

# C a r d i n a l   S i n s

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The fine arts and literature magazine of  
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# Cardinal Sins

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

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

# Editor's Note

Every new editor of *Cardinal Sins* has to deal with a learning curve, and it is greater for some than others. I'm not sure where I belong in that spectrum, but I can say that this privilege has certainly been a learning experience. I definitely feel much more confident going into next semester, but I can tell that there is still plenty for me to learn. I don't have all the answers, and I have to ask for help from time to time. But that's okay; isn't it? We're all humans here.

Without any further ado, it is my pleasure and my privilege to present the Fall 2011 edition of *Cardinal Sins*.

Happy reading,

Emily Krueger





# Room 224: A Revisitation Poem

by Heidi Hall

It's dark and starting to rain.

"I know a place  
we can go," she says—and  
smiles after him.

The boy and girl  
drink until  
his hair is in her lap.  
Weeping  
tears thicker than velvet,  
he says,

"Life is black."  
He says,  
"Ignite it for me."

His focus blurs from the  
paint-stained chair to the  
car crashes in his head;  
to hands  
clutching  
fistfuls of silk,

hands  
planted on blue skin and  
blue lips dyed by

the light seeping  
through the blinds.

Hopeless-  
compulsive  
romance.  
Because for the next few minutes

I can.

# M. I. A.

by E. Bauer

Ellie was content. She wasn't happy, but she wasn't a complete wreck either; she was somewhere in the middle—content. As she sped along the upper coastline of Michigan's Lower Peninsula on her Ducati, only one thing was on her mind: Jake.

Jake Keller was Ellie's fiancé of two years and a captain in the United States Coast Guard. He'd spent the last few months at sea with the Coast Guard, and he and Ellie were supposed to get married when he got back in June. But the last letter that Ellie had received was sent in July, and it was typed. Formal. She couldn't remember the exact words, but it had read something like, "We're deeply sorry for your loss, but Captain Jakob Johan Keller is missing in action and presumed dead." The letter continued for an entire page, but Ellie hadn't read it. What else was there to say?

For nearly a week after she'd read the letter, Ellie didn't speak. She didn't sleep or teach her dance classes, either. Today was the first day in a week that she had even left the house, and even though she didn't want to go to Sleeping Bear Dunes, it was the very place she found herself going.

The summer after her senior year at SVSU, Jake had blindfolded her and drove her to the dunes. Their day of fun in the sun had ended with his proposal to her and a trip to the hospital. Ellie smiled at the memory. After accepting his proposal, she'd kissed him and then ran down the dune yelling, "Tag! You're it!" The grin that had lit up his face was something she would never forget, but as he'd rolled down the hill, being the ridiculous person that he was, he'd managed to hit the only tree on the entire dune. He'd given himself a pretty nasty gash on his arm that had required a few stitches.

As the damp morning air rushed past her and the first rays of sunshine came over the horizon, Ellie reeled at the beauty of her creator. Her faith in God was the only thing moving her forward, and it was also the only reason she was content. Whether he was dead or alive, Ellie knew that God was watching over Jake. She was still worried, and her heart was still breaking. But as long as there was hope, Ellie was determined to be content. Gorgeous forests and glimpses of Lake Michigan warmed her to the bone, and she couldn't help but smile. "Thank you," she prayed. "It's beautiful and just what I needed to see this morning, but I only have one request today. Please, be with Jake, Father, and if he is alive, Father, I pray

you'll bring him back to me."

Her prayer was the same as it had been for the past week, and Ellie was going to pray it every morning until Jake came home or someone told her that he wasn't going to come home. If there was one thing her mother had taught her before she passed away, it was that the power of prayer was boundless and, with God, anything was possible.

When Ellie arrived at the dune, she grabbed her things and started hiking. The hike to the coastline took Ellie about an hour and a half, as she had expected. Glancing at her watch as she sat down atop the last dune, Ellie noted that it was nearly three in the afternoon. Not that it really mattered; she didn't have any place she needed to be anyway.

Enjoying the sunshine as much as she could, Ellie went for a swim then climbed back up the dune and lay down. Looking up at the sky, she sighed. The clouds were shapeless and almost nonexistent. Most people would have taken that as a sign of beautiful weather—it was—but Ellie loved clouds. Some looked like cotton candy, others like strokes of paint on a bright blue canvas, and thunderclouds had always reminded her of piles of dirty snow in the wintertime. A cloudless sky meant the sky was a brilliant shade of blue, but she still found it boring compared to a sky filled with clouds.

After a few minutes, Ellie drifted off to sleep. A week of sleepless nights and her trip to the dunes had left her exhausted. It was a rare occurrence when Ellie didn't dream, and this time was no exception. This time, she dreamed that Jake had come to the dunes, found her asleep, and swept her up in his arms to take her home. She was so excited to see him that if she'd had the energy, she would have squealed for joy and asked him a million questions. But as excited as she was, she didn't want him to let go, so she kept her eyes closed and buried her face into his chest.

"Jake," she whispered. "Are you ever going to come home?"

With a chuckle, Jake kissed the top of her head and replied, "Go back to sleep, sweetheart. You'll see me in the morning."

# Cicada Song

by Moses Fellini

You named him Frederick  
when we found him clinging  
to your window screen.  
He was dead, almost  
as large as your thumb.  
I don't know how to know  
if he was really a he,  
but the act of naming  
made it so. He was, and is,  
iridescent. At first  
we didn't know he was dead,  
not until you observed that  
he hadn't moved  
in several days. Even  
in death he held on,  
an affront to the doctrine  
of non-attachment.

If only we could count on  
so firm a grip, so impervious  
an exoskeleton,  
death would be much less  
of an event, just another in a series  
of transformations: nymph  
from egg, imago from nymph,  
non-being from being.

The Japanese say cicadas  
are emblems of reincarnation.  
The Chinese eat them.  
Americans like us  
pluck them  
from screens and adorn  
our hats with them.  
I admired Frederick  
for his failure  
to decay, his resistance  
to rain and sun, his blank eyes,  
his prodigious grasping  
of whatever surface presented itself.

# Rules

by Bobbie Richardson



Watercolor

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# Friends Forever

by Tyler Beyett



Color Photography

# Frosted Flakes

by Pete Stevens

My father would inhale logs and blow out splinters. He was a keg-chested man who bounced me on his knee until the day he died. After his death, I couldn't sleep. I poured syrups, booze, and pills into the void he left, and nothing worked. I hung from the ceiling like a bat. My night vision had greatly improved, but veins were swelling and ready to burst.

My first posting on Craigslist: "In need of large man to spend the night. Must be able to snore with volume and power."

After some initial confusion, my revised Craigslist post: "In need of large man to spend the night (not for sex). Must be able to snore with volume and power. Free milk and double chocolate Milanos."

When I opened the door to Oliver, a Buick of a black man, I knew I was on the right track. His first step inside sunk my apartment deeper into the foundation. He asked, "You Tobias? The Craigslist guy?" without waiting for a response, "'cause I've ran three girlfriends and two wives away for my snoring. And that's my story." A bellow of laughter. "Alright, where do I sleep?" Oliver began to stroll around the room, sticking his snout here and there, checking things out. The layout was not much different than the studio my father and I once shared: a mattress on the floor, TV (Nintendo), desk with computer, futon shoved against the wall, then a kitchen (mine overflowing with boxes to the ceiling), and bathroom.

"You can sleep on the futon or bed if you prefer. We could flip a coin."

"Futon is fine." He took off his Lions windbreaker like a deflating parachute and sat down. "So, what do you do, To-bi-as?"

"I'm a drug dealer."

"Drug dealer?" Oliver's eyes narrowed. "What kind of drugs?"

"Well, if by 'dealer' you mean dealing from an Amazon storefront and by 'drugs' you mean vintage video games...then, yeah."

"Do you have any drugs?"

"No. But I do have three bags of double chocolate Milanos and milk, of course."

The day after my mother died, my pops traded the front end from a '67 Skylark for a beat-up Nintendo and a handful of games. This was 1988. I was nine. Religion had, at last, been found. Mario, Metroid, Zelda—if I wasn't at school or collecting scrap metal with Dad, my face was velcroed to the screen. The love has never left me. Just sold a gold cartridge *Punch-Out!!* and paid the rent.

That first night with Oliver was filled with trepidation. I am the son of my father. His snoring—rattling the windowpanes, shifting the furniture—was my lullaby. These were my thoughts, eyes wide, that ran through my mind as I observed Oliver. I could see the silhouette of his rotund stomach as it rose and fell. His arm had fallen off the futon. There was a wadded-up Milano bag next to an empty glass of milk. And he was snoring—kind of. If Oliver's snore was a tiger, my father's was a dragon. Bottom line: no sleep.

The next night we went on WebMD and searched ways to alleviate snoring. Our plan was to do the opposite: If WebMD recommended dehumidifying, we humidified. I ran the shower for hours, 'til vines began to grow up the walls. Nope. No sleep. An additional post on Craigslist was the next move.

When I opened the door to Frank, I got Lou in the bargain. Both were ex-auto workers angling for a break. Frank did the talking and resembled a sweaty fridge with a mustache. Lou is the kind of guy who immediately takes off his shirt when entering a home. He had a belly like a wild boar, and I've only ever heard him say "Yup." Would you like some Milanos, Lou? "Yup." Would you like a glass of milk, Lou? "Yup." I had a team now—over a thousand pounds of man-meat at my disposal. Collected on the futon, I addressed them as if I was General Patton marshalling his troops: "Men! You must sleep on your backs! You must deviate your septums! You must snore! Snore! Snore!"

"I was told there'd be Milanos."

"All you can eat."



“And something else,” Frank said, pointing towards my desk. “I can’t sleep with that thing looking at me.”

I told him not to worry—merely a human hand suspended in a jar of formaldehyde.

My mother was crushed in a metal press. Her hand, sticking out of the press, was the only part of her not flattened by thousands of pounds of pressure. Luckily, my pops knew the owner of the yard, and he was able to trade a set of LeSabre hubcaps for my mother’s hand.

Post “The Big Squish,” my father and I were never apart. Every night he’d clutch that jar, a pickled bologna jar with the label still on it, and cry. His other hand would work Stroh’s after Stroh’s down his throat. Up ‘til all hours of the morning we’d be. I’d have my red pop and Nintendo. He’d have his beer and his jar. The old man would pass out, sometimes holding Mom’s hand, and the snoring would begin: my signal to curl up and catch some rest.

Oliver was on the futon. Frank and Lou lay on the floor sardine-style. Four men in a room ready for sleep. I waited, toes wiggling, blanket tight to my chin. First went Oliver bringing his usual roar. Then Lou jumped in sounding as if he were continuously drowning. Frank joined the party like a blender filled with batteries and baby teeth. Taken together, it was a symphony of snoring.

I couldn’t remember a morning when my Frosted Flakes tasted so sweet.

Twenty-two days in, our routine runs smooth. I let the boys in at ten, and the Milanos are passed around. We talk about our day. We play Nintendo.

Tonight, I feel hot breath against my cheek in the darkness. Strong hands swaddle me into a cocoon of comfort.

“Ohh, that’s nice. Thanks, Lou.”

“Yup.”

# The Door to Narnia

by Jennifer Herrick



Black & White Photography

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# Sunset, A Vertical Landscape

by Timothy Windy, Jr.

Setting: A beach that doesn't stretch far into the water, marked with bits of driftwood and clumps of algae like wet hair.

Background (Sky): Clouds are drawn toward the setting sun as if it were a grated drain in the sky. The sun reaches out with its arms, streaks of cumulus arcus shaped like Saturn's rings, and guides them nearer—the Keeper of the Winds materializes as a spider ushering zephyrs into its mouth with mandible claws.

Midway Down on the Far Left: DANGER buoys bounce on the undertow like the graves of happy babies.

Middleground, Slightly Off Center: Waves' crests carry specks of a post-impressionistic sunset that dissolve once they hit sand.

Foreground, to the Right: A dog barks each time the incoming tide splashes close. The waves take two steps forward, one step back.

# Dad, I'm Gay

by Preston Hagerman

So a racist, a xenophobe, a homophobe, and a religious bigot all walk into a bar. What do these guys have in common? They're all my father. Out of these Four Horsemen, my father's rider of choice is the one laden in "Where Was My Vote" apparel, accompanied by an unattractive ensemble of flannel and denim. Mind-blowingly ignorant and terrifyingly curious, he is probably the most flamboyantly homophobic man I have ever met, a lifestyle choice that he forces upon America.

So one can only imagine his reaction when I told him I was gay. Now here's a guy who rented *Brokeback Mountain*, somehow thinking it would be a good western. God bless the poor man; he was so confused when Donnie Darko and the Joker got funky in the warm confines of their tent in the Wyoming wild.

"What are they doing?" he cried in a strange mix of fascination and disgusted confusion.

"They're hugging, Dad!"

By the way, I think it's important for me to address at this point in the story that I'm not really homosexual. It was toward the end of my sophomore year in high school when I found myself in a consensual sexual relationship with a college freshman that I had met at the community theater. Her name isn't important. In truth, the age gap wasn't nearly as wide as one would think; I was sixteen, and she was nineteen. My father, however, lacking the vast mathematical capacity it takes to count those great many numbers between six and nine, was unable to see our relationship as anything less than straight-up pedophilia.

I suppose, in retrospect, I have myself to blame for him finding out in the first place. I was sloppy in my sexual escapades. The thin-stripped "tear here" part of a condom wrapper left clinging to the cerulean carpet like a fallen rose petal is likely what gave me away. After numerous shockingly conspicuous signs that I was sexually active, my father had "the talk" with me.

"I want you to be honest with me, Preston," he said in a raspy, bibulous mumble. "And don't worry 'cause you ain't in trouble. But are you

havin' sex with that girl?" Blinded by familial trust in which I no longer have faith, I told my father yes.

"Well, then," he said, "I'm gonna call the cops."

"You can't prove anything!" I interjected.

"Oh yeah," he sneered. "Well, they got these forensic tests where they take this blade-like Q-tip to your penis and..."

For the next several moments, my father and I bickered back and forth about whether or not I would be legally required to surrender my phallus for evidentiary purposes. Scripture, Bill Cosby's self-help rhetoric, and forty-something years of Papa Bear's own sexual ambiguity worsened the situation. Frustrated and infuriated, I gave little thought to the lie that spewed out of my lips.

"Okay, Dad. The truth is...I'm gay."

"I don't understand. What are you saying?" he stammered. "Are you saying that she was a cover-up?"

"Yes, Dad. That's what I'm saying."

Bound to the fortified chains of holy writ and his bewildering conservative antilogy, my father rose to his feet, howling that age old cliché, "You're no son of mine." He then proceeded to run to the back of the trailer, stumbling as he struggled to find a relevant Bible verse.

"Right here!" he said, waving the good leather-bound book around in true Old Testament flare. "It says you're going to hell."

Plagued by the naïveté of quick love and desperate longing, I tried my best to make sure my father wouldn't prosecute my girlfriend. Unfortunately, she broke up with me later that week for reasons I still don't know. I briefly convinced myself that I no longer cared what happened to her and decided to continue the ruse out of twisted pleasure and assholedom. So he kicked me out.

For the next few months, I drifted from place to place, staying with

friends and sometimes my mom whenever I could, until after a night of sleeping under a bridge—this is no exaggeration—I was momentarily welcomed back into my father's house. My uncle, who is a relatively open-minded minister, must have convinced my father not to abandon me because I'm honestly not sure why he asked me to come back.

"Now, I don't want you to think that I like gay people," he said plainly. "Because I don't. I think they should be shot." As though our original sex talk wasn't awkward enough, my father then proceeded to give me the *Christian Daddy's Guide to Dealing with a Queer Son*.

"If you get a desire, I would rather you whip out that little peepee-snake and whack away than to stick it in some guy's hiney-hole."

I tried my best to focus my mind on anything but the great many anatomical impossibilities that my father gratuitously described. Working at the same car dealership proved to be an especially interesting set of circumstances that summer. Driving through downtown Mt. Pleasant, my father would awkwardly whistle out the window at all of the hunky, shirtless, jogging CMU students.

"There you go, Preston. There's a man for you! Yeah, yeah, he's hot!"

Although my father's attempts to forgive and connect with me were humorous, our heart-to-hearts were not. Waking up to find my father frantically sifting through my backpack for cooking recipes was always a joy. I reminded him a thousand times that just because I was gay didn't necessarily mean I could throw together splendid pastries. Even though I was adamant in emphasizing this point, it rarely assuaged the sweet tooth expectations of his rumbling gut. I can't be sure, but I'm fairly certain that at one point I heard him say "but you must know how to make a chocolate soufflé" under his breath.

Incidents like that caused the days of Dad to drift on like a long night after a bad taco. On top of having to deal with the wacky, albeit offensive, antics of my father and the philippic rantings of my holy rolling kin, I was still reeling from the heartache of being dumped. Looking back on it now, we were only together for six months. But that short period of my life was spent and lived in a way that few people get

to experience. It wasn't just one of those googly-eyed puppy dog bullshit encounters that Nicholas Sparks capitalizes on. It was genuine. So juggling the pain of this warrantless loss in congruence with the weight of a homosexual facade began to take its toll.

When I think about that stage of my life and the many paths that led me there, I often wonder why I kept it up. After my girlfriend and I broke up, I could have just as easily told my father that I was straight, and likely have gained his love, respect, and affection. But a force of sorts—a type of magnetism I wager subsists within and around all of us—would not allow me to speak up. Was I teaching him a lesson? Was I just screwing with him? To this day, I can't be sure.

After a bout of depression and sybaritic longings—likely brought on by my excessive use of alcohol and prescription drug abuse—I finally settled into some semblance of happiness when I found myself in the arms of another woman. Her name isn't important. At this point, I was seventeen years old and more than likely old enough to “get a piece” in the eyes of the law. With this in mind, I finally felt comfortable enough to do something that I had practiced in front of the mirror a dozen times: to tell my father I was straight.

I'm not sure if it was because the revelation was a long time coming or because I had forgotten to mention to my then-girlfriend that my father thought I was gay, but I remember the day I told him the truth like a bad case of the clap. We entered the front doorway of my trailer, which extended to the gloomy living room where my shirtless father sat giggling in the absence of light.

“Does she know?” he said immediately.

“Know what?” we simultaneously replied.

“Hahaha...that you're gay.”

“Actually, Dad, that's what I wanted to talk to you about.”

After spending what must have been over two hours explaining the situation to my father, I soon realized that I wasn't getting anywhere in the way of his comprehension. He just simply couldn't understand

that I wasn't actually gay and that my girlfriend wasn't a cover-up. A couple of days later, I awoke to find my dad standing over me scratching his head.

"So, what, you're not gay anymore?" Relieved that he was finally starting to improve in his abilities to come to simple conclusions, I decided to just go with it.

"No, Dad, I'm not gay anymore." My father shook his head thoughtfully and exited the room slowly. He glanced back at me in a sort of scolding manner.

Something stained across his countenance gave me the abdominal feeling that he was mildly disappointed. These incidents occurred over four years ago, and he hasn't mentioned them once since. Then quite suddenly and relatively recently, my father walked up to me and sat on the steps. He appeared deep in thought.

"What's on your mind, Dad?" I asked.

"Do you remember that time you were gay?"

He seemed to be half joking and slightly bitter, but I didn't respond and he didn't reiterate. Consumed by the quiet of the calming night, I looked up at my father expectantly as he looked back down. He wanted to say something but never did.

I would like to tell you that my father has accepted that we live in an age where God saw it fit to dip us in a deep bucket of vast diversity. I would like to tell you that this was the moment my father had an epiphany, the moment we embraced, the long-awaited moment that we finally came to terms through truth. That would have been a nice ending. If this were a work of fiction, that may have been how I ended this tale. Unfortunately, this is where the true story really ends: two silent souls sitting on the steps of their home staring out at the stars while a quiet tension floats about the atmosphere.



# Empathy

by Corey Gilbert



Oil on Canvas

Fall 2011

*Cardinal Sins 25*

# Sixth Avenue

by Justin J. Brouckaert

Sixth Avenue was slicked with rain. It trickled down gutters and pooled in crevices of the city sidewalks. Buildings on both sides stooped to see their stately reflections in the asphalt stream, faces rippling away with rubber footsteps. Steam oozed upward from grated manhole covers, impregnating the air with a trickling haze. A car drove east.

\*

Ginny Balkman walked tenderly. Her eyes were absent behind black frames, her fragile arms swinging on hinges, pale in the black air. She wore a hooded sweatshirt with yoga pants, her dark hair thrown up in a ponytail with a blue hair tie. She hated her hair. She wanted to crop it, to run her hands back and grab it in small bunches, in hills of spiky roots; she wanted to cover it with a baseball cap. Sore between her legs—a dull pain. She stepped carefully and looked upward; the moon was gone.

Nick Young felt a spike rising in his throat. His chest rose and fell in sharp jabs; he felt the cigarette trembling in his grip. He watched the girl collapse against his door, sobbing. Her eyes were blurred and red; her head thudded and dripped clumsily against the pitted wood. She stared blankly back at him, face streaked with damp strands of light brown hair. A sky-blue T-shirt hung loosely on her slender frame, and she was clutching a pair of dingy khakis by the knees. Nick watched her cry; the spike rose higher. “Get the fuck out.” His voice was weak and shaking. She crawled out the door. Nick heard her choked effusions, the clumsy knocking of elbows and knees on the thinly carpeted floor. He looked out his second-story window and saw a slight teenage girl peering curiously upward. He walked across the room and carefully closed the door. He lit the cigarette, trembling. The spike was gone.

Gregory Kinick rolled his black Mustang to a stop on Sixth Avenue, parallel parking with ease. He smoothed back his hair, pointedly thumbing a stringy black strand behind his ear. He turned to the empty seat next to him. Blonde. Pinched the strand between his thumb and forefinger. He carefully stepped out, shed it into anonymous wind, shut his car door and gently slid his right hand in his pocket. His fingers felt for the smoothness of the plastic key fob. A skeleton stumbled past. He pressed the button and was startled by the weak reply. As he walked toward the sidewalk, his black shoes slipped on the slick asphalt; he stumbled up the curb.

Samantha Grisham laughed. She pulled the covers to her chin and smiled. She laughed again, spread out on the bed; her naked calves and feet poked out the bottom of the light-blue bed sheets. Across the street, a car door slammed. She brought her hands up to her hair, running them through the long, thick strands. She loved her hair. She spent hours on it every morning, brushing and teasing and styling. She played with the tips of it, curling them thoughtlessly. She smiled and turned her head toward the bathroom door, where she could hear the shower running. The toilet flushed, and Samantha suddenly felt cold.

\*

A dumb chill settled through Sixth Avenue. The streetlights stood dead, their arched spines hunched over the street, towering eunuchs. The rain glossed into a fragile sheet of sleet, splayed over the highs and lows of the warped asphalt, and thin cracks wormed grooves into the virgin ice. A gust of wind blew westward, and the beginnings of a frost began to gather.

# She wants to learn to write

by Rachel Schienke

about how she doesn't like ketchup  
on her mac and cheese anymore,  
and how excited she felt  
the day she realized "ch" made  
the "chuh" sound, and how  
with safety scissors she snipped  
the bangs in her eyes and hid them  
in the pencil tray of her wobbly desk.  
Index fingers glazed with glue  
she peels in strips,  
ignoring missing jewels  
on her plastic tiara, idly  
scratching scabby knees.  
She had a Barbie backpack bursting  
full of army men with plastic parachutes  
that the next-door-neighbor boy stole  
and tied matches to and threw  
out his bedroom window, facing hers,  
letting flaming tents float away and crash-land—  
he's all chapped lips and strong kicks  
like it's recess, and when they play tag,  
in their minds the wood chips merge  
into a molten sea of lava, a fall from monkey bars  
means morphing into a monster,  
reduced to hungry "It."

And she rarely comes home

with "A" tests, but when she does  
her mother looks up and duly quotes  
"that's great," adding it to a stack of taxes  
where it will be buried, and then  
she'll hand her dinner,  
a plate of mac and cheese with ketchup,  
and the girl hates how she had to play hide-and-seek  
to find noodles without smears of red  
or unmelted army men drowning in her lawn,  
messily refolding charred parachutes and  
trying to recreate their first flight.

# Pretty as a Rose

by Ellissa Cherven



Color Photography

# Untitled 1

by Emily Sovey



Acrylic Paint

30 *Cardinal Sins*

Fall 2011

# Kids Get It

by Raymond Deeren

I've come back from a broken dream  
of oil drips and unseen thongs  
with a scream of things  
we have and are not to want.

A dream of kissing  
the pavement. Falling  
down stairs only hurting she  
who pried and cried and tore  
at your boot so your clown feet  
wouldn't wake up God.

I've been there before with you,  
and you with him  
—or her. I'm no soothsayer—  
there with too much to say, smoke, shoot  
shots shots shotsshotsshots

everybody, let's not get ahead of ourselves.  
We're still always our parents' children  
who don't want what we were given.  
Two Christmases but is Carl my new daddy?  
And all the candy  
in the world doesn't bring us back

back to that dream

of picnics and of...hrrrr  
my mind's not right, either,  
even with so many people here.  
We get SO lo-  
well at least I—we—can say  
we're getting there.

And when there is here,  
skin oranged leather,  
we get to look back and wonder  
when and why we stopped  
playing tag in the dark.

# The Sway and Tumble Tango

by Brandy Abraham

The stage below opened wide, like Francis' lion with the hang-nail jaws, and nothing but air separated the wire from the stage floor. Hugo, the strong man, held his clown barbell close to his body, a stuffed toy against his muscles. It was the crowd that echoed in the man's ear, a rhythmic chant between "oohs" and silence that seated their anticipation of his first step onto the wire. It was an unsteady step—unsure. The wire wobbled, and he almost dropped the balance bar. The man imagined it tumbling down to the stage floor, landing on the drumroll player, a cymbal burst ending his life. Or perhaps, thought the man on the high wire, Hugo would reach out and grab it as it fell and swing it back up to me.

The drumroll went on, and Mam, the ringleader, in his top hat with a red whip in hand, spoke softly into the microphone. "He must be shy, folks. Just shy. Let's give him some encouragement!" The crowd clapped offbeat, drowning out the drumroll, with someone's last clap joining the drum at the end. The crowd grew silent again as the man gripped the balance bar, holding it square in front of him like a tilted lance or plastic nunchucks.

The first step led to the second, and the wire swayed, and with it the man swayed. The swing reminded him of a dance where his mother held him close to her chest while his feet dangled at her kneecaps. His feet no longer dangled, but gripped. Now, his feet stung from the hard wire. The knots in them welted, an imprint into mud.

The crowd "oohed" and "ahhed" with each step the man took, the sway becoming a rhythm, a dance with the air that only circus performers know. Mam recited the concession list, of pizza and popcorn and soda, as the crowd nodded while staring at the man floating above them. "Think about flying," whispered the man, "think about running and slowing down." His heart beat like the drum, but faster, wanting to abandon the beam and jump to the other side. Yet, without the balance, the air would consume him, drown him. The clowns would take his lunch money, and Henry, the elephant with the stitched scars on his back legs from years of abuse, would stomp him into the stage floor. He would become a decoration to the floor boards, a red splatter next to the stars.



Hugo whispered to Shiva, the belly dancer with the bad hip that made her swing widely more than sway. They had history, a baby somewhere in California with a blue to her eyes that proved she was Romanian. Shiva's dark palms were clasped to her mouth, the fake ruby rings on her fingers twinkling with the show lights, and she gasped as the man above him stopped to regain his footing, lifting a sad, red foot to the air.

Henry, with his tamer, looked up fiercely at the man, who was again making his way to the middle of the wire. With his trunk, the elephant swung his headdress off, as if he were resigning from the circus, throwing a wrench at a broken lawn mower. In the same motion, Francis' lion roared in a hiccupped fury, making the man on the wire shake. Henry stayed where he was with the tamer and watched as the man steadied himself at the midpoint of the wire's length.

The crowd clung to their seat chairs, the hard plastic underneath them. An old man with his pipe whispered to his granddaughter, "What's he doin' up there? Playin' make-believe?" The news traveled up to the man on the high wire through a murmur from the crowd. The man took wider steps, his feet contouring to the roundness of the wire while the white straps on his feet came loose from the sweat on their bottoms. The straps unraveled and fell, so he stood uneasily barefoot on the wire. The crowd's eyes followed the straps to the floor while Shiva shouted at her place next to the high wire ladder, "Hold on! We will get the net!" Francis retrieved the white straps from the middle of the stage floor and ran backstage, out of sight.

The lights brightened as Mam whispered encouragement into his microphone, the crowd held silent by the momentum of the stilled wire, the dance over. It was with a brief pause that the man threw his dancing partner, the bar, out from the downward direction that would have killed the drumroller if he were closer to the middle of the stage. The man fell, a motion that made the "oohs" and "ahhs" from the crowd echo louder in his ear, the air swirling around his head and matting the brown knots of his scalp. He was back first into the ground, a momentum that would have killed him.

...

The grass was soft, and spring rain had made the dirt between the trees a billowed mud pile. The rope, dirtied from years of his elder brothers' exploits and tug-o-war competitions, swung a foot above him as he rested his back to the ground. The boy's mother hummed to the beat from songs off the radio strapped to her back as she worked in the garden.

The boy saw that his father was pounding a wrench into the brains of the old lawn mower that they had picked up last week from their neighbor. Still on the ground and afraid that the air had been stolen from him, the boy nodded to his grandfather, who was smoking his pipe on the porch and asking, "What were you doin' up there, boy?"

The large Saint Bernard gaily bolted from across the yard and, with a massive tongue, slapped the boy's face clean and roared a bark that made his grandfather call him away from the boy. "Francis, you get over here! Let him up!"

The dog wagged his tail and knocked the rope that swung between the massive oaks, making it sway back and forth. The boy grabbed hold of the rope as it swung and used it to help himself off the ground. Francis took the stuffed elephant that laid next to the boy's feet in his jaws and raced toward the end of the yard.

...

The bearded woman was shorter than most women, bald from years of drugs. She was holy like a Tibetan monk, in a white robe, her body molded from the goddess with her many arms. There is a tapestry of her hung in Mam's trailer. The growth of the beard stayed, curling at the end with a wild mischief that splintered as much as the lines on her face from years of weathered afternoons in the stone alcove where her mother kept her. She often saw flying dragons outside her window, their breath scorching in spurts of New Year glory. They flew in circles around her home, children at their feet, one hand up to the air as if to touch the tail as it flitted by. Now, as the crowd gasped, hand to mouth to cover the breath, she reached her own hand up into the air as if to touch those kites.

...

The boy's mother was digging up her garden with the iron limb of his father's right leg, which he often took off when at home. She reached behind her back and flipped the radio dial with her dirtied thumb, the static making Francis howl. She was making pottery out of the damp earth where the carrots grew, bringing to the surface the clay pots that held the roots. The garden was buried, the potatoes deep beyond the trickle of spring rain, and the boy watched as she uprooted the pots from her garden. Earth spilled over their edges, but the greenery still remained floating at the top. He knew what it meant when his mother unearthed her garden, taking the pots into the trailer while his father kicked the tires of the old lawn mower with his stub.

...

The clowns hurried into the middle of the floor, screaming in their hoarse voices, and encircled the falling man. They held up their hands to him as they spread across the floor as if he would bounce off their bellies. Their voices made the audience shudder, the depth of their gait making the multicolored clothes balloon over fake, thick thighs. One clown tore off his red nose and wiped his face wildly to see the man clearly as he tumbled.

...

The boy was forced into the cabin of the trailer where he sat upon a throne of pillows; the bounce of them lightened the ache from the bumpy road. Traveling, they passed a drummer with his bass drum strapped to his chest. The cymbal was on top, and he played with the beat of the bumps as the trailer snaked past him.

...

The drumroller couldn't help but keep playing, this time speeding up with the intensity, the roll getting faster, the beat haunting, as the man fell closer to the ground.

...

The boy watched the country pass outside the window, watching the kites fly by the near seashore, and above them a naked woman rested

in the hollow of the sun. She beat at him through the window, and he hoped his father wouldn't see.

...

Mam's face fell with the man. He dropped the microphone some time before and was stretched with the clowns on the stage floor, feet placed in the middle of a star.

...

The boy was bounced off the pillows, and his bare feet sunk into the still-damp earth of his mother's traveling garden. The woman reached through the glass and held him as he fell, the dirt brimming over the edge of the pots.

...

Hugo swung his massive arm out and caught the falling man, breaking his fall, snapping his own arm at the elbow. The clowns held the falling man up high, hoisting him up toward the stage lights. Hugo held his arm tight as the audience cried, "Hoorah! Hoorah!" Mam watched as the high wire swung above them, and Francis' lion howled a roar that shook the stars from the ceiling's outreach. The yellow mache tumbled and landed on the drummer's cymbal.

...

Somewhere closer to the shoreline, his mother replanted her garden in the weedy undergrowth. Children often took dragon-shaped kites to the shore, and the seagulls would weave between the strings.

...

The man hadn't been there in years, tumbling down, yet what he remembered most was the naked woman in the sun.

# Four Wisconsin High School Teachers, 1937

by Mike Mosher



Four Wisconsin High School Teachers, 1937

26.17  
"11

Pen on Paper

Fall 2011

Cardinal Sins 37

# Hell's Laundromat

by Heidi Hall

I doubt the devil  
does his laundry with the lights on.  
Boiling bubbles are all  
he needs to hear,  
the crimson color behind his eyes  
since birth.  
Warm water wraps around  
his coiled claws  
as they caress velvet vests  
and pleated slacks.  
He breathes the bloody steam,  
and savors the suffering that covers  
his clothes and  
keeps him clean.

# Catbird (Steals You While You're Sleeping)

by Corey Gilbert



Oil on Canvas

Fall 2011

*Cardinal Sins 39*

# Sketchy

by Tyler Beyett



Color Photography



# Auto-Fellatio

by Timothy Windy, Jr.

The lone gunman  
was drawing bead  
on a mirror. Moisture  
ran down his face,  
little rivulets of flame.  
He checked the tarot card  
on his wrist—The Chariot  
meant he was too late.  
He took the carpool lane,  
rode shotgun with  
one free hand.

After he appeared  
in court, he got out his  
bowl, tapped out  
some fear,  
and got high  
to the sound of a  
studio audience's  
jeers.  
Reality lagged.  
There was no way  
to judge  
when he'd fallen.

A gale blew through his cell's  
half-cracked window. Drool dripped  
from his lolled tongue onto an imaginary robe  
as he succumbed to self-absorption.

The jailer asked him  
to roll off the couch,  
to nail the windows shut.  
The prisoner was receptive,  
letting the advice clad in  
lace ease near, 'til it was  
close enough to see  
the stripes in his eyes.

He was committed to evidence,  
a rag tossed in a corner.  
The pain, like canned laughter,  
throbbed the drumheads in his ears.  
His blooper reel peripheral vision  
framed everything with mistakes.  
The tireless light glaring in his  
Panopticon was trial by  
paralysis-inducing reminders.

The cunning of his own  
penitence endowed him  
with telekinesis—the ability  
to move through life without  
touching (or being touched  
by) anything or anyone.

# The Houses of Light and Dark

by N.D. Phillips

In South Africa, townships aren't just kind names for the outskirts of an average suburban city where people live in two-story houses with half-mile-long driveways that are accompanied by small farms, or, as the professional farmers call them, "glorified gardens." In the United States, township people are the recipients of jokes and taunts from those who live in the city. The subject matter frequently includes references to the amount of corn in the immediate vicinity of their homes and/or the inability to distinguish one's wife from a cow. While both are valid points, the fact remains that an American definition of "township" greatly differs from a South African understanding of the word.

Imagine a field of mud. You're flying over this field, which seems to be inhabited by odd-looking cars packed together as tight as the jeans of a hipster. After landing, a car will drive down a highway at 140 (not m/hour, you American, don't freak out) km/hour and you will look at the field on your left. They weren't cars but dwellings. Not houses, not homes. Dwellings. You'll pass this inhabited junkyard and enter a suburban area filled with ranch-style homes guarded by automatic gates. You'll find the house you'll stay at and pull in.

When I reached my temporary home, I was struck by the automatic gate. Where I'm from, only the wealthy own the great sliding walls. However, in South Africa, a home without a gate is like a woman in Transylvania without a crucifix or garlic necklace. The gate proves only to be the first line of defense. Before one is granted entrance, one needs a key to a padlock, which holds the door-gate in place to release it from its statuesque position. Then a key is inserted to the door itself to loosen it from lock-down. Then, and only then, are you allowed into the house. Now, if the owners have a dog, the "visitor" must take care to dismantle the guard before proceeding (for South African dogs are very loyal to their owners).

The layout of the house is not vastly different from any American house. A living room connected to a dining area abutting the kitchen. Separating the land of Kitchen and Dining Area is a door that leads to a long hallway containing entrances to the house's bedrooms. When I went into the bathroom, I did notice a couple of differences. South Africans are partial to bathtubs and are fundamentally wary of showers.

Also, bathrooms, for the most part, do not have fans. Matches prove very helpful for anyone sharing a bathroom.

Township houses possess similar attributes to the homes in suburban neighborhoods, only in a condensed format. A generic township house is insulated by plastic, the kind used to add a layer of protection from the rain to your shed in the back yard, nailed helter-skelter to a thin frame of boards. The bedroom takes up one fourth of the house, covering an entire wall. Nails protruding from the walls on either side of the bed where clothes are hung mark the closet. After waking, one is allowed quick entry to the kitchen by standing and sidestepping to where a Bunsen burner and a loaf of bread sit on a small folding table. The bucket of water next to the table will substitute for a bathtub. Two plastic folding chairs constitute the sitting room, and the table can be moved in front of them to create a dining area.

Any dog from the large cities in South Africa could be classified by the American Kennel Club (unless such animal couldn't make the boat over to our great nation, in which case the South African Kennel Club could handle identification). Shih-tzus, poodles, dobermans, and spaniels are regularly seen in homes or walking, protecting their masters. A line as powerful, tall, strong, and wide as the Great Wall of China, divides the township from suburbia in this regard. Crossing into the township, I saw creatures more closely related to the offspring of zombies and bears rather than dogs. These animals had lost all of their hair and had splotches of discolored skin or pieces where skin had either rotted or was torn off. They constantly scratched and could be frequently seen attached to other dogs. I was assured this was only a communication exercise between the animals, though I was pretty sure it was much more.

The only thing worse than watching multiple "communication exercises" of township dogs is being chased by them. I was granted this unfortunate pleasure due to my own stupidity. *Make sure you look for dogs, I had been told. If you see one in front of a house, try to get around it, and if it doesn't look happy, move on!* How brilliant, yet simple, the advice was. Yet, how difficult it was to carry out.

The skin of this particular township dog's skin had been bleached by the sun until it looked almost identical to the dirt on which it lay. As my

right leg stepped over the dog's body, I heard a kraken-like growl. My leg froze for a fraction of a second. Straddling the dog, I realized the compromising position of an essential part of my anatomy. I recovered my previous position and thought of backing away slowly, but alas, it was too late. The dog was now on his feet and was advancing forward quite quickly. Retreating down the street, I could hear the barking dog closing in on me. I have never been known for bursts of speed. Those built like me claim that we are made for endurance not speed (God knows we are built for neither). But at this moment, I managed to throw my feet in front of each other quicker than I ever have before. Realizing that my burst of speed would soon end, which would prompt a physical crash, I began to despair. I glanced backwards and saw the mouth of the behemoth spraying forth a foamy concoction that would burn through a block of gold if it sat on it long enough. A voice called out, and the dog stopped its advance. I strained to see my savior only to discover it was a nine-year-old African boy.

Five minutes, walking, from my provincial residence was a Spar. Spar holds a monopoly on food in the cities. There are QuixSpars, SuperSpars, and regular Spars, and they are nothing but miniature and glorified versions of Kroger. One can expect to find anything in them that one could discover in the United States. Except, of course, ketchup. In its place, between the mustard and mayonnaise, was only tomato sauce, which tasted, God forbid, like tomatoes. In the township, a young African named Tomsanqua Oliphant led me to get the dinner for that night. We walked through mud and water until we reached a table. This table would not have passed any health inspection, unless of course the inspector had been raised in the backwoods of the Louisiana bayou. I saw a cow walk into a small shack ten yards behind the table led by a old man. Seconds later, a loud squeal emanated from the shack followed momentarily by loud chopping sounds. In three or four minute intervals, the old man would bring out various pieces of the cow. First came the liver, a highly coveted organ, which we were lucky enough to purchase that day. Later, we also bought some meat to accompany our 100-percent fresh beef.

As we walked back to the shanty to cook our liver along with some onions we picked up, a white truck pulled up beside us.

*"Moloh, booti,"* the driver said to Tomsanqua. He ignored me. The next

couple of sentences hid their meaning from me, seeing as my knowledge of Xhosa was limited only to greetings. Seconds later, the truck drove away.

“What’d he say?” I asked

“He told me to get that *umlungu*,” the Xhosa word for “white man,” “out of here before he gets shot.” He looked at me and grinned.

“Shot? C’mon, where does he think we are? Africa?”

I said earlier that people who lived in American cities felt strangely about those from American townships, and the same is in South Africa. But the nature of the discrepancy is not the same. Americans make fun of the farm-like ways of those in townships; they poke fun at their distance from town and equivocate it to their inability to operate technology. In South Africa, the townships are feared. White people do not dare go into the townships for what seems like a fatal amount of guilt. They realize their injustices against an entire race of people on whose land they themselves were denied access. And they fear retribution. I cannot pretend to understand the sentiment of every African and their feelings toward the whites, but I can express that throughout my entire stay not a single negative word was said to me. Even the man saying I might be shot was more of a warning than a threat. They tell me that apartheid ended in 1994, but staying in a white person’s house on Monday night and then a black township house on Tuesday, one might second guess that.

# Personal Hero

by Stephanie Janczewski



Black & White Photography

Fall 2011

*Cardinal Sins 47*

# Conversation To Avoid at Family Dinner

by Sarah Arthur

For as fast as it happened, it was slow. Surprisingly slow. I saw his hand shoot up. I saw his fingers cup the edges of her face. His palm mashed her nose as the strength from his arm forced her head backward into the glass. I expected it to ricochet off the window pane like a rubber band stretched too far, but no—it just went right through. I heard her gasp. I saw the shock. And then she cried. She cried.

We sat at the top of the stairs. He didn't know we were there, couldn't hear us over the sound of his own voice screaming terrible things at her. Of course, how could we not be there, having been woken up in the middle of the night by the sound of his violent rage? My sister and I, we crept to our spot in the dark. I giggled when I heard him say the F-word, couldn't help myself; he said it like five times in a row. My sister told me to stop or we'd get caught. She was right. I struggled to stifle the noise I was making.

When I heard her, saw her, my heart told me to run down the steps. She needed comforting, and I needed to separate them like they always did to us when we fought. But my sister, older and wiser, pulled at my pajama shirt to keep me right where I was. "We should go."

I didn't want to go, but she forced me. I'm sure neither of us could sleep. "You up? Sissy, you up?" But her half of the room stayed quiet. She was pretending. She had to be. Still, since she wouldn't talk to me, I rolled over on my back checking for any new bubbles or cracks in the ceiling paint. I guess I fell asleep.

The beauty of being seven. One of its greatest benefits was that with a solid block of rest, I was allowed to forget. And I did forget, waking up to Michael Jackson singing "Thriller" through my radio, getting dressed, combing my hair, brushing my teeth. Even after the first step down the stairs, second and third, too, watching my feet



to keep from slipping, I was in my happy place. In my happy place until I hit step number four, instinctively looking ahead. There was a hole in the window at the platform between the two floors. Then I remembered.

Mom wasn't in the kitchen making cereal like usual. She wasn't anywhere around. I wanted to go up and get her, but my sister said we shouldn't. Sissy said we had to take care of ourselves. We made a bit of a mess, but tried our hardest to clean it up. There was a hole in the window, see. There'd never been a hole before.

My sister and I walked to school. Right up to the very last step leading out of the house, I watched the window. I had to set it, like an iron-on transfer. Not sure why. It wasn't beautiful with unicorns and glitter; it was sad and ugly, and I hated it. Didn't matter though. I just had to set it in my memory.

Mom was busy making cinnamon toast when Sissy and I walked back into the house after school. Two glasses of milk, each half full, waited on the table for us as she finished up our snack. "Sorry about breakfast this morning. I was tired."

She wasn't wearing her usual smile, the one where she shows all her teeth. I missed seeing them, one in particular—it was the color of coffee. Out of a whole mouth full of white, that one stood alone, and today, it was hiding. "Go put your book bags in your room."

I dragged my backpack up one step at a time. It thudded against the hardwood as I walked. I wasn't ready to look again though, keeping my eyes fixed firmly on the stairs until I reached the top. Then I turned around. The hole was gone.

Mom didn't look at him at all during dinner. She just sat with her head down and pushed food around on her plate. "Who fixed the window?" I asked. Mom's head whipped up, and her eyes bugged like she'd just seen a giant spider perched on my shoulder. Sissy kicked my shin underneath the table and called me stupid under

her breath. "Well, who fixed the window?" I asked again.

"What window?" His voice was low and gruff, like he was angry.

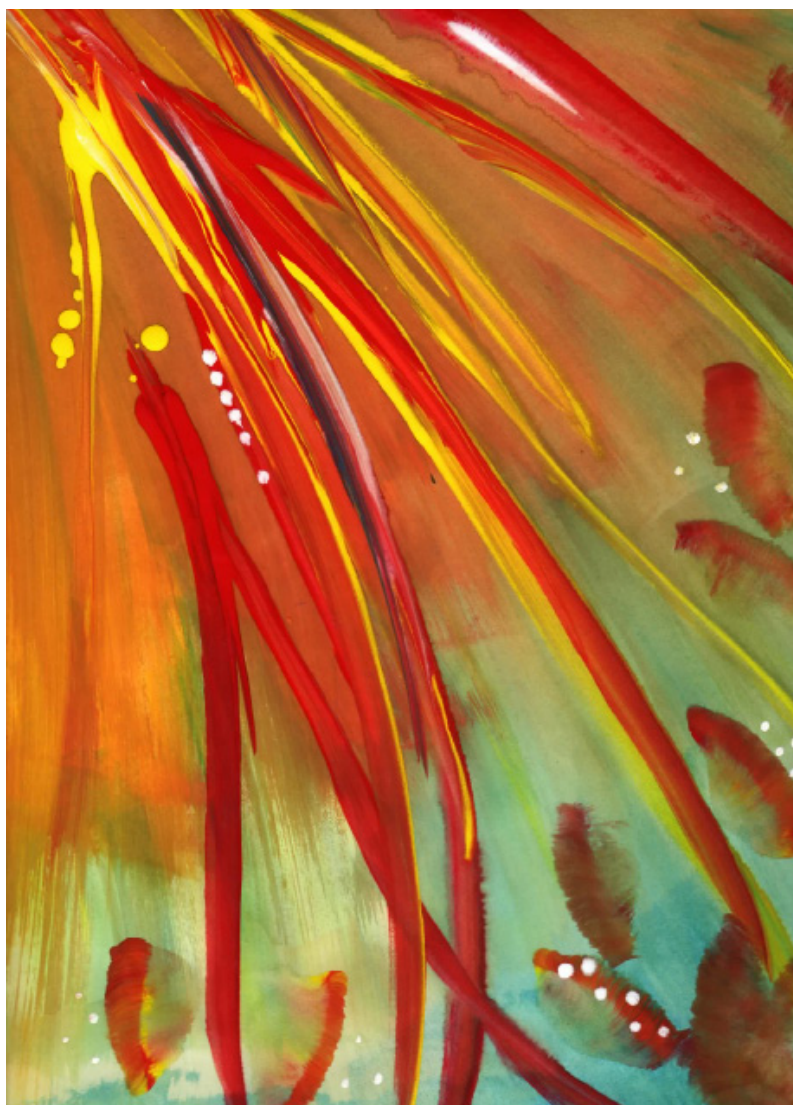
"The platform window, I saw you break it last night."

"Shut your god-damned mouth!" He swung at me, but I ducked. So he pushed up from his seat and grabbed me by my hair. It hurt. I started to cry. "Shut up!"

He was so close he spat on me as he screamed. I wiped my face. He lost it. Blow after blow, the leather strap and the belt buckle welted my skin. I screeched and tried to pull free, but his grip was like a clamp around my forearm. Mom charged at him with a chair above her head, crashing it down onto his back. He released his grip and fell to his knees. She grabbed me and my sister by the hands, and we raced upstairs where she locked us in the bathroom. The three of us stayed until we heard the rumbling of the car start up and drive away. Then it was time to clean.

# Ecnarbiv

by Lakyn Miller



Paint

Fall 2011

*Cardinal Sins 51*

# Flashback

by Jesse Place



Color Photography

52 *Cardinal Sins*

Fall 2011

# Marooned

by Moses Fellini

This is a place where a door might be  
a window, or a mirror reflecting itself.  
Yours is a face that a whore might have  
slapped; you've always been  
a bad tipper. Those oranges  
you zested yesterday have turned  
into tiny moths and swarmed  
ashore to be marooned and purpled  
in the indelicate heat of this  
cancerous tropic. You'll have to go  
crabwise into the mirror  
to arrive at a place where a door  
might be a trap. Let it draw you  
down beneath the toadless garden  
we planted but forgot to  
water. Waiter, there's a spy  
in my suit: I think he's me.

# Despair

by Emily Sovey



Linocut

54 *Cardinal Sins*

Fall 2011

# Side Effects

by D. Scott Edwards

Plenetrol is the new way to reverse genetic male pattern baldness, but talk to your doctor because side effects may include drowsiness, headache, heart disease, nausea, the plague, blood clotting, sinus infections, and sudden allergies to people named Brendon. Arthritis, euphoria, anorexia, dyslexia, pyromania, obesity, cranial bleeding, anal leakage, skeletal inversion, and severe liver damage.

In a rare but horrifying instance, after an application of Plenetrol, a dark portal to a molten abyss, which can best be described as the one and only Hell, opened up and sucked an entire Midwestern town into an eternity of unimaginable torture.

On January 18th, 2006, in Arizona, a man spontaneously combusted after looking directly at the head of someone who just applied Plenetrol.

Plenetrol is not for people who have a hard time breathing, eating, sleeping, walking, talking, doing jumping jacks, singing "The Star-Spangled Banner," or doing drunken impressions of Mel Gibson being pulled over by California police.

People named James Donald Pendalton XVIII should not use Plenetrol as its engineers take a general offense to his continued existence and have designed Plenetrol to break down his genetic code and devolve him into an amoeba.

Any side effects not specifically mentioned in this disclaimer, such as general mutations, hallucinations, mental breakdowns, breakdowns in national economies and the space time continuum or other temporal anomalies, are implicit in this disclaimer, and the makers of Plenetrol may not be sued for failure of disclosure.

Plenetrol is a miracle drug, so users might have a propensity to walk on water, turn water into wine, part the Red Sea, heal the blind, cure leprosy, talk to burning bushes, produce manna from heaven, walk through incredibly hot furnaces without being burned, walk through lions' dens, build arks, fight the demons of Hell and ascend to heaven, spontaneously multiply the number of baked goods and seafood at a meal, and raise the dead.

Since Plenetrol is not designed for women, immaculate conceptions may not happen. However, if a female should be exposed to Plenetrol and a savior child born unto her where a star shines over a manger and three wise kings from India, Pakistan, and Malaysia show up bearing gifts of extraordinary value, this should not be taken as a sign of her infidelity or fornication on her behalf in any way so sayeth the archangel Gabriel glory to God on high, amen.



# Who Speaks English?

by Josh Crummer

It was whispered  
that he had Nordic origins,  
a bastard child possibly Indo-European—  
something whose mother  
is still uncertain of to this day,  
but she swears daily he takes after his father  
anyway. The Happy Meal toys  
scattered across the nursery  
are discarded in molding corners  
with yellow wallpaper.

\* \* \* \* \*

Students speak monosyllabically  
during hushed classroom  
chatter, uttering curse words  
between breaths. If he were

a substitute teacher, he'd speak in  
crooked clear stutters—

blue jean monologue for antsy kids,  
his gift for six hours

for a decade and a half—

A Public Chalkboard

Dojo. If he were a school principal  
scolding these brats for insolence,

he'd likely shut the door,  
smirk, and explain how to elude capture.

Every week on the PA his Teacher's Pets  
are student of the month, and  
even after weeks of studying hard

you never win that award,  
that insignificant award.

\* \* \* \* \*

On lunch break

atop incomplete roofs and rusting dump trucks  
there's something on his mind

that he can't remember. On the radio, a song:

Cherokee people lament  
that he taught their young,  
packaged centuries of invasion into Billboard 100—

caring little that he owns the record label,  
and sings the song himself, for he is proud to live, too,

and, some whisper, can never die.

\* \* \* \* \*

He's got his swag on,  
strutting the streets of Manhattan, dark gray suit  
pressed against his marble skin—  
ear-to-ear Brad Pitt grin. All around him

skyscrapers sprinting toward a heaven  
stuffed with asteroids and

empty space

which he's sold to the underground,  
recorded in the National Star Registry. He enjoys  
the show, the rise and fall of

investments foreign and domestic. But clearly he is no peddler,

no don't pigeonhole him such, nor  
does anyone question his one-time policy—

dotted line signed at birth.

\* \* \* \* \*

During wartime, fatalistic soldiers joke  
behind his back, in dusty muggy tents

lost in the Arabian desert:  
When Germans shoot, the British duck.  
When Britons shoot, the Germans duck.

Before Americans shot,

He calculated friendly fire as a minor inconvenience.  
Ask now and hear eulogies and 21-gun salutes all at once,

every soulache moan from widows now and tomorrow  
shaking churches harder than Elvis' pelvis—

by which time, he's already left the funeral.

\* \* \* \* \*

A Machiavellian trap waiting at the poverty lines.

Seitanic cooks in the kitchens of Hell—  
me feast on, Mephiston—  
a bib on Abaddon.

*Now speak my name, or die.*

# Console

by Katie Schlund



Black & White Photography

60 *Cardinal Sins*

Fall 2011

# Biographies

Brandy Abraham is primarily a fiction writer, whose work has appeared in *Cardinal Sins* since Fall 2009. She was also recently published in *Temenos*. She would like to thank Pete Stevens for keeping her modern and for always pushing her to improve.

Sarah Arthur in spite of, or maybe because of, being a very busy student, is scatterbrained most days, but has a big heart, and occasionally writes things people want to read.

Peter Brian Barry is the Hemingway to your Fitzgerald.

E. Bauer, nicknamed "The Cookie Monster," is a happy-go-lucky criminal justice and communication double major who joyfully dances West Coast Swing as many days during the week as she is able! She writes in her spare time and never misses an opportunity to scribble down new ideas on a napkin.

Tyler Beyett believes that quantum mechanics and swing dancing can coexist peacefully and that life should be wrapped in gratuitous amounts of bacon. Mmmmm...bacon.

Justin J. Brouckaert is unsure of how he got here, a bit confused about where he is, and absolutely thrilled to see where he's headed.

Ellissa Cherven is a freshman planning to major in nursing. When she is done with school, she hopes to do mission work in inner city Detroit. She cares about people and wants to show them God's love through nursing work. Photography allows her to capture beauty around her and share it.

Josh Crummer is currently a student at Central Michigan University, pursuing an MA in creative writing. He currently leads an Occupy: Board Room movement with some Dark Elves and is increasingly paranoid of girls on the Internet.

Raymond Deeren lives.

Sean D. (Yes, the middle initial IS necessary) Dudley: sophomore art major, otaku, and a fan of reading pretentiously in coffee shops. He had uber fun judging your artworks and going through all the nifty stories. He hopes you enjoy them as much as he did.

D. Scott Edwards was born to be a super hero, and he will be, just as soon as that blast of gamma radiation hits him.

Alyssa Ellison is a junior from Gaylord. She is majoring in secondary education English with a minor in history. She hopes to someday take a full tour of Europe and visit Romania and Vlad Dracula's castle. Writing is like breathing to her and reading a second passion. Her dream is to have at least one of her writings/series published.

Beth Erbacher is not the only Bethany Jean in the world. She has personally met two others.

Noah Essenmacher is the columnist 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.

Moses Fellini graduated from SVSU in 2009. He had a different name then. Now he lives in Baltimore and plays bass guitar in the indie rock band Northern Spy.

Corey Gilbert has been wandering the ethers of the 21st century economic wasteland, equipped with a BFA in painting and drawing, searching for an interstitial source of income to provide a means for financing aspirations of further education. He enjoys reading borrowed philosophy texts and painting unprofitable art.

Preston Hagerman is a relatively nice guy who enjoys all things obscure. If you were to ask him what his dream is, he wouldn't be able to answer because he is too content with the way his life has turned out so far. He is currently pursuing a career in youth bereavement.

Heidi Hall is a senior majoring in creative writing.

Katelyn Heins is a third-year graphic design student with a love for art, photography, and life. In her free time, she likes keeping active, hanging out with friends, and doing freelance work.

Jennifer Herrick is a sophomore, majoring with a BFA and a minor in psychology. After SVSU she wants to go to graduate school to become an art therapist to work with children in hospitals. She enjoys Chinese takeout,

a comfy blanket, and a 12 hour TV show marathon of *The Golden Girls*.

Marlin M. Jenkins has a Taylor Swift calendar in his dorm room with his roommate's face taped over the picture. He also takes great pride in bragging about his humility.

Stephanie Janzcewski is graduating this December from SVSU with a BA in graphic design and a minor in art. After graduation, she plans to move to Arizona and pursue a career in photography. She would like to thank her friends and family for supporting her along the way.

Emily Krueger uses antlers in all of her decorating.

Kirsten McIlvenna will follow you into the dark.

Lakyn Miller is doodling on everything and believes laughing makes you live longer.

Mike Mosher is a professor of art/communication & digital media at SVSU. His first series of artworks at age 23 were derived from school yearbooks. He returned to this theme in 2011, in solidarity with Wisconsin teachers' protests, using his mother's yearbook.

Jesse Place cannot be defined with a definitive definition, but rather is described by descriptive descriptions.

N.D. Phillips is a Texan reluctantly residing in Midland. His favorite authors are Paul the Apostle, Cormac McCarthy, and Garrison Keillor (it is a dream of his to hear Garrison say his name), in that order. He lives in South Africa and freelances for *The New Yorker* in his dreams.

Jared Quist is currently pursuing his bachelor's degree in communication at SVSU.

Bobbie Richardson is a nursing major who plans to graduate from SVSU in December 2011. She enjoys sticky white rice that clumps together, the sensation of soft carpet under her bare feet, and things in even numbers. She is so grateful for her family's support in everything that she pursues.

Rachel Schienke realizes that there are hundreds of thousands of words in the English language, so she's continually enticed to do something beautiful to them.

Katie Schlund is a freshman at SVSU. She enjoys photography, fall days, and all that is Elton John.

Jenne Shores is attending SVSU for her bachelor's degree in psychology, followed by a master's degree in clinical psychology and finally a certification with AASECT in sex therapy. She also has an academic background in the fine arts, works in the Office of Adjunct Faculty Support Programs, is an avid reader, and loves playing Scrabble.

Emily Sovey is a fourth-year art and history major. She plans on pursuing a career in higher education, specializing in art history. Emily mainly spends her free time drawing, napping, and listening to some good tunes, but most of all enjoying life.

Pete Stevens would like to thank his mother and father, his son Seth, and Kayla.

Timothy Windy, Jr. is a "sometimes" writer presently working on becoming an "all the time" writer.



# Acknowledgments

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Also, thank you to those who helped make the Fall 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.

Emily Krueger

# Submission Guidelines

## Entry Requirements

### *All submissions must*

- be accompanied by a completed cover sheet (downloaded from [www.svsu.edu/cardinalsins/submissions](http://www.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 "Winter 2012" 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 to 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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