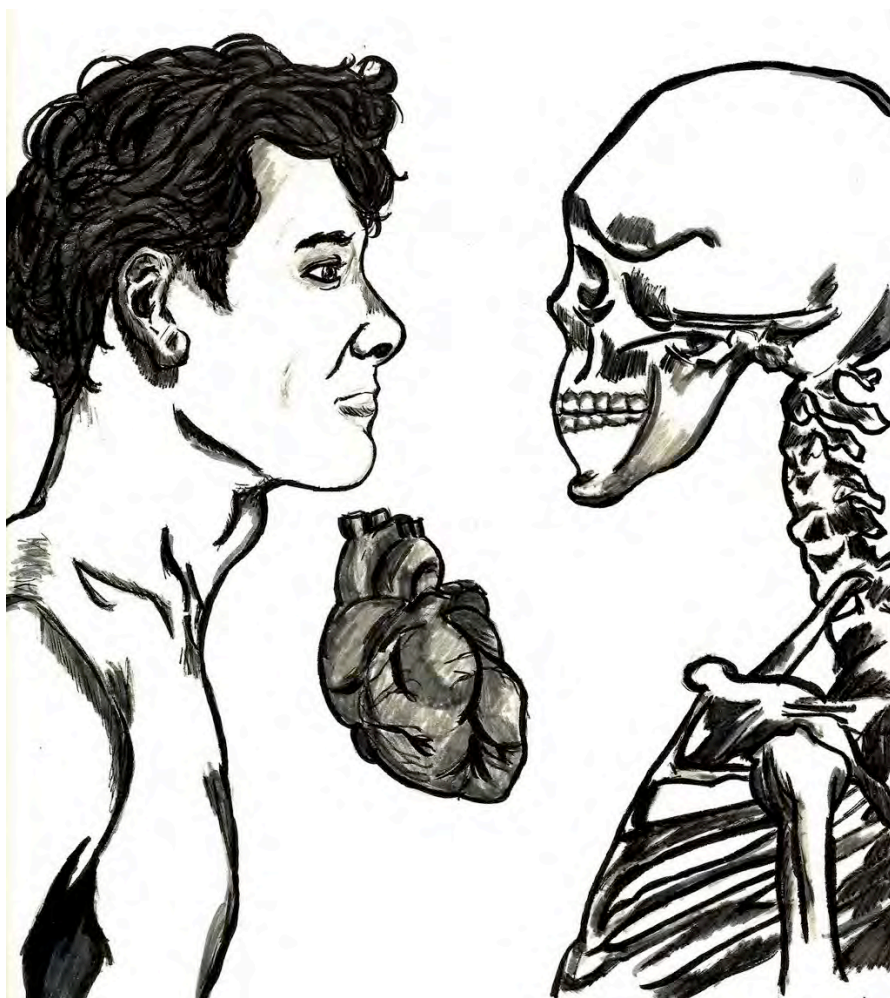


Lion's Eye



Fall 2011
VOLUME 29



ENTRE NOUS
ALEXA BAIRD

The Lion's Eye



FALL 2011

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THE FIRST LOOK



A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Reader,

Catching a glimpse of the cover, you are drawn in with your finger hovering over the corner. A lion? A letter talking to me (although not one about shit), and you realize it's Lion's Eye, only it's a different issue. Finding yourself smiling where you remember feeling tears build up, it is our secret that you covet this new precious.

Our magazine has grown from its origins, and each year takes on a life of its own. Caroline, the beginning is to you — thank you for a style that helped me start. Christine, what followed is to you — thank you for a style that helped me over the bumps and cracks.

Jess, you are a creative go-getter to anyone who knows you. It might surprise you that I think that, but you were always ready and willing to venture something new. Sam, you were once described as “so literary that it is often difficult to tell where [you] end and [your] poetry begins.” It is and has always been a pleasure with you, with someone who truly cares about making this the best possible and is willing to work to do so. Saagar, you are certainly the humor department with your e-mails. But also, you bring us back when we've gone too far, show us new ways, keep us centered, keep us happy — and I can't see us without that. Mariko, I started with calm, but it just wasn't working. Maybe, because you are calm and reasonable, able to listen to us and then work through it, but you are also there getting things done with enthusiasm that would crush a lesser woman. Jeff, you were always ready to volunteer, and that made all the difference sometimes. That and your lead-by-example submitting. Corey, next semester this letter will be yours to write. To me, the best thing I can say to you is that as I write this I can smile, knowing you will be writing yours after another successful magazine.

To the rest of our staff, I hope you enjoyed this semester as much as I did, and I look forward to seeing all those new faces as not-so-new friends next semester. Readers, please take care with this issue and I hope you find something special in your journey through literariness, and so much more.

Yours,



Cynthia Ritter
Executive Editor



MAASAI MYSTERY
TIFFANY TENG

METHODOLOGY

The pen's tip touches the page
As an aerial assault—
Quick, feverish to the beat,
But light enough to greet your
Unsuspecting head with ballpoint precision—
Or scabbled storms, for the less adept.
Then comes the rain. Indignation comes in rolling
Roars. You wince at Inspiration's scattered bolt.
But you've never left running — this is worth note!
Palms pulled from eyes, you peer as if into a mirror,
To some hidden locus in the gray expanse.
A storm is brewing — this is clear.
But the blue beneath is too sweet a
Promise to let pass and fade, as storms
Often do. The chance of rising
With the winds, of landing among the inky
Bramble — well, the consequence of storm.
But our tempests prove far too
Tempting to leave behind with glances.
Storm chasers: that's all we've ever been. And
As true enough to nature, your eyes and
Mine glimpse promise in the ruins. The work
For works is taken. A promise made. I promise.

Samantha Zimbler

HOW TO EAT AN ORANGE

Dig your fingers into the bright coat, let the sweet guts bathe your fingertips.

This is living,

Drive your nails into the supple sunskin and tear the spherical layer away;
feel the way it gives itself to you, the way it offers itself to your thirsty hands.

This is breathing,

And plunder! Let the viscous juices pour down your wrists;
toss the stringy veins to the sides.

Slice, rip, finger away the nearly identical pieces of tender fruitflesh.

Chew. Swallow.

This, this is loving.

Jeff Harrison

UNTITLED

Somberly lain out like a porous cadaver
His eyes melt into his sockets and that
Snarky frown fades into gnashing teeth
His wet dream was your warm saliva
Trickling onto his tongue like baby-rain
Soft and submissive he becomes tranquilized
By your weary eyes and buttery voice.
Like a chaotic rainstorm, He thunders
His love for you on the back of a lightning bolt
Proud of his innocence and disturbed by your
Lack of compassion
He seeks out women who can crush him for his
Own benefit
He longs to entangle himself with those who long
To entangle themselves with him
The vines getting tighter until his windpipe breaks
And the jungle serpent dislocates its jaw to swallow
Him whole, readying its belly bile to morph his ashen
Flesh into short-term sustenance
And shit out his skeleton
Whose ribcage hyenas will use to shelter their young.

YOUR DAUGHTER IS A REAL GEM

I

She cupped liquid gold in her palms
like water
filled a lemonade tumbler
and took a sip
that lined her throat and settled in her stomach.
She gave birth nine months later
to a child with yellow hair
and cat eyes.

II

Our daughter asked to dress up as the Sun for Halloween.
So, you gathered the curtains
from the kitchen windows.
She extended her arms like a mock airplane
and you spun her in the pale, yellow fabric,
squeezed out tubes of gold paint,
and pressed her small palms to the color.
You even lifted her under the armpits
and dipped the soles of her feet.

I still have the photograph from that afternoon.
She is glowing, brave,
sequins and glitter.
She is looking straight at the camera,
and you are looking straight at her,
pretending to shield your eyes,
squinting into the light.

HEARTSTRINGS

Sometimes I wonder about the man
who ties our hearts together.

I wonder if he falls asleep at his desk,
arms sprawled out,
hair tousled,
nose crushed flat against the wood.

I wonder if he snores,
and if his dreams brush our strings
as he exhales.

I wonder if he drinks on the job
and his fingers taint us with the stench of liquor
and the musty smell of glass that
rubs off onto sweaty palms.

I wonder if he laughs sometimes
even though he's alone.
I wonder if he talks to himself
in the mirror.
I wonder if he holds his own hands
and goes out to a fancy dinner place
on his breaks
just for himself.

I wonder why he knots
so tightly or so loosely.
I marvel at his sheer lack of logic,
how he let his fingers go
and tied me up to those
who thought me most useless.

I wonder if he plucks our strings
and listens for harmony or dissonance.
He probably doesn't think about things like that;
he's too busy microwaving a pop tart
or drinking a beer
or watching football
or leaning back as far as he can
in his swivel chair.

I wonder if he pretends to care
as he plucks us up
and spins us 'round
and pulls our heartstrings taut
and ties them down.

I wonder.

Maybe, as he takes the swig that sends him over,
he has this moment of clarity,
this prick of light
in his life's dull fabric,
when he realizes his true importance,
and right before the haze descends,
he handpicks with the utmost care
a beautiful, beautiful pair
and ties them snug and close.

I wonder just how lucky they must feel,
or if they even know
he's real.

Sometimes I wonder about the man
who ties our hearts together.

I wonder if he wonders about
us.



MUMMY
JACK SCULLY

Samantha Zimblor

ME MYSELF

This sensation is peripheral — I see
bloody seran wrap, a corpse, and they are
a song.

Boxed wine — a blood ocean in cardboard
splashing out of plastic, curtaining a
brunette's freckled cheeks—

a brunette with a retainer and
a cross noosed around her
pale neck — I see

me — reclining in the
background of a swelling image,
a painter's dream of lavender
surreality on a menacing
cardboard — I am

that dream // that cross // that
blood ocean // I am
all things to the power of none—

I am the waves ticking back and
forth to a crooked rhythm—
the heartbeat of that weepy moon.

Sense me; hide in me,
me me, meta me when
you're post-me—

all things me but
me myself.

Mary Dwyer

DRIED FLOWERS

you, my black lotus lady
lover
molding into leaden mortar
the thick intertwining of lips
hips, painting the seal just so
'til his serrated hand turns
and cuts each elbow
and ankle
and should it surprise you?
with the way you arch your stem
and gloss your petals
for redemption
first he watered you with cabernet

then you,
cheap circus trick
stagnant side show
begging the earth for a touch more nectar
to reel him back heavenward,
riding the ruby-back passion of that fall
eve, dotted with solstice stardust,
foretold embers of exhaust

now you, under a fig tree alone
spring in its vicious beauty
reminding my lady that
every poppy wilts like love
like cake and wet hair
like all your Rita Hayworths
and Mary Magdalene
after she blistered her heels
walking 'cross town to see her man

on the day he proclaimed
nah babe
I've got my miracles and shit to do
when she'd thought her thighs sang
like whipped butter
from the softest udders
to every bull in the square, sniffing
at her basket
of unleavened bread and honey

that cock crowed no
with his talons clutching the next patch
of dirt

and look, my dear
it's
you, lashed in the languid sun,
the effervescing fluttersby
flipping past your staleness.
(the charred grass huffs
its sympathetic silence
of course.)

it's a stark thing, you know
to be deserted.
we all fall into traps of honeywine
like kitchen gnats,
like drunken pinup sluts

and our Mary Mag,
stripped of bread and butter,
skulking back to some shadows
by the river.

Andy Gallagher

IF I PAINTED YOU

If I painted you yellow,
you'd smell like a buttercup.

If I painted you green,
you'd have traces of cocaine on your skin.

If I painted you orange,
I could shoot you.

If I painted you blue,
you'd expand to fill your container.

If I painted you white,
you'd have poetry scrawled in your margins.

If I painted you pink,
I'd drink you to settle my stomach.

If I painted you red,
you'd course through us all.

If I painted you with turpentine,
you'd be who you actually are.

LOVE SONG

i was within earshot when
you hummed that tune.
(it was the closest i ever got to you)

those six seconds of your delicate voice
oh how i wish i had a recording device
to have the melody that wreaked havoc to my brain
in my little hands

and so i went to my friends and family
and hummed that same tune
but no one knew it

i purchased melody recognition software
and sang to my computer
who told me
“no matches found”

the musicologist
explained that the refrain was “swell”
and that i should expand it

painstakingly trying to finish what you had given me
i added more notes
a b minor chord opened the piece
and soon the whisper of the melody
that slipped from your lips
had a life,
some violins, some cellos, a piano

and when I turned around to the applause
my orchestra behind me

I see your face in the audience

Corey Drake

RECONSIDER

On the evening of your self-ascribed autumn,
in vanity lachrymose,
you laid down in a field of cell-shaded daisies
and buried yourself in ash.
Grayscale in a concrete world,
you resigned yourself to a monochromatic existence,
before the church ever burned.
I begged you to tell me that you were more than a fading memory
before eternity swallowed up what was left of you,
but you rolled wide-eyed with the wind-tide,
milky cataracts following cloud churning,
charcoal pouring from your parted lips like sand.
With lugubrious pretense,
you staged your own funeral
only to throw yourself upon the pyre,
smiling and waving goodbye
to all the people you claimed never cared about you
like you never cared about them.
And then you were gone.
Except for the shrieking eyeless skin-melted fire zombie
who had clearly not considered the consequences of such an exit.
Stupid.

Amy Chen

FINAL ACT

Pre-creased envelope
With rusted cracked memories that were
Slid in slowly.

Fold over the flap.
No pain now
Just a dull distant vision.

Sealing blind thoughts and childhopes into darkness
I carry it to its final resting place,
Postmarked: "Goodbye."

Megan Osika

SOFT SWALLOW

Soft Swallow
From a Green Bottle
Smooth Ride
Tickles my Spine
As it slides down
Down, Down, Down,
Until my Mind
Begins to drown
And I'm Floating
Up, Up, Up,
Empty Cup
Reaches for more
Falls to the Floor
Darkness hits
Ouch. Dammit.

Kevin Schlittenhardt

ODE TO MY HOODY

Hoody,
Deviously green hoody,
Sheathe me in a way that would make the greatest hoodlum, Robin Hood I guess, look on enviously,
His pesky arrows and undignified thieving are childish, aren't they?
Or does that come with the territory?
Am I unaware that in relying on you to keep me dry as raindrops pelt me and thunder crashes,
That I would be encumbered by far more than just portable shelter, but by an urge of deviance?
The need to kidnap?
The need to rob a man of his Pringles right from under him and mock him by putting two in my mouth,
One upside down,
and start quacking at him with my self-constructed chip beak?
Perhaps. But the petite princess of hood wearing, Little Red, skips about with innocence.
More likely to converse with bumblebees while raking autumn leaves
Then to engage in some kind of Spy vs. Spy moment involving a helicopter, a sandglass, and a pencil.
Night and day.
Yin and Yang,
Wallpaper and sheepskin.
The hood is not alive, you'll realize, but rather amplifies what lies manifest within the host.
The wearer.
The Knight.
"What big eyes you have!"... The better to see you under the tilted shade of my companion,
"What big ears you have!"... The better to eaves drop inconspicuously,
"What big teeth you have!".....stop looking at me.

PHONE SEX

It was the summer that I worked for a phone sex hotline.
I curled my hair tightly against my scalp
and sat on my bed with
my knees pressed to my chest
in a satin nightgown
that was almost see-through in the lamp light.
I spoke to men with receded hairlines
who wore briefs with the elastic band pulled up to their belly buttons
who had wives who died from cancer
and age
and sleeplessness.
I tell a man
in a voice like butter
—that soft-spoken voice of old movie stars
who gave men hard-ons even in black and white
told them that I would be home soon to put a roast in the oven,
scrub the kitchen floor,
dust the bedroom.
“My curls are damp with sweat from ironing your work clothes,”
I breathe into the receiver.

Then I disconnect the line for the evening
because it's 7 o'clock.
All of my customers are nodding off in front of the television,
in diners and churches and beds.

Daniel Marino

A EULOGY.

I remember when we were twenty-two,
And all the world was rising up to meet us.
I remember when we slept through car alarms and screams.
I remember Brooklyn, and a room below ground with street level windows.

Your hands trembled.
You were frail, you were eccentric, you were beautiful and strange.
You had a bookshelf of Dickens and J.K. Rowling but no Shakespeare, and
Four tea sets whose scrollwork of ivy, twisted calligraphic script,
 etchings of storm-tossed whales, and swans in tense repose
 knitted their respective pots and cups and saucers together,
 but neglected any effort to adhere thematically to one another.
You had a cat.
I have a cat now.

You never owned a dress that did not accentuate your shoulder blades,
And you never wore bracelets that did not slide precisely halfway up your forearm.
Your wrists were chiffon and paper folded with careful breath
 over threads of spun marrow,
 achingly held together by whatever fiber optic cords
 could stand to bear the signal to your fingers.

Your eyes, well.
Windows to the soul; portals to the heart, I suppose.
Stained glass using the sun to turn reflected faces
 into stitched shards of color that the next rainbow
 was certain to remember to include, etc.
(You hated when I talked about your eyes.)
Your eyes saw, and sometimes they did not.
Later, when your eyes would cease to see, right before the end,
 they mocked the color of your clothes,
 as if in a dreary pantomime of remembering
 what colors once meant to them.

Your hair was auburn beneath the copse of clouded sunlight,
Copper when fire took the sun's natural duties,
And brown against white walls and yellow lights.
You claimed that it had been red as a child,
But at one of Brie's parties you claimed
 that bluebirds ate seeds directly from your palm
 and also that you were a witch.
Your feet held your poise, and your toes began a chain reaction
 of flawless supple posture that extended up your calves,
 through your thighs, around each hip,
 and shot like a firecracker up your spine.
Your spine shivered whenever I touched it,
And through mewes and muffled gasps you indicated precisely
Where upon it you wanted to be licked.

I remember calling you a cunt and I remember you realizing
That English never gave you a chance for a fair fight.

I remember that being the last fight we had.
I remember the monitors like sonar pinging your shoulder blades,
 your wrists, your eyes, your hair, your feet, your spine.
I remember when I heard that you probably couldn't hear me anymore.
I remember when we were twenty-two,
And all the world was rising up to meet us.

John Eldis

THE COWBOY

for my father

His swagger signaled
that he was not to be messed with.
His leather boots treaded the ground
as if to defy it.
His spurs rattled like the chains
of a desperate inmate seeking freedom.
His hat, low over his brow, blocked the sun
but not his piercing gaze.
He kept two six-shooters by his side,
that didn't have to be fired.
The rest of him was naked as the day he was born,
which happened to be three years prior.

In a nearby restaurant, a customer queried his hostess: "Is that your boy?"
The hostess looked up from her notepad, spotting the child.
"Nope!" she flashed a brief smile as she backed away
and hustled into the kitchen.
"Go get your brother!" she cried to her daughter, who was
frying two fresh eggs.
"He's naked as a jaybird out there with his cowboy boots on!"

The law had finally caught up with him;
they were taking him in now.
No one knew the next time he would see the light of day.
But he swore, no matter what happened,
that the world hadn't seen the last of
Tony the Kid.

Jeff Harrison

MY DEAREST HENRI

My dearest Henri,

For months, I've been isolated in the bleak mountains of the Pyrenees, struggling, toiling with my manuscript entitled, *This World, So Cold*. My soul's only sustenance has been Shelley Jackson's *Half Life*. In the damp mornings I read it, petting my cat, Jean-Paul, my only companion. At night, I inhale *Half Life*'s rich mustiness by the weak firelight. My emptiness abounds and will surely crush me in the end, but *Half Life* will ensure that my spirit will never succumb to a coal-black death. Take care of yourself, Henri. And the children.

Your desolate brother,
Emile

Alicia Cuomo

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST SEXUAL EXPERIENCE?

Lying on his back in bed,
the sweat soaked bed sheets curled around their ankles
he asks her
about her first sexual experience.
She speaks about a Water Moccasin snake
and the teenage boy who knelt in the dirt under her porch
and sucked her ankle.
She said she had never felt such a heat
as when he wet his lips and aggressively placed his mouth to the
swollen flesh.

Saagar Trivedi

DECONSTRUCTION IS AN ART / I'M IN LOVE

“The hawk is a square,” she said,
when the tick in her neck tocked
and snapped her spine back in the glory of a blue god.
Her wave function shallowed;
someone caught her brains;
when her bones squared off, the beautiful
gears of that gaunt girl
fired off into the sun—
a mosaic of deceit destroyed, and
the blasts smiled in her eyes.



UNTITLED
MEGAN OSIKA

Jordan Gauthier Kohn

IT'S HARD TO BE A SAINT IN THE CITY

I was standing on the corner, considering:
Running to the pleasure gardens
and running from my twelfth year here.
Running from my tiled fields of Eden.

Running from these gardens, full of trash
and all the usual sleaze—
From these adolescent hallways of Eden,
and running to trains: TO NEPTUNE.

All that usual sleaze of measured skirts up against
cold, metal lockers and “you’d have to be staring to know.”
And I’m still considering trains: TO NEPTUNE—
Running from male teachers who clearly stared, and obviously thought

that as I stood up against those cold, metal lockers
I was running to fille de joies.
They obviously stared, and clearly imagined with loosened
neckties that I was running to where ne’re-do-wells-do-dwell.

Maybe I would become some fille de joies
speaking: “Les cigarettes francais sont les mieux,”
for a bump from some ne’re-do-well. But then I remembered the
smell of Father’s citrus tobacco pouches.

And if French cigarettes really are the best—
I doubted I could stomach a taste since I spent my youth
Scraping those citrus tobaccos pouches off the living room table.
Maybe I really was running from those filthy things.

And maybe I just spent my youth unsure of how to think straight.
Maybe I was just running to finishing a thought — Thoughts that always led
to filthy things and that tramp on my corner: “We’re all predators denying ourselves
of life with good manners.”
I was standing on the corner, considering.

Chris Delaney

I SAID TO JAMES BIXBY

I said to James Bixby,
In the back of his refrigerator,
That his wife was a cold bitch.

That somewhere between the potato
Salad and the ketchup, she had turned sour.

Bixby's eyes lit up his cigarette
As he stared me down. And the silence between us
drowned the sound of the ice maker.

Somewhere down the hall his wife was laughing a lake of tears,
While using the couch as a flotation device. And Bixby,
still staring, doused his cigarette in the knee high wetness of it all.

Mary Dwyer

FEAST OF THE CYCLICAL CONCEPTION

In the thick glass mixing bowl
I sigh,
muscles tensing at the joy
of richness,
beating silver spinning
cyclical cylinders
in blood
red
velvet cake
batter
battered and thickened
and ready to be poured
into the pan
or sucked smoothly
off a woody spoon

into the great filling
of my stomach (yum tum tum)
so willing to be expunged
by any heave that may come
like a hemorrhage,
this recipe hotly rebirthing itself
out my throat

Oh it's so luscious,
this consummation
of lady and fatted creation,
my tongue rolling over each
grain of sugar, pocket of butter
melting into dimples

and it's so perfect
to suck
the juiciest bone marrow
from the great ivory chunk
of ox tail

or slaughter
a strapping boar,
simmer the sinful,
grizzly fat
of the animal
in a pan with potatoes
or pasta, and certainly
goat cheese
(the creamed lust that
gushes
in, crying out)

I dream of the saliva
flooding my lips
for the taste of the beast,
oh it's
the deepest hunger
for fat.

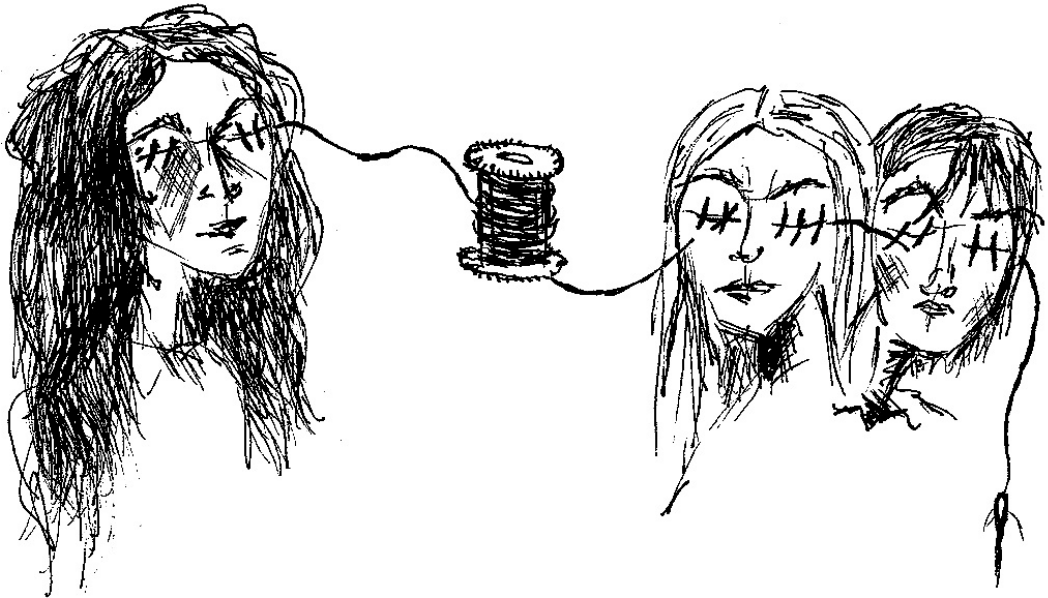
It is such a simple act,
to ravish a mixing bowl,
to lap the fluid sweetness
off the back of a melting rubber
spatula
or dump
the whole bowl down my throat
soaking through vocal chords
and
caressing
the peach pit
of my tummy

Yes, this is an ode
to the sweetest confiture of
dreams,
to the glistening moments

when you assure me
that I am dandy
and beautiful as strawberry jam
in whipped lily cream
and I can believe
for a split drop of a moment
that I can simmer the saltiest chorizo
and smoked pork loins
for you,

allow the luscious ooze
of orange marmalade reduction

to drip down the peach fuzz of my
chin
down my thighs, to bleed
around my ankles,
smear into the coarse knotted webs
of my hair,
to birth me
as a glazed lamb
gloriously soaked in cherries
and ready
so ready
to be devoured.



THE ENVIOUS
JESSICA BAKER

Corey Drake

SCHRÄGE MUSIK

This is a love poem I never meant for a girl I once met,
who taught me that beauty is only skin deep.

FORGIVENESS IS A DISEASE,
read the tattoo around your throat,
a curving dotted line, which seemed to scream,
CUT HERE,
or else undo the stitches and tear me off like the head of a dandelion.
My eyes traced that line a hundred times
as you told me the first thing I would ever know about you.
You said that you fantasized—
nightly—
about being stabbed to death.
I told you I wasn't that kind of guy
and you just stood there
with the awkward, uncertain grace of a child ballerina,
with an expectant look in your eye
and you laughed.
You were wearing a white cotton dress
like it was Sunday,
like you were a virgin,
but you never really believed in either of those things,
as I would come to find out.
The white cloth just hung loose around your slight frame
the way foetid flesh does on a plague victim—
and you wore George Vicars' best proudly.
You handed me a cut marigold,
kissed me on the cheek and whispered in my ear something I don't remember.
And you were the kind of girl I could see myself spending all of two weeks with,
to the sound of your casket-hinge music,
painting death portraits in pastel and running my fingers through your wine-red locks

as we would write suicide notes to leave on park benches,
because we both thought the gathering of pigeons was morbidly beautiful.
And we would kiss with a force meant to split lips
until we bled upon one another and I would breathe in
your aconite scented breath,
becoming one in the spiraling atrophy
of ennui.
I told you I loved you,
and I meant it.
But this is a love poem I never meant for a girl I once met,
who taught me that beauty is only skin deep,
but that skin is all we really have
and this shall be our epitaph,
because the grave is the only place a love like this will find itself.

ODE TO JELLYBEANS

You are the starry-eyed pipe-dream
of my dog day's afternoon,
My hard day's night.

Plucked from the misshapen noose
of the Jelly Belly bag,
You might be secret jewels,
embezzled from the treasure trove of the Rajah,

snuck out of the country
under the steel carpet
of darkness,

Snatched up by an eager parrot's beak
and dropped in
my lap.

You could be the curve of the
Countess' cheek,
or the pear in her hand,
both succulent and soft
(though, perhaps, the Countess
wouldn't appreciate my teeth as much).

And you — a filmy branch of larkspur
pulled from a thick lace of flowers—
Or maybe, the glint of light
off the burgundy blanket of
the sea at sunset,

Near where the mariner sits,
Idly playing at the mysteries
of the earth, and the sea,

And the stars. You are the late-creeping
evening light, stalking sootily toward
My back door — or, maybe, the twinkling axle
Of Morpheus' chariot, as he rides over another
tree-lined suburb in New Jersey.

I hold you up, and
measure out the gaps in the clockface
with your breadth,
I begin to believe
you are the hideous purple-and-grey standards
stamped on the wallpaper,
the unsharpened blade of the kitchen knife
on the counter,
the gold trim on the honest-to-crystal
goblets in the clear-fronted cabinet
out front.

(But really, happily, I believe
I've stuffed you in the cupboard
for tomorrow).



UNTITLED
MEGAN OSIKA

Daniel Marino

UNTITLED

Encircled, filigreed and woven,
Silver spun within the steel brought to form quick in the forge
I am your foil, inasmuch as I am tempered
There is steel, and there are threaded strands inside
There is you, and there am I, encircled, filigreed and woven

And there are new days,
And there are new ingots fresh from the mines
There is the fire newly stoked, licking its tongues together, hungry for the
dross
And so, hours after noon, there you are again
Smooth and pure, and there am I again,
Being drawn like silk from a worm,
Thin nearly to break, glinting in the sun
There we are, the sum parts of a jeweler's smith,
Encircled, filigreed and woven

Mariko Curran

QUITO KITCHEN

You drop your words into the boiling vats
They're easy to fry, easy to come by – already
Crunchy, delicious on my tongue even though I've never tasted them
Even though I don't know where they come from or where they've been.

With a smile that digs up your crow's feet
You toss the words to your girls, to Victoria and Crazy Diana, while they're
still
Popping, still sizzling
(Swearing at your burnt knuckles,)
Bouncing back and forth between small brown hands.

The girls run to sell them to the people on the street
I can't help but stop one and rummage
for my wallet
while she smiles with eyes that have seen mountains

and the mountains of words,

your words
earthy, oily,
raving with unapologetic spice

with sinewed arms you grate
your sunburned laughter into heaps

Matthew Brown

TUG AND SNAP

The only time
we were ever one

the only connection
that we shared

the most intimate moment
we ever had

was when we were stuck in
a Chinese finger trap

colored an erotic red
unlike our love

we strained to pull apart
when we should have come together

THE BEST THINGS

The best things are growing things.

They grow all over, often cozied up next to each other, and they twist together in ardent embraces, mixing their attributes, spreading their seed.

They thrive where you'd least expect them to, curling through cracks in the sidewalk and in the dank corners of alleyways, small, vivid sprouts, poking through snow or winding over the ridges of rocks.

You can take what you want of them, leaves upon leaves upon leaves, and they'd flourish a hundred-fold for you. You can pull them up from their great-goblin roots and somehow there'd be more come the spring. You just thread your fingers in the bed of greens and tug if you wish, tug if you want.

But it takes you so long to see them. Once your eyes drift, they forget. There's so much green it disappears, and maybe you do see it, maybe you see the best things, flowering by the moment around your ankles, just under the tender tips of your fingers; maybe you taste their mingling fragrances in the wind's breath, subtle honey sweetness, purple musk, rosy blush, but you don't bend your knees or close your fingers to a gentle fist; you don't because you won't because there's something in you, a crooked creature who cries for contortion over a bed of coals and dines on denial with fine wines, and at the beginning, you sealed a deal with him that your soul would be his for half the time.

But all the best things!

Hope in the garden wall, faith twined in the gate, and love abundant in firm, crisp blades, tickling the bottoms of your feet.



IMAGINATION
TIFFANY TENG

SORRY TO BREAK IT TO YOU

You are fingerprints on an automatic door
out of place
an absurdity
painted obviously opaque
upon your transparent reality
perhaps you are reaching
for quiet invisibility, to sit a specter amongst ghosts
but as the arm extends
that door does flee

You are the collision of deer and automobile that neither saw coming
the cautionary signs were two miles up the road
and you were too busy driving one-handed
trying to light a cigarette
and text Jesus for guidance
as if for once he'd respond in time
but, Dorothy, the impact of reason
hit you like a tornado in a snowstorm
you never thought it could happen to you
and I didn't either

But there you are
a dot matrix printer
spilling the zigzagging contents of your paper mind
from your too eager mouth
to whomever takes the time to press enough buttons
to be torn into neat pieces and scrutinized
but you already knew this
you just never thought you'd become the perforated edges
pointless
outdated
twisted around fingers
and later found discarded

Daniel Marino

THE ARMAGEDDON WALTZ

Give me $\frac{3}{4}$ time, give me violas in the court
Give me soft brown curls around soft brown arms
Give me silk and satin weaving on the floor
Give me air raid sirens to vomit the alarm
Give me eyes that can see the world heaving
Give me bones that can give these songs meaning

When the world ends, let me be there to see it
When Megido is flesh immersed in water and blood
When it brings all its armies to bear, let me meet it
When guns and shattered bones are flotsam in the flood
When the broken earth calls forth its new machines
When the audience shrieks for one last scene

Let explosions kick the pillars and the walls
Let the strings mask the bombing in the street
Let the band play to the soldiers in the halls
Let them come and feel the chords beneath our feet
Let me see the fury roaring in your sunken eyes
Let me feel the drumming of the fire in the skies



SURVIVOR OF THE SEA
LINDSEY HARDIFER

Michelle Frett

EVOLUTION

And the seagulls are aflame.
Affable aerial angels falling to the abyss
Without cognition of their destinations.
The sulfurous smile of the sun swims
To the sea surface, catching the sinking
Scavengers scented in sorrow,
Until they swoon into the sand.
Dunes of dilapidation are devoured in the
The decaying skins of the shore doves,
Dozens dying as the day dips.
Meanwhile.
Beneath the burial barge of bewilderment
Bushels of bloody crabs converge in celebratory
Communion. Clasps of deafened talons are
Toasted, torn from the tepid limbs of the terns
In testimony of prosperity.
And the Decapods are dining.
And the seagulls are dead.

ORCHID

Drowsy incorporeal mess—
slouching; swaying on a sidestreet
oh, hold the living soul before it goes,
Plato knows what it once was,
tired, fainting, tumbling
rhythm of figures moving silently—
a senile deafness lumbering its way home,
heavy pain under clear blue,
and tobacco stains in the living
room.

ghost-like. soul-fed. upset. repeat.

America, with her concrete veins,
chain-smoking in metallic blue
easy chirpworld digging up smoke in a multicolored den
subspace rolling fire photos of wet angles and Jesus in
firehalo knifing open the cigars so the dusty guts
spray on bare arms
my heart is here
backbones exposed in the soft light where
we were the rats in a labyrinth

Remember when we stood on the edge of a painted world?
first words blistering the air,
daisy petal scars and melancholy breath
smoke of fresh gray pure day Oh! with the stems
we left in the grinder the rose petals touching the
lamp light resurrected, rising from Pinot Noir bottles
spelling: wordfresh toleration!
Blow through this holy dinerworld
Meatless wonder in ankleskins harmonizing to the
firepitch in the car alarm bleeping in unity disappearing
before the beat stops Oh! hold this fire land—

light us white and build up these smokestacks that
pump our blood out our wombs
dancing day made NEW;

I found your oldsoul hidden on a crossbow.
When you drifted backward,
you shifted blue, as tumbly as our
cotton clouds.

Come, my teathy sire, my cloudlover
in olive tones dribbling a quartz stone
as our folly gritters away—

I am an open gate,
come breath my fertile air.

Megan Osika

UNTITLED

Sour milk washed down the drain
Spilled into the sink
Sour milk, sour milk.
Squeezed from the utter of a sour cow
A scowling cow
Kept for too long
As an object for profit.
The scowling sour cow
Squirted sour milk
That slipped down my kitchen sink
And stinks in my drain
Sour milk, sour milk.

Francescar Georges

ITUNES LIBRARY

Night and Day
I Set Fire
To The House That Built Me

I Miss The Liar That Let Me Fall
The Father, The One and Only
You Know He Can Take It All

If I Die Young
What The Hell
I'll Be In the Sky
Till The End of Time

Samantha Nader

FARMING

Asymmetry forms with every snapping sinew,
Breaking my steady gait,
Revealing my iron and oil and rusty hinges,
Things I'd hoped to never find
Above the surface, mingling in the open air.
I'm exposing the squealing swine in my mouth,
Parted lips and snout and the fence of my teeth,
Grassy bits of my grated tongue poking through the gaps.
And when words sprout from the back of my throat,
Each seed coming from the great Mother Mind,
They burst forth into a flourish,
Exiting to rise up in an eternal worship of the sun,
A photosynthesis of thoughts and the cracking of my delicate mandible,
Digging deep into the moist darkness of my firing synapses.
The blood on my chin, caked with dirt and stuck syllables
Hangs as a reminder of the growth of ideas and leaves I've left scattered on the
ground.

SPACE

one inch. tense. stretched. empty.
charged with heat.
ashamed? a little.
amazed? indeed.
so much in such a space,
and in the smallness
of that space! just
one inch. more or less.
oxygen and nitrogen, or
brick and cold cement.
no need to knock 3 times
just lean a little.
mind the gap, but
lean a little.
ah, screw it,
lean A LOT.
close the FUCK out of that
one inch. too tense. too stretched. too full.
thick as summer sweat.
ashamed? a shame.
amazed? so dazed.
what else is there
to block the way,
the smallness
of that fragile space, that
one inch. less, or more?
take the risk.
taste it.
tell the truth; it's only
oxygen and nitrogen.
no brick.
no cold cement.
no harm meant.
no need to knock three times.
just push together
the you,
together
the me,
'til nothing else remains.

Andy Gallagher

MOUTH

I'll only say this once.

I've dressed my room in cloth—
cozy earth tones that might
excite a hippie.

I'll walk around in frays
to be your living foil.
Tomorrow, I'll show you where
I go to think.

Your fingers are nothing but concrete
extensions of your ambiguity.
I know how much you want
to reach out and claw at moments.
But let's be honest; it goes.

*Do you like the hourglass?
It's made of skin and bones.*

Open your chasm
and say that again.



CANOPY
LINDSEY HARDIFER

Noah Franc

OF THE SNOW AT MIDNIGHT

It slipped into my thoughts,
As I walked upon the billowed, silken floor
Of dreams too real to dream.
This fantasy was of winter, so beautiful as to be unreal,
Where fresh snow was still in a state of virgin purity
Along the winding path before and behind me.
And I ran, ran as I did as a child,
Rejoicing in exultation,
The wondrous exploration
Of the stirring effects of bitterly cold breaths of air.
And when I ran, it was to fall,
To wear the snow upon my brow,
To taste its brew upon my lips.
It is in the darkest hours that the snow shines bright,
A beacon for man and beast alike,
Cutting through the dreary dark
Of cold and dismal winter night,
Alabaster, silken sheets
Of milky satin, soft and sweet
To eyes of bitter, humbled granite
Shaped by battled rain and sleet.
I have seen the snowfall at such hours,
When it frees one from thoughts of “had” and “will have,”
The breaking of such earthly powers
As time, in all its machinations.
And to be sure, it is no hallucination.

MOTH

A moth lands on my wall
and my mother is convinced that it's my grandmother,
perched there with her antennae waving at us.
Because that is the last thread she clings to

And she tells me this, as if I hadn't been there,
as if my body hadn't been crushed to splinters,
as if my eyeballs hadn't forgotten how to move,
as if my ears hadn't echoed back to me the same words over and over and over again,
She's dead.

as if my mind hadn't checked out, left the building,
to retreat to some safe haven
where grandmothers don't die before their time,
as if I don't still think about her soft paper-thin skin, blue under her patterned dress,
as if I could ever forget the sound of her voice.

That can't be her there, on the creamy wall of my hallway.
She's in that place I dream about at night,
a body, in a box,
in the dirt.

But maybe I just missed the transition
between worm food and moth, somehow.
That's just what my mother tells me,
Being followed by a moth is a sign.

And how insensitive it would be to crush that moth
before it ever gets to leave its perching place,
a pest, a burden, another set of eyes
watching me
over me, my mother says,
but I don't believe her
or the superstitions
that spew from her mouth, like ribbons unfurling.
She speaks,

and all I can think about
is how jealous I am of the moth
perpetually perched there on my wall.

Jeff Harrison

INDIFFERENCE

Sickeningly sweet death march to Hell
I've spent my last piece of gold on a diseased whore
Slumber like an exploded turkey
Choking on the wishbone as you wait to melt
All the way to the bone
But spare my rotted, sequined heart, infested with
White worms crawling into oxygen-filled cavities
That quake with yellow fat and jiggling pus hanging off
The head of my dick
Covet masturbating lilies with a stinking fag hanging from their mouths
Tired of weak perversions that speak to me like a morbid witch
Holding your hand through the woods into the underground cave where
Babysitters sacrifice spoiled children and diamond dildos are used to
Scrape the inside of my skull for that last scrap of sanity I've been looking for
For so so long
But you wouldn't be able to hear the screams even if you were being held by the
Ankles over the steaming black hole

THE LAST LOOK



A NOTE FROM THE ISSUE EDITOR

Reader,

It isn't easy, what you've just done. It isn't easy to pick this beefy 60-page magazine, to sit by the lake while you digest its contents, or contemplate its messages on your dorm room floor. It isn't easy to want to learn, or to find purpose, or to hear your own thoughts echoing back to you in delicious verse. It isn't very easy at all.

But you did it. No longer are you drowning in a murky cesspool of hackneyed images, monotonous voices, or the infectious bile of the mundane. So dry yourself off, and read on.

If you happen across Bliss 235 on a Wednesday afternoon, you will hear the voices of this lively band of literary chums, usually yelling over each other about the placement of a comma, the correct definition of a word, or whether an alien would really vomit green or blue. If you were looking for *The Lion's Eye*, you'd be in the right place. Allow me to introduce you:

Cynthia, your dedication to this magazine, and to the work of each and every artist who submits to it, is incomparable. Not only are you determined to give each piece the attention it deserves, your leadership and organization this semester has made this publication thrive. Corey, your commanding presence breathes life into the production of this magazine. Without your ceaseless passion, *The Lion's Eye* would not have the same energy. Jeff, your ability to balance dark wit and financial responsibilities is inspirational. Jess, as the creative backbone to our magazine, you inject hearty helpings of *The Lion's Eye* into the heart of this campus. Saagar, the shining light of our school week, you provide us all with a sense of comic relief in our inboxes, and your positive attitude at our meetings is unrivaled. Mariko, through thoughtful contributions to this magazine, you give warmth to our oftentimes hectic publication. And to the rest of our staff — Christine, Mylin, Matthew, Alicia, Eric, Dan, Samantha, Janet, Aaron, Jessica, Ellen — you are all too good to be true, like a satisfying work of prose.

I extend a large thank-you to the names mentioned above and to every writer and artist who has submitted to the magazine this past semester, making it one of our biggest submission-yielding semesters ever. It is because of you readers and writers that we continue to push ourselves to create.

So now, with the pages and pages of words you've just ingested, I invite you to go out and conquer, question, contemplate, create. Embrace December as a warrior bracing for a decisive fight with a one-eyed lion — with a sense of purpose.

T.S. Eliot once wrote, “indeed there will be time / To wonder, ‘Do I dare?’ and, ‘Do I dare?’” As you look at the night sky and see all those stars burning, all those planets whizzing by, remember -- there is still time to wonder, to put the ink of your mind to paper.

Yours,



Samantha Zimble
Issue Editor

ABOUT US ::

The Lion's Eye is published by the students of The College of New Jersey with funding from the Student Finance Board. The magazine provides an outlet for creative expression, publishing student short fiction, poetry, prose, photography, illustrations, graphic art, and more. To learn more about *The Lion's Eye* visit: lionseye.pbworks.com.

SUBMISSIONS ::

Although the deadline for our next issue has not yet been decided, submissions are currently being accepted. Please send all submissions via e-mail to lionseye@tcnj.edu.

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Please kindly pass this magazine on or recycle it. ♻️

