

CORNFIELD

REVIEW

2006



# THE CORNFIELD REVIEW

A Literary Publication of The Ohio State University at Marion



*A beauty is not suddenly in a circle. It comes with rapture. A great deal of beauty is rapture. A circle is a necessity. Otherwise you would see no one. We each have our circle.*

—Gertrude Stein

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## PREFACE

LAUNCHED IN 1976, the *Cornfield Review* has turned thirty, a feat I had to endure myself a couple of years ago. Thirty is an odd age—one isn't exactly faced with the tired clichés associated with the mid-life crisis (sports cars and trophy wives), but one must finally let go of the excuse of youthful excess that accompanies every year beginning with a two. In short, thirty feels like the first year of real, bona-fide, no-training-wheels-allowed adulthood. It is a moment of Janus-like reflection, an opportunity to glance back at the past and contemplate the potential of the future. And so it goes with the *Cornfield Review*—it has certainly grown into a well-adjusted adult over the years under the direction of editors and faculty advisors like Jaquelyn Spangler, Stuart Lishan, the late David Citino, and others. We like to think that this issue fits in with the fine literary tradition established by issues past, and points to the promise of work yet to come.

A number of people are owed a debt of gratitude for not only understanding the importance of continuing the tradition of this publication, but acting on it as well. We would like to acknowledge the support, financial and otherwise, offered by the OSU-Marion administration, particularly Dean Greg Rose. We would also like to extend thanks to the English faculty of OSU-

Marion for their support and ideas. For his sage advise and impeccable institutional memory, special thanks goes to Stuart Lishan, a fine poet, professor, and sometimes-editor of this very publication. I would also personally like to express my very sincere appreciation for the editorial board of this edition, who took their charge very seriously as we muddled through a pile of submissions, discussed various layout options, and generally contemplated our collective existence in the universe of literary publications: Anthony Iacobucci, Tiffany Hord, Niel Burbury, Alyson Strickler, Erin Vought, Deanna Bachtell, Barbara Irwin, and Sarah Stahl. Thanks again to Anthony and Tiffany for staying with the project after Winter Quarter's "Literary Publishing" course was concluded—your efforts have led to a very fine product.

The *Cornfield Review* is published annually. The Editorial Board seeks quality poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction in addition to original artwork and photography. Submissions are accepted from students and faculty of OSU-Marion and Marion Technical College. For further details or queries, please send an email to [mccorkle.12@osu.edu](mailto:mccorkle.12@osu.edu).

—Ben McCorkle, Faculty Advisor



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## THE EMPTY BOX



I put inside its four brown walls, the dream within my heart.  
I swear that my friend confidence and I shall never part.  
I build my hopes up to the skies and pray they never fall.  
I wonder if this perfect wish is really worth it all.  
I give it my deepest side and the sincerest of my thoughts.  
And yet I feel this small brown square is still an empty box.

—Tammy J. Blair

## SNOW ANGELS

Snow, so white and pure  
As if washed by angels.  
Covering earth like a blanket  
Like ivory dust from the sky.

As if washed by angels,  
We use bare hands to fashion snowballs,  
Like ivory dust falling from sky,  
We stick out our tongues to taste.

We use bare hands to fashion snowballs  
And build people with coal and buttons.  
Smiles light up their white faces.  
We give them our hats and scarves.  
Seems silly, we don't want them to be warm.

Smiles light up their white faces.  
Their stick arms like wiry hangers.  
Seems silly we don't want them to be warm.  
We want them to come to life.

Smiles light up their white faces.  
Their stick arms like wiry hangers.  
Seems silly we don't want them to be warm.  
We want them to come to life.

Their arms wiry as metal hangers.  
We like to name them for fun.  
We want them to come to life.  
We hope to dance and laugh and play.

We like to name them for fun,  
Frosty, Crystal, Fluffy, or Bob.  
We hope to dance, and laugh, and play.  
We elaborate about our day with them.

Frosty, Crystal, Fluffy, or Bob  
It's sad that you have to go,  
We'll elaborate about our time with you.  
We'll miss you until the next snow.

—Tammy J. Blair

## CONSUMPTION OF THE SOUL

Bursting  
Like a grape  
Between the teeth  
The idea of  
What could be

The girl was  
The woman is  
And it continues

Where is she?  
And her  
And that woman I once knew

Plucking grapes  
And savoring the promise  
Of each one  
Only for a moment  
Before biting

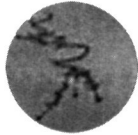
Sweet  
Succulent taste  
But  
One grape  
Barely quenches the thirst

—*Crystal Alford*

## CRUCIFIXION

My emotions are drained daily  
Into a glass goblet to quench his thirst  
Unsteady hands lift to lips  
I am fallen, spilt on the ceramic

He's trying to pick up the pieces  
Unknowingly stabbing me in the dark  
The bread is broken  
Just like so many of my dreams



I worship the ground  
He walks and I step on broken glass  
Pain weakens my sacred spirit  
Still I continue hypnotically on

I bear the shame I deserve  
My emotions, The Blood, The Wine  
They are spilled on the floor  
Intermingling in unison crimson red

—*Tiffany Hord*

## SOME SMART TITLE

I'm a wrinkle in the grand scheme of things, but I don't mind.  
As long as I have my sand castle in the sky, and  
you're waiting for me there aren't you?  
Oh, yes you are, I can see you smiling 87 minutes away.  
This isn't another one of my stupid love poems to you,  
I'm going to get to see you today, tonight, perpetually.

You know I'm a born liar, twisted by the hands of fate.  
I don't want to be a good girl; I want to be dreadfully superior in spite.  
I lived once, I'm sure of it. Its karmatically in the stars.  
You weren't supposed to die so young; it wasn't meant to be.

I am as admirable as Orpheus. I can make foliage dance and waterways stand still.  
You were my nymph, my kismet, my only consecrated legitimacy.

I sit in the morning and listen to the siren songs of Moerae.  
Clotho sings of my love for you now and Lachesis sings of its past.  
Only Atropu can sing the songs of our future, and how sweet they sound.

I'm leaving for the underworld tonight, and I will find you.  
I won't ever gaze back; I will never have another motivation to revolve around.  
We'll live temporarily in the daylight,  
and depart to Hades, eternally inseparable.

*—Tiffany Hord*

## STARLIT WATER SPIRIT

I use to be a swan, with a floating heart.  
Flying nuns followed me over orchards and sailboats.  
But now I am a black cherry with a heart of swamp rose.  
His siren song lulls me into a starry-false Solomon's seal.

I have fallen out of solitude,  
slipping over the curvature of his lips.  
We hid from the lightening,  
but I can't even remember him in the rain.

I use to be a swan, but now I am a harlot.  
Dreams of baboons and periwinkles evade me.  
The blossom has fallen , and he never sleeps now.

*—Tiffany Hord*



## POISONOUS STARS

The night drips sweat beads  
like a fresh squeezed glass  
of April.

My mind going a hundred seconds  
a minute.

Stars lighting fire by fire  
in the mystified sky.

All my ideals being poured  
into the Big Dipper  
lost in the night.

And I drink my thoughts like Juliet,  
drinking the poison  
that would set her free.

—*Tiffany Hord*



## CASAMARI

On the bridge between Brush Ridge and Highway 23  
I slip into 1953, and hear Casimari Iacobucci play the accordion.  
Handwritten sheet music is spread out on the wood floor,  
His eyebrow creased and lips pursed, and between them,  
thick black-rimmed glasses on a fat nose, and behind them,  
sharp eyes staring down at the floor in concentration  
as he waits for the next chord to come.  
And, faintly a lullaby is heard in Italian  
As a baby boy cries back in the bedroom.

But I can't hear anything before 1984,  
and the cracks in this wall feel like an old man's hand.  
Last night's dinner was a vending machine pepperoni roll,  
and what I'd give for a homemade steaming calzone.  
I squint at tiny gray faces with noses shaped like mine.  
These walls are prize-fighters late in the third round.  
They lean into each other's shoulders,  
clamped in time by someone's flashbulb.

Now the sidewalk snores in the drizzle,  
and I walk on its surface and start to whistle,  
and T-bone comes by with an electric bass.  
We'll take my car.

We'll find a place to drive to and the sky will close its eyes  
and we'll move by sounds.  
*Cerco il language di mio nonno.*  
*Voglio sentirlo stasera.*

The car will scratch its belly and roll over,  
so we'll leave it to sleep, and start walking.  
Our bare feet will fling droplets onto the street  
as we dance to accordion music and a faint lullaby  
sung in a language a small part of us understands.

—Anthony Iacobucci

## A CHIROPRACTOR GETS ADJUSTED

Ice-slick branching fists on trees,  
knotted in the dusty snow  
like muscles outside my office window.  
My body remembers age eighteen,  
two years of factory work and a slipped disk.  
My sciatic nerve barks at me on the morning drive.  
In my dreams I see white hands  
spill over the burn of a taut nerve  
like milk from an overturned jug.  
My hands tango on a tendon  
when they find the tight spot.  
Gliding fingers knead warm skin like dough.  
This job takes me so close  
to the twitch of raw meat,  
the slow decay of bone.  
This sheet is warm against my chest.  
Eyes closed, I breathe deeply.  
Thumbs dip between my shoulder blades.  
Nerves shiver and bow,  
muscles loosen, and obediently,  
gratefully, bones begin to crack.

—Anthony Iacobucci

## CAROLINA MORNING

Morning breathes an air of renewed hope  
She breaks fresh beginning  
Pale lights promise a boldness becoming  
Pink hues of softness foreshadow a strength of coming fire  
Wisps of white are sonnet writers of the sky  
Lines of lavender keep the page perfectly ruled

Morning blows a breath of pure  
She wakes what Night had rest  
Gentle breeze from angel's breath  
Clears my head, caresses my chest  
Lines indistinct, shadows that are weak  
Speak to all the promise for the meek

Morning brings song from Nature's chorus  
It times the day through rhythmic pulse  
Wind rushes reeds of trees  
Grasses dance sporadic melodies  
Tones of light collide in concert with conductor's  
pace  
Night's curtain rises for a symphony of sun

Morning beams of quiet pride  
She blushes pink perfection  
Masterpiece of art mocks fine artist's brush  
Portrait of tranquility calmly provokes the wild  
Pallet of beauty explodes with timely brilliance  
Easel of possibility possesses promise of vibrance

—Barbara Irwin

## SEA GLASS

waves upon rocks  
forever seem permanent  
if time will allow

come crashing through

and that which you  
felt  
only as a kid  
comes spraying back  
into your  
face

for the first time again

and the sweet mist  
is a sip  
of wine  
in sea glass  
from sand grains  
if

time will allow

*—Barbara Irwin*



## WISHING TO WHAT

Sunken eyes

Like treasure in a ship

Unable to be retrieved

Take a deep breath

Dive in

Recover the worth within

Faces streaked

Like lilies of Monet

Caught in a sudden screaming storm

Drape my arms

Sober mouths

Like pensive passion of virgin love

Wonder whether to cry or sigh

Rest my mouth

On those mouths

Pour into them sips of life's breath

Bodies shaken

Like mistaken hardness of touches

Too tough to take

Wrap myself

Around theirs, within theirs

Restore strength stripped by sickness

—Barbara Irwin

## STREAMLINED

See the tears  
Stream the sheets  
A brief goodbye this June

Hear the soft echo  
Gaze through my cage  
A cold December moon

Your lips will drink  
From my mouth  
Sips of mint  
Swallows of innocence

I'll ravage your roses  
With rain I'll smear their blood  
Upon my hands  
Sacrifice a smile for penance

Restore all color  
The glow of your skin  
The flush of your face  
The pink mouth gray eye

Forever pale  
To hot then cold  
Dark then light  
Black and white

*—Barbara Irwin*



## **BARBIE DOLL BLUES: BURN BABY BURN**

We were products of the plastic age  
when even love was an elastic  
that stretched and snapped back to smack  
anyone who held it hyper-extended,  
something certain to sting but still,  
an artificial convenience we needed.

Polymers like jello pooled in jugs  
arousing flesh undulations.  
Lust for latex, like kissing:  
a fetish no longer.

The new forbidden thing we needed to get off on  
now was our greatest fear—  
the heat that could consume us.

Lacking it, we fed cyberskin jelly cocks  
to cul-de-sac gashes to quiet a hunger  
that seared from celluloid lips lapped by no flames,  
flames whose heat we could only imagine—  
from Bakelite we built bodies as alters to that heat,  
shrink-wrapped on our backs  
bare-breasted in bed  
molded mantels heaving to heaven  
limbs laid out in a cross  
ready to bear nailing of a savior.

But to what sort of savior would we offer  
such sacrificial flesh if not men made of flames  
who, at first, seemed slick, like petrol spilled on pavement  
but when lit, burst in angry  
arcs of rage sparked as gasoline rainbows,  
rainbows that would kiss our skin  
make our cheekbones shine painting in shades  
from the palette of indelible pain?

Why was it we wanted only men of flames  
who burned our nerves and made us melt?

Once, our vapid noses smelled vapor fumes  
of a violence whose volatile ventilation  
whetted our want for something more fragrant  
than sulphur fists that left us sniffing  
for the sweeter sense of love we'd never smell.

To stop breathing in that atmosphere  
seemed the only way we would ever escape  
those noxious odors that broke our noses  
so we suffocated ourselves under  
suits of soot we wore to soothe bruising  
(out of sight yet, still, on our minds always)  
a way to live not alive but surviving,  
a survival senseless numbed by touches—  
we forced ourselves to forget how it felt to feel.

We had to find ways to feel more alive:  
we pulled on pins we jabbed through  
our own areolae and believed that it felt good,  
believed we'd found a way to ground our live-wire lives,  
our mutilation, a mutation,  
breasts turned to io moth wings,  
needles through nipples,  
saws through our eyes.  
The blind bleeding lithic flesh! We worked miracles.

Remember what a riot that was, what kicks we got from pricks and nicks, and what about waiting for the sores to seal, the scabs to stitch in scars that would suture skinful sins?

We'd found a way to work around  
our urge to discharge our electric surge,  
to add another coating of creosote  
to the chrysalis that cloistered us  
further into the folds of ourselves.

What a way to rot that was, weathering waste and withering. What a route.  
But what else was there, save for waiting  
for a sadistic savior to serve  
who'd smear us with the salve of sex—  
a safer way to hurt...

*Juicy*

## IN DEFENSE OF THE LOST GIRLS WHO PLAY WITH DANGEROUS TOYS

To love a sharp edge, is that such a sin?  
To see something sexy in broken  
beer bottle glass, hot for fragments;  
to stare at a table saw, wanting to touch the teeth;

to palm an M-80 while you flick a Bic  
to light the wick, is that so perverse?  
To revel in the rush of Russian roulette,  
spin a cylinder, finger a trigger, wondering what luck is—

Curiosity kills cats. So does milk-mixed antifreeze.  
Fettered by fate to such lethal feline appetites,  
how can we condemn the gluttons for needing nine lives?

Curiosity kills cats by both nature and cliché,  
in the same way crows swarm in murders as they must.  
Lost girls, likewise, have their obligations too.

—Juicy

## THE SUCKER SONG

We're the dropped lollipops  
licked and kicked around  
sticking sickly how grit grips  
thick to our corn syrup gooze.

We're the grave sweets fretting, fearing  
graze of feet, of heels bearing a cracking  
of saccharine spackled ick-dusted crust.

How far from the glamour of our cellophanes  
we've come, how brave to shed our wrappers  
ripped by a glutton in a sugar-lust strip tease.

We're suckers slicker than most confections, thriving  
by virtue of rejection. *Who'd want to eat us now?*  
Our safety, from consumption, urged by this dirt.  
This soil may spoil but too it preserves us.

*Juicy*

## MUFFLE THIS, DUMMY

I have rehearsed the lines in my mind  
but nothing simulates inflections of elocution  
implying operation mercenary,  
which is to say: improvise.

If all the world's a stage  
my acting stinks like a tire fire.  
Rubber burns dirty as perverts  
and just as sooty,  
a stubborn flame that doesn't want to die.  
embarrassing performances since 1981,  
crossing lines of bad taste.  
Cats, eat your heart out.

Vaudeville's a more viable venue  
for tramps like me, they say,  
just sit on some man's knee,  
let him be the voice of me,  
bobble about my wobbly head,  
wow the crowd with your throw.

Horrific acrylic, krylon glaze, amazing masses.  
Take a bow, but before you box me,  
a backtalk check, listen if I get lippy.  
Hear that  
wood-to-wood squeak, the rusty-steel squall,  
the squeal of quelled soliloquies?  
You have the lube and will oil it out.

—Juicy

ESSAY ON POPE  
OR GEMS ARE WHERE YOU FIND THEM.

**Epistle I**

Steffel said, "Who will do Pope's *Essay on Man*?"  
Like a fool I jumped up and said, "I think I can!"  
Much to my horror when I got home  
The "essay" assigned was really a poem.  
Pope's 'sposed to be an Enlightenment thinker  
But as an essay writer he's really a stinker.  
Now I'm assigned on Pope, to write an "essay"  
So if I wrote a poem, then what could Vlad say?

Pope was spokesman in verse for the Age of Reason  
While his Roman religion was practically treason  
An Englishman poet from seventeen thirty four  
Modern people might think that sounds like a bore  
But people loved his paradox, satire, and wit  
So much that he made a living off it.  
Pope wanted to go back to classical times  
Combined with current philosophical beliefs in  
rhymes.<sup>1</sup>  
Nature and God- How could man fit in?  
This problem Pope wanted to try to spin.

While writing 'bout weeds, trees, gardens, and  
flow'rs  
Reading all this could go on for hours.  
Pope thought of man's place in the whole universe  
The Presumptuous Man! What could be worse?  
To know everything, man never will do  
And why in the world should God want us to?<sup>2</sup>  
A natural religion was Pope's theism  
Commonly referred to as a statement of deism<sup>3</sup>  
Which tells us that man, and nature, and God  
Go together as one, like peas in a pod.

**Epistle II**

We are part of a system we cannot comprehend  
Are we simply part of God's means to and end?  
Among creatures on earth we suppose we are wise  
But we know not our purpose in God's perfect eyes.  
Nature includes all living things, planets, stars, and  
seasons



But man alone has been blessed with reason.<sup>4</sup>  
Pope says, “All are parts of one stupendous whole,  
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul.”  
Regarding nature we should learn as much as we can  
Pope says, “The proper study of Mankind is Man.”<sup>5</sup>

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Pope admired the ancient classical thinkers and wanted to take their approach and incorporate it with all of the new discoveries and ideas of his time.

<sup>2</sup> It is clear that Pope firmly believed in God. He saw no conflict between man’s belief in God and his pursuit of knowledge as long as man realized that there are things that man is not supposed to know. This is very much in the spirit of the dualism of Descartes.

<sup>3</sup> According to the introduction, another name for deism is natural religion. Pope felt that man was a part of God’s plan and only God knew what the plan was. He says “Man’s as perfect as he ought.” We are the way God made us because this is how God wants us to be.

<sup>4</sup> Pope admires the new ideas of the Enlightenment, but at the same time wonders if man would be better off in a totally natural state without science or religion.

<sup>5</sup> The student/poet/author of this assignment hopes that he has gotten away with his feeble attempt at creativity and begs the instructor’s indulgence for not following the format of this assignment.

—Gary Buechel

## WAVES

If I could live like all the waves  
That rise out on the sea  
If I knew that I had just one chance  
Would I live differently  
If like the waves I knew that I  
Was destined for one shore  
Would I be satisfied  
Or would I wish for something more  
And would I try to gather speed  
For one heroic dash  
And channel all my energy  
Into one final crash  
And would I stretch my self until  
I could be stretched no more  
To push a line of broken shells  
Across the sandy shore  
And would I live with purpose  
And press onward to the goal  
Or would I sink beneath the tide  
And leave my tale untold

—Niel Burbury

## IT'S COOL

Sometimes I wonder why I go to school,  
Then I remember it's to get good grades.  
That's circular, I know, but hey, it's cool

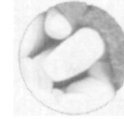
In history class I feel like such a fool –  
A quadriplegic trying to play charades.  
Sometimes I wonder why I go to school.

I learn some facts on how kings used to rule,  
Then all that knowledge subsequently fades  
That's circular, I know, but hey, it's cool.

“Medieval people used to use a mule  
To spin stone wheels and sharpen iron blades”.  
Sometimes I wonder why I go to school.

Old Socrates might say about my school,  
“He's wise who knows in ignorance he wades”.  
That's circular, I know, but hey, it's cool

I know that learning is a vital tool,  
And knowledge comes in many different shades.  
Yet, still I wonder why I go to school.  
That's circular, I know, but hey, it's cool.



–Niel Burbury

## WEDNESDAY EVENING WORSHIP

I'm standing in the sanctuary. Swarms of people surround me – all followers, worshipers together tonight. I look around, and as my eyes scan the huge room I see no marble statues of the Apostle Paul or molded forms of the Virgin Mary. I see no heavy cross, metaphorically stained with sinless blood, hanging behind the stage. I don't hear any soft notes of an organ floating through the warm air, which is not lit by glazed glass lamps overhead. This room is dark. Red and blue lights shine steadily, aggressively out across the crowd. Behind the empty stage there hangs a poster about twenty feet wide and high. The image is a head – just a shaved head with a hand covering the face. The fingers are tensed – anguish, I think, anguish or rage. Perhaps both. The people around me are packed tight, with enough room for me to turn around only if I shove a little. The air is thick with the breath of hundreds, the sweat of hundreds, as we wait.

I'm close to the front, perhaps ten feet between myself and the metal fence that sets a six-foot barrier between crowd and stage. The bar runs along in

front of the whole platform, and in the area that it creates there are four men – large men – spaced evenly. They are the only people allowed in that space; that reserved, set apart, indeed that sacred space. A person inside there could touch the stage, perhaps even touch those people who may be on the stage, and this is decidedly disallowed.

They are wearing orange shirts, these men, orange shirts that set them apart from everyone else. I survey the masses around me; most are wearing dark colors, if not black. The men in orange stand dutifully in that space, watching the movement all of the people. They stand before the eager crowd like priests between the world and God.

Suddenly the stage lights start flashing rapidly, colors bouncing off all the faces focused intently on the stage, and out stride three men. The scream that rises from the mouths of all around me is deafening as these ordinary human beings take their positions on stage. One climbs behind the drum set that has been waiting for him. He lifts the sticks, and strikes

out a thunderous beat for a second or two. The screaming intensifies. The crowd looks left as the bass player rolls a few harsh, violent notes out across their waiting ears and shakes some hair from his face. A strum of a guitar, then a faster, more aggressive strike of all the strings brings all eyes to center stage. Here is the god tonight of this place of worship. He wears jeans and a short sleeve shirt, and could just as easily be one of the faces in the crowd. He greets everyone with a what's up everybody, to which the only reply is an even louder, unified roar. The strumming of his guitar, the rolling of the bass, and the thundering of the drums has blended into a prelude of sorts as the center stage singer does the typical yammering on about how he loves playing in this city. The instruments fade together and are silent for a moment. Then, on command of the drummer's count, they tear into their first song.

The orange-shirted priests are now watching the crowd even more attentively, but nobody is watching them. I have been crushed even closer to the front by the hundreds of people behind me all trying to get

as close as possible to the stage. Everybody is jumping in time with the music, elbows flinging all around, fists raised to the air as a sign of support and involvement in the moment. As the music becomes more intense, a group to my left starts shoving and bouncing even more energetically than before. I don't know what the words are in the current song, but both verses have been completed along with both choruses, and the guitar bridge is coming to a close. A prolonged note along with the momentary shiver of a cymbal struck once brings the emotional involvement in this song to a climax just before the catharsis begins. The guitar bass and drums are attacked viciously by their owners, producing that mournful rage expressed so acutely by the poster behind them. The chorus is screamed over and over and over into the microphone with a perfect, raspy edge in the voice.

Now the guys to the left who were before starting to get more aggressive have formed a full-fledged mosh pit. It is a space that has been forced open in the crowd, perhaps ten feet in diameter, and

inside are about seven guys running, stumbling, shoving, colliding and doing their very best to dominate their peers. Whenever two collide, one inevitably bounces roughly into the people on the outer edge, who shove him even more forcefully back into the center to get crushed by whoever deems him a good target. A guy about six feet tall now enters the pit. His shirt is off, displaying an impressively built upper body and a large tattoo across his shoulders. He has dark hair, and heavy eyebrow ridges that make him look like a boxer, or perhaps a battle hardened mosher. He is dominating the pit now as the music rages on. Guys half his size bounce off him, guys twice his size bounce off him. All the commotion reminds me of a scene from a cheap action film where the fighting happens too fast to know what's going on. Maybe that is one of the selling points of the mosh pit. Aside from taking out rage on your fellow band worshipers, and aside from physically expressing the raw emotion of the music, one of the main things this pit does is give a stage and a hardcore soundtrack to whoever is man

enough to enter. In the pit you are no longer imitating the music – everybody around is watching you, not the band, and the music is imitating you. The violence you commit is validated and encouraged by its rageful sound. After several songs, the pit fades.

Now the show has been going on for well over a half hour, and the people toward the back of the crowd are getting more restless. We at the front are all packed too tightly for anyone else to squeeze in, but that won't stop them from getting as close as possible to their gods. As I'm standing, eyes focused on the stage, a foot suddenly crams into the back of my head and a body lands on my shoulder. Instinctively I lift it off and shove it, and watch as the body gets shuffled over the remaining heads before being grabbed by a priest in orange, set on the ground, and hurried out of the sacred area. This young man seems to have started a mass pilgrimage; all the seekers and committed followers from the back are now on their way to the front.

The men in orange are busier than ever. So many fervent worshipers trying to touch their god.

Maybe it's the ride, maybe it's the rebellion, maybe it's simply that they get to kick people in the head, but something is drawing these people in droves. The orange interceptors have no more than a couple of seconds to catch one pilgrim and set him or her down before another one drops into their arms from the edge of the sea of shuffling hands.

As the show continues, the amount of overhead travelers increases even more. Now the last song is playing, and I can barely watch the stage for the amount of traffic that needs my assistance. The priests are doing their utmost, but as I help shuffle one young lad over my head and into the hands of those in front of me, I notice that all the nearby clergy are occupied and in no position to receive this one. At this point it is beyond his control where he goes, for the people are packed too tight in front for him to roll and drop down into the crowd. I see him slide, slide, slide, then fall with a flail of limbs onto the unforgiving cement of the sacred area. I guess fanaticism has its cost.

When the last song ends and the band leaves the stage, the lights in the room brighten, and people

filter away from the stage seeking drinks and lost friends. The commotion has subsided, and now with shoulders beginning to get sore, I make my way to the exit, dodging and ducking between people – only shoving when necessary. My ears ring as a reminder of the event, and as I push through the door, my sweaty face is chilled by a gust of cool air. And now, with no central point on which to focus their attention, no being to whom all respect is given with raised fists, no god to command and unify their thoughts actions, these once fervent but now exhausted worshipers that surround me begin to disperse. In small, isolated groups they find their cars. Singly, separately, some disappear down alleys. Stage crews disassemble the speakers and sound equipment, taking down that twenty foot poster that recently reflected the feelings of the audience. The room is now empty, but needs not wait long before its polytheistic pilgrims return to unite under some other banner – raising their fists in ardent adoration of the one who will unify the motion of their disparate bodies and mesmerize their fragmented thoughts, until they again disband under waning city lights.

*–Niel Burbury*

## STOP

Shots in the night  
Cries in the dark  
Pain and death in the air  
Innocence lost  
Blood runs in veins of ice

Stop the madness...  
Stop the pain...  
Stop the hate...

The flash of a knife  
Children cry in hunger  
The stench of rot and decay  
Soldiers and guns  
Souls are dead

Stop the madness.  
Stop the pain.  
Stop the hate.

A grenade goes off  
Silence as thick as rock  
Children left as orphans  
Trained to kill  
The vicious cycle of hate

Stop the Madness!  
Stop the Pain!  
Stop the Hate!

A bomb explodes  
Tearing flesh and bone  
Wails and screams of widows  
Beating on lifeless bodies  
Voices going silent

Stop the madness  
Stop the pain  
Stop the hate

*–Erin Vought*



## UNTITLED—LIFE IN THE SALAD—TOSSED

When I came to this morning I forgot what I was supposed to be doing. Was I supposed to be doing anything in particular?

Slipped back into the void,  
    life becomes a plate, spoon, and fork.  
    No knife.

Tonight I made supper with a side-dish  
    because I can't afford meat.

Marshmallows don't come with  
    meat—  
    once abundant,  
    roaming free  
    as beast.

Poking fingers into the poly-foam,  
    plastic covered trays  
    sit next to  
    pre-packaged salads.

Life-lived decomposes itself into life waiting to be lived by the hapless soul waiting for life to happen.

Mesclun

or

Iceberg.

He'll fill the void with a weathered fairy-tale, unfounded in his decision to make something happen because he forgets the absolute nirvana of childhood.

Long has his essence been withdrawn.

Microwavable meals,  
    pre-packaged with  
    pre-cooked veggies, and  
    don't forget the dip.

You're going in the wrong direction.  
Everyone will become upset.  
Right is wrong; left is all that's left.

The newsman stares at me from pixilated mesh.  
I consider what he's saying,  
    how he's smirking into the camera—  
    taunting the event,  
    patronizing the rest,  
    like puppy-dogs or kitty-cats.

And thus we are fed.  
We eat and some of us give back to the machine the junk of yesterday's food—  
    either regurgitated into a fountain of hopeless dust  
    or reprocessed into tomorrow's news.

The sky ripples and swells with sentimental art.  
We amass.  
    Long, deceptive corridors  
    beneath the places where  
    once existed love.

Alas,  
    only those who wish to go back go.  
Follow the line without finding something grey.  
Simon says to rid ourselves of this void—this flak.  
Simon didn't say.  
Go back.

Thinking about times when I used to feel  
    not so alone,  
    without overtones,  
    without a home  
    in a thousand.  
I could go about my business and  
    never really leave,  
    never learn to see,  
    without a sense  
    to be free.



—Kristin Keplar

## A SHORT REFLECTION ON BECKETTIAN DISCOURSE

### *Under the Guise of Samuel Beckett*

Here. Here is to begin. Begin where? Begin here. In this space of fortitude and laughing all the way. Laughing. We laugh at you and your forms and systems. Society laughs at society. Forgotten realms of dead artists. Make your sleeves green with envy. Laughing. Where? Here. Laughing for reasons unknown and yet known. Known not. Not known. Laughing at your unknown laugh. Scoff and hanker down with the flies of maggots of forgotten aspects of who I tried to be. But I could no more be him than you could be me. Where is now? Where has it decided to be? Hidden...stop...between...words. No. There is no silencing me. Not in my words. Words next to meaning and nothing. Meaning nothing. Always for the place. Here to be. I will exist to be here. And here is to begin. Again. Heavy handed words. Here to where we first begin.

Here. Here is to begin. Here to begin. Symbols where none intended. Dark found silence for the dying laughter of artists unearthed in this quietude of forgiveness

and meaning unmeant. Who made you god? Are you the sky and air I breath? Godot? Murphy? Erskine? Not breath. Stifle me. Are you the air? Choking on you nightly? Choked out until the last breath becomes silence. No meaning where none is intended. Curse you with your formidable efforts at finding words. No Words for you. No words come through to me.

Here rests a great idea. Buried under the rotten garbage. Here. The idea of ideas of laughing at society laughing at society. Trying to find something in nothing. Here rests the pains of labor. Lost on you. Here to begin. Little words. Tiny little words. Who? Not I. Not she. Nor me. You. The idea rests in the white skull. Blackened mud covers my body much to your privilege and advantage. Great sky looks down. Who? You. Here in this skull. Full of nothing in a great idea. Listen to this idea. No words come out for you.

Here. Meant to be simple. Never trying to be more than words on a page. Here. Yet.

Hidden...stop...between...nothing. Never meant to be tiny little words. Only words to you. No words. Never meant ideas. Fun to play on me. Play on me. You play. Old stauncher. Me to play on you. Society laughing at society. The artist rests his case.

Lessened more to nothing. Head raised. Light spotted. Defiant testament of defiance. Here in this skull. Lessened to complete. Nothing. Lessened to white hands and feet. Standing ovation to the critic. Muse. Muse I find in you. Laughing art laughs at you. What did you create? From nothing create the world from nothing of a word.

Lessened more to less than more. Three to two to one. Down. Here. Here rests word. Words for meaning nothing. Laughing at you laughing at laughing. No understanding. No meaning. No...what...no. Refusal to create alone. Two strapped chair tied silk. Refusal to create. Work is death. Death is work. Refusal to work in work in work. Here. Muse. You.

Lessened more to three stark fists. Shaking in the death of words. White knuckles. Claws. Pain-killers. Word-killers. You. Who goes on like this? Who? To end it is death. The birth is death. Dear death. Birth is death. Worst the way of meaning where none exists in words. Alone. Words find their way of meaning nothing. Laughing society laughs at society. Lost on you.

Light contracts and densely scarcely find nothing in the critic's muse. Nothing of intentions. Nothing but words of words of nothing.

*—Kristin Keplar*

## NEW LOVE MYTHOS

There will be a great rapture in the world to come—  
emit from me.

And while you speak in fine tongues of love—  
Western archetypes  
no longer flow free.

Because they're buried underneath the mask  
of fantasy.

I know little of your Gods—Roman and green  
with the plague of things  
lost in envy, pity; same to me.

When will the days of mythical loves—  
contemporaries,  
full of scandal and swirling inconsistencies—  
John and Jackie,  
Gertrude and Alice,  
Lenny and his love/hate words of Jewish being.

The rabbis saw him the day the police  
burst open the door and upstaged him.

He did not feel guilt;  
he felt rage.

This man, he is the answer to Pan's adversity,  
found in a series of blasphemies  
and pays homage to the unearthly  
occupancy of history and memory.

I haven't bothered learning about the Greek  
tragedies.

Set in a climate of crumbling marble and  
Helios—Joyce—release me please.

They've not killed the cattle for fun or need,  
but because nothing else was left to kill.

Words—falter on my lips—  
hold me—my breast's cold spot—  
make sanguine.

This love—today—of one Dan-I-el and one me.

Within the refracted light of complacency—  
someday will be ours.

Thousands of years beyond the scope of human time—  
our time—again—we will discover  
yours and mine.

—Kristin Keplar

## SECONDS

JAMES CONLEY SLAMMED on his brakes, felt the car slide on the slick surface, and watched in disbelief as the body bounced off the hood. Just as quickly as the figure had appeared, it was gone.

He was always running late. There just weren't enough hours in the day. He was behind on appointments, work, social engagements. Hell, even laundry. He was wearing yesterday's dirty jeans, blue sweatshirt, and jacket.

But everything now felt very still. His grip on the steering wheel was turning his knuckles white and his arms were extended and locked at the elbows.

It couldn't have happened.

He stared through the windshield. The fat droplets of rain plopped against the glass, distorting his view of the repetitious housing of suburbia that lined both sides of the street. The wipers swished back and forth, turning the blur into clarity. He fumbled for the ignition, turned the key back, but left the headlights on. The pounding in his chest was so strong it ached. Even though he knew only seconds had passed, it felt like an hour. All this in seconds.

James Conley reached for the handle and paused. He wasn't really sure he wanted to get out of the vehicle. He wasn't sure if he wanted to make this real.

He opened the door and stepped out into the street. The rain was heavy, and he was soaked in no time. He turned toward the front of his car. One step...two...three, each bringing him closer to the front. His heart still trying to beat its way to freedom.

It had to have been a dog. Some large dog...something with yellowish fur. A collie of some kind. Possibly a deer. There was still time for it to be a dog. *Please, please God, let it be a dog.*

But he knew it wasn't a dog. And it wasn't a deer.

It had been a blond ponytail.

He stopped now, and leaned reluctantly forward, each inch exposing the truth beyond the hood.



And there the girl lay, just beyond the bumper, framed in the headlights like they were searchlights.

A shudder rippled through James' muscles like a convulsion. He extended his arms, palms out, as if he could block the image from his mind. His paralysis died away quickly, and he ran to her, feet sloshing through the half-inch of rainwater standing in the street. She was laying on her side, her arms stretched out and her knees pulled up. It was a contorted, fetal position. Her blond hair was pulled into a ponytail with a few strands matted to the side of her face by the heavy rain. He knelt and reached out to touch her...and hesitated, like she was too fragile. You weren't suppose to move an injured person. But he had to check. He laid a two-fingered touch on her neck. *Please, please God, still be breathing!*

James moved his fingers lightly across her neck, chanting, "Please...be alive...just have a pulse...please...please God, don't do this to me."

Nothing. It wasn't there. *Are you sure you're doing it right?*

"No," he answered his thoughts out loud.

A porch light came to life, lighting up the small suburban yard across the street.

Damn it! He looked down at the lifeless girl. *It's midnight*, he thought. *What were you doing out in the street?*

A flashlight, that had obviously been hers, lay only a few feet away. Its bulb still burned.

The porch-lit house yielded an old man in a blue robe. He leaned out from the doorway and hollered, "Car trouble?"

James stood up on traitorous legs. "Call an ambulance," he finally shouted in a voice shrill and crackling.

The man walked a couple of steps out onto his porch to get a better look. "What happened?" he asked.

James Conley, motioning violently at the man, shouted again, his voice cracking at the height of hysteria and frustration, "Call 911, will ya! Just...call an ambulance! I hit some—" his voice wavered as he looked down at the child. "I hit someone," he muttered. *You killed someone!*



The man waived a confirmation and quickly went back inside. Now, there were other lights that were coming on, both inside and out of the houses lined along the street. The sounds and commotion of an awakened neighborhood began to steadily grow.

*Soon, everyone will see what you've done.*

*But it was an accident, he countered.*

*Doesn't matter...a child is a child. Even if you do not go to jail, your wife will leave you. You can't expect her to live with what you've done. She'll say you were rushing, speeding, because you were going to be late again.*

Had he been speeding? He wasn't sure. He didn't think so.

*Can't remember? Doesn't matter...everyone will assume you were. Doesn't matter what you say to the cops...to her parents...to your wife...to yourself. This will always be the moment that defines your existence. You killed that little girl. It is the first and only thing anyone is going to remember about you.*

He bent back down by her side and carefully lifted her face away from the water standing on the pavement. He was oddly afraid that she would drown. As he gently lifted her head, a red coloration spread out through the water.

Blood.

*Her blood.*

He hadn't wanted there to be blood, but there it was. The brightest red spreading out from under her temple. The rain was diluting it fast, but in the headlights it flared like a red flag of urgency.

Whereas before he'd been unaware of how much time was passing, now he was very aware of it. Where was that ambulance! People had been saved and lost in a matter of a few minutes...life was measured in seconds.

The neighborhood was coming towards him now. He wasn't sure what he should do. He felt a reflex to back away, as if his presence was an offense, but he couldn't break his focus. He couldn't stop looking at her face, so peaceful and still. It was unnerving how wrong that looked. He wondered how old

she was. He guessed maybe...twelve. Twelve, with a whole life ahead of her—boys, prom, a day of motherhood—but not anymore. Now she would experience nothing. He had seen to that.

A blur of neighbors, all with raincoats or umbrellas, surrounded them. Some knelt down beside her...beside him. Others were standing. The sounds of rain droplets pelted the hard surfaces of the coats and umbrellas.

He could hear the questions passed among the crowd, "What happened?" and "Is she breathing?"

He could hear the pain in the answers, "No!" and "Oh God!"

All these voices slipped by with little or no effect on James. That is, until the grief-stricken cry of "Sarah!" It sounded exactly like what James had expected.

His focus broke from Sarah's face, from her life, and he stood and stepped back from the growing huddle. Many of them stood with their hands pressed to their mouths in horror or cupped to their

foreheads as if the reality of it all was giving them a headache.

He turned away from Sarah's body (*he really hadn't wanted a name put to the face*) and stared off into the night's sky. He could hear the sirens in the distance. He wasn't ignoring the scene behind him. He was waiting for the violence of words and actions from the parents. And deservedly so. He had taken the most important thing they had.

A hand fell on his shoulder.

He turned around and faced the old man who had called the ambulance.

"What happened, son?" the man asked in a gentle voice.

James Conley gave a sharp sigh. "She came from between those two cars. I..." James let his head fall and stare at the man's chest. Was this her father? "—I didn't see her until it was too late. I'm so very sorry."

The man left James and walked back to Sarah's motionless body. James stood there a moment when a woman's hand touched his face. She raised his

head to look into her eyes. The tears were there, but nothing else. A dead soul, and a moment of silent recognition.

Sarah's mother swallowed once, and looked down from his gaze. "We had told her a thousand times not to sneak out at night..." She let the words hang.

James could taste them in the air. They tasted of sorrow and regret.

And then she hugged him.

She wrapped her arms around him and squeezed.

He just stood there, arms hanging motionless at his side, confused. But it didn't take him long to understand. They were connected by guilt. She did not blame him. Of course, it had been *her* fault. He had just been the instrument of her failure.

She finally let go and turned back toward her daughter's body. James couldn't move. Of all things he thought the mother might do...this was the worst. Why couldn't she have thrown fists and words of hate?

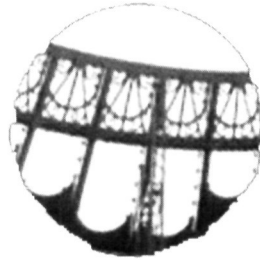
Everyday that he ran late, it was because of some outside force. Every time he fell short in his life, it was not his fault. Blame was key to survival. If he was

her, he would only be able to see the person who had taken his child from him. "What kind of mother would not know where her child was?" was the only real weapon he had to survive this. More powerful than "She came out of nowhere" and "the road was too slick for me to stop in time." None of these moved enough responsibility off of him. She had taken that away from him, with her unbelievable understanding in the face of this tragedy. She didn't blame him, and that made it harder to see her as a contributor. How would he ever be able to live with himself without hating her? He was not equipped to carry this much weight.

James needed some distance, so he splashed across the street and leaned on the hood of the closest vehicle. Spasms in his abdomen forced him to double over between the cars, and his stomach erupted in pain and vomit. Each purge brought with it tears and strangled moans. He reached up and placed a steady-ing hand on the hood of the car and lifted himself back up to his shaky position. Several members of the crowd were staring at him. *Get used to that look!* The old man had his arm around Sarah's mother as she wept against his chest. The sirens were close now.

He walked away from the scene (*your mess!*) toward the ambulance's approach. He couldn't wait for it to be over. He would never be able to make this right, to make amends, to anyone whose life was now damaged or destroyed. It was done. The newspapers would relay the story, heads would be shaken in judgment, and he would always be remembered as the bringer of pain and suffering.

The siren was loud now, a wailing accusation, calling for all to come and see what he had done. He could see the ambulance coming down the street. The red lights cast shadows on the houses they passed. He looked away, back toward the scene, where he would now live. Many in the gathered crowd were still staring at him. He knew some were watching him to make sure he didn't disappear. Others stared with sympathy, as they tried to imagine what they would do if this had happened to them.



The ambulance was slowing to the scene. He saw several of the red illuminated faces that peeked out from drawn curtains as it neared. He could see the faces of paramedics inside. He could still feel the eyes from the crowd.

Stares. Always staring, and never understanding. They couldn't.

James began to rock on his heels against the car. He could make them understand how sorry he was.

The ambulance was slowing, but it had enough speed to accomplish what he needed it for. The driver's attention on the scene, the rain, and the sincerity of the action was all on his side.

James Conley stepped out from in between the parked cars, his strides quick and sure, straight into the ambulance's path.

The driver's focus had been on the crowd in the street and he had no more than a second to react. The ambulance collided with James Conley dead on, and launched him down the street, where his body landed at the end of a twisted dance...and remained still.

James Conley's eyes were open and staring at the grill of the stopped ambulance that had been *his* instrument. He saw two paramedics burst from the vehicle. One of them went to the little girl, and the other was fast approaching him.

He had been oddly aware of a few screams when he was struck, and wondered how bad it had been?

*Just as long as it was bad enough.*

The paramedic knelt down and leaned over James' twisted heap examining his injuries. James' eyes remained open and focused on the dimming bulb of Sarah's flashlight.

The paramedic was talking, saying things like, "You came out of nowhere" and "Please God, don't let him die!"

*Hey buddy, been there.*

He hoped he was going to die. The fact was...killing a child could never truly be completely forgiven. Even when it was an accident. Probably not by the rest of Sarah's family. Not by his wife. Not by anyone who knew. It would always be there behind their eyes, the knowledge of it all.

Those who read the story tomorrow would nod their approval. He was too overcome with grief after what he had done. It was understandable. There could be no greater expression of his regret.

The flashlight, and the headlights of the ambulance, dimmed even darker.

He was fading.

*I'm sorry, Sarah.*

James Conley heard the other paramedic, Sarah's paramedic, call out, "How you doing over there?" The voice sounded much farther away to James than it should have.

"I'm losing him, Alan!" shouted his paramedic.

And Alan's reply was the last thing James Conley heard in this world.

"She's got a pulse here. It's weak, but it's getting stronger by the second. We're going to have to get moving!"

The paramedic sighed, reached out and closed James Conley's eyes, and stared at the odd little smile on his face.

—William Friend

## I'VE HAD IT UP TO HERE WITH VIAGRA

Many fools will try to tell you that the greatest invention in the history of man was soap. The act of sanitation saved hundreds of thousands of lives back in the bacterial-rampant ages of old. Other fools will try to tell you that it was the invention of gun powder, and all the possibilities that were opened with the idea of propulsion. And yet, there are those who still foolishly cling to the wheel. Where would we be without the wheel? How long do you go before you utilize the advantage of the wheel? When do you not need a wheel? Shut up about the wheel already! The wheel is nice, as is the gun powder and soap. You could not do a drive-by, nor wash the blood off your hands without them. But the one thing all those statements have in common is that they are all made by fools. Yep..., that's a lot of fools. But why do I say this? Because the greatest single invention in the history of man is the delivery system known as the Pill!

Pills have saved our civilization. Pills have improved the standard of living. Yes, better living through the use of pills. A pill for this. A pill for that.

A pill for you. A pill for me. One pill, two pill, red pill, blue pill. Is anyone out there *not* a pill-popping monkey? Medical dudes say you should pop at least 5 pills a day, and chase them with 8 glasses of water. Am I being serious? Not about the miracle of pills...and certainly not about the medical dudes. Pills have become the easy-to-swallow crutch.

Every single condition, every single problem, and every single emotional state has a pill assigned to it. Depressed? Swallow this. Joint pain? Swallow this. Internal bleeding? Swallow this. Rampant paranoia with involuntary narcissistic rage! Swallow this. When I was young, I only remember 3 kinds of pills: A pill for headaches; A pill for heartworms (mainly for dogs); and a *chill* pill, for when someone needed to *calm the hell down!* I am sure there's a need for many of these new ones, but seriously...Haven't we got a little out of control? My favorite example of this is that we have pills with side affects that are far more serious than the ailments they cure. I have seen advertisements for pills to help with social anxiety that "may" cause uncontrollable loss of blander functions. They

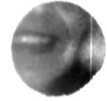
put it better than that, but that's what it is. *Hate to tell ya there*, but accidentally messing myself accounts for a lot of social anxiety. ("Wow..., I'm so relaxed and at ease that I don't even care that I just urinated on the dance floor.") What is the point of releasing this drug? Or any of the others that carry side affects of stomach bleeding, nausea, swelling, or bowel dysfunctions. What happened to the time when these would have been classified as failures? ("Good job Scientist Bob, now if you can just cure the fact that it made me hallucinate, we'll release it to the public.")

And while we are on the subject, my favorite is the "may cause sexual side effects." Yeah. Let's just mess with that. You now have the confidence to go out and mingle, you have the ability to dance with no discomfort, and you have the whole indigestion thing under control, but don't count on getting "lucky" cause you are as impotent as over-boiled pasta.

But don't fear. There is Viagra for that. If there was one place pills had neglected up to this point..., it was erections. Sure, there was a lot of those herb roots to chew on. Plus, the aphrodisiac oysters. But now

science has found the answer, and as is the way of today, the answer comes in convenient pill form. The thing that makes me laugh is that thanks to Viagra, every young trophy wife hanging on some rich, soon-to-be-dead elderly man is more likely to have to "work" for her money. Ha! (They say once you've had prunes you never go back to plums!)

Of course, this brings me to the best side effect of all. The one that tops them all. I have recently heard ads that warn you that "if you should have an erection that lasts for more than four hours, you should seek medical attention." Okay...who is walking into an emergency room in the wee hours of the night, pointing at their erection, and saying, "I'm going to need someone to take a look at this!" (Better in the wee hours than the packed afternoon.) Hell, would you even be able to close up your pants? (Only you know the answer to that one.) Would you just cover it with something? A hat, maybe. Perhaps a pot or pan? Oh, I know. Just slide one of those empty toilet paper rolls over it and be on your merry way to make the top of some ER doctor's "You won't believe this one" list.



You want my advice? (Of course you do!) If you have an erection that lasts over four hours, don't seek a doctor, seek a cheerleading squad!

You know what I want? I want the behavior pills for the everyday person. Where are the pills that help morons not be such...morons? Where are those pills? I'd really like to know when someone is going to get on that one. How about loose women? When are they going to put out a "legal" pill that creates more of those? Huh? Here's another one: A pill that cures hang-overs. Now, I am one of those people who believe that if you have a hang-over, you deserve it. (Screw you guys!) But, if I invented a pill that could relieve you of one, then I would go ahead and make it available. Yeah..., because it would make me a ton of money, and nothing says "screw you guys" better than striking it rich! Now that would be one bitter pill to swallow!

*—William Friend*



## WINTER AS ONE

Sparkling plateau of a fallen cloud...  
too perfect to go unscarred.  
The tear—proof I am the first and only.  
I am explorer; destroyer; obscene.

Horizons of cold and darkness...  
Subtle sounds of natural silence.  
Moonlit prisms of crystallized branches.  
We are still; tranquil; serene.

To be in the cold embrace...  
Head on icy feathers of heaven's pillows.  
To belong and be understood.  
I sleep better; peaceful; between.

When branches become surrogate clouds.  
When the ground drinks upon the water.  
When everything winter ceases to be.  
Will I vanish; accepted; unseen?

—William Friend

## WINTER WEIGHT

Trees like blown glass sculptures glitter  
and with winter weight  
weighed, slump like weeping willows.

Ice freezes in droplets,  
golden echoes of oil beads  
from Grandma's lamp.

A gray squirrel  
skitters across the snow  
at the crunch of my boots.

I show up early  
with two bottles of Sweet Belle,  
the black torchiere lamp on low,  
T.V. off.

In the kitchen sweet cinnamon pumpkin  
mingles with tomato sauce.  
I used to be a scarlet teenager,  
but now I'm a single candle  
burning between two wine glasses,  
smoke rising like music notes.

We yearn for nature's return  
like we earlier yearned for fall's fire.

We long to see the orchard blossom,  
the berry clusters hanging in bushes like bells.  
We fear forgetting the brown thrasher's everlasting song,  
the yellow-bellied sapsucker's meow,

watching the tree swallow change  
from blue to green in the sunlight.

We hope and whisper  
as the whippoorwill wanes.



—Amanda Shrader

## THE GLEAM OF HER

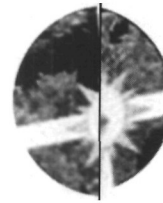
Here people wear pointed hats  
and words can appear and dis-  
appear like music.

Lines of rippled light  
reflect flames.  
All is dark, still.

Rising from a pool of golden  
blocks, chest high in honey,  
licorice lips kiss the shadows.

I remember the heat of the sun on my face  
as I waited, the gleam of her

leather knee high boots, the smoothness  
of her metal thigh band, the short-  
stemmed rose still sticky.



—Amanda Shrader

## MORNING SONG

I send my song on breath blown through your hair.  
And you, my fool, who can't lift up your voice,  
can't taste my rose perfume upon the air,  
look up toward the moon where I entice.

To thy sweet mistress come by flowers crowned.  
As once you whispered pale touch-me-nots past  
swamp candles in perspective, moonlit bound  
until the blue light conjured you at last,

come back and bring the blue bird's morning song,  
reflect the frost of moonlight on my brow.  
With breaths of wonder we shall hum along  
until soft moonbeams christen fresh this vow:

With lunar shadows on our skin of blue,  
my song's for me alone, to share with you.

—Amanda Shrader



## BAPTISM OF SALT

What do you hold prisoner  
behind your budded eyes?  
Does it count the days with hash marks

on your soft inner walls?  
Is it bathed in lime-light,  
or are you filled with darkness?

I watched Grandma peel  
your mottled outer skin;  
the earthen smell on her hands,

wet, white broth  
running through her fingers.  
How little you resisted the blade-

sliced half, and half again,  
thick white stains on the knife handle-  
my fingerprints.

I remember piecing you back together  
to keep from turning,  
the ring of foam inside the pan,

the smell you released- like birthdays.  
We threw away your map  
of dirt-filled gashes and curls.

I give you in return  
a baptism of salt  
and a new dark place to hide.

—Amanda Shrader

## FEVER DREAMS LIKE POPPIES

Something about a cold  
Fever makes my mind race  
Makes me think about being old  
Red runs over  
Like lines of age  
A flush like time  
Across my face  
Heat in flashes and cold like lashes  
Whip me from dialectic extremes

Wild dreams  
And apparent seams  
Of life and consciousness  
To fall redeemed  
I live dangerously  
And close to the line  
Been some time  
Since I felt so bent  
It's good for the soul  
To lose control  
To feel the sickness  
Run the show  
And have some days in darkness spent

*—Daniel McNulty*



## TWO-TIME

I have been taken  
Hoodwinked, bamboozled  
By a traveling salesman  
Who would take no refusal

The goods delivered  
Seemed so appealing  
Though now their flaws have come forth  
And proved his double dealing

He's fled with my funds  
But won't get away  
With a lifetime of savings  
By his deceit from one day

I chase like a hound  
On his last known course  
He has a head start on me  
So I bear down on my horse

I ride through the sands  
But I've seen no sign  
And I thirst for my revenge  
As I yearn for what is mine

I come to a town  
And I inquire  
If they have seen this huckster  
Wretched conman, this liar

They say that they have  
That he's robbed them too  
And ridden off to the south  
They call with, "Good luck to you"

As I ride renewed  
For twenty more leagues  
I ride till I'm exhausted  
Until my horse is fatigued

Then, miles ahead  
I see his wagon  
And I urge my steed onward  
But he's weary and lagging

—Daniel McNulty

## CRYING TO JOHN

After sex  
That was offered  
Not desired  
So much  
Intimacy  
He felt compelled  
To undertake  
Somewhat by  
His own impetus  
The prurience of his body  
Concomitantly  
Because as a man  
He knows  
When offered  
He is obliged to accept

It was  
Without  
Connection  
It was  
An atavistic reaction  
Corpus delicti  
He grunted  
Effort undertaken  
Not to feel  
Much more  
Beyond the longing of his loins  
Thrusting away  
She lay there like a cadaver  
Whimpering

Emotionally detached  
Both of them  
Eventually he came  
And slackened upon her  
She enshrouded him in her arms  
He lay away transiently  
Then extricated himself  
His head propped on a pillow  
Becoming aware  
Of the patter of rain on the window pane  
He heard iced weeping  
He looked and saw her crying  
When she noticed  
That he noticed

She spoke  
Telling him  
Of a rape  
And a pregnancy  
And an abortion  
She began sobbing  
Her father  
Beacon unrestrained  
The street lamp outside  
Cast shadows  
Of raindrops  
As they trickled down  
The panes of glass  
Over her  
And the room behind her  
It seemed as if the entire world cried  
As she cried

—Daniel McNulty

## TWINS (A FAIRY TALE)

ONCE UPON A TIME... there were fraternal twins still in the womb of their mother. They grew there safe from danger. They eagerly awaited the day when they would see what was outside of the walls that confined them when they could finally see what made all the sounds they heard beyond the womb. They would talk with each other excitedly about what may be awaiting them. One day a magical fairy appeared to them.

"Hello", said the fairy. "I am your fairy guide, here to tell you of the world into which you are to be born."

"Oh my!" said the little twins. "We have never met anyone but each other. How you shine!" They were delighted to see this magical creature before them. Anything would seem magical to these two perfect unsullied creations, but a real fairy dazzled them beyond measure.

"Well thank you," said the fairy, "but let us dis-

pense with the niceties, I have a schedule to keep, so let us proceed with my introducing you to this world you will enter."

"Oh yes, oh yes, please do!", cried the twins gleefully. "Tell us, what is it like to be born?"

"Well", said the fairy, "you will enter out of this dark world into a world of bright light, and the muffled sounds you hear will be clearly discernable. You little girl, will be cleaned off and wrapped in swaddling blankets and held close to you mother's warm breast."

"Oh that sounds wonderful," said the twins. "But what of me?", asked the brother with wide eyes and innocence.

"You", said the fairy, "you will have part of your penis chopped off."

"Whaaat?!!!", said the little boy, shocked and horrified. "But...but...it is just now growing, it is so

small and delicate...why would they want to hurt it?!" "It is just the way," said the fairy guide. The little sister looked concerned about her brother but her fate did not seem at all bad so she asked the fairy, "What then fairy, after we are born?"

The little brother looked up, still with innocent curiosity in his eyes. He had been shocked by the prospect of being mutilated at birth but had spirit and thought that it must get much better after this entrance into the world.

"Well then you will grow and soon you will play."

The little boy started to perk up at the thought of this and again the two spoke as one, "That sounds wonderful. What kind of games will we play?" "You, little girl," said the fairy, "you will play with dolls and dress up, you will color and be expected to be good in art, you will have kittens and puppies for pets, and

will help in cooking delicious meals." "What of me?", asked the little brother.

"You", said the fairy, "you will play in mud and dirt, you will make frogs and snakes your pets. You will be rough. You will wrestle and fight and get into trouble."

"Why do I have to play in the mud... and...snakes?!? Why would I get into trouble? I don't understand," asked the little boy, confused and disheartened.

"It is just the way," said the fairy guide. Again the little sister was concerned for her brother but could not wait to ask what was next for her because all that the fairy had told her seemed so wonderful.

"What then fairy? What will come after we are older?"

"Well", said the fairy, "as you grow older you will begin to play different games."

The little brother thought to himself that after all that had come before this must be the part where his life will become enjoyable and again the two spoke as one:

"What then fairy guide? What kind of games will we play?"

"Well", said the fairy guide, "you, little sister, will swim and run. You will play a musical instrument in your school band and you will be a cheerleader. You will say things like 'GO TEAM!' but what you will mean is 'Look at me, I'm so pretty! Everyone loves me. Life is so good!'"

"What of me?", asked the little brother. "What games will I play?"

"You", said the fairy, "you will play games where you fight other young men for a ball. You will slam your body into theirs and hurt each other to get this ball and then you will put it through a hole or take

it across a line and whoever does this the most wins. Whoever does not hurt the other one more and take the ball away the most will be losers and no one will like them because they have failed."

This time the little boy just stared in disbelief at the fairy for a while. Finally he said, "What stupid games. Why would I want to play those games?!?"

"It is just the way," said the fairy guide. Again the little sister felt for her brother but her concern was little more than a tinge when she thought about what else she may look forward to. Everything sounded wonderful so far.

"What then fairy guide?" she asked almost squealing with anticipation. "What will happen after that?"

"Well," said the fairy guide, after a while you will be done with school and done with the games you played as children. Now life will truly begin for you

on your own."

At this the little boy, who was now staring off into the blackest corner of the womb, looked back and again the two asked as one (although the boy did not do so with the same zeal as his sister), "What will we do then?"

"You", said the fairy guide, "you little sister will go to college, a school for young adults that will ensure that you get a higher paying job. You will be eligible for all the scholarships your brother is and you will have special scholarships because you are a girl. Your parents will give you more money as well, because they will worry about you because you are their precious angel. Your father will not want anything bad to happen to you because he thinks you need his protection and your mother will see herself when she looks at you and will give you all that she can."

"Oh that sounds wonderful!," said the sister.

Not wanting to ask but not able to help himself, the little brother asked, "And what of me?"

"You", said the fairy guide, "you will have to register for Selective Service. It is just in case they have to conscript you into the Army and you may go to war. You may not be able to pay for your college though and you may have to join the Army anyhow, in order to pay for your college. That is if you survive. It is not likely that your parents will help you very much with college because you are a boy and they think you should be able to pay for it yourself. You will not be able to get a good job though, because you have no education and the economy sucks, so you probably will not be able to finish college,"

"Oh," said the little brother. And that was all that he said.

Little sister was beaming with the thought of all that life had for her and she asked, "What then fairy

guide? What will happen to us then?"

"Then," said the fairy guide, "then you will graduate and get a good job. You will not have to work too hard and you will be paid well for this. You will bear children and they will love you. You will live your life out happily and see your life continued in the children that come from your womb."

"Oh that sounds wonderful," she exclaimed. "Don't tell me any more, I want to experience it all myself." She then looked and saw her brother staring dejectedly into the blackest part of the womb. "But what of my brother?" she asked, hoping that some good news might console him.

"He," said the fairy guide, "He will never graduate college, he will stay in that dead end job that he got in order to survive. He will get a girl pregnant. It will be her choice to abort it and he will become horribly depressed. He will then get another girl pregnant one

night after becoming incredibly drunk at a bar. She will decide to keep the baby, it is her choice, but she will sue him for child support to pay for the result of her choice. He will be even poorer than he already had been. After a few years he will develop cancer from the carcinogens he has been exposed to at the dead end factory job that he has been working at for years. He will lose his job and insurance and die a hellishly painful death, alone."

With this the fairy guide left them. The little sister beamed and could hardly wait for the day that she would be born. The little brother sat and thought in complete dismay, about the life that he faced. After a few weeks they saw a light opening up beneath them and they knew that it was time to be born. Outside of the womb, their mother was in labor in the maternity ward of a hospital. The doctor told her to "PUSH! PUSH!" After a long while of pushing the doctor



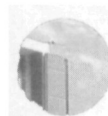
said to her, "I see the head. Here she comes." With that, out came little sister. She was taken away for a moment and cleaned and wrapped in swaddling blankets.

Still there was little brother inside so the doctor kept saying, "PUSH! PUSH!" After a few minutes of pushing the doctor said to her, "I see the head. Here he comes."

With that out came little brother. A hush borne of grief came over the room. Little brother had arrived but his umbilical cord was wrapped around his neck like a noose and he hung from his mother's womb as a gallows, a baby condemned since before birth.

The doctor took him away and brought little sister to her mother. Mother was sad at first and so was little sister, but soon they found solace in each other, and were able to enjoy the lives that they had been so fortunate to be blessed with.

*—Daniel McNulty*



## SOLITARY

Another Fall comes,  
I have lost myself  
I am not afraid  
I am not at awe  
I must harness my world  
I must not be imaginative  
I must be practical  
I will be boring  
I will be bored  
But I will not be stagnant  
I will grow within myself  
In appreciable ways

No one loves  
It is a lie  
Love only your own  
And power  
Only respects itself

I will be old  
I must not be poor  
I will not be  
That old man  
Who begs for food  
Who rots alone  
And no one cares

*—Daniel McNulty*

## HANDING OVER THE LATEX GLOVES

*I REMEMBER WASHING dishes with my mother when I was six. I would climb on top of a chair to play in the sink. I took pleasure in filling it with warm fragrant soapy suds. I would make sure the water became full of fluffy cloudlike foam. A bubble would float away and I'd catch it. I was mesmerized with the colors it made and at how it stretched with movement of my finger. I prodded the small air filled orb waiting for it to pop. When least expecting it the bubble disappeared in front of me and all that remained were its sticky remnants on my fingers.*

Washing dishes for a restaurant is not like washing dishes at home. The only time you catch a glimpse of soapsuds is when they seep from the dishwashing machine due to a clog in the drain. A bubble-regulated machine runs the actual dish washing process nowadays.

Spray, load, open, close.

Open, repeat, inspect.

Still dirty.

Unclog the filter, open, close.

More bus tubs of filthy dishes: Lift tub, drop, sort.

Spray, load, open, close.

"Here's your apron and gloves."

A dishwasher is a key function of any kitchen. Any completion of work in the kitchen is dependent upon you, the dishwasher. Chefs depend on you to supply them with necessary utensils to produce their delicacies: "I need skillet! How am I supposed to finish this fettuccine?" Hostesses rely on you to supply them with the means to arrange their place settings: "I need silverware to roll napkins." You must be capable of multitasking for the success of others is in your hands: "We're out of plates and I can't cook this food without a skillet!" Breaks should be taken quickly because you are always needed, "I know you're on a break but we're out of glasses." Don't be hesitant in doing what it takes to get your job done. Productivity is valued more than quality: *"Wait! That is still dirty."*

As a dishwasher, your primary concern is assisting others so in order to achieve this vocation you must be a philanthro-

pist. The wash cycle of my Kenmore at home often brings back the memories of hearing the booming voices of cherished coworkers: "Damn it, where are all the salad bowls? I need steak knives! We're out of hot plates, I need them now!" You must be able assist others' needs promptly: "I need a pitcher of water, we got a fire!" You must be attentive to others' desires and take their words to heart in order to maintain this profession: "You're all worthless, you need to pick up the pace." You must always remember to treat your fellow employees with respect: "Are you deaf? Hurry up. It'll all be your fault if we don't get out'a here on time."

Strength is valued at this restaurant. In order to be a dishwasher you must have a tolerance for manual labor. Those who are sensitive to touch should quickly adapt to extreme discomfort, as your skin will be exposed to hot steam and scalding water. To this day, I experience a reoccurring skin allergy whenever I encounter Joy soap and latex gloves. You must be able to bear your injuries on the job as though they are medals of honor. These wounds are emblems of personal achievement showing that

though you were injured you maintained your hardworking position. My most prized battle wound, the one I worked diligently through, was acquired from a whimsical slip on spilled grease on the surface of the kitchen tile floor. *Oh my god, I think I just broke my tailbone.* You also need to be cautious of bus boys as they often present you with bus tubs containing hidden broken glass.

Endurance is vital to the dishwasher because few people can handle the responsibility it takes in this occupation. You must become accustomed to working long hours soaked in slimy grease and filthy water. Just because the restaurant closes at eleven doesn't mean your job is done: "I want *everything* washed before you can leave." Washing dishes is a full time job. In order to be dedicated to your position you must always be on call: "You *have* to come in tonight - Tiffany quit."

If you are in dishes for the money, you are on the wrong career path. Even after years of employment, few make over minimum wage. Though the labors of each day may drag you

down physically and emotionally, you must understand that you have a higher purpose as you are a main ingredient of the kitchen's recipe. You should feel pleased with your position. I, however, am unable to reach my potential as dishwasher. I am moving on to bigger and better things: food preparation.



*–Deanna Bachtell*

## 4TH OF JULY

THERE WERE NINE of us cousins and only two of them were boys- the oldest and the second to the last. But the boys didn't care they played with us girls anyway: house, make believe, and Barbie's (as long as we let them pop their heads off). We met my Mom's side of the family for a picnic on the Fourth of July every year. These picnics were fantastic! The same park (with the giant hill), the same food (Nannie's banana pudding with the vanilla wafers, the same people (Nannie and Pawpaw, aunts, uncles and cousins along with the six people in my family), year after year.

We played at the park all day. Running from the swings, to the pool, to rolling down Lincoln Hill. Not towards the woodsy side because that's where the bad people hid who wanted to take little children and hurt them. We could feel every bump and rock on the way down that 50ft slope. Our skin was itchy from sunburn and grass and my hair was its faint shade of green from a summer's worth of pool chlorine. Later we made our trek back to the swings, back to the pool

(1/2 an hour after we ate so that we wouldn't drown), and then it was back to the hill and its bumpy overtures.

My father and uncles would grill the hamburgers and hot dogs while Pawpaw picked a tune on his guitar and smoked a cigar.

"Dad, don't you light that stinky thing," my mom scolded.

"Yeah, Dad," my aunt joined in, "we can't stand the smell."

"You girls leave your Dad alone. He can do as he pleases," Nannie admonished them. Nannie and Pawpaw were so loyal to each other. No one, not even their children, could say anything to one of them without the other sticking up for them. Jim and Irene met on a train heading to Detroit from Inez, Kentucky in the early 1940's and have never parted.

My Dad and uncles would stand within the charcoal smoke plumes to get away from the stench. But pawpaw just chuckled and used his power as the patriarch and lit up. The fumes of his cigar permeated

his skin- that mixed with Black Suede after-shave. I would step up behind him and wrap my arms around his neck and lay my head on his warm shoulders. I loved his smell- it was strong. And he was handsome, old Indian features of some long forgotten ancestor. Chiseled cheekbones, a high forehead and a perpetual tan are the features that my second son, Zachary, luckily inherited from his great-grandfather. Zack and I are both summer babies, born under the sign of cancer. And I share this holiday with him.

My children's holiday experiences are different from my own. We don't celebrate on the holiday itself, but when my sisters, parents and I can work each other into our schedules. My kids have thirteen cousins. In this generation only three of them are girls and two of the cousins live in California. The cousins' range in age from nineteen to three and the older kids are so great with the little ones. Barbie is not the dominatrix that she once was: baseball rules. I watch Zachary, now seven play, his long limbs, tanned from the sun, reach up to give me a quick wave from the make-shift

baseball diamond seen only through the eyes of children.

"BATTER UP!" yells his little brother Nick, a tow-headed boy who was born to be his brother's pitcher.

Jacob, 9 my oldest son, is always the catcher. The oldest cousins Todd, Aaron, and Chris play out field. Megan, the oldest girl cousin, is at second base wearing her pink Mary-Kate and Ashley skort and matching hair scrunchie used to hold back her long blond hair. The twins (also known as lil' Shawn and Seth), are at first base and shortstop, respectively. Adam and Olivia stand at third. Zachary stands in the batter box, chokes up on his big, red plastic bat and waits for that first fast ball-Swing and a Miss. Nick winds up again; Zachary stares him down and CRACK the ball soars to left field. He flies towards first base and knocks over lil' Shawn who hasn't yet learned to not stand in the baseline.

"Come on Todd get the ball," Megan yells, "Throw it in!"

Todd and Aaron collide in the outfield trying their best to catch the ball. Chris comes to the rescue of his athletically challenged older brothers, who are now rolling on the ground laughing so hard their sides hurt. He throws it in and Zack rounded second and he's almost to third. Adam and Olivia are there screaming in their three-year-old exuberance and trying to tackle Zack as he passes by. Heading towards home plate he spies Jacob who is squatted in his Johnny Bench stance with the ball in his glove. Zack shifts down and squares off against his big brother.

"You're out!" shouts my husband, Dave, who is also the official referee for our unofficial games.

Our get-togethers are great, but our holidays are different. The family doesn't commit to make national summer holidays a priority. The people of my childhood are gone. Papa died years ago. Mom and Dad divorced (Mom's remarried, Dad's deserted). My uncles are grandpa's themselves with their own family picnics. And we go to a different park. My childhood park with the big happy hill and squeaky swings now

belongs to the throngs of teenagers in very loud cars, not the kind of place for a family picnic. But, this new park brings a nostalgic atmosphere to the Fourth of July. There are many families at this park in this quaint little Ohio town. Driving through the streets, of Prospect, trying to find a parking space I witness many celebrations. One house has a keg flowing; another has a family playing a game of croquet. Miniature American flags line a walkway and another house flies a POW flag. There's a line at the dairy bar and one little boy crying because his scoop of chocolate is lying on the ground.

The park in Prospect has hosted this celebration for close to a decade now. The volunteer fire department brings their big trucks in and they let the kids turn on and off the lights, but not the sirens. There are food stands and a dunking machine, except it's not a dunking machine anymore. Some insurance company put a stop to people falling into the water (they take all the fun away). Now the machine has the water spill on the head of the victim with the sound of a flushing toilet to delight the spectators. A clown works the crowd



and for a dollar he'll make any balloon sculpture the kids want as long as it's a flower, dog or sword.

We arrive just about two hours before the fireworks start. We let the children play some carnival games and ride the ponies that are chained to a merry-go round. The poor ponies are stuck for hours walking only in circles. It's hot and the sugar from spilled drinks and rotting chicken carcasses from the earlier BBQ are attracting flies, bees and the killer of all summer activities: mosquitoes. Dusk is setting and the hundred families that are here begin to clamor for the best place to view the fireworks. My husband and stepfather walk four city blocks to reach our minivan. The kids need bug spray and we need a blanket to sit on because I forgot to pack the lawn chairs. My mom and I mark our territory in our six-by-six tract of grass and like growling dogs we protect the lot until our men return.

"Can I go get something to drink?" Jacob calls out.

"No," I'm not waiting in that line.

"I have to potty," whines Olivia, my soon to be completely potty-trained three-year-old.

"Honey, can't you hold it? The fireworks are going to be starting."

"Nnnooooo, I have to go now!"

"The restroom is clear over on the other side of the park," I try to reason with her.

"I have to go too," Nick joins in.

"Fine. Does anyone else have to go?"

"No."

Then my Nannie sweetly asks, "If the line isn't too long, could you get me a funnel cake?"

Exasperated I smile and let out, "of course." Hand in hand we trek off to the bathroom. This holiday isn't as easy as it used to be.

When I was little we could watch the fireworks from our home, not a different town.

After hours at the park our clan would retreat to my house. My dad would pull out the ice



cream maker and swear because we didn't have enough ice. With \$2 in our hands the privileged older cousins would walk to the neighborhood grocery store and sling the icy drippings coming off of the bag on to each other as we screeched all the way home. My dad would attach the handle to the metal tub that is encased in ice. He would have to crank the handle around and around, then add more ice, crank it more, add salt to the ice to make it colder, crank it some more. Finally after a half-an-hour of churning and complaining were done, Mom would spoon bowlfuls to everyone.

"We should try chocolate," my uncle would say.

"Or cut up some cherries," piped up my Dad.

"Get some sprinkles," one of us kids would call out, but picnic after picnic, year after year we still ended up with vanilla-and it was good.

At dusk we would search out the lightning bugs. Our back yard was a goldmine for these glowing friends. Our pie-shaped yard held within its fenced sides Rose-of Sharon bushes, a huge lilac bush and some evergreen shrubs. A lone hydrangea tree with blossoms pure as snow and as big as our fists gave us

a little glimpses of winter in the heat of the summer. The 'snowball' tree also held the power of filling my mother's mouth with the harshest colors of the spectrum. The rainbow would spew out expletives when us kids would have a 'snowball' fight with the tree's huge blossoms. The lightning bugs would hover within the leafy branches of the bushes in an attempt to shield themselves from harm.

The children would pull out our glass jars and my dad would pound holes in the lids. Then we were off tracking the docile creatures like they were 10pt bucks.

"There's one!"

"There's one over there!"

Even our parents would join in on the fun. After a dozen or so in our jars; we would shake them as hard as we could. I don't know why we just did. After the torture had stopped we put the little buggers out of their misery by ripping their golden, glowing guts out and adorning ourselves with their carnage. Rings, earrings, and necklaces: the embers glowed for all of two minutes. We pranced around the yard like we were princesses flashing our jewels to our Pawpaw.

"Don't you girls look pretty," he admired, but then he ran when we would try to give him his own set of earrings from our most recent kill. The guts of the lightning bugs left gooey, glittery, stinky residues that my mom, immediately, made us wash off.

*—Julie Lehner*

## UNTITLED

Asorrowful touch  
A lithesome voice  
You breathe,  
To keep breathing  
You look to know you're not  
Dreaming

You're still breathing  
You're still here  
You keep on moving  
Without any fear

Then it comes back  
So long down the line  
The fear  
The anger  
The voice still inside  
You breath to keep  
Breathing

*—Joseph Hill*

## CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES

**Joe Hill** is a junior majoring in middle childhood education. He was born and raised in Delaware, Ohio (except for a brief stay at Shawnee State University). He has enjoyed writing since the age of 12, and he is currently working on his first book.

**Julie Lehner** is a 2005 graduate of The Ohio State University. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Humanities in August, and she plans to pursue her Masters at Ashland University to obtain her teaching certificate. She would love to teach language arts at the high school level and help her students enjoy their writing experiences using the skills that she learned at OSUM and her fantastic professors.

**Daniel McNulty** is a student at OSUM. Daniel explains his writing this way: "I write stories in my head all the time. I don't believe you. I am probably going to have ulcers. I read a lot of non-fiction, utopian, and distopian literature. I think walking in cornfields is a good place to review thoughts, but I think the title, "The Cornfield Review," makes us sound like a bunch of hicks."

**Amanda Schrader** is a recent graduate of OSUM with a B.A. in English. She focused in Creative Writing and hopes to one day go back for her MFA and teach. She likes cats and Star Trek. Yeah, seriously.

**William Friend** is a senior at Ohio State University Marion majoring in English. He plans to minor in film.

**Kristin Keplar** is a fairly responsible and enjoyable person who loathes Biology, Dial soap, and pork-chops all in the same breath. Stuff she does like: her daughter Tangwystl, maps, and Diet Sunkist. When asked where she was going in her life, she answered, "home...point me in the direction of home which = my heart. I'd be content with that lot in life, yesiree."

**Gary Buechel** is a Senior History major. He lives in the Ashley area with his wife whom he met at OSUM. They have five kids. He returned to get his degree after a thirty year break and only has a few hours left to graduate. He owns a business in downtown Ashley that has been going for 48 years. He states that, “the fact that OSUM has a History program has made it possible for me to achieve [redacted by CIA..].”

**Crystal Alford** is a mother of three, a full-time college student, part-time construction worker, and her hobbies include stained glass, painting, drawing, and jewelry making.

**Tammy Blair** is a junior English major. Who has been writing poetry since the eighth grade. She hopes to someday publish a whole book of poetry. Her career goal is to become a true crime novelist.

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In addition to contributing pieces to this year's journal, several students also served on the editorial board of *The Cornfield Review*: **Niel Burbury, Erin Vought, Deanna Bachtell, Sarah Stahl, Barbara Irwin, Anthony Iacobucci, Tiffany Hord, and Alyson Strickler**. Amidst the spirited discussions about submissions, layout, and the business of literary publication, this group amassed a truly heartwarming corpus of memories that will ring through the ages: the Semi-Regular Political Debate Series, the Field Trip that Almost Wasn't, the Table-Top Celebratory Dance (and, of course, the Subsequent Fall from Grace), the Thousand Paper Cuts Rite of Passage, and many more that dare not make their way into any permanent record. Excelsior!





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