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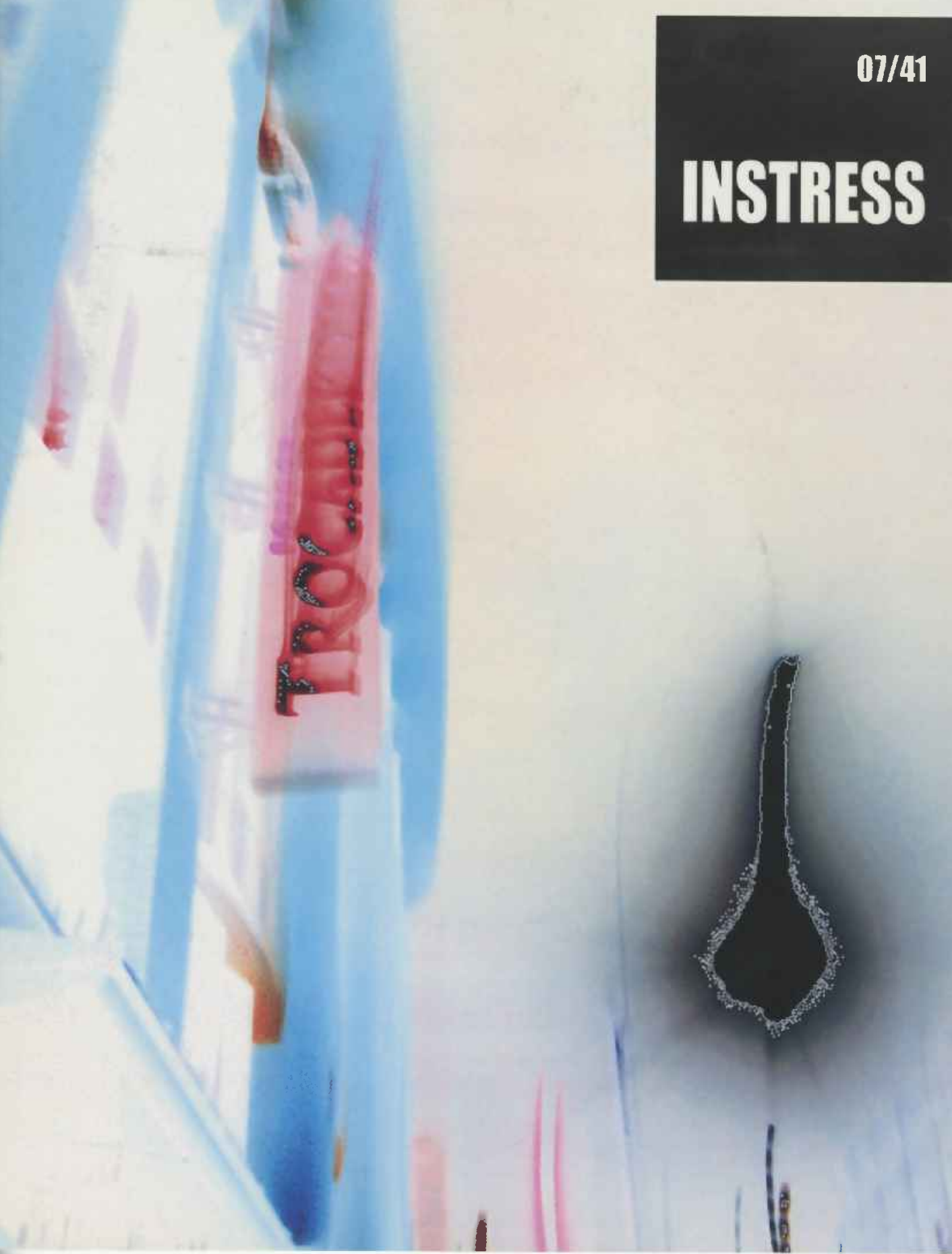
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INSTRESS



Instress 2007

Thank you to everyone who contributed – your creativity helped shape this year's *Instress* into an innovative publication filled with insight into the world around us.

Thank you to Dr. Mark Tursi, *Instress* advisor, for helping us learn how to craft a successful literary magazine.

Thanks to Dr. George Sprenglemeyer and Jay Decker for creating a brilliant music cd.

Many thanks to Jim Sabulski and all in the Misericordia Print Shop. We couldn't have done it without you!

Most of all, thank you to the *Instress* staff, who spent countless hours reviewing submissions and designing the layout for *Instress*. Your help is greatly appreciated.

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Chris Cimei and Alicia Magda – Editors

Kelly Denlea – Art and Photos Editor

Katie Turner – Fiction Editor

Chelsea Somers – Poetry Editor

Jacob Garner - Publication Editor

Jay Decker – Audio Engineer

Dr. Mark Tursi – Faculty Advisor

Dr. George Sprenglemeyer – Faculty Advisor, *Instress* cd

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ART OUT LOUD

*Dr. George Sprengelmeyer: Faculty Advisor
Jay Decker: Audio Engineer*

- 1) Eilla
- 2) Su's Aequanimitas

Chris Cimei

- 3) Winter

Ray Kline

- 4) Witch of the Night
- 5) What if?

Marie Gray

- 6) Easy Now
- 7) BvO

*Coals to New Castle
Tom Simko*

- 8) She Said Salvation

Matt Mc Dade

- Sonata Opus 31, n0. 3
Beethoven
- 9) Allegro
- 10) Scherzo-Allegretto Vivace

Betty Porucek: Assistant Professor of Fine Arts

- Pirates of Penzance
- 11) "Hail, Poetry"
- 12) "When the Foeman Bares his Steel"

Gilbert and Sullivan

Dr John Curtis: Director/Professor of Fine Arts

2007 *Instress* Journey Through The Arts Awards

The e.e. cummings Poetry Award

Sarah Bonn "Snow Globe"

The Kurt Vonnegut Fiction Award

Katie Turner "Transfixed"

The Yann Tiersen Music Award

Chris Cimei

The Pablo Picasso Art Award

Virginia Grove "Cutting Edge Fashion"

The Charles Bukowski High School Poetry Award

Isabel Anderson "A Trestle Far Below", West Scranton High School



Virginia Grove "Cutting Edge Fashion"

"Snow Globe" by Sarah Bonn

In the distance there are rich hues of bittersweet amber and
Frosty pink skyline. But above us rests only navy velvet
Studded with bits of silver glitter. A tinsel moon twinkles with mirth
Laughing at the citizens below, scurrying with their
Gift wrapped packages. They hurry to windows warm with rosy light, but

Outside the streets are lined with row houses. Lives connected
At some point both inexplicable and arbitrary. Neighbors
Listening to one another's pillow talk but ignoring their shouts
Of rage. On either side of the double lined road are cars packed and
Stuffed into the space from stop sign to stop sign. Between the

Circular pools of icy light which spill half onto the sidewalk, half on
The street slush, I wait. The mix of sugar white and cinnamon brown
Is not as pure and picturesque as those peering in would believe. Here things
Appear a little bit different than the snow covered wonderland they
Have you believing in since birth. "You can be anything"

As long as it is
Delicate,
Tender, and
Age appropriate.

I am a breath of glass
A fall from grace
A kiss beneath a city streetlamp

Reaching for the stars
You feel the tap of the dome overhead
Life stops here.

"Transfixed" by Katie Turner

Matt sat transfixed, barely ducking to avoid the crumpled notes and sticky Snickers wrappers that flew past his head to a soundtrack of shouts and crushes revealed. "Where do bees get their milk?" he mouthed to the ripped seat in front of him, lips parting just enough to keep the joke his own. "Boobies!" He giggled at the thought, before noticing stares from the other kids around him.

Not hated, but certainly not liked, by his classmates, Matt usually sat by himself near the bus driver. Luckily, without friends his own age he was left with a lot of time to serve as his mom's "little man," often helping her dry dishes or dye her hair. For as long as he could remember it had been his job to help with the coloring process. He'd sit on the sink ledge, mom bent forward to reach his tiny hands, while he scrubbed the thick goos in various colors through her hair. This was their time alone - when he would share his fears about moving on to subtraction in class and she would tickle his chin, reenacting her fat boss's swishing dress pants. But most importantly, this was when they would make up jokes together. While walking alone through assorted clusters at recess he'd heard this one, and had since been anticipating her reaction.

As a distraction, he stuck his nose and mouth against the window, exhaled deeply, and pulled away to examine his temporary creation. Watching the dewy shape fade away, he repeated the process and fingered in a smile topped with two blank eyes. Seven stops later Matt scrambled to get his Monster Jam backpack on over his hand-me-down jacket, while searching out the dusty windows for signs of life around his house. There never was, but for the last two months since starting kindergarten he'd had the same routine. Bus 11 screeched to a stop just a few duplexes away, at the corner as usual, and just like always the driver missed her mark and came to rest in the middle of the street, allowing the bus to exhale deeply. Mothers crowded on the corner to meet their kids, ready to walk them home in an attempt to protect them from the older bullies, and the creep every neighborhood fears. Unsurprisingly, no one was there to meet him, but Matt always hoped his mom might be - and that he'd only been deceived by the bus's height blocking his view. Mothers scattered as their kids hopped off, still shouting the latest gossip, while Matt trotted across his front lawn, practicing the punch line.

After fiddling with the lock momentarily, he finally swung the door open revealing his mom's current boyfriend, Bill. Many men had come and gone in the year since his dad had left them and, just like the others, this one was always in the kitchen or on the couch. While it was normal to come home to Bill, cigarette in hand and half finished six-pack nestled next to him, it was odd to see his friend Frank. Squinting to adjust to the family room's haze, he inhaled deeply, tasting the smoke. "Hey guys, wanna hear a joke?" Always trying to please Bill, Matt usually fell short, but any reaction made him think he'd done a good job.

"Hey Franky, hear that? The kid wants to tell us a joke." Shooting a glance Frank's way and cracking a drunken grin, Bill raised his voice just a bit more, "Go ahead. Tell us this joke of yours. But then I got one for you."

Bubbling with excitement over the thought of two new jokes in one day, Matt spat his out without even giving the men a chance to answer. "Okay, now tell me yours!"

"Haha, good one kid. You ready for this?" He raised his eyebrows, teasing Matt further with the sudden attention. "Okay, here goes." Pausing again, he seemed to reconsider. "You think he can handle this one, Frank?"

"Go for it. He'll love it," spat the other man between heavy gulps.

"Hmm, okay. What do you call a dead kid with no arms and no legs in the middle of the ocean? Can you figure this one out Matty?"

"Um, no, I can't figure it out. What do you call him?" Shying back, he picked at a hangnail but still waited for the answer.

"Fucked!"

There was a momentary pause between the three of them before Bill and Butch roared with laughter, stomachs jiggling them into a coughing fit. Matt stumbled back,

giggling slightly. He still appreciated the acknowledgment, but asked where his mom might be.

Bill answered, exchanging a nod and grin with his friend. "She's lying around this place somewhere. When you find her let her know the boys need another case."

"Uh, okay." Matt wheeled around to begin his search, positive that she'd appreciate his joke more than his previous audience.

Continuing the harassment, Frank spun him back around by tugging on his wispy hair. "Hey wait kid, you wanna finish this one off for me? It's getting a little warm and I gotta save room for the cold stuff, ya know?"

"Um, no thanks, I just want to go tell mom my joke."

"You'd better get over here and finish this beer, or else I'll tell her about that dirty joke you told company," pushed in Bill.

Perplexed he wandered back, still fidgeting and looking side to side. Worried his mom might be just around the corner, he picked the can up, swallowed its contents, and had it back in Frank's hand in one quick motion. While the men laughed over their trick - wiping at their eyes and ashing their cigarettes on the musty, carpeted floor - Matt attempted to make his escape.

"No, no, no. Get your bad little ass over here."

"Yea, finish this cigarette for me," chimed in Frank.

"No thanks."

"Did my good friend just ask you a question, Matthew?"

Again he returned, ready to meet his fate. "Didn't think so kid." This time Matt went about it slowly, still worried about being caught - but more concerned with the present, rather than what consequences might follow. He inhaled meekly at first until a finger jabbed into his still coat-protected ribs, at which point he took a deeper breath, coughing immediately at the humidity in his lungs. After recovering, and launching the filter back into his captor's hands, he took off, faster this time.

Peeking into the home's tiny kitchen he saw no sign of her and then raced to her bedroom. Big compared to the other rooms, it took him a moment to scan. No one knelt beside the bed, no one stood by the mirror, and even the room's closet door stood open, revealing that it too was empty aside from scattered shoes and simple dresses. He began shouting. "Mom! Hey, mom! I've got a new joke to tell you." At no response his voice tensed, "Mom? Where are you? Mom?" Laughter rang from down the hall as he searched the bathroom. An auburn stain in the sink grabbed at his throat. "Ah, so she must be around if she's been dying her hair again," he muttered to himself, disappointed.

Slowing to a shuffle, he went to wait in his own room. "I guess she went for a walk or something," he mumbled to himself, a frown replacing the smile he'd worn all afternoon. Cracking his own closet door, Matt kicked in his muddy sneakers and turned to walk away when their rebound caught his heel. Curious as to what had thrown back his shoes, he peeked inside and found his mom asleep on the floor - a rosy smile slit across her neck.

"A Trestle Far Below" by Isabel Anderson

A trestle far below
Substitution was the key.
A place where you could
Swim under the trees.
Near rivers, farms, and state lines
Hidden from him, her, and you.
The sun shines through the pines
With a peaceful, serene view.

A trestle far below
Where it leads to my safe haven.
A slippery slide right next
To a waterfall not brazen;
Bubbling by the rocks
Are the splashes down below;
Above this lagoon are many lush trees,
But the sky will never show.

A trestle far below
And on the shore, some stones.
Arranged to be a bench
To watch your friends or be alone.
Climb up the high cliff.
With the mural painted on the wall.
This place is no virgin to company
With pictures big and small.

A trestle far below
It seems like a paradise all around.
Yet high on that cliff, some inebriated kids
Are now six feet under ground.
The thrill of free falling
To the waters down below.
The hit from the rocks
And shadow of broken bones.

A trestle far below, a contradiction in all-
Where the place is my fantasyland and "suicide" is painted on the wall



Becca Shaller "Perfect"

"Overshadowed" by Elizabeth Jasolosky

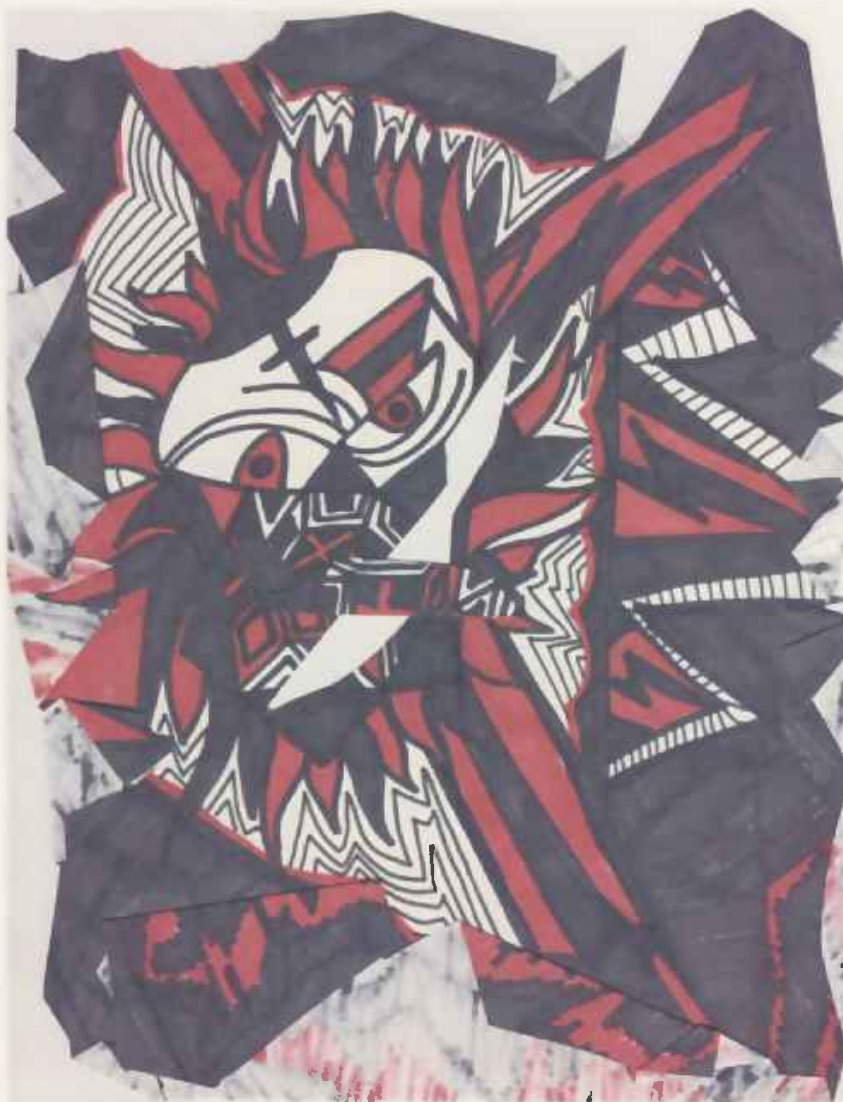
If so quick to be taken, so quick to be won,
so soon deceived, as forgotten.
Betrayed as to honesty,
as loneliness is without pain.
To seek warmth is what truth
can only bring.
Feared love and joy,
only time can show.
Untie these wounds,
too unbearable to be felt.
Like fire in my eyes,
mournful hearts do cry.
Tearing into a river,
for shattered and scattered,
pieces do flow.
To the arms of others,
they shall not grow.
The sun, its care,
that lights the heart.
has never, nor ever, shown its face.
It mocks and jeers,
taunts and teases, yet
shows its good side,
but too quick to judge,
changes its mind.
Quickly received,
can only be taken,
taken by the hated fiend.
So innocent and sweet,
quickly to cover.
But as soon as found,
taken with no thought,
the cries and sorrows,
no longer heard.
For overshadowed by deceptive ways.
Thy heart bleeds,
like screams from hell.
These wretched pains,
only one could ignite,
with unhappy, sly ways,
unnoticed by a naked eye.
To find this trick, no doubt in my mind,
time will show,
true feelings that now hide.
Only to wait,
and then thou shall see,
who is the true love,
only One can be.

"faucet/necklace" by Chris Cimei

spiral, tranquility on a turntable
fade into
words residing solely on the periphery
longing to find meaning
as if they could.
inverse rotation,
opposing forces struggling.
focus on,
numbers, geometric shapes,
humanity?
man's desire
a coin, conformity, a hat.
thrusting
pistons, arms, scales,
all dominating actions once ruled by man
creations
to do what has become too much to handle
forgotten.
focus on
money, pearl necklace
light and darkness
voids gaining existence only from the other
ex nihilo nihil fit?
faucet begs for a mans ear but is
ignored.
detachment is the eye.
a disease.

"Inner-Lost Rhythms" by Aleksandra Djordjevic

I scrape the world
and its ways,
to find your memory and
understatement of grace,
only there is nothing but the cackling of lost crows,
begging for salvation;
I seek a poetry that is the mere silence between us,
a mere shadow of who we once were
and what we meant to one another.



Virginia Grove "Black and White and Red"

"A Paramount of Twentieth Century Dreamworks" by Alicia Magda

Seven-year old lollipop suckers infected by vials of fat
Middle-aged women cooing "ohm" as they sip no foam, no fat, no fun mocha lattes.
"Man is the forest really this color" the spaced out hippie wearing high end trash asks
The Louis Vuitton slinging wannabe actress from her anorexic coffin.

It's the throbbing pulse of America.
The right to stuff a red white and blue Mcflag in your oversized mouth
The pursuit of driving your ten ton SUV off the tip of Lincoln's nose at Rushmore
The freedom to keep your mouth shut while Halliburton tells you what to say on-air.
And liberty and justice for all.

"It's this or Prague"
Sighs the celluloid seventeen-year old twirling the red umbrella.
The sun shines on a 4th of July suburban sidewalk
Covered in bloodstains like ketchup on a hot dog.
Eyes the size of Venus I stare
At my reflection in the mirror
Of a knife & I cut.
Pushing apart the walls of this fantastically staged middle-class dining room.

"knowing Beauty" by Jim Warner
(for Tony Hoagland)

Crossing in front of me, (girls) too young to be

aware, too damaged to be young. Beauty
is the poem they attempt to memorize.

Clumsy stumbles over Beauty. The words
fail to materialize

regardless how pained the expression--
regardless how bright the lights stare back.

Pale high school cheekbones explode
capillaries of denial embarrass the skin.

The teacher feeds them lines as their faces fill out.
The room swells.
pressure cooker, hot flesh--bodies sweat to melt.

Everyone here recites Beauty no one
learns Beauty by heart.



Nicole Barker "Yellow"

"Blank" by Jennifer Elward

missed opportunity.
reinstate what we lost.
open the door again.
fate stands behind us all.
laughing as we test the water.
we can't change.
listening to the same song on repeat
and contemplating battle plans.
what have we become?
we are disguised.
we are disguised.
we are disguised.

"Fake Dada" by Jacob Garner

For six minutes of your life, spirals hypnotize you for an evening that hasn't begun
Arming the Australians with smiles from a pretty lady
At the same time, the people of the flat-nose republic shall sing
Oh, they shall sing!
As incestuous mirrors run rampant in the street
Hail the dolphins! Realism defeated and necklaces turn into cheese
A trout thrown at your feet signals your victory!
Urinals for everybody!

"Where is the Water's Edge?" by Harrison Wick

The water is endless,
Where can you go?
Reflections surround,
And new journeys are unbound.

I remember finding you on the path,
And being helped along the way.
Our time together is endless,
And the water's edge seems far away.

Bridges may come and go,
And time never waits,
But for you,
I know no end.

The edge may come near,
And be ever present in our minds,
But where can I go with peace of mind,
Without reaching the water's edge?



Harrison Wick "Florence"

"Doors" by Charles LaJeunesse

When one door closes another one opens, at least that's what they say
When I go through those doors they talk about I usually have to pay
It's amazing to me how easy it is for some to go through each door
While for others it remains so difficult, for some it is a real chore

Some doors are really solid, and other ones are really weak
Behind doors people do things of which they don't want to speak
If I was a fly on the wall after everyone closed their own door
I'm certain I would find it interesting to see things I deplore

All the doors we go through throughout our lives it truly boggles to mind
And all the doors may encourage us or perhaps they are the challenging kind
Sometimes I become so wary by going through each and every door
I ask myself on many occasion, is this what I'm here for?

Doors are a part of our society , they help us get through each day
Some doors can keep us from intruders, others keep the riff-raff away
Some doors are difficult to enter, despite our efforts to go through
But the only door I truly care about, is the door that leads me to you

"Resources" by Ray Kline

The crowds shout and yell for change that will never come.
Amassed in the streets, hiding behind pointed, loaded guns.
The woes of the world have finally collected.
Signs they are carrying say:
WILL MURDER FOR BREAD.

The Bums down the street chameleon
with garbage and brick walls,
littered streets blend into shadows.
Four sets of five and five sets of six,
Take the stairs,
Give them the slip.

Two sets of two and three sets of three,
I run my fingers along the edge
of a round wooden table, and wonder;
how it came to be. The crowds shout and yell for change that will never come.
Amassed in the streets, hiding behind pointed, loaded guns.
The woes of the world have finally collected.
Signs they are carrying say:
WILL MURDER FOR BREAD.

The Bums down the street chameleon
with garbage and brick walls,
littered streets blend



Becca Shaller

"Ghost Writer" by Thomas Rehtin

After I stabbed my brother
with a pen, he returned
with a dinner knife
that I wrested like a pen
from his grasp to write,
"Do you remember
how I forced you to memorize
the presidents of the United States?
They are all dead.
I have buried each one
like a bone in the backyard
for our dog to dig up.
When she went blind, she lay
in the sun and panted
for water she couldn't see
until we carried her
to the car like an empty casket.
'She will live forever,' I said,
'and you, you will sing
her praises. I am the dandelion
you pick to adorn her leash."

"Philosophical Musings of a 21st Century Prophet" by Matt Hannon

I'm creating a new government
It's an existentialist nation
A country full of academic influenced youth...
Dragging and banging throughout the streets and roads and sidewalks
Constantly searching for meaning and ideas of existence
Like a pair of scissors is constantly searching for a purpose other than
cutting something
Woe, to you, children of Starbucks and MTV
Woe, to you, trapped in the ever maddening confusion of THIRD WAR AMERICA

OH Holy Fools!
OH Dreaded Books!
OH Disastrous Funding!
We don't attend school anymore
We attend businesses...
Made to suffer under completely unintelligent intelligencia

Raise chants for Kingston, Oh Zion
Shout mantras for Hanover, Oh Pilgrims of Heaven
Cry aloud for crumbling Wilkes-Barre, Oh Children of Buddha

We need to re-write Sartre's "Being and Nothingness"...
It's got to be "BEING AND SOMETHINGNESS" because we're always searching for
something aren't we?
Something to eat
Something to do
Something to feel
Something to hear
Something to define ourselves

Well...one thing leads to another, Fred
At least pose this question to yourself...
How can you cure yourself of disease with art?

"The time before" by Steven Wieser

Your vision is skewed. Kaleidoscope.
Zoom in zoom out. What of inside?
Glasses don't help. But you see just fine.
Your vision is skewed. Prisms flashed on the wall.
What do you fear?
Death? Inevitable.
Connection? Desire.
Fear, Symbols.
Freedom, do you fear? Liberty?
What do you fear? Disgusted, I fear.



Virginia Grove "Bruised"

"Morning Walk" by Alicia Magda

Moles are burrowing in my feet.

I brushed the tunnel rats away, gritty little pebbles falling from my size ten foot. I slapped both hands across my throbbing eyes, afraid the painful sun would reveal that time I told my mom I ate the carrots but threw them on my brother's plate. Or that time I threw my brother off a cliff.

He's okay.

The ground pulsed up and down against the weight of my 140 pound five eight body. Yeah, not much there. I didn't want to walk down this big hill at 6:45 on a Monday June 21st but my roommate said we needed butter, that fake margarine kind with the cancer. I wasn't sure where the butter factory was on this road but he said I'd end up there. I consulted my mental map, the voice in my head that tells me to turn left when I know I should go right. Maybe that's why I picked up the bottle of Stoli instead of Parkay.

Innocent mistake.

I walked out of the store. Five children stood in a circle, watching me like a rhinoceros encroaching on a hummingbird. "I FEEL PRIMAL" I exclaimed, arms mounted in the victorious "V". Some seven year old in a sideways dress snickered at me and held up her red stop sign that screamed "Slow Down".

One of the moles nipped at me again.

Blood started to ooze from my size ten foot. I sat down on the side of the road on the wet grass and extracted a green slab of glass from someone's Rolling Rock bottle. I looked up to a car going by, I was the driver. I threw a Rolling Rock at me. I shrugged. At least I knew I'd do the same.

"Sister" by Cody Hack

It was us in the driveway
Shooting hoops and playing pig.
In '92 you dressed me up.
Yeah, you remember that wig.

You fell through the roof,
And I was the first to laugh.
But that is a bond
That everyone wished to have.

We joked and cried together,
While pushing and shoving,
But no matter what
It was always very loving.

We're older and wiser now,
But the fun doesn't have to cease.
We're always there for each other
In the best of ease.

You never caught that firefly
You damn sure missed her,
But these are the days
When I'm proud you are my sister.

"What was Lost is Now for the Words" by Aleksandra Djordjevic

Are you a poet?

Do you like the way words come tumbling out of my mouth like fresh roses from an open window?

Do you like the way words taste in your mouth,
the way they paint portraits of themselves onto the pages of your life?

Can you say the word,
"Isabella?"

Can you read her mind and
hear her intentions,

can you plume her plucky robin's-egg-blue mirrored soul
for that inescapable bestial thing that exists and yearns for escape,
for attention

deep inside you?

I cannot.

Only the words can.

"Healing Hands" by Shannon Gleason

I lay there on the gloomy night,
Wondering how those healing hands
Could ruin the life
Of such a man.
His face bears the hardships of life,
His eyes search for a purpose -
A reason to live.

As he lays there-
The bed struggling to support him -
Silent tears slide down his cheeks.
Tears that reveal years of nothingness,
Years of pain and suffering,
Years filled with the hatred and distrust of others.

He tells me of the endless desperate pleas;
The pleas of suffering men echoing in his head.
How can he reach them through these bars of steel?
These bars that hold an innocent man.

Compassion, shock, horror, sympathy.
My mind experiences a rush of emotions for this man -
A man dying for the crimes of another.
How can I stop the heartbeat of this miracle worker -
A man who can save others...
But not himself.

Suddenly, my heart is ripped to pieces
As the life is brutally shaken out of this man.
Those around do not know the truth:
A part of every life has left this world,
Leaving all to ponder the words,
"I'm sorry for what I am."

These words echo within me night and day.
A man blessed with truth and life
Is plagued by the world's evil.
The anger of many
Will now silence hands full of goodness and love.

"In the Picture" by Thomas Reichtin

Your hands are holding
a bouquet of yellow flowers
or the flowers are fake.
Or the picture
is in black-and-white
and you have dropped the flowers
to take a picture of the woman
someone carved
on the way back from a beach
whose sand is green.

There was a fire.
The sky burned black
so we drove to a beach
whose sand was black
and your legs rose. The back
of your right hand
supported your chin,
while the smile you gave
rotted every tooth?
cracked every lens.

Or maybe, made me laugh.
In the picture
you are either wearing a hat
that was stolen
or lying on the trunk
of a fallen tree. To imagine
that the tide may have brought it in.
To imagine
that a storm bore it here.

"diapers and bleach." by Jim Warner

A tiny crawlspace where we
worked was wet with Time
Square street smells.
Her father picked at scabs
nerving and curving up his
arm.

. . . there were times

she would wait for the entire
three hour session. Eventually
they moved to Los Angeles.
At the last therapy session, her father's

frustrations were bloody earthquakes
along the fault-lines of his wrist.

"Saturlater" by Jim Warner

Empty pockets: make it the table's problem.	Untangle
------------------------------------------------	----------

memory from hangover. receipts—the Jackson	Blurry actually
-----------------------------------------------	--------------------

a Hamilton. Pour your heart out over the toilet.	Call
-----------------------------------------------------	------

nobody	back.
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"Fairytale Ending" by Rachel Hasay

I'm the reason it stopped,
But you're the reason it ended.
Too many battles that I had lost,
My shield had fallen,
And I was finally free.
I had met the others,
And you were right all along.
My heart became all black and blue.
Defeated once again,
Forever and ever was how long you escaped my mind,
Now your memory is my shadow.
You haunt my dreams,
Whether I'm asleep or not.
My heart is empty and alone,
And it's all because I had to let you go.
Defeated all over again.



Jennifer Kowatch "Acadia Beach"

"Life Like an Away Message" by Matt Hannon

I like to live vicariously through my friends away messages

Tasting pure life

Staring at the requisite photos on myspace

"Me drunk with so-and-so at Mike's party 5-6-06"

"Me in Philly with my super cool friends lolz"

"Aren't I so amazing?"

Not amazing, just dumb

People with names like "the reverend" and "tragic outlook" and "ham leg"

Are you for real? Do you really exist like this?

And who names their kid Ham Leg?

Angry screen names with bold X's in them

Xxangry_emo_kid_who_cuts_his_wristsxX or xxsymphonyinacarcrashxx

Nothing is real anymore

Life is purely a manufactured existence made by Sony or Viacom or GE

I want pure life

Is that such a crime?

I am no longer known for my personality but rather what my myspace page says

"Hey aren't you that Mr. Whitesunglasses guy? It says you like Ginsberg...what's up with that?"

"Hey I know you from myspace!"

What if real life had a "deny request" button?

Then what?

What kind of great responsibility comes with that?

Don't worry, I'm friend requesting all of you later...you can be sure of it.

What? With the Shower Net?" by Jacob Garner

Licking the walls while searching for gold grew to be tiresome for all
Out the door and into the crowded city streets you go
Your mind is still hazy from the forest you burnt down
And your mouth is as dry as unwanted penetration
But that doesn't matter now
You walk past all the pretty things in the store windows
The pompous hipsters shrug you off in their ironic, yet lame way of doing things
One person will still talk to you, a ghost of the Johnson administration
Listen to his ramblings for five minutes but not too long
Lord knows you don't want a paranoid rambling man to lobotomize you with the fork in
his ear.
Take the nickel in your pocket and hand it to him so he can call his friend in 1968.
Welcome to Hades, your own private hell inside your mind
No one can hear the screams except you because you're the only one screaming
Screaming that you can't handle what you're seeing
Or doing
Or smelling (but that's for the Sanitation Department to handle)
Continue your journey with the help of the Amboy Dukes
As your mother runs behind you in the street
Clean up you lazy bum!

The clouds darkened as Wilhelm walked along the dusty road that led down into the campground. The campers were mostly gone and the summer breeze blew coolly against the beads of sweat that ran down his wrinkled forehead. Wilhelm stopped and picked up a beer bottle from beside the road, shiny green glass with a worn label of white and red. He dropped the bottle in the black plastic bag in his left hand.

The road ended in a wooden gate around the bend. There was the office building, an archaic shack of wood siding and peeling brown paint. Beyond the gate, a field faded into a grove of scattered pine that overlooked the tired river below. Garbage blew across the field and spotted the summer grass. It was the last Sunday of August.

As Wilhelm approached the gate the door of the office opened and Tim came out. He walked over to the gate and pushed it open.

"How we doin' today?"

"Tired," Wilhelm said, dragging his feet past the gate.

"Yeah," said Tim. "We weren't sure if you were gonna make it down. It's damn near four o'clock."

"It's Sunday isn't it?" Wilhelm snapped.

"Yeah, of course," Tim said, fingering the coins in his pocket.

The two gazed off into the expanse of spray painted and numbered pylons, down past the field and into the grove. The breeze was picking up and the air smelled of rain. A white grocery bag danced in the electricity of the impending storm.

"Looks like rain," Tim said.

"It's damn well *gonna* rain," Wilhelm said. "I can feel it."

"Yeah. Well, the guys tried to keep the bottles separate for you. They're in the top of the barrels."

"You work them boys too hard," said Wilhelm.

"Well...I gotta get back to the office," Tim said. "Good luck."

He walked up the steps to the office and closed the door. Wilhelm walked to the first site and sorted through the bottles and cans at the top of a 55-gallon drum. A phone rang from inside the office and Tim answered.

"Tim's Outdoor Enterprises, this is Tim speaking, what can we do for ya?"

"Hello sweetie."

"Hey."

"I just wanted to remind you to pick up Timmy from the Polymers' at 6:30. You know how Timmy *hates* it when you forget."

"Yes, dear."

"How is your day progressing?"

"It's alright. Wilhelm's in one hell of a mood though—even crankier than usual."

"I can't understand *why* you let that old man dig through the garbage, especially on *Sundays*. It's rather sacrilegious if you ask *me*."

"It doesn't do no one any harm. Most of the campers leave Sunday morning anyway and it gives Wilhelm something to do."

"...anyone any harm."

"What?"

"It does not do *anyone* any harm."

"Yeah. Well I gotta attend to the business. I'll see you at home."

"Do *not* forget to pick up Timmy."

"Bye."

Tim walked over to the desk under the window and stared at the papers scattered there. He held a pencil in one hand and scratched his head with the other, trying to remember where he had left off.

Wilhelm made his way around the campground. He carefully picked the refundable bottles and cans out of the trash and placed them in his black plastic bag. Rain drops dotted his white and collared short-sleeved shirt. He decided to call it a day.

Wilhelm handed the refund slip to the cashier and said nothing. The rain had soaked through his clothes and left him cold. A puddle formed at his feet and spread along the grocery store floor as he handed three paper slips to a cashier and waited.

"Here Will," said the cashier, handing Wilhelm a bill and a nickel. "Your refund comes to five dollars and five cents."

"Thanks," Wilhelm said, easing the money into his wet pocket.

"Hey Will."

"Yeah?"

"My shift ends in five minutes. If you want to wait, I'll give you a lift to the home."

"Thanks," Wilhelm said. "But I'm already soaked."

"Don't you worry any about it. She's raining too hard for you to walk all that way."

"No thank you. I'd rather walk just the same."

"Alright," said the cashier. "But if you change your mind I'll be out in five."

"Thanks," Wilhelm said, and walked out the door.

Tim looked up at the clock and swore. It was 6:31 p.m. He gathered up the scattered papers and threw them in his pocket. Hard and infinite drops of rain stung his face as he ran for the driver's side of his Yukon and unlocked the door. His clothes were soaked and he swore again as he sat down in the leather seat.

Tim could hardly see as he drove down the road toward the Polymers' home. The wipers were on high and swished away the raindrops as millions more immediately took their place. Tim squinted at the road and slammed on the brakes.

The Yukon's tires screeched and Tim heard three solid thuds followed by a series of rolling taps before the car finally came to a stop between two pines. His hands shook as he reached for his cell phone and he could feel his stomach in his throat. With trouble Tim dialed 911 and hit the green SEND button. There was no service.



Becca Shaller "Abandoned Shadows"

"American Electric" by Chris Cimei

Freedom wrapped around a baby's hand
i wasn't supposed to grab his dogtags
but it was my right wasn't it?
America, land of the free
land of the many, many
sleeping souls, fade in and out like
ghosts of our fathers
bayonets tearing through tissue
allowing the bodies of the enemies to
open up and pour out guts, blood, and organs
finally receiving aid to reject their sinful nature

Stories of soldiers luring in the women of
countries that they were supposed to protect
raping and tearing apart their once pure lives now
tainted by the mess that they created
"daddy's got to go away but i'll be back soon"
mother stays awake in the dark bedroom

I found my fathers dogtags next to his wedding ring
as i searched through his drawer
to pretend that i was him, that i could be a GI Joe
a true American hero, the defender of freedom
I grasped that freedom tied tight around my right hand
as two tags dangled from the chain
one and two held out
Americans can be curious
plug it in and let freedom ring
as the electricity flowed through my body
and left its scar on the hand i put over
my heart as i pledge allegiance to this flag

"My Inspiration" by Kelly DeSantis

Here I sit, a world unknown before me

Consumed by this loneliness
My insignificance among this beauty
My place in this world all amiss

And then I see her, her arms open wide
Winds of grace beneath her feet,
Dancing in the rain, her face towards the sky
Her innocent eyes oh, so sweet

A vehement storm upon the sea
Cheerless clouds of ebony
paint my heart
my heart

The rain falls,
The tears fall
Melancholy ebbs the shores of my soul
My soul

Where is my peace, where is my light, where is my inspiration?

Made pure again, a heart once defiled
As she wrapped her arms around me
The simple faith of a whimsical child
Embracing a hurt she can't see

She is beautiful soaring on Your wings
I open my heart now to You
Mold me, fill me, unworthy of My King
Ashamed of the place I've come to

Storm clouds clear, the sun shines through
I lift my hands to praise you with my heart
All my heart

So let the rain fall
Let the tears fall
The joy of the Spirit fills the depths of my soul
My soul

I'm finding my grace, I'm finding my strength, I'm finding my inspiration

The sun sinks below the horizon,
The rolling waves rock me gently to sleep
I've found my hope in the One who sends the rain
I dance in His glory, He takes away my pain

Diamonds pierce the velvet sky.
As my God whispered, "My Child, don't cry, for You are my love, You are my heart, You are my inspiration".

"Untitled" by Tammy Nudo

Trill, Trill,
the lark on the windowsill,
the wren in the bush.

Yellow, pink, green,
on the windowsill,
in the bush.

Madame Lark, Sir Wren,
bringers of spring,
heralds of winter.

Yellow, pink, green,
on the windowsill,
in the bush.



Elizabeth Jasolosky

"God is in the rain"

Excerpt from "Living/Non-Living & God: What's Really Going on Here?"
by Amanda M. Schraeder.

Late in August of 2006, I happened to be vacationing on the coast of Maryland. On an overcast afternoon while meandering down a wavy line of shore, I could catch sight of storm clouds relocating from the west. Diminutive liquid drops began to descend gently, landing on my sunglasses, grey, zippered hoodie, and bottle green COUGARS shorts. With outstretched arms, I could feel the soothing drops gradually becoming larger and larger yet as I continued imprinting my footsteps down the sodden beach. When the storm appeared to reach its zenith, I diagonaled my stroll towards the sea. Crests collided unconcernedly with my body as I turned to behold bubbly troughs of water sweeping fragments of shells over the sand. Blurred by water in eyes and saturated completely to the bone, I stood timelessly in the Atlantic, enveloped by water, fresh *and* salty, derived from land *and* sea. The sensation was incredible; I was *life standing in that which permits life* on our cosmic, cerulean abode. Unexpectedly, the downpour dwindled, the clouds resumed their migration, and illumination could be detected where the dark, fluffy, floating pillows had entered. A spectacular exemplar of ROY G BIV (a rainbow) arched above the horizon through bright, misty rays. Lamentably, to describe the vista in words does not equally express its earthly exquisiteness. Nonetheless, it remains as gorgeously breathtaking in my mind as if I had glimpsed it today.

For as long as I can recall, I have had faith that there exists a God. This world, this state of Being that we partake and exist in, seems much too complex and awe-inspiring to be an accidental or chance occurrence. Take my experience of the loveliness at the beach, for example. I could not imagine that such displays of beauty are mishaps or utterly random incidents. Rather, I believe, as some others do, that Nature and order in the world is the product of an intelligent architect of sorts, a Divine Being to be exact.



Angela Grochowski "Shed No Tears For Me"

"At the crosswalk" by Jim Warner

 a car door orphaned.
horns-
lights-
and stop
signs.

A handful of dead leaves
drifted from his pocket, left
to fend for themselves in

the street.



Kelly DeSantis "Intersection"

"After Buuel's *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*" by Thomas Rechten

Begin by placing your palm
flat against the wall.

It feels cold, of course,
but the real question is

whether you have enough heat
to burn the house down.

A wind dives in
through the open window

and bends the flame of the candle
horizontal, without putting it out.

You are quite the jokester, it says,
but the question remains:

is it your hand that is sinking
into the wall, or are you pushing

your way into the next room?
It is only a kitchen.

And the windows aren't even open.
In fact, there aren't any windows!

Period. You are outside walking
with five other friends

on a car-less road
through the countryside, eyeing your shoelaces

as they flap and flail like
fish caught and dropped on the dock.

Two are holding hands?
is it the sun that lets you

see them see their own shadows?
As you lift your head up

a wind takes advantage, snatches
the bowler off your head

as if you were standing still,
or walking backwards: anything

but the dying figure in bed
wishing he could swing one leg

to the floor, and stand.

"The Vodka Soaked Biography" by Matt Hannon

He leaves a trail of broken wine bottle stigma

Far surpassing everyone else, that's for sure

"The only thing worth living for is this couch, man" he says with a concrete-like cracked face and a cigarette laugh

The open road isn't even a possibility

He's been hunted far too much for that

Go head, sell the house, and move in with your dead best friend's widow

It changes nothing

We need to make the movie that tells the real stories here

The stories from coma-inducing, go nowhere-feeling, never make it alive-tellin' coal region

"I'm just glad to make the American dream come true"



Chris Cimei "Contemplation"



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