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INSTRESS

1998

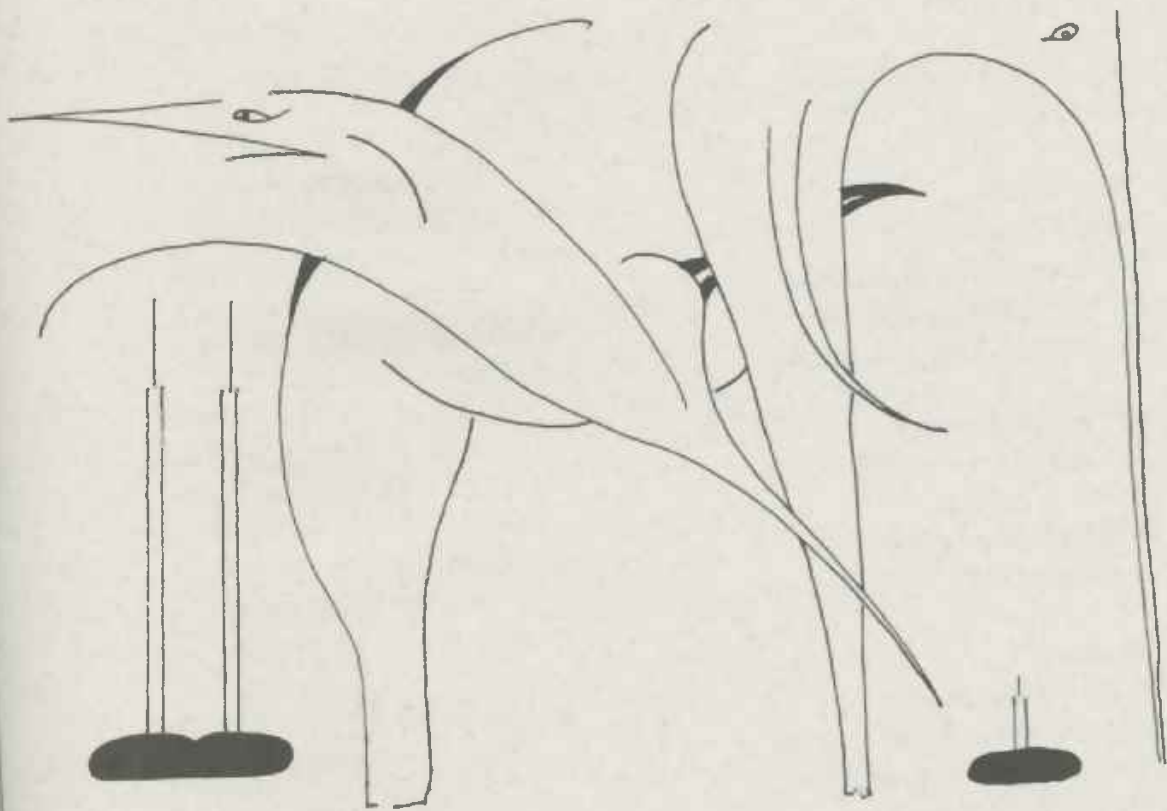
Thanks to Everyone for Submissions
&
Congratulations to the
Contest Winners:

Prose:

1st-Scene61, Chad Dreishbach
2nd- A Sign of Peace, Colleen Chandler
Honorable Mention- Between Black and White, April Masters

Poetry:

1st- Tuned Manifesto, Amy Dunaway
2nd- Kites, Melissa Spinelli
Legacies, David Michael Engelhardt
Honorable Mention- Felix Culpa, Colleen Chandler



S Davies Circus 5/22/95 MEW

circus
Dr. Davies

AN INTIMACY WITH GOD

Heat pounding
Sank deep within my core,
Surrounding me with a sweat,
Draining my life
Of its conscience.

I lusted for the light
To fill my groin
With a life
That would engourge my being
Into wholeness.

Then lifted up,
I might celebrate
the source of this illumine
And confess my failure
To consummate this vessel.

Yet, such a burn
Can leave you scarred.
No such intimacy
Is completely known
Or forever felt.

It is sought,
Never possessed.
Only the field can be owned
Where its precious passion
Can be climaxed.

No violation will stain
The memory, only
A removal of the veil
Enables the radiance of the mighty
To spend the sacred orb...

Into my chaste being.

Michael Bryant

By the Glass

Walking by the glass
Watching them pass
Watching them speak,
not hearing the words.

Walking by the glass
Watching them pass
They rush there
and stop here.

Walking by the glass
Watching them pass
Walking with intent;
gesturing with discontent.

Walking by the glass
Watching them pass
Dressed in costumes,
filling roles of extras.

Walking by the glass
Watching them pass
Appearing from nowhere;
retreating to somewhere.

Walking by the glass
Watching them pass
Stringless puppets
Silently read stories.

Walking by the glass
They're watching me pass.

Roseann M. Gorey

The Past Life of a Virgo

They lay over me as a silencing peace.
They tell me stories,
they explain my feelings.
They were never randomly lined up in the positions that I see them in,
they were crafted with care. And when they became themselves,
they set the spirits of others.
They belong to us all, yet we are all specifically one.
Because I am missing,
they guide me to the light;
Because I am hurting,
they strive to reveal the truth.
They have lasted throughout time, allowing me the patience to wait.
I GAZE.....and they bring me the one.
The streaking lines and the dancing circles bring my heart to
fulfillment.
It makes my MIND race.
It makes me WONDER.
They never go away, nor does the love:
cause in the day they all form as one,
which is just as significant.
They come together as one,
as the SUN.
And that is how it is suppose to be.

-Lori Scott

Between Black and White

And if you go chasing rabbits...

The wall was white but not for long. It was cut short by a smoke layered ceiling and weary carpet. The kind which rests in a grandmother's house, having been worn by centuries of dirt and careless foot steps; but all, that had been seen before in that hallway above the stairs was not of concern. White glared but with an inviting gesture of peace, a journey into the wall and myself.

I can't remember what clothed me or why I decided to go, but I ran into the white wall to see gray shadows grow. Mountains rose from the bumpy white paint which unevenly lay perpendicular to my view. Small gray valleys pulled me between the white mountains to leave the sickly surroundings. The yellow turned around me, slowly at first; it soon spun and I was suspended in a whirlpool, staring into the eye of the rushing wall-a white comforting depth in the mist of a swirl of yellow.

My focus rose higher as I lost the whirlpool around and ran into a valley between three chalked mountains. It was as if snow covered the ground but without texture or coldness. I was in the center of a crumpled white piece of paper slowly being washed by water colors as my pointed ears picked up a faint sound. I barely heard the growing rhythm of "China Cat". I pranced in my feline fur through the brush of a familiar artist who placed me in a growing green valley with blooming sunflowers. The green was immense; thick tree-trunk size stalks of green textured veiny strong stems piping food up their veiny bodies to produce far above blooming suns of smiling golden songs. Soft intertwined petals flowing with creamy vibrance dripped in my wide smiling cheshire world. I was surrounded and held within velvety green giants who caressed me further into the music.

A new rhythm lifted me along. I buzzed into a

field of "scarlet begonias" who danced amongst themselves. Fellows buzzed before me gathering their own findings, however the sweetness was not only from the scarlet scent; drums and feeling moved all orange and black fuzzy coats through a hidden doorway of love-colored favorites, nothing could resist the rising flowers. Leaves joined hands and were released from grounded roots to flutter along with the wind. Petals were faces of moving red, encompassing yellow smiles. We grew together helping our brothers and sisters in their natural blossoming; in turn they gave us the magic sweetness to journey through the awaited door of a yellow sky and blue sun. A single scarlet begonia raised up in the movement to release a sound so airy it breathed into us and we were endlessly moved beyond the water color and into oiled colors - endless visions.

I found an unending field of grass beyond the scarlet path, cupped within the vast mountains which rested at the extent of my vision. Wind whispered and blew the liquid green to and from each encompassing purple mountain, which caught the soft unbroken flow and nudged it to return into the cupped field. Fluff-like a rabbits fur cushioned my step and guided me into moving music. Drums lifted me into colors more vibrant than those of a painter's pallet of soothing sound. Music broke in form only to sway me in a strange hypnotic state. As the music rose, I rose. With each touch of the drum, blue and green pulsed from the impact. Vibrant fluttering birds of beat streaked the sky; I was all of them.

A crowd of smiles sprung from the ground like kind buds in spring. *The other one* found me and I flew up into the clouds, white fluff. I folded my rushing wings and floated to the green. Happy arms spread out before me as petals after a morning's dew to reach the sun's warming rays. We moved by not knowing; lifted by our fearless feathers into the ocean greens of our floating world. My face was an everlasting smile. My neck lifted into the sun which dripped golden sugar syrup. Clouds frolicked in blue joy to chase one another across the unending sky. We moved by not

knowing. We had "escaped into the lily fields and come across an empty space which trembled and exploded, left a bus stop in its place". We were on the yellow bus of day. We were the music, all became one.

Original form retook us. Feet brushed the dirt through their rhythmic steps- the brown uplifted grains blew and dissolved into the wind. Grass trickl-ed amongst the pure smiles and comforted through cool soft evergreen blades of fluff. Grass sounded and pulsed within to make every arm move like a snake and each foot shuffle beneath. Spinning swirls of orange flew from finger tips entranced. The mountains flowed with fire, red and yellow blended explosions of orange sun cascaded down into the field as bending tiger lilies. All life moved by perfect reaching sound which faded into itself changing without notice, . carrying each soul.

My breathing arms soon slowed from their uncontrolled state, but were held by another's. I melted into the blanket of green to rest in my dreamy mind. A single dark star pronounced a falling sun. *Shall we go..you and I while we can....through....the transcending night fall of diamonds..* saturated as the gentle laughter of rain washed me. I wandered further within to notice the slowly wavering blades of green, daring not to fly like pinwheels when I rose. My mind slowed with calming- it came from within.

The blue sun echoed the *dark star*. The soft mist gently fell. Smiles dissipated with the raindrops into the sinking ground. I wrapped my fingers around my worn, but still rejoicing toes. My neck turned my face to the sky. Brightness had been washed in black and white. Gray-blue covered the liquid green flow. The mountains which cupped this eternal area were faded by a thin chalky foam which restrained their bouncing bellies from nudging the grass to crest in waves. As I gazed upward I could see the lid of the universe releasing thin pin droplets. Falling lighter and softer than snow, the dew must have been dropping around the world. It was a dream- the release of calm nectar.

The last rhythm dissolved into an undisturbed mother who slowly cradles her child to sleep in a sturdy rocking chair. *Mountains of the moon* made me rise and beg my feet to lead me. I was a simple firefly in an immense field. The field further, crisper, and more enchanted than any other even though layered by a thin fog.

I circled myself to see the vastness of my slowly dissolving word, "the Earth will see you on through this time..." repeated in light air and I knew I was returning. I drifted into the water glossed sunflower forest.

The ground was mud. My tiny wings beat off the water droplets. Suns previously blooming with golden light were in need of rest. They welcomed the cleansing rain to dull their vibrance; nourishment was needed.

Mountains of gray grew into three white realities. I turned to see the magic forest and field beyond *bow and bend to me....bend to me*. Fog thickened and all faded light to pastels. My body returned from illusions lost in a world being eaten and dissolved by rain, which dripped visions of color into the ground. Once all colors mix- brown results in an artist's water wash. Sleepy brown.

My head spun and the white mountain was lost. I found myself from behind gazing into the white wall no longer growing. My swivel chair halted as was its duty. All that I found could never be forgotten. Green never to fade. A wall never, merely a wall.

Nothing could be expressed. All was understood. I journeyed in myself through all who had gone before me and were to go after to the world between black and white. A world where white rabbits flee in search of something they never lost.

April Masters

-honorable mention-

A Singular Purpose

Walking alone
Down the back road
Pulling the wobbly red wagon
With a singular purpose
Cans

Searching for cans
Empty cans
Soda cans beer cans
Cans

Along the roadside
One can two cans three cans
In the ditch
Four cans six cans ten cans
Enough
To buy some toilet paper

At the bend
By the creek where the fishermen sit
Twenty cans thirty cans
Almost out of coffee too

Behind the playground
At the party spot
Fifty cans
Piles of cans

Oh yes
A hamburger for dinner

Up the alley
Where the woman leaves her cans
Hanging on the fence
Countless cans
A jackpot
A fortune in cans
Make that a cheeseburger
And maybe

Even a bottle of wine
For company
And comfort

felix culpa

you gave me the choicechancechallenge,
you made me,
you gave me a special little gift
in a package of creamy breasts and milky thighs.
(but did you make me so that these are all i am
and all i can ever be?)
was the free-ness you gave me planned by you
because i would be weak/free and bring on the downfall?
the world thinks that because it was not the
broad-chested seminal-vesicle type that ate the apple
(it was the soft voluptuous child-bearing sex)
that i am at fault, that i hold the copyright.
look beyond to see that the chance to fail
rested on the shoulders of all human kind
(not on a girl who probably just skipped breakfast)
and that this is not where the story ends.

Colleen Chandler
-honorable mention-

Kites

We always flew kites on grey-silver afternoons
in autumn.
A family-thing (with mom just a shadow
but dad a kid)
at the community college on the other side of the city.
It is always grey there.

Foreshadowing the necklace of bead-cars
lurching forward an inch before hitting the brakes again.
Foreshadowing the second time my parents would find out my evilness.
(Only twice have I been afraid of them.)
(Mostly I was defiant. Mostly I ran away,
well only twice, and talked of it much more.)

But peaceful, cool autumn evenings admiring the skilled kites--
I remember wondering why they were so into it--
Was the freedom in the grey?
No, just the commonness. There the cold always bit a little.

Foreshadowing the family-greyness on that side of the city:
two deaths of unknown somehow-cousins,
one in a car crash
one in...one no one heard from in awhile..
one no one
knows how
(or maybe I'm just not told)
just told to go west and get him.

We haven't been there in awhile,
now we fly kites in our back yard--
and mom remains a shadow within, one that stifles father's
youthfulness?
or maybe it can't come out without the protective grey.
And now evergreen snares catch those who fly too far north
but I guess that is better than the possible consequences of
flying to far
and I guess that is better than drowning in the grey lake.

Melissa Spinelli
-Second Place-

Camped Out

We waited
awesomely afraid
our afflicted lives
would be callously tossed aside
into the dark of our sin.

Each time
he entered
the tent of gold
we tasted
a bitter taste of molded metal
bowed down to
in blasphemous epiphany.

The pillared cloud
never thundered or thrashed;
it hung suspended
above the gates
of our lives.

And our knees collapsed
for a thousand generations.

-Michael Bryant

Scene 61

*This isn't my story. Someone else made it up and wrote it. They wrote it on paper, probably handwritten at first, later typed up presentable so that someone might buy it. Someone did buy it - as a script, because that's the way it was typed up. Maybe if it wasn't typed up as a script it would have been a novel. but it wasn't. It was never a novel. It was only a movie. No. That's not right. It was a script first and then it was a movie. The director of the movie was Dr. Stephen Gearhart. You've probably never heard of him, not many have. He does all underground stuff. the kind of thing that most people would be appalled at. This film was no exception. Gearhart was given the script to work with and he reworked it to fit his own ideas of how the film should be and that is the final project we can see today. The name of the film is *The End of War* and it was released in 1991. It is an apocalyptic film. where the world ends on New Years Eve, 1999. It isn't one of Gearhart's best works. Despite that, I have taken a section of this film from the screen and have put it back onto paper where it originated. I do not tell you this because I think it is some great moment of personal history for the work, like someone returning to their homeland, but I just thought you might find it interesting.*

I am not going to tell you the story of the whole film. just a section of it. It is the infamous cafe scene which is taking place on New Year's Eve 1999 right before the end of the world comes. I know you have never seen it. that's why I am telling you about it. It is a small scene from an extremely large and complex work. I am not going to tell you the whole story, but the basic plot is that these two large armies of Good and Evil

in the wilderness outside of some city, the city is undefined but some speculate that it is New York and someone actually suggested to me that one of the leaders of the Evil forces is supposed to be Dick Clark. The intent of each army is to have one final battle which will obliterate the other side from the face of the earth, even if this means destroying the earth to do it. As the clock strikes midnight, the armies are converging on the city to begin the war with a grandiose battle of courage and death when the world just suddenly ends for some unexplained reason. Yup, that's right, it just ends fading out to black like a film technique. And then we have nothing. There is no great Armageddon, no battle is ever won. The world just ends quietly without a bang or a whimper and so does the film.

Sound stupid? It is really, especially after you've sat through four hours of film building up to this great war which never happens. So why tell you about it? Because I think this cafe scene is important. In fact, I know it is important. And I think for you it is specifically important, because you were in it. I doubt that you know you were, but I saw you. You were outside the cafe, across the busy street where the people weren't actors but rather extras who didn't know they were being filmed. Gearhart calls them natural extras and has been in many arguments over whether such a thing could exist. You were just standing there with your hands in your pocket. It was cold. I could even make out your breath in puffs of white, and your face was an unlikely shade of pale. It seemed odd that you were just standing there on such a cold day doing nothing while the people and cars on the street hustled by you seeking some sort of warm place. It seemed extremely odd and I was just wondering if you were

waiting for somebody; meeting them there at that very spot where the camera caught you for such a long time (I have played this scene over many times and have discovered that you were there the entire length of it). Or did you just know they were filming a movie in that cafe and you wanted as much screen time as possible? Were you a natural extra' or did you know something was going on. maybe not even consciously? Could you feel it in the air that night? The Armageddon, the approaching end, even though it wasn't real? Do not shake your head in forgetfulness just yet. Let me tell you about the scene first and try to give you something to remember.

The Cafe Scene From: The End of War

Based loosely on the film used courtesy of

Gearhart Films Inc.

@1991, Los Angeles, California

The scene focuses on two main characters in a busy cafe within the city. The two characters are Sable and Dwight and they have absolutely nothing to do with the rest of the movie plot. This is the only scene which they are in and the only time they are ever mentioned in the length of the film. When the scene cuts in, the two of them are seated at a table next to a large window which opens up to the dusk covered street.

Dwight takes a sip from the coffee cup in front of him and leans with his elbows on the table. looking at Sable as he speaks. "The stores will be open tomorrow. I think we should go out in the morning and get a new VCR."

Sable sighs and rolls her eyes. "It will probably be much cheaper to just take the thing to my dad's shop to get fixed. It's not even that old and it's a good VCR."

"If we take it to the shop it may take weeks before they fix it." Dwight is anxious. "We can't go a week without a VCR."

Sable laughs amusedly. "We can't go a week without a VCR? Try you, bud. I hardly ever use it."

"You always use it."

"No. you always use it and then I can't watch TV and so I have to watch whatever you're watching. You watch your stupid movies twenty four hours a day."

"I need a VCR. though. How can I make my films without one?"

"You hardly ever work on your films anymore. Nine times out of ten you're just watching your Spaghetti Westerns. . . O-or those tommy-gun gangster flicks."

Dwight shakes his head and shifts his elbow along the table, knocking the creamer onto its side. The white liquid runs across the table and Sable scrambles with napkins to wipe it up before it runs over the edge.

"Sorry," Dwight says half-heartedly.

"You're such a clutz sometimes."

The two of them clean up the mess and are left with a pile of sopping wet napkins.

Dwight leans on the table again. "Seriously. though. I have a really great idea for a short. I've been working it out in my head and if I could just get it done I think it will be the one that starts my career.

"Dwight, it will take a week tops to get the VCR repaired. We just don't have enough cash for a new one right now."

Dwight looks down at the table and bites his lip. He looks disappointed.

"Do you have the money for a VCR?" Sable asks.

"No...no." quietly.

Sable sighs and looks out the window. Her gaze is caught for a moment by something across the street. A haunted look comes across her face.

"I guess I can wait it out." Dwight says.

Sable looks back to him. "It will be good for you to take a week off. You can catch up on the real world. Watch the news or even read the paper." She laughs.

"What? You mean there's something out there besides Clint Eastwood and the Wild West?" He smiles.

"How did I ever find such an ignorant one?"

"You just got lucky, I guess.

"So what is your," Sable motions quotation symbols with her fingers, "breakout short about?"

Dwight leans back onto the table, thinks for a moment and then says; "It's about a woman who one day while watching movies discovers that everything she sees on her TV actually happens in the real world in some altered form soon after she sees them. I'm trying to explore film and its relation to reality."

"Sounds interesting."

"Good thing because you're the lead actress. It's just too bad I'm a director with no VCR."

"There s always tomorrow, Dwight."

Dwight takes another sip from his coffee cup, clears his throat and leans back in his seat. He begins to sing loudly, over the noise of the cafe:

The sun will come out. to-mor-row

Bet your bottom dollar that tomorrow

There'll be sun

The place becomes quiet. Everyone turns their head in their direction. Sable shakes her head, embarrassed.

Just thinking about tomorrow

Someone in the cafe joins in, followed by another and another.

Clears away the cobwebs and the sorrow

'til there's none

Finally the whole cafe is bellowing out joyously. Dwight stands and motions Sable to stand. The two of them begin dancing around the room.

When I'm stuck with a day

that's grey and lonely

I just pick up my chin-and grin-and say

Oh the sun will come out tomorrow...

Does any of this ring a bell? Surely you couldn't forget seeing something like this even if you were on the outside looking in. Do you remember anything about that cold night on the street? Did you glance inside the cafe at all and see the production going on? If not, I guess it's really not that important. I just wanted to let you know that this isn't the first time that I've ran into you and I know a few others who have noted your presence, too. You're practically a celebrity. How's it feel? I know its a shock, but at least you know now, and you can go out and buy a copy of *The End of War* to show to your friends. I'm sure it would make Dr. Gearhart happy.

Chad Dreisbach

-first place-



Mike Blasick

My Second Chance

I was about five when I last saw my mother alive; she was standing next to the counter at the store. I was in the toy aisle playing with the new "bouncy" toy. It was made of firm rubber, and you flew real high when you jumped on it. I had never before felt the thrill of going so high into the air. I was laughing loud, and then I heard my mother say, 'come on, honey, we have to go.' I did not want to go yet. I started pouting, and she sighed. I wish now that I had listened to her then. She told me she was going to put her purchases into the car and then she would come back in and get me. Delighted to have a few minutes of play, I hopped back on.

My mother was at the trunk of our car when she was hit by the drunk driver. I ran outside when I heard the crash, and there was blood everywhere. I saw what was left of my mother on the other side of the parking lot. I started to run to her, but someone held me back. I kicked at them, but they just would not let me go. My older sister was standing there with a look of pure terror on her face. She had seen the whole thing. I took her hand, and she squeezed it. Then she turned to me and hugged me for a long time. The next thing I remember, Dad, my sister, and I were sitting in a hospital corridor. My father had his head in his hands. He was crying, and my sister was still. I was nasty and tired. I started to cry, too. My father lifted me into his arms, and he held me.

A few days later, I saw my mother for the final time. She was in a beautiful white lace casket with pictures of my sister and me, and her and my father's wedding picture surrounding her. Pink roses, a favorite of hers, were laying around her like a blanket. When I asked my father why Mommy was not moving, he told me that Mom was staying with God in Heaven now. I must have accepted that explanation because I do not remember saying anything else.

As time went by, I "forgot" my mother. My sister would get angry at me when I wouldn't remember some of the things that Mom had done for us: she would make us dresses at Easter. She put little notes in our lunches for school; an act I never remembered because I could not read before she died. She would make special shaped pancakes for us on Christmas morning. Sarah always got an elf, and I always got a reindeer. The first birthday I spent after Mom died was lonely. My father worked, and Sarah and I celebrated my sixth birthday with our baby-sitter, Jacqueline. Sarah made my cake. It was pretty. There were six candles

and it said: 'Happy Birthday Meghann' on it. Sarah cried as I blew out my candles, although I do not know why. I was happy. Or so I thought.

As the years passed, Sarah and I got on with our lives, and so did our father. He remarried to a young woman named Samantha. She had a son, Arthur, who was a year behind me in school. He seemed very happy to have someone in his life again, but Sarah and I did not like Samantha because she was nasty. When we would come home from school, Samantha would make Sarah and I clean the house, and she would let Arthur watch television.

One afternoon, I got brave and told Samantha I was not going to clean up because Arthur never did. She got real mad and threw me against a wall. I think she knocked me out. When I finally woke up, I was in the hospital. Sarah, my father, and me that I had been in a coma for four days. He then asked me what had happened. Apparently, Samantha had threatened Sarah not to say anything. But, I could not remember. Everything was a great big cloud. I could see Samantha smile, and then she told Sarah and my father to go and get something to eat. After they had left, she leaned down and told me that she was glad my mother was dead. And I started to cry. Sarah must have sensed something was wrong, because she had overheard everything. She yelled at Samantha. When my father arrived to ask what the meaning of that was, Sarah got over her fear of Samantha, and told him everything. Samantha was arrested and Arthur was put into a foster home.

I went home a few days after all of this had happened, and I started asking my father questions. "Daddy, what was Mommy's favorite color?" "What color was her hair?" "Why did she die?" I don't remember him ever answering my questions. Sarah would avoid me, too. Frustrated, I would call my grandmother and ask her. She would try to answer them, because by this time, I would be crying. Usually she would ask to talk to Dad, and then he would yell at her over the phone, and slam it down. He would mumble something incoherent retreat to his study, where I knew he would stay for hours to come.

By the time I was 10, and Sarah, 14, we could cook for ourselves, and take care of ourselves. Daddy had begun going out with girls again; Sarah said it was because he was lonely. I wasn't so sure. I thought it was because he didn't want anything to do with Sarah and I anymore.

Apparently, though, Sarah was right. A few months after meeting Rachel, he married her. Rachel's three year old twins, Kyle and Ashleigh were ring bearer and flower girl. Her daughter, Amanda, who was 12, and Sarah and I, were Maids of Honor. I was so honored. Sarah was not so

honored. She was angry that Daddy had forgotten about Mommy. He insisted that he would never ever forget about Mom, but he hid all the pictures of her that were in the house.

It was after Daddy had married Rachel that I had begun to wish that Mommy was back. Not that I didn't like Rachel. She was very nice. But, she wasn't Mom. I found one of the pictures that Daddy had hidden, and I put it under my pillow so that I could kiss her good night before I went to bed. Sarah now shared a bedroom with me; which she was not happy about. She caught me at my bedtime ritual once, and she started screaming, 'what do you think you are doing? Do you think this will bring Mom back?' She grabbed the picture from me, and threw it against the wall. I tried to get it from her before she threw it, but she was quicker than me. It smashed into a million pieces, and I sat down by the wall and attempted to pick up the pieces. Rachel was in our room minutes later and she saw me on the floor with broken pieces of glass in my hands. I was crying uncontrollably by this time, and Sarah was crying silently on her bed. Rachel picked me up into her arms, and we both sat on Sarah's bed. She held me while I cried, and when I stopped, she asked me about the picture. 'Is that a picture of your mother?' I nodded a response. 'You look just like her.' Then she looked at Sarah as I looked at the broken pieces of glass in my hands. 'What happened to it?' 'I'm sorry, Meghann. I didn't mean to break it.' Sarah looked at me with tears falling from her eyes. I could tell she was sorry, but I was hurt. All those years that I couldn't remember my mother, and when I wanted to, I got in trouble. I shook my head. 'Please, Meghann. I am really sorry. I don't know what I grabbed her by the neck and said, 'I love you, too, mom.' She kissed the top of my head, and said, 'I love you, too, sweetheart'.

The next morning, we went out and bought a new frame for my picture, we hung my mother on the wall above my bed. And, after a long talk with Daddy, he brought out other pictures of Mom, and put them back where they belonged. I look at them now, and I know I was blessed with a second chance. I love you Mom, and I miss you. You are always in my heart.

-Stephanie Lee Traver

Tuned Manifesto

and they tell us not to worry; they tell us not to think
'cause we ain't gonna die,
no, we ain't gonna die

as we beat the sticking space bars on our terminals,
and wish a window in our cube, and paste up the noise
with construction paper artworks and glossy marketing pieces
of Orlando, Baja and Paris,
for we don't want to be here

though, we continue out each morning to compete in the FREE LABOR
MARKET,

as they tell us to become accountants and consultants,
wielding black, shiny, imitation leather attache cases,
and build up concrete shopping malls over wetlands
because the tiger race is on,
for he ain't gonna die

and we adjust our temperature controls and stretch out in town cars,
untouched by the smog cigarettes we tear out
of Suggestive Warning packs, bought through driver's side windows,
while television keeps us happy
with public service announcements
and our slick tabloid journals keep us informed,
as tom, peter, dan or rush would never lie

and tourists with their assembly line tin-can cars
and black plastic box cameras need pitch 'n putts
and chuck wagon restaurants, as they try to ingest cities
and drop coins into hollow hand-out boxes

and everyone knows only a single, working mothers at diners
are white trash, as cash registers clang up our massive
artery squeezing beef sandwiches with mayonnaise and onion rings,
as credit card acceptance approvals sing loudly to buy
and exchange, in and through, so BUY TIME,
for welfare is our biggest problem

and we tuck our pajama clad children,
as all good parents do, admiring more colored creations
of birdbaths, frogs and swingsets taped onto bedroom walls, and
we kiss and tell them that we're never gonna die

for PARANOIA is in the head and prosac
makes it better, and only our bright children
are placed in challenging learning environments,
for everyone knows a person must be well-rounded, for there is no
racism, sexism, incest, ineQuality, and sex
is man and woman and rape never happens here

we live in a liberal DEMOCRACY, as we americanize the world and talk
through computers and cures for aids finds the fattest wallet,
as dropout teenagers slip
on cheap labor-made retro shoes and sell themselves
in a soda can littered alleyway far from
our neighbors, for no one has to be starving, overweight, lonely,
doesn't everyone know, we have the answers

while we breathe SILENCE like carbon monoxide, and land mines
cough up child lefties thumb and index finger clutching still
a green crayon-but
we ain't gonna die, no we ain't gonna die

'cause vietnam, the holocaust, japanese interment camps,
the tuskegee experiment never happened
'cause we ain't never died

for our structuralists and academics have it all figured out,
so we don't have to THINK,
playing podium gods, mouths full of gravel,
and eliot, sniveling little poetry man, and his band of literary creeps
keep the godly wingbags busy, for all of poetry
never states the obvious, as the yellow fog of elitist gas
constricts around, and makes students hot, grow drowsy
and fall comatose

as we belch out graduates with double degrees, proving
their intelligence, and tell them to change the world
and anchor them in pirana loans and give the gift
of unemployment and remind them that a man's hour
is worth but five and a fourth

and we ain't gonna die with our brain ringing
mobile phones, flesh sticky company cars and we don't NEED
to worry, as mr. hussein builds anthrax bombs
and the president tells us
there ain't any problems
in china, egypt, el salvador, the philippines
so we add up all our assets and guesstimate
our taxes, forgetting those things around the gold pen
with faux marquise diamond, as we mutter through our footsteps
we ain't gonna die

pounding it out silently on cement, pounding
the woes down to words, pounding with hats
pulled over ears, so we can all but HEAR
no, we ain't gonna die, ain't gonna die today

Amy Dunaway
-first place-

Except in Dreams

The hallucinations of sightless souls
A flock of wingless birds
Dart suddenly across
The blood red sky
Blotting out
The black sun
Whose radiation
Pierces pale red retinas
Sending sparks
Bursting through the mind
Illuminating dusty corners
Where secret desires lie
Unused
Yet now springing to view
With visions of beauty
Obscuring desperate thoughts
Which scurry like startled spiders
Deeper down dark canyons
Where no one wants to see
Except in dreams

-David Michael Engelhardt

Blue-green-yellow
swirling-just swirl

roundround inwithin
I left amright
or down from without
sit legs tucked under stop
let it flee
flee it by
by
 can not
catch an eye I a s h in the wind's
breathe...

go to where
togotowhere
the icysky catches lashes
bliss
peppermint licks
a red noselicks
exhales with visible form
invisible

I'll be in the morning
at night
sunshine lead me
to the fallen sky
the sky is falling

I can hold
something
something I can
hold
inbetween
the in
between
swirling- just swirl



Sheep Dr. Davies Dis. meet 4/8/58

sheep
Dr. Davies

A Sign of Peace

the smell of old ladies' perfume and stale pews filled my nostrils as i opened the door to the back of the church. mass had already started, and i had to wait in the back for the proper time to sit in my seat. as i waited, i scanned the congregation of old and young. the same people were always at the noon mass at my church. the teen-agers who wanted to sleep but knew they eventually had to go to mass, the elderly who rarely rose early in the morning, the parents who brought their small children to mass, knowing that there would be more tolerant people present--the faces i was looking at now were the same faces that i looked at years before. the appropriate time had come in mass for me to sit. i proceeded up the isle, feeling the many pairs of eyes on my back. i took my place next to my father. i was just in time for the second reading. the lector approached the podium and i strained to see who it was. in my church going days, i was a lector, too, so i wanted to see who was reading today. it was a woman who i had never been fond of. i had heard many rumors about her and her family, and she was a favorite topic of the ladies at the mother-daughter teas. i heard the first few lines of the reading, but then i found myself looking around again. this church held many memories for me good and bad. i had been going to this church since i was born. my parents were married in this church, i was baptized in it, and i received first communion and confirmation in it. i was expected to be wed in this same church one day. it wasn't a fancy church. it was very simple, with little to look at to advert your attention from the task at hand. this church that had seemed so big to me when i was a child was now so small in my adult eyes. i remember gazing at the huge statue of the risen jesus in the front of the church with my young eyes, and it always struck a cord of fear in my heart. i could never figure out why, even now, as i was sitting in mass

as an adult, i shivered a little when i looked at it. suddenly everyone was standing. it was time for the alleluia and the gospel. i stood up, still looking around at everyone. i saw some all-too-familiar faces-- faces of my ccd teachers, faces of the old ladies that seemed to have been around forever. the old ladies. i never cared for them too much. it sounds awful- they're just harmless little old ladies, right? they would warn me about sin and urge me to constantly seek the lord in everything i did. they insinuated that sins of the flesh would be the worst way to turn from god, and that prayer was the only way to salvation. they all had the same smell- the too much perfume and coffee breath smell. they all wore knee stockings that sometimes slipped, giving you a tasteful glimpse of old lady leg. they carried rosary beads in their hands at all times, and their handbags-black patent leather, mostly--were clutched in arthritis-stricken fingers. it looked like they all shopped in the same old lady stores, all their tummies bulged out over their skinny, delicate belts, defeating the purpose of appearing like a well-dressed woman. they stood around me, oohing and ahing over the precious chandler girl, and "oh, wouldn't she make a fine housewife?" and "she'll bear lovely children, they all do.", could be heard over my ribboned head. the church basement, where the woman's guild was held and where the mother-daughter teas took place, was likened, in my mind, to a breeding grounds for old ladies. i thought that they lived there, because every time i went down there, a congregation of clickety shoes and henny voices could be heard, even before i reached the door. the older i got, the less i feared them, and the more annoying they became. i stopped volunteering my help in church fund-raisers, because they would stand over me, watching my every move. and i could smell them, i could always smell them, even hours after i went

home. and they never died. i never heard of the old ladies dying. i didn't ever wish death upon them, because that wouldn't be very christian of me, but i never heard announcements at mass saying that "one of our beloved members had passed away after 50 years in this church". but i think that if they did die, they would live in the basement, doomed to a life of spaghetti dinners and finger foods, watching over the new generation of little girls. i faded back into reality when my father reached over to give me the sign of peace. i kissed his cheek and turned around to offer my fellow christians peace. i came to face with an old lady, and for a moment, i wasn't go into to offer her peace, but then i looked into her tired blue eyes, and she smiled lightly, properly, and held out her hand. i gently took it into mine and felt the warmth of her skin merge with mine, and suddenly she was a person, a woman, a grandmother who knitted and baked cookies and spoiled her grandchildren, and a tear came to my eye as i thought back on all the times that i feared a woman like this, in my childlike mind, and i wanted to tell her that i was sorry for judging her, i was just a little girl, what did i know, but all i could do was politely shake her hand. "peace be with you."

Colleen Chandler

-second place-

An Adjacent Flavor

You're the sweetest drop I ever tasted
on the tip of my tongue
I challenge you to Conquer me and Swallow me whole
I predict you will ultimately Choke on my sarcasm and Drown in my
sorrow
Burn in my confusion and Secrete your being, Swallow
me
Explode into dusty particles that will never
be
you,
The sweetest drop I ever had
Bitterly reminiscent of an adjacent flavor
of so long
ago.

Jessica Welsh

Not Just a Piece of Cloth

Listen to the names
Someone you know?
Who is John D?
What did Bob like?
Under the rainbow everyone knows
It's not just a piece of cloth
This is art,
Art is love,
Love is faith,
While faith is strength,
Strength holding determination
And the power of memories together,

No, I don't
I don't know,
Who do I know,
Who has it?
Yet, I think
Become scared,
And worried,
About friends
Who like my family,
I love.

So many nicknames,
First initials
Secrets are hidden
Because
Society of ignorance
Could never understand
Or so people think.
Believe me,
It's not just a piece of cloth

Take up ten football fields
Maybe even twenty
Now how many people understand?

Or maybe done out of misunderstandings,
I don't know....

I don't know
How pieces of cloth,
Pieces of stories,
Stories of lives,
Lives of people, I never knew
or met
Can make my stomach turn to knots.
Or my heart turn to agony-

Agony for people who lost
For the good that was lost
And the bad that still perishes
Impact and beauty,
In the eyes of the beholder.
How much can be found?
Enough to change opinions?
Or maybe just to think...
Life?
For this is not just a piece of cloth.

-Laura Gamble

Fearful Future

On the way to work out my frustrations

On the way to meet a friend

whom, only hours before, I could not utter a word to

I looked up--an amazing thing: looking up, is

sometimes I forget there is an up-more,

this time there were two up-more levels--

and the dark grey clouds were flying across the sky

and they were hanging low--the first level--

and the black, black sky that wasn't even there sat there

and reaches on to eternity

while reaching down to me

between the fleeing clouds obstructing its permeance--

somewhere there is the second level

and the moon was almost full--three nights to go--

and watched the chaos, calmly, from the front row

while the stars shyly peeked over her shoulder

(it is really a woman in the moon.

I know.

The next eternity is my shift.)

So I sat sown and stared up

as my thoughts rushed away from sanity

faster than the clouds from their stalker

Yes,

it was sanity that was taking my thoughts

it was truth

it was the strongest person my mother thinks I possess.

I just want to avoid confrontation.

I can deal with internal turmoil

I flounder when confronted with external.

I am causing all of this.

I am my own problem

I just want to be me! And me alone.

That's the problem

(but I don't consider it a problem)

So: that's the cause of my internal conflict.

So: I am going to deal with it

be the big woman in the Moon

that I will be some day

(Until I change my mind and

want to apply for the

West Wind Woman's job

or the Woman who Wind's the Watch the keeps Time for the Tide

or maybe the Woman Wanderer of the Rain...

I think that suits me best)

(the waiting, unspoken to one

can--should--be the Woman Watcher in the Moon)

... be the Big Woman that I can be now

I am going to face it

create external turmoil

increase the entrophy that will be our* end *mine&nature's

I have made up my mind

for now

I have to act on it

or else

I have to finish my plan

I will be a little woman star

peeking over the moon woman's shoulder

forever.

-Melissa Spinelli

Rebirth

One white winter day a girl of about 15, dressed in solid white, emerged outside her doorway. The girl strolled through the powdered flakes that had layered the ground into the woods. The girl stopped suddenly, impacted with a disturbing memory, the memory plagued with horror and fear. The girl so fragile and delicate crumbled before the vision. The reality of life had jumped from the darkness in her head onto the wintry gleam of the snow. Now lying in the snow paralyzed from terror, the girl's vision had evaporated but the memory still lingered. The girl believed death to be the only solution. So she stared upward into the hazy gray clouds that blanketed the atmosphere. Soon she could feel the cold and wetness begin to soak through the layers of her skin. As her body temperature dropped the flow of blood in her veins began to slow. Ice quieted the beat of her heart and her mind. Preserving them for safe keeping. Just before her life had come to its final end, a woman of vast knowledge and wisdom walked with an illuminated aura to where the girl lay. The woman then knelt before the girl and reached into the snow to grasp her hand. The woman's warmth and love melted the ice that lie between them. Their hands met that sent a burst of love into the girl reviving her from her slumber. Peace hovered around them, and without a word the woman pointed to the dead appearance of the woods. Then with a radiant smile the woman looked to the sky. There, the clouds began to part and the sun shined upon them. At a phenomenal rate the snow melted and life's beauty had been restored. Flower began to blossom, leaves to flourish, animals to wander, and life to thrive once again. Then out of the quiet the most enchanting voice was hear.

And with words made of music the woman said, 'I am Mother Nature and I wish to help you. Remember this always. The past can no longer hurt you and the memories can help you develop inner strength. Do not let things overcome you. You overcome them. You see the peace that surrounds you. You deserve to be a peaceful at they are. You see the happiness that surrounds you. You deserve to be as happy as they are. You see the beauty that surrounds you. You are as beautiful as they are. You see the love that surrounds you. You deserve to be as loved as they are. And you see how important they are to the earth. You are as important as they are.'

He never Knew

She loved him with all her heart
And hoped that they would never part
He didn't know she felt this way
But she'd think of him day to day
The signs were there but not the love
As the bright sun hung above
For when they sometimes met
They both began to sweat
He was a very special friend
And she thought her love would never end
But someone else also fell this way
That's how she lost him on that day
Her heart was cut in two
For when the blood would stop, she never knew
She often thought of his new life
And of the girl who struck the knife
She'd think of him through and through
But as you know, **He Never Knew**

-Mandy Reed

HEROINE

her eyes so black,
yet so white, because her pupils were rolled back in her head.

It had control over her:

a tight rope around her arm
jagged little holes scattered over her body
screaming and begging for more.

She lost her mind. She lost the power. She lost her life.

WE lost a friend.

She was gone to the outside world, but living in her own mind and veins.

We all made a pact:

NO RETREAT BABY, NO SURRENDER.

We were the soldiers he was talking about, and yes,
the song was about friendship.

The one who should not see through her won eyes.....

RECOVERED.

SHE

met her fate.

She

won the battle.

She

let her guard down.

she loves us,.....she owes us her life.

SHE is ALIVE

DMV Delinquent

My eyes shift secretly to where your foot
rests on the clutch, about to push it down and
shift gears. Thoughts race as fast as you *accelerate*
and you look over at me and nod.

Fists clench tight, my legs like rubber,
Such contradictory impulses, yet they complement each other
Or do they?

Just as we do

Or do we?

You grip the wheel and blare the music, I am blown back in
my seat with a superficial smile
pasted on
just for you.

I tell myself that I'll be ok, I say inside that we won't die
but then you sporadically pump the brakes and grind the gears and it
makes

me gnash my teeth in silent agony
and

I

scream.

You screech to a

halt

in that
deserted
school parking lot and
your worried face seeks an answer to my
random outburst.

It's finally my chance to break free of this
horrible driving school delinquent,
but he was cute...

I let him pass
the driving part
of his DMV test.

Legacies

I remember

once

holding on to his hand

He was so big

and I

I was so small

He took me fishing

sometimes

But I would dig holes in the banks

or watch the water lap

the shoreline

or the sides of the boat

which I could lean out of

and peer into the depths

to see if I could spot

the bottom

of the lake

rather than stare

at the boring bobber

Once we played catch

in the backyard

but

I didn't get the point

of the repetitious tossing

Then he ran alongside me

as I learned to ride a bike

too early for my taste

but finally

we succeeded at something

Later the years of separation

began

long periods apart

The few things we did became

fewer

Beauty Over Beast

Night brings one's darkest fears to life.
But the onset of day encourages one's strife.

The setting of the day,
Is is onto the fray.
The rising of the sun,
A battle has been won.

Sunsets- dark orange, red and black,
Orange a symbolism of one's spiritual lack,
Red of the precious and warmest of blood,
Black of the dead that lie in the mud.

Alas from the darkness there appears up above,
A spark of light that hovers in love.
It's brilliance and courage illuminate the sky,
Shinning upon one like a soft lullaby.
Enlightening gleams silence the fear,
While it's radiant shine implies morning near.

Sunrises- bright pink, purple and blue,
Pink of the soul that has started anew,
Purple of spirit that has survived the strife,
And blue of the dawning of the day of life.

-Falsus Titulus

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