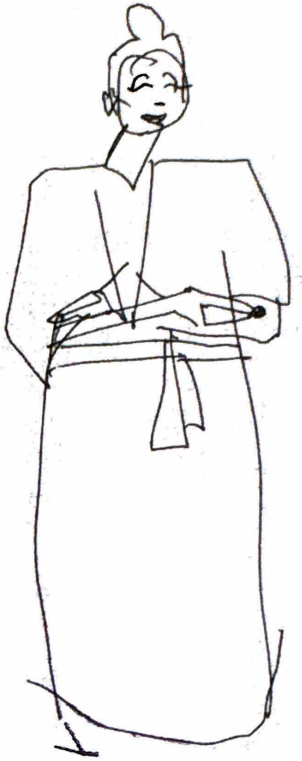
CARDINAL SINS

新迎时生谊市民
吉喜新生小加



FALL时
喜2003

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Volume 23, Issue 1
FALL 2003

Editor-in-Chief Lindsay S. Bryce
Academic Advisor Melissa Seitz
Editorial Staff Darcy Czarnik
Ann Garcia
Christopher Giroux
Kurt E. Jaissle
Dr. C. Vincent Samarco

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Cover Art
Logo* *Casey Williams*
Art *Michael Mosher*

*Congratulations to A. Palmer, Michael Mosher, Cheryl Dotterer, and Casey Williams, winners of the poetry, fiction, flash fiction, artwork, photography, and logo awards respectively.

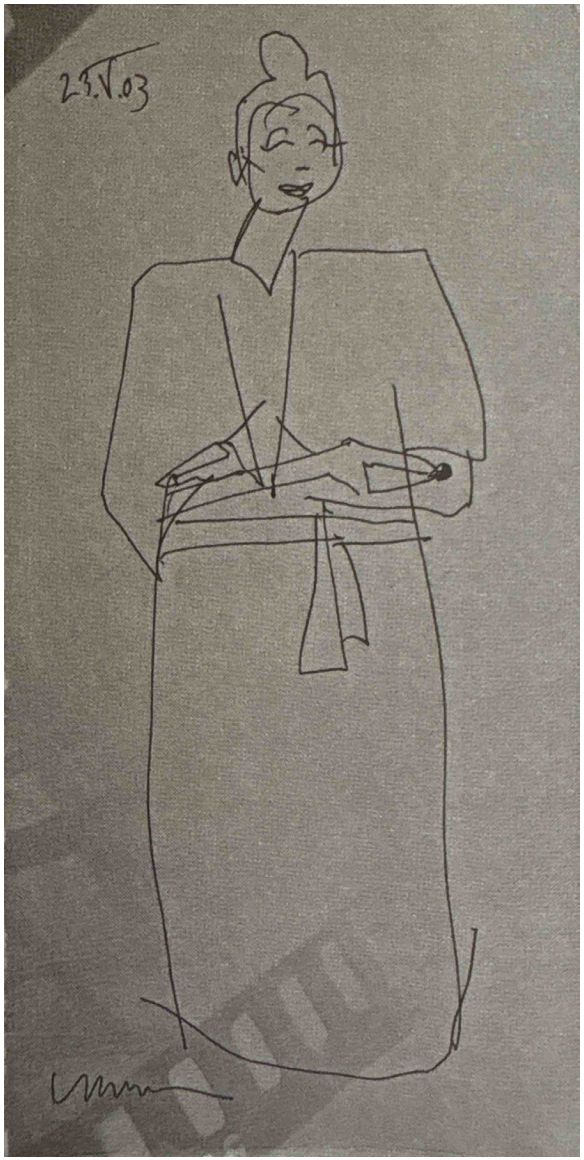
Editor's Note

As I was evaluating the overwhelming number of submissions for this issue, I was reminded of the true essence of art and, in effect, what makes it so intriguing to those of us who seek it out: its humanity. Art—by this I refer to all of the works which require a union of creativity and discipline—seems always to have some kind of relationship with those qualities that make each of us innately human. Whether masking or exposing it, exploring or offering penance for it, art always draws us in with how it interacts with pride, envy, gluttony, lust, anger, greed, and sloth :in short, the Cardinal Sins.

The contents of the following pages make it obvious that this magazine's name is drawn from the inspiration of the art it celebrates. The pieces in this issue exemplify not only the talented artists we have as students, faculty, staff, and alumni of Saginaw Valley State University, but also that intricate relationship which art maintains with something inside each of us.

I would like to thank my husband, Nathan, who continues to cultivate the creative being in me, and who supported me in every step of this endeavor. I would also like to thank my parents, who have insisted for the last twenty-three years that I can be successful in whatever I set my mind to. This issue—and all of the bits and pieces of myself woven through it—is for the three of them.

Lindsay S. Bryce
Editor-in-Chief



Kimono
By Michael Mosher

After H.D.'s "Eurydice"
by A. Palmer

How can you turn back for me
the one still lost in the pear tree's downy pollen
still crowding the flowers
a bee tasting like a phantom

a shadow on the petals and leaves
I am moonlight
the placid watcher
impassive
sent from something so cold and fiery
from the closest star
the closest flower catching light in still-open cup

You will kill me with a bowl of water
filled up with rain
a gift
a drink

I thought of you as a creature
dark and ethereal
less a human by a lack of organs
I see that you are only immortal
only older than me

I feel without kin in this subterranean abyss
I bathe in the Lethe and pray to sleep
Instead I find this middle air
between burning water and warm clay
I will sleep instead with you
in the blueness of this light
in the bone-tree orchard
with the pears hanging
and the trees, their burning bones held up
"I who could have slept among the live flowers at last"
find only reverie, the echoes of sleep

Philosophy
by Ann Garcia

Nietzsche stopped to read the paper
over coffee and a donut
then walked home slowly
window shopping on the way
wondered at the goods
the hand that placed them
the hand that made them
the head that thought them
the sky's reflection
the window
his face.
A gum wrapper boat
floats
down the gutter stream
drawn into
the larger body.

Communication
by Adrienne Dyane Lewis

Protestants don't let the flesh melt
on their tongue; they chew it
once a month on a given Sunday. It took me a long time
to grow accustom to the sparseness
of remembrance of the Baptist
church my husband's family attends. They are touchy-feely
with *good morning* and a hug
replacing the solemn sign of peace. Catholics
taste the mystery of the Body each week; the bitterness
never becomes more palatable though
as you slip the thin wafer in,
hold it still with your tongue, let it dissolve.
Dislodging small, sour pieces
sticking to the roof of your mouth
throughout the service, you are reminded
of the vinegarations you must have caused others to ingest
during the week, the many ways you've fallen
away from the piousness required
and the belief in absolution that helps you swallow now.

rezo de mi abuela

by Kristen R. Garcia

in the morning
I wake up to pray
knee kneeling
        and feel the earth
rich, moist dirt
sifting through sun steps
that form on the wall
        levels holding a moment
where she sat
where she prayed

and nothing feels the same
without her sense of calm
without the silent stare
        brown, silt hands
bend finger to finger

The Kind of Trip

for Dave: thank you.

by Gina L. Richards

1

After dropping out of college, a bike trip. With an interest in Heidegger, Faust, and Sartre, time to travel. A nameless puppy. A woman. Love and not love. Quantum mechanics. Philosophy.

2

In the sixties, he says, everybody went somewhere. Sometimes alone. Sometimes listening to Hendrix play the national anthem with a million other people. He says, I kept a journal but most of it is in here. (Points to his forehead). It's not a memoir because it's not for anyone but me.

3

What I don't ask is, why weren't you in the war. Without me asking, he says: When I left college, I don't think America ever caught up with me.

4

a sheaf of typewritten pages
journals bound between cardboard, tied with twine
        the bike, with new tires
        memories of

a commune, a hike,
an epiphany of sorts

5

Somewhere in New York, he finds a map of the U.S. Closes his eyes and chooses Colorado. He says, my friends had a van. Of course they had a van. They left me at the Maryland border and went on to D.C. I hitchhiked a lot, he says, and if it wasn't raining I was on the bike.

6

Beneath an overpass in Kentucky (the I-75 running north above him): his journal soaked with rain, the ink smearing between the pages. It got harder to hitchhike the further west I got, he says.

7
He never got to Colorado, but
the journal dried in the sun
and got him all the way
to Michigan

8
where there was nothing but
black and white photos with ragged edges and
a spiral bound book with
notes on philosophy



What Does the Handle on YOUR Door Look Like?
By Amy Ladensack

under Detroit
by A. Palmer

I see a girl folded up on the pavement—she sits upright and her skirt spills in the wind, ripples, and the breath fades from her.

I wait for her to stand, kick her feet out and slap her thin thighs, unexpectedly, and call out to the trees and their marginal leaves flickering like fritillary wings and the spaces between that are the sky: Bella fica! My fruit is a fig! and I hear her wry laugh, somehow light in the lowering darkness.

We found the porch, the one with the orange light and the laurels laid on the front steps—

The back courtyard had red and orange tulips, the kind of grape muscari that is pale lavender at the top and round, bubbly purple as the bloom thickens; there are the daffodils and the white narcissus, peaching in the sun. Here, it's too late to collect greens from the dandelions for salads, too late to see the leaves as scraps of gentle felt, rolled up, and it's already dusty outside. I'm looking at it from the porch, sitting on the leaning chair next to the rolled-up oriental rug from which I expect the heavy moths and laces of its pattern to emerge, shake off clinging fibers and twine around the steps. Looking around this courtyard faced with porches, the stained glass and the bottles on windowsills sit calmly, a still chime and one window with shelves and stacks of plants are awake. I saw someone visiting that house today when I was sitting in the sun by the parking meter, one hobbling and another woman knocking. Maybe she was coming home, or visiting, pale as the potted plants sipping winter sun.

He calls to me from the kitchen that it's ready, but I can't look to his voice inside because the sun is glancing off the overhanging eves and glittering onto my arm, because I remember last night and I can't stand the city three days in a row. I'm sick here and I'd rather listen to the sun.

I'm still sitting on the back porch, of a different quality than the wide cement and tiny ivy fingers on the front porch, and I can see down the alley. The aimless rustle that punctuates the unrelenting, plaintive static low of the city returns—the papers are brushing along the brick and a pigeon flaps up on the rise of its crescendo.

Survivors
by Adrienne Dyane Lewis

These are the survivors;
keys I still use to unlock places
in my life. Their gouged edges fit perfectly
against metal, push upward
into the shear line. Spinning the cylinders
of doorknobs I have touched a thousand times in haste;
the twist of the lock an unconscious act,
glorious in the sense of mastery it declares:
I belong here. I can still get into the first apartment we shared
three thousand miles from where we are turning locks now.
The door to our new house is equipped with the dead
bolts that slide across frames and keep us
safe at night. I think about the Oldsmobile
we drove to San Diego, its long silver opener
duplicated in case of loss. I have a memory of us
sitting in the front seat facing each other
and it is resting in the ignition, turned forward with the others
so we can listen to Clapton, jingling
like chimes as we move into each other; soft sounds
as sharp edges meet. Some keys are ghosts,
left behind outside passages of doors; they can't be released
because who knows what work they have left to do. Here in this room
they surround me on the floor, try to tell me
their stories, help me to remember.

Constellations

by Gina L. Richards

the way the stars
knit together or how
in the early morning
they seem to move in
wide circles around
the thin fragment of moon.

...

the snow
as it falls in November
clings to itself in the grass,
disappears just before
it touches the sidewalk.

...

under the oak,
a shroud of autumn:
even a slight movement causes
a leaf to drop,
the near silent *tick-tick*
as it drifts down

...

frost coats the grass;
it folds
underfoot:
a slight
crushing.

...

and the way smoke
surrounds the moon:
winter in
the sudden sleep of
earth, the sudden bright star
above the sunrise.



What Weston Saw

for Charis Wilson

by Gina L. Richards

her arms, legs
small of her back
placed carefully
as he photographs her

the backdrop is unimportant
as he views her
through mirrors, glass

sees only
her body
his temple

she curves to his
desires
asks him
like this? what about
my hands?

her ribs
float up
her spine creates
a little semicircle
legs raised slightly

he takes her
photograph





Aladdin's Market, Ann Arbor
By Michael Mosher

Giving Thanks
by Leigh C. Grant

You weren't at dinner.
there are more leftovers—
She made your favorite,
minced.
I ate a piece.
somehow
it tasted like home.

and You,
You didn't stop by—
five-dollar cigar,
irish whiskey, mustache.
this year We could've used a smoke.

The Kitchen still smelled like
dressings, yams, drippings,
polite conversations.
The Mutt still whined for a drumstick,
and The Toilet still plugged—
This House breathed,
wanted a little something to fill This Void.

We didn't bless us our lord
for these gifts;
but We poured the wine into cut-glass
and drank to What Was Left.

The house outside of Sanford
by A. Palmer

there are some pictures you remember
I remember standing, self-consciously in my grandmother's
dim, brown kitchen with fat tomatoes bulging on the window sill
waiting to be ripe

my mother grew up in that house,
its room still divided by a change in carpet
or the introduction of linoleum
in the kitchen, the pattern, like interlocking stones,
always looked wet

from the kitchen window there is a bed of orange daylilies
stargazer lilies and the spreading visible feet of a willow tree
bordered by the same piece of cement sidewalk that ended in a curve like a heel
that I walked by when I saw a tomato worm on the side of the house
its blunt arms pinched away from its body, crude and green

I had a dream that the willow tree's trailing branches were tied up with ribbons—
mostly red—and that some of the leaves were feathers, other skeletons of leaves
and some of them muted yellow, dusty, like willow leaves in the fall

and she still saw that willow tree from the trailer that
was set down on cinder-block corners
by the fuel pig in the back yard
because she had to move out when she was eighteen, her father said
but her mother told her that she could wait till she was married
and so she moved fifty feet away
but had fifty different locks put on the door
between herself and herself
and it was ten years before she finally collected all the keys.

Untitled
by Adriana Bas

La vida se llena

De pequenajas frambuesas rojas

Que están brillando

En el sol

Su piel

Aterciopelada

Blanda

Delicada

Se me sube su dulce vida

Suculenta

Vida Roja

Como sangre

Quw corre en mis venas

Las frambuesas frescas

Son las sartas

De joyas

Gogebic
by Leigh C. Grant

In a silence imposed by bare necessity—
sparseness, the nakedness of timber rafters
outside a crash of thunder wets the trees with sound
and small creatures, small thoughts arise,
little pecks at inspiration
(beat of downy's beak)

And the rain begins to fall,
downpour of emotion, laden
with northern wisdom
late into the falling of the night

No master plan, no manuscript that
sweeps the stars up into meaning
and singular inspiration into prose, and yet

For now I'll settle for carving my initals



Speaker @ Lectern
By Michael Mosher

Love Poem
part 1
by M. Thomas Goecke

I have shaken with love half the night.
She is but half my age.
Whither, whither am I going?
-Ezra Pound

The other day on talk radio, a woman revealed that her husband had filled her car's gas tank before she even got up for work. That was love, she said, even if he couldn't say it in words. I hope someday I can tell you about the love I have for you, how it torments me, pawing at my ribs, how it falls on me unpredictably, making me queasy, dizzy. Your mother knew. She smelled it the way visitors to the zoo pick out the smell of the lion house, making their hearts gallop before even seeing the cats, but she misunderstood, told me to stay away from her fifteen-year-old daughter. A grown man, she said, I should be ashamed.

But, I didn't want to touch inside you like your father has since you were eight. I saw in you a hollowness like my own, like the decayed middle of a lightening-struck tree. I never told you about the hardest stone, one engraved with Beth Ann, Infant daughter of...

My son talks of seeing you in the hallway at school. One afternoon he described your disheveled, dirty clothes and uncombed hair, told of you giving away the contents of your locker and purse.

Close to Death
by Adrienne Dyane Lewis

The day I almost electrocuted myself and you
asked how much life insurance I had,
I knew it must be over.
How else could you joke of money
with my hair still wiry from the voltage. Your voice turned
the subject, brushed over the fuzz
standing up all over my body, the red flesh
on the palm of my hand. My wedding ring
looks no worse for wear
but a current ran through it, interrupted
its structure, changing forever our composition.



Kochville Affair
By Cheryl Dotterer

Time in a green flowerpot
by A. Palmer

Flying is unnamed
a realm like underwater
that we can only talk about in its lower strata
its shallow degrees

dawn is at the edge of the flower's chalice
the horizon on which the moon rises
sitting
full on the lip
and enormous

How many dead stars do you see, he asked.

There's a place where mothers can sign up and have a star named after their dead bodies—they mostly do it for ones that they never knew—the stillborn.

I mean, how many do you think we see right now that aren't actually there anymore—the ones that have extinguished themselves, eaten up their energy, but because their light is still traveling those incredible space distances—we can only liken them to sea distances, but space is deeper—but we will see those stars until the beam them shone, that strand of light, narrowing finally to a pinpoint, will shimmer and then wink and won't open again.

She said, As luck would have it, it could be the number of cigarettes we've shared tonight, or it could be the number of stillborn babies—or as many hands as there are in China.

We were walking, the leaves falling in behind us—a wake that memorized the words we left before closing over them, drowning them on the cement. When the snow melts, they will still be floundering there, dried by the sun until they peel at the edges and float up, feathers picked up by two other people, or one alone, or the orange cat that sits on the porch in the sun. The cat is Maxime, a French name.

Sometimes I am only a death-mask, like I saw in the French cemeteries, a visage captured and replaced in the hours after death and so always I am the absolute of what I will be. I will start young with my children, casting their faces in plaster and wrapping them carefully, putting them in labeled boxes. I remember the sun in Pére Lachaise and the tombs that

seemed to have been pushed up from the ground, volcanic granite that had forced up, crowded, and was carved and given stained-glass windows, broken now like the gates that stand ajar, locks and chains hanging, like the broken bell of a skirt; it was my skirt I saw hanging, torn like the chains. I am trees following the paths and the shrubs, leaves brushing one another and keeping time in my solid belly, ringing and ringing like the bell of a skirt.

I want you to see the flowerpot, green, with vines and painted pansies twining around its fat bowl. I want you to see it huddled there, in the sun, remembering the dark kiln in the sunlight, remembering the damp earth once pressed into it—it is half-full of clear water, now. Sometimes I look into it on my way to the car, sitting half under the eaves of the garage, sitting alone in a stack of terra cotta pots and plates, and I see in the still water a reflection of the clouds that passed over it during the night, or the cat that came around the corner to drink out of it, or the leaves falling in the yard, flapping on their way down. Sometimes it can see the hem of my skirt flash past as I'm walking out to look at the night sky.

We didn't talk anymore that night.

*

Last night, I had a dream that I reached up to my bedside lamp to turn it on and it electrocuted me—I was amazed and with my arms spread wide, I seemed to float down the hall, my feet barely tripping, just brushing the floor. The only noise was the inverted sound still ringing through my body and my ears, making a light that emanated from between my hands—a cat fled before me, bounding down the stairs and I heard my mother's name falling down the stairs after me; I'm lying at the bottom with my hands over my eyes. We are walking now, the last brittle leaves falling behind us, rolling and rolling until caught by another leaf, locked and turning in the first dusty snow.

He said, I've been thinking about moments prior to *time* as such, when nights were longer, or if one were in prison; inability to participate in time. Some people keep time with a cigarette—

Six minutes.

—Or how long it takes to drink a beer or a cup of coffee. He sings here, from Desire, "One more cup of coffee for the road, one more cup of coffee 'fore I go—to the valley below."

But the trees keep time better—they don't liken the rings to anything

because they don't need to—nor does the rain think, as it falls, catches, and is suspended to the tip of a blade of grass, "How my brothers fall, less than a second apart!" These things just happen, like the tides, unconcerned with how long we reckon it as.

The cat's name is not Brenda—it's funny, because I don't know my mother by that name. She will always be mama to me, of course, and she named me. I am afraid of becoming my mother—he told me this, once: I have a story for you to read. It was all about fire, consuming, absolution, catharsis. The protagonist is rising up through the chimney, ashes, at the end and is finally part of the tableaux, the dark spruce and the sparks. It doesn't matter; my mother and I are the same and so are he and I.

I looked into the flowerpot today and saw the greenness of the bottom, the clear water settling to rest and it played for me a fantasy. It filled itself up with coins, shining and smooth, caught in light that was deeper than the water of the flowerpot, and the coins turned to leaves that swarmed up out of the bowl like flower pots, like cherry blossoms ringing and thin willow leaves (the willow trees outside my mother's house, smelling of dry late summer) and swirled around me, caught me, and then fell.

*

I saw the cat again today, and thought of a painting. He was picking his way through the snow, lifting his feet clear. I don't really know his name, but I will call him Bosch today, because we are on Hieronymus Bosch's "Ship of Fools" today, all laughing, sneering and oblivious. We are rocking toward shore, rollicking, and there is our yellow pennant and above it, whose skeletal face is in the leaves of the tree? The cat was mincing up the steps as I watched, and the door opened and a woman with a bag of frozen fruit in her hand shooed him in. I think she was making crepes, strawberry blintzes for herself. I can imagine her humming, thinking about the romance of the food she is making, lifting the edge of the crepe from the pan with a fork, gingerly, peeling it back and flipping it. I can see her assembling them, spooning the cheese in, rolling them up and pouring strawberries over the whole mess. I'm sure she shared it with the cat, whose name might be Marmalade, or Tiger.

Today was the snow that will stay, and the flowerpot was even more green with snow on its lip and the water inside was less, and crusted with ice—I could still see the snow that fell all night playing black around the

edges of the ice, where the water was still free and breathing.

We walk, because we usually do, and if it weren't so cloudy, the rings of Saturn could be seen with binoculars, and so he brought his along. It's funny how, once you are close to someone, you speak so many thoughts you have that are just passing before your mind's eye, flitting, thoughts like finches, but you mention it because you know how he thinks and he thinks he knows, too.

I remember the time that we sat on the roof, she said, and it seemed like the stars had fallen. But even in motion, and fireflies hanging close to the ground, pulsing, they hadn't touched the ground. I think stars would evaporate before they commit themselves to silence.

Evaporate? They're still gone—but I guess dispersed.

She said, Yes, they're still participating.

Maybe the falling stars are caught by birds, he said.

They laughed at the memory, at the history, at the absurdity and the order.

And time ceased, cesium ticks slowed and fell out, and was heard only in the fattening of tree trunks, imperceptible, and heartbeats.



Tree w/ Dead Rabbit
By Michael Mosher

Inscription

by Adrienne Dyane Lewis

"No one has ever proved the dead can't read poems."
-Jonathan Wilks

I would like my tombstone to have a poem on it.
His words, etched in rough granite
for all time. I will read them
over and over. Ethereal, I will pass
into the sense of us they carve out, settle in the essence
of who I was to him. In this life,
I cannot begin to rest
in his expressions, let them alight my being
for too long. I have held on to the need for concrete
assurances of fidelity, *Semper Fi*,
and the ways in which corporeal love chisels
the certainty of its existence.



Moonlighting

by Leigh C. Grant

Monday:
And I noticed the small ecstasies, so easily overlooked;
little taps on the shoulder that happen right when the sun sets.
Red splashes into blue-black,
drawing in the day's breath and exhaling in
light of moon.

Tuesday:
The moonlight makes our skin pale,
an eerie glow as though Mother Nature
is reminding us that life indoors
isn't all that there is,
all that stands beside us at sunset.

Wednesday:
The moon is quite a curious thing.
He never winks, though his face peers
on us, and rests upon the backs of our shoulders
as we walk barefoot in the sand,
searching for moonshells that glow
like the whites of his eyes.

Thursday:
Driving. The moon played a trick on me today.
He came dressed in gaudy vermillion and blew sunset's breath into his chest,
and followed me home from the grocery store.
It was quite disturbing, actually, he would not wane;
and I began to feel like he had sold out to
the sun and his more social ways.

Friday:
Our family dog has a habit of
accosting the moon from my parents' back porch
Somehow he seems displeased by the way the moon danced
with the wisps of cloud that passed by.

Saturday:
In parts of Latin America the moon is a jealous woman,
a pale-faced mistress of the night
who wants nothing more than to be a mother.
Twenty-eight days. Lunar cycle.
Tonight she reminded me to dance.



Sunday:
Full moon tonight.
I will again draw open the blinds and lay still
in cold sheets as the moonlight taps me on the shoulder,
nudging me in my dreams.

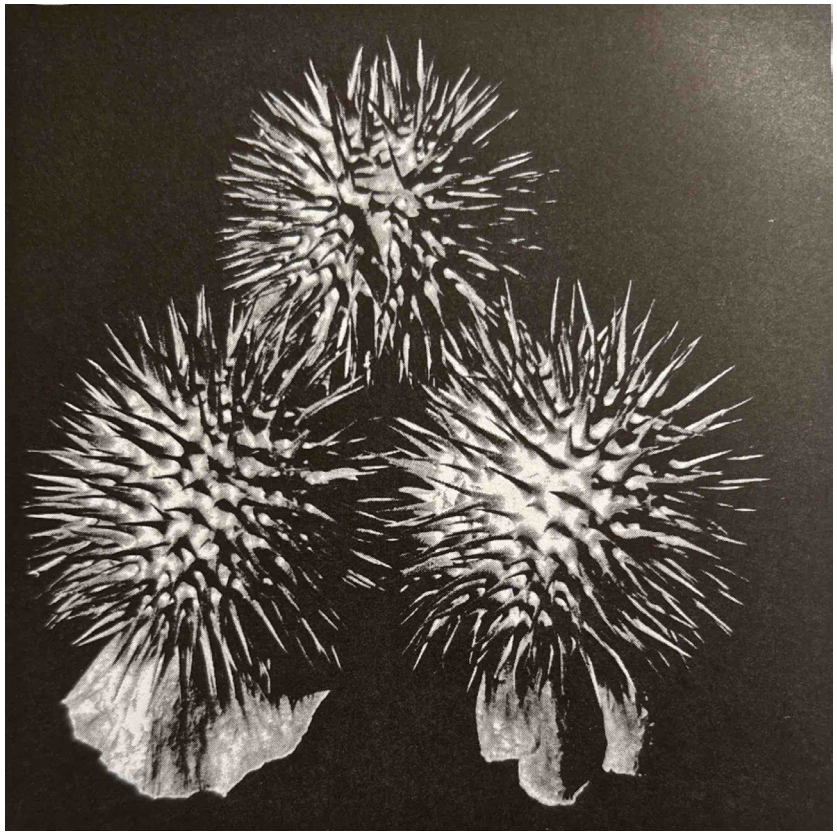


The New American Way
by Adrienne Dyane Lewis

Superman: Easy, miss. I've got you.
Lois Lane: You've got me? Who's got you?

They are unraveling, and I can't pull them
together. The cords connecting us
are meant to bind, not tether.
And yet, I am left as the anchor
holding your free-floating form down,
letting it glide over our lives
like some Macy's parade walker
fighting with Superman's invisible lines. I am tired
of dragging my feet on the ground, watching you
soar over my helpless form. Take me with you
or lift these from my hands;
tie up your loose ends
before you are up, up, and away.



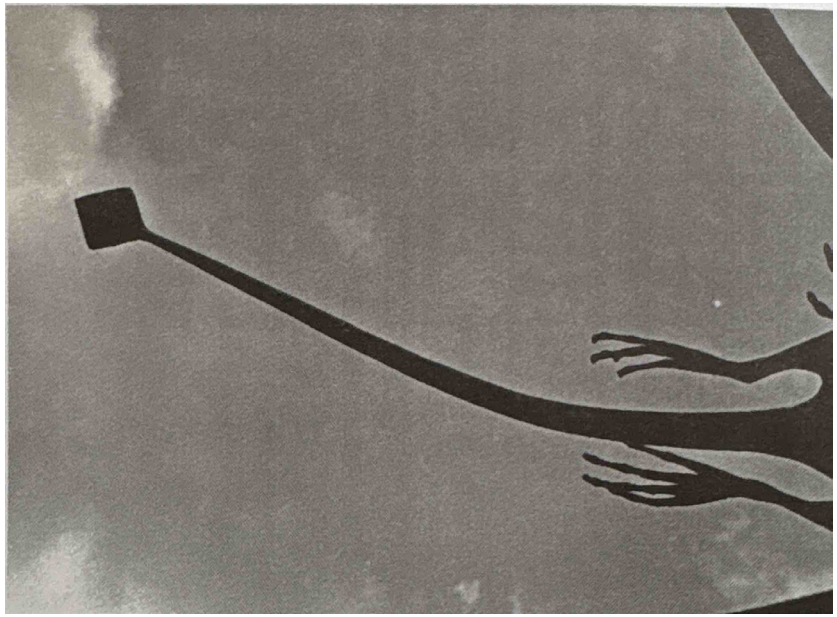


Locoweed
By Cheryl Dotterer

The water cabbage are like green roses
by A. Palmer

This water is always somnambulant
the moon doesn't wake it
and even the virgin of May day,
taken into the hollow under the roots on the bank,
bathed in the dark water
and then laid out on the moss
will not disturb the clarity of the water and
the dreams that can be seen in it
as leaf falls onto still surface and sparks a scene
moving through the underwater

almost subterranean; the water is so deep
dark fissures, holes like the nests of birds in sheer cliffs,
the concentricity of droplets from the overhang penetrate as circles of dim light
the intricate Moorish patterns, interlocking majesty
and as they filter down to me I close my eyes
But when I stand up
the water is only at my knees



Almost Caught
By Amy Ladensack

Homecoming
by M. Thomas Goecke

I know when you return, your
wrists will be swaddled in clean
gauze with tape beginning to curl
at the edges, and we will not
look at them, try not to
imagine the red lines punctuated
with black stitches like
a small railroad track going
nowhere.

Angelito

by Ann Garcia

Wind whipped snow at passersby, who winced and squinted against the pellets and pushed on. They were all at odd angles trying to minimize their resistance and still look dignified. Joe stood turtlelike on his corner. His head shoved down into his shoulders, no hat. Eyes and forehead just visible over his turned-up collar. Elbows back, hands pulled up into his sleeves. When he put them in his pockets, the wind found the gap of flesh between sleeve's end and his pocket. No gloves.

Up and down the street paper hawkers and shoeshine boys stood at their stations. None dared leave his turf unguarded during a business day. The U.S. Postal Service had nothing on Las Vegas newsboys. Bad weather was no excuse. It was just bad business not coming to work. Joe won his prime location thanks in part to the Hong Kong flu and the fact that he was an early riser. Now he would not give up his spot without some form of divine coercion. This storm didn't qualify.

Occasionally a boy ventured a weak "Paper, mister?" or "Shine, mister?" as the wind blew a shopper by, but the sound and the shopper were quickly carried off.

Joe said nothing. It was best just to stand, watch, and protect his corner, prime real estate next to the bank. Once it was dark enough, and darkness would come early today, all the boys could go home. He only had to wait. Braced against the bank wall, he occupied himself by calculating his Christmas fund and making out his short shopping list in his head and humming "*Oremos, oremos, angelitos, eremos*".

It was a good year. *The Optic* sold few subscriptions. Lots of bad news and scandals, so papers sold. The stock market was good, so lots of papers sold. University students looking for apartments, jobs over Christmas vacation, used cars, so lots of papers sold. He'd given up buying candy and lemons. He missed the lemons, but he'd rationed his Halloween candy and made it last.

The largest portion of his savings were for Kirina. He ticked off the gifts he would buy: catnip, a squeak toy, a dozen cans of tuna fish. Since it was a gift, his mother couldn't scold him for wasting money. She expected Kirina to survive on table scraps and all the mice and birds she could catch. Kirina stayed on, never complaining.

Joe loved all animals, but Kirina was special. She was the thing he valued most in the world. He had first brought her home in his jacket pocket. Had traded two rubber bands and a marble for her. No living thing understood him like Kirina did. She left him alone most of the time--which was

exactly what he wanted. At night, in the dark, she leapt onto his bed, curled against his chest and fell asleep. She didn't seem to mind much when he wet the bed. She got up with him, lay patiently on the floor while he stripped his bed. Then, rejoined him after he had changed the sheets.

No gift would be enough to repay her this single kindness.

Headlights flashed on. It was time to go. He noticed now that his toes were stiff. He knew to move quickly or he would never get home. The longest part of the walk was through New Town. Its streets seemed to go on forever. His feet were so cold now, they seemed to freeze to the pavement. If by some chance he were to fall, he felt to would not be able to stand again. He laughed at an image of himself on his back, turtle-like, trying to right himself again. The cold against his teeth cut his laugh short. At this moment even the Christmas lights strung across from street light to street light seemed cold and unpromising. Blocks of businesses, then apartments, then houses, more businesses, the university, finally Old Town.

Snow pellets stung his forehead. He saw he was nearly in Old Town, the original part of the city. Old and familiar, it was the first social and commercial center of Las Vegas. There was a plaza at its center. To get in or out of Old Town or to any business still left there, one had to drive or walk around the plaza. At its center was a park and at its center a bandstand, perfectly round and gingerbread ornate. His grandfather had built it many, many years before he was born. Ahead of him he knew was the Home Cafe although he could not reall see it. In Old Town he always had a sense of where he was.

And there it was. So warm inside, the windows heavily fogged, HOME was the only thing visible in the grass. He had to warm up. Mentally he calculated how much he'd made that day. Not much.

Painfully he pressed the latch, threw his weight against the door, and pitched forward into the restaurant. People glanced up quickly and just as quickly turned away, more surprised by the cold than curious about who came in. Joe shuffled toward an empty booth near the kitchen where it was warmest. Startled by the reflection in the mirror above the cigarette machine, he watched his head emerge from his turned-up collar. There was glistening beads of water on the tips of his hair. He shook snow off his jacket before taking a seat in the booth.

On the table there was a small jukebox, ketchup, salt and pepper, a napkin dispenser. He pulled out one of the menus tucked behind them. Again he checked his mental ledger, compared it against the right side of the menu and decided a bowl of *posole* to be just right all the way around. Cinnamon hot chocolate tempted, but would empty his pockets.

The waitress, Lupe, came around to take his order. She was a friend

of his sister. "*¿Que quieres, Jose*?"

"*Posole*."

"*¿Y pa' beber*?"

"*Agua*."

When the *posole* arrived, he cupped the bowl in his hands, inhaled, allowing the steam to warm his face. *Posole*. After a fiesta or a night of celebration, the party usually ended here with a bowl of posole. His father told him *posole* cured hangovers. Joe had no first-hand experience of this truth, either the disease or the cure. Right now, he knew it was hot. He ordered extra *chile piquin* and broke it into his bowl. He liked it hot and hot.

He hunched over his soup, ate slowly and savoured each mouthful— there was a good reason this was called the Home Cafe. The soup was as good as mama's.

So focused on his eating, he didn't notice the woman standing next to his booth until she said "Hey kid, wanna make quarter?"

"How?" he asked.

"I need somebody to carry my Christmas tree upstairs."

"Sure."

"Yeah, the man's ready to get rid of 'em, so I got a big one."

"Okay, let's go." He picked up his bowl and drank off the broth then wiped his face quickly on his jacket sleeve.

She walked out ahead of him. They walked a block to the tree seller's, where a few faded and lonely trees lay in the middle of the vacant lot. He'd seen the man standing over his oil drum fire when he walked to new town to see his papers.

"Hey, I got somebody to help me. I'm gonna take it now, okay?" the woman called out to the man.

He nodded. "*Con mi bendicion*," he growled and waved them out of the lot.

She pointed to a very tall, very uneven tree leaning against the building. Joe nodded, carefully grabbed the trunk and waited to be told where to take it. He could feel the resin stick to his fingers.

"I live over the Home," she said.

They walked back without conversation. The tree was awkward. Cold wind bkew the stiff needles against his face and the backs of his hands. She led the way upstairs and opened the door to a nearly empty apartment. Two small boys lay on the floor watching a television which was also on the floor. A little girl sat in a large chair near the window, the only other piece of furniture in the room besides the television and a rickety dinette. When the little girl turned around her eyes were red, her cheeks tear stained. She was silent, focused on her mother and seemed not to notice the tree.

"Did you see her?" the girl asked as they walked in.

"No. Now shut up about it." Her mother spoke sharply.

The two boys, seeing the tree, stood up. Joe leaned the tree against the wall where she pointed. The boys rough-housed around him, shoving each other, careful of both him and the tree.

"Ain't that a nice tree, mister?"

"Yeah." He held back his laugh. He wasn't that much older than they were.

"Mama said she didn't think we could have one this year, then she went out and bough the best one. Huh mister?"

"The best one in the lot," Joe replied.

"Yeah. Bet it weighs a lot, huh?"

Joe was studying the little girl and only half listened to what the boy said. She hiccoughed, as though she'd been crying for a long time.

"Your sister get hurt?" he asked.

"Nah. She lost her cat." they both replied." they both replied.

"Mama says she can't look for it. She's too busy and we're too little to do it," said one.

"She said we're too young to go chasing after a *sonso* cat," said the other.

Joe regarded the girl with new interest. With the cat gone he knew the apartment must feel very empty. "What kinda cat?"

The boys answered, "*Pintada*. She has lotsa colors."

She's just little. Mama called her *Miniatura*. Luisa just calls her Kitty. She gotsa funny line down her back that makes her look like they cut two cats up and sewed them together."

The mother snapped, "I just got too many other things to worry about." She handed him a quarter.

"Thanks." He was warm now. He could walk some more. It wouldn't hurt him. "Cat's name Kitty?"

"Yeah," she sniffed and shook her head. She put her head down and Joe could see her smiling a little at the floor.

Joe left the apartment and followed the pine needles out of the building.

It wasn't as cold in the alley where the wind was blocked by buildings on either side. He trudged up and down, paused by dumpsters and trash cans. He knew it was getting late and his mother would be worried.

She wouldn't say much to him when he got home, but he recognized the look in her eyes. The woman tonight, she didn't have that look. She'd been embarrassed for feeling the way she did but proud of that scraggly tree. Parents. He knew that they always wanted for you what they

thought you should have. If you were lucky, it might turn out to be what you were thinking you wanted.

He knew only what he felt. Need was like . . . like that feeling in his belly when he hadn't eaten all day. But he knew. When he worked hard at his papers or traded valuables with the other boys, the ache was not there. It wasn't there either when he was with his mama or his *abuelito*. Or Kirina.

He could smell the Home. The smell of fried corn tortillas. There were stacks of empty boxes by the back door. Wilted and frozen lettuce leaves clung to their corners. Icicles threatened from the windowsills. White smoke rose from a black pipe and climbed and climbed.

He walked slowly past the boxes. Rubbed against them with his shoulder. "Kitty, Kitty, Kitty," he whispered. Ssss, ssss, ssss, he whistled through his teeth.

He heard a muffled meow, like a question from the ground. She had climbed into the first box out to keep warm. Someone in the Home had stacked more boxes on top. He lifted them off and opened the lid. She was huddled int he corner nearest the wall. She was very small. In the dim light, she looked like half a cat. She had dark fur on one side of her body and light on the other. What a sight.

He closed the lid and lifted the box.

The woman opened the door.

"I found the *gato*," he said.

She looked puzzled. "*Menso*. The cat woulda come back by herself."

"Not this time." He showed her the frozen lettuce on the corner.

Again she shook her head and took the box. "*Gracias*."

"Yeah."

The woman stepped back and pushed the door closed with her hip. Joe started back down the stairs. Behind him a door opened.

"*Oye*."

He turned around and watched her come down the stairs toward him. He handed him a dime. "That was nice what you did."

He looked at the dime and made a quick mental calculation and checked his list. "Buy the kids some candy for me. Okay? From the Baby Jesus, okay?"

"Yeah." she said. "*Dios te bendiga*."

Yeah.

Familiar Hands
by Amy Henning

A neatly trimmed fingernail scrolls
down the list of names.
The phone book so flimsily large
in her gentle, aged hands.
A familiar resemblance I can't quite make clear
like a latent photograph image coming to light.
Her cool soft hand on my arm reassures
that the number she dialed is correct.

I continue to study her fingers and wrists
out of touch with her phone conversation.
Recognizing each curved fore finger
and the wrinkled ridges of skin at each bend.
A freckle appears in the same patch of skin
like the delicate signature of the artist.

Always reluctant to notice the likeness before,
foolishly denying any parallel to my mother
suddenly now such similarities are a delight
my hands are a piece of her,
forever, I will hold dear.



Weeping at the Death and Troubles of K-Mart
By Michael Mosher

I Believe
by April Richards

I don't believe you are
who you say you are.
Everyone has their secrets.
Even though you say you don't
you do.
I know I do.

I believe that there isn't
always a good side to things.
You can always
hit rock bottom
and you often do.
Don't worry I do too.

I believe your secret crush
isn't always so secret.
You tell at least one person
who in turn tells more
after a day everyone knows.
Even me.

I believe you day dream
absolutely everyday.
About your forbidden love
and places you wish
you could be.
It always happens to me.

I believe you need your friends
more than you'll admit.
They are always there
for you.
No matter what you need.
I know I'm here.

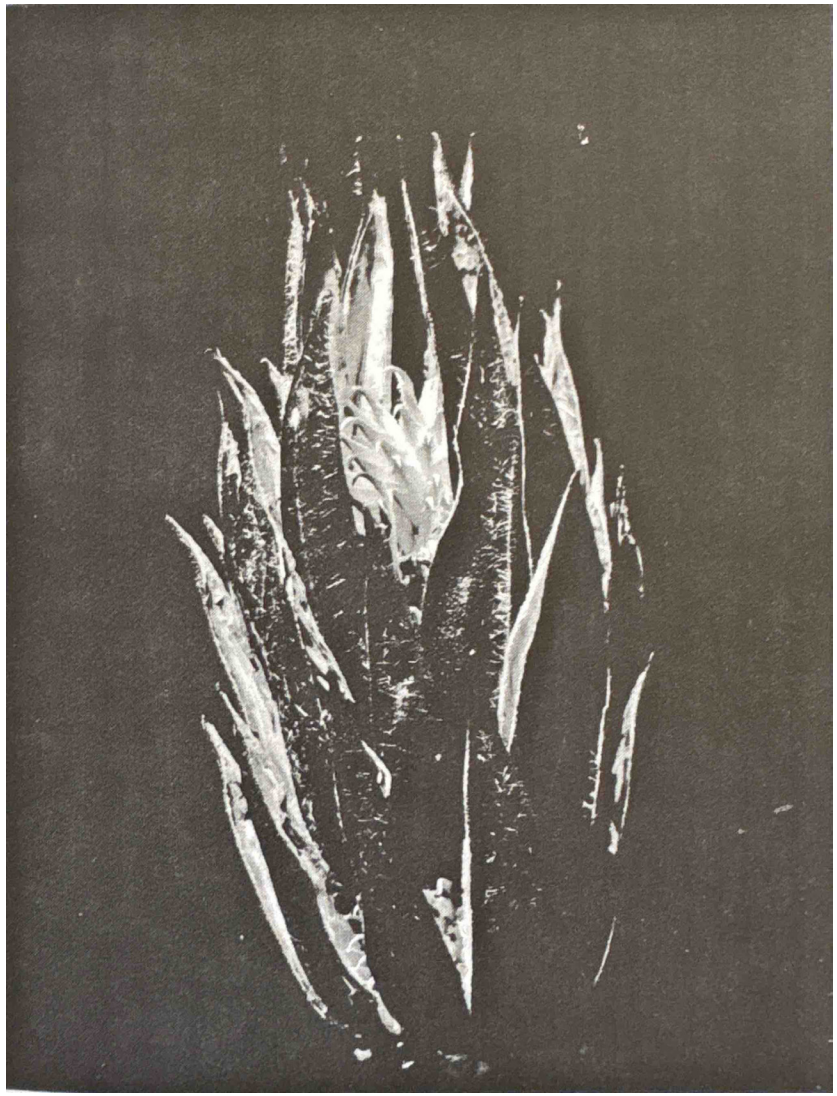
Photograph
by M. Thomas Goecke

When I cleaned off an overloaded bookcase to paint the wall I found an old photograph of you. It had fallen behind a shelf and its corner cracked when I flattened it out on my desk. I touched your face with the tips of my fingers as if I could feel your cheek, then held the paper to my lips for a moment. It's funny how clearly I remember that day after almost twenty years. You were driving the maroon Monaco toward Log Lake and we had already pulled two cold ones from the cooler in the backseat, the radio playing loud and all the windows down. You turned toward me and the camera froze the honey colored hair snapping around your face, your lips pursed with the words to Jackson Brown's *Running on Empty*. You were fearless, the kind of girl that would take candy form strangers and run with scissors. And that summer, the summer before we left for different colleges, I felt fearless with you.

I can almost smell the scent of that old car, a musty combination of leaather seats and mildew from a tiny leak above the windshield that even a jagged and finger smeared line of brown caulk could not stop. That '68 Dodge was the size of an ocean liner, but the money from our summer jobs, trimming Christmas trees, kept enough gas in it to take us to the lake evenings after work. We usually stopped for a six-pack, bought with your fake I.D., and two burger baskets from Jackie's Diner. After eating, we would stand in the bushed to change for a swim and you always made me promise not to peek. Most evenings ended with us sitting on the hood, leaning back on the windshield, studying the sky. We always had more wishes than stars.

The first time we made love was in the back of the car. Your mouth tasted like beer and watermelon Jolly Rancher. I was inexperienced, fumbling the condom, but your cool hands on my shoulders urged me down over you. "It's alright," you whispered, "it's alright." I finished too quickly, and embarrassed, pressed my face to your shoulder, your fingers traced the outline of the ear as my breathing slowed.

Our last lovemaking was also in that car. By then, you had choreographed my graceless hunching into a rhythmic violence that left us giddy. By then, I realized when Keats wrote "full beautiful," he meant you. By then, I knew I loved you because you made it easier for me to love myself. After, we tugged our swimsuits back into place and ran, hand in hand, toward the lake, its water shattered like crystal upon our entry, the ripples dispersing your reflection, like a photograph seen through tears.



Spike Lily
By Cheryl Dotterer

Biographies

Cheryl Dotterer is a native of Warren, MI, majoring in secondary English education with a minor in art. She is a 21-year-old, and the Editor-in-Chief of *The Valley Vanguard*. She finds her deepest connections to art, mostly black and white photography, and spends her free time attempting to further develop these skills.

Kristen Garcia is pursuing a Master of Arts in English Language and Literature, with a concentration in Creative Writing Poetry at Central Michigan University as a King-Chavez-Parks Future Faculty Fellow. She won the 2003 Tyner Award for fiction at SVSU and has been published in several issues of *Cardinal Sins*, in the premier issue of *Cardinalis*, and also in *Cooweescoowee*, the literary magazine published at Rogers State University in Oklahoma.

M. Thomas Goecke lives in Mio, Michigan, with his wife, son, and an old cat named Mischette who thinks she is his mother. A full time student at Saginaw Valley State University, he is working on dual majors in English and Psychology. His work has appeared in several journals and he is the author of *Things Zumadallas Knew* (Dancing without Direction Publishing), a collection of flash fiction. He is currently working on a novel.

Leigh C. Grant is a 2002 graduate of SVSU with a B.A. in Honors English. She is currently attending Wayne State University pursuing her Master's degree in English/Creative Writing. The winner of the Tenth Annual Tyner-Roethke Prize for poetry, Leigh's work appeared in various issues of *Cardinal Sins* in the past, and most recently in the premier issue of T*he Paradidomi Review*. Leigh lives in Metro Detroit, where people-watching is as much an education as her course work.

Amy Henning is currently working on a second Bachelor's degree and is looking forward to graduating after the Fall 2004 semester. Working full time and attending school full time leave few leisure opportunities for Amy. She enjoys traveling, astronomy, aviation, and activites with family and friends. Amy lives in Freeland with her husband, Matt, and their two cats, Annie and Zoey.

Amy Ladensack is a second-year studnet at SVSU aiming for an Art Education major. She originated from Port Huron, Michigan, where she was a student of Mrs. Labeau. Mrs Labeau has been a great inspiration and influence to her artistic abilities, and Amy would like to follow in her footsteps. Amy enjoys a wide range of mediums like drawing, painting, sculpting, photography, and writing—although her favorite medium is paint.

Mike Mosher is Asst. Professor of Art/Communication Multimedia at SVSU who sometimes teaches Art 121: Beginning Drawing. Even when he neglects to produce larger works, he often generates small drawings such as these.

Adrienne Dyane Lewis is the Co-Editor of the *Paradidomi Review*, a bi-annual literary magazine featuring the best creative works in the Midwest, especially in the Great Lakes region. A professional grant writer, she lives in Saginaw, Michigan, with her husband and son. Her works have appeared in such print and outline literary venues as *Controlled Burn*, T*he White Pine Review*, *The Driftwood Review*, and *Poetry Midwest*. Her first collection of poetry has recently released by Mayapple Press.

A. Palmer is a freshman at Saginaw Valley, writes, reads, and studies literature—she believes in the essential and mutable nature of lanugage above all things. It (language) is not a triumph, nor can it be mastered—the human creation that controls our very thoughts and interactions—but it is a fascinating, fluid medium that surrounds us all. We are not careful enough of its depth.

April Richards is in her second year at Saginaw Valley State University. She is an English major and would like to focus on creative writing. She loves to write and does it in any spare time she can find. She would love to one day have a book published.

Gina L. Richards received her B.A. in Creative Writing at Saginaw Valley State University and recently received her Master of Arts in Creative Writing from Central Michigan University. She is currently an adjunct English instructor at Delta College and has also taught at Saginaw Valley State University and Davenport College.

Casey Williams is twenty-two years old and a senior at Saginaw Valley State University majoring in Graphic Design. In his spare time, he enjoys listening to music, snowboarding, and being with friends and family. He hopes to relocate to a "bigger city" after graduation in May 2004.





Acknowledgments

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all who are an integral part of the success of this magazine. *Cardinal Sins* would not continue to grow without the interest, dedication, and hard work of people like you!

Thank you to...

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Winter 2004 Cardinal Sins Submission Guidelines

General Information

Cardinal Sins is produced by the students of Saginaw Valley State University and published on campus by the graphics center. Works by students, faculty, staff and alumni are eligible for submission. All submissions are considered for publication there are no exclusions from receiving an award in any category, unless requested. Judging is done by the blind voting of the editorial staff.

Deadline for entries: February 6, 2004

Requirements:

Text submissions should

- be in 12 point, Times New Roman font, with average margins (except where variations are integral to the integrity of the piece).
- have a title centered at the top of the page
- have the title and page numbers in header for prose pieces
- be submitted on a 3.5 disk in Rich Text Format. Disks will not be returned. Hard copy submissions will not be accepted.

All submissions should

- have a signed cover sheet submitted with the work
- be titled

Poetry (First place winner will receive $100 and full recognition in the Winter publication):

- Individual poems should not be more than sixty (60) lines.

Flash Fiction (First place winner will receive $100 and full recognition in the Winter publication)

- Each flash fiction piece should be no more than 750 words.

Short Fiction (First place winner will receive $100 and full recognition in the Winter publication)

- Each short fiction piece should be between 1,000 and 1,500 words

Note: Limit of five (5) poems, two (2) flahs fiction, and two (2) short fiction pieces per person.

Artwork/Photography(First place winner will receive $100 and full recognition in the Winter publication):

- Limit of ten (10) photographs/pieces of artwork submitted per person
- Black and white images only
- Artwork must have high contrast and sharply defined lines
- Minimum sizes is 5" x 7"
- Do not mount or frame entries

Submit entries to: Evening Services (SE 201)

All entries will be considered for the contest unless otherwise requested. Do not put contact information on the entries themselves. Hard copies of these submission guidelines, necessary cover sheets, and additional information on the genre of flash fiction are also avaliable in Evening Services. Please email question to the editor, Lindsay Bryce, at cardinalsins@charter.net.

