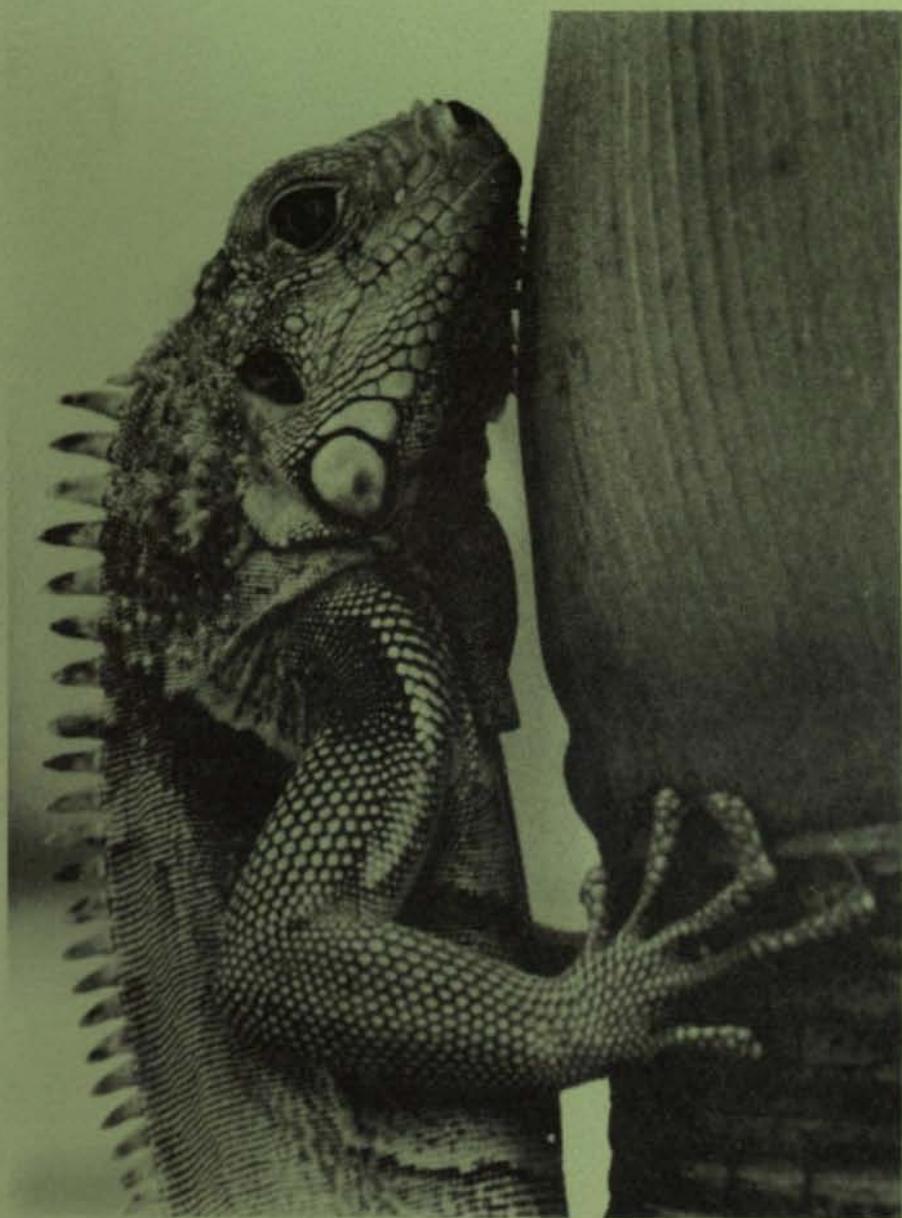


# GREAT LAKE REVIEW



Spring 1992

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**Garrett Wagner**

Editor-in-Chief

**Michael Munnely**

Treasurer



**Editorial Staff**

MORTICHE

*"I like it.*

*It has the word "blood" in it."*

JASON LEE AMERUSO

*"Why? this is senseless . . . "*

KENDRA GRIFFIN

*"This one sounds like Chantilly Lace."*

ALISON M. WAY

*"I wish this man would fall in love with me  
and write me poems like this."*

JUSTIN GOLTERMANN

*"Are you willing to die for this poem?  
I'm willing to kill for it."*

GARRETT WAGNER

*"Why are all the good poems ruined  
in the last two lines?"*

LILIANA ALMENDAREZ

*"Wish I was here  
when the quotes were given out."*

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# GREAT LAKE REVIEW

SPRING 1992

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## Silent, and Fading

Seasons fly and die in the artful passage  
(Long and painful waiting) of time. A moment,  
Vast and spacious, shared in a summer garden,  
Lasts but a moment.

Asking questions all of the time can drive one  
Crazy; I know. Letting them slide, without a  
Thought can kill you. In an instant, all is  
Silent, and fading.

Discord, sweet and natural, flows in constant  
Streams to keep us thinking, like drunken barflies  
Spotting pinker elephants. Knowledge fails us  
Daily, like clockwork.

Summer gardens, faithful and green, can slow the  
Course of chaos (throwing away the questions  
Posed and pondered, they can inspire truth) at  
Least for a moment.

- Brad Westcott



*Mark Childs*

## **A Wooden House**

Are the trees alive?  
They have so much inside them  
and yet, they won't move.

*- Adam Altman*

## WAITING FOR SPRING

We grow and outgrow,  
Gaining new plateaus,  
Fighting, clawing, surviving our way  
To the next level up or deeper in.  
We breathe, hoping for breath, for air.  
We open our throats for songs  
And find screams piercing our hides.  
We stand in a circle and take a step  
To find that we are neither  
Nearer the center nor the circumference.  
We have moved, traveled,  
But to where?  
We have turned space inside out,  
Progressed, moved on,  
Gained consciousness and understanding.  
But each new spiral gained  
Has lessoned our companions.  
We are like warriors  
Stripping down to loincloths,  
Oiling our skins and painting our faces  
And tossing away our spears.  
We continue  
For no other reason  
Than that there is no way  
To remain stationary.  
The landscape about us continues to shift.  
We are frightened creatures of the universe,  
Standing nearly naked as amoebas,  
Hoping we are more than our ancestral slime.  
Wind howls.  
We wait for the sun,  
Perched upon a hilltop  
Hoping to be first to greet the dawn,  
Thinking dawn will save us from our followers.  
We do not dare to bow our heads in prayer.  
We are renegades because we love our lives,  
Because we want to breathe the deepest,  
Because we want to shed the fear  
Of knowing at the end  
There is a private void for each of us  
Neatly labeled with our names.  
We hope that we have time on our sides,  
Maybe time enough to laugh and love  
Without the laughter spewing  
Out of dirty jokes or cruelty,  
Without the love wearing itself down  
For lack of human dignity.  
We cry to the wind, to give a show of faith  
That we do not stand alone,  
The multitudes of us.  
We seek  
We soar.  
We stand grounded in our hope.  
We somehow sing.

- Beverlee Salley

## Cold Friend

I come to you with tears in my eyes,  
you fail me with your distance.  
I come to you filled with love in disguise,  
and you nail me with resistance.  
I needed what you couldn't give, I wanted what you are.  
I seek the sun from warmer hearts and leave your icy jar.

- Sara Brigid DeCastro

## The Jester of the Tide

I cuckold my life with poetry and spirits  
it is because of all things I fear its  
hold.

I live in sand castles  
and ignore the wave's hassles,  
for it is the tide my love  
that is my bride the dove  
that lays waste to all my vassals  
of passion.

My evergreen faerie queen of elation  
holds me dear and forever near

for  
ever  
wiping  
away  
f  
e  
a  
r.

- W.J. Adams

## **POW.**

by  
*Alison Way*

His hair is that color of golden radiance so rarely to be found anywhere else in the world, save of the pages of some bestselling book about a Malibu-Ken-doll-of-a-man, and I remember thinking how glorious it looked, sort of like a halo . . . but perhaps it was more like a crown of precious wealth and brilliant jewels, a crown of glory, a crown of stern pride and resilient honor, of defiance and inevitable victory, and it seemed to fill the room, fill my eyes, with light, positively shimmering in the dusty streams of sunlight that poured in through the open window, infiltrating the silence of this broken moment in time, as if it wished to come between us and delay the arrival of destiny for but another minute or two, and I remember thinking, Well I guess we won't be walking down the block tonight for takeout Chinese; the only other bit of him that I ever saw was the deep impenetrable blue of his eyes - the blue of ice over churning waters, and I noticed that his pupils were dilating that very moment, as if in anticipation, and I wondered if mine were doing the same thing, as we were both living on the very edge of a tremendous moment - but I never really got to think of much else because as I was trying to get the words, I didn't have time to clean up, to come out of my mouth at a reasonable rate, his hand came soaring through the air like a jet on full rocket thrust and then I felt his flesh making contact with mine in a way we'd never touched before and I had to try and steady myself as I watched a curious, almost graceful spiral of blood sail through the air and onto the plush ivory carpet, accompanied by two of my teeth - I think they were bicuspids, and I remember thinking, Now I'm going to have to remember to make an appointment with Dr. Lillith . . . and that was the very first time Colin ever hit me.

## Sadistic Senses

Don't tell me that you're here by choice,  
(I'm not here to hear your lies).  
I don't like to hear your voice's  
Standard sickly loving sighs,  
So don't you let me hear a noise  
Escape your splitting scarlet lips -  
I'll gag you like the other toys,  
Stay silent for my singing whip.

### II

Don't touch unless I say you may.  
I hate the feel of sweaty hands  
On me, unless it's time to play  
The servant game. I've many plans  
for you. I'd like you leatherraw,  
Your slickstick blood will glue our skin.  
Yes! Cringe against me as I claw  
Your flesh, flinch from my discipline.

### III

I love to hate the scent you wear -  
It fills my nostrils. I'll fee free  
To deep breathe through your sweatsweet hair  
And lose myself in chemistry.  
Odors will hit me all at once.  
With smells of leather, metal, tears,  
Wet flesh and latex in my lungs,  
I only want to smell your fear.

### IV

I'll suck the cloth that holds your shrieks  
In place and taste it's spitsoaked lint.  
My starving, watered tongue will seek  
Out all the salts you're seeping in -  
They'll dry my mouth, I'll thirst for more.  
I'll bite. Your juicy flesh will pop -  
And as my hungry lips explore,  
My kiss will long to eat you up.

### V

I don't want to see your face  
So look away until I'm done  
With you. I feed on your disgrace.  
In watching pains I have my fun.  
To make you look right for my needs,  
I'll dress you up and tie you down.  
I'm only here to watch you bleed.  
Love's dark in the underground.



Free Speech

Renee Page

### Shakespeare Had No Gun

That's not the question: to be, or not to be.\*  
 Shakespeare should have and has his praised file.  
 In all of his plays, his touch is plain to see,  
 And Mr. Bacon, you've claimed your own style.

Countrymen, lovers, friends, lend me your ears.\*\*  
 It's been literature and other arts  
 That have lasted throughout the many horrid years  
 Of killing people and shattering their hearts.

Now does time waste me, for I wasted time.\*\*\*  
 I think it is about the time to start  
 To enjoy the arts and not squander a dime  
 On stupid wars or quarrels about art.

No matter who Shakespeare was or what he wrote,  
 A bullet can't be shot from a harmless quote.

\* : reconstructed, based on line #56, Act III. i. in Hamlet.

\*\* : reconstructed, based on line #13 and line #75, Act III. ii. in Julius Caesar.

\*\*\* : reconstructed, based on line #49, Act V. v. in Richard II.

- Adam Altman

Sing out the ps  
Chorused by chambers of conformity  
Directed by demigods demonic and dark  
Accompanied by ignorant acceptance  
Listen to lyrics ladened with loyalty  
Illustrations of illusion, imagery ideal  
Disillusionment is the dirge of the demigods  
Societal salvation only through imagination.

- Brenda J. Yanger



*A Flash from our past, present, and future*



Mark Childs

## The Wind's Symphony

Trees are the Wind's instruments

whose leaves and limbs are the keys

which the Wind plays

not randomly, but intentionally.

I stand quiet and still to listen to every note -

The leaves sound with an intensity

augmented, excited

interposing a blend of

sweet softness, gentleness -

In this way the Wind makes known to me

its temperament.

Oh the strength and spirit that does so belong to the Wind -

An excellent performance

Then a moment of silence -

Upon my applause the Wind eagerly responds with an encore.

I am caught up in the rapture of it all,

The Wind's Symphony,

What a piece- What a peace.

- Jennifer J. Baggett

**Wilderness**  
by  
*John Freiburger IV*

After several days of stagnation, I decided that I needed some fresh air and a hike up into the woods behind my house sounded like a good idea. Once I was bundled snugly, I proceeded out the back door and treaded upon the newly fallen snow which blanketed the earth. I started to climb the drumlin in my back yard which served as the threshold to the forest that surrounded the housing development where I lived. It had been years since I had been up the hill as I slipped and staggered cursing my black combat boots. My absence in the woods showed as I struggled to remember where the quickest and safest trail to the top was.

I arrived at the summit safely after a steep trip hindered by briars and tree branches. I looked out over the houses from the clearing as I did when I was a child. My friends and I nicknamed the clearing "bird's eye view" because of its revealing perspective of the neighborhood and encompassing landscape. About ten feet from the clearing were the trees that composed the shelter for the wildlife. I walked through the breach in the trees, allowing me access into the woods, and began searching for anything that would serve as a decent walking stick. I cracked a portion of a thick branch off and tested its solidity by pounding an end into the ground. My noise startled a doe from its feeding in the base of the tiny valley which the back side of the hill rolled into. In amazement, I watched it leap over broken branches and fallen trees. Once it reached the opposite crest of the valley, it slowly trotted away.

The deer vanished. The complete destruction of the forest I had loved seized my attention. Decimated trees littered the valley burying the trails and making them impassable. I sighed when I saw the gaping hole in the forest ceiling that disrupted the gigantic canopy. My thoughts drifted to childhood memories of spring, and trips into these same woods to pick the wild flowers for Mother's Day. Back then, the trees stood tall in the sky creating a jungle terrain complete with the humidity and the insects. A perfect haven for children with toy guns silently searching for their pretend enemy. Now the valley was full of scattered tree corpses rotting away. I almost ended my hike, but I felt compelled to continue the journey in search of any remainder of the one time sanctuary.

Stopping at the bottom of the valley, I viewed the woodland wreckage closer. As I gazed into the snow hazed sun watching my frozen breath, I felt as if I was trapped deep in the cold pit of Hell. It was man's hand at the end of the saws and axes that ripped and tore its way up and down each side of the valley. Suddenly I became mankind's peace ambassador sent to sympathize with the war-torn survivors. I clumsily picked my way through the thorn bushes, vines, and downed trees to the top of the valley. There I found the trails equally buried, but at the edge of the woods was farmland which ran parallel to the woods.

The farmland was on the top of another small hill overlooking the farmer's house about a half mile in the distance. Near the center of view stood an ominous tree that separated the edge of the hill from the farmland. From what I remember, that tree never grew leaves and justly earned the name Devil's crab tree. Sprouting forth from the tree ran a thick, wiry, thorny brush which

traveled the perimeter of the clearing forming a natural fence. The bent, twisted branches spiraled towards a bleak sky reaching for the invisible god that has shunned and disfigured it. After years of not visiting the area, the tree still spooked me and I waited nervously for some demon to pop out from behind it to drag me into its lair, or throw me onto the prickered fence.

I snapped out of the fantasy. Laughing the anxiety away, I traveled along the edge of the woods seeking a route that would bypass the ruins and allow me to continue my re-exploration. As I walked on, memories of overnight summer campouts, bike rides along the trails, and autumn strolls through the red - orange leaves stared back at me. I wondered why poets worship nature, yet men destroy it? Why children frolic in the forests, but adults avoid it? Why children enter the woods to play and run when men enter to hunt and kill? Also, why I look at the illusion of memories, yet walk over the reality of decadence?

I discovered the small entrance near the intersection of farmland and forest that I recalled from my mental map, and reentered. From there, I looked down into the division of the hill at the origin of the valley. A thought entered my head as I stared at the bare, weathered side of the opposite crest: why did it not tell me who did all this damage? Or why did it not resist? I remembered that an old fort built by the older kids of the neighborhood stood only about twenty feet to my left. I walked down the thin trail only to be obstructed by more prickers intertwined with branches and vines. It seemed as if the woods did not want me here, that it was preventing me from going any further. I was trapped in a mass of thorns and trees. Maybe that was the case, the woods were stopping me since I was an adult and only children have the right to passage. I remember when I was a child I was able to move through untouched. It was the loss of innocence - gain of knowledge conflict. Children are innocent, ignorant of the turmoil of life, therefore they mean no harm. I wondered, maybe the forest purposely prevented adults from entering since it is a place of refuge and escape for children leaving adults to the tortured asylum known as life. Maybe that is the reason the trees grow tall, they shelter children from life. Unfortunately, this forest had a hole in its cover and was dying, perhaps from life.

Being the adult that I was, I did the grown - up thing of smashing out of my pricker prison by breaking the branches and forcing my way along the trail. In the process, I scared a small cotton - tail rabbit. I apologized silently as I watched it bounce over the snow. I found where the fort, the black fort, stood. It jutted out from the side of the hill with a flat, sturdy roof which we could stand on. Inside, the builders dug out a hole about five to six feet deep with the structure providing an extra foot. It was not the most elaborate construction, but we admired it and thanked the older generation of kids for letting us use it. All that remained now was a partially filled hole grown over and covered with snow. Only the shell of the fort survived. It resembled a grave. But whose, the fort's? Our childhood's? Mankind's? The forest's? I paid my respect and decided that I had seen enough of my decaying childhood memories.

To my left, I heard a rustling noise in the brush. It startled me because I knew it was too heavy to be the rabbit, and the wind was not blowing very hard. I grew alarmed and pulled the hood from my head to enhance my hearing. Attempting to join with the woods, I tried to become one with it to discover what I was hearing. But the forest resisted, it had turned on me. For several minutes I stood silently gripping my walking stick. There was no sound, just a woodpecker in the distance and a slight breeze. I started to relax blaming my imagination when the noise reoccurred. This time I heard a guttural panting, some type of harsh, throaty breathing in the vicinity of the rustling. Did I arouse a third inhabitant of the woodland? My fear intensified as my limbs tensed. I could use the stick to defend myself if I had to, but against what? I spied through the brush without moving, but whatever it was, it was just over the edge where I could not see it. Behind me was a small outlet to the farmland. Man's land. Right now I was in the wilderness, the wild's land. I waited for something to appear, but nothing did. The beastly sound returned and I quickly

jumped into the farmland.

From the muddy farmland, I scanned the approximate area from where the sound had emitted. What could it have been? Human? Probably not. Animal? Most likely, since the breathing resembled a bizarre purring sound that only a giant cat could make. Maybe the woods were telling me to leave, demanding me not to return since I was an adult. Perhaps the woods recognized me, but would not harm me if I left. It would only scare me into leaving, and that is exactly what it did. What I heard next sounded like large multiple footsteps. Branches cracked and snapped as if something would appear and tear the flesh from my bones leaving me to die a short distance from the devil's crab tree. Was it the demon from the tree, or an old childhood fear? Maybe it was the soul of my childhood, everyone's childhood, embodied in some form that was telling me to leave and let the forest die in peace.

I shouted out to let me go, that I would leave. Just let me go, let me live. A typical adult reaction - to be afraid of what cannot be explained. A child, being innocent, would embrace whatever it was in curiosity without any fear. Perhaps that is what separates adults from children.

As I walked away constantly looking over my shoulder, a line from an old Door's tune ran through my head:

*Lost in a Roman wilderness of pain,  
and all the children are insane,  
all the children are insane*

Who is in pain, the wilderness or us? And are the children the ones who are insane? Definitely not. Maybe it was the entity hiding in the woods that was insane, but it was only protecting its dying parent. Who could blame it?

I walked into the forest at the farthest end from the creature. The ruined trees were piled everywhere like wounded soldiers left to die alone on the battlefield. Everywhere I looked the wilderness was a ruined childhood, buried artifacts of a lost memory. My escape from the egotistical material world did not end in complete failure. As I approached nature, it scolded me about the abuse and injury mankind has inflicted upon it. Just as Adam and Eve were condemned from the Garden of Eden, I too was evicted from paradise. Mankind needs, and deserves, a jarring shock to prove that it is not immortal. One day there will be a grave for mankind. Perhaps it will be next to the forest's.

As I reached my street, I saw a small sign declaring the land it stood before was private property, and that trespassers would be prosecuted. How true. They will be prosecuted by nature's law, not man's. They will be apprehended by whatever it was that I escaped from. I walked down my street lined by paneled houses on either side. I had returned to the safe, adult conformity of the real world, but was eternally separated from the mystical, magical, dangerous, childhood world of the wilderness.

## **Peace on Earth**

The Bomb  
is the humane  
answer to our quest  
for peace, so we should  
detonate IT.

- *Liliana Almendarez*

## **humble beginnings**

I guess it starts here,  
awkward and disjointed

like the first fuck:  
overeager feel fast free  
— stumped, unsure.

Let it go, flow;  
That's how one deals:  
learn a letter at a

time until words wash and  
wheel away anxiety. I know  
the genesis of greatness

begins with the stumbling  
illiteracy of youth, ambitious.

- *Brad Westcott*





David Harbert

## academia

Little to do and no one to do it with, nothing around  
to take and be numb with. So much  
work and nothing to work with, so little time . . . so  
little mind.

So much to think, too much to discuss, not  
enough people that scream and make a worthy fuss. No one to  
fall out of the strict regiment of

Greek Life  
Planet Strife  
Man's Wife  
P.C's Knife

I've heard it all before, you know. You're not  
educating, your just dedicating.

Choose another mask from your bone filled closet,  
deadheadhippyfreak  
youngrepublicannazigeek  
bullneckedbeerguzzlinggreek  
blackcladearingedModerncreep  
BASICjehovasneak

There's a cast of thousands on campus, everyone plays a  
part, and

we all  
know our  
lines by  
heart.

it's as if everyone  
doesn't want to be  
no one anymore.

But, everyone is no one to someone.

- W.J. Adams

## Golfing with George Bush and John Sununu

Within  
The White House, I  
Saw my husband stroke a  
Golf ball. The ball slammed into John.  
He cried.

The ball  
Ricocheted off  
John's head, and I caught it.  
"If you please, give me the next shot,"  
I said.

"Your turn,"  
George replied. "John  
Doesn't care." I shouldn't  
Have bothered to listen to my  
Husband,

But I  
Did anyway.  
I dropped the ball, took a  
Club, and pounded the ball into  
John's groin.

He screamed  
While I laughed. George  
Waited for a moment,  
Then he hit the ball. Soon, the house  
Was trashed.

- Adam Altman

## I Remember

I remember saying, "I remember."  
That should narrow it down,  
Not much room to get in between the words on that one.  
You know what happens the minute  
You give your mind a little space in which to move.  
It starts growing like the BLOB  
Taking over, edging out the words  
and creating a world of its own.  
Remember when you were a young student and  
Couldn't get through a page in your history book?  
Your imagination would crowd in between the words  
And start exploring the good stuff  
That they leave out of elementary history.  
You followed kings into bedrooms and barrooms and gypsy camps,  
And of course, you were the gypsy girl who caught their attention.  
But you were also a peasant girl  
Who rescued Mary Queen of Scots  
Because she didn't deserve to be beheaded.  
And you were the real captain of the Santa Maria,  
Though Columbus kept it a secret from Queen Isabella.  
You see,  
You see how much got crowded in  
Between I remember and I remember.

- Beverlee Salley  
2/89



*San Pan Rides*

Garrett Wagner

*An Excerpt from*  
**Finite and Endless**  
by  
Alison M. Way

Chapter Two

Never in my life have I been quite so thankful for the silent, glistening, black panther of a car that awaits me by the curb, purring gently within the noonday shriek. Quickly, I slip into the sleek magnificence of this cocoon with all the subtlety of a dizzy ballerina, telling Karl to take me home with a quaver in my voice that might very well betray me. The motor croons with luxurious confidence as we glide away from the curb to join the chaotic horrors of rush-hour traffic. I know that I am finally safe still, I look back, quite confident that no one has run out of the candy store in feverish pursuit. No, I am really quite safe, very much alone. Nestled within this plush solitude, I find myself relishing the distinct security of knowing that all is as it should be - that try as someone might, there isn't a thing or a man in this world capable of disrupting my life. Why, I could be kissed by a stranger each and every day and hardly think twice about it.

I sink deep down in the seat, letting my body relax and succumb for what seems like the first time in millennia. Suddenly, I feel so tired, so wary with the burdens of existence. I close my eyes, paying no attention to the people who catch us at red lights, peering into the impenetrable windows with curious, slashing stares. I would like to fall into a deep mindless sleep - a sleep that would overtake me, not unlike a soothing fog of darkness, and fill my head with so much peaceful nothingness that I would hardly have the urge to care, or even to remember. I will be home soon and when I'm there, it will seem as if this day never even happened. I will probably forget all about it.

Jonathan is eating his dinner when I arrive at home. I slip in unnoticed and after returning my hair to its usual immaculate severity, I join him at the table, taking my place along the farthest outskirts of the glossy table's expanse so that, as usual, it seems as if I'm dining alone even though the man I love is seated across from me, little more than a hundred miles away. My meal awaits me, looking sullen and more than a little disappointed with my tardiness, but as I find my appetite to be missing, I can only sit there and toy with my fork as I sip my wine. As always, Jonathan is reading while he eats, but as he reaches the bottom of a page, he looks up and smiles as though he is somehow surprised to see me.

"Oh, you're here?" he says, smiling a little as he nods his head like a statue come to life, "how nice to see you . . ." The wonders of his book are beginning to lure him back inside but I need desperately for him to talk to me, although I can hardly explain just why, so I find myself reaching out for anything, anything at all to say to him that will hold his attention upon me.

"I'm late!" I blurt out, practically straining against the table as if I might be able to touch him, "I'm sorry, but I'm late. I got held up in line at the candy store

- it just couldn't be helped."

"It's not a problem, I told Helen to serve dinner without you, of course. You really ought to wear your watch - leaving it on your dresser won't do you any good. It makes you late for everything." He has closed the book and laid it upon the table, but I can see that an enclosed finger marks his place as he opens the ponderous volume once again. If I'm not quick enough, he will start reading again and I will be all alone in this massive tomb of a dining room with cold soup and a head full of troubles.

"Jonathan!!" I cry out, and then I realize that I have been yelling. I can hear my own voice, shrill and pleading as its echo fills the room, the halls, climbing up the endless glacial walls as it reverberates off the sentinel columns, only to be swallowed up by the plush vacuum of Jonathan's precious medieval tapestry.

He is staring at me, and he is more than a little annoyed. I can tell by the crease that is beginning to engrave itself beside the right side of his mouth. I have blown out a candle with the force of my breath.

"Camille, you really shouldn't yell. The sound is not at all pleasing and I am in the middle of a very good book. Now eat your steak before it gets any colder. I'm sure you will like it very much." I want to say to him, I was kissed by a beautiful man in a candy store today, and I liked it very, very much. Please help me to not like it so much. But he has gone back to this beloved nonfiction and I can tell by the farther-away-than-usual look in his eyes that he will not return to me before the meal is over. I hate him and I adore him for no particular reason and he looks so graceful and kind when he's being cold and brutal.

I gulp down my wine. I have Helen pour me another glass and I do the same, barely tasting the bitterness as I look at him over the rim of my glass, watching his eyes scan the page. The steak looks beautiful but boring, and I wish to God that a big fat cheeseburger would take its place. Unfortunately, magic rarely visits this place. Having bored Jonathan to distraction, I in turn find myself becoming painfully bored with the entirety of my existence. I think I'm beginning to despise this dining room; I know I hate this dinner. I would like very much to leave this table and go to my room to lay on my bed and think about certain things, but I'm quite sure that Jonathan would not like that at all. So I sit there, fiddling around with my spoon and drinking yet another glass of wine in the face of Helen's blatant disapproval. As you can see, I can be quite gutsy when the urge takes a hold of me.

I lean back into the rich leather caress of my chair, resting my wine glass upon my silken thigh so that I might feel the chilled fragility of the crystal against the heat of my flesh. Suddenly, I feel warm, soft and mindless with the need for sleep - it could be the rosy magic of the wine, it could be the fire in the hearth that makes me feel this way, I can hardly say; I know only that I sense a strange, woozy peace within me, that I feel more than willing to surrender to call of my tempting dreams. A shroud of sensuous radiance seems to encompass me, and I am distances from this frozen dining room and the lifeless statues that inhabit such a wasteland. Once again I'm in the candy store and I can feel and taste the wet nectar of a hot mouth joined with the open tenderness of my lips, and I know what it is to be kissed by someone who cares oh-so-much about this one finite and endless moment. And I feel a strong and gentle hand upon my hotcold face that leads my mouth to a kiss as it would lead my body to a bedroom. And I am melting, oozing all over the floor of this candy store like so much hot, bubbling taffy. This could be love - or a reasonable facsimile.

"Camille - what in the world is wrong with you?" asks Jonathan, and I realize that this is the second or third time his voice has sounded out against me in as many seconds.

"What? Huh - I was just thinking, that's all. Just thinking." I mumble, downing my half-filled glass of burgundy in one tremendous slug.

"You looked as if you'd just realized the meaning of life."

"Don't be ridiculous, I've just had a good day, that's all."

"Oh really," he says, and he is also laughing in that soundless smile-laugh of his that only I can recognize, "what exactly happened to you - did you fall in love?" I want to die. Helen stands behind me and I know she's got a horrendous twist of a smirk smeared across her pruneface. I would like to take my glass and smash it on the table, slitting her vulture's throat with the jagged edge. Her warm rosy blood would be a lovely compliment to the filet mignon.

"May I please be excused? I've got a bit of meat stuck in one of my teeth." This last part is sure to earn my dismissal.

That night, for the first time in months or years, I do not paint a thing.

### Chapter Three

I am in bed, taking a little pre-bedtime nap with all of my clothes on when it hits me. I could very well be starving to death. A murmured, rumbling voice from deep within my digestive tract seems to call out in response to a wailing whisper that seems to beckon to me from the dim and silent kitchen. And so I tiptoe down the endless swirl of spiral staircase, my footsteps taking on the soundless voice of plush carpet as I wander through a silent house of myriad rooms that have already been overcome by the momentary death of nightfall. Jonathan has retired to his room for the evening, or perhaps he is down in the gallery, working in a world without clocks and time. Helen has gone out for the evening to drink and pretend that she matters.

The kitchen is a peaceful oasis of inactivity; everything has been scoured and scrubbed and put away in its perfect, usual place. The only sound for miles around is the hypnotic whirring hum of the refrigerator, for the faucet never drips. Indeed, I am almost afraid to breathe too loudly for fear of somehow disturbing the perfect order of this tidy, echo-prone room.

The expanse of marble beneath my feet gives off all the warmth of an iceberg in December. Still, the light that entices me from the glass-doored refrigerator seems to urge me to make my unsteady way across the arctic terrain, leaving behind the damp tracings of my bare feet.

In a moment of unbridled defiance, I imagine Jonathan's disdain as I gulp down great big swigs of milk from the pitcher of cobalt blue. If he could see me right now, he would have a seizure, I'm sure of it. I picture the foam gurgling out from between his thin lips, flowing out and down upon his noble chin, and I swallow even more of the milk, as if to pay tribute to his rage. The joys of rebellion are subtle, yet nonetheless exhilarating.

Feeling a sudden surge of trailer-park Americana within me, my stomach cries out in a cacophony of tumultuous rumblings for a sandwich of peanut butter and Fluff, undoubtedly symbolizing a need to satisfy the gourmet side of my soul. After a bit of a search, I discover the half-filled jars of goop that are meant for my tastes alone, and I proceed to create my culinary disaster with all the care and finesse of a master chef.

I am licking off the Fluff-covered knife when it hits me. He is out there - somewhere in this city, he exists and he lives and he is out there with a family and friends and a job and a hobby and a place he calls home that could conceivably be right next door to this place that I call home. Or he could live all the way over on the other side of town in a place I've never seen and don't even know of - in a place that might as well be all the way over on the other side of the universe for all of my hopeless intents and purposes. Perhaps he is visiting from out of town. Perhaps he is heading back to Bangladesh this very minute, sound asleep on a phantom jet with half-eaten package of honey roasted peanuts clutched tightly in one fist.

Maybe he is standing in a shadow-filled kitchen - licking Fluff off a knife just as I am, still he could have already finished his sandwich and could be moving on to yet another digestive catastrophe. Then again, he could be sound asleep, naked or barely dressed in a warm and comfy bed as he lies on his side, curled up in the fetal position that makes him look all of seven years old. And he may not be sleeping alone - I want to push the idea away, but the thought is undeniable in all of its despicable possibility. He is absolutely beautiful, and I cannot have been the only one to notice.

I wonder about him . . . I wonder all about him, and I know only that he kissed me and it was wonderful and I don't even know why he did it or why I am so very moved by the whole thing. I think I want to see him again, and at the same time, I'm so afraid of something that I understand but can never really seem to figure out. Anyway, I'll probably never see him again as long as I live . . . and I still wonder. I toss my half-eaten sandwich onto the countertop, thinking a little too intently upon the cryptic array of breadcrumbs. I feel a horrible stomach ache coming on - the pangs twist into my middle and if I listen carefully, I can hear the juicy squirm of my insides as organs slide against each other and jerk away in the throes of spasmodic revolution.

It has come over me all at once and I suddenly realize that it isn't the dissolute sandwich, but rather, a curious and overwhelming passion that grasps a hold of me so tightly that it is necessary to lean against the smooth solidity of the counter to stabilize myself. In the midst of this ice palace, I burn in flames and I savor a stranger who forced his way into my world and took the intimacy that I have yearned to give for such a very endless and painful time. He grabbed me and he kissed me and it was a violation and a gift of gentle mercy and I am so frightened by the things he has stirred up inside of my stagnant soul and Oh God I want more and more of him and please help me to forget all about this day, this man, this feeling. And yet this magic may never go away when he is surely lost forever. Pain will replace the giddy wonder that I feel and I'll think myself a fool for mourning the loss of a complete and absolute alien who never even really belonged to me in the first place. And I can still taste the last kiss of him that lingers in the liquid heat of my mouth.

"You're still up? It's getting awfully late." says Jonathan who stands behind me as he places his steady hand upon my shoulder.

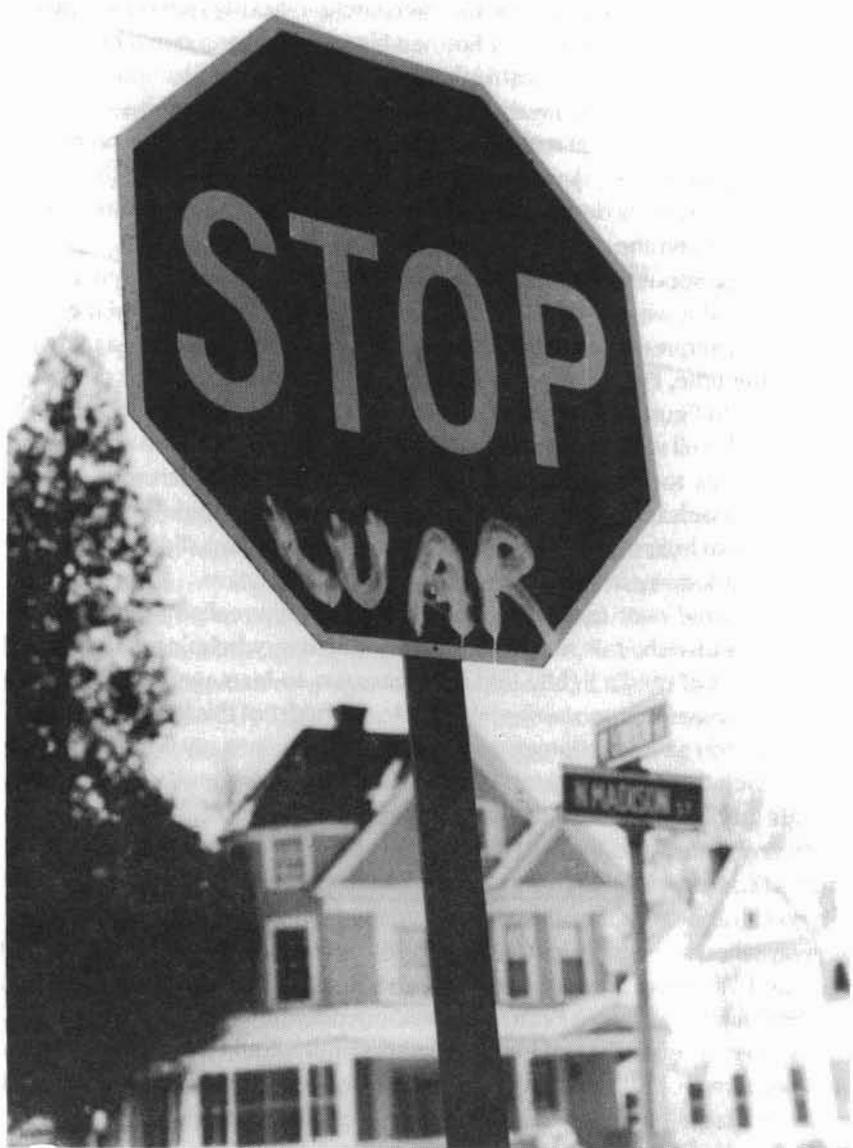
"I didn't ever hear you come in but yes, it is getting late - I just needed a little something to keep me going."

"Dinner usually helps . . ." he replies in a voice that sounds as if each word has been neatly trimmed off at the end with a pair of crisp, newly-sharpened scissors.

"Yes, I suppose it does." I move my body out from beneath the strong, barely-noticeable contact of his grasp, for I despise the feel of him when he plays these subtle-but-all-too-obvious-games, "I'm going to bed, I guess. I don't think I'm hungry anymore."

He is holding the jar of peanut butter in the delicate, spider-like expanse of his fingers. It is the same hand that reaches out to a Matisse, to a Pollock, to a Picasso - to a million other names that will one day whisper or shout from the walls of his immortal gallery. And he holds this silly jar of peanut butter with the same care, the same intensity, the same adoration, and for one moment, I love him more than anything else in this whole entire world and I want him to search me, to care for me, to worship me like a Matisse - like a jar of peanut butter. He puts the jar down upon the countertop with one graceful gesture, pushing it away with the same slight of hand.

"How can you eat such things? I'll never understand you . . ." Without so much as a good-bye, he leaves the kitchen in a whispered rustle of costly textiles.



Renee Page

## What is the reward of killing Truth?

*"The first casualty of war is truth."*

*- Norman Mailer*

The fumes of bones fill  
the night. Tired men sleep  
against the naked hill,  
and dream of keep -  
sake memories deep  
in their swollen heads  
These men can not reap  
the rewards of the dead.

Voices cry out, "kill, kill!"  
The men then leap  
to their feet and say, "I will".  
Grumbling, stumbling deep  
within conscious sleep,  
awakened by what is said  
from those men who can reap  
the rewards of the dead.

The soldiers wake up ill  
advised, and find a heap  
of decaying, still  
men lying in knee deep  
swarms of fat flies; they weep  
knowing this is Deathbed.  
Those men who can reap  
the rewards of the dead

need this vast heap  
of men with no heads.  
These men can not reap  
the rewards of the dead.

*- Jay Pyon/Anthony Neddo*

Guard man, guard  
The thoughts you have.  
Alone they are not sin.  
But thoughts become your actions, son.  
And those will do you in.

- Brenda J. Yanger



### Elegy

This morning I watched an injured bird  
die in our shady back yard.

Its feathers were greasy,  
one eye was filled with blood.

It convulsed violently for nearly an hour,  
while I watched – I watched. Then I buried it.

This afternoon I told my mother about the bird.  
"One second it was alive, the next it wasn't,"  
I said.

"Well, at least it had a peaceful death,"  
she said.

"Yes," I said.

- Rod Smith

## The Night of the Dragon

by

Martha Talley

I can vividly recall the night the dragon rose up from my grandmother's garden to spray us all with fire. No one else seems to think it happened at all.

It was a warm night, the air close about us like an uncomfortable sweater. The sun, having begun its descent to the ground, glared red at us like the angry eye of a tearful child being sent to bed not yet sleepy. The steady creak-creaking of my grandmother's rocker kept time with the chorus of crickets serenading us from the hedges spanning the porch edge.

Cutting through the air came the yells and screeches of the boys – brothers, nephews and uncles – engaged in a battle of football, young versus young-at-heart. An occasional dull thud of flesh meeting earth was echoed by the thumps of empty beer bottles landing in the scraggly rose bush. Safely out of harms path, they would be retrieved when the whine of torpedoing mosquitoes would drive the uncles and fathers to the safety of the porch.

A rifle-crack shout from an aunt brought a scurry from a toddler too close to the road. Usually the warning would bring a tear, running through a path of dirt and sticky ice cream, long since eaten.

The women were scattered around the porch. My favorite aunts would share the swing couch, rusted now to a slight sway, my mother in a black wicker chair whose paint flaked and drifted like dark snow around her feet at the slightest movement.

Each held a bowl in her lap, my grandmother's huge metallic basin, resting firmly on the faded apron that has stood guard against stain for as long as I can remember. When the soft murmurs of the women's voices fell silent, the distinct snap-ping! of yet another pea defrocked of its shell echoed in the silence. The basins were filled with the tiny orbs, and their fresh sweetness perfumed the air.

It was the last blazing flare from the dying sun that drew my gaze toward the garden. In that last flicker of light I watched spellbound as a dragon rose slowly up from the warm dirt of my grandmother's garden.

He was enormous, his skin great shingles of scales. His nostrils were smoking black caverns, and his eyes two glowing embers fueled by the evil within. His mouth, a leering grin, widened to reveal gleaming knives of death.

He squatted on his massive haunches, searching for hidden prey. Mesmerized, I watched as he swung his massive head towards the porch. His nostrils widened as he found us, and his eyes flared fiery red. It was as a fire stoked, and in a blinding flash, fire sprayed from him in an effort to kill.

Later I an remember my mother pressing a cloth to my forehead, whispering to me a mother's loving reassurances. Holding her close, I fearfully peeked at the garden. The dragon was gone! We had survived his vile attack unscathed. In relieved exhaustion, I slept soundly.



Martha Talley

### **A Smoky Birth**

The hollow beats of drums pulsated in her ears  
as her feet stomped the soft, salty earth.  
Shadows flickered and passed as crackling ashes  
danced on top of the fire.  
Sweat poured down her smoky body  
as water flowed and pain pierced the air.  
Drum beats echo.

The scent of ashes, part wood and blood,  
mingled in the after birth.  
She stretched out across the earth  
to quell the heat and soothe the flesh.  
The new spirit was freed from captivity  
and the drum beats continued to echo.

- *Liliana Almendarez*



### **Burning Passion**

In darkness, I love most  
the blackburn smell of flesh -  
from cigarette burns, tame  
at best, to skin engrossed  
in gas. I play the game  
in darkness. I love most  
to slide on skin defaced  
by fire - a bubbled mesh  
of blisters. When I baste,  
the blackburn smell of flesh  
sicksweets my lungs. My flame's  
hot fingers touch like ghosts  
and singe my hair - she came  
in darkness. (Her love most  
sparks my interest.) Never wasted,  
She stays hot and fresh,  
and in the air I taste  
the blackburn smell of flesh.

- *Mortiche*

## Passage

We rode the ebb out black and cold,  
a million phosphorescent globes in suspension  
under us like a galaxy of tiny stars,  
the liquid seeming electric.

We were the first vessel,  
bobbing on an unknown current,  
buffeted by crafty winds,  
close under a sky curdled like dark bile.

I licked the smooth air and drew upon  
the tepid mist sour as my daily dreams  
and nightly terrors,  
and collapsed upon the sweating rubber.

To drift ashore among hissing reeds,  
black mud stinking of ancient fertility,  
crawling crab-like up the gravelly shore,  
the moon red  
as if from laughing at my efforts.

- Rod Smith

PH A RA OH S!

s a y s

a n d

head,

old

year

five

his

over

high

arm,

his

tches

stre-

out

voice,

He raises his

absolute pride

His skin shines in

dance in his answer.

His dark brown eyes

to flush bright red,

His face begins

about the pyramids. Who built them?

know the answer, we were just talking

screws up in utter confusion. Jason, you

Does he taste the answer too? His face

from playing in the playground. He grimaces.

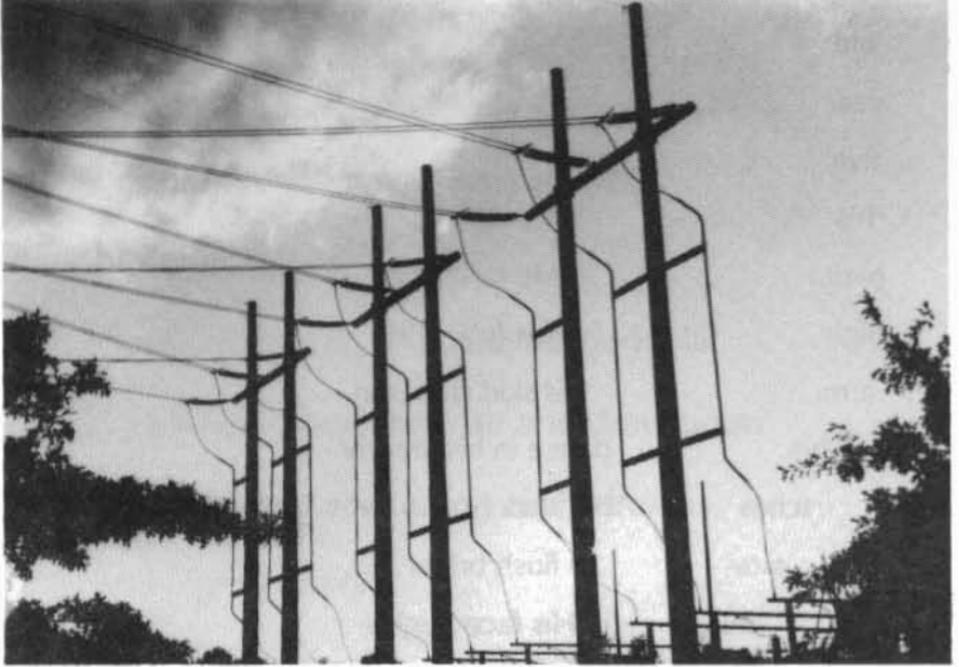
his mouth. He could taste the bitter grit caught

Did he forget the question already? His fingers fly to

He concentrates. His look intensifies. Does he understand?

### A CHILD'S VICTORY

- Lilitana Almendarez



Mark Childs

Remnants of an era  
gone bad: a pack of cigarettes  
left for the maid on a  
dirty bedspread.

Astronomy

holds little relevance when  
the walls bear threatening  
images of the slow disruption  
of the  
psyche, tamed and conditioned  
to amount to something.

"Streets amaze me; when you pass someone  
going the other way, you try to see who  
they are. How could they be more the  
negative to your positive? They  
departed from your destination;  
you're destination is the place of  
their departure,"  
he said.

I flicked my ash into his lap.  
"Hitch-hikers are a  
dimaduzen, jack...  
and you need a new rap."

- Brad Westcott

## An Elegy of a Poem

Line for  
line I buy my  
time. Letter by holy  
letter I create myself by  
the word.

With each  
passing "thwack" and  
"ch" from my typewriter  
I breath life into a page, and  
listen

to it  
sing. A poet's  
Nepish is stained with ink,  
and entombed by a soft paper  
body.

But the  
saddest thing is  
the last stroked key which ends  
the sweetest melody of the  
poem.

- *W.J. Adams*

## Chicken Soup and Poetry

*This, she said, This is altogether stupid  
Worrying about changing jobs!  
Why am I worrying about a jerk job  
When a touch of genius flows in me?*  
She looked up, a little embarrassed at herself.  
Genius was not a word to be used so lightly.  
Genius was Shakespeare and Leonardo,  
Not an almost middle-aged woman-girl  
Surviving in the North Country.  
A therapist had once told her she was a genius at survival.  
But what did anybody care?  
She sat there reading over her latest poem,  
Picking cat hair out of her new electronic typewriter,  
Musing on the meaning of a word,  
And taking pleasure in the cozy nest  
She had made of a rented trailer on Pumphouse Road.  
She was looking forward to the chicken soup  
She had simmering on the fire.  
Anxiety had been chasing her through the week,  
Old voices playing in her head  
Like a tape recording of insecurity.  
*This is stupid! she said again.*  
*Look at the paintings on the wall  
And the furniture I've built.*  
*Why does the idea of change feel so terrifying  
When I've changed my life so many times over?*  
*God, growth is a pain in the ass!*  
Another sneeze hurled itself out of her.  
She went to breathe steam from the boiling pot  
And remembered Woody Allen's line  
About viruses being our friends  
Because they give us an excuse to take care of ourselves.

- Beverlee Salley  
3/89

