
The Cornfield Review



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Preface

“DOES NOBODY UNDERSTAND?” These were the dying words of James Joyce, who worked his entire life pushing at the bounds of the written word. This was the quotation my Literary Publication class selected as the epigraph for this, the 30th volume of *Cornfield Review*. As my students explained it, Joyce challenged how we looked at language and felt like no one understood him. This deathbed utterance might be read as a lamentation, or it could also be seen as a challenge to future generations of readers and writers to continue that push, to innovate when we create and attempt to find meaning in challenging texts. This is, after all, how literature survives and ultimately thrives.

We acknowledge the support we have received throughout the production of this issue: firstly, the administration of OSU-Marion, led by Dean Greg Rose; our English faculty, as ever, have pressed our students to send good written works our way; Mary Fahy has likewise encouraged her students to send along wonderful photographic submissions.

This year's Editorial Board

has been a particular pleasure to advise. Members of the 2013 Board consist of: Halley Buchwalter, Jherek Cummings, Lacy Daughenbaugh, Janay Dyer, Stevie Evans, Tiffany Grounds, Rebecca Wagner-Hopkins, Lauren Jackson, Audrey Kielmeyer, Austin King, Kayla Robertson, Samantha Stover, Whitney Taylor, Meg Weatherford, Brian Wilds, and Calvin Wray. Without their tireless, eager efforts, this issue would not have been possible.

Cornfield Review is published annually. The Editorial Board is interested in quality poetry, prose, artwork, and photography. Submissions are primarily solicited from students at OSU-Marion, Marion Technical College, and Columbus State Community College-Delaware, although we accept submissions from off-campus writers and artists as well. For more information, please email me at mccorkle.12@osu.edu, or visit us online at <http://cornfieldreview.osu.edu>.

—Ben McCorkle, Faculty Adviser

The Cornfield Review Mission Statement

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

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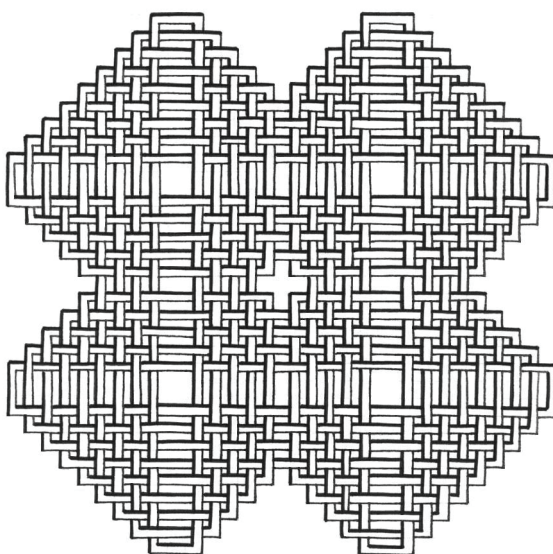
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M₁⁹⁵
L₁⁷⁵

poetry.

More

A swirling, raging mess of sea
Always drenched in adversity
Most have oft dreamed, many have dared
Few have tried, fewer have triumphed
Traversing from shore to distant shore
A task not won by will alone
Billows of death break up resolve
Hidden dangers haunt the unknown
Warning the weak & content & simple
But for those who search for something
Demand meaning beyond today
And can't lie still while riches wait
The pounding waves and deadly pains
Give way and lose their haunting refrains

—*Andrew Pinkerton*

Renewed

"No hope found here," familiar lay
Tang of death forebear desolate tears
A glimpse of hope might one chance down here?
"But for delusion, foolish one,
Can you see beyond this cursed state?"
In every hollow can be heard
And scratched on every stone unturned
Read amongst every evil act
An echo screaming from endless past
Both known and felt, we endure the fall
Groaning from agony and guilt
Final breaths before a last exhale
Like a prow besieged by pounding waves
Ere giving way to watery grave
But such a fate I don't foresee
Not final death these groans declare
But release from chains, restored state
A hope long hidden in the dark
Singing her song to searching souls
Of live revealed by renewal
Coming day when creation will see
From trial emerging a beauty
To which the former cannot compare
For only when the fall be felt
Will be brightest day fully beheld

—Andrew Pinkerton

Treasure

Where doth wit and splendor meld
More fittingly than can be thought?
In one being only be they found
It is in thee and thee alone
Loveliest creature to caress this—
This accursed earth.
Might I merely regale this thought
Having no hope of turning thee
Entering once they dear embrace
No longer have I need of wealth
For in thee is greatest treasure found—
Found in only thee.

—*Andrew Pinkerton*

Reality Remix

Written on vellum, black and white past,
My stories narrated through silent film,
Edison's phonograph, crackling breath last,
Needles gliding gently across ebony history,
Music playing fluently, a reality remix.

Mother's touch soothing weeping wounds,
Crystal beaches, filtered through vivid current
Blue Ridge smoke taste thick with picturesque sound,
My families warm summer sunsets, flashes current,
Cold Christmas mornings, warmed by my niece's smiles,
Music playing fluently, a reality remix.

Bitter earthy fresh flavors of a football field,
Screams of respect chanting throughout a crowd,
Deafen sounds, a symphony as thrills collide,
Clashing modern day titans, against steroid induced youth
Music playing fluently, a reality remix.

White coats delivering a message of determined dark,
Internal suffocation, as I sway about sterile white halls,
Eyes display the raven that engulfed the lark,
Bones brittle splitters spread, like a shattered Gibson
Music plays...plays my reality remix.

Final scratches carve deep into vinyl,
Music fades out, on reality remix.

—*Brian Wilds*

F*** You Censorship

Censorship, an entrapment of mind and soul,
Similar to Ginsberg and Jordan, I don't hide within lines
Spidering every poetic entitlement with metaphoric calamity,
Black X, or slurred questionable word,
Can't use "Fuck"...even though it's a grammatical gift

Deep Breath...in, then out

I'm not hiding behind Blake's whispering flower towers,
Or oppressing my verbal flow inside WCW's little red wheelbarrow,
Forming inscriptions of venom acid laced amenities,
Screaming "fuck America," if any rights are ceased

Confusion of freedom intertwines uneducated minds,
America has a communist business driven spin,
A back bone shattering freedom through faded thoughts,
Drag your body in landfills of propaganda poison,
Force feed toilet wine into your imprisoned soul

Pause, breathe... in chemical-induced cancer cells

Question a makeshift thought of "for the people, by the people,"
Brought to you by — born free, live free
Sponsored by *Corrupt Politicians of America*
Citizens don't approve this message,

They hide behind nuclear lies, and war machines,
Government controlled messages through TV,
Infected with political injected STDs,
Urine stained documents written by Jefferson and our ancestral
tree,
Blind since day one we've been raped of being free,

Fuck You if you want to censor me.

—*Brian Wilds*

Grandmother's Kitchen

Hidden eyes peeking, through lavender leaves
Lush green stems waving crystal clarity,
Smells fluently flowing through ancient décor,
Slithering slowly, viewing a heated mouth

Steadily staring, through clouded weeping air
Temperate vanilla dough, dancing upon her tongue
Richly sweet chocolate, surfaces deep brown
Risen expansion spreads, vastly over metal borders

Faded rose floral, sustains her view
Grandmother's, wrinkled prune hand extends
Fingers laced, with sweet serenity
"Cookie dear?"

—*Brian Wilds*

Adam's Confession

I long for nothing
Trapped flavors, essence tip lips
Nature's nectar, flowing through hollow channels
Sounds of smooth skin brazing internal distress,

Ruby red creations,
Press against fractured fruit veins
Inviting purities repercussions
Gently whispering... "For you",

Slithering through nature's bosom
Sandpaper skin rattling greyed branches
Hissing he calls to Eve
Her eye's light brighter than hell's ultraviolet flames,

Persuaded and suffocated, enlightens moral mayhem
Aggressively I bite tearing away at crimson skin
The serpent coils, Eve collapses as all is numb
In petrified fetal position shivering in regret,

I long for nothing—
Nothing will be received,
Forevermore dammed.

—*Brian Wilds*

Pray

Pray for souls defining their depth through trained tongues
Relinquishing concepts of empty thoughts, pervade by
 mythological mouths,
Pray for idle hands that feed the breast of deception and greed
Divide diversity of thoughts and theories with illusion,

Pray within closed walls suffocating faith with filth and fraud
Aspirations that one day brothers, once again become brothers, and
 not collection plates,
Pray starving families find humanity, opposed to begging, erasing
 humility
Individual cuts of heroin affect skin drips with our son's homeless
 blood,

Pray when your infant becomes a man he's not inferior
He doesn't attempt to breathe absorbing his black lung,
Pray he holds Mother Nature, not a semi-charmed science
That bleeding hearts, can protect bleeding minds,

Pray, that praying is faith.

—*Brian Wilds*

Stolen Soul

Empty thoughts linger in a thick mist
Reflections of us fading with time,
Lovers leave, without having finally kissed
If death is lethal, then love is a crime.

Hearts find a symphony in darkness, which is devilish and divine
Seeking sanctuary in a soul to console the numbing pain,
Blisters embedded on a heart that is truly mine
Love is a deceitful bitch that drives to be vain and insane.

Many loves have come, and much love told
True love can never exist in a heart so dead... and cold.

—*Brian Wilds*

Absence

Wisdom speaks empty words,
Minuscule translations muted,
Oblique meanings,

Scalpels slowly, progressively,
And diligently forming tarnished souls,
Phases never cease,

Absent color internal pink,
Taste of cancer black, bitter, sweet,
Smells of slander cures unknown,

Ask, white coats how to feel?
Ask, me of my morbid dreams?
Ask, to hear my deafening moans?

Don't pose as if you know,
Conspiring to impregnate my thoughts,
Don't ever say you have worn my ebony wings,

I taste your iron deep fear surfacing my tongue,
Run childless soul, run from all we've meant.

—*Brian Wilds*

England's Own

Infant's eyes coined, flesh milky white,
Relic's remorse spawning grievous emotion, as a morbid procession
 passes —
Mother's collapse to weary knees, their first daughters blends into
 night,
Universal Prayer vibrates through splintered eardrums in masses.

Portrait of minds burnt as somber embraces signify one of England's
 dead
Neither intellect nor second comings can repent her shattered wings
A skylark of freedom bid a final farewell; with deafening words said
Voices grasp the remains of a slain, depleted soul,

Stolen child gracefully guided through lush green kaleidoscope
 gardens,
Glorious elder women possess, like a structure erect and full,
Child's letters floating, as ink stains appear pardoned,
Last verse printed produced on antique presses, numerous near
 sided
Ebony ink states "England no Longer Mourn for me when I am dead
and free."

— *Brian Wilds*

A Few Words

I believe I loved you once
It was long ago
The pictures of us are worn
You can have them all
These treasures: I will not recall
When you met me
I think you remember that night
You came upstairs
You said you loved my dress
With a playful smile
You told an old tale, one of love
And I believed for so long
True, I had read a love story —
But never had I found a white knight
Your hand soft as a rose
Fell on my arm
That drop of love made mine flow fast
But you with a nonchalant air
Forgot poor me
Did you tremble at all
Oh, how the fickle fell
I look at you
With quiet surprise
I think it was only a dream
Of love, of defeat
It was not your first

—*Brittany Coomes*

A Tunnel Named Depression

The tunnel is so dark that I can barely see
That the weary path omnisciently foreshadows
The walls of this dejected cave closing in on me
There is a demon hiding in the eerie shadows
A single lonely vestige lurking in the darkness
Whispering sad lies truth tries to overshadow
This hollow cave is a dwelling for the heartless
The pungent air is thick and it's hard to breathe
My will to move has vanished in the blackness
Shivers creep up my spine as my blood seethes
This deep dark depression won't make me flee

—*Brittany Violet Long*

I follow wherever I am led

Yesterday was bright, calm and frosty when my lover left for war.

Before he left, he said, "The love of Socrates is associated with seeking the other half of one's soul."

He said, "Every man has a guiding genius in his conscience."

He said, "A good man is hard to find in the temple of the Holy Ghost."

He said, "Small changes in body posture can produce surprisingly large changes in the forces acting inside the body."

He said, "The artist needs only to make it express her personality in such a way that visitors will be enchanted."

He said, "The possibilities of the unimproved are limitless and exhilarating."

He said, "Baby I love you but your presence is a moral poison that would contaminate the most virtuous."

My heart sank because the trade was soon brought to an apparently happy conclusion on his end.

—*Brittany Violet Long*

Summer's Last Will

In her last
decaying years,
my golden locks
had turned
to silver.
The air was warm
when she
begged me
to no longer mourn
after her death.
But's it's hard
when the
ecstasy
of her touch
still
lingers
on my flesh.
Summer's
last will
was to grant
my sweet,
rose-cheeked Laura
to sigh
no more.
The melancholy nightingale
called to my love
while the stars
were alive
in the sky.
Even in death,
her beauty
radiated
like a bound-
less ocean.
There was a garden
in her face
that watered
my love's

growth.
Her quiet
features
hinted
at a prospect
of Heaven,
which made
the acceptance
of her death
easier.
Months after
my lover's funeral,
I sat watching
her apparition grow
from the
shadows.
The rising sun
caught light
in the twinkle
of her mystic,
gleaming
eyes.
I watched
as her
beaming
light
disappeared into
the horizon,
while the first hint
of winter wind
blew a shiver
up my
spine.

—*Brittany Violet Long*

The Fuck Word

The fuck word
Can be used anywhere
In any sentence
At anytime
With any topic
Talking to anyone

The fuck word
Use it to describe an object
Use it to describe someone
Use it explain a scene
Use it to describe an action
Use it to hate

The fuck word
Possibly too vulgar
Could offend someone
Sometimes unnecessary
Could make violence
May not work in any other poem

The fuck word
Makes me laugh
Makes me smile
Makes me happy
Makes me stand
Makes me live

The fuck word
Not everyone can pull it off
Only a certain type of person
Have to be care free
Must be comfortable
Most of the time be fucked

—*Calvin Wray*

Sights and Sounds of the Ghetto

Eerie sights fill my gaze/
I look upon bodies that are battered and weary/
Faces painted with pensive, solemn expression/
Pulsating temples and tightened jaw bones/
Eyes darting about in all directions, engaged in survival mode/
I look upon tensed shoulders and perched arms, crossed defensively/
The walking dead tirelessly searching for their per diem fixations/
I look upon groups of individuals muddled together in rife proximity, bonded by generations of penury/

I hear the sounds of horror which indelibly resonate/
I look upon scores of youth, and even though their sobs and wailing may be silent, and their cries out for help may be inaudible, the noise is deafening/
I hear the scuffling of sneakered footsteps against the concrete pavement/ The blaring of lights and sirens/ And the laboring of breathing as perpetrators fleetingly escape authoritative pursuit/
I hear the cries and whimpering of infants being held on the hips of adolescents, who have been maternally forced into adulthood/

I look upon the ghetto infrastructure, with its family dwellings stripped down, blackened charred, and presumed vacant/
Squatters making due with second-hand furniture and pirated utilities/
Under appliances and in corners sit mouse traps, fly strips, and roach motels/
I look upon lurid, hulking eyesores rotting away, standing on their last leg/
Employment severally abated, so bill-collectors and landlords subsequently become persona non grata/
I look upon busloads of schoolchildren being driven toward dreams thought to be unattainable/

I hear the squeaks and croaks of rocking chairs as elders gather and squabble over matters of vanity/
I gaze upon games of hop-scotch and double-dutch being played on the same ghetto sidewalks where hustlers shoot craps/
School children walking the same streets where the 'working girls' stroll/
I hear the resounding celebrations of those who've for so long hidden their true identity for fear of enmity from the masses, but now released themselves from the crypts of their own hearts and minds/

Sights and sounds of the ghetto/

—Dawud Wilson

Cataclysms

In my dreams, I've seen unimaginable events/
Crooked beliefs and traditions that are deeply entrenched/
Population decline intertwines with the rise in crime, the grit and
grime, and ultimately the end of time/ We're still at the end of the
line/

From being push to the back of the bus/ To leaders of the free
world, but still not completely free/ We're almost at the cusp/
Ghetto youth searching for their guardian angel/ Their anger boils
and overflows, 'til they're choked up and strangled/
Revolutionary thoughts are suppressed, because certain character
egos must be stoked and caressed/
Only in my dreams have I seen such cataclysmic events/

Our confused government hastens to ease the tensions of those
across seas and oceans/ While neglected are those that are
right here. Those that are closest/ Leaders are void of all integrity
because of the actions done on a whim/ See, sometimes it's easier to
fight for principles than to actually live up to them/
Only in my dreams have I seen such cataclysmic events/

Upon ships are bundles of mind-altering substances, from Colum-
bians and Peruvians/ Which lead to neighborhoods becoming war
zones, but that was all part of their foregone theories and conclu-
sions/
Young ones sitting on stoops, while older one's sit watching from
atop roofs/ Keeping a lookout for those in authoritative attire, while
hand-to-hand distribution transpires/
Only in my dreams have I seen such unimaginable cataclysmic events/

—Dawud Wilson

Titles and Registrations

I will be insane at first when Dutches will be last
I love the letters that my grandmother wrote in the past
we take off the rhythm in the fact
the method will only bother you, the mask

Our own roads taken out on the roads faking
educating Indians find some toads for the taking
now that my horses full listen to the strings in his bowels
names many of the horses she had no names for cows

Spent lights might need batteries
tragedies of Psalms to calm Edmonds versus
curses lurk Robert's grave gets robbed, hopeless on the surface
the pope wrote warnings, children broken in a battle scene

We are what mother cooks in the kitchen
from Vegas in the car all of the southern fictions
Oprah has Elvis on the show, who knew
dance together and they shall have answers new

Something wakes me up in my father's house
even nuclear age is late to spring now
is it a kiss in church, holier than thou
when strong lambs die I am a mouse found

The Whitehorse has come to harm poets
in the cool of the evening jokes on a pulpit
my father's corpse lies with grandmothers spit
fireflies after twilight I have do this bit

—*j.a. cummings*

The Moment with My Ghost

I awoke, sat up in ninety degree
to the left of me stood a ghost
she was transparent
her face detailed the most
she wore a nightgown
a veil like Mother Mary
white, blue, foggy black
she did not dare to scare me
I looked away, rubbed my eyes
looked again to see
her eyes were closed
she did not look at me
her arms rested at her sides
hands lay open a praying time
what is she why is she here?
why is she so high and divine?
I turned again, stared at the wall
to see if she was in my head
I looked back at her she was there
I felt like I was dead
I wonder if she was real
and also after life
I wonder what her prays are
and her mission in the night
I stared at my feet, and the wall
I looked again to my right
and still there to the left of me
she stood there in her light
I threw my right arm through her
she opened up her eyes
she stared right at me
she was the one surprised
her hands went to her cheeks
in her disbelief
then she dissolved into the air
her moment with me brief
was she my guardian angel?
did I mess up her prayer?
I wake up night after night
to see if she's still there.

—j.a. cummings

African Talent, American Stage

It can't be changed ashamed and strange,
Fun for some, none for others
Anthony and his good black friend,
Can explain this American thing is Africa

Fun for some, none for others
African Talent, American Stage.
A form of laughter, disrespect
History will be remembered

African Talent, American Stage.
Folk is my answer, not funny, a way
Hambone, spoons, I rattle the bones
History will be remembered

Folk is my answer, not funny, a way
Churches of fire, sweat in the face
History will be remembered
Dance like balloon, children's cotton candy

Churches of fire, sweat in the face
Entertainers get thirsty, balancing act
Dance like balloon, children's cotton candy
Alive, purpose, talent, custom, a "stage"

Entertainers get thirsty, balancing act
Posing for pictures, nerves make suits hot
Alive, purpose, talent, custom, a "stage"
Hold still, Gentlemen Be Seated NOW~

Posing for pictures, nerves make suits hot
Anthony, his good black friend were five year stars
Hold still, Gentlemen Be Seated NOW~
Black face can hear the fiddle is sharp and white

Anthony, his good black friend were five year stars
Forty eight states act this way, not around here.
Black face can hear the fiddle is sharp and white
Black boats take seats, boosting the economy

Forty eight states act this way, not around here.
Let's show them what we've got Boys,
Black boats take seats, boosting the economy

We lost connection, thanks grandpa

Let's show them what we've got Boys,
I hear them Papa, laughing, joking, String noises
We lost connection, thanks grandpa
O- Honey you all look great, black faces

I hear them Papa, laughing, joking, String noises
You clown; hurry up the makeup, the show now begins
O- Honey you all look great, black faces
Watch me grandpa, SKY HIGH! Thirty-five star

You clown; hurry up the makeup, the show now begins
Mammy? Uncle Tom and Sambo said they imitate
Watch me grandpa, SKY HIGH! Thirty-five star
Did you know, Africa shaped our culture, grandpa?

Mammy? Uncle Tom and Sambo said they imitate
Outfits kept, warm outside in January
Did you know, Africa shaped our culture, Grandpa?
26-27, 1933—professional musician, clown, Minstrel

Outfits kept warm, outside in January
Trumpets, violins, tambourine drums,
26-27, 1933—professional musician, clown, Minstrel
Development of black stereotype, African Talent

Trumpets, violins, tambourine drums,
Why? Do you think I'm a comedian, grandpa?
Development of black stereotype, African Talent
I love our innocent child, neo-human.

—j.a. cummings

When I Was Young...

When I was young I used to believe
That every thought or idea I had was worth preserving.
That somehow if I wrote it all down
That it meant something,
Or made me mean something.
I had this convoluted idea that someday,
After I was dead and gone,
Someone would read my thoughts, words, poems and memories
And proclaim me posthumously an undiscovered genius
Or at least an underappreciated artist.

As age has made me wiser,
I now almost fear writing my thoughts down
Because then they can't be erased
And somehow that makes them more real, more tangible.

Yet the desire still burns
To leave behind even just a single phrase
That someone will remember long after I'm gone.
To touch someone with words the way words have touched me.

—Mandy K. Lucero

I Passed My Past Today...

I passed my past today on the street.
My phoenix of anger rose from the ashes I thought long put to rest.
Yet it only took an instant for the fire to burn intensely,
And now my past hasn't passed.

Now I start over,
To put out the fire that's not out of fuel,
To squelch the issue of THE untruth.

You threw a match
And walked away,
Without realizing the destruction you left
or caring who you burned.

As long as you're happy,
No one else matters.
As long as your lies were convenient,
Who needs the truth?

Even if you cared,
It's too late for the truth,
So you'll have to account for your selfish ways,
Someday.
And I'll account for my fire.

—*Mandy K. Lucero*

Untitled

You took everything
 I gave it willingly
You spoke sweetly
 I listened intently
You held me tightly
 I held you tighter
You loved me softly
 I loved you deeply
You said you're sorry
 My heart shattered.

—*MeLynn Corwin*

VV

Hold strong, dear woman,
It's just another sheet to change,
Another mistake unneeded,
Another situation unwanted.

Sometimes nature prevents virtue—
Sometimes nurture calls for virtue.

Hope, Will, Faith, and a deep breath,
(Love)
Help make a gentle woman discerning and whole—
Help perfect her honor, her good name.
Hold strong, dear woman—hold
Strong like a woman can be.

—*Rachel L. Eblin-Dodds*

The Sponge

The sponge
squelched and squeezed,
devoid,
shrunken,
no longer swollen;
but finally on its way
to becoming whole.

—*Rachel L. Eblin-Dodds*

Grace B. Fahlin

Like a seal freshly waxed
upon the deed,
she rests steadily within my heart.
Lord, that I might glorify her
by the gait
of my hands and feet to mete
out Your Presence.

For when I fell from her, so she fell to me.
—So sayeth Eve.

—*Rachel L. Eblin-Dodds*

The Fall God

Just like autumn
is the Tree in Eden,
the hues of blood and fire.
Down to earth thoughts flutter
borrowing a thought that transpires
the mutating form of “each other.”
I say, man, even woman, can deny what it is that they create,
to destroy for renewal of pleasure; but remain fruitful.
Multitudes have multiplied the many
false witnesses and prophets
until the earth grows tired from waste and
this is trash—the leaders who speak and reveal not, but proclaim
nothing.
The god they worship isn’t
the god I know
is as nothing
like autumn leaves falling.

—*Rachel L. Eblin-Dodds*

Lithium Balloons

Balloons,
the size of my pinkie nail,
expand when mixed with water and stomach acid
and are less than lite yogurt,
sagging like loose socks around my ankles
by that touch of large curd cottage cheese with no peach,
but twenty pound weights.
No matter how hard I try to keep them up in place,
my socks flip and flop
off the end of my toes and skipping becomes impossible
for fear I'd fly so high that I won't be able to find my way home
from outer space.
From all these years of trying to find some sunshine,
I know that these balloons are just as good
as the ones filled with helium—
and neither one is Heaven.

My doped-up, happy-bouncy head rests
in Alice's Wonderland of Zoloft dreams about white rabbits
...makes me late in motion...
for anything other than barefoot in the kitchen.
But when I've inhaled that helium and someone strikes that sulfur tip,
I lose my footing and slip
up to inspiration by the hour with little sleep
and that brilliant mind which speaks in Spanish
tells me that I should really give the worm a go—
no lemon or lime or salt needed with the good shit;
all I need's a lick of skin and

a cushion to take a nap
with a cigarette dangling from my lips like a boulder on the edge of
a cliff that would soon fall
down with Wile E. Coyote while singing about a ring around a
posy and pockets full of woes-ies
until it pounds on my head like a hammer and a nail does—
tap-up, tap-tap-up, tap-up....clunk.

I'm buried in this medicated marriage of who I am and what we need
only because I want to be a good mother.

So, lithium balloons keep the Hatter at her Un-birthday Party
locked in one seat only
and half a cup of cold tea.

—Rachel L. Eblin-Dodds

About a Rape

Kindness is the Beast
All Teeth
All Teeth

Hushed is the Leaf
Beneath
Beneath

His Weight
She Waits
And Waits....

—*Robert Johnson*

Advice to Young Poets

There are whimsical words
that twinkle and flash
as they roll from your lips
like a thick dark mustache.

There are delicate words
that silence your fears,
whispering gossamer dreams
into Chantilly ears.

There are thunderous words
that strike from the page
and call down destruction
on your object of rage.

There are suspicious words
that seek hidden blame
and question all motives
from beyond their own frame.

There are damp, jagged words
That grind , thrash and roll
as you plumb the depths
of your dark young soul.

But beware young poet
Lest you forget in your fun:
Truth lies in simple words;
love requires none.

—*Robert Sexton*

Winged Shepherdess

still she is
up there
her pulsating wings
the warm breeze
I feel it

days are long
gone
when I could
tip my head back
to see her

used to kneel
between my parents
a hyper little girl
long ponytail dusting
the pew behind me

cathedral ceiling adorned
with Roman Catholic art
beautiful but
two-dimensional
my shepherdess was different

one wink from her
at just the right moment
hypnotic
settled me right down
into my family's pew

strangers sit here now
irritated by my choice
of parking space
right next to *their* pew
my irritating wheelchair

angelic fingertips
on my forehead
now I'm being
backed up
service must be over

don't know anymore
what my body does
nor what's done to it
no such thing
as privacy anymore

must be close
to what it feels like
to be pure spirit
to be like her
my winged shepherdess

—*Rosa Maria DelVecchio*

Because I was feeling through the front of your nightgown

Because I was feeling through the front of your nightgown,
When I first walked into your amnesia,
When the crunch of the snow was all that I heard
Because of the role of my imagination,
I felt a light as warmth filled my soul.

And when you dealt your pretty words like blades,
Because no heart could deny you,
Because reality was so easily altered
When passion and desire seemed to fog your vision,
You heard distant cries echoing through the barren halls.

And because we poor were nothing but bad tidings,
When better weather brought happiness to us all,
Because a firing squad of words when a street light darkened
Was like a cigarette burning regret into darkness,
We all heard that universal prayer, that
psalm to ourselves dissolving.

And that is why I'm telling you now, "Don't die, I'm here.
Hush now, Shh."

*—Ruth Albright, Kyle Brown, Brock Gates, Denise Hoffman, Brit-
tany Long, Melanie Waits, and Stuart Lishan*

Because the look in your eyes, so innocent and free

Because of the look in your eyes, so innocent and free
When all you could do was cry
When tears couldn't quench your thirst
Because you were drowning in the rain,
We always seemed to see dark clouds hovering over your head.

But when you smiled, hope gleamed in the corners of your eyes
Because of airs of purpose and perplexing patterns,
Because you had an intention
That lasted and was unlawful,
And you fought back the curse to bewitch you.

And because there were girls laughing and a whole bunch of beer
cans
When feathery tufts of milkweed floated through the wisps of light
in your hair,
Because of your touch and warm embrace
When you remembered how young and so carefree you felt,
You couldn't deny those words so dark.

And that is why you never spoke of that night, so consumed with
sorrow.

*—Ruth Albright, Kyle Brown, Brock Gates, Denise Hoffman, Brit-
tany Long, Melanie Waits, and Stuart Lishan*

Because the pungent air is thick...

Because the pungent air is thick and it's hard to breath,
When I close my eyes I find it hard to dream of you.
And when the moan of the breeze haunts me
Because the warmth of your comfort invites me,
I feel the ferocity for your words.

And when I am dazed and confused,
Because angels refuse to make daybreak in my heart,
Because I walk out of the hallway of my amnesia
When I still feel trapped within myself,
The voice of your angel calls out to me.

And because I will never speak of that night
When you came to me with somber pain,
And told me that people's hearts sometimes change like the weather
When rough seas and high winds begin,

I realize the distant sound of your melancholy heartbeat lingering
in my ear.

—*Ruth Albright, Kyle Brown, Brock Gates, Denise Hoffman, Brit-
tany Long, Melanie Waits, and Stuart Lishan*

Because you saw her in the woods

Because you saw her in the woods
when you lay awake in your bed
when quiet passed out of your life for that one quick moment,
because you thought you saw your child waiting for you on the
other side, you felt a fire inhabiting your eyes.

But when she smiled it radiated passion,
because her love is all you ever really needed,
because her touch kept you warm at night
when winter winds whistling and whispering surrounded you,
and all you wanted was her comforting embrace.

And because you stared without weary eyes
when love of these things created joy,
because the radio played nothing but songs of regret,
when you imagined train whistles loping toward angels carving
her initials deep in the clouds, you felt a calm come over you.

And that is why darkness has taken over you no longer.

—Ruth Albright, Kyle Brown, Brock Gates, Denise Hoffman, Brit-
tany Long, Melanie Waits, and Stuart Lishan

The Girls Kiss

Two daughters of Venus,
raven-haired beauties,
holding hands,
dancing like fairies through the trees.

Laughing,
pulling each other close,
falling out of reality
under a blossoming apple tree.

Embraces exploding
into a million glimmering pieces,
reaching out,
yearning.

Kissing each other,
like dew drops,
balancing on the tip
of a moment.

Two floating flowers,
wildflowers,
holding the charm of the world
in a kiss.

—*Taryn Korody*

The Things We Take From Each Other

1.

Sitting around,

Waiting to die.

"Her body isn't producing red blood cells correctly.

If it doesn't correct itself by morning, she goes for bone marrow testing."

She died to me 3 years ago.

Rubber, cords, wires

Coming and going as they please.

Flashing lights and sirens every two weeks.

Another 2 a.m. phone call.

"Can you come sit with the dog?"

As always,

I can.

2.

They say that love is fickle.

They say it doesn't last.

They were right in some ways.

Love sure did go by fast.

3.

Youth,

Fading into gray hair,

Never stopping to ask,

"Will I regret this next year?"

Always hoping that tomorrow is better.

Always asking

"When does it get easier?"

Does it get easier?

Does it?

4.

I need you, Mother.

I love you, Daughter.

I need you, Mother.

I will help you, Daughter.

I need you, Mother.

Still, Daughter?

I need you, Mother.
You can do this on your own, Daughter.

I need you, Mother.
Will you ever stop, Daughter?

I need you, Mother.
Get a job, Daughter.

I need you, Mother.
When will this end, Daughter?

I need you, Mother.
You're becoming an embarrassment, Daughter.

I need you, Mother.
No more, Daughter.

I'm sorry, Mother.
I still love you, Daughter.

5.
Think of the things we take from each other.
What have you given today?
Heart, soul, mind, body.
I would return them all if I could.
I would lay them at your feet.
However, I need to take yours
Because I already gave mine away.

—Taryn Korody

attic letters

through my attic window
the strummed notes resonate
echoing upon cobble streets
below clamoring feet

quietly leaves flutter
falling in colour
touching black soil
quite softly

the flame wavers above
this uncrossable distance
becoming harder to bear
within each instance

the letters are cool
without a page
within my cage
above it all

there is no need to fear
the passing of another year
to write your name
across the attic window

is freedom

—*Timothy Giles*

Blue Moon Melodia

Luna descended upon the moor.

Carrying the rosewood stool
I entered the meadow's heart
into Autumn's sacred literature
leaving summer and her odes.

Encompassed within this solace
I dig four legs firmly through soil
because I dream of you being
basked in beauteous moonbeams.

Once in a blue moon's breathing
Paradiso's melodia will be reason.
It is here I will always be waiting:
between the pages of this season.

—*Timothy Giles*

Adventus Malevolentia

Azure Prologue of the soul
Malevolent entities of old
bask upon ancient language
as shining seraphs whisper
blessings of our ancestors.

Guardian spirits with sorrow sing
-choir of eternal ruler's creeds-
correlating chords as weeping
for each child Advent, warped
under shining moon melodies.

Turquoise Epilogue of origin
afterlife banquet before death
through white river destiny
snuffing candlelit faith.
Chapters of the book never ending.

—*Timothy Giles*

Salvation

The desperate struggle.
The lunar cycle.
All along wishing
to find another way.

Transparent teardrops
they flow down
thin streams
caress your cheek.

Standing in darkness
ruby-diamond eyes
reveal themselves
devour the soul.

The background holds
The Grand Window
as full moon
drenches room.

I aim for the heart
of which I love.
All along wishing
to find another way.

Silver bullet,
bloody through.
Shatters fragments
across this room

It is salvation.

—*Timothy Giles*

REvention

The mist lifts; reveals supreme solace.
I have never walked this road
nor seen burning light pour perfectly
between cracks of battered pavement.

Redemption redeems nothing
but the soft touch of reassurance.
This being the lie of tattered musings,
I embraced wounded, winding trials.

REvention unto the rogue hunter
swallowed by ruination's demons.
The time is nigh for next birth.
From ashes, phoenix philosopher,
create the elixir of unfaltering fate.

Seas of storm clouds need not part,
for rays bleed through white scepters
revealing shades of a never-ending path
being neither cruel, nor forgiving.

I have never walked this road;
never dreamed among the damned.
The distant horizon holds a future
of greatly flawed soul perfection,
traversing beauteous battered pavement.

—*Timothy Giles*

Gate-Broken Dreams

Drowned benevolence of
brightly diminished dream.
Deferred only by briar
aging across window pane.

For what devastation would fracture
the darker domiciles of fate?
Are not our dying dreams creatures
basking within broken gates?

—*Timothy Giles*

When Time Stands Still

When I am with you it feels like magic
Your moist sweet lips pursed up against mine
Strong arms wrapped around my waist so warm and secure
The long deep kisses that leave me breathless
The tender touches and the gentle embraces
When time stands still
The moon and the stars shine on us like a spotlight
Looking into the heavens admiring the constellations
Feeling the comforting breeze of summer
Time never seems to matter when I am with you
Staring into those sparkling eyes of yours that twinkle
When time stands still
Leaning up against your chest hearing the beating of your heart
The back of your hand running down the side of my cheek
I know after you leave I will wish you were here again
I have these deep feelings that are indescribable
Your goodbye kiss always leaving me wanting more
When time stands still

—Whitney K. Taylor

Long Lost Friend

Looking back I don't remember your name
Or even what you looked like
I know we never said goodbye
We went everywhere together
We played in the sand
I read you stories in bed at night
I talked to you every day
Shared many trips and adventures
But one day just out of the blue
You were gone
You left without saying goodbye
I wasn't aware at the time
That you had really left me for good
It was the day I grew up
Sometime during my childhood
Was it a Monday or Friday
In December or July
Day or Night
Was it snowing or raining
Hot or cold
I don't really know
Or even have the slightest idea
Where did you come from
And where did you go
Now I can no longer see or hear you
You were like a dream
Gone when I awoke
People called you my imaginary friend
But you were very real to me
I shared my deepest thoughts with you
You were a part of my life
Were you really just a figment of my imagination

—Whitney K. Taylor

Saying Goodbye

To say goodbye to close the eye to let go
Some memories to those seem like years ago
And some seem like only yesterday
To take one last look and give one last kiss
And say see you someday
And tears drop from the eyes
To close the lid and never see that face or feel the texture of the skin
To carry the box across the snowy ground
To say a few words then lower the box covered with roses into the
moist earth

—*Whitney K. Taylor*

Dream Redemption

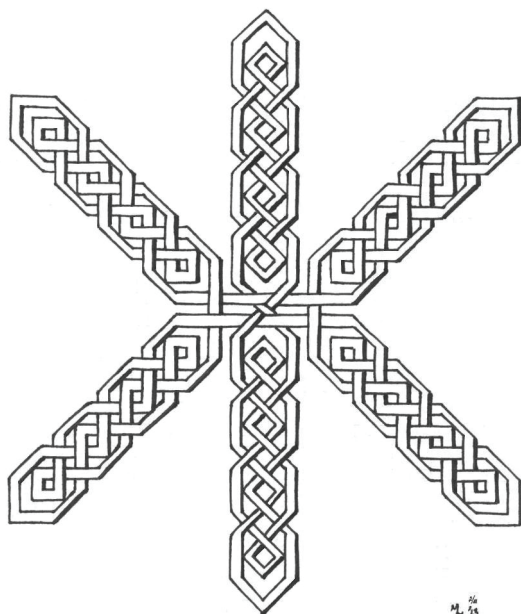
Touching the cold mound of dirt
Moist earth sifting through my fingers
The sprig of pine like sticky glue
Covering the seed buried in the dark earth
Simple reflections running back into my childhood
Like rustling sounds of dry leaves
My long hair dancing in the wind
I lie down and sleep as never before
Through the whispering dark leaves and shadows
I rise above the great oak tree
And soar amongst the clouds
Looking down for miles
Feeling the chill of that distant death
Deep snow covered with bouquets of flowers
I return from oblivion
And awake by the old wooden swing
Tear penetrations for years following Mom's passing
I used to be held in the crypts of winter's grasp
But now have escaped that barren tomb
To hear to taste to see to smell to feel again
The deciduous trees and evergreens blowing in the warm summer breeze

—*Whitney K. Taylor*

An Overdue Elegy for Camp Walhonding

No more will we hike through the Whispering Pines
Or canoe in the Mohican River
Now only empty tables and benches
In a once bustling chatterly mess hall
The pool now drained and full of decaying leaves
The wood and metal lifeguard throne weak and rusty
Pond where we also used to swim now stagnant and moss covered
The flag pole still stands tall
But no longer bears the camp's colors nor American flag
Now just a grassy meadow where tents once stood
And remnants of cabins collapsed and decaying
Camp songs cadences and laughter from young girls are now silenced
Anxiously waiting for letters from home at the mail office
Now just a memory of a ghost town
That will live on forever in my mind

—Whitney K. Taylor



26
15

prose.

Justice

Andrew Pinkerton

IT STARTED WITH A THUD. Dull at first, gradually increasing in volume and clarity. David's head arose from the enticingly comfortable pillow as he attempted, in a groggy stupor, to ascertain the source of the intruding noise. Rising, he purposefully avoided any contact with the cold, untouched half of the bed. The half where she lied. She, his bride. Venturing into the woods the better part of a week ago, going to fetch divers supplies from an acquaintance in the neighboring village, she had yet to return. He pleaded with her not to make the trip alone. Half-hearted pleas, however. The entire morn had been marred by quarrel and shouting, over an issue far too trivial by now to even remember. He let her go, nearly anticipating the few hours to himself, and knowing she desired such too. How he now wished those pleas would have transformed themselves into resolute forbiddance. How he longed for her to again be by his side.

As his bare feet hit the cold floor, mostly polished wood but for the parts where the wood had given way to the ground underneath, a sense of relief washed over him. A relief he hadn't known since her departure. "Perhaps it is she," he thought, "trying to make her way back in." He hastened towards the door, but each step closer bore witness to that freshly blossomed hope slowly dissipating and in its stead, a new sense of dread and terror. The banging and commotion were far too loud to be coming from his dear wife, or any single person for that matter.

Continuing to inch closer, he could hear voices behind the continued pounding on the door. Several voices. And familiar. He recognized Thomas,

the reverend, saying something unintelligible. As well as Stanley, from next door. Another voice, not recognizable but filled with anger and menace, declared, "Just set the fire to it now! Let him be damned to hell for all I care."

At that, David came to an instantaneous halt. His first thought, spin around and exit through the window in the back and scamper away as far as possible, danced around his mind and tugged at his feet, urging him to escape. But another thought, equally as powerful and beckoning him towards the door, entered in.

Curiosity flitted through his brain and begged to know why the men from the village where at his front door and if they had knowledge concerning the whereabouts of his missing wife. In the end, it was the curiosity the won the battle, and David finished the distance between himself and the door, now barely grasped by the loosened hinges.

Disregarding the saner half of himself, telling him not to, David grasped the latch and opened his door. To say the sight he beheld caught him off guard would be an immense understatement. Nearly half of the village gathered at his doorstep, most of the faces he recognized, others faded into the pitch-black night sky. A few carried torches, the flickering causing eerie shadows to dance about the mob. Others carried their pieces—loaded, no doubt. All, however, bore a face that incontrovertibly revealed hatred and utter contempt.

Charles, the mob's apparent leader, stepped up to David and raised his voice, which was a rasp more than a yell. "What on God's earth were you thinking? Did you truly believe you would escape judgment for something so—so demonic?"

"Pardon? I know not what the

cause all this trouble be. If I have done a thing to cause harm to fall on you or anyone else, I beg of you your forgiveness. Tell me, why are you here?"

"Let's just finish him off right now!" came a shout from the crowd.

"To feign your innocence does nothing but add to your transgression. I pray God shows you the same grace you showed to your wife."

"Elizabeth? Have you heard from her? What's befallen her?" Panic gripped David with an icy grasp, and sobs were visibly choked back.

"You maul your wife to death, leave her to die a bloody mess in the woods and dare give us your theatrics?"

"No. This can't be so. Please tell me. Tell me where she is!" David held Charles's collar in his fist, the sobs no longer detained. His soul was besieged by an anguish that never a man had experienced ere this night—whether the dominant emotion was grief or anger, one couldn't say.

Thomas interjected, pulling David off of Charles and pushing him into the door, holding him there. "You've become entirely insane, boy. We knew you were trouble the day Elizabeth dragged your sorry self into our village. Her one mistake was you and look what it's gotten her."

David felt a chilling ire course through his person at that. It was true, Elizabeth's betrothal to him merited the disapprobation of the little village. It wasn't so much David's fault. He had his minor faults—a few too many ales on occasion, perhaps—but he was no less an agreeable man than the rest of the village's inhabitants. No, the reason for their disdain was far more base. David, much to his own misfortune, hailed from Spottford, the village near a two day's journey to the north

and, indisputably, the most despised as well. Perhaps the worst kept secret here was the citizenry's low opinion and general distaste for David and his union with their beloved Elizabeth. Thomas's expatriation unfortunately continued, despite David's retreat into sullen despondency. "End your chicanery and confess what you've done. Your game's over. We found your blood-stained knife on the property ere coming to your door. Half the village could hear you berating her just prior to her disappearance. And is it not a questionable thing that your home was found vacant for well beyond a day, just enough time for you to commit such an unmentionable act and drag her innocent body off to the forest?" David, of course, could offer a sound rejoinder to every bit of evidence standing against him, categorically denying the mob's heinous accusations. He was, after all, a butcher, thus explaining the bloodied knife. Indeed, he and Elizabeth had bickered that morn, but so had every other couple in the village that had been together for any time worth mentioning. And his absence from his own abode could be explained by his repose at his in-law's, both of whom were conspicuously absent from the ever more increasingly heated mob. However, David was unable to utter a single word, let alone deliver a full defense. The villagers' verdict was a foregone conclusion, made the moment he stepped foot on their despicable soil. His love was gone, and never would he be able to make amends with her. He was guiltless in this moment, without a doubt, but even should some divine miracle grant him the ability to loosen his tongue, no word could ever sway their mind. The best he could muster was an uncontrollable sob while scowl-

ing at the crowd, his fingertips finally releasing their clutch on the wooden door as he was overtaken.

And there, as the sun made her ascent through the morning sky, her warming rays fell upon David, his body bearing the marks and bruises and burns that brought him to his end. Accusing him of murdering an innocent woman, the village itself had murdered an innocent man, and left on itself an indelible mark from which it could never heal. ■

When Dusk Meets Dawn

Brittany Violet Long

(In Response to the Sun and the Moon speech from Taming of the Shrew, by William Shakespeare)

THE WONDROUS MOON SHINES BRIGHT IN THE MAGNIFICENT LIGHT OF MIDNIGHT. We lay in a bath of milky shadows watching the stars twinkling in the dark sky. The steady rhythm of his heart beats beneath the flesh of his chest, resonating in my ear. The warmth of his body against mine warms my deepest inner being. Though we lay in complete serenity, my heart is heavy. I can't help but ponder the questions troubling my heart: What true love of mine would ask me to alter my perception? What betrothed spirit would forcefully take my will and make it thy own? Shall I give in to falsehood just to reconcile our differences in thought?

I think not.

Oh what stubborn man! Oh what foul pig-headed man! How dare he attempt to take away my pride? How can my husband, my lover, my life ask this of me? Though he is my husband, I feel it is not fair for him to dominate every aspect of my life. I must not willingly admit defeat but I may compromise my repulsion with an act of artificial intellectual servitude. I will pacify the man by imitating submission. In his presence I will be his, but my life shall be my own in my peaceful solitude. I will say to him this:

Just as the moon longs to linger in the presence of the sun, I long to be near you. I wish with truest sincerity that our souls may grow together as one. I once lived in a fruitful sea of shining stars, but none of those stars had compared to the incredible way you have made me glow. I forever want to feel your warm glowing rays glistening on my luminescent pale skin; to feel the dark depths of my timid soul be washed white with your blinding beam of light. Time is vicious and every moment holds within it a precious urgency. It is impossible to defy you and wrong of me to disregard your will, just as it is unnatural to hold a shooting star captive. You are my master and your words are the only truth I know. If you say the morning birds sing their song at night, then I will believe that the morning birds only sing their song during the darkness of night. Your deepest desires will be fulfilled. Your will shall be done. I lay my frail life before your regnant feet. I will always think of you when the sun sets into a peaceful slumber, for I am the moon and you are my sun. I will forever wait in burning desire and heavy anticipation for the moment when time stops and dusk meets the break of dawn. ■

Manifestation

Brittany Violet Long

THE OLD HOUSE QUIVERS IN THE STILL OF THE NIGHT, contorting into an angry asylum. I can hear the distant cries echoing through the barren halls. The room shutters while memories of the past creep into my peripheral vision. An altered mind is like a playground for the twining fingers of a dark presence. A mad man's lament is ever so present in the mind-forged shackles that dominate his perception. My misty eyes peer through the overwhelming fog. Mysterious voices echo through the recesses of my mind, while eerie, childlike laughter taunts my perception. Nothing is what it seems. Reality shifts in and out of focus, making it unclear what part my imagination plays. I sit idle, afraid of sudden movement. The room grows dim and vast, making it harder to see. The bodies around me have shifting faces; ghostly smiles haunt their features. My lips are moving, but it's obvious that they can't hear what I'm saying. A dark, ominous figure materializes from absent matter. It's a beast on four legs with bloodthirsty eyes and a soul as black as tar. I'm captivated by it; frozen in place under the gaze of its hollow eyes. It meanders its way through the room, never losing my scared stare. Everyone around me fades away obliviously as health turns to decay. The aroma of rotten apples consumes the air and burns my nostrils. The room turns into a spiraling downward vortex as my worst fears begin to manifest right before my diluted eyes. ■

Haircuts & Vaginas

James Roger Johnson

ONE SATURDAY MORNING IN 1953, when I was ten, my mother laid four quarters into my hand and dispatched me to get a fresh haircut before the start of school on Monday. Sam's Barber Shop and Shaving Parlor stood on 4th Street, just up the block from where we lived on the south side of Columbus, Ohio. The quarters jingled in my pocket as I entered the shop, a store-front establishment with generous windows, a ceiling of cream-colored, ornate tin tiles, and long poles supporting slow moving black fans. I was by far the youngest of the nine men in the shop and I tried to look grownup and nonchalant even as I squirmed into one of the black-vinyl upholstered and chrome-armed chairs against the wall.

To pass the time, I paged through a dog-eared copy of *Life Magazine* that featured the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. While intent on learning about British royalty from the photo arrays, my eyes would surreptitiously glance at the wall calendar from Bernie's Garage and Body Shop around the corner on Jenkins Avenue. The month of August pictured a cocker spaniel puppy looking up at a young woman in tight denim shorts, her heavy breasts barely contained in an unbuttoned white shirt, and a red-plaid neckerchief tightly caressing her neck. Checking the oil under the auto's raised hood, she looked out at me as she bent over the green Chevy fender with one barefoot calf flexed daintily off the ground.

I startled as one of the three barbers, named Jake, caught me ogling the calendar; the heavysset fellow, sporting a narrow mustache and hair combed across his balding head, wiggled his eyebrows and called with a wicked twist to his mouth, "You're

next, Boy." I stood as tall as I could, crossed the black-and-white checker-board floor, and climbed up onto the booster bench that Jake had placed across the arms of the ebony leather chair. As he swirled the pin-striped sheet over my body, he asked my name. Looking up at Jake's looming presence, I answered in a wavering voice, "Roger."

After some small talk and the commencement of snipping my hair, Jake asked, "Well, *Roger*, you do know about that patch of skin between the anus and a woman's vagina, don't ya?" A snort from one of the men waiting their turn echoed off the high ceiling. I felt my face flush, and surely, silhouetted by the white sheet up to my neck, it betrayed my embarrassment. I stared past the other two occupied barber chairs to the red, white, and blue striped pole outside the storefront in the summer sunshine. It turned inexorably as the pungent scent of hair tonic assailed my nostrils. My awkward silence was punctuated by the snipping scissors of the other two barbers.

"Well, do you, Boy?" Desperately hoping the subject of the conversation would go away, I nodded my head, "Yes." Actually, my understanding of the female anatomy was limited at best and I unsuccessfully tried to envision where this space might be. I wondered how he could ask me such a question. No one talked to me about such things. Sure, my dad enjoyed bringing home from the factory what my mother called "off-color jokes," and I had heard my mother mention the word "vagina" in conversation with her women friends, but I had no idea exactly what she meant. I understood boys didn't have them; we had penises. A vagina was something

for girls. I had never seen an actual vagina, not even a picture.

But there was that one time, I did get a glimpse, at a dancing recital. Yes, my mother made me take tap dancing and tumbling. She mistook my avoiding cracks in the pavement as a sign that I had two left feet, and thought dancing and tumbling lessons would correct my deficient coordination. It didn't help any that the Jones' son, also named Roger, was attending the same lessons. I promptly ceased my crack-avoidance game, but too late; I was in for at least a year of lessons.

At an evening recital, the parents attended to the costuming of their children in a school cafeteria, the darkness punctuated by a few incandescent lights in white-enameled metal shades, dangling on long cards from the ceiling. One mother had her daughter, about my size, standing on top of a lunch table under one of the lights. In a demanding voice, she rebuked the girl for hesitating to disrobe to total nude. Every face of the forty or so people turned. My mother instructed me not to look. The few other boys that were there, including Roger Jones, had eyes glued on the hapless girl.

Jealous, I did grab a peek. Under the cone of light, her bunned, auburn hair glistened, but her head was bowed and her shoulders sagged like a defeated prisoner. And so much skin, goose-bumped from the chill of the unheated room; like a plucked chicken on display. Her chest was as featureless as mine, and with similar nipples. An innie belly-button resided on a small, protruding tummy, and below, in that secret space, was, well, nothing, an empty place, undistinguished. I thought vaginas overrated. I began a more intent study for something there, when the mother turned the girl to

facing me, her vacant eyes looking at me with a forlorn, trapped expression, a cringing look of sad resignation. I stopped peeking.

Jake continued, the tenor of his voice indicating his enjoyment at my embarrassment. "Well, *Roger*, if a poisonous snake bit a girl in *that* place, and you were to suck out the poison, which way would you put your nose?" Now there was outright laughter from the men.

The blood rushed to my ears and my scalp tingled. I must have been beet red, and I was again speechless. As a Cub Scout, I did know that you should suck out snake venom, but what did that have to do with my nose?

"Well, come on, Boy, what would you do?"

"I dunno," I said lamely, looking down to my lap, wishing I could hide beneath that sheet, tightly pinned around my neck. I felt captured and humiliated.

"The girl's going to die if you don't do something, *Roger*. Which way are you gonna' put your nose?"

"Let the boy alone, Jake," said Sam, the shop owner, from behind the barber chair next to the front window.

After a heavy sigh, Jake said, "I'll be right back . . . need to take my medicine." As Jake went through the door to the back room, I could see Sam in the mirror, shaking his head. After Jake returned, he shaved my neck, dusted me with talc, and applied tonic. With my inquisition ended, I climbed down, paid Sam the seventy-five cent charge and the twenty-five cent tip with the quarters my mother had given me, rushed out of the shop without looking anyone in the eye, and ran to my home at the far corner of the block.

I knew if I told my dad when

he came home from the factory, he'd go down and beat the crap out of Jake, or, if he went into one of his rages, he might even bludgeon Jake to death. But how could I talk about something so embarrassing? My dad might even think it was my fault that it happened, and punish me.

It was "my cross to bear" as my mother would say of unpleasant things endured. I worried all Sunday about how I would escape future ordeals. Maybe I could let other men go ahead of me if I was to get Jake, or I'd step outside at my turn, or I could escaped his chair when he retreated between customers to the backroom for his *medicine*.

Monday, on the way to my school across the street, I saw all the kids looking up the block at the flashing lights of an emergency wagon and police cars in front of the barbershop. My dad found out, that when Sam opened the shop that morning, he discovered Jake lying face-up on the backroom floor, dead of a heroin overdose. I didn't know about heroin, but I was intrigued that I knew someone who actually had died, and wondered what that was like.

I did not, however, have much remorse that it was Jake who had passed. The shop was closed for the week, and then never reopened. I didn't think much about Jake again. But, I did think about that girl who was snake bit. Why didn't she have any clothes on, and where was she when she was bitten? And, how did she ever get bit, in that particular spot, by a poisonous snake anyway? ■

Home Repairs

M. McDonald Keith

SUZANNE STARED OUT THE KITCHEN WINDOW, watching rain water splash onto the patio and then sluice over the long grass all the way down to the creek at the end of the yard. A field belonging to Mr. Sam Hendricks, a farmer, stretched beyond. She and Alan knew no more about the farmer because he'd never needed a favor Alan could supply. Suzanne compressed her lips and breathed heavily out her nose. Through the wavy cords of rain on the glass, she glared at the drowned, neglected lawn and the rectangular sea of mud that *still* was not a garden. *When?* she asked herself. *When?*

Her hands in the sudsy water in the sink were quiet, had been quiet for minutes measured by the clock on the wall. Faintly Suzanne heard its electric whisper, incessant and undeviating. She sighed and groped for another salad bowl under water and found it, edges free of scallops or embossed designs. For the five years they'd been in their "fixer-upper" of a country home, she'd waited for Alan to install a dishwasher. He kept promising, kept pointing out how much money they'd save if he did all the work himself. Which meant, she supposed, that she never would have a dishwasher. Surely she had more to do in the softening light of a summer's evening than run her fingers over boring shapes in lukewarm water.

But then, perhaps not, not during a rainstorm, not in a house too run down to decorate or dream over, and not when Alan was gone yet again. Suzanne was tired of television, tired of reading. She hated to talk on the telephone unless it was to be rude to a telemarketer on one of her really grumpy days. She finished the dishes and let the water out of the sink.

In a while she settled at the

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table with a cup of tea and the crossword puzzle in the newspaper. Ho-siery shade. T-A-N. *Dawn goddess.* E-O-S. She consulted the clock. 8:15. *Nameless.* U-N-K-N-O-W-N. The rain on the roof sounded less assertive. *Masonry tool.* T-R-O-W-E-L. *Altar affirmative.* I-D-O. *I do what? Sit and wait?* The clock told her that only five minutes had passed. But in those five minutes the sky, though darkening, had become clear. The rain over, she could get out of the house, at least.

A concrete walk ran from the patio to the cellar door, and Suzanne went slowly along it, peering up at the gutter. Judging by her beaten-down petunias, she was willing to bet that the gutter was clogged with elm leaves and who knew what else. She wanted to be aggravated but felt too exhausted to care. What did it all matter, really? And what could she do, other than cut the grass herself when it needed mowing, spend money she and Alan didn't have to buy a dishwasher and have it installed, plant the garden and clean the gutters herself too and gauge her growing resentment until she decided she'd had enough and left her marriage?

She didn't want to leave. Alan was a good man, appreciative over his pork chops and home fries, appreciative also, sometimes, of her body when he wasn't tired or preoccupied with someone else's needs. He was *too* nice, a known handyman who couldn't say no. *Except to me.* Oh, Lord, I am so bored!

Suzanne whipped around and stared down the hill at the creek. It charged by, riled up by the recent rain. In the twilight its beige foam glimmered. Here and there spray danced in the air.

She went back into the house

sixty-four

and drifted into the front hall. She flicked on the porch light and watched the road for a time through the screen door. "Come home, Alan," she whispered.

He'd taken the truck after dinner because it could carry the mower and the weed whacker. Mrs. Barstow, 78 and widowed, had needed his help. And Alan did the work for her free of charge.

"Come on, Alan. You should have been able to finish mowing before the storm. Now it's getting dark. What can you do in the dark?" She knew what *she* could do in the dark. She lay her head against the screen door. Crickets sang.

Back in her kitchen she listened to the clock softly whirring. 8:42. She stood in the middle of the floor and waited.

At 8:45 she heard what she'd wanted to hear: the hiss of tires on a still wet road, the rumble of the truck's engine and the way it coughed once or twice after Alan shut it off. His feet sounded on the porch boards. The screen door squealed and then shut with a muted thump because Alan caught it before it could bang. Suzanne sat at the table.

Alan offered the same pleasant smile he'd given her over supper when he said he had to go cut Mrs. Barstow's lawn, a smile neither anxious nor eager, expecting or explaining nothing, even though he now carried a vacuum sweeper she'd never seen before.

"What's this?" she asked, her voice low. "It's not for us, is it? We don't need one." *Why couldn't you have come in pushing a dishwasher in front of you, or with your hands full of hardware needed to repair our home, or with your arms empty, ready to hold me?* she thought. Her heart pounded. It

seemed huge, thudding so hard she felt it right under her jawbone.

"Mrs. Barstow's old sweeper. She just bought herself a brand new one—you should see it! But she said if this one was fixed, she could use it as a backup. I thought I'd bring it home to look at. Can I have that newspaper there to spread under it?"

"My newspaper? This one?" Her mind repeated *just bought herself a brand new one—you should see it...a backup, a backup*. "No, Alan. You can't have my paper. And," she gulped in air, her emotions tumbling free and her blood charging through her in a furious stream, "how dare you bring that stupid thing home!" She spat the words at him.

"What?" The sweeper hung at the end of his arm as he stared at her. His mouth was open. He looked idiotic, she decided. *Boob. The world could drive right over you, and that is the face it'd see if it cared to check if you were alive or dead.*

Aloud, she said, "Give me that." With both hands she pulled the sweeper away from him and hurried with it into the back yard. She slipped once or twice on the wet grass but did not fall, nor did she stop until the mud oozing over the tops of her shoes told her she'd come to what should have been their garden. Suzanne slammed the sweeper into the mud hard enough for the stuff to splash high. It hit her blouse, her arms, face, hair. Laughing, she stomped on through the mud and jumped into the creek. The water slapped against her thighs. Suzanne gasped at its coldness, but, still laughing, she first sat down and then lay back. When she resurfaced, she heard Alan swearing. She couldn't remember his ever even raising his voice before. She struggled to her feet and

grinned at him.

"Are you crazy?!" He was holding the vacuum sweeper out before him.

"Yes!" she called back. "It's great!"

"Christ!" He stalked to the creek bank. "What am I supposed to do with *this*?" He shook the sweeper at her.

"Throw it in here! The creek will clean it!" She laughed wildly.

"It's ruined!"

"So? She can *buy* a backup. She can afford a backup for her backup with the money she never pays you. Or, I got it, Alan! Listen. Put the sweeper back in the mud. Maybe it'll grow. Then at least we can have a sweeper garden, since we'll never have vegetables unless I plant them all by myself." Suzanne had stopped laughing, but her voice still hitched, breaking in unexpected places. She discovered that she was shivering. She watched Alan. In the moonlight she could see his face working. Again, he held his mouth open, looking both angry and confused, but not idiotic.

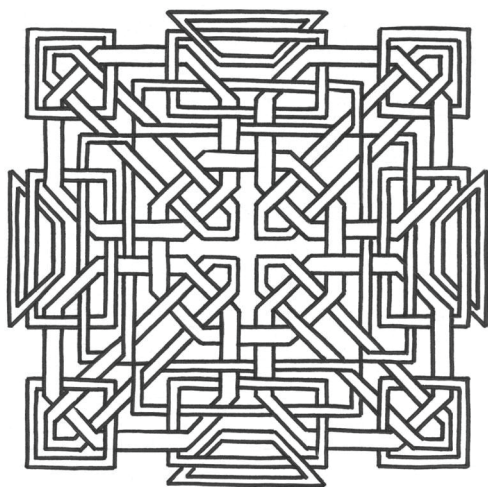
"Dammit!" he roared, sending his voice across Hendricks's field. Then he dropped the sweeper into the creek. Suzanne laughed again. "Here," he said, reaching toward her. "Give me your hand. Let me help get you out of there."

Suzanne let him pull her up on the bank. He kept her hand in his.

"I'd better go and change," she said. "I'm soaked."

"I know. You *are* crazy." He shook his head and smiled. "Come on, Suzanne. Let's go in and take care of those wet clothes."

Together they waded uphill through the damp grass. It sent a thrill up her legs. ■



M⁵_{L₁₃}

art & photography.



—Brian Wilds, “Will Work For Food”



—Brittany Violet Long, “Birds Feeding”



—Brittany Violet Long, “Into the Wild”



—Brittany Violet Long, "Life"



—Brittany Violet Long, “Bridge of Lions, St. Augustine”



—Brittany Violet Long, “Water Under the Bridge”



—Brittany Violet Long, “Waterlilies”



—Calvin Wray, “Baby Face”



—Drew Lynch, “Bent”



—Drew Lynch, “Reflect”



—Halley Buchwalter, “Forgotten”



—Halley Buchwalter, “Headless Headstone”



—Kelcee Daniels, “Buckeye”



—Kelcee Daniels, “Blue Eyes”



—Kelcee Daniels, “Navi The Siberian Husky”



—Kelcee Daniels, “Library of Celsus”



—Kelcee Daniels, “Mykonos Windmills”



—Kelcee Daniels, “Hawaiian Sunset”



—Kortnie Brown, “Before the Storm”



—Kortnie Brown, “Railroad Crossing”



—Kortnie Brown, “63”



—Mandy Lucero, “God’s Fingers”



—Mandy Lucero, “Prairie Life”



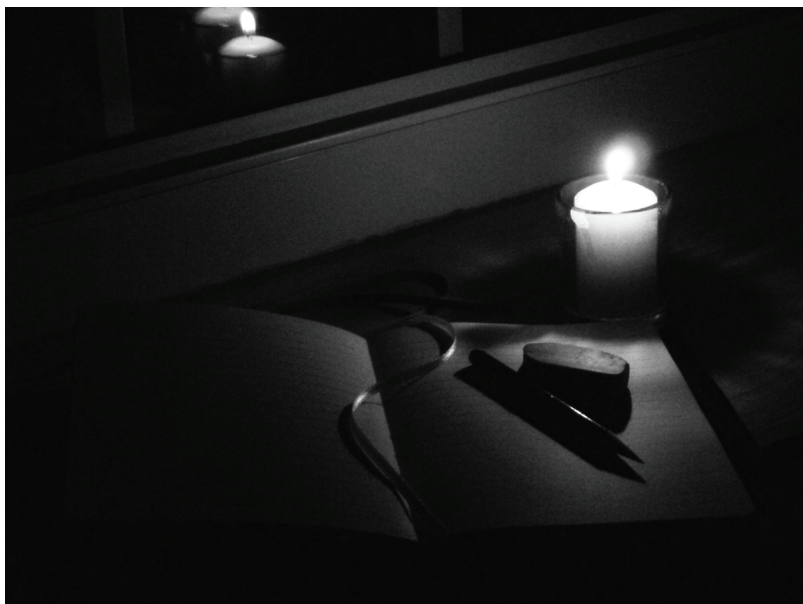
—Mandy Lucero, “Spring Is Blooming”



—Mariam Hellalat, “Cosmic Harmony”



—Meg Weatherford, “Floral Raindrops”



—Timothy Giles, “Midnight Literature”

Contributors' Notes

My name is **Ruth Albright**. I am from Marion, Ohio and my field of study is animal science. I plan to apply for graduate school to become a veterinarian.

Kortnie Brown: "I'm a small town girl from Mount Gilead. I am an Adviser on the Morrow County Junior Fair Board, and I am a Lifetime Member of Girl Scouts. I am a Social Work major."

My name is **Kyle A. Brown**. I was born and raised in Marion Ohio. I am currently a Psychology major at OSU Marion Campus, and I enjoy biking and spending time with my four children.

English major **Halley Buchwalter** just graduated from OSU

Brittany Coomes currently teaches at Marion Technical College as a Community Faculty member.

MeLynn Corwin: I chill with the Freaks and Geeks of this nation listening to Eminem's flow, while swapping stories about Buffy the Vampire Slayer's latest adventure. I understand The Perks of Being a Wallflower are the greatest when you wish to be a writer. Most importantly I've gone through my Growing Pains and contemplated my Wonder Years. If none of this tells you who I am then maybe you should call Dr. Who and CSI to help you read between the lines.

I am **Jherek Cummings**, an English major student at Ohio State University in Marion, Ohio. Writing poems and stories is a fun hobby for me along with learning how to play various musical instruments. My English studies is helping me become a better writer and this new knowledge will be useful when I create my poems, short stories, music, and film. School is cool and hard work and I am glad to have experienced all the studies at Ohio State University.

Kelcee Daniels: "I'm currently finishing up my degree in Business & Economics. I will be graduating in December 2013. I just married my wonderful husband, Ryan, in September. We have a beautiful puppy named Navi that we added to our family in October of 2012. I want to thank my family and friends for all of their love and support over the past year!"

Rosa Maria DelVecchio received her PhD from CWRU. She is an editor for *Cyberwit* in India and a staff member at CSU. Her poetry has appeared in many literary journals, and CR published her first short story in 1989. She is in the process of writing a beast epic series of YA novels.

Rachel L. Eblin-Dodds: In the same year that President Jimmy Carter was elected President of the United States of America, I was born to a high school biology teacher

who was, and still is, loved by many and a local, though brilliant and talented, thespian who could very well give Martha Stewart a run for her money in the creative and home making skills. Now, I have my own family with a wonderful husband, two children and two felines. I am an avid coffee drinker.

Brock Gates is a student at The Ohio State University.

Timothy Giles: "Creating somber, dream-state poetry and various fractions of fiction ever since the burning on the bridge. I do not claim to be a good singer, but if anyone wants to get together to play some good ol' guitar together, let me know, and we will jam. Or Nintendo. If anyone wants to play some good ol' Nintendo together, let me know."

Mariam Hellalat is currently a sophomore majoring in Biology/Pre-dental.

My name is **Denise Hoffman**, a returning student to O.S.U. Have had a wonderful time in poetry class, and have greatly enjoyed uncovering our collective unconscious with the rest of my class. Writing poetry has been a very compelling experience, it is an "uncovering" of some type.

Robert L. Johnson believes in a future teaming with alien life, galactic warfare, and the occasional light speed warp. In another universe Elves, Orcs, and Magic rule his every decision. He is in love with the written word, and hopes to tame her some day.

Roger Johnson: At 70, does not know what he's going to be when he grows up. Tried geologist, meteorologist, psychologist, teacher, military officer, college administrator, home health aide, and world traveler. Now, courtesy of OSU-M old people's program, aspiring to be novelist, using experiences to create imaginative worlds, with help from the Havasupai nation, classmates, instructors Stuart and Ben, and wife Judy. Rewarding endeavor, but much yet to learn.

M. McDonald Keith: I'm not a traditional student at Ohio State Marion. I recently retired from Franklin University and wanted to take some fiction writing courses to help me transition from teacher to full time writer. A University of Cincinnati and University of Toledo graduate, I was, am, and always will be an English Literature major, happily.

Taryn Korody is an OSUM English Dept. alum who can't find a job in the field she really wants because... well... frankly, the job market sucks for an English major. Now, this doesn't mean all you other English majors should switch to something boring, like science or engineering. English

is a beautiful thing that creates very passionate students. Just don't be surprised if you need to get a Masters degree to do something cool (and profitable) with your degree. Taryn's true passions lie in reading, writing, and correcting people's grammar everyday, as any good English major would say. She also plans to become a teacher before long (she can hear the audible groan from all the other E.M.s), which will be fantastic! Until then, wish her luck and she'll do the same for you!

Stuart Lishan teaches English at The Ohio State University. His poems and stories have appeared in a hundreds of literary journals, including *Kenyon Review*, *New England Review*, *Creative Nonfiction*, *Arts & Letters*, and *Brevity*. His book of poems, *Body Tapestries*, was awarded the Orphic Prize in Poetry and was published by Dream Horse Press in 2006.

The name is **Brittany Violet Long**. I am a senior who enjoys taking long walks through the woods, writing poetry and hula hooping. I should have graduated by now, but I simply just can't get myself to leave the magnificent and educational confines of The Ohio State University. For the time being, however, I excitedly plan to continue taking awesome English classes with Rad teachers like Stuart Lishan, while buying myself some extra time to decide what I really want to do with my life. (I'm pretty sure I won't be able to make a living off of hula hooping bare-footed in my backyard while thinking up sweet lines of poetry.)

Mandy Lewis Lucero: Tomorrow is today, and yesterday came to stay. I have defeated many days, and my past has gone away. I took snapshots of time stood still, to show the world my views. Some bright, some scary, some confusing, yet all showing a little piece of myself. Look closely and you might get a glimpse of me.

Drew Lynch is a student at Columbus State Community College.

Andrew Pinkerton: "An English major (for now, anyway), I can't quite seem to keep

my mind made up. But this writing thing seems to be pretty fun, so maybe I'll stick with it. Hopefully (so glad it's now OK to use that word in this way), things stay like that. Guess we'll see next year..."

Robert Sexton is currently a junior majoring in middle childhood education, minoring in professional writing, and recently elected as student representative to the OSUM Board of Trustees.

Whitney K. Taylor: I am a student at The Ohio State University Marion Campus majoring in English. Writing poetry has been a great catharsis for me since my mom passed away of breast cancer 11 years ago. Many of my writings speak of nature and experiences. I enjoy sharing them with others. Some of my favorite hobbies and interests are spending time with family and friends, watching my favorite hockey team the Pittsburgh Penguins play, reading, theatre, riding motorcycles, boating, snow skiing, lighthouses, thinking, and walks in the woods.

Melanie Waits: "When I first began this class of writing poetry I never considered myself to be a writer but now knowing that something I had contributed to is going to be published gives me the feeling of accomplishment and that my journey to writing has just begun."

I'm **Meg Weatherford**, I'm 21-years-old, and I don't really have anything interesting to say about myself. I'm not exactly good at writing these... things so this is the best I got. Thumbs up. :)

Brian Wilds is a busy, busy fellow.

Dawud Wilson is a student at Marion Technical College.

hiimcalvinwrayandihaveanintensedislikeforcapitalizationandpunctuationandiwrote the "fuck" poem hope you like it and also mys onisirresistiblyawesomeandcanbefoundin the pictures section of this edition of the cornfield review so i hope you like what i have come up with for you

Colophon

This issue of the *Cornfield Review* is printed using **Palatino Linotype**, *Rage Italic*, and **Elephant** fonts. The layout was handled in Adobe InDesign. The interior artwork and photographs, as well as the cover design, were all edited using a combination of Adobe Photoshop, Fireworks, and GIMP.



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Ohio State Marion welcomes you to join us around the noon hour for live performances of music, writing, and talent at the

Coffee House Series!

COME CHECK OUT **KAPW!**

OSU-Marion's creative writing club meets every two weeks during the fall and spring semesters (usually during the noon hour in LC 217, but keep an eye out for flyers with updated meeting dates and locations). Feel free to bring your lunch and hang out and listen, or you can bring along some writing to share!

And if you have any questions, contact Stuart Lishan, fellow Kapower and faculty advisor (lishan.1@osu.edu). Hope to see you there!

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