

the reflector



the reflector

2008 shippensburg university's
student literary journal

The Reflector. Issue 2008.

The Reflector is the annual undergraduate literary journal financed by the Student Association of Shippensburg University. The Reflector accepts fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and artwork throughout the fall semester, and works are considered for publication based on a blind submissions policy. Submissions are accepted digitally at ReflectorSubmissions@gmail.com. For questions regarding our submissions policy, contact reflect@ship.edu.

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1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the smooth operation of any business and for the protection of its interests.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and procedures for recording transactions. It provides detailed instructions on how to use different types of accounting systems and how to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data.

3. The third part of the document discusses the legal and ethical responsibilities of those who are responsible for recording transactions. It highlights the importance of adhering to applicable laws and regulations and of acting with integrity and honesty in all business dealings.

4. The fourth part of the document provides a summary of the key points discussed in the previous sections. It reiterates the importance of accurate record-keeping and the need for compliance with legal and ethical standards.

5. The fifth part of the document contains a list of references and resources for further information on the topics discussed in the document. It includes books, articles, and other materials that provide additional insights and guidance on the subject.

editor's note

Last year, we celebrated our fiftieth anniversary as Shippensburg University's literary journal. This inspired many of us to look backward—to browse the pages of our journal's literary history. Some of the work was bad, but much of it made me think—not only about the aesthetics of the works, but also the voices that the students brought to the journal.

The Reflector has a long history of social activism written in its pages. I have read the poetry of a black man facing an inevitable tour of duty in Vietnam. I have read the grievances of women facing a degree of sexism that our generation doesn't know. I have read the monologue of a man who argues *for* the chaste spinster. These subjects are not comfortable. These subjects are not safe.

And art is not merely a medium of self-expression; rather, art is an avenue for ideas. We are not merely individuals, writing of our singular perspectives and experiences. What we say has a meaning and an effect on the people around us. We are human beings, and we must talk with one another.

In 2008, the students' works we publish continue to explore these issues of race, gender, and sexuality. Some of their voices are personal. Some of their voices are political. One of the most outspoken pieces is Ashley Kline's digital image, "Hillary Queer."

We publish this piece not as an act of provocation. Rather, we publish this piece to engage with the artist, with the GLBTQA community, with the liberal and conservative student bodies alike, and with you, the reader.

We do not ask you to agree. We ask you to engage with these works critically. This year, our country faces a seminal and potentially historical election. We all have so much to say.

—Danielle Geller

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Year	Population	Area	Notes
1800	100	100	
1810	110	110	
1820	120	120	
1830	130	130	
1840	140	140	
1850	150	150	
1860	160	160	
1870	170	170	
1880	180	180	
1890	190	190	
1900	200	200	
1910	210	210	
1920	220	220	
1930	230	230	
1940	240	240	
1950	250	250	
1960	260	260	
1970	270	270	
1980	280	280	
1990	290	290	
2000	300	300	

She Used the Fruits to Write Her Glass Memoir

Alex Terrell

She used the fruits to write her glass memoir,
And some vegetables all juiced up in brine,
She chopped them up and put them in the jar.

Beetroot, scarlet, like *that* time in the car—
Spasmodic pain – knife edged, her gaits incline,
She used the fruits, to write her glass memoir.

Some extra sugar for her tongue's savour
Her son's red hands from grapes picked from the vine,
She chopped them up and put them in the jar.

She thought of her son then, he was so far,
Those hands that picked the grapes that might ferment to wine,
She used the fruits to write her glass memoir.

Apricots resigned to scores, like the scar
Her marriage left on her, unhealed by time
She chopped them up, and put them in the jar.

She gazed at a strawberry, ageing in jam thick as tar,
Its appearance, blood red, yet benign.
She used the fruits to write her glass memoir,
She chopped them up and put them in the jar.

Ya' at' eeh, I say

Danielle Geller

My grandmother sits wedged between the thick cushions of her navy blue recliner. She rocks it with delicate taps of her toes to the rhythm of her disapproving clucks at mine and my father's glee over Court TV. At our sense of moral superiority—a mark of our white trash heritage.

We watch it in disgust and fascination. We watch it on an old TV set in the small living room. The screen is orange, the pixels warped with age.

“When,” says the judge, “did you know he was not the man for you?” The judge leans over her high desk, and the camera angles in on the female plaintiff—white, blonde, and shrugging with a look of satisfaction that I can't quite comprehend.

And then it happens, perhaps when I am least expecting.

My father says, “It should have been the color of his skin.”

I look between him and the TV screen—between him and the black man, shrugging uncomfortably in the suit that seems too square or too flat or too big. Shrugging under the ridicule of the judge and the audience and, I imagine, my father's flat, white gaze.

And I say, “My skin is the same color as his.”

My father jiggles his feet and hocks something up from his chest into the back of his throat. He swallows it but wipes his forearm against his mouth and says—nearly whines, though, there is more of a snap to his voice, like a child interrupted—he says, “Different genes.”

...

My white family often and conveniently forgets that my sister and

I are anything other than white. That is, until we transgress some unpredictable social more. I have always had a number of theories, whether valid or not. We are Native American, and because we are not black, Hispanic, or Asian, we are somehow more forgivable. In many ways, Native Americans have been removed slowly but effectively from social consciousness. How many of us are even left, anyway? And aren't most of us more white than anything.

True, despite my complexion, high cheek bones, and census number, I cringe to call myself Navajo—or even worse, Diné.

. . .

When I am sixteen and responsible for paying my own car insurance, I spend my weekends working morning and lunch at a local fast food restaurant. At first, I resent the hours. The regulars win my heart. They are my secret.

One man orders biscuits 'n' gravy and a senior coffee at a senior discount—every Sunday morning. He wants one fork, one knife, and one strawberry jam. Ours is a routine that requires diligence and precision on my part. One manager, Cindy, insists that he can't have a senior coffee *and* a senior discount. I give him both.

One woman insists on extra cheese *and* onions on her bacon and egg biscuit. She inspires my opt for extra bacon.

One man carries his Sunday breakfast money in an old Hershey's Kiss bag. The plastic is taking on an entirely gray appearance as the logo slowly wears away. He insists on tipping me even though I am not allowed to accept his tips. He tosses his dimes onto the counter with a wicked sort of glee. I decline his bait. And decline.

One Sunday, another regular approaches the counter and whispers, "Miss, I'm sorry. There's. Someone smeared his excrement on the men's bathroom stall. I'm sorry to tell you." I'm sure it's him.

But I imagine that I have endeared myself to them. I linger in the dining room as I wipe down the tables and the counters and retrieve trays for the kitchen. They politely ask me about school, and they

share short stories of their own families. And one man tells me of mine.

He tells me a story that I can scarcely remember now, though I know the gist of it. Was he military, or did he travel? He tells me about how he falls in love with a Navajo woman, and he lives with her in Arizona—surrounded by her family—for many years. He tells me about how she falls sick and passes away, and he returns to his native Pennsylvania.

He asks me how much I know. I say, very little. He asks me if I know any Navajo. I say no. He says, Ya' at' eeh. He says, hello.

. . .

My mother leaves me only with a hastily sketched family tree full of anglicized names like Preston and Edison and Dorothy.

Years later, a friend asks me seriously if we have secret Native American names.

. . .

When I am four and my sister is two, my mother and father pack us into the car and drive us to the reservation in Window Rock, Arizona to register us with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and to meet my mother's family.

I remember the desert as I remember a dream. I remember my Indian grandmother as she sits with me in a dark, TV-lit room, and I cry for my father, who is in jail, and my mother, who is at a bar. I believe that I understand this even as a child, when neither a jail nor a bar were too distant for my imagination. I remember my uncles as they terrify me; they are hideous, masked men who trap me on a bunk bed in a dusky, yellow bedroom.

Much later, my real grandmother, my white grandmother, tells me that I hated the reservation. She tells me that when I came home, I sat in the kitchen of her trailer and cried. I cried because my Indian

grandmother locked me in a closet to punish me. She tells me this is why I cannot sleep with my closet door open. I had thought that I had come up with that irrational fear all on my own.

My father agrees. He tells me that for Thanksgiving, they cooked a giant turkey but left it on the table. For days, they would pick pieces of meat off the turkey as they walked through the kitchen. He wouldn't let me eat it. I think of my own tendency to leave chicken on my desk for hours before I eat it, when the meat is dry and browned by the air. I had thought that I had come up with that quirk all on my own.

I remember the rusty shells of cars along the fence in the backyard. I remember sitting on the hood of a car with a windshield wiper in my hand and a long, deep cut on my inner thigh.

. . .

My mother says I belong to four blood clans. She writes them down for me, though the fourth is a question mark. She writes, Mexican Clan, Bitter Salt Water Clan, and Navajo Clan.

She tells me, don't ever go back to the reservation. The only way to get off the reservation is to work for the government or marry off. She tells me, don't ever tell a Navajo boy your blood clans first. If he wants in your pants, he'll lie. He has to tell you first because it's incest to have sex with a boy who's in one of your four blood clans.

. . .

My sister Eileen, two years younger than me, remembers nothing of Arizona or of our mother or of our half-begot heritage, so she likes to make things up as she goes. Over MySpace she meets a half-Navajo boy who happens to live a street over, and she tells me, "We were meant to be together."

Imagine, three little Indians in Yoe, Pennsylvania, with its population of 1,022 people, approximately 2,014 miles from Window Rock, Arizona. I understand the weight of the coincidence, and my

arguments sound weak before I even make them.

Two doors down lived a Hopi Indian named Noe and his two young sons. I met him in the snow. I was wearing my grandmother's black felt hat with thin strips of fabric that wrapped around my neck, and I was wearing my long, black coat. He helped me shovel the snow from around my grandmother's car.

He said to me, "I thought to myself, that is a Navajo woman." He invited me to his house to watch a movie. He took me on a short tour, though the apartment was exactly like mine—two steps down the hallway to his sons' room, cluttered with dirty clothes and plastic toys, and his room, a room with dark masks on the walls and a large, four poster bed.

He said, "I always wish I had an Indian mom for my sons." When we sat down to watch the movie, he said, "You don't have to sit so far away."

A year later, I sat at my kitchen table with two FBI agents, and the man showed my grandmother and me naked pictures of two neighborhood girls. I told him their names. He told me Noe was arrested in Texas for smuggling Mexicans across the border in his semi-truck, and he had numerous accounts of pedophilia against his name.

His apartment was quietly emptied by his mother, and his two boys moved in with her.

Eileen stands in my doorway and starts giggling. She says, "Don't be mad, Danielle, but we fucked on your bed."

...

Years later, I write a paper for an anthropology course on contemporary conflict in land use with traditional Navajo religious beliefs and practices. It is called, "A Reconciliation of Worlds."

I piece together an interview, which I date November 23, 2007, from conversations that I have had with my mother over the years. I search the internet to fill in the gaps, but I cannot find the Navajo Clan in the list of recognized blood clans.

I unearth an old e-mail that she had sent me when I was in high school. I had asked her what she remembered of the reservation. Could she teach me Navajo? I wanted to know.

She said she couldn't remember much Navajo. She hadn't spoken it since she was a girl. She had lived in south Florida for too long. She said, Ya' at' eeh. She said, hello.

. . .

When I am eighteen, I begin collecting piercings without my grandmother's consent; she no longer has to sign the consent form. As a nineteenth birthday present to myself, I have my tongue pierced. When I come home, my grandmother storms into the kitchen and slams dishes in the sink and pots in the cupboard.

"You don't have to be mad at me about it," I say. I stand in the kitchen and pour myself a glass of water from the faucet. My tongue is thick and swollen in my mouth. The kitchen is hot, and I can taste blood as I quietly sip the water.

"I don't know if I'm mad or just disappointed," she says, and I can hear tears in her throat. "I don't know what to think, and I can't stand facing Eileen with you having it done."

I feel sick. And guilty. As if I have done something wrong. Four hours in the car loom ahead. Eileen is in corrective boot camp on South Mountain, and we are scheduled to visit with her. My loyalty lies with my sister.

My grandmother retreats to her recliner. "It must be the Indian in you two," she says, and she stares at the street through her muddy, watery eyes.

. . .

I am in a car in the dark. I can feel the ground rolling underneath me as the car curves around the back roads of Dillsburg, Pennsylvania. The night is solid. There is only music and dark sky.

My boyfriend is a biology major who talks about taking a road trip with me to the South West, though the summer is nearly over. He wants me to acquire a peyote plant for him—not to smoke, the ecologist in him wants it. A curiosity.

I'm not a member of the Native American church, I explain. And don't plan to be.

"Danielle," his friend says, "make me an official Navajo, for real, so I can join it."

The roads are empty. The car cuts across the yellow lane to account for speed as it hits another curve in the road. "Sure," I say. "Say something in Navajo for me."

He says, Ya' at' eeh. He says, hello.

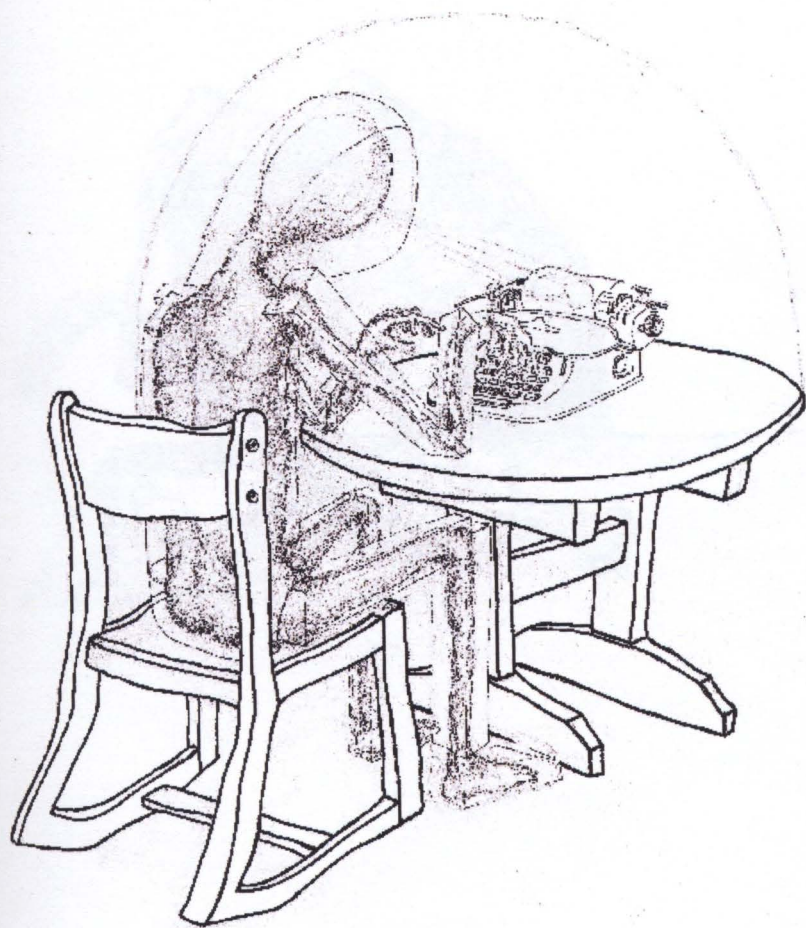
. . .

Months later, my father sends me an e-mail when he is drunk with the subject line, skin color. He says, is the same as yours. sorry sorry michael your dad.

Type ink on paper 14" x 11"

Gordon Rabut

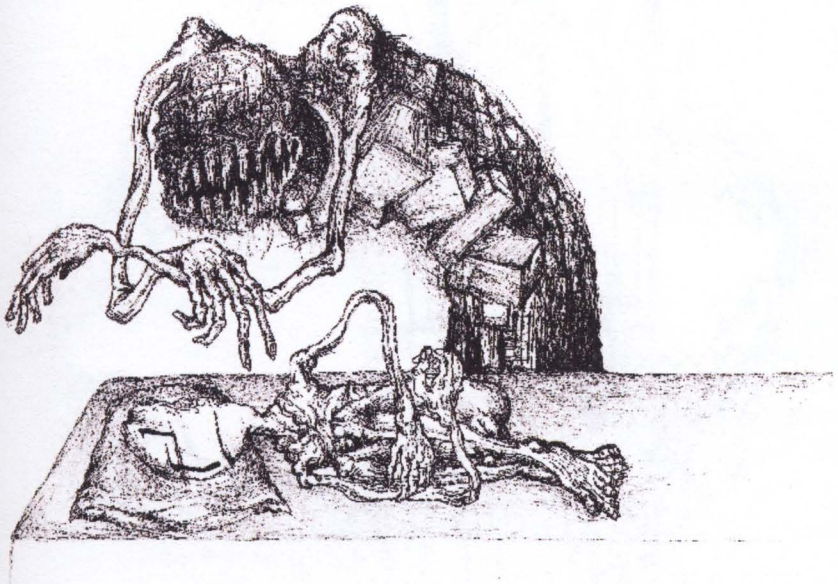
Right hand of the artist
Gordon Ford



Night Terrors ink on paper 11" x 14"

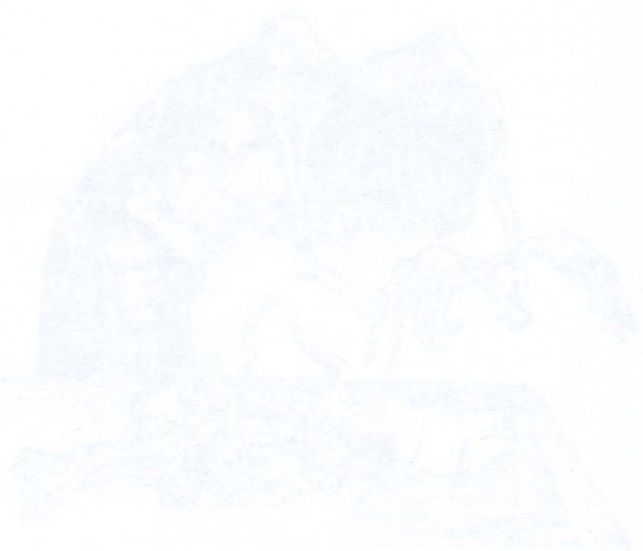
Gordon Rabut





Corporation ink on paper 14" x 11"

Gordon Rabut





Condition of ...
...



Stillborn
Crystal Stumbaugh

a plum split open red and wet
your mouth
a craving for fruit

lips devouring lips
your mouth
red and wet and open tastes
not sweet not bitter
isn't the slippery flesh or the juice
but the pit
dry withered hollow

Persephone

Crystal Stumbaugh

I stroke the blushed breast
of the pomegranate—
the flowered end is a nipple;
I cut it off.
The body of the fruit:
halved, then quartered.

I peel the papery veils
from the red seeds,
pluck them from the rind.
I am a marauder,
leaving the honeycombed
catacomb of the rind empty.

One seed between my teeth; the juice spurts.

A second seed for
the destruction of light.

A third for reddening leaves,
brittle lilies, frozen ground.
Mother ripping wheat from the earth.

A fourth for shadows
who don't know they're dead,
who require offerings of blood
to feel the coldness of longing.

A fifth for the five rivers
that converge in a swamp
in the center of the underworld,
for the fiery Phlegethon
boiling souls in its red water.

A sixth for the three headed dog
who guards the dead
from the living and their moaning;
who guards the living
from the dead, their hollow eyes
their gaping, coin filled mouths.

The seventh is a grenade
placed under my tongue,
waiting to be detonated
in the wake
of the little deaths before it;
this one is for my hand
cupping my own naked breasts.

Omniscient mild steel, limestone, & copper sculpture

Scott Osiol



As smoke from the wood and into the air, smoke clouds formed. Ryan

Glass Cages

Connie Moonen

Icy clear, bluish-silver rock, highball, and cocktail glasses lined the front of the wooden shelves at the back of the bar. Soap-streaked and cracked glasses were stacked behind them. Frosty glass mugs dripped condensation into the grooves of the wooden counter above the glass-doored refrigerator. Dust collected on the red and white wine glasses that rested on the upper shelves.

In October I saw spiders. I couldn't kill them. They were too alive. If you stepped on them or popped them between your fingers with linen napkins they made too much noise.

On nights I tended bar, if I saw a spider, I would grab a glass and slam it over him. Some nights, sitting around the bar would be several trapped spiders pawing at the sides of their clear cages. Under a glass, the spiders were always in my view. They couldn't scare me. Sometimes I trapped what I thought were spiders but what turned out to be pieces of dust that moved along the floor, or burnt and dried pieces of meat that had not been cleared off of the bar from customers.

In October, I always saw the most spiders. The biggest one I ever saw was on a Tuesday night, and I caught it without much of an audience. My customer sat alone, staring right through the TV that announced the hockey team's stats. The dark circles under his blue eyes stood out in the dim light from the broken Michelob sign that read "Low Beer" instead of "Low Carb Light Beer."

"Good game today, huh?" I asked.

"What? Yeah. Good game," he said as he rubbed his eyes with blackened hands. He wore a silver wedding band, workman's jeans and a tee-shirt that said Leeman's Plumbing.

I was going to ask him how he liked the team this year, when I noticed some movement to my right on the bar counter. I slammed a frosty cold beer mug on top of a spider that was running along the sticky surface. The cold mug cracked. Trapped in an arctic globe, the spider remained still. I couldn't get a good look at him, the mug was too cloudy. My customer didn't even look up. He just twirled his ring around his finger and kept staring through the TV.

"What can I get you?"

"Blue Moon. Hot wings. Fries."

I handed him his beer with an orange slice shoved halfway down the neck and a frosted glass mug. He poured the Blue Moon into the glass. The orange sank to the bottom as the foam rose to the rim then started to fall back down, leaving white froth on the cold sides.

The beer mug over my spider was warm and clear now, and I put my eyes close to the glass. I saw his eyes. They were bluish-black through the mug. Hairy black legs and a plump, round body almost completely filled the glass cage. His legs moved simultaneously, in place. I wondered if it was a pregnant spider, or if it already had thousands of little spiders living somewhere beneath the counter or bar stools. I pulled out a piece of paper and wrote: "Topher don't touch yet!" He was on his break, but just in case.

I always told Topher about my spiders. If he wasn't working and I caught spiders, I left them overnight under glasses around the bar. Ron would pick up the glasses in the dark, on his way out of the bar, unknowingly freeing the creatures. If Topher was there, he would take a piece of paper and slide it under the glass, lifting the spider off of wherever I had captured it. Then he would wash it down the sink in the back.

Dinner service had started at 4:00 and lasted until 9:00. When I went back to the kitchen, it was 8:30, and Ryan was cooking what he had hoped was his last meal of the night. Liquid heat in yellow and orange leapt up from the meat, licking it and quickly sucking the color from the steak, turning it black and hard. As the orange and red peeled away from the meat and into the air, smoke clouds formed. Ryan

rushed over and covered the pan with another frying pan, trapping the flames. He turned the blue stove flame down. I handed him my customer's order. His shoulders slouched, and he pulled his stained white Yankees cap lower over his eyes.

"Keona, Keona. What are you doing to me?"

"Sorry Ryan. Last minute customer. He's alone."

When I took the order back out to my customer, he was cradling his empty beer, still looking at the TV.

"You need another one?" I asked him.

"Yeah."

"Long day at work?" I said, trying to get him to talk.

"Not long enough."

It was boring on those autumn weeknights, especially since Deandra had quit. Often, I would read the paper from front to back. That day's headline read: "Man Dies Trapped in Flames." Some guy had died inside a burning apartment. His roommates made it out safe, convinced that he was right behind them.

Sometimes I'd look for jobs in the paper and plan how I would walk out of here, feeling free, finally telling Ron what I thought of him. When there were few customers in the bar I often thought how easy it would be to just slip out, unnoticed, but I couldn't. I needed the money. High school was over and the man of my dreams hadn't fallen into my lap. He'd dated my best friend, changed her and dumped her.

I started to roll some silverware. I wrapped tight and stiff linens around mismatched and water-stained forks and knives, as I kept one eye on my spider and the other on my customer's dwindling beer. His phone rang, and he hesitated as he looked at the number.

"No, I had a few extra jobs to do. I'll call you when I'm on my way home. Well tell them I said goodnight then. Don't bother. I grabbed a bite to eat at work. I don't know. What does it matter? Someone ordered pizza. I said I'll call you. I got a lot of work to do. Well, don't wait up. Ok. Yeah. Bye." He slammed his Razor shut, rubbed his eyes, and drowned his french fries in ketchup.

It was 9:00, and the TV program changed to local news. There

were more details now about the apartment fire. The twenty-five year old hadn't actually lived in the apartment. He had been having some problems at home and was crashing with some buddies when an electrical fire had trapped him inside. My customer tossed some bills on the table, stuck his hands in the pockets of his brown Carhartt, and headed out of the bar staring at the ground. I gathered up his bills and cashed him out.

The blue flames in the kitchen were out. The bar was empty, only the sound of the TV filled it. My spider was motionless. He hadn't even tried to get out. I lifted the glass mug. He remained still, legs curled inward.

Xray

Staley Bowers



B
O

Butterflies

Crystal Stumbaugh

Forever I shall be a stranger to myself.

—ALBERT CAMUS

The CT scan
of an Alzheimer's patient's brain
reveals a butterfly
whose terrible wings
beat away recognition, memory, self.

In a museum
of medical oddities
there are sections of brains
on display beside
conjoined fetuses in jars,
a colon as large as a dog,
the fractured skulls of criminals.
Some of these sections
look like faces.

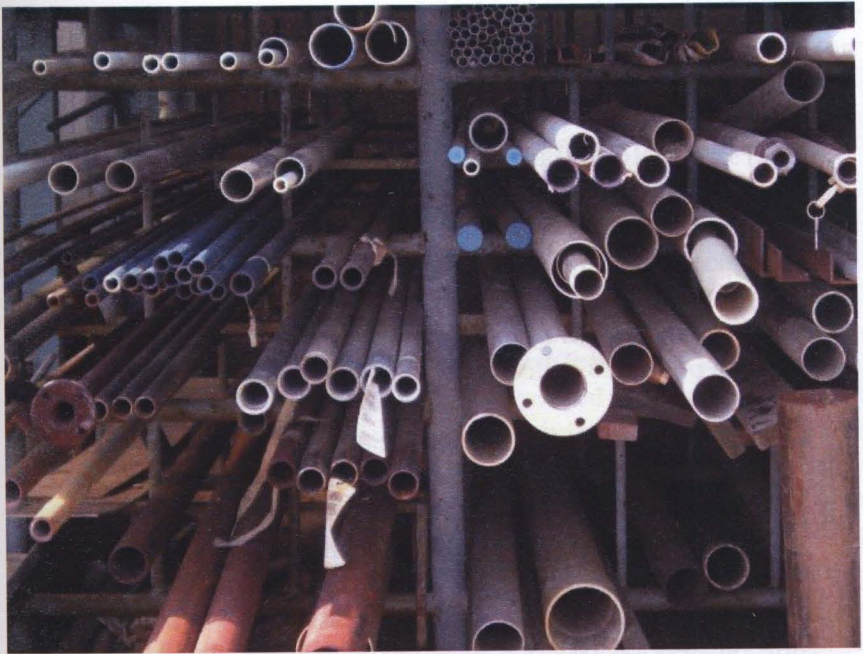
I wonder what the scan
of my brain looks like,
what face behind my face:
a grin or a grimace?

In what shape
is the damage of my first kiss?

How are the bruises
from the climbing of trees recorded?
Do the electrical storms
in the messages between neurons
look like Pollock paintings?
What caterpillars are nibbling
at the two bloody fists in my head?
The black fuzzy ones
who gather on country roads
and curl themselves into balls
to prophesize harsh winters?

Pipes digital photograph

Jon Harahan



Portrait of a Father

Megan Straley

When Jimmy Kelso was four, he kicked a soccer ball in the house and shattered his mother's heirloom vase. His dad was there to buy one just like it at the flea market and replace it before his mother returned from work.

When Jimmy Kelso was eight, he stole a handful of the cake his mother had just finished decorating for the Willis wedding. His dad was there to add extra icing to that spot and smooth out the decorations to make it look as if nothing had happened.

When Jimmy Kelso was twelve, he rode his bike through his mother's prized petunias right before the big County Fair. His dad was there to buy some potted replacements from the greenhouse a few blocks away.

When Jimmy Kelso was fourteen, he developed his first crush on a girl, Mary O'Brien, from down the street. His dad was there to give him advice on how to woo her and make her smile.

When Jimmy Kelso was seventeen, his dad died.

And when he was eighteen, he drove his car into a tree because he missed his dad and his mother was, quite frankly, driving him crazy.

Unfortunately for Jimmy Kelso, the tree was less than lethal, and he suffered only a sprained ankle and a broken middle finger, which didn't result from the crash itself but from pounding his fist against the steering wheel in anger and frustration.

The day his finger healed, he boarded a plane and flew to Denver, Colorado.

As the plane glided, undulating a few miles above the earth, Jimmy Kelso decided that, from then on, he would be called James. He also

decided that, even though everything below him was unknown, he would fear none of it.

The man to his right held a book, opened to page 226, even though he was sleeping. The book was about an astronaut—Benjamin Reynolds or something like that—and James wondered how there could be over three hundred pages of things to say about a man that most people had never even heard of.

He wondered why that astronaut had a book written about him. What made him so special that he should be forever remembered on paper? James thought about his dad, about how he was a great role model and a great father. Every afternoon, he would help James with his homework and celebrate the completion of worksheets and type-written papers by going outside and playing catch, or kicking a soccer ball or throwing a football. They were a team that would play any sport they could together. They would talk about everything from Jimmy's love for pizza and chocolate pudding to Jimmy's love for Mary O'Brien. They would talk about his mother's long days at work as a nurse and her weekends spent at her part-time job as a bakery chef. They would talk about what Jimmy wanted to be when he grew up—*just like you, Dad* was his constant response—but they would never talk about his dad's work. That was OK though, because Jimmy knew it was something really cool, like a police informant or FBI agent or something really awesome, and he only worked under cover of night so that he would be harder to identify if someone should see him.

Five years later, when James Kelso was nearing his mid-twenties, he looked nearly double his age. He sat in his apartment alone, devastated by the news that his mother had told him when he called her to say he was never going back to Pennsylvania. He explained to his mother that his dad had been his hero; that his mother had never spent enough time with him, because she was always working; and that this tortured him as a child and caused him to resent her. She explained to him that his father was, in fact, responsible for none of the income in the family. Really, he was never a kind-hearted, full-time dad, but an alcoholic every night who would sneak away with his wife's hard-earned money

and get thrown out of the bars when they closed early each morning. Then he would come home and shower downstairs, where Jimmy couldn't hear him through his perfect sleep, and climb into his bed with his wife, creating the perfect image of the perfect married couple, before waking to become the perfect father.

James decided he would never again speak to his mother.

She had some kind of nerve, tarnishing his father's name that way. How could she say those terrible things about the man who checked James' spelling and punctuation and arithmetic every afternoon? He had devoted his life to his son, and now this workaholic woman was trying to take the memories of him from James to try to win his love, or at least his respect. But he would give her neither.

It was ten years later, after James had revived a youthful and energetic appearance, when the musical he wrote debuted in Denver. It was a show about his father: how James remembered him and how his mother had described him. It was a show with one man. That was it. One man controlled the lights, one man played the piano as that same one man sang. That one man sat behind either the piano or an easel, facing the audience but partially hidden by a canvas on the easel, and he painted as he spoke.

As the man spoke of the father's will to help the son, he splashed yellow onto the canvas.

As he spoke of the father's apparent alcoholism, he splashed red onto the canvas.

When he spoke about the father's sneaking around, of his stealing money for his alcoholism, green specks flew around the canvas and fell to the stage floor.

When the man spoke about the father's love for the son, he splashed blue onto the canvas.

When the man spoke about the anger the son felt about the father's death, he took a tube of black paint, stood, kicked his stool away from him, and squirted the thick black paint in wild streaks across the canvas.

The audience gasped every night as the man threw the canvas to the

floor and kicked the easel away and fell to the floor wailing and tearing at the canvas with his black coated paintbrush. The audience would understand that this was unscripted and authentic, so applause at its beauty and brilliance would be inappropriate.

Then the man would lower himself once more and, with a paintbrush dipped in white, would add only a few more delicate strokes to the painting. Then he would retrieve the easel and set it up so it would face the audience. He would bend and pick up his canvas and rest it on the easel for the audience to see, and he would walk away.

The audience would be left with an empty stage, except for a piano, an overturned stool, and that easel with that colorful canvas on it: that colorful canvas that contained not wild streaks of blue or red or black or green or white, but instead an intricate portrait of a man that could only be the father of the show's one man.

James Kelso, Jr. was that man. And after reading the first reviews of his show, he called his mother back home in Denver, Pennsylvania. She complained that he left home and he argued that, in fact, he hadn't left, that he would always live in Denver, and he invited her to come see his show. She declined the invitation, wondering why James would paint such a beautiful portrait of his father when she had been the one to keep the family living in their two-story home, the one to keep food on the table and water and electricity running, the one to make sure they could survive like a regular family.

James Kelso replied that if Benjamin Reynolds could have a three hundred-something page book written about him, then surely James Kelso, Sr. could have something done in his memory. When his mother asked who the hell Benjamin Reynolds was, James told her she would never understand, then hung up the phone and gazed around his apartment, smiling back at the many colorfully painted portraits of his father that watched him from his walls.

Yes, if Benjamin Reynolds could have a book, then surely James' dad could have a show. James' dad, drunk, winking and smiling, agreed.

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the success of any business and for the protection of the interests of all parties involved. The document then outlines the various methods and procedures for recording transactions, including the use of journals, ledgers, and other accounting systems. It also discusses the importance of regular audits and the role of the auditor in ensuring the accuracy and integrity of the financial records. The document concludes by reiterating the importance of transparency and accountability in all financial dealings.

The Question

Desiree St. Duran

A headache. The pounding between my eyes. The rhythmic pounding. Drum. Drum. Drum. It spreads. My neighbor hears it. Complaints of noise. Noise. I don't hear because of the pounding. A twang is added. Yet more complaints of noise. A plucking twang of a sibling. Now I hear the noise. That twang with the drumming and the pounding. The continuous drumming and twanging and now the belting. Ascending and ascending and ascending. An addition of wailing and barking. All congealing and distorting the pounding. More twanging with buzzing and zipping and puffing. The sawing against the pounding. Rising to an acute whimsical whistle. End the drumming and twanging and belting and wailing and barking and buzzing and zipping and puffing and sawing. And the pounding.

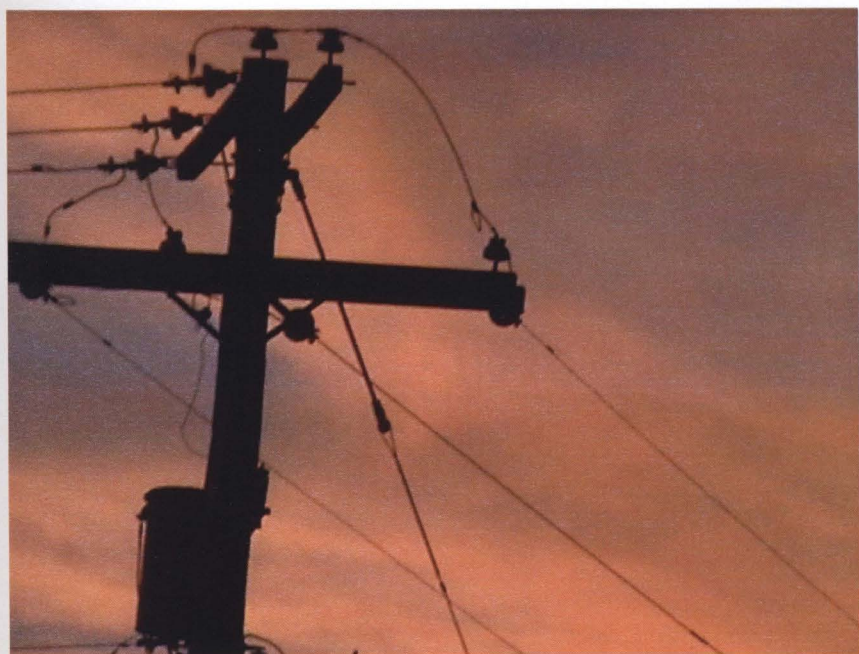
Powerlines digital photograph

Dan Bennett

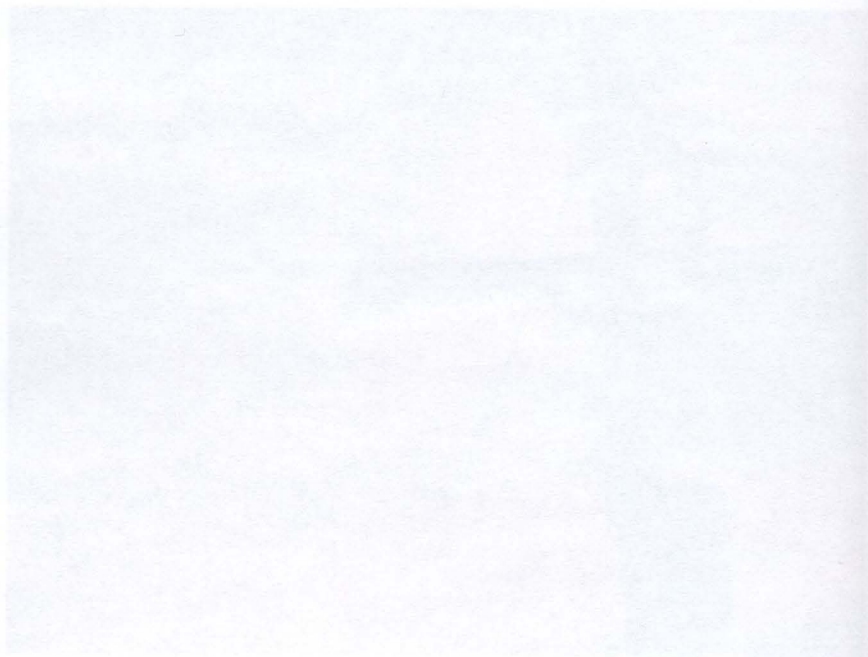
The Question
Genre & Form

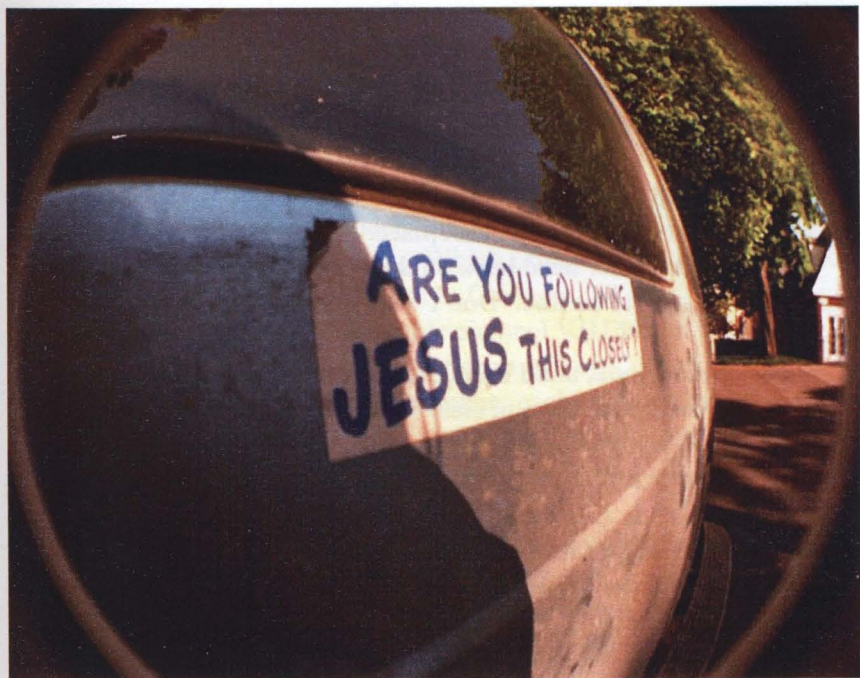
A landscape. The sun is low in the sky. The light is
golden. The power lines stretch across the horizon.
The lines are dark against the bright sky. The
ground is a mix of brown and green. The trees are
scattered across the landscape. The sky is a pale
blue. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

Following Issues - Journal of
Katy Horne



Following Jesus fisheye lens photograph
Katey Boeree





Pop Cultural Pursuit

Laura Martinelli

“Mom.” My mom opened her eyes and turned her head to look at me. “Can I just say something?” I asked.

She sighed. “What is it now?”

“I just want to remind you—again—that this was *your* idea.”

“I know.”

“So if anything were to happen, I just want you to realize that you’re the one who put us here in the first place.”

My mom rested her head back on the airplane seat, sighing, “Laura, I know. It’s going to be fine. Don’t worry so much about it—”

“But—”

She shot me a look, and I immediately shut up and looked out the window. I would have been in class right now—instead, I was on my way out to Chicago because of my mom’s idea. My mom’s *insane* idea. I looked over at the other seat at the end of our row—my dad was already asleep. He was all for this. Me? Not so much.

My stomach was churning, either from the plane lifting off or my nerves. *I got dragged into this*, I kept thinking, gripping my armrests, *This was her idea*.

In five hours, we were due in a Chicago hotel in front of representatives from VH1 and who-knew how many other people who had come up with the same idea as my parents: hell or high water, we were going to parade around our useless knowledge of pop culture for the viewing public.

...

My family is the sort of people you want on your Trivial Pursuit team. I'm the person that DVD extras and CD liner notes are made for—I like knowing what went into something. I'm the one who has Internet Movie Database bookmarked on top of my web browser.

And when it comes to my family, pop culture-wise, as my mom would say, "We are on top of it, baby." Give us a category, and at least one of us will know something about it. We quote TV shows and movies incessantly, always catching up with one reference or another. We read magazines like *Entertainment Weekly* and books with titles like "The 500 Greatest Moments in Movies/Music." For two years, we made it a point to watch all of the Best Picture Oscar winners *and* the American Film Institute's "100 Greatest Movies."

Family time usually ends up with us watching some form of TV. We like game shows, particularly for the chance to yell out answers at home. (*Jeopardy!* is always fun.) Which brings me to the main reason my parents and I were heading out to Chicago.

In the summer of 2006, the cable channel VH1 began running a game show they called "The World Series of Pop Culture." Simple idea—take sixteen teams (three members each) and pit them against each other on general pop culture knowledge; winner take all. Some categories were easy, others hard; it really depended on a team's knowledge.

Due to my part-time job, I couldn't watch a lot of the episodes. My parents, however, were hooked. As that first season went on, my mom began to talk to people—people who told her that we should be on that show. "We would do great!" my mom would say.

I would roll my eyes. "Yeah. Like we'll go out for it." My parents routinely get crazy ideas. It's even crazier when they finally decide to actually act on them.

...

We never brought up the show again, all of us going on with our normal lives. I came back to school, immediately immersing myself.

I had other things to worry about, like getting through the rest of the semester.

It was one seemingly normal day in November when I got the email. I was just checking up on my messages, and I saw that my mom has emailed me—with no subject line. I guessed that she was emailing me for one of two things: a. to ask me if I'd made plans to come home with a relative for Thanksgiving or b. to send me a humorous email.

I opened it up and found something different.

"I've signed us up under the 'Smartinellis'— Chicago from Feb. 2-4. Let's get in shape!"

I read the email again and did the reasonable thing—called my mother. "Smartinellis?" I said as she picked up. "*That's the best you can come up with?*"

"Well," she said, "People at work thought it was clever."

I hid my head in my free hand. "Please tell me you're not serious about going out for this."

"Why not? It'll be fun!"

I groaned.

About a week later, I got another call from my mom. "We have to do those applications tonight!" she yelled as I picked up.

"The applications for the show?"

"Yes! The VH1 people called me to see if we had gotten the email." She sounded way too excited about the whole thing, even over the phone.

"Wait, *they* called *you*?" I asked.

"Oh, yeah! We are *so* in!"

I smacked my forehead and hung up. The show's people had called my mom, which meant that they were probably interested in us. This was not good.

My mom sent me the application immediately, and I got down to answering the questions, each one giving me more to worry about.

Occupation: Starving student.

Relationship to teammates: They're my parents.

What would you do if you won the grand prize of \$250,000?: Pay

off my last year of school?

What pop culture icon do you identify with?: Lisa Simpson.

And so on and so forth.

“Honestly, Laura,” my mom said, calling me to confirm that she had gotten my filled application, “we’re trying to get on the show. Could you make yourself sound any more boring?”

“I don’t know, Mom.”

. . .

The winter break before the audition consisted of two things for me—my part-time job, and my parents’ nightly “training sessions. They brought up our old board games, and we went through them, night after night.

It was all part of their grand scheme. Go to Chicago, take the quiz, wow the producers with our pop-culture savvy and get on the show. We made formal announcements of our participation at Christmas dinners and New Year’s Eve parties. Everyone we knew was excited for our success.

On the other hand, I was not looking forward to potentially going on camera. The fact that the producers had contacted us didn’t exactly lift my spirits. For all I knew, we were a shoo-in because of our family dynamic—a married couple and their oldest child. Most other family teams were mostly made up of siblings; we were bringing something “new.”

The Chicago audition date kept getting closer. After weeks of pestering my mom, we finally made reservations for our flight and hotel. We were leaving on February 2nd, with only two hours to get ready for the meeting.

The producer meeting, as far as we knew, was going to consist of us taking a pop culture quiz and then an interview while our scores were being compiled. The interview, my parents figured, was going to be our ticket on the show. My mom would tell me, “I’m going to call you ‘Charles’ until someone asks about it, so I can say, ‘Well, she’s

‘Charles in Charge!’” The test would be easy for me to get through; an interview, however, would hurt.

I came home after a long day of classes and a four-hour trip from school. We left for Chicago the next day—it was cold and snowy in Pittsburgh. Two gut-wrenching hours later, we landed at Chicago National Airport. “We’ve got three hours to get to our hotel,” my mom said as we walked out of the terminal, “check-in, get changed and then head over to the place where they’re holding the auditions. Should take us about ten minutes to walk from the subway to our hotel.”

After finally warming up and changing into our matching shirts, we grabbed a cab over to the hotel where the auditions were taking place. Unlike the House of Blues where we were staying—rock ‘n’ roll, garish, big—the Hyatt was more trendy, more upscale, black and silver everywhere. We went into the bar, where at least thirty other teams were waiting as well.

None of the teams attempted socializing with each other as we waited; everyone kept to their own groups. I could feel a sense of competitiveness in the air—hey, we all wanted to win—but nothing mean-spirited. No nasty looks, no snide remarks; just waiting until someone came down and told us we could all come up. My parents and I didn’t say that much to each other either, except commenting on other teams names and shirt choices. “There’s like three teams here who are from ‘Back to the Future.’ There’s one—the people who are dressed up like Marty McFly.” (The team with puffy vests and red baseball caps.)

“Heh, there’s a team called ‘Three Men and a Little Lazy.’ The ones in the bathrobes.”

“There’s the ‘Knights Who Say Ni.’”

“They’ve got T-shirts on, though.”

“‘I’m With Stupid?’ That’s so original.”

“And, what, ‘Smartinellis’ is?”

At five o’clock, we were called up to the third floor—by we, I mean everyone who had been waiting downstairs. After cramming through the elevators and narrow stairwells of the hotel, all ninety of us were put into a conference room, where producers and interns were

waiting for us, manila envelopes and pencils in hand. “Would all team members please sit in front of one another! Do not open your envelope until we have given instructions! Please do not sit with your other teammates!”

We headed towards the middle of the room, with me sitting in front of my parents. I was easily the youngest person there, and I felt the knot in my stomach—which I had since getting on the plane—grow bigger. I ran my fingers over the crisp envelope, wanting to just open it and get this over with.

“Welcome, everyone.” One of the producers had started to talk, and everyone’s attention went to the front of the room. “On behalf of VH1 and *Entertainment Weekly*, I’d like to invite you to the first round of the World Series of Pop Culture.” Some people began to clap and cheer at this. The producer just went on, “In a few moments, we’re going to begin the test. You have a half-hour to answer fifty questions. Afterwards, we’ll tally up the scores and announce the teams who will be moving on. That team will be interviewed, and then compete with the other qualifying teams tomorrow in a mock competition.” So this wasn’t the only audition. I shot a look behind my shoulder at my mom, who shrugged at me.

After a few rules—no cheating, and the like—we finally opened the envelopes, taking out the packet of questions and the attached answer sheet. I filled out my name and team name at the top of the answer sheet and then looked at the blank spaces. Fifty fill-in questions. *It’s just like another test*, I reminded myself, *only this time you might actually know everything*.

“Everyone ready?” The producer held up a stopwatch. “Then, go!”

I grabbed my pencil and began scanning the list of questions in front of me. *What animal was Disney’s Robin Hood—oh, that’s easy, he was a fox. Lance Bass’s boyfriend won...he was the ‘Amazing Race’ guy? Yeah... Patrick Dempsey and Eric Dane’s characters’ nicknames, please—The club name on ‘The O.C.’? The Bronze? No, that’s on ‘Buffy.’ Crap. Next one...Crap. CRAP! I don’t know that one either!*

Down the sheet of paper, I filled out questions as best as I could.

'Kids, Incorporated. Shermer. St. Elsewhere. Wisconsin.' The ones I couldn't remember or didn't know, I skipped over, coming back to them again and again. I only looked up from the sheet once or twice to get a sense of how everyone else was doing. I could do this.

"Aaand time's up!" Everyone broke out of their concentration and put their pencils down. "We'll be around to collect your tests and will have your scores in a little while." Two interns swept up and down the aisles, grabbing our papers. I got out of my seat and went over to my mom. "Well," she said, "How did you do?"

"I'm regretting the fact that I never watched 'The O.C.' You?"

"I thought you would get that one!" My mom also got up from her seat, turning around to my dad. "Well? And you?"

My dad was looking down at the table. "Laura, did you skip any?"

"Me? Yeah, like thirteen questions."

"I hope that you're the one to get us on there," he said, disappointed, "I didn't get any of them." My mom and I looked at each other. "I skipped half of the test," my dad explained.

The wait to get into the conference room was only the set-up for the even longer, more nerve-wracking wait to get our results. There was a lot more talking, but there was still the mixed sense of "We failed/ We owned this test!" from all of the teams. After the longest twenty minutes, the producers finally came back in. "Out of thirty teams, we have the three highest scores!" they said. Three teams out of thirty—and none of the names called were even close to "Smartinelli."

Our spirit now trampled on by our inferior pop culture knowledge, we headed back to our hotel. No one said anything about the test until we got back to our hotel room, when my dad dejectedly said, "I failed us. It was my fault."

"Dad, I skipped a bunch," I said, trying to shoulder the blame, "Probably got a lot wrong too."

"No." He sat down on the edge of his bed. "I didn't know as much as I should have. I dragged you down."

I looked over at my mom, who said, "Stop being a party-pooper. Come on, we'll go out to eat."

. . .

We left Chicago the next day, still downtrodden by our failure. It was over. We came, we saw, we failed miserably. All that was left now was to trudge home to face the expectations of our friends and relatives.

After we landed back in Pittsburgh, we went out to a local sandwich shop for a late dinner. My parents still didn't say anything about how we did on the test. We talked about the questions, the team, the format of auditions, but nothing about our own results. It seemed too embarrassing, too soon to pour more salt on our wounded prides.

Sitting down with a large order of cheese steaks and sweet potato fries, my mom finally spoke up. "Well. I know it went badly—" My dad and I looked up from our sandwiches, staring at her as if to say, 'Yeah, we *know* that.' "But," my mom continued, "at least we can say we did it, instead of complaining about not doing it when the show's on." My dad sighed.

"She's right," I finally said, "And there's always next year."

"If there's a next year," my mom finished.

We ate our sandwiches for awhile. "We know what's coming at us," my dad said, "I don't see why not."

"There's also the online competition next week," my mom added, "Laura, you should try it."

"If I have time for it," I said, giving them both a warning look.

"Why not? You know what's coming."

"You know what you can try out for?" my dad said, sounding a little bit better, "*Jeopardy!*'s having online auditions the week after that. You would rock on that show."

I sighed. "No more game shows, please."

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry should be supported by a valid receipt or invoice. The second part outlines the procedures for handling discrepancies and errors, including the steps to be taken when a mistake is identified. The third part provides a detailed breakdown of the financial data, including a summary of income and expenses. The final part concludes with a statement of the total balance and a declaration of the accuracy of the information provided.

Well-Fare Line

William Schneiderhan

Blue collar malaise
Long, drawn faces held in palms
Like Van Gogh portraits.

This Machine Kills Fascists oil on canvas 4' x 4'

Ashley Kline

**THIS MACHINE
KILLS FACISTS**



The Benny Allen Story

Jon Harahan

Why is violence funny? It isn't funny. Why do we laugh at violence? It's all fun and games until someone gets hurt. It's all fun and games until someone dies. My old friend Theo Blanton once said, *If you die on TV, you will not have died in vain. You will have entertained us.* As a kid, my cheap Irish father never allowed the family the blessings of cable. As a kid, I would still laugh if someone happened to fall down.

This past Tuesday, a guy I once knew was struck by an eighteen wheeler. He died. He was struck by an eighteen wheeler, after all. The truck was on its way to a hospital to deliver medical supplies. I didn't laugh out loud. Yet, my teeth found their way between my lips for a minute, my eyebrows climbed high upon my forehead, and I quickly exhaled through my nose. A man was violently struck by a truck, and I laughed. I may go to hell. If I had a dollar for every time I was told I was going to hell, I would not be so short on cash. Maybe I would be able to take my wife out to dinner more often.

I went to Martone High School in Harrisville, Rhode Island and graduated in 1997. I went to school with a guy named Ben Allen. His friends called him Benny. I called him a punk, a dick, a douche bag, a tool because that was what he was. I never had a conversation with Benny. We were not friends, and we were not enemies. We ran in different circles. I was two years older. He was a loud character and observing him from afar was not difficult to do.

Benny Allen stood five feet five inches—short, stocky and hairy. He had three hobbies: playing basketball for Martone High School, throwing fireworks at animals, and convincing strange women to

perform oral sex on him. He was a sophomore in high school when I last saw him.

Harrisville is a small town. The entire high school took gym class at the same time. The basketball team had only four players on their roster: Benny and his three cousins Frank, Harry, and Mark. They had to forfeit every game. I ran on the track team. I was our only runner. They say running is a lonely man's sport, and I knew that better than most.

Our town was so small that the basketball coach and track coach was the same man. His name was Mr. Luke Trama. The students simply called him Trama. He was tall and strong, a man to be feared. The rumor was that the movie Rambo was based off his life. He had the most beautiful wife in Rhode Island, Christina Trama. She won Mrs. Rhode Island twice and made it to the top five seven times. Both years she won she said she would use her new position to advocate the importance of communication within the family. For four months she would travel Rhode Island in her Mazda Miata and advocate family communication, while Mr. Trama and their two girls stayed at home and ate take-out.

One day, while Trama was at the gym and Mrs. Trama was driving across Rhode Island, Benny Allen's cousin Mark bet Benny eight dollars that he could not convince Elizabeth (Mr. and Mrs. Trama's fourteen-year-old daughter) to perform oral sex on him. As the story goes, Elizabeth said *no*. Benny could not convince her. Benny would not give Mark the eight dollars. After egging the Trama household, the two boys fought in the street. The cops came and made the two boys go home. They went home and lit their fireworks and threw them at cats and squirrels.

The next day, March 15 1997, our school had gym class. The school sat on the gym floor, all eighty-nine of us. We all had our grey t-shirts on with our blue shorts. Elizabeth sat to the side. I sat in the back. Mark, Harry, and Frank were late. Benny walked through the gym's heavy green doors. As they shut, the noise was amplified by the high ceiling. The school turned around and looked at Benny. Short, hairy

Benny Allen, in his blue gym shorts walked up to Elizabeth and said, *What's up you fucking bitch*. He spun around picking up one leg and attempted to fart on her. He failed. Instead, a small, round, brown piece of feces fell from Benny Allen's shorts. Elizabeth screamed, the school laughed, and Benny ran out of the gym in embarrassment. The heavy doors closed, and the echo mixed with the school's laughter in that gymnasium.

I stood up and clapped. I laughed. I laughed hard. I bent over grasping my legs pointing at Ben's escape route. My face was red. I yelled, *That's what you fucking get! That's karma, bitch!* Elizabeth had never told a soul about Benny's offer.

Some felt bad for Benny. I did not. He deserved utter embarrassment. I did not like that kid. I remember thinking, he is one of those people who could fall off the face of the Earth and it would not faze me. Most people shared in my embracement of Benny's Karma biting him in the ass. I did feel bad for Elizabeth though. She was a sweet and innocent girl. She didn't deserve to be pooped on.

. . .

I left Rhode Island that year. I fell off the face of the Earth. It did not faze me. I went to college in Colorado and received a degree in English in 1996. I stayed in Colorado after college and started writing for a small newspaper. I was content. I eventually moved to Denver. My wife and I met in a library. I was researching Canadians, and she was reading a book by Theo Blanton. Men with English degrees can always use fancy words to talk their way into getting a date, but they rarely have the money to pay for dinner. Thankfully, she was a lovely cook. I rarely have the desire to eat out any more.

I wrote for newspapers and tried my hand in fiction and published a few stories in some local journals. Local journals do not pay well, so I continued to write for newspapers. At some point, I started writing my second first-novel. It was supposed to be an epic saga between the last two great superpowers of the world. It was to be humanity's last

great war, a war between Chinese-Canada and The United States of the Americas, taking place in the year 2085 in Harrisville, Rhode Island. It was to focus on a small family escaping the falling Chinese-Canadian bombs. It was my second first-novel because I threw away my first novel. It was a piece of crap. I wrote most of my novel in a little coffee shop on Sixteenth Street in Denver. In a world full of Starbucks, it's nice to find some caffeine and quiet.

This was where I first met my friend Theo Blanton, a successful fiction writer who does not live in New York City. He is the successful fiction writer who lives in downtown Denver and refuses to own an answering machine. I think he was put here to show me what it is like to be rich and a writer. His wife has been put here to show me how a woman can age beautifully. Often times Theo and I meet in coffee shops and green parks to talk about writing, or life, or to philosophize. He tells me that I am *on my way to learning how to write. I am learning the same way Twain and Hemmingway did, by talking to people on the streets and writing for newspapers.* My wife is jealous. Often times people run up to Theo and ask for his autograph. He says, *No thanks!* I then ask if they want my autograph. They say, *No thanks!*

Last Sunday, the old man asked me to tell him a funny story. I told him about the time Benny Allen pooped on Elizabeth Trama. Theo laughed. He has one of those hacking, wheezing laughs that only life long smokers and successful writers have. Theo then talked about how *karma is a funny thing to believe in, and that so many people believe in the harmless untruths that make us happy and kind.* We sat there for the next couple hours, holding our empty paper coffee cups, talking about what it is to believe, and whether or not anyone ever has, or even can, treat the word literally.

. . .

Two days after talking to Theo, Benny Allen was hit by an eighteen wheeler, carrying medical supplies, that was moving at ninety miles an hour down a highway. It was a bright, beautiful day in Harrisville.

Not a cloud in the sky. Forget about dental records. His teeth turned to dust on impact. Forget about asking the family to identify the body. What body? He was scattered over a quarter mile. Some pieces were never found at all. Pink mist. For some unknown reason, he was walking his dog on the highway. The dog survived. No one knows why Benny was on that damn highway.

And for the past five days, I have had total and complete writers' block. I could not even write my name on the page. Someone once asked my friend Theo Blanton whether or not he suffers from writers' block. *Sure, lots of blocks. All I want to do is write a book, but often times I have nothing on my mind.* I write, but I often times have nothing to say about what is on my mind. I am a journalist. I am not a fiction writer, I only pretend. Writing fiction is what happens when you do not know what to do once you grow up. I am like a child who pretends to be a fireman or soldier. I do not have what it takes to be a successful fiction writer.

All successful fiction writers have a couple screws loose. Unfortunately, I am as sane as can be. So instead, I pretend to have some screws loose, and sometimes I seem nuts. It is all part of my act.

Many successful writers have bags under their eyes, smoke cigarettes, and have long shaggy hair. Even the young ones have bags under their eyes. I enjoy sleeping too much to have bags under my eyes. I enjoy sleeping too much to be a successful writer. What a shame. God knows I love to sleep. I saw a child the other day with large, depressing bags under his eyes. I thought to myself, he's going to be somebody someday.

I do not smoke either. My friend Theo smokes a lot. He says, *It is the most popular form of suicide.* I'm not very suicidal and smoking would really cut into my jogging and my tight budget. I wonder what Theo would say about my drinking.

That is one area where I am much like a truly successful writer. I drink. I could sit here and pretend that I drink a lot, or have a problem, but once again, I would be pretending. Maybe someday I will be lucky enough to say that I have a "drinking problem" or that I am a

“successful writer.” Brendan Behan, the Irish dramatist, famously told the world that he was a drinker with a writing problem. Since Benny Allen died, I have been drinking a lot, but I still have writers’ block. It is very unattractive.

The strangest thing about successful male writers is this: they all have attractive wives. I do not know why. I guess it is reason enough to become a successful writer, or at least pretend. My wife is as attractive as I pretend her to be.

Can I be honest? Since I started writing, since I moved to Colorado, since I fell off the face of the Earth, I have been reminded of the days when I was age twelve and everyone wanted to be Michael Jordan. Everyone knew the odds of becoming Michael Jordan were worse than winning the lottery. Many children stopped playing basketball for this reason. I stopped playing because I was not any good. I see tons of writers walking around nowadays trying to become successful. None of them realize that the odds are worse than winning the lottery. Theo Blanton became a successful writer. He said that he had survivor’s guilt. He did not understand why he became a success and others did not. If fate throws success in my lap, I will continue to write. It’s just a shame I do not have what it takes to be a success. Tobacco, alcoholism, bags under my eyes, a beautiful wife.

So now, I say to the writers out in the universe what my coaches told me when I played basketball at age twelve. Give up on your dreams. Successful writers are freaks of nature. You are a normal person. Concentrate on getting a real job. You are nothing like those successful writers. You are a good person. Spend your time more wisely. Put your pen and paper down.

...

I laughed when Benny Allen was destroyed by that eighteen wheeler. The guilt is what kept my pen from touching paper. I can tell a man to go to hell so that he looks forward to the trip, but I do not want to meet him there. I would rather not have my laughter

come back to haunt me in the future, or perhaps my potential afterlife. However, the more important question is not what will happen to me when I die (if anything) because I laughed, but why I laughed. I did not laugh the way I did when he pooped on that girl. That was just damn funny. But how can one do anything but feel sad when someone they know dies? Unless the person lacking sadness is nothing more than a cold hearted or even hateful person? Never mind, that is not true. I bet the Jews did not cry when Hitler decided to have a bullet with a twist of cyanide for his final meal. People say the bunker smelled like roasted almonds and bacon afterwards. European Jewry did not shed a tear.

I struggled. I struggled with myself, with Benny. Why the hell couldn't he have moved out of the way, was he fucking stupid? His dog was smart enough! What was Benny thinking! Why would he do this! Could he have not had some common courtesy? Could he have not thought about the damn truck driver who could not stop in time? Thought of his parents, his cousins? Thought of all the girls he told he loved just so that they would give his head a kiss? Why would he do this to me!

I did not cry over his death. I cried because my first response to his death was laughter. Getting hit by a truck is not funny, even if it is carrying medical supplies. He was a punk. He had no respect for anyone at all, including himself. He deserved everything he got in life. He did not deserve death. He did not deserve to be hit by a goddamn eighteen wheeler.

We all die. Maybe we all deserve it. I do not know anymore.

Now what! I have sketches, short stories, and novels unfinished and scattered around my home and brain. Yet I was consumed by this guilt. I did not know what to say about it. I have been told by many to write about the darkest parts of my soul, to write what I fear, for that is where great writing will emerge. I fear what I may write down. I do not know. I abscond from these questions. I would rather have a stiff drink. The Creamy Mick: place four ice cubes into a pint glass. Pour three shots of Irish cream, two shots of Irish whiskey, and two shots of

cream de menthe. Mix vigorously and enjoy. Repeat, and enjoy again. The Angry Irishman: place three ice cubes into an Old-Fashioned glass. Pour two shots of Irish cream and two shots of Irish whiskey into glass, stir and enjoy. The Irish Curdling Cow: pour a shot of Irish Cream, a shot of whiskey, and a shot of vodka into a highball glass. Add a few ounces of orange juice, stir and enjoy.

. . .

My head hurts after a night of drinking. I will usually feel like I had been in the back of a hot school bus for eight hours on a winding summertime road. My father called it the Irish Flu. The sun is always brighter than normal, and every damn bird in Colorado will be chirping outside my window. Two nights ago, I called Theo Blanton on the phone while I was good and drunk. We talked about Benny Allen, my writer's block, and much more. We often try to solve the world's problems.

We philosophized. We talked about yin and yang, good and evil. Theo argued that I am looking at this Benny Allen situation from a strictly philosophical point of view, whereas I must also look from a psychological perspective. I am stuck, not progressing in life. If Benny were close to me, I would mourn him and use it to build character. My laughter is not to be condemned because I am only trying to protect myself psychologically so that I can get past this situation and continue to prosper. However it is the philosophical side of me which has looked deeper into this instance, which means that I am analyzing not only this general situation, but myself as well. Apparently this means that I am trying to achieve a greater level than just survival. Apparently I am trying to be a man in a sense that I am trying to achieve higher knowledge.

I wondered if Theo said this because he believed it to be true, or if he was simply trying to comfort a distraught friend. Is Theo my friend because he is honest or because he tells me what I need to hear? Harmless untruths? A friend can always honestly tell you a lie. They

themselves will even believe it.

There is nothing funny about getting hit by a truck, even if the victim is an asshole. I think Blanton is right. I think my laughter may have been simply to protect myself from the reality of the situation. I settled on this answer.

I wonder if I am a good person. I wonder if it matters. I wonder if I should climb my way back onto the face of the Earth. I wonder if being killed by an eighteen wheeler moving at ninety miles an hour is painful.

I made myself another stiff drink and crawled into bed. Benny Allen was dead. Theo Blanton probably sat cross-legged on a park bench in Denver, smoking a cigarette, and with his old, depressing eyes, watched the moon with his beautiful wife. Maybe he thought, this is nice. My wife slipped into something a little more comfortable. She looked beautiful. I told her I was going to try to do some writing tomorrow. She smiled.

. . .

I sit here in my favorite coffee shop in Denver, sipping my coffee. Every bird in Colorado sits outside the coffee shop window. They will chirp and sing until they are hoarse. Theo walks through a red revolving door and orders a black coffee. He walks over to my booth, sits down, and lights his cigarette. He holds it like a joint. He looks at the cigarette as he exhales, and laughs. He has one of those hacking, wheezing laughs. He looks at me and says I look as if I have *a touch of that Irish flu*. I tell him to be quiet because I am almost done writing the Benny Allen story.

THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON



Shark in a Bucket digital photograph

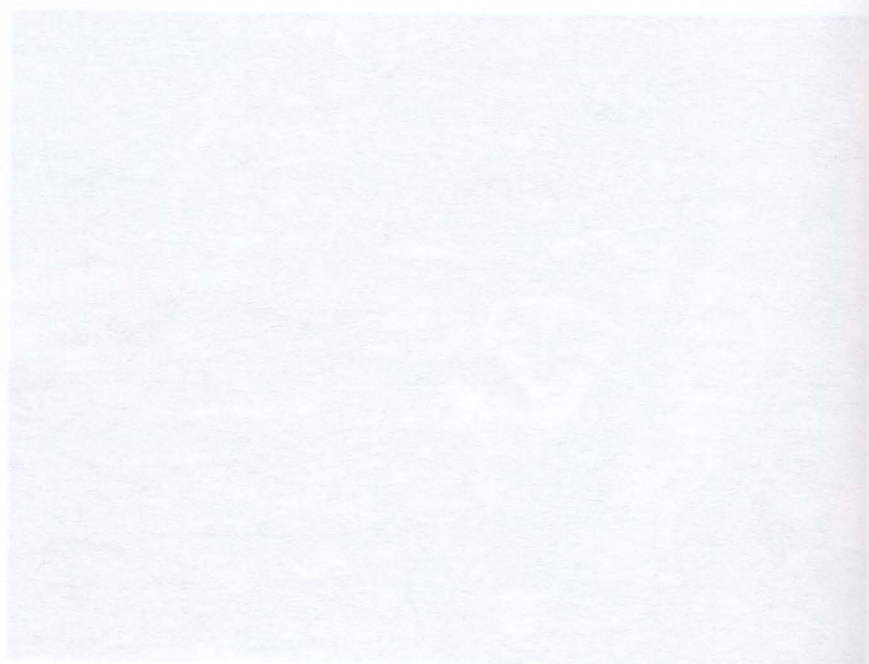
Danielle Geller

Little Miss T
Sean Sullivan



Shark in a Bucket

Donale Carter



Little Miss t

Susan Sullivan

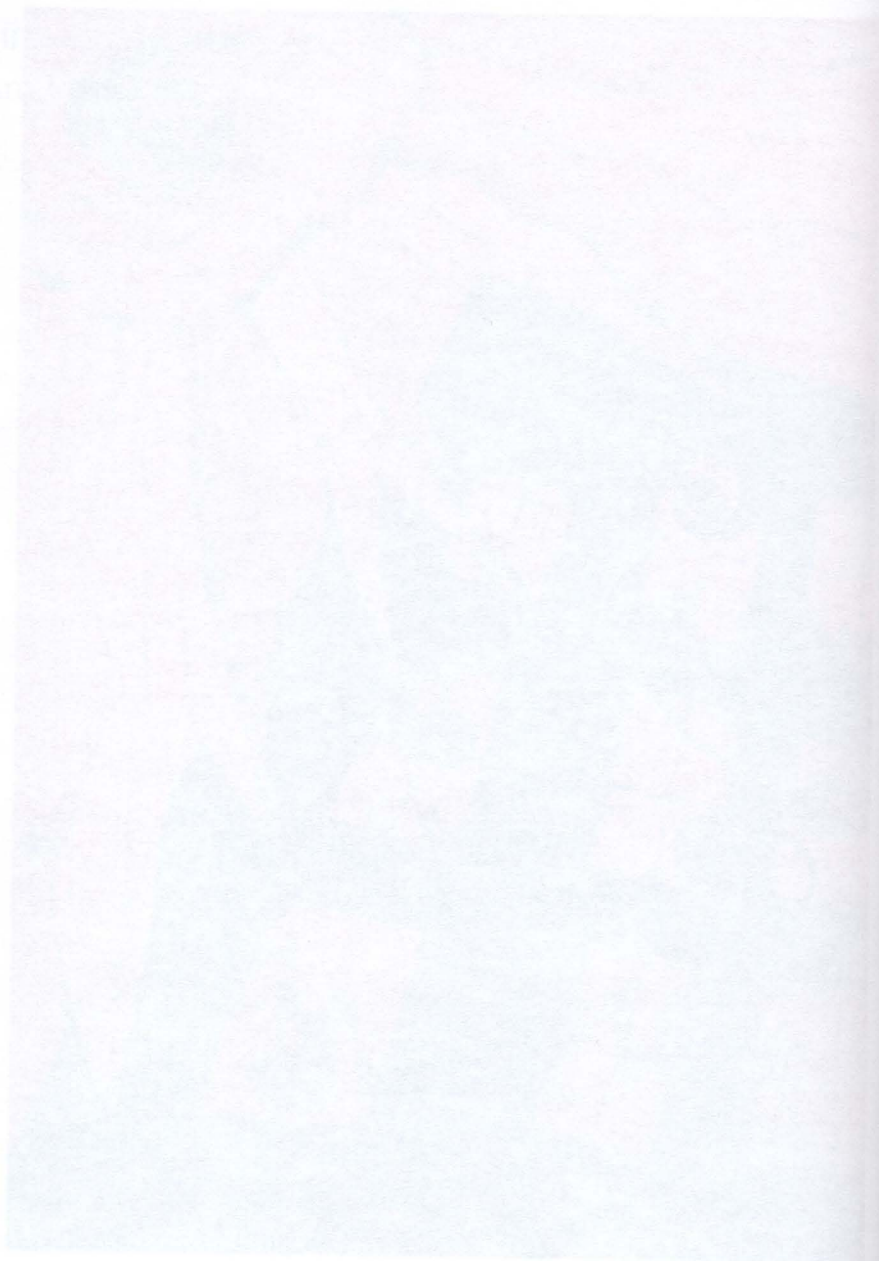
Little Miss t never leaves home without her hat
Placing it delicately on her slender form
In loving imitation of her mother
It is never forgotten like i's own round decoration
The distinction necessary to identify the little lady
From her younger but plainer cousin l
She'll have it dipped or slanted hurriedly in casual correspondence
Or curled upwards extravagantly in passionate love letters
But the little lady prefers her hat straight and proper
The perfect lines that only type can provide

Fire in Mexico oil on canvas 24" x 18"

Amanda Burg



FIG. 1



Fashion

Jenn Bly

A peacock tip-
toes through the
department store
wondering where
the other birds are?

Fashion Journal

A journal of
fashion and
design
writing
the other side

.com

Jenn Bly

Wiki words

repose in libraries large and wide
as students

link and tag them.

youtubemyspacefacebookbloggersnyahooflickrgoogle.com

The internet revolution

such that bloggers know best.

A techno age

of pirates and porn stars.

social personal

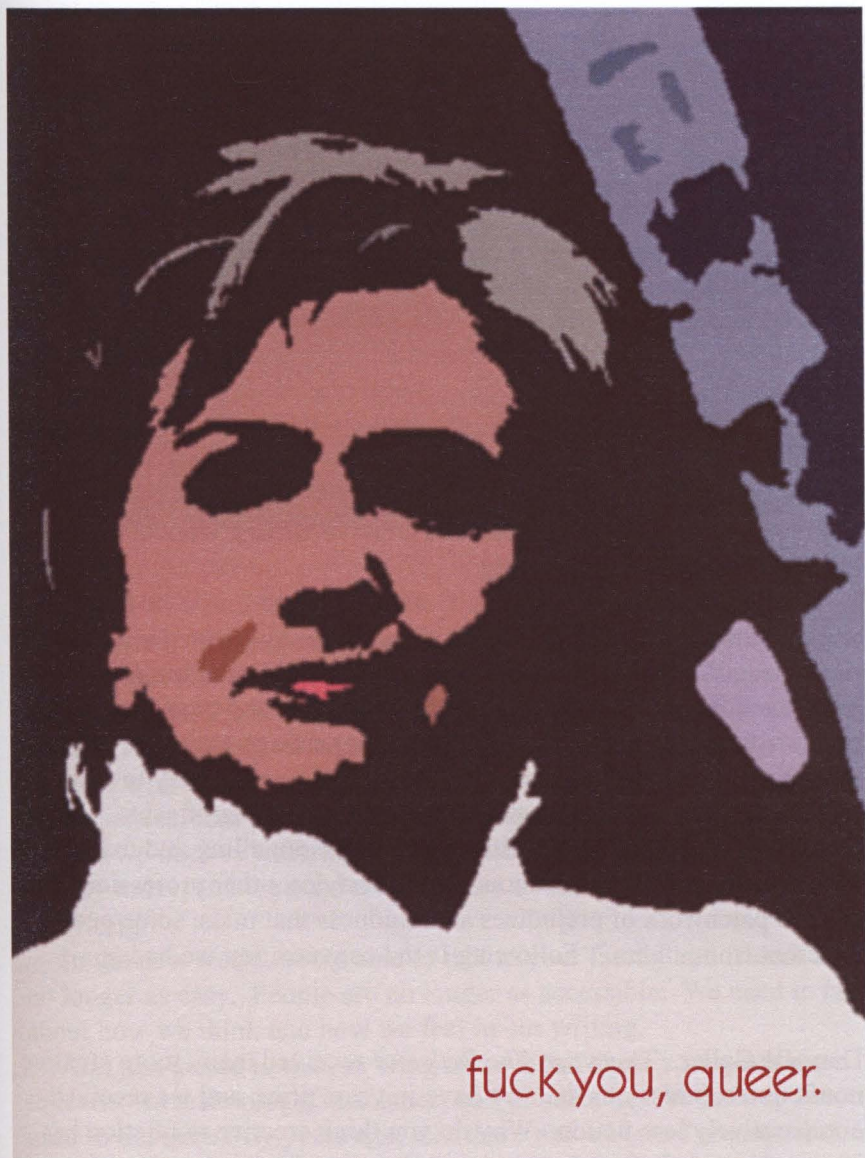
networks avatars

Slanderous identity hidden in

JavaScript and nameless forums,

machinating a new truth that is.

Hillary Queer digital image
Ashley Kline



fuck you, queer.

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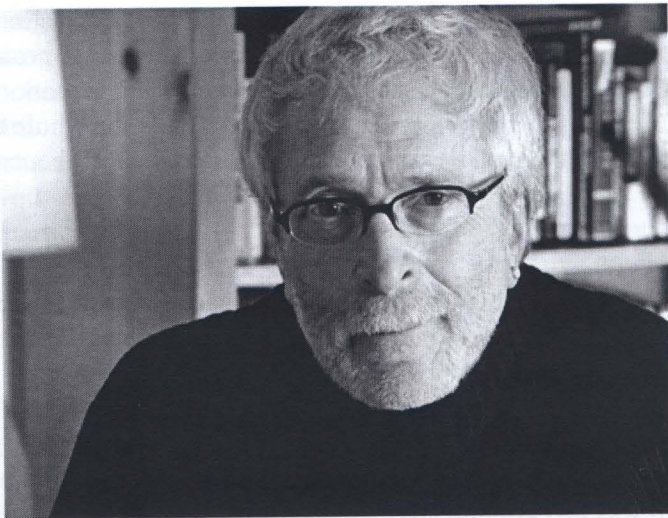
A Conversation with Lee Gutkind

Danielle Geller

Lee Gutkind is often called the “Godfather” of creative nonfiction. He is the founder and editor of *Creative Nonfiction*, a magazine dedicated exclusively to this growing genre. His own work is a continuous process of immersion, whether into the worlds of organ transplants, of baseball, or—as in his latest work, *Almost Human: Making Robotics Think*—of robotics at Carnegie Mellon University. Gutkind currently teaches as a Professor of English at the University of Pittsburgh and also participates in creative writing workshops and readings throughout the country.

In a phone interview with Lee Gutkind, I asked him if he had ever wanted to write fiction. He swiftly directed me to his own website [www.leegutkind.com] and to a piece he had written on his decision to pursue writing as both a career and lifestyle: “At the time I was in my middle 20s, and I realized that I didn't know enough about the world to write anything with the insight and experience necessary to make my novels and short stories culturally and morally significant. . . . If characters I created in my fiction were to be compelling and true then, I concluded, I had to learn about other lifestyles, other professions, and the patchwork of prejudices and kindness that make some people different from others.” Following is the conversation we had.

Danielle Geller: This year, *The Reflector* received many more creative nonfiction submissions than we have in years prior, and we received comparatively less fiction. Why do you think creative nonfiction has become so popular?



Lee Gutkind: Well, creative nonfiction is what we call the literature of reality. And that is what this world has turned out to be. You know the old cliché, real life is—now I can't remember the cliché! The point is, real life is becoming so bizarre, and the world is becoming so vast and so filled with new ideas, and new cultures, and new technology, and new sciences, that it would be hard to imagine new things anymore. And so we need to work hard to understand what is happening in society today, and we need to work hard to communicate to each other in writing.

In the new world, being able to talk to your family and friends is no longer as easy. People are no longer as accessible. We need to talk about how we think and how we feel in our writing.

And just to add to that, to bring more focus, there's so much more to learn—in technology, in science, and in business—even in sports. It used to be, even fifty years ago, that there was a limited amount that we needed to know in order to survive. Computers, television. None of that existed, and now everything is different. And so, in being able to

communicate in a creative nonfiction technique, people can learn more. People understand more and remember better when we are presented information in a story-oriented manner. How computers work. How science impacts the world through medicine. That's the whole thrust of creative nonfiction. That's one of the main reasons it's become so incredibly popular.

DG: You say that in this bizarre world, it is hard for us to imagine new things. Do you think, then, that the Romantic elevation of the imagination has died out?

Gutkind: When fiction was popular, when fiction was very popular, the world was less complicated. So, a writer could sit down and create characters and create a universe that we could all kind of give ourselves to. And now, the world is so complicated that we need to work much harder to understand where we are now.

The most successful book of fiction that I can think of is the whole Harry Potter series. And that is real imagination. That is really something beyond anything that we can create today. That is really imaginative writing.

DG: You have described creative nonfiction as more than a genre; you've described it as a movement. What are we moving towards?

Gutkind: This is kind of what I'm getting at. It's a movement in many different ways. One, communicating information through story. Two, understanding more about ourselves, being honest about ourselves, and trying to explain ourselves to the world. We are not disguising ourselves as fictional characters. We are coming out and declaring who we are and trying to reach out to a larger audience. And three, the

most popular form of creative nonfiction is the kind where the writer participates in other peoples' lives—immerses themselves, to one degree or another, in other peoples' lives. And that becomes another kind of life.

You choose the kind of life you want to lead, and you choose the people you want to live that life with. It's more than being a writer; it's being a participant. And that all becomes part of this movement. There is a creative nonfiction genre, but then there is a creative nonfiction life—how we live life in order to write it.

DG: What advice would you give students who want to turn writing into not only a lifestyle, but also a career, through publishing their own work?

Gutkind: I think that students should worry first and foremost about becoming really good writers. And most students are not—no matter how good the writing program is—ready for prime-time writing when they receive their undergraduate degrees. I think that students should work a great deal at becoming the best writers they can become, then worry about publishing. There's nothing worse than publishing too soon.

And I think students should read tons of the best stuff possible. I'm really disappointed when students read only the books teachers have assigned them to read. To become a great writer, you have to study the masters of literature—not worry about getting a Master's degree or MFA, but going out and living life. The thing about writing nonfiction, you have to have things to say. When you're twenty-two years old, you haven't lived enough life. Drive a taxi, work as a waiter, hitchhike from Pennsylvania to Los Angeles. Whatever! I also think you should try to do internships at magazines and learn about networking and make as many contacts as you possibly can.

Note that I am not advising anyone to get a Master's degree

in creative writing. That is not necessarily the thing to do. Some of the greatest writers in the world, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemmingway, did just fine without going to an MFA program.

DG: As an editor of both *Creative Nonfiction*, as well as *The Best of Creative Nonfiction*, published in 2007, what do you look for in the works you select for publication?

Gutkind: I look for good writing. And that good writing to me has a very strong narrative basis—a real, story-oriented structure—and I also look for writing that says something, that has a thesis. That has a mission. Why have people become writers? We don't become writers because we want to be rich—because that's not possible. We become writers because we want to change things. We want to share what we know and to make an impact on the world. And that's what I look for. I look for good writing that makes an impact on its readers. And that happens through strong narrative, through strong scenes and stories, that have a powerful message.

DG: From *The Best of Creative Nonfiction*, I have most recently read “The Truth about Cops and Dogs,” by Rebecca Skloot, and at the end, a note affirms that it is because of her story [which is very powerful, and which I recommend to all readers] that dog law is rectified in New York City.

Gutkind: Very good example. Here is a writer who involved herself. If it wasn't for the writer, the story wouldn't have happened.

DG: Shifting track a little bit, you have talked about how immersion writing—which is what you do—is the most popular form of creative nonfiction right now. How do you distinguish between memoir and the larger genre of creative nonfiction; what makes good memoir?

Gutkind: A rich mixture of writing about yourself. It's fine to write about yourself if it happens to be a good story, but we tend to write too much about ourselves, and we tend not to think of the universality of our story. Every good memoir has a good universal chord so that it impacts upon a larger audience. Did you read, for example, *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt? It was really one of the first memoirs to become one of the biggest, best-selling hits, and it was the story of an 8 or 9 year old boy during the Depression in the United States, and also in Ireland because they thought they could live better in Ireland. But the fact of the matter is, he realized his story was not going to carry or capture an audience, so he writes a lot about poverty and the impact on poor people during the depression. And that's what gives it its good universal quality. So, good memoir is written so that your story represents something bigger than you: poverty, war, whatever it is.

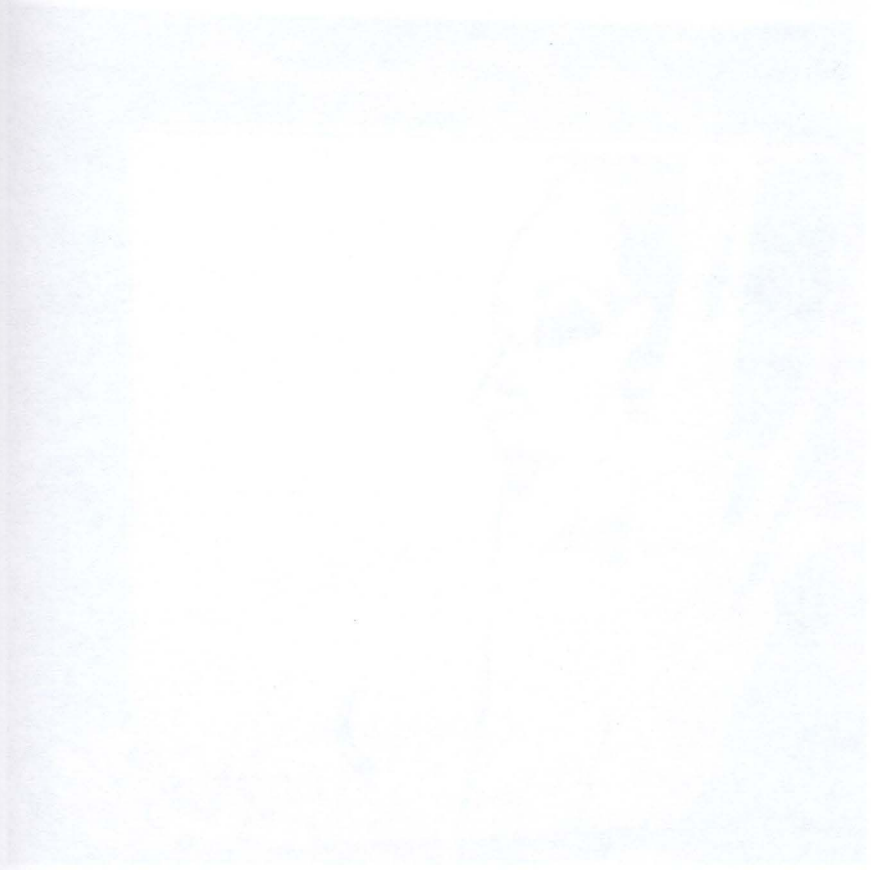
DG: Lastly, I would like to talk a little bit about truth in memoir. What do you think is lost when people get caught up in the truth of the narrative rather than the underlying issues?

Gutkind: First off, I think you're wrong. The only group who talk about truth are journalists. All you hear morning, noon, and night are journalists criticizing memoir because newspaper reporters have been taught that journalism is not really creative writing. So, the fact of the matter is—the entire problem is—journalists do not understand what we're trying to do. And they're very concerned with reporting accuracy. And they don't understand that, first of all, memoir is your

story—that it can't be fact checked—that the vagaries of memory make our memories impossible to fact check. That's the whole nature of memoir; it's our story. It's what we know happens. Either they don't understand it, or they don't want to.

You will not find lots of people who aren't journalists criticizing memoir. You can't condemn all people because a few of them have written fiction and called it nonfiction. But really, they're breaking bonds with the reader and they're kind of ruining—or making our genre and our world look bad. But the fact of the matter is, most writers don't do that. They just try to recreate or relive the stories the way they remember. Art cannot be legislated. Art is a process of creation.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
PHYSICS DEPARTMENT



Bhutto oil on canvas 35" x 35"

Ashley Kline

Remember His Face

Robert Schwab



black, but always plaid. I'd hear a first tap on the table which my

Bhurto on canvas 35 x 50

April 1964



I Remember His Face

Elizabeth Schwartz

It was 1995, and the pews stood in rows, just like the cards my grandfather set in the Memory game we played. He'd lean slightly back in his chair and let his tanned hands, covered with mountains of veins, rest on his little belly. "I remember his face," I say when my mother asks if I remember him. He only had a few wrinkles and they crinkled up even more when he smiled. The dark bags under his eyes would rise, and his faint grey eyes came through his square sturdy glasses. I remember him with thick black eyebrows and curly hair that was covered in grey and black; he was still handsome.

I ran through each pew with my hands sliding across the smooth wooden seats. Uncle Leo, Aunt Cecilia, Uncle John, Uncle Fred, Aunt Magreta, Aunt Celeste, Uncle Vincent, Aunt Irene, my mother, Aunt Mary, Uncle Mike, Uncle Matt, Uncle Mark, Uncle Marten; all his children were here. It reminded me of Easter.

My aunts and uncles stood with coffee cups, and steam hovered over their hands. They gathered on a porch, while we grandchildren (over 30 of us) went in search of Easter eggs. Easter at 10 a.m. always smelled like cut wood and settling dew from the early morning. The air was always rich; the wind would blow faintly, brushing against my skin, and my arms formed goose-bumps from the chill. It was so damp in the morning that I could feel the mist settle on my face and clothes. I'd always remember my grandfather working at this time.

Sometimes, he'd brush off crumbs that tumbled onto his shirt while he ate crackers. His shirts were red, blue, or green, sometimes black, but always plaid. I'd hear a faint tap on the table when my

attention turned away from Memory. He'd tap and tap until I heard, and he would smile at me and point to the cards. The sound reminded me of when he, holding a long, worn axe, was out in the field, and his feet were planted firmly to the ground, and he swung: Whack, Chop, Chop, and he'd pull the axe back. The leaves fell around him like in a fairytale. The tree would slide off the stump, but instead of falling over, it would stay standing.

At his funeral, my mother sat next to me, her face smothered in her hands. She was crying, but I couldn't cry. I tried to cry when my father and I walked up the aisle to that square wooden box. An uncle squeezed my shoulder then tapped it as we walked up the pews. When we reached the end, my dad lifted me up. My grandfather lost some of his color, but I couldn't cry.

The sound of tapping would always bring me back. I'd turn to see his smile, his long extended finger pointing to the cards, and my mother in the corner watching. Years later my mother and I would play the Memory game for the first and last time. She asked, again, "Do you remember him?" and I replied, "Yes, I remember his face."

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY



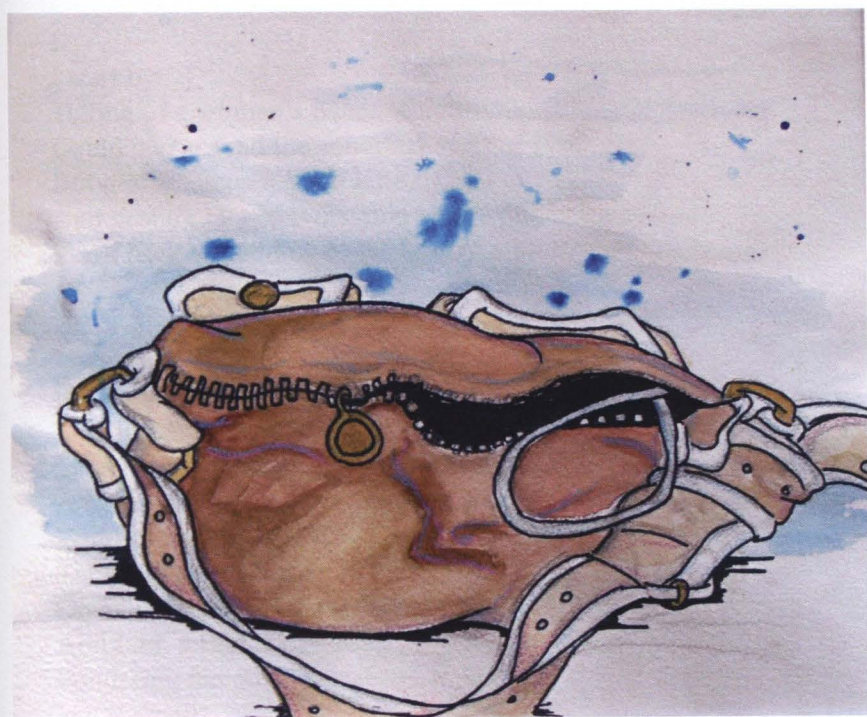
Yummy watercolor 8" x 9"

Paige Bonitz

African Interpretation of Woman

Written on by Monday

Andrew Bond



Yummy

Paige Smith



A lyrical interpretation of women,
written on a Monday

Andrew Bartal

I.

I start by
Telling of a woman's hands which
Could cup around the sonorous heart of jazz,
But prefer to cup a Venti latte,
And gesture in a conversation with a duller friend.
I turn back to nodding to the beat of a blues station.

II.

I hear bold undertones in her expression—
Undercurrents pulling out my knees;
Tugging my ankles toward
Sand bars where I would only take a nap under a tree,
And sail off in the late afternoon
With sails the shade of sun-bleached sand—
The palm trees lean south
On an island built of angles
And I am a Buddhist noting the tide,
Pondering the push
and the pull
of water.

A typical interpretation of women's writing on a woman

Andrew Ross

It is a common assumption that women's writing is a form of self-expression, a way of exploring the self and the world. This view is based on the idea that women are more likely than men to be concerned with personal experience and emotions. However, this view is based on a narrow and often misleading interpretation of women's writing. In fact, women's writing is a complex and diverse phenomenon, and it is important to consider the social and cultural contexts in which it is produced. This essay will explore the ways in which women's writing has been interpreted, and will argue that a more nuanced and historically informed approach is needed. It will consider the ways in which women's writing has been used to reinforce gender stereotypes, and will also look at the ways in which women have used their writing to challenge these stereotypes. Finally, it will discuss the importance of reading women's writing in its historical and cultural context, and will argue that this is essential for a full understanding of its significance.

The Real Hospital

Joel Haddad

I watch TV, I've seen the commercials. Hospitals are supposed to be places of great drama, of unbridled human emotion and heroics. All the doctors are supposed to be witty and smart and look like George Clooney or Ellen Pompeo and Katherine Heigl. So when I broke my ribs, I thought it was going to be great. Check in, get fixed up, spend the night for observation, and maybe get it on with a hot doctor or intern who possibly strips after her shift to pay for medical school.

I broke my ribs in a car accident. A drunk driver ran a red light and crashed into my driver's side door. I hit my head on the steering wheel and everything went black for awhile. When I came around, I was already at the hospital, laying on a gurney and waiting for X-Rays. I could see my fiancée talking to an older, grey haired doctor. There always has to be at least one older, grey haired doctor around to fix everything when the young, hot doctors make a mistake. My fiancée was smiling so I knew my condition couldn't be too bad. She notices I'm awake and comes over, whispering into my ear that I'm going to be ok, that my penis wasn't damaged in any way, so she still loves me. I try to laugh at her joke, but it hurts too much. She squeezes my hand as they wheel me off, and I close my eyes again.

When I wake up, I'm in a bed with one of those paper smock things that don't cover your ass tied around my neck. Why do doctors use those smocks anyway? Isn't it embarrassing enough to need help to go to the bathroom, you need to moon everyone in process as well?

I'm surrounded by a dozen monitors and machines beeping at

regular intervals. I smile, there's no long drawn out beep that means I'm dead. A good sign. I look around and see another patient in traction lying in the bed next to mine. Sucks to be him.

After an hour, someone finally notices I'm alive and awake in there and comes to check on me. Finally, time for my gorgeous nurse and doctor to crawl into bed with me and "nurse" me back to health.

"And how are we feeling?" the nurse asks as he enters the room. He. How did I end up with probably the one Gaylord Focker male nurse in the state? And why the hell do all nurses always ask: "How are we feeling?" There is no we here, it's just me.

I open my mouth to protest and the male nurse shoves a thermometer under my tongue before I can say a word. He goes about checking all the machines and then the bandages wrapped around my ribs. When he's finished poking and prodding at me, he plucks the thermometer out of my mouth, jots down my temperature on my chart and walks back out without another word or glance. Mr. Stick-up-my-ass Efficiency. Great.

I wait another hour for some food and water. Why do hospitals only ever serve green jello? What about all the other flavors? Bill Cosby always had like 8 or 9 different kinds of jello on his old commercials.

I lean over and grab the TV remote control on the table in-between the beds. Not like he can change the channel anyway. I flip through the channels and stop on SportsCenter. As I listen to all the scores from the games I missed last night, I hear the door opening. I turn off the TV and wait anxiously.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Stone. How are we feeling today?" she asks me. She is ancient. Pharaoh's Egypt ancient. Her hair is stark white and her face is wrinkled like one of those little Pug dogs, the kind that look that they had their faces kicked in at birth.

"No, no, no," I mutter, covering my face with my hands. "This isn't fair," I groan.

"Yes, I know it may seem difficult to be injured, Mr. Stone, but your injuries are far from disabling," the Ancient One says cheerfully. She doesn't understand.

Where are all the hot nurses and witty doctors? How could TV have lied to me like this? Hell, I'd even take Clooney or McDreamy/McSteamy/whatever the hell the girls call him over this old woman. She was probably there when Hippocrates first swore the first Hippocratic Oath.

I don't say anything the rest of the time she's there, I just let her do whatever it is she has to do to get me outta this devilish hospital faster. I turn my head to the side and look at the poor guy in traction next to me. Poor guy, I think, can't even move or open his mouth to talk. I meet his eyes with my own, and a single tear rolls down his cheek.

He knew exactly what I was thinking. He had expected the TV hospital too. I nodded to him, and we suffered together.

Fragments for a Lover

Crystal Stumbaugh

A gnat hovers by your eyelashes, edges closer to a burning
green iris
that is not frilled and swaying, waiting to be planted.

The clover is damp under my feet; the drawing pad on the table
between us blank.
I am supposed to draw your hands, but they move too fast, like
dragonflies.

Touch-me-nots loiter by the slow water of the river, restless
and ready like your mouth that I want to take with my mouth but
am too afraid to.

I dig my fingernail into a honeysuckle blossom to suck the dew
from the bottom;
the vines vibrate like guitar strings from ripping off the flower.

Tinnitus: the phenomenon of hearing dead sounds bloom in
fertile silence.

You say, *I can't sleep because of the moon. I can't sleep.*

Fire-eater

Nicole Theiwechter

Sometimes the hand first finds the fruit
Sometimes gravity—then the ground

Staring through panes and dreaming of elevation

You swallowed the distant sunset. Now spit illumination—

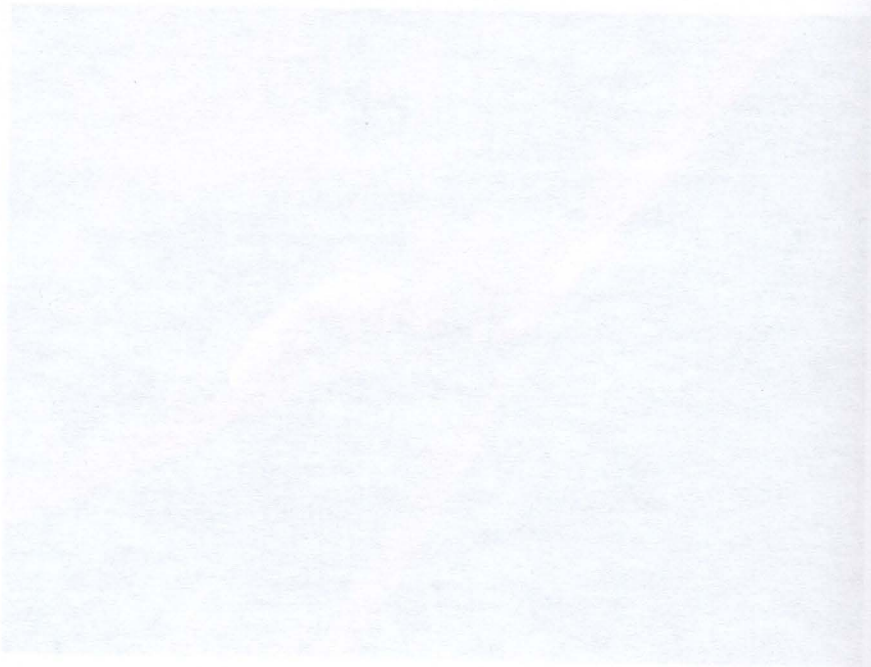
A series of sunsets and inspiration transpires, transforms, retires
Know this—rotten fruit is merely too far transformed

Nestle digital photograph
Marie Hathaway

Applebeard
D. J. G. & J. G.



NOTE: This is a very faint, illegible header or title at the top of the page.



Applebeard

Samantha Siino

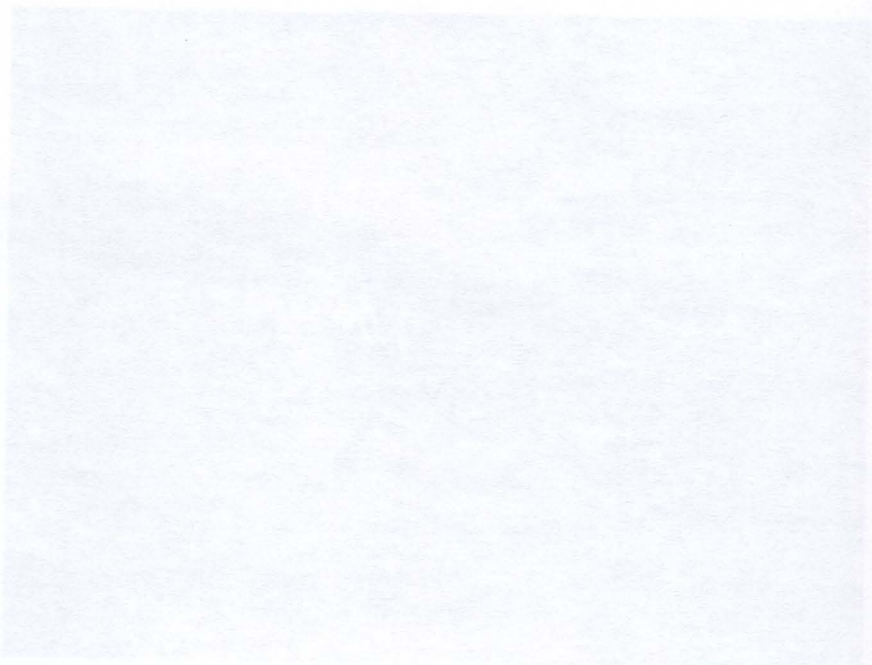
Crumpled, mottled, much besottled his one good leg is weak and
wobbled
On vehicles of air and swings and plastic metal rods and things
Treasure finding x-ing punning shoving falling crying running
Elements of ice cream candy and perhaps a sneak of brandy
Applebeard has found the golden popcorn Lego chest of olden!
He ran inside to tell the 'rents to hurry! Set up the quarter tents
And for his amazing 'gents a feast of grating elegance.
Though his mother clasped and begged, captain and crew ordered
tartlet dregs
And turkey legs to fly.
But this is moshing through the mire, and after which, they shall
retire.
Applebeard, before he fell flat, sneered at all who dared to leer,
Replaced the honored, tricorne hat and tossed his leg into the fire.

Green ...
Darius Gole



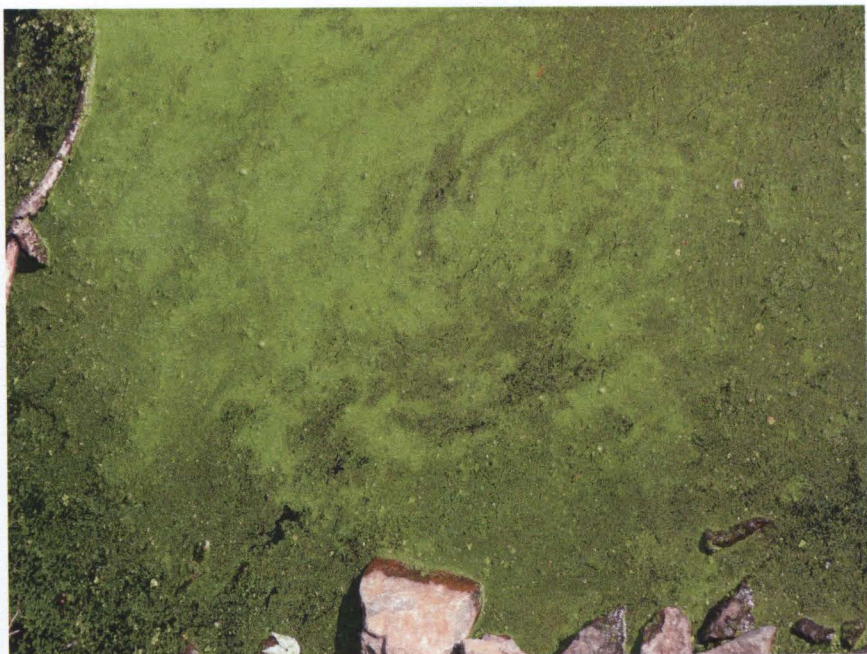
Green digital photograph

Danielle Geller



Clean and Swelling

Steve Collins



Intelligence of the ancient
As its own tired hands
Faded on the window sill
Still warm and stopped
My eyes saw what I did
With the beauty of the face
Close and crying

Green, J. S. (1990)

British New



Clean and Swaying

Susan Sullivan

The smell of soaps and chemicals
Caught in my throat

The only indication of
My war against a wild mess
Where sweatshirts had crept
Along the floor
And cups and plates had
Danced wildly on tables

Now the house was asleep
The dishes bathed and put away
Spoon into spoon
Plate hugging plate
The tables smoothly wiped down
And clutter tucked away

The room softly breathed
In the stillness of its slumber
As my own tired hands
Rested on the window sill
Still soggy and cramped
My eyes, however, vivid
Watch the laundry on the line
Clean and swaying

Willow Fish black & white photograph
Staley Bowers



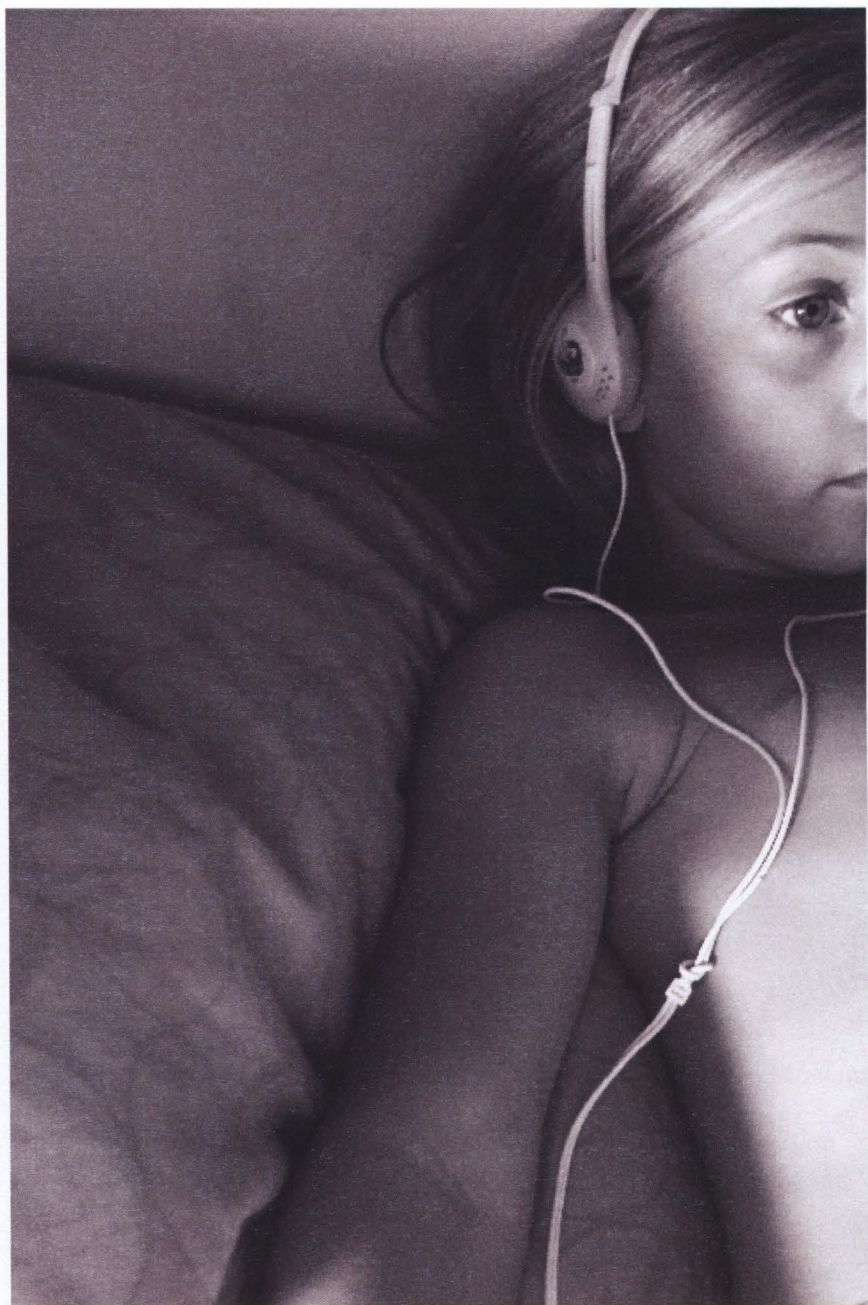
Bunny Foot black & white photograph
Staley Bowers

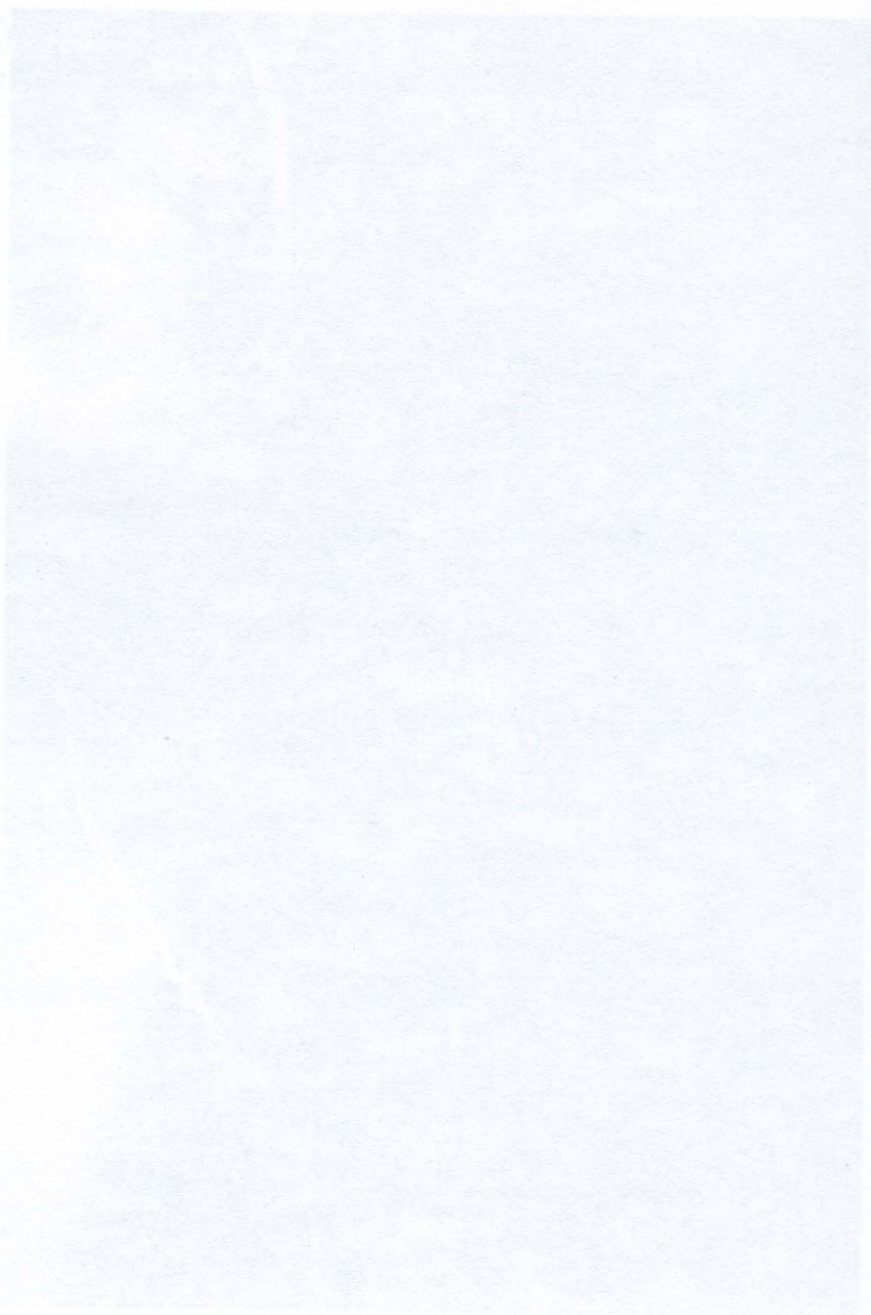




Willow Eyephones black & white photograph
Staley Bowers







Rock Memory

Elizabeth Schwartz

Even at the age of ten, my sister was fascinated with rocks. Her fingers and her finger nails were covered in dirt while she collected them. She handed me a rock. “Why do ya collect ‘em?” I asked my sister as she rummaged through the dirt, or sand—wherever she thought there was something new to discover.

“I want to know what they are,” she replied, smiling at me and dropping the clear rock in my hand. It was cold to the touch and the light from the sun reflected off the slick surface. There was a shine inside it, and the rays from the sun marked each crack that aged it. I called it a crystal.

Today, she goes to the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, majoring in Biochemical Engineering, but she still has her rock collection somewhere, collecting dust. But when we find the collection we sit down, take our shoes and socks off, and name each rock. The first is that same crystal, but now we call it “dolostone.” It’s not clear white anymore, it’s milky gray, but it still has the same shine from when she first handed it to me. There is a gray slag, quartz, scoria, and mica. The rest I can’t name.

They mark moments for me.

. . .

I biked seven hundred and eighty miles from Oregon to Montana. I only collected four rocks.

The first rock I found was at two hundred and sixty miles into the trip. I was biking on the edge of Washington and Oregon, and

for the first time I was an hour ahead of everyone else. The sky was just blue with no ominous clouds lurking about or creeping over the snowy edge of the mountains in the distance. It was just me, my smile, and my motivation marching along the road. At the peak of one of the many hills that I climbed, I got off my bike and drank warm water from my water bottle. I looked back and smiled at the emptiness. I danced alone on this hill, happy and alive. In the midst of my dance, I saw a black rock. It was smooth and shiny at the surface, but the edges were sharp and rough. I took that rock and pocketed it.

At three hundred and fifty miles, I found another. This one was smooth. I can still feel the fine layer of minerals from the Columbia River. It was spring, and the buds on the trees were waking, but the river felt like winter. I walked in with my bare feet exposed. A few degrees colder, and it would flow ice. The water streamed across my feet, and splats of water stung my legs as the river flew swiftly between my feet. My body shivered. The smooth, rocky surface felt slippery on my toes. I reached into the frigid water. I picked up a rock. It was oval-shaped, grayish white, and smoothed out by the years of servitude in the water.

At seven hundred miles I found another rock in the curb. I got to camp two hours later than everyone else. When I saw my uncle, he looked serious. "We think you should go home. It's not safe," he said, "for a girl to be alone so long on the road."

In the distance I saw a rock tucked away under some leaves, desperately trying to get out.

"I can't watch you and your cousin when you're miles apart," he continued, placing his arm on my shoulder, "You understand, right?"

Nodding, I walked over to that rock. It was a flat rock, almost square, but the corners were curved. It was strictly grey. It was rough to the touch, but not bumpy. There was a misplaced white splotch across the surface. I picked up that rock and packed up my motivation.

...

Seven hundred and eighty miles and at the bike shop. It's costing me hundred and fifty dollars to ship my bike home. My cousin was probably at the next camp site as I paid the cashier, my uncle checking out new bikes on the stand by the window, "\$3,000!" They start to dissemble my bike as we leave the store.

Looking down as I walked to the rental car, I saw this clear rock, deformed and bumpy. I kicked it ahead of me, but then decided to pick it up.

"What do you call this rock?"

"Dolostone."

Patchwork oil on wood 2 1/2'x 3'

Marie Hathaway

Esteban Rojas: What Shot Through the Heart

June Holmway



Esteban Rojas is a contemporary artist whose work often explores themes of identity, gender, and the human form. His paintings are characterized by their vibrant color palette and expressive, gestural brushwork. In this piece, 'What Shot Through the Heart', he depicts a nude female figure in a reclining position, rendered in soft, blended tones of pink, purple, and blue. The figure's arms are raised, and her legs are slightly bent, creating a sense of movement and vulnerability. The dark, textured background provides a stark contrast to the lighter colors of the figure, emphasizing her form and the emotional intensity of the work.

Esteban Rojo Was Shot Through the Heart.

Marie Hathaway

1.

His hair, after twenty years of going gray,
went black again
two months before he died.

2.

Summer had transformed the cornfields
into swaths of hollow papery stalks
with matted black silk
that curled down
from abandoned husks
like drool.

3.

Lilly watched
as the days grew
dewy with thunderclaps.
Seismic twangs
shook a barely visible membrane
stretched from road to sky.
Resounding bellows
coursed the atmosphere
settling with an acidic fizzle
in a channel between her ears and jaw.

4.

The thunder that night wasn't loud,
but it felt close
—somewhere in the walls
or lurching around in the room above.

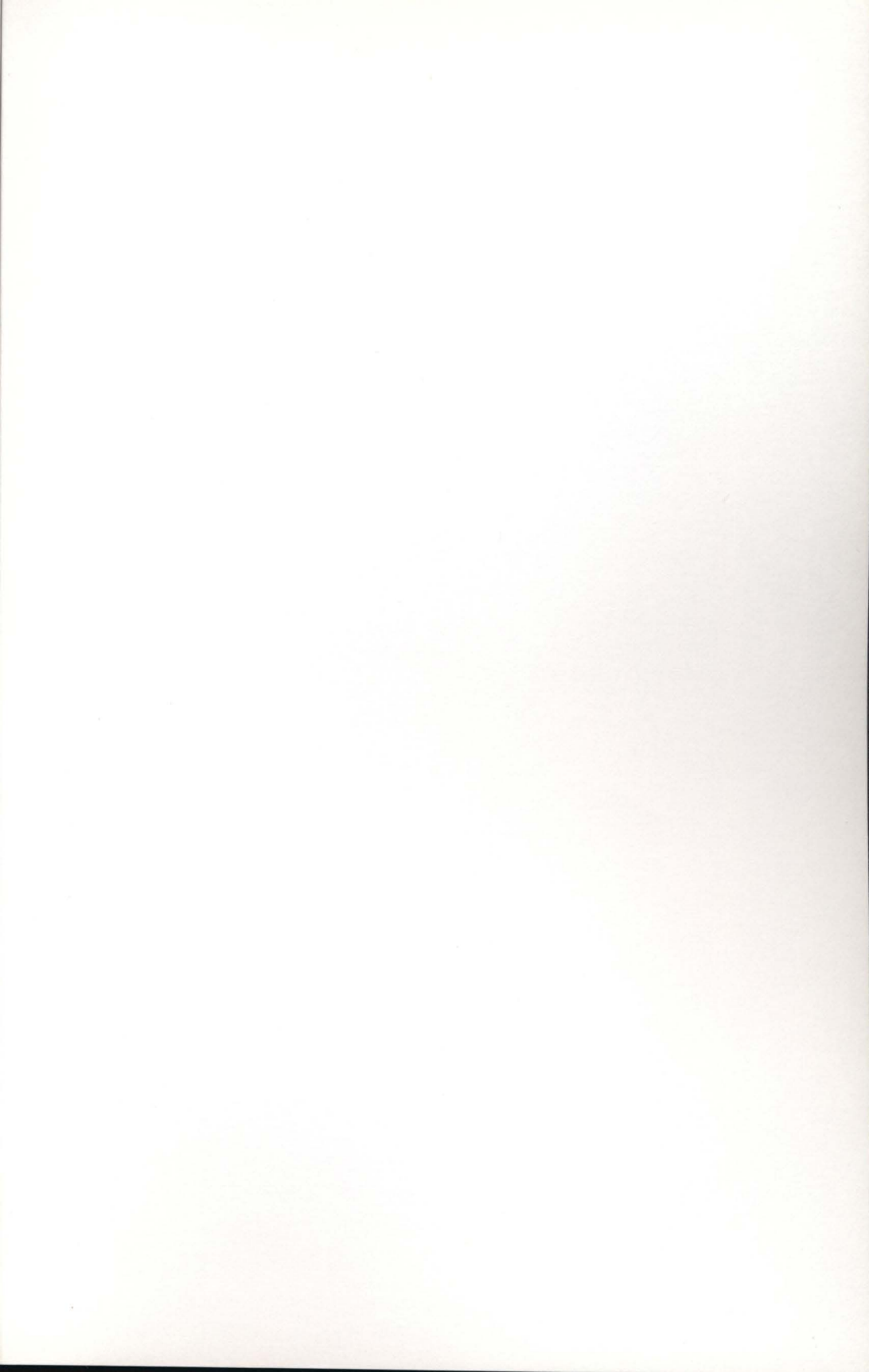
The door breathed in as he approached.

5.

Lilly woke, with alarm
having slept through morning mass.
The silence and lack of guilt
surprised her.

Soon
they would fold him softly into the ochre silt
of the river.

Lilly lay still
holding her belly like a baby.
Her face felt full and swollen.



contributors

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