

*the*  
*Crucible*

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THE LITERARY JOURNAL OF  
LOCK HAVEN UNIVERSITY

SPRING 1995

# the Crucible

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**Victoria Zaitz**  
**Rainforest**

We move, red eyes  
above the landscape,  
paired to each other  
like flames.

The black trees remain  
cold as martyrs,  
scorched roots silent.  
Somewhere unknown to us

the last breed  
vanishes in smoke,  
dead as ancestors.  
All along the charred grasses

small pains swell and devour.  
We merely wipe our face,  
and it is over.

It is impossible to take back,  
it is done, the blazes hiss at us.  
From up here they fall silently;  
the exotics, the unfamiliar.  
We are gods above black holes,  
the airs cannot trap us.  
Even the storm and whips  
of thunder do not shake us.  
We ascend, blank and peaceful

While in the flame rises  
the ash of somebody's dead boy.



**Timothy Burdick**  
**Winter's Tale**

Two spindly evergreens  
stare  
through the glass parlor  
wall at me.

Their dried brown arms  
blossom out  
in the harsh cold;  
each branch fingers

the icy particles  
that drop  
one  
by  
one  
from a frozen sun.

I just watch.  
The wind's stinging grip  
grasps for me,  
only to slap against  
my invisible pane.

I wrap the black scarf  
around my  
weathered throat  
while the frosty specter outside  
wails  
for my presence  
beneath my Brigitte's willow.

From my hiding place,  
I smile.  
A dry white season  
of fear.

**Amy Timko**  
**The Final Masterpiece**

On a white canvas,  
a brushstroke and a red petal drops  
and she falls to the bed, motionless;     dying.  
Bluish veins of the leaves  
are withering, drying, turning cold. . .  
—Save the rose!

The thorns not seeming real then. . .  
The scarlet, violet blue, forest green, mud brown of oil have  
Become stains on the innocence of the white  
backdrop;     no longer perceived as beautiful.  
Tainted. (She has folded/Them back into her body as  
petals/  
Of a rose close when the garden/Stiffens and odors bleed/  
From the sweet, deep throats of the night flower.)

Invisible thorns pierce.  
Crying for days, he seeks  
to revive the dying beauty,  
The Rose.

On artist's paper, no more  
petals will fall; you  
will stay  
in full bloom.



Victoria Zaitz  
**Mind Fish**

I am fish in a river of light  
Gulfs stream and stretch  
Their twilight  
Over my eyes in fine grains

Star-silt smooths  
My silver thin  
Scales, I shine and dart

Through water pouring  
sleep-hole after sleep-hole  
Inexhaustibly,  
Like a mechanical baptism...

Bruised purple fin, one  
Eye all pupil and lightening  
Flash, I bear some sort of  
Explosion, I absorb electric  
To expose my skeleton.

Straight on I look like  
The negative of a photograph,  
A yin-yang embryo  
Scorched as the smell  
Before the storm...

I make no sound, that's what's so  
Horrible about me, you can never quite  
Put your finger on

The weight of a pained silence,  
Or understand what is  
Cooking in me  
When I spy the half-  
dead bait,

A twitching, deformed suicide  
Hooked in my vision—I tread  
Over, alarmed yet

Hungry  
To discover the tail ring  
Of a mermaid, open-  
Hearted, and thrushing, thrushing

Itself into my O-mouth  
Until I am pulled into mid-  
Air, and just when you think  
My feeling, all of me will

Evaporate, I begin to fall  
Fall back into the river of light  
Fall back,

The burn of the salt  
Seethes me, I am gashed  
But you forget—  
I am cold-blooded and wild  
I stretch as one point in all directions,

Under the thick sunset  
I must glow and glow,

Untouched and Untouchable  
Pure as a virginal crystal.



**John Heath**  
**Untitled**

...and on that fine line  
a miracle hike—stretch out  
across the stream and  
just be happy as I am.

Iguana heat  
beat down, hey try not to  
frown!  
me and the roll-sleeved one  
rolled in love.

Reconciled joy how do I  
please her...  
does it make me  
a doctor to  
kiss  
and not tease her?

For such a shallow  
simple breeze  
caught me under just the way  
and split apart  
those blades of grass  
I'd introduced  
today.

**Shawn Ivie**  
**Roads and Pathways**

As I came to a white,  
open  
field of daisies, I stopped  
to rest.

As I stared out in-  
to the field

I noticed one flaw.  
In the middle of all the soft, white  
petals was a lone, tall stalk of ripe field corn.  
I had my choice to pick  
any of the flowers I wanted.  
Being hungry, I passed by  
all of the beautiful, but useless, white  
daisies, and chose the corn,  
with its silky yellow hair  
and its rough, working skin.  
I have been ful-  
filled ever since.



**Toru Tanabe**  
**Illegality**

Our laws don't say anything about me dating you.  
But when can I touch you legally? When  
Will the flimsy paper recognize our love? Hence  
I'll kiss your lips, forehead, and maidenhead  
Illegally, will touch you although breaking the law.  
Over the speed limit I want to reach you without  
Showing right or left turn lights; ignoring  
Stop signs I want to chat and hug you,  
Kiss you on the No Parking area;  
Without watching, back a car without putting on the brake;  
I want to clash mine against yours like a car accident,  
Throwing us back and forth and upside down,  
Tearing off clothing, breaths, shrieks. I want  
On the bed to lie down like a broken car  
That is inside out.  
When flowing gasoline catches fire,  
Let us make our love again, spreading out  
The sweat of powdered glass until  
An ambulance comes for us with speed.  
When a police officer examines our love,  
Let's say, "We illegally love. Please,  
Imprison us in one small cage, please"  
In order to show off to the prison guards  
Our crutches, the bandage of a bed sheet,  
Our condition which is finally  
Legal and compulsory.

**Jake Hewson**  
**Road Kill**

Attractive: on the first sight  
but stiff. A board the  
closer you get.

Smell: can't from a distance,  
like foul meat when you're  
near.

Sad: as if Monte your old dog  
just took his last breath.

Funny: it's sun-bathing to an  
unknowing young one.

Messy: a heavy night of drinking  
followed by a pizza eating  
contest.

Gone: a sentence to a deaf ear.



Amy Timko  
One Line Riddle Poems

Car Tracks in Snow

Motion over stillness leaves a muddy stencil on white.

Alphabet Soup

"The Zergblot Cat" swims in a lake of tomato sauce.

A Brown Apple Core

Red flesh now gone, the center decays.

Susan Sarvis  
Pennsylvania Barnyard Massacre

Feathered feature  
running around ruffled.

Caught by the grasp  
of its killer.

Doomed towards death.

The axe  
falls upon  
fiery.

A final headless  
unknown yard-prance.

Mark death here!



**Amy Haagen**  
**Blue**

Two miles outside of town, down an untraveled dirt road  
The grass and weeds grow where the automobile tires  
used to pass.  
Crooked pickets of the faded white fence hang  
from rusted nails.  
The gate creaks as the stale wind sweeps across the estate.  
The sidewalk is crumbled and partly covered with dry moss.  
Shutters bang against the flaking exterior walls;  
The paint used to be blue.

The side porch is engulfed in briars and it's caved in  
on one side.  
The fallen boards have broken the flower pots  
and blocked the doorway.  
Tangled barren bushes climb up the walls and scrape the  
windows.  
The swing in the backyard has fallen from its hooks  
and rests on the ground.  
It lies in front of the scummy algae green pond;  
The water used to be blue.

The grass is dry and crunchy, and the earth is hard.  
Glass from an attic window is shattered on the lawn directly  
beneath the third-story pane.  
The front porch is bare, lifted boards from the steps.  
The wooden door is tightly sealed where the screen door  
used to swing wide open.  
That was years ago, before they found out about the  
cancer;  
They buried her in her blue dress.

Inside the lonely decrepit house, he barely survives.  
He sits on the dusty antique sofa and holds her  
framed portrait close.  
His devotion and untainted love search for life in a dead  
soul.  
Among the wrinkles, his abandoned eyes are lonely and  
spiritless;  
They used to be blue; and aside from the color,  
they still are.

**Gary Renzelman**  
**My Father's Corn Crop**

If his crop of corn had been damaged by blight or hail or shriveled by  
drought, Dad could have lived with the consequences, but the betrayal  
that knawed at the core of his sense of justice could never be exorcized.

As the youngest of seven children (his sister, Dora, was twenty years  
older), he was already a "worker" at age ten or eleven. His father and  
the conditions of farm life took child labor for granted. His mother died  
when he was seven. His younger sisters were assigned to his care and  
the household chores. He and his two brothers did the farming while  
their father began "retirement" at age fifty. The children were obligated  
for having been brought into the world and were thus expected to tend  
for their father.

My closest approximation of the facts are sketchy details. Grandfather  
Renzelman brought his family to America in 1890. He had lost his flour  
mill business in Hanover, Germany, after he co-signed promissory notes  
that went bad. He had apprenticed as a cabinet maker but had never  
worked in the trade. Dora was born in Germany and the other children  
in the USA. At first, the family lived briefly in New York City where Dad's  
father delivered milk by horse and cart. They then moved to eastern  
Nebraska to take up rental farming near Fairbury and later moved by  
train, riding in the boxcar with their animals and household goods, to  
another farm near Bennet, near Syracuse.



Denise Summa  
**Armor of Ice**

I stood beside him in the freezing snow.

His robust figure shaded me  
from the passionate sun.

I only knew that he was sad.

He clutched his tissue as icy tears  
thawed from his sorrowful  
eyes and rolled  
down his frozen cheek.

It was then  
that I saw him  
for the first time.

My father.

Crystals of snow shattered  
on his warming flesh,  
soaking into him.

Freshly fallen flakes  
clung to his wet eyelashes.

I remember hearing him cry as he shook  
his head.

Warm tears were squeezed from my  
own eyes.

With the snow collapsing around him

I saw my dad not as a father,  
but as a hero.

I knew from the moment he cried  
his emotion-laden armor,  
like ice in the scalding sun,  
melted from his large frame.

And he was able to bear his own hurting heart.

How I wanted to hug him...  
but I was still.

Victoria Zaitz  
**battered shadow**

The more intensely one lives, the more one burns and  
consumes oneself.

-Sylvia Plath

1  
body box,  
tight and thin-lipped,  
soon you will open

your blue husk  
raw jaw  
to clamp me in.

if i am good  
barren still-life  
a woman will paint my face  
and a man  
place a lily  
in my palm.

2  
something is breathing in me.  
darkness: a small black form  
feeding on itself.  
i wrestle my muscle  
to peer out the pinhole  
my eye an oyster  
stiff and without pearl.

3  
they carried me  
on a stretcher too small  
for my heart.  
i thought myself dead  
on a white angel  
whose wings slipped  
from beneath the bed.  
instead everything goes



to focus my eye  
on a chipping wall.  
it too, is white  
scalpel scraped  
and smoothed to blankness.

4

hospital,  
jack-in-the-box, you are wired  
with traps. soon  
the halls of your neck  
will twist  
and split,  
one medusa hiss  
from plastic tubes;  
giant worms  
tunneling me off  
with blind, unwanted life.

5

i am floating on a crust  
of snow-sheet, sterile  
and melting, melting

as i drown

i am stuck and hoarded by clones  
who wire me to bomb machines  
while a flock of women  
surround me  
calling the wrong name.

6

the curtain separates us.

shadows nod and shrug,  
nod and disapprove.  
angel-headed bastards,  
i know what you are doing.  
i am sealed off and glued  
a terrible package  
nobody will open.

7

mother i am still breathing  
mother they force feed me  
mother it is chalk,  
thick black.

it is paint scum  
and sludge grime.  
it poisons me worse  
than you ever did.  
and mother in the bathroom  
the worms came back  
black and evil and ugly  
just like me.

8

they will not come too close.  
they prod an unhealthy specimen.  
the sour breath, spore eaten  
is taking over. i am grotesque.  
i exude a rare saddening infection  
that saturates the air  
i know they would not hold my hand  
even if i begged them.

9

they poke me weakly  
in my gown, i'm a baby  
for a christening,  
mounted and propped  
on steel bars miles in the sky  
on cold shiny silver

for hours.

my eyes are all pupil,  
they fixate on nothing—  
"it's october 31, 1994  
and i have tried to kill myself."  
i think i may be hearing voices  
Halloween  
they whisper



10

i failed. i consumed everything.  
i wept in open places.  
i was drawing, drawing  
the world away  
into one breath.  
the fly buzzed at the bottles.  
he said: there is only one  
thing left,  
labels that read:

IF SWALLOWED, CONTACT A POISON CONTROL CENTER IMMEDIATELY.

i swallowed. there was nothing left.

11

i am in a hole,  
a womb cocoon.  
i am a blind mole  
wading in a large sea.  
it is too silent,  
it is coming for me...

CONTACT A POISON CONTROL CENTER IMMEDIATELY.

12

the note reads:  
i have done something horrible.  
please  
help  
me

13

and the conversation went like this:

"I'm doctor \_\_\_\_\_.

...physically, you'll be just  
fine. How do you feel?"

(i want to die.)

"You're a very lucky girl."

(i don't feel lucky.)

"How do you feel?"

(i want to die.)

"Some friends are here to see you...  
...mental hospital...did you really  
want to die or were you just trying  
to get attention?"

(both)

"I see, well sign here...hope you feel  
better...keep you under surveillance...  
feel like you wanna hurt yourself?"

(i want to die.)

14

"Visitors."

two strangers stare  
at the zoo animal  
chained to the bed.

"That's me. That's what I am."

they ask,

'How do you feel?'

"I want to die."

silence.

'Well, we're from school.

We came to help you move to the mental ward.'

a battered shadow drifts above the bed.

i turned my wet face to the wall.

a voice said:

"Get out. Get the hell out and don't come back..."



*Jon Hartman*  
**Last Time I Visited a Cemetery**

A lonely stone  
stood solid and cold  
in the midst  
of a granite field.

No body, no spirit  
just a time-freckled  
slab proclaimed  
a name and a day.

Twisted oaks sheltered sun,  
rabbits trimmed weeds,  
starlings warbled lullabies,  
and that is all.

*Anthony Wood*  
**Parental Failure**

The ground is shaking  
The trees are gathering their leaves  
And leaving  
Why are you here?  
No one said that you could return  
The undertaker put you to rest years ago  
Mommy doesn't miss you, and I know that I don't  
Why are you here?

Miss Barrett down the street throws rocks  
at your tomb  
Because near your plot, flowers do not bloom  
Why are you here?  
Apologies are too late, like taxes filed on  
June 8  
Our family has changed, since the bottle's spirit  
that you possessed went away.....far away

Go away  
Go away  
Go away



**Nathaniel A. Thomas**

**Empty**

My angelic hands wave over the mirror's face as  
I cast away thoughts of all things, and my eyes  
Lock onto themselves and swim in nothingness.

How I desire oblivion.

The billowing wind crashes in, curtains ballooning  
over the sill: you are a wicked power.

Blow me away.

My thin white arms flutter to the dismal strands  
hanging limply over my brows.  
Where has my constraint gone?

My vacant shadow stares blankly at itself  
as some far-removed intellect reviews the past:  
happy disciplined days.

Was restraint ever mine? Confound passion!  
See how wasted I become in my pondering. . .

More wind.  
It whips the bedcovers and  
topples innocent paper stacks.  
Nasty moving air.

My watery eyes blink rapidly as I shiver in revulsion.  
Lips quivering in hopeless anticipation,  
Limbs aching fruitlessly,  
Heart roving restlessly,

Empty as the wind.

**Scott McCamley**  
**Never Alone, Together with You**

Red, stained, broken glass  
pain, shattered hopes  
please don't ask,  
but I need you to

Painted eyes and smiles?  
I don't know  
they come and go  
I need you to stay

Why be afraid?  
need, need, need  
never alone,  
together with you

Black hearts with blue bows  
laugh and play  
in the blood red snow  
let it fall  
let it fall  
let it fall



**Timothy Burdick**  
**The Sacrifice**

Tiled fists  
cemented hands  
laid out.  
His waxed hair  
prostrate in the sun.  
The body spiders  
each limb burning  
in grainy earth.  
Screaming arms  
jerk his worn body;  
miniature black soldiers  
march from the hill.

My vibrant shades with blue pines  
as some far away  
in the blood red snow  
let it fall

More wind  
it whips the bedcovers and  
ripples innocent paper stacks  
Nasty moving air

My watery eyes blink rapidly as I hover in revulsion  
Ups quivering in hopeless anticipation,  
Limbs aching fruitlessly  
Heart roving restlessly

Empty as the wind

**Jessica Rogers**  
**A Lion's Breath**

Oh, what reeks of regal rage  
Past those white killing  
Knives.  
The fragrance  
Demise.

Burning from the depths within  
Hot, heavy  
From his chest  
Enters and exits with no risk.

Proud, royal, majestic, king  
It touches prey  
Once  
He consistently  
Wins.



Adam Davis  
Blessed

There I was, sitting in the woods of the late night, leaning myself against a skinny tree awaking from its seasonal torpor. I suppose I shouldn't inform you of my contemplations, for they were most horrific, at least how I view them. I don't remember exactly at what point I closed my eyes and inhaled a large breath of nature, but at least I do remember doing so. When I opened my eyes and mind back to the world, I saw him.

From out of the night he came, a large and muscular figure, standing at least six feet. He was broad, much more so than I, making me feel all the more feeble and futile. In his nakedness, he stood erect before me taking in a large breath of air and expanding his powerful chest, the bright moon silhouetting his muscular build. In my increasing fright, I fumbled a cigarette to my quivering lips when it snapped away out of sight. I saw no hand, mind you, but felt only a strong gust of wind hitting my face.

The figure crouched down before me and drew his face near mine, and to my astonishment, he was the most beautiful creature I'd ever laid my eyes upon, more so than any human, man or woman. His face was chiseled perfectly and his short, brown hair was messy but perfect. His fiery yellow eyes caught mine, and I became transfixed. I knew not who or where I was any longer. His large palm slowly extended forward and smoothly grasped my shoulder with a power I could never imagine. He then drew his lips toward my ear and whispered in a deep and trusting tone, "I am Oberon. I am what dreams are made of. I reside where endeavors dance. I created time and time has created you, my child. I am the earth, the wind, the fire, and water. And in the end, I will be you. Think no more of me or of this night, just remember yourself." At that moment, upon finishing his statements, his powerful grasp left my shoulder, which felt like jelly, and he stood upright in front of me again, never once distracting those vivacious eyes from mine. I wanted so much to touch him, to feel him, for you see, I could feel nothing but love. All hatred I had ever held before in my life seemed to vanish in his presence. I reached out to him, but he turned languidly away from me and walked silently back into the night, forever gone.

When finally I exuded myself back to reality (I had lost all track of time), I jumped to my feet and ran through the woods, hoping to find him. I had so much to ask him, so much to know. I begged and screamed his name into the night. Never had I once experienced such a need, such a yearning. But I'm alright now. The drugs are doing their job, and the walls keep me confined in here. The nurses don't complain of me anymore, only boast of my improvement. I'm feeling much better.

Adam Davis  
The Coming of the Lord

Desecration....

Contrivances I've made, contravening your norm,  
I roam....

To the west, the east, the north, the south;  
My eyes, my wide open eyes cover all.

I grow....

With cognition, I sprout wings.

In effervescence, my eyes venture,  
Into the past, the present, our future.

I am alive....

My commencing freedom, my unshackled feet,  
Writhing and flowing in an exudate of knowledge,  
Eluding disposition spawned through tradition,  
And I've seen nothing today, nothing at all.

Why do you look upon me this way?

Your eyes are so dark, your eyes are so blind,  
And I am the contretemps?

I give you this gift, the ultimate gift,  
And you discard it forever and ever and ever....

Malicious deception you say?

So point to your answer, your nescient theories,  
And whisk me away with awe.

I look down upon you;

Your wings are but rudiments,

And your eyes are sewn shut.

And, of course, I am the contretemps.

But....

Perhaps you are right; perhaps it's not over.

I could always fall to my knees, lower my head,  
Ask for forgiveness, build up my shame....

And pray.



Amy M. Hoge  
**Rendezvous with an Angel**

I saw him within a blink of my eye. This old, unshaven man standing in front of me wearing a long, stained beige overcoat. I thought of him, an angel. There was nothing religious nor beautiful about sitting on a dirty bench waiting for the NJ Transit. However, after weeks of discontent, contemplating my religion and God, this stranger was an inspiration standing in front of me.

I had been in a deep stare, hypnotizing my eyes by the train tracks because I was reflecting on my life, my life at fifteen when I didn't know who I wanted to be. I seemed to occupy myself with the past couple of days, when my religious "best friend" had attempted suicide and pathetically failed. Her sickness led her to slit both of her wrists, and her mother brought her to church all bandaged up like she was brand new the following Sunday. She wouldn't tell me what led her to it. No one else asked. Our so-called "church family" thought it best to ignore it, which sickened me. So rather than face it, our pastor prayed for Tracy's burns to get better, the burns she had accidentally gotten from her after-school job at Burger King.

A few months before that, I recall a question I raised in Sunday school. My teacher had been telling us that only Christians who kneeled at the altar and gave their life over to the Wesleyan Church and Christ would pass through the gates of heaven. My question, merely, "Why wouldn't my Gram be going to such a beautiful place like heaven even though she had never set foot inside a church in her life?" Was it because she hadn't rendered her pocketbook over to the church? If she had but one penny left to her name, she would spend it on Swedish fish because she knows how much I had loved them as a kid. My Gram has based her life on hoping, loving, and believing in herself and others. What could be more spiritual than a wise old woman who had such inner-peace and happiness? However, my teacher, who never even met my Gram, incessantly argued that she was wrong and, even more, that I was wrong because I had not spread the "word" to her.

I had been convinced of hypocrisy and twisted values over and over as I was balancing my life in the secular world and the world of the Wesleyan Church. I felt alone, stuck between these two worlds, until that day, during which I encountered the confirming bum at the train station.

While I was waiting for my cousin to show up, so we could catch the train for our day trip to NYC, he came to me. I didn't even see him walk up to me, but he disrupted my stare. He spoke in his confident, but drunken tone, saying, "Lose religion, find God." In a flash, he was gone and moved down the platform to the yuppies who were all standing in

their business suits reading their *Trenton Times* or *USA Today's*, all ignoring him like a crazy man. He started walking farther and farther away and was disappearing into the fog. Soon, all that was left was the platform reaching out into nothingness.

I looked back and felt a planet of discontent lifted off of my shoulders. It all came so clear to me at that moment. I needed to relax. I respected that man in his loneliness and wanted to believe in some mysterious cosmic order of things without claiming a monopoly on God like I believed he did. I'd never forget our encounter. Suddenly as I was sitting in the midst of a heavy fog, life didn't look so dreary anymore.



Amy M. Hoge  
untainted inferno

i  
i  
i  
i  
stare  
into the  
inca  
descent  
flame  
looming  
from my  
glowing  
candle  
and dis  
solvery  
worries  
into one  
intense  
glimpse.

John McKnight  
It Stands by the Sea

Protector.  
A colossal being,  
it stands tall,  
guarding its surroundings.  
Its golden beam illuminates  
all that crosses its path.  
The murky water trembles at its feet.  
The jagged rocks respect its might.  
Ivy hugs the tower, and,  
shining grains of sand surround it.  
It cuts through the dead of night,  
and the roughest weather,  
glowing brightly across the sea.  
Sailors trust its signal and follow its commands.  
For generations, its ancestors  
have kept the beaches free of shipwreck.  
It lives up to its heritage.  
Standing proudly by the sea,  
it is there,  
always,  
to show us the way.



**Amy M. Hoge**  
**digressing**

i gave up on you  
you called me a baby (a goo, a goo!)  
didn't even grant me a chance to handle  
"a complex individual like you."

smoking your Camel straights  
hiding in the smoke  
from seeing me  
probably  
and looking occupied  
pouring your  
tall  
dark  
Porter  
as i gulp down  
my  
aureate sunshine  
in a pitcher  
wiping out rejection from you.

"Lucky Strike, anyone?"

No, not me.  
I don't wanna get lucky with you,  
but actually  
I do. I do.

desperation  
staring at you  
and your hypnotic circles of  
black, white, black, white,  
the dart board  
where it all started

only a few weeks ago

pulling me closer to nothingness.

**Kim Justice**  
**I Like Staring**

I like to stare at him.  
Not at any specific part,  
(though I love  
his legs,  
his back,  
his extra padding in the middle)  
Just him.

I like how he gets  
those deep dimples,  
(two valleys in a face unwrinkled)  
when he smiles  
(like he knows he's got a royal flush)  
and asks why I'm staring at him.

I like the way he blinks,  
(happily reeking of innocence like a practiced liar)  
when he's trying not to notice  
that I'm noticing him.

I like how the veins  
(acting as branches of the river of vitality)  
show in his linen white arms  
when he tenderly touches my knee,  
simply to remind me he's there  
even though he knows  
I'm staring at him.

I like it when he scratches his nose  
(with his usual rabbit-like frenzy)  
after retrieving it  
from the scent of my hair.

I like it most when he touches my chin  
(the way a mother does to clean her child's face)  
and moves his faded blue jean eyes  
to take his turn  
and start staring at me.



**Toru Tanabe**  
**The Contact Lenses**

You hard, you soft:  
Both of you are so fluent  
Pasted on my sensitive parts  
To focus the world through your transparency.  
You are twins;  
You build up one image,  
Putting together kindness and cruelty,  
Neither picky like a microscope,  
Nor clairvoyant like a telescope,  
Not showing me a naked microbe  
Or the pimple-faced moon.  
You yourselves are reversed dimples:  
But also the shape of my joy;  
I shed tears without a reason  
If you get a speck of dirt.  
Before I met you,  
My tears washed out queries.  
But annoyances between you and me  
Merely stay and don't go away  
Even though I cry for a long time.  
Today, I dropped you both,  
Thus the world lost its shape;  
I can't move my feet, can do nothing  
But in a squatting position  
Look for you, oh, where are you?

**John Teacher**  
**The Leaving**

The sun shone through the windows, giving the room an amber, dust-looking glow. The old man walked slowly down the great hallway. He looked at the old oak-paneled walls with their paintings and large mirrors. He crossed to the windows, with their antique wavy glass, turned a handle opening one and let the air from outside rush against him.

It was March. The air was warm; the trees were not yet budding, although they did show signs of color returning to their trunks and branches. The man took a deep breath of fresh air. As he stood looking down into the empty courtyard, his mind saw a boy of ten standing with a suitcase. The boy was there with his parents and one of the old doctors. The doctor was making the usual required, "Your son will do splendid work; I'm sure," speech while the son stood warily eyeing the courtyard full of children.

The child didn't want to do splendid work here; he didn't want to be here at all. In fact, looking at the school before him, he began seeing the mullions of the windows as bars and the older boys as prison guards. Over the main gate to the courtyard, the sign reading "St. Martin Proper School for Men" seemed to change to read "St. Martin Prison." Looking around, he was trying to figure a way to get thrown out of the place that was to be his new home for the next ten or eleven years. The old man remembered the approach of another boy.

"Hello, I'm Paul Jonson. You must be new this term."

"... er, Yes, I am. New, that is... I'm Adam Smith," the child said, thrusting out his hand like he had been taught.

Paul shook his hand welcomingly. Adam was somewhat disarmed. It hadn't been one of the cold, formal, "We belong here; you don't" handshakes that he received on his orientation tour.

"Paul," the old doctor said with a smile, consulting a bundle of papers, "why don't you show Adam to his room? It's 135"

"Room 135! We're roommates! Come on, I'll show you where our room is. It has a great escape onto the front lawn across from the confectioner's shop," Paul said, looking back, smiling at the old doctor. The doctor peered over his glasses at Paul in such a way as to start both boys laughing. Paul picked up one of Adam's bags and they walked off through the double doors, leaving the doctor to reassure Adam's parents that there wouldn't be a problem with the room.

Adam figured with someone like Paul to help, it would be easy to get thrown out of school. But he quickly found that he didn't want to anymore. He had made friends.



The old man felt ever so much younger as he stood looking into the courtyard remembering the first friend he made upon his arrival at St. Martin. His mind wandered to and from the many times he and Paul would loiter in the courtyard with their other friends, the harmless antics to amuse themselves at the administration's expense, and climbing the tree that grew in the one corner of the courtyard so they could sit on the roof and look out into the country side. The town was smaller then. Now, one wouldn't think that there was a countryside. The walls now look over factories and into offices. It wasn't until the war that the town started to grow.

World War II: the great thief that stole his best friend. Paul had left school to fight the Germans and was sent to France to help the Americans. Adam felt choked-up and ill, just like he did when they told him that Paul had taken a bullet in the leg and bled to death. Adam felt cold. As he closed the window, he realized that clouds had covered the sun and it now looked like rain.

His attention was jarred back to the present as he heard the sound of hard heels meeting the marble tile. A student was running down the hall towards him and eventually slowed to a stop and, amid gasps, spoke.

"Dr. Smith, I thought I was late for class. Did you cancel?"

"Not yet, Michael," the man replied patting the youth on the back of the neck. "Why don't you announce that class is canceled. Tell them I want everyone to write an essay about what they did during the time we were supposed to meet today. In your case, probably meeting with that attractive young lady from St. Mary's."

"Me, sir?" the lad asked growing visibly embarrassed.

"Yes, I saw the two of you in the bakery across from the front lawn yesterday morning."

"I . . ."

"Don't worry, I know you weren't to be off school grounds then; I won't tell anyone."

"Thank you sir."

"I wasn't always a seventy-year-old doctor, you know. Now run along."

Adam watched the boy run out of the hall towards the classroom. Then he himself walked out and towards the faculty lounge. But his mind was elsewhere.

He was thinking of Elenore. He had met her during the war, only a day or two after hearing about Paul. He was in a coffee house, near the back. It was raining that day, and she had just entered the establishment. She shook off her coat and left her umbrella by the door. There weren't many places open that day because the bombing the previous night hit the commercial district hard. The place was crowded, and the

only empty seats were at his table. She traversed the crowd and looked at him.

"May I sit with you, or is this seat taken?"

"No, please, make yourself comfortable," he said standing politely.

They sat, and after some fussing with her coat, she looked at him hard and then asked, "So, who did you lose?"

"Pardon me?"

"The war has been going on for quite some time now. I can tell when someone has had a loss. It usually helps to talk about it, but I won't presume to force you . . ."

"A friend."

"Oh?"

"My best friend."

"Oh," she said quieter.

They sat there and talked for hours. She had lost her brother. He had lost the closest thing he ever had to a brother. When they were done, both of them were in tears and sobbing. Eventually, regaining their composure, they left and walked around what was left of the town. Late in the afternoon they parted company and went to help with the black-out preparations.

They saw each other frequently. Eventually, Elenore got married to a businessman in London. They wrote continuously and had frequent visits from each other.

It was a bad marriage, and after her husband's death, she moved to Avebury where she bought a little cottage. She bought two grave plots and left one of them and the cottage to Adam in her will, not having any surviving family. She had always loved him, even though she knew a marriage between them would not work. He was a man dedicated to study and education. His entire life revolved around it; marriage would only prove a distraction from that dedication.

He had taken her death well, but then he was an older, more experienced man when it happened. He took a couple of days off to see her that one last time before she laid to rest near her home in Avebury.

"I shall have to go see her this week," Adam thought.

He had been looking for something meaningful to do in the coming week: the week of his retirement.

He started attending this academy when he was ten. Here it was, sixty years later, and he was teaching at the same academy. He went through all levels of education offered here. He was teaching before it ever even sunk in that he had graduated.

"I was very lucky," Adam thought as he walked into the professors' lounge. It was so typical of Adam to brush his own skill off as luck. He walked to the far side of the room near the bay windows and sat down



by one of his younger colleagues.

"Hello Peter."

"Oh, Adam, I didn't see you come in."

Leaning close he said, "The Queen Mab carried me in. Shh . . ."

"Umhum. Of course. I see we've been reading *Romeo and Juliet* again."

"Yes, my junior Shakespeare class is studying some of his tragedies."

"Sort of ironic."

"What is?"

"Them studying tragedy when it is unfolding before them . . ."

"Oh, must we start all this again."

"Yes! We must! It's the truth. You're the best thing to hit these walls this century, and you're leaving."

"Once you 'hit the walls' you only stick for a little while before you begin to slide. I was lucky to hit the walls fairly high, and now I've slid more than most."

"What do you mean? You're still better than most, if not, the best."

"I let my composition class go again today."

"So. They've got a holiday coming up they're excited about; besides it's a nice day! It won't hurt."

"Was."

"What?"

"Was a nice day," Adam said gesturing to the ominously dark window.

"Hum. Still, they'll learn more from you than any of the other professors and doctors teaching composition this term."

"Your classes are doing very well from the score I've seen. They're even better than my classes."

"Just like your classes were when you first arrived. Your classes doubled the language scores of this school. I haven't been able to accomplish that despite everyone saying that I'm the next 'Dr. Smith.'"

"Does it bother you that people say you're going to be another me?"

"No, why?"

"Because it should! Never be any man's second or his replacement. You can never do what the person before you did and people will resent you trying to be him. You'll spend your entire life in his shadow. Be yourself in your own place; things will happen."

After an uneasy pause, Peter spoke again. "Have you told your students you won't be back?"

"No."

"Oh, won't that be a lovely welcome back. The students can return from spring holiday to find their favorite professor and probably the closest thing this school has to a living embodiment gone forever."

They sat there for a moment like a tableau before Peter started again.

"Just why are you retiring anyway?"

"I've outlived my usefulness."

"Umhum. Try again."

"I'm serious. My results aren't what they used to be. My classes are no longer an exciting challenge for me or my students. The classes have become just something that the administration requires."

"You know, I spoke with the administration about you."

"Oh, really?"

"They feel losing you is the worst thing to happen to this school since any of them can remember. They also told me not to get too attached to whoever they get to take over your classes because if you decide to come back, they will be released."

"Peter, dear boy, I'm not coming back. I'm leaving for good. I've given everything I've got and ever had. I can't give anymore to this school. It's time I step down and let those who have something to give, give it. It's not my time anymore, Peter. It's your time. It's a time for you to give all that you have. If you are giving everything, you will see a sparkle; take it in and hold it, absorb it, for someday it may fade, as it has done for me. That will be your cue to step down."

"Thank you Adam," Peter said getting up. "Just one thing though . . . What will you do once you've left?"

"I suppose . . . I suppose I shall go for a long walk in Avebury."

With a puzzled smile Peter walked out of the room. Adam was alone to ponder, to look, to remember. His mind supplied the details not present, the sun streaming through the window, the noise of people. As he eyed the room, he saw many people, most of whom he realized were dead now. They were talking and enjoying themselves. They were in full dress, graduate robes and all, as if for commencement. He saw a young man of twenty-six walk into the room and everyone begin to applaud. He was lead over to the punch bowl for a ceremonial toast. It was the day he was received into full professorship.

Adam got up and walked over to the bay window and stood looking where he remembered the president standing. He remembered the sprawling lawns out of this window, and the gala trimmings. For an instant, he saw the president stand there, raise his glass, and wink.

In that wink everything faded, the figures, the trimmings, the sun. The lawn shrank to about thirty feet and was replaced with a sidewalk, street, and office complex across the way.

Adam walked down a corridor to his own bare office. He thought of nothing and just listened to his footsteps echo in the empty, dark hallway. Feeling older than ever, he lowered the blind, picked up the bundle of books, took a long, last look at the office, and closed the door. He then locked the door and slid the key underneath.



He walked out the main entrance, crossed the street, and turned to look back. He reviewed the features of the building, his gaze falling upon the bay window of the lounge. He knew what was going to happen to him now that he was retired. The only thing he had left.

Some have nothing without their work; of these, he was one. He turned in the direction of the train station, where he could get to Avebury to join Elenore. It began to rain.

**Deb Daniels**  
**Math Class**

The hapless student walks into the room,  
Blinded by the fear of what's inside.  
As if compelled by a force against his will,  
He sits down at a desk,  
    Book open wide,  
    Eyes open wide,  
    Ears open wide.

The Teacher (or is it Creature?) walks in,  
And the door slams  
Like the door of a dungeon.  
Muscles tense as the student realizes  
He is not alone.

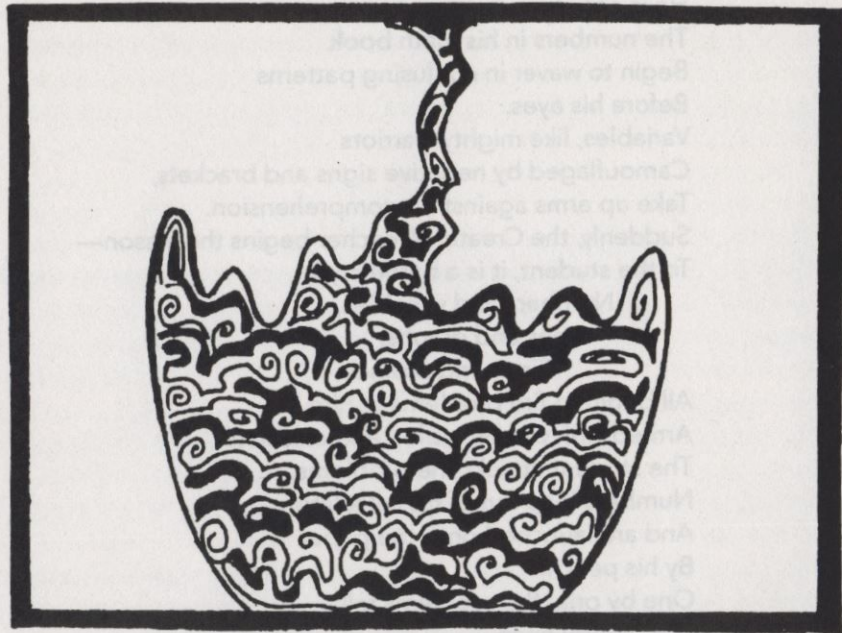
The numbers in his math book  
Begin to waver in confusing patterns  
Before his eyes.  
Variables, like mighty warriors  
Camouflaged by negative signs and brackets,  
Take up arms against his comprehension.  
Suddenly, the Creature/Teacher begins the lesson—  
To the student, it is a battle cry!!

    Numbers and variables,  
    Lines and graphs,  
    Sines and cosines  
All begin to fire problems at him.  
Armed with pencil, tablet, and calculator,  
The student attacks the problems.  
Numbers leap out of his calculator  
And are launched onto the paper  
By his pencil.

One by one, the problems fall  
In a bloody heap—  
Some slain by his unexpected prowess,  
Others, only wounded, get ready  
To regroup and attack again.  
Finally, with the help of the Teacher/Creature,  
The problems are defeated.



The student leaves class, his head full of  
New knowledge,  
New confusion,  
His eyes glazed from the battle,  
His mind frightened of the homework  
He must now face  
Alone.



**Kim Huber**  
**What If I Was....**

"Did you see Megan the other day?" she asked me, winding her fingers in the pleat of her newly bought wool skirt. At least I figured it was new—I'd never seen her wear it before.

"No," I answered, watching her wrinkle that beautiful fabric with her exquisitely painted peach nails. "I haven't seen her in a while."

"But isn't she attractive?"

I stared up at her, into her lovely hazel eyes and I felt a sort of kinship — and a spiral of dread. "She's a beautiful young lady," I said, my eyes trailing back to her fumbling hands. "Why?"

"I was talking to her on Saturday and she really likes you. I mean, well, she'd like to go out with you, and she was kind of hoping that you sort of wanted to, too."

Gazing miserably at her hands, I felt something hazy wash over me. "I... I don't know, April, I hardly know her. I'm not the kind of guy that goes for this whole 'she-likes-you, why-don't-you-two-go-out' business. I like to take things slow, feel the situation out a little. Tell her I'm flattered, but maybe some other time."

I couldn't lift my head to look at her; I was afraid of what she would see, of what she'd discover and what she'd say. I could feel her eyes boring into my being, as if she were trying to look me in the eyes through my forehead.

"Are you interested in anyone presently?" she asked politely. I could tell she was hoping to hear something tantalizing enough to make this conversation worth the time it was taking.

"Not really. I much prefer being alone most of the time. Besides, I have very high standards. I'm not sure anyone I've met recently meets my requirements."

She looked at me for a while as we sat in the hallway, her eyes probing my face for clues. I uncomfortably shifted my weight across the floor and swallowed. Time slowed down for me at that moment when I watched her pert mouth form the hideous words, "Are you gay?"

"Excuse me?" I said, repulsed at the idea. Me and another...oh, oh no. Never...that.

"Are you homosexual?"

"Where did you get that idea?"

"Well, look at us. You're staring at me, but it's not as if you're attracted to me... I can tell. I've never seen you alone with a girl, and you haven't asked anybody out."

"How do you know that?"

She shrugged, "Word gets around. Besides, you're incredibly hand-



some, but you don't even seem to be aware of the reaction you get from girls—it's almost as if you overlook it."

"I just don't let it affect me, that's all."

"So are you?"

"Am I what?"

"Gay."

"No!"

"Why, what's wrong with it?"

"I didn't say anything was wrong with it. I'm just not, that's all. Okay?"

"Then go out with Megan; prove it to me."

"I'm not going to do something I don't want to do just to make a point."

"Do you like girls?"

I felt her eyes all over me and a chill went through my spine. "Yes," I told her. "Most girls are very pleasurable creatures."

I saw that my remark slowed her down and momentarily I relaxed. I even felt so bold as to continue, "In fact, when in the company of most girls, I often can't think of anything but the scent of their hair, or the way their legs cross and uncross as a class rolls on, or how they smile real big and real slow when they see you. Females are a very important part of my life. If you must know, there is a blonde in my next class who is rather alluring. Does that satisfy your senseless curiosity?"

She looked as though she didn't believe me, and I felt as though I were horribly misshapen and that everyone else was also staring at me. "And how do you feel about guys?"

"The same way any guy feels about any other guy. We're all the same basically. Just some of us deal with things differently than others."

Her eyes narrowed, and I almost blushed. Why was she staring into me so? I did my best to remain calm as she replied, "What most attracts you to... someone else?"

My heart pulsed vehemently in my chest. Why, God, oh why was I being interrogated by this person who so badly needed to know something I could not say. "Their power," I said, then wanted to take it back. I tried to explain, "I can sometimes sense an inner power or confidence in certain... women, that I feel is most exhilarating."

"Really?" she leaned closer and felt her warm breath on my cheek. I tried not to flinch away, but something in my stomach lurched, and I unconsciously bit the inside of my cheek to remain calm. "Do you sense that from me?"

My left foot fell asleep; I felt dizzy and faint for a moment before I could form words to speak, "Yes, very much so."

"What do you do when you're strongly attracted to strong people?" she breathed, her lips approaching mine.

"I usually find them exhilarating," I managed, trying not to panic, the fight or flee instinct welling up inside of me.

"Am I exciting you, then?" she asked me.

I couldn't respond; my eyes were locked onto her flat, stained lips. Then they touched mine and my world spun like a carousel gone berserk. I fell away and grabbed my books up from beside me, "I've got to go," I mumbled, my arms going into spasms and my legs weak. Awkwardly, I stumbled to my feet and raced to my class, getting there fifteen minutes earlier than usual.

A few minutes later, the blonde came in and sat down next to me, then looked over and asked, "Did you do the assignment?" Oh, what power he held in his eyes....



**Karin Croucher**  
**A Logical Conversation**

While walking on water one day, I  
saw a fish talking to the seaweed. I knew he was  
talking about me because I could tell by the  
way he blinked his left eyelid.  
I skipped over to his section of the sea and  
inquired on how he knew me. He said  
that I was the reflection he saw in his mirror  
this morning.  
That seemed logical because I saw Captain Kangaroo  
in my mirror this morning,  
so after eating the fish and saying good-bye to  
the seaweed, I left.  
I sure hope the fish sees someone else tomorrow.

**Susan Sarvis**  
**A Peripheral Flake**

A Kellog's cornflake  
clings  
to the edge  
of your cereal  
bowl of white  
milk sloshing  
up in waves,  
pulling the soggy  
under  
and spewing  
it back, beached  
where it stays  
until you  
dump  
it  
down  
the  
drain  
in one  
unconcerned  
whirl

rinsing away  
milk,  
you forget  
the flake neglected.



Adam Davis

## Nick

Nick Fraizer came home at five o'clock that day from work at the dairy mill. His refrigerator was always stocked with milk. His incredibly fat wife, Annie, was sitting on the couch gossiping about endless stories with her incredibly fat friend, Sue Heck. "Oh, hello, Nick," said his wife as he entered the door, wiping his feet on the rug. "So anyways, Sue," she continued, scarfing down another cupcake and leaving crumbs scattered about on the couch, "I don't think it will ever happen." "Does Nick like coffee cake?" asked Sue. "You know, I'm not really sure. I don't think Nick likes any sort of cake," answered Annie, disregarding her husband's existence in the room, just as she always had. Nick laughed and bellowed out, "Oh, the animal Nick is. Where should we put him tonight? He seems to have the runs." Sue gasped, with bulbous eyes, and put her hand over her mouth, remembering not to eat it and Annie spit out bits of cupcake mixed with saliva as she yelled, "Nick, behave! We have company!" "Oh Nick is sorry. Nick should be condemned. Perhaps Nick will be," the small, skinny man said as he pulled the revolver from his bag. "Nick went shopping today," he said, "and it sure wasn't for any more cupcakes." Later that night, Nick slept alone on the large bed. It was hard adjusting to all the space.

Rob LoMauro

## Jail

One red,  
Two rectangular blocks surround me.  
Three gray lines surround them,  
Four separating them from each other as  
Five they separate me from the  
Six world.  
Seven all I see for  
Eight years unending.  
Nine are the walls closing in?  
Ten....



**Toru Tanabe**  
**Disneyland**

My Hong Kong landlord once visited Japan.  
Now, she shows dictionary-thick pictures of her travels  
In my basement apartment.  
It is funny that I'm here in the U.S. to study  
And the pictures show the places I used to be:  
Kyoto, Nagoya, Osaka, and  
Tokyo Disneyland:  
In front of the Neuschwanstain pseudo-castle, smiling  
With a face made for a summer vacation, holding  
A half-eaten ice cream cone, melting  
Under the sun, beside a Mickey Mouse  
Who always welcomes me with his milky face;  
His smile will last in these pictures forever.  
"Have you ever been?" she keeps raspily asking  
Me about Disneyland.  
The answer is always No—"Why not?"  
And other pictures and other smiles  
And others and so on. "But why not?"  
Yes, I have! and besides,  
Since I was born (until  
Becoming bones), I've been in  
Disney-district here and there  
Faking faces of papier-mache,  
Of stuffed-animal-laughter, or  
Dressing up in a Beauty-and-the-Beast costume,  
Apple-polishing like Aladdin's Lamp  
For the seductive Mermaid lying down  
Beside the shallow man-made pond.  
Because, polishing up my Mickey Mouse poems  
Even in a blessed basement where I am half-blind,  
Through an invisible windowpane I am  
Chasing the footsteps of the fat rat race.

**Timothy Burdick**  
**My Train of Thought**

Morning hues  
a darkened blue background.  
The blur of the countryside  
zips by my tired head.  
I lean back in the orange divan,  
speeding pines race away.

Tiny lights bead the city line  
distancing themselves  
from my view.  
It's all so wonderful,  
taking off backwards  
only to slow down like  
molasses dripping on  
my knee.

The worn lady  
across the sticky formica table top  
frets,  
flipping magazine pages randomly,  
glancing every few seconds  
for a glimpse of  
civilization.

I just close  
my misty eyes  
to all of this.  
Praying, I pass out  
of the endless  
cobble tunnels.

shimmering moonlight  
The stars glistened in  
your brown eyes.  
I reached to wipe your  
hair from your eyes  
barely touching  
your polished skin.



*Kim Huber*  
**Continental Drift Theory**

Rose—

Flushed  
burn, burn  
Grind inside  
Let it all churn—

Fire, passion, sheer delight  
Glistening in the candlelight...

Two statues bonding into one,  
they let their faces come undone  
Crisp and crackle  
Fire breaks  
the stones shift with each earthquake

A shudder—  
Cooling down—  
a sigh...

then still the two moved statues lie.

*Denise Summa*  
**Silhouette of Desire**

We sat on the clean, white  
porch swing.  
No one spoke.  
A pure breeze  
cleansed us,  
gentle and soothing,  
like ice cream  
over a swollen  
throat.  
You held my hand between  
your tan fingers,  
embracing my fair skin.

The smell of salt  
from the bountiful  
water  
enclosed us in  
fantasies.  
We rocked softly,  
together,  
on the paint  
chipped swing.  
The aged chains cried  
out, as we  
swayed with the breeze,  
protesting and  
complaining,

your dark features  
outlined by the  
shimmering moonlight.  
The stars glistened in  
your brown eyes.  
I reached to wipe your  
hair from your eyes  
barely touching  
your polished skin.



Your tan fingers tightly held  
my hands,  
pulling me.  
The rusty chains  
ceased their pathetic  
cries  
as our wooden  
swing slowed,  
your arm heavy  
and secure on my shoulder.  
My body fitted together  
with yours.  
Each of us craved  
for the warmth.  
I could feel your sweet  
breath on my face,  
tickling me like  
a child's playful fingers.  
I placed my hand  
over your heart;  
it beat rapidly against  
the heavy rise and fall of your chest.  
I held your hand  
while the clean white  
porch swing rocked  
itself into a  
peaceful sleep.