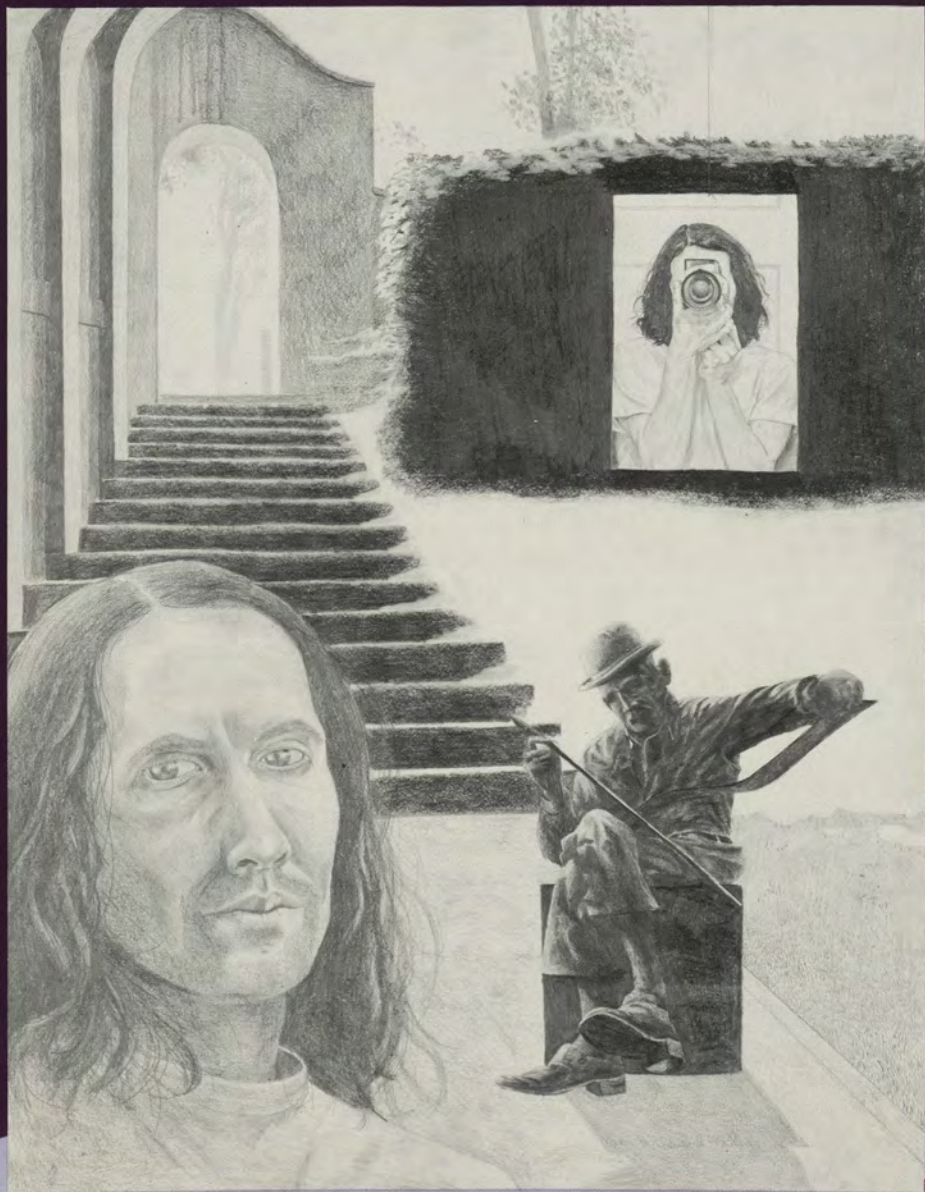
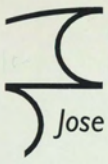


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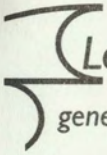
volume xxxiv  
spring 2003



Cover: Best of Issue – Artwork

Double Self Portrait with an Old Man Playing the Saw in the Snow

Jose Di Gregorio



# Letter from the Editors

genesis, volume xxxiv, spring 2003

In 2003, we all are searching for pieces of ourselves: past, present, future; what is and what we hope could be. It is with great pleasure we present this issue of whimsy and wonder, where monkeys dance and ancestors rise, where the individual joins the weave of the American experience to enlighten us all.

Kimberly McClish  
Pat Harvey  
Katie Krieger  
Tedra Richter

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Lauren Kusze  
"Precious Collection V. 2"  
page 29

# *genesis*

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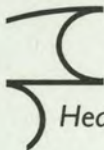
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Best of Issue – Poetry  
All in Me

Heather Filson

Just between you and me, I am not what I seem. Yanni and the Backstreet Boys *are* cool! And yes, you look fat in that skirt! And no, I would never, ever date you! But seriously, the complications of being me stretch far into a realm that I am just beginning to explore. But I've found out a few things. I work from the inside out. In math, I can FOIL, but I can't factor. I can multiply but can't divide. I can square, but I can't find the square root. Even though I start from the inside, I would hate for someone to figure me out completely. I have never had an emotional bond equal to the physical bond with anyone. When I tell you a story, take what I said and divide it by drama. Then, you'll get the real story because I exaggerate. Slow drivers and being cold really piss the hell out of me, but I think old people are cute and my favorite season is fall. Explain that one! I fear heights, but I love roller-coasters. In the summertime, I love to walk barefoot in the grass. I despise crying in front of people because it makes me feel weak. Guilt trips and decisions tear me apart. I worry so much about others that I forget what I want. I can really sing like Mariah and Whitney; I'm just too shy to sing outside my car. All right, I admit it! I cuss like a sailor and I enjoy it! Fucking get over it, okay? I once thought of getting cherries tattooed on my hip. Now, that would be false advertising. I love kids, send me all your orphans. So next time you pass me in the hall or you're staring at my ass as I get my Mountain Dew out of the machine, know that I can't paint a portrait of myself for you. I am just a mess of contradiction, irony, and complexity. So don't try to analyze me. I'm unfathomable.



Best of Issue – Prose

*Cindy and the Green Monkey (an excerpt from Cindy's bedtime story)*

Michael Springer

Once upon last week, there was a girl named Cindy who lived in a treehouse on the far end of the woods. One day, Cindy was painting a picture of a girl painting a picture of a girl painting a picture of a fish. It was coming along very well, when KNOCK KNOCK somebody knocked on the door. People seldom knocked on Cindy's door.

"People seldom knock on my door," said Cindy. "I wonder who it could be!" Cindy went over and looked through the eyehole and saw a very silly looking green monkey.

"It's not often that people see monkeys in this woods," said Cindy, matter-of-factly. She thought she remembered someone telling her something about a green monkey in the past, but she couldn't remember what it was. So, she let him in.

"Hello!" said the green monkey. "Could I interest you in subscribing to a magazine?"

"No, thank you," said Cindy.

"What about buying some girl scout cookies?" said the green monkey.

"No," said Cindy.

"How about joining my religion?" said the green monkey.

"No, I don't think so," said Cindy.

"Well, can I pick up your trash?" said the green monkey.

"Depends," said Cindy. "What are you going to do with it?"

The green monkey scratched his head. "I hadn't thought about that. I suppose I could put it in your neighbor's yard."

"I don't have a neighbor," said Cindy.

"I could hide it in the top of a tree!" said the green monkey.

"No, thank you," said Cindy.

"Do you want your mail, then?" said the green monkey.

"Sure!" said Cindy.

The monkey looked relieved. He reached into the pocket of his white overcoat and pulled out fourteen envelopes.

"I didn't know I could get mail," said Cindy. "I didn't even know I had an address."

The monkey didn't say anything.

Cindy opened the first letter, which was addressed to "Cindy's treehouse" and was from "America Online". She opened it and it was an add for the internet, and came with a free CD. Cindy threw away everything but the CD, because she figured it was hard to tell when a CD would come in handy. She put the CD in her pocket. She sat the other thirteen envelopes on the table, so she could open them later. She hadn't ever gotten mail before, so she wanted to treasure each letter individually, and not open them all at once.

"Is this your painting?" said the green monkey.

"Yes," said Cindy. "Do you like it?"

"She only has one nipple," said the green monkey.

"Well," said Cindy, "it's not done, you know."

"Yes, but when it's finished, she should have two," said the green monkey.

There was a brief lag in the conversation, in which the monkey grinned and stared at Cindy and Cindy continued working on her painting, because the monkey made her feel rather awkward.

After she'd been painting for quite some time, the monkey said, "Oh, of course. I forgot to tell you something important."

"What is it?" said Cindy.

"What do you mean?" said the monkey.

"What did you forget to tell me?" said Cindy.

"Something important," said the monkey.

"Well, what is it?" said Cindy.

"I'm not sure I follow," said the monkey.

"What is the important thing you forgot to tell me?" said Cindy.

"Well," said the green monkey, "all of them, if you want to get technical. Why, I haven't said one important thing since I got here! Choosing one important thing as the only important thing I forgot to tell you is a bit rude to all of the other important things."

"Are you going to tell me something important?" said Cindy, growing impatient. She had a tendency to get impatient, which was one of the reasons she lived in a treehouse far away from anybody else.

"Right now," said the green monkey, "Mars is closer to you than it's ever been before. In exactly five minutes, Mars will get even closer. Then, it will be far away almost instantly."

"I hardly see how that's important," said Cindy. "Planets don't interest me."

"I'm not talking about planets," said the green monkey. "I'm talking about a candy bar."

"What?" said Cindy.

"It's a Mars candy bar."

"Oh," said Cindy. "I see." Then, after due contemplation, she said, "That's not at all important!"

"Yes it is," said the monkey. "It's a hint."

"A hint?" said Cindy. "A hint about what?"

"About what's going to happen at the end of this chapter," said the green monkey.

"But why would I want a hint about what'll happen at the end of this chapter?" said Cindy. "I'll find out less than a page from now, anyway."

"You aren't curious about the future?" said the green monkey.

"Not the immediate future," said Cindy. "At least, not right now. If you're going to give me a hint about something, give me a hint about how the book's going to end."

"You know how the book will end," said the green monkey. "It's going to be a generic happy ending."

"Yes," said Cindy, "I suppose you're right. Well, can you tell me what'll happen in the next chapter?"

"Something you won't like at all," said the green monkey, giggling. With that, conversation stopped, and Cindy continued painting while the green monkey watched. Then, the monkey said, "The Mars will get very close to you in seventy seconds. Then, it'll be far away again."

"I hardly see why that's supposed to intrigue me," said Cindy. "I doubt I like Mars candy bars, anyway." Then, after a pause, Cindy said, "How close is the candy bar right now?"

"Oh," said the green monkey, "about two feet away from you."

Cindy did a quick calculation, and said, "You have the candy bar, don't you?"

The green monkey smiled. Then, he hopped forward and touched Cindy on her forehead. "Tag! You're it!" said the green monkey, and he hopped out the window. Cindy never saw him again, and Mars just kept getting farther and farther away.

Self Portrait in a Sub-Conscious State

Jose Di Gregorio

A Taste of Salt  
Kim Kim



## A Taste of Salt

Kim Kite

I tuck back the errant curls that have escaped my headdress. The sweat that drips down off of my nose leaves little dark circles in the dirt floor. Goodness, it's hot enough to melt candle wax, and still I must stoke the fire in order to bake today's bread. But as Lot says, I should "be thankful" that I have flour to make bread and an oven to bake it in. He's a good man, my Lot. We've been married for almost three decades. Why, I can hardly remember a time when we weren't together, growing up like we did in the same village. There's not much that I don't know about him, but lately he's had something on his mind that seems to occupy his every thought. Why just the other day I found him in the barn talking to no one, still dressed in his pajamas. I know that he is concerned about all the trouble that we've had, here in Sodom, but what can he do about it? He's just one man. How can he fight things like prostitution, homosexuality, drunkenness, and idol worship? He has enough to do keeping this household in check. You see the Lord in His Wisdom saw fit to bless us with beautiful daughters. Unfortunately, He did not also bless them with brains, and although neither of them is married as yet, they are both engaged to boys that have the intelligence of sheep. Lot cannot allow our girls to be yoked for life to these dimwits. But lately, all Lot does is sit by the entrance to the city, keeping a watchful eye on the countryside, like he's expecting someone. Today, he's been sitting there since the birds began their chirping at first light. Just now, as I'm speaking, he approaches and he's not alone. Who's coming with him? Doesn't he realize that I'm not prepared for company today? I've yet to finish my chores, and still he brings, not one, but two, guests. I can see that Lot's face is flushed with excitement like he has a secret that's his alone to tell. He explains to me that these men are angels sent by God to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. Angels? Destroy Sodom? And Gomorrah? These two guys look as though they couldn't kill the neighbor's cat, let alone destroy two cities. Lot says that we're to gather our family and whatever belongings we can carry and escape to the mountains. What is he thinking? I haven't finished the bread for today and he wants me to pack up and hike to the mountains. Well, I have some news for him. If he wants to leave then he can do the packing, and tell the girls and their two oafish boyfriends. Dumbfounded, my jaw gapes widely as he agrees without any fuss. He begins his task with enthusiasm, something I haven't seen in for him weeks. But even his begging is unable to pierce the thick heads of those boys, and they choose to remain in the city. Oh well, at least one problem is solved. All too soon we are leaving, although I'm not yet convinced that we're making the right move. I'm not sure that these two guys, these "angels," know what they're talking about. I'm sure I don't want to leave my home and go live in the mountains and, as if I haven't been given enough orders for one day, now I'm told that I mustn't look back at Sodom. What, no last look at the only home that we've ever known, where we spent our wedding night, where both of the girls were born, and where we grieved over the loss of our only boy baby? "There's no looking back," Lot tells me with an air of zealousness. He says that I must not disobey God. Well, I've had it up to here with all of this nonsense and if I want to take one last look at the home that I'm leaving behind, then, by golly, I will. I roll my eyes and laughingly tell Lot to contact Uncle Morty in Zoar if anything happens to me. As I turn for one last peek, a distinctly briny flavor fills my mouth.

haiku for a pompous paint chip  
Chizoma Sherman

it's yellow, i said  
but mom said *expand your mind*  
sunk into saffron

Stamps  
Joshua Baratz

Uncle Albert's stamp collection spans eighteen years.  
I flip the smooth, stiff transparent sleeves, the formaldehyde  
to aging moments pressed flat in an obese,  
vinyl album.

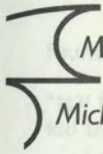
His cavernous voice bellows box scores  
from the balcony. John Kennedy, the Seoul Olympics,  
and Sandy Koufax lay side by side, reissued.

His gray hair glistens above his weathered complexion  
in L.A.'s one o'clock afternoon shine. Details swim  
with the almost one-sided conversation.

Cigar smoke churns and my fingerprints are remnants of kisses  
on the sleeves of the collection that starts in 1979,  
and is presented to me on my eighteenth birthday.

Uncle Albert's stamp collection spans eighteen years.  
I flip the smooth, stiff transparent sleeves, the formaldehyde  
to aging moments pressed flat in an obese,  
vinyl album.





My Will

Michael Springer

To David, the apple tree in the old woman's backyard which as it ambled into the past grew an old woman standing in a doorway with a shotgun who lived alone and wouldn't allow us any of the apples, not even the ones which had already fallen to the ground.

To Jenny, the day we went sledding and afterwards when we sat together on your bed and the taste of your own tongue, knowing how much I wanted it. Everything the way it was in the beginning, because ends always let you down.

To Mom, the way I watched you read, watched you crawl through the pages, always searching for something, the way I began writing to try and help you find it and was hurt every time you put off reading my poems until you finished another and another mystery, the way I was a little farther from you every time you skimmed a poem and gave it back without a comment.

To Cindy, that Tuesday in the castle when colors were so rich you had to squint and I didn't keep anything to remember it; the way we both thought days like that would line our lives all the way through. The morning everything stood still while we lay in bed watching Sesame Street. The way the light and rain was gentle with us, and cars humming along the wet streets outside made the world feel safe.

*My mother is a brilliant trial lawyer*

*Melissa Morris*

My mother is a brilliant trial lawyer. She knows the Indiana tax laws better than she knows what my stepfather looks like naked and can get a couple divorced so fast that the three hundred dollars she charges per hour looks like a happy meal. But for all her brilliance, she neglected a few things, like telling my sister never to sit down on a truck stop toilet seat. And that oral sex doesn't mean talking about sex out loud. Or that women are only out to give one thing. If my mom had talked about this earlier, my sister's boyfriend wouldn't be in jail right now. Actually, my mom never did criminal law a day in her life, aside from highlighting the words in her criminal law class thirty years ago. She never heard of criminal procedure until her brother, my uncle, ran his blue pickup truck into the living room of some family's house and sent a piece of oriental vase into the left temporal lobe of the father's head. Somehow she still managed to get Beth's, that's my sister, her boyfriend locked up, tossed in the can or whatever they say on TV.

See, he's twenty seven now but it doesn't matter anymore because he's in jail. It's weird because whenever we went to see him for the first time on his birthday, I didn't remember how old he was but just that he was in jail. The only number, he said, that he knew for sure was two thousand forty six and one hundred and forty four, his parole date and the number of tiles on his cell floor.

See, Bryant, that's his name, was really cool when he and Beth started going out and stuff. He played tag with me all time and was really cool to my mom and even gave my stepdad, like, a new engine for his car once. Beth told me mom was actually doing laundry the first time they did it. See, Beth was a virgin and bled for a long time. She even started throwing up stuff, not food stuff and she couldn't eat, not even Cookies 'n Cream ice cream, her favorite ever. Mom thought she had food poisoning so she took Beth and me to some clinic in Port Washington which was like a three hour drive and since Beth couldn't eat, we stopped every like five seconds at every gas station in the world so she could puke and I got a bag of beef jerky because Beth and Mom both got sick when I brought a hot dog in the back seat.

"Are you sure it wasn't something you ate?" Mom asked again. Every time mom asked that, Beth sorta smiled and she winked at me like I ate whatever it was mom was talking about.

"Yeah, I'm pretty sure it wasn't anything that you fixed, Mom. And besides, Bryant makes sure I watch what I eat."

"I really like that boy Beth. He seems like he really respects you. Seems to me like you could learn a lot from him."

Since Port Washington is so far from our house, we got to stay at a Holiday Inn with a swimming pool and those fuzzy blankets. I love those blankets. We even got free donuts the next morning for breakfast and we never get to have donuts, ever.

The doctor, he had on a green and pink button that said "Smiles are the only thing free around here" and that Beth didn't have food poisoning. He gave her some horse pills the color of his button and we went to a truck stop for lunch. I got biscuits and gravy and my mom got a salad with red dressing. Beth went to the bathroom again and got herpes. She sat on the toilet seat and started getting sick a few weeks later.

But Beth ate all the time then. Gross stuff like grapes with ketchup and toast with mayonnaise and apple butter and cauliflower and lima beans. Bryant and her were still doing it so he got real bad sick and told my sister she couldn't keep the baby when he



found out she was pregnant.

"It'll be deformed or something if you have it. You can't have no diseases and have a kid that's right. Did you tell anyone about it?"

"Just Vanessa but she knows better than to tell Mom or anybody. You'd kill her."

"You just can't keep it baby, you can't."

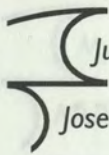
So she went to Port Washington again, she and Bryant did. I didn't because I had a multiplication test that day at school so I didn't go. She wore a Marlin's jersey and sweatpants that day because Bryant said that you usually hurt afterwards so wear something big.

I was stuck on 4 X 11 when Mr. Watson, the principle, came to tell me that Beth was dead. She was dead and Bryant was in jail.

"Where's my mom?"

"She's at the jail now, Vanessa. She's there with Bryant right now."

I didn't ever tell my mom about Beth's baby after that. Bryant was in jail and that was enough for her. But it really wasn't all his fault you know. Beth sat down on the toilet seat first. But I don't think I'll ever tell my mom that you're not supposed to do that either.



Junk

Jose Di Gregorio



To the IUPUI Parking Department (after Martin Espada)

Michael Springer

I had a teacher who didn't show up for class,  
because he couldn't find a parking space  
despite his \$200 parking permit.

A couple of times I've arrived in the school lot  
45 minutes before my first class  
only to show up 5 minutes late because I had to park.

I heard there aren't enough handicapped spots, so even the disabled must search  
and search, then walk miles after finally finding a spot.

I have, in the seas of full parking spaces, seen cops in their air-conditioned cars,  
sipping coffees and watching me,  
waiting for me to give in and park in an illegal spot.

May pissed off students siphon all of the gasoline from your cars  
to replace the gas they've wasted parking.

May the back ends of your vehicles be smashed by trucks trying to park next to them  
before realizing the spots are just too small.

May some poor old woman with a bad leg find out who you are,  
park,  
limp from the back of an E lot all the way up to Campus,  
sneak into your office, wait for you there, and then kick your ass.

May an overheated car drop on you from the sky  
and send you  
not to hell  
but to purgatory  
a giant parking lot around noon, 99 degrees outside, sunny and no wind  
you in a Honda without air conditioning and low on gas  
just commercials on the radio  
circling  
and circling.

## Headed North: The Great Northern Migration

Gaylie R. Cotton

One puts on his finest  
when there's celebrating  
to be done.

Oh we were dressed  
all in our Sunday best;  
wingtip shoes, vasalined legs  
and faces.

We crossed the Ohio River,  
that great divide;  
between oppression and freedom  
between Jim Crow and Civil Rights

left an economy dependent  
on Negroes and mules.

On the other side,  
we stopped our watches  
the beat of our hearts  
kept time with music.

Danced and sang  
like Israel and ate  
bellies full of rag bologna  
and saltines.

We spilled like oil  
onto the streets  
of the black metropolis.  
Our hungry eyes  
taking in the city  
made of concrete and iron,  
monuments of steel and stone,  
buildings like universities  
too big for our bellies.  
Chicagoans swift winds  
moved us about in every direction  
headed south.

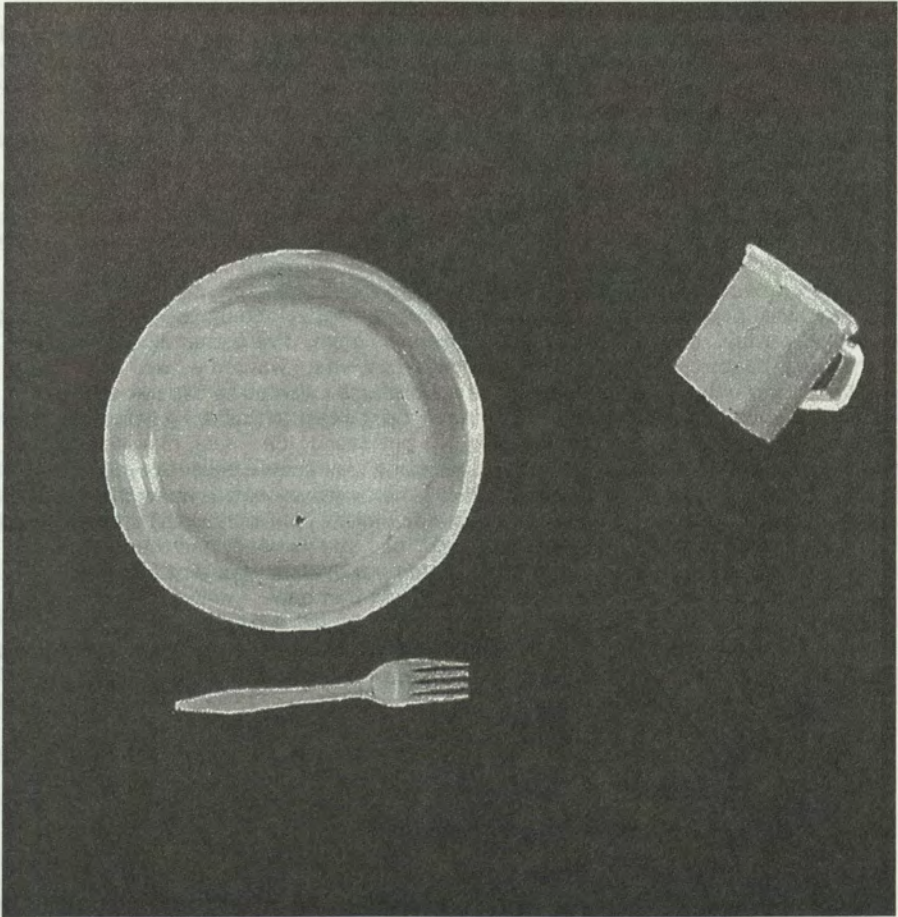
We worked  
steel mills and slaughterhouses,  
pockets full and good meats  
on our tables.

Chicago South Side glowed  
with wide-open laughter,  
cheek-to-cheek kisses, slow grinds,  
and big hopes.

Like lion and lamb  
streetwalkers and gamblers,  
prostitutes and sinners,  
fraternized with church folks  
and grandmothers.

Oh, plenty of theaters,  
cabarets and soul food  
filled South State Street  
where we new dreamers  
clinked champagne glasses  
under sparkling city lights  
in a toast spiting ol' Pharaoh.

to know your kidney beans... I brought it home, but now that I'm here, those beans are sitting on the counter... just staring at me, and you know that I don't really want to put effort into cooking...



Immediately the secretary appeared and was introduced. She sat in a high back chair and tried to embolden her.

"You looking for similarities," she chimed. "I didn't know Jack had a son."

There it was, out of the bag like the vapor it was that had descended to make its caustic appearance for over forty years. Dumped on on our heads in one quick thud.

"I walk exactly like my mother," my quick retort.

"You have her profile," Jack added.

That was accurate and perceptive. Perhaps even generous.

on beans (with apologies to gertrude stein)

Chizoma Sherman

so, i saw some kidney beans on the shelf at the store yesterday and because i'm adventurous and courageous and i had a dollar to spare, i flopped the bag in my basket and i brought it home, but now that i'm here, those beans are sitting on the counter just staring at me, and you know that i don't really want to put effort into cooking. i mean, if i'm not turning potato flakes into cheesy au gratin spuds in ten minutes, you know i'm not doing it, and neither of those cookbooks that you gave me when i moved in here include kidney bean recipes, so what besides red beans and rice can i make with kidney beans? i mean, i've never eaten or made red beans and rice, but if i were going to cook red beans and rice, what does one put on red beans and rice? tabasco? i don't have any tabasco. because i don't really like it. yes, i know, you put tabasco on everything. i still can't eat scrambled eggs. because you put tabasco on yours when i was a kid and it looked like they were bleeding, that's why. i just went to the store yesterday. yes, i can go again. i just -- what. because i didn't know i needed tabasco. i was hoping to stumble across some substitute -- no, mom, i don't need any money. i just bought the esse -- yes, i'm sure. i only needed bread and milk and -- i swear i don't need any money. i'll just go back to the store on payday. no, i don't have any black pepper either. because i don't need pepper! i only bought what i needed yesterday. people can live without pepper, mom. i've gotten along without it for this long, haven't i? yes, it would be nice to buy what i wanted as well as what i needed. look, i only bought the kidney beans because i wanted to experiment, and because they were only a dollar, and because i can't seem to find dry hummus mix anywhere -- yes, mom, hummus in a box. it's not wrong, it's -- yes, i know it comes from chickpeas. they should be called womanpeas, you know. because, you know, chick ... woman? it's not derogatory if you call them womanpeas. i know that they're just food, mom. it was a joke. because i'm a feminist. yes, mom, i still shave. okay, do you know how to make red beans and rice? oh. you've never had them either? then why did you suggest tabasco? because you put tabasco on everything. right. okay, i need to go. soak the beans in water. i'll do that now. i will! i'm getting a pot out of the cupboard right now. i am! overnight? they won't be ready for dinner? oh. hmm. cereal, probably. i'm kidding, mom. taco bell. it'll satisfy my bean craving and it's che -- okay. i really need to go, mom. okay. i love you too. yes, i promise to stop by and pick up a check tomorrow.

Steve "Stony" Thompson

The situation was awkward. I switched tables three times before coming to rest in a small booth where foot traffic seemed nominal. It also gave an unobstructed view of both entrances.

I might not recognize him.

He said he'd have his secretary with him, not his wife. As the room began filling with patrons, most of them elderly men with female companions, I found myself smiling nervously towards each oncoming couple. Each prospect would gravitate to a nearby table and wait. Wait, it seemed, for eternity, but not for me.

They filed in steadily - their empty lemming gazes piercing my hope - and took their places. No comments. No expressions. Occasionally, I boldly muttered to the approaching dead, "I'm over here...?"

The waitress brought me two havarti shrimp quesadillas. They were smoky and delicious. They readied me for the future.

\*\*\*\*\*

I'd seen my father only once in my life.

When I was 19, of my own volition, I crossed the country to find him. Across the years and the few phone calls since, he never shook off the aloofness that characterized that first encounter twenty-three years ago.

I wasn't sure he'd even recognize me.

It was almost one. The lunch crowd was actually dying down. I paid the bill and walked into the main lobby. It's decor was stark, uninteresting, even dull. A single man stood in its expanse, head slightly tilted, slowly wiping his hand across his gaze as I passed by.

It had to be him.

"Jack?"

"Steve! It's good to see you."

We shook hands and settled into a nearby love seat, as if old friends. Almost immediately the secretary appeared and was introduced. She sat in a high back chair designed to embolden her.

"I'm looking for similarities," she chimed. "I didn't know Jack had a son."

There it was, out of the bag like the viper it was that had threatened to make its caustic appearance for over forty years. Dumped on our heads in one quick thud.

"I look exactly like my mother," my quick retort.

"You have her profile," Jack added.

That was accurate and perceptive. Perhaps even sensitive.

\*\*\*\*\*

They chose a small Italian café for their lunch. It would have been my choice had I known the area. Sharing a sloppy spaghetti meal on one plate, not as friends, but lovers, they wrapped the leftovers for her mother. I feigned being comfortable yet was reeling inside over their flagrant relationship. Where was that wife of his?

Talk turned to discussion of my recent stomach churns, of stress. My father eagerly fanned the flames.

"Your grandmother died from stomach cancer," he brayed. "Your grandfather, cancer of the pancreas. And your uncle, abdominal cancer. It runs in the family."

That was enlightening. Not only did I get the only poor lawyer in the world for a father, but, apart from my conception, his major contribution to my life was a seemingly genetic predisposition to its end.

After their lunch, I suggested a walk to the beach. It was just the two of us. Jack commented on the expense of the houses stretched across the sand, saying he couldn't afford to live that close to the water. Here it was, the day's first stab at an old tune invalidating his wealth.

I helped him back up the steps from the beach.

Our meeting had taken little more than an hour yet it was time to say goodbye. I drove him home, not caring about his expected lack of invitation. At the end of the block I shot a quick glance back. A sad, pathetic man, head lowered, was slowly walking up my father's driveway.

I wondered where he'd say he'd been.

\*\*\*\*\*

A few days later I called the secretary and told her I was moving. What would Jack think of me moving near him? They were going whale watching Sunday, she said. She'd ask him then just to make sure, but I should plan on moving down, perhaps to Laguna. I could live there again, we agreed.

At last, I'd be close to my father! He was old now and could use me to drive him places. It was a twist of fate. I'd take care of the man who never took care of me, with no expectation than to make up for lost time.

She talked extensively. She talked too much. "I was the one who got the romance," she shared with confidence, "the one wined and dined, who took the yearly trips to Ireland with your father."

"He's a curmudgeon! I'm attracted to what makes him who he is," she giggled. "I can be attracted to you that way."

My stomach turned.

"He's broke, you know," finally came out of her. "He has no money. He spends what he gets and holds onto nothing."

That was the message that needed to get across to me, to be ruminated over and over, no matter who was speaking or whatever else might be revealed. Though I never wanted him for his money, I would never be able to erase that fear from his mind.



I took to the freeway knowing all the years of hope were finished. There would be no right in this world. Adding insult to injury, my inheritance would go to a floozy — to good times spent with a fun broad.

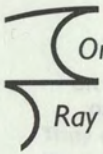
A message on my answering machine Monday assured me my father wouldn't mind if I moved near him. I played it twice, just to make sure the same indifference I'd absorbed across the telephone these last twenty odd years was now surprisingly evident in her voice as well. It was.

I erased it.

And just as well. Just two hours away, I'm already much too close to a woman I've never met, who must justify the confines of her space when a faded memory glides past every now and then, as it cautiously weaves in and out of her loveless world.

Self Portrait

Conie Rebecca Armellina



On a Mission

Ray Koleski

At 2:00 a.m,  
 David, full of ten beers,  
 was showing us how  
 he mastered the monkey bars  
 twelve years ago,  
 when he was nine.  
 He stood on top of them  
 about seven feet off the ground  
 looked up and  
 lifted his arms  
 in homage  
 to the Goddess of the Moon and,  
 ever an Hellenophile, shouted,  
 "I am Jason king of the Argonauts  
 off to capture the Golden Fleece!  
 I am Icarus  
 on a night flight to avoid the sun!  
 I am Alexander  
 leading my Macedonians  
 against the Persians!  
 I am ..., I am ...,  
 I'm ... getting dizzy  
 and I think I'm going to crash!"  
 And he did,  
 Ker-chunk!  
 on the tarmac.

David celebrated Christmas  
 in Memorial Hospital.  
 I saw him  
 battered  
 bruised  
 and bundled like a mummy.  
 He said through his pain  
 and the aperture  
 for his drinking straw,  
 "It shouldn't  
 have happened this way.  
 I guess I'll have to change  
 my brand of beer."

"That's a catchphrase! I'm attracted to what makes him who he is," she giggled. "I can be attracted to you that way."

He somewhat turned,

"He's broke, you know," finally came out of her. "He has no money. He spends what he gets and hands onto nothing."

That was the message that needed to get across to me, to be ruminated over and over, no matter who was speaking or whatever else might be revealed. Though I never wanted him for his money, I would never be able to erase that fear from his mind.

retreat

Chizoma Sherman

During our walk, your shadow floated behind mine. I can still feel the deliberate sway of my hips, a gentle rocking that was intended to pique your interest, to cause a slight smile or rise in an eyebrow, but not enough to make you stray. The seven of us, friends on a weekend retreat, soaked up the warmth of an unseasonably warm February afternoon. We found a creek and paused to shed coats and sweatshirts like snakeskins. At the edge of the water, my shoes sank into the silt as my fingers searched for pebbles and stone. I brushed gritty sand from each rock whose striations or shape seemed more beautiful than its successor. I was hyperconscious of you downstream as you searched for your own treasures. I wanted to approach you, wanted to say something casual and meaningful, but I couldn't think of anything witty to say about wet shoelaces or muddy fingerprints. Upstream, your girlfriend tried in vain to rescue a football from a tangle of branches. She didn't see you hand me a small red stone that resembled a brick teardrop, didn't hear you say, "I found this for you." I smiled and hoped I turned away before the truth of my crush on you reached my eyes.

Self Portrait

Carrie Rebecca Armellino



## Reattachment

Heather Filson

Skinny Meagan executed a whirling cartwheel on the splintered wooden balance beam. I stood in line behind her, chitchatting with a few friends about the "stupid showoff" boys playing basketball nearby. Suddenly, Meagan's foot connected with my chin, quaking my skull. My vision vanished. An eerie warmth seeped over my lips. A hysterical scream jolted my body. I panicked, running blindly over the mulch, stumbling over the tire swings, and smashing into a group of girls. They protested, protecting their Chic jean skirts. I had interrupted their gossip session. Autumn shrieked, "Ew! What is that?" Her disciples began screaming as well, but as I collapsed onto my side in a faint. My eyesight returned to a dizzying lamp a few inches from my face. Scarlet smudges on my hands reminded me of my accident. A man with huge wire-rim glasses and a facemask hovered over me, wordless. He smeared a Q-tip with numbing ointment like sour cherries over my tongue. Sanitizer and the stench of blood tempted my acidic vomit to splash out onto the doctor, whom I wished would say something. Blue thread bobbed in and out of my quivering mouth as he began to sew. My heartbeat reverberated in my head as I wondered what damage had been done. Then, my eyes focused on the baggie of reddened ice that had once held my tongue. Autumn must have found it.

## Mad Woman

Sarah Hanlon



He stuck me in there when I was five. I remember that I used his razor when I was pretending to shave with whipped cream and he thought of a new way to "teach me my lesson." I think when my father stuffed me into that dark, quiet space full of tall dark garments, a quiet dark hate began to fuel my small wimpy body. It would be nice if I could say I loved my father but I don't.

I love houses. I love that he gave me that.

Later, after I hated him, he took me around to all the open houses in rich neighborhoods on Saturdays.

In the big gray Buick sedan he leased, "Buddy, this is a great way to meet some high-brow ladies. They think you're loaded so they're all over your nuts. Well... you know. Then you play lonely millionaire and it makes 'em weak. After they show you a house that you'll never be lucky enough to own, son, you get their card and call 'em up for a date on Friday night. Now I know, you're a little young to think about the ladies and datin' and everything, but soon enough, you're gonna need to know how to impress the ladies, cuz boy, you need all the help you can get. God knows you didn't get my looks," he said as he licked his index and ring fingers and slicked his angry eyebrows into submission.

We pulled into a gated driveway. I always was quiet, because once I asked the lady showing us the house a question and I paid for it later. There's still some scars on my legs from when he "accidentally" made the water too hot and threw me in the white claw-footed tub.

I am a house painter now. The money's ok, and it gets me outside. My apartment's pretty small, but I have some tropical fish and all my stuff fits nicely, even though I don't have very much stuff or very much storage space. The bedroom has one big walk-in closet, and there's another one when you first walk in through the side kitchen door by the sink and counters. Work takes a lot out of me, especially in July or August. But then again, I love the summertime.

It was some time in late August. I started looking around at houses again. I didn't think I could afford any of the ones I looked at, but it was always nice to pretend. Day after day I guess part of me went crazy after standing on a ladder against a hot house letting the sun beat me down. I wished that someday I'd be inside the houses for good. Live there. The house would be mine. I could show people around, walking from room to room and say "I got this in Paris," or "The chandelier was hand-beaded by twelve women."

The appointment was for twelve o'clock pm on a Saturday. I drove my blue truck out to the edge of the subdivision. The house was beautiful. I had seen it in one of those free papers you can get at the grocery store. The photo's been on my headboard for days.

The realtor's name was Andrea. Andrea sounded like a big girl's name. Or at least a girl who liked to laugh.

I parked and got out and walked to the address. I looked for the photo so I could compare the two. The photo was in my pocket. So was some tape I kept by habit. I guess it was the house painter in me. She told me the code to enter on the keypad at the front, and the forest green gates slid open with a hum and I continued up to the front door.

My finger was just about to touch.

The double doors made of thick redwood flung open, "Hi! I'm so glad you made it all right! And you're on time. How thoughtful! Come in, please! We have a lot to see."

Not really a big girl, but a lot to take in, if you know what I mean. She grabbed my hand, and I looked around, thinking how perfect the house was. It was in the style of Wright, with huge sprawling rooms instead of divisions and separations. There were no awkward transitions from room to room, and the view out the back of the glass-walled

house was amazing. All you could see was sunny California foothills for miles.

We made our way through the top floor of the tri-level house, but my mind was already made up, and I wasn't really listening to her. I caught glimpses of her expensive clothes and closed my eyes as I heard the sound of fabric rubbing abrasively against skin.

When I opened my eyes, Andrea had a confused look on her face. We were standing in the master bedroom's closet. "Uhhh, are you okay?"

"Sorry. Yes I'm fine. I was just thinking about my father for a second. Today was his birthday." I felt the duct tape in the pocket of the expensive coat I got on layaway.

"Do you need to sit down?"

"Please, just for a second."

The house came furnished, so we sat on a Queen Anne settee in the closet. I waited for her to sit down, then I pulled out the tape and pulled off her scarf, stuffed it into her mouth and taped her quickly to the chair. She didn't fight much. I was sort of disappointed.

She looked so terrified and utterly confused and I just thought to myself "I remember how that felt."

I moved her into the attic (there was a small elevator in the hallway) and then I went down to have a look at the rest of the house. I saw her clipboard on the kitchen counter. There was another appointment for a walk-through in an hour. There was no way to reschedule. The Melsohn's.

"Yes, the house was designed to make one think back to the contemporary, or as we like to say 'contemprarie' style. But it's also *very* modern and there is so much space! All of the bedrooms have walk-in closets and there is a small attic above the second floor.

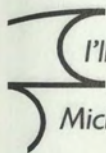
They were a rich white couple. She wore a lot of leather, his outfit reminded me of a boat.

"Honey this is wonderful. How old is the house?"

"Well, the original house was built in the fifties, but it was added on to in the eighties. Sometimes settling from erosion still causes the foundation to make noises, but trust me, this house is a real gem."

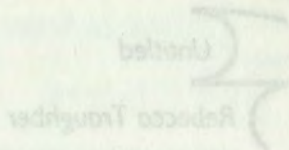
They didn't even hear the thuds coming from upstairs as Andrea rocked the Queen Anne back and forth on the dark wooden panels of the attic floor.

"Wow. These closets really are spacious!"



*I'll Admit It, I've Been Writing Someone Else's Poetry*

*Michael Springer*



I was never in love with the girls I said I was.

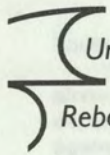
My wit hides in the bottom of my stomach most of the time,  
and occasionally I can burp a few lines onto the page.

I read other people's poems six or seven times before I have an opinion of them,  
and even then I usually feel like I've missed the point.

I like sparring, driving really fast, and basketball.  
My life is too busy, and I'll never be a real poet.

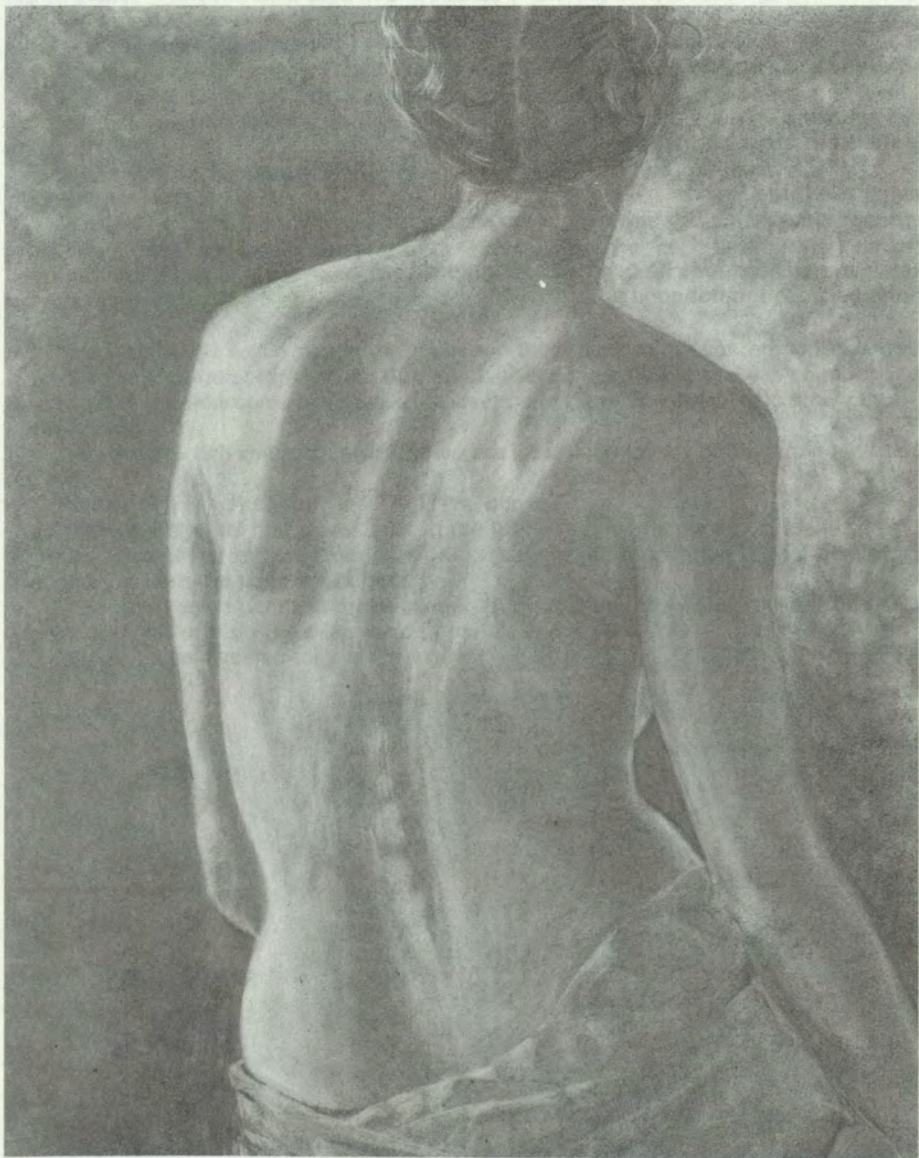
I only have three friends  
because I don't hold on to anything unnecessary.

I've always wanted to write poems about nature.  
I don't because I'm not good at it.



Untitled

Rebecca Traugher





fifteen minutes after I suggest we buy a loveseat  
she rises from her chaise and lounges against the bar  
exhales a sigh and says

*I don't want to fight*

in the breath before she raises  
a menthol to her pout

she spins to face the bar  
one arm akimbo  
stabs out her cigarette and explains

*I don't want to break up*

in the breath before she finishes  
her diet soda and unbuttons  
her levis

her shirt falls next to my jaw on the floor

*kiss me*

she insists and raises an eyebrow  
as she waits  
my pulse  
when our lips meet

she leads me to a mattress on the floor  
that we've christened couch and murmurs

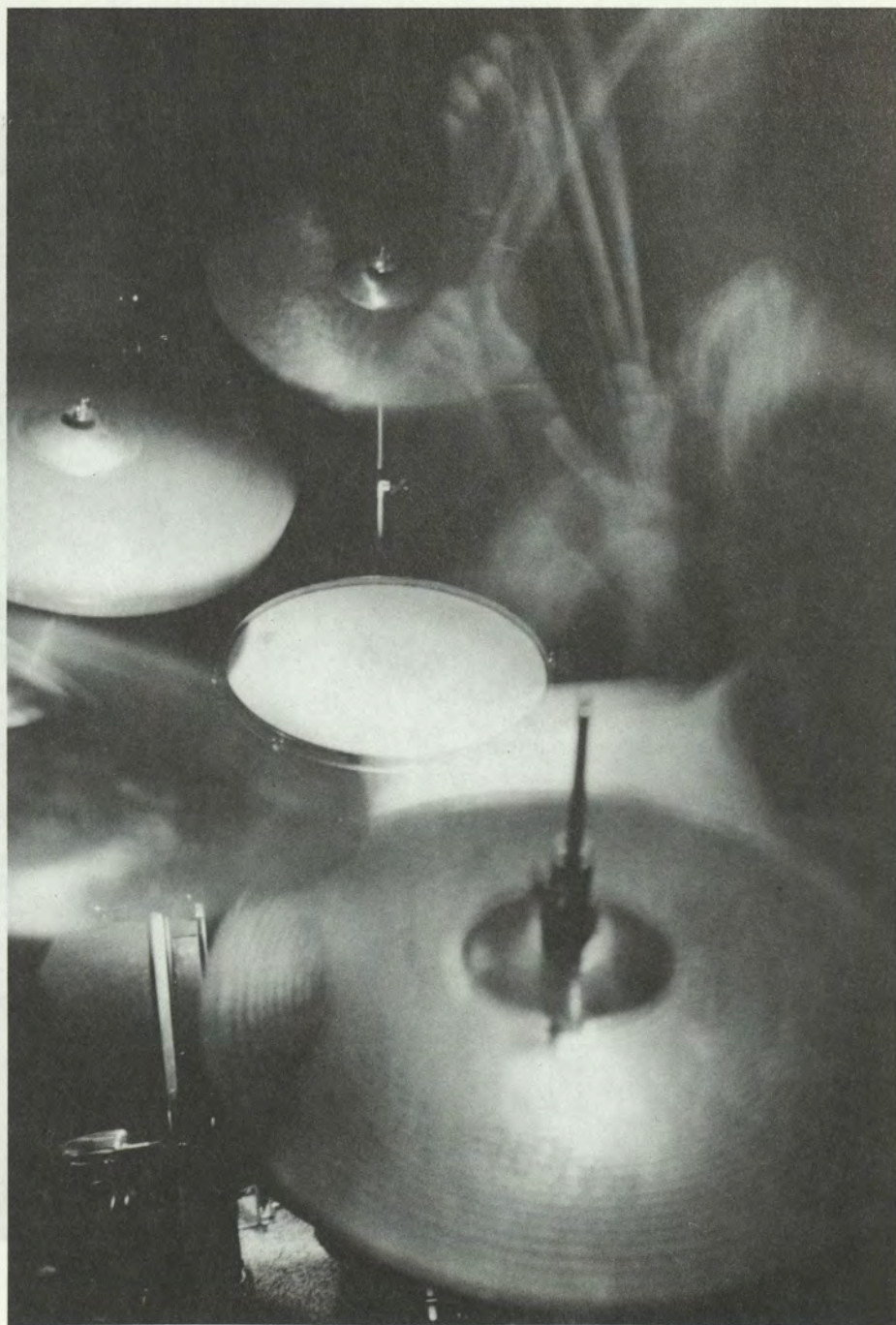
*I'm very superstitious*

in the breath before she whispers

*everyone I buy furniture with eventually leaves me*

her hips rise above the crisp lemon comforter  
and I debate promising that we'll never break up  
but instead I say

*I'm sorry*



crash landing

Steve "Stony" Thompson

You made yours from scratch no kits for you just trips to the hobby store for balsa paints and glue.

I'd see you sit for hours painting the last detail onto the fuselage of a Sopwith Camel or clipping the wings of the Spirit of St. Louis. Though I never really saw you.

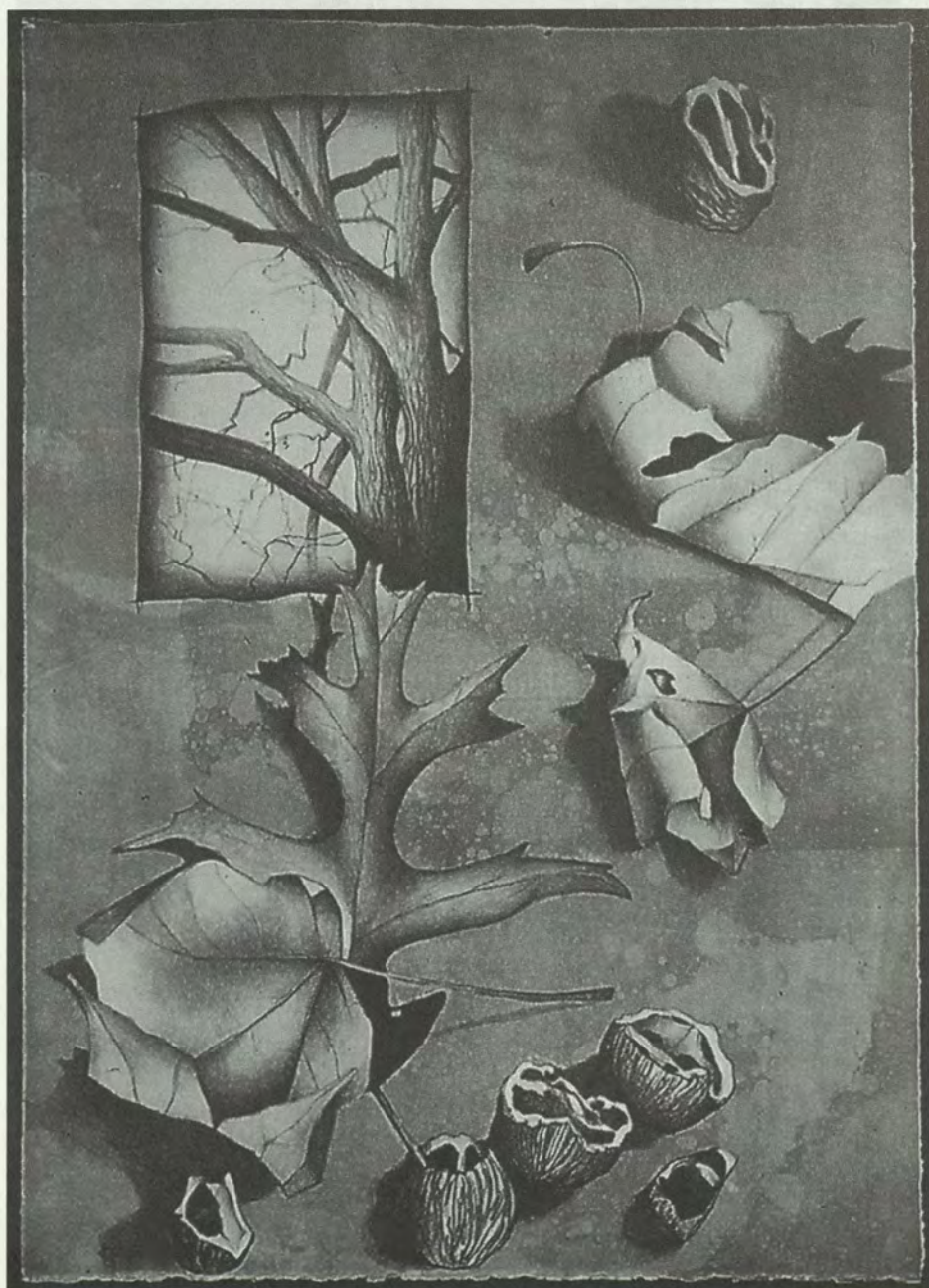
They were the quiet nights of my childhood where I would read and you would craft and my mother would sit with you and the radio ballgame.

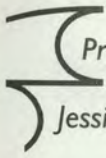
I watched those little planes line up on the shelves wherever they'd fit little planes carefully constructed not from kits very rarely from kits and I'd go on the few family outings we had to the airshows and museums and frequent visits to the hobby store for more paint more glue.

They were the nights the Yankees pitched to your high and batted at your steel nerves as you'd hoot and holler the house down and chuckle together at the announcer's corny comments constructed just for you.

You know I never had an interest in those stupid planes flying all around the house though some were neat with the faces painted on them. Just one more reason for you to hate me.

Only now do I realize you were stoning yourself into our lives while sucking on the cigarettes of desperation you brought with you we ate what you liked to eat and went where you chose to go and lived as you shaped our lives never seeing the danger of the dogfight the smoke of distant thunders only the image of a man tall and impressive courteous and cultured not the reality of a man bent on domination spinning wildly through our air in threaded warplanes.





## Pressure and Time

Jessica Fields

*A poor man's made out of muscle and blood,  
Muscle and blood, skin and bones,  
A mind that's weak and a back that's strong.*

Fields. I say my name, and I'm laying out my father on Christmas Eve, washing the coal dust from his face. The company men had dropped his body on the table, the one where we ate eggs and biscuits this morning, and will eat ham and potatoes tomorrow night. Momma brushes Daddy's hair from his forehead, and I imagine the unforgiving stone; the cascade of rock and water falling upon him, until he was in a sea of a thousand screams, a thousand pleas with God. But the darkness had silenced them all. I wish he had stayed in the pit, his body still lost in the depths, until one day they would find him, a diamond.

Fields. I say my name, and my hands are scrubbing the knotted pine floors, grating the skin on my knuckles like orange peels. Bristles massage the wood, but still it holds the blood, drinking it deep so that it is always there: a red shadow trail; two pairs of boots drug through the kitchen and into the sleeping room. Husband moves the still higher on the mountain; little Gillis hides the G-men's Model T in the holler. The girls make a game of throwing the badges in the stream. Killing was the easy part, like slaughtering pigs. Forgetting, like the burying, is always hard.

Fields. I say my name and I'm pinching the blooms off the tobacco. My back's screaming, but I sing with the radio, *ain't no grave gonna hold my body down, when I here that trumpet sound, I'm gonna get up out of that ground.* The babies hunt for green worms, squeezing them and laughing as the slime slides from their fingers. August comes and we're cutting the chest-high stalks at the base, to hang in the barn. They swing in the humidity like withered corpses, like bats, until the coolness of November. We strip the leaves in the cold, our hands blister-red and numb.

Fields. I say my name, and I'm back in Harlan County. Grandma is up early, her biscuits whispering warm butter and salt through the house. Grandpa stirs slowly, his ventilator humming and sighing. My bed is warm with faded quilts, worn to threadbare silk, and rag rugs soften the rough pine floors. The yard is flush with strutting chickens and peonies, but the world beyond is brittle with stone. My bones are there; I feel them made beautiful by the inward crush of the mountains.

Lord help me, the only difference between coal and diamonds is pressure and time.

# Contributors

genesis, volume xxxiv, spring 2003

**Carrie Rebecca Armellino** is a sophomore at Herron School of Art who plans to major in Fine Arts. She likes to draw, take photos, and make sculptures. She likes the colour orange and there is nothing you can do about it.

**Joshua Baratz** is a student working towards an undergraduate degree in creative writing at IUPUI, and he loves contributing to and enjoying poetry, visual art, and hip hop.

**Gaylie R. Cotton** writes: "You did not see me there because Cuba Gooding Jr. monopolized the screen time, but that was me flying that helicopter, darting in and out of trees to catch that little monkey with the cooties in the movie *Outbreak*. I saved that little town, thus saving the U.S., possibly the entire world. And I was right there in *The Color Purple* too. It was I who took on the embodiment of Miss Celie, put the root on Mister and warned him how me and my chil'ren gone set around and whoop his ass. And in *Rosewood*, the big bald black guy riding the horse 'Booker T', that really wasn't a man, but yours truly in disguise, coming out of the brushes of the woods poised with two six shooters to ward off the Klux's, delivering all those kids safely to the train with the two friendly white conductor brothers. And in the movies *The Bodyguard* and *The Preacher's Wife*... that really wasn't Whitney Houston belting out those songs like a seasoned diva, but I can understand how one might confuse us. I just opened up my spirit and sang! Hey my talent has no limit and my imagination knows no bounds."

**Jose Di Gregorio** is a junior at Herron School of Art.

**Jessica Fields** is an English major and a junior in the School of Liberal Arts.

**Heather Filson**, as people will learn from her writing, is a little bit of everything. She is just a girl discovering herself.

**Sarah Hanlon** is a senior at Herron School of Art.

**Kim Kite** is a returning student majoring in secondary English education. She enjoys being back in the classroom.

**Ray Koleski** wishes to express his appreciation to his instructors and student colleagues in Creative Writing. They have made writing a pleasurable experience.

**Lauren Kussro** is currently completing her BFA in Painting and Printmaking from the Herron School of Art in Indianapolis and will be graduating in May of 2003. She strongly feels that art is a powerful medium that can affect people emotionally and spiritually. One of her goals is to affect people in a positive way when they see her work.

**Andrew Malone** is contributing artwork to *genesis* for the first time.

**Melissa Morris** is contributing prose to *genesis* for the first time.

**Chizoma (Chi) Sherman** is currently a graduate non-degree student. She is the author of two chapbooks, *amative* and *beneath this skin*. Chi is caretaker and scratching post to a precocious calico, Sammy the WonderCat, and enjoys changing her mind every 6.3 minutes about where to attend graduate school.

**Michael Springer** has successfully, over the last few months, quit smoking and stopped cracking his knuckles. He currently spends most of his time figuring out what to do with his hands.

**Steve "Stony" Thompson** is presently a research scholar in his first semester at IUPUI in the School of Informatics working on an M.S. in Media Arts and Sciences.

**Rebecca Traugher** is contributing artwork to *genesis* for the first time.

**Michael Vance** was hatched from a thinktank endeavor gone horribly awry in 1980 on the sunny day that Robert ("Bobby") Kennedy was shot. His writing acts as a makeshift waiter to the hungry customers who need to eat biscuits and gravy but don't think they like sausage. The words should not only instill a deep-rooted need for meat in his patrons but also make them feel sort of disgusted or ashamed of the fact that they belong to a group who eats Big Macs for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Bon Appetit!

**Sarah Walker** is currently a student of Art at IUPUI. Her focus of study is Visual Communication. The piece included in this issue was completed for Photography I shortly after the birth of her child. She has since become the greatest contender in the juggling act she calls her life.

## An Invitation to IUPUI Writers and Artists

### General Guidelines

You may submit up to a total of ten works of art, poetry, or prose. Include a cover sheet listing the title(s) of your submission(s) and the word count for all prose, along with your name, address, phone number, e-mail address, and a brief biographical statement. Do not place your name on the manuscripts; *genesis* editors judge each piece anonymously.

E-mailed submissions will **not** be accepted.  
Upon publication, copyright reverts to the author.

Please mail or deliver your submissions to:

*genesis*  
C/o Department of English  
Cavanaugh Hall, Room 502-L  
425 University Blvd.  
Indianapolis, IN 46202

If you have any questions or comments, please e-mail the editors at:  
[genesis1@iupui.edu](mailto:genesis1@iupui.edu)

### Disclaimer

By submitting your work to *genesis* Literary Magazine, you affirm that you have read and agree to all our submission guidelines. *genesis* reserves the right to discard without notice those submissions that do not follow our guidelines.

### Writer's Guidelines

All genres must be typewritten and printed in 12 point Times New Roman Font. Fiction and nonfiction submissions must single-spaced and contain 2,500 words or fewer. All work must be submitted on **both** an IBM-compatible disk and hard copy.

### Artists' Guidelines

Please clearly label your artwork with the title(s) of the pieces. All mediums will be accepted but slides are preferred. Please include a self-addressed stamped envelope with your submission(s) so that artwork may be returned.





**works by:**

*Carrie Rebecca Aremellino*

*Joshua Baratz*

*Gaylie R. Cotton*

*Jose Di Gregorio*

*Jessica Fields*

*Heather Filson*

*Sarah Hanlon*

*Kim Kite*

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*Sarah Walker*

genesis: the origin or coming into being of anything; development or evolution; the process or mode of origin  
the ~ of a pattern