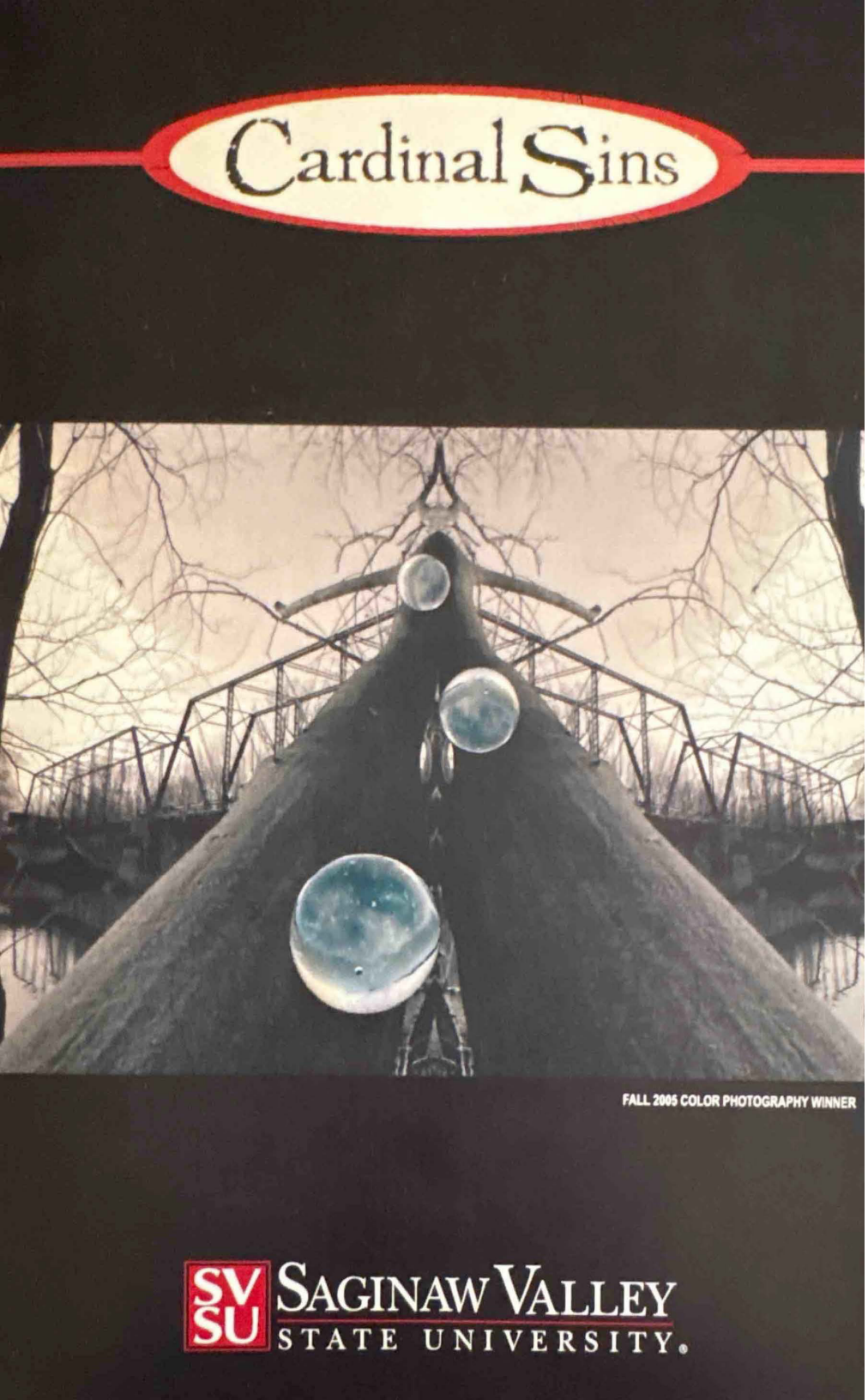


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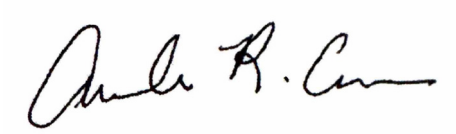
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*Congratulations to all the winners in their respective categories.

**Congratulations to the winner of the *Cardinal Sins* Fall 2005 Poetry Slam

Editor's Note

This semester, I was lucky enough to be in an incredible position, editor of *Cardinal Sins* during its 25th anniversary. This is a great opportunity, and for that I am extremely grateful. If there can be any such thing as a "theme" in this issue, it would have to be a celebration of the legacy and long life of *Cardinal Sins*. The magazine, to me, has taken on a life of its own. So while I was putting together this magazine, my focal point was to dig up the roots of this magazine while at the same moment stand back and let the current fruits shine through. Okay, cheesy metaphors aside. I really do think you can see the evolution of *Cardinal Sins* in this magazine from its first inception to its present incarnation. That is why I am happy to reprint the first issue within this magazine. I feel it makes a statement to the vitality of Cardinal Sins as an extension of SVSU, as a literary magazine, and perhaps most importantly, as a student organization.



Amanda R. Conner
Editor-in-Chief

Karma

ANN GARCIA

Well,
I've made my bed
and you're in it every night.

Room for Two

KRISTOPHER PETERSON

It was time he did something. This was the type of realization that came to patrons of the Wicker Rocker: the movers and shakers, the cell phone deal-makers—paying with plastic because money is archaic and their manicures aren't, drinking ten-dollar martinis over cellophane conversation passed between sets of collagen-infused lips, looking into eyes that would be forever winking if the botox hadn't already made mannequins out of their faces. Owen paid for his scotch and looked across the buzzing patio at the Sunset Motel. It excited him to imagine two strangers getting drunk in the bar and giving in to its convenience. However, it wasn't plausible. Convenience wasn't an adequate reason. Anything could be convenient for these people.

Owen was on his third single malt. He was only allowed three. In fact he'd given up smoking to afford these Saturday nights on the patio, staring past the people at the enticing Sunset. This had been going on for six months. He figured it was time to put an end to it, grabbed the waitress, and paid eight bucks for a pack of smokes. It was time to do something.

The Wicker Rocker used to be a dive before Santa Monica ran out of property and the yuppies started moving into North Venice. The first time Owen had been in the building it was called The Bitter Red Head, and it was his thirteenth birthday. His mother was dating a bartender named Steve at the time and decided to meet both her obligations for the evening at once. Carroll was always good at multitasking, but never better than when it came to her son and drinking. She was on her sixth gimlet when she took him outside to have a cigarette.

The homeless shelter was just south of Wilshire on Lincoln Boulevard. A man handed out cigarettes as long as you kept moving south instead of north into Santa Monica. This left the alleys and bus stop benches littered with the homeless who'd move on just far enough to get their nicotine ration. There were a lot of eyes on you in this part of town. Owen hated the weight of that many eyes, but there was something safe in the fragrance of menthol and gin that always found its way to his oily nose.

"So'd you get everything you wanted?"

Owen had refused to make a birthday list that year. They laughed together a moment, but Owen knew the seriousness was never far behind his mother's laughter.

"Like, we make this big deal about birthdays, like, it's a beginning or something. But you're a man now, and I'll tell you about real beginnings. But no. No. Like, you can't tell about beginnings. You, like, you see beginnings.'Cause it's before the words. Like, l saw you. That was a beginning."

It would be another three years and incalculable gimlets later before Carroll would tell the boy that she'd conceived him after her third failed attempt at swallowing too many sleeping pills, or that it turned out to be easier living for someone else than for herself. That night she just pointed across the poorly lit street, past a man wrapped in a dull green blanket, at the Sunset.

"Take a good look, O. that's your beginning. That was our beginning."

The Bitter Red Head was gone now. The homeless people had moved further south, but the Sunset was as dimly lit as ever. Owen was restless. He didn't finish his scotch and exited through the small, iron gate off to the west of the patio.

Below the doorbell, there was a handwritten sign that might have read, "Ring for Night Service," if it hadn't been splotched by the rain. The Persian man he had just awakened buzzed him in.

"Thirty dollars."

"Smoking room, please."

"Thirty dollars."

Owen smiled; it was cheaper than his three drinks plus tip. He slipped forty beneath the scratched bullet proof glass that separated him from the half-awake man.

"One twenty-one, in the back. Check out by eleven."

Owen took the change and key. It was a real key, not a plastic one. As he walked across the parking lot, it was strange not to see a single foreign model car. For a moment. he wasn't in L.A.

The room was everytlung the Sunset had advertised—vacant and the cable TV worked. There were some bonuses too. For example. the furnace room was right next to the bed behind a door that was duct-taped at the seams. Its constant rattling gave the impression that someone was trapped inside. That was it. He lit a cigarette turned on the television, and made a phone call. About an hour later. there was a knock at the door. He reminded himself he didn't have to answer it, but did.

"What the fuck are you doing?"

"Nice to see you too, Alison."

"You were supposed to be home hours ago. Do you have any idea what I had to tell our guests?"

"Tell them it's my birthday."

"Are you drunk?"

"No. No. I'm very sober tonight. Are they gone?"

"I don't know. Some of them. What the hell is going on with you?"

"It's funny, you know. What's the first thing I thought? Out of all the first things I could have thought, what's the first thing I thought?"

"What are you talking about?"

"I should have just paid for the cable TV. I knew you wanted it; I didn't. But I knew you wanted it. And I thought, fuck, why didn't I pay for

the goddamned cable TV?"

"Okay, you aren't making any sense. Are you staying here or what?"

"I drove up to the Wicker and I saw your car here and I thought to myself, why didn't I pay for the goddamned cable?

"Owen..."

"No. That's honestly what I thought. I sat in the parking lot all night and I thought about everything, but that was the first thing. How weird is that? But there it is, cable television."

He tried handing her the remoted.

"Look, we can talk about this."

"No, there's nothing to talk about. Let's just watch TV."

"Obviously, there's plenty to talk about, or you wouldn't have brought me here."

"No, really, this was it. This was all I wanted to happen."

"What exactly is this?"

"I just wanted to take this place from you. It was yours. It was supposed to be all yours. But it's not. Now I've ruined this place for you. That was it. We're even."

"Owen, can we please go home?"

"No. I'm gonna watch some TV."

Alison lingered a moment, took a step toward the open doorway, and retreated back inside. He looked comfortable in the bed, an ashtray on his lap, remote in his hand. She didn't know he smoked.

"Can I stay with you then?"

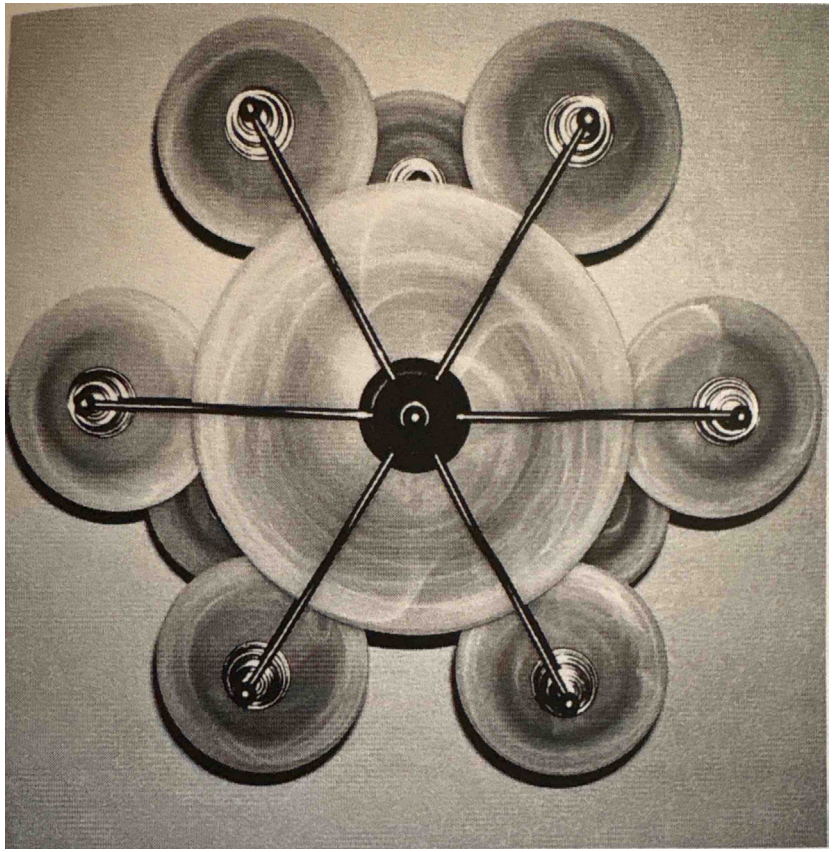
Owen shaped the ash with his cherry in the glass for a moment before handing her the remote.

"Yeah, that would be nice."

Alison closed the door. Owen put the cigarette out and made room in the bed for her. The size of the bed forced them to sleep closer than usual that night, and the flickering commercials filled the final hours of his birthday with palatable noise.

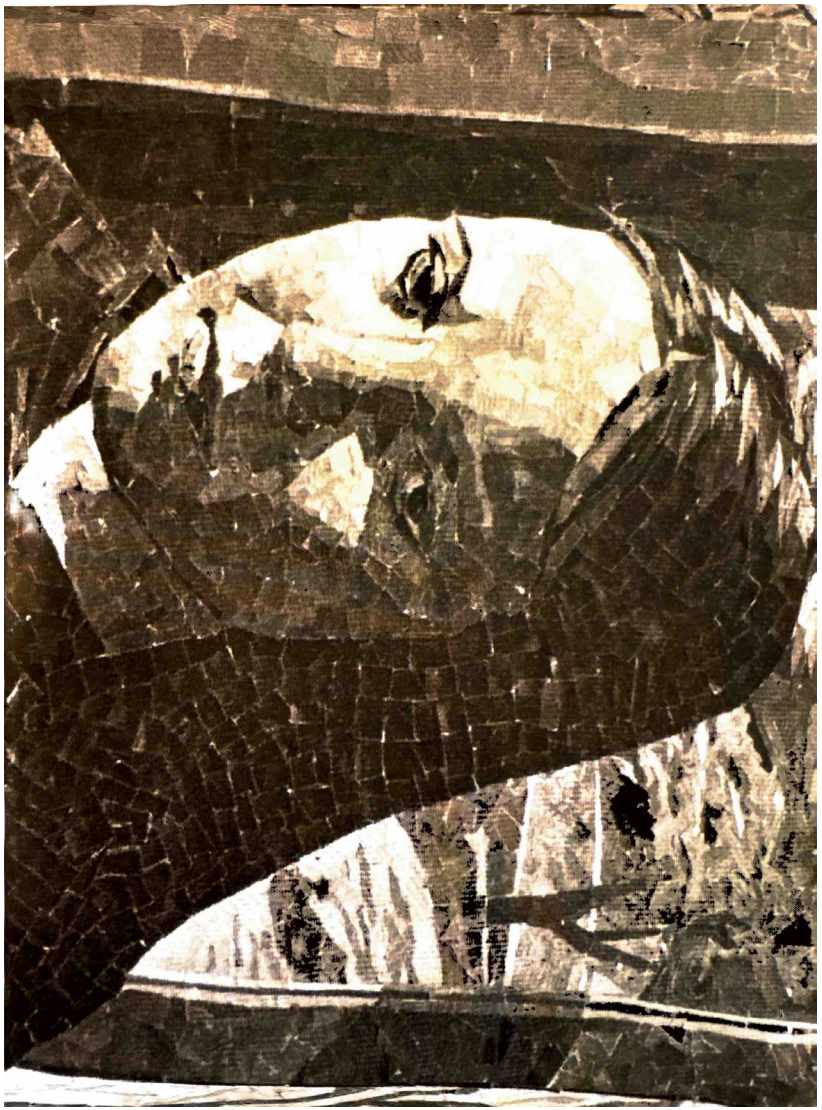
House Series #5

ERICA HOFFMAN



Sister

MICHELLE LUPLOW



In Fourth Grade

CHRISTI GRIFFIS

I held hands with Tim on the playground
and learned about the Civil War.
My class performed a play about slavery
with Tim and me as husband and wife
traveling the Underground Railroad.

My teacher brought brown tempera paint
to smear over my delicate ivory features.
“Now you look like a slave,
a woman who could be Tim’s wife.”

On a Tuesday afternoon after lunch recess,
we took the stage with matching brown faces
(though mine cracked, peeled, and fell off in strips)
and demonstrated to our small audience
how far we had come since slavery.

January's Garden

CHRISTOPHER GIROUX

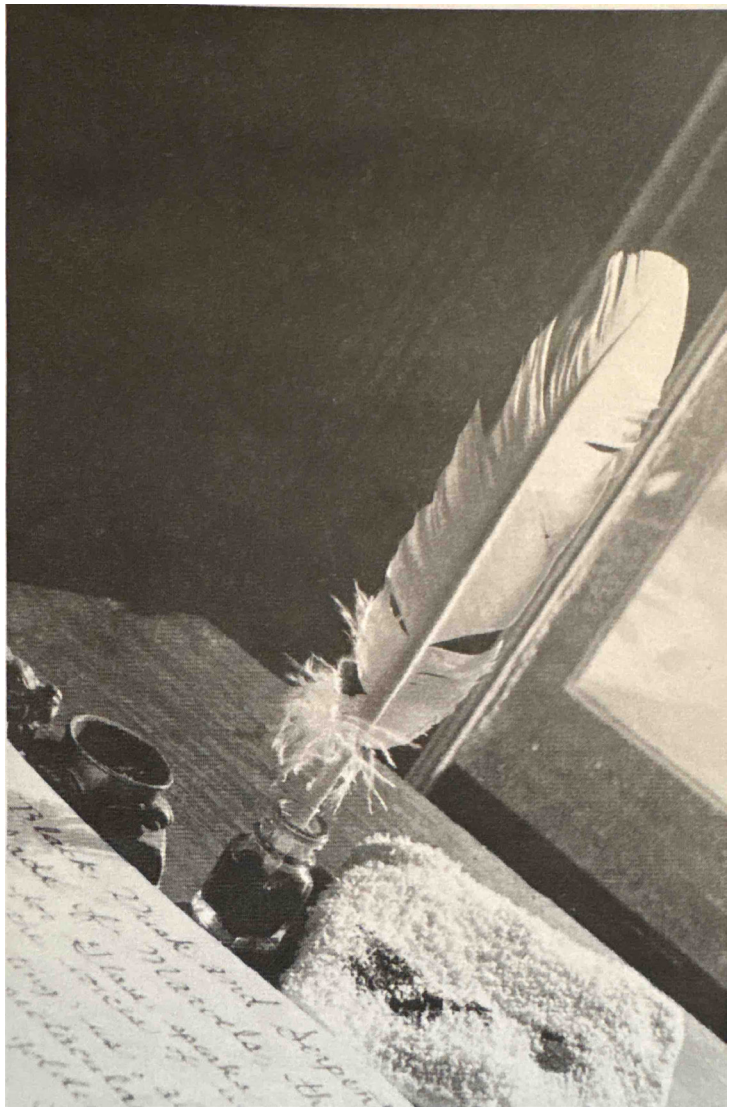
in our world
sun and shade work to our disadvantage

so each winter
we pore over seed catalogs
comparing prices
we tally the emotional and financial cost
of shipping, handling, credit card debt
eager for spring
we delve for dogwood
and dog-ear pages
calculating
we extend our borders
try to go native
move from the regular death of annuals
to regeneration, reincarnation, eternal life
desperate to find
perennials that will thrive
in drought
and under sickly maples
we yearn to eliminate weeds and empty spaces
to steal hostas from our elderly neighbor to the north
coveting the clematis and columbine
of the retiree to our south
we urge his bleeding heart and *helleborus*
to cross our fence line

eager to kneel in the dust
our gaze is earthbound
yet we look upward
steal glances over our shoulders
tend to our own shadowy eden

Artifex

HOWARD JAMES MILLER III



Antechamber

KYLE REED



Scream

JARED MORNINGSTAR

I'll never forget the day I heard a familiar voice above the pit. It was the first time since my arrival that I had felt anything other than pain from the scorch. I glanced above me and saw two demons holding him over etemal damnation.

Curious, I maneuvered my way through my fellow shades and the flames that kept all of us miserable company toward what would be his landing spot. I didn't expect him to join us so quickly. Oh, I always knew he'd end up here. Like me, he was a Commandment breaker, adultery being his one-way ticket. And there he was, pleading like a child for mercy. It was as though he didn't expect he'd end up here. Poor fool. At least, when I put the barrel in my mouth, I knew where my final destination would be. I almost felt sorry for him.

With one terrible heave, they threw him in. I stood there, captivated, as his soul was engulfed by the inferno. I knew what was coming-the scream. The same hopeless scream that fills this place. Everyone's sounds the same. Then again, you don't really notice the others when you are shrieking in agony yourself.

But nothing could have prepared me for the hideous sound that emerged from his pathetic fonn. It was like the cry of a lobster hitting boiling water, only much, much worse. A terrible shiver coursed through my condemned soul, and for the first time since I walked the earth, I felt a different pain than the one caused by the fire.

Did he make her scream this way?

I found myself fascinated by his soul flopping around in the orange and yellow and his continual scream. As terrible as his initial scream was, each one that followed seemed more intense, more painful ... more passionate. I trembled as memories from my past life flooded back into my mind. Those memories were never more troubling than they were now. I wanted to stop listening and look away, but I simply couldn't. I stared on as the flames danced around him, and injected themselves into every pore. The look on his face as the fire worked its way inside him sucked me even further into the moment.

And that scream. My mind pulsated. It was driving me mad. It was as though I had retaken my earthly fonn, for I could no longer stop shaking. Scream, scream, and scream again. The memory of seeing him with her, engaged in the sin that brought us both here, alternating with the sight and sound of his suffering, made me bum up faster than these flames ever have.

Everything was as completely black around me. My body long dead, my heart still pounding, and adrenaline still pumping. And I loved it!

That's right! Scream! Scream, you son of a bitch! Though I spoke the words silently, he must have heard them. I can not remember having felt so free. or having such an incredible release of satisfaction, as I did when he finally recognized my presence. I broke into hysterical laughter, and in that moment. hell was heaven. for I felt no pain.

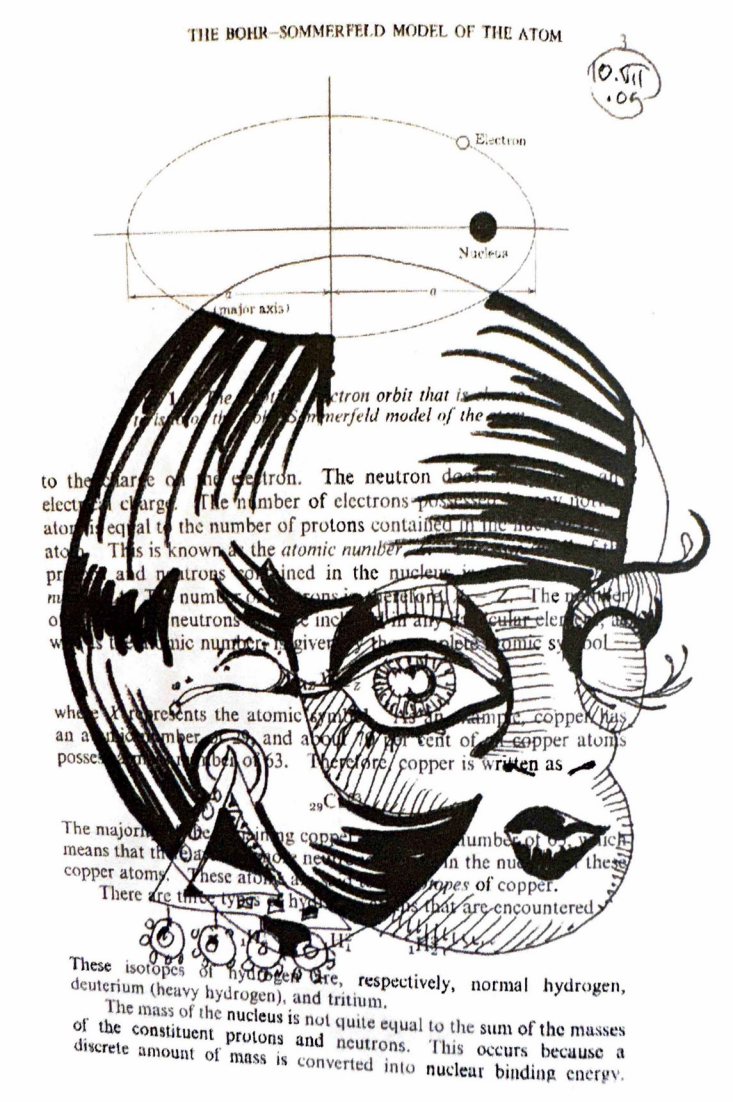
Lost at Sea

CHRISTINA TREW



Model

MICHAEL MOSHER



Einstein’s Swing

KRISTOPHER PETERSON

warm beer
warmer night
gifted students hibernate in the summer stars
crack-pop-fizz
words like kids stay on the swing
we still are
time slows, curls, bubbles, tiny toes
tracing vertigo lifelines in the sand
fingers, aching observers
begging for a word
push-fly-howl-laugh
faster than a scream or a sunless beam
fingering, straightening
kinked chains, imagined pains
all muffle in the snoring rain
forget the sun
‘cause tomorrow night may be
hot enough
to make warm beer cold

The Trickster Prowls the Deserted Garden

HOWARD JAMES MILLER III

I. *the trajectory of the morning star*

my mange strangles
cold breaths of silence.
the last wind rustles through me.
I look with marble eyes knowing,
that all you have left to offer
is empty innocence
that burns the moon.

I have no pause
my jaws bleed words that you fear.
spit draws and drags
across the hallowed floor.

these western highways are nothing.
only slow romantic paintings
stricken with bleeding American colors,
the idealism of manifest destiny,
turning the intangible dream
into a cold faux moonlight blanket of oblivion.

I am the last seal,
all the holds you
to the remnants of your life's meaning,

beneath these ragged paws,
creeping horizon to horizon,
thistle-stung pads beat
time unto its conclusion.

for the tetragrammation is but the reiteration
of Sammeal,
lurking, digesting
in the pits of acidic stomachs
turning and churning
red memories.

the pallid now.
the transcendental point of the dawn
where all you can make out
are diffuse plays of light,
trick sirens on white walls.

II. *the coyote feasts at dawn*

silence mutes the needle
and the rose withers,
its blood forsaken.
lost bones tosses to the heap of
stratification.
the fossil's proof,
bedridden mazes
of shaman incantations.
a rock-wood cemetery petrified, crystalline
dogwood falls to the ripple of time's digestion.
unleavened bread cannot nourish
the appetite of what I am,
prowling the sage and sand,
the black ashen dusk.

from behind the Joshua tree's
tangled skin,
I creep, closer,
closing in on you.

feasting in dawn's glory,
insatiable jowls taste
like a razor's cut.

Elegy of a Plastic Bucket

MATTHEW C. EASTERWOOD

small hands manipulate green men
into taking evasive action,
except one—
poised with metal detector in hand,
platform a few millimeters below the sand,
too late.
imaginary grenade bends the
green-skinned soldier in two—
snapping beneath the pressure of
a chubby thumb and forefinger,
plastic blood oozes thoughts,
The Empire Strikes Back—
arm severed, lightsaber lost
like the downed soldier

scattered troops await orders,
Mother's voice breaks the
muffled silence explosions leave in war movies—
"Supper!"

they march into the plastic bucket—
sand sifts in after them,
lid places them in darkness

the lone soldier, flimsy metal detector
still attaching top to bottom,
lies alone in the sandbox,
left behind,
staring up at a green sky of
maple leaves—
crackling like distant gunfire in the wind

Earthmover

HOWARD JAMES MILLER III



The Snore

KRISTOPHER PETERSON

tucked in loose, late
child-safe finger paints
blotting back-lid bids
for whole bean conversation
ground into something we can drink
whispered, scented secrets
second skin of sheets
selling top-drawer speech

went to the doctor
‘cause my heart weakens
with every unconscious abomination that steals past my lips
and
you can’t sleep

now, plastic mask pumping
perrumpapump pumping
actualized machine
oxidizing dreams

you still can’t sleep

I’ll take off mine just take off yours
grind the ignition
my cold starting hand-me-down
I’m a corrupt hand-me-up

still, you can’t sleep
put a bed in the
guest room
‘cause the missed breath machine
snores louder than me

Colors of the Riviera

CARLY TOYZAN



Falling from the Sky

CHRISTINA TREW



Transformer Down

DOUG MCGAW

The light flickers and fades
a disjointed snapshot
from my Polaroid mind
something cosmic
capture what is lost
frantically fumbling in the dark
where is she?
fade out
yet. this is no orchestrated event
no television show geared for Nielsen
no second act of redemption
no happy ending
the light flickers and fades
I catch a glimpse
as she fades ...
fade out
flic-flic-flicker
Edison's genius at work
gone mad
a glimpse of a pristine face
fuck she's gone again
flic-flic-flicker
a tinge of crimson hair
in the corner of my watering eye
fade out
"the power outage was caused by
us shutting the main generator off"
so said Consumers
I know better.

Grave Markers

JASON SCHNEIDER

We skipped fourth period when Luca found out about his father. He had run off about a month earlier, and no one knew where he'd gone. He was never reported missing or anything like that. A grown man can do what he pleases, even leave his family behind.

We weren't grown men yet, but we did as we pleased, too. And so we left school at lunch, snuck through the trees on the edge of the school property, and got into Luca's rusted brown pickup that he parked next door at the old apartments.

He had gotten word of his father from this guy, Tony Malone, in art class. I was attempting to reproduce a photo of a fox in a field of grass in acrylic paints when Tony walked up to Luca's workspace and asked. "Why is your dad always over at my neighbor's house?"

Luca's face flushed redder than my fox's tail, and he got up and cleaned his brush in the sink. Then he told me after class that we were going to get him.

"Get who?" I asked in all honesty. He just looked at me.

And when the lunch bell rang, we got in his truck and headed out of town.

Its a small town, so we were out in the country in just a few minutes, driving to the house of someone neither of us had ever met before.

I didn't know what to say, so for a while I didn't say anything. But then the silence got to me and I asked, "Whose house do you think it is?"

His lack of response told me I should get used to the silence.

The only time I had ever met Luca's dad was when I was helping Luca fix the white post fence in his yard that we drove his truck through.

Luca had to pay for the new posts, and I was generous enough to pick up some white paint. I really just swiped it from our garage.

Twenty-five feet of fence lay on the ground, the circle of unmowed grass around the wood must have been half a foot high. I rolled the splintered and cracked posts of the original fence down a small hill in the yard and watched as they tumbled down to the edge of the cornfield behind Luca's house.

It was my job to dig the new holes for the posts because Luca had hurt his shoulder crashing the truck through the fence. I plunged the post hole digger into the soft earth and clamped the handles together, pulling up a chunk of wormy dirt and sod.

"Next time we'll park in the driveway and not the yard, alright?" I wiped my forehead with my sleeve.

Luca kicked the pile of dirt that I had dug up. "Just get the fence post in the ground, alright? It's fuckin' hot."

I stuck the first post into the ground and pushed it down as far as I could.

"Good enough, go to the next one."

Then I heard the screen door open and Luca's dad stepped onto the porch. He had on a blue work shirt, the kind that auto mechanics wear, unbuttoned to his protruding stomach.

"What the fuck? First you wreck my fence and now you fix it half-assed? Pound that motherfucker into the ground! Damn thing'll fall down first time the wind blows." He waved his hand in disgust and went back inside, leaving the door open behind him.

I pulled out the post and reached for the posthole digger, but Luca stopped me. I looked up at his face.

"Hey, fuck him. Let's get out of here."

We left the fence in pieces in the grass. When I drove by a week later, the grass was about a foot tall. I think the fence was still lying there, hidden beneath that backyard jungle.

That was the only time I ever saw Luca's dad. I never hung out at Luca's house or even went inside when I walked over for a ride to school. I suppose if I had any other memories of the man, I would have had a better idea of why we were in Luca's pickup skipping school to go find him.

By the time we got to where we were going, it was afternoon. We sat in the truck for a long time, the engine running, radio off. Luca parked in the lot of an old church across the road from Tony Malone's house. To the left of us was the tiny church cemetery. No more than ten headstones stuck out of the earth, all of them leaning at different angles. They looked like they were thrown as carelessly as we had placed those fence posts. The sun shone down through the leaves of a tall maple tree.

"So that's his car?" I asked, not even sure whether it was his car.

"Whose house do you think it is?" I asked, forgetting I had already asked once before. I got no answer this time either. Instead, Luca got out of the truck and started walking.

I cut the engine and leaned over to yell out the window. "You can't just go up there!" But why couldn't he? Because I didn't know what he would do? Because I didn't want to be here when he did it?

I saw his tall, slender body moving down the street, disappearing behind the maple tree. I just sat in the truck and watched a squirrel climb up and down a light post. Then I heard Luca grunt, and I looked over to see him kicking at a headstone in the cemetery.

"What the hell are you doing?" He just kept kicking as hard as he could. The little stone marker was no match for his mighty blow, and it toppled over easily. Luca picked it up and walked back to the street.

I couldn't say anything else. I knew it would be pointless to yell, to be the angel on his shoulder telling him to be a good boy. I watched in silence as he walked up the street into the driveway opposite, and stopped in front of his dad's car. He looked in the car windows for a moment, perhaps making sure it was indeed his dad's car. Then he raised the headstone and smashed it down onto the windshield. "Fuck." I muttered. The headstone gave more than the windshield, so he picked a chunk of it and smashed it down again. The glass crumpled like a sheet of aluminum foil. Then he kicked the driver's side mirror off with one blow and walked back to the truck.

He got inside, started the truck again, and we were driving back to school. I didn't say anything about the headstone, the car, the complete and utter lack of respect I saw on display. I just asked, without thinking, "Whose house do you think that was?"

I stopped riding to school with Luca a few days later because I got my own car. The first day I drove to school. I drove past his house. It was still dark outside but his yard was lit up. Half of the white post fence was still standing, but the whole thing was in flames. The wood posts circled his house—a ring of fire. It reminded me of the movies, where the hero lights a ring of fire around himself to keep enemies at bay. This wasn't the movies: this was happening on my route to school, at my friend's house. I stopped the car on the side of the road and got out.

Sitting on the ground in front of the garage was Luca. He looked up as I walked to the edge of his yard.

"Hey," I called out.

He nodded his head at me and said, "Hey."

My eyes traced the burning fence around his yard. "You still gonna need help with that fence?"

He stood up. "There's a pile of fence posts down by the corn field. Do me a favor, will you, and light them fuckers up."

Row by Row

CHRISTINA TREW



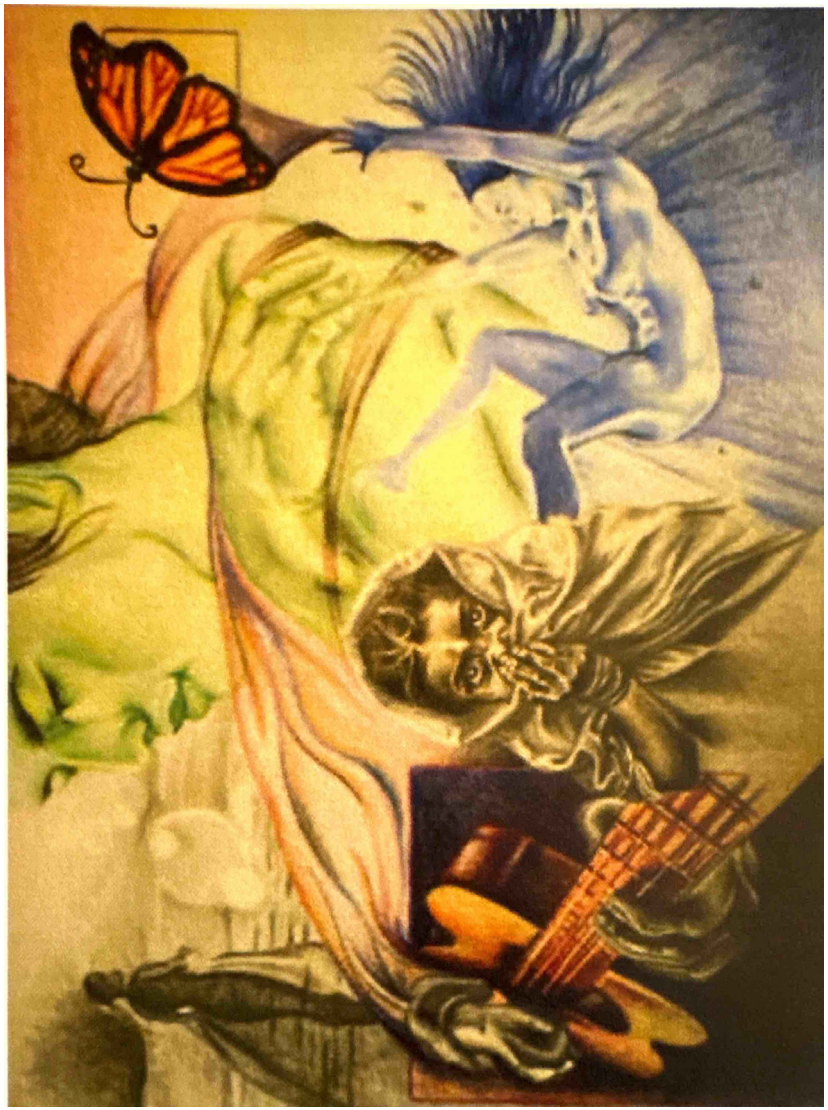
Ice Storm and Passerby

DAVID ADAMS

An April ice storm to freeze the trees
in mid-sway, like the moon's cold tears
were chilled as they were pulled to earth
and sprinkled on the streets.
A lamppost lights the willows while
the raindrops outline skeletal limbs,
which long to grow leaves and cover themselves.
A passerby inside a house, protected from the painful cold.
peers outside through a windowpane
to watch the willow turn to stone.
The street lamp's steady Medusa gaze
illuminates the spiderweb where boughs used to be.
Some crystal lace, or woven glass, a diamond cotton puff
pulled apart and placed upon a trunk.
The passerby stares into the night with wonder
at the willow tree, as thunder
waves from far away and underneath
the soil, the roots. they quake in fear.
Inside the house echo the words,
"How beautiful..." it is.

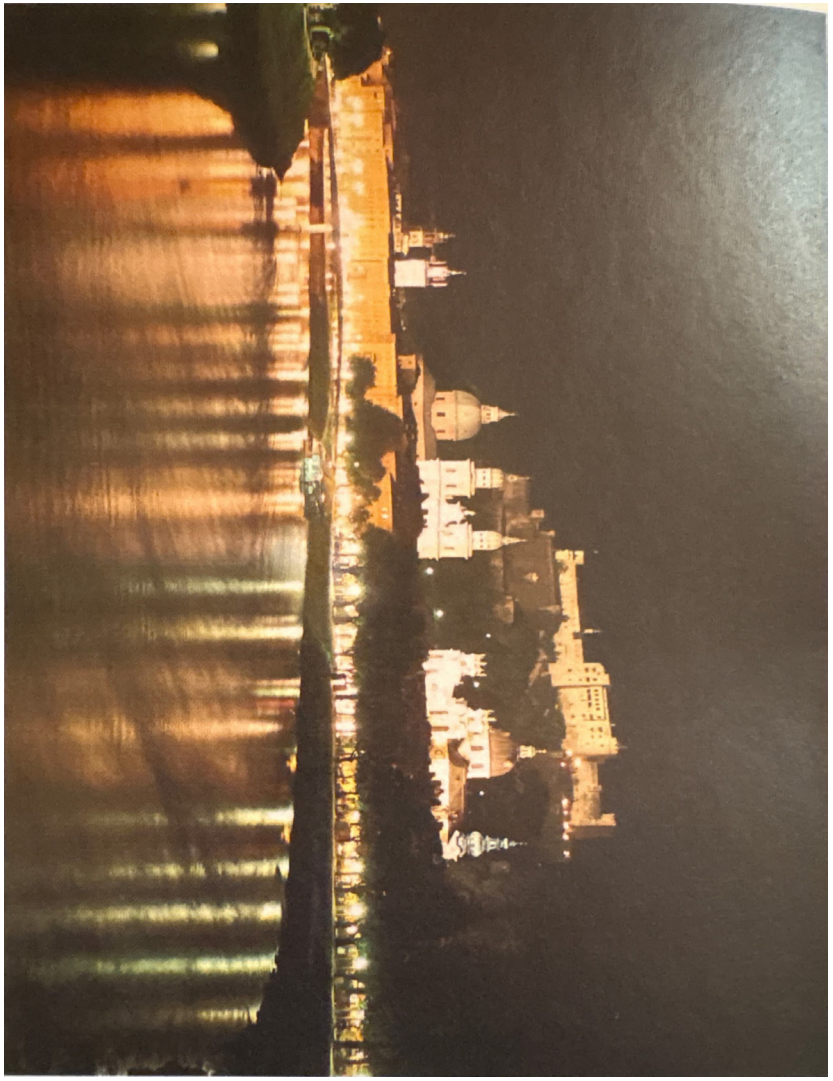
Clean That Gun Comrade

Holly Morningstar



A Salzburg Night

CARLY TOYZAN



Underwater, Above Your Waist

Holly Morningstar

The water's five feet feel deep but I'm kccping my head up
because I don't want to know
what you look like beneath
Rumor has it your eyes are wide, and round
and your mouth hangs open in a
hold-your-breath-and-walk-away-right-now

Fishy-kiss face
I can feel the water like a makeshift halo-noose
Gathering loosely around my neck as stalactite-icicles
decompose in a drizzle
in my hair and trickle
like a river down my spine
but in the back of my mind all I can see
is while wedding veil lace you promised me
and the vagrant eyes that give me a reason to deny

that Fishy-kiss face

Because they're borrowed and they're blue
and being used, baby,
isn't anything new
to me
So tell them the olden days that were here at last
are ashen and they're through
and when they ask you where I am,
point to the depths of our City's Dam
and let them know I drowned in you.

The water's up above my skull and no,
I'm not nervous at all
about the liquid shackles around my feet
I see a light from a celestial prism
in the depths of this subterranean prison
that makes sure I remember what time has tried so hard to erase:
Freezing rain on the window sill that gathered in your irises until
I held my breath and had my fill of your

slippery Fishy-kiss face

Grand Father Time Wore Drag

KRISTOPHER PETERSON

i wonder...
thunderous thoughts caught, still speed, canned simultaneity
are pockets made?
deeper than mine mined
can larger things be held?
in kindergarten, kinder gardens, small enough to work
Emmy Ayres made me in-
visible
with One pink-sit-still-wink number Two eraser
jostled
from a pocket, from a finger, on my picket road
chauffer toad, proud, still a toad
Dollar tipped, tripping, tripped, but where'd I slip
in2
the caramel cracks of a chocolate request came together to form a seat
just close enough not to stop the leaky valley peak
i know it's sweet
stop licking
'cause hollow heads give Time Space to sing
dull skull take a seat pillowed there
porcelain clean with neglect
sobering tiles a sometime rest
dangling just below the noose of sleep
stung
take a stab deep pocketed foe
i am
budgeted blanketed bubble-wrapped Onetime-armored
i'll pop myself for kicks
tricky slowness
deflated knuckles laugh with escape from a promissory note stamped still
One way trip came down quick
prosthetic lips
the empty, enigmatic, envelope bounces on the fallspring
siphoning truth
in2
tiny, dripping, smiles

A Grown-Up's Sandbox

MATT SHAW



Lindsey Ann

CHRISTINA TREW



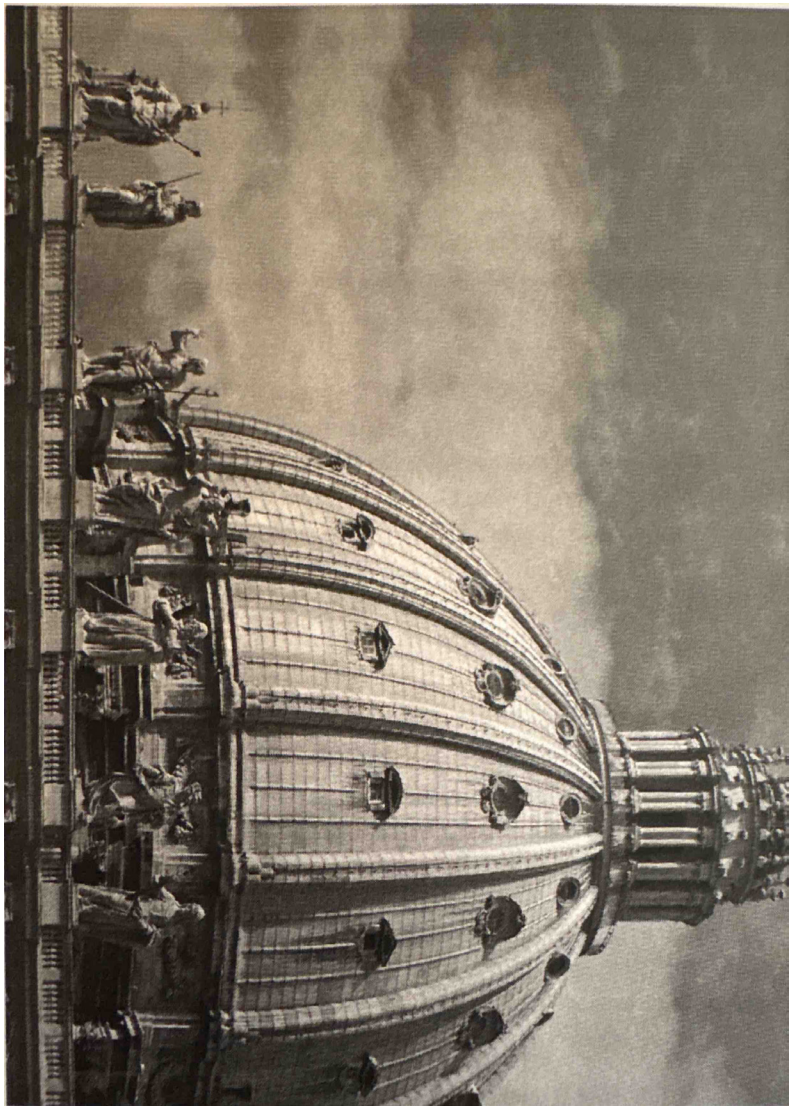
Grasstains

DAVID ADAMS

When we were young
our trophies were grasstains,
badges of honor displayed on our jeans.
Our mothers would find them
smeardinlonglinesfromourkneestoourshins
and the disgust in their eyes
was the accomplishment in ours.
Now we work for a different green
that stains our hearts
black
and leaves our denims
with their clean blue hue,
but any child who stands
knee-high
can see they are richer
by far.

The Vatican

CARLY TOYZAN



How To Avoid Oedipus on the Road

HOWARD JAMES MILLER III

my feet got grottoes betwixt the toes.
shower's soap slick, sliding,
grab and grasp, for balance
that quicksilver bar.
pause,
steady then
resume the ritual
fingers between toes,
keeps the stink down
the foot-rot out.

that's what got
my namesake grand-dad.
two steps by two steps,
too many dank French miles
between the beachhead
and the shell-shocked remnants
of broken bricks and mortared rubble.

he got his first purple prize
for a piece of it
lodged in his side, beside
his heart, the second,
purple like those
rank swollen feet,
his return trip ticket
back home.

that's why I wash,
remembering
the importance
of feet kept clean
to converse healthily,
with the often rough ground.

No Direction Home

BRIAN CABRERA

When I was younger,
I would often drive around
late at night,
singing along
to the Bob Dylan song
“Like A Rolling Stone.”
I can remember
gripping the steering wheel
so tightly
as I spat out the lyrics,
so sure
that they spoke for me,
amd that I,
in my indignation,
was righteous.

But the years are passing,
and I know that I have done
more than my share,
so that now
when I drive along
and hear that song,
I’m not so sure
that all those daggers
that Bob is throwing
aren’t aimed
right at me.

Wrong Turn

MATT SHAW



A Distorted View of the Night Sky

CHRISTI GRIFFIS

Cars and trucks filled the driveway and front yard of the familiar house and spilled out into the street. On the outside, the house looked exactly the same as she left it, with its gray siding still barely hanging on and its ripped screen door still not replaced. Angela smiled at the sight of it. Something about nostalgia and the night's perfect stars made the dump look immaculate. Before she left, the house had become a commune of sorts. None of them officially resided there, but she and her friends spent almost no time at their own homes. Mike's house had minimal adult supervision. The rest of them lived with parents who failed to realize eighteen-year-olds, fresh out of high school, know everything.

Angela walked up the creaking porch steps into a familiar kitchen filled with unfamiliar faces. Her eyes searched frantically around the room. but recognized no one. It felt like going to Thanksgiving dinner, only to find someone else's family sitting at the table. She nudged a guy in a dirty red hat out of her way, opened the dingy white refrigerator, grabbed a beer, and walked through the arched passage into the living room. She avoided all eye contact with these people who obviously did not belong. She thought they must be somebody's friends but didn't care to acknowledge them.

One by one, old friends appeared in her line of vision. They'd catch up for a few minutes, somehow summing up a year in moments. Angela felt like she should have more to talk about , but the only stories she cared about were the ones they already knew. The rest of the group talked at length about the past weekend's party, cracking jokes about some game she'd never heard of and some guy named "Mushroom." Angela laughed stiffly and pretended to understand this new jargon. Gradually, she stopped listening and stared at the floor wracking her brain for something important to say. Occasionally someone would get up to get another drink, often two at a time to keep up with the rapid pace at which they were consumed. As the time passed, Angela struggled to keep up, pouring alcohol down her throat even when her stomach started to churn. The people around her looked like old friends but felt as distant as the stranger who had blocked her path earlier.

An uncomfortable feeling overcame Angela: suddenly she didn't belong. She excused herself to get another beer, walked past their new friends, and stepped onto the back porch to be alone and collect herself. She saw Johnny sitting on the steps smoking a cigarette and staring at nothing. She'd kept in touch with Johnny more than any of the others, but still wasn't prepared to see him. He looked like an adult. Not incredibly different, just older, the same way he looked different at graduation than he did in their kindergarten class picture. Those brown eyes never changed, the area around them just got deeper. She didn't know what to say to him and thought about turning around but sat down next to him instead.

"Hey, Ang," he said without looking at her.

"Hi. I had to get some air. It's hot in there." She somehow felt the need to give a reason for sitting next to him. A year ago she would show up at his house any time of day just because the thought occurred to her.

"It's pretty out tonight, nice and warm." Johnny must have been feeling the same. He never made small talk with Angela.

"And clear. The stars are gorgeous, just amazing."

"Yeah, I guess. Probably just because you're used to them city stars," Johnny said in a mock southern drawl. "Makes you think these country stars look better, but it's all in your head. They're the same stars as everywhere else." His gaze stayed fixed on some far off, imaginary point. "How's school?'

"It's all right I guess. I don't know; it's not home."

"You still with that guy?"

"Yeah. His name is Jack. You'd really like him Johnny. He's great. I wanted him to come, but he didn't want to. He said he wouldn't know anybody." Angela glanced behind her at the strangers in the kitchen.

He sat silently for a moment and then turned to her. " It's good to see you, Ang. Just like old times tonight, huh? Just like I told you it would be. Nothing ever changes."

" Yeah, just like old times."

She wondered if those old times were really as great as the memories she'd held onto. The thought never crossed her mind before, and it struck her forcefully. What if the camaraderie was just them being lonely together? What if all the possibility was just aimlessness? What if they all went to the house just because the they had nowhere else to go? Tears welled up, but she swallowed the lump in her throat.

Johnny absentmindedly flicked his lighter over and over, and Angela imagined setting the house on fire. Not now, of course, that would be pointless, but on that last perfect night at the end of that perfect smmner. She saw the house overtaken by crackling red flames, completely destroyed. She saw the smoke rising up over the trees, blocking the starlight. She saw the empty, dead ground left behind and everyone standing around, quietly saying things like, "We will always have the memories." It would be finite and beautiful ending to a place no one could ever revisit.

"Remember that night we were breaking glass on the sidewalk? By the garage?" Johnny interrupted her morbid fantasy.

"I remember." One night someone dropped a bottle on the front steps of the house, and it crashed with a wonderful sound Johnny and Angela became obsessed with recreating. They threw bottle after bottle against the concrete, listening to the light shatter, until a shard flew up and stuck in his leg. Blood spurted out of the wound and trickled down his shin. She washed it off for him and covered it with a band-aid.

"I've got a scar." He lifted up his pant leg to show a small patch of hairless, discolored skin right below his knee cap.

"What a crazy night. We had so much fun in those days."

"I should have got stitches for that. Miranda and Steve broke up that night too. She cried for an hour and locked herself in her car."

Angela had forgotten that part of the evening. Any memories she had of Miranda and Steve were of a happy couple, the first from high school to get engaged. "She threw her ring in the ditch and never did find it. No one could console her. I didn't want to leave her alone; I was afraid she'd do something stupid."

"They were always like that, still are. They fight all the time, nonstop. He hit her once or twice, she won't admit it, but I know he did. He won't change and neither will she, both so stuck on what they think they've got. It's a damn shame." Johnny spoke like he was talking to himself in a stream of consciousness. He threw his cigarette at the bottom of the steps and stomped it out with his foot. "Everybody's doing the same old shit," his voice trailed off, and he looked into her eyes. "It's like I said, just like old times. Nothing ever changes." He was silent for a few seconds before standing up and stretching. "I need another beer, you want anything?"

"No, thanks. I'm about done for the night." Angela tried to muffle her shaking voice.

He put his arm around her shoulders and squeezed her. "I miss you, Ang. I'm proud as hell of you making something of yourself, but I miss you."

"I miss you, too. God, Johnny, you have no idea how much I miss you."

Angela watched him open up the rickety door and high-five one of the kitchen strangers on his way to the refrigerator. She stayed alone on the back porch while the party continued on behind her. A warm tear hit her cold cheek, then another. She tilted her head toward the sky, forcing the stream of tears to pool in her eyes rather than fall down her face. The starry night turned into a swirling mass of light and dark in which all distinguishable shapes disappeared. Through the silence, Johnny's words echoed in her head: nothing ever changes.

Swings

MICHELLE LUPLOW



Her Two Cents on His Two-Buck Addiction

AMANDA R. CONNER

Expensive Sony headphones
and off-brand cigarettes
mingle
with Boone's Farm sangria,
and eclectic vinyl.

Eyes closed, air guitar
in constant motion.
Nicotine hangs heavy
on every note
as he smokes between chords

Lost in the dichotomy
of a world where only he exists.

Love Is in the Water

BRYAN G. THOMPSON

Rising, rising
Memories sinkfog ,over days
Black babies descend
    in high-gloss and matte
Soul food, filled with air
    bobs on brown surface
    uneatable, disregarded like them
Rock walls mold, unsure of
    what to keep out
    and what to keep in
Birds fly, dropping low,
    rising, like the water,
    looking amazed, relaying
    sights and sounds,
    screams unanswered,
    unnoticed
Dogs on porches, straining
    to see thirsty masters
    on roofs, waiting for
    bones and bread
The invisible dead swim
    for shore and wait
    like the living, only
    more patiently
Screams rise from the water
  like disease, unabashed and
  unrelenting
Big ears pretend to listen,
  turning south to show a
  face with narrow eyes
  as a hand reaches out
  a little too late

Reflections of Venice

CARLY TOYZAN



Why Caterpillars Die

MATTHEW C. EASTERWOOD

1. today

stars will not shine tonight,
weatherman say overcast,
but i know a pillow will be
wet with unease

emptiness sits next to me,
whispers cold air into my skin,
i cocoon myself within blankets
preparing for metamorphosis:

caterpillars eat leaves,
butterflies feed on nectar

2. tonight

your hair does not feel quite as soft
in his hands your smile
is not as bright nor does your
hand grip his as tightly
as mine

in the morning,
your puffy eyes
damp pillow
shivering hands
will dissipate as the dreams
you have

sliding closer to
him, lying on his shoulder,
realizing he too makes you happy,

you will smile, frown,
drop another tear,
look at the damp salty circle
know it is me,

roll over, dream
you are a leaf
falling gently from a tree

3. unknown

an elderly man steps onto his porch.
bones creak like the boards
beneath him his skin
wrinkles tighter
like an old leather jacket.
he watches his breath,
shivers, looks up at the stars,
a tear slides down a crevice,
touches his sleeve

he stares at the damp salty circle,
clouds overcast the sky

4. tomorrow

i will no longer like leaves

An Artist Can Only Use

KALUM R. MEYERS

Her breasts heaved like ocean waves
as she sobbed,
starlight brushing her tears just so,
her face awash in diamonds.
I stood across the street
dizzy with borrowed emotions
watching silhouettes creep up where trees
linger in daytime.
The dark suggestions of branches framed her,
collapsed on the front lawn
waiting for me to title this picture
but feelings ran together like watercolors
and I couldn't label the subtleties
that slipped beyond the grasp of words.
I cannot help what I am
nor that an act of observation
always alters what is being observed.
A quiet rain begins to fall
and I leave her be
lest my armor bleed red rust.

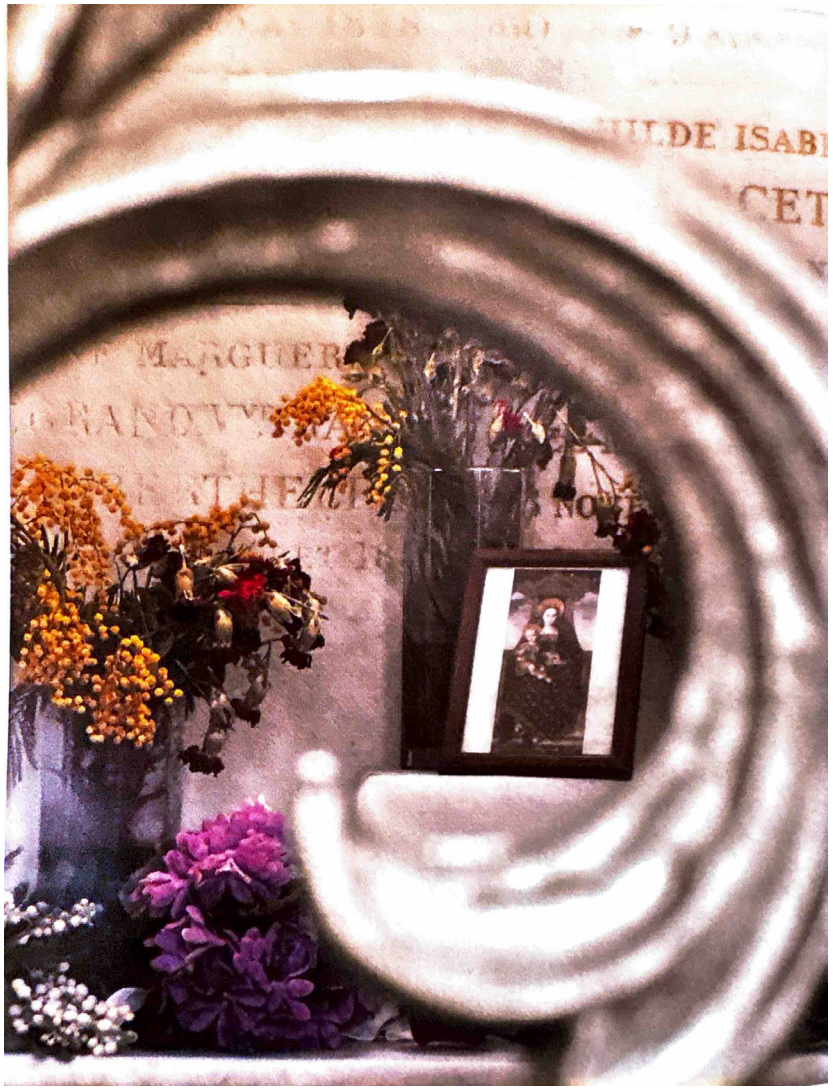
Birth of Passion

HOLLY MORNINGSTAR



Life after Death

CARLY TOYZAN



Me and Jesus

CHRISTI GRIFFIS

If Jesus were alive today,
He'd be a really cool guy.
I bet we'd be great friends.
Jesus would listen to Bob Marley and the Clash
and say, "They had the right idea."
Jesus would play baseball with the neighborhood kids
and buy Popsicles for everyone,
even the losing team.
Jesus would have cried when the twin towers went down
and again when bombs exploded over Baghdad.
Me and Jesus would watch the Grammy's,
and when rappers thanked Him profusely,
He would say, "You're welcome,"
out loud to the television.
Jesus would have voted for Nader.
With His long hair and mellow demeanor,
people would often mistake Jesus for a stoner
and call Him "Hey-Zoos."
Jesus would love everyone anyway,
even atheists, homosexuals, and crooked cops.
Me and Jesus would hang out at the park,
feeding ducks and shooting hoops;
some days we would just drive around in my car.
I'd get lost; He'd show me the way and say,
"Hey, that's what I'm here for."
When people did ridiculous things in His name,
Jesus would shake His head and say,
"That's not what I meant at all,"
but forgive them for they know not what they do.

Tonic

JEANNE M. LESINSKI

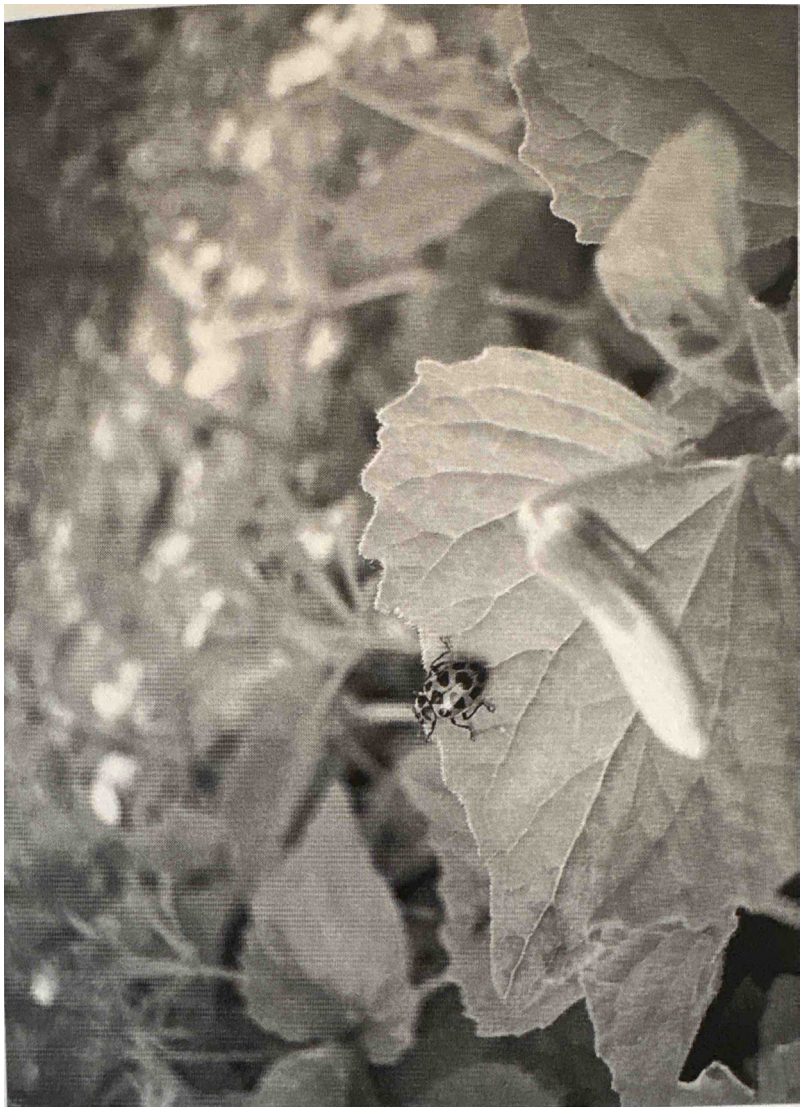
If you should grow root
bound—static, wilted, pale—
I will repot you.

Burrowing to your taproot,
I will grasp it,
providently transfer it to new loam
(fertile, soft, moist) inside
a cache-potted container,
ornamented in mosaic,
your rearranged life-shards.

In my sunlight and shade,
I will restore your turgor,
tease fresh shoots from you.

Honorable Gardening

ERICA HOFFMAN



Hector's Barrow

MATTHEW C. EASTERWOOD

for Matthew Wayne Shepard
I

broken, bloodied body
fastened to a long pillar of wod,
early october night's cold hand
gripped you tightly,
face clotted but for where
nearly frozen tears cleaned the wounds—
reddened streambeds running down cheeks

finally found,
you suffered three days in the hospital before
slipping through its fingertips to die

II

a man with a worn cap, yellow teeth
closed the curtain

the booth next to him, blonde hair fell
over a woman's face

a man replaced her, white collar
about his neck a prayer

a suited man—
thoughts of telling
his son to get out of the house, the
courage it must have taken him
saturated eyes,
hands shook,
needle-like punch slipped to the stand.
yes and *no* unmarked

III

you must have felt out of place:
beer mirror reflecting an old
jukebox playing country,
something discernable pickled,
used mason jars

your eyes wandered,
smooth curves contrasted
by rectangular shape of
wallets held in back pockets,
the sight of curly locks
upon chests,
you forced glances to
curved. protruding breasts
to avoid raising eyebrows

two men invited you to join them—
stale drinks,
subtle winks,
cowboy boot caressing your thigh,
you followed

on the ground
empty road,
boots struck ribs again, again
you cried for help.
belts opened your
body like a cat-o' -nine tails,
you flailed behind their bumper

fastened to a post—
not fully suspended from the earth,
spit on your face,
you were alone

IV

the proposal passed:

yellow teeth and laugher,
blonde hair damp with tears,
white collar and thanks of god,

*un*suited man with a dusty photo of his son

V

as you hung there early in the morning—
broken like Him,
bloodied like Him,
breath floating like a
squandered cloud of heaven,
did you ask forgiveness?

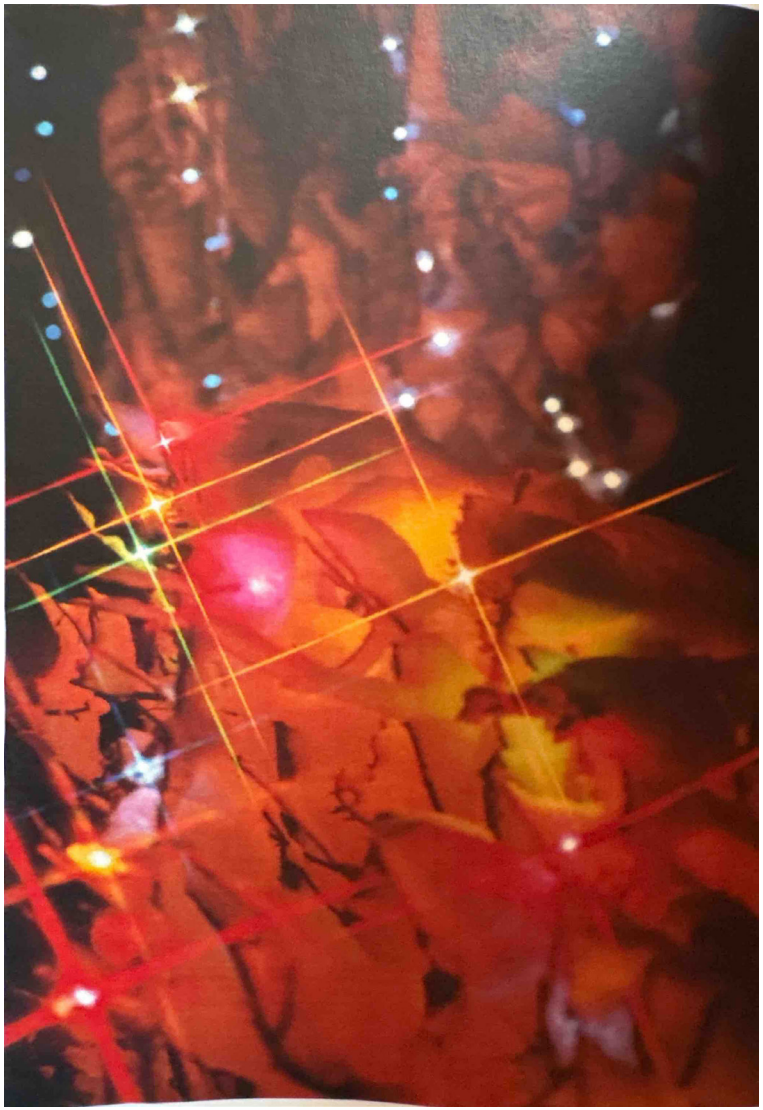
Ste. Flavie I

S. Teisman Giroux



Fresh Snowfall

CHRISTINA TREW



A Still Photograph

JASON SCHNEIDER

She grew up watching Jay Leno. To her, there was no other *Tonight Show* host. She said she had heard of Johnny Carson. I told her that he stopped doing things after he left the show, that he was still alive. We watched the show one night in my living room, middle of the summer, cool July breeze moving the curtains like ghosts. I can remember Jack Paar—does that make this wrong? Amber's head came down upon my chest; she had fallen asleep. How easily I could have slid away, placed a pillow beneath her head and left the room, the house, the town. I stayed. right up through Don Henley's performance of "Taking You Home." I stayed.

Her friends told her she was stupid. They said it wasn't right, even a little gross. She had no problem reporting these things to me, just like she had no problem telling her friends to go to hell. They stopped calling her; she didn't seem to miss them. There was just more time for me to take her shopping now, more time to buy her tanzanite bracelets and flashy purses and shoes of every type, although I don't know what she could have done with so many shoes. Whenever I surprised her with one of these gifts—if you could call it surprising her since I let her pick them out—she kissed me long and hard, and we stripped off our clothes, and she did to me all of the things that I loved most.

This went on for nearly a year before I noticed how forced the whole thing had become. She seemed to do it out of habit rather than desire or passion. Of course. I cannot say for certain how long she felt this way; it was nearly a year before I took notice, before I actually realized something was wrong.

On a cool day that hinted at the approaching autumn, I asked her what was wrong. We sat in lawn chairs out back, watching the soybean field as though waiting for something—a deer, a slow-moving train, anything—to break the monotony of the day. I said she looked troubled. She told me she was not. I lowered my head and asked if she still wanted this.

"Of course," she replied. '"More than anything." She said she also wanted to go back to school. I told her that was great. I was proud to see her take interest in her future. She repeated the word future to herself with increasing volume and intensity until she was nearly shouting. I just sat there motionless. When she disappeared through the screen door and into the house, I realized what was the matter.

I kept a picture of me and my wife, Isabel, in a frame she had picked up at a store in the mall. She told me the frame was silver and very

valuable, but that a picture of the two of us behind the glass would make it priceless. I said it was a sweet thought, but I wondered why she left the frame empty for so long, until I finally dug out a photo from our New Year Eve's party and slid it into place. The frame sat on top of the small bookshelf that I kept in the living room. It waws conveniently out of the way, and I barely realized it was there until I went looking for my dictionary or something to read to pass the night hours.

One day I sat down with the newspaper and came across a nearly finished crossword puzzle on the back page. One word was not completely filled in: fourteen across, "Disconsolate." I tapped my pen on the page hoping the answer would spring forth. When I grabbed the dictionary and flipped through the pages, the photo of Isabel and me fell to the floor. I glanced at the bookshelf to find the frame missing. In the space where it had been, the wood was shiny, a freshly-stained square amidst the dust.

"That's not why I keep that photo, Amber. It's not there to remind of anything."

We sat at the kitchen table. The clock above us said five after eight, but that thing had never been right.

"But, she is your wife, isn't she?"

"She was at the time."

She looked at the picture, into Isabel's eyes. "If it's not about memories, then what is it about?"

"You wouldn't understand." And I believed what I said—even I didn't understand.

"How do you know?"

"C'mon, how many pictures could you possibly have? You haven't even lived a roll of film yet. My life fills entire albums."

Her eyelids lowered, her hands flattened on the table.

"I always burn them."

"Burn what?"

"Pictures," she said.

"Certainly not all of them?"

"Why not?"

I didn't know why not.

She handed the picture to me. I placed it back in the dictionary and closed the covers.

Isabel had loved me truly for our first five years together. I sold cars; she taught children. I told her many times that our lives were so different they couldn't possibly bond as one, but we wed anyway. Life went on as any normal life should. Sometimes, I made spaghetti for dinner whenever my wife had to stay after school for meetings or conferences. It wasn't until years after I stopped cooking for her that I learned she hated spaghetti.

Amber read me a story before I went to bed on the final night, something about two sisters in love with the same man. As she read, I rubbed my hand across her thigh. The window had been left open, and the bedroom smelled like catmint.

"That was a nice story."

"No it wasn't. It was filled with hate and envy."

"Really? I thought it was a love story."

"Is that what you call love?" Her eyes grew heavy with sadness.

"No." I wanted to relieve her melancholy, but I had no words to reassure her that love meant more to me than simple attraction and shared interest.

A sigh escaped her lips, but she quickly drew it back in.

"Maybe next time," she said, "I'll pick a mystery. I like mysteries."

"Me too. I like not knowing what will happen next, trying to figure it all out."

She pulled the sheet between her leg and my hand. The sheet was cold against my arm.

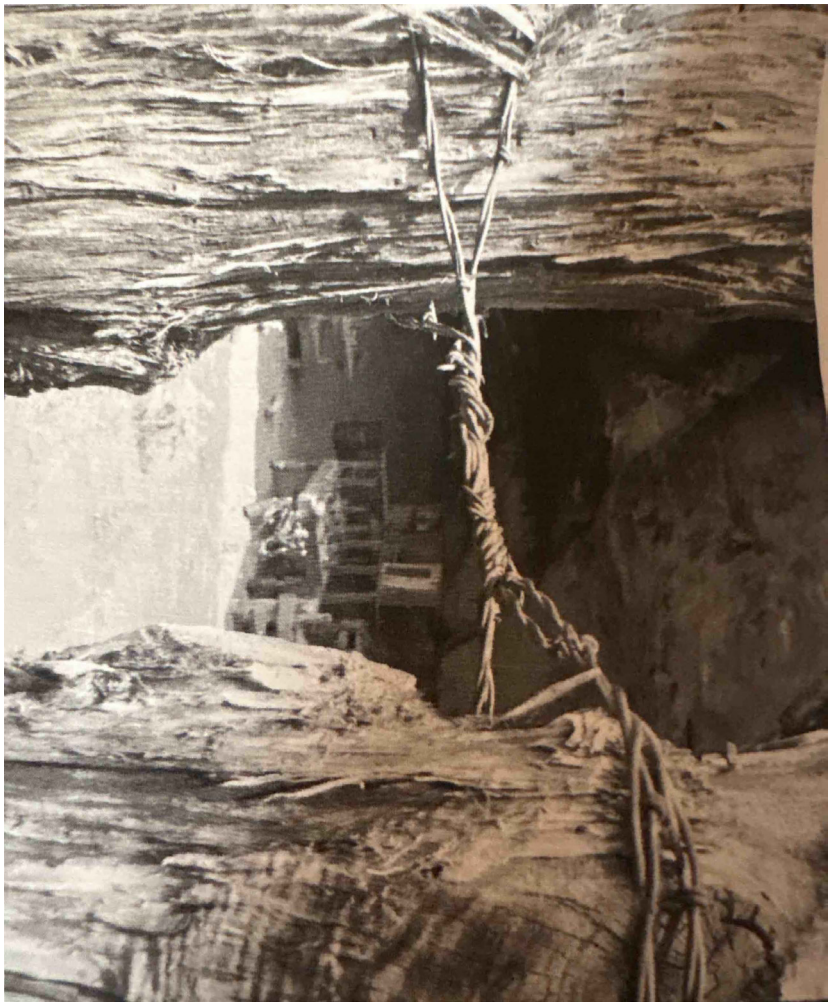
"You know, I haven't had a story read to me in a long time. It makes me feel like a kid."

She smiled wanly. "Now you know how I feel."

As she got up off the bed and walked toward the hall, a cold draft filtered through the open window, and I sat up, leaned against the headboard, and pulled the sheet to my chest. Watching the bedroom door slowly creep shut, I had the feeling that I should grab my camera and take a picture of the female form moving through my doorway.

Restraining Memories

MATT SHAW



Gutter

HOLLY MORNINGSTAR

As your eyes inquistively watched
the water droplets budding on the can
of my cherry soft drink in the same manner
that a man with salt-and-pepper hair
ogles the blossoming breasts
of a seventeen-year-old girl parading the secret
of her maturity in black velvet and leather
I pondered the life that you had lived
during our years of separation.

Images of hungry mouths, reptilian tongues,
slippery bodies.
and a Rose pricked by the briar of its own humanity,
deflowering at its Core
returned to me the memories of you
never spending an honest dollar
and how your side of the bed
was always cold at night while the windows
of your white ‘97 Honda steamed over,
the car rhythmically rocking as I did at that moment
cradling only myself in my own arms
dismayed by the thought
of you
of me
of Us
woven like the Thorns of Christ’s crown
drawing blood and carving scars
until We
were stickily satisfied.

The back of my neck began to moisten
and humility flushed the paleness of my cheeks.
Swallowing emotional shrapnel
lodged in my throat,
I wondered as you asked for a sip
if you were referring to my refreshment
of another drink
simply
of me.

Apres-midi Bonheur

AMEE SCHMIDT

"Hey-hey, Preacher Dan!" hollers the table of locals in the back.

That's Daniel. He's the preacher here in Caille Des. He came down from the States about four years ago. Started a Protestant church just down the way, next to the exotic pet store. All the locals go there now—I've never been. Comes to see me. I think, because I'm the only other white person in town.

After being harangued and teased by the fish market gang, he comes up and sits at the stool, second to last right in front of the Corona mirror. It's the spot closest to my register, where he can get in the most conversation.

"Daniel, how *do* you survive with all these lions?" I ask as he settles into his seat his face gleaming—or so it seems, maybe because he's so white compared to the Caribbeans. Soft cheeks, and a wide nose perfectly centered under his grey-blue eyes. He always dresses like a tourist—red and orange Caribbean shorts and a button-down white linen slrirt, totally open to reveal his almost perfectly hairless chest.

I stir up his kamikaze and 7-Up with extra lime in a chilled glass, and he smiles, says, "God bless," and closes his eyes. When he looks up, his head still tilted down, I can't help but tell him how sweet he is, and how lucky any woman would be to find lrim.

At this, he takes a breath; his shoulders heighten. He pulls at the skin between his thumb and forefinger. "'She makes me crazy," he says, "my wife, I mean."

I'm always fascinated by his stories of her. "The house on the beach you bought," I start, "that one," I ask while I light up one of my homerolled cigarettes.

"Tsk, tsk," Daniel scolds.

"Ah," he pauses, "the first week was so hectic. Then we settled in, and it has been pure fantasy." He continues to tell me how when the sun sets, her pale face gets a red glow, how he loves to taste her sun-kissed skin. "She consumes me."

He pauses and bites his bottom lip—just enough to make it pucker.

"Hey man," the locals yell from the back again. "Another round here, darlin'"

"Gotcha," I yell back and start mixing six Bacardi and Cokes. Daniel just sits and predicts his future in the green-tinted ice cubes. He never tells me what he sees.

"We are like slaves. Completely alone, completely isolated." I hold up my fingers as I walk the rum and Cokes to the table.

When I get back, he continues by describing how after the sun sets, the blue light from the moon makes the sweat beads on her skin look like icicles, which makes him miss Michigan. Light jazz crackles through the dusty speakers, the story continues for hour—white lilies with light blue streaks, cinnamon toast and fruit for breakfast in bed, mud puddles in the sand. I envy her, I think. The locals go home, and it's just me and Daniel.

The heat begins to dim and sweat becomes cold. "Well, I'm out of here, kiddo," he says and smiles. I blow him a kiss and follow behind to lock the door. I shuffle back toward the bar, crack myself a Miller Lite, and sit down in Daniel's tool. The light from the mirror catches my eye, and I gaze at the spritzing lime at the top of the Corona bottle. I cry.

25th Anniversary Tribute

In 1981, the first issue of *Cardinal Sins* was released to the Saginaw Valley College community. Since then, the magazine has seen many changes. One thing that has not changed is the standard to which pieces are held. The artistic and intellectual strength represented in *Cardinal Sins* remains a powerful constant, allowing its spirit to remain the same.

On the following pages, to celebrate our 25th anniversary, we present to you the premiere issue of *Cardinal Sins*, which has propelled the magazine to what it is today, as well as interviews with individuals who have been largely responsible for its birth and continued success: Michael Langworthy, Gary Thompson, Ann García, and Perry Toyzan.

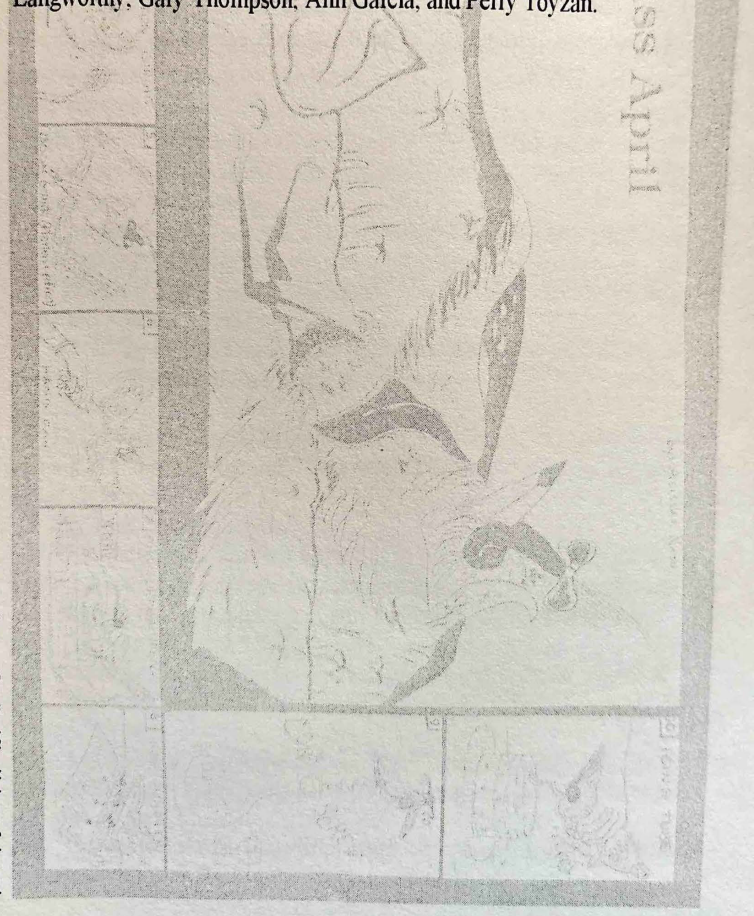


Image: *Cardinal Sins* Volume 1, Issue 6

CARDINAL SINS

BEAUTY IN AGONY

It is not happy and free anymore
because out there, it had the sun to touch it with warmth
brightening its red, fiery glow
it had the soft breeze caressing its leaves
making them shiver softly
and to their music, this little rosebud
swayed and danced all day long.

But as it sits here in a small, cold vase
its little red tender thorns settled on its stem
looking in all directions and wondering where has life gone
Its few green leaves seem so motionless in the still air
With sadness hanging over their red zigzagged edges
The little bud sits here looking so sad and quiet
so lifeless
The sun will shine no more, to give it life and make it glow
The breeze won't come this way anyway, to tease it and caress it
There will be no more dancing, under the sun and in the wild wind
The leaves will bow their heads in silence
and go to sleep as the days pass by
The bud might grow and open its eyes
but it will stay there in the cold vase
motionless, unglowing, and unhappy
with a wound at the bottom of its stem.
And soon it will grow old
and bend its weak tiny back
sadly lowering its lifeless faded head.

--OMAYA NAJD

MY PUMPKIN

I have a little pumpkin
his name is Mike.
I'll put him in the window
on Halloween night
His eyes are big
and his nose is small
His mouth is curled up
with a smile for all.
So come witches and gobblins
out on Halloween night
see me and my friends
and my pumpkin
Mike.

--WILLIAM J. ITTNER

This particular journal you are reading is the new SVSC journal, Cardinal Sins. Cardinal Sins will be a monthly publication of creative writing and poetry collected from SVSC students, faculty, and staff. The journal will be copyrighted by the Library of Congress so, in essence, all contributors we publish will be published writers.

We need material!!! If you have poetry or creative writing, please submit it to the mailbox in student government marked "Creative Writing." Include name, phone number, and class standing. We will accepty material under pseudonyms, but remember this will be a copyrighted work. Submitted copies should be readable and the contributors should keep extra copies for themselves for material will not be returned. In editing the submissions for material will not be returned. In editing the submissions the editorial staff reserves the right to correct small linguistic infractions.

For the titling of "Cardinal Sins", the journal's editorial staff would like to give special thanks to Dr. Tim Hearron.

Faculty supervisor.....Gary Thompson

Sinners' Staff:

Elizabeth Ballien	Alissar Najd
Kathy Hall	Patti Stevens
Michael Langworthy	

To write anything well you must show, not tell. It is true that writing is a confession, but that confession, to truly absolve the ignorant sinner, must be the confession of the entire race.

Rather than becoming singular, and unique, the writer must become all men -- at all times --in all places. He must relinquish his own tears so that the tears of humanity may fall in their place.

--Raymond Michaels

Copyright 1981

-Hey, ninety-three.

Seconds stretched like elastic and thumped across his chest. He called again.

-Hey ninety-three!

The bars were cold. He could smell his own sweat. 'Why is it so damn quiet?'

-Yeah, whadaya need?

The voice was mellow and clear, not at all what he expected. Not from a black.

-You got any squares, Bro?

-I ain't your bro, honkie. They call me Silky -- Silky Smooth.

A black hand with pink fingernails snaked into sight and laid a cigarette on the cross-bar of his cell.

-Thanks, Silky.

He picked up the cigarette and lit it. The bite of the nicotine felt good in his lungs.

-My name is Itch. What's your beef?

-Procuring.

-You're a pimp?

-Yeah, I'm a pimp -- what are you?

-Well my beef is armed robbery, but that's just how I supported my habit. I'm a stone junkie and will be till the day I die. It's my life and it's my wife.

-Hell of a wife. What ever made a smart honkie like you get strung-out on dope and call himself Itch?

-I don't know. Why do you pimp whores and call yourself Silky?

The air in the cell stopped moving. The only sound that Itch could hear was the rasp of plastic on metal as Silky got off his mattress. Itch sighed and leaned forward onto his elbows. 'The guy that built this bastard prison must have done time himself --- the bunks are just far enough away from the front of the cell so you can sit comfort- ably and still be able to lean through the bars!' Next door the toilet flushed. Itch closed his eyes but he could still hear Silky moving things around --- loudly. 'He must be in his foot-locker; they're the only damn things in these rotten cages that can eve make any noise. Everything else is either made out of rubber or bolted to the floor.

-Hey honkie, you play chess?

-Yeah, I got a fair game.

-You wanna push one?

-Sure.

Both of Silky's hands came into view around the end of the metal wall that separated Itch's cell from Silky's. The hands were balled into fists and Itch immediately recognized this universal way of choosing who would move first. One fist held a white pawn and the other held a black. 'If I pick the hand with the white pawn, I'll have a first-move advantage.' Itch reached through the bars but before he could tap one of Silky's hands, Silky jerked away.

-Just put your hand under the one you want, honkie.

Itch stared at Silky's hands. They were dark, especially around the knuckles, but the fingernails were pinker than his own. Each nail was polished to a mirror shine and extended out at leash an inch beyond the tip of each finger. Itch slowly reached out under Silky's right hand. The hand opened and a white pawn plopped down onto Itch's palm.

-You're white, honkie.

Itch watched closely as Silky dropped a paper chessboard on the catwalk floor outside their cells. The black hands re-appeared, lower to the floor, and pulled the board right up against the wall. They positioned the board carefully so that its center line lay on the same axis as the center line of the wall. Silky poured the pieces onto the board and began setting the opposing armies up on either side of the invisible boundary. The white pieces collected on Itch's side of the board.

-Wher'd you get the chess set from? I can't even get my hands on half a magazine around this shit-hole.

-This ain't my first bid, honkie--I've been here before. I got a lotta bros behind those walls. They knew I was comin' before I got here.

-Must be nice.

-It is, honkie, it is.

Itch's opening moves were weak and Silky's fingertips sparkled with each returned move. No pieces were taken or exchanged, but Itch's rhythm was broken. His first-move advantage disappeared as Silky began a strong offense on two sides of the board.

-What made you want to rap to me today, honkie, after two weeks of nothing?

-I needed a square.

-That was the first time since you come to seven-block that you needed a square?!

Itch didn't answer. He didn't have to.

-I'll tell you something, honkie; here in the joint you don't keep secrets. If you're thinkin- anything your best shot is to blow it off your chest early.

Itch made another feeble move and Silky countered instantly. Itch's tee-shirt was stuck to his arm-pits.

-How do you know I'm keeping secrets?

-I know a lot of things about you, honkie.

-Like what?

-Like how you think, and how you're gonna act here in the joint.

-How can you know that?

-Because you're white and it's your first bid, and I'm black and it's my third.

Silky quickly caputured two of Itch's pieces, one after the other, leaving no chance for retaliation. Itch wished he had another cigarette.

-It's a black world here, honkie. It's a ghetto, just like Detroit or Saginaw---but there ain't no rules. Those guards

don't give a shit what we do to each other, as long as we don't try to get out into their world. Well, honkie, you're part of my world now!

A drop of sweat ran down Itch's face.

-I'm not scared.

-You will be, before you leave here.

Itch tried to concentrate on the game, but it was obviously too late. Silky was moving with deliberate precision.

-You see those cells across from us, honkie?

-Yeah, what about them?

-Tell me what you see in them.

-People.

-What kind of people?

-All kind of people.

-Yeah, but what color are they?

-Mostly black.

-Right---more than seventy percent black!

-So what?

-So this, honkie; you're going to meet two kinds of blacks here: Muslims and low-riders. The Muslims will try to break your soul, and the low-riders will attack your body---in any way they can. As soon as those doors over there are broken, all laws stop.

Itch blinked as Silky snatched up his bishop and slammed it back down on the board.

-What are you, Silky, a Muslim or a low-rider.

-I'm a little of both, honkie. The all-powerful Allah is real hard to find on the streets of a ghetto.

Itch was lost when he looked back at the board. He made a blind move and Silky slashed back with his queen.

-Check--mate in two, honkie. You wanna push another one?

Itch wiped his face on his tee-shirt.

-No.

Silky lifted the board and pieces off the catwalk floor.

-Maybe tomorrow, huh honkie?

Itch fell back on his bunk and tried to ignore the chuckles from Silky's cell. He crossed his arms over his face and thought about summer in Grand Rapids.

When he sat back up it was after lights-out. Two solitary spotlights, one at each end of the block, allowed the night-watchkeeper to make his rounds. Itch looked out into the open center of the callblock. His eyes were dimmed, but his ears were sharpened by the darkness. The sounds of sleep were all around him---and he listened--- as the groans and moans and snoring sighs congealed into a droning chant. Emotions poured from the individual cells and intertwined.

The central core of the block was like a vacuum, drawing all the restless souls to its hollow breast. Itch felt his insides being sucked outward from his chest. Awareness was gone.

Itch didn't remember falling asleep, but he slept deeply---without dreams.

Morning broke in the same way that it always breaks at Jackson; booming steel and grating concrete. The sounds yanked Itch's eyes open and dove into his skull. He clenched his teeth. He was numb with sleep, so the last crash came unexpectedly. The sudden noiselessness of the cellblock replayed the final explosion over and over in hiis echoing head.

As Itch's body became adjusted to the sunshine of early morning, his eyes began to follow a large cockroach in the corner of his cell. It moved incredibly fast---stopped to poke at cracks and dust motes, then charging off in a random direction that always produced more cracks and dust motes---and food. Bread crumbs and other morsels disappeared swiftly beneath the shiny, brown predator. Itch was hypnotized by the cockroach's movements; the blur of its pumping legs, the waving jerks of its supple antennae, the grinding jaws in its armored head. He moved closer---was almost astride the cockroach's back as it came up on a group of its kin---scattering them with sheer weight and energy. Itch felt the viciousness of this insect world; no compassion, no remorse. The smaller cockroaches simply dashed off somewhere else, to continue the struggle with those smaller than they.

Itch began to feel a burning in his throat as he looked down at the cockroach, standing on its crust of bread.

-What the hell ya doin' on the floor, honki, praying to Allah?

Itch looked up in time to see Silky's teeth flashed out of sight. 'The bastard's laughing at me!' He pulled his boots on and stepped out on the catwalk. He was late for breakfast, and the last of the cons were filtering down the bulkhead stairs at the far end of the cellblock. As he moved down the rock, he looked across at the empty rows of cells, then down at base-floor, four tiers below. The black cons were clustered in small groups that shifted and split as he watched. Arms jerked and hands slapped. Fingers jabbed. Here and there the boiling floor was salted with white and brown cons, picking their way past and through, shoulders hunched.

Itch felt the burning in his throat begin to spread. He stopped, and stared, as Silky came off the bulkhead stair and pushed his way through the hustling mass. Itch's face twitched---once; then again. He turned and walked back to his cell. He leaned against the catwalk screen. His face was blank except for a downward twist at the corner of his mouth.

When Silky turned onto the fourth gallery catwalk he saw Itch, leaning on the screen with his arms crossed. As Silky moved toward his cell (and Itch), he realized that Itch was staring right at him. Their eyes locked, for the first time, and Silky grabbed at his shirtpocket and pulled out his cigarettes.

-What you lookin' at, honkie?

-You.

-What for?

-Because you're the fastest cockroach I know.

-What's the shit supposed to mean, honkie?

Itch moved away from the screen and uncrossed his arms.

-It means let's go play chess, nigger.

---Raymond Michaels

6

DEATH AND LIFE

I walked the right-hand side of the road, along the white line. The day was amazingly bright, clear, and hot, and the air was still and lifeless. Heat-waves rose from the pavement, causing that familiar liquid vision.

Because of the downpour of white-hot light, I had to squint to see an object that appeared to be a black lump, which was directly in my path about seventy-five yards ahead. Each step brought me closer until I could see that it was a small animal. At first I was uncertain of the species-but soon, I knew exactly what type of animal it was. The smell was black and seeped in around me like putrid smoke. It was the kind of smell that could choke a rancher and bring tears to a physician's eyes.

As I drew nearer, I saw that the skunk had not been dead for long. Its white stripe was matted red and had not yet been turned the ghastly maroon caused by exposure. The bones and organs that protruded from the left side formed a small, growing puddle of blood that had not yet coagulated.

I'm not the type of person to gawk but something caught my attention; I moved closer despite the smell and the grotesqueness of the scene.

A closer look revealed that the broken right paw was extended as if reaching for, or pushing away, something. The small claws were broken, apparently as a result of the crushing blow from the vehicle that had killed it.

Strangely enough, a look of relief or peace seemed to be on the creature's small, dark, almost childlike face. That feature must have been what attracted me.

As I took my first few steps away from the corpse, I had the distinct, penetrating feeling I was being watched. I stopped, turned, and saw several tiny skunks; three of them standing directly in front of the dead one, just behind some weeds to the side of the road. They sat shoulder-to-shoulder, their six furry front paws slightly ahead of the rest of their bodies. Their silky ears were perked as if listening to silence. Each of the six brown, baby-button eyes was rimmed with long lashes turned up like small blades of grass reaching for sunlight. Each face has a raisin none that twitched, tickled by white whiskers from the face next door.

I looked to the body, and back to the small skunks. It seemed she must have given her life to save the lives of her kittens.

Compassion gripped me and I slowly walked toward them. Each was watching me intently. Without thinking, I bent down to pick up the smallest kitten on the right. Not only the one I reached for, but all three turned and fired on me.

I stood up immediately and started slipping my T-shirt off as I walked, then jogged. The little monsters hadn't seemed old enough to be able to do that; I ran all the way home to keep the smell behind me as much as possible.

Later that day, after burning my clothes, I stood resting with my chin on the shovel handle and thinking how brave the mother must have been and how cute her little bastards were.

--Jeff Rice

7

PAPPY

The most remarkable man I ever met was a homosexual. His name was Walter, but all his close friends called him Pappy. He was the base photographer at the naval station and lived in a shack within sight of the main gate. Three small rooms jammed from floor to ceiling with the trip-toys of his life. Rocks and paintings. Statues and records and filthy ashtrays. Cameras and photographs.

Pappy could do just about anything. He could play the piano, guitar, harp, and flute with gentle precision and he sang so sadly that I didn't like to listen. His watercolors of the Olympics and Cascades were like windows to a brighter, happier world where people never cluttered the landscape. He was a rockhound and his jewelry was rough but exquisite. Moss agate, sliced and polished into rings and necklaces and earrings. The moss reproduced startling scenes of mountains and lake shorelines in the milky agate. Pappy was also a poet.

I can't recall how I first met Pappy, but I wasn't afriad to be seen with him, like others were. I enjoyed his company and conversation in spite of the ridicule and insults. Pappy was more worthwhile than all of those conditioned fools could ever be. After I began to spend my weekends sleeping on Pappy's couch instead of in the barracks, I even started to enjoy the remarks and insults. I felt a nasty sort of egotism begin to grow. I suppose you would call it elitism. I was a part of a strange, exciting and interesting existence that they would never know. I was in touch with something they would never feel. While they got drunk at the E.M. club I traveled all over the great Northwest in Pappy's squeaky Ford pick-up. Mt. Rainier and Olympia. Picking oysters stews were like nothing I have tasted, before or since. And I shall never forget those transcendant hours of Montoya and Segovial. Coming back to the uniforms and rigid faces was like pulled on an air-tight suit of unjointed lead. Cold and stifling. Unnatural.

Of course there were a few drunken moments -we both drank like fish- when Pappy would throw himself at me and mostly out of pity I would hold and console him. He was dying very slowly of leukemia and I couldn't bring myself to hurt this tragically marvelous human being.

Because of Pappy I realized that there are alternatives that can be taken... in any situation, and at any time. And if I ever find myself regretting this realization, I hope my Pappy isn't watching because he'll probably disown me.

--Raymond Michaels

Waiting

I feel like a lone raindrop on the window pane. Here I sit crystal clear, a beauty to behold. Yet all the other raindrops are falling somewhere else, many joining together becoming silent little crystal streams. Why did I fall here by myself? I didn't want to join the mass; my aspirations are higher. I needed this lofty view so I could clearly see and wait for another raindrop somewhat like me.

Michael Langworthy, First Editor

Interviewed by STACIE GATZA

How did the first magazine get started?
Professor Gary Thompson was one of my first instructors. He had come from Rice University, which had a rich arts program. We basically decided to see if we could get funding from student government, and for five hundred dollars, *Sins* was born.

How did it get its name...who came up with the title *Cardinal Sins*?
We had an eclectic group of original editors, and of the various names thrown out, the *Cardinal Sins* one sort of stuck.

How was the word spread around campus about the magazine?
I think a lot of the first publications came from the editorial staff and faculty. The editors would get together and select the printable material by a consensus selection.

How do you feel about the magazine being around still today and about the changes that have been made to it?
I did see a copy of one of the magazines about a year ago, and you folks have made a tremendous leap in the sophistication and technical aspects of the process.

How long were you editor? What year(s)?
I was an editor from 1980-1984.

Is there any other interesting information about the magazine that we should know about or that might be interesting to tell our audience?
Actually, I am a terrible editor. I have a tendency to switch tenses when I write. My wife, Alissar, was really the editorial brains behind the original work. She was an art major at SVSU and was the only one who knew how to lay out text and artwork for printing. The original staff argued a lot, but the original editorial group, I learned a lot about the management of projects and people.

What year did you graduate from SVSU and with what degree?
I graduated in 1984 with a BA in Literature, but was basically a pre-med major.

What did you do from there? Where did you go?
I flew jets in the navy for about five years and then went to medical school at the University of Michigan for my medical degree. I have continued to write consistently as a physician and clinical researcher. About a year and a half ago, I was the first surgeon in the US to perform cartilage transplants to the hips in young adults with arthritis, and if you Google "terrorism and blast injuries," I have the number one paper on the Internet dealing with the medical aspects of terrorism blast attacks.

Tell us about your wife. How did you meet?
Once again, Alissar edits all my stuff and laughs at me while she is doing is it. We just celebrated our 20th wedding anniversary, and I think we met in a bar, but she won't tell me how we met.

Gary Thompson, First Faculty Supervisor

Interviewed by HOWARD JAMES MILLER III

Who first conceived of *Cardinal Sins*?
The students had gotten together and decided to put together a literary magazine, so the students were the ones behind its creation.

Well, how did you get involved?
I was asked to be the advisor because several of the students involved knew me.

What was the editorial experience like during the first issue?
A lot of laughs, hanging out editing the magazine together. It was a good time going through the submissions, some good and some pretty bad, but it was always fun. I did have to spend some time in meetings though.

Did you think *Cardinal Sins* would still be around through all of these years?
Well, at the time, we were just interested in putting out a little literary magazine, but I'm definitely glad it's still around. At the time though, it was just some stapled together photocopies.

Some real advanced technology, eh?
Yeah, the technology today really helps the quality of what you can publish.

What do you think is the benefit of *Cardinal Sins*?
Well, it is an excellent publication for a school this size and is a good place for beginners to get published. It also allows students some valuable experience with the editorial process.

Anything else you would like to add?
Well, I submitted a poem under a pseudonym as a joke once. I don't recall if it ever got published, but we definitely had some laughs about it.

Ann Garcia, Longtime Member

Interviewed by MEGAN STROHKIRCH

How did you get involved with *Cardinal Sins*?
I liked what I saw when the magazine came out. Then they moved my office next to the *Valley Vanguard* office, where *Cardinal Sins* had their office. I got to know all the *Sins* staff, and they made me take a test before I could join—which I guess I passed. It is also an indication of how much I wanted to work with *Sins*.

How long have you been involved with *Cardinal Sins*?
At least 15 years. Rachel Zamek was the editor. She was a legally blind artist. I was really a big fan of her artwork. She has also become a massage therapist.

What has kept you involved for this long?
The students who, every year, commit to keeping *Sins* alive and going. Without them, I would not be able to produce the magazine, no matter how much I wanted to. I like meeting wonderful, talented students each year who are kindred spirits, people who saw issues of *Sins* and wanted to be part of it—to continue it.

What has changed most over the years?
The magazine itself, it has gotten better and better with changing technology.

What do you enjoy most about *Cardinal Sins*?
The students; if it weren't for the people involved, it would not be fun. *Cardinal Sins* has the brightest, funniest, most passionate students to work with.

What changes do you see in the future for *Sins*?
The magazine will continue to get better, receiving more recognition off campus, and more rewards. It has a bright future.

Perry Toyzan, Printer

Interviewed by STACIE GATZA

How many years have you been involved with *Cardinal Sins*?
I have been with the University since January of 1981. I believe the first issue came out about the same time as my arrival.

How has the magazine changed over those years?
Sins has remained consistent to its mission of providing a place for people to bare their souls through word and image. Most of the time, the pages are filled with personal experiences. Suprisingly, I do not remember many pages of protest or experiences of a political or religious nature. The formatting of Sins has also remained consistent. Editors have experimented with different papers, typestyles, and logos to give the magazine the feel they wish to project, but the authors' feelings and visions have remained the same. You could take a poem, drawing, or photo from the first issue, and it would feel at home in the last issue.

What is your favorite part of the magazine?
That's easy. I am one of the fortunate few who get to experience the *Sins* people. For twenty-five years, I have seen many highly motivated people with an artistic flair. The best times are the last days of production, when there is a sence of urgency. All of the *Sins* staff find the work harder than they imagined but walk away better people for it.

What exactly is the extent of your involvement with the magazine?
My job for Sins is to take the completed artwork and turn it into the printed piece. There are many things that go into coordinating production. The Graphics Center staff has to print, fold, collate, and bind Sins. We also make sure the images are of the highest quality. We assist with the many software issues that arise. I am always there to offer assistance in getting the submissions to look professional.

What do you envision happening to *Cardinal Sins* over the next twenty (or so) years?
What makes *Sins* successful is that it is a unique part of this campus community. *Sins* is a portal for people to express themselves. The end result is a published book that you can hold in your hands. That's important in this electronic world. In twenty years, Sins will be forty more booklets of expression.

Biographies

David Adams is in his third year in SVSU, and these are his first published works of poetry. He enjoys video games, obscure indie bands, and artistic movies. He has penned many song lyrics for bands of which he's been a member. He lives in Bay City and hopes to leave one day in pursuit of a teaching and writing career.

Rob Bastek is in his fourth year here at SVSU. He is majoring in graphic design and minoring in something, someday. He's incredibly glad to be back on the *Cardinal Sins* staff after a two-year hiatus

Brian Cabrera is currently pursuing his teacher's certification at SVSU. He was the recipient of the Tyner-Roethke Prize for poetry in 2004, and his work has been published in *Cardinalis* and *Cardinal Sins*.

Amanda R. Conner pleads insanity.

Matthew C. Easterwood is severly disdainful of ignorance, which is why he refuses to pay attention to the news, watches almost no television, eats cheap macaroni, and sings in the shower. He would like to thank someone for something he will someday achieve somewhere other than here.

Thomas Falkner is a third-year business management major. Classes, writing for the *Valley Vanguard*, and working with *Cardinal Sins* and at the Writing Center consume most of his time. When he is not otherwise engaged, he builds sand mansions, serenades mermaids, and preaches to lions.

Ann Garcia has been a *Cardinal Sins* supporter for a number of years. She has had poetry and fiction published in *Cardinal Sins*, the *Green River Review*, *Alethea*, and the *Detroit News*.

Stacie Gatza currently lives in Kawkawlin, Michigan. This is her third semester as a staff member of *Cardinal Sins*. Next semester, she will be busy student teaching but is excited to graduate in May. She doesn't know what she will do after that.

Christopher Giroux, contrary to rumors among the Cardinal Sins staff, is not a pseudonym. He is a lecturer in the English Department.

S. Teisman Giroux is a graduate of Calvin College. Although she is a graphic designer by training, she considers her true calling that of a fiber artist/photographer. She is currently studying art education at SVSU.

Christi Griffis is a fourth-year student from Vassar, majoring in professional and technical writing, with minors in communication and graphic design. She enjoys obsessing over music in her free time. This is her first time being published in *Cardinal Sins* and first semester on the staff.

Nick Hildenbrand is a sophomore at SVSU and has done the web design for *Sins* for three semesters. He would like to thank the staff and his girlfriend for putting up with his crap and hopes to be able to continue helping make *Sins* a great magazine.

Erica Hoffman is a psychology major and French minor, with addictions to knitting, various genres of music, and Katamari Damacy on the side. She has recently become conscious of a career path and a love for consumer psychology. She would like to thank Fernando for being her artistic consultant.

Jenn Joseph is a creative writing/theatre senior at SVSU, plays softball and pool, and is the mother of three. This is her third semester on the staff of *Cardinal Sins*. With an amazing granddaughter and an adorable grandson, she plans to spend her golden years babysitting, writing fiction, and doing community theatre.

Erin Ledy is never going to escape.

Jeanne M. Lesinski, in addition to publishing three nonfiction books, has written for a variety of magazines, including *Better Homes and Gardens* specialty magazines, *Lake Country Journal*, *Good Old Days*, *Ozark Sr. Living*, and *Interlude*. She has a trio of poems slated for publication in Pennsylvania this winter.

Michelle Luplow is a junior majoring in biochemistry and minoring in art and creative writing. She enjoys camping and volunteering at Bay City State Recreation Area. She would like to thank God, Mike Mosher for the encouragement to submit to *Cardinal Sins*, and her parents—Tom and Therese.

Doug McGaw is a senior at SVSU. He hopes to continue the drunken troubadour tradition and to outlive his heroes who died at 27. He is a distance runner (sometimes) and loves to contribute to the *Sins*' cause.

Howard James Miller III is an experiment in identity. Please forgive him if he fades in and out of your...

Holly Morningstar was raised in Hart, Michigan, with her two brothers by her grandmother, Fern Huizenga. She owes everything in her life to God. Aside from being a student at SVSU, she is also an artist and a music critic for a roots/alternative country ezine, *RootsHighway.com*.

Jared Morningstar is a creative writing major looking to purse a career in either journalism or secondary education. When he is not busy hitting the books, he spends his time watching sports and listening to music. He loves road trips, Frank Kafka, friends, girls, cartoons, and last, but not least, his family!

Michael Mosher is an associate professor of art/communication multimedia at Saginaw Valley State University.

Brei Noble is a country-girl-gone-liberal with twists of spontaneity and a taste for life bathed in optimism. She aspires to be friendship's constancy, wrapped in freckles and smothered in faith. She values child-with-finger-paints imagination, flight-of-the-lightning-bug absentmindedness, woman-in-labor strength, and the feeling of being alive.

Kristopher Peterson has had his share of indiscretions and would like to thank *Cardinal Sins* for giving him a socially acceptable outlet for his deviance. To anyone who may share this magazine with members of the ATF, DNR, IRS, California Border Control, or the DMV, or the health inspectors (just as a general rule): please obscure his name in some way first. Thank you.

Kyle Reed is a junior at SVSU pursuing a degree in computer science. This is the second time his work has been published in *Cardinal Sins*. See his other pictures at www.svsu.edu/-kareed.

Amee Schmidt has multiple addictions—coffee, cigarettes, toenail polish—that fuel her neurotic tendencies. Futhermore, her neurosis is the one character trait that provides her with the sanity to survive life in the university. Writing is the outlet of this neurosis—cut open and splayed out for all to see.

Jason Schneider is an English education major. While he enjoys journalism and is one of the most awesome members of the *Valley Vanguard* staff, he would much rather be writing fiction. This is the first time he has had fiction published, probably because he has never attempted to get it published before.

Melissa Seitz grew up in Dodge City, Kansas; lived in California for a few years; and currently lives in Midland with her wonderful husband and son, and fabulous dog. She plays electric guitar, runs half-marathons, and writes poetry and fiction. She intensely dislikes liars.

Matt Shaw is currently a junior majoring in accounting. He is from Marlette, Michigan, and enjoys four-wheeling, jet-skiing, snowmobiling, and being outdoors in general. He got into photography this summer when he went on a trip out west with his family. He would like to thank *Cardinal Sins* for publishing his work.

Megan Strohkirch is a fifth-year student at SVSU. She is an elementary education major with math and social studies minors. She enjoys running and Topher.

Carly Toyzan is a junior majoring in professional and technical writing and communications with a minor in graphic design. She likes to keep busy around campus through her work as a Writing Center mentor and the Alternative Breaks Coordinator. She is excited to be published for the first time.

Christina Trew graduated from Hemlock High School in 2001. She is a senior at SVSU, pursuing a bachelor's degree in graphic design and photography. She teaches dance at Extreme Dance Arts in Saginaw. During her spare time, she enjoys dancing, boating, camping, and downhill skiing. She feels very honored to have her works chosen for *Cardinal Sins*.

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to all who have been instrumental in my success as editor of *Cardinal Sins* this semester. Thank you to Melissa Seitz, who has given so much of herself this semester to help create a better magazine; Sam Strobel, who has diligently given her time and work experience to better organize the submission and benefactor process; Ann Garcia, for her experience working with the magazine; Chris Giroux, for giving so much of his time to help create our new summer program; W. Anderson Bearden, for sharing his experience as editor; President Gilbertson, for his support of *Cardinal Sins* as an artistic staple in Saginaw Valley; Dean Bachland for his support and encouragement; Lucille Beauthin and Alana Rabedioux, from the Foundation Office, for their advice and help in our benefactor process; The Student Association and the Professional Journalistic Practices Committe, for their overwhelming support of our 25th anniversary issue; Diane Boehm, for her support of our new summer program; Andy Hoag, Brian Abbott, and the staff of the *Valley Vanguard*, for covering *Cardinal Sins* events and advertising; Kim Augustine and Jason Parker, for their involvement in the magazine; Jim Seitz, for being our math guru; Linda Farynk, for helping to organize the publication release party; the library staff, for their help in gathering information for the 25th anniversary; all of our benefactors for their financial support; and the entire staff of *Cardinal Sins*, for their enthusiasm and hard work in putting together this issue.

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