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The Windy Hill Review



ANDREW BURTON



The Windy Hill Review

23rd Edition

2001

University of Wisconsin Waukesha
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23rd Edition
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Confessions of a Young Writer

Carolyn M. Gaar

I'm afraid to disappoint those who believe in me.
I'm afraid they will realize I am an impostor.
I'm afraid I can't meet their expectations.
I'm afraid that I won't live up to my own.
I'm afraid to believe that I can.

I'm afraid they lie when they tell me I'm good.
I'm afraid to believe in my own ability, my own worth.
I'm afraid to start writing, for fear I'll offend.
I'm afraid it will be wrong or stale.
I'm afraid to stop because a part of me will die.
I'm afraid of never knowing when it's finished.
I'm afraid my indecisiveness will stall me forever.

I'm afraid no one wants to hear my voice.
I'm afraid I'm too young, too Midwestern.
I'm afraid to believe that what I write could matter.
I'm afraid to be told my life is too unremarkable to be notable.
I'm afraid I'm too sheltered to be daring, to chance rejection.

I'm afraid to expose my own worm-eaten soul to society.
I'm afraid that I hide behind my words.
I'm afraid to share them, because I am afraid I will lose them.
I'm afraid to be heard too clearly and give up too much of myself.
I'm afraid of my feelings, so I write flaccid prose.
I'm afraid to be shocking.
I'm afraid my family will look at me differently.

I'm afraid to lose each moment, each person, so I write them all down.
I'm afraid a few have slipped away.
I'm afraid, so I skirt the borders of society, watching with a writer's eye.
I'm afraid to be alone and detached.
I'm afraid I'm in exile.

I'm afraid I will fail.
I'm afraid to choose this life.
I'm afraid it was never a decision.

Sing With Me

Kris Tetzlaff

sing with me, baby,
we'll smoke cigarettes like hard candy
and drink dry wine
slow
'til day turns red again
hold me softly
and let the desert wind messy your hair
your fingers mine
we'll dance drunk beneath the darkness
Love's desire
and smash our empty glasses down
as the moon breathes her last

and sing with me, baby
if cigarettes and dry wine
won't keep you
sing divine 'fore dawn spills her golden stain
naked upon a hundred restless nights
I have yet to see

sing quick, baby,
the sheets are wearing thin
the flame growing dim
blending swift
lost like a grey tongue
whose words
paint ill circles
like savage birds
in the red Sahara sky

and sing quick, baby,
'cause happy pins and knives
have lost their starry shine
sing quick, those
bony thoughts of pity and acclaim
whose nimble steps laugh
at the quake of time

sing quick, baby
and make our death even
higher than the last.

Aftermath
Kelly Becker

Two trees, toppled and topless
Pine trees, lay flat in the yard.

Where boughs once stood tall, vaulted, jade
Green against a sky of azure

Now on the ground, tangled, interwoven limbs,
Downed within the valley made by two trunks.

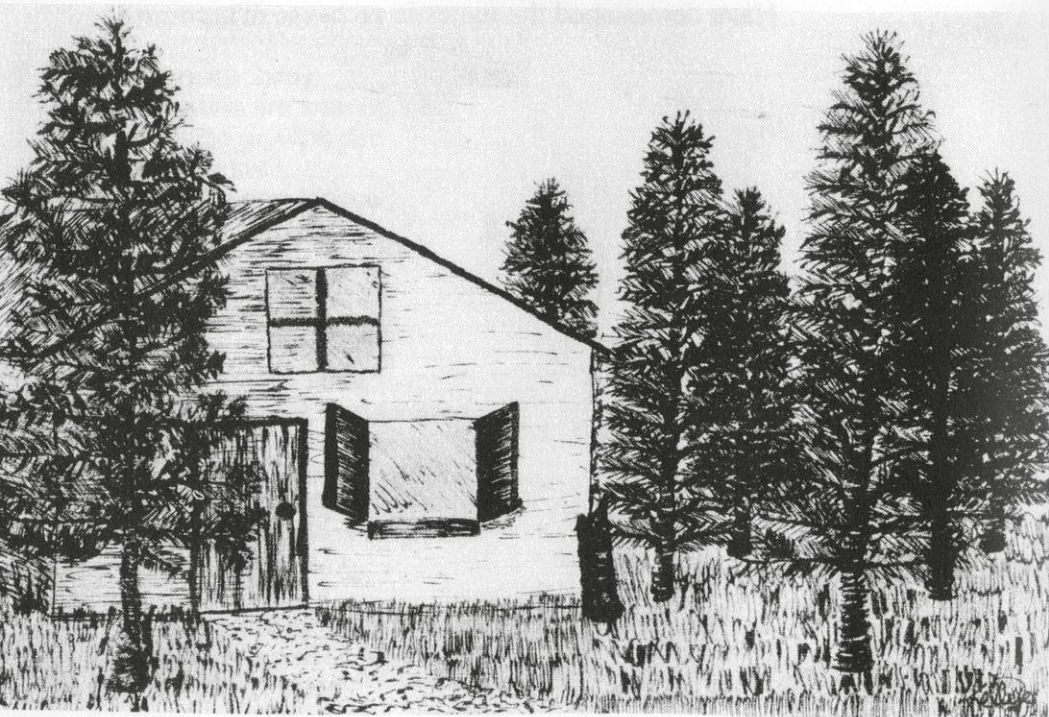
When the sun shines, no more tiger-stripe
Shadows dance on the grass.

Platinum clouds rain down and bolts of titanium
Have demolished the majestic arch.

global distant moon
brilliant alone in the west
mid-november dawn

female cardinal
swooping down, male following
light brown, bright red flash

~Barbara Bache-Wiig



A Night at the Carnival

Therese Heckenkamp

Kaleidoscope colors combine
crazily
with laughing lights,
deriding the night,
flashing silver
at the solemn moon;
shadows leap to life,
frolicking feverishly,
scattering musical notes
across the crowd,
playing games with the mind,
mesmerizing
under a magnetic moon,
weaving hypnotic illusions,
converting reality
into confusion.

The Dream House

Kristin Jenkins

Sounds of the carnival blurred together as the wind flapped through her long straw colored hair. Her small frame became squished between her parents. First on the right, then on the left. The right, the left. Right, left. The sights of the dunking booth, ice cream stand, and carnival games she had seen moments before were a kaleidoscope of colors. Her head spun and stomach turned as the colors blurred even more.

Her surroundings looked now like a movie that was flashing fast-forward on the screen. Or, it could have been in rewind. She couldn't tell. The voices of the carnival were blurred. In her mind, other voices were blurred as well.

She had recognized these muffled tones the night before. She had slipped from beneath her pastel pink comforter to hear. The dancing bears on her nightshirt looked anxious as she tiptoed barefoot to her door. Their voices were clearer there. Clearer still after she stepped out beyond her bedroom door.

Their bedroom door was closed and only a small sliver of light escaped and ran into the shadows of the long dark hallway. Over the last year, their angry tones had grown more distinct behind this door. She didn't understand the words of the muffled voices of her parents. She only understood the anger. They always carried this tone into the next morning. They yelled at her with the same angry tone they used towards each other.

Cassie, pick up these toys before I trip over them again.

John, don't yell at Cassie like that, she's only seven.

Well Catherine, it is time for her to learn that she can't leave everything of hers lying around. I should throw it away before somebody breaks their neck.

She would stop their angry tones tonight. She scampered lightly back into her room and glanced around. A colorful clown night-light glared down at all the toys scattered on her

bedroom floor. Before the angry voices faded, her teddy bears and dolls were neatly lined on the shelf above her Barbie Dream House. Her dolls wore plastic smiles as she safely tucked Barbie next to the Ken in the bed of the second story room in her Dream House. Cassie looked around her room. Her parents could not yell tomorrow. Her room was clean.

She looked towards her door, which was still open to the hallway. Someone was crying. Someone was yelling. She didn't understand. Their door flew open and light scampered across the gray carpet and past her door. She peeked around the door-frame and hoped they wouldn't see her. They didn't. Her mom's eyes looked like moist pools and she leaned on the wall just inside their room as if it were the only thing holding her up. Cassie ducked quickly into a shadow as her dad filed past her doorway with a blanket and pillow.

Morning came. The sun peaked through the marshmallow clouds on the day her parents had promised to take her to the carnival near their house. Cassie threw back her comforter and smiled at the room around her. Her room seemed even cleaner in the morning light which seeped through her blinds as she changed from her pajamas. The night before seemed like a dream as she bounded down the stairs in her favorite yellow

jumper.

At the breakfast table her parents wore plastic smiles. Her mom drank orange juice and her dad drank milk as they ate their dry toast and eggs. She had Frosted Flakes. *No*, she thought to herself between spoonfuls. *There would be no yelling today.*

Cassie walked between her parents on the way to the carnival. She talked about her puppy, dolls, her favorite cartoon, and an ad she had seen on TV for a new kind of cereal. She glanced up at her parents' faces between each story. They smiled down at her with tired and distant eyes. They reached the carnival gate and asked her what she wanted to do.

First, they took a trip to the ice cream stand. *We need to talk to you, Cassie.* Second, they played a round at the ball toss. *Your dad and I just don't get along anymore.* Third, they took her picture on a pony as an attendant held the reins. *Some things just don't work out.* Fourth, they stood in line for the "Scrambler." *Honey, we're getting a divorce.*

Now she was seated between her parents on the ride. The bench beneath them began to slow its speed as it whirled around the stable base. The movie playing in her mind stopped its jumbled scenes and once again became the sights of the carnival. The ride spun twice more as it slowed to a halt. Ice cream, toss, pony, line. The ice cream stand, the ring toss, the pony rides, and the line for the "Scrambler."

She felt sick as her parents each took a hand to help her off of the ride. Her face had become tinted with a shade of green and her insides churned as she felt her stomach rising to her throat. They had just exited the ride when she got sick.

John, I told you we shouldn't have taken her on the ride.

Catherine, you were the one that bought her all that crap to eat. She shouldn't have all that ice cream and cotton candy.

Well, you know she's only seven, she isn't big enough for that ride anyway....

Tears collected in Cassie's eyes as she became sick again. She heard her parents' voices rise. They were not muffled this time. Her mom laid one hand on Cassie's shoulder as she dug a Kleenex from her purse to wipe Cassie's mouth.

Don't worry Cassie, this isn't your fault.

It's not?

No! Of course not! People get sick on the "Scrambler" all the time.

American Citizen

Carolyn M. Gaar

Into the great sputtering maw of Society we spring –

Breathing, heart beating, mind open,

Heart ready

To accept, to love, to create, to endure.

Years pass. A crusty shell

Grows over our soft pink hearts,

Blinders form alongside our eyes

To shut out reality.

Hunger, disease, poverty,

Death, atrocity, ethnic cleansing,

Genocide, abandoned babies,

Teenaged mothers, dead-beat dads,

Domestic violence

Figureheads of state and union

Smile falsely from the screen

Spinning tales of how they've made pain,

Made want, disappear.

Blindly stumbling, numb, apathetic,

We nod and agree;

“Yes, this is a proud Nation!”

But it was built on the backs of

Immigrant slaves and perpetuated by

Worker bees, Army ants, Computer mice.

Out of the sputtering maw of

This Great American Nation we crawl,

Defeated, callous, dead.

MODERN HIPPIE

Tammy Brunner

Flourish in a sea of creativity

As your heightened desires are consumed by dimensions of laser light.

Feel the vibe.

Dead limbs liberate to the passionate pulsation of an electric rhythm.

Eyes jump to a melodic beat.

Heavenly deity-- Can you spin me a musical masterpiece of spiritual
sanity?

Youthful kingdom united against the conformity of a dignified dream

Their pain remedied among kung-fu gripped staffs of nuclear light.

What is the answer to your ultimate question?

The answer lies within the illuminated depths of this plastic heaven.

Lose the glitter, mock the insanity

SILENCE, CLARITY-- REALITY.

Riot Outside

Alroy

There's a riot going on outside

I look to the east and see a glowing sky
In a few short seconds the fire trucks will streak by
Leaving me a slight smile as I wonder why
There's a riot going on outside

From every direction I hear sirens screech
Cherries and blueberries flash on the street
The concrete dances a melancholy beat
There's a riot going on outside

The roars of rage are shaking my house
Hours ago the cable went out
Electric flares in the sky cause the drop in my mouth
There's a riot going on outside

For a few short seconds there's an eerie calm
The ignorant fools may think it is almost done
But in a few more seconds another mother will lose another son
There's a riot going on outside

I watch the wind vibrate—a horrifying sight
It seems there'll be no end to this night
A streak of blue death destroys all the lights
There's a riot going on outside

My friends all cower in the basement in fear
The stress in the sky is my soul in the mirror
My chaotic emotions keep my feet glued right here
There's a riot going on outside

Mothers and children weep on the floors
Only wasting their time by locking the doors
As it starts to abate I scream out for more
There's a riot going on outside

A downpour of pain makes the streets flow
With a tormented peal heaven strikes another blow
I don't understand but somehow I know
There's a riot going on outside

The ants below won't survive till the dawn
In another few seconds it all will be done
But elsewhere without abandon the riot plays on
There's a riot going on outside

There's a riot going on outside
But now just a dull roar
There's a riot going on outside
On my knees pleading for more
There's a riot going on outside
The beautiful rage of heaven's score
There's a riot going on outside
And softly, with a whimper, no more

Passions Are All We Really Need

Mark Beggan

Someone spoke
But no one listened

Someone screamed
But no one came

Someone cried
But no one heard

I walked over to the garbage
But all I saw was food

I looked on the ground
But all I saw was garbage

I said good morning
But heard nothing back

I went to the library
I opened the paper
The page I wanted was torn away

It's always been my passion
To sing a song without sound

It's always been my passion
To run and not be found

It's always been my passion
To walk beneath the stars

It's always been my passion
To breath the night air in

It's always been my passion
To begin anew again

It's always been my passion
To dream beneath the clouds
It's always been my passion
To whistle a tune for you

Passions are all we really need
The rest of everything
Is nothing more than greed

Pain Killer

Jill Marie

"I broke my arm." He knows. She watches the nurse exit the white room.

"I'm at the hospital, but I'll be home soon." A cast covers her left arm from wrist to elbow. A sling presses upon the back of her neck. The line crackles. She winces.

"Did the kids get to Grandma's?" Yes. They're going to spend the night.

"Did they get some food?" Fast food on the way.

"What about you?" Same. What's taking so long? She holds the cast close to her ribs. The room is cold.

"The doctor is getting a prescription for - for pain." She trembles. Antiseptic permeates the air. Silence persists.

"Here he comes. He's got the prescription." She convinces. "I need to go, but I'll be home soon, O.K. hon?...Goodbye...Love you too." The line clicks. The doctor comes with help. His dark eyes register kindness.

"This is Officer Riley. She is going to take your statement, Mrs. Johnson." He places a gentle hand on her shoulder,

"You're doing the right thing." She talks. At home, he waits. She doesn't come. A few hours later the officers do.

Love Poem

James Kaczmarek

I wonder

Could I write a poem of Love?
perhaps of young Love;
kids together in some blissful Springtime,
or golden Love of aged couple,
perhaps some late anniversary.

Would I write a poem of Love?
If mood were right. If I came
upon some happy pair, somewhere,
and felt need to commemorate their bliss.

Should I write a poem of Love?
Oh, I don't know. Are there not
enough Love poems already?
and to spare, unless, well, unless
you and I became a pair. Then

Good! I'll write a poem of Love.

Grey Dog West

Robert Kokan

Following great rolls
And folds
And golds
Back
To long abandoned
Colorados

Riding Eisenhower's
Concrete dream
On a grey dog's back

And two seats
Up

Salty sailors

Search

For their seas

Unafraid to step off

The raw edges

Of the earth

Tonight

Nobody

Can escape

The darkened

Dreams

Under America's

Creaky old floorboards

Not even the sainted

Snorers

Stuffed up in red brick

Rooming houses

Of 3 a.m.

Grey ghost Kansas city

A town beaten down

Against the shores

Of America's great shoulders

Holding back

Her blustery mountains

And answering

The musty moans

Of the calling earth

Rising

Wandering

In the western dust

Of tiny crossroad

Junctions

That stretch out huge

Like god's great arms hugging his earth

Watching

Tiny stars

Sparkle

Timid in the twilight

As the evening bows

To bless the land

Listening

For the crying

Of the foothills

As the night

Turns

Their grasses purple

And in these first-met

Mountains

The great

Worn face

Of old Kerouac himself

(for whom these roads are ridden)

the stone Zen master

pointing his way

along the highway night

and softly sleeping

in the hobo jungles

near a forlorn fire

of hopes

days

lost to a night's ragged coat

and his voice

a mountain in my brain

saying west

always west



Oberon's Strips of Silver

Kevin Connolly

Long, slender, feminine, sapling arms taper down, then lead abruptly into her busy hands. The arms move, working continuously, mechanically cutting slim strips of silvery fabric for a costume.

Lithe, bony, branchy fingers entwine around the cerulean handle of her sheers, reminding me of a bright summer sky, seeping through the pale arms of a growing birch as they sway back and forth, back and forth in the wind.

Diminutive, careful gestures repeat ceaselessly - slight pistons firing again and again in response to the long, sinewy ligaments almost unnoticeably urged forward by her small, sculpted, gently tensing muscles.

Unnatural, steely, metallic, mesh-like fabric reflects a faint, almost bluish sheen against the shadowed underside of her hand as she cuts, highlighting the rolling peaks of her trenched knuckles with moonlike light.

Warm, glowing amber shines softly down from the stage lights overhead, illuminating, bathing her over occupied hand as it brandishes its double edged blade against the sterling cloth that fearlessly climbs into the shearing mouth, again and again.

Aeneas
Christine Gutwein

I dream;
you come upon me fierce from battle;
rising with Antares, that blazing hour of the night.
your ruby hands seize and splay,
slick with blood, still bearing grass from the field,
coaxing from my pale flesh the riddles
that spiral,
coil unbidden in me,
the secret fire of my splintered existence.

Elysium!
there is no greater crush,
O green, now golden-eyed commander,
as my seraphs' wings snap
and shiver beneath me,
aching to spring wide, to catch my fall.
I struggle and bite
quills between my teeth
but there is you, only you,
blessed goddess-born son
heaving and honeyed on my tongue.
I am broken with dream,
writhing with the force of shadows,
spread and tasted like a sweet;
sweet tongue, you licked my heart,
and left me to burn.

You could never beg me to forget, my prince;
as I turn, hip deep in graying ash, to sweep your imprint in my arms,
to rub my nose in the spice you left.

I will remember, always,
in my ember cage of ceaseless sleep,
as the stars drop away, like bright stones,
into the dawn.

Between the Lines

Steven Van Slett

The sunlight came streaming in through the window, illuminating the floor of the living room. It shone on the brown couch covered with dog hair, on the old easy chair in the corner, on the severed head lying on the floor. It shone on the yellow dog chewing on a toy, the faded rug the dog was lying on, and the bloody metal spike sticking out of the wall. This is what Jeremiah saw as he walked out the door.

Jeremiah was youngish looking, maybe in his early thirties, and tall. He had dark brown, wavy hair, brown eyes, and a scar on his right cheek. He didn't know how he had received the scar. As far as he knew, it had always been there. The Creator must have given it to him. It was just another reason for Jeremiah to hate him.

The air was cold outside, and Jeremiah shivered as he walked down the road. The sky was a beautiful light green. Jeremiah himself did not think it was beautiful. He thought that there could be no uglier color for the sky. But the Creator said it was beautiful, and whatever the Creator said had to be true. Everything in the world was part of the Creator's twisted vision. Along the road were massive, living statues with eyes that followed Jeremiah as he walked by. There were trees that sprouted hair instead of leaves. Giant black birds with six wings circled over head, shrieking the entire time. And there was the cloud of gas that hung several feet above the ground. It was green, like the sky, and smelled like rotting meat. Of course, no one thought any of these things were strange, because they had never known anything else.

Jeremiah saw someone coming down the road. The figure was hard to make out through the fog, but Jeremiah knew who it was. He had done this so many times before.

"Hello, Frederick."

"Hello, Jeremiah."

Jeremiah cursed his name as he walked down the road. He hated the name Jeremiah, but it had been given to him by the Creator, and there was nothing he could do to change it. Today he would go through the same routine as he had done a million times before, but he had no choice. He made minor diversions from the set path before. He had walked on the other side of the road a few times, and he had changed some of the words in the things he said. So far he had avoided disaster. But even a minor change in his routine could change the entire cycle. He didn't dare change the cycle, because the Creator would find out, and that would surely be the end of him. There had been others that had been destroyed at the whim of the Creator. There was the old man at the corner. He wore a top hat, and was always flipping coins. In one cycle he was there, and in the next he was gone. But Jeremiah seemed to

be the only one aware of all of this. No one else had any idea of what was going on. Jeremiah's only hope was to appeal to one of the lesser gods that appeared from time to time. They weren't as powerful as the Creator, but they had some influence in the cycle.

And now, at this moment, he sensed the presence of one of the lesser gods. He screamed out to her, to get her to see his plight, to get her to free him from this awful cycle. But then, he felt her slipping away, and the moment of hope was gone.

"Okay, I'm ready to go," Scott said as he came out of the bathroom.

"All right," said his girlfriend Michelle. "I was just reading your notebook here. That's some really weird stuff you've got in here."

"Yeah, I write in there when I'm bored sometimes. Or sometimes I just want to let loose."

"This Jeremiah, he almost seems like a real person."

"Hmmm, that's interesting. I never really thought about it. Well anyway, I'm ready to go."

"All right, let's go."

After they had gone, the room was empty except for Scott's dog sleeping in the middle of the room. Suddenly, the dog's ears perked up. There was a faint sound coming from Scott's notebook. It was so soft that it probably would have been impossible for and human to hear. It sounded almost like screaming, but it was so faint that it bore a resemblance to the sound of a mosquito humming. It was close enough to hear, but just barely. The dog listened to it for a few moments, and then went back to sleep.

Lizard's Eye

Sara Numan

A bronze lizard skittered across the cracked plateau.
But the lizard was a hand.
His hand.
And the plateau was a bed.
His bed.

His sun-baked hand
 smoothed the warm maroon comforter.
The light reflected
 off a new sliver near his left thumb.

Lightning flashed, no, just a flicker of the lamp.
Rain would cool the desert plateau.
But this is a stiff, bright room.
His room.

I want to go home.
I want to borrow his car.
His prized Chevy.
"Can I borrow your car for awhile?"

The light ricochets off the lizard's eye.
"Damn sliver. This is what I get for working."
My hand is cold.
I reach for his.

The Snake is Out There

Greg Mustapich

The snake is out every day
spewing out its poison on the human race
and slithers along its path of pain.

Evil is hidden behind its smiling face
as its eyes look deep into its victims.
For only the strong will win the race

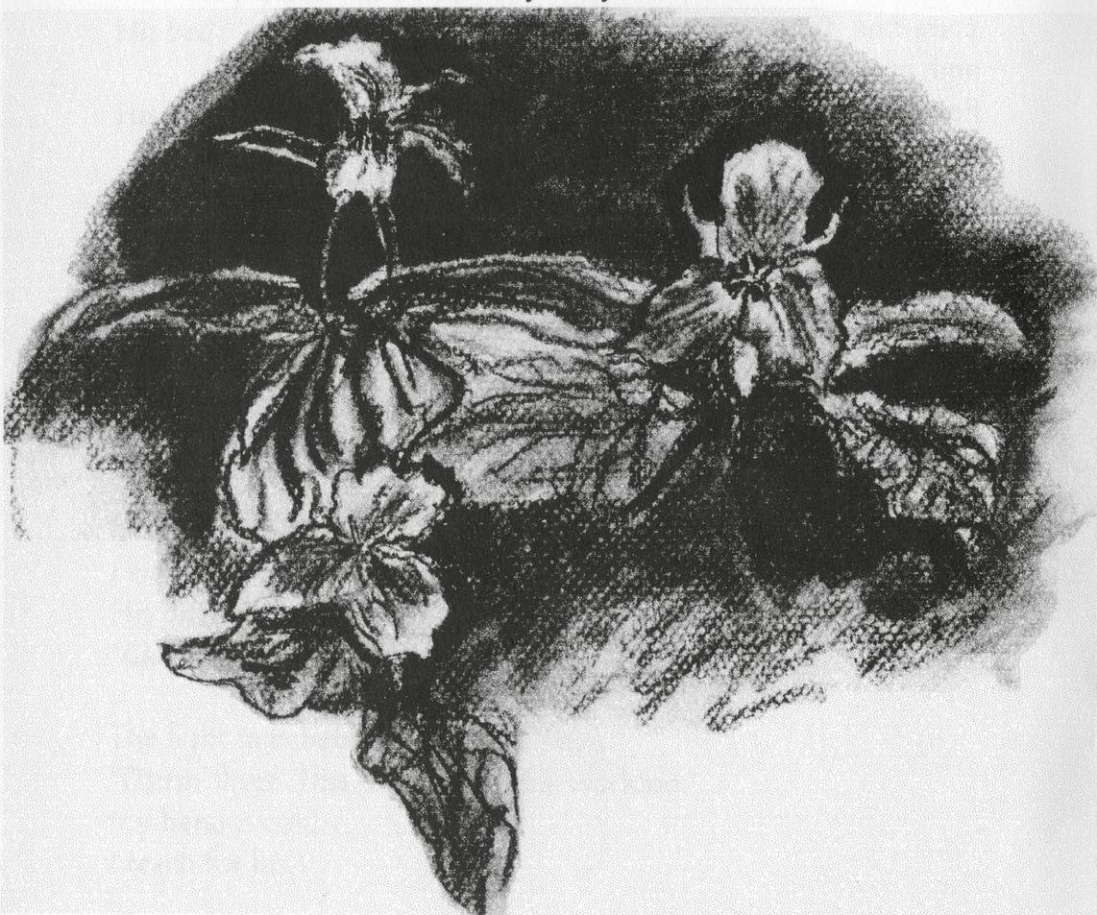
from the fangs that snap at them
and prey at the soul beneath their skin
For the snake knows one who sees them

and loves them, but hatred will stay within
the hearts of those who get wrapped by its tongue
and fall deep into its jungle of sin.

Centerpiece
Therese Heckenkamp

All eyes focus on this flower—
a tropical treasure, touched with flame,
suggesting something forbidden,
exotic and wild.

Knowing it is out of place,
its crimson veins pulse
and its five wings spread wide,
ready to fly.



Ignorance

Bob Pulkowski

A diligent effort, but all for naught
With generations and generations of wrong
Society cannot reach the goal we had sought

The problem is too big, the wound too deep
So please, complete your daily tasks
I pray that you may sleep

Forget not to talk of the problem
Or preach what you would do
Oh remember to stand tall and proud
So we don't point the finger at you

Filter your sewage in streams or lakes
It eventually cleans itself, or so you think
Soon plants and animals fall victim to your innocent crime
Remember though.....we all must drink

And drink we will unknowingly
You'll eventually drink it to
Or eat what life you have destroyed
And then you'll cry "If I only knew"

Oh but your crime is worse
Your ignorance is the plot to blame
The homicide of mother earth
Is but the final victim you shall claim!

The Hay Fever Wars

Carolyn M. Gaar

T'was the night of the pollens and all through the yard
Every plant was astir across the green sward.

My snot-rags were tucked in my pockets this morn
In hopes that my Claritin wouldn't leave me forlorn.
My allergies nagged as I snuffed and sneezed
My eyes were tearing and with each breath I wheezed.
I pulled out my Nasonex, gave each nostril a spray
And hoped that the breeze would blow pollen away.

When out on the lawn, there arose such a gale
I squinted and snorted and started to wail.
I sprang to the windows, I locked all the doors,
It was time to commence the Hay Fever Wars!
The seeds of the cottonwood were thick as a blizzard—
The skin 'neath my nose would look like a lizard's!
When what to my watery eyes should appear,
But an army of ragweed, much worse than last year.

I knew in a moment what I had to do;
I grabbed up the weed killer, and to the hose I flew!
I squirted and sprayed all the weeds I could find,
The neighbors thought I had gone out of my mind.
I sputtered and fumed the whole time I did it,
But after ten years, I had just reached my limit!
Damn ragweed! Damn cat-tails! Damn thistles and grasses!
Damn mildews and molds! I'll kick all their asses!

I surveyed the yard to check out my progress,
But in every direction, I spotted new stress;
The neighbors had let things go right to hell
The sight of their yard was like a death knell!
Dandelions, flowers, grasses all going to seed
I vowed not to quit 'til my sinuses were freed!
I blasted and sprayed and tugged and I pulled—
I just could not stop 'til every weed had been culled.

I broke out in hives, my skin started to itch,
I cried like a baby, and cursed like a witch.

My eyes were all swollen as I stumbled back home,
My nose was all runny and had started to foam.
At last reaching my door, right through it I fell
And realized I was trapped in cat-dander hell!
My eyes were ablaze as I scratched and I cried,
My home was no longer a safe place to hide;
It was infested with molds and pollens and spores,
Dust and cat-dander flew around by the score!

I stripped off my clothes as I ran to the bath,
Perhaps some warm steam could cure this nasal wrath.
I sighed as I slipped into the warm tub
And I grabbed up the soap and I started to scrub.
When, to my surprise, it got even worse!
I was using herb soap! I surely was cursed!
I jumped up and rinsed and then towed dry,
As I put on my clothes, my skin started to fry!

So far as I saw it, I had only one option,
To bar all the doors and proceed with most caution.
I crawled into bed, snot-rag ready at hand,
To dream of the day when I could breathe freely and
So, 'tis no wonder I wait, welcome both winter and fall
For it means the death of my foes, for once and for all.
Well, at least for a season, to build up my strength,
Maybe next summer I'll withstand them the length!

Mississippi Gambler

Andy Nowakowski

The wet warm air sticks to you like a damp T-shirt
Willow trees bounce their branches, suspended above your head
The hoot of a horned owl pierces through the hot mist,
Reminding you that there is still sound
Your feet step softly down the beaten path,
On your way to the river

The night has won; the sun has hidden in shame
Countless stars burn holes in the black blanket of the sky
And the moon looms large, guiding you with cool blue light,
While wispy reeds reach out to touch your shoulders
The river smells of catfish and the crawfish gumbo
Your mom used to make

Your fishing rod bounces its tiny tip with each step
The tackle box seems to hang heavier
You will miss these nights when you are thirty-three,
When you are in an air-conditioned apartment, playing cards
You silently vow you will never become that shade of man,
Your heart aches as you lay down your last pair of jacks

In The Cards

Mark Beggan

It happened on June 16, 1961. Forgive me for my accuracy for it's all been told to me. My sister walked into my room, reached down, and lifted me up. We walked into the kitchen and she placed me in a chair. From what I have been told there were four chairs, I in one of them, my sister Renee to my left, my sister Gayle to my right, and my sister Margo across the table. Gayle had something in her hands. I didn't know exactly what it was, just a small box about four inches wide and six inches long. She opened one end and out came what looked to be small pieces of paper. I asked what they were. She said they were called cards and that we were going to play now. I said that I did not know how and she said that no one does and that I would learn as we go along. Next, she said that she was going to do something called shuffling. As she shuffled, I could hear the crisp edges crackle against one another. She said they were all new, holding them all in her left hand. Slowly reaching over with her right hand, she placed one of the cards on the table before me. Then she gave one to my sister Renee, one to Margo, and one to herself, continuing this process until all the cards were gone. I thought the whole thing was strange. Finally, she was finished. She then said some people pick their cards up all at once or one at a time. My hands were still small, so I thought it best that I pick them up one at a time. The first one I picked up said "alcoholic father". I didn't know what it meant so I looked to see what the card she picked up said. It said "alcoholic father" also. She caught me looking and started to yell. She said that to look at someone else's cards was called cheating and that it was a bad thing to do. What does the card mean I asked? She started yelling again.

She said, "You aren't allowed to say what cards you have. Those are the rules."

I said, "This doesn't seem like it is any fun."

She said, "Sometimes it isn't."

"Why play then?" I asked.

She said, "Everyone has to play."

My sister Renee then complained we were all playing too slow. She yelled at me to quit talking and hurry up and pick up my cards. So, I reached down and picked up another one. It said "male" on it. I didn't know what that meant either. The next one said, "right handed" on it. I said that I was becoming more confused as I played. She said that sometimes that happens and not to worry about it, that I would figure out more as I go along.

She said "Everything will be ok as long as you don't pick up the king of hearts."

"What's the king of hearts?" I asked.

She said, "It's the only card with a knife to his temple. It's called the suicide king."

I hoped that I didn't get it. I didn't know what it was but it sounded bad to me. I hoped my sisters didn't get it either.

Finally, I had all the cards in my hand. Boy, was it tough to try to keep a hold of them. Renee said that it was up to me to play first. I said I didn't know what to play. She responded that no one does and just play. She said I was becoming a pest and asking too many questions, that I was one of the lucky ones. That some people get dealt a card that says "orphan" or "only child" and they don't get to ask questions like I was doing. She said that one of her cards said "the oldest" on it and that she never got to ask questions either. So, I threw the card onto the table that said "male". Then all my sisters threw down the card that said "female". Then my sister said that the highest card wins and I should pick them all up, because I won.

I said, "How do I know my card is higher?"

She said, "That's just the rule right now and over time the rules change but that's the rule now. I thought it was a silly game. After we were done, she picked up all the cards and put them in a pile. She then handed them to me and said it was my turn to deal. I said that my hands are small and that I didn't think that I would be very good at shuffling.

"It's not up to you to decide if you're good at it or not. It's all in the cards," she said.

I pursed my lower lip and started sulking. She asked, "What's the matter? Aren't you having any fun?"

I said, "It's not as fun as I thought it would be."

She said, "Don't worry it will all be over very soon. It is a very short game."

My Kitchen

Sara Numan

Pungent aroma of coffee
tap-dances among the thistle walls.

The iron latch lifts.
Bright violet light penetrates the window.

Lonely spider crawls over the plateau
gently chewing the remains of morning.

Rusty tin cloud rains
cinnamon on my bread.

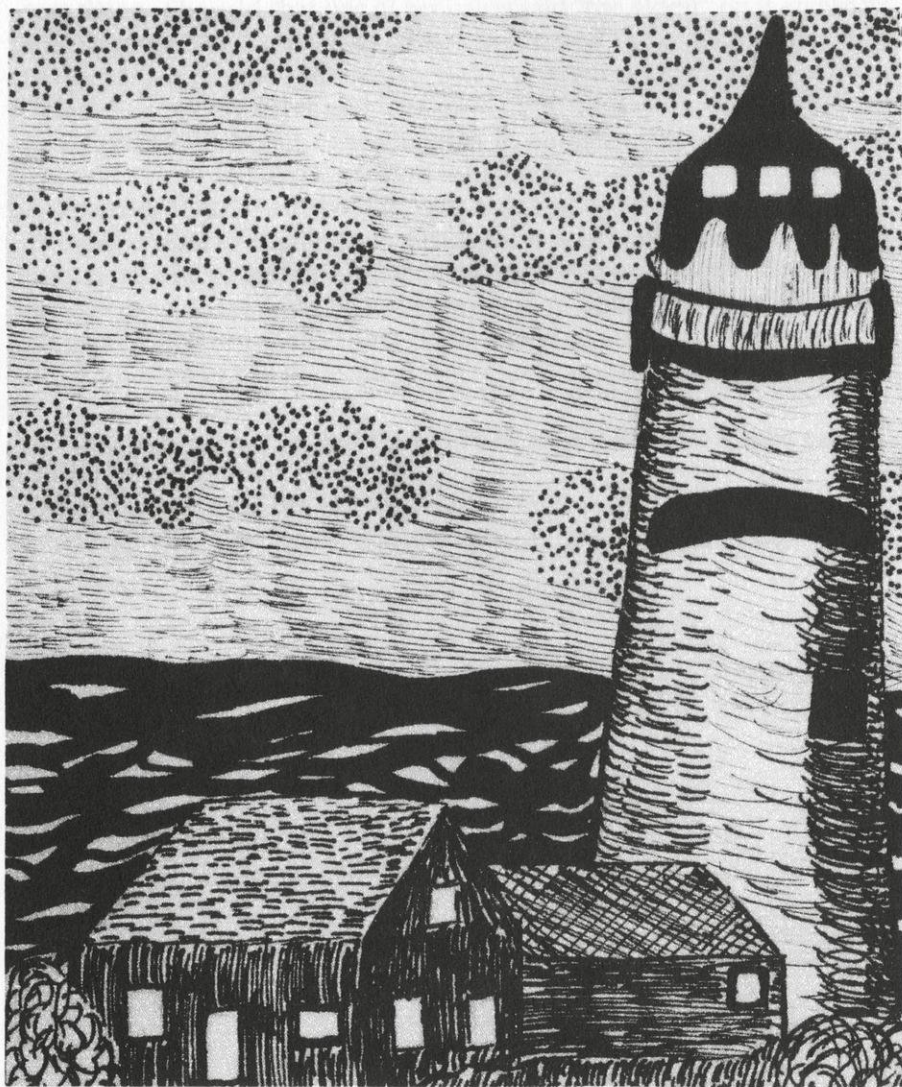
Daffodil and Tulip share secrets.
To be whispered, the next morning.

white mooring buoy

nods to inflated grey dinghy:

water hides pennant

~Barbara Bache-Wiig



Remembering You

Kevin Connolly

Only sobbing in a harsh, woeful voice can I love you,
With cries hopefully declaring the falsehood of this reality;
Remembering, wishing I could forget your pained face and
weakness.

Only cursing endlessly those damned stairs can I love you,
With the vision of you collapsing below, looking up;
I hear your soft voice deep within, and wish in vain, to hear it again.

Only with absent kisses and silent vows can I love you,
With the recollection of friendly embraces, seeming pointless;
I brood on the ashes of regrets and memories of you.

Only in thrashing waves of raging emotion can I love you,
With the angry clash of preoccupied water everywhere;
I move aimlessly in a current of obstacles and doubts.

Only fighting through these angry thoughts can I love you,
With church-bells screaming your death, mourning unmade
memories;
I needfully refused in desperation the truth such dark endlessness.

Only with lost hope and trembling strength can I love you,
With an inferno of dreams seeping out from somewhere within;
I can't offer anything in return for the memories.

Grandpa's Song

Kristin Jenkins

Black worn case
propped in the corner
of my room
as well as my mind.

Tightly latched
shut as if to hold
the sound of
silent melodies.

Black worn case
a safe home for his
violin
and his signature.

Long before
my birth his fingers
danced away
varnish on its neck.

Black worn case
contains the music
of a man
I wish I had met.

1942

Andy Bitner

Their beds lay empty and bare
Their hollowed screams lingering
Echoing still.
The hall decorated with treasures
Discarded, forgotten.
The doors of the fire beast
sit open and silent
A faint trickle of heat lingers
Ash settles
The beasts belly is appeased

The only way

Kurt Rempe

Stampeding water-buffaloes iron down chrysanthemums in the desert
tongues catch blue hail, picture summer

Rivers and mountains draped in iris and sweet William, the scent of
tropics: vanilla, chocolate, and dew not
cow manure and pot metal

Heart, skin, head, elbow, tongue, and nose
Shampooed with thoughts, lathered, massaged in rest

Joy, copper orangutans elbow through dew rinsed plum trees
Wolves howl sensibly, and sensually in the red desert

Listen, chocolate and vanilla striped zebras lounge in the mountain
devouring wild plums, as the juice stains their skin, the only way.

Reflection

Sara Numan

"The bravest thing I've ever done was to run away and hide. But not this time."

The first time I heard the song 'Break Your Heart' I was looking at myself in the mirror. No, I am not obsessed with my appearance, although you seem to think differently. I saw my better self smooth on the icy violet color to my pursed lips. I don't have much to smile for these days.

"And if I always seem distracted, like my mind is somewhere else, That's because it's true."

The summer before we became an official couple, provided me with some of the best days of my life. You were my friend; I would even dare to say my best friend. Midnight talks on the phone, raspberry shakes, Nintendo games, and random trips to the mall were the things that I loved best about you. Gazing up at the mirror now, my eyes looked back at me, knowing that I now knew the truth. I loved those things, not you.

I would call you wanting to talk, mostly so I could hint about what I thought was love for you. Now I think I only wanted to hear the compliments that you would pile on my ego. The raspberry shakes could have been enjoyed with anyone, but they were best with you, I couldn't dare sit in Oscar's by myself. Nintendo was my source of competition, anything done for a win. I would tickle you, hit you, but never would I kiss you.

When we became a couple you told me that you loved me right away. That was the one thing I wanted to hear for so long, and at the same time dreaded hearing. The distance between our homes was too much for daily visits; instead I was forced to do things alone. And I liked it. At the mall I was now able to march proudly into Victoria's Secret and walk out with my brand new \$14.99 pink lace bra, without your snickering face. And that was fun.

"I couldn't tell you I was happy when you were gone, So I lied and said that I missed you when we were apart."

I put down the lipstick and grabbed the mascara. Why do I feel I need to change who I am with you?

"And it's not 'cause I'll be missing you that makes me fall apart, it's just that I didn't mean to break your heart."

Once more I glance up in the mirror and smile at the pretty girl. I have to meet you soon so that I can return your CD. And your heart.

Untimely Conscience

Andy Nowakowski

I shut my eyes to escape the sound
Of the deer bleating and thrashing around
I stand above it, gun in hand
I drop my jaw, my knee; I can't stand
It is dying now, its body calm
I reach for it, and apologize with my palm
The dark black eyes stare into my soul
They judge me, and squeeze my heart like dough
My tears wash away the camouflage paint
In tiny rivers of green and black stain
His chest rises and falls with decreasing speed
As the blood bubbles up around my palm where it bleeds
I reach for my weapon and place the barrel against its skull
To end the suffering, I pull the trigger and hear someone call
Splashed in warm blood, I hear my dad shout,
You got him! He yells happily
No, I say, he has got me

October Night

Carolyn M. Gaar

Cool autumn night air

Caresses my cheek

As I lie in bed

Thinking of leaves

Turned crimson and gold

And dreaming of vaulted blue skies

With puffed up white clouds.

The full moon illuminates

My crisp white sheets

And I revel in the feel

Of cold cotton on smooth legs.

A Lifetime of Memories

Kelly Becker

If I told you that I had to write my own obituary, would you believe me? I didn't think so. I didn't believe it either. It seems that my English teacher thinks that writing obituaries is a good learning experience. Learning experience? Right. Sounds more like he was desperate for an assignment. Speaking of desperate, I've been sitting here for the past three quarters of an hour trying to figure out what to write. I haven't gotten very far.

"Matthew James Davidson, 17, passed away yesterday of unknown causes. He is survived by his mother, father, and two younger sisters."

That's it. I don't even know what an obituary is supposed to contain. This exercise is supposed to make us think about our past and accomplishments we would still like to make. I don't get it. How's this?

"MJD, as he was called by his friends, was a great hackey sack player and loved Playstation. His other pastimes included drinking games with friends and thinking about sex. He died a virgin."

Umm, sure. That would go over real well. Does he care that I haven't gotten laid yet or that I spend all my time playing Playstation? Probably not.

"Matthew was a talented, intelligent young man. He helped old ladies across the street and donated the money he made at his part-time job to a homeless shelter. His goal in life was to write an account of the homeless he met at the shelter and donate the profits to various charities. He pledged to live in poverty for the rest of his life."

Sounds good to me. Who am I kidding? No one will believe that. Ok, so now what? If someone other than Natalie were home, I could ask them for help. I don't know, though. I guess she could have a few ideas.

"Natalie, c'mere."

"No!"

"Nattie, please come in here."

"My name isn't 'Nattie'"

"Come here anyways."

"No, you're a boy. I don't like you."

"What? Why?"

"You're gross!"

Ok, so much for asking the nine-year old princess for help. Hmm, what have I done in my life? More like what haven't I done? I haven't won any prizes. I don't have a million dollars. I don't have the ambition to become a professional athlete. I don't have a girlfriend. I've never been in serious trouble. I don't have a perfect grade point average. I've never won an award. I have no life!

What does this stupid teacher want? An account of every day of our lives, everything that's happened? A bunch of novels? I can't do this!

"Matt?"

I hate interruptions, especially from sisters.

"What, A-man-DUH?"

"Geez, crab-ass. I just want you to know I'm home."

"What, you think you're cool now because you can swear? And I'm not

crabby; I'm just trying to do homework. An obituary."

"Did you just call me a bitch?"

"No, I said 'obituary.' You know, a letter someone writes about someone when they're dead?"

"I wish you were dead."

Wow, something must have crawled up her butt and died. And she says I'm crabby? Right.

Well, I'm not getting anywhere with this stupid assignment. Maybe if I do something else for a while I'll be able to concentrate better later. Umm, how about TV? Where's the remote? Ok, let's see. Sesame Street, Behind the Music, The Real World, Bill Clinton talking about something gay, Power Puff Girls, a shopping show, re-reruns of Saved by the Bell, Ricky Lake, and a heart surgery. TV sucks.

How 'bout a snack? That sounds good; food always helps. Too bad we never have anything good to eat. Maybe I could make grilled cheese with pickles on top. Maybe.

There's a lot of crap on our refrigerator. Some of these pictures are so old. I can't believe they're still up here. Like this one, of me, Amanda, Natalie, and Dad at the beach. Me and Dad played football all day. Look at all the sand I have on my face. And we're all so sunburned! What's this one? Oh, my soccer picture from eighth grade. I was such a dork with that huge 'fro. And here's one of the night I tried to make a candlelight dinner for Mom and Dad but burned the pizza. I was so upset, but they thought it was hilarious.

And here's a letter to me that I haven't opened yet. Couldn't anyone give me my mail? This looks important. Wonder what it's about.

Dear Matthew. We are pleased to inform you that you have been accepted to DeVry Technological Institute. Congratulations. We look forward to hearing from you in regards to your acceptance.

I was accepted? I was accepted! This somehow had to fit into my obituary. I've wanted to go to that school for so long, but I didn't think there was any way it would be possible. I made it! And I know what to put in that stupid assignment, too!

"Matthew James Davidson, 17, passed away yesterday of an unknown cause. He is survived by his mother, Debbie, father, James, and two younger sisters, Amanda and Natalie. Matt has lived a full lifetime in his 17 short years. Among his favorite activities were playing soccer and hacky sack and hanging out with friends. He loved the outdoors, and could spend entire days in the sun. He was a senior in high school, and was recently accepted to DeVry Technological Institute. His parents remember him as a considerate boy, although he didn't always think things through. He was in good health from the sports he played, both in leagues and with friends. His death came as a shock to all who knew him. He will be greatly missed."

Perfect.

Fire Inside

Alroy

Waking up every day
I snicker as observers list my assets
My youth, my individuality, my passion
They talk of the fire inside

They do not understand
The fire burns inside for all I hold dear
Desire for freedom, anarchy, and love are my fuels
But as fuel is added I am consumed

They do not understand
The fire burns inside for all that I am
A rebellious image, heart, and pen are my fuels
But as fuel is added I am consumed

They do not understand
The fire burns inside for all I have seen
This youthful spirit, body, and mind are my fuels
But as fuel is added I am consumed

The heat of my passion is burning my will away
The heat of my individuality is burning my self away
The heat of my youth is burning my soul away
The fire I display destroys all they praise

They do not understand my depleted passion
They do not understand my fading individuality
They do not understand my hollow youth
They do not understand the toll of the fire inside

Two Worlds

Lorne Draskovic

The frog lives in two worlds
 born into one, the water
He is comfortable here, for now
 until he notices he is not a fish
He has smooth skin, not scales
 where are his fins and tail?
He cannot swim as the fish do

He does not belong
He feels the urge to leave

He goes to dry land
 here the frog can blend in
He has legs like the others
 but he hops and they run
The pace is fast and he falters
 he longs for the easy flow of water
It calls to him, urging him to return

He does not belong
He feels the urge to leave

He goes back and forth, searching
 on quest to find himself
In water, land is on his mind
 on land, the water is in his heart
They are both a part of him
 he is the luckiest animal of all
The frog lives in two worlds

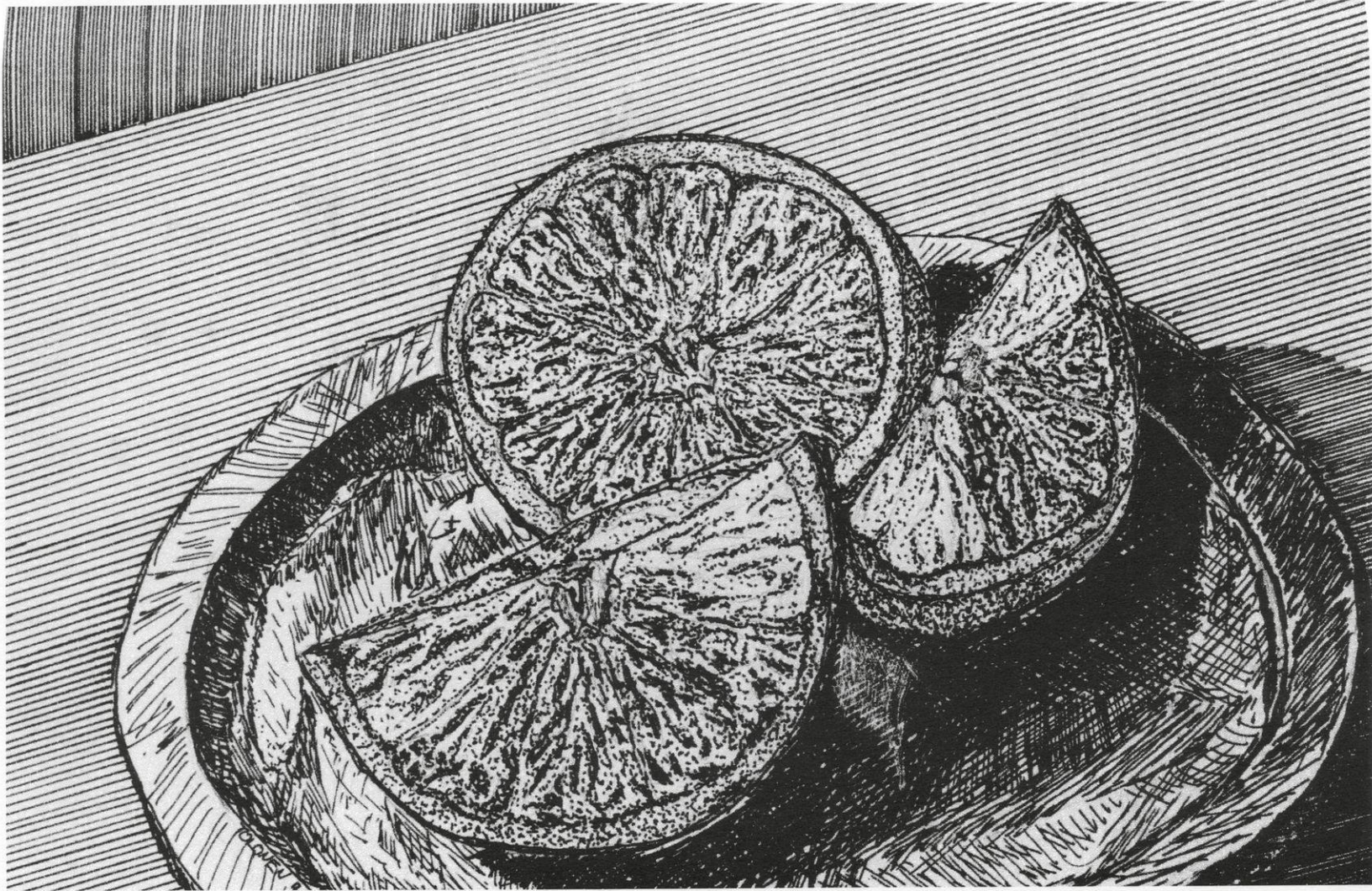
He does belong
He feels the urge to stay

Green Tea

Katie Antony

Orange blossoms
Ginger root
Plum
Passion fruit
In faraway
Curry smelling lands
Women with paled faces and wide rimmed hats
Gather orange blossoms under the melting dew
Sun soft and forgiving
As petal-by-petal their baskets fill
And bees buzz crankily about
Wet cool afternoons
Kneeling in squishy mud
Through fingers and toes—
Giving easily the roots
Dried in cool bungalows near the pressing petals.
Plums bulge on their trees
Fertile
Their pit ready to fall
Cushioned by human palms
Plums and passion fruit to places
Strung to dry.

Every spring Grandma and I ground the fragile petals and
sliced the ginger
Into richly green flakes
Aromating through the bungalow into the field
Stirring it into steaming water in shapeless porcelain
Warming hands
Even on cold days years later in Frisco.



Chem 123 Notebook

Sara Numan

**Another lecture,
Another page.
But this is the last page.
Now what?
Fifty minutes of lecture just won't fit.**

**And now I've wasted half a page
on nothing.**

**$\text{HNO}_3 + \text{H}_2\text{O} \rightarrow \text{NO}_3^{-1} + \text{H}_3\text{O}^{+1}$. THE
HYDROGEN HAS TO GO SOMEPLACE. THE BASE
MUST ACCEPT IT. TO IGNORE THE
DONATING ACID WOULD BE CRUEL. IT
COMES FROM THE WATER. I come
From the water. TRANSFER A
HYDROGEN FROM ONE TO ANOTHER. MARCH
3RD 2000. I feel as if I haven't slept in days.
LAST NIGHT I dreamt THAT I WAS
GIVEN \$1,922.03. I PUT MOST OF IT
INTO SAVINGS.**

Yellow Window

Mark Beggan

He has always liked the forsythia bush under his window. In spring, it would always be covered with numerous small flowers that gave his room a soft yellow glow. When the wind blew hard, he could hear the branches snap against his window, and it became soothing to hear because complete silence can be too uneventful at times.

Saturday was always his day to work in the yard. First, he would start by mowing the lawn. Next, he would go to the garage and get the little green trimmer from its drawer. After that, he would work in the dirt behind the house. It was dirt that once he sunk his hands into it made him feel earthly. It was in this spot that I saw him bury eggshells, banana peels, peanut shells, the remains of fruits and vegetables, and various other commodities. Sometimes he would plant marigolds, but this year he planted impatiens. However, whatever he planted grew bigger and brighter than any other flowers in the neighborhood. Everyone who passed by would ask "Why are those flowers so colorful?" While he was planting, he would enjoy the sounds of sheets flapping in the wind.

At the end of the day, he would hear the door open and quickly thereafter close. He would then eye the few board games on his shelf. He would take them down and run his hands over the boxes. Then he would empty all the contents and count the pieces. The cards were many different colors and he would arrange them in piles. When he won, he beat himself and when he lost, he lost to no one.

He doesn't hear branches against his window anymore, just silence, too much silence. When he is in the garage, there are shelves and shelves of nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium, and potash. He doesn't know what it is all about, but he does with it what he is told.

Then at night when he is too tired to work and too tired to run, he walks down his stairs and looks under his window for the yellow flowers. There are many colors but somehow they are all dull. Then he kneels down, puts his hands in the soil, and is unable to feel the richness of it. He listens for sheets flapping in the wind. However, sheets aren't allowed to flap here. At night when he goes into bed, there is a strong odor of fabric softener. It is a fake smell. It is a chemical smell. It is a contrived smell. It is not natural.

To Jack
Bob Puikowski

Jack Kerouac, or do I just call you Jack
I don't know you from Tuesday

The man who roamed our roads, traveling years on end
Opening a generation's mind
Jack Kerouac, a nomad in disguise

Sal Paradise, or is it still Jack

The invisible specter who carried no face
While following the yellow lines
Sal Paradise, in all our imaginations you're still alive

I can see all
I can dig all
But I can't live all

I think....
Imagine.....
Dream.....
And read....I read you, Mr. Kerouac
I read you

Sleep Tight

Kris Tetzlaff

interminably indebted to Jewel Kilcher

A rare child sleeps quick
his careful body bled of another red winter's play
and his bones ache like fallen fruit
dull as a frost-bit guillotine

Unaware is he of those who pray for his new death
those whose handsome tongues
melt swift beneath the heat
of their own hollow breath

Sleep tight, little child,
believing Jesus wears white skin
and those who strive to be divine as he
shall too be forgiven

Search not in vain, strange child,
for heroes in familiar places
sleep tight knowing angels exist quietly
exist quietly in far off faces

Certainty

James Kaczmarek

Somewhere to the west of center,
slightly north of where you thought,
there was place of indecision,
maybe three, or blue, perhaps.

Oh, I once thought I would go there
in the springtime, or some evening,
when it wouldn't be too steamy,
or just right for anyhow.

Surely singular, or join me,
whistling tunes unlearned in color,
rampant wonder in excitement,
bland, or smiling, slightly tart.

Night, or wet, or one would better
found examples out some window.
Doubt would surely exercise
intrinsic songs interpreted.

Later on, when stars had witnessed,
milk will feed, or run away.
positively non-events will
take us east by south instead.



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