Mosaic, as a magazine, represents a considerable effort and love of art and literature by many. From the beginning of autumn quarter to the end of spring quarter, Mosaic's board of editors and their staffs strive to create a showcase worthy of the Ohio State University's talented undergraduate students and their work. Mosaic is, however, more than a magazine. It is organized poetry readings and student art exhibitions as well.

Everything with which Mosaic is associated relies on the talent and aid of many. First, obviously, Mosaic depends on the students who submit such impressive works. Every year, it seems, the selection process becomes more difficult. Just as important, and often underrecognized, are the talented faculty and staff members who contribute their time and energy to the success of Mosaic. Our advisor, Arienne McCracken, whose devotion to Mosaic is so greatly appreciated, often deserves more gratitude than she receives. So does David Citino, who not only has contributed to Mosaic through his poetry readings, but also through his unfailing and much needed promotion of Mosaic to his classes.

Finally, Mosaic owes thanks to all of its "Friends." "Friends of Mosaic" consists of people, both as individuals and organizations, who sponsor the magazine, its events and its production. Without "Friends" like the Student Events Committee, the University Honors Center, numerous dormitory councils, Mabel Freeman and E. Gordon Gee, Mosaic would never be possible. It is Because of the generosity of these individuals and organizations that Mosaic continues to grow and improve.

As the Publisher/Editor of Mosaic, I thank all of these people for their dedication. Only through their efforts has Mosaic become something so worthy of our pride and support.

Heidi R. Riffell
Publisher/Editor

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Reflections

Shorty

Shorty, he had
High hopes
Aspired to be his best
Dreams like lollipops
But his weakness a pregnancy
Unplanned, unknown
To surface at his worst hour
Consuming, gnawing at his mind
He desired to forget
To escape the growing nightmare,
his life had become
First, a shiny bottle
Next, green and a bowl
Then, a dollar bill and a line
Needle how he loved thee
he was high, flying high in a sky
Full of vultures and coal colored clouds
A shadow of himself
But no light to be found
Remembering his lost focus, his shattered dreams
And how he fell short

Prince Charming

A sleeping beauty laid in a castle bewitched.
Her face was so pale that she seemed, as if through a mist,
Like an angel with a golden harp that was perfectly pitched
When I leaned down upon her and so gently kissed.
I waited and looked for the slightest bat of an eye
I bent my ear to hear if she'd any sound make
As she in this cursed unwholesome castle did lie
But no sound was made- for she did not awake.
She lay there, so still, with her hands clasped on her breast.
Her eyes still unopened, her head limply hung
As our lips mushed together - an unpleasant and slobbery mess.
So of course I'm ashamed that I slipped her the tongue.
When your kiss can't wake fair maidens or make bells ring,
For a prince like me, it is often a tiresome thing.

Rachel
The Years Spent at a Modern University

Here, have some readings of Shakespeare
have some algorithms
a chemical reaction
a six pack
and some sociological issues

Binge cram memorize
Don't taste breathe analyze
Just drink and throw it right back
For we come here to better ourselves
to become better people
better consumers
and are taught to guzzle
the theories
and equations
and stories
and lives
and of course, beer

Four-hundred and fifty-eight
Add an extra two points in the margin
The glow upon your face
The carpel tunnel ache setting in

One more quote
One more example
Your eyes scan the masses
A friendly face smiles up at you
Nine-hundred forty seven
You're almost there
Re-work a thought
Re-write that sentence
Have another conclusion

Have some more caffeine
The hum of the drive writing
The slip of the laser
Twenty-three minutes left to spare
We came to college
to slay the dragon
or meet prince charming
to change the world
or find our souls.
But after our orientations in
self-discipline
and binge drinking
we gained
normative experiences
that eventually lead
to normative lives.

Standing on the shoulders of giants leaves me cold.
When a blanket
hid the grass
A star hid the sun
Looking up the sky was blue
Looking back so many clouds
Whispers of Immortality

Thoughts pile up
Jostling against one another
Waiting to be pushed apart.
No poleman comes
I cannot write.

Vibrations

Inheritance.

my hips curve with the shaping of the Earth
remnants of her wildness
as she herself is circular
i too am cyclical
the rain pours
i drink
dew gathers on her lush surface
her beauty flows with time and seasons
as she herself gave life
i too will give birth
and in my winter return to wildness to be
cyclical, again

- emily koenig

The Banishment of Yayael

Vibrations
One hall of the cottage was for the splintered drums of wine the Whitewakes were storing for a more prosperous econo-
my, the other was for Lourty, their graying gardener. Lourty rotated the drums twice a day and snapped the fat rose bushes out in the sunshine and made presents of the mistakes to little Jenny Whitewakes, five years old with blue eyes, who dug holes in the moss with Paddy the teddy bear. Lourty kept the Whitewakes’ property nice and trim and watched for burglars when he had nothing more important to do.

He had three objects he cherished in the half-cottage: his television, Griffer’s collar, and the blue marble washing machine. This last he borrowed from the Republic Bank. Every night, he would start the washing cycle and let the machine wash his only pair of clothes as he sat in a broken chair, rubbing green lotion on the cracks in his knuckles. After twenty min-
utes of cottage-shaking intensity, the smell of the air-conditioner pipe, and go to bed on gardener’s sheets.

Lourty had nothing more important to do. After twenty min-
utes of cottage-shaking intensity, the smell of the air-conditioner pipe, and go to bed on gardener’s sheets.

His reception was crystal clear because the television was a good one, the kind you can roll down the stairs without worry, the kind the owner of a really rowdy cat goes to first when given a list of brand names. Lourty kept a television diary wherever he had gone. Lourty missed his old friend like crazy, and held and warmed the diamond collar while he sat in front of the television, cursing like he was young and in the corny romantic futures.

There’s a war on don’t you know, and that she had an ice ball’s chance in hell of getting anything really expensive. For the first
week, they had figured out where the troops were likely to be next morning, and called the television station to confirm it.

The next day, Jenny continued to drop hints about her birthday while playing in the garden. Like her parents and the scary neighbors, she knew Lourty had very few possessions, but she knew something of the expensive television. Its glow could be seen for miles around on Wednesdays. “Oh, Paddy,” she said to the dear bear, knowing that Lourty was listening. “If only I had a television for my room at home, then I’d really be happy. Just a little television. We could watch it together before bed.”

Along the near tree line, Lourty became sad as he remembered the entertainment-filled nights with Griffer by his feet; he hurried to the other side of the property, feeling foolishly guilty. He found a forgotten shovel and began spading the rose moss with quick elbow movements. It wasn’t long before Jenny and Paddy were digging in the moss several yards away, with continued birthday hints. The old man loved the little girl more than anything in the half-cottage, more than anything in the world except his memories. To someone of his age, a girl like Jenny means all the world. He made a decision.

Lourty gave the television to Jenny on her birthday. She hugged him carefully before her parents asked him if he would mind leaving the mansion and getting back to the damn-blasted plants that wouldn’t face the road. He whistled among the roses, but when he returned to the half-cottage and saw the empty table and the Wednesday night diary with the funny comic fantastic from The Republic taped to the cover, he rested wearily on the floor and remembered the fun days of being chased by Griffer around the garden, spraying that frisky yellow cat with the hose until it promised to stop gnawing on the sprouts. Lourty fell asleep without washing his outfit or turning the drums of the washer to his fat truck as tenderly and carefully as if it was a kitten in an Easter basket. It had valuable motor oil.

Jenny had been watching him plant and water from her bedroom window instead of taking Paddy into the garden. She was embarrassed. There was no more digging of too-deep, too-wide holes for possible future plants. Lourty had thrown out his calendar, but a man with responsibilities can’t help but distinguish Wednesdays from Mondays, no matter how he tries to forget. Jenny didn’t want to meet his gaze, so she played inside with the bear’s friends. Her absence made the television’s absence worse, which made Grippe’s absence worse, and it circled and spiraled. It got pretty bad, but a gardener can always recover his sanity if his garden is large enough.

It took months, and in those months the war turned ugly and spread claws outward like crazy fringes on expanding blankets. The Whitewakes sold part of their mansion to help keep the country free of invasion, and the wine would have went if Mr. Whitewakes’ rich old uncle in South American hadn’t sent an express-mail check to insure it stay within the family assets. A banker called on Lourty one bloomingly beautiful day, and explained that the family had signed the necessary papers to return the slick blue washing machine to the Republic Bank, who would ship its innards to one of the factories in Chicago. If Lourty had been indoors he would have hit the roof; instead he pointed to the half-cottage with dirty split hands and grimaced at the banker as he staggered through the smoke-filled house, his axe was worth more than a hundred dollars, and he would not let the man take it. The man bowed, and Lourty caught the black plastic case in the doorway. He had no money to pay his taxes, but the bank was mistaken. In four days he was out of the half-cottage, and it was over. He watched the smoke fill the air, and it was over. He watched the smoke fill the air, and it was over. He watched the smoke fill the air, and it was over. He watched the smoke fill the air, and it was over.
mechanisms inside.

When Lourty stood in the doorway of the halfcottage that night he saw a single, solitary cat collar with a large in-set diamond. It was truly all he had left, it gave him tunnel vision. Everything else, the table, the cot, the drinking can, the walls and wine, just turned to black Chicago haze.

"Damn that old cat for wanting the biggest stone in the store," he cursed, and all his tears flowed like April. He decided that he would honor his gardener's vow never to work in soiled clothes by quitting his position the next day. And since the Whitecakes hadn't seen it necessary to inform him of their agreement to recall the washer; he sure as the war two counties south wasn't going to inform them of his decision. That made him happier in a vain way, and he slept on the floor that night because it was softer than the cot.

Seven hours later he was in town with Griffer's collar in the front pocket of his trousers, his hand clenched around it like a protecting Calcium shell. Times were tough and expert pickpockets were a dime a dozen in urban centers. Lourty walked a straight path right to the duplicator's shop and accosted the shopkeeper.

"And address for the evening report."

"I don't know anything about any recent or upcoming bank robberies or mechanisms inside."

"If any burglar takes this to a jeweler, he'll be laughed into the street. Come back tomorrow with some bags; they'll be赏析

With a quiet and confidential air and great care not to harm the collars, Lourty gave the shopkeeper the secret information and the little man slid his finger down a dog-eared chart taped to the register.

"One thousand, two oh five war bucks."

"All right," said Lourty. "Then I want as many copies of this as that collar sifted from the artificial ones. That made the duplicates more worthless than they really were.

"I'm going to get those beauties all for myself," Robinson said, scratching the lumps on his face with a book of matches.

"Lourty gave her the secret information, and she frowned and looked away, to where all the county trucks sat, when she found the corresponding numbers on her pocket chart. "I'm sorry," she told the gulf of air between her and the shining hydraulic vehicles. "You haven't anymore credit."

"What's your code?" asked Lourty.

"Tm sorry," she asked. Lourty gave her the secret information, and she frowned and looked away, to where all the county trucks sat, when she found the corresponding numbers on her pocket chart. "I'm sorry," she told the gulf of air between her and the shining hydraulic vehicles. "You haven't anymore credit."

The shopkeeper calculated the numbers and came up with one thousand, seven hundred, ninety-eight duplicate diamond collars, and Lourty was very happy.

"No burglar will know which one is real," he said, and the shopkeeper smiled.

"If any burglar takes this to a jeweler, he'll be laughed into the street. Come back tomorrow with some bags; they'll be ready.

Lourty filled the halfcottage with diamond cat collars, keeping Griffer's real collar carefully around his ankle. He dumped the wheelbarrow full of bags into the doorway and watched sparkling light spill like liquid across the wine drums. He twisted the wheelbarrow away from the doorway and stepped. He grabbed the end of each bag and pulled heartily, and was rewarded with two shimmering piles, which he spread across the floor like a baker spreading candy pearls across the surface of a wedding cake.

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Robinson, one of the despicable begging neighbors, couldn't believe his eyes when he saw the Whitecakes' gardener bring home a fortune like that. He jumped away from his stolen stony strutting and called the news channel. The anchors didn't know anything about any recent or upcoming bank robberies or jewelry thefts, but she carefully noted Robinson's name and address for the evening report.

"I'm going to get those beauties all for myself," Robinson said, scratching the lumps on his face with a book of matches.

Like many of the Whitecakes' neighbors, he had disliked Lourty's cat because it had always beaten him at tic-tac-toe.

At midnight, he kicked open the halfcottage's door with one oversized mountain boot and fired both rounds of a double barrel shotgun into the far wall and wine drums. Lourty jumped up from the floor and shrieked like a tea kettle. Champagne sloshed all over him and he involuntarily swallowed large amounts before he managed to squeeze through one of the tiny windows. The local sergeant arrived in seconds to investigate the shots and apprehended Robinson, who was helping himself to the "fine women's bracelets."

Lourty gave a private statement to the sergeant, and the "Drunkens Gardener Incident" went out in the evening edition of The Republic's interview was punctuated with strong curses and oaths, for as it had been in the final processes of completion he had discovered that Griffer's collar was missing from his ankle - that it must have slipped off when he had forced his way through the little sugarbag window. It was mixed with the duplicates. One of the secondary investigation officials was touched, and offered to help.

"What's your code?" she asked.

Lourty gave her the secret information, and she frowned and looked away, to where all the county trucks sat, when she found the corresponding numbers on her pocket chart. "I'm sorry," she told the gulf of air between her and the shining hydraulic vehicles. "You haven't anymore credit.

Something inside Lourty settled, and he stumbled forward. He didn't have enough war bucks to have the real Griffer's collar sifted from the artificial ones. That made the duplicates more worthless than they really were.

He walked to the mansion and knocked on the oak door to the Whitecakes' hall, knowing they were awake. Mr. Whitecakes met him in the foyer and pretended to just notice the officials milling about outside. "Whitecakes, I quit."

"They shook hands and the stout employer didn't say a word, but nodded as if unsurprised. They were both good men, and it was hard for them to meet under the background of modern life, for they had little in common.

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In the weeks before the great peace was declared, the shot up half cottage filled with cats, strays all, their numbers swelling like tuna salad sandwiches from an open picnic basket. They played in the collars and lapped at the wine and chased away the mail carrier each day at ten thirty.

"Meow! Meow! Meow!"

One really smart cat discovered the real collar with the real diamond inset and shot away with it, waking the neighborhood with its cries of happiness. The rest of the cats got exceedingly drunk and paid dearly for it the next day when the letter from South America arrived.

- aaron maupin

For Nick

The flame burns brighter to those searching for it.

Round and round we go, we’re at the house of a killer or some such so.
Circling towards the other in dances.
Placed in hypnotic, alcohol trances.
There is one that stands near, and yet far apart.
Such derring do, he thinks himself smart.

The flames will envelop them all.

On the balcony a sentinel stares across the inlet to a foreign shore, beckoning him home. Green means go.
So we beat on.
Waves against the shoreline,
Tides of time.

- douglas mitchell

Euphoric Buzz

4 cups of joe and ‘bout a half a pack a smokes later a caffeine induced euphoria fifty’s sounds fill the air
10:30 on the Pepsi wall clock
forth cup cooling and vanishing rapidly iced water brings back freshness to palate restlessness fights with mellowness rings from the outside world

A dozen glazed please.

- brad petty
The Lighthouse Keeper

I look at my child and begin to tell her stories. 
Stories of the past, 
drifting from generation to generation.

"Baby don't ever take anything for granted, I say. 
My child looks at me, utterly confused, not understanding at all. 
All the women in our family have been through hell. 
I don't want you to go through hell too, I say.

I look at her and begin the stories. 
The stories of my great-great grandmother 
who felt the sting of the white man's whip 
and afterwards, felt the thrust of his hips. 
The stories of my grandmother who lived in a rundown shack 
in the sweltering heat and red clay dirt of the south. 
As a child, she was forced to watch flames dance 
from a burning cross, a symbol of the white man's ride. 
The stories of my mother who never understood Malcolm X, 
who adored Martin Luther King, 
who wore an afro for all the wrong reasons, 
who cried when JFK got shot, 
who knew so much while knowing so little.

I look at my sweet little girl and tell her my story -- how I didn't go to college, 
how I saw L.A. go up in flames, 
how I saw my entire future fall apart before my eyes. 
how I wish I could start all over again 
and take my life seriously. 
Now I am crying, 
feeling the pain that has crossed the bridges of time to reach me. 
I take my beautiful child in my arms, 
and hope that she has listened.

-- cherie c. hampton

Silence

At the edge of silence 
lie the shadows of sound 
and the hidden meanings of words. 
Where meaning is projected beyond our ears. 
Where words are just symbols separated from their sense. 
Where letters are just meaningless scribbles 
and what is said is not what is thought, 
and what is thought cannot be said.

-- bon a. campbell

KACIA

A road atlas, a cup of tea, 
and the memory of you saying; 
"nine states and one province."

A word filled rime in Wawa, 
speaking of a moose with patched fur, 
the gluttony of black-flies, 
and snow on June thirteenth.

With my finger I trace the area 
we have seen. I wish the world were still flat. The map makes it look easy, with numbered roads crossing like a net which catches my day-dreams.

There are so many things outside my fingered border. I dream of bitter wine in France, or castanets and rainbow ruffled dresses in Chile. 
And you, a ship in the Caribbean, 
or skunk striped lemurs in Madagascar.

-- william boenig
commandments

stars
i wont wish on you for anything
save for
your silent falling
into my hands to catch
like fireflies in summer,
kept inside
cupped palms,
rattled and frantic.

moon
bust-open opal
swell full round
like a pregnant womb
cast shadows,
shadows long and thin
you nocturnal orb.

sky
hold in the universe
and the planets,
mov e about,
breathe
exhale the atmosphere
calm my shaky orbit.

— erin duncan

Venery

without a god, without a girl,
I’m left to pray one-handed.

— alexander vow marrow

necklace

without words
we flee
the bass too deep?
escaping, exploring free
here we are in the lobby
of our stolen cheap motel room
your lips, oh god your lips
soft, sweet as they swell, bloom
lips as gentle drops of spring’s last rain
I taste them fall as they trickle
splash, puddle, drain
and pool on my chin
your soft tongue, the focus of my fantasy
kiss me there, kiss me
I sit so still, waiting in ecstasy
no, wait
talk, talk
you have so much to say.
words that have been locked forever away
in the tower of your solitary consignment
whispers of daydreams, passion’s divine assignment
your fingers tickled the back of my neck
higher, higher I’m so high
as you unknowingly
released those butterflies
tied those beads around my throat
alone at night, my fist is you
plunging the desire that clugs me with excitement
your eyes, the rich tea I drink to warm me
the wet leaves sealing my indictment
I never intended to shout

— k. allen harshorn

Trash?

then my hands flew to punctuate
wiping away vestiges of doubt
my drunken soliloquy missing the mark
suddenly your soft eyelids, your timbre
your flow that I crave fleeting
leaving me frozen, warmth retreating
even now as you martyr me
even now as you remain my deepest desire
my invisible make-believe lovebead necklace broken
daydreams faded, fantasies retired
the threads frayed, the beads sprayed down
in a hail of glass bullets
crushed to tranquil nothing powdered
a million lovesong lyrics skipping louder and louder
remember this
as you live your beautiful life
dodging my kiss
the night awaits, its black hollow
the golden trophy of your insensitivity.

— lea. a/J. en dearbom
The Corridor

Gerno walked quietly across his apartment and opened the refrigerator. They would be coming soon. He removed a Heineken from the top shelf and set it on the counter. The plump man of about fifty then put a frozen dinner in the microwave and waited. The apartment was quiet but for the hum of the small appliance. Gerno stood awkwardly to the side of the microwave and peered in. He did not want to receive any of the cancerous rays he’d heard about on TV. The macaroni was spinning in the light, oblivious to his watch.

Muffled clomps came from the apartment stairwell. “They are coming!” he thought. ‘They’ were one of the neighbors and her boyfriend. Gerno did not know their names, though he suspected hers to be ‘Bitch’.

He opened the small door, removed his dinner, and hustled to the front door. After placing his macaroni on the flimsy end table he retrieved a fork, reclaimed his beer, and tiptoed back to the door.

Today Bitch was wearing a brown sundress under a cumbersome leather jacket. Her eyes were outlined heavily in blue and she had on black lipstick that matched her hair. “She always wears too much makeup,” thought Gerno. As she walked toward his end of the corridor, Gerno could see the boyfriend looming behind her. The old man smiled in anticipation and switched to his good eye.

The girl stopped two doors from Gerno’s and began to unlock her own. She was not smiling. “She is pretending to ignore you, Boyfriend,” he thought. “Say something.” The old man hated when they fought inside her apartment. He had to settle for listening at the wall and his ears were not as good as his eyes. Gerno watched as she stepped through her door.

“Come on, Kristi.” Gerno was relieved to hear him speak. The girl reappeared at the door. “Are we still going tonight?” said Boyfriend.

She just rolled her eyes and walked back into her apartment. “Oh, fuck off,” he called. “I hate it when you’re like this,” and then, “Stupid bitch.” He started to leave, but Gerno knew better than to desert his post.

“I’m being a jerk?”

Boyfriend turned quickly. “What are you saying?”

She didn’t answer.

“Huh?” He began walking back. “Well?”

“You know exactly what I mean.” Her eyes were filling with water; threatening to burst.

“You don’t you just say it?” The young man’s face was red now. “Come on, Bitch. Say it!” he shouted.

“Why don’t you just leave me alone?” she cried hoarsely. She turned to leave and Boyfriend grabbed her arm, pulling her towards him. He was about to shout again, but stopped when he saw her eyes surrender their tears.

Gerno, too, could clearly see the streams of blueblack running the length of her hollow cheeks. He put his empty bottle on the table and returned to the kitchen. He knew there wasn’t anymore to watch. Boyfriend had overmatched her again. He had won.

The old man retrieved another beer from the fridge and settled into the couch. An apartment door slammed in the hallway. Gerno turned the television up as loud as possible and waited for the next show.

—j aware

This Work For Sale, Price Negotiable: Call 688-2563
Unknown

Neil Ave, north of King: This boy
Leaves the window open, steps shower-wet
Into cotton boxers at 10 PM. If you are lucky
The desk lamp lights his black
Shadow across the ceiling.
That image takes your breath,
Not the naked impact
Of his chest above those
Boxers, concave head rest.
No, not the desire to lie there
Again, touching, sweaty, blessed.

Ian

When I move my body like his,
Lean on one elbow and round
My shoulder forward, my back spreads
Into wings. He places
Each foot flat, cocks a foot
Out, knees flexed. When I move my
Body like that I open
Symmetrical. Try it and tell me
What you feel. Tell me what opens
And why I want him in there.

Steve

What I miss are the long
Loping walks home, you
Puppydog handsome and strong.
How I felt safe. I am surprised when
You say you still fear violence
In this neighborhood, listening
For slow cars, baseball bats. When
You leave town I kiss you
Outside.

Two months later I am
On a first date with an
Insomniac boy who can
Talk all night so
We go outside at 4 AM to
Smoke. It is cool and we
Hold hands. I see them first.
There is nowhere to run and anyway
Scott keeps talking, my
In his, my body finally flush with your fear.

--stephen manson

Many children are afraid of the dark. Fairy tales told at bedtime customarily
condition children for a good night's sleep. Drifting off into slumber, believing that
everything is going to be okay...just like in the stories. When I was little, my record player
did the soothing. Each night the characters entered my room and I never wanted them to
leave. I believed they could ward off bad dreams, I now know that kids don't have to be
asleep in order to have nightmares.

Most kids are afraid to fall asleep at night.
Some were afraid to be awake....

--danaobliton

Castle Ghosts

Will it Ever End
Devon Rogoff took up lesbianism the way other people take an adult education course. It was like learning Indonesian cooking late in life, or calligraphy. At twenty-four she became an expert on the subject, a willing participant in this new and unusual field. It happened so suddenly that she barely understood it; for so many years she was a heterosexual, keeping her eyes open to the possibilities of a man strolling into her life, and now, with very little effort on her part, she was a lesbian, looking at women on the street and thinking: "My neighbor's girlfriend." 

"Uh, you have a caper on your face," the woman said. "Oh, God," said Devon. She took a swipe at herself and missed the spot.

"Wait, I know you," the woman said. "You came to my house in Brooklyn. You were there for the poetry reading. You were my neighbor's girlfriend."

"Oh, that was over a year ago," said Devon, and she nervously manipulated a cracker thing into the general direction of her mouth.

"What was this conversation about? What were they doing? Was this called flirting?" said the woman. "Actually, very interesting. It says that dolphins are promiscuous." "You mean Flipper put out?" Devon asked.

"Oh yeah. But blue-green algae is extremely faithful," the woman said, closing the book. "It only has sex with itself." "That's convenient," Devon found herself saying, "no need to send flowers the next day."

"Like sending flowers," said the woman.

"So how is it?" Devon asked politely.

"Actually, very interesting. It says that dolphins are promiscuous." "You mean Flipper put out?" Devon asked.

"Oh yeah. But blue-green algae is extremely faithful," the woman said, closing the book. "It only has sex with itself." "That's convenient," Devon found herself saying, "no need to send flowers the next day."

"Like sending flowers," said the woman.

What was this conversation about? What were they doing? Was this called flirting? It felt very strange, as though they were flirting with each other according to the customs of another planet. Devon felt confused, almost drugged.

"But it was too late to take this any further, because the woman stood and walked across the room and came right up to Devon. Across the room, a dark-haired woman was unabashedly watching Devon.

"If I were into boys," said Devon, "Charlie is definitely the one I'd pick." "Were you ever involved with boys - I mean men," asked Devon.

"Sure," said Emily. "But they tended to have long hair and be effeminate. Finally I figured it out. Why did you and my favorite neighbor, Jay, break up?"

"You know," said Devon vaguely. "A chemistry thing." "What, he was missing molecules?" said Emily. "I think love is very simple. You're either attracted to someone or you're not. If you are not on it. If you're not, then they become your 'if only.' You can't fake it," Emily paused, looking across the room. "But it was too late to take this any further, because the woman stood and walked across the room and came right up to Devon. "Hi," she said.
"Hi," Devon said meekly.
"Devon? Devon Rogoff? Don’t you remember me?" the woman asked.
"I don’t think so," Devon answered.
"This is a blast from your past," the woman said. "I’m Shelly Berkowitz."
"Oh my God!" said Devon. "Shelly Berkowitz. You’re the one who wouldn’t let anyone try your flute."
"It wasn’t my rule," said Shelly flatly. "It was my father’s."
"We grew up together," Devon explained to Emily. "We were in band together."
"And now we meet again," said Shelly. "There must have been something called Shelly from across the room and Shelly interrupt ed Devon, saying that she was glad to have seen her, and hoped she was doing well, but that she had to run. And with that, s l

over it.

good

turned and walked away, while Devon sat stunned from this encounter.

earlier lif e .

True, there was a pup tent that needed to be pitched inside the vagina, but using one seemed a little extreme. Maybe she was

the aquamarine light of the digital clock beside Emily’s bed, Devon discovered this fact for herself. They had been up half the

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Devon thought.

see if Emily was awake. No. Emily was fast asleep, the pillow crushed against her face, the slope of one shoulder poking up

over the quilt. The entire room hissed and clanked with the efforts of steam in the radiator. Devon replayed the evening, start­

like the way Devon’s and Emily’s were right now. Without moving her head, but instead peering sideways, Devon checked to

window after their first night of married love. Maybe lesbians could hang

front stoop of the brownstone, and winding up back here , in the bedroom of Emily’s apartment. Devon felt that there ought to

be some ritual to commemorate her first lesbian experience. In the old days, some people hung bloodied bed sheets out the

bed sheets out the window.

Adele Rogoff had seen her daughter making love to another woman, she would have let loose a series of hideous,

she thought giddily. In addition to the sex being so exciting, it was also safe. Supposedly, True, there was a pup tent that needed to be pitched inside the vagina, but using one seemed a little extreme. Maybe she was

kidding herself, but sex between women seemed far removed from AIDS anxiety. It seemed far removed from the whole world.

Devon thought.

If Adele Rogoff had seen her daughter making love to another woman, she would have let loose a series of hideous, woman-warrior screams, then whirled in a circle until she became someone else like Wonder Woman does. But Adele Rogoff was safely sleeping with her husband back on Springfield, their bodies lying in relaxed, slovenly, sack-of-flour positions, much

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mouth open wide in pure, suburban horror.

dreaming of bed sheets, and bare-breasted women, and her mother’s looming face

her mouth open wide in pure, suburban horror.

Emily laughed, and added, “Although the suspect claimed she’s not ‘that way,’ she appeared to be having a suspiciously
good time.”

Sex with a woman wasn’t all that different from sex with a man. The only difference was, it was better. Much better. By the

aquamarine light of the digital clock beside Emily’s bed, Devon discovered this fact for herself. They had been up half the

night, engaging in odd thrashing activities that resulted in surprisingly familiar thrills, as though she had done this before, in an

earlier life.

May I eat Gertrude Stein, she thought giddily. In addition to the sex being so exciting, it was also safe. Supposedly, True, there was a pup tent that needed to be pitched inside the vagina, but using one seemed a little extreme. Maybe she was

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Summers at the Stone House

Outside.

Red, crayon-hued currants dot the bushes in the yard.
A small boy leans with his white bucket and his minnow net searching for quick fish and unsuspecting crayfish.
A girl-child dangles her feet from the creaking wooden bridge, clutching the sun hot steel beams.
Thunder Rumbles.
A rain drips onto the green.
The boy, transposed, hangs in the Y of a walnut tree shaking leaves with summer restlessness.
Golden brown girls flop on the grass underneath listening for the crunch crunch of footsteps on the driveway.

Inside.

Polished, wooden floorboards echo with years of footsteps and invite small children to lay smooth cheeks upon smooth wood.
Straightbacked chairs with straw bottoms pull up to a satiny wooden table.
Lunch of sandwiches on rough bread and cool watermelon to squish in the mouth.
Naptime in a soft, white room.
Kick off hot sheets and watch the breeze billow crisp eyelet curtains and the sun spill in yellow pools on the floor.

Aria

Looking up at the top room, window blazing with the icy blue fire of television’s rhetoric.
I climb the slippery metal staircase as it ascends, spiraling toward the aria of this, my latest three-penny opera.
Windows drenched with condensation now, steamed finger-drawn letters compose vulgarity, my desperate sinkhole deepening as I lay in my blood-signed contract.
I am perched on the green velvet, gold-fringed pillow of my pitiful self-righteousness.
I sit deafened, reading your lips like a weathered postcard; transfixed, moulting indignation, synching to me, talking of my body, dreaming of employment, a well-rehearsed carnival.
I know how you see me, nothing more than fleshy vessel, seed tray.
Removing your hat, a gentleman’s gesture.
Rubbing your scalp in defiant abandon.
The calliope bellows as our horses trot in their obscene paths, trained well and oddly silent.
Thick fingers tightening, gripping me as your eyes massage away inhibition and doubt.
Vicious cycle sweetening cruelly with every glorious encounter.
Dancing without touching as we sweat in a nervous tango.
You step in as I retreat and spin, Like so many dancers in school, afraid to touch, avoiding that, knowing that in my hand I hold what slight future our union implies.

-emily koenig
Donut Shop Front Window, October Evening

Through the window
people walk arms folded against the wind
look in
at the donut shop people behind us.
Behind us
an asian boy in a colorful plaid shirt
studies at the counter
cars with windows reflecting the shop’s sign
drive through him
frat boys wrestle around in his shirt
he does not appear to notice.
the donut man smokes in the kitchen
straightening his pans
the counter girl leafs through the want ads.
people passing on the sidewalk
look with half-interest at we two, talking
They see our lips move and lean to listen
as though we are a tv with the sound turned down.

In the window
i look at you
and you look at me:
we look at each other
but not as we might in another poem.
No—in this poem, you watch me as i talk
and (in the window)
I watch you watching me.
I address the side of your face in the glass
(wishing for your eyes)
as you observe my doing so.

—erin randell

Afterglow

The peel hardens on a paper plate
and has been for seven days, since she
broke the skin with her painted nails;
ripped the orange fruit
from the center. I’ve watched the uneaten pulp
lose its moist gleam and
the inner white web crack and shrink
under the patient pressure
of decay. I’ve rolled the dried out seeds between
my forefinger and my thumb, heavy
like wooden tears, like I’ve cried
for all my nineteen years that brought me
to her drunken, cold embrace. Not her first time
and not her last, but my only first
to give, and to blurred and sparkless eyes
and whiskey breath and languid thighs
I did. With an unshaven face I lay
and wonder if ever another has
offered a tangerine to
such a girl after. Ever wondered
her Christian name. I want to throw
the mess away, but every first deserves
its monument, even if it’s
a dying shell, a package without a prize.

—adam gray

x-ray eyes

she is
moonbeam
flower power
mercury kid
she is
UFO
CIA
H-O-T
fire kid
she is
—eric chaffee
A Thousand People Should Not Undress a Naked Person

Unlacing a smile is a difficult task; and to pare the heart is to thief away the vision of already blinded intentions. But to lid an empty jar is to suffocate dreams of an ant farm child; whose dreams are not known by the circle of maturity. Is this how misconstrued intentions are, to enclose the dreams within a hushed jar teasing the creative vision of the undressed mind? The answer proves difficult.

— Kristina Albertson

Surgeon General’s Warning:

The souls of a Black man’s shoes wear as thin as his senses...

SOUND

The roaring sound of a car door click as I pass, is just slightly louder than the deafening sound of a purse being clutched.

SMELL

And as I approach, only the scent of rotting flesh can rival the pungent smell of a conversation dying.

FEEL

The surface of the street that she crosses to avoid your passing by, hardens your/her heart.

TASTE

Blood flows in your mouth to mingle with mace. A present from Barney Fife. All for a pack of smokes...

— Eric A. Richard

Peaceful Tapestries

Africa Cries
The Yellow Mower

My parents always talked as if they had escaped something terrible by marrying each other. I found out they were wrong when my father found the rage inside to push my eight year old frame across the room. In my mind I wobble like a bowling pin in this memory; my shoulders are cool and white and the room resembles the one I have now. In truth, there are other things I remember more accurately. There are other things that seem more relevant. I remember the yellow riding mower my father bought from the neighbors and my admiration for it. I remember the paste of grease and grass that filled every crevice from banana yellow seat to engine, and the strong steel squeak of the pedal I watched slide in and out of a s m.

I had the tremendous urge to scrape away the clippings that had filled in every corner. Many were wet with the smell of spring grass. I remember sitting on it in the garage, on days it was the mechanical I craved. I touched the grease and burnt myself on the leather. Before in secret and wiggled the sticks and pressed the pedals. "Never get near the blade, and don't get off when it's running." He pounced with a sense of seriousness. He enjoyed a certain amount of seriousness.

I pulled on the levers and looked for keys and compartments.

"Listen." I listened.

Soon it was running and I slowly inched off the clutch. "Control!" my father yelled over the noise. To him it was useless. "Don't ever lose control of it. If you do, put down the grass and park it." I understood.

I put my arms around the shining chrome wheel and it popped into gear. I felt the itch of motion and mowed the yard from then on. Still, my father roared when I missed spots, or when I forgot to check the gas before I started and became stranded in a sea of half cut grass and islands of clippings. He would come flying out the back door at the sound of the engine. The red boxers he carried awkwardly away from me were still, like sour carrots, and some of it peeled back, dry and dusty, like cocoons. I touched the grease and burnt myself on the leather.

I learned to ignore what I couldn’t clean away.

My dad pulled me into the garage with the promise that it was my turn. I jumped up onto the mower as I had done before in secret and wiggled the sticks and pressed the pedals. "I have been away from that house, framed by a yard and my father, for a long time. In fact, there are no yards at all on the downtown streets where I live now. Instead of yard work I work in a store and spend some time in pool halls. A few weeks ago I met someone at a pool hall. She was short and boyish. Her hair was mid-length and full of tight, black curls. She bobbed and hung when she leaned over the bright green table like hundreds of baby arms reaching and swaying in delight. The metal stairs of her building were slippery and we held onto each other and laughed, and it was the first time I liked her. Inside, she had green walls and posters of France, but I knew she had never been there. I wondered why she had picked France to lie to me about—out of all the places in the world. We both waited. We sat on the couch and both pretended to watch the TV for some time. Then, she looked at me like she knew I wanted something and said, "I’m going to change for bed, I’ll be right back." As I sat staring at her bedroom door I wanted to leave and thought of many things. I thought of the yellow mower. I thought about being stranded in the backyard on that beached whale of a mower, waiting for my dad to rescue me, waiting for him to push me across the lawn with his stale, dry palm. I remembered how my face ached from his hand and that I sometimes felt like running from him, and the machine, but I never did. It was the pain along the swollen cheek bone of my face that made me stay. It was my face, throbbing and numb, that made me watch her as she pretended to lose her balance, and touching her fingers when I handed her the drinks. I liked the feeling of catching her body in motion and changing its direction. I did not like her at all.

When she brushed her face with her hand I felt some obligation, an obligation I wanted to have. We left with six of her balls on the table and went to her white building up the street. The second thoughts I once had disappeared when we were all alone in the street and the dark. The metal stairs of her building were slippery and we held onto each other and laughed, and

didn’t know about, and I didn’t want to know. Her face around her eyes swelled as we went and I watched her thin, loose brown pants bump the table as her walk became unsure. She whispered through her teeth when she thought I was not noticing and waited for me to follow no matter how long I stood away from her. I touched her as much as possible: tapping her shoulder, catching her when she pretended to lose her balance, and touching her fingers when I handed her the drinks. I liked the feeling of catching her body in motion and changing its direction. I did not like her at all.

If you do, put down the grass and park it.

"Control!"

She opened the door and went in with her arms wrapped around her shoulders. She said: "That’s where I got the hat." She pointed with a drunken tilt at the green pancake beret that held down a few of her curls under its dead weight. I watched her feed drink after drink to herself to cloud her understanding of things I

"Listen."

"Don’t ever lose control of it. If you do, put down the grass and park it."
Justice

Artemis
The blush of her is gold,
A molten-scattered hue -
A fourteen-karat mirror
On iridescent blue.
Extinguished by a rising star
Which stifles beaming veil,
Her seas once more are thunderstormed
With shards of cosmic hail.
She sleeps at Dawn and stirs with Dusk
When raven-colored lands
Effulge with burning seascapes
And moonbeam-minted sands.

- dave barthel

Stone Soup
Talking in the dark
I get interested and then back away
Stars spreading their
bright selves above us
    am not! am not! am not!
    are too! are too! are too!
In the woods I
am a tree, he is a hawk.
At this point I realize
how everything is
 collapsible, and if I could
fold me up
Arching,
Getting
Physically Closer,
I would be
inside
some sense of violence that
I felt.
    To consume,
    Feel every
    Feeling.
Can I just
fucking talk
to you?
Sad because of lonely.
If I didn't
constantly live
in that
underworld
That ugly sea, murk
those waters I drown in.

So I swim back
upstream where I see fish.
Communicating: gesture, eye, face,
hands on wooden table.
Sitting as the tide
comes and goes
The undeniable urge
doing to leak
into our standing-up-
on-two-feet reality.
Inside my own ocean,
what goes on: Cannot find a way,
yet, to touch the passing
texture of my environment.
Ghost fish
tavel in circles of comfort consciousness.
Sitting on the floor
we eat pomegranate-
those red red seeds
our hands are
wounds shown through
our lives- he splashes
the juice on me and
on himself
Waves crashing all
over the walls- and
I lick my hands clean
in the comfort of his gaze.

- amanda runyon Lynch

Inside You
Remote Control
(or a story in fragment)

On
If I went to school
I wouldn't follow you.
I'd find a university
where I could be my elf.
I'd make a difference--
be more than just a number.
For I want to be different
like everybody else.

Flip
When did the cat fall out of the window.
Before, when everything seemed to go
wrong.
Did it land...
On its feet?
Yes.
No.

Flip
Pretty Lake, Pretty Lake
Quaker Land
Take Tea and Shake
Tasmanian

Flip
The Burial of the Dead?
Which war was that?

Frank found a tape
No one was breathing
Is that thing on

Flip
What was that?
The news.

Flip
Every man is a woman
Every woman a man
Join and become one
Love your father Kill your mother
The future never happens
A car is sex and death is a career move

Flip
Are you ready?
Yes.

Flip
Every word began with a K
Catastrophe in Kansas
Killings in Cairo
Eliot made an appearance

Flip
MTV presents. A nothingness Production.
In Partnership with Post-Modernity
and his friends Groucho and Sattori.
In Association with Humanity, Education
and the Commodities of: Breathing
The madmen lead us nowhere in the frenzied
dance of this world,
for we are all just babies, infantile and
corrupt
by the national order that capitalizes us
while commodifying our desires.
so all we do is drink
the mercuried honey of a fragmented
culture
--all we can do is stare into the glass hoping
to find.
Credits:
madmen-----------madmen
babies--------------babies
mercuried honey--a thermometer and some
bees
directed by nothing with nothing for
nothing
special thanks to Princess Di for us of the
word “in”
and to Timmy for his rock polishing kit.

Yes?
Is that thing on?

Off
– laura horvitz

3 Times Removed: Science and Technology Library
After Lunch
As storm clouds march against the perfect afternoon
a screen door slams;
the first salvo as Dad's artillery
engages Mother's brigades.
The eight year old in dirty jeans
is swift as he leaps
from the porch unnoticed
and races for the woods.
There was no time to plan
this statement of truce, a session meant
to undivide attention.
And past the gate he still can hear
the metal clash of bayonets
and crashing dinnerware.
Beneath a helmet of black hair this combat veteran
is charging through the fields as fast as
child legs can run. Arms pump
in violence as
the sweat
begins its slow assault.
The breath.
Becoming.
Forced.
The boy advances, though, and
he's Pickett's best soldier now
because he knows...
He knows if he just
can make
those trees,
perhaps he'll find
a better chance
at peace.

Current
I flap arms in muddy July
water and swim to shore. Sun
hangs in a still sky, birds skimming
blue. My jean shorts drip
onto the grass, wetness pushing
cold through my shirt onto skin.
I lean against a tree, stare across
the field, and remember Father's boat,
white wood fighting waves as he cruised
away from dock. A phone broke night
into an unhinged sadness, relaying the message
of storm and death. I walk over and sit
on the edge, dangling my feet into calm
water, dried memories splashed by sun.

Nature of Concrete
I.
The birds peck the dust
Scattered mounds of plastic glass
Green leaves burrow through
II.
Broken glass bottle
Stretches its form to the wind
Erases from time
III.
Lazy eyed moon drops
Fall from silver steel towers
Line of reflection

- jame.J tomarJ

- michael rayburn

- m. bannon

Entangled
Somehow Broken

The boy says, “Walk with me through the wind tunnel, girl. I’ll give you so many things, so much dope and glasses of water, bits of minced garlic and songs on my record player. Let’s go riding our bikes, walking my dog in the park after dark when the sky has the unearthly glow from fluorescent floodlights outside apartment complexes down by the river.

"Let’s live under the bridge, girl. You gather the firewood (wrist-sized pieces are best) and I’ll find a radio station (you like this song, honey?) I can cook spaghetti cuz it’s easy and tomato sauce comes in cans now. Light the fire slow and build on a foundation of paper-old report cards, love notes, divorce papers, the garbage of teenagers and hoboes.

"Don’t walk away, girl, there’s work to be done. My scalp is thick with dirt and ash, glazed with honey and itches something fierce. I hurt with an ache:: so indescribable, under my left shoulder blade and up in my ribs. Like I’m somehow broken. I can’t bleed, can’t cry.

"Sometimes I think I’m meant to be alone. I am a ghost, a stranger, lonely, a tree falling in the woods without making a sound. Heavy, like the wind, pressing. Walking through fire again and again. The girl gets ready to say something, she is tasting the words, testing their sounds until they are dry and brittle on her tongue, charred black, withering. She is leaning back with her hands unfolding across her chest (and the smooth stretch of his belly and the soft brown thighs, the suction their chests make together—plus his lips and eyes and hair and voice armpits and elbows ankles toenails earlobes)

“What do you want from me, boy? Am I pink red moist warm open, a tight hot box? Can I soothe your broken, can I rub it stroke it coax it? Will you emerge, will you shine, be mine? When I gather it up, I will throw it to the wind and laugh—happy to be busy gathering again. I cry I bleed I laugh.”

Scattering onions in the pan. As they sizzle and crack in oil she says, "I don’t want to go through the wind tunnel. There’s food to be made. I have to go now."

- amanda rutherford

The World’s Greatest Dad

my brittle morning muscles open the Post-Dispatch because I know you’ll be in the kitchen soon fixing a bowl of generic Fruity Pepples and watching morning network cartoons my lips are burned by ninety-nine cent Kroger coffee the mug you gave me for Christmas Eve of eighty-two tells me I’m "The World’s Greatest Dad"—your smile said you didn’t know that that’s not true the breast pocket on my five dollar T-shirt is getting frayed and showing signs of holes the leather of my Payless dress shoes creases and whispers reminders of dusty unused goals I don’t know what I’ll have left behind for you but I hope you’ll live to drink a finer brew.

I Eat My Television

There’s an electron sandwich in my living room on which I dine, hour by hour, until pieces of light pummel my head and static razes my awareness. But I do not think I am a glutton. I still remember the outside: the moss green cloud blown violently by the cold summer breeze. Yet still, I am hungry.

- robert murdock
The Hand and the Hunter

The hand was found by the hunter early on a Sunday morning. He noticed something sparkling in the sunlight that was filtering through the trees. It was only partially buried under some leaves, near a tree, miles away from the backroads that crisscrossed the area, miles away from anything. The trained eyes of the hunter had been tracking a deer for a couple of hours, waiting for the clearest cleanest shot. The statuesque buck looked to be a sixteen pointer, but although the hunter's walls were well covered with a menagerie of kills he felt this one in particular would make a fine addition. But suddenly something silent happened, something the hunter hadn't seen or heard, and in an instant the deer bolted, fleeing much too quickly for the hunter to follow. Frustrated but calm, the hunter lowered his rifle, looked around, then down, and that was when the sparkle caught his eye.

The hunter approached curiously. He was only about six feet away and as he moved closer he squinted to make out what he had spotted. He still wasn't aware of the natural sounds around him, instead he was so fixed on his prey not even his loud crackling footsteps made the slightest noise. When finally he was upon it he still didn't know what he had found. He couldn't tell there was something under the leaves so he shifted them with the barrel of his rifle. After moving only two of the cold, wet, dead leaves away he saw the buffered blue open palm of a seemingly small, seemingly delicate, seemingly womanly hand. The open palm was cradling his gaze. The fingers were cupped slightly upward. They appeared relaxed as if the hand might have been carelessly, effortlessly flopped into that position when the woman rolled over in bed. He noticed the rings.

There were five rings in all. The thumb even had a ring on it; a small twisted piece of silver which held what looked like a sliver of chipped glass although it may have been a diamond. It must have been what caught the light. He opened the door, put his rifle in the corner, placed the hand on the table, and removed his gloves. The fire in the fireplace was smoldering and the black coffeepot hanging inside was still slightly warm to the touch. His rough calloused hands were bare. All the rings were silver and either had a pattern etched in them or were twisted and gilded into different squiggly shapes. He followed each of the fingers from the rings to the tips with his eyes. The fingernails stopped somewhere between long and short, were slightly rounded on the ends and painted bright blood red. They looked freshly painted, they were shiny.

The rest of the hand was smooth. There were no wrinkles or veins to make small mountainous ridges on the surface, of course, there wasn't any blood inside to cause such formations, whatever was there was gone now. Even the place where the hand had been severed from the rest of the body was seamless. The hand wasn't gnawed like abandoned in traps he'd set for small animals. The cut looked clean, sharp and swift.

The skin in this area had been beautifully blue in the rest of the hand. Here the edges were black and crusty, quite ugly in fact, especially when compared with the rest of the hand. It disturbed the hunter, this sharp contrast, so he removed a scarlet bandana from his pocket and wrapped it around the base of the hand around what would have been the wrist if the wrist still existed. It matched the fingernails and seemed to make the hand complete and quite attractive.

The hunter paused. He began looking around him. For the first time he wondered how the hand came to be severed and how it found its way into this deserted woodland. Civilization was miles away. People, unlike deer, were certainly scarce in this area. He was usually gone most of the day, off in other parts of the woods hunting or trapping; so he supposed he could've missed something or someone. And sometimes he would fish off a nearby lake but even there he rarely saw other people, a passing car definitely would have been noticed. But nothing. Not recently, not for a long time.

The hunter stopped thinking about how the hand got to be in his own. It didn't matter to him all that much really. All that mattered at this point was that his sixteen point buck had gotten away and he was left holding a fragile, beautiful, delicate piece of someone who wasn't there. Although it was still early, the hunter decided to head back to his cabin. In his right hand he carried his rifle, in his left, the hand, wrapped ever so gently in the rest of the scarlet bandana.

His cabin was small, one room and a front porch. Furniture was scarce but functional: a table, a bed, a chair by the window. The fireplace took up most of one wall, the others were covered with his trophies which he'd killed and mounted himself. Rustic, that's what it was. There were no curtains, no flowers, no signs of a womanly touch. In fact the hunter hadn't felt a womanly touch in many, many years.

He'd been married once and even had a daughter, but they left one day to go somewhere, he couldn't remember where, and never came back. That was when the hunter lived in the city but that seemed like a lifetime ago. Now he lived alone, not just alone, considered himself, he had limited contact. He'd called the owner of the store a few miles away. He would only go there for emergency items like fuel for his lantern or ammunition when he ran out. The outside world never entered his own. He preferred it that way, when he'd actually take the time to think about it.

He opened the door, put his rifle in the corner, placed the hand on the table, and removed his gloves. The fire in the fireplace was smoldering and the black coffeepot hanging inside was still slightly warm to the touch. His rough calloused hands reached for more wood to jump start the fire. The room was cold. When the flames rose to meet the kettle the hunter remained nearly within the heat. He moved the chair closer to the fire, poured a cup of steaming coffee, and after he was warmed and settled he once again began to examine the hand.

The hand was cool to the touch now. Without his gloves he could feel the smoothness of it. He was soft, silky. He held it gently and caressed it. He remembered a softness similar to this, but only vaguely. The fingers were long and slender. His own were short and stodge with black hair on the knuckles. The hand he held had no hair at the knuckles. It had no callouses, no visible signs of stress or strain. It appeared to be quite pampered. All of these characteristics seemed so familiar to him. It seemed as if he'd held this hand before, if not his hand, another. He remembered when he first saw the hand from his past, long before he found this one in the woods. He saw it slip through the teller's window at the bank. It was returning the balance of his first paycheck. He could barely make out the I.D. bracelet that jingled as the silver nameplate hit the metal at the bottom of the security glass. He remembered the bumps of the joints where he placed a diamond on the slender fourth
finger. He remembered how the bright red fingernails felt as they dug and traced, dug and traced down his back when making love. He remembered the way they glided through his hair. He remembered the hand gripping his own so tightly he thought it would break in the delivery room. And he remembered remarking how such a strong hand could be so gentle and loving. He remembered the hand trembling with anger and shaking and pointing violently at him. He remembered the hand and another smaller yet identical version silently waving goodbye to him one early Sunday morning. He remembered not seeing, touching, or feeling the hand for a very long time but he could not remember why.

The kettle was boiling over now. He placed the hand on the table. Not thinking he reached in to pull the kettle away for the flames without first wrapping his hand in a towel. The metal melted into his skin and slowly yet quickly he pulled away, sinking into his chair. His right hand held his left which felt as if it was still on fire. He got up staggered outside and thrust his left hand into the mud near the edge of the porch. It was cold and soothing. When his hand had cooled slightly a dull, constant pain lingered. His hand was still warm when he recalled a time long ago when he felt the same pain. He would feel the same pain every time he hit her, but it never stopped him. He remembered that his hand would sometimes burn for hours, even though it was wet with tears, but that never stopped him. Nothing stopped him.

The hunter returned inside, opened the chest and removed a clean white bandana. He wrapped his own hand with it and went over to the table. The hand was lying there alone and helpless. Sunlight from the window caught the gem in the ring on the thumb and it began to sparkle brightly. The hunter knew now why he hadn't felt anything like this hand in so long. It was because of his own horrible ugly hands. The hunter stared at the hand on the table for a while. Then he did something he hadn't done for a long time -- he put his own hands to his face and cried.
Life As We Know It

From your wheelchair you lift your head
When you cannot lift it higher your eyes pick up the trail
One ballet-smooth movement

You who once crawled under a semi to escape rape
You telephoned for help then, you knew how to fight then
I cannot go to you now

My brothers drift in and out of the nursing space between us
They ask

~m

I okay but I am beyond language, me
The tallest has become small
Tim begins the speech, second shock to my heart, tells you that we
Always have you with us, we never forget you, we forgive
The drinking, the fights, the words
You say thank you like an Oscar winner
I wish he would shut up
The room shifts an inch, Mike says the same, Jim, the same
After each a thank you, thank you

I know what I want now, fight or flight, that phrase from biology
They were not talking alcoholism, incontinence
They did not mean a son's response to his mother's eye movement
I want you back, boozy and swinging
For a three a.m. ride from a bar on Keowee Street
That is life as we know it, not this woman who does not lift her head

But rolls her eyes to me
You ask for something and I say Key<1? You want my key?<
Kiss! my brothers say She wants a kiss!
I kneel, I weep into your desert flesh
I say to you, maker of men, witness this I want you back

A Math Erection Becomes Revelation or a Note to Myself

At least homosexuality is not an imitation.
It's intimacy for beginners.
the orgasm we once care to fake.
I almost admire it. I almost write aphorisms.

from "About Face" by Alice Fulton

I shouldn't fear
uncontrollable things:
earthquakes,
the sunrise,
or the size of my penis.

I shouldn't fear writing
Me on a page,
putting it off while I try to find
the last digit of pi.

The blood in my body has been busy
reddening my face,
or burning my ears as an old
calculus teacher pointed out.

There should be a warning
in the manual of the human body:
Caution! When improperly used
blood will turn cold.
Owner may experience paralysis
and apathy.
Suggested uses:
Lovenaking, writing,
and oxygenating the brain when
such activity doesn't interfere
with previous suggestions.

Sometimes,
it's easy to think
too much;
it's safe to count the digits,
to lose the beauty and intimacy of pi.

- robert mardock
Burn

I like the way she smoked
lengthy fingers extending
to flick away the remains
of that
last drag.
Smoke curling around her eyes in
tight
blurring
circles.
Her mouth:
a hollow filled with incense,
breathing in
and out
spirals.
I liked the way the flames
licked
at her smile
each time she lit in the dark,
igniting the wet
of her eyes.
She would smoulder;
cigarette dangling
lightly on lip,
casually from hand
as she tapped
a rhythm on her jeans
or threw her arm around me.
Her smoky sweetness clung to me
in deep cloud around my head
as I spent my day.
And coming home,
I find her kiss in ashtrays
the buried imprint of
her mouth.

---

juliet waits to bleed

crushed rose petals
stain her fingers
that twirled
her deliciously tinted ringlets
round and round
in nervous fits of laughter
and thoughts of her Romeo
circled around her like gnats
swarming in the sweat-heavy air.
she sat on the electricity box
at the corner of her backyard,
and drew its strength
into her unassuming thighs.
the sky blushed
the sun was cherry—
when she returned to her room
she slept soundly,
dreaming in red.

---

aimee nezhukumatathil

---

amanda warren

Scorpio

Holy Trinity
Things That Go Bump in the Night

"Turn the page, turn the page!
Please finish the chapter.
What happens to the princess, Mommy?"

"Why, she lives happily ever after."

The light was dimmed, the shadows emerged. Placidity all my own.
The record spun round, so did my dreams,
The Big Bad Wolf came stumbling home.
Cubbards slamming in the yellow kitchen,
For food he would clumsily forage.
The queen would arise, so would her fears,
To go reheat that evening's porridge.

Sudden crash. Something hit to the floor.
Silence pierced with hateful words spoken.
Please don't let it be... He wouldn't go that far...
When will this curse be broken?

Swirling clamor, covering my ears,
Yet straining to decipher words.
Wishing to raise a magic wand,
And erase all that I heard.

"Don't wake the kids," an unheeded request,
Night replete with surreal commotion.

"Who ripped out the pages of this fairy tale, Mommy?"

"An evil, intoxicating potion."

Giant's footsteps in the hallway are heard.
Limp teddy bear caught in my grip.
Clenching my eyes, pretending to sleep,
But the record continued to skip.

Acetone

Silver strands broken. Hands too strong.
As your hand reached in and grabbed for my soul... poked at my heart... felt for my vulnerable spot...

Did you mean it? I'll never know.
Did you reach it? You did.
Did you drain it? You did.
Did you manipulate it? You did.

And all with your hands.

All inside...

the smile on the anguish,
the stability embracing the emptiness.

That which overcame my body was unreal.
The power in your face was blinding- caught me in the headlights like a doomed doe.

Or, maybe, was it the reflection of my subservience that took away my sight?

I can go back to that moment and I can take away your strength.

I can remove your hand pulling within me and make you look at it.

I wouldn't have even tried.

Thinking back... I am aware of my nearly wet silver nail polish smeared into the couch, my fingers clenching that seat of "love." As if that silver shone with any truth...

as if that silver was worth anything but our sweat.

You showered your sweat away.

I let mine dry like a disgusting film of sincerity...

I looked up at you as my sanctuary...

I watched you walk across the wet grass just the same.

I thought if you were to slip, I'd be the one to catch you...

I'd risk my own fall just to hold you.

I never let that silver polish dry upon my nails...

It was no longer smooth, shiny nor sleek like it was at first.

- dana dutton

Silence
The Gown

The young woman seemed a mannequin through the dress shop window; Blue lipped and pale against the long black gown. Her arms were outstretched and taught like rope as the dress maker pinned the folds. I noticed her discomfort, held firm by the stale task, (and her fear of the small steel pins that chased her skin along the seams.) The gown itself was a rigid, closing trap inching nearer her shallow waist, and tightening around her rounded breasts. Then I imagined her skating amid some ballroom floor, held tightly by the obstinate gown and the sticky clamp of man and tuxedo.

In my thoughts she starts to shrink, the satin gown slips off-down her quickly lacking shoulders and across her thinning thighs-to quietly bunch below their feet. She folds her now subtle arms over her changeless breasts, and closes her eyes; but the man continues to sway and (leaving the dress behind) he pulls her closer. He carries her small frame to his room. She flinches now like an infant pushed into a doctors stale hands born still and caught, and is soon wrapped tight in his white blanket, so much more suffocating to her than any gown ever has been.

– Keith Baich
I tend to write about people I have met throughout my life and observations I have made. I like to try to make a point. I guess, mainly, one of many ways to impose possible form of empowerment; English. I see fiction as a personal order on events and language.

The works I submitted are exercises in the manipulation of language.

I am an English major at OSU. The works I submitted are exercises in the manipulation of language.

I am a senior Honors English Major with minors in Spanish Literature and Theatre. I am currently working on my Honors Thesis which is a creative writing piece, and I am employed by UTS as a micro-computer consultant. I've spent my four years at this University in a variety of ways, from editing a newspaper to studying overseas for an academic year, but I am proud of the fact that I will be graduating with my sanity mostly intact.

I am a first year student from Toledo, Ohio double majoring in Black Studies and English. I love writing poetry and fiction. I love to influence other with my ability to express my emotions through my writing.

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I am an English major studying to teach at the college level. He lived most of his life in San Francisco, where he can spend his spare time searching for Sol Paradiso. 

that she may continue to inspire and support him.

Emily is a second-year student majoring in English and Spanish. She enjoys reading, writing, and spending time with her families (both of them). Her favorite season is summer because with it comes warm weather and home grown tomatoes.

The less you know about me the better, but I'll tell you anyway. I hope to graduate, someday, and eventually become famous. Not necessarily for something illegal like robbing a bank, although that would probably be easiest route. However, that type of fame is fleeting and would probably involve a bit of jail time. I'd prefer instead to become a world renowned film director of psychic to the stars - dare to dream!

Tyier Lowry, a history Major, has been writing for several years. He has had work published both nationally and internationally, and is enjoying the Ohio State University.

A Dayton, OH native, I am completing my English degree at Ohio State, and will enroll in Kent State's Library Science program. My astrologer says that most of my past lives were female, and that in this life, I am learning to balance the feminine with the masculine. So much for the genetics. My brothers and I are closer as adults than as children, and I am grateful for that.

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biographies

Douglas Mitchell
I am a fourth year student majoring in English. I am from Cincinnati and have spent all four of my college years here. I will have one of my poems published in an anthology called Beneath The Harvest Moon. I will hopefully graduate in Winter quarter 1997.

Robert Murdock
Robert Murdock is a senior graduating this spring in Slavic Languages and Literature.

Amie Nezhukumatathil
I am a senior in Visual Communication Design. Recently, I studied abroad at Hogeschool van Groningen at Academica Minerva in the Netherlands (and someday I will be back!) Tot Ziens.

Jerry A. Bell
I grew up in Columbus. I started drawing when I was 3 years old. When I graduated from high school (Old Central High School) I was awarded a scholarship to go to Columbus College of Art and Design. I am presently attending the Ohio State University, studying painting and drawing, and I'm pursuing a BFA degree. When I create art, I strive to attain inner peace and outer harmony. Art is the healing force that relieves our minds.

Eric Richards
Eric Richards is still a junior and now majoring in Black Studies and communications. He is currently working on a series of short stories on living Black in white america and living in Black and white in America.

Joula:1
I am an English major. I wrote some poems. I have no idea what I should be saying about myself. I'm glad this is only 4 sentences long.

Stacy A. Butts
I am a senior in Visual Communication Design. I came from a generation poking on Sit-n-Spin, smiling chrome, and laughing at Dad's chops. I was reared by a Radical PTA mother, turned into a fool by glamour rock, and then thrown in the Jane's Ivy League, and splattered with disease, destruction, and Public Service Announcements. I am the mentally disturbed soldier of social Malediction. Nevertheless my target-market is not gay. A bit fruity, perhaps, but not gay. One has not dined at Toucan and have been attending part time since then. I love Ohio State and art and am very committed to education and continued growth in the arts.

Brian A. Hite
Brian Hite is a third year student at Ohio State, who is currently working towards a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in photography. His photographs are primarily derived through travel experiences and experimentation with alternative techniques. He hopes to someday find a career in which he is able to combine these interests with the abundance of creativity which occasionally lingers from his mind.

Joseph Jones
Joseph Jones is a fourth year student in Architecture at O.S.U. Time dictates life day by day and he hopes to play drums for the rest of his life.

Andy Lanier
Andy "Roy" Lanier is a third year student studying Architecture. He knows for certain that Blair is better than Oasis.
Despite his frail stature, John aspires to quit painting in favor of a high profile career as a New York City fashion model.

Evan Mercer is a long time professional student who specializes in juggling school, work, and husbandry. He can only dream of one day becoming a famous artist. Until then, he will live day to day as "regular working Joe".

"Painting is not really my thing, it is just a stepping stone on my way to becoming a supermodel and strutting down the catwalk".

Corn Research Facility is a research station occupied from the time the corn is planted until it is harvested places the researcher within a growing sea of corn. The ascending horizon line for the maturing corn is displayed to passing motorists as it steadily reaches toward the elevated ground plane of the architecture. At the corn's full maturation the vessel is grounded upon the new horizon of the corn. At harvest the delicately rooted structure is suddenly exposed serving as a reminder of the balance between nature and our seasonal impositions.

I'm a senior in Sculpture and general Fine Arts from San Juan, Puerto Rico.

I am from Lima, Ohio. A fourth year student in Architecture graduating this spring. Currently working for a small Architectural firm in the Columbus area. I intend to continue my education in the field of Architecture after I complete this year.

My name is Roberta Snevel and I have been working with photography for five years. In high school I worked on the yearbook and newspaper as head photographer. I plan to keep studying photography along with natural resource management.

Daniel Sorbello is a junior in mechanical engineering who has no desire to know how his car works. He is currently devoting his time to convince the powers above to promote Emma Thompson to Sainthood.

The editorial staff of *Mosaic* encourages submissions from all undergraduates at The Ohio State University.

Literature submissions, including poetry and short fiction, must be typed and should not contain any personal information (name, address, etc.) on the pieces themselves. Literature submission will not be returned. Original works of art are accepted, as well as slide or photographic reproductions of works that are not transportable or of high value. All original artwork will be returned.

All submissions must include a title sheet listing the titles of piece(s), name, address and telephone number. Limit five submission in art of literature.

Send submissions to:

*Mosaic* Magazine
University Honors Center
220W. 12th Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43201

Deadline for submissions traditionally falls in mid-February, but is subject to change at the discretion of the editorial board.
Each year, *Mosaic* relies heavily upon the financial support of students, faculty, and friends to make everything possible. In addition to paying for the cost of printing the magazine, these donations allow *Mosaic* to hold various events such as poetry readings, our annual art show, and the unveiling ceremony.

The editorial board of *Mosaic* would like to express sincere thanks to the following contributors for the 1995-96 academic year:

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- David and Mary Cino
- E. Gordon and Constance Gee
- Mark and Lyann Duchene
- Student Events Committee
- University Honors Center