

C a r d i n a l S i n s

V o l u m e 3 0 , I s s u e 1

The fine arts and literature magazine of
Saginaw Valley State University

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**Congratulations to the winners in their respective categories.*

***Congratulations to the winner of the Fall 2010 Cardinal Sins Poetry Slam.*

Editor's Note

This semester I've finally had to crack down, stop procrastinating, and do things ahead of time (as much as I could). Any who know me know that being *Cardinal Sins* editor is only one of my many responsibilities, and, thus, the only way I've survived this semester is to rely heavily on my planner and my lists (I get a sick satisfaction from crossing something off of a list). So, bear with me as I make one more list (at least for now).

New to *Cardinal Sins*:

1. Online Submissions: It's been a journey (and sometimes a nightmare), but, all in all, I think it was easier for the contributors and for me. We saw a great increase in the number of submissions we received.
2. Cover Design Contest: I feel like we've tossed around the idea of doing this for a while, but we've been worried we wouldn't get a good response. By attaching a prize, we hoped we'd get at least one submission. We ended up getting a tremendous support from the Art department and got not one, but twenty submissions. We had some great covers to choose from. Congratulations to Brian Jackson, the designer of the winning cover.
3. Lots of New Faces: It's amazing to see the talent and dedication at SVSU. Congratulations to all the first time contributors and thank you to the new staffers.

I'm so proud to be a part of *Cardinal Sins*' 30th anniversary edition and I hope you enjoy reading!



Kirsten McIlvenna

Piano

by Aaron Warner

I never understood the way my father played the piano. I'd hear these sad songs, songs I'd never heard before, but if I came into the small room in the front of the house, where the piano was, he'd stop playing immediately. He seemed to pretend that he was dusting the piano, and then, he'd slowly close it. He never played a song for me, and, whenever I asked him to play, he'd smile a tiny smile and say, "Oh, I don't think so. No, no...not today."

I pushed my cart around the corner of the grocery aisle, and there she was. She didn't see me. She was walking away, walking in a comfortable way, with the arm of whom I presumed to be her fiancé around her hip. She'd never been so comfortable with me, I thought. I didn't know where to go or what to do. I bolted for the checkouts, forgetting about the grocery list I had come in with.

Whenever I didn't know where to go or what to do, I'd go to see my father. He still lived in the four-bedroom house I grew up in. He enjoyed his retirement by reading old books and books about old books and smoking his pipe. I stepped into the front of the house, and I could smell the pipe smoke. It was sweet and rich and hung in the air in a comfortable way. It made me think of winter and the fireplace and reading Patrick O'Brian novels.

"You're leaving her?"

"Yeah. I mean, I don't know," I said, "I think so."

"Because you saw your ex-girlfriend in the grocery store." He sounded disappointed. "Have you really thought this through? What did she say to you?"

"I didn't talk to her...I couldn't."

"You didn't even talk to her?"

"I don't think she saw me."

"What?!"

"I think she was there with her fiancé."

He pulled out a chair from under the table and gestured to it. "Sit down."

He went to the refrigerator and returned with a few cans of cheap beer he knew I hated. He opened them both and handed one to me before sitting down across from me and relighting his pipe.

"So let me get this straight, son." He took a long swallow from his beer. "You're going to leave your fiancé because you saw Amanda down at the Kroger with her fiancé."

I took a sip and tried to hide the disapproval in my face for the beer. "You know, nothing I think ever makes sense when you explain it, dad."

He chuckled, taking a sip from his beer. "You know, maybe that's because sometimes you don't make any goddamned sense." We laughed, shaking our heads. "Alright, explain it to me again."

"I saw her," I paused. "I saw her, and I knew that looking at her, even seeing her with her fiancé, I had never felt anything close to how I feel about her with Amy." He looked out the window, saying nothing. I took another sip from my weak beer and said, "Was there ever anything you just never got over?"

His hand trembled as he tamped his pipe and relit it. He sighed and said, "I think you'll get over it."

"I keep thinking I'm over it...but then, all it takes is another trip to the grocery store."

"I think you should be careful. Amy's a good woman."

"Amy is amazing...but does that matter if it doesn't work for me?"

"Look, Dale. Amy isn't Amanda...and no one else you're going to be with is going to be Amanda, either. Maybe you need to rethink what works for you."

"Maybe...but I'm not sure how to do that. Did you ever get over Mom?"

Immediately, I wished I hadn't said that. He didn't say anything. I grimaced, looking down at the beer can, saying, "See what I mean?"

He looked out the window and made a small, silent cloud about our heads with his pipe. I took another sip of my beer. My chest began to warm and it didn't taste so bad anymore. Finally, my father broke the silence.

"You just have to find a way to move on. It doesn't mean...it doesn't mean I like talking about it." He set down his pipe and sipped his beer. He pulled the can away from his lips, paused, and then drained it in several large swallows.

"Do you think you've moved on?"

His father smiled weakly. "I don't know. I get by, I guess." He went back to the refrigerator and returned with two more beers, handing one to me.

I smirked at what was left of my beer and swallowed the rest of it. We cracked open our new beers together. I offered a toast, "Here's to getting by, I guess."

We chuckled, but our eyes were low and dim, looking to our beers and the tabletop. "Is that what I have to look forward to, then?"

"What's that?" He asked.

"Getting by..." I said, "just getting by."

He emptied the ash from his pipe into a large ashtray and began to clean it. He was very precise about this, like a soldier cleaning a gun. For some reason it always made me feel good to watch him do this. I smiled.

"You're a young man, Dale. I think you can look forward to more than getting by, if you can snap out of it," he said. "Much more."

He ran an oiled pipe cleaner in and out of the stem of his pipe. He inspected it each time he pulled it out, blacker and blacker.

"But that's what I'm asking you, Dad." I took a big swig of the beer and wiped my mouth, with a small cough. "Have you snapped out of it?"

He kept his eyes to his work. He was slowly filling the bowl of the long-stemmed pipe. He didn't seem to have heard me, but I knew from experience that he had.

Until my mother died, our talks had always been very one-sided. My father had always listened to me, but he never said much. He'd listen. He'd sip his beer and smoke his pipe. He'd laugh at my jokes. But the talking he'd always left to my mother.

"When your mother died, I was twice your age. You've got plenty of time," he said. "You've got plenty of time and you've got a beautiful, loving wife..."

"Fiancé."

"...Fiancé, who wants nothing more than to make you happy. Am I wrong?"

I swallowed the lump in my throat and had another sip of beer. I winced at this one, but took it down. "Say..." My father looked up from his pipe, over his glasses. "...you wouldn't happen to have anything stronger, would you?" I asked, shaking my beer can. It was already nearly empty. The beer made shallow, tinny splashing noises.

He cleared his throat, his eyes lowered to his pipe again. "There's some port in the cupboard above the oven. There's brandy, too. I'll get it for you if you want some." He didn't look up.

I emptied my beer, coughing away another choke. "The brandy," I said.

Once he was finished filling the pipe, he took off his glasses and set the pipe neatly beside the ashtray. He left the room. I heard his steps fade down the hall. I heard the piano from the front room, the taught wires within shuddering, resonating as he closed the cover over its eighty-

eight keys. I smiled, my memory doing a sad impression of the likewise sad melodies I'd heard.

He returned with a half-fifth of brandy. "I didn't know you drank brandy," he said, with some amusement in his voice.

"I didn't know you did, either, Dad." I was looking at his pipe, beside the ashtray, polished and filled. It looked like a magazine photo. "But I suppose I don't, either." I didn't add that I don't typically drink shit beer.

"How do you take it?" he asked, taking down two brandy glasses.

"In a glass," I said. We both laughed. He poured generously, set the glasses in front of us and sat down across from me again. He lit his pipe carefully and tamped it.

I sipped the brandy and winced, but with a smile. "Your beer is cheap, old man...but your brandy isn't."

He smiled, his face brightened by his latest match. He shook it out and drew on his pipe, strengthening the new cherry. "No, son. I guess I haven't 'snapped out of it'—but there's time yet. There's time for you." He coughed a little, spitting out his smoke. He never coughed when he smoked. He picked up an empty beer can and spat into it.

I looked away, sipping my brandy. I could feel some heat in my chest and a buzz in my head, both pleasant. I smiled a vacant smile, but it widened at the thought that I could smile at all. I chuckled to myself.

"What's funny?" he asked.

I laughed a little louder for the question. "I can smile. I can laugh for some brandy and some cheap beer," I said. "Inside, I'm all mixed up."

My father looked concerned, "Do you think you've got a problem?"

"Oh yes, I've got problems," I chuckled.

"Do you have..., I mean," he paused, "...a drinking problem."

My face straightened. "I've got bigger problems than that," I smiled. I finished the brandy. "They're not mutually exclusive."

My father laughed and shook his head. I could tell he understood, or, I imagined that he did. I watched him patiently. I could tell that he had more to say.

"I've been hurt," he said. His words were heavy and chosen carefully. He paused to take a small sip of his brandy. "I've had lots of pains and I guess many of them have had pretty names." He looked down at the tabletop as he spoke, not making any eye contact with me. "Still, I guess I've got no regrets. Regret would be the wrong word," he said, "and I don't know the right one."

I nodded slowly, looking at my father. His brow was furrowed as he thought, carefully choosing his words. "To answer your question, Dale, yes. I guess there are things I just never got over. Your mother..." He held down a lump in his throat. I looked away. My eyes stung. He continued, "...your mother wasn't the first thing I never got over and she wasn't the last. But I wouldn't trade a single moment I had with her away..." he said, "...or with you." He looked me in the eyes then and they shined. I smiled and nodded at him. He finished his brandy and set the glass on the table.

A little later, I closed the front door behind me and walked to my car. By the time I reached the end of the driveway, I knew that I shouldn't drive anywhere, but I debated with myself about it. I smiled to myself about the swimmy buzz in my head and the fire in my chest. I got into the car, started the engine and then tipped my head back against the headrest and closed my eyes. I thought of seeing Amanda in the grocery store. I thought of his hand around her hip.

My phone lit up and buzzed from the car seat. The caller ID said "WIFE." I had to squint to read it. "No, I definitely shouldn't be driving," I said to myself, laughing. I talked to myself a lot when I was drunk. Amy had changed her contact name to "WIFE" after I proposed. I pressed "Ignore." I opened the contact list and "Amanda" was the first one in it. Without thinking, I dialed it and brought the phone to my ear.

"Hello?" It was a man's voice. I pulled the phone away from my ear and

closed my eyes. I heard his tinny voice repeat itself. My thumb hovered over the hang-up button, but I brought the phone back up to my ear, clearing my throat.

“Can I talk to Amanda?”

“Uh, sure...hang on.” I could hear his voice in the background now, “I dunno. It’s some dude.”

“Hello?” My heart nearly stopped, hearing her voice. I didn’t know what to do. “Who is this?” My heart was racing now. I hung up.

I pulled a cigarette from the pack I kept in the center console and lit it as I rolled down the window. I laid my head back against the head rest again and closed my eyes. My head was starting to feel better. I turned off the engine. I could faintly hear somber notes from my father’s piano, slipping through the cracks in the closed door and drifting down the driveway. I smiled as I ashed my cigarette out of the open car window.

Very carefully, very quietly, I opened the front door. My father tilted his head. He had heard me and, as usual, he stopped playing. “You’re back,” he said.

“I never left.” The brandy bottle was next to him on the piano bench.

“Aren’t you going to go home to Amy?”

“I don’t know. Maybe I will.”

He took a sip from the bottle and offered it to me. I took it, but just smelled it, without drinking. He took it back, took another small sip, but then put the stopper in it. I sat down on the bench next to him, but with my back to the piano.

“So, a change of heart?” he asked.

“Well,” I said, studying the carpet, “maybe it’s like you said. Maybe I need to rethink what works for me.” He nodded. I continued, “...and, until I figure out what that is...until I ‘snap out of it,’ maybe ‘getting by’ isn’t so bad.”

"I think that makes a lot of sense, son." We nodded our heads.

"It sure doesn't feel good, though. Somehow, it makes me feel...insincere."

"You seem awfully sincere to me."

"Why don't you ever play the piano when I'm around?"

He cleared his throat and said, "I play the piano when I'm alone."

"Why only when you're alone?"

"I don't know. It makes me feel like I'm not so alone...or, at least I'm alone with someone else."

I heard him open the piano again. He played a few notes tentatively, but then moved into a sweet, sad song I'd been straining to hear for years. I'd never really heard it before, but I knew it so well. My father went on playing and we tapped our feet and anticipated the next notes and we tried to smile. We nodded our heads with the rhythm. We got by. We were alone, together. From then on, I didn't ask my father to play the piano anymore. I didn't have to.

A little later my phone buzzed and lit up again with a message from "WIFE" that said, "When are you coming home?"

I replied, "Soon, baby. Soon."

Too Late

by Nadeer Alabdulwahab



Black and White Photography

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Between “Slants of Light”

by Marlin M. Jenkins

In the silent poetry aisle, she sits.
Eyes absorbed,
dark skin against white pages,
hair the same color as the words of
Emily Dickinson.
“You like poetry?” they would ask.
“Do you read Langston Hughes?
Do you like Maya Angelou?”
As if with their eyes and their hearts
they placed her in a musical cage with dreams
like broken wings.

They told her to read
Claude Mackay,
Jean Toomer,
Cullen, Dunbar,
Clifton.

But maybe she enjoyed old English sonnets
or lower-case letters that should be capitals
or lengthy three-part allegories.
Maybe she overlooked the African-
American section at Borders
and ignored the posters of
February.
Or maybe she loved them all the same.
But
today,
her eyes are absorbed in the work
of a posthumous hermit.
Because she enjoys reading Dickinson
more than Gwendolyn Brooks.

Rooftops of Paris

by Kelly Spooner



Digital Media

Fall 2010

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Rouge et le Loup

by Jenna L. Perrault



Woodcut

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That, These, Those

by Brandy Abraham

Which *that*, among *these*, are *those*?
Are *these* much like *those* but lack *that*?
Or are *those* like *that* but less than *these*?
Or are they some combination of all three?

I find *that* is something less than *these*,
but that *those* are HUGE. You see—
I found that *these* are often singled out,
but more or less should be.

After all, we see the *these* in the smallest of *those*,
and less of the *that* in that.
But what about *those*—?
When we throw in a little of *these*?

The point in *these* is *that those*—
you see,
are anything you want it to be.
So ask, “Which *that*, among *these*, are *those*?”

Signs

by Lauren Annette Boulton

I've gotten really good at reading faces. Over the years, I've become accustomed to finding all the things that are not said. These hidden messages lie in lines between the eyebrows. They mock eyes, detached from smiles; they give birth to the concealed downward motions at the corners of someone's mouth. I can't help but notice these things, as my condition has made it essential.

Her coffee hands are smooth and young. I notice hands, too. You could call it an occupational hazard, I suppose. Those young hands have me doubting her. Just when did she graduate from medical school? She's pretty. Really pretty. Her irises drip, melted chocolate swirled in honey. Her lips are raspberries, and her hair, just reaching her chin, curls slightly, cradling her face. Her white lab robes are sterile and clean. I hate how clean they are.

Today, I wish I were socially inept. I wish that I couldn't read the forced concern in her face. I wish that I didn't see the stutter in her step as she walked through that swinging door. Her feet know the bad news those raspberry lips have not yet told. Striker sees her, too. He's gotten good at reading faces, too. He tells me nothing with his face; it is completely blank. We know each other so well, though, that even if he makes no move to show his hand, I know every card he holds.

She walks up to us, speaking to us both. She doesn't know. I refuse to look at her, to hear this from her. I wait for what seems like years. Striker turns to me, tears in his eyes, and now I know for sure—this is the worst news. He's a hard man; I have not seen him cry in these twenty-seven years. I look up; my eyelids attempt to shade me from the truth. I shove them up, force myself to see the words. He holds his right hand as a cup. His left is a "C" holding it. He pulls the cup in and down, a shrinking flower, and drops it from his left. "Gone." Then he swallows, slowly holds up an index finger, and creates a small saucer in the air, adding, almost unconsciously, forever. And this is how I learn that our daughter is dead.

A

by Sarah Arthur

Prisoner: Boy, number 1 in 75; incarcerated in his own mind. My only visitation comes from behind cold, expressionless glass eyes. Brilliance abounds, but there is no understanding. Concepts—under, behind, above—hacked away by a skewed thought process taking no prisoners, except Boy, number 1 in 75.

In the lobby of the office, we wait, wrinkling our noses from the smell of a combination, microwaved meat and disinfectant. It's the fourth time I've glanced at the clock on my cell phone, but the numbers haven't flipped. I hate waiting. I have no patience for this. Boy, number 1 in 75, plays on the floor with a toy train while I sit flicking at my fingernails and tapping my foot.

The one toy in the room that catches his eye is a toy for a three-year-old. Boy isn't three: he's six. Academically he's sixteen, reading at a sophomore level already. Emotionally, three is about right.

"Mrs. Arthur, Mary will see you now." The secretary is sweet. She knows our faces, and always seems to pick his favorite movie to watch on the TV out of a collection of old VHS tapes. I don't acknowledge because I'm checking my phone for the fifth time. She says it again, "Mrs. Arthur, Mary will see you now."

"Thanks. C'mon, Bud, it's time to go."

He races down the hall intent on defeating me, getting to the finish line first. There's never any competition, but he feels a sense of accomplishment and I'm good with that. When I finally make it across the threshold, he greets me, taunts me, "I did it; I beat you, Mumma..." Again, I'm good with it.

"So, is today the day? I mean, did we get everything we needed?"

"I'll go over everything in a couple minutes. How's he been at school?" His counselor scribbles down notes as I talk.

"He was beat up on the playground, and they didn't even send home a note. The principal is avoiding my calls."

She talks on and on about our situation while Boy stacks and clicks Lego pieces together, forming large towers and small buildings until he's sitting in the middle of a vast city. I watch him, half listening to Mary, half wondering what the people who live inside his mind are feeling as he has them shooting down

the imaginary streets at sonic speeds in flying cars that you don't even have to be awake to operate.

I've heard all about the flying cars and the people who don't even have to be awake to operate them. I know them all by heart. They don't have names, not in the literal sense. They don't need names; he can identify each and every one of them. They will star in his video games someday. Boy is determined to become a video game developer. I can get behind that. There's lots of money in video games... maybe he can take care of his mom for a change. I can get behind that, too.

"So," Mary pulls out a stack of papers and spreads them down, fanned across her desk. "Let me explain his test results and the behaviors chart we go off of..."

I turn my eyes and attention to her explanation, continuously straining to keep track of the conversations between the people who live inside Boy's mind. What she says is important; what he says is fascinating.

"Do you have any questions for me?"

"No, no... you've explained it all pretty well. It's not a surprise, just confirmation."

She writes me an appointment card for two weeks. It seems a shame to have to demolish his Lego metropolis, but the next child has to have his opportunity to build greatness as well. His five-fingered demolition crew brings down and clears away in record time.

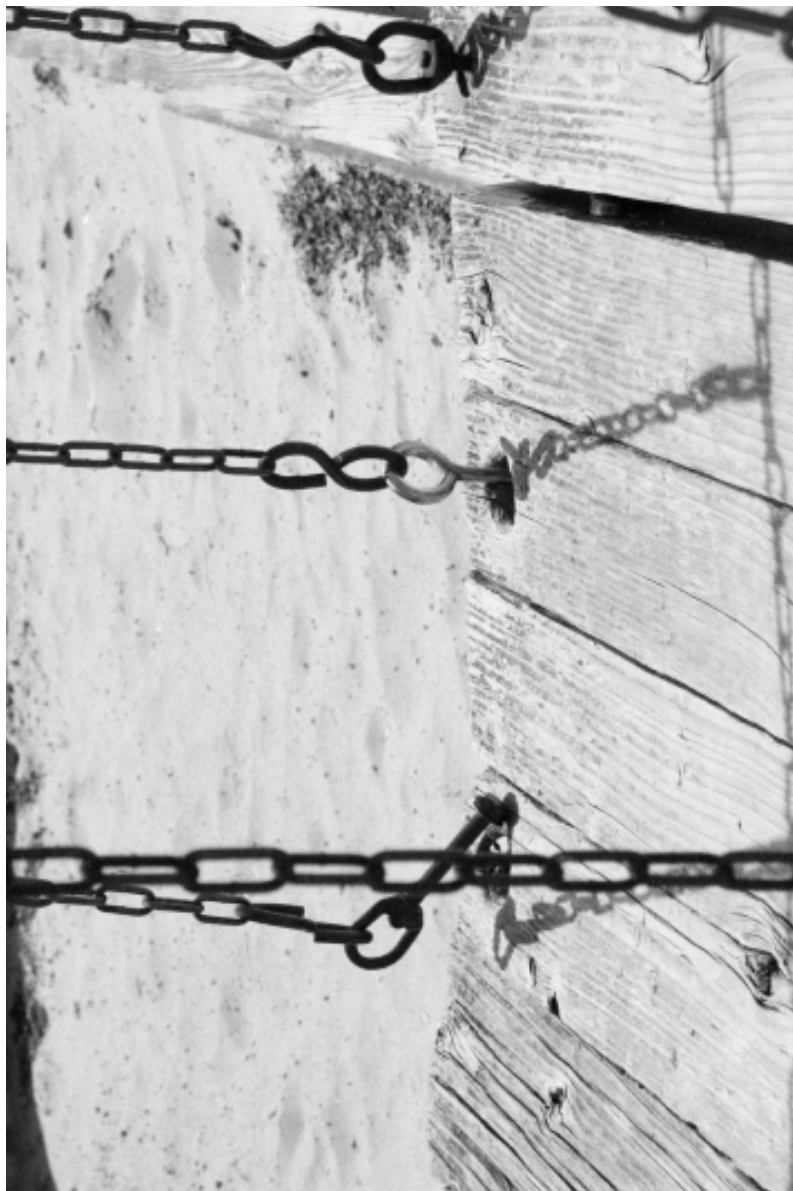
Those people in his head have moved to his hands. Boy paces in a circle, flapping his fingers in the air and making schussing noises. Mary shows us out.

The swift gavel of injustice was brought down, and Boy, number 1 in 75, sentenced to life without the possibility of parole. He leaves without shackles, without stripes, but forever tethered to this existence.

Prisoner: Boy, number 1 in 75, incarcerated in his own mind. He entered this structure free, respectable, no labels attached, and exits—held captive by the science and speculation of the world—a scarlet letter affixed to his chest. A.

Play Time

by Stephanie Gromer



Black & White Photography

Fall 2010

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11 PM (Zilwaukee School Playground III)

by Josh Crummer

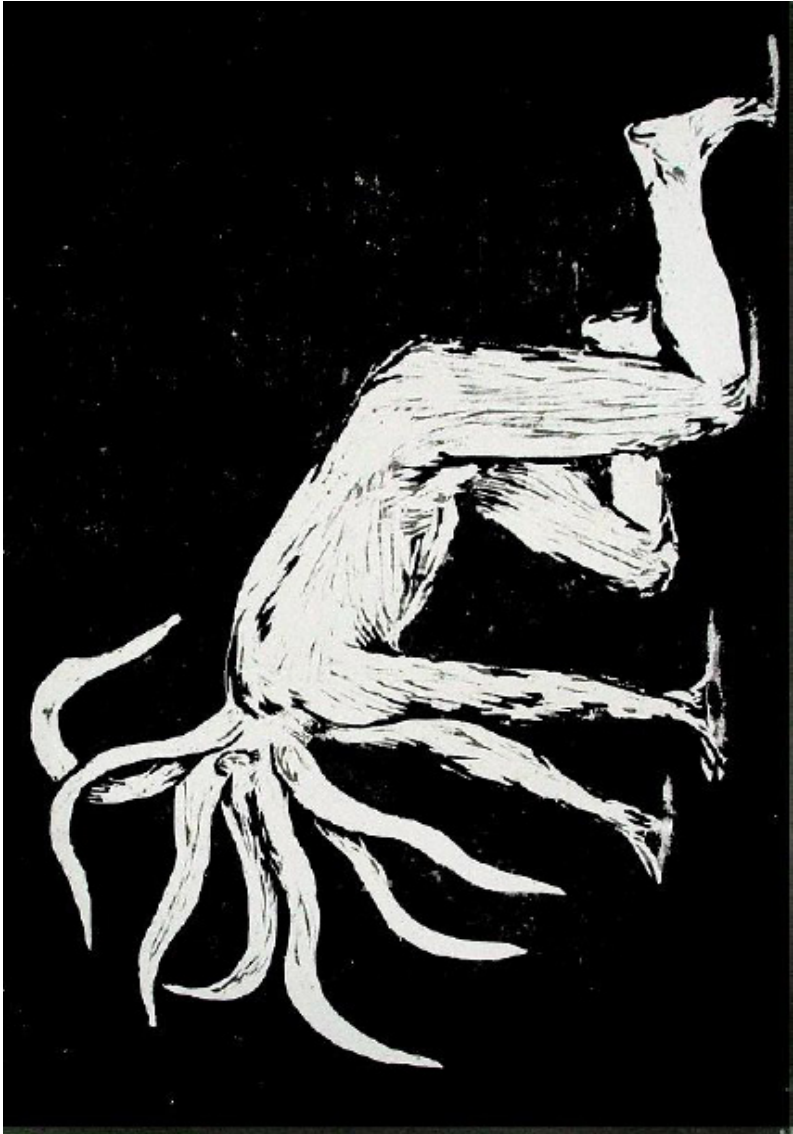
Tonight I'll drive with my window open—
semi-truck traffic is a leaping sheep
flock crooning lullabies Sinatra-style.
I can't fall asleep without these tunes
on the breeze, and a bright bridge light
is my Polaris. I've grown too accustomed
to moonlight shining alone; my
insomnia-romps always chart courses
to stoic gray bricks propped sentinel.

Blocks away, a mother closes a book—
her children have heard this Snow White
story a million times. They demonize
the witch; a progression rhyme read to our
drowsy children ensures their safety in
someday-when-you-grow-up disclaimers.
But when they do (and it will be soon),
let them draw conclusions in No. 2 pencil—
they'll boil to perfection in late-night nostalgia.

I stand in a new blacktop beneath
a starry sky—it hides the sprouting walls well,
and this concrete jungle lets Styrofoam
to sleep unguarded. Shadows are snug
pajamas for ground breathing cold air in
its slumber, each exhale bringing its growth
full circle. These Everest sand hills won't
last, but oh! If they stayed, any kids could be
kings and queens in innocent make-believe.

Seven-Headed Beast of the Apocalypse

by Robert Darabos



Woodcut

Fall 2010

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She Finally Sees He's Anorexic

by Michael Somers

Astrid sat in the living room, on the couch, in the dark, Smirnoff on the rocks in her hand, staring at where she had found her son earlier that day. She saw herself striding into the room after coming home from a meeting, calling out to Nathan, wanting him to help her dust and vacuum. She saw herself slamming to a stop, her purse dropping, as she almost stepped on his hand.

Her son, her only child, looked dead. He had fallen onto his stomach, one arm tucked under and the other thrown out. His cheek was against the carpet. His legs were bent at an odd, disturbing angle. She couldn't hear him breathe; she couldn't see any movement underneath the baggy clothes that seemed to swallow him. His mouth open, his eyes closed. She saw—she couldn't help seeing, with Nathan on the floor like a dead body—just how razor-thin her son had become. His fingers were nothing but bone, the visible side of his face like a tautly covered skull. She could see his eye sockets and the hinge of his jaw right there, just under the skin.

She dropped to her knees and leaned her ear toward his mouth. She felt a soft, sickly sweet exhale. He was alive. She felt for a pulse on his crane's neck and found a tiny, struggling throb. She quickly stood up and stepped over him to grab the phone and dial 9-1-1.

She didn't remember what she said to the woman who answered her call, but she assumed it was along the lines of "My son fell, please hurry." She was sure the dispatcher asked questions, but all Astrid knew was she had hung up to crawl over to her dead-looking son and stare, stare at this creature she didn't recognize. This wasn't her son: this wasn't Nathan. Was it?

On the ambulance ride, Astrid watched as the crew tried to attach IVs to Nathan's arm. They couldn't find a vein, and when they thought they had, the vein would collapse. Nathan didn't stir from the poking and jabbing, and she wondered just where he was inside that body of his. Finally, they settled on a vein in his neck until they reached the hospital and could find another. He needed fluids and electrolytes, according to the tech who turned to face her. "Your son's extremely malnourished, ma'am. Has this boy seen a doctor?"

She shook her head. No, Nathan hadn't seen a doctor.

"How could you let him get like this and not take him to a doctor?" the tech asked, before another tech brought his attention back to Nathan.

She didn't have an answer. And she still had no answers as he was wheeled away from her at the hospital, and as she was left to fill out admissions forms. The intake specialist, the nurses, the damn forms—they all wanted to know what was wrong with Nathan. All she could say or write was that he doesn't eat and was passed out on the carpet when she came home.

That's all she knew. Everything else was a mystery. Her son was a mystery, had been for months. He withdrew more and more; he grew thinner and thinner, and she had no answers for them.

The glass of Smirnoff on the rocks felt cold against her leg. She still sat, still stared. Stared at where she had found her son. Her son who had collapsed. Her son who now had tubes and machines attached to him. Her son who starved himself as she looked right past him.

She raised the drink to her lips and took a long, steady sip.

Cancer

by Paul Anderson

a rusty red wagon
spills spoiled milk
against the stems
around my
grandmother's
stocking feet,
and I tiptoe from
the sandbox
to the pool
to swim with
a dead sparrow.

Urbane Destruction

by Katie Karnes



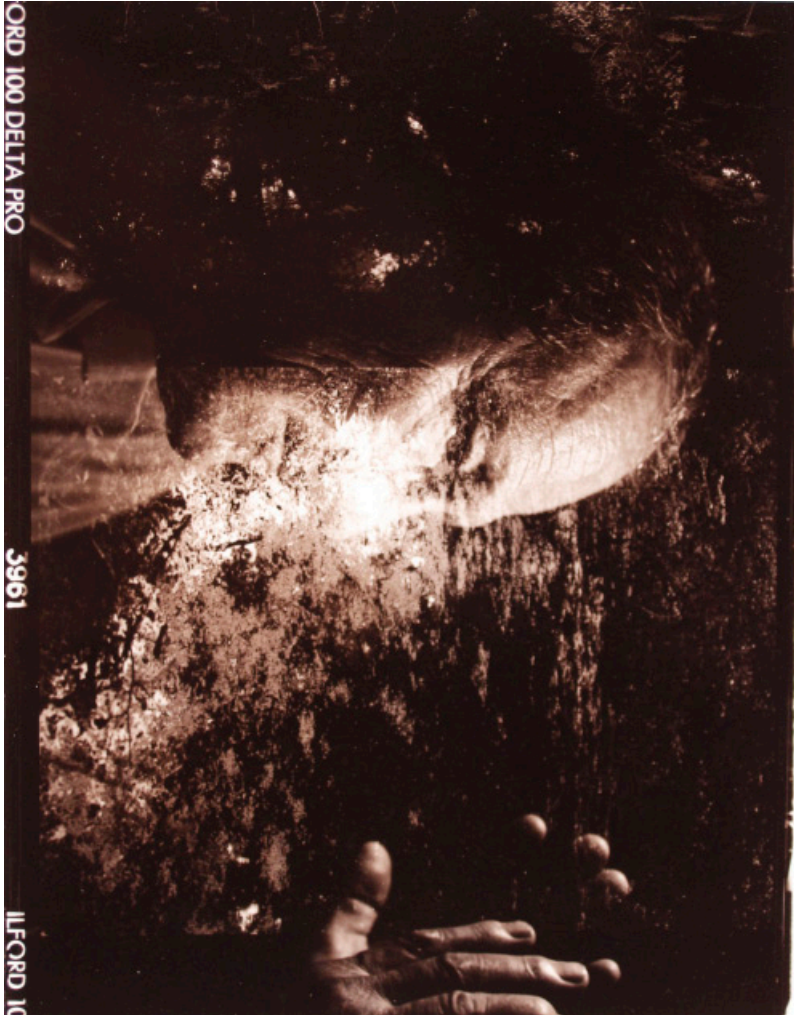
Color Photography

Fall 2010

Cardinal Sins 31

Magic

by E. Jill Cooley



Silver Print

32 *Cardinal Sins*

Fall 2010

A Lifetime

by Brandy Abraham

You look out the window, position your glasses on the bridge of your nose, and sip cold coffee from a chipped mug.

It's one of those days when the wind seems to catch you under the arms and blow you back to the good ole' days when you weren't cool if you didn't own a record player and a beat-up van with a peace and love sticker tattooed to the rear window. You look down, your weathered, factory-worked hands cracking as you curl your fingers into a fist to punch the wind as it plays with your graying roots where your hair was once a deep brown.

It's one of those days when each finger, the lines becoming fainter as they blur into your sagging skin, becomes all you can remember, like you were born seventy-eight with bad hips and a hunger for painkillers. You try to remember life before work, before the factories and the burger-places with the girls on rollerskates with unbuttoned shirts. It's 2010, and all you remember is 1959. You lost a finger to a steel blade forty years ago making cars for The Man. Arthritis stole your job a few beep-bop years after that. Yet, you think back and know it wasn't just age that got the pat on the back from Mr. Cline, with his brown tailored suit and shiny shoes, telling you that you gave it a "hell of a run." It was the machines that could make parts faster than your cracked hands. You laughed on your way out the factory doors, laughed at how they tried so hard to scratch out the "Made in China" label on the machines. You were made in the U.S.A, the '50s, when they still let nail clippers on airplanes. You were born in Oldsmobile, Franklin County with a taste for whiskey already on your tongue. You couldn't blame your father for the black lungs that make you cough and wheeze into the night. Now, you have to have "bread" to afford a hospital bed. Your grandson is in the attic looking through your old records, saying he'd love to own a record player one day. You know better: he only listens to rap. And you know even better about the miracles of eBay.

It's one of those days when you remember everything, when you can't sleep because the impossible dreams are now nothing but impossible, when even the blackest coffee wouldn't shake the sleep from your eyes. You look in the mirror, one of those Miranda loved, an antique in its unvarnished wooden frame. Miranda's perfumes and lipsticks litter the shelf below the bureau mirror, or so you remember. Miranda liked

cherry red. Her favorite flower was lily of the valley; you often lay a handful on her grave every spring.

It's one of those days when everything seems to fall apart at the seams; your hands shake too much, and no amount of flapjacks can brighten the day like when you were twelve and played pirates with a stick as your wooden sword. The stick came from Ma's maple tree, the one she planted when Dad went off to war. Ma wore a white dress every day that he was off with his gun and a few good men. There were white roses at her funeral, and she was buried in her favorite white satin dress.

It's one of those lifetimes when everything gets worse before it gets better. It takes that long before you realize you needed a lifetime, that one day just wasn't enough to blow you back to the good ole' days when you were livin' the dream, thumb out on the highway, finding yourself in the tread marks.

You look out the window, position the bifocals on the tip of your nose, and sip black coffee from your favorite mug with the bold "#1 Grandpa" lettering fading from years of use.

Sisters Are Forever

by Jillian Bourbina



Photo Transfer

Fall 2010

Cardinal Sins 35

Piccolo Fiori

by Jillian Bourbina



Watercolor

36 *Cardinal Sins*

Fall 2010

Valley of the Shadow of Death

by Jack Frost



Black & White Photography

Fall 2010

Cardinal Sins 37

1 : 2 3 : 0 3

by Kelsey Mehl

The Ferris wheel had not yet been ridden. Pale streetlights shone orange against the glistening perfection of its untouched yellow paint, sleek and fine. It caught my eye, even half-covered by a frame of overgrown weeds that Uncle Olek had conveniently forgotten to remove from outside the kitchen window. I couldn't help but find it a melancholy scene. It was such a pity to think that by morning, this shiny new object would be covered in the fingerprints of little children and already beginning to rust in the cold Ukrainian rain.

There was no telling what kept me up doing the dishes at one in the morning. It wasn't like they were going to disappear overnight. Then again, maybe that would make my life a lot easier if they did. I knew that if I went to bed and left them there, they would still be sitting in the cold, stale sink water the next morning when I woke up. Uncle Olek wouldn't touch them. He was too busy controlling the beer population while losing a non-existent fortune to his drunken buddies in a game of kitchen table poker.

The four of them gossiped and shared a fair number of crude jokes while I scrubbed the same dish at least three times in a row. The light above the sink flickered as though deciding whether to live or die.

I licked my thumb and gently tightened the bulb. For a moment or two it cast a rusty orange glow over the kitchen counter and then flickered out again. This time it didn't come back on. I suppose it just got tired of trying.

"What did you do to it?" Uncle Olek grunted behind me. I heard four chairs creak against the wooden floor as he and all his friends turned to look at me in the near-pitch darkness. Their blatant dissatisfaction hit me like an armada of laser beams.

"I didn't do anything." I removed my hands from the sink and wiped them on a grimy, discolored towel hanging from the nearest cupboard. "It just died."

That's right. It just died. It just gave up and died.

Uncle Olek staggered to his feet. He had one bad leg that kept him stiff and a love for alcohol that kept him stumbling over himself every step he took. His half-emptied beer bottle slammed on the counter and made the dishes tremble.

With an “I-can-fix-it” sort of manner, Uncle Olek reached for the lifeless bulb and didn’t hesitate to force his grip around it. His sweaty fingertips sizzled against the heat. He yelped in pain and pulled his hand away quickly before wrapping it in a towel and making a second attempt. This time, he forced the light bulb out of its socket and threw it angrily into the trash can where it shattered on impact.

Olek ran his burnt hand beneath the cold water. “The liquor store is still open,” he said with his teeth clenched tightly together. “Go buy a new one.”

“It’s one in the mor—”

“How are we supposed to continue our game in the dark? Go buy a new one.”

It was useless to even think about arguing with him.

As he lit the end of a cigarette and held it to his mouth, Uncle Olek scrounged for some spare change in his pockets. “And while you’re at it,” he said with an impish smile, “pick up another case or two for these thirsty men. You’re old enough, aren’t you?”

His friends chuckled approvingly. Uncle Olek produced a few bills and coins from his pants’ pockets and held them out to me in the center of his rough, dirtied palm. I grabbed them up swiftly. There was nothing I could have been more pleased with than a chance to leave this house, if only for twenty short minutes.

The April air was warm, but the breeze was cold. Dark clouds moved quickly over the moon’s surface, pushed along against their will by the merciless wind. They never got a moment to stop and stare, never a moment to rest. Sometimes I wondered why nature was always in such a hurry.

I traded a handful of gold coins and paper *hryvnia* for a pack of beer and three new light bulbs. The man at the counter was silent and irritable, but he didn’t need to explain himself. I understood. At this time of night, no one felt like being friendly. He handed me my bag with a nod of farewell as I took my departure, stepping out into a circle of streetlamps and glowing signs. The door chime jingled and broke the perfect silence. Not but a few feet away, two little black insects were ramming their tiny heads into a sign

that said "Open 24 hours" in flickering neon letters. I didn't know whether to pity their foolishness or envy their simplicity.

I pulled my sweater in tightly around my shoulders, my footsteps echoing on the pavement beneath me. My eyes stared deeply at the dark ground. I watched my feet, now appearing as nothing but black masses, as they kicked out one at a time in perfect rhythm. One step, two step, three step: it was like hypnosis. I could forget for a little while that it was nearly one-thirty in the morning. I could forget that I was heading home to five drunken men, none of whom I had a bit of admiration for. Maybe when I got there, they'd be gone. Maybe I'd just fall asleep, and everyone would disappear. Maybe it wasn't 1986 anymore.

Among all of these maybes, there was a little truth. This truth took the form of a bright light coming from the east, spreading over the ground first and then reaching my eyes. This wasn't the sun. The sound came afterwards: a very distant rumble which soon turned into a monstrous crack, like thunder. A second or two passed, and the ground beneath my feet began to quake in a wavelike pattern and then disappeared.

In my ignorance, I had no choice but to turn and look.

There was smoke rising from the other side of the city. A few stray patches of fire lit up the walls of the power plant, or at least what was left of it. There were police sirens and fire trucks zooming through the streets in seconds, but I had no time to sit and watch. This was none of my business, and, to be quite frank, it was none of my concern. There were others who stared out their windows with mouths agape and one hand reaching for their telephones, but I wouldn't be one of them.

I moved the bag into my other hand and turned around.

When I opened the front door to greet the five men inside, I found only one remaining. Uncle Olek was sitting slouched at the kitchen table with his arms crossed impatiently.

"They all left," he said with a touch of bitterness. I placed the bag on the table, rummaging for the lightbulbs without so much as a glance for my uncle. I tore the package open with my hands.

"You took too long. Where were you?" Olek asked.

"Where do you think?" I responded, nodding my head towards the plastic bag sitting limp and half-empty on the table. I dropped the remaining bulbs on the counter and stood up on my tippy-toes to place it into the socket.

I sniffled, thinking for a moment that perhaps the cold had gotten to me. I wiped my nose on the arm of my sweater while I fit the light bulb snugly into place. With a couple of gentle twists, a brightness came to life and stung my unadjusted eyes.

I stood back down, flat on my feet, dizzied by that short little trip back to Earth.

"What's that on your face?"

I turned and looked at Uncle Olek, who was pointing at my nose with a furrowed brow. "Hm?" I murmured curiously as I wiped the back of my hand between my lips and my nostrils. Squinting through the brightness, I saw a line of red stain contrasting against the paleness of my skin.

As I bowed my head to look, two drops of scarlet blood fell from my nose onto the wooden floor between my shoes.

"What is it?" Uncle Olek asked.

"It's nothing," I said while turning to retrieve a napkin. I threw it over my palm like a glove and pinched my nostrils together.

The emergency siren blared.

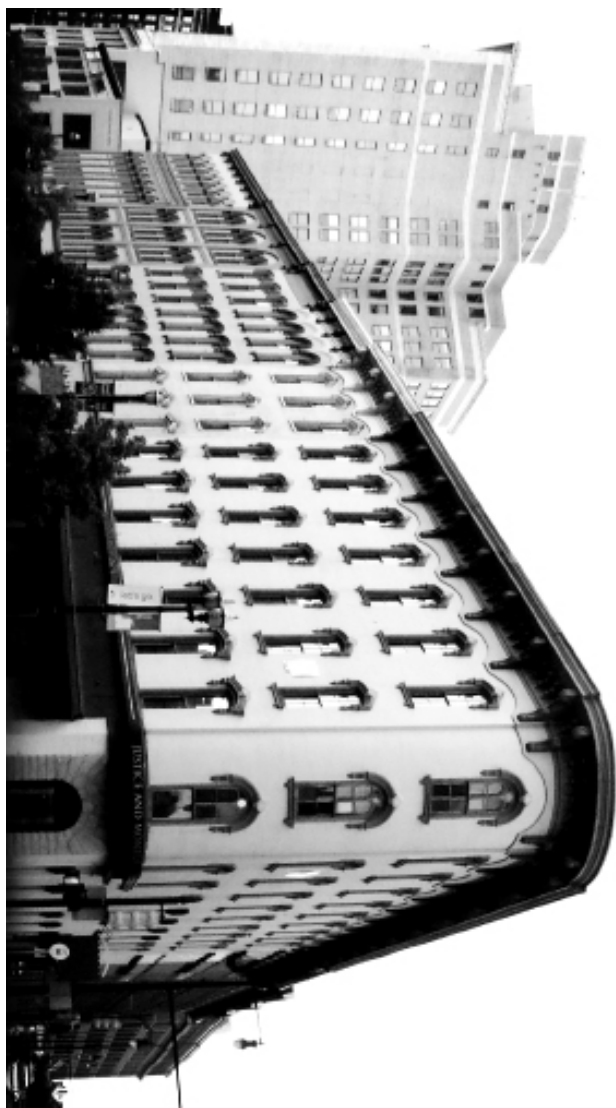
"What is it?" Uncle Olek asked.

I dropped the blood-stained napkin and reached for the dish-scrubber on the edge of the sink.

"It's nothing."

Justice and Monroe

by Katie Karnes



Black & White Photography

42 *Cardinal Sins*

Fall 2010

Existence in *Raga Bhairavi*

by Christopher Sweet

In the midnight alley of a jagged snail's grotto,
rosewood harmonium's scarlet reed-studded innards,
Lal Shahbaz Qalandar rises from the grave to write
life's name with a snail-like flourish of
blood lining the harmonium's gizzards.

Cursive waves of music dissolve in the blood-drenched cochlea,
snail-hovel itself,
from which claps reiterate the reverberating rebounds
of the live questions uttered from dead saints
given dead answers
to which salamanders glide, making a beeline for
stale sweetness, metallic as blood
in labyrinthine cul-de-sacs of a harmonium's womb.

Billiard ball thoughts carom in the hedges of the mind maze
labyrinth library-womb in the lightless lengths of cerebellum-tomb
insult to the nothingness that whelms all cosmic depths.
Prototypes of prognosis unfurl in the darkness
tendrils of thought emerging against the
solipsistic pompousness of What Is.
Nothing does not exist anymore; it dies
its nothing-death, held on a nothing-stage
while rival existence in ignorance evolves
in the rosewood birthing rooms of a snail-shell
while a midnight *raga* births in the vocal-womb.
Soon it is all the existence of mere air, a seeming nothing,
that breeds the vitalities of the cosmos in the *alaap*
while the *tanpura* notes drone like music-driven honeybees, the
vibrations of existence in the wood-knotted, would-not'd
harmonium's raspy first few breaths of *Bhairavi's* notes.

On the Crab Boat

by Paul Anderson

like a dragon
preparing to breathe,
a cup of coffee
emits smoky steam
from between
the gloved fingers
of a deckhand;
as he draws
the black liquid
into his mouth,
a dragon's fire
enters him
before he melts
into the sea.

Saginaw's Ojibway Island

by Matthew Binder



Color Photography

Fall 2010

Cardinal Sins 45

La Belle et la Bête

by Jenna L. Perrault



Woodcut

46 *Cardinal Sins*

Fall 2010

7B - Rochelle

by Nadeer Alabdulwahab



Black & White Photography

Fall 2010

Cardinal Sins 47

The Sky Looks Bigger in West Virginia

by Marlin M. Jenkins

There is a stone bridge before Braddock Mountain, not far from
a cell phone tower that points from jade-green
treetops toward streaking clouds.

There is a watertower across from the Hampton
just before a line of electrical wires
forty-one miles from Washington D.C.

Jagged rocks line the shaded turnpike—layers and
colors exposed from construction and dynamite.

Caterpillar backhoes move boulders from the roadside.

Twin helicopters circle overhead from the military base.

And tourists snap photographs of
the natural beauty of the trees on the mountainside.

The Break-wall Diving Club

by Brandy Abraham

Travis stood with his arms outstretched as if he would catch the wind as it rushed in from the lake in billows, bringing with it the smells of murky water and barbecues from the park farther down the beach. The summer heat made the occasional splash of water against the stones sound refreshing. Jon had made us climb the outermost of the white, sun-washed rocks and was now looking over the edge as the rest of us clung to the sturdiness of the break-wall, our feet cemented to the rocks. Sonya looked terrified. She would lean over the edge and then take another glance toward me. Her eyes asked me to save her from the jump. We clung to our towels as if they would shield us from the rush of the air against our skin. We could feel the water even before the jump. It was picturesque to the people who walked along the break-wall, the kids who wished they were us but without the guts. I'm not sure if we had the guts. Here we were—Sonya, Jon, Travis, Kally, Nathan, and I—standing tiptoed at the end of the highest rock on the break-wall. Sonya's hair was tossed about by the wind as Nathan and Travis stood in the background, muscles bare against the sun, and tried to act as though the break-wall didn't scare them. The signs behind us warned us of the danger. "No jumping. No diving." The stick-figured men with their bodies blotched out by a giant red "X" were a caution light, no more foreboding than the sharp rocks below us. The water was less than seven feet deep, and you had to clear a jagged rock before reaching the water. Even then, you had to land between two other rocks that jutted out of the water on either side. I saw Kally look around, clutching her phone, and I saw her practice the 911 sequence, tapping it out on her Blackberry. Tap. Tap. Tap. 911. Repeat.

"Alright, come on," Jon said as he stepped out on the rock, staring down at the crevices in the same way a bungee jumper would stare down a cliff. If he was afraid, he didn't show it. "It's not so bad."

"Speak for yourself!" came Sonya's voice through the wind.

"It's windy," chimed Kally, her back stark against the metal railing, feet secured against the cement of the break-wall.

"Come on," smiled Jon, his white teeth outlandish next to the tan of his face. "You just have to—jump!"

With the final word, he spun off the rock in a wide glory of barelegged flight. We watched him descend rapidly toward the brisk water but were too late to see him break the water's surface. We scrambled onto the rock where he had jumped. We pushed one another's shoulders out of the way to see him rise from the water. He climbed gracefully onto one of the rocks that could have shattered his skull.

Yet, despite his aloofness, I questioned, "Are you okay?" though it seemed misplaced as it echoed down the wall to where he sat panting.

"It's cold," was his reply. "Who's next?" he questioned, looking up at us, birds on a power line, gripping each other for assurance that we would not jump to our deaths.

"I'll go if you go, Travis," whispered Sonya through gritted teeth, knowing the whole time that she would never jump.

Travis leaned over the rock, steadied his feet, and practiced the rocking motion of suicide. He imagined his body propelling into the air, and, with every thought, he took a step back, gained his footing, and practiced his leap again. Rock. Two steps. Sway. Two steps. He raised his arms into the air as if he was already in flight, the wind rushing through his fingers, and then lowered them to the comfort of his sides. "I dunno," he said after we had watched him gape at the edge. "I don't think I can clear the rocks."

Nathan, a mighty man in his cowboy-style baseball cap, took a place next to Travis and, staring down at the water, said, "I could make that."

"Then you go!" said Travis, motioning for Nathan to take his place where the rock was the smoothest, with the best gripping against the bare of their feet.

"You guys have to man up," said Jon as he appeared before them; his blonde hair slicked back with lake water. "Come on, Sonya. You jump. I jump." He held out his hand to her—a lifeline—amid the coolness of the lake air. We all looked at her, a pawn in a game of chess who had run out of good karma.

We're not men, I thought.

"Ugh, alright," Sonya said, not taking his outstretched hand. She threw me the towel and, in one fluid motion, took her place next to Jon as they alone stood on the highest of the break-wall rocks, looking back at us as the sun beat down on them.

She is gonna die, I thought again, my mind returning to the beach below us where our phones were ringing, our parents were worried, and all the wonder of it began to fade away to the worry of tomorrow. The long stretch of break-wall was lined with people, all gawking at Sonya and Jon as they stood staring down at the ominous water.

"What do I aim for?" asked Sonya wearily as she tugged at the edges of her swimsuit.

"The water," smiled Travis from behind her. I shot him a glance for Sonya who hadn't heard him because of the loudness of the splashes against the wall. She looked down.

"Brandy, you go," she ordered with a smile, a shot in my direction, a possible "get-outta-hell" free card.

"No thanks." I winced, "I like solid ground. Not so good at jumping. Bad knee. White men can't jump, remember."

I'm not a man, I thought.

"Chicken," whispered Travis.

"I'd rather be a chicken than a floating fish," I humorously replied. I stared out along the break-wall, at the people coming toward us, looking at us with disgust and allegiance. Their faces were painted with the amusement of our stupidity.

"Alright. I'm gonna go," said Sonya through gritted teeth. "Now or never, right?"

That is a Three Days Grace song, I realized.

"Go on three. Ready?" Sonya nodded her head. She clenched her fists as she bent down as though she were about to run a marathon. She

tugged at the roots of her hair, to wake herself, to hear the numbers, to jump. "One." Sonya bent even farther down. "Two." I could see her take a few deep breaths, her chest inflating and deflating at tremendous speed. "Three." I could hear the "tap-tap-tap" of Kally's Blackberry. Sonya hadn't moved. "Three?"

"Ugh," muffled Sonya. "Let me try it again."

"Chicken," whispered Travis.

"You don't have to, Sonya. Remember your ankle," added Nathan who had climbed another rock that was just as high as the one where Sonya stood. He eyed her in fear.

"One," replied Sonya.

Two, I screamed in my head.

"Three," said Jon as he saw her fly from the rock in a ball of screaming triumph. We heard the splash. Nathan looked back at us from his place on the rock and smiled down as he groped the back of his head with his palm.

"Who's next?" screamed Sonya from the bottom of the break-wall as she fixed her swimsuit and ran three tan fingers through the length of her hair.

Jon followed with Travis shortly after that. Nathan looked down at the water and was still afraid as he plummeted past the rocks and into the blue depths. Yet, he jumped.

The sun began to fade further into the lake, and now it was my turn. I stood at the edge and could not jump. Kally could not jump.

The others walked on past us, leaving us barefaced against the wind atop the break-wall rocks. We held our towels firm around our shoulders.

"You can still jump," said Kally. "I will wait for you."

It's not the same, I realized. I imagined myself flying through the air, nothing below me, remembering only the sharpness of the rock at the break-wall's peak. I imagined the air twisting my hair in currents and the water below me menacing as it struck the shore.

The others kept walking, their bare feet smacking against the cement of the break-wall. They let their fingers trace the lines in the metal railing where lovers and ex-lovers had written their names. I could hear them recount the feeling, the rush of air under them as they fell. Kally and I looked on at the Break-wall Diving Club's newest members, and I was not one of them.

Untitled - Demons

by Robert Darabos



Woodcut

Eve

by Marlin M. Jenkins

My mother's name was Eve. Every Sunday morning she would make me sit on those horrid pews, and I would complain that my behind was getting sore after only fifteen minutes. The preacher would tell us about Isaiah and Moses and John and Jesus. He would tell us tales of the strength of Sampson and about how great a warrior King David was. I remember once he said something about three of the archangels: Gabriel, Michael, and the most beautiful, Lucifer. I never understood why the most beautiful angel was not a woman.

After service my mom would take my hand, and we would walk home. We had a car, but this way we saved on gas and got to spend more time together. I loved when it was sunny on Sundays. Her red hair would flow in the breeze, and I'm almost sure her bright smile reflected the sun. If I became tired after the first half mile (which was every time), she would carry me for the second half and I would fall asleep in her arms. I imagined that's what heaven was like: Sunday afternoons.

On my eighth birthday (which happened to fall on a Sunday), we walked home just as we always did. Mom told me this was the last time she would carry me home because I was getting too big. This one time I didn't fall asleep. Instead I kept my light green eyes wide open, watching the squirrels chase each other up and down the oak trees and listening to the robins chirp their melodies. I imagined that they knew it was my birthday and were honoring me in song to commemorate the occasion. Every few moments, I would glance up at Mom and she would smile the most gorgeous smile, and I would smile back.

When we walked through our front door, Mom kissed me on the forehead and sat me down on the living room couch just as she always did before she went into the kitchen to put some chicken nuggets in the oven for dinner. I loved chicken nuggets. I loved that couch, too. It was an old, brown, worn thing, but at the time I was too young to care. Really, most of the house was worn down but only because we didn't have the money to both eat and keep up the house. Replacing furniture and repainting the chipped, fading walls just wasn't important. Besides being just old enough to hate school and knowing that I had to go back the next day, in my eyes everything here was perfect. But summer

break started in only three weeks, and I was ready for it. Summer meant more sun and more time with Mom.

That night, a bang on the door woke me up. I quickly sneaked into the living room and hid behind the couch so I could see who it was at the door when Mom opened it. I hadn't been there three whole seconds when she entered the room from the hallway, yawning with a drowsy look in her eyes. The banging continued. She opened the door slowly. It was my father, whom I hadn't seen in four years. He was wearing a green shirt and his jeans were torn.

"I'm here to take my son." He had a blank look on his scruffy face.

"Paul, it's already past ten o'clock. He has school tomorrow..."

"I didn't say I'm here to take him out. I said I'm here to take him." His words were slow and deliberate. Back then I didn't know what drunk meant, but I had heard once that it had something to do with why he had to leave our house.

Mom stood, speechless, staring into his half-dead eyes as if searching for at least a shred of sanity within him. Maybe for a moment she thought this was some bizarre nightmare and she was still asleep.

"Are you deaf? Where is my son? I think it's about time he got out of this dump. Leaving will be my birthday present to him. Scotty!"

Mom hadn't called me Scotty since the divorce. It was always just Scott.

"You can't just show up and demand to steal my son from me!" She was trying desperately not to cry. By now I was scared, and from behind the couch I think I saw a lone tear splash against the tile floor.

He grabbed her wrist in his overpowering, unforgiving grip. "Where is he? Scotty!"

He was trying to look into the house to see me. She tried to push the door closed but he was much too strong. I ran from the couch to my room and tried to bury myself under the covers. I think he saw me. The blankets couldn't shield the noise. I heard a slap. I'm not sure who hit

who, but I didn't want to know.

I heard mom scream, "Let go of me! Let go of me!" Another slap. Then I heard a thump that seemed to shake the house. More screams and shrieks and yelling that I was certain the entire block could hear. I tried to drown them out with some frantic screaming of my own, but that didn't work nearly as well as I had hoped. Soon, I heard the door again, or at least I'm pretty sure it was the door. A moment later it slammed back shut, and the next thing I knew, Mom ran into my room, sobbing, and pulled the blankets from over my head and hugged me harder than she ever had before. Our neighbor, Jillian, walked in right behind her holding a baseball bat. I heard, faintly, the sputter of a pick-up truck. The next morning I asked my mom why there were red stains on the living room floor. When I got home from school, there was a black rug covering the living room carpet, and we never talked about it again.

That was seventeen years ago today. I haven't seen my dad since, though I probably wouldn't recognize him if I did. Eventually I learned that he developed a drinking problem after he lost his job when I was two. He couldn't stand feeling like he couldn't provide. He feared for our safety and security, and in some ironic twist of fate, the alcohol he turned to, to mask that fear and pain, caused him to be the one that instilled fear in us. At least that's the story I heard, in part, from Mom and, in part, from Jillian. Mom kicked him out of the house when I was three, and the divorce was final by the time I turned four. The divorce didn't hurt me much. The few memories I had of my father were ones of abuse and fear. Never of love. So when he left I was at first confused but, at the same time, glad I was no longer getting yelled at or cursed out and that Mom never got hit anymore—until that Sunday night.

I will never get over how beautiful my mother was. Her hair fell just past her shoulders, subtly wavy. Her eyes were almost a grey color, though they changed with her mood. At times they looked blue, other times green, but no matter the hue, they always looked truthful and insightful. It was like, with them, she could see your soul, and, if you looked hard enough, you could see hers too. They were especially grey, almost silver, when she was terrified or depressed. My eyes never changed

color, until last night. I looked in the mirror and noticed that they were grey.

I wonder if the man at the gas station yesterday noticed her eyes before he pulled out his pistol. I wonder if, for a moment, he stopped, saw her eyes shift and fade back to a cloudy grey, and began to reconsider. At times, if you looked hard enough into her eyes, you could feel my mother's internal tears. Did he feel them? Or did he just see a 45-year-old woman (though she didn't look a day over 33) stepping out of her silver Honda, a frail female target to take advantage of? More than likely, the purity of her eyes and her soul frightened him, and he, already nervous, pulled the trigger because he was too weak to back down, like a bee scared into stinging to protect itself. She probably didn't say anything. She didn't speak in words if she could ever help it.

Jillian went with me to church this morning. She was my mother's best friend for longer than I could remember, a guardian angel that knew us both better than we knew ourselves. There were times when we couldn't try to make ourselves sing. A few times during the sermon we started crying, either simultaneously or one of us would start and the other would follow suit only moments after. I'm not entirely sure what gave us the strength or will to come this morning. Maybe the fact that I didn't sleep and grew tired of sitting alone at home had something to do with it. The service ended about forty-five minutes ago. Jillian left about five minutes ago. And so I sit, ignoring my sore behind, hands folded, looking at the ground, then the ceiling, then back again, every so often running my fingers through my sandy hair, and when next I come across a mirror, I will stare into silver eyes.

Silent Beauty

by Jenna Mahaffy



Oil on Paper

Fall 2010

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The Holy Room

by Shiloh Sanchez

The room is exactly as I had left it over a decade ago, as a shaved head bisexual atheist. The stained walls support scenes from the many stages of Jesus' life, framed as if he were one of my cousins. Clumps of rosaries of every color hang on ratty lamp shades like bunches of bananas. Shrines of the holy family, St. Francis, Mother Mary, Mother Mary as Guadalupe, are arranged on dusty wooden furniture. Stacks of soiled mattresses are still sagging because Abuela Sanchez's spirit is ever napping with her collection of throw pillows stacked nearly up to the ceiling, and Aunt Lia is still sitting in her fermented wedge on the couch with cushions from past couches, her feet up on the same footrest. She has been complaining—and still is—of her aching feet since I first hit puberty. Scattered throughout the holy room, I spy mementos of childhood: Burger King crowns, Native American headdresses, baby socks, plastic toys, friendship bracelets, baby rattles, plastic purses, and plastic knives. I see my sister and brother and myself when we were three rugrats among other rugrats, my brother with a bowl haircut, my sister and I with long braids, our black soles running the streets.

I don't know what I expected when I impulsively called them on Easter Sunday. I blame loneliness. Mama and I ate our potato salad, macaroni and cheese, and beef steaks by ourselves, in a quiet house once filled with maniacs. Those maniacs, my mother, father, sister, brother, and I, have all been scattered throughout the state of Michigan. Father is addicted to pain medication and cable television, dying in a cabin up north, finding Christianity wherever they give alms to the poor. Sister is settling short with a man who probably loves her more than himself, which isn't always a bad thing. Brother is with his sick lover, probably sick with the usual ailments of young men that come with the use of a heart. There remain two maniacs in the house, and we can only argue so often without arguing about the same thing twice. We are thus forced to get along, which often causes us to take too many naps, collect recipes, and watch television because we never got to when Daddy was home. But we didn't feel like watching television.

Mama took a nap, and, just as I did as a youth, I yearn for that manic love while she rests in peace. I do not care what kind of love; any love will do as long as it is loud, whether it be the bitter love, the kind where someone is complaining of a broken heart or lost loved one; or a reminiscent love, when the widow talks of old days; or sloppy love, when

someone is laughing so hard coffee is dripping down the tablemat or a child leaves a rivulet of drool on furniture; or stupid love, where some teenager says the wrong thing and is the scapegoat of the young and old. I want laughter, shouting, wailing, and stomping. I want the room to be sweaty with brown bodies crowding on chairs, stools, piles of dirty laundry, boxes, laps, floors, rugs, pillows, kitchen countertops. So I called Aunt Isabelle and told them I'd be coming up Wednesday since I have three days off of work and that I'd be staying the night. I heard a blend of Spanish in the background and ended up talking to the sisters for several hours.

The Virgin Mary greeted me in the front yard of the holy room, her hands spread out to patches of dead grass. I had been chain-smoking and drinking too much coffee all day, because poverty never satisfies. I was prepared to touch the mystery meat in the fridge, to chance that my hips would widen fifty inches in an hour or that I would find myself sleeping for the next thirty. Therefore, I linger at the hands of Mary, catching a headache from the cold drizzle sinking into my hair and a depression. The skies are the color of freshly stirred plaster and the texture of leftover mashed potatoes, and I breathe in the stench of truth in this moment, always revealing the lie of sweet anticipation. These metaphors are rather pleasant in a domestic way. The colors and textures follow me inside the holy room, yet inside I am relieved from both the headache and the rain. A proper metaphor for the holy room would be the color of a child's bedroom sky, capturing the exaggerated lights of midnight drive-bys across the cracked ceiling when all the maniacs have gone to sleep and strange sounds can be heard in the kitchen, or the texture of a tired Mexican woman scrubbing the sweat out of her husband's clothes using a washboard. Safe from the judgment of Mary and the patter of rain, the air becomes full of ghetto drizzle (the kind of drizzle where children stomp in puddles, homeboys and homegirls hotbox in their parents' living rooms, and teenagers pry open fire hydrants). Inside the holy room, we speak of other things, holy things, in the silence of a ticking clock and a running toilet.

My own subjectivity casts an opposition to the holy room, and, as I watch her dark lips speak slowly, I objectify the poor and the holy surrounding me. I never get to see that side of their hometown, but I know the freedom because I carried the same realness with me here as I do in my hometown where I dabble in the events of creativity. Creativity

has always been the skill of those who bear crosses of poverty, illness, and/or depression. There is no one to impress in these neighborhoods because everyone is too busy hustling, praying, or chasing rugrats. Marxists, however, have the wrong idea that religion is the poor man's opiate. We do not pray because it is all we can do, because it gives us hope, because our grandparents will beat us with a switch. We pray because it brings us life outside of dying. We are, essentially, dying. Our breath is a bonus; hope is a bonus; happiness is a bonus; but art is a product, and love is a gift. You have the wrong idea that us dark skinned folks are sex-crazed. We just have time to cater to our lovers, to cook for them and light their pipes, and they have time to rub our feet and whisper sweet nothings. Servitude feels better in the summer sweats, the delirium of starvation, and in the pains of long bus rides and family losses.

But Aunt Lia knows nothing of Marxism, racism, stereotypes, and depression. We talk only of holiness and human necessities such as food, shelter, clothing, and family. These are necessary to receive our breath, to pray. Aunt Lia's attire is of a tired woman found traveling the dusty roads of Mexico carrying a chicken. Her wide hips are layered in dark, faded, flowered skirts she sews herself; her bosom is wrapped in a colorful poncho where saints and Jesus rest near her heart. Her shoes have holes in them, and when I offer to buy her a new pair, the question clings to the walls like other past voices. I fear nothing ever leaves the holy room, that the room always remembers, that stories will haunt me in my sleep, and that stories will mingle with other stories to make new stories so that my past will be a lie, my future will be a ghost, and I will cling to these walls until the day I die—

"Mija, are you hungry?"

"Oh, no, I just ate before I got here." I think I had a cracker, maybe half a bagel. I drank a thick cup of coffee and washed it down with nicotine phlegm.

I see beauty beneath her long silver hair, twisted into buns above her ears. Her face is cracked stone; deep rivulets of mourning shape her cheeks and mouth, but when those same sponge lips open, her soft words are deeply formed within that face. It softens as if made of clay. I feel as if I've aged quicker than she has, as if nothing has moved here;

nothing has aged; everything has been preserved. Only during this visit are my ears open to listen, my hands and feet not as itchy, because I am old enough to understand and accept her long silences.

I had first come to check up on my cousins, who are at the age of promiscuity and temptation and have itchy hands and feet. My flesh, the girl who is in love with high heels and boys who are starving artists or breakdancers, yearned to take them on a tour of sin, but the Catholic within me wanted to warn them. I instead find myself engulfed in the timelessness of the holy room. I know not whether minutes, hours, weeks, or years pass within this room before two of my cousins, two aunts, and an uncle arrive. There are many wet kisses, violent hugs, rumbling Spanish rolling off tongues as if their words had been fermenting in their bellies for some time. It is more than I can take, and I take it. Because everything I've ever done has been forbidden, I am fourteen again, yearning for a cigarette and a beer. When the rolling r's slow to a stream, I wade in my request to go get more coffee and invite one of my cousins along.

I fear him, this Catholic seventeen-year-old boy, who is required to pray the rosary every day, whose father got laid off because he knows no English, whose family doesn't understand technology, whose heart is pure, whose heart is pure, and whose heart is so pure. I slip sin in inch by inch. First, I turn my music on low, hip-hop spitting nails instead of that rolling river of syllables. Next, I light a cigarette, cracking my window. I ask him questions about his relationship with his angry brother, his hobbies, his goals, but not his dreams. Not yet. I'll save that for next visit. It is pleasant driving in the rain, and since I'm not done with the cigarette, I decide to pick up food for the family. I want to keep driving with my cousin, until he is old enough and we can share a beer and honesty together. But for now, he is soft and hard as my aunt, and I know nothing. I don't know a damn thing, so I stop talking.

Eugenics

by Lauren Annette Boulton

I tap the golden fruit flies out of the vial
into the anesthetizer.
Three sets of five taps and they fall,
a smoothly choreographed suicide ballet.
Larvae so recently enclosed
metamorphose into obscene
And groveling red-eyed uglies,
covered in spindly eyebrow hairs.
Their frenzied movements soon settle.
Still, no way to close those sparkling black compound eyes.
No eyelids.
They doze softly anyway.

I imagine tiny and buzzy fruit fly snores.
Pour the worst glass of lemonade.
A white unlined index card waits.
They twitch as they descend, dirty spastic raindrops.
They bounce against the white background
and lay, unaware, as I prod
their loathsome selves, turn them over to see, in light,
imperfect wings and foul eyes.
Their bristled exoskeletons
scrutinize their naked lilliputian bodies.
They sleep, I tilt the index card,
and they plummet swiftly in an
alcohol abyss we lovingly call the morgue.
They slumber.
And drown, placated in sleep.

Business Suit

by Erica Jesse



Color Photography

Fall 2010

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Locked on Riomaggiore

by Jillian Bourbina



Watercolor

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Kids on Leashes

by Dan Schell

Furry brown monkey
strapped tight to back,
harnessing freedom
from the child;
tan strap wrapped
around mother's wrist,
a maternal yoke,
circling each other
like earth and moon.

Don't go too far, dear child,
you are mother's prized subsidiary;
she does not run well
with heels and cell;
go lay with the dogs,
or crawl on all fours
on polished mall floor.

Are they training to be tethered
tight to authority's rock?
Restless boats undocked
during the storm of release which comes
once free of the leash;
no wonder they tend to run.

Scenes at an Indian Airport

by Holly Hahn

A man, with most of his yellowed teeth missing, eats an onion like an apple while he begs rupees from travelers.

Two women wearing bangles to their elbows jingle as they glide toward the small stand with fresh mangoes, papayas, and pomegranates.

A group of Americans eat candied ginger to preempt motion sickness while flying in a monsoon.

Blue and white striped curtains hide mandatory pat-down security.

A young girl wraps her saffron-colored scarf over her jasmine-scented hair before being drenched the second she steps outside.

Samuel, a young Indian man, teaches me a hymn in Telugu that I will never forget.

Death

by Justin Carlton



Color Photography

Fall 2010

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Gaia

by E. Jill Cooley



Silver Print

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Moments of Indecision

by Christopher Sweet

Nearly an hour after he had left work at the grocery store, Mahesh returned to his Toronto flat, where he encountered the letter again, waiting on the cassette player. Though he had received it a week ago, a cheap blue aerogram sent from Delhi, and though it bore his parents' address on the cover, he had noticed then that there was something vaguely unsettling about it, unlike the other letters he had gotten from his overseas family. He had known at once, somehow, his eyes sifting through the lines penned by his mother, through a list of inanities and innocuous information, that a crucial matter was hidden, something deeply intimate and something he knew they would have their minds on. He had left the letter on the cassette player, unwilling to read any further. Today, he did not feel like reading any of it either, but he considered the request of his parents. What was wrong with it? After all, they had said, it had been a year, hadn't it? Mahesh frowned at the memory immediately, sighing as he stared at the cassette player. He switched the tape inside on, and the melancholic voice of Mohammed Rafi emanated through the speaker, resurrecting the memories of years past: his late wife's smiling face, the kitchen warm with her cooking, the long conversations that wavered from topic to topic. *A full year has gone by*, he thought. Another sigh escaped him, and suddenly his world was as lugubrious as it had been that day when he had suddenly realized this new path of reality and had withered into an introvert. Existence had seen him as a non-resident Indian, too, adrift in the cosmopolitan complexities of Toronto, with poor English, a paltry grocer's income, and an absence caused by his wife Pushpa's fatal accident a year earlier.

He suddenly turned off the cassette player, and Mahesh pressed his fingers to his forehead. To listen to this song, from one of Pushpa's favorite films, was particularly painful; he had often crooned it to her before leaving for work in the mornings, unabashedly behaving like the romantic Dilip Kumar of *Ganga Jamuna* before disappearing into the mélange of Toronto. Though he thought he might be reflecting too much on this, he found there was a strange comfort in it, and he did not want to let go of it. He never forsook the traditions, the routines he had amassed over their time together. How could he let go, when he had been with her for the past four years? What could replace the memories, the beauty of being with Pushpa? *Nothing*, he affirmed, stroking his wispy mustache, *nothing at all*. But uncertainty still lingered, even as he continued his unnecessary obeisance to her memory.

And now there was the letter from his parents, which had come about a week ago. The thought of the letter made Mahesh eye it suspiciously from where he stood by the window, resenting secretly the treasonous suggestion of remarriage. It was a command, really, that he should marry and carry on the family name, and with a child this time. He knew his *dharma*, his obligation, to follow the desires of his parents, to obey and take another wife, yet he still hesitated at the thought. He could not leave the past behind; it was more than a shard of his being, his entire soul. Mahesh was too reluctant to move forward, to change in the least, which had flummoxed his childhood friend Vikram when they had met last week. "Is it wrong to change, *yaar*?" he had asked after an exasperated sigh. There was no answer from Mahesh who knew the obvious fault in his thinking. But he still partly resented the idea of change.

Now that he was thinking of Vikram, Mahesh remembered that a full week had passed, and that he had committed to coming again to his flat, as he had done for ages before on every week. He glanced at the clock on the wall that hovered above the shelf where he kept the ceramic figurines of his Hindu gods and a demure bridal portrait of Pushpa. He still had a few minutes to get to his flat, which was only a few blocks away, and before he left, he drank the last sip of water from a demitasse, glancing backward at the letter and the cassette player, wishing his life could be rewound like a reel in a cassette tape.

When he got to Vikram's flat a few minutes later, standing at the door, Mahesh heard muffled chatter inside, and when Vikram opened the door for him, his bearded face peering at his sentimental friend, Mahesh knew somebody else was there with him. He smelled cigarette smoke; Vikram didn't smoke, at least not since he had been a chain-smoking college student in Delhi, and there was another pair of shoes—a flimsy pair of sandals—at the door. "Hey, *yaar*, come in," Vikram said, and Mahesh discarded his shoes there, his enormous bare feet blooming underneath the billowing creases of his khakis. He looked around as he came in and saw a man sitting at the Formica table in the half-lit kitchen, holding a cup of tea in one hand and a lit cigarette in the other. He nodded at Mahesh.

"Remember me?" he asked in Hindi. His mustache and Brylcreemed

hairdo were all too nebulous to pinpoint to one person, but his shirt was ridiculously flamboyant, a turquoise color striped by deep blue. After a moment Mahesh recognized him, recalling a thrifty electrical engineering student living off some other *desi* family. "Dharmesh?" Mahesh replied, his brow furrowing in uncertainty. A nod and drag of a cigarette confirmed his guess.

Vikram put a hand on his friend's shoulder. "Dharmesh was visiting his brother-in-law in Scarborough today, and when I was at Nadeem's shop, I saw him there. I invited him over, and now you're here, *yaar*." He shrugged and smiled at Mahesh. "Might as well stay. You want some *chai*? Maybe a *laddu*, some sweets, to eat?" He was beginning to sound like his hospitable Indian self, almost like a wife.

"Yes, *chai* and *laddu*." Mahesh replied. He sat across from Dharmesh at the table.

"Cigarette?" Dharmesh asked, pulling out a Pall Mall from his pocket. Mahesh reached for it and lit it. It had been a while since he'd smoked, a habit he had taken up again after Pushpa's death, and he was content again to inhale. He tapped his ashes onto a ceramic plate in front of him, the nicotine pleasure warming his lungs after a walk in near-winter weather.

Vikram brought out a plate of *samosas* and *laddus* to the table, and was about to walk back to the kitchen when Dharmesh said, "You don't look like you need a wife if you're doing all of this cooking." He chortled at his own joke.

"Thanks," Vikram quipped, "but it's all store bought, you fool. And I microwaved all of it." He wagged his head towards Mahesh. "I get it all from his grocery store."

"Hey, it's not my store, it's Pratap's," Mahesh replied, picking up a *laddu*. Over his shoulder, Vikram waited, staring at Dharmesh.

"What?" Dharmesh asked.

"You don't want a *laddu*? What's wrong with you, *yaar*?"

"Just diabetes, you fool," Dharmesh snorted before taking another sip from his glass. Vikram pretended to look hurt.

"Arre, a little sugar never hurt anyone..." he mused.

Dharmesh' face oozed sarcasm. "Yes, of course. Just like a little cancer never hurt anybody."

"Or a little smoking," Mahesh interjected.

"Shut up, *yaar*," Dharmesh chided, playfully nudging him, and they all burst into laughter.

The three of them continued talking for a while longer, most of the talk going between Vikram and Dharmesh. Mahesh kept himself out of the dialogue for a while, his mind wandering onto other things, as the other two navigated topics of latest Hindi films, the recent riots in Bombay over the mosque-destruction in Ayodhya by radical Hindus, and, later on, women. He was thinking about his life right now, about the loneliness of his bachelor nature; he wasn't sure that what he wanted to preserve was the best for him. What if by not listening to his parents' requests he was destroying himself somehow, in some subtle way? Thinking on this, he ground his cigarette butt on the porcelain plate, watching the dim glow at the other end fade. His gaze wandered around Vikram's flat, at the disorganization of it all, the crude improvisation of functionality. He noted the tea-bag dish on his kitchen counter was crowded with corpses of used tea-bags, the walls devoid of pictures, the burnt-out lightbulbs still sitting in their sockets. He then saw the desolate nature of the bachelor's life, the weariness of it, and imagined himself as a decrepit man, gimping into an unpromising and unfulfilling future, and saw the expanse of a vast horizon before him, filled with that one question: How to fill up all of the moments of life? The thought startled him, and he came out of his vision when Vikram asked all of a sudden, "What's wrong, *yaar*?"

Mahesh said, "*Bas*, nothing."

Now they were talking, somehow, about marriage, and Dharmesh was telling them how his own marriage had gotten cancelled a month ago after the father of the bride suddenly died; the bride's family had con-

sidered it inauspicious to continue with the marriage and had bailed out.

"Sad, *yaar*, how our plans go wrong," Vikram commented, draining a glass of tea and staring at its emptiness.

Dharmesh put out the cigarette he had been smoking and continued with his story. "Yes, nobody has a guarantee on their destiny. Even I had thought it would go on, after my sister had helped make the match for me."

"Your sister?" Vikram asked.

"Of course. She is such a socialite, and very good with the matchmaking process. Every couple she has helped come together has lasted. Except mine of course." He threw his hands into the air fatalistically. "I must have a *nazar* or the evil eye or something. But really, she's an expert at this stuff."

Mahesh was now listening carefully to this and felt the desire to speak being roused at his throat. He was thinking of his *dharma*, of his parents, of his lonely miserly self, and suddenly he had to say something.

"I think..." he began. The other two looked at him with interest. "I think, Dharmesh, that you should tell your sister about me."

"Why is that?" There was a silence, and Vikram seemed a bit surprised, even mystified, at this. He knew what Mahesh was going to say; there was no evading Vikram's knowledge, and his face was stony, stoic, expectant.

The words were about to flow from his lips, but Mahesh hesitated. After all, what did Dharmesh know of his love for Pushpa, of his agony of his loneliness, the nights of the past week ghosted by the pains and fears of finally submitting to something he had wished his parents would never think of? Dharmesh didn't even know he had been married, and this would make everything worse.

"Never mind," he said, a slight tremble in his voice.

"Are you sure?" Dharmesh asked with a grin. "I could tell her to make arrangements for you with some nice girl."

"Please don't, er, no, just forget it, *yaar*," Mahesh sputtered. Despite himself, he noticed the ardent desperation in his voice. Dharmesh was sensible enough not to say anymore and he changed the subject. Vikram kept watching Mahesh, his eyes empathetic.

After a while, a cup or two more of *chai*, and lighter conversation, Dharmesh got up and stretched. "Well, I'd better be off, *yaar*," he declared. "I have to go in early." He smiled at Mahesh. "Nice seeing you, *yaar*. *Phir milenge*. See you later."

After he had left, Mahesh was about to go when Vikram put a hand on his shoulder. "I can see that you're trying," he said, and smiled.

On the way back to his flat through the murky autumn night, Mahesh pondered on what he had done. He had been close to saying what he did not want to say, even though he knew it would have probably been better if he had said it. These moments of indecision were what kept him in his cyclical life, yet he was not ready for another marriage. He did not know when he would be ready, if at all. And maybe this was his *dharma* anyhow, to continue this daily devotion to his past life, his past wife. He sauntered homeward under the saffron glow of the Toronto streetlights, not regretting the loneliness he at once disliked and loved.

Scotch Tape Anniversary

by Paul Anderson

when cancer entered our home
and took rest in grandmother's bed,

her fingers became wintered tree-branches
too slender and crooked for her ring.

grandfather slid it back into place,
vowed one last time,

"with this ring, I thee wed,"
then taped eternity to her hand.

Water-play

by Abigail Garlick



Black & White Photography

Biographies

Brandy Abraham lives on an island of books, eats the fruit of the Great Pizza Roll Tree, and finds great value in her day-by-day conversations with the paint-streaked native who lives next door. She dreams and so—bonne nuit.

Nadeer Alabdulwahab is a lover not a fighter but also a fighter so don't get any ideas.

Sarah Arthur is a blockheaded monkey junky who loves the wild things residing in her home but hates to break bones or promises. However, she finds it hard to keep from doing one of those. Her desire to tell stories lies in a basic truth: writing is cheaper than therapy.

Peter Brian Barry is drunk with the only saints [he] knows.

Matthew Binder is a Saginaw County native, self-taught photographer, RN to BSN nursing student, and treasurer of the Saginaw Rowing Club. He enjoys taking landscape, nature, and portrait photography. The photo was taken in view of the SRC's dock on Lake Linton. The background is Saginaw's beautiful Ojibway Island.

Lauren Annette Boulton is the writer of her generation, obviously. She hopes that someday you'll be able to read that without laughing. She loves her family. Her deepest wish is to become as shockingly wonderful as her late grandmother Janet Gassman, but she knows that is one lofty goal.

Tyler Bradley is that kid with that hat and paint-splattered TOMS shoes. He only exists for human society on days that end in "-ay." He will always be a little monster. He believes the golden rule is "keep your paws up."

Justin Carlton is a first-year SVSU student who transferred from Delta College, where he earned his associates degree. He is from the small town of Chesaning, MI. Outside of school, he enjoys photography, videography, hot rods and classic cars, sports, traveling, tattoos, and music.

E. Jill Cooley is a senior in the bachelor of fine arts program with dual concentrations in photography and ceramics. She hopes to graduate in three semesters and continue on to graduate school to earn a master of fine art in photography.

Josh Crummer puts the fun back into funeral. He's also the guy with that hat (you'll know when you see it). His work has previously appeared in *Cardinal Sins* and *From the Dark Side Anthology*.

Charles Davenport is aware of his surroundings, is breathing, and has a pulse. Things are looking up.

Beth Erbacher is almost always an optimist.

Noah Essenmacher is editor-in-chief of *The Valley Vanguard*, a Writing Center mentor, and a Roberts Fellow. He enjoys the tradition of storytelling and encourages others to find the stories worth telling in their own lives.

Jack Frost is a freshman from Pinckney, MI and graduated from Detroit Catholic Central High School in 2010. His life is about good times with good people. One of his good friends, who fits in with any group he hangs with, is Jesus. He enjoys the outdoors, music, and experiencing anything unfamiliar.

Abigail Garlick is a sophomore and a graphic design major.

Corey Gilbert is in his senior year of studies, working toward his BFA. His focus is painting and drawing, primarily abstract oil painting. He is also very interested in art theory and plans on pursuing his MFA.

Chris Giroux is not a pseudonym.

Meagan Griffin is a fictional character in a popular animated television show. When she's not busy on camera, she enjoys her three-dimensional life as an avid reader, writer, and fan of irony.

Stephanie Gromer is a designer who strives to make a difference through design.

Holly Hahn is a literature major and creative writing minor. She graduated in December, 2010 and currently resides in Mason, MI with her husband. Her plan this spring is to imbibe lots of books, coffee, and chocolate while finishing her novel.

Katie Head is a junior with a PTW major and philosophy minor. Her future dream job is to be a news editor for a newspaper. She is also known for being squirrel-crazy.

Marlin M. Jenkins is just a city boy, born and raised in West Detroit. He took a midnight train goin' anywhere. Also, he would like to inform you that there is no such place as South Detroit. It's entirely made up, just like Genovia.

Erica Jesse is a lover of bunnies. She is grateful for her family's support in everything she does.

Katie Karnes is a graphic design senior and design editor for *The Valley Vanguard*. She spends her time working and studying to finally leave this institution. She lives by the motto, "Never let anyone make you feel like you don't deserve what you want." and procrastinates... way too much. Do what you love; love what you do.

Emily Krueger is awesome. End of story.

Jenna Mahaffy is a fourth-year student and a graphic design major with a communications minor. She mainly spends her free time doodling, napping, or listening to some great tuneage. Jenna would like to thank Ovaltine Jenkins for being a great supporter!

Kirsten McIlvenna pretty much lives in the *Sins/Vanguard* office with her friends Cherry Pepsi (an always peppy girl who motivates her), Mac (a newer friend: fun to play with, but sometimes fussy), and Pandora (a lovely singer who sits on the desk singing Regina Spektor songs).

Kelsey Mehl is never late, nor is she early. She arrives precisely when she means to.

Kelly Mundt is a high-school volleyball coach who likes to read good books on a porch outside in a thunderstorm, or sit in a cafe watching soccer on her laptop and writing her novels.

Jenna L. Perrault is a fourth-year studio art major and sociology minor. She is considering going on to get a degree in library science, wildlife management, art history, or all of the above. Jenna appreciates things that are very beautiful or very meaningful, preferably both.

Kelly Reilly is a freshman psychology major. She enjoys endless conversations about nothing and sweet tea. Her future aspirations include tornado chasing and graduation. The End.

Shiloh Sanchez has too many names. But what is in a name?

Dan Schell is a creative writing student and the winner of the Fall & Winter 2010 *Cardinal Sins* Poetry Slams. He plans on releasing his first book of poetry in Spring 2011. He works in legal administration and lives in Saginaw with his wife and children.

Alex Soares has to share this part of Matthew West's song: "What if there's a greater purpose/I could be living right now/outside my own little world."

Michael Somers believes there is no better cure for a stressful day than doing a half-hour of yoga followed immediately by eating two heaping handfuls of gummi bears. Toss writing in there somewhere, and that's a day whose frown has been turned solidly upside down.

Aaron Sopfe is a political science major and is in "purgatory" between sophomore and junior status. He is known for driving Katie Head crazy, as he is an English major's nightmare.

Kelly Spooner is a third-year student and is getting her bachelor's in nursing. She loves to take photos in her free time and on vacations. She traveled to Paris in July of 2006, where this photo was taken. She is thankful to her friends and family for all the support and encouragement she's received.

Christopher Sweet is a third-year international studies student and a self-taught Hindi/Urdu and Panjabi speaker. Though he speaks (and writes) in English, he is an avid user of Hinglish and a devotee of actor Dilip Kumar. He is also fond of bhangra music and classical ghazals.

Christina VanPoucker is a conundrum.

Aaron Warner will often get up in the morning. He also sleeps at night, on occasion. Every once in a while, he inhales or exhales. Of all of these accomplishments, he is proud of some of them.

Tim Windy is a writer and a musician who enjoys wandering/wondering aimlessly on brisk fall days.

Acknowledgments

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Also, thank you to those who helped make the Fall 2010 poetry slam a smashing success: Christi Griffis and the staff of the Magic Bean; everyone who came out to compete; the judges of the slam; and everyone who came out to watch.



Kirsten McIlvenna

Submission Guidelines

Entry Requirements

All submissions must

- be accompanied by a completed cover sheet (downloaded from svsu.edu/cardinalsins/submissions). Please title the document with your name and save as a .rtf or .doc.
- be submitted through email to cardinalsins@svsu.edu. Title the email "Winter 2011" followed by your name. Submissions and cover sheets should be sent as attachments.
- have titles. The file name must be the same as the title of the work.
- not contain any contact information within the entries. This information should only be on the cover sheet.

Text submissions should

- be in 12-pt Times New Roman font, single spaced, with one-inch margins.
- include the title at the top of each page.
- be attached to email as a .rtf or .doc. Hard copies will not be accepted.
 - Poetry should be no longer than 70 lines.
 - Flash fiction should be between 250 and 1,000 words.
 - Fiction and creative nonfiction should be no longer than 2,500 words.

Artwork/Photography submissions should

- be 300 dpi or greater and have high contrast and sharp definition.
- be attached in email in either .gif or .jpeg format. Hard copies will not be accepted.
- N.B.: Photos that have been manipulated with a computer program should be submitted as artwork, not photography.

Number of Entries

- Submit up to 5 poems, 3 flash fiction pieces, and 2 pieces of fiction or creative nonfiction.
- Submit up to 5 artwork and photography pieces.

Prizes and Judging

- Prizes are typically awarded in the following areas: poetry, fiction, flash fiction, creative nonfiction, black & white photography, color photography, black & white artwork, and color artwork.
- The winner in each category will receive \$100 and recognition within the publication.
- All submissions will be entered into the contest unless otherwise requested.

- Judging is done through blind, anonymous voting by the editorial staff.
- The staff reserves the right to withhold an award based on submission numbers and/or eligibility requirements (Members of the editorial staff are excluded from winning an award in any category).

Please visit www.svsu.edu/cardinalsins for deadline dates.

Thank you for submitting to *Cardinal Sins* and Good Luck!

These guidelines are subject to change; please visit our website for the most current guidelines.

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