

# The York Review

A Magazine of Poetry, Prose, and Art

VOL. 10

2004



Published by the York College of Pennsylvania Department of English & Humanities

# THE YORK REVIEW

Volume 10  
2004

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THE ENGLISH & HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT  
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# THE YORK REVIEW

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The editors would like to thank the following organizations and individuals for their support and interest in the magazine. Without them, our work would not have been possible.

Eternal thanks to both **Sandra Diener**, Secretary of the Department of English and Humanities, and **Dr. Dennis Weiss**, Chair of the Department of English and Humanities, for all their continued support, enthusiasm and encouragement; their help was a staple in the production of this magazine.

Many thanks to **Lance Snyder**, who helped design the cover for *The York Review*.

Many thanks to **Wade and Coral Glosser** of Penny Press, who scribed our collected imagination with ink and paper.

Thanks to **Joel Springer** & the Music, Art, and Communications Department for their encouragement.

Thanks to **Kristy and Chris Johannesen** for their pizza donations, which kept us going.

Thanks to **Commerce Bank** for the loan of their parking lot one rainy Saturday to help make the expansion of this magazine possible.

Thanks to **Jen Brown** for her artistic advice.

Thanks to **Valerie, Deb**, and all the other friends and loved ones who put up with our shenanigans over the past year.

Finally, our eternal love and gratitude to **Dr. Paul Puccio** for all of his continued support and guidance in this project, and without whom this magazine would not have succeeded.

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## English Major's Prayer

Elizabeth Hiatt

Dedicated to: Miss Erica Hildebrand

"Now I lay me down to rest,  
I pray my haikus are the best.  
Let me do my best to prove,  
my work is worthy of *The York Review*.  
May my writing suffice.  
May my commas not splice.

Let me read this novel,  
after I read this play,  
after I write this paper  
that was due yesterday.  
Please let me wake for my exam,  
when I've been reading 'til 4 A.M.

I promise to praise you every day,  
If you disperse the MLA.  
Why should I cite?  
All ideas come from you.  
Divine intervention caused this paper,  
What more can I do?  
Will I still see the pearly gates,  
If I forget to paginate?  
Forgive me Father, for using Sparknotes,  
and readjusting the margins when I block quote.

May I serve your glory in each line I write.  
Now it is time to rest...  
Good Night."

Amen

## Tequila Boom Boom: A Memoir

Vito Grippi

On a cobblestone street in Terrasini, Sicily, the bartender prepares our shots. Fill the glass halfway with tequila, fill the rest of the glass with club soda, cover with a coaster, hold it firmly, boom-boom, slam it on the bar twice and serve.

It was our last night in the Mediterranean. Our plane was leaving at 8 o'clock the next morning, but my cousin Sergio insisted that he would take us out one more night before we left. We had already been in this paradise for about three and a half weeks. Three weeks of dancing, drinking, eating, experiencing, and falling in love with new places every day. The smell of the sea, fresh octopus—bought from the old man in a rowboat off the coast, family members I didn't know I had, and friends that I never thought I'd make.

*"Vito—andiamo. Ci beviamo una birra e torniamo subito."* Vito, let's go. We'll go out for a beer and we'll come right back. My cousin Sergio was right. How could we not go out one last time, knowing that by this time the next day we'd be back in Pennsylvania. Besides, saying no to Sergio was almost impossible. Now, thinking about his bulging eyes and featherweight frame, I realize that his tightly wound curly hair explains it all. Sergio is a tightly wound force of nature—one who without question would keep us out partying until the early hours of the morning on nights when he would have to be at work at 7am. We all piled in our cars and left for the bar.

Although Sergio and I are only a few years apart, we've been separated by oceans our whole life. Before this trip, I had only seen him a few times. Once, when I was five and my family visited the island, and on two occasions when Sergio's family visited the United States. I remember his fascination with the fact that we had so many freedoms here. Ironically, years later, he would tell me how surprised he was with all the restrictions we had in the land of the free.

We came to the small sea port village of Terrasini and parked our car along one of the narrow streets. The bar, like most of the bars in northern Sicily was outside—a sidewalk café with the iron tables and chairs sitting unsteadily on the cobblestone street. From where we sat we could hear and smell the deep blue water of the Mediterranean. We were all there, me, Amy, my brother, his girlfriend, Sergio, Giovanni, Salvatore, Vincenzo, and a few other guys that I had never seen before—all of us brought together for this celebration ritual.

*"Veeto, Eh-mee, com weet me. Forrr a drreenk."* My cousin, knowing that I am fluent in Italian, could not keep himself from trying his English. He and Amy spent most of our vacation trying to teach each other their native languages. They eventually developed an efficient form of Italioenglish that they named Karate. The name Karate was given because most of the verbs within the language were accompanied with hand signals.

We approached the bar, and *il barista* was already getting our drinks. "What are we drinking," I asked, knowing that if my cousin ordered I would probably miss my flight the next morning. BOOM-BOOM! The evil concoction exploded on the bar and sprayed everyone within ten feet. "Drreenk, Dreenk!" my cousin said as he shoved the erupting class in my face. Two gulps and the fire that started in my stomach quickly rose through my body. I could feel the sweat coming off of my face before the drink even it the bottom of my gut. Before I could speak, the last three weeks of my life had suddenly reoccurred in my mind—playing the guitar on *Nonna's* terrace on the side of the mountain, the old man with the octopus, golden cathedrals, Greek ruins, the body parts of saints preserved in Palermo, soccer with locals, swimming in caves, snorkeling, making love, reading great books, and dancing. We spent nights dancing till the sun came up—nights when we could barely stay on our feet, but instead had the rum and the music carry us along. BOOM-BOOM!

That sound was heard throughout the night as we talked about politics, soccer, and music. We had conversations in English, Italian, and Karate. I remember looking at Amy halfway through the night. I had brought her to this magical world, thousands of miles from her home. I could see her whole face glowing as she tried to use some of the Italian she was learning. And every time our eyes met it was as if she was thanking me for exposing her to this ancient place. At the same time I thanked her for letting me share this part of me with her. That night as she smiled and brushed her hair behind her ear, I realized that I would eventually marry her.

*“Barista! Due bottiglie di champagne per favore.”* Sergio grabbed the two bottles of champagne from the bar tender and started walking towards the beach. *“Andiamo! Les go!”* he said, motioning with his hand that we should follow him. We were going to the beach to toast this wonderful night. Once there, we shook the bottles of champagne and popped the corks straight up into the air—filling our glasses and bathing in the spirits. It was almost four o’clock in the morning, and there were others already on the beach with the same intentions. While we drank our champagne and we talked about future trips where we would meet again, someone lit a joint. It had been years since I had last smoked and the smell quickly reminded me of times when I was young. Before this night on the beach, I had not truly felt this free since I was fifteen or sixteen. As I stood surrounded by these new friends from this modern, old world, I couldn’t help but feel sadness knowing that I may never see some of them again.

Four o’clock passed us by without a second thought. It was time to end the night—our plane was scheduled to leave in less than four hours. But, first we had to make one more stop. *Il castello di Carini*. I had to see the castle one last time before I left.

When we got to the castle, Amy, Sergio, Giovanni and I were the only ones left in our group. The others were not yet satisfied with the beach. At the castle, the mood of the night quickly changed. This was goodbye, a shaking of hands, empty promises of plans for next summer, a kiss on each cheek and good night. Driving up the narrow streets towards my family’s house Amy and I were both silent. We both knew that for the rest of our lives we would never have a night like that again. A night where we broke language and culture barriers. A night where a group of people got together to bid farewell to the strangers visiting from the new world. A night where we could stand on a beach at the edge of a thousand year old city, and drink, laugh, and get high on each other—get high on the night. BOOM, BOOM!

## On The River

Sara Maurer

The moonlight haunts me.  
Waves lap against the side of the boat  
in a melodious beat set by God’s metronome.

Stars sparkle through the heavens,  
each created long ago with the beginning of time.  
Tiny lights holding the mystery and age of beauty  
they dance above my head,  
leading me home.

Not one of us speaks, each  
held mute by the simple magnificence  
of the world. Five friends realizing,  
for one incredible minute,  
the absolute perfection of it all.

And I am happy  
lulled by the whispering sounds  
of the memory of a summer night.



## Pictures

Erin Cummins

Sit alone and stare for hours  
carpet patterns, bugs and flowers  
through an eye of glass and metal  
capturing the lights and shade.

Open shutter let it gather  
all the light and things that matter  
to the one who set up on  
this stage a tiny still life portrait.

Flash the light to steal the colors  
of the faces on new lovers  
blushed and twisted up  
into a pretzel with 4 sets of arms.

Pictures worth a thousand good times  
show the span of many lifetimes  
to the ones who sit and think  
what life was like when these occurred.

## Windowart

Hilary Deckard

On the passenger side window Christine,  
a fourth grader whom I babysit  
traces a fish with her index finger.  
It turns out well, but smudges the cold glass.  
I want to ask her to stop,  
but I say nothing.

I remember when I was her age.  
I used to like to doodle on misty car windows too,  
in the back seat of my mother's minivan,  
a fire-engine red Pontiac Transport,  
the one my dad traded in when mom died  
for the car I'm in now,  
watching Christine draw on the window.

## Bella

Kristy Johannesen

*"And if the place for us is far beyond this world,  
I'll wait in peace for you if I should be there first."*

-Stuart Adamson (1958-2001)

Her body lay nestled in the grass as if the ground had opened its arms to receive her: The left arm extends above the head; the left hand grazes the grass palm up with fingers spread. The head rests upon the upper left arm causing the wavy chestnut hair to fall across the face, nearly obscuring it from view. The dark hair flows in loose curls across the shoulders and down to the middle of the back in shocking contrast to the ivory skin and filmy white dress. The dress is a simple halter style with fitted bodice and full skirt that would end at the ankles but is neatly ruffled so the legs are visible from the knee down. There is the slightest suggestion of silver embroidery on the bodice. The left leg is bent slightly at the knee. The right leg is straight, ending in a foot with pointed toes. There are no shoes. The right arm is bent at the elbow with the upper arm resting on the body. The forearm lies on the grass with the fingers entwined in the blades as if entangled in a man's chest hair. The stone above and to the right of the head reads 'S.A. 1958-2001'.

\* \* \*

The woman, as Wife, had been greeted by the scene every morning. The painting, done by her husband, hung opposite the bed so that it was the first thing she saw when she opened her eyes. She had never liked it, but didn't dislike it enough to fight him about its placement. Over time it became so much a piece of the background that she hardly noticed it.

To see the scene here, now, as Widow, almost made her vomit. She instantly both despised and pitied the girl that lay sobbing on the grave. The Widow stood at the edge of picture, unsure of whether she should interrupt or come back at a more suitable time. She shook her head to clear the thought. It was her husband that was gone. This girl had no place here.

"You don't belong here," the Widow snarled.

The girl lifted her head, looking around as if seeing the scenery for the first time.

"Doesn't everyone belong in a graveyard sooner or later?"

The Widow took a step back in shock. The girl had the same face that she had seen peering at her from the countless drawings and paintings her husband had produced. She had never been able to see the features clearly in this piece before, but she should have guessed. It was always the same face.

The Widow had always thought that the face must belong to some woman her husband had seen when he was young. It was so perfect and beautiful that it had lodged itself in his mind. The woman's face had become his muse and inspired every stroke on the canvas. Even when he tried to paint the Widow, the resulting face would have the woman's eyes or her smile. There was nothing he had produced that did not reflect her in some way. The Widow expected that her husband loved the woman still and because of this she had always hated his work.

This girl sitting in the grass before her was far too young: far, far too young to be the same woman that had captivated her husband for the past twenty- five years. From the look of her, she hadn't even been born the first time he had painted her image. But the face, those eyes, even the way her hair fell in such perfect waves... It was she. It had to be; and yet, it couldn't be.

Her curiosity was great, but her jealousy was greater.

"Did you know him?"

The girl cocked her head in contemplation, "We've never... met."

"Then why are you crying, girl?"

"He just seems so sad, so desperately sad. I couldn't just ignore that pain," the girl turned to the Widow suddenly. "Why aren't you?"

The Widow snorted in disgust, "I stopped crying for him years ago. Even when they told me he was ... dead, I couldn't bring my self to cry."

"That's a pity," the girl replied plainly.

It was a pity, the Widow thought. She couldn't remember when it had happened exactly, but she had just stopped caring. Her husband had retreated farther and farther from her until she had just stopped trying to reach out. He was a good man and she had loved him, once. It had just all become too much for her. If he had somehow learned to manage his pain or to ignore it the way that she did, maybe it would have been different. Instead, he closed himself off from everyone. He submerged himself in his work, appearing now and then for a new bottle of whiskey. They spoke, but only about mundane things. It seemed at times that he was trying to explain or to apologize for himself, but she had never let him. She didn't want to hear the explanation in case it was more horrible than she imagined it to be.

The Widow was afraid he didn't love her. She was afraid that she could never live up to the woman in his mind. But, if she wasn't real? If she had truly been only in his mind, he couldn't have loved her. Could he? Yes, he must have. Because if he hadn't- it was her fault. If he hadn't loved another, she had let him drown in misery because she couldn't handle the 'what if'. If that was true, she deserved to be Widow.

"Who are you?" the Widow demanded.

"He always called me Bella."

"Yes, he did. Beauty"

"What?"

"You were always his beauty," the Widow sneered. "No one could take your place."

"I don't know that that's true," Bella's voice betrayed no malice. "I just don't know that anyone tried."

"And what should I have done?" the Widow screamed. "He just stopped seeing me. He couldn't see anything but you!"

"No. He was hurting. He needed someone to be there and I had nowhere else to be."

"He could have come to me," the defense sounded weak even to the Widow.

"I thought you said he had." Bella shook her head, "No, perhaps you didn't say."

The Widow watched as Bella adjusted her skirt into a prettier pose. For a moment she appeared to be merely a painting again. Her thoughts were interrupted by Bella's voice.

"I'm sorry if I've upset you. That wasn't my intent."

"Really? Then what was your intent?" the Widow could contain her fury no more. "Why are you here? Why are you here now when you can do no good?"

"I don't think I understand."

"Where were you when you could have helped him? You're worthless to him now, but- but a week ago- two weeks- all those years that you could have saved him. Where the hell were you then?"

Bella said nothing, merely waited for the Widow to continue.

"If he had known you were here. If you'd let him know, he would have waited," the Widow sobbed. "He would have waited for you for eternity, if he had known. Why did you wait until it was too late?"

"I didn't have a choice," Bella's voice was soft.

"But he loved you! You were everything to him. You could have saved him when I couldn't. All he would have needed was to see you. Then he wouldn't have... left," her voice hardened. "He would have held on for you. Everything would have been alright and he would still be here."

"It couldn't have happened that way."

"Why not? He loved you enough. It would have been so easy. He just didn't think you were real. He thought you were an angel. He told me you were his angel, but he was wrong because here you are. You're as real as anything else. You are all he needed for peace," the Widow paused. "I couldn't do it. I couldn't save him. Why didn't you?"

“Because that isn’t the way it happened,” Bella replied as if there were no more explanation necessary.

“No, it didn’t,” the Widow sank to her knees, covering her face with her hands as she sobbed. Her husband would have appreciated such a showing of raw emotion. He’d have thought it would have made a lovely painting.

When the Widow looked up, the scene had returned to way she had found it. Bella appeared to be alone in her own sad world. She just lay beside the grave, crying. The Widow could almost hear her humming a low a lullaby.

The Widow rose, straightened her hair and turned from the picture. She was tired from the day’s emotions and sure that she needed rest.

\* \* \*

Later that night, the Widow destroyed the hated painting; weeping as the flames licked Bella’s skirt. She couldn’t bring herself to watch as the flames consumed the girl.

### **Diversion**

Hilary Deckard

November settles over Tuesday  
thick, wet air and low clouds,  
leftovers from Monday night.

Three girls meet two dogs  
through the spaces  
in a chain linked fence.

The dogs, small and wrinkly  
stand by the fence  
lapping up the girls’ attention.

After a few minutes the dogs grow bored  
and abandon the girls  
to sniff and wander wet grass.

The girls don’t seem to mind that the dogs leave.  
They stay standing at the fence,  
fingers locked around the metal wire.  
They watch the dogs a while longer, then move on into the mist.



**Pere Lachaise Mausoleum (detail)**

Amanda Getka

## Shiva's Moment

Amity R. Bitzel

January descends like a miniature death.  
Wind keens in frustration and chides the stars,  
icy pinpricks needling an indifferent sky.

Our breath hovers, halts, unwilling to leave  
the warm housing of our lungs.

We grow exoskeletons of wool and thrift store cashmere,  
shedding them in stripy piles as we come and go,  
relieved to see our true forms once again.

When chai is prepared with stiff fingers,  
cardamom and ginger perfume the air with sudden indolence.

I clutch my mug and inhale deeply,  
summoning India with each spiced exhalation.  
Steam unfurls, suggesting that distant land.

Saffron monk's robes drift through the humid streets  
like a thousand marigold petals.

Elephants call to each other in ancient voices;  
A plume of sandalwood incense wends through the heated air.  
Sunlight thickens and warms like honey.

An apparition of Shiva beckons, only to vanish.  
My chai has grown cold.

## Philo-sophy

Liam Seeley

O, Mother Sophia  
you slide across the oceans spiraling eddies in the madness  
    a spiral dance in a double helix fashion  
    spiraling 'round  
to know is to know you  
to know you is to know

the pentacle and the grail  
you reach to us from eden  
    with a golden apple marked *kallisti*  
beckoning us to dine, to feast  
    to drown in water  
and daring us, like the phoenix,  
    to resurrect into shining new beings

O, Mother Sophia  
    terrible is the kiss you give



**London Eye**  
Amanda Getka

## **Meditations of Jobalikus Atrainicus**

Allen Lawrence

### *A Dream*

Life is a city under construction:  
Buildings have been erected, but not finished.  
Most have walls, some have floors, a few roofs.  
However, almost all the walls protrude from unfilled ditches,  
uncovered fountains naked to the elements.  
We walk over planks to enter buildings with dirt floors and plywood stairs.  
Single light bulbs hang from wires;  
they sway overhead in the wind that flows as naturally through the building as it would  
through the open sky. Sections and whole walls are missing.  
We are tenants in these buildings: Conversing on the stairs,  
complaining that the water isn't working  
or that the landlord hasn't installed our ceiling fan yet,  
still judging our neighbors in this equally deconstructed world,  
we inhibit the completion of these buildings and, ultimately, the city itself.  
All is noise and silence, breath and breeze, odor and aroma.

### *Learning*

Bugs Bunny was funny in a wacky, no-fear-for-his-life kind of way.  
But perhaps he was a sage-like figure as well.  
When being chased by a balding hunter with a gun and a speech impediment,  
what is the best course of action?  
Obviously, run through a door, and, as the hunter approaches it in pursuit, emerge in drag  
and begin salsa dancing with him until he blushes and drops the weapon.  
Dance danger, anger, hatred into submission.  
There is a thin line between insanity and genius;  
Like Bugs, I have big feet.

### *Regret?*

I met a girl whose eyes were small dark coals;  
I took them too lightly and ignored their presence.  
Soon they clenched shut around themselves  
until water was squeezed forth and fell  
onto the hard, cracked mud of my heart.  
I touched her face and the eyes sprung open,  
sparkling as diamonds, transformed by their fierce imprisonment.  
Now I understand their value, now I feel like a jerk and an idiot.

### *Belief*

There is more to this world than it would have you think,  
that beguiling jester, dressed all in pantaloons.



## Highway of Dreams

Tracy Hanegraaf

*For Bob*

Drivin' round highway 95,  
The new mattress atop Bob's MX-5,  
slipped free and took a dive.

Cars swerved and tires squealed,  
as Bob watched the windshield  
inside and out, bells in Bob's head pealed.

For six long months, Bob did sleep  
on the stone, cold floor with a cheap  
pillow that sunk, oh, so deep.

Now Bob's dreams of a restful night  
quickly flew out of sight.  
But looking ahead, things seemed bright.

For a pretty blonde in a red sports truck  
Was waving at Bob—and what luck!  
A king-size mattress was strapped in the bed,  
And as the blonde tossed her head,  
Bob crossed two lanes, to follow behind  
his dreams escaping off exit nine.

## A Lonely Addiction

Hilary Deckard

This road force-feeds me miles.  
I choke them down,  
like eating Saltine crackers with nothing to drink  
Breaking them in half and then half again,  
they're much easier to consume

Familiar territory, like a pair of sneakers  
so well worn it's difficult to distinguish them  
from my bare feet.  
I've been here many times before.  
I know this place, the feeling of the pavement  
and the spicy smell of the roadside weeds  
that brush my ankles as I pass

Some days it's like wandering a desert  
brutal stretches of time and task,  
Sweating and dehydrated,  
concentrating, one foot in front of the other,  
it's easier to continue than to stop.  
Still, each bend in the road mocks me,  
a shady oasis taunting water and rest

Pain-numbed, thoughts of the day, the future,  
luke warm showers, and ice cream are long gone.  
I even suspended my prayers miles ago.  
The afternoon sun settles low, leaning on the hills  
and only the breeze accompanies me.



**Travels**  
Ben McKnight

## Jack Dempsey's on Thirty-Third

Vito Grippi

—for the lonesome travelers—

I dream of you Liam,  
wiping out a glass with the  
towel that drapes over your shoulder,  
living up to the stereotype and knowing it,  
as you light cigarettes for tourists and brush off the bar.

I dream of you,  
departing from your ship,  
alone and cold in Manhattan,  
with only an Irish accent and a gift  
for conversation to keep you warm.

I dream of the America  
you lead us to, here  
on the 102<sup>nd</sup> floor, with the rats  
below in Rotten Gotham.

I dream of *Murphy's* and *Costa*,  
from the *Copacabana*—who smoked  
all my cigarettes while watching the  
meaningless match in a smoke-filled  
room of oak and brass and stale spirits.

I dream of looking for sweet *Liberty*,  
from two flights below heaven where  
the December wind feels like a cold hell.

I dream of the millions of lonesome travelers  
who set sail looking for paradise,  
praying for hope at  
the foot of a green effigy. And

Uncle Bobby, who put all of his soul  
in a concrete slab reaching for heaven,  
but falling short.

I dream of you Liam,  
while looking down on the  
lustrous planets of a city with no name.

I dream of you,  
in the pub of Everlasting life,  
with the boxer's name on it.

## War Games

Brooke Harper

Saddam plays the leading role in Catch me if you can.  
He replaced Bin Laden in the CNN miniseries melodrama.  
The Commies and leftover hippies protest in the streets:  
What do we want PEACE!  
When do we want it NOW!  
Bush launches the first air raids two days later

French fries became freedom fries.  
An Iraqi girl dies.  
A mother holds the pieces of her daughter in her arms.  
She walks through the deserted bombed out streets mad for three weeks  
wearing the same black dress,  
that has grown stiff with the blood of her daughter.  
This is her liberation. Her Iraqi Freedom.

In our homes we see images of Saddam burned in effigy.  
Brown faces smiling for the MSNBC paparazzi.  
We do not see death,  
Only black nights with green shards of lights flying across the city skyscraper  
Like a Middle East Fourth of July.  
In the end we are victors.  
Oil prices have gone down  
and we forget our conquests, the protests.  
Return to our all American lives.  
Lining up for Harry Potter,  
Healing our scars with Zoloft and Dr. Phil  
We send our future generations off to school each morning to recite the lie  
And justice for all...

## The Promiscuous Robin Hood: Social Righteousness in John Rechy's *The Sexual Outlaw*

Erica Hildebrand

Jim wakes up. He eats a breakfast of several eggs mixed with milk, honey, and protein powder and all-grain toast. His apartment is his workout gym. He pumps iron until his muscles swell and ache. It's Friday. For the next three days, Jim will patrol the streets, back alleys, parks and nightclubs of 1970s Los Angeles to have sex with scores of other men. This is the plot of John Rechy's, *The Sexual Outlaw*, a semi-autobiographical novel spliced together with his own personal essays in a brutally straightforward expression of outrage at intolerance towards homosexuals. Rechy has created a repertoire of responses to the rampant intolerance towards gays on behalf of the heterosexual world, and he has romanticized promiscuity, anonymity, and rebellion in the form of the sexual outlaw. Rechy characterizes his outlaw as thus:

What is it to be a sexual outlaw?

Archetypal outsider, he is a symbol of survival, living fully at the very edge, triumphant over the threats, repression, persecution, prosecution, attacks, denunciations, hatred that have tried powerfully to crush him from the beginning of "civilization": Each night after the hunt, the outlaw knows he's won an ancestral battle – just because he's still alive and free. (Rechy 299)

Rechy also describes sexual outlaws as the "shock troops of the sexual revolution" (Rechy 299). This revolution, Rechy rationalizes, is intrinsically what all homosexuals long for, as a way of expressing our inherent rights and contempt for anti-gay legislation and enforcement – that is, twenty-five years ago.

For such a condensed book (it barely passes three hundred pages), Rechy puts a fine and brutally clairvoyant point on a number of select issues that are often discussed, stereotyped, and not tolerated: from the apparent narcissism in gay males to the "trend" of bisexuality, from sadomasochism to the "gay threat" that is posed to the straight world. Most poignantly, he also discusses what he coins as "promiscuous rage", the catalyst that drives gay men to become radical street hustlers and the vanguard for the sexual revolution.

### I

Rechy insists that the sexual revolution is the product of a steady process of discrimination and intolerance from heterosexuals directed towards the gay community. The sexual revolution, he claims, is the result of otherwise normal human beings rebelling against repressive laws and repressive morality from politicians and religious figureheads in the community, and that rage is the very thing that creates this sexual revolution (Rechy 28).

Rage is the straw that breaks the gay man's back. An ideal example is the Stonewall Riots. According to David Bianco's article on the history of the Stonewall Riots at PlanetOut.com, "the word [Stonewall] has taken on mythic proportions in lesbian and gay culture... the event is still a hot topic of debate in gay circles" (Bianco 1). When the police raided the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village, NY, an establishment with predominantly gay clientele, they arrested the staff and three drag queens. The arrests spawned violence from the onlookers, mostly the angered patrons of Stonewall, and after the riot, more and more protests began in earnest to draw attention to the unfair attention given to homosexuals by the police.

Rechy catalogues the building pressure that creates a sexual outlaw:

Homosexuals in jails are threatened with castration and shock as "cures." Official routine beatings and roundups of gays by cops encourage murderous lunatics to prowl cruising areas with guns, broken bottles, rocks, police clubs... Ancestral rage. Death by sword or

other torture decreed for homosexuals by ecclesiastical courts. Burnings at the stake into the nineteenth century...Men convicted in California of merely asking to make it with another adult male must register as "sex offenders" for the rest of their lives... Suicides... Indiscriminately wrecked lives. Lost jobs, broken families. Constant fear. Rage. (Rechy 29-30)

It is not a subtle point that Rechy is making here. He is implying that the inherent worth and value of a homosexual as any other human being is often ignored. Twenty-five years ago there was an obvious dichotomy drawn between humanism for heterosexuals and humanism for homosexuals. Condemned by biased church leaders and lacking the imperative protection of law enforcement ("The Vatican urges tolerance for 'incurable' gays..."[1976]; "The LA City Attorney's office handles up to 500 gay-bar arrests per year..."[1974] -*Los Angeles Times* [Rechy 56-60]), homosexuals are left to fend for themselves.

It is not difficult to imagine what it feels like to have lived your life under the jackboot of religious intolerance, of being taught since childhood that homosexuals are wrong, sinful, and perverse. If one cannot come to terms with that skewed indoctrination, then the weight of that so-called "truth" can become a very heavy emotional burden. And if someone is not protected by the laws – is in fact treated unfairly, even violently, from those who are supposed to *uphold* the law – then they have the prerogative to resist an unjust law that applies to them when it does not apply to anyone else (such as arresting gay couples for holding hands as a sex offense, when the hypocrisy would not allow any such thing to happen to a straight couple). This is the foundation for Rechy's justification:

In this context the sexual outlaw flourishes. The pressures produce him, create his defiance. Knowing that each second his freedom may be ripped away arbitrarily, he lives fully at the brink. Promiscuity is his righteous form of revolution... No structure – legal, medical, religious – will ever stop him. It will only harden his defiance. Neither sinful, criminal, nor sick – he knows that to try to force him not to be a homosexual *is* sinful, criminal, and sick – and as impossible as forcing a heterosexual not to be a heterosexual. (Rechy 31)

There is almost a sense of pride instilled in the idea of a sexual outlaw. They are protesting unjust rules; they are acting as chaotic and free as they choose. There is a very romantic appeal to that kind of lifestyle, almost akin to the romantic ideals of Robin Hood, the outlaw who was chaotic but inherently good, defying the law because the laws were not just.

## II

We now have a basic understanding of Rechy's validation for the sexual outlaw, and his constructed ideas about how the world treats homosexuals. He also touches on issues that circulate primarily *inside* the gay arena, as well. There is a common stereotype about gay males that they are very narcissistic and appreciative of the physical form. Jim, the main character, punctuates this point with his bodybuilding and health-obsessed diet. Rechy seems to exemplify this as a positive thing. He makes the analogy that a bodybuilder's own body is much like a painter's canvas or a sculptor's block of clay, and that bodybuilding is no different from any other art form (Rechy 46).

Yet unconsciously, in the actual narrative, Jim's narcissism seems to become a sort of crutch to him, particularly later in the book. Jim as a hustler and an exhibitionist is a passive "hunter" on the streets, letting his random sexual partners come to him. There is a brief period when he is not attracting any men, and, afraid that they are not finding him attractive, Jim starts flexing and strutting and trying harder to make himself more appealing. This presents him as trying too hard to attract men, which he thinks makes him even *less* attractive to other men. Jim nearly panics, until he finally "makes it" with another man, and the text gives off the impression of Jim feeling a great swell of relief.

This offers a double-edged sword approach to narcissism. While physical beauty is an epicurean ideal, some can enjoy it as a form of art. However, becoming so extremely centered on appearance can make someone more self-conscious, to a point of preoccupation with how others see them.

There is also the point of sadomasochism. Unlike narcissism, Rechy does not seem to condone it. He writes, "The proliferation of sadomasochism is the major internal threat to gay freedom, comparable only in destructiveness to the impact of repressive laws and persecution by cops. The basis of both is the same: self-hatred" (Rechy 253). In this passage he implies that gay masochists are just homosexuals who cannot admit that they think lowly of themselves, and that that is the reason they enjoy pain. The psychological ramification is much more harmful than the physical one, particularly to gay people as a group.

He does make the distinction between "soft-core," consenting and loving S&M play – and the brutal sadomasochism that can permeate people's lives, extending from the bedroom dynamic (which is where Rechy wants to keep S&M constrained) of a purely sensual nature, to bleed into the reality of a person's life.

Jim has a flashback where he recalls visiting the house of Steve and Tony (Rechy 239). Steve and Tony lead a sadomasochistic lifestyle, Steve playing the dominant role and Tony playing the submissive. Yet Steve's steady verbal and emotional abuse of Tony pushes Jim to try to convince Tony to leave. Jim asks Tony, "How can you stand that sick motherfucker?" and Tony responds, "Don't you say anything about him! I don't want to hear you say anything about Steve!" Then, through tears, "I love him." Steve laughs at Tony for saying that (Rechy 241). So, there is a definitive line that can be crossed. S&M belongs as only a game in the bedroom, but when it stretches to futile dependence on the part of the submissive, and all kinds of tolerated harassment on the part of the dominant, it becomes an unhealthy fetish.

This critique of sadomasochism dovetails into a look at the emotional well being of the gay world in general:

What of the gay world itself? How is the *inner* revolution being waged? Gay liberation. Yes. But even that may be used as subterfuge for lack of interior awareness. The necessary exploration of self – alone, isolated – may be dissipated by protection within the club; static rhetoric substituted for active individual responsibility. (Rechy 243)

Gay self-awareness and perceptions of the self are topics so important that they deserve their own respective critical papers, but there is a point to all that. Perhaps gay people are so focused on gay culture that they lose sight of their own individuality, and that being involved in the culture takes away awareness of the self.

Individuality is hard to explore when one of the definitive attributes of one's self, namely being gay, becomes a passing trend for modern culture. Rechy is not alone in the way he views bisexuality with some trepidation. He writes, "A growing sexual hypocrisy is the chic-y pose of 'glittering bisexuality.' It's everywhere, like sequined pollen" (Rechy 125). Rechy implies that it was "trendy" in the 1970s to be bisexual. It was in style. Not much has changed in the last two decades; bisexuality is still often considered a "fad" or just a "phase," and that depreciates the value of the claim to true bisexuality. It also devalues the integrity of the gay world as a whole, true bisexuals included, because it is a trend, an incumbent oddity. If it is considered to be only recreational, then it does not lend credence to the fact that it is a very real part of a gay person's sense of self.

Also, bisexuality is a way to "bridge the gap" between being closeted and coming out as gay. But, as with his case for sadomasochism, Rechy warns against anything that deviates from a moderate approach, otherwise the trend of bisexuality will diminish the unique good of *all* orientations: "[Bisexuality] is only one of at least three 'ideal' possible worlds; and to uphold it as *the* ideal is to deny the specialness of both male and female...Where all sexual boundaries blur, it is at the expense of all sexual experiences" (Rechy 125-126).

### III

Rechy admits that there is indeed a gay threat. He does not subscribe to the Biblical references, considering they are only selectively used for the benefit of an argument, and certainly does not hold to the notion that homosexuals are child molesters or sexual deviants (he does not count promiscuity as a deviant act). Rather, he defines the "gay threat" as thus:

There are, in fact, two very real threats that the gay world poses to straight society. One is of course psychic – the fear of being what religion, laws, doctors have wrongfully branded, condemned, persecuted, prosecuted, punished, forbidden. The second is that an acceptance of homosexuality – including, importantly, its tendency towards promiscuity – would result in a traumatic questioning of what, in the extreme, becomes oppressive within the heterosexual norm. Why one wife? One husband? Why not lovers? Why marriage? Why sex with only one person?... Why, necessarily, children? (Rechy 205-206)

Homosexuals are the scapegoat for every dysfunction of the family structure, he implies. If straight people did not view gay people as a threat to the family unit, then they would still have to find some outside foe to blame for their own problems and familial definitions. It really is not gay people who pose a threat to them; it is the concept of alternative families that scares them. And that fear is what drives them to view homosexuals as a threat.

Rechy leaps across many boundaries with this book, from its loud and sometimes crude erotic voice to its livid and articulate opinion on many, many different topics that apply to homosexuals. Considering the time it was written, it is an innovative and sharp look at the social, political, and religious intolerance that stare homosexuality in the face. Considering Rechy's voice, this book is the keystone for a positive argument for gay liberation and the sexual revolution.

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## A Poem for Ian Curtis

Brooke Harper

The factory was his church  
As he stood at the pulpit  
His congregation of skinheads below him  
Raising their arms in Hitler's salute  
Drunk and kicking the shit out of each other  
The spirit shone upon him  
The spotlight illuminating the darkness he preached  
The bass player casts a dirty look at him  
As he writhes and contorts in epileptic fits  
Dancing to the melody of his madness  
The sweat dripping into his eyes stinging  
He gripped the microphone so hard his fists turned white  
And then he let it go  
It crashes to the floor  
The punks still dancing and charging at each other  
To the harsh sound of feedback  
Remnants of his leftover soul crying from an amp  
He hung himself two days later  
Listening to Iggy Pop as if to say you really should die before you are 25.

## Passing Days

Hilary Deckard

Those boys, when did they become men?  
Leaning against cement walls  
in the middle of the afternoon  
their long frames, broad backs,  
they bear the weight of the streets.  
Claiming territory one enemy at a time,  
dirty fingernails, hungry eyes  
they laugh and jeer,  
smoking cigarettes  
while they ogle a few women who hurry past.  
Their talk fills the space of midday  
they say they'll make money,  
move out of the city  
or at least off the block  
as soon as their luck turns, their deals go through.  
Maybe, they say they'll make it home for dinner  
or visit their young sons and  
ask their daughters how their days were.  
Or maybe they don't.  
Regardless, they remain  
standing against their walls  
as twilight's shadows consume  
everything they once were,  
leaving only what they've become.

## Returning

Elizabeth Hiatt

Steven Jackson gazed at the wet road, noticing the dust on the dashboard of his silver Pontiac Grand Prix. He was on Route 40 now, twenty minutes from home and everything he'd left when he joined the marines. The stench of burning trash emerging from the waste plant poured through the heat vents, a reminder that he would be home soon.

Riverside was a dirty suburb where mostly unemployed old steel workers lived. It was nicer when Steve grew up there in a typical three-bedroom rancher with his parents and five siblings.

Other families on the block respected the Jackson family, even though they were incapable of comprehending their eccentric childrearing techniques and lifestyle: Church three times a week, denying their children from watching all television besides *Sixty Minutes*. Then again, the father was the minister at Centennial Baptist Church, the only Southern Fundamental Baptist church in Southeast Baltimore; you would expect him to be a strict parent.

Steve remembered monotony. Everyday, he and his three brothers woke up, made their beds and said their prayers. They thanked the Lord for another day as their father leaned over their shoulders, listening to make sure that they were not offending Jesus or the Heavenly Father.

Steve remembered once, when he was about seven years old, daydreaming about driving in a monster truck rally during prayers. His father pulled him aside, pinched him on the back of his arm, looked straight into his eyes and said, "The Lord knows everything, Steven. When you are pretending to pray, you are mocking him... Mocking our Father. I may not be able to stop you, but He knows. And when you end up in Hell, the devil will whip and torture you worse than I ever could. Just remember that my son.... He's always watching you."

Standing in his father's shadow, trembling, Steve thought he was off the hook. Then he felt something warm and wet trickling down his leg. His father looked down and saw the puddle. His faced turned scarlet; he swiftly raised his right hand, and WHACK.

Steve shuddered and turned left into the Exxon. He sat back in his chair and rolled his neck from side to side. Memories were churning through his head like a swarm of bees that he couldn't escape. He remembered all of the mornings in the yellow kitchen, while Mom fried up eggs and scrapple or grits, Daddy would give the blessing for their biscuits and bacon, and in his loud roaring Charleston accent he cried out to Jesus thanking him for their food. Always keeping a watchful eye, glancing down on the boys like a hawk, with the switch hanging on the towel rack behind him, a constant reminder to keep their faith. Then they would pile into the wood-paneled station wagon and drive down the road to Centennial Christian School for six more hours with Jesus.

There were no extracurricular activities at Steve's school, no sports or debate team, because after classes two days a week, they had to go straight home, eat dinner and go to Bible study.

Sundays were even more hectic; the family went to church from 8 AM to 2 PM. On the way home, they stopped by the nursing home to visit sick members of the congregation.

By the time Steve was twelve, he began to realize his family was different. Other kids didn't have to go to church three days a week, or memorize Bible verses. They didn't get the switch if they said, "I swear," or took the Lord's name in vain. It was bad enough to pretend to believe in God, but it was even worse to feel like an outcast for it.

He wondered, "Why was I born into this house?" When they went out in public, he pretended they weren't his family. His nights were filled with dreams that he was adopted, that he was really one of John Lennon's love children, and one day his real mother would show up with a long, flowing blonde hair. She would wear a white gauze gypsy skirt and brown leather sandals. She had tan skin and a warm smile, and she would take him away to San Francisco, or wherever people like her go to smoke drugs and meditate.

He didn't want to go to church or choir practice anymore; he wanted to play ball and listen to rock and roll. He wanted fancy clothes and a fast car and girlfriend. He wanted to be cool like James Dean in "Rebel Without a Cause," smoking cigarettes and wearing leather. He hated his parents for forcing him to live in a world where he didn't belong. He wanted to hit his mother and kick his father. He wanted to cry and scream, but most of all, Steve wanted to die.

By the time he was 16, Steve was smoking and drinking after school with his neighborhood friends who attended public school. He got caught all the time, but he didn't care. No matter how much his father beat him with the belt or the switch, he wouldn't change. It only made him stronger. He started to enjoy making his father angry more and more each time. He stopped praying and reading the Bible. When he was in church, he would daydream about sex and scary movies.

Steve moved out on his eighteenth birthday when he joined the marines. Boot camp was tough, but not as bad as being at home with a bunch of holy rollers. He could go out and get drunk every once in a while, and they let him smoke cigarettes.

He had planned to leave them all behind. He was an adult, and he didn't need them. He never called or wrote. When people asked him about his family, he said they were dead.

While he was stationed in Hamburg, he received a package. It was a letter from his mother with cookies and his favorite Tasty Cakes. She had found him and would not give up. She begged him to come home and visit while he was on leave. She told him that she missed her baby so much. She said that family was the most important thing in life, besides God and the Lord Jesus Christ. "You can't turn your back on God or your family," she wrote, "Eventually you need them."

She wrote about how much she loved him, and how her only dream was for all of her family to make it to Heaven together. How could she be happy in paradise knowing that her baby was suffering in Hell?

After that he received letters and packages of cookies every week with a Christian informational packet inside containing messages like, "Is there room in your heart for Jesus? He always has room for you." Steve threw these away, and hoped none of his buddies would see them. He read her letters, but he never wrote her back.

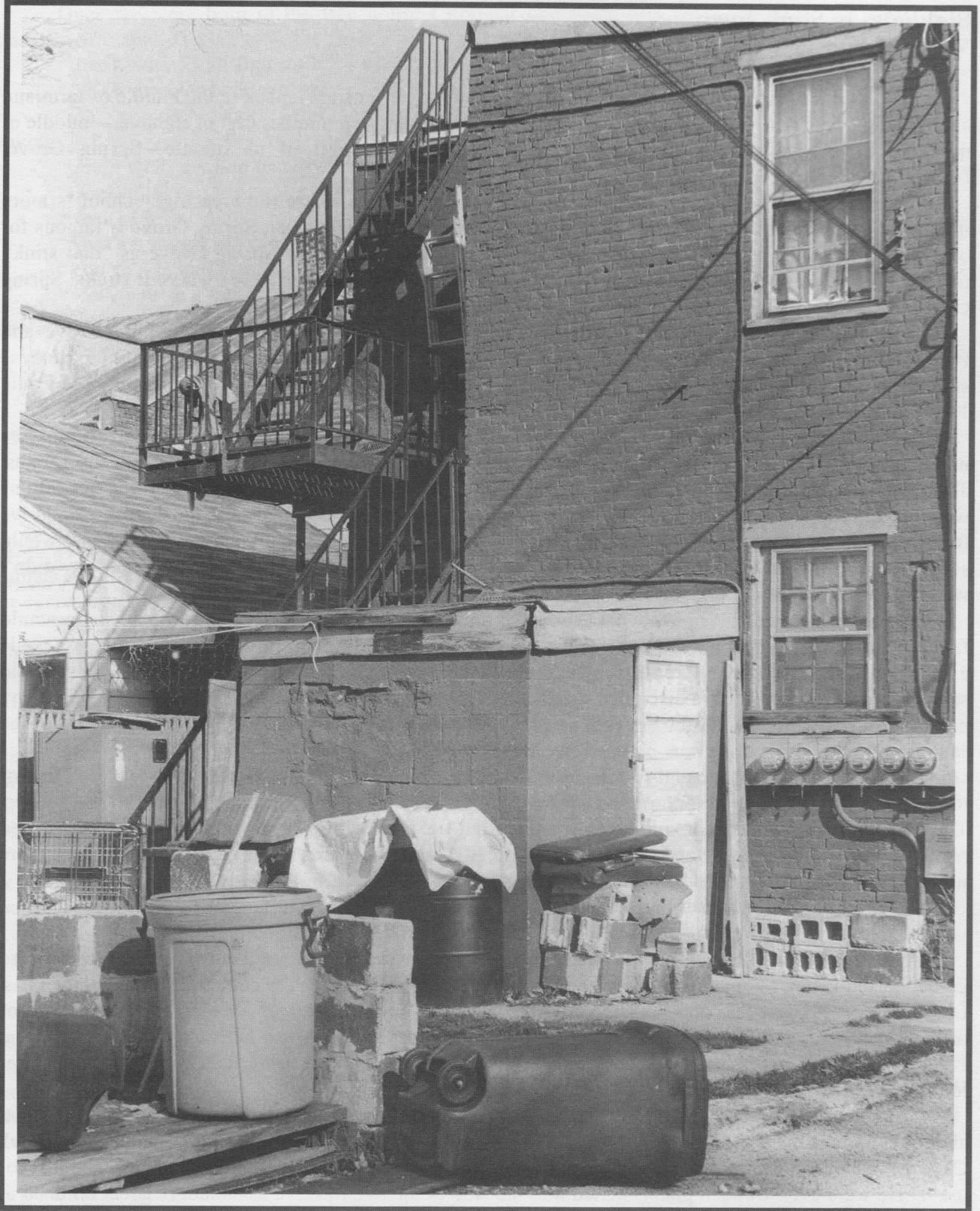
Now here he was, twelve years later, sitting in an Exxon parking lot, a block from her house. He didn't bring Megan and their son with him. He hadn't even invited his family to their wedding. He wasn't sure if he should come, but he had to see her one last time. It frightened him to think about stepping into the church again and hearing his father preach at the funeral. What would everyone say to him? Did they think he would come? He turned the radio off and stared at the raindrops falling on the windshield and cried.

He could still smell her White Shoulders cologne and taste the lipstick that always rubbed off her lips onto his. He loved her. He couldn't remember if he ever told her that. Tears rolled off his chin. He closed his eyes, rested his head on the steering wheel and began to pray.

## Cat

Amity R. Bitzel

Dark chocolate seal-point  
shading into cream lushness  
espresso tipped tail.



Alley  
Kelly Burns

## Sinkholes in Stink Town

Vito Grippi

My old ice-cream-dream, suburban development home sat right smack in the middle of farmland and nothing. This is where I grew up. Ten minutes west of York, ten minutes east of Hanover—middle of nowhere U.S.A., but close enough to civilization to keep most of us literate—Spring Grove, Pennsylvania.

Spring Grove is your typical eastern mill town; the kind where the area high school is more interested in its athletic program than it is its academic program. However, Spring Grove *is* famous for one thing—its smell. People from all over Central Pennsylvania know Spring Grove as “that stinky town.” One of the local bars even had t-shirts made that say, “Kiss your honey where it stinks, Spring Grove PA.” Wonderful.

The development where I lived was made up of two intersecting streets—Spring Forge Drive, and Hamlet Drive. I lived on Spring Forge Drive and my friend Brent on Hamlet. At the end of both of these streets there was dirt road. This dirt road ran parallel to a field and then ended up coming out onto Route 116.

About the time I turned eight is when Brent and I started riding our bikes around the neighborhood. Both of us had the tricked out Bmx style bikes with the playing cards in the spokes. These were the days of poppin’ wheelies, bunny hops, burnouts, and skinned knees. Our parents told us we were only allowed to ride right up to the dirt road and back. Under no circumstances should we follow that dirt road into the field. Supposedly, the road was filled with snakes and sink holes that would suck you right in. At least that’s the story our parents told us. We would later realize that they didn’t want us on it because it came out onto a main road.

I believe it was the summer between third and fourth grade that Brent and I decided we would face our fears and go on a mission down that road. We planned the trip for most of the summer. We made a list of all of the weapons and tools we would need—knives, flashlights, and even a BB gun, if we could sneak it out of the house. We discussed the fact that we may not make it back. Brent would inform my parents of my heroic but fateful struggle as I tried to pull myself out of the sink hole. I was to do the same for Brent. Everything was planned, we were ready to go.

We rode for what seemed like hours in silence. The only sound that could be heard was that of the crickets and the simulated motorcycle sounds the clothe-pinned playing cards made on the spokes. There was no sign of snakes or sink holes—nothing but fields and dirt. Then, suddenly, disappointed and ready to turn around and go home, we saw something. About fifty yards to the right of the dirt road there was a single standing tree in the middle of the corn field—a mirage in the middle of the corn desert.

“Brent, I think we may be seeing things because we’re fati, we’re fatigued.”

“Bullshit, that’s a real tree, and look....there’s a tree house in it.”

It’s funny how I remember his exact words that day when he spotted that tree house. In the third grade, he and I were famous for saying the most swear words. We were *very* cool and we got *all* the girls. But that day we didn’t care about being cool. We were just being eight year old kids. We jumped off of our bikes and started running through the field towards the tree house. About halfway there I realized that I had left all of our necessary tools back at the bike, but it was too late to turn back. We had to get a closer look.

The tree house had definitely had its better days, but by our standards it was perfect. It stood about ten feet off the ground, which as I told Brent, was higher than most of the skyscrapers in New York City. It was a dream fort made of dilapidated and rotted wood, left there by some miracle of God just for us. There were even wooden planks nailed into the side of the tree to serve as a ladder. Brent climbed to the top effortlessly. I was scared out of my mind, but I had no choice other than to do the same.

Once we were both in the tree house I noticed that there was what seemed at the time like hundreds of empty cans all over the floor.

"Brent, what is all this stuff?" I asked.

"It's Budweiser beer cans, my dad drinks it."

"Oh, my dad drinks Michelob. He usually lets me have a sip when my mom's not looking."

"Yeah, well, my dad usually lets me drink the whole can."

"Does not."

"Yeah huh."

"That's a bunch of crap."

"You're a bunch of crap."

"Well, you're a liar."

"No, you're a liar, wanna play cowboys and Indians?"

"Yeah, but can I be the cowboy this time?" For some reason, I was always the Indian, and I always had to die. I still remember feeling really bad for Indians. As far as I knew all they ever did was die. Of course, when I asked if I could be a cowboy this time Brent said, "No, you can't be a cowboy."

"Well why not?" I asked.

"Because you're Italian, and Italians and Indians are the same thing."

"How are they the same?"

"They're the same because they can never win. The cowboy always wins."

And so I died that day, like I had died so many other times. Eventually it started to get dark so we had to go home. We were pretty sure the trail was safe in daylight, but who knows what kind of wild animals would be out there at night. So we rode back with a promise that we would not tell anyone about our secret tree.

For the rest of the summer we spent every day in that tree house. We played cards, pretended to smoke twigs. We even talked about who our girlfriends were going to be when school started again. At one point, we even stole one of Brent's dad's *Playboys*, but soon realized that shooting at birds with the BB gun was much more fun.

Then came the day when we each stole two beers out of my dad's refrigerator in the garage. We decided that this would be the day we became men, and when we got to the tree house we were ready to take that plunge. Unfortunately, manhood didn't come. When we simultaneously took our first big gulp we quickly spit it out. The taste was horrible! That day we realized that grown ups were crazy, and that soda was definitely better than beer.

A few weeks later, school started again. We would only be able to visit our secret place on the weekends. However, once the weather grew colder, the times we went there grew further and further apart. Eventually, we forgot all about the tree house. That year in school we realized that the only way to get girls was to either play football or to learn how to do tricks on a skateboard. We decided to do both and we lost interest in the tree house altogether.

\* \* \*

A few years later my parents told me that they were going to open another restaurant. This one would be much closer, so I could actually walk there and visit my dad. I could even start helping out, if I wanted to. It was a few weeks later when I realized that the new restaurant was going to be in the shopping center that was to be built soon. The shopping center was going to be built right in the field where our tree house stood. But still the idea of someone tearing it down didn't really affect me until I saw the machinery start to dig up the field.

I stood there and watched as the bulldozer tore the tree out of the ground by its roots. I could hear its flesh breaking and cracking as they pulled its ancient roots out of the ground. Each time it sounded like the tree was screaming inside my mind. I realized later that it was in fact me who was screaming on the inside. Approaching my teenage years, I realized that I would never be able to get those times in the tree house back.

The restaurant now sits exactly on top of where our tree house once stood. The same restaurant that I have had to sweat in for the past twelve years of my life is the same restaurant that stole my childhood away from me. Ironically, I have been trying to get out of that restaurant my whole life. Now at the age of twenty-five, I am still trying to get out. I'm in college, I've been through hundreds of career choices, but still I am working in that damn restaurant. It's almost as if something will not allow me to leave that place entirely. How can it be that the same place that defined my childhood is the same place that I've been trying to get away from since I was thirteen? I guess they were right about the sink holes in that field. It's just taken me this long to realize I've been standing in one all along.

## Untitled

Mary Petock

Sharp non-intent intellect  
And there I woke up rocking  
A childhood action plus three  
Wondering if I am the person  
That I was taught I ought not be  
Trying to forgive, cleanse myself  
Of any indecision and uncertainty  
Holding to candle a transparent egg  
A light that rekindles the delicate form  
Thinking of the reason for this half dream  
Holding my entirety to something so warm  
Surely every candle eventually reaches wick's end  
And once melted, now solid, hopes can be boiled again

Realizing the height of dissonance encountered in dreams  
Bathed in the hot pursuit of my syrupy mental surges  
Soon I awake semi-shaking like autumn's last leaf  
Preparing myself for a possible decent into grace  
Recalling figures and tidings that can dampen  
The most profound screams and feral eyes  
All I found I had, I find no longer mine  
Sweeping for those sweet simplicities  
Grabbing straws and pushing buttons  
That are no longer there, unshared  
Can I blame me for my reactions?  
Knowing no existence is yet fair  
Wishing I was helping embrace  
The hand that has held me near  
I must evacuate these thoughts  
Feelings need to be bent soon  
And if the spoon is not there  
Neither are these thoughts  
And I can rest once again  
Within the arms of stars  
Significantly warmer  
Than candlelight

## Dear Teresa

Richard Rabil, Jr.

Dear Teresa, please don't tremble so,  
Don't shake the stillness with your tears,  
Be soothed and let me hold you close,  
That soon you'll feel no doubts or fears.

Dear Teresa, know I love you so,  
Know how I count my measured breaths  
Between the times you come and go,  
Between the times I work and rest.

Dear Teresa, don't in me place trust  
That God alone can satisfy.  
Know that brides are flesh and lust  
To me, a man, corrupt and blind.

Dear Teresa, please don't misconstrue  
The value on duty I place.  
I give to duty duty's due,  
And strive to live in wholesome peace.

Dear Teresa, days of pain will come,  
Distressing days and years of tears.  
But fight we will and win, my love,  
For cries for comfort Heaven hears.

## The Sacred Heart

Elizabeth Hiatt

She was glancing up at the Eiffel tower t-shirts in the souvenir shops. She smiled at him and pointed to the black ones that spelled out Paris in rhinestones. They definitely weren't her style. He thought she would pick the silly children's ones with an Eiffel tower made out of cheese or something. But that's what he loved so much about her. Eight years after they met, he still worshiped her. They were so different, and he was never bored around her. She still made him laugh and smile every day. They'd only been kids when they met during the freshman fair at college, riding next to one another on the carousel. After that ride, he couldn't stay away, and now here they were, heading up the hills of Montmartre. He slipped his hand out of hers and placed it in his pocket, making sure the tiny box was still there.

Maxine turned away from the window and saw Nate feeling around in his jacket pocket. She knew it was coming. She had waited eight years for this day. As soon as Nathan showed her the plane tickets, she was ready.

Of course he took her to Paris to ask; he always wanted things to be perfect. It was as if he had planned out the perfect romance moment by moment for them. While other college students spent spring break in Cancun or Daytona, Nate booked trips for the two of them to go sailing in Savannah or hiking in



Nevada. She felt as if she was a character in some romance novel that Nate had been writing since college.

Falling in love was the last thing she had planned when she started college. She had goals. She was the first person in her family to get an education; she knew she was expected to succeed. No time for boys, or parties, she was going to law school. She would never go back to that tiny chicken-farm town on Maryland's Eastern shore. Then Nate came along. He was adorable, all blue-eyed and tan skinned. White boys were never attractive before; they were all rednecks who teased her about her hair or her family. Nathan wasn't some hillbilly from Maryland; he was from New York. His accent was adorable, and when he asked her to dinner the next night, she couldn't say no. Four years later, when he asked her to move to New York with him, she couldn't turn him down either.

Rent was expensive, so she had to drop out of law school after her second semester, but she was proud of her job at the women's shelter. Maybe she'd had the wrong dreams all along, and all that she ever really wanted was to be loved unconditionally, no matter how successful she was.

Nate grabbed onto her arm and led the way up the hill, passing the cafes and porn shops that bombarded the side streets near the Sacred Heart church. It was the perfect place to ask her. He'd decided when he was 17 and went on a trip to Paris with his French class that this was the spot where he would take the woman of his dreams. The enormous white basilica high up on top of the hill was like a god looking over the city. And when he'd met Maxi on the carousel, he knew it was perfect, because there is a carousel at the bottom of the stairs that lead up to the church.

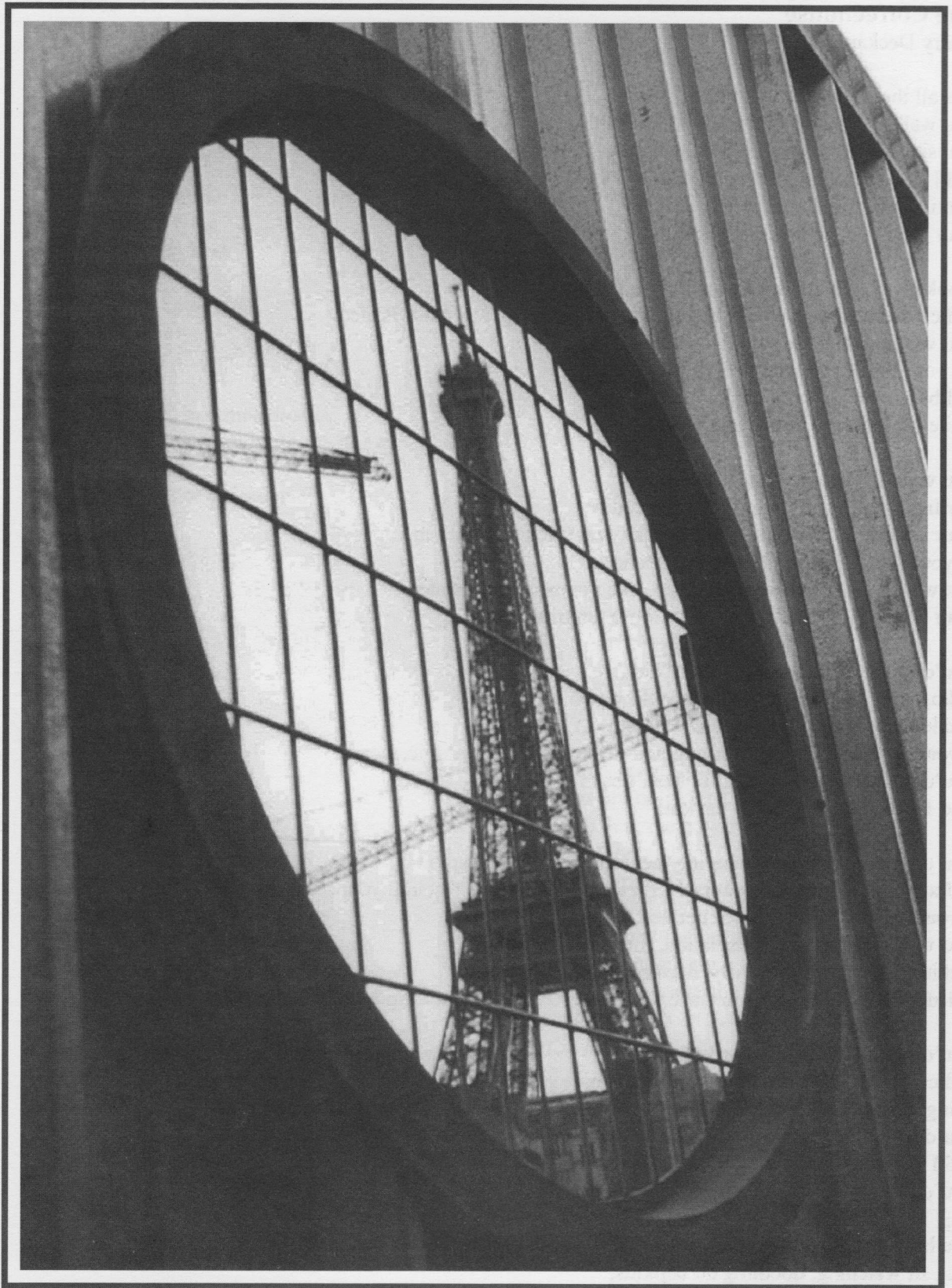
As they continued up the hill on their way to the carousel, Nate pictured how Maxine would look with the wind blowing through her hair as she smiled and then cried. What song would be playing? Then he realized her hair couldn't blow in the wind. It was too short, and stuck to the side of her head. He kept thinking back to his fantasy girl, and realized that Maxine would never be her. When he met her, he was blown away. She looked like a statue of Cleopatra he had seen in the Met.

Of course his Irish catholic parents weren't thrilled about him dating a black Baptist girl from Maryland, but he knew as soon as they met Maxi they would fall in love with her just as he had, and eventually they did. His mother had given him his grandmother's engagement ring the week before they left for Paris. Everything was falling into place, but nothing felt right.

He thought about their life together: three-bedroom brownstone, their golden retriever "Wallace," and the two kids they would have. And when he pictured those children, he realized what was wrong. All along he had dreamt of a boy and girl, two years apart (He'd already picked out the names). Only, these fantasy kids had blonde hair and blue eyes. They didn't have nappy hair and big lips like Maxine. They were white. They looked like him and all of his family and his ex-girlfriends. He had never realized that he would be raising black children. Could he raise a black child? How could he, an Irish Catholic stockbroker from Manhattan, teach his son to be proud of his African heritage? Would they celebrate Kwanza? Would he have to listen to rap music and watch Chris Rock movies with them? Would he ever be black enough for them? Would Maxine ever be white enough for him?

And there he stood, frozen in front of the carousel, looking up at the church, the ring in his pocket. Maxine saw the spot. She saw the carousel. "This is it," she thought, "the perfect place." She stepped onto it, and handed the man a few Euros. Nathan followed her, and she grabbed hold his hand. Off they went. The music was playing as they were spinning, and she saw Nathan reach for the box. He pulled out his camera and took her picture. Around and around they went. He felt like this ride would never end. She didn't know why he hadn't asked yet. She was sweating even though the crisp autumn wind was zipping across her face with every rotation. Round and round. And then, the ride stopped.

Maxine waited. Nothing happened. Nate stepped down and grabbed her hand. He thanked the little old man in the operating booth, and looked up at the sun setting behind the church. He nodded his head towards the massive white church, caught Maxine's eyes and asked, "Shall we?"



**Eiffel Tower**  
Terri Shadle

## The Coffeehouse

Hilary Deckard

I recall the day I saw you perfectly:  
You walk in, elegant and smooth, like still water.  
You sit down across the room facing the window, watching  
and I stop sketching on my napkin.  
I notice the sun glinting off your hair;  
Your gaze out the window is steady.

I look away, though my curiosity remains steady  
and envision what it would be like if you had sat by me, Miss Perfect:  
You would pull back your brown hair,  
sip your bottled water,  
and blot your lips on a napkin,  
while I'd gulp my coffee and watch.

You would glance at your watch  
starting to talk, and I would listen steadily.  
Your stare would fall into your lap, staying fixed on your napkin  
as you would feed me lines of perfection,  
that would come out wrong, wilted, like plants without water,  
Your face would be obstructed by loose tendrils of hair.

You'd brush away these pieces of hair,  
falling over your cheeks, and I would watch.  
Suddenly, you'd spill tears, slow streams of salt water.  
I would listen to your soft crying and my breathing, rhythmic, steady.  
You'd admit, recently your life hasn't been perfect,  
and I would hand you my napkin.

You'd blow your nose, smearing the drawings on the napkin  
and attempt to compose yourself, running your fingers through your hair.  
I would assure you life's not perfect.  
You would accept my consolation, intent, watching  
seeking a stranger's sincerity, needing to be steadied,  
Dried tears would stain your face, like smeared glass from evaporated water.

You'd drink the last of your water  
and crumple up the sorrow soaked napkin.  
rising from the table steadily  
you'd smooth your hair  
and I'd drink another cup of coffee watching.  
You'd leave the way you entered—perfect.

You have not been by since, consuming water, modeling perfection,  
yet I sit watching, doodling on napkins,  
and wait steadily for a glimpse of your brown hair.

## **Canned Air Condition**

justin harlacher

The manufactured cold tries  
to invoke September yet  
remains stifling.

It's not yet noon as  
the AC battles  
with the soaring heat.

The dial goes to ten but  
I'll stay at nine—  
Nice to have a cushion.

This is summer in Pennsylvania:  
Suffering the canned chill,  
I hide from the oppressive  
Mid-Atlantic haze poised and  
ready to pounce  
if I venture outside.

## **Last Call**

Brooke Harper

It's 3 am and I am hopeless.  
All of the lights are on in this empty apartment,  
Where I long to hear the sound of my brain  
Crashing against the wall  
To stop the quietness.  
That lingers after-  
The laughter stops and the barstools  
Stand at the attention upright on the counter.  
The bartender sweeps away the napkin  
I wrote my number on for the boy  
Who fingered me in the back of the bar  
In the booth by the jukebox.  
That plays love songs everyone remembers  
And no one dances to.  
My vagina cries milky tears all over his fingers  
As he places one in his mouth to taste the pain.

## The Mütter Medical Museum

Hilary Deckard

The rooms smell like time held captive,  
a compilation of dust  
and musty carpet.

Dark rooms containing stale air  
It's like browsing  
a madman's attic:

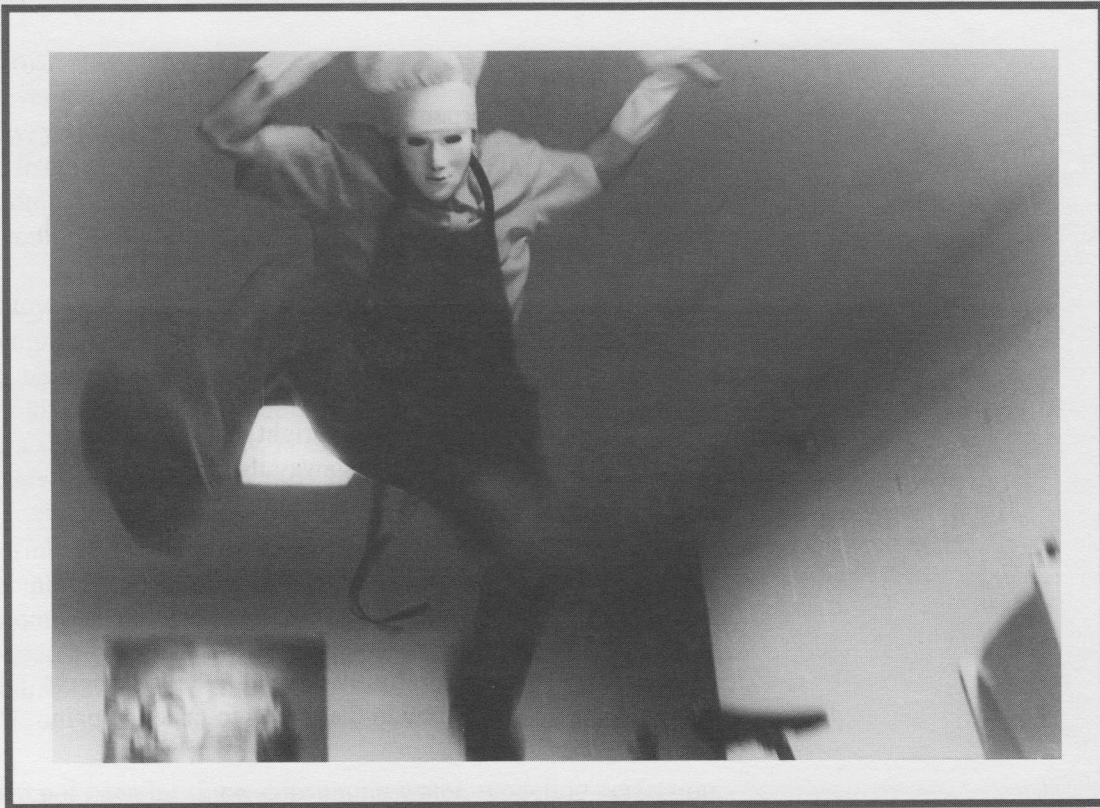
Deformity and disease on display,  
I wander  
quietly, slowly,  
subdued by intrigue and disgust.

Resting on shelves  
body parts wait,  
ugly and unnatural,  
commemorating misfortune.

Plastered to walls  
newspaper clippings catalogue  
devastating human casualties  
to microscopic wars.

Guarded by glass  
skulls pose  
with silent grins  
and vacant stares.

Calcified tombs,  
Concealing secrets  
I see my reflection, and my own  
vulnerability.



**Untitled**  
Justin Meyers

## The Housewife

Brooke Harper

If life had a road map I would go careening 100 miles per hour  
in the wrong direction.  
Only to see if I could jerk back  
escape Janis Joplin, Sylvia Plath fates,  
And return to safety in suburbia  
with 401k and 2.5 children.

Picket fences and two car garages  
PTA president hopeful  
Send in recipes to the Philadelphia cream cheese recipe sweepstakes  
Pick up the kids at the bus stop when it rains.  
Cool brownies for the whole class on birthdays.  
Read Cosmos Tricks you got to try with him  
While the checkout lady sorts through your collage of coupons.  
Give him a blowjob he won't believe later on that night  
Lick his asshole and cup his balls  
Never admit you are not satisfied  
Bite down hard on the pillow to muffle make pretend screams  
So you won't wake the kids

In the morning wake up and do Pilates naked  
To remind you of the imperfections you seek to correct  
Sit at the table before the kids have to get up  
Opt for a shot instead of a cup of coffee  
Salty tears threaten to gather at the crows feet you combat with oil of olay  
And you sit and wonder what it would have been like to have truly lived  
To never have jerked back-  
To cry, cry baby stick your head in the oven  
Shoot heroin  
Fuck every Tom Dick and Harry  
To be free of mundane tasks  
To dance in the rain naked  
And not give a damn what the neighbors said

## Stale Air

Erica Hildebrand

Lionel opened his eyes. It was oppressively hot, and since he wasn't very fit he sweated more than a little. Luckily he was of short enough a stature that he managed to crawl to the end of the craggy, twisted tunnel that he now found himself in, with no recollection of how he got there. The last thing he remembered was going to tend to his rosebush in the garden, then blacking out and waking up here in the stale air.

Finally, he came to a proper cavern. He straightened his bent back and smoothed down his suit, though it was nothing more than a tattered weaving of rags by then. The fabric had been a lovely shade of gray, but now, he noticed, his suit glowed orange. As did the rocks, as did the whole cavern.

The whole place was most likely brightened from the boiling moat of magma that rimmed the cave and limned a rocky island in its center. There upon the island was a rock, and upon the rock sat an impeccably dressed woman, with feathered hair and goat horns. The woman looked at him and grinned. Her teeth seemed too white, her eyes too red, and Lionel sweated again. "About time, six-seven-two!" she called to him.

"What?"

"Six-seven-two. That's you!"

"Where am I?"

"Didn't you ever go to Sunday School?" The woman pouted at him.

She beckoned to him, and with some effort Lionel managed to cross the rickety rope bridge suspended over the simmering pool. This woman stood, stretched, breathed in the sulfur fumes. Her little barbed tail swished behind her.

"Pardon me, but are you a devil?" he asked, with as much courtesy as one can have when speaking to a hellion.

"Do I look like a devil?"

"A bit."

"What gave it away?" She tilted her head to the side, and pulled on the lapel of her jacket. "Donna Karen?"

"It's a lovely suit—"

"Of course it is."

"—But no, I thought maybe with the horns..."

"Ah yes. I've been meaning to get them trimmed. See, I'm actually a demon, but that's besides the point." She beckoned him closer with a finger. "Now then, Six-seven-two—"

He recoiled a bit, and interrupted her. "Pardon, but why do you keep calling me that?"

She pouted again, unaccustomed to being interrupted. "You are Case Six-Seven-Two, assigned to me for rehabilitation."

"Assigned?"

"Consider me a social worker."

"But... but I'm not a child!"

"Oh come now. You still cry when you watch *The Lion King*, don't you?"

"Well... that's, ah..."

"I know, I know. That's special. Right. See, you're in Hell, but you're not dead yet. You remember that Dickens story? I'm here to set you straight, so you can go back to your wife and kids, treat them better, blah blah blah," at this the demon rolled her eyes and made a yakking motion with her hand, "so you don't come here when you die. Get it?"

That set him back on his heels.

"Right then, let's go!" She jumped off the rock, grabbed his hand – which sent an unpleasant prickly sensation up his arm – and started him off towards a bridge on the other side of the island.

"Pardon, miss," he tried to pull against her. "But what's your name?"

"Rose," she sang, without slowing or turning around.

*Oh, well... I like roses,* he thought to himself.

"They couldn't think of anything else to call me," she muttered, and rolled up the sleeve of her latching arm to show the skin covered in thorns.

"Right," he murmured, still following.

Soon enough, Lionel was huffing and puffing to catch up with Rose, who skipped and somersaulted ahead of him, having a much grander time of traveling than he. The air kept catching in his lungs, and he had to gag several times. "Can't...we stop... for a moment?" he panted, holding his side where a stitch had developed.

Rose huffed, stopped, and leaned against the tavern wall. "Ohhhh fiiiine," she drew out in a passive aggressive way, and lit a cigarette.

Lionel collapsed next to her, panting. After a moment, he looked up to see her smoking. "Bad for you, you know."

"Remember where you are before you say something that dense, darling."

"Never smoked a day in my life."

"You should've. It'd help with your breathing down here."

Not long after, Rose brought Lionel to a smaller cavern, this one with a mirror set facing up into a stand that looked very much like an overgrown birdbath. She led him to it, and bade him watch the swirling patterns within.

"Here you see your son."

An image appeared, of a young man shooting heroin, sitting on the floor of a dark, dirty room while an older man laughed at him. The youth looked dreadful. Lionel gaped, as he did indeed recognize his son.

"Oh, Ronny!" He lamented, hurling himself at the mirror. As he did so, the image swirled into smoke and he got splashed, for the mirror was a pool of reflective water rather than glass.

Rose handed him a towel. "You should have helped him with his homework when he was younger. He dropped out of high school. Soon after that, he dropped acid. *Et cetera, et cetera.* Let's look at your mother, how about it?"

Lionel spluttered, "No, wait! How can I help Ronny?"

"Moving on!"

The image in the mirror-that-wasn't-a-mirror swirled to reveal a second rate nursing home. Inside, the image led the pair to watch an old woman sitting at a table, pasting dried macaroni to a picture frame. She ate one of the noodles, and a white-clad orderly ran by to yell at her, frightening the old woman out of her wits. Lionel wailed.

"M-mother!"

Rose was inspecting a chip on her fingernail, frowning at it. She looked up at him, almost startled that he was still there. "What? Oh yes. You let your brother stick her in a second-rate nursing home. Didn't you see it featured on *Sixty Minutes* last month?"

"I think I'm gonna be sick," Lionel moaned.

"Face the other way, then."

"I can't breathe."

"God, I'm bored."

Rose snapped her fingers this time, and a third image began appearing in the smoky water. This time it was his wife, sitting alone at the dining table, two places set for dinner. Rose said, "See there? Your own wife is horribly depressed because you're such a workaholic, you ignore the rest of your family, and you don't help with the house, except for your damn rose garden."

This time Lionel splashed the water away, screaming No, no, no more, and other expletives, refusing to watch the wretched state his family had falling into with his neglect.

Spitting out curses at himself and laments for his family, he threw himself to his knees in front of Rose, who was occupied running an emory board to smooth the tip of one of her horns. She looked down at him, irritated.



“Please, please! I don’t need counseling services! I’ve seen the error of my ways, Miss Rose. I promise I’ll change! Just let me go back, I’ll fix everything right!”

He was still pleading, unaware that another demon had entered, great and terrible and black-furred with six arms. His burning coal of a single eye noticed Rose and the simpering human, and he waved to her. “Oi, Rose, up for some tennis?”

Rose brightened at the other demon, and beckoned Lionel to his feet. “Thank Christ. A reason to end this session! Very well, Lionel, our time is at an end.”

“Great, great!” He was giddy with relief. “Okay, how do I get back?”

“Get back?” Rose laughed.

Lionel looked at her curiously.

“Why, dear, you’re dead already.”

Lionel blanched. He shook his head, scrambling to his feet and backing away. “No, no! My family still needs me! You said so!”

“You believed the word of a demon?” Rose tittered and then fell upon him, rendering him to pieces.



**Untitled**  
Justin Meyers

## Mother's Memoirs

Brooke Harper

Her only happy memory was when she was a girl  
Riding out in the wild west on a rocking horse  
Never leaving the bedroom  
Where her uncle raped her of her childhood  
Blood ran down her knees and stained her dress  
Her mother ignored the funny way she walked

To school the next day in agony she walked  
At 6 she was a woman no longer a girl  
The tears fell on the blue print dress  
When the teacher called on her she answered with a hoarse  
Voice that mourned the loss of her childhood.  
The clock strikes three and she returns to the scene of the crime, her bedroom.

She sits alone in the silence of her bedroom  
She thinks of a time when she walked  
In the sacred land of childhood  
Her dreams interrupted by her mother's piercing voice hollering GIRL!  
She looks at stars and wishes for Prince Charming to ride in on his white horse  
And for her fairy godmother to grant her a new dress

To replace the blood stained tattered dress  
That hangs in the closet of her bedroom  
Along with the forgotten rocking horse  
She turns out the light as her uncle walked  
Past her door, drunk and hungry for the girl  
Whose closet hold the remnants of her childhood

Thinking back on her perilous childhood  
The morning light beckons her to wake and dress  
Her sleeping eight year old girl  
Lying in the lavender hues of her bedroom  
To the carnival hand in hand light and heavy hearted they walked  
She pressed a quarter into her daughter's palm to ride the carousel horse

She thinks of herself as a girl riding on that rocking horse  
Wipes urgent tears away to preserve her daughter's childhood  
As her daughter walked  
Toward her with a red kool-aid stain on her yellow dress  
My mother smiles because she knows that no one will trespass into the bedroom  
To rape her daughter of the time to be a girl

This is consolation for the 6 year old girl riding on a rocking horse  
Who walked into her bedroom and was trapped  
In a land of lost dreams as her uncle held his fingers to his lips telling her to hurry and dress.

**Lonesome**  
Mary Petock & Ryan Hart



**Hello, Ophelia**  
Elizabeth Hiatt

“Hello, Ophelia.  
So, I’m down here with you.  
Sucked to the bottom.... angry  
used.

This must be what happens when you lose hope,  
Each moment swallows you,  
Each breath a reminder that  
you weren’t enough to make him jump too.

It’s not like we’re Juliet (at least Romeo fell).  
At least he felt something.  
Young fools together; they died for the cause.

And here we are, drifting in murky waters:  
Part pain,  
Part shame;  
Somewhere in between life and death.

Sorry, Ophelia, I guess we should learn:  
It’s not about us.  
We’re his side dish, like peas or coleslaw;  
Someone else will be his veal marsala.”

### Persephone from the Mysts

Liam Seeley

'Neath silvery moon  
we dance the night  
'round balefires'  
spectral light

we pile the faggots  
but no wythes burn  
save the passions  
that we yearn

dancing 'round  
and lauding Pan  
elemental moments  
in a feral land

brothers and sisters  
come heed the call  
the time has come  
to shed exile's caul

The editors apologize for the following misattribution: the artwork that appears on page 42 of Volume 10 of *The York Review* titled "Lonesome" and credited to Mary Petock and Ryan Hart should be untitled and credited to Justin Meyers.

### The Sirens Call

Richard Rabil, Jr.

Awaken me this morning bright;  
My Soul, revive! Thou slept all night!  
Split you heavy Eyes and labor,  
Be the path; Mind, be the slaver.  
Stretch you Legs, be stirred from slumber.  
Weak Arms, uphold your sluggish members.  
The Sirens call; are we not bound  
Ahead to plod and meet the sound  
That beckons out devotion full?  
Awaken Veins, embrace the pull,  
The calling of a world inflamed  
With lust untold and sin unnamed.  
Pursue the Sirens, Human Strength,  
The day's yet past; restore thyself at length  
And calm the protests of thy Heart  
Which threatens next run not to start.  
Cease thy groans at sleep denied;  
Gird thy frame as one, or die  
Before the taunting white sun sets  
On the race of life: then we'll rest.  
What! Shalt thou buckle 'neath thy load?  
Ambition's throw is lost, if so,  
Along with thy glorious gold-plated Name,  
Precious to thee as honey-sweet fame.

## Toe Shoes and White Sedans

Elyse Reel

Twelve little ballerinas dance in the forest, pink tulle rustling and satin toe shoes dipping in-out of the dirt and dead leaves. They are heedless of the branches that snag on their costumes and the rocks and twigs under their feet. They dance as though they are on the polished stage of Broadway.

His wife had always been slightly too large for the seats in his car; her legs an inch too long and her arms draped just a bit too awkwardly on the armrests, her head a little bit too high for the headrest. She was sitting next to him, in that vaguely awkward way, leaning back and smoking a cigarette. Every so often, she blew a methodical smoke ring at the ceiling.

Harold watched her with a detached fascination, at her faintly awkward position and her smoke rings that were more of smoke ellipses than rings. They were beautiful smoke ellipses, he thought to himself. The epitome of beauty.

He was leaving her today. He hadn't told her yet, but he was leaving her for good. He had a nice apartment picked out already, on the east side of town. It had green carpeting - not shag; he hated shag - and brown walls. Harold had bought a nice print of flowers in a vase to put on the walls. He had the receipt for it, too, 28.99, plus tax. It had come framed. It had been a clearance print. Harold thought the print was almost as beautiful as the smoke ellipses.

Deep in the woods, a wolf lifts its head and smells the air. It is intrigued, and lifts its lumbering body up from its den. The air smells like tulle and twelve little ballerinas, and the wolf follows the scent. It does not snag on the branches, and it does not dip into the dirt with satin toe shoes. It does not dance. It patters.

Harold's wife blew a new smoke ellipse and crushed her cigarette violently in the ashtray. Harold opened his mouth.

*Harold*, said Harold's wife, *I'm leaving you.*

The smoke ellipse faded.

*Oh*, said Harold.

Harold's wife lit a new cigarette.

*Well*, she said. *Do you want the house? I never cared for it much.*

Harold scratched his leg. *No*, he said at length. *I have an apartment on the east side.*

*Oh*, said his wife. *That's nice.*

Harold nodded.

The ballerinas begin to slow. Their feet are bruised and their toe shoes ripped to shreds. Their tulle hangs in tatters. A few begin to limp. One of them trips over a fallen branch in the path and scrapes her elbow. None of the rest offer to help her up. They limp-dance away and leave her lying in the path.

*I suppose we should sell it, then*, said Harold's wife.

It was an awkward house. Like his wife - could he call her his wife? She wasn't his ex-wife, but she didn't want to be his wife any longer. Perhaps if he had given her the print for her birthday, she wouldn't have wanted to leave.

*I have a print of flowers in a vase, Harold said quietly. I'm going to put it in my apartment.*

*That's nice, Harold, said his wife and stared out the window.*

The wolf comes upon the first ballerina. One-two-three, snap-snap-snap and a shred of tulle is caught in its teeth and that is all that is left. The toe shoes have long since dropped, exhausted, to the ground in bits and pieces. No one misses the ballerina. Ten more of them dance on. The eleventh leans against a tree and pauses for breath.

*I could have given it to you, Harold offered.*

Harold's wife (the one who didn't want to be his wife any longer) shook her head. *That's all right, Harold.*

*I'm sorry, said Harold. I thought you might have liked it. It reminded me of you.*

Except it fit together and it wasn't slightly too long or too big or too out of place.

*Don't say that, Harold, said Harold's wife who did not want to be a wife anymore. She didn't blow another smoke ring.*

*I'm sorry, said Harold again, since he had nothing else to say.*

The eleventh only takes two snaps - snap-snap - before it is gone. The wolf enjoys the eleventh more than the twelfth. It is not quite so tough. The eleventh had been more skilled at avoiding the snagging of branches and the rocks in the path.

The tenth goes down, dragging the ninth with it.

*Do you want me to drive you back to the house? Harold asked his notquiteawife.*

His notquiteawife lit a cigarette. *If you want to, Harold. I need to get my things.*

Harold started the car. *You should get out, he said. You don't love me anymore, so why should I drive you?*

Harold's usedtobeawife leaned over and blew smoke that never became an ellipsis into his face. *Drive, Harold.*

The tenth and ninth are bony and disappointing. The wolf nudges them aside and patters on. Three more sets of satin shoes stop dipping in the dirt and drop. They are not bony. The wolf enjoys them the most. It can smell the tulle and five little ballerinas ahead. It can smell the tiredness as well. The wolf hates tiredness, but it is still hungry. Patter-patter, dip-dip.

Harold moved his foot off the gas. *No, he said. I'm not going to drive.* The pine tree air freshener quivered as it hung from the mirror.

*Harold, said his onceawife.*

*I hate you*, said Harold. *I hate you*.

*Harold, let's try to end this on good terms*, said Harold's notawifeanymore. *I don't hate you. I just don't love you any longer*.

*Go to hell*, said Harold.

The wolf shifts its position. The fourth notices and reaches out to warn the fifth, but it is too late for the both of them. Three of them continue dancing.

*Harold, listen to me*, said the woman Harold used to think of as his wife.

*I'm sick of listening*, said Harold.

*Don't be stubborn*, said the woman Harold did not think of as his wife anymore. *Let's talk this over like reasonable, rational adults -*

*Rationality be damned*, said Harold. He thought fondly of his print and then thought of tearing it to pieces with the claw end of a hammer. He hated how it reminded him of her.

The third one is not worth the effort. The wolf ignores it and noses ahead to the second one, which has dull eyes and crooked teeth. The wolf must wait for a moment until it finishes trembling. Then it sets in.

*Honestly, Harold, we both know that it's heading the same way*, started the wife, once removed.

Harold drummed an angry rhythm on the steering wheel. His shoes squeaked as he rubbed them together. Squeak-squeak, squeak-squeak. *You don't fit*, he said.

*Fit?* she laughed. *Fit? Harold, whatever do you mean?*

Harold hated being mocked. He hated her more than ever. He told her so.

The last one is the hardest to catch. It almost makes it out of the woods, but the wolf knows better than the ballerina. The bloody soles of the feet give out. The tulle stops swishing. The heart stops beating. The wolf is full by this point. It drags the ballerina back to its den, where its children swarm across it.

Snap-snap-snap.

Harold got out of the car before his wifewhowasnotawife could say anything to him. He walked down the road in his squeaky shoes. He walked to the east side of town to his apartment with the green carpet and the brown walls and the print of the flowers in the vase on the wall. He walked downstairs to the janitor's closet and asked to borrow a hammer. He walked back to his apartment and took the print of the flowers in the vase off the wall and tore it to pieces with the hammer.

Harold's wifewhowasnotawife sat in the car that she didn't quit fit. She thought that perhaps it would be an ideal time to scream, but she couldn't bring herself to do it. She felt oddly trapped in the slightly too small car. She thought about getting out, but she couldn't bring herself to move, either. Her cigarettes fell out of the pack and fell on the floor, her cigarettes that made the smoke ellipses that Harold had loved. The ellipses had never screamed when they faded. Or perhaps she had just not heard them.

Untitled  
Nicole Buck

voices silencing echoes  
running through my head  
the purple tea room  
came alive  
and the court jester said  
drink to life drink tonight  
but do not drink to me  
'cause the goblet's running over  
and nothing comes for free  
have your cake and eat it too  
eat the garden flowers blue  
life can take a different hue  
if you come away with me  
I've paid the price to eat the bread  
filled with maggots and with lead  
would you rather have the cake instead?  
It'll be a pricey fee  
down the bottomless pit it goes  
springing thorns, but not a rose  
that's the way the story goes  
when you drink the purple tea

**Anaconda**

Amity R. Bitzel

the scaly she-snake lies in wait  
her name is sloth and she has earned the sobriquet  
coiled amongst the white cloud of your duvet  
she pauses:

twined amongst books clamoring to be read  
hungry for laziness, urging you to bed  
crimson tongue flickers and licks pencil lead  
for the crossword:

her appetite is enormous and vast  
no labor here, just an endless morass  
of lounging and lazing, luring you to a crevasse  
where it's only your heartbeat:

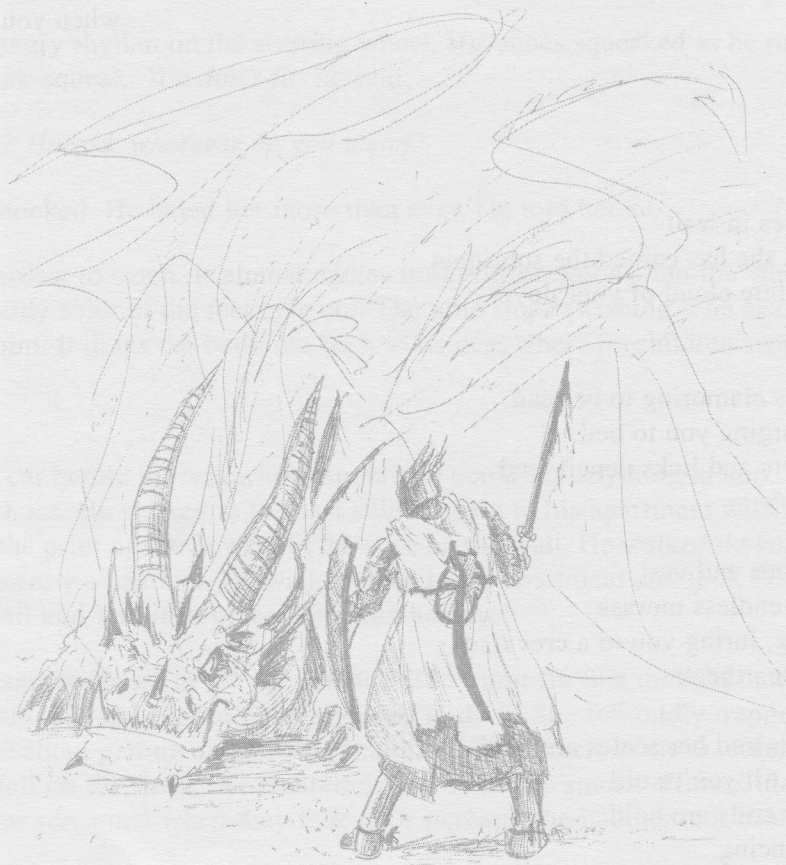
she glitters in emeralds and her scales are cold  
hissing at you to read till you're old  
the undulations of her coils are bold  
and really quite convincing.



## The Unscathed Green Plain

Richard Rabil, Jr.

Majestically he arose, seasoned in battle,  
Donning steel plates and a helm, dragon-emblazoned.  
Beneath the searing eye of the heavens it gleamed,  
Fiercely blood-red, whilst rich yellow flames shot raging  
Like curling missiles from nostrils in wrath agape.  
A monument burning eternal memories  
Was he, of glorious virtue inspiring pride  
In hearts noble and common, both aged and young.  
Silent in majesty stood he ahead of them;  
Them being foot-worn, tattered battle-virgins all,  
Whose internal fear was now vanquished by courage,  
In unity plunged into the bristling ranks  
Of the foeman opposite the unscathed green plain.  
There fell golden petals, there scattered butterflies,  
There rents appeared in the fresh field's verdant earth.  
The breeze once so gently whispering the song of peace  
Soon wailed and screamed, summoning Nature's fury  
And the glee of Hades, who reaped a bounty full.  
Torrents of rain ravaged the land as heaven wept  
For souls unsaved; valor alone couldn't save them.



St. George & the White Dragon

Erica Hildebrand

## Juniper and Poppies

Amity R. Bitzel

My dream that night was searingly vivid. I was looking at a field of poppies. I couldn't touch them, but I could see them and smell them. They were cup shaped, crimson, gleaming with a lunar sheen, dotted with round circles of black in the middle. Sleepy and languid, they nodded gently in the field, calling to me with voices of narcotic beauty. It was as if a firestorm of red satin had drifted over and draped itself everywhere, and I wanted nothing more than to run to them and lay down. I wanted to see if I would suddenly grow limp, my body curving into them, surrendering to scarlet. I would be Dorothy, if only for a short nap, and the scent of them would cling sleepily to my clothes.

The alarm clock jarred me from my opiate reverie, however, and I awoke to the staccato beat of rain upon the roof. Everything was gray and muted and I, too, felt as though I was wrapped in cotton batting. The poppies of my dreams were rapidly fading away into nothingness, even as I fought to hold on to them. I showered, dressed, and packed my book bag in a fugue state. Even at school, in a windowless classroom, I swore I could still hear that rain, drumming and thrumming ceaselessly.

Homeroom was always a bit chaotic. Mr. Grierson, the history teacher, presided over our homeroom, and he was incapable of controlling my fellow classmates. Spitballs flew and curses rang out, and Mr. Grierson just gripped his podium and ignored us. He always reminded me of a turtle, for he was little and old and his round head protruded from the neck of the mossy green cardigan he always wore. His nose was large and mapped with gin blossoms. The rumor was that he was an alcoholic. It was true that he would often visit a back closet, in the middle of class for no valid reason, and then return a moment or two later, a bit flushed. His lectures were circuitous and rambling, and someone could always get him to go off on a tangent.

Today, though, we had to get through homeroom first. My friend Paris sauntered in late and sat down next to me, holding a bottle of seltzer water. She uncapped it and drank deeply, then passed the seltzer to me. As soon as I raised it to my mouth, I could smell that it wasn't seltzer. The smell was clean and sharp like juniper berries—gin filched from her mother's liquor cabinet. Paris nodded at me, grinning. I shrugged and took a big slug.

We passed the bottle back and forth until I began to feel a bit woozy. At one point, I contemplated offering Mr. Grierson a swig, but I managed to contain myself. The loudspeaker crackled obnoxiously and I heard the principal announce the morning pledge of allegiance. Everyone muttered and grumbled around me but eventually stood up. I thought about standing up, but then I pictured myself doing it, swaying like kelp in the sea, and I thought there was a pretty good chance that I would fall down. So I stayed seated, eyes downcast. About halfway through the pledge, Mr. Grierson noticed that I was sitting down. His rheumy old eyes bored into me and I looked away, but I could still feel the afterimage of their heat, like when you stare directly at the sun.

As soon as the crackling noise of the loudspeaker stopped, Mr. Grierson started in.

"What are you doing? Why on earth wouldn't you get up for the pledge?" he yelled. I could see a vein pulsing at his right temple, beneath the papery skin.

I just shrugged. My gorge was rising, but I still felt pleasantly warm, and there was no way I was going to stand up.

"Well? Answer me!"

"I...I just didn't feel like it."

"Didn't feel like it? What's wrong with you? People died for you, died in the war. Don't you know that?"

Mr. Grierson's voice was several octaves higher than it normally was and now a vein of the opposite temple had begun to throb as well. His liver-spotted hands were shaking and a fine rosy bloom had spread all over his face. Everyone was quiet, for once, and they were all staring at us like they were at a tennis match.

"I *said*, people died for you, died for your rights."

As he said this, he wobbled a bit at the podium, almost losing his balance, and suddenly I didn't feel so drunk anymore. I remembered that Mr. Grierson was diabetic, and that his wife was dead and his son lived in Japan. In a flash, I saw him going home by himself, patting his cat, putting a TV dinner in the oven and sitting down with the paper. I could see those fragile old hands smoothing the black and white folds, turning slowly to his favorite section. I could see him taking off his mossy green cardigan and folding it gently, placing it on the bed for tomorrow's day.

"I'm sorry," I whispered, but I said it so quietly that no one heard me. Maybe I even said it in my head—I'm not sure. He told me to get out, which I don't really think he was allowed to do, but I got up anyways. I wasn't sure where I was supposed to go. As I stumbled through the hallways, staring at the scruffy industrial carpet, I saw poppies woven into the threads, flat and defeated. I stepped on them all.



**Spirited Smoke Break**  
Allison Madwatkins

## Backward Hat and the Hypocrisy of the Man

justin harlacher

One recent Tuesday morning I had assumed my position outside Campbell Hall as I usually do during my long periods of downtime. As I sat there chatting with a friend and forcing down lukewarm coffee to jumpstart my day, a fellow student wearing a backward hat and toting a guitar case wandered up and took a seat on one of the concrete benches in this gathering area. Backward Hat removed an acoustic guitar from his case and began to strum away on some Led Zeppelin cover. My friend and I shared a chuckle at this throwback to college times of old and continued with our conversation, scarcely noticing Backward Hat and his rock and roll dreams.

After a few minutes and a few changes of tune, Backward Hat was approached by a member of the York College faculty. The two shared some quiet words, after which the professor walked away. Backward Hat quickly packed up his guitar.

"That's all right," he said in resignation, "I was having trouble getting 'American Girl' anyway."

For a second I was dumbfounded. "You mean he told you to stop?"

"Yeah man. He said that he had heard other complaints from his colleagues that I was disturbing class."

Again, I was incredulous. I could not believe that on a college campus, young Backward Hat could not sit in the quad, badly strumming Tom Petty. "Sure ain't the sixties anymore, is it?"

"No, man," he replied, solemnly shaking his head. With that, Backward Hat wandered off and my friend and I returned to our conversation.

A couple times throughout that day I relayed the story of Backward Hat and his aborted guitar playing to anyone who would listen. As my friends tend to be humanities majors embracing the liberal arts leanings of York College, they all agreed that chasing Backward Hat from his impromptu performance was a shitty thing for The Man to do. However, it wasn't until the following day that I would be really irritated by this little event.

The next day, I found myself sitting on the same steps in front of the same Campbell Hall chatting with a different friend. Suddenly, we were confronted with loud music. We quickly realized that there was a band playing White Stripes covers in front of the student union, only a few hundred feet from where Backward Hat had been chased away for quietly strumming his acoustic guitar a mere twenty-four hours prior. This was a full band: bass, guitar, drums and vocals blasting through a P.A. system on a concrete slab that channeled the noise at near full power to where we sat trying to hold a conversation.

The band played on and soon students began to pour out of Campbell Hall as classes ended. Among them was my buddy from the day before who I had been chatting with when Backward Hat was removed from his seat. He seemed perturbed.

"What the hell is that?" he asked, referring to the musical stylings still easily reaching us over the din of a growing crowd of students stopping to smoke and gossip between classes.

"That is a cover band," I replied simply.

"Yeah, well. Try taking a test through that shit!"

Now this was funny. Recently, there have been advertisements written in chalk on the ground all around campus proclaiming that YCP's radio station has big-name concert tickets to give away. It was clear to me as soon as I heard the White Stripes covers that this band was promoting one such giveaway, the winner getting to see the real White Stripes play these songs. I found it even more interesting that the same Man who had apparently organized a small conspiracy to have Backward Hat removed from the front of Campbell apparently had no objections to an all out rock and roll show, such that it was, taking place during a time when students were in class.

My suspicions were confirmed when I opened the campus newspaper today, only to be greeted by a review of live music on campus. The cover band had been Naked Stranger and their rocking was indeed sponsored by the radio station. The article reports that "many administrative members and faculty members stopped and watched the band perform as they rocked the campus on a beautiful day." Really?

It seems that The Man is a bit hypocritical. I haven't seen Backward Hat around with his guitar since The Man chased him off, but I had seen him in the past. I say, keep a look out for him. If you see him and enjoy a brief chuckle at the expense of his poorly rendered versions of the classics, show some support. The next time The Man confronts him, Backward Hat should have concerned folks on his side, folks who are acutely aware of yet another shining example of the Hypocrisy of The Man. Here's to you, Backward Hat, wherever you play your song.



**Crossroads**  
Jennifer Adams

## Captive

Elizabeth Hiatt

She sweats. The door won't budge, and the room is hot.  
She squishes her cigarette into the crystal ashtray,  
next to the tattered rag doll,  
sitting on a teacart by the window.  
In the parlor, mother pours cool lemonade  
for guests who know nothing about the pregnant girl.

She pulls on a dress that fit when she was still a little girl.  
Now it's too tight. The crinoline feels itchy and hot.  
Her maid opens the door, hands her a glass of lemonade,  
and spits in the overflowing ashtray.  
As the maid dumps the butts out the window,  
the girl flops onto her sofa like a rag doll.

She undresses her rag doll  
to make sure it is really a girl.  
They dance in circles. The pink drapes fall off the window.  
She stops. The sunlight makes her skin tingle. It's so hot.  
But a breeze from the shore blows her hair, which smells like an ashtray,  
Her gold ringlets glide into her glass, fading into lemonade.

The freckled- face girl offers lemonade  
to the naked, stained rag doll,  
lights a Marlboro and says, "Look, a dirty ashtray.  
Only bad pregnant girls  
smoke cigarettes, but it is so hot,  
and we're stuck, starrng out this window."

Sucking her cigarette, she stands before the window.  
The sun sets, and the sky looks like rivers of pink lemonade  
oozing through a cotton candy field. Shaky and hot,  
she decides to be like the rag doll,  
and strips off her clothes. Lying on the bed, a happy naked girl  
with a cigarette in her right hand, her left hand holding the ashtray.

She rubs her belly and puts down the ashtray,  
walks in a circle, sticks her head out the window  
and screams. The invisible girl  
wails, as she throws her glass of lemonade  
out the window, falls down and rips the hair off her rag doll.  
Lying naked in a pool of her sweat, sticky and hot,  
her hot tears drop one by one next to the ashtray,  
Clutching her rag doll, wishing she could fly through the window  
like her glass of lemonade, she wonders if it will be a boy or a girl.

## Words, Words, Words

Elyse Reel

Verbs are sultry. They wear stilettos and red lipstick and smell faintly of cigarette smoke, but somehow make the scent glamorous and not sickeningly stenchful. They call you "kid" and have you hanging on their every word. They could seduce you in a heartbeat, drag you to bed before you knew what was happening, and still leave your bed cold in the morning. They frequent nightclubs and only drink martinis on the rocks, leaving lipstick smudges on their glasses and napkins. They don't dance, ever. They are too sophisticated for this. They prefer to sit at the bar and wrap their legs around the barstools and capture hearts in a beaded purse. They are dark and smoky and mysterious and above all, unattainable. They are on a different level. They are beautiful and sexy and desirable and just out of reach. Halfway between humans and the gods.

\* \* \*

There is no way to enjoy a noun. Nouns are frumpy and boring and impossible to converse with. They sit on ugly velvet flower-patterned armchairs from yard sales and watch *Judge Judy* and *People's Court*, all the while drinking cheap coffee and putting their limp hair into pink foam curlers. They would never dream of owning anything larger than a schnauzer that piddles on the carpet and wears hand-knitted red sweaters in the winter. Their chosen attire is invariably a misshapen housedress striped in pastels and stained with the remains of month-old dinners. They go to bed at 8:30 pm, wearing thick cotton nightgowns and flannel socks. They scuff around the house in moth-eaten fuzzy slippers and warm up Campbell's chicken noodle soup for four days in a row. They find no joy in life; they are tired and worn-out. But they keep plodding on, slurping soup and shuffling discontentedly across the kitchen floor.

\* \* \*

Pronouns firmly believe that they own the world. They are the heads of international corporations, with black wingtip shoes and shiny leather chairs that creak with newness. They have nine phones lined up on their mahogany desks and voluptuous secretaries named Bambi who wear short skirts and talk in low, breathy voices. They take off work to play golf with Stan and discuss meetings scheduled for Monday. Their wives are picture-perfect clichés, blond hair perfectly coiffed and strands of cultured pearls arranged just right to create a contrast against that navy blue pantsuit. Their houses are huge, pre-Civil War mansions all lined with hardwood and with stone fireplaces in all the rooms. They have traveled around the world in expensive private jets, dressed in pinstripe suits and sipping champagne. They are smooth and slick, like used-car salesmen. Smooth and slick and oily, able to talk you into selling your soul for a dollar and disappearing before the money ever passes to your hand.

\* \* \*

Adjectives are flamboyant and ostentatious. Their perfume enters the room before they do, and they trail feathers from gaudy boas wherever they go. They flash oversized diamonds from every finger - they love to use their hands whenever they talk - and cake their faces with heavy makeup. They love attention and gossip, and are exceedingly vain creatures who preen every minute of the day. But their diamond-spangled fingers are wrinkled and arthritic; their dressers are crowded with anti-wrinkle, age-defying face cream. Skin dangles from their upper arms and smothers unlucky feathers from their boas. There is lipstick on their teeth and gray roots below their platinum blonde upswept hairdos. They are the disillusioned dreamers, the Ponce de Leons in rosy glasses, teetering closer and closer to the edge and too wrapped up in a fantasy world to notice.

\* \* \*

Adverbs are eager to please. They are straight out of a Dickens novel - "yes, sir, guv'nor sir, shine your boots, sir?" - almost tripping over their own clumsy feet in the effort. They follow like lost puppies, feeding hungrily on the tasks they are assigned. Even the lowest and dirtiest jobs are like heaven to them, for they believe that their purpose in life is to satisfy others. They dash from place to place, having seemingly boundless energy, always pushing themselves harder and harder in order to make the best impression they can. They work and work until they literally collapse from exhaustion, and even then

they worry that their best was not enough. The graveyards are filled with them: they are so eager to please that they will simply work themselves to death. Death, coincidentally, is eager to welcome them.

\* \* \*

He watches with glazed eyes as she caresses his Italian-suited leg with her foot and smiles coyly. Somewhere, a mother absentmindedly pets her schnauzer and wonders where her daughter could be this late at night. Beady eyes, weighted down with layers of heavy pink eyeshadow, glare resentfully at the seduction at the end of the bar, while a hopeful face leans forward and offers her a scotch on the rocks.



**Contentment**  
Mary Petock & Ryan Hart



## Notes from Contributing Writers

**Elizabeth Hiatt** is a graduating senior English major from Baltimore, where she will attend law school next fall. She would like to thank her partner in crime Nicole D'Alonzo for the past two years: "More powerful than two Cleopatras"

**Elyse Reel** is excessively fond of writing stories and plays about two-person dysfunctional relationships. She will probably continue in the same vein after she graduates, and so would appreciate fifty cents or so dropped into her starving artist cup if you ever pass her on the Philadelphia inner city streets.

**Liam Seeley** is a former college dropout who has finally passed English 101 after his third attempt. He is a columnist for the Spartan newspaper, and, under the pseudonym MercyRain, has many publications in the small press/zine scene both on and off-line.

## Excerpts from Contributing Artists

"The Architecture in York is so different than any other town I have visited. Within five minutes, you can find yourself looking at the most gorgeous mansions, or the sweetest little cottages. However, in the same proximity, you may also find yourself surrounded by run down row houses or driving through the alleyways that run all over town. I had hoped that these photos would illustrate the personality of York."

—**Kelly Burns** on *Alley*

"All the artwork was done in Illustrator and Photoshop. A template for the six pack container was created in Quark Xpress and then the artwork was laid out to see how the six pack container would be put together. The bottle caps and bottle labels were also created in Photoshop and Illustrator. All pieces of artwork were individually cut out and mounted in place. The result is a completed project that was done for my Visual Communications III class. Our original assignment was to create a logo for a micro brewery. The projects to follow would be based around the original logo design. Labels and bottle caps were created. A promo piece was created. Then the six pack container and a press kit to finish off the project."

—**Carrie Engle** on *Tom Cat Brewery*

"All of the works... were taken last semester when I had the opportunity to study abroad. I studied in York, England and I was able to travel throughout England and also to many other countries. The pieces are my photographs that I scanned, changed to grayscale, and enlarged. [One piece] is of a mausoleum in Pere LeChaise graveyard in France. And while the sole purpose of going there was to see Jim Morrison's grave, I became intrigued with the way the light filtered through windows and over the gates of mausoleums. The [other] photo is the London Eye. This shot was taken while I was looking through the glass into another car. I took this photograph because of the contrasts between linear quality of the bars and the curved car and also between the silhouetted people and the background."

—**Amanda Getka**

"I was struck by the linear elements of the scene and the industrial nature of a romantic icon."

—**Terri Shadle** on *Eiffel Tower*



# The York Review

*English & Humanities Department  
York College of Pennsylvania  
York, Pennsylvania 17405-7199*