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P'ANKU





P'AN KU



Issue No. 45, Fall 2008

Editor's Note

P'an Ku was the mythical Chinese god of creation. The two remaining halves of the egg that he hatched from became ying and yang. His body parts, his hair, breath, all became varying elements and fragments of the universe. It was believed that artistic minds were infused with his power.

In this issue, we experimented with a technical, industrial layout. You'll note the clean lines and smaller font sizes that weren't truly empathized in the last issues. We forsook a motif of any solid form; who are we to squeeze the work of student artists into some sort of theme?

We set out to change P'an Ku alongside of the many other alterations happening in our world. Though the format has been manipulated, and the delivery may mutate still (I speak of the countless publications finding new homes on the Internet), the purpose of P'an Ku remains the same.

- David Boni

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The Gardener

BY HEATHER LYNN GONZALEZ

At first, I was small—scarcely a scrap of land
But you tilled more.
My rock dulled your blade
But you dug them out with your hands.
I was empty
But you planted seedling.
I became overgrown
And you weeded me.
My earth cracked in the hot sun.
So you watered me.
You planted lilies,
I interspersed them with black-eyed Susan's and Queen-Ann's Lace.
You planted sweet peas and built a trellis,
I spread them across your yard like a carpet of blossoms.
In the fall, you burned me down.
The next spring my tulip bulbs didn't bloom.
Season after season, you patiently tended me.

Until

The cold October wind froze my soil.
I waited.
Spring came and the old overgrowth choked the new seedlings.
I waited.
Summer arrived and my trellis had fallen over.
I waited.
Autumn buried me under leaves.
I waited.
Winter covered me in snow.

You were gone.

In the spring, I raked last autumn's leaves and burned them as I'd seen you do.
I planted lilies, daffodils, sweet peas and irises.
I weeded them diligently.
When the sun scorched my earth, I watered myself.
In the fall, I burned the remains and prepared for winter.
Year after year,
I tend the garden of my life as you taught me.



MIXED MEDIA "TRAPPED" BY PAULA ROJAS

ACADEME

BY JONATHAN KING

It started when I was just a child
The beast unleashed to tame the wild
While nameless kids came single filed
They fed us fear and dimmed our smiles

While tyranny came to overflow
They taught what they deemed fit to know
And with no names to overthrow
Our lives flew by, remaining slow

So blindly we endured hell
Remaining under wardens spell
That only now I know too well
That molding hands came with the bell.



SOLAR BLOCK PRINT "RAVENOUS DEBRIS" BY JOSEPH BAUM

Newest Flesh

BY DAVID BONI

Old scars, mediocrity
Peel slowly and see
The long dreadful curtains fall
Alabaster daggers pierce withal
And sighing echoes trace through dust
Dormant eyes with yellowed crust

Awaken, now, let the world be
Sloughed off the surface

A bloody fight to push through
Birthed all manners of man
And unimaginable animals, too
Infinite microcosm eclipse
Blink once, it's missed
Blink twice, déjà vu
Thus spake Thoreau

The hands serve the eyes

Look here, how the skin shudders!
And wrinkles, dries, rips asunder
Make way for the newest flesh
Red, raw emissary
Come up the living boast
First sign of a healthy host
Or a betrayer like settled mud?
What was sure to be solid earth
Drowns the wanderer in its blood
May be the blush of some mad disease
Or the rush of pulse when we are teased
Whatever the case, it's here to stay
Until it is replaced again some day

A warring tide of meat remains
Innards, hair, and teeth
Crimson oil locked in shadow
All parts confined beneath
Muscles don't burn, can't stretch
No taste, nor smell, eyes sightless
Within here, life's inhibited
Inside vanity's chrysalis

But, now, the drapes are rotting away
Behold, and feel, the gift of day
A blade of sunlight just passed by
Sliced open these sickly eyes
Scattered the scraps of metamorphosis
And vaporized all the rest
Only I am left, reborn and aware
My long awaited wings flare
At first, as I rise, as I dare
To change; to suffer not stagnation
This, I believe, is my reincarnation

Social Fratricide

BY SAMANTHA HO

Homicidal attempts rise, an all time high.
In this world of insipid, intrusive, comedians.
They try to pry open and leak into our minds
The pointlessness of conspiracies,
Of unsevered ties
Apparently we're required to paint our faces
And act as though we're completely phaseless.
"You. Can't. Phase. Me."
I look at you, you cry out to me
Instead of helping...
I've turned the other cheek.
You'll sink into their minds,
Into their spikes
They'll slice you closed
And keep you secretly exposed.
But society craves attention.
Their infatuation lies within the ideas
Of other nations.
They'll continue to swallow
To chew, to excrete
Painful remarks and copyrighted things.
Our minds are no longer ours...
And we're mechanically engineered.
What hurts most?
I'll sit and watch you die,
As you fall into the pits of angry eyes...
Because no one wants individuality
But EVERYONE wants you to fall into society.
Become what you're told
Not what's inside of me...
Sorry, I meant you.
But instead, I'll stand and watch you fall
While these political carnivores swallow you
whole.
Engineered for humanity
But expelled to fatality.
"I love you my brother"
But you won't hear my cry...
As you fall painfully
Into social fratricide.

HEROES

BY HECTOR GONZALEZ JR

Did you ever wonder about war?
Neither do I, but what about death.
I've seen him you know,
He likes to wander in the fields
In trenches and tear out your eyes.
I've helped him along,
Made sure they were surprised.

Hey, I don't feel bad, war is hell don't ya know,
The only way to live is to make it a show.
Blood for blood!
That's what they say,
But nobody lives it
Not at the end of the day.

We are soldiers, that's what we do,
We live by our own golden rule.
Kill those around us, till there's no one left.
To slaughter the guilty, the innocent, and
everyone else.
A soldier has no duty beyond what he's told,
And a man has no right to take what he can't
hold.

But I guess you never thought about it
Not that way, no one never does.

But go ahead condemn me,
Save all our cheers
I'll be the one keeps you safe until your golden
years.
A soldier, that's all I am.
You can be a human or humane
Or whatever it's called
Until the day when you see death
ripping out someone's eyeballs.

See if you don't grab the next guy,
And put him right there in front,
Don't think we're alike though.
We have nothing in common.
I fought and died,
And you...

You're just a coward.



PHOTOGRAPHY "SPIDER OVER CHICAGO" BY LEA POVIAN



PHOTOGRAPHY "HERE IS MY SON!" BY ROBERTO SOTO



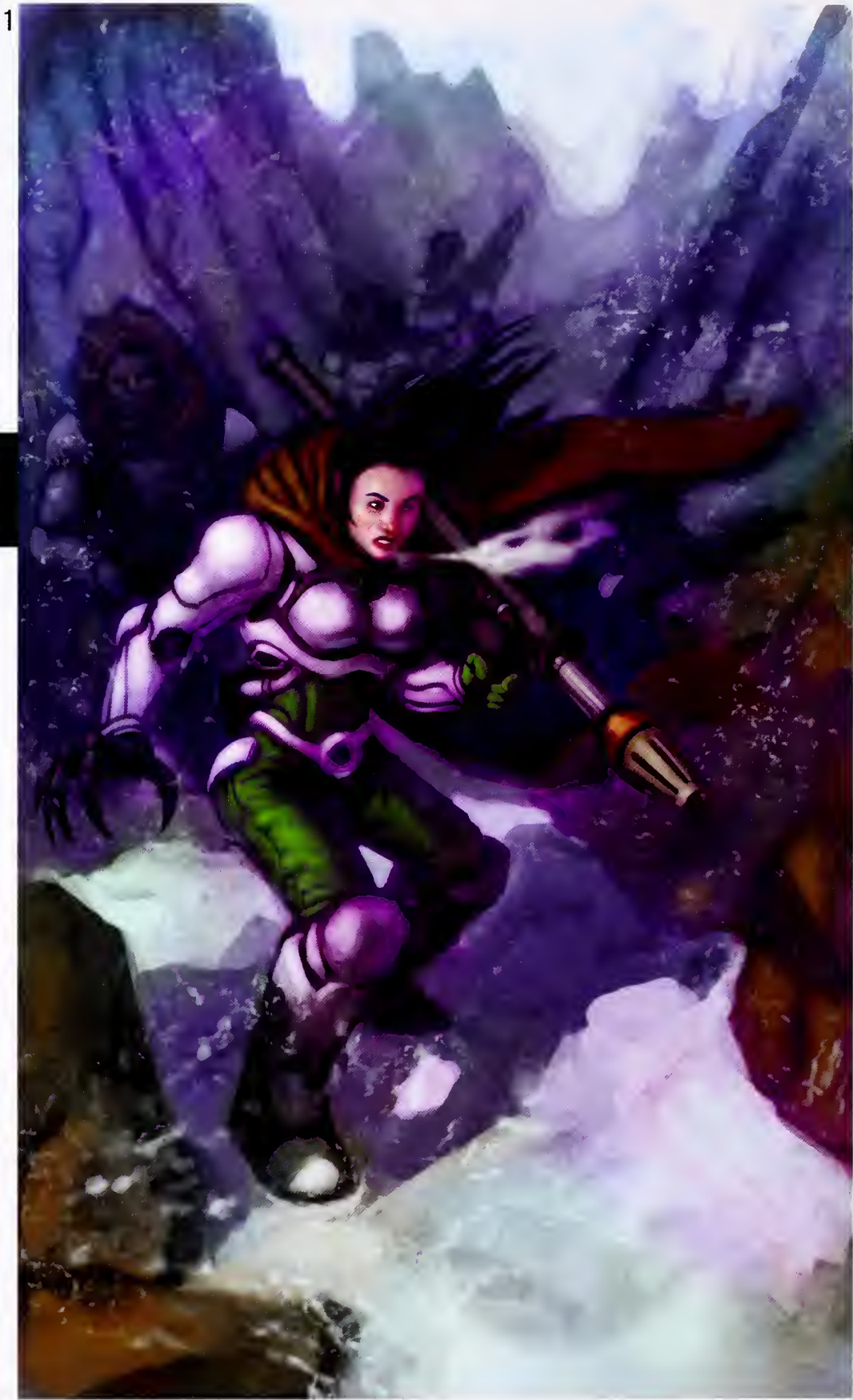
"BRIGHT SPIKES" (ABOVE) "DANDELION PUFF" (BELOW) BY LEA POVIAN



PHOTOGRAPHY



"UNTITLED" BY JENNIFER WOLLABER



DIGITAL ART

1 ICE QUEEN
2 SKY PIRATE
BY NERY MEJICANO

2





BUBBLES

PHOTOGRAPHY



LOOKING FOR CLUES

BY LAUREN LAUFER

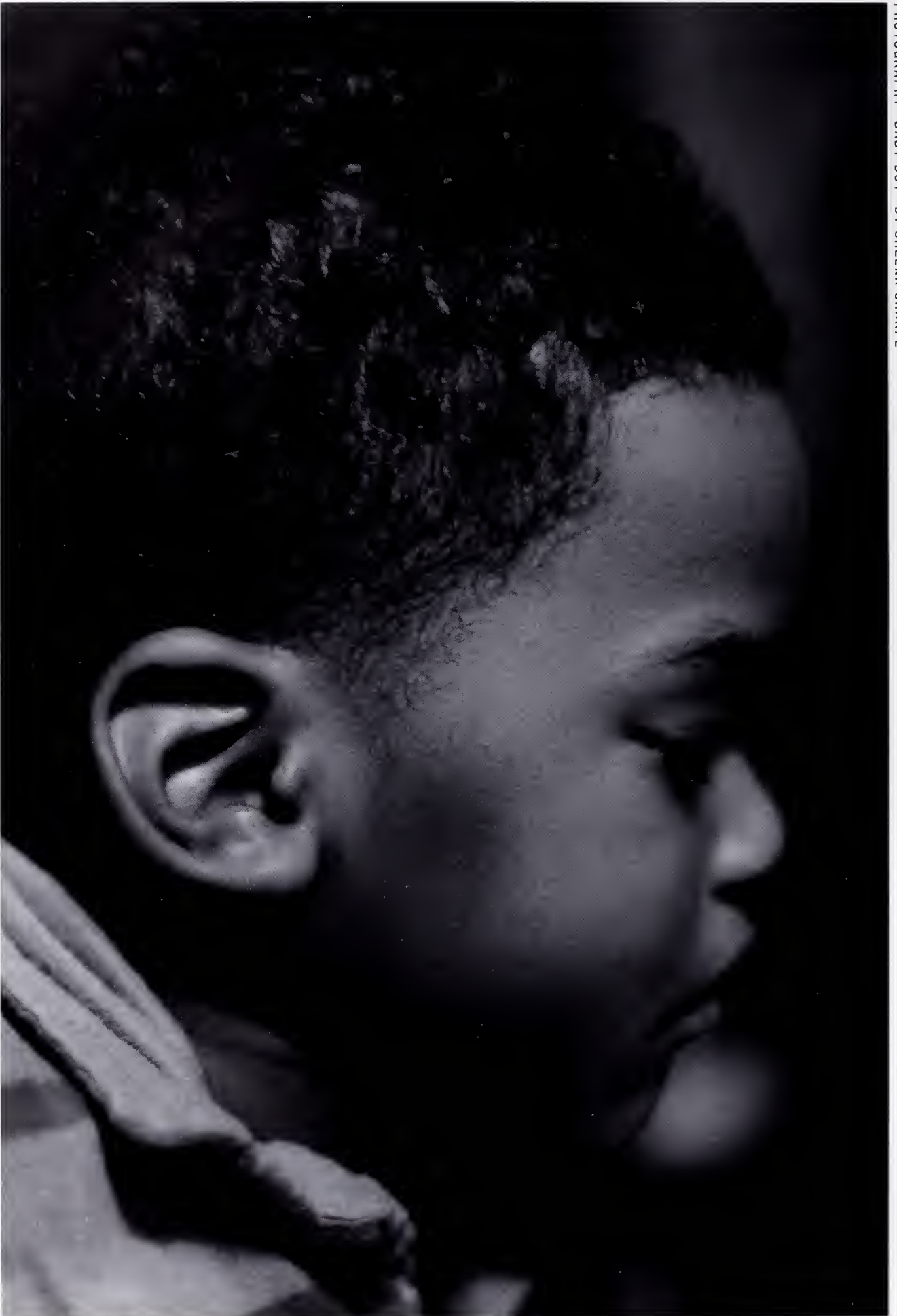
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DIGITAL ART / "SLIGHT FAIL" BY ELVIS BELLO



CHARCOAL / "WOMAN" BY BENNY MERCADER





Memory Lane BY MATTHEW JASON SERUR

I once lived in time
Now, I live in moments
The clock has made me wise
It is the main component
So I thank it from time to time
Ahead of my past I shall remain
Or forever I'll reside on memory lane.

SHATTERED

BY DANAI VERDE

Take the shell and lick the cracks
To make little seals where the soul leaks through
And falls to the floor.
We'll pretend there's something left to catch.
Sweep the evidence into the corner,
Blush,
And let's not speak of it again.

Tell me something I don't know,
And I'll relate a million things you've heard before.
This room is too small for things unsaid.
Babble is a comfort for one vessel of broken pieces and
And one too parched to notice nothing whole is left.

Not So Common BY KEEKS G.

A not so common fantasy that allows
My mind to wonder beyond boundaries.
He used his artistry to solicit me. Figured
That's the only way he'll like me, so I wrote
Him one back... He'll never know!
Time put our situation at a standstill.
Didn't notice his beauty until it was
Wrapped around her. The classic mistake.
Sat this quarter out, but Coach is seeming
To have second thoughts... and I'm glad.

Distance still divides us, but can't help but
to feel you next to me while I read the sweet
melody your words play across the page. Sing
to me again and again and again, until you have
nothing more to say. And by sheer luck if that
day comes, you can be my personal Van Gogh.
Your tools are up to you, from a thin brush to the
effortless strokes of your tongue... I don't mind babe.
Simple complexities make him eloquent in my eyes.
He's just not your common dude... and I kinda like it.

Not his height, age, experience nor definite swagger
or lack thereof defines him. It's in his laugh, his notebook,
his I-Pod and his squeezing arms that make him... Him.
And though the reality is that he's not mine,
in my dreams he sings to me without thought of permission.
Maybe tomorrow...
Maybe tomorrow he'll sing to me again.

SHE CAME, BY JASMINE GRANT SHE SAW SHE CONQUERED

Who knew that something so overlooked could be so impacting on so many lives?
But this wasn't the first time.
She started off calm, cool and collected,
just drifting from the Atlantic; taking a forceful stroll through our home we call South Florida.
Leaving no real impact, but headed towards bigger and better things.
With her eyes on the gold,
she gained strength by the hour.
She came, she saw, she conquered
Going on to leave her mark and let her voice be heard to wake up this country.
To shed her light on all that is injustice, that has been all along in the dark.
Encouraging many to free themselves from imaginary shackles to go on and survive under unbearable
circumstances.

Encouraging us to realize that good does still exist in things that seem to have gone rotten.
Even though, it's been a long time coming,
she sure did achieve what she set out to do.

She came, she saw, she conquered...
Conquered her treasure, known as good 'ol New Orleans the Magnolia state along with Alabama and
Mississippi.
Places where the deepest cries of our ancestors have been buried, but now dug up.

Digging up...
hope
fear
guilt
ignorance
courage
and most of all faith

Conquering not only the south but the attention of the nation,
to realize that when one cries the pain is felt by many.
Indeed...
She came, she saw, she conquered.

sea Monster

BY SERGIO MORA

My love calls me a sea monster
I like to think it is because
I am a ferocious force that
has risen from the dark mysterious depths
to hold her captive with
my love

Or perhaps it is because
when my body enters the ocean
I become streamlined and
agile and lose myself among the waves
as my fingers web
and tiny gills slit open
at my sides

But then again it may be
My beer belly
and the way my face swells
as my breath holds
before I take the plunge
like a creature out of Loch Ness
in my large state,
in tight trunks
coming up for air.

FORGET ME NOT

BY LINDSEY ANN DENSON

There's a rose here on your table,
And a painting hung up on your wall.
Please, my Daddy, remember me,
even when your memory halts.
I remember a time when life was good,
when your mind was totally there.
Those times are coming less and less now,
yes it's hard to admit that I'm scared.
It's often times hard to push right
through,
to the love in our hearts that's always
true.
You have beautiful blue-green eyes,
and wavy, silken blonde hair,
but the Daddy I remember,
sometimes just isn't there.
It hurts a lot when you're confused,
when you don't understand that it's me.
At those times when you sling insults,
creating scars so easily.
So Daddy, the one who loves me,
to that Daddy: I do know you care.
I'll leave my picture right by your side,
and a sweet, small sprig of forget-me-nots
so you'll know that I'll always be there.



PHOTOGRAPHY "AT THE MALL" BY LEA POVIAN



DRAWING "BALANCE FROM NATURE" BY STEVEN HOPE

HAYWIRE Pt. 1

BY GRATITATION

Walkin' down the Boardwalk, past the bandstand/
 A woman and a man two rings they holdin' hands/
 They stroll right from the land, straight into the sand/
 Layin' down, repeatin' how the other one is the only one for
 them/
 Here comes the gigglin', they clownin'/
 He pushes she falls, in a playful way she hits him/
 Back and forth and it goes on 'fore you know it it's dawn/
 Get a slice at Angelo's then they go, on, home/
 Ridin' in Chevy that's sit-tin on, chrome/
 Stop at red kisses her on, the, dome/
 Pullin into the driveway, door's open halfway/
 Only to find the crib's cleaned empty/
 Tempers flare, she screams lookin' up in the air/
 "Why don't they care about our welfare how can they dare!?"/
 She collapses he catches an hour passes the cops finally come/
 Got a bone but no light/
 "Neva no break neva no fun"/
 Don't know what to do anymore, they poor/
 Ran outta herb no time for meditation so it's time for the store/
 Liq-ur into the system his is messed up along with the others/
 Stumblin' home cars are parked, his parents and brothers/
 Ayo question, "Where the hell have you been?"/
 Says "Getting' bent no energy to face the predicament that we
 in/
 Too much is goin' on I can't take it all in/
 So for now I close my eyes so I can shut out the demons"/

The Sweet Disease

BY BRENDAN CONNOLLY

The cold wind blew me in,
In an encapsulating undertow.
These lonely docks longing for home.
The harbor dressed with no where to go.
The concrete stifled,
Still underneath the gravel.
But somewhere past these neon lights,
And hazy avenues,
When the horizon meets the moon,
We're found,
Free-flowing down the drain that we're all destined.
We're completely self-aware,
But we're stranded anyhow,
Inebriated, turned around,
Carried down the balmy gangway as free men
Down along these cobblestones,
We'll find what God we seek,
The critically harsh words from the meek,
Only pale in comparison around me.
Carried away by common sense,
I'll crest before I fall.
Me and my rusty dancing ball,
Courting life in the dark alleyways of morning.
Their promises have rotten thin,
I'm begging to bum a ride.
Built a raft for the next tide,
With these broken hands and crooked spine,
Just to make the shore break,
Before the sun gets too high.
A castaway amongst refugees,
At a martyr revival.
With a full glass and empty skull,
A branded tongue plated with gold,
A fat bowl pack,
For a slight delay of tomorrow.
This torrid maze of holidays,
Rejoicing and the lash,
Counter-production, at last!
Jay walking with a J of green grass
Just to re-hash the slight memories of yesteryear.
O streetlights give me warmth,
Give grievance for your son.
Who came misguided and left undone.
Broke as fuck on the streets of Boston...

Learning to Smile

BY CARLOS DELGADO

I open the door of the art gallery; there are not many people inside, there's a seller trying to sell a painting that not even I would want, the girls on the front desk are working the phones, which apparently means that things can run smoothly without me. I go straight to my office, not really caring about what's happening there, mostly because I don't want to play nanny outside of the house today. I get inside the office, light up a cigarette and start working the paperwork that will keep me occupied for the rest of the day. Cameron shows up a couple of hours later. He looks like a person out of his comfort zone, wearing casual and not looking particularly fine with it. I guess vacation is not something everyone can appreciate, as I have experienced. We say hi to each other coldly. It's the first time in two months we've seen each other. There's a feeling in the air, and I have the thought of how this conversation is going to end. He sits in one of the empty chairs, while I keep scrambling the papers, and check my phone every five seconds, when he says:

"So, how's Sophie?"

"She's fine, I guess. I think she'll be fine."

I answer vaguely. I really don't want to talk about myself, or my sudden fatherhood and how it's pretty much eating me alive; I don't think he needs to hear the bullshit about the last two months, or how my sixty four year old mother can silence that kid in a way that makes look like the person that I swore not to be, a person full of misery for the same reason that everyone else can be happy. I had an amazing life, now I'm lost. Cameron then tells me to stop working, that's when I know what the next part of the conversation is going to look like, and then he says:

"Please tell me that you are sure, Sydney."

"I'm... I'm trying Cameron."

I don't feel good at all. Grieving Jessica hasn't been easy, I can barely hold myself and my doctor best friend knows this. At that moment I stand up from my chair. I walk towards the window, not being able to look him at him. I breathe heavily, and start talking, almost weeping, full of sadness.

"It's been two months. I can't take her out of my head. I feel like shit, Cameron. How the hell am I supposed to this? How the hell am I supposed to raise I child, when I don't even remember what it was to be a kid. I'm twenty four, not thirty six. I'm not your age, I don't have your skill, or your instincts, and clearly I don't have Jessica's. Am I supposed to just do it without a problem? What do I know about children?"

Cameron doesn't have an answer. An awkward silence invades the room for a moment. I turn around slowly and I look at his face, his look says what his words won't say, that he still doesn't get why I got her, that no matter how close she and I were, her child should have never ended in my door, and in a way he answers is an almost helpless way.

"You'll live Sydney, you have to."

We say goodbye to each other. I start working nonstop like always. I don't want to think, I want time to go fast. I want to forget, I want to kill my pain.

I drive back home, trying to not think about the past two months. From the moment I was told that Sophie was mine, I haven't had a

sense of what should I do. My parents have been taking care of her, pampering her, taking her to the park. I can't do any of that, I still can't feel anything when I see her besides pain. As a drive, I keep thinking of last year, when I went back home to see Jessica. We were talking on the phone, before she gave birth; she'd decided to go the "modern" way, by getting a "good" sperm donor, even when she was only 24, and had an irregular heartbeat that would make any old person look healthy. She knew that it was dangerous, but she said to me that was her only chance to finally have a life. I didn't disagree.

"Come on, I'll be fine, if any my sister can take of my parents." She said.

"Please tell me you won't die." I sarcastically said.

"Nah... I can't die, I have a kid now."

That was the time when it hit me. She had fulfilled her life by choice. She was happy in the only place I wasn't, yet. She was at peace. I was happy, but not fulfilled, and I started to wonder when it would be my time. I arrived a day after the birth, feeling completely out of place. I didn't feel necessary during that weekend; I guess I was just there to play good friend, because at the end it was all about Sophie; the baby with her dreamy eyes, and pooping, and crying that didn't allow anyone to get sleep.

Months later I was at the funeral. She died from a heart attack, while driving to work. I looked at her corpse, she looked so beautiful, and she looked like the woman I once fell in love, and then broke my heart. She looked like the woman I should've married. She looked alive. Then her mom came.

"Sydney, can I talk to you?"

We went to this small office, inside the building. She looked worst than her husband, but she wasn't crying. She just looked hopeless, she just looked like me.

"Jessica left you Sophie." She said.

"What?"

"She put your name in her will, I don't why, but she said you should be in charge of her kid."

I was shocked, I didn't know what to say, my life was over as I knew it, and then she added: "Please promise me that you'll take care of her; I cannot lose another child." She cried.

"She'll... be fine with me." I lied.

The traffic light changes to green; I drive all the way home. I try not to think on anything, as I approach my apartment. Once my car is parked, I go straight to the elevator, and into my place. Thirty minutes later I'm sitting in my balcony smoking cigars with Cameron, while Danielle is inside, putting Sophie to sleep.

"Your life is officially over." He says.

"I guess. Fun is over as I know it, isn't it?"

"Most of it, at least now you'll have something to talk about besides Jackson Pollock."

"Heaven forbid."

Danielle comes to the balcony, and sits next to Cameron. As the rain keeps pouring we keep the talking, they both know that as long as they don't bring her into the conversation everything will be fine, but I know they will, they care too much.

"Sophie sleeps so quietly. Neither our kids slept that way." She

says.

"Good to know." I answer cynically.

"She's not as hard as you think Syd; I think she's like her mother."

"Or like her father, whoever her father is." I answer.

"You are the father Syd; you're the one that has to change her diapers."

At that moment the rain showers turn into a storm, I stand up and move towards the view, it looks depressing, it looks full of sorrow, and it looks like me. I take a deep breath and then I start talking.

"Who would've thought that a city like Miami, so full of people, so full of life, would feel so empty? I can't help it, guys. I'm still dying on the inside." I say almost whispering.

We let the sound of the storm fill the room, I close my eyes trying to relax, trying to forget, and then Cameron moves to my right and answers.

"You were probably not her first choice, but you were the right choice. You are the one she loved. She never stopped loving you Sydney. Take care of Sophie the same way you took care of her and you'll be happy."

"Do I have to do this?"

"Yes... just take care of her."

He hugs me and keeps telling me that I'll be okay. Danielle says the same, although to hear it from her feels like a different experience. For her, marrying Cameron, and having kids was the best thing she's ever done, maybe one day I'll feel that warmth inside of me. I know they are right, but I want to feel that, and I haven't felt it yet.

It's eleven; my parents are coming in half an hour to take Sophie for the weekend. I check on the baby, she's sleep, and I'm emotionally drained. I go to Sophie's room, not knowing why. Once inside the room I find her asleep, I look at her for a moment trying to remember what I thought my life would look like. Everything is here, except Jessica. And without her, all the meaning is gone; nothing feels that it belongs here. I take Sophie out of the crib and I put her in my arms, trying to remember the day when I carried her just a day after she'd been born, when her mother had a smile because her old friend was taking care of her kid. Suddenly my belly starts hurting, though it goes away after a couple minutes. I force a smile out of myself, even though she's asleep. I tell her that it'll be fine, that I'm the pathetic fuck she's going to call daddy now, that I'll try, even if I don't want to, and that I have to fulfill her mother's last wish, and then I put her in the crib. I leave the room, with the false hope that my smile will become real someday. I decide to take a nap in my room, since I gave my parents a set of keys yesterday, so they won't need to wake me up. As I close my eyes, everything goes blank.

I wake up in a beach. I stand up, and start looking around to see exactly where I am. I realize quickly that I'm in Cabo, wearing a long sleeve t-shirt, shorts and a pair of sneakers. My beard is back, so is the town I visited years ago. I think I'm dreaming, but I don't want to think. I leave the beach, and go to the bar my friends and I would go during college. The bartender tells me it's well past midnight, and that I came yesterday with a woman. I don't remember any of that, but then, I don't want to know, I just want a beer. I get a drink and look around the place. It looks exactly the same. The pool table is empty, there's a football game on the T.V., and some drunken tourists are playing darts, it's just another day

I guess.

"Scotch on the rocks, please." A voice says.

I'm surprised to hear a voice; I thought I was alone at the bar. The voice sounds like a woman. I look, it's Jessica.

"I guess you couldn't sleep either," she says.

I don't have an answer. I don't believe that it's her, but I don't know how I got here either, I might be dead for all that I know.

"Come on Syd, spit it."

"Where am I?"

"You're in Cabo and maybe half drunk."

"I'm dreaming, aren't I?"

"Mm... define dream. Dream happens when you're sleep, but you are not sleeping."

"I'm dead then."

"Maybe, on the other hand, I am dead."

She chuckles. I don't know what she is. She might be a ghost, she might be my imagination, and maybe everything is my imagination. I have so many questions, I want so little answers. I feel numb.

She gets out of her chair and goes to the pool table. She asks me to join her, which I do without thinking. There we are, playing pool, drinking, talking, just like the old days.

"How the hell I got here?" I ask in an irritated tone.

"Something is happening upstairs, God only knows what it is."

"You've met God?"

"Yep, pretty nice fella."

I start wondering how it would be to be dead. No more office nonsense, not having to worry about anyone, a life of no consequences. That's the life I want, that's the life I'll never get.

"Who are you? What are you?" I ask.

"I am what I am. I am what you want me to be."

She looks like her, she acts like her, but she might not be her. I know I'm dreaming, but I just can't go along, it's too much pain. We continue playing, when I ask:

"Do you think we could stay here?" I say.

"You have my kid to raise my kid first, sport, and you have a life to live." She answers.

Now I feel she sounds like my mother. I don't want her to do that, not when I'm miserable, and can't seem to get my life back on track.

"How do I raise your kid?" I say sounding almost hopeless.

She smiles back, while approaching me. She stands in front of me; her hands take mine, and then she looks at my eyes and starts talking almost whispering, making it feel that we are having a moment.

"By raising her, but not worrying about what's going to happen, because good things can and will happen if you just let yourself go."

"It's easy to say for you. You're dead."

"And, what are you?"

I can't find an answer to her question. I don't know if I'm dead or alive, I don't know shit, and then I say the first thing that comes out of my mind.

"I'm the dude that used to be your best friend."

"You're the dude that never moved on; you're still in love with me."

"So are you."

"And like you... I'm trying." She says with her voice breaking down.

"It's easy to say for you. You're dead."

At that moment she leaves her cue in the table. We are now in front of each other. I start feeling full of anxiety, wanting to know what to say. I can feel her heat, I stopped believing that she might not be real as our noses touch, and as I close my eyes; I want to kiss her, I want this to never end, because I know this is what I want and I don't want to leave.

I move apart, I'm freaking out. I leave my cue in the table. I get out of the bar as fast as I can, not wanting to think that this not happening, that is just my brain trying to give comfort to my mind. I stand there looking to the full moon, thinking about why this place is always in my mind, or why I gave up on Jessica, and why I have to keep living. She joins me a minute later. We are again next to each other, thinking about the fact that we used to call this place paradise, and that this is the place our love faded away, and that this time there's no return.

"I'm going back, right?"

"Yeah, you are, once the sun gets out." She whispers.

"Why can't I stay?" I ask, almost weeping.

"You have to live."

"I don't want to live!" I scream.

"Why not living Sydney?"

"Because here there's no pain, because here happiness can happen, because I still love you."

"Then love my child, and you'll love me."

We are in each other's arms at the moment. It hurts so much, and it feels so good. I kiss her; I feel that she's her, she feels so good, and then I open my eyes. The sun is up, I'm leaving. A car is in front of us, she tells that there's a pair of keys inside the car. That I should go north, and that I can't stop. I hug her and kiss her again, and then I see tears running out of my face. It just feels so real. I have to go. I get inside the car, and as turn on the engine I see Sophie in the back seat. She's awake. I look at her, and then I realize that Jessica is gone. I start driving, and then everything goes blank again.

I start feeling pain in my lower abdomen, when I open my eyes. I jump out of shock. I'm in a hospital bed, with needles stuck to my body. Breathing heavily I look around, Danielle is filling my chart, Cameron is watching T.V. on the chair next to me, if it weren't for the fact that we've known each other for years I'd say he's not a doctor.

"Good morning sunshine!" He says.

"What's going on?"

"Ha ha, surprise to see us?"

He sounds sarcastic, as he laughs with Danielle. I don't know what happened, or how I ended here.

"Your appendix exploded, literally. When your parents came to your apartment, they found you without a pulse, fortunately, they got you here." He answers.

"I thought I only had a stomachache."

"Well apparently you had more than that. Apparently you almost died."

"When can I leave?"

"I guess tomorrow. You're funny when you are high, by the way." He adds.

My head crushes the pillow as I shake my head. It all makes sense now; it was the morphine talking, not my dead ex-girlfriend, yet it felt so real.

"I could've sworn that I..."

"It was the morphine talking kiddo." Cameron tells me.

Danielle gets called after to go surgery. Cameron and I stay in

the room talking about how it is going to be for the next month. I can't carry any weight, and I'm going to need help with Sophie, which means I'm probably going to need a nanny already, though most importantly, I'm going to work from home the next month.

"Think about it this way, at least now you can go AWOL over the phone, instead of their faces."

"Mm... I guess that might help." I answer.

Four days later I'm back home. I still can't carry any weight, nor go to the gym, nor shop for coffee, which means I spend most of my day between my phone and videogames. Sophie seems fine, at least now that she has the best nanny in the world: My mother.

I wake up the next day, not wanting to do anything at all. The sun has risen, and Miami looks radiant today, just like it's supposed to be. Nothing has really changed, most of the time I still cannot shut my kid from endlessly crying, she still drives crazy no matter how weak I might be, and on top of that I still have to deal with the assholes at work, which means every single conference call feels like trying to teach communists about democracy.

"So what have you learned?" Cameron asks.

It's been four months. Cameron and I are sitting at the roof terrace of a Cuban restaurant in South Beach grabbing breakfast. Sophie sits in a tall chair between us; I don't know if she's thinking of anything in particular, although she seems to like the music from the place. I look at the place, then I look at the beach, and then I look at her. "Well, apparently she likes Cuban music, which is great since I'll now be able to put something that she likes that's not related to Bob Dylan." I answer.

"Your kid likes Bob Dylan?! Wow, she's smart."

"Yep, she falls asleep when I sing her 'Blowin' in the Wind. I guess I'm raising the next great feminist."

Cameron laughs at my answer. I keep staring at the beach; it now looks the way it's supposed to be. It looks full of life. Have I learned anything? I don't think so. I still hate pretty much every child, except mine, my life still revolves the new "great" artist that might make it big someday, and on top of that for some ridiculous reason I decided to sell my condo, and buy a bigger one. But, then again, I'm lying. My life is not like that. My life now revolves around one year old kid that half the time drives me crazy, and the other makes me oddly happy. This is not the life I wanted, but is not a life I would refuse, I guess the excitement of life might be back, or at least it might be making a comeback.

After we pay the bill, Cameron and I part ways. Since it's a Sunday I decide to go home and relax. Now it's almost midnight. I put the baby to sleep. This time she falls asleep to Buddy Holly's "Peggy Sue", which I guess means she likes old rockers.

"Good night kiddo." I say.

She moves around, she doesn't fall asleep fast, which means I stay for awhile staring at her, she seems to like that. I'm finally starting to believe that it's going to be fine. Life has changes, but I won't die because of it. I look at the portrait of her mother. She's there with her kid in her arms. I smile; remembering that she once told I had taught her to smile. The song ends, Sophie is asleep. I leave the room, finally with a real smile, remembering the words her mother once told me:

"Thank you for teaching me how to smile." I whisper to myself.

Now it is the time to teach my daughter that.



PHOTOGRAPHY "WHAT NOW" BY SHEENA SHARPE

Crazy Weather

BY FARHEEN ISMAIL

The door hits the wall and opens as the wind flows in
The breeze comes as the scent of the ocean
Midnight falls as the curtains fly out the window
Then comes sounds of thunder and rain
Lightning strikes as the clouds turn black and dry hitting the plane up high
The heart pounding in a weird lumber
The body needs a slight slumber
Waiting up all night because of the crazy weather
Then morning rises as sunshine scatters

American Reality

BY CAROLINA LAVAYEN

When I was 18 I never would have imagined my life how it is today
Creeping towards 30 – no career, husband, children, or accomplishment to brag about
Sorry dad, sorry mom
Sorry you feel just as insecure about your future as I do
Sorry you can't depend on your children to fall back on
Are you sorry you brought us to this country, to live the American Dream?
Haven't you heard apologizing is a form of weakness?
I didn't deserve to go to college, but I always paid you rent on time
I'm not a home owner, but have endless credit cards and a student loan
I lease a Volvo, watch HDTV and have high speed internet service – living the American dream
Dead end jobs, lay off after lay off, my income continues to drop, while my debt continues to
rise
We pay inflated rates on gas, insurance we're forced to have, chemically induced food, and most
everything else
The media hides the truth and "protects" us from reality – living the American dream
Let's play video games and blog about pop culture, while the earth is being destroyed, we're
running out of food and WWIII is on it's way
Then we wonder why so many countries laugh about our selfish ignorance
Corporations brainwash us with their advertisements while they kill us with their junk food,
infected meats and vegetables, invisible radio waves, and release of poisonous fumes
Our cancer rates increase while we keep pumping money into the machines owned by heartless,
greedy CEO's and politicians
We live the American dream where young people choose not to vote because they choose not to care, where
people remain naive, and think what's going on in other countries won't ever affect
us
I'll take a shot of Patron, Mr. Bartender
Dance the night away and forget about the things I cannot change
Tonight my opportunity cost is a productive tomorrow
Tonight I will continue to live the American Dream

THE BATTLE OF GREENLAND

BY BRENDAN CONNOLLY

The object of war is peace.

To know thy enemy is to know thyself.

Fight the battle you want to fight.

When your enemy expects you from the front, greet them from behind. Pete the Nazi taught me this. Pete the Nazi, one of the few, the proud.

That was the summer of Risk. The game of global supremacy. Total domination. Where the goal is to remove all other contenders from the map.

It was also the summer we were all being arrested or getting pregnant. Both happened to Glenn. Breaks your heart.

"Are you ready for the rape of Greenland," Pete asked me over the game board. "I will sack your cities, pillage your resources, subjugate your children, and by all historical accounts of scholars, you will be taking the high hard on in the small brown one. Will you hold your ass cheeks open for me?"

I was staring again at what is lovingly referred to as the Wrath of God. We called him a Nazi because he could acquire a large landmass in a relatively short time. Think blitzkrieg. Lightning war. And none of the other dictators that sat around the table ever worked together to rid themselves of the common enemy. So I would attack Pete on my own, and lose.

See the wrath of God was coined specifically for me.

Pete would send a message, like any good Nazi, through overwhelming force. His throw away forces, Pete called them. By amassing such an expansive empire he received more armies at the beginning of each turn then he needed. He could afford to drop his spare reinforcements on me.

A total realization of one's mortality always enlightens the chosen darkness of blind immortality.

All I had liberated at this point was a small, unfortified, position in North America. Not a large contingent unfortunately; I had lost too many in a vain attempt at moving into South America. My borders were Alaska, Mexico, and Greenland.

The Wrath of God.

Mortality on deck.

I had one rotation of turns, maybe two. No more. Ian sat in Australia and Southeast Asia, feeding of the scraps of the remaining continent Pete allowed him to conquer so he could receive a small turn bonus. The continuous ebb and flow was just a device for Pete to control Burn's actions. They called it No Man's Land. I called it nursing.

Shawn Bob sat in Africa and had colonial aspirations on the shores of South America. He and I had been vying for dominance below the equator for a few rounds now.

We didn't call him Shawn Bob because he was a fat redneck. Oh, he weighed 350 pounds. It was because he floated in fresh water. He would inhale and rise. Just like a bobber.

He was a persistent bastard.

He wouldn't sink.

Pete sat on my direct eastern border, Europe. Greenland was the only obstacle to the invasion he envisioned. His empire stretched its cobbled roads throughout the Middle East and northern Asia. He had forty armies in Iceland.

This was before I went off to school.

Burn had the bong. He and Glenn were playing videogames. We were all at Shawn and Nikis house. I had Ripper the Jack held fastly between my fingers. A functional piece of glass that resembled knotted bread. Only wheat wasn't the main ingredient for this particular craft.

This was before Glenn's organ auction on the Black Market. When standing on desperate ground a man must fight or flee. Sometimes it's the choice that misguides us.

"Who wants to smoke a cigarette," Burn asked.

Pete was always black.

Ian was always yellow.

Shawn Bob was always red.

I was always green.

I exhaled and stood up. I walked over to put my shoes on and my cigarettes fell out of the pocket on my hoodie. It was not the first time. I had lost more lighters to suicide in Shawn and Nicks toilet than to Pete's pockets. Pete got up to go outside. He would need to borrow my lighter.

I took a look at the looming black cloud to my east. I stepped outside.

It's all about interests.

This was before I had a cell phone.

Before I was arrested.

Before my realization of mortality.

Before Pete the Nazi's Wrath of God.

This was diplomacy time. The burning white flag of civility wrapped around our shared addiction waved brightly.

"Hey," I asked Pete, "You're not going to whore fuck me, are you?"

"If I were you, I would get the money up front," he answered. Then he lit his bummed cigarette with my borrowed lighter.

We all worked together, except for Burn and Glenn. They worked at a head shop. Actually, Ian was our boss. None of us really liked him, but he had good weed. We put up with him. He even served out the back door at work. This was before I broke my hand.

This was a golden age.

Complete selfishness.

Total nihilism.

Sun Tzu once thought that by altering one's arrangements and changing one's plans, one keeps the enemy without definite knowledge. I was definitely fucked.

Ian wasn't in any position to draw Pete's attention and Shawn was avoiding it, wisely.

I was fucked.

"I hate you Pete," I said lightning a cigarette. "I hope your kid comes out black."

"Hey, Telephone Tough Guy," Burn said, "Let me borrow your lighter."

This was before I employed my world famous rolling stop and saw the blue lights.

The Buzz Kill.

The Wrath of Law.

Should you witness a flock of birds arise suddenly, run. It's an

ambush.

They asked me, Had I been drinking? No.

Was I sure?

Yes.

What's that?

What?

That smell?

Step out of the car please.

It was Ian's turn; it would be a small offensive. He and Pete had discussed the details in my presence outside. Diplomacy. Nursing. Ian would take Mongolia, there-by granting him a bonus card at the end of his turn. He was hoping to attain extra armies on his next turn.

"Fuck it's hot in here," Burn said as he walked behind Ian and grabbed his bonus cards from the table. He began dabbing his forehead with Ian's bonus cards; face up. Ian had a bonus of six extra armies. His previous nursing provided him with much needed reinforcements.

He also had a new found imperialistic interest: China. Japan. Consolidation.

He held the unquenchable fire of empire.

He attacked China in two offensive waves from the south. He did his part rightly.

He smashed through China. He spilt his forces and moved through Northern Asia coastline.

He collected his card, looked at it, and began to pack the pipe.

"What is that," the cop asked. The cop. The pig. The man who couldn't do anything else with his life but impose his adopted dogma upon other people.

The fascist. The Good Christian.

"Please stand up," he said. "Put your hands behind your back."

They put me in the back of the squad car.

I've heard the only chance at life lies in giving up all hope of it.

That the value of martyrdom outweighs its cost.

Shawn began his turn by moving a hearty force from Africa into the Middle East. He was encroaching against Ian. Shawn hoped Ian had stretched himself too thin in his grab for land.

Shawn Bob had found his golden elephant.

That spark of action to one's self interests.

So had the pigs. Fucking cops.

A small one-hitter I had forgotten about. My realization of consequence. My small mistake.

My ride downtown.

It's just a fond memory.

Shawn moved decisively into Ian's western front. Shawn controlled Afghanistan and India by the end of his turn. Ian had been pushed to the coast.

I was handed Ripper the Jack by Burn, who was hovering around the table while Glenn was in the bathroom.

Then I was handed the attack dice, by Pete.

My enemy handing me hope. My executioner handing me a loaded gun.

My turn. Mortality on deck.

I was charged with possession of a controlled substance. For a

"Do martyrs realize their immortality?"

pipe. I could plead guilty and pay a fine of \$420.

or;

I could plead no contest and receive forty hours community service.

I walked dogs. For forty hours. But, that's much later.

Long after Glenn was arrested the first time for possession. And ironically, fired from the head shop.

But this is all after the Battle of Greenland.

The line between a martyr and scapegoat isn't very thick.

It was my turn. I attacked south and won Venezuela from Shawn. He yelled, cried, and carried on. He was angry when you would even look at his land. He didn't like to share. I had ten armies in Mexico, so I attacked the contested lands with only two armies. A quick skirmish, more nursing then conquest. I moved three troops from Mexico to Greenland.

Greenland had fifteen armies.

My largest force.

2.6 to 1.

Good odds.

Shawn continued to bitch. I handed Pete the attack dice.

Forty, plus whatever he received for his land and continent bonus, against my fifteen.

Martyr.

Scapegoat.

Fool.

"All a wave does is break against the shore," I told Pete. "I will not run."

"I pray you don't," he said.

He received twelve armies all together. He placed ten in Iceland and moved a group of seven and the extra two armies into northwest Asia then moved south, into Mongolia.

He then moved five armies from Western Europe to Iceland. His turn was over.

Fifty-five to fifteen.

3.6 to 1.

Not bad odds.

Do martyrs realize their immortality?

Burn coughed long and loud. Ian had placed his misshapen kingdom into the hands of others. He had read the writing on the wall. Even through Squealer's corrections. He looked to Pete.

Pete was always a Nazi.

Ian was always afraid.

Shawn Bob was always angry.

I was always...

"Cigarette," Pete asked standing up.

"Sorry about giving your kid brain damage," Burn said to Pete as we stepped outside. "But Kelly's vaginal cavern echoes from the vibrations of her ass. I was just trying to make her avalanche. There's nothing better than fresh pink bubblegum," he said, "pre-chewed."

"On your best day," Pete said with a fire in his eye, "I will be there to knock you down."

"What about me," I asked.

"You will destroy yourself," he said exhaling. "You don't need my help."

The Wrath of God delivered by the God of Wrath to a martyr of fools.

Something is only real if someone convinces you it is.

I broke my hand at work. On the clock. I was let go by a broken hand. Glenn sullenly replaced me. Shawn, Ian and Burn had known him for years.

A few weeks later, Glenn's rented house was raided by the police. Glenn was on probation. He had been arrested not a month prior. The seizure yielded about \$1500 worth of paraphernalia and five or six un-flowering plants.

Glenn was in serious trouble.

Seven years of trouble.

Seven years of separation.

His love.

His unborn child.

It's the freedom of choice that traps us.

Ian attacked Shawn in India. And lost. Massacre feels about right.

The police pushed past Glenn's girlfriend, her mother, and the foster child that was staying with them. All for one single purpose.

The golden elephant.

About the time the police discovered Glenn's house of glass, he was standing across from me. We were at Shawn and Niki's apartment. We were playing foosball.

He told me not to worry.

Slap on the wrist.

I had just finished telling him how, a week before; I had spoken to the police about, maybe, not going to court. Glenn listened as I explained what Quid Pro Quo meant.

I'm not a rat, I told them. They reserve a spot in hell for rats to rot, I told them.

We'll see you in court, they smiled.

Ian was lamenting his offensive. His bricks and bats was no match for Shawn's machine guns. And Shawn still bitched. About how everyone was attacking him.

We used color commentary for the atrocious losses.

It happened more than you would think, a wave breaking against the shore.

This wasn't nursing though; this attack was personal. Shawn's troops had marched to Ian's borders. Ian just attacked too soon. Instead of fighting a battle, Ian rushed into a brawl.

When practicing war, Sun Tzu said, use dissimulation to succeed. Only move if a real advantage is gained.

A few days after Glenn's run-in, I heard about it. From Pete.

He told me how Glenn was looking at seven years.

He told me how the police told Glenn someone had informed

them about the house.

He told me they said it was someone who had just gotten into trouble themselves.

He told me.

Shawn Bob began his turn by receiving seven armies. He put all of them in India. He moved through Southeast Asia and cut Ian's forces in half. China became an island.

Only move if a true advantage is gained.

Pete lit the bong Burn had brought. Burn carried it in a suitcase. He put it together like a sniper rifle.

A deadeye to hit the red eye, Burn used to say.

"They think you did it," Pete told me in his bedroom. "I can respect someone saving himself and losing their teeth."

The tenets of playground law.

Something is only real.

If you are convinced.

It is.

My turn began with my seven reinforcement armies. Five went to Greenland. The other two, Venezuela. I pushed west and conquered from Shawn's frontier. I collected my card, my third card, and moved two armies from Eastern America to Greenland.

55 to 22.

55 plus whatever continent, land, or even card bonus to 22.

Good odds for a quagmire.

I had found my golden elephant.

My salvation.

I had a ten-bonus army through my cards.

If I survived that long.

After Pete told me of Glenn's temporary freedom removal, I didn't see Shawn Bob much. Burn was even harder to locate.

Burn's mother told me she didn't have his new cell phone number on hand. He wouldn't answer his old one.

I had broken bread with her. I had sat at her more table than my own.

I told Pete what I told Glenn.

This is all later though.

All a wave does is break against the shore.

Pete placed five armies in Iceland and seven in Mongolia. The coup d'état of China was quick and silent. He now had control of a large plot of middle Asia. Ian was left with a small foothold in the extreme Northwest Asia frontier.

Shawn saw the cryptic prophecy and began to look at South America.

Pete handed Ian the attack dice.

Ian handed him Ripper the Jack.

The difference between a martyr and a scapegoat; a scapegoat is blamed. A martyr is condemned.

"Cigarette," I asked.

In war, your great objective is victory, not a lengthy campaign.

Pete was coming.

The drums of war.

Mortality on deck.

Glenn continued on at the job after the second arrest. Ian even spotted him a few dime bags. He had known Glenn for years. Long before I ever met them. He fell in easily.

I had my car break down, my hand wrapped in a cast, and lost my job. I fell out easily.

Pete and I were standing outside. I gave him a cigarette and the

"It's the freedom of choice that traps us."

lighter. Then I lit mine.

He said, "I'm going to Irish boot Ian out of Asia"
"So."

"You have one more turn," he said. "Then I come."

Pete was a good man.

He always warned me of the wave.

Then he rode it with me.

He used to give me rides to the animal shelter where I was
judicially volunteered. I cleaned up dog shit and cat piss. I walked
those throw-a-way souls. Sometimes they walked me.

Sometimes we walked each other.

Pete was always black.

Burn was always yellow.

Shawn Bob was always red.

I was no longer around. I think Glenn was green at that point.
Burn wasn't allowed to play. From what Pete told me, after seven
hours and almost total annihilation, Burn threw his hat onto the
game board in a fit of rage. Pete said he claimed insanity.

Ian was holding the bong as Pete and I returned from outside.
Shawn was in the bathroom.

Ian's turn would be short. Maybe a small fortification. Indonesia
most likely.

His turn was short. He placed his reinforcements in Indonesia
and placed the attack dice where Shawn was sitting.

Sun Tzu said, whether to concentrate or divide your troops
must be decided by circumstances. Let your rapidity be that of the
wind, your compactness that of a forest. In raiding and plundering
be like fire, in immovability like a mountain.

Shawn came back from the bathroom. Sat down. And paused.

It's easy to get dropped off. While cleaning dog shit I watched it
happen. I would walk along the dog cells and see them sitting in
the corner. They always looked at me with a haunting stare. They
always looked deflated. Lost between the hope of rescue and the
realization of reality.

Something is only true if someone convinces you it is.

Risk is all about chance and circumstance.

Shawn received eight
reinforcement armies. Then
turned over his bonus cards. He
placed twelve armies in India. He
put the additional four armies in
Afghanistan. He attacked Ian's
southern front, Cambodia. A slight
distraction for Shawn's forces.

He attacked Indonesia.

He attacked Ian's homeland. Ian had held the continent of
Australia, where Indonesia sits, since the beginning of the game.

Ian's defenses fell.

Hard.

Shawn stopped and pulled troops from Africa into India. He
collected his bonus card and nailed two coffins.

I was now fucked.

But Pete would have to earn it.

I used to walk an abused pit bull mix, at the animal shelter,
because paid employees found other dogs to walk. She was always
on my roster. A throw-a-away like me.

Once, we were walking along the path, through the woods, that
we always walked. Only the two of us. Refugees that were dropped
off.

All alone in the woods.

All alone and I dropped her leash.

She noticed the release of tension and spun. There I was, all
alone in the woods, staring nose to nose with a real risk.

I knelt slowly and she watched me.

I was backed into a corner I had not chosen. This was not the
ground I chose.

I was struck by the hope of rescue and the realization of reality.

I could wait for someone to save me, or I could do something. I
could save myself. Such is true risk, I guess. You either deal with
your problems or you let them deal with you.

Slowly I grabbed the leash.

Slowly I moved on.

I saw Pete regularly. We would get stoned and play chess on
Sundays over the coffee I brought. Then he would give me a ride to
the shelter. I spread the forty hours over six months quite evenly.

I ran into Burn a few times. We exchanged the usuals, but it was
forced and awkward. I didn't see Shawn or Ian. I didn't ask Pete
about either. Why would I?

They thought I was a narc. They thought I was rat.

Something is only real if someone convinces you it is.

Shawn handed me the attack dice and the world had grown into
two main empires.

Black and Red.

I turned over my bonus cards and placed five into Alaska and
the rest into Greenland.

I attacked the battle-scarred valley that was South America. I
attained Brazil, collected my card and gave Pete the attack dice.

Mortality on deck.

Then early one morning Pete called me. He asked, If I knew?
Well of course you know, he said.

You're not a narc.

You're not a rat.

The foster child living at the house had brought a flower to class
for show and tell. She said it came from Glenn's closet. She said he
showed it to her.

Burn called me an hour later.

He was at my house in fifteen
minutes; bowl already packed. He
apologized.

Then he told me to hit him in the
ribs. Free shot, he said.

Most apologizes seem contrived
to me. Burn's had the hope of rescue
and the realization of reality in
between the words. He meant it.

**"You either deal with
your problems or you let
them deal with you."**

I never asked, or received one from Shawn. Or Ian.

Twenty armies.

Twenty fucking armies.

Pete dropped twenty fucking armies in China and attacked
north. He wiped Ian's forces from Asia. He grabbed Kamchatka,
directly to my west, within spitting distance of Alaska. He was
standing at both doorways lubing up.

"When your enemy expects you from the front," Pete said,"
greet them from behind.

Glenn soon quit the job citing schedule problems.

Soon they replaced him.

Ian was then arrested for distribution of a controlled substance.
They showed up at his home. Knocking with a warrant.

Glenn was looking at seven years.

Sometimes it's the choice that misguides us.

On desperate ground a man must fight or flee.
Sun Tzu once said, masking strength with weakness is to be effected by tactical dispositions.

Glenn learned what Quid Pro Quo meant. His Latin phrase tutors rode with him to Ian's home. Then had Ian bring him and a new friend some pot so they could impose more charges upon Ian.

"Do you want to smoke a cigarette first," Pete asked me.

"No," I said exhaling.

Ian and Shawn got up and started watching Glenn and Burn play video games. This would take awhile, I heard Shawn mutter.

The Battle of Greenland.

My Wrath of God.

The waste of time on a diversion.

I had forgotten the fundamental rule of defense. Do not rely on the likelihood of the enemy's not coming, but in the readiness to receive them. I think Sun Tzu said it.

I didn't look over my shoulder.

It's a running theme, I guess.

Pete attacked Greenland with all of Iceland's forces as I was lighting the bong.

I stood shoulder to shoulder on the unprepared defensive front with my army. The army of St. Jude. There we stood resolved.

Pete, though, made an egregious error himself. You should not surround an army and not leave an outlet. Do not bar them from sight of home. Do not back them into a corner.

A lost cause is better than a found death.

This army of cast-offs. Of the unwanted. Refugees that found a home. We disregard the hope of rescue and embrace the realization of reality.

Pete's throw-a-away hoards displaced the ocean as it sat in monstrous ships in the bay off our coast. Our beaches were now under water. Our enemies trying to erase what vestige of land we would lose.

Such storms are that of Gods.

Such reactions are that of martyrs.

All a wave does is break against the shore.

The main attack began.

The advancing army moved swiftly up the beach in all directions. As if glass beads were strewn carelessly over a marble floor. They swarmed like darkness.

There we stood.

Home to our backs.

Such is the art of warfare.

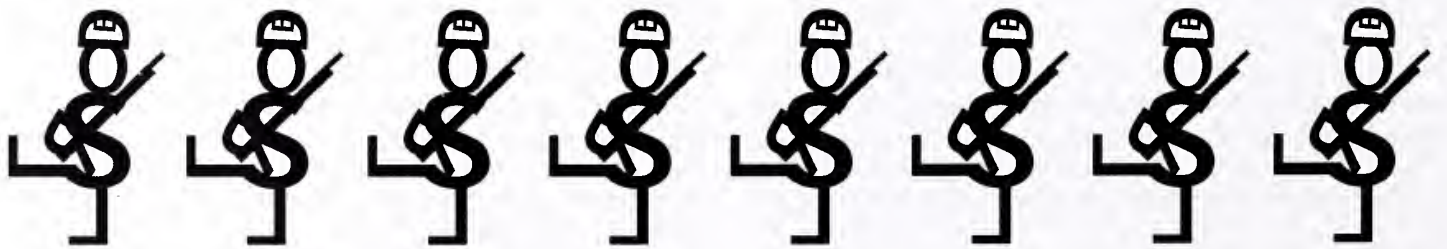
When one speaks with greatness, Leonidius said to my right, one's word is as good as gold.

Still they advanced. Foraging our earth. Using it to kill us.

On desperate ground, indeed, on desperate ground.

We charged.

I lost Greenland. I lost Alaska. Shawn, returning from the video games, lost Africa in a bold offensive by Pete a few turns later.



"All a wave does is
break against the
shore."

Glenn ended up in Maine somewhere. Living in the spot he deserved to haunt. Pumping gas. Breaks your heart.

Shawn became manager, after Ian was prosecuted and convicted thanks to Glenn. He spends his days yelling and cursing, surrounded.

Burn is still Burn. He still works at the head-shop. He says he wants to go on a trip.

Pete had a wonderful son. I still to try to teach him curse words while Pete and I play chess over coffee on Sundays.

Such is the art of risk, I imagine.

TYPOGRAPHY "SOLOIER" BY LAURA GOLOSTEIN

A BROKEN DOOR

BY ANDREW JOHNSON

Here's a bit of philosophy: what is a door if it's out of order? Is it still a door? Does it retain its identity if its only purpose in life, its only reason for existence, is stripped away? How does it go on when this door finds itself useless? Does it wallow in its own pity? Does it fuss with the splints and cracks of its frame? Is it embarrassed by the rusty handle? Or does it lash out in anger at all those that pass it? It hears the snide remarks. It sees the demeaning stares. Maybe it can find satisfaction in the fact that it no longer has to feel cold clammy, or hot sweaty, hands of disrespectful, disconnected, disregarding fools who passed in and out its life? Could it find strength in its weaknesses? Can it see that even though the door is broken, it still stands? Can the memories of all the years it served its purpose cause it to find peace? To remember happiness?

In truth, a door is a door. It will always be a door. Regardless of its handicap. Even if the door is taken off the hinges and thrown to the side, it is still a door.

Adam

BY ADELINE RAMOS

Your moonlit voice whispered a wind tunnel through my heart...
Your hands spoke with each stroke, painting false prophecies of splendor
With ease you flowed through me like a river meeting another simply to reach the ocean.
Bare breasted, streaked in ebony, aching under the painted radiance of the night
This garden of Eden, with its spoiled fruit and broken promises
Violet and crimson, I laid here in the emerald
Legs parted I delivered my stillbirth heart...
Here in the emerald of your ruined Eden.

SUPERWOMAN

BY DAMELA CEDELIES

She sits and she weeps
Already knowing her destiny
For it's been chosen for her
She sits and does not wonder
Of the world around her
For her path has been written
Her goal is to do what she should be
That she must have the perfect shape
That she must have the perfect weight
And that money is her only valuable possession
That's what she's being told
She must do everything to possess it
Her body, mind, and soul must be used to gain it
If she must work the pole to get it
If she must strike a pose in the nude
If she must submit her womanhood to get it
She must do it or her future won't be prosperous
That's what she's being told
The streets are what she knows and she'll never rise above it
That's what they'll like to see
Her becoming a baby's mama, with no baby's daddy
Stuck in the hood, forever on welfare with no child support
That's the image that's being painted on her face
Dancing in videos, showing off her hips and thighs
That's her only worth or so they write in their statistics
A life of poverty that's what they predict
But she stands, and wipes her tears
She refuses to be another statistic
It's time for a new chapter in her life, and this time she's the author
The streets might be her hometown, but it's not her future
And there she won't remain, strive she must, and fight she will
To achieve what she thinks is best
She won't submit to what's been said or written
Her destiny she will change and leave them all in shock
Her story is not yet complete, the rest is still unwritten
And she will fill in the blanks as she moves along
Her life... a history in the making
She is the definition of a SUPERWOMAN

The Rodeo

BY DANAI VERDE

Catch you at the Rodeo—
Where the latest Fellini hangs
With the Gondry shorts,
And the scene kids come to pontificate on
Cinematography,
And the bums come in for some relief and coonverstaion
On cold nights,
And you—
Where you sit behind the register,
One eye on a customer's account,
The other on an episode of Curb,
In you cable-knit sweater.

Sometimes I come in just to see if you're there,
Just to fumble through another awkward conversation.
But tonight it's the quiet girl with the long hair
Who always forgets my name.
I don't hold it against her,
I don't know hers either.

Video Rodeo—
I dig, but not as much as I dig you
And your cable knit sweaters
And your sweet smile
And awkward wave
As I leave the three movies I have no interest in seeing.

SHRAPNEL

BY DANAI VERDE

Isaac had been there for hours and still had not seen her. He towered in the far corner closest to the band, shifting his weight from one foot to the other, tapping his bony fingers across the wall molding to the beat of the bass line. Isaac was nearly a whole head taller than most people he came across, and the hundred or so people at Ben's house were no exception. St. Patrick's Day was always an occasion in Gainesville. Apart from regulars like him that went out almost every night of the week, there were many more of those that took time off from their lattes and heavy studying to take part in the debauchery of the drunken holiday. The party was buzzing with the arrival of those thrown out of the bars at closing time, and he grazed the crowd of dirty jeans and obscure band shirts shuffling through the double doors for the top of her head. It was getting increasingly harder to pick out individuals in the crowd as it got later into the night. Isaac's head throbbed from searching for her in so many faces for so long. He focused his attention down at his clothes for a moment, making sure he still looked presentable. The beer that spilled on him earlier in the evening had completely dried and had graciously not left a stain. Isaac looked around to make sure no one was watching, and quickly lifted his arm and took a whiff. *Coast clear there*, he thought. Now if she would only show up already...

The living room had become unbearably humid, reeking of sweat and stale tobacco. Bodies huddled closer and closer to one another and to the dining room where the band was hammering their set. Most were too drunk to notice or care, but Isaac's anxiety had forced him into unwanted soberness. He started to feel pinned against the corner that had graciously offered him a complete survey of the room and its occupants, and abruptly decided he needed some fresh air and more importantly, another beer. With his dark eyes on the exit, Isaac shuffled through the crowd, mumbling his excuses and apologies to several stony faces, all of them obviously annoyed by his awkward interruption of their immersion in the lo-fi grit of the music.

The night was unusually chill for late March, and the rush of cool air against his face as he walked onto the front steps was instantly refreshing. Glass shattered just ahead of him in the dark, and as his eyes adjusted to the moonlight he saw several silhouettes circling the abandoned house next door, busting their Converse through windows and crushing wood paneling. Isaac tried to discern if she could possibly be anyone of the silhouettes, and then just as quickly decided it was nearly impossible. Parker's a lush, Isaac thought, but no amount of alcohol could make her act like *that* much of an ass. Isaac decided to go back inside. At least inside the music did a better job of drowning his

racing thoughts than the crumbling house and endless clamor of voices. He took one more deep breath of chill air before resigning into the depths of dirty masses when he saw Parker, or rather, perceived her through the dimness. Isaac instantly knew it was her, her hair gave her away, and as she moved it looked even darker in the shadows and then, only a few steps later, sleeker through the bright cast of the moon. She stumbled a bit, though her hand was pressed firmly on someone's shoulder—was it Beth?—as they headed in the direction of the door, his direction. Isaac panicked, all too aware that he had stared across the yard at them for a second too long, and began to shuffle into the house as if he hadn't seen them at all and was only desperate to get back to the festivities after taking a short hiatus to refill his beer.

"Isaac?! What up, boy?!" The sound of her voice stopped him. Parker removed her hand from—yes, it was Beth's—shoulder and darted up the steps to greet him. Her smile was so big it looked like it hurt as she went in for a hug. Suddenly, their hips were flush with her head on his chest. "I haven't seen you at the bakery lately when I've come in to see Beth. You still work there, don't you?"

"Uhh... yeah, yeah," he said, as he stood stiffly in her embrace, "I'm working less hours lately, I, umm... have some exams coming up. I just got here a few minutes ago- I didn't expect to see you here." Isaac looked over Parker's head at Beth, who looked more than annoyed with Parker's drunken enthusiasm.

"I'm going inside," said Beth, as she sauntered up the steps to the landing, "I have to work early, but I need to catch a few minutes of this band. I have to at least pretend I gave them a chance before I rip them a new one in the Alligator review tomorrow."

Beth swung open the door and began pushing her way through the crowd, oblivious to the same stony faces that Isaac withdrew from. Parker pulled away from Isaac's awkward embrace and began chattering, asking thoughtful questions about his classes and moaning about her Linguistics professor. Before he even met her, Isaac found himself falling for Parker. Beth and Isaac had decided to go out for a drink after closing the bakery one night. "I'm house-sitting for my friend Parker over winter break," Beth had said, "and need to stop by her place to take care of a couple of things first. Her place is on the way to The Top—why don't you

"St. Patrick's Day was always an occasion in Gainesville."

just ride with me?" Isaac found himself getting to know Parker that night, perusing her vinyl collection and chuckling at the doodles that cluttered her refrigerator door. As he remembered his first encounter with her existence, he looked down at her face. Her expressions are so powerful, he thought. He noticed this the first day he saw her come into the bakery to pick up her book from Beth, weeks after his brief visit to her empty home. What book was it? Oh, yes... Raymond Carver's "What We Talk About When We Talk About Love". Isaac was even more drawn to her. Her eyes crinkled at the corners and her forehead moved up and down, up and down with the inflection of her voice. In fact, her head moved so much while she chattered and laughed that her long hair swung against her cheeks rather rapidly. Her bangs also fell in front of her eyes quite often, and she rarely took a moment to pull them behind her ears. Isaac caught himself doing this for her now, and only then did she take a moment's pause.

"Hey, do you want a cigarette," she asked, dangling one Camel Light from her lips as she pulled another from her pack. She placed it in her open palm and offered it to him. "C'mon. Take it—but don't dare give me that I-only-smoke-when-I'm-drunk crap. I'm the last one to judge. Just lay off me when I want one tomorrow, deal?" Parker gave him a wry half-smile, stuck the filter between Isaac's lips, and lit the cigarette. She stared at him a moment before lighting her own, making sure he knew what he was doing. Satisfied with his first drag, she took hers.

The band stopped suddenly, and a slow parade of bodies came flooding out of the house. The small concrete landing was instantly crowded, and Isaac instinctually grabbed Parker's hand and led her into the open driveway. The silhouettes weren't finished with the falling house, and Isaac was surprised to hear there was still more glass left to break. He stood close to Parker, being careful not to blow smoke into her face. She winced at each shattering sound, painfully aware of how close her back was to the soaring house-shrapnel.

"I feel like I'm going to get a shard of glass through the face," she said, moving inches closer to Isaac. She felt even closer to him in the cold, her body radiating warmth more comforting than mere body heat, "That would be such a romantic way to die, don't you

think?"

"No, no. A shard of glass through the heart would be *the* most romantic way to die," Isaac smiled jauntily at her, placing his hands on her slight shoulders and looking into her eyes. He's fairly sure they're even darker than his own. Suddenly, without a thought, he took her hand and placed it on his chest. "Would you do that to me?"

"Huh?" Parker's forehead wrinkled in confusion. Isaac pulled her closer, pressing her hand more firmly on his chest, blindly encouraged by the adrenaline that pumped through his body.

"Would you put a shard of glass through my heart?" Isaac looked down into her face, searching for any ounce of insincerity. There was another loud crash as Parker lifted her face to his. Isaac was lost in her kiss, and felt his reserve crumble away. She had put her fist right through it. The tumble of voices around them were nothing but feedback, the crashing of wood and tile and glass beat like a drum and shrieked like tambourines, and her face was the soft melody that orchestrated it all into one.

And, as it began, it was just as soon over.

"Parker! Where you at?" Beth yelled, scanning the yard. "I'm ready to go home!" Isaac winced as Parker abruptly pulled away, wiping her mouth on her sleeve. She gave him one last look, a little more steady and perplexed than those she had given him earlier. As Parker turned away to catch Beth, Isaac noticed that she stopped for a moment to square her shoulders and catch her breath. She ambled a little more calmly and steadily than when she had arrived.

Isaac watched as Parker met Beth and walked off towards the open lot where they had parked. He breathed a sigh of relief, and stood up a little straighter. Isaac felt a wave of hope rush through him, and didn't care to stay at the party any longer. He quickly unlocked his road bike from the tree at the end of the driveway, and rode off in the direction of his apartment. The same chill air that gave him relief earlier in the evening from the sticky crowds now threatened to steal Parker's lingering warmth away from him, and Isaac quickly zipped his hoodie up to his neck to keep her there.

"...and her face was the soft melody that orchestrated it all into one."



DRAWING "FIGURE AT MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, NY" BY MANISH PATEL

letter from a fairy tale

BY SCOTT MAGILL

Dear Prince Charming,
If you're reading this letter
I'm pretty sure you can tell
I got out of this dump tower.
Sorry I didn't wait for you
But life is too damn short
I couldn't just wait around
For you to come bursting
In with your shining armor,
Riding on a noble steed.
I cut my hair
To a reasonable length
Climbed down to my freedom
Flicked off the wicked witch
And decided to leave
The fairy tale behind.
Good luck with your life
And I hope you find
Someone else to save
Once again I'm sorry
But I'm just not
The damsel type anymore.

Love,
Someone who didn't need your saving.

BROTHER

BY EBER H. MORRIS

My brown eyes are on you at all times
My eyes are with you when you are sad
My eyes want to turn the other way when you are bad

I am your protector
I am your mind at times of needs
I am the one that guides you and whispers in your right ear
I am the One who died, your brother Carlos
I saw you at my burial, both you and my mother cried

You remember me at all times
You carried my casket that was little and egg shell white
You sung to me that song called LOVE
You remember me, cause I am always at your right side.



An excerpt from "...and a bottle of Jack Daniels."

BY BRENDAN CONNOLLY

Burn tells me this. He tells me as we are on the wrong road and headed into Maine. The sun was disappearing behind us.

Rarely is a lesson learned without humiliation.

It's the keystone to any religion. Or support group, he says. You must be humbled before you can be redeemed, he says.

You must tread the gutter before you can dance with the stars.

What doesn't kill you only makes you stronger, right, Burn asked.

He, and a friend he used to have, once found out something about a couple who lived a few blocks away. Something bad. Something irrevocable. Burn doesn't talk to this kid anymore, he says. Not after that day.

He would be about our age, Burn's friend might say.

So, Burn says.

I once heard that most child abductors are usually the child's parents, Burn says. 9 out of 10, the news reports. The convenience of safety.

At least it's their mom, you think. How bad could it be?

But, what about the minority, he says.

When the mom and dad are snuggled in their soft down comforter, dreaming about tomorrow. They sleep through the sound of a small window on the door breaking. Right next to the deadbolt, maybe.

It's just a few inches to the handle.

The next morning mom and dad are eating breakfast, joking about the durability of little Timmy or Johnny's heavy eyelids. This is before mom goes to wake Mr. Sleepy-Head, perhaps. Maybe the first thought to mom was, he was jerking off in the bathroom. Maybe she knocks and gets no response.

The dad might then notice the broken window.

Burn's friend finds this out.

You might pass for him, Burn's friend says.

Maybe the kid ran away. So the mom and dad call the police. My son is gone, the father might say.

Please find him. Please help me.

9 out of 10. Maybe they question the parents. It's odd, Mr. Detective may insinuate, there is no ransom note.

Maybe the mom and dad leave the police station and go to church and pray. Maybe.

Just say you're their son, Burn's friend says.

Why, Burn might ask.

I don't know, his friend could respond. It's funny.

One must be broken down before they can be rebuilt. Maybe, just maybe, Burn may think, some things are better off dead.

Burn tells me this as he looks for what is left of the pot. We are lost in Maine.

Perhaps the mom and dad move on. Maybe they even get over the night their precious little angel disappeared. Could be the mom shuffles down empty hallways, smoking cigarettes and drinking wine late at night, looking at pictures of little Timmy or Johnny. It's hard to see through the tears, she may think.

Maybe, they are harder to see now that they are covered in a thick smoke residue. Maybe she doesn't clean much anymore. Maybe she died that morning. Maybe this is how the minority grieves.

Burn's friend says he was doing a project for school. He says he

was using microfilm and saw the front page news.

Child Disappears.

Why would I do that, Burn may wonder aloud.

I'll give you twenty bucks, Burn's friend may smile.

Just like Burn; quantity over quality.

Maybe Burn and his friend smoke a joint before they do this. Behind an old willow tree. Maybe Burn's friend gives him the money there.

Maybe on little Timmy or Johnny's birthday, the mom and dad drive to his honorary grave and lay flowers.

Because, by chance, they never find his body. Their son. Their lost son.

So Burn may knock on the door.

And maybe the dad will answer.

Dad, Burn could say in his most excited voice. Just loud enough so his friend, who could be in the bushes, should be able to hear him.

Dad, he says again.

Son, the dad would say. Really? Is it you? After all this time?

Maybe then Burn feels like shit. Maybe he no longer wants to be redeemed. Maybe this dad doesn't like pranks. Maybe Burn feels guilty.

I knew it, the dad says.

When the police said you might have been cut up into little tiny pieces, the dad says, I knew you weren't. Oh, your mother still kisses your picture before she falls asleep. She cries in the dark, he says.

When they said, the dad could continue, you might have been sold into slavery as a young prostitute in Southeast Asia, I knew it didn't happen.

I never looked, the dad says, in the newspaper when they found that incestuous cult up in the woods. I knew you weren't there.

I knew, he says.

So, the dad may ask, where have you been son?

Maybe the dad doesn't move. Doesn't smile. Doesn't do anything. Just looks, maybe. Overcome.

Um, Burn may jumble.

Doesn't matter, the dad would say. I knew you weren't locked in someone's basement.

Even when they found your pajamas out on the interstate, the dad would say, I knew you weren't in that snuff film.

I knew. I knew, he may say.

So son, the dad may ask, do you know how I know?

Burn may or may not answer.

Well Jim, he may say to Burn.

Church, Burn may say. Jesus?

No, the dad says. Because I buried you under the porch you're standing on.

Son, he would say.

Maybe Burn never went down that street again.

9 out of 10, Burn says. Burn tells me this as we see the New Hampshire welcome sign on the Maine border. He says it's what you love that will end up hurting you. It's that which loves you, that will rise you above.

Burn tells me this. He doesn't know why though.

He says this looking for the bag of mushrooms. The sun was rising behind us.

HUSH

BY CHRISTOPHER GAMBOA

Let Shakespeare lend his mighty hand
As I write this here the best I can
Let my words be strong and my hand be still
As I spill my thoughts through the quill.
The darkest thoughts that consume my life,
And leave me here without a light.

Hush, sweet child, and speak no more.

Should I write my name on a wet concrete floor?
Perhaps then I might be seen, perhaps then be heard?

Or should I leave it on a dry erase board?

Hush, sweet child, and speak no more.

My life has seen its ups and downs,
But I've fallen in and cannot be found.
Left at the bottom to rot away,
To die like my dreams that slowly fade away.

To be, to be, but what for?

Hush, sweet child, and speak no more.

Yet in this darkness I found a rock
And with this rock I made a spark
And lit the only thing I had,
A picture, all bent and sad.

A picture of me in my early years;
Before the sadness, before the fears.

And as it burned the darkness approached,
Till the light was no more.

Hush, sweet child, and speak no more.

i am life

BY JOHNATHAN KING

I am life.
The soulless philosopher,
The brainless intellect,
And useless commodity.
I am a lustful fighter and a raging lover.
I drink water from the earth and draw fire from the sky.
I find beauty in touch, and harmony in taste.
I play elegant music that can only be seen.
I love what is hated and hate only that which cannot love.
I float on gentle breeze but will not move in stormy weather.
I see what is only felt and feel more than I know.
I am calm in calamity yet wild in a barren soul.
I can be found asleep under a tree on a sunny day,
Or dancing with children on a cold rainy night.
I am as fast as time allows, yet find no reason for haste.
I can stop in an instant...but never a moment too soon.
I've been treasured forever yet seem always so short.
And when you come to know me,
Know that being is prime.
I am life.

Departure for Death

BY ANTHONY PASCARELLA

A cold gust spread across the room
Accommodating the climate for the man of doom.
He sashayed slowly toward my bed,
As if time had no importance to the dead.
Clouds fused together blanketing light, forcing anything spirited to take flight.
I began to feel dreamy and light headed,
But at the same time completely sophisticated.
See death itself did not draw my fear
But rather, what existence I will persevere.
At this moment debating has no weight,
For doom itself patiently awaits.
A faint bell rang twice, and Doom, through the darkness,
Gave evidence of delight.
He slowly rose and his glare I felt strong,
And in that instance I was gone;
Forever leaving this world behind, to journey on and discover the undefined.



MIXED MEDIA "THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY" BY TOM DRATLER

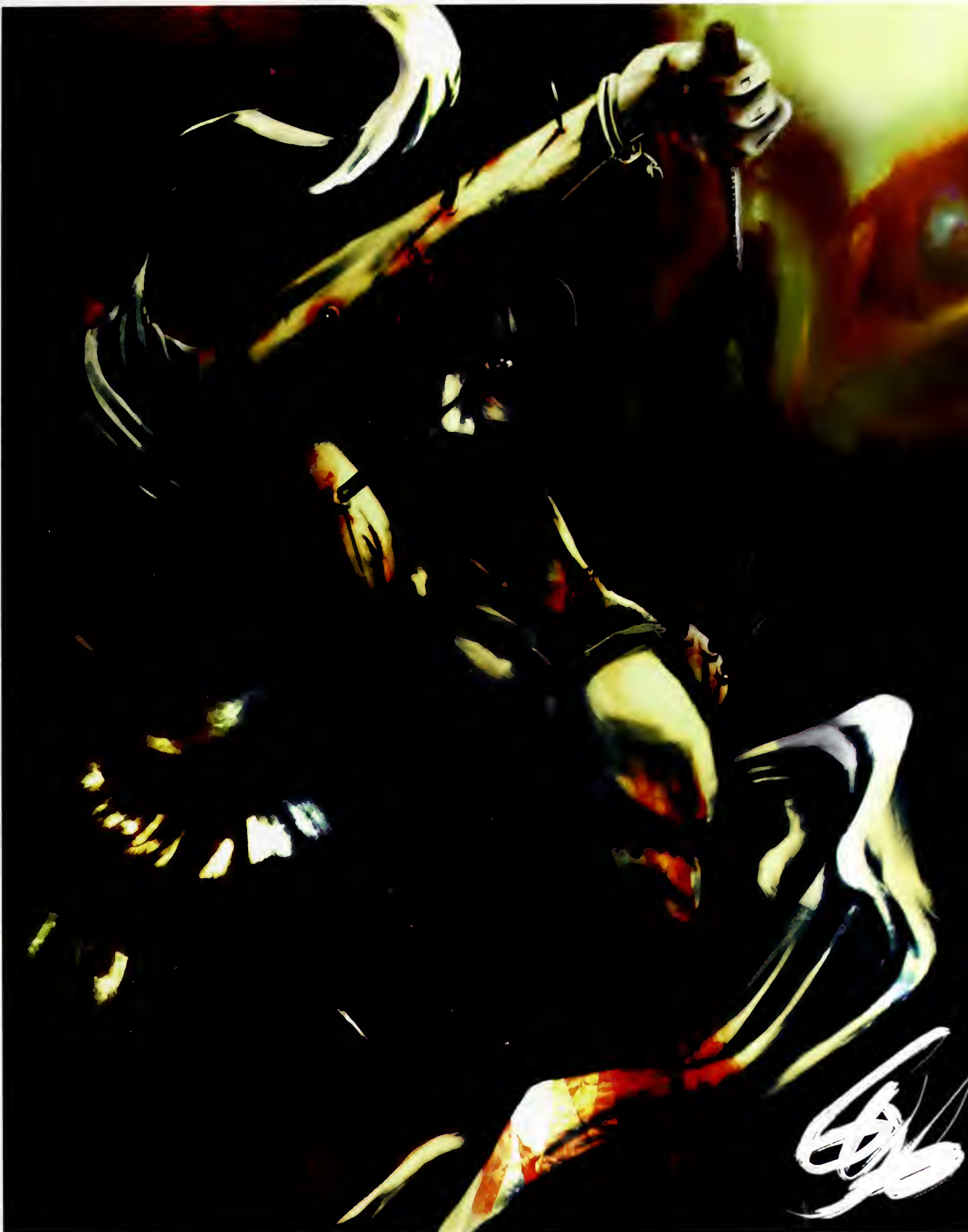


ACRYLICS "IN THE BUSINESS WORLD" BY WESTLEY CEDENO



MIXED MEDIA "UNTITLED" BY PATRICK!



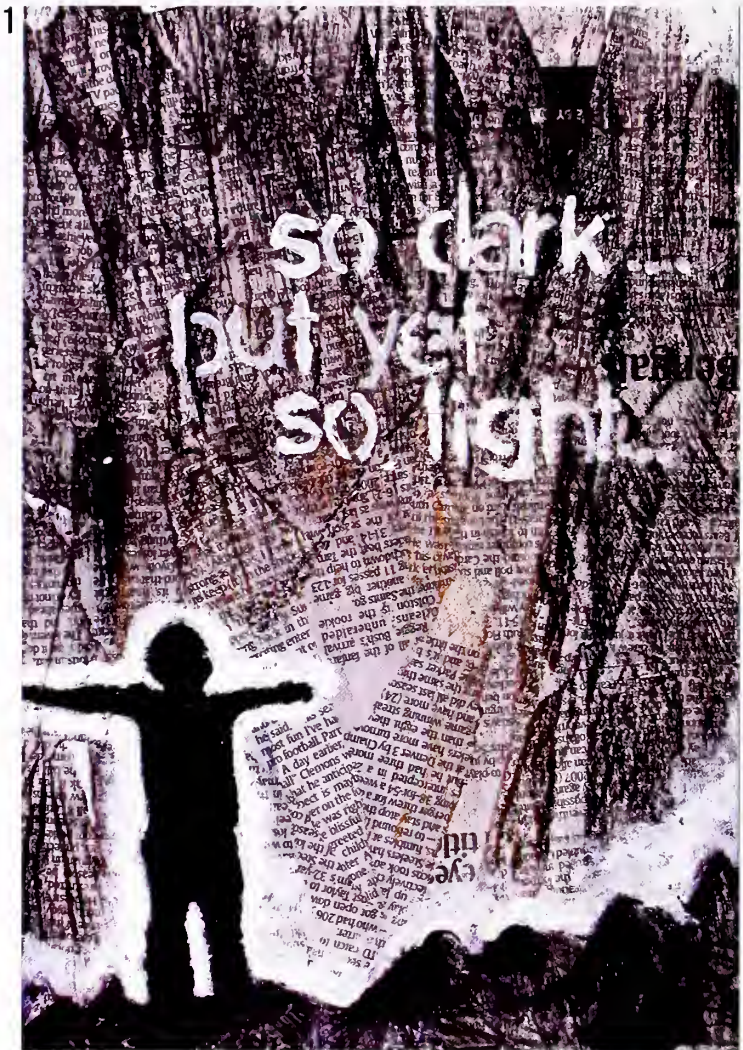


Handwritten signature in white ink.

BY CHUN LO

"PENETRATION ADDICTION"

P'ANKU 53



MIXED MEDIA

- 1 "CLARIFICATION"
- 2 "EXPERIENCE"
- 3 "DESTINY"

BY PAULA ROJAS





PHOTOGRAPHY "TREES IN FROST" BY LEA POVIAN

SHE SEES ME

The Musings of a Teenage Mom

BY S. CHEATHAM

Little me, I lost her, did not know why I needed her
rough hands unlike a nurturer, held me when I didn't ask
embarrassed
she was no fun, when she said she meant it.
I hated her.
Career day the progeny of lawyers, doctors, nurses and teachers
Held out the proud breast of a peacock
No not me
She will take your order at Burger King
I loathe her.
My birthday, yes my birthday, she's not there, no gift, no money
Bullshit!
She got fired. Yes fired!
I woke up still angry, little toys rested on my pillow
Smelling of picked fries and sweat glands.
I threw trash, kids throw trash sometimes but oh goody my friends could see
Those rough hands beneath them, to serve them and pick their hand downs.
I despise her
They teased me.
A janitor, all men until her
I wished she were dead
On weekends she aught us and taught us
No play ground and sleeping late
Did I mention she was no fun?
For Easter most kids gorged themselves on chocolate and
Ruined pretty dresses
I waited to see her, dirty hospital, ew sick people
Never got there, she left me, she did not wait
My teen years I cried for her, I need you, where you are
My street life is gutter life
A mistake? Not a mistake
I found you again you see, in the eyes of this thing I made
Why does she stare at me, I feel guilty
Did I look at you as she does me?
It's hard now, she's hungry. To feed her, I leave her
I work hard, my hands hurt, when I get home she's sleeping
I kiss her; did you kiss me when I did not see?
I look at my hands, they hurt me, they feel like your
I rub my face. I remember.
She held me,
She fed me,
She taught me,
She worked for me,
She stole for me and got fired for me,
She picked up trash and got spat at for me.
If I am half as good to her as she was to me;
she won't like me now.
She might hate me
That's a good trade
For one day she will know this love
I Love her!

Victim of My Own Desire

BY SCOTT MAGILL

“No, there isn’t
any romance here;
simply flesh meeting
flesh.”

The beginning of this story is the end of another, as so many beginnings are; the end of my first love. The problem with always winning the fights is that the loser, my ex, slammed the metaphoric door on our relationship. And when that door closed another door swung open: the door to steel, my first gay club, where I had one thing in common with everyone. We were all searching for something or rather someone.

Someone to touch, someone to be touched by, someone who shares the same desires.

I walked onto the dance floor looking for a man who wanted me as much as I wanted him. Tonight is all about lust, no deeper desire to feel anything but a physical connection. The desire to feel his smooth skin graze mine, to feel his lips part letting me in, to feel his fingers running through my hair. The intense need to know every inch of him tonight. But that doesn’t come just yet. First there is the dance, it doesn’t happen like the old movies here, there aren’t any eyes meeting across the room, slow motions lead to being trampled, and nervous conversation is like whispering to someone with a chain saw. No, there isn’t any romance here; simply flesh meeting flesh. And I just found the flesh I wanted to meet: 5’10”, black hair, and light tan skin stretched tightly over powerful muscles. How no one had claimed him yet worried me for a moment; he must be picky. I forced the worry aside I wouldn’t be denied tonight. I walked right up to him, took his hand, and pulled him toward the center of the dance floor. Once I had us where everyone could see us, showing off my victory. I pulled him close so our bodies rubbed against each other as we swayed to the techno beat. By the end of the 5th song with him I couldn’t stand the tease of just dancing

anymore. I gave him another kiss that said everything (I have to have you, let’s get out of here, you’re coming home with me) and turned toward the door; I knew he’d follow me. I was never this bold before now, but that’s why I knew this would work. He took my hand and let me drag him off the dance floor and out of the club. Any other night I would have asked where his car was or how he got here but instead I just went to my car letting him follow me and get in the passenger seat. He spent the short drive back to my apartment staring at me so intensely I could feel it on the air. When I parked the car he kissed me this time and just before it reached the peak of passion I pulled back giving him another smile this one said “not just yet”. Our elevator ride to the third floor could have been the opening scene to a porno, both of us groping each other every place imaginable. We only stopped long enough to get behind the privacy of my front door before our shirts came off. The walk to the bedroom seemed graceful even with us removing our shoes and pants all the while still kissing as if stopping that would end life itself. When we crossed the threshold to my bedroom we were both stripped to the skin and firm. We collapse onto the bed in our embrace of each other. Even though I had been in charge the whole night up until now he quickly became the dominant one and I loved it. Feeling his passion for me in his every movement and watching his muscles tense made me climax at the same time he did. I fell asleep in his arms feeling completely satisfied. But the next morning I woke up without him. The only proof of the night was the condom which I pityingly compared myself to, used and ditched. But the reality of it is that I wanted this to happen. I wasn’t a victim of anything but my own desires.

Fairy Tale

BY LUBA SOLONENKO

Once upon a time, in a kingdom that may or may not have existed, there might have lived a princess. She may have married a prince and she may have been happy. Maybe together (maybe not), the princess and the prince might have had a daughter.

Perhaps their daughter was deathly afraid of heights, perhaps she was stolen by a goblin. The goblin might have locked her up in a high tower, which may (or may not) have been protected by a dragon.

There might have been a prince who may have slayed the dragon. Perhaps he rescued her, or so it may have seemed. Maybe he loved her, maybe he didn't, for she may have loved him. The prince might have broken the spell – perhaps just to break a heart. She may have thought he would be there forever, while he may have known he would not.

The girl might have staggered home, or maybe she ran. She may have gotten there safely, or maybe she got hurt on the way. Perhaps king and queen were drinking tea when she arrived, perhaps they were already gone. Maybe the girl was taken in by a gypsy, or maybe she starved to death.

She may have met the prince in the future, but the prince might not have been aware. Maybe he decided to avoid her, or maybe, she was never there.

Thanks Luis

BY DINA MEDINA

My day started off horrible. Being twenty isn't all it's cracked up to be. You are just between being legal and still not legal to do cool stuff. It was eight o'clock and the morning seemed the same as usual. Except to me it was like my world was falling apart. Earlier that morning, I got a phone call from my best bud breaking the news to me. My boyfriend was caught cheating on me not only by her, but every one in R.O.T.C. I decided that that was it; someone was going down. I dressed comfortably and walked outside to tell my brother that I was leaving.

He asked me, "What is wrong with you?"

I replied, "Life sucks and I hate men."

He laughed, "Another one?"

I turned and gave him an evil look and said, "Very funny, I am so glad that you get so much amusement from my suffering."

"Well you can't hate all men. Then that'll mean you hate me too."

"You're different. You have to love me."

He smiled sweetly. "I don't have to, but I do."

I turned to face him, half smiled, and then turned to climb into my car.

When he stopped me, he gave me a kiss on my forehead and said, "Things could be worse." Who would've thought that he would be right?

That night, I came home early to tell him the good news. I was in such a wonderful mood. When I ran through the front door, I yelled his name out, hoping that he would greet me like he always did. But he didn't. I figured that maybe he was busy with the car. I went to the garage door to knock but the music was blasting so loud that he wouldn't hear it anyways. So I waited a bit before I opened the door. Finally I did.

The door creaked open and total silence fell upon me. What I saw was something that you would not even want to wish on your worst enemy. The feeling of shock was like someone punching you in the stomach when you're taking a deep breath, just twenty times harder. Before I could think of anything else, I called 911.

The operator answered, "911 Emergency."

Before she could finish her sentence I screamed, with tears all choked up in my throat, that if she didn't send an ambulance now, she would have to send two later to pick up not only my beloved brother's body, but my own.

That caught her attention immediately.

She asked me for my name, address, and to explain what my emergency was.

When I told her that my brother had shot himself, her next question will haunt me forever.

She asked, "Is he still breathing?"

I responded with loud sobs, "I don't know, I don't know."

She told me to calm down and to go check because she needed to report his status to the ambulance, and not to worry; they're on their way.

When I went to check my brother, to my surprise and horror, he was still breathing. I returned to the phone and informed the dispatcher.

She advised me to stay as calm as possible until help came and to make sure to keep him awake.

I said, "Thank you," and hung up.

I ran to the garage to be with my brother. I put his red and purple, blood swollen head on my lap. At this point there was no way that I was going to be able to stay calm. So I started thinking about our daily routines. Everyday he would ask me how my day was, so, I immediately started telling him my day. With tears in my eyes and my voice almost gone from screaming, I told him how I got into a fistfight with my ex-boyfriend because I found out that he had cheated on me. I told him that I won and how proud he's going to be when he sees my ex's face. *I know you're laughing*, I thought to myself. He always had a sense of humor. After that, all I could tell him was how much I loved him.

All of a sudden, I heard a man's voice yell my name. I answered back, letting the familiar voice know that I was in the garage. It was our neighbor. He was the first officer on the scene. When he came in, I remembered that he was like an angel coming to help me.

He told me to stay where I was, that he was going to the car to hurry the emergency crew. I remember when he walked away. I started focusing on my surroundings and how much blood there was, not only on the floor but also on myself. A minute hadn't passed until my neighbor returned to tell me that they were at the house. He told me to go outside to tell them where and what had happened, but I didn't know. With the little strength that I had I got up and stumbled through

the front door and across the lawn to the bright lights. The officers had thought that I was the one who was shot because I was so drenched with the blood that the only white that you could see wasn't from my shirt, but from my face.

Everything happened so fast. They had him in the ambulance and drove off towards the hospital. My mother and sister pulled in and saw the other officers helping me up. They ran towards me to see if I was hurt and to ask what had happened. I lost my voice so I couldn't answer them. When one of the officers pulled them aside and told them what had occurred, the word suicide floated across my face in a mocking wave, laughing at me, letting me know that it had claimed another life.

Within seconds, we were in the hospital and they escorted my family and I to where he was. The room was bright white and extremely cold. The room was so heavy with grief that death itself would feel our sorrow. Minutes passed by and we were all praying. I think we had never prayed as much as we did that night. But after a while I started feeling at peace instead of in anguish, like having a spiritual revelation that he wasn't suffering and that he was going to be okay. I held his hand all night and just talked to him, letting him know that I loved him. He died the next morning. It's been silent after that night.

A couple of months have passed by and I'm working on the car we were supposed to work on together. I look back on that night and start thinking twice about what was making me so sad that day and see that it was something so petty. I still remember what he told me that morning, "It could be worse." He was right.

I learned how to distinguish what is actually worth being sad about. Now when I feel like being alone, I go visit my brother. I sit next to him and clean his plaque and just talk to him for hours. Just like I did when he was alive. Every time I go I always thank him for the little things that I seemed to take for granted. Like being able to change my tire and loving me for who I was and, last but definitely not least, for telling me that you never fail by trying, you always fail by not taking a chance.

Thanks Luis. ■

The Vengeful Poet

BY DAVID BONI

Poet of a dismal start
Vengeance of a youthful heart
Built from the same parts

I contemplate
Count the weights
Upon the scales,
I measure fate
I calculate
A plan in the making
The way of breaking
Out of my caste
And into the vast

Dreams of another place
Mirrors with a different face
Impossible to erase

Words of infection
Words of rejection
Words of deception
Words of revenge

Retribution of a common man
Cultivation of a paradox land
With enraged, bleeding hands

Teeth for teeth, eyes for eyes
I shall vindicate my dream's demise
And thus I rise
A Vengeful Poet

BY MEGAN KODADEK

Freedom

Strolling from my transport
To nirvana, piece by piece
My humanity ignites
First, I'll lose my dress
Placed over my skin
For protection from the harmful
Minds of today.
My hairs that match the dunes
Bounce wildly
As they dance an ancient step
With sister wind
As I stand, in a two-piece suit,
Purposely the same beige
As me, my hair and the stand
My eyelids hug each other
And I kick off my shoes
And finally, it rested between my toes
An atom of the ocean
Crumbled coal and shells
Transformed by eternity
In the heart of nature footwear
Is unnecessary, not to mention
Puzzling to the sponges and gulls.

In my dream I melt
Into the sea as if it were a
Lovers' arms and allow
My existence too cease
For I need not individuality
From this body far larger than mine.
Instead, I hope to join hands
With each wave absorb
Every grain of salt.
Where the breaks I call my bed
While I pretend I am
Crashing and breaking
The boundaries of time and identity
Graceful as the Atlantic.

Still, I am Megan,
Who breathes deeply and
Blinks periodically
An sponge-mind is heavy
Dripping the reality that
This vibration plucked by a
Lunar being felt here,
Across the expanse,
Ten years ago and a
Thousand sunsets from now.

P'AN KU STAFF



David Boni, Editor-in-Chief

The self-designated "Vengeful Poet," more commonly known as Mr. Boni. A mysterious, most curious young fellow with an insatiable interest in creativity. He enjoys writing and reciting poetry, using computers for web and graphic design, and spending time with his girlfriend named Lila. He is an aspiring English Major and hopes to one day change the world.



Brendan Connolly, Literary Editor

Brendan has been seen down and out in Paris and London huffing ether with the likes of Holden Caulfield. "I, too," he was heard to say, "know why the caged bird sings." He hopes to dream of the lions on the beach.



Dina Medina, Photography Editor

Exciting! Tiny and colorful.. Dina resides in Hollywood, Florida and brings magic everywhere she goes.



Jasmine Grant, Art Editor

"More people need to have an appreciation for the art in their lives, it's a way of surviving. I guess art is born from wanting to escape negative feelings or sending a message; and as a result this allows people to gain something even if it's just for a moment. It's all about give and take." Jasmine is a Geography Major with an affinity for painting and art in general.



Jennifer Wollaber, Design Editor

At the time of publication, Jenn was being sought in connection with a string of diamond thefts. When she's not avoiding the authorities she enjoys dressing up toy dogs for their roles in the Rocky Horror Picture show troupe she holds in her apartment. She also likes lo mein; to such an extent, that Sergio's scars are finally healing.



Sergio Mora, Central Campus Liaison

Poet. Friend. Son. Brother
and Sea Monster.

Photo courtesy of Kelly Wiggins



Samantha Ho, Staff Member

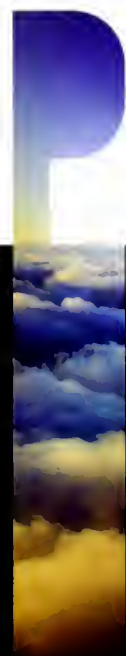
Samantha has been a writer and a performer since early childhood she is happy to be working with a team of awesome people.



Dr. Patrick Ellingham, P'an Ku Advisor

Having advised the college's literary/arts magazine since the early 1890s, Dr. Ellingham feels it is now time for early retirement, having exceeded the state's mandatory retirement age by some 100 years. Still spry, despite his advancing years, he will be able to be seen propped up in South Campus' community garden, scaring away the crows and any stray, itinerant wizards.

PAKU





P'AN KU
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ISSUE NO. 45
SPRING EDITION

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Editor's Note

WITHIN THIS ISSUE, WE HAVE COLLECTED a wide assortment of student art and photography, but, as you will notice right away, a slim amount of literary work.

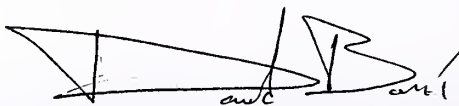
It is common knowledge that the first thing people will look at when they pick up this magazine will be the pretty pictures. Then, perhaps (and hopefully, because it's all very good), the text. The last stuff we expect you to read is my humble Editor's note and the biographies of staff.

In this issue, we have attempted to augment most of the 12 poems selected with stylized "settings" or backdrops that relate to something the poem depicts. In this way, we figured that readers' eyes will be pulled to the written pieces more than they would if a poem was on a blank page.

Also of considerable note: this is the only P'an Ku Magazine printed in full color, and maybe, ever. Ironically, it seems like we have never received so many black and white photography submissions from students before now.

I'd like to thank my advisor, Patrick Ellingham, and my staff. Also, a thank you to my love, Lila, for her divine and affectionate support.

And many thanks to you, reader. We hope you enjoy this very fine and colorful issue of P'an Ku Magazine.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Boni', with a stylized flourish at the end.

DAVID BONI, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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She Brushes Grip

BY BECK LEWIS

She brushes grip with the handle made up of control and bristles made up of pure wonder.
She paints mood, she strokes moons. Color drips and emotion falls from the tip and
such glorious visions come from an intentional or accidental slip.

She blots and mixes, she corrects and fixes.

I sit still but I am moved.

I am free, my heart feels entombed.

Solid red is the base beneath her splash. Picture perfect, canvas crash.

She brushes a grip that will never release.

I scope for us love, intimacy and eternal peace.

She is angelic, touching and one in sheets.

Oh how my heart beats to a rhythm so steady.

I waited for the day when she would be ready.

My feelings for her flourish and the weight is so heavy.

She sketches bliss.

I am so in love with this.

Innocence with a twist.

Colors change with the flick of her wrist.

I remain her loyal and devoted prince.

She brushes grip and you want prints.

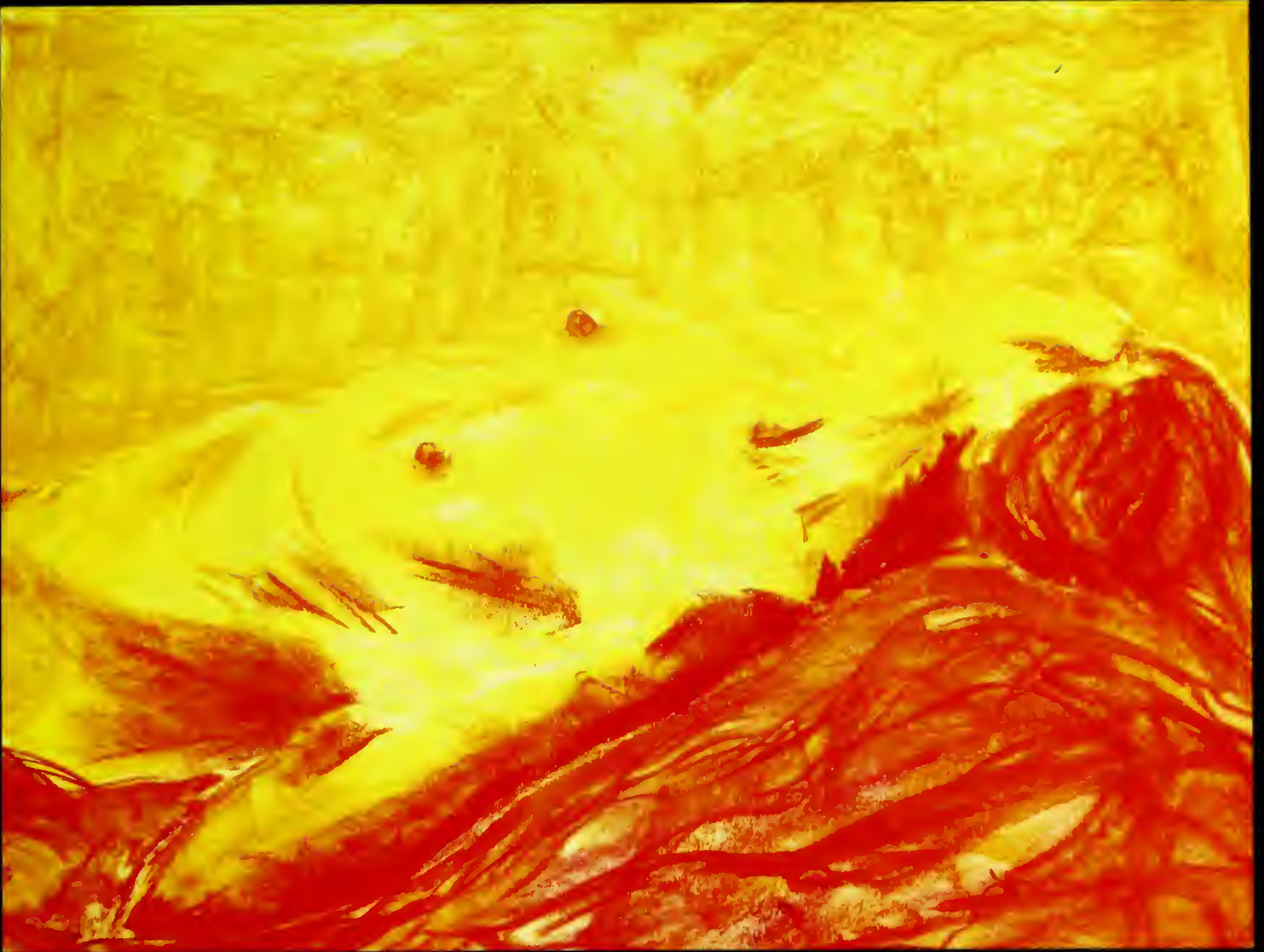
I shake when I kiss her, I tremble at sight.

She shines so bright through the darkest of nights.

I am full with her. Complete. Her voice is energy, breath is sweet.

It is heaven when our souls meet.

My heart is on this amazing trip and with her handle made of control and bristles
made of wonder, she brushes grip.



Phoenix
Manish Patel
Mixed Media



Optical Confusion

Frohman Davis

B&W Photography

Holden

BY BRENDAN CONNOLLY

HOLDEN TELLS ME THIS.

About the summer that Tommy Boy went to war. Burn still hadn't returned as I was falling unconscious. Holden had said we would have to go and find him, but that was hours ago. A bottle ago. An eighth ago.

His name is Burn right, Holden asks. I had a friend like him once. It's funny, he says, the types of people we all encounter.

"Really, I'm concerned," Holden said Tommy tells him. This was my best friend Tommy Flanagan, Holden says.

"I'm afraid your vagina has grown so gapping. I think, I may just fall in," Tommy said.

I just told him my hands were cold, Holden laughed softly.

It was our final burn run, he says. Two friends, one car and a stoned afternoon. The next day was supposed to be the first day of the rest of my life, Holden says taking off his shoes. The following morning, I would grab the proverbial bull by the proverbial horns, my dad said, Holden says. But, that would be the next day.

What we didn't know was a postal truck was T-boned by a federally owned sedan a few blocks away, he says. An explosion of letters, the newspaper articles would say, the day the alphabet stood on it's head.

There was a strong breeze that day, Holden says, a gust would burst at every span. Electric bills, credit card offers, con-artist schemes; all littered the ground.

Anne Archy.

Annie.

That's what Tommy called it, Holden says. His bowl, his deliverance.

"Can I borrow your lighter," Holden said he asks.

If tomorrow was the first day of the rest of my life. What was that day, Holden asks.

The lead-up, he says before I have a chance to answer.

No great climax, he says. Just ending to start all over again. The next day, I would head off to school, Holden says.

The endless parade of envelopes skipped angrily, end

"You will not spend the rest of your life, my father would say, Holden says, bringing assholes shit."

over end, down the sidewalk a block away.

"Do you know why the world will end," Holden said Tommy asks him.

"Because it began," Holden said Tommy answers, as Holden handed the pipe to him.

He also used to say, Holden says, the only real drug problem is scoring good drugs.

It was an Armageddon of get well cards as the letters began striking the car. The tires ejected the less upwardly mobile postage to the four corners of the intersection. A few flew into the window. I was even struck by one, Holden says.

Cable bills.

Jury duty notices.

Long distance relationship Dear John let downs.

It was raining the rest of the world's responsibilities.

"Holy shit," Tommy said. He spoke as though he chewed rocks, Holden says.

The rush of correspondence was brief. Momentary. Anti-climatic. As I looked at Tommy, Holden says, he was bending below the event horizon of the window. Going down the black hole trying to find his white rabbit. I wasn't sure if his reaction was to the bombardment or if it was because he had burnt himself, Holden says.

He was lighting Annie, he says.

"Tommy," Holden said he tells Tommy. "I'm going to pull over into the gas station. Help me throw this shit away."

My dad, after Korea, was a delivery-man. Holden says. My grandfather was a delivery-man. His father was too, as was his. Understand, Holden asks.

You will not spend the rest of your life, my father would say, Holden says, bringing assholes shit.

And he's right, Holden says, I wouldn't. Well then anyway.

So, Holden continues, I pulled into the parking space and began collecting the birthday cards, political advertisements, and other the other shit worth a stamp. Tommy got out and asked if I wanted something from inside.

Soda?

Chips?

Testicles?

"Anything," Holden said Tommy asks.

I had thrown away my first handful, Holden says, and had begun my second extraction, when I saw it. The fatigue green color stood in stark contrast to the bone white of the other envelopes. It stood out like a beacon.

I knew what it said. Everyone did.

Especially Tommy.

It said, We regret to inform you...

I grabbed it and stuck it in my back pocket, Holden said sitting on his cot.

"Your two inches of glory are on the other side," Tommy said walking back.

"Go fuck yourself," Holden said he tells Tommy.

I knew what it said, Holden says. Tommy had shown me his father's edition. I knew what it said, Holden says.

It said, We regret to inform you. It said, Unfortunately. It said, We're sorry that your son and/or husband won't be there.

So I was dropping Tommy off, Holden says, and we smoked our last joint. He exhaled the final drag and ate the roach, Holden says.

"I want you to know something" Holden said Tommy tells him..

Don't ever come back here.

Go off and discover something, Holden says Tommy told him as he lights his last cigarette of the night. We hadn't heard from Burn in at least two hours.

"I want to read about you while I ignore my wife," Holden said Tommy tells him.

Enjoy the rest of your fucking life.

With that, Holden says, he turned and lifted the latch to the gate of the chain-link fence. He looked at me one last time as he set the latch back. He looked once, Holden says.

I knew what it said. I knew.

I watched him walk up the path to his front door. He never turned around, Holden says. He opened the door and closed it. He never turned around, he says.

I thought I would never see him again, Holden says. That might be why I did what I did. Maybe it was the right thing to do.

My dad, Holden says, always said he was a descendent of Pheidippides. Not literally though. You know, metaphorically, he says as the candlelight blew in the wind.

Pheidippides, Holden says, ran to Athens to scream, Victory, after the Battle of Marathon. Twenty six miles, Holden says, he carried this message on his back. He died seconds later, embraced by the brick and mortar as a messiah.

His last great delivery, Holden says as I light my final cigarette of the evening.

My father said it was his death that makes thousands of runners lace up. That it was his final glorious commencement and that's all people remember, Holden says. Two weeks before the battle, Holden said slightly excited, Pheidippides ran to Sparta. A 145 mile run. In two days, he says.

His most wondrous achievement was part of his lead up, my dad used to say, Holden says.

The next day was the first day of the rest of my life.

The next day held my proverbial life by my proverbial balls, Holden says.

So did Mrs. Wilson.

The letter in my back pocket burned like coal, Holden says. My conscience was on fire.

Mrs. Joe Wilson, the envelope read, Holden says.

No more, "Hey Joe, how's it going?"

No more, "Hey Tommy, go fuck yourself"

We were both widows. Only she didn't know, Holden says in the encroaching dark.

Mrs. Wilson didn't live too far from Tommy and my old school. I remember wondering if she had a child I knew, Holden says. I'd know soon enough.

Mrs. Wilson.

Mrs. Joe Wilson.

Mrs. Something Wilson.

I always loved the name Braelyn, Holden says.

I remember thinking, Holden says, I'd probably catch her while she is shoulder deep in flour. Some culinary miracle she would create any Sunday. I could see her kneading, he says, I could see her lonely tears fall softly into the batter.

She would answer the door in a red checkerboard apron, Holden says inhaling. She would have tufts of baking soda on her cheeks.

Her warm, rosy cheeks would go cold.

Her vibrantly curled hair would lose its flair. Compressed by the impending weight of the world.

Or, he says, she would show up at the door, I remember thinking, with a baby on her hip and her looks would be faded.

Raising life drains yours, Holden says.

She would be wearing what she could throw on and be on her way out to pick up her other child from school. I would stop her mid-stride.

I would stop time, Holden says.

I could see her blue-green-brown eyes erupt.

After I knocked, I remember thinking, Holden says, she would swing open the door. She would be bubbly, with a short haircut. Her lean figure would show the miles she had run to escape the fear.

Her station-wagon would be impeccable. So would her house.

Life would be bliss, if bliss didn't exist, Holden says lying down.

My dad always said, Holden says, that delivery-men are never just men. We are either the savior or the scourge.

I not sure which I was. I'm not sure which I wanted to be.

The problem with your conscience is that it is always conscious, Holden says stretching onto his back.

Tomorrow, I remember telling myself, he says, tomorrow.

I always loved the name Sheleagh, Holden said.

I worried a plump woman would answer the door, he says. Black hair, blue eyes. Her teeth would be slightly askew. I would like her instantly.

I remember thinking, Holden says, she would answer the door, magazine in hand. She would have a pair of reading glasses, half-hanging half-falling off the slope of her nose. She would have blonde hair and green eyes and freckles.

She would answer the door, Holden says, with a long slim cigarette in between her yellow fingers. She would be wearing a twin set, pearl necklace, and more gold tacky jewelry than I would like to mention.

Her teeth would look like barcodes, Holden says.

I was driving in circles around her neighborhood, Holden says, and I knew why. I didn't want to deliver this. But, I would, Holden says.

I remember thinking I would do it for Pheidippides, Holden says, and everyone else whose whole life was overlooked for one great climax. I would do it for Joe.

I always loved the name Siobhan.

And I would break her heart, he says rolling onto his side away from me.

I arrived at the non-descript locale. It looked average, Holden says, I remember that. A car was already in the

driveway when I pulled up.

I didn't recognize it, he says.

As I walked up to the front door, Holden says, I felt like I was walking through tar. Each step sagged.

Each knock hung in the air the way God does.

Who answered the door, Holden says, I can't describe. Only frustrated came to mind.

Tired.

Beat up.

Her clear eyes told the story of sleepless nights. The unclimatic evenings resulting in a new day.

Ending to start all over again.

Tomorrow meant something different in that household, Holden says.

"Mrs. Wilson," Holden said he asks.

She didn't nod.

She didn't need to, he says.

"I found this," Holden said he tells her.

She looked puzzled at first. At first, he says. Looking at the fatigue green holding her husbands death notice.

She knew what it said. Everyone did.

I watched a tear race down her cheek, Holden says, running for sparta.

For Joe.

For Pheidippides.

For Tommy.

"Thank you," she said. She said thank you, Holden says quietly. Then she closed the door in my face, he says. Momentary. Anti-climatic.

I saw Tommy the next morning before I left, Holden says. He said he wanted to make a point. He wanted me to remember him as a man of principles. Holden says Tommy told him that he understood when to let go. He told me to go live the rest of my fucking life.

So I did, Holden says blowing out the candle next to his cot.

Holden tells me this. I don't know why though.

So what happened to him, I ask.

I went to college, Holden says, Tommy went to Vietnam.



Happy Strikers
Erika Sanjines
Photography

WHERE DO I STAND

BY FRANZ STANFORD

There is a question etched in my head like the veins etched in every one of our hands: Where do I stand?

Where do I stand as a person against all odds of life, figuring the obstacles of the world just to endure that I can survive?

Where do I stand in this vast, god-forsaken place known as Earth, where men and women struggle to improve themselves since birth?

Where do I stand in this world, where it's me versus the world in this blender where the ingredients for success mix while the blades of failure twirl?

Where do I stand in a household divided into two separate lands, while eating the fruits of knowledge from two separate hands?

Where do I stand in a mixing pot of different religions and races, where different people worship different gods and/or goddesses at different times and places?

Where do I stand in a battle against myself, where I try to fix or neutralize a situation just to damage myself?

Where do I stand in a war made of choices, where different outcomes in life are ensued by following different opinions from different voices?

Where do I stand in this world where times are hard, where the low and middle class struggle to keep up and live their lives, while the rich and the wealthy go through life with little or no regards?

Where do I stand in the middle of it all, where we can build ourselves assurance of success but crumble at the probability that we can fall?

Where do I stand? Here is where I stand: I stand on a question that, in my head, has not disbanded; a question that has left me mentally stranded; a question that has to be answered, even though, it is not demanded

Now you know my predicament etched on this paper from my hand, now you know where I stand.



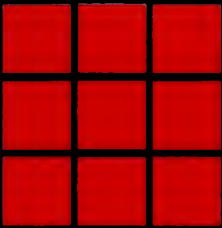
Wealth, Dreads, & Equal
Ashley Bland
B&W Photography



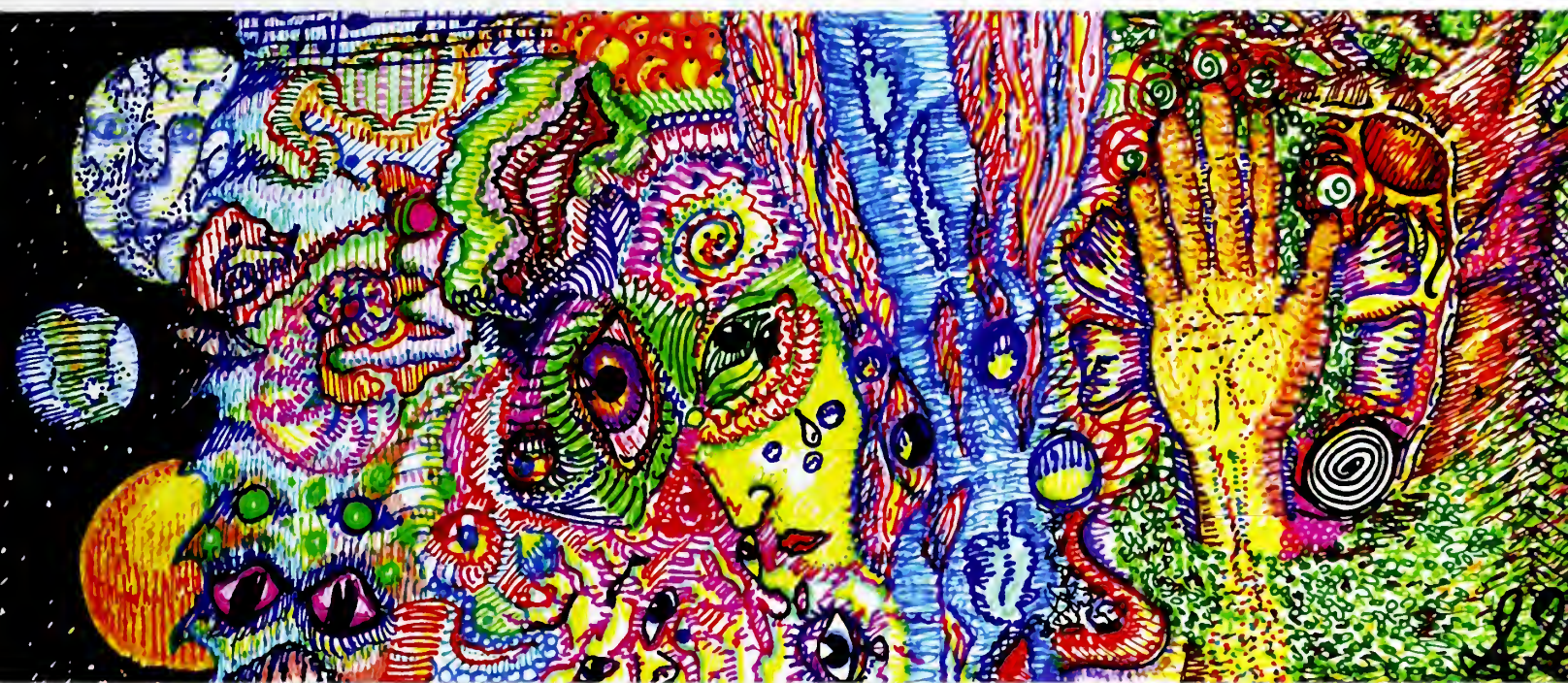
Over and Under
Sean Parkinson
B&W Photography

silverwing

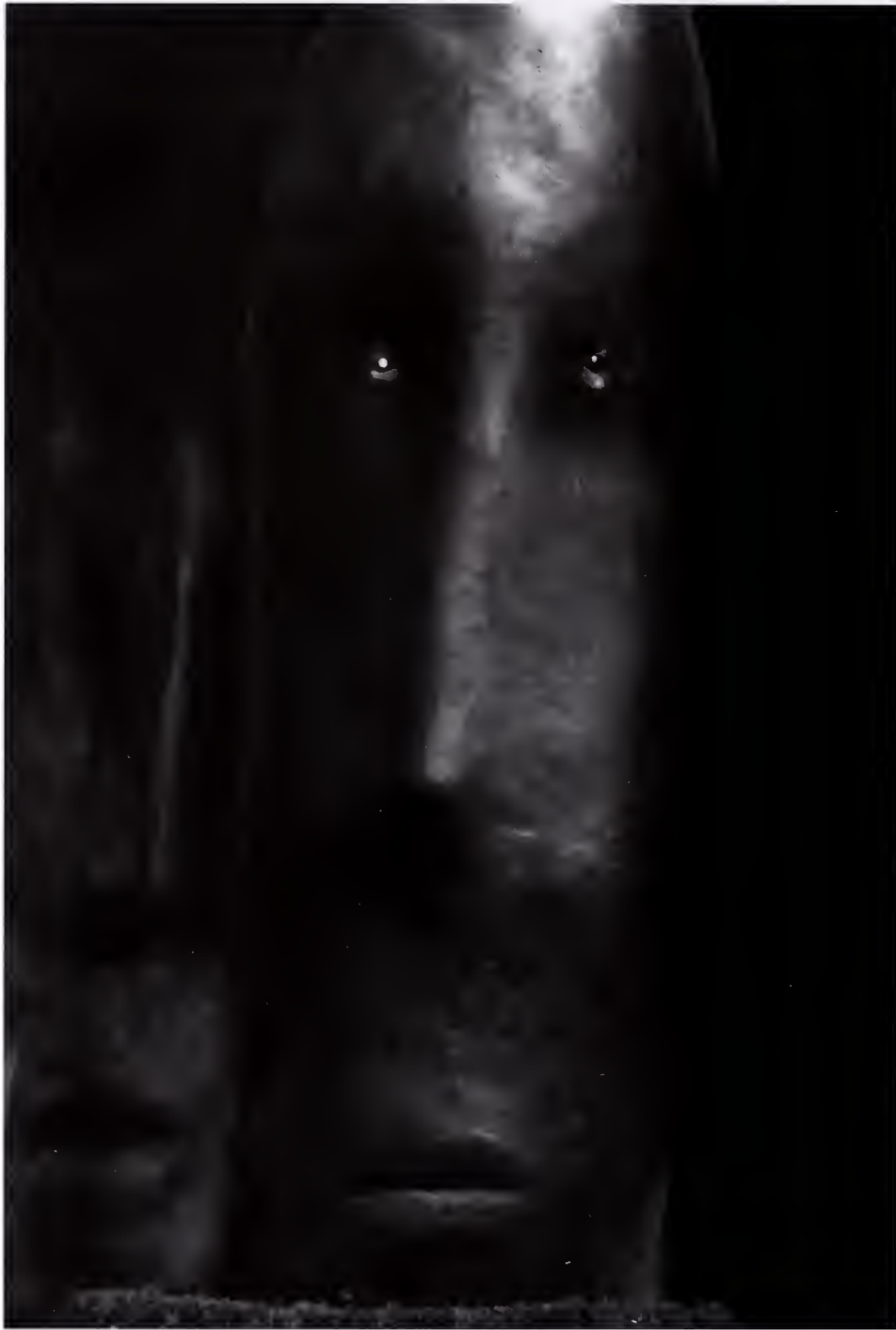
BY NICK RODRIGUEZ



it was somewhere north of okeechobee—just the dead road flowing down and out before me—the pain eased away from my shoulders—my wrist sore as hell went numb—my neck untensed and i sank five hours deeper into my seat—the engine rose up assuredly to my ears pounding away and ahead—i was racing underneath the largest blue skies of white purity and the wind silencing everything—passed pubs and chipped shoulder gas stations—forgotten barns sad fences never mended—the hours are days and the days years the years lifetimes of lifelong repetitions—over the cycles turn unto themselves and we roll on quiet steady—bang the potholes and press forward—paynes prairie purplet my cheeks blue but my eyes peeled yellow holding the last of days warmth—giant army jacket moist and cold fatigued shaky to knees as i get off bike—ahead into the backyard of doms to drink sixteen beers in three hours plus james shots with bearded bartender bodhi warrior of gainesville lost woods—a boy blonde on unicycle juggles rubiks cubes and from in him keys of orchestral myth blast harmoniously with colored beats red real blowing time to my rhythms—



Doodle
Steven Hope
Mixed Media



Hotel of Darkness
Theresa Hunter
B&W Photography



Friday Morning
Kelly Reagan
B&W Photography



Self-Portrait
Stefanie Bentes
Typographic Art



Appier
Andrew Oliver
B&W Photography

THE FLIGHT OF THE CONDOR

BY ERIK MOSHE

Desert plague was stirring under the Chilean sunset
A lone condor lowered amongst the vermillion dust specs
It cautiously descended to the tundra and began to circle
A wise creature with dull bronze plumage and a hint of tannish purple
The carnage was baking in the sun, but it wasn't frothing yet
Without any cause of threat, the bird lowered to enthralling depths
It leaped back at the sight of a small child slain upon the tulips
Cities had become wastelands, people made the wrong improvements
The bird was raised appalled of humans, it's kind praised the fall of humans
But it couldn't leave the child dying as it laid among the ruins
Remembering its own young, it was left to ponder in shock
What can I do for him? The condor thought over
Do I leave this young human to the flocks of vultures?
Dehydrated and bloodied, the boy's body was leathery black
It dug its claws into the dirt and hoisted the boy onto its feathery back
His weight securely balanced, the boy peaked out of a crevice in his eyes
Am I on the wing of an angel? he reflected in his guise
While the condor's attention was directed to a scent that it detected in the skies –
It swerved to the right and squawked aloud, eyes widened, it cried
A colossal hurricane was coursing over the desert – *so silent... but why?*
The boy hugged onto the bird's back, he felt a fire inside
As the condor flew forward at full speed in one violent stride
If this is my time to die, the bird thought, *then let this be my noble arrival...*
It could see patches of green ahead – *the Jungle, there was hope for survival!*
The bird flew onto a tree, the boy slid off its back, they then huddled
As the nuclear sandstorm swallowed the dense jungle
They waited until the storm died out, bodies covered in sand
Though exhausted from the fierce flight, the condor found no trouble to stand
The little boy was barely alive drinking water from a vine
He looked to his savior, to the sand around him – then he hollered to the skies
Below was a tavern in the trees – a village in the cumulus
There was a human settlement within that fog, such stillness in a huge abyss
The condor took flight and reached a cave beneath a deepened shade
Under the refuge of a eucalyptus, it left the child beneath a glade
Gracias, ángel de Dios, said the boy as it looked to his savior
As the bird met the gaze of man in a union of humans and nature

Death Dealer Remake

Nick Lopes

Mechanical Pencil w/ Digital Enhancements



Nick Lopes 09

WOW!!!



Bernie at 95
Theresa Neumann
Solarized Gelatin Print



Sunburnt Owl
Kevin Tsoi-A-Sue
Block Print

Outwitting the Rabbit



BY SHARDAY MOSHANKO

I feel like my young age has been riddled with mistakes sometimes. I also feel, as young as I am, older now and strangely less wise than I was in the past, but there is something about my good childhood that brings about a quiet peace in me. I was fortunate enough to have one of the best childhoods any girl could dream of. I had everything I wanted and everything I half-wanted, too. If being a lonely child means you're spoiled, then I was definitely part of that stereotype.

As I got a little older, about eight or nine years old, I started being clever about getting things I wanted. I can recall telling my mother, "Look, it's only \$9.99! It's on sale! Last week it was \$19.99, we better buy it quick!"

Whether my mother was actually fooled by all of my salesmanship, or just humored me, it made no difference. I still felt like a winner whenever I opened the colorful boxes of new toys over and over again. No occasion, however, could compare to Easter. Sure, Halloween had the candy and Christmas had the gifts, but they were too worrisome for me. I had to dress up for Halloween and walk around strange neighborhoods for good candy. For Christmas, my mother would not buy me anything from any store for nearly a month before the day so she "didn't accidentally give me something Santa got me." Easter was another matter all together. To me, it was a game of wit with a large prize at the end and I always won. For years, I would lay in my bed on Easter morning half-awake listening to the sound of plastic eggs

being placed around the house and cellophane crinkling. I smiled to myself because I knew that, even though I wouldn't, I could catch the Easter bunny at his game. I wouldn't dare to move though, because the "game" was so much more fun to win on his terms. The "game" of course would be to find all the plastic eggs hidden around the house and sometimes the yard. Once I found them all, there would be clues to find the basket in the end. The basket was a glorious mountain of bright candies and toys and, of course, a plush bunny as a trophy, proving that I had once again outwitted the Easter bunny.

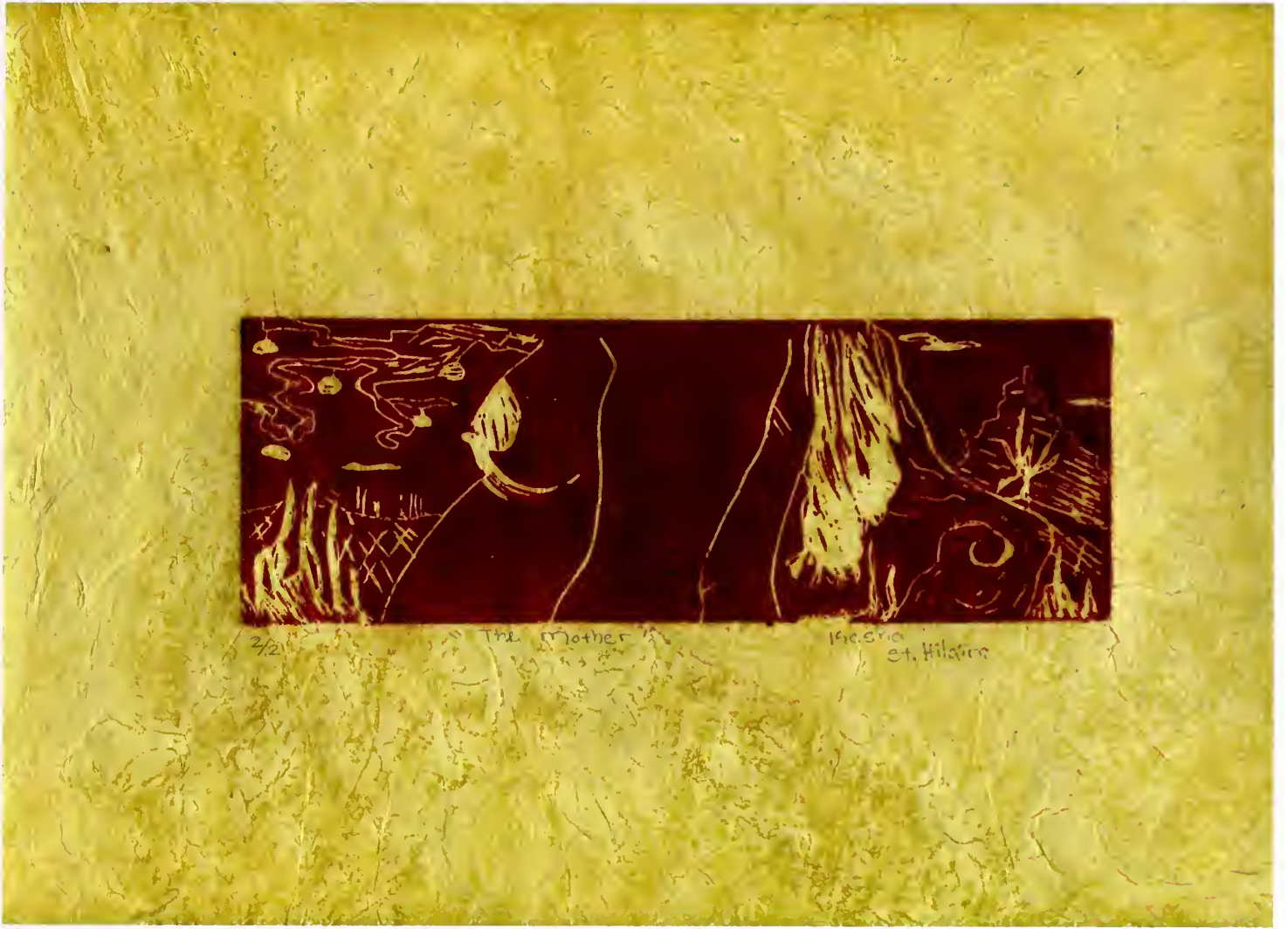
One Easter, however, I remember my mother and I were away and would be arriving home late that day. I wondered what amazing things would be waiting for me when I got home, yet at the same time, I worried the Easter bunny had not found me. Once we arrived home, my father greeted me eagerly saying there was something in my room from the Easter bunny. I thought to myself that the bunny must have been too tired of our game this year and decided to just let me win. It felt wrong though and too easy. I remember walking in and seeing a little plastic basket with just a few candies, not even wrapped, with no plush bunny or even a bow.

"Do you like it?" I heard my father's voice behind me as I stood in a stunned silence.

I started to cry and amidst my crying my father disappeared. My mother asked what was wrong and I told her that the Easter bunny must be mad at me. I didn't know why but I must have done something wrong to not deserve the basket I always looked forward to. That's when my mother explained to

me that there was no Easter bunny. I remember crying harder, my whole world standing still. She told me my father was the one who got the little basket and it was his first time making me a basket so it wasn't as exaggerated as hers were. It was the most depressing Easter I ever had. I felt the magic was gone and all that was really real was my silly greed for a big basket of things I'd never use. I thanked my dad for the basket and told him about my misunderstanding with the bunny and how it was really a fine basket. Though inside I felt it was a lie at the time, but I knew what I should say. That night, I grudgingly went through the little basket, I found a package of caramel filled chocolate Easter eggs and opened them up. They were the most delicious candy I had ever had in an Easter basket. I realized that, while my mom could decorate, my father had better taste in candy. In fact, everything in the basket was so sugary that less was certainly more. In my mind, this evened things out significantly. It made more sense now that the basket was so small. That night, I decided I was too old to keep playing with the Easter bunny. I figured I would go along with what my parents were saying and quietly keep on believing in the Easter bunny. Someday I knew we'd have another game.

Now that I'm grown up I can't say I do believe in such a thing, but I do know now that the magic of the memories was brought on by my family. That was the day I learned that there is a different kind of magic than the one I had always believed in. It wasn't thunderbolts or disappearing acts of wonder. It was in caring, warm hearts, and, of course, caramel filled chocolate Easter eggs.



The Mother
Kesha Saint Hilaire
Relief Block Print

The Last Rites of the Old Main Drag

BY **BRENDAN CONNOLLY**

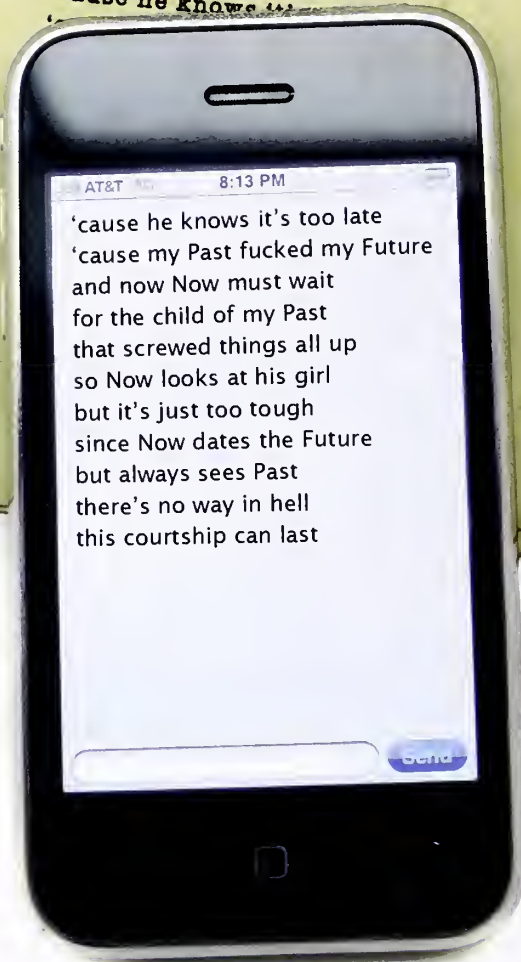
'Twas a merry merry Monday morning,
And confession with Father's being heard,
So I told him what I done,
And I waited patiently,
For absolution.
I told of the vile exiles that still haunt the moors.
And how I missed the ferry ride home.
Of the gutter rats and street trash,
Who emerged from the shadows,
And asked me to bum a smoke.
Of the empty hallways full of street-lit corners,
Inhabited by the ragged remnants of human beings.
Yet I fed upon the bread,
That they offered up to me,
Hands outstretched with fair warnings of plenty.
I explained the back-alley abortion protocol,
As best as my memory would allow.
Of every shot that rang out,
And burned down my throat,
And the blessings of just finding out.
Of the frozen wall that I couldn't scale,
And the green grass on the other side,
Of a cracked crucible,
That used to house my soul,
Of the red and blue lights that scream in the night.
I told of the bamboo that would burn for miles,
And an emblazoned horizon I could never find.
Of an old willow tree,
That I carved my name in,
When I thought I would live forever...



A Day in the Life
Terese Caruso
B&W Photography

Cheating With My Future
by David A. Pryce III

Can you stop my Past?
I think he's gone wild
and my Future hates him
'cause she'll never be in style.
My Now wants him dead
'cause he knows





Lost Forest Girl

Nick Lopes

Digital Art

Abort

BY NICK RODRIGUEZ

The first waiting room was sterile, with neutral colors and even more neutral elevator music. Despite the setting's attempt, a young man looked patiently agitated sitting next to a cute plump girl in thick framed glasses. They sit awkwardly waiting for their (or her) appointment. The receptionist, an old woman, appears; she had watched over waiting rooms for far too long and immediately sensed their hesitancy.

"Aren't we a bit old to fear the dentist, guys?"

Their bewilderment reflected off one and others' faces.

"Sorry lady, wrong office."

The correct office was suite 201 A, which they found around the corner and walked into a much larger waiting room filled with women and young children. Most of the women looked anxious, but a few who had been through this rodeo before looked decidedly apathetic. All eyes go to the young man as he enters, some confused, others angry, a few approvingly curious. He realizes he's the only male in the room.

Instinctively, he flashes a toothy

smile; ironically, it's the same one that led him to this point. An innocent smile, a little flirting and a few beers and now this shit. He brushes the thoughts away and looks encouragingly to his companion. At times we can even lie to ourselves about reality, no matter how thoroughly it's thrust at us. She feebly returns a thin-lipped smile. They get forms from a receptionist who doesn't have any of the seeming warmth the grandmother in the dentist's office offered them. The young woman nervously scans the documents: severe bleeding, scarring, possible death, warnings you'd expect from open heart surgery.

"It's just precautionary medical hodge-podge, look at all these people, they don't seem nervous," He says a bit too casually.

She continues with the John Hancock's, while he looks around the room. "All these people" were the women, some still scowling at him, others looked on disappointedly, but most had the blank faces of people waiting for anything; just bored and passing through yet another ugly situation life had thrown their way. It's amazing what people can endure and become accustomed to. Eventually a nurse came into the room and called her name, he hugged her, felt like a thief, like a bastard, but he embraced her tightly, reassuring her one last time and in she went.

He began to feel nervous, out of his element. The Golf Woman magazine was unsurprisingly not holding his attention. He felt a cloud of an-

tipathy coming from an older woman sitting with what appeared to be her weeping daughter. He got up uncomfortably and walked out.

There was a bar strategically placed a cigarette walk away and he ducked in.

"The grill hasn't heated up yet."

"No worries boss, just toss me a brew."

The man shuffled off down the bar after setting down the beer, and the young man thanked Dionysius that he wasn't one of those boring talkative barkeeps. He let his mind wander off to anything other than why he was there sipping beer at two in the afternoon on a Monday in God forsaken Sunrise. He wondered about Dr. Seuss and if he really was a doctor and how much acid he had eaten, or if he was just on another surreal level naturally, he couldn't decide on much besides the fact he must have been a strange dinner guest. He had two more, decided it wouldn't be wise to show up drunk, like he was having a hell of a time while she was under the knife or whatever it was they did. Tact, even for the tactless, finds its place under strained circumstances. Entering the office again, he put on a false air of confidence because he didn't want them to see his apathy for the situation. A few minutes later the young woman came through the door, looking dazed and obviously drugged, he took her by the arm, walked her out and gently placed her in his car and they drove off. Just like that—he wasn't going to be a father anymore.



Oblivion

Vanessa Chamorro
Photography



Merry-Go-Round

Lauren Laufer
Photography

Sunrise
Lauren Laufer
Photography





Regrets
Paula Rojas
Charcoal



Bleed It Out

BY NATALIE SILVA

Let it snow let it pour, out my nose onto the floor that grounds the just and lays distant to the rest. Instead I spin profoundly upon gravitational force that yields my existing habit of destruction. "It feels so good," how could it not? The burning sensation corrodes inside the pathway, doesn't spark interest until an hour later when it can no longer be done. Yet still I crave for that intimate moment within myself where thoughts are forgotten and only feelings of immense satisfaction swim around my rotting eight-pound muscle. Who needs it?

Next day occurs the usual drainage of different dimensions of colored fluids leaking through my breathing glands. "Can't do that for another couple of days," I say to myself as I wonder what other concoctions I can come up with to bring joy to the current boredom state of deprived serotonin and inconclusive alternatives for mood modifiers. Some call it the easy way out, it is always harder to do what's right, but "it feels so good." I remain in the affected state and reminisce on the past week's escapades up and down Mount Evergreen. See you later Colorado, until then I remain sunny in Florida.

Untitled
Lea Povian
Photography





Untitled
Lea Povian
Photography



Nature

BY STEVEN BASART

Along the silver streets
Through the crowded halls
Upon a lonely nightstand
Lies a potted plant

Whose roots are ever-reaching
For the company of his friends
Daily drenched with the filtered water
Water too clean for his tastes
Rarely placed on the sill

On the slightly narrow sill
Over-looking
Over-seeking
Over-bearing
The sight that lies before him

Till one day on the sill he sought the sun
Gazing up he only needed a gentle
Nudge
Falling fast and falling faster
The potted plant finally free

Falling away from its lonely nightstand
Breaking apart near the crowded halls
Stepped on then brushed aside
Along the silver streets



Untitled
Barbara Lamothe
B&W Photography



Who Is This Guy?

Marife Olivares

Photography



Bistro Bottle
Tom Dratler
Mixed Media



Excuse Me

Roswitha Sidelko
B&W Photography



Moleque
Marlon Johnson
B&W Photography



Silence

Steven Hope
Mixed Media

The Choice

BY MILO

You spent countless hours
Crying how I was
The worst thing ever to
Happen in your young life

You never thought of me
It was all about your needs
And my father
I would never meet

All the while, my
Life was never given a chance
To be young, to be old
To be anything, but gone

You never wanted me
Don't give me a chance
To show you the man
I would become

Another piece of trash
For the truck to take
To the mountain
Next to the highway

Put me in the bag with
Old needles, used tampons
Next to the rotten fruit
The birds like to pick at

Forget about me, like
You forgot about dad
And life will go back to
Normal in a few weeks



Asian Echo
Susan Maguire
Pottery



Argh!
Diana Cardona
Feather Rock Sculpture
12.5" x 11.5" x 10"



Self-Improvement is Masturbation

Chun Lo
Digital Art

Man in the Mirror

BY MILO

Drunk and high I stand and stare
Once again, staring at a face unknown
He stares back with a cockiness
That irritates every nerve, sending
Shivers down my brittle spine
Wild hair from binge drinking hangs over,
His fiery eyes glow with hatred and arrogance

He is the alpha, the center of attention in any circumstance,
The loud leader of the wasted drones, singing and dancing
From this shitty bar to even shittier bar
He downs alcohol to impress the ladies
Stakes his dominance in the crowd of competitors,
Who hope he'll leave his post long enough
For them to make a move on one of his concubines
He sings too loud, drinks too much,
Never cares about consequence or hang-over

He is everything I couldn't be

Drunk and high, I stand and stare
Unsure of what may happen,
Reach out, to touch his enchanting face
Our hands meet at the glass, and
I know this stranger, throw down
Some Tylenol, splash water on my face
And slowly, the stranger slips away

Leaving only me, the one we both hate



Rock Stair

Spencer Greenfeder
Photography / Sculpture



Exstallation

Spencer Greenfeder
Photography / Sculpture

A JOURNEY ALONE

BY ERIK MOSHE

Bangladesh, the festival of lights
Children soaking in the monsoonal rains,
Object to infinitesimal delight
A bedraggled old man lugs
his barrel of insecticide bottles along
One man fleet upon the cobblestones, in sorrow, he roams
When the rickshaw wallah comes home,
legs rest on the repellent crate
How can he be a grandfather and cope?
If he swallows he'll choke from the particle smoke

And unseen, unbreathable mist shrouding his living quarters
He marches on, yet he's becoming too fragile to deliver orders
Barely makes a living, quarters,
Goes home with some kebab and a little bourbon
Home sweet home is an overhang shed and plastic mat
The slums are where you can find him
– pulling wagons by the taxi cab
He'd have a wife and children but
he couldn't give a woman a pack of maxi pads
If you question the death rate, envision every possible lead fume –
He'd invite guests over,
but his living room is also his kitchen, closet and bed too

Meager cup of tea from a cold keg,
won't beg, it's against his religion
He won't go to pray at the city temple –
You've gotta pay to get past the fence entrance
Read or write?
Most doubt he could even wrestle a sentence, confess to redemption
In broad India daylight
– you can see his wrenching intestines
The rewards reaped?
A silk shirt, tobacco pipe, and mildew sod
what has he done to be forsaken by these Hindu Gods?
These are the facts of life,
his bruised wounds bleed cumin seed fusion
when he dies, his cheap loot will go to free union –
And from where?
In the afterlife, he says, he doesn't know, he'll reroute it
What's significant is the rule –
he knows to keep moving.



Kitten

Ashley Cassidy
B&W Photography



Prayer
Ashley Lamberson
Photography





Guitar

Estefania López
Acrylics on guitar

Photographs by David Boni



Looking Down the Road

Manish Patel
Mixed Media

Forbidden Thoughts

BY GANAVYA DORAISWAMY

For taught was I to speak in proper lines,
To bow, to smile, to hide, to feel, to write,
A predetermined life contains designs –
An ancient norm becomes a guiding light.

Thus warned must be when you hit puberty:
A passion's show misleads tenaciously.
Behave with fear regarding chastity!
(...Amuse a wealthy chap but graciously.)

Beware a change from fear to want of care:
Prepare to see a plea with plain disgust!
Conduct an air of flair, albeit despair.
Thus thrust away (t)his 'trust' to be but lust.

Believe a thought is all that counts today.
You pine to sleep but all into his arms?
Be gone -for you have lost the right to stay.
You dare declare to try pursue his charms?

Endure such pain unless you seek such rage;
As those who seek to stay a virgin maid
Will tame their minds to stay within our cage.
(For who will dare retort to such crusades?)



Do Not Touch
Miguel Chavez
Block Print



Inner Peace
Ellen Riazanow
Block Print



Drowning Man and the Yin Tree

Ericka Picard
Acrylics on canvas



Paradox Mandala

Christy Williams

Mixed Media



Phelia's Song

BY GANAVYA DORAISWAMY

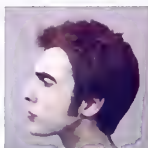
My liege: Have I behaved displeasingly?
Did she (who meant to serve), unknowingly
Contain, command, exceed her rights with thee?
Oppugn must I: To be or not to be?

Is that my crime, transcending rights of love?
Forsake those rights but for your sake, shall she.
To satisfy a thirst, requires a drink
—but drink you not, forbids my Lord's decree.

I do not know, my lord, what I should think:
Should I allow this hope to breathe its beat?
Insane I stand upon a narrow brink,
As hope then shoves and pulls upon my feet.

Lila
David Boni
Digital Painting



**DAVID BONI / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

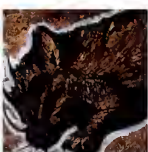
David Boni writes poetry and plans on becoming a Graphic Designer (though he enjoys practicing many other creative professions such as acting and singing). He is happily in love and feeling as if he is moving towards a grand future. Visit him on the Internet via www.dboni.com or send an email to david@dboni.com.

**GANAVYA DORAISWAMY / MANAGING EDITOR**

When she's not busy washing cows in her pool, Ganavya conditions her daughter to solve Calculus problems blindfolded, while performing headstands. A Senior at Cypress Bay High, she recognizes the value of school: she uses the time to assess the efficacy of Hypnopædia. Enjoying her last months as a minor, she amuses herself by speaking in Iambic pentameter. Applications for Brahmin mating open in two months.

**WILSON MEI / DESIGN EDITOR**

A man of little words. Literally. Not much is known about this odd Asian. From the little we do know, he is an easy going guy and enjoys the company of others. His passion for Art brings him to P'an Ku. When not at school, work, or home, you can most likely find him in a place where Art exists. Hint: Everywhere.

**STEVEN HOPE / ART EDITOR**

Proclaimed artists heed my warning: Urbanization has you by the ankle. We are all extroverts in an introverted society. Submit to your gifts. They will empower you to live above other people. You alone have the capacity to will yourself to do great things. We are children made into individuals existing shoulder to shoulder. Do not fear elevating above it all. Use more of your brain to do more; say more; be more. DO NOW. Or fail to realize your potential...

**KELLY RIVERA / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR**

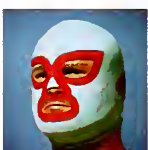
Kelly Rivera is a Mass Communications major. She loves to laugh, especially at herself. She is silly and refined, young and mature, & wild and established. She's a very dedicated person and loves finding new passions in life. Learning about anything and everything puts a smile on her face. She loves theater, writing, The Beatles, photography, listening, learning, living, smiling, and having once in a lifetime experiences.

**BRENDAN CONNOLLY / LITERARY EDITOR**

Brendan is an Irish gentleman skilled in the ways of yodeling. He enjoys fine dining at Waffle House, gonzo journalism, and shaving for special occasions. If you happen to meet him on the street, you'll agree that he is the most sincere and endearing person you will ever meet.

**VANESSA CHANG / CAMPUS LIAISON**

She thinks differently, finds inspiration amongst the people in her life. At only 19 years old she believes that the American Dream can be achieved with dedication and persistence. "What makes life so interesting is creativity and pushing boundaries." She loves vibrant colors and beginning on time.

**PATRICK ELLINGHAM / P'AN KU ADVISOR**

Little is known of Patrick Ellingham's early days in Buffalo, NY. Rumor has it that he toured the northeast wrestling circuit as the masked wrestler, The Great Garbanzo. Though he toiled in obscurity for many years, the highlight of his career came in a lights out match after WrestleMania III when he body-slammed both Andre the Giant and Hulk Hogan. Unfortunately, it occurred in the men's room of the Silverdome, so his claim to the title was never recognized. He later surfaced as a bowling coach in Boca Raton, FL. How he became advisor to P'an Ku is shrouded in mystery. Legend has it that on particularly dark and foggy nights, a masked man has been seen lurking in the shadows of building 68. When confronted, he disappeared into the mist but was heard to exclaim, "Hi Yo, Silverdome!"



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