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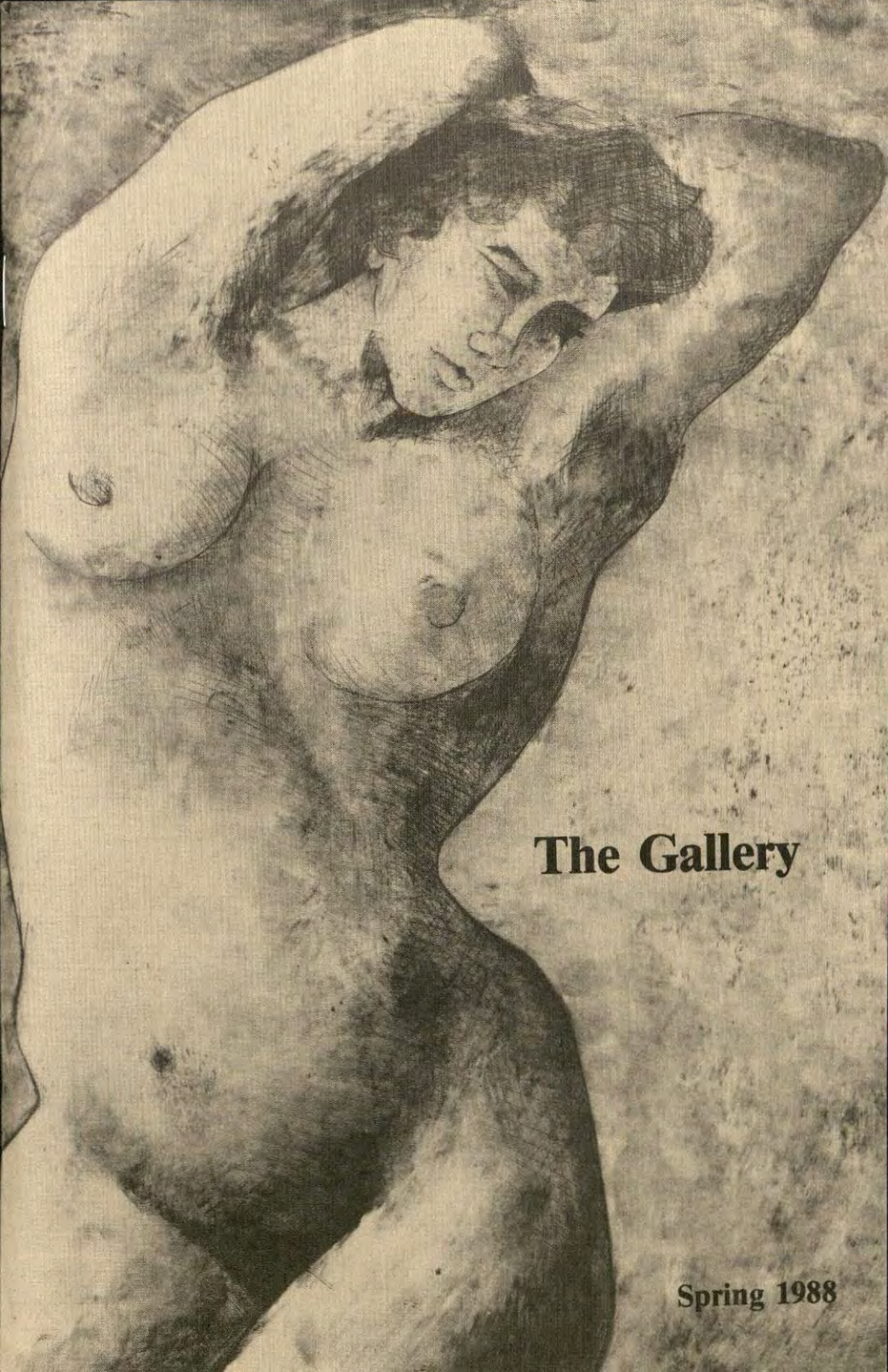
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## **The Gallery**

**Spring 1988**



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# **The Gallery**

**Connecticut College's  
Arts and Literary Journal**

**Spring 1988**





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## Seaglass

I picked you a stone from the beach.  
Actually it was from the sea.  
You see, it was a pice of seaglass,  
and the color reminded me of your eyes.  
I saw it from a distance and thought it was you.  
I wanted you.  
So I picked you up, out of the sand  
and held you in my hand.  
I must have stood on the beach for an hour  
that night.  
I sang you songs into the sea.  
The whole time thinking of you,  
I held on to the seaglass.  
I guess you could say I once had you  
in the palm of my hand.

I intended to give you that piece of seaglass,  
to give you back yourself, the part you gave to me,  
the part I found.  
Yet it is still sitting by my bed.  
It still makes me think of your eyes,  
how green they are,  
how light and soft they seem sometimes,  
like an old piece of seaglass.  
I really intended to give you that seaglass  
but I am selfish and stubborn and I want you  
for myself.  
So I sit here in love with my seaglass,  
with but one grain of sand  
when what I want is the ocean.

Ondine Appel



## The Opening of the Gates (or why the Miami Airport is always busy)

Parents weekend I emptied out my room. I used to have a whole bunch of collections...sketches, baskets, paperweights, that sort of stuff, but I just didn't want anything anymore. I hated having things dictate my nature. I was forced to carry a key all the time, and as trivial as it may seem, it made me pretty unhappy. Anyway, I donated my junk, except what I could scrunch into my blue backpack, to the Salvation Army. I'm not sure how they plan to save anyone by cluttering up their lives, but I'll let them worry about it. Maybe they know something I don't. My own head is aching a lot.

I am going to leave school for good. I decided yesterday. My mind is getting too foggy and I don't have enough time to find education by listening to dry lectures and watching my friends slowly become alcoholics. I need Socratic action desperately now, before my conviction dies. I'm getting lazy. Monday I felt that if I couldn't change the world, I might as well sleep. Its serious, though, I'm only 18. The regrets are already piling up. Leaving will help me regain some focus. I want to do something.

Karin has promised to help me if I choose to make San Francisco home, but I'd like to avoid running into my aunt and uncle who moved out there last February to sculpt. California in general seems too much of a haven for middle-age crisis sufferers. I am looking for more intellectual stimulation. Which reminds me, I dreamed about Charlie last night. He sent me an airline ticket to join him at that Nicaraguan refugee camp in Costa Rica he's been working at for the past couple of years.

When I woke up this morning I decided that's where I'd head. I called my mother and left a message on her machine letting her know I'd replaced this land for the tierra of the south. I then boarded stand-by all the way to San Jose with a borrowed immunization card, some money, and my sack. I had a bunch of vaccinations a while ago, and I'm hoping that'll do me.

It feels strange having such an easy time getting out of this country. I keep thinking there should be someone cross-questioning me or at least making sure I have some basis of rational. I endure a mild rush of guilt over my insanity in a window seat in the non-smoking section. I think more clearly when there is no smoke and I can see the sky. It's just my trademark. But anyway, the flight takes forever. For some reason they are having trouble with the air conditioning, and I think my breath is going to stop. I remain fastened in my seat, because I doubt that anyone will notice my disappearance were I to get stuck in one of those small bathroom chambers. I concentrate on my gum.. chomp chomp chomp - always to the right side of my mouth, always swallowing on the fourth chew. Routines



already... the next thing you know, I'll have a mortgage. Beads of sweat trickle down my back and lodge in the nape of my neck and under my bra, trying to call my attention back to my existence. I keep reading the same passage over and over in my dirty copy of Bellow's, Henderson and the Rain King. It is the part when Henderson aggravates the frog problems of the Arnewi tribe by exploding the lake. How many others besides me and Henderson have escaped from Connecticut with hopes to do some good?

My thoughts are brought back to my body by the cold; cool air rushes around me, filling my lungs, making me damp and in need of a sweater. I grope around my knapsack and find my brother's old Bear's sweatshirt. I laugh. Hand-me-downs seem far away from my life now. Especially in such ugly colors. This damn sweatshirt reminds me of the Sunday morning games we used to play against the Darton's next door. I pull the dejected thing over my head and wait. "Solamente diez minutos mas," announces the pilot. Out the window I glimpse a lit up city, but not of the same magnitude of New York or Chicago from above. It is less intrusive down there. more like candle flames than flood lights. I want to thrust myself through the little window and soar down, only I don't. I'm sure the stewardesses, if they knew, would appreciate the restraint I show for the sake of everyone on the plane.

After filing through customs relatively quickly, I hop a bus a man in the terminal promises will take me to Charlie's address. As the saying goes, the night is dark and I am far from home. Yet, I'm feeling more at peace than ever. I am giddy with happiness as I squish in my seat. The smell of the night earth, the smooth sound of Spanish, the silhouette of the Costa Rican countryside is all so familiar. I breath deeply, hoping I can internalize whatever this is. Tranquilopa.

The sunlight exposes the earth and encourages a small child from behind to chew at my hair and claw at my earrings while her mother sleeps. She slides her small brown hand down my part, tickling me with her fingers as the bus jolts to a halt at a military check point. A man armed and in uniform walks on, scans the bus and then goes silently. I have a hard time believing that something so despicable to most of us Americans is a routine part of daily life here. The mother proceeds to carry the little girl off the bus, unwittingly leading the four of us remaining riders to the day. My pack swings and hits the driver, who looks like a younger version of my father, in the face and I can't bring myself to ask him directions like I had planned. By the time my feet are on the ground most of my former neighbors have dispersed in different directions. I see the women with the baby as I squat behind a palm. On the seat of an ox-cart she kisses a dark man while the little girl runs in circles not far away. I repeatedly check for Charlie in the distance, and I have to remind myself that he thinks I am still in Connecticut.



The bus driver heads towards me to offer civil assistance. I wonder as I explain my intentions if I look more lost than I feel. Or does he feel like my father too, and realize I am new to all of this? Another short (and private) bus ride places me in front of a hut near the edge of a wired-in community. The area is run down and a bit seedy. We enter the hut and are greeted by a woman, whom I perceive to be a close relation of the bus driver. I amuse myself by thinking that she looks like my mother. She presents her hand and then appears with coffee and flavorless cheese, which the driver devours and I compliment less sincerely by nibbling and muttering thanks. Charlie has mentioned that the Costa Ricans feel awkward when English is spoken around them and this woman proves to be no exception. It is unforgivable of me to forget this. The woman embarrassedly calls to her son and pushes him to explain to me in English that some Americans live near their home. I ask him in simple English if he knows Charlie Seymour, the gringo with the blond hair and the big smile. Amazingly enough, he does. "Char-les," says the boy, "lives close by." "Where is he?" I implore.

I am too late. Charlie has gone back to Chico State to finish his education. I can't believe we missed each other. Selfishly I wonder how am I going to function without him. I have no program or contacts, I speak little Spanish, and I am alone. The bus driver senses my fear and urges me to stay with this woman and her son. Their eyes glint with anticipation, hoping for my yes. I sense this staying is the right thing for me to do. We set up an arrangement in which I will look into vaccinating in the infirmary, as Charlie did, and they will provide a place for me to live. I am surprised at how ready they are to take me in.

The next afternoon, after making myself a nuisance to the woman by crying as she killed a skinny chicken for our lunch, I follow the boy to the camp. I hope to figure out whom to speak to about the immunizations, but instead am swept into the confusion and noise around me. There are people filling every inch of space. Some big, some little, but all thin, tired, and dirty. Overwhelmed by the masses I sit to breath and separate my thoughts. I gather the situation has been more chaotic since the Sandinistas opened the border from what Charlie has said. All I know is that no public assemblage I've ever experienced can compare to this. And I've been to numerous rallies and concerts and even seen footage from Woodstock. This human disorder is so utterly disturbing that it is in a class by itself. Still, most of the people won't go home because they say Nicaragua has changed. They do not want to risk losing their family and friends again. The boy, who has been attempting to shield me from the swarms of people with his slight body, leans over me as if he has been reading my mind to say the reason for the numbers is that the Nicaraguan's expectations have increased



with the new government. "They won't be happy until they are guaranteed full civil rights," he mutters. I purposely step on his toes as he assists my rising.

I spend at least an hour crammed in a smelly latrine at the camp, wishing my stomachache was dysentery, wishing it was all that easy. By the time I reach the Ministry of Health's quarters, I am useless. I cannot even give the shots. I do not want to puncture more muscle or break more skin. There is so much else. I go back to the hut, my head hanging and my eyes red.

I am met by the bus driver in the kitchen. He is holding an express envelope marked urgent, which he tells me he intercepted from a mail delivery in San Juan. In it is a telegraph my mother has sent, telling me to come home immediately. Scribbled on a separate piece of paper is a message from my father. It says only, "What the hell are you doing? We need your faith." Enclosed is their credit card number.

I thank him and put everything back in the envelope. I exit out the back door and go lie in the fields. At least the stars are more clear down here.

Alana Herron

## **Cow-Tipping Last Saturday**

Open darkness  
no one to interfere  
I rock the big dumb thing  
like pushing a car over speed bumps  
I skip back as  
the cow thrusts its head and  
blares a fog-horn  
flipped cock-roach  
the legs build momentum and  
it heaves in slow motion  
I run to shelter of  
red steel

Liza Martin

## What I Can Tell You

### I.

Clothes hanging  
like seaweed  
off the cliffs  
of your weathered bed

I travel oceans  
to see you  
your questions  
bob me up

### II.

I once plucked  
pin-like hairs  
from a tiny brush-  
a present-

I was jealous  
I hadn't found  
anything so fitting  
and small

### III.

Like you,  
my eldest sister  
demanded that I  
open up--wide

and with skittish delight  
I freed two moths  
from the top of my tongue  
"Any more surprises?"

### IV.

My family and I  
stuck together  
on the vinyl upholstery  
of the car we drove

up and down  
the New Jersey Turnpike--  
Eight of us fussing  
for excitement...

Six of us cleaned up  
the hurricane's mess  
with cousins of mis-  
matched ages

V.  
When I was fifteen  
I was really beautiful--  
men with sausage fingers  
couldn't touch my lean

saucy self -  
I am still  
fifteen,  
but bigger

VI.  
I sink you  
with my stories  
and stumble home  
from your dark room

like a haggard survivor  
I've retold the past  
no more surprises  
not even the murders

VII.  
We are moving soon  
to a house with a pool  
where a squirrel floats dead  
among the leaves

Stephanie Zadravec





Scott Jefferson

## **The Coldness of Light in Late October**

When September loses her tawdriness and in  
the smallish pool of the roots of ancient trees  
frost forms, then heavy field mice struggle in  
their hollow caves and I retire to  
my room. I go to quietness like ants  
who slowly freeze in pools of forming frost.  
I cloak my skin in the matted hide of sheep  
to which cling oil and dirt and bits of dung.  
I fade in the dullness of a winter's noon.

Cindy Sheppard

## **Wrecked**

In a crypt-still mist  
the heavy black

that pours from the fingertips of flames  
crackling like blisters

writhes and strains  
straining the dawn shade;

the driver bastes in burgundy vinyl  
still garnished from the night

a grey-flecked carnation  
meticulous against the window

Andrew Tubbs



The wind blows stiff. Grass rolls and leaves hurry about and often trees are forced to capitulate, but nothing stands still before the wind. Even man has learned to become scarce when the winds whip up. He has learned to fear nature, in fact, he has learned to fear for his life. Maybe that's what happens when mountain ranges and bodies of water and cities simply disappear in great flashes of light. Maybe you learn to realize that the things you always took for granted like clean tap water and a swim in the ocean on a bright, sunny day were gifts from nature. Gifts that were not man's to destroy in a sudden fit of technology. Gifts that once taken away make the world all the more uncivilized and random and inspire fear. Fear of everyday common things, like the wind.

The man groaned and slowly came to life. Shifting His tongue like some crude parody of a Pear Drops commercial, He tried to scrape the sleep off his teeth. There had been a time when He would have at least made a token effort to brush His teeth but things like toothpaste didn't fit into the new order. Only things that promised survival meant anything now. Besides it wasn't like He had to impress anyone anymore, Dog didn't care and beyond Dog, what else was there? Of course if a woman came along He might consider it, if only to make sleeping with her seem like the old days but if she refused the "gentle" approach there were always other ways.

It seemed that these days there were always "other ways." Other ways to sleep: a deep sleeper was a dead man what with vagabonds and drifters about. Other ways to met people: a fast well-oiled 45 went a long way towards making strangers feel right at ease, the smart ones just eased on by. Even other ways to eat. In the old times you could pretty much trust any food you bought at the old Stop'n'Shop. Granted it usually had enough preservatives to begin the embalming process long before death and enough carcinogens to speed that eventual moment along, but on the whole it produced a country of at least outwardly healthy people. Food was different these days. Open the wrong can of peas and you could very well begin wrenching your insides out. Wrenching that simply might never stop. He had seen his share of people who made that ultimate mistake and paid with their lives. Not him, He was too smart to trust anything, besides, He had Dog.

Something rumbled deep inside and the man realized that He was hungry. He glanced down at His watch and still got a kick out of seeing that it was almost noon. In the old days that extra five hours sleep might have cost Him His job but these days who the hell cared. "Bosses and time clocks be damned," he thought, "Those fuckers have no power over me, no more!" He seemed to remember hearing that when left to its own, the human body set its own schedule. Laughing, He recalled His wife's reaction



to that news. She had mumbled something under her breath about that leaving less time for Him to sleep around. The bitch had paid for that one with a fat lip and with what some might consider rape. The more "enlightened" like Himself, knew it was her duty so what the hell.

Sitting up He stretched and looked around. "The Ritz it ain't," He said to no one in particular, "but it's all Mine!" His "kingdom" consisted of the trailer and cab of an old Finast delivery truck. These days He could have had any building left standing, but no palace had what He had. The previous owner and He had come to a disagreement as to the "fate" of the truck's treasure but a clean shot had silenced all contention. Actually thinking back on it, the whole thing had been a stroke of luck. One delivery truck loaded to the brim with canned food a hundred miles from the nearest major city when the Ruskies hit. The old driver had simply stopped and waited for instructions over the radio. Unfortunately for the old man "His" instructions were not good enough and he paid the price for disobedience, death.

The old trucker had provided him with something else almost as valuable as the vast store of food, Dog. Dog was a mongrel who must have kept the trucker company on those long, midnight hauls. These days Dog provided a much more useful service, Official Food Taster. Yes, why risk His own life when He could have Dog taste all of the food for Him. Then, if Dog started writhing He'd know the food was no good. Big shit if Dog died, He could always get another dog, or person. "Yeah," he half laughed to himself, a female type food taster would be real nice. Might even serve as Official Bed Warmer.

Slowly the man pulled on His pants, eased Himself around the gear-shift and steeped out of the cab into the afternoon sun. On sunny days like today He always remembered to flip the bird to "Carl Sagan and his Dreadful Nuclear Winter Theory." Granted some said the ozone layer had been ripped away but at least it was warm. Hell, His tan was looking pretty good these days. Something caught His attention and loosening his 45 from its holster He moved quickly around the cab. There Dog as usual was straining at the jumper cables securing him to the forward axle. "Stupid-ass animal," He bellowed as He brought His steel shank boot into the canine's side, "You fucking scared me to death."

The mangy cur looked up at the man from where it now lay and slowly fought its way to its feet. Its coat was piecemeal from too many nights outside and the all too frequent beatings, and one leg was obviously favored. The man looked with contempt at the beast and laughed, "You never learn do you Dog? No matter how many times I kick your ass you still insist on tryin' to bust free. Do it again," he mumbled, "and I'll give you another lame leg to match the first. I did it once and I'll do it again."

The man slowly moved off and rummaged through the pockets of



His jeans for the keys to the truck, even out here it didn't pay to be too careful with one's possessions. The padlock on the truck's big bay doors yielded and the man heaved Himself inside. After His eyes adjusted to the light, He walked the length to the wall of food and surveyed the selection. For no particular reason, He selected a can of Spaghetti'O's and moved out of the truck. Quite frankly He knew that one can would hardly fill Him up, but why over indulge? If He was careful His supply should last Him a year at least.

Dog was waiting obediently when the man returned and watched as He opened the can with a pocket knife and placed a small portion in an old glass ashtray. Grudgingly the man untied the Dog and dragged him over to the ash tray. "Here you stupid ass, eat." He mumbled as he forced the dog's mouth into the food. With one great movement of his tongue the dog lapped up the pitifully small amount and stepped back.

This was the part that the man hated. Glancing at His watch, He mentally marked off a fifteen minute interval and settled down against a tree to wait. If, at the end of the fifteen minutes, Dog had not thrown up or started acting funny, the food was okay to eat and "lunch was served." If the dog did loose his cookies, then a quick bullet to the head would halt an otherwise long and painful process. "Although," he thought to Himself, "it might be a good punishment for the stupid animal to let it suffer. Not that it would ever disobey again...."

Sometime during His wait the man dozed off and when He awoke and looked at His watch He realized that well over thirty minutes had passed since feeding Dog. "Well, you stupid asshole, you survived another meal," He grunted as He dug into the can of Spaghetti'O's with His fingers. "No UH OH Spaghetti'O's for you," he joked out loud and laughed so hard His gut began to hurt. Half a can later, He realized that His gut wasn't the only thing hurting, His side kind of hurt too. "Well shit, must have slept fun...."

Suddenly the whole world went black except for a light of pain that erupted out of his digestive tract. Before He could catch His breath, another spasm racked His body and He dry heaved whatever was left. "Mother fuckin'," something cried out inside of Him, "the goddamn food is contaminated." Somewhere else inside the man He realized He was going to die.

Wiping the sweat from His brow He scanned for Dog. "Why the hell didn't....." From under the spare tire Dog returned his stare. Yet another contraction of His guts blurred His vision and He prayed to a god whom He had never known. As His vision cleared, Dog began to open his mouth, there on his tongue lay the unswallowed portion of Spaghetti O's. Somewhere the wind smiled and blew stiffly on.

E. Paul Haringa

## Metamorphosis

We'd be bugs of some sort and I'd lounge  
back on my shiny cephalothorax waving  
my accordion legs  
in the air while  
you'd collect crumbs and smaller things on our  
garden  
penninsula.

Riotous flowers would shove their  
hats against impending fog while  
sixteen sparrows with appetite  
for speed would explode across our  
vaporious  
heavens

pioneers slicing a way toward a  
yellow antidote  
but we'd trip back rock  
and pebble deep into earth-  
cool as  
mist.

Stephanie Zadavec



## Lines.....

I see lines and lines...  
They're not straight

Why?

It's not one long line, but rather, many, many, many crooked lines  
put together to make it seem like one line...

The first two lines are pointing down,  
kind of like an arrow

The second two lines are pointing the opposite way,  
Down

Down

Down

Down

Why?

Why not?

But why though?

No, but really, why not though?

Should I shade in the wide arrow?

But surely I may -

Yes, I believe I will - SHADE

It does look handsome

Yet, delicate too

Should I start a second page -

Of lines?

Yes, but surely I may...

May I, may i, may i

June I, june i, june i

July, july, july

I see

I see a girl

She watches me, not through her pupils, but with her

Mind

She chews and chews and chews many lines

It does look handsome

I can taste the people blowing their nose behind me

It tastes like... like lines -

No! More like arrows

It seems as if people blow their noses when they're sad...

If I blew my knows, I think I would apologize to them afterwards

Why?  
Why not?  
It's not bad  
Bad it's not  
Bad snot is

More lines and a new arrow  
I often wonder if snails do drugs.....  
Maybe that's why they're so mellow and tuned out  
In my eyes. I see feet  
Butt, no but really  
Have you ever looked into someone's eyes and found a distorted  
monster looking back and staring into your eyes?  
Once upon a time, there were three bears,  
And now they're dead  
No, but seriously, can you read my mind?  
My mind - it bleeds, it hasn't lately  
No, but seriously, it has...  
It's rather unfortunate that some numbers don't go together well...

Back to lines  
I don't know if I could ever be a line  
I'd most definitely be straight,  
And thin  
Straight and thin. Straight and thin. Straight an' tin.  
I wonder how tin cans feel when they're recycled over and over  
Andover Andover Andover And-  
Can you imagine being melted and transformed into many others?  
But seriously, can you? Can You, CAN YOU? You can! You can!  
You are a can! Can you can you?  
I wonder if cans have orgasms  
May they have orCANisms?  
Can cans or CANize??  
I wonder and blunder and thunder and shunder and I still can't  
orCANize!  
I feel sorry for K's when they aren't paid enough attention to  
Like when they are made silent, you no? you no? You don't NO!  
How about double-you's?  
Or maybe when A's are rejected flat out: How 'bout it, how 'bout it,  
how 'boutit, 'boutit NO!  
I can hear the railroad station sailing up my spine  
It's chewing and gnawing

It's gnawing at my spine



I heard it!  
I did!  
I heard my fingernail scream this morning when I cut it  
It was in so much pain, I stopped  
Now it's just hanging from the tip of my pinky, but i no it snot  
    dead... it moans... i think it's orCANizing  
I can't finish it off dot dot dot dot dot dot dot  
I can't see the lines, they are broken up into dots, in two dots,  
    in two dots, many many dots, multi-colored dots  
Maybe they're not dots, but rather spots  
Know, Really, Why?  
But seriously, rather Why not?  
i no, i yes, i no, i yes, i no  
i may, i june, i jew  
Jew i lie?

        Never, no no know  
You stare at me as if to say  
"Go to Hell"  
I've already been there  
I prefer to stay where I am

Don't ask me Why,  
I can't give an answer  
Don't get me high,  
    I won't come down.

Charles S K Chun

### **On Rivera's Paseo de los meloncolicos**

A brown dirt path divides  
Trees building high  
On either side

Christopher O'Hara



Larry Miller



## Subconscious Awakening

The half-hour cadence wafted from the bell tower, echoing in a jumble of pitches across the quadrangle to where Ann stood at the far end of it. The conservatory chapel lay at the northern border of the lawn, its towers projected white against the dark sky by stationary spot-lights anchored at the corners of the entrance portico. Ann shoved her hands in her pockets and breathed deeply. The night air was cool, fingering her clothing inquisitively. She had hoped it would help to clear her mind and fill her with the sense of calm that she had not felt since she began her studies at the conservatory. Ann exhaled and slowly moved across the lawn toward the triangle of white that was the now silent bell tower.

It had been an awful day: an endless succession of theory lectures and technique exams. Ann frowned at the wet grass in her path. She'd spent three hours under the piano master's sharp gaze, repeating a fingering exercise over and over until, finally, he'd let her go, exhausted and disappointed in his student's mediocrity. Ann sighed and stretched her neck back, studying the dark sky. Gray clouds slid from horizon to horizon, illuminated into dusty whiteness when passing the bell tower. She imagined a banner of notes stretching across the dome of punctured black, whirling around and around, confusing her until she'd have to squeeze her eyes shut to be rid of it: the horrible finger exercise. But it wouldn't leave the backs of her eyelids and she hissed a curse at its torment. Oh, I hate it, I just hate it, she thought. Since she had come to the conservatory, it seemed to Ann that she had regressed to the days when a simple exercise approached the difficulty of a symphony to be memorized.

Ann turned abruptly and smacked her feet on to the sidewalk, following the straight path to the portico of the chapel. She rested a hand on the stone column nearest her and felt its coldness with a start. It reminded her that the air was chilling, and a breeze had picked up, ruffling the border of saplings around the chapel. Ann shivered and slid the hood of her sweatshirt over her hair with her free hand.

She stepped on to the entrance patio, letting her hand slide around the pillar as she went, though its surface still chilled her fingertips. High above the line of columns, the shadows of the roof cast dark angles over the stained-glass frieze above the doorway. Ann saw the lead borders twist into snakes and trees and bending figures. She blinked and leaned against the pillar, sliding down to sit on the cool stone floor. She thought about going into the chapel -- it was never locked -- but decided the darkness was more comforting.

The quadrangle was empty: there was no moon, only a few cold stars and the artificial light reflecting off the bone-white steeple. Drawing her knees to her chest, Ann dropped her head and felt her kneecaps press into her eye-sockets. That damned exercise wouldn't leave her -- her fingers



drummed it now, on the stones of the patio. How ironic, she thought, that her fingers could manage the pattern perfectly when there was no piano beneath them.

She groaned and leaned heavily against the pillar, her eyes sealed shut and her body pulled into a ball against the probing night wind. From far off she heard the bell cadence, muffled and lifeless, tolling the hour.

-----

At first Ann wasn't sure if she had actually slept, but she felt herself on a level of awareness that seemed a little like a dream. And when she shifted and opened her eyes, the damp, soft coolness of grass pressed against her cheek. A vast expanse of crystalline green spread out on every side of her, and above stretched a sky that was half gray, half pale blue, and tinged with orange at the horizon.

Mumbling reassuringly to herself, Ann pushed up to a sitting position and tried to focus clearly on her surroundings. The dew of the night before lay diamond-like on the grass, and soaked her clothes where she lay in them. To her left was the chapel, quiet in a shroud of morning gray. Ann lay in the center of the green quadrangle, watching morning come. She felt a breeze rustle over her: a warm, calm breeze suggesting that a storm had passed. Somehow the air did not seem totally clear of the electricity left by a rage of unconscious activity. It was then that Ann recalled a sliver of a dream, and a rush of realization came soon after.

She'd heard a piano, the chapel piano: its hollow ring bouncing off the vaulted ceiling was familiar, for she had played a recital on it before. The piece she heard through a blind, swirling darkness was a running of erratic scales, strengthened by deeper chords and harmonies. Ann looked down at her hands, the fingers splayed in the wet grass. They trembled slightly. She knew that music. The finger exercises were unmistakable. They drilled at her eardrums, ringing perfectly over the rustle of the wind in the trees bordering the quadrangle.

Ann looked over her shoulder at the serene chapel, then back down at her twitching hands. She sucked in her breath, feeling numbness spread up her arms. Her fingertips were red and swollen. Touching them to each other sent sparks of stinging pain and confusion to her throat. She gasped and struggled to her feet and slid away across the deserted lawn, the orange sun touching her back as it rose over the chapel.

By sunset that day, half the conservatory knew of the chapel's new pianist ghost. A couple trysting in the shadows of the building had heard the wild music, and pressing their faces against the dim glass, saw a hooded figure bent obsessively over the piano. Ann heard the story soon enough, and she played the part of the mystified listener, but when the piano master sat stunned at her flawless rendition of the finger exercises, she smiled with a secret knowledge.

Ellen Putnam



## Icarus Arrives

Icarus, quiet  
and alone,  
lived with his name  
over a New Jersey  
laundromat,  
and was one day transformed  
into a fish  
while staring in despair  
out the kitchen window.  
As he flipped and  
slapped on the floor,  
poor round eye  
pressed lidless to  
the linoleum,  
he remembered  
the girl he kissed  
by the Mississippi.  
And as his gills  
gaped rope-burn red,  
he remembered his  
mother's song  
    Slip away slap away  
    Slappity clap  
    This boy's a clean boy  
    And how about that?  
as she sprinkled water  
over his chubby body.  
Sleek body laid to rest  
on simulated slate,  
he remembered  
the surge of light  
streaming over his face  
as he rose  
to the surface.

Sara Eddy

## reflections on water

the countless puddles that make a river  
swim recklessly  
around the rocks  
that rise from the bed

mornings  
I rise from bed  
I enter the shower  
water falls endlessly  
out of the one-eyed faucet

I see small faces  
homesick  
with audible eyes  
in the rain

remember fleeing a tall shower  
imagining the river led to  
pouring buckets of sad half-puddles  
out all the windows of the house  
but striking no one with the drops

making puddles  
on the floor of the bathroom  
I go on with the morning routine  
making tea  
I spill more hot water  
leaning on the edge of the sink  
arms limp at my sides  
I can't turn the faucet to wash dishes

pulling my head up  
I look past the window  
my eyes stop on a forlorn grey bucket  
holding its ground  
among the rocks in the flower bed

it stands ready  
open to the sky

Caroline Oudin



## Falling

1.

I saw a cat crouching next to a trash can

I counted a few ribs

It was vomiting a pile of brownish red

It looked up with glazing eyes

I walked on

I saw a man hunched over a trash can

I saw him holding the sides

I walked on

I see myself in the mirror

I kneel in front of the toilet

I hold on

2.

distance clears the mind

pay the fare

board the rolling asylum

woman in piss green

pumps dead air alive with toxicants

standard deadheads excrete pot

walkmans' piercing whines rasp

metal scrapes metal

dry mouth

greasy-eyed elder

rocks his cradle

sings lullaby

black girl pops bubble

ignores child

sulphur-breath fossil snores

mouth open my way

3.

I escape three or four stops early  
I avoid cats  
I locate a diner currently smoke-free  
heavy smell of bacon & eggs  
I accept the momentary comfort  
menu vertical between sugar and salt  
I stare into a cup of black coffee  
between prickly hands  
I pay the bill  
one quarter is change

4.

*Hello Grandma*

*I'm in a small town somewhere  
I don't know*

*I was wondering how's the weather?*

*You just let the cat out?  
I suppose  
that's  
nice*

*I'd better get going  
Just called to say hi*

5.

the line has not been cut  
thoughts creepy like cats  
the tale will not quit

Caroline Oudin



## **thoughttrain from earltoearl**

earl sheib · early times · fast times · on time · time out · outside ·  
offsides · taking sides · taking drugs · drug taking · burnout · wipeout ·  
thrown out · out west · chillin cali · bally · homeboy · you're toy ·  
throw up · tag on · beat on · style wars · blitzkrieg · kreig koph ·  
skinhead · head cheese · munster · herman · her man · manray · ray gun  
· flash · stash · dope · pope · church bench · johnny bench · homeplate  
· hot plate · rice a roni · mony mony · top forty · bon jovi · bon bon ·  
fag candy · old brandy · brandy flask · branded cow · how now ·  
shakespeare · english class · no class · homework · holmes · brother ·  
brother from another planet · janet · janet jackson · michael jackson ·  
thriller · killer · freddy kreuger · razor blade · gillette shave · shave your  
head · close shave · near miss · miss teacher · first grade · bad grade · a  
grade up · uptown · bar scene · scene one · movie · t.v. · party · black  
flag · flagship · first one · number one · prime number · prime beef ·  
side of beef · large meet · meet the press · edwin neuman · alfred e ·  
mad magazine · mad as a hatter · hat trick · hockey stick · jock dick ·  
jock o rama · jello biafra · orange jello · pudding pops · boston pops ·  
popov · vodka · latka · sitcom · sit down · get down · james brown ·  
brown cow · milk · milky way · galaxy · galaxie · old car · car wash ·  
white wash · paint white · white paint · paint brush · air brush · auto  
work · earl sheib

Christopher O'Hara

## For Gwendolyn and the King

Sometimes I wish my skin was  
black and blue  
to match the color of my soul.

Sometimes I wish my skin was  
red  
to capture the fire in my blood

Sometimes I wish my face was green  
green  
to show the nausea in my mind

Then I think about how people would  
look  
at me  
and my different colored skin

and I crawl into my whiteness  
pulling it around me like a fragile  
egg shell  
easily broken. (but comforting nonetheless.)

Suzanne Kulperg

\* Gwendolyn Brooks, Pulitzer prize-winning poet, and  
Dr. Charles King, author of Fire Under my Bones



## Michael

I picked stitches  
pulling the hand from your view  
plucked deeply fibrous stubble  
while talking to you  
a gentle brilliant flick  
your bee-sting, your bone-deep nick

Caught in the department store  
Caldor's undertow  
weighted by Christmas sinkers  
and the odor of sprayed cologne  
you hesitate, wild-eyed,  
elephant-slow and petrified.

We struggle in the  
breathless undersea  
the odor of firewood  
adorning me.  
You plunge backwards, wild-eyed,  
elephant-slow and multiplied.

You picked stubble  
laying my head in your hand  
peered deeply past two eyes  
to clean the broken band.  
Many gentle, brilliant flicks,  
my ugliness, my soul-deep nicks.

Cindy Sheppard

Your hopscotch board's  
form remains  
though the stone scratchings  
have gone--  
worn away by feet  
and rain.  
The old church bell  
tolls the first of twelve  
hollow, tarnished tones;  
hollow  
I steal down the dim street  
silent  
but for my feet on pavement and gravel.

Blind  
but to watch for my favorite cat,  
the albino,  
who lies lazily on the porch  
with the dawn  
and explores the folds and crevices  
of night.

That house with the brightly painted rooms  
flower garden  
and habitual lawn bicycle  
where you pretended you lived  
is dark now  
and for sale.  
And that shop  
where you bought exotic feathers  
and licorice  
is smothered in dust and decay  
for the old woman  
has soured with senility.

The heart etched in brick  
on the wall of the warehouse  
cackles bitter revenge  
forcing me past  
towards the park.  
the narrow dock  
which extends far out on the windless lake  
gives a low groan with each step  
until I reach  
its end.

Christopher J. Aquino



## Lincoln Revival

I see a boy photo  
    copy a copy of  
        President Lincoln's head  
                    which says:

"Come short, come tall  
                    but most of all come  
All; Revival starts at eight  
                    tonight."

And I will see  
            and pass  
Each and every plastered Lincoln pole  
    or building end  
                    for I have seen  
    tens-of-hundred  
                    Lincoln heads  
            and know  
                    by heart  
Every word he ever said.

Melkon Khosrovian



Miles Ladin



## Make Us Whole

I lie  
Feeling  
Your warm thoughts  
Wrapped around my body  
Wrapped around my mind  
And wonder  
If you are making love  
To Him  
To Night

He  
Is a kind person  
But the passion  
In your eyes  
In your touch  
In the motions  
You struggle to hide  
Tell me  
He is not the one you wish  
To halve

I am in your thoughts  
When you lie in bed  
With Him

I can sense  
The shiver  
That spreads  
The Rush  
That shoots  
Through your body  
When it brushes against mine

A Longing  
Remains  
Ever present and  
Ever growing  
Within your desires  
Your concentration  
Your focus

But fear  
Doubt  
Insecurity  
Plays around your heart  
Preventing you  
From knowing  
What you want to know  
And feeling  
What you want to feel

If you half two  
You can make us whole

Make us whole.

C. Lyons

## **Early August's 9:45 p.m. in Chester, Nova Scotia**

I  
Rachel and Sarah look at each other  
from their separate beds,  
and giggle.  
Not a moment to be wasted.  
Six months of cousin fun  
must be had in three weeks.  
Rachel slips out of bed first.  
The floor creaks,  
but they don't have to worry about that anymore,  
between Grandma's louder snores  
and Grandpa's duller hearing.  
With sleeping bags around their shoulders,  
they climb out the window,  
like burglars stealing a moment,  
and run to the beach.  
As they get curled up against a huge rock  
that's shaped like a stenciled cloud,  
they laugh.  
No one has ever guessed their secret.



## II

John McCuren Sr. had to set out on his walk  
late tonight.  
Even later than he had expected because  
his daughter thought  
maybe he shouldn't go out  
this late, alone.  
(She's only up for the weekend.)  
He promised not to be long.  
So, he hears,  
as he walks past the small white house  
with the beautiful garden and the dark green trim  
on Treemont Street  
"You fuckin' good for nothin' bitch!"  
"Don't raise your voice to me, you ungrateful bastard."  
They would have been so embarrassed  
if they had seen him walk by.  
Mr. McCuren looks at the road ahead,  
and thinks about going fishing in the morning.

## III

Jenn, Craig, Andrew, Nevin, Michelle, and Eddie  
pile into Eddie's thirty-five horse power  
with a case of beer, a flask of rum,  
and a roll of peppermint Breath Savers.  
The gunwales lie pretty close to the water.  
They're going to get wet on the way out,  
but not to worry.  
"We'll be a case lighter on the way back."  
Ha ha ha ha.

## IV

The light on the Yacht Club porch just flicked off.  
Blake closed the bar early.  
He double checks the doors,  
then heads upstairs to his room.  
By the window  
staring out at the harbor,  
sits his beautiful Swedish girlfriend,  
with tear-soaked cheeks,  
and a photograph of her brother  
pressed near her heart.  
Blake goes to her and holds her,  
not knowing what to say.  
He stares out at the harbor.  
But he can't find the answer either.

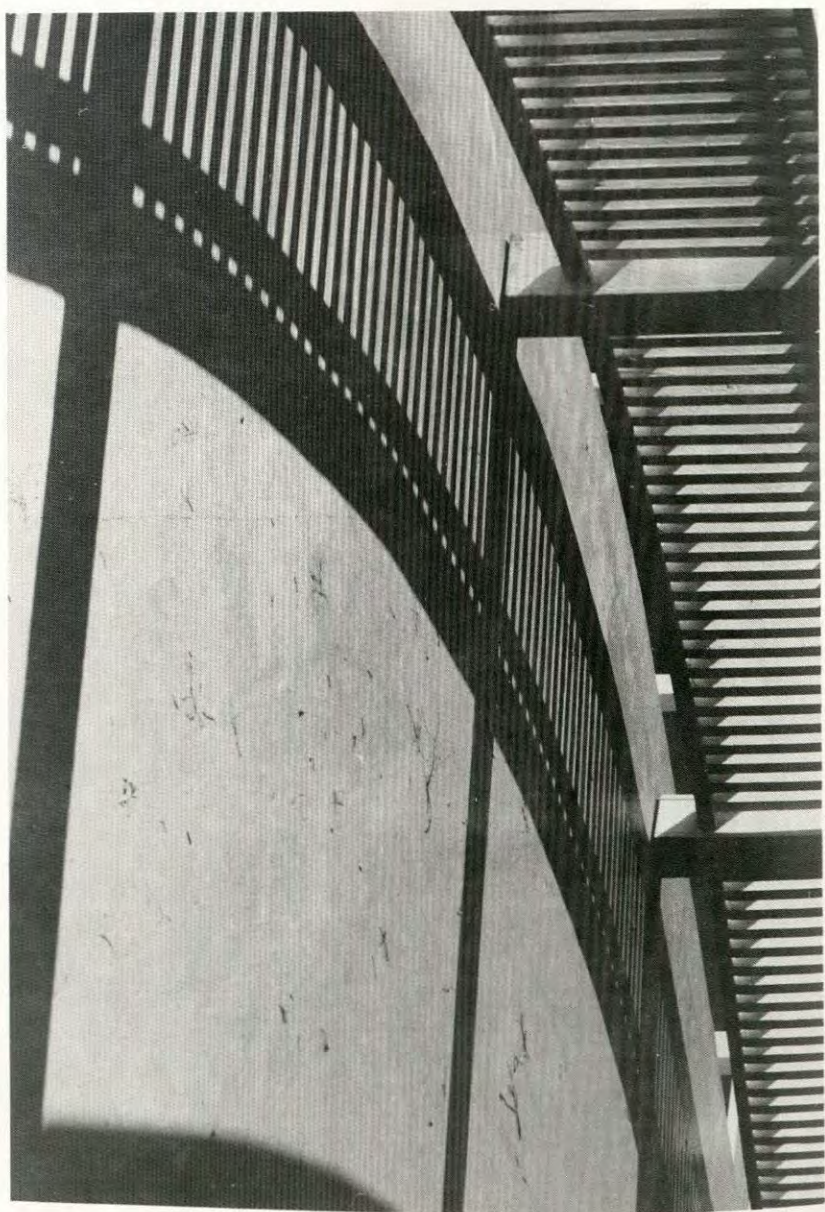
## V

The last kernel of popcorn  
gone.  
Two-thirds of the movie  
left to go.  
She still can't believe it.  
Goofy Emma Craig  
in this car, watching a movie with  
Tim Boswick.  
Popcorn box aside,  
her hand is free to take his,  
when he offers it.  
Sensing a smile,  
he moves towards her.  
She rests her head  
on his shoulder.  
She tries to keep her buttery breath  
away from his face.  
His other hand  
touches her cheek.  
She looks at him;  
his face  
is so close.  
Her heart  
almost stops,  
but then beats faster  
than it ever has before.  
So gently,  
his lips meet hers.  
Her first kiss.

## VI

Gravel crackles under the weight of the tires.  
Charlie leaps out of the car as soon as it stops,  
then wrinkles his nose as it catches the unfamiliar smell  
of low tide.  
His mother looks at him and laughs.  
"You'll get used to it."  
He looks towards his mother,  
who greets their surroundings as an old friend.  
Charlie stretches and yawns.  
He can barely picture her arriving here as a young tomboy,  
and having all the adventures she boasted about  
during the long drive down.





Larry Miller

## The Lullaby

Hush my child, hush my dear, everything will be all right  
mama's here.  
Don't be afraid of what tomorrow will bring  
You've made it to the next day - that's the most important thing  
I know the other kids make fun of the way you dress  
Believe me baby, I'm doing my best.  
If only my love could fulfill your needs  
I hope to pave your way with my deeds  
To give all I never had and more  
To lift some of the burden and shame from being poor  
Hush my baby, hush my dear, everything will be all right  
mama's here.

Pamela Little

A violet-eyed child sits  
under a halo of golden straw,  
looks down upon his limbs, and  
wonders where his man is.  
He rises to meander through blueberry bushes  
murmuring to himself;  
a human hum in amber nature.  
Goldenrod tickles his tender skin, but  
he does not giggle.  
He looks ahead to thick green pines  
and longs to become a smell.

Nell Porter



## This Has to Be It

It is six a.m. Sitting at the table in the kitchen of my parent's house, I am smoking cigarettes and drinking orange juice. On the window I can see my father asleep. He is curled in his blue sleeping bag in the center of the back yard, the only place where there is some grass. He looks like a patch of blue sky, or a warm pond, in the middle of the dirt and dandelion stems.

He doesn't know that I am home. Neither does my mother. The drive up from Virginia took me all night and I got here at four o'clock. I took the key from its hiding place in the geranium plant and quietly let myself in. I dozed a little at the kitchen table, but really, I was just waiting for the sun to rise on house and family, and for someone to find me, slumped and bedraggled here in the morning light.

"I could smell the cigarettes," my mother says, "I knew it was you. Did something happen?"

"No, I just came for a visit."

"A visit, you must have driven all night, did you drive all night?" My mother's face is wrinkled with concern. She is wearing a white terry robe that makes her look fresh and efficient even though she has just woken up.

"Why is Daddy out in the back yard?" I ask.

"He has a bad back." She turns her back to me and starts making coffee. "How long are you staying?"

"A while."

"Why?"

"A rest." I say.

"O.K. No smoking."

My father rattles the back door. I can see his head of auburn peppered hair bent over, talking, I assume, to his cats. They have probably awakened him by patting his face with dew-covered paws. He pushes the door open and lands in the kitchen in a gust of fresh air with the two cats darting between his legs to their dish and back again. He stops because he sees me. His thin lips stretch across his face when he smiles.

"Nicole!"

My father is beaming, he is aglow, his cheeks pink with morning, his hair a mass of autumn-colored curls, the blue sleeping bag in his arms, pin-striped pajamas crumpled from sleep. This is why I have come home, because of this image of my father's unflappable happiness when he sees me.

"You look great," he says and he comes to where I am sitting and taps me on the back. Never kisses from my father but taps, pats, little circular rubs that are somehow nicer.

"She looks awful," my mother says. As usual she is more perceptive than my father. I am frazzled, grey skinned, thin.

"Not so," my father says. He wraps his sleeping bag around my shoulders and moves off to feed his cats.

"How is your back?" I ask him.

"My back?" He glances quizzically from the electric can opener to my mother. I can not see her expression but it seems to remind him of something he has forgotten. "Oh my back. Like new."

Suddenly I need to sleep. My mother comes upstairs to help me make my bed. My old room is in the northwest corner of the house, stuffed back into the trees. It has pink walls and windows with leaves pressed against them so that the light filtering in is green tinged. There is a small bed with a dark headboard and a wall of bookshelves. It is a dim, warm room that has not changed at all since my departure, and it seems like a sanctuary to me now. My mother and I put blue and white checked sheets on the bed, and I spread my father's sleeping bag over the thin bedspread.

"Why was Daddy outside?" I ask her again.

"I'll tell you," she says, "When you tell me why you're really here."

We sit on the edge of the bed. I take off my shoes.

"I don't really know," I say.

She says, "Sleep on it."

Lying in my bed I can hear the opera music drifting up from downstairs. It is a muffled sound that I associate with Saturday and Sunday afternoons, a sound I heard all through my years at home, every weekend, and sometimes still strain to hear. Sometimes I think I hear it when there is no music. That is why I am home, to fill the void of my life now, with things that used to be part of it, fatherly pats and opera songs, rooms like tree forts at the end of houses. I want to call my mother and tell her I've slept on it. Here's the answer. My life, I want to say, has lost its meaning. But she would think I was foolish, and I am falling asleep on this revelation.

Somebody drops something on the bed and wakes me up. My father is standing at the foot of the bed. His favorite cat, the black and white one that follows him around like a dog, looks bewildered. The cat sinks in the blue down sleeping bag. "Who is this?" it seems to ask my father, as if I do not belong in their house.

"Jim called," my father says. "He's worried about you."

"Yes."

"Did you two have a fight?"

"No, but I left without telling him."



"Oh, well, get up, I made you lunch." He scoops up the cat and turns to leave.

"O.K." I tell him, but I do not get up. I stay lying in my old bed, thinking of Jim. Jim is the man I live with. We are both graduate students at UVA where we have a bright, white-walled two-room apartment and a big bed. The passion I felt for him once is like something I read in a book, something that happened to someone else a long time ago. I feel comfortable in this small bed, where there was never a man, never the possibility of one.

When I sit down at the table in the kitchen, my father serves me humus on rice cakes and home-brewed beer. Brewing beer is the latest of my fathers "phases," as my mother calls them. The kitchen is a ramshackle tribute to these phases. On the white, tiled floor there is a shaggy, paisley-patterned rug that my father hooked. One corner is unfinished. On the wall over the table there is a large watercolor beach scene that he painted long ago. The painting is amateurish and rough, but I have always liked it. It is dramatic. When I was young I thought of it as out window on the water.

I take a sip of the beer because my father is sitting next to me, waiting for me to try it. The beer is bitter and awful, but I force myself to drink it, because criticizing a new project of my father's is like telling a child that his drawing is not pretty.

"How is school?" he asks. He gets up to get himself more beer.

I say. "The weather is still very warm down there. You can't feel fall in the air like you can here."

My father sympathizes with my desire to avoid issues. He says, "The leaves are supposed to be beautiful this year because it hasn't rained too much."

"This beer is pretty good," I say.

"I am perfecting the system; it takes a long time. Do you want some more?" He is at my side again, ready to fill my glass.

"I have to go call Jim."

"Yes, I told him you would." He rubs my shoulder and wanders off towards the refrigerator.

Instead of calling, I go out to my car and get some cigarettes. Walking slowly down the road, I light one. I stand and smoke it. I like the fact that my mother has told me not to smoke in the house. The smoke lingers around me, and it smells good in the fall air, the way cigarettes used to smell when they were forbidden, a novelty, a stinging, coughing, cool thing in my life. Now Jim and I smoke all the time, and the air in our apartment and in our lungs is stale and grey, now cigarettes are more of a necessity than a pleasure.

I see my father's cat on the lawn of the house in front of me. I kneel down and call it, making hissing, twittering noises. It sits on its haunches and regards me, graceful and blinking in the green grass. I feel clumsy, silly suddenly and the foolish noises die in my throat. What must the cat think of me? I finish my cigarette and turn back towards my house. The cat stalks after me, keeping a little distance, staying at the edge of the lawn.

The cat catches up to me at the front door. I open it and let the cat go in first. My mother is sitting in the living room reading a book. She is an English professor, and she is always rereading some classic. The living room is her room. It is neat, with nice paintings on the white walls and oriental rugs on the wood floor. There are built-in book shelves between the two windows. She sits, as she always sits, on the left end of the blue couch, feet curled under her.

She says, "Did you have a nice smoke?"

"Yes." I lean on the edge of the large entryway.

"Those cigarettes are going to kill you."

"Something has to, some time."

"Yes, but there are better ways to go."

"What better ways?"

She turns a page of her book. "Have you called Jim yet?"

I go into the kitchen and dial the number that will ring in my apartment in Virginia.

"Hello." Jim answers the phone.

I hang up.

I sit down at the kitchen table and stare at my father's simplehearted watercolor. I feel like the tide has gone out on my life and that I am a long, dry stretch of beach in a winter month, barren.

I go into the den where my father is also reading a book. His den is like a cave; carpeted, panelled. It is full of horror and how-to books, puzzles, games, stereo, computer. I see that my father is not reading, he is sleeping. His head is back, his moon-shaped reading glasses crooked over his face. The book lies open on his lap. Opera singers sing in his ears, his rusty curls curl about his face, his mouth is open, his breathing full, trembling on the edge of a snore.

On the table by his reading chair there is a picture of me my senior year in college. I am framed in gold, in my own curling hair, smiling and wonderful the way I was that year with my passion for Jim, for school, for the future. I want to tell my father that I made all the wrong choices, that Jim, that Virginia, are an ebb-tide sliding out of my life, that I feel desperate. But I do not wake him.

Instead I go back into the living room where my mother is still



curled on the couch reading.

"Did you call Jim?" she asks.

"Yes, he wasn't home."

She closes her book and looks at me. My mother is dark-skinned and dark-haired. She has simple features, she is not dramatic like my father, but strong, serious, the refiner of whims.

I avoid her perceptive gaze by walking around the living room. I look at the pictures and trinkets on the shelves and read the titles of the books that stay in an order I still know by heart. These are books that have been read, that are saved to fill the empty spaces of the room and gather dust.

I pick up a clay dragon that I made years ago. It is simply done. Its pointy spikes and bright painted eyes radiate enthusiasm. The dragon feels cold and strange in my hand. "Why is Daddy sleeping in the back yard?" I ask.

She looks at me with interest. "Why are you so curious? It's not that important."

"It seems important to me," I say. I put the dragon down and pick up a large conch shell that my father and I had bought in Florida when we went together on spring vacation my junior year in high school. I turn and look at my mother for an answer.

Finally she says, "Your father and I get tired of each other. When that happens, we stay apart for a while. It seems dramatic to you, but it isn't."

"Oh." I look down at the conch shell in my hand. I am disappointed.

"I'm going to go start dinner," my mother says. She gets up from the sofa, and I watch her, tall and self-assured, walking out of the living room.

I am left alone with the shell. I wonder did my mother think it was dramatic the first time she got tired of my father? Did she ever tire of anything else but him? This house, teaching, her life. My father, a rush of energy and whim, never gave anything the time to tire him. That must be one way.

The conch shell is warm from my hands when I hold it to my ear. I can hear the faint sound of the ocean. I put the shell back in its place, an undusty circle on a dusty surface, and I think about going into the kitchen to help my mother with dinner. There, in the kitchen, hanging on the wall near my father's painting, is the telephone. I know I will have to call Jim after dinner.

Christine Weaver

## Any Guru

Any Guru  
would not do  
for only you  
can sit entwined  
enraptured in a state sublime  
yet how refined  
doth meditate  
in this state-- half removed  
reproved  
without complaint.

Truly I wish to be like you  
in a sumptuous turban blue  
spouting nonsense philosophy  
a litany "to be"  
but I'm not taken in-- not me:  
I'll find my own Nirvana on my own  
without the help of mystical advice, magic dice  
tarot cards or crystal shards  
preferably alone.

Betsy Lowenstein





Amy Terrell

## For Unsook

Scarlet sky sea dreams  
surge foamy waves through ocean caves  
beneath the mountains and river  
of Big Sur.

The sweetness and calm  
hiking those poison-oak laden hills  
dreaming, then too,  
of the warm wine valleys  
to cool Morro Bay for sunset:

A woman like African violets--  
exotic and graceful  
delicate and mysterious  
gentle and fragrant was she.

Pelicans  
out on the sea-sprayed reaches  
of Morro Rock--  
silhouettes against the orange glare  
of that fog bank  
contoured and heavy and nearly gaspable  
like a rainbow.

On those awkward rocks  
her warm hand touched  
so soft mouth tasted.  
And the sun peaked beneath the fog  
igniting those ephemeral heavens crimson  
sparkling the ocean to dance  
souls to take flight.

Like children we ran  
down the beach  
while the sun dwindled  
to a pinprick,  
shimmered into the sea.

Still warm sand, kissing  
tenderly  
in that purple dusk.

Christpher J. Aquino





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Editor in Chief

Sylvia L. Plumb



