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editor-in-chief	Beth Medley
editors	Greg Armstead, Carolyn Baird, Ann Garcia, Kat Sterchele, Chris Taylor, Karen Totten, Andrea Wood
assisting	Marc Beaudin, Elizabeth Dulski, Michael Gritter
business manager	Michael Bellar
faculty advisor	Diane Sautter

*Cardinal Sins* is the student literary magazine of Saginaw Valley State University. All SVSU students, faculty, and staff are invited to submit poetry, short fiction, essays, 2D art, and black and white photography for consideration at the office, which as we go to print is in the northeast corner of first floor Wickes.

# Cardinal Sins

## all from the tree of knowledge

"Put that tape on erase; rearrange your face.  
We always liked Picasso anyway."  
--Devo, "Through Being Cool"

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## The Idea of a University

Conquerors before have burned our libraries and now you will cover our mural.

The idea of a University is to promote the importance of different cultures and not to deface, to destroy, or to cover up the symbolic representation of a people's culture in the form of an art form--the mural.

Why are technology and physical plants being put before cultural principles and cultural values as represented on that gym wall, the only one for miles around?

The idea of a university beckons us to look back, to reconsider, to reexamine our history, to take cognizance and bring forth the consciousness of what the symbolic expression of art means to us as University persons.

If our conscience allows us to proceed as follows, then it is only logical and ethical that a new mural, bigger, more colorful and more beautiful than the one before, be painted again.

In this way, the purpose of a university will remain faithful to its standards of academic freedom and to the expression of cultural differences and cultural values.

I hope that in your support of the idea of a university, you will be in agreement with me.

Help me to restore the integrity of the idea of a university. It is an idea centuries old.

Why does power always have to have its way?

That is not the purpose of a university.

But it is to respect the cultural representations of that mural; i.e., Native American and Hispanic consciousness.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Guadalupe de la Raza



The Buddha rests in bronze stillness  
waiting (for nearly twenty-five centuries  
beneath the bo-tree)  
for the glowing cone;  
incense of enlightenment.

The inanimate figure  
sends forth cool wisps of living smoke  
and in that smoke the pupil learns:

That smoke which flows  
(like the silvery streams  
of the Neranjara)  
gently upward, searching.

That smoke which passes  
over the body in soft caress,  
like a funeral shroud,  
but leaves no image

to offer as proof  
to a skeptical mind  
asking for physical evidence  
for a metaphysical truth.

But which is more real,  
that which marks the temporal, unreal body,  
or that, which by a display of ceaseless change,  
remains the same?

--Marc Beaudin

Michilimackinac

Softening still in perfect silence  
The Great Lake sifts;  
breathing-swelling,  
( Huron's dreaming ... )  
Asleep.

The Moon belonged to the poets ... that  
night Ascending from the blackened  
waves  
... splashing.

( I heard the Water Move  
When that Moon woke ... )

--Tricia Struthers

ONE ... THIN ... DIME...

I bring from my pocket  
one thin dime,  
cool and silver.  
It centers my hand  
and bores a tunnel  
thru flesh & stone.  
Chiseling through granite darkness  
the tunnel reaches a crystal cavern.  
Shimmering lights reflect themselves  
in liquid admiration  
on an ancient pool.  
Blind cave fish  
leap & arch  
gasping for shadows  
in a rainbow of night-  
fins and feathers clash  
and the bird devours  
with bloodied beak--  
claws spring in lightning strike  
fur made red on red--  
the bullet shrieks  
and cuts the beast  
and echoes crack the walls-  
splitting rock  
sends shards of stone  
striking the man  
who is sent sprawling  
into the pool--  
the cavern collapses  
and light breaks thru-  
the gleaming sun  
is a silver disk  
and it all comes down  
to one ... thin ... dime ...

--Marc Beaudin

## THE GARDEN

Hidden somewhere  
in the back of the mind  
is a garden.  
It's a secret place  
where we learn  
how to become human.  
That's where you'll find me  
kneeling in memories  
pulling flowers  
and tending weeds.

The sky here is too big  
it presses down  
crushing  
the innocent  
and guilty alike.  
A thunderhead  
rumbles at me  
as it moves from the horizon,  
a tumor in blue.

Even if you shout  
I won't hear you  
I'm not listening.  
And even if I do hear  
I won't answer  
no reason to.  
And even if there is a reason  
I won't  
Why should I?

Pretend I'm with you  
because I'm not.  
Imagine me as you  
wish me to be.  
I won't care.  
Because I'm not here  
to see myself  
through your eyes.  
I'm alone in my garden  
listening to the wind  
and in it I hear  
my own voice  
for the first time.

--Michael Griffor



The Nap

Wrapped in corded skin,  
the elephant hugs us, warms us.  
Its pillows beckon Asia.  
Lost in drowsiness, bleary-eyed,  
we drift ...

Soft, cat-breathing,  
with twitching limbs full of dream.  
Under twine coverlid we lie.  
Shutting out the jungled phenomenon,  
we wait.

--Nadine Zazou

Primrose

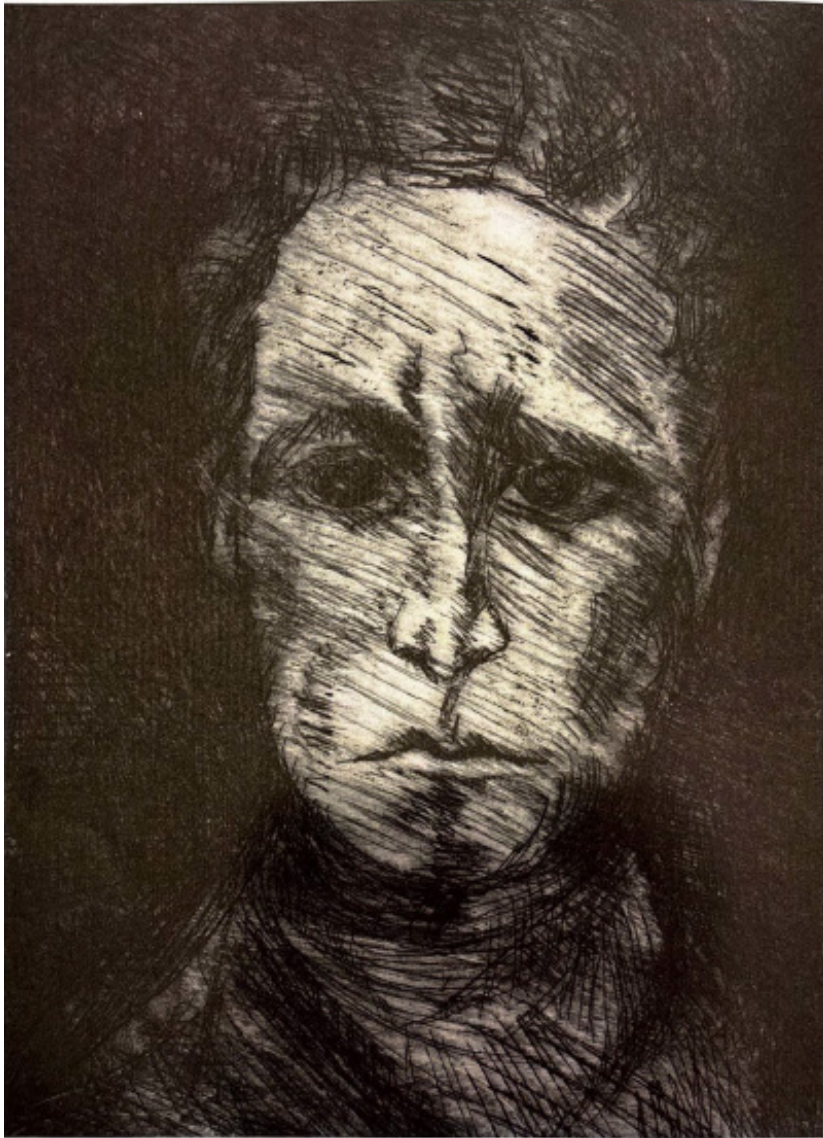
The bridesmaid sways  
In the evening breeze  
Her organdy gown  
A wisp of floating rose petals.

She flinches as the sun  
Climbs in the east  
Her life among the stars  
Cut short by the warmth of the sun.

She lives in the  
Yesterdays of those she loved,  
In warm breezes and lapping waves  
Her form gliding  
Lifting, reaching  
Power in her stroke.  
Graceful to the eye  
Nine little Indians  
Frolic in the sand

Their children now reach  
To caress her withered form  
Grandma.

--Margaret Countegan



celebration for a grey day

someone dropped a skrim  
clogged with the dust of a million  
vacuum cleaner bags  
across the scene  
it is drawn and delineated in  
crumbling charcoal  
the view is obscured  
by grime  
the colors  
dark or light  
a blend of zinc white  
and lampblack  
nothing has the hard edge  
of childrens' coloring books  
the crayons have all melted  
into dusk  
the pencil leads are worn to nubs  
that blur and bludgeon  
the moon reigns eternal  
the sun has died intestate

--Barb Miller

For Shukri

a love poem

For centuries you have slept.  
Curled hair, brown eyes filled with the knowledge  
of ten thousand ages.  
Yours is a life of azure blue,  
and the glint of burnished gold.  
Hot breezes swallow your sight,  
and your air becomes one with all.  
You have come to me with fundamentals  
that no other may feel.  
Wise in your mirrors,  
your energy becomes citron.  
And I am consumed.

--Nadine Zazou

LEAVING

I recall that autumn day well...  
A whirl of wind gusted up  
A swirl of leaves in front of me,  
At my feet, like a welcome mat to winter.  
A squirrel did not defer as he, frantically,  
Stored nuts too late for early winter.  
The light was dim at mid-day,  
And the wind tugged at my heart  
'Till I thought it'd break.  
The geese in their overhead "V"  
Called, "Come, Sister!"  
And I went.  
And I never looked back.

--Andrea Wood

## EARLY EVENING

It is the quiet interim,  
that grey, unconnected place  
between day and night, when  
the minutes seem to hang suspended,  
as unmoving  
as the broken clock on the wall.  
Outside the heavy snow keeps falling,  
drifting deeper in the darkening streets.  
The house is wrapped in muffled silence-  
I sit alone, savoring the warmth  
and faint, snuffled breathing  
of Maxine,  
curled in familiar comfort on my lap.  
And I would freeze this moment  
if I could,  
stop time and all its implications;  
that this room where I sit  
will grow shabby and frayed  
and this cat, already failing,  
drowning in hours and years,  
pulls away, toward her greater loyalty  
to death.  
While I, helpless too  
against the grinding turn of days,  
feel the tumbling, downward weight  
of years  
collecting in a scattered disarray  
of dimming memories, gathering dust  
about my feet.  
In the mirror, my image tatters  
and fades,  
growing shabby like a once lovely room,  
until at last  
the dust will cover me, with all things.  
And only the permanence of the cycle  
of endings  
remains frozen, unchanging, unbroken  
by time.

--Elizabeth Dulski