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If you go down to the corner of Seventh Street where it crosses Melancholy Blvd., you will find a little coffee shop. And if you are

Prose Prize: Caffeinated Delusions of Normalcy

feeling particularly down that day, you might stop in for a cup of comfort, served piping hot and at a very reasonable price.

I know the place. It's very calm—placid is probably a better word for it. It's a place wherein you can lose yourself if you need to be lost and find yourself again when you need to be found. And for a nominal fee, they serve excellent comfort. You can have it any way you like it. You can have a lot of comfort, or just a little. You can take it straight or not-so-straight. That's how I like it. I take my comfort with a little sympathy (genuine sympathy, not that pre-packaged powdered crud) and two packets of apathy to dull the bitter taste. It's very nice.

Anyway, it's a nice place. It's a place where the patrons have no face and the waitress doesn't know your name, and even if she did she would never call you anything but "Hon", or "Shug". They keep it impersonal by design, because they know as well as you do that you don't want to talk, just to drink in your comfort and prepare for the day ahead.

I always take my notebook with me. I'll order my cup and sit down next to the window and watch the Earth go by: people running to work, people running home, and people who just keep moving without getting anywhere. I like those in particular—knowing that I'm not getting anywhere either, but realizing that I'm not really worried about it. That's the difference between living and existing. It's peaceful. I sit and watch and occasionally write something in my notebook. Then I look down and read about my life.

"Love, no, peace, no, love is the difference between life and existence. If it is love, then I haven't lived for three months."

"I would rather be blissfully ignorant than brilliant and miserable. I speak from experience."

"Live and learn, or don't bother with either."

"I thought I saw you in town today, but that couldn't have been you, because you were with a guy, and you should've been with me."

"I'm not as bitter as I used to be, and I'm not nearly as bitter as I want to be."

"Stopping to smell the roses—that's the difference between living and existing."

"I know I hate her because I don't love her. I know I don't love her because she told me so."

"Cupid is the god of love because he shoots arrows through

people's hearts, not the other way around."

And then I sit back, take a sip of my comfort and forget about the world. It's quite nice. I'd recommend it to anyone, just don't go there at night. Don't be one of the regulars. The regulars go there and talk to you and expect you to listen. Then you have to hear them make their petty small talk and sing their depressing songs and recite their horrible poetry. But you don't want to listen. You just want to sit and sip a cup of comfort.

So, as needed, take a stroll down to the corner of Seventh and Melancholy and stop in for a cup. You can tell them I sent you, but it won't matter. In fact, you might even see me there, but that won't matter either, because I'll just sit there: lost, unrecognizable, unaware, and occasionally writing things down in my notebook—convincing myself that I'm alive, because sometimes believing is the only difference between living and existing.

Kurt Pankau



Photo/Graphics Prize:
Jon Todd

Poetry Prize: Poetic Gas Station

It's my last year of college and all is not well.
I'm scared to death; I'm in academia hell.
Will I graduate or not? I contemplate my fate,
For I have spent many a night at the Tap Room late.
I'm just sure I'll flunk the GRE,
And graduate schools will deny me.
With a degree in English, only a BA,
I know how I'll spend my work day.
I'll be pumping gas at the local Shell,
Full service, answering to a bell.
But I'll not forget my college time,
It will be a gas station full of rhyme.
Armed with knowledge of Shakespeare and Poe,
I'll quote lyrics when I'm feeling low.
I'll serve with a simile and a smile,
As I fill it up (unleaded) for the next mile.
While my work is such a bore,
My mind will be on metaphor.
As life feels like a horrible curse,
I will concentrate on flowing verse,
Accepting my fate, and using my imagination,
In my very own poetic gas station.

Casey Kayser

Polarity

The aurora borealis is humming with light,
 A luminescent sheen like the glow of a
 Tender lip waiting to be kissed, and although you're not
 Here I feel like you should be here, that maybe
 You are here, snuggled into the horizon playing
 Billiards with atomic nuclei, wrapped around the magnetic
 Poles, a living caduceus aligned with
 The electrons and protons breaking and scattering
 In the troposphere. On my back in the flattened
 Grass, sticky with dew and scratchy with ants, I
 Can see Bootes pasted in the sky, soaring
 Past Draco and the crown of brilliant stars. All around me are
 Blue-white points of light, embedded
 In the tar of the night sky like a pencil lead
 Buried under the skin. You told me
 You didn't know anything about astronomy, but I
 Think you do—it's in you, the light and
 Magnetism of the constellations, the hazy emerald
 Gel of the northern lights, the nuclear swell and
 Collapse, gravity and cutting, curving space—yes,
 I know you're here. Far to the
 North there are trillions of subatomic particles
 Moving in a polar dance—slipping close and
 Pushing each other away, an affinity almost
 Erotic in its base movement. If I held
 The palm of my hand over yours we could see
 Our own polarity, the white-hot energy and the force
 That drives our hands apart. But I can see it here as well—
 In the sky, scraping the edge of the horizon, the
 Band of light between earth and space, the viscous
 Glow of magnetic activity, caustic green and radiant,
 Spilling over the gentle bend in the corner of the northern
 Sky, the wavelengths spreading like fingers,
 The shine and the shadow pushing against each other,
 The magnetic pulse, the ongoing attraction.

Ashley Hoye

Jazz: Transporter to My New Home

"Prague does not let go, either of you or me. This Little Mother has claws. There is no choice but to give in." --Franz Kafka, letter to Ernst Pollak, December 20, 1902

His worn plaid shirt and scowling face were enough to make me curious, even a little apprehensive. He was looking right at us. Was he coming toward us? Confident in his step, but a little unsure of how to get our attention—probably another peddler trying to sell Gucci impostors. Having had good luck avoiding any kind of trouble, afraid that our luck had run out, Melissa and I carefully dodged this strange man as we stepped from the train at Mustek.

All I could think was, "This man is about to mug us!"

He held up something shiny and I thought "He's trying to sell us something—whatever it is." Skeptic that I am, I said with confidence, "No thank you, we don't want any." Melissa looked on in confusion, but he was persistent—speaking in Czech—I couldn't understand him. Finally, he spoke two words in English, "Tickets, please."

Remembering now what I had read of the "plain clothed" cops Prague used to regulate passengers on the metro, I dug through my purse looking for the week-long pass and found it crumpled at the bottom. He looked at it with a suspicious eye. I kept it in my purse because it is not necessary for entry on the trains. Everyone just walks on—not at all like other cities, familiar places like London or Paris where you must have the ticket in hand to get on and off the trains.

I was nervous now, because I knew Melissa did not have her ticket with her. The scruffy old man looked at her the way your grade school teacher looked at you when she knew you didn't have your homework, almost forcing a confession out of you. No way would he go easy on us. She flipped through her organizer with a puzzled look on her face, a look that seemed to say, "I just saw it here a second ago!"

The seven-day passes we bought on the first day of our visit cost only about six dollars. I just knew that the day one of us didn't have our pass we'd get stopped. And we did. We were stuck—trying to think of excuses—but with ticket book and pen in hand he wasn't buying it! Our honesty meant nothing to him, but it meant a 200 krona (about eight dollars) fine for Melissa. Finally, confused and frustrated, we were allowed to leave the station and to return to the serious

business of life. Exploring Prague.

My thoughts drift to all that I had heard about this wondrous city and all that I had never realized about this place until now. Matt—my older brother—had always talked about Prague and how he wanted to go there. He said it is the place to be. Trusting my brother's judgment and sharing his love for travel, I knew that I couldn't leave Europe without visiting Prague.

As I walk through the Old Town Square, my neck is constantly bent back, eyes looking up at the architecture—usually with camera in hand to capture each square inch. I love learning about the history and, even more, about the mystery behind the intricate details of the architecture as revealed to me by the tour guides. Stories of who lived in which buildings. Walking in the footsteps of Mozart and Kafka. I have never felt so in touch with a city. I feel complete. Breathing in the air, feeling the cobblestones under my feet, the narrow hallways of this world embracing me. I never thought I would be able to call another place home, but in barely a week Prague has somehow become that little piece of me for which I had been searching my whole life. Having found it...How could I leave? Because if I did, I would have to go on dreaming of this place that makes me feel who I am. If I leave, I am afraid I will never be complete again. If I return, I wonder, will I be able to find again the same magic?

I wish Matt were here—I just know he'd love it and would know the best places to go! At the same time, though, it's invigorating to discover a city on my own and be able to reveal it to others when I come home.

♦♦♦

Translating my experience, in all its complexity, to others is not simple. Something is lost between what I see, hear, and feel, and what I can tell in words, show in pictures, what I can create for others.

Pop in the CD from the jazz concert I attended in Prague and I'm instantly transported, breathing in the smoke-filled air, leaning up against the wall in the back, as a small, bright light shines above my head. This very special concert is to commemorate the life of Duke Ellington. Mulgrew Miller, an American pianist who once played with Ellington, plays with a bassist from Denmark. Feeling the music as they play with such precision transports me, takes me home to Prague and back to the US, where I was born. I think about America and the importance of jazz to our culture and I wonder what it means to the listeners here. I've been away for months and part of me misses the States, but I don't really understand how far away I am now. The music has pulled me in.

Communicating the uniqueness of music to other listeners is difficult—the place music takes you—sometimes the grandeur of a place can only be expressed or relived through music. I know I will continue to visit Prague, even before I can afford another airline ticket. At least in my memories. The sights I've captured on film, more permanently in my head, the sounds I have on my jazz CD—all these fuel my memories.

♦♦♦

It's our last night in Prague and I don't want to leave. We try to decide what to do, and, having put off going to the opera, Melissa and I check into the schedule at the Royal Opera House. Unfortunately, we missed a performance just a couple of days ago. No more are planned for another couple of weeks. So, our plans are up in the air still. I stop at a newsstand to buy another copy of The Prague Post. I flip through to find today's date, November 29, 1999. I scroll down the many entertainment options. The one listed as the "top pick" for the night is a tribute to Duke Ellington, celebrating the hundred years that have passed since the year of his birth.

A jazz fan, I needed no more convincing, but unsure if this is what Melissa has in mind, I ask her what she thinks. She agrees that it sounds like a good idea. I am relieved when I see that the location is the Lucerna Music Bar where Melissa and I had attended another concert earlier in the week. Getting there is going to be simple.

We get off the metro at Narodi Trina and walk in what I thought was the direction of the bar, realizing that we are lost and that it will take another fifteen minutes to walk to the Lucerna. Frustrated, freezing cold and already late for the concert, we look everywhere for a cab. But cabs are not too easy to find in Prague. People here walk.

Melissa, always full of wild ideas, points out a car parked on the street. "I wish that was ours and we could just drive there—it is soooooo cool!" I agree. She's chosen a Mercedes-Benz SUV, of sorts, an upscale version of a green army jeep. We see a man in his mid-thirties approaching it and Melissa looks at me, her eyes conveying a message I understand. "When will we ever have an opportunity like this again? Let's go for it!" So we ask for a ride. Luckily, he speaks English and agrees.

I'm completely comfortable climbing into this car for reasons that go beyond reason. Perhaps it was because we approached him and he didn't seem to be dangerous or anything. We start talking, and of course, he asks if we're Americans. His wife is an American too. She's from San Diego and they've been married for a few years. They have a six-month-old son. He's very much a family man; very proud of his family and willing to go the extra mile to make sure we get where we're going safely. He is a complete stranger, but I feel like Melissa and I have gotten a glimpse into his life.

In retrospect, we were really lucky to have made the choice we had. Completely at random, we decided to have our token hitchhiking experience in a luxurious car with a decent man. He knew exactly how to get where we needed to go, too. When he dropped us off, he

said something that reminded me of what my dad would say if he were dropping me off somewhere. He said, "Now, I am going to drop you off right up here across the street, because the way the streets are set up, from the direction I am going, I can't drop you off right in front of the place." He is so nice. I almost wanted to stay and just drive around the city more, to take it in that way. But I open my door instead and thank him for his generosity.

We run up to the box office to get tickets for the concert. The prices are very reasonable, but reasonably higher than the last concert we had been to at the same venue. Twelve dollars (500 krona) for standing room. Luckily I brought exactly one 500-krona bill. After paying for the ticket, I don't have any money left to check my coat, but I don't mind holding it. The place is familiar, with a feeling very similar to *The Blue Note*—a place I frequent back home. And as I walk down the stairs, I think of just a few days ago when we were here and discovered that beer was cheaper than soda! I couldn't believe it—soda for a little more than a dollar and beer for seventy-five cents.

Down in the smoky bar the balcony towers over us. Tables with chairs are set close to the stage and people are crowded wherever there's a chance for a good view. I can't help but notice the class differences. Everyone sitting at tables is dressed in suits and nice dresses. Everyone standing is in regular, everyday clothes—like us. Though I know it is not completely true, I tend to think the true fans are the ones you find in the back or—at larger places—in the nosebleed section. They wouldn't miss the music for anything, but can't afford to pay triple the price for the luxury of sitting close enough to see musicians interact. They're the ones most often swept away by the music, the ones for whom the experience involves complete immersion, a connection of music and feeling. And then, there are fans who take in the visual, as well as the auditory aspects of the performance. I tend to find myself somewhere in the middle, battling between the two.

I am content in the back, joining others who I could see were jazz freaks. All are dressed in black and welcome us wordlessly as we find just the right corner to stand in. In this far away place, I feel, strangely, part of a new family. These are the people willing to stand against the wall or sit on the floor or the sticky stairs. The music draws me in right away. I listen in awe as Miller plays clearly and precisely. Every note. My eyes wander from the musicians to the audience. Looking around at the expressions of complete wonder, seriousness, or anticipation, I wonder what all these people are thinking. Does this song remind them of something? Someone? Some place?

I have my camera with me, as usual, but feel very hesitant to take a picture. Somewhere in me, though, (maybe because we had

been living on the edge and taking more risks—like hitch-hiking to the concert!) I hear a voice say, "take a picture," and, "you only live once. You'll want to capture this moment to share with everyone at home." I have my trusty motto ("You will regret more the things you didn't do, than the things you did") backing me up, and the help and support of my new "family" in the back of the bar. I get just the right angle (or the best possible—realizing that there is an advantage of anonymity standing in the back) and snap the shot! Nervously, I quickly creep back over to my corner, sit down, and hide the camera in my coat.

Not two minutes have passed when three men in black run over, stretching their necks and looking through the crowd for suspicious people. I know it—everyone knows it. But everyone remains cool and calm. No one says a word; we just go on enjoying the music that binds us together. In time, the 'undercovers' leave, giving up, I suppose. I breathe a huge sigh of relief!

A couple of minutes later, another flash goes off—this one nearer to the stage. The same men run over to the table and confiscate the camera. I say a prayer of thanksgiving. I don't know what I would have done without all of the pictures I had taken of the city!

Those pictures would be my only tangible proof of my new home. Prague had opened the door to a New World for me. It is so old, yet so very new to me. Jazz had formed a bridge between something familiar and special to me and something new and invigorating which was quickly becoming a part of me—a part of me I had never known existed. I felt free for the first time. The old town had revealed its magic and mystery, its wonder and beauty. At twenty, I had never before realized how much we are made by the places we have traveled—the things we have seen and experienced in those places. We become part of those places by accepting all that they offer.

Prague is the foundation of my newly chartered self. I had discovered a new city and, I discovered myself as well. Though prompted to go there by Matt, I found in Prague a place where I had to learn on my own and establish my self. And now I escape to "Prague" when I feel that nothing else in the world is going my way. I felt a solace there that I have never felt before. I don't think that any other place will ever compare. Even in my thoughts, I feel a comfort as my mind drifts to the Charles Bridge, or gazes over the city from the hill where Prague Castle stands. Images of architecture, spires, the astronomical clock, murals on buildings are all vivid in my memory. Comfort and a sense of home far from home. Prague. Prague is my place. I belong there.

Libby Murrie

Magic

The moon over marshes
a whisper, a cry, a scream
sudden light
the power
of
love, of life, of me
Magic in the silence
a heart, a beat, a dream
alone I wander
the world
of
night, of blackness, of thee

Marijana Matoric



Lauren Koerber

Lorn

Thoughts flit through the underbrush of my mind,
love no distractions since you've been gone.

Painful and awkward moments in time
Rise above the fading ghost of your memory,
Attacking my heart with ill-feeling barbs,
Memories of embarrassment,
Moments of confusion.

I need you with me.
Your jokes,
Your words,
Your face, your soul, yourself.
Creating memories to protect my fragile soul
From the instants in time that wish
To kill every bit of confidence
And respect your love has given me.

I miss you more every minute.
Time is not healing my heart.
Instead, it's rending tears into my psyche,
Running me down in a despairing hunt.

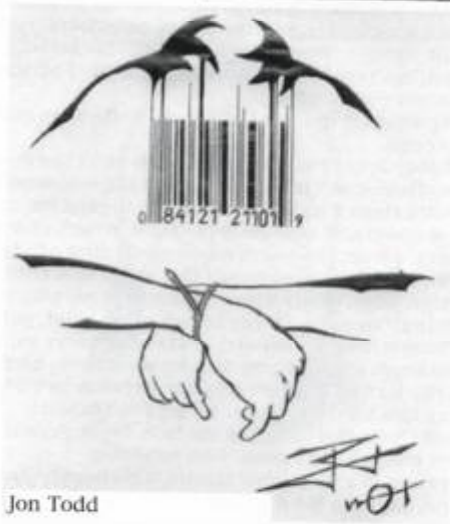
I'm starting to forget how I felt in your arms.
How much love I could feel.
How much of me I was
When I was
With you.

Jennifer Riebel

Westminster Frat Boys

to tell the world i was subdued by you
 and since in you all wonders common are
 i will sit in this room with the padded walls
 screaming and puking to look like them all
 i am happy to say i never fell your way
 not easy enough to become your prey
 i lied
 i never wanted to be those girls
 heaving scrawny messes
 a tribute to my friend
 i won't have to live in your world much longer
 you won't even read this to the end

Lauren Burdolski



Jon Todd

Gurgle

Clink, clink, clinkity clink.
 Her eyes say, "put that fork down!"
 Finally, chinese food, plates of noodles steaming on the tray, heading
 my way!
 Then ring, ring, ringit--she scrambles for the phone, catches it midsen-
 tence--the waiter, asking "More tea?"
 "Yes, please." Quick answer, glancing at Dad, also clutching his fork in
 anticipation of our waiter leaving us to our feast.
 Mouth watering, hunger mounting, the world revolves around this
 plate of veggies, sauce, colors, aromas, til my bubble pops--sound of
 her voice. The fork slips--clink, clink, clinkity clink--lays on the table.
 No motion. But I'm up. No words, just the tone is enough to pick me
 up off my seat. Finally words--"We're leaving--its Jake." No questions,
 just coats. Scrambling to the door. No questions, just hospital doors.
 Many questions--one nurse. Complete bewilderment, but facts are
 surfacing. Car wreck, my lil bro, ambulance, rolling, emergency--just
 one thing-- "Where the hell is he?" I demand.
 Tap, tap, tappity tap--boots on the floor. Footsteps so fast, turning the
 corner--then stop!
 My mouth drops, but I pick it up. Gotta keep your cool, sis. He's scared
 enough.
 Blood. Drip, drip, drippity drip. He can't see it--but he can see me--
 my face--can't let him see what I see--no emotion.
 Gotta clean it up. He keeps trying to read me, can't let him. Just grab
 the towel and wipe away the signs of hurt, sporting a smile. Gotta
 keep a front. He needs me--reassurance of a familiar face. I need the
 towel--to reassure myself that under that crust, he's there.
 Wipe, wipe, wipity wipe. He laughs at my efforts--"What are you
 doing?" he jokes. Three towels red in color, gotta hide those, too.
 "Nothin much," I answer. Gotta keep busy--no time for a breakdown.
 He keeps searching my face for an answer, a better answer than small
 talk. He finds it--there it is. I'm nervous, twisting that strand of hair--
 tell tale sign. He knows. He sees it. My fear.
 But I have him back--see the face, the smile, ah, **Katie Clouse**
 his essence. All I need. Fear subsiding.
 No arm in a sling, what staples in his head?--just my cut lil bro. And
 me, enjoying the moment.
 Silence broken, another bubble popped--damn my gurgling stomach.

A Moment, Nothing More

The world stopped in an instant
 And we continued in
 Our own motions,
 Believing in our perfect isolation,
 Hoping for eternity,
 Wanting
 To hold on forever.
 But for us
 Forever was meant to last
 No longer than a moment,
 A short breath, a blink of an eye,
 Until the world began again
 And we were
 Drowned in the sands of time.

Kim Warner



Jon Todd

Above the lights was darkness. Pitch black, no moon. It had arrived just twenty minutes earlier. He peered at it for a moment. Everything below his chest and above his thighs tingled, almost tickled, as he tried to control the fear. It was not a normal fear, like that which made him step cautiously, shifting the pressure of his weight onto the balls of his feet when boarding a plane. Rather, it was the fear of failure. He could not decide whether he liked the feeling or not; he assumed he did because he had kept coming back, over and over again, year after year. But he was never quite sure.

He frowned, wishing that the darkness had ushered in a cooling. But it hadn't. Water appeared on his forearms, along his brow, above his lips, on his hands—too much to wipe away. And even if he had tried, it would have kept coming. The polyester button-down clung to his chest and his shoulders, feeling abrasive as if the skin it hid became slightly more irritated, reddened, with each movement that he made. So he didn't move. Instead, he stared, watching, and adjusted his helmet with a gloved right hand, pulling on the earpiece so that it rested a bit more comfortably.

He watched the aging boy deliver the ball sixty feet and six inches. Sometimes it seemed to him that he could slow the passage of time in these instances, allowing him to observe the red laces as they rotated, able to perceive each variation, and deduce the purpose of the delivery. This was the first to the man in front of him and he recognized the delivery—he saw the familiar horseshoe, the four-seam grip. It produced speed—that was its purpose. He waited for it to strike the leather mitt held by the heavily guarded boy who squatted, also waiting. And then—whump! Like a punch in the guts. It resonated painfully in his ears, seeming to bounce from one side to the other downward as it became his.

He looked up at the lights beaming overhead. They appeared large, circular—a ball of yellow pluming out of metal brackets. He found it difficult to see his opponents standing underneath them; the glare made them appear less than human, small, although they cast long, dark likenesses of themselves into the normally green grass that now appeared yellowish under the interrogatory glow. He found comfort in knowing that it would return to green for tomorrow morning's game—plush, mowed green. The dew would trickle down his throat; the clippings, harsh and bitter, would mix with the tar—woody, earthy—and the tobacco with its smell of mint. He smiled.

But that was the morning. He concentrated, focusing on the pitcher, letting his eyes follow the next delivery. It spun into the dirt, kicking damp soil in every direction. The catcher shifted, placing his mitt on the ground between his legs, against his cup. The ball sunk into his chest as he embraced it, widening his arms to prevent it from scurrying to one side or the other. It fell in front of him. Rising, the boy tossed his mask to the side mechanically, the practiced manner of a loyal student, then scooped the ball into his right hand and hurled it

towards third. The runner retreated; the crowd was silent. They knew. The runner's father bowed his head in disgust, unable to watch. Leather struck the face of the runner, wrenching his neck backwards. Behind, a man's arm rose, his fist clenching as he grunted deeply from the pits of his innards. The runner rose without dusting himself off; head down, he retreated to the bench.

And then there were two—two on and two down. The pitcher caught the ball and readied himself to deliver once more.

He did not acknowledge the runner jogging past to the dugout. Standing inside the circle of chalk, he gripped the bat with his left hand as he reached into his pocket with his right. He removed the can inside and opened it, then retrieved a sizable pinch after smelling the whole of it, allowing the mint to infuse his nostrils. With his thumb and forefinger he stuffed the grains between his lip and teeth, and pushed them downward with his tongue until they rested, packed firmly, at the base of his gums. The juice spread through his mouth as he sucked once, just to get things going. He spat, and listened as it pattered lightly onto the dirt in front of him. Then he felt the sting, the tobacco resting against the roughness of the once smooth pink of his mouth. He relaxed.

Picking up the bat again, he tried to time the next delivery from pitcher's hand to catcher's mitt. He stepped and allowed himself to swing. He alone heard the metallic resonance of contact—hurtful, but yet so welcomed. He shook his head and reminded himself to concentrate. The batter watched the next pitch barrel into the leather. With the thud that followed, the batter began to move towards first base and tossed his bat aside.

For a second, he stood inside the chalk, watching the previous batter's trot end at first base, and hoped for a similar fate. He tried to push such thoughts out of his mind as he refreshed the sticky tar on the bat's grip with a soiled rag that attempted desperately to stay together. His strength had been too much for it. Alternating hands, he tossed the bat from one to the other, until he was satisfied that he was in complete control.

He breathed deeply, then made the sign of the cross across his chest. He looked to the ground to hide a smile. Tradition, he reminded himself. Stepping into the box, he moved dirt with the toe of his right foot, watching the lights glance off the metal of his spikes. With each breath, the air felt heavier. He stepped out of the box to receive his sign. The man standing in uniform behind third clapped once in his direction, then turned toward the field and held up the first two fingers of his right hand. Each of the three runners swept a hand across the bill of their helmet and nodded. As they took their lead, he entered the box, grinding the spikes of his right shoe into the dirt, making the hole slightly deeper. He heard the catcher shift behind him as he faced the pitcher. Then he heard nothing.

Ty Hawkins

There is a Billboard

There is a billboard over
 There, looking at me
 I love billboards—they tell me who I am
 ... what cigarettes to smoke
 ... what beer to drink
 ... what cell phone to use
 ... which radio station to listen to
 ... how to vote
 and all this is at no additional charge to me
 But, best of all, they block out those damn trees

Kurt Pankau



Matthew Miller

Eluding Dreams

It's late, it's cold . . .
The world's asleep, I'm in too deep.
I spread my wings, I fly away.
It's how I feel, I feel less real.

The rest of the world is dead to you.
I'm wide awake, I start to shake.
The stars below, I cross the sky.
And now I feel, I feel alive.

It's dark, it's bleak
Your love undying, my soul still trying
Awake I try, the bed I cry.
It's the way I feel, I feel more real.

It's dawn, I yawn
The world's asleep, I start to creep
My eyes profound, for sleep I'm bound
And now I feel, I feel surreal.

Now I'm right back where I started.

Rob Lehr

Contradictory Thoughts on Death from a Teenage Writer's Mind

I want to die young.
Leave a life unfulfilled.
A mark of the carelessness of youth.

I want my death to be explosive.
Silence will not be my death toll.
My death will not die.

I will not go quietly into that dark night.
My death will be the top story
From the 12 o'clock news till 9.

I want to die because of stupidity.
Some trivial mistake
Catalyst for a cause

I want no tears unshed.
The world should mourn my passing.
A life to remember forever more.

I want to spend my last seconds like in the movies.
Quietly croaking out my last words to a large group of loved ones.
Simple words, turning point in thousand of lives.

I want to be immortal.
To die but never end being me.
Living life out until the darkness of all days.

I do not want to die.

Jennifer Riebel

Disillusion

Isolated
Yellow
Disgusting
Globby
No sex appeal
Ugly
Horrific
Fat

I have felt all of these, and yet I am an average woman.

"You just matured early . . ."
"Big Bones run in our family"
"Big is better and beautiful . . ."

HAH!

Did you know that the average American woman is a size 12 or 14?
(How come that even though that is my size, I still feel guilty?)
Did you know that psychologically, average is found more attractive?
(Perhaps someone should clue in the average American man . . .)

If all that is true, then why do I still feel matronly?
Don't get me wrong; I don't feel this way now.
You see I discovered this wonderful and fabulous weight loss
program . . .
It was called: Bulimia

For a while it was incredible; no one knew . . .
I had so many compliments on my newfound figure,
It made me feel normal, womanly, and desirable . . .

Then something horrible began to happen
My skin began to yellow,
I began to vomit involuntarily,
I began to distance myself from those I loved;
For fear that they would discover my secret . . .

Then the unthinkable happened

I ruined my vocal cords . . .
I had toured 6 foreign countries with my youth choir,
Sang solo after solo, gaining standing ovations . . .

We were going to cut our second CD that summer . . .
I never got to sing on that CD.

I gave up my passion, my talent, my life;
All for size?

Yes.

Do you see how warped women can be?
Maybe not all of them,
But definitely a percentage that would blow your mind.

My mom, my savior
Found me out one Saturday afternoon,
I still remember it.
She got me help,
And let me tell you: I NEEDED IT!!

I had dropped from almost 300 pounds,
To 115 pounds . . . It wasn't pretty.
My ideal weight for my height, figure, and build is
140 pounds . . . and I'm almost there.

But, it took 5 months in a "Bulimia house,"
And two years of eating right, and exercising to accomplish it . . .

There are still days that I feel:

Isolated
Yellow
Disgusting
Globby
No sex appeal
Ugly
Horrific
And Fat

Anonymous

Yet, with the love and support of friends and family;
Those days are few and far between.

What? Religion?

Crawl out of your bed
Starched, tucked, and straightened too much
You go to the church
The pews are unforgiving
Hypocrites are near.

Rebecca Birke



Lauren Burdolski

The Goodbyes of North Monroe

he touched the brake pedal gently to the floor
as he approached the burgundy trimmed house
at the top of the hill of North Monroe
memories flooded his eyes

he was always leaving me here
for 12 years now
with the same goodbyes
always at the doorway

he caught a glimpse of her
running across the yard
laughing innocently
her long tangled hair reflecting the sun into his eyes
only, upon blinking
he realized she was only eight
and that she had no idea
of what had happened to them

she didn't even know
that he wasn't coming back to her
that he couldn't be her daddy anymore
that he couldn't come HOME

how old was she now
he wondered sadly
had it been so long
the kelly green grass in the yard had been long since mowed
the hedges spilled abundantly out into the street
the once white paint was cracked and flaking
the windows were empty
she was gone now too

he wanted to park the car
and run inside as fast as he could
hoping to beat a few years
and the old porch seemed so familiarly close

but he focused on the road ahead
wiped his cheeks and his heart
with a handkerchief
and turned left onto Kavanaugh

Eliza Wessinger

Eric Harris's eighth grade Social Studies class is interrupted when the principle, Dr. Wilkins, gets on the intercom to announce that O.J.

Tragedy at Columbine

Simpson has been found not guilty. His class erupts with conversation, everyone seems to be interested in this news but him. What relevance does this case have on these people's lives? Eric could care less if O.J. killed these people; he did not know them, none of the people in his school knew them. The Trial of the Century? The outcome of this trial has no effect on the lives of almost everyone in America, but for the last six months this trial has gripped the American public. What a joke! He wants to choke the jackass next to him that was overjoyed because O.J. might return to Monday Night Football. He hates these people. He hates America. He hates the fact that he is so insignificant in this world while the nation is captivated by the trial of some nigger who killed his stuck up ex-wife and her Jew boyfriend. One day he will be important, his actions will enthrall a nation, people will remember Eric Harris.

Dylan Klebold feels the constant pressure of his parents. They want him to be something in life. He struggles in school, he sucks at sports, he isn't popular or good looking; he's good at video games and computers, recently he has gotten good at making bombs. He is a failure, a loser, a faggot; he fails in every aspect of his life in which his parents want him to excel in. He thinks he loves his parents but they want him to be something he isn't; they want him to be what American culture has defined as normal, as successful, good. His brother has everything, everyone knows him, everyone likes him, and he is the football star. Dylan is known as Byron's little brother, like he is not an individual, only another aspect of his brother's life. God how he wants to be respected, to be feared, to be famous. He has been afraid his whole life. They make him afraid: football players, teachers, the popular kids, media, America. But this is his turn . . . they will fear him, they will fear themselves, they will be afraid.

Murders happen every day and people never think twice about them. Look in the news and the papers; drive-bys and stabbings are a dime a dozen. Anyone with a gun could be a murderer. Hitler wasn't a murderer, he was a genius. We have to kill enough people to be studied and imitated like him. Killing one person is a murder, killing two hundred and fifty is infamous.

I just cannot wait to have them at my mercy, they will be punished. Even the most devout Christian will refute their faith, while every fucking atheist will pray for God's help. I'll hold the fate of their lives in my hands, there is no God, I am your God motherfucker! Did you see Steve Allen knock my tray out of my hands at lunch? I will teach him something about embarrassment when I make him cry like

a bitch before I blow his face off.

It will be just like Doom, walking through the halls of that shit hole with a sawed-off. They all go to school everyday in their happy lives; they have no idea what is coming. We'll celebrate Hitler's Birthday with a holocaust.

Let's make a video, let them all know what they have done to us. It will be studied and analyzed for years. American culture is going to become obsessed with us; we will be a constant reminder of what they have become. We are becoming a part of history: one month until we embrace our destiny.

†††

Chris Valliant is the youngest of four children; he is the baby of the family only by age as he stands a powerful six foot four inches, two hundred and twenty pounds. Looking back on his childhood he is glad that his brothers beat him up now and then, he is glad they picked on him. His childhood made him who he is now; the co-captain of the football team, the scholar athlete, homecoming king. He is a better person because of the adversity that he faced growing up. Byron Klebold was also a co-captain of the football team, a team that this past fall went 14-0 winning the 5A Colorado State championship. This championship came only six months after the tragedy at their school. Chris thinks their season might have eased the pain of the community, gave the people of Columbine something to cheer about, something to be proud of. Chris only wishes the season would have eased his pain; it merely distracted him for a few months.

Chris and Byron were great friends and up until the shootings they were always together. Chris never had a younger brother and when he was at the Klebold household he often tormented Byron's. It wasn't that he disliked Dylan, the kid was just a little weird and it was fun to mess with him. A few times, when he and Byron had been drinking, it did go a little too far, but usually he thought it was harmless. He almost thought of Dylan as his little brother. He messed with him, but he really thought it was good for him, maybe toughen him up, get him to come out of his shell and be more like his brother. The abuse Chris faced growing up only made him stronger, why should it have been different for anyone else? Chris was paralyzed when he first saw Dylan and Eric Harris in their trench coats out in the parking lot, a million thoughts running through his head. He hesitated to move, almost stopping and trying to reason with them. He watched Dylan, little Klebold, the goofy kid who used to get picked last in their backyard football games, fire shots into a group of fleeing young girls. It was happening in slow motion, he could see the bullets like in *The Matrix*; one of the girls is hit in the back, she falls. This was happening a mere

twenty feet away, he could have helped her, carried her off to safety, be the hero he always envisioned himself to be. Instead she bled to death on the cold tile floor while Chris dashed to safety like a coward. Rachel Scott was her name; she was in his Spanish class, sat directly in front of him, she used to let him copy an answer or two off her test. He secretly had a crush on her for part of the semester but never acted on it because she didn't run with the popular crowd he did. Chris was troubled by her death, as well as the twelve other innocent people who perished a year ago today, April 20th, 1999.

A few days after the shooting, Chris heard on the news that the main targets of the shootings were identified as jocks (mainly football players), popular kids, minorities, and the kids that bullied the two shooters. This profile seemed to fit Chris perfectly, he was an ideal target. Chris wonders if Klebold came into school that day with the intention to specifically kill him. Chris feels that he greatly contributed to the events of that day. He is haunted by the faces of the victims, by the images of Rachael Scott crumbling to the ground. At the memorials he would attend in the months following the shooting; Chris would feel the accusing eyes of the victims' families searching for someone to blame. The media, finding cause for these boys' actions documented accounts of slander and torment, some of which Chris was an active participant in. He could no longer face Byron or the Klebold family, they witnessed Chris picking on Dylan, he knows they secretly see him as a cause for ruining their lives. The Klebold family, once strong and proud, is now an outcast in the community. Chris has never confessed his guilt to anyone; he never told his loving family, his caring girlfriend, or his best friend Byron that he is a horrible person. He has tried to bury these feelings that haunt him to no end; but yet they remain, a constant reminder of what he has done. Eric and Dylan took their own lives after killing thirteen of their classmates, and now Chris feels he must do the same.

Tears fill his eyes as he pulls up to the memorial that still stands outside the football stadium. During the championship season many of the players would often visit the memorial before their games, finding strength and motivation in the pictures of their fallen friends. Chris would do the same, finding the strength and motivation to punish himself for what he has done. Only God can judge him now, as he steps out of his truck, gun in hand . . . he is Eric's and Dylan's fourteenth victim.

Eric and Dylan enter the library optimistically hoping to find some unsuspecting students finishing research papers and studying for upcoming finals. To their dismay someone has already tipped them off as they were mostly hidden under tables and behind rows of books.

They are not sure how many are dead but it is far short of what he had hoped. No matter, Dylan, there is only one exit, and I always was good at hide-and-seek. There are enough students here to make a killing.

Dylan was beginning to feel some remorse, he never really knew he had it in him to kill someone so senselessly. Earlier he had gunned down his first victim in the parking lot, some bitch from the Drama Club. Before he fired again he made eye contact with Chris Valliant. Chris was a friend of Byron's, who pretty much represented everything that Eric and Dylan hated about society. Chris stood there for maybe five seconds staring at Dylan then at the wounded girl then back at Dylan; it seemed like an eternity before Chris turned to run. Dylan had every chance to kill Chris but he didn't. And when Eric raised his gun to shoot him Dylan stopped him. Even though he kind of picked on him, Dylan always respected and looked up to Chris. Chris at least acknowledged Dylan was a living and breathing person which was more than most people did and even more than his own brother did. Chris just stood there in disbelief of what he had seen, almost in defiance of the power Dylan had. The encounter made Dylan feel ashamed of his actions. The look on Chris' face, the look of disappointment and fear was etched into Dylan's thoughts. Dylan is thinking about all the people in his life that don't want him to die, old girlfriends and his grandmother; Dylan didn't want to die anymore, but he didn't want to disappoint Eric.

Eric isn't remorseful, he only regrets that so many people have escaped his vengeance. Eric is also afraid. He is afraid of living through this and having to face his parents and the rest of the world. This will be his legacy; he is leaving his mark on the world but to live through this would take away from the climax of his life. He has always known the finality of his actions but now he sees that his life is in the home stretch.

Eric and Dylan randomly move about the room searching for potential victims. A girl whimpering under a table gets it first. Dylan thinks she may be the Valedictorian of the senior class. Please God help me . . . please don't kill me. Please . . . oh please God.

Gunshots drown out the crying of the helpless students hiding throughout the library. The books are now tainted with the ghastly remains of the students who had once read them. Eric and Dylan terrorize their prey with the laughter of a child playing tag.

Craig Scott hid under a secluded table in the corner of the library with one of his closest friends Matt Kechter and a senior, named Isaiah Shoels, Craig didn't really know. Craig was in disbelief when he first heard his health teacher, Mrs. Zabaren, pleading for the students to hide themselves under the tables. But as he watched two dark figures

push open the Library doors with their weapons drawn he knew this was no joke. The three of them tried to remain as inconspicuous as possible and when the killers told all the jocks to stand up Craig disposed of his baseball cap in a nearby trash can. Craig caught the eye of one of the killers and they began heading his way. They pulled Isaiah from under the table he dropped to his knees begging for their mercy. Craig felt the warm urine trickle down his leg as he watched Isalah being knocked across the floor from a shotgun blast to the face. One of the killers, Craig thought his name was Eric, peeked his head under the table and whispered peek-a-boo before he unloaded a revolver into Matt's neck and back. A pool of blood and urine choked Craig but he kept his head tucked under his hands as he silently prayed for God to make them go away. Craig's body moved before his mind told it to and he sprinted for the door screaming for everyone to come with him. He collided with a girl reeling from a shotgun blast. His hand brushed against the bare bone of her shoulder blade, that was protruding through her skin, as he lifted her into his arms and carried her to safety. Craig and a handful of others narrowly escaped death on this day, but they will forever be haunted by the memories of their fallen companions and terrorized by the sound of childish laughter from two psychotic killers.

Eric fired shots into the group of people heading to the exits. He knew his sawed-off shotgun wouldn't kill anyone from where he was firing, but he would give them some nasty wounds to remember him by. He turned to find Dylan with tears streaming from his face.

"What the hell is the matter with you?"

"Eric I don't want to die yet, I want to see my family again, maybe we should turn ourselves in."

"Are you fucking kidding me? Everything we have worked for and you want to quit now? Do you know what they will do to you?"

"I have made up my mind, I am not afraid like you, I am leav . . ."

Eric smashed both the barrels of his shotgun into Dylan's mouth breaking his teeth in the process. The discharge exploded the back of Dylan's head and his lifeless body slid off the gun and onto the floor. Eric then grabbed his father's hunting rifle and sang Columbine High's fight song before firing a single shot into his chin and up through his head. This was his destiny.

Patrick Byrne

Back Home

It's late at night, and all the world is sleeping.

One man is on a Journey

To find someone he's been missing.

With a sight of something familiar

Now I see her,

Her face as vibrant as the night's sky.

I am home.

One single moment . . . guess who lover?

It's been a month of Mondays,

Where the days go by like the lines on the highways.

She will deliver me.

She is alone except for my presence.

Seeming timid and apprehensive

A tear trickles off her cheek.

She holds something close to her heart

As she lies there like an infant

I can do nothing but watch, as she can do nothing but hurt.

As I approach, she begins to utter something.

To whom, I am unsure. What, I will never know.

I reach out to touch her velvety skin, but she rolls over

As to almost avoid my action.

I gently whisper in her ear the words she longs to hear

As she finally falls asleep,

I see the object she held so close to her heart.

Merely a picture frame, I wonder why she is so sad.

For I am home for her.

Then I see it . . . all her pain and suffering.

For now I am her angel, to guard and guide her.

Wishing I could stay just five more minutes alone with her . . .

I have to walk away, leaving all her pain and sadness.

Waiting for that day to be united with her again.

Until then . . . I am home.

Rob Lehr

Untitled

sometimes I grow weary of words
tire of the useless exertion to make sense
maybe the words fail me
or I fail the words

either way
thoughts and ideas never get expressed
but lay in waste in the space
between mind and matter

sometimes I stand outside of myself
listening to the words
and I know immediately
the words are disconnected

from me and from another
neither of us then care to listen further
both knowing that understanding
is hopeless and futile

ahhhh silence
how I long for the absence of noise
but oh the grind of the din
in my ears explodes

how I dread tomorrow
when I wake in mourning
from the convoluted dreams
where words are not spoken

will a new day dawn
when I can be comprehended
understood much
while saying little

until then do I incessantly babble on
or wait in silence for the appointed moment
and when will I know when my turn is up
to speak some truth, offer some comfort

I will sit in the corner laughing
or climb to the top of the mountain to cry
while waiting for the words
of death and life

Brad Sheppard

Socio-Educational Angst

The roots of my vagrancy lie deep
Within my own mind.
Where little butterflies of wisdom
Fail to fly.
And icicles of truth
Spear through my heart
Like cold, steel swords.
And the falsehoods I live hurt,
As if salt were being rubbed into an open wound,
Grain by grain.
And the pain is warmed over by fast food
Heat lamps,
Each time around the drive-thru.
I can feel my ever present anxiety;
A thick granite wall closing me in from
All sides,
Threatening to crush me with its weight.
While all I can do is sit
On the cold, plastic, inflatable furniture,
Contemplating my vulnerability.

Kim Warner

One Day

One day I'll be happy
and One day I will fly
above all of you and your hatred.
One day I'll soar
beyond everything and everyone
and One day I'll be free
and maybe if I'm lucky
my One day will be today
and One day I'll be happy.

One day when I walk around
my eyes won't burn holes into the floor
and I won't have to speak in a whisper and cry.
One day I'll be happy and no longer will I look at myself this way
with this humility and hatred for myself.
One day when I look at myself I won't be disgusted and ashamed
for things I know weren't my fault and I couldn't control.
but until then I won't live
I will merely exist
in a world that doesn't know me and doesn't care to.

I know that nothing I say, do or who I am has any relevance in this
world

but someday it will
and
One day I will be happy.

Amanda King

Dollstar

dwindling down the glitter wall
water cleans my trip and fall
and whoever said nothing last
better stand out of my way
don't tell me what I should say or do
because I'm going to do it better than you
And when my withered pink wings will fall
My enchantress messenger will swallow it all
Don't you neglect my bruised soft flesh
Wanting to encircle your favorite wish

Lauren Burdolski



Lauren Burdolski

What is to Come?

Now that the last of the past
Has been put behind me
I can now look to the future
With an open heart and open eyes.

I am not proud
Of what has transpired,
And I know that you
Never meant any harm,
But through your selfishness
It came upon me
Without my notice
Until it was too late!

You will never be the same in my eyes,
But that may be just what I need
Because as much as one can live in the past
It is the future that brings the promise.

The promise of a new day,
The wonder of what is to come
Not knowing where I'm going to be
Or who I will see.

Now that we know where we stand
In each other's lives,
We are free.

Just explore the rest of what life offers,
I just wish you well!

Darcy O'Hanlon

Still There

Knock, Knock,
A feeling like someone's home.
Though there is no answer,
Slowly walk away frustrated.

Lights flicker,
Pale blue curtains open a crack.
A face partly concealed can be seen,
Fearful eyes stare ahead.

Clank, Clank,
Safety found within a car.
Collecting thoughts and images from afar,
Dizzily aware of who and why questions.

Separation from those eyes,
Watching, listening, stalling.
Unknown reactions, unknown realism,
Mystical things present.

Scratching, scratching,
Fearful of what's not seen.
Scared of who or what is there.
Wanting and needing attention.

Stunned but relieved,
Without great care.
Slide from the seat,
With a gentle stream flowing down flaming cheeks.

Pictures, pictures, everywhere,
Tears fall and ruin those they touch.
Balance demanded,
No pause or stillness occurs.

Life goes on,
From near or from afar.
To cling or to restrain,
A life is born.

Maryann Hon

Untied Time

It's been almost a complete month or less
Since our first certified and concrete contact
I've eagerly concentrated on you and my aim for you I confess
But there is much more for me to explore before I can relax

I must measure the complete integrity of my personality
Nothing has been a lie, but I've been hiding behind blue eyes
Hopefully it's honesty you respect, yet neglect the timing of this
mystery
And see me as the same sweet gentlemen as you had prior to this
surprise

I've come to consider expecting no more from you until this seal is
broken
I've reserved my regard for your faithfulness, though it does sting
It's time for me to make my impact and personality outspoken
So my heart won't hurt the whole way through my suffering

I flow this poem to let you know before I go that you hold a part of my
heart
This will forever be factual as I fight to find fortitude to survive
us . . . apart

Brandon Wooley

Melt Turn Back Now

how many wars can we pay for
how many casualties are in store
put hope in the new generation's soldier
while the world still gets colder

think about our sons and daughters
whose minds have froze
melt the ice of the world
with love that pours from our souls

melt turn back now
the wise men shout
melt turn back now
there is a way out

how many governments will we follow
how much time will we spend
living as foot soldiers in the oppressor's army
tell me when it ends

come on children
lets melt this fucking world
persecute the chilled confinement of life
until we resurrect our sacred souls

melt turn back now

Nate Mendenhall

The Rest of America

September 13, 2000, Midnight Vigil, Jefferson City, MO, Execution of George Harris

tonight we gather
on the curb near the State House and the governor's mansion
we below
he above his head on his pillow

there are many here tonight
more than most can remember
so there is much chatter
and too much interest in the photographers' cameras

she doesn't talk to me
wearing glasses a writer wears
I'm glad she doesn't
but wish she would

because I would not babble on
... .blah blah blah

like all the others
with all their cold statistics, calculated facts, rehearsed rebukes and
condemnations

I would simply say
"I am here because I love life"
and that would be sufficient.

then we could all be quiet, stand still
keep time
and at end distinguish our candles
go home

My wife always says when I leave at the appointed hour
"some day you won't have to go"
I'm ready to stay home, watch the news,
and fall asleep in the rest of America.

Brad Sheppard

A Breath of Fresh Air

The wind blowing through the trees sounds like a waterfall
One that flows from the highest parts of the sky to the crust of
the Earth

Embracing everything it touches
Winding around anything in its path
Resonating in every ear like the melody of a
song

Its breezes cool the heat and freeze the cool
Each breeze is ever present to the senses
Stormy breezes feel damp to the skin

Licking the skins like a dog's tongue
The sound of nearby traffic covers the sound of the wind blowing
through the trees

For now the wind picks up and can be heard
Each tries to overpower the other
A never ending battle for attention

Like siblings at war
The wind is as alive as any creature
The sound can be silenced

Deafening at times
Relaxing at others
Eluding control
Letting nothing stand in its way
With a will to do what it pleases
And a mind of its own

Bringing with it stories
To wherever it goes

One brings the smell of barbeque pit
And a pleasurable afternoon of leisure
Another sends the scent of fresh cut grass swimming
through my nose
And a busy afternoon of labor

It paints pictures in the mind
With thousands of paint brushes and an infinite number of colors
So vivid one would swear they were real
Real enough to reach out and touch and even
become part of

I smile as a seed blows toward me floating powerless in the wind
its gentle touch makes me happy
Gusts make my head spin and roll through my senses
One tumbles through my hair driving my senses into
a frenzy

Sending chills down my spine and giving me
goose bumps
I am not happier anywhere else than in
the wind

I feel everything

It whisks me away into my imagination

Julie Slisz

Blue Line Faces on Jackson Ave.

black briefcased men
in tall well-tailored suits
with cell phones
and the *Chicago Tribune*
masking their blank stares

sullen oily-faced teens with
slumped shoulders under
heavy school totebags
scowling into reflections that
they don't recognize anymore

congregating blue uniforms
with arrogant badges
intoxicated with power
waiting anxiously for less fortunate
to dare eye contact in their direction

suitcase tourists with wheels
dragging behind expensive souvenirs
stressed to determine who
looks safe enough to confirm
their destination of O'Hare airport

a young careworn mother lugging
her drowsy child across hips too young
tenderly fingering luscious curls of lazy sleep
despairing over the next eighteen years
of money for shoes or possibly even food

grey-bearded man with rough hands
tightly clasping exhausted trash bags
brimming with a lifetime of treasures
weary eyes hoping to avoid attention
from random passing callous cops

fake fur coats cloaking women
carrying brand name shopping bags
from the Magnificent Mile
home for their townhouse closets
as proof of their daily existence

little cappuccino colored man
dressed in mismatched camouflage
and proud NIKE AIR tennis shoes
delicately pouring out luring violin notes
to anyone willing to spare some coins

Eliza Wessinger



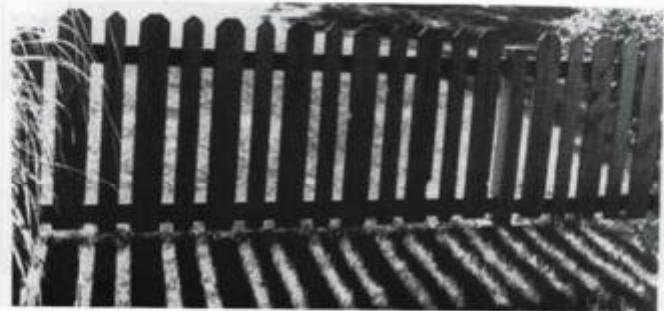
Lauren Koerber

Listen

Dad, can I talk to you?
It will just take a moment.
I know you are busy, but I want to tell you a story I thought of.
Dad, are you awake?
Please get up.
I want you to listen to my story.
Dad, Mom said I had to tell you first.
Dad, I'll come back later
But, I might forget it.

Hey, Dad, can I tell you my story now?
It will just take 30 seconds.
It's a wonderful story.
Mom said she was too busy.
I know you are busy too, but you'll love it.
What did you say?
Okay, I understand.
It was a stupid story anyway.
You wouldn't have liked it.
TV shows are more interesting.

Jennifer Swan



Lauren Koerber

Can You Teach Me to Fly?

Can you teach me to fly?
If I asked nicely.
I need to leave this wicked place.
Can you teach me?
I learned from the birds.
I build with the bees.
I cannot stay here.

I drown in the darkness of a father's mistake.
I can do anything.
But I can't bring him back.

You look like the boy I knew, rather
The man that he could have become

Kurt Pankau



Wes Philpott

The Wind

Let go of your heart
 There's nothing left to fear,
 Standing by your side
 I'll whisper in your ear.
 I'll be your warmth
 I will remain by your side,
 No matter what the world
 I'll always be your guide.
 The wind is your soul
 To hold and to stay,
 Treasure all life's moments
 Before your wind drifts away.

Rob Lehr



Lauren Burdolski

Happy Hour

"The library, what a fantastic spot to study," thought Alex. Alex was one of those guys who was easily distracted and one who created distraction in turn. You see Alex wasn't exactly one whose picture would be helpful in scaring the mice away, with his blond hair and baby blue eyes; Alex could have been the poster boy for Calvin Klein boxers. Regardless of his appearance, every day as he proceeded to do his homework, other, more interesting things, just got in the way. It may, as Alex's mother thought, have had to do with the fact that he lived in a fraternity house with twenty-five other guys who were either drinking or partying at any given moment, but Alex would do anything to prove her wrong. Since Alex's grades weren't as good as his parents expected. He was always receiving threats from them about being cut-off and of course with the dreaded complaint that his mother was tired of doing his laundry. If his parents stopped sending him money, he would definitely have to get a job to support all his habits. These threats prompted Alex to look at his studying in a new light. He had heard about this place called the library, it was somewhere on campus he was sure, but he had never taken the time to check it out. The library, he knew, was supposed to be a quiet place, somewhere he could sit and study without the distractions of the fraternity house to affect his progress. This was the answer he was looking for. Alex ventured into the library, a huge, dominating building in the middle of the campus, funny how he had always overlooked it. This was a new experience for Alex; he started this adventure by trying to figure out a good place to sit. There were plenty of cute girls at each of the tables that were before him, and sitting near them would not be such a bad thing. He could get his homework done and meet chicks at the same time. How come none of his buddies had ever told him about this place and all that it had to offer? After Alex gave it a second thought, he decided to sit at a table by himself. He didn't need any distractions, especially if he was trying to prove to his parents that he could make grades.

Kayla Marshall was a twenty-something female who was trying to make ends meet. She worked at the library that Alex had recently stumbled across and had been employed there for nearly two years. Day after day, Miss Marshall, as her colleagues knew her, stumbled out of her bed to prepare for her mundane job as the college's librarian. Miss Marshall was a relatively pretty female; her eyes were a soft, gray-blue, similar to the color of a turtledove and her hair was the color of sun-drenched honey. Her skin possessed the smooth quality shared by a porcelain doll and boasted the color of a luxuriating milk

bath. But those who saw her at the library saw her only as the quiet, serious, young lady with her nose in a book. Miss Marshall was always very helpful to all the students and she never seemed to mind helping them find a book or search a database to find articles for their papers. One day Alex saw this woman known to everyone as Miss Marshall. She walked past his table with an air of authority that made Alex do a double take. Her hair, he immediately noticed, was pulled into a severe bun at the top of her head and her eyes seemed to be crying out from the strain they were feeling due to the tightness of the knot. She was wearing a long gray skirt and a white blouse that screamed school marm, but Alex noticed something else. He noticed the slight pout of her lips and the slit in her skirt that exposed a firm, shapely calf. "Wow," thought Alex, "if she would just let that hair down!"

For the next couple of weeks, Alex frequented the library in an effort to regain monetary aid from his parents. He put the idea of Miss Marshall's lips out of mind for the time being and, interestingly enough, his grades started to improve. It's funny how studying can affect your grades like that. Alex's buddies noticed a change in him too. They convinced Alex that he needed a reward for doing so well in his classes. This weekend would be a guy's night out, they teased. Alex thought about it and decided that he really did need a break. So, that weekend as he and his friends finalized their plans Alex's excitement for some non-school related stimuli began to grow. They made all their normal stops, to the bar, and they had dinner at the steak house, but little did Alex know he was in for a big surprise. Before Alex knew it he was blindfolded and led into an establishment that sounded very much like the bar they had just left. Alex could hear yelling and hooting which seemed a little out of place but, all in all, it sounded like the normal bar scene and smelled like it, too. As Alex's friends untied his blindfold, his surprise came into full view. Standing on the stage in front of him was a twenty-something, gray-blue eyed beauty wearing her honey-colored hair in a severe knot and not much of anything else. Miss Marshall!? Could it be? Alex's jaw hit the floor. It was!

Alex could not believe his eyes. His gaze was constant as Miss Marshall sashayed about the stage, pulling one piece of clothing off after another.

"Wow," Alex's friend Lee said, "take a look at her!"

Alex assured Lee that he hadn't overlooked her as he continued to stare. He knew now that none of the other guys had recognized her. And then it happened. Miss Marshall raised her finely shaped arms to the pin in her bun. As she pulled at it, her beautiful hair cascaded down and pooled over her shoulders and breasts. Alex's breath caught in his throat and he felt a warm feeling in the pit of his stomach. He had

never seen anyone so damn hot in his entire life! After a while, Alex realized that he was still standing at the entry of the club while his friends had been seated at a table near the stage. Alex rushed over to them and began smiling when he realized what they were up to. Lee was calling Miss Marshall over to the table and pointing at him. As Alex took his seat, the voluptuous Miss Marshall had slowly made her way to his table. Alex took out a 5-dollar bill and began waving it around. He was not disappointed when Miss Marshall slowly got down on her knees and took the bill from Alex with her teeth. The ensuing reward would not soon be forgotten as Miss Marshall finished Alex's personal dance on the stage. Miss Marshall seemed to only have eyes for Alex as she made one last round on the stage. She even gave him an alluring wink.

"Damn," was all Alex could muster. "Damn!"

Alex decided that he liked this side of Miss Marshall a whole lot better than the one at the library. As she was exiting the stage, he was sure that she was winking at him and without thinking he jumped up to go after her. As he started to move in her direction, he heard his friends calling out to him.

"Alex, hey where are you going?"

"This party has just started," Lee called out.

"She's waiting for me, I know it," Alex cried. But as he turned back around to follow her, she was no where to be found. He searched the crowd for her frantically to no avail and when he finally got back to his table, all he could do was think about Miss Marshall and all her breathtaking assets. As they were leaving, Alex scanned the club one more time to see if he could find the mysterious Miss Marshall. Again, with no success, he left with his buddies, who all sensed his disappointment.

"Hey man, what's got you so bummed?" Lee said.

"Yea. There were some fine ladies up in here and all you did was sit at the table and drown your sorrows in beer!"

"I don't know what it is guys, I can't get Miss Marshall out of my mind," Alex said.

"Miss who!?"

"Miss Marshall, the college librarian."

"The college librarian, man that is sick!"

"No, she was at the club tonight!"

"What?"

"Yea. Don't you remember that first stripper, Lee?"

"Oh yea, she was damn sexy!"

"Well that was her!"

"Damn, she's our college librarian?"

"Yea, that is what I said."
 "No way! You're shittin me!"
 "I'm dead serious!"

Alex continued to try and convince his friends that the stripper was also their librarian, but they still would not believe him. He decided that the only way to make them believe he was telling the truth was to prove it.

"Fine, everyone meet me in the library on Monday at 3:00 p.m., and we'll see who's lying," Alex said.

When Monday finally came, Alex was standing at the library entrance waiting for his crew. Finally, they all came strolling down the sidewalk and the moment of truth was upon them. Alex opened the door to the library and they followed him in. He went up the stairs to the table where he usually sits and told them all to have a seat, while he went looking for Miss Marshall. Then he spotted her, leaning over a computer, helping another student; he could recognize that body anywhere. He had memorized every curve and it had played through his mind over and over again all weekend. Her hair was again drawn up tight and she was wearing her signature gray skirt.

"Uh, excuse me, Miss Marshall?"

She slowly turned around. When she saw Alex, her smile disappeared.

"Uh, uh, can I help you," she stammered.

Alex saw her face change and he knew that she recognized him. He missed her usual smile and he hesitated. He didn't know what to do. He could show her off to the guys and maintain credibility or . . .

"I was just going to say . . . uh, never mind. Have a nice day, ok?"

"Sure, you too, thanks? Are you sure there isn't anything that I can help you with?"

"Well, just one thing."

"Yes?"

"I saw you, Friday night. At the strip club."

"Um, yea, that was me."

"Why do you put yourself out there like that? Like some piece of meat?"

"I mean, I am not complaining, just curious."

"I guess it is what you would call the American Dream. It pays good and money is money," she said with a look of detachment upon her face.

"Yea, I guess you have a point. Well, sorry I bothered you. I'll let you get back to your work."

"Thanks, I'll see you around, ok?"

"Yea, around."

Alex winked at her and her smile returned. He could see a look of gratitude in her eyes as he turned away.

"Wow, she really is more beautiful with her clothes on," he thought.

Alex walked back to his regular table where his friends sat with skeptical loos on their faces.

"Well? Where is she?"

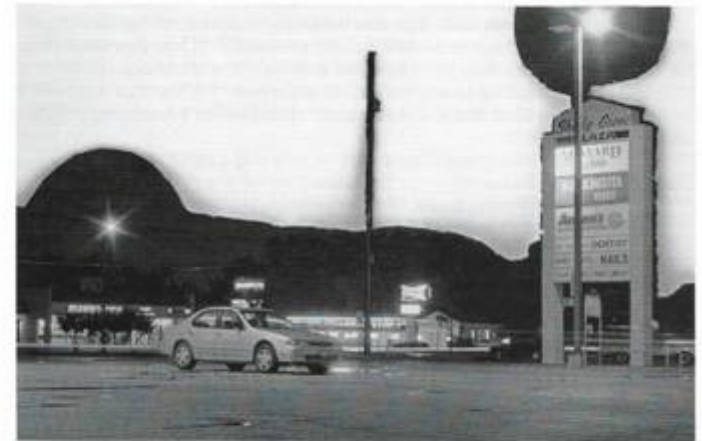
"Ah, you know, you guys were right. I don't know what I was thinking. It wasn't that stripper at all, I guess I just had a little too much to drink. Sorry about that."

"See, we told you man, we could never have been that lucky!"

Alex smiled to himself as he and his friends made their way out of the library and back to the house. Afterwards, Alex continued to go to the library and his parents began to notice that his diligence and hard work were paying off. They sent him a little extra money the next month for his progress and his life was worry free, again. And, every time he passed Miss Marshall at the library, their eyes met and they both winked at each other.

Her secret was safe with him.

Rebecca Birke



Wes Philpott

Waiting Until our Dating Day

Within the last week, I've really realized your worth
Never knowing when your five-month relation will end
It may be more months than recommended before our bond's birth
If so, it shall patiently postpone, fondly unfolding as friends

The more we charm each other, the more I adore
I respect your esteemed establishment of trust
Jovial jealousy I secure for the fellow who found this score
He may not honor it, but I do, and have it, I must

Next month, next week, whatever . . . I'll wait
Your belief of "to meet" and "to cheat" is discrete
I appreciate your situation and your trustworthy way
you handle your feelings and emotions without the notion of "cheat"

Every time you turn down my opened doors of dating
You fascinate me more and more, though I sense our link soon . . . I will be waiting

Brandon Wooley



Wes Philpott

Love is a Superficial Word

i'd spend my last penny on you
i can't decide if i love you or like you
i spoil you with affection and gifts
i'm reflective, receptive and responsible
i adore you
i appreciate the unique
my doubts try to control me
i am sickened by my own inhibitions
i could tell you anything
nauseous from only attractions
mother tells me to go find another
i am aware and conscious of the situation
everything suffers
i did once
painfully attentive
drinking in it all
a remembrance of things passed
i strive to perfect the relationship
a teacher, i am, a nurse, a lover
quite thoughtful
quite awful
my whole conversion is going well

Lauren Burdolski

Remember

Remember the fire
And the way it made your soul sing,
Casting mysterious shadows
In the depths of your eyes.
Remember that night you lay awake
Listening to the songs of the tree frogs and cicadas.
Remember a time
When the little things your father did
Didn't annoy you.
Remember when roses and balloons
And friends didn't matter;
Friends have always mattered.
Remember when you almost gave up,
And would have slipped beneath the inky waters,
If it hadn't been for her.
Remember to always remember,
Even when others start to forget.
Remember.

Kim Warner



Josh Shrimpf

Me

Last night I found a pirate ship
While swimming in the ocean.
Swords and planks, jewels and stuff
Even magic potion.

I also fought an octopus
Really, truly I did.
I killed a shark with my own bare hands
And arm-wrestled a squid.

After that I crawled upon the shore
You'll never guess what was there.
Lions and tigers and elephants
And a killer grizzly bear.

I wasn't even scared
'Cause I had a private jet.
I jumped aboard and took the bear
He's my favorite pet.

That's nothin' though
I also fought a dragon.
And escaped some rowdy indians
On a cowboy's covered wagon.

I'm also a doctor, lawyer,
Car racer and teacher.
A painter, a chef,
Actor and preacher.

I'm not lying though,
It's really not what it seems.
Because you can be anything you want.
While frolicking through your dreams.

Craig Mason

At First Sight

you caught the corner of my hazel eye
like the surprise of brilliant flash from an evasive camera
across a tightly crowded room
and the breath in my body instantly escaped me

you tossed me eternity in a grin
that cradles my heart safely while I peacefully slumber
like a father cradles his first born son
the initial moment his arms embrace his newest hero

your tangled hair beckoned me
to lose my small fingers among its implicate strands
like young children often lose their feet in the sand
along endless golden stretches of beach in tranquil summers

your powerful voice echoed through my mind
humming those words gently through my soft ear without a pause
like a colorful humming bird's wings in rapid fluttering
leaving me desperately silent in reply and scarlet in my cheeks

Eliza Wessinger



Josh Schrimpf



Peter Haigh

Some Words From the Editors

First of all, we want to say a big thank you to all of the artists that, through their generous contributions of writing and graphics, made this year's edition of *Janus* possible.

Another big thank you goes out to our faculty advisor, Margot McMillen, who's expertise guided us through the creation of this publication.

Additionally, we would like to thank Brenda from General Printing who helped us get *Janus* through the presses in time for you all to read it. She also made sure that we didn't bankrupt the college with our printing costs.

Also thanks to Dean Seelinger and Dr. Collins who budgeted the funds to have *Janus* printed in time for the end of the school year and to SGA for allocating money for prizes in each category.

We would also like to thank Jon Todd for using his superior scanning ability, equipment and photo editing skills to scan and alter our cover and sharpen some other photos.

And we can't forget to thank the newspaper and yearbook staffs for letting us use their computers to do most of our layout and image scanning since the new computer does not have the necessary programs.

We would also like to take this opportunity to say that in no way were any of these submissions edited for content. The only editing that we performed was in the form of grammatical changes. Any changes in content or meaning were discussed with the artist prior to printing. We felt that we have done our best to preserve the artists' original messages throughout *Janus*.

Matthew Miller, Brandi Schubert,
Alexis Wolfe, Rebecca Birke, Marijana
Matoric, Will Ryan, Melissa Box, Eliza
Wessinger, and Libby Murrie