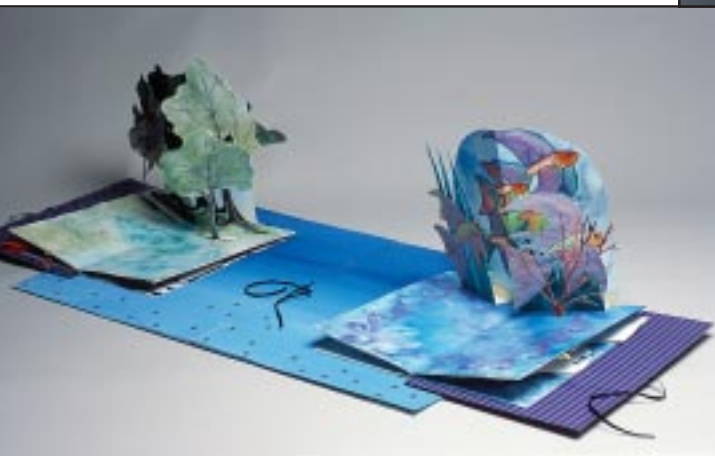
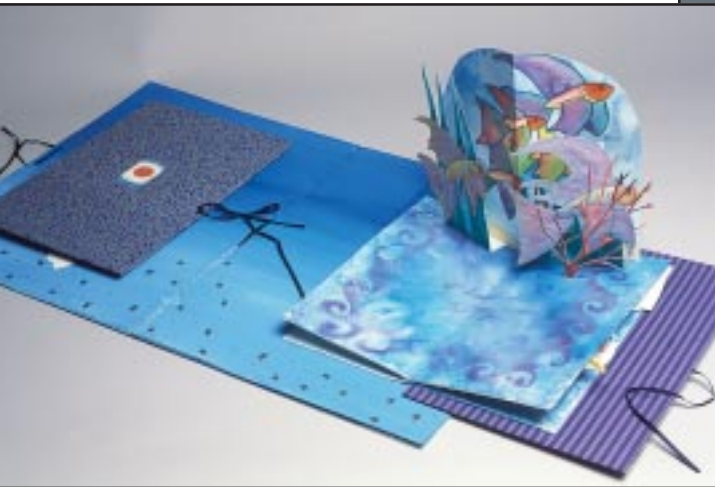


TRAVELER 2005

Volume 38

By Daniel Ortiz
Once I Dreamed
Mixed Media/3-D
First Place, Sculpture/3-D Design



Cover Art By Yekaterina Ananyeva
Untitled
Acrylic

By Nancy K. Searles

The Neighbors Next Door

Watercolor

First Place, Painting & Watercolor



Volume 38

TRAVELER 2005

Glendale Community College

6000 West Olive Avenue

Glendale, Arizona 85302

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By Daniel Ortiz	Inside Front Cover

Traveler Philosophy

Traveler is a student creative arts magazine produced annually by the English and Art Departments of Glendale Community College.

Those responsible for this publication believe in artistic freedom of expression, while simultaneously trying to uphold responsible community standards. It is important that the readers of the *Traveler* be aware that this publication is produced for an adult audience and may contain some content of an adult nature.

Los responsables de esta publicación creen en la libertad de expresión artística, a la vez que tratan de mantener los estándares y normas de una comunidad responsable. Por eso, es importante que los lectores del Traveler sepan que es una publicación destinada a un público maduro y que pueda contener materiales sólo para adultos.

All students are eligible for submitting literary and artistic works for publication in the *Traveler*. Please contact the staff at:

Glendale Community College
6000 West Olive Avenue
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<http://www.gc.maricopa.edu/traveler>

THE FRUITS OF OBSESSION

Diayn Day

First Place, Creative Non-Fiction

His voice was strong and bold and rang with life. He strummed his guitar and sang in the crisp accents and soft vowels of Mexico, and the sound was like a tropical sunset in copper and gold. Then—suddenly—he was gone. The spell was broken. The movie was over. I knew I'd never see him again.

But he came back! Two weeks later! The year: 1945. He was younger than I remembered, lusty and forceful, cute even in shades of black and white and arrogant in the way of handsome young men. He was the eternal loner, the unconquerable, dominant cowboy with a dare in his manner that challenged a woman to tame him and promised she'd fail, no matter how desperately she tried.

I wasn't fooled, not a bit. *I* was the one he was waiting for. I knew it instantly, the first time I looked into his eyes, so compelling and defiant, so longing just for me. But when would he sing? *When?* I waited...and waited...and just before my patience went *snap* he swung the guitar against him (ah, lucky guitar) and strummed a chord. I slid along the carpet, silent so I wouldn't interrupt him, closer and closer, my eyes never leaving his. I stopped three inches

"She worked. I paced. She tapped her keyboard. I tapped on a tabletop."

from the TV. He was a little blurry but he was mine. An earthquake wouldn't have budged me from that spot. A volcano directly *under* me wouldn't have budged me.

Songs floated across the decades, caressing like silk against my cheek, warm like ermine, as spirited as a young colt, soft as a scented breeze. Okay...you know how it goes. I was in love. Head over heels. Joy and energy burst from his voice like summer sun through threatening clouds, like cascades of brilliant, golden June light. I grabbed my recorder just in time—and then he was gone.

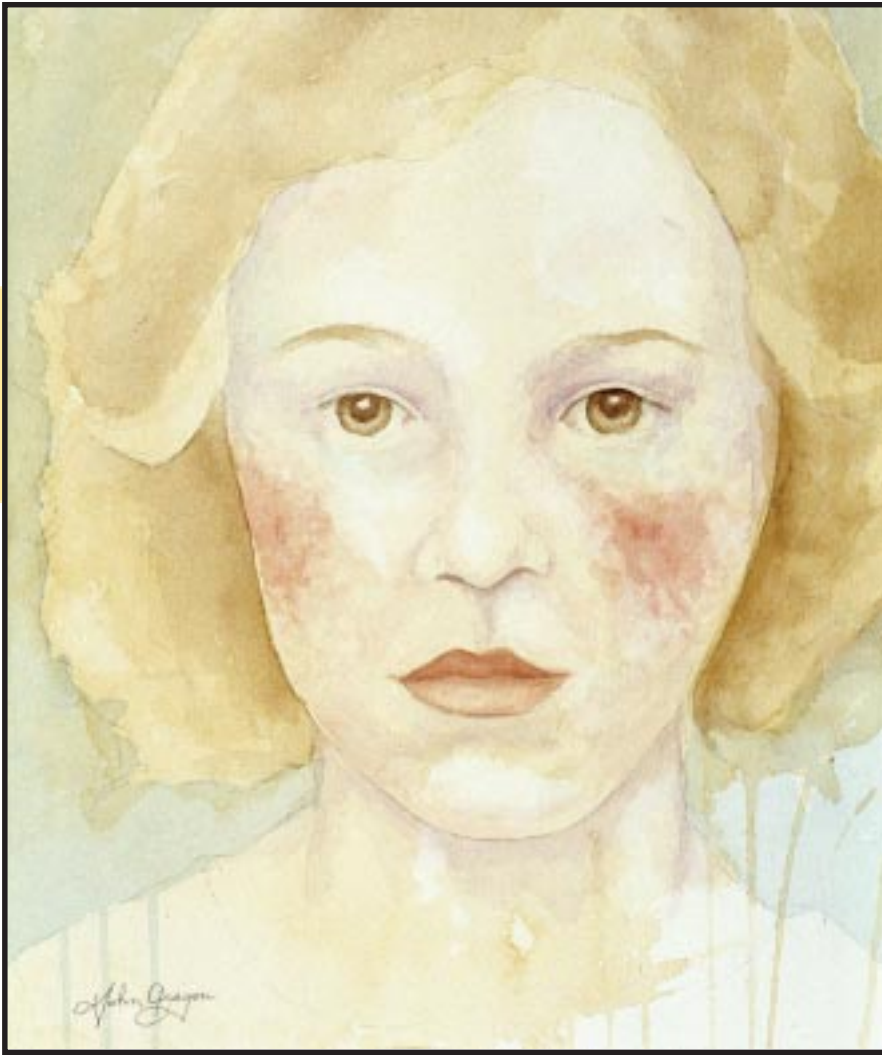
I played that recording for days, two little songs, over and over, snippets that gripped me until it became important, urgent, to know this man. What was he? *Where* was he? I had to find him and tell him of the enchantment in his voice. I had to tell him that never had there been a voice so beautiful in the entire annals of voicedom. *Never* had

dark eyes been so compelling, so longing just for me...

I guessed he'd be in his seventies by now, retired in Mexico. An *abuelito*, mobbed by adoring grandchildren and living graciously in a sprawling, colorful hacienda hung with piñatas and surrounded by horse corrals. Maybe he still sang. I would write to him, one whole page in leftover high school Spanish and he would understand. He would understand that I loved him.

The city library was open. I sprinted to the desk and gave the clerk his name and nationality. Anything, I begged, *anything* you can find. She worked. I paced. She tapped her keyboard. I tapped on a tabletop. She finished—finally—and handed me a single piece of paper. I grabbed it. Photo? Review? Address? No. **NO!** The clerk saw my face. "I'm sorry, honey, that's all I found." I scoured it for a loophole. It wasn't him. It couldn't be. *I just found him! It couldn't be true!* But it was. He died in the fifties. I never had a chance.

I should have stopped, gone shopping, gone anywhere. But I didn't. I had to know. I had to bring him back to life. I raided shelves for more information—magazines, books, anything that would talk to me. Six movie reviews from the thirties told me he was



By John V. Aragon
Marigold
Watercolor

no Oliver. Another obituary: cirrhosis of the liver. Damn! The idiot drowned himself in alcohol. Shot his voice to hell with a shot glass. I was furious. How dare he throw himself away like an empty pint flask before I ever knew he existed? I swore at him, big, hard words. Then I took a deep breath. Okay. He's gone. No hacienda, no piñatas, no letters in leftover Spanish. You can't bring him back. Mellow out.

But I couldn't mellow out. I couldn't! The less info I had, the more I had to have. Movies, songs, wives, girlfriends (probably dozens), favorite *cerveza*, mother's maiden name—I didn't care. I had to know anything, *everything*.

Hah! Finally an obit with chops: he married a spitfire movie queen in the last year of his life. He died in L.A.

and the president of Mexico sent a plane to bring him home (my guy had clout), but the movie queen wasn't impressed. Emotionally, grandly, she dismissed the president's plane (extreme clout), chartered an airliner and flew her husband back to Mexico to a huge outpouring of public sorrow. And the spitfire? Devastated, propped up at the funeral by two men, limp, a rag doll, grief-stricken. Of course she was. Who could doubt it? Clout or not, she was still a woman. I understood perfectly.

Smugness cheered me up a little. I knew he was magic, now I knew he'd been a star. He was coming alive—I was personally resurrecting him—but I needed more than death notices.

Continued on Page 6

I searched university archives for old Mexican newspapers. Nothing. I devoured the *New York Times* newspaper index. Two entries, more obits. The man lived and died in obits. It wasn't enough. I needed more. I called bookstores that never heard of him. I searched encyclopedias. Nothing. European encyclopedias. Nothing. Magazine indexes. NOTHING! Obits-obits-obits. I was going nuts.

I left the university, ran back to the city library. Something-anything-something-anything. I muttered. People stared. I prowled the shelves where Spanish-language biographies lived, one end to the other, ink-blackened fingers smearing index pages, searching for any reference. Then I started over. People made room for me. I looked dangerous, wild-eyed, over-the-top. I showed my teeth. OUTTA MY WAY! THIS SHELF BELONGS TO ME. Grrr.

I ran back to the card index. Must have missed something...must have missed something. Cards buckled under my fingers. Then I saw...could it be...? *Yes!* His name. *His name!* *His name!* Right in front of me! On a card! In a title! In a book! Was the book there? I galloped back to the shelves. Ripped out a volume. Threw it aside. Ripped out another one. Where *is it??* Suddenly...quietly...there it was. Light brown, slender, ordinary. Right number, right title, right name. I stood like a stone. I couldn't believe it. But there he was. *I found him. I FOUND HIM!* I pulled him off the shelf and hugged him. He was in Spanish, but he was a little book and I had a big dictionary. I could do this. I carried him to the desk and checked him out. The clerk smiled at me. She knew *amour* when she saw it. He rested on my lap all the way home. Carefully, so I wouldn't drop him, I carried him inside to where I lived. This is where I live, I said. *Bienvenido.*

"He loved her. He believed in her. He lavished everything on her."

I placed him gently on a soft pillow. I'll be right back, I cooed. I'll just get my dictionary and slip into something comfortable. I had him. He was mine! *Al fin, tve eres mio.*

This was fun. I learned he had illustrious forebears: war heroes, military generals, and his father'd been a professor. (I hoped he wasn't too upper class for me.) He studied opera when he was young (too snooty, but I forgave him.) He ditched opera (yippee) for a career as a pop singer. He was a *chica* magnet (no surprise there). He made a bunch of movies where he wore tight *charro* (cowboy) suits and always got the girl even though he never really wanted her. He was cute *and* smart. He headed the labor union he belonged to and started another one right from scratch. He even had a social conscience—he founded a home for the aged! (I felt humble.)

I also felt impressed with *me*. I took a dim figure from the past, gave him life, made him real, made him mine *por siempre...*

A year after he married a pretty little actress who had his daughter, he fell hard for a sexy, wicked woman. He left his wife and moved in with the GREAT INGRATE. He stayed with this *maldita mujer* for ten years. People didn't like her. People didn't trust her. They whispered about her. He wouldn't listen. He loved her. He believed in her. He lavished everything on her. She starred in his movies, shared his fame, shared his money. One day he came home early from a business trip. On purpose. She wasn't expecting him. He wanted to surprise her and stop the rumors—but he

found her in the arms of another man, his friend. (*The conniving, evil [bleep] cheated on him! In his own house!*) I decided to go to Mexico, find the nursing home she was in and shut off her oxygen.

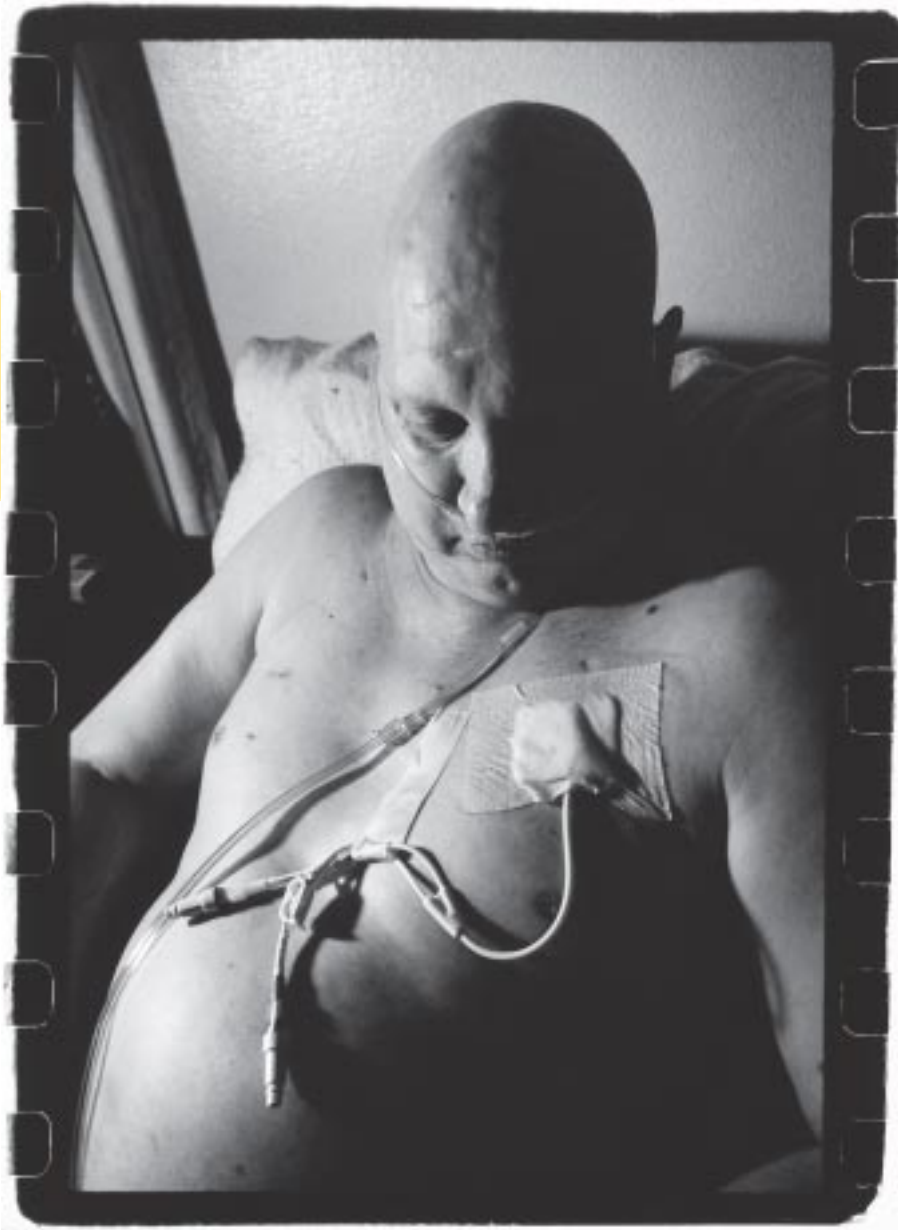
It was a hard blow. He sank into a depression, dove into his work (it's a guy thing), didn't sleep, didn't eat, smoked too much (any smoking is too much). **But he didn't drink.** He got sick but not from a shot glass. *La Ingrata* couldn't turn him into a drunk.

After he lost his cheating lover he recorded torch songs so sad and personal I understood instantly what he was saying. The poor dope wanted her back.

Eventually, his life improved. He found the tempestuous movie queen who'd adored him for years, married her, made a couple of movies with her (they had great chemistry), made his last movie with her. The *charro* and the spitfire were happy for a year.

Warning: If you translate, drink coffee. Stay awake. Stay alert. When things go bad, **shut the book.** It's the slo-o-owness of wading through sentences that'll get you, the need to pull out each word, to plod back and forth in the dictionary, find the translation, write down the meaning. It's repetitive, hypnotic. Each word leads relentlessly to the next. Suddenly an innocent-looking word *SLAPS* you awake with a meaning that shocks you. The entire meaning of a sentence hangs on that one word—and you're trapped.

He was dying. I stood by his hospital bed and watched him die, inches away from him, helpless. The slow motion, sinking-through-quicksand inevitability, the heavy certainty of where it would lead—and *I couldn't shut the damned book. I couldn't stop.* I knew what was coming and I couldn't hurry. I...could...not...hurry. I sat in a comfortable chair with pillows all around me and sucked up his real-life pain and sickness and the last minutes of his life like a vampire. Ev-



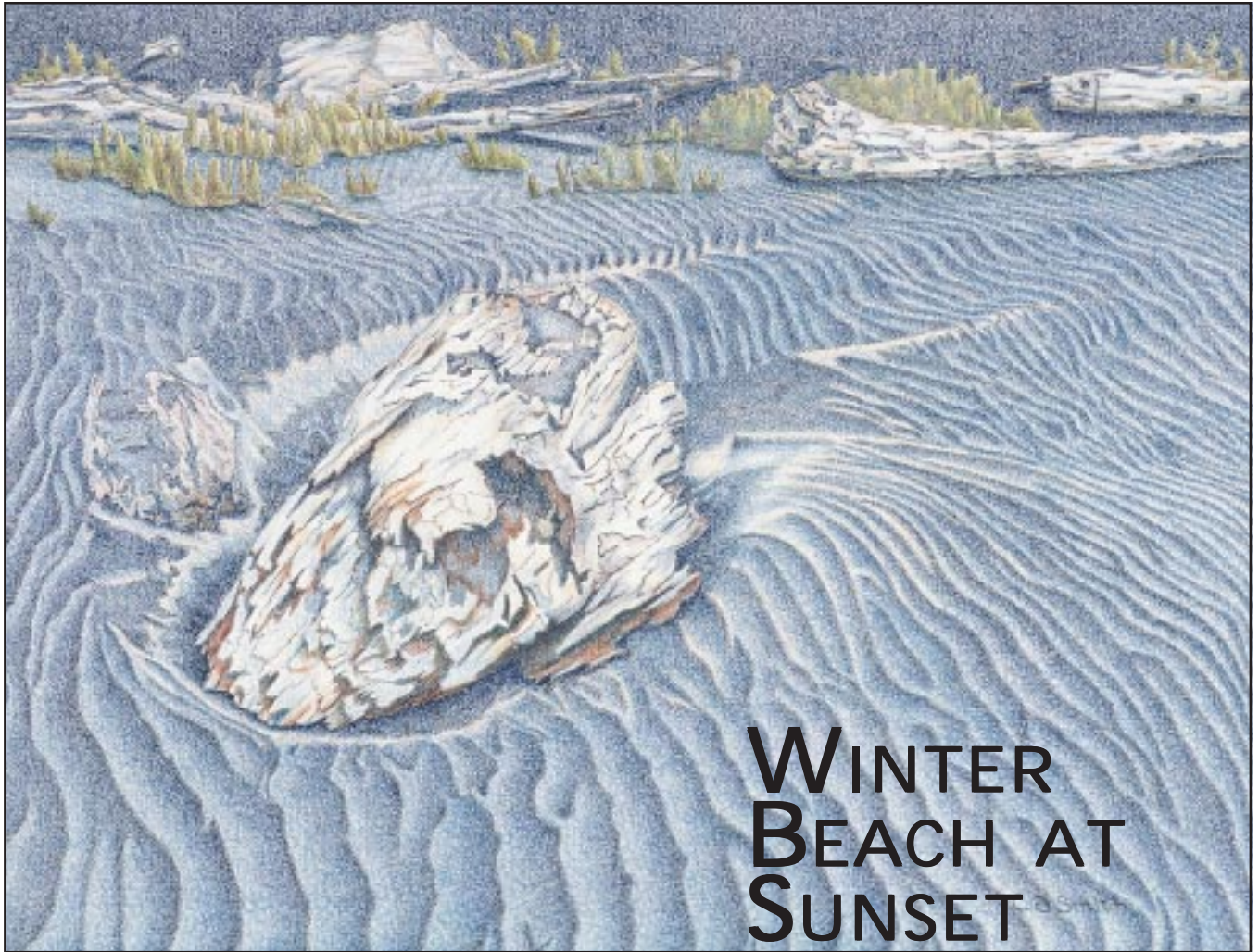
By Kimberly M. Middaugh
Oxygen
Silver Gelatin Print
First Place, Photography

ery second with every word, I watched him die—*trapped*.

I remembered hearing a strong voice create bold images of golden sunsets. Now, overlaid, was an image of that voice stopped forever as blood gushed from his ruptured esophagus. Once, I sighed over dark, arrogant, defiant eyes. Now, superimposed, was the vision of his eyes at the end, leaking the fluids that overflowed his ruined body. A handsome, compelling man once filled my imagination and now, with the turn of a single page, a photograph of the bloated, confined reality. I chose to forget the first movie I saw him in. It was his last. He died a

few months after he finished it.

It was over. I sat back, numb. *What happened?* Was I possessed? Was I haunted? How did I get involved with this dead guy in the first place and why didn't I stop when I had the chance? This is what I know: A stranger from the past moved into my imagination, and the perseverance that brought him back to life and made him real became demanding and compulsive and assaulted me with an ugliness I wouldn't forget. That's all I know, except for one other thing. The fruits of my obsessions had always been free—and this time I paid.



WINTER BEACH AT SUNSET

By Carol Smith

Time Stands Still

Pen & Ink/Colored Pencil

By Mellisa D. Sawyer

Third Place, Poetry

Shallow silver peaked with foam,
Crested cliffs that crumble low,
Earthen pine meets salty brine,
and frigid air does blow.

Masters of the sand domains,
Fortify with sticks and shells,
Yells of delight fade with the light,
drowned in the roar of the swells.

The breath comes up against the land,
The sun dips low to bend,
The sigh pulls from the lips to die,
lifted away with the wind.



By Don Fethkenher
Vase with Lid and Handles
First Place, Ceramics



By Don Fethkenher
Survivor Pot
Second Place, Ceramics
(On left)



By Arti Goulatia
Timeless
Third Place, Ceramics
(On right)

HENRY

By Audrey S. Paterno

Honorable Mention, Fiction

A warm glow blooms in Jane's cheeks as she steps out of the comfortable classroom and into the evening chill. She hugs her notebooks and folders against her chest, her journal closest to her heart for safekeeping, and begins to walk the mile home. The sun is setting and as night takes over chills run through Jane making her muscles spasm with pain. She's quite used to it by now.

She makes her way to the main street that leads to her apartment complex, searching for the girl who sits three rows away from her in philosophy class. Usually the girl is reading on a bench next to the student lounge. Today she's nowhere to be seen. It's probably too cold even for her.

Jane walks past the student union, pausing to look at the small coffee table near the atrium window where she would sit across from Henry, comfortably eased back in the beat up old couches that surrounded the well-stained table. She rarely got to spend such concentrated time with him, their friendship always being somewhat awkward, but when there was a chance to sit in his company and write side by side with him, she leapt for it. It had been too long since their last rendezvous.

She reaches the street stopping to wait for the crossing sign. After an impatient beat, she turns and continues to walk the broken sidewalk on the college side of the street. The diner is only a few blocks down on this side of the street and she's been debating whether or not to check for Henry. Most likely he's sitting in the corner booth with his usual social discomfort, smoking cigarettes and drinking coffee. Black coffee, he always drinks it black. She noticed it the first time they had coffee together at the coffee shop near his apartment. She had bought his second cup and when she brought it to him with sugar packets and creamer

he thanked her and then neatly and nonchalantly stacked them together in the center of the table. That day she had begun to study his movements, his meticulous little habits, until the smallest moments they shared seeped into her dreams.

A truck driving by honks at her, bringing her eyes back into focus on a backlit sign. She's almost to the parking lot of the diner. Scanning the rows of cars and trucks and vans, she finds his beat-up, blue, Toyota truck and smiles. The parking decals on the windshield give him away. Her face pales and as the smile fades a lump grows in the depth of her throat. Henry has been anti-social for a reason.

He's fallen into a low that she's never known anyone other than herself to have. When they do find time to talk, he talks of death and the ever-haunting contemplation of suicide. His eyes have begun to drag with lack of sleep and he's lost weight for lack of eating. But the worst of it is the pacing, back and forth, back and forth, all the while checking his pulse. The carpet in the living room of his apartment has begun to wear thin.

A few weeks ago Jane sat on his couch watching him. He mumbled about his heart, its quick, irregular beats, that seemed to assure him that death was coming for him. He rationalized suicide with wanting to skip all the suspense of waiting for his body to give out. It took every drop of control she had to keep her distance and simply watch.

He should be calmer in the diner. Jane crosses the parking lot and stops at the entrance. She hasn't seen Henry since that day in his apartment. She needs to see him, make sure he's okay. She tries to smooth out her hair but the breeze is working against her. Inside, the warmth permeates her skin.

He's sitting in the corner booth as usual.



By Raquel Royong

7 Cycles

Conte, Charcoal, and Pastel

He stares into a world no one else sees and lets his coffee cool. Jane shivers slightly and pulls the sleeves of her oversized hoodie down over her hands. Jaw locked into a crooked, forced smile, she approaches his table and stands at the end of it, pulled far enough back that a server passes in front of her.

"Hi." She squeaks a little as the word disappears into the chaos of the late night diner. Only his eyes turn to hers and a sad smile creeps into his cheeks. For a moment nothing happens. They stare at each other, uninterrupted by the life that continues outside them. She motions to the bench seat on the opposite side of him, and with his nod, sits down with a bounce.

"How are you?" Her smile fades and the corners of her eyes age. She knows the answer to her own question.

"Alive." The pencil in his hand shakes, his other hand raises to his neck, fingers searching for a pulse. She slumps forward, hanging her head over the table, closer to him, her arms and hands cached beneath the orange laminated wood, perspiring silently out of sight.

"Still checking your pulse." She doesn't know what else to say. She empathizes, but she can't tell him that, she's tried before and it always makes him even more anxious.

"What are you up to these days?" His arms relax on the

table, but he sits with his spine twisted into an idea of the double helix. Her eyes twitch across his face. She wants to confide in him, tell him about her fight with Charlie. Her lips are wet but she licks them and chews on the corner of her bottom lip.

"Nothing really. School, work, writing, the usual. I'm working on a screenplay. There is a character I think you'd like. He's mostly you. Or at least how I see you. I named him Patrick." She relaxes against the seat cushion and begins to play with her hands, studying their lines. She spoke too quickly.

"Really," he mocks her. "I'd like to read it sometime. Are you almost done?"

"No, I'm just working on the scene synopses right now, but when I'm done with them I'll let you read it, if you want." She wants to make it perfect first. He has never seen her as a worthy writer and more than anything she wants his respect.

"I'd like that." Again, the smile, but this time it doesn't fade.

"Have you been writing?" She looks over her hands and into him, her shoulders slumping just a little bit lower as his eyes touch hers. When he looks away she keeps watching him, her body swaying like a young tree in a light breeze. He's not smiling anymore.

"Some." He goes back to his journal, reads a few lines, fixes something, and reads it again. The breeze between them changes and she can feel his attention wane.

"Can I read something?" She holds her breath, but doesn't notice. He flips through the pages stopping to read as he goes, distracted by the arrangement of words he has scrawled out. She waits, beaming with a hidden smile.

"There really isn't anything new."

"So let me read something old. I haven't read them all."

Continued on Page 12

"She can feel his eyes on her, following her as she picks herself up and gathers herself together to leave."

She put her hand out, waiting for the book, but he pulls it toward him shaking his head. A sigh escapes as she exhales.

He lays the book flat and begins to write something on a new page. She watches him, then opens her own notebook and finds a blank page. She begins to write, "My dearest Henry," and thinks better of it, crossing it out, then blacking it out completely into a two dimensional box of ink. She looks up at him writing, oblivious to her presence. Writing him letters has only ever caused trouble.

She chews on her pen cap, bewitched by his concentration. He stops for a moment and checks his pulse, then sips his coffee, all the while reading what he's just written, and then continues with his flow. Her eyes follow his hand as it shakes across the page. She memorizes the flaws in his fingers, the small patches of dark hair between his joints and his knuckles. Her clear blue gaze focuses on each of his dark brown eyes one at a time, going back and forth over his face until she knows she could see him in the dark.

"What are you thinking?" His voice makes her sit up straight and she refocuses on his eyes that are now looking back into her. He noticed her zoning again.

"I should probably go. I have laundry to do." Her eyes are glistening and getting heavier as she speaks. "I'll call you tomorrow."

"All right." He looks concerned. "Are you going to be okay?" She wants to stay, to answer him honestly, but she knows he's just being nice, that everyone knows those words in moments like this.

"I'll be fine." She smiles, trying to laugh, but a halfhearted noise drops out instead and she loses to a frown. "I'll talk to you later."

"Okay. Bye..." She can feel his eyes on her, following her as she picks herself up and gathers herself together to leave.

"Bye." A half covered hand hidden in a black sleeve gives a quick little wave, her eyes meeting his before turning around. Time skips a beat; she turns back around and kisses his cheek lightly breathing in his scent.

She doesn't look at him before she turns around and heads for the exit.

As she pushes through the swinging door her eyes blur and overflow, softly staining her confidence, making the lump in her throat throb, her lungs still recovering from the strength of his grip. Her sleeve smears the ache and a deep breath reassures her that her pulse is still there. As she walks past a window that displays him like a painting, he looks up to see her. She smiles and keeps walking.



By Jenna Moody

Untitled

Silver Gelatin Print

Honorable Mention, Photography

OZONE PARK,

FOR RACHEL

Jasmine Rae Hobin

First Place, Poetry

We push past the crowd of smiling faces
Commandeer the swings
Once we are on we can
Fly
We go higher, pump harder with
Legs
Sculpted by years of walking to mediocre jobs
Running
From school, running from home
Chains
Pinch our hips that bore children, or tried but
Couldn't
Holding on, squeezing with
Hands
That have been soft, have been calloused, have been
Held
Toes towards the sky now, our
Feet
Have felt hot saliva, been scorched on asphalt, blessed on foreign
Dirt
Carried us back together to
Childhood
On this overgrown sawhorse of swings
That slows
As leaden feet
Reach
For stable ground

DON'T BE SILLY

By Jennifer Thomas

Second Place, Fiction

My mom is waiting for me, leaning up against a cement planter.

"You couldn't have at least changed?" she says.

"I'm sorry, I was running late," I say and pull my hair out of its ponytail.

She walks to the ticket window. "You look like you're in your pajamas."

"It's standard nurse attire."

She leans down to talk to the ticket seller, trying to make her voice heard under the glass, and requests two tickets. You'd think after all these years she'd know she doesn't have to do that.

She turns back to me. "If you were a doctor I bet you'd wear nice clothes every day."

"I have other clothes in the car. Do you want me to change?"

"Don't be silly," she says, taking the tickets from the counter and handing one to me. "We'll be in a dark theater. No one will see."

Settled in the theater with our popcorn and vats of soda, I try to decide when to spring the excuse. Should I get it over with and hope the previews will save me from talking it to death or should I wait until after and yawn a few loud, obnoxious times through the show?

"I've got some errands to do after the movie so don't feel obligated to come over," she says, halting the debate in my head.

"But I thought we were going to spend the whole evening together," I say before I can stop myself. What can she possibly have to do that is better than spending the evening with me?

"There is a bended knee and a black velvet box and a ring with a cute round diamond and a question that I can't answer."

"I need to run to the grocery and maybe stop by Sears and pick up a new sweeper. Mine is on its last legs. But I can do it another time if you want."

"No, it's fine if that's what you want to do."

"Okay, then, it's settled."

And the previews start and save me from talking it to death.

The apartment smells wonderful as I open the door. Jacob greets me with a kiss and grabs my bag with the unused change of clothes and my purse.

"Report immediately to the bath-

room, take a hot shower and change into whatever you want. Dinner is in thirty minutes."

Depending on who is giving it, I tend to take direction really well. I go straight to the bathroom without a word. The hot shower cleans off the day and I go to dinner in sweats and a tank top, hair wet and face red from the steaming water.

"I made your favorite, steak and mashed potatoes."

Is it my favorite? "Thank you. It looks delicious."

He dishes out a good mound of potatoes, yellowed with butter, creamy with milk. He forks a steak and drops it on my plate. I dig in first with a spoonful of mashed potatoes to tide me over while I cut the meat. The buttered movie popcorn still solid in my stomach but I don't care. A meal outside of the hospital cafeteria is a treat for both of us and we are going to enjoy it. I look over at Jacob who hasn't touched his food but is instead staring at me.

"What?" I garble through my mouth full of food.

"You're beautiful."

"Yeah, okay. Let's eat."

"No, I mean it..."

He continues on. The rest is a blur. There are grand proclamations of love and devotion. Words like *eternity* and *the rest of our lives* thrown out. There is a bended knee and a black velvet box



and a ring with a cute round diamond and a question that I can't answer. We finish our meal in silence and then my mom calls.

"So?" she says.

"You knew?" I say.

"Of course. He asked my permission. Isn't that a gesture? I didn't know men still did that. So, have you set a date?"

"He just asked. How could we have set a date?"

"I like October. It's cool but not too cool. Where should we have it?"

"Mom, I haven't given him an answer."

"You broke up?"

"No. I just want to think about it. It's a big decision, don't you think? I think people make it too quickly."

"Oh dear. If you want to move in with me, you can."

"I think I'd rather get married."

Monday is Jacob's day off from the hospital and he barely acknowledges me when I get out of bed. I leave for work hoping that when I return that night everything can be like it was at the moment I sat down to dinner last night. Pre-proposal I like to call it.

He's lucky he didn't come in today, or maybe I'm lucky. Apparently, everyone knew about the proposal. Some of the nurses had even gone with him to pick out the ring. When I walk into the locker room, excited voices and words attack me. I lift my naked left hand and wiggle my fingers. Never has a hand had so much power to silence.

"It's not big deal. I'm just taking some time to think about it. Don't make it an issue tomorrow." I drop my bag in my locker and leave the room and

By Raquel Moreno

*Discover Me
Silver Gelatin Print*

Continued on Page 16

my co-workers behind. How did such a personal issue become so public? I guess that's what I get for dating someone at work, though we were dating before we started working here. Is there a special rule for that?

Home life and work continue to carry a similar misery. Jacob is hurt, I'm confused, my mom is nagging, and my co-workers continually offer doe-eyed, head cocked looks of sympathy. Jacob and I are existing, pretending we are intact. We agree to act like the proposal never happened and continue as the happy, carefree couple we had been for four years. Approximately once a week he

forgets this agreement and we have a conversation that goes something like this:

"How would being married make us any different than we are now?"

"It just would."

"That's not an answer."

"I'm just not ready to settle for my life as it is now."

"Is this about Dr. Steve?"

"No. It's about being sure."

"Am I not good enough for you?"

"It's not about you. What if I want a different career, to live in a different city, to go back to school, to write the novel I always wanted?"

"Why can't you do those things if we're married?"

"Can I? I don't know."

"It's not like I don't want other



By Sukhvir Gill
The Awakening
Silver Gelatin Print

things out of life, too.”

“I know. I don’t know what to tell you.”

“Fine then, let’s not talk about it.”

“Fine.”

It’s been a couple months since I’ve last seen Mom and she insists on me coming for a visit, alone. We both thought that when she moved to Arizona we’d see each other all the time. Catching a weekly movie, chatting our way through shopping trips like the girlfriends we had never quite become. But I’ve been avoiding her for more reasons than usual lately. I don’t have any answers for anyone and being constantly questioned doesn’t help. I’m initially startled by her appearance when the door opens. She looks years older than I remember. Her hair a mess, the gray she usually disguises beginning to take over and become the dominant color. The thick black eyeliner under each lower lid unintentionally smudged as if left over from yesterday’s application. I’ve never thought of her as old, simply Mom, but as I walk past her into the apartment I’m struck by her mortality in a way I’m not ready to face on a Sunday evening.

“I hate that shirt,” Mom says, shutting the front door and looking me up and down.

“I know you do, Mom.” At least she is the same Mom on the inside.

“Why do you always have to wear it?” she asks.

“It’s comfortable. Why do you care?”

“It would be nice if you made some attempt to dress up for dinner.”

“What’s the occasion?”

“Just getting you here for dinner is an occasion.”

I ignore her and take my normal seat at the dining room table. A quick peek under the placemat confirms my location. Rudely carved into the maple is

my name and directly across the table from me, if I chose to look, I’d find the letters “MO”, my artwork having been stopped a letter short many years ago by Mom who refused to recognize my masterpiece. “What are we having?”

“Pork chops and baked potatoes.”

That’s always one thing Mom could do really well. I’d spend months craving her homemade biscuits. No matter how many times I tried to reproduce them it was impossible. Jacob had to choke down his fair share before begging me to pick up a new hobby. I chose journal writing. He wasn’t really too happy about that either. I’d sit up nights in bed furiously scribbling page after page and he never got to read a word.

“I try to ignore his judgment gnawing at my brain. Maybe I should go out with Dr. Steve. Maybe it would make me appreciate Jacob more.”

“The weather’s been nice,” she says, bringing me a soda. It’s been in the mid-nineties and extra humid every day for a week.

“Something on your mind?” I ask.

“I thought we’d talk about it after dinner.”

“Are you all right?”

“Yes, of course. It’s nothing like that.” She pulls out two plates from the cabinet.

“Why can’t we talk about it now?”

“Fine, we’ll talk about it now.” She joins me at the table and we sit in silence.

“You’re scaring me,” I say.

“I’ve been thinking,” she begins.

“Yes?”

“I don’t really have the money to buy a house and you don’t either, I imagine, and so I was thinking, maybe that we could join forces and get a house together.”

I choke a little on a gulp of soda. “Wow. I don’t know what to say. What about Jacob?”

“What about him? You turned down his proposal. I figured it was only a matter of time before it was over.”

“I didn’t turn him down. I just haven’t given him an answer yet.”

“Well, that doesn’t seem like a very good sign, does it?”

“I don’t know.”

“He could live with us, too, if it works out. I wouldn’t mind. I guess two nurses are better than one. Even if one of them is a *male* nurse.”

I don’t even listen to her snide comments anymore. “I think we may want our own house someday.” Really? I don’t think I’ve ever said that out loud before. Maybe I should say it to Jacob.

“Oh, okay. That’s fine.” She jumps up to pull the potatoes out of the oven and turn off the chops.

“Let me think about it,” I say, knowing that I could think about it for an eternity and my answer wouldn’t change.

“No. I have your answer. It was just a silly idea I had.” She unfurls each potato from its foil and plops them down on the individual plates with a clank.

“It wasn’t silly. I just... I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be. I’ve already forgotten about it.”

Continued on Page 18

Today Jacob and I are wearing matching royal blue scrubs. We try to avoid the twin thing most of the time but some days we give in. We eat lunch together in the cafeteria whenever we can. Even though people whisper, people we think are our friends, he sits with me and never complains. He smiles across the table at me and I smile back. There's been a lot of that lately. Smile through the pain, isn't that what they say? Today, Jacob gets called away to the ER and Dr. Steve takes this opportunity to slip into the chair beside me. Dr. Steve is a heart surgeon and has been trying to steal my heart for years.

"If you were with me, I'd never let you eat alone," he says and actually winks at me.

"Eating alone isn't so bad," I say, scooping a spoonful of macaroni and cheese into my mouth.

"When are you going to dump that guy and go out with me?"

"Never."

"He can't be making you that happy otherwise you'd be wearing his ring."

"That's not true." I suck down the remains of my diet soda, slurping every last bit from between the iced cubes.

"Isn't it?" he says. I try to ignore his judgment gnawing at my brain. Maybe I should go out with Dr. Steve. Maybe it would make me appreciate Jacob more. As it stands, Jacob is only the second serious boyfriend I've ever had and I'm not sure how I am supposed to know that he's the one. My phone vibrates against my skin and I grab it and look to see who's calling.

"It's my mom. I have to take this." I pick up my tray and drop it off at the kitchen, happy for the escape. I answer the call and offer a final wave to Dr. Steve, leaving him behind at the table.

I find Jacob in the Pharmacy. He likes to hang out there when he has a few free minutes and learn all he can. The Pharmacist is a family friend and he teaches Jacob how to verify prescriptions, dispense pills and check patient histories to avoid adverse reactions. He likes to say that the only reason he went to nursing school was so he could have a job to work his way through pharmacy school. I tend to think it was because he wanted to meet women, though he'd never admit it.

"This is what you had to rush off to?" I say and glare at him with an exaggerated squinty eye and wrinkled forehead.

He laughs. "The page was a false alarm."

"My mom called and said she twisted her ankle. Can you stop by there?"

He looks at the clock on the wall. "I don't know."

"If it's an issue..."

"No, I'll figure something out. Are you sure she wants a male nurse to tend to her?"

I look at him and his willingness to deal with her and I can't make him go. "You know what, I'll do it."

"I don't mind."

"I know, but I'll take care of it."

I have a bucket of fried chicken and all the things that go with it: the drippy coleslaw, hard biscuits and thick mashed potatoes. It's my attempt at making her dinner.

"I wish your dad was here to help me," she says and hobbles to a seat at the dining room table.

"Me too, Mom." I add some water to the teapot and set it on the burner.

"I thought we'd grow old together. Instead he gets to live forever as a 40 year old and I have to get old and gray."

"I'm getting old too if that makes

you feel any better." I bring two plates to the table and spread out the food. She isn't moving so I make her a plate along with mine.

"You are not. You have your whole life ahead of you."

"I thought I'd have it all figured out by now." I sit down across from her.

She watches as I scoop up the coleslaw and drizzle it back onto the plate. I build my mashed potatoes up, tall like a mountain, and then squash them back down, making them conform to the shape of a pie piece, wedged in between the slaw and chicken.

"You're a nurse. I think that's a great start."

"What if I want more?" I rip a piece of chicken off the breast, forgoing any utensils.

"Then you'll do more."

"What about Jacob?" I stuff the chicken in my mouth and chew quickly.

"Jacob's not going to hold you back. He's a good guy."

I swallow what I can of the chicken. "If only he was a doctor, right?"

"Being a doctor wouldn't make him a better boyfriend."

"It would just make you happier."

"I'm not the one he needs to make happy." The teapot whistles, the water's ready.

Everyday I grow more accustomed to the diamond I wear on my left ring finger. For now, Jacob and I have decided to spend our money on a house rather than a wedding. I try to get my mom to come along on the house hunt but she refuses. She's too busy, too tired, has too many errands to run. We are looking for a house with at least three bedrooms. That way, should there be more than just the two of us living there in the future, there's plenty of room.



By Jenna Moody

Untitled

Silver Gelatin Print

MAKING ALLOWANCES

By Philip L. Boddy Jr.

Third Place, Fiction

Growing up on Chicago's lakefront in the 1950s brings fond memories of the energetic mix of cultures, baseball, and figuring out ways to get money for spending with friends. By third grade, this became an occupation. I got up in the wee hours of Saturday morning to hit the alleys, park, and Lincoln Park Zoo looking for returnable bottles. Taking the American Flyer wagon with the wooden side rails from the bike room downstairs, I'd load up within a couple of trips.

Smiles appeared on the faces of the elderly already strolling as the clinking-clanging of the loaded wagon resonated along the canyon walls of the high-rise apartments and old brick alleyways in our neighborhood. They LOVED their soda pop providing the endless supply of bottles I harvested. So I waved and greeted them in my early attempts at world trade. "Bon journo," "Ohayo gozaimasu", "Gutes, Wie gehts?" "Como te va?", and any phrases learned from the myriad of immigrants surrounding me became my trademark. After all, they were customers.

In winter I added a shovel and towels to dig up bottles from under snowdrifts. The towels cushioned my cargo as it often became brittle in the subzero nights by the lakeshore and gusting wind tunnels of the bricked canyons. In science class we learned the term "thermal mass." To us it only meant bricks got very cold in winter, didn't get much sun, and stayed cold all day.

Arriving at the A&P Market, I went to the back delivery dock to unload the bottles. Regular sized Coke and 7-Ups were worth a penny. The larger sized brought 2 cents. Everyone prized quart-sized bottles as they could bring a

nickel. Once up and inside the loading area, I found the supervisor. Dropping my snowsuit hood, stamping my galoshes on the mud rack, and pocketing my mittens usually announced my presence in the stockroom. Bernie, the assistant manager, was there on early mornings. He was Armenian like many of my schoolmates and adopted an "American" first name. His last name started with "A," was long enough to get a first down at Notre Dame, and ended in the familiar "kian."

"Hey, Flip, looks like business is good today," he called out. Flip was my *nomme de guerre* in the neighborhood. I was a junior and the Irish called me their speeded up version of Philip.

"G'morning Mr. 'A', yes sir, got a good load behind the Golden Cup coffee house. They had a banquet last night," I replied. "I'm going back for a

second load right away before other kids find it."

"Good for you, kid. I'll be here. Hey, let me mark your receipt for these bottles before you leave. You can collect when you bring the next load, OK?"

Bernie gave me that big Mediterranean smile I like so much.

"Oh, Flip. Be careful when you come back, eh. We gotta truck full of those damned frozen turkeys coming in so watch out in the alley."

"Thanks Mr. 'A', I'll be right back."

Mittens on, hood up, and I was down the ramp with the wagon in seconds. It wasn't even six in the morning yet and still dark.

I recovered more bottles from under snowdrifts behind the coffee shop and grabbed two quart 7-Up bottles from an iced over trashcan in the park. Bernie paid me \$2.25 for

"We gotta truck full of those damned frozen turkeys coming in so watch out in the alley."

only an hour's work. Entering my building from the alley service entrance to put the wagon in the bike room, I stomped coffee-with-cream colored semi-frozen slush off my galoshes. The Irish elevator man, Mr. Thomas, greeted me. We had three men for the front elevator twenty-four, seven on three shifts. A fourth man covered for days off and holidays. I respectfully called them "Mister" with their first names.

"Mornin' to ya, Flip. Up before the sun today?"

"Hey, Mr. Thomas, morning'. Yup, gettin' bottles and made \$2.25 in an hour!" I was grinning all the way to Michigan's shoreline.

"H'Well, Boyo, ya did great on dat one. What's on da itinerary for today?" Mr. Thomas asked, smiling.

"Half to my Nana for the bank then see what Stevie wants to do later."

"I'm sure your Da's right proud of ya. It's a lot better'n them other kids around getting that allowance without doin' a lick a work." He had a look on his face telling me to agree so I did.

The elevator stopped then adjusted to match the floor level at 14. It was really 13. Superstitious people had omit-

ted this renumbering our floor to 14 above floor 12. It didn't help, really. Mom had fallen asleep three times with lighted cigarettes already. I'll remember the acrid sooty aroma of the burly Irish firemen who carried us kids down the stairs on those occasions for the rest of my life. It was the smell of "I'm safe now."

Something buzzed in my head from Mr. Thomas' mentioning money without working. Hmmm... My third grade brain was planning. I'd ask Stevie, my best friend and crime partner, about "allowances" later. I decided not to bring it up with dad just yet. He was reared on the South Side and had been poor. Asking him for money usually involved getting the United Nations Security Council for a unanimous vote.

An hour later I had taken a hot bath and eaten a sugar-loaded breakfast. Miss Betty, our maid, tipped the morning paper down glaring.

"Philip, I doan want to remind you that yo teeth is gonna fall outa you mouth if'n yall keep eatin' that sugar."

"Yes Ma'am, you're right."

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By Ann Beauregard

Cody, Clay & Hytop

Silver Gelatin Print

Honorable Mention, Photography

Miss Betty was my mom's maid back in the late 1930s. Nana had found her living in Florida and asked her to come up to "live" with us. Other kids in private schools had maids they bossed around. Not Miss Betty. No way, no how. Nana told me, as the eldest child, to be responsible for my little brother and sister. Miss Betty was to teach me this. Whenever I became curious how a chore was done, Miss Betty would show me how and why it was done. The chore became MY obligation from that day. By third grade I washed, dried, folded, ironed, (WITH Niagara spray starch on church collars and cuffs), cooked on the gas stove, swept floors, vacuumed carpets, and mopped. If I stood up using the toilet in the house, Pine Sol and a mop for me. Her reasoning was simple.

"This ain't the Greyhound Bus Station restroom, boy!"

When friends came over, we'd announce our presence and Miss Betty greeted us, analyzing newcomers with the calm expression of a guard dog. When Stevie first met her he asked if she played baseball when seeing her Louisville Slugger bat in the kitchen corner.

"Only with intruders and fools, Mr. Stevie," she softly answered. Stevie had the Wisconsin deer-in-the-headlights expression.

The doorbell rang as I finished washing breakfast dishes. I went to the door as Miss Betty returned to her reading. It was Stevie. He'd come to check my morning's profits. Grabbing my snowsuit parka, galoshes, hat, and mittens, we left the apartment calling back, "Goin' to Stevie's for the morning!"

"Yall be careful, Honey," came her affectionate permission-to-go.

In the elevator Mr. Thomas greeted us both. Perfect, I thought. I can ask Mr. Thomas and Stevie together about this "allowance" thing. As the elevator was guided to alignment at the lobby, I asked Thomas if I could speak with him for a moment about an important topic. He said it would be fine.

As the elevator door opened at the lobby, I relinquished the control handle back to Mr. Thomas. We stepped right into Judge and Mrs. Miner entering the elevator in a hurry. With the step-asides and courtesies exchanged, I glanced at Mr. Thomas.

No allowance discussion with him now. I sat on the divan and suited up for the face slapping lakeshore white zingers of early November outside the revolving main door. The snow shovel was still wet in the large pan by the garage entry. Mr. Thomas had been busting his butt all morning to keep the ice off the sidewalk. I made a note to get him a hot coffee with some Irish "medicine" in it.

Nana and I liked Seagram's Crown Royal. She had responded to the school nurse's reports of my uncontrolled fidgeting and bouncing around the classrooms with the "old medicine" for hyper children. I preferred hot toddies and a nice Crown Royal Mist poured and NOT stirred. Often lethal doses of Turkish coffee with cream and sugar sufficed.

Once outside the still spinning door Stevie and I headed east along Fullerton toward his apartment. The lake blown flurries bit our faces making our eyes watery. On the way to his apartment I popped the allowance question.

"Hey, what do you know about getting an allowance?"

Stevie glanced at me from inside his parka hood, melted snow droplets on his coal black eyebrows. He was surprised. Smiling, he shook his head back and forth like a parent.

"Mom and dad told me not to ever discuss it," he answered. That was it. Nothing else. This wasn't going to be easy.

"How come, man, like, is it some kinda secret?" I asked, spitting lakeshore frozen ice-stingers out of my mouth.

"Yeah, Flip, it is. Dad said never to discuss money with anyone even the family."

We scrunched along in our galoshes, the best-damned import by the Russian and Polish immigrants to the North Country. Stevie continued his analysis of kid economics.

"It's really different from family to family. It all depends..."

"Do the other kids get an allowance? How about the kids in public school?" I interrupted.

"Oh, yeah, most kids get a small allowance. It's kinda' a tradition," he continued with the red chapped face of pedestrians assaulted by Chicago's typical winter "lake effect" climate.

"So, how much is yours?" I asked point blank. I wiped the gooeys off my nose and upper lip with my sleeve, sniffing.

"Twenty bucks a week," he said like there was nothing to it. But he was grinning in anticipation of my reaction. He took a precautionary step sideways on the iced sidewalk. I stopped, turned to him, and backfired like an old Studebaker truck.

"TWENTY DOLLARS a WEEK! Holy shit, Stevie, how long have you been gettin' this?"

"Since I was four. Mikey gets his now, too." he calmly stated. Mikey was his little brother who'd just turned five in August.

"Geez! What a racket, Stevie," I stammered, melted snow droplets spraying his parka front.

"Hey, Flip, now don't get loonies on me, it's just one of those things." He just rolled this off his tongue like it was

"TWENTY DOLLARS a WEEK! Holy shit, Stevie, how long have you been gettin' this?"



By Elizabeth A. Everson

Psycho House

Silver Gelatin Print

Third Place, Photography

a weather report. I was gonna piss in my already icy soaked jeans hearing all this. But Stevie, reading me pretty well, had the solution.

“So, Flip, just ASK your dad about it. Don’t tell him you just want money or nuttin’ like that. I don’t wanna go to your funeral just yet, man.”

We continued to his apartment and up the elevator. His elevator man didn’t speak nor did we. His apartment rules were ‘old school.’ At the apartment door Stevie looked at me and I got the message. We weren’t to discuss the allowance thing or any money matters in his home. But I planned to ask my dad about an allowance the next morning right after I got home from 6:30 Mass.

I hurried home from church the next morning. I’d left a note for dad taped to his Sara Lee coffee cake asking to speak about an important matter before leaving. Mr. Harold, the Sunday fill-in elevator man greeted me, commenting on my being in a hurry.

“Gotta talk to dad about an allowance.” He chuckled and nodded, his aquamarine eyes dancing along with his smile making me always feel happy.

As I left the elevator and reached for the apartment door handle, Miss Betty opened it ahead of me.

“Your father is waiting for you in the den, Flip.”

I thanked her and entered our foyer. I unsnapped, unzipped, and wiggled out of my winter survival clothing. Stepping out of my galoshes on the rubber mat, I moved into the den.

Looking up from his red leather reading chair, he put the golf magazine down.

“Good morning Junior. You had something to discuss with me?”

No hugs or asking how things were from him. Nope. Not with dad.

“Yes dad. I wanted to ask you about an allowance.”

I cut to the chase. Why dilly-dally about? Without blinking he responded in his classic drawn out interrogative mode inherited from our Ontario born grandfather William.

“Oh?”

His simple monosyllabic utterance had been refined over time into the British butler sounding ‘*So, you want to abscond with the Crown Jewels?*’ tone. In our family’s dynamics this was a complete sentence from dad.

“I feel I’m old enough now and do chores at home. I think five dollars a week would be OK.”

This time he blinked. After a few seconds of peering at me intently, dad cracked a slight grin.

“Let’s go to the store for some things I need for gin rummy with the gentlemen later. We can discuss details along the way.”

With that we went to the foyer suiting up for the walk down the street.

Dad was wearing an ascot, London Fog woolen over-

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By Allison Conry

Untitled
Graphic Pencil

Continued from Page 23

coat, Spanish calfskin snow boots, an Italian narrow brimmed hat, and lambskin lined gloves. As we silently descended in the elevator I wondered if Mr. Harold agreed with my teasing friends that Cary Grant lived in our apartment.

As we left I whispered to Mr. Harold about my getting an allowance. He laughed quietly and shook his head approvingly. Moving out through the side doors to the street, we met Roy, the Negro garage boss. He quickly dropped and stepped on his cigarette to speak.

"Morning' Missah Boddy, Flip. How yall doin' today?"

Dad smiled and responded as we moved to the entry. I murmured to Roy as we passed.

"I'm gonna get an allowance, Mr. Roy."

He couldn't miss my attempts to subdue my excitement and winked at me, grinning in his nice "I'm happy to see ya" face that all the kids liked.

The wind had picked up as usual and swirled around looking for places in your clothing to invade with tickling ice fingers. Dad and I headed west on Fullerton to Clark. I envisioned our being in a *Sgt. Preston of the Yukon* blizzard scene. We crunched our way to the corner and turned south into Clark Street's wind tunnel. The A&P supermarket was at the end of the block so we wouldn't be suffering long. We didn't speak at all so I figured the allowance topic would be talked out at the store. I was following dad because his walking pace resembled military field marching.

About half way down the block he suddenly turned into the Greek grocery market. Maybe he could get the snacks here instead of going farther. I followed him inside. We knew the family as we shopped here often.

"Hey, Meester Boddy, Fleeps, Tikanes, evharistoh?"

"George, Kay, Junior, how's the family and business?" dad answered. Papa George, Mama Kay, and George Jr. were long time old friends of dad's. Like Mario, the Italian barber across the street, they had all migrated up from the South Side decades ago along with many of our neighbors. We still rooted for the Sox when the Cubbies weren't playing.

Dad grabbed some fresh fruit just in from Florida and California, Lays potato chips, orange juice, candy, and mint gum. I was back by the warehouse watching a truck coming into the dock through the steel barred window. I turned around to avoid the frigid blast as George Jr. opened the delivery door. Stepping back into the market aisle, I noticed dad was gone.

"Hey, Mama Kay, where's my dad?"

"Ah, don't worry about your dad, Fleeps," Papa George said, "We got something for you."

The red curtain dropped over my head as Mama Kay's



voice whispered from above and behind me.

"There you go, Fleeps, this should feel OK."

The cotton apron fell into place as the collar band wrapped my neck. Mama's deft fingers tied the strings to secure it to my waist. As she stepped around in front of me, Mario called out from the Clark Street entry.

"Hey, look at the new businessman. Looking good, Flip!"

I was speechless as I looked down at the well-worn red cloth draping my body down past my knees. They all laughed while nodding their heads in approval. Papa George spoke up.

"HoKay, here's the deal. You come in after school for maybe an hour. On Sundays you come in from ten to three in the afternoon." Mama Kay continued with my baptism.

"We know you have the bottle business and like to play with your friends on Saturday so you don't have to come in then unless you want to." She smiled, gave me a hug, and remembered a detail.

"Oh, you stock, price, clean, and deliver the phone orders to the apartments...and you get to keep all of your teeps, too."

I began to grin a little and they all came over to surround me, patting my shoulder, shaking my hand, and more hugs all around. I still wanted to get something cleared up.

"So, Mama Kay, how much do I get paid for this?"

"Your 'allowance' is five dollars a week just like you negotiated and you get to keep all of your teeps. Saturdays are extra if you work then."

With that, George Jr. handed me a duster and grease pen.

"Fleeps, you can start with that case of creamed corn over there."



By Pamela Bleakney

My Favorite Creatures

Pen & Ink

Third Place, Drawing/Life Drawing

HORTENSE

By William E. Sullivan
Second Place, Creative Non-Fiction

Hortense Prado was the most beautiful girl at Cleveland High. Before you paint this femme with your provincialism, her name is not Hoare-Tense, conjuring the vision of a gum snapping, hip shot, spit curl crowned creature from the Bronx wearing cheap shoes. Her name is Or-teen-say. Shortly after the end of what my kids call double-u, double-u, eye, eye, she and her family had emigrated from Old Castile. I had never stopped to think about it 'til now but Europe was full of D.P.s, Displaced Persons. D.P.s had seen their country, town or village disappear in a flash of light. Getting a visa to the US meant that you had or were a friend to the State Department. In Fascist Spain, her family must have done something very, very good or very, very bad. But I didn't speculate. My eyes followed my mistress like a sunflower faces the sun.

My gang hadn't sorted themselves into boy, girl, boy, girl. We had gal pals 'cause you needed somebody to dance with you. Any halfway decent athlete can dance. We were hooked on American Bandstand. The program originated in Pennsylvatucky somewhere and showed in St. Louis just after school let out. Rock and Roll was new. Ducks Ass haircuts were new. Both things drove our parents nuts. We'd descend on somebody's house, move the furniture out of the dining room and dance. Refining our technique, we would mark original furniture positions with masking tape and put everything back before the dreaded homecoming.

If Omar the Tent Maker designed mumus, you'd have an idea how Mum dressed Or-teen-say. Like superman, she would disappear into the girls' room. A head scarf would become a sash, a safety pin or two would take up some slack and the transformation would be complete.

Venus on the half shell would be shamed by comparison. Or-teen-say took high school Spanish as a snap course. I took the same course because she was there. If, there are points for brevity, she was lightning in a bottle. Some girls cause traffic jams. Or-teen-say was a hazard to navigation. This Leyden jar of sexual potential possessed as fine a haunch as any three-year-old Irish hunter and an accumulation of mammary fat that defied gravity. But, it was her eyes that told the tale.

The King of Spain had helped me out with my coloring when the Armada was wrecked on the west coast of Ireland. At the time, I was tall and thinly aesthetic, perfect for the male lead in the Spanish vignettes that our charming

instructress used to enliven drill in irregular verbs. Being a model of traditional dress and movement, Or-teen-say always played the feminine lead. I paid court to her and her family with all the "Respecto" that roaring hormones could wring out of me. Her father was a tiny man, nervous as a whippet with eyeglasses on a ribbon and some kind

"...her name is not Hoare-Tense, conjuring the vision of a gum snapping, hip shot, spit curl crowned creature from the Bronx wearing cheap shoes."

of minor title. He obviously thought of her as an asset to the family fortunes. Alas and woe, no fortune attached to me. But, I paid my court, learned the language of fans and eyes, reveled in luxuriant blue black hair piled high with Spanish combs and falls of delicate lace, provided the pixilated chaperone with endless cups of punch and tea and tried not to honk when I walked.

Silly me, I thought that the chaperone was there to protect Or-teen-say from me. If we could only sell what we have learned for what it cost us to learn it, the world would be a different place.

Big bands and huge ballrooms were a facet of what passed for nightlife in South St. Louis. The operators of the Casaloma Ballroom liked to have attractive young danc-



By Amanda E. Doppler

Self Portrait

Graphite Pencil

Honorable Mention, Drawing/Life Drawing

ers mixed in among the heftier, bejeweled patrons. The way the deal worked was that you were given a handful of tickets for the next week, every time you showed up. It was pure salesmanship on my part that loaded the Prado family into their Cadillac Lasalle and put them at a table at the edge of the dance floor. Another bit of gum to cover my smokers' breath and I was ready. A Camellia appeared; I offered my arm to my angel.

My luck was running strong; the first dance was an Argentinean Tango, "In the Silence of the Night." Danced in a stiff, military style, locked pelvises were required for the smoother moves. She was a natural. The inline turns, the crossovers, Terpsichore whipped my brain into a froth.

Then, the spot light dance. Amid the crawling lights from the great mirrored globe, couples were singled out with a baby spot. Tradition was that when this happened, you might kiss. Like a peregrine falcon I nested amid my gypsy witches' locks, poised, I knew my kiss would tell her all the things I wanted her to know.

Then I chewed my gum into her hair. Not a gentle mistake but three good chomps while my brain was in neutral. A full wrist thick rope of her crown was enmeshed. What to do? What to do? With a cowardly sigh, I disen-

gaged.

When the spot hit us, I had no heart. The gallows walk back to her family was disorienting. Shamefully, I fled the scene. My castle in old Spain, the girl that gave my heart a reason to beat, gone.

Since then, I have learned many ways of removing chewing gum from hair. Ice cubes seem to be the preferred method but too late. Mumsy must have panicked, for they Cut Her Hair and I became invisible. Or-teen-say couldn't see me. Ever.

I'm told that shortly after that, the chaperone must have dozed and the short haired, Americanized Horty threw Dan Eckman over her shoulder, climbed to the top of the Empire State Building and put a smile on his face that even the undertaker can't remove. Dan was beautiful too, in his Nordic way, and had the good grace to be discomforted by it. I'll bet he didn't chew gum. Circumstances conspired to put me in GED land shortly after that and I lost track of all of them.

Funny, the things that trigger memory, the sight of the back of a girl's head, the smell of Camellia. Hortense Prado is the most beautiful girl in the world and sometimes, in the silence of the night, I remember.

DUCK DUCK FURY

"Never, ever, did I see the pine duck turn its back on the oak."

By Elizabeth Steinmetz

Third Place, Creative Non-Fiction

There is an old Korean tradition that on the day of the wedding the bride and groom exchange of wooden ducks. They then place the ducks somewhere visible in the home, and the ducks face each other. Except when they are mad, the ducks sit buttocks to buttocks or buttocks to bill. This is so that visitors, upon entering the house, will know whether or not the couple is fighting.

It must have been around May 1957 that my grandmother heard of this tradition, as she was married a month later. And on that day, my grandmother, though neither her nor her spouse were Korean, traded ducks. Now I came onto the scene some twenty-five years later, and even then I wasn't really aware of the ducks until at least five years after that. But I know all about the ducks.

I don't know how the ducks look in Korea, but my grandfather's duck was made of pine. As a wood worker, types of wood is something you learned quickly in my family. And my grandmother's was

made of oak. In case you weren't familiar with how the various types of wood were shaded, you could also see that my grandmother's had beautiful

painted wings, in fanciful colors of pink, red, and green. My grandfather's was painted like a mallard. Still there was a third way of identifying who was mad at whom. The duck on the left belonged to my grandfather.

Typically, the ducks were beak to beak. On some occasions the oak duck would turn its back and stay that way for a few hours, and would then magically find its way back around to the front. Never, ever, did I see the pine duck turn its back on the oak. Not once in my thirteen years had I ever seen the pine duck turn tail. This was strange to me. But I always just assumed that my patient grandfather never really found a good reason to turn the duck. Or maybe he just never thought of it. That was when it happened though. I was thirteen and they asked me if I'd like to dust for a little extra cash. I don't even remember my reason for being at their house at the time, but I was paid well for dusting, so I pulled out the towel and polish and began my duty.

I'd dusted at their house be-



By Sherri McClendon

In Honor of Deirdre's Lament

Watercolor/Acrylic

Honorable Mention, Painting & Watercolor



By Carol Smith

Seclusion

Watercolor

Honorable Mention, Painting & Watercolor

fore, and I'd dusted that shelf where the ducks sat before. So I really don't know why I never noticed it until that day. I lifted up the oak duck, then ran my towel over the duck and set it down. That day they were beak to beak. Then I moved on to the pine duck, and when I lifted it up, the tiny cracks all along the duck caught my attention. They weren't cracks in the paint from age; they were cracks in the duck. I couldn't recall ever hearing about the duck breaking. So I picked him up and took him to my grandfather.

"Pappy, did you know the duck broke?" I showed him his duck.

"Yeah. I knew that." He was in the shop; the smell of wood chips and sawdust filled my lungs and my heart. This was where he was happy. He barely cautioned a glance toward the duck, he was so focused on the new horse he was making for the newest addition to our family. His second granddaughter, Nacole, was only three months old, but he felt she was ready for a rocking horse, and like all of his work, he was making sure it was perfect.

"How did it break?" Curious by nature, questions were my favorite thing, especially at my grandparents', where

I knew every question would be answered to my satisfaction.

He stopped his sanding, looked at the duck, and then reached for it. Pappy cradled the object in his hand; he had to rub his fingers along the cracks, maybe to remind him of just how they'd gotten there, asking the cracks for permission.

A few years after the wedding, just a few months after my Mom had been born, my grandfather had gotten angry. He'd had a bad day at work, then he'd come home to two screaming kids and a wife who had dealt with them all day. She'd asked him to help her, and he had but not happily. He told me he didn't really remember what had started the argument, just that it had really made him mad. My grandmother had been in the living room yelling, and he was yelling, and then my mom had started to cry so she'd gone to tend to her. In his rage he'd hastily attempted to turn the duck around. He noticed my grandmother had beaten him to the punch; he'd been infuriated and thrown the duck across the room. It had hit a brick wall and fell to the tile.

After that, when my grandmother came back into the room, she'd been

really upset about it. She'd thought the ducks were a symbol of their marriage, and now half of it was broken. Pine is a soft, fragile wood. My grandfather had taken care to glue the duck back together, as my grandmother hadn't wanted to go out and buy a new one. He'd then painted it, so that the cracks wouldn't be as noticeable. It was while he'd been gluing the duck back together, the hours it had taken to make sure it wouldn't be lopsided, or missing even a piece, that he'd decided that there wasn't a thing my grandmother could do to him that would ever make him want to turn the duck around.

I went back into the house and put the duck back on the shelf. They were facing each other; like they should have been. It was a revelation my grandfather had made many years ago. He lived each day with his duck facing hers, and even if she made him angry, he told me he'd just look at the cracks, and remember that day, and it didn't matter so much anymore. After that, my grandmother's duck only turned a few more times. For the last five years, their ducks have shared the space on the shelf, seeing their life in each other's eyes. Neither one has turned its back.

THE HERETIC

By Michael Pfeifer

Honorable Mention, Poetry

And so do I renounce my faith,
Consigned to wander all my days,
Abstaining forever from the sacraments
that are woman.

Neither shall I recant or confess.

I will never seek to enter the Holy Place

Or exchange the kiss of peace again.

Alone, I shall worship none;

No priestess will hear my sweet confession,

For I was in love with Love,

And He has been unkind to me.



By Liza Wilkinson-Ready

Drowning the Facade

Silver Gelatin Print

Second Place, Photography



By Misty Osberg
Liberated Gargoyles
Watercolor

By Katherine Wilcox

Molly

Watercolor

Second Place, Painting & Watercolor



"Tires started mewling like mashed cats. I was suddenly airborne."

BLUE

By Rachel Ricker

First Place, Fiction

Today I decided to shoot myself in the head. Now this isn't something I thought I would do for a spot of fun. You know, walk the dog, eat breakfast, shower, then BANG! Nor is this something I'm doing because I think the world sucks, life is crappy, goodbye all, thanks for nothing. The decision is rather rational.

At the ripe age of twenty, I was in a car accident. I really don't remember much about it. I remember stopping at red. I was listening to Warren Zevon sing about how he drank up all the money. Tires started mewling like mashed cats. I was suddenly airborne. I didn't have to flap my arms or think happy thoughts.

By the way, flying is a very nice sensation indeed. The air wrapped around my body and tossed me up like a baby. Was it windy that day? I don't know. Anyway, my favorite thing about flying was the way the world looked. The world is an oil painting, in case you didn't know, an ugly piece of Pollock junk, and when you fly it looks like God has strewn paint thinner on it. Then he squeezed out all sorts of new colors on it from his fingertips, and blew it around with his mouth, mixing it with more thinner until everything was a rainbow.

Pure and bright and pretty again. The way God wanted it to be, I think.

The air didn't catch me in its arms. Much too messy, and Alan never ever cleans. Mind you, I still intend to kill myself. Though it is far too loud. If I ever hear an angel scream, a gunshot is what it'd sound like. Perhaps that's why people hate guns so. Maybe. I don't know. Things aren't too terrible, I suppose. But this tickling must stop, or I will change my mind!

"You were doing it again, weren't you?" Alan asks me.

"Doing what? I wasn't doing anything except sitting here reading about how politicians were discovering new ways to act moronic in the news." It's true, you know. I never met a good politician. Sort of an oxymoron. I take that back. I did. Once at a funeral, only I was standing six feet over him so that probably doesn't count.

"You were. I know because your face went blank for a minute or two while you boiled the eggs," he turns to look at me, "Your face never does that, unless..." he stops. The magazine he tosses aside shuffles in the air and makes a most satisfying "shoo" as it slides on the floor.

Alan don't look at me like that. I hate that look. That hurt face. He does something so strange when he's sad. He

sucks in his cheeks, and it makes him look hollow. And he's already such a slender man! I mean, I am the woman of this relationship. Shouldn't I be the thin one?

"For some reason," he plunders on, "you always look like you're thinking, even when you sleep." No Alan, don't take my paper. After all, I am in the middle of a horribly uninteresting article. "Your eyes really give it away. You look dead." He's such an empathetic man. A rare trait for such a rare creature.

Honestly, all this talk of eyes and faces! I adore Alan's eyes. His eyes are like a cool ocean or an ice cold blue. But "a cool ocean" or "ice cold blue" are such clichés. Alan has eyes that are so much more. Besides, they can be warm, too. And I don't do clichés.

"That's not true," I claim, "I only look dead when I haven't any make-up on. Like now."

I know. They remind me of these blue roses I got from my mum for winning that stupid competition at school. Whenever I touched them, the smoothness of them reminded me of the plastic covering on a pack of fags.

Such pretty things they were. Though they didn't last very long. The blues in them changed color depending on the light. In the warm light of



By Daniel Ortiz

III

Acrylic

the kitchen, I put them in a jar, you see, on the windowsill so they got lots of sun. They looked like the soft iridescence hummingbirds have under their necks. But you have to catch them in just the right light to see such loveliness!

“Stop skirting the issue,” he pleads to me, his hands walking up my arms. Then they gently pounce on my skull and smooth out my bed head.

“I am not skirting the issue.” Maybe I am skirting, but I can skirt if I want.

“Do you remember that day, Charlene?”

Oooo! Now he’s using my full first name. If he uses the rest, then I’ll know he’s really pissed!

“You don’t, but I do.” His once clear eyes are filling up that cool ocean I was talking about.

“Of course, you couldn’t because comas sort of put people on an extended Valium vacation. ‘The Kumars at No. 42’ was on. A rerun,” Alan continues. His voice is erratic, breaking in different waves of sound, from a crackling fire to honeyed razor blades cutting at his vocal cords. “You’ve seen it,” he tells me, “the one

Continued on Page 36

where the grandma flirts with Donny Osmond shamelessly." Ah yes, I have seen that one. That was a rather funny episode.

"At 10:46, you stopped beeping on your little...I don't know what they call it. The life signs thing," he sighs. I can feel scores of bumps rise in the skin of his wrists. They keep brushing my cheeks as he strokes my hair. Goose skin always feels like a man's unshaven face.

He could be a Svengali, that man. His caressing is that hypnotic. I know what the medics call it, sweetie. Please don't Alan. I'll give up my other leg to stop the hurt in those eyes.

Alan continues, "I was so mad because I didn't know why. You were

doing so well physically. 'Critical but stable she is.' That's what Doctor Rails told me. Exactly that."

Only mum could make me feel this sort of guilt. I never ever told her thanks for my beautiful blue roses. You see, she was always doing kindly acts.

"But your face, it just didn't look stable at all," he sputters. His shoulders and chest keep convulsing the way ships do in a heavy wind.

He opens my eyes with two fluttering kisses. I had closed them? Right then, I could see all of him. Not mum, not roses, not hummingbirds. I realize he's been the only thing that ever stayed in front of me. Or behind me if I were to crash from a new piece of prosthesis. Or for that matter right beside me in tuxedo if I wanted.

"You left me, and you didn't look like you wanted to come back. And that's how you looked this morning," he finishes. He's trying to wipe up the mess his eyes made on his face.

I think I will stop this skirting business.

"Alan, I am so sorry," I murmur. "Sometimes, it just gets really hard to keep going even when everything around you is going so well." I pretzel my arms around his head, trying to shut out all the thoughts he can feel me thinking.

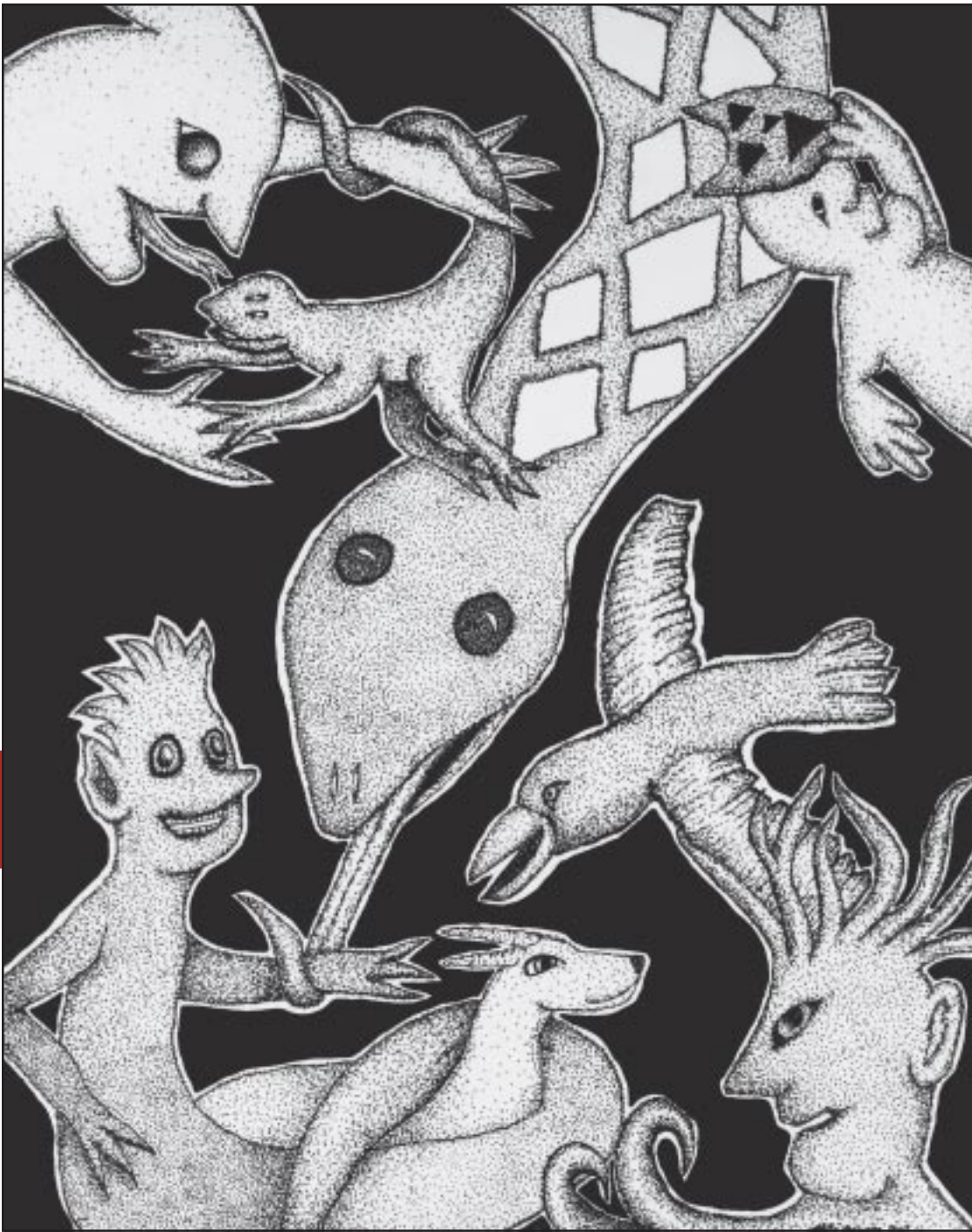
The other color those roses turned was this cool morning blue. The sort of ones that still has the haze of grey pollution in them. The harsh kind only London can give you. That's the kind of blue he can get. Though it's only ever for me.

By Kelly Terreri

Divine

Silver Gelatin Print





By Misty Osberg

Happy Little Creatures

Paint/Pen

Second Place, Drawing/Life Drawing

By Cheryl Street

Frog Prince

Ink Jet Prints

First Place, Computer Art



By Daniel Brawn

Light

Laser Print on Photo Paper

Third Place, Computer Art



By Anthony Valle

Igor Stravinsky Poster

Ink Jet Print

Second Place, Computer Art

ISABELLA'S MORNING

By Mellisa D. Sawyer

Second Place, Poetry

My darling—

I have known the sweetest things,
aurora's fire on your skin,
as quietly you dream.

I have known the nectar drops of dawn,
slide slowly down the pane,
reflected on your slumber-land,
as tears of morning rain.

I have known the softest ray to pass
Upon the lids so deep,
with which you held composed
dreams of innocence in sleep.

And I have known the moment darling
when all finds perfect place.

The faith in yet another day,
writ on a child's face.



By Kelly Terreri

Bulbs

Silver Gelatin Print

By Erini Gregoriades

Untitled III

Soft Pastels

First Place, Drawing/Life Drawing



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Pages are built on a 6-column grid per page, 12 columns per spread. Pages are 8.5 inches wide by 11 inches tall. Main story headlines are 60/72 points Eras Bold ITC small caps; pull quotes are 24/26 points Gill Sans MT Condensed Italic; story bylines are 24 points Gill Sans MT flush right; story text is 10/14 points Book Antiqua justified; drop caps are three lines deep Eras Bold ITC, artist names are 18 point Gill Sans MT and title/award lines are 14 pt/16.8 pts Gill Sans MT Condensed Italic all flush left or flush right, depending upon art placement.

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By Janet Wandry

Seed Pods

Watercolor

Third Place, Painting/Watercolor



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