

The Phoenix

Thiel College

The Phoenix

A Magazine for the Creative Arts
Thiel College, Spring 2009
Sigma Tau Delta

Co-Editors:

Sheila Gross
Kirk Mullen

Layout Editor:

Kirk Mullen

Editorial Board:

Amanda Colvin	Dr. Mary Theresa Hall
Dr. Natalie Dorfled	Andrew Miller
Duranna Fretts	Rebecca Miller
Ellen Greis	Abagale Steidl

Front and Back Cover Artwork:

Ben Beck

Advisor:

Dr. Mary Theresa Hall,
Professor of English

Printed By:

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Welcome to Thiel College's creative publication, The Phoenix!

As sponsors of The Phoenix, the English Department and Sigma Tau Delta are especially pleased this year to share with you, in what has become an anticipated yearly tradition, some literary and artistic works of our students, faculty, and alumni. This year, we are especially proud to celebrate the 85th anniversary of the founding of the international English honorary society and the 10th anniversary of the Alpha Iota Kappa Chapter on our campus. In the spirit of the motto of Sigma Tau Delta—Sincerity, Truth, and Design—we dedicate this issue to all of you whose interest in pursuing the liberal arts and sciences inspires you to refine, explore, question, and consider the significance of the written word and the artistic process in our daily lives.

In Egyptian mythology, the Phoenix was a beautiful, lone red bird that lived in the Arabian desert for 500 or 600 years and then consumed itself in fire, rising renewed from the ashes to start another long life. It is a symbol of regeneration, immortality, and hope; as such, it is an appropriate symbol of Thiel College, in particular, and of a liberal arts education. Our publication The Phoenix testifies to the courage of the Thiel community to create, to use our intellects and imagination, and to share the power and wisdom of the writing process in the selections you are about to read and the artists' evolving epiphanies in the visual pieces you are about to behold.

We hope you enjoy the literary and creative selections that follow. We invite you to contribute to The Phoenix by submitting your own creative or artistic pieces to Dr. Hall (305 Greenville Hall) or any member of the Editorial Board.

Dr. Mary Theresa Hall

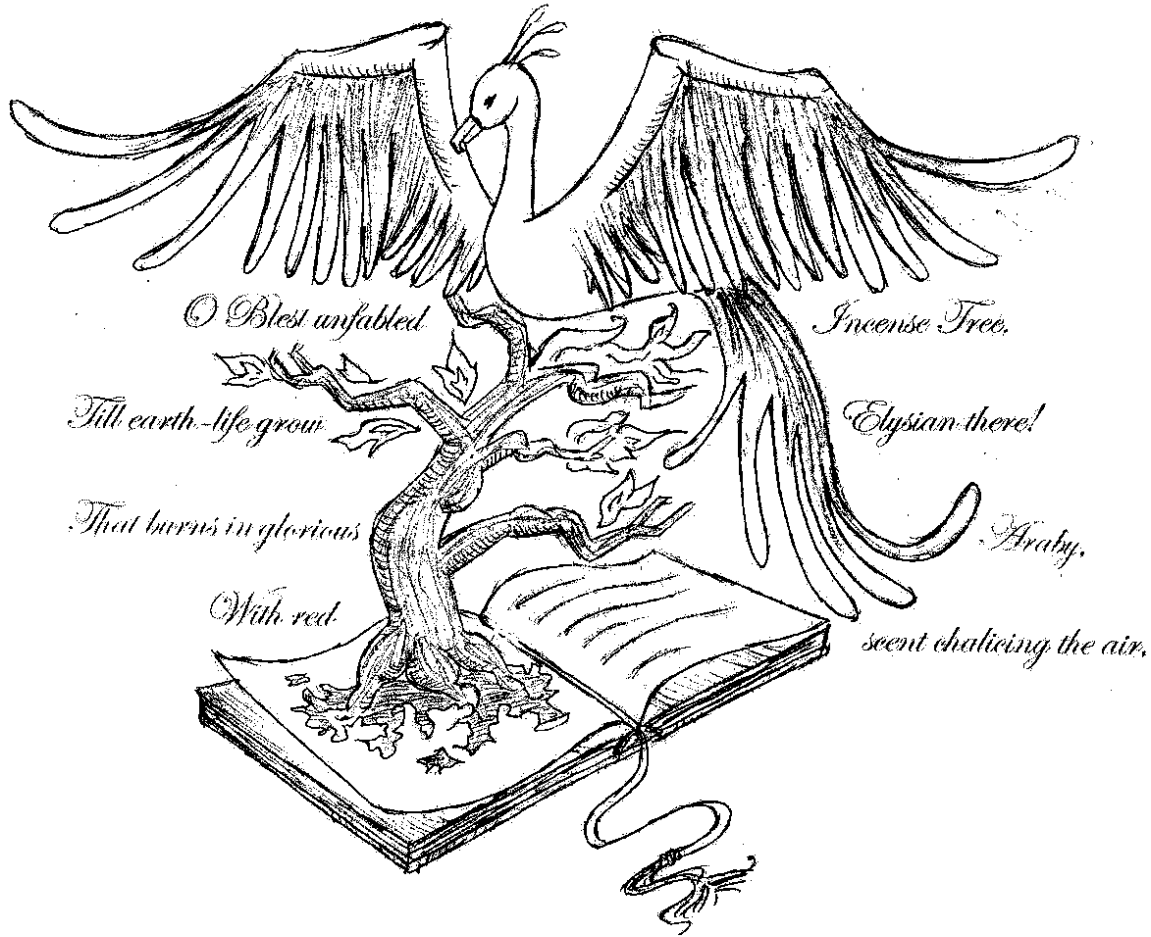
Chair and Professor of English;

Advisor of Sigma Tau Delta and The Phoenix

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Thiel College Literary Magazine

2008-2009

When I Started to Blossom

By Jennifer Ryan

When I started to blossom,
my body lied on the ground,
seizing. My fingers sprouted
tulips and my thighs
were turned to ivy.

I smiled and
between my teeth,
grapevines seeped.
Coughing forced mustard
seeds from my stomach.

And I laughed while choking.
I *laughed* and
fed the vines.

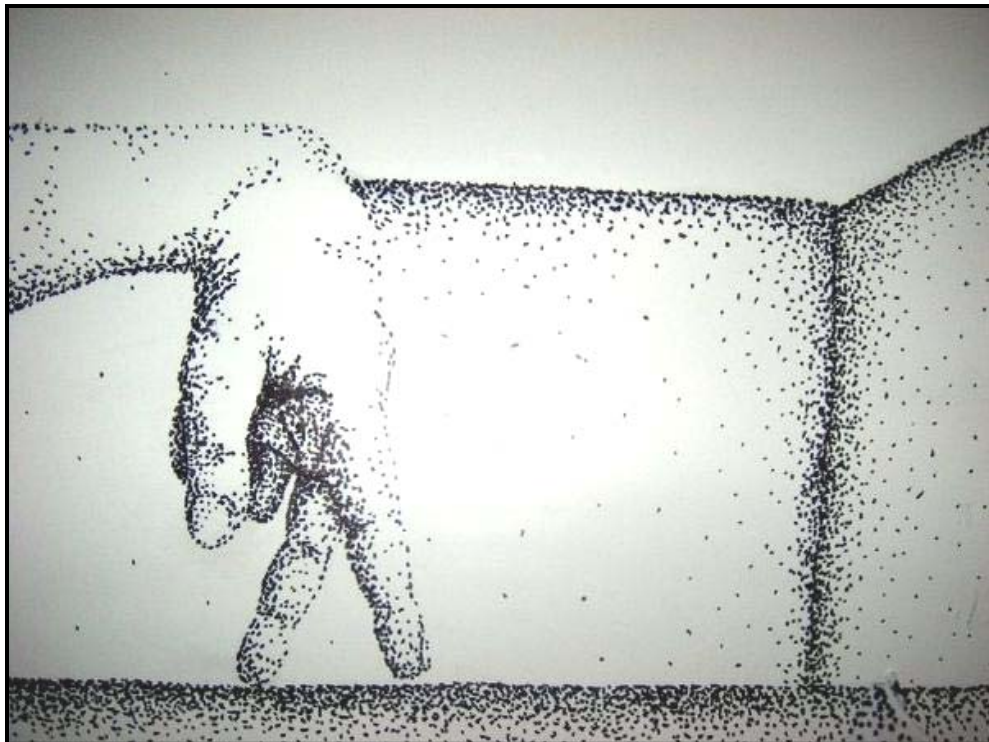
Illusions

By Kirstin Kennedy

Hunter and gatherer, King and Queen;
You play my strong love and I'll be sweet
So that everything fits in this pretty scene
Choreographed at perfection's meet.
Lord and Lady, man and wife;
Children play dolls but we play real
Just to avoid actuality's sharp knife
Whose wounds don't so soon heal.
Here this man, I thee wed –
In sickness and in health may I be true
To the rules established of our marriage bed;
May the man that I love be he whom I never
knew.

And may we never deeply see into each
other's eyes

Living happily ever after in a love of lies.



Freedom

By Amanda Colvin

Ingredients: revolution, struggle,
cultural conflict, maintaining cultural identity

Optional: incorporating philosophies.

Unite reformers entirely

For best results, discuss plan of revolution.

(calmer conversations aid in quick
action)

With struggle, fight for freedom

Depending on deepness of oppression

Hold on to cultural identity in conflict

(looking far into the future facilitates
the strength to continue)

If incorporating other cultural philosophies,
choose carefully, extracting any

Valuable traditions and beliefs from other cul-
tures.

Maintain cultural traditions, beliefs, and values.

Do not succumb.

A Conversation

By Elizabeth Yurky

Greetings

Eyes that won't meet

Shifting switching feet

Hands twisted in a knot

About to say something, maybe not

Trying way too hard to make this look easy

It never will be, it's a difficult dance indeed

Thinking too hard and not letting it flow

Reach out, then hide the gesture quick

The look on your face tells all

Goodbyes

It's the things unspoken that say the most. . .

It's All In Our Genes (Light) By D. J. Martino

The child stops crying, her tears are now dried
By a brave survivor who could no longer hide
He takes her hand and they leave as a team
After all, bravery is all in our genes.

The determined hunter while claiming his prize
Sees the slain animal's family with pain in their eyes
His swears off of killing, he wipes the slate clean
After all, compassion is all in our genes.

The homeless man's gaze is met by kind eyes
His stare is raised from the ground to the skies
Once forgotten, now full of hope he gleams
After all, happiness is all in our genes.

A forest renewed, their planting new trees
The young leaves flutter in the fresh summer breeze
Life flows in like a beautiful stream
After all, charity is all in our genes.

Humanity is righteous, forgiving, and kind
An offense against the Earth is a capital crime
As the darkness retreats, the dawning of a dream
After all, the light is all in our genes.

Diary of a Mortician

By Andrew Miller

12:47

The Cadaver tonight was especially dry,
Rigid and restless in one half-opened Eye,
As I plugged up the wires and drained out the
life
I eagerly waited to see what I'd find –

nothing.

Slightly upset, I reached for my Blade
And into the Cadaver I would carve with my
Spade.
I began at the Torso, slicing in deep
And peered childishly over as to capture what
I'd see –

Nothing.

Slightly irate, my Blade met resistance of Bone
Removing soft tissue, layers, organs in whole
I clawed for my answer, scraped for a Soul,
Tore through for my Triumph, yet dropped my
Scalpel.

Slightly pissed, I lunged into the Chest with
hands bare
And scooped out the gunk and stained-matter
in there.

The Cavity near empty, no Scalpel in sight

No answer to my quest; only dark for my light
–

Nothing?

No Soul! No Spirit, No entity of Being!

Nothing, No one inside did I see.

My soiled hands now raked through my hair

And frantically I searched to revise my answer,

Nothing?!

Slightly insane, I rolled up my sleeves for a
final burrow

My hands tore out organs and vessels and Oh!
A pinch, a pain, my Hand would sharply re-
treat,

Impaled by my Blade, throbbing was my Key.

I needed a live sample; this Soul had run free.

As I scattered the lab and in reflection saw Me.

In panic I fell, yet stood to Epiphany,

I – I would, to find the Soul, dissect me!

Hesitant for a moment, but only a moment

I thrust the Blade into the plump of my fore-
arm

Searching for a hint of Spirit through my Vein

Avoiding blood-loss and ignoring pain.

With whatever strength I could afford
I threw the Cadaver down to the floor.
And laid back to rest my Body whole
As I opened my chest to reveal My Soul.

I ripped out my lungs, liver, and spleen,
Searching, carving ever so vigorously.
My Soul was not there! I, drained of fluid and
sacks
Fading in consciousness, tried to roll off my
back.

To the ground fell I, a bloody, carved-out heap

And the Cadaver happened to lay right next to
me,
Its before half-open eye was now at full stare
And Our realization was in full; We were aware.

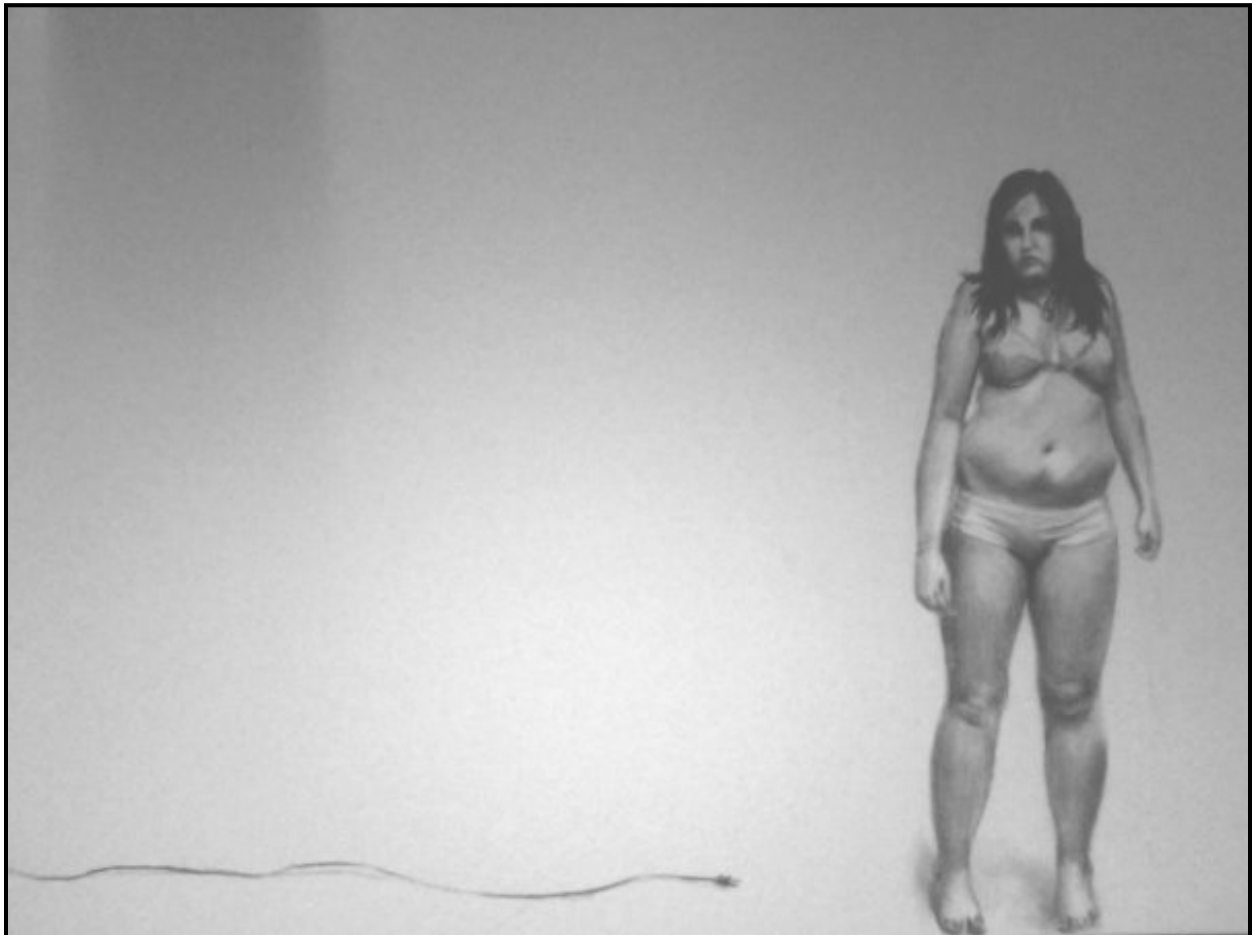
But before I could grasp, my numbness over-
took

The Soul was slipping, ripped like pages from
a book.

How was I robbed, when the answer had been
there?

My Blade falls limp, the Cadaver's Eye in de-
spair

nothing



A Summer Afternoon on the Reservation

By Dr. Chris Moinet

At the annual Arlee Pow Wow,
as I sat in the bleachers with the other eastern palefaces and their digital cameras,
the drums throbbing, the bells jangling rhythmically,
the nations swirling, marching, prancing,
processing before us in their exorbitant colors,
the leather, the beadwork, the feathers, the braids,
the pride, the traditions, the heritage,
it was not mere history, not the past,
no old black and white John Wayne movie,
but alive, and present, and real,
and even a little threatening,
and Powerful.

Immoral

By Joshua LaFace

The smell is unforgettable
Smell of unrighteousness and immorality-
Those with extreme hardship.

Please God forgive me,
For the most ultimate sins-

It
was
Immoral.



Don't Rush My Heart

By Juanita Christner

Don't rush my heart.

It takes its time
to know.

The brain can say
with flippancy
"This is reality."

But the heart is slow
It wants to know
in every living fiber
before it can abandon to belief.

It never pays to simply say,
"This is the way it is,
get on with it."

The brain can move in leaps and bounds
When fed information.
But the heart must know
in a different way
that defies explanation.

So,

don't rush my heart.
It's coming wait for it.
When it arrives
the brain will fly
ahead to newer stations.

I cannot say
why it's this way.
I only know
that's how it goes.

The heart would stay
forever in one spot.
Did not the brain keep prodding
to see the world with different view.

And as we learn,
we grow,
we change.

That's okay.

Just
Don't
Rush
My
Heart.

Gentle Love

By Nicole Uwah

If ever love were so abundant
The flow of affections and many wants.
The source of joy shared by two people,
Has now become an intrinsical bond.

I prize your love given so ever delicately
That life will definitely be lived happily,
To the fullest of two so in love.
And be blinded by this shiny glimpse,

Your love has unfolded as years went by,
That is now returned fully from me.
That the dream that we may one day,
Wake up and grow old on our porch together,
May truly now become a reality for us.

Life

By Miles Wilburn

Sometimes, things come to an end
the tides calm, the wounds mend
so carve your heart on our old tree
remember times you spent with me

Sometimes, we play our songs in minor keys
but take the major with the minor things
and something has gotta give sometimes
when we collide

Sometimes, a reach a fork in fate
character decides who lives, and stays
but inside we all have got to change
or we die

Sometimes, things come to a start
but this time we go apart
so give me part of you to take with me

January, 2009: A Replication of
Mary Robinson's "January, 1795"
By Stephanie Flask

Pavement slipp'ry, people sneezing;
Taxbreaks given, citizens paying;
Leaving workers homeless, freezing.

Mothers, sisters, and cousins pleading;
Bombs exploding, bodies flying;
Gallant soldiers fighting, bleeding.

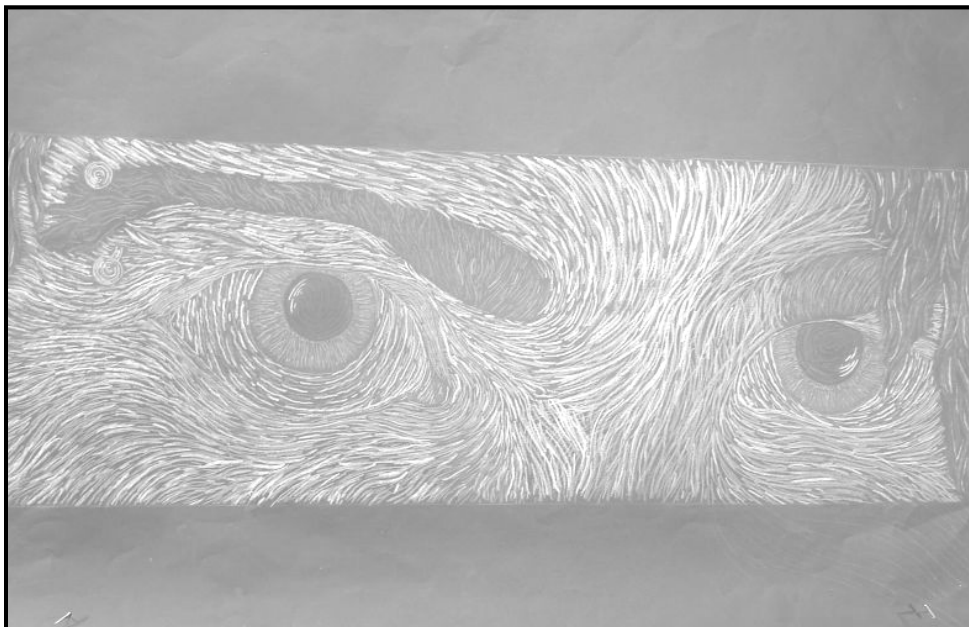
Balls, where simp'ring misses languish;
Elections over, speeches made;
Hope and Change in office vanquished.

Commerce drooping, credit failing;
Unknowing of the future's entailing;
Awaiting for the Congress bailing.

Many a subtle rogue a winner;
Fictitious investments and money "ensured";
Stealing millions exemplifies the Sinner!

Some in luxury delighting;
Most in turmoil, payless, broke;
Elites unaware of the others writhing.

Honest men who will take us places;
Looking forward to the changes ahead;
Putting smiles on the weakened nation's
faces.



These Bruised Evenings

By Jennifer Ryan

these bruised evenings
the narcotic angels suck the
marrow
out of my bones
and stroke my American nerve
with such passion
that I could care less
if you call tonight,
but would you at least
think of me
when you watch the children fall
during play
and rise again, proud of their
bloodied little wounds...?

what pride have we
in such wounds
to fantasize our strength
to gods that mock us
and rape us in the dark corners
of parking garages
and leave us weeping
with unanswered prayers
for such things like
love, protection, or
fifty percent off sales
in the stores that we adore.

cars we drive
that offer us more comfort and
leisure than our own lovers,
fuck that, our own homes --
lovers I say,
they cry rivers down the mountains
into valleys of material sorrow
and money buys their minds
as they pretend love
in their filthy sheets.

oh no sweetheart, from inside this
valley I loathe your death,
but you've come
and you'll go now, dress yourself decent,
go on out the door
but come back for one last kiss
and forget me two blocks down
the street
where you ran from home
with your drunk love
waiting with a drink in hand
for your rent
and you wondered where
the valleys unfold
but you ticketed your death
and took the train on out...

Mutilated Fate

By Tina M. Steele

Dark, hot starry night
She sleeps aglow in silent moonlight
You come- shake her awake
Just to become her horrid fate.
You ask, you bribe
You grab her side
You order, you plead
With you sick goal to plant your seed.
Now you're holding her down,
Do you feel like a man as she breaks all around?
This small girl of seven receives her unjustly fate
And is about to be raped.
You cover her mouth and force your length forth
Destroying her every self worth.
Does it feel good as you thrust into this daughter?
Think of all the pain you've just brought her.
Do you like the feel of her warm blood seeping?
As she lies there weeping?
This moment will haunt her memories
From now until the day she is to decease.
Years go by and the court date comes
This man will pay for the wicked thing he's done
She cries so torn apart
For this man still lives right there in her heart
So she softly whispers- I'm so sorry daddy
But you really hurt me.

Untitled

By Andrew Miller

Time is the curse Mankind to suffer
The beating Drum – the mocking cog –
One that shrivels at near of hour
And keeps at bay the one he loves

He fears the Dawn; time's tempest end
Though he, not time, beholds the drum.
That wicked thing inside its cage
The Organ played so soon so stop

He clenches this to make assure
That if it stops – could start again.



Shedding

By Kirstin Kennedy

I've Tucked Myself Away

By Dr. Chris Moinet

Up a long and narrow lane,
Near a field of hay,
Beyond the pond, beneath the trees,
I've tucked myself away.

The house is old, the ceilings low,
The walls a weathered grey,
But it's a cozy, quiet place;
I've tucked myself away.

My wife is fine and loving,
Too generous to say,
And in her warm, enfolding arms,
I've tucked myself away.

I read and talk about my books,
And collect substantial pay,
So "working" at what I do for fun,
I've tucked myself away.

It is a perfect, peaceful life
Of almost ceaseless play;
I've found the secret of success:
I've tucked myself away.

On your chest rests a stray;
A long, dark hair that
Once tore itself from the
Pores on my head
And fell, gently, to your breast,
Sticking to your skin,
Dancing to the beat of your breath.

I Don't Care if You Have Wounds

By Miles Wilburn

You can be torn
frayed
that heart inside your chest
if all remained was a fragment
I would love that fragment eternally

I would keep it, and hold it
and grow it back to new
I would give you back everything

But then.

What if my heart was broken
would you care for me, understand me
be there when I'm sad.

I say those words, and a door opens
you leave.

Behold the Seer
By Dr. Rick Kay

Behold the Seer
Erblicken Sie die Serra

He knows all
Sabe tudo

He sees all
Hij ziet allen

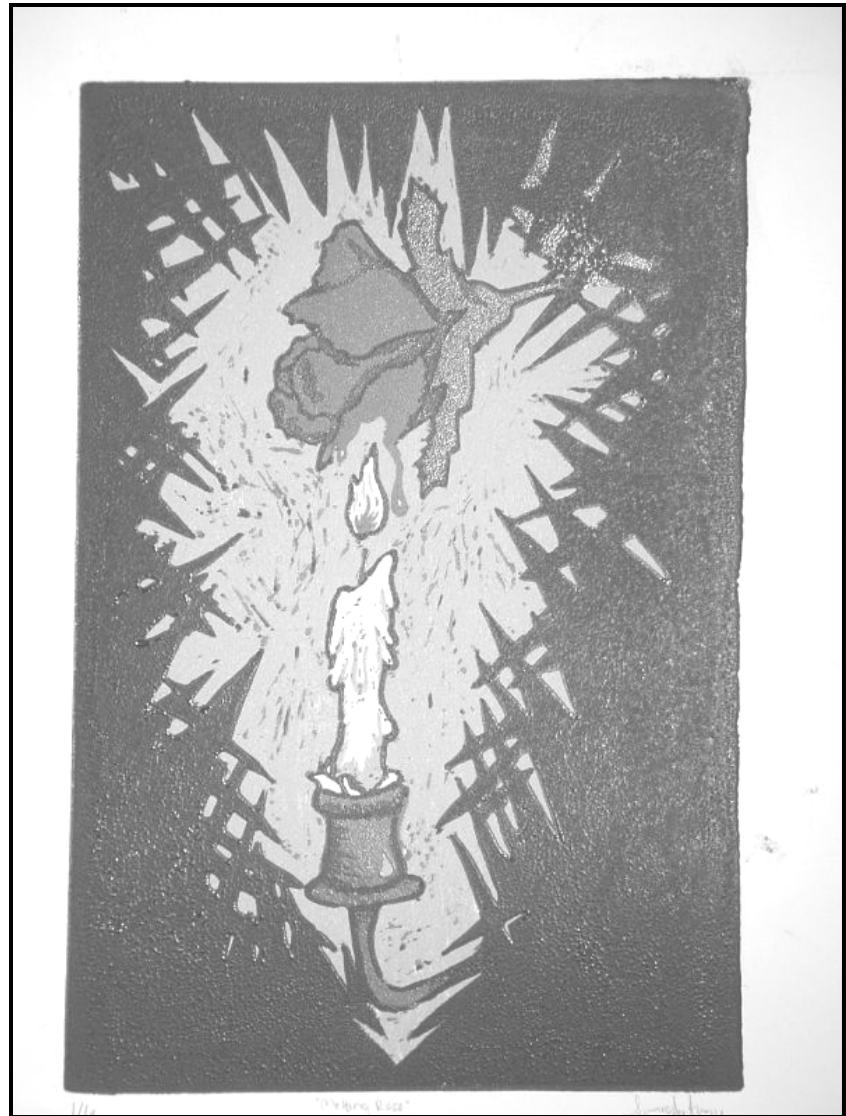
He speaks the Truth
Parla la verità

Behold the Seer
Voyez le sombre

Fear him
Téémalo

Praise him
похвадите его

For he rules all
Για κυβερνά όλων





25 or 6 to 4 in the Afternoon: Twilight from a Male's Perspective

By Cody Kendera

The woods were thick with the fog and grey of the midday Seattle sun as the cold subsided only slightly to let the two wild teenage lovers enter and stroll hand in hand through its damp belly. Each stared fascinated and deep into the other's eyes, seeing the soul that stirred within and lit their own to kindle and burst in a fury of fire. Lost in this moment of passion, the two wandered deeper and deeper into the gnarled branches. Wolves howled, and crows answered, but the sound was lost on the couple.

Bello was awe-struck at the specimen of beauty that occupied his thoughts day and night since he moved here to Seattle some three months earlier. It had really been a shock to him why this girl of such rare and luminous allure would even speak to a guy like himself, not only new and awkward in his adopted environment, but with no attractive physical characteristics or athletic prowess to make even the frumpiest girl back home notice him. He stood a solid five feet and six inches tall, weighing near two hundred pounds, with pale skin brought through years of Italian blood being passed from one generation to the next, and short brown hair matching his unimpressive brown eyes. He was shy, boring, to say the least, when he did talk, and a bit out of touch with the "in crowd." With all of these traits conspiring against him, it certainly was strange to see him courted by Edwarda.

Edwarda, on the other hand, had no trouble attracting the opposite sex. On the contrary, she was constantly bombarded with requests to go to movies or out to dinner from boys of every social group and possible way of life at Spoons High School. And there was no great mystery why this was so. Besides having a mysterious personality that was in no way off-putting or arrogant, she was absolutely perfect by any measure of beauty and charm. At a statuesque five feet nine inches, she had a track star's body with a centerfold's proportions. Her dark brunette hair slung down at the perfect length and only slightly covered her left eye of a lighter brown color that almost bordered on gold. Every stitch of her clothing measured to perfection, every muscle in her body taut and in perfect proportion, every curve and dimple measured in ambient flawlessness that could never be disputed.

Seen side by side, it was easy to see why they were the topic of many locker-front discussions at the small high school. What could she possibly see in Bello that was so much better than any of the football stars or homecoming kings who tried valiantly to woo her? They heard these stories and dismissed them as jealousy, because, above all else, there was one thing for certain: they were madly and hopelessly in love with each other.

So as they walked to the center of the forest now clutching each other around the waist and laughing at Bello's occasional bouts of clumsiness, there was no cold, no fog, and no rain to deter them from each other. They stopped and sat on a pine's fallen base. And after a brief moment of longing for the other, Bello pushed aside Edwarda's scarf and began to gently kiss her neck. She stiffened at the thrill that this sent through her matchless body. Every nerve tingled as his lips embraced every part of her neck, cheek, and ear before landing passionately on her flawless lips in a long, deep romantic kiss that many long for but few ever get. They embraced fully and in that moment they were one, both physically and emotionally, in love and in each other.

As Bello began to move his hand along Edwarda's jacket to undue her buttons and expose her heaving breasts, she stopped him. He gathered himself at her reproach and meekly asked why she stopped him.

“I have something to tell you,” admitted Edwarda in an expression that straddled pensiveness and coldness.

“What is it?”

“If I told you something about myself, would you still love me?”

“Sure,” replied Bello in an unsure manner, not knowing where she was going with this. Secretly, he thought in that moment: it depends on what it is.

“There’s something about me that you may not like.”

“That’s absurd. I love everything about you.” But in reality, Bello was beginning to get worried. What could she possibly have kept from him for three months that would cause her all of this hardship to tell him? His mind raced. Could it be another man? This was quite possible, considering how plain and uninteresting he was. Could it be something to do with her body? A deformity perhaps. She might have a sexual disease. After all, it had been three months and they had never made it past touching each other over the clothes, though he had tried on several occasions. He was a virgin and thoughts of sex with this beautiful girl had occupied many of his waking thought since he first saw her. It was funny what raced through his mind at this time. Maybe she was moving away. He had been told that her family was quite strange in the beginning and came to agree with that viewpoint after a few invitations to dinner. What could it possibly be?

“But there’s something that I haven’t told you about myself. I haven’t been completely honest with you about us.”

Bello was shocked, but he had to admit, he had seen the whole thing coming from a mile away. He knew the whole situation was too good to be true. “It’s another guy. I knew it. You’ve been going around behind my back the whole time.” Really, he couldn’t blame her.

“No, that’s not it at all.”

“Yes, it is. Let’s face it. I’m not interesting. I whine and complain about everything. And I am not in the least attractive.”

“I’m a vampire.”

“Huh?”

“Really, I am. I usually feed on animals, wolves and such, but I’ve been tempted by your blood all along. I thirst for it. I would probably never attack you, but I could never say for sure.” Just then, her eyes became a bright scarlet that burned with all the fury of hell. Fangs materialized from her upper dentry and her skin went paler than his. She was, in fact, a vampire. There was no questioning it now.

Without much thought, Bello took off sprinting out of the woods. While he was not in the least athletic or coordinated, he blazed through the forest at a blinding speed, hurtling branches and fallen tress in antelope-like grace. He need not think twice about it. A vampire? He didn’t care about her looks, or her personality, or the smug feeling he got when he wondered what people thought of him for dating her. He was out of there. A vampire? It didn’t matter how perfect she was. It wasn’t worth it to stick around and be killed because he was in love. That would just be stupid. Who would possibly think of staying?

He reached the edge of the woods but stopped in his tracks. There, just beyond the last trees, was Edwarda, now staring daggers into his very being, her features still those of a vampire. "I can't let my secret be leaked to the outside world. Now you die."

Before he could beg for his life, Edwarda pounced on Bello in an insane rush. He didn't stand a chance. The whole episode ended in lightning speed as she sank her fangs deep into Bello's jugular vein, drawing the sweet nectar that she craved. Slowly, the life drifted from his body. He couldn't fight. He couldn't make a move. The last thing he saw was Edwarda stand over him, a dollop of his blood hanging on her chin, smiling in vicious satisfaction.

Bello was found three days later after his mother, a police officer, found him as part of the town search party to locate the boy. The wounds on his neck from Edwarda's attack had mysteriously vanished. The coroner officially listed the death from hypothermia brought on after he had passed out in the woods alone. Edwarda never thought twice about the whole event. He was just another notch on her belt and another meal in her stomach.

The Truth Told Slant By Elizabeth Yurky

Stop

The fantasies dancing in my head

I can't

Remember all that we have together

It hurts

To think on the beauty and joy of love

Enough!

Of this effortless freedom from thought

It consumes

Me, to be so hopelessly romantic

Restless Nights

By Miles Wilburn

Restless nights said I
I think I'm gonna try
to find a way to stay inside for good

The time to murder and create
that lift and drop the plate
I think I want to stay inside for good

Like a patient etherized
I do not know what goes outside
I'm going to stay inside for good

Insidious Intent
Yellow fog that floats content
is it destined to stay outside for good?

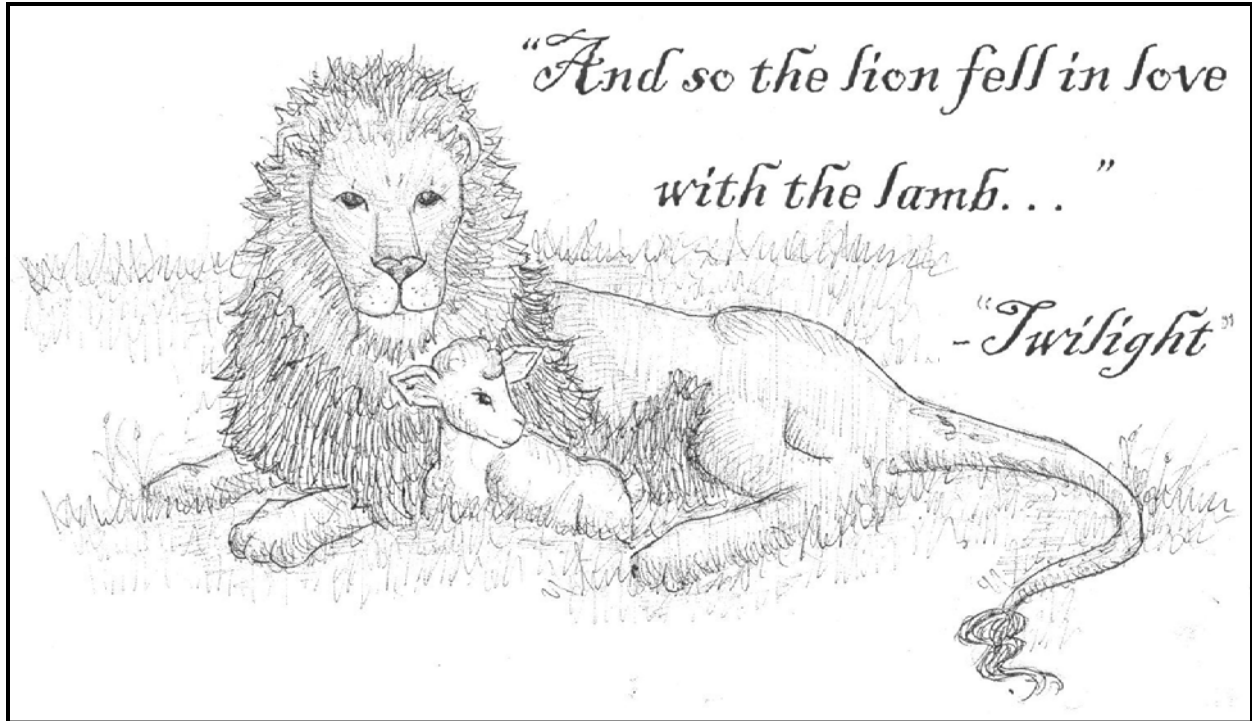
Time for you and me
until we can't see
I want to stay inside for good

Time for indecisions
for hundred visions and revisions
is it too late to stay inside for good?

I know the voices dying with a dying fall
I know the woes of those who call
it's becoming to late to stay inside for good

And I shall spit out the days and the ways
How can I change the world I live in today?
How can I stay outside for good?

Till human voices wake us and we drown
Until yellow fog surrounds
We will stay inside for good



The Violence of Sunshine

By Elizabeth Yurky

Sunshine hits the grass

It bangs on the windows to wake you

It tears apart the curtains to blind you

It rips seeds from the ground and demands that they grow

It sucks moisture from the Earth after a refreshing rain

It beats on the neck of the struggling farmer

It wilts the joyous flowers with its overbearing heat

It scorches the trees, causing their leaves to frown

It jumps consistently, daily, to its tyrannous throne

The ultimate irony, it takes life from the life it gives

It's All in Our Genes (Darkness)

By D. J. Martino

A child is crying in fear and despair
Her parents are gone, there's nobody there
In a war-torn country, death is all she has seen
After all, fighting is all in our genes.

An innocent animal runs for its life
If only the hunter was using a knife
Instead a rifle's boom causes a bloody scene
After all, killing is all in our genes

A man without family, food, or a home
Sits in an alley, cold and alone
With some thought, into a pistol he leans
After all, despair is all in our genes

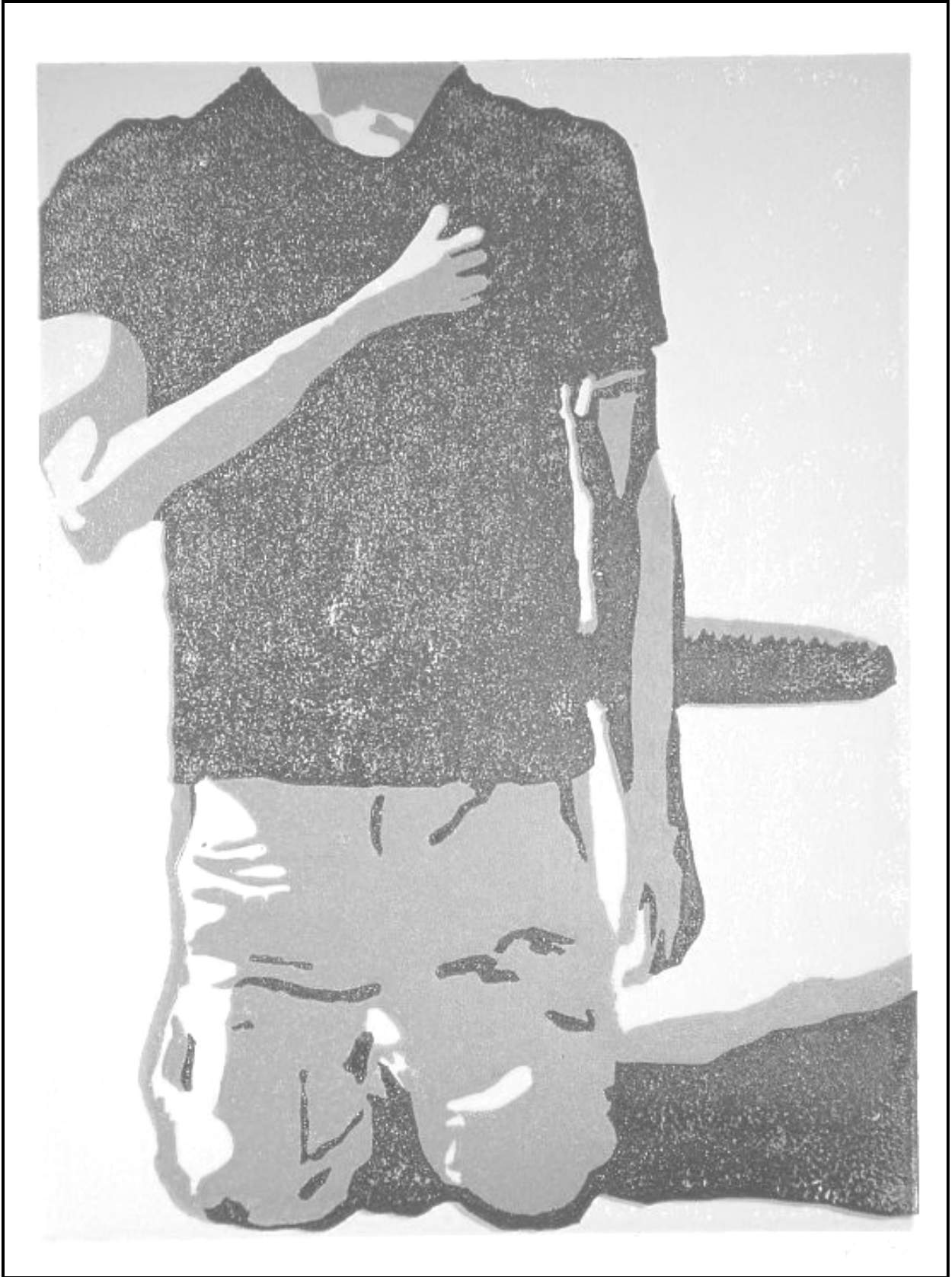
A forest in flames, they're clearing the way
For a city will need to be built there someday
Mother Nature weeps, the world torn at the seams
After all, destruction is all in our genes.

Humanity is wrong, unforgiving, and cruel
We see the Earth as merely something to rule
As the light fades away, off of spilled blood it gleams
After all, darkness is all in our genes.

My Mister's Words Have No Sort of Tact
By Kirstin Kennedy

My mister's words have no sort of tact;
Flattery is far too fake in his eyes;
If lies be white, why then he keeps to fact;
If truth be told, harsh truth hides all little lies.
I have heard young callers glorify a mistress,
But no such glorification have had I;
And in some love songs is there more kindness
Than in the words that from my mister sighs.
I love to feel his embrace, yet well I know
That bluntness hath a more pleasing allure;
I grant I never hear such a god go:
My mister, when he speaks, reveals my adore.

And yet, in love, his seldom sweet words are real
As his love's truths take my soul to steal.



Bake

By Evan Csir, '08

Flour, eggs, sugar,
Soda of bake,
Spices of lands unseen.
Add oil.
Stir.
Vigorously. In Bowl.
Place mixture in preferred
Baking container.
It really does not matter which.
Oven should be set, at approximately, for
Size of dish at around 350.
Too light—burnt spittle.
Too heavy and it'll never fully cook
In 45 minutes.
When finished, icing can be
Added.

But do not focus solely
On the icing!
It is the safest—
And the most dangerous
Thing of them all.
I knew someone who only
Used and ate icing.
Now,
She can no longer tell
If something is truly sweet or
Sour—or truly rotten to the core.
All because of the sickly
Sweet icing.

Also, do not worry if no one
Appears interested.
There is always a market.
Even if there is only one
That likes your baked goods.
And remember to expand
Your style.
That's because no one likes
Stale bread.

Untitled

By Emily Zoller

Never will I forget that lonely date
Winter and I one in our coming deaths
Part nature, part birth that this was my fate
Until I knew with those reviving breaths

Days no longer had to be dark as night
To my mother, I had one word to say, Spain
Rip apart my life under new Basque light
Three years lost, I could see now from that plane

My family was lost, but my mother knew
I had the choice to make on that Spring day
The panic was fierce and never more true
Change is too late; I will bear it and stay
Resigned to contentment was my lie
Until I heard, "Get out! Or you will die."

Dead Silence

By D. J. Martino

“Beware the stare of Mary Shaw.
She had no children only dolls.
And if you see her in your dreams,
Be sure you never, ever scream,
Or she’ll rip your tongue out at the seams.”

Mary Shaw, a ventriloquist, once gave life to dummies.
Now, however, she’s as dead as a mummy.
She once performed every night, her audiences were dazed,
At the spectacular stunts, and Mary always amazed.

A dummy named Billy was her favorite of all,
He always would answer her when she would call.
“Where are you, dear Billy? I have people you should meet.”
“You’ll never find me mother,” came a voice from under a seat.

And the show would go on, every night a success.
Mary Shaw always practiced, with no time for rest.
Her mission in life was to create the perfect doll,
One that could echo applause from wall to wall.

One night, however, a show went awry.

A child in the audience let out a cry,
“I see your lips moving. Your act is just crummy.”
“Do you really think Billy here is just an old dummy?”

The next day, the boy disappeared from his town,
And they all accused Mary, despite her renown.
They raided her room, they forced her to scream,
The angry mob cut out her tongue from the seams.

From that day on, the town was said to be cursed.
Not by demons nor devils, but by something far worse.
Mary Shaw descended on her foes and her friends,
And in their darkest nightmares, she took her revenge.

So before you even think about going to sleep,
Be wary of your thoughts, or in them she’ll creep.
If she finds you, believe me, she’s there to stay.
There’s only one thing that can drive her away.

...sssilence...



Nightly Regrets
By Ellen Greis

The balmy breeze whispering through the screen
Is chilling me beyond the bone.

The lamp just barely shedding light
Is blinding me to the point of idiocy.

And the “man” on my bed
Is calling me to a place I never should have ventured.



The Bar

By Cody Kendera

The group opened the door and let filter into the dark lifeless bar a streak of fulgent light that made the lone patron, an elderly man dressed as usual in a flannel shirt and paint stained pants, wince in a slight shock. The door quickly slammed shut behind them and they found their way through adjusting eyes to a table in the back corner of the dining area. The dining area was a loosely used term since the bar had stopped serving hot food about ten years prior. The leather of the booth squeaked and squealed underneath the four who sat two abreast on the facing seats. Paul, not to be ungentlemanly, let Sharon have the last outer seat, and instead pulled up a chair adorned with ripped vinyl to sit at the head of the table.

Each was dressed in varying degrees of black. Each male, Paul, Michael, and Steve wore deep black suits against white shirts. The only difference was the choice of tie color. While Michael and Steve both wore undecorated black ties that now hung loosely around their unbuttoned collars, Paul wore one in the same style but with a red criss-cross design that he had chosen since it represented the old high school colors. Sharon and Karly both wore black dresses, each low cut and hemmed long with black heels. There really was no reason to deviate from the normal for any of them. It really wasn't a desire to be fashionable that brought them together. In fact, this was the first time in three years that they had really spoken to each other at length.

“At least it was a beautiful day,” croaked Michael as he still sat staring into the varnished wood pattern of the table with his chin in his hand.

“True,” replied Paul in an off-beat manner a few seconds after Michael’s silence breaking sentence. “I think he made it that way. That was like him. Always wanted to have a good time. Remember that party at Josh’s senior year? My God, we got shit-faced.” He laughed a little to bring up the spirits at the table. It seemed to work as a small smile came over the rest of the party.

“I remember that night,” said Steve as he looked up into the ceiling pondering the event, laughing, trying to remember long ago forgotten details of the night. “He was standing on the railing on that deck that Josh had over his pool, saying that he was Superman, and going on about how amazing he was and how every girl loved him. He was so fucking drunk. Then he downed a beer like nothing, got butt naked, and did a face-first splash into the shallow end. The next morning he wakes up and comes into the dinner room, we’re all eating breakfast, nursing triumphant hangovers, we look and see him with a huge black-and-blue mark on his face, eyes and stomach blood red, scraps on his chin and his chest, he goes, ‘What the fuck happened last night?’ I pissed myself, we all did.” And Steve let go the biggest laugh that they could remember, the entire day filled with forced laughs that were used mainly to hold back tears.

“We need to do that again sometime. Just get everyone together, get a ton of beer, and sit out back and talk about him and all those good memories.” Paul wiped away a tear, not a tear of sadness, but a tear of happiness brought on by Steve’s story.

Just then an older woman dressed in a flannel shirt similar to the one that the older gentleman at the bar wore came up to the table and asked each person for a drink order. Everyone ordered a draft beer in a tall glass, with the lone exception being Karly, who ordered a Diet Pepsi since she was the only one of the group under the legal drinking age. It probably wouldn’t have matter much in this particular establishment, but she didn’t really feel like drinking with the rest.

Sharon chimed in quickly after the bartender had left to continue the air of happiness that now surrounded the friends, all remembering and dreaming up stories about their departed friend. “I remember that night, before he almost killed himself on the deck, him hitting on Rachel and hooking up with her.” She said this with a laugh as she remembered just how pathetic the pick-up attempt was, but how it had actually worked seeing as how Rachel had been equally inebriated. “He came up behind her, and said, ‘Yah feel that?’ Then he proceeded to lay out a bunch of corny lines about the size of his penis and his sexual stamina. It was all bullshit, but who cared. They ended up making out and I think she went down on him.” She couldn’t contain her laughter anymore and burst out in a full fit, “Or at least, that’s what he said.”

“I heard that he threw up all over Rachel and went out to the deck where we saw him. And she sprinted a dead heat to the bathroom, covered in chunky orange barf.” Steve couldn’t control himself either and soon he and Sharon were doubled over on each other’s shoulder laughing hysterically and crying more than they had at the funeral.

“He did the most epic keg stand I had ever seen,” exclaimed Paul to out due the excitement and memories that had overcome the table in this moment. “He could drink anyone under the table. And that keg stand was after about a case of beer and a ton of shot of that cheap vodka we bought. White Horse or White House? I don’t know. But man he got so trashed that night. That was him to a T. He was always the life of the party.” With that everyone found the nerve to finally let out the laughs that had been kept so quiet over the entire ordeal. The situation was over. Sure he was gone, but everyone had their good memories of him. He was immortal really.

Karly was the only one that was silent. While the rest of the group chuckled and laughed and cried uncontrollably, she sat still and quiet, staring listlessly into her newly poured Diet Pepsi. The subject wasn't one that she should bring up now, but she could really see no other time when she would have the courage she had now to say it. "He raped me."

The whole table sent silent, mute and dumbstruck. There was no real response to this. Each people glared daggers into Karly's soul as she hesitated to make eye contact with any one of them. Each mouth was open. Words began to form on the tip of everyone's tongue but they could not escape the now cavernous voids.

"What on earth are you talking about?"

She was on the verge of tears. Not because of the fact she had revealed a secret that had eaten away at her for years, but rather for spoiling the good time that everyone was having. This was like her. She really did feel terrible about doing it, but she didn't see another time when she'd have the confidence to say it. "It happened at that party of Josh's, my freshman year." Her eyes got puffy and pink, tears began to overflow, and her throat got too tight to breathe.

"What the fuck are you talking about? You're lying, damnit. What the hell? Why would you say something like that?"

"I'm not making this up!" The tears came full force now as Karly couldn't do much more but bury her head in her crossed arms on the table.

Paul chimed in to comfort his girlfriend. He too was a little skeptical though. He didn't think that she was lying, but how could this possibly be true?

"It all happened at the party," started Karly through thick mucus in her mouth and the salty stream that now came pouring down her pale cheeks. "I guess he couldn't get any from Rachel. I don't know. But I know it was before he jumped off the balcony. I saw him by the cooler, trying to get a beer. I knew him through you guys. I just wanted to say 'Hi.' But I didn't know what was happening 'til we got to the room. He threw me down on the bed and started to rip off my shirt. I tried to stop him." She trailed off as it became too much for her to continue.

"You're a fucking liar!" Steve screamed this to offset the slander that had befallen his departed friend. Who was this girl to spread these rumors?

"Fuck you! I'm not lying. You wanna know the truth? I told him to stop. I screamed for help but he shoved the covers in my mouth and told me to 'Shut up!' He ripped off my jeans and my panties and raped me! You don't wanna hear that do you? It's true." The rage that had built up over the last three years surfaced in a blind fury that no one expected from this previously humble girl. She realized the outburst but couldn't stop the emotion that flooded her now. "I was a virgin." She cried even harder than before. "I couldn't tell anyone. You all thought he was Jesus Christ or something. I couldn't disrupt you're little worship of him." She couldn't go any further with it. She was spent from the entire ordeal, three years of lies and repression coming to the surface will do that to most people.

The rest of the group couldn't place their finger on the thoughts that overtook them, but it was a far cry from the joy that had permeated through them a few minutes prior. With a silent movement they all got up and walked to the door, leaving behind four half empty beers and an untouched Diet Pepsi. The door opened, but no one squinted.

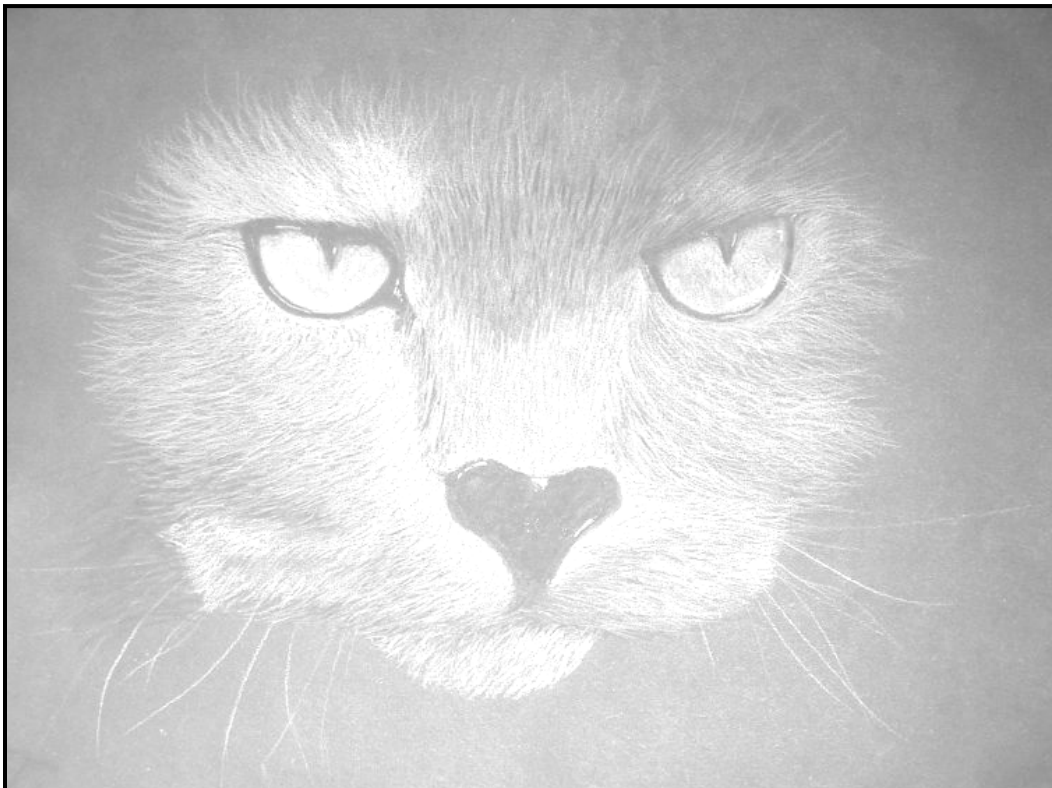
The Stranger

By Miles Wilburn

I walked into a familiar room
and saw a stranger there
he sat quiet looking at me
with a distant piercing stare

"What's wrong my friend?" I ask concerned
And he simply says "I've become a burden to the world."
When I wake it isn't waking, but one step closer to the end.
I walk alone always faking, believing that I'm real
however, I'm so broken I can't even feel.

A single tear rolls down his face and his lip begins to quiver
I walk over to embrace him, but I bump into a mirror.



Swing Your Razor Wide

By D. J. Martino

Come to me child and hear a strange tale.
It's a story of horror to make you turn pale.
A man that once lived in that room right up
there,
Did terrible things without even a care.

He was a barber you see, and he was very
skilled.
You would never have guessed how many peo-
ple he killed.
Yes, young one, the stains there on the floor,
Are simply the remnants of the pain and the
gore.

He lived here on Fleet Street, above an old
shop,
Where they used to sell meat pies that tasted
like slop.
Old Mrs. Lovett, although a nice enough lady,
Later showed herself to be far, far too shady.

But now back to Sweeney, for I think you'll
agree,
That he ruined far more than one family tree.
A troubled past, some say, caused his dastardly
art,
But I think he was a rotten egg right from the
start.

He was seeking revenge for the loss of his
daughter,
And his revenge manifested in the form of a
slaughter.
A judge was his goal, a man corrupted and
proud,
But before he got there, he needed a crowd.

He challenged a barber, an Italian working the
street,
With the quickest shave, victory went to Mr.
Todd of Fleet.

After the challenge, the Italian did brood,
But Sweeney put him in a more "dead" kind of
mood.

When Lovett saw on the man's body, a red,
slimy paste,
"A shame," she said, "to let all that go to waste."
And so began a partnership of pure horror,
When Lovett's new recipe attracted the rich and
the poor.

"A special new chair, that is what I need now,"
Sweeney did say, in fact, he made it a vow.
So he got right to work, toiling into the night,
When he finished, it was an awful and beautiful
sight.

The customers would eat, into hunger they gave,
And Mr. Todd would slink in and say, "How 'bout a shave?"
Up with the barber the customers would go,
But where they wound up, you don't want to know.

Countless men came, and countless men went,
And once they were "shaven" down a chute they were sent.
Mrs. Lovett then turned on the oven full blast,
And from the rising smoke, an evil shadow was cast.

Oh! Back to the judge, I had almost forgotten.
You never would find an official so rotten.
He heard of the success of the barber once poor,
"Perhaps," said the judge, "I should go take a tour."

He arrived at old Sweeney's, and looked all around.
With an air of pomposity, up the stairs he did bound.
He sat in the chair in a jovial mood,
Even though the décor was a little too crude.

Mr. Todd, with a grin, and a chuckle so kind,
Lulled into safety, the judge's malleable mind.
With a quick word of revenge and a swing of his arm,
Sweeney did to the judge the ultimate harm.

Don't look so afraid, for I've heard old men tell,
Evil old Sweeney soon after that fell.
But there are others who say, to believe if you will,
That Sweeney Todd was a thing no human could kill.

They say that Sweeney sold his soul, and the devil then gave,

Mr. Todd the ability to rise right up from the grave.

If you believe in such things, then feel free to rave.

Say there young man...how 'bout a shave?



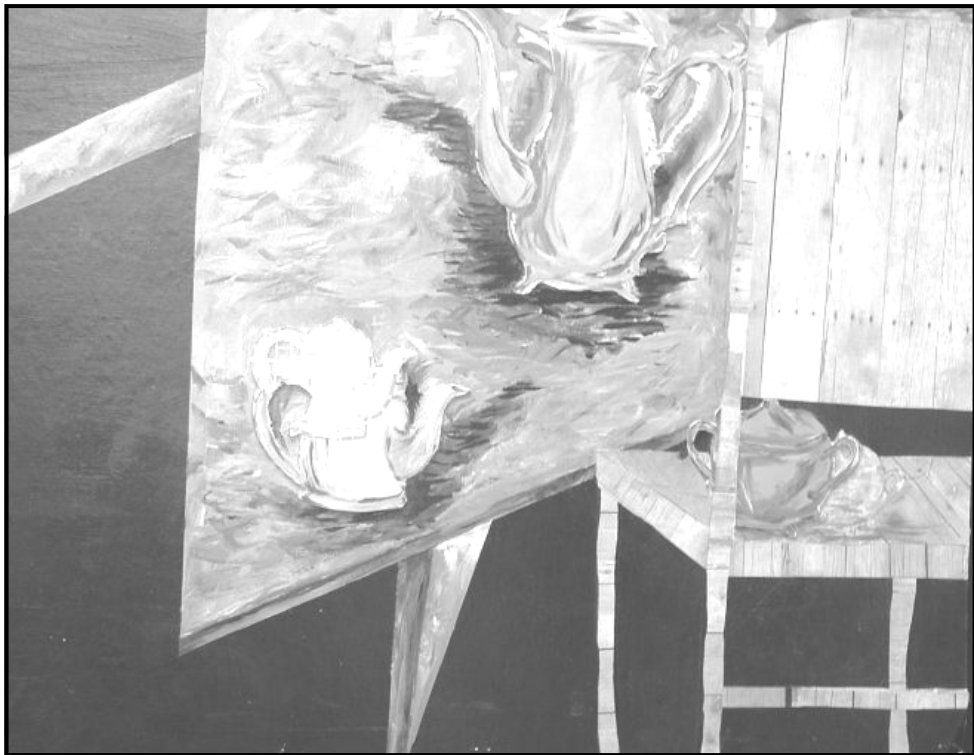
Rain
By Ellen Greis

The pavement is a pond—

The pond becomes an ocean—

And nature a series of diamonds

Falling to the core.



Desire

By Miles Wilburn

I'm helpless against the current
and I'm drowning with my feelings,
and the undertow is pulling
where I know I shouldn't go

I know I shouldn't envy
and I know I shouldn't worry
but all I do is worry
about the things that I want

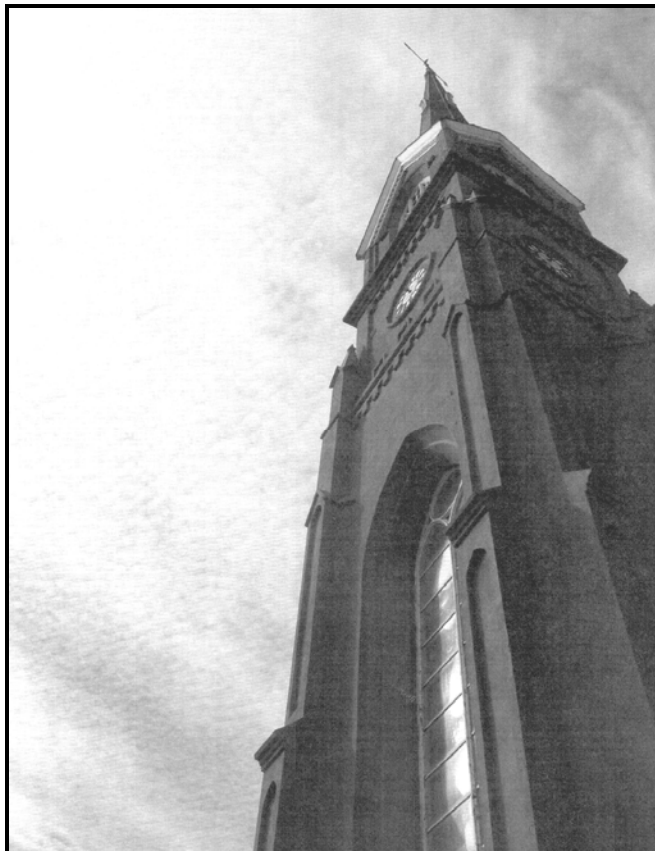
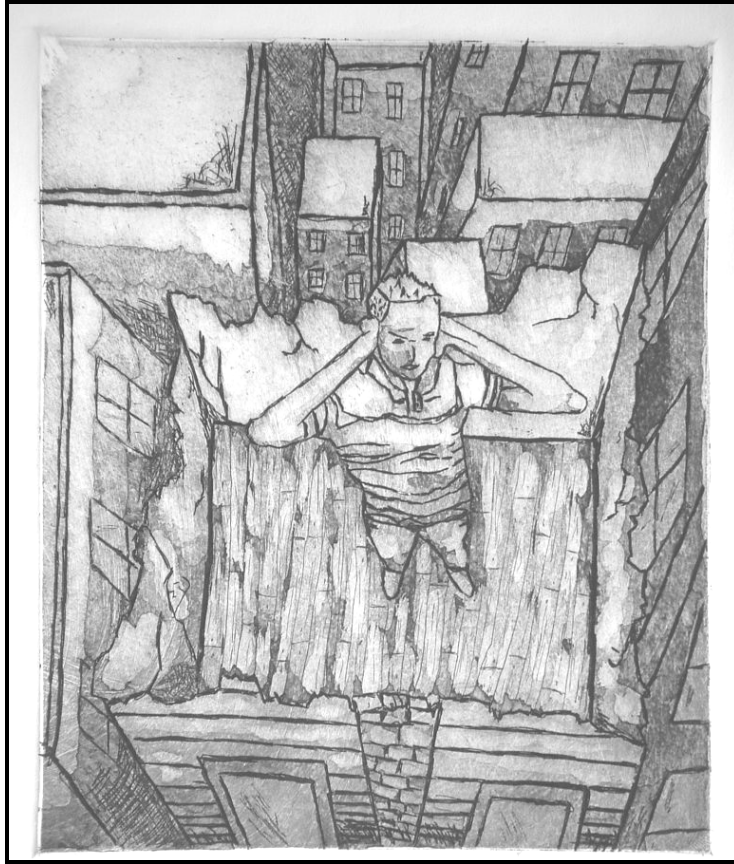
The world is very loving
and the world so full of hate
and the world so full of feelings
the world we cant escape

I try to face the feelings
and rage against the line
But all I want is everything
one moment at a time

Reach into yourself
and find what you need
not what you desire
what you crave, or what you see

I hear whispers in my ear
confusing what I really feel
I want to understand myself
feeling left up on a shelf

You tell me somewhere to go
but its not the place where I know
down a backwards alley
or an abandoned road
I feel you deserting me
then where am I
then where do I go?





WHAT WAS HIS NAME AGAIN, NOT IMPORTANT, HIS
 FACE ISN'T ALL THAT IMPORTANT EITHER, ALL I NEED
 RIGHT NOW IS WHAT HE HAS TO OFFER, A QUICK FIX A
 SAD TREAT, A DAT WITH DESLAY I JUST KNOW
 THAT I
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 WHAT IS GOING ON?
 ON?

THE WORLD HAS PASSED
 HER BY AND NO ONE EVEN CARES
 HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO KNOW WH
 THET'S WHAT SHE SAID BLAH BLAH BLAH
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