

1992

Exile Vol. XXXIX No. 1

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Recommended Citation

Pound, Ezra; Kruse, Kristin; Macaluso, Chris; Brummitt, Charis; Padden, Kristen; Rudgers, Jen; Nix, Kevin; Croft, Rich; Widmaier, Beth; Rudder, Katy; Wanat, Matt; Kang, Ishak; Dempsey, Erin; Dunham, Trey; Bowers, Craig; Christie, Carey; Lott, Erin; Fair, Adrienne; Stind, Ellison J.; Allen, Trevett; Zobay, Andrew; Heckert, Andy; Polumbus, Christina; Wendell, Jennifer; Brady, Travis; and Gallagher, Annette (1992) "Exile Vol. XXXIX No. 1," *Exile*: Vol. 39 : No. 1 , Article 1.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile/vol39/iss1/1>

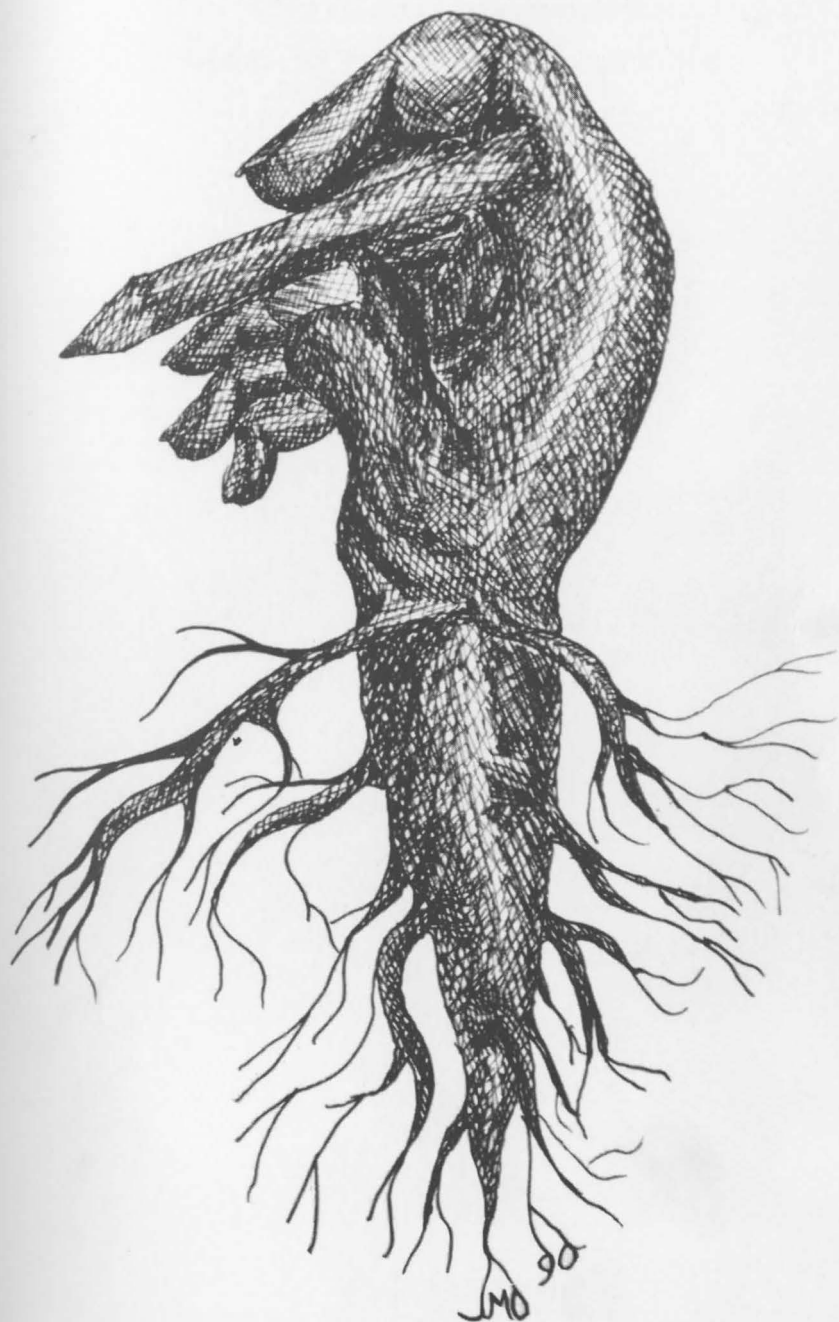
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Exile Vol. XXXIX No. 1

Authors

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FALL 1992

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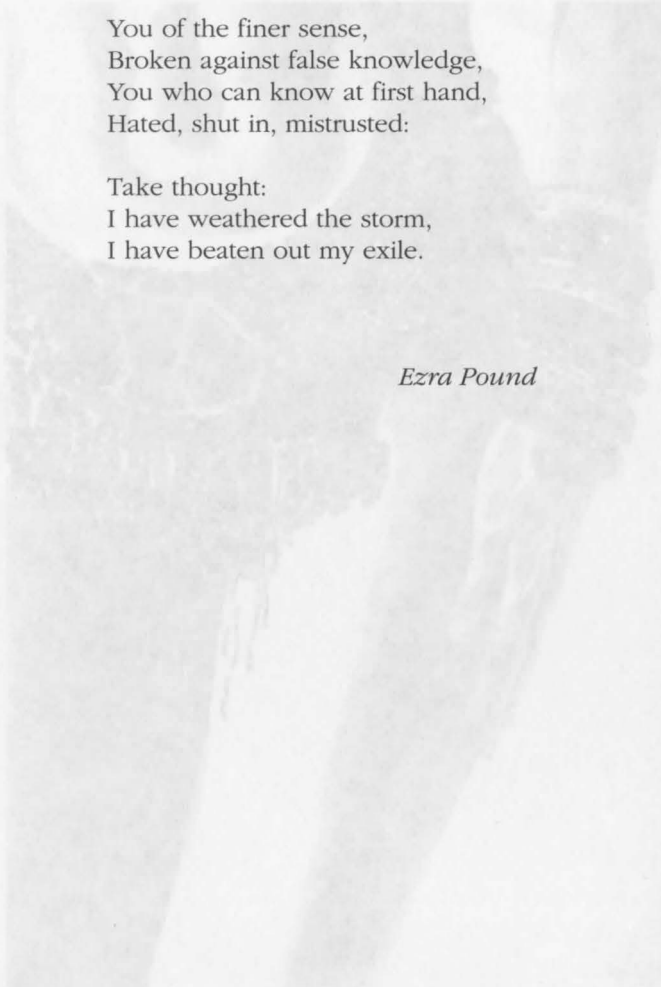
**Denison University's
Literary and Art Magazine**

37th Year



Fall Edition

EXILE
Denison University's
Literary and Art Magazine
37th Year



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

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Remaining a Soldier

paintings line the pale brown walls that hide him from slanty-eyed snipers from enemy sites. He's sick, he says to his secretary, and her eyes focus on a little garden of sweatbeads on his forehead. Sick so he'd like to nosedive right off the top of his skyline-pretty building straight and clean, into a streak of black worsted wool through the cold pea-soup Manhattan morning. Well, truthfully he caught his words just before Marlene heard how sick he was. So she brought him Pepto Bismol, sweet and pink as Shirley Temple, for his stomach. His stomach was right as

rain pouring through trees, through them, making mud and sticky cartoonish blood run down his face. He is thinking about how pretty the world is, how soft and warm, how lucky he is to be part of it. Long gone, initiative and objective and Greek letters forming a backdrop thick and impenetrable as the forest itself, he runs silently, his feet sounding like just two more drops of rain on the green soil. He is thinking something

a beautiful girl. Just lovely. So western, for God's sake, with her spandex and bustier seeming to split at the seams, simply unable to rein in the bouncy curves that sell themselves with the eloquence of sharpshooting, right-below-the-belt girliness. He smiles, wishing she were more than just a lipstick-colored shadow, wishing he could close his eyes and then open them and see, because

I keep getting distracted. This figure is walking toward me, while I sit in this tree with my can of Raid, watching his nose fill with insects but he still stops dead, and stands there, holding his knife and smelling the air. He seems to melt into a tree or a rock or a village, aware and amused by his knowledge that I am there, have always been there, and he picks up a furry something and eats it. I lean over, almost fall out of my hiding place, and am sick. He picks up his pack and

she is running. She goes so quickly, he takes off his loafers and quietly jogs after her, whispering, "a hundred bucks, baby, no AIDS, no VD, I'm so clean, you can be clean too." But she knows something's fucked, and she's fast, especially when the last little sunshine comes through

and makes the blade wink at her, and makes her think about how much she's really worth, how many bodies she can hold inside of her for how many hundreds of

dollars are a man 's best friend, skip, sing, he seems happy for the first time in days. The hole in his left arm is closing, and he can move the fingers. Out of ammo, but is that a chopper beating in his brain, or just his little heart? He strokes the pin on his grenade for one moment before pulling it and running into the trees, as screams pierce his brain and he's sure now he's been followed. The ladder comes down from the sky with fatigues and a stretcher, and he's going home to the

times that she can spread them, but that's all over with, a man in an expensive suit smiles like a cat and says nothing, but his eyes are soft, and he cuts her gently and lies a ten dollar bill over her dying eyes. After the one kiss, he replaces his shoes, wipes his knife, and hails a cab. She sees daisies and those designs she drew on her notebook in school, the ones that look like the designs you see when you shut your eyes real tight. The ones that come out of nowhere. The ones that almost look like other people 's feelings.

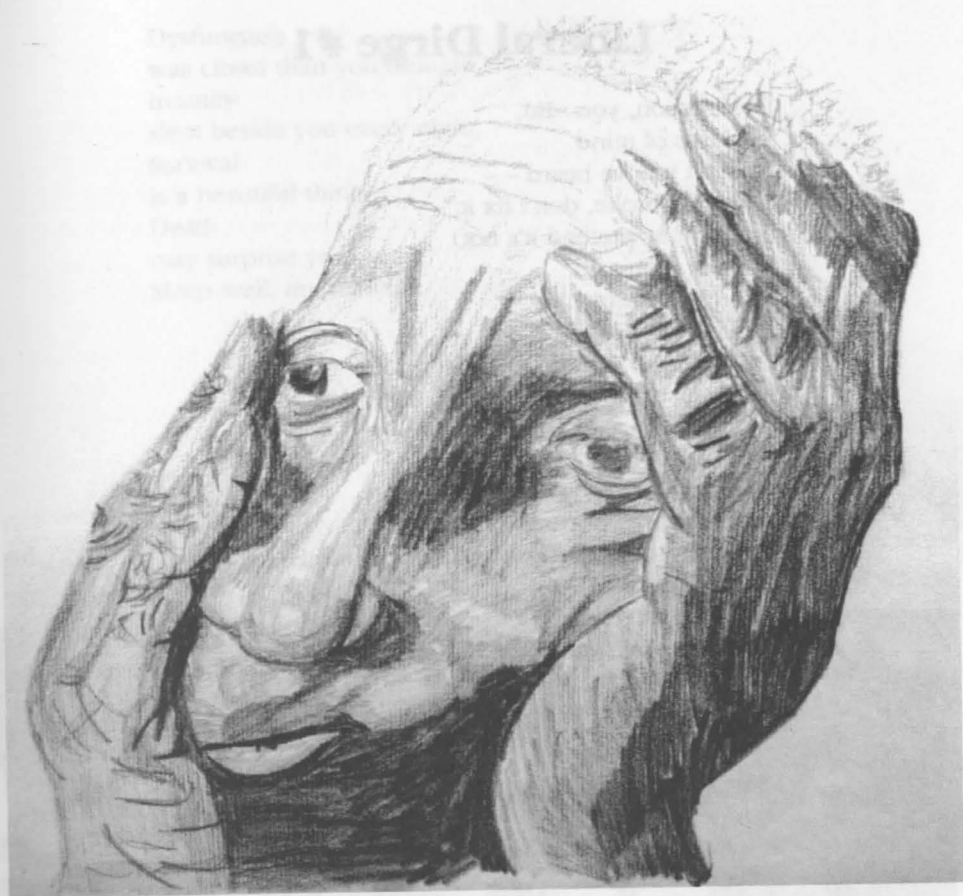
ones. . . .

—Kristina Kruse '93



We both ride in the back.
Shirts off.
Ankles covered in fresh cut grass
sweating in the Virginia sun.
My skin is brown,
his black as night.
This is my summer job,
it's his life.
The mowers on the trailer
rattle and clang as we roll down
the highway.
Junior tells stories:
about the scholarship he was offered
to play basketball at U.S.C..
"College don't teach ya nuthin',
look at chew."
He smiles bearing a front
tooth that is wrapped in gold
leaving only the shape of a heart
in the natural white enamel.
Junior tells me of the riots.
He talks of last Labor Day, 1990
Those that brought Virginia Beach national attention.
The "Guard" had to be called in
Black vs. White.
He tells me of other race wars,
scars from dog bites, stories of fire hoses.
The truck stops
Mowers, weedwackers
and gas cans clash in the trailer.
I ask,
"Why do you live down here
with all these rednecks?"
We pull our mower cords in unison.
"Ya see, in the soufh, dey hate da race,
and dey like the individuals. In the norfh
dey love da race, but dey hate da individual.
Judge me for who I am."
We go off to put a fresh coat of grass
on our ankles.
Cutting the Virginia field
under the hot sun,
my skin dark, shiny with sweat.
What Junior said, echoes
Over and over. I'm from the north.
We fought for black freedom.
I'm not racist.
Then I realized the most unlikely
event had occurred
I had to go to the South to find
I was.

Chris Macaluso '93



Jamie Oliver '94

Liberal Dirge #1

Dysfunction, you said,
is a state of mind
from all you've heard --
"If it ain't broke, don't fix it,"
(and if it is, pretend it's not).
Insanity, you said,
is a relative term
so who's to judge?
on a scale of Gandhi to Hitler
which is crazier, the martyr or the murderer?
Survival, you said,
is the quest of the weary spirit
towed under by the current
in this our sea of troubles;
We live to catch the sun and not be burned.
Death, you said,
is not to be feared,
a place of ultimate sleep
(discounting the worms and decay)
like a gorgeous featherbed six feet below.

I believed you until
I saw you (as in a dream)
wrapped
in a hundred icy rosaries,
stifled
by a thousand prayers,
choked
by a million flowers,
drowned
by pine and third-rate satin,
grounded
by four men you barely knew.
Could I lie with you
once again
and ask you sweetly
"Have you changed your mind, my dearest?"
I learned the difference
between reality and desire
even as my tongue
found your throat
and I pressed cold steel
into your chest
and felt the sticky-salty-liquid-heat
cover me.

Dysfunction
was closer than you thought.
Insanity
slept beside you every night.
Survival
is a beautiful thing.
Death
may surprise you.
Sleep well, my darling.

—Charis Brummitt '96



Two Ex-Lovers and a Dirty Glass Door

Approach the glass door.
Reflections. Reflections of me and her.
As we were before. Intertwined.
We hang in the metal frame.
Lying in the finger smudged
pool before us.
My reflection and her
on the opposite side.
Separated only
by the oiled glass
We both step forward
as if to challenge
then retreat in unison
like a dance.

Throw the door open
arms wide, baring my chest.
We slide in the narrow frame
as if slick with sweat
positioned as if we had collapsed,
looking down at her soft features,
my arm above her head.
Our breath mingling together.
I turn to tell her . . .
But nothing comes.
The moment gone.
She is distant now.
Only the filthy hinged glass
Comes back to me.

—Chris Macaluso '93

The Salt of the Air

Overgrown grass, untamed weeds and windblown broken twigs covered the estate. The rose bushes needed to be trimmed, the shrubs needed to be shaped. Tanner Clayton slowly drove up the gravel drive noting all that had to be done before the weekend. The tennis courts needed to be swept, the hammock needed to be hung.

The Clayton Estate still stands on a grass carpeted cliff above a small private beach. For forty-five years, the gray, weathered-wood mansion has been a summer escape for the thirty-some Claytons who travel far to catch the Cape Cod sun. From Memorial Day to Labor Day the Clayton dunes in Chatham, Massachusetts fill with family and friends.

He parked his car beneath the torn basketball hoop. No one used to park near the hoop, let alone right under it. It was some unwritten Clayton family law. That hoop had more wear and tear from long summer nights of two-on-one. For Kate, Brian and Tanner, the oldest kids in the neighborhood, it was an after dinner ritual that would go on until the sun came up.

Tanner got out of the car and stretched his legs, breathing in the ocean air. He walked across the lawn to the cliff peeking off to the Atlantic. The waves crashed against the jetties, the sea gulls flocked overhead, the porch chimes echoed. He loved the Cape in May, things were so peaceful before the seasonal tourist rush.

He turned his back on the ocean to confront the home. The red shutters were peeling, revealing green paint from ten years ago. When Tanner was fifteen his Uncle Tom paid him fifty dollars to paint them red. Brian and Tanner spent that whole summer painting forty shutters red.

"Tanner, what do you think Uncle Tom would do if we chose to um... paint these purple, say a nice violet?" Brian stood there in ripped Levi shorts holding his red paint brush like a weapon. His curly, summer blonde hair was tucked beneath his sun-bleached Red Sox cap. Brian had a devilish grin that was tempting.

"Yeah, he would shit in his tailored shorts. I was actually thinking of a nice fluorescent aqua-marine to match Aunt Betty's new car."

"Tanner, is that Kate coming up the drive? She looks nice."

As Tanner looked to the empty drive Brian poured the bucket of paint over his cousin's head. That's what started the paint war of Seventy-nine. By the end of that summer, every piece of clothing they owned was red.

Tanner walked to the house traipsing through high grass that itched his ankles. The screens of the porch sported holes that had to be patched before the weekend. He walked into the porch dodging the winter homes of thousands of spiders. A layer of dust and dead insects served as a welcome mat on the clapboard floor. He pulled a house key from the pocket of his madras shorts. As he turned the key and opened the door, a small bird flew out just missing Tanner's head. The house looked haunted. The furniture was protected by dusty sheets while masking tape crossed the window panes to guard against off-season storms.

Tanner walked around the house, up the creaking staircases, and through the bedrooms. Not knowing where to begin, he stopped at the door to his bedroom. Pushing the oak door ajar, he stepped inside. The first floor board chirred as Tanner took a seat on the bed. He still spent his summers sleeping on the top bunk. Tanner and Brian had the bunk beds built in when they were six and seven. It was Brian's idea.

"Tanner, so you want the top or the bottom? I really should have first choice since I'm seven. I'm also the one who convinced Grandpa to build them but you can have firsts because you're my favorite cousin. What do you want?"

"I don't know, I guess the bottom."

"Scaredy cat, Tanner Clayton, you're a scaredy cat. Why don't you want the top?"

"I'm not a scaredy cat. I'll sleep on the top."

"Alright, but the top is the best. I'll make a deal with you, you can have the top bunk if you give me your Carl Yastremski baseball card. Deal?"

"O.k., deal." Tanner handed his best card over to Brian and took to the top bunk.

The nautical flag bedspreads still carried that musty aroma. The bedspreads as well as the pale blue walls lightened each year with help from the sun. Three tic-tac-toe games were etched in the walls from years ago. "I LOVE KATE" was stenciled on the window sill. Tanner didn't know who wrote it. It could of been either of them, they both loved Kate. Ever since they were little Kate Lewis had been their third amigo. One summer she would be Tanner's girlfriend and the next summer she'd be Brian's girlfriend. It didn't really matter who she was with because they were all the best of friends.

Tanner walked downstairs to the kitchen. He figured it was the best place to start. Ammonia, Ajax, sponges and brooms were all piled in a corner by the leaking sink. He took the broom and began to sweep the floor finding crumbs of Wheaties from last August. When the entire white linoleum floor was clean, Tanner began to scrub the counters. He opened all of the windows to let the salt of the air inside. He ripped the masking tape off the windows and took off all of the sheets. The place was beginning to look less haunted.

Last summer Brian stayed after Labor day with Tanner to clean. They'd clean for an hour in the morning then devote the rest of the day to sailing. They would take the seven-year-old Sunfish out for hours and reminisce about all of their summers in Chatham.

"Hey Brian, remember when we stole that bottle of rum from Kate's dad." Tanner dipped his feet into the water.

"Yeah, we poured half of it into Grandma Rose's cocktail. And she got on the patio and started break dancing with us. Do you remember the look on Grandpa's face when her skirt started to slip off?"

"No one ever suspected us, we were cool."

"What the hell are you talking about, Tan? You were hiding out in Kate's tool

shed because you were so scared. I was the cool one. I convinced them that it was probably a reaction to her medication."

"What about the time you cut Kelly's six inch braids off. You were mean."

"We were more than mean, we were evil. I'm still amazed that she believed me."

"Brian, I think she still believes you. Kelly has her hair checked for lice three times a year." Tanner splashed Brian, "I'm glad we've matured." They sailed all the way from Provincetown to Marblehead laughing about old times.

Tanner dusted the living room, the dining room, the parlor, Grandpa Mickey's library and the den. After vacuuming, the first floor was finished. Tanner had two more days to get to the second and third floors. The house would look perfect before everyone came for the annual Clayton summer kick-off.

He jumped in his car and drove into town to pick up dinner. The town was desolate. The tree lined streets were empty, Tanner got a prime parking space right in front of Mulane's Pizza and Sub Shop. There is nothing in the world better than a tuna melt from Mulane's. These tuna melts served as the staple of Tanner's diet for years. Mulane's is a family run business that flourishes in the summer and hardly stays afloat in the winter. As he opened the door, bells sounded announcing a customer. Tanner grinned at the smell of the old shop and the sight of Mr. Mulane.

"Well, well, well, look what we have here, it's the first sign of summer." Mr. Mulane came from behind the counter. He reached out his freckled hand to greet Tanner. "How have you been?"

"Not bad, not bad at all. The family is coming up on Friday and I'm just getting things ready. I have been waiting all winter for a real tuna melt."

"Well, I should hope so, you Claytons keep me going." Mr. Mulane headed into the kitchen to prepare his magical creation. "So, where are your sidekicks these days. I haven't seen Kate or Brian since last forth of July," he said as he worked the tuna into a patty with his aged hands.

Tanner stood there in silence, staring at the ground. He shuffled his feet and dug his hands deep into his pockets searching for an easy answer. "Umm... I guess you didn't hear, Brian was killed in a car accident in Philadelphia right after Christmas." It had been a while since Tanner had to account for Brian. He continued to stare at the tiles on the ground.

"Oh, Tanner. No, I didn't hear. I'm so sorry. How are you doing? This must be so hard for you." The cheeriness in the old man's voice quickly disappeared. He reached for the bottom of his apron and wiped his hands. The two men stood in silence.

"Well, yeah, it has been hard. And I know this summer will be too but Brian wouldn't want me to mourn for too long. I just gotta keep reminding myself of that."

"Oh Tanner, I am so sorry. But you're right, Brian loved you more than anything. He would want you to try and have a fun summer. I bet he is up in Heaven right now looking down on us just waiting to grab that tuna melt from you."

Tanner headed for the door with the tuna melt in hand. "Goodbye Mr. Mulane, I'm sure I'll see a lot of you this weekend." Mr. Mulane stood there still wiping one hand while waving goodbye with the other.

He drove back up to the estate with a pit in his stomach. Tanner no longer craved the tuna melt. He put the sandwich in the refrigerator and walked out to the cliff. He took off his shoes and walked down the cement steps to the dunes. Grandma's wooden lounge chair was planted in the sand, it never moved. Tanner took a seat allowing the sand to seep between his toes. Letting his head fall back, he gazed into the sky trying to identify all of the constellations that Brian taught him on the night of Grandpa Mickey's funeral six winters ago.

"O.k., Tanner see that bright star," Brian pointed into the huge sky, "that's Polaris, the north star. And see that over there, those three stars in a row, that's Orion's belt. Now if you follow the belt down, you've got that bright star, Sirius. That one is easy to remember, you go below the belt and you get serious." That night they spent hours on the roof of Brian's house. "You know people say that every time someone dies a new star appears."

The sky was covered with unsettled clouds that continued to move around. The beach was dark because there weren't any house lights reflecting off the sand. As Tanner looked around the beach, he noticed that the only detectable light came from the light house in the distance. The starless sky left him feeling alone. There was no sense of life on the Cape, everything seemed to be in mourning.

—Kristin Padden '93



Ellen Gurley '93





sun-child

framed by the kapok
the smear from a juicy
bit of banana
accentuating
her gaping smile;
the child held my eyes
steadily,
hoping to gain
my favor.
“pretty girl,” she called.
her gaze possessed
the humidity
of her land,
staring into my soul—
a look
which warmed me
in an instant
with pinks and tangerines—
clinging,
melting me
into an understanding
as rich and smooth
as steaming coffee

—Jen Rudgers '96

Crazy Horse

There is a malt liquor
That celebrates the Native American,
And the romance of the Old West.
A proud Indian warrior
Emblazened on a 40 ounce bottle.
Hold it in your hand.
Feel the weight of the golden liquid.
Raise the bottle up in the air.
See the sunlight refract off the Friday afternoon sun.
Look at the back of the bottle.
Read the compact history of the American Indian.
Think about the Indian race.
The only race whose history
Is combined onto a paragraph
On the back of a bottle of malt liquor.
Why doesn't it mention the Daas Act
Or the Sand Creek Massacre?
Or mention the high suicide rates
And alcoholism on any reservation?
But drink up and celebrate.
Two dollars and fifty cents
Gets you a nice buzz and a history lesson.
You get to read about the history of the West
On a forty ounce bottle of beer
That is brewed in Baltimore, Maryland.

—Kevin Nix '94

The Fall of the Western Field

And the man cleared his fields,
planting crops to the east and west
of the home he built with his own hands.
Until, when the soil had turned fifty harvests,
a summer came with an empty heaven.
He chose to save the window field,
the field of sunsets.
He awakened winter's snow
melted in the dank well
with buckets, moving to touch like passion's hands.
The stalks grew over the field
like cloud shadow
and the eastern field
was fallow, the eastern field
would have cursed
the old man and his favorite son.
But a day came when, in the August
of his eighty-sixth year,
the old man sat behind his west wall window
and never rose.
The clouds disappeared from the fields
as the stalks, heavy with grain,
fell under their own weight
in piles of rotting gold.

—Rich Croft '93

In the Closet

In the closet
the farthest darkest corner
I sing to myself
and lick the tears
yelling, accusing thunder
sounds in their voices
dad at brother at mom at
I can still hear them

and I go to school
and get good grades
and am the mature one

it breaks through the cracks
between muttered prayers
and songs and tears and
now I turn on the radio

and I am the good
the quiet the
stay at home friday night one

I don't sing anymore but
I still cry sometimes
I write words to block out words
and feelings thrown and smashed

and I laugh and smile
and cry inside and
I still hear the screaming

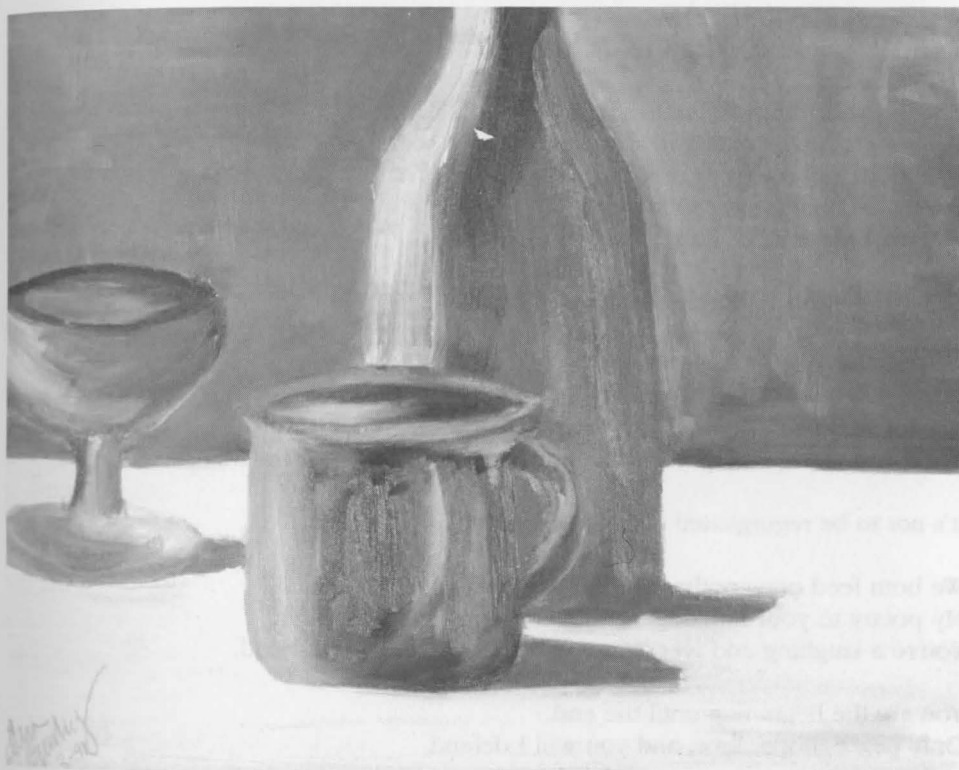
—Beth Widmaier '95

Winter Strawberries

When I ate the seedy flesh of strawberries,
My mouth, burning with the bitter-sweet pulp,
Moved into a sorrowful puckered grin
I shared once with a man, fateful child
Of God's country, that flat river bog
Where mud quickens to sinking limbs
And weighs down the salty lustful
Let loose from faded blouses worn thin
At the breast and brown at the seams.

Whose consenting mother, or what angel
Deserted us in the sterile beds of others,
The interim: his soft and steady breath,
The heat of his neck in the thin bend
Of my arm, and I beheld with conjected soul
That pale fragility of sleep, his closed eyes
Pulsing with the gentle, intangible dream
To shatter with a waking kiss, tender and red
As the fruit for and, now, of my flesh.

—Katy Rudder '93



For This and Much Beyond This Poem

Not for the intercourse catharsis of illusionary love,
Not for to be on top for not to see the blade above,
Not to touch Medussa's Aphrodite mask with a rubber glove,

It's not for these lies that I need you.

You're a morning glory passing lattice, gutter, and pinnacle weather vain.
You're a thin but stout gladolia standing in the rain.
You're an aloe plant from Eden to stop the burning spotlight pain.
But to say you're just a plant is insane.
You're a coffee cup. I'm floating down the drain.

For this and much beyond this poem,
I love you.

Not for the turnipless diet kiss that leaves one breathless on the stairs,
Not for the rolling pin necklaced bliss that makes the restless leave their
lairs,
Not for the pick-up truck lap cozy that makes the reckless say, "Who
cares?!"

It's not for fairy tales that I read you.

Newton and I know a feather is as solid as a rock.
You're a relic in the attic in a hope chest in a sock.
You're the only door to perception that doesn't have a lock.
I don't even ever have to knock.
You are Quasimodo. I am at the chopping block.

For this and much beyond this poem,
I love you.

Not for the skeleton crewman's blinding flask of bitter Victory Gin,
Not for Napoleon the pig with Charles F. Kane's chin,
Not for to be their elephant killer and to lose Rosebud for their sin,

It's not to be regurgitated on that I feed you.

We both feed one another and on each other we depend.
My poetry to your nonjudgemental confessional I send.
You're a laughing and weeping willow, both solid and at bend.

You are the beginning until the end.
Only peace, hope, love, and you will I defend.

For this and much beyond this poem,
I love you.

Not for the key to Emerald city the forefathers of Spartacus built,
Not to hold the handle, while Harry is carried on the hilt,
Not to wear ripped jeans, a coat and tie, a jersey, or a kilt,

It's not into these valleys I will lead you.

You're a shepherd, a coyote, a sheepdog, and a sheep.
You're an inner soul stabilizing pressures in the deep.
You're a silver platter answer dressed as an Alcapulco leap.
You're a place to sow and a place to reap.
You're seeded dreams where corpse collages heap.

For this and much beyond this poem,
I love you.

Not for the Church of Those Who Do Lunch With Christ in the medium
strip,

Not for a pair of loaded dice, or an honest coin to flip,
Not for pathetic inebriation with every giggling sip,

It's not for these Sahara igloos that I heed your call.

You're a magic firefly in nocturnal Usher's hall.
You're a packless wolf and a pack leader's call.
You are Socrates and Shakespeare with a southern drawl.
You're open range horses, you're a Universe, a wall.
In vertigo pillow paintings, you're a bed on which to fall.

For this and much beyond this poem,
I love you.

—Matt Wanat '95



The Cycle Repeats: Apathy

Listless, longing for lasting purpose
Those who were born post-boom,
Know the depression that one can leave
Being reared in the shadows of bigger booms.

Parents have said before to do it
Only if it feels good.
Children ignore the need for pleasure,
Choose instead the lust of goods.

Hearts, no longer stirred by rhetoric,
Ideology connecting not with belief
But with fantasy far removed from truth,
Given answers aligned with all beliefs.

Media's power provides a deluge.
Computers are needed instead of the mind
To process and link with the world surrounding
And destroying our spirit, and no one minds.

Progress has taken the joy of discovery,
Transformed it to the toil of repeat,
Frustrating the leaders of powers so strong,
One pushes the button, the cycle repeats.

—Ishak Kang '93



Pear-Colored

My apartment was too hot. Although the clock next to my bed said 3:52 a.m., it felt like midday in the city. I sat up, smearing another layer of sweat into my face, wiping it into the sheets as if I wouldn't have to do it again in a minute. The thought of what 9:30 that morning meant made me light a cigarette. I really love to smoke. At four in the morning it's almost like having a meal.

I love to watch myself smoke so I slid off of my bed onto the floor and sat there in front of the full length mirror. The light from the street below always gives my bedroom a queer greenish-yellow cast, and I was only wearing underwear. I tasted the balls of sweat above my lip. Salty.

Across the room I could see the envelope on my dresser. Inside there were a few pieces of paper, typed on, folded in thirds, and sent to my apartment this morning while I was at work. The letter was keeping me awake. I looked in the mirror at my body. A clump of hair stuck to my neck like a gash.

I never exercise. I laughed out loud at my crosstraining Nike's slumped in the corner as if they've been used properly. I wanted a cold beer just then so I got up, stretched, and grabbed my cigarettes.

Opening the refrigerator, I held my head in the frosty air until the moisture on my face and neck was cold. I pulled out a beer and shut the door. A plastic smiley face magnet stuck my mother and father to the Frigidaire. Below them hung an expired coupon for the Scandanavian Health Club. My two warm fingers reminded me to put out my cigarette. I looked back at the magnet and then reached for the ashtray.

I was thirsty. I opened the beer and gulped, rinsing off my dry pipes and replacing my salty taste with alcohol. I listened as the dull hum of the refrigerator stopped, leaving only the ticking kitchen clock for company. I sat down and quickly drank the beer. My thighs were sticking to the stool I was on, but it was cold and stable.

I lit another Merit and knew that I was going to be up for the remainder of the morning. I chewed on the loose skin around my thumbnail and spit it out onto the counter. I felt naked. Since my beer emptied itself so quickly, I opened a new one. The sound of the clock disappeared into the silence. The refrigerator clicked back on. I burped loudly and laughed.

Walking around my kitchen, I stood in front of the microwave to watch myself drinking and smoking for a minute. I turned away slowly, continuing to walk. In front of the sink, I leaned over, staring down into the reddish-orange soap bubbles floating from my pasta dinner. The smell of the sponge made me wish I had thrown it away a week ago. The bubbles popped without a sound. I think I was on my third beer. I could feel its weight in my stomach.

I grabbed another pack of cigarettes from the cabinet and packed them against my palm. Smack. Smack. Violently. It stung my hand. I lit one and sat on the linoleum floor for a while. Nine-thirty loomed and the smoke hung in the air above me.

Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, as God is your witness?

I do.

Please be seated...

And I sat there on the floor. Sitting and waiting.

I finished four beers and got up to find a bottle. My belly was swollen with beer, and as I poured the Vodka into my glass I knew I didn't want it. I stood there in my underwear and cried. I cried because that letter was in my room scaring me. My nose was running. I was drunk and I needed to urinate. I walked into the bathroom and turned on the light. Everything was silent. My feet squashed into the shaggy white throw rug. My white body and red face stood there staring at me. The bruises around my neck had started to turn pear-colored. I felt like vomiting so I did. I sat on the floor afterwards with my back against the cold bathtub. I could feel the coldness and the hardness all the way through to my stomach.

It was just a form letter from the District Attorney's office. Honorable Judge so-and-so will be presiding. Please meet outside Court Room 12 at 9:30...but I wondered if he got a form letter. I wondered if he had just thrown up. I was crying again, like a child with a brush burn. I was so tired.

I stood up, chewing on my thumbnail and biting the hard skin with my front teeth. My cheeks were hot but the tears still burned as they fell. The mirror was in front of me. My neck bones were a big wooden hanger wrapped around my shoulders, my underwear hung above my hip bones, my breasts disappeared into my ribcage as if they were hiding. I reached for the lightswitch to stop the view.

Shaking, I moved back down the hall and into bed. I curled up on the wrinkled sheets, pulling my knees under my chin. The sweat started all over again.

His violent presence hung in my room like thick red velvet draperies. Thoughts of that night—his thick wrists, the smell of my body after he left, the scream that never found its way from my lips—were crawling from the envelope like roaches.

8:14 a.m. unfolded my body. I showered and got a cab to the court house.

—Erin Dempsey '93

4-Square

The bell rings

A tidal wave of young minds,
Full of math and grammar,
Crash into the yard.

Racing to every corner, nook and cranny;
Waves rippling, giggling,
A sea of youth flowing into games
Of hop-skotch, jump rope, red-rover.

I lead the flood
Running hard, concentrating, looking
Straight down at those size 5
Zips, turning over and over.

The yellow squares loom ahead,
Bouncing closer, closer,
The red, rubber ball tucked safely away,
I'm there first, I'll serve.

I turn to face the enemy.
Three sets of soft eyes greet me
Done in mother's pink bow.
I chuckle. "Serve, stupid!" she growls.

Smack! "This will be quick," I think.
Round it goes, faster, faster
Heat caroms off the blacktop, lines blur, left, right my turn Bam!
Silence. All eyes turn to watch.

The ball floats and slowly lights back to earth.
"Hit the line, hit the line!" I plead.
"Out!" one bow jumps and moves towards my square
I stand motionless, stupified, amid the clamor.

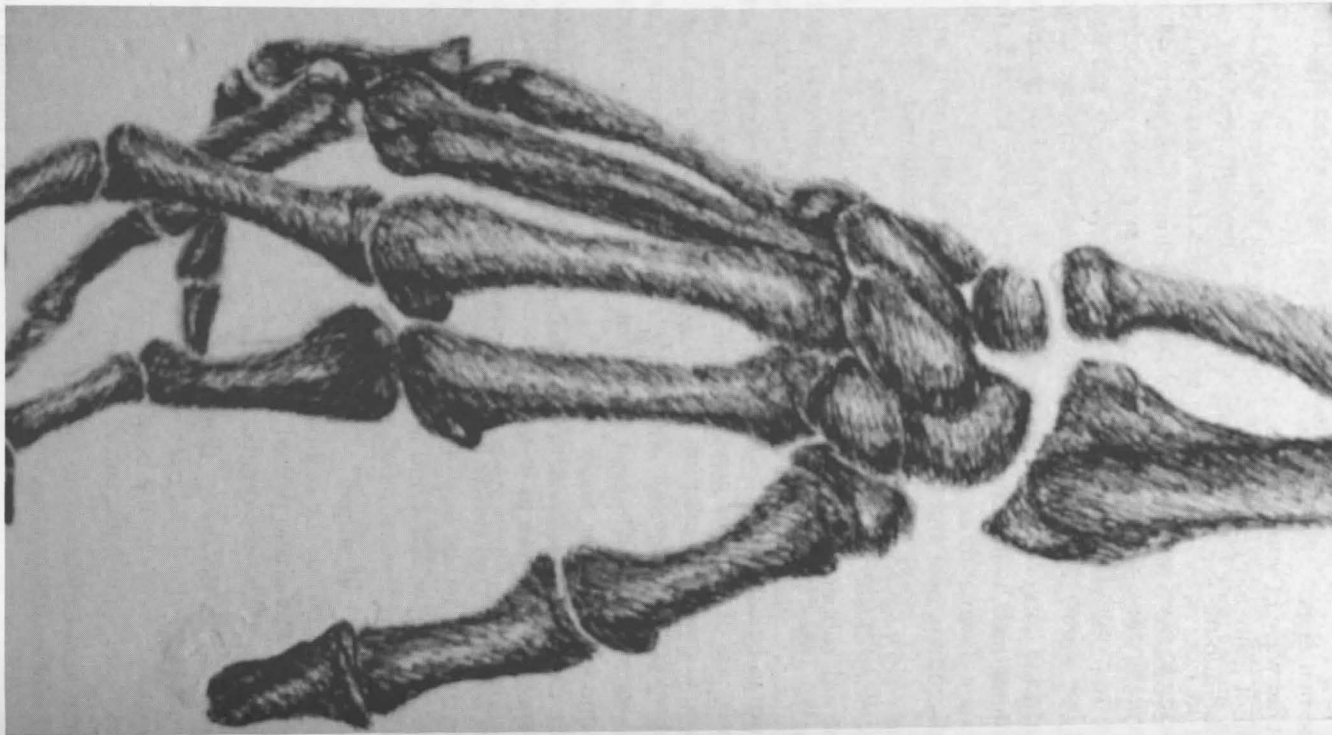
"Give us the ball, stupid!"
"There you go," as the ball bounces twice then disappears
Behind a Winnebago parked
Down the street, stupid girls.

"Brian Joseph McAllister!" that old reptile roars
As her lizard-skin hand bites my ear,
"You can't always be the best."
"Yes I can!" I fire back, stupid teacher.

"Or at least I try to be," to myself,
As I trickle back to class.

-Trey Dunham '94

Jamie Oliver '94



Ink and Heroine

*I am a kind of pharmacist, she pulls tightly on the rubber strap
I take my drugs with me , she finds the vein;
I have travelled from innocence to experience, the needle disappears,
But I have come back to her, sick child- to fill her with the meaning of sensation.
Experience taught me, the core of life, her beautiful essence;
There was nothing more to beauty, risen from this ashheap,
Than itself, a phoenix to her throat, wings beating in her ears,
So the world exists for beauty, golden in dawn's chill,
There is no serpent, but her heart chases her,
Taking infinite forms, a cat, it hisses, spins like days,
Tempting her, it bares teeth at her own tail, wanting
To romp like the mind of God, to find its own gravity,
And why not, it allows her to draw in the sensations of the world,
We will all be fallen, the cat tires, the great bird descends,
I am just a salesman, she wishes another form for her ashes,
A green paged book of poems?, but the coffee can in the kitchen is empty,
They are most beautiful as her world grows more dull,
Ashamed to see what you can't afford? her eyes begin to swell,
Another taste before I leave? paralyzed, still clutching the strap,
The ink drips from your lip to chin, blood spatters her shirt,
I know you want another taste, biting her tongue to keep from swallowing it,
It will take you away from the rats scratching between the walls,
This God forsaken place where. the child lies dead in the next room,
You still expect he will rise, wrapped in swaddling bands of toilet paper,
To guide you as you wander, under a phosphorus star.*

—Rich Croft '93

Figments

I dressed
my whirling dreamer
in some melancholy wisps
designed to decorate
to claim
as if I own.

She was
spinning there alone
warm within my skull-surrounded
void, twirling top-like
in an
air of imagination.

I streamed
gentle green to
passionate red to tranquil shades of blue
winding her naked flesh as
a spool
of prised sunlight.

But then
my maypoled wonder
slowed, her swirling figure
bound and burdened by this present
my heart
produced so pure.

I had
bestowed these ribbons
of rainbows, in hopes such a glorious gift
would make her forever forget her
dreams and
think of me.

But my
poor and precious
mummy's momentum finally gave in;
she teetered and tottered
and collapsed
in deserted memories.

I then
unwrapped her wretched
robe to find remains of sorrowful
splendor: a set of
 golden bones
laid perfectly in line.

At last
I gazed within
her hollow eyes where
whirling in her mind was
 I alone,
naked and cold.

—Criag Bowers '93



Malfi Coast



Suzanne

Hey Stella!

SHIT, YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO SAY THAT I WAS
ONLY TRYING TO MAKE A JOKE AND IF
YOU DON'T LIKE MY PURPLE PROSE
YOU CAN PUT YOUR SHOES ON SOMEWHERE ELSE m.r.

FLYING THE JOLLY ROGER DOESN'T
MAKE MUCH SENSE IF YOU ARE GOING TO GIVE IT ALL TO CHARITY
MY QUAKER OATS AREN'T HOT ENOUGH FOR
CALCULUS ASTRONOMY

HELL, I DON'T MIND LIVING HERE MR. PRESIDENT IT'S JUST THAT
MOTHER MERCY DOESN'T SEEM TO FEED HER CHILDREN ANYMORE
AND I WAS WONDERING IF STELLA KNEW WHERE I COULD FIND A PLACE
THAT'S GREEN

STELLA KNOWS ABOUT THE DIVES WHERE STUPID PO FOLK LIVES AMD DIES
SHE LAUGHS AT JOKES AND JIGS AT JIVES
SHE'S ADVERSE TO AUTHORITY

ART CALLED ME THE OTHER DAY AND SAID TO PUT MY THINGS AWAY
THE KIDS ARE DRUGGED OUT IN THE HALL AND THE
WALRUS AND THE CARPENTER ARE READING THEM THE ALL
AMERICAN FAIRY TALE.

I'M JUST HERE TO FIND OLE STELLA
KEEPS HER BRACELETS IN THE CELLA'
EMERALD EYES AND FORLORN SIGHS DON'T TAKE AWAY HER MEATY THIGHS.

THIS IS NOT A MONET MOMENT BUT HALLMARK HAS A CARD FOR YOU
I AM NOT FUNNY NOR AM I SERIOUS
STELLA'S HIDIN' ALL THE CULTURE UNDER HER TAN PANTYHOSE
IF YOU'RE LOOKIN FOR ART JUST FOLLOW YOUR NOSE.

HELL, I DON'T MIND LIVING HERE MR. PRESIDENT IT'S JUST THAT
MENTAL JEWELRY HERE IS GLASS
AND ALL THE OYSTERS WANT IS GRASS
SO STELLA'S GONNA MAKE ME KEEN
TO WHAT IS OLD AND WHAT IS GREEN.

Turning Leaves

He said that i was crazy.

Maybe. i wouldn't tell him even if i knew for sure.

"Perhaps you're a manic depressive."

Someday, when i'm happy, i'll tell you what it feels like to be sad.

He asked who the girl in the picture was.

"My best friend who made me miserable," i replied.

"She's gorgeous. I want to meet her."

i just wanted to introduce him to the real me. Instead of telling him, i looked out the window and watched the leaves turn red.

Don't get too close to the original. It might look mundane.

i said to myself in a fleeting moment of introspection.

But what if the original draws you near?

He's like the first leaf that turns color. All the others have to follow and fade from green to orange.

Nothing ever stays the same.

i used to slide down the hill feet first. Then head first.

Now i'm sliding heart first, and the rest of me can't catch up.

Earth's children sliding down the hill without any mirrors. And if there were a mirror, i wouldn't be able to find my image—

Even if he was sliding beside me, holding a hand-held mirror.

Sliding down the hill into the welcoming whirlpool.

i wonder at night when the rain is pounding against the windows,

does he, too, wake to the sound and listen for a moment?

hear the splatter of each individual raindrop onto the glass?

Or does he sleep soundly though the rain. Dreaming of someone else?

Golden light spiraling forth over the pillow.

The warmth filling the bedroom as dawn steals the night.

The golden moment of morning tears itself into the room.

Standing barefoot on the edge of wakening, i take up space.

i shrink back into the nothingness so that the atoms of existence will not be disturbed.

"You're too messed up," he accused.

"You're addictive and obsessive."

Well, cast your gossamer fishing wire my way (i said with my eyes)

i'll bite the bait and gladly hook myself in the cheek.

And reel me in.

Skin me. i said with a smile.

He chanted melodic words in my ear.

Verses of confusion.

With each word, he filled my empty shell: the thrusts of his body were only secondary.

i wouldn't have done it. i wouldn't have given in.

But i thought his hazel eyes matched the color of mine.

Green brimming gray brimming brown.

Confusion brimming pain swirling in the depth.

But i was mistaken. His eyes weren't windows. I saw that they were only mirrors.

—Erin Lott '96



Reclining Nude

Blazon

auschwitz neck
peter lore eyes
sunshine erupts
through little girl disguise

grandma moses hands
emerald covered sands
art from foreign lands

she's dandelion, a cactus, a psychedelic flower
i'm a dandelion, a woodpecker, a hippy
she's all that beauty is to me

quasimodo back
real tears
calender girl back
stitches mark the years

no ball, no chain, no mace
no knowledge of her place
a little baby's face
a wise old grandma's face

i'm a dandelion, a cactus, a psychedelic flower
she's a dandelion, a woodpecker, a hippy
she's all that beauty is to me

basketball feet
aristocratic moles
close encounters arms
earthly mature goals

titanium well being, paper thin
private lips and chin
the ocean's extinct skin
priest-siren ears soak up sin
and no ones tries to win

she's a dandelion, a cactus, a psychedelic flower
i'm a dandelion, a woodpecker, a hippy
she's all that beauty is to me

buster keaton bones
china doll flesh
main doors are admantine
my sanctuary doors mesh

a crayfish catching tomboy
a bird that *bbs* destroy
the unknowing fate of troy
the truth that missed tolstoy

i'm a dandelion, a cactus, a psychedelic flower
she's a dandelion, a woodpecker, a hippy
she's all that beauty is to me

hair is hers
she lends it to me
her freedom is
that she still knows how to see

Jesus Christ concern
sigmund freud mind
--machine gun belts on breasts
lag thousands of years behind --

a dreamer with a list
prophets' feet to be kissed
a soapboxless humanist

she's a dandelion, a cactus, a psychedelic flower
i'm a dandelion, a woodpecker, a hippy
she's all that beauty is to me

she belongs to nobody; nor do i
we share what cynics deny

-Matt Wanat '95



Holly Aikens '93

Awake

i am the third person, now
i am also one
my brain folds inward
 and cringes from the feel of its own skin
 pulsing and smooth like a dolphin's
it refuses to believe

a hysterical laugh to glaze over the fear

a label: absurdity
pin it down
i feel i could almost
 keep it from squirming away
 from wiggling into my subconscious
from eating out my sanity

an all-you-can-eat reality buffet

i have broken my brain
open and filterless
i see too much
 and am torn apart, unhinged
 with no lines to separate
the real from the imagined

a fragmented mind incapable of sleep

—A. Fair '96

Dell The Barber

He can't remember much about Guam
He was on a support ship hauling spare uniforms
There was a fistfight with a naval officer in Singapore
He tells me of the Spanish Flu Epidemic
He asks me where I go to school
He tells me he had no time for it
He calls his local alderman a no good bastard
Blacks are moving into his neighborhood
The Cubs are only 7 games back
He tells me he tried out for the Ft. Wayne Chiefs
That was when baseball was a real sport
We talk about caddying and Matlock episodes
And the Spanish Flu Epidemic
And he gives me a bad haircut
I always go back

—Kevin Nix '94



The Tree House

This land was familiar, the long rolling hills quilted in green. The trees were full and close together. And in the thick August air they did not move, even with the rush of this east bound bus, noisy and gray on a winding road. The valleys were deep and blanketed with long, cool shade. They were places of shelter, places to hide. I watched through the tinted windows and let the heavy book lay on my lap.

The night before, the bus had blazed through Kansas grasslands that gently waved, reflecting the moon on its velvet surface. And though I'd never been to sea, it seemed to remind me of being lost in the middle of dark waters, not knowing exactly where the earth stopped and the sky began. I was moving farther and farther from the mountains. Sometimes I sensed the drop in elevation, a slow decline with every mile. I breathed deeper, talked slower. I felt my accent returning with each stop the bus made. I'd ask for a Coca-Cola instead of pop, cheese grits instead of western omletes. But as the bus rolled into Tennessee, it was the trees I noticed most. They were so different from the harsh northwestern vegetation that grew separate and strong, crudely twisted by the winter wind and heavy snowfall. I had forgotten how trees touched one another, hiding the earth's surface, softening the hills.

My parents had lived here since I was a child, and I knew they would never leave. "Jobs are scarce," my mom had written. "Your father's not having much luck. We might have to sell the house and move to an apartment in the valley."

"The valley is a beautiful place," I told my father on the phone. "Change isn't always a bad thing."

"You're only a teenager. You don't understand what losing this home would mean to your mother," my father told me.

And it *had* been a year since I had felt that unhappiness which the lack of money brought down upon my family. In the wide land out west, I could forget, but on this bus I remembered it all—the fights, tears, uncertain silences, frustration. It would only be a few days though, just enough time to get things together before school started up again.

In the living room they argued about insurance as I showed them my pictures from the summer. My articulate father spoke loudly as if his point were valid. My mother's voice was almost a whisper, a technique she used on her first-graders to quiet them down. The pictures lay on the thick twine of an old wicker trunk my parents used as a coffee table. I snapped one on top of the other, giving names to the unfamiliar people and landscapes, looking up occasionally to check my parents' reactions. I had maps and a written log to explain them all, but leaning back against the couch, I seemed to have nothing to say. They passed the pictures back and forth to each other and sometimes ask what they were looking at. We were rushing because Dad's football game was coming on soon, and dinner still wasn't started.

The next morning I woke at noon to work on my financial aid application for a study-abroad program. The papers and forms were spread across the bare

shining surface of my old desk. I sat down and leaned back in the chair, noticing the painted flowers that were still preserved under the stain-proof finish. I remembered how silly I thought those flowers were when I got the desk for my eleventh birthday. I never said anything though. I didn't want my parents to think they had wasted their money, and I tried to use it, too, instead of piling junk on it all the time. But it was up against a large window, and I rarely felt that I got anything done there. The view was all green, up in the pine needles and maple leaves. Mom had called my room the tree-house when I was young, and to me it became that, a place separate and hidden. As I grew older, I would stare through the window's warped glass that blended the shapes and colors of the waving trees. I would listen to music so loud that it drowned out every thought, and I would twirl around in the old swivel chair, trying to keep my eyes on the outside that twinkled and danced to the melody.

I looked down at my application, picked up my pen and chewed the cap. **State your academic, career, and personal goals and how your experience abroad will help you achieve these.** I twisted the pen in my mouth, clicking the plastic against my teeth. I grabbed a sheet and wrote "make money" on one side and "overcome materialism" on the other. Then I paused. I could hear the cats scurrying on the roof. It was their place to hang out, not inside the house but safe, on their turf. It bothered my mother, though, the way they'd sit like gargoyles in the gutters and peer down at us when we would come or go. They would crawl along my parents' bedroom window sill and let out long, horrifying cat cries that made us all feel a little guilty for never touching them except for tapping at their noses through the screen. No one in our family really considered the cats their's, but my father fed them and built a warm place for them to sleep on the upstairs porch.

It seemed strange to me the way my parents kept them penned up, but there were other things around the house that I was noticing as if I were seeing these things for the first time. The paintings of old churches barely visible through the mist, the furniture with its seams tearing and color fading, the mildewed walls of the pantry, the loud hum of the dryer bought twenty years ago. Even my parents revealed things about themselves-the way my father let his artichoke plants grow brown by the kitchen sink, the way my mother wore layers and layers of mismatched clothes even in the summer heat.

My mother asked if she could go shopping with me. There were only a few things I needed, but I agreed, seeing as how I was leaving so soon after I arrived. I drove slower than usual. I hated the occasional gasps mom would make at the roll-stops and the tires' squeels. I was wearing dad's cut-offs, and my thighs stuck to the seat. Mom had on pants that fit awkwardly at the top; I noticed they were an old pair I had left at home. She was telling me about the changes around town, pointing out what had been torn down or built up within the year, and I glanced over at her as she talked, marking the changes in her appearance. Her hair was darkening, the highlights almost completely grown out, and she was always wearing her glasses now. The skin on her neck was looser and soft looking, setting her chin apart like a little purse that disappeared when she smiled. I could picture her old, where the wrinkles

would fall along her face. It seemed strange that I would one day look at her aged and know how that face had changed. She always had looked young for her age, but at 45, there was a tiredness about her.

We stopped at a red light, and I tried to straighten my hair knotted from the wind in the rear-view mirror. Looking at my reflection, I remembered how on the bus ride home I had stared at myself in the window for hours, noticing the lines around my mouth, just two when I smiled which probably had been there all of my life. But with the reading light shining down like a spot light, the lines looked deeper and darker. I looked ghoulish, like a different person, but it gave me pleasure to be different. My stomach would tighten at the eeriness of each slow expression I formed. Even my smile was deranged; I liked that best.

The light turned green. We waited for a while before we could start moving, traffic was getting heavier.

"Do you remember this song?" she asked, referring to the music barely audible from the car speakers.

"Sure, Rockin' Robin. I've got the 45, remember," I said, turning it up slightly. I wondered if she was thinking about all the times she tried to teach me the bop to this song. The TV would be turned down, the wicker trunk pushed up against the couch, and we'd pull each other around the open space. We'd laugh and laugh because I never really learned the steps. I would just mock her composure, swinging and twisting to the whistling in the song.

In the stores, she walked behind me through the aisles with her hands in her pockets. Sometimes she would ask what it was that I needed and then try to help me find it. Other times she just talked about work, the kids in her class and the problems she was having. Walking out of a store, she would apologize for not being able to buy the thing for me. But I told her to forget it, that I was used to being on my own now.

"You've been on your own for a long time," she said. "I can't remember the last time we went shopping together."

"What about Christmas?" I said.

"That's different," she said, and I remembered last Christmas. Their credit cards were taken and destroyed at one of the stores, and there were presents that had to be unwrapped and returned.

In the food court of the mall, we ate fast food and listened to the crowds of people and the rain echoing on the sky-lights overhead.

"So how are things going?" I asked.

"There are ups and downs."

"How are things with you and Dad?"

"OK"

"I mean...are you happy?"

She paused, putting her french fry down, and said, "Well, no. But that's because of things that are going on now. If you're asking if I'm happy with your father, well you can't separate the two. When you have to sell your house and give away your cats and you've lost all your credit...these things don't make you happy, when you're together or alone." She was looking at her cup,

stirring the ice with a straw and touching her fingers to the drops of water collecting on the outside of the glass.

"Did you think it would ever be like this? I mean when you were my age and just dating Dad, did you think things could get this way?"

"Before we were married, I told your aunt Alice that your father and I would have one problem and that was money. But all this seems to just be bad luck on your father's side. He's a smart man, you know that. He just hasn't had any luck with jobs. And now we're almost fifty. People start planning to retire at this age, and your father doesn't have any retirement plan, and what I'll have won't be enough to live on."

I wanted her to look at me when she spoke, include me in the future that she stirred around in the bottom of that glass. I wanted her to tell me something more, use another word besides "luck" to describe what was happening to them. I wanted to know what was really going on, what I could do to help.

She stood up and walked over to the trash can to dump what was left of her food, and I joined her silently. We went on to a few clothing stores, and she would hold my purse while I was in the dressing room. She would hold the clothes that I was uncertain about and follow me back and forth to the mirrors.

"Have you decided where you might study abroad?" she asked. I was modeling a large sweater. "Because if you're going to Kenya, you won't be needing that."

"True," I murmured at my reflection.

"But if you end up going to France, you'll need it. Your father said that when he was stationed there, he wore that big down coat of his all the time."

"I think I'll be going to Kenya. Too many people I know are doing French programs," I said and walked back into the dressing room.

The roads were steaming from the afternoon shower. I put my window down and listened to the rushing of water against tires as cars passed. I rested my elbow on the door, letting the drops of water blow from the side of the car to my goose-pimpled arms. The changes around town that Mom had pointed out seemed minor. The parking lot pavement was a little darker and smoother, the gas station signs a new green color. But each place was generally the same. That's how the town wanted it. Many of my older friends were coming back after college and buying houses in the very neighborhoods in which they grew up. People were recycled here just like the roads and signs. They would say, "Tradition holds this town together." And I would argue that we should open our minds, try new things, learn what we couldn't at home.

It was beginning to shower again. I rolled up the window, turned on the lights and windshield wipers. The rain pelted harder on the car echoing loudly inside as I slowed with the traffic.

"Do you ever want to get out of this town?" I asked. We had been quiet for sometime, lost in our own thoughts."

"I like it here—both your father and I do." She was looking out her side of the car, following with her eyes each building we passed. The window was

fogging and she wiped away the mist with her hand, just blurring the view between the streaks of water.

"It's just sometimes...sometimes I see how my life is just like my mother's. She never got to go anywhere, never got to travel. She lived in the same house almost her whole life and never got a chance to decorate it until she had the insurance money after Daddy died. I've never been able to decorate a house, and it makes me so mad to see your father finally working on the place just so we can sell it. And I never got to travel."

I wasn't sure what to say. I wondered if she had seen herself as a follower, one who easily fits into the molds placed before her. It seemed there was such little control over our lives. I realized that she had spent all her energy for the sake of others, never herself, and I wondered if she had chosen this life or if it just happened to us as we found our place—our spouse, our town, our home.

When we got home, I went upstairs and lay down. It was getting dark outside, and I could see in the window's reflection that over my head were all the things I'd hung on the wall during high school. I had forgotten about the giant collage of photographs, tickets to dances, dried flowers and strings of beer tabs. The warped glass in the window made these things melt together like the leaves and pine needles in the afternoon. On my desk lay the application untouched since the beginning of the day. I looked at the clock; it was only 8:20, but I was tired. I reached over to my grandmother's old lamp and turned off the light. Lying on my back, arms crossed behind my head, I looked across the room to the window again. The panes of glass glowed with the night's light. The trees looked different, just silouettes moving slowly with the evening breeze, and there was still that twinkle from the rippled glass so that the trees would lose their shape, the branches splitting and blending into one another.

I heard the wooden boards of the stairs creak and the quiet brushing of socks on the carpet. There was a gentle knock on my door that bushed it slightly ajar.

"I'm awake," I said as I leaned to turn on the lamp. Mom was standing in the doorway with a children's book in her arms.

"Why are you going to bed so early?" she asked. "I'm not really. Did you come up to read me a bedtime story?" I smiled. She sat down on the side of the bed, and I did feel like a child. I pulled the covers tight against my chest.

"I wanted to show you a folktale that I read to my class the other day," she said as she flipped through the book, running her hand down the long, smooth pages. "You must see the picture first." She opened the book wide and held it up between us. The illustration was of a little gray mouse sitting on a cliff and looking out at the sun setting on the ocean's horizon. The sky was colored with bright oranges and yellows, with the purple night coming in from the corners of the page. She brought the book back to her arms and began reading.

The story was about a mouse who longed to see the ocean, but lived very far away. His parents told him of the danger of the voyage in hope that he would choose to stay, but the mouse was determined. He traveled alone and was chased and hunted by hawks and snakes and other beasts that the mouse

had never seen before. Tired and wounded, he completed his journey and looked out over the immensity of the ocean, all ablaze with the sun's colors. It had been worth the entire struggle, yet the little mouse wished his parents could be there, too, to share his happiness.

She squeezed the side of my arm and stood up, nodding her head as I reminded her of the details of my next day. I told her I needed the car to visit friends. She reminded me of an appointment I had with the dentist, then she turned off the light and closed the door tight behind her just as I had always requested of her when I was in highschool. I lay awake still after she left and thought about the day and the application I had forgotten. The shadows of the twisted branches spread wide along the ceiling, and it again felt as if I were in the tree house, wrapped in the soft pine needles that sparkled through the glass. It was warm and quiet in the room, and I felt as if I could sleep forever. But I reached to turn on the lamp and left the bed, walking to the desk to finish what I had already begun.

-Katy Rudder '93

Jailbait

It was the night we lingered
way past the appropriate time to punch
my time card.
We had been cleaning the yogurt machines
and mopping up disrespectful gummi bears.
I noticed whenever I looked your way
our eyes would get caught.
You led me back to your desk
and tried to put your arms around me.
I said this wasn't the kind of overtime
I was accustomed to and broke away
from your needy embrace.
I made the mistake earlier of telling you
my stupid problems.
Jon's rejection, senior year.
You laughed at how immature they sounded
to your adult ears.
I revealed too many insecurities while
yours were hidden under a distorted and
aloof mask.
You believed my naivety and your authority
meant more than just my wages as
you once again reached for me and held
me against your foreign chest.
You kissed my cheek and smoothed my hair
telling me life was not that bad.
I wanted to trust you and cry on your
shoulder.
But you were older,
with older intentions.

—Ellison J. Stind '95

Mother

I suppose you believe
(and sincerely)
that what you did was
best for me.
And how can I say
you never loved me?
You loved me,
I was obedient—
I don't know which came first.
I was the apple of your eye
(now eaten with the worms
of imperfection).
Brilliant, beautiful, gracious little girl,
I was the Golden, hell, even Better—
Platinum Child.
Only child.
Only chance.
You weren't going to screw it up.
I know the secret smile you enjoyed
when you saw the others
next to me.
They were damaged.
Flawed.
Faulty.
I liked them because of it.
I began to question
(the abortion of innocence).
Maybe you weren't
directly linked to God.
Maybe there was no God.
Maybe there was no you.
There certainly was no me,
only
a lovely trophy
with the tiniest sign of tarnish,
invisible to your selective eyes.
I continued to eat your dogma
and threw it up silently
in the toilet of my soul.
It was easier.

What would you say now
if I told you
that I am not intact?

Men have put their hands on me
and I have returned the favor.
I have filled my body
with impurities of every kind
until I could not laugh
or cry
or feel my own skin.
I have heard Satan's music
speak more truth than any hymn.
I have found my former self to be false.
I am not brilliant.
I am not beautiful.
I am not gracious.
I am made from the same alloy
as Adolph Hitler.
So are you, mother.
Don't ask me again
why I'm not having children.
How can I tell you
that I don't want to repeat
your mistake?

—Charis Brummett '96



Private Origami

for Jim

Somehow the bells knew
before we did,
ringing softly between class;

They would not sound for him anymore,
they knew, so whispered solemnly
their benediction.

Speed had caught him I heard;
Tiny bits, squares of paper,
a lonely crease in solitary origami,

folded, twisted, contorted
into double barrels pressed
against his chest.

His mother found him dead,
blood spilling like old newspapers
out of a dumpster on 52nd street.

How she must have cried,
tearing herself,
ripping, shredding,

picking up those spilt pages
reading them, trying to understand
the fine print.

I wish he could have heard
those bells softly toll and seen the halls
filled with reams and reams of twisted, folding lives.

—Trey Dunham '94

Among the Tendrils of Sleep

Moonlight bends
to the tide of night
scattering illumination
on the soft, cool pillow.

The sundial lies useless
bereft of meaning by the night.
The fields outside gain depth
with cricket's song.
The stars push black back infinitely.

Empty.
Lonely.
Let your dreamland comfort
and loll and rock you
as you pour your passions,
trembling,
onto the nightstand.

Dream with your spirit wandering.
Walked sprawled upon your bed
feet bare and tender
sticking out from the covers.

Travel roads of feather-straw
saving women with soft,
maple-brown hair.
Sap flows to honey, she comes.
Sleep lights your heavens now.

The moon melts on your pillow
and you brush her hair
from your eyes
with the thoughtless concentration of half-waking,
while her sweet flesh,
yielding and insistently sweat-stuck
to your damp moonlit hide,
becomes more sensible than life.

—J. Trevett Allen '95

Poet of the Unforgiven

He writes outside of his mind, tearing apart the mythic majesty of too many hot nights and sexy television love scenes. When he stands up and dusts off his jeans in the morning he doesn't smile or say I'll call or even offer a cold cup of coffee. He sends her love songs almost every night, although she is nearsighted and cannot hear them. She blows the dust off of plastic ballerinas who have forgotten how to dance and listens with a tortured ear to the jewelry box music of her childhood in the spring.

He does not use his beige, AT&T, rotary dial phone to tell her that he wants to be with her. He does not worship Relationship and will not sacrifice his goat.

He will not say how nice she looks or that he missed her while at work. He will not thank her for last night or promise that he came outside.

She feels that which he has forgotten, or renounced, that sacred scent of amber dream which sits on hearts with a mighty crunch and makes stomachs turn with falling sickness.

He writes outside of his mind, his songs of needlessness and no apologies are given nor deserved because he is a poet who has been misunderstood.

He will not offer her a ride or take her out to see the movie. She will try to fix his tie and get him to leave his toothbrush by her sink.

She will think of shining symbols, ringing bells, and taboo colors.

He will not forgive her.

She will want to shop with the woman who cooked his meals and changed his putrid diapers. She will balance his books and make love to his friends. They will think they make a darling couple.

He will not forgive her.

She will write within her mind and build the myths of happy homelife and mini-vans. She will send him love songs with lemon-scent pledge and turkey casserole. She will open to him like the beach opens to the sun and he will never forgive her.

She will abandon her helpless ballerinas and will mystify the silent beige, AT&T rotary phone. He will be dusting off his jeans without a smile, a call, or a cup of coffee.

She will always forgive him.

He will never forgive her.

She is an understood poet who is misunderstood by him.

He will never forgive her.

Damn, what a way to end the myth.

-Carey Christie '95

Stuntman Steve

Exceeds limits
Machismo maximizer

An outer rim
dweller

finding safety in
danger and abuse.

Loving life only
because he hates it.

Lonely like
everyone.

Finding reasons but
not needing them.

He is deceptively
simple.

One day
his parachute
did
not
open.

Lily Street '94



Wonderings of an Adopted Son

Fifteen, and she was experimenting,
Testing torrid emotions
New to her rapidly changing body.
And the crushing answer,
Found in her swelling belly,
Was the other metamorphosis,
As she discovered just how much free love costs.

Or was she the weary peasant,
Squatting to deliver me,
The bakers' dozent?
And enough was enough,
And too many too much.

Was my infantile form pulled
From the tattered ribbons of a body demolished,
Straining to hold together for the instant
That completed the sacrifice?
Some sparkling shred of human willpower
Bringing in a soul to replace that
Which left the world by way of the guard rail.

It could have been the greasy whore,
Sweating on a mildewed mattress.
While the myopic clerk
Drags belly past bloated belly,
And dreams of Miss September.

Which then raises the question:
Who was the other half,
And does he know what he has forgotten?

Is this father his party's rising champion?
Leaping awake at night,
Lying to his wife about the nightmares,
The visions of the jackal reporters
Tracing that curious affair,
Discovering its desperately concealed product,
And, blood test in hand, swarming to the kill.

Perhaps he is entombed,
Buried in the twisted wreckage
Of a Phantom jet long since burned.
Washed away in endless acres of dark,
Steaming rainforest.
And never knowing of the boy
His cheerleader widow carried.

It was the axe man,
On a Friday after the slaughterhouse,
His shoulders weary of work,
And his meager pay dissolved,
In a three dollar bottle of wine
And a wilted bouquet.

The child who could not be loved
Observes the parental parade,
Guiltily content to have avoided
The characters whose blood he shares.

—Andy Heckert '93



Holly Aikens

Odd Binge

It must have been a full moon that night.
I guess I wasn't looking though,
there was too much around me.
OXFORD UNIVERSITY.
a room over High Street, THE room.
The epitome -for me- of a dream, Oxford.

Three Young Americans
trespassers
in this room
with wood paneling,
high ceiling.
Comfort yet class.
What scholars shared this space?

We couldn't move, we wouldn't because
we had to soak in all
the atmosphere.
We lived this room
years passed in an evening.

We shared wine
and Raymond Carver
We bonded in the honor of our mutual friend
Owen Meany.

We went to Ohio without
leaving the room
to go to Meijer
to get more wine
because it would be open
at 1 a.m.
Reality
Oxford England.

It was raining and
the streets were wet as
taxis sped by
Naive, determined, young Americans
on a quest.

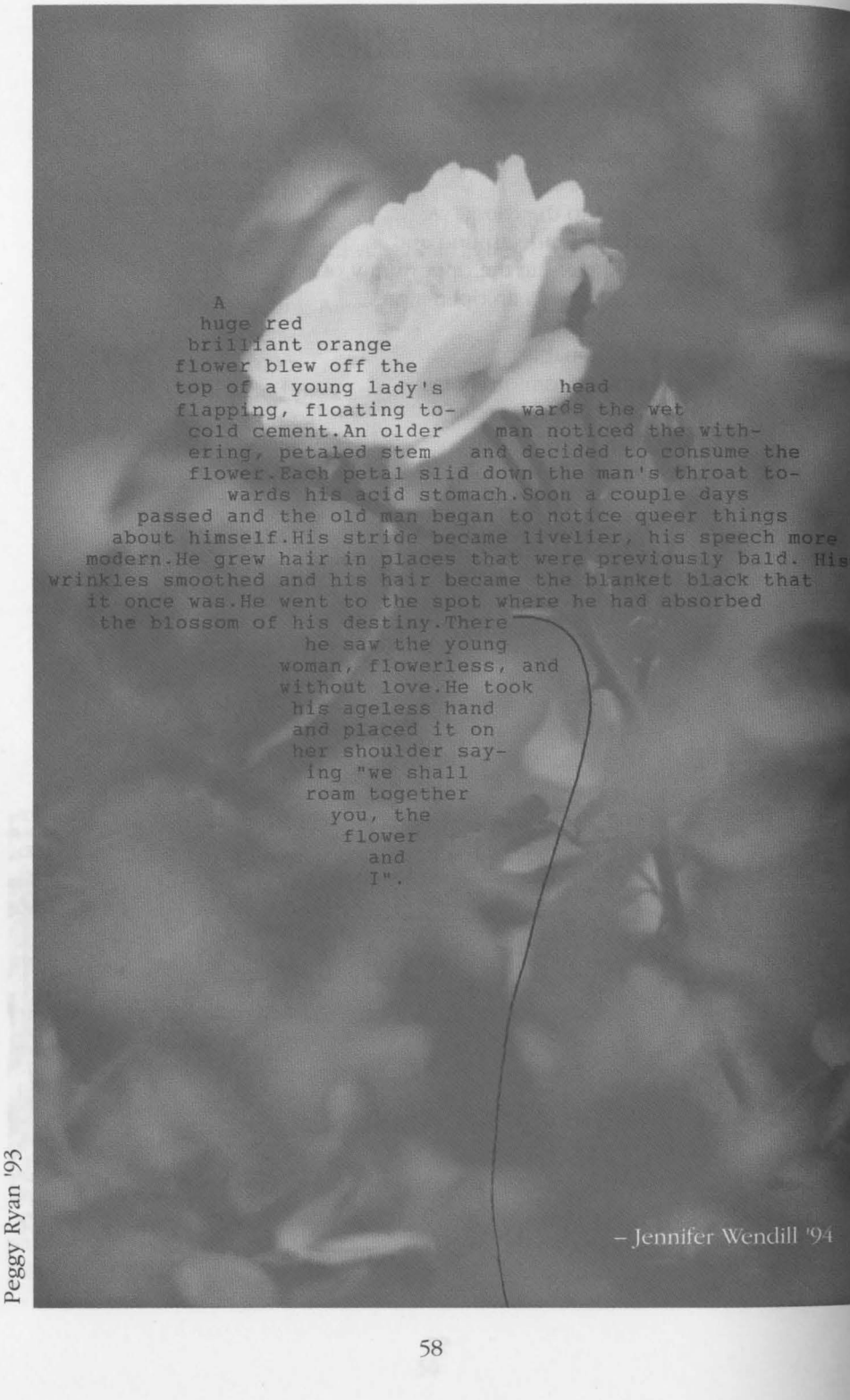
Nothing was open
except one bottle
that touched the lips
of a man on the street.

Five quid for an open bottle
minus one swig.
Returning to the room, we
passed the bottle around and
regretted passing the opportunity of
purchasing from an open store
a closed bottle
for less probably
and a more comforting taste.
4 a.m. we left the room
and dreamt
of a liquor store.

—C. N. Polumbus '93

Holly Aikens '93





A
huge red
brilliant orange
flower blew off the
top of a young lady's head
flapping, floating to- wards the wet
cold cement. An older man noticed the with-
ering, petaled stem and decided to consume the
flower. Each petal slid down the man's throat to-
wards his acid stomach. Soon a couple days
passed and the old man began to notice queer things
about himself. His stride became livelier, his speech more
modern. He grew hair in places that were previously bald. His
wrinkles smoothed and his hair became the blanket black that
it once was. He went to the spot where he had absorbed
the blossom of his destiny. There
he saw the young
woman, flowerless, and
without love. He took
his ageless hand
and placed it on
her shoulder say-
ing "we shall
roam together
you, the
flower
and
I".

- Jennifer Wendill '94

Shadows of Pearl

I was standing in front of my canvas, eyes glazed over in response to my empty head. Behind the easle was a glorious picture of morning. The aged oak that hovered over the back yard sent jumping shadows of leaves across the dewy greenery. Every day had been like this for somewhere around two weeks. Every morning I tried to get up and paint it. But, just as I reached for the tube of Pearl White, my hand moved to the left and gripped the almost empty Daylight Onyx. It was a color of black that shined. It couldn't be dulled. As I squirted a dollop directly onto the rough white surface, my brush began to mash into the oily paint. I wanted more on the surface. Much more. The paint had to erupt off of the white, so that any observer would want to touch my painting. My hands began to move faster. The process now began taking over my body as if in the heat of any love the body's instinct houses all the action. Now there was a red the color of flashing street lights that possess dark places, places of horror. The brush slipped onto the floor as the finger tips of my left hand caught all the red of the picture under my nails. To mix with this and the speed that was building with every movement the color of blue, the Picasso blue, slashed against the red. The image of sadness, of dull things left behind...

Yes Ben. You can go over to Tucker's house today. Are you sure you wouldn't rather come on home with your sister? OK, well, just have his mom call if anything is wrong. Otherwise, I'll be by around 6:30 to take you home. What do you usually do outside there that you can't do here? I know they have more woods around their house...but what about that Mr. Clarence? Is he crazy? Do you see him? Mrs. Bruce says he walks around in the driveway. What does he do in that driveway?

Around noon I stepped back from my painting still in my boxers and bare chested. I stepped back all the way into the kitchen finally placing my butt down on one off the pickled wooden chairs. It was a mess. The colors were meshing and moving it seemed, but not together. Where was the harmony? I had used the tube of Pearl White. In the far right corner of the large rectangle was a faint glare of the white. Now that the sun had changed positions with the day, so too it played across the rise and fall of my paint. The white canvas was masked by a choking of hills and valleys. One beam of the light fell on the hint of pearl. It was a faint image of a rope. It was tied to nothing and made nothing. I didn't remember brushing it on there. I sat in the chair for what I think was over an hour. The red and blue battled each other but then sometimes they were purple. Different purples. Near the rope the purple was the deepest. I guess it had more blue and red concentrated about the Pearl White. But the white did not come from the purple, the purple came from the white.

Hey Ben, you want to play guerilla warfare today? Let's make the boundaries my yard and Mr. Clarence 's yard. That'll work. I'll take his yard, you can have

mine. No climbing in the trees though. You're a better climber than I am. Stay in the brush. Here, let me wipe some dirt on your face. Will you put some on mine? Mom'll be pissed. Oh hell. Hey, watch out for metal things. Don't let the sunlight burn 'em. The glare will give you away.

I sat on my back porch as the sun was setting and the street light was starting to glow fakely, unnaturally. The yard was filled with large rectangular paintings. They were the colors of the setting sun. But not the peaceful one, maybe the setting of a nuclear age. The dust of the horizon shooting wands of aged hues. It took so long to dry in the humid air. It was as if I had created my own landscape against one that does not need to be re-created. The real natural is ideal. My landscape was a wasteland.

Ben... BEEENN! Overhere, The tree. Mr. Clarence. Come here. I'm not kidding. This isn't the game. Run! Where are you? Ben?

The hot sleep not holding me under. The rope is what keeps me there. The purple of the face concealed by the white, the pearl white of the noose. Not tied in the shape of a cartoon. The body dancing in the wind no longer.

Tucker says, Mom don't look. A yell. A scream. Kids, get out of here! Oh my, I saw him in his driveway this morning, pacing, but the tree, kids get out of here!

The sun behind the tree in my dreams. This tree used to be climbed, by me. Mr. Clarence has washed over in black. The shiny black of onyx. The black of oxygen withheld. His eyes used to be brown, I think. I awake to sit straight up in bed, the midnight mirror in front of me. My eyes are open.

—Travis Brady '93

October/Route 161

A carpet of autumn blows back in my face
dancing to the ground like gold dust,
a dazzling raiment to behold, to touch
and explore, delicately.

Red leaf, yellow leaf, thousands unfold
piled so deep, it feels like
a technicolor quilt from heaven
beneath my feet.

The branches of an Oak are bare,
with its cloak now unfurled, except,
one leaf at the top, fluttering,
as if to fall, would declare - winter.

But the old farmhouse looks rich
with its garden so blessed
and outfront, its crowning glory,
a Sugar Maple - still dressed.

—Annette Gallagher



The Influx:

If U

could forecast
the future,
(spilling &
 splashing)
from darkened,
lifeless skies
drizzling Drops
willingly
(dive &
 drown)
become parts
of puddles;

the

rings remain,
rippled scars
(crashing &
 clashing)
sentenced to
spawning waves
within waves,
expanding
(outward &
 onward)
circles a-
mong circles,

one

after a-
nother; silent
(certain &
 forsaken)
cycles flow
ebbly on,
eternal
change without
(fearing &
 fretting)
an ending.
Up on fields,

see

the morning
Haze embrace
(boldly &
 coldly)
dampened earth
with outstretched
arms, almost
angelic,
(grimly &
 grayly)
save subtle
shadows; a

few

groundclouds wait
in limbo
(hovering &
 covering)
for sunlight
to dismiss
their dreary
existence,
(dazed &
 damned)
knowing they
will return;

and

foggy forms
have only
(worthless &
 priceless)
bodies for
mere moments;
transcendent,
timeless souls
(drizzling &
 morning)
are nature's
unborn. But

how

those golden
Randoms are
(tattered &
 torrid)
clinging so
dearly to
purposeful
perches, stuck
(flapping &
 flailing)
upon some
simple sticks;

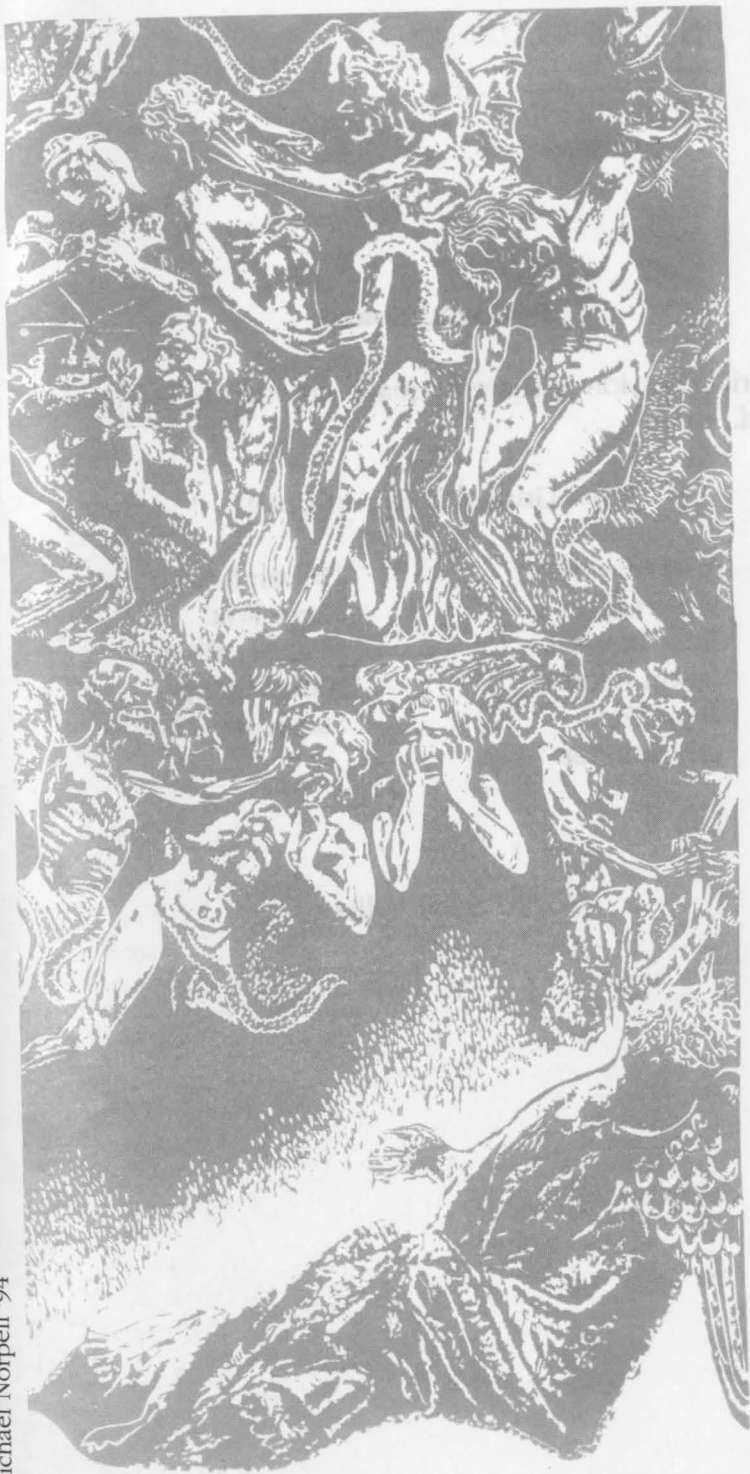
are

autumn winds
the reason
(teased &
 taunted)
spirits reach
heights never
imagined?
Victims, who
(falling &
 flying)
though dying,
carry on?

All

are destined
to exist
(lying &
 piling)
with fellow
fallen sons,
hallowed ones
accepting
(bravely &
 naively)
fate because
they were once.

—Craig Bowers '9





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