyes of wonder
Explodes a vast sea of sultry warm comfort
A blanket of gold shelter, before winter's fall
Soul shrouded with peace at the sight of it all

In the midst of the sea stands high, one lone tree
Some great oak, twisted branches, peerless browning leaves
A vision deigned to draw deepest longing within
Pure and undefiled, free from all stain of sin

So comes to mind what heart bursts through flesh
A certain longing men know through the passing of age
Pulling their substance to settle down somewhere,
After piercing the world to find there is someone...

To bring light life, above voids still, pitch dark
Tangible sigh, now surrounding, the essence of this
Life and light, gift of all good, which finds favor
In virile hearts, created hidden, known only by Him.

Tends to Disorder

Justin D. Ganser

Sitting down for a bottle of beer
Or two, maybe three, ect.
Thoughts and feelings desire release...
From work I cease, in coming here.

Everything tends to disorder today
And every day since the beginning
So I expose the faceted ways
Of this truth oft ignored, if I but may.

'Cause life transcends the lifeless void threshold
And the light still shines from the sun,
Belief is common, evolution brings advance
But everything tends to disorder e

Hoping in what tarries on round about
A wise man's standing becomes the fool's
In all learning and knowledge they pool e
Yet, everything tends to disorder e

Entropy, the word for this chaos
Of all we see, or touch, or taste,
Hear or smell, O do tell e e i
Evrythng tnds to disorder e

Look at the stars, pinholes of light
The galaxies shimmering as pure gold
A single cell, smallest unit of life
To the behemoth or leviathan of old

Flying creatures, land loving beasts and critters
Those bathing or swimming through the waters
Multitude of creepy-crawly insects and spiders
Plethora of plants, so many, it's a blur

The dove, the eagles; buffalo, bears, beagles
Sponges, starfish, squid; sharks, porpoises, fish
Grasshoppers, fleas, butterflies, bees; black widow
Grass, tall trees, scent of flowers in the breeze...

"Stop please!" O.k., I see; forever it would take,
To say in detail all that fades, forever is at stake
Or so to speak, before forever all will break-
Truth is that vrythn td s t o ds ord r. i
e g e i
e e

Artist (unknown)

Justin D. Ganser

Mauve, light violet, smooth flowing currents
Mingled ruby, to red, bright orange, some yellow
Blazed thin jots of cloud set to slow motion
Light, garment of loveliness, by them is rent

Just but a scene of an ordinary day
Augustly above mortal art's displays
When birds start their singing, working and play
Dawn greets the darkness, coming to bay

Clamor and restlessness cease but a while
Work-a-day world sipped in a file
Day of the sun expels all in that's vile
When moonless night wrought wicked smiles

Who's this who sets the sky all ablaze,
Show's subtle power in all we have gazed?
From smallest to greatest; what's that you say?
Yes, although unseen, let's seek if we may

For when beholding an artist's great work
Within we find solace from plight
We naturally ask whose vision and hands
Could show such beauty of sigh

Then why not this One, seeing so much splendor
Surely, They must have a name
If we fail to find and give honor to Them
Conscience shan't free us from blame

So, who are You then, Who's fashioned all,
Where are You, I you can be found?
We've seen your glory in what You have made
Sublimity around doth abound!

Mad Poets Society

Justin Ganser

No, my friends, I do not belong
They are in a class all their own
To be part of their madness is not for me;
Thus I part, and wander on alone.

So maybe they write with “special” ability
Basic words, puffed-up, fat and gross—what a
sight!

They stay from truth chasing passions crude;
Naked asses all aglow under covers of night

What churns inside their gut is like the smell of
their theme
As hard-boiled eggs stink, after peeling their
shells
Their ability is real, but their message, obscene;
Talent consumed in the flames of a self-centered
hell.

(Oops! Let me start over.)

There’s something about mad poets, don’t you
know it?

With little or nothing to say, so eager to show it
Smooth tongues, pouring out despair’s curse
Thus paling poetry’s face with malicious verse

From few ancient Greeks, to modern day freaks
It disturbs me to confess what I see
Men without substance, their destinies bleak
Those whose god isn’t far from their bellies

Am I alone, really, in this assault on profanity?
Life is better that they tell, look around
Sweet nature gently mocks their profundity
In its verse by the wayside, life resounds!

Trapped

Nichole M. Merckes

I am in the dark
I feel as if I am inferior
to the human race
why is it that I am to
be treated this way
I don't understand
why I am
invisible to the lurking
eyes of the human flesh
no one will recognize
or comprehend this stage
that I live in
like a maze
I am trapped
no real place to go
what am I to do
sit and wait
until someone understands
that I am not inferior
then the true me
will shine like a star

Him

Katie L. Ahles

Here I am
all alone
out in the cold
smoking a cigarette
thinking of you
All the things I wish
I could say
but know I never will.
About how much I care for you
And how I long to be close to you.
You have become my best friend,
but what I really want
is something more.
When I'm with you,
you make me feel like
no one else exists.
And all I want
Is to wrap my arms around you
and feel your body against mine.
Lay my head
against your chest,
hear your heart beat,
Breathe in your scent,
melt into you.
But for now
all I can do is dream
because no matter how much I feel for you
you don't feel a thing for me.
Or maybe you do,
and you can't say either.
So for now
all we can do is stay here
in this place,
this hell,
friendship.

A Visit from a Friend

Katie L. Ahles

My friend came to me in a dream last night.
That's how I knew it was a dream.
He was off in the distance,
tossing a fallen branch for his loyal companion.
I started to walk towards him,
he turned to me and smiled his mesmerizing smile,
then kneeled down to scratch his companion's head.
I hear a voice calling me from behind.
I glance over my shoulder, just the wind.
When I turn back,
my friend has vanished.
His companion remains
as confused as I.
I call for her,
but she runs,
as fast as her four legs can carry her.
I fall to the ground,
sitting, taken back,
staring.
Forever waiting for the day
when I can be with my friend again.

Morning

Katie L. Ahles

As dawn arrives
The dark sky fills with colors of red and yellow.
Like a fire burning the morning sky.
The sun rises just as it has the day before.
The birds are chirping,
And the sweet smell of morning dew is still in the air.
As I awake from my dreamland,
Morning greets me.
As my mind awakens,
I realize that you are still gone,
And I am still alone in the bed we once shared.
Mourning consumes me.

Flowing

Katie L. Ahles

Sitting in this moment
I don't want to leave.
Emotions and feelings
are flowing through me,
or am I flowing through them?
I feel as though I'm being swept away.
A leaf from a tree
falling from security
into a river-
flowing with the current-
being tossed and turned
under the water-
gliding across the surface-
smashing into a rock-
breaking free-
finally stopping peacefully in the lake.
As the feelings stop
my thoughts take over,
I sink to the bottom,
Into darkness,
Into unknowing

Absence

Katie L. Ahles

In his absence,
I long for his presence.
In his presence,
I long for his touch.
With his touch,
I grieve, for in time it will cease.
And when it does,
I'm left longing again,
Longing in his absence.

Root Beer

Ann Pilot

Good old root beer
If you want something to drink—
you can grasp for brown sea bottled for all's enjoyment
When life is pounding into you with its unrelenting force
Just shake it off like salt bursting from the shaker—
When that soothing liquid flows down the tunnel to your stomach—
That gurgles as a newborn babe from the womb

What could be better?
Questioning is as futile as a Borg Cube in your ice cream
Mmm—ice cream makes a float—
A decorated place as though you have mother's make-up on—
A new sensation takes place as if watching Star Trek with dad just started today
Sitting in his chair, with his own special "root" beer
Telling me not to spill as if my little hands were unsteady
You turn to me with your wavering hands with panic in your eyes
I'm here to save you as I always do

Today I drink my root beer thinking of the Borg
All of those empty heads filled with so many voices
I sit back, and take a dive into a sea of brown

The Feel of the Night

Ann Pilot

Today begins like any other
The sun is snuffed out and twilight prevails
Reminding the world can survive without color
The smell is musty—damp, it never fails
The depth of the dark is overwhelming—
Eyes take time to focus—we dance with one another
A coppery taste plays on the tongue
The night is alive—silence is deafening
The feel of the night is all I know—lost, intense
Muscles flex, poised to move into a hug
The meal begins—the tables turn, hello chef
To tease puts him at ease, he begs please—please
No more up his sleeve—no more please
The connection with the night is complete
Life is distant, it matters little what is real
Tingling with satisfaction—beat
You will have to look for another meal
Tomorrow's night falls like any other

Sestina For Tina

Ann Pilot

When still alive you told a story about your young body
You carefully laid out what happened when his lips
met yours. With tears drooping down you touch
my shoulder, and I melt along with my mother
Your story is one of horror—you go into excruciating detail.
Hugging you I block the outside world—is that what you imagined?

From what I recall that is not how I imagine
it. You never sat down and told me... you happily hugged your body
next to mine. Smiling and laughing about details
of what your weekend was filled with. Decorating your lips
with a color that looked like it belonged to your mother.
I didn't find out until later—as I cringed from his touch.

Thinking of all the times he hugged me. Now viewing his touch
as a lethal injection. Closing my eyes I cry for you... imagining
how hard it must have been for your mother
and father. Your mother's brother-in-law against your body
I sob myself to sleep. Your story changed my life. My lips
move in prayer to keep you safe from further details

that you seemingly kept hidden. As time goes on details
become sketchy. The six of you up there together, touching
on topics such as friends and the future. Your fifteen year-old lips
were much too young to be pressed upon someone that I imagine
was to you an "old codger." He is our Uncle. His body
belongs to sweet Sandra D.; the boy's mother.

Why would he waste it on you? Your story seemed unbelievable as your mother
rambled on. Things didn't add up—strange details
about how he forced wine down your throat, while straddling your body
became sadly laughable. How could he climb over his children to touch
you? How could not one have heard? Who imagined
that all it would take would be a young quivering lip

on the stand wrongly condemn a man? Your hardened lips
lied to God that day. Your practiced speech earned your mother
a victory. Did you celebrate after? I can only imagine.
That night lives where shattered. Shaking with the untrue details
you so carefully concocted I want nothing more than to touch
your conscience. He walked into his five year lock-up with pride. My body

twitches as I remember that day. He is back with us now—details
seem unimportant. He survived, God made sure that with a touch
you and your mother are put to sleep, He reached out to collect your tired bodies.

Suffocation

Ann Pilot

Sitting in the chair—clicking with anticipation. Feet adhered to the floor with invisible glue. Eyes drooping... pulled by a secret force much worse than gravity. I sigh, sometimes I hate today. It is more difficult to hold up this fake world... to paint on my face day after day... to be the person that everyone wants me to be. Sitting here allowing the air to become thin I know how easy it would be. Just slouch in my chair... let my eyes sink into my busy head (I think that would keep it quiet). All the things that make up today... I would that I could smother them—keep down the din. Today I want to dissolve into a wall. To make a new life there, a secret place. A sweet fantasy where the air I take in is full of color. Where lies have no meaning—all that will matter is I will no longer dream of suffocation.

You

Ann Pilot

Please tell me why you pierce me with your eyes
Lips moving, you hope to woo me, is that right?
Why do those hands of yours rest on mine?
You choose to tickle me and fill me up with lies.

I've heard all about you—and I'm not like them—I'll fight
smiling with that sweet face you show all the girls. You think
you're so fine
with them fawning all over, tripping on themselves. I tie
my shoe. Perhaps you are catching on, I bite

my tongue. Tough I must admit you have a face that's kind.
your eyes crinkle when we speak. Your supportive words fly
around me as if I am free falling into you. You assist me on this
flight.

Holding hands, we laugh. Your lips seem so soft... they shine

into the warmth of my dream. So what are you doing? Why
me? Do you want me to leech out some intelligence and sight
a ridiculous thing you said? I'm not like them. I don't feed lines
to egos. That's not me—you seem to know—causally I wave
good-bye.

Rainbows for Jacquie

Ann Pilot

Small fingers dance cheerfully—

Twirling through young hair
Enjoying a sickening sweet chocolate
Licking off face with a warm tongue
Grabbing pieces of life as they whirl by
Life is a rainbow

Yellow fingers take a drag

Touching recently cut hair
Guilty eyes shift downward
The first one comes along—you say yes
Life is pressing deep as you inhale the smoke
Rainbows quickly fade

Hard fingers become a fist

Life beats into you with word and hand
Hair and cigs forgotten
You temple beaten down—battered
Wishing for a rainbow

Fingers fumble through lipstick and wrinkle remover

You attack the life that put you down
Carefully applying age to your young lips
The prize you searched for is claimed
Attaching fallen pieces to your heart
Your fingers stick in the rainbow

Experienced fingers set down the brimming plate

I watch your callused fingers
As you push back your grown out hair
You offer me a shake of the past
We smile and hug

I reach in my purse and pull out a rainbow

Road Trip

Lisa Malczewski

I give away pieces of my heart,
Wrap them in shiny red ribbons
And ship them across the country.

My heart holds home
On the east coast, west coast,
And almost always far north.

Sometime my heart can be found
On the sunny beaches
Of Ocean City, New Jersey,
Catching a tan in the afternoon sun,

Or strolling the walk of fame,
Arm in arm with Edward Norton
Or the beautiful Selma Hayek
High on cocaine

I give away pieces of my heart,
Wrap them in inky newspapers
And ship them across the country.

My heart was once spotted running
In the rain of Seattle's sunny days,
Sipping wine in an art gallery.

Or found walking
Down the streets of Boston.
Shifty-eyed, coyly smoking a cigarette.

I give away pieces of my heart,
Wrap them in brown paper bags
And ship them across the country.

My heart goes everywhere.
Picks up girls in Fort Meyers, Florida
Eats cheese steaks in Philly, and
Is often bored in Valparaiso, Indiana.

Once last week, I caught my heart
Taking a nap on the living room sofa.
I tried just once to take my heart back. It no
Longer fit in my palms
Or rested easily on my sleeve.
So I decided to let my heart leave.

