



The Crucible

*Lock Haven University's
Literary Magazine*

Spring 1992

The Crucible

The Literary Magazine
of Lock Haven University

Spring 1992

Editors:

Timothy Burdick
Amy Linn
Elizabeth McMullin
Shannon Pringle

Faculty Editors:

Marjorie Maddox
Joe Nicholson

Staff:

Laura Bulgaris
Susan Davis
Ryan Ritter
Corine Stewart

Cover Art:

Elizabeth McMullin

Contents

Doug Roles	
"In Favor of Daydreams"	1
"Poolside"	2
Eleni Anastasiou	
"Vincent Van Gogh—A Self-Portrait"	3
"Herculaneum—A Capsuled Moment of Fear"	4
Marcin Sendeki translated by Adam Glaz	
Eight Poems	5
Jose J. Martin	
"Untitled"	7
Heather Millard	
"It's My Baby, Too. . ."	8
Laura Bulgaris	
Two Poems	13
Deb Daniels	
"Reflections"	14
Lisa Hedrick	
"Untitled"	15
Amy Linn	
"A Cappella"	16
"Rhythms"	17
Renee Zartman	
1991-1992 LHU Essay Contest, 1st Place	
"From Hating to Loving the Farm"	18
Ryan Ritter	
"Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Cow (a parody)"	21
Lisa Hedrick	
"Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Stone"	23
Sheri Cline	
"Northern Lights"	25
Ryan Ritter	
"Thought for Food"	26
Michael Pose	
"Screwdrivers"	29
Quinn Bitner	
Three Poems	30
Tim Burdick	
"The Freedom Fence"	31

Contents

Heather Pecoraro	
"The Enlightenment"	32
Jeff Pacl	
1991-1992 LHU Essay Contest, 2nd Place	
"Midwatch"	33
Heather Pecoraro	
"The Revelation"	35
Michael Dube	
"The War of the Yellow Roses"	36
"Green House on the Susquehanna"	43

Doug Roles
In Favor of Daydreams

Tonight I'm too tired to tether
this mind of mine to the blackboard
so I let it roam as if it were
not my own. And though I'm struggling
to hear the instructor's drone
you've only to look to know,
I'm gone.

I settled in my desk
but from there I went on.
My chair became the yellow cloth
recliner that I'd laid on
over a fleeting summer weekend.
The clumping thump of the heater
was the pounding of the evening surf,
the eerie churning that left me yearning,
although I could not swim,
to brave the tide and see what the ocean
hides from all those who come.

The restless glow of the sunset
on the crest of the Alleghenies
was now a burning sun, the one
that had baked the Maryland shore
then slipped its moorings to go
adrift on the water's rifts
and leave me on the darkening strand.
These cold mountains became
the rolling waves of the Atlantic's
vast expanse.

The coalblack crow
searching for a perch
at the end of the day
was the gray gull above the spray.
Swooping and diving she flies by
and I throw out my hand to touch
but, she reprimands.
And I'm brought back to the present,
the present tense, which in a sense
isn't me.

Doug Roles
Poolside

I see her
She's sitting poolside
She's topless
At least I believe she is,
She rubs
Coppertone
Over her shoulder
She looks to see
If I'm still watching
I am

She lifts to her lips
A sweating can
Diet Coke
She drinks and leaves
A purple lipstick stain

my wife drinks
the same, she uses coppertone
too

but I'm wondering if
this lady's lotion smells
just the same or if the soda
in the lipstick can
is any sweeter

Eleni Anastasiou

Vincent Van Gogh—A Self-Portrait

Eyes stab me from the depths of the canvas
Leave me stunned. Your desperate love-hatred
Erupts violently. Blazing white, lilac, green, blue strokes:
Nose, cheeks, brows protrude from the flatness of paint.
In a bright-blue suit you sit and pose for yourself.
Aqua, lavender, turquoise swarm in swirls
Nearly engulf you in their waves of colour
And you sit calmly, quite still,
Sadly silent, with the tips of your blue mouth
Turned downwards. Sombre and solid,
An austere high forehead, pale against
Swept back hair of golden-orange. Flaming-red
Intrudes on the blue hell of frozen fire
Outside and inside your soul. Tormented genius
Underestimated for so long—now famous.

Eleni Anastasiou

Herculaneum—A Capsuled Moment of Fear

A sister city of Pompeii was found,
In seventeen-o-nine, by chance. Today,
Some scientists have gone to trace the ground
For clues about the people there, the way
They lived and died. Entombed in pumice stone
A lady that was young and pretty told
Her story. Hands were held to shield, half-grown,
The baby in her belly. Young and old
Had no chance to live or breathe the air.
A little further on, a group is clenched
Together. Bones through time exposed, lay bare
Revealing soldiers, tradesmen, women, drenched
With molten lava rain, before it sealed
Them tight, protected. All the fragments freeze
A moment. Time stands still to be revealed
To prying eyes. These Romans show the ease
At which the blast destroyed the town. The fear
And terror lie too deep within the land
Of Herculaneum. A mother here
Had left her child asleep without a hand
To rock the charred and broken cradle-bed.
Lost lives lie tangled, mangled master-slave
Are now all one. The cataclysm's dead
Are trapped within Vesuvius' grave.

The Afternoon (II)

Marcin Sendeki
Translated by Adam Glaz
Eight Poems

*
* *

I was talking to you on the phone but I couldn't understand you—as if you were speaking through a handkerchief. The words were getting charred in the air, a bundle of black leaflets was making me dumb.

A Poem by Both of Us

The rain crossed our path, we were running, slower and slower, and it was putting on our faces scraps of newspapers, the flame of prayers, livid scraps of flesh, and I didn't know who was purging their ailing lungs above us.

Fields, Puddles

Fields, puddles, people's stooping silhouettes and the sky falling down onto the roofs of dirty houses, how clean.

*
* *

Cuts, warm. Buildings in a drop of resin spat out at the train. In every one of them (they sing) there is a ball of thread waiting, a violet little face; stretch out your sticky fingers, one move, the smallest.

Marcin Sendeki
Translated by Adam Glaz
Eight Poems, cont'd

The Air, the Light

Turn off the light, fall asleep, the air on both sides of the window ajar merges, for those who are looking at the bulbs starting to shine a dusk the light begins, sleep: legs, hips, breasts and belly pressed into the bedclothes, into the feeble walls of paper, plaster, and all that lets us sleep: so: turn off the light, fall asleep swallowing handfuls of the air mixed with mud, the air which is, which all of us live on.

(May) Be

May be everything is explained more simply, just like now, when the leaves of fire embrace the match and we slowly find each other in this feeble, short flash.

Buses and Trams

The newspapers live faster and faster. Now even you fit in their mouth, they are reading, over a young man's shoulder, a few of their own words. Yellowed pages move on, money and addresses melt in the pockets.

The Afternoon (II)

The afternoon, the musicians lead someone into the afterlife, a flock of jackdaws take wing, the faces of the mourners scrutinize themselves in the paving stones; (it has been snowing and the end of March resembles a mirror).

Jose J. Martin
Untitled

*En tu ausencia
me duele el alma,
me duele el corazōn
Amarga experiencia
que me haces sentir;
en tu ausencia
mis lāgrimas me saben a ti.*

In your absence
it hurts my soul,
it hurts my heart.
Bitter experience
you're making me feel;
in your absence
my tears taste like you.

*Al igual que el agua
escapa de mis manos
que el tiempo
de mis dedos,
a mi se me escapa la vida
mientras estas tu lejos.*

Hello
you say while you're smiling
while you're passing
silver knives by my soul.
You're hurting me
and you don't know it,
but the pain kills me
without knowing
if your heart,
if your soul still loves me.

Heather Millard
It's My Baby, Too...

"You'll get an abortion over my dead body!" Billy shouted at Allison.
"It's my baby, too, and I refuse to let you put me through the pain of losing another child."

Billy couldn't believe what Alli had just told him and asked him to do, another unintended pregnancy, another abortion. He swore to himself that there would be no more lives wasted, and now she was asking him to do just that.

The first time Allison had gotten pregnant was definitely a mistake. She had only been 16, barely out of childhood herself. They had been going out for a year at the time and decided that they were in love and wanted to be together always, so there was no reason that they shouldn't have sex. They used protection but something has gone wrong—the rubber ripped or something and protection hadn't been good enough; Allison had gotten pregnant.

Alli was now crying, begging Billy to let her abort the baby. "But Billy, I'm only 19; I have a whole life to live. . ."

"So does our child!"

"You don't understand; I'm not ready for this. Please Billy. . ."

"No! and that's it. I have to go to work—we're done talking about this. It was your decision before; now it's mine and I've already made it."

As Billy drove to work, he couldn't help but think about the last time they had been happy; now it was all turned upside-down because she had forgotten her damn pill. She was so irresponsible sometimes.

His conscience tore at him as he debated whether to give into Alli and say yes or to hold his ground. No, there was no question about it, after all, they were engaged to be married in the spring. No one would even know she was pregnant at the wedding; she wouldn't be showing yet. And it wasn't like they hadn't already planned the wedding, so no one would think that they had to get married because she got knocked up.

When he arrived at work, he called Alli to apologize for being so mean and angry.

"Hello. . ."

"Alli, hi it's me. I just wanted to call and applogize for being such a bastard this morning."

"Does this mean you reconsidered and I'm allowed to have the abortion?"

"I don't believe what I'm hearing! I call to make-up, and you can't even accept that. You're a selfish little bitch."

He slammed down the phone feeling more anger than he had before he called. What did it take to get through to her? Why couldn't she see what she was doing to him, to herself, and the baby for that matter?

After lunch Billy felt a migraine headache coming and decided that he needed to just leave for the day and go home and rest. He told his crew-boss what was wrong and left.

While driving, he decided that maybe he didn't need to rest that badly and decided to stop at The Flagstone to have a few beers. It was the middle of the afternoon and the only person in the bar besides himself and the manager, Buzz, was a local town drunk whom everyone called Krank. He told Buzz his problems thinking that that would help relax him. No such luck. Buzz said that he was sorry, but he just couldn't help with this one. He played pool with Krank and asked him what to do.

"Do ya love da girl?"

"Sure I do old man. I'd give the world for her."

"Well, ya could always take da baby and leave 'er."

"No, I think once she has the baby, she'll want to keep it and then my problems will be over."

"Well, ya do what ya want, and I hope things work out for ya."

"Yeah—me too. Thanks Krank."

Billy left the bar not feeling any better than he had when he got there. Why did life have to be so complicated? All he wanted to do was get married to the girl he loved and start a family. The American Dream type thing. Everyone else had it so simple.

When he got home, Alli was nowhere to be found. Today was her day off and she could be anywhere, most likely shopping. He decided to lay down for a while and rest. When he woke up a few hours later, she still wasn't home. Knowing that she would be home soon to start making him supper, he decided to order out Chinese and surprise her by having supper ready when she got home.

As he drove to China Queen, he couldn't keep his mind off the discussion, no, argument, that had taken place that morning. Maybe she was right, maybe she wasn't ready. But, on the other hand, he had a great partnership in a construction company and was making enough to support them and a few babies so it wasn't as though she had to work anywhere. She could spend all of her time with the baby, and he was home early from work every night, so he would be able to spend time with the baby too, plus give Alli a break in the evenings. He just couldn't grasp why she didn't want to have a baby now.

He wasn't paying attention to the road and didn't see the stop sign or the car that hit the driver's side of his truck broadside. He felt instant pain shoot through his legs and up into his back. He cried out in pain and then blacked out.

He heard sirens and people talking but wasn't able to open his eyes to see them; all he knew was that he was in terrible pain that made the migraine he had had feel like a pin-prick. He blanked out.

When he came to, he heard a very loud buzzing noise that seemed to be right above his head. He opened his eyes with some effort and saw what he guessed was the jaws of life, cutting through the roof of his Chevy Sidestep. He lost consciousness again.

When he woke up, he thought he could hear Alli giving the insurance information to the receptionist at the desk. He realized that he must be in the emergency room at the hospital and prayed that everything was all right. The pain in his legs, back, and neck was worse. Why didn't these idiots do something to relieve the pain?

"Mr. Gibson, can you hear me? I'm a back specialist. My staff and I are going to operate on you soon. You have a broken neck that has injured your spinal cord. . ."

What? I can't believe this—I'm only 22. I'm getting married to Alli in the Spring; we're going to have a baby together. No, not me.

". . . and if we don't operate immediately, you're going to be paralyzed for the rest of your life."

Oh, God, please don't let this be happening to me. Let me wake up and this all have been a bad dream.

"Billy? Honey, it's me, Alli. Everything is going to be okay. This doctor is a specialist and knows what he's doing. Please be strong. I'm here for you."

"Alli?" His voice was weak, but he was speaking. "If anything happens to me in there . . . if we have a little boy, name him after me, and call him Gibby."

"Oh Billy, please don't talk like that; nothing's going to happen to you. You'll be fine. And we still have plenty of time to have another baby to name after you."

The anesthesia was taking effect now, but he knew what he had heard. What could she be saying? She couldn't have had the abortion already. Was that where she had been all day? Out killing their baby? NO! This was too much. Why me, Lord? Why me?

Billy slept for what seemed a very long time. He kept hearing voices talking about him, but he couldn't tell whether it was a dream or real. He tried to open his eyes but to no avail. ". . . This is just a temporary coma, I assure you. There's nothing to worry about. Mr. Gibson has been through a lot this past week, a severe car accident, several operations. . ."

"Yes, I realize this Dr. Tabias. But shouldn't he have come out of this coma by now? When will we know if the operations were successful or not?"

"It's true that the only way for us to know the outcome of the operations is for Mr. Gibson to undergo some physical therapy to see if he'll walk."

Could they be serious? Maybe he was dreaming.

When Billy finally was able to open his eyes, it was about a week later. When the nurses saw that he was awake, they called for the doctor.

"Mr. Gibson. Hi, I'm Dr. Tabias, your surgeon. We've been waiting for you to come to . . ."

"What day is it?"

"It's Thursday, Mr. Gibson. You've been in a temporary coma for six days. Let me tell you what happened. . . . I've already told your girlfriend, but you might want to have her in the room when you get this news."

"Mr. Gibson, it's not bad news; it's not good either. The cut into your spinal cord was more severe than we had at first predicted. The cord was entirely severed. . . ."

"It's true then. I wasn't dreaming. I heard you and Allison talking, but I thought I was dreaming. Will I ever walk again?"

"That depends on how much therapy helps. In a case like yours, it's very likely that therapy won't do that much for you. The percentage is very small that you'll ever lead a normal life again. You'll never be able to have children, and will probably be in a wheelchair the rest of your life, even with the most advanced therapy."

"And you told my girlfriend Alli the same things?"

"Yes, I did."

"Could you leave me alone please?"

After the doctor left, Alli came in. Billy had had a few minutes to think about what the doctor had told him and decided that he wouldn't ask Alli about the abortion, but let her tell him herself.

"Billy. . . . I'm so sorry. I never thought this would happen to you—to us. You're so young. We have so much left to do. The doctor told me that you'd never be able to have children."

"Well, I just thank God that we conceived a child before this happened. At least we'll have one baby together."

"Billy. . . . There's something I have to tell you."

"What is it Alli? You look kind of pale. Are you okay?"

"God, I'm so sorry. Billy, I had an abortion. I'm not pregnant anymore. I'm sorry." Alli had started sobbing and Billy was having problems understanding her. "I've been so selfish, if I had only known that this was going to happen."

"It's okay Alli. I knew in the back of my head that I could never keep you from having one; besides, what kind of father would I be?"

"Billy, you would have been a wonderful father; I only wish that I hadn't had that abortion."

"No, really, I'm glad. You can get on with your life now and do what you want to do. There's no commitment to me, and not to a baby."

"How can you talk that way Billy? I love you and I am NOT going to leave you because of this. You could walk again, even if we can't have children. . . ."

"No, it's better this way. . . ."

"God, Billy, do you hear yourself. . . . I LOVE YOU! I'm sorry for what I did to our baby, but I still love you."

"I'm sorry Alli, but there's no way that I'd even want to be a father or a husband now."

"I'm not giving up on you that easily. I'm here with you."

"Can we talk about this later? I'm really tired."

"Sure Billy—whatever you want. I love you."

As Billy watched Alli leave the room, he thought of her and their never-to-be-born baby. . . . and of his sudden change of heart about having one. He couldn't be a dad now or a husband. He had lost everything he ever had—including his manhood, how could Alli expect him to feel the same? It seemed as though she had done some thinking, too. Now she wanted a child—but it was too late—and he wasn't sorry at all.

Laura Bulgaris
Two Poems

**Catholic Reconciliation:
(a bulimic experience)**

More than full
They stumble in
Less than empty
They exit
Going away hungry
Leaving behind
A closet full of vomit.

Untitled

I'm choking on your blood,
and I couldn't be more happy.
I didn't expect such a flood,
knowing the size of your heart.
So here I stand, fighting
with a swarm of vampire bats.
But they do not know
how determined I am.

Deb Daniels
Reflections

Dead trees stand
Rigid along the street below,
Black sentries of the winter mists,
Saluting a hidden sun.
Rows of cars,
Cold as the air,
Huddle together in the parking lot
Beneath a sky of
Indifferent grey.

The wind moans loneliness
Outside my window,
Longing for the companionship
That I too have been without.
The winter sun tries to peek
Its blurry eye
Through a curtain of frozen uncertainty,
Gazing coldly at the world below
Before silently slipping away.

Emotionless clouds drift above,
Too empty to weave a blanket of snow
To cover the harshness of death,
The bare loneliness
Of a season made too long
By solitude.

Broken ice floats down the river
Like sharp pieces
Of memories.
My world without you
Has been but a bleak canvas
Of dismal browns and
Nondescript greys.
And I wonder if the color of spring
Will bring a ray of hope
Into this mediocre existence.

Lisa Hedrick
Untitled

Icicles melting
as the sun shines through
rainbows inside them dance to break
loose.
The coolness that surrounds them
sends crisp and chilling waves through
my spine.
I touch and grab hold of its mind
I feel the coldness as the
water flows
down from the rainbows and into my
hand.

Amy Linn
A Cappella

I pull up the blind,
let in some winter sun.
It shatters across the floor
like splintering icicles.
Your guitar frozen
in a corner of cold shadows
now covered with dust,
once lulled in your arms
accompanied by our laughter and kisses.
Memories refrain,
Memories refrain.

A broken string dangles
like a dead telephone wire
snapped.
I strum the remaining
static strings.
Harmony now jangles.
The pick sticks,
rusting.
Memories refrain,
Memories refrain.

Outside the window, a cardinal sings
a song of resolutions soon
to fly away.
My eyes water
from the rays reflecting
off the snow a new year.
I draw the drapes.

Amy Linn
Rhythms

two cats curled
on the braided rug dream
of each other. For days

the rain has been saturating
in the turf where they play
in the tall grass. Tigress games

pacing their steps
slowly, steadily stalking
to capture the other. One awakes

to stand and stretch;
claws dig, muscles tense
arching its back. Then relaxes

close to warm slumbering
rhythms of their purrs
echoing each other. Softly sighing

Renee Zartman

From Hating to Loving Life on the Farm

1991-1992 LHU Essay Contest, 1st place

"Just tell me," I pleaded with one of my friends. "Well," she uttered in a solemn, sympathetic voice, "I heard he broke up with you because you live on a farm." I was shocked. Here I was an eighth grader, dumped by my first love not because he didn't like me anymore, but because of how and where he lived! It was nothing new; all through elementary school I had been teased, laughed at, talked about, and called names because I was a "farm" girl. I imagined myself going through my entire life being constantly heckled about my life on the farm, until something happened to change that.

I remember one boy in the sixth grade, his name was Tyrone. He was the bully of the class and I was not surprised that he came up with my nickname. He called me "Heifer." I was the joke of the class. It was obvious from the grades Tyrone earned in school that he didn't care about much, including when and where he called me "Heifer."

The boys in my class always busied themselves with a game of kickball during our allotted time for recess, while the girls played four square on the opposite end of the playground. I can clearly remember myself standing in line to get into square one when Tyrone, dressed in a flannel shirt and high-water jeans, wailed, "Heifer, we need someone else to play on our team, wanna play?" I, along with everyone else, heard him loud and clear. I could even see some of my friends attempting to suppress their laughter. My face turned as red as the playground ball we were playing with.

As a result of all this teasing, I tried to keep quiet the fact that I lived on a farm. After school, all my friends went home to watch the *Flintstones* and *Woody Woodpecker*. But me, I went straight from Bus #36 to my bedroom where I slopped on a pair of ripped sweatpants and a stained shirt. I never even bothered to turn on the television. I went straight out to the barn to feed the calves, every day. Of course, most of my friends would have been startled if they would have known that I didn't waltz home from school and glue myself to the television as they did. I had no intention of informing them of this fact, either. The less they knew, the better. I was different, and I hated it.

In class discussions, when the topic we were speaking about leaned towards agriculture, I hoped that the teacher was not aware I lived on a farm. Therefore, he could not refer to me for any answers or explanations about life on the farm. In Spanish class, we placed great emphasis on learning vocabulary. I could feel my blood jet faster through my veins the day I strolled into class and discovered our vocabulary lesson was about *la finca*, the farm. "Please, oh please, don't ask the class if anyone lives on a farm," I said to myself as I silently tried to convince the teacher not to ask that question. In Geography, we discussed the transition our society underwent during the Industrialization Period. "The number of farms in Lancaster County is decreasing rapidly by the year," belted out my teacher. Then, the

dreaded question, "Does anyone in this class live on a farm?" My best friend jerked around and threw me a glance. I kept a straight face and shook my head, trying to convince her not to tell him that I did. "Renee does," she said, in spite of my efforts. It took the bright red color that flushed my face two to three minutes to disappear. My hands got sweaty and my heart beat faster when someone said to me, "What does your Dad do for a living?" It's true that I was embarrassed that my Dad was not a businessman, lawyer, or doctor like everyone else's father seemed to be. When my Mom or Dad came to pick me up from school functions, they wouldn't be dressed in clean neatly ironed clothing. They contrasted greatly with other parents who came straight from their office of employment. My parents wore old jeans stained with grease and wrinkled, ripped shirts. Some of my Dad's jeans weren't even blue anymore. They were black from all the grease that was wiped on them when he repaired machinery that always seemed to break down. I guess it would have been a different story if some of my peers had gotten picked up from school in a farm truck driven by parents with soiled clothes that loitered a stench of moldy hay and cows, but I was one of two persons in a class of 283 that grew up on a farm.

Something else I did that differed from my friends' activities was to participate in 4-H. My Dad belonged to 4-H when he was young and he spoke so enthusiastically about it that I would have felt I was letting him down if I didn't join. During the summer, the first Thursday in every month, I would gather with other 4-Hers to discuss the progress of our projects, which involved pigs. We bought our pigs in the beginning of June for one purpose, to show them at the local fair in September. All summer, we fed them and watched them grow.

It was the pig show of my junior year that changed me. The show was on a Tuesday afternoon, after school. No one from school ever came to these exhibitions because there was always a field hockey game at the same time; not like they would have come anyway. I was confident that not many people would see me. I even tried to tear down the little sign that the Fair committee hung above my pig's pen. It read, *Renee Zartman - Ephrata Senior High School*. I always left a little piece hanging there so my Dad would think someone ripped it, as was often the case.

At 4:00 pm, the show started. I used baby powder to put some last minute touches on my pig. The bleachers that surrounded the ring in a perfect circle were occupied mostly by parents and elderly folk. I led my pig into the sand-covered ring. The judge, dressed in a suit and tie, usually gave equal eye attention to every pig that entered. This time, though, he kept focusing on my white, baby-powdered pig. He meticulously scanned it from head to tail. After a bit of thought, he handed me the blue ribbon. I was surprised, but not overjoyed, because there were a lot more groups ahead of me and one from each of those would get a blue ribbon, too. Then all the first place winners went for the championship. This year there were about fifteen of us vying for the championship. My pig walked contentedly around the ring, waiting patiently for the judge to make his decision.

Finally, the expert grabbed the microphone. Everyone was silent, anticipating his choice. "I'm gonna go with the white crossbreed as your champion." It hit me like a rock; my pig had won! I peered out into the audience and saw my Mom giving me a thumbs-up sign. I was ecstatic. The judge led my pig into the center of the ring and had me kneel down behind it and hold my trophy. Photographers with large, flashing cameras took my picture as reporters anxiously interrogated me. "How long have you been showing pigs?", "Who got you started in the 4-H program?" shouted one reporter trying to drown out the one next to him.

The following morning, a big picture of my pig and me was slapped on the front page of the local section of the newspaper. I was kneeling behind my pig, who was eating out of a round, black tub. I held my trophy high above its head. Now, everyone who even glanced at the paper would know that I showed my pigs. If they read the article, they would also know that I lived on a farm. What I wanted to keep silent was now on the front page of the newspaper. I feared going to school because I didn't want to hear those same snide remarks I used to hear about living on a farm.

The comments I received were the exact opposite of what I expected to hear. "Hey, I didn't know you lived on a farm. That's really cool," said the football player who sat next to me in Chemistry class. Two of my friends from church sent me congratulation cards. In school, the teachers expressed their delight in my accomplishment. To my amazement, not one person teased me. Maybe it was because my peers had reached that maturity level where they no longer derived joy out of teasing me, or maybe it was because Tyrone had dropped out of school in his sophomore year and wasn't around anymore!

Whatever it was, after that day, I was proud of the fact that I came from a farm. I look back now and can not believe that I was ever embarrassed to admit it. I realize that I've had so many opportunities and experiences growing up on a farm that many of the people who teased me did not. When someone asks me what my Dad does for a living, I do not hesitate to say he is a farmer. My family's livelihood is farming, and ever since I won that show with my pig, I'm not afraid to admit it.

Ryan Ritter

Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Cow (a parody)

I

Out in the snowy field,
The only moving thing
Was steam rising off fresh cow dung.

II

I was of three minds,
Like a gallon
Of Neapolitan ice cream

III

The cows stood there staring.
They never did understand pantomime

IV

A man and his bike
Are one.
A man and his bike and his leather jacket
Are one.

V

And on this farm
He had a cow
E-i-e-i-o,
The cow mooing
Or just after.

VI

Icicles filled the barn window
And the cows were frozen.
The shadow of the farmer
Crossed them, to and fro.
Will the cows
Give ice cream, now?

VII

O fat men of 'Haven,
How do you want
Your steaks done?

VIII

I know noble accents
And inescapable rhythms
Are coming on the Dead Milkmen's
Soon-to-be-released album.

IX

When the cow shut its eyes,
The drunken teens stole up and tipped it.

X

At the sound of Ice Cream Trucks
Ringing simple melodies,
Even the most euphonic child
Will cry out sharply.

XI

He drove through the countryside
In his fiberglass coupe.
He wondered why
All the cows he saw
Faced the same direction.

XII

The farmer is waking.
It must be milking time.

XIII

It was milking time all day
She was working
And was going to work.
The cow wanted to retire
And move to India.

Lisa Hedrick

Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Stone

Among green grass
In a hay laid field
There lies a stone
Defined by its strength.

When wind blows debris
And the hail comes fast
A stone may turn
If it loses its grip.

In a bed of soft feathers,
Mother robin tries to forget her loss.
As she burrows on small stones
Like they are all her own.

Out at sea the waves sparkle
In the moonlight abroad.
Each little sand stone is shaken
As each tide breaks its silence.

On the hand of a lover,
Dreams dare to come alive.
Inside each diamond stone
Two hearts sparkle in its eyes.

A small child hides in cold fear
From the cries of her father.
It echoes through her ears
As she sees only his heart of stone.

The Ten Commandments of our Father in heaven
Were engraved by the finger of God
Chiseled for those who follow
To live by the tablets of stone.

True poets touch the deepest hearts
And cut into the disturbing sorrows
It starts to touch their souls and minds
As tears break through their hearts of stone.

All those who seek to destroy
Follow paths on their own.
Some will find a smooth journey;
Some will fall upon their own stones.

A poor black man many years ago
Was caught stealing food for his home;
Each white man mocked him in disgust
As they watched him die by the stone.

In rows like church steeples
Mourners lay many to rest on a distant hill.
It is the beginning of their silence
As they watch him die by the stone.

A stone skipped through white waters
Sends chill down its spine;
Reflection of outer trees come alive
And reality wakes up its mind.

A tree lies silently on the forest floor
Absorbing the noises and mildew in the air
Each year it molds itself into the earth
And slowly defines a petrified stone.

To each his own
Their lives condone
By any ways or means

To find your niche
First make a wish
Then follow well your dreams.

So what am I doing managing a fast food restaurant instead of being a Pulitzer Prize winning writer? Because you can't pay the bills with rejection letters—well, probably rejection notices. He had never received any because he never bothered to submit anything for publication. Besides, there's good money in the restaurant business. Unfortunately, good grades in Fiction and Poetry Workshops combined with mediocre grades in Business courses could only land him a job in the fast food biz. So there he was, just two short years after getting his BS. Ok, well, too late to ponder about the

Sheri Cline
Northern Lights

Wisps
of silver hair
fly as she rides
the moon. A magic
trance stills the night
as moondrops replenish
her soul. She rides the moon
on the iridescent side
and slices through
the North stars who dim
in Aurora's name
as she rides
the moon.

Ryan Ritter
Thought for Food

"Okay, Ma'am, here's your whopper. Have a nice day." The woman accepted the package of seeded bun, processed cow, and assorted vegetables, then shuffled back to her booth just in time to see her youngest son tossing what remained of his hamburger onto the floor.

Howard Abner, the manager, surveyed his domain. *Does the clock really say 9:15? Christ, we got hit late!* "All right, gang, it looks like the rush is over for now, so let's get started cleaning this place up."

On his way back to his alcove-office, he gave clean-up orders to his crew: "Mark, grab a towel and wipe down the counter, will you? Rhonda, darling, re-stock the cups by the soda dispenser and make sure there is enough mix in the shake machine. You can worry about your hair later. Trust me, you look gorgeous. Kenny, can you—how many times do I have to tell you? Keep your greasy little fingers out of the french fries! Tell you what; you just volunteered to do a sweep and mop of the dining room. Some little brat just dumped his dinner on the floor. Don't argue with me; just do it, okay?" *Damn kids! Can't they think? Well, what do you expect from a bunch of brainless teenagers, anyway?*

Howard's "office" was nothing more than a too-small desk stuck in a remote back corner of Burger King just off Route 311. *Well, at least there's the notepad I can personalize.*

Aside from memos, schedule reports, invoices, and the like, there was only one remaining visible contribution to the board. Next to where the picture of his ex-fiancee used to hang was an old dog-eared copy of an epigram-poem he wrote during high school. It was small enough to be secured by only one tack, but there were presently four holding it in place.

To each his own
Their lives condone
By any ways or means

To find your niche
First make a wish
Then follow well your dreams.

So what am I doing managing a fast food restaurant instead of being a Pulitzer Prize winning writer? Because you can't pay the bills with rejection notices—well, presumed rejection notices. He had never received any because he never bothered to submit anything for publication. Besides, there's good money in the restaurant business. Unfortunately, good grades in Fiction and Poetry Workshops combined with mediocre grades in Business courses could only land him a job in the fast food biz. So there he was, just two short years after getting his BS. Oh, well, too late to ponder about the

past. *Now where is that inventory report I was working on before all Hell broke loose up front? Ahh, here it is. Where was I?*

"Mr. Abner..." This was Rhonda. She was a very pretty young woman, and she was friendly too. Real friendly. She was hungrily into her budding sexuality, and anyone else's she could get her hands on. Howard had seen her and her latest beau "just talking," as she put it, in one of the corner booths just before her shift. The guy had returned during the last rush, and now that things had slowed down, Rhonda wanted to go and use the bathroom. Howard voiced his disapproval.

"Sorry, dear, but you just went about an hour ago. I know who's out there, so you can just keep your hormones on ice another thirty minutes until you get off." *Yeah, you'll get off, alright. Little slut.* "Now get back to work."

I wish these kids would leave me alone so I could finish my work before closing. After a few minutes of grumbling about the uselessness of his staff, Howard managed at least half the inventory report before his next distraction.

While searching for an elusive invoice slip, he opened the drawer that was the current resting place of his ex-fiancee's picture. He stared at it for a few minutes, then dug a little deeper into the same drawer and emerged with a half-finished letter to the same woman.

Howard had met Cynthia Robbins in a Creative Writing class at college, where they fell in love and went to poetry readings and things like that. They were quite happy, and almost "set an date" but things began to sour. *Just like an expired "Use By..." date.* Howard had scared himself into earning a living and switched majors from English to Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Management. *I always wanted to run my own place.*

He no longer had time to attend poetry readings with Cindy, what with all the HRI meetings now consuming his time. In fact, he could no longer do much of anything creative with her intellectually, emotionally, or romantically, and they drifted gradually apart.

So now Howard was trying to write her a letter and lie to her about how great things were (No starving artists here!) and beg her to come back without him actually saying so. After reading the note once or twice, he decided it was time to complete it.

He might have finished it this time, but in the middle of a creative spurt, his pen ran dry. He tossed the now useless pen into the waste paper basket and began hunting for another when he realized that the drive-through sensor had been beeping for a good thirty minutes. *What the Hell do we pay these kids for—to stand around and pick their asses?*

Mark, the sixteen-year-old eighth grader, had apparently ignored the order to wipe down the counter and had gone out back to get stoned instead. Howard found him staring at the beeper's little light through slitted, bloodshot eyes. Howard canned him immediately, but Mark just giggled and walked out.

After taking care of the lone drive-through customer, Howard gave his staff a nice long yelling-at worthy of his years as an English major. About the only result of his mis-spent time was the joke award for "Reports with the Least Errors" he had received at his first Burger King corporate banquet. The plaque was not buried on the notepad, and he never saw another.

Now he was using his vast knowledge of the English language to chew out his crew. He did this occasionally to relieve stress and tension, and his kids were perfect subjects for his binges. They just stood there with dumb looks on their faces as their manager droned on, thinking about what an asshole he was, or fantasizing about sticking him through the broiler.

Howard was just about to return to his desk and try to finish that inventory report one more time when the two Greyhound Luxury Coaches pulled into the parking lot. The restaurant manager instantly sprang into action. "Drop two baskets of fries! Start sending some whopper patties through the broiler! Get ready; here they come!"

The drivers of the two vehicles paused outside, then shuffled in, followed only by the stares of their respective passengers. They did not want anything to eat. They were lost and merely wanted directions.

"Don't you want anything else?"

"Sorry. We just stopped at a McDonald's a while back and musta took a wrong turn somewhere. Which way do we go to get back on the way to Atlantic City?"

Howard fed the drivers their directions and watched the two big busloads of business melt away. He slowly turned back to his desk, but was stopped by Kenny's huge grinning face.

"What are we gonna do with all this extra food, Mr. Abner?"

I'm gonna shove it all into your fat bloated face, you. . .

"Well, we can't let it go to waste, right? I guess we'll just hafta eat some, huh, Mr. Abner?"

"No, Kenny, just let it sit for a while; maybe we'll get some more customers in a little bit." *Fat bastard.*

Funny. That's just what Rhonda said to me when we were alone in the back room after closing last night. "Just leave it there, okay, Kenny?" I wonder how much inventory is lost each month to him? Speaking of inventory. . .

A few hours later, when the store was shut down, the trash cans and Kenny's belly full, Howard Abner the manager surveyed his domain. *Everything's cleaned off, shut off, and set up for breakfast tomorrow. There's another day shot to Hell.* Howard turned off the lights and locked the door behind him, leaving the half-finished inventory report on his desk.

Michael Pase
Screwdrivers

Orange wet hard to swallow,
easier as time passes.
Thank God for potatoes.
Vladimir, Absolute, Saxony

russians in florida
eighty-proof fools

bottled by Montebello
100% pure, keep refrigerated

Girls look better,
dancing is easier.
Everything's fuzzy, skin's like rubber,
the end is near, pour me another.

The walk home lasts forever
spinning bed, spinning bed.

Quinn Bitner
Three Poems

Game Show

What lurks behind door #1?
A vision, a prayer?
Behind door #2?
Trickery and despair?
Behind door #3?
The world and its fate?
Behind door #4?
An answer too late?

Enlightenment

A confused panic of jumbled voices
Sirens wail and whine
I have a feeling
Someone has been enlightened.

Fallen Idol

Obsessed with the dead
Flesh house with a voice.
Get on with your life;
The King would rejoice.

Tim Burdick
The Freedom Fence

"You-little-fuck! I saw you looking at my girl! Your ass is mine!"
shouted the hawk-nosed teenager.

Hearing the commotion, I looked up from my cleaning to watch him as he punctuated with a shove each shout at the little mop-haired boy. Accepting the teenager's beating, the boy turned and hung on the fence. Continuing to clean, I watched him from the opposite side. Glancing up, I noticed his silent suffering, the tears slowly dripping down his face. My heart bled, but I did nothing. The metal safety fence separated us. My boss wanted the thirteen foot tall metal fence cleaned daily. Besides operating the Kiddie Carousel, I had to keep the gum, dirt, and bird crap off the alternating red, white, and blue metal safety bars that surrounded the ride. Ignoring those pleading eyes, all I did was wipe his tears and blood from the bars. As he whimpered, I wiped harder to make sure the guests could read *The Pioneer Freeman Fence Company*.

Watching the teenager walk away, I thought, "If I didn't have to clean this fence, maybe I could have helped. There are so many children in the crowd calling with their silent screams. Why didn't I answer this one?"

Blinking the emotion away, I kept wiping the carousel's fence.

Heather Pecoraro
The Enlightenment

Stuck in the crevice between life and death,
I pull with all my strength.
My right knee grazes the razor-like edges of granite,
Tearing loose yet another portion of skin.
Fuck, I scream into the bright indigo sky.
Why?

I pull my bruised body over the ridge,
Shouting with disgust, relief, and plain rage.
"You've made it," said the blind man.
"You are finally here. Now you can understand
Why.
I just write the story, but you, my child,
you live it."

Jeff Pacl

Midwatch

1991-1992 LHU Essay Contest, 2nd Place

"Packel," the roving patrol waits a few seconds. He tugs at the blanket near my feet, yank, yank. "Packel, you got the Mid." Mid is short for midwatch, as in middle of the night, the 12:00 to 4:00 AM watch on the ship's engineering plant. It is the rover's job to make sure the next watch is up in time. I turn the light on over my bunk, so he will leave me alone. He walks to the sleeping place of the next man on his list and carefully tugs his blanket. The rover knows he is an easy target for the ones who wake up mean. It is a tradition at sea that you are not responsible for your actions for the first sixty seconds after you wake up.

I peer around me in the dim light. The men are sleeping in bunks that are stacked three high and head to toe in long lines. There are about one hundred bunks in the berthing compartment. I hear snoring and mumbling of the restless ones mixed with the rushing of the ventilation system. The smell of oil, old boots, and the ocean permeates the room.

I roll out of my rack and lift the top portion, mattress and all, propping it open with a steel pole. My bunk has a large storage locker built into it. It is in here I keep everything which belongs to me. The space is divided into several ergonomically designed compartments. I don't give it much thought, but each one is just right for its purpose. One is just right for my work uniforms, another perfect for my dress uniform. The one containing my socks and underwear grudgingly makes room for my books. Apparently the Navy didn't take literacy into account when it designed the bunk. I go through stages; right now there are historical novels and science fiction. There is also a small drawer in middle-front of the locker, so I don't need to open it to get at the smaller things, like soap or razor. I have one of the racks in the middle. I don't have to climb down or scramble up to get out. The older salts (those who have been at sea for years) and leading petty officers lay claim to these hotly contested possessions; after more than five years at sea, I am both. I am the work center supervisor and leading petty officer of the interior communications group, informally known as the I.C. Gang.

The rest of the watch are dragging themselves to the bathroom, swaying from side to side in time with the ship's gentle roll, sending shadows skittering towards me across the gleaming deck.

I grab my towel from its place and shuffle across the cool linoleum to the head (bathroom). Like everything else on the ship, it is spotless.

When the subject of cleanliness is raised, the Navy waxes quickly to fanaticism. A crew of seven men is assigned to clean the berthing compartment and head every day. They dust and scrub everything. The floor is waxed and buffed every day and stripped twice a week. The ship's second in command, the XO (executive officer), inspects the compartment daily, wearing white gloves. He periodically stops during the inspection, gets down on his belly, and crawls under the racks searching odd nooks for traces of dirt

with his white fingers. When he rises, his hands and uniform are clean. It is the job of one of the men on the cleaning crew to scrub each nook with a toothbrush.

I walk through the echoing washroom with its double row of sinks, mirrors, and groggy, griping people, to the showers. Even a shower is taken differently in the navy. I turn on the water long enough to get wet, shut it off, scrub myself all over, turn it back on enough to rinse; I am done. I dry off and return to my bunk. I put on my uniform: light blue work shirt, dark blue dungarees, black socks, heavy ankle high steel-toed boots (called boondockers), and a bright red St. Louis Cardinals baseball cap, the traditional ship's hat of the U.S.S. St. Louis.

It is 2340 (11:40 P.M.). Without any overt signal, the watch files out of the compartment and down the passageway, carefully avoiding a communications junction box projecting from the bulkhead (wall).

The deck is painted dark gray, the bulkhead light gray, and the overhead (ceiling) a very off white. Our heels echo softly as we walk, competing with the other sounds of the ship: the clanking of machinery, the thrum of the big steam turbines, and the soft swishing sound of the ship as it glides through the western pacific.

I step through a hatch and enter the Central Control Station. The ship is run from this room. It is filled with consoles that control the boilers, pumps, and generators of the ship's engineering plant.

I can hear the EOOW (Engineering Officer of the Watch) droning to his relief ". . . we're making forty turns for eight knots, lube oil pump number two is off line for repairs . . ." As I walk up to the Petty Officer of the Watch, Steve "Cowboy" Wells, he starts his sing-song chant, ". . . Arty and Ski are repacking that hot bearing on lubo number two. . ." The two officers square off and salute each other.

"I assume the watch," says the new EOOW.

"Mr. Johnson has the watch," says the old EOOW.

"O.K., Cowboy, I got it," I say.

"Cool," he says and walks out of the room. I have assumed the watch.

Heather Pecoraro

The Revelation

Sapphire skies, massive cottony clouds;
Clean waters, oceans aquamarine.
Pure air—Breathe.

Fuck you, you ignorant species.
Take your prejudices and greed,
Go fuck yourselves with them.
Your cliches make me sick.

Why can't we live in Peace?
No war, no stereotypes, no status quo.
I have been here and there, where next?
We are killing each other.
We don't need a war; we have ourselves.

Will I wake up tomorrow?
Dead or alive.
Will I love my nation
or Fuck it
like You?

Michael Dube

The War of the Yellow Roses

I

Walter lived in the color Yellow. If you are not familiar with color atomic physics and biology, you probably wouldn't know that inside the universe of the color Yellow there lived a community of yellow creatures, who lived in yellow houses and ate yellow apples. They were a monarchical civilization of yellow people and defended their yellow color with the pride and savagery of yellow tigers. Walter lived in a small home with his yellow wife and a fierce dog named Kitten.

Walter was walking to the Queen's Crown Inn for a beer when he noticed how beautiful a day it had gotten to be. He stopped and looked up at the golden clouds and thought to himself, "How lucky we are to be alive." He lowered his head back down and saw the familiar sign of the Queen's Crown. The sign displayed a lopsided, royal crown with a yellow serpent moving through it. A warm feeling filled Walter and he smiled a content smile and entered his home away from home. Everyone in the bar turned as Walter entered and acknowledged his entrance with a "Hey buddy" or a "Walter, glad you could make it." It was Monday night and the Yellow Football League came on at nine o'clock; it was eight fifty-five now. The room vibrated with excitement. As the program began, the yellow bookies called for all last bets and a round of drinks went around the house. The game was on for five minutes when the Queen interrupted it to bring the horrible news.

II

Luther lived in a small, boring town just about 75 miles from the border between yellow and red on the spectrum. Luther lived in a red house with his red mother and his cowardly dog named Killer. Luther was eighteen when the day came for him and his school friends to break the Code of the Red. The Code of the Red was a vow that each occupant of Red had to recite yearly. The Code pledged that no citizen of Red would set foot on any other color's spectrum. Luther and his friends were determined to do just that, and not only were they going to leave their spectrum of red, but they would go right through orange and to the borders of yellow.

III

I am Professor Milton Marbury, founding researcher in the realm of color atomic physics and biology. I grew up as many children did in the world of rainbows that you and I live in. We take for granted the beauty that is revealed to us in the magic of a multicolored universe. Imagine an apple in the land of blue, or a rainbow in the land of white. Have you ever wondered

why we live in a multicolored universe? I used to go to the beach with my mother and father during the summer. What fun we had there until that day, that momentous day which changed the course of my life.

It all started when my mother bought me a new beach blanket. She had the kindest of intentions in giving me the blanket; she had no idea what was about to happen. I was sitting on the beach alone while my family was in the water playing those "family water games" when I started thinking about how wonderful my mother was for giving me this beach towel. The towel had G. I. Joe designs all around the edge of it: different faces, different vehicles, guns and other G. I. Joe symbols. In the center was a desert scene. The scarlet blood of the warriors and the yellow of the sand dominated the panorama. How neat. What inspired me more than the towel itself was the way that the colors gave meaning to the different objects on it. Blood without color would just be a puddle of gray, and how would you tell the difference between a black desert and a black lake? in my nine-year-old imaginative mind I started thinking of ways to explain this color phenomenon. This quickly turned into an obsession, an obsession which would later force me to turn to science for an explanation.

My major in undergraduate school was physics with a minor in biology. I followed this up by creating my own major in graduate school—color atomic physics and biology. I had a theory, a theory that was so unusual, a theory that if I had revealed it too early could have had me lobotomized. I theorized that at one time, our universe was one of many single-colored universes. I also theorized that over a period of time, a mixing occurred between these colors that brought all of the unicolored universes crashing together.

IV

"We interrupt this broadcast of the Yellow Football League to bring you this message of colorwide importance." To the dismay of all the men in the room, the Queen of Yellow stepped up to a yellow microphone and gave the following speech:

Citizens of Yellow, I bring news that threatens the existence of all Yellowians. In the past few weeks, youths from other locations on the spectrum of color, specifically red, have been ignoring the Code of their color and venturing into our territory. These ambitious youths, whose thrill-seeking urges take them far from the Code of their forefathers, think not of what their color does for them. Already, Redians have been spotted in great numbers as far inland as 50 miles from the border. If given the opportunity, this mixing of colors can only cause the extinction of our Color. I beseech you, rally the people of your town. Fight against the evil that plagues this day. Vive le Yellow!

The inn was in turmoil. Someone jumped on the yellow bar and cried for a town meeting. Hurrahs were rising from the crowd when Walter and the rest of the inspired Yellowians shuffled out of the inn and paraded, as though already victorious, to the steps of the courthouse.

"Quiet! Everybody quiet! Let's do this in an orderly manner," cried the yellow man who had stood on the bar so recently.

"I say we go find some of them colors and string them up," yelled a voice in the crowd.

"I wouldn't waste our precious yellow rope on the colored slime; let's just kick their red asses back where they belong," proclaimed another, whose cheeks were turning red in anger,

The crowd was, by now, so enraged that no one noticed the change of color coming over their faces. No one, that is, but Walter. The congregation marched down the main street in Yellow, heading for the border. The got within ten miles of the border when someone in the army yelled, "There's one...two...three...there's three of them over there." Now granted, "over there" is a long way, since you can see a red for miles and miles in a land that was until recently only yellow.

V

Luther of Red sat on his front porch chewing his fingernails when his pals drove up. He entered the car quietly, staring off into an unknown world.

"Having second thoughts Luth?" asked a voice from the front of the car.

"Naw, just thinking...what if someone sees us?"

"They won't, school taught that nobody lives within five miles of the border of Yellow and the Orangians never leave their houses. Weird folk the Orangians.

"Right. Whatever."

Luther didn't want to push the issue for fear of being thought a "chicken." One of the boys up front turned on the radio and they sat back to meditate on the scenery. Images flashed through Luther's head of what another color might look like. In school, they tried to make analogies, but the teacher said it was a concept out of anyone's range of explanation. His heart was beating with the speed and strength of a thoroughbred. His concentration was broken when an awesome sight came to his eyes. Orange!

The driver slammed on the brakes. The radio was silenced. A look of awe came over the three boys' faces when the orange landscape appeared out of nowhere. School had no explanation of why the color change happened so rapidly. The professors always said, "that, my son, is one of the great mysteries of the universe." At first they couldn't even speak—imagine the mental strain caused by viewing another universe. Every rule of vision learned since birth had suddenly changed. After staring off for about twenty minutes, Luther urged the other boys to continue on.

The people of Orange were a strange folk, all born with agoraphobia, the fear of open places. This anxiety prevented most citizens of Orange from ever leaving their homes. Robots and computers took care of the farming and the delivering of produce. Because Orangians never left their homes, government was unnecessary. Luther and his pals journeyed forth into the land of orange creatures, being careful not to be discovered by the neurotic population. What they did not expect was that their trespass beyond their home had caused a chain reaction, a reaction that would alter the basic structure of the multi universe.

The scarlet trio had at last completed their journey through Orange and had now arrived at the border of Yellow. Unaware of the danger that lay ahead of them, they plunged thoughtlessly into the golden landscape. Five miles in, a herd of yellow deer paused thoughtfully at the sight of three red creatures. In fear, the deer turned and shot for cover. What a strange world Yellow was. Luther's thoughts were cut short when one of his pals cried out in fear, "Look...look at that tree!" The boys then saw a wondrous thing. A tree that was surrounded by rotting yellow apples had begun growing red ones! It was then that they realized they had been spotted. Running towards them was a horde of crazed Yellowians with red, flushed cheeks and a bloodthirsty look in their eyes.

VI

Walter was unsure of what was happening to the people of his community. He had never seen such aggression before. What was the strange rash that had appeared on his kinsman's faces? These questions would have to be dealt with later, for they were almost within striking distance of the red intruders. The crowd of Yellowians swarmed the three red adolescents with the fury and fierceness of a cornered wildcat. Screams of murder filled the air. During the confusion, one of the boys made it back to the red car and sped away in the direction of the border. Walter, shocked at the savagery of his people and fearful of the repercussions they may have brought, ran home to deliver the disgraceful news to his family.

Walter's wife could see in his face that something awful had happened.

"They killed them! One got away, but they killed them. Possessed—they were possessed. They killed them. I can't believe it!"

"Slow down, honey, you're not making any sense. Start from the beginning."

Walter's wife tried her best to sound calm, but she knew that whatever had made her normally cool husband this upset was something horrible.

Walter told his wife everything that had happened after the Queen's broadcast. She brought him a beer to calm his nerves. They sat together in front of the television, holding onto each other, both possessed with uncertain fear of what lay ahead.

"We interrupt this program to bring you a message of colorwide importance."

Tension filled the room. Even Kitten could sense the anxiety that swam between the couple and their television.

Citizens of Yellow, I come to you with grave news. We have just received a radio transmission from the universe of Red. They have informed us that within twenty-four hours their army will invade the borders of Yellow. These hostile creatures claim that the citizens of Yellow have cold-bloodedly murdered two Redian youths, however, they refuse to provide us with proof. Men of Yellow, take arms and defend your color and your children. We must exterminate these subhuman barbarians. Vive le Yellow!

Following the Queen's speech appeared a documentary on how to turn household items into weapons. Walter turned down the volume on the television and turned to his wife. They held each other for security, both fearing that the end was upon them. Walter gathered his wits and prepared himself and his family for the onslaught of the Red army.

VII

Luther barely got away; he impressed himself with the skill he had suddenly developed in driving a stick shift. He sped away from the carnage he had just witnessed, thinking only of getting home to the comfort of his mother's arms. What would he tell her? They didn't mean any harm; they were only curious. Random, crazed thoughts raced through his young, innocent mind.

Luther arrived home and ran for the security his mother had offered him in the past. Luther explained the terror of his journey; his mother stared, listening in horrified silence. She immediately brought Luther to the King of Red, to present the tragic news. Upon hearing the story, the King instantly declared war upon the land of Yellow and instructed messages to be sent out to the other colors of the spectrum in search of an alliance. The First Spectrumwide war had begun.

Luther was in shock. Was he responsible for this war? No. His parents reassured him that he was not at fault. However, Luther was eighteen years old and had a responsibility to fight for his country. His mother spent most of the evening at the sewing machine, creating uniforms for Luther and the other young men who would aid in the war effort. In the morning, they would march into Yellow, and not far behind them would be their allies. The King had received word that the kingdoms of Blue, Indigo, and Orange would send their troops to support Red. Orange offered the services of their farming robots. Green and Violet did not agree with the war and vowed to defend Yellow.

VIII

Walter stood at the border for the first sight of the enemy. The other Yellowian men were laughing and telling each other the ways they were going to kill the Red scum. How could he be so different from the rest of his race, he thought to himself. They stood vigilant, knowing they would not see their enemy until the Reds were upon them inside the land of Yellow. Suddenly, the sound of war cries were heard as the Red army advanced across the border.

The battle was fierce, and the warriors were so intent on their fighting that they did not notice the transformation going on around them. Objects all over the land of Yellow were turning red! The blood of the Yellow soldiers, the leaves on some of the trees, the scattered rose bushes all changed hue. As the robotic armies of Orange crossed the border, a similar change occurred. Orange leaves appeared, the sun took on a new appearance, and even the hair on some of the Red and Yellow soldiers changed shade. Similar changes happened as the reinforcing armies of Blue, Green, Indigo, and Violet crossed the border.

Bodies were scattered all over the multicolored battleground. Suddenly, a young Redian approached Walter with a fraudulently fierce look in his blue eyes. Walter could tell that this boy wanted no more part in the bloodshed than he did. Walter dropped the sharpened broomstick he had been carrying around the battlefield in hopes that the boy would read this as a sign of peace. Confused, the boy did the same. They stood there for what seemed like years, staring speechlessly at each other. Walter realized how similar this boy was to himself not so long ago. And more, he realized they were brothers, brothers in a multicolored family of angry and untrusting fools. Why are people so quick to condemn an entire race on the basis of such a superficial trait as color? The boy, whose name was Luther, was consumed with similar thoughts. All across the battlefield, similar bondings were taking place. Blue and Violet were shaking hands. Green and Indigo were embracing. It was as if a higher power had seen the death and destruction that covered the field and shouted BROTHERS! STOP THIS SQUABBLING AND LOOK AROUND YOU. The fighting had stopped, and a wondrous new world had been born. Even the horizon had changed, for the barrier that had previously prevented the sight between colors was no longer there. All of the colors had become united, and confusion filled the universe. The confusion, however, was joyous, and celebrations were going on all over the spectrum.

Walter invited Luther to return home with him to celebrate with a turkey dinner. They slowly walked to Walter's home, discussing the details of life in a multicolored world. Walter noticed how beautiful the white clouds were against the blue sky. They passed the familiar sign of the Queen's Crown Inn, and Walter told Luther about the events that had led to his participation on the battlefield. Walter noticed the magnificence which color brought to Her Majesty's Crown. At home, they sat down to a wondrous meal of turkey with crimson cranberry sauce, red wine, fluorescent yams, and

a brownish gravy. His wife piled on to Walter's plate healthy portions of everything including his favorite part of the turkey—the breast. Walter looked at Luther with the innocent eyes of a newborn and said to his wife: "Honey, I think tonight I'll try the dark meat."

IX

"Mr. Marbury...Mr. Marbury, how are you feeling today? Nurse, please increase Dr. Marbury's medication to 500 milligrams of Thorazine. Oh. Also schedule him for one extra shock treatment each week. It's O.K., Dr. Marbury, go back to sleep. Sorry for disturbing you," said Dr. Freudman as he looked with bloodshot eyes at the chart of patients.

"Hello, my name is Doctor Milton Marbury. Have I ever told you about the time I entered the seven dimensional universe of Frobozz? It all started when..."

Michael Dube

Green House on the Susquehanna

Written while watching the mist rise off the river from the heat

White.

Balls of cotton break for the sky
as their liquid souls are pulled out from their watery womb.

Look at the frigid, naked branches
peering out from behind the universe of cotton,
calling out from across the plain of ice,
"Look at them fly!"

We stand in solitude:
me on my porch,
they on their island.
"Take me with you!" they scream
though they know they cannot go.
"Take me with you!"