

1992

## Exile Vol. XXXIX No. 2

Richard Croft  
*Denison University*

Thomas Roberts  
*Denison University*

Heidi Mahoney  
*Denison University*

Michael Foley  
*Denison University*

Charles N. Brown  
*Denison University*

*See next page for additional authors*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Croft, Richard; Roberts, Thomas; Mahoney, Heidi; Foley, Michael; Brown, Charles N.; Hughes, Amy; Widmaier, Beth; Shim, Edward; Gurley, Ellen; Allen, J.B.; Pryor, Derrick; Jennings, Lelei; Potts, Grant M.; Cruikshank, Molly; Dunham, Trey; Heckert, Andy; Kruse, Kristina; Wanat, Matt; Rudgers, Jen; DeNardo, William; Campo, Katherine; Christie, Carey; Picker, Kerry; Rogers, Kirstin; Bowers, Craig; Widmaier, Beth; and Fox, Dave (1992) "Exile Vol. XXXIX No. 2," *Exile*: Vol. 39 : No. 2 , Article 1.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile/vol39/iss2/1>

This Entire Issue is brought to you for free and open access by the English at Denison Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Exile by an authorized editor of Denison Digital Commons.

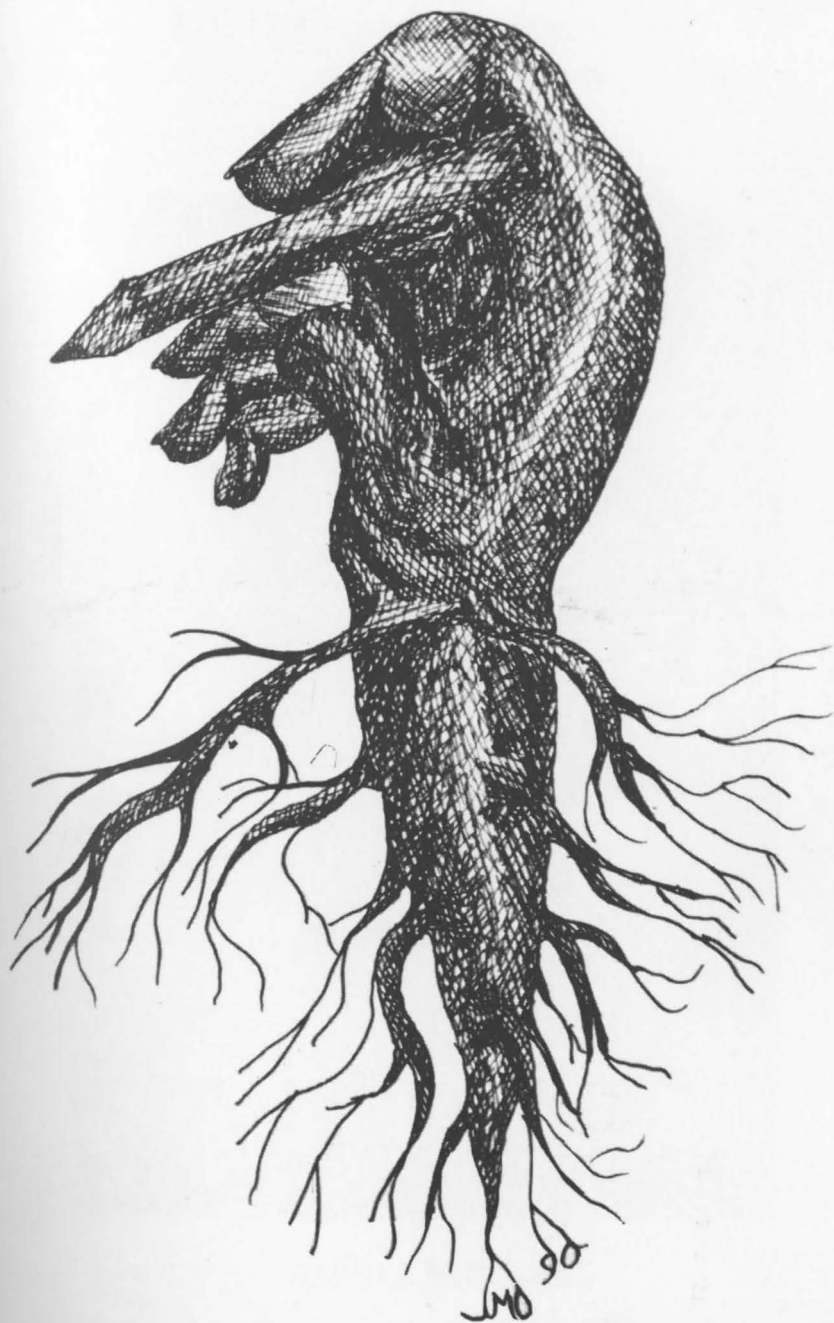
---

## Exile Vol. XXXIX No. 2

### Authors

Richard Croft, Thomas Roberts, Heidi Mahoney, Michael Foley, Charles N. Brown, Amy Hughes, Beth Widmaier, Edward Shim, Ellen Gurley, J.B. Allen, Derrick Pryor, Lelei Jennings, Grant M. Potts, Molly Cruikshank, Trey Dunham, Andy Heckert, Kristina Kruse, Matt Wanat, Jen Rudgers, William DeNardo, Katherine Campo, Carey Christie, Kerry Picker, Kirstin Rogers, Craig Bowers, Beth Widmaier, and Dave Fox

# EXILE



SPRING 1993

**EXILE**

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

**37th Year**



**Spring Edition**



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*

## Table of Contents

<i>Title Page</i> , Hal Petri '94.....	i
<i>Epigraph</i> , Ezra Pound .....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii-iv
<i>Fallen Behind A Head</i> , Richard Croft '93.....	1
<i>Artwork</i> , Ivey '93.....	2
<i>The Darkness Within</i> , Thomas Roberts '96.....	3
<i>Waterhole</i> , Heidi Mahoney '93 .....	10
<i>Artwork</i> , Keith Chapman '95 .....	10
<i>The Night I was Conceived</i> , anonymous .....	11
<i>I haven't seen my generation</i> , Michael Foley '93.....	12
<i>Artwork</i> , Hal Petri '94.....	12
<i>The Waiting Room</i> , Charles N. Brown '93 .....	13
<i>Losing Time on the Massachusetts Turnpike</i> , Amy Hughes '93 .....	14
<i>Anatomy</i> , anonymous.....	15
<i>Artwork</i> , C.N. Polumbus '93 .....	16
<i>Distance</i> , Beth Widmaier '95 .....	17
<i>Temptation</i> , Edward Shim '95 .....	18
<i>Artwork</i> , Sheila Scanlan '93.....	18
<i>The House</i> , Ellen Gurley '93 .....	19
<i>Artwork</i> , C.N. Polumbus '93 .....	20
<i>Shadowbrook Lane</i> , J.B. Allen '94 .....	21
<i>Arriving on a Nightmare</i> , Derrick L. Pryor '93 .....	22
<i>Seasons of Change</i> , Lelei Jennings '95 .....	23
<i>Ghazal For My Fiancé</i> , Charles N. Brown '93.....	24
<i>Artwork</i> , Keith Chapman '95 .....	24
<i>YHWH</i> , Grant M. Potts '96 .....	25
<i>Artwork</i> , Kate Tomaro '93.....	26
<i>Petty Officer</i> , Molly Cruikshank '93.....	27
<i>artwork</i> , Peggy Ryan '93.....	27
<i>There Here</i> , anonymous.....	28
<i>Artwork</i> , Jeannie Wienke '93 .....	29

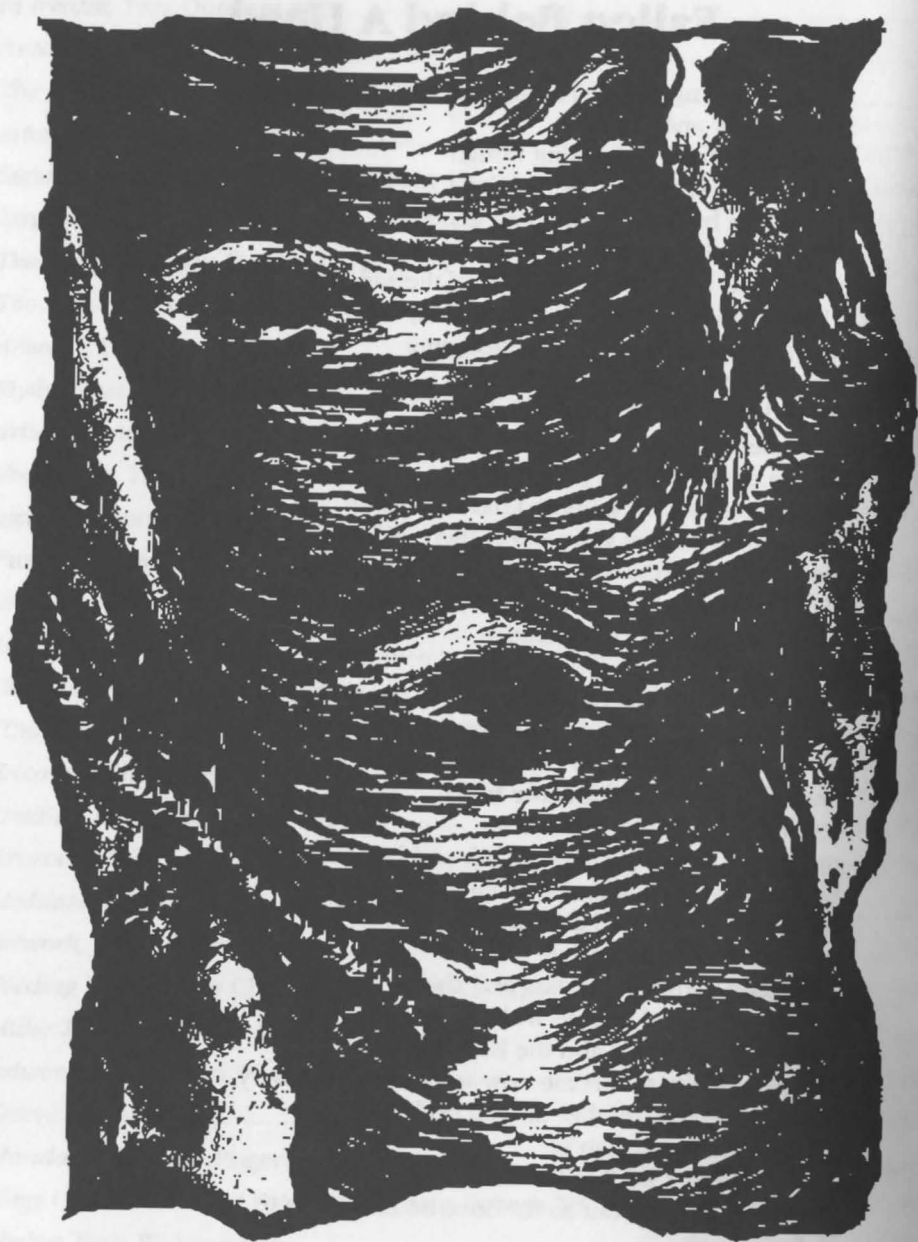
<i>In Irkutsk</i> , Trey Dunham '94.....	30
<i>Artwork</i> , Colin Mack '94 .....	31
<i>The Dogface West</i> , Heidi Mahoney '93 .....	32
<i>artwork</i> , anonymous .....	35
<i>Snowless Winter in New England</i> , Amy Hughes '93 .....	36
<i>Artwork</i> , Keith Chapman '95 .....	36
<i>The Shouting Floor</i> , Derrick L. Pryor '93 .....	37
<i>The Favorite</i> , Andy Heckert '93 .....	38
<i>Artwork</i> , Colin Mack '94 .....	39
<i>Mythologies</i> , Kristina Kruse '93 .....	40
<i>artwork</i> , anonymous .....	43
<i>Vedauwoo</i> , Trey Dunham '94 .....	44
<i>picture</i> , Jeannie Wienke '93.....	45
<i>Part II: Awakening</i> , N. N. C. '94.....	46
<i>artwork</i> , Jamie Oliver '94.....	47
<i>Lucky Boo</i> , Matt Wanat '95.....	48
<i>Uncreation</i> , Richard Croft '93.....	49
<i>(Untitled Verse)</i> , Jen Rudgers '96.....	50
<i>Encore</i> , William DeNardo '93 .....	51
<i>Untitled</i> , Katherine Campo '94 .....	52
<i>Artwork</i> , Holly Aikens '93.....	53
<i>Meditation on Darts</i> , J.B. Allen '94.....	53
<i>artwork</i> , Jamie Oliver '94.....	54
<i>Feeding Betsy</i> , Carey Christie '95.....	55
<i>Miller Time</i> , Kerry C.R. Picket '96.....	61
<i>artwork</i> , Peggy Ryan '93.....	61
<i>Tattoo</i> , anonymous.....	62
<i>Mandarin</i> , K. Lynn Rogers '94 .....	63
<i>Elegy One: About That Fateful Fall</i> , Craig Bowers '93 .....	64
<i>Shelter</i> , Beth Widmaier '95.....	65
<i>Battleship</i> , Dave Fox '93 .....	66
<i>artwork</i> , Peggy Ryan '93.....	66
<i>Revolution</i> , Matt Wanat '95 .....	67
<i>Artwork</i> , Jeannie Wienke '93.....	68
<i>editorial board</i>	

# Fallen Behind A Head

night swimming on John's Island  
fallen below another crest  
he watches from the resting trough  
as unsheathed silver furls forward  
spurred on by leagues of fallen generals  
the unforgiving eyes of the deep  
raised arms and the fore hooves of the saddled  
wild horsehair and the whites of many eyes  
ahead the black beach waits glistening  
slick as whale skin  
the collapse on the silence in the eye  
overwhelming itself as if to final calm  
but the shore will not be broken  
so each retreats back behind the curtains of  
the deep as if there were safety there or need  
the bleached white rocks jut from the shallows  
like the heads of salt blind ancient mariners  
awaiting the mercy of moontide

swimming in these waters he feels as he did then  
that there is no loss here but that there is no loss  
over there he could see the stained purple sand  
draw them in in a premature burial  
seeping back to the one womb  
red drawn back by the blue shift and he was sure  
he was unsure of what he shouldered  
but dying always and anyways  
in a blood clouded marsh  
he waited with lifeless stars and shells  
till dawn cracked and he woke to the great fans  
sounding in the sky and the bare feet  
if only a tide would come now to raise this memory  
to lift it away as another draped body  
spread it to a thin film be  
little it to just a shell in his shoe  
he would shake it out so for once he could join  
in the swelling

— Richard Croft '93



*Ivey Bowes '93*

# The Darkness Within

The old man stood completely clad in black, save the immaculate white collar clutching his neck and his sickly, pale face. His stern expression combined with cold and piercing blue eyes gave him an air of omnipotence. It was as if he alone claimed power over every object within his sight and no mere mortal could dare to oppose him.

The parishioners shuffled slowly into the damp and dark church. Candles were lit atop a spartan and colorless altar table to provide a feeble struggle of light against the growing autumn darkness. Deacon Holcomb stood with his hands crossed behind his back, watching his subjects file into the small room and take their seats on the dark wooden benches. Speech stopped at the doorway to the church as every head bowed respectfully to the ground upon entrance. Not a soul would dare to break the reverential silence and awe for both the diety they came to worship and the man which they came to hear. Deacon Holcomb frowned inwardly as he scanned his audience. The people set themselves up in a discordal manner: the young sat with elderly; the well-off with the paupers. Not an eye met the holy man's gaze, not a word was thrown his way.

As the last of the country folk took their seats, the deacon moved toward his podium. Slowly, all heads rose to meet the eyes of the elderly man. An unseen strength seemed to power his frail limbs to motion as he climbed to the speaker's podium. His eyes pinned down the parishioners and commanded their attention as the words from his throat boiled out of his mouth, "Sin is amongst us!"

His words seemed to shake the very foundations of the ancient church. The wind howled outside the doors as if it were mocking his words.

"We must fight every day against the fell forces of Satan. He lurks in the most dear places, lest we weed his roots from our soil. I do not have to preach of the importance of piety in our day and age: war, strife, adultery... it makes me sad to call myself a man.

"I look to our people and ask myself, 'Where does Satan prey the most? Where are his evil tendrils breaching the goodness of our community?' More and more I see myself answering this pressing question with a solemn answer.

His final words hung in the air. Every mind tried to fill in the answer to his question and guess what the immortal deacon had discovered.

Slowly, the deacon whispered, "Our youth."

The gathering was taken aback by the surprising answer. Every parent silently looked at their children and shudderingly thought, "My child? Evil? Never!"

As if reading their minds, the deacon violently responded, "Yes! Your children breed the seed of hate and sin which will destroy our already fragile world!"

"The youth of today does not heed the words of their mentors. They flippantly press the spring flowers and play in the fields when work is to be done. Lessons rebound from their souls and they embrace the darkness within instead of calling to the light from beyond.

"You may ask, 'What is to be done? Is there any way I can protect my innocent lamb from the corruption around him?' Well... there is," his words slowly fell from his mouth.

The deacon's eyes scanned the audience as he violently returned to his speech, "There is something that can be done. We must stave the evil at its root! Seek it and banish it from our sight! No more will we live in fear of the ghosts from below! I command that Alicia Farrow step forward to confess her sin to the public eye!"

A collective gasp rippled through the small crowd as all eyes focused upon a small pitiable woman in the front row. The deacon's eyes narrowed as they focused upon her young and innocent face. She returned his gaze with a frightened and pleading look. Alicia was dressed in a less formal manner compared to the rest of the parish crowd. Her slightly torn clothing suggested her intense poverty. She brushed a mass of unkempt hair out of her face with her slightly dirtied hands as she tried to choke down sudden tears of fear. Deacon Holcomb stared at the suddenly dilapidated member of the church with a cold contempt as she shakingly rose from her seat and approached him. The church folk visibly shrank from her presence as she walked to the altar as images of demons seemed to replace her formerly neutral form.

"Confess, woman," the deacon spat.

"I have no crime to confess, deacon," she pleaded timidly. "My actions are not of my own will. Your relation of these actions is a crime! It is a betrayal of my trust!"

The crowd looked perplexedly at the deacon. Unmoving, he retorted, "You have committed a crime against this parish and this community. If you do not confess, I will openly charge you with this moral crime."

Alicia opened her mouth to speak but emotion tore through her body before the words could form. Tears came to her eyes and she collapsed to her knees in front of the deacon.

"Rise... rise, woman!" the deacon yelled, but Alicia did not obey.

"Very well, then. Miss Alicia Farrow harbors within her the child of Satan! She has no betrothed and she has no home, save her shack in the forest. She has resisted the community and receives no help from the noble people of our community. Therefore, how does she survive and where does her child come from? It is the doing of evil, I tell you! We must dispose of evilness such as this before it is too late for our good children. The lesson is done."

With those final words, Alicia ran from the church wailing her despairing cries to the black, open sky outside. Deacon Holcomb climbed down from his podium and began to extinguish the candles on the altar. The men of the parish put on their hats and the women tied their bonnets as they too prepared to leave. Two concerned men lingered for a moment as the parishioners filed out in order to speak with the deacon.

"Deacon, if what you say is true about Miss Farrow, then what is to be done? If we banish her, she will die in the forest alone. Even if she may have evil within her, she can always be reclaimed, can't she? It just is not our way to abandon those of our faith!"

The deacon looked sternly at the man and plainly said, "she is no longer of our faith. Banish her."

Night descended upon the small farming community of Grey Oak. The men would usually be done with work and would be waiting for a warm meal from



their wives to enjoy in the company of their families. However, tonight was an unusual night. The torches were being lit near the community hall and wooden crucifixes were being constructed near the small church. Angry voices evoked the name of their Lord to aid them in the destruction of a poor and lonely woman's home in the forest. Good could not be served until they felt evil had been routed and murdered.

Deacon Holcomb left the church with his Bible in hand and began the long trek to his home on the opposite end of the majestic forest. The autumn winds chilled his bones but he did not mind them that particular night. After all, he had led his disciples to a major victory that day and his righteousness warmed his body from the inside.

The mighty oaken walls of the forest loomed ahead. It was great and dark; a warning to all who entered its mystical realms. The deacon perked his head up from the trail to silently observe the immense shafts of wood which separated himself from his home. He always had a certain trepidation of the forest and its sinister interiors. Something about the tremendous curtain of darkness above isolating him from the sanctuary of the sky sent a slight shiver down his back. The deacon averted his eyes towards the horizon and saw the glow of fire near the village limits behind him and smiled. "Good. The deed will soon be done," he said aloud.

Feeling a greater sense of courage, the deacon stared down the path ahead of him into the forest. How silly, he thought, to be afraid of the forest, one of God's greatest creations. With that final thought to propel him, he stepped into the forest.

He began to feel a little sad for the poor woman he had condemned as he walked down the forest trail. She did indeed confide in him that she did not know how she had become pregnant. Of course, how could he believe her? Alicia had been an abandoned child left to the community. She was a little wild, in his opinion, as a teenager and he had always expected her to lose the path of God's way. Her punishment would serve those around her, he thought. The deacon believed himself to be right and smiled again to himself.

The wind suddenly picked up around him and blew his hat off. He tried to chase it into the woods but the hat blew away too fast. "Damn!" he muttered.

The wind seemed to laugh at him as he watched his hat blow away deeper into the forest. That wind! he thought how sinister and cold. Without his hat, the deacon felt much colder and decided it would be best to get home quickly and warm up next to a cozy fire.

But wait... which direction was the trail? The deacon turned around and walked back to where he believed he had come from but there was no trail. So, he walked in a new direction but still, no trail. It was as if the dirt path was just swallowed up by the forest. He scanned the ground for any sign of the trail but the growing darkness impaired his vision so that he could barely recognize anything on the forest floor. Remaining calm, the deacon remembered his forestry lessons as a child. All he had to do was find the moon to regain his bearings and walk through the forest back to his home. He looked up to find that the bright and full moon was quickly receding behind a large cloud. It did not stay in sight long enough for him to determine the way home.



He was lost. No matter, though, town was not far away so he could always walk back by one route or another and stay overnight at someone's house. The deacon felt confident and smiled despite the fact that the wind was cold and the gathering clouds foreshadowed rain.

"Father! Over here, father!" a boy shouted.

Deacon Holcomb's head picked up on the sound and he looked in the direction of the voice. Unfortunately, he could not see anyone, but there were two distinct voices.

"Remember, boy, the moss is always on the north side of the tree. That way you won't get lost," an older voice called.

The deacon could hear leaves being trampled nearby but the darkness obscured the shadows around him into a grotesque and chaotic mess. "Father, is it true that the devil lives in the forest?" the boy called.

"No, son. He doesn't live in the forest. Where did you hear that?" laughed the man's voice.

"I heard it from the deacon! The deacon said it! Does that make the deacon a liar, father?"

Deacon Holcomb's eyes widened at the last comment by the boy. He tried to run through the forest to the boy yelling, "I never said any such thing! How dare you call the elder of your community a liar!"

The voices trailed off in laughter and the leaves swirled at the deacon's feet as the wind picked up again. He stood alone in the forest, panting, as the faint sound of laughter echoed through the forest.

"James, do not allow your wit to fool your nerve! Those two could not have gone very far. Perhaps there is a farm house nearby," the deacon said calmly to himself.

He began walking with purpose unknown even to him in a forward line deeper into the forest. The trees grew thicker and older as he delved even deeper into the forest. The wind swirled around him and the cold began to bite his elderly face. The deacon did not know which direction he was walking in but trusted that he would eventually find his way home. The encounter with the two apparitions in the forest were still lingering in his mind when he thought he heard another voice from ahead.

He slowed his pace and began to concentrate on the sound. He heard a muffled voice coming from a dense copse of trees not more than a few yards in front of him. He couldn't make out the words that he heard since most of the sound was drowned out by the wind. slowly, he began to recognize certain sounds and repetitions from the voice. It sounded strangely like a prayer of some kind but he couldn't tell which. Intrigued, the deacon made the decision to push aside the branches guarding the copse and enter its darkened and mysterious insides.

Strangely enough, he discovered a small clearing inside instead of more trees. The wind was much calmer in here and it gave an ominous silence to the scene. The deacon scanned the area for the source of the mumbling he heard but, to his dismay, could not see anyone. However, a particular tree caught his attention and he stopped to examine its knotted and twisted trunk.

The ancient oak seemed out of place amongst the smaller trees as it rose to

unimaginable heights towards the clouded and black sky. Its thick, leafless branches reached out towards the forest beckoning the deacon closer. The magnificently twisted trunk defied the eye as the wood seemed to weave into and out of the tree and around its sturdy base. The deacon looked in awe at this incredible creation of God's magic in the forest as he quickly pushed his former fear of the forest out of his mind.

He suddenly had an irresistible temptation to climb the tree and attempt to reach the heights which would bring him closer to the being which he had dedicated his life to glorifying. The deacon climbed onto the immense trunk of the tree and attempted to grab hold of one of the great lower branches. No sooner had he grabbed the branch when he heard a terrible splintering sound and the entire branch fell off the tree and sent him tumbling to the ground. Shaken, but not hurt, the deacon stood up again and went to examine the fallen branch.

The wood was cold and hard. It was tough and sharp. He felt his heart sink a little as he realized that the majestic oak was completely dead. The branch was in splinters on the ground and it left a huge gaping hole in its place on the tree. Curiosity compelled the deacon to examine the hole, which he quickly regretted. The insides of the tree were all rotten out and an innumerable amount of verminous insects had taken up residency within the dead tree.

Just as the deacon realized the fell nature of the once-proud tree, the wind picked up with a ferocious force. Caught by surprise and unable to hold his place on the trunk of tree, the wind blew deacon Holcomb against the side of the tree. Instinctively, the deacon reached out to the tree to prevent himself from falling again. He plunged his cold and bare hand into the hole, forgetting the infestations of insects contained therein. However, the tree was too rotten to even hold up his weight and a large piece of the trunk came loose in his hand, sending both to the ground, covered in beetles and ants.

The deacon lost all composure and jumped up trying to swat at the creatures covering his body. The wind howled in the trees and further infuriated the shocked deacon. He continued to stomp on the insects as he knocked them off his clothes and yelled with all his might, "Infamous evil! Incestuous vermin! Go back to Hell from whence you came!"

The wind stopped as suddenly as it started and the deacon calmed himself, panting from his exhausting efforts to rid himself of the creatures he discovered in the tree. The deacon closed his eyes and tried to regain his thoughts, completely unnerved from the previous experience. A light breeze whistled in between the trees and somewhere within it the deacon swore he heard a voice again.

"God's creatures, deacon... God's creatures," it whispered.

The deacon opened his eyes only to realize the fear that was massing in the back of his mind: there was no one there. Instinct propelled him into motion. He began to run madly through the forest to escape the voice. All the while, the wind gathered strength again and began to blow mercilessly through the trees. The wind whistled through the trees in such a manner that it seemed to laugh hysterically at the frenzied deacon as he ran wildly through the darkness. He knew not where to turn and panic swept through his body. Every tree was thick and dark. Every shadow rose up against him and mocked his movements. Every

fallen leaf grabbed his legs and threatened to tear him down to the cold ground. The forest was cruel and he was alone to fight it, except for one final hope.

The deacon's reason returned to him as he halted in mid-flight and dropped to his knees. Amidst all the chaos and howling winds, he closed his eyes and clasped the silver crucifix around his neck with all his might.

"Please! Please deliver me from this strife! I have been a noble servant and beg of You to grant me passage through this unholy night! I will sacrifice anything to escape this moment of torment tonight!"

With the last of his words shouted into the cold night air, the wind ceased its bellowing and the laughter slowly died away with it. The deacon gradually opened his eyes and relaxed his grip on the cross. He looked up and smiled a thankful grin at the eerie silence surrounding him.

His exultations were met with a single, ice-cold drop of rain. His smile quickly changed to a frown as rain began to pelt his body from the heavens above. The deacon looked despairingly around as the grim vegetation echoes the sounds of falling rain and distant thunder rolled across the land. For a second, the deacon thought, "This is no haven; no shelter from my strife! Surely my deeds warrant a better solution than the cold rain of a contemptuous cloud!"

He then realized that his prayers had indeed been answered. No more than twenty yards away stood the dim outline of an old building standing in a nearby clearing he had previously failed to notice. He silently rose and plodded over to the gift bestowed upon him. He observed that the building was more a shack upon better examination. Its wooden walls were old and worn and there were no windows. A single door provided entrance to the small hovel.

Deacon Holcomb walked inside and surveyed the dwelling he had been led to stay in. He found a candle nearby on the floor and lit it with a dry match he had retained from services earlier that evening. The home was in disarray with chair overturned and some simple clothes lying on the floor. There were no aesthetic objects in the room at all. However, there was a straw cot in the far corner of the room and that was pleasing enough for the weary old deacon. He placed the candle next to the bed and laid himself down to sleep.

Outside, the storm beat upon the forest dwelling. Thunder shook the land and wind whistled through the trees. He silently shuddered at the thought of still being caught outdoors in that awful weather in that sinister forest. As he tried to rest, he heard the faint sound of laughter ringing in the trees and murmured voices echoing around the shack. The deacon smiled and put the sounds out of his mind, dismissing them as another trick of the imagination that night.

Still, the harder he tried, the harder it was to escape the laughter. It seemed to get nearer and louder at each heartbeat. Suddenly, a clap of thunder rocked the old shack and upset the candle, knocking it to the ground. The deacon leaned over to pick up the candle when he heard a quiet chuckling from next to his bed.

He raised his eyes and met the gaze of a merry looking woodsman. The woodsman was standing over the deacon, smiling and laughing. The deacon sternly looked at the woodsman as he righted himself and asked, "Who are you?"

The woodsman was taken aback and said, "Who the hell do you think I am? Am I a friend or foe? Ally or axeman?" his eyes narrowed, "Fiend or Father?"

The voices outside the shack began to rise and encircle the building but the deacon ignored them. He instead concentrated on the odd woodsman and tried to control his temper as he said, "I am not in the mood for your games. If you are the one who has followed me through the forest all night, you have caused me much trouble tonight. I expect a full apology and explanation of your actions, immediately."

The woodsman smiled again and sat down next to the deacon, "Well, you see, I was kind of expecting the same from you. You have caused me a great deal of trouble at times, also. However, since you have aided me so well many more times in the past, I figure it is only fitting that I repay you by explaining just what you and I have accomplished tonight."

The deacon looked on with interest as the woodsman continued, "James, you have been a very stern fellow all your life. Your wonderfully self-righteous attitude has helped to distort many young minds as you tortured them with threats, harangues, and a narrow minded view of life to keep them from straying from 'the path'. However, you should realize that not everything unknown and mysterious is evil!"

A faint odor reached the deacon but he paid no attention to it as he quizzically asked the woodsman, "What do you mean? I have never pushed a child off the path! And I am not fearful of the unknown."

The woodsman smiled and said, "Quite the contrary, James. You have lost many children before. However, the one who stayed true and faithful, you had believed to be the worst sinner of all. You threw her from the path and tried to use her as an example to quell others you believed were faltering. Unfortunately, you banished the hope of mankind along with the girl."

The words slowly sank into Deacon Holcomb's brain as he tried to grasp the meaning of the woodsman's words, "Are you talking about the Farrow girl? She was a sinner! A wild woman and a tramp!"

The woodsman chuckled to himself before speaking, "You don't understand, do you, James? The child! Her child! She knew not from whence it came. She is a pious young virgin with a child... sounds vaguely familiar, doesn't it?"

The words hit the deacon like a blow to his soul. He looked in horror at the laughing man in front of him as a cold hand grasped his spine. Suddenly, the deacon became aware of the events transpiring around him. He smelled the distinct odor of smoke inside the building. It was on fire! There were men outside shouting and swearing as they tossed objects at the shack spreading the fire which was engulfing it.

The deacon looked pleadingly at the woodsman who was practically in hysterics. He looked at the deacon and said, "Yes, deacon, you have helped to seal the fate of mankind through your misguided piety and abhorrent intolerance. I thank you! Yes, I thank you very much for helping me win a seemingly endless battle. I'll see you soon, Deacon Holcomb! Trust me, I'll see you again very, very soon!"

The shack burst into flames. The old deacon was powerless to stop it. He was too shocked to scream and too paralyzed with fear to run. Instead, he sat dumbfounded, listening to the laughter of the woodsman and the angry chants from outside the shack shouting, "Stomp out the evil! Burn it back to Hell!"

— Thomas Roberts '96

# Waterhole

He skipped the flat stone across the quiet water,  
I counted eight rings and looked at James with awe.  
The rope hung from a dead branch of our great oak,  
threads of fiber danced in the wind.

James will do anything, so I dared him to swing.  
His eyes narrowed until only the blue pierced mine  
own, his lips were tightened around a whole lemon,  
the cords in his neck a child could play.

He knew dangling from the limp line was foolish.  
He grasped the weathered board with one rusty  
nail that couldn't penetrate the rings of the oak.  
I saw his right leg jerk, hand over hand he moved.

His silhouette climbed through the patterns of the  
leaves, the sun blinding all detail. Searching for  
his freckled nose, his skin of dark, red berry full  
of the juice, his wheat hair long from the summer.

He reminds me of a wild weed that you pull from  
between the bricks in a long path. He's covering  
the dead branch with his overgrown feet. I can picture  
the white knuckles wrapped around the swing.

I feel that last breath he takes before the plunge,  
I can see the white of his eyes. He swoops low over  
the water and is pulled to the other side, away from me.  
I hear the snap and see his fall, his head framed by rings.

— Heidi Mahoney '93



— Keith Chapman '95

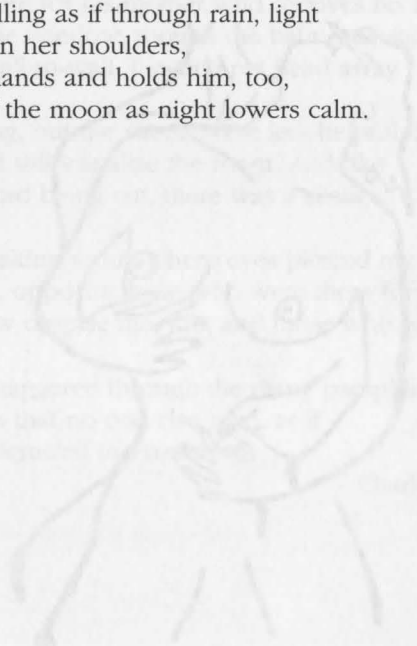
# The Night I Was Conceived

Sheets of cool Carolina rain fall  
into the red clay which gets pulled  
inside and tossed across the patchwork  
carpet, sewn together, laid in place like  
pieces of a puzzle; the day closes, strewn  
with flat tires, stalled engines,  
chicken casseroles burned black and sinks  
full of unclean dishes, and tall pines bow, holding down  
carefully the night coming in: like the rain it might  
fall, breaking across the floor and, too dark,  
be lost in the red earth; and he holds  
her as they dance, listening to the rain call;

he kisses her, for the first time, again  
warm and smooth and silent,

and follows the rhythm of the storm;  
while in his arms, she touches his neck, new,  
tiny spurs of hair growing like shadows  
cast from the moon of his eyes  
which shine like fire against the rain descending  
measure by measure in aquiline arpeggios;  
and through frail evergreens the wind blows  
as, in her arms, he smells the clean  
of her hair, falling as if through rain, light  
like dusk upon her shoulders,  
it covers his hands and holds him, too,  
in the light of the moon as night lowers calm.

– Anonymous





# i haven't seen my generation

we fight because we are no longer pioneers together  
ready-made homicide on every corner everywhere in between  
not even one free beer motherless children

once we ran together like horses through open fields  
our mane was our rudder keeping us straight according to wind  
grass has been high we lifted ourselves above and came  
down sure on the earth

now the waves of love make houses crumble  
and wind blows against us and our houses crumble  
and we pick up the pieces and throw them at each other  
and all is built again.

and jesus comes in 2005 as a homicide statistic  
the believers stone him  
the rest see nothing

and i walk on in six/eight through burning streets  
pissing on hot steel stomping down excreta

and i do whatever i want and probably lose  
most of the time sometimes all the time

and reason and phantasmagoria  
like buddies whose parents disallow hanging out  
play flashlight tag on the walls  
of my dark soul never penetrating the flesh

— Michael Foley III '93



—Hal Petri '94

# The Waiting Room

A wrenching cry came down from the apartment above me.  
A baby's lungs expanded like the wings of a tree,  
waking me like the sudden screams in that waiting room.

I could imagine its mother in disarray,  
seeking a solution to no problem. In a near-  
by chair, the teddy-bear smiled, suggesting

it enjoyed the affects of those volcanic eruptions.  
On the wall, mama held dad- undisturbed. Sleep  
was in the forefront of my mind, but the pillow couldn't

stop the screams from ringing. Like a breathless beetle  
I stared at the ceiling, trying to see through it,  
trying to see the baby's pain. The screen above me flirted

with colorful images of baby chicks, fortune cookies, and  
eggs, one after the other. Then the waiting room. A right hand  
follows a left across the baby's face. The baby now slumbers

in a corner, only with the walls watching, as blood  
runs down the baby's feather-like lips. If only  
he could run. On the floor, where the fall was broken,

he screams more for his mother who receives his father's  
attention by the window, though the baby was still being  
tossed from wall-to-wall. I swung my head away

from the ceiling, but the sheets were less helpful than the  
pillow. I could still visualize the room. And like  
a telephone cord being cut, there was a silence,

just like the waiting room, where eyes pierced my flesh  
as I sat scared, opposite those who were there for a reason,  
those who now despise me, too, and those who weren't

there at all. I staggered through the many pamphlets  
and magazines that no one else read, as if  
I were truly interested in *Parenting*.

– Charles N. Brown '93



# Losing Time on the Massachusetts Turnpike

He drove a 1967 Dodge Polara.  
Pea Green consumed three fourths of highway  
from Cape Cod to Boston.

We fit three across, including Sam,  
whose haunches spread like  
warm mayonnaise across the middle.

He whipped drool from window to window  
like a crazed lawn sprinkler, inhaled the waning summer air  
and the pizza still warm on my legs.

While Dad molded the plastic steering wheel,  
I caught scoopfuls of wind with a Slurpee cup out an open window,  
and plugged AM stations.

Pieces of songs and commentary cracked through one screen speaker.  
I was waiting for the one about the rain to start  
even though the sky was blue forever.

The shell mosaic driveway we left behind.  
gave way to the North in the same forgetful sweep as low tide:  
Tender ooze, sea grass and quahogs.

— Amy Hughes '93

# Anatomy

I find something deep, penetrating  
about the blue lines of *U.S.S. Nimitz*  
wrapped around his forearm like gauze  
left on too long, the blood  
soaking through.

He walks along aisles,  
when the store is empty, the shelves full  
unlike the ship's blue-grey corridors. His son  
works for a roofing company and makes  
five seventy-five an hour; it's more than he makes,  
but he knows what his son is missing: the silence,  
rows of magazines, cold medicine at strict attention,  
the buzz of the security camera rolling like waves

She steps into the light of the diner, knocking  
snow from her boots, hair pulled back  
tight, streaked with enough grey and blue to fill  
the pages of a road map; varicose veins trace  
every place she's ever been, ever driven.

I see her  
alone at the counter, the jukebox casting line after line  
at her: ex-lovers, lost dogs, shots of whiskey; the notes,  
falling like the strings of a net, sweep across  
her hair and shoulders, the music draping  
like a shawl around her; her body rocks  
back and forth with the song as long  
lines of eighteen wheelers pull  
up to the truck stop, stacking themselves in the lot.

I sit here at my typewriter, blue veins  
driving through the backs of my hands, the silence  
of early morning ringing in my ears,

wondering what it is  
that pulls us together.  
What is it in water that separates  
on hard ground then, running like veins,  
lines in a map, comes back into itself? I can feel the weight  
of my life. I can feel the roll  
of waters under my feet. I can feel strings  
like love around my shoulders full of tension driving  
through me; something hard and fast,  
pulling us together.

— Anonymous



— C.N. Polumbus '93

# Distance

She learned distance early  
shivering under clutched covers,  
a cocoon shield from the screaming,  
a refugee from exploding emotion

Distance at the dinner table,  
vacant sunshine smile to avoid  
the anger in her father's eyes,  
the defiant tilt of her mother's chin

She learned distance early  
huddled in the refuge of a dark closet,  
muttered songs protection from the flashing  
red blue red blue chasing down her brother

Distance in the pew, spine stiff,  
mind dancing with memories of silent prayers,  
pride in each salty drop treasured on  
the tip of her tongue

She learned distance early and remembered  
alone in a crowd, cringing from the past  
distance in her eyes, her smile  
burning with shame and hurt anger

She learned distance early and remembers  
the importance of covers and closets  
the safety of the dark  
the refuge of solitude  
the importance of distance

– Beth Widmaier '95

# Temptation

Awe caught  
in the  
thorns  
of a rose,  
in its  
silky convolutions.  
Riding  
the sky  
is a  
tear-filled moon:  
a glowing empress.  
The winding howl  
of a wolf  
touches the moon's  
stone hide  
like a  
baptism.

– Edward Shim '95



– Sheila Scanlan '93

# The House

Warm afternoon sunlight  
poured in through the window  
in slanted squares  
painted on the wall.

The two figures stood  
still in heavy light. She  
a step below could  
feel his hips in  
the small of her back.

As she shifted weight in her boot,  
a small plumb of dust  
danced  
around her heel.  
She studied the flies that had accumulated  
on the blue,  
paint-chipped sill.  
Through the dirt speckled window  
she saw a stoic tree-line  
become a black silhouette with the  
low red sun.

The hue of ochre  
glowed across the field  
as dusk settled behind  
the horizon.

That field, with it's house, and it's stairs  
carried voices I would never hear;  
hid places I would never see,  
held people I would never know.

The two figures were  
stationary  
on the dust covered stairs.  
Their cheeks were yellow, and  
their hair glistening.  
The time weathered steps had another  
purpose. The static bodies needed  
not a direction to travel  
on the worn stairs.

Rather  
he cradled her head and neck  
in those hands  
that would never let go.  
Their eye-lids were closed as

Warm afternoon sunlight  
poured in through the window  
in slanted squares  
painted on the wall.

– Ellen Gurley '93



– C.N. Polumbus '93

# Shadowbrook Lane

This day, like every other,  
I drive the same path,  
a solemn road that delivers me  
to my place of habit  
and brings me back  
when the sun is nearly done.

Each bump, twist and turn  
etched into my mind  
with countless traces.  
The back of my hand  
could only dream  
to be so familiar.

I drive it again,  
anticipating the sharp turn  
at the big oak tree,  
the pot hole caused  
by the thawing and freezing  
of countless years,

the slow, bending curve  
at the rain-smoothed boulder.  
The automatic actions  
allow my mind to ponder  
tasks and chores awaiting me.  
Out of the corner of my eye

appears a darting shadow—  
no time to stop, no where to turn.  
Then it ends in the fashion  
of all life.

I stop the car, turn my head  
to see the fresh death,

too warm to call a carcass yet.  
I stare for awhile  
thinking of the wrinkles  
around my white knuckles  
still fastened to the steering wheel  
and of a road never to be known again.

— J.B. Allen '94



## Arriving On A Nightmare

Walking down 57th street,  
I can see it,  
and feel it  
etched in the sweaty  
brown-black faces of  
the homeless, and the worker.  
It isn't going anywhere,  
it runs from the BMW driving,  
Armani suit wearing "Negroes,"  
to Mr. Greenwell walking  
up the Cole Ave. hill after  
another 15 1/2 hour work day  
with holes in his boots,  
and "lem-black" in his lungs.  
It travels across the linear  
boundaries of this place,  
and the degrees of pigmentation  
among us.  
It is the reminder of that  
moment, as fleeting as it may  
have been, when we knew  
we arrived upon a nightmare,  
which closes the cracks in on us  
even when we'd hoped that  
we had slipped on *thru*.

— Derrick L. Pryor '93

## Seasons of Change

I am a descendent of dreams  
intertwined in a hardened man's thoughts.  
I am a companion of compromise  
swaying easily like minted fields of greenery.  
I am a traveler of tides  
moving meekly with the crowded waters of uniformity.  
I am a moment of a memory  
a fairy light image in the corner of a mind.

But times turn...

Like the shade of an old Oak's leaf in October.  
Once lush, fragmented green  
becomes victim to pattern  
and in death displays  
crisp uniqueness and absent partnership.

Times turn again...

And I become an image of a former image  
releasing my shadow to the destiny of a wind-swept winter.  
Now standing barren of influence,  
shielded by confidence.  
Thus,

I no longer am a companion of compromise.  
I no longer travel with the tide.  
I am no longer a simple moment of a memory forgotten.

But...

I am still a descendent of dreams—  
riding the tail-spun tapestry of life.

— Lelei Jennings '95

# For My Fiancé

That night beneath the wavering leaves, I felt  
Your touch, the gentle breeze, a shelter,

One that moved me, caressed me, and hid the warm mist.  
Three hearts, chipped into oak, positioned by the sweltering

Point of a dull blade, were reminiscent of your lips' moistness  
When I first saw your words swim. They still tell

The story witnessed by the lightbulb of the night, the blind hoo,  
wishing to welcome

Another bond like those carvings. Clouds rushed past our light  
Like a hesitant blink. Hands of dark skeletons

Waved goodbye. Nervous shivers halted!  
Finally, I clutched your hand in mine. And knelt.

—Charles N. Brown '93



— Keith Chapman '95

"And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live."  
—Exod. 33:20

The old woman sitting in the third row  
of the presbyterian church where she  
always sits her hands trembling from old age  
and fear of God wondering if that time so long  
ago she was thirty if it really mattered.

Her husband was away for a time too long  
and the other was young and the way he touched her  
running his hand up her back hesitantly asking  
with his fingertips if this was all right and she  
not really knowing if it was but such a change  
and she letting it happen and when the lovemaking  
came his lips so gentle on her lips on her breasts  
in the place her husband would never place his own  
feeling so good for the moment at least—her husband  
died thirty years later never knowing  
her so called moment of weakness that she forever  
ached for yet never let happen ever again  
because of fear of damnation and love for a man  
that was developed from years spent sharing dinner  
and walks together in a park on wednesday afternoons.

Now her hands tremble harder as the memories  
flood in and she worries wanders if she is damned  
or if that sin and her years of silent guilt  
were really enough to cancel her promise of heaven.

Or a man he lives next to the old woman  
though he's never been to church sitting in a building  
three stories above the world scribbling equations  
rough drawings the like figuring stresses and strains.

In a fit of frustration he slams his pen down  
and walks to the window his key to the world and looks  
out at a man a person with ratted clothing asking  
people out on lunch for a cigarette for a light  
and he is filled with a abrupt quickening like the moment  
before an orgasm or before the cars collide  
and the glass tears into the skin dangerous territory  
where there is more then the plan for a new plant.

he pulls quickly away experienced in these matters  
and grabbing his pen his calculator his handles on the world  
at his desk again he sits and works the page.

Or a boy his son sits with friends in a circle  
together in a park somewhere deep in the city  
and they look up to heaven feeling the communion of love  
but feeling that beyond their tight sphere is hatred.

Later that night he and the friends abandon  
trees and soft grass for the inner sanctum of a club  
filled with guitar riffs skinheads and girls with plum hair  
and he looks to his friends and looks to the stage and looks  
to the bar where he can't order a drink so he spends  
five bucks of the money he earned watching  
meat cook at a fast food joint and tries to find god  
in a slamdance pit and the end of an acid tab  
(on being tough they call it though it will bring him  
to his knees possessed by the moment his father so fears).

Only he has no pen and no calculator and no desk  
and no so called wisdom to block it out and the drug  
makes it seem so much more than it really is that he cries  
to the sky because like Moses he was given  
a glimpse but not allowed to see the face.

– Grant M. Potts '96



– Kate Tomaro '93

# Petty Officer

In the distant sea, wishing for the voices of his children,  
he works below deck, beneath machinery  
sweating the same grease he breathes.

The waves carry no messages—  
the wind whistles no news.

Worry brings sleepless nights,  
so he thinks only of their smiles.

He dreams of wrapping his thick arms  
around his love, for comfort and security:  
her head throbs from playful screams of children  
and she's frustrated by the smell of ash in the oven.

The chill she feels leads to the summer windows  
not yet dressed for winter and she thinks of him  
who curses while he practices war.

— Molly Cruikshank '93



— Peggy Ryan '93

## There

cold steel cuts your feet  
the tendons trail through daffodils  
as you run towards a dark, soft place  
you step into the plush black  
wanting to heal your open sores

you lay down behind the headstone  
with the closed-faced forms  
who cannot see your eyes  
their hands are rough tough and cold  
and horribly arousing

(your brain disconnects itself)

when you are ready to leave  
you get up from the dirt  
and brush the beetles to the ground  
they crawl quietly, gingerly  
inside the wounds on your feet

(the darkness has not healed you)

## Here

(the light cuts on inside)

your pupils grow big, then small  
you shake your head, the pain spins  
don't look into the mirror—  
you skin is shifting and cracking  
and you will soon be old

(your eyes will wilt like theirs)

the sun is shining and slicing  
and when you let in the light  
you will be burned by god  
his luminance heals nothing  
his lightning will split your spine

you do not want to see  
you burrow down and wish for maggots  
they eat only the dead tissue  
and they will help you to heal  
when they fly away you will be shiny

– Anonymous



- Jeannie Wienke '93



# In Irkutsk,

our train pulling us through,  
a woman bowed low  
to the platform and held to her back  
bundles of branches and sticks  
pulling them close  
like a blanket held against  
the cold of the early morning.  
At home, we would gather bundles  
of twigs, setting them ablaze  
inside a small ring of stones  
in the backyard, and huddle close  
pushing our hands near the center,  
next to the flame, while flakes of ash  
rose between us then carefully  
descended like a snow  
falling against her cheek.

Outside,

the stars, now full of dawn,  
mixed and fell with new  
flakes and the black smoke  
of our train, settling like  
dust across the station, filled  
the air between us with thick  
greasy light. As our car rolled  
past I could see the lines of her  
face, twisted and rough like the  
branches she carried, set around  
her blue eyes, which, lit softly by  
some unseen hand against the cold,  
made their way home  
to a backyard and a circle of stones.

– Trey Dunham '94



— Colin Mack '94

# The DogFace West

The clock in the bus station was busted. Minute hand hung limp and bent as if someone reached inside the glass and physically tortured it. The clock was not alone. The interior of the bus station was chipped everywhere. The deserted lunch counter was lime green with worn brown patches; the stools bright orange. The lounge chairs were low and plastic, perhaps once blue. Definitely left from a time gone past. From where he sat you might of thought he was part of the decor. He was awkwardly hunched in his chair with his head in his lap. His hair was partly caught in a ponytail and his denim jacket was covered with the handy work of Harley Davidson. The only two visible possessions were seated next to him, a scabbed up dog and a flat pack of reds. The college student entered from the side and stood in the center of the room. The interior frightened him. He spoke to himself,

"Shit. What the hell am I supposed to do now?" His echo bounced off the tiled surfaces, only the dog responded to his imploring question. He jumped from his perch and stretched his way over to the student's bag, sniffing the brown canvas.

"What do you want mutt? I haven't got a thing." He moved over into a chair first checking for any weird objects that might be stuck to the surface. He then removed a tattered bus schedule from his jeans and began searching for a way out. The dog had followed and jumped up on the seat next to his. The young man ignored the possibility that this dog was his new found friend. When he finally located the time of his ride, he immediately began to grind his jaw.

"I can't fucking believe this shit. If I had known the short cut dropped me off here I would have taken the other route. God fucking dammit!"

The next bus wasn't due for eight hours. He immediately glanced at the snack bar and realized the last sandwich they had probably served was when Lennon took that bullet. As for any attendants, they were most likely hiding in the shack outside pulling on a bottle. His only chance at entertainment was the lost soul hunched over in his chair. He did the only reasonable thing and pulled out his book which he had already finished. He started over.

The buzzing of the flies awoke the college kid as one of them landed on his open mouth. They had wandered over from their tired exploration of the Harley man. He rubbed his eyes and glanced around out of habit, but knew it would look pretty much the same. The dog was still staring at him. He retrieved his book from the ground and opened his sack, placing it back inside. He then removed a cellophane sandwich and slowly undressed it. The dog leaned in to inspect the merchandise. Shifting away from the animal he removed one half and took a bite of warm roast beef that had turned an off brown color from age. The dog jumped off his stool and came around for a better look, and also to remind the student that he was still waiting.

"I can't give you anything mutt, this is my last bit of food until I reach Santa Fe."

The dog licked his nose and scooted closer.

"Aw, come on now, why don't you go bug your owner." He then glanced

over at his object of advice and realized just how desperate the dog must be. The man was still in the exact same position. He looked down at the dog again. Ripping the sandwich in half he placed the larger piece on the ground and watched the dog devour what looked like his first bite in days. He scowled in the owners direction and muttered to himself,

"People shouldn't fucking take on animals when they can't even take care of themselves. Just another drunk shit taking up space."

He decided to get up and take a few laps around the room, all the while shaking the blood back down into his toes. The dog stayed by the bag perhaps thinking he was guarding whatever food was left. As he circled the room he began to check out the owner more closely. A fly had landed on one of his hands that lay palm up on the floor. -His feet were stretched out in front. The student shook his head and imagined just how much he probably had to consume to find his position sleep worthy. He then looked out the window at the vast wasteland of brown chalky earth that stretched to the horizon. For the sake of verbal stimulation he held his own conversation.

"When I get to Santa Fe the first thing I do is find a shower without having to pay for it. Put on my clean underwear and head for her doorstep. If she is excited to see me then, no worries."

He was now testing out the water fountain to clear his throat and had to settle on a few swallows of his own saliva. A good deep clear of the vocal passage and he was off again.

"On the other hand, if she isn't that thrilled, well, then I head for Corpus Christie, Texas and visit John. Now he'll be excited. We'll talk about the coming fall and drink golden margueritas by the pool. Quitting that landscape job early was a good idea, now I can explore the west and fantasize about all that could happen. Definitely."

He was now being followed in his endless circling by the mutt, who was obviously interested in what he was saying.

"What do you think old dog? What the hell do you know anyway, you don't have enough sense to ditch your owner and opt for a new life. I guess the saying is true, man's best friend is man's best friend. And what a friend I might add."

The student decided to check out the man a little closer, however, the fear of a lurking disease kept about five feet between them. His one visible hand was pale, that blue pale you'd imagine on a ninety-five year old grandparent, who moved in with you just in time to say goodbye. There were flies trying to burrow under his straw hair, wanting to lick his neck. The student didn't voice his opinion loud in case the thing awoke, but he thought about the impossibility of a life similar to this whinos. How does anyone reach this plateau? And once there, why don't they slit their wrists? He knew the thought was evil but couldn't prevent the opinion from forming. Standing over the body he spoke to create a bigger distance between their two lives,

"I'm on my way to Santa Fe to get some loving from a beauty. She doesn't know this of course, it's a surprise. But don't you worry your soaked head over this, she'll be excited to see me, you wait and see."

By this time the dog had wandered over. He licked his owners hand and stood there waiting for the pat that usually follows.

"For Christ sakes, wake up you wino and pay attention to your dog."

With that the student pushed the denim shoulder. There was no give, just rigid, hard bone. The college kid swallowed slowly as a hard realization set in. He had to know. Leaning over the cowboy, the kid pried his chest from his knees until the Marlborough man was sitting up, as if waiting patiently for a bus. He ran out the front door with tears falling out of his eyes and found one scraggly bush to empty his stomach. The roast beef was hardly digested. Wrapping his hands around his chest he sat over his sacrifice, silently violent. The dog's nose touching his flesh brought him back.

Later, when the sheriff came to retrieve the lost souls he picked the student up off the ground and placed him in the back of his car. He did the same for the dog. The sheriff had to fetch the kid's bag because he'd refused to enter the station. The college student had left the man sitting there alone, unable to stare into his grin, his alcoholic grin. As the sheriff climbed into the car he volunteered the information anyone would want to know.

"Dehydration and a very bad liver most likely. Nothing anyone can do for these people, they do it to themselves." He didn't even look at the sheriff, the brown empty landscape held his attention.

— Heidi Mahoney '93



– Anonymous



# Snowless Winter in New England

Puritan homes from the outside,  
Glued with salt from the keel of some fisherman's pram  
Bend wooden bodies to align with  
Raw albumin pavement slick from late fog.

Black earth stretches between sidewalk and doorstep.  
Dampness seeps through rubber soles of boots and  
Person leans into light fingers from lamp poles  
Burning heatless spheres of white-washed electricity.

Inside, low beamed ceilings breathe orange warmth  
Through windows —nostrils of sleepings dragons—  
Steaming ice puddles on frame and clapboard into  
Wishful spiralling clouds of nothingness.

— Amy Hughes '93



— Keith Chapman '95



# The Shouting Floor

Sister McNab would start  
the "Holy Dance."  
Her hat with its feathers  
and sequenced beads,  
would fly off  
during the praise.  
All of the Saints  
would edge her on.  
One by two they  
would come.  
Shouts of "Amen."  
and "That's all right!",  
would echo throughout  
the halls, as they clutched  
their long polyester skirts  
and let their hats fly off  
as well.  
Only those with true faith  
would come.  
Others stayed in the pews  
and yelled,  
empty heartless screams  
of acceptance.  
But the floor absorbed the cries  
of those with true faith.  
A week's worth of hardship,  
poverty, pain and  
"negritude" was thrown down  
and left there for a week to renew  
the Saint who came to  
the shouting floor.

— Derrick L. Pryor '93

# The Favorite

On Friday night he is the life blood  
Of this two spotlight town.  
Under pale purple lights,  
On the only field in the county that isn't plowed under  
With corn or beans  
The Favorite dominates.  
Diving off tackle  
And kicking up dirt,  
He runs, tackles, scores,  
Punishing all takers for failing to be as magnificent as himself.  
And the overawed fathers nod,  
Arguing over bellies swollen with lukewarm booster hotdogs  
And twenty years of beer,  
Whether tonight's star  
Runs more like Nate Washington,  
Or Butch Westin,  
Or some other forgotten hero,  
Who clocked out at five  
And made the game tonight.

There are those people,  
Goddamn liberals, everyone of them,  
That are fearful and envious of his confident swagger,  
They bemoan his attitude, asking  
Why can't he hit the books,  
Like he did that kid from Easthills, the one whose chinstrap broke,  
And helmet twisted half way 'round?  
You know, the kid who lay on the thirty  
Until Bob from the life squad  
Gave him the salts.

The Favorite won't even play ball again,  
College will rust and die  
Like the Malibu behind the garage,  
And tonight's hero will be another mechanic,  
Or broken back farmer,  
within three years.

Long ago I would have  
said How right those teachers were.  
And how the horse should have been reined,  
If not broken.  
But then,  
If I were made God  
Before I could drive,  
And fathers lined up their daughters for me,  
And poured me their beer  
While their young sons fought to wear my number.  
What would I care,  
About Trigonometry?

– Andy Heckert '93



– Colin Mack '94

# Mythologies

## I. Waiting for Venus

You stand on a carpet and wait for your feet to sink  
Into the pile. You look at the artwork placed there  
And there like quicksand. Venus lifts a garland to the sky,  
Her eyes fixed on some god-awful horizon. She seems  
To have a purpose. Her hair, sliced into her back  
And shoulders, curls on her neck and molds itself  
Around your ears as you stand. So you blink, and walk  
To the next room, where you hear chanting and smell  
Incense. Your body opens, breathing in sandalwood  
And honey. You have to go back to her. Her waxy  
Gray skin is the color of your bones, and its chill  
Corrupts you, so you fall to your knees and conjure  
The Lord to heal her. She falls lightly from the pedestal  
And your arms surround a statue. Water condenses  
And yields over her solid eyes, rounded torso, the stony  
Tips of her breasts. And you pray that Venus has  
Broken her marble cage and is free, you lying on your side  
Next to an empty pile of shards, she a soaring blaze,  
Intact and unshed in your veins. But you know the  
Difference between life and dreams. So you shake her  
Water from your body, wipe lamb's blood from your eyes.  
And you leave that place of imprisoned, powerful ones  
Whose bodies fit into your hands as if shaped for you alone.

## II. Pallas

Every day is a rebirth of the one before.  
Grass shivers. Atlas blows clouds over the sun.

He sees the world gravely. With her body  
Athene circles me three times

and we fight, a dance of metallic clash and breathing,  
there an angry roar, then we love.

With every cut of her knife I further swoon  
to death. My skin slips off, an outgrown tunic.

I lie, loosen my blood to a carpet of earth,  
while she wears my empty shell like a vision.

The sun finds every exposed nerve. Burning,  
I watch her planets in the sky, spinning.

### III. Psyche and Eros

Her skin shines in the moonlight as if spun from gold.  
She twists her hair all the way around her neck until it's  
all there is. The gods talk about splendor: look here. She lifts  
her head, straightens her shoulders: the stars are your eyes.  
She rubs her lips with oil, goes home to dream of you.

She sleeps: eyes turn into your face, submit with a smile,  
your neck slopes to shoulders with arms cut into the sides.  
Your fingers grace her body. Speak into her mouth, forget  
about prophecy. Remember the danger of beauty without  
love, and then dream only with her. Don't worry, Eros,

she could fill the box with a pyramid of wax, a mound  
of earth, tiny chunks of myrrh. You could wed under the sea,  
two fragile fish like the swimming ornaments in her hair.  
Fall into her now as into blackest night, and stay, immortal,  
while she lifts the lantern to your face, to see how

you change into ever-lovelier shapes under her fingers,  
while your eyes are jewels under the lids, perpetually  
growing. She will find you. The moon shines purer  
than skin, even colder than the dreams of her god:  
if this were not true, you would never have woken.

### IV. Achilles Speaking to the Nereid Thetis

The day falls like rain under your grief.  
What are the tears of a nymph  
But a mere wet breaking of the old  
Gray clouds on this ground of war?  
Remember how falling, screaming,

(I stub out a cigarette  
to watch it  
scatter  
exhale a last blue  
cloud of smoke  
I'm dead  
warm  
I walk to the door  
and open it for air)

Huge, I tried to be born of you,  
And how these fists held air  
Until you grabbed my fat limbs  
Like fruit and I choked and gagged  
On water and life. Mother,

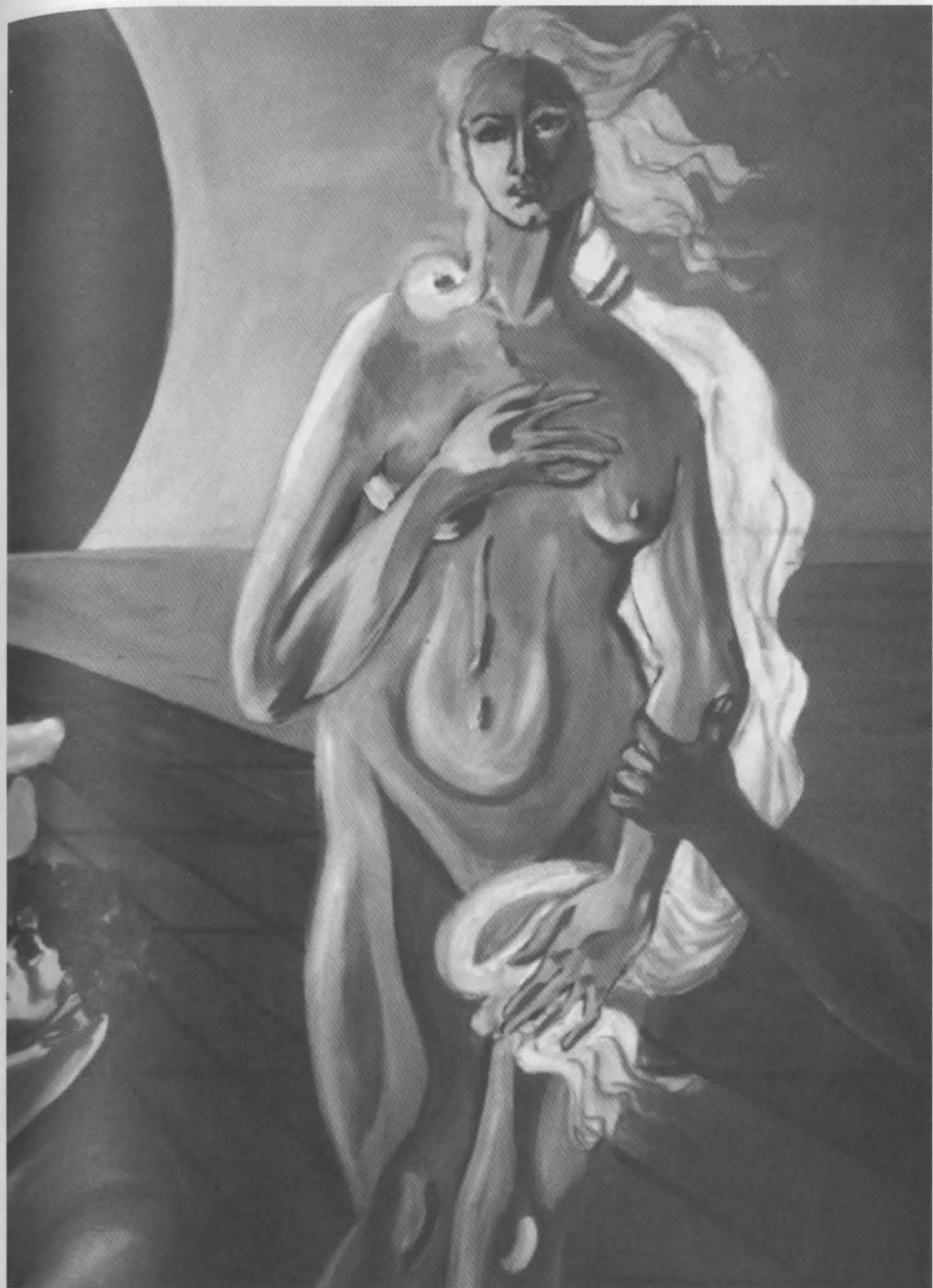
(in the silent urgency  
of late night I am  
enchanted by the  
sound of dead leaves  
in the wind  
I think no longer of loving  
it never even touched me)

Lover, destroyer of faith and men,  
The water of Nereus eats stars  
Like dates, then glows in the black  
Black of a destroyed sky. This is  
Why one waits and sees.

(sunrise  
a hot star coming  
with easy regularity  
encroaching on a body  
that will not await  
a new rebirth  
of wonder)

Howling to be made a man on this  
Stretched, war-littered battlefield,  
Bitter and mottled as the old  
Gold filigree on my royal chariot,  
I surrender to your immortality.

— Kristina Kruse '93



– Anonymous



# Vedauwoo

## *(vee-dub-voo)*

She might as well push  
the groceries to the car  
herself, she'd done all  
the pushing before—  
the vacuum, the furniture,  
the baby born after ten  
hours of labor— by herself.  
Now squeezed between  
the Charmin and Quaker  
Instant Oats, she muffles  
his cry with a pushed-in  
pacifier.

She nudges  
the check forward with the same  
thin fingers which, at half-time,  
had twirled a baton, then returned  
to full-time, wrapping blankets  
around him and trudging home  
through the wind and snow  
and the blare of laughter  
and cars, horns streaming from  
the lot

towards  
Vedauwoo and a bonfire  
and music and a keg of beer:  
And Johnny  
pulling her close  
and the weight of the moon  
holding him down  
onto her, thin, naked  
fingers too light  
to drive him away.

She  
pushes the cart into the parking  
lot, holding on against the wind  
and the slope of the land, retracing  
her way to the car.

— Trey Dunham '94



## PART II

# AWAKENING

i have heard from my grandmothers mouth  
of why her skin is so light  
why her hair is so straight  
how her mother was the same  
and how she got that way and the evil man that found his  
way into our blood  
(who was that man I would think to myself?)

i have heard my grandfathers story of  
leaving the eighth grade  
never to go back  
to sweat under the fiery North Carolina sun  
so that he could help feed eight hungry mouths  
all of them family  
but none his children

and i hear the cautious whisper of my grandmothers voice  
when she says "black"  
and in 1993 will still say  
"colored"  
without a wink and with a sense of pride

and i think of the story my mother told me  
of cleaning bathrooms  
in the department store downtown  
because in 1965 that was what she could get

and i hear the stories and  
watch the tears of my family,  
their pain, their deaths, the opportunities lost  
and the bodies set aflame  
and i see the stories of my family  
becoming real again when i see  
Tawana Brawley, Rodney King, the wino in my neighborhood  
even when i think of the bullets that ripped open  
Malcolm's chest  
or  
Martin's neck

and i think of all these things  
as i lay here  
and i ask why am i lying here  
next to you  
letting your blue eyes pass over my brown face  
and your pitifully suntanned hand slide over  
my hip.  
can you tell me why I am still here... naked with you?

do you really hate me after all these years?  
can i really love you after all the scars?  
are you that man from so long ago?

– N.N.C. '94



– Jamie Oliver '94

# Lucky Boo

Diamond earrings illuminate back alley New Orleans,  
Where freak show drags and college girls play naked voodoo queens.  
Swamp mud scars the azure skin of rock 'n' rollers' shoes.  
The vacant suitcase molds as Lucky Boo plays the blues.

Satan waits in the reeds with Alaskan Brother Ben.  
Confetti buries Mardi Gras with biker czars of Zen.  
The box folk sell their children to switchblade pimp gurus.  
The vacant suitcase holds the rain as Lucky plays the blues.

Polaroid perverts line the street 'neath Gunsmoke overhangs.  
Pretty girls trip leg-hole traps of slicked-up, night-wolf fangs.  
VD sinners ask God to guide them through their colds and flu.  
A cigarette hits the suitcase as Lucky plays the blues.

French cuisine is garnished with an honest mask of black.  
A Cajun bites a crayfish, a mosquito bites him back.  
A blind Indian draws spirits from an Irish flask of booze.  
The vacant suitcase mildews as Lucky plays the blues.

The French Quarter is full of clowns and priests in jackal hoods.  
The sweaty chemist shows the gray suit his crystal goods.  
Black men bowl in crowded dives with Pollacks and with Jews.  
The suitcase is as naked as the howling six-string blues.

Torch jugglers build shadows from the fading iron lamps.  
Tap-dance echoes beckon ebony sheet metal camps.  
The winners tie, the losers die, the lucky always lose.  
There's bird dung in the suitcase, and Boo still plays the blues.

A gun spins 'cross the rooftop, a fists goes through a fan.  
Down below some colored kids kick their lonely can.  
A raven on a Gothic wire can watch the evening news.  
The starving suitcase decays as Lucky plays the blues.

A bottle races towards a face from a dead man's hand.  
The brimstone blasts are eaten by a funeral marching band.  
As blood rains on the canopy Lucky smells the fuse,  
And as blood rains in the suitcase Lucky plays the blues.

Thumb hooked in pocket, a poor boy's fingers keep the time.  
As he listens to the naked truth he pulls out a faded dime.  
Walking to the suitcase he says, "Here's something you can use."  
Lucky tilts his weathered hat, and then he plays the blues.

– Matt Wanat '95

# Uncreation

He had her lie down, naked, unashamed  
in darkness. He called Phoebus to dissolve  
the veil of shadows, "Illuminate her."  
He could not believe what the darkness hid;  
But she had warned him of what would evolve  
if he would not be pleased with a darker  
love. He decided, then, to betray her  
for art. Now loving her more than ever,  
he took the soil of the earth and began  
to shape it in her image; with his hands  
he ribbed her, then moving his thumbs from her  
eyewells, he smoothed the apple of her throat  
and hung from his own tree, eyes stabbed out.

He lives yet, moving amoebic through cold  
darkness. Is this just the way things would be?  
The clay is cold and wet, his fingers swim  
through shadows, groping, like a man returned  
to the place he called home to find nothing,  
nothing there for him but a smug fool's dream,  
a bartender's story when closing lights dim.  
How to paint one whose canvass is barren?  
She cannot nurse him for his universe  
is created in dust, and his love verse,  
the second testament, he had written  
by men, but his last vow is best and still,  
and no one knows how long his silent vigil.

– Richard Croft '93

## (untitled verse)

thrown scattered about  
(once pressed close to a young lover's breast)  
the pages of a shrivelled memory  
brush the gritty pavement  
of the sidewalk  
at the heart of the dozing metropolis

in this midnight lull,  
the blurred verse  
advertised by the  
artificial glare of the lamppost  
guarding the corner of Fifth and St. Clair

vulgar, now,  
in the grimy hands  
of the ever-so-public night,  
the poet's soul  
tossed into a gutter by the wind,  
his voice  
lost forever to the callous city streets

— Jen Rudgers '96



# Encore

Read between my line.  
The one you've heard so  
many times before.  
Like the time in Paris  
with Dexter, our man,  
blowin' so hard we  
thought the roof would  
cave in, or was it  
the stars that were shining

beneath us, with their  
fine cut suits and furs,  
smiling and posing,  
on display for the bored  
to watch. But not us,  
as we sat in the cheap  
seats, drinking scotch  
smuggled in through the  
flask pressed to my skin.

Listening to his  
horn and feeling the  
warmth pass through us, I  
turned to look at you,  
on the edge of your  
seat, eyes shaded from  
the stars. When I opened  
my mouth you turned to face  
me, and as you looked  
away, I knew my  
blank was already filled.

– William DeNardo '93

Forever looking for understanding  
Endless country roads  
And waves along the shore  
Baby blue eyes that captivate  
Even a child—  
Your protocol.  
A side of you  
You wouldn't dare to show another  
Unique  
Contrast is not always black and white  
Forever trying to solve the mystery  
Clouds loom and the rain—  
The pitter patter of pain  
The child possesses something  
Others do not.  
A no risk guarantee  
Pacified easily  
By some red and green paint  
And a two dollar picture with Santa  
Forever mastering the simplification of complexity,  
The resilience of a child  
Who has not been beaten by society  
You try to make life better for him—  
Than it was for you.  
Your baby blue eyes captivate me—  
And I try to understand.

— Katherine Campo '94



—Holly Aikens '93

## Meditation on Darts

A man aims, desiring to pinpoint his goal, then casts  
away, hoping to hit the circle among circles—

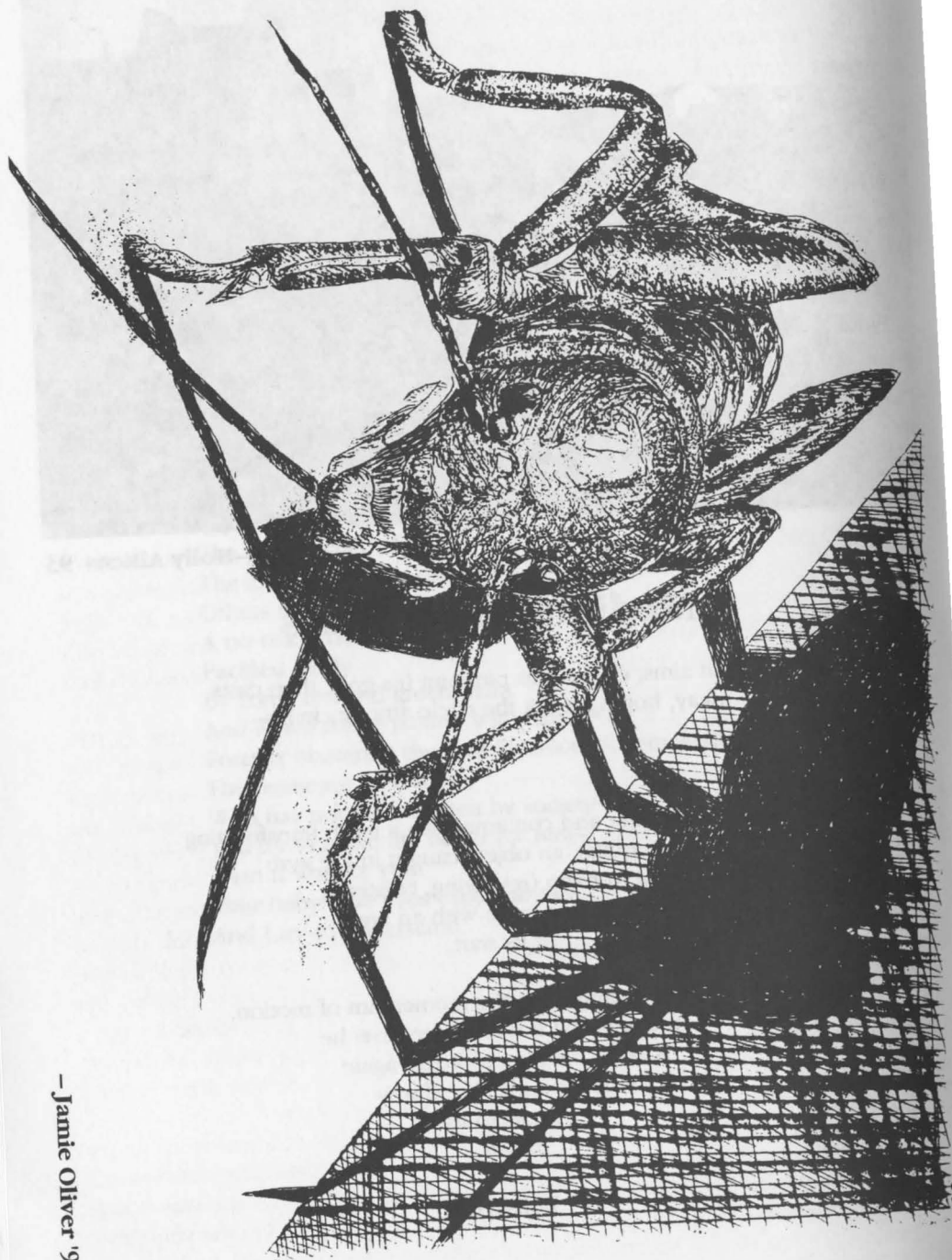
A miss.

He clamps another and contemplates: a moth transforming  
to a caterpillar, an object caught in the gyre  
of a tornado (revolving, twisting),  
stuck in a cycle with an end  
at its start.

One last shot, tangled in the momentum of motion.  
In childhood it was easier; now he  
is older wanting to begin again  
when it ends. The throw  
spirals to its  
target.

Bullseye.

—J.B. Allen '94



— Jamie Oliver '94

# Feeding Betsy

My momma says we're gonna be here forever. I guess that's pretty fine. Daddy takes me out in the truck just about every Sunday, calls it his Fiery Old Red Dump. Sometimes we go to feed Daddy's pigs, which I like because they make funny noises and rub up against your legs alot. Daddy's pigs live down the road some from the house, Momma says they stink and I guess that's why they're so far away. Daddy feeds them himself every mornin', 'cept on Sundays sometimes he waits 'till after church and takes me with him. Daddy used to take me with him mostly just to see old Able. Able was Daddy's favorite pig 'cause he was the smallest (even though he was really big) and he liked it whenever Daddy scratched him behind the ears. Whenever Daddy took me to feed the pigs he'd call out "here Able!" and Able'd grunt and come chargin' up to Daddy like he was some stud bull or somethin'. Daddy sure loved that pig.

Sometimes Daddy takes me fishin' with him, but not mostly 'cause Momma says it ain't ladylike to go fishin', 'specially on Sundays when we're s'posed to be thinkin' all about Jesus and what bad people we all are durin' the week. Whenever Daddy takes me fishin' we just tell Momma we were pickin' flowers along the river, and she kinda smiles her momma smile and tells Daddy he shoulda been a polly tition 'stead of a farmer. Then Sandy laughs with Momma and we all think its pretty funny.

Sandy's just like Momma is. She's real pretty with curly hair and she likes to cook big pots of stew. Momma and Sandy always cook dinner together 'cause sometime real soon Sandy's gonna hafta pick a nice fella and settle down. That's what Mr. Piker keeps sayin' anyway, every time him and Mrs. Piker comes over to play cards with Momma and Daddy. I like it when they come over 'cause then my best friend Mildred comes with 'em and we play barbies and dress up.

Mildred's about my best friend in the whole world. We both take the bus to school and me and Mildred play hand slaps on the way to school in the mornin', but Mildred's Momma (Mrs. Piker) picks her right up from school after lunch so's she can help out with the housework. I have to stay there all day and Jimmy Johnson just bugs me to death! He sits right behind me in school and pulls my pigtails everyday! I asked Momma to let me stop wearin' 'em so he'd stop pullin' 'em. But Momma says pigtails are very ladylike and proper. I guess she's right, but I still don't like 'em, they pull my head too tight, and then boys like Jimmy Johnson pull 'em in school. Mildred doesn't have to wear her pigtails any more, guess her Momma don't think they're ladylike and proper. 'Course, Mildred's daddy don't have a truck like my Daddy's, no Fiery Old Red Dump. His truck's green and Daddy says it's no good 'cause it's got a foreign motor. Mr. Piker doesn't take Mildred for rides in his green truck, not like my Daddy takes me for rides in his, but I sure wish I didn't have to wear these pigtails, and I'd sure like to come home early like Mildred does every day.

Mildred's got seven Barbies, and she's even got a Ken doll. Momma won't let me have a Ken doll 'cause she says that Barbies should only play with other Barbies and that Ken dolls would only make the Barbies act silly. Sandy told me she wasn't ever aloud to have a Ken doll either, so I shouldn't have one just 'cause I'm the youngest.

Daddy always laughs whenever Sandy calls me "the youngest" and he says "Hell, Sandy, there's only the two of ya." and then Momma tells Daddy, "For

heaven's sake Jacob watch your language, do you want to make my daughters into rutters?" Daddy just keeps laughin' and I think it's pretty funny, but Sandy says "Oh, Daddy," and then she and Momma go into the kitchen to cut up some pie or do the dishes. I always wanta help, but there's really only room for just the two of them at the sink, and I'm too clumsy to dry off the plates, so I just stay at the table with Daddy and he tells me stories about Old Uncle 'Cephus, who was Daddy's favorite Uncle when he was a little boy.

I think my Daddy's just about the best talker in the whole world. Whenever he takes me for a ride in the Fiery Old Red Dump on Sundays he tells me lots of really neat stories 'bout Uncle 'Cephus and bears, and times when he went huntin'.

Daddy doesn't hunt anymore 'cause Momma says its 'trocious and tells him she can't look at his hands when he comes home. Daddy told me he was gettin tired of huntin' anyways 'cause one time he shot this one fat doe right in her eyeball, and she just kept runnin' and runnin', and Daddy was tryin' to chase her 'cause he shot her and didn't want her to get away. But she was just too darn fast, so she got away and him and all the other hunters had to look for her blood on the ground and try to find her that way. "It took us all day," Daddy said, "and when we found her she was layin right on her side, crying like a baby with the whole left side of her pretty face missin', and I thought to myself, Jacob, you done this creature wrong, and now you gots to set it right. So I lifted my rifle, and I shot her right in the heart. And I didn't take none of that venison home with me, I gave it all to the other fellas and said 'fellas, I'm out, my huntin' days are over,' so then I walked back here to your momma and showed her my hands and said "Violet," (I think Momma's name is just about the prettiest I ever heard. Sometimes when me an' Mildred play out in the field I find violets for Momma and she wears 'em in her hair) "you can look at my hands now sweetheart, they're clean."

I think about Daddy's stories sometimes when I'm layin' up in the old hayloft in the barn. I really like it up there a whole lot. In the summer time the hay smells real sweet and soft, and you can lay up there smellin' the hay and listenin' to the flies and bees buzz, and close and open your eyes real slow 'till ya feel kinda like when ya first wake up in the mornin' and you yawn and stretch like a warm cat. My cat Betsy always stretches and yawns like that whenever she's been layin in the windowsill for a long time. She's not allowed in the house, but I pet her outside sometimes and she even lets me stroke her tail, which the other farm cats won't let me do.

Sandy won't pet the cats at all, she says they gots fleas and stinky mouse breath. I think Betsy's pretty nice though, so whenever I yawn and stretch up in the old hayloft, I pretend like I'm Betsy and I gots fleas and chase mice.

One day I was layin in the hayloft, thinkin' how nice it was to be up there in the barn with all the rusty nails and creaky boards (that's the things that Momma always tells me to be careful of when I'm goin' up into the old hayloft) I was just closin' and openin' my eyes real catlike when I heard Daddy's Fiery Old Red Dump pull up outside. So I yawned and stretched and twisted 'round to peek out the window up there and then I narrowed my eyes just like Betsy so I could see Daddy better when he got out. And then I waited for Daddy to jump down out of the truck and holler my name. But he didn't jump out like normal, he just sorta climbed out slowly and I knew he wasn't happy, 'cause Daddy always jumps out when he's happy and climbs



out when he's sad. So then Daddy walked around to the back of the truck and I thought he was cold 'cause he was shakin', but then I saw he was cryin', and I got real scared 'cause Daddy never cries, 'cept for the time when Sandy got hit by the car when she was eleven and Momma went with her in the ambulance and Daddy took me with him to the hospital in his truck. The road was all dusty and Daddy was drivin' real fast so it seemed like the whole world was a cloud of dust. He was cryin' when we drove there and I was cryin' too 'cause I was just real little and didn't know what was goin' on.

When we got to the hospital Momma was in the waitin' room and Daddy went runnin' up to her and hugged her for a long time and they were both shakin' and then I started cryin' louder and Daddy picked me up and Momma kissed my face and squeezed me tight and that scared me even more but then the doctor came out and said everything was alright and Sandy could come home in a few days. So then Momma started cryin' even harder, and so did Daddy, and we were all cryin', but I didn't know why.

And when Sandy came home she couldn't walk for a while so she let me get her lemonade and magazines and stuff. I like Sandy alot and I wish I could be as pretty as she is. Momma says I need to be more ladylike, but I don't think I could ever be as ladylike as Sandy is. Sandy always giggles when she talks to boys, and sometimes her face gets red whenever they look at her funny. She thinks boys are cute, but I think they're gross, 'specially boys like Jimmy Johnson.

When I saw Daddy cryin' it made me think of that time in the hospital and I started to feel like I was gonna cry, and I didn't feel very catlike at all. Then Daddy started walkin' to the back of the truck and he pulled somethin' out of it that was pretty heavy 'cause Daddy couldn't hardly lift it and my Daddy's pretty strong. And when I looked closer I saw that it was one of Daddy's pigs, and I guess it was dead 'cause it sure didn't move, but then, Daddy didn't move none either. He just kinda stood there for a minute, and then he stopped he took the pig into the woodshed, and then he didn't come out of the woodshed for a long time.

I stayed up in the hayloft for a long time, even though I wanted to go down and talk to Daddy. It still smelled sweet up there and I could still hear the flies and bees, and sometimes dragonflies buzzin' around outside. Dragonflies always sound just like big motorboats from far away. They look scary though, so I don't ever get real close to find out what they sound like then. My eyes felt really heavy and I tried to think about Betsy and chasin' mice, but all I could think about was helpin' Daddy feed those pigs, and how they all grunted and rubbed up against our legs when we walked into the pen.

I thought about that while the sun was goin' down and the bees and flies were changin' places with the mosquitoes and lightning bugs. I knew that the light and the noise was changin' but I was closin' and openin' my eyes real slow, picturin' Daddy and Able out in the pig pen. I just knew the dead pig was Able. Able was the only pig that Daddy could've carried, so I knew why Daddy was sad, 'cause Able had died.

Then I heard Momma callin' me in for supper. Her voice was clear but it seemed really far away and it sounded like she might have been callin' for a long time. So I stretched and yawned just like Betsy and I thought I was really hungry, so I climbed down out of the old hayloft and ran into the house to wash my hands.



Momma was in the kitchen mashin' up the potatoes. She always waits 'till we're sittin' at the table to mash 'em up, cause she says that makes 'em taste better. Daddy tells her she should sit down and enjoy supper with the family, 'stead of jumpin' up and down every five minutes to mash potatoes or get more biscuits. Daddy was sittin' at the table and he looked real happy, he was laughin' at somethin' Sandy just said, probably somethin' bout me bein' the youngest, and he didn't look like he'd been cryin' at all. So then I thought that thing about Able must have been a daydream, and then Daddy called me over to sit on his lap and asked me where I'd been all day, so I told him I'd been up in the old hayloft, and then he laughed and said, "takin' a little catnap?" and winked at me 'cause he knows how I like to act like Betsy and listen to the bees and flies. Then Momma told me to sit at the table and I sat in my chair.

My chair's always the one closest to the sink. Our kitchen table is big and round, but my momma don't have one of them red and white checked tablecloths for it 'cause she says they're too cleeshaid. Our table cloths is always white, 'cept on special 'casions like Easter or Daddy's birthday Momma puts out the pretty tablecloth with all sorts of pretty pink roses and daisies on it. Whenever Momma puts out the pretty tablecloth I like to pretend like I can smell all the flowers. The daisies always smell 'specially nice.

This time our tablecloth was plain old white, and I couldn't smell no flowers. I put my napkin down on my lap and Sandy went and got the biscuits off the stove, and Momma brought the mashed potatoes to the table in a big steamin' bowl with thick yellow buttter running down the sides, and my stomach started rumblin' and I was lickin' my lips, thinkin' how good dinner was gonna be, when Momma set down a great big steamin' tray of porkchops, right in the middle of the kitchen table.

I looked at Daddy, and I thought he'd be startin' to cry, but he was smilin' his great big happy smile, starin' right at those porkchops and suckin' in a great big breath like he was gettin' ready to dive into a swimmin' hole. And then I looked at Sandy, but she was smoothing her napkin on her lap and foldin' her hands to say grace. But then I saw that Momma didn't have that great big proud look on her face she always gets whenever we sit down to a table full of good, hearty food. Momma looked like she looks when old Eddie, the mailman, brings a big thick stack of env'lopes and says "sorry m'am" as he hands them to her. Momma wasn't smilin' at all, she was just scoopin' the mashed potatoes onto our plates, pouring us all great big glasses of ice-cold milk, and pretendin' like she didn't even see the tray of pork chops she just set down on the table.

Then Daddy said, "Well, Violet, this looks like a fine meal, I guess you outdone yourself." And Momma looked at Daddy and told him, "I'm sorry, Jacob, but the family's gotta eat." And Daddy didn't say anything, he just planted his fork into the biggest, juiciest porkchop, and he set it down right on my plate. Then he put one on Sandy's, then Momma's, then his own. I just sat there with my hands in my lap, starin' down at that great big porkchop, thinkin' how I wasn't very hungry anymore. Momma and Sandy were eatin' real slow, cuttin' their food up into little bites and chewin' it up real good before swallowin'. Daddy was eatin' like a combine, shovelin' pork and potatoes into his mouth so fast I was afraid he was gonna eat the plate. I just kept sittin' there, lookin' at my porkchop, wishin' it was on someone else's plate.

"Eat your dinner. Daddy was lookin' at me across the table as he dug his fork into another greasy porkchop and dropped it onto his messy plate.

"I'm not very hungry," I said, 'cause really I wasn't and I didn't know why Daddy was.

"I don't care if you're hungry or not, I want you to eat that porkchop."

Daddy wasn't smilin' anymore and I knew he was gettin' mad, so I picked up my fork and scooped up some mashed potatoes, and then I took a little, ladylike bite, just like Momma and Sandy.

"Now eat your porkchop."

"Daddy, I don't want any." Momma and Sandy had stopped eatin' and they were all lookin' at me, Daddy still had his fork in his hand, and he was pointin' it at me just the way old lady Wiliker points her chalk at the class when somebody just made a fartin' noise or somethin'.

"Young lady if you don't eat that porkchop I'm goin' outside and cuttin' a switch from the rosebush."

"Jacob, if she's not hungry I think she can just be excused from the table." Momma had picked her fork back up and was chewin' up a small bite of porkchop, as if to show Daddy how the whole thing was really just silly. But Daddy didn't even look at Momma.

"Am I gonna' hafta cut me a switch?"

Now I was startin' to cry, 'cause Daddy never whipped me anymore, even when I did somethin' really bad like trippin' Jimmy Johnson on his way off the schoolbus. And I just couldn't eat that porkchop, even though I knew I'd get in trouble if I didn't.

"Jacob, leave the girl alone."

"Goddamnit Violet, I told her to eat that porkchop, and she's gonna eat it if I have to shove it down 'er throat!"

Momma looked at me and smiled, "Honey, why don't you take your porkchop outside and eat it on the porch?"

Daddy looked right at Momma, and he was madder than I'd ever seen 'im before. His face was all red and his eyes were real wide and watery. Sandy didn't know what to do, and I sure didn't either, so I just did what Momma told me and picked my porkchop off the plate and carried it out of the kitchen. It felt all wet and slippery in my fingers, but I wouldn't drop it, even though it was still hot and grease was drippin' off it onto the floor. Sandy watched me get up and leave, but Momma and Daddy just sat there lookin' at each other like they was both fixin' to cry.

I walked real slow to the front porch, drippin' hot grease onto the shiny wood of the hall floor, cuppin' my hand under the falling grease as I passed over the homemade yarn rug in our livin' room, swingin' open the screen door with my hip, steppin' out the summer twilight with a steaming porkchop in my hand. Once I got outside I didn't know what to do, so I went runnin' over to the barn and climbed up into the old hayloft, catchin' my skirt on a rusty nail as I climbed up the knotty old ladder with one hand.

Once I got up to the top with the hay and dusty pitchforks, I sat next to the big window, and pretended like I was a starvin' man in a desert, who had a big juicy apple in his hand. I closed my eyes and it got so I could feel the burnin' hot sand

under my feet, just like when you run barefoot across blacktop in the summertime. And the greasy porkchop in my hand started to feel hard and round, just like a fresh handpicked apple. But I didn't get to bite into th' apple, 'cause soon's I brought it up to my face it smelled just like a porkchop. And then I started to cry again when I heard this tiny sound in the barn below. And I looked down and there was good old Betsy, cryin' for me to stroke 'er tail. So I called her up into the loft "Here kitty, kitty, kitty, kitteeee." And she jumped up right next to me all soft and ladylike, then she stuck her pretty little nose right into the porkchop, and she looked right up at me and let out this long "meeeowww..." like to say how she really wanted some porkchop.

And then I looked down at the piece of Daddy's favorite pig that I was holdin' in my hand, and I ripped off a little chunk of it and held it out for Betsy. Then she took it gently 'tween her teeth, just like she was some kinda princess, and she chewed it up with a bunch of quick, tiny bites. And then I ripped her off another piece, and then another, and Betsy just sat there, purrin' and chewin' and I thought about how when Able was alive he prob'ly woulda scared Betsy to pieces, but here she was, eatin' Daddy's favorite pig and lovin' it just like it was a baby field mouse. And when the meat was all gone from the porkchop, and all that was left was a sticky pig-bone, Betsy licked off all my fingers, all the time soundin' like a big, happy tractor truck.

Momma and Daddy had a big fight that night, and I didn't go back into the house 'till I heard Daddy get into the Fiery Old Red Dump and drive away. I walked in through the screen door and Momma was sittin at the kitchen table, drinkin' a cup of coffee which she didn't hardly ever do.

"Don't forget to wash your hands honey."

"They're clean Momma."

"Wash 'em again sweetheart, I always want my girls to have clean hands."

"Okay Momma."

And then I went and washed my hands in the sink with lots of hot water and lathery soap, washing off the smell of the porkchop and the rough, pink feelin' Betsy left on my fingers with her tongue. Then I kissed Momma goodnight, and I layed in my bed for a long time, listenin' to the crickets and waitin' for Daddy to come home.

I woke up in the mornin' to the warm sun comin' in my bedroom window, and the birds chirpin' and the smell of bacon fryin' in the kitchen. I opened and closed my eyes a few times real slow, and then I yawned and stretched and pulled on my skirt and blouse. Then I picked up my brush and my rubberbands and I walked downstairs to the kitchen where Momma and Sandy were already sittin round the table. And Daddy was settin down a big platter of eggs and bacon right on top of a bunch of pink roses and daisies. And the flower's smelled real good that mornin', and everyone was smilin', and I took some bacon off the platter and put it in the napkin on my lap. And after all the plates were cleared Daddy brushed out my hair and put in my pigtails. And then I kissed him on the cheek and I took that bacon up in the old hayloft. And I sat up there feedin' Betsy, as Daddy drove out to the fields, and Momma did the mornin' dishes.

- Carey Christie '95

# Miller Time

The mahogany floor suffers  
From repeated stamps  
Of beer-bellied grandpas  
Watching a T.V. locked  
On Monday night Boxing.  
They jab their clenched fists  
Through cigar smoke.  
Riley hollers a belch  
Adams blows his nose,  
Dropping his Tom Cat cap  
On a drunken bear skin rug.  
In this rundown basement  
Beer cans and pretzel sticks stuff the ribs  
Of sofa cushions  
Every Monday night.  
But that never matters  
To them, as long as Mrs. Adams  
Doesn't step In front of the set.

— Kerry C.R. Picket '96



— Peggy Ryan '93

He tells me how  
he never got touched  
by the flames, sitting there  
eating lunch, in the truck,  
the other men outside  
trying to outrun  
the explosion.

How he felt  
only the heat wrapped around  
him like a blanket, squeezing,  
him off like a tourniquet,  
searing the keys in his pocket  
to his thigh and so much weight  
he wanted to die.

His watch gripped  
tight tattooing his wrist with time  
and place he would never  
forget— like his first kiss that, too,  
had scorched his lips.

How his face turned  
red, then bubbled in the places  
he couldn't cover, heat burrowing under  
skin, a fever no one could ever cure;  
how he wanted to die like those men running  
outside.

I just stand here as he tells me,  
through bandages wrapped around seventy-  
eight percent of his body, about the new  
truck he'll get from the insurance  
company; and I think,

what a lucky guy.

— Anonymous

Orange pachydermal skins,  
thick with white fibers  
lie scattered on the floor.  
My bare toes wander through  
their oily, pitted textures  
and I lick dried juices from  
my yellow-skinned fingers, pick  
whitish half-moons from  
under my fingernails.

I press the spongy white  
to my lips, cradle it on  
my tongue. As my teeth's  
slow grinding releases  
its bitter oils, my mouth  
savours the passages of  
other similar fruits,  
hand-peeled and quartered,  
shared between us.

In the ceremonies of Kyoto,  
nimble-fingered Geisha carve  
the beauty of the fruit into the  
blossom of its mother, scenting  
tea-house rooms orange in  
afternoon, silent willow-women  
kneeling beyond rice paper walls,  
slight shadows in lantern-glow.

The final crescent, soft and seedless,  
waits, warming in my palm.  
Cautious, my hand closes over it,  
ginger-list pressing dark pulp.  
My nails puncture clear membranes,  
rupture tiny oblong chambers  
of juice. The pale liquid drips into  
the thirsting carpet, quenching  
tribute to momentary ghosts.

New friction against dark yarns,  
my bare heels rub out the stains.

– K. Lynn Rogers '94

Forest lay  
like an acorn  
that lay like  
six inches  
from his nose; like  
all of its  
brothers, who  
lay there rotting  
around on  
the ground, like  
the stick clenched for  
dear life in  
his death-gripped  
hand beneath the  
broad, proud boughs  
of the Oak  
which laid them all  
there, lying  
together,  
just like they were  
supposed to.  
Forest was  
feeding his small,  
greedy pail,  
plopping pod  
persistently  
after pod  
until the  
ground grew bare, but  
his bucket  
remained half-  
empty; when with  
covetous  
eyes he spied  
some seedlings still  
secure, which  
bobbled about  
the Oak's upper  
branches, and  
with one big  
bounce he too hung  
among twigs.

Clambering,  
scrambling, he  
worked his way  
up towards  
the top to where  
the acorns  
grew thick and  
the limbs grew thin;  
just then a  
Wind blew bye,  
so the old Oak  
waved, which forced  
poor, careless  
Forest to step  
back upon  
solid air  
where Winds cannot  
care, clutching  
a lifeless  
limb which would not  
bear the boy.  
Down he dropped,  
clinging to his  
broken branch  
through wood which  
could not break his  
fall, but break  
he surely  
would, across the  
Oak's hard roots,  
ribs jutting  
through the Earth's cold  
breast; yes, a  
break he took,  
that fateful fall,  
from things like  
tree climbing  
and such, for what  
seemed like for-  
ever to  
Forest, who did  
like acorns.

— Craig Bowers '93



# Shelter

"My Daddy won't find me here,"  
he states, monotone in his little boy voice.

The pale face stares up, a distrustful moon  
marred purple on the left temple.

I restrain my hand from smoothing the cowlick,  
from gathering the fragile frame to my heart

And get out the worn wooden blocks:  
"Help me build a castle."

He builds it as high as his thin shoulder,  
fierce concentration on the wise elfin face.

"My Mommy cries alot," he whispers, sending it  
crashing down with sad satisfaction.

Round ravenous eyes plead, defying my anger  
or punishment, as I walk past

the smoking mothers slumped at the dining-room table,  
wearily asking "what now" with their eyes.

"Are you leaving me too" the dead voice asks,  
like wind sighing against my ear.

And I turn to hug the little man, who cringes  
reflexively, remembering the pain in love.

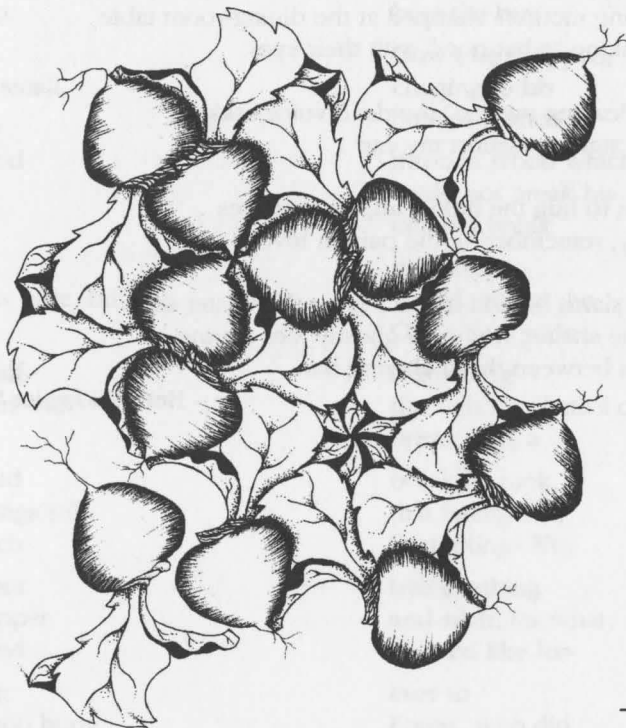
The door slams behind me as I enter the winter sun  
outside the shelter, leaving a ghostly face staring  
back from between the sheltering bars.

– Beth Widmaier '95

# Battleship

A pink sunset at night,  
sailors delight.  
The blue skies overhead  
are expected from the forecast.  
The S.S. Saratoga slices a continuous path  
three hours from a pre-selected destination.  
Ocean swells play as if they would  
eject the boat off the surface.  
Sailors finish duty, checking  
rechecking and cleaning the weapons.  
Their time is now, full alert  
requires incessant concentration.  
The Battleship, their warship, sculpted by perfection  
is ready to react in a seconds notice.  
The siren wails, the sound  
snaps it's crew to attention.  
Final destination is near,  
battle has begun.  
The Commander sends his order,  
"Switch to guns."

— Dave Fox '93



— Peggy Ryan '93

# Revolution

Diana slashes through the asphalt navy night,  
Dragging tide legions from sincerity's seas,  
Dueling the dark shroud with her battery of light,  
To part the purple blood of the blighting blind disease.

Her torch sets fire to the petrified trees.

Ashes forge the Phoenix forest wild and untamed.

The rain-washed ruins are swallowed by the seas.

Life bursts from its cages new and unashamed.

The hunt burns onward through the blanket of cement.

The prey are lies and the penance is sight.

The predator pleads for focus from the Babel government.

The Phoenix paints the smog dome rainbow with its flight.

The locusts scream through bullhorns to help Diana fight.

They institute what the institution maimed.

The harnessed Phoenix is maneuvered like a kite.

The doves of chirping chanters charter black hills left  
unclaimed.

Diana spots the virgin hills beyond the tenement.

Power lines crack one hill like the liberty bell.

It is the boot hill where the burnt out lords of light are sent,

Where catalysts dubbed eclectic find a refuge from the spell.

The half-dead firefly climbs from the screaming locust well.

The drowning idiot bugs are crushed beneath her feet.

They bite her blisters and tug her towards their hell.

She seeks a sanctuary from the screams of her defeat.

They fall in layers, a new blanket of fresh blood.

They break their covenant to the promise land.

At the base of the mount the prophet slips in the red mud,

And feels fulfillment slipping through her hand,

A dinosaur in the crimson quicksand.

– Matt Wanat '95



– Jeannie Wienke '93