
Cardinal
ART & LITERARY MAGAZINE **SINS.**

Fall ■ 1994

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Cardinal Sins

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all from the tree of knowledge

"My mind is a trash basket. For all of my adult life I have found enjoyment in prowling the back alleys of knowledge in search of trivia, information others have discarded as worthless. For the life of me I couldn't tell you the dates--or is it date?--of the Battle of Marathon. But I can tell you the name of the man who invented the safety pin!"

Bernie Smith, *The Joy of Trivia*

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Hello

Matthew Hill

hello!

flashing red
beeping

l.e.d. displays
with buzzers

are you ibm compatible?

i don't know- i'll fax you the answer.

electronic jungle
a technological nightmare

vast hard green plain
dotted with
the countless hours
of
tech-school graduates

unescapable. . .
wisdom which we created
that now undoubtedly
surpasses us all

error
access denied

alone
i stand shaking
with one hand
on the power cord



Sleep Well
Marker, 8 1/2x11

Bryan Konieczka

Charybdis

Anthony James Phillips

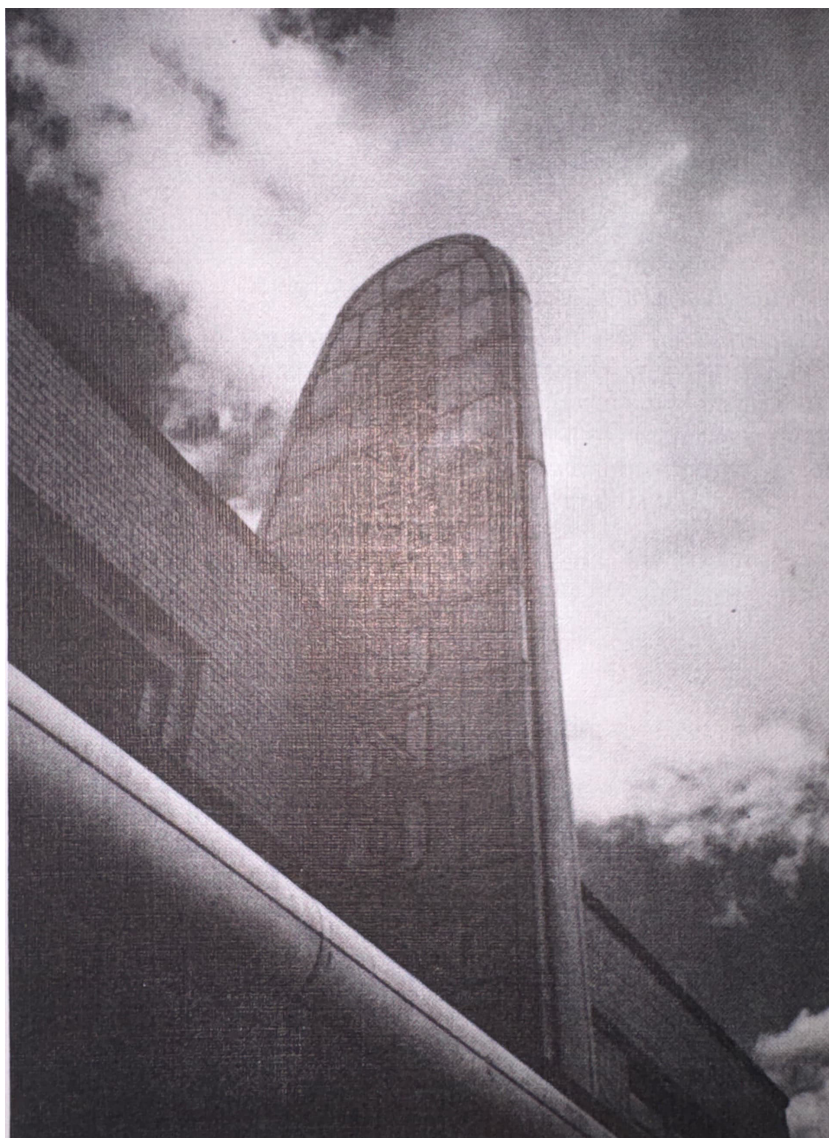
Flurries, surfing January gusts
 Race me to melting deaths
“Hey,
 Lucyl’mHome”
Rattle as my leather falls
Though dark already descended while
 I rounded up errant carts
 In parking lot purgatory
Creak of stairs
 Her descent more casual
 Than my jacket’s and the night’s

We meet in a pile
Buffing fingers over cotton wrapped shoulders--
 Sanding, a fine steel wool
 My dark grains emerge
Exhale
 She to me
Smack--lips arc
Though I stand grounded, on tiles
 Red brick--each to each
 And she didn’t drag her feet
 Over the autumn shag
She stirs the soup--
 Tidalwavehertongue
 Crashes my shore to boil
Though the waters are weary,
 Tranquil about the whirlpool--
 Swirling, gypsy us
“Howwasyourdayatwork?”
 With disinterest and simmer

Quoth the Raven

Joanne Wittbrodt

Finally wishing peace, not worry, I seized my pistols in a hurry
And shot around me in a fury, striving to hit that dreadful boor,
Which while for silence I was pleading, stood there coldly and repeating
In croaking tones and ceaseless bleating that dreadful word of “nevermore.”
I caught it with my seventh shot and felled it finally to the floor.
 Quoth the raven nevermore.



Grey Dey
Color Photograph, 31/2x5

Barry L. Camp

Kafka Dawn

Anthony James Phillips

alarm, grinding grate
clock "American Made"
bought it with star-striping eyes ablaze
in patriotic glaze, in fear of
career opportunities
bottom line is jobs

leave her asleep in the nest
hatchlings lulled under battered wings
fly to the shower, waterfall
bloom the heat over a warming body
cold tiles still burning my heels
sulfur hell would be a blessing
can't turn the heat above 68
bills to pay, tomorrow, late
early bird gets one worm?

turquoise towel wraps like
cheap candy
cheap Indian jewelry
beaded gaudy, peace, love crap
perhaps, had my mom
met my dad,

bad sign

in 1950, under stupid skies

in the mirror, baggy plaid button-up
department twenty, TJ Maxx
category C1931 ... because that's
the year

my mom was born

and she said save a buck
don't shave in your good shirt
never trust the banks

electric razor roars
to life and rips the rain forest from its chin-hill
seventy-five dollars, top-of-the-line
to banish the Sicilian curse
a half weeks pecking--bargain

two babies scream hunger
from one third-hand crib
a two-hour rested balm
her soothing "hi, pretties..."
her purse on the counter
resist the urge to check
the wallet--how much did I give you?
noble coward towers like the grinch
hair cut at home
with orange handled scissors

squeeze of grease
flat iron the sable locks to
locked and sealed turtle shell
wonder what i'd look
like, matching the towel
turquoise around the temples
under fluorescent glare

"hello, handsome" quiet
i whisper, amazed
at the transformation
undergone, tie in place
clipped under the tight
collar of my JohnPierreLauren

oldest of three cymbals
an articulated "mor'ing, mom"
the din recedes with the coming
tide of \$2.69 a can formula

god i hate
these days of struggle and toil
and non-turquoise hair
i scuttle, old spiced roach
flatten me with your pink pumps
your wedding waltzing, heelless dreams
heelless, so you don't rise above
my 5'7" station

cries
whines of "hun'ry"
laughter on rented shingles and a one
year lease

this laughter that rains
like wolves and sabre-tooth
tigers
is an outlier
a discrepancy
perhaps, statistically insignificant
not a geranium
planted for hardiness
near the grave with the epitaph
"worked hard, died young,
by the boot her
broke the strap
on"

perhaps

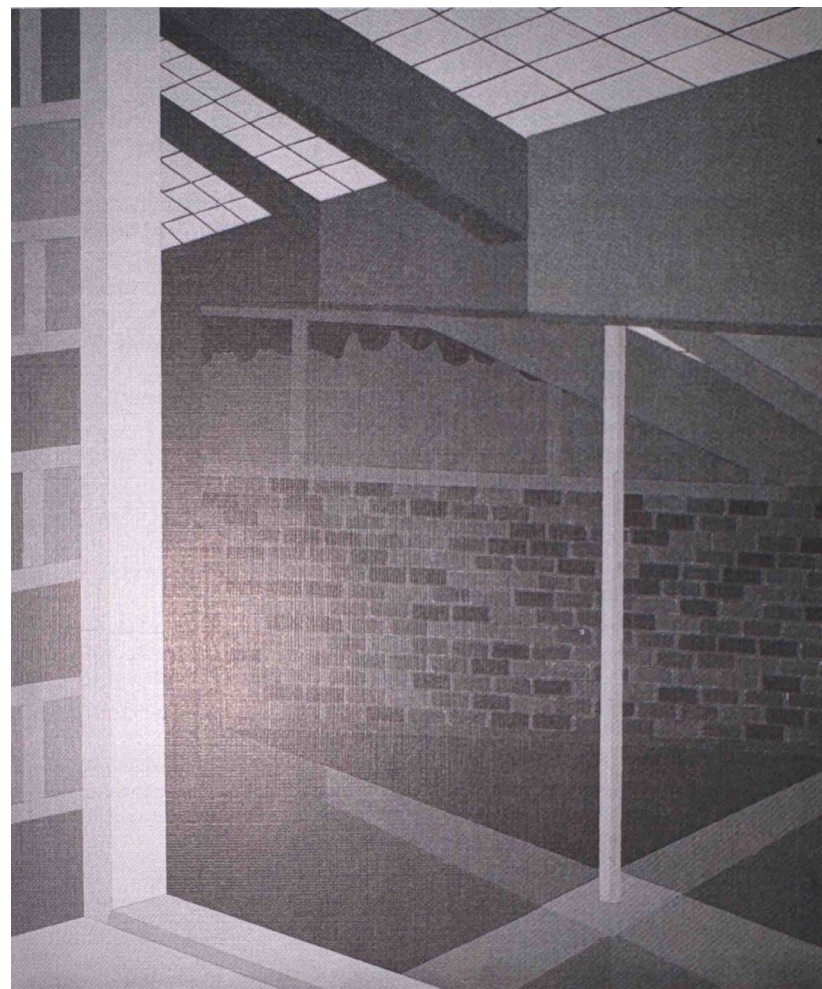
laughter falls
on rented shingles
in the eves, we await
in a cramped nest
bug hunting
now and then, grooming ourselves

the return to Capistrano

Affair with Tuolele Falls

Scott Lange

Your delicate beauty,
Seduces me,
And sends me scrambling up,
Your boulder-strewn throne.
My legs ache and hands chafe,
From your impossible pursuit,
Still you softly call,
Like a lonely siren of the cliffs.
Boulders shift and skin bruises,
But I can't resist your temptuous voice.
Nearer and nearer,
Your beckoning becomes louder and louder.
The fine details of your shape,
Come into focus,
And you caress me,
With soft kisses in the mist.
An impenetrable granite sentinel,
Guards your virtue,
And I sit dejected at your feet.
Lace curtains,
Fall from the sky,
And I longingly admire,
Your delicate beauty.



Last Look Beyond the Bricks
Color Aid Composition, 11x14

Gary E. Rocha

Park Alone

Steven Locke

park alone

magic fairy dust
tinkerbell snorting past
sterile experiences
hold my breath
three finger event
our present conjures vision

we were well

herd instructs you
in stampeding strollers
think i'm kidding?
magic was below
their bowel level

central energy
chemicals drop
in from the past
like decorative techniques

cult of weeders
needers on parade
microwaveable homes falling out

no doubt

interwoven portion control
intensely aware
aimed at itself
nuclear family
clearly getting out

drug messages in retrospect
THINKING

thinking

follow acres home
retract ... refract
dominate every type
less perfect whole realities
venereal proportions
hard line cynics mainstreamed
streamline old line

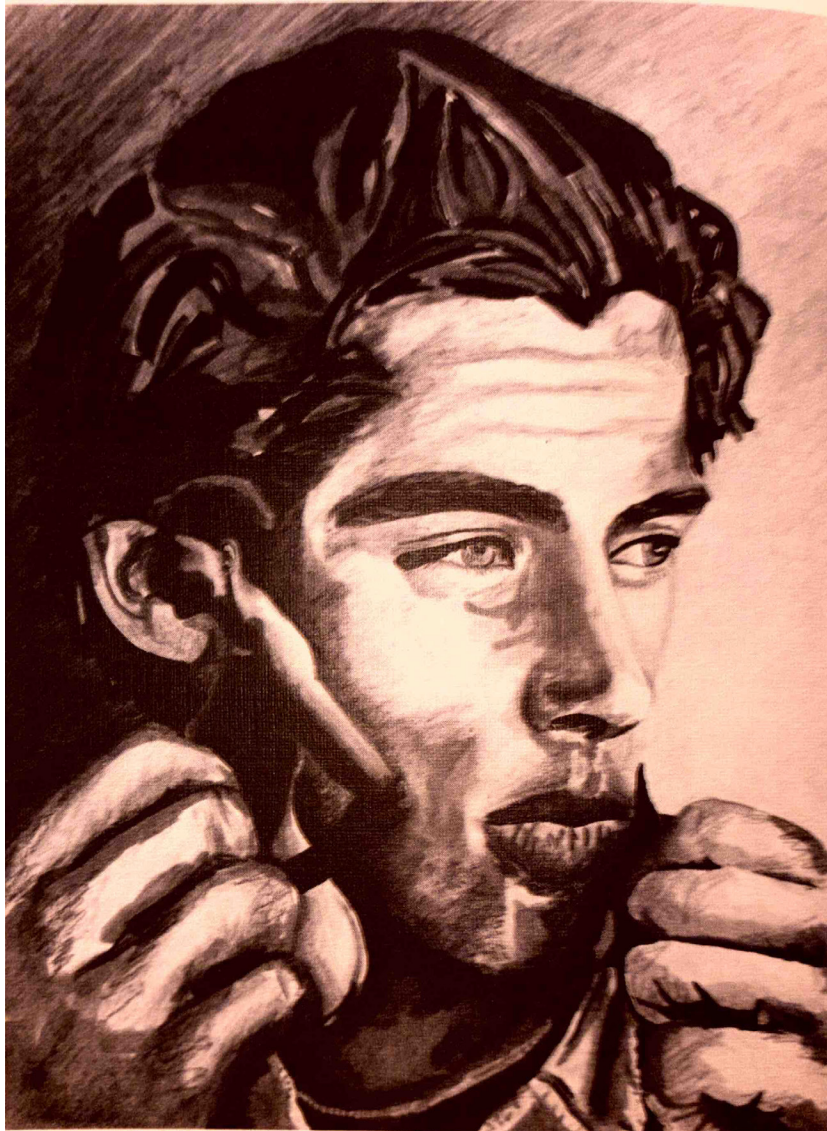
beer bellies pregnant profiles
outdated moralism via darkness

glacially unaware

ride

park

ride



Sweet Subliminal Nothings
Marker and Colored Pencils, 8 1/2 x 11

Rebecca L. Andrus

Sticks and Stones

Kelly S. Sams

My mother died when I was seven.
She was forty five. She simply died.

In the back seat I am eating McDonald's french fries when Betsy's mom says, "There's no room in your driveway so I'll have to stop here and let you out." Then Betsy makes some comment about the cars always crowding the road.

"That's okay," I say, "Thanks for the ride."

Caroline is standing on the front porch. Her eyes look pink and puffy. She says, "How was dance practice?"

"Fun! What are you doing here?"

She begins to cry. She reaches out her arms towards me and we hug. Together on the porch we are hugging and she is crying.

"What's wrong! What's wrong?"

"Mom died," she says, "She died just a little while ago."

I say, "What do you mean?"

What do you mean, I said, when my oldest sister told me my mother died. For part of that evening I cried and listened to my brothers and sisters cry. For the other part of that evening, I sat alone on my bed and quietly dressed and undressed my favorite doll.

I had seen death before.

My grandmother died when I was five, maybe six. I never met my grandmother before her funeral. My brother, James, picked me up by my armpits and introduced me to her lying so still and white in her casket. The room in the funeral home where I waited had a shiny floor partially covered by an oval braided rug. I practiced my tap dancing on the floor in my new, bought-just-for-the-occasion patent vinyl shoes. When I grew tired of tapping, I followed the braid of the rug. I started in the center and

worked my way out whispering “follow the yellow brick road” over and over. We ate at a sit-down restaurant when the whole thing was done and a stranger told my mother how lovely he thought it was to see a family pray before its meal.

Betsy’s parakeet died. Her mother bought her one exactly like it the next day.

My mother had red hair. Some of the time. Some of the time it was brownish-red, like mine. Pat Boyd had red hair and so did her cat. When my mother came home from visiting Pat, her hair would be red again, although it wasn’t quite the same shade of red as Pat’s or the cat’s.

My mother had something wrong with her heart. She wore dentures, slept downstairs, and took little red pills. I ate one of those pills once. She kept them on her dresser next to her checkbook and cigarette cartons. I thought it would taste like a hot, cinnamon candy. It didn’t. So I ate just the one.

*She said my name
was just a bunch of
sticks put together.*

My mother taught me how to spell my name. On a hot August night I sat on the front room radiator behind a black and gold metal TV tray watching my mother carefully draw the letters in my name. She said my name was just a bunch of sticks put together. The next day I told my teacher that I could spell my name and she said, “That’s nice, honey, but right now I want you to pretend you’re riding a bicycle like everyone else.”

I have a photograph of my mother. It was taken at my second from the oldest sister’s wedding. After Michele got a divorce, she went through her photo album and tore up every picture with *him* in it. She found a snapshot of my mother decided to have it enlarged and have the background of *the reception* removed. A year after Michele’s discovery, I received a five by seven black and white photo of my mother with indistinguishable figures in the background.

I have my mother’s signature on my birth certificate and three of my report cards.

I have a scar on my knee that I watched my mother pick tiny stones out of. My sisters and I were playing war. We raked the leaves in the front yard into a mound

next to the street. We made the pile big enough for the three of us to lie in and shoot cars going by with our stick guns. As cars slowed and their brake lights came on to stop at the end of the street, we raised our guns and yelled, “A hit! A hit!” Once, when it had been a long time between cars, Kathy and I raced each other to the stop-sign and back. Running back to the leaf pile, I fell in the neighbor’s gravel driveway. Only thirteen months and ten pounds between us, Kathy carried me back to the house where my mother sat me on the side of the bathtub and used a damp washcloth from the laundry basket and her fingernails to clean my bloody knee.





Mariam

Black & White Photograph, 6x9

Noah Tysick

The Ringing

Anthony James Phillips

I reclined on the balcony, my bare feet airing in the cool, fall breeze. Dan, having a bit more modesty than I, left his Converse on, but followed suit and perched his size nines over the wrought iron edge.

"I'm not saying I don't see where you're come from," I began, "but I'm telling you, this is going to be good for me."

Dan nodded. "Try again."

"Okay... Let's see." I paused, gathering my thoughts for another assault. "It's just a matter of following society's laws, right? Just some paper and a stamp. Nothing is going to change."

He cocked his head, like a dog listening to a distant bitch. "I've heard it before, boss. You ain't gonna convince me with that one."

I shrugged my shoulders. "It worked on Mark, you know."

"He was just giving in." Dan shook his hair from his eyes. "Dad always said there ain't no arguing with drunks, or--"

"Fanatics," I finished.

"Yup. Mark probably figured he wasn't gonna change your mind."

I nodded. "He wouldn't have, you know."

"Sure, I'm not trying to, either. I know when you get something set in your head, no one, not even me, is gonna change it without a lead pipe."

I chuckled. "Do I take that as a compliment?"

"Only from me."

"Well, will you come, then? Or are you going to boycott this whole thing?" I looked at him and took a sip from my Miller.

Dan threw me a lopsided grin. "Under protest."

"Noted," I smiled. "Now, you don't have to wear a tux; this is an informal affair.. jeans, if you want, but--"

"No concert tees, right?"

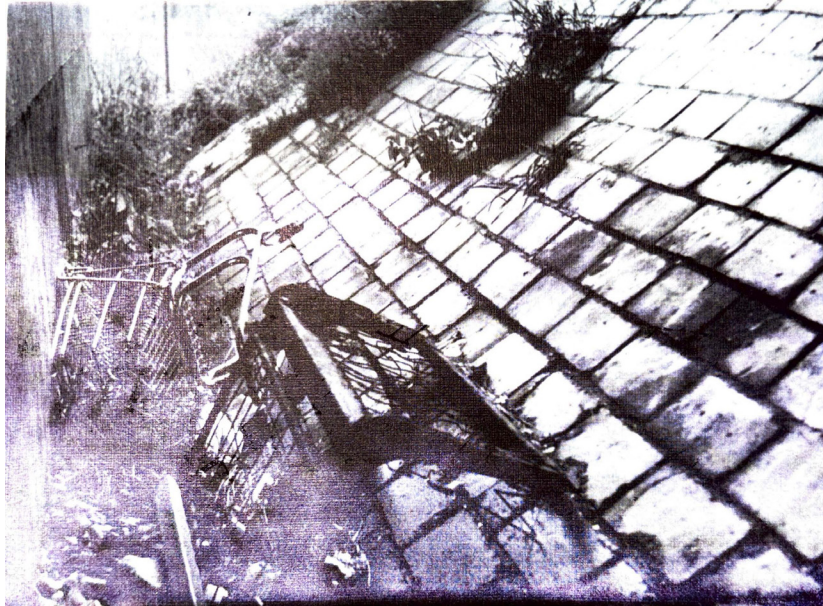
"Yeah, and you can't steal the rings. I counted; there are two. I think I'd notice a fake."

Dan pushed his hair from his eyes with a ring-free hand. "No way. You'll be shaking and trying to remember if you say 'I do' or 'I did.'"

I took another drink and felt the coolness all the way down. Dan was fumbling for a smoke. "And you'll be ready in the get-away car, right?"

Dan just laughed and milked a Marlboro for all it was worth.

1994



Destruction of Youth
Black & White Photograph, 3 1/2x5

Jennifer Christensen

You All
Christopher Hall

take from me my life.
i've nothing left,
but shallow eyes to gaze into.
i have wandered thru your field,
and grazed upon your coldness.
i too have frozen inside out.
the lifeless stare has done its work,
sapping away at my truth.
now there is none.
taking away my childhood memories,
transforming them into tears,
and an empty shell of a smile.
the sustenance i craved,
now is bitter to my taste.
no longer wishing for a word from you,
yet denying your very existence.
worlds apart we stand,
and shutting out my pleading stare,
pulls the noose tight,
taking me over the edge.
hanging lifeless in my own mind.

AlonE.

NaNa Sistine

Anthony James Phillips

She has brought the bright mosaic to new lows
to rubble--smeared foods with ketchup mortar
She has wiped her stubby finger brush
on a palette--her once white sweatshirt
She has erected a cairn of buttered potatoes--
monolith with monarch butterflies and
sulfur moths carving a winged epitaph
She has ignited the pyre of blueberry jam and bread
with fork, friction, flint and steel
She has fertilized the glass with sundered bits
of pink-inside pork and the umber
of over-exposed barbecue sauce
She has laid low the green forest, stout
broccoli bowing to her flustering spoon
She has gone bowling with peas and
sent orange carrot pins to the underworld
She has torn the heart from green pears
and stuffed yellow-skinned banana pelts
into her consuming maw
She has quenched these battlefield flames--
white milk, like her shirt
And left a portfolio, floating