FOREWORD

AMANDA APPLETON

This year *Mosaic* celebrates its 21st birthday by continuing the legacy of undergraduate creativity and thought inside its pages. For more than two decades now the magazine has been a showcase of the university's creative talents in the realms of art and literature. This year the staff has worked to offer more opportunities for writers to present their work at open-mic readings. The response has been wonderful.

Producing a magazine such as this is an effort that calls upon the time, talents and dedication of many different people across campus. We are indebted to the constant support and encouragement of our advisor, Ms. Arienne McCracken, of the University Honors Center. She devotes many hours during the year to helping us achieve our goals and keep us going. We would also like to thank Dr. David Citino, Professor of English, for his willingness to promote *Mosaic* to creative writers. The staff also thanks the University Honors Center for funding the production costs of more than fifteen hundred copies of this edition so that students can receive and enjoy the works free of charge. Finally, without the undergraduate students at this university who attend and participate in the readings, submit art and literature to the magazine, and tell others about the organization, *Mosaic* would not exist.

As editor-in-chief, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the magazine, especially the staff members who brought the final product together. Many times our meetings were just as fun as they were productive, and I have enjoyed it immensely. So without further ado, I welcome you to the 1998 edition of *Mosaic*. 

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STANDING ON THE ROOF, NAKED
SHANNON LEIGH THOMAS

Standing on the roof peak of a cottage
On Long Beach Island, New Jersey, naked,
I remembered the Pretty Ladies,
The only strip bar I have seen from the inside.

I had never seen women that way.
Not just stripped, but speaking sex,
Saying fuck me to strangers.

Nor had I seen men that way.
Scary and staring, dreaming at
Flashing flesh and open thighs.
Eyes placing themselves inside.

The whole scene was arousing,
Not the nudity, but the want.
Only, it was empty want,
Private-table-dance want,
That split in two like velcro seams.

Now, on the roof, I see black dunes
And light off the night-rolling sea.
I am clean,
Buffed by salt and sand,
Naked, wanting nothing, so free.
I know that this dance is only for me.

WARNING: SOME SETTLING MAY OCCUR
KARI LOWREY

On the second story in the bathtub listening
to the gentle mice tromp through my airducts.
Each footstep echoes like rain and I can hear them
gnawing. Gnawing away at the structure.
Maybe the bathtub will fall through, splatter
porcelain and me over the stove and sink below.
"Hello?" My sister is knocking on the door
again. She needs to pee or brush her teeth
but I have locked all the doors and
lit a candle to read the old books again. It is of no use.
What did they expect?
Since the time of my breasts I have sworn
if I had a poet child
I would kill them with the first line they ever wrote. Little
poet children: mice just gnawing.

The relaxing bath salts are burning my nose
and crotch as I dry off. Turn on the bed heater
and climb in, pulling pillows on top of me. I almost
like it better than a lover beside me. Pull the smoke in
hard, force it out tense nostrils. It twists and mingles
with the words I will not say... Feeling the smoke
become the taste of oysters and flat Sprite and his
breath lost in the swinging momentum of a potato
sack tied to an oak tree over eighty feet tall.
Numb by the feel of the cool wind I cling to the rope
tied to the branch creaking with my weight. I close
my eyes and remain in motion until dark.

Dark:
Imagine the sunburned muscles of the man standing,
shovel in hand. How he spits off to one side and
wipes sweat off his forehead. He's wearing a baseball
cap that is blue, with no logo. He'll climb down. Open
my mahogany door. Then climb out and start the tractor
and lift the bucket and turn the radio up, loud.

THE KITCHEN
DARLENE OGLESBY

My grandmother measured out salt in her hand,
poured unbleached flour from the bag to the bowl.
No students labored her kitchen for contraband,
no measuring cups littered her stove.
Here, in this kitchen, I sift the autumn breve
for bread, stir the pentametric pea soup,
and simmer a gentle dislike
for recipes,
and an ardent love for what they produce.
Laud those corpulent chefs who lightly pureed
their culinary madness with one stroke of the whisk,
lit fires on ancient stoves and emerged unscathed
to tell us about it. In grand gesture of garlic,
they kissed their fingers with concise passion
and grandmother clapped out the salt from her hand.
THE KILLING TREE
ADINA ROLLINS

Axe in hand, the young farmer made his way to the edge of his field. Such a peculiar one, this tree, he thought. When he planted the seeds four years ago, he expected a small orchard, but only this tree grew.

He tried again the next year, but in the spring it was the only tree left standing after the harsh winter. The farmer would allow the tree to grow, only there was something wrong with it. The tree was lopsided, and its leafless thorny branches grew tangled together. Welt-like sores grew on the tree's trunk and bark was peeling in several places. It was an ugly tree, and because it faces the small winding road people used to get to town, he would cut it down.

As the farmer came to the edge of the clearing he stopped. There the tree stood, small and hunched over. It seemed to stretch out its arms to the young farmer for comfort, and after a long while something moved inside him.

"Tree," said the farmer, touching its bark, "you are certainly not very tall, nor are you beautiful. But unlike all the other fine trees I imagined, you alone found root in this soil. So, though you have not beauty nor strength, you must have a purpose, and I cannot kill what has a purpose." With that, the farmer turned to walk back across the field, leaving the tree alone.

The tree had listened to the farmer carefully. I'm just a small ugly tree, she thought. There could be no purpose for me. But the sincerity in the farmer's voice, the touch of his hands on her bark, helped her believe his words.

Seasons passed, then years, and the tree pushed her roots deep into the soil. She gradually untangled her branches and reached her crown to the sky. She was now beautiful, unlike any tree the small country had seen, and every day people would stop to admire her on the way to town. But this did not matter to her. Her beauty nor strength, you must have a purpose, and I cannot kill what has a purpose.

One day, as the people moved inside the field, such a peculiar one, a man shouted, and the tree felt an enormous weight on one of her branches. But it was dark and impossible to see.

The crowd stayed awhile. Then, one by one, people walked back down the dirt road; and soon, in the early morning hours, the tree was alone. I don't quite understand, thought the tree, but with all the people, all of their cheering and laughing, it must have been important. It must have been my purpose.

It wasn't until the next morning, when a vulture circled above in the grey sky, that the tree noticed the man hanging limp from her branch. No! screamed the tree. She shook her branches, trying to free the man form the rope attached to his neck, but it was too late. The man had been dead for hours. He was a black man and looked like what was left of an animal after a predator feasts on its flesh. His white shirt and dark pants were torn, revealing deep cuts on his legs and chest. Dry, crusted blood was on his wrists and ankles, which were bound tightly with a piece of wire. One of his eyes was swollen open and festering, and his face was no longer human.

What have I done? cried the tree. What have I done? All I ever wanted was a purpose, and now I see I've found it. I am the killing tree. When the farmer ran across his field, a large potato sack in hand to retrieve the body of the dead man, the tree was still crying in the wind.

Weeks passed. Those traveling the little dirt road into town no longer stopped to admire the tree. They only said, their voices low, "It happened here. They chose this tree." Then the people would quickly move on. But it was just as well, for the tree had lost all the life in her. Her branches, now leafless, sagged low to the ground. Her bark peeled away and her roots shriveled.

The day the woman came, it was spring, and the earth, the trees, the animals were just beginning the awakening. The woman moved slowly, each step she took in pain.

"You will recognize it," they had told her, and she did. It was the only tree on the road, but even if there had been a thousand more she would have known it. The woman took a deep breath and knelt down. Her brown hands placed a bouquet of wildflowers at the base of the tree. The tree didn't notice the woman until she said softly.

"You were just too good a man, John, too good a father, too good a husband, to die this way." The woman's words awoke the tree from her state of hope lost, and she listened.

"I've asked myself over and again, why? So many times a thousand times a day, but no answer comes. You weren't the one who killed that white man. You weren't the one, but it didn't matter. The only thing that mattered was you were black and were walking on the road that night." The woman's voice had become angry.

Now the tree realized who the woman was, and she wished the woman would go. She brought with her too much of the night the tree wished to forget. But the woman, almost hysterical with grief, continued.

"To have what was keeping you going from day to day, your reason for living, taken in a single night." Yes, thought the tree, your hope, your purpose for living, stolen. I can understand, I think. I am sorry, said the tree. I am so sorry, but of course the woman could not hear her. Then, the tree, using the little strength she had left, stretched out her branch, the same branch form which the man had hung, and
caught the tears of the woman in the only leaf she had. And in that touch, something stirred within that tree, and the woman felt it too.

"You're such a sad tree," said the woman, as if seeing the tree for the first time. "Perhaps," she said softly, "we can be sad together. We both, I think, have had something taken from us that can never be returned.

And with that, the woman slumped to the ground, and she rested her tired body against the trunk of the tree. They would cry together.

**SOUL SEARCHING AND SANCTUARY**

**AT THE SORROWFUL MOTHER SHRINE**

TYLER LOWRY

Heading home
on the way through
nowhere we turn
off, drawn by light
and the promise
of eternity. Almost
midnight and the shrine
is lonesome, save
the wildlife
and the trinity, thick
in the darkness. Less
solemn than sincere
we chase stained
glass and cicadas between
crumbling Virgins Mary,
losing ourselves in the dark
and grinning madly
to keep the spirits at bay. Motivated
by starlight and steps in the darkness,
we return to the road,
fortified, and hopeful
for the promise of eternity.
IN THE WILD
REBECCA GURNEY

Hidden from scanning eyes, a wild pheasant
lingers in shady underbrush and children
scream feigned attacks, "I'll cream
you, You rotten skunk." Flying with a barrage of pretend fire
they wield broken dogwood sticks,
and retreat from an onslaught of mud-cloth pelts.

With whips of leafy twine fashioned as a trapper's pelt
they play in the uppermost limbs, a dark cool pheasant-
tenement. The crackle of sticks
breaking underfoot launches secretive children
into the lower foliage like smoldering embers, a scattered fire.
Breath flows through tiny lungs like milk thickening into cream.

Strawberries and whipped cream
in their mothers' refrigerators are forgotten, as they pelt
each other with pebbles and insults warped into fire.
Frightened, a pheasant
recoils, removing itself from bellicose children's
warlike yawps and carols of stones and sticks.

In a pool of mud, one boy's foot sticks,
losing his left cream-colored sneaker. He wages a tribal attack on other children
consumed in play. Their heads become like the pelts
of dust-coated pheasants,
thick with grime. Rounds of cinnamon "fire"
candy are fired—
though layered with dirt and lint so it sticks
to their front jeans pockets. Fearful of the pheasant-
like squawk of overbearing mothers, who sit indoors with cream
and sugared coffee. The pelts
of suburban life carpet the cages where they keep these children.

At dusk, musty children
rage against parental intervention, their bodies on fire.
They refuse to cling to their parents' coarse pelts.
The warmth chafes, pricks, impales, and sticks
as their mothers smother them with cream
kisses and plump round bodies like brown pheasants.

HOME FROM COLLEGE
REGAN LEE

Awake
in the dark. This is my third Christmas back and
here I am again lying between
these familiar sheets. Just beyond
the stillness of my bedroom are
your footsteps reminding me of the unconditional warmth
you provide. I wish I could still
see tentacles sweep from under my bed or
hear bloody fangs grind against each other. I wish
I could still cower under five suffocating layers of blankets,
afraid to expose my bare feet to that slithering fiend that hides
behind my dresser. Then I could cry out a single word:
Mom and as always,
you'd answer.
PICTASSO'S KITCHEN
FAITH HOPLER

Jessica Hayes swung her blonde hair
on the corner of West 10th,
as the dim bells fell towards evening
and children walked towards home
in the bright shade of the campus trees.
But I was all blue eyes and heavy bangs,
small on the afternoon steps,
warm in the reign of my mirthful mother's
newfound child kingdom.
We watched the garbage truck spit out men
in dirty pants and yellow gloves
and I asked what would happen
if I was swallowed up inside it.
You'd be smashed she said,
as we laughed into the light,
and she pressed her cheek to my
precocious hair -
she was warm and blue, breathless
in the sweet peace of her reign,
like pictures that I had yet to see,
unconsciously binding her with others,
the blue folds falling to her feet,
Madonna-like,
lapping her child tight
as she plays in endless yellow moments
in gold light
upon the level sidewalk.

To own the pictures, to watch from those afternoon steps
is to break now my breastbone with
a grief I did not know I possessed,
willing children I see only in words
to sit on the steps with me,
to take the school bus back to milk, cookies, and naptime,
to burnt sienna, tumbleweed, and classic razz-ma-tazz.
Still the picture shows the harsh light of
love in a stubbled man, as he shoots his girlfriend
waiting for the bus,
shoots until they are innocent as vampires
and the mother falls
to a one-eyed crumple of grey
and a half-handed clutch of a child
into the fractured fold of blue,
as his world is splintered
and a floating face of writhing agony
thrusts itself before the yellow light -
casts a shadow
that I wish I could wipe away
as I hear again
and again
Did you know?
Did you hear?
Did you see the woman in blue
with her cheek against his hair?
And I want to wash the blood that runs
to my sidewalk and puddles around
a child playing house in Picasso's kitchen.
The friends I used to have, all the ones I stranded in Weirton, West Virginia, because I knew I'd never go back there again, started a club to fight the loneliness, the boredom and monotony. They meet in the back room of the bowling alley, and over the sharp rumble of pins make up songs, secret handshakes, and rites of initiation. Some are very young, whose faces I don't remember, but whose moon boots spot snow climbing the snow blower blown mountain in the parking lot of Oxford Elementary, back in Cleveland Heights where I grew up. Many are eighteen but should be in their twenties and drinking in bars on campuses across this country. Instead they're sipping Dr. Peppers and ogling the same tired boys and girls as they line up to miss their spares. My grandfather and Uncle Jeff should be at rest, but are also members, and always end up running lunch orders to the counter, because the dead must keep busy. Friendship is an easy loss, not like a wallet or a toothbrush, where you have only one. Friendship is an easy loss because it is only a concept, and concepts only exist in small rooms, places we invent and forget about and remember again as the thump of fingers on a keyboard jars the names loose. Jars them loose and they fall back into the puddle that builds under the slow drip of years.

Her name might be Frankie (it's someone unattractive), but she is the club's founding member. We, my father and brother and I, were coming home from Myrtle Beach, and in Weirton my father sprung for a room in the Holiday Inn Holodome — we're talking whirlpool, sauna, video games, weight room, indoor pool and shuffleboard. I was about thirteen, my brother eight, while the pool was just a puddle, the video games unplugged, the Holodome experience, maybe the huge Holiday Inn sign charging up to a brilliant green at night fell. "You're leaving tomorrow but this is where I'll be for a long time. I don't mind, though, I like it here. Will you miss me?"

I'm sure I said that I would, I would have said anything at that point, and later, behind the sauna, with her brothers, sisters, and younger cousins snooping around the corner, giggling, what I had wanted so single-mindedly, that first earned, however modest, female caress, I received. My father woke my brother and me early the next morning, and while the pool was just a puddle, the video games unplugged, we snuck out, and back across the Ohio border.

If I went back, which I won't, but if I did, I know that Frankie would still be fifteen, would still be the same tired boys and girls they're more than a little angry, because the dead must keep busy. Friendship is an easy loss, not how you feel about someone but how they feel about you. Friendship is easy to falsify in return, but those are the ones we forget about and strand with scorecards on hard plastic chairs. Those are the ones that circulate. They join clubs and 12-step groups.

"This is where I'm from," Frankie said, as together we stared out over Weirton from her parents' rented room, and even though I don't remember her exact words, I remember clearly that she was somber. "We go to the movies there, and up that big road is the bowling alley." I recall nothing else of the city except the huge Holiday Inn sign charging up to a brilliant green as night fell. "You're leaving tomorrow but this is where I'll be for a long time. I don't mind, though, I like it here. Will you miss me?"

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wearing her wet hair in common, everyday rubber bands, and that I would cringe with guilt the moment I laid my eyes on her. The friends I used to have, who used to have me, slip further away each year. Or each year I drive further and further away from Weirton. Frankie, between club meetings, bowls on Lane One with Grandpa Leo, Mike Young, who was supposed to go Spelman but ended up, thanks to me, in West Virginia, and that poor little boy who died in second grade, at whose name I couldn’t even hazard a guess. Each one has a story I’ve forgotten, and some nearly hate me for the cowardly way I’ve chained them to time, acne, bad clothes, and death, for losing my address book, for obeying my penis, for fearing death, for writing poetry, and for only caring enough to lament, and type, and then stop and go to bed.

ASTRONAUT
RICHARD A. LUCAS

Gazing to the heavens,
He looks through the sky,
Beyond the stars into the infinite.
He sees a reflection of himself.
He wishes he was there,
Beyond the universe.

He will begin building
The ship shortly.
He runs into the garage to see
The things he will use to make it.
Before he begins, his mother calls,
It is dinnertime.
Maybe tomorrow.

Running home after school
He gets the wooden ladder,
The leaf blower to propel it.
A rusty old lawn chair,
And his jumping rope to attach it.
Puts on his bicycle helmet,
The countdown begins.

Finally, he takes off.
It is a long journey,
And it should take him many Light years to make.
But he makes it
In only one afternoon.
MUIR WOODS
REBECCA GURNEY

Smiling victorious soldiers.
In this trapse through Muir Woods
we conquer each redwood
as if it were our own
invention. With smug pride
we proclaim our innate
kinship to every stretch of sinuous bark.

Somehow, the asphalt artifice
beneath our feet walks along
unnoticed. Roots occasionally
disrupt the path, asserting
thousand-year-old bulging knuckles,
certain to be thumbed down by a
few more inches of pavement.

We marvel at their extremity
and majesty with telephoto panoramic
lenses. We do not wonder that
we have traveled hours, paid admission, and
shared these stalky souls with
the minivanned masses and the aroma of
french fries from the park concession.

CIGARETTE DUST
ADAM LONG

broken-in skin, you look like a bruise,
in faded black tee and deep denim blues.
single file thoughts of secondhand truth,
face value Esther outlining Ruth.
seeing it beauty, wanting it lust,
ashes to ashes and cigarette dust.
making up love to mess up your bed,
you button your lip or pierce it instead.
crisscross your chest in halfhearted prayer,
and mock the God who doesn’t live there.

CHRONOLOGY OF SKIN
JOHANNAH HANEY

I imagine that your skin was
Once honeymoon-silk —
Like paperwhites,
the Pulpy bract of amaryllis.

Hands-in-drizzling-dirt make your blackened fingernails
the bee that plays cello in that
unidentified flower that’s so much like crepe de chine.
Later, bleach and a zinc tub replace the drowsy reverie.

So does the half-mile to the water well
(not to be mistaken for a wishing well)
and the half-mile back for bath water that will be heated
by burning the weeks’ trash.

But, in stolen moments over tea and your letters,
your skin re-attaches to bone and melts like lipstick in the sun.
The back kitchen disappears and your
Madonna & Child catches the light like it used to.
My fourteenth Thanksgiving. We ate on paper plates, sitting on the floor around the television in my grandparents' living room because my grandpa was dying in the next room. Big, old house -- sun porch - my grandpa was lying in a hospital bed on the sun porch off the living room. Why did I have my violin with me? Maybe that morning my dad had said, "Your grandpa would like that." Grandpa never called himself grandpa. He always said "granddad." The little things about him amaze me so much more now than they did before ... So sometime on the day before my fourteenth Thanksgiving I got out my violin and carried it to the sun porch. The tumor was so large by that time that Grandpa didn't recognize anybody. Grandma, maybe. But he really wasn't there ... I began playing Christmas carols - how did I feel then? Looking back, it seems as though I should have been traumatized, but it wasn't like that. Maybe I was numb. My grandpa never sang -- he always kind of quiet. Not that he never spoke -- we had so many long conversations -- but he spoke quietly. He didn't laugh out loud -- he moved slowly, and although he had that bad hip I think he had probably always moved slowly, on principle. I don't think he minded the leaping, running types -- it just wasn't his style. (The story about Aunt Judy driving, the cigarettes on the fridge...) But I was playing "Up on the Housetop" on the porch on Thanksgiving beside the hospital bed -- very white, the kind that sits up and reclines when you turn the crank - my dad was sitting there -- I remember sunlight, but I could have put it there just now - and Grandpa started to sing along, in the middle - Where had he been storing the words all those years? He wasn't clear, just sort of mumbling - I had never heard him sing! Oh, I had; he sang "Happy Birthday to Me" before blowing out the candles on his birthday cake last year. And I can see him swing his hand in time to the tune -- but I could have invented that memory, too. I must have wanted to scream! My wise, wonderful, good, reliable grandfather - reduced to a two-year-old. That part of him must have been living all that time, just buried so deeply under 83 layers that it was easy to forget that my grandpa hadn't always been a grandpa, or even a father...he smiled then, in my mind's eye tonight I see him smiling. But I don't remember wanting to scream -- that wasn't until later -- I only remember feeling that I was too young for this, like it was some R-rated movie that the grown-ups shouldn't let me watch until I was older, more mature. I looked to my father to shelter me, unaware -- not realizing that this was his father, who had always sheltered my dad. And for once in his life my dad almost forgot me. He was smiling -- I remember this perfectly - from wherever he was, when he said, "See, Grandpa likes that." And there were tears in his eyes as he said it.
WHILE YOU WERE AWAY IN CHARLESTON
CHINH DO

For Michelle Teleron
The morning moon yawned
But the snowslept soundly
atop the floor and roof.
Flake hugging flake
In the nude of darkness
And it hurt—
To make the first prints
And not have you follow
placing your small boot inside my prints,
saving the beauty of the first snow,

Breathing in mucous—
from flared-red nostrils
laughing unbalanced,
still smiling,
knowing we're
saving the beauty of the first snow,

Feeling the crunch beneath my boot,
perfect cookie-cutter pattern pushing snow in place,
and the next step would struggle,
Drugging alabaster cookie dough
clumped atop the heel print,
I'm taking 3 Giant Ant Frog steps
And One Ball o' rina!
saving the beauty of the first snow

-Woah back at absence.

MEMORY
ADINA ROLLINS

why have i climbed twenty feet
to stand on this diving board that
sinks because of my weight
to kill myself? i could have jumped in front of
a train.

chlorine stings my eyes so it is hard
to see my teacher a brown speck
far away waving her arms.
how can a speck say she is god and will
catch me?

my skin is wet and rubbery
my raisin-fingers clasp my shoulders
i shiver
my teeth chatter
my throat is dry and there is
chlorine-paste in my mouth
my head is throbbing and it feels
like i have a large water balloon for a brain.

i'm going to die in this ugly pink
bathing suit
that is plastered to my frigid skin
my mom will feel guilty, won't she
when she sees my dead water-washed body
broken in pieces
on the side of the pool and thinks
why didn't i let her buy the blue one.

-I soar like an eagle down and light
as a seagull's feather
to a quiet shore and float on the waves
toward the dusk-dawn light in the distance
the water is sharp, how can liquid
feel like a thousand razor blades piercing
the skin.
my legs and arms jerk until my head
shoots out of the water
i gasp my heart is in my head but
i am not dead
and i am remembering floating down
on a dream until i touch my throbbing nose.

my teacher wonders what to do about
the drops of blood in the water.
UNTITLED
JOELLEN REINECK

SAIN OR INSANE
MARIA SAAVEDRA

STEPHAN PENTAK’S LANDSCAPE
SHANNON MICHAEL ORTIZ
Out of work dancers
are never seen waking up.
Servants and admirers peel their bananas
and go away.
Retired dancers are deflowered by invalids,
consider suicide,
leak smoke through teeth
and fall asleep on point.
They cannot sing, recite life
and open their arms
like fading white windows.
The breeze enters the room masked by a dancer's poise.

A retired dancer misses her spine
and does everything weakly but smile.
Painters and writers sip conversation
around the wicker table in the yard.
She sits inside on the divan
reminded of human emotion from whatever variegated light filters
through the blinds and is choreographed by the furniture.

Every dancer smiles immunity.
PASSING TIME
CAROLINE HUDAK

Outside the window, the sky is iron-gray and the rain falls in silvery sheets
and I know that I can not leave, so for now, I decide to wait.
I wait for the day I bury my parents, when I wipe their bodies and faces
and give them up to the earth to keep them.
I wait for a good man and worry while I wait that the ones I left are as
good as they get.
I wait for babies, for my belly to swell and my breasts to fill and my skin to stretch
as lovely as old-fashioned lace.
I wait in line at the grocery store, cradling my milk, knowing I should be waiting
somewhere else.
I wait for the time I look in the mirror and see my mother's legs, blue-green veins
spinning their fine webs.
I wait for love and for him to call, but for both, I am used to waiting.
I wait for disease, or just time, to rip through my body or to hide quietly
in my heart or at the base of my spine.
I wait for children to leave me, to feel my womb close, for my body to forget time
and to hear the wind chimes and silence from my bed.
And still I wait for the rain to beat out the words, one word, a name,
and to know I can continue to wait.

CANNIBAL SCHMANIBAL
DAVID HEATON

Free food who could pass that up? I didn't know it was wrong. It was free, come one, so
o.k. so it was a little bloody and I guess you could say that's barbaric, but you can eat
chicken right off the bone too. How was I supposed to know it wasn't F.D.A approved?
The tomatoes in grandma's vegetable garden aren't either. Listen, just because I ate a
little human flesh doesn't mean I'm a monster. I didn't get thirds. I just had two plate
fuls and I didn't even know what it was the first time. It didn't really taste like chicken.
It had it's own flavor. It wasn't too bad. Actually, it was damn good, but I didn't really
like it after I found out it was my neighbor, although, that boy was always running
through my yard. And the neighborhood just seems like a better place now that he's gone.
Not to mention that, I feel better, healthier than I've felt in years after eating the little
rascal but, I mean cannibalism is wrong, ya know? The world is getting a little crowded
though and Jesus did do all that talkin' about eating flesh and drinkin' blood, not that I'm
for it or anything. I'm a grandfather for god sakes. I resisted sinking my teeth into my
own kids but, yours look tasty. Just kidding, I'm just kidding. You people these days get
so upset. You've just got no sense of humor but, I guess I'm old fashioned. It's not
like I killed them, it was a picnic, a barbecue, who can resist the smell of barbecue, who can
resist the smell of barbecue? I don't know about you people these days, judging me at the
drop of a hat. I'll bet you've never even tried it. You whiny kids, you're afraid to try
anything new. Well I feel great, and I don't care what you think. I am not a criminal or a
lunatic. I'm just an old man, who ate some people.
HEARTBEATS
AIMEE E. PUGLIESE

The feel of your heartbeat on my thighs haunts me still, though never in the crowded daylight—only in the dark sterility of my nightsheets. But only when the sheets are not tangled about me, when the white cloth lays flat, barely there above my slightly spread legs, can my mind feel what my body no longer does. So intense, however, is this memory, that my blood rushes to that spot seared by heartbeats, joining mind and body, and I must contract my middle so that sudden moans will not escape to be heard. My head pushes deeply, roughly into my pillow, and my legs spread wider to be filled by a space of sheets that is far from hollow. A blood-filled weight settles there and I arch, silently begging it to move. Slowly it pushes, rushing and retreating with every calculated flex of muscle and memory. My eyes open and close at every pulse, with no fear of visual reality intruding—for my mind’s eye sees what the naked cannot. 

The fibers of the sheets begin to burn and prick my skin. My muscles contract and retreat of their own rapid accord, implying intensity, heat, hardness, the unconscionousness of fraudulent sensual contact. My fingers curl beside me and my head tosses, but my thighs are anchored too wide, bent positions. Only where they meet is there movement as quick as my mind, as my blood, as the heartbeats, a movement so quick and wild, yet savagely rhythmic—

in a place so physically small.
Gradually, the weight spreads the length of my body, steadying disobedient muscles, as numbness to a fresh wound. Holistic stillness reigns for a brief instant, and naked reality returns in a thousand pieces. The quickness of my heartbeat scares me so that I try to gain control of my labored, loud breathing. Bringing my aching, stiff thighs back together, I blush for a second time to think that my noisy bed may have been heard under the pressure of so much.

Did they? Do they know? Could you imagine? With sheets now tangled about me I turn away to my side without a trace of glow after-at once in sham, but then in anger at the self-inflicted dew that replaces the heartbeat.
UNTITLED
KATHERINE KUNZ

we traveled and traveled
by car and by tent
by train and by foot
in the rainy, sandy, salty
youth of the georgia coast
days passed on and we passed on
through the lentil soup
and raisins
piled in yogurt
only the best, the cheapest,
the most adventurous
we slept in gazebos
we strummed savannah
we glimpsed submarines
until the jagged line of the map
faded
and the water, carving a new outline,
touched our toes
it was the beach,
the wide ocean
calling our limitless, billowing spirits
it was the beach of tourists
and not of adventurers,
but we noticed little and continued our walk
day or night, warm and cold
the sky and the water remained,
filling with changing shapes
until they could no longer wait to express
their emotions
as we expressed ours
so we took notice
as even the footprints faded
and ran into the turning surf

the water dotting our bare shoulders
as rain dotted the naked waves
swimming and singing and spinning
and splashing
we accepted
the cold water coursing over and through
the impressions of our bodies
only the boundary of skin,
the boundary of space
until the sun returns to catch a glimpse of us
we will float, unbeknownst, on the adventure,
on the spirit of travel,
of making things be

EXPATRIATE AS CONFUSED TOURIST
ISAAC ELDREDGE

first time traveler
without notes
or
map and legend
stumbles
off
the plane
drunk
unshaven
and in need of rest

can you show me to the Spanish girls?
he says
to the first person who
appears non-threatening
hoping
English
is one of his stronger wisdoms
they point in the direction
of
the
exit
of
the aeroport
“right through those doors”
the sign behind his eyelids beacons

thumbing through a translation guide
he just wants a taxi
mal dito sea!
college was rough
but this Spain
is a monster
get him a taxi por favor
get him to the beach
a soda
anything
just get him out of this airport

and his chariot comes
whisks him away
down the first highway
he has been on
that wasn’t
AMERICAN MADE
this makes him smile
because it is the beginning of the end
because he is lost
and his ticket was a one way
GUAVA
SHANNON MICHAEL ORTIZ
FIRST PLACE KUHN AWARD WINNER

HER EULOGY
HENRIKKI PRIYANA TUOVINEN

CAUSE OF DEATH - TOO FAB
DANIEL SORBELLO
I read *Leaves of Grass* to Aunt Janie as she blooms to her dying. The air certainly isn't tongue-tied in the front room of her Brooklyn flat, but the closed window puts the noises far away. Chalked sun sifts through the film of the window veil. The monotony of the words adds lethargy to the plastic bag humidity.

It's August. Iced tea sweetens the salt on my upper lip. I resist a craving to loosen the blanket that is tucked around her body because she keeps asking for hot tea, even though there is always a fresh cup at her side. Uncle Joe usually sips at them. It makes her seem less sick.

Aunt Janie thinks I'm Lillian. "Lilly," she says to me, "Where have you been?" All I can think of to say is, "I've missed you, Janie," and keep reading. It's true I look like Lillian.

"Lilly," she says to me, "Where have you been?"
All I can think of to say is, "I've missed you, Janie," and keep reading. It's true I look like Lillian.
She hasn't been back to Brooklyn in years. I've never met her, but I saw a picture of her once, She was in a gun powder blue apron, Against the same wood paneling that is in the living room now. I remember thinking I didn't recognize that dress Or why my hair was in that painstaking do.

I must have paused at this thought because Aunt Janie looked up at me with sixty-six year old eyes. "Lilly, keep reading."
"Sure thing Aunt Janie," and I keep on reading.

**I'M SORRY.**
**FAITH HOPLER**

I stole your mouth last night and put it in a poem—not this one—another one. I couldn't remember how your cheek curved where your eyes should be, and nothing of your voice was left rewound for me to hear. I have never touched your hand, and the bend of your arm—not the elbow or the shoulder, but the hollow of its middle, you know, where the crook of my neck would rest—it has never invited me. The back of your neck is not mine to keep, nor even the top of your head. But the corner of your mouth remembered me—in your empty face there is just one pocket of mouth that belongs to me. So I took it. I hope you will forgive me. It was mine to not forget.
Dear Janet—

This evening in the sporting goods department I sold a fishing license
To a man with a Slav last name.

I thought of Grampa Urbis
And the fruited wine he gave us on the sly
When we worked as coat check girls
For the St. Vitus Christmas dance.

I was sorry when he died; leaving Leona
With only your archaic father to keep her company
While you, wandering one, break colts
And haul tack in the West.

I sold this man a fishing license today,
And he corrected the way I say
I gotus to Vetus.

Write soon.

Standing with me at the counter,
He too remembers the smell of a gymnasium
Trimmed in evergreen boughs, wound through
With twinkle lights that glinted
In the spectacles of men and women
Old enough to have been married
In that shrinking parish; glinted in
Four hundred eyes as they danced
To the only real polkas that I’ve ever seen.

I sold this man a fishing license today,
And he corrected the way I say
Igntus to Vetus.

Write soon.

The sun was shining on the grass, and the sweat in my underarm pits was beginning to stain my new dress. I heard the wooden door on the porch swing open and slam. Constance Morseworth was coming for me. I hugged my legs and listened to her shout for me.

"Alice! Alice, where are you?! Don't you dare do this to me!"

She stomped around the yard in her blue and white checkered house-dress as I peeked out of the bushes. I watched her step into one of the tiny piles of dog shit that littered the year.

"Goddammit! Get your ass out where I can see you!"

I didn’t say anything. I wasn’t going to another beauty pageant. I had just turned thirteen and I knew I was starting to become a man.

"I want you to try on this yellow dress next," she said, reaching through the sharp thistles to grab my shoulder.

I leapt up and out, escaping her grip. She grabbed at me like a clumsy bear.

"Daquiri-swilling b.ag," I whispered to myself as she chased me in circles. I knew that if my wee hollow legs would give out, I’d be stuffed into another frilly or lacy little girl number, forced on a plane to New York, and paraded before even more middle-aged perverts with notepads and sweaty palms.

But I did owe Constance. Until I was seven, I was raised by a group of nuns in a terrible orphanage. We were beat for looking up when they said, "Down," meals were few and far between, and worst of all, we were always sick. Money rarely filtered down to the orphanage, so we suffered. That all changed when Constance Morseworth showed up one day with her green plastic purse. She walked over to me and said, "You've got a face."

She took me home and after I was feeling better and getting fatter, she told me the rules.

"Your name is now Alice. If I give you something to wear, wear it. Every once and awhile, we'll go upstate and you'll do a beauty pageant. If you're good, I won't make you go to school."

That's all she said, and that's all I needed to hear. I didn't think it mattered. It sounded easy. I just had to watch t.v. all day and Constance would ask me to play dress-up once a month.

I didn't know that Constance wasn't right in the head.

I ended up dressing in skirts and make-up every day, and she made me grow my naturally blonde hair out. I saw pictures of a young woman all over Constance's pink and cluttered house. I'd ask her if it was her daughter, but she'd only say, "You're my daughter."

I always did what she asked. We won pageant after pageant. Constance had told me once that she had been a big studio make-up artist out in Hollywood in the '70s, so she could always make me look any way she wanted. She had also told me that she once had a torrid affair with a major movie star. Since
Constance was cross-eyed, grotesquely fat, and taller than most doorways. I either thought the "star" in question was Danny DeVito or that she had made the whole thing up. It wasn't working anymore, though. We were winning fewer pageants as I grew broader and more masculine. We got lucky at the last state competition and won the title. With it came a chance to compete at a national pageant in the Big Apple. Constance was ecstatic. I was miserable.

"Gotcha'!," she shouted as she grabbed my thin arm. I thought it was over, but I saw Sponger relieving his bowels in the sun-bleached dirt. Despite Constance's strength, I steered her towards Sponger's fresh pile of delight, jumped in it, and pulled her down with me.

"You little fucker!" she pulled me up by my pig-taJs and slapped me in the bead.

After we showered and got into new clothes, we were on a plane for New York City. I remember looking down and seeing the Statue of Liberty. I imagined flinging myself out of the strangling environment of first class and impaling myself on her majesty's torch. I imagined my blood drenching her damned concrete dress.

Getting off the plane at JFK International Airport, I felt the contents of my stomach liquefy. I looked up at Constance's beaming face with my own frowning one.


We maneuvered our way through the terminal. I was sure everyone was staring at the little boy in the dress.

"Queer," I heard some older boy say to me as we passed. "Retard," I returned but I knew I was doomed.

Before the pageant, I locked myself in the bathroom. 'Tm sick!" I yelled.

Constance ran down the hall, got a fire ax, and chopped the bathroom door down. She smiled at me.

"Don't piss with me precious," she said.

At the pageant, I stood in the back with a flock of skinny girls. We were all waiting for our names to be called. We could hear Valerie Harper asking the same questions over and over: "Who's your favorite actress?", "What kind of woman do you want to be when you grow up?", "How do you feel about chloroflorocarbons?"

"Our next candidate in this year's 'Daisy May Little Miss Perfect Pageant' is a wonderful lass from the shores of Maine, Miss Alice Morseworth!" the announcer said.

The crowd cheered. I shit my once-pristine panties.

"Over here, kid," I heard Valerie whisper.

I walked towards an "X" on the floor of the stage. I voice: debilitated by the squeaks and squawks of puberty. The audience applauded loudly. Constance and I knew the ropes when it came to these pageants. Everyone is so full of crap it stinks.

I found my way off the stage and into the back. Then it happened. The room was filled with girls; naked girls, girls in bras, and girls in panties. Yes, lots of girls. And I was a boy, a boy in a dress. A boy in a dress becoming aroused. A boy in a dress becoming aroused and having to go on stage in very constricting tights.

I pulled the outfit on. I tried to the obvious bulge. Maybe they won't see it, I thought. I knew better. I waited through the names for my turn, my bulge not going away at all.

"...Francesca... Cassie... Veronica... Cherish... Chastity... Alice!"

I walked onto the stage for the last time. I felt the cameras focus in on me and spit my image on the huge video screens surrounding the auditorium. The crowd was silent. From the back I could hear applause. It was Constance.

"Whoooo! Way to go Alice!" she yelled.

We went home the next morning, and I never had to do another pageant again.

**WATERCOLOR SMILE**

**ADAM LONG**

I kiss your earthen mouth
And I taste the passion you refuse to recognize,
Follow your seamless symmetry
So light
And made all of glass
Stained with silent stories of innocent need,
And I am made aware-
The burdens I endure contain
Nothing
Of your form.
But my hands cannot sustain your wanting,
It is a paint too thin for the canvass,
A mixture of yes and no
That traces the path of least resistance.
So I will decide-
And brush away your watercolor smile,
Blend it deep
Within the background,
And find new paint to cover that space
And the hazel of your eyes.
THAT LITTLE WOUND
HENRIIKI PRIYANA TOUVINEN

SELF-PORTRAIT
JEFFREY MATHIAS
Time slipped silently from my bed,
two past three, waiting for a dawn that cannot come
and all I can smell is crumbling dreams.
They feel like sand funneling through my fingers,
exploding on the floor like mercury
while the clock dances on the nightstand screaming,
"Je me deteste, je me deteste, je me deteste!!"
I realize I understand life better when it's making no sense.
Like Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters
at the Billy Graham Civic Center,
November 22, 1997,
as they introduced a dream
I thought he had died.
But I wasn't thinking.
No, Puck wouldn't do that anymore.
The sweet smelling women of mirth
had warned him in mournful tones
just what that could do to a man.
So I sit walled away in this room,
killing the time between me and what I fear most,
and sometimes, what time, this time,
life feels like an infomercial,
or a cigarette to those who never smoke,
who I can hear in the next room,
"betch ya came back fer sum a Doc Neptune's delicious elixir,
ain't that right?"
but I didn't
but I am
and the bottle winks once
before I float away
and above and
beyond all those things
that were almost there
poking me with pins
shattering this fragile night.

I've wanted to be you since
I was three. Ruggedly handsome-
the color of jerky-tobacco juice
dribbling down-
guns molded to broad hips, spurs
gripping the ground-as if frightened by you.

Oh, I was mean, doing what I thought
you'd do - throwing dirt in pools, riding
my "horse" through gardens, spitting
like a fountain. My "padnuhs"
chose names like Curly and Shorty,
but I was The Kid-
no one could tell me different.
I lost your picture so long ago-
yet I still carry invisible guns,
and fight my life,
my spurs scared to leave the hard
ground of Ohio.
COLOR OF MEMORY
CAROLINE HUDAK

I lie in the tall grass listening to the approaching churn of the train beside a boy with red-brown skin. He is shirtless, tan and smooth as worn leather, with long hair falling over a high forehead, black shiny raven feathers. On our backs, we watch the sky and say nothing, don't touch. But I sense his hand only an atom away. The wind blows across my bare white belly and I think that if I move only an inch, we'll sink into each other, into the soft soil, wrapped in Queen Ann's Lace. With my eye, I try to peel away his layers, to get at the alabaster core where the bone breaks brittle and the heart bleeds red like mine. The hard sound of his name rolls off my mind in time with the beating in the flat expanse of my chest. I wait for him to move, to float or run away, but we only lie in the tall grass, listening, and I reach my hand to touch the sky.

INSOMNIA
NORA EDWARDS

Lying in my strange room thinking about Janis Joplin and death and heroin. And I suppose Crystal might have crossed my mind. Watching ladybugs— which petrify me— circle my light bulb like it was an interchange.

I'm wondering why I am here, in bed, in a strange room. Rather than home in my riverbed. The windows are too small here too tight and unfamiliar (much like the rest of the house) to let any real light shine through. Not that the view is anything to brag about though; nothing but the neighbors driveway. Not my woods with rivers running through. Rivers washing away the scum and the limestone and the bodies of all the weakest ladybugs.
WILLY WAR ON CENTRAL AVE.
JOSHUA BUTTS

Quick on a Bob Frost night—
in the sideyard of
my grandmother's
country city limit—
pickletown—home.

The snow coalesces all
the proper objects:
tree, student chair, clothesline,
chicken coop, and junk piled
on walled old shelter house.

Things build around
The street light bathes
the property with stillness—
the house seems a little warmer,
and the dog
turds
stand out in steamy
clumps—
brown on white,
likemudslushy

slungh
oncurbsidesnow.

The scarcity of events
in the night
make the dogs bark
louder, punctually, stark, offbeat.
Take back to that hay garden
in
the summer—
when the neighbors drive
3 cars
by the
front garden
through the
dirtrockstuffed
driveway loop
to gawk—
at Willy War
walking with
a sickle

taking practice strokes
at the
corners

Their interior is plush—stately;

his exterior is mud dabbed stung
—bleached from the sun—
burnt
unbathed
and hairy—
and naked,
save for a pair of flip-flops
and a Buddha—
—sumo thong.
Willy weighs in
around
89 lbs. in this get-
up.

Unviolent.
Quiet.

His hay garden is
30 ft. x 30 ft.—
before he rounds
the
corners.
(things less apt to fall down.)
How Do I See Myself?
Suelen Marie Brown

Fists clenched,
pounding at my thighs.
Arms straight and soldier-like,
at my sides.
My gaze slowly drifts over and over the ground,
I notice little things:
how the sidewalk doesn’t line up,
textures.
My chin,
consistently over-correcting and jutting my face up again,
eyes that are exhausted,
from frantic jerking side to side,
searching for a pointed finger or a laughing face:
something I know.
The pads of my feet,
hardened and callused from frenzied walk to be out of their gaze.
Knuckles swollen from nervous cracks.
Thick glasses slide down a pudged nose.
A canyon between my eyes on a too-wide forehead.
Soft hair,
stringy and bouncing into my reddened eyes in unison with my heavy,
swaddling walk.
Dark circles,
framing the blue.
My mouth,
is pursed tightly in a learned quietness.
Duck ridiculing me as I pass by.
I listen to my thick thighs
swoosh together,
and I haul my slipping bag up on my rounded shoulders again.
I emerge from behind two parked cars.
Yearning
to be hit.
TYARI
MAANIK SINGH CHAUHAN

MASCULINE BACK
ELIZABETH ATZBERGER
CONTRIBUTORS

CHINH DO
My family and I came to the United States in 1975 as refugees from Vietnam. My childhood experiences provide most details for my writing and poetry.

ISAAC ELDRIDGE
Isaac Eldridge is a sophomore planning to major in journalism. He has just started writing poetry, again, after getting over his fears that poetry meant nothing.

ADAM GRAY
Tired of the dating game? SWM S/DF with Bi-tendencies for S&M, movies, and good times: BYOB.

JEFF GROH
Jeff Groh was born May 25th 1976, which makes him 21. His friends and family find him arrogant, tiring, and confused. He finds himself where he fell asleep. He advocates not voting, eating meat, and abstinence till sobriety.

REBECCA GURNEY
Rebecca is a Women's Studies and English major who hopes to bring feminist (and all other) poetry out of academia and into the real world. More of her poetry can be found in the first three issues of the Columbus based literary 'zine, Retribution, where the real magic happens.

JOHANNAH HANEY
Johannah Haney is majoring in English and minoring in Irish folklore. She plans to study at University College, Dublin in Ireland for a semester and continue for Irish Studies in grad school at Boston College.

DAVID HEATON
David Heaton is from Springfield, Ohio. He spends most of his time in caves. Once he lit a dumpster on fire.

FAITH HOPLER
Faith wishes someday to earn the title of poet; but, for now, she is content to be a junior and an English major, which provides quite enough excitement in her life.

CAROLINE HUDAK
Caroline Hudak is a graduating senior. She is an English major and Women's Studies minor. Primarily a short story writer, she has just recently ventured into the wonderful world of poetry.

KATHERINE KUNZ
Katherine Kunz was born in Stuttgart, Germany eight minutes after her twin sister and grew up in various U.S. and German cities. She graduated this winter with a degree in international studies and is now teaching swimming and cooking classes! She hopes to continue to travel, write, dance, learn, and grow a great garden this season!

REGAN LEE
Regan Lee is a senior English major from the Chicago area. Because he is graduating soon, he would like to use this space to thank his friends and family for everything they've done.

KARI LOWREY
Slowly adapting to Ohio Life, Kari is looking forward to graduating "soon," on moving on into the world of the great establishment.

SHANNON ORTIZ
Shannon Ortiz paints. His mentor is Stephen Pentak. Shannon sleeps every other night. He enjoys karaoke.

ERIN RANDEL
I would like to thank the employees and regular customers of the Bethel Road K-Mart (#3365) for providing me with such rich material over the years.

TYLER LOWREY
Tyler Lowry is a Junior History major here on the eight year plan.

REGAN MANCZEG
Regan is a femme fatale who likes Dorothy Parker and the occasional good book. She is, you guessed it, an English major.

BEN MERRELL
Ben Merrell is a freshman gunslinger/English major from the jerkwater backlands & cranberry bogs of northwest New Jersey. He loves his mother, & your mother as well. He is available for family picnics or bachelorette parties, & can be reached at merrell.5@osu.edu.
ADINA ROLLINS
I am a first year engineering student from Iowa. I write poetry because, as Gwendolyn Brooks said it "Poetry is life distilled." My only ambitions in life are to be a teacher, poet, actress, engineer, politician, mother and diplomat.

LARRY (NICK) SMITH
I was born and raised in southern Ohio followed by four years in the Army. I am currently a Senior with hopes of attending graduate school. The main focus of my paintings is natural objects which usually catch my eye. Primarily objects are painted as they could lie on the ground.

STEPHEN WOODGEARD
Stephen Harry Woodgeard was born in Sugar Grove, Ohio instead of Libya, Cuba, or Norway. He’s never been happy with that fact so he lies to people. Stephen Harry Woodgeard likes lying to people so he writes stories while he studies history and pretends he is an R.A. in Siebert Hall.

PATRONS
Each year, Mosaic relies heavily upon the financial support of students, faculty, and friends to make everything possible. In addition to paying for printing the magazine, these donations allow Mosaic to hold various events such as poetry readings and the annual art show and unveiling ceremony. The editorial board of Mosaic would like to express sincere thanks to the following contributors for the 1997-98 academic year:

- The Ohio Union Activities Board,
- the University Honors Center,
- and Jeredith Merrin and the Poets of 763.

SUBMISSIONS
The editorial staff of the Mosaic encourages submission 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 submissions will not be returned. Original works of art are accepted, as well as slides 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 submissions in art and literature.

Send submissions to:

Mosaic Magazine
University Honors Center
220 West 12th Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43210

Deadline for submissions traditionally falls in mid-February, but is subject to change at the discretion of the editorial board.