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Exile Vol. XXXV No. 1

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Exile Vol. XXXV No. 1

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EXILE

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Introduction

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Clay Poem

You of the finer sense,
Broken against false knowledge,
You who can know at first hand,
Hated, shut in, mistrusted:

Take thought:
I have weathered the storm,
I have beaten out my exile.

Ezra Pound

One of the first things
I noticed upon entering the room
was the strong smell of
burnt wood and leather.

It was a warm, cozy
atmosphere, and I felt
immediately at home.

17

Clay Pot

The gyre turns to spin the wheel;
Laughing hands bring sweat and dust to form--
Caress me.

Carefully wrought borders
pinched to the point of pain--
Enhance me.

Infinite interior, hold my existence, let it
expand beyond the sky--
Ensnare me.

A waste to create--
The hands frown, scattering
the form to infinity.
Tread lightly on the pieces.

Christopher Collette

Ars Poetica

I see a flock of birds
scattered over the sky.
Circling
slowly, transforming
constantly changing
shape from one
meaninglessness
to another they paint
alien symbols & figures
on the light-blue parchment
that is not, that nothing is
but air, but nothingness
but air
as still as
my mind late at night
newly awakened
sitting with my eyes narrowed
going blind in the bright light
from the white pages and
my head humbly lowered
not in prayer, nor desire
but stillness, as
to soothe the hunter
the unsatisfied
desire, the longing
that is so unbearably
loud
with cries and laughter
from memories not to be closed
out by my palms pressed hard
to my hurting ears, until
the rattling carnival
procession disappears
around a corner

receding
as I am
surging
a silence as
soft as a woman's
breathing in the dark, as
rich as my two
own hands cupped around
her breasts. And to
the wire
spun in blue
from side to side to
connect my paper, my sky
in the paper, from the sky
lowering
tumbling, rolling and
falling the birds come
for rest. The words
so precious so awaited so
eagerly welcomed, land
first one, maybe two
even three or four, before
before
they are suddenly scattered
now scrambling up and up
once again - yes again! - scared
by the echoing gunshot
that is
your whisper
inside my head.

Mans Angantyr

Through the Window Pane

The window pane felt sweet and cool against her cheek. She had been plagued by uncomfortable warmth ever since they had brought her here and the sensation offered to her by the window was a welcome one. Why was it always so Goddamned warm in hospitals? It was probably some Freudian ploy; to make the atmosphere excessively warm, quiet, and womb-like or some stupid psychological thing. An attempt, perhaps, to make the crazies feel better about being there. Well, if that's what it was, it wasn't working. The heat was oppressive and she was feeling nauseous.

She pressed closer to the window, cooling the entire right side of her face while at the same time fostering the hope that if she pressed hard enough, she would by some rare and unusual process of osmosis, move through the pane and into the dark, bottomless alley below.

Just as she felt herself begin to transcend into the street, she caught a glimpse of the smiling doctor reflected in the window. The image caused her to be pulled back toward the suffocating room. In the once-removed reality of the window, she could see that the smiling doctor was still smiling and still looking at her.

"What are you thinking about? " I'm thinking about why the Hell you look so Goddamned euphoric all the time. I'm thinking that you sure as Hell must know something that I don't know. " All of this she said in what she knew was probably a vain attempt at offending the doctor enough so that she would get fed up and leave her to be alone in the bright, hot room to be by herself.

" I smile because I'm happy." said the doctor. " I want you to be happy, too." she added cheerfully.

" I'm touched." she said shifting her gaze back into the alley.

Hanging from the building across the street there was, she noticed, a sign. It read: " FIRE STAND PIPE CONNECTION. Fire stand pipe connection. She had never heard of this before. What did it mean? Anyone building a fire should stand, due to the pipe connection? No. Maybe this was where the fire, the stand, and the pipe all connected. No. That didn't make any sense either.

What does it mean? I don't know,n said the doctor. She paused theatrically and then went on." Life can be confusing sometimes and it's hard to know what it all means." She was still smiling. " Philosophers have spent hundreds of years asking themselves that same question.n

She looked up from the sign to the reflected doctor, suspended by the light of the room against the blackness of the night outside. The doctor was still smiling, looking prophetic and pleased with her answer.

Not life. She said. " Not what life means. What does the sign mean? "

The doctor looked upset (though still smiling) that she had wasted her profundity. "I don't know what it means " she said, casting a glance through the window at the sign. It seemed that she didn't really care, either.

For a while, neither said anything. The room would have been quiet, but for the dull beam of the doctor's smile and the gasps of the heater as it struggled to pump still more warm air through its vents.

" Why did you do it? " she asked, interrupting both the heater and her smile.

" I didn't, obviously." she said. She was tired of this question.

" Why did you try to do it? " Undaunted by rudeness and sarcasm, still the doctor was not ready to give up.

She looked out the window, forgetting the doctor, the bright room, the heat. Aware only of the pane, cool and linear against her cheek.

" Why? " The doctor repeated, thinking that she had not been heard.

"I don't know. " she said, not lying. The doctor's smile faded at last. Clearly this wasn't the correct answer. She sighed, she stood up, she straightened her skirt, and she left the room - all in one poetic movement.

It was very quiet now that the doctor and her smile were gone. She pressed her forehead and palms again to the cool numbing pane of the window and closed her eyes.

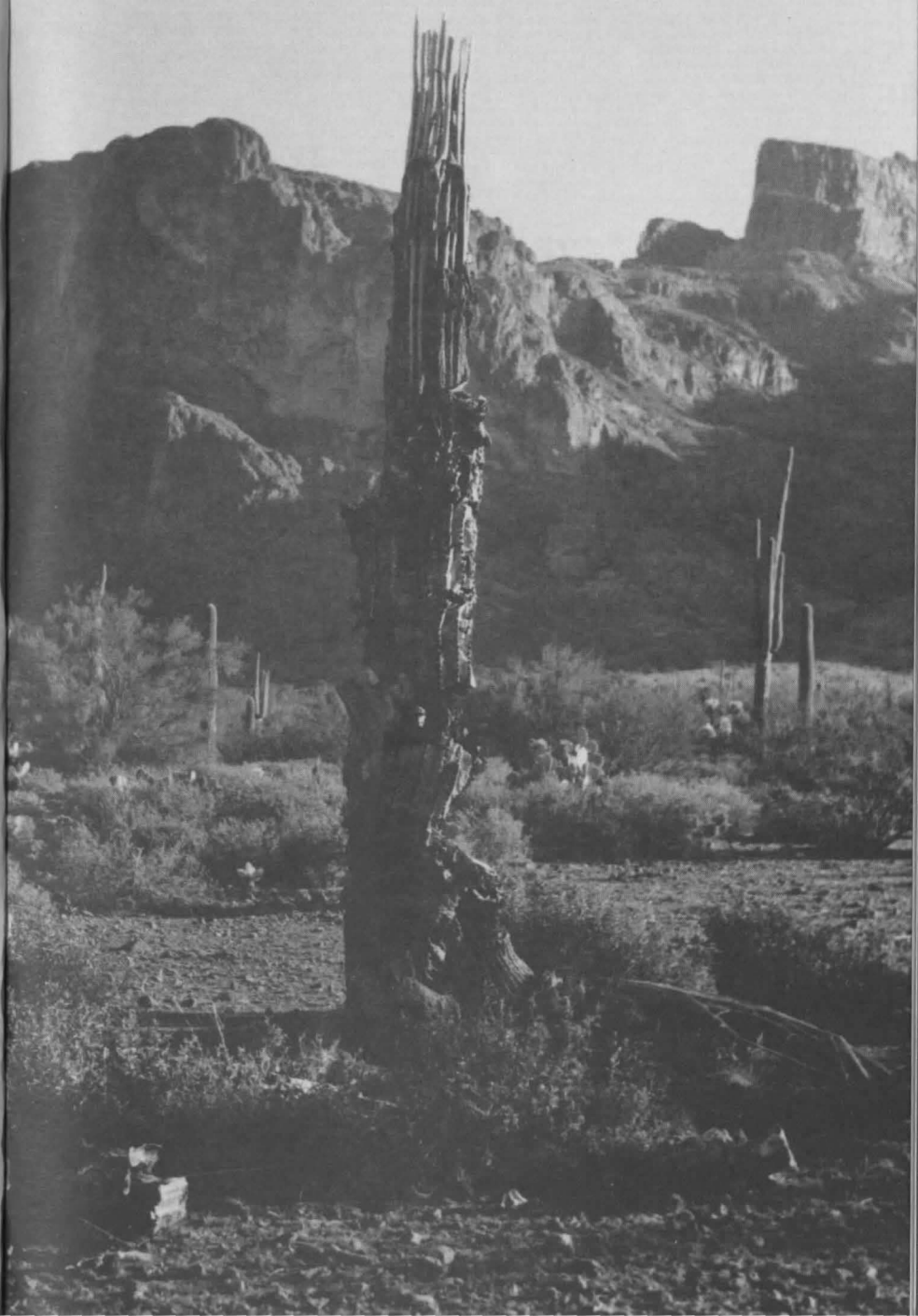
"I don't know." she said again. To no one.

Jennifer Read

Bible Thumper

We drive by and point at his scanty form,
a thin wire knocked straight in the vertical
torrents of rain. All overcoat and beard
and lips, he glistens on the corner of
3rd and Peach. A wrinkle of a man, wet
to his creases, yet still he reads--rivers
of words flowing from a green book clinched
tight
in small white hands. His speech is lost to us
and I imagine rain-drops spattering
delicate pages, melding all the words
to a gray-smeared whole...and he, still reading
while the book grows heavy and bloats away
its binding of moss-green leather, eyes wide,
wet lips bulged like the fluted silver rim
of a flagon, welling up and spilling,
welling up and spilling into that great
outpouring of tongues...awhirl with the tides
and praying for the mercy of the sun.

Chris Rynd



Play

Jennifer is skipping around
the funeral home.
Tomorrow she will miss our Grandfather,
but today he is still in the room
with so many faces watching,
like her class surrounding her,
bruised and toothless,
the morning after her bike wreck.

Jennifer asks our Grandmother
if she's heard the news, but tells
her not to worry because he's in heaven,
and grabs one hand, wrinkled like tissue,
leading Grandma to the casket
to say goodbye.

Amy Judge

Satellites

Out between the road and the fields,
Behind a dying house
Filled with breathing life
It is erected.

A structure of steel
Brings the world to a large screen
Surrounded by unshapely bodies
And empty beer cans.

A dish that was meant to feed
Slowly starves the home,
And the roof never
Gets fixed.

Andrew C. Carington

"A Theopoetic"

Throughout the history of the last two thousand years, theology has been trying to make religious affections compatible with the rest of human experience. The theologian has tried many techniques to fit the experience of God into the lives of the religiously concerned. All of these techniques have employed a language created by the intellectual demands of the time. The result of these efforts has been the separation of knowing from creative experience, and the collapse of religious discourse from the weight of intellectual baggage. This essay introduces something new to the religious dimension, something which can breathe life into the staleness of contemporary faith - the "theopoetic."

Amos Wilder, in his book *Theopoetic*, wrote: the vitality of a faith is inseparable from the vitality in its vehicles of expression (47). "Theopoetic" can briefly be described as a framework for communicating faith in a manner sensitive to the creative ethos of a particular time and space. For a theopoetic to be a valid enterprise it must exhibit a vitality in relation to the cultural spirit of the time -- in our case, it must communicate to those who live in the contemporary world. This essay is about a potential form for theopoetic in this context; it is about a rediscovery of a particular creative ethos -- an ethos formed by the confluence of ecological awareness and poetic expression.

The framework through which I perceive the world has become sensitive to the immanence of creative vitality in the natural world. The ancient Hebrews called this vitality "rush" (the divine breath or wind) and considered its energy to be the basis of life. The study of old and powerful words such as "rush" suggests that there is a connection between Biblical faith and awareness of natural vitality. This discovery is congruent with what the very word religion suggests (from the Latin *re-ligio* -- to connect again). By linking an environmental concern with Biblical faith I was led to a reawakening of the imagination, and an appreciation of the divine activity which allows the reconnection. "Rush" is a word that exemplifies this activity: what element could be more appropriate than the wind to symbolize the interconnection within ourselves and throughout the surrounding environment?

This summer I had the pleasure to spend my time on the Outerbanks of North Carolina. The Outerbanks are a narrow strip of dune-formed islands just off the mainland. The land exists in a fragile balance between the water which shapes the coastline and the wind which shapes the dunes. The wind is the dominant force on these islands; it creates the character of the region. From the Wright Brothers to the windsurfers, men and women have come to the Outerbanks to harness the power of the

wind. Human beings have often wanted to use and control what they have found in the environment, but one does not have to spend much time on the Outerbanks to realize how futile our attempts to control nature are.

Many beach cottages on the Outerbanks have been lost as the relentless action of the waves (driven by the ever-present wind) has consumed the shoreline. The vitality of rush is both undeniable and uncontrollable; those who live on the Outerbanks are confronted with their own finitude as they watch the sand disappear. Many of us will awaken to the same sense of finitude as we watch our own backwards disappear, drinking water become contaminated, and breathable air exhausted. But the awareness which comes from environmental sensitivity must not stop with our own neighborhood. The necessary extension is to translate this awareness into the religious dimension which encompasses the whole earth rather than the suburb. To do this, the vehicle for a religious faith must be a potent one.

R.P. Warren and Cleanth Brooks discussed what I think is a potential vehicle for faith in their book *Understanding Poetry*. They wrote that poetry is "massive communication" which springs from a basic human impulse. We can push this concept farther by linking it with Wilder's idea that "any fresh renewal of language or rebirth of images arises from within and beyond our control" (6) What is seen as a basic human impulse, such as the desire to fly, is dependent on a power beyond our control. How far could Wilbur and Orville have flown without the wind? The same kind of question can be put to the poet -- "How massive is your communication without the vitality which breathes through all language?" If the poet could open up to the kind of power which can drive the waves it would be very massive indeed. Poetry works through language, and language lives in relation to the religious.

Language itself is the *lingua franca* for any theopoetic; and within the theopoetic, language and religious imagination merge. In considering the efficacy of faith Wilder understood that "when imagination fails doctrines become ossified" (2). Ossification can be experienced in many forums: the political, where candidates throw dead names around such as "liberal" and "conservative"; the intellectual, when those who teach can no longer respond to the lives of those who wish to learn; and the religious, where fundamentalists project Biblical verses, without interpretation, on those who live two thousand years after the text was written. In my own life it was a renewed appreciation of the natural world through the insight of poetic imagination which broke through the ossification in a modern context that excludes the possibility of a religious consciousness. I was able to make the "leap of sympathetic imagination" which Warren and Brooks considered to be the key to authentic poetry.

My own imagination -- conditioned by a love for the natural environment -- found a sympathetic voice in the language of poetry including the Bible itself. I was, as Brooks and Warren so eloquently wrote, "put back in the freshness of things" (77). Freshness and vitality are all around us, ready to be appreciated and waiting for us to open up to. The poet speaks to this situation. To give an example of this I return to the Outerbanks in a poem by Conrad Aiken that describes the principle cape of the islands.

"Speak, Hatteras, your language of the sea: scour with kelp and spindrift the stale street: that man in terror may learn once more to be child of that hour when rock and ocean meet." -- from *Hatteras Calling*: 1931

Newness is discovered in the action of the sea which cleanses the stale street and strikes terror in our hearts. Hatteras "speaks" to man just as the power of rush challenges our life. We are the ones who need to open to the calling so that, in our meekness, we may understand what it means to live in relation to something more than us. In this poem our finitude is beautifully expressed in relation to the power of nature. The language of the poet has reawakened the religious dimension.

Language, in poetic form, was the key to my own reconnection, but any language must take into account the cultural spirit of the time if it is to communicate with the secular ethos dominant in the modern context. This problem is not a new one. Erich Auerbach explained in *Mimesis* that the Christian view of reality has always involved the antagonism between sensory appearance and meaning. Consider the dogmatic nature of Biblical doctrine where "the Old Testament presents itself as complete truth with a claim to sole authority, on the other hand that very claim forces it to a constant interpretative change in its own content" (Auerbach 16). Wilder wrote about this problem also: "The meaning of such older stories as those involving the fall, redemption, judgment and new creation is deeply buried and obscured behind older layers of language and thought forms" (89). How can we breathe life into the vehicle of faith if its content is hidden and its meaning is changed by the attachments of previous dogma? An answer may be present in our interaction with nature.

My rediscovery of faith was a personal one, but it was also an experience shared by an ethos that is becoming more predominant as the world awakens to the planetary nature of ecological problems such as the greenhouse effect and deforestation. The metaphors of ecology, nature and wilderness are possible means to the insight necessary for a more nearly total vision based on Biblical faith. Who can deny the ecological

meaning of such stories as the Creation where the Hebrew word for Adam (adamah) means "earth," and where the very force through which God creates life is our old friend "rush," the wind?

In the present era the call for a creative theopoetic may find answers in the resurgent interest in planetary ecology. The pressures of a shrinking world will make evident the fundamental interconnection of which we are a part; it is then only a small step to link this imaginative construct of interconnection with the creative energy of religious faith. The gap between imagination and faith will be bridged by language; if it is to be effective, this language will be poetic. It is the poet who is best suited to make the appeal to our imagination and open us up to the store of human experience expressed in the mystery of faith. We find rootedness in the power of poetry to connect with basic human impulses and direction in the ability of poetry to point to something beyond our control -- in this case the divine activity in nature. Poetry conditioned by environmental awareness will be a new creative ethos, and the basis for religious awareness which breaks through the theological ossification of the present context. The environmental theopoetic can bring us back into the vitality and freshness which is at the root of all creation.

Robert Marshall

Music = Love?

The cello, singing between my legs...
The silky wood-grained patterned points
of light in the night sky --
The cat-gut strings vibrating,
intertwining in movement and skill.

The music, ambrosia for the ears, difficult to
follow...

The cello, singing between my legs...
gives me something no human
body can --
itself.

Shannon J. Salser

Allusion

It's just not happening.
Everyone is here
With me now,
But not one of them
Is doing me
A damn bit of good.
Shit.

I want to manipulate
Psyche and cupid
For my own wanton purposes-
To torture the fair, young,
Winged boy into
My creative slave:
Flowing, smooth, sensual.

He doesn't want to play.

Say, say,
Little cherub,
Won't you come
Inspire me?
And bring your
Dollies three,
So I can write poetry?

God, where's Gertrude
When you really need
To be smacked
In the face
By someone
Who has every
Right to hit you.

Oh, she's off with Alice,
Doing dirty deeds
On a blanket
In the sun
In the nude,
Giving Guy Davenport
Food for thought.

But I,
In the meantime,
Like sediment
In a desk chair,
Starve to death
For lack of
A better word.

Involuntary poetic anorexia.

If I was bulimic,
I could devour
All the mythology
And canonical history
That litters my fossilized desk,
Then regurgitate
Onto these blank pages.

But a poem should not puke but be.

Thanks Archie,
A lot of good
You do me now.
My doorway is
Still empty,
My poem equals
Zed.

Rosemary Walsh

Self Portrait

Salt crystals glisten white
on the wrinkled face
of the pier; forming a new image
with every stroke of the winds brush.
The low sun ignites the sky.
Red and orange explode
across the pale blue canvas
and fill his head with the flames
that burn on the horizon
and melt like wax drippings
into the blue water.
Time drifts softly
like the hanging fog.
It is a kaleidoscopical vision;
slowly the bits of colored glass disband
and disappear. Only one glowing white
crescent is left against the blackness.
The colors have melted dark
into the deep water, on which the moon
now performs its dazzling light.

Margaret Dawson

to whom i may concern.

. . . . so i was just eating breakfast, minding my own business and i got eggs as usual 'cause you're supposed to eat eggs for breakfast and. . . i don't even like eggs, why do i eat eggs, maybe i shouldn't . . . anyway, i was minding my own business 'cause there was nobody else's to mind and i looked up 'cause someone was talking to me. . . and i'm thinking, i don't know no one here, why is someone talking to me . . . so i looked around and looked around real hard , so hard that i think i pulled a muscle in my left eye. . . see. You see how its kind of weird now i think i sprained it maybe. . . anyway, so i'm looking around and i finally give up 'cause, well my eggs were getting cold and if there is one thing i hate more than anything than i guess eggs its cold eggs. . .

did i tell You that i got bacon too. . bacon is good i like it 'cause you can pick it up with your hand and no one gets angry at you. . isn't that right, i mean it's ok to pick it up right. . ? yea, i thought so. .

so, i'm thinking of what to do that day and i hear this voice again. . oh, oh, yea, i got a cup of coffee too. . it's not like i really drink coffee but since my mug was on the table the waitress filled it and i didn't want to upset her. . maybe everyone is supposed to have coffee with eggs. . do You?

so. . this volice is really starting to, i don't know, scare me or something so, i quietly whisper at the top of my lungs asking, what do ya' want from me? and its like then i don't hear the voice no more. . i figured maybe i should take my hat off so i could hear better. . . plus, maybe i was offending people. . so i set my hat down on the counter and i remembered that i got it from the skinny black santa at the shelter a while ago. . do You think that he's really black i mean, or was it just an elf or You know, he could be You know, just 'cause well. . . i saw him and he gave me a gift and i never got nothing from him before and so maybe he is. . .

and this voice again was bugging me and i'm thinking maybe it was god. . . i'm thinking he may even have something really important to say 'cause god doesn't just talk to anyone. . . maybe he wanted me to save the world. . but the world, it's so big and could i ever change it, save it and why me god? and to find me, the savior, at this diner, i guess he would think it was a good enough place 'cause you have to pay for stuff and everything there. . . but me, why would god pick me? and damn, i was looking at my hands "holes" "holes" in my hands and in my feet too l l i hate pain and where would they set up the cross in times squire? i don't like pain but if god thinks that i should save the world i guess maybe i should. . .

but as i was thinking and i guess i was drawing some holy attention, i felt a heavy hand on my shoulder. . . and this man asked me if i had any means to pay for my check, check. . . check, well i'm the new jesus christ and well. . . no. . . i guess thats what happens to those chosen by god. . everyone gets mad at them 'cause that's the way it is in the bible. . .and i figured before i could even start to spread the good word around i'd be crucified at times square. . .

but strangely he didn't crucify me not yet, he just kicked me out and yelled nasty things. . . i hate it when people yell at me, i get so . . . well . . . i cried and i didn't even get my pencil mug back which had unexpectedly had coffee put in it. . . how could i spread the word without my pencils? even though i didn't have any. . .

i mean. . . well. . . i did but someone tripped me that morning and i watched them roll right into the street during rush hour. . . i was gonna ask people if they'd want to buy some crushed pencils but. . . well. . . i could only find an eraser and um. . . a few kind of mooshed pieces. . . i don't know would people buy that? would You? i still got them in my pocket. . .1/2 price. . . ?

Chris Campi

On Our Way

It's as tattered as a gypsy's bandanna
He said as he jumped into the rusting red pickup
The springs of the old seat
Bouncing with a squeak
Like the hinge of a door
That needs oiling,
He was talking about the sky
And it was true
The different shapes, thicknesses and hues
Of the white clouds
Quilted together
In a mismatched patchwork
Embroidered with the washed out blue of the sky
Fraying around the edges.

The seat squealed with my weight
But not as loudly,
He pulled out
As I positioned the cooler
Within easy reach at my feet
And threw our packs in the back,
The wind rushed through the windows
As the brown stalks of corn
Soon to be gathered and burned
Flew by,
His smile and eyes were big in excitement
As he gripped the wheel
With determined force
And I closed my eyes
Imagining the sky
Five hundred miles ahead.

Lynn Pendleton

They called her Mitzi
But by birth she was
Mildred
So patient
To let me play shoestore
With Gucci apparel
And beauty parlor
With silver brushes.
She had "Fred Flinstone" dishes
For Oscar Meyer lunches
Or sloppy Joes,
And funny straws
For iced tea with backyard mint.
She was a perfect Jewish gram,
Always looking
For my Prince Charming.
Together
We used to jump rope
And play games
One on one: Hearts and Jacks
In the evenings
We'd walk to dairy queen
And Gram would get me a double dip
With assorted Jimmys.

Jen Miller

Storms of Illusion

Contemplation

As silver grey pearls gather,
the polarization of energy amplifies
the force of attraction between all bodies.
There are no shadows under waiting skies,
nothing to fear in the soft non-darkness
of what soon will be...

Passion

While Thor grumbles with anger and jealousy
a wiser loving elder reveals new diamonds...

Sunset

An infinite brocaded pillow caressed the
shell-pink salmon tangerine
coral lilac yellow-sand pastels,
the opaliquid fadings of indirect starlight...

Promise

Love licks nectar in ionic air.
Honey-warm muse breath frolics
in flowering fields while glistening prisms
mist back to pearls...

Kevin Merriman

Beauty

Little leaves landing
On little boys standing
Under a maple tree
During a month so clean
I had to sleep

Purple cabbage growing
On a lawn in need of mowing
Under a maple tree
During a month so alive
I had to sleep

Crystal sunlight glaring
On a metallic coffin baring
My body
During a month so new
I will never wake

Andrew C. Carington

Thoughts of a Husband

I stand behind a soaking gaze
Enjoying the simple beauty
Of a bare, gentle clearing,
The soft earth slumbering quietly
Beneath a veil of fresh snow
Which conceals all the secret smells and juices
That stain the earth in spring.
Beyond looms a spectral foreground
Slowly melting like the depthless grey around me
At the first touches of the new sun.
My fancy toys with the shadows in the morning fog
Tricking my eyes with elusive figures
That melt teasingly into one another.
I long to step out into the delicate folds before me
Chasing the creatures of my fancy,
Like a pup after imaginary prey
Bounding through the depths of the wilderness.

Kent Lambert

For Lack of Sleep

The small lamp on the table next to his head radiated brightness like a big torch. The light had made me feel safer when he first laid down but now it was becoming more and more like an unwelcome chaperone.

"What do you remember most about today?" As he asked me, he started to look more comfortable, rolling over onto his side, facing me, though there was a conscious ten or twelve inches between our bodies.

"I don't know." I looked in his eyes for a trace of what he wanted me to answer, but the light behind his head was blinding. "I guess when I met that girl that I was supposed to stay with, complete with red fishnet hose and a black leather skirt; people at a poetry conference just are not supposed to look like that."

"Ya, she is scary. I wonder what her writing's like. I've never had her in any of my writing classes or anything."

Something that sounded like a pan crashed to the floor in the kitchen with all the glory of any loud noise in the middle of the night. Chris just looked at me and said, "Kenny always gets hungry about this time of the night. He's not too graceful."

My sweater was getting all tangled up as I strived to take up less space in the bed than I had needed in elementary school. Chris looked even less comfortable with all six feet of him trying to do the same.

"Look," I said, "its your bed. I don't mean to put you out. Go ahead and take off your shirt or something. I don't know how you're going to sleep confined by all of those clothes and no bed space. This sweater has to go." I sat up and pulled the sweater over my head as gracefully as possible, which was not very. I thought quickly how I was glad that I'd put on a descent t-shirt under my sweater that morning. He followed my lead and unbuttoned his shirt, then stood up and walked over to the closet. I'd forgotten about the rest of the room and now that he was at the other side of it, all the space settled in around me and left me with a chill.

"Mine was when I sat down in the group and met you," he pronounced, carefully reassuming his position on his side of the bed. "Hay, this light is kind of bothering me, it has a real glare. Do you mind if I turn it off?"

"Sure, go ahead. What about sitting down in the group?"

"My most memorable moment of today, until now. I can't believe how easily I can just sit here and talk to you. I'm not even tired anymore."

"Ya, its like being at a slumber party, how you never feel tired once you get talking." Just as I finished my thought, a piercing wail, a cross

between the sound of an animal crying and a car alarm, cut through the hush of the room. Next thing I knew, I was upright at the foot of the mattress and about to go find Parker, I'm not sure why, when the noise stopped.

"Marvin always plays with my alarm clock when he parties in here. Sorry it scared you."

"That's your alarm clock? Doesn't it wake up the whole campus?" My heart was still beating fast; my veins felt like ropes that were being whipped around.

"Marvin always turns it up to highest volume when he plays with it. Listen, while I'm up and have the light on, what time should we set this for tomorrow?"

"Oh, I don't know." All the blood crowding in my head right then wasn't making room for any thought, especially about the morning. "'Breakfast is at eight, but before that I have to go shower and get ready in that girl's room, where I left all of my stuff."

"Okay, how about seven? Wow, its almost three now. That doesn't give us very much time left to sleep."

"Ya, I know. Dr. Strayer's not going to be too pleased with me if I doze off during the workshops tomorrow. And I'd hate to sleep through the reading."

"So," he said with a tone of resignation, "do you think that we better stop talking and go to sleep?"

"I guess," I agreed. In my head it made sense. I waited for sleep to envelope my consciousness the way that it usually did, like a candle quickly extinguished. But my drowsiness had slipped away.

"I don't have anything to do tomorrow night or Sunday." I don't know how long we had been lying there in silence, but his voice was a welcome change. "I can definitely catch up on any sleep that I miss tonight," he continued. "What about you? I mean-"

"Oh ya, I can always sleep the whole way home on the van tomorrow night. So I'm sure that I'll catch up on all my sleep."

"And besides," he paused, smiling, and I could see the brightness in his eyes through the darkness of the room, "I'm sure that one of the aims of these conferences is to make sure that the writers from different schools get to know each other. So we'd be letting them down if we didn't use all of the limited time that they've given us."

The limited time that he was talking about was becoming a blur. Only a few hours before, everybody had cleared out of Chris's room in search of space and sleep like spores blown by the wind from a dandelion. We'd all been together too long. For a while I was alone in his room. He was in the bathroom and I was resting at the head of the bed; but the second that he came back, I made myself alert.

"Listen, should I go find Parker, and just share his couch?"

"No, stay, please."

"Sleep is all that I'm going to do, you still want me here?" A couple of scary encounters with guys that I thought I knew but really didn't made me leary of getting in bed next to a guy that I didn't know.

In the back of my mind lurked the revelation that Parker had mentioned sleeping on the couch right outside of Chris's room. Parker and I worked together on the university literary magazine and he met my criteria for being a safe male good friend.

Earlier, at the reception, Chris had come to sit down in our group to meet Parker and tell him the sleeping situation. Just when Chris had started to make his way out from behind the curtains that are his big round eyes, he asked the guy next to him what university he was from. When he replied that he also was from his school, Hillsdale, the host school, the curtains closed and before long he found a way to excuse himself from the conversation and go find more familiar people.

Standing at the foot of the mattress, he looked down at me and I could see the opportunity waiting to get past those eyes and I didn't want to lose it.

"Okay," I said. "Thanks, I'll stay here." I moved over to the side next to the wall, thinking how if I yelled or hit the wall really hard, Parker would wake up and come to my rescue.

He lay down fully dressed, on top of the covers. He crossed his arms and legs, somehow managing to lie down the same way that people stand in crowded elevators. I thought how I must have really made a strong impression on him when I said that I just wanted to sleep.

"I'm so tired," I said.

"Me too," he said, turning his head to face me but leaving his body in the same uncomfortable position.

"Nah, you're just baked." He looked hurt, so I redeemed myself with, "What time did you get up this morning, anyway?"

"Ten. My first and only class was at eleven. I'm not baked anymore."

"We had to be ready and waiting for the van at 8:30 this morning, only to end up getting here an hour early. I could have had another hour's sleep. I guess I can't complain, though, because I have to have gotten at least a couple of hours sleep on the van." I never imagined when I was sleeping on the van, or even when I was telling Chris about getting the sleep, how long it would sustain me. But as time passed and hours grew in scarcity and value, sleep somehow lost importance, or at least precedence.

Knowing that we were dealing with only a limited time to spend together, I wanted to learn the absolutely most important things about him. I thought how I was learning things about his family and his past

that I'd never even thought to talk about with my closest friends, friends I'd known for years. Time began to pass with increased speed, the way water speeds up as it approaches rapids, and the is gone.

"I bet that you probably ran your high school," he said, jabbing me in the stomach and laughing.

"No, remember, I told you about my big football player sweetheart and our sweet, innocent relationship. He was too busy playing in all the games and I was too busy being cheering for him. I've rethought alot of things since then. I never thought that three years could make such a difference."

"Ya, I know what you mean." He'd stopped joking; I felt like I'd lost his attention in the whole conversation.

"What about you, in high school, I mean? You never said anything about a girlfriend. I'm sure that you must have broken some hearts."

"Ya, well its just weird how I used to be able to do that without thinking about things, the future, you know, implications."

"Sorry, Chris, I'm trying hard to follow you, but you've lost me."

"No, I don't want to put you through listening to this. I've never put anyone through it. Its just for me to. . . no one can understand."

"I know that we're just new friends, but that's what makes me sure that you can share this with me if you want to. I mean for all we know we only have tonight." Something inside of me had become obsessed with having as much of him, at least spiritually as possible.

He looked to the ceiling, almost for an answer to what he was thinking about. When he looked like he'd come to an agreement with himself, he rolled over to face me and looked straight into my eyes. Right then I felt the closest that I'd ever felt to a person.

"A month before I left for school freshman year, I got this call- it was my girlfriend from high school- for a while-and anyway. . . ." His voice trailed off and he rolled onto his back, directing his comments more to the ceiling than to me. "You know, we'd decided with school and all the different people, other people, to just break up. I hadn't talked to her for about a week."

I could hear someone moving around upstairs; the steps weren't quick or deliberate, they were more like I imagined a ghost would sound lingering in this old house. The light reaching over from the closet was like an intruding visitor, and the tone of Chris's voice was strong but distant, as if he were addressing one of these ghosts.

"I was surprised to hear from her-but anyway, and how was I supposed to know, but- well, she was pregnant."

He was lying on his side, facing me, and the space heater beside the mattress was illuminating the right side of his face and shoulder. About an hour ago, when the room was full of people and the bright colors of

their tie-dyes and his madras shirt, he'd brought out the heater because I was cold. Now I was warm. too warm. And his honesty wasn't helping.

"I wonder- I mean, if things had been different."

The clock uttered an annoyingly loud tick as if to draw attention to the fact that I hadn't yet verbally reacted. I waited. I wanted to see what was hiding in the shadows of the left side of his face. I wanted to touch it until my fingers became familiar.

Earlier it was easier, with everyone in the room. "Chris-are you high?" My palm covered his nose and my fingers were manipulating his face. He was baked and that made him an easy target. Still, he wasn't hassled. He was sitting as easily as a big throw pillow where the mattress backed into the corner. There wasn't that much room, either. I know there were at least five of us sitting on the mattress against the wall, our makeshift couch. The couch that somewhere around 2:30 AM became the bed.

"So, did you go through all of it with her?" I was under the distinct impression that there is no way a man can even pretend to go through all the hell of an abortion, but he was reaching out to me and I wanted to reach back.

"I guess- I mean- as much as- well, I took her to everything, and afterwards, I- brought her back to my house. I fed her ice cream."

"Were your parents there? Did they know?" I couldn't even imagine what my parents would have to say about my brother bringing back an old girlfriend to the house for ice cream after he'd taken her to have their baby aborted.

"Ya, I had to tell them, I didn't know what else to do. And we needed the money. But we didn't tell her parents. They'll never know."

"How'd your parents react?"

His eyes wandered to the ceiling again, and then over to the closet. "I couldn't believe my Dad. He was mostly just shocked that I'd been sleeping with her. I think he was proud of me. I don't think that he even thought about her. . . about. . . ." As his thoughts became less verbal, he had the disillusioned look that a boy gets in his eyes after breaking a rule that he didn't know existed.

I wanted to be able to explain the rule, or at least explain why it was broken. I wanted the hints of sunlight to stop trickling in through the window. I wanted to understand where a hurt goes when it hides away for that long, and what in me made it surface. But, most of all, I wanted to touch his face until my fingers became familiar.

Amy Judge

The Music of the Sun

fades, shimmers and sets
on the dancing
sweating bodies:

silhouetted notes on
the stanza of the horizon.

Zach Smith

Don't Think

You could call it love
But everytime I see you
I will certainly die
If I don't reach
Inside your body
And pull you out
To me
Shovel my tongue
Through your grinning teeth
And slide it soft
Round your ripened mouth
Lick to taste the resistance
Of your gums
Your teeth
Your tongue
Licking until we are numb
Until I am sure
That there is not a promise
Left to offer
Me

Mary Forsythe

Aspiration

Introduction
Musician
Impression
Distraction
Attention
Emotion
Preoccupation
Infatuation
Obsession
Notion
Apprehension
Suppression
Expression
Motion
Communication
Association
Connection
Suggestion
Conversation
Proposition
Consideration
Anticipation
Reception
Celebration
Elation
Gratification

Tim Emrick

Where We Go Together

Entangled
with arms and legs
we lie
unable
unwanting
to move again
twined
together
into
a cocoon
of wrinkled
damp sheets
with the salt
of our bodies
crystallizing
stinging
tender lips
slightly parted
and breathing
each other
the warm air
of coffee
cigarettes
and desire
rising lightly
as steam from
our joined skin
a spider's web
forming a cage
protecting
imprisoning
us

in the stillness
of our union
where we came
together
in serious
self-sacrifice
finding pleasure
in pleasing
being
so grown-up
when
we came together
greedily satisfying
our own needs
and now laughing
out loud from joy
as children do.

Mans Angantyr

Sunset

We are like these rows of maples,
and crows nestled in the thin arms
of telephone poles, all black
against the flame of sunset,

all charring to dark silhouettes.
Caught at this corner, we wait,
cooled by the wind and listening
to the winding legs of crickets.

I hold your roundish head in my hands,
notice, suddenly, how your face
has bloomed--too many ripened bushels
past the dawn of a wistful smile.

In your eyes is sunset,
a fading hazel pooled at your eyelids,
and your figure wavers to flecks of black,
a flutter of crows angling toward the sun.
Terribly close to being
Shocked

The Child of my Fatalism

Last night I dreamt that I was pregnant.

Today, my thoughts, as usual, drift and fall upon the
problems of the world.

I sense only an exhausted, exploited darkness.

No control.

My anxiety-ridden, frustrated imagination creates a vision
of relief to soothe me.

A maternally instinctive surrender to a poisonous epidemic.

A woman and a child lifting off the earth.

No mechanisms to direct and propel.

No barriers of metal to hold, confine.

No wings.

Only desires of peace to fuel a motion of retreat.

Soaring against the pressure of a dying wind, I hold my son
against me to protect him.

We leave death to find the beauty of survival.

The image always disappears here.

I cannot picture what I do not know, what I cannot give.

Nothing more to offer a child, this unfinished escape.

My last hope.

The subconscious cure to justify the birth of a wanted child.

Jennifer Peterson

Untitled

She coils beneath the street lights
Like Circe tossing tricks to her boars.
She doesn't have a taxable income,
Her bare essentials the sum of her worth.
But where the artist struggles
To capture the magic of the touch,
Where the faithful stumble,
Hearts constricted by the world,
She remains strangely aloof-
A serpent that consumes them whole.

Kent Lambert

Jonathan

Time

"Hello, this is Elizabeth. May I help you?"

Sometimes, if you think about it long enough, it engulfs you and takes you closer to the edge. Some people, no matter how hard they try, cannot shake a bad feeling.

It weighs them down, plays with them, actually teases them. And no one else is living your life - they can not know - know one will ever no.

"Hello? Are you there? Hey, Phil, they aren't talking.

Hello? Please, I can help."

That is a scary thought, isn't it? No one will ever know. You are completely alone sometimes. If you never feel alone, I envy you. It is total helplessness, no matter how strong,, how intellectual, how. . . how anything at all. Escape is not possible. Certainly, at times, a little niche of security is found, but the walls of that fortress can not stand forever. The song won't last.

"Phil, get on the line. Trace the call. Please, listen to me very carefully. I. . ."

Let me describe it. I am walking alone. The night is chilly, there is a little bite to the wind. The situation did not improve at all today. You've talked about it, but that only made it worse. Talking about it is overrated anyway. So you start to think hat went wrong? Who is to blame?

". . . and that's what we are here for. To help. Talk with me. If you're feeling alone, I'm here for you. Please, give me a signal that I'm reaching you. I want. . ."

And thousands of reasons pop up. Thousands. But they are all so superficial. You think, how could that be a reason for what happened? But the search for a reason is hopeless. And that's the answer - there is no reason. It just happened. But knowing that only makes the situation worse. It means you never had control in the first place.

"We've got the call traced Elizabeth. I don't think its a prank. They would not have stayed on so long. Any luck yet?"

"No Phil. Nothing."

So where does that leave me. Near death, I suppose. I can not control my life - I've lost whatever control I've had. Some times I think I never had control.

So here is the situation. They do not enjoy it anymore, she did not enjoy it in the first place, and I never had any say in the matter. NEVER. So they played with my life. And they said they were sorry. Well, thanks. That helps. "I know that the hurt was not intentional, but why did it have to happen?"

"That's true, the hurt was not intentional. You've got to realize that. Talk with me. . . what is your name?"

"Jonathan." Just answer me one question - what did I do? Or maybe two - why was I not considered in the situation? Throw a little something substantial my way - whether its love or hate.

"Jonathan. Good."

What's so good about that?

"Jonathan, tell me your problem. I can help you."

I've been telling you my problems, you bitch. And just like everyone else, you don't understand.

"Phil, he's not responding.

"Well reach him, dammit. Give me the phone."

"Jonathan, what are you thinking. We can't guess. If I didn't want to help you I wouldn't be on the phone."

So now I have no choice.

"You have a choice, Jonathan. You. . ."

"But do i really" have a "choice?" What is your "name?"

"Phil. I'm Phil. I. . ."

Phil, you can't find me. Your existence will not coincide with mine - my existence is far removed from your security. Phil, "if only you knew of the independent existence I am experiencing, you would begin to understand." But you can not understand...

"But Jonathan. . ."

"I have an" actuality that would frighten the "shit" out of you "Phil." You don't want to know of the answer i've unearthed. I am the "lucky" one.

"Jonathon, I'm trying to reach you. Reach back."

"Phil, I am. And you don't understand how far the gulf between us has widened." Was there a chance of ever returning? Was there Phil? Phil? Phil?Phil Phil?

Phil, I'm leaving you now.

"Jonathon, someone will be there for you in two minutes. Hang on, Jonathon. Are you hanging on?"

In essence, Phil, you have already lost me. . .they have already lost me. Time is a useless measure when the future has already become the past and when the present, also, has already become the past. They co-exist, Phil. They are one entity.

"Elizabeth, I think we're all right. The guys are going to be there any second. Jonathon, you're doing great."

No choices, Phil.

"Jonathon? I. . ."

The matter is ended with my life.

Apocalypse

I sat on the picnic table, not eating, but being eaten. Earlier, when I descended the worn and worm-eaten wooden steps, my night vision had yet to take effect, and the immediate environment was a blurred mass of trees and foliage in various shades of dark and darker that would take on grotesque forms to a vivid imagination. I saw suspect shadows and movements within the brush that tugged at my mind and, though I made myself believe that I was truly alone, they coaxed me into remembering that society was near.

Then there was the trash can. God, the trash can. After I sat down, I glanced over my shoulder, only to see a witch dressed in the darkness, hunched over and meticulously inspecting the earth - for herbs and salamanders, no doubt. Periodically, I checked her progress, which was outrageously slow, and as my eyes became accustomed to the darkness, the devil's hag took advantage of her amorphous qualities and turned herself into a garbage can. At least I then had one less problem to concern myself about. The witch made me uncomfortable.

There were many trees blocking my view of the road directly in front of me, but to my right I could see the winding pavement reach up and out of sight. I could also see the driveway where a car would exit, momentarily leave my line of vision, and then re-enter it at what was 90% of the time too fast for the sinuous, sharply angled road. And tonight it was raining - had been for maybe an hour. I'm not sure how long - I had only recently exited the false haven of the place I call home.

To my left and mostly out of sight there was a second road, this one winding upward. A Jeep Cherokee sped up the slight incline and stopped as the hill sloped gently into a small parking area. I watched the red taillights intently over my left shoulder, and I pictured the vehicle exploding violently and disturbing the peaceful night.

The red lights seemed to study me in hopes of discovering the whys of my actions. If I closed my left eye, and squinted with my right, the lights blurred and then became tiny pinpoints of electrified energy glaring at me, seeking to burn through my retinas and singe my fatigued cerebral cortex. The lights sought me through the blackness, filling the distance between us with a faintly discernable ray of pulsating heat - or hate. Then it was gone - vanished into the thick night, seeking another.

Hearing a disturbance in the brush, I tensed briefly as I sensed an unwanted presence. I turned and was frightened by the unexpected close proximity of an evergreen that was standing guard over the table. It was only a cat that had attracted my attention as it wandered through the undergrowth, searching for only it knew what. Maybe it would find death on the road tonight, as many creatures do. . .

I found myself staring up the road to the driveway. A car pulled up - was it time? I saw myself unfold my body and move, barefoot, through

the bushes and trees to the edge of the road. My movements were methodical, pointed, defined. Also, there was a shroud of dread and hopelessness outlining my body, and I was almost engulfed in pity for the wraith that was now standing by the roadside. The car turned out of the drive and began down the ever increasing slope. The ghost of me, continuing with the same systematic motion, walked into the road and into the lane in which the Honda Accord sedan was steadily approaching. Even if the Honda was not speeding, stopping would be impossible - there just would not be enough time. A split second and bam! - there's one road kill that will not be counted in the log of someone's journey. The wraith faded into the night as I was pulled out of my foreshadowing hallucination.

The rain came in spurts, but always droplets would fall from the trees, and occasionally a gust of wind would send gobbets of water cascading down onto the already moist earth, and onto the forlorn figure that sat with his arms wrapped around his knees, and his head bent down, balancing on his limbs that provided a natural resting place.

I awoke abruptly from a horrid dream of life at its ugliest. It was now 2:30. I took off my watch and placed it beside me on the chipped red paint of the table. I wondered how so many could believe that an instrument such as a watch - a simplistic representation of our existence - could capture the most elusive concept of the ages. Show me the past on a watch. Show me the future. Show me life.

My surroundings had become increasingly clearer, and I could see most of what was around me distinctly. I looked to my right and was again startled by the ominous evergreen that seemed to be haunting me (was it moving closer?).

I stretched and yawned. The bush in front of me stared curiously. I saw it burst into an inferno, though it was very green and very wet. I was unthreatened by the flames of this fire. I snapped out of the dream-state that I had once again floated into, and the beauty of the evening embraced me. My blood slowed in my veins, seemingly in an attempt to come into equilibrium with the tranquility of the darkness. I remembered that the light cool breeze was nature's breath and not my own, and I inhaled slowly. What immaculate confusion - briefly, I had been flowing freely with nature.

This is the way it should be - calm. My skin was cold and I shivered violently - had the Grim Reaper's fingers played on my neck? No, only the evergreen, reaching closer to me, striving to touch me, hoping to jolt me into action. It realized what was happening, and was tired of me being there. So was I.

My barefeet hit the mud, but I only lost my balance momentarily. I walked past the burning bush and down into the darkness created by the

cluster of trees that stood by the black roadway. Something strange about the bush held my attention fleetingly, I believe because within my brain a voice was screaming about the absurdity of the green and wet bush actually going up in smoke. I skirted several thorn bushes for no apparent reason, considering my intent. I walked deliberately, almost confidently, and reached the road in a matter of minutes. As if on schedule, a car stopped at the end of the driveway and preceded to take the left turn that led toward me. Later, she will think that she should have turned right. I stepped casually onto the asphalt and into the path of the oncoming VW Jetta. The seconds passed oh so slowly, and I remembered my watch on the picnic table. Glancing back into the trees from which I had come, I saw the cat silently stalking. It looked up at me - and if a cat's face could exude terror. . .

Frame by frame the last seconds of my life moved like the slide show of a disastrous family vacation. First the high beams of the car peeked around the bend, then the front half, and then the whole vehicle came into view.

I looked up in time to see a horror-stricken look dance an ancient tribal ritual of death on her attractive countenance. And then I realized that I regretted my decision. Too late - sometimes it is only too late. I should not have allowed someone to become a component of my apocalyptic decision. It may frighten them, that which they can not comprehend. But nothing is ever pure in this world. There is always that little blemish that so frustrates a perfectionist. This will be the smudge on my final action, the fact that i frightened this heroine of my death. But what could I do? Breath a sigh of relief? Yes. And smile a smile for that which was, and that which will be - not with, but without me.

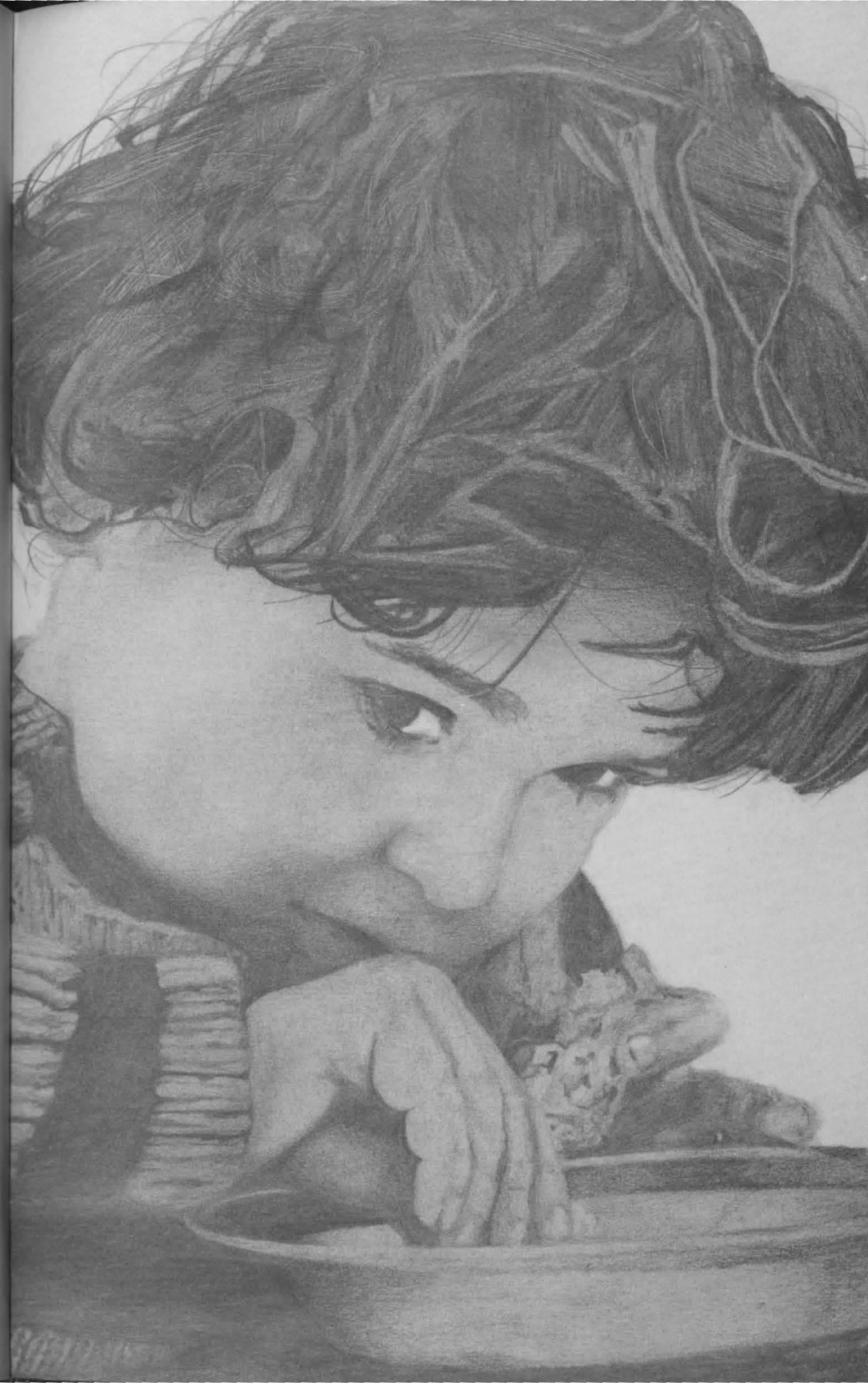
Jim Cox

Terribly close to being
Shocked
Sits a man in a raging
Thunderstorm
Of his own devise.
Natural,
Without direction.

Sitting
Because she is dancing,
Whirling
Naked except for a pink ribbon,
Waiting
To be loosened by the deluge
Or
Pulled tighter by the whipping of the wind.

And he is amply
Shocked
By the trampled, sodden
Ribbon,
Which he discovered by the
Light
Of an instant crack of lightning.

Michael Payne



Anne Frank's House

We drift down
the doll house stairs
to the street, cold
and slippery under our feet.

You fumble at my fingers
clasping the black and white
imprint of statistics
sealing in our palms.

There is an unspoken need for silence
as we surrender to the faces,
the bodies packed in pits-

The white hand of a little girl
carving her secrets
into the open pages of
her life.

We walk, our minds numb
with the hunger crushed
in their bones. The question
burning in our throats.

Mary Forsythe

Invitation

You are cordially invited
to excise my innocence.
With the peppermint sharp sweetness
of that which you call love,
I want you to kill me.
For only after dying in you
will I be able to live in myself.

Kevin Merriman

Height Protest

I'm tired of being patted
Like a pup
Because I'm petite.
Size five feet
Are not fun at eighteen.
I don't want
My sneakers to read
Left and Right
When I leave for college
And Mary Jane's won't cut it
For the senior prom.
If I were on stilts
Would my cute ideas be
Sophisticated?
And who says little ears
Don't hear as well.
I don't want to stand
In the front row-for choir
And pictures-
Ever again
Because, inside me
My personality
Is the size of Wilt Chamberlin.

Jen Miller

Dancer

Her hand drops after a perfect pause,
Legs shifting imperceptibly across the stage,
Scissoring in secretive steps-the lady walks.
Her arms flick up, they pierce the space,
Carving umbrellas as they slice Tchaikovsky.
His complex bars are but clay to her body's
Surgeon skill whose scalpels sing through flesh.

In third row center, yellow pearls look on.
She watches every slice with care,
Each one seems to scratch her eyes.
In its velvet cushioned seat her skin pulls tight.
As she smiles and stiffens the program crinkles.
And the stained red salt, running down her cheek,
Is leaking from a wound she cannot feel.

Skin Deep

My name is Billy.

I am twenty-three years old and I work at the Columbus Zoo, or at least I used to.

Its not really hard work, not like the guys who have to feed the animals or the zoo doctors because I only have to pick up trash. Some days, if not everyone shows up to work, I get to use the stick with the nail in the end to jab the bits of paper that cover the ground. Sometimes I pretend that the pieces of hot dog wrappers with ketchup are bleeding from the hole I put in them, but only on days that I come to work blue. Most days I'm not blue and I just use the broom and the metal garbage collector to pick up the trash.

I don't make a lot of money at my job, but most of the time I don't need to pay for my lunch or dinner because not all of the people finish their food, so I keep it. We're not supposed to do that and Dave, my boss, tells me not to if he sees me so I always look around to see if Dave is watching before I pick something out of the trash. Once I found a can of Mountain Dew that was almost full, but when I drank from it, I found a bee that had found it first and I got stung on my lip. I don't drink pop from cans anymore, even if they are almost full, unless I'm the one who opens it, and even then I shake it to make any bees that are inside fly away.

Dave is pretty nice even though he yells at me sometimes and looks mean if I come up and pat him on the back and say "how's it going, Dave," Me and Dave are best friends, but since Dave lives too far away for me to ride my bike to see him and he said I wouldn't fit in his car because I'm too tall, I've never been to see where he lives. Dave brought some friends to see me, though, and we all went to a bare on High Street. Dave and his friends had me drink alot of beer and I saw a girl who smiled at me and we danced but then I don't remember. Dave said we had fun so I guess we did. The next day I heard my mom crying, but my head hurt so I didn't smile and say "Good morning, Captain" like I usually did. Her favorite apron was soaking in the sink and I asked her why and she said that I got sick on it when she was putting me to bed the night before and she kept crying. When I asked Dave about it he laughed and said that he gets sick on people all the time so it was alright. I said that I didn't think so, but I thanked him for taking me out. Later when I went to whiz I looked down and saw that I didn't have any hair in front like before. I saw that there were some black lines that I hadn't seen before and so I went over to look in the mirror. Somebody laughed when I turned around but I didn't see who because I was staring at

myself in the mirror. Somehow where the hair used to be there was an elephant face drawn on me. There was little eyes and big ears, but the trunk had been there before. It was the best thing I had ever seen. My favorite animal in the whole zoo was Matilda the elephant because she was so pretty and big. Everyone knew it, and they would even ask me how she was because they knew I always went to see her first thing everyday. This picture on me looked just like her, but it was more of a boy elephant I think. It was so nice that I whized in the sink so I could look at it some more. I decided that I liked it very much. When I went to show Dave he was on the phone and he seemed shy about it, but when he saw how much I liked it he told me that it was his idea and that it was a tatoos so it wouldn't wash off. I thanked him very much and left. On the way out, Dave told me not to show too many other people because they wouldn't understand like me and Dave.

The reason I don't work there any more is because I tried to show Matilda the picture. The day that I tried to show her wasn't too busy and I'd picked up lots of trash so it was alright. To make sure she would see I stood up on the black railing in front of Matilda's house and pulled down my pants. While I was waiting for Matilda to come out a little boy came up beside me and pulled on my pants leg and asked me what I was doing. I turned around and showed him the picture and he said it was cool and that he wanted one, but then his mom came and saw me and she screamed. I think she was just blue because she couldn't have one too. She took the little boy away and the Zoo police came and took me to see Jack Hanna. I had never seen Jack Hanna up close, and it made me scared because Jack Hanna was famous enough to be on David Letterman. I thought about it, though, and decided that maybe if Dave and the little boy thought my elephant face was cool then maybe Jack Hanna would too. I thought that maybe he would think it was so cool that he would take me to be on David Letterman too. The more I thought about it, the more I wanted to find out, so before Jack Hanna could say anything I showed him my elephant. When I showed him his mouth sort of dropped open so I knew he liked it. All the other men in the room laughed and the policeman took me out and sent me back to the employee building. When I got there he made me take off my nametag and my Zoo Hat. While I stood there, he peeled off my name from the nametag and gave it to me. I still have my nametag 'cause I put it on my mirror at home and when I look into the mirror it says Billy Winston and I nod 'cause I know its me.

When I got home and put my bike away, I saw Mrs. Carmichael from The Franklin County Retard Board and my Mom hated that, but my dad was gone so it didn't matter. One time my dad had given me a shirt that said "Instant Retard, Don't Need Water" that he had made special out of

one of his own shirts, but he didn't tell Mom. I never wore the shirt because it smelled like "The Juice of the Devil" that my Mom was always talking about, but I guess I lost it because I don't know where it is now. I'm glad my dad is gone, though, because I fit into all of his clothes. Mrs. Carmichael was getting up when I came in, and she patted my arm and looked up at me and said that she would do her best at finding another job. I told her I liked the zoo, so could it please be another zoo? She looked away and said something to Mom.

Sometimes I go to the zoo still, but only on busy days so I can get in. I saw Dave once, but he left before I could say hi, so I don't think he likes me anymore. The animals still like me, though, so I say hi to them. Last week I went and Matilda wasn't there, even after I waited all day. I asked a boy who hadn't worked there when I did, and he said that she had been Put To Sleep because she was sick, so I picked some flowers and sat on the railing to wait. A few minutes later, the boy walked by and after he passed he yelled "THAT MEANS SHE'S DEAD YOU FUCKING RETARD," so I said thanks, but I'd wait anyway. I thought she'd want to see the picture.

Eric Whitney

Ars Poetica

And, finally, I present
my gift to you

a weak statue, at best,
much more tactile than beautiful.
Take the yielding clay and mold
it to your own experience.
I'll rest in the shadows,
behind this anonymity, safe
until you've contorted my energy
and, under the weight
of its scrutinizing look,

I crawl away, trying to remember
the creature that it was.

Amy Judge

Contributors' Notes

Mans Angantyr, cinema major, is a Swede who lost his heart and language in America.

Andrew Carington is a junior English (writing) major. He primarily enjoys fiction writing, but lately he has written a bit of poetry.

Christopher Collette, a sophomore English major, French minor, Anglophile, who likes the month of November and wants to thank all of his beautiful friends.

Bradford Cover fully supports ballet, and this poem is no reflection on the struggling dancers of America.

Jim Cox.

Margaret Dawson.

Tim Emrick is a freshman artist, scholar, and self-proclaimed wizard.

Mary Forsythe draws purple cows in her spare time.

Amy Judge fictionalizes.

Kent Lambert is rapidly popularizing "his own little world."

Robert Marshall is a graduating (December, 1988) Religion major. He dedicates his work to the memory of his mother, Flora Costin Marshall, 1930-1986.

Kevin Merriman

Jen Miller admits that she enjoys being 5 feet tall.

Michael Payne - P.S. Exactly what is a contributor's note?

Lynn Pendleton would rather be trekking up a mountain, skiing down the bowls of the Colorado Rockies or curled up by the fire with a good book and misses the African skies.

Jen Peterson is a pseudo senior at Denison and she claims that she owes all her creative aspirations to several spiritual encounters with the female deity Elvissia.

Jen Read seldom looks through window panes these days.

Chris Rynd.

Shannon Salser - What a guy !!!?

Zach Smith

Rosemary Walsh always wanted braces as a child.

Eric Whitney does not have a penile fixation.

