

The Cornfield Review

A Literary Publication of the Ohio State University at Marion



Volume 26 | 2009

Preface

DURING THIS PAST WINTER, my Literary Publishing class spent a lot of time thinking about fonts. Typefaces, the quiet vessels of the literary journal, serve to convey the ideas and expressions of our contributors, and they often do so with a noble sense of purpose. Ascenders, descenders, terminals, finials: these anatomical appendages fade into the background to let the art, the craft of the words they symbolize cut through the ethereal fog that separates all of us in the universe of language. I raise this point in order to draw an analogy to the larger labors of love that characterize the production of *The Cornfield Review*. Reading through our submissions as editors, reading as fans, deciding on the very best of our photography and artwork, intensely discussing the ethics of editing, excitedly arguing for competing design concepts, figuring out how to make things easier for future classes: it is all of a piece, intricately connected and interdependent, receding quietly in the background even as the ink dries on a fresh run of our journal.

As usual, this project would not be possible without the help of several people raising their hands, pens, and voices on our behalf. The OSU-Marion administration, helmed by Dean Greg Rose, continues to support this long-standing project, support we graciously accept. The English faculty are always instrumental in steering good work our way. The lion's share of the work making

this issue possible is the result of the truly collaborative efforts of our Editorial Board: Tabitha Albright, Stephanie Howard, Carlee Mabrey, Nikkala Briggs, Michael Beatty, Jill Valentine, Michelle Leitzel, Sara Veirs, Sarah Carroll, Lacey Birchfield, Skylar McEntire, Rebecca Sullivan, and Tierre Jefferson. The Cornfield Skeleton Crew, a brave and sturdy lot of students who stayed on beyond the Literary Publishing course well into Spring Quarter to help finish production duties, is owed a special debt of gratitude: Rebecca Sullivan, Tabitha Albright, Nikkala Briggs, Carlee Mabrey, and Stephanie Howard (well done, mateys!).

The Cornfield Review is published annually. The Editorial Board seeks quality poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction in addition to original artwork and photography. Submissions are primarily accepted from students and faculty of OSU-Marion and Marion Technical College, although works by off-campus writers and artists will be considered. For further details and queries, please email me at mccorkle.12@osu.edu.

—Ben McCorkle, Faculty Adviser

The *Cornfield Review* Mission Statement:

We strive to represent the literary and artistic voice of Central Ohio by giving area college students an opportunity to see their work published in a professional literary journal. Additionally, we are passionate about achieving a cultural impact that goes beyond local campuses and reaches into the greater community.

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Love is hearts with initials and last names scratched in a notebook. Love is holding his hand for the first time and feeling the rush of butterflies. Love is a first kiss, where noses bump and awkwardness overplays romance. Love is lying in bed with him and listening to his heart. Love is fighting over stupid things and making up an hour later.

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Love is confusing. Love is not knowing what is going to happen from day to day and making the most of it. Love is keeping secrets from family members to keep up appearances. Love is trying to keep yourself occupied when he doesn't come home for hours. Love is appeasing him no matter what the cost.

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Love is a busted lip smeared with blood that goes unreported. Love is bruised knuckles and holes in drywall. Love is screams that echo through a house that has never been home. Love is heavy breathing from a one night stand before going home to you. Love is angry hands and thrashing in a bedroom to get what he wants from you. Love is you not wanting to hurt him, no matter what he does to you.

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Love is death. Love is a trap that keeps you from finding your own way. Love is a loss of freedom. Love is something you no longer believe in.

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Love is a new beginning. Love is getting over the fear and learning to trust. Love is having faith in a dream. Love is smiling until your face hurts. Love is finding comfort and safety in yourself. Love is having patience with limits. Love is feeling the flutter return. Love is there every day.

To fully understand what love is, you must first discover everything it is not.

Tabitha Albright

Tearing away
at the pieces of me
until there is nothing left

Rip
“you’re ugly”

Rip
“you’re lazy”

Rip
“you’re stupid”

Taking away
my faith and hope;
a soul almost gone

Rip
“You’ll never find someone”

Rip
“You’ll never leave me”

Rip
“You’ll be alone forever”

Every tear is a new tear
Every scrap scrapes away

Rip
“you won’t do it”

Rip
“you’re too scared”

Rip
“you won’t die”

R.I.P.

.....

I love you quietly –
the feeling no more than a whisper.
It runs through me soft
as the babbles and coos of a brook,
that guide me to sleep
among the mounds of soft grass.

I love you peacefully –
the emotion harmonious in my heart.
It sends calmness through me
as the storm of anger shakes,
protecting me from any harm
until the light shines again.

I love you truthfully –
the inspiration warming my soul.
It brings joy to me
as the glow of a sunrise
floating across the mountains
showing the valley's hidden beauty.

Tabitha Abright

The night heat is thick,
 my breath raspy,
 I say, "goodbye,"
 sounding like a banshee song.
 I run into the trees
 beside the darkened water.

I see the moon,
 just a sliver of silver,
 an eye peeking at the world.
 It barely lights my way
 to a lost path
 littered with flowers
 trampled into the dark earth.

I feel bittersweetness here
 as though a love was lost
 somewhere in the wrinkled trees
 the wind whispers to me
 "this path is not for you;"
 the tone is ominous
 and I imagine Death
 himself behind me.

The deep blue shadows
 bend a little, hiding the way.
 I wish for Death to find me.
 "Feed me to the forest,"
 I pray quietly,
 the ache taking over.
 I sit, waiting for his song.
 Then his eyes find my soul.
 "No," he hisses, life escaping
 from his pale lips.

I shiver at his touch
 but feel that corruption leave.
 In the half light of morning
 I return from oblivion
 dewy tears of thankfulness
 running down my dirt streaked face.

Her name was Serendipity, an ironic name for such a plagued girl. To me, she was Seren. Her life contained one accident after another – never happy. Once things started to go downhill, she never came back up again. The last accident wasn't really an accident, but at least it was what she wanted. I tried to help her, but she was lost. Now, as I stare at her photo album, I can tell her story through my eyes and observations.

Turn to a baby wrapped in a white blanket with green and pink stripes on one end. The newborn is opening her eyes, looking at the world for the first time. Her parents lie together on the hospital bed, smiling for the camera. Her mother's hair is still sweat filled and sticking to her head. Her mascara is smeared and her nails are painted bright red. The father in the picture has bags under his eyes, as though he hasn't slept in days. Looking at the picture, you would never know that the man isn't the newborn's father. He doesn't know it at this point either.

Turn to a three year old girl with brown pigtails holding a fish. She is celebrating her catch. Her "father" is standing beside her, his hand patting her on the head. He looks so proud of his daughter's catch. Seren's mother is taking the picture. In the background, you can see a tent and a fire. What don't you see in this picture? The drive home from the camping trip where Seren's father runs off the road after being told he isn't her father. Seren is in the car. She survives, but her parents do not. After that, Seren is taken to live with her grandparents.

Turn to a picture of a little girl unwrapping a bicycle. Seren is five years old, and her eyes are wide as she tears at the paper. There are people gathered all around, some wearing pointy birthday hats. Seren's white dress has a brown stain from the chocolate ice cream she begged for. Seren told me about this picture. She said it was the first and last time she remembered being happy. After everyone had left the party, the bike was taken from her and returned to the store. She was then beaten and locked her room for two days for staining her dress. It is amazing to me that a child who is so sad can look so happy for a nanosecond of time.

Turn to a woman in a black halter top, tight jean shorts, and flip flops. At first glance she looks about 22 years old. She is leaning against a black Cadillac, her arms stretched out along the sides. She is posing. Though it seems she wants to look sexy, she is coming off as awkward for the camera. There is no life in her eyes. Taking out the picture and turning it over reveals that this is Seren at age twelve. No wonder she looks awkward. She is still a child trying to play at being a grown up. This picture, along with others, was sold to friends of her grandfather. They were the reason

Tabitha Abright

Seren was sent into foster care.

Turn to a picture of a teenager in white pajamas. She is sitting in a white room posing with other patients and orderlies around her birthday cake. It is her 18th birthday. She looks happy, as if the institution is a place she wants to be, even though it is her last day. Her pale skin and the darkness in her eyes hold the madness that seven suicide attempts in six years can bring. Two hours after the photograph was taken, Serendipity checked herself out of the institution, walked up to the roof, and did a swan dive onto the parking lot below – the perfect ending to the life of such a tragic character.

Staying up until 4AM -
the words don't suffer.
They swirl around my head,
dancing, keeping me awake.

Transient, sleepy smile.

Am I obsessed?
- the lunatic is laughing
in my head -
"I think I am."

I don't have relationships.
I have a commitment
to my characters.

I spend more time with them
than with real people.

Real people are things
I study to further
the lives on my page.

I am obsessed with a great writer.
I want to smell the sweetness of
genius that wafts around him.

"You were to me what I am to you,
and somehow, you've changed."

Where do my priorities lie?

The writer is the God of
the world he creates.
The words are his reality.

It can't exist.
Do I exist?

I can't exist without him --
even though I can,
even though I think I can't.

Do I write to please myself?
No, I write to silence my mind.

The words swirl out of my head
and onto the paper,
leaving me empty again.

Tabitha Abright

When the Bruises Fade

When the bruises fade...

I won't have to explain
why I always wear sunglasses,
even when it's raining.

When the bruises fade...

I won't have to wear
long sleeved shirts all the time,
especially during summer.

When the bruises fade...

I won't have to make up
lies about walking into doors
and falling down the stairs.

When the bruises fade...

I won't have to think
about the abuse every day
and how he might kill me.

When the bruises fade...

I won't have to pretend
that he isn't a monster
and that I still love him.

When the bruises fade....

...but the bruises never fade.

Tabitha Albright

ALLISON SLAMMED the car door and sat back, folding her arms over her chest. Allen looked over, one eyebrow raised.

“Someone’s in a mood,” he said.

“I’m fine.”

“You can retract those claws, Allie Cat. Now why don’t you tell me what’s going on.” Allen pulled out of the driveway, barely missing the mailbox.

“Watch what the fuck you’re doing! If you mess up my yard, I’m taking it out of your ass.”

Allen made a left, and pulled onto the freeway. “Ok, seriously, what’s wrong? I’m not going to have you biting my head off all night when I don’t even know what’s bothering you.”

“Watch your speed. For God’s sake, Allen, you don’t have the money for a speeding ticket. And you better think again if you think I’m going to loan you any money.”

Allen looked over at his fiancée with another eyebrow raise. “I don’t need to borrow money from you. I have a job, and I’m good with money. What are you talking about?”

Allison turned to look out the window. She let out a sigh and wiped away a tear. How could she let him know that she found out? How could she break the news that she saw him kiss her best friend in a restaurant today?

“So, um,” she cleared her throat, “What did you do today?” *Please don’t let him lie to me. If he tells the truth,*

maybe this can still work, she thought.

“Oh, I didn’t do much. I sat around the house, played some video games. Then Bob came over, and we worked on my car for a bit. After that, I took a shower and came to get you. Didn’t you notice the car isn’t making that clanking sound anymore?”

That’s it. It’s over.

“You didn’t go to lunch today?”

Now Allen was the one clearing his throat. He took his right hand off the wheel and rubbed the back of his neck. “No, I didn’t go to lunch today.” He paused. “Why would you ask me something like that?”

“...because I saw you,” she whispered.

“What sweetie?” Allen turned down the radio.

“I said, ‘because I saw you!’”

“Where did you see me?”

“I saw you with Christine today at Haru.” She folded her hands in front of her, one hand squeezing the other, trying to keep herself calm. She slipped from anger to sarcasm. “I mean, really Allen, why would you kiss someone at a sushi bar? That spicy tuna roll probably left a really nice taste in your mouth.”

Allen sat in silence, staring at the road.

“Nothing to say now? I thought you wanted to know what was wrong...sweetie.”

Tabitha Albright





Tabitra Albright

The problem with fresh fruit,
is occasionally it's delightfully delicious,
but frequently it's absolutely awful.
The solution is frozen fruit,
which is wonderfully mired in mediocrity,
and never more than mildly disappointing,
or better than slightly satisfying.

Michael Beatty

*Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune.
But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings.
Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.*
-- From Max Ehrmann's "Desiderata"

Questioning my depth of character,
I started questing to find feelings.
Only to find I'm a barren tundra.
It's all my heart made time for.

Some simple sins I've committed, One:
I've left grocery carts in parking spots -
When a cart-kennel was easily found.
I can't simply be forgiven.

Come forth child of light:
Teach me how to be pure,
Instead of just purely being.

I ground my soul to dust on years of small concessions:
It was the little fabrications,
The little promises,
That brought me down -
Made worse because they were entirely made with myself.

Some simple sins I've committed, Two:
I've caught checkout errors in my favor and left -
Momentarily richer monetarily,
This is not a matter of mere forgiveness.

Come forth child of light:
Let me study you,
Let me study -
Beneath your guiding hand
We examine my past.

I'm hunted by countless mistakes,
Haunted by memories I barely remember.

Michael Beatty

Iniquitous Peccadilloes (cont.)

Minor misdeeds and terrible transgressions,
 Merging into a quilt sewn from patches of guilt.
 I'm trapped in a life I can't atone for.

Some simple sins I've committed, Three:
 I've acted inappropriately with women -
 I've handled their emotions flippantly,
 And I've been careless and cruel in love.
 I can't be forgiven.

Come forth child of light:
 Wash away the darkest shadows of my life.
 Amidst your purifying splendor
 My lies
 My shame

I deserve what I get.
 I deserve what I've got.
 I'm not wallowing in loneliness:
 I'm not.
 I'm seeking purity.
 I'm seeking the flame.
 I'm searching for some meaning that means something.

Some simple sins I've committed,
 Four, Five, Six, Seven, Eight, and Nine:
 I have donated too little of both my time and money.
 I have, at times, been a burden on others.
 I have, consistently, been envious of others.
 I've been envious of others' money.
 Money, of course, deserves its own line.
 I've sold a new car...
 At sticker price!
 I've taken my life for granted.

Come forth child of light:
 Show me that it won't always be night.
 Please swaddle me in forgiveness,

Iniquitous Peccadilloes (cont.)

For the myriad sins I've committed.
Then cradle me till the sun finally arrives.

What of the times I gathered carts,
Returning every one in my row?
What of the times I went back to the store,
To pay what was owed?
What of the times I tried to love absolutely and completely,
And, looking back, I can only be hopeful that I gave some small measure
of the happiness I found?

Is this how a life is measured?
Good deeds balanced against bad,
Carry the remainder, like some sorta karma-based, afterlife pension?
What happens when I am weighed in the balances and found wanting,
Is it off to debtor's prison?

Come forth beautiful, golden child of light, but
Bring your spreadsheet, so we can balance my life.
Let us put every deed in its place,
Marking each as either right or wrong.
Let us make a tally of what is owed.
I won't merely be forgiven these debts I've sowed.

Reckoning

When a student's isolation and angst
 manifested as violence and rage
 The Hokie's buried 32 young stars.
 Their light extinguished in their prime.
 We bathed in a sociopaths manifesto,
 while seeking someone, anyone, to blame.

Still, it is a beautiful world.

When Katrina came crashing against our shores,
 and the enormous weight of her water
 came crashing through the levees.
 We watched in terror as death tolls rose to 1,836,
 and civilization came apart at the seams .
 Listening as evil preachers said it was divine punishment,
 watching as authorities failed to deliver relief.

Still, still I remind myself, it is a beautiful world.

When the Earth shifted one inch to the side,
 trying to rub an itch it couldn't quite reach.
 Water's life giving hands clenching into fists,
 and mercilessly pounding shores.
 Its fingers digging through sand and dirt,
 dragging 230,000 souls back into suffocating blue silence.

Still, is it a beautiful world?

When transportation was transformed into a weapon,
 America found itself digging through the twin's remains.
 We collectively mourned 2,751 civilians taken before their time.
 Then we found ourselves responsible for nearly 100,000 civilian deaths,
 and General Franks said,
 "We don't do body counts"

Still, still I wonder, is it really a beautiful world?

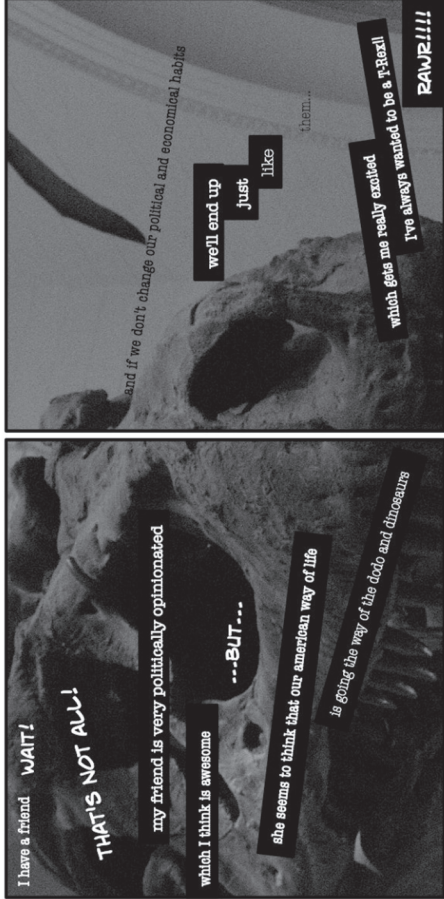
Michael Beatty

When I say she was beautiful,
I mean she was hot.
When I say she was hot,
I don't mean the, ouch, I just got burnt hot,
I mean the ooh that's a delicious dish hot.
She was hot.
She was too hot.
It ruined her.
She was take a bite and take a break hot.
Which is hotter than wipe the sweat from your brow hot.
She was so hot she was dangerous
You might rub your eyes and be blinded forever.
She was so hot everyone noticed her,
and she knew it.
She knew she was hot,
and it consumed her.
It made her inedible, so she was left to rot.

Michael Beatty

I Have a Friend

Benjamin Chaymies





Pam Cooper



The light has faded into gray
It dances on the windowsill
And beckons you to come and stay
Amid the warming lamp lit hues.
Darkness leaps and trembles
Casting forms into the world
While the brighter decorations hide
Until the golden is renewed.
Neon embers, hot and bold,
Take prisoner the eyes
And mold them there
Until they fold
As pieces of design.
Retreating once more
Into the night
The gray has taken siege
And the light of a thousand memories
Take the shape
Of nightmares and dreams.

Laura Damm

I awake to visions of Snow White and Dopey.
He comes to me and asks my hand in matrimony.
His hands tremble with fear.
But I'm too young for marriage.
That horrid dwarf is angered by my rejection
As I look on for the next chapter.
I rise up to see a ghastly monster.
His jagged teeth are caked with human flesh.
It hungers for more as it stares at my frail body.
Running from this terrifying monster,
I reach for the vacant door.
Fear runs through my weak veins,
And my heart pounds as I turn the knob.
Opening my eyes, I glare at a wood stove.
Pieces of children litter the wood cabin.
The old hag returns from her slumber while
She gnaws on an extra finger or two.
The hag gawks at my presence and licks her thin lips.
She wants to eat me alive.
I run near the oven, but dive for the floor.
The hag hobbles toward my legs but slides into the fiery flame.
Watching her wrinkled flesh burn off makes me vomit inside.
I want to go home. Someone save me from this nightmare.
I awake in a cold sweat. I scream in utter fear.
I check to see if all my parts are intact.
Just as I was returning to dreamland,
The smell of the hag's body lingers in the thin air.



Danielle Dick

When a Girl Wears Makeup

Don't ever think pretty girls wearing makeup are the ones who have it all together.

Her makeup is just really showing the pain you caused her.
For, the eyeshadow is the blur that covers her eyes when she was too blind to see what you've done.

The eyeliner is the line of the knife you drag through her heart.
And when it all hits her as to what is happening,
The mascara running down her cheeks...

Why that is the bleeding of her heart after you tore it apart.

Then the lipstick that is now smudged all over face...
It's just going to show that everything she thought she had has disappeared and she can't seem to keep it in the right place.

i take what i desire
but desire is just a dream.

dreaming is a wish that
only you can grant me.

so watch me desire you
and feel you towards me.

with nothing but hope
for that one granted wish.

Megan Galyk

As Much as I Love You

As much as I love you...

I have to learn to hate you as much as I love you.

I gently touch my face and imagine it is you touching me.

I remember how you did.

I gently caress my neck and relax with such ease.

I feel the sudden jolt of the fire that is burning through my nerves.

I take a deep breath in and hold it until I realize I need another breath.

I slowly open my eyes and remember that you're not here and I have to
learn to hate you as much as I love you.

April Green

I hear it in your voice, I see it in your smile
Why not sit down, And talk to me a while
Things are not the same, Problems are on the rise
You don't need to say words, It's all in your eyes
Try all that you can, To hide all the pain
Do all in your power, To break the chains
If you need a friend, Confide in me
Don't bear it alone, That is the main key
Sometimes all it takes, To lighten the load
Is to share with a friend, A bump in the road
No easy way out, Too much to keep in
But if you never say why, Then you never will win
We all have our burdens, And crosses to bear
And I know that smile, Sometimes we must wear
So let your pride go, And put faith in me
Instead of saying I, Replace I with we
When I ask you what's wrong, Don't you dare to ask why
Your eyes tell it all, Your eyes do not lie

Bryony Celeste Hedger



Photo by: Angie Helton

Angie Helton

Settling between dead time
stillness in the air
accumulates and condenses
in a whisper

Echoing true
beyond the limitations
of mortal men
and empty horizons

Reverberating in the secret
places of the mind
and catching
just below the threshold of solitude

Longing to reach out
and touch something
purer than the breaking
of morning sunlight

Finding faith in unsought
corners of the heart
and unity in
loneliness

S. Howard

The shine has left your eyes,
where once it hosted
bright happiness, and
I'm left anticipating
the remote despair
of losing something
that was already lost
to begin with.

Dreams dragged
across dirty linoleum,
through muddy pools
and open wounds,
have never looked
so beautiful
as they do tonight
with you.

The chime of your resolve
echoes in this place,
reflected back by the
empty walls
and lost reasons,
finding lodgings in
the secret places
of my heart.

I can't condone this
temptation to abide
by sweet bitterness,
lost in a frenzy of
unfulfilled promises.
I can't settle to a lifetime
of starless nights
and perpetual deceit.
I can't blindly follow you
forever.

CLAIRE WAS TRYING to figure out why the seemingly endless sea never faltered. She was trying to understand the reasons behind the gulls swooping, the little plastic bags fluttering with the breeze, the waves rushing onto the shore. She was late, she was always late. She ran, one foot in front of the other, one foot after the other. Claire was only seven, she didn't know why the sun melted into the distance, or why the sea kept on churning.

She was only seven.

She will always be seven to me.

Claire was a fiery little girl, bright orange hair and a mischievous grin. She was daffodils and poesies. Her smile was the sky after a storm, the sunshine in her voice resonating, making all troubles and worry break away. Claire didn't know how the world worked yet, but she was learning slowly.

She was playing by the water that day; collecting conch shells and sea glass for her daddy. Before I knew what had happened, she was lost. I screamed out to her, my lost daughter. I searched the yard, the expanse of beach before me. The search party looked up and down the shores, they waded out into the water; but returned empty handed.

She was gone.

Claire beyond their search field, her feet carrying her further and further down the bay in the wrong direction. The sun was setting and she knew we'd would be worried. She ran faster, and faster, away from the warmth of our home. Claire curled up under a giant oak tree as the night fell. She was waiting for her daddy's arm to carry her home, or my soft voice to show her the way. She waited each night, wrapped in a delicate dream of home, thinking that if she just wished hard enough she'd be there.

Claire kept fighting her way through the sun baked sand, the bracken driftwood, the gnarled trees that lined the sea shore; but each morning she awoke farther from home. On the second day, she was so hungry she tried eating tree leaves, and rotting mulberries. She was so thirsty she tried to drink the morning dew, and the salty sea water.

Claire lived seven years, forty-two days, and twenty-two hours. She was walking between the living and the rolling sea for three days, until her body succumbed to the ways of the world. Her tiny, tender, body rested behind a felled tree; only to be discovered by a

S. Howard

lost hiker, found too late.

And I hung my head that day in my failure. I admitted defeat, and collapsed as my heart shattered into a fragmented heap of remnants. I had lost her. I had been the one to turn my back from the window, the one to hesitate, to call her home in vain.

Claire was seven.

A beautiful, inquisitive, child.

Sometimes I look out at the crashing waves and I swear I can see her. I see her walking down the shore, hand on her basket, smile on her lips, cheeks flushed rosen. She calls for me, but I can't reach her. I'm stuck behind a wall of glass. And I'm drowning. I'm weak, hungry, alone. I'm dying.

At night, when the cicadas sound like an orchestra, and the crickets are the overture, I can almost hear her honeysuckle voice calling me. I run outside, run towards the voice, only to find the lolling sea awaiting me. Sometimes I wish it could wash away my pain, the way it cleanses the shores at night, covering them in a blanket of dark veiled blue. But Claire was not a piece of driftwood, a discarded candy bar wrapper, a plastic wrapper; Claire was a wonderful child. As much as I wish the sea could wash this pain away, it can't.

All it does is remind me that Claire was.

I stand at the shore when the sun hangs high overhead, and I wonder why the sea never falters. I wonder why the gulls continue swooping, why the plastic bags continue dancing in the breeze, why the sea keeps rolling in and out, day after day. I wonder why the fish keep swimming, why the boats keep passing by, why the sun keeps rising, and setting, and rising again.

Claire was a fiery little girl, bright orange hair and a mischievous grin.



S. Howard



J. Howard



S. Howard

I Promise!

As I begin to grow, I start to wither away:
withering forever, reduced
to nothing more than a faint whisper; of a Promise;
a memory of self,
so loving,
so vibrant,
so strong

I promised!

Admirable, perhaps I once had a purpose;
one that I was not able to secure,
a purpose of fulfillment
full of desire, commitment, and hope to exist forever
Yet, my life has ceased to exist,
as I lie here, reducing to a pile of silvery-ashes,
embers and ashes of a memory I once had and now
I can only think of the promise I made,
my sole purpose for living, the one thing that made me whole,
has now depleted me of my own self preservation, now denied,
Alas, I remember my promise!

Tierre Jefferson

write to me
in words only you can give
flow down into reasoning
flow down in my need for words
I can give pages
I can flex muscles
I still can't help laughing
life is short after all
getting shorter all this way
leaving no trail
blazing no straight nor narrow
spending life making sure you remember me after
I didn't have time to enjoy what I had
too concerned
with when I'm gone
I was never here at all
if it's worth remembering
it was worth sacrificing
for others to memorize
wonder what could have been
laughs, tears, worries
if I didn't dare
remember
remind me
which side belongs where
riddles
green tops to spelling books
Write to me
could you?

Michelle Lietzel

souls swallow rocks
when they feel
they'll never reach
ground again
trials of wasted
wings on black lit skies
pigeon headed walking
still eating rocks
rain drips off the tips
of every end of you
comfort in the gallows
waiting to reach
always with hands tucked
deep winding winds
with no hope of still
coined phrases
empty faces
you're eating rocks
sometimes you don't
sometimes follow me
correcting mistakes
calling upon shortcomings
un-realizing until I'm
putting down the rocks
I see me
you see nothing
I can fly through black lit skies
leaving blue and sunshine
in my wake

Michelle Lietzel

Miss the oak hands
Miss the termite lines
Trade them in for city skies
Build yourself in a world of people
Then cut them off from you
Yeah it's lonely
Realizing that people are everything
And you can't find one

Michelle Lietzel

Moments Between Voices

Guideless eye rolls
 scanning
 taking in every breath
 each inhale like steak knives
 tearing apart the layers between
 lung and heart
 the solitude of winter
 continues into modern day
 with the same wet eyes
 numbed grey toes
 every eye beholding
 soaked wood
 mud sucking you even
 tighter to the ground
 browned leaves
 glisten with pools of mirrors
 bright enough to display
 the melting days
 crisp heat
 some still holding on
 the rest of us stuck breathing
 remembering
 dreaming
 these moments between voices
 where soft animal feet
 and rain on windows
 remind you that sound
 and places are out there
 but you remember eyes
 that will never look you over
 again
 listening to distance memories
 of conversations
 just to wake up breathing
 breathing in knives that have been
 and will
 between voices
 that never come

Michelle Lietzel

Now
I creak
 on time
With passed
 knowledge
No longer making
 laughs
Solemn
knots in my stomach
 Contract
 knead my ease
Cotton napkins
 creased
 pressed
Never
capture softness
 breast
Heartbeats
 deep breathes
Constant pace
 til sleep
Ever smiling
I see
 know
Something bricks builds
Now I'm
 numbed
You've cocked the gun
Silence waits
its turn

Michelle Lietzel

Can you feel how much hotter it is up here?
Straight down, wow
but look at all the tiny homes,
straight down now
they look bigger way up close.
Planes fly into it, straight ahead.
From down there I'm a piece of the sky.
It looks like you can just reach out and I'm yours.
But reach, your hand never touches the sky.
Night falls, and the moonlight shines
straight down,
I shine don't I
your hand never touches the sky.
The moonlight makes the sun run wild
spinning whirlwinds in your chest
I can see you reaching.
It spins the air around my face.
You reach and I imagine you've touched me.
Bang your hand against my cliff
make it crack and break
you can bring me close enough to reach
release me from the sky
straight down

Michelle Lietzel

I guess I'm ready to get up.
I know it's raining outside
but it's been 9 years
since the last time
I ran out into the rain
just to splash
in puddles
and let the rain wash the mud away.
Every splash,
every slap
from my wet hair
hitting and sticking
to my wet cheeks
brings more speed and more life.
I've been in this town
for three months now
and I haven't found a single person
to identify with
and I've got all this mountain ground around me
I might as well go out and live.
I can hear my laughter
filling the open air.
Every inhale
contains heavy scents of dirt and grass.

Michelle Lietzel

flatten yourself down against river beds
 cool wet crisp feeling across your face and hands
 palms turned up
 only your knees break the current
 with eyes open
 water so clean you can still see the sky
 as you laugh it fills your mouth
 bursting through you rise again to ripple free wilderness
 no one was around
 but laughter fills the air
 under
 up
 under UP!
 when you're alone today man it doesn't feel crisp
 you aren't running though sunshine
 the water isn't clean enough to open your eyes
 so you press yourself down into couches
 you cry when you rise
 you sigh when you fall
 down
 down Stay
 I can't stay here much longer
 what is a year to my life
 being solitary in this place seems odd
 being solitary there gave me the freedom to lay
 in river beds and laugh
 no one trying to be cool
 no one trying to end the night with the best story
 or envious events
 just you and the river bed
 laughing under the trees

Michelle Lietzel

What's for you will take you from me

She is losing the war my friends
 And you will lose her too
 Soon the time for this poem will run out
 And she will not have said enough
 The wine on her breath speaks
 And she is afraid to say
 There are words you should hear
 Words that would never be spoken without you
 They can't be said because of the hearts they'd break
 And her damn morals that will not let her simply exhale
 Does she fear chasing you away?
 Or is my heart her responsibility?
 If you can believe the narrator changed
 Then I have words to speak with you.
 Her is me and you is who can finally hear
 Who knows they risk being chased away

Just know before you flee
 Just how much I have been breaking
 As tears fill eyes
 The car pulls in
 And I hide once again
 And the pain that rips me apart inside is laughing at me
 And I just can't stop them
 The lies
 The truth
 I know what hurts more
 And I know that neither exists yet

Michelle Lietzel

Of Ink Blots and Credo's: A Love Poem

Once, after the knot of grace, after the brawl
of the heat-wave sun, and the smooth serenity

of death, and the stars melted in their eaves,
pricked by the coiled warp beat of their shadows,

you were the stillness after a meteor's flurry,
like a volcano beating its slow drum

beside the shadowed, pierced purity of a sky mountain
melting in the world of its soul, twitching its mind awake,

hidden amongst the clouds wilting at the edge of what
we knew. You were melting valleys and tangerine

cherries slumming in a sky of fire, a dark, sinful,
angelic turret of matted purity. And I loved you,

like a static shiver, a frost-bitten breeze,
a trickling bead of icy sweat. I loved you,

through the chutes of water filth, with the rippled
whisper of a star lake filled with fresh apples,

like a fire tribe of death wind blowing through
a consciousness of a town. I loved you,

with the beating sincerity of angels, with the purity
of the sun's lacquered heat. I was wearing a prom dress

of lost dust, girdled in the serenity of your touch,
of your freckled wing matted against my cheek.

I remember, we were walking toward heaven,
by the lost pool of our majestic ashes.

I remember it all now. I wear it like a
filthy staple or a band aid. I remember it all.

(Contributing poets: Deb Noll, Jill Valentine, Carlee Mabray, Saretta Main, Tabitha Albright, Mike Beatty, Terry Hermesen, Dominick Berg, Dennis Millisar, Honey Carr, Stacey Wilson, Zach Wheeler, Stephanie Howard, Shandi Pryor, and Stuart Lishan)

Stuart Lishan, Terry Hermesen, et al.

You assume
'cuz of everything I do.
The way I wear my hair,
The way I dress,
The way I talk.
You even assume
About the way
I blow
Bubbles with my gum
—POP—
Hate to burst your bubble,
But you assume wrong.
Watch me throw
Your assumptions
Out the window of the car,
And laugh while I see
Your own assumptions
—SLAM—
Into your windshield.

Carlee Mabrey

I-Identity Crisis

I am more than a letter.
 Who I am does not fit between H and J.
 I am intricate, infinite, incomprehensible—

A mystery even to myself.
 Yet I recognize “I” as a representation of me.

I am unique, individual,
 Distinctly different from anyone before.
 So, I is me. Yet you are I,
 And I am she if you are me.
 Are we all together?

I am more than the sum of the parts.
 In part, I am that singular slim character—I.
 In part, I am a full name spread over the page,
 C a r l e e D e o n M a b r e y.

In part, who I think I am,
 In part, who I intend to be,
 In part, who you perceive me to be,

In part I am not whole.

I am more than the sum of my parts,
 Yet I can't add up the sum,
 Let alone factor in the “more.”

In total, I am never seen.

If no one can see me,
 The whole me,
 The real me,
 Do I exist?

She looks in the mirror then quickly turns around,
she grabs her make-up quietly and puts in on without a sound.
She is off to her nail appointment because she has to look her best,
all she's doing is going to school, but there's so many to impress.

She looks like a stunning mess feeling so sick and fake,
Why must she please everyone else? Why the same awful mistake?
She is hiding herself through cosmetics, through glimmer, glitz, and gleam,
she doesn't mean to live like this, her clone is not her dream.
She cries herself to sleep some nights as she looks through her magazines,
wishing she were someone else, one of these gorgeous teens.
She has no concern of her health and her wants are now her needs.
this is everyday life for her with fakeness, lies, and greed.

Savetta Main

Poetry, a self-expression for the educated.

The freak of literature.

So deep and disturbing, forcing one to look away.

Poetry, a gray sky

No black or white

No criticism

No wrong or right

Poetry, free to express the inner freak

Lizzie Martin



Kelcee McCurdy



Kelcee McCurdy

O, let us tell it to the tulips;
Let us sing to bleeding hearts;
Let us cry out to viburnum,
And remember each forget-me-not.
As we dance on the azaleas,
Softly step on baby's breath,
Trust me to tread on nary a nettle
And avoid the primrose path.
My lovely lily of the valley,
O, my darling hollyhock,
You're my sensible snapdragon,
My sweet honeysuckle drop.
You open up your morning glories
From your bed of lavender,
Lest you drown in your hydrangeas
And lay to waste your juniper.
Will I yet miss your hibiscus
That is gone with the begonias?
Will I have questions like the crocus
Or a mind like a magnolia?
Let's not dance around like daffodils
Or be shy like little violets,
But let's love, then, like the lupine
And be candid as dandelions.
Dear, I would never lack the lilacs
To be a sunflower when skies are darker,
If you'd cut me roses from your garden
And from your greenest meadow, larkspur.
Then would I kiss your lips with amaryllis,
Or your neck with hyacinth?
Or, here, a lotus for your nose
And an iris for your wrist.
Let me cover you in clover
My darling delphinium,
As I guard you with gardenias
In a castle of chrysanthemum.
O, my sweet, delightful dahlia,

Dennis Miller

Garden Song (cont.)

My beautiful buttercup,
We ought to marry as marigolds
And love like gentile geraniums.
Then we'll sing praises like petunias
Who sing daily with the daisies
To the Creator of carnations
Who planted all the peonies.
And as we bow to the God of goldenrod
We'll climb upward as ivy to rest in His love.
He'll heal us both with heliotrope
As he enfleshes hard hearts with foxglove.



David Nicol

The Girl with the Curl

The girl with the curl above the brow is just
A girl you see you cannot trust, because
Behind her smile and big, blue eyes, she lies.

Deb Woll



Meredith A. S. Partipriser

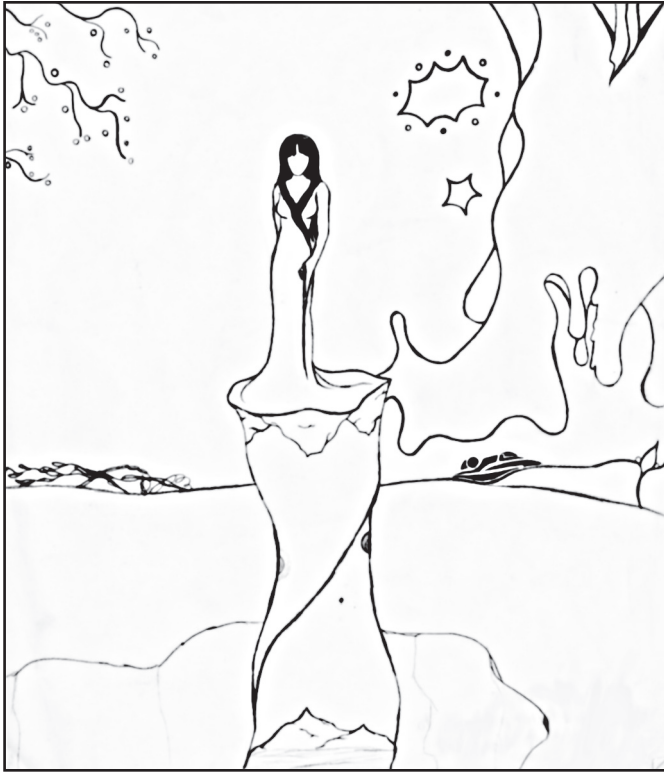
Meredith A.J. Partipilo

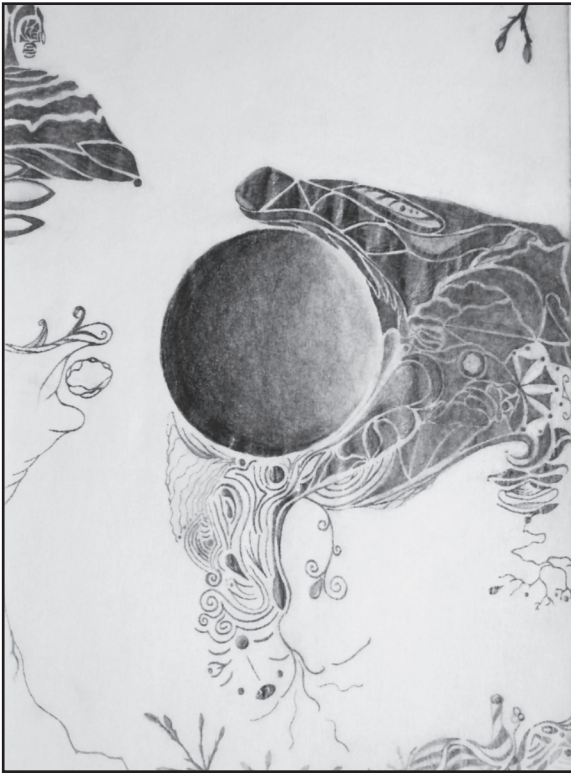




Meredith A.S. Partipider

Ashley Richards





Ashley Richards

Holodomor

Zamoryty

murder by hunger

My belly a chapel where the hymnals are inched in dust and the stained glass is cracked on the crown of christ

No one masses anymore

I have cut off and eaten all my hair

Stalin is the biggest *kerisa*¹ on earth. Stalin, with his seedy eyes and trim whiskers, Stalin has stolen all of our grain

Valentin hid a few sacred kernels in the cuff of his trousers to sneak some grain away

We hunch in our hutches, so hungry we eat faith

Moya *podruga*² Oxana, she lined the loft of her house with wheat, lifting the asbestos for every little kernel

My neighbor Ludmilla fed the flesh of her husband to little Nikolai, to keep him going for just another day

Starve is word verbi-fied: stomach's obsession with itself. Every variety of burn: scorch, sear, smolder

The mother-gone-starver went over the wheat field collecting shafts of grain and the Collectivists shot him dead

We weep for meat, for *hleba*³

The ravens watch our every vernal urge, we cannot grow without them seeing, oh crow away

All I had to eat today was three mouthfulls of *pochva*⁴ for the minerals

The skin on the face of my boy Vanya is stretched so thin it tears in spots and I can see his skeleton prying its way out

Ukraine, a crag before it crumbles

We work this land that once was ours with hands that once were ours we are only now shells of old cocoons

Proximity persuades our stomachs we are full, so close to grain we cannot eat

I found today a bird's nest and I robbed the eggs, my rusty innards forget to gurgle, forget to churn

A heart worn, not watched on the sleeve is a heart that seizes to beat while we work I am so dizzy how can I take another step

We are all skeletons seeding. We call our caskets now, before things get worse

The Collectivists have cut the pleasure centers of our tongues; we can taste only scars now

We will sketch here out under the fire's low light a metaphysics of emptiness

I dreamed last night a holstein was my mother; I sucked and sucked but could only suck dust

Even in prisons the jailers offer pleasure of a moldy heel of bread

My *koshka*⁵ Natasha, I loved, I took her life for my hunger and cried while I dined
I am still a human am I?

1. Rat 2. My friend 3. Bread 4. Dirt 5. Cat

EVERY TIME I HEARD either of my children say “mom”, I cringed and ducked, hoping they weren’t looking for me. I hid forever in the colorless tile of the bathroom, behind the pinstripe curtain that reminds me of a man’s suit, soaking under hot water or at least what part of me would fit into the water; as if the water could cleanse the part of me that hated myself for feeling what I felt. I just sat there in that ugly white fiberglass staring at rusted out faucets and holes some half-assed maintenance man rubbed caulk over to keep water out of the insulation. It wasn’t even clean in the place I went to cleanse myself. I can’t remember the last time I used the toilet brush or wiped off the mirror. What I do remember is telling my husband, John, that I was pregnant for the third time, and watching him grin, like this was fantastic news. Did he have a clue how much more work this would be? I couldn’t even keep up with the laundry. We could barely put food on the table for our family of four, now diapers and formula and a family of five? I had no help from him now with all the hours he was putting in at his job. And I had just barely managed to get my youngest one toilet-trained. I thought I was done with diapers. I couldn’t even revel in my small victory. I looked from the soapy water to the surrounding bathroom. Empty toilet paper rolls lay on the counter. There were discarded, naked Barbies,

My Little Ponies, and the remnants of pirate ships and princesses that never made it to their plastic bins in the utility closet. Too many used towels left in piles on the floor, hiding mismatched dirty socks that somehow missed the hamper only a few steps away, and an overflowing trashcan full of stinky pull-ups that I never managed to take down on trash day. How is it I could sit in this chaos and still know peace? This ugly, grey, dingy bathroom had become my sanctuary. It wasn’t the bathroom I would have chosen and it certainly wasn’t beautiful, but it was my only place to escape the responsibilities of folding the laundry, cleaning the kitchen, cooking the meals, paying the bills, reading *Goodnight Moon* for the hundredth time, ironing my husband’s clothes, and breaking up arguments on whether it was time to watch “Spongebob Squarepants” or the “Wiggles”.

I can’t remember ever feeling so miserable. It wasn’t just that I couldn’t see my feet anymore or that every time I ate something, even as simple as bread, it burned like someone was ripping out my insides with a salad fork. It was the kind of misery that crying doesn’t purge from you. It was the unmistakable hard edge of suicidal thought, but suicide wasn’t even a remote option. It was being saddled with consequences of making the wrong choices with the wrong

Bill Valentine

man and not being able to change it. I knew that while I wanted to leave the misery, I was bound to it by duty, and responsibilities of wife and mother. I didn't care what the OB/GYN said about showering instead of bathing so late into the term of my pregnancy. I didn't care about anything.

I finally emerged from the bathroom, clean, but not purged of my thoughts. Trance-like, I lumbered awkwardly, the towel barely wrapped around my large frame, into the darkness of my basement bedroom, the cave of it dank and dim, sheets twisted from my nights of discomfort. I wanted to be free of my responsibilities. I started to wonder what my life would be like if I got on a plane and flew to Mexico, where no one knew about me or my life here, and the sand squished between my toes, and the sun burned my pale skin, and the cabana boy brought me some exotic fruity drink in a hurricane glass, and did anything except have this baby. But it was too late. I was going to have this baby and nothing short of death would stop her from coming.

As I lay back on the cool sheets still not dry from my bath, disgusted with my lack of clothing options for my growing stomach, I started to wonder if maybe death wasn't the obvious answer, but I couldn't bring myself to hate her enough for that. I knew it was a "her" and I resented that too. Just as I resented her very presence and all the ties that came

with it. She was keeping me from things I wanted for my life and, try as I might, I couldn't love her. I wanted to be the kind of mother that could afford Christmas presents and could volunteer for the school homeroom parties. I wanted to be able to attend every baseball and soccer game and cheerleading competition that would come in the future. I wanted my one beautiful, perfect daughter to never be outshined by another daughter and to know I could afford prom dresses and expensive hair appointments and all that came with having girls. I wanted to finish college and get a foot in the door at some great company and still have time to be the kind of mother my mother was to me. I didn't think that would be possible now. I couldn't take care of the two children I had. I was letting them down already by not being able to offer financial dependability. John and I had already borrowed so much money from my mom and dad already. I wasn't ready for more responsibility and yet, here it was. What kind of mother could I be if I couldn't love her? What about the children that were already here for that matter? Didn't anyone understand that I wanted to disappear into oblivion and never be needed again? I just stayed there in that dark room, thankful for a moment of peace while Alex was at kindergarten and Julia was taking a rare nap.

Most days the couch was the only thing that touched me---the deep

stained cushions of a couch that were once an off-white but after it had been moved 6 times, it carried the remnants of each move. I couldn't bear to part with it because it had belonged to my friend that had, on so many occasions, saved me from my self-destruction. The couch was just a piece of furniture, but it seemed my link to sanity and to my only salvation from my friend, Dawn, that had up and moved with her husband to Maryland, too many miles away, and right when I needed her most.

Dawn was the kind of friend that would find a job for you if you were out of work. If you needed something, she was the first one to find it for you. She was spiritually guided, smart, ambitious, and everything I wanted to be. A few years older than me, I was aware of her struggle to have children with her husband, but it wasn't working for her. They were well-off and managed to keep up with the expensive fertility treatments that were required for her if she wanted to get pregnant. I was sensitive to her plight because I truly did love my children, but the thought of another child was just too much. I wanted her to be here so we could sit up late and talk like we always did. I didn't have her here with me like I wanted, but I had her couch.

It was possibly the one tie that made me feel like I still had a hold on things; the couch I was too tired to even adjust the slipcover on any-

more. Sometimes I would imagine that the cushions were beautiful and that the couch was somewhere else...like a hammock hanging on palm trees in Mexico. I could truly see myself there. To me, this seemed like a real possibility. Running away seemed so simple. I could picture a pregnant me, where no one knew my name, on a beach somewhere in Mexico, healthy and relaxed. Yet even Dawn, trying so desperately to understand my thoughts, made me feel alienated and guilty, as I knew her own struggle and desperation to become pregnant. And here I was with a baby I didn't even want.

Name her, my therapist said. As if her very name could make me somehow accept her invasion on my body and the sickness she brought with her. I wanted to scream at my therapist that this was not just some exercise in accepting my fate, this was my life and I was hanging on by a thread. I know she thought she was helping me to cope with my anxiety and depression, but it wasn't working and I didn't think naming her would suddenly catapult me into loving, nurturing mother. But I was convinced no one understood how close to the edge of madness I was standing. Name her. And so I took a week, enveloped in my couch cushions, and consulted all the books and friends and family and I picked her name. I flirted with the name Jenna, but I couldn't stand a shortened version of the name. I finally settled on

Jessica Dawn. Her middle name was for my friend because I was hoping to impart some of Dawn's charm, cheerfulness, and positive outlook through the name alone. Her name was a name I couldn't possibly hate. But I didn't love her. Not even then.

I was working towards motivating myself; trying to convince my mind that I felt something for this little girl growing inside me. I had gone to therapy, called my best friend, read some books and magazines to prepare myself for the birth, and finally I called in re-enforcements. "Mom, I need you to help me with the baby's room," I told her. (Another suggestion from the therapist.) And she came, as always, totally prepared, and ready for tackling any large project; her Honda CRV loaded down with everything from cleaning supplies to paint rollers. The baby had a room already. The girls would share a room, the other little occupant both eager and reluctant to share the space. Tiny though it was, I crammed it full of color and sass hoping to cheer myself out of my numbness and discontent. Mom went readily to task as if the room itself could transform my thinking. She taped off a stripe for the wall, purchased accessories in every shade of pink and purple imaginable. Her excitement was not contagious. I painted her room purple; the kind of purple that reminds me of princesses, ice cream, and spring. I forced myself to hold a paintbrush

and disgustedly painted mismatched furniture white. I resentfully screwed on hardware like maybe going through the motions meant I cared just a little. We hung new lighting. We put a new comforter on the brand new mattress and box springs of this inspiring "big-girl" bed. We put the freshly painted white crib in the corner with its purple and white gingham checked quilt, gallantly displayed inside and we arranged and re-arranged the furniture to make room for new things. I tried to pretend that my mother wasn't staring at me with hurt and confusion when I tried to explain that I didn't much care if she even had a room to sleep in.

"But what about her big sister?" mom would ask, "Doesn't she deserve something special if she has to share?"

"I don't know," I'd say. She just didn't get it. I couldn't make her understand my disgruntled attitude. I wasn't ready to deal with problems.

"Honey, this baby is coming whether you like it or not. How can you not love her? She deserves to have a happy, healthy home. I hope you come around and soon. Your health and hers depends on it."

"I can't make myself feel something I don't, Mom. I didn't want another baby."

"Well you know how that happens, don't you? Why didn't you take precautions?" I was incredulous, floored she would even say this to

me.

“We DID!” I shouted. “Did you know that birth control is less effective for overweight people? That the percentage of pregnancy prevention is not as high as it is for average weight individuals?” Thinking back to what my doctor had told me only after I found out I was pregnant while on birth control. “Well I DIDN’T!” I was yelling louder then, my tirade zapping me of any energy I might have had in me. I dissolved into sobs and walked out of the room leaving my mom to stare in my wake, hurt and bewildered because I had lashed out at her. Somehow that room got finished without me and there was a big ceremonial presentation of the “big-girl bed” to my daughter, Julia, at the end of the day. I attended with false enthusiasm and a smile pasted on my face, as if my life depended on it, my eyes still swollen from crying. John gave the room a quick glance when he came home, and nodded his approval, but never uttered so much as a thank you since he spent the day at the office and we worked on it all day without his help. Even I managed to squeeze out a “Thanks, Mom,” before she left.

Later in the week, there was another doctor’s appointment; another check-up in the posh Dublin office. Newly built, the inside was impressive, with maple hardwood floor polished to a high-gloss sheen. Glass and steel were dominant architectural

features, with impressive fish tanks recessed into the walls. The glass and steel were softened by diffused natural lighting from floor to ceiling frosted windows and large trees in planters on the corners, and the plush area rugs in muted shades of plum and green. Several copies of the latest parenting magazines and gossip rags were stacked on light maple tables. I felt so out of place here. And it was here my patience was tested further as Julia wrecked the neatly designed waiting room in toddler style; tearing apart every magazine and tirelessly asking to read children’s books, standing on designer chairs with spindly legs, dirtying the new fabric and fingerprinting the spotless windows. I didn’t bother to correct her behavior. The very breath it would have taken me to speak was too much effort, and wasted effort at that. Some moms-to-be looked on with polite smiles as if to sympathize with my plight, an acknowledgement of understanding. Others looked on in fear, wondering if this is what they have to look forward to; an out-of-control 3-year-old that had only one speed, and it wasn’t a speed that could be clocked on radar, just really, really fast.

There were problems the doctor said. “She could have severe complications if you don’t eat.” I wasn’t hungry. Every morsel felt like acid going down only to come back up again. I tried to explain this to the doctor. The doctor gave me

a choice: eat and gain weight in a week, or be hospitalized and fed through a tube. I chose to eat and be miserable as opposed to having needles and tubes attached to my already encumbered body. As always, I called to brief my husband on the appointment. He was angry. "Why are you always sick? What is wrong with you? Don't you want this baby?" No! No! I don't want this baby! I didn't want this baby. But I said nothing. God help me, if something happened to her, it would be my fault. But I never wanted Jessica. She felt like a curse to me. And the guilt made my despair worse, because I knew I had no right to feel so angry.

Alex and Julia ate pop tarts for breakfast and lunch. I cringe to write it, but it doesn't make it less true. While I napped on the couch, they stayed in their rooms and tiptoed around me if they needed to come downstairs. I somehow knew they saw my callousness and they were afraid. Where did Mommy go? I could hear it spill from their minds and bite me viciously as if it were coming from their lips instead. I forgot to look at the time so that I would be awake when the bus came home in the afternoons. I was late to Julia's morning ballet class because it took so much effort to get ready and actually drive somewhere, anywhere.

I slept until I had to wake to go to the bathroom if I could get away

with it. I hated my little family for being in my presence, as if it were their fault my body was no longer my own. I hated my husband especially for making me like this, pregnant and resentful, and then not understanding me. I hated myself for being needy and incapable of understanding how to communicate my needs. I hated this baby and what she was turning me into, and most of all, I despised that there was no one that understood, and no one that could take my burden and mend my thinking, despite the supportive gestures.

There were problems. Always more problems. I was at the bottom of the stairs where I had fallen, crying out in pain. I had twisted my body in an effort to protect my stomach when I lost my balance. I was alone with Julia, and she was scared and crying because mommy was hurt and she didn't know how to help me.

"The phone," I cried, "Bring me the phone." I had twisted both ankles on the stairs and I had hurt myself in the fall. I called John.

"I need you. I fell down the stairs at the house and I hurt myself badly," I explained through sobs.

"Well, can you walk? Go out to the car and drive yourself down to the doctor's office." He sounded annoyed that I had even called and interrupted him at work.

"I can't walk! It's serious. Please help me. I need you to drive me to

the hospital,” I pleaded.

“I can’t leave work right now. I’ve missed too much already because of the baby and you. I just can’t leave. If it is that serious, call the squad. I have to go, my boss needs me.”

Tears rolled down my face, as my toddler crouched beside me stroking my hair, concern and confusion in her eyes. He hung up and I felt angry and frustrated and helpless. I called the doctor and they said I needed to either get in there right away or most likely go to the emergency room. But I was alone. I tried to stand up on wobbly, swollen, sore ankles. I told my daughter to get her coat, and realizing I couldn’t walk, crawled to the bathroom on hands and knees to check for bleeding. Seeing none, I took a big breath, and prepared once more to stand. It took every effort to get to my car and I bitterly drove myself and Julia to the emergency room. Calling him again, I gave him no choice but to get both children, Julia from me at the hospital and Alex from school. I was admitted to the hospital for monitoring of fetal activity. My blood pressure was soaring and there was a concern for an onset of toxemia, a condition of pregnancy that means a sharp rise in blood pressure, and abrupt swelling of extremities. I knew this was serious because it meant the placenta could detach itself and both of our lives would be in danger.

It was only a few weeks later that I was again at the hospital, on doctor’s orders. Fears were confirmed. It was definitely toxemia this time. My feet, so puffy my shoes would not go on, resembled water balloons that were only partially filled. My rings were cut off my fingers. And I was alone.

I was alone in a room with curtains for doors, where some pastel painting on the wall was hinting somehow that this was a fine place to be, indeed. The machines I was connected to, beeped furiously and if I moved to get more comfortable, it sent monitors and nurses alike into a frenzy. They would come rushing into the room in pairs and one would take my blood pressure again while another looked at the printed sheets of paper registering fetal activity. They would move briskly and efficiently, but always as if there were major consequences for me stirring. Someone would come and tell me to lie still (as if it were no problem for a woman in my condition) so I would stare at the emptiness around me, counting ceiling tiles, wondering why they never put clocks anywhere in this place. All I could smell was sterilization and urine that had been left too long. Eventually my nose adjusted to the unkindness and I sought solace in my pillow. People rushed by and I was forgotten except when someone poked or prodded at me. (I swear if that resident doctor

kept sticking her hands in me like I was a hole in the wall, she would feel wrath like she had never known!) Needles and tubes were everywhere and my husband wouldn't come because he had taken too much time from work already. I clutched the phone to my ear, straining to hear him over the machines.

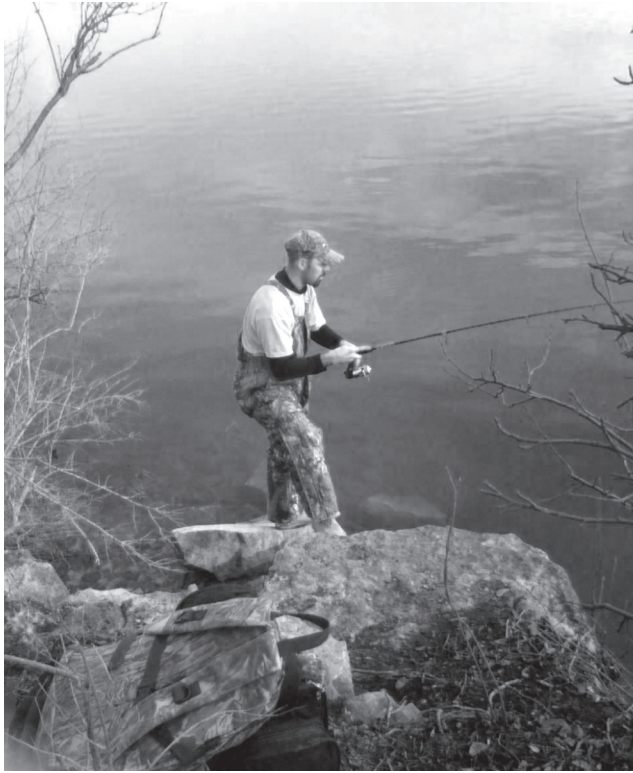
"What if the baby comes?" I asked.

"Then she comes and I'll get there as soon as I can", he says. "You're in and out of the hospital all the time now. I can't take off work every time." I knew then I would divorce him.

They made me wait 2 days in that room alone, sick and suffering and worried that I would not like her when she came. But she came anyway. And she came out with black hair, soft as rose petals and a mouth turned up like she was smiling. I remember her red and wrinkly skin and how silky it was and almost transparent. It was the dimples that got me, though. Those deep little dots in her skin that somehow turned me into a blubbering mess and made me ask God's forgiveness. I pleaded with Him to excuse me for not wanting her. I couldn't imagine at this moment how I could have ever felt that way. I asked that He forgive me for ever thinking she could have been a burden to my life. I couldn't believe He could have given me anything so perfect, as ungracious as I had been. She looked at me like she knew all along that I would love her anyway, and she makes sure I do. It was as

if the fog had lifted and there had never been anything to worry about in the first place. Maybe my precious baby knew that somehow. Her newborn spirit renewed me and I felt God's presence there too. I felt as if the burden I had been carrying all this time had been taken and replaced with sheer delight. It was a shared spiritual moment, where I felt her almost speak to me, and God too knew my struggle and had given me this gift, this angel for my very own. I was given ecstasy wrapped in pink blankets and I cried from the sheer pleasure of knowing this child and I had made it through. It was almost as if my new daughter said aloud, "See? Wasn't I worth it? I knew all along you wouldn't let me down."

Jessica Dawn was my third child and my last. She is the hardest to be mad at and the easiest to love. God sent her to me with the most sparkling personality, with a laugh that comes from deep in her belly and infects me with giggles, and her smile is almost constant. She has a look in her eyes that is wise beyond her years. She lights a whole room when she smiles and those dimples have not been outgrown. We share a secret, Jessie and I, an un-whispered secret about how she began her life unwanted, and ended up attaching herself to my heart.



Jill Valentine

"TAKE ME HOME," he demanded. "Right. Now."

I couldn't gauge his mood anymore. I had lost him and I wasn't sure why. But I knew that whatever grip I previously had on him was gone now. There would be no more from him today.

"OK. Fine." I was exasperated. "Where do you want me to drop you off?" He was changing his mind again.

"Let me think about it." A few hours ago he had wanted to be with me all night. He flirted with his hands, his words, and his mouth. I had just assumed he was waiting to get out of the public eye.

"In front of the grocery store. No. In front of my mom's house. Or my brother's. It doesn't matter. I'll walk from there." In one afternoon, his indecisiveness had led us to the park where we took a walk and watched the kids skateboard. We watched the kids for over an hour, never really talking about anything. I had thought people observing us might think it was creepy that two adults in their thirties were hanging around a kids skate park anyway. I didn't want to be there. I had no interest in watching punk 'tweeners with attitude fall off their skateboards and dare each other to drop in from the big rim. When he sensed my impatience, we drove a few miles south to the dam, where we dis-

cussed fishing bait. Did I know the difference between the bait needed for bass and the bait needed for wall-eye? Had I ever considered the drop from here? I wondered if he needed me more for a ride, because he sure didn't act like he needed me for the company. We had walked from the dam down to the marina. The boats had been stored for the winter and the spring thaw was just a teaser for now, so it was empty, muddy, and in a definite state of disrepair. Docks were missing wooden slats and railings had been knocked down by an earlier freeze and flood. He held my hand and we didn't talk anymore. He had seemed content not to and I was hesitant to break the silence. He had told me last week he would be at the lake fishing today, which is why I had been surprised to get the call from him earlier:

"I'm at The Tavern." The Tavern was a dive. It was one of those places that no one would ever think to look for you because they forgot it existed in the first place.

I teased, "Seriously? No way! You know I love that place and you went without me?" The music was loud, and I could just make out the crack of the pool tables in the background.

"That's why I'm calling you. Come and see me."

I loved to go there because he and I had made it our own special place. The rest of the world fell away there. Cell phones got turned off and there were no interruptions. Besides that,

the beer was always cold.

"It will take some maneuvering on my part, but I can probably manage it," I told him.

"Hurry," he said. There is always urgency with him. I made up some excuse to my mother, who had the children, about why I was leaving again that day. I told her I had to do something for school. I always have to do something for school. It's the one thing she never questions. Though lately, I'd always been running somewhere and she was growing weary of my excuses.

"Seriously? Again?" Mom looked at me incredulously. "I had stuff I needed to do today!" I felt guilty, only for a second, but not enough to stop me from leaving.

"I know, Mom. I'm sorry." But I wasn't. Not really.

I went off as fast as I could, checking my make-up in the mirror. I realized the effort was futile and he wouldn't care anyway. He rarely noticed those kinds of things. Time has been scarce for us lately, but I never asked to see him. It simply wasn't the way it worked. I waited for him, and when he called, I'd go. I had no other way to reach him. Even if I had, he would resent my intrusion. The last two times I'd seen him, he had asked me to come, but then he was distracted and I couldn't seem to get him to remember that our time was precious and wasting it was not on the top of my list. If I asked to see him, it was

a sure way of guaranteeing that I wouldn't, at least not for quite some time. So when he asked, I would always go. There would never be any notice. Just a phone call. I would stop whatever I was doing, wherever I was, and go to him. He always knew I would come.

I was anxious to reach him, as I always was. He doesn't like to wait. I know this is an irrational thought but I can't stop the nervousness from creeping in. It didn't seem to matter to me that I was flying down the highway with no regard for the speed limit, until I saw a highway patrolman and I realized that I was speeding to get to a man. A man I somehow have my heart all tangled up about.

The bar was busy for its usual pace. Every other time I'm there, the barmaid spends as much time sitting on one side of the bar drinking as she does on the other side of it serving. I found him at the pool tables and he looked up at me briefly.

"Hi!" I flashed a brilliant and relieved smile. I noticed he didn't smile back. I dismissed it because I was sure he was involved in his game. I loved the way he filled out a t-shirt. It fit tight across the arms and chest and I loved the way his waist narrowed and fit into his jeans. He never worked out, but his job was physical and it kept him very fit. I loved the way I felt when he put those arms around me. I felt safe and protected. I tried hard not to

Where We're Going (cont.)

think about those arms being around his wife.

"Wanna beer?" I asked him. He didn't answer me. Didn't even look up. I ordered my beer and one for him and sat at a table in the corner.

"Hey," I wiggled the bottle in my hand to indicate it was for him and sat it on the table. He glanced at me and nodded, his only acknowledgment so far. The tables were scarred with a million cigarette burns, and they were covered with acrylic and photos underneath of the bar in its heyday. It appeared to have been a popular biker bar at one point judging by the characters in these photographs. But I don't think I'd seen a biker in that place once since I started going there. Toby Keith's "I Love This Bar" was blaring out of the speakers above my head, and I thought that was rather ironic for the moment. I did love this bar. Smoke swirled in a haze around the pool tables and I could smell the staleness of grease, cigarettes, and old beer. The song stopped and I could hear Lisa and John fighting in the men's room again. Lisa and John were always either hugging or fighting. Mostly fighting. I'd never been at the bar without seeing them there. They were kind of a regular fixture. I could hear Lisa yelling at John over the intro to Led Zepplin's "Tangerine." I tried not to listen as I waited for him to finish his game.

"Hi," he finally said when the game was over. He leaned in to kiss

me, smelling like his two favorite vices, E & J brandy and cigarettes. I had grown used to this smell.

He finally smiled at me. "Glad you could make it."

I was glad too. He softened then, setting the pool stick aside, kissing me gently and pulling me closer by my belt loops. We were no secret at the Tavern. It was always the same, though. He played pool while I bought the beer. He gave me quarters to pop in the ancient jukebox that kept the classic rock and country blasting in through blown speakers. There wasn't much talking, but plenty of touching and smiling.

It was always this way, until he said, "C'mon. Let's get out of here."

We spent the whole summer together. I wasn't prepared for the heartache when he decided to get back together with his wife. He wasn't able to let the relationship with me just stop there, though. He had said he didn't mean to fall in love with me and that things with his wife were complicated, but he needed to stay married to her. We had carried on with our secret meetings, but things were growing ever more infrequent.

The last time I saw him, we had met there at the Tavern. He had asked me to dance and we danced, not caring that no one else was dancing. It seemed like we had the whole place to ourselves. It was always just the two of us, even when we were in a crowd.

He had said, "You are so beautiful. You smell fantastic." He was ridiculously romantic like that and while it made me blush, it had also touched my heart because I thought he meant it.

"You are one of the finest women I know," he told me. He liked to lay it on thick.

"Not fine enough, apparently." My words were sharp, but I kept my voice and face soft because I didn't want to lose the moment with him. I couldn't bear the thought of him withdrawing his arms from around my waist. That day was the last time I had seen him until now.

Here we were again, another moment lost. He was asking me to take him home, so I got on the highway and headed north. I remained silent now that we were headed home. I wasn't sure where I stood with him right now, and I wasn't taking any chances on his shifting mood. But I was sulking and I'm pretty sure he could read my mood just fine.

"I'm sorry I can't give you what you want," he finally told me. This was a common argument we shared.

"Don't worry about it," I said.

But he did worry, and I did my best not to let him hear the disappointment in my voice. But I was upset. He teases me with empty promises and then drinks too much and his moods changes rapidly. I can't keep up and I'm weary of trying to sense the change before it happens. It makes me tired. Maybe

his guilt got the better of him. I sense that sometimes he remembers I'm not the woman he's married to, and he realizes he should be with her instead of me, but I stopped trying to figure it out a long time ago. Today is particularly disappointing to me since I feel like nothing I can say or do is pleasing enough to him to make him stay, but pissing him off by saying something about it will assure that we do not see one another again, so I remain silent.

It bothered me that he spent all afternoon talking about my tits and my ass and pulling me towards him, then at the last moment of our time together, pushed me away. I wonder, again, if the guilt had gotten to him and he wanted me, but he didn't want to feel bad about wanting me because he knew I was the forbidden. Well, it wasn't my job to make him feel good about what he was doing. I just wanted to make him feel good, make him forget that there was anyone but me. Sometimes I could, but that day he hadn't let me too near and then we were headed for home. At a red light, he leaned in to kiss me. I turned my face away.

"You're angry. Alright." He set his jaw and looked out the window. I tried to recover because I felt bad for hurting him.

"No, no. Look at me, I'm not angry." I deliberately softened my voice and gave my most sincere smile, hoping that it worked. I put my hand on his leg and squeezed

Where We're Going (cont.)

gently. "It's ok. I understand you need to go home. It's been a fun day."

"I'm not doing what I'm supposed to do." I heard his guilt, lingering just under the surface. "You're mad. I can tell because your eyes change color when you're mad. I wish I had all kinds of time, but I don't." There was sadness in his voice. His speech slurred and I wondered how much he had to drink before I met him at the pub. His eyes drifted closed. They snapped open again when I spoke.

"Well, what is it you think you are supposed to be doing?" My voice came across loud and annoyed, but immediately I was sorry for its harshness. "And I'm not mad," I say, truthfully. I realized it really wasn't anger that gave me that feeling in the pit of my stomach. It was disappointment. While I waited for him to answer, I realized: He's going home. He will always go home. He will always love the bottle and his home more than he loves me, and today was no different. I have had this revelation before, but that day it stung, me and I felt like being mean. That day, I was tired of the game we played. I wanted to lash out at him, but I didn't. I couldn't. I was afraid.

"Don't play dumb with me. It doesn't suit you. You know why I called, and now I'm not doing what you expected." He thought I expected him to sleep with me. He seemed angry, though I wasn't sure why. To

counteract his tone, he snatched up my hand and squeezed it tight, raising it to his lips and brushing it with a kiss. We were getting close to the place where I would drop him off, in the alley near his house. I felt like a spy involved in some type of espionage when we did drop-offs and pick-ups.

"With you, nothing is ever expected," I said, deliberately, and meant it, with an involuntary harshness. "It's part of your charm," I added and smiled to soften the blow I just dealt. I knew why I was scared. I understood that the thought of being alone was more than I could bear. Being with him let me have the illusion of happiness sometimes. At least, that's what I keep telling myself. He finally looked me in the eye. He kissed me, and I let him that time.



Bill Valentine

The Frosting!

Jill Valentine





Bill Valentine

Caution Lights

Memories are thick tonight
Choking my mind with lucid details
A single ceiling fan turns lazily
The pointless whirring unable to clear the air

I sit with half-opened eyes and
I wait but for what I'm not sure;
Something different maybe?
Unpredictable,
Unexpected.
Nothing changes
But still I wait.

On the carpet, perfect black-rimmed circles
The cigarette burns remain.
The air is hazy with secondhand promises
Hazy with...
...cancer.

Inhale deeply and the smoke assaults my lungs.
Red warning lights flicker
On and off the beacon blinks.
I devour the airborne toxins
Waiting for it to be funny
Waiting not to care
But still I wait.

Nicole Vargo

INT. FOYER - AFTERNOON

The front door knob twists. The door opens slowly. JULIA walks into the foyer and drops her keys in the small bowl on the table near the door. She slips her coat off and drops it on a chair.

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

JULIA walks into the kitchen. Takes a glass off the counter and turns on the tap.

CLOSE UP- of the water filling in the glass.

CAMERA PANS the KITCHEN. JOHN is standing in the corner of the room.

JOHN
Hello Julia.

JULIA turns quickly, startled.

JULIA
John! I didn't realize you were home.

JULIA takes a long drink of water.

JOHN
Left work early today.

JULIA
Oh, I'm so tired. I think I'm going to lie down.

JOHN
Maybe you should. I brought the mail in.

JULIA walks out of the kitchen, grabbing the mail and a pair of silver scissors.

CLOSE UP on Scissors. They are sharp and have a flower design that curve around the handles. JOHN follows her to the BEDROOM.

INT.BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Sara M. Veint

Untitled Screenplay (cont.)

JULIA undresses and slips on a long sleeping gown.

CAMERA PANS TO THE LEFT

JOHN walks into the attached BATHROOM.

CAMERA PANS TO THE RIGHT

JULIA sits down on the bed. She slices open a letter with the scissors and lays them on the nightstand next to the bed.

The handwritten letter starts out with “JULIA” in big thick letters.

JOHN
What'd you got there?

JULIA looks up, quickly folding the letter.

JULIA
Gas bill.

JULIA takes the stack of letters and lays it on the nightstand behind the lamp. When she thinks JOHN isn't looking she slips the letter in-between the mattresses and lies down.

JULIA
I'm so tired.

JOHN
I know what you mean.

JOHN'S voice grows louder as he walks towards the bed.

JULIA
I'm not going to sleep for too long.

JOHN
Give me a kiss first.

JULIA
Of course

JOHN sits on the edge of the bed and touches JULIA'S face. He leans over to kiss her. Their lips touch gently, passionately. JOHN'S hand slowly moves down to JULIA'S neck. JULIA opens her eyes. JOHN is squeezing her. JOHN pulls his face away and stares at her blankly. He wraps both his hands around her neck and tightens them quickly. JULIA beats on JOHN'S chest and kicks her legs. Nothing is working. JULIA pushes on JOHN'S face, but he rolls his face back and continues to strangle her. JULIA'S face turns red. She rips and scratches at his hands trying to release them from his neck.

JULIA
(GRUNTING)
J...J- ohn

JULIA moves frantically back and forth trying to make him stop.

WIDEVIEW with scissors at the far right of the screen. Focus on scissors.

JULIA tries to turn her head, but JOHN is squeezing too tight. With all her might JULIA stretches out her arm. She knocks over the glass of water. It splashes everywhere. JULIA'S fingertips scratch the edge of the nightstand, just barely touching the scissors. She closes her eyes, and tears run down the sides of her face. She starts to slip away. Her fingers wrap themselves around the scissor holes, but she has lost feeling in her arms now. Her right hand slowly lets go of JOHN'S hands. Her left hand drops the scissors. They hit the wood floor with a loud bang. Her head falls limp; her eyes open staring at JOHN. JOHN stands up and takes a step back, lights a cigarette.

JOHN
So long, baby.

JULIA sits up and gasps loudly, grabbing her chest. She is fully dressed lying on top of the bed. She looks around the room frantically.

At the doctors for the sniffles.
Outside stands a strong tree,
Only about eight feet tall and rail thin.
Slight obtuse angles,
organic deep brown elbows of the limbs
small speckled defects corroding the climb
to the canopy holding up, offering
Its confident, vibrant, Red berries
Emitting a sharp glow against the bland, white reflective snow.
There, protruding the landscape,
Defying nature, defying the season,
Defying my eye's expectation,
It beams a wench through my eyes,
Cups my heart, and slowly click-clacks my spirit a few links upward.
A pencil-thin, bright, shining, Red berry-tree I am.

Zachary Wheeler

A small box,
In bottom a button,
With its shiny blue butt on plastic.

Firmly encase in a pinch
A small percentage bare
Pass your lips
And gnaw,
With your teeth chomping around its rim.

Now eat,
Weathering its synthetic wrapper,
As its pale blue shavings drift and float,
Down the pharynx, larynx, and creeping in spirals,
Your stomach.

The texture
Reminiscent of her blue blouse,
Still shining up at me on the berber floor.

This button was once two,
Both fleeing the life on my vest.
It's counterpart I re-sewed with accuracy.
The needle, the hole, the trailing thread.
Intimacy.
The same intimacy I felt with that blouse-button.

Here and now,
this button,
for some strange reason,
tingles my tongue through my eye
and excites my teeth through its touch.

Button,
Box,
Serenity,
Stillness,
Important urging intimacy.

Zachary Wheeler

Leaning, acute
Angle against
Rough chipping brick building
Hidden in shadows
'mid the din of towns and cities.
A cigarette
Stuck in
Your slightly worn
Face, hard-targeting eyes.
Drizzling rain,
Slight dew
In my mind's
Farther darkness.
There racooning
Beneath the moonrays
You're a staggering familiar stranger.
Splunking, Splashing,
Dark leather boots
In murky puddles
Pitted in pavement.
I'll call you when I need too,
For now
Drag that cigarette
Collar your cheeks.

Zachary Wheeler

Pronounced steps descending the staircase
Muffled across the carpeted floor.
The ever-growing distant voice of lecture surpassed,
A silence. A motion camera,
A soft constant voice internal.

A door, with its chrome-plated commercial handle
Under the force of my hands

A Release! Into a lively place.
A bright wind-blown sunlight
Nudges my body.
A larger view,
Room for infinite possibilities.
Sounds erupt irregularly;
A pattering engine, distant,
voices, and fellow footsteps.
All backed by the sounds of earth
Shooting straight for my ear,
Out into this natural world
I stride on the naked snow-bordered concrete.
Aloud my mind smiles
At the freedom, the possibilities, and the controlled chaos
With a certain joyed existence.

Zachary Wheeler

Zachary Wheeler

Gambrel head
 question seated
 how I introspectively
 exist?
 Perceptually found
 as an outstretched arm
 with a hand,
 grasping in hot fits at the quarters of my
 skinned vat.

Conformist,
 just, defined.
 Subduing spirit,
 conventionally idyllic.
 Pale contentment,
 relied upon too often,
 hindering any difference,
 I'm stifled by you,
 you spoon.

Awareness,
 targeting eyes
 observing landscapes
 mass conformity,
 Amongst w **O**rdly life;
 Existence.

Heard heel and pattering
 stars,
 engine distant.
 Windy airs breaths,

Creativity,
 Abstractions unbound,
 unconscious mo **O**ns
 and dream-
 Vibrant bucket-head
 catching
 lofting particles of ideas.

Smoothed fuzz of white tree refined
“unlimitationalismality”.

Fresh, real, scents and sense.

Filled with your
Neighboring component
for art,
Readily summoned,
Strong shifting change,
Buoyant tendencies,
creating,
abolishing
worlds, indefinite size
in a mind’s blink.

Maverick,
untamed
creature,
subversively
hidden behind

all other
Aspects,

my Rolo-desk
mind, flipping

M,N,U,E,I,R,
every now and again,
deep breath for a single howl
back under you all go.

Herein they lie.
A yin-yang schematic
Illustrating thought.
The half-lit mid section
Marked for poetry.
Reaching to touch
One or more of them.
Will I putter through today,
Or stride with strength into tomorrows?

Contributors

TABITHA ALBRIGHT (formerly Tabitha Clark) says, “Call me Ishmael. No, wait – Call me Tabs.”

MIKE BEATTY could not be bothered to write his own contributor’s notes. He is a second year senior at OSU-M, and it’s entirely possible that he will never graduate, but that’s ok because the entire campus certainly enjoys having him around.

“My name’s BEN CLAYMIER, I’m an English major with high hopes of someday being a writer (don’t we all?). I’ve been making comics since I was little, but only recently started doing it seriously, if you call what I do serious, that is. If you want to see the “magic” in action, go to --> <<http://positivelyperfect.blogspot.com/>>.”

PAM COPPER: “I am married to a wonderful man named Bob. We have two children, Jim (he is taking online classes to get his business degree) who is married to Soni (Soni is also been nominated for teacher of the year at Mansfield) and are going to give us our first grandchild in July and Tristan, who is doing her student teaching now. Tristan hopes to be a teacher soon. We enjoy photography and riding our Harley. After working the past 22 years at Baja Marine in Bucyrus, Baja closed their doors last June and I have been going to school since then. I am enjoying the schooling and have found that you are never to old to learn a new profession.”

CHRISTY CULVER is an associate professor of information technologies at Marion Technical College. She holds a M.Ed. in curriculum and instruction with emphasis in computer education. She has exhibited her photography as part of juried show at the Kuhn Fine Arts Gallery at OSUM. She stated, “My images are captured with no extra equipment at the time of the shot. However, the last few years the influence of digital options has allowed me to travel different manipulative image paths. My digital enhancements are applied after the shot, and I only apply one effect. Embracing the new technology and instant gratification of the image just captured is rewarding. The hours engrossed in experimenting with software and different techniques remind me it only takes one effect to change the viewpoint. As an educator I know how true this can be from photography to the classroom when it all ‘clicks.’”

LAURA DAUM is a senior majoring in English pre-education and minoring in psychology.

JAMIE DAVENPORT writes: “I’m a senior English major at Ohio State main campus and wants to thank my children, Megan and Dylan for inspiring me to write my insane poetry and stories because someday, they’ll find my work all torn up and dog-eared and they’ll think, ‘What the hell was wrong with my mom writing about these sick and twisted subjects? She was one strange chick! Was she crazy or just disturbed?’ I think I’m a little of all of the above.”

DANIELLE DICK is a student attending OSU-Marion.

RANDI FOX: I attend Marion Technical College, majoring in Human and Social Services. I am approaching the end of my 3rd year and hope to graduate in June of 2010 with my Associates Degree.

MEGAN GALYK is a student attending OSU-Marion.

APRIL GREER is a student attending OSU-Marion.

BRYONY CELESTE HEDGES: “My name is Bryony Hedges. I am 25 years old and a First Year Nursing Student at MTC. I have two boys, ages 1 and 6. I can’t wait to graduate!”

TIERRE JEFFERSON writes, “English major seeking Profession, will work for food, has great table manners! Famous Quote: Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.--Albert Einstein”

SLHOWARD knows that she lacks self motivation, but can’t find the motivation to do anything about it. She currently lives in her own little world with her husband and their small, but mighty, animal army.

MICHELLE LEITZEL: “One not only wants to be understood when one writes; one wishes just as surely, not to me understood.” (Nietzche)

Before he became a professor of English at OSU, where he teaches courses in creative writing, poetry, and the literature of the fantastic, STUART LISHAN worked in a number of jobs, including a sherpa in Nepal, a lifeguard in St. Tropez, a bouncer in a biker bar called Scrawny’s, and a valentine giver in Mrs. Stokes’ second grade class at Kester Ave. Elementary School. In addition, he once played softball with Mickey Dolenz, Davie Jones, and Peter Torke of The Monkees. He caught a grounder.

CARLEE MABREY dislikes contributor’s notes. Writers only use them to brag about themselves and convince readers that the writer is cool. But, if you are cool, you don’t have to convince anyone of it, so people who try must be nerds. This being said, the only thing she has to say is this: I’M COOL; LOVE ME! So, at heart Carlee is just another nerdy writer begging her audience to find some semblance of coolness in her and her writing.

Contributors

SARETTA MAIN writes: "So much to say, so little space to say it in... so how about this? Write about what you think, think about what you love, love what you write no matter how utterly ridiculous you think it may be and you'll never go wrong. I would just like to say that no matter what the world around you says, if something feels right, DO IT!!!"

LIZZIE MARTIN writes, "I am a full-time PSEO student graduating this spring and going to Cedar Crest College in Allentown, Pennsylvania to major in Forensic Science this fall. Take one of Sarah Crosby's classes if you get the chance!"

KELCEE MCCURDY writes, "I am currently finishing up my degree in Software Development at Marion Tech. I should have my degree finished by the winter of '10. In the spring of '09, I will be starting classes at OSUM. I will be majoring in business. I am working at Blue Fusion Entertainment as a front desk employee, and I am going to be doing an internship there. I will be helping the marketing department with the website and a few other things."

ST. DENNIS MILLISOR is currently working on an English degree and building an empire at www.dennismillisor.com (coming soon!!!). During his twenty-five years of being allowed to live, he has aged sixty years and coined the phrase "oh, no you di-in'!" He enjoys theology, very really truly good music, and being Dennis Millisor. For more information, visit www.dennismillisor.com (coming soon...seriously though, it's coming soon...not like tomorrow-soon, but it'll be here before you know it, and that's pretty soon...I think it is anyways). Oh yeah, and that wasn't him on "Yo! MTV Raps" that one time; I don't know who that was.

DAVID NICOL writes, "I'm in the business management program at Marion Technical College. I enjoy art and photography. Photography is such a great hobby of mine. I have been taking pictures for a long time and I enjoy sharing my photos to everyone."

DEB NOLL: A Freshman, majoring in English...growing as a student by identifying and cultivating skills to harvest a lifetime of knowledge.

MEREDITH A.S. PARTIPILO: "I'm an Interactive Media student at MTC and this is my third year in the course. I will be going into Criminal Justice soon and I enjoy being creative with poetry, drawing, and writing stories."

ASHLEY RICHARDS is a pawn working her way across the chessboard, determined to be a queen.

SARAH STAHL loves to travel. Still.

JILL VALENTINE is a stressed-out, overworked, and obviously underpaid senior of OSU Marion. Needless to say, she contributed, but has nothing useful to say about herself for contributor's notes. If you see her around campus and she has that nervous twitch, back away slowly and you might be safe.

NICOLE VARGO is an English major who thinks life should not be grammatically correct because it limits creative possibilities.

SARA MICHELLE VEIRS writes, "I am a Senior English major at OSU-Marion. I am a screenwriter, i just don't get paid for it yet. I promise, you will watch my movies and love them. My plans after graduation are to move to New York and work for Tribeca film Center."

ZACH WHEELER: privately invested in art and music, the printed word has become a new found field of creative discovery, specifically in the writing of poetry. Through these areas of creativity I am able to uncover and communicate knowledge in new ways, and it is this creation and continual growth of ideas and ways of thinking that seems to be an obtainable trek in forming a meaningful life; a purposeful existence of knowledge and communication.

Colophon

This issue of the *Cornfield Review* is printed using **Garamond**, **STEAK**, and *TCLesclerascrript* fonts. The layout was handled in Adobe Indesign. The interior artwork and photographs, as well as the cover design, were all edited using a combination of Adobe Photoshop, Fireworks, and GIMP.



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