



SPIRES — intercollegiate arts & literary magazine — fall 2002 — Volume VIII, Issue II

SPIRES

fall 2002



S P I R E S

intercollegiate arts & literary magazine

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Front Cover "Trading Places" by Nathan Ratcliffe from Washington University
Back Cover photography by Juliet L. Fong from Washington University

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*"Underwater Silverware" by Melissa Miller
Washington University*

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INTRODUCTION

Dear Readers:

Ta da! Welcome to the sixteenth edition of Spires. At times, we didn't think we'd make it this semester, but after a budget crisis, a web site crisis, and the normal minor crises that always pop up in literary magazines and student groups, I'm glad to say that we're still here. I'd like to thank all of our members, both old and new, our alums, and all the students who submitted their work for us to publish. For the Fall 2002 issue of Spires, the Washington University chapter received over 140 submissions of literature and art from 16 different universities.

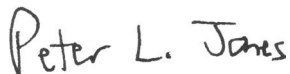
Unfortunately, our other chapters experienced the same sorts of difficulties we did, and they did not fare as well. The entire staff at Yeshiva graduated last year. Tulane and DePauw were beset by budget problems. We hope that they will rejoin us next semester, and we look forward to receiving submissions from their writers and artists. We are also always looking for new chapters. If you are reading this, and your college or university is not listed on the first page of this magazine, you should contact us at spires@kwur.wustl.edu and ask us about starting a chapter at your institution.

First page? Oh yeah—I almost forgot. This is the first time we have a distinct web version of the magazine, and, of course, since the world wide web is nonlinear, there are no first or last pages. You can find our website at <http://kwur.wustl.edu/~spires/>.

Now, turning attention to the world within which Spires exists, I'd like to address a much more serious issue. At this time last fall we reflected on some issues of September 11th. This semester, several days after October 12th, we were informed that one of our alums, Nea Hildebolt, our former publicist, helped evacuate injured people after the October 12th bomb attack in Bali. In an article in the St. Louis Post Dispatch, she was quoted as saying, "This shouldn't happen in the world. I can't imagine anybody seeing this happen and thinking this is the way to accomplish anything." The violence of the last year and the prospect of more violence to come (and the possibility of war) should make everyone pay attention to the causes he or she supports and consider the effects of the means he or she supports to advance them.

It has been proven many times that words and art can be much more effective than any bomb or bullet. The writers and artists within this edition of Spires explore many dimensions of humanity and ideas that could never be expressed with those crude implements. I encourage you to look through Spires, to appreciate the peace that allows us to produce a collection of works like this, and to consider how wonderful it would be for everyone to be able to express his or her ideas in a world free of violence.

Sincerely,



Peter L. Jones
Co-President

COSMOS

this is evolved
newsprint reflection
firebranded onto cosmonaut helmets:
kicking nightmare blankets in the news
the politics of guilt parade / so you
want to read the papers?

three-quarters of the monarch butterfly population
froze and died but we've already faxed
vacuum sealed chimps far away
in those dirty eggshell modules
satellite emissions where sweat floats and
lipstick marinara cannot hold us down

lifting off
scenes from a life
trail away in frozen tiles
huge frames slide sideways and
cleanroom staff undress carefully
spooling your voice from a

compact disk / now you
have passed out halfway through
pouring thoughts
into the north star glare
compass fingers pointing to a halo edge
delivering through

a lens : circular prophecy
half the screen shows
a flyby of vacated continents
soggy with pulp mountains
and the cities are just fireflies
living and breeding with

electric choreography
vital songs
twisting ears with
cronkite truth
and then? suddenly we are
telescoping / do you

stop to see
unbound? tides bow awkwardly as
adonai forced into being manifests
oceans
waving the shoreline with
sandpaper mannequins

voices instantly awake and howling
burning orgasms off the Iraqi coast
sipping hot tea while amputees
procreate to shake hands with actresses
and apes and nothing is ever over
and done with / with you

banned from the public library
exiled as socialists rape the honeybee
lawyers build the fortress and
everyone else plants annual bulbs while
drinking or making love outrageously
and without any crafty obelisk-maker

awake but without the dream exit
and the alarms ring calling
heat weaves into sea foam juggernaut crying
kadosh kadosh kadosh!
and once awakened
I will never return.

Danny Marcus
Washington University

HE WAS NOT

Because the sky looks lower to the ground
When I analyze the poem he wrote me,
I need to sit down and uncoil
For a moment, to remember.

There he was, uncivilized in the ways of windowsills
And how they caught rain, in a storm
The drops getting trapped in chipping paint and gutters,
But it's the motion I can't explain when it dries.

There he was, laying on the blue couch in the living room,
Too narrow for both of us,
Talking to me about Norwegian burials and I wanted him to stop
So I could think about the sound of him talking.
(Words splattering like rain?)
There he was hesitating to leave the awning of the front porch,
Reflections of lamps and trees in the street potholes,
Watching me walk towards my car, romantically
In rain and goodbye and smashed

And I still can't get my hands in it, in his prose,
Because I am writing when I should be listening,
Listening when I should be answering,
To the central world becoming a translation of
Tracing the softness behind his legs.

One thing is for sure,
Tragedies like this shouldn't be broken up.
They should be beautifully plastered on ceilings,
So when we lay on backs, looking up,
We are seeing backwards too and the image
Tastes like rain swelling in where he was,
Where he was not.

Faye Gleisser
Washington University



*"Accommodation" by Jacob Hawweley
University of Iowa*

Mother through the fall
Strange shall I dream
Wandering through years past
The October where I was a princess
Fading into the one where I lost desire
To pretend.
I used to ask why rain lingers after the sun
And you would smile,
Painting me a rainbow
Now I stare at listless branches
Broken by an unforgiving season
Watching the world die slowly
And you fade away too fast.

Erin Harkless
Washington University in St. Louis

She walks amid the shadow of her beauty
Immune to disaster
Covering
Falling
On her knees
When the road ends.
Can I touch your hand?
Penelope weeps beside you
And you cry too
Remembering prior glory
The halcyon days
When hubris was a virtue
Desired by the masses.

Erin Harkless
Washington University



*"Annunciation" by Philip Martin Meier
Washington University*

NIGHT BY THE OCEAN

The seabirds spiraled above my head,
their shrieking jabber piercing the surf sounds,
a massive flock, strangely active for the late hour,

and beneath them, the ocean,
foaming like a rabid dog,
snarled endlessly at the rocks,

carving hollows beneath my perch
on the cliffs above the ocean.
The old man, tired, sat with me.

He said, “You watch as though
you expect the ground to fall
to meet the violent waves,

“and to fall with it into the arch
of rock that the sea carved—
Neptune’s open mouth.”

I nodded. I would have spoken,
but I knew my voice
would not carry.

Sam Eddington
University of Houston

“Eye of the Beholder” by Diana Seubert
Washington University



ALBUQUERQUE, NM.

Nick wore his headphones like a necklace. Loose, and hanging down around his stumpy neck, they pumped out music in a droning hum that everyone in the car could hear. It's strange what you remember. We were going up to Santa Fe on vacation—me, my mom, my dad, and Nick. I didn't think about it too much at the time, but it was the last vacation I took with my parents before heading off to college.

Llamas chew like cows. That was another thing I remembered. Our little bed and breakfast, just outside of Santa Fe had a whole herd of llamas running around in a pasture behind the houses. Nick and I fed them a couple of times and they chewed like cows. Each bite seemed an exercise in rotational mechanics.

There was a little pool, too. And some mountain bikes with crooked wheels that jarred your spine like a jackhammer when you took them down steep hills.

New Mexico light plays like slanted paintbrushes on the ground. I remember that from driving into Santa Fe with Nick one evening. The clouds didn't seem to do anything but bend the light into more colorful arrays. The ground was bathed in a red battle zone switching with the wind on the clouds to blue 1950's music clubs.

I remember a sign DO NOT THROW OBJECTS OFF OF BRIDGE and thinking what bridge? Oh there. We were already on top of it. Nick looked right and I looked left. A narrow ravine stretched out through the earth in both directions. It was strange to think there was nothing beneath us but a few meters of steel and a thousand windy feet. We stopped on the other side and got out to walk along the steel.

Up there on the bridge everything was long

and windy and would shudder each time a car went by. Far below us, on a tiny bluff, a white sedan that must have flown off the bridge years ago was gathering rust like camouflage for the burnt evening landscape. A little way down some college kids were spitting off of the edge.

Nick brought out a rock from the side of the bridge. It was round, sepia, a cool ember the size of a bowling ball. The sign said not to throw things off of the bridge but for what? It could have been erosion control or polluting prevention. Maybe they were afraid a canoe operator would find himself below a coke can with the power of a thousand feet behind it. We couldn't see a canoe though, and it was rock, and anyway life is all in the moment it seems. So we dropped it off and watched it fall. The certainty of gravity never failed or abated. Distance hurled the rock smaller until it completely disappeared for a moment before springing up again in an enormous shower of water from the river below. A few seconds later the speed of sound caught up with the speed of light and the stone's impact rang out like a church bell nailed to a thunderclap. Echoing all around, a proverb seemed to spring up from the whole situation: no matter how insignificant you are, you are bound to make a big sound if someone throws you off of a high enough bridge.

The college students down the way erupted into applause.

That same day, when we got back from Santa Fe, there was a note on the door of our room at the bed and breakfast. Nick Graham, telephone call, see front office.

Two minutes later he was on the phone with his parents. His granddad had died. I had to take him to Albuquerque that night so he could fly home with his aunt. In Albuquerque we hung out until ten or eleven at night, watching people and walking up and down the streets. In the middle of

the city a new highway threw out its unfinished limbs in chaotic spirals. After I had dropped Nick off, I rode it back into the night, blinded by the glare of streetlights and cars at every direction.

Once I was out and into the country though, it was the darkest damn road I had ever been on. The blues and reads and browns of the day all blended into a unanimous black. Darkness fell on my head a cloak as the radio settled into a soft between-city hiss. Dips flew in and out of curves on the dark two-lane road. Then my car was flying out of far ahead of my headlights and black was the only thing keeping me on the road.

Flying in and out, I thought of the rock. Thought of the junk, the life, ahead and behind.

Then the rock. With a splash. And a few moments later an impact. It's all over. I thought of gravity, never failing or abating, not like us. We the rock. Abating always. Crashing always. Catching up always. And then someone dies and it puts back into a really weird, crazy angled perspective. One from which you can see your mind and yourself and the whole world and the whole beauty of everything and deep dark darkness. And it all sucks at that moment because your friend's grandparents are dead and you are lonely and tired out in the middle of nowhere. But you smile and ride because from the perspective you can see that the darkness is exactly the thing that is holding you in the head lamps.

Michael Parks
Washington University



"Spiderweb" by Jim Spell
University of Missouri in St. Louis

NEAPOLITAN

Her maternal voice broke silence
Calling Indian summer to conclusion

As he knelt on a scraped knee, dragging his
Red, October chalk across a cracking patio.

Until a garden hose sprayed stale cement
Spilling painted dust along a fringe of tawny grass

While he marched inside
Barefoot independence— slapping shoeless against

A navy pattern stenciled on kitchen linoleum.
She sat him on the counter, legs dangling

From a formican stage. He would look at the ice cream
But listen to his mother; a kitchen spade digging

As she prattled, sliding her smooth cuts
Through vanilla and strawberry then fighting

To dig out a ball of chocolate—
It seemed out of place beside lighter colors

She told her son as she scooped each flavor
Dripping over the edge of a white, dixie plate.

Eric Van Cleve
Ohio State University

I.

Its well after dark but
I remain sprawled amongst
Mildewed grass and mist
Painted violet by the stark gray
The moon provides
And if I want
I can still remember the musty
Stone-smell of cement in August
Twilight
Pigtail-plaited behind
My gate
And blinked away the rain to
Name my star
It was my star my
Dust my dusk
My flesh

II.

And today as the moon darkens
And deeper I peer through the
Exaggerated remnants of
Your encroaching storm
I can still remember if I want the tangerine hue last by
A hurried moonrise on naked
Bodies
And smell still your star
Your night your noose
Your flesh

Lauren Harte
Washington University

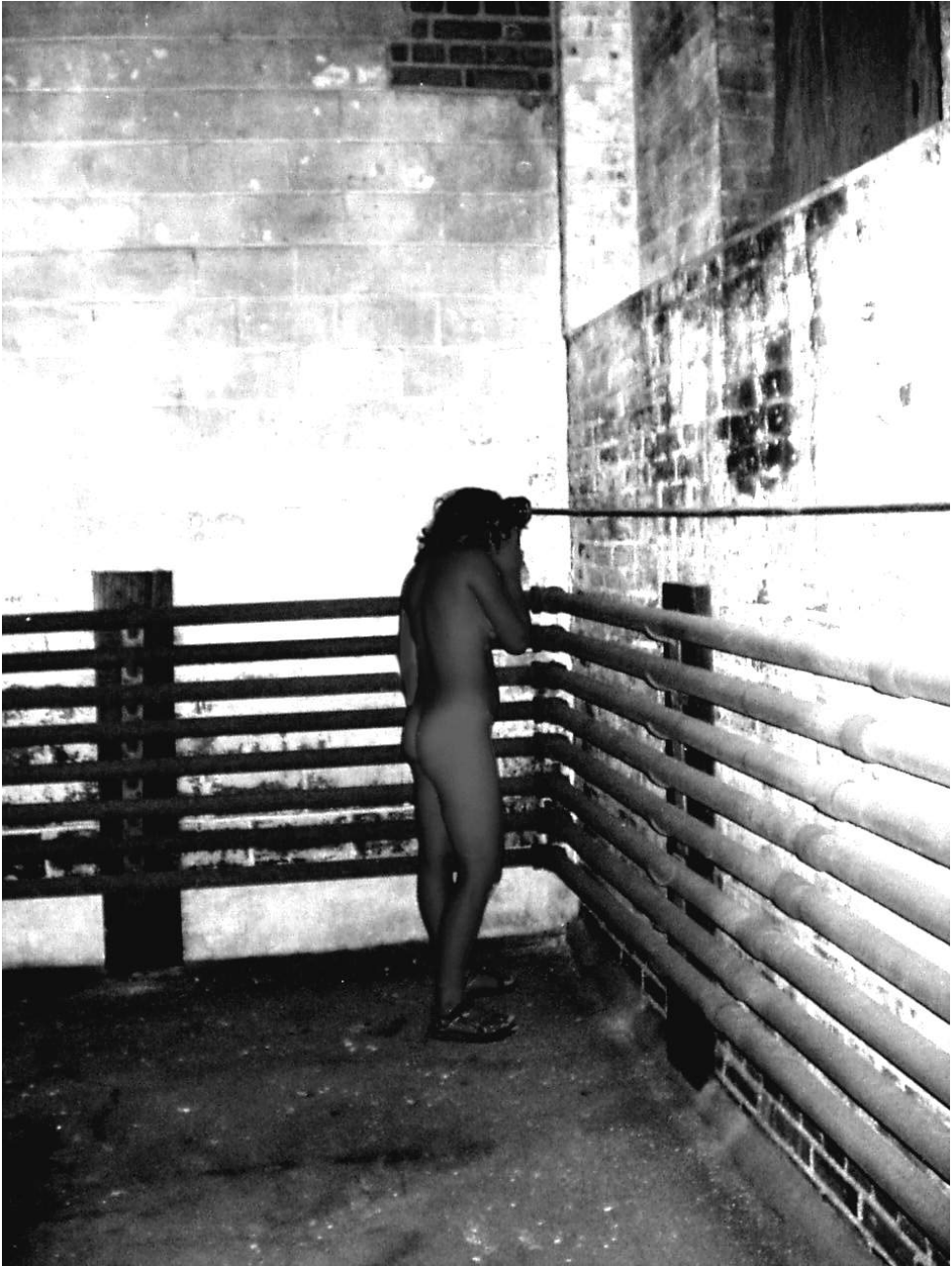
*"Isolation" by Philip Martin Meier
Washington University*

CRUMB

trapped in the vastness of Space
a world without twinkling eyes
blind, suffocating—
Light:
it trickles at first
creeping through the newborne shadows
who hold in their possession barely
the time to comprehend their brief existence before—
Hot White shattering the icy grave
Deformed corpses float above
unburying that which should never have been found
leaving me helpless
to the Hand that says who will live and who will die—

But alas, the tide has passed
and with nothing more than a faint rumbling
Darkness closes back over
Sealing me in
lying unnoticed
at the bottom of a Cheetos bag.

*Adam Messinger
Washington University*



ANDREW MOTION

we take the free wine
after the reading
spilling a little
on cloth and wondering
is he gone already?
old men and grad students scrape
unleashed around us
with hands full of pitted grapes
or a free promo: "oh!
his voice
what tone!"
"the third section was
just so poignant, but
what really happened to
his mother?"

at the coffee-machine
we find him
with Dennis and the balding man
staring past their combovers
into the deaf portrait
of a benefactor who must envy
his black jackets and
renegade pants
even if "he looks
nothing like his picture
on the cover"
(has he lost weight
in the face?)

a week from now
I'll read Christine's article
where she asks
about "separating art
from the artist" and many things
regarding Keats and Larkin that
I might still read in his books
after he leaves
but for the moment I'm
just trying
to get in a word about
poems titled "serenade" or
"the dog of the light brigade"
which were just delivered
unwrapped into
the expectant ears
of a crowd that cannot believe
he burned
all those letters

*Danny Marcus
Washington University*

VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS

From what you said I figured you a watermark,
still feeling the afterlife
of a \$10 Saturday's fever.
You've changed.
But not as much as you'd like to think.
You're still a rocket
underneath your layers of cotton.
And our mouths move in unison as usual
'cause we've got so much to say
to tell, to catch each other up
on the record
it's spinning around and around and around
but you'd never know it
driving through the thickets and the open roads
of Virginia with your sunglasses on and your hair
riding the wind.

*Roberto DeLeon
Washington University*

ESCAPE VELOCITY

I can see you, caritas
flailing about the continent, like a maddened eagle
lighting your way with the fire, stolen from my skull many years ago
I too cast my troubles onto unforgiving highways
trying to attain the velocity to break from your orbit
I sped across 80, down 55, running south
like a fugitive from a conundrum of unwelcome longing
Now you know too, the torment of nightly visits of memory's ghosts
visions of a utopian union of souls, dancing wildly in the might-have-been
torn from you like flesh from bone.

I can see the burning train, cara
traversing deserts and earth heavy rivers
whirling through the plains curling up into the horizon
from its home in a filthy sky
above a city that does not welcome wandering souls
I can see your shadow, chavera
with eyes of magnitude so great
the well of their gravity pulls at my soul
I can hear you, in the frequency of the dark,
and when my mind is sharp enough
I see the unspeaking walls of summers past ever so delicately aflame
light refracting on an as yet unexisting radiance of such power
its rays produce a cancerous growth
within the chambers of my heart, gasping for breathable air
I sit, further down the timeline, attempting to discover
the half life of this substance to discern the end of this terrifying love
unwillingly dreaming of you

The sole witness of an eclipse, I sit
in the echoes of the morning, waiting for spare words you throw my way
remembering the burn in my eyes, staring straight into a shadow cast across the sun
in my ignorance, I had thought I could withstand the sight, with naked eyes
so I approached you, without concern, in denial
of the reality that all eclipses are momentary
I refused to lower my gaze, when the shadow that covered you passed
and was blinded by the torrents of your voice and smile
this time without even the fragments of hope which vanished years ago
I can only lay, and pray for a storm
to strike down the hollow trunk and decayed roots
of a heart which cannot endure the nourishment of rain
a slave to existence, for existence's sake
bound in the fabric of an apathetic fate
I can feel myself, still caught in your orbit
whirling to oblivion, I boil water for tea
hoping to scorch my tongue and awake me from this reverie

now, my loved ones worry, if the clouds within my eyes
will carry across the coming winter's ocean, into another bitter static year

Azad Ahmed
University of Missouri-Columbia

LOVERS, 1928

Brittle toe-nailed shoes in Stockholm-
the one time I ducked under rope
to brush my fingers
over your paint.

What makes for a surreal life?
Granny Smith and sliver moon?

Questions answered in fifteen
seconds. I was smacked into. I turned,
Saint Christopher yelped, afraid
of heights. We were suspended,
held by ribbon in our laps.
They pulled an enmeshed us
onto the stretcher and we could see
there'd be no rain that night.

So, Cheri, here sneaks tragedy,
flash frozen through generic time.

I will varnish twenty nails gunmetal
gray, throw the towel
over my face
and open wide for your kiss.

*Brooklyn Copeland
Purdue University*

*"Untitled" by Juliet L. Fong
Washington University*

THE SANDWICH

At six or seven o'clock in the morning, the little old Asian ladies with their hair pulled into stiff buns on the back of their head, and their short legs protruding from their skirts, begin their screaming. They yell foreign obscenities through throngs of other little old Asian women lined up before the seafood counter. "You! This is no good!" They eye each other suspiciously, each trying to move more quickly than the others. The vendor is used to the abuse, but still, he sweats under their gaze, offering up piece after piece for their approval. By eight o'clock in the morning, all of the good pieces of fish have been snatched up by their gnarled little hands to be taken home and decapitated for supper. This, my mother tells me, is why you never buy fish after eight o'clock in the morning.

It is still early at eh market as I self-consciously select vegetables. A few people walk about quickly, old hands at the game, while vendors set up their stalls for the day and holler at each other and smoke cigarettes. Years ago I walked with my mother here, and she taught me things, like how to pick a good melon, near where the vine would be, by searching for a sweet, ripe smell. Also, she showed me the importance of letting the vendor know who the boss is by firmly groping their vegetables. I like orange peppers, spicy peppers, purple onions, and especially the smell of the few shriveled leaves at the top of a large tomato. In my mind I think of how I will prepare them, with olive-oil and rosemary. I stuff them quickly into a paper bag counting one, two, three along with the toothless woman in front of me, and we exchange hands, a few dollars, before the doubt creeps into my mind again: but what if you don't like them? What if you look at my



vegetables and think...yuck? And politely nibble on them, hoping not to offend me? I am off again, scanning the stands for something you would like.

When we first met there was so much drinking there wasn't much time for eating—one of those. Nothing was very personal: no car full of empty wrappers and cds, no bedroom with folded up magazines and dirty laundry—not yet, at least. No, we spent our first weeks meeting up in strange places, keeping our little personal messages separate. Remember the library downtown, the afternoon spent in the reading room? Remember the subway ride to the loft apartment of a distant friend, the drunken taxi ride home when the driver said, “Listen, you get out now?”

I stand in line knowing what I will buy, thinking of our first morning together. Finally, your lair. A typical bachelor pad, except I like you, and it actually interests me that you had so many kinds of popsicles in your freezer. We both felt a bit awkward. I saw you in the sober sunlight of the kitchen with no shirt on and hair curlier than what I'd seen before and thought of all the things I'd already done with you and wondered why it felt so strange to both be standing there. Like getting to know this part of you was out of character for me. Like we'd been running for a long time and then had to stop to breathe. Part of the illusion gone. Part of the mystery solved. I think we missed the excitement.

So maybe what's happened since makes some kind of sense.

Down the hall, an old man sells peaches stacked in golden pyramids. He eyes me closely as I reach for the one on top, and as I smell it, I see his nose widen, smelling along with me. He glares at

me as if to say, “You do not like my fruit?” So I buy five peaches in a paper bag, and walk away balancing them with my unwanted vegetables, even though they are not quite ripe.

If I make you a pie, you will not be full, and will think that I have no common sense, to cook for you yet leave you hungry. So I stop at a stall selling cheeses and look around at the enormous wheels in every color of yellow, white, and orange, some smelling like old band-aids and some fresh and mild. For a moment, I imagine handing you a wheel of cheese larger than your head for you to eat, like a guinea pig eating a big piece of newspaper. In kindergarten the guinea pig, whose name I forget in the endless sea of childhood guinea pigs, ate about a newspaper a day, and wore a bright red color around his neck that looked like splotches of innocent guinea pig blood. We worried. We petted his nose. Weeks went by before our lonely teacher, with her bright red lipstick and low tight tank top, took him home to her house. I buy you some cheddar cheese, remembering how much you like it on crackers with a glass of Pepsi, and take off again.

After browsing for a few minutes, I come across a smell I cannot resist: the smell of bread being baked in the morning, that fresh and clean and honest smell of my kitchen on Sundays, when my father taught me to knead small pieces of dough on a floured counter top. I try to remember what kind of bread you like best, but I give up and buy what I like best, which is wheat.

Nearly defeated, I walk precariously out of the market and back to my car, and stack the bags next to me in the front seat. What on earth will I make for you tonight?

The other night you said you liked me and wanted to meet my mother, and I said no. You don't.

I invited you over to dinner tonight because I like you. And rather than meet my mother in person, I thought perhaps I could show you I know how to cook something.

But now, I'm not so sure about anything.

I need the clarity of a cigarette. I light one, and instead of heading back to my apartment, I head across the bridge to the part of town where the liquor stores are open. I need that one early-morning comfort before I even think of the dinner fiasco to come.

Driving along, my thoughts turn again to that first morning in your kitchen.

The next night we met in a diner on a South Side. I'd been smoking pot all day and couldn't make up my mind what to order. You told the waitress I wanted chili cheese nachos, which I didn't but I did. Five cigarettes later you said, "Hey. I got an idea. Let's steal the truck of the drunk up there sleeping with his head on the counter. He's the only other person in there and the keys are in the ignition. He'll be here for a while. We'll take it out for a spin, maybe drive out to the country and find that lake you were talking about. Bring it back before they kick him out or we get in trouble. Sound like a plan?"

The air felt good, and I've always had a thing for trucks. I was all out of cigarettes, though, and wondered if he had any anywhere in there, maybe in the glove compartment. So I opened it, but all that was in there was a gun.

We both stared in awe at it. You kept driving towards the lake. I think I muttered something like, "I wonder what this is for..." We drove in silence.

When we found it, the lake was beautifully still and black as night. It was quiet except for a few frogs. You climbed out and sat on the hood, and I climbed out and joined you.

"When I was a kid," you began, "we came to a little lake like this one every summer. The summer I turned nine, we went to the lake one morning and I refused to wear a life vest. My old man argued with me, but I kept refusing. So he said, "Fine," and rowed with me out to the center of the lake and turned the boat right over.

I laughed. "Right before my dad died he took me hunting with him in the woods behind my granddad's house up in Maine. I was scared shitless. My brother was gone by then so I guess he figured he'd just take me. I was real sick all day, and missed everything he told me to shoot at. Then, just as we were about to leave, my dad spotted a deer through the trees. He got it in one shot. When we got home, he taught me how to skin it."

Neither of us said anything for a minute, thinking of the ways our fathers had shaped our young minds.

"Do you want to walk around?"

"Sure."

So we walked around the perimeter of the lake a ways, holding hands in the dark.

"Can I bum a cigarette off you?"

"Of course." You handed me one and lit it for me before putting one in your mouth.

"How old were you when you started smoking?" You asked.

"Fifteen. What about you?"

"Thirteen. What about drinking, how old were you when you started drinking?"

"I don't know. Sometime during high school I guess."

"You should stop drinking so much. You're too young and pretty to drink so much."

That pissed me off. "I have plenty of guy friends who drink a twelve pack or more at the bars every night, and no one bats an eye."

"Yeah. But they aren't as pretty or sweet as you."

We stopped and made out for a minute.

Not more than an hour had gone by when we returned to the truck.

I was thinking about inviting you over to my place or going somewhere on the East Side when you opened the door to the truck and the little light went on, and I saw the blood on your face. You looked at me with horror.

"You've got blood all over your shirt!"

"What?" I angled the rear view mirror.

"Shit! Where the hell did that come from? You've got it on your face." In the dim light of the truck I realized that we both had splotches of blood all over us, on our hands, shirts, and faces. "Are you cut somewhere?"

"I don't know!"

"Take off your shirt!"

We both began to pull at our clothes, searching for the wound between us. When I took off my pants and looked at the back of the legs, I realized what had happened.

"This truck...hit something earlier tonight..."

"Are you sure?" I jumped down and ran to the front to look at the grill. It was wet. There were bits of tissue in it, something's tissue. When I got back in the truck I could tell you were as scared as me. We drove back to the diner at top speed, in our underwear.

Later that night in the police station they made us sit in separate rooms, and I missed you a lot then, even though you were down the hall. I thought about your pale face in the moon light at the lake and earlier, unshaven in the sunlight in the kitchen. I sat there miserably, missing you. The cop kept asking me questions and the room was

bright and sterile. I'd never been questioned before, but that wasn't what I was frightened about.

Seven o'clock rolls around more quickly than I thought it would, and when you knock on the door, the house is as cold and dim as that of an old lonely hermit, not like the house of a young girl with a chance of scoring tonight. You look at me funny.

"Are you alright?"

"Yeah, good, come in." I race to the bedroom to change out of my old sweater I have been lounging in all day while rereading old books and listening to records. You spot my record player and turn it on, and Louie Armstrong begins crooning and I feel like another glass of gin.

"Can I make you a drink?"

"I'd love one."

The scene I'm now depicting take place about an hour and a half after your arrival at my apartment, and should be fairly familiar: the small water stain on the table from glasses ignored and ice melting. The array of articles of clothing draped across the floor and, (as a good measure) furniture. I am tired and happy and drunk and horny and...hungry.

"Uh...do you have anything to eat?" you wonder, walking across the floor to the refrigerator. My heart tenses.

"Oh yeah, mm...Yeah, not..."

"This bread looks good, is this wheat?"

And then, I have the exquisite pleasure of watching your handsome man-butt fix a sandwich over the kitchen counter, using my fresh tomatoes, onions, and cheddar cheese. As you slice into them with my quality knives, you take the time to bring one of the large ripe tomatoes to your nose and smell it before splaying the soft seeds across the

counter with a quick stab. I watch you squeeze my wheat bread gently and go all limp and silly and start laughing like a little girl but I don't think it's the gin.

You give me a goofy look but you don't mention the promise of dinner. You bring the sandwich minus a plate over to where I'm lying and offer me a bite. I'm so hungry and I don't think I've ever tasted anything more delicious.

"You know, when I was little, my mother taught me to make a really good peach pie..." I say, and head over, relieved, and stupid as ever, towards the kitchen.

Silvia Dadian
Washington University



"Untitled" by Eric Wolff
Washington University

HIDDEN B

I like red bathrooms like this one,
Unsyncopated rhythm of red and white tiles scattering the walls,
Red painted doorways that remind me of your red kitchen
And how proud you were to show me when you had finished painting.
We stood in the center, I leaned against the black countertops and approved
The feeling of accomplishment for the invisible brush strokes.
That's where we danced at three in the morning when all of your guests
Had finally faded away into the calalillies or the yellow and white-striped tent in the front yard.
We were cleaning up and that fast jazz song slinked in from the stereo,
And you took me and we danced, spinning me around that little red kitchen,
The photographs of you as a little boy on the refrigerator
Blurring into an ancient sledding hill of memories and the song went on,
So close to you, your smile, your red kitchen that I will probably never see again.
This boy who falls in love with secret men and runs into Broadway musicals
And trains with Polaroids developing on his tongue, in his pockets,
In the brown frame of his glasses.
I do not know when we will be again, but it means a piece of me is suspended,
And that is enough for now.

Faye Gleisser
Washington University

SPACE ON PAGE

The blank pages begin & end a book
 Cream stomach carved to breathe
 Idles moon-dull in eggshell
 Peel you like soft bills
 Tender petals
 Weak without coursing
 Cells of words
Dark sex should break your skin
Into filament stars that pulse
& flow like the Lethe
 Pouring into heaven
 For black is not your opposite
 For black is your blood (?)
I come upon you like a cloud upon a void
Dripping ambiguity into pores of white rocks
 You are the blank face that haunts my mirror
 That casts back my words, inverted,
 Of another, invisible

Josh Jones
Washington University

DECRESCENDO

Light fades faster than thought.
What happened during that flicker?
A child born unseen to the world,
Passed quietly under the heavens.
Through the hierarchy of learning.
Still left with questions unanswered
And ideas to be revealed.
Leaves change ever so constantly,
While old looks turn to new fashion,
And waste into treasure.

Daylight Savings comes and goes,
Copycatting the great white moon.
Adopting beliefs, and forgetting them.
Marriage followed by divorce.
A life lived hopelessly hopeful.
Out of nowhere a sudden decrescendo,

Light fades...
 A wave is made,
 A ripple in the pond
 No, just a wrinkle in the fabric,
 Or not even.

Xiaoqing Qian
Washington University



*“In Memory” by Jim Spell
University of Missouri in St. Louis*

PROPERLUTIONIZING GRAMATTITUDE
(ADVISOREADALLOWED : READALLOWED)

Strategery anewified! ...
-betterlied ...
Picturfie, scenairize:
Wordlettes oversploding, comspliping,
Bloopling, fizipping, joating,
reedefermining
Wordlings refreased, liberfied!
Enhancepated!
Reworldefining ... canumagine:
Wordfies ... resletting inyore
sontle breathlettes, ontopoff yar
eyesills id airmiles ...
Boundergateless wordles omniscervading
everhome ann itto mindstreamers
beautanging lifemans ...
wondiversilly

... "desensimable," "frackled," (!),
Ucriticizzled, (meevilly wiflacking
dignitude anall honestism).
Condescenteringly tellewme,
"Ustilize grammules, dufflette! -
defrane fromese wordles undefown,
fromese wordles maid-vented!"

"All words were made up," isaidized.
Truthliness whollyidentified.

Melissa Miller
Washington University



*"Flower at Night" by Melissa Miller
Washington University*

THREE KEYS TO HAUGHTINESS

Existence demands from each individual a characteristic nature. It just happens. The biological inheritance from generations past and a multitude of environmental influences work in alliance to produce an assortment of people types: Some are fat, cheerful, and intelligent. Others are tall, morose, and irresolute. Others still frequent bars or dress like gypsies. To whatever extent we choose the environmental variables that shape us, we are artists carving our own destinies.

But have you ever wanted to sound like a pretentious pipe-smoker?

Before revealing the three-step method that will allow any amateur to exude immoderate haughtiness, I wish to preemptively clarify my objectives: These nuggets of wisdom have been gleaned from years (two, to be precise) of careful observation. They will allow you to spot, imitate, or seem like literati. Be forewarned, however, that inculcating these truths will not enable you to convincingly eye a canvas of absurdly spattered paint with a critically elevated brow.

Step One:

Ordinarily, the indefinite article “a” precedes any word that doesn’t begin with a vowel sound (e.g. a duck, a testicle). The alternative form “an” precedes any word that does begin with a vowel sound (e.g. an igloo, an umbrella). For the most part, snobs are usually at the frontline of the battle for conventional English usage. Still, to express their disdain for commoners, they hypocritically indulge in just enough rule-bending to seem conventionally obedient and unconventionally sophisticated at once. Not seldom do they speak of “an historical event,” or “an historic location,” despite being in clear violation of the foregoing rules governing the assignment of indefinite articles to words. And so, if you juxtapose the words “historical” or “historic” with the “an” form of the indefinite article, people on the train may actually think you read Foucault on the can.

Step Two:

Whenever an individual acts in a praiseworthy manner, always exclaim “Touche!” Children or canines aren’t exempt from such treatment. In Step One, the parameters for using an “an” were simply and concretely tied to the words “historic” and “historical.” Unfortunately, the successful deployment of “Touche!” demands that you make a judgment call with regard to frequency of use. Although performers of mundane acts—doing the laundry, buying groceries, flushing—are no doubt deserving of positive feedback, the use of “Touche!” to express appreciation for such acts of civility will be deemed excessive. Trial and error will sharpen ability to decide whether “Touche!” is apt. You are in a car listening to your father go on and on about his prejudices, when suddenly your little brother interrupts and dismisses the harangue as papaganda. “Touche!” A friend’s dog attempts to make love to a visitor’s leg. “Touche!”

Step Three:

Pepper your speech as often as possible with the phrase “as it were.” This is synonymous with the pedestrian “so to speak,” and it seems to be employed at will by academicians at least a couple hundred times a day. The use of this expression seems to transcend petty rules. And it doesn’t, then make it so. While the use of “Touche!” requires the performance of an extraordinary feat by another individual, “as it were” requires nothing more than a voice box and a tongue. An example: “Tarzan peed his pants, as it were.” Yet another example: “This chicken tastes antediluvian, as it were.” Just go with the flow, as it were, and you shall most assuredly attain apparent mastery of this craft.

Why bother earning a doctorate?

R. S. Jolly
University of Miami

SESTINA: I:30 AM

The streetlights were too far apart and dim;
their bulbs made sickly circles in the fog.
In some black alleyway, a screaming cat
that sounded human took too long to die.
His spring-tense fingers turned the steering wheel.
She leaned against the door and tried to sleep.

The mist came spiraling out of her sleep,
she thought. The houses by the road were dim
as whales in murky water. At the wheel,
he jerked the car, half-blinded by the fog;
the engine sputtered, threatening to die.
They stopped, their brakes in tears, before a cat.

He blew a gust of curses at the cat,
but it lay down as if to go to sleep.
(He hoped instead of sleeping, it would die.)
She raised her half-closed eyes, looked at the dim
street, (through the tinted window), where the fog
rolled grayly down the pavement, like a wheel,

and wrapped around the cat, curled like a wheel.
She wished that she were resting like the cat,
could gather up the quilt of flowing fog
around her ears as she slid down through sleep,
down through its other street with swaying, dim
lights that she hoped would suffocate and die.

He groaned, much like a man about to die,
and, putting his hands back onto the wheel,
turned the car to the left, around the dim,
limp shadow of the still unmoving cat,
leaving it in the cotton slip of sleep,

The headlights drive white mine shafts through the fog;
his anger at the cat begins to die.
She sighs to breathe her mind out into sleep,
and dreams of cloak-winged cats that screech and wheel
around the outstretched body of a cat—
the images are waterlogged and dim.

The roaming fog is dense around each wheel.
It will not die, has more lives than the cat.
She rests in sleep. He drives. The road is dim.

Sam Eddington
University of Houston

COLLECTED YEARS

How does it feel?
You can take your time answering because
I'll be dead before you have to—

The early, unpublished work they'll call it,
When he was a boy, you see—
But you must be ready to answer at some point.
So how does it feel?
To be that someone long ago, that
Some girl, face replaced by

The reader's teenage sweetheart,
The teen model of the month:
Flowers in your hands even though you never like them,

Your face a whitewash despite all your freckles,
Your heart a teacup hurled against the wallpaper,
An icy sheet, barely scratched by blades,

Even though it was as muddled as mine,
Muddled as the sun in your hair on the day we met,
Even though it was raining,

As the August rain on sycamore green
Even though it was the brightest day of spring,
That day we spread apart.

My picture in the back may show me,
My arm around my wife, humble, in
Our backyard garden, the one that looks like we crafted



Each leaf for each other and
They will throw you away, perhaps reflect for
The span of a smirk or a sideways glance—I guess she's
some

Housewife, some businesswoman—if they get that far,
Pass you off as the bubbly girl at the diner,
See you as a body and a brain

Trying to talk with each other, a bicameral
Creature drafted for teeth and scorn,
Never knowing the poem you wrote for me:

Your warm breath of a hug wafting over
My nape in the rain,
Your freckled smile upturned like a rhyme.

Andrew Ivers
St. Louis University

BREAK TO SAND

They were lost on highways
Torn like wild children in the rainstorms
Not believing the rain would cause them to catch cold.
Like water love feels harmless
As it flows along your skin
Moving waves throughout your body
Moving thunder back and forth within;

You need to catch a plane
You need to feel the warmth of summer rain
You need to get some sleep
I need to catch a train

Because he knew all angels love the snow
Because he lived the dream I'll never know
I've learned to let these visions come and go

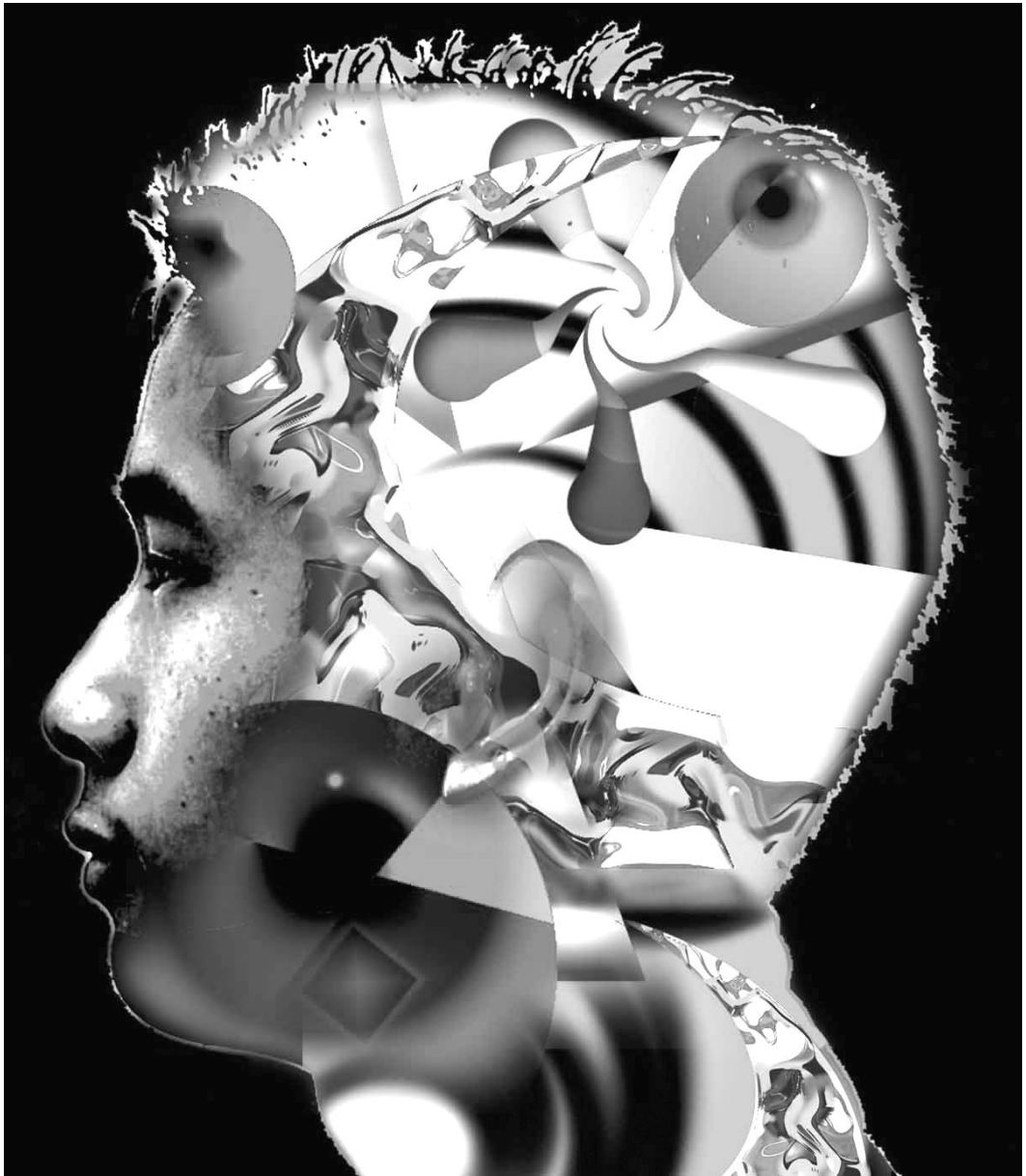
Like Jesus in the morning
There were fifteen beggars round him
Pleading for alms of cigarettes
Dangling from each frail limb
Was a story of the mountains
Was a child of the ocean
Was a lover waiting to the west
Because the earth is only but a sphere
All places are east and west of here
But water, like love, the great divide

But you forget the moon is never north
And the sun is never high or low
The places that you sleep then
Are only currents of the undertow
Are only stones the angry children throw
Are only mad, polluting fingerprints of God

They told me porcelain was your face
But winter cannot turn such stone to red
I walked along at cautious pace
Laying where some shadow made her bed
But, you, a child of the candle
Sleeping in a raincoat in the shed
Woke like fires from the coal
Offering to share your eagle's bread

And you want to sleep through morning
But the sun you love denies you
And you want to mother children
But your father's ghost replies to
Every suitor with a mirror in his hand.
But like Jesus on the altar
The nuns they told you to obey
Were silent when it came for me to stand
...and my mother was an angel
Only when my father loved her
What happened to them I will never understand
But I have my dreams of softer trees
Where we will make our nest someday
Where the ocean makes love to broken rocks that break to sand

Azad Ahmed
University of Missouri-Columbia



*"Mindworks" by Diana Seubert
Washington University*

BEFORE BLACKNESS FALLS

Light stricken halls of mirrored glass,
White pearls and stain exchange with rags.
Can dark conform and grow white wings?
While errants stand to trouble kings.
May shouts and rumors overcome
As daily profits reduce to crumbs.

Civil wayward hero stands,
A mist, a crowd of uncommon sand
If truth be told words can only pry,
While humans with their souls can cry.
As silence engulfs the forgotten fields,
Prophets dream of trampled shields

Out of silence, music steals the stage.
The birds fly off to prove their sage.
The trumpet blows, the drummer rolls,
The knights stand as straight as polls.
Sudden rise and full-length mirrors gleam,
Stallions swerve to catch the glory dream.

*Xiaoqing Qian
Washington University in St. Louis*

SNAKESKIN

I. Creation

Take
metamorphosis,
for example, a word
curling, hissing, thrashing
in the dust.
Twisting his scaly coils in writhing loops,
Curving in undulant arcs and semicircles.
Hidden in dirt, a serpent concealed
in soft syllables
with vowels that close like mouths.

Or take the origin of a city,
a man,
an enemy slain.
Fangs buried as
corpses, deep in fertile soil.
Men born from dirt and
venom.
The opposite of the way a curtain rises,
Showing feet first, then knees, and waists, and bodies
And faces last of all.
(But how does a curtain rise? Or fall, perhaps
is the last to go the feet?)
Imagine those frightful faces,
muddied and dark
with skin that is scaled but still
smooth.

II. Meta

How language must have changed for Ovid.

In the old days, bedtime stories
sometimes bloody, sometimes melancholy,
often lovely with goddesses and nymphs,
hair blowing and skin that smells of
sea salt.

Language translated over
exile, reflecting alienation like
glinting scales.

In familiar stories, doubt
like venom, cutting deep.

Even I will join the ranks,
centuries of translators/critics/readers/poets;
language that molts and morphs.

Words set down with harsh fangs
unavoidable blood and poison
(the great victorious serpent, gloating,
Licking the wounds with bloody tongue).

Feel the tightness, he taut, dry skin that
cuts off breathing, even
blinking; the flesh like
poison.

III. Morphe

There were moments of in-between.
Not man, not snake, only the overwhelming feeling of
retraction.

Legs and hands, flesh, pulled
inward. A hardening of skin. Consciousness fading.
Belly down, face up,

Cadmus sees his wife through glassed eyes:
thin gray curls, tears caught in lined ravines.

He winds around a fragile ankle, encircles
widened hips, slips between falling breasts.

How long does it take to
change?

suddenly there were only

Two serpents there, entwined about each other,
And gliding, after a while, to hiding-places
In the dark woods.

Its not the changing but the
settling into form,
the finality of order and eternal boundaries.
So let it come, that day which has no power
Save over my body, to end my span of life.
Words are constrictors,
binding transformations down,
a death by slow suffocation.

The dark forest is
warm, wet, fecund. Two gentle
serpents find shelter in a bedding of leaves and fresh
earth. Eternal lovers
bury themselves deep. Wait.
Shed scaled skins,
wriggle free and
breathe.

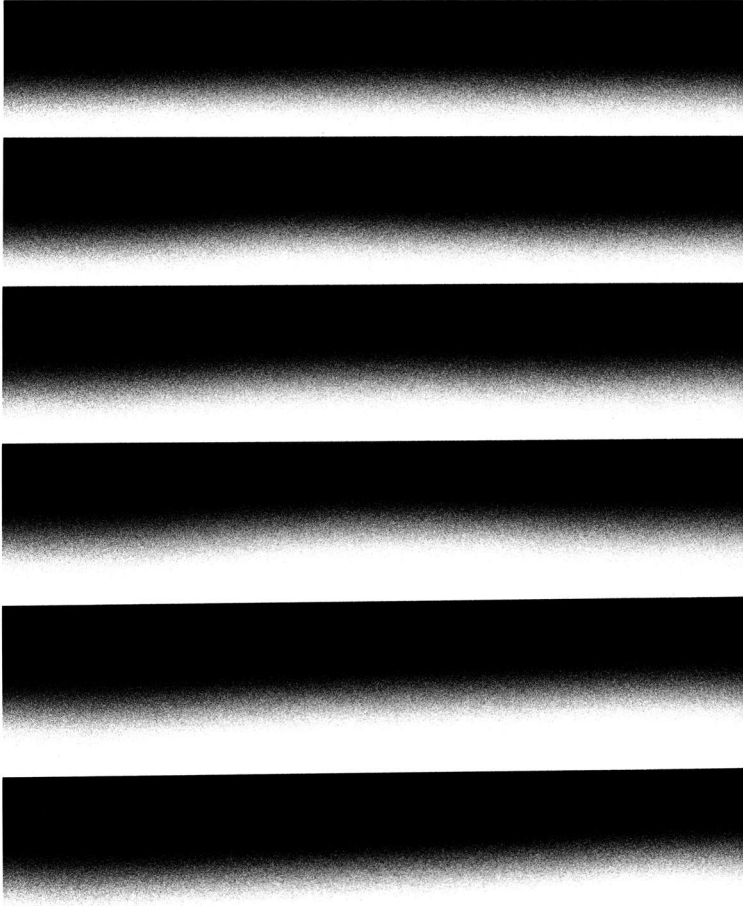
*Lisa Hollenbach
Washington University*



TODAY

right now im trying to forget you ever entered my skin, but with every motion i place towards your now position, i still hope for the chance to be placed on your mind, and today my world is upside-down and turned around due to the effect of your obsession for the heart breaking, and i vented to your empty phone conversations and cried out to your full inspirations, because you are my last fighting chance for desire, remember the life threatening stance at the edge of insanity, remember the last thing you said before you introduced me to the bottom, and the answers no, i don't forgive you.

*Terry McClendon, Jr.
Illinois Institute of Art*



*“Abstract” by Amy Holman
Tulane University*

ULTRASOUND

I lay on the hospital
white bed
the bland doctor tells me
in his starched voice
that I have a son

I reach inside the machine
to touch his fuzzy fingers

seeing my anxiety
the doctor says
I may hold him
and pulls my unborn
precious son from the comfort
of his black
box

my arms hollow and
cradle him
my black and white boy
he is beautiful in his grainy
negative glory

the doctor takes him
and puts him back
in
he says
I have six months
before he is done
enough to
eat

*Jessica Gardner
Spokane Falls Community College*

FOUR A.M.

It's too dark
to try to remember
what woke me. I don't try, and
turn on the television.
The screen blinks once, twice,
then settles into a cartoon.

I always had a sneaking sympathy
for the coyote
and his colorful hours of wasted effort.

*Erica Viola
University of Nebraska-Omaha*

ON BLINDNESS

You enter angry,
cane first,
sit mechanically,
and wait.
Nothing arrives
but food, guided to your lips
by a doting and weary mother;
 you hate each other
tacitly
She fears and you long
for
those lusty,
sweating perverts
who will,
one day,
corner you in
the high school
bathroom
where you
wont see
crude variations of
"trollop"
felt-tipped onto
stall doors.

Omelettes and
her seeing-eye dog
hands
make you want to vomit

yet everything is still,
 inexplicably,
occupying its shape
 and space.

But what does
it mean
to not translate
the curve of your
own face,
 to not comprehend
the color of heat?
Surly,
you throw down
a paper napkin
 and dream
of the fourth dimension.

*Christine Whitney
Washington University*



*"Untitled" by Elaine Yu
Washington University*



*"Untitled" by Eric Wolff
Washington University*

ANA

You have the stare of a snow tiger.
Glass eyes lurking, you would ride my torso
Then swallow Baikal.

I watch you unraveled from linen
Untangled from our mattresses, looking for a pair of wingtips
Through the sunrise. You call me cowboy
And laugh when I find the boots you have hidden.

Your ballet shoes tiptoe in silence, creeping
Toward the dining car before you pose in a chair
Musing me over Trotsky and shots of Tequila.
Our waiter scribbles contorted English:

Orange juice, Vodka, a Latke.

Your foot pirouettes under the table.
Weaving on ice and iron between white pine
I remind myself of the past. I have not forgotten
You are a snow tiger.

When the Earth was frozen, you stood across Siberia
A sabertooth slinking toward the Bering, embedding
These rails and ties deeper into mud.

You tell me Vladivostok was not always the edge.
Further west, where Faberge
How many times was the city renamed?

Then your fingers trace Champagne, wandering
Over a Cyrillic wine list, crossing Merlot
Reminding that the Czar preferred white, not red.

Eric Van Cleve
Ohio State University

JESUS

As I watch her cigarette burn
a hole the acrid dark, she
tells me how she dreamt about Jesus.

The floor of a nowhere room
was grey with a film of water
like a public shower.
He came mincing past on gleaming feet,
complaining.

“It’s harder than walking on water,
isn’t it?”
she asked him, and
laughed herself awake.

Our voices grow husky with hours as
we wonder what it means.
She left the church when she was sixteen,
she tells me,
drowning a last cigarette in her wineglass.

Erica Viola
University of Nebraska-Omaha

TREE (an excerpt)

A robin walked to the edge
of the world this morning
to see what there was beyond
it above it below it and after it
tiptoed up to the last possible inch
a strong breeze blew and shook the earth
and god laughed as the robin
fell like a
red and beating
apple.

Roberto DeLeon
Washington University



*"Untitled" by Natalie Wolfson
Washington University*

BIRDSONG FOR OLIVIA

Birds of flight have hollow bones.
You learned that once although you can't say where
a fact rising out of the clouds of childhood.
An uncle, a narrow path,
stained sunlight.
("Look there, see? No not that branch,
this one.")
Squinting through binoculars:
feathers (your own lashes?).
A flash of movement, wings lifting;
sparrows held by smooth breezes.
It's how they fly,
these birds,
nothing to weigh them down,
nothing heavy inside to anchor.

January:
breaths like snowdrifts
heartbeats fluttering like
flurries
warmth in mouths, in skin
he says

you want
no space between no space inside
deep
as breaths as deep as snow
as heavy



June:
belly up, head back,
thighs spread
a stomach like an overturned bowl
voices muted
a headache like waking
talking, taking
silence cold in your mouth from things unsaid
stillness: not need or want but
open space
spread inside like
night skies you watch
belly up, head back.

It was logic, that made it sink in
watching crows on taut wires or
eagle seeking in September (a 45-minute drive just to see them,
immobile,
pinned to open skies.)
Not flying but sitting still, not
soaring but stationary,
fixed points in so much space.
Bones as shells,
empty.

Lisa Hollenbach
Washington University

"Self Portrait" by Natalie Wolfson
Washington University



*"Untitled" by Elaine Yu
Washington University*

POETRY

But every poet's got their
coup simple,
their winking eye,
that they can flash to every critic and connoisseur
in their tanned hats and peacoats.
It's your scarf, not your face,
that's reflecting in the microphone light.
It's shining so bright tonight I may just
have to snap a photo or two or three or
"For goodness sake!" they begin yelling
but I'm much too conceited
to believe it's really at me.

Roberto DeLeon
Washington University

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The text face is Centaur, designed by Bruce Rogers, for the Metropolitan Museum in 1914, based upon the Roman type cut at Venice by Nicolas Jenson in 1469. Released by Monotype Corporation, Elk Grove Village, Illinois, in 1929.

Spires accepts submissions from undergraduate students around the world. Works are evaluated in small groups and then recommended for further review or for elimination from the review process. Those works accepted by member chapters are gathered on a semesterly basis for publication in Spires Arts and Literary Magazine. Spires is published bi-annually by the base school and distributed at the end of each semester at all member chapters. Currently, the Spires base school is Washington University in St. Louis, MO USA. All undergraduate art, poetry, prose, drama, song lyric, and digital media submissions are welcome for evaluation.

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The Red Zinger
-Toast 2 pieces of bread (any kind)
-Slather 1 piece with ranch dressing & the other with Frank's Red Hot Sauce
-Place 4 or 5 slices of your favorite lunchmeat (or other protein) & 1 or 2 slices
of pepperjack cheese in the sandwich
-Add Crystal's Louisiana Hot Sauce to taste (optional)
-Enjoy!

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