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# WINDY HILL REVIEW

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1997-1998

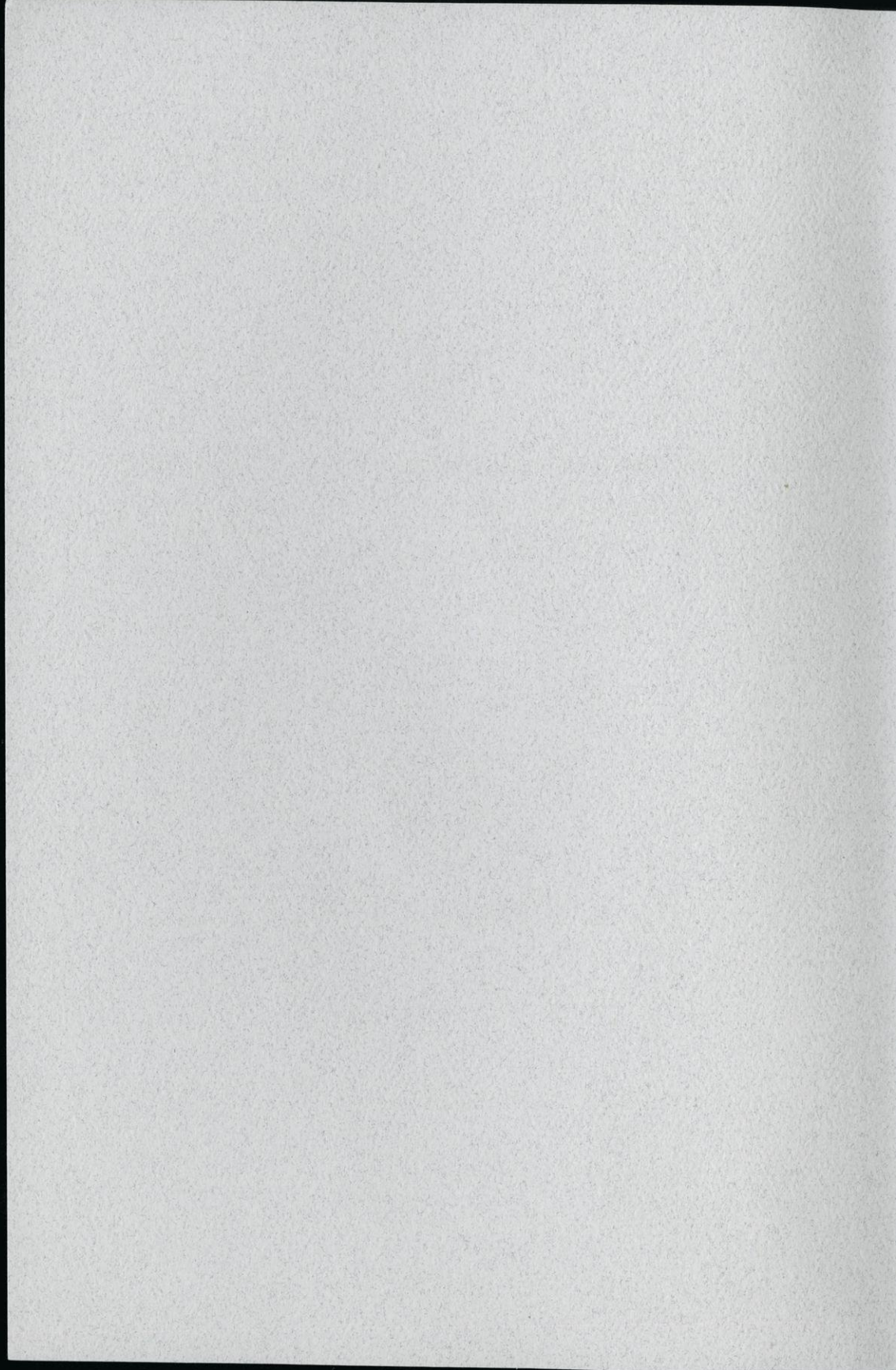
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UW WAUKESHA

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# DEDICATION

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**This 20th anniversary issue of the Windy Hill Review is dedicated to all the previous contributors and editors who helped establish the foundation of the literary club.**

**We especially thank those who once again blessed our pages with their fine work.**



**20th Anniversary**



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## **COVER**

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**Illustration by Gabriel Leonard**

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**Terry Kaminski**

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**Layout design by Tina Young**



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## **Why I Write**

by Mary Beth Eckels

### *Boxed*

Inside a world of  
Spelling lists, physics labs,  
Teleconferences,  
Lost jackets, squeezed-out toothpaste tubes,  
Must-have computer games, just-right jeans,  
Laundry (dirty commingling with clean)  
Overflowing bedroom floors,  
Eternally emptying refrigerator shelves,  
I am hermited.

So many schedules,  
Games, gatherings and deadlines,  
That my own appointments are nearly  
Crowded off the calendar.  
Oversleeping beauties  
Somehow make it my job  
To awaken, organize, tend  
Them, not me.

This hubbubbing home,  
This box with walls  
Solid and unyielding,  
Encase me  
With alluring clutter.

And yet, now and then,  
By sleight of hand  
Or heart or mind,  
I touch the secret panel  
Of escape.



The Celebration  
by Beth Ausprung



We ate and drank  
Conversed loudly  
without noise  
Held hands  
Your ungainly palm in mine  
Dancing on this unfamiliar soil  
Returning to the craft  
You seem to glow  
Your aura of fluorescent  
green light

# Physics

by jen stubbs

In the refrigerator light, I might have thought she looked like an angel.

"If you squeeze like this," she said, placing a smooth, white egg in the palm of her smooth, white hand, gripping its circumference, "it won't break."

I was not thinking about the egg. I was thinking I wanted to kiss her. I'd almost tried, twenty minutes earlier, in the car on the way over to her house, when she'd leaned over to grab a tape from the glove compartment. She'd kept one smooth hand lightly around the steering wheel and reached with the other, softly brushing my thigh in the process. (Maybe it'd been an accident.) I had leaned in, closed my eyes, and waited, but she pushed the tape into the cassette deck and exhaled something like a laugh. She'd said nothing, but smiled, not feigning ignorance. She didn't pretend not to know.

Twenty minutes later, in that cold blue light of the refrigerator, holding an egg in one hand and a recipe in the other, I might have thought she looked like an angel if she hadn't worn that same impish grin.

"Yes it will," I said. "The egg will break."

She turned toward me, still grinning. "It won't break, I promise you. I wouldn't do this if it would break."

She stood with one arm draped over the open refrigerator door, leaning with her hip jutted out to hold it open. The egg was warming in her grasp. Then she began to squeeze.

*(Slowly at first, gently)* "It won't break," she explained.

*(Pressing)* "Because the pressure applied is equidistant. *(Harder)*

Something about the center of gravity, I think. *(Harder)* See?"

*(Crushing not breaking)*

I saw. Her knuckles whitened and I watched the muscles in her arm work. A dull pain broke loose in the pit of my stomach, cold and runny as broken yolk: in the blue light of the refrigerator, holding a recipe in one hand and squeezing an egg in the other, she was not angelic, but still beautiful. The egg did not break. She grinned.

She stepped forward, held the refrigerator door with her knee, and loosened her grip on the egg. Her long fingernails tapped the shell. "See?" she repeated. "Like I never touched it."

She handed me the egg. I clutched it, warm from her hold, and ran the pad of my stubby thumb over its surface.

"Do you believe me now?" she asked.

I didn't say anything. The refrigerator light flickered behind her. I stared; she was still grinning, back-lit blue, charmed by her own knowledge of the physics of everyday things. I did not think about kissing her. I thought only of the warmth in my hand and the slow-spreading cold in my stomach.

## Mariners

by Andrew Krause

Siren,  
Do you realize that  
You stand in a tide pool?  
I know that you're  
Completely unaware  
Of bathyscaphs  
And submarines.  
You've never even seen  
Their barnacled hulls  
Which I've tasted  
With my skin.  
Enjoy your honey voice  
As the beach dries,  
Nymph.

## A Friend for Ishmael

by Eric Larsen

A three month old  
short green heathen  
cowers in the corner;  
hardly breathing.

His nervous eyes  
dart around  
as his claws dig deeper  
into the ground.

Forced from the warm  
surroundings of his cage,  
he whips his tail  
at me, enraged.

He's no longer lonely,  
but no longer warm.  
He shows his affection  
by scratching my arm.

But our special bond  
will never break apart,  
because the scratches  
are from his heart.

# *Ninety-Two*

*by Kathy (Held) Grieger*

*Her frail bones clasped  
my strong arms  
Sobbing for relief  
she begged me  
to stop being selfish*

*Holding her  
in a world  
where she  
no longer belonged*

*I was not brave enough  
to lose her*

*Gathering my courage  
as she slept  
I told her  
she could leave  
I was ready now  
to let her go*

*Raising an eyelid  
she drew me close  
with her whisper  
"I can hear you  
you know  
I'm not dead  
yet"*

*Crawling into bed  
I held her  
Wrapping her cold  
body  
with my warm one*

# Potlatch Creek

by Claire Davis

It could be explained  
as easily as baptism,  
this immersion  
in a sylvan river  
but the silt  
bothers you, greasing  
the rocks and you slide  
more quickly  
than intended  
into the water, to your hips.  
A scattering of  
crawdads rise—  
a brine of claws,  
legs—and your breath  
hitches under the fifth  
rib. Friends crouch  
on boulders  
plucking caddis flies  
from the gravel,  
peeling back homes  
like scabs off proud  
flesh to reveal  
grubs, white  
and shriveled as your own  
small toe.  
You speak to hear  
your voice  
leave, following the river  
as if it could keep  
stride without you.  
Friends ring you in  
and you want to believe  
they hold the water  
in place. You want, more  
than anything, to know  
there is no mercy  
too small.  
The leaves applaud  
with tiny gestures,  
wince and shrug  
in sunlight too bright  
for the commotion

of clouds. You find  
    your own level  
        where watercress grows  
an immanent green  
    and white fish pucker  
        their lips against your thighs.  
When the water breaks  
    over your eyes  
        and they burn with cold,  
you blink  
    and in the dark compulsion  
        you see angels  
torched by the last light,  
    the larvae guttering  
        in their palms.

## The Rising Son

by Erin Nicole Fleming

The noise is growing **louder**,  
getting closer,  
Cans violently **bang**  
against the rim of the truck.  
An eye opens.  
Nearby, a dog **barks**—  
*over and over*,  
becoming more annoying  
as the owner fails to **silence** it.  
Perturbed, an eyebrow raises.  
Another eye opens.  
The phone **rings-again**. . .  
a sigh, a clench of the fist,  
both eyes close wearily.  
There is an outbreak of **laughter**,  
and an *obnoxious* **clatter**.  
A grinding of teeth—lips tightly together,  
A head is smothered.  
Time passes . . .  
**Beep! Beep! Beep!**  
One hand reaches out—**SMACK!**  
A mouth slowly opens,  
as the body hesitantly rises.  
Both eyes open—  
Nothing but the blinding sun.



# Seoul

by Chris Abresch

Surrounded by humanity,  
noise, smells, colors, customs  
I'm not accustomed to.  
People, so many people.

I never get used to motor scooters  
forcing me off the sidewalk.  
Or squid for breakfast,  
or any other meal.

I take a chance  
and talk to a shop owner.  
She invites me in and  
shows me her wares.  
I bargain (a little) on a hanbok for my child.

I smile at a fisherman's wife  
and she gives me the "thumbs up" sign.  
We giggle like old friends.

I say "annyeong haseyo"  
to people I meet.  
Some of them hide a smile, but others  
just respond and go on with their work.

I'm nervous about visiting the home  
of people who have volunteered to have me.  
But I've come halfway around the world.  
They're waiting, and so I go.

We meet. We bow.  
We smile and nod a lot.  
We sit on the warm floor at a low, glossy table  
And eat sweet watermelon and pumpkin soup,  
chop chae, bulgogi and spicy kim chee.  
(I skip the squid, and they find this humorous).  
I play jacks with the children.  
They play piano and we sing songs together  
each in our own language.  
It blends well.  
We embrace and say goodbye.  
I leave gifts of toys, T-shirts and keychains.  
They give me their Bible  
and their love.

## Schoolyard Chums

by Pat Bakic



I can remember playing dodgeball  
during recess in the schoolyard  
My friends pinned me up against a wall  
as the ball was thrown in my face pretty hard  
but I can laugh about it now  
Ha.

## The Wheels On the Bus

by Ryan Burican

(children sing) The wheels on the bus go round and round,  
round and round,  
round and round . . .  
The wheels on the bus go round and round (fade)

An elderly woman 'black' enters the bus  
It is crowded, and I sit next to the filthy prejudiced pig  
The woman walks farther down and looks for a spot  
I see Her tired eyes and I know She needs to sit  
But all I can say is . . . "Oink"  
I see her wrinkled skin and I know She needs to sit  
But all I can say is . . . "Oink"  
I see Her lonely arms and I know, I know  
But all I can say is . . . "Oink"  
I can see so many things, yet there is only so much I can say

## HELP WANTED: STREET SWEEPER, BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

by Dennis Held

I sweep the streets of Waukesha, a town done up in lamps and benches, cobblestone and central springhouse, parks along the Fox.

The river hunches over a shallow gravel bar, raising its old backbone. A hypodermic needle points to a pair of bleached crayfish claws at water's lip. Beer-bottle mosaics pave the alley down by Gasper Street. The early morning crowd hits K & D's and Hammer's Landing—second shifters, twenty-year-old junkies and just plain drunks with skin that stinks.

On Main Street, cigar butts roll before the rooming house, Lucky Strike straights line the cracks outside Chicago Ed's tattoo parlor. Clumps of hair drift out from Dick the Barber's shop. He offers me a job: "Not cutting hair, I got a buddy needs some guys to build a bridge out by Eau Claire."

Cold morning: stocking cap and gloves, two sweaters and my cart. Broken pigeon eggs show fetal birds, all bulging eyes and shiny skin. I sweep them off the sidewalk to the gutter—the bristles send a shiver of flesh through my chilled fingers, tight around the handle.

A permanent oil slick blacks the street at the Checker Taxi Company. Two young guys with cigar-packed mouths drive sullen drunks back home. The rescue squad hollars up to the rooming house but today leaves empty. Yesterday some guy dropped dead of a heart attack and split his head when he fell. I sweep across today's black stain.

Carol who owns the flower shop talks through me and looks down at my cart. "You know, I think they ought to get a retarded to do your job—no offense—but since we are the county seat we got all these social service cases running loose, maybe they could give one of them your job, get them off the streets." She looks off at the crab apple trees, heavy with blossom.

"Just you wait till those petals fall,  
then you'll have some sweeping to do."

Two high-school kids hump by as I sweep past.  
One spits on my foot, stops to look me  
in the eye, make sure I know it's no mistake.  
A grampa with a wooden cane says, "I guess  
then Charlie Knoll is dead. He used to save  
the butts from taverns, smoked them in a pipe.  
Had a shack on the river, lived off what he found  
in garbage cans. Us kids would bug him 'Hey Charlie,  
you got limberger cheese in your pockets?'  
Then we'd run like hell."

A tiny woman in a cloth coat grabs my arm,  
her shoulder sporting a six-inch square  
rhinestone American flag pin.  
"I want to say, God bless you and your work.  
I saw you sweeping and I stopped my car  
to tell you—well, God bless you. I think  
you might have saved my life.  
You and that broom of yours."  
Then off, smiling, back into traffic,  
back into that regular world.



## *To Reminisce*

by Jonathan D. Hahl

I watch a lonesome swan  
Sit in her beauty upon the lake.  
Dancing across the calm waters,  
She moves with splendid grace.

With feathers white as snow,  
And eyes as black as night.  
In silent movement, she gently goes  
Across the lake, and out of sight.

A full moon shines upon the lake,  
Reflecting yesterday's dreams.  
As black waters surround my heart,  
I wonder, does she remember me?

I spent a lifetime within her arms,  
I gave her my heart and soul.  
In the morning, when she was gone,  
I found myself alone.

# Anyone Lived in a Wild Drug Town

(a parody of e.e. cummings' Anyone Lived in a Pretty How Town)

by Carol E. Billings

anyone lived in a wild drug town  
(with so many highs they couldn't come down)  
guns, alcohol, sex, drugs,  
he fit right in with his fellow thugs.

women and men (both left and right)  
knew that anyone stayed out all night  
they closed their eyes they played the game  
money, success, position, fame

children scared (without no rule  
and down they went as up they grew  
alcohol, drugs, sex, guns)  
that anyone's lost in all his fun.

when by neglect and wood by chip  
dad beat him numb and split his lip  
blood by red and split by mad  
anyone beat his brother bad.

someone's joined everyone's gangs  
tipped their liquor and fired their guns  
(spiders, snakes, screams, sweats) they  
did their needles they lived their trips

position money, fame, success  
(and only the blood could begin to tell  
how children were able to destroy their souls  
with so many highs they couldn't come down)

one day anyone died I guess  
(and no one thought they'd join him)  
someone sighed and scratched their head  
little by little and doubt by doubt

one by one and all by all  
the more they'd used the more they'd fall  
no one and everyone died by spring  
wishing that they had just said no.

women and men (both deaf and dumb)  
alcohol, sex, drugs, guns  
reaped their sowing and lost the game  
position, success, money, fame.

# ***Gabe***

*by Kathy (Held) Grieger*

*His questions intrigued me  
and I laughed  
because  
it was his mother  
who had to answer them*

*A cherub face  
with ocelot eyes  
he needed to know  
"How many rocket ships  
would we need  
to lift our house?"*

*And  
"Do dogs really  
have elbows?"*

*Gone*

*I see him now  
in another  
the questions join them  
in my mind*

*I no longer chuckle,  
for I am the one  
who has to explain  
where a flame goes  
when a candle blows out*

*If Darth Vader  
was really  
a good guy*

*And why he  
cannot ask Gabe  
to help him  
find the answers*

# Alone

by Chris Abresch

From my vantage point  
apart from the rest of humanity  
I see subtleties of life and death.

They say,  
He was your grown-up child,  
there was distance between you

or, he was so ill,  
it was a blessing, of course.

In this way,  
they mean to soften his death.  
Not for my comfort, I suspect,  
but for their own.

I let them ramble on in nervousness,  
but not for long.  
I rescue them.

Yes, it's been hard.  
I miss him a lot.  
I'm doing ok.  
(and my best line) Life goes on.

They sigh with relief.  
I sigh with resignation.  
Gratefully, they turn from me  
and walk away.



# Angelic Apparition

by Jonathan D. Hahl

I gaze upon black waters,  
A shimmering moon above.  
The lapping waves,  
Like autumn days,  
Bring memories of love.

A silent soul I sit here  
Listening to the wind.  
A gentle voice  
I hear rejoice,  
Without, or from within.

As I gaze upon the waves  
I see a light unknown.  
Above the water,  
There I saw her  
In all her beauty shown.

Enchanted, there I lingered  
In silent fascination.  
I stood in awe  
Of what I saw,  
Angelic Apparition.

When at last she spoke,  
The air was filled with song.  
So wonderful,  
It filled my soul,  
But then, alas, was gone.

Still I sat and pondered  
At all the things I'd seen.  
The spell then broke,  
And I awoke  
As if it were a dream.

At times beside the waters,  
I sing in jubilation,  
For what I see,  
A spirit free.  
The Angelic Apparition.



## Handshake

by Pat Centena

An old friend came to me  
Asked, "how is the family?"  
"Fine," I said.  
He extended his hand as  
a gesture.  
I extended mine.  
With a firm grasp, both  
arms joined as a snake  
of flesh.  
A just and quick bounce.  
As one hand retracted  
from the other, bits of sticky  
hair clung to mine  
for a strange reason.  
After sharing of sweat  
I see mother was right  
about washing hands often.

# She Smiles Alone

by Christina Thomas

Still as stone  
she sits and frowns.  
She gazes out  
the frosty window  
Delicate images;  
Her aged mind trembles.

She remembers the days  
of peach silk skin  
of scarlet lips  
innocence  
Of tiger eyes, and  
youth that passes  
like a breeze  
of ancient song.

What child does not try  
to catch her shadow  
to find her gold  
and ride on rainbows,  
to believe in luck  
and fairy tale wishes  
or to capture the wings  
of a butterfly  
and learn of its  
musical dreams?



She remembers the days  
that left her hollow,  
A shell of a child,  
the years unforgiving.  
Still as stone—  
she sits  
and smiles.

# **AN AMOUNTING PROBLEM**

**by Jenny Troyer**

**TORN  
BETWEEN TWO  
AND SOMETIMES THREE  
KNOWING OF NO WAY  
TO PLEASE EVERYONE AND ME  
WISHING THAT SOMEONE WOULD SEE  
JUST HOW MUCH THIS BUILDS UP ON ME**

## **Blind Stitching**

by Mary Beth Eckels

Basting a length of soccer practice  
To a Wal-Mart trip,  
Mending a holey history essay,  
Hemming a frayed friendship,  
These are the zigzags of my day.

Once in an azure moon,  
Someone else grabs the needle  
To put in a hem or even embroider.

Usually it's just me,  
Basting the day's seams,  
Using the thread of my time  
To assemble our  
crazy quilt.

# Revamping the N.E.A.

by R. Scott de Snoo

---

The Art Museum in Milwaukee County  
is housed in a building we call "War Memorial"  
which doesn't sound right, but there must be a reason:  
perhaps by convenience or chance lease agreement  
or maybe design: always there to remind us  
every front has a back, every bottom a top  
every birth has a death, every beauty an ugly. . .

And maybe I'm wrong. Maybe they go together,  
the visions of few shaping senses of many  
who don't understand but believe that they do—  
a spatter of spots that appear as a picnic,  
a painting of chocolate so brown you can smell it,  
a pigment so red that it makes the pulse quicken,  
a bomb blast so close that it makes the pulse quit.

So should I equate these opposing conceptions,  
or have I grown cynical living with people  
who think they are chosen and morally greater  
than people whose bombs don't destroy as completely,  
who laugh that the artists are queer, look at paintings  
and bellow out proudly, "My kid coulda done that,"  
and at sculptures ask, "What is that s'posed to be?"  
And could we do better by switching their duties—  
put artists in charge of our foreign relations  
make soldiers the stewards of creative forms?

Let admirals live in cold attic apartments—  
use each tea bag twice and stay up all night painting  
some intricate full-color battle plan pictures  
to sell on the boardwalk to wives of accountants  
in town for the weekend and looking for bargains.  
Put colonels on corners lined up in formation  
with helmets beside them to handle donations,  
and people who pass can drop quarters or pennies,  
or wrappers from candy bars, ticket stubs, spit. . .  
We could fill all our gallery space up with bullets,  
grenades—even tanks if the wall hooks are sturdy,  
let majors and captains convince wily agents  
that bombs will sell big in the new sculpture gardens.

Then find the old poets with post-hippie tendencies  
artists, musicians, interpretive dancers,  
give them huge budgets to bully their critics—  
resolving all conflicts by hurling abstractions,  
original concepts and bold new ideas.  
Then take all the money that's left in the budget  
and use it to fund some new pinko elections  
that let us choose leaders with middle-class incomes  
in order to form a less imperfect union,  
then name the museums and art exhibitions  
memorials to something we used to call war.

## Breaking Camp

by Andrea Schlavensky

Setting up the tent  
red and white  
colorful and bright.

Then the clouds  
build in the sky  
it starts to rain, to pour  
what a day it is!

It is wet  
I am soaked  
water is dripping down  
the side of the tent.

Early the next morning  
packing all the gear  
in the rain  
wet smell  
all the way.

## **Vernon**

by Mary D. Hayes

Red suspenders  
suggest a  
snappy life  
hidden beneath  
external trappings  
of the years.  
His smile,  
identical to the  
young man in  
the photo . . .  
a man who once  
pumped iron,  
held titles,  
drew the glance of admiration.  
Fate also  
desires youth.  
Covetously,  
she steals  
the young man  
from out of  
the old.

# Mother Sun

by Christina Thomas

So far away now,  
This beauty I remember,  
Blending one magnificent  
color to another.  
Warm, breathtaking shades  
of red, orange,  
purple, sometimes  
blue.  
Her soft luminescence  
Fading,  
A radiant sun in  
the horizon,  
Somewhat hidden  
by the quiet turn of the earth.  
But she did not  
disappear  
Without leaving her  
loving glow  
as a kiss  
into the night.

# **Eating Your Heart Out**

by Kaonu K. Lo

I am the beast that lives  
In your soul

Every time that you sin  
I sharpen my chops

Oh, how I cheer you on  
And praise you

For your hate is my pleasure  
And your misery is my supper

I am in good health because  
You cater me with such generous meals

Yes, mother, you are the creator of me  
But I am hear to destroy you


Your foolish human heart is  
No match for it's own creation

Remember, because you are weak  
I am strong

## Reflection

by Hollie Martin

We stood together without intention or afterthought  
provoked to speak  
An ordinary situation weaving an extraordinary experience  
Creating a momentary warp –  
in the fabric of our lives  
The illusive shell of a shadowed self  
Was eclipsed by the burgeoning sun of returned adolescence  
So gentle its upswell  
So sweet the fragrance of its freedom  
Casting aside lost expectations  
failing accomplishments  
seasoned acceptance of uneventful existence  
Did our thoughts press lightly  
Revealing the rise of yet another potent moon



## Retraction

by James Scannell McCormick

Your eyes were blue, your eyes were brown as cowbirds,  
Your left palm was scarred in a star-shape, you  
Called me lucky and bereft, Puss in Boots and Cat  
In the Hat, you called me Lake Dead with Milfoil  
  
And Moon Filleted to the Bone, you told me to  
Call late, you asked me was I maybe lying, you  
Tried to guess my name, you couldn't guess my name,  
You took my cigarette, you cried hard, you told me  
  
*Shoosh*, you told me to get that through my thick  
Irish skull, you never would remember, you never would tell  
Me, you put your hand on my shoulder, you put  
Your hand in the small of my back, you laughed,  
  
You hit me, you hit me again, you shouted, *You'd*  
*Better take it back I mean it take it back.*

## Shady Pines

by Christina Thomas

I know my name.  
My name is Elsie.  
I have three wonderful children.  
Their names are Lydia, Carol and Sam.  
They've brought me here today.  
For a little vacation, they said.

I remember my name.  
My name is Elsie.  
I have three wonderful children.  
Their names are – Liddy, Ciddy, and So. . .  
I can't remember how I got here.  
I think I'm on vacation.

I remember my name.  
My name is Elsie.  
I have three wonderful children.  
Now what were their names?  
I'm not sure where I am.  
Am I on vacation?

Do you remember my name?  
I think I left it in the car.  
I know I have children.  
Are you one of them?  
Where am I right now,  
and how did I get here?

Where am I?  
Who are you?  
Who am I?



## Our Transplanted Rose

by Jenny Troyer

One day the Lord gave us a rose  
Who thought she was a weed  
For the thorns of life had wounded her  
And caused her heart to bleed

A rose more beautiful and special  
Then any could ever be  
But in herself she could not find  
The beautiful flower that we see

She looks around the garden  
In admiration of all the flowers there  
But time and time again fails to realize  
Her petals are far more beautiful and rare

We live to see the moment  
When she sees it's true  
Other children look at her  
With admiration too

Maybe then this radiant rose  
Will finally realize  
Just how special she will always be  
In her parent's eyes

## **She**

**by Kathleen Cech**

**The tall flame stands alone  
Thin and sturdy  
yet, the second I breathe,  
the light weakens and bends.  
She isn't strong enough to hold on.  
All the wax has melted  
so she sits in a pool of liquid.  
Having held on for so long,  
but now slowly dying.  
There is nothing I can do to save her.  
She doesn't want to keep burning.  
All that is left is her scent.**

## **In Her House**

**by Mary Beth Eckels**

**I love candles all over.  
I have them in my room now,  
And I'd like to burn them,  
Night and day.  
Or at least sometimes,  
When I have time,  
When I'm home.**

**Incense too—  
I want that.  
Actually, I have incense  
All over my room now,  
But I can't burn it  
Because it bothers her.**

**I'm ready with  
My incense and my candles  
In my room  
In her house.  
All I need, she says, is  
My own room in  
My own house.**

**I already have the matches.**

## *An Hour Spent in a Furniture Store*

*By Carol E. Billings*

*Sitting side-by-side in a quiet, rose-hued corner  
Of one of the store's display rooms,  
We discuss fabric samples strewn on the coffee table,  
As waning sunlight casts shadows on the ivory walls.*

*She has brought me here to admire samples  
Of furniture and fabrics she has ordered.  
Leading me from room to room, from piece to piece,  
She asks, "What do you think?" "Do you like it?"*

*Her actions remind me of when she was a toddler  
Leading me through apple blossom-scented breezes  
To sniff each fragrant, soft-pink cluster,  
To be a part of her first moments of discovery.*

*She was my "Me too" child, trying to keep up  
With two rambunctious older brothers.  
She was my feminine daughter, who treasured dolls,  
Devoured books, and could have lived on junk food.*

*She was my determined strawberry-blonde  
Who at nine said, "Let me help you, Mom,"  
Who at twelve preferred her father's company,  
Who at fourteen preferred the closeness of her friends.*

*Now, sitting side-by-side in the fading rose-touched glow,  
Breathing in the pungency of new leather,  
Rusty-tan and muted green for chairs and sofas,  
We admire a medallion-backed side chair on our left.*

*We caress the velvet richness of jungle-patterned fabric  
In tones of green and gold and coral.  
We discuss plaid, striped, and printed swatches  
Of the same colors meant for accent pillow.*

*Quietly, her voice floats through the dying light,  
"It means a lot to me to have you here."  
"Me too," I whisper, as I gently tuck  
The fabric of her words forever in my heart*

# Chez Longueur

by Steve Tighe

My high school French teacher had hairy legs. She was reputed to have hairy underarms too, though no one had ever seen them. She never wore short sleeve blouses, and on hot days there'd be a sweat silhouette in the underarm area. We took that as pretty solid evidence. Actualment, I thought I saw her hairy underarms, but it might have been in a dream, for she was wearing a short sleeve blouse. She raised her arm to make a point in class, and I saw a quick flash of a dark bush of hair there. I didn't find it distasteful, but rather somehow exciting, and I carried that image with me for a long time.

Her last name was Diderot, but we called her Madame D., though there didn't appear to be a Monsieur D. to go with her. Some wags referred to her as Madame Died Rot. She invited small groups of students to her apartment after school to read, and have cookies and tea. The cookies had anise in them and were inedible, unless one ate them rapidement. Most students chewed them, then spit them into one of the numerous potted plants that adorned her living room. She had us read Proust aloud, correcting our pronunciation as we went along. It was torture for most of the students. When someone discovered what longueur meant—a long and boring literary passage—her place became known as Chez Longueur. All of the boys but me, and most of the girls in the class hated going there, and they often made excuses to miss. Sometimes I was the only one in my group who went, and I enjoyed myself immensely. I identified with the young boy in Swann's Way, and I loved the sound of the language. It was like music. I loved to speak it and loved to hear Madame D. say it. It was tres sexy. And my

pronunciation was good enough that I could read long passages uninterrupted by Madame D.'s corrections, though I probably sounded like Peter Sellers doing Inspector Clouseau. Sometimes she'd lean back in her chair, her hands in her lap, and close her eyes while I read.

Her living room, where we met, was what I imagined one looked like in a modest home in Paris, something Proust would have been comfortable in. The couch and chairs were deep and soft. The tables were covered with patterned cloths. The lamps were made of stained glass. And, of course, there were the many cookie-fed plants. She had lots of books, and there were posters of France on the walls. The room always seemed somewhat dark, even in daytime, but especially late fall and winter afternoons when the sun set so early.

Sometimes Madame D. gave us a break from reading Proust and played her records of the Chateuse Edith Piaf. We variously called her Pee-off and Pee-aft behind Madame D.'s back. But when I heard her sing "La Mer," I became interested. I told Madame D. that Bobby Darin did a version in English called "Beyond the Sea." Sometimes she would dance around the room with an imaginary partner, smoking a Gauloise, blowing smoke through her petite nez. Thought she had a pale complexion, Madame D. had a young and lively face with the requisite pouty lips. Her eyes were big and brown and unblinking, as if she wanted to see as much as she could and not miss a thing. Her dark hair was cut short. She was small and thin and wore loose-fitting clothes, so it was hard to tell if she had any shape at all. I was infatuated by Brigitte Bardot at the time. Madame D. didn't look anything like Bardot, but there was something sexy about her besides her voice that was hard for me to figure out. Maybe it was her familiarity. One

time she made me dance with her and when she pressed me close to her, I could detect her breasts under the bulky sweater. I kissed her quickly on the lips. She pulled back and stared at me in surprise, then laughed infectiously. But she didn't reprimand me. I felt a strange mixture of humiliation and pride. I blushed, yet couldn't help but smile, and we continued to dance.

One day she told me about Proust. She said he was homosexual. Guys in my class used the term "homo" or "queer" to describe guys who were effeminate or didn't date or were just plain uncoordinated. She said that mainly he was a man dedicated to his art, that he was sickly and would lock himself up in his soundproof bedroom and write. I didn't want to be like Proust, but the artistic life was *tres* attractive. Madame D. had lots of French art books. She especially liked Monet. We'd sit at her dining room table and look through them, bathed by the music of Ravel or Debussy from her record player. It was the kind of experience I didn't get any place else. At *chez moi*, my parents watched TV and listened to Broadway tunes, Burl Ives, and barbershop.

Madame D. was notorious for riding her old-fashioned bike to school every day, good weather or bad. I can still see her pedaling into the school's parking lot with the snow falling, like some Impressionist painting of a French peasant. I wasn't sure whether I was in love with her distinctive style or what she exposed me to. *Voila la difference!*

One warm spring weekend late in my senior year, I rode my three-speed Raleigh over to *Chez Longueur*. I don't know what compelled me, but Madame D. greeted me warmly and didn't seem surprised that I stopped by unannounced. The hypnotic music of Satie was playing. I helped her wash up the few breakfast dishes. Afterwards she suggested we go for a

bike ride. She packed a picnic lunch of bread, cheese, fruit, and a bottle of wine. She also brought along a couple of books. We rode a long way to a park next to a lake north of the city. I seemed to appreciate the scenery for the first time in my life. Wild flowers were in bloom, and she knew the names of all of them. She could identify the oiseaus, some by their songs. I was terribly impressed. We spread the picnic blanket and ate our lunch. I had drunk beer before, but never wine. I didn't like the taste and slipped it slowly. Afterwards, as she read poems by Valery and Apollinaire and Baudelaire, I lay back on the blanket and looked up at the trees and ate grapes and was carried away by the music of words. She also read from Colette's *Cheri*. We walked around the lake and through the woods. I felt slightly drunk and wanted to hold her hand. Finally, I reached for it, and she didn't pull away. I was in heaven. She told me her name was Celeste and that's what I should call her.

When we got back to her apartment (I couldn't think of it as Chez Longueur anymore), she invited me to stay for dinner. I helped her prepare the poulet and peeled the pommes de terre. We had more wine with dinner and ate by candlelight. I confessed that the students called her apartment Chez Longueur.

She laughed. "Very clever," she said. "Very amusing." She laughed again and sipped her wine.

I looked across the table into her wide eyes, shimmering in the candlelight. My hormones were raging. "I love you," I said.

She put her hand out on the table, palm up. I placed my hand in hers, and she held it. "You are darling to me," she said.

She could have insulted me by saying something like, "Don't be silly," but she didn't, and I appreciated that. She looked into my eyes, then let go of my hand and continued eating.

After an uncomfortable silence, she wiped her mouth and said, "We shall go to a French movie tonight. Would you like that?"

"Oui. Oui," I replied, and she laughed.

I called home to let my parents know I was going to a movie with a friend. Celeste and I rode our bikes to the Eastside Art Theater and saw Truffaut's *The Soft Skin*. I was enthralled by the story of a married man's affair with an airline stewardess. I felt like an adult. I slipped my arm around Celeste, and she leaned her head against my shoulder. I was so happy I could have stayed there forever. When we went outside, it was raining hard. We waited in a nearby restaurant and had pie and coffee, but the rain didn't stop, so we rode to her apartment and got soaked. Rather than go inside, we went for a walk in the rain. I held her hand again. We stopped and kissed and lay down on the ground and let the rain fall on us, catching it in our mouth and kissing, letting the liquid flow from one mouth to the other. We walked slowly back to her apartment. Then she undressed, took my hand, and led me to her bedroom. We each carried a candle from the dining room table. I never did notice her underarms.

I rode my bike home in the dark, not certain the tires ever touched the ground. I loved the night and the street lamps and the cool air on my damp clothes and the fresh, clean taste of it after the rain. I breathed it in deeply.

My mother was waiting up for me when I got home. I was so late that I got grounded till the end of the school year. I couldn't even go to the

reading sessions at Celeste's after school. I told her so after class on the Monday following our romantic weekend. She smiled as if that was what was supposed to happen. At the end of the school year, she left for France for the summer as she always did. I ached for her and wrote her passionate letters in my best French, telling her how much I longed for her. She wrote back regularly, and though she signed her letters "Love, Celeste," there was no intimacy or romance in them. I was off to college before she returned from France. I met a girl during my first semester and dated her exclusively. When I came home at Christmas, I drove past Celeste's apartment a few times hoping to see her, but didn't. Finally, I called her. I told her I desperately wanted to see her, but she said that was impossible. She had relatives in from France for the holidays and would be busy the whole time. She sounded like a stranger, an adult, her voice flat, the *joie de vivre* gone. She asked if I had met a special girl at school. I admitted that I had. "Bien," she said. The word had finality to it. She wasn't just saying that it was good, but that it was right, it was proper. It implied "Finis." And I never saw her or talked to her again.

# Await

by Tracy Rubiayk

In my beige box  
being  
being-  
Scar streaks shoot  
through overlap intersect  
blend into nothing.  
Here I sit  
ignorant—  
waiting for me  
to come to me.  
Breathing choking.  
Eating screaming.  
Sitting running.  
Living weeping—  
idling

Escape in sleep—  
Heartbeats heartbeats.  
Eardrums inflate  
my thickening brain,  
swirls and waves of psychedelic,  
pointillist pain – I fight  
not to wake.  
Bring it on –  
the buzz ring silent scream  
to pass the point  
I fear and need.

Mystic guard  
of blackness and depth,  
half black half red,  
I'm here.  
Tell me—  
Give me a truth,  
a word, a way  
before I shake  
to close the gate.

Back to my beige box  
I wait.

## **Photos of a Stranger**

**by Andrew Krause**

**Younger than I am, combed and clean-shaven  
He hunches over his footlocker  
Keeping mysteries from his pen.  
Looked like that in the Navy.**

**Then, approximating my age,  
With flimsy-moustached beard,  
He could be my twin. He cradles me  
In one arm. I cradle my bean doll.**

**Skinny legs poke sideways from the frame  
Of a girl's bicycle, sunglasses,  
Large like a mask, hide his grooved clay face.  
My half sister claps in the background.**

**He smiles there, that exaggerated  
Grin, a rarity I longed for at her age.**

## **At That Point**

**by Mike Margowski**

**I tear out a piece of my now three page  
Notebook and with a spoon, pluck my eyes from their  
Sockets. I frantically scan the room to find  
An ounce of creativity. Under the couch, maybe  
Near the refrigerator. It must be in the toilet.  
I slam my forehead on the towel rack and fall to the  
Tile floor. The notebook spirals above me and I have  
Yet to think of an idea to write about.**

## **A Man of Society**

by Kaonu K Lo

He donates money to the house of Christianity.  
He opens his home to the poor.  
People say he is a man of generosity,  
But his daughter sleeps on the floor.  
She wears last year's fashion  
And dares not ask for any new clothes;  
For the church is a mansion.  
The girl walks in shoes that show the tips of her toes.  
The orphans in town are shown affection;  
For the man hugs and kisses them all,  
While he treats his daughter like an orphan.  
Today, while holding her doll, she watches him fall.  
In front of the town's people, he dies.  
Rebecca, his daughter, is the only one who cries.

## **Shoe Renewal/Astral Catastrophe**

by Andrew Krause

Widened shoe repair fingers  
Grip and pry soles from welts and heels from soles  
Using simple machines and raw sinew tension.  
Uranus spins on a horizontal axis and  
Electra is a rubble ring, smitten by  
Gravitational maelstrom and the  
Gigantic engines of space.  
Do you ever watch the skies cobbler,  
Dreaming of cosmic mechanics?  
"I don't do dreams," he said.

# **What Happened That Day**

**by Mike Margowski**

**It was supposed to be  
another warm summer day  
food cooked on the grill and  
time enjoyed with friends and family.**

**It was supposed to be  
a safe place for children  
games in the pool filled with laughter  
conversation until the sun went down.**

**It was supposed to be  
that I found a helping hand.  
I tried to tell the others  
no one would listen, I was just a kid.**

**He put his hands down my swimsuit  
and played a different game.  
I felt insecure and confused.  
That is how it was.**

## Metaphor of the Crows

by James Scannell McCormick

I didn't see them until after we'd pulled into the garage.  
"Oh yes," my mother said. "They do that all the time.  
They even use the roof to take off," she added as she closed the door.  
I slowly walked down the snow-grained driveway,

Only halfway, for confusion or nervous awe.  
Across the street the lake steamed in the cold, sending up

Great pewter billows into the iron-blue sky;  
Against this, the brown honey-locust limbs narrowed to red twigs,

And the trees themselves were hung with crows as with heavy, black fruit—  
Crows bigger than cats, dusky-coated (as the Anglo-Saxons said),

Crows black and desultory, a treeful of omens,  
Always some—but never the same two or three—describing

Between housetop and treetop smooth ellipses with their  
Unflapping wings, like pairs of black hands open to the sky,

A hundred crows, hundred-mouthed as Briareos was hundred-handed,  
Hanging the trees with their brass-tongued, frog-in-the-throat calls.

I watched. Suddenly they were silent, but still shifty,  
Each refusing to look me in the face.

Then one in particular, in mid-tree, the choragos,  
With a flick and a gargled, forceful note, led them back to their pulsing song.

I watched, sensing you in eye-pit, wrist, and calf,  
The knowing crows noising my disapproval and fear.

Found out, unnerved, I went inside,  
The warning of the crows loud at my back.

# She Just Sits

by Bobbi McLean



After ninety-some years,  
she never leaves the house anymore.  
Baptisms, weddings, funerals,  
luncheons, shopping trips, holiday celebrations

and church  
all proceed in her absence.

She just sits  
in her green wingback chair in the living room  
or at the woodgrain formica table in her kitchen.  
She just sits.  
She doesn't watch soap operas or game shows on TV  
or listen to talk shows on the radio  
or play solitaire or do crossword puzzles  
or read or knit or crochet or tat  
or watch the world out her second-floor windows.  
She just sits and does nothing.

She's winding down  
like a cherished antique clock  
and she just sits and does nothing,  
or maybe. . .

she sits and waits,  
waits for family to climb the stairs to visit,  
or for long-gone friends to call.  
Maybe she waits for mealtime, bathtime, bedtime,  
for the weather to change,  
for good things to happen.  
for memories to return,  
for the next ache or pain or gurgle  
in her frail old body.  
Maybe she waits for a bump in her daily routine.

Maybe she just sits and waits for her life to be over.



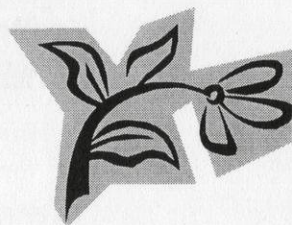
Gone  
by Onie

The golden sunset in the west  
A star standing alone  
Roses without their petals  
Lips saying no words

A star standing alone  
A howl in the night  
Lips saying no words  
The meadow with no green

The howls in the night  
The screams in my head  
The meadow with no green  
The dark without its light

The screams in my head  
A dreamless slumber on the hill  
The dark without its light  
The golden sunset in the west



**Clean and Dirty:**  
**To a Woman**  
by Erin Murphy

Mom are you cleaning  
dirty patio door screening?  
Screen of dirt and not new  
with rags can you undo mildew?  
Ah! as you hiss and swear  
the old screen door begins to tear.  
By and by, you steadily still try  
though leaves and cobwebs linger by;  
and yet you're cleaning as you cry.  
Now, no matter what the pane  
cleaning clearly drives mom insane.  
My words and your body expressed;  
your back aches now, as we guessed.  
It's the chore women grease their elbows for,  
It is tired Mom I shake my head for.

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**Stop**  
by Susan Rudolph

Windshield world  
    rolls through my eyes  
        like the scroll in a player piano.  
Outside circle,  
    Rearview mirror,  
        reflector of reflections,  
            falls back through  
                as fast as forward can move.  
Stop! Get out! Listen.  
    The trees are singing.

# Shadows

by Margaret Rozga

Minnesota highway 371  
Bemidji to Brainerd  
And the sun setting.  
First blue water holds  
Stream of gold,  
At the next lake  
Gold turns to orange,  
By the time we get to Hackensack,  
Unaccustomed to no kids in the car,  
The sky is pink, tinged with violet.

We drive a block off the highway  
To the main street of town  
Think it more western than  
We could have imagined  
Northwoods Minnesota to be  
And almost enjoy.

If a shop were open we'd linger  
Get coffee, face each other and talk  
Or buy postcards and send them  
Back to children at camp,  
But at eight p.m. on a Monday,  
Though we tuck away our parenting,  
As we had promised ourselves we would  
Nothing's open.

We continue down the highway  
And drift back into our own thoughts  
Another lake and another color in the sky  
Puple deepening, turning grey  
And we get to Brainerd in the dark.

## **Sunny Day in April**

by Rich Sawyer

Everyone in the room cried but him.  
Even now, while the hand of death was near,  
He would not open, not even to them.  
Being broken now was his only fear.  
I held his hand as he left the Earth,  
And witnessed his spirit join with the air.  
His first chance at peace he had since his birth,  
The first time that he did not have to care.

I'd say we'd all learned too much about death,  
And that I have seen too much with my eyes.  
A distance too short between every breath,  
Is only realized when somebody dies.

We gathered at noon to say goodbye,  
Halfway through life, he forever lies.



## **The Big Swallow**

by Dirk van Sloten

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My tongue moves around  
The wet and round shape  
My saliva mingles with its fluid

Raising my hand,  
To lift up the shape's end  
I can see and feel it's coming closer

Then it passes my lips  
Into my mouth  
Slowly rolling over tongue

Then I smile and rejoice  
As I swallow, from the dark green bottle  
The very last drop of beer.

# The Crueler Seasons

by Laurel Starkey

There are those  
who would still have me  
tiptoe across shoals of silence,  
move cautiously among clues and signs,  
past the stains on the couch  
put there by my father.

There are those who would keep me  
behind bars  
in thin, starved dawns  
only sparrows are awake to see,  
in gauzy dusks  
where gnats gobbled our eyes  
as they would plums.

They would stop me  
from enlightenment,  
from becoming  
luminous.

They would cut off my hands  
to stop me  
from unraveling  
the frayed years,  
those crueler seasons:

the leering pumpkins each fall,  
bandit saints each winter  
frozen crocuses each spring,  
the beaten yellow dogs  
of summer.

