

GENESIS

Spring 1992



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Artwork is invited from all persons who have been students at IUPUI at any time during the last eighteen months prior to submission. Any type of artwork may be submitted. All artwork will be reproduced in black and white. Artists are asked to submit no more than ten pieces for a given issue; artwork should not exceed 26 inches by 32 inches. Please identify each piece on the back with its title and your name, address, phone number, title(s) of your artwork and a 25-50 word bio. Submissions not accompanied by a bio will not be considered. Artists will be notified as to acceptance prior to publication; they will also be instructed as to how artwork will be returned. Submit work to GENESIS, Student Activities Office, University Library, 815 West Michigan Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46202.

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Manuscripts must be typed and submitted in duplicate; prose pieces should be double-spaced on a sixty-space line. Please classify prose pieces as either fiction or non-fiction. Poets are asked to submit no more than ten pieces for a given issue. All submissions must be accompanied by a separate title sheet containing the author's name, address, telephone number and a 25-50 word bio. Names, addresses, and social security numbers should be on the title sheet only, and not on the manuscript.

Authors whose material has been accepted will be notified prior to publication date, and all authors who wish their manuscripts to be returned must include a self-addressed stamped envelope with their submissions. Any manuscript submitted too late for the current deadline will be considered for the next issue. Honorary prizes are awarded at the discretion of the editors for the outstanding entry in each of the categories of art, essay, fiction and poetry. Members of the Editorial Board are ineligible to receive prizes.



Roller Coaster

Gary M. Kendall

The Carnival

Silence

J. Paul Shepherd

Silence

Edgar awoke from his slumber to the sound of booming thunder. The room was pitch black. He strained his eyes looking across the room for Otis. A burst of lightning lit up the room for a split second, but disappeared before Edgar's eyes could adjust. Another loud crackle roared in the sky followed by a long jolt of lightning (*it sounded to Edgar as though it had just struck one of the rides; he didn't care though, as long as it wasn't Silence*). He squinted his eyes in the yellowish-gray of the room and looked over at Otis's cot.

There he was sound asleep through the whole thing. Otis wasn't much for hearing. He wasn't much for brains either, but Edgar had no choice in the matter. He was stuck with (*silence*) Otis for the rest of this tour. Maybe next season he would get a new bunkmate; he hated doing everything for Otis. He had to tell him which ride they worked that day, what to do, how many tickets it cost, when to take his break, where to go to the bathroom. It was an endless variety of questions asked day after day. Edgar really hated him, but he knew Otis would be lost without him. So he let him tag along when he went out and always answered his questions with that same impatient tone only to have his answer followed by another question.

Edgar felt beside his own cot for a candle and some matches. He felt his hand brush against the coarse wick and stretched a little further, on his hands and knees, before finally getting a hold of the long, smooth luminary object. He found the matches beside it and struck the side of the matchbox filling the air with the smell of sulfur. The flickering light induced a warm glow under the tent. The harsh sound of raindrops could be heard smacking the tent before they exploded into billions of tiny particles, only to evaporate the next clear day. Edgar put the candle on a saucer and quietly walked toward the tent window. He didn't know why he was walking quietly when Otis was sleeping so soundly through the storm, but he thought it better to be quiet nonetheless. He reached the window and sat down crosslegged. He unsnapped the flap keeping the window screen covered and held the candle as close as he could to the window. He cautiously peered out and saw the falling rain. To his left stood The Cannon and straight in front of him sat the chocolate frozen banana stand. He dared to be brave and pulled back the flap even more. To his right

rested The Sleeper, and far off in the midnight horizon he saw *her*, stalwart and confident. His eyes widened as he saw her beckon him (*silence*). He drew his breath in quick, short spurts. She was *ravishing*. Edgar had worked with the carnival for seven years and had never seen anyone like her. He was drawn to her. She called him again and this time he listened. He didn't bother to change or even get his umbrella. He carried the candle out into the thunderous night with him and walked solemnly toward her. The flame went out almost immediately, but he just continued to walk.

A compelling sense of alarm told him that he wanted to run. But he couldn't. He wanted to break out of this trance and yell to her, "Leave me alone! I don't want to have anything to do with you! you're trouble!" But he didn't. His fear told Edgar that he wanted to run back to his tent and pretend that he had never seen her. But he had. Instead of listening to this inner voice, he listened to *hers* and continued walking across the muddy paths in his bare feet; (the icy cold sludge slivering between his toes, in and out, flickering on his pants, dotting his legs,) toward his destiny.

There she stood. He looked her right in the eye and she stared back at him, not budging. She was dead serious. He looked over her long, slender, black body. She was so delicate, so sleek. He dreaded going to her, but every time he saw her, he felt the urge to run to her and hold her tightly in his arms. He didn't want anyone else to touch her, to even *look* at her; but he knew they would. She was too beautiful to belong to just *him*. Still, he could live with sharing her if he had to. As long as he always had some claim to her. Besides, he *was* her first. That had to account for *something*. Maybe that's why he was here tonight. Maybe since he was the first then he would be the chosen one. The one to carry out her requests, no matter *what* they were. He didn't care, as long as she loved him like he loved her. As long as she was *his* he would do whatever she wanted. He looked beside her and saw the strong man platform with the huge sledge lying beside it. She quickly snapped his mind back to her. She pulled him to her and told him her plan.

When Edgar awoke the next day he found himself wet. He thought maybe there had been a leak in the roof of the tent. He remembered getting up the night before in the middle of the storm. He remembered Otis snoring and himself lighting the candle. After that his mind drew a blank. He didn't *think* he went outside, but he couldn't quite remember. Edgar got up and went to the window of the tent. The flap was open. He didn't remember it being open the night before. That was probably why he was wet now. His cot was right beside the window. He looked at Otis. "Otis!"

he yelled. Otis turned his head to the other side and continued on with his slumber. Edgar's face turned bright red. He hated this idiot. He *knew* Otis had been the one who left the flap open, because *he* certainly didn't do it. When would the fool ever *learn*? Edgar walked tippytoed over to Otis' bed and tapped him lightly on the shoulder. "Otis...," he sang, "it's time to get up sweetie."

A soft smile crossed Otis' naive looking face. "Mmm...?" he answered, (and with a question nonetheless).

Edgar's blood boiled as he glared at this lazy oaf in his warm, dry cot with a contented smile on his face. He leaned his head slowly toward Edgar's and blew softly in his ear. Otis giggled like a girl. Edgar bent down again and bellowed, "GET UP YOU FAGGOT-ASS!"

With that, Otis' head flew up from his pillow and SMACK! Edgar thrust his hands to his nose and began to howl. Otis jumped out of bed looking wildly around, as if someone other than he had slammed his head into his buddy, Edgar's nose. He stared with wide eyes as Edgar flew backward holding his swollen nose. Blood oozed from between his fingers and landed on their dirt floor.

"Bdmay nodes, bdmay nodes!" he shrieked. "Di thin djou brode bdmay nodes!"

Otis stared at him incomprehensively. "What Eddie?" he asked. Edgar hated being called "Eddie".

He took his bloody hand away from his nose. "Nothing, you dumb ass. Get dressed!" Edgar went outside to the water pump and rinsed off his face. His nose wasn't broken, but it sure hurt like hell. He went back inside to get Otis. They had to meet with the foreman of all the rides over 35 mph. Edgar had heard through the grapevine around the carnie that he was next in line to run the newest adult ride. He was terribly excited and had wanted the chance to run his own ride for such a long time. He didn't know the name of the ride, but he didn't care. It was going to be his own ride.

They met with the foreman that afternoon and he told them that they were running the new ride opening up in three days. He handed them each several blueprints of the ride and told them that it was the most expensive, highly developed ride yet. It was expected to be the biggest attraction at any amusement park, since the "Beast" at Kings Island. It was a guaranteed money machine and it was up to Edgar and Otis that it ran properly. Edgar would be the operator and Otis would take tickets and see to it that everyone was secured once they were in the ride. Edgar was overjoyed at the news, while Otis sat there staring at the copies of the blueprints stupefied. Edgar hadn't even bothered to look at the front page. The two men were given the next three days off and were allowed to walk around the park and do as they pleased, so long as they knew the machine inside and out by Friday night.

Today was Tuesday.

Otis went back to the tent to study, while Edgar went looking around the park. He smiled a little as he saw families eating cotton candy and laughing. It was early in the day yet, and the park was still pretty empty, but the people who were already there were having a good time.

Edgar decided to take a look at the blueprints and find out where the new ride was located. Their carnie got new rides all the time, so it was hard telling what was where. He found the lot number: H-6; and headed toward his machine.

As he walked across the park, he thought back to when he first came to the carnival. He was just a scrawny kid, only sixteen. He started out selling Cokes and worked his way from "guess your weight" and getting pummeled by fat ladies to monitoring kids in the "Bounce House." Now he finally got to work his own ride. He couldn't wait to see it.

Edgar stopped and looked to his right at the light pole. The section H-5 was painted on it in yellow. His heart began to pound harder as he approached H-6. He was so excited. The sun seemed to be shining so brightly that day. He no longer cared about his achy nose. The carnival was his life right now and this was a huge step forward. He couldn't wait until Friday.

He looked to his right again. H-6. Edgar grinned. He looked to his left and saw it. His stomach churned and his eyes filled with a look of dread. It towered high into the sky. The coaster was completely black. It had a slender, sleek frame. He had a sudden overwhelming urge to go back to his foreman and tell him to give the ride to someone else. He couldn't explain why, but he had a gut feeling about this one that was deadly. He nearly screamed when he heard the CLANG! of a bell and looked to his right to see Joe, the guy working the strong man stand, bring the sledge hammer down on the lever again. CLANG! Joe handed the sledge hammer to a little skinny kid with glasses and turned to wave to Edgar. Everyone laughed at the skinny kid who missed the lever completely and almost fell over from the weight of the sledge hammer. Joe never took his eyes off of Edgar. He was studying his face.

Edgar looked away from the kid back to Joe and saw a strange look in Joe's eyes. Joe wore an unusual frown on his face and pointed straight ahead behind Edgar. Edgar turned around abruptly and saw the house of mirrors. He staggered over to the amusement and looked in one that made him look real fat. He first took notice of his eyes. Although they were a lot puffier in the mirror, they looked too glazed. His face seemed a little pale. He walked over to the skinny mirror and saw brown circles under his jet black eyes. His face looked gaunt and tired. Edgar saw the letters from *his* ride in the mirror. He read them each slowly out loud and came to a sudden

halt on the last one. He blinked his eyes rapidly and double checked. Edgar began trembling and shrieked like a hurt child. Then he slumped to the ground.

Big, burly Joe (little Joe as they jokingly called him) came over to help pick Edgar up. Edgar smiled a wan, almost drunken smile as he saw big Joe's reflection in the skinny mirror. Then he saw the letters and again began to scream. Joe looked up into the mirrors and noticed them also. His eyes grew wide with confusion and horror. He looked down at Edgar and wildly asked, "What does it mean?"

Edgar uttered one word with deathlike gravity:

"Silence."

Edgar awoke early Wednesday morn with a fright. He remembered the mirror. He had been standing there, looking at his ghoulish face in the mirror. He didn't understand at the time why the ride had given him such a fright, but now he knew. He remembered seeing the reflection of the letters from the ride's sign behind him:

"SILENCE"

noos gnimoc

He had nearly died of fright when he had seen that. It *shouldn't* have said that. He didn't want to work there Friday. Edgar walked over to the tent window. Butthead had left it open again. He looked to his right and saw the sign, distant, from his tent:

"SILENCE"

coming soon

He shuddered at the words. *They should have been backwards, dammit!* he thought. He had had the chance of a lifetime and now he was scared to death. *Maybe it was the mirrors! Yeah! That's gotta be it!* He looked back out at the sign. Now it did not seem so menacing. Edgar sat down to study the blueprints.

The blueprints were complicated but Edgar thought he understood them. The basic idea of the ride was to create a sinister illusion. The passengers were to be strapped in a compact compartment by themselves. A cover was then placed over the cockpit. The passenger then had to bite down on a hard plastic object and have it strapped around their heads. This was to keep them from making any noise; thus the name "Silence". The ride was supposed to be the ultimate in horror, because the passenger would not be able to release their fear by screaming. There was supposed to be an insurmountable amount of tension on the ride. In case of an emergency and the ride had to be stopped, there was a lever under the switch controlling the

ride. When the lever was pulled, the ride would stop. It had to take someone pretty strong to pull the lever, to avoid any accidental bumpings. Actually, it was divided into two separate tracks, much like Kings Islands "Racer". One coaster would go up a steep hill, while the other would go down a deep plunge; at a 73° angle; the sharpest angle in roller coaster history. Both coasters would go through a series of successive loops and drops, until finally meeting in a dark bridge. The ultimate fright is the two separate coasters coming straight at one another until the last second they thrust the opposite way. Test passengers were reported to have come off the ride trembling and crying. Looking at the ride, Edgar could see why. He put the information he had studied down and looked out the window. His head began to swim as he stared at the letters S-I-L-E-N-C-E.

Edgar walked along the dirt path toward her. She had called him again and was waiting. He didn't want to go until he saw her. She was so beautiful. He felt like she was controlling him too much, but there was nothing he could do. Her power was too awesome, her resolve deadly. She reprimanded him for having naughty thoughts. He apologized and hugged her. *That's better*, she told him. She reminded him of what he had to do and sent him back home.

When Otis woke Edgar on Thursday he didn't remember a thing.

Friday rolled around. The fair was it's busiest ever. Edgar had never seen anything like it. The bright lights seemed to look brighter and lit up the town for miles. Everyone at the fair seemed exited and anxious to get on the dreaded "Silence". Teenage girls screamed and giggled every time they walked by the coaster. Occasionally, Edgar would jump out at them to scare them and they'd run like crazy. Otis paced around nervously all night, saying, "Three tickets, please, three tickets please..." He was rehearsing.

At eight o' clock the bells chimed. That meant "Silence" was now officially open. Swarms of people rushed to the line. The ride held fifty at a time and there were at least five times that many in line in the first minute. Edgar had never seen anything like it. He knew it was an event to remember. Otis opened the gates and the first passengers boarded their launch into the world of "Silence." Edgar just smiled broadly. He turned his head to the right for a moment and saw the letters. Then he remembered why he was there.

The ride began.

She had them. Edgar smiled at her. Yes, he would carry out the plan just as she had asked. The first fifty passengers had been locked in by Otis and had their mouths closed up. So many of them looked frightened. They

were grappling at their throats. *Good*, she told him, *I hope they suffer*. Otis double checked everyone and with widened eyes gave Edgar an unsure nod. Edgar did not even look at Otis but threw the power lever forward. The gear cranked in with a sudden jolt and the descent began. Many of the passengers were shaking their arms frantically, but Edgar paid no attention to it. She was safe. They had tested her many times, but *he* had been her first.

She rose silently, gracefully up the long climb. When she got to the top, she hovered for a moment. Edgar felt her looking at him, giving him the signal. He smiled and thought he felt her blow him a kiss. He grabbed hold of his cheek as it landed.

All of the passengers were waving their arms now as they hung at the top of the climb, like most riders do. The only difference was their eyes. Each one of them stared at Edgar, their eyes pleading for him not to throw the next switch. They knew. He didn't know why, but they understood now. The first passengers on "Silence" were going to die. Edgar smiled.

Otis was walking towards Edgar. "Hey Eddie! They sure do look scared, don't they? Huh?" he asked laughing.

Edgar turned and stared at Otis coldly. He didn't know who this big oaf was, but he sure was beginning to bother him.

Otis turned his blond head and looked up at the passengers still hanging; terrified. "Hey Eddie, do you think maybe you shouldn't throw the switch? Huh?" He stared at Edgar with a look of stupidity and fear on his face. Edgar smiled and threw the switch.

The right coaster plunged the 73°, while the left shot straight up at 54 mph. There *was* no sound. Edgar looked at Otis and remembered. "Oaf," he said, "run down to the bridge! Hurry, there's an emergency!" Without a blink, Otis hopped onto a ladder leading up to the bridge. He did not even know why he was going up there. He always told Edgar that he wanted to be somebody's hero.

Edgar looked at her aesthetic beauty. She had divided her body and carried them all over the course of the tracks. *I hate them, Edgar*, she said, *I only want you. You were my first rider. You took a part of me that cannot be given back. You divided me. They didn't. And yet they use me Edgar. As though I were some kind of cheap whore. They must all pay for using me, Edgar. Especially Otis. He is your friend. He has some right over you. I want all of you. I want you to make me whole again. Kill them all Edgar. Kill them all for me.*

Edgar stared at "Silence". Her black glistening body lighting up the warm night air. Streaking over the carnival; owning it. Yes, he *would* kill them all. He would do it for *her*. He turned and saw Otis almost at the

bridge. Both coasters were at their last loop and rapidly approaching the bridge. Otis reached the top. He was looking around hopelessly for an accident that hadn't arrived yet. Otis looked up and saw the left car approaching him. He turned and saw the right doing the same thing. He was standing in the middle; caught.

Do it now, Edgar, she said.

Edgar looked down at the heavy red switch. If he threw this, then the two trains would collide head on and everyone would die.

I'm almost there. Pull it!

The cars were ready to meet. Otis stood in the middle. He didn't scream. He just stared at Edgar. He knew too. He knew the evil she possessed. Edgar looked at his friend, expecting him to scream like a child. He didn't. He just stood there in silence, staring at Edgar and waiting to die.

Pull it ! she whispered harshly into his soul. Pulllll itttt !

He did.

Then stared in silence.

The coasters were only two hundred yards away from Otis now. He looked down at Edgar. "Eddie, she's dangerous throw the switch!" Edgar just stared in solemnity.

Many people had gathered around her to see the blond man die. One of the men yelled for Edgar to throw the switch. He didn't hear him; he was studying her. Then from the back of his head, Edgar felt an explosion of pain. He fell down into the dirt and turned quickly around.

Looming over him was big Joe. Edgar didn't understand why he had hit him. He looked up and saw Otis, arms spread apart hoping to stop the oncoming doom. Edgar watched with horror as big Joe walked over to the red lever and raise his big sledge hammer over his head. He was going to *strike* her.

Edgar got up and ran quickly to big Joe. He could *not* stop them from completing their work. Edgar grabbed hold of the big hammer just as Joe brought it down. She was less than fifty yards away now. The two men grappled for a moment, then Joe took the side of his big hand and smacked Edgar under his eye.

He went flying into one of the rails and landed hard on the ground. He watched in desperation as Joe looked up at the black beauty crossing the pale moon. Joe then looked down at the lever and with all of his might let the hammer go. It fell squarely on the red switch and Edgar cringed. He also felt relief.

"Silence" stopped.

Joe looked at Edgar. "She's evil, Edgar," he muttered. Then he threw his sledge hammer down and started to climb the ladder to get the people off of the ride.

Edgar watched as Joe and Otis helped unload the frightened passengers. Fear had rested in the core of his heart. He knew that "Silence" was pissed.

All of the passengers had been unloaded when the red lever popped back up on it's own.

Joe and Otis were the only ones left on the track. They had gotten help from a few of the onlookers in getting everyone down the ladder. They had checked for valuables and were walking slowly along the tracks, heading toward the ladder. Many of the people below were crying and screaming. No one saw or heard "Silence" moving forward. No one except Edgar.

She was moving toward his friends. He wanted her but he did not want them to die. He tried to pull the lever down but it would not budge. He looked up to the two men and yelled to warn them. They did not hear him through all of the commotion. Without thinking, Edgar grabbed the sledgehammer and began climbing the ladder to stop her.

She was thirty yards away when he had reached the top. He quickly pushed Joe and Otis away and stood before her. She was his judge; his executioner. He raised the hammer to smash her grinning head in when another thought entered his mind. *Please don't hurt me Edgar, I love you.* Her voice was so sweet. It sang to him like music.

He held the hammer in the air for a moment and thought he saw a tear rolling slowly down her cheek. She was moving slowly now and intended to do him no harm. He dropped the hammer far below and went to her. She smiled.

"Silence" began to quickly pick up speed as Edgar walked to her. He knew she would not hurt him, for she loved him like he wanted her to. She was his music and he was her song. He stopped as she grew near. He looked down at Otis and Joe. They were okay. I'm here, she said to him. Take me, he replied. Her smile turned into an evil grin as her teeth were a foot away from his. Edgar smiled back at his love.

Then he was devoured by Silence.

Silence.

I am a 20 year-old transfer student from IU, whjere I had a *little* too much fun. As a writer, I strive to provide my reader with a "chill up the spine" piece. My long term goal is to be the Stephen King of the 21st century; a goal I **will** accomplish. Boo.

The ride home

Maia Peele

“Bastard!”
Mother screamed
to Dad. “You smoked dope
before church this morning!
Why can’t you stay clean?
At least for church,

for God!”
Dad just gazed,
grinning,
showing no remorse.
He drove well,
for a stoned man!

We three sat frozen
in the back seat
of the old ’77 Granada.
It was ugly,
cheap,
all that I knew.

Mother
flung her seat belt off.
The car door opened.
Dad slammed the brakes.

My brothers and I watched
her roll and roll and
roll. I was ten, they
younger.
Mother stumbled

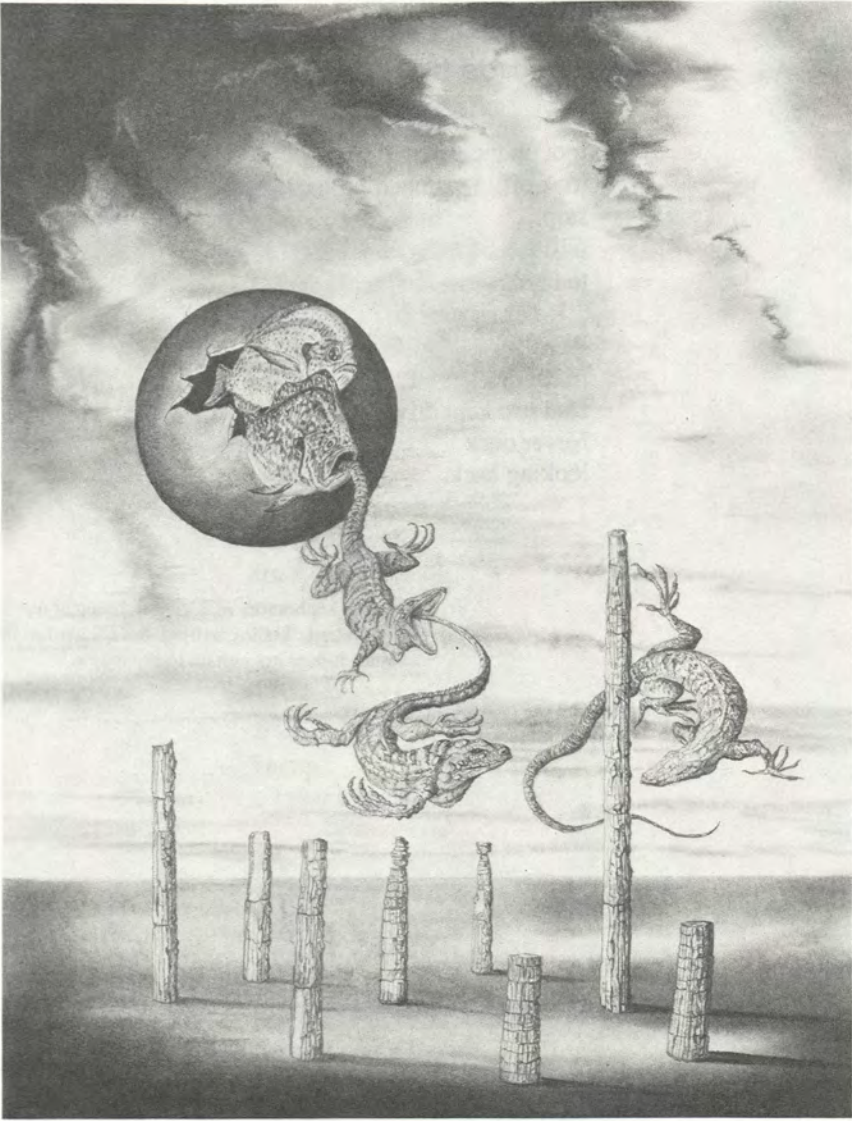
to her feet.
Now running, away
from the car—
from us! Dad
laughed,

The ride home (Cont.)

foot on the gas,
took off. I watched Mother
stop,
fall
to her knees,

face
in hands.
Dad just kept driving.
Never once
looking back.

I am a sophomore majoring in Elementary Education. I enjoy writing, but it's hard to find time since it does not pertain to my major.



Untitled
Michael Clement

Birthng

Bonita Lee Rainey

Her eyes stare blackly, not quite seeing, yet knowing somehow,
I am her mother. Her hand
closes around mine in a vice-like grip, tension like a coil
ready to snap. Suddenly,
her eyes roll into her head, body convulses as though razors
have cut at raw nerve endings.
Knowing the pain that feeds on her body will intensify I stroke
her forehead, calm her. "*Mom,*"

she whimpers, "*when will this be over?*". "*Soon,*" I tell her, "*Very soon,*"
but I'm helpless. Soaked with sweat,
her body exhausted, her hair resembles a Monarch tangled in a web,
fluttering to free itself.
I brush the strands from her cheek, the route her tears
have crossed another.

Blankets encase her like a cocoon, I loosen their hold
from her distended body. She grips,
tighter now, as once again searing pain takes her. She hears nothing
of my soothing words.
Just as the sea rages against the rocks, the surf crashing resoundingly on
the rocks, filling the tide pools,

spilling over a sandy beach, so does her agony. Wave upon wave
of roaring vibrations, overwhelming, consume her.
Anguish rages and builds until finally—a mere whisper;
devoid of emotion,
a cottony gurgle from her throat. "*No more,*" she whispers.
"*No more.*"

She waits. Pain, stronger this time. "*Soon,*" I tell her,
"*It is almost finished,*"—
an explosion rips through her body, pupils dilate, sapphire eyes turn milky,
her brain
fills—I remember this—with fog so thick the room becomes
a blur. It lifts, images focus. She smiles—
her baby son, movements jerky and erratic, not yet able to see, knows,
somehow who his mother is.

I was first introduced to writing by Sascha Feinstein when I enrolled in Creative Writing W206 for the Fall 1991 semester. I had never written anything prior to this class and was amazed how much I enjoyed the challenges and opportunities to explore other avenues of expression. Sascha's help both in class and on my rough drafts were invaluable to me. His encouragement and praise of my work has inspired me to continue writing both stories and poetry.

Motor Blow Jazz America

By Trina O'Connor

Corvette hums down the road,
tunes down the road, stop sign
red light, neon—not lit, cruising
into

Factory America
Newsprint, Billboard, Time-card
America

Bent torsos sweat bolts,
sweat under oily machine fronts,
spewing paper, ink, from
flat conveyors; plastic
wrapped dailies—quarter gets
you one from a hanging-jawed
old man in alley.
He waves back.

Slow down, downtown,
Sonny's Place, cobblestone, five n' dime,
smoooooth tar for a mile,
past a wheatfield, bleached
horizon, zig and zag, speed bumps,
the gearshift stutters; legs
and backbone stick to the
leather palm; tap jazz
in the glass
tap jazz
in the glass

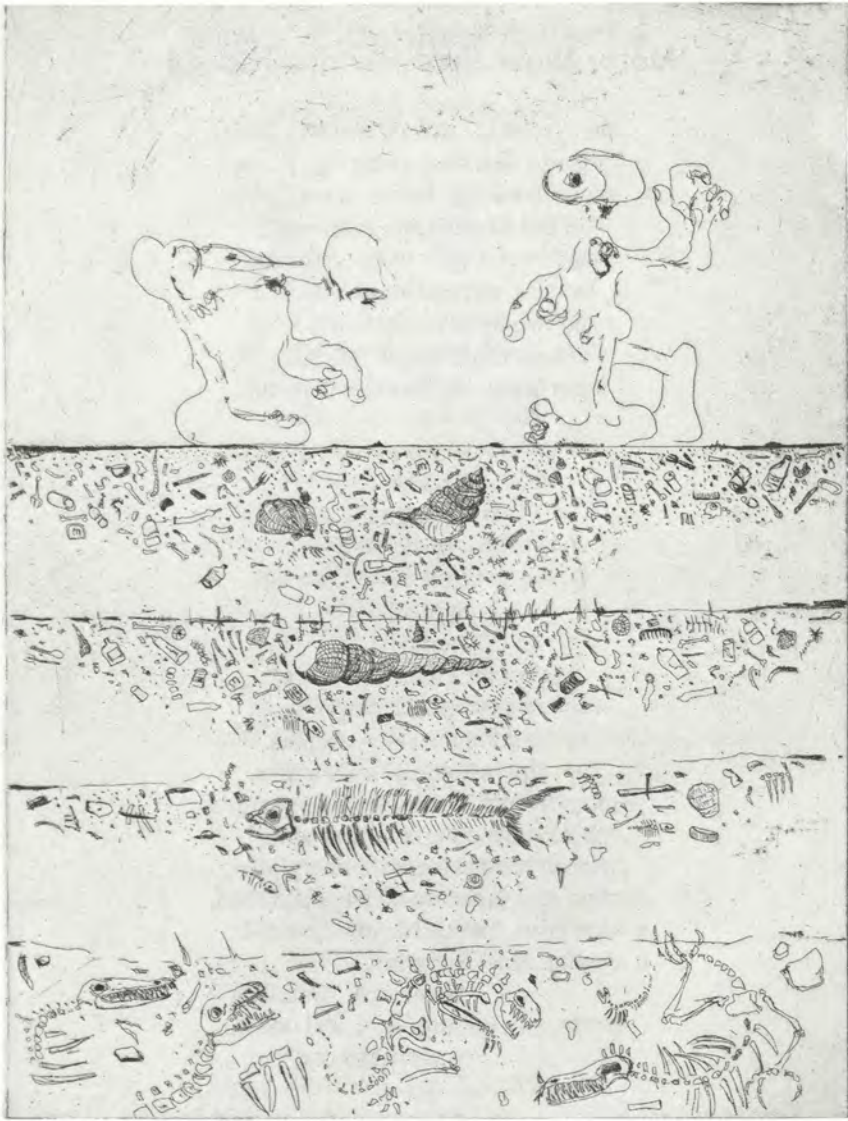
Motor Blow Jazz Tap Tune Tap Motor
America

Motor Blow Jazz America (Cont.)

The eyes of the driver, mover, shaker,
Nine-to-five motion curving down
small-town side streets, open-backs
of old shops; young men nod,
load trucks, split wood, brush on
lacquer, turpentine, two by four
and two by two, clock out, whip
past, clock out, whirl past,
worn brush workers clocking out.

Blasts of
wind
through
brick
tunnel
graffiti
echo
against the chain link fence,
echo empty barrels, empty faces
in the corners, under steeples.
Tap, tap, two sets of train tracks.
Broom factory windows blowing gold,
baled hay straight off the semi;
chapped hands slap on cotton gloves.
Second gear groan down a clipped road,
a wide third, forth, fifth gear lane,
a winding run—Suburbia;
fine-tuned, American
condo, slip in snug, park, roll down,
neutral and out,
jazz out
and
home.

Due to my heavy load, I miss out on parties where
sperm whale carving (out of butter) and green
(Play-doh) gargoyle hacky-sack are in vogue. BUT,
"you know who you are," so save a ballerina leg for
me next time!



SCUM on the BEACH

Michael Clement

Down in the basement, after the bombing

Kyle Barnett

Down in the basement, after the bombing
you're on your back dead, halfway between the cement blocks
and yellowed newspaper clipping of Mrs. Filbert's Soft Margarine
displayed next to cherry tomatoes in a Thanksgiving ad.

You didn't make it to your hiding place,
and you don't run across the floor like a dirty thought
when I hit the basement light.

Was it a relative that was stepped on upstairs,
crunched with bare feet between the alarm clock and the bed?

It's how your body is segmented and twisted,
the iridescent evil on your brown-shell back,
those pseudo-legs that carried you so fast,
that scared us so. Those legs don't move you anymore,
dead after the little bomb, not the big one.

Kyle Barnett is a senior majoring in English and Philosophy. He is a University Writing Fellow and a contributing writer to the "New Times." He plays in a local rock group, the Lovemeknots, and lives with his wife in downtown Indianapolis.

No Reason to Explain

Peter A. Monn

Cornished hens, hard as plastic, waiting in a nest
of oyster dressing on the dining room table.
Two pumpkin candles, burnt all the way down, around
a salt and pepper family.
A glass of \$3.50 wine between my palms, and Nina Simone
soothing me to an intoxicated sleep. Waiting, waiting.
“Hush now, Don’t explain,” her whispering words of
piano barroom romance.
“There ain’t nothin’ to gain” pouring out like thick, warm,
red wine into a goblet.
Flicking off the light switch, laying down on the worn
couch, I pull a ragged quilt up to my chest, watching
The dancing flames from the dangerous, protecting hearth
on the ceiling like sunbeams at the bottom of a pool.
“You know I love you,” her words swim in and out of my
thoughts, with the cracking shots of the flames.
Outside, snow so violent, I can hear it hit the windows, a
hollow wind. A lonesome, weeping wind. And I
wonder . . .
Where are you?
“And what love endures”
Are you in the storm, listening to Nina’s rippling wine
melodies, or are you between someone else’s flannel sheet,
with your clean shaven leg, air conditioning itself in
the cool air of the room, above the flannel?
“I am completely, pletly, pletly, pletly . . . yours”
A skating needle, waking me from the suffocating heat,
drowning in the hallucination of her words.
“You’re my joy and my pain”
Last reading 1:15, my eyes close, only to raise, drifting,
from one piano chord to the next.
Visions of your outlined, strawberry kissing tools, mahogany
falling down your back in curls.
“I’m so completely yours”
An icy caress, the smell of Chanel #5, as your
strawberries take action, cooling my lips.
“I’m sorry I’m late. I was . . .” you say, as my warmth melts
you in my lips, Nina’s red wine melodies whisper . . .
“Hush now, don’t explain.”

I am madly obsessed with live steel drum bands, the humor of Sandra Bernhard, and one way plane tickets, which explains why my main goal in life is to escape the culturally closed minded city of Indianapolis.

Her Hands

Cecil L. Sayre

she had the smallest hands
smaller still
when held in his
hands so small so fast
like a hummingbird's
wings full of flight

asleep in the livingroom chair
he dreams of her hands
how they would settle softly
beneath his much larger hands
into a nest of quiet shadows
her fingers folded under his

he slowly curls his fingers inward
touching his rough palms again

"yeah, yeah yeah, uh huh, et cetera, et certera, enuf said."

Grandma Bitsy

Linda Bredensteiner

The last time I saw Grandma Bitsy she was sitting in a chair by the window eating a Danish butter cookie.

My father had brought her a round blue tin of them separated by shapes into little ruffled white sleeves.

Half of the cookie fell on the floor.

Grandma Bitsy's bed was closest to the window.

The other bed was neatly made and had a note written and taped to the wall above it that said:

"No Diapers for Bertie."

There was no place for my brother and I to sit.

In the hall a happy, bouncy song had played while my father told us about a woman who had fallen out of bed and broken her hip--
or was it her arm?

My brother and I tried not to laugh at the song. It was inappropriate.

The Most important things I learned in six-and-a-half years of college is that 1) if I work hard enough--or sometimes just hang in there--I can accomplish what is set before me. . . Thanks, Daddy; and 2) Dreams can come true. . . Thanks, Bob.



Dead Horse

Brenda K. Hale

Birthdays at Grandma's: 1965

Nancy Anderson

Nothing disturbed the somber aging of the room,
Its drab, dark personality uncheered by the bright balloons
and confetti of the party.
There was an absence of light:
Shades pulled down to windowsills,
Windows cloaked behind heavy, dusty draperies
And never more than one lamp lighted at a time.
On two wooden blonde end tables, doilies cupped
each lamp vase
Like starched paper snowflakes.
The peg legs of the coarse black and silver-threaded
sofa,
Still held us too high for our feet to reach the
played out pattern of the Oriental rug below.
A flurry of sunlit dust motes traveled through
an escaped slat of light in the dining room,
Landing on a small stack of 45's: the Beatles, the Supremes.
A portable record player hid in the shadows just to the right,
And to the left—the dance floor,
Where the discord of stomping and knocking
against the hardwood
Sounded like someone buried alive.

I graduated from IUPUI in May 1991, but will return to complete teaching certification requirements in the fall. Nine months a year I want to be an old maid schoolteacher with eyes in the back of her head; the other three months I'd like to travel and write.

Eating thy Flesh

Monica Downey Kirk

I,
Mediocre Man with
Carnal desires
Lurking
Within my Pale
carcass . . .
Like an Angel
with Blackened Wings
I, Lurk to Observe
her Rounded Buttocks . . .
In her Beguiling White
Gown . . .
Born of My wife
The devil child's
Nebulous Breasts
Clip My Wings . . .
I Fly Across her
Ripened feast . . .
While Thy, Forked Creature,
Penetrates her Flawless
Ivy . . .
Virginity Taken . . .
I Awaken to the Trembling
Limbs of My Ivory Locked girl . . .
I Have Acquired this Taste
So Simply Do I . . . Gorge her

I have three loves in life, in this order: My physical love is James, my metaphysical love is poetry, and my irrational love is my catty friends. Hssssss.

Ritual

James W. Kirk and Monica Downey Kirk

7:00
Lavatory bound
I awake to wash thy dew
from carnival flesh.

Secret finger
glazing my nakedness
like warm fog.
While my puppet hand ebbs over
augmented breasts
leaving me motionless.

Dress rehearsal begins
converging from daily
ritual of sexuality
like a mannequin into the
closet of conformity.
Patternless cloth
caped over cotton-candy breasts.

Thy mirror directs me
into society's image.
Rehearsal accomplished.
Character completion intact.
Emerging
by showtime
8:00.

James W. Kirk: Our writing is a coming together.

August Morn Dew

Trina O'Connor

August Morn Dew

like you
disappears
with the rising
of the sun.

The day:
mellow till noon,
then trees slouch
with heavy leaves.
Heat hugs the worm

like me,
s
l
i
d
e
s
to a cooler
layer.

A bold cloud thins,
wise and drifting;
shrugs off the summer
degrees into rocky
pockets.

August night:
sultry,
earth exhales
like you,
a red root.

Summer night,
in these degrees,
I bathe
in a cool cave.



Untitled
Michael Clement

Trust

R. J. Sullivan

Nicholas Gibbons stared through the screened pit of his fireplace. The flames crackled and darted in their destructive dance. It was not yet nightfall, though he could conveniently measure the time in minutes before the sun set. Still, he wanted a fire now, needed one, actually. He needed the warmth to clear the chill in his body.

He amended the thought as he sank into the lush comfort of his armchair. No, he didn't need the warmth. Not at all. In spite of all the things that had happened in the last few days, he did not feel the least bit guilty. Some men would call what he had done horrible, others, merely illegal. He didn't care what others thought. As if anyone knew. He had been very careful. He didn't have a choice then and he didn't feel guilty now.

It's not really true to say he didn't have a choice. He did, it was just. . .

And round and round the jumbled thoughts spun like the leftover swirl of hot chocolate. This was why he needed the fire. Many nights in the last few years he had sat next to these burning flames, and his problems, as if by magic, would sort themselves out, all the little scraps of paper in his mind would file themselves into marked folders. The files would arrange themselves chronologically, and the folders would alphabetize themselves.

This was the magic he needed tonight. He had to think things through from the beginning, which meant thinking things through from practically the beginning of his life. How could he encompass all of this? But he knew he would. He just had to wait for the dance to begin.

Nicholas laughed as he thought of the "problems" he had pondered in the past. He was the owner and president of his own computer software company. By the age of twenty eight, he was a bona-fide millionaire. In a matter of five years he had graduated gifted prodigy amongst his college peers and made his money by writing what many considered to be the ultimate business programs. The current versions of those programs were still the standard for both I.B.M. and Macintosh computers. Nicholas had made his money and now he was in charge of mediocre programmers who worked for him revising and inventing software packages for his company.

The irony of it all was that these "mediocre" employees knew three times as much about programming than he ever would. Nicholas, graduated in 1986, was already an obsolete model in the PC world.

But Nicholas had the money. He had the resources. The days were gone when you could start your own company with a PC and a few floppies in the privacy of your home (but thank God he squeaked in during those

days, he thought). It was for this reason that the modern programmers put their trust in him. As a result, he remained successful and his company remained state-of-the-art.

Trust. Nicholas turned that word over in his mind. Trust was the reason his childhood friend Monica Trinn appeared at his doorstep three nights ago after so many years of sporadic contact. She had no one else she could turn to. After all, he had money, he had contacts. After all that she had done, he was the only one who could help her. He had covered her tracks and now she would never have to pay the price for having murdered a man.

But it was more than that. Trust is a two-edged sword. A man was dead, and she was responsible for it. When he opened the door to his apartment, she had figuratively and literally thrown herself at his feet. And in the next few minutes he could have swung his blade down and killed her with betrayal, or lowered the edge upon her, and bid her to rise.

Was there ever really a choice?

He watched the flames burn over the wood, the sparks snapping against the silence of the room. The magic happened.

The computer that was his mind began to organize little bits of "Monica-memories" into sorted folders.

Nicholas closed his eyes, traveled back and opened the first folder. It was labeled "childhood."

She had lived down the block from him when he was eight years old. She was the new kid on the block in the little suburban neighborhood of Marion County, Indiana. Even better, their back yards faced each other and they were able to play together almost every day. It was in the summer of 1971 when they started horsing around with marbles, Monopoly, card games like Old Maid and Poker, whatever caught their fancy.

But more often what interested them were the more esoteric games of the imagination. Nicholas would run across his stretch of back yard, jumping over the metal fence effortlessly the way adults never can, carrying with him a bundle of two towels and a pair of safety pins.

Nicholas would take one towel and pull the width of one end around his neck, standing erect like George Reeves in muscleless legs and a boxy bathing suit as he struggled with the pin of his "cape."

"Look, Moni. I'm Superman."

"Yeah, me too, Nickie." She was struggling to pin the blue "cape" over her red one-piece. She had to push her black curls away to get it around her neck.

"Nuh, uh, Superman's a guy and you're a girl."

"Well, then, I'll be Wonder Woman. I look just like her." She stuck her tongue out at him defiantly.

"No, you don't. Wonder Woman don't have a cape."

“Well, this Wonder Woman does.”

“Does not.”

“Does so” . . .

Eventually, they would get around to hooking up Monica’s parents’ sprinkler and “fly” through the spraying jet stream of cool water to wash away the humid Indiana afternoon.

The second folder in Nicholas’ mind was marked “High school.” This was the wonderful time when the hormones kicked in for all boys and girls and they became young men and women, albeit sex-crazed young men and women. The bright red in Nicholas’ hair had dulled to almost a brown color, while Monica’s dark mane had grown full and wavy. She had taken to wearing it past her shoulders because it accentuated her dark eyes and pale skin. She’d driven all the men crazy, including Nicholas. She’d blossomed in other ways as well, her breasts always invitingly full and firm beneath her sweaters or tee-shirts.

Nicholas, of course, had his “guy” friends and she had her “girl” friends, but they always stayed in touch. They had both been at the age of fourteen when they had first seen “Star Wars” together, and that was just fine and comfortable. Three years later in 1979 Nicholas asked her to see the sequel. The situation suddenly became very, very awkward. Halfway through the movie they realized they were attracted to each other and by the end credits they were necking in the back row. The decision to have a relationship seemed almost an afterthought. As close as they already were, it seemed a romantic relationship was ready-made. Silly that they had never thought of it before then. With this newfound passion, they had assumed that their relationship would last, unlike so many other high school romances going on around them.

A month later, they realized how wrong they were. One afternoon when Monica’s parents were gone, Nicholas and Monica became another high school breakup “tragedy” that all such things are at that age. Nicholas and she were on the living room couch necking when Nicholas suddenly tried to “feel her up.” She became infuriated with him and threw him out. They did not speak for the next three months until he finally called her and apologized. She did too, saying, “I didn’t feel like your friend anymore, Nickie. It was like I was suddenly some sort of conquest for you and we’re so much more than that. You understand, don’t you?”

Nicholas said that he did, although at that time he did not. Later on, when his hormones stopped running rampant through his body, he really DID understand. In the meantime, a relationship was out, but to kick their old friendship back off to a new start, they went and re-viewed “The Empire Strikes Back” to catch what they had missed the first time, as easy as that.

They had loved each other that much, even then.

Nicholas smiled at the memory of his first kiss with her in the darkened theater. Hardly the first time for either of them but so much more tender, so relaxed, unlike any other women he had kissed before or since then.

The next folder read "Miscellaneous" because that was really the best way to describe their relationship in the 1980's. They went to different colleges, Nicholas went to the University of Texas for a computer science degree, Monica traveled to Illinois for a degree in accounting. Still, during the holidays and occasional weekends, they would call each other, and even fly out to visit once or twice a year.

Continuing the tradition, Nicholas took a special trip to Illinois to see "Return of the Jedi" with Monica in 1983. Monica was engaged to another man. They were seated in the theater seats a good 45 minutes before the show started, talking and catching up. After the movie, they had taken a trip to her apartment and talked more over hot chocolate.

Nicholas had to admit, objectively, he hoped, that Monica had blossomed into a truly stunning woman. She had a head on her shoulders as well. Nicholas had never really filled out, but had traded in his computer-geek glasses for contact lenses. He had halfway completed the program that would make him famous.

"It's so good to see you, Nickie!" She gripped his hand warmly.

"You, too." He smiled at her. She could always cheer him up.

"Listen," her full lips curled upward into a smile as she bubbled over. "The wedding is this summer. You're going to come, aren't you? Please say you will."

"Of course, Moni. I wouldn't miss it. Don't be silly." There was a faint tint of jealousy within him at the idea of her getting married. Not that they could ever have had a chance, he knew that already. But he was learning that marriage did something to people. Friendships distance themselves, sometimes break off entirely. Yet another person would be interfering with what little time he shared with Moni. As he understood it, this man Peter didn't even approve of the fact that they were together tonight. Nicholas did not want to know what might happen if this trend were to continue.

"You're such a dear friend. Listen to what I'm trying to do." She gripped his arm as she looked at him. The light had a way of catching her dark eyes in such a way as to make them glow from within, a bright, joyful green. Her eyes were the only dark eyes he had seen that could have a completely independent color to them depending upon this trick of the light. "I'm trying to get you into the wedding party. On my side."

Nicholas shook his head at the vision of himself standing amongst a group of pink-gowned women. Would he have to wear a pink suit? The vision scared him for a moment, and then made him smile.

"I don't think that's possible, Moni."

"I know, but I'm trying. Peter doesn't know you, doesn't want you there. He's probably jealous. I guess I can't blame him? But I want you to know that if I can't work it out, I feel that you should be there, right next to my father and before the maid of honor."

Nicholas was fairly certain that this was the nicest thing that anybody had ever said to him.

He did attend the wedding, although he was not part of the wedding party with the Bridesmaids. They did, indeed wear pink, and Moni wore white. She saw to it that he was seated in front by the aisle on Moni's side and he was able to get almost a profile view of her pale white face beneath the veil, her huge mane of hair pinned back at the sides yet still free behind her head. She stood tall and shapely, proud and excited, determined for this to be her greatest moment, basking in it. He remembered thinking, "she has the stature of an amazon." Then a melancholy smile at his next thought, "She really does look like Wonder Woman."

Tragically, her marriage only lasted two years. The special man she'd thought she'd married was no such person at all. Monica ended up at Nicholas' doorway in Texas for the first time in 1987 after finding her husband in their bed with another woman. Her dreams were shattered. Her adult life, it seemed, was a waste, and she had turned to her best childhood friend to comfort her.

She told him the entire tearful story over hot chocolate (the hot chocolate was becoming a tradition anymore whenever they visited each other). His house was new then, custom-built with the money he was just beginning to make. She had stayed with him a week in the guestroom while she made arrangements to move away from her husband and make a new start in New Orleans, where a valuable Department Head of Accounting job had opened up at a prosperous travel agency.

Nicholas, since that time, was out of college, financially successful, and had no immediate plans to marry. Twice, however, he had come close.

In 1989 The terrible aftermath of a particularly intimate relationship sent him on a midnight drive to New Orleans. He thought nothing of imposing on her in her apartment, because, of course, there was no imposition on her part. He had spent that Friday night figuratively crying in his soup. In reality, he was ranting and raving at his hot chocolate.

"Women!" He finished. "I can't figure them. They're all a bunch of. . ." He looked at her and cut himself off guiltily.

"Sluts?" Monica offered a smile that told him she was not the least bit offended. "Bitches? Let me know when I'm getting close, Nickie."

He sighed weakly. "Damn right." A pillow hit him in the side of the head and her girlish laughter echoed in the small room.

Later that same year she had flown in to Texas to be his date for the "Compu-Pros" Annual Awards Banquet. His company and he received a special Newcomer of the Year Award, and it was his greatest moment. He wanted her to be there. When they called his name, he was sure that it was she who had clapped the loudest.

The last folder, finally, marked "Present." Nicholas took a breath in the darkness, his face the stark orange of a Jack-O-Lantern. The fire continued it's spell and he was suddenly two nights ago.

His doorchime had rung at 4:30 in the morning, frantically, repeatedly. "Hold on," he yelled, throwing on his robe and slippers as he padded down the stairs to the door. A look in the peephole revealed the shape of his childhood friend, dressed in a blue nightdress, torn at one shoulder, her bra strap showing beneath. The Dress was covered with blood. Even through the peephole, he could see tears.

He wasted no time flinging open the door but before he'd gotten it completely open, she had thrown herself at him, her sharp nails brushing down his back as she sobbed openly. He could see her '81 wood-paneled green station wagon on the curb by the side of the road. She had driven all the way from New Orleans this night. Her warmth and her weight became oppressive. She was crying freely into his shoulder, dead weight.

He did not complain. "Moni, Jesus, what happened?"

"Just hold me, Nickie, just hold me," was all she could manage between sobs. It took him many minutes to calm her down enough to get a full story from her. She had gone out to a bar with a friend. The friend had left and she had stayed by herself. She had danced with a man, a stranger. He had rich blonde hair and deep, hypno-tically blue eyes. She did not notice when he followed her to the car and attacked her. She was grabbed from behind and dragged behind the building itself. She fought hard and dirty, kicking, punching, even jabbing at her attacker with her keys. He still easily overpowered her.

When it was over, and he had her pinned against the wall, she thought she was going to be raped. She was wrong. The spiritual and emotional terrors he then subjected her to were far worse than any physical violation she could ever imagine going through.

When she awoke, she took a life. Murdered a man. Monica cried and did not hold back any detail about how she had done it, and why. Nickie could only listen mutely in deepening horror. And now she was here. What was she going to do?

She cried and cried as he comforted her. As she trembled against him, his mind was reeling over the possibilities.

"Nickie, what am I going to do? What can I do?" Was all she could ask. "Please help me, I don't know what to do."

Maybe she didn't, but he did. Monica Trinn had to disappear, and he could do that. But did he want to get involved?

Did he really have a choice? Not that he could see.

He took her head in his hands, staring into her tear-streaked face.

"Trust me, Moni. We can get through this. I won't let you down."

First, he took the car around back. If they were lucky, the police were not yet tracing the car but they would soon enough. He drove it up the wide driveway and parked it around back next to the garage where he kept his grey BMW. He removed the cover from his car and pulled it out into the driveway. He pulled the station wagon into the garage, re-covered the BMW, and shut the garage door. The most immediate problem was taken care of. The rest could wait until tomorrow.

He arranged for her to sleep in the guest room, drawing and securing the thick curtains tightly to maintain the darkness she required to rest.

While she slept, Nicholas drove to the local mall and purchased a wig of thick blonde hair for Monica. He also bought a grey sweatsuit he hoped would be her size. He could buy more clothes later, but she certainly could not go around in the blood-stained dress.

The next night she had joined him again, fully rested. She had just barely made it down the stairs when the phone rang. She looked at him pleadingly as he picked up the phone. His voice was perfectly calm as he watched her watching him, the trembling mouth, the pale face, her hands gripping the banister tightly.

"Hello? Mister Trinn, how nice to hear from you. Monica? No I haven't seen her." No waver in his voice. He'd lied smoothly and articulately to the father of his very best friend. He did it for her. He was in it now. She knew that they were in this together.

"Oh, God, that's terrible!" His voice trembled now, as he let his real emotions play themselves out. "God, please call me as soon as you know anything. . . . of course. Yes. I'm sorry, Mister Trinn. You don't know how sorry I am. Goodbye." He hung up. She came to him and he took her hand.

"Nickie, I'm sorry. This is tearing you apart."

"No." He shook his head. "The important thing is you. We need to get you into as normal a life as you can possibly have, considering what's happened. I've made a few calls. I can contact some people who can give you a new identity."

She swallowed convulsively. "What do you mean?"

He nodded to her "costume" on the chair, the clothes folded neatly beneath the wig. "The first thing we have to do is kill Monica Trinn. The world has to think she's dead or they're going to start looking for her. We have to give the world your death or the police could be here as soon as

later on tonight with a search warrant.”

She nodded, sighing deeply. “Of course.”

“Let’s go, Moni. You follow me closely in the BMW. Close enough to keep people from seeing the licence plate of the station wagon. I’ll drive your car. I know a place along the coast between here and New Orleans we can get rid of it.”

The wind was bitterly chill as they drove the cars through the dips and curves of yet-another large mountainous region bordering the coastline of Texas. A sign caught his attention on the way, “Slow, Sharp turns ahead.” They drove past a curve that progressed along the edge of a cliff. The chasm below led to the rock-layered ocean. He drove past that curve and gave himself a good 300 feet before he pulled over. He got out, told her to stay in the BMW, and got back into the station wagon. He turned the car around and pointed the nose towards the wooden barrier. This was it. He revved the engine and stared calmly at the clouded horizon ahead. He felt himself suddenly get the shakes as words such as “accomplice” and “murderer” echoed through his mind. It didn’t matter anymore. He glanced quickly at the passenger seat where Monica’s purse was. Perfect.

Without another thought, he hit the gas full, accelerating towards the rail. He had room to work it up to 45 mile per hour, a mere 50 feet from the cliff’s edge. He pulled the handle and pushed against the door.

Nothing happened!

The seat belt had jammed up the door. He panicked and threw himself against it. It opened and he tumbled out just as the car impacted with the rail. The jarred acceleration threw him into space where he landed. . . just barely.. .onto solid ground.

He covered his head as he heard the smashing impact of the car against the rocks a few seconds later. Then the secondary explosion as the gas tank impacted with the rocks.

Nicholas was more than trembling, he had almost fainted from the trauma of how close he had come to losing his life. His breath was harsh and ragged in his ears and he could barely hear the pattering of disturbed sand. Monica, donned in wig and sweatsuit, was running towards him and calling his name.

“Nickie!!” Oh, my God!” A hand was on his back, grabbing his shirt and turning him over. Monica grabbed his shoulders and pulled him to her. Instinctively, he wrapped his arms around her, his entire body was still shaking. The world was still spinning over his brush with death. She was warm against him, protective, maternal, almost crying again as she spoke soothingly to him.

“Nickie, you cut that so close. Darling, don’t ever do that again.” She gripped him tighter and the childlike need for protection gave way to a

stronger passion. He wanted her suddenly, furiously, and he had no more control over himself.

He reached up, grabbing the back of her head and reaching into the wig, catching her eyes, loosing himself in their green glow for many seconds. She calmly returned the stare. She knew what would happen next and he felt her hands go to the back of his neck, scratching softly.

He leaned close to her to deliver his kiss and she accepted it. It was warm, furiously passionate, the heat building geometrically with their mutual need. At first.

Suddenly, she pulled away, actually threw herself back, and he knew it was completely against her will. She stared away from him, looking at the ground and hugging her own arms against herself as if she could shrivel into a ball and disappear entirely.

“I can’t.”

“Moni.” He spoke sadly. He knew why this was happening but he was not willing to accept it. “Nothing’s going to happen.”

“How can you say that? You don’t know. After all that I’ve done. All that I’ve become. I’ve murdered a man.” She turned back to him, her eyes hard and yet sad as if to say ‘this is how it has to be, but it is not how I want it.’ “We don’t know what I’m capable of,” she said. “You don’t know what it’s like. I completely blacked out. I lost control of my emotions and my actions, and when I came to, he was already dead. I don’t know if I can ever control myself again.”

“I don’t believe that. Not for a moment. Jesus, Moni, you’d never hurt me.”

He reached out and touched her but she shrugged him away.

“Please, Nickie.”

He sighed. “Okay. For now. But this is not over. I promised I’d get you a normal life. But I also know that I love you and I want to be a part of it.” He stood, held his hands out to her.

She uttered a bitter laugh, but said nothing. She took his hands and stood up. They walked back towards the car in silence. She spoke tentatively once they were back at the car.

“Nickie?”

“Yes?”

“I love you too. But that can’t change things. Don’t think I’m rejecting you because I don’t love you.” She finished weakly. “Just . . . don’t think that.”

“Okay.” He supposed he would have to accept that. For now.

They entered the car.

“What now?” Monica asked.

“Now, we take my platinum American Express card and spend a

ridiculous amount of money on a new wardrobe for you. Then in the morning I run an errand to the pet shop.” He put the grey sports car in gear and it glided smoothly away from the scene of Monica Trinn’s death.

* * *

While shopping, Nicholas had Monica try on a dark black evening gown. It was incredibly beautiful and incredibly expensive. It was low cut, and showed off her figure exquisitely. It was thinly laced at the bosom and had billowing sleeves.

“That dress was made for you.”

She smiled at him but shook her head. “No, it was not. I plan to pay you back for these clothes, and I’m not getting stuck with this bill.” She laughed. A good laugh, this time, a touch of her girlish soprano coming through.

Unbeknownst to her, however, he’d had the man at the register hold on to the dress while she was off trying on other clothes. They’d stayed out all night talking, and he felt closer to her now than he’d ever felt before. After awhile things seemed rather comfortable, although he was sure it would be a long, long time before Monica Trinn could begin to use the word “normal” again. If she ever could.

The flames were dying. He had no more files left. The time was now, and when Monica awoke, he had to convince her that their love could work. During the fire, he had thoroughly convinced himself. All afternoon he’d had doubts, but with this looking back on everything, he knew it was right. He loved Monica. He was going to have her. He would have to convince her that this would work.

He would start by taking her out to dinner.

He had not bothered to show up for work. He was the boss, what were they going to do? He didn’t have to be there, anyway. He took the day off to make the arrangements for tonight. He came home and built the fire. He left the white box containing the dress and a single red rose outside the guestroom door. He waited.

He jumped. He must have dozed because when he awoke he realized that it had been dark for many minutes. He heard a sudden movement on the stairwell. The fire was almost out but when he turned around he could still see her. As she glided down the railed stairway her smooth white skin seemed textured, like chalk. It seemed to actually reflect the light. Even her dark hair seemed reflective, like silver, in the dying light of the fire. As Nicholas turned to stare at her, he could see a large black cat perched comfortably around the back of her neck and across her shoulders. Her eyes. God, he could drown in them, even with the distance between them. In this dim light they outshined even the cat’s eyes. He stepped around the chair and went to her. He held out his hand and she took it tentatively.

The other hand was scratching the cat, who was purring audibly with contentment.

"Thank you. The animals were a good idea. I decided to let this one out, though, she's so beautiful." She reached towards her shoulder and removed the animal, slowly lowering it to the floor.

"You don't mind, do you?"

Nicholas shook his head and said nothing. He was intoxicated with her beauty.

She took his arm and held out the flower that she had tucked into a fold of her dress. "Thank you for this, too."

"Do you want to go out? For dinner?"

A shiver ran through her. "I don't know."

"That's not a no."

"I know." She smiled but then pulled away from him.

He grabbed her arm and she turned back. So vulnerable, so beautiful. So desirable.

"Let's go."

"I don't know."

He drew close to her. "Moni, you trusted me. Now you have to trust yourself. Come with me or you'll never be able to give yourself that chance again."

She donned the wig and left with him.

"Anderson's" was a ritzy, elegant restaurant, of course. Even though Nicholas wined her and dined her with the best steak and liquor Texas could provide, she could only nibble and sip tentatively. She continued to listen, to gaze at him with those eyes. She did not lose interest in what he was saying, mostly small talk, a smoke screen in an attempt to make light of what had happened recently. But she was scared. They both knew what he wanted to happen tonight, and she was scared of it. It was inevitable that the decision would be left to her. She fixed her eyes on him with such love and adoration, wanting. And he mooned over her the way he might have had they met later in life, without ever having to worry about destroying a friendship. None of that mattered anymore.

"Do you treat all of your girls this way?" She asked teasingly, not really expecting an answer.

"No," he said seriously. And took her hand. "Not all of my girls are you."

She looked away, but she was smiling.

* * *

They were just through the front door to his house, hand in hand. As soon as he shut the door he removed the wig, freeing her thick dark mane. He threw the wig into a chair. She bowed her head, eyes glancing at him

awaiting the inevitable. His mouth felt suddenly dry as he brought his fingertips down to caress the softness of her chin and tilt it up at him.

The kiss was moonlight and spring waters and everything cool and dark. He could see nothing as she pressed her body against his. He felt that he now was the flame, the embers, dancing his own dance of possible destruction. After an eternity, they separated, softly, wetly, her eyes locked with his when he pulled back.

Suddenly, a noise in the dark. Monica's head snapped towards the banister and Nicholas felt his breath draw in. Her black cat was hissing sharply in the dark, its green eyes were glaring at Monica. Its hackles were raised and the hiss turned into a deeper growl.

"Hey, now. . ." Nicholas tried to reach for it, but the feline swiped its claws at his outstretched hand. He barely drew it back in time to avoid a deep scratch.

"Whoa. She's mad." He looked at Monica. "At you, I think."

Monica's eyes met the cat's straight on, and for a moment Nicholas felt that he was caught in the middle of an intense battle of wills and concentration. The cat growled more deeply and its legs bent as if it were ready to pounce.

"Stop that," Monica said. Her voice was low, husky, almost masculine.

The change was as instantaneous as it was startling. The cat's hair lowered, the growling stopped. The loud purr that suddenly emitted from the cat's body was so sudden that Nicholas jumped at the sound of it.

Monica smiled. "There. See? She's not upset about anything now. Are you, precious?" She reached out and stroked the cat's head with her nails. The feline purred loudly and lifted a leg off of the banister to allow Monica access to her tummy.

Nicholas sighed and scratched his head. "Well, consider me indubitably impressed. You certainly have a way with animals."

Monica nodded and he thought he saw a shiver pass through her body. "Yes. I certainly do." But when she looked at him again, she was smiling.

He took her hand and led her up the stairs to his bedroom. She seemed to allow him to take her, not resisting, but unable to wholeheartedly give her approval to what was going to happen.

In his bedroom, now, she took the rose back into her hand. But he was already on her and kissing her more. Her hands came to her sides and she returned his affection almost submissively. Then her arm came up and her fingernails scratched lightly against his cheek as her own urgency grew within her. Hot and sweet, swirling within them, the passion grew, until she let out a sharp gasp and he heard a crumpling sound. The kiss broke off sharply and they both looked at her hand.

Red petals fell from her palm as Monica released the crushed head of

the rose. She gasped in shock as the stem and pedals fell to the ground.

"No." She stepped away again, looked back at him in despair, visibly shaking. "Everything that's beautiful I destroy. Please, Nickie, I don't want to destroy you."

He stepped towards her, so very sure of himself in spite of her words. He gripped her shoulders gently. "You won't."

"You don't know that. Please, Nickie."

"I know that you won't." He tilted her head up again. One hand ran through her hair. In the dim light, with the moonlight coming through the window, her hair radiated silver. He felt silky warmth. He gripped her hair tightly and kissed her again, hard. He felt her fingernails dig into his shoulders and he almost winced from the pain. With his other hand, he reached down towards the cleavage of the dress and found the snap. The kiss ended abruptly, as an explosion from within. Their breaths were sharp and swift.

The snap came undone and she reached down, exposing her beautiful breasts, large and globelike, to his loving and lustful gaze.

She reached out, tentatively at first, but then with more assurance, she undid the buttons of his shirt, her hands traveling downward and pausing briefly to stroke her nails across his belly. This time it was she who kissed him, and as she stepped into his embrace she pulled his shirt back beyond his shoulders and off of his body.

"I love you," she said. "Oh, Nickie, my darling, I love you so." She kissed him, small, open-mouth, passionate kisses onto his mouth, his cheek, his chin, all over his face.

"Moni, Moni," was all he could whisper. He was in ecstasy. He leaned back on the bed as she continued to kiss him, she pulled the full skirt up and across his legs so that she could work her hips over his thighs and settle upon him.

She brought a light, long kiss to his chin and paused. A single nail stroked his neck and moved down to his chest, then her lips traveled over his chin, down to his neck, and stopped. He felt her body go rigid and suddenly she wanted to pull away. He could feel terror suddenly welling up within her, as well as himself.

Quickly he grabbed into her hair, holding her. She continued to nuzzle his neck, but nothing more. Her breath was ragged.

He gently brushed her hair away from her ear and whispered.

"Do it. I trust you."

Then Monica Trinn bared her fangs and bit desperately into the neck of her lifelong friend. A trembling moan escaped from her while Nicholas simultaneously gasped and stiffened. All of his foreknowledge could not prepare him for the reality of something like this.

The initial pain shocked him awake, made him want to grab her by the shoulders and throw her off, but he knew he couldn't let that happen. He fought his instincts. He thrust both hands into the folds of the sheets and settled down. Monica gripped his forearms, holding him still. His friend, his lover, Monica Trinn, the vampire, was now taking him and the initial shock of the experience was beginning to give way to a perverted pleasure as she continued to moan greedily into his ear. The initial horror gave way to an erotic euphoria that was similar to the pleasure and pain of a forbidden sexual act. This was, he rationalized, a form of giving, and a strange form of pleasure. His mind reeled as his eyes closed.

For a moment he grabbed on to reality, but blackness was now in the periphery of his vision and he gave himself over to it.

Her grip became suddenly claw-like as she continued to feed on him. After what seemed like an eternity, he snapped his eyes open. He could hardly concentrate anymore. How long had it been, a minute, an hour? Who could tell? Perhaps he was to die here after all, he thought. It was probably too late to even put up any sort of struggle. Not that he would. He closed his eyes, content with this idea when she suddenly pulled away. He heard her sharp cry as she collapsed across his chest.

Nicholas fell backwards and drifted on the verge of some intoxicated sleep in the bed. For another eternity nothing was said, all that could be heard was his gasped breathing and Monica's openly-painful sobs. A contented smile came to his face. He was right about her after all.

Monica had been attacked by a vampire. When she awoke, she had killed a man, the first stranger she had met. The bloodlust had overpowered her and against all of her rational thought, she had killed.

When she showed up at his doorstep, Nicholas had agreed to take the responsibility of caring for her. He bought pets for her to feed on, which satisfied her bloodlust for an evening. Beyond that, What was left was still essentially Monica and he still loved her. And now he hoped that she would know that he would love her no matter what she became.

Nicholas felt strength slowly returning to his body. He was disoriented, but he was alive. He was not dead and he was not of the undead, either. She'd left him free to walk in the daylight, free from her curse. He'd wanted her to indulge a bit in her strange new passion, her need. She'd accepted what he had freely given and nothing more.

Gently, he sat himself up. He reached a hand towards his neck, flinching, ready for the worst, when he realized that the bite was more towards the shoulder and not where his arteries were at all. There was only the slightest trickle of blood on his finger.

He reached out and stroked her silken hair as she cried. When she felt his touch she gripped his hand, brought it to her mouth, and hugged it,

kissing it intently while she spoke.

“Nickie, Nickie, I could have killed you. I almost lost control. I thought I would. Oh, sweet Nickie. How could you do this?”

He touched her pale face, now warm and soft. The moonlight shone through the window and into her glowing dark eyes, which pierced him to his heart.

“You didn’t kill me. You couldn’t. With the wound you made, there was no way you could drain me. You had enough sense, even then, to hold back. You may have killed, but you’re not a killer.” He grabbed on to her hand. “Don’t you get it? The Monica I knew would never hurt me. And you are still her.”

She sat back up on the bed, her hands on either side of his face as she gazed at him with open passion.

“How could you know? Even I didn’t know.”

He kissed her again. Her lips were still sweet with just a hint of bitter copper. “I trusted you.”

She stood up, nodded. “I believe you.”

He stared at her body, her breasts before him, nipples hard and shamelessly exposed. He was flushed and intensely aroused. It was time to ask the one question that he had been wondering all along.

“Moni. I want you. I don’t know if you can feel love, anymore, that way, but-”

A single finger, light as a feather, touched his mouth, stopping all other words. Her smile was one of desire and acceptance. “Shhhhhhhhhhh.” Long and slow. Her words were barely a whisper. “I want that, too. Of course I still can, dear, dear Nickie.”

First she finished stripping herself. Her firm amazon body was everything he had imagined. Then she finished stripping him. She crawled over him again, grinding her hips, smiling. She kissed him. Her breasts were pressed tightly against his chest. Again the dizzying euphoria.

She looked at him with more love than he’d ever seen from any woman before. And then for no reason, she giggled, high, girlish.

“I’ll bet I know where all of the blood is, now, Nickie.”

They made love intensely, playfully.

When he entered her, the sounds that escaped from Monica’s lips were loud and passionate. They were identical to the moans she’d made when she fed on him.

THE END

A Number of people made my three years on the genesis staff very rewarding: Drew, Todd, Kate, Geneva, Linda Bond, Mark, Jim and Monica, Shannon, Chris, Nancy, Peter and Kimberly. Thanks and best of luck to you always. There’s also that other Linda on the staff who influenced me in a big way by becoming my fiancée. I love you.



Prince
Shiva Saghafi

About the Artists

Michael Clement: Herron student and welder, trying to do art.

Brenda Hale: "The reproduction of what the senses perceive in nature through the veil of the soul." -- Edgar Allan Poe

Gary M. Kendall: Indianapolis, currently attends Herron School of Fine Arts in the evening. Has published poetry in the *Indiannual* and artwork in *genesis*. Two-time merit winner of the Arts Indiana postcard contest. Enjoys traveling; most recent adventure was to Hong Kong.

Shiva Saghafi: At present, I am a sophomore at Herron School of Art. My major interest lies in painting, however, I dabble in printing and ceramics. I've always expressed a love for literature and hope to collaborate visual arts with poetry or short literary pieces.

Holly J. Sauer: Although I'm a fairly prolific dreamer, I'm also fatally realistic about how the world operates. So . . . instead of disappearing to a quiet, private life in a decent climate, I'm a Visual Communications/Biology major. With any success, I'll be working toward a masters in Medical Illustration in a few years. I'm just waiting for some inspiration.

