

THE CORNFIELD REVIEW

A Literary Publication of the Ohio State University at Marion

Volume 25 | 2008




Preface

ANOTHER YEAR, another *Cornfield Review*. Like the budding and blossoming of the dogwood, the ebb and flow of the oceanic tide, the waxing and waning of the moon, so too does the publication of this humble literary journal have its own life cycle—its own rhythm of being, if you will. At this moment when the new issue makes its way into your hands, its words and images into your eyes, preparations will have already begun for the next issue: requests for submissions, hushed conversations in the hallways about a promising batch of student work, figuring out when and where to have the next public reading. This is a concept of time tied not to the clock, but rather to the living world. In a sense, what you read is a small part of you, so treasure it, enjoy it, and rest assured that its lineage will carry on into the next issue. And the next. And the next. A bit overwrought? Perhaps; after an interminably long winter, I'm suffering from a touch of Spring Fever.

This project would not be possible without the help of several people across our campus, and so we thank them here. The first gesture of appreciation is reserved for our administration, particularly Dean Greg Rose, for their continued support of this long-standing project. Each year, the OSU-Marion English faculty help steer good writing our way, and for that we say “thank you.” Once again, we are indebted to Mary Fahy for encouraging her

digital photography students to submit their incredible photographs to us. As always, the Editorial Board members who helped make this issue possible are owed thanks: Tabitha Clark, Laura Daum, Rich Denton, Michael Ebright, Stephanie Howard, Ben Jolliff, Heather Korner, Danielle Schnees, Scott Shirk, Rebecca Sullivan, and Dee Wood. The Cornfield Skeleton Crew, made up of Winter Quarter's Editorial Board members, deserves a special note of gratitude for courageously continuing on during Spring Quarter and completing this issue's production duties: those members include Scott, Tabitha, Heather, Danielle, and Stephanie.

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

Mission Statement:

Our goal is to strive to be the literary and artistic voice of Central Ohio by giving students of higher education in the area an opportunity to be published in a professional literary journal. Although submissions come primarily from area students, we strive to achieve a cultural impact that goes beyond local campuses and reaches into the greater community.

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the glass hammer suite

I. Framing the moment

Board bearing board nailed—that is the order
borne of forming frame's firm miters
mating joint to loin the claims of portraiture.
The puny penny spikes need this shunting
sinking canines tooth by tooth as metallic
turnicates darning an oak so deep the bite
scathes bone of grain, a thrust to thrall
true-hewn wood straight enough to delineate
areas receiving the eye's attention, neglecting
fields of wall. The holding of these nails—
it is a hunger, a hinging lunge of pound
that divots, the violence of an appetite starved
forged of an ore to fulfill,
the drive to feed.

II. Feeling the pathos of a tool that can't be used

I was made to break like the dawn
which owes annihilation to being.
From peen to claw to grip I feel a sick
glee in my glass matter which would smatter
should one blow of kiss be dealt to iron head.
I love the horror of sterility,
the dread my body gives me when I rest
slant on the bench, an island marooned,
a return to my elements:
sand melted to become something more.
But what more will I become save the fill
of a dust pan laced with smashed fragments,
the pathos of a tool that can't be used—
what will I be besides a beautiful waste?

—*Sarah Stahl*

from the apocrypha of enigmas: If a tree falls in
the woods...

Forest solipsists insist that missing
the sound of timber's tumble
will render the death whoosh null and void,
like showing your tits to a blind guy,
an elegant exhibit of waste.

I am this echo-chamber
for all the forgotten rumbles
like an oyster with sonic pearls.

Listen to this:
just because you can't hear us
doesn't mean we don't matter,
doesn't mean we don't merit
a loan of aural interest.

I am screaming this,
hoping someone cares.

—*Sarah Stabl*

Winter's End

Awake. Lightning strikes and sounds soar outside. Your dreams of the one above are lost in mid-night. You're still lying in this dark room, alone, without her near you. Nerves command your hands to water as you imagine her pools of brown and green. Inches from your body lay a strand of hers she left last week and you hope it's not all you have to keep with you tonight.

You hear the small creaks and cracks upstairs as she walks softly. Red 2:10 displayed. Will she come to lie on your chest and bring you a smile? It's up to you, dial! Dial! I know your confidence lacks on its hold but remember only boards separate two souls. Time runs too fast on this night and the sand falls quickly. You know those sounds won't last forever, invite her, hurry. What do you do? Go!

—*Ben Jolliff*

Ghost in my arms

The door creaks like a crow's call
As it opens, exposing her silhouette.
That smooth black image on the door,
The straight, shoulder-length hair of my brunette.
Her body moves towards my bedside.
She's covered in moonlight, her body the same.
Her lip gloss smells of strawberries
and still shines like a growing flame.

She crawls between these sheets and me,
I wrap her in these arms of mine.
Her body as warm as a summer's night,
Her hair, the smell of a lilac wine.
A slow caress of fingertips on my cheek.
I kiss those lips as soft as snow,
The cricket ensemble performs for us,
Our romance stands in as the acting maestro.

Suddenly moods in the bed grows sad,
She leans towards me in the bright moonlight,
She whispers close, "I don't have much time,
Please, just remember this night."
The water in my eyes trickles like rain
As I hold her closer against my heart
Her body feels lighter as it thunders outside
A storm is coming to tear us apart.

The outside wind crashes violently

Against the colored leaves of the night.
The faded streetlamp through my window
Flashes on her body like a beacon light.
The leaves cast their shadows upon her,
My warning signs and subtle alarms.
She fades away softly and never returns.
I fall asleep nightly with a ghost in my arms.

—*Ben Jolliff*



Photograph by Kelcee McCurdy





Photograph by Araby Sexton



“Art in a Fast-Paced World,” Michael Eades



Covenant

My name is Legion for my sins are many
Possessed by devils I roam the countryside
cleansing the faith from those burdened

I will find anything you keep secret
cry out to me in a loud voice
and I will make a pact; an issue of blood

Delighting in laughter
Fool of my sorrow,
you will destroy thine heart for me

My wickedness sits patiently
dance with me in the pale moonlight
while you make your fatal choice

—*Tabitha Clark*

Blue

—*Tabitha Clark*

SANGEY BAKOUPDA WAS going to die tonight. He didn't realize it when he walked into the Crimson Crustacean. Had he known this, he would have chosen somewhere else to have his dinner. Alas, he was hungry and he saw the glowing light of the "Crust" (as the workers called it) from the empty highway, so he stopped in for a bite. It was fifteen minutes until closing and an hour until lights out for Sangey Bakoupda.

Sangey wasn't the type you would consider an enemy to anyone. He was a 58 year old mathematician. Overall, he was a quiet man, though he could be a bit condescending. He knew what time the restaurant closed, but he also knew it was the waiter or waitress's job to stay until he was finished, despite the hour. He had been through one hell of a day at work, and it was his turn to make someone miserable. So, he strutted boldly through the deserted, foggy parking lot, grabbed the door handle, and entered the restaurant.

Sangey received an eyebrow raise from the hostess as he came through the door. The hostess looked 17 years of age and the name on her badge had an odd spelling. "Hello sir, welcome to the Crimson Crustacean. Only one for dinner this

evening? Would you like a booth or a table?"

"A booth please," Sangey stuttered, still amazed by the ramble of words that had attacked him. The hostess hadn't even given him a chance to answer the first question before moving on to the next. Her speech reminded him of an auctioneer. He assumed she was trying to get things started so he would be out of the restaurant as soon as possible. Had he known her thoughts, he would have proven himself right. "So, how do you pronounce that name?" he asked as he patted her elbow.

She looked at with a mix of confusion and disgust. "It is pronounced 'Tasha'. My parents decided to spell it in a unique way," Toisha explained as she looked over at another woman, "Dolly will be your waitress this evening, and she is coming this way right now."

Dolly rolled her eyes as she saw the man enter the restaurant. She knew she had to pick up her daughter in an hour from the rink, and this asshole was going to make her late. Dolly walked to the back and let Justin, the cook, know there was one more customer before closing.

"Are you kidding? Please tell me

you are kidding Dolly! Well, he better not order anything grilled because I already cleaned the damn thing!" Justin seemed a little less than pleased about the situation.

Dolly left the prep alley to greet her customer in the dining room. "Hello sir, my name is Dolly, and I will be taking care of you this evening.

Sangey lightly patted Dolly's elbow as he gave her his order. "I will have tea, a plate of lemons, a glass of ice, a lime, and a shot of grenadine. I am ready to order my dinner as well. I would like a steak, well done, with fries, coleslaw, and I will have dessert later on."

Dolly could feel the color creeping into her face. This man had ordered the one meal on the menu that took the longest to make. A well done steak took 20 minutes to cook! She stalked back to the kitchen to give Justin the news. "Please drop that steak on the floor a few times before

giving it to me to take out," she said.

"No problemo! Oops!" Justin exclaimed, dropping the steak on the floor again and again. Little did Justin know, the floor had been cleaned with an industrial strength cleaner, and it retained a residue that was now seeping into the meat. Justin let the steak slip from the tongs one final time before placing it on the plate. If he would have lifted the piece of meat, he would have seen blue goo underneath, staining the piece of tableware.

Dolly took the meal out to the waiting man, smirking all the way.

Sangey smiled when he saw his food being walked out from the kitchen. He was hungry. Dolly sat the plate down in front of him, asked if he needed anything else, and then walked off to finish the rest of her work. Sangey cut the steak and put the first bite into his mouth. There was a tang of something different,


He knew what time the restaurant closed, but he also knew it was the waiter or waitress's job to stay until he was finished, despite the hour. He had been through one hell of a day at work, and it was his turn to make someone miserable.

CLARK

but Sangey figured it was just a new sauce or flavoring the restaurant was using. He ate every bit of the steak within fifteen minutes, never even noticing the residue on his plate.

All of a sudden, the restaurant began to spin. Sangey's throat and stomach were on fire and his heart felt like it might break out of his chest. He didn't understand what was going on. He tried to make his way out of the restaurant and to his car, but he collapsed just outside the booth. As the lights of the restaurant faded into the distance, he heard nothing the steady hum of the restaurant's dining music. The rest was silence.

"Dolly! We have another one!" Toisha called as she walked over to Sangey's body.

Dolly sauntered over to the dead man and gazed at his glassy expression. "You need to learn not to come into restaurants right before closing," she said, "Where do you think we get our steaks?" Dolly told Toisha to grab Justin from the back to help move the body. Dolly knew what would happen. Who do you think cleaned the floor that night? 

Back Before You Know it

—*Tabitha Clark*

“SO KISS ME and smile for me, tell me that you’ll wait for me, hold me like you’ll never let me go...” Charlie sang while he held Tristan in his arms, not wanting to let her go.

Tristan smiled against his shoulder, knowing that he was being cheesy, but that was Charlie. He knew how to make her smile through the tears.

Charlie opened his mouth to say something, but his voice was drowned out by the roar of the aircraft’s engines coming to life. Tristan looked up at the gray C-130 Hercules that loomed over the crowd. The hulking piece of metal cast a monstrous shadow in the winter sun.

Glancing at the crowd around them, Tristan saw all the troops wearing desert camouflage. These uniforms made them indistinguishable in rank unless an eye caught the glint of metal from the officers’ collars. The Marines and their loved ones were saying goodbyes and giving last minute words of encouragement. Some cried while others kissed deeply in the final moments before departure. Young children, their eyes red rimmed from crying, were clinging to their parents pant legs. Fathers and mothers held babies, playing with

their small feet and hands. One man knelt and kissed his wife’s stomach, whispering goodbye to the child that would be born while he served overseas. On the outskirts of the crowd, Tristan noticed some of the Marines were still working. These were the men without families. The Marine Corps was their family, and they were the glue of the unit, keeping everything moving while others finished their farewells. Tristan, overwhelmed by the scene, turned to Charlie and buried her face in his chest, trying to hide her tears. Charlie whispered reassuring words into her ear.

“It’s ok sweetie. I’m going to Africa; it’s just a training deployment. At least I’m not going to Iraq, right?”

Tristan pulled back from Charlie a bit. She wanted to look into his eyes. That way, she would know if he meant what he said. She knew deployments were always dangerous, but she sensed that he was being honest with her. He wasn’t worried about this deployment.

The couple stared deep into each others eyes, trying to make a mental picture before being pulled several thousand miles apart. The moment was broken by the Commanding Of-

ficer's voice. It was time to go.

Charlie hugged Tristan one last time, then turned to walk away. He swiveled back to her and waved. "I'll be back before you know it babe. I love you."

Tristan watched him get on the plane. It raced down the runway before becoming airborne and drifted off into forever. As she willed her eyes to keep contact with the ever shrinking aircraft, she began to feel dizzy. The ground beneath her started rolling like waves breaking on the coast. Everything around her became fuzzy and indistinguishable. The earth became a tilt-a-whirl, spinning her in all directions. She looked up, and the clouds formed a spiral, almost as if they were a stairway to heaven. Her heart pounded while her stomach knotted more with each twirling sensation. To stave off the nausea, she shut her eyes tightly. That was when she heard it; a lone bugle.

She was standing in a familiar cemetery. She had been there four months ago. The trees made a dark canopy, shutting out the sunlight and making the scenery more grave. In front of her was a casket draped in an American Flag. The wind picked up, catching the flag and throwing it onto Tristan. The flag twisted

around her, a cotton python, squeezing her tighter and tighter until she felt as though she couldn't breathe. Tristan thrashed, kicked, and screamed. She lurched forward and fell into a freshly dug plot.

A pair of beady eyes peered at her from under her bed. Startled at first, she soon realized they belonged to her fuzzy bunny slippers. She tried to get up, but was trapped in her sheet. Ripping out of her linen prison, she stumbled and stood up. Tristan rubbed the side of her head. It throbbed, and she felt a bump. "Still night," she sighed and slipped into bed, willing herself back to sleep.

A cool gust of air cut through the oppressive heat and tickled Tristan's nose. Tristan was thankful for the chill washing over her drenched body. She rolled onto her side, attempting to stay as far away from the other person in her bed as possible. Her mind flashed back to the scene in the bar earlier that evening. She thought about how she threw herself at him, not caring what he looked like. She craved the touch of a man, wanting to push all the bad feelings away for one night. Now she felt even worse. Every time she brushed against him it made her skin crawl. His clammy, rough body stuck to her as she tried to move, not like

the strong, smooth bed mate of her past. Tristan felt the bile rising in her throat as she thought – this man is not my husband.

The stranger rolled over, “Well, hello there sexy. What’s wrong? Did you fall out of bed? Are you ok? Come over here and let me make it all better.”

As he tried to put his arms around her, Tristan lost control of her emotions. Anger flashed in her eyes, her mind thinking of Charlie and how this man would never take his place. She threw back the covers, and vaulted out of bed. “Get the hell out of my house!” Tristan shoved him out of the bed, feeling a small tingle of wicked delight when she heard

him yelp and hit the floor.

“Fuck! That really hurt! What in the hell is wrong with you?”

“There is nothing wrong with me! I don’t want you here. I should have never let you come home with me. You need to leave right now!”

“Ok, ok, you crazy bitch, I’ll leave!” The stranger got up, grabbed his clothes, and walked out of the room cursing under his breath.

Tristan heard something made of glass break against the floor and then the front door slammed. She began pacing. She was angry, and there was nothing she could do to alleviate the heaviness in her chest.

Charlie opened his mouth to say something, but his voice was drowned out by the roar of the aircraft’s engines coming to life. Tristan looked up at the gray C-130 Hercules that loomed over the crowd. The hulking piece of metal cast a monstrous shadow in the winter sun.

CLARK

“You lied to me Charlie!” she yelled into the silence. “You told me you would never leave me. You told me you would be back before I knew it! Well, you aren’t here Charlie, and I’m well aware of it! What in the hell am I supposed to do without you, huh??”

Tristan took a deep breath, prepared to scream some more and stopped. She crossed the dark room; the hardwood floor creaked with every step. Collapsing onto her window seat, defeated, she curled her legs under her and looked out into the moonlit backyard. She pressed her forehead against the pane and sighed before leaning back and opening the window. She needed to call the air conditioning repairman tomorrow. Tristan had never dealt with the house repairs before. That was Charlie’s department. Tears crept down her cheeks. His blue green smiling eyes flashed through her memory, and she lost her breath.

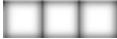
Tristan heard a sound – a man’s voice, but wispy; a whisper carried on the wind. The hair on her arms prickled up. She knew that voice even though she could barely hear it. Tristan ran from the room. She rushed down the stairs and paused in the kitchen, holding her breath and listening.

“Back...back before you know it...” She heard it again! It was coming from the backyard. Tristan opened the back door and ran outside. She was met by the thick August night air but nothing else. Even the wind had stopped. Her eyes darted to every part of the yard, searching for any glimpse of Charlie, but she couldn’t find him.

Tristan’s eyes widened in disbelief; she heard his voice, he had to be out there. She began to tremble and sat down on the porch step. Had she heard anything? Was she still dreaming? Tristan didn’t know; she wondered if she was going crazy. She rested her head in her hands and began to sob out of sadness and confusion. The wind picked up and she heard the music again; a lone bugle playing “Taps.” As exhaustion began to envelop her, her mind drifted off to a happier time – a time before the knock on the door and the twenty one guns.

Tristan felt the warm sunlight on her eyelids. She stretched her arms out, feeling the sheets around her. She was back in bed. Was last night a dream? Have the last four months been a horrible nightmare? Tristan prayed inwardly, attempting to will Charlie back into existence.

She was alone in the room. She took a deep breath to keep herself from crying; her eyes were sore from the night before. She lost the battle and the tears leaked down her face. She stared at the ceiling. “I need you, Charlie. I can’t figure out how my life works without you.”

The clock radio switched on. Tristan smiled through her tears as she heard, “So kiss me and smile for me, tell me that you’ll wait for me, hold me like you’ll never let me go...” 



“1000 Ackers,” Emma Kroon Van Diest



“Disch’s Lion,” Emma Kroon Van Diest



The Suicide of October

Take a walk in autumn rain
We'll break our backs against the wind
And stand to lose more than we've gained
With October bleeding bright.

We break the ground

Among the lilies in a midnight bind
Capture none, fade away
Into a wicked vapor sky
To wish away the morning

We left him in October.

Beckon up with golden vows
To the veined crude face
In the foreign heights
And let the memories sweep us home

To our eternity in October.

Instruct us with a strangled jaw
The gash, a savior,
Still remains
Force the Heavens to open wide
And hold in arms, October.
Then, pouring, drowning, sweeping, wide
We lay October down.

—*Laura Daum*

Sure

They open like umbrellas against hail
Folding, gasping, hollowing
Underneath such force
That could break ivy from the limbs
Could break it clean off shutters
They pour each word
In its casual phrase
Watch it until it falls into the space
Where words go
When they are not
Made use of
Breaking spaces
A proverbial show
Stemming more and more
With days unending
While they open their mouths,
Gaping wide like umbrellas
And waiting for the hail.

—*Laura Daum*

Losing Chicky

—*Laura Daum*

I NEVER NOTICED HOW beautiful spring is. I never actually stopped to look as the days passed between winter and into the spring months. Somewhere along the way, I stopped trying to find that delicate transference of death into life. For the first time since I was a child, I notice the trees are blooming again. The buds grow more brilliantly each day, screaming in colors of maroon, pink, white, and green. It's a strange feeling. It's almost as if I had been blind all my life, then suddenly had my sight returned in the same instance that the world was being born. All the colors are more frightening, spinning like a picture under a blue, blue sky, with clouds floating through the horizon like ocean waves. How could I have stopped noticing the spring?

The thoughts bombard my mind as I drive to Dr. Wes's office. There's an emptiness that I can't shake. The passenger seat is cold and alone. I keep glancing over, wanting to speak of the spring. I'm so used to her being there next to me, hanging on my every word. Normally, I would let the thoughts tumble out in streams. She would nod that blond head of hair, twisting some on her delicately manicured finger, take in what I was saying, putting words in here or

there. But I'm alone now. In the car, at home, in school, in church; I'm forever alone.

As I drive through the tree-lined streets of the nice neighborhood, the one with huge brick houses and white picket fences, I see two children outside on the sidewalk. One is sitting on the ground fiddling with the grass, the other standing, holding the rope, seemingly begging the other to stand and play. As I pass, the children suddenly transform before my very eyes into two little girls with matching blond hair in pigtails and matching outfits on the lawn.

We were five. I was playing hopscotch with my sister, trying to figure out if I could come up with a new rhyme to jump to. My sister was sitting on the concrete, her round face and honey-colored eyes which mirrored my own, were intently focused on an ant. She watched it crawl and struggle as she poked and prodded, until, in a fit of rage, she squashed it with her thumb.

"Ew! Chicky!" was my response.

She looked at me, with those twin orbs and simply wiped the gooey

stuff off of her fingers onto her pants.

We were always together. Day, night, bedtime, story time, and playtime... We could never be separated.

We were five. I was playing hop-scotch with my twin sister, Chicky. Then there came Devon, with his dirty hands and his mean face, which was always grimacing or pouting. There he came, out from behind the fence into our yard, our domain.

“What do you want?” Chicky asked. Her face almost as menacing as his was.

“Can I play too?” He tried to smile. His face pulled up in an unaccustomed expression.

“No, but maybe later you can.” I said.

“But I want to play now!”

In his anger, he came up close to me. He had put his face next to mine, until I was staring into those plain brown eyes. He put his arms out and pushed me down. Hastily, after seeing the tears spring up in my eyes, he darted back behind the fence.

I bled. I scraped my knee and I was bleeding. But my sister, my Chicky, helped me stand. Let me lean on

her and she had carried me into our house. Mother wasn't home, she was working. So she helped me into the bathroom and cleaned me up all by herself. My twin hadn't been as squeamish as I was about blood. She even kissed my boo-boo and told me it was okay. I wouldn't be hurt again.

I shake my head, the sun's glare blinding me momentarily and I almost miss my turn. Swerving sharply, I make it, ten minutes late. The red brick building greets me as I swing back the thick double doors and step into the waiting room. I am waved through to the corridor of my therapist's office. Opening the door, I'm astounded at how bland and dark the room is. How could I have forgotten? The only cheery things were the posters with “Achievement” and “Progress” written on them.

“Charlotte. Good to see you again. Have a seat.” The voice from behind the desk of papers came as a shock. My eyes hadn't quite adjusted to the darkness yet.

I see the tuft of blond hair and the glint off the glasses, breathe in slowly. *Here we go again.* Sitting down in the velvet chair, I immediately begin fidgeting and twirling my ring, like usual when nervous. She notices this. Her eyes dart down to my hands. I

DAUM

clasp them together and look up.

“Well?”

“Oh, sorry, I’ve just been swamped with paperwork lately.” She waves her hand across her desk.

“That’s obvious.” She smiles. She’s really not bad looking for a woman of forty. There are age lines around her face, but her eyes and mouth still retain most of their youth.

“How have you been lately?”

“Good.”

This is meaningless chit-chat. She always takes a million years to get to the root of what she wants to work on. *Get to the point already!*

“How is the medication? Having any problems with that?”

“No.” *Sweet Jesus, forty five minutes left? You must be joking.*

“You seem tense today. Anything you want to get off of your chest?”

“Well, I thought about Chicky.” I lower my eyes, fiddling with my ring again; silver, shiny, and permanent. That ring seemed to be the only constant. “I can’t seem to get her off of my mind lately.”

“Sometimes it’s better to hold on rather than let go completely. It’s perfectly normal. Actually, I’d be worried if you weren’t thinking about her.”

“You seem tense today. Anything you want to get off of your chest?”

“Well, I thought about Chicky.” I lower my eyes, fiddling with my ring again; silver, shiny, and permanent. That ring seemed to be the only constant. “I can’t seem to get her off of my mind lately.”

“Why did she have to leave?”

She leans towards me, taking off her glasses and setting them down on the desk.

“Maybe it was just her time to go. She probably realized you didn’t need her help anymore. She wouldn’t have done anything to deliberately hurt you.”

“Why do you say that as if you knew her?” I raise my eyebrows. “You didn’t.”

She sits back in her chair and sighs.

“Charlotte. I’m not trying to take Chicky away from you. That’s not why you’re here and that’s not why I’m here.”

“Then why am I here?”

“You are here because you lost someone very close to you. Now you have to let go of someone else who filled that place. It takes a toll on a person. No one could’ve handled what you’ve dealt with for so long on their own.”

I sit back in the chair, crossing my arms. She glances at the papers on her desk and shoots me a little smile. “Whenever you wish to talk about it, we will. For now we can talk about

whatever you choose.”

I know the “it” she’s speaking of. The papers on her desk, the extensive notes and the doctors reports; I know what they all read. Mother has been over it with me many times. They say I have a problem. Deep, emotional and scarring, my problem is such that I need therapy and medication to fix it all; to make it all evaporate.

“What if I don’t wish to talk about it?” My eyes dart back down to my hands. Without permission, my fingers caress the silver, twist and turn it. Dr. Wes clears her throat and shuffles the papers around on her desk.

“Well, I guess all I can do is wait.”

Wait for what? What does she wish me to say? *My father died too early. My mother’s never home. No one listens to me, so why should you?*

I can’t imagine pouring my heart out to this woman. This speck of a woman, whose only reason for being here is to listen to me because Mother pays for these sessions. Mother wants me to be normal, to have friends, to hear me talking to someone on the phone and not to someone who she claims never existed.

DAUM

"I can't do this anymore, Charlotte. I just can't." She sobbed to me one evening, on those rare occasions that I saw her in person.

"That's a lovely ring you have." Dr. Wes's voice intervenes. She is pointing to my hands.

"Uh, thanks."

"Who gave it to you?" She props up her chin with her fist, staring at me intensely.

"Here, Charlie, this is a magic ring." Father said as he handed me the shiny silver thing. Mother was in the background telling him my fingers were too tiny, it wouldn't fit. She said that there was no point in giving such a pretty piece of jewelry to a five year old that played in muck all day.

He only smiled and said, "A pretty girl deserves pretty things. She'll grow into it."

"I've had it as long as I can remember. I haven't taken it off in five years."

She nods her head again. "Well, our time's almost up for today. Shall we continue next Friday?"

"Sounds fine," I stand, grab my purse and yank open the door, eager to get home and out of that office. It has a dizzying effect; those post-

ers and wooden paneling make for a migraine.

I jump in my car and head for home. When I pull in the driveway all that greets me is a big house with no lights to be seen on inside. There's no second car in the garage. I'm assuming Mother won't be home until later. I walk in the purple front door. Purple. Who the hell paints their front door purple? The house is too big; too many rooms for only two people. Mother's said many times how we should move into a house on Delmond, small and easily affordable. She never has though. When I ask her why, she always says, "Some things you just can't let go of."

Lately Mother attempts to keep some civilized communication going using an old Mickey Mouse magnet on the refrigerator to transfer notes. As I wander into the kitchen, there's Mickey, sitting in his usual place in the middle of that white blank space, holding up my mother's voice. *Charlotte, dinner's in the fridge. Help yourself. See you when I get home.*

I have to laugh at that. She doesn't even say when she'll be home. I grab the orange juice and head up to my room, turn on the black light and lay on my twin bed. I close my eyes and immediately am drawn into a simpler

We were thirteen the first time we put on makeup. Chicky had gotten the idea while we laid on our beds, staring up at the ceiling on that hot summer day. She rolled over on her stomach, eyes glittering, the way it did when she'd get a mischievous idea.

“Charlotte?” She smiled. “Wanna get pretty?”

time.

We were thirteen the first time we put on makeup. Chicky had gotten the idea while we laid on our beds, staring up at the ceiling on that hot summer day. She rolled over on her stomach, eyes glittering, the way it did when she'd get a mischievous idea.

“Charlotte?” She smiled. “Wanna get pretty?”

“Huh?” I smiled back. “Nah, I'm pretty enough as it is. You? Well, for you, I guess it wouldn't kill you to try it.”

She rolled her eyes and stuck out her lower lip. “C'mon, let's sneak into Mom's room and find some of her

mascara.”

“I'm gonna stay here. You go.”

“Fine. Whatever.” She jumped up to leave.

“Dork!”

“Loser!” She stuck her head back in the door to shout at me.

Minutes later she reappeared, brandishing iridescent blue eye shadow and Mom's red plastic tube of mascara. “Ha. Found it.”

Sitting at our vanity she applied gallons of the stuff. Somehow, with her coaxing and taunting, I ended up sitting cross-legged in front of my sister while she applied the black mascara to my eyes. Hours ticked by,

until the sun disappeared into a sea of black clouds, blacker than the garish eyeliner we had applied. We heard rain pounding the tin roof, looked up, then at one another.

“Wanna go dance in the rain?”

Chicky asked. We hadn’t done that since we were seven.

“We’re too old, you dork.”

“You’re never too old to dance in the rain.” At that, she grabbed my arm and pulled me downstairs, out the door. And we danced in the rain. We danced, laughed, and twirled, mascara running down our faces making black lines. We looked like crazy, wet Indian natives. We danced until the mascara ran down our necks and seeped into our shirts. We danced until the sky produced streaks of light and thunder. We danced until Mother leaned out the door and screamed at us to come inside. Soaking wet and breathless, we reluctantly obeyed.

I open my eyes, look up at the ceiling. The clock beside my bed proclaims it to be eleven at night. I shake my head to get rid of the nightmares, be rid of her. I don’t want to remember these things. Why these things have to happen? Well, that still remains a mystery. Under my bed

there exists a lovely thing. A bright, silvery bottle of vodka, purchased by a man named Chase, whom I pass every morning on my way to school. Good man, that Chase. Good enough to take money from a sixteen year old, good enough to take a mere five-dollar bribe to buy her some alcohol, to buy her the good stuff. I rescue it from the confines of the dust bunnies and clutter, keep it in the safety of my arms. I lay back, take a swig. It burns, ripping its way into my stomach. It tingles and overtakes me as I, bit by bit, choke down the bottle. One more drink, that’s a good girl, drink it all down. Drink her away. Drink them all away.

Hours tick by, until it becomes more than time, more than a space that can be filled with the alcohol. So drink it down, girl, drink it all down. I swear, I closed my eyes and it was five, I open them again and now it’s eleven and the dark shapes are crowding my room. They fill the spaces. They drink in the light. They inch their way across these walls. They speak and their voices sound like shadows do. They whisper and waver and speak in soft tones so that I cannot hear them any longer. Speak up! Come one now, how am I supposed to carry on a decent conversation when you keep moving like that, huh? Can you answer me that? Well, can you answer me? Take

another sip, just one more sip, and then it's gone. Now it's in the system where no one can retrieve it. Let us try to walk, shall we? My feet move together, without rhyme, without reason. They scream "We can't work like this! How can you expect us to work under these conditions with this drug coursing through our veins? We'll learn you to do this to us!" And damn those legs, they did. I stumble and fall, first over the chair to the desk and then on solid floor. I make my way to the window, to my escape. My window with the pink frilly curtains. Damn those ugly lacy things. Chicky picked them out. Chicky. The lace laughs at me, it's lacy frilly way. It giggles and points at me, mocking my loss. I'll teach you to laugh! Rip apart the shades, yes, strip the window bare. I promise I will make up for stripping you down. Pry up the latch and spring up the window.

"C'mon, Charlie, get up." She whispered in the dark. "C'mon."

"Huh?" Before I could open my eyes, Chicky was pulling me from the bed, towards the window. She'd grabbed a blanket off of her bed and proceeded to open the window and step out onto the second story roof.

"Are you nuts? It's freezing out here!"

"That's why I brought the blanket silly." She reached through the window pane and snatched my wrist, helping me out. She wrapped the blanket around the both of us and we just lay there, looking at the heavens. The lights were abnormally bright that night. I remembered the moon looking huge and luminous in the sky, like a Chinese lantern. And we lay there, looking up at the night sky, not uttering a word, with our heads knocked toward one another.

The warm night air pulls around me as I lie here once more. I'm still here, I haven't left. It wasn't that long ago when we were together. It wasn't that long ago that we were both out here, looking up at that glorious ball of light in the dark horizon. I lean forward, looking out into the yard. The trees take on a life of their own in the night. The wind rushes through them, twists the branches, jostles their frame to look like waving fingers. The trees wave at me. They're waving. Hello trees! My eyes go in and out of focus. I swear I can see a shape moving on the ground. The moonlight shows the way. It shows me the figure moving towards the house. Chicky?

The warmth pulls around me, pulls through me, sweeps me along with it. I want to stay here.

DAUM

There's a million miles of darkness sweeping through the land. I want to reach out and touch it. I want to feel it. I want to take it into my arms and have it carry me off. No more therapy sessions, no more doctors, no more medicine, no more. I hear a noise, out here, on this celestial plane. As I turn towards the sound, the dark shadows mix with brown. The brown starts to bend and fade through the night. The brown has faded to gold. Gold, gold, golden. Golden eyes stare at me. Golden eyes come out through the darkness followed by golden hair, golden skin. Chicky. My Chicky.

"It's a long way down, dork." She peers over the side, coming to join me. She sidles up next to me, plopping down on the roof, letting her

legs dangle over the side.

"They tell me you're a lie." I'm still tipsy. I just put a slur on "a".

She frowns at me, face illuminated by the moon. Our Chinese lantern in the sky. "You knew I wasn't meant to be here long." Her voice drops down to a gentle hum.

"I don't understand."

She furors her eyebrows, mirroring mine. She used to mimic my facial expressions all the time when we were children.

"I was never meant to stay." She reaches her hand out as she speaks those words and tucks a strand of hair behind my ears.

I lean forward, looking out into the yard. The trees take on a life of their own in the night. The wind rushes through them, twists the branches, jostles their frame to look like waving fingers. The trees wave at me. They're waving. Hello trees! My eyes go in and out of focus. I swear I can see a shape moving on the ground. The moonlight shows the way. It shows me the figure moving towards the house. Chicky?

“Can I go with you?”

Chicky smiles. She looks out on the lawn, her eyes tilt back up to the lantern in the sky. She then closes them as if contemplating. “No, it gets easier as time goes on.” She stands, leaning once again towards the edge, peering down.

“I want to go where you go.”

She smiles and nods. “I know this is difficult. Mother’s been busy with work and you’ve been seeing Dr. Wes for the past three months, but she’s going to help you. It’s tough now, but it will get better. It always does.”

“Doesn’t seem like it.” I lie back, propping my head up with my arms. Chicky sighs as she lies down next to me. “No one ever said life was easy.” “It should be, though. Why the hell shouldn’t it be?”

“I don’t know. I never said I knew everything.”

“Why can’t I go where you go? Can you tell me that much?”

She closes her eyes again. Upon opening them, she reaches over and grabs my hand. It’s solid. It’s real. There is warmth in her hand. I can feel the pulsing of her blood. How could they have told me she was a

lie? There are no lies.

“I don’t want to hurt you anymore than I already have.”

“It won’t just go away when you leave.” I squeeze my eyes shut. Chicky takes my hand, heaving me up next to her. She bends, as if she is trying to get a good look at the ground, glances up, giving me a little smile.

“It’s a long way down.” Chicky says, looking at me with those golden eyes. “I want to go where you go.”

“Are you sure?”

I nod my head.

Then we jump. 



Photograph by Kevin Gosnell



Photograph by Kevin Gosnell





Photograph by Kevin Gosnell

The Unsinkable Ship

—*Pamela Beth Mobon*

I.

SARAH AND I LAID outside on the concrete with our faces to the sun. It had been her idea that we should get a nice healthy glow, the same way that she believed in beauty rest. This was probably true in her case, though—to give her acne medication a chance to flow easily and tuck into the pockets of infection.

Today, she was wearing a new spaghetti-strap tank top, light blue with rainbow stripes across the chest. Out of the corner of her eye, she kept admiring herself in the reflection of her parent's metal trashcans. Most people knew that trashcans were insane for The Village but not Sarah's parents. Dozens of dumpsters were situated in various locations around the complex. Besides, neighboring gangs would come out after dark and demolish the playgrounds, banging anything they could dent. You stuck to plastic indoors and went without otherwise. Sarah's parents hadn't had

any nighttime visitors yet, though. They were still focused on the idea of making an apartment look and feel like a house.

"Hey, Sarah," I said as I jabbed her in the ribs.

"What?!" she answered, a bit exasperated.

"Can I come over Saturday? My sister's havin' a slumber party, and Megan N. is going to be there."

"Yuck. I can't stand her," Sarah said.

"Every time I see her, she acts like she's too good to even say 'hi,'" I said.

"I know, but I feel sorry for your sister. She snores really loud on the bus, and I heard she sleepwalks to night, and she --"

We chimed in together. "Has gas." I rolled over on my stomach and

NOTE: This story concerns the 1997-1998 school year when I was in the sixth grade at the inner-city Westport Middle School in Louisville, Kentucky. My father was working towards his Masters of Divinity at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and our family along with the family of Sarah, my best friend/worst enemy, lived in The Village apartments, one step above the projects. The following is a condensed version of a much larger project.

MOHON

laughed. Sarah started tickling me, which made it even worse. Before we knew it, we were in one big pile together, spinning and kicking and snickering massively. “BBBBuupppppp!!!” We were silent for a second listening and then resumed laughing even harder. One of us had farted. We frantically questioned each other but couldn’t decide who had done it. It was a nice moment when Sarah and I were united, even if against someone else. The great mystery was why Sarah and I were best friends when we couldn’t even stand each other.

After we had settled, I asked again. “Sarah, can I come over on Saturday?”

“I didn’t want to say anything to

you,” she said.

“What?”

“You know how you get.”

I sighed. “No. Just tell me what you’re pretending you don’t want to tell me.” I was smart enough by now to know that if Sarah could, she would try to make me jealous. I figured she was going to Katherine Mullholland’s for the weekend. Katherine was Sarah’s very best A.P. friend, a girl with short light hair and a toned tan. She liked dirt bikes and drawing. Currently, Sarah was learning anime from her and watched *Sailor Moon* at Katherine’s house. They were fast now, and Sarah was striving to be more like Katherine.

About a month ago, Andrew Rogers had asked Sarah if he could be her boyfriend. Andrew was short, round, and the epitome of middle school boy grossness. The fact that Sarah treated Andrew well at all was almost a sign of maturity in her shallow mind.

“Fine. If you really want to know,” Sarah said. “A group of us from 6-1 are going out to see *Titanic*.”

“Oh. Okay.” My head turned away a little, and I readjusting the towel beneath me.

“You’re not mad, are you? It’s not many people. Just me, Heather, Bleniss, Stephanie C., her boyfriend, Ryan, Melissa, Sashlyn, her boyfriend, and Katherine. So it’s all people you don’t know. Just 6-1 people. I’d ‘ve asked, but I didn’t want you to be bored,” she said.

“It’s cool,” I said, but I could feel the tension in my throat.

Then she threw the dagger. “Besides, your parents said you couldn’t see it anyways.”

—which was true. *Titanic*. Winner of the Best Picture Academy Award. Grossing over \$200 million at the box office from households around the nation, and exactly zero dollars and no cents from my household. My father had distantly heard one of the news shows mention two objectionable scenes, and even though he usually let PG-13 films slide, he wasn’t budging this time. My parents said that I was a child, not allowed to see depictions of nudity and sex -- let alone the fact that I saw

it frequently as long as it was in a movie they were interested in. The time must have been very trying for my parents. I was a child -- but who didn’t think she was a child. Sarah had lost her recollection of the word.

“Yeah. Yeah. I understand,” I said, trying not to let one of Sarah’s many sadistic games get to me.

Her eyes sparkled. “I forgot to tell you the best part, though. Kevin’s coming!” She practically jumped out of her skin. “He’s like the cutest. The most adorable. I think I like him better than Leonardo DiCaprio, and I’m being serious.” She paused dramatically. “I could have sex with Kevin.”

“What about Andrew?” I said.

The smile slid off Sarah’s face. “Oh, yeah. He’s coming, too.” About a month ago, Andrew Rogers had asked Sarah if he could be her boyfriend. Andrew was short, round, and the epitome of middle school boy grossness. The fact that Sarah treated Andrew well at all was almost a sign of maturity in her shallow mind. Although Sarah had agreed to date Andrew, her real desire was Kevin -- an extremely handsome boy in the sixth grade Remedial track. She thought that by making Kevin jealous with Andrew, she could capture his attention.

My father was tired from working three part time jobs and going to graduate school. [...] Come supper time, he preferred silence. He pushed his glasses back onto the bridge of his nose and continued shoveling mashed potatoes and green beans into his mouth.

“I thought you said the movie was only for 6-1 people,” I continued.

“It is. Andrew’s from 6-1,” Sarah said.

“No, Kevin. Kevin is from 6-2.”

She paused again, trying to think out of her hole. For a long time, I had suspected that she was hiding me from her friends. Likely, she thought I was too dorky, and they would reject her because of me. “But Andrea is in 6-1. Since they’re step-brother and sister, everyone knows him.”

II.

The biggest movie of the year, and my best friend was going with a boy and the popular people over me. I

couldn’t go at all. After I left Sarah that afternoon, I cried into my pillow. Even if I could stop myself from crying in front of her, the tears would always come eventually. “Stupid pillow. White. Lumpy,” I said aloud and punched it. Sarah got everything that she wanted.

“Beth!” my mom called. “Supper time. Get your sister.”

My sister and I went from our bedroom into the living room corner where my parents had managed to shove the kitchen table. The cushions on the chairs were more tattered than ever. My mother had never had good dining room chairs. She kept these same chairs for several years, even after that time -- forcing them together with duct tape and covering

them over again to the best of her ability. The four of us sat down on the cushions.

“Let us pray,” my father said. “Dear Lord, please bless this food to the strength and nourishment of our bodies. In Jesus’ name, Amen.” Like my mother’s chairs, my father’s supper prayer hasn’t deviated in several years, only being patched and re-sown by illness, major holidays, and the rare praise.

“Hey, baby, pass the salt,” my mother said to my father across the table. The shaker silently passed from my father’s hand to my hand to my mother’s hand and back again. Cozy as could be.

“Daddy,” I said. A plan had been formulating in my head, and I was about to put it into action. “Do you think maybe I could go to a movie this weekend?”

“I think it depends,” he answered. My father was tired from working three part time jobs and going to graduate school. In the mornings, the apartment complex paid him to baby sit kids onto to the buses. In the afternoon, he worked as electrical maintenance for the seminary and then skipped over to the library to shelve books. Classes were scattered in between. Come supper time,

he preferred silence. He pushed his glasses back onto the bridge of his nose and continued shoveling mashed potatoes and green beans into his mouth.

“Well, you know *Titanic* is out now,” I said cautiously. “And the French teacher, Mrs. Young, says there is a lot of historical content in it.”

“I already said you and your sister couldn’t watch that movie. And don’t tell me a French teacher is qualified to assess historical content,” my father replied.

“I know you said that, but I thought maybe I could go with Mommy, and then I would have adult supervision.” Serve. I gnawed down on a fried chicken leg.

“What about me?” he said.

I looked at him puzzled. Why would he want to see *Titanic*?

“If you can’t watch a movie in front of me, you don’t need to watch it.”

“It’s not that—” I blushed, and he cut me off.

“I already said ‘no.’ If you wouldn’t want your father or Your Heavenly Father in the room, you’re not allowed to do it.” Spike.

I started to whine. “It’s just— I haven’t seen a movie in a really long time.”

“Like Anastasia that you and your sister weren’t watching this afternoon when I came in.” He paused. “You know, maybe I would like to watch a movie every once in a while!”

Everyone sat quietly.

After that, the only sound was the silverware on the kitchen plates. My tears dripped silently into the gravy below. This was not a good day. As my father finished, my mother got up to take his plate away.

“I’m sorry that I lost my temper,” my father said. “I’m really tired right now. I have a lot going on.” He rubbed his eyes and got out his handkerchief to clean his glasses. He held them up to the ceiling light and puffed air onto the lenses.

“If you really want to go to a movie, I’ll let you see the French film,” he said defeated. For weeks, I had begged my father to let me go on Mrs. Young’s field trip to the hole-in-the-wall theatre across town that showed only art movies and films with subtitles. The school sent out special forms well in advance since the theatre did not include ratings with any of its features. Mrs. Young

reassured the parents that it was only a kid’s film, but some parents—like my mine—were still stubborn. I had stopped hoping days ago and was dismally awaiting a half-day of study hall. My mind was already considering the possibility of talking my mom into letting me stay home sick and then writing a note. Now I was saved!

“Thank you, Daddy! Thank you!” I screamed.

He looked over wearily. “When I was in school, we never went to see movies.”

III.

This movie was all mine. As Spanish students, Sarah and her 6-1 friends weren’t allowed to come on the field trip. I would get to see a movie that Sarah would probably never see in her life.

My friend, Pamela, and I stepped off of the big yellow school bus and into freaky town. We gaped looking at the movie posters for the theatre’s coming attractions. Spiders crawled across a man’s face, dramatically back lighted. One poster was completely white with large implied blood splatters. Most were just weird, though. Colors, abstraction, meaningless fluff to our twelve-year-old minds.

We got in the back of the line going in. Mrs. Young tried to address the students, but we could barely see her, let alone hear her, at the front of the line. Finally, she yelled out, “Stay close and pay attention!” The line seemed to not be moving at all. After a time, Pamela and I seemed to merely sleep walk to the door. Suddenly, our eyes shot bolt awake.

“Is that ...” Pamela said, staring at the wall. The final poster was two black stick figures on a pink ground moving together.

“Oh, my!” I said.

Pamela laughed. “Why do you say that? My grandmother says that.”

“It’s just what I do. I dunno,” I said. I blushed but looked back at the poster again. How did it feel? Was it nice? Maybe that’s why my par-

ents didn’t want me to see *Titanic*. Too many questions, and they didn’t want me to go looking for answers. They needn’t have worried about me, though. They should have kept a better eye on my sister who expressed her desire and gave birth to my nephew, Sean, when she was eighteen.

“Fifty-two. Fifty-three,” Mrs. Young said tapping our heads. Pamela and I were the last in line and got seats in the very back. The theater had been an old Tivoli gone to pot and still bore evidence with its charming statues and little stage fallen into disrepair. The air seemed uncommonly subdued. Somehow, even more light creped out of the room, leaving us in total blackness.

Dreamy music seeped thru the speakers and without previews or ado, the movie began. Pamela and

We gaped looking at the movie posters for the theatre’s coming attractions. Spiders crawled across a man’s face, dramatically back lighted. One poster was completely white with large implied blood splatters. Most were just weird, though. Colors, abstraction, meaningless fluff to our twelve-year-old minds.

MOHON

I could barely see the tiny subtitles from our seats. I leaned forward, straining to even see. The plot that I was vaguely able to piece together told the story of a young Parisian, Pierre, who had ran away from home. He wandered the city, crossing bridges and moving thru arches, in search of destiny. A typical quest narrative.

“This is boring,” Pamela said.

“Shhhh. I’m trying to concentrate,” I said. I’d never had to work this hard to watch a movie in my life. Pamela slumped back in her seat.

“At least we get to go to the mall for lunch,” Pamela said.

“At least we don’t have to listen to Mrs. E.’s lectures,” our friend Karen said from my other side. In the dark, I hadn’t even seen her. The students all called our Science teacher Mrs. E. because no one could pronounce or remember her last name. Karen had told me that her mother said Mrs. E.’s first name was Claudia. It sounded beautiful, and I wished I could just call her that. I’d never met a Claudia before. Claudia sounded like she could be a good companion for Pierre.

I looked up again. Pierre had hitched his way across France and was stand-

ing at the seaside. He looked out to his past and secret pain. Pierre was probably no older than Pamela and I. Looking down at his feet, oranges drifted on the waves. Pierre hadn’t eaten for several days, and he eyed the mysterious oranges in hunger. Desperately, Pierre tugged on his shirt and unbuttoned the front. He slipped his arms out of the long stripped sleeves to reveal a stained white tank top. His stomach rolled as he peeled the tank from his toned chest. Pamela sat up.

All around, people began to snicker as Pierre dropped his pants.

“What is he doing?” Pamela said. I sat quietly frozen in my position.

“I think he doesn’t want to get his pants wet while he’s gettin’ the oranges,” Karen said. Pierre dove into the sea stark naked and gathered the oranges. As he submerged, Pierre gasped and stepped out, displaying his entire being—frontally.

“*Abbbb!*” Pamela, Karen, and I turned to see where the scream had come from. Mrs. Young stood in the doorway of the screening room stricken. The theatre manager held her hand, trying to prevent her from fainting.

“I thought this was a children’s film!”

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All around, people began to snicker as Pierre dropped his pants.

What will I tell the parents?!" Mrs. Young yelled. Her true Midwestern upbringing showed as her accent faltered. All of us had quite clearly known she wasn't a true Frenchman. Her scarves and beads swayed in dismay.

"Madam—" the manager said. He was a short man and was getting shorter under her scowl.

"Mademoiselle," Mrs. Young corrected him. He was trying to be a polite Brooklyn boy. The whole world was French to her.

"Of course, mademoiselle, the the-

atre will be returning the money to the school." He did what he could, but she was absolutely inconsolable.

"You don't understand. You are very kind, but the children have been scarred."

Our eyes shot back to the screen. Several minutes had passed. We had been more interested in Mrs. Young's performance. Pierre was re-pantsed and now wearing a jersey boy hat. He walked down tiny alleys and emerged under a golden sun with his bag of oranges. Silently, he un-wrapped the bundle, peeled an orange, and ate it in the lush grass. The closing credits

rolled.

“What did that mean?” I asked no one in particular.

IV.

The weekend passed, and I enduring the slumber party in all of its scents. I reached into the freezer and pulled down a popsicle. The grape juice tasted good to my dry tongue. I turned left from the kitchen and walked thru my parents’ bedroom to the backdoor. I sat on the back step and thought about Sarah and her friends and Pierre. To the left, I looked across the yard at her backdoor, hoping she would come out. I at least wanted her to tell me about Titanic and maybe I would tell her about Pierre. It was really too much to hope for though that she would

just walk out like in the movies. I slurped the final liquid from the stick and went back into the kitchen to throw it away. Back out the door and across the yard, I knocked on Sarah’s backdoor.

“Hey,” I greeted her. “Do you wanna talk?”

“Sure. Just a minute,” Sarah said. She closed the door for a few minutes and returned wearing a pair of sunglasses. She joined me at our picnic table in the center of the yard.

“So, what’s up?” she said.

“Nothing much. How was *Titanic*?” I asked.

“It was good. If Kevin and I had been alone, I wouldn’t have watched

“They showed some guy’s penis or something,” she said matter of factly. “It’s no a big deal. Who hasn’t seen a penis before? Really, who hasn’t touched one?” Sarah went on and on, dreaming that everyone lived in her little world.

Finally, I just had to stop it. “I haven’t,” I said. She was quiet for a minute before chattering on.

“Well, duh. You don’t count.” Sarah said.

the movie. But I had to have an excuse to keep Andrew from kissing me. You'll understand one day. It's so difficult."

"I could imagine," I said, dryly.

Sarah took the sunglasses from her head and moved them to her hair. "Andrew's mom got these for me at the mall. I guess there are some good things about dating him." I can't see any, I thought in my head. Andrew wasn't worth a million pairs of sunglasses. I could never sell myself that way.

"*Titanic* is so romantic! And Leo is so hot! You would have died. I mean he's nothing next to Kevin, of course. Kevin sat on the other side of me next to Bleniss. I wished we could be alone the whole time," Sarah gushed. Her ignorance was too much sometimes. If Kevin had wanted her, he would have asked for her by now. Andrew could never buy her Kevin. There was nothing to be said to Sarah, though.

"Oh! I heard about your French movie. That is too funny with Mrs. Young," said Sarah.

"How did you know?" I asked.

"Stephanie told me. She heard it from Sashlyn who heard it from

Jessica who heard it from your friend Pamela. I guess she was pretty upset."

Sarah had ruined the only thing I had: my story. "Yeah, but did you hear why she was upset?"

"They showed some guy's penis or something," she said matter of factly. "It's no a big deal. Who hasn't seen a penis before? Really, who hasn't touched one?" Sarah went on and on, dreaming that everyone lived in her little world.

Finally, I just had to stop it. "I haven't," I said. She was quiet for a minute before chattering on.

"Well, duh. You don't count." Sarah said.

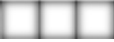
V.

And *Titanic* hadn't counted to my parents. For a few weeks, I had nothing to talk about at the lunch table, but it was alright. I grew up and went on. In a world where dollars counted so much, this movie meant nothing in their eyes. The sting was that it had meant something in my eyes. I never told Sarah and I've since thrown them out, but I created a series of stories about what I thought the movie might be like. I could never stop her long enough from

MOHON

talking about Kevin to get her to tell me the actual plot.

The first time I saw the movie, I was almost shaking. It was exciting to finally be “in” on what everyone else knew. The water surrounding the elderly couple in bed, probably married forty years or more, and I cried, startled. The rest of the film was Hollywood fluff. I barely enjoyed it. Leonardo DiCaprio looked better in real life than his dirty immigrant clothes. I didn’t think Kate Winslet’s body was that different than mine. I could see that in the mirror any old time.

I never told my parents about the French movie, though. Some things were better left unsaid when they already didn’t understand. Pierre’s body would have been ten times more shocking to them than the subtlety of *Titanic*. That afternoon in the theatre, I began to understand them. Seeing Pierre made me think of things that I wanted deeply but had never imagined before. But maybe that was natural. That’s what I was supposed to think that time in life. It was a course that no one could stop. A ship that was unsinkable. 

I

I am not well. I am not as stable
as I think. I am not as
grown up as I
think. I am not
ready to accept
another person
i n t o m y l i f e
right now. I am
not r e a d y to
compose a sentence that
does not begin with the word “I.”

—*Pamela Beth Mohon*



Photograph by Amy Walton



Photograph by Amy Walton



Finding Interest in Mis-shaped Objects

Every other day,
I sit down at a window,
Look outside and see people.
I like to draw these people,
As naked stick figures.
You would not believe,
How full my notebook gets,
With nude stick figures.
It almost seems improper,
Calling them “naked”,
Since I have to add parts,
To give them that “unclothed” appearance.
All these skinny exaggerated caricatures,
Most having a name and personality,
That I don’t know,
Just stand suspended in a moment of time,
Imitating the action that I saw them doing,
When I drew them.
You know Miss Jefferys;
The one down the street?
Her she is walking her dog.
Notice how saggy I made the... arms?
This is what I choose to do with my free time.
So if you have any insecurity about your body,
Beware of walking near windows.

I want to be able to introduce myself,
In an unusual manner.
I want to be able to go up to people and say,
“Hi my name is Matt,
And I am an expert,
On the art of pornographic stick figures.”
I anxiously await the day,
Someone walks up by me,
When I am at a window,
Performing my hobby,

With my notebook wide open.
I will stare that person down,
With a glance that says,
“Yes. This is how I choose to spend my free time,
I’m not harming anyone.”
This is my time.
This is my enjoyment.
I don’t mind if you watch,
Just don’t stare accusingly.

—*Collin Stump*

frosty the homeless man

sometimes
he would stay in shelters
or stay with me
but he loved livin'
on those busy streets the most.
when frosty was drinkin',
oh, man!
he would stumble around
then fall over into somethin'.
he just didn't
get around very good when he was drunk.
after panhandlin' he would
sometimes come over to my shanty,
with a couple of beers,
one for me and one for him,
oh, man!
i just can't believe he is dead,
you say they found him
floatin' face down.
he must have stumbled
and fell into that cold river.
frosty he was no snowman,
but he sure did have a shiny nose.

—*Lloyd Kirk*

remnants

what remains?
a regret.....maybe
a smell of apprehension,
a touch of grey,
photos of yesterday
or the echo of want.
what remains?
i cannot say
but those remnants
push there fingernails
into the skin
of my thoughts.

—*Lloyd Kirk*

Zero, a poem of finite proportions

Dull edges and ridged corners
Rule in places of disarray,
Geometry has overcome nature and her mess.
Squares dictate our paths through hollow halls
Boxes lock shifting shapes into rigid formfitting
Structures unchanging as the stone from which
they are carved.

Geometry has overcome nature and her mess.
No longer is the sun loose to bound across the expansive sky
As time has cemented order to the celestial beings.
The growth of grass is linear, and trees form columns of submission

All hail the golden rectangle.
The stale perfection you have brought
Our world stands in testimony of the power of your sides.
Your proportions are law and you hand down the edicts
for life through the symmetry of your corners.
Truly man has never created a more beautiful thing,
Nor as powerful to bind nature and her mess.

—*Ben Zucker*

Kneading the dough

Kneading the dough, rolling it out;

Smooth it over, cut 'em out.

My little cookie army!

Created, indoctrinated;

Baked in my image:

My little cookie army!

Sprinkled with hate,

Sweetened with dogma

My little cookie army!

I shape them, their lives,

With my cookie-cutters

To be what I want them to be!

—*Nate Miller*



Stencil by Brittany Chase



Drawing by Brittany Chase

Winged Caresses

The stars of her eyes
illuminate intricate beauty
which goes unnoticed.
Champagne moths kindle magic
with winged caresses,
and velvet roses burn
refracting fiery truth.
Her laugh resonates cosmic vibrations
that become her soul's song—
bouncing off her tongue
like the whisper of wind.
Soft, Delicate...
she becomes the allure of sound.
Radiant love flushes her face
reflected in puddles.
The Moonlight embraces her shadow
As it dances patterns of passion and smiles.
Life lessons
in spirit and beauty are learned
and my salvation glitters,
giving the sparkle that is in her eyes.

—*Kelly Murphy*

The Garden

for L. P.

All the gardening tools away
and the shed tightly closed
as you always did.
Behind the withered picket fence
the light is drenched in white
and the riot of colors bowing their shade
has long been defeated.
Winter has cast its shadow
and the snow covers now
the remembrance of your garden,
once glorious and tended,
with the wind writing on it
with an invisible pen.
I should not feel sad because
nothing could disturb you now
since you slipped away
to garden on better soil,
on greener pastures as they usually say,
and Spring with its subdued
assurance of fresh hope
is a redemption not far away,
and for me, just like for anyone
who has loved gardens
the precious memory that
remains here, is eternity.

—*Guillermo Arango*

phone

all meaning
is

lost

when the telephone
line disconnects
miles
upon
miles
upon
miles away----

there is no
controlling when
it's going to s ...

—*joshua e. elchert*

black tar

happiness is:

a bent

blackened

burnt

spoon

a bic

a smuggled souvenir

from afghanistan

and the dis-honourable

discharge of the

GI that brought

it to you.

—*joshua e. elcbert*

homophobia

why not think
of something
minute
for a
minute?

what if,
there was
a sewer
in
the sewer?

is it
possible to,
to tie
a bow
around
a bow
as giftwrap?

is one
to live,
or experience
it live?

what sound
does a four-stringed
bass
make compared to
a bass-guitar?

does it get mad
if
you polish

a
polish sausage?

how does
a combine
know
not to
combine
the hull
with the
soy-
beans?

what did
it take
to convict
the orange
clothed
convict?

if the charge
is invalid,
does he become
an invalid?

—*joshua e. elchert*

there was a green

the once
green

splotch of
paint has
turned

blue.

it's as
blue as
my

balls.

—*joshua e. elbert*

The editorial board decided that the above poem was best understood within the context of Elbert's poem "there is a green," which was previously published in the 2007 edition of The Cornfield Review. We reprint it here:

there is a green
splotch of paint

on the white
ceiling

above my bed.

that i just now
noticed.

i was

lying on my back
being fucked.



Photograph by Stephen Wisebaker

Left Wanting

What is to be said of love?
Does it even matter anymore?
Love is beautiful.
Love is awful.
Love is ecstasy.
Love is agony.
Love grows.
love fades.
love dies.

Nothing lasts forever,
not even love.
Is it normal for love
to fade to a feeling
that only resembles love?
What is 'normal'
give me a definition,
give me light.

Trade me places.
Take me away.
Hold me close
and fly
straight into the sun.

Plummet casually,
let me feel your warmth
like I've never felt before.
Let me smell your scent
in the dead of night,
and take me down.

The world dissolves around us
in this memory
of a better place,
and ill conceived time,

when youth ran loose
and lust
could easily be mistaken
for love.

Running farther than before
I end up on the other side of your world,
and you take ahold of me,
shaking me to my senses
and locking the door;
because you know
that I would fly away
if I could.

They say that if you love something
you should set it free,
but you have never
never
let me go,
because you knew
I was never meant for you.

Out of time, and
out of space,
beyond eons of
dead sea
and empty conversations,
you will always find me

lapping at the pool
of our demise,
drinking deep
knowing that the time is upon us
for me to close my eyes
to the sight of
you
forever.

And here we go again,

lack of observations,
as I deny you your prize
again and again,
yet your hunger won't be denied,
and I abide
in my new apathy.

My hollow eyes
are filling this void
faster than the rain
on the windowsill.

—*S.L. Howard*

Oh, Saturn

So Saturn wasn't the person I had thought he was,
Betraying me with wonders and sleight of hand.
Yet he told me this would happen;
he told me that this day would come.

The faeries have stopped dancing
in the cool velvet moss.
They are so weak that
they can't even fly anymore.

The water nymphs will soon forget
how to swim in their never ending seas;
and drown into it's emerald depths
like tears sinking down your cheek.

Artemis is discontented because
she is no longer remembered,
and now instead of having many names
she has none.

Apollo, her brother, is missing.
He has vanished like Aegis into the sky,
yet the sun rises and sets every day
without his chariot of fire.

The gods of old are in hiding
playing games out of boredom,
tossing aside all care for man,
because faith in the gods has been lost.

The days of old fade fast;
like stars shooting into oblivion
only to crash down to the soft earth,
denied the sweet kisses of heaven forever.

The stories will be lost as
the magick and mystery are buried
under a mountain of thick ash
from a tower of burning books.

—*SL Howard*

The House

—*S.L. Howard*

NORMALLY EVA LET the dust lay still as a soft cushioning of the harsh reality inside. The windowsill sagged and mocked her. The ceiling laughed at her, dropping flecks of lead paint and plaster onto her head. The holes in the wall watched her suspiciously, following her every move.

A layer of thick dust coated the television and swirled around her when she blew on it. The cloud triggered a body-rattling sneeze from Eva's small frame, tossing her to the ground with its force. She cursed under her breath as she picked herself up.

She stared at the 27 inch television as she wiped the screen. As she eyes her handiwork, deep eyes, beneath crumbled alabaster skin, stared back. She switched the power on and the television glowed blue in anticipation.

Eva remembered they had been excited at first. They had been newlyweds, naive, and moving into their first home. Excited about their wedding money, and their new life, they had gone to a 24-hour store to buy the new television. Eva had skipped into the store, gushing a smile, holding George's hand.

It was midnight, and they walked the electronics department an hour

before deciding. They deliberated, starting to feel each other's nerves grating. Tempers were surmounting flames, waiting to spread their fury. Finally, they had agreed on a sale model, the model she would own until the end. It wasn't the best, but it was better than their old model. They paid for it and quietly made their way to the cold parking lot.

They had gotten it all the way out to the car only to realize that it wouldn't fit in. They had gotten frustrated, and started raising their voices. George had pulled the television out of the box. Then Eva had broken the box down and shoved both the styrofoam and the cardboard into the trunk aggressively. Together they shimmied the shiny new apparatus into the back seat, cursing each other when they had failed to work cohesively.

They had been silent on the drive home, and the silence felt thick in the air. George's anger penetrated Eva's flesh, making her skin crawl. She breathed deeply, and George's brow crunched as his eyes glowered. Both had refused to let it go; they refused to forgive.

The empty house had loomed above them as they struggled up the steps. It was oppressive, it's strong figure

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against the street lights. George had grabbed the television, its cord swinging like an angry cat's tail.

He snapped in frustration at every attempt Eva had made to help him. She settled with trying to get the door, but even that upset George. He snapped, "Get the fuck out of the way!" and she did, after slamming the door in his face.

Eva jumped as the doorbell buzzed erratically. She quickly pulled out her favorite movie, and shoved it into the DVD player. She started towards the door. She picked her way through the clutter of the house. Broken picture frames sat on the floor staring at her with their empty eyes, laid to waste amongst the bits of drywall and decayed wood. She kicked a mouse to the side as she walked and dust spooled around her dainty foot. The mouse had once belonged to the, now dormant, computer in the den. No one had used the den in years. Not since since George was killed.

Back when they were newly weds, and even before, George had been obsessed with computers. He had spent his days at work with them; he had been a computer programmer. His evenings were spent in the den under their effervescent glow.

He chatted on computer forums most of the time, giving and taking advice on computer languages. Sometimes he would look up silly

videos, and beg Eva to come in and watch them. He would nag her, plead with her, to get up and join him in the den. She always did eventually, even if she was in the midst of something. However, when Eva needed him, he was never there for her.

It had got to the point where Eva had become jealous of the humming beast. George was spending more time with his computer than her, and one day she had confronted him about it. Things had gotten heated, and in his anger he had thrown the keyboard across the room. It had hit the wall, and plaster had bled out from the gash. Eva refused to fix it, and so had George. There had been many nights like that.

She hurried down the hall, the doorbell continued to buzz. It would be her son, Mitchell. Only Mitchell visited her anymore. He never brought the grandchildren. There were five of them, but Eva only knew them through photographs. The same way she had known her son. Eva wasn't insane, she knew the house was no place for children. It was dying, all around her, everyday.

Wiping her brow, she slowly opened the door. Mitchell's face held a smile, weak and taunt, as if it were going to fall at any moment.

"Hey, mom." They hugged briefly.

She ushered him into the dining room; it was the safest room. The wood floor lay as it had when Eva had first come to the house. It was incomplete, missing planks here and there. Bits of glass crunched under their feet. A cool wind swept the room from the recently broken windows, disturbing the dust that had lain dormant for years; it formed a thick fog, which masked the sunlight that filtered in.

The windows were rickety, the wood rotted clear through in most places. A few large glass shards still hung haphazardly like teeth, gnashing and gnawing trying to break free from the frames. She had broken the windows only that morning, carefully picking up the old key board and swinging it by its tail at the glass.

When George was still around Eva had taken great care of the bay windows in the dining room. There used to be angels, colorful glass bottles on the sills, and faux flowers adorning the curtains. In winter they would staple plastic over the windows to keep the cool air out, the windows were never any good at that. They were one hundred years old after all, original to the house.

That first year Eva had labored away at the windows trying to keep the house warm. When her hand began aching after the first three sets of windows, she moaned and fought

back tears. George never looked up from the television, never offered to help, never asked if she was all right, and never said thank you. She never forgot that.

She went to the cupboard in the kitchen and removed two cups. The dishes were the only objects to escape the dust because they were tucked away safely in their dark chambers. She made tea and returned to Mitchell. She sat a cup in front of him.

She eyed him, knowing his true motives. She decided to delay the inevitable though. She hated arguing over tea. “How are the kids?”

“They’re fine. Kyle’s in high school now, so’s Gwen,” he continued to prattle, until his voice died down as the silence beckoned. They sipped their tea, waiting. The television was playing in the living room. They could see the screen from where they were. Neither of them paid it any mind. Mitchell’s face contorted as he thought of how to approach the inevitable conversation. A new breeze climbed into the small room, illiciting a sneeze from Mitchell as a frail tendril of dust wiggled its way up to his nose. Eva’s face was blank, staring at the peeling jade paint.

“Mom, are you listening?”

She shook her head, and looked at her son’s face. He looked exactly like

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George.

“I don’t want to talk about this again.” She waved a dismissive hand at him.

“I don’t care. I am having this conversation.” He looked even more like his father now, he even sounded like him. He continued, “You need to go to a nursing home. If I have to I can go through the courts.”

It wasn’t a threat; Eva could see that.

“I am not leaving. This,” she waved her hand towards the dilapidated house, “is all I have left...”

He furrowed his brow and bit his lip, just like his father used to.

“Mom, I know that this is all you have,” he leaned across the table and clasped her hand, “but *let it go.*”

Eva prepared to say something, anything, but was stopped by a sneeze. The same wisp of dust that had found Mitchell had finally found it’s way to her nose too.

She couldn’t leave now, it was to late for that. She’d spent to long under the house’s oppressive frame, so long in fact that she may as well be another dying fixture in the house.

She had almost left after the incident. After George died it would have

been easy to leave, but she didn’t. She had so many dreams for her future, so many paths she had wanted to try, yet she never did anything with herself. She let it fall to rot, just like the house.

There had been a terrible storm. It had ripped trees from their roots, knocked power lines down, electric meters from houses, broken widows with flailing cords; a vast amount of damage, all in under a half hour. It was late, Eva had been detained at work for longer than she had expected. When she walked into the house she already knew what happened, she could smell death from the moment she had opened the door. Eva should have stopped in her tracks then and called the police, but she had kept moving, silently, through the house as a ghost.

As she made it to the den she put her hand to the door, and slowly turned the forlorn knob. The door creaked in it’s familiar way and blood spilled out onto her feet. She threw up on the floor and watched her vomit, with a sick twisting and turning like a strange waltz, mingle with his vibrant blood.

Later the police would tell her it was some sort of freak accident, the storm had blown the window out and sent the shards flying through the air with enough velocity to do what they did. Eva wasn’t sure she believed that though, she wasn’t sure

what to believe, but she did know that she would never forget what she had seen in that den.

He had been impaled against the wall, keyboard still clutched in his hands. His eyes, his eyes were the worst; fixed in a frightened dying gaze. That gaze that she had seen so many times before, the same terrified pleading eyes he had given her every time she had tried to leave him. The realization sinking in had brought her to the floor with it's force, her hands in the blood. She stared at her hands, blood saturating every pore, and knew her hands wouldn't ever come clean.


She looked at her son. His eyes were sincere, and she knew he meant well; but he didn't understand.

"Mitchell, I am not going to leave here." His face flushed, ready to reiterate his plea, but she raised her hand to halt him, "I want to finish the rest of my days here. Don't interfere, please."

His face sprung tears, and he pleaded with her to change her mind, but Eva was a tall mountain refusing to bend to the wind. Finally he subsided; Eva suspected he was making plans for court, but she didn't care. She knew that she wasn't incompetent. She shifted her gaze to the television.

A man sat on a chair, while a woman watched him intensely. She said to

him, "It's as though you were bound to her in some way, as I am to you, as she was to Miller."

"As every human being is to something or other," he replied. 



Photograph by SL Howard



Photograph by SL Howard

The Little Berry

—*Daniel McNulty*

ONCE UPON A TIME, there was a little berry who lived on a little bush on the edge of a sunny fencerow. The little berry was surrounded by those he loved, in a beautiful world of warmth and family. One of his favorite things was to feel the dew covering him in the early hours of the morning, then to have it evaporate, bead by bead, with the morning sun.

One morning toward the end of a long summer, the little berry noticed people walking around, and touching some nearby bushes. HE asked one of the nearby berries if they knew what was going on. “They are picking berries to take into town to market.”

“Why are they doing that?” asked the little berry. No one knew why, but soon a human came to the little berry’s bush and began picking. Soon the little berry was picked and put into a basket full of excited berries all talking, some happy at the prospect of seeing more of the world, while others were frightened to be leaving home.

After some time the basket, the little berry was dumped out into a pile. He could see a human sorting through the berries, putting them into three

different bowls. Soon he was picked up and put into a bowl and carried away.

He asked the berry next to him what was going on. “We are to be food for the Queen.”

“Why would I want to be food for anyone?” asked the little berry in shock and revulsion.

“It is really quite an honor to be eaten by aristocracy,” replied the berry next to him. That was the general consensus of all the berries around him. “It is actually very difficult to get into this bowl,” said one. “We are the cream of the crop,” said another. The little berry noticed that some did not seem genuine in their enthusiasm, but no one complained, and those who did not seem genuinely enthusiastic, at least feigned enthusiasm when confronted with it.

The bowl was placed on a table in an ornate hall, but the little berry could see none of this, because he was at the bottom of the bowl. As he sat there, he could hear human voices and feel movement above him. The weight of the other berries was lessening and soon he could see light. As he looked up, he saw a middle aged woman dressed in fine cloth-

ing, with sparkling jewels, and paint on her face. She was reaching in with long painted nails tipping delicate fingers ringed in gold and diamonds. He felt her fingers embrace him and pick him up. He wanted to scream, but just held his breath as he entered into her dark maw. It was wet and warm, and he could feel her hard white teeth gnashing about him. He was only scathed by a molar before he was whisked down her throat into her waiting stomach.

As he sat there, he was surrounded by many other berries, some mutilated by the teeth, other more intact like him. The stomach was cramped, wet, and dark, but most around him still expressed their excitement at being here.

Soon, the little berry could feel himself moving into an even more cramped area. It was like a hallway filled with other berries.

The little berry had been silent up until then, but now had to speak up. “Something is wrong here,” he said. “This isn’t right. I can feel myself changing. We need to get out of here.”

One berry next to him replied, “Oh no, we shouldn’t leave, this is a great honor, we are being shaped and molded within these hallowed halls.”

But the little berry knew better. He

could feel his life being sucked out, could feel his essence being taken away. As the little berry passed further along on his journey, he could feel himself changing. Those around him who had not been satisfied with their lives and who needed someone else to tell them they were doing the right thing, exclaimed how happy they were with having a purpose, with being shaped by the aristocrat, and with being molded into new beings.

As the little berry moved further and further, he looked around. What once had been blackberries, raspberries, and strawberries, now all looked the same. Homogenous little nuggets surrounded him, and the little berry knew that this too was his fate. As the little berry passed along, there came a great excitement from the nuggets ahead, the time was near to leave these hallowed halls and pass back into the world.

Soon the little berry felt himself crammed tight against many other little nuggets. It was hot and uncomfortable and it seemed as if he waited here forever for the commencement of his entry into the world again. Finally the time came and the little berry could feel himself falling through the air. He landed in a large bowl, staring up at the pimply rear end of the Queen. Soon she departed and he could feel himself being picked up by another

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human. He heard this human mutter, “I hate cleaning up her waste.” The bowl was then carried through long corridors, down staircases, through doorways, and out to the horse barn. There the contents were dumped into piles of human and animal waste.

“Where... where are we?” asked the little berry. “Yer inna pile a shit,” replied a dried up turd, cracked and bleached by the sun.

“But, I’m a little berry...why would I be in a pile of shit?”

“Ya ain’ta lil berry no mer,” replied the dried up turd. “Yer a lil turd like da ressaus. Yuer eatn like da ressaus, be it by anmal er arissocrat. Best yer fer now is bein’ put in da field fer nex year’s crops.”

And the little berry had nothing to say. 

My America

Cold silvery steel, turning and twisting
Supporting the color of our cloth
In the wind, waving like a wasp's wings
Colorful, awake, alive
Like a mirrored image of my wife's heart
A beacon of promise and prosperity
Changing colors as it waves in the wind
On a wand of silvered steel

—*Scott Shirk*

Falling

She was there in her innocence of life
Her complexion drenched of youth, soft as clay
Fall on the rise, swept clouds turn day to night
Silken threads of brown and a touch of gray
Breathe on branches sounding off, standing still
One love, only love, say it will not end
Her eyes, her eyes, the day has been fulfilled
Trees are swaying of rollercoaster winds
Grasses graze onto mile markers pass
Frozen timeless moment, warmth of her kiss
Her smile, her touch, of feeling it will last
Days spent together I want, I need, I miss
Tender leaves, twirl turn lasting chance of fate
One love, only love, change of season makes

—*Scott Shirk*



Photograph by Scott Shirk



Photograph by Scott Shirk





Photograph by Scott Shirk

Nothing is Lost

Nothing lasts...

But nothing is lost.

If only memories weren't buried
beneath years of cowardice and regret.

Hollowed out of coulda beens.

No, nothing lasts...

Yet nothing disappears.

Except the years we could have had.

Your clarinet eyes lured me from my basket
above the tempestuous scenes our dance was pure.

Still, nothing lasts...

But nothing is lost.

Only your face is fading
and your beauty ran deeper than my understanding.

Our purity became tainted in the vortex of my doubt and fear -
if only my heart hadn't been wrapped in calluses to protect me from your pain

Nothing lasts...

But nothing is lost.

I bound us with a rope
and when I was done tying
it was full of love me knots
only they became the knots in my stomach,
and the knots of regret,
and the knots of arguments without end.

Nothing lasts...

Not even love you forever

We wrapped each other in empty promises

Then we slept young and naïve and in love
The couch became our home, and words became our weapons
I said I would love you forever,
but forever's such a long time
And, unfortunately, nothing, not even love, lasts...

—*Mike Beatty*

Xerophilous

xe · roph · i · lous

adj. Drought-loving; able withstand the absence or lack of moisture.

I am an island,
Surrounded by an ocean.
Adrift in water I can't drink.
I am a leaf,
Drifting serenely,
Towards a tempest.
I am a suitcase,
Occasionally carried.
Rarely fulfilled.
I am a rock,
Hoping to be noticed,
Lost amongst the sand.
I am xerophilous,
Waiting my entire life,
For love's gentle rain.
I am a typo,
Beautiful and different and waiting to be discovered,
Amongst a dictionary's deluge of words.

—*Mike Beatty*

Contributors

Sarah Stahl is accepting donations for her legal defense fund.

Lloyd Kyrk lives in Bucyrus, Ohio with his wife Elizabeth and daughter Hayley. Robert Frost is his favorite poet.

Laura Daum senior at OSUM, majoring in english pre-education and minoring in psychology. .

Pamela Beth Mohon is a senior at the Ohio State University Marion. The most treasured honor in her academic career so far has been receiving recognition for her writing in poetry and creative non-fiction, and the greatest pleasure of her undergraduate years was writing her senior thesis, the fictional account, *Alexandra Leaving*.

Nate Miller currently attends OSU Marion.

Tabitha Clark: The woman, the myth, the legend—always achieving yet misunderstood—and so very humble too.

Guillermo Arango teaches Spanish at OSU Marion.

Kelly Murphy currently attends OSU Marion.

Joshua E. Elchert is chillin' wit his gnomies.

Scott Shirk is a loyal OSUM student majoring in English. Some of his favorite activities include smoking within 25 feet of public buildings and watching tele-novellas with his adoring wife Shellie. He also takes long walks in the park with his cat Coquina.

Michael Beatty writes, "I have too much integrity to toot my own horn; furthermore, I'm not, in point of fact, flexible enough to blow my horn, so I think it's time to get off... the subject of horns altogether. Do you see what I'm talking about here? I'm saying our country's mores need reinvigorated with a respectable dose of shame. That's the message, and don't you forget it!"

Daniel McNulty is a recent graduate of OSU Marion.

Ben Jolliff writes: "I'm in a touring band called Koufax. I'm also in a band called The Cinema. I have a business degree from Ohio Sate and I'm working on my second undergraduate degree in English. I grew up in Marion, but

Contributors

I've been all over the nation and Canada on tour.”

Born and raised in Marion Ohio, **Collin Stump** is an English Major who enjoys a wide variety of writers; from John Milton to Ernest Hemingway to Chuck Palahniuk. He also enjoys playing guitar and pushing down little children in his free time.

Ben Zucker: A man on a mission. What that mission may be is in question, but still a mission. For the past four years Ben has become an integral part of the scenery on the Marion Campus, be it participating in the Talent Show or just sitting in front of the pond watching the ducks. When he is not on campus, Ben usually spends his time rocking the guitar with his band, The Mighty Underdogs. His favorite soup: Potato.

Araby Sexton currently attends OSU Marion.

Michael Eades currently attends OSU Marion.

Emma Kroon Van Diest writes, “I think it’s important to share the things we create with others, it’s a good way to learn. My paintings are created from ideas of friends, family and personal creativity. Being open to sharing ideas and taking criticism has allowed me to create from great works of art.”

Kevin Gosnell currently attends OSU Marion.

Amy Walton currently attends OSU Marion.

Brittany Chase currently attends OSU Marion.

Stephen Wisebaker currently attends OSU Marion.

Kelcee McCurdy writes, “I am in my first year of college. I am majoring in Software Development. Photography is a big part of my life. I currently work at Sears Portrait Studio, but I am more interested in having a small studio for senior pictures and other types like it.”

SL Howard is currently wading through the cesspools of academia. When she has free time she likes to sleep-in, nag her husband, and build an animal army that will ultimately make her ruler of the world.



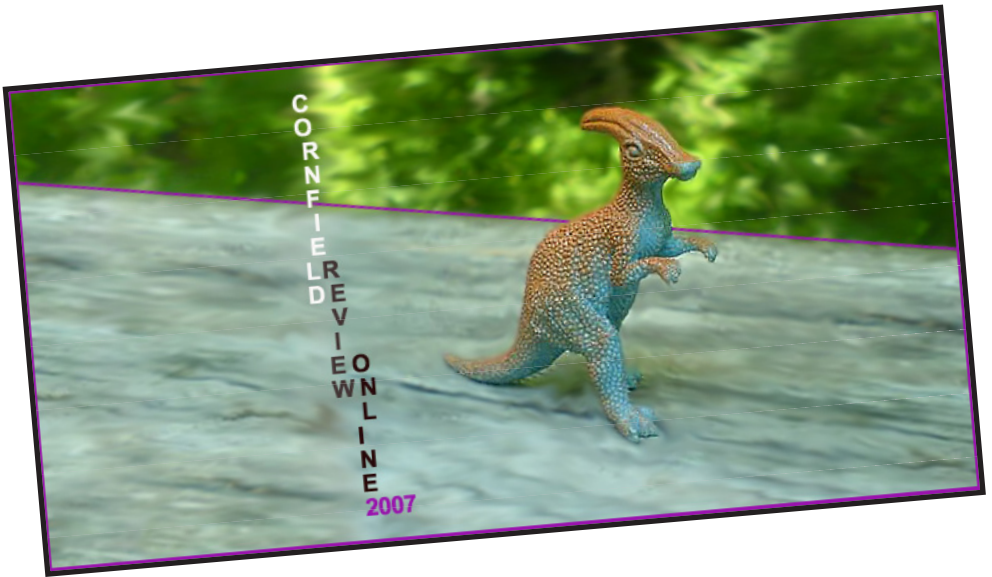
*The editorial board of the 2008 CR would like to dedicate the issue to **Alex Masters**, an OSU Marion student who tragically passed away this year. He will be greatly missed.*

Colophon

This issue of the *Cornfield Review* is printed using Garamond and Black Adder II fonts. The layout was handled in Adobe Indesign. The interior artwork and photographs, as well as the cover design, were all edited using Adobe Photoshop.



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