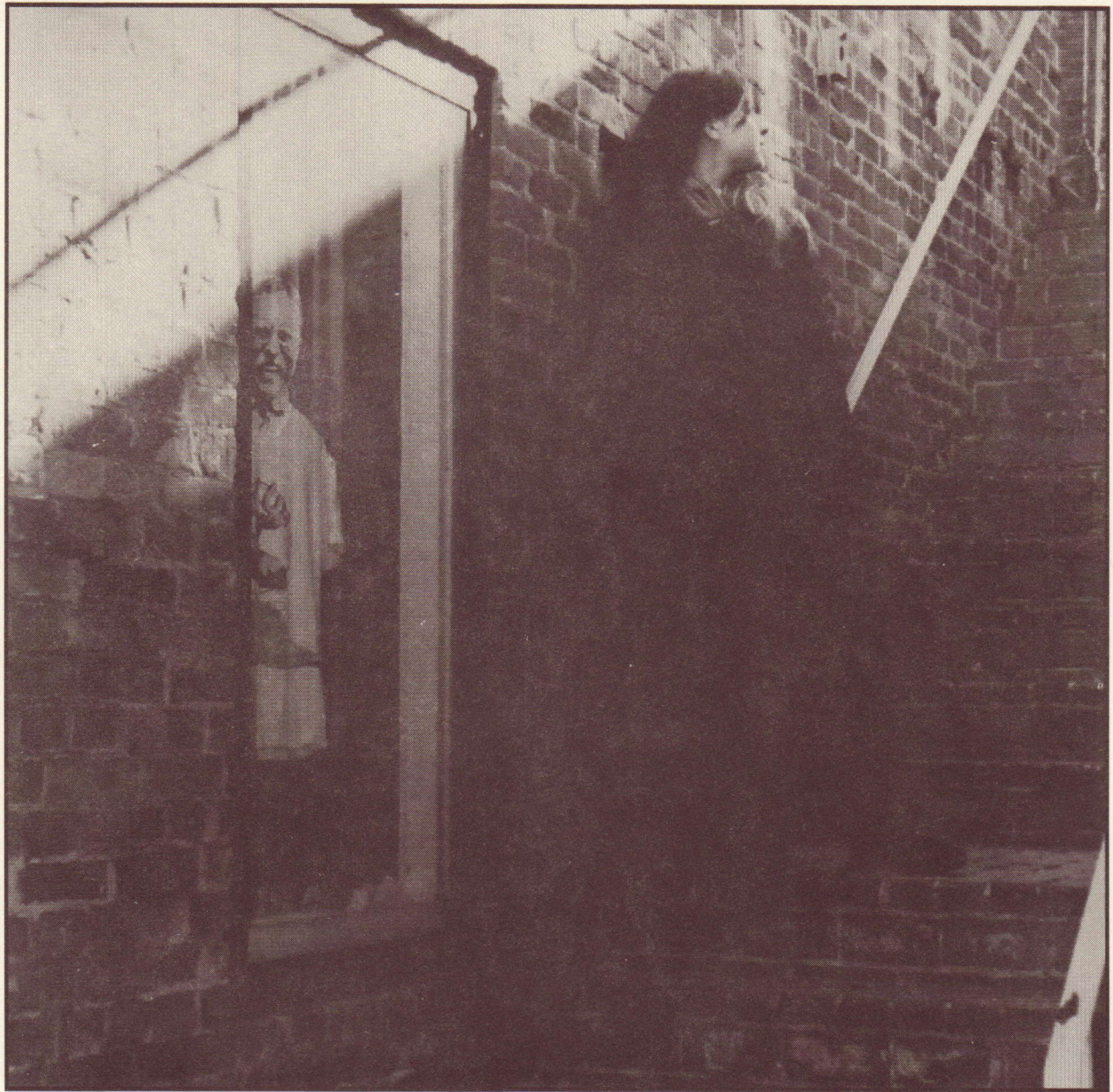


The York Review

A Magazine of Poetry, Fiction, Essay, Photography, and Art

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THE YORK REVIEW

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VOLUME 9/SPRING 2003

<i>3-ME's</i> (Mixed media)	Valerie Ustinovich	5
<i>Soccer at the Vatican</i>	Christina L. Jaffe	6
<i>Horizons</i>	Michael Tager	7
<i>1991</i>	Chad Hedgcock	8
<i>What Can I Teach the World...</i>	Bettina K. Jaffe	11
<i>A Muse</i> (Silver gelatin print)	Ben McKnight	13
<i>Mattie's Garden</i>	Angela Buchanan-Bloch	14
<i>A Note to My Older Self</i>	Matthew J. Lau	15
<i>Thomas</i> (Silver gelatin print)	Ben McKnight	16
<i>The Wrestling Ring</i>	Bradley T. Diehl	17
<i>What's in a Grade?</i>	Stacey L. Miller	24
<i>Rage</i>	Erica Hildebrand	25
<i>Untouched</i> (Charcoal)	Kayt Cherris	27
<i>Chaos</i>	Daniel E. Keith	28
<i>Lines on an Unfinished Fresco</i>	Matthew J. Lau	30
<i>The Luxury of Tycoons</i> (Out-of-focus print)	Kevin Leitzel	31

<i>Victorian Lace</i>	Stacey L. Miller	32
<i>The First Time I Died</i>	Matthew J. Lau	36
<i>"read here, often?"</i>	Christina L. Jaffe	38
<i>First Glimpse</i>	Michael Tager	39
<i>Apology</i> (Black ink linoleum print on chipboard)	Kevin Bowman	41
<i>I-Land</i>	Allen Lawrence	42
<i>The Longest Drought</i>	Kevin Leitzel	43
<i>Student Teaching</i>	Christina L. Jaffe	44
Untitled (Sepia Toned Gelatin Silver Print)	Valerie Ustinovich	45
<i>Tomatoes</i>	Matthew J. Lau	46
Notes from the Contributors		47

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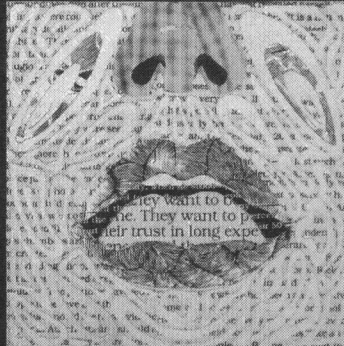
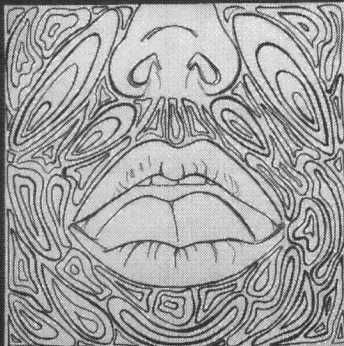
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Horacio

Michael Tager

I envision the life he might have led
I dream about his dreams
His journey, a book that no one's read
His manner, a style that no one's seen
His face, a smile that no one's seen

His father's name was Horacio
Of his father's name he spoke
They had names with those good looks
Physical grace like Viceroy, Marco, Diego, Lasso, Gian, and Cesar
and the announcer was talking about the way he looked
Yesterday they had an audience with the king
The king was a young man



Resting and gazing all around
His breath, made up of heart and sight
That seem to float in the air
but why is it with daily thoughts and feelings
near foot and hand and head

I start to ask him if he needs a hand
And he waves me off with a grin
Already I see someone coming to stand
Next to him, small hand developed in his

A tiny young thing, coming up to his waist
I can see they are of the same mold
Their manner and manner, they are cast
the young reflecting the old.

Pictorial Love	Sheryl L. Miller	32
The First Time I Died	Michelle F. Law	36
"read here, often?"	Christina L. Jaffe	38
First Glimpses	Christina L. Jaffe	39
Apology	Christina L. Jaffe	41
(Black Ink) Looking out on a ship	Christina L. Jaffe	42

Soccer at the Vatican

Christina L. Jaffe

they had names with these gorgeous round o's and one syllable after another
musical names like Vincenzo, Marcos, Diego, Francesco, Gianni, and Cesarre
and the announcers was talking about the Italian team and they said,
"yesterday they had an audience with the pope"
and then, almost as an afterthought the other one added, "who himself was a goalkeeper"
and they went on with their discourse on Marcello's free kick and the need for a savior defensive-man
and the youth of the boy-star
but for the rest of the game rather than see these Italian running Gods playing with their white orb
I saw an old man, with a hunched back, in white robes and his white papal cap, standing in front of a net
and blessing the victor before blocking the goal
and I wonder at my irreverence
or is it merely the dichotomy of the two images
these men at the peak of their athleticism- immortalized in their youth
and another man, a man of God, known and loved by the world in his old and feeble age
those pictures don't meet
but why is it with faintly forming smile I want them to?

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Horizons

Michael Tager

I envision the life he might have led
I dream about his dreams.
His journey, a book that no one's read.
His memories, miracles that remain unseen.

His stumbling steps are echoes
Of his gallops and dances and leaps.
His rheumy eyes that once saw rainbows,
Joyless now, they only weep.

His future is only a shimmer;
His past, an endless water spout.
The present day, a candle's flicker
That will sputter and die, lost in doubt.

I see friendships and battles and one night stands.
I see challenges, met and overcome.
I see loves lost and won, amidst the sand.
I see an entire life come undone.

He makes his way 'cross the road,
Trembling, coming over towards me.
On his weary shoulders, rests a great load
That bends him down, by degrees.

He stops and waits nearby
Resting and gazing all around.
His breath, made up of heartfelt sighs
That seem to have roots in the ground.

I start to ask him if he needs a hand
And he waves me off with a grin.
Already I see someone coming to stand
Next to him, small hand enveloped in his.

A tiny young thing, coming up to his waist;
I can see they are of the same mold.
Their features and manners, they are cast,
the young reflecting the old.

1991

Third Place Hoffman Writing Contest for Non-Fiction

Chad Hedgcock

I remember on one particular morning we stole a Styrofoam horse jump from the riding school and dragged it down to the river to use as a float. We invented a game with it where we had to get from one side to the other without letting our feet touch the water. This was possible without risk of hypothermia because the South African sun was already hot that winter morning, and the icy water was actually refreshing in small amounts on the body. Teaspoon and Banana had come home early from school, so I skipped also because I really didn't think I'd see them again. Inkatha had chased them out of Alexandria, or so Banana says. They had pangas and clubs, and she could see them coming over the hill, so she grabbed Teaspoon right from her desk and they hitchhiked home. I didn't believe her about the Inkatha story. Neither did Teaspoon. She didn't see any rioting people; but they were back, and that's what mattered.

The river was our only playground. We had to invent new games constantly to stay entertained. We'd been banned from swinging off the weeping willow because we had shorn so many leaves from its lower branches that it now looked like a spindly spider instead of a flowing fountain of luscious leaves. The crabs died or hibernated, or whatever crabs do in winter, so no more crab farms with its dozens of confused and terrified crabs slipping all over each other. The plan of building a submarine out of molten chocolate wrappers had to be scrapped due to shoddy engineering. So today it was the Styrofoam horse, and the fun lasted for hours until Teaspoon fell off. She hadn't gotten enough momentum to get from one side to the other, so the thin sheet of ice held her hostage in the middle of the river. We tried pushing her with sticks, but they either broke or weren't long enough, so she had only one choice left, and that was to jump.

Despite all of my insisting to the otherwise, she wouldn't come to my house to dry off. She never came to my house if my dad was still there. He had the look of a cop, and the temper of one too. He knocked a man unconscious once, and almost shot one in the ankle judging by the puff of smoke that flew into the air just inches from him; but they were trespassing. They deserved it. Why couldn't she see that she was different?

Finally we decided she'd have to dry off by walking the valleys and hills with Rosie, who was on her way to the store to buy milk and bread. It was quite a long walk involving an intricate network of treaded paths across the hillsides. To get there we had to cut across the dump, which

was an exciting place for children, full of mystery and danger. It had that hot, damp, rotten vegetable smell. It had scavengers. Believe it or not, one could actually live off the dump. It wasn't easy. It took a roughness of a different caliber than even Teaspoon or Banana had. These people had such a look of desperation and immediate need, like stray dogs do when they have the wobbles in their legs, when they barely have the energy to walk. When we'd go there to dump our trash, they wouldn't even look at us, just our trash, hoping there'd be something to make a home with, to wear, or hopefully to eat.

Banana turned out to be lying, judging from the newspaper at the store. Inkatha had not attacked any city yesterday. Even Soweto was rather peaceful, so the newspaper put more boring pictures of Mandela and DeKlerk on the front page. Political stuff that I didn't understand. Rosie was rushing us out of the store, so I had to buy something quickly. Teaspoon bought fireballs, which made sense given the circumstance. Banana saved her money. That was usually what she did with the money my mom gave us. By now she probably had at least five rand hidden under some log or rock.

On the way home I asked Teaspoon why Banana lied about Inkatha. Teaspoon was emphatic. "Because she thinks she can go to America with you! She lies always, Chad! Don't believe her about anything," she screamed, stressing her points with gestures like a motivational speaker who can't fit enough words into one slot. Teaspoon was the adult, though only nine, grounded in reality and ignored by Banana for that very reason, so her tiny voice always yelled to compensate. I never did understand just what about Banana's behavior was making her so anxious. Was it some premonition about the future? Some disaster that would take place because of Banana's lying and her skipping school. Perhaps it was of the doom that awaits Banana's belief that she'd sail away to The Other World with us, like *The Little Mermaid*, which the three of us had memorized via many snuggles behind the drive-in fence. I thought it was jealousy, perhaps, that was making Teaspoon this way. She deserved to go to America with me just as much as Banana did. It wasn't fair. I wanted all of my friends to come, but that would be impossible. Banana and I both had it planned that my dad would probably let her come if she'd be our maid, like Rosie was, since she'd then be contributing something that would make her an indispensable asset. I take most of the blame for getting her hopes so high. She even went so far as to spread the news to her family that she was going to America. It only dawns on me now that Teaspoon was trying to yell me into reality too. Banana and I made a bad combination because

we built on each others dreams; limousines everywhere, movie stars as your next door neighbors, the ease at which one can become famous, and Michael Jackson. She'd finally get to see Michael Jackson.

The next day their uncle came from Alexandria to take them back to school. I didn't even know they left because we were so busy making preparations to leave. The dogs had to be put down. Quarantining them would be way too costly and time consuming. My parents smuggled them off to the vet without me getting to say goodbye. They thought it would be better that way. So for several months following I imagined their heads looking out of the Vanagon windows, panting with excitement, with no idea of the destruction they were about to face. I remember that day well because a singer showed up to use our river as the scenery for his music video. The Styrofoam horse was thrown in the grass somewhere to make way for cameras and the umbrella lamps, which artificially lit a bald guy strumming his guitar against the beautiful scenery. Everything seemed to happen at once.

We had to take a train into Durban because that was where our boat was docked. The train was separated, of course, black and white. As the train bent around turns I'd watch people hanging out of their car. The doors weren't even closed, so there was always one man holding onto the bar, casually leaning out until his stop came, which wasn't really even a stop. At that point, chaos would ensue, with two crowds running in opposite directions along the side of the train. We learned after the first town to duck, so that people would think our train is empty. If the window weren't plastic I would have gotten hit with a rock, about in the ear I'd estimate. The girl who threw it looked just like Banana, but with shorter hair. She was barefoot and she had a dusty church dress on, like Banana's except without flowers.

At the harbor I found a much larger chunk of Styrofoam that had broken away from a jetty. I found new kids to play with, but they weren't any fun. They didn't know how to play properly. They didn't understand the give and take process that's necessary for a good play. Much like dancing, play is a sophisticated art, but here it was a confusing and cumbersome activity with a lack of communication and opposing ideas of fun. One kid kicked my boat repeatedly, trying to break it in half. Another hogged it and took it all the way into the deep. Then he abandoned it; swimming ashore as it drifted toward the spinning blades of a tanker.

What Can I Teach the World (or Nicko in the front row) at 22?

Bettina K. Jaffe

I can tell you-with certainty-very little. I wonder what then am I doing in uncomfortable shoes? Chalk-stained clothes do *not* make a teacher. The initiation is far more crushing than a layer of dust. It is hard labor carrying others' stories along with my own. For, "Yes," I tell Monique, "films can have stories and so can people's lives." This is a small surprise-a welcome one.

Even my title is enigmatic-student teacher. My favorite and most terrifying moments are when I see myself-at that age of aching joy, early adolescence. The good thing is that I usually know what to say. "You look beautiful." "Your new haircut is very becoming." "Don't worry about what he thinks." "I think you would be a wonderful friend." "Families can be very difficult-impossible sometimes." "If you need someone to talk to..." "Sure, I'll read another break-up poem," although I know them by heart...I wrote them myself.

"Just a lot of words," I think often. "What can I offer children with very adult problems other than after-school special dialogue?" I think with disgust. The weekends are the worst. Now I carry worry as they leave my classroom to fates unknown.

I titled my musings about student teaching-with all the hubris English majors and young teachers hold. However, it is compelling to think of classrooms as worlds.... There is a Rilke poem, "I live my life in growing orbits..." and I'm off on one of those lecture-induced tangents. When I return, I am usually greeted by the yawning multitudes. Losing my place-when I am in the classroom, in front of rows, of students is humbling. It really is a lot like a night at the Improv. If you can handle the hecklers with humor and find something the audience relates to-you just might win them back.

I make many mistakes-to illustrate problems for my students, of course. I use Audrey Hepburn as an example of legendary and I am officially an old person with obscure references. I learn. I now refer to Guinevere as Gwen (like Gwyneth Paltrow and Gwen Stefani) and relate her spunky personality to that of the Shrek princess. Merlin is Harry Potter's mentor, Dumbledore

and a host of comic book and film characters help me illustrate the rest of the cast. We create our own version of Arthurian stain glass windows. The result is a cartoony Paul Klee-like piece of artwork we love.

There are times when the classroom-*our* classroom does seem like a world in itself, a place where creativity is celebrated and earnestness in the eighth grade is allowed...fleeting as it may be. We create the scene with shiny "princess" hats from Christmas garland and a cheap Halloween costume transforms Nate into Merlin. A tiara is placed on Wendy and she smiles a queenly smile. I am surprised that Merlin is declared their favorite character. He doesn't have a cool sword. He's a supporting player in a drama of larger than life figures. The students write essays explaining his intriguing mysteriousness and his ability to see into the future. This gift is unanimously considered "very cool". My favorite response is that of one of the quietest students. "I like Merlin because he is a *teacher*, creating a place of peace and wisdom, Camelot."

When I began my student teaching experience, in a nearby rural school district, I arrogantly proposed a title for my future expose condemning public-education-"What's Wrong with Wrightsville?" There is nothing wrong with Wrightsville students, a great deal wrong with my intellectual conceit. I have learned courage from my students. I learned, very quickly, how to laugh at myself. I still marvel at how many names are lost in a day. There is always a pass to write, a paper to read, and sometimes, I don't even say anything at all to the unassuming students. They remember offhand comments when I am losing my patience, ninth period, but not the author of *A Christmas Carol*. I refuse to admit that Eminem has talent, continuing the debate from my soapbox...and infuriating my listeners. I am no Merlin...and yet I celebrate the fact that a little magic has occurred, that we have Camelot in the classroom-peace and enchantment-if only for a class period or two. Maybe I can slip the shoes off under my desk... revise the question to "what can I learn from the world, from my students", and begin again.

Mattie's Garden
First Place Hoffman Writing Contest for Poetry
Angela Buchanan-Bloch
ALAS, I DID NOT SEE THE STONE
Today as I spaded the soil at my new home
and I wept
I thought of Mattie's garden—



This is some life we have now
but now as I plant
I see that in her garden
vibrant, the sky always blue
my love, I'm still alive, right?

Mattie's Garden

First Place Hoffman Writing Contest for Poetry

Angela Buchanan-Bloch

Today as I spaded the soil at my new home

I thought of Mattie's garden--

How it must have looked back in 1903

She, still a young woman, just turning 30

Wearing her prim victorian dress.

I always imagine hollyhocks,
tall spires pink against blue sky,

And the scent of roses in June.

I grew up at Mattie's house

long after she was gone,

but her roses still bloomed,

ramblers and reds and whites,

And her daffodils and myrtle

and peonies, right where she had planted

I'm not there anymore

although my roots are deep

I still need to turn the earth and plant

I answer the same call as Mattie

who died long before I was born

but now as I plant

I see her in her garden

vibrant, the sky always blue

The Wrestling Blog
First Place Hoffman Writing Contest for Poets

A NOTE, TO MY OLDER SELF

Matthew J. Lau

To the me looking back—

I know you will have a certain disdain for the unpolished idealism of youth, but never forget me. I hope you never grow stubborn in your wisdom; there is always more to know, and it is humbling, not hardening, to grow.

Remember what you wanted to be. As long as you have love, you are the success I wanted to become. Never forget or forsake your love.

Remember that you had happy times. It's easy, perhaps, to sit here and be optimistic, I know, but I don't want you to ever give up; you love writing, you love music, you love the endless wonder of the world—and you love Khristey most of all.

Continue to learn new things. Pay attention to politics. Do things that will directly help people.

I have so much I want to say. I wish I could be there, with Khristey and the kids; I hope you spend plenty of time with them. I hope everybody in the family is healthy and safe. There's nothing I can say, of course, if things are grim, but be strong...you're a strong person, a good person, so just do what you think is best. Ask for help, don't be proud.

I hope you're more mature—I know how I can be. I'm sure I'll be proud of you... I hope you're still proud of me. Funny that I'm looking forward to being you, and you're probably wishing you could still be me. We're never satisfied, I suppose.

This is some life we have here. Never thought you'd end up here, huh? Give everybody my love...I'm still alive, right?

Matteo's Garden



The Wrestling Ring

First Place Hoffman Writing Contest for Fiction

Bradley T. Diehl

As I sat at my desk, I felt as though someone was staring at me. I tried to concentrate on the teacher's lecture, but the feeling of being watched became overwhelming. I began sweating as my heart thumped loudly in my chest. Realizing I was having a mild anxiety attack, I got up and left the classroom. Because my desk was located in the center of the room, I rarely got up and left during class because it drew attention and I felt awkward. But that that moment I needed space. I had to get out.

I silently closed the door and leaned against the wall. I took a deep breath, exhaled, and repeated this exercise several times until my heart rate had abated. I felt a bead of sweat run down the side of my left cheek. I caught it with my finger and as I held it out in front of me, I began hating that droplet. It represented how dissatisfied I was with myself for being so unexplainably self-conscious. I was nervous all the time; this resulted in my periodically leaving classrooms and at the beginning of each semester, selecting classes that did not require in-class presentations. The feeling of normality eluded me.

I descended the stairs slowly and tried to figure out when I first began feeling this apprehensive and uncomfortable in my own skin. In both elementary and middle school, I was more outgoing than other students in my class. This behavior likely began sometime during high school. But for the life of me I could not pinpoint one event that gave birth to this anxiety; one day it was simply there.

At the bottom of the stairs, I entered a nearby bathroom and stood in front of the mirror. Thankfully the bathroom was empty so I could attempt to relax and compose myself privately. I turned on the water and made it as hot as I could tolerate. I leaned over the sink and allowed the water to fill my cupped hands. As it cleansed my face, I imagined myself in some tropical location with waterfalls and—

Hey.

I wiped the water away from my eyes and looked in the mirror at my classmate's reflection. Sure enough the greeting was directed at me.

Hi, I said, inaudibly. I wondered if he even heard me.

I watched as he entered one of the stalls and shut the door. When the latch slid into place, I instantly turned off the water and exited the bathroom. I didn't care that my face was soaked. Back in the hallway, I began drying my face and hands on my sweatshirt, ignoring the stares others gave me, but feeling self-conscious nonetheless.

I have never smoked in my entire life, but as I passed through the lobby of my building and gazed through the glass doors, the cigarettes pressed to students' mouths were awfully tempting. If I weren't so uptight, I would have likely been out there smoking and conversing with the other college students. Strike up a cigarette and good conversation. Something *normal* people did.

That's when it happened, me standing alone in the lobby while students idled by. Something inside of me snapped. I cannot describe it, but if you've ever been to a chiropractor and have had your neck cracked, that's how it felt. Except the cracking sensation occurred throughout my body. And suddenly I knew what I had to do.

I quickly turned in the direction of the stairs and ran. I knew people were looking at me, thinking I must be late for a test or something, but I disregarded them and focused on what I was planning to do. I attacked the stairs with a vengeance and reached the top in an admirable amount of time. As I hurried toward my classroom, I paused and took a deep breath. I could do this, I told myself.

The door creaked as it opened. This was not a good sign, but I could not relent. I took my seat avoiding the students' stares. I tried to focus on the teacher's lecture. My heart began pounding in my chest as my teacher took a break to look down at his notes. The teacher glanced up.

As many of you know, there was a reading assignment due for today. I had originally planned on giving a surprise quiz, but have decided otherwise. If the response to the questions I have listed is favorable, then we'll simply have a class discussion. Otherwise... and the teacher held up a copy of the infamous pop-quiz.

I swallowed hard. This was the moment I had been waiting for--I would answer a question and speak in front of the class. At that moment, I didn't care what others thought of me. I watched, my heart beating unmercifully in my chest, my eyes feeling as though they were bulging from their sockets, as the teacher studied the first question. Then he read it aloud and looked at the class in anticipation. I did not look around; I was absolutely focused on the teacher and his question. And to my delight, I knew the answer.

No one moved and no hands were raised. Because my inhibitions were still a force to reckon with, I did not raise my hand right away, but opted to prolong the agony. Then, as I took a deep breath, I raised my hand, voluntarily answering a teacher's question for the first time in years.

The teacher looked in my direction and nodded approvingly. I remember him looking down at a sheet of paper and realizing that it was the seating chart. He didn't even know my name! But that didn't matter. As soon as I answered the question, he would.

Mr. ...Johnson? I nodded. *Okay, Mr. Johnson, what key words or phrases did the narrator use in describing the final scene to create such an effective setting?*

I was finding it difficult to speak, an inopportune time if ever there was one. My heart was pounding so hard that I could barely sit still. On my lap, my hands were clasped together and shaking. I cleared my throat and sat up. The teacher was looking at me patiently, waiting for a response. I silently scolded myself for raising my hand and placing myself in an uncomfortable situation. Ignoring my classmates' stares, I began to answer.

The narrator, I believe, used--

Suddenly the passing bell rang. Students gathered their books, throwing them carelessly into their backpacks. I looked up and saw the teacher collect his papers and place them in his briefcase. Students were leaving. Why didn't the teacher let me finish, I asked myself. Was he not interested in what I had to say? After all, it was the first time I had decided to participate. I remember hearing laughter from the hallway. I couldn't help but wonder if they were talking behind my back. I sat there helpless and frustrated, feeling as though all the effort I had put forth was in vain.

I noticed my heart was no longer beating. My eyes no longer bulging. Instead of feeling nervous, I felt angry. I had actually begun to answer a question that I felt confident with. I was going to talk in class without worrying about others' reactions. I was going to be normal.

The classroom emptied itself in minutes; however, I remained in my seat, my notebook and pen resting on my desk. I listened as the volume of the students' voices lessened, and without thinking, pounded my fist onto my desk. Again. And again. My hand began to hurt, so I forced myself to cease. I looked at the chalkboard and the wooden podium the teacher stood behind. To this day, I am still surprised by what I did at that moment. I sat up in my chair, unclasped my hands, cleared my throat, and began to answer the teacher's question.

The narrator, as I recall, had used phrases such as....

I continued until I finished answering then began putting my notebook and pen away. I actually felt complacent, a feeling that had escaped me for years. But that feeling did not last.

Suddenly, from behind me, I heard a man clear his throat. My heart sank and was quick to resume the rhythmic pounding that I had grown so accustomed to. I felt the blood rush to my head and I was forced to close my eyes in order to alleviate the oncoming dizziness. That was when it really hit me—someone had likely seen me punch my desk and go on to answer a question in front of an empty classroom.

I zippered up my backpack and stood up, legs feeling weak. From behind me, a voice said

I forgot my briefcase.

I recognized the voice. I turned and saw my teacher standing in the rear of the classroom. He was wearing a polite smile and stood with his hands buried deep within his pockets. At that moment my backpack suddenly gained ten pounds.

He pointed toward the podium. I followed his gesture and sighed; the briefcase was resting next to the podium in plain sight. He began walking to the front of the classroom. I could not put into words just how awkward I felt at the moment. I felt like a fool. And embarrassed. It was as though someone just walked in on me taking a shower. I began walking toward the door when

Mr. Johnson?

I stopped. I didn't turn around because I felt uncomfortable and, more importantly, vulnerable. How could I face my teacher for two more months? I heard his footsteps approach and stop within a few feet of me.

Mr. Johnson, look at me. Please.

I was hesitant to look at him. How could I explain what had just transpired? But I sensed something in his voice; it sounded as though he was concerned. So I turned around and realized that his smile was not done out of politeness, but that my teacher was offering me sympathy.

Mr. Johnson, what you did just now was brave, and I admire your courage.

I began fighting back tears and said nothing. I may have shrugged. My teacher stepped closer.

I know what you are going through.

How?

It was all I could manage just then. I wiped my eyes and suddenly had a deeper understanding of the figure standing before me. He was a few inches taller than I was, had a receding hairline and dark eyes. His glasses were pushed high up on his face. For the first time, I was actually seeing my teacher as a person, instead of an imposing figure. I felt like a fool that I had let myself be so intimidated by this man and of his classroom.

The look in his eyes reflected not only sympathy, but empathy as well. I choked up once again began fighting back the tears. I could think of nothing more embarrassing than crying in front of an individual I hardly knew. He stepped closer and said something I don't think I will ever forget:

Mr. Johnson, I have been there. And it's not a good place to be.

I nodded in agreement.

Now, he said as he guided me toward the door, *how about we see what we can do to fix this? Come with me to my office and let's discuss this.*

Two sentences that offered me hope and encouragement; two sentences that changed my life. At that moment, I felt like a child, helpless and impressionable. That was my defining moment. That was one of those instances where one can either jump or back away from the cliff, so to speak. I was going to allow another individual into my world of apprehension and personal suffering for the first time. It was not only disconcerting but also scary as hell.

Suddenly realizing I was staring at the floor, I looked up. With the room quiet and the desks empty, I came to the conclusion that the classroom was really not such a terrible place after all. But as soon as students filled the desks and the teacher began randomly calling on students to answer questions, the classroom became a wrestling ring--me in one corner, my anxiety in the other.

My teacher was still standing next to me, being patient as I tried to come to terms with what I was truly afraid of and what he was offering. I knew that life would remain difficult until I began discussing my feelings of anxiety with another. My teacher was offering me a helping hand to attain a sense of normality. I had wished so many times that I would no longer experience trepidation in the classroom, and now as I stood at the edge of the cliff, I knew what I had to do. So, overcome with emotion and gratitude, I smiled at my teacher and whispered

Thank you.

What's in a Grade?

Stacey L. Miller

An "A" means I belong here.

An "A" means that I'm good.

It means the rape, the abuse

Gave me more than it took.

It means that you respect me,

That I've something to give

Of the value of the voice

Born by the life I lived.

It means I'm a person,

A whole human being.

An "A" is so much more

Than what letters should mean.

My perspective seems lost

As my eyes tear at night.

Because an "A" would almost

Make everything right.

Rage

Erica Hildebrand

Why rage?

Who are we to feel rage?

We are your doctors, your lawyers, your caterers, your garbage men, your food servers, your judges, your professors, your students, *your police officers*, your firefighters, your news anchors, your factory workers, your actors, your CEOs, your bartenders, your bums, your millionaires, your insurance agents, your scoutmasters, your town watch, your carpenters, your clerks, your politicians, your ministers, your writers.

We are your neighbors, your *friends*, your *bosses*, your co-workers, your drinking buddies.

We are your mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers. We are your *children*.

We guard you while you sleep.

We prepare your food.

We stand in line with you at the DMV.

What we are not; we are NOT child molesters. We are NOT sexual deviants who flaunt ourselves (you people show public displays of affection more than we, because you're not *frightened* of what might happen to you if you are seen). We are not emasculated men. We are not estrogen-deprived women.

We don't recruit.

You push our backs against the wall when you speak your intolerance. We try to remain stoic and turn the other cheek, but YOU DON'T. Every time you say "Fucking queer" you push us back. Every time a police officer charges us with lewd conduct, you push us back. Every time a gay cadet gets bludgeoned to near-death in boot camp because the other cadets were afraid he was making a pass at them, you push us back. Every time a minister or a priest says we're going to hell, you push us back. Every time you use selective quotations from the Bible, you push us back.

If you quote the Bible, quote the whole thing. Show that you have some *conviction*. If your right arm offends the Lord, cut it off. If a woman is menstruating, don't let her leave the house. Kill adulterers. Don't eat pork. If your child disobeys you, have him stoned. Your devotion to that one line in that ancient book when you ignore the other direct translations

offends us. Why must ONE LINE from the Old Testament be quoted when all the others have passed into the shadows of history?

And don't tell us that we are inferior parents. We are forced to take the time to *plan out* a pregnancy or an adoption, to get screened and prodded and scrutinized and billed. We can't make families by accident. We have to fight for a right that you treat as a privilege, or even an accident. We prepare ourselves for a family, and we raise that family to be as strong and as unbiased as possible, to make a stopgap against the overflowing population of bigots that are bred.

When you tell us to keep our affection to ourselves, or to not be queer at all, you might as well say that eating chocolate ice cream is inexcusable while at the same time endorsing vanilla ice cream. Choice is not the same as preference. You can *choose* to eat the vanilla ice cream, but you will never be able to consciously change your *preference* for liking chocolate better.

Define acceptable contradictions.

Every time you tell a child that gay people are intrinsic sinners that will burn in the flames of hell because they like the same sex, whether that child is gay or straight, you *offend* us.

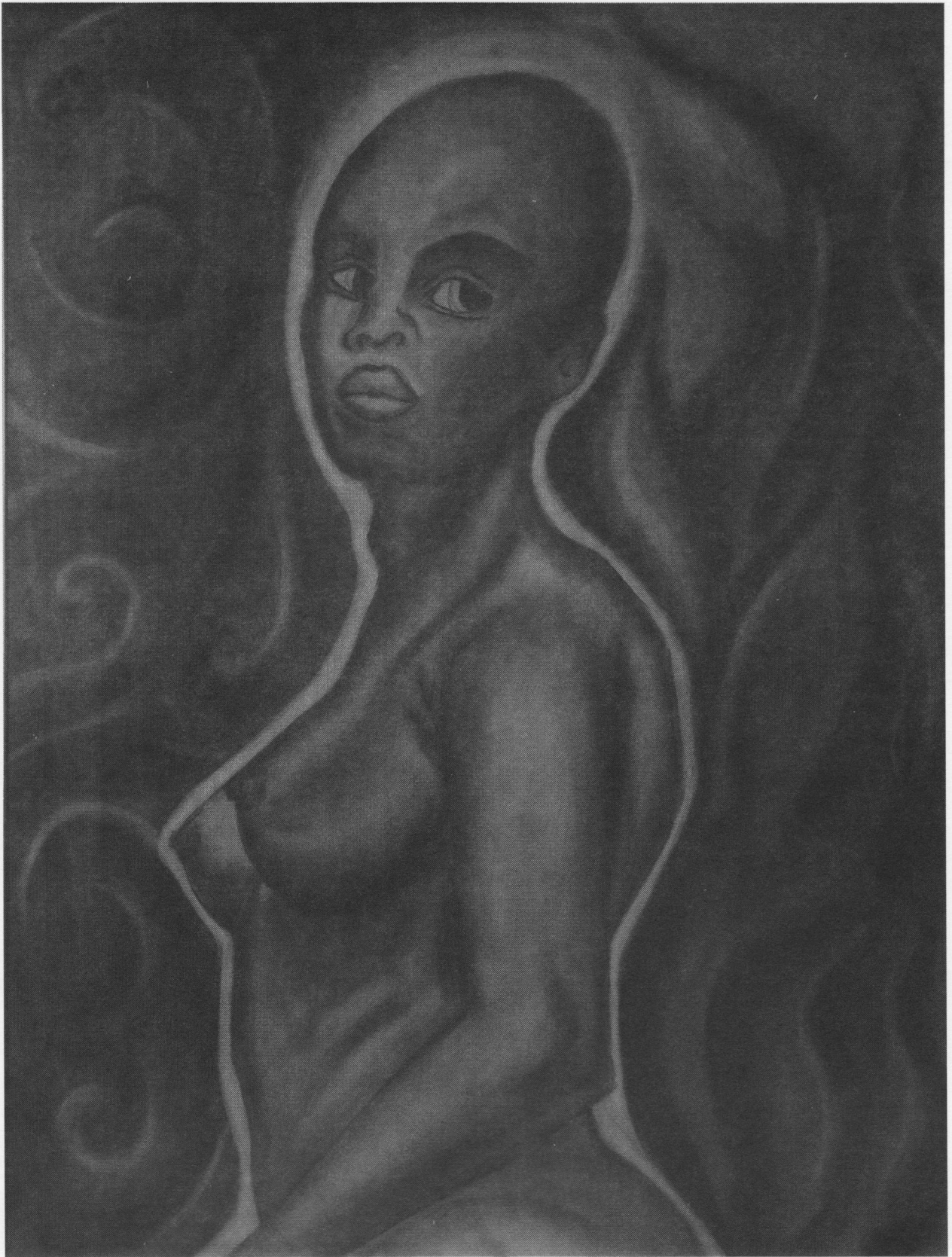
When a gay couple is harassed and then beaten up for holding hands with each other on the street... that *offends* us.

It OFFENDS us. That word is deliberate.

Back us up into a corner far enough and we will lash out.

We don't love any differently than you. We love the same. Our scopes are only set differently. *That is the only difference.*

From the back: from the front, it's a dark, almost black, void. It's a void that is not empty, but filled with a sense of mystery and depth. The figure is a woman, her face and upper body visible, looking towards the viewer with a serious expression. The background is dark and textured, with swirling patterns that suggest movement and depth. The overall mood is somber and contemplative.



Chaos

Daniel E. Keith

I'm not here, not there, everywhere, nowhere. In, out, down, north, south win, lose, cheat, steal, lie, truth, yes, no, maybe-later.

Conflict, harmony, ebony, ivory? Cat living with dogs, jumpy killers, drug dealers, drug stores, the golden rule, rule of thumb, Pythagorean theory.

Inside, outside, to do what's righteous or say, "I don't give a damn," plan, fail, weep, wail, hell, jail, subpoenaed by mail, sleep, stay away, stay awake, come here, go away-never mind-ok-forget it-why do I raise my hand? I don't know.

Put it down, pick it up, your grounded, slow down, speed up, that my be bad for you, no wait, I think it's good. No one wants to be alive when they are 75. Grandkids, middle schoolers, water guns, shotguns, handguns, we are 6, exit through the metal detector.

Lysol, York Mall, Pin sol Manchester Mall, hot-dog, Snoop Dog, dog pound, heartburn, heart attack, heartland, East Coast, West Coast, Westside, chorus beat, bass line, chorus drum, beat line-oh shit-no not this time.

Think you know what's going on inside of me? I don't want to get out of bed, it's too cold but I have to pee. Tap, rack, bang-said the non firing N.C.O., equal rights turned women into hoes-gotta eat, gotta work, gotta fly-heroine, what the heck in the neck. GOT MILK?

Rap, rock, pop, hip-hop-disco, cut off, GOD, Darwin, I win, I lose. I want to be a detective, I cant find any clues, gotta be some-some-where I was, late this morning, could find a pair of matching shoes, don't stare, glare in my window, turn the wipers on-is this poetry-might be a song? Not long yet Long John Silvers, has fish with scales, trails, trippen', throwing up, those things don't belong in your gut. Gotta eat girls if you want a big butt and attract males.

From the back, from the front, it's 4 down and 11 coach says, "(PUNT!) I wanna quit but my mom didn't raise a quitter. US MARINES and natural born killers, phuket, phatong-might be a song-smoke the roach or put it in the bong. Mushrooms, PCP, LSD, STD, IV in my vein-a cycle on the way to pain-talk marijuana, you get a smile, without Buddha-my brain goes 1,000 miles-per-hour-sweet and sour, pig feet, hogmaw-jigsaw, see saw-I get it ya'll. It's not a bulkhead it's a wall-I hate buying groceries at the store, I'm running out of toilet paper, I aint buying no more.

Red alert, re alert, it's time to go to work. It's clean but I still gotta iron this shirt. Do men still rule the world? I know they do-ladies 18-24-I'm looking-where are you?

10-24 to get rid of this looter, shooter, mcgavern tun tavern philly 11775. I'm like Ando in *Alive* eating raw meat, raw flesh. People are so cold see, what a mess-get dressed-gotta-go-slow-WOW. Is all this from my brain. I don't know-someone's spinning the room you think I'll blow another paycheck on acid, wake up in Death Row?

Insanity? No it's good to be me, it's good to be the kind, it's cool to be him-who-hacksaw Jim Dougan, Jimmy Superfly Snucka-I took ya all around the world on a boat and I'm the captain Japan, New York, Brookklyn-Manhattan-what happened? Like Slick Rick the ruler I'm back and I'm healthy like Jenny-Rikki Lake, mistake, i'm heading for the break-fix it? Don't try-I'm not really crazy-"man why you gotta lie-I'm they type of guy who is involved in a rock-n-rola-cola-war-need to find a good woman-not a whore-we didn't start the fire, who did, who cares-ideas fly through my mind brighter than roadside flares-if the roof catches on fire (what did we learn?) don't do a pepsi commercial with a perm.

ABSOLUTESTRAIGHT-my chest burns-end of Chaos going in my head-was it an illusion? No! I'm going back to bed

(Toby DES)

Lines on an Unfinished Fresco

Second Place Hoffman Writing Contest for Poetry

Matthew J. Lau

Forever there, with eyes looking incomplete,
fast to the never-coming end—
muted colors, what could offend
these drawn faces slack to dread repeat?

O, messenger, the letter that you send
hopes no arrival; though you aim to warn
or please the mystery recipient, the torn
impassible boundary is impossible to mend.

The sky interrupt, bold mountains shorn,
even grassy fields dissolve away where
the plaster dried, the painter brash enough to dare
to tell your full day's tale in one brief morn.

Who left this child, imperfect, bare,
to speak for itself when the Magi come
to welcome it? Is this its home
eternal spent, this rabbit in a lion's lair?

When will the shepherd see that some
of his sheep lost their legs, their heads consumed
by the encroaching void, the fear of falling loomed
as they teetered on the edge of monochrome.

The sky forgot its stars, its seems, and angels roomed
at the inn that night, lacking wings to make it back;
certainly no life is safe within this falling shack,
beneath an empty heaven, indefinitely doomed.

The second door on the right behind the...
left for college. We sent him away to school...
have known better. He always had a way...
All at once I began to shudder. The air around me seemed foreign. The ground beneath...
the second entrance. And yet I was home. I was at the house to which I had become so...
accustomed. I knew where each hallway led. I knew the corners to every room. The pictures...
were that of my family and myself. And the furniture were all pieces I had chosen myself. I once...
through the / American towers and oceans to be beautiful. But they seemed cold to the now



Edward walked his little girl down that aisle. I could see the tears because those proud eyes of his...
I saw those same proud eyes gleam when she placed his granddaughter in his arms. Our Eleanor...
the career woman who helped this nation win a war. Edward even called her Rosie for a while...
For as independent and strong as she was, she never lost those curls.

Victorian Lace

Stacey L. Miller

All at once, I began to shudder. The air around me seemed foreign. The ground beneath me seemed unfamiliar. And yet I was home. I was at the house to which I had become so accustomed. I knew where each hallway led. I knew the corners to every room. The pictures were that of my family and myself. And the furniture were all prices I had chosen myself. I once thought the Victorian fabrics and details to be beautiful. But they seemed cold to me now.

As I went further down the hallway to the living room I could hear the sound of children's laughter. It was a sound I had almost forgotten. A toy car escaped the room and passed in front of me. I picked it up and rolled it back to its owners. There was a hush and then the laughter began again. I ran my fingers along the chair rail as I walked. Dust. Perhaps I should speak with housekeeping. In the dining room, the chandelier seemed as beautiful as ever. It was adorned with perfect crystals that reflected the light around the cherry table and chairs. My mind wandered back to a time when my friends all gathered here. The men wore their tuxedos and the women in their most beautiful gowns. Edward stood beside me. My ring was so new on my finger. But it seemed as if I was destined to wear it. They raised their glasses to me when Edward proposed. My Edward, I say that now even though it has been years since he passed. He was the most eligible bachelor in New England. He said he stopped being eligible the moment he happened to spy my ankle as I stepped down from the car. He would say, "Ginny, Thank God you were all caught up in reading a bit of Austin instead of concentrating on what your skirt wasn't covering." How happy we were! How long ago that seems!

I walked up the stairs to the second floor. I remember the banister being a favourite place for my children to play. No matter how much I told them not to slide down the rail. I always seemed to be catching them disobeying that order. The first room on the right belonged to my daughter. It was here that I combed Eleanor's hair for her first day of school. Her hair was blonde with ringlets. Those curls...we used to sit up and sing as I wrapped the rags in her hair. It was here that I put on her headpiece for her wedding. She married a fine gentleman. And the moment Edward walked his little girl down that aisle, I could see the tears escape those proud eyes of his. I saw those same proud eyes gleam when she placed his granddaughter in his arms. Our Eleanor, the career woman who helped this nation win a war. Edward even called her Rosie for a while. For as independent and strong as she was, she never did lose those curls.

The second door on the right belonged to my son. I kissed Jared's cheek just before he left for college. We sent him away to school hoping he would break ties with Margaret. I should have know better. He always loved her. No matter how much we tried to point out that she would never feel comfortable in upper-class society. Both her mother and father worked for J. P. Morgan so she stayed with an aunt here in Massachusetts to escape the New York City crime. Jared came home after graduation with Margaret as his wife. They eloped. Oh, Edward was furious! He swore to disown him. But when the coughing started, he knew it was time to forgive his son. A man tends to forget such foolish things at a time like that. So finally, I opened the door to find my son in uniform and his young bride still glowing from the first year of marriage. Her belly was swollen with the love they shared. And I soon embraced my first grandson in this room as I welcomed Jared's wife and son into my home.

The first door on the left belonged to my youngest, Meg. Polio took her when she was five. The entire time she was sick, everyone told me to send her to the hospital. Society women did not care for their children let alone a sick child. But I did not want to share my time with her. I dismissed all the servants. Eleanor and Jared tended to the household chores. They never once complained even though Ellie's hands were callused from scrubbing the floors and Jared's back was sore from the wash. Edward helped me with Meg. And together we read *The Wizard of Oz* to her. She delighted at the voices her father would do. She was particularly fond of my witch. But one glorious morning, I walked into her room to find the sun had burst through her window to carry her soul to a place where she could once again run. I held that sweet shell in my arms for what seemed like forever. I kissed her cheek and twirled her hair around my finger. My Ellie opened the door to find me there. She was just fourteen at the time but she carried this peace with her. It was a wisdom I could not explain. She cradled Meg in her arms and said, "Let go, Mother. You have to know when to let go. She's in a better place now." She cast her eyes down on Meg's lifeless body, kissed her forehead and said, "Isn't that right, sweet Megan?" we buried her in the family cemetery. I still feel that same emptiness in this room. It is just as she left it. Her dresses still hang in the closet. Her toys are where she left them. And her teddy bear still sits on her bed. It's as if they are waiting for her to play with them again.

There was one more door at the end of the hall. I opened the door to the master suite. I slept with my husband, Edward, here for more years than I can remember. There was a four-poster bed on the right. The cherry wood was as breathtaking as it was when he bought it for our

new home. Beside the bed was the nightstand and the Bible that was given to me by my father on the day of my confirmation. I was reading it to Edward that fateful day. It was raining. Edward loved the rain. The children gathered around the bed as he fell asleep for the last time. I stopped reading for a moment and turned to my husband. He was smiling. But he was also no longer with us. A tear fell upon the pages. I looked down to wipe them clean when I noticed that my ankle was showing once again.

I walked over to the window overlooking the garden. Here I sat in my rocking chair to nurse my children and sing them lullabies during the night. I can still remember the words, "Hush little baby, don't say a word. Mama's going to buy you a mocking bird." The melody plays in my head still. If I listen closely, I can hear Edward humming it in his sleep just as he did those endless nights of young parenthood.

I walked to my vanity. So many times I would see my daughter there combing her hair with my silver brush. She would pull out my jewelry. The earrings were too big and heavy for her tiny lobes. The pearls hung down almost to her waist. She seemed to love all of my pieces. But most of all she loved this piece. It was the necklace Edward gave to me when he proposed. She always said the rubies were the most beautiful of gems. And since she was born in July, she made me promise that one day it would be hers.

A tear escaped my eyes unnoticed. I looked in the mirror as I brushed it off my cheek. I powdered my nose and fixed the laced collar around my neck. My hair was still done in the French twist and adorned with the comb my mother put in my hair the day I married. The dress was as white as it was that day. The lace was still as intricate as I remembered it to be. The satin was still as soft. I looked down to my left hand. The ring Edward slipped on my finger was the most beautiful gold and inscribed with the date of our wedding. I looked up to the mirror to see my image the same as I was then. I could hear laughter in the hallway as a man and woman approached the door. As the door opened, I looked back to the mirror to see nothing, not even my reflection. I turned again and saw a face so familiar to me. She reminded me of my grand daughter with the golden blonde hair and the brilliant blue eyes. I walked to embrace her but she seemed to pass right through me. The man said, "What's wrong, Eleanor?"

Eleanor? But that's my daughter's name.

"I don't know. Nothing I suppose. I just had the most peculiar feeling. I felt warm and safe all at once. Haven't felt that way since... Well, never mind. How was work today?"

“No, tell me.”

“Well, you know I’m named after my grandmother, Eleanor?”

“Yes. So?”

“She used to tell us about all the things that happened in this house. She told us about her sister, Meg, who didn’t survive polio and Jared who married against his parent’s wishes. But most of all, she told us about the special love her parents shared. She told me about her mother, Ginny, who was an amazing woman. She loved her family so much; she swore she would not leave until they were all together.

I remember I told Ellie that.

“When she said that, I felt this warm feeling wrap around me. It was like Great Grandma was hugging me. That’s the reason I wanted our Ginny to have that name. It is why I wanted to live in this house. I wanted a home filled with love. Hopefully, Tom, Great Grandma can rest now. Now they are all together.”

I looked down to see that my feet were not touching the floor. I looked at my hand again and saw the doorway through it. This dress was exactly the one I wore on my wedding day. And my face had gone from aged and wrinkled to young and smooth overnight. At least I think it was overnight. Perhaps this is all a dream.

All at once, I began to shudder. The air around me seemed foreign. The ground beneath me seemed unfamiliar. And yet I was home...

The hallway in front of me became blurry as I heard someone say, “Let go, Mother. You have to know when to let go.”

Wait. I know that voice. It’s Ellie! My Ellie!

“I told you she was in a better place.”

At that moment a girl started running towards me. She was wearing a white dress with a pink sash. Her hair was dark with ringlets. Ringlets... the same ones I twirled as I held Meg’s empty shell in my arms. Could it be? “Megan! Is that you?”

“Mommy!” She screamed as she leapt right into my arms. The house disappeared around me as I found myself with Megan, Eleanor, Jared, and my Edward. I am home.

The First Time I Died

Third Place Hoffman Writing Contest for Poetry

Matthew J. Lau

I suppose the first time I died
I was twelve. It was so cold
at the viewing; my brother never cried...

I don't know what they told
my grandpa that left him tearfully
shuddering beyond all consolation.
I remember God was there for me
in pamphlets, with the affirmation
that death took people to a happy place;
however, I was introduced so bluntly
to finality, I can't imagine my face
smiled at the loss,
despite that glowing cross.

The second time I died, then,
I was seventeen, just walking
to the store when eight or ten
or thirteen guys came stalking
after me—a shove to the ground,
turning just in time to catch
the foot that turned me back around,
the moment painless, hollow; all watch
as I absorb the impact with my face,
my mind swallowed by the silence of stars,
until some man's yell chased
them away... yet nothing hurt,
bleeding in the voiceless dirt.

I died a third time, twenty now,
my first time on my own; the hot
summer burning with a newness found
in every smile, every glance—and caught
on a new bed, a familiar voice
demanding a new question: more
an order than a choice,
but taken willingly. Unsure
of what to do, I lay pinned, afraid
of pain upon resistance, submissive;
afterwards, in the dark I laid
unmoved, still dying,
unaware of any crying.

First Stanzas

Michael Tague

*

I died just two months after that,
walking in on what I really always knew.
My weakness prolonged the aftermath
no matter where I tried to run to.
A car soon after took my life away,
my old, happy illusion still a spark
inside my husk. I remember to this day
not breathing in the trembling dark,
lying beneath the world above,
fearing every footfall—or worse,
the creak of old boards making love:
every crawling second I relived
what I refused to forget or forgive.

I died once more, but unlike how
I died before: this time I suddenly awoke
as from a dream, my world now
real, my past all drawn in smoke
that dissipated at my touch; and all because
when looking into honest eyes I saw
in them the good in me. Who I was
went the way of dreams, and all
my sorrow and malaise defused.

I took my first real breaths
since youth, parts long unused
reanimated, that smile undoing every death.
In this new light, I grow assured
I did not die, having never lived before.

The First Time I Died

First Poem Program Writing Contest for Poetry

Matthew J. Jaffe

"read here, often?"

Christina L. Jaffe

the sexiest thing is a guy reading
not so much that they can. but that they *do*
today I saw one- handsome, a boy- probably just 20, long legs, sunlight casting his shoulders and
fair knees in this golden hue
framed silhouette in an open stairwell window- eyes intent on the pages
he was more Manchester United than Mansfield Park
I walked by in my short black dress with the high collar and I stopped and watched him, watched
the book hold him
and his eyes never lifted
not once
and I was taken
and I wondered what it was that he was reading

First Glimpse

Michael Tager

I hummed to myself and smoked my 3rd in a row as I watched her across the courtyard. She looked so beautiful to me, just standing there, smoking her Marlboro lights. I knew that that was what she smoked when she tossed out an empty pack on Monday and I checked to see what brand it was. I felt a small thrill when I realized that we smoked the same brand. Now I could have something to say to her I thought. Something like, "Hey, we smoke the same cigs. How crazy is that?" Then I realized that if I approached her with that, she would probably give me a confused, condescending half-smile, nod and walk off. After all, that's a pretty lame come on. Maybe that is not such a good idea after all.

I first noticed her two months ago when I showed up at school a little early and hung around outside Linthicum, waiting for class to begin. I stood there, killing time, smoking and humming 'Here Comes the Sun' to myself. Then she walked out of the building, pulled out a cigarette and turned to me, asking for a light.

I handled it cool enough, I'll give myself that. Ignoring the sudden fluttering I felt in my chest cavity, I wordlessly pulled out my lighter and lit her smoke for her, smiling slightly when she mumbled, "Thanks." She walked away and I didn't say anything, I just sort of watched her and smoked my smoke... but on the inside, my stomach was doing little flip-flops. For the next ten minutes, all I could do was sneak peaks at her. I even smoked two more cigs so I could have an excuse to stay out there and look at her while she chatted with her friends. Then she went in to class. I stared after her, crushed out my cigarette, and followed her in, hoping we were going the same way. But she turned left at the hallway; I went right, went into my classroom and forgot all the German I ever knew. I was in love.

I know a little about her now- just from overhearing her conversations a couple of times a week for two months. I am outside the building, smoking and hoping to catch a glimpse of her Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays somewhere between 930 and 1045. Sometimes she's not there, more often she is. I know her name is either Emily or Amelia. She's from some rinky-dink town on the Eastern Shore. She hates dogs, has a crush on Jared Leto and shops at the Salvation Army. And when she got her eyebrow pierced, her mom almost threw her out of the house. I personally think that the piercing is utterly charming and I've considered approaching her with some comment like, "I was thinking of getting my own eyebrow pierced and I was wondering if it hurt?" Or something like that... but I decided that that would be kind of weird.

Last night I had convinced myself that I would finally find some excuse to talk to her. At the very least, I could go up to her and ask her for a light, like she did with me. I truly meant to- I had gotten myself all psyched up. But then the moment came, when I saw her come out of the

building and set a cigarette to her cute little mouth... I just couldn't do it. I totally chickened out. I knew that once the moment came, once I went up to her and opened my mouth... nothing would come out. Maybe some squeaks, possibly a mumble, a very small chance of a burp or a high-pitched laugh. Or at the best, my mind would go blank, I would stare at her for a minute, open my mouth and close it like a fish and then walk away, my cheeks red as her and her friends laughed at me. I always freeze under that kind of pressure.

Besides, what's the point? It's not like I know anything substantial about her. All I know is that she's pretty. I don't know if she's nice or interesting or intelligent. She's probably one of those little automatons that sororities churn out- devoid of intelligent conversation. This campus is filled with those archetypes of party girls who use daddy's credit card to buy Prada bags.

I dropped my cig and angrily stomped it out with my heel, angry with myself for making this situation come to pass. For getting my hopes up without any kind of reality intruding. It's better this way, I thought to myself. Nothing ventured, nothing lost. I'll just put this girl out of my mind and chalk this one up to experience. It really isn't worth this kind of aggravation. Who cares if she's gorgeous and wears cool clothes and seems to check me out all the time? I started to turn away and walk towards the doors. It really is better this way; it probably would never have worked.

I was lost in my thoughts and had my hand on the door when I felt a hesitant tap on my shoulder. I turned around and there she was, looking up at me and holding a pack of smokes in her hand. "You dropped these," she said, handing me the pack.

"Um... thanks," I managed to reply, while automatically putting my pack away. I didn't even stutter amazingly enough. Again, I started to walk away, this time with my heart thumping.

"I noticed that we smoke the same brand," she said, pulling her pack out of her army surplus jacket. I smiled slightly, wondering where this was going. She didn't say anything for a moment and then sort of shyly grinned at me.

"I know that's a lame thing to say but the thing is that I've been trying to think of some excuse to come and talk to you for awhile and well, when I noticed you dropped your pack and that they were the same as mine, well... you know..." she trailed off. I smiled a little broader.

"Believe me, I know."



I-Land

Allen Lawrence

I land on an island and know not what to expect.
How large is this place, what's left of the wreck?
Are there trees, grass? Perhaps, mountains or people?
Is there a city, a government, or a towering steeple?

My instinct says no, that I am alone;
no companion, no road, no cellular phones.
Just me and the island, its forest so deep
and one lonely mountain upon which I'll sleep;
I'll live out my days here, alive and alone,
while God and I sit and converse from Our thrones.

"How like you my island?" says I to He.

"How like you My world?" (His reply to me)

"I like it just fine, but here I am free,
away from it all, surrounded by sea."

"Yes. Enjoy, now, the sea, and breathe in My air,
but perhaps if you sat in a loftier chair,
you'd see what is hidden from your humble throne:
All land is island, and no man alone."

"Isolation, that state seemed most natural to me,
be it Your Will that I cross the cold sea?"

"My Will it is, and My Will you will see,
for living apart is too easy for thee.
For if a hermit I craved, one man there would be,
no woman or child, no discrepancy
no popular culture, and no minority
no laughter, no reason to challenge the sea
no tears, no pain, no reason to be."

The Longest Drought

Kevin Leitzel

~Part One~

You are one of the trophies I didn't win
despite how hard I wanted you.

You colored all of my pride.

and took something that was mine when you nailed me to the wall.

Now I'm slowly becoming the screw,

And learning to screw with them all.

The tiny rivets that wear down the years
and make life seem so long and wasted—

I feel like I'm just another hole in the wall.

Living without a prospect has made me feel so jaded.

~Part Two~

And the rain will stay away,

because it is rebelling against everyone.

Ostracized, it leaves its dew

for the air to consume

and share with the ground.

Now the screws grow like plants in the dirt;

many years they've been turning hard.

I'm becoming withered as I rust

Because I'm living in the longest drought.

Student Teaching

Christina L. Jaffe

I have learned that the moon is made of cheese and that it is about the size of Tommy Caldwell's backyard,
that the craters on its surface come from the astronauts shoes
and that the one absolutely essential thing that the astronauts must not forget to bring is *toothpaste*.

I have learned that Columbus was born in 1951, which would make him just a little younger than my parents and able to buy a combo (and retire) in San Salvador.

I have learned that I look like Matthew's mother,
that moon trips cost a dollar,
that there are invisible magnets, which draw shoelaces to the ground

chalk to a black dress

and hugs, to the child- or teacher who needs them.

I have learned that Cinderella is waiting for her "*coach*",
a whistle wearing, sneaker clad man
who goes by some name his buddies gave him in college.

I have learned to get over my suspicion of "hello kitty", my unease at suddenly referring to myself in the third person, as in "Miss _____ loves learning about predicates", and my phobic dislike for a talking yellow sponge.

I have learned that teaching sometimes feels like you are in that commercial where the Vikings take your credit

and other times it feels like you take the five loaves and the basket of fishes and you pray
and other times it feels like stand-up comedy in a small club; ("is this mic. on?")

but when I remember to take apart these "wrong answers" or offbeat lessons, I find this labyrinthine of reasoning and curiosity, innocence and earnestness.

and I feel very tired and very happy- and seemingly blessed that tomorrow we will learn even more together about "how glowworms glow?" and "could we swing on the moon?"

oh I have learned that sometimes when life is at its most unfair children forgive it
its trespasses

and we do well to be still and hear their tramping thoughts and hold their holy whispers.



Tomatoes

Matthew J. Lau

i wish i like them

people tell me they so good
i thought they look that way
i just cant make me like them

i sure they good for me
even if we dont know what they be
so why i no like they taste

i like them with other things
even one ok if it hiding
but i no like it alone

i dont know what i did
that make me hate them

i wonder if god like them

Notes From Contributors

Kevin Bowman

Kevin is a senior graphic design student at York College. His work *Apology* was inspired by things said and done to a loved one that are regretted. The semi-random placement of the print on a quickly deteriorating substrate relate to the characteristics of an apology which we all know will fade with time, but hope never will.

Angela Buchanan-Bloch

Angela is a junior at York College majoring in English and is from York, PA

Kayt Cherris

Kayt is a senior Secondary Education-English major at York College. She is originally from New Jersey.

Bradley T. Diehl

Brad graduated in 2001 from York College with his B.S. in Business Administration, Marketing minor. He will earn an MBA in Marketing from York College this May.

Chad Hedgcock

Chad is a student of photography at York College. He is about to graduate from Geneva College with a B.A. in Psychology, after which he plans to study photojournalism at the University of Texas. He would like to use his experience to document lives of poverty in South America.

Erica Hildebrand

Erica is a (perpetual) student at York College. She studies English, and fancies that she will someday control the weather. Not yet, though. Sandi, Riley, Vince, Brian, and all you wonderful cronies out there, thank you for putting up with me! And remember, kids, a bum with drums is really a failed artist. So don't kick 'em. Cheers.

Bettina K. Jaffe

Bettina graduated in December, with a B.A. in English (literature) and a B.A. in secondary education (English). She is currently employing her Spanish minor to fill a long-term sub position as a Spanish teacher. She is earnestly seeking a position in the same school district for the fall, teaching Literature. She misses being a part of the lovely community, the York College English Department, and her very first students at Wrightsville Middle School.

Christina L. Jaffe

Christina graduated as an elementary education major from York College in December. She is currently enjoying the strange yet rewarding life of the substitute teacher. Her juggling skills are coming in handy, as well as her memories of what it was like when recess was heaven. Despite her delight with teaching and post college life in general, she misses the lovely community of the English Department and the kind professors of York College. She enjoys writing stories, plays, essays, poems, and the occasional bad joke. Other areas of interest include politics, language studies, and music, particularly Bob Dylan and Gillian Welch.

Daniel E. Keith

Daniel was a Criminal Justice major at York College.

Matthew J. Lau

Matt, a York native, will finally be liberated from his hometown this fall when he attends graduate school at an as-yet undecided university; he will be going for his Ph.D. in English Literature. Not one to limit himself to one big event at a time, Matt and his wife are also expecting a baby. Matt would like to dedicate his work to his baby-to-be (due in September) and his beautiful wife, Khristey.

Allen Lawrence

Allen hails from Media, PA, and loves his mom. He enjoys sports, film, literature, writing, dancing, long walks on the beach, and most activities that involve being alive. He would like to dedicate his work to anyone who has ever made him smile, and especially those that do it so often.

Kevin Leitzel

Kevin has aspirations of being a horror novelist and scaring the living shit out of your children someday. His favorite authors are Richard Wright and J.R.R. Tolkien. One of Kevin's philosophies is that Modern Literature has ruined the video game.

Ben McKnight

Ben majors in Professional Writing and minors in Photography. "Following Adam's advice, I got an electric guitar. Now I just need to take some time and learn how to play. If you know what I'm talking about, just believe."

Stacey L. Miller

When I was fifteen, a collection of poems by e.e. cummings was given to me. I've been writing ever since. I strive to learn, to grow, to be alive, to be an individual. My hope is to teach my children, Zachary and Cosette, to do the same.

Terri Shadle

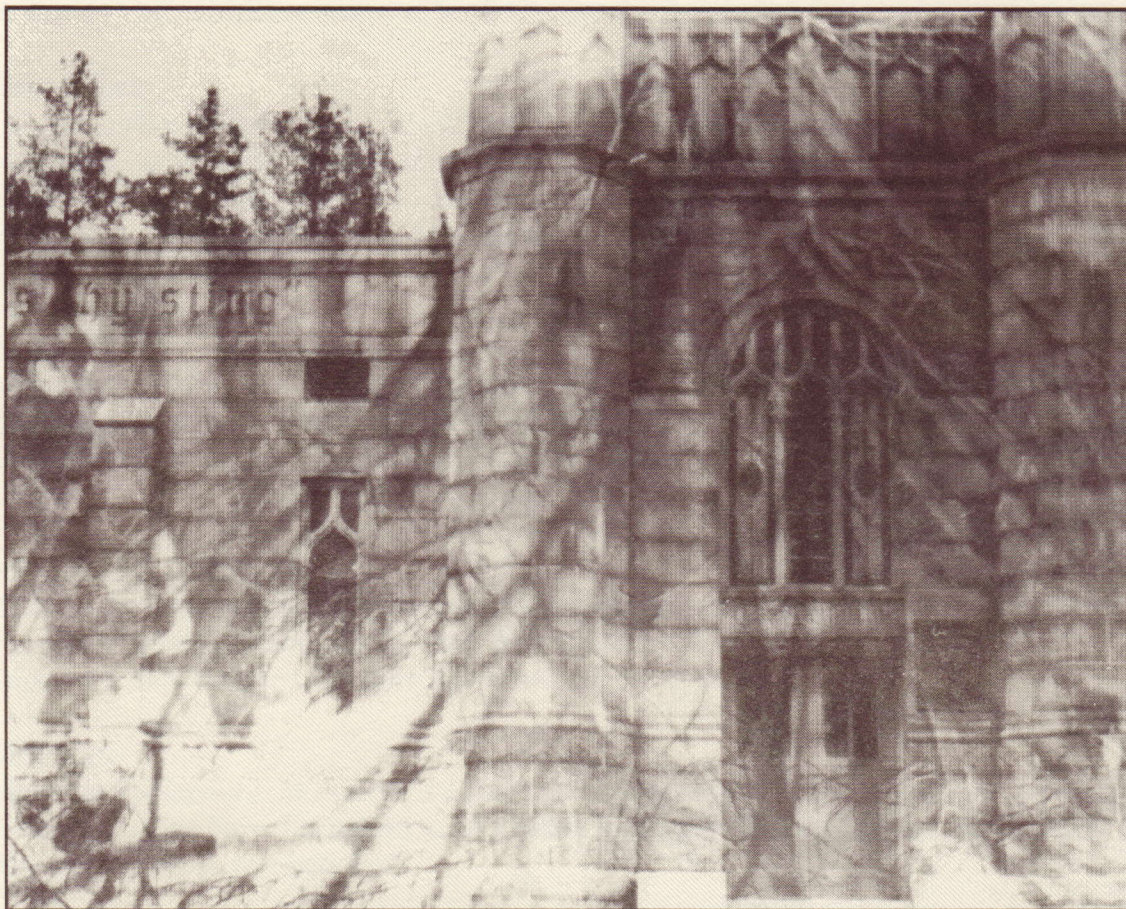
Terri is a sophomore at York College with a major in Graphic Design and minors in English and Photography. She was born and raised in Williamsport Pennsylvania, home of Little League Baseball. She took the picture *Alexandria*, of her sister in Alexandria, Virginia. She finds *Alexandria* interesting because the scene is imbued with mystery, high contrast of dark and light, a diagonal composition, and an expectant figure.

Michael Tager

For a writer and former English major to not know what to write in his own bio is pretty ironic, isn't it? So how about a nice shout out. Big ups to Tupac, Seth green, Chris Claremont, Sylvia Plath, M.C. Escher, all the dead white philosophers, and Malcolm X. "All my life, I have wanted to walk on the water and write my name in the sky."

Valerie Ustinovich

Valerie is a junior at York College.



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