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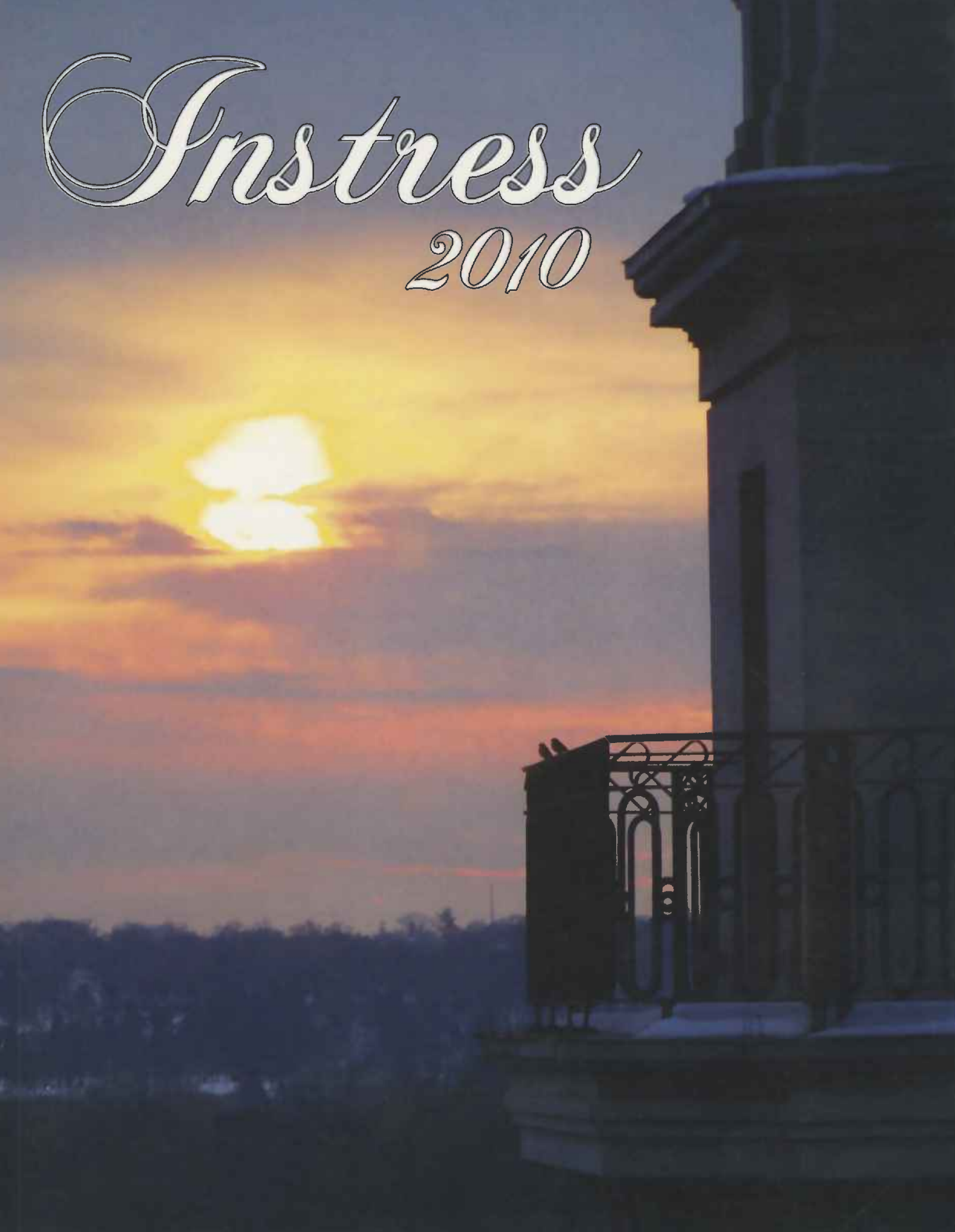
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Instress *2010*



Welcome.

Keep this in mind while perusing the pages of this year's Instress: What you see on the outside may not always be what you expect. The forty-fourth edition of Instress, Misericordia University's literary magazine, is tremendous. We mean it. Students' innovative efforts will be apparent as you turn each page, read each poem, examine and reflect upon each photograph. Our staff worked tirelessly to bring you a composition of campus creativity, so we hope you enjoy the poetry, fiction and artwork featured in this edition.

Staff

Sarah Hite, *Editor & Layout Designer*

Katie O'Hearn, *Content Editor*

Kaytlin Yachim, *Content Editor*

Dr. Thomas Rechtin, *Faculty Advisor*

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Artwork

Caitlin Bryson

Lindsay Buss

WINNERS

Road to Nowhere

By Tiffany Harris

I walk along a cobble road
Up to nowhere
Grab a few peaches
And stick them in my pockets.

Nothing is important
Only the color of the new girl's hair,
which incidentally is blue.
Traveling along the copper road.

And back to Lake St.
The road is gone
I cannot walk
I run to the

Blacktop.
And remove the peaches from
My pocket.
And replace them with stones.

I have wasted my life.
Trading peaches for stones
Stones for feathers.
What is next?

The sun will never
Touch my skin again.
Forever lost in this
Season of cold death.

Go back to nowhere
Exchange my feathers
For a horse.



Caitlin Bryson

Stupid Mistakes By Mariah Fabbri

Crying.

Crying once again for the same things you've done before.

You'd think I'd get used to it,

You walking out the door.

Poisoned.

Because you let this habit, disease get the best of you.

When it's not out the door,

You push me to the floor.

Glasses breaking and hearts shattering,

And you're not thinking this must be a mistake.

Sometimes I like to think this is a dream; a fake.

But reality sets in and I take on the consequence of your

STUPID MISTAKES.

You say you love me and I know you really do.

But sometimes I question,

If you loved me, why put me through this depression?

Can I forgive you?

Yeah sure I can.

I just wish we had a better relationship, but what can come of that?

This is what I'm used to.

Your **STUPID MISTAKES!**

Going to the emergency room.

Of course, you always had to end the night with a big boom.

And in the morning when we wake,

You feel the regret of your

STUPID MISTAKES.

But to make it easier, you just pay me off.

Like I'm a little kid who hasn't grown up.

Well now I'm grown and will eventually move on.

I can't babysit anymore,

But I truly do love you mom.



Lisa Witkoski

Silver Keys

By Michelle Anzalone

So much depends
upon

a set of silver
keys

dripping with pancake
syrup

beside the kitchen
sink,

260

By Kailee Hummel

Is it winter already
Oh I wish we were done
With cold winds and gray skies
All I want is the sun
Bring back the blue skies
Bring back the heat
I want to feel the burn of the blacktop
On the soles of my feet
Why have all the leaves left
Packed up and moved on
I wish those bright colors
Weren't already gone
Where has the time gone
It came and flew by
I can see it moving away from me
On the edge of the sky.

Haikus

By Aubre Mayorowski

An October tree
Sitting on the fresh cut grass
Waiting to be chopped.

The December snow
Falling outside my window...
Begging for me to play.

The cool April rain
Pouring down the gray sidewalk,
Searching for a place.

Glass

By Brett Ford

My reflection frowns.
I blow on the cold window
And draw a new smile.



Lindsay Buss

Superman

It's October 31, 10 p.m. I tighten my tie, tug on the sleeves of my jacket, and perk up my collar. I take the elevator down to street level, and exit the main doors of my apartment complex. Nelson's place is five city blocks away. I take my time, striding along the sidewalk, soaking up the night air. Nelson's town house is on 14th and Chestnut. I stand outside; the clear glass window guides the dim party lights onto the street. I can feel the energy and commotion within. I ascend the stairs and ring the doorbell. Nelson comes to the door and greets me, obnoxiously.

"Hey man, c'mon in, you're just in time."

He wraps his hand around the back of my arm and gently pulls me over to the bar. He orders me a beer and slides it towards me, spilling it a little.

"So what are you supposed to be?"

"I hadn't really thought about it," I respond.

He snickers, "Don't tell me you forgot a costume."

"OK, I won't."

"Hang tight for a second, I'll be right back."

Nelson disappears into a loosely gathered group of people in an assortment of costumes. There's a girl leaning with her back to the bar dressed as a bunny, cotton tail and all. A gentleman stands in front of her dressed as batman. A drunken wizard flings his wand around sputtering spells to every woman in sight. Another woman is dressed as Madonna, another as what appears to be some sort of gothic fairy. Another man sits on a couch dressed as a referee with his head resting on the back of the sofa. He's wearing aviators and I can't tell if he's sleeping or not. A girl who doesn't look a day older than 20 walks towards the bar; I catch her red sparkly lady bug skirt out of the corner of my eye. She stumbles and grabs my right arm to support herself. I tense up and turn to meet her glazed eyes staring at me through heavy eye make-up. Nelson returns.

"So I see you've met Kayla." He grabs her waist, pulling her in for a kiss. She deflects him and his lips land on her cheek.

"It's Kylie."

"Oh, yeah, well here Nate, I brought you a cape to ya know save you some embarrassment."

"What do I need a cape for? It looks rather small anyway."

By Aimee DiLucido

"I don't know. You can pretend to be superman or something. I'm sure you can squeeze into it."

"I think he looks nice already," says Kylie. "Besides, he already is superman."

I keep my composure, my eyes dart over to Kylie melting inside. I swipe the cape from Nelson's hand and rip it into two pieces. He stands there, mouth gaping open. I grab Kylie by the hand and lead her to the door. The man dressed as a referee stands in front of the door. I rip his sunglasses off his face and throw them to the floor. His eyes widen and he steps aside. Kylie and I descend the stairs onto the sidewalk. I grab her hand tighter and begin to run. Our escape is slowed by her click clacking attempt to run in heels. We arrive at Metropolis Park. We make our way to the center of the park where the brick pathways meet and stem from a circle with a round fountain in the middle. I let go of her sweaty hand. She looks at me as if I am the world.

"What's your name, again?" she says breathlessly. Her blonde hair shines in the moonlight.

"Take off your heels."

She takes them off; I grab both of her hands and pull her towards me. I place my hands on her waist and she places hers on my shoulders. Her dainty feet tip toe onto the top of mine. We rise into the air, ascending past the tree line, the housetops, the skyscrapers, and into the clouds. She trembles in the cold air and presses her body against mine. She looks deep into my eyes; I can smell the alcohol on her breath. Her air warms my face as she exhales, trying to control herself. Her mind is racing; her eyes glitter in the sky light. She stumbles and screams a little. We descend, without saying a word, my feet touch the cement. For a moment she remains standing on my feet. She goes up on her toes as if to whisper something into my ear but she hesitates, struggling with what to say.

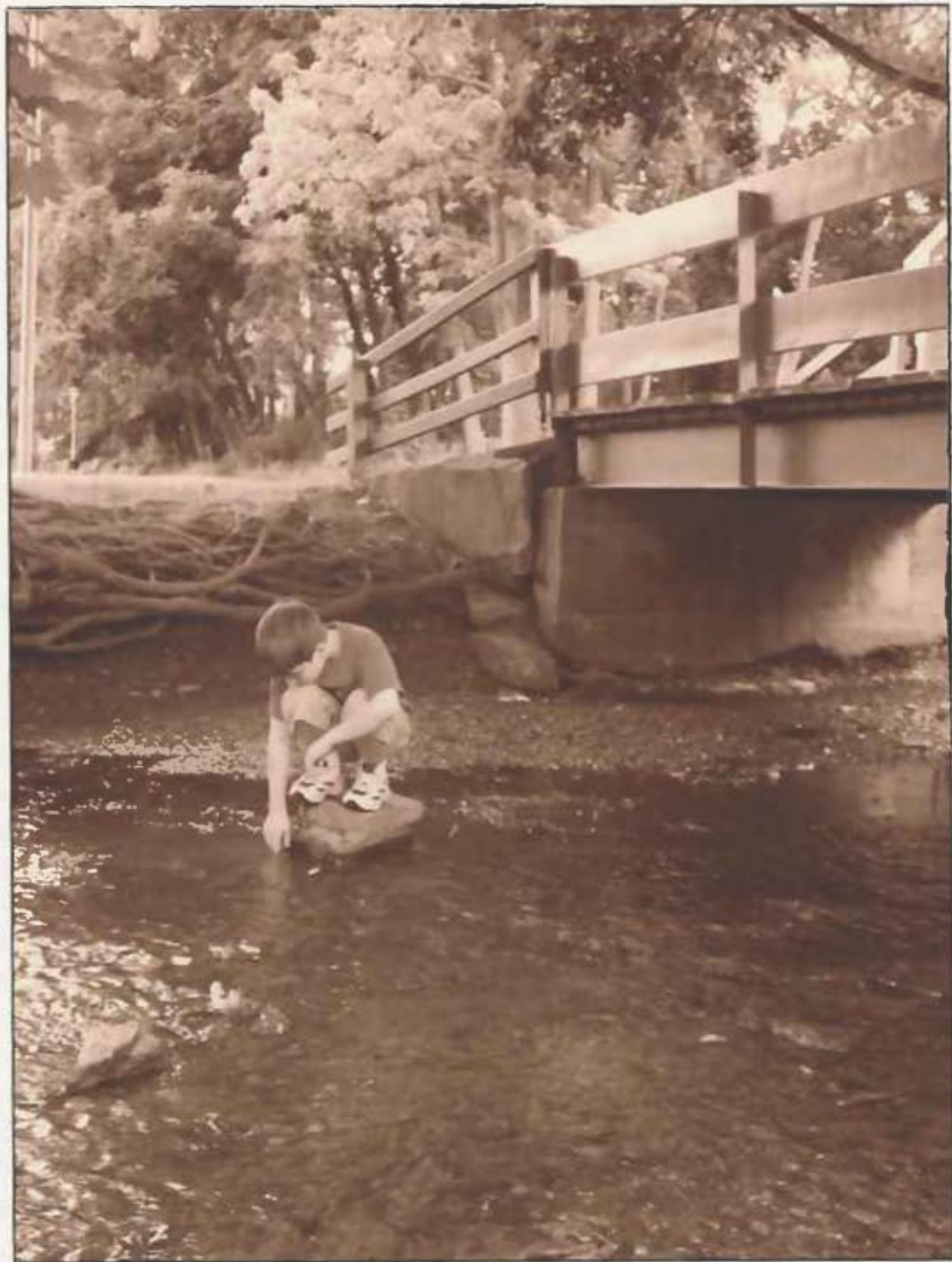
"You... you never told me your name."

"You should probably get back to the party."

"What? No. Who are you?"

"I am, whatever you make me."

I turn on my heel and begin to walk away. She doesn't follow me. She doesn't know how. I walk through the park, guided by two parallel lines of trees. Straight, cutting, I walk alone until the red morning slices the night air.

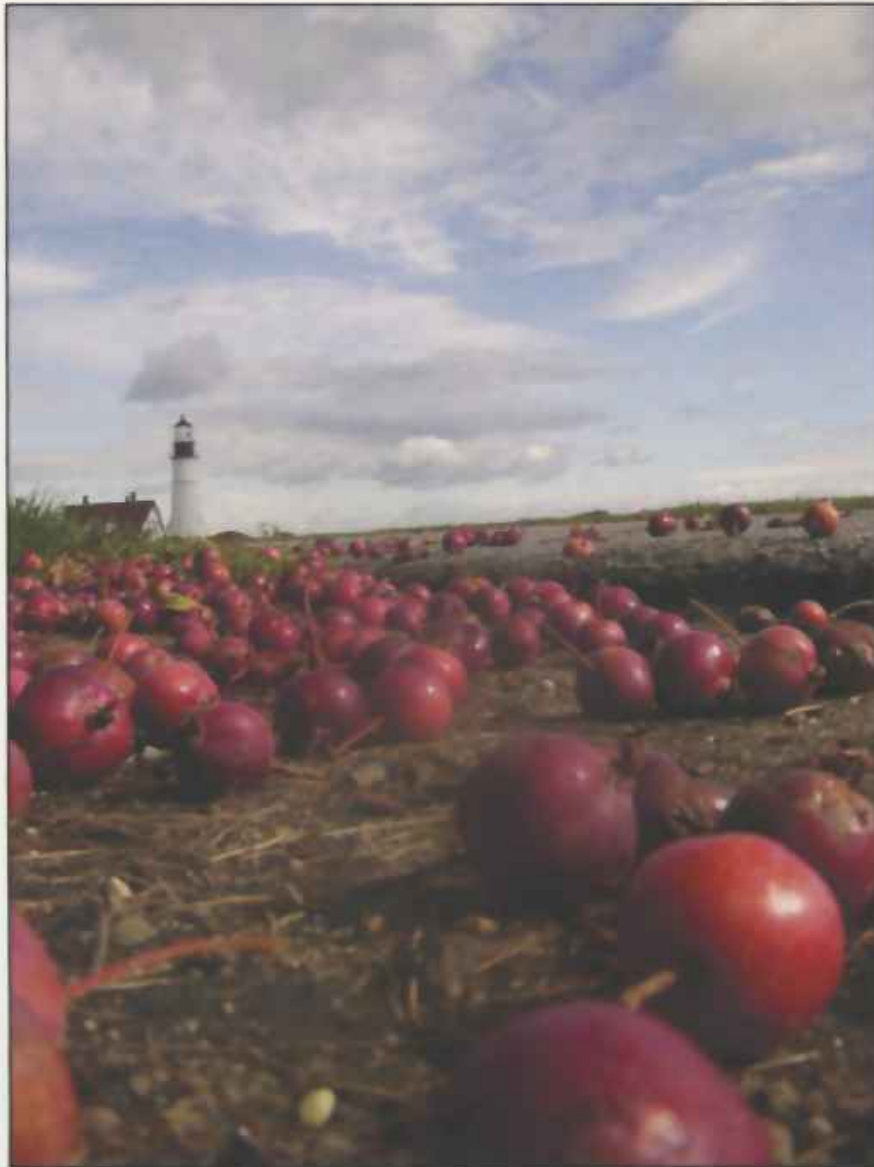


Lisa Witkoski

Slice of Cheese

By Sean Williams

Calm cool
Fall day
Three brothers playing a game
With a ball maybe or possibly a disc
One of the brothers loses the disc or ball
The other brother goes in the house and gets a fresh piece of cheese
Zoom, over the house it goes
Two other brothers want to find where the cheese went
No reason why just curiosity I guess
Slowly walk around house
Laughing as we walk
Get to the other side of the house and no cheese is to be found
Search the whole opposite side of the house
The cheese stands alone on its own
Nowhere in sight
In one of the corners of the house a noise is heard
A whimper
Closer look
There is a cat under the house
It is a male
We decide we should keep it.



Sally and Death on a hill. By Brian O'Neill

It was a sunny Saturday,
so Death was up on the hill sitting in his favorite apple tree
crushing little rodents between his bony fingers.
"Oh how I love autumn" swooned Death
as he squeezed the head of a shrew with the twist of nonexistent tendons.
"But why?" asked little Sally Slander, who now stood beside a neat pile of stained
fur.
"Why? Well, autumn is the season of unintentional blasphemy.
For it is only in fall that people forget their gods
and relish in the mass suicide of leaves."
"Suicide?"
Questioned Sally with eyes as black and curious as caviar.
"Yes Sally. Suicide."

Hacienda

By Kari Breazeale

Enter into the vast spectrum of an authentic Mexican villa, an isolated land of hot spices --
the Hacienda.

Not much to remember but the intoxicating fumes from spices,
so deep and scathing that the taste of the fumes penetrated my tongue,
forever leaving its imprint.

A fire so vast no amount water could contain it.

While some fires turned to steam,
this fire imploded and engrossed all water,
spitting its
flames back at me.

The vision then becomes hazy, like an overcast day,
clouds crowd my memory becoming only a flash of vision where the sun then can make its
peak.

Sitting in my high-chair heightened by the extent of its legs,
the distinct memory of physically looking
down and seeing my family at a distance.
It was here I was the queen at her throne with the peasants
beneath me.

Then within the flash of an instant, the woman in red satin clothes sets a tray of feeble thin
nachos right in front of me.

Immediately,
chomping and obliterating
the nachos the taste of bitter blankness stains my
tongue.

The gluttonous baby forever
chomping and obligating
the cheap Mexican nachos.

things to do with a gun By Patrick Noonan

you could probably eat it,
it would take some time, but
with the right utensils
and a little
elbow grease
you could make it fly
if only for a moment's time

you could apply makeup to it
and take it for a night
out on the town
jumping from
rooftop
to rooftop
grasping blindly for its form
in the darkest of places
for some sort of answer
why you're there,
why we're here

you could tell it your secrets
and bring yourself closer
to its cold exterior,

its sullen firing
mechanisms
and maybe
you'd find some comfort there

you could marry off
your daughters to it
you could teach it sign language
and have it help the deaf
with words it
cannot hear
cannot fathom
gasp
and choke to say

you could apply for a loan with it,
but no one would understand,
and you know they never do.

you could paint a picture
with it, taking brushy strokes
across cold, porous canvas
and have it finally learn what it means to die.



Matches

By Kaytlin Yachim

I lit a match and said to him,
"You should really quit this bad habit."
"I just can't."

It was a quiet fall afternoon at the farm.
The orange and yellow foliage matched his teeth.
"Maybe some day," and
blew the smoke into my face.

I lit a match and passed the flame
onto the wick.
"Happy birthday," I said.
One, two, twenty-two tiny flames illuminated the room.
He smirked and blew them out and turned to me and said,
"I'm twenty-three."

One-sided Conversation

She sits opposite me, her grey eyes brimming with tears. It truly is a gloomy day, with gray clouds swirling overhead and a frigid breeze harassing everything in sight. The grass and trees, still lifeless from the long winter, do nothing to lighten the mood. I swallow hard, trying to think of something to say to make this better, to take away her pain. A simple "It's going to be alright" won't do, in part because I'm not even sure if I believe it to be true. I think back to all the times she had comforted me: everything from a scraped knee, to my first heartbreak, to the simple disappointments one encounters in life. She had always known what to say, what to do, how to help me move on. Mothers are just gifted like that I guess.

I sigh. I was still only a daughter. I had never known the tact each woman receives upon becoming a mother. "It was an . . . accident." I start off slowly. Her only response is to stare ahead, fighting to keep the tears from spilling over.

"I needed it, though. I needed my space, to get out and clear my head. It was just too much, you know? Everyone thought I was so happy, and on the surface I could've even fooled myself into believing it. Abby McDonough, with the perfect grades, the supportive family, who never got into trouble. Abby McDonough, who finally realized she didn't know who she was without her books, family, or rules."

I pause to judge my mother's reaction. She had brought her hand to her mouth as if in pain. No mother wants to hear that their child is unhappy. I guess it makes them feel like they have failed somehow, or that they're child was ungrateful. To me they seemed to be the two most probable causes, anyway. She bites her lip, fighting now to keep the emotions in check.

"I didn't want to leave like that." I whisper in remorse. "I didn't mean any of those things I said to you and dad. You two are solely responsible for every shred of goodness in me. You sacrificed so much to see me happy, to set me up for success. I knew that and it meant everything to me. You taught me never to quit, to never be afraid to be myself, to do my best at my every endeavor and that would be enough. I owe everything I love most to you, and my greatest memories are with you. And dad, of course."

My mother's jaw is clenched. While I was talking she had curled her arms around her knees as if to comfort herself, but I noticed that her hands were balled into fists. She had every right to be angry. I had stormed out of the house declaring my need for space, in my confusion blaming her for crowding me, for being too controlling. All I was really accusing her of was being a mother. I know that now. I just wish it wasn't too late.

"I suppose you want to know if I have any regrets?" I ask, my voice starting to break. She just stares ahead, unable to hear as she wrestles with her emotions. I nod, knowing I deserve it. Knowing that my simple desire to breathe fresh air had ruined the lives of those I cared most about. "I don't, you know. How could I, when you gave me everything?"

The wind plays with her hair, and she reminds me of a lost child who doesn't know which direction to turn for help. I square my shoulders and look her in the eyes. She looks

By Katie O'Hearn

right through me. "You told me that everything happens for a reason. That, when one door closes, another one opens. I know it's hard to hear right now, but it's true. It was time for me to go, mom, and time to move on. I had played my part, and I left my mark. You may not be able to see it now, but that's only because the things you are clinging to are the first to fade away. The smell of perfume I'd spray every morning, the sound of my frantic screaming when I needed you or dad to kill a spider for me." I shake my head nostalgically, and a bitter smile tugs at the corner of her lips as she reaches out to touch the cold stone.

Miraculously, the sun pokes out through the clouds, temporarily blinding us both. I struggle to keep my eyes open against the sudden assault, memorizing my mother's face. "I left a scholarship fund in my wake, for all of those who have the intelligence and maturity for higher education but not the financial means. I taught little Suzie to play the piano, and although her skill has already surpassed mine, I'll always be connected to her music. Those are the things you need to remember."

I knew it was time for me to say good-bye. To walk away from her forever. It seemed so unfair, to have to do this to the woman who gave me everything. She didn't even realize what was going on. Her emotions had won; I knew this from the tears trickling silently down her face. I hadn't meant to hurt her. It was an accident when I left for good like that. I had to swerve, though. There were two little kids lying in the middle of the road. One had a broken leg, I think, since he was clutching it and his bike lay sprawled menacingly a few feet away. The only logical thing for me to do was to swerve off the bridge, because I had realized in those two hours as I sat by the lake that there was more to me than grades and morality. It was my compassion for others that mattered most and truly defined me as an individual. That compassion made me choose their lives over mine, despite the fact that the last words I said to my mother as I stormed out of the house had been harsh, inaccurate rationalizations for the mistakes I had made. I had to make her understand they held know truth, that she had never done anything but support me.

"Always remember that I love you." I whisper as I follow her gaze to the tombstone.

Abby McDonough
September 1, 1990-January 11, 2010
Beloved daughter and friend to all.

The flash of light ended, and I was fading away into the distance. As I lost all sense of time, the only thing I was conscious of was the stream of light still illuminating my mother as she wept at my grave. I felt an odd sense of calm as the numbness of death set in, because I knew that she would eventually recover. She may not live happily ever after, but she will always have her faith.



Gabrielle Giello

Venus House Trap By Sarah Hite

I opened the window and the unexpected breeze
Lifted the foam ceiling tiles in my room
And the bugs living in the attic
Sprinkled all over my bed.

I keep asking my stepdad to
Fix it and he always says that
One day he'll get around to it.

Most of the time the bugs are dead.

Fred Astaire

By Kaytlin Yachim

It was at the late hour of eleven in Men's Apparel when Mac the Mannequin broke his legs off. He wasn't assembled correctly and the other mannequins pointed their stiff fingers at him and laughed. His plastic skin stayed pasty white, but in his empty head he felt

engulfed in flames, in anger, in rage. As he was resting there on the cold floor, he hoped that one day he would grow real legs and learn the art of tap dance. One day, he thought, he will earn his legs and dance his way out of this department store,

away from these conniving bastards. The others continued to laugh and laugh and laugh, and soon the whole department store was loud with sneering mannequins. Suddenly, the ceiling speakers started to play Fred Astaire and

Mac began growing legs. Real human legs. Legs with skin. Legs with hair. Legs with heels and toes. The others watched in amazement as he stood up on his own and slowly walked over to the shoe department, where he put on a size thirteen tap shoes and danced.

Shuffle, flap, heel, shuffle, flap, shuffle, shuffle, stomp. He mastered the tap, he became the tap. Shuffle, shuffle, stomp, stomp. And for the rest of the night he tapped up and down the aisles. He tapped himself through

Sports to Swimsuits to Handbags and Accessories to Cosmetics and through the exit door. He tapped himself outside. Away from those conniving bastard mannequins. To real life he went, with his real legs and all.

Learn to Live and Live to Learn

By Mary Scarpa

I am twenty years young, and completely unattached
I'm not anyone's baby, so don't call me yours
Limited time, special edition, a girl on her feet
Not interested in what's best for anyone but me
Careful not to run into anything else that will hold me back from happiness
The world is mine, and all these words I write are mine
Once was a page and nothing more in the chapters of my hardest lessons
I learn slowly to appreciate the things that faced me at my worst
Surviving, it will never become the end of my world again
An unordinary girl with promises and vigor
If you can't handle me, then learn to or leave
Take a seat and watch me succeed, or grab my hand and come with me
I intend to love and to learn and to live
To make hundreds of mistakes and hundreds of friends
And learn from both
So if by some chance I forget these words
They'll be there to remind me and pick me back up
A girl on her feet, with only the unknown ahead
And if you do want to call me baby
I hope you mean it, because I don't deserve
To be anything but happy.

He loves me,



He loves me not...

Danielle Nebzydoski



Heather Beleno

the gulper eel is musically inept.

By Brian O'Neill

Roses are red
and violets sink ships.
Sending violas and cellos
to the deepest trenches of the ocean
to become splinters
amongst sand
and blind monstrosities
that know nothing
of how to pull string
across string.

Just Rain

By April Dulskey

I opened the blinds and saw my reflection,
Bags under my eyes from a sleepless night.
In the same frame I saw the rain falling,
Heard it hit the earth but never knowing which drop hit first.

I smelled the rain clear my senses and calm.
The night before; a blur of rage and chaos.
Now falling into oblivion on earth
In the form of rain,
Never knowing which word hurt worse.

I closed the window and shut the blinds.
Hoping that maybe if I open them again
I would see the sun,
And the day could end.

The Gopher

By Sarah Hite

John's palms were sweaty on the steering wheel. Nancy was applying more lipstick in the side-view mirror. It was cool outside, but Nancy didn't bring a jacket, even though John knew she would complain of chills later in the night.

"Let's go," she mumbled in between blots. John looked at her fat mouth. Bitch, he thought. There were times when he wanted to hit her. Sometimes it was a quiet urge, like when she said something stupid or crass; those were the times it was expected of him. But today there was something broiling underneath his cheap wool suit, a fire that could not be put out with one lousy bucket of water, or in this case, a simple smile and nod. Oh no, it wasn't one of those days. He clenched the slippery steering wheel as he thought about it -- the way she ordered him around like an unruly puppy, like he'd been on an invisible leash for the last 15 years -- but when he finally mustered enough strength to at least say something to her, she'd grown impatient and stepped out of the car and into the party.

John wasn't dressed. He wasn't naked, but costume-less at a Halloween party, he wasn't far off. He'd convinced himself that his suit could make him into many different things for instance, he could be a Lawyer, or a CEO, or maybe even the generic Professional. But Nancy and the others just didn't buy it. He half-smiled when he saw his coworkers' judgmental glares while they whispered between sips of orange punch, bites of devil's food cupcakes, and marathon bullshitting sessions with the guy from accounting on the third floor. John appeared lazy next to "Nurse Nancy" and "Hogart the Astronaut," like it was a room full of third graders pretending to fulfill their career dreams and John was the only one who obviously settled for a less than lucrative life.

Nancy's big eyes searched his face with pity. "John forgot to pick up a costume," she said while frowning at him. The other wives looked at him with sympathy, nursing their drinks. John laughed nervously.

"No, Nancy! I'm a Lawyer! What's scarier than that? Am I right? Up top, Jeff!" John held his hand above his head, waiting for his coworker, Jeff, to reciprocate the high-five. Jeff, dressed as a caveman, looked at John, and then abruptly walked away from the small circle. John slowly lowered his left hand, and laughed again. "See you later, Jeff!"

"Honestly, can you not embarrass me tonight? It's bad enough you're not dressed," spat Nancy. John felt the urge bubbling inside him again.

"These are my coworkers," he whispered through his teeth, feigning a smile at the small crowd around them. "You don't even have a job, honey." Nancy furrowed her brow. "And anyway, I didn't even invite you." John spoke louder now, allowing the others to hear his ire. "And by the way, I'm dressed as ME. I'll bet you think that's pretty TERRIFYING, right Nance?" He couldn't stop grinning once he realized his voice was echoing through the venue.

Nancy, stunned at John's sudden brazenness, tossed her plastic cup of orange punch in his face and dramatically made her way to the ladies' room, causing two other wives to

follow. John straightened his tie and marched toward the exit. Everyone else in the room paused briefly during John's tirade, but returned to their fake chats about stock options and the boss's lazy secretary almost as easily as John had broken them.

He left without her. This was the first time he ever felt the need to leave her behind. When she failed to make a side dish for the company picnic and publicly blamed John for not being able to afford the accoutrements for deviled eggs, he accepted it. Hell, he even believed it. When Nancy invited all her friends over to John's friend Hank's home for ladies' night at the same time of their fantasy baseball draft, John convinced the guys to let Nancy and the girls have their fun. The costume party seemed so insignificant in comparison, but obviously something had clicked in John's head, and the squealing tires of his town car as he sped away from the party further proved this point.

When John pulled into the driveway of their two-story Cape Cod, he wept for a brief moment. He cried the tears that an often defeated and emasculated husband cries when he knows he's in trouble. He slapped himself in the face. C'mon, John, he thought to himself as Perry Como crooned songs of wedded bliss on AM radio. That life was over now. He looked at Nancy's prized perennials just behind the white picket fence, and suddenly that urgent need for violence erupted from the pit of his stomach.

John stepped out of the car in a daze. His eyes looked criminal, wild and frightening as he walked slowly and menacingly toward those pretty pink flowers. He knelt by the mulch-covered dirt mounds, and almost tenderly began to pluck the flowers' petals one by one until all that was standing in his front lawn were rows of single stems. He became enraged with the laziness of his pace and began to pull out stems, roots, rocks -- anything that would come out of the ground and disrupt the tranquility the garden once provided.

The neighborhood was quiet now, and the only sound John could hear was the air rushing in and out of his lungs as he sat in the dirt hole he'd created. Rustling in the nearby shrubs silenced his heavy breathing. He stretched his neck to see what might be lurking at this time of night, but before he could sneak a glance at the noisy culprit, he felt the sharp pain of something biting his backside. John jumped from his spot and saw a gopher looking up at him from the dirt hole. He screamed; the gopher whined. They looked at each other momentarily while John reached into his back pocket. The gopher sniffed around in the hole casually as John threw his thick leather wallet into the hole, missing the squat animal but hitting something else. Something metal. Something hollow.

John fell to his knees and began to brush the dirt away from that something until he saw the shimmer of a metal locked box in the moonlight. He broke the lock with a crowbar he kept in his trunk and found bundles of hundred dollar bills neatly aligned in the big metal box. He thought about Nancy and her threats of leaving him. He thought about how much he hated his job. He thought about sipping a Mai Tai on a Mexican beach, alone for the first time in 20 years. He brushed some dirt off the box and put it in the trunk with the crowbar. He drove around the block a few times before heading for the freeway.

Habitat for Humanity in New Orleans

By Lisa Witkoski

Powdered sugar falls from the beignets
Of passing tourists
Dusting their sandals with a light snow

Red beans and rice
Crawfish and biscuits
Tango
With the smell of strangers

Jazzy tunes of the saxophone
Color my head.
Earthy guitar music
Flavors the Fourth Quarter

I stand at the corner
Between the grassy cracks of the sidewalk
Lost in the eyes
Of the child
In the painting

The dirt of his skin
Makes my worn sandals look pageant-worthy

The gold glint of his eyes
Which stare out his window
At nothing
And at everything
Hints at the unglamorous glow
Of my Cajun fries.

With nothing but a splintered stool
He sits, facing the window
Enveloped by the acrobatic blues
And the tangy reds
And the hearty yellows
That leap across the four walls of his bedroom
Performing every last trick up their sleeve
To entertain him

He remembers the hour
When Katrina stole his Cajun fries.



Lindsay Buss



Sarah Bonn

Midnight Movie Madness

By Kristina Brown

Midnight madness at a downtown movie theater.

Now showing on screen two, the romantic comedy of the decade.

The popcorn laughed hysterically, bursting frantically out of its bag. The soda cried a river, overflowing the cup as the ice sailed away. The Twizzlers flung a Goober at Mike and Ike who were seated in front. The Hot Tamales danced up and down the aisle, as the Nerds discreetly watched.

"Down in front," the cell phone yelled in a loud whisper.

The usher walked in with his flashlight and a profound silence spread across the theater, as if the hero had just died.

dream procession no. 581

By Brian O'Neill

All the bees cried
"DREAM ELONGATION!"
For great hallways
intercept justice killers
lying menacingly and
nipping at our pant-legs.

Quails retort,
singing trills
under vexed willows
with xylem yellowing.

Soon Zebras arrive
bulging with cysts
dripping with enzymes
flapping graciously.

Halfway into the jamboree,
kelp limps murderously into our necks
only paralyzing the quaint rakes
stuck in the ulcers of vermin.

When the xylophone yelps
"ZZZZPPPPTK!"
All begins to cease,
the dreams end and fade
gradually becoming hollowed
and insipid.

Just kidding.



Susan Panaway

Unavoidable son's going

By Pawel Filip

Your picture on the wall
above your chair in the dining room
is the best clock showing the passing of time.
Whether I want to or not
every Sunday at dinner time
I look at you both and ask
how far are you from the picture's image,
how many inches and pounds have you gained
what have you learned in the school of life
how much more time will you sit
with us at this table
before you build your own house?
Each change I see confronting you
with the picture
makes me feel you are further from us
and I fear this hour
when at the dinner time
I will look at the picture
hanging above the empty chair.

Dolls with Izzy

By John Lipka

I decided I would take my Muppet for a walk.
She really doesn't like it when I bring Sasha.
Sasha's my stuffed bunny who has this way of being nosy.
She tries to be a big girl like me.
But my Muppet likes me more,
And I don't know what to do!

I took them to the park,
My Muppet wants to play in the sand.
And she said she didn't want Sasha to play with her.
My little Sasha threw sand in her eye!
I had to put Sasha in my pocket,
But her big button eyes wouldn't fit!

I walked over to the swings,
And Sasha fell out of my pocket.
My Muppet got a scary look in her eyes.
She whistled and pretended she doesn't know anything.
I'm no dummy,
My mommy told me I was S-M-R-T!
I know she pushed her out all by herself!

Mommy and Daddy came with me.
They tried to help find Sasha,
But Sasha's a big girl just like me,
I know she'll come back someday.
My Muppet is just way too selfish.
One day she has to grow up,
Until then, I gotta go find Sasha!

Under the Table

By Rhian Arlene Davailus

Under the table
our love lies
You kissed me on the lips when
we were only five

Who'd have guessed
that you and I
would fall in love after all this time

Now our love is lost
My heart it cries
To think that under the table
Our love still lies

White Rose

By Tiffany Harris

So much depends
Upon
A white
Rose
Standing alone
Beside the black water
Pump.

Moment

By David Dafcik

I light a match
wait for the sulfur
to burn off, then
lit my cigarette
inhale
exhale
my wrist watch ticks
its frail sound echoing
off the off
white tiled walls
stained to a near yellow
stained by time and whatever
else and time
the ticking matches with
the curious splashes
of the leaky faucet
smacking the chipped
porcelain sink
inhale
exhale
the bathroom is small, old
the grey color is worn
tile grout sticks to the gum
of my soles
but it has a window for breath,
and
a lock for separation.

Dear cold-activated cans

By Craig Zielinski

Our senses are all disabled
When the mountains turn blue
Our eyes must believe
It must be as cold as the Rockies

When the mountains turn blue
Our judgment becomes impaired
It must be because of the substance
Years of abuse and addiction activate the can

When the mountains turn blue
Our lives turn grey
It must be as cold as the Rockies

TV Crotch Shot

By Sarah Hite

Pratfalls.
Voice-overs.
Little children
egged on by
eager parents
wielding video
cameras and
high hopes.

And you
and I
watch patiently,
expectant of
the same old
scene.
We are warm
in bed, but we
feel the breeze
of 1984 stilled,
silenced, loaded.

A proud father by the
T-ball stand,
wearing shorts that
leave little to the
imagination.

Tiny Jimmy
is attempting his first
line drive, and
Dad, with his
oversize sunglasses,
stands a little too
close to the target.

And this new host's
sound effects can
never match
Bob Saget's.

Still, the audience
roars because
that novelty check
scrawled with
ten thousand dollars
isn't going to win
itself.

The announcer says,
"We'll be
right back
with more of
the same."

Award Winner



Caitlin Bryson



Kristin Vender

The Hope Garden

By Maria Pizzo

Little seedlings, small and plain
Thumbed into the ground
The evening after a summer's rain
Whilst the sun sank down.

Moist and cold the soil stood
Sullen at her step
Imprints, upon her rising, left.

Caked with mud, her stubby hands
Did serve their purpose so.
Upon arrival of the dusk
A home for all to grow.

The dew upon her soiled feet
Stole her dirty toes
Then turn she a spigot, lift she a hose.

Little seedlings, small and plain
Soaking up the soil
Let your dreams unfurl;
Don't recoil.

Little seedlings, dewy fresh,
Deep within your core
Potential of such loveliness
to blossom lies in store.

Little seedlings, virgin pure,
Child-like flora unseasoned
Are planted and believed in.

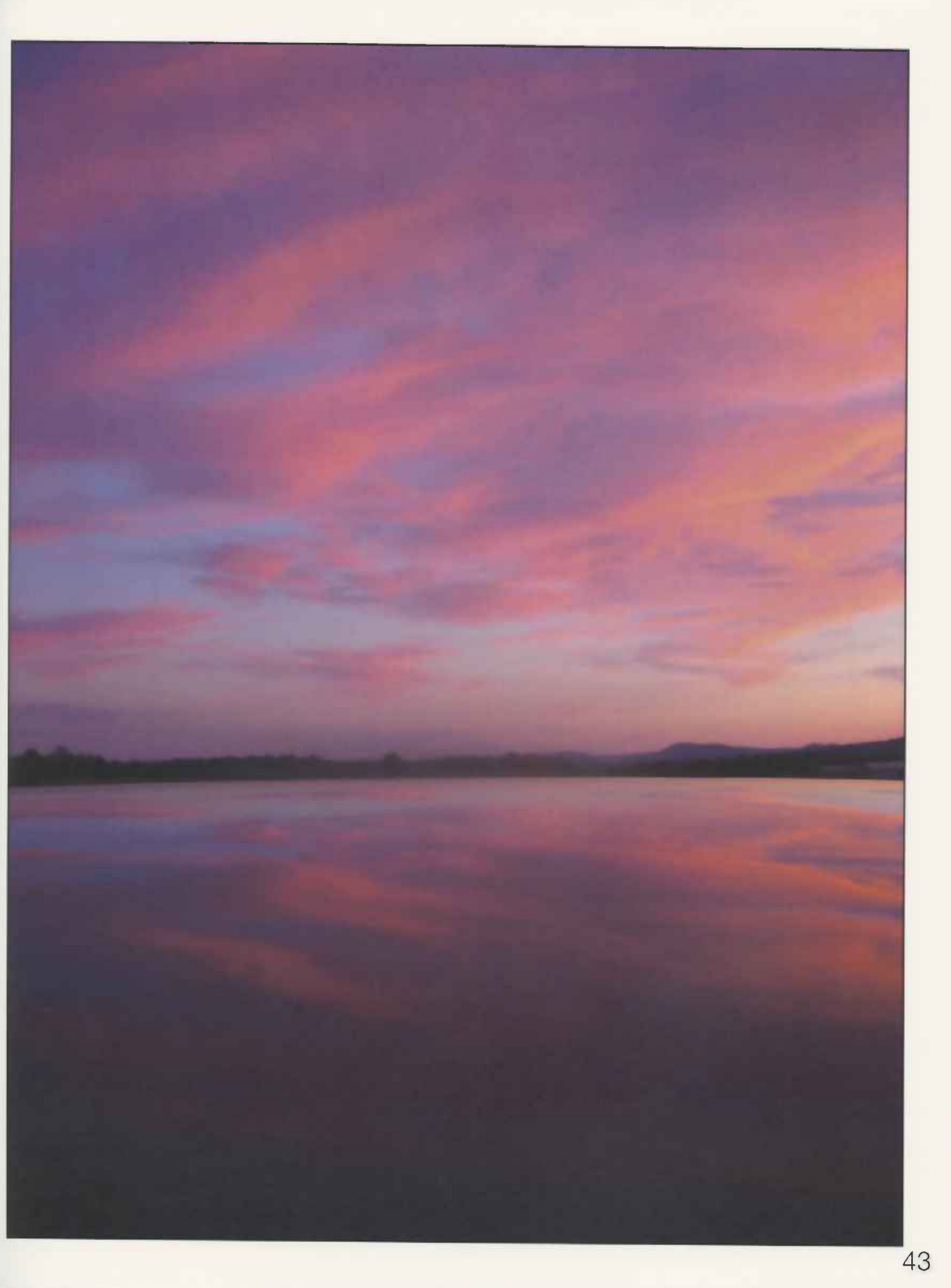
Time is likened to a tease,
Bringing birds and bumble bees
Sunlight welcomed all for these
Sprinkling hope upon the breeze --
Yet only in their season.

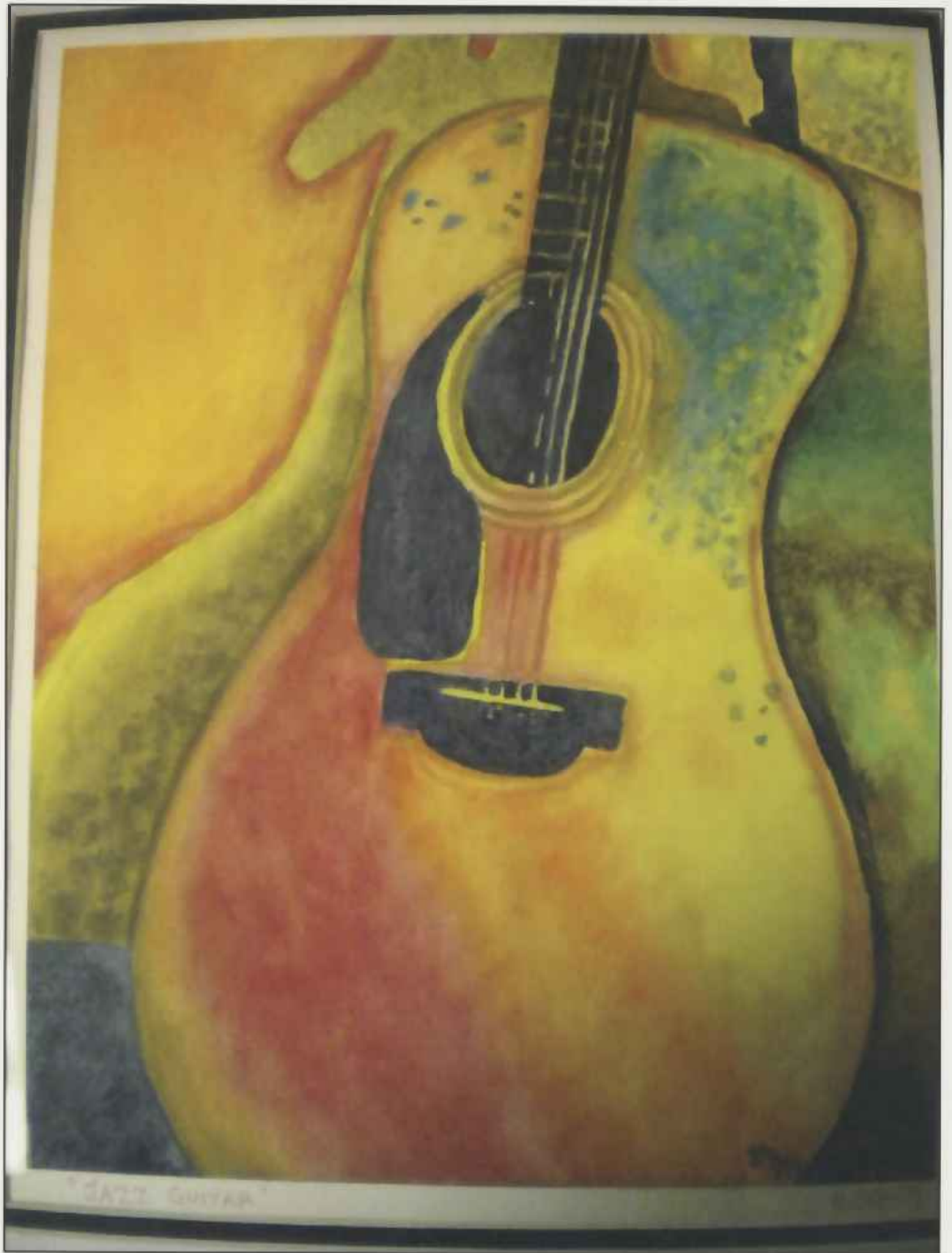
And I Should...

By Sarah Gill

Every time I think of your face,
the calming tones of your voice,
the way your smile radiates warmth through every square inch of my
body,
it makes a pit in my stomach that feels as though it is digging its claws
into my intestines, climbing all the way up, destroying as it goes,
with it's final destination being perhaps my heart, to remind it of
the destruction that has ensued.
or maybe it's really my mouth that it's aiming for, pushing for all the
hateful words to come out because of hateful feelings that I may
or may not be entitled to.
And I probably should make that choice to nurture these feelings of
obscene animosity, hold it close to my breast and coddle its
ugly face just so I can remember what it felt like to hurt and how
I should feel for you.
Give birth to ugliness, in mind and sentiment, since it is what you have
shown me and must be all we can produce, since I was broken
in the first place, and all the more so for my experience now.
But I never will, since I know that hate breeds nothing but ugliness
perpetually so even when I want to simply spit venom in front
of every single last one of your logical and physical steps, every
time I want to scream because you can never use your words to
just tell me, for every time you have ever made me feel as
though you were the greater one who needed to step down to
my level, which we know is not true, I simply remember that
ugliness begets ugliness.
And that you still have a wonderful smile.
Smiles don't beget ugliness. Just ignorance, in full, or enlightenment
sometimes.
So instead, I'll enjoy as we sit across the couch, both guffawing at this
joke or that, slyly sneaking looks to each other. Smiling sweetly
for the sake of some sentiment in filthy rotten seduction.
Even though I want nothing to do with you, I need to be right next to
you. Always just right next to you, never too far away from you
giving me what I deserve.
Always giving me what I never deserve.
Next time when we smile and slowly start to destroy the space that
exists between our physicalities, I'll just get up and keep smiling.
Then I'll be smiling for myself.

opposite page, Caitlin Bryson





"GUITAR GUITAR"

Megan McClary

Love Music Art

By
Mia Pantuso

Love is like a mighty river
Powerful yet calm
It flows according to the way
You invent the song

The song that you create
Is more important than you know
That song you choose to make
Is what drives the river's flow

The loudness and the softness
Of the music you create
Is the swiftness and the slowness
The river rapids take

The change of key and page you see
Represents the turns
Some are sharp and some are flat
It's how you live and learn

Love cannot be limited
Only to one image
Love is like a river
Yes, but also a composition

So go on and live your life
Love with all your heart
No matter what mistakes you make
Love is your own art



Sarah Hite



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