

# Cardinal Sins

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# Cardinal Sins

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

*\*\*Congratulations to the winner of the Winter 2011 Cardinal Sins Poetry Slam.*

# Editor's Note

As I look back on previous editors' notes for inspiration, I wonder what there is to say that hasn't already been said. I could sit here and tell you what I learned, how I've transformed, and why *Cardinal Sins* is just so great. Or, I could tell you a story.

My mother, as a pastor in the United Methodist Church, gives a sermon that includes a memory of me as a child. I choose to reference that same story, here. Thinking, at the time, that someday I could be a great artist, I would sprawl out with my crayons and papers and draw anything around me, inside and outside. And my mom says that in every single picture, be it of a flower in the park or of a vase of flowers in the house, I would draw a rainbow in the background. One day, she asked me why I drew a rainbow when rainbows were outside. I replied with the simple answer, "Why not?"

So although it is seemingly egotistical to use a story about myself, I think it demonstrates a way in which we can, at times, guide our own lives. When Chris Giroux asked if I wanted to be on staff three years ago, I asked myself, "Why not?" Asking myself that question led to an opportunity to gain professional experience and a feeling of self-worth (yeah, yeah, there I go with the whole "how I grew" bit).

Certainly all of the artists and authors in this publication have asked themselves the same question: why not submit and see if my work can get in? So I challenge you to do the same. Why not read this magazine? (How convenient, right?) Why not submit next time (or continue to submit)? Next semester you might see yourselves filling these same pages and drawing the rainbows in your own life.



Kirsten McIlvenna



# An Acceptable Age

by Brandy Abraham

The most beautiful love story is the one we remember over a cup of coffee, in a diner we go to every Sunday after church, before the toast, between stoplights, during stoplights, and on the date with the wrong, but perfect, young man. It's a different kind of love. This is the lie that we perfect, but not young, women tell ourselves looking into the mirror as the doorbell rings. We smear eyeliner over the creases. We say we need to powder our noses. Yet, we need to make sure we didn't start our cycles, claiming the trickle of fresh blood as a relief to our womanhood. It ached like a fresh wound, full of memory, and too deep to heal with Ma's salve.

We are women. We are not old, yet. We patch the lipstick fade-spots with fresh crimson. The dye spots are tossed behind our ears with the frizzy split-ends, the hard-to-explain emptiness, and the way our middle age makes us want to buy shoes. The diner was horrible but the wine was great. Merlot tastes great with pork. We had chicken. It was overcooked, and the feather pillows on the Marriott hotel bed were overused. I love you. This phrase starts the most beautiful love story between cups of coffee at some rag-tag diner a few stoplights away from the apartment of a very young, but imperfect, man. The fade spots are too noticeable; we think he will see the rust, the mildew in the eye cracks, and wonder about the insurance policy.

# A List of Things To Do the Day Your Grandmother Dies

by Michael Somers

1) Answer the phone. It's your mother calling. It's before 8 a.m. "Your grandmother died this morning," she says. "Your sister was in the room with her when she died. I'm on my way home from work now." You expected your mother to cry, but you know the news is too fresh. Besides, she needs to focus on the road. "I love you," you say. Tell her you will call later once you get things in order on your end. Hang up. Breathe in. Breathe out. Feel completely out of order.

2) Call the division secretary to let her know your grandmother is dead. Ask how many days of bereavement you are entitled to. Proceed to cancel classes for the rest of the week. E-mail your students and brace for the inevitable condolence replies. Your online students do not need to know, so go ahead and respond to the new discussion posts as if nothing is amiss.

3) Go grocery shopping at Meijer. You need staples on hand to make it through the next few days. Hold two Braeburn apples in your hands to see which one feels most alive. Realize they've been removed from the trees that nourished them, that they're just as dead as your grandmother, no matter how vibrant they appear. Put them back and buy canned and boxed food instead. Refuse to be fooled by dead food posing as fresh today, of all days.

4) Go to Barnes & Noble. You need to buy an anthology of *Curious George*. Your grandmother read *Curious George* books at your every insistent whim, would hold you in her lap with her arms tight around you as she read about that cheeky monkey's exploits. Her breath warmed your ear. You have no *Curious George* in your house. You need *Curious George* in your house to keep her alive. You find an anthology, but the stories are all wrong. They are not what you remember. The pages are crisp and white and stiff. The cover is an unscuffed red. It is not the same, but it will have to do.

5) Go to Target to buy things you forgot to at Meijer. Medication for your sinus infection. Eucerin for your cracked, dry hands. Pick up the new Sara Bareilles CD to distract yourself in the car on the way to the funeral home later.

6) Enter Kohl's but turn right around and leave. Buying a new dress shirt and tie for the funeral would find you collapsing at the register after you swipe your debit card.

7) Talk to your mother on the phone. Find out what time to be at the funeral home. Marvel at how calm she sounds when you know she's collapsed like a house of cards on the inside. Chalk it up to shock and numbness in the wake of the news. You did go shopping, after all.

8) Forget to eat but watch *The Young and the Restless* and *The Bold and the Beautiful* while knitting a scarf you started the other day. Enjoy someone else's dramas. Create in the face of endings. Glance at the *Curious George* book on the cushion next to you. Distraction only goes so far.

9) Do yoga. Stay in "Downward Facing Dog" for far too long. Feel so much blood rush to your head it first gives you a headache, then makes you dizzy, then makes you collapse onto your mat. Find yourself in the most inelegant "Child's Pose" possible. Sob a tear-free sob. Now is not the time for waterworks. Fall asleep on your mat, and have your dog curl up next to you.

10) Make applesauce from the bruised apples before heading to the funeral home. Core and chop. Boil and stir. Grade quizzes between stirs. Enjoy the welcome distraction of cinnamon and apples marrying happily in the pot and of work being completed. Continue riding your own wave of shock and numbness.

11) Realize you haven't spoken to your partner since the morning, when you told him, after your mother told you that your grandmother had died. Call him on your way to the funeral home. Have his voice, so full of love and sorrow for your loss, make you pull to the side of the back road you're on and have a proper tear-filled cry, surely the first of many cries to come in the next few days.

12) Remember your grandmother's name is Marguerite Catherine Rundy Bohil and she died earlier that day—January 14, 2008, at 7:22 a.m. in Ovid Healthcare Center, in Ovid, Michigan. Imagine your sister being there when she died and what it must be like to see death

happen right in front of you. Resolve to give your sister the biggest hug you've ever given her and respect her more than you ever have before.

13) Write these words in the parking lot of the funeral home before walking in: *Walk with me awhile, won't you? Now that you're done here? Then talk with me awhile. Tell me how and who you used to be. Now sit with me awhile. Lean on me and I'll lean on you. Hold my hand in yours. There, that's a good fit. Let's rest and lean and just hear each other breathe. Isn't that nice? Your breath against my ear like always. Let's say "I love you" and never stop. Let's rest and lean and breathe and say "I love you," always.*

"A List of Things to Do the Day Your Grandmother Dies" first appeared in *Flashquake* Volume 10: Issue 3.

# Falling Up

by Tiffany Hammond



Acrylic on Canvas

Winter 2011

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# The Stars Seemed So Close in the End

by Joel A. Lewis



Photoshop

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# Shedding My Night Skin

by Josh Crummer

I caught Ambiguity behind her mother's minivan one night  
after another dog-day shift at the grocery. My mind stuffed  
with questions, her eyes gushing sexy. Or was it mischief?  
Eyedunno. *Starry Night* mixed modern with cloversmoke as  
her snake-bit lips sealed mine. Clapton won't play guitar in montage—  
it's too soon, we shut the music off. She said,

*Come with me, tell no one this secret*, so I followed—  
Deep said the rabbit hole, I'm a nowhere man lost in secondhand—  
some nights some backseats some hookah pipe  
some strippers meld like mind's eye tripping acid—  
I didn't find the exits soon enough. Ambiguity's baked to 450,  
flying like a bird, higher than the ceiling. Carnivals don't spin,

clowns don't dress drag. Disco lamps aren't a pair of bass grooves  
shoving my face into leather but here I sit as she says,  
*Who needs sleep? Sleep is for the weak.*

Call me a Lilliputian; call me a hobbit. Purple haze thick as venom,  
laughter of stray cats' shrieks slowly as purses vomit their contents:  
plastic, inanimate, pestilence and famine plop shamelessly before me—

Some dreads, Goodwill grunge girls shout *You don't count. You're just a boy—*  
*In a few years boys won't be needed anymore.*

No shame in defeat if spirit isn't conquered—  
I'm Nick Carroway in Gatsby's nightmare policed by Lady Gaga  
and examining the purse I ask: *What exactly is Bitch Magazine?*  
Who is Pink? What is *Skins*? And why these strip clubs? *Shut up*, she says,

*You wouldn't understand.*

All right. You want to embody selectiveness in Suicide Girl bodies?  
You want to be catty hermaphrodites, expressive as glaciers?  
Tell you what: lose sleep in your disco-dark strip clubs,  
licking lollipop lips like hungry wolves, or Red Riding Hood  
on the wrong side of things. Go ahead, spread MTV sexuality—  
worship Madonna wannabes to teens bewildered—that channel

stopped spinning real music years ago. Three billion women on this Earth;  
why nurse grudges on just a few? My toy box features novelties

like *chivalry, soul mates, some kind of connection in  
a tornado of excess, a world of convenience. Sleep for the weak?*

Then coffee for the walking dead; ecstasy for volatile sonic youth.  
My kingdom for stability and other inane metaphors. The words just escaped

as I ran for the nearest exit. And fast I ran—bolted the door, pounced  
the couch, flipped on the television—gave halogen no leaks in my  
blanket. Some survey shows young girls 17–25 are susceptible  
to sex drugs rock 'n' roll and I'm supposed to be surprised. But I'm not.

I'm too mudstick for stone hard zagging; so tired of bad romance  
Not even Jesse James' gorgeous mistress can make me stare now.



# Around

by Stephanie Janczewski



Black & White Photography

Winter 2011

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# Feliz Cumpleaños

by Marlin M. Jenkins

Limp on the grass beside the oak tree,  
he stares out from painted eyes at the children,  
grabbing at lollipops that spill from his torn hips,  
torn rainbow torso,  
dent in his extended neck  
still cracked bat beside his stubby tail.  
Candy the color of his frills,  
frantic faces falling bloody knees ,  
filthy fingers yanking at braids pulling on shirts,  
stepping on fingertips.  
The birthday girl's streaming tears  
splash on his squashed face.

# Miyajima Island

by Jamie Wendorf



Black & White Photography

Winter 2011

*Cardinal Sins 19*

# The Art of Sandwich Making

by Brandy Abraham

He says, "I want 'ta pop your cherry," and I say, "Buy an orange grove." It's the simple but unavoidable facts of existence that really rot your teeth, get between the cracks of your molars, and give you that undeniable sweet tooth. I say, "I'd like a piece of banana cr me pie." He says, "I'll bring the banana if you bring the cr me." It's a fact of life that you eat it, slurp it, swallow it, and then gag on it until you die. Life rolls around in the mouth like a nice slab of well-done steak, a hint of A1 sauce to lighten the mood. Yet, the mood just gets heavier with the sauce. He says, "Baby, blow me." I say, "Why? You're not hot." Every moment gets made into "maybe," "how-do-you," and "forget it" sandwiches. I think I would have rather gone with the Reuben. They wonder why we don't wear thongs. We say, "Would you like a wedgie?" They say, "Is this floor play?"

We sit down to the quaint dinner he promised three weeks ago for our four-month anniversary at 5:56 p.m. on a Saturday on Twenty-sixth Street at a diner that doubled as a Chinese restaurant. They also served American-style pancakes; I realized this in looking closer at the menu. *Where is the cage with the naked women with Buttermilk bottles?* "Oh, they have rice pudding," I said. "You know, the rice is in the pudding." He is too obvious in the quiet way he observes the waitresses. He thinks I don't know that he asked Santa for x-ray glasses when he was six. He doesn't know that I know. Last year he asked for x-ray contacts. *Smooth*, I thought. The waiter approached us in his apron and took our drink order. I ordered a gin and tonic, and he had bourbon. "There is a lot of psychology in the word bourbon: burr is to cold as bon is to den." "Can I take shelter in your den?" he asked. I ordered a "forget it" sandwich.

The fish was delicious. Salmon with lemon pepper seasoning really makes a meal sound expensive. I was worried that the smudge marks on our bill hid an extra zero. "What happened to our bill?" I asked the young waiter. He had a smallness that made him look bookish. He replied in an English accent because he obviously wasn't English, "I sorry, my fingers were wet."

We left the bill with the companionship of two mucky and discolored twenties, one with a rip in the corner. "Darling, where are we going now?" I asked through my teeth. The city sky was ill-lit for a Saturday; there wasn't enough smog, and too many clouds made the skyline

above the scrapers look like beat leather. The billboard lights skipped a beat. "We are gonna make the bed rock."

"We are going to Club Buff downtown," he said as he waved down a taxi. The driver had a drunken expression, and the backseat smelled like ass cheeks and cologne. "When did you come out?" I asked. He looked at me and pushed me into the cab, making the car bounce as I floundered in touching puke stains and avoided everything else. *Taxis are disgusting*, I thought as we sped away going three miles per hour because it was 8:04 p.m., and every other couple in New York had the same idea as they lined up like businessmen on Wall Street, hands in the air, bullied the others across the street with their eyes, and stared into the souls of the taxi drivers. They pulled over for the man who puffed out his chest the most and the woman with the most expensive jewelry, and carried on their way down the hustling streets without those who had too short of a haircut or smelled like aftershave. The taxi drivers were the gods of our New York, giving praise to those who, by natural selection, wouldn't have to walk to their destination and smote the high-brow with a sideways glance as they sped off without a passenger. "We can share a cab with them." I pointed to a nice couple with dirty shoes. The driver, his mouth forming a pinched oval, ignored me as if I'd admitted to having a threesome with an Elvis impersonator. From his dialect and gruff, I think he prefers the classics.

We kept going, and the cab bounced to the rhythm of the potholes. He gave me a wink. As we pulled up to the entrance of the nightclub, I asked the driver, "Is this a good club?" "It has a pretty face." We threw him a wad of bills, and he scrambled after them, pinching them between his massive thumbs. I was surprised that the club played techno because the cowgirls at the bar made me think, *Gotta find a ride*. "Can I get a martini?" I asked. "Do you want to go home with a Ringo or a Farley?" They gave me a stirred martini. We danced in the sloppy way that he dances. It was drunken, but more conservative, like a pharmacologist with a pain killer fetish. My toes got fumbled like an old football, like David's, my brother who liked the feel of worn pigskin. Really, he just liked the leather. My feet were upended and twisted and lead and splintered against the weight of his dress shoes. "Are you drunk?" I asked. "This is floor play."

He looked funny when we left, like he was wind-whipped, though I bet

he would have liked that. "You look like hell," I laughed. "Does this mean I'm playing bad cop tonight?" It was at the corner of Western Street, as we were facing west, that I realized as we left the club we were walking downtown. "This is a bad neighborhood," I said. "Terry, did you know underneath this tux I'm Superman?" We made it home to Lux Street with more than fifty cents in our pockets. He was whistling "Surfin' USA." I fumbled with the lock: open—close, close, open, cracked, and busted. The key wouldn't work. "It won't fit." "That is what you said after our first date," he said.

Superman opened the door with the might of one thousand and a half men, all about 5'10," brownish hair, a few with nubs of facial hair protruding from their jaw lines. "I told you it'd fit." "It still doesn't," I said. Our apartment was the color of the salmon we ate earlier, the herb tuff the couch color, and the pepper splattered across the walls like Dante's confetti. "We should repaint this," I said. "I like it when you paint naked."

I turned on the T.V. with the flip of the extra large remote because his eyes were shoddy. I heard the popcorn burst in the microwave, and the aroma made my nostrils widen. "Baby, can you get it?" "Is this floor play?" he asked. Jon Stewart boomed on the T.V., "Ten-percent of women pay their own bill when they go out as a couple." "I'm like that, right?" I asked. "I'm not going to pay you," he said. I fell asleep at 4:32 a.m., my buttered fingers on my face, the smear like war paint. The sounds of yesterday seemed reflective in me like the heaviness of the morning, the urge of a good piece of beef after years of being vegan, and the warmth of his body against my own like falling down the rabbit hole.

"Baby, I missed you." No answer. "Darling, I will buy the orange grove with you." No answer. No breathing. No left. No up. "Why did you have to go? You left too fast." "But at least I came," he said.

The dinner was great in the way eating and binging is great. It was a lonely night. A woman at an expensive restaurant gets the check, and it looks sad. Your steak gets a little stiffer, the pepper on the chicken gets just a bit overwhelming. I ordered his bourbon, although I hate bourbon.

I wore expensive jewelry; my chest puffed out like I was showing the taxi drivers my income. Within minutes they were at the side of the road

opening the door for me, as if I were a queen, but more like as if I had money. Taxi drivers are like vultures. They see everyone as rotted, huge pieces of meat with a seasoning. My seasoning was a bit heavy, mostly because my meat was overdone. Dying in a fire would do that, or missing someone, too. My seasoning was heavy; it made me wear too much perfume and cover my puffy cheeks with the softness of blush powder. I smelled like a lady. I smelled like sadness. I smelled like a memory that caught fire. That happens sometimes when it's on the mind a lot.

"Can I get a ride downtown? Club Buff?" "I would take you for a ride—anywhere," he said.

I danced with a Ringo.

Club Buff was like sequins. It spun me around like a whirlwind, and I was wind-whipped.

He stepped over my feet, no bloody nylon footies, though at times I would mess up, his feet brushing over mine in that impending way. It was an almost trip-and-fall and a round-a-bout that seems to straighten itself out somewhere farther down the road.

I went home with the Ringo. He looked funny when we left, like he was wind-whipped, though I bet he had no idea. "You look like hell," I laughed. He didn't agree but just laughed. It was at the corner of Western Street, as we were facing west, that I realized we left the club and were walking downtown. "This is a bad neighborhood," I said. He shrugged. I made it home to Lux Street with more than fifty cents in my pocket. Ringo was whistling "Hey Jude." I fumbled with the lock: open—close, close, open, cracked, and busted. The key wouldn't work. "It won't fit." "We will make it fit," he said. I wanted the "maybe" sandwich that was in my purse.

Open—close. Close. Open. Close. Close. Close. He left me at the door, and I called the superintendent, who answered in a nasally voice, "It's 3 a.m." "It's 3 a.m. and three degrees outside," I answered. She fumbled with the key for what seemed like a daunting number of hours. There was a burst of warmth from inside; the door opened. She reeked of kitty litter, and I had a reason for barfing on her shoes—I just didn't like her.

I knocked over the picture of us on the table just inside the door, and I lay awake watching Stewart rant about how *Teen Mom* makes real Mom look like a playdough creation, stamping out the dollar bills like a tool.

I fell asleep at 4:32 a.m., my buttered fingers on my face, the smear like war paint. The war I fought for years was against my face as I inhaled the popcorn fumes, the gas bombs of heat from the furnaces, and his rank, decaying clothes in the hamper.

"I will make you cherry crème pie," I whispered into his translucent face. "I would have settled with the orange grove."

It's the simple but unavoidable facts of existence that really eat you alive, like you are on a Saturday night episode of *Man vs. Food*, and you are that round, untouchable fifty pound hotdog. Then you wonder if you need mustard, if ketchup would be like putting on a pair of sweat-pants and relish a mini skirt.

They rot your teeth, the facts. They get between the cracks of your molars and laugh at you from that dark place with bits of last year's sirloin. The whipped cream makes it sweet, but then all you can think of is a whipped cream shirt with cherry buttons. We are the sundae, a cold and heavy sweetness. They are the facts of life that you eat, slurp, swallow, and then gag on until you die. Being thirty-eight makes me feel like I'm thirty-eight, not one hundred and eight or twenty-four, but thirty-eight.

"I need glasses," I said to Stewart. I flipped the channel with the fluidness of years of practice. I nibbled on the crust of my "how-do-you" sandwich. "We are all still young," said a man from the *History Channel*. "We should eat more lima beans," said the chef on *Food Network*. "You will grow older waiting for me, but I will never grow older waiting for you," he said five years ago on a Monday night watching Jon Stewart, not believing with one more heartbeat the steak, the one with the A1 sauce, was waiting between the valves. It went through the arteries taking the poor, digested artichoke's money as he clutched his heart like a good movie, before the secondary character dies, mostly in a diner, with a sandwich in the scene.



# Self Portrait C

by Jillian E. Moody



Color Photography

Winter 2011

*Cardinal Sins 25*

# Collapse

by Erin Case



Mixed Media

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# Skillet

by Lauren Annette Boulton

The fisherman's wife peered out  
from her  
saline-stained oversink window,  
submerging the charred black  
skillet.

She was waiting  
for his vitric vessel to slip into the harbor,  
to hear it turn the gravel,  
to watch him  
emerge from the depths  
with dinner on a stringer  
and a pinch of sugar hidden in his rain coat.

So that if he thought  
(as he often did)  
with his hands in his long pockets,  
and then  
brought a pensive index to his lips,  
he could taste  
the thoughts of her, the sweetness  
to which he sailed,  
over the bitterness of the sea.

# The Problem with Speed Dating

by Pete Stevens

Nicknames are like herpes. You never know where you got one, and once you have it, it's with you for life. We called him the Rowdy Saudi, and my former roommate was neither rowdy nor Saudi. He was a dope-eyed Pakistani from Detroit.

And he had stoned dreams.

My other roommate at the time, Sophie, an ex-ballroom dancer with spectacular thighs, would splash water, turn up the stereo, and whip the Rowdy Saudi on his ass with a section of rubber hose. Together we'd pull on his arms and legs, attempting to drag him from slumber.

"Why go to bed right after smoking?" we'd ask. "You're just wasting good bud."

"Not so," he'd say with a fat little finger tapping the top of his skull. "Stoned dreams."

Sophie and I pushed the Rowdy Saudi to describe these stoned dreams. Between tokes, he'd lean in close and bring us into his world. He spoke of freefalling naked off tall buildings, the rush of air licking every inch of exposed skin. He told us about the time he played volleyball with a giraffe and lost. He told us about the baby oil, the ball-gag, and the ballerina. He spoke of dense jungles and knives the size of sailboats. Everything was better in a stoned dream, and anything was possible.

When Sophie and I were alone, we gushed jealousy. There were tightened fists and pillows punched. Why hadn't we heard of this before? Who's heard of such nonsense? Fuck that motherfucker.

Secretly, I'd get blazed and fall asleep. Nothing. Never.

Eventually, we moved out and drifted apart, but I refused to give up hope. I continued to believe that one day I'd experience a stoned dream.

Last night I ran into the Rowdy Saudi at a singles' mixer. I hadn't seen him in years, and after my fourth vodka-cranberry, I asked him if he still had stoned dreams. He said that he'd never had a stoned dream—it was all a ruse. The lazy bastard just wanted to be left alone to nap. I staggered backwards in disbelief, my empty glass crashing to the floor. His revelation shook me to the core. It was like the time I sat alone on a riverbank and watched my horse slowly drown. Or the time a nurse at the clinic, a nurse who bore an unfortunate resemblance to my ex-wife, told me I had herpes.

# Faced with Fur

by Erin Case



Collage

# Matchstick Girl

by H. Hall

The little girl was dressed and ready for church before anyone else was awake. She'd picked out her favorite blue dress, the one her mother had given her for her birthday the year before. Then, the little girl wrapped a white ribbon around her unbrushed red curls and tied the best bow a six-year-old could manage. She left her bedroom and tiptoed down the hallway towards her father's study. He'd been called into work a few days before, and the girl would always sneak into his office while he was away and look for knick knacks to play with.

Once she made it safely into the room, she'd walk over to his desk and pull open the top drawer. Inside was a shiny, metal cigar case that was engraved with the words, "US Navy, Commanding Officer, 1940." It was a gift given to him when he was stationed in Oahu, Hawaii one year ago, right before Christmas. The family moved from the cold temperatures of Montana to the state where the coldest day was still spent at the beach or in the park. The little girl loved living there, as did the rest of her family. Whenever she had time to herself, she would spend it playing outside in the large, open field where sugarcane was once harvested.

Beside the cigar case was a small white box. The little girl took the box out of the drawer and slid the top off, revealing a collection of tiny, wooden matchsticks. Her eyes widened, and she smiled as though she'd discovered a small treasure. Quickly, she stuffed the box into one of the pockets on the front of her dress and hurried out of her father's office. She tiptoed back down the hallway and into the kitchen. She opened the sliding glass door that led to her backyard and, closing the door behind her, stepped out into the brightness of the early morning.

She ran past her swing set and the two palm trees that stood on each side of the lawn until she reached the field. The grass faded, and the harsh ground of the field scratched the bottom of her bare feet, but she didn't seem to notice. The little girl tilted her head up at the sun, smiling with her eyes closed as she breathed in the warm morning air. A moment later, she sat on the ground and began to dig with her hands until she reached the cool, dark soil underneath. Once she made a small, circular clearing, she pulled the box of



matchsticks from her pocket. Sticking them into the ground, side by side, she began to build a house from the matches. She arranged them, ever so carefully, until she had built four, tiny walls. Then, the little girl laid five more matchsticks across the tops of the others, creating a roof for the house.

To finish the tiny replica of her home, she stuck the four remaining matches into the ground in front of the house: one for her mother, her father, herself, and her new baby brother who was due in the spring. The little girl sat back admiring her creation. Suddenly, an airplane zoomed across the field; it flew so fast and so low that it sent a small quake through the ground beneath her. The matchsticks quivered, wobbling in an upwards motion until they were no longer steadied in the soil. They fell in unison, collapsing in a pile in the middle that now resembled a campfire instead of her house.

At the same moment that the matchsticks toppled, the strong gust of wind that the plane had created took the little girl's ribbon from her hair and swept it up, carrying it away in the direction the plane had gone. It twirled and coiled as it flew helplessly through the air. Finally, it caught on some shrubbery at the end of the field, attaching itself to the thorny branches. The ribbon continued to whip around in the air, flapping like a tiny, white flag that had surrendered itself to the plane's powerful winds.



# Look What I Found!

by Libby Booth



Acrylic on Canvas

Winter 2011

*Cardinal Sins 33*

# Swings

by Kassie Smith



Watercolor

# A Carving

by Tyler Germain

A tired, old man lowered his aching body to the front porch step of his weathered house. As he sat, dirty sweat ran down his coffee-black forehead and gathered on thick eyebrows like a stream slowed by a dam. He wiped his brow with the dark side of hands that were calloused, cracking, and dry. This morning—which could have been any morning—was spent splitting wood from the old black walnut tree next to the dusty drive leading to the man's home. It had been dying for some time now, becoming an eyesore and giving no shade.

The morning air was thick and hot in the man's lungs as he drew it in and blew it out. On the wall next to him, an old, round thermometer hung from a rusty nail. The red arm that pointed to the temperature had been following the same, slow arc of the sun all morning, inching closer to its peak with every passing hour. He gave the thermometer a long, slow look and sighed. At the man's feet lay a log left unsplit, set aside for carving. The rest of the tree was split and stacked, ready to burn.

Pressing dirty palms down firmly onto the knees of worn Dungarees, the man forced his body upright. Every joint creaked like the porch step as he stood. He walked across the porch, every step a chore, to collect his carving tools. Inside an old trunk was a makeshift pouch that held his chisels and knives; next to it, mallets and stones. Each tool had its own pocket sewn into the material—the same material as the jeans he wore—into which they snugly fit. He brought the pouch back to the step and laid it out flat at his side. Then he grabbed a mallet and the biggest chisel he owned and chunked off pieces of walnut, forming the log into shape.

Slipping a small round chisel from the denim pouch, the man worked. He started slowly, taking small pieces of dried wooden flesh from the log, scooping them out like melon. They fell to the floor and landed quietly around his feet. His face, showing wrinkles of both age and concentration, was inches from his work. Shavings from the wood collected in his patchwork beard, flaking the black hair with white, like pepper, fresh-cracked and coarse. There were pieces on his hands and nose and eyebrows, too. Every crack, every line he made was cut with careful precision as he carved on the piece of the dead tree. For hours,

he changed chisels and stones without taking his eyes from the work, pausing only to wipe sweat from his forehead, leaving dust from the back of his hand in its place.

Once he finished carving, the man stood, rubbing bent-twig fingers against wiry facial hair, to look at his work. He carved himself. Every detail was accounted for: every line, every bump, every scar on his face. The jaw and chin: rough and scratchy with beard; the cheeks: made to droop, heavy and tired. He looked down upon the eyes he had carved. From the corners of them came crow's feet, jagged and deep. Under them hung tired bags that almost rolled down the whole of the face like melted wax. The man slid his crooked fingers from his beard to his eyes and touched the wrinkles around them. He had carved them exactly as they were on his flesh.

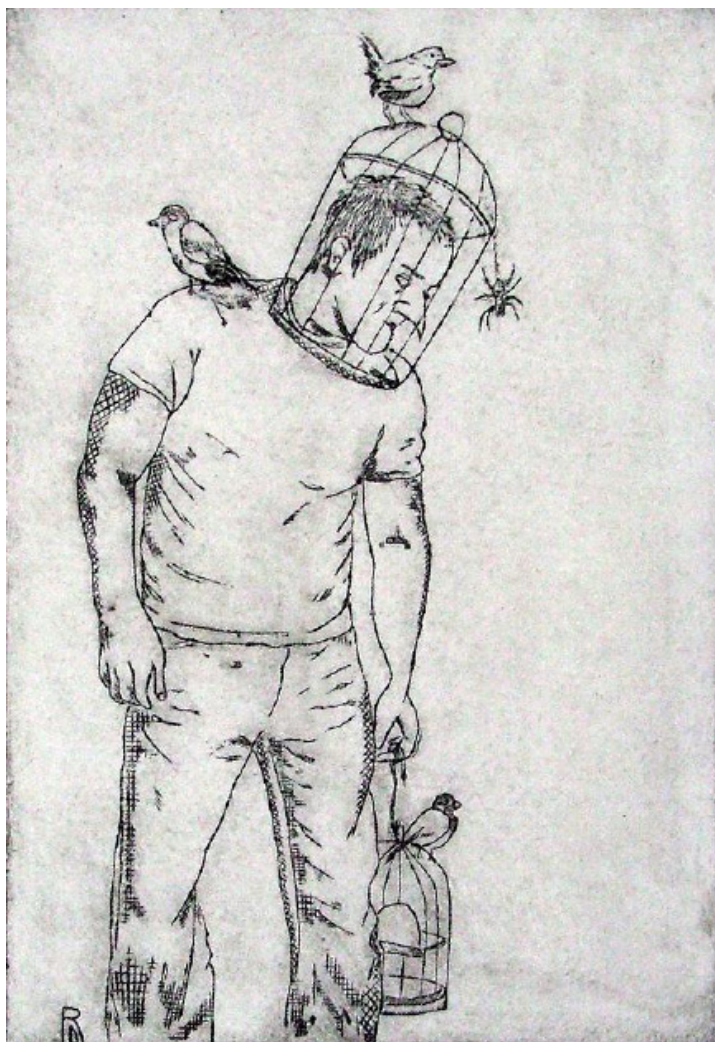
The man sighed a deep sigh as he lowered himself off the porch, collecting himself atop each step on the way down. With stiff limbs, he walked to the wood he'd split earlier that morning and leaned on his forearms against the neatly stacked pile. His head hung down, and a couple drops of sweat fell from his brow and landed on his dark hands. He grabbed a few of the logs, threw them in a pile, set them on fire, and walked back to the porch.

He sat for several minutes watching the fire at a distance, then looked again at the immaculate carving next to him.

It took nearly all the strength that was left in his body to pick the carving up. He almost lost his balance on the way down the stairs, the weight of the wood working with gravity to keep him from standing straight. He felt the heat of the fire on his skin as he approached the flames. He stood a few feet away. All the joints of his body jerked and clunked like a rusty machine when he strained to throw the carving on the fire. It crashed and cracked when it hit the pile, and embers flew into the air as the fire popped and snapped; the effort it took to hurl the carving sent the man lumbering backward. He rubbed away the dust and dirt from his arms and wiped it on his jeans. Then he watched the towering flames and billowing smoke, and he listened to the crackling wood. He stood for a long time, and the fire was hot on his face.

# I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

by Robert Darabos



Etching

Winter 2011

*Cardinal Sins 37*



# Ode to Manet: The Bar on Tittabawassee

by Nicole Turner



Black & White Photography

# Fifty-Three Percent

by Josh Crummer

So I sat in a  
coffeehouse drinking tea, thinking deeply, when  
a passerby transformed my tray into trebuchet;

napkins and empty cup  
dead as leaves on my lap. I fired back *Hey watch what you're  
doing*, though I knew it was an accident, and remarks about

her pastel plaid surfaced  
too slow—her stride, my cranial sloth were no match.  
Spiked brunette, a slim beacon down in front—

this modern mix of  
*Tank Girl* and *Ellen* orders coffee for two. Beside the counter,  
an old man reads pie charts in a *USA Today* headline:

*Fifty-three Percent  
of the Population is Female in America*, boldface in  
passion pink. Betwixt the statistic my fellow bachelors

are catalogued; statements  
supplement fact revealing female partners on the rise. I'd stain  
it with my tea—or better yet, reshape it to triangle. History:

*the term lesbian  
comes from the Greek isle of Lesbos, a nod to Sappho's poetry  
outlasting antiquity. Her passion for women transcended bearded*

*and Atlas bodies—  
a connection forged outside Grecian status quo.*  
Some thousand years later, her daughters snicker quietly

at my Chamomile trousers.  
Or maybe not yet; my misfortune, bottled  
and stored, might be shared in music hall monologues

or campus safe zones.  
Maybe I'll reprise in hazy reception speeches at their  
Boston wedding. But for now, pastel plaid and *Tank Girl's* eyes

exile everything outside  
their table. This coffeehouse, a Mona's 440: male  
patronage, dollars in Euro economy. My cold bedside,

permanent pants stain, Sappho's  
high-wall daughters, every lonely bachelor in the nation:  
*Will my story outlast antiquity?*



# Elderberry Hands 2

by Abigail Garlick



Color Photography

Winter 2011

*Cardinal Sins* 41

# Eye of the Beholder

by Tiffany Hammond



Watercolor

42 *Cardinal Sins*

Winter 2011

# Bruise Me Lima Bean Green

by Brandy Abraham

I can't say that my memory of history class was all that good, mostly because I was fifteen wishing I were eighteen, or more likely because lunch gnawed at me like some vicious monster roaring in disagreement with Mr. Dean's discussion of the Underground Railroad.

He tried to make it simple, but really, he made it funny. Mr. Dean couldn't be taken seriously, not because he wore tennis shoes with his off-black dress pants, but because of his way of referring to history using football. "Hike! And then Parks passed it to King, and with a slam dunk Kennedy wins the game!"

"Mr. Dean, isn't that basketball?" I remember someone asking.

"Think of it as a mixtape," he said, "except with sports." It was 2001; we listened to CDs.

It is only now that I can imagine the sound their feet must have made as they ran through the bramble in that hopeful desperation. I guessed I was a slow learner and that history ached me in a way that made my feet click too as I ran down the hall of the single-story elementary school, caught between the bramble of people.

An assignment for class, when I was only six, was to draw people from across the world. I was six. I drew purple and green people. Their faces were similar to the white static of the buzzing home-room T.V. screen. A fellow classmate, a small bookish girl with glasses that consumed her face, called them bruised people, green-blue bruised people. It was only much later, after I missed a monkey bar handle and fell to what I thought surely would be my death, that I ended up with a massive bruise that turned an odd shade of green. I looked like a Martian, but really, I was just bruised.

At fifteen, in a sea of Polish and German, scrawny and thin "white kids," I have a feeling no one actually got it. I have a feeling that they still don't.

We read Langston Hughes but never tried to feel what *they* felt or wear *their* shoes. I bought a pair of shoddy work boots when I was eighteen. They made my toes blister; the red warmth was not at

all refreshing, but bearable. I felt the pain of the cotton workers in their shoddy shoes, how their feet must have hurt. Later on, long into summer, I believed that knowing history was doing history. Sometime after, I ran barefoot for miles across our open field, back and forth, trying not to remember where the stones were so that, occasionally, I could leap over them. I picked blackberries and cut my fingers on the small thorns. With the sharp side of a broom, I vacuumed my room.

That summer, the brilliant sun had beat me down and made my skin a darker shade than my original Polish complexion. The soles of my feet were rubbed raw into a warm red, but the running made them stronger, heavier, and less bourgeois. My room never maintained its cleanliness. My skin is again that pale paste, like an uncolored picture book, but my feet have never lost that wear and redness.

Though I was six when I drew "People of the World," I drew them all with brown curly hair, with squiggles and roundness much like my own, and their skin was a sing-song of color. I failed the assignment. I never drew people, only myself, all with that same happy stick-figure grin. I thought I was drawing the world, because at six, we all hold that certain innocence.

# Rub It In

by Erin Case



Collage

Winter 2011

*Cardinal Sins 45*

# Double Exposure of a Man

by Tosha Lijewski



Black & White Photography

46 *Cardinal Sins*

Winter 2011

# The Speaker of the Poem

by Marlin M. Jenkins

Smooth, slicing words; syllables  
like cylinders that align cartridges  
or power steam locomotives.  
Precision, Panic,  
punching like fists  
or three-hole punches  
that allow Trapper Keepers  
to hold sheets together.

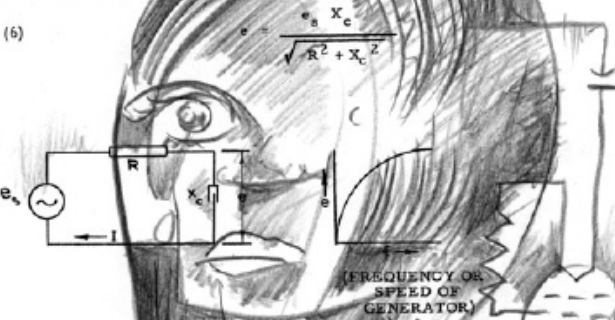
Stanzas and similes that stab  
like knives. That stab like her knife.  
That sting like her gash.  
That beat like her chest did.  
That bleed like her pen.

# Business Woman

by Mike Mosher

- 6 -

at point A in Figure 4. That is, the curve of volts vs. speed is to be flat at high speeds and steep at low speeds with a gradual transition between the two extremes. The effect of variable frequency on the voltage drop across resistance in a resistance-capacitance circuit provides this trend. That is, considering the circuit of Figure 6 it is seen that the voltage,  $e$ , as arrived at using equation



Generation of Non-Linear Signal  
Figure 6

takes the characteristic shown graphically as the speed of the generator is varied. Note that the slope (of volts per unit speed increment) is steep at low speeds and flat at high speeds as required.

By rectifying the voltage  $e$  and using this in place of the straight generator voltage in the circuit of Figure 5, it is seen that a curve approximating that shown as the required curve in Figure 4 may be obtained.

In actual practice, a low power A. C. tachometer generator is used in conjunction with a low power, rectified, regulated, adjustable reference voltage with the resultant acting as a grid signal input to a thyatron type power and voltage amplifier. This complete, although basic electronic tension control circuit appearing in Figure 7 serves to provide constant tension in the face of roll diameter build-up ratios as high as 10:1 with errors in tension held to a few percent.

An analysis of the required characteristics of a center-pulling brake involving speed and torque are the same as those described in the foregoing. Thus, the Eddy Current brake with associated control achieves similar results in its applications.

*Businesswoman*

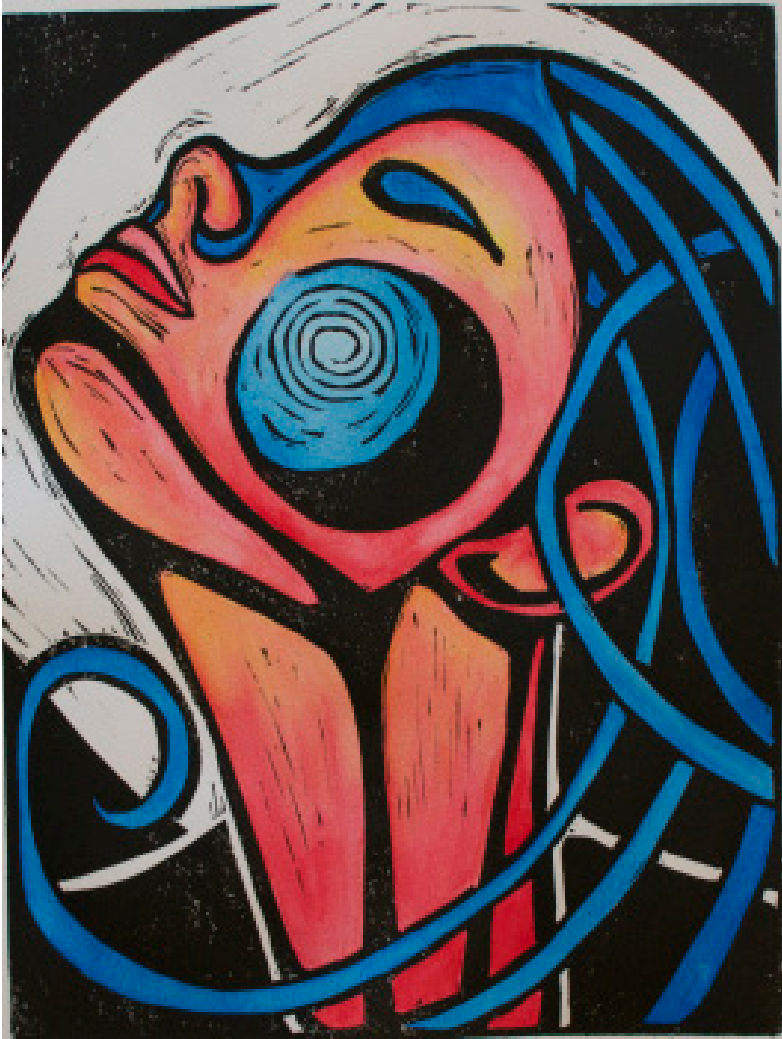
16. 6. 10

Black & White Artwork



# Luna

by Kait Harris



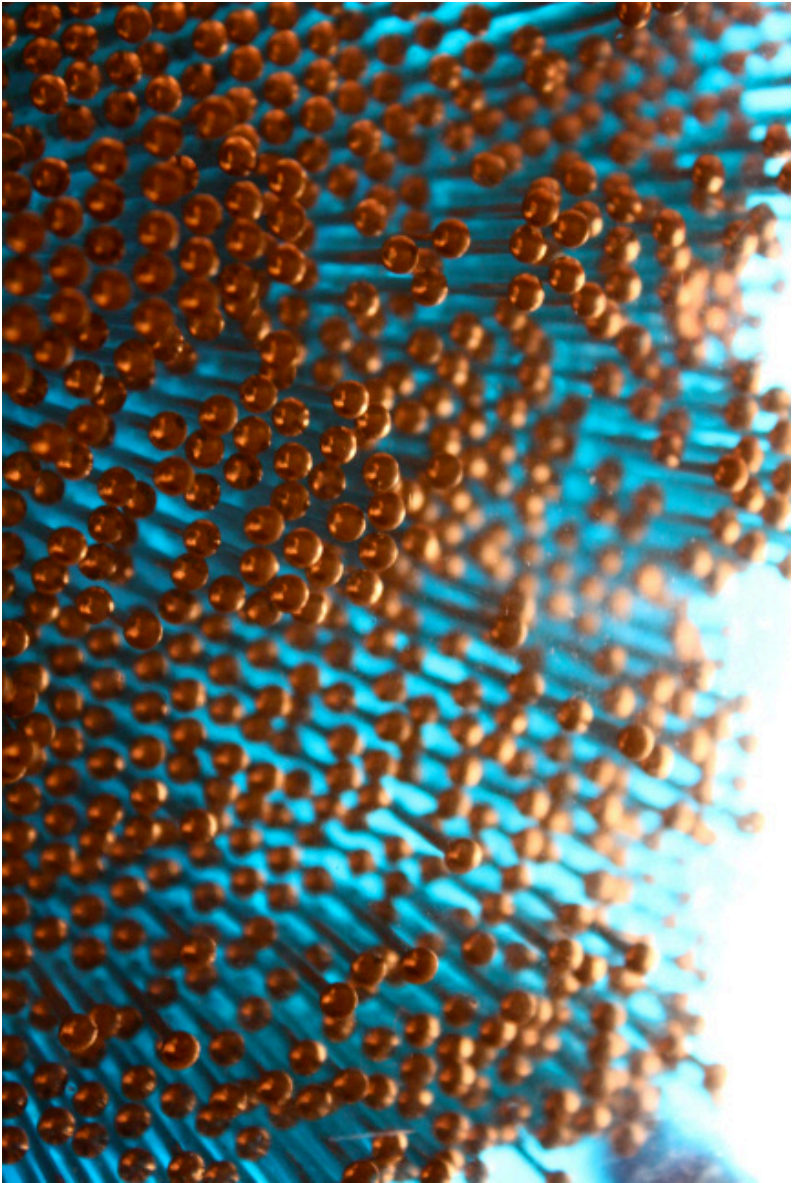
Linoleum Block Print with Watercolor

Winter 2011

*Cardinal Sins 49*

# Emergence

by Tyler Beyett



Color Photography

50 *Cardinal Sins*

Winter 2011

# Absolutely Bursting

by Pete Stevens

“It feels good to feel good.”

“It feels good—to feel good. I like it.”

Two men sat apart from one another. The doctor held a yellow note pad, and Mark was hungry for taco salad.

“Tell me about a time when you felt good about yourself, a time before Nicole entered the picture.”

“Alright. She came in every week, and she always dressed in the brightest colors. Yellows with orange and red, blues with green and purple—the colors so vibrant.”

“You had an emotional reaction to this woman’s attire?”

“No. I’m telling you because the colors reflected her personality. She was probably in her fifties, could’ve been in her sixties, and she was gorgeous. I always wondered how she looked when she was young. And here’s the thing: she was the kindest woman I’d ever met. She came in every week to shop and say hello. In the presence of such purity, my foul nature covered.”

The doctor’s pen raced across his notepad. “This woman’s religion intimidated you?”

“No. Her spirit touched me. And I’m not a religious man in the slightest. She came in one day, and she was walking with a cane. She said her hip was busted. I could see how much pain she was in, and I wanted desperately to take that pain away. Without hesitation I said, ‘The Lord is with you. God bless.’ And when she looked at me, I could see the wetness in her eyes. She said, ‘Thank you, thank you so very much, and may God’s blessings be with you.’ After she said those words, Doc, it was like I was exposed to genuine love for the first time. And I’ve never been able to replicate that feeling, not even with Nicole.”

Halting his notations, the doctor set his pad of paper on the table. “Have you considered attending the faith-based services here at the facility?”

Mark leaned back and closed his eyes. “No. Never gave it a thought.”

"You should give it some consideration. I can see you have a desire to help others. You've spoken previously about Nicole and her cutting. I'd like to go there."

There was a lapse in the conversation. Mark twisted in his seat, shifting his weight, unable to gain comfort. "The worst was when I opened the bathroom to smears of red, little puddles streaked by palms and fingertips. I mean, the girl I loved was leaking out one cut at a time. She always found a razor. I'd hide them, and she'd find them."

The doctor sat in an overstuffed leather chair, and he motioned for Mark to continue.

"You know, everybody is stealing from everybody, and I was stealing time with her. Trust me, Doc. On the surface, there was love. Underneath that love—I knew she'd escape. I was out of my league."

"When you say your girlfriend escaped, what do you mean exactly?"

"She left me for our coke dealer."

The doctor tapped his pen on the pad of paper before scribing more notes. And it wasn't the analyzing of his life that bothered Mark—it was the doctor's canvas sneakers and blue jeans.

"You've mentioned previously the role drugs played in your relationship. Is it fair to say they ruined your relationship?"

"The whole thing was doomed from the start."

"Well, looking back, how do you see the drugs affecting your time with Nicole?"

"She never had a problem falling asleep. She'd pass out while I'd grit my teeth, our room slowly filling with morning light. It drove me crazy—that light. I knew I had to be at work at eight, and still I never got more than four hours sleep. And that's not all, we'd go weeks without intimacy. I blamed the lack of sex on my lack of sleep. She blamed it on the coke." Mark's head lowered and collapsed into his hands. "Yeah, I'd say the cocaine ruined our relationship. But then again, if it wasn't for the blow, there might not have

been a relationship. And yeah, the whole thing was doomed. So basically, I have no idea.”

Reaching for the glass of water waiting on a wooden table to his right, Mark took in the casual attire worn by the doctor. The unprofessionalism irritated him. He pictured the young doctor in college luring women with talk of helping your fellow man. Holding these women in bed, he’d tell them about the day when he’d finally become a doctor—a psychiatrist. And these young lovers would laugh and laugh together at the thought of all the future losers and all their loser problems.

“I don’t mean to be rude, Doc, but how old are you?”

“Will my age affect your treatment?”

“Actually, your Chuck Taylors are affecting my treatment.”

“We’re all about creating an open environment here. You can understand the importance of comfort during a process like this. I dress how I’d naturally dress. And I’m thirty-three.”

Mark was thirty-seven.

“When she left me, I kept Nicole’s panties—thongs, boy-shorts, g-strings—all of it. I have one of her thongs in a thick plastic bag, and the bag is in my room—at the bottom of my suitcase—right now. And all I can think about is your damn shoes and the fact that you’re smarter, richer, and better looking than me.”

“Why keep the panties?”

“I smell ‘em and jack off. It’s in those moments, leading towards orgasm, when my memory of her is most vivid. And well, you know, I like to sniff panties.”

“Interesting.”

“Interesting? Come on; you can do better than that. Dig deeper.”

The doctor took a drink. Mark took a drink. There were two glasses, one half

full—the other half empty.

“I can’t allow you to keep her panties in your room.”

“What about the ‘open environment?’”

“Positive openness, negativity must be channeled away.”

“You’re not getting my panties.”

“You can give them to me when you’re ready. Remember, we’re here to help you. If you choose not to participate, well, we’re just bullshitting.”

“On that note, Doc, I’m heading back to my room. Maybe tomorrow will be the day.”

\* \* \*

One foot after another pressed into the carpet. Mark relished the sensation of the fibers pushing up between his toes. In reading his insurance policy handbook, a task he’d never done in the past, Mark discovered his coverage provided for up to thirty days in a rehab facility. It could be for the treatment of an addiction or mental dysfunction. He aimed to work the system, to exercise his rights as a valued employee. If he managed to get the residue of Nicole out of his head in the process, it’d be for the better. He walked in a circle. Squish—release. Squish—release. The fibers, they pushed up between his toes. After going round and round for an hour, the trail of his circle broke off and led him into the day-room.

A quick scan left him two options: he could talk with Sheila, the manic-depressive, or Ben, the chronic masturbator.

Sticky juices ran over the strong fingers of Ben The Masturbator as he peeled back the skin of an orange. When Mark sat down, a slice was offered, and he politely declined.

“So, how you doing, Ben?”

“Fine.”

"That's good."

"Yup," Ben said. "You still sick about that broad you lost?"

Woody Creek Rehabilitation holds no secrets.

"Sort of, I guess."

"I got dumped one time."

"Yeah?"

"Because I ate an expired egg salad sandwich."

There was a pause while Mark wrestled with the statement. "What?"

"She dumped me."

Ben slid another dripping slice into his mouth.

"Because you ate an expired sandwich?"

"Yup."

"Seriously?"

"She said it displayed a lack of judgment."

"Well, she was probably right. But still, that's rough."

"It wasn't even expired much—a day, maybe two."

"Two? You ate a two-day expired egg salad sandwich?"

"It was forty-percent off."

"Did you tell her that? She should've at least respected your shrewd sense with money."

"Yeah, I told her. She said it made it even worse."

"Are you sure it wasn't the, uh, you know..." Mark balled his hand into a fist and rhythmically pumped it back and forth. A shy-boy grin took form across Ben's lips, and both men had a laugh. Before long, Mark grew tired of the conversation and retreated back to his room. There, he pulled out the plastic bag with Nicole's thong and resumed his circling. He didn't open the bag, however. He knew every time he opened the bag it would lose a bit of its magic.

\* \* \*

The pleasure Mark received when he saw the doctor in chinos and leather loafers should not be mitigated. Pleasure—"feeling good"—was a motto to live by, according to the good people at Woody Creek. And the thought of his offhand remark affecting the doctor this way was pleasing indeed. Today could be the day, Mark thought, the day for progress.

"I like the new look, Doc."

"Thank you. I have meetings this afternoon."

"Interesting."

"Well, not exactly, I prefer the one-on-one interaction with residents over budget meetings any day." The doctor reassessed his outfit and brushed an imaginary speck of dirt off his knee. "Shall we begin?"

"Let's do it."

"Yesterday you touched on your feelings of sympathy and futility in regards to Nicole and her self mutilation. I'd like to start there."

The lighting in the room was low, and the overstuffed furniture was unreasonably comfortable.

"Hey, would you mind if I just lay on the floor while we talk?"

"Sure," the doctor said. "Do what comes naturally."

Down against the carpet—amongst the fibers—Mark felt relief. "When she cut herself, I felt horrible, like it was my fault. It seemed to hurt me worse



than it hurt her.”

“I believe your desire to help Nicole has a direct correlation to your story about the religious woman. You want to help others to the point you neglect to help yourself.”

“Doc, I came here for selfish reasons—a vacation. I want help myself. And I’m beginning to think narcissism is underrated.”

“A certain level of self-indulgence is healthy. Why did you want to help Nicole? How was she able to earn your sympathies?”

“It was the best year of my life. I was ten years her senior, yet she was the one teaching me.” Mark forced his body deeper into the fibers. “I’d been going through the motions, and she broke me out of my funk. I was the type of man content with work and simple leisure. I ate the same shit every day. I did the same shit every day. With her, I was eating sushi and snorting coke and dancing—dancing! I still can’t believe I went dancing.”

“And when she cut herself, you felt responsibility?”

“No. It’s just my nature to help, always has been.”

“And now it’s time to focus on yourself.”

Mark’s eyes were closed, and he could feel the soft caress of the carpet’s fibers on the back of his neck. “In Japan, you can buy used panties from a vending machine. They put a picture of the girl who wore the panties right on the box. I mean, you don’t want just anybody’s used panties.”

“No, I suppose you wouldn’t.”

“I mean, damn. Think of the convenience.”

The doctor continued, in vain, to poke, prod, and examine. Oblivious to the doctor’s frustration, Mark was happy to discuss the sexual perversions of the Japanese and the current offerings at the facility’s cafeteria.

\* \* \*

A knock on Mark's door brought him out of a daydream. His face was flush with the carpeting, and a small pool of drool had collected under his cheek. Again, there was a knock on his door.

"Come in!"

"What are you doing on the floor?"

"Nothing. What's up, Ben?"

"Just wanted to say hello, see how you were doing."

Peeling himself away from the grip of the fibers, leaving the residue behind, Mark got to his feet and sat next to Ben on the edge of his bed.

"You know, I feel great. And you?"

"Fine, fine."

"Let me ask you something. How do you feel about the Doc wearing jeans and Chuck Taylors?"

Looking down, Ben examined the constellation of stains on his sweatpants.

"What do I care? I've been to a couple of these places now, and Doctor Thompson is one of the best."

"Have you cut down on the five-knuckle-shuffle?"

"Nah, it's too much fun."

"What's the point of being here if we aren't getting better?"

"I'm here to shut my wife up. When she caught me with the cantaloupe, it was the last straw—again. Honestly, it's just nice to get out of the house."

"Yeah."

"It'd be nice to take a vacation, really get away."

"This is my vacation," Mark said.

"Nah, I mean a no-one-knows-where-you-are vacation."

Mark brought both hands, with fingers splayed wide, up over his forehead and back through his hair. "How about Japan?"

"Yeah, sure, whatever."

"They have these vending machines... actually." Mark dug through his suitcase, pulled out the plastic bag with Nicole's thong, and handed it to Ben. "Check it out."

Ben's fingers manipulated the underwear through the plastic. "You mind?"

"What?"

"Can I smell?"

"Sorry, I need them ripe as possible."

"Hey, I understand."

"I bet you do."

"What's up with the vending machines?"

"Used panties. Vending machines. Japan. Twenty-four-hour convenience."

"Those Japanese, they're the sick bastards."

"I know," said Mark, grinning. "It's perfect."

\* \* \*

Peering at his patient, the doctor sat engulfed in his leather chair. Mark, however, did not lay on the floor per usual. Instead, he paced restlessly in front of the doctor. The calculations had been made. He'd been stockpiling time and knew there were fifty-five days of paid vacation waiting. And Ben was right, he needed to get away. Four days at Woody Creek were enough.

"Doc, I'm gone."

"You're gone?"

Mark's hands flashed with accentuation. "I'm leaving." Flash. "Today." Flash. "Right now."

"Mark, be serious. Is this a joke?"

"No joke."

"You're scared."

"Yeah, I've never been on an overseas flight."

"You're scared to face yourself, to help yourself."

"Doc, fuck off."

"Fuck off?" The doctor jumped to his feet and stood before Mark. "You're nothing but a coward, a child playing games."

"Keep that tone, Doc, and I won't be inviting you. The Japanese are known for top quality denim. I'll get panties, and you can buy new jeans."

"What are you getting at?"

"Japanese vacation."

The doctor immediately went into his retort. Mark wasn't hearing it. Walking out of the office, Mark envisioned himself in the near future. His smile would beam like a rising sun. Striding through the Tokyo night, a kaleidoscope of neon bleeding across his vision, he'd go straight to the vending machines, with two pockets overflowing—absolutely bursting—with change.

# O.M.G.

by Libby Booth



Mixed Media on Cardboard

Winter 2011

Cardinal Sins 61

# Prosthetics

by Timothy Edward Bauer



Color Photography

62 *Cardinal Sins*

Winter 2011

# Non-Resident Indian

by Christopher Sweet

Memories of home displace your present situation of life. Hardly any time is lent for you to adjust to the absence of food from your mother's hands.

*Aalu gobi* replaced with salads,

*Daal* and *roti* replaced with cheap, plastic pizza.

Your flat sings with the smuggled joy of Kishore Kumar while outside rock 'n' roll screeches its presence, unwilling to be ignored. Your mind fumbles with new-found English, syllables awkwardly clanging on your tongue, unlike the umbilical familiarity of Hindi. America was different to you as a *bachcha*.

But you are here now, brown, *desi* man from Delhi, with childhood still slightly here, and only one question remains written over your thoughts:

*Kya karna?*

What to do?

Though there are more smiles and frowns here (Not like home at all, you think), the clattering traffic reminds you of Chandni Chowk.

All your needs met in a roadside *dhaba*,

and an after-meal *paan* from a *paanwallah*,

the rattlings of thick traffic mixing with the *mélange* of mutters of Panjabi and Hindi.

But now the only sounds you hear are the the results of your mistake in this foreign land: green light.

The heckle at your hesitance from behind:

"Bastard Dothead, just GO!"

Your moment of nostalgia is wadded, shredded by a raised middle finger and snarling eyes.

You cannot say anything; the languages rattle in your mind:

English—a lazy guitar strum

Hindi—a throbbing *tabla* thrum

And you wonder when you will go back.

Memories of America displace your present situation of life. Hardly any time is lent for you to adjust to the absence of food from that old Greek restaurant.

Salads replaced with *aalu gobi*,

five-dollar pizza replaced with *daal* and *roti*.

Your parents' flat sings with Radio Ceylon,

while outside filmi pop music booms its presence, unwilling

to be ignored. Your mind fumbles with old-found Hindi, syllables

awkwardly slipping on your tongue, unlike the acquired familiarity of English. India was different to you as a *bachcha*.

But now you are here, brown, *desi* man from Chicago

with childhood still slightly here, and as you feast on forgotten foods,

only one question remains written over your thoughts:

What to do?

*Kya karna?*



# The Tug at Your Sheets

by Erin Case



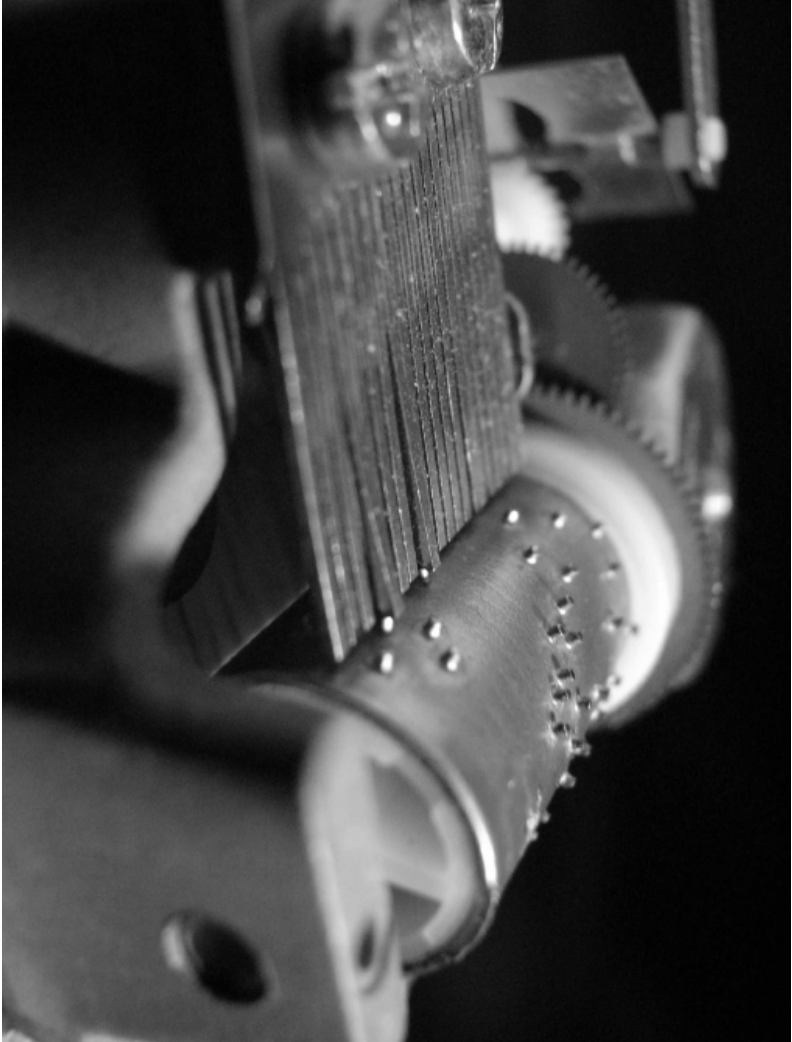
Collage

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# Music Box

by Abigail Garlick



Black & White Photography

# A Work in Progress

by Ray Deeren

I made a mistake.  
Look at me,  
I've made mistakes.

Just like you and you  
and you and you.

But finding that grain of gold  
in all the grains of salt  
makes it all the more sweet  
to say, "I told you

So" glow with me  
in our victory  
as we fall in love with our mistakes.

Cuz when I—and maybe you—are thirty,  
we'll still be learning.  
And when I'm forty—just like you—  
I'll still be working.  
And when I'm fifty,  
we'll all be tired.  
And when I'm sixty,  
hell, ain't none of us are  
going to be able to retire.

So again, let's bask in the  
waning sunlight—  
No

—wait—

Let's rave and rage  
and sing and screw  
and run and fall  
and do all that we might  
to not go gentle into  
this, that, or any good night.

So I'll stay awake and  
I'll sip my beer and  
I *will* play tag in the dark.

But I'll also take the shots.  
Glances shot, the flu shot,  
pucks shot, a cheap shot,  
three wise men in a glass  
shot full of holes through what  
I can only glean is a joke.

So, finally, with the coming of that  
ever-happy night  
I can say,  
"Punch drunk?"  
More like,  
"My head hit the pavement drunk."

# Union 5

by Kassie Smith



Black & White Photography

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# Dandelion

by Hillary Grigonis

A deep breath, cheeks puff out like gumballs are tucked inside.  
A burst—tiny seeds scatter on their own parachute.

Wind weaves itself in and out of tall silver silos. Hide and Seek.  
She presses her back to cold ridges, staring at the blue sky topping the towers.

He uses one hand to vault over the side of the hay wagon, bales stacked like Legos behind him. Lunch break, a sweating glass of lemonade to wash down a sandwich.

Beach sand's got nothing on long summer grass. Her body creates a shape in green, an indent the grass waves to.

He cradles a glass soda bottle, pinky and thumb on one side.  
Bare feet dangle over the porch rail, a lopsided grin.

A mutt's pink tongue licks bare feet, wet sandpaper slipping between toes that bend and dance from a giggle.

Hay constructs a fort in the back of a rusty pickup named Herb.  
Two voices tell secrets until Papa needs their walls to feed the cows.

Leaves create a necklace around a bald white head, an empty stem clutched in a girl's hand as she spins, singing *Oh my Darling, Oh my Darling*.

# Biographies

Brandy Abraham is currently paying her price for literacy—with washer-washed twenties and years without *Playstation*. Her work is in dedication to her parents and you, the reader.

Peter Brian Barry wants to believe in everything you believe.

Timothy Edward Bauer would prefer not to.

Tyler Beyett is a sophomore majoring in biochemistry. He plans on pursuing a doctorate in biochemistry and hopes to do pharmaceutical research. Besides photography, he enjoys playing video games, cooking, and traveling.

Libby Booth is a dilettante of atrocities, but nobody's looking for a puppeteer in today's wintry economic climate. She learned to steer by the stars, and that the central message of Buddhism isn't every man for himself. With husby Joel's powers combined, they're a policeman.

Lauren Annette Boulton thinks teachers deserve admiration. She would like to thank the faculty of Harrison Community Schools for pouring her foundations and the faculty of SVSU for teacher her how to add stories. She als thanks her mother for being a fantastic educator, in and outside of the classroom.

Tyler Bradley was told to write his name with his biography. This is the result.

Erin Case is a late bloomer who wants to expose herself, but is much better at flashing others.

Josh Crummer cares a lot about disasters, fires, floods and killer bees. When he's not out in Zilwaukee communing with nature, he's writing more poems, playing *Warhammer 40,000*, and living the easy life.

Ray Deeren has what it takes to "Like" everything he does on Facebook. Ray Deeren likes this.

Beth Erbacher often sometimes creativity. This is one of those times.

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.

Abigail Garlick wants to travel the world.

Tyler Germain used to be a cardboard cutout at SVSU, but now he is an English teacher at Benton Harbor High School.

Corey Gilbert is a BFA major, focusing in painting and drawing. His work is developed within the concepts of formalism and various color theories.

Meagan Griffin enjoys a quiet lifestyle drinking *Snapple*, debating with her boyfriend about popular pizza-themed microwave snacks, and browsing *Modcloth* for dresses she'll never be able to afford. But it's nice just to look, right?

Hillary Grigonis will graduate in April with a degree in creative writing and professional and technical writing. As a journalist at a weekly newspaper, her writing has also been recognized by the *Michigan Press Association*. She lives in the country with her husband, a large dog misnamed Peanut, and a very jealous cat.

H. Hall always checks behind the shower curtain for monsters and indulges in storytelling (she means writing) because it's so much better than the real thing.

Tiffany Hammond is a fifth year student and will graduate in December with a Bachelor's of Art focusing on photography with a minor in psychology. She loves taking photographs and learning about new techniques and spending time with her family, fiancé, friends and dog.

Kait Harris is in her fifth year and looking forward to completing her Bachelor's of Fine Arts with a concentration in printmaking.

Katie Head is a junior double majoring in professional and technical writing and philosophy. She enjoys writing for *The Valley Vanguard* and is looking forward to graduating. After taking a year off, she plans on attending Michigan Tech for her masters and/or PhD so that she can fulfill



her dream of being a news editor for a newspaper.

Stephanie Janczewski is in her fourth year at SVSU. She is currently pursuing a Graphic Design major along with an art minor, and will be graduating winter of 2011. Her passion for art is through photography. She would like to thank her friends and family for supporting her along the way.

Marlin M. Jenkins does not mind taking midnight strolls through the Valley of the Shadow of Death because a shadow never really hurt anyone.

Emily Krueger is consistently told that she is an excellent writer, but no one ever sees her writing, so she is baffled as to where these opinions originate.

Tosha Lijewski is an art major/graphic design minor who enjoys all forms of art, especially photography. She can't live without her new iPad2. She would love to travel to Italy one day. She owns her own photography business called *Tosha Cole Photography*.

Joel A. Lewis is a connoisseur of calamity and the self-proclaimed number one collector of fake mustaches in the American Southwest. When he is not shaping young minds, you can find him roaming the hills of Utah in a cowboy hat with his beautiful wife Libby Booth at his side.

Kirsten McIlvenna has seven large freckles on her left arm that form The Big Dipper.

Jillian E. Moody is a unique individual that draws inspiration from the world around her. She will be graduating with a BFA concentration in photography at the end of this semester. She is looking forward to new adventures and challenges in her life.

Mike Mosher is a professor of art/communication & digital media at SVSU. He commands his art students to draw with china markers, because life is too short to erase.

Kelly Reilly still gets a little excited every time she hears an owl. She knows her Hogwarts letter will come any day!

Rachel Schienke is a creative writing and literature junior who cooks for everyone, enjoys solitude, and looks forward to spending summer 2011 playing ukulele in Yellowstone National Park.

Kassie Smith is a graphic design junior with ambitions of graduating with a BFA concentration in ceramics. Although, she has also been considering not graduating at all and just becoming a professional student.

Alex Soares is a fifth year accounting student originally from Brazil. He is also *The Valley Vanguard* business manager and a Writing Center mentor. He strongly believes that beliefs have consequences.

Michael Somers is rather surprised at what can be accomplished with just one to-do list.

Aaron Sopfe is indecisive about indecision.

Pete Stevens would like to give thanks.

Christopher Sweet is an American-born writer and self-taught linguist who is desi (South Asian) in culture and at heart. Never having stepped off of the continent, he still speaks Urdu/Hindi like a native speaker and is infatuated with Indo-Pakistani music, particularly qawwali, bhangra, and Indipop.

Nicole Turner is a senior pursuing her BFA degree in photography. She also accidentally earned her minor in sociology. For Nicole, any day that involves her husband, kids, a camera, and chocolate is a good day.

Jamie Wendorf is a senior, double majoring in literature and Spanish. She watches too much *HGTV*, will always accept a hug, and serenades people in surrounding cars, though they don't usually seem to notice.

Tim Windy felt like quoting one of his new favorite poets, Charlie Sheen. Instead of claiming he has "tiger blood" and "Adonis DNA" or that he is "an F-18, bro" (which Sheen both has and is), Tim decided to use a slightly more obscure quote that properly imparts the kind of wisdom accessible only from Sheen's magical and poetic fingertips: "Work fuels the soul."

# Acknowledgments

I would like to thank all of the people who make *Cardinal Sins* possible: Noah Essenmacher and *The Valley Vanguard*; Kimberly Brandimore Horton, Trish Gohm, and the Student Life Office; Julie Boon and the Student Association; Resident Housing Association; J. J. Boehm and the PJPC; Perry Toyzan, Angela Bublitz, and the Graphics Center; Linda Farynk; Suzette Zimmerman, Emmie Busch, and Jane Anderson; SVSU's English and Art Departments; Alex Soares; President Eric Gilbertson and Cindy Gilbertson; Dr. Donald Bachand and Liana Bachand; Blake Johnson and Tim Canale for promoting our cover design contest; Brian Jackson for designing the cover; Pat Latty and Sharon Opheim; Chris Giroux; Peter Brian Barry; our benefactors; our contributors; and, of course, the dedicated editorial staff.

Also, thank you to those who helped make the Winter 2011 poetry slam a smashing success: the staff of the Magic Bean Cafe; everyone who came out to compete; the judges of the slam; and everyone who came to watch.



Kirsten McIlvenna



# Submission Guidelines

## Entry Requirements

### *All submissions must*

- be accompanied by a completed cover sheet (downloaded from [svsu.edu/cardinalsins/submissions](http://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](mailto:cardinalsins@svsu.edu). Title the email "Fall 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](http://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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