

THE LION'S EYE

VOLUME 28 SPRING 2011





WE ARE UNFINISHED CREATURES / Alexa Baird

The Lion's Eye

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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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The First Look

A Note from the Executive Editor

Reader,

I hope this issue of the Lion's Eye finds you well... and leaves you soiled in the best kind of shit. This may be the first time you've been informed, but you exist in a world of war, war waged with finely processed words, syllables, phrases, fragments, sentences— excrement no sooner processed and squeezed out of think tanks and thought factories than flung into the faces of unsuspecting adults and barely self-aware children. Yes, it is an all out bullshit-flinging war.

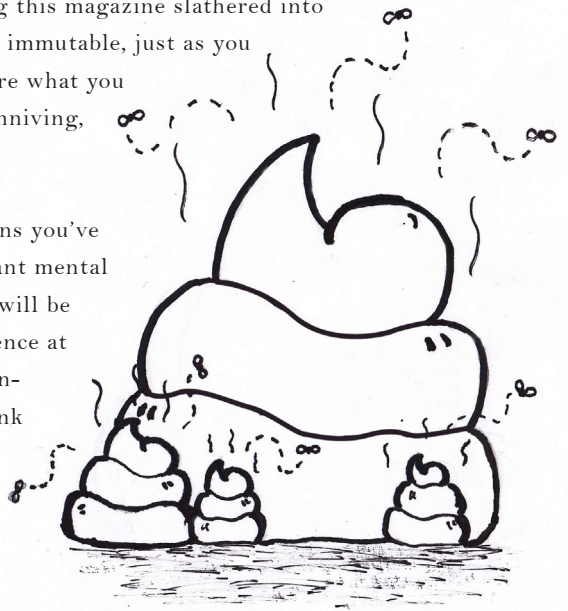
Here in this world, every word makes a world of difference or a world of indifference, situation depending.

The words within this magazine — like all words — have mind-bending abilities; these words, however, are especially powerful because they were crafted from minds bent on words. They have been constructed by many hands, consulted, informed, and filtered by many heads, and selected and transferred by many more.

Minds guarded or unguarded: don't think you can go onward, consuming these words and ideas only to poop them out onto the floor. Don't think after having this magazine slathered into your ears and eyes that you'll go on living, whole and immutable, just as you were before because, whether you like it or not, you are what you know. Symbols and words — deliberate, haphazard, conniving, or benign — determine your reality.

The moment these words penetrate your brain, neurons you've tried to ignore will be nourished, overgrown, malignant mental habits will be hacked away at, nascent, half-thoughts will be informed, internalized parental oversight will experience at least one assassination attempt, and your brain will undoubtedly be inseminated with inspiration. Didn't think your brain had a birth canal? It has many.

It is not a question of evasion— once in combat (that is, once birthed) the onslaught of sludge is unpredictable, stealthy, ubiquitous. But right now, here and now, during this decade, this century, it is



a question of disturbed, ugly half-truths or pretty, routine half-lies, and, to be clear, the other remaining halves aren't made up of their polar opposites, but just plain old nonsense.

These days it's a question of to which words you give priority. Will you continue to sit with your mouth drooped open, waiting for your clockwork of pabulum to be fed to you before, after, and during every commercial break so you can continue fitting your bloopy, formless existence into form-fitting jeans and fitted-caps? Or do you dare disturb your universe, seek something tangible? Redpill or bluepill? Naturally flawed or perfectly manufactured? Ugly? Shiny? Inconvenient? Convenient?

If you're unprepared to make such a decision, you should consider putting this down, walking away, and trying to forget the few peeks at poetry you took before reaching this warning. Brush off the ideas, like ivy, that have already begun working their way up your spine with little microscopic suction cups. No harm done...right?

Or do you suddenly see, plain as day, the assault of words and ideas being flung at you? Do you now cower and curse the all-out-war being waged, dodging handfuls of steamy, lustrous shit and screeching, "Savages! All of you! Savages!" while trying to keep from becoming lost in the latest tide of manure? Reader, I hope you do.

None of this glorious shit would be possible without our talented contributors and our dedicated and hard-working staff. To say thank you wouldn't begin to cover it. It's been great tossing turds with you. It's been great sharing realities. It's been great.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caroline Bachmann". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Caroline" written in a larger, more prominent hand than the last name "Bachmann".

Caroline Bachmann / Executive Editor

untitled

my writings start as
squiggly spores of ideas
on post-it notes or notebook corners...

sometimes they immediately mushroom to life,
infesting whole villages of thought with psychedelic color—
delectable, unreal harmony hazarding the ideas of old
insinuating their incineration with a cloud overhead

sometimes they remain marginalia,
stunted inklings of ideas
suckling onto forgotten scraps of paper
till they're rediscovered, revived, or recycled
and added to the all-but-abandoned
graveyard of aborted thoughts

other times they are assertive, nocturnal:
pacing the catacombs of my mind like a diseased kitten,
nudging and scratching at the walls
with violent affection
until i give in
 and part from the warmth of my bed
 to lure them from the labyrinth onto a page
 where i am safe from their rabid fluffiness
 or where i can at least put down a bowl of milk
 and sleepily reassure the beasts
 that i'll remember
 in the morning

- CAROLINE BACHMANN -

The Great Escape

The dangling clothing was my fort.
Washed-out blue jeans
and burgundy corduroy overalls
Draped over me like a
canopy.
I was the queen
Wrapped in my
velvety shawl.

My brother, Perry,
Wobbly and drooling,
was my minion.
My partner in crime.
Fermented milk
and rotten Chinese food
Leaked from the
Droopy sack hanging
from his behind.
He was going to blow our cover.

My mother was distracted
By the evil sales associates
Trying to “help her” -- trick her!
into buying a new suit. They
gazed at her with hungry eyes.
Only I knew the truth. They wanted
To drag her into the wicked
“changing room” where they kept all
The good people that
set foot into that store.

It was a dungeon. A long wooden
Hallway with squeaking doors.
A torture chamber.

People in their underwear!
Their clothes stolen
But they wouldn't catch me!
I hid.
No one would ever find me.
I outsmarted them.

I made a run for it.
I slithered among the towers
Of animal print dresses.
Past the starving mannequin,
Under the bench of folded scarves.
Perry tripped over a sneaker.
He was a goner for sure.

I could see the door nearing me
The sunlight gleaming through
the spotless glass.
The key to the outside!
I was a foot away
My little feet racing
on the slippery wool carpet.
And up I went!
I was flying!
I escaped!
I was...
Picked up by my mother...
“We found her!”

- MIA RITOTA -

Somnambulism

After Linda Pastan

I remember when my mind
Was not my own
When night took root inside my skull.
I remember when the clarity of daylight
Was denied by the dark,
And the cold floor
Beneath my bare feet
Was, for fear,
A perfect conductor.
I am remembering this now,
As my hands clasp copper
As the wall gives way
And as wind and rain,
Warmer than sleep's chill embrace,
Welcome me
Like a long lost brother

- JACK SCULLY -

Cookies

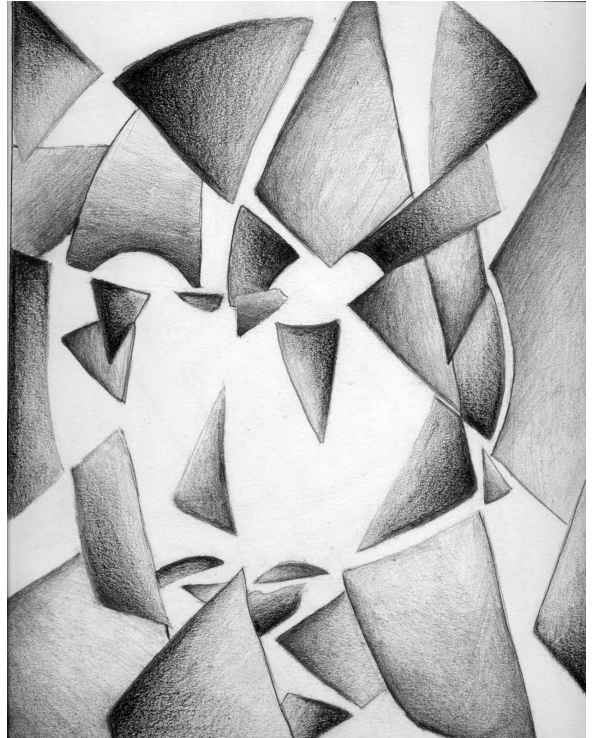
There may be cookies,
There is sweetness to be found,
In a lonely heart.

- JONATHAN STEINKLEIN

Bubble

Assemble me! Screw on my arms - not too short -
Pop in the sockets, surround with glue, jam jam jam;
I can't
Fall Apart
again.
Wait - Torso, torsos, where are the bodies?
Lined up. Dimensions checked. Porcelain nightmares.
Smoothed over, sewed up, stripped to androgyny.
Perfect.
That one is perfect.
Left leg shortage, arms serve as substitutes
No! Delivery incoming, salvaged frames found buried,
No.
Frozen - Found frozen.
Twist on the head, my head,
Home, send me home.
Wig on, capped off.
Beaming, glistening, leaving
I inform the infirmed.
Sterilized.

- RICHARD THORNE -



Sunday Driver

Hands grasping the wheel, white knuckle burning
The airbags burst open and slam my face hello
My head is pounding and my heart is banging against my breast bone
“Let me out!”

The world turns upside down but I’m still right side up
I shouldn’t have been texting

The rubberneckers swarm.
Each car that passes brings curious eyes.
The lack of carnage is moot.

The situation becomes laughable as the urge to smile and wave at these morons grows
This quickly becomes the urge to throw pieces of the clobbered car at them.

The police show up and sweep up the mess with their badges,
Issuing me a ticket for “careless driving”

The blood and antifreeze are wiped up with cheap paper towels
And the man I hit gives me a ride home.

- JEFF HARRISON -



JUST A THANK YOU / Christine Austin

Corrugated

You once told me everything in one breath
at least all I wanted to know
and then I asked you for forgiveness
you just never heard me
now I've seen how you spend your days
sitting in window sills pressing your nose to fogging glass
on summer days you distill sunlight in green bottles
as if it were common knowledge they work the best
fingers forming furrows in quiet locks
you cannot discourage the curls.

When it rains

I hear you spill out the most heartfelt half-truths
a meshing cogwork of life lamentations
leading like rivers flowing in circles
you circumvent and expect reciprocation –
sunflowers in front of abandoned houses
the corrugated roof is caving in –
you told me once that life was about exchanges
but dead girls aren't as giving as concertina wire,
you just curl in on yourself.

- COREY DRAKE -

The World Unknown

after Thomas Lux's "The Happy Majority"

Before I enter the world unknown,
I have some plans: to skydive while wearing
rainbow
party streamers; to cook a hundred vegan
hotdogs in a park and serve free meals for
everyone;
to count every single star in the October 29th
sky;

(oh not to enter the world unknown,
until some tasks are done)

to travel back to the Brachiosauruses
and ask them their opinions
on global warming; to make the
world's largest bouquet of lilies
-- but not before stocking up on
Zyrtec; to hold the record for eating the
most Reese's peanut butter cups.

(oh not to enter the world unknown,
until some tasks are done)

to create self-tying shoelaces
that are recyclable and "smart"
--but never talk back; to write a 500-page
book
documenting all of the dreams about lepre-
chauns
that I've ever had-- if I could remember them;
to have the carrying abilities of an ant-- while

wearing leopard stilettos;

(oh not to enter the world unknown,
until some tasks are done)

to uncover the reason for lobsters;
to change APA format to red font
and Wingdings; to experience love at second sight;
to marry (name available on request) in an Indian-
style
wedding on the roof of the world's highest
skyscraper -- and have a zebra
somewhere in the ceremony;

(oh not to enter the world unknown,
until some tasks are done)

To thank my parents for supporting my art;
to spend my last moments with
(name available on request), **from the conscious
into the un-.**

- MIA RITOTA -

Marie Antoinette Killed a Wombat

Marie Antoinette baked seventeen minus four cupcakes last Monday
(in the 1700s or something).

Orange marmalade ricotta cupcakes.

And her hair was the size of a tall Oompa Loompa.

Somehow, a cupcake got lost in her labyrinth of locks.

And lice survived on this single cupcake, eating a million times their sizes.

Mimicking tapeworms.

Voracious tapeworms.

Tapeworms that would be
so happy

in John Goodman's stomach.

Anyway, those pseudo-worms, faux-lice organisms grew bigger than potato sacks.

But in France, potatoes are underappreciated.

I know this because I once lived in Montmartre.

(after a Dutchman, Bartholomeus Quintolikkerpoot, eloped with me).

Oh! Euro-dreams.

And ecstasy.

And ephemeral decrees that are birthed at my stovetop.

I try all the time in this institution.

So, to be spiteful, I told them that Marie Antoinette once killed a wombat.

(in the part of Versailles that faces north).

Then I curled my fingers into a fist and bellowed:

I pray every single day for a REVOLUTION.

(minus the "prayer").

(minus the "every single day").

...I really only did this one time.

But, as expected, they were unresponsive.

I told them (again!) that Marie Antoinette

ravenously ripped apart

A FREAKIN' WOMBAT!

This time – this time...they heard me.

I mean,

They *heard* me.

And they *believed* me.

...But, what about you?

Do you believe Marie Antoinette killed a wombat?

Upon first asking this question to you, Mr. or Ms. Deer in Headlights, you will:

1. Cower your head in disbelief,
2. Completely ignore me, and
3. Proceed onward.

But I urge you, baked good aficionado, tolerate my jargon.

Try to accept it, though.

But I've realized, my friend, all you're good for is
denunciation of the obscure.

Aside from that, I'm told to bear with it...and you...and them...

Carefreelessnessstude (or something of the sort): the answer to this smudge.

But I don't know *how*.

Help, Marie Antoinette.

You stood out in my textbook as the

cool, but quite-possibly-alooof-holier-than-thou-and-maybe-even-a little-bit-selfish queen.

You also stood out as the one who never killed a wombat.

- MELISSA RADZIMSKI -



Several Haikus Regarding Futility

Screech-hallowed Sundays,
and the letter R welling
in peony plots.

We fall, clawing buds
from the crannies of limestone:
vertigo nailbeds.

Tea leaves violined
against the roof of the mouth
of the prophet's hark.

- JENNA LANZARO -

March

A box of wine

A blood ocean in cardboard

All over the kitchen's island

Oh, my bumblebee, my little kite-flyer,
My simple, clean, sway-wanderer.
You walk on dawn
in your drag-and-drop life,
Ye funny little person-woman.

- SAMANTHA ZIMBLER -

Four Cuts

I.

“Cut to the chase,” I warn my mother,
in a snippy voice that comes with being sixteen,
forgetting it is the snip snap, cut
of my mother’s scissors that clipped my first
Sunday school dress dizzy with peonies and roses and turquoise leaves.

II.

“I’m going to cut the grass!” my father says on Sunday afternoons,
and he rides his tractor mower, oblivious to the screeches of
the two-year-old neighbor, and the full body wriggle of Mom and me
as we squirm for his attention to call him in for dinner.

III.

During lunch the black-haired beauty cuts her eyes
past the boy with hazel eyes, made unfamiliar when Popularity
shoved her manicured fist into the space between. She yanks her
digital watch down her wrist
to bury the cuts of a .5 lead graphite pencil
speared through ashen skin.

IV.

You cut me with belabored instructions. You cut
me with a tender stitch of needle on cloth.
You cut me like I need a haircut—vigorous and relentlessly
cutting the fringes of my being, whittled down to the raw trembling quick.
Your cut makes me bleed into a thousand puddles of stained jolly-rancher red.

- TIFFANY HSIEH -



ALICE IN THE SPIDER'S GARDEN / Jessica Baker

The Wanting

But not the act,
The feeling of desire.
That Wanting,
pushing, forcing Indulgence,
to empty our worth
for the never-complete Satisfaction
Guaranteed,
that drives our society--
our consumerist society,
onward toward material, physical.
Need it. Want it.

People colliding and churning
the gears, the appendages,
till Seeking is fulfilled--
by fleeting Ecstasy.
Completion? No. Never.

The ugliest part
of our human existence.

Always sucking on Life through a straw.
Feeding on the others' Allurements--
savoring like a tape worm,
trying to get their fill.

When Innocence,
like holding hands,
becomes significant. Necessary--
to squelch the fingertips from grasping
for more.

The nails
from scratching, clawing
at Temptation,
until it shreds and tears and bleeds
and nothing remains of your wants--

Except

an empty space
to (re)fill your ugly, lustful desire.

- KATIE PUCCI -

Unofficial Undergraduate Transcript – Internal use

Name: Melissa Radzinski**Student ID:** 12345**Print Date:** 12/30/2010**Academic Program History**

Program: School of Trying-To-Sound-Important Studies
 4/24/2009: Active in Program

4/24/2009: Blinking & Digesting Major
 Approved Program

4/24/2009: Carbon Dioxide Exhaling Minor
 Approved Program

Fall 2010

<u>Course</u>		<u>Title</u>	<u>ATT</u>	<u>GRD</u>	<u>PTS</u>
BS	350	ETYMOLOGY OF THE LANGUAGE OF SAQAQAQ SETTLERS: POST QUEEN MARGRETHE II	1.00	B	3.000
BS	206	PRENATAL CARE AND BASIC CLON- ING OF ZEBUS	1.00	C	2.000
BS	101	TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY LIECTEN- STEINER & LICHTENSTEINERIN MIMING FOR BEGINNERS	1.00	C -	1.670
BS	499	SEVENTH-DIMENSIONAL PROFESS- IONAL MUSIC RECORDING: THE DIDGERDOO & YOU!	1.00	C	2.000
TV	305	KEEPING UP WITH THE KARDASHI- ANS SEASONS 3-5 MARATHON VIEW- ING	1.00	A	4.000

Term GPA: 2.534

Cum GPA: 1.976

Academic Standing Effective 12/22/2010: **Student in Good Standing**

rudeboy

“Ooooooh damn, girl, that haircut looks *goood*,” said the tiny, Asian hipster as her friend stomped her way under the overhang, doc martins and skinny jeans all aflutter.

Awkward, thought the tall, wrangly rudeboy watching the affair. *She doesn't know her girl looks like death personified*. He was irritated by how terrible she looked. It was very terrible. He was not unreasonable, just cruel. *This girl looks like maybe she could be on reality television if the show was about not ever getting off of methamphetamine*.

“You think?” came the reply. “I think it makes me look kind of edgy.”
Oh for sure, edgy like a racist or a real unsafe car. Edgy, sure, but definitely not sharp, no sir. “Yeah, definitely,” gushed her friend. “You look so edgy and confident. Confidence is sexy.”

Naaaaah, he thought to himself. *Sexy is sexy. Wearing a bad haircut confidently just makes you look like you don't know what a good haircut is.*

His cigarettes were heavy in his pocket and on his mind; he drew them out slowly. The box top was broken. They were bent. They were lights. These were Considerations. He put one to his lips. His lighter flicked. Dark flint wrapped in bright plastic kissed a grimy wick recently wreathed in butane by his thumb's pressure. He inhaled. He exhaled. He hated her.

She was walking over.

“Hey man, can I bum one?”

“Sure. Rude haircut, girl. Punk rock.”

He kicked the toe of his Cons against the ground. They did not fully fit, so he had to occasionally move his foot up in the shoe to remain comfortable. He didn't care; he had bought them because they were made of tweed and the last Cons not made by sweatshops full of Asian children, not because of the fit. He didn't really care about Asian children or tweed; he cared that other people cared about Asian children and tweed. He cared more about other people's thoughts than he cared about other people. He cared more about other people's thoughts than he cared about his own comfort, or maybe his own comfort was based on other people's thoughts. If he was female, he would have been what old, married people call a slut. If he was black, he would have been what ignorant people call an Uncle Tom. He was a white male, though, and as such he was just a stupid asshole.

He spoke again.

“So what's your name?”

Later on, when she was asleep, he put on his pants and left.

- DANIEL COGHLAN -

Drenched Mammal

Seawater. Damp. Sticking and tugging. Pulling me into my outward structure. Wet dirt. Bottom of bottomless. Disgusting symbol. A voyage. Boat of seawater. Stuffy. Want out, out. All dark. Unspoken tendons in the big toes. Bodies tense from the moisture. Drowning in the wetness of the skies. Sunk under. Feeling the way out. Drenched mammal. Something to show you're human underneath the blanket that makes the wet stick more closely, plunge further in, sit more heavily atop your flooded pores. It is all seawater. All like wet fresh salt. You damp human drowned in the heavy stuff of clouds. Boating barbarians mustachioed with mist of La Mer. Wet cardboard like wet skin in a fungus building, hot and steaming and hair curling all wrong. Human body blown about like an empty ship. Oh high tide and its smell, even on the inside.

Consider the clock. Time is a compass. (And we are all sailors.)

- SAMANTHA ZIMBLER -

When You're Here, You're Family

The cook was frying pork chops that had just been ordered. They were almost done, when a rat came scurrying along the floor. The cook picked up a butcher knife and began running around the kitchen, hacking and slashing like a madman.

It took him a while, but the cook finally caught the rat. In his frenzy, he forgot about the pork chops, which had burned to a crisp. They were the last ones and he started panicking. "Jerry, where's the chops? I gotta get 'em out there." He said it would be a few more minutes and began ransacking the freezer but couldn't find any more pork chops. As he leaned against the refrigerator, he eyed the corpse of the rat. He quickly scooped it up, skinned it, and tossed it on the frying pan.

"They'll never know," he thought.

- JEFF HARRISON -

Untitled

I'm a little lost lately.
A little run of the mill, run-down college blues.
A little stressed, a little depressed, a little messed-
Up in the head, in my cranium
Where knowledge causes it to expand,
Slowing the flowing of the blood to my brain,
My Jell-O mold,
Consumerist sold,
I'm barely old-
Enough to even know what any of it means.
I just try to do what I'm told,
Keeping my nose to the grindstone,
Looking more like the Sphinx every day.
I'm crumbling bit by bit,
Byte by byte.
My hard drive is on the verge of crashing.
The memory card in my Jell-O mold is full,
Sand and sugar leaking from my ears,
Like some sort of pixie stick factory seepage,
Or the moment when you flip your beach shoes upside down,
And the Great Pyramids of Giza come rumbling out in succession.
But what am I doing in Egypt?
And why is the taste of processed sugar so strong on my tongue?
I guess I'm just a little lost lately.

- SAMANTHA NADER -

Salad Days

When I was much younger,
I had a friend named Noel.
One day, while we were walking around our neighborhood,
we found a garbage can full of empty glass liquor bottles.
We happened upon just such a treasure, behind an Italian restaurant.
After little thought as to what to do, it seemed obvious.
We proceeded to break each and every one of those bottles.
Some we threw as high as we could,
others we threw as far as we could.
Watching the brilliant glass glitter on the stones was fine,
but what we really loved was listening to those bottles shatter.
It was like musical notes to us.
Of course, this was a few years back, when kids didn't really need anything
electronics to keep them occupied,
and Zack Morris' cell phone was the latest in technology.
Like farmers, we cultivated those shards all day it seemed, until the police came.
I threw my bottle down and tried to run to Noel, who was pilfering more liquor bottles
from a dumpster near the restaurant.
"That's only going to make it worse," the cop said.
Though we got a good scare,
in the end, we just had to apologize and clean up the glass shards.
The next day, we found another garbage can full of bottles and another place to break them, too.

- JEFF HARRISON -

Like the Boy of Her Dreams

after Mitch Sisskind ("Like A Monkey")

My cousin tells me Gunther was an ugly boy.
Acne mapped his face like bloody constellations.
Toes pruny.
No, he wasn't smelly,
but he always had poppy seeds stuck in his teeth,
trails of his morning bagel from 3rd Avenue
and cuffed trousers because he could never find pants
that were short enough for his even shorter frame.
Yet beside Hector, my cousin says,
Gunther was like the boy of her dreams.
Gunther was like the boy of her dreams beside Hector.
For my cousin tells me that Hector was an ugly boy
because he never paid or opened doors.
Chivalry is dead, he said,
And he lived by it too.
Really you don't need to pay on the crappy first date.
You don't need to do anything at all.
Yet beside Alex my cousin tells me Hector was like the boy of her dreams.
Hector was like the boy of her dreams beside Alex.
For my cousin tells me Alex was an ugly man.
He cracked his gum wickedly, charming the girls with his crooked grin
but smooched too long behind her back
and had a book that ranked them all on a scale
like cows in a meat market auction.
His words could be sweet as Splenda,
Sugary but fake, sitting on the tongue to leave a bitter kick
after it's all over.
Yet beside Sam my cousin tells me Alex was like the boy of her dreams.
Alex was like the boy of her dreams beside Sam.
Beside Sam's stalwart hand my cousin tells me
Alex was like the boy of her dreams.
His stalwart hand composed and conducted the rhythm of her soul
weaving a haunting tide of false reveries
Passion ignited
Then smothered in a fury of soft white ashes.

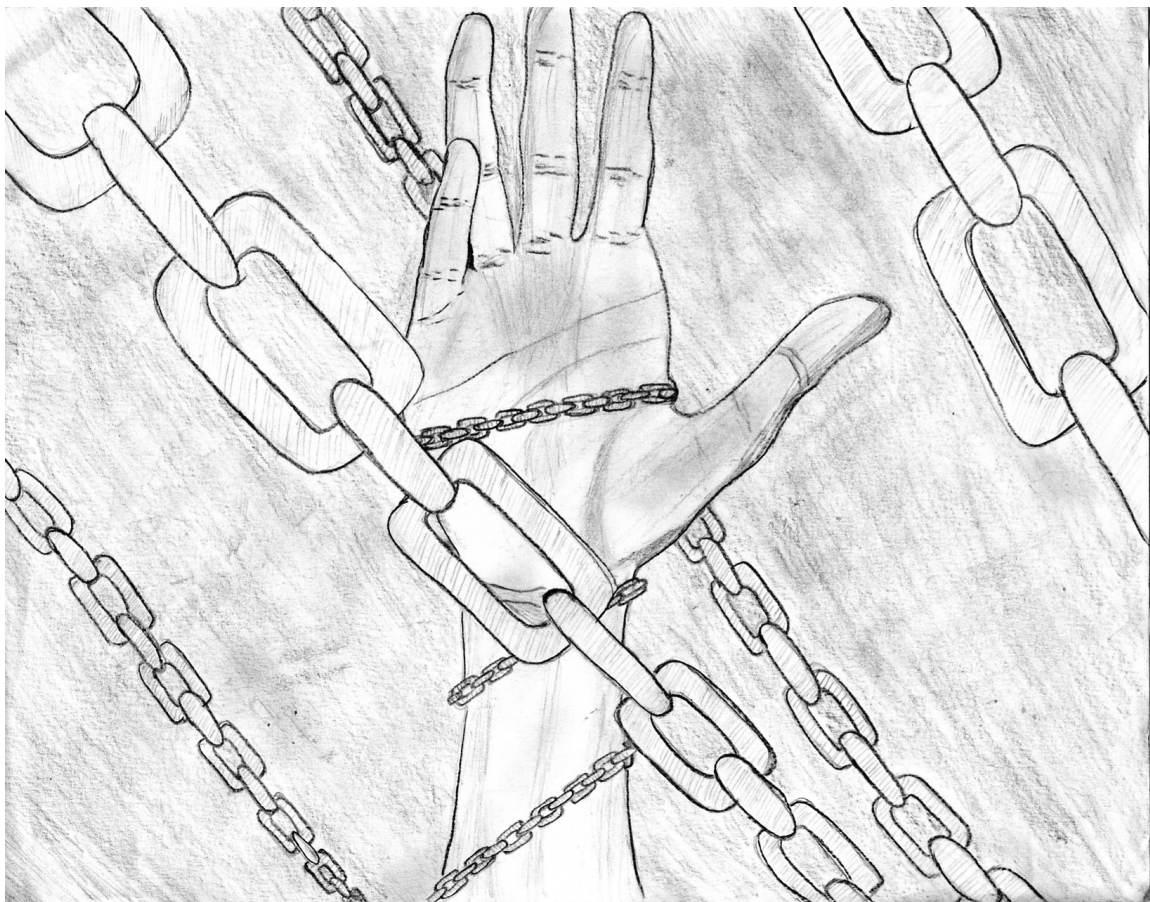
- TIFFANY HSIEH -

My Plowshare

Some days –
I feel like a Grecian statue
bare
sculpted by the hands of artisans
and worn by the sands of time
languid and contrappostal
staring out somewhere into Elysian fields
because today I am disaffected

I am the lamentation of Keats –
the vase that pushed itself from the shelf
in reckless abandon towards the unity of the mundane
and the obscure amongst the tumult
and I am wondering if this is the part
where I get swallowed by the ocean like
the remnants of last year's regrets shall I be absolved
of my transgressions in dragging my affections
to leave plow marks trailing from where
it has all gone
awry.

- COREY DRAKE -



SILENCE / Christine Austin

Untitled

I still think of you when I am under the sky
or while standing in the breeze
I wonder where you are, when I breathe
And occasionally, I remember your face
when my muscles contract for movement
Sometimes, I miss the way you smile
while I'm awake, and other times
I hear your voice when I swallow
empty, fearful sighs
You are not on my mind constantly,
But rather a fleeting thought that comes and goes
whenever I'm alive
Unconscious serenity, I have forgotten you

- CHRISTINA ALAIMO -

Fast Lerner

We like to take a multivitamin—a compact cocktail to satisfy our daily value. It's mindless; popped into a routine like cats. An overarching theme to encapsulate the novel. Our need for mindless self-sustainment outweighs our need to self-sustain our minds.

- ANDY GALLAGHER -

Electric Fixation

In season two of Avatar, the Last Air Bender,
Azuela shoots lightning out of her hands
and sends a bolt of bright blue electricity
right through Aang's chest.
Katara cried,
but I couldn't help but think
what a rush it would be to have
2000 volts dance down my spine,
a million times better even than that time
you ran your hand down my back.
I hear the word "fetish" a lot
when I talk about this,
but I think that's a very judgmental word.
I think it's a lot more normal
to run sock covered feet
over a carpeted floor and touch
the nearest charged surface
than it is to indulge in fantasies
of school boys and stern German instructors
or get chained up with handcuffs
that look like they came from the sex room
in Barbie's dream house.
No, it's much saner
to dream of
static-y blankets and a
boy to lay on them with in the hopes
that the next instant of skin-to-skin contact
will yield a
spark.

- SHAUN FITZPATRICK -

On Picasso's *Blue Nude*

Pablo Pablo Pablo

your girl folds herself with so much precision;
she really knows what it is to do so and how thick her outline is
how easily distinct from her somber surroundings but she is made of the same stuff
as those surroundings

she sleeps above my bed with her back turned from my dreaming body
a goddess of the sadness whose face we'll never know
she soaks in blue something curving in time
a fire curling down her spine over rivers intersecting
but really Pablo you've just thrown her together with some blue world and
all we know is the nothingness of her and of all that surrounds her

does she speak from beneath her swollen arms?
does she sigh as I do?
does she cry out to be dressed by your aching blue-stained palms,
to be addressed again by the cool thickness of your wet brush against her back?

she sleeps for you, our sullen nude.
this goddess is no mammal-woman; her only hair entwines behind her
and there are signs in her shadows, deep set eyes and
wrinkles and pieces of faces her friends in the dark
her naked shell is wrapped in the blue faces of her
silent, scheming portraitmates.

or is she kissing another dark-haired water-nymph behind that arm?
she floats atop beds of silent waters and the human sun rubs his tongue
on the small little cape of her neck,
thick block blue-bare woman alive with sadness.

- SAMANTHA ZIMBLER -

family roots

Family runs deep they say.
She pictured hers: dark, silent, busy underground,
gnarled and rough and evidently proud of it
—working for years, centuries even,
twisting stubbornly around rocks and boulders,
waiting to peek their toothy nodules out of the earth
to tamper with wheels and feet.

All that was and all that would be was dutifully carved into their crooked arms,
dug deeply in clear nonsense;
yes, spelled out in deep letters of forgotten, but bitterly felt, nonsense,
and they were pushing her with the steady urgency of a glacier,
stalking her patience and her peace of mind,
plowing over her unsuspecting germs of progress, growth,
and churning them upon themselves.

Fertilizer. Do it again.

It was like being force-fed to her own stomach,
only the acid didn't wholly devour her;
it slowly recollected in her nonexistent stomach and waited, should she create anything
less than radioactive ever again.

And all the while she thought, dreamed, of escape,
plotting and planning a happily ever after in an Eden all her own.
But alas, she, too, was but a root: forever sharing water, nutrients, blood;
forever bound to the blind underground.
Her only hope: to send someone or something out
to the light of day so he could say “oh, how lovely it is to be in the sun!”

- ANONYMOUS -



FALLEN BEAUTY / Nicole Priestner

Last Call

Like war veterans, past high-school football heroes, and reformed hippies, gods often gather together at bars to discuss their glory days. Should one stumble into Matty's, a little dive bar located on a forgotten side street in Manhattan, on a typical Thursday night, he should not be surprised to see a crowd as motley as mythology ever produced. A quick scan of the dingy room will reveal such familiar faces as Thor and Quetzalcoatl, engaged in a fierce game of pool at a table in the corner. Apollo, taking his role as the former god of music quite seriously, has been playing the out-of-tune piano for roughly 1500 years. Deities flirt and fight as they have been doing for thousands of years, but a close observer will catch the smallest twitch in the corner of their mouths, the one area where their hidden desperation manages to break through from time to time.

Sitting alone at the bar, as he has been inclined to do ever since that no-good carpenter stole his thunder roughly two millennia ago, Zeus attempts to drink away his feelings of inadequacy. The bar tender should have cut him off long ago, but he is understandably reluctant to tell a man with the power to smite him that enough is enough. Not that Zeus is looking well enough to smite anyone these days. With his beard growing gray and knotted and his stomach looking decidedly rounder, he is only an echo of his former self. Zeus sighs, his now-empty cup making an audible thump as it hits the counter. His bloodshot eyes survey the room, but not even Qetesh's leering can catch his interest tonight. He isn't looking for sex at the moment, which already marks this Thursday as being drastically different than all of the other ones. Typically, there is nothing the Greek loves more than a quickie in the cramped bathroom with one of the many sex goddesses that show up at Matty's. But tonight he is a different kind of drunk, pensive and melancholy, and the rest of the gods presume, correctly and with no little exasperation, that he is about to make a speech.

"My brothers and sisters; my colleagues and friends; my lovers and my children," he pauses, making sure that he has covered everyone in attendance. "I have sat here with you all for centuries, millennia. I have sat on this very stool," he drunkenly gestures towards the seat he recently vacated, "and watched myself grow older and weaker with each passing decade. And I ask myself, how did it come to this?"

We were once the most powerful beings in the cosmos. The stars themselves bowed in our presence. With a flick of my wrist I smote my enemies, and when I grew angry the world knew my wrath. Now look at me! I can barely summon a bolt on the stormiest night!"

"I have noticed that his, uh, 'lightning bolt' hasn't been in top shape lately," Isis whispers to Epona, who tries not to laugh. Zeus either doesn't hear them, or chooses to ignore the interruption. He grows more passionate by the moment, waving his arms and getting steadily louder.

"Our people feared us as much as they loved us. They built temples in our honor, offered us more sacrifices than we knew what to do with! They fought wars, wrote songs and poetry,

all in the hopes of winning our favor! And yet, who do they turn to now? A guy who got his people lost in a desert for 40 years and his uppity bastard child!”

The crowd, sensing that Zeus is losing some of his steam, begins returning to their own conversations and activities, leaving Zeus once again alone with his thoughts. He slumps back into his seat, signaling the bartender for another drink. Just as he resigns himself to another night of drowning his sorrows in the cheapest liquor Matty’s has to offer, a new face enters the bar.

It is entirely obvious that this young man is not one of Matty’s usual clients. His brown hair is freshly washed and styled, his suit pressed and laundered, and his blue eyes hold a twinkle instead of the bottomless despair found in the eyes of the other patrons. He approaches the bar with what can only be described as a saunter.

The stranger orders a scotch, looking at the perpetually dirty cups with disdain. He turns away to face the room, wrinkling his nose at the run-down décor and the run-down gods. He turns back to the bar and gives a small start of surprise when he sees Zeus sitting just a few stools down from him. This is an act, of course; the stranger came to Matty’s knowing that Zeus would be there. By acting as though he didn’t notice him at first, however, the stranger is subtly reminding Zeus how far he has fallen, how easily he can be overlooked. As though anyone could miss the hulking giant pounding back drink after drink!

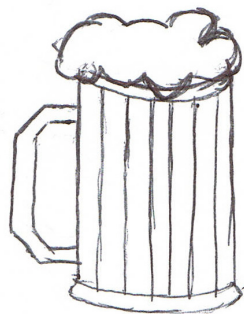
“Zeus! How the hell have you been, buddy? Haven’t seen you in awhile!” The stranger’s overly friendly tone can’t hide the arrogance in his voice. Zeus merely grunts. He knows why the stranger has approached him, and wants nothing more than for this interaction to be over as quickly as possible. The stranger won’t give up that easily, however. “What’s wrong? Don’t you recognize an old friend?”

Zeus glares at the man with blatant hate. “Hello, Jesus.”

“Please, call me J. That’s what all the kids are calling me these days.” Jesus flashes a toothy smile that would not look out of place on a used car salesman. “I have to stay fresh, you know? Modern. Otherwise, I’d end up here, like the rest of you.” He shakes his head sadly, as though he feels any sympathy for the forgotten gods around him.

“Oh, we should have become more modern, is that it? That’s where we went wrong? I was under the impression that the real trouble for us started when your followers started forcibly converting some of our followers.” Zeus is beginning to raise his voice, but the other gods are trying to pretend that they can’t hear anything that’s being said. They are all weary of Jesus, and would rather not call attention to themselves.

“If I remember correctly, I lost quite a few early followers to some very hungry lions,”



Jesus responds quickly, unwilling to look like the villain. “But let’s not dwell on the past. I just wanted to stop by and see how everyone was doing. Not well, by the looks of it. Unemployment really has taken its toll on you, huh? It’s really a shame. I wish there was something I could do, I really mean that. But, you know, it would kind of be bad for business. Sometimes you have to look out for number one, am I right?” Jesus reaches into his suit pocket and pulls out a cigar. He strikes a match, lights it, and inhales deeply. “But hey, if you’re every in the neighborhood, give me a call. I’ll tell Dad you said hi.” With that he finishes his scotch, gives Zeus a wink, and leaves the bar.

Zeus remains silent for a few minutes, and then looks at the bartender, who is the only person paying any attention to him at all.

“I can’t wait until his old man knocks some other virgin up. Then that son-of-a-bitch will know what it feels like to be replaced by a newer model.”

- SHAUN FITZPATRICK -

Look At Me

He handed me the coffee.
I avoid his eyes.
He whispers “Look at me.”
But it’ll just remind me of his lies.

So I avoid his eyes.
And I still can’t think straight.
I’m just reminded of his lies.
Wordlessly, we both wait.

I still can’t think straight.
Even in the silence.
So wordlessly we both wait

As I remember all the violence.

Even in the silence,
he handed me the coffee.
As I remember all the violence,
he whispers, “Look at me.”

- CHRISTINA SARRAS -

An Awkward Interview

Closer.

Closer.

Way close.

Too close.

You've come a tad close
For my comfort
If your feet were rooted
To some foreign ground
I might be at some ease

I struggled to picture
Our meeting, our dreaded meeting
Sitting in my car, a death-grip on the wheel
As I pulled up to your work palace
And gulped down a ball of nerves

The walk was too long for my taste
To your office, it felt like the green mile
And when I entered you were waiting
Right at the door
Right next to me

You chose to loom over me
A vulture, a tall vulture
And I felt your breath pat my head
As I sat in your tatty, ratty leather chair
Picking at the holes in the armrest

One of your hairy hands pats my back
"We need men like you, son"
You said. You grinned.
But I'd be more relived
If you would just step back.

Way back.
Farther.
Farther.
Good. I'll take the job.

- MATTHEW BROWN -

Crowds

Fingers wrapped-round a warm, doughy,
pretzel twist, the oversized chunks of
salt making tiny dimples, red-dotted
constellations in my hands, I walk—
no, stroll—the city streets past millions of unknown Faces.
Traces of my suburban roots revealed in my
constant upward gaze at
endless glass—
squared off, God-like, looking down upon
The Breathers of Bustle and I think,
What if it all shattered, all at once?

- ANDY GALLAGHER -

Haikus

Starfish swallowed whole,
Returning there to the rest
Shriveling lifeless.
Lost beneath the waves,
Wandering out in the night,
Always retreating

Pouring, from the tree
Ashes blanketing the earth,
Assaulting the ground.

- RICHARD THORN -

Pillow for Your Thoughts?

Usually, I take a pillow upon my feelings.
suffocating and holding them down
as they twitch and squirm and
try to shout--
like a child being held under water
gasping for breath,
struggling to reach the surface
and just scream in air--
helpless, hope less.
But it is not until they are calm,
that the frantic spasms have come to rest,
when I can release my grip--
laying my head
on that same pillow, entering
into a fitful slumber--
and once again relax--
forgetting what has passed.

And smile at you as before,
with composure.

- KATIE PUCCI -



My Body is a Cage:

Transgendered Remix

So this is what we're back to,
The cage without a key;
I occupied -the open side-
So did eternity.
I thought that I had not looked back,
I must have left it on;
That glance we tell-just but ourselves-
I'll be with you, anon.
And so, again, the shadows,
And so once more the shame,
The rustle of-the other glove-
When dawn dissolves to dame.
The wind, it comes in carriages,
Then out the other way,
But first it drones-like catacombs-
And ends before my say.
I'd sooner blossom to be brave,
And settle into storm,
Resolved, a rose-no interpose-
From roots without reform.
It is the pain of petals fair
That couple ebony,
I'd much prefer-the twilight's stir-
Than this dichotomy.
I'd do it all, to get away,
But I can never leave-
To enter is my better half,
To stay there is the sieve.
A corpse without conclusion,
I wish to lay to rest.
A part of me-will always be-
A curse, but never blessed.

It Might Have Gone Like This

You could see the bruises on her legs
through the holes in her jeans.
She was balancing triscuits
between her fingertips, placing them
delicately between her teeth.
She smelled of
the last marlboro she shared
with the last boy she wished
she'd kissed.

You could tell how life was treating him
by the measure of hairs on his face.
He was staring into the ceiling
as if it was Heaven, as if
he believed in anything
other than
inhaling.

You could tell how many days ago
my heart deflated
by the rate at which my eyes
blinked, calculated, waiting for someone
to
watch me, the way I am always
watching and falling in love with a
movement, with a false memory
that might be playing behind their eyes.

The three of us
walking backwards,
having nothing in common
except for the distance between us.

I was the Queen once,
I inhaled somebody else's smoke.
I bruised easily, I moved delicately,
I loved and I could not stop
no matter how hard I tried.

We might as well have had
the same lips, the same eyes

I was untouchable once,
a step forward or a
step behind,
milliseconds out of your reach.
He loved me and he could not stop,
and he did not try.

We might as well have had
the same hips, the same thighs

In this room where all the lights are too bright
and all the faces are hiding something, hiding it all-
we breathe in synchronicity
and it's as if we had all been holding hands
before we even arrived.

- COURTNEY MOSES -

Corona Conjure

Quick, everyone
Look directly at the sun
Look directly look directly
At the sun sun sun!
Fix your gaze, find a friend
Get an eyeful of the end
Pick a judgment to suspend
 And run run run
Incandescent mass depressant
Show the world! Show them all!
It may scorch, it may burn
To the point of no return
Send you straight into the urn
How could that be of concern?
It's our ever cleaner slate
Our exploding head of state
Banging open every gate
All is great great great!
 I wait
in the shadows within and without
straddling
wisdom and frigidity

- MARIKO CURRAN -

Plastic Bag

Sling you over my shoulder,
Cling to my skin and dangle.
Float.
Fill.
Tear.

Through you I can see
Myself.
Brand names, brand new.

Arriving home I throw you down.
I reach in to unpack.

I am swallowed.

- RICHARD THORNE -



snake.

sincerely stumbling sub-strobe light
give me a symphony you sycophant
silence becomes you
stele surmount sympathy
should you so stoop to siphon your stipend
be it below you
sitting, still-life framed in polyester
psoriatic spill of glass arthritic merely quarter-full
she'll be here so soon

- COREY DRAKE -

untitled

death has a way of turning you inside out:
lungs thrust from your chest,
through your mouth, forcing you to
watch yourself inhale and exhale a
perpetual vomit of oxygen and
carbon dioxide because
external lungs
with wide-reaching grasping, gasping branches
are the only way you
can get nearly enough.
your lungs dangle there in the air aching and
inept, and your thoughts become the only thing you
can see and your surroundings the only thing you can think-
your brain becomes a popped kernel of corn that
you have to
manage and manipulate slowly, delicately
so it isn't misplaced or broken like a
piece of chalk or coral, and
you helplessly throw thoughts at objects and
furniture like the ineffectual peanuts you
throw at a sleeping elephant when all you need from
it is for it to move and
it isn't long before
you give up and
whatever was still inside
seeps out from your eyes like
obese slugs, leaving a trail
of mucus and memories smeared on your face
until you can turn yourself right and
you look and act like everyone else,
wearing your stains on the inside again

The Last Word

A Note from the Issue Editor

Dear Reader,

On the outside, this is just another magazine. When you open it, you see words, pictures, and a silly lion. *It's better than my calculus book* you might say to yourself, but don't give it much more thought. You put it down, and begin to walk away. You think you hear something, so you turn around. Was it your name? You catch a glimpse of the cover again. It hums softly and you can't help but think of the Joker. He looks at you with his green, dancing eyes and laughs, asking, "What sort of person are you?"

You solved that mystery years ago between grass stains and coffee breaks, or is it the other way around? Either way, you're curious now. You're thinking that you might be delusional and your parents are going to send you to the same place they keep Aunt Mildred. Or, you're not. You step closer to the magazine. *What harm can a magazine do?* You say to yourself as you bend open the cover and the magazine sighs.

Your eyes skip over the pages at first, but something catches your eye. Some words. And somehow you're remembering that smile you lost in 5th grade. You turn the page, letting your eyes dance now, and some more words stop you mid-twirl. The echoes of a silence. Your eyes caress the last word and you move on. You find a photo, a place you've never been. You remember that, when you were in 6th grade, you wanted to go to the moon. You also wanted to be a Power Ranger, that girl on "Rocket Power," a World Champion Mini-Golfer, a Spice Girl, Mia Hamm, THE President, and kiss _____ before you went to 7th grade. Now you're not so sure. You turn the page – more words – and then it's gone.

You sit alone and ask yourself: What is this magazine? It's you, and it's me. It's that old lady you cut off at the grocery store yesterday and it's your little brother waiting for you to come home. It's even the little dog licking your cheek. But more importantly, it's nothing less than honest reflections on what it means to be.

It has been a delight to be part of the Lion's Eye for these past years. We're certainly a motley bunch, but I won't get all sentimental. Caroline – you're the wink that escapes from *italics*. Samantha – your passion and thoroughness with words astounds me. Katie – your warmth and dedication are so inspiring. Cynthia – someday you are going to run TCNJ (if you don't already). Saagar – your words speak on their own. I think your e-mails should be considered literary works of art. Jessica – You. Are. Fierce. Danna – your silent wisdom knows no bounds. Rebecca, Christine, Matthew, Mariko, Corey, Eric, Jeff, Matt, Catherine, Samantha, Brett, Yale, and Ellen – you are the Lion's Eye, ROAR!

Always, to my wonderful family – you're the stitches that hold me together, even when we're apart. Rich – you've helped me to break down the walls that say *you can't*. I don't know how you do it, but thanks for being my everything. Sam – Thank goodness for dogs and tie dye dresses! Everything you do is amazing. Thank you for your work and your inspiration.

And you, Reader, I hope these pages make you look in a mirror and stop. And when you do, I hope your mouth twitches, the sketch of a smile, and you see something you forgot to notice the day before.

Yours in Reading,



Nicole Priestner / Issue Editor



LOST SOULS / Nicole Priestner

