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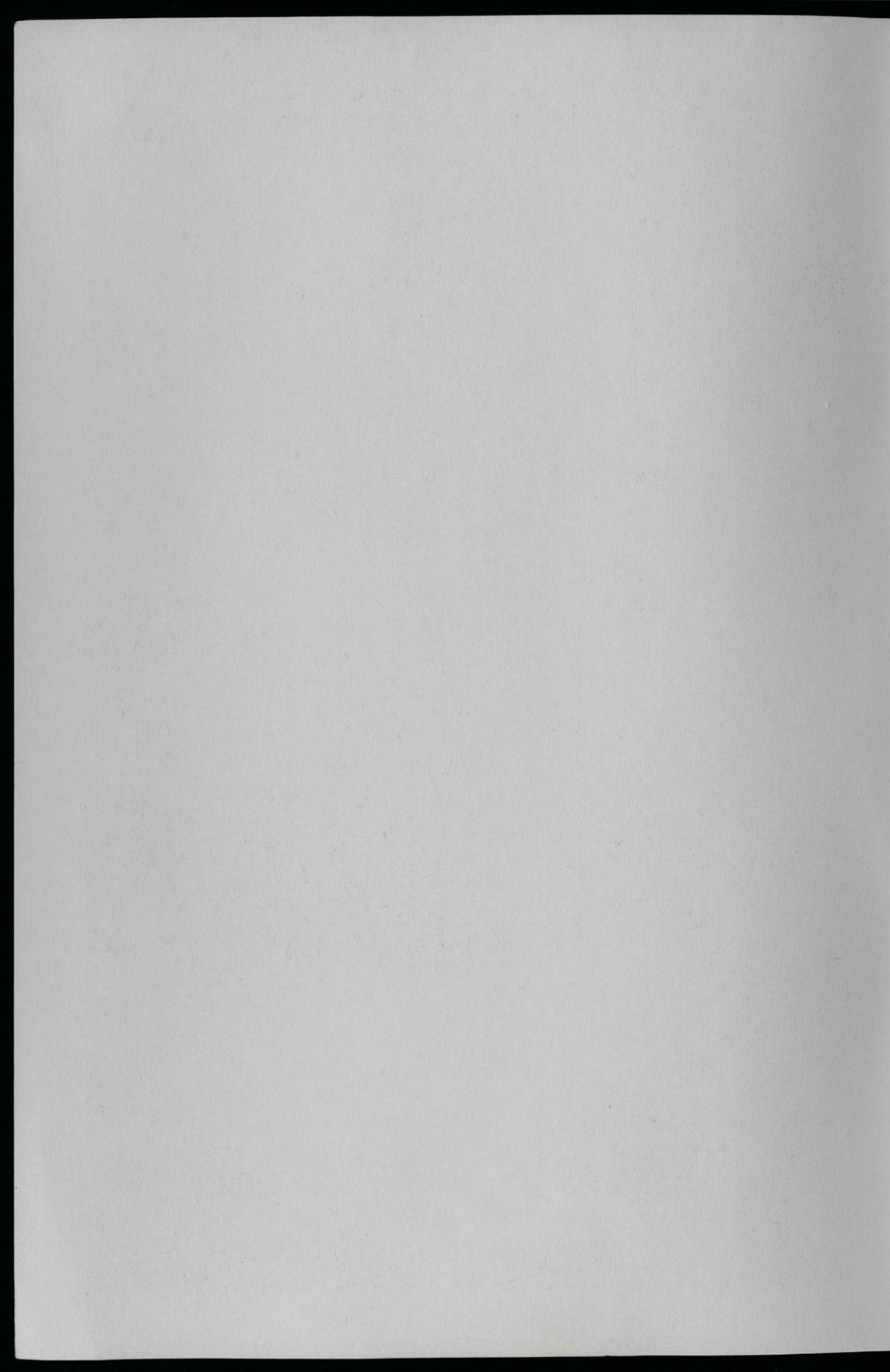
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The Windy Hill Review





THE WINDY HILL REVIEW

25TH EDITION

2003

University of Wisconsin-Waukesha

1500 N. University Drive

Waukesha, Wisconsin 53188

25th Edition

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All rights to the material herein are returned to the individual writers.

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Acknowledgements

The Windy Hill Review is a literary magazine that allows for writers and artists to have their work seen. It is a great accomplishment to be published, and as the editor-in-chief this year, I would like to congratulate all those who have been published in *The Windy Hill Review*, not only this year, but also in the past. This is our 25th anniversary edition, and as a group we would like to extend many thanks to all who have made *The Windy Hill Review* possible. First and foremost we would like to thank Phil Zweifel. Had he not started and advised the Literary Club for seventeen years, we would have no one else to thank. And to Peggy Rozga who took on the job of advising after Phil and was very much missed this year, thank you for continuing the Literary Club and for assisting for so many years. We would also like to thank our faculty advisors this year, Greg Ahrenhoerster and Sheila Griffin. Perhaps we would not be sane, or not so grammatically correct, were it not for the help of these two wonderful professors. Next the Literary Club would like to thank Lynn Knight for all of her publishing assistance, not only this year, but in the many past years. And to Barb Reinhart and her art students, many thanks for assisting us with finding the artwork that is used to add flavor and aesthetic pleasure to *The Windy Hill Review*. As the editor-in-chief, I would like to extend special thanks to Jill Marie, my predecessor for setting such a wonderful example. Also to my staff this year, it is because of my assistant editors that this publication has come to be. It is their good taste and hard work that puts the whole thing together. Thank you to Michael Moscicke for all of your layout assistance and advice, I would have gone crazy without you. And lastly, the Literary Club would like to

Thirteen Ways to Write a Poem

Miles Harvey

1. I begin to write a poem,
About ways to write a poem.
2. The form is easy,
Just 13 stanzas.
3. Write a sonnet to please
Mr. Shakespeare
4. Try to use slant rhyme.
That would give your poem a nice shine.
5. If you don't feel like using any rhyme.
Consider it next time.
6. Enjambment
always
stands
out
7. Haikus are so fun.
Writing them makes me happy.
But I'll save that thought
8. Quatrain poems are
Popular, but it
Just might end up
Being too long.
9. Couplets are a
Way to go.
10. Feeling sad?
Try an elegy.
11. Commemorate someone
and write them an ode.
12. If you're thinking about using a cliché,
You'd better make like a tree and leave.
13. Always remember this...
Snappy conclusions get you an A

Awake

Stephanie Bunzel

the grass collects beads of dawn's
dew
that have condensated from the
night
ground tickled by a misty gray hue
now illuminated by a morning's
light

shadows cast down by towering
trees
drawing in darkness to the forest
gathering the coolness of the breeze
upon the morning, darkness has
befell

a fawn is cooled by jewels of dawn
and emerges out of the shadows
camouflaged by its surrounding,
little fawn
it breathes in the beauty, lifting its
nose

magical creature awakes from the
gray
like the breaking of this new day

Nature's Healing Process

Stephanie Bunzel

Rooted to **the** ground, but at the **same** time free

Unable to **place** the past behind me

Scars are **where** they don't belong

Still I stand strong

Only time and **tears** can heal

A loss painfully real

A knot tangled in the depths of my heart

Where heavy tears will clot

Forcing me to regrow, restart

Pain will **remain**

Tears have stained

Thick bark helps the sadness hide

Rain falls

And allows

The spirit to **cleanse**

And replenish

Beauty begins to glisten within

The blemish

The wind of our ancestors shares

Secrets with our **soul**

Helping me feel balanced **and** whole

Rain and sunlight coalesce

Depicting clarity out of this mess

A part of me, still attached, dies

The rest of me, stays **free** and grows

Wise

My Grandparents

Michael Moscicke

My first memory is of a small house in a small town with a large front living room dominated by the presence of an olive green shag carpet. I had to have been around two or three years old which means that I would have also been wearing my defining blue sailor suit which combined all the best of childish shorts, white shoes, and probably some sort of red ribbon around my collar. I believe the ribbon was my mother's way of marking me as her own like a prize she had won at the fair earlier that day.

In this memory the only other person present is my Grandmother who is wearing a long midnight blue with white polka dot dress, in which she is perpetually attired in every memory I have of her. She is sitting in a large Victorian chair, wings and all, which has been refurbished in a lime green satin fabric that offset the eyes from the carpet for the first few minutes you were in the room. I currently have this same chair in my bedroom and it still has the same gaudy covering.

Next to her and the chair is a giant book case made of some exotic wood that my Grandfather had chosen himself and then spent many weeks sawing and sanding into what is now immortalized in my head. This monstrosity of shelves was most likely only about five feet high because with great ease my five foot six inch Grandmother reached up to the top shelf and revealed a huge glass jar full of some strange candy to me and my inquisitive mind. She slowly reached into the jar and pulled out a large orange gumdrop shaped candy covered in shimmering sprinkles of sugar. When handed to me it nearly filled my two-year-old palm. And then, along with the Grandmother I trusted and still do because of some fluke of nature, I placed the sweet in my mouth and ate it.

To this day I still hate that type of candy or anything like it. However I love that memory, just as I love my grandparents. That, throughout my life, is how I would define my Grandparents, as people who impart me with things that I hate, will hate or have hated only to learn to cherish those memories. They are the greatest oxymoron in my life and whenever I need some cheering up I sit down and recall the adventures I've had with them.



Words Climbing Upward To Her

Michael Moscicke

In climbing that ladder believed to end in true love
I have discovered an inherent beauty in the climb itself which I
Cannot quite describe except that it is revealed in the end at
Every step and has pushed me along this path to a
New existence where *up is down* and she is what I lack

You

Michael Moscicke

Joy of the soul
begins with
passions fulfilled,
blessings sustained
only *in* love
that occurs with
poetry *around* it.

Balanchine's Folly

Michael Moscicke

Swans a dancing, Swans a prancing
Gliding to and fro,
See them twinkle, not a wrinkle
Life a gift box bow

Faeries dancing, faeries prancing
Hover up above,
It's quite tragic, there's no magic
Only some girl's love

Then the Giselle moves like a belle
But it's just an act,
Because some george, may warp and forge
For she made a pact

But what have become of those great
Who made the crowd anticipate,
They are gone now in twilight's dust
For directors have let them rust

So they're dancing, and they're prancing
With no heart at all,
Those once carried are now buried
This was ballet's fall.

Your Love in Lilies

Michael Moscicke

Into fields of lilies melt,
I do when'er your touch I've felt.
To see your eyes and hear your voice,
Like fragrant flower scent rejoice.
And when you dreamt with silent sleep
I saw the lilies close and weep.

A Succulent Memory

Gretchen M. Wirts

"Imagine a steamy, silent afternoon
in the Kickapoo River Valley."

My dad always tells this story of how
he once picked 40 quarts of wild blackberries
with his mother in a single day.

"Blackberry bushes tall as a grown man
intertwined with briars and nettles."

They had to wear long sleeves and gloves
for protection.

40 quarts of blackberries
shared between mother and son.



Then James Came In

Lauren Pfaff

James entered the small, smoke-stained room with a respectful smile on his face. He removed his charcoal colored trench coat and draped it over the back of the antique wooden chair angled towards the bedside. Ken lay immobile in his hospital bed, but was able to make the head of the bed rise. His thin and feeble legs began to spasm under the navy blue blanket that covered them. His head shot back and his unshaven face strained. James looked down at them, but quickly averted his attention back to Ken's eyes, trying not to show his concern. He knew the pain he was in, but could not truly understand how he felt inside or even physically. He could only imagine from what he has been told and from what he has learned about the multiple sclerosis Ken now lives with. Ken's voice became shaky and he began to stutter slightly. His usual embarrassment in these situations took over. He felt childish and helpless. James put a cigarette in Ken's mouth and eased the lighter's flame up until the tip burned a red glow. He then lit his own cigarette. Blues music was playing quietly in the room. The atmosphere was peaceful, but yet somehow uncomfortable for both of them. It wasn't like a home to Ken. James felt like an imposter when he visited. Ignoring this, they began their usual discussions of music and other arts, each teaching the other about the old and the new. They managed authentic laughs about the other's jokes and returned the constant attention to the other. They kept eye contact at all times although Ken's eyesight had almost diminished completely. Ken flicked the ash from the end of the cigarette by snapping it in between his lips with his tongue. The dusty gray ash dribbled down his bony chest and into the plastic ashtray below that rested on the table over his bed. A few moments later, James pulled the butt out from Ken's mouth and buried it into the ashtray. He had to leave then. E was still in school and had to work for a few hours that evening. Guilt always set in at this point. He knew that visiting every week was appreciated and he was doing a good thing, but he still felt as if he could do more. He needed to feel that he was making a difference in Ken's life, more than just cheering him up for a few hours a week. Of course, Ken understood. He knew that young people had many responsibilities these days, and he saw the stress in James' eyes. They were black with lack of sleep and sore from rubbing them to stay awake in class and at work. He was grateful of the time he set aside for him.

James pulled into his garage and shut off the engine of his car. He stepped out and headed for his bedroom to lay down a few moments before going to work. He wanted to eat, but was too exhausted to move. His eyes closed and his muscles became loose. He was soon asleep. At the same time, Ken lowered the head of his bed after his sister gave him his pills and some water. His eyes were heavy. His body hurt to the point that it became unbearable. He lay there with his hands on his chest and his legs out straight. He felt alone and depressed. He stared at the ceiling until soon sleep took over his body.

James walked into Ken's bedroom. He still lay there in bed, this time he was asleep. James sat in the wooden chair next to him and smoked a cigarette. He didn't want to wake him so soon. Ken opened his eyes and said hello. His voice was almost inaudible. He could barely turn his head in his direction. James knew that this was a bad sign. He has seen him ill before, but this was the most pain he has seen him in since the last time he was hospitalized. The house-nurse entered the room from the bathroom door. She asked James to leave and to give a call later. He hugged Ken and picked up his coat and uncomfortably stumbled out of the room. He turned around and looked back at Ken in his bed. His nurse was taking vitals and making extensive notes in a big blue chart. She shook her head and picked up the telephone. Ken's eyes closed and his mouth opened.

James crept into the hospital room slowly and unsure of himself. Ken lay there in a different hospital bed hooked up by many wires and tubes to machines all over the room. The beeps and other familiar sounds remained rhythmic and constant. James pulled up a light brown plastic chair and angled it towards Ken. He sat down quietly while he clenched and twisted his coat in his hands, which were cold and sweaty. Ken did not open his eyes. His mouth was held open by a transparent plastic tube. James reached over and held Ken's hand. It was cold, bony and limp. Ken's sister entered the room shortly after James. She was crying slightly and looked as if she hadn't slept in days. They didn't speak, just looked down at their feet and at Ken's unresponsive body. Ken began to cough. Their eyebrows raised and their breath stopped for a moment, waiting to see if he would recover. His hands quivered upwards and fell hard on to his lap. His usual olive skin was now pasty and pale. His flesh sagged down as if every muscle in his body gave up on holding him together and separated from his brittle bones. James' eyes swelled with plump, salty tears. He looked out the frosted window at the iced rain slapping against the glass pane. He wished he could

stand in it to feel a sense of reality that he couldn't get standing in this hospital room. The tears began to fall down his face as the rain did on the window.

James walked into the funeral home, tripping over his feet due to the blinding effect of the burning redness in his eyes. The pews were full of young children playing and looking confused, young adults who had lost their inspiration and mentor, and old friends and family crying and holding each other. Ken lay there in a slate coffin surrounded by white pillows and memorabilia of the life he had lived. People lined up to give him one last kiss or place something next to him for him to take into the grave. He was wearing the typical tuxedo that men wear in their caskets. He looked like rubber with the excessive makeup that someone had put on his skin to make him appear alive and well. James waited in the back of the line to say goodbye to his only role model. He held on to himself and tried desperately to keep his balance. He approached him for the final time. He leaned over and kissed him on his right cheek. He tasted like makeup and felt stiff. James knew many people there and had become good friends with them over the years, but he just turned to his left and walked out of the building. He got into his car and lit a cigarette. He sat there in silence for a moment before starting the engine and driving off.

James crawled into his bedroom. He lay there in his futon, daydreaming about his past and what he had to expect in his future. It looked bleak to him. He saw no happiness or fulfillment. He felt so alone now. He felt mad that Ken had to leave him so soon, but he understood he was better off than suffering in this world. He was confused, mad and hurt. He reached over to grab a cigarette. He lit it and inhaled the smoke as deeply as his lungs would allow. He exhaled with an audible sigh. He flicked the ash off onto a flat, ceramic, makeshift ashtray on his floor. He pushed the cigarette until the red cherry exploded off and separated from the butt. He lay back and closed his eyes with one arm rested on his stomach and the other over his face. His face scrunched up into a painful expression. He rolled over on his side in a fetal position. He wrapped his arms around his knees and rocked back and forth while crying out loud. He wanted to punch the wall and at the same time he wanted to be held. He sobbed until there were no tears left in his system. He could barely breathe. He began to drift into sleep only from pure exhaustion. The reality of the world left his conscience, and he felt at peace for the moment. Waking would only bring this day back to him so he covered up in his thick blanket and fell into a deep sleep.

At this time, the slate coffin that Ken lay in was being lowered slowly into the cold, dry ground. People stood aside, weeping, as the man who was once so full of life, entered into his eternal sleep. The cold, earthy dirt trickled down the slopes of the deep hole. Ken's arms crossed, his legs extended out, and his eyes and mouth closed forever. He fell into his confined rest, finally reaching peaceful comfort he so longed for.



Frog Alley Road

Andy Nowakowski

Roll down your window
Amphibious reverberations
Pound on the drum of your ear
Listen to the grand welcome

There just above you
Yellow street sign swaying
Perilously points the way
The scene spreads before you

Follow the winding asphalt
Up to its rain-soaked peak
Now the marsh is your amphitheater
Turn off the radio, they sing for you

Bumblng bullfrog baritones
Clamor with other guttural groans
Soft serenade...peep, crackle, peep
Tireless crickets chime continuously

An invisible conductor leads the show,
A swirling symphony that soothes the soul
No band today could ever compare to
The musicians residing up Frog Alley Road

“Collection of Goods”

Jill Zlensky

I went out one day to catch opportunities. I thought hey, I'm young. Plenty with bright wings will come to sit upon my shoulder. Instead of hope, promise, and trust, I felt anger, resentment, and fear flapping in my hair, tangling themselves. The flower silk screened on my shirt was a logo *Nieve*. Its scent had drawn them to me. Me, in my flower shirt that I thought was selling innocence. I was unperturbed by the gray and dark purple and blues, so I let them nest in my hair.

When I was old enough to understand it was hard to let them go. I knew that they were not bright, did not shine in summer's sun, but I told myself that was okay. I liked anger, it was empowering; the vivid zigzags of maroon that flashed in my peripheral vision. When it finally came into full view I could see how ugly it had become.

Every year new love, new hopes for those who had advertised innocence. I was too old to cling to the illusion of this colored flight. I pulled them out – blue and black hate, green fear, my favorite anger, and I pinned them in a family photo album I labeled “Lepicloptera”, the family of both winged creatures. Because you don't have much choice of which lands on you, but you do choose what to do with them once they have.

Paddington

Chris Bluma

Paddington looked like a five and a half-foot tall infant in cheap business wear. He was a computer whiz and a real idiot. It was impossible for him to sit with his co-workers in the lunchroom, and when he conversed with women he always stared directly at their chests. However, he didn't talk to many women because they all thought he was creepy. His hair, a dull brown, was cut neatly and often, which only made his big misshapen grape of a head more obvious. Above the right side of his lip was a small scar about a half of an inch long that he received after he fell off his toboggan as a teenager while sledding alone. He thought it made him look mysterious to women, who he still referred to as girls, but no one ever looked at him long enough to see it.

He sat perfectly still while his eyes raced around the office as if it were his first time inside. The room was decorated in dark wood, which was a world apart from the rest of the office building, which was mostly white and taupe. He felt the eight eyes in the room staring at him, penetrating his mind and reading his thoughts, which were reminiscing the primetime sitcom that he watched the night before. Two of the eyes belonged to a wild boar that had long ago been shot, stuffed, and stood upright with its right leg bent as if it were walking towards you, next to the desk that Mr. Lindert was sitting behind.

Mr. Lindert's eyes were looking quizzically at Paddington, his three hundred plus body looked like it had been poured into the chair. His gray stiff suit jutted out from under the armrests.

The other four eyes belonged to Mr. Nick. His gold wire glasses matched perfectly with his watch and tie clip which accented his black suit perfectly. He would accuse people of making him feel old when they called him Mr. Zill; so to show the employees that he was "One of Them" he charitably signed his memos using his first name *Mr. Nick*.

Paddington cleared his throat with trepidation and Mr. Lindert was moved to speak. "Have you been to Paris?" his eyes darted down to the manila folder in his hand, "Paddington." A southern accent brushed every word. He was born and raised in Detroit.

Paddington was surprised he didn't call him by his first name, Raymond. No one used his first name and he was wondering if he was even just Paddington in the company records.

"Um, Paris sir?" Paddington asked.

"That's right, I was just there last week with ma wife and

they've got these little cafes. I'll tell you what, they give you a sandwich and coffee, and serve it up to you, while you just sit there looking at that, a um..."

"Eiffel Tower," Mr. Nick said confidently.

"Yeah, you know what I mean?"

"No," Paddington said sharply, a little agitated that this was taking longer than he had planned.

"Nah, you see, you sit at a table and enjoy all the little Frenchy girls that pass you by while you eat."

"Like the cafeteria?" Paddington asked with any improved interest.

Mr. Lindert's smile quickly fell as if he were offended. "No, no, I wouldn't say it's like the cafeteria," Mr. Lindert said and then he began to chuckle. He got the joke. Paddington didn't.

"You're a funny little S O B, you know that? You remind me of a younger, smaller, ah goofier, version of myself. Now, why don't you tell me why you're here?"

Paddington locked eyes with the boar and cleared his throat. "It's about my office Sir. It's on the third floor, in marketing."

"Yes that's a busy floor, marketing," Mr. Lindert butted in, "And you were hoping to move off the third floor weren't you?"

"Yes, Sir!" This was going to be easier than he expected, Paddington thought. "It's just that I don't think that I'm a marketing person."

"Heck no, you're not! I could tell the second I saw yah, I said this little guy can't last long on the third."

"Yes sir, not me," Paddington agreed, almost getting out of his chair.

"Here's what I want you to do," Mr. Lindert paused while his smile made his mouth swell like the large bass on his wall. "Go home and tell your wife that she's married to the new executive of west eastern sales."

Paddington's face turned deep red and he stared at his foot that he was running back and forth on the floor tile. It was all he could do to keep himself from giggling at the thought of being married to a girl. Then his face tensed in a look of surprise when he realized what Mr. Lindert had proposed.

"Executive of west eastern sales, you mean a EWE? Well I don't know sir, that's, that's not what I really had in mind," Paddington's voice started to quiver.

“Well you’d better start packing up your things. Tomorrow you’re moving up to the sixth floor. You know, only two men have ever skipped two whole floors, and one of them was me.”

Mr. Nick smiled knowing that the other man to skip two floors was himself. “And me,” he said in a confident tone.

Mr. Lindert looked vaguely surprised. “Oh well then make it three other men.”

Mr. Nick slouched.

Paddington’s body wiggled out of the chair and plodded out of the office. His head held a little lower than when he came in, so much that his chin was buried in between his fatty breasts. He wanted to get moved back down to the second floor. The second was where he wanted to stay.

80

Two Haiku

Maryam Dachniwskyj

Frost covers the ground—
Winter's breath descended
My heart still warm for you.

Mirror's fragile façade
I see right through and wait
For the shattering to come.

A Meta-Poetic Lament

Maryam Dachniwskyj

Godhelpme
if i leave the house
forgetting paper and pen
I become frantic!
I squirm in my seat
I shake my fist in the air
I snap at my children
I cuss under my breath
I grope under the seat for my purse
I rummage in the glovebox
swerving drunkenly in the lane
I chant it in my head
(aloud would frighten my son)
I'd pay dearly for just a pen
at least i could write it then
on my forearm, my
thighs, the dashboard!
I have to write it down—
this poem that composed itself in my head
without appointment
without permission
without school supplies—
before it vanishes in a hopeless puff
before the wit of the moment
withers and dies in futility
for lack of miserable
wretched
God-da---ah! A-ha!!
Godhelpme...

Written in the Stars

Rebecca Dowsett

A sickle moon sliced through tangled crystal clouds, occasionally lighting the earth below. Shadows dashed across the ruffled fields, where lay the remnants of last summer in the form of fallen, frosted corn leaves. The air was light and cool, twirling around Amaya's torn gray sneakers and jeans, and through the broken walls of the barn nearby, whistling loudly. She swore she could hear laughter in the wind as it echoed through, children's laughter.

Her brother's laughter.

She could still picture this gravelly yard on a spring day. The dusty old barn still stood up straight back then, no wind had been strong enough to strike it down. She and her older brother Graye would tear around the corner of the farmhouse, chased by a little barn swallow, whose nest they had gotten too close to. Grampa would laugh at them from his rocking chair on the concrete patio, and the big white dog would scamper after them, oblivious to the angry bird.

Had it been five years ago, Amaya thought, tightening her grip around the cold keys in her pocket, they might all still be alive.

It was about a year and a half since the accident occurred. Had Graye been home filling out college applications like he was supposed to instead of skidding around the streets with his friends, he might not have skidded off that overpass.

"You're always telling me to do my homework," Graye said to her once. "Jeez, you're like Mom. Why don't you stop studying for once, huh?"

Amaya had scoffed at him and asked whose grades were higher. She sometimes felt guilty when she brought that up. He'd always be careful to hide his feelings behind a cocky smile, but he would avoid her for the rest of the night. She was just trying to help, though.

It wasn't that he was dumb, no. He'd at least manage solid C's if he was yelled at. But he refused to work for anything more. It frustrated Amaya much more than she let on, and he didn't take notice.

At the dinner table, she might stare at him and try to get into his mind. The outside of him was always a mess. He claimed to comb his hair, but it never looked like he did. All his clothes were at least five years old, showing the wearing of random games of "tackle" soccer. His eyes were playful, the color of a robin's wing and just as jittery. The eyes were the only part of him that didn't seem lazy or bored. All

this distracted her too much from trying to figure out what his thoughts were. He was all decoration with no filling. Yet still, he was constantly telling her that there were so many things she didn't know.

"What's your favorite constellation?" Graye had asked a long time ago. "Favorite constellation? Who has a favorite constellation?"

"Just pick one," he insisted.

Amaya shot off the first one she could think of. "Orion."

"Everyone picks that one," Graye said with disappointment.

"Not me, though. Mine's Leo. See it? It's a lion."

Amaya could barely make out the stars through the orange glow of the city. "Don't look like a lion to me."

"It does too. It's sitting there roaring at the guy next to it."

"They're just stars, Graye. They're only scary when they're really really close and going to burn your eyes out."

"You're no fun," he pouted, heading back to their house. "You can't see the pictures."

"Why should I look at the pictures? That's not what they are."

"You wouldn't understand."

You wouldn't understand – her least favorite combination of three words in the English language. At that time she just emptied her mind, telling herself he was just saying that to make her feel dumb.

"Well, it didn't work!" she yelled at him mentally.

Tonight, something was off. She had started in on some of the ugliest Algebra problems she had seen in a long time. By the end of the hour, the same page she had started on was full of eraser dust and void of answers. She slapped her book closed and gathered her things, and plastered on an embarrassed smile for her parents. "I totally forgot. I was supposed to drop by Sandra's and help her with her math – she's gonna be ticked –"

"When are you going to be back?"

"I don't know."

"Take your cellphone."

Her false rush convinced them out of any more questions. She got out of there as soon as her sneakers would allow.

The early-spring winds blasted through the open windows as she roared down the freeway, leaving the restless lights of the city behind. Strangely, at this time there were very few cars. At least no one could see her and tell her parents where she was really going. Amaya popped a CD in the player, starting a light but tense techno rhythm. The song always made her feel like she was on a secret mission.

She hummed with the melody, but her mind drifted away from the road. Graye told her he loved the freeways. She always laughed at the car commercials with the “freedom” songs in the background, but Graye, once again, just told her she didn't understand.

I don't understand what?

Amaya had to know. She had to know what he was thinking. Her curious mind pressed the gas pedal down.

Road markers whooshed by the windows, the barren fields to the side a maroon blur. The wind encouraged her, begging her to keep riding, keep flying. It promised her something, something she hadn't felt in a long time, but only if she kept moving. A smile crept up her face.

In the dark stretch of road ahead, she could see road markers curving upward. An exit bridge. She would have to slow down now.

She couldn't. The wind had control over the car now.

She hit the curve high above another road, gripping the steering wheel as if she would fly out the window. The car lurched unsteadily, reaching back for the piece of the road it belonged on. The guard wall inched closer and closer, the little metal marker beams passing with loud whips.

Amaya laughed as she left the bridge behind. It just came out of nowhere, a real, thrilled laugh, and it wouldn't stop. “I – I think I –”

She was cut off by a powerful honk and a rumbling she could have sworn was right in front of her. She shrieked and stamped on the brakes, just as the semi-truck rolled through the rest of the intersection.

Amaya continued through, then pulled over at the edge of the road. For a moment, she found herself unable to pry her eyes away from the window, listening to her heart racing, to the insane laughter that still echoed inside her ears. Despite the cold air, she felt sweat beads forming. Finally, she managed words.

“Nice stop there!” she shouted after the taillights of the disappearing truck, eyeing the red signs at his end of the street.

It's your own fault for *not slowing down!* she scolded herself. *This is what happened to Graye! How could you be that stupid!*

There was a twinge in her hand where she had been clasping the steering wheel. It was getting late. She pulled back onto the road and continued on to the old farm, keeping quiet notice of the speed limit signs.

Amaya groped in her churning thoughts for an answer as to why she had come back to the farm. She had studying to do, whether she understood it or not. This was a big waste of time. She was going to pay

for it when that B showed up on her math test next week. She sat down on a cinder block, nudging the dirt in front of her with her sneaker.

The moon appeared again, casting a faint shadow. She glimpsed up at it. And then, she found her widening gray eyes could not tear themselves away.

Through a gaping hole in the clouds, she could see an indigo sky that was not nearly as quiet as the world around her. That sky glimmered with the trails of a million stars, reaching on and on into the darkness. It was alive. It was dazzling, just plain astounding. She was lost in the stars for a moment, following them like she never could back in the city.

Then, as quickly as they had parted, the clouds began to seal up again. “No, don’t do that,” – Amaya whispered. “There wasn’t enough time –”

She trudged back to the car, looking at one of the barn walls where Graye had jumped off on a dare. She didn’t think he’d really do it. But he had just shrugged and told her, “Grampa says you only live once.”

As her lips parted in a soft smile, her words floated into the sky in silver curls.

“I *do* understand.”



White Death
James Kaczmarek

That great white poof of dust,
roiling, rolling, speeding towards
the camera, towards us, towards me;
chasing running people away, away
from towers falling, falling; and one
Black woman, black by her features,
running, running towards me; all white
with that dust, covered with that dust,
with the dust white tribal African color
of Death. Death coming up to me.
Death coming to me. Death white.
Death.

Old Snow Fence

James Kaczmarek

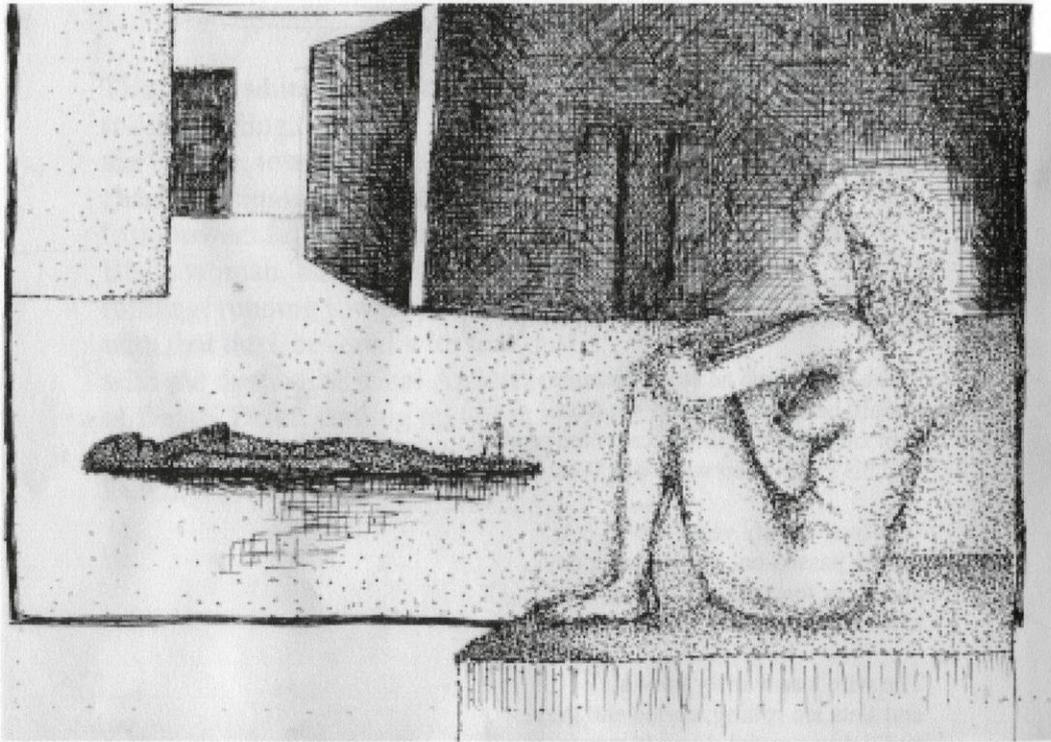
Out yonder there, near to the road,
reposing next to maple tree,
lies, all rolled-up, of wire, slats,
an old snow fence, what's no more used.

It belonged to my wife's Pa,
who owned the land where snow fence lies,
but when the land had come to us
he said that fence was now ours, too.

There was a time he stood them up
in Fall, before the ground got froze.
kept snow from drifting 'cross the road
into his yard, when wind was West.

Was over twenty years ago
that he passed-on, one Summer day,
and snow fence hasn't moved a bit
since Spring before, when took it down.

The wire's now rusty brown,
and slats are rotting, curled and gray,
and lichen crusted, like old stones.
That old snow fence there near the road.



...have not two birds wings? June 21

Goodbye

Erin Curry

Feel my pain, run away
Take my heart, another day
Don't come back, stay away
Take my soul, come what may

Take this knife, can you see
In your heart, let it be
Smile your smile, pay the fee
Live your life, you don't know me

On your wings, death shall die
On your feet, I shall fly
Go from here, pass it by
In your grave, see me lie

Close your eyes, do you know
Look away, let it show
See the river, watch it flow
Jump in quick, go die slow

Feathered wings, off you flew
This pain inside, nothing new
Blood so thick, sky so blue
Hello to death, goodbye to you

A Resting Place

Adam Gaulke

The room wasn't well lit. A small dark lamp was the only source of light next to the young man's head. His face looked to be involved in a deep sleep; there wasn't a muscle in his body that wasn't relaxed. On his window ledge, to the left of the bed, a small bird perched itself with a worm dangling from its beak. It cocked its head in many directions until finally fluttering away leaving only a trace where it once perched.

A few moments later the sun began to peer in over the window ledge and glare down on the face of the man. The sound of chirping birds came in through the window followed by a subtle cool-morning breeze that skimmed over the length of his statue-like body. He took a deep breath, shifted his head so the sun was cast from his face, and went back to sleep. His arm lay rested over the edge of the bed, with his fingers dangling and veins pulsating violently almost through the skin.

The door creaked open and a little furry dog with shaggy hair over his eyes came quietly into the room sniffing his way around the messy floor. The dog's nose finally reached the fingertips of the young man, which he licked as if they were coated with sugar. The man shifted his body and awoke suddenly.

He did not wake to find himself comfortably in his bed amidst his memories; he woke instead to find himself amidst a mess of white sheets. All around him were similar beds inhabited by other young men, some more injured than others. Just then he felt wetness on his fingers and lifted it to see a trail of blood down his arm. The bandage on his shoulder had shifted in his sleep and irritated the wound causing it to bleed. He lifted his hand onto his lap and looked up in confusion.

Several nurses were scattered amongst the other beds tending to the needs of the patients. Next to the young man was a chaplain, head down in prayer blessing the dead body that lay in the bed to the right of the young man. The chaplain turned his head slightly, noticing the glare coming from the young man's face. His face was aging, but he looked to be like someone you could trust. There was just something about his eyes, the way he looked at you, as if he knew something that you did not. He finished his prayer and motioned his hands the way Christians do and turned to face the young man.

"Are you worried?" the chaplain asked.

"Worried?"

“Are you afraid of dying?”

“What do you mean? Am I going to die?”

“Not exactly, but the look on your face seemed to be concerned about something. And being in a hospital surrounded by death can be overwhelming.”

“I’m not so sure about that. Death that is.”

“What is there to be sure about? Death is just as much a mystery as life.”

The man shifted his glare away from the chaplain’s face and sighed. “You don’t know what it’s like. How do you find peace amidst all this anger? If someone cared so much about giving us life, he wouldn’t have it taken away from us. Not like this.”

The chaplain took his rosary in hand and blessed the young man in prayer. The boy turned his body away from the chaplain and faced the empty bed to his left.

“The ones who are responsible for all this death are human. There is no force above instructing evil to kill his own flesh and blood. It’s what we choose to do with our time, with our lives, he ensures an eternal heaven to those who are merciful.”

“Maybe we’re led to believe that.” The young man pulled the sheets up tightly over his body. The chaplain sighed and gave the young man a sincere smile.

“My dear boy, ye of little faith.” The chaplain bowed his head again in prayer and the young man rolled his eyes and turned again over to the empty bed to his left. He lay staring off into space, until his gaze pierced through the walls, and memories of his childhood ran through his mind.

The room wasn’t well lit. The windows let the bright glow of the moon into the room. A small boy lay fast asleep, his tiny body shifted left and right. His face looked afraid and sweat dripped from his forehead. A moment later his face was expressionless and his body still. A large crow rested upon his window ledge to the left of his bed. It began pecking at his window. Suddenly the boy shifted again and his face turned to fear. He let out a shriek and the bird flew away. The door opened to his bedroom and in came a beautiful woman, dressed from head to toe in a bathrobe. Her hair was dark as the night and her eyes a forest green. She approached the side of his bed and sat on the corner, near his head. She ran her hand across his forehead. The young boy awoke in surprise.

“Hey sweetheart. Are you ok? You sounded like you were having a bad dream.”

“Mom?”

“Yes dear?”

“Am I going to die?”

“Why would you ask a thing like that? What’s wrong?”

“Nothing, I just want to know.”

“We all die at some point, sweetheart, but you have the whole rest of your life to live.”

The woman looked at her son with a sincere smile and leaned down and kissed him on the forehead.

“Are you gonna die, mom?”

The woman looked away from the boy to the window.

“Mom, what’s wrong?”

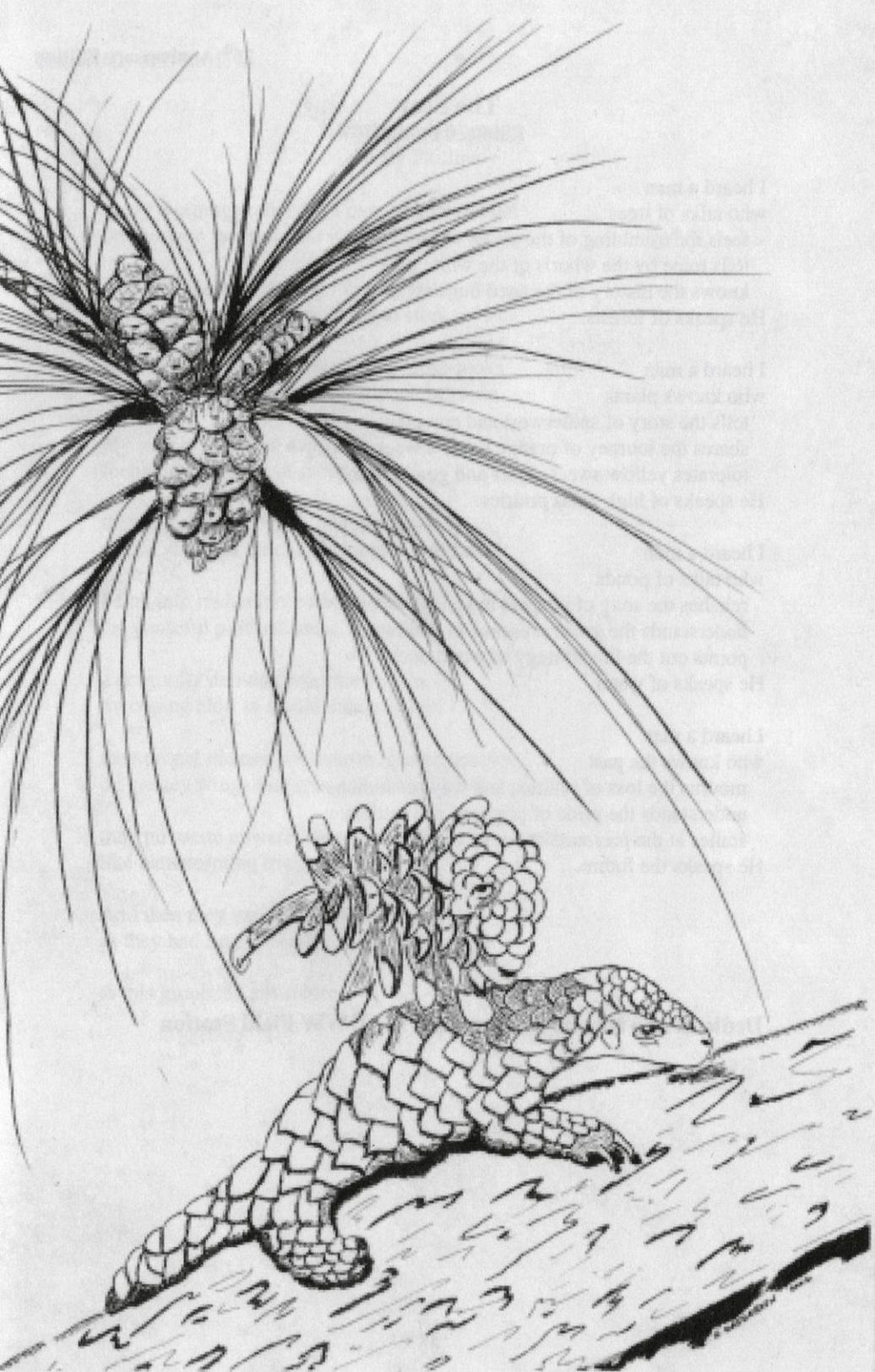
“Nothing dear, you should get some rest.”

With a soft kiss again on the young boy’s cheek the woman tucked him in and walked towards the doorway. As she was about to close the door she suddenly stopped and leaned into the boy’s room.

“Don’t forget to say your prayers, sweetie.”

“I won’t.”





The Seer
Kathleen Phillips

I heard a man
who talks of trees
 feels the trembling of the aspen
 tells tome by the whorls of the white pine
 knows the history of the aged bur oak
He speaks of forests.

I heard a man
who knows plants
 tells the story of spiderwort and cup plant
 shares the journey of orange hawk's week
 tolerates yellow sweet clover and goat's beard
He speaks of high grass prairies.

I heard a man
who talks of ponds
 relishes the song of peepers in spring
 understands the green presence of duckweed
 points out the life strategy of wood ducks
He speaks of water.

I heard a man
who knows the past
 mourns the loss of prairies and ways of Indians
 understands the pride of pioneers and settlers
 smiles at the presence of peony blooms in clover
He speaks the future.

Dedicated to Marlin Johnson and the UWW Field Station

Summer Reveries

Katy Phillips

Early morning wanderings over unknown land
bring me to this timeless wooden bridge and

with the whisper of swift running water
Scuppernong Creek tempts me to stop,

gaze at the sunlight glistening on moss-rocks
and enter a sensual world of succulent green.

My skin is first held captive,
feeling the warmth of moist air:

then my eyes succumb, fatally attracted
to this vision of quick, sundappled coolness.

I sink into midsummer trance. Suddenly
the peaceful pastoral scene is aquiver...

a dragonfly duo dart over the stream.
Swooping aloft in a wild dance of joy,

they propel themselves over the marsh grasses
on gauzey wings that spin and flash. Defying gravity

they pirouette upward, then swoop down in tandem
like barnstorming tricksters of old.

And then they vanish, gone as suddenly
as they had first appeared, leaving the scene

to this grounded adventurer.

Kathleen Phillips

I live the story
of a woman
who loves stone

hides them in suitcases
piles them in baskets
travels to find them
in faraway lands
makes chairs of them
along rocky shores
wonders at meanings in
mysterious circles
deep earth shelters
spaces carved
secrets unspoken

and I love to listen

Kathleen Phillips

*Speak of rock, she said,
tell a story
of stone...*

one speaks of hardness
heaviness
the stoop of his shoulders
fills his silence
another with dangling crystals
envisions the universe
herself as star stuff
the old talk
of secrets within
the young
of endless possibilities
all groped for words
to define
why they choose
to be stone
why birds
do not speak
their language

In Aldo's Chair

Kathleen Phillips

I sit and listen
for what I have never heard before
but the familiar sound of wind in trees
birds who call their names to me
bring nothing new.
I wait and watch
the changing scene around me
scutting clouds high above
summer trees in full leaf
short clipped grass beneath my feet
all familiar...
so too the smell of fast approaching storm.
until I close my eyes
and let my body be cradled
in Leopold's lab,
let his voice speak to me
of hidden wonder

I awake to see
beneath my feet
a carpet of flowers
waiting for me
in silence.

Coming Out

Dave Baier

“Dusk. His majestic form bathed in crimson light, perched high above the streets and far from the gaze of the people he has sworn to protect. Fear not citizens, for you are being watched by the ever-wary eye of vigilance. The wind catches his cloak, billowing and enshrouding him in impenetrable mystery as he stands proudly on the building’s ledge, ready to leap into action should the need arise. Who is this champion of justice, this protector of innocence? He is Mister... no, Captain....no, no. He still needs a name.”

“Oh, nice monologue. Very dramatic, just let me sit herein awe of your ‘majestic form’.”

“Dammit Jeff, can’t you just for once be a good sidekick? Now knock off the peanut gallery sarcasm and just get out the book, will you please?” begged the strangely dressed man as he climbed down from the ledge of a particularly tall downtown high-rise. His green spandex suit caught the reddish sunset light in a hue that was somewhere between cabbage and vomit colored, and his cloak didn’t so much billow as it did drag on the ground at his heels causing him to stumble slightly.

“Let’s get something straight here, Doyle.” Jeff replied rather annoyed as he dug into the backpack on his lap, rummaging for the book that had been requested. “I am not your sidekick, I’m just your friend who got dragged up to the roof of this building while you engage in what I hope is some passing delusion or insane mid-life crisis. So I’d prefer it if you would not refer to me as your side-kick, or as the boy-wonder, or call me ‘chum.’ You’re the only psycho up here in spandex. I mean, look at you for God’s sake. You’re wearing a cape. What would you mother say?”

“Leave mom out of this. I told you, I’d tell her when I was ready. I just don’t think she’d support my choice of lifestyles; she’s too old fashioned. She doesn’t think grown men should be out gallivanting around in tights.”

“She’s right.” Jeff said. “Have you seen yourself? You look like asparagus.”

“Just shut up and help me pick a name, will you please. This is important to me.” Doyle said, grabbing the book out of the outstretched hand of Jeff, and pacing around as he flipped through it. “Let’s see... introduction.”

INTRODUCTION

WELCOME AND CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR PURCHASE OF CAPTAIN PEDAGOGUES SO, YOU WANT TO BE A SUPERHERO, FIFTH EDITION. WHETHER THIS IS THE FIRST TIME YOU ARE STEPPING INTO YOUR TIGHTS, OR YOU ARE A SEASONED CRIME-FIGHTER LOOKING TO BRUSH UP ON THE BASICS, THIS COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE WILL TAKE YOU STEP BY STEP FROM PICKING A NAME, TO THWARTING MADMEN'S DELUSIONS OF GLOBAL DOMINATION. WE APPLAUD YOU FOR YOUR DECISION TO TARE UP THIS MANTLE, NO DOUBT AT THE COST OF RIDICULE FROM FAMILY AND FRIENDS. THE ROAD TO BECOMING A SUPERHERO IS NOT AN EASY ONE: THE TIGHTS ARE UNCOMFORTABLE, THE PAY OFTENTIMES NEEDS TO BE AUGMENTED WITH A SECOND FORM OF INCOME (SEE CHAPTER 9, SECRET IDENTITIES), AND THE CITY YOU SEEK TO PROTECT MAY FEAR YOU AS MUCH AS THE VILLAINS ON WHOM YOU WAGE YOUR NIGHTLY WAR. HOWEVER, IF YOU HAVE THE TENACITY AND STRENGTH OF CHARACTER TO PERSEVERE THESE TRIALS, YOU WILL FIND THAT VICTORY IS YOUR PAYCHECK, AND A SAFE PEOPLE'S GRADITUDE YOUR REWARD. NOW, GATHER YOUR WITS AND PREPARE YOURSELF. YOUR EDUCATION BEGINS, AND ADVENTURE WILL FOLLOW.

CHAPTER I

SUPERHEROES' NAMES ARE AS IMPORTANT TO THEM AS THEIR DESIRE TO FIGHT EVIL. THEIR NAME WILL PRECEDE THEM INTO BATTLE AND LINGER BEHIND AS THEY DISAPPEAR INTO DARKNESS. IT IS THEIR FIRST WEAPON AGAINST CRIME, AND MUST STRIKE TERROR INTO THE HEARTS OF EVIL-DOERS. IT ALSO MUST BE EASILY RECOGNIZABLE SO A GRATEFUL PUBLIC CAN RALLY BEHIND IT IN TIMES OF STRIFE. THE BEST SUPERHERO NAMES ARE VERY PERSONABLE, AND VERY HEROSPECIFIC. THEY CAN ILLUSTRATE UNIQUE POWERS A HERO MAY POSSESS, LIKE SPIDER-MAN. OR THEY CAN REFLECT THE PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES OF A SUPER PERSONA, LIKE INDIGO-MAN, OR THE SCARLET STREAK. IF YOU ARE HAVING PROBLEMS COMING UP WITH A MEMORABLE NAME FOR YOURSELF, YOU MAY WISH TO CONSULT THE CHART BELOW. SIMPLY CHOOSE ONE ITEM FROM COLUMN A AND ONE FROM COLUMN B. ADD THE PREFIX "THE" AND THE COMBINATION IS YOUR NEW SUPERHERO MONIKER!

COLUMN A

TENACIOUS
MARVELOUS
HEADSTRONG
INCREDIBLE
SPECKLED
MASKED
WINGED
CLAWED
SMELLY

COLUMN B

AVENGER
CRUSADER
DEFENDER
PROTECTOR
SAMARITAN
SALIVATOR

FOR EXAMPLE: THE MASKED AVENGER, OR THE HEADSTRONG SAMARITAN. REMEMBER, THE SKY IS THE LIMIT WITH YOUR SUPERHERO NAME. TAKE THE TIME TO EXPERIMENT WITH SEVERAL BEFORE YOU COMMIT TO ONE AND

INVEST UNNECESSARY TIME TO LOGO CREATION. (SEE CHAPTER 6)

“What do you think, do you like any of those?” Doyle asked, turning to Jeff who was having a hard time masking his disapproval of this entire situation. “Maybe I could be the Green Avenger. You know, because my costume is green.”

“Yeah, that’s good,” said Jeff sarcastically. “Or maybe you could be the Caped Jackass or Turd-Man. Then your battle cry could be, ‘Time to assume the Fecal Position!’ Ha.”

“Oh, that’s very clever. And helpful, I might add. Have I mentioned to you why I value my friendship with you so much, Jeff? It’s because I can always count on you for support. You’re both my rock and my shoulder to cry on; you always pick me up when I’m down. And speaking of picking up, are you picking up on my sarcasm here, because I’m using it pretty liberally. Has it ever occurred to you that I am going through something pretty big here, and maybe instead of constantly belittling me for my unorthodox lifestyle choice, maybe you could try being supportive? This is not some phase I’m going through before I ‘come to my senses’. This is important to me. This is who I am. I’m a superhero. Now, you can either be a friend and get my back, or you can get the hell off my roof.”

“Hey, I understand this is important to you. And I’m doing my best to be supportive, but it’s kind of a lot to take in. What am I supposed to think. We grew up together, for Christ sake. I thought I knew you, but you’ve been hiding this from me for years. Did you think you couldn’t tell me? Did you think I wouldn’t understand, that I wouldn’t stand by you? What does that say about your feelings towards me, you couldn’t even trust me enough to confide in your best friend?”

“I wanted to tell you, but I was ashamed. I thought something was wrong with me, and that if I just ignored these urges I was having they would go away and I could be normal again.”

“Urges?”

“The urge to fight crime. The urge that I’ve kept hidden all these years for fear of what people might think, what my parents might think, what you might think. I couldn’t tell you because I realized I needed time to become comfortable with myself, to admit to myself that nothing was wrong with me, but for the first time things were right. Believe me this is hard enough without all of your passive-aggressive hero-bashing.”

“Look, I’m sorry,” Jeff replied, getting to his feet. “I know I give you a lot of shit, but I always thought it was in good fun. If you

want to be a superhero, be a superhero. Christ, I went to school under a political science major, and when I graduated I decided I wanted to be a gynecologist. Who am I to judge? Now, are we going to argue all night, or are we going to pick out a name for you?"

"No, the book said I should try out a few names before I stick with one. We can discuss that later, over coffee. The real reason I wanted to come to this roof was so I could test out my superpower."

"What superpower? How are you going to test a superpower? Do you even have a superpower?"

"Of course I have a superpower! Well I assume I do. Most superheroes have superpowers. I am a superhero, thus it stands to reason that I have a superpower. Here look, the book will explain it better than I."

CHAPTER 4

A KEY TO SUCCESSFULLY FIGHTING CRIME IS TO HAVE SOME SORT OF ADVANTAGE OVER THE CRIMINALS YOU PURSUE. POLICE USE GUNS AND HANDCUFFS, VIGILANTES USE SACKS FILLED WITH DOORKNOBS, AND SUPERHEROES USE SUPERPOWERS. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF WAYS TO OBTAIN A SUPERPOWER IF YOU WERE NOT ENDOWED WITH ONE AT BIRTH. THE EASIEST, AND MOST COMMON IS TO BE INVOLVED IN SOME SORT OF ACCIDENT INVOLVING RADIATION. RADIATION WILL CAUSE YOUR GENETIC STRUCTURE TO MUTATE RAPIDLY, OFTENTIMES YIELDING FANTASTIC RESULTS. JUST LOOK AT THIS TESTIMONY:

"YEAH, I WAS ATTENDING A SCHOOL FIELD TRIP TO THE LOCAL SCIENCE LABORATORY, WHICH HAPPENED TO BE DOING RESEARCH ON RADIATION. APPARENTLY A SPIDER WAS BOMBARDED BY THIS RADIATION, AND BEFORE DYING IT BIT ME, TRANSFERRING ITS MUTATED SPIDER GENES INTO MY BLOODSTREAM GIVING ME THE PROPORTIONATE STRENGTH OF A SPIDER, AND THE SPIDER-LIKE ABILITY TO CLIMB VERTICAL SURFACES. I OWE A GREAT DEAL OF MY SUCCESS AS A CRIME FIGHTER TO RADIATION."

-SPIDER-MAN

ONCE YOU HAVE YOUR SUPERPOWER, IT IS MERELY A MATTER OF DETERMINING EXACTLY WHAT ITS CAPABILITIES ARE, AND THEN HOW IT CAN BE BEST USED TO FIGHT CRIME. THE EASIEST COURSE OF ACTION IS SIMPLY TRIAL AND ERROR. TAKE THE TIME TO SUBJECT YOURSELF TO SEVERAL TESTS SO YOU KNOW JUST WHAT YOU ARE CAPABLE OF. THE MORE YOU KNOW YOURSELF, THE MORE POWERFUL YOU WILL BE.

Jeff was not convinced. "When have you ever been involved in some sort of radioactive accident? We live in the suburbs."

"Technically I haven't, yet. But look. I brought a microwave, a roll of tin foil, and my pet parakeet, Lucy."

"And..."

"And everyone knows you can't put tin foil in a microwave;

it'll blow up or something. So, if I wrap Lucy in tin foil, and put her in the microwave, the microwave will blow up and bombard Lucy and me with its radiation. Then I just have to eat Lucy, combining our molecular structures, and I'll have the proportionate strength of a parakeet, and I'll be able to fly. Hence why we are on the roof. Now, plug this thing in while I wrap Lucy in tin foil."

"Now hold on just one second Doyle. You'll have to forgive me if I have a hard time with some of this. I mean, you throw your grandiose life ambition at me, and now you're telling me that you're going to microwave your pet, and you expect this act of lunacy to give you super powers with which to fight evil. I understand you're going through some life altering events, and I support you and your decisions, but I'm going to have to ask you start making some sense. How do you know this is going to work?"

"I don't 'know' this is going to work, per se. But why wouldn't it? There's radiation and a bird. The rest just seems like it will work itself out. Now if you'll excuse me, I have a parakeet to wrap in tin foil, and it requires my complete attention.

"Easy, girl ... stop struggling. It's for the greater good. You'd best stand out of harm's way, Jeff." Doyle finished wrapping the writhing bird in foil, put her in the microwave, and pressed the baked potato button. Jeff slowly backed away as the microwave whirred to life, and sparks and screams started emanating from within. Suddenly the machine fizzled out and smoke started pouring from the door. With careful deliberation, and much to the dismay of Jeff who let out an audible gasp, Doyle began to unwrap and take small bites out of his former pet. "I can feel the power building inside me." Casting aside the small wad of tin foil and bones, Doyle began moving towards the ledge of the building.

It became obvious to Jeff what Doyle was about to do, but the question still came to his lips. "What are you doing?"

"Fear not, Jeff; I am surging with the power of the parakeet," he said, climbing dramatically onto the ledge.

"You can't seriously be thinking about jumping?"

"Jeff, I've thought this through. My molecular composition has been altered by the radioactive parakeet I just ate, giving me certain physical attributes of said parakeet. One of those being the ability to fly. It is these abilities I will use to rid this city of evil."

Jeff was losing his patience for this. "You nuked your pet bird and ate her! Now you're planning to jump off the roof of a building to

test your superpowers! Jesus Christ, we're 20 stories up, you're going to be a schmere on the pavement! What makes you think you have the powers of a parakeet, let alone any chance in hell of surviving?"

"How else do you explain my sudden craving for crackers?"

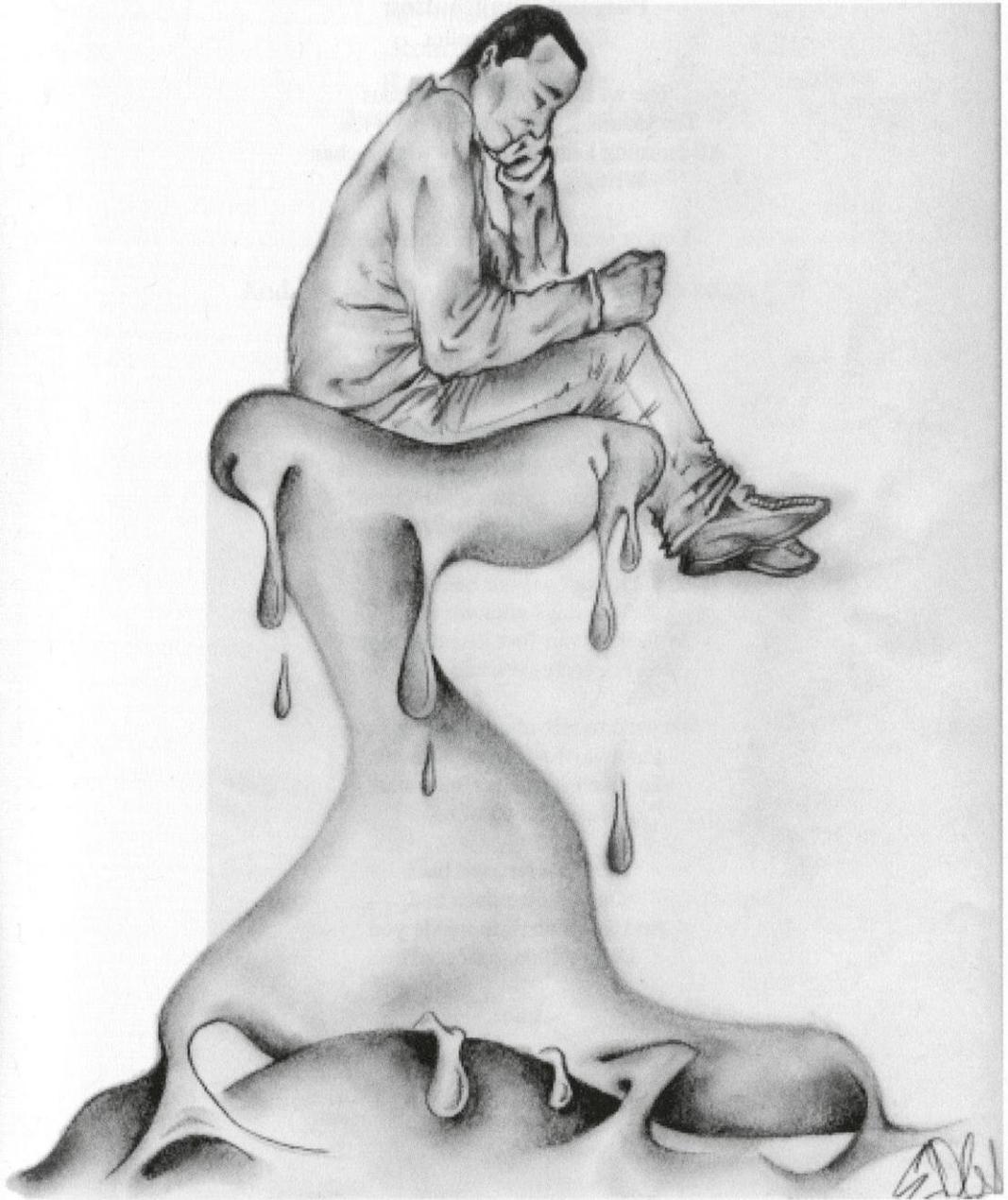
Doyle asked matter of factly. "Now if you'll excuse me ..."

"Doyle, please ..."

"I have a city to defend." "... don't do this."

"And so begins my war against crime, with one giant LEAP..."





Parallel Imagination

Stephanie Mueller

The weather today is gorgeous
The clouds are rolling past my eyes.
All morning I sat in our new wicker chair
Writing poetry in the sun.

You're sitting at your kitchen table
Tie loosened, shoes off
Wondering why the hell
You got a letter from me.

I'll tell you why.

I always reminisce about the day
When you stumbled down the stairs
You gave me an awkward "hello"
And I fell in love.

You threw your back out
Two days after we met
We kissed our first kiss that night
For forty-five minutes.

We used to talk about moving away
Far away to Tempe, Arizona
To give ourselves a new start
Just the two of us.

Do you ever look back
On what we once had
And feel a warmth inside you
Deep within your soul?

I do.

My hair is still red
Roaring with fire
Raging with desire
Just the way you liked it.

More importantly
I've gained wisdom.
I've gained knowledge
And my heart hurts less and less everyday.

I have to go now
But I'll write again soon
And when I do
I'll tell you about my past three visits

To Tempe, Arizona.

It Could Have Gone Either Way

Stephanie Mueller

You're in my space
You never leave me alone
You're like a shadow following me
Wherever I go

I travel out west
Hoping to fly away
But your face is on my mind
Everyday

I could have been the one to win
I could have changed the outcome
You could have been the one to lose
I guess "it could have gone either way"

My mind is on fire
Thinking of what might have been
I loved you with everything I had inside me
But the line was thin

Looking back on us
I know it's in the past
It's what you needed to do and you left me
It happened way to fast

Now I'm here
Thinking of you everyday
You're like a shadow following me
You're in my space.

Pain

Meg Offerman

The night air was heavy and damp. Smoke from the campfire swirled above her head as if it were dancing. As the smoke moved around her, she felt cramped and crowded. Slowly, she moved away from the fire, trying not to draw attention to herself.

As the darkness closed in, she sighed in relief. Walking along the campground's dirt road, she noticed the way the fire filtered through the sparse grove of trees. It made the trees look like they were alive, moving and dancing. She moved off the road now, onto the damp, soft grass. It crinkled beneath her running shoes. "*It looks different at night,*" she thought. Stopping then, she looked around, trying to regain her bearings. "I should've brought my flashlight," she muttered.

The path seemed to appear in front of her, closer to the campsite than she remembered it being. It looked sinister in the night, dark and foreboding. Not as it had during the day. Her mind screamed at her to turn back, but the curiosity of what was waiting to be seen took control. Breathing deeply, she stepped onto the path.

It was darker on this path. No light from the campfires lit it for her. The only light came from the stars that shined down through the openings in the trees. She shivered then, wishing she had brought her sweatshirt. Her steps started falling erratically. She was clumsy without the light to show her where she was going. Suddenly, she realized she was close to where she wanted to be, close to the area that had seemed to call her earlier in the day. She stopped walking then. Standing there silently, she waited and listened and then heard footsteps coming behind her. She dashed off the side of the path and crouched down, hoping it wasn't her sister following her.

The steps that came closer were irregular. They didn't keep a steady rhythm. The girl looked up, trying to see who was coming and if she knew them. The footsteps stopped almost in front of her face, yet she still saw no one. The bushes that hid her parted, and two large eyes peered at her through them. Fear paralyzed her for a moment but soon fled her body.

"Middy! Silly girl, you scared me." Her large mastiff stood in front of her; obviously pleased she followed her mistress. The leather leash that had tied the dog to the camper trailed behind her, broken in half. The girl contemplated her dog for a second and then stood up. "Well, girl, I can't take you back, so you'll have to come with me. Let's

go.”

Standing up, she dusted herself off, grimacing as she noticed the dampness from the ground had seeped into her shirt. Shivering again, she started walking, going deeper into the forest with Middy walking along side of her. Silently she walked, occasionally petting the dog as if she needed the reassurance. The trail curved sharply and she stopped again.

The twisted tree that stood at the edge of the trail seemed to want to direct her. The twined and misshapen branches pointed her in the opposite direction of the path. Breathing deeply, she stepped off the path and into the woods.

No light penetrated the dense cover of the woods. The tree trunks seemed to be varying shades of black and gray. She felt like she had walked into a black and white picture. The air was thicker here; no wind cooled the air. Sounds of running water surrounded her, making it hard for her to even hear her own thoughts. Middy cowered, not wanting to walk among the sinister looking trees.

She continued on, her excitement growing. The air became thicker as the humidity rose. The sound of running water became louder and the trees became less dense. A fine mist started to thread in between the trees, making it look like a dream. She walked into the mist, letting it swallow her. Middy whined gently as her body shook with fear. “It’s okay girl, don’t worry. Nothing’s going to hurt you.”

“Now if *you can only convince yourself of that, Jewel, you’ll be fine,*” she thought.

The air became hazier, almost fog-like. She extended her hands in front of her, to avoid walking into a tree. Jewel stopped then and listened. She walked forward again, towards the sound of the water. Abruptly the mist ended and an amazing sight unfolded in front of her eyes.

In front of her was a waterfall. The porous slate gray rock wall climbed high up into the sky. Standing next to it, Jewel felt tiny, insignificant. The water crashed down into the clear lagoon below. Water bounced off the surface and sprayed up, drenching her. She stood there in awe, amazed at the power she felt coming off the waterfall.

Jewel moved closer to the deep blue lagoon. Bending over she ran her hand through the cool water. She sat down on a boulder and started to remove her sandals. Dangling her feet into the water, Jewel stared into space. She allowed herself to get lost in her thoughts. “*I don’t wanna be here anymore. I thought if I came here with them I’d be*

able to get away from it all. But I can't escape my thoughts. I could have helped in some way. How can I face everyone again?"

"Life is pain."

Jewel's eyes opened suddenly and glanced around looking for the unseen speaker. Shaking her head, she tried to dislodge the feeling of being watched. "Middy, here girl." The dog came bounding out of the woods, abruptly stopping in front of her. "I'm paranoid aren't I girl? No one else is here. It's just you and me." She leaned down to rub the dog's head.

"Actually, someone else is here." The lightly accented voice sounded vaguely familiar. "I saw Middy run away and didn't want her to get hurt." He stepped out from behind a clump of trees. Recognition took a few moments, seeing as he was surrounded by shadows.

"Kurt, you followed me."

"Yeah," he said without guilt, "Gonna let me join you?"

"I came out here to be alone. You know, just me."

"C'mon Jewel. I just walked all the way out here to make sure you and your dog were okay. At least let me sit for a few minutes. I won't bother you if you don't want me to." "Fine, as long as you shut up."

"Good." His smug smile let her know that he wouldn't have left anyways.

They sat on the boulder together in silence. The thoughts that were plaguing her before came back in full force. Tension climbed through her body. Without realizing it, she started talking to Kurt.

"It was my fault."

"What was?"

"The fact that she died. I could have stopped her."

"No you couldn't have."

"Yes, I could have. I'm the strong one. I'm the one everyone comes to if they need help. I told her to go away that day, that I was busy. She wanted to talk and I told her to come back later, when I had time. But you know what? She never came back. She was gone."

Jewel jumped off the boulder, seemingly oblivious to the cold water seeping through her jeans. She walked a few steps away, trying to get herself under control. Kurt sat on the boulder, watching every move she made, but not speaking. He waited for her to calm down and sit back down.

"Are you ready to listen to me?" he asked quietly.

"Sure," she answered, her voice dull and emotionless.

"You couldn't have stopped her. She was going to do it no matter what you said or did. She was very ill. You can't blame yourself, and you can't pull away from people because you're afraid of being hurt."

"I don't like feeling like this. I don't like feeling like I'm not in control."

"To not feel anything would mean you're either God or a corpse. And I know you're neither. You haven't talked with anyone about this have you?"

"No." She looked at him for the first time since her tirade. "It seemed like if I kept it all inside, then I could live with it. But it doesn't work. I just feel worse."

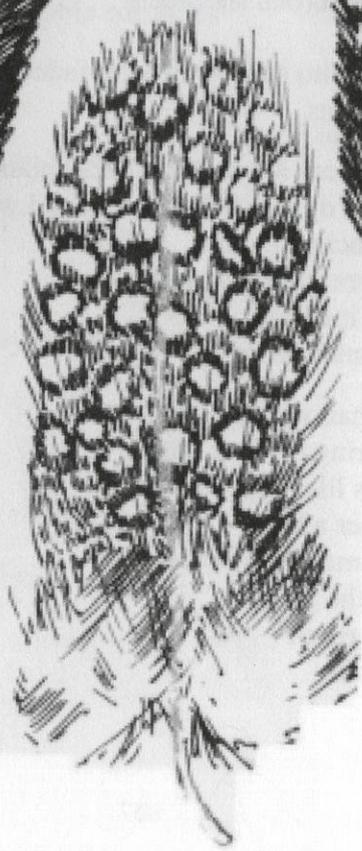
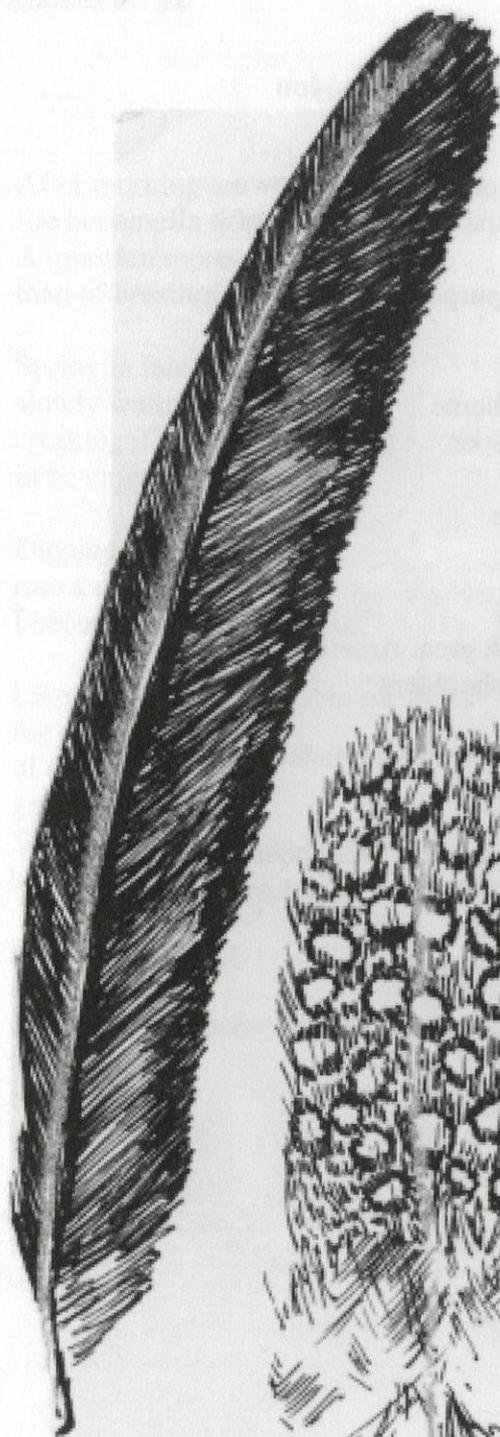
"Don't bottle it up. I know it's hard to talk to people sometimes, but that's what we're here for. To listen."

Jewel didn't answer, but sat there quietly. When she didn't answer, Kurt jumped off of the boulder. He stepped in front of her and made her look at him.

"Feeling pain and guilt is part of life. You can't let either of them take over your life though." With that last bit of wisdom, he turned and walked away. Middy followed behind him, as if sensing Jewel needed to be left alone. She listened until she couldn't hear their footsteps anymore. Sliding off the boulder, she put her sandals back on and walked towards the far side of the waterfall.

The roar of crashing water created a sound proof area. No one around her would hear what she would say. She sat down again, this time on the smooth pebbles. Grabbing handfuls of them, Jewel started tossing them into the lagoon. She started throwing them harder and faster. Finally, the tears she'd held at bay came, and they mixed with the calming waters of the waterfall.





Green River Canyon

Robert Kokan

This is when all night comes crashing down
and I hang my head in the drear darkness of it all
thinking
Everything once had a purpose
inevitable
but now it's lost
a thousand miles from home
Not feeling even a whisper
or a vibration
of someone somewhere
anywhere on this earth
thinking of me

How is that not night oh great America
with your stony broad shoulders
Granite
now softening into sunsets of long faded
Utahs and dreams

Your angular teeth are holding back mountains
and ravines are dying in their backward world
Waiting for ancient echoes
to carve and crack new stones
peeling away into
uncountable madnesses

Now I am a man without sky
not remembering my last breath
or what it was like to know air
but I remember a kiss
and it haunts me like a voice
heard across the silence
of a listening room
until I am again
only clouds

Morning Tea

Robert Kokan

After morning tea
life becomes a deeper science
A question more of living
than of breathing

Spring in late March wind
slowly warms the Earth
creaking it's winter joints
in an expansion of sky

Dipping down
into a deeper brain
I become a patient witness

Like a voice of reasonable solitudes
the changing shades
of the passing sun
grows shadows
Shadows that grow and die
and grow again

But I am constant
a continuance
(though considerably darker)
rounded
not immediate
or moving

Like stone
an anchor
for sun

Blue Day
Robert Kokan

Six o'clock in the junk-sick morning
Of the new world
Waiting for the sun to rise
From the cinders and ashes

Gabriel

Joshua Parker Ryan

I walked to work today. Once a year I walk to work, always on the same day. I only live a mile away, but I'm not as quick as I used to be. I need the time to think. Today's special. The gray above loomed over me, and the mist washed my face.

I entered my office and hung my coat. Sara was in her usual spot, gabbing on the phone. She paused for a moment, hand cupped over the receiver. "I got the flowers you asked me to pick up for you, Father." I knew that she would be difficult to get rid of tonight without a million questions.

I walked to my desk and picked up the bouquet. I brought them to my nose and smelled life. Tears pounded the back of my eyes. I stared out the window so Sara would not see my lip quiver.

I sent Sara home early tonight. She asked as many questions as I thought she would, and as she does every year. I scurried to the front doors of the church. I posted my sign, ensuring total privacy tonight. "The choir will not be practicing tonight. Sorry for the inconvenience." Now I wait. The church is the world's sanctuary year-round, I just need tonight. Now I wait.

When the time came, I made my way to the back of the church and took my seat. The flickering candles provided the only light. The wind ferociously blew the shutters back and forth. Their clapping overpowered the sound of my heavy breathing. Their persistent banging escalated to a point of frenzy, then suddenly silenced. All is calm.

I cowered in my seat, and buried my face in my hands. I took a moment to catch my breath. Hues of amber caressed the dank air, and comfort settled around me. I felt a set of old, familiar eyes on my back. He's here. My eyes widened as my hands went to my sides. My body tensed. He's arrived.

"Why do you always act so alarmed whenever I come here? My visits should be nothing new." Gabriel chuckled, and then coarsely coughed. "How's life?"

"You tell me." I want to seem mean. I want him to think I'm still mad.

Gabriel sighed in frustration. "I really don't know why I bother."

"I really don't know, Gabriel."

"I still feel responsible."

“I think of what you did, and what happened... was it so wrong?”

“No one was happy with what I did. I perverted death by cheating life. As for you,” he paused and smiled brilliantly, “you’re so well loved.”

Emptiness filled me. I felt more alone by his assurance from above. “But that, my friend, is for another time. They notice if I’m gone too long.”

“Our conversations are getting longer, Gabriel.”

“I’m getting bolder,” he smirks.

“Any idea when I’m leaving?”

“Some other time, kid. Some other time.”

The church was cold again. My loneliness only grew. The gate at the cemetery creaked as I made my way down the hill. I barricaded the flowers in my coat, a senseless task that made sense at the time. I stopped at my friend’s headstone and laid the flowers at the base. I’m really not mad. “I’m waiting, bud.”

The walk home was brutal. I’d forgotten the questions I intended to ask, as I always do. There’s always next year.



Senses of Sleepiness

Carolyn Chariton

Sounds of

Lonely bullfrog

Soft bass

Night-time rhythm

Smells of

Slow lavender

Humid depth

Scented summer

Sights of

Hazy landscape

Long shadows

Soft awareness

Tastes of

Vanilla taffy

Melting

Warm ductility

Touches of

Cotton blankets

Swaddled...

I Watched

Carolyn Chariton

I watched the trees turn to silhouettes
As darkness waxed a stalking stranger
As night crept in with gnarled ghost fingers
As daytime voices turned to whispers

I watched the deep night in its fullness
While sparkling stars showed lofty glamour
While earth slept heavy under blanket's cover
While I wondered where and what was over



Wit's End

Amber Kwiatkowski

The cigarette burning in the ashtray fills the one-room apartment with smoke. The baby lies in the crib in the corner wailing. I ignore him. He's been crying all day, and I don't know what more to do. Hour after hour, day after day he cries continuously. No one will watch him because of his crying. This is not normal crying. This is wailing.

His father is coming for his once-in-a-blue-moon visit with his child. I want to cook a decent meal for myself for once. The church gave me some food last week. I start to chop the onion to put in the lasagna. There's a knock on the hollow door.

"Come on in," I say when I open the door. He can tell that I'm not happy about his visit, but he smiles at Bailey and pretends he doesn't notice me.

"Hey kiddo, how ya doing!" he says as he picks up Bailey high in the air twisting him side to side.

"You have any money?" I ask him. Without even looking at me he reaches into his pocket, withdraws the bill and hands it to me.

"I'll be expecting more," I say to him, knowing it's fallen on deaf ears.

He continues to smile up at the baby whose face is pinched up tight and is bright red. Mark's back is still turned to me and he's facing the unlit corner.

"Yeah, yeah," he mumbles. He picks up the baby bag and carrier and heads toward the door.

As he walks out, I yell at the closing door, "Back by six tomorrow."

I look around slowly taking in the sight of everything. The lack of furniture, the stained, well-worn carpet, the crack in the window. A sigh escapes my lips, and I get back to my dinner.

A couple of hours later my gourmet meal of the month has been consumed, my small place is clean, and I have a cherry pie on the counter cooling.

With a full tummy and no distractions, I feel ready to enjoy the next 24 hours. As I turn on my little black and white TV, there's a knock on the door. I squint through the peephole and see that it's Charla—a fellow church member.

"Hi Charla, would you like to come in?" I ask, motioning with my arm.

“No thanks, I can only stay a minute. I just have to tell you something.”

Her brows are squinted together and she can't seem to look me in the eye.

“What's wrong?”

“I know that you have full custody of your baby, but I... Well, I don't want to intrude but I figured you should know.”

“Know what? What's going on?”

“I saw Mark at the bus station with Bailey,” she blurts out quickly.

We are both silent for a minute. Finally, “Well maybe he's picking somebody up,” I say as I inhale deeply.

“Yes, that had crossed my mind, but he had a suitcase with him and I thought I saw tickets sticking out of his shirt pocket. I don't want to worry you, but I figured you should know, just in case.”

“OK. Thanks. I have a freshly baked cherry pie. Would you like to join me in a slice?” I say with a forced smile.

“No. I have to get going.”

“Well, thanks for stopping by.” I close the door and stand staring at nothing in particular. *Now what do I do? Legally I can't do anything until tomorrow if he brings him back late. Maybe he's just taking him on an overnight trip. Worrying now won't help anything.*

Although I am exhausted, I have a restless night of sleep. The next morning Charla arrives at my door just after I have finished my breakfast of toast and milk.

“Hi, Charla. What's the surprise this morning?” I ask dejectedly, my heart beating wildly.

“I was wondering if you would like to join me today? I'm going to the park by the beach to enjoy the nice weather. I've even brought along a picnic lunch with enough for two. Would you like to come?”

“Sure,” I say as I slip on my sandals and grab my keys, walking out into the sunshine with her. We enjoy our little vacation day and I forget my worries so much that we play like children splashing in the ocean. Over lunch we relax in the warm sand.

Pondering, I absently say, “I miss this life.”

“Well...I guess you would. Having a baby changes things. You can still go out and do things though. You seem to be enjoying yourself. I've never seen you smile so much.”

“Yes. I am having a great time,” I admit half-heartedly as I

smile at her as a silent thank you. "But I can't go out much with a baby that cries all the time. He almost never stops. I just don't know what to do." I pick at the blanket. We hear nothing but our own thoughts for a few minutes.

"What does the doctor say?" she finally asks.

"I haven't gone to see him about this. It's just crying," I say as I shake my head lightly.

"I think you should. The crying could be caused by something that the doctor can fix. Even if he's just colicky I'm sure he'd have ideas."

"I guess I could," I tell her, deciding silently that I'll think about it. Realizing I'm complaining too much, I add, "It's not that I don't care, I'm just so frustrated."

We decide we've had enough talking so we head back to the water for the remainder of the afternoon.

We don't get back until 5:30, but I didn't notice. She takes me up on my offer of leftover lasagna and pie. She dries her hands on the towel after we finish the dishes and looks at her watch.

"It's 6:15. How time flies." She looks at me expectantly as if waiting for a response.

"6:15 already! He's not back yet." I run to look out the window. "What do I do now?" I ask as I start pacing.

"Calm down. What time does the order say? 6:00pm exactly?"

"Yes and he's never been late. He usually doesn't even like taking Bailey," I say, as my voice gets higher with every word. I search frantically around the room as if searching for something, but I don't find it. "I have to call the police. Please, I have to go down to the pay phone."

"I'll drive you. Where is it?"

"It's down the street two blocks outside of the bar."

We get in the car to go. I call the police then hang up looking down at the ground. Tears well up in my eyes.

I slowly look up to meet the worried expression on her face. With tears streaming down my face I say quietly, "They say he isn't considered missing until 24 hours after he's supposed to be back. The fact that he is with his father doesn't help. They don't seem to take it too seriously because it's his son."

"Why don't we drive over to his house? Do you know where he lives?" she says as we start heading back to the car.

"Yeah. He's on 5th and Graden... if he hasn't moved again." I

look at her expectantly, "We can try if you really don't mind."

"Of course not. I want to help." She smiles at me so wonderfully that it fills me with a great feeling. I can almost see the light.

We drive over to his house, my heart pulsating wildly against my ribcage the whole way there. Turning the corner on Graden I see his truck in the drive. We walk through the overgrown littered yard and up the dilapidated steps. Taking a deep breath I rap loudly on the door. From inside we hear the heavy metal being turned down and he opens the door.

"I want my baby back Mark," I say as sternly as possible.

"Chill out. It's not time yet. I have 35 minutes left."

I glance at his clock on the kitchen wall, hearing the baby crying in the back. "You forgot to spring forward, you moron!" I yell as the corners of my mouth start turning up. I let out a huge sigh and laugh hysterically. "So you're not trying to steal him from me?"

"Well, you can take him now. It'll save me a trip." He hands me Bailey and his stuff. I leave with a slam of the door.



Whose Grass Is Greener

Carol Deprez

Consider the farmer
 outwardly calm
but serf to the seasons
 the weather, his farm

Linked to the land
 by blood and by debt
his psyche is restless
 his mind does fret

Consider the cow
 languidly calm
docile psyche
 life without qualm

In stanchion or pasture
 precious little to do
chew grass, swish tail
 make milk and moo

Carol Deprez

Z is for zebra
A is for apple
as all the primers say
but it's tedious to read
again and again
a worn and frayed cliché

how about Z is for zigzag
or zorro or zip
just a few zesty samples
of words more hip

and A could amaze
with ambidextrous agility:
adept is adroit
but it's also ability

as for B through Y
possibilities are profuse
as myriad words
grow dim with disuse

