



genesis

Fall 2007

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## Cover: Best of Art

Megan Wells  
Triptych  
Digital Art

# Editors' Note

As fledgling editors, fresh from W280 training, we were honored and humbled to take on the mantle of responsibility for publishing IUPUI's premier art and literary magazine, *genesis*. We were privileged to review and discuss a diverse collection of writing and art for the Fall, 2007 issue of *genesis*, which we feel truly reflects the student body at IUPUI. This was a transitional year for the *genesis* staff, and we apologize for the delay in bringing the magazine to fruition. We would like to thank everyone who contributed to this issue for their patience, and encourage all of you to continue to submit your work to future publications.

# Acknowledgments

We would like to thank:

IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI  
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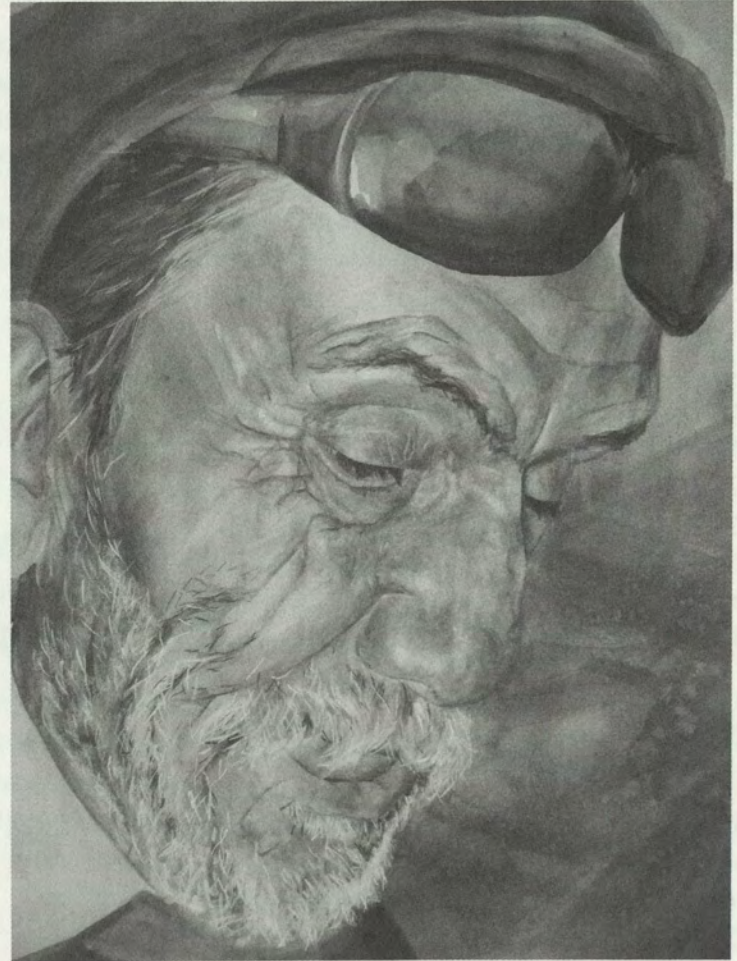
**genesis** the origin or coming into being of anything; development into being, especially by growth or evolution; the process or mode of origin <the ~ of a book>

# genesis

Literary and Art Magazine of  
Indiana University  
School of Liberal Arts  
at IUPUI

Volume 39 Issue 2

Fall 2007



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Taryn Lotak  
Gypsy  
15" x 11" Watercolor

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# Friends of *genesis*,

*genesis* has made great strides in recent years. In addition to establishing a course around the writing, editing and production of the magazine (W280 Literary Editing and Publishing), we have created a more dynamic magazine, which better showcases the art and writing within.

In W280, we have learned what we value in writing and art, as well as why we value it. We have learned the ethics and politics involved in choosing pieces for publication. We have learned how to work in committees with respect and open minds to select a variety of work that exemplifies the result of thoughtful craft.

But *genesis* would be nowhere without the support of its donors, contributors and readers. The students who produce this journal ask that you continue your support and would like to thank you for being a part of the past, present and future *genesis* family.

Gifts in support of *genesis* have allowed us to fund our "best of" prizes, and now we are looking further, especially as we bring *genesis* to the Internet at <[www.genesis.usg.iupui.edu](http://www.genesis.usg.iupui.edu)>, where student work can be shared more broadly. We invite you to join those listed here as "Friends of *genesis*" with your gift today.

Gift checks may be made payable to IU Foundation/*genesis* Fund and mailed to the IU Foundation, 950 North Meridian Street #250, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204. Or you may go to the IU School of Liberal Arts website, <http://www.liberalarts.iupui.edu>, and make your gift online by clicking the "Give Now" button.

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The Editors of *genesis*

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Nebraska. She sleeps as we cross the state line, head back and mouth open, looking that uncomfortable way one looks when sleeping in a car; diagonal and stuffed like a Raggedy Ann in a duffle bag. But she is sleeping, and as she sleeps, I think. The white lines of the road syncopate the silent rhythm of my thoughts. I let the road drive me back into places I can only visit when I am quiet, no matter if I am willing.

Life occurs. With you or without you, it bullies its way in. I am a stone in my psychiatrist's office, I am still and I stare beyond seeing into a blur of hot tears that fall without permission. I am a stone here. I sit so still that the pounding of my heart begins to gently rock me the way my mother used to do when I was small, as if somehow trying to comfort me from within. I reject this man, I am no one to him, he never remembers my name; I am a faceless, weeping stone. A flash of light brings my eyes to focus, another and then another - little globes, Tinkerbells flying around the room. So many that I consider they may be visible not only to me but to Dr. Riley and my therapist. But as quickly as they begin, they are gone. I see things a lot. More than I would like to admit seeing anything that I know is not there. I sound crazy. Dr. Riley asks me why I think I am depressed, and I laugh in his little prune of a face. What kind of question is that? How do you know you've slammed your finger in a car door? What an ass. He writes another prescription and asks me to begin to graph my days according to the way I am feeling, equating one to el shit-o and ten for muy grande bien/I just got a pony for my birthday. I would settle for a five where I feel like a constant and steady drip of water.

Drip, drip, drip, drip. Nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing.

I stare through Dr. Riley. I set him on fire. I want him to choke on his "small man with a white ring of hair in a smart sweater; talk to the crazy girl in a quiet tone so she doesn't completely freak out while you're here," condescension. As I vaporize the doctor, I imagine myself suspended in a bowl of Jell-O, I don't even have to close my eyes, I just see it. Me. Fully clothed in jeans and a tee shirt, socks and shoes; small and vertical, a snow-angel separate in the middle of dessert.

The drugs will not work. I can tell you this with absolute certainty because that is what happened, they did not work. Wilco sings "Sunken Treasure" as I reach out into the waves of new evening air through the sunroof. The sky expands around us as the smell of dirt and wet pavement fill the car. The sun will be down soon and I am looking forward to night and the stars that fill the black like so many rows of celestial corn. There is no stopping me today; I am the road, I am the road. There is a gravitational pull towards the west for Jennifer and me. We made it once, back when we hated ourselves and tolerated each other at best. We managed to stay in Boulder for the year when Hale Bopp sailed glorious through the night sky. Our time ended before the comet finished its divine voyage, and we each trickled back to the heartland separately. There was no contact between us for years. I find those years appalling today; they break my heart when I allow myself to look back on them. Those years were a battle for grace but I never knew it then.

For me, my past has always been elusive. I rely on my journals to keep much of my early adulthood readily available, but there are incredible holes in them almost as devastating as the holes in my memory they are there to replace. I am a lazy jour-

nal keeper with beyond difficult handwriting and my own illogical shorthand to decipher. I rarely bother to date an entry and if it is dated, nine times out of ten there will be no year. I have taken journaling to a new, highly frustrating level. I remember very little of my childhood and only a bit more of my adolescence, and this is only because there are friends around me who tell me stories that sometimes jog my memory. I heard someone talk about having a Swiss cheese brain once; I think it was in a movie. That is what I have, a Swiss cheese brain. My cellular memory has always been strong, like beach glass, so many bad habits worn into me over these close to thirty years that now, on my bad days, I can feel the demons pulling at me, just like the west coast pulls at my soul.

This pilgrimage towards what is within Jennifer and me comes for me at a time that I have no good way of explaining to you because I am confused, and my mind is unable to comprehend much of the outside world. It is too occupied with my inside to be bothered with small talk and responsibility; it has no time for congeniality. Due west is our true north and there is no choice but to go towards it when the chance presents itself, which it has. Jennifer is a teacher and has her summer to do with as she pleases. I am a waitress and a landscaper who has just inherited a small amount of money from my dead grandfather. He was the last one I had, gone on Halloween. His wife, my beloved, loudmouthed, chain-smoking, card playing, General Hospital watching, Polish grandmother was the first to leave me.



Mary Greenwood  
Skin Problem

10" x 20" Pencil and Charcoal on Paper

Lung cancer. I never knew until it was too late. She wouldn't let my Father tell me, and when I called near the end (although I didn't know it was near the end), she told me she couldn't talk to me right now and hung up. I was twenty one, it pissed me off, and I didn't call back. We buried her on Christmas day, and then my dad and I went to a movie; there was nothing else to do. I can still hear her say my name in my head. She took with her the recipe for perogie that I have tried and tried to recreate; they

are not the same.

I drive and breathe. I feel nothing but the seat beneath my ass and the steering wheel in my hand and the echo of nothing that has taken me over inside, and I want to cry but I cannot. I want to scream, but my voice is silent. I want someone to please love me, please fill me with something other than this void of solitude and sadness. Please take it from me, please God take it. But no one comes. God is busy and I am empty and this is all I have, my emptiness. And so I keep going. Amy Corriea sings "Life

is Beautiful." I weep.

Music is my drawing salve it affords me the luxury of emotion. I wrap myself in the lyrics tight like a newborn in an envelope of notes and melody. Jennifer is my conduit, allowing me to be alone without being alone in the literal sense. She sleeps, I drive, I sleep, she drives until she needs me to read a map. I get pissed off because she wakes me up to tell her where she is. I get pissed off because she has a Masters degree and she

can't read a fucking map. I get pissed off because I want to be alone, but I am too afraid to be alone and so I compromise. To be with her is to be alone, and yet to be with someone who understands the alone I have no choice but to be. We, she and I, are wounded in the same place and so our understanding is delicate but demanding. It assumes a connection between us that we struggle to understand. It will be years from now before we crack our code, only to be thrown off again by new dynamics and fresh animosity. But for now, I drive. I drive past the creepy illuminated crosses and the cornrows and into the night.

Jennifer's angular body oscillates towards me in the gray leather seat. As a form, a body, she takes shape without offense; she is all appendages, hair and freckles. Her skin has the reddish brown tan that red heads get when they can actually tan — like a beautiful Boston baked bean. Her face is round with smooth curves, her features complimentary but quiet and unassuming, except for her eyes. Jennifer's eyes are whatever color blue she is feeling; they are stunning. I have always thought she looks like a bird. When she opens her eyes, I can feel them, and so I look to my right. "I have to pee," she says. "You're awake — I do too." "Where are we?" "Nebraska," I say, as she begins to straighten herself out from the awkward ball that her five-foot-seven frame had maneuvered itself into while she slept. Yawning, she pushes herself forward on her hands, lifting her butt up off of the seat, and stretches towards the windshield. She looks out into the black, "Oh." She plops herself back down. "Well, I still need to pee." I do not respond to this. I don't feel the need to. I am in conservation mode. My tolerance for redundant conversation is nonexistent and Jennifer recognizes this. However, the fact remains that both of us need to go to the bathroom, and we don't seem to be anywhere near the middle of somewhere other than nowhere so I pull over onto the shoulder. Neither of us is above relieving ourselves in the beautiful out of doors; we are practical. We are low maintenance. Neither of us wear make-up or require a hair dryer; we are situ-

ationally pliable and we like this about one another. We like all similarities we share because it makes us feel closer, stronger; as if the more we are alike, the less we feel alone in the world; the way I imagine twins or extremely close siblings feel — there is safety in numbers. Our hearts cling to one another the way a dead leaf clings to a tree branch in the middle of February. If it were not for that, we would have nothing to cling to but our own pain. There is no toilet paper in the car, only the bright yellow napkins left over from our last stop at Wendy's, which I grab as we both open the car doors and step out into the humidity that is Nebraska in July. It is silent but for our shoes waking the gravel. Even the crickets are asleep.

I wake to find us in Colorado. I had been unsuccessfully hiding my face under my blanket from the daylight for an unknown amount of time, falling in and out of lucid sleep, until now. The heat of the sun was beginning to work against the oxygen under the cotton. The hot smell of fabric softener, although comforting, was trying to suffocate me, and so like a reasonable person wanting to breathe, I was forced out of my mostly uncomfortable cubby. Through the small amount of space between my opening eyelids, my eyes could make out the fuzzy, distant mountains. For the first time in a very long time, I felt something resembling joy in my chest. Jennifer looked at me. "Do you see them? I didn't want to wake you — but I have been so excited." We beam in unison. We met nearly ten years ago when I took her place answering the phones at a pizza delivery joint — if I called it a restaurant, I would be lying. The majority of our business was catering to drunken college students. We closed at 3 AM., and there was nothing so sweet as answering the phone at 3:01 to say, "Thank you for calling. Sorry, we're closed." Jennifer had been promoted to topper, which meant she was responsible for topping each pizza as well as placing said pizza onto the oven's conveyor that would turn the raw pizza pie into a golden and bubbly piece of cardboard. If you are drunk or broke, cardboard will suffice.



Apparently, the multitudes were in one, if not both of these categories. We were a busy place. I wouldn't say we became friends instantly; Jennifer had become protective of the unsavory position of "phone bitch." I was new; I was a girl, (not a requirement for phone bitch position, we had many a man take our sacred receiver over the years.) And, as she would tell it, I was small, I was blonde, and I had big boobs. To make it worse, I was friendly. I was busting in on her turf. I was aware of the potential that we might not get along -- especially in a job like this, when the person I replaced was still there, promoted or not. The fact that she was a girl made me extremely wary. I did my best to show her that I wasn't trying to replace her. By the end of the first night, each of us had decided that the other was okay. The truth was that I didn't really have any close friends anymore. The two girls I had considered my best friends from high school had gone off into their lives; I was still standing in the same spot. At twenty years old, I had, from what I could see, accomplished nothing. Instead of going to college (which to be completely honest wasn't really an option for me, considering I had barely graduated from high school), I flailed around. I took dead-end jobs and had no idea what it meant to be, or how it should feel to be, an adult. All I really understood was that I wanted to be on my own. Other than that, I had no focus, no drive or ambition. But more than anything, I had no plan for my future. When I took the job at the pizza place, I was really looking for an anchor. I was looking for someone to take on the world with. I thought that if I just had someone, proof that I was not alone, everything else would fall into place. If someone would have asked me back then if I thought Jennifer was going to be the one I would conquer the world with, I would have told them "no" or "maybe, but I doubt it." Today she sits next to me as we drive towards something we hope will set us free. As if magically, once we hit the great western sky with all its stars, one of them will bless us with the key to unlock the answers to every secret we have ever kept from ourselves.

## Moonglow

Clint Smith

Into the pre-harvest evening,  
palm to palm, you and I;  
along the glimmer-thin stream, into waist high  
primrose—the tree-cloaked meadow, untamed grass cleaving

a path, an unscripted incision for us as we wade  
headlong into the post-storm, limb-strewn glade.

Later: midnight spills its sackcloth tide  
over you, my moonglow muse, your ivy-eyed

twinkle in synch with the sidereal blinking beat  
above. Share your cesarean secret with me—

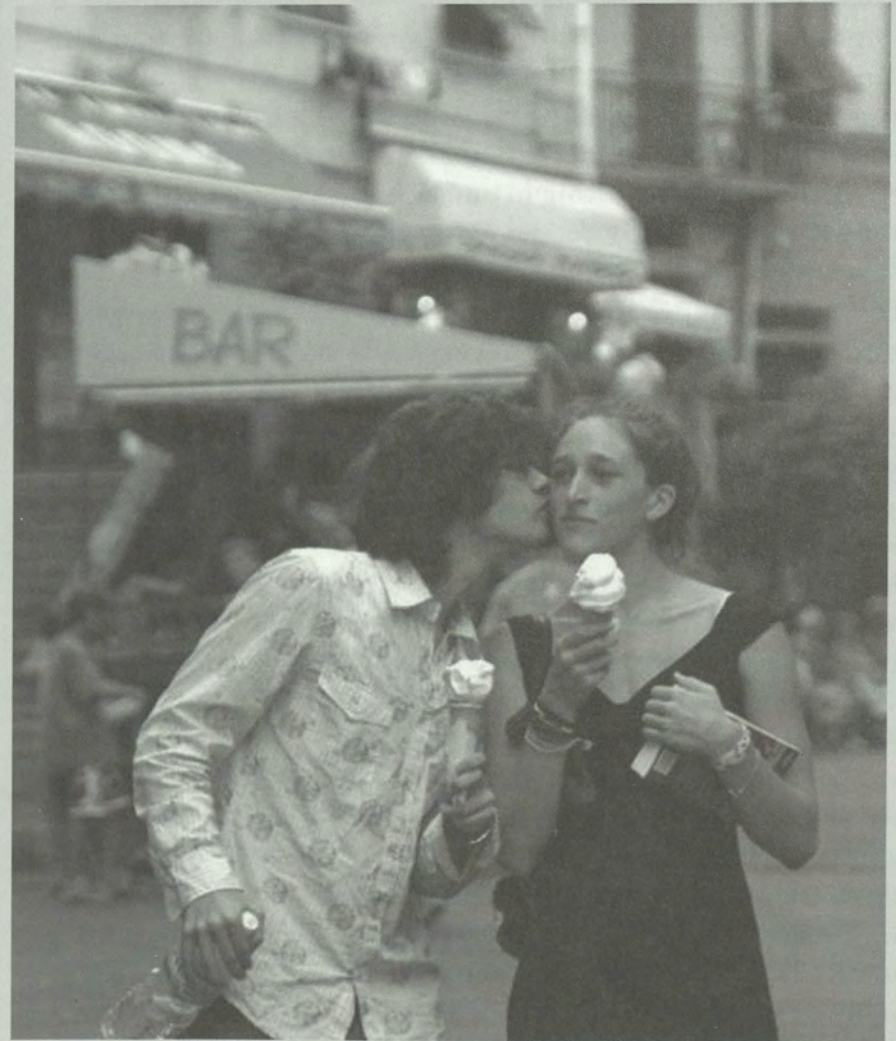
the reaping season severance of our umbilical conscience; speak  
the autumnal tongue. Mercury-glistened lips  
coax a cricket hush, a candle-flicker whisper which  
scatters the veil of moth-eaten gossamer and cloud-streaks

the cyclopean stare of the copper corona:  
sole witness to our friendship's eclipse  
as we kneel—palm to palm—to partake in this,  
our nightshade, our belladonna.

# Before Everything Got So Complicated

Catherine Coppage

I rub my hand across  
the velour of the seat.  
Remembering  
sitting here with you  
in the dark. Your arm  
heavy and warm  
with possibility around  
my shoulders  
like so many scarves.  
The smell of perfume  
in winter among the wool  
and the heat  
from your body  
acting as conduit  
to my wobbly legs,  
like a new horse in the hay.  
My breaths begin in  
the lowest, most quiet places.  
They whisper,  
wait their turn, each one  
the line of a poem written  
for you.



---

Heidi Herbst

The Kiss

7" x 5" Photograph

## Things I remember

Catherine Coppage

Your bathrobe.

The unfolded  
paperclips that you used  
to clean out your ears,  
full of wax, and discarded  
on the corner of your desk.

Your beard.

The way you would fart  
in the car on long trips  
and ignore it.

The guttural way  
you had of clearing  
your throat. Your heavy  
hiking boots with the red laces.

The time you woke me  
at four in the morning  
to watch the space shuttle take off.

I don't remember us touching.

There were instead: nights  
with my mother and the hum  
of our car outside a house  
that was not our own;  
watching your truck  
sleep.

## I Need It Like You Need Jesus

Michael D. Edwards

Poetry cannot be trapped  
in an empty Ball jar

like some common firefly,  
pulsing its sexy spark

—that insect star of Bethlehem—  
on a fading August night.

It is far too clever to be contained  
by the likes of you, who fell

so easily into criticism, smiling  
a crooked smile. A book

of literary theory in one hand,  
a butterfly net in the other.

## Metallurgy & Magnetism

Matthew Cicci

I need to understand the science of magnets;  
the way things remain close.  
Such alchemy could be practical  
considering our metallic and polarized skin:

The way we conduct cold from our  
bitter, and chilly environs;  
The way we feign impervious  
to injuries that would stagger pink flesh;  
The robotic manner in which we consume days,  
nights, and those monotonous hours in-between.

Yes, the science of magnets,  
a noble pursuit,  
to see you in all your rusted depression  
once more.

And to show you my tarnished brass eyes,  
while the copper taste of fear rises to our tongues.  
Again halting our still human hands  
from mining mountains of memories  
in pursuit of silver linings or a truly  
golden silence.

## Morning in November

Michael D. Edwards

The grass  
is a brilliant  
silver-green.  
Frosted,  
frozen  
for the first  
time.

This moment  
is bottled  
winter. Cold  
and deliberate.

Oh,

It reminds  
me  
of you.



Anthony Schroeder  
Tree  
35 mm Slide

culture and customs of china attract you

Ashley Mack

all i know about you is general tso's  
and veggie fried rice  
that's all i ever order

once or twice a week i sit  
on this cracked blue vinyl  
seat reading the *star*

buddha serenely  
looking at me from his smooth  
bronze wallpaper seat

a little girl my  
godson's age watches me with  
brown doe-eyed wonder

twirling a jet black  
pigtail around her golden  
brown index finger

in loud child whispers she says something  
to the gray haired lady behind the counter  
their words are melody to me

i can't help but stare now  
wonder what brings her here  
if she's playing hooky from preschool

or has she always been  
there too small for me to see  
behind the counter

he wears nice shoes

Catherine Coppage

sometimes when we speak  
my thoughts  
stick between my heart  
and throat  
finding no way out  
but dissolve.

# The Trees of Podolyantsi

Katie Fleetwood

Best of Non-Fiction

I met Leonid Stadnyk in October when the Ukrainian winds numbed my hands, when the leaves littered the ground and cracked under my feet. Leonid lived in Podolyantsi, a village filled with crumbling houses and unpaved streets. It sat amid wheat fields, about 200 kilometers from the noise of Kiev, silent and abandoned. Most of the village's young denizens had since traded their rural lives for the promise of wealth and security, moving instead to the bustling cities of Odessa or Kiev. Its older residents had stayed behind to build homes that needed building, to cook food that needed cooking. Driving into Podolyantsi, I saw a white-haired man herding cows, his arthritic hands wrapped around a walking stick. Beside him, a bent over woman shouldered a bucket, water sloshing onto her wool dress as she walked down the lane. Our car sputtered past them, tripping over the lethal potholes; they turned to stare. I'm sure they assumed we were here to see Leonid—after all, visitors only came to Podolyantsi for one reason: to see the World's Tallest Man.

My sister, Andrea, and I had traveled to Ukraine to bring medical supplies to some homeless shelters in Lutsk and Kiev. When Sergei, a mutual friend of ours and Leonid's, heard we were coming, he'd asked Andrea, a nurse, to bring medicine for Leonid as well. The steroids she carried in her white, canvas sack would alter the man's pituitary gland and stop the thirty-three-year-old, 8'4" Ukrainian from growing any taller.

When we pulled up to his brick house with its blue window frames, I saw his hands for the first time as he leaned against the gate, scratching his head. I'd known he was going to be tall—"The World's Tallest Man" had certainly implied that—but I hadn't really thought about how big his hands would be. Even

from a distance, I could see the outline of each finger. I watched him lower his fists, beginning to tap his thumbs against the gate. The gate seemed to tremble from the contact.

I jumped out of the car, met with an overwhelming desire to touch him, to see if he was real.

Leonid waved as we walked toward him, two fleshy palms facing me. He reached out to shake my hand, and his fingers wrapped firmly around mine. I wanted to make eye contact, to smile at him, but my eyes were glued to his hands. He moved on and greeted my sister, but I stood beside her, gawking at him, my mouth hanging open.

He invited us inside. Sergei went first, then Andrea, and I trailed behind. My sister turned, and I mouthed "Wow." She nodded.

Before we'd arrived, Sergei had told us not to take photographs of him.

"He already feels like a freak show," he'd said. "People gawk at him all the time—the Japanese journalists are especially fascinated by him."

As I walked toward the house, I stifled a laugh when I remembered this. A cardboard cutout of a waving Japanese man in a black suit covered the front window.

I followed my sister into a dark room with Oriental rugs pinned on the walls and lace curtains shielding the windows. Sergei sat at the table, Leonid across from him. One chair remained. Andrea and I squeezed into it together, wedged side by side in the threadbare seat across from Leonid's mother. She was barely over five foot.

I felt surprised that Leonid's mother was so small. At

5'3", I sometimes felt that I might have qualified as "The World's Shortest Woman," but here she was, a diminutive figure about the same height as me, who had given birth to a man four feet taller than she. I knew a boy in high school who'd been 6'4" and 220 pounds, and I remember his sister had asked their mother, "Can you believe Henry came from you?" I sort of wanted to ask Leonid's mother the same question.

But she stared at us, her dark eyes roving over Andrea and me. I felt my kneecaps start to shake under her inspection. After what seemed like an eternity, she leaned toward Sergei, tracing her finger along the ribbing in her skirt as she spoke. In the years I'd studied French, I'd only ever met a few French-speaking Germans, but I could have sworn Leonid's mother was speaking the maternal language of Proust and Verlaine, adding those guttural Germanic grunts to her words.

"What language is she speaking?" I asked Sergei.

"Ukrainian," he replied.

Andrea snorted. "Welcome to Ukraine."

I watched the old woman's lips form words. I thought I heard *rappelle* and *grenier*. My brain ached as it tried to make sense of what she was saying.

Sergei turned to Andrea and said, "She's asking about the medicine."

Andrea handed over the sack, and Leonid grabbed it. He pulled out the small bottle of pills and turned them over in his hands, eyeing the label. "Thank you," he said in labored English.

Andrea nodded. I wanted to laugh at her. She was so obviously trying to be polite, but while she'd clamped her mouth closed, her eyes still bulged in their sockets.

Probably noting her stunned expression, Sergei steered the conversation away from any undignified "So 8'4, huh?" comments, asking Leonid instead to tell us about his disability. Leonid sighed and raked his fingers through his hair. Words crept from his mouth, slowly at first, then picking up speed and tumbling out, until his soft, deep voice had risen to an agitated growl. I

loved that sound—the deep whining straight from the pit of his stomach.

As I listened, I saw a book shoved between the worn cushions of my chair. I pulled it out, and while I couldn't read the title, the dog-eared cover depicted a cowboy atop a horse, gripping a pistol in his hand. I looked to Leonid, then back to the cowboy.

I imagined Leonid losing himself in a world of outlaws and shoot-outs, cowboys and saloons. I saw him curling his long fingers around the novel, mentally riding through North Dakota or Wyoming, all the while forced to stay in an isolated village in Ukraine.

"Katya?"

I looked up. Sergei and Leonid both had their eyes fixed on me.

I gulped. "Yes?"

"Leonid's asking if you're in school," Sergei said.

"Yes," I replied, "yes, I am. I go to school in downtown Indianapolis, Indiana." I thought about mentioning I was a French major—that I loved French, dreamed in French, but after Sergei translated, Leonid looked away. His massive hand cupped his chin.

Cupped.

In middle school, a woman had come to my class. She'd taught a seminar called CPR + (Creating Positive Relationships + God), another name for "Sex Ed." Somewhere between receiving our first tampons and reciting the mantra "The only safe sex is abstinence," she'd held up a white padded bra and said, "Today we'll learn about cup sizes."

Margaret had sat beside me. My mother hadn't liked her, said she knew too much. Margaret had leaned over and whispered, "All you need to know about cup sizes is this: you want to be a C. It's exactly the right size for a man's hand."

"But men have different sized hands," I'd said.

"Doesn't matter. It's like a scarf; one size fits all."

But Leonid's hands? Here was one man who needed a

little something more than a C. I looked at Leonid—thirty-three and unmarried. There probably weren't many Dolly Partons and Pamela Andersons living in Podolyantsi.

I was still considering his groping deficiency when Andrea whispered, "I wonder how big his poop is."

Andrea's college professors had always told her no matter how long she'd been a nurse, no matter how high she climbed the nursing ladder she should remember she'd always be a poop cleaner-upper. So began her fascination with poop.

"Because the bigger the man, the more he eats and the more he...well, you know," she continued with a conspiratorial wink.

I nodded, as our eyes moved to his belly.

I looked around the kitchen, from the cauldron-like pot sitting atop the stove to the five loaves of bread spread across the table.

"I mean, have you ever seen a man poop?" she asked.

"No," I whispered.

"Well, men poop big. Long, long coils," she said, crossing her arms over her chest, taking her "nothing's sacred" stance. "I bet he has to dig a new outhouse every week." She laughed, entertained by her insight. I tried to hold my own laughter back, but once she snorted, I lost myself to a fit of giggles.

Leonid looked over in our direction. He let out a sigh, his chest falling as the air rushed out, and immediately, my stomach clenched. I tried to turn the giggles into coughs, but it was too late. The damage was already done; Leonid had seen us.

I elbowed Andrea, whispering. "Stop."

"What?" she demanded, glaring at me. "You were thinking the same thing."

"Was not."

"I wasn't laughing by myself."

"So?"

"Takes two to tango."

I ignored her. Cup sizes and poop weren't the same thing

anyway.

I looked over to Leonid again. Eyes fixed on the table, his fingers traced patterns into the wood. I silently begged him to look up; I wanted him to see that we weren't laughing, that we weren't making fun of him.

With his head still bent, Leonid spoke again, his words barely more than a whisper.

"Leonid says he's lived with his mother his whole life," Sergei said. "She's his best friend."

Leonid nodded as Sergei translated. He pushed his chair back, pulled himself up, his head brushing against the ceiling. He



Sondra Hansen

Ten Hands, Ten Feet

"21 x 21" Graphite on Paper

walked over to his mother, eyes trained on her. His shoes pounded against the wooden floor. He placed his hand on her shoulder,



and the gray-headed woman looked up at her son, a smile on her lips. She squeezed his hand, and they grinned at one another as Sergei spoke to them in his rapid Ukrainian.

He'd lived with his mother his whole life.

I pictured that mother sitting beside a fifteen year old Leonid, a boy who'd once been smaller than his classmates, but suddenly had found himself growing taller and taller, until he towered over the others. She'd probably ruffled his hair with her short, fat fingers. I wondered if she'd given him one of those "What makes you different makes you special" speeches. I'd gotten that speech about my out-of-control curls. The boys at school used to call me Waffle Head, and every day of my middle school career, I'd cried over my little blonde afro. My mom had stood beside my bed as I wailed into my pillow, and she'd given me my own less-than-helpful rendition of the speech. Only hers was more of the "Sorry for the bad genes, sucker" variety.

I watched Leonid stand beside his mother; I thought of that big sigh, that flicker of pain in his eyes. Cliché as it would be, I wished I knew how to say, "What makes you different makes you special" in Ukrainian.

"If we're going to make it to Lutsk by supertime, we need to get going." Sergei said, standing.

Leonid whispered something to Sergei who looked toward us and nodded. "Leonid would like you to take a photo with him—as a thanks for the medication."

I looked up, taken aback. After we'd laughed?

"Really?" I asked.

Sergei nodded, pointing to Leonid. "Get in the picture."

I thought of all the people Leonid had probably had his picture taken with: Ukrainian President, Viktor Yushchenko, news reporters from all over the world, leggy Ukrainian models and movie stars. Soon, my name would be added to that list.

Sergei pulled his camera out of his pocket and I hurried over to the 440-pound man.

Standing beside him, I got a pretty good view of his crotch

and not much else. I looked up and caught him looking down at me with a furrowed brow—probably surprised people as short as me existed. But when I looked into his eyes, I saw sadness.

I knew that look. I'd seen it in a mirror, in the eyes of a frustrated eleven year old who'd holed herself in a middle school bathroom as a choir of high-pitched prepubescent voices screamed "Waffle Head" from outside the door.

Suddenly, I didn't feel so well.

I thought of Leonid looking at me as I laughed in his kitchen; I thought of how his hands were too big to cup women's breasts, how he probably pooped foot-long coils of fecal matter. I thought of him sitting motionless in a chair as photographers paraded through his home, snapping photos of him, his mother, his bedroom.

"Oh Leonid," I sighed.

He looked down at me, and I clamped my mouth shut. I'd forgotten names didn't need translation.

Sergei positioned his camera, preparing for the photo. Leonid clasped his hands in front of his waist. I wasn't sure what to do with mine so slipped them into my coat pockets. Sergei snapped the photo—one of those awkward shots where the photo's subjects stand side by side, looking uncomfortable, as though time and space is the only thing that connects them. Leonid let out a long, weary sigh. I wanted to look into his eyes, see what he was thinking, but I already knew what I'd see there: that same overwhelming sadness.

Sergei lowered the camera, nodding in approval. Leonid moved to the door, ducked through it, and we followed behind. He stopped at the gate and rested his chin in his palm.

As I walked past, I waved at him. A tiny smile lifted the corners of his mouth.

"Please understand that I'm sorry," I whispered.

I knew he wouldn't understand, couldn't understand me, but I still felt disappointed when he looked away.

I hopped into the car and pulled my bag out from under

the seat. I found my notebook, and wrote inside, “Leonid, I can do nothing for you but this: I will respect you. You probably wouldn’t believe me if I told you that—I haven’t done a great job so far.”

Sergei twisted the key in the ignition, and the engine roared to a start. We drove down Leonid’s lane, out of his village. I turned to stare at Leonid from the back window. He stood behind his gate, watching our car carry us to another village, another city, eventually another country. And Leonid stood there, barricaded within the walls of that gate, on two legs that had been created to carry him from place to place. Instead, they planted him, like two deeply rooted trees, in Podolyantsi.

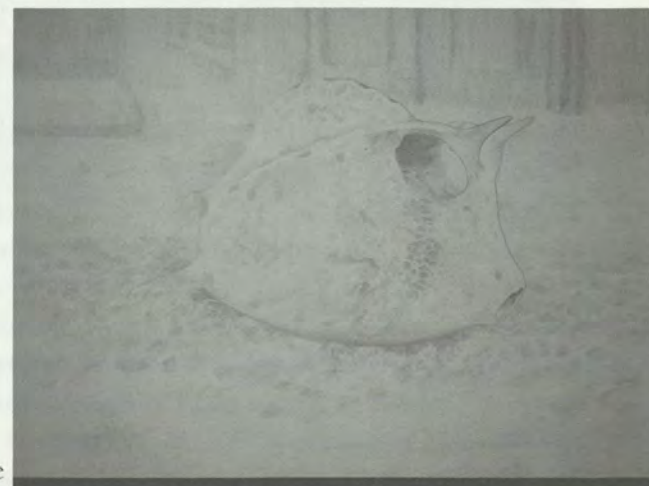


Heidi Herbst  
Last Sunset  
7" x 5" Photograph

## Action Figures

Jacob Sunderlin

The day they found two bodies in Apartment 4G, my hair was tangled up in the sand the color of sand under the boardwalk & Paul—who scored a really decent half-sack of primo—spun a rickety Colt Revolver on a finger at a wild pace such that the vibrations begat (I thought) the waves, all iridescent & bubbly-breathing, & the salty stink haze glazed up over the water in transcendence to the skywalk. I fingered the crust of algae on the support beams w/ a dirty toe—up above, the guess-your-weight yak-woman hawker, beside the puppet-hut, gargled sugar-cake thru a straw & the band played the night the lights went out in Georgia, when a greasy slick of oil hovering on the surface of the ocean slime exploded in crayola waves & a few flaky chunks of planked atlantic whitefish w/ bullet-wound thru both eyes floated into the space between the sea & land & Paul said this is what it means to say we’re not children anymore.



Joe Bieschke  
Shell  
18" x 24" Graphite

## Femured Dreams

Clint Smith

The intensest light of reason and revelation  
combined, can not shed such blazonings upon  
the deeper truths of man, as will sometimes  
proceed from his own profoundest gloom.

—Herman Melville, *Pierre: or, The Ambiguities, Book IX.* (1852)

The nimbostratus moth wings out west  
have become the undulating Rorschach test  
I've expected for months. It's hard to tell where it all  
begins—where that exam ends. I know Fall

like dreamers know the ocean floor  
peace which accompanies the aquamarine torpor  
of the Kraken's embrace—like the stray dog  
seeks the burlap security in a hollow log

after a morning of fruitless looting. The hound knows:  
ear-cocked with the hope of a far out howl; nose  
to the ground as he cuts across the dead bladed plain  
of this frost peppered farm. He returns to the remains

of his hermetic campsite hidden in a wooded nook,  
and to the comfort of that aforementioned oak.  
Our pup props his jaw upon his paws and joins the dreamers  
—drifting off beside the green-glow warmth of his fire made of femurs.



Ashley Richardson  
Guardian

7" x 9" Digital Photograph

## La Naissance et la Mort de la Mer

Katie Fleetwood

Un matin,  
j'ai vu la Mer.  
Elle était belle, bleue  
comme les yeux des bébés.  
Chaque matin,  
la Mer se met au monde  
encore une fois.  
Elle essaie de recommencer sa vie.  
Les vagues,  
oui, les vagues...  
elles se dandinent vers le sable.  
Elles veulent  
manger les petits grains, chauffés  
par le Soleil étincelant.

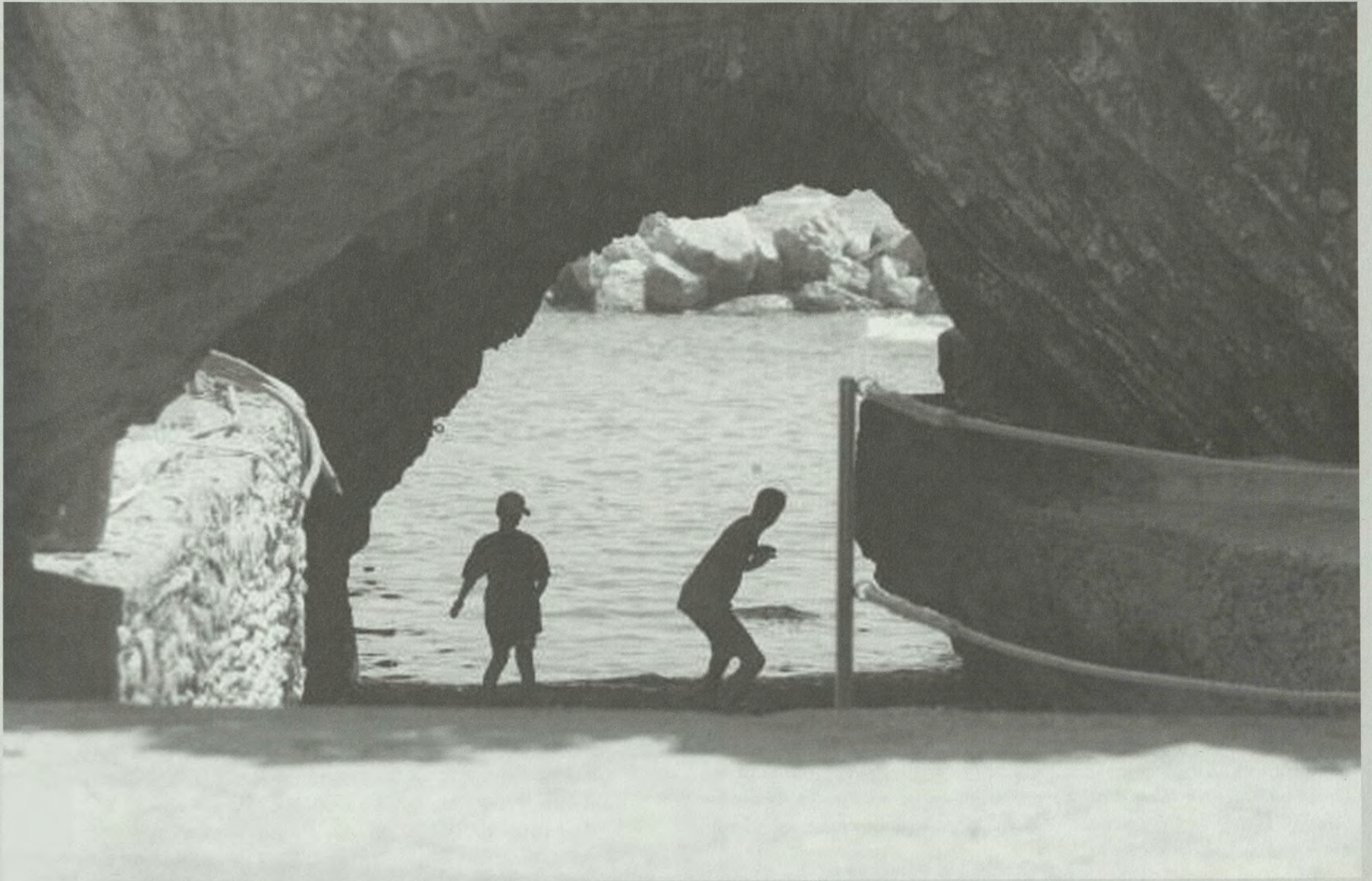
Un soir,  
j'ai vu la mer.  
Elle était triste, noire  
comme les visages des cadavres.  
Le soir  
la Mer met fin à ses efforts.  
Elle oublie de chercher la plage.  
Les vagues,  
oh, les vagues...  
elles ont abandonné le sable.  
Elles se reculent lentement  
vers l'empire ténébreux de la Lune.

## The Birth and the Death of the Sea

(translation)

One morning,  
I saw the Sea.  
She was beautiful, blue  
like the eyes of babies.  
Every morning,  
the Sea gives birth to herself  
once again.  
She tries to start her life anew.  
The waves,  
yes, the waves...  
they tottle towards the sand.  
They hunger  
for the little grains, heated  
in the blazing Sunlight.

One night,  
I saw the sea.  
She was sad, black  
like the faces of corpses.  
At night,  
the Sea puts an end to her efforts.  
She forgets to seek out the beach.  
The waves,  
oh, the waves...  
They've abandoned the sand.  
They slowly recoil  
toward the mysterious realm of the moon.



Heidi Herbst  
Riviera Rock Skippers  
5" x 7" Photograph

# Building and Nurturing Relationships

Fiction

Debbie McDougal

So I was toggling every which way on my computer - reading my e-mail one minute, job-hunting the next, checking out the personals. I was really on it, you know? I was in a groove - the "zone." I had become "one" with the DSL. It was a beautiful moment.

Then... in a single keystroke, my life took a spiral leap down the john.

My trigger-happy fingers had just transmitted a job resume' through the Singles-Scene-dot-com channels to someone known only as "Too Sexy for *Your Shirt, Baby*."

Not one to do anything half-baked, I then watched helplessly as the Triple-A Temp Agency received an e-mail attachment that turned out to be a page from my off-line dream journal - a somewhat longwinded narrative about scuba-diving in a giant vat of Cool Whip with Sigourney Weaver. I'm convinced I was still comatose when I wrote it. I certainly wished I was dead when I sent it. This, of course, was accompanied by a well-drafted cover letter, in which I outlined my strengths with catchy words like "sober," "organized" and "perfectionist."

"Too Sexy for *Your Shirt, Baby*" proved to be a harmless type - at least on paper. Propelled by utter panic, since this guy now had my *very real* name and contact information, I looked more closely at his profile. His photo was one of those self portraits taken in a too-well-lit bathroom in front of a small medicine cabinet mirror. His nose was disproportionately large, owing to its proximity to the camera lens. I counted ten nostril hairs. His bug eyes glared at me from behind Coke-bottle bifocals. Obviously, he was "too sexy for *his shirt*," seeing as his wardrobe for the photo shoot consisted of one white tank top, a la' Hanes.

In his narrative, "Too Sexy..." claimed to be "hot" for me, though I could have been anyone reading it. Flattering as this was, modesty prevailed, and I contacted the phone company to have my number changed.

If he decided to drop by for a visit (since my address was also on the resume'), I could say that the "sex kitten" he was "seeking" moved out, coincidentally, just last night. Dang. And no, I myself was *not* available because I lived with my Ever-Lovin' Knuckle-Druggin' Hunk o' Burnin' Love who, at this moment, was on his way home from a knife and gun show at the fairgrounds. But thanks just the same. 'Best of luck in your search.

For good measure, I planned to change the labels on my apartment mailbox to "Mr. & Mrs. Brutus Gusto." That sounded intimidating enough. I'd explain things to the mail carrier who, I'm sure, runs into these situations all the time.

Although it also occurred to me that this guy might become a bona fide stalker, I took comfort in the notion that his glasses weren't merely a cosmetic enhancement. There was considerable hope that he'd have a hard time distinguishing me from a real kitten if he turned pathological.

As for the Triple-A Temp Agency, I followed up my e-mail with a phone call, and explained that I was taking a creative writing class, and my submissions must have crossed in cyberspace. Despite this reasonable explanation, I never got a job assignment from them.

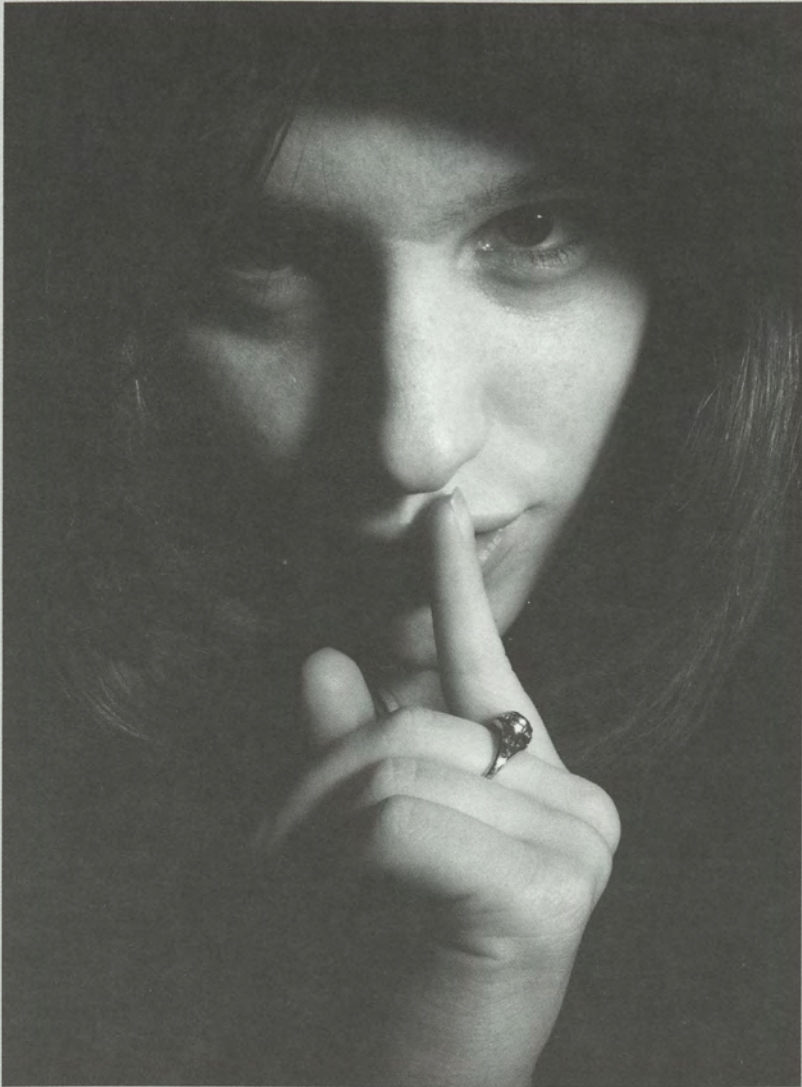
Several weeks after my mishap, an envelope appeared in my mailbox -- with no return address. Inside was the following note:

*I tried to call you after receiving your rather voluminous resume'. I must say, I'm not used to getting quite so much information before we've had a chance to even meet. At any rate, since your number had been changed and was, subsequently unlisted, I thought I'd just send off a little note to thank you for your interest, but I don't think we'd make a good match. 'Best of luck in your search.*

*Signed*

*"Too Sexy for Your Shirt, Baby"*

I noticed that he'd sent a copy to his attorney.



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Ashley Richardson  
Hush Little Baby  
12" x 8" Digital Photograph

step ball change  
Ashley Mack

i want to strangle  
the muses for making my  
pen dance merengue

instead of my dance  
the chicago bop two step  
my pen chooses you

## Giving up Smoking

Loretta Ebnet

Your body fits so neatly into this room  
where you want to stay,  
cigarette long legs  
wrapped in white sheets  
tight and straight as you sleep,  
cigarettes are smoking everywhere:  
in the lines cast by the sun,  
through rusted orange blinds,  
vanishing strokes in painted yellow walls  
in-between the space of my fingers  
above and below  
the ink of words that I will write  
to you. Your blonde hair, lined with highlights  
lying limp, smoking everywhere.



---

Ashley Richardson

Move It

7" x 9" Digital Photograph



# Work of Their Hands

Colleen Card

Under January's ice gray skies  
snow drifts white in furrowed fields,  
the farmer tends his cattle in the barn  
warm hides steaming in cold bare light  
of bulbs hung down from heavy beams.  
While feed pours from the pail in his hands

he knows work owns him, handed  
down as long as he's lived under Earth's broad skies.  
He lives to toil beneath hand-hewn beams  
that rise above the furrowed fields  
frosted silver in January light.  
While cattle stamp in the aged barn

the farmer sees men that built the barn  
with work worn tools and calloused hands.  
They walk the fields in shadowed night  
when the sun rides down ice gray skies  
and cattle sway in from grazed fields  
to rest in stalls of hewn oak beams.

With wooden pegs they joined these beams,  
men that raised this ancient barn  
when cattle grazed in timothy fields  
reaped by the farmer, the men with their hands.  
Under goldenrod sun of September skies  
as shadows bent in afternoon light

the cattle sought shade from relentless bright  
in coolness of barn beneath wood seams  
where the farmer remembers the open skies  
that rose above the new framed barn  
crafted with tools and sturdy hands  
to hold the harvest of autumn fields.

Another winter rests on furrow and field  
and the farmer rises in ice gray light  
with stiff fingered buttons and gnarled hands  
and hobbles to stalls where once it seemed  
his cattle lowed there in the barn  
while he fed them grain. The farmer sighs.

Whose hands will help the mouths to feed, in dreams  
the men walk stolen fields, planted with houses, glaring lights  
while the barn is razed. Empty furrows meet January skies.

# Listening

Colleen Card

My grandma's house on Hastings was three blocks from the railroad tracks, on the south side, so getting to the main part of town meant crossing those tracks, which I did several times a day. Some days I walked them, balancing, arms outstretched like a tight rope walker on the iron rails that stretched east and west as far as my eyes could see, then I'd stop and put my ear to the ground to see if a train might be coming. I stood back leaning on the black and white crossing arms as the trains passed through, waving at the conductor, hoping he'd blast the whistle just for me. The ground quaked beneath my feet with the rhythm of those flashing wheels headed to Chicago, Baltimore, Cleveland and Detroit, and the cars passed at dizzying speeds. If I stared straight ahead into the blur of their massive progression, it seemed as if I were moving down the tracks too, soaring alone into the horizon with the Chessie System, Norfolk Southern, CSX, and the Grand Trunk. The trains' whistles were background music to my life, sometimes slow and leisurely, just passing through, sometimes high and desperately fast, straining to get to the net town and beyond. It was a comfort to lie in bed at night and hear the steady beat of the train's wheels clacking on the tracks, pulsing like my heart, and the plaintive cry of the whistles calling out my name to lure me from my sleep, my bed, my home, into the world.

The small town world that I knew grew wider and larger after my family moved into the country. My mom wanted more room to breathe. The old farmhouse that we moved into that winter of 1967 was already a hundred years old, with a leaking roof and sagging windows. The sounds of small-town traffic and train whistles were replaced with the wind moaning through the passage between the barn and the milk house, and night owls calling out in the dark. We were surrounded by hundreds of acres of open fields, an isolated island in a sea of black earth. That

# Non-Fiction

first winter the house spoke to me in an ancient, creaking voice of its aching joints and of cold that seeped deep into its bones, and I felt afraid. I missed the sound of the trains, their sonorous melodies. My parent's room was downstairs now, and I heard their muffled voices through the floorboards, a soothing contrast to Walter Cronkite's broadcasting distant perils. My brothers shared a room, but I remained alone in the night. I'd lie in wait for the big oil burning furnace to kick on an hum me to sleep in the frigid darkness, and the cold wind blew through the plaster and lathe walls whispering to me, turning my breath into drifting, white fog

Once that winter my two younger brothers and I went to spend the night at the babysitter's house. Mom and Dad were having a night out, and we nestled side by side like spoons in a drawer, lying in a big strange bed in a house that did not know us. My youngest brother Rex started to cry, he was only three, and he wanted Mom. I tried to console him but nothing would do, nothing was right. The sheets didn't smell the same, the house didn't sound the same, and all we could hear was our own steady breathing. Just as we were about to drift off into a shallow sleep we heard the sound of crunching gravel in the driveway outside the bedroom window, and headlights swung their beams through the curtains and across the wallpapered room. We held our breaths, and then come the knock on the door and the babysitter's footsteps across the floor, and the low murmuring of our Dad's voice. The door to the strange room opened quietly and Dad poked his head in to see three sets of eyes, open wide and hopeful. Then we shuffled out of the house in our slippers and pajamas, shivering in the crisp night air, and the stars winked down on us as we climbed into the backseat and fell asleep to the sound of the tires on the road home.



Anthony Schroeder  
Skies Pour Forth Speech  
35 mm slide

## Red Roof Inn

(Beech Grove 1983)

Daniel J. Hook

faces shiny and red  
from blustery winter night  
heavy door clicks loudly  
we laugh, not knowing why

*Lights are dark*

curtains pulled tight  
fat lamps never lit  
false dim light from fuzzy TV  
shines on cheap swirled spread

*Dark*

hoping wine can dull the edge  
of nerves wired from anticipation  
our fingers fumble with buttons  
but find their way

*So dark*

blue denim falls to the floor  
taking inhibitions away  
pink panties against creamy flesh  
we discover a new kind of high

*I cry out*

hours of passion are not enough  
we both moan for more  
our faces shiny and red  
heavy door clicks loudly

*Into the night*

## Necklace

Karen Mitchell

The flower skull charm hangs  
from a vine that twists around my neck.  
Cold silver wakes the breast,  
nipple points to the eastern sky  
where the Full Worm Moon  
casts red shadows into water,  
a natural compass that joins me  
wherever I go, empowered by your  
teeth and tongue, honey that drips  
from the stinger, blood that salts  
the blade, skin that sugars the bone.  
The yolk inside a fractured egg--  
where life begins and ends--  
freezes for a moment, suspended  
in the hen's sun-soaked iris,  
the dark matter of what our lives  
could be, if only the rooster's throat  
would grow sore and force the sun  
to wait for us to rise.



Sarah Nicley

Halls of Herron

24" x 11" Pencil and Charcoal

## Huntress of White Cats

Karen Mitchell

Sometimes I feel like a ghost hunter,  
tracking them in the likeliest of places.  
Moonlit pond, old country cemetery,  
the stormy eye of a winter wood. But I never

find them. Instead, I am found.  
And it happens when the veil has fallen  
into the snow, and my naked hands tremble  
with pleasure because the spirit has taken

me over, and its wind moves my hands  
to reach for the murder of crows that drives nails  
into the Scottish Rite Cathedral, their wings  
outstretched, dark angels raining down

into my mind, that blizzard globe where a headless  
cat cries out to me, her *ka* floating among the limbs of a bare tree.  
And all I can do is stroke my cheek with an invisible paw  
and wait for the fur to grow.

## Wisps of Evening

Loretta Ebnet

Long limbs of willow trees bend and sway,  
with Renaissance ribbon-like streams of motion,  
dipping leaves, dancing like a lover, awake,  
the wind, soothing devotion, is the music  
to the dance – stepping, following, invisible  
vulnerability rises in the trunk of my chest,  
swallowing the sunset copper entrance  
to your pendulum blinking, bringing  
me back and forth in this moment,  
time is still, evening, our legs become  
the hands of a clock, interlocked,  
to avoid leaving the hours that tire  
and stay where you stampede like a hundred  
forms of hypnosis at my heart, with each moment  
galloping to your eyes through our dance,  
swinging on the breeze of this romance.

# Last Encounter

Katie Fleetwood

By the time death was three days in your stomach,  
I saw you lying amid pink and white orchids, veins popping  
through your petal flesh. Your hair had been washed for the first time

in months. Your mouth had fallen into a flat line  
of red. You didn't look like you—you were asleep,  
and I could detect a rising in your chest (almost).

I reached out and touched your hand. Death stuck  
to my skin. I could feel you (just barely), cold and hard,  
clinging to my fingertips. I put it into my pocket—

that peculiar pang of death, that stiff sense of loss. And I walked away.  
But you stayed there, resting on a bed of abandonment  
and I noticed (as a shock) that, even then, I longed for you.



Mary Greenwood  
Insomnia  
14" x 17" Pencil and Charcoal on Paper

## I am reading poetry

Loretta Ebnet

you are in every line,  
harvest eyes lit by moonlight,  
playing with shadows, looking  
through Neruda's "Barcarole,"  
speaking to me in sentences  
of less reserved sounds, low  
husky, flowing tides of you  
that even my skin listens to,  
your voice comes up like petals,  
in the wild field of my chest,  
"if you would blow on my heart near the sea."  
I would recognize your breath,  
and grab hold of the reins,  
racing under the hooves of you –  
that paralyzing prance,  
calling you across the pages  
of every poet, to me,  
and to the moons of each  
passing night.



Heidi Herbst  
Stranded Boats  
7" x 5" Photograph

## What it Means to Say Zionsville

Jacob Sunderlin

Persia is a dream assembled  
In dot matrices somewhere-  
An arcade mountainscape

A soundbyte between  
writers almanac and bbc world news  
piped into cars plumping the concrete  
like mushrooms

by four deer in the snow fold  
by the roadside-  
probably doomed.

two thumbfulls of mashed moon  
and bifurcated daylight  
pulled from an ocean

dripping into the darkroom  
of continents.

# Shekinah Glory

Colleen Card

Best of Fiction

Grandma said when I was born I was so small they made my bed out of a bread drawer and shone a heat lamp down on me to keep me warm.

“Honey, you glowed under that light like Moses comin’ down from the Mount shinin’ with the shekinah glory of God” she said.

And that’s where I got my name. I never did grow very big, just five feet and ninety-five pounds, raised by folks who didn’t have even one bone of meanness in them. When I first realized how easily it came to some people in this world, I would find myself staring, just staring and trying to figure out how all that meanness could be hiding down deep inside of a perfectly normal looking human being. Was it born there? Or did it grow there like a weed choking all the goodness out?

It’s hard to know exactly how I got myself into a predicament like this, married to a man with a heart so mean I began to picture it like a hard, cold raisin shriveled up inside of him. He hid it well for a long time with all his smooth words and I guess, to tell the truth, I wasn’t looking to find it. I just saw soft, little boy eyes looking at me and I lost every speck of sense in my head. Those eyes were hard now as he raised the shotgun to his shoulder, squinted, and aimed for Mamie as she cowered out there in the hay field, her tail between her legs, crawling low.

“Get outta here! Go on! We don’t need any damn useless, cow chasin’ mutt causin’ trouble around here!”

Jake pulled the trigger and a spray of lead-shot blasted into her side where blood began to run into her white fur, staining it dark pink. She ran for the woods yelping and limping, not understanding. My chest was tight and sobs sliced through me sharp as shattered glass but I swallowed them down hard and just looked at him, with his slicked back hair, a cigarette pasted to his

lower lip, a beer bottle balanced on the grass beside his feet. He turned to look at me as he took a drag off his cigarette.

“Damn dog. I hope she dies.”

I wanted to shoot him right then and there, just point that gun at his chest and watch the white of his t-shirt stain the same ugly shade of red as her white fur. Instead I took a ragged breath and stepped forward and lunged for the gun. I grabbed it from him and ran as fast as I could with my heart racing into my mouth, my feet numb as they pounded the ground. I ran out to the road that curved in front of the house and stopped, my chest heaving, knees trembling. He was coming toward me, beer in hand, not running, just loping along steady like he knew I was going to stop. I raised the gun by its barrel and held it high over my head with both hands as I looked into his glazed eyes, and then with all my might I swung it down onto the asphalt and smashed the wooden stock. I raised it and swung it over and over, down onto the road, jarring my bones until there was nothing left of it but splinters and steel. The sweat poured down my face, down my neck and shirt between my breasts to where my heart pulsed and measured my hatred of him. I spun around and flung what was left of the gun at him then turned and ran for the barn. I stopped at the big sliding doors at the barn entrance and turned back to see him standing there with the barrel of the gun in his hand staring down at it in disbelief. His head slowly turned to look at me, his jaw tight, and he threw the gun down into the grass as he came toward me with long determined strides, never losing his grip on that bottle. I slid the door to the side just enough to slip in, closed it behind me and swung the latch, leaning back to swallow my heart back down into my chest. The shadows of this big open room pulled me in and held me close and kissed my skin with cool,



calming breath. I listened a moment for his footsteps and tiptoed quickly across the wide, ancient planks of the floor that creaked and groaned underneath me until I reached the wooden ladder that led up to the loft. As I climbed, I heard him pulling on the door.

“Shekinah, get the hell out here! You’re gonna pay for bustin’ up my gun you crazy bitch! You think you can hide from me?”

I climbed faster as he pounded harder. There was no way for him to get in. I’d made sure of that a long time ago, closing and latching the thick, inner shutters to every window, and laying the wide plank barricades across every door. This barn was meant to keep out frigid, northern winds that blew across the open country that surrounded it and it sure as hell would keep him out too. I heard the crash of the beer bottle against the door.

“You can’t stay in there forever girl! I’ll be waitin’ for you!”

“You do that, Jake” I whispered through my clenched teeth.

On days like this, when I felt like I couldn’t breathe, I came up here and gulped air until my heart loosened up in my chest and his yelling and raving stopped buzzing in my ears. I climbed the high stacked bales and sank back into a nest of hay and spread my arms and legs wide like I was a starfish, quiet and hidden at the bottom of the sea. Relief washed over me. As I curled onto my side, an angled shaft of sunlight shot down through the window high up in the roof’s peak, and I watched as dust specks came to life in the spotlight: swirling, swimming amoebas drifting through the atmosphere. The loft was warm, piled high with hay bales from summer’s harvest, and every sound was muffled as if I were wrapped in layers of tissue paper. The air was filled with green clover scent, timothy, and alfalfa; each lungful took me flying high out across the fields where they grew, ripened, and fell to the sharp hay rake’s teeth. The Mast boys had ridden their hay wagon through those fields behind their daddy’s baler and heaved these bales up onto the wagon bed one by one, until they towered above their heads waddling and swaying like a broad-hipped old woman as the tractor growled toward the barn. They rigged up the conveyer to the loft and with calloused hands and farm-boy

biceps swung bales onto the belt where they rode up like roller coaster cars, creaking slowly to the top and tumbling through the high window into the loft.

It was a long way up to the floor of this loft, maybe twenty feet, and the roof soared up to almost fifty feet at the peak. This barn was old, over a hundred years. It leaned a little to the east now but the rough hand hewn beams that framed it were strong and true. I had tried counting the wooden pegs that held them together but always lost count. I could see the men who’d built this dusty cathedral, their ghosts carving each peg by hand, pounding them into each joint and beam with sure, steady swings where they would meld perfectly forever. The beams joined the loft walls to the high sloping roof, forming a shelf that ran the perimeter of the barn. Here were my treasures, all the things I didn’t want him to see, things found as I walked the fields and woods while he was gone, special things. There were smooth, worn stones from the pond down by the woods where my dog Mamie and I waded and she chased tadpoles. Sparkling pieces of pink and black granite dropped jewel-like from glaciers that carved out the land so long ago, a variegated feather from a red tailed hawk, globes of sycamore seeds, robins’ eggs, a painted turtle’s shell, and my favorite thing, a tiny one-inch-high birdhouse. My neighbor Jay had given it to me.

It had been a few years since we’d moved to this forsaken farm out in the middle of nowhere, Rural Route Two, Moore Road. Jake said we needed to get away from nosy neighbors in town. I think they’d called the cops on us one too many times. “Domestic disturbance” was what they called it, for a long time I didn’t know what to call it, but now I simply call it Drunk Bastard Husband. So now the only ones that heard him were the neighbor’s Black Angus cows who never complained about anything. Mamie loved to chase those cows, but I knew he had only shot her because I loved her, because he couldn’t stand me giving my attention to anything but him. She was a sweet little dog, following me everywhere. She made me smile. She hated Jake though. She knew his heart. Dogs always know. So now she was out there all shot up,

scared, bleeding. My throat got tight again and tears rolled down the sides of my face into the hay beneath me. I choked back the sobs. I would never let him hear me cry.

I heard rustling up high across the barn and squinted to see what it was. As my eyes adjusted I saw a big, brown, barn owl settled in the corner on one of the beams. It raised one wing and flapped it slowly then settled back down and just stared at me. I stared back into its glowing eyes and wondered how it had gotten in here. My eyes wandered back up to the window and I realized one pane of glass was completely gone. The owl must have broken through by mistake. The window was as tall as I was and broad, with wide panes of old glass full of waves and bubbles that distorted the world outside into a crazy green and gold quilt stitched together with barbed wire fences. There was a crude ladder that led up to a narrow platform in front of the window, and I climbed up there often. The window swung out on rusty hinges and I would open it and sit on the edge and dangle my legs outside, gazing far out over acres of wheat, corn, and soybeans that grew in long, green lines stretching and arching out into an infinite horizon. The owl called out a low questioning "Whoooooo?"

"Poor baby. Did you hurt yourself?"

He blinked and shifted his weight from one hooked claw to another and then moved his beak, as if he wanted to answer me.

"You'll be alright. I guess we'll have to figure out how to get you out of here."

I sat up and looked around. Later I would open that window and maybe he would fly out the way he came in. He'd be fine for now. I watched him watching me and settled back down into the hay where its golden fragrance filled my brain, and I drifted off as my eyes settled on the tiny birdhouse. It was a little out of place with all my other stuff, but I loved that it was carved with Jay's own hands, hands like ones that had built this barn. I thought of the day he had given it to me. I had snuck out and walked the mile up Moore Road to visit him and his wife Mabel while Jake was at work. They'd been married sixty-seven years. I

couldn't imagine living with the same person that long. Along the way I gathered periwinkle blue blossoms of chicory, tall graceful stalks of Queen Anne's Lace, and bunches of starry white asters to make a bouquet for Mabel. She was sick, dying of cancer, and Jay filled her room with flowers and his hand carved birdhouses painted in all the colors of the rainbow. He said a pretty lady needed something pretty to look at. I knocked on the front door loudly because I knew Jay couldn't hear very well. I waited and then heard the shuffle of his feet and him fumbling with the door.



Ashley Richardson

Broken

13.5" x 9" Digital Photograph

His hands were gnarled and twisted from all the years of chiseling and hammering, and when he finally got the door open his face crinkled into a smile. He reached out and drew me in, putting one rough hand on my shoulder. He was tall with broad shoulders but as bent as the rows of windbreak pines behind his house.

“Mabel’s been bad, Shekinah. She’ll be so happy to see you”

He left me at the door to her room and wandered away to tinker in his shop and I walked into the bedroom where she lay sleeping, neatly tucked into crisp white sheets. Her silver hair hung in two thin braids held with rubber bands, one down each side of her lined face. I added the flowers I had brought to a bouquet on her bedside table and sat in a chair next to the bed. She must have sensed my presence and her eyes fluttered as she woke and looked at me. She gave me a small, painful smile and then noticed the flowers.

“Oh how I love chicory! There’s no color like that in the world.” She winced as she shifted her weight under the sheets. “You know we used to boil the roots back in the Depression and drink it like coffee. It has a bitterness to it. Kinda surprising from such a sweet little thing.”

She studied my face and slowly put one hand up to my bruised cheek where it rested like a fragile bird.

“What happened to you, baby doll?”

“Oh Mabel, don’t you worry yourself. You know me. It’s amazing the trouble I get myself into. But look at you, you look so beautiful. Jay said you were having a bad day.”

She looked steadily at me for a moment with her still, clear blue eyes and sighed, taking her hand from my cheek.

“I dreamed of you.”

I smiled and took her hand in mine.

“You did? What did you dream about me, Mabel?”

She looked away from me over to the window where the sunlight filtered softly through sheer white curtains.

“I dreamed I was out on the porch with Jay. We were sitting after supper and the sun was setting.” She swallowed and coughed harsh and deep, then took a shaky breath. “The sky was so beautiful; it looked like it was on fire, all pink and orange, and the sun was so big. I looked out over the fields toward your house and I saw you. You were up in the sky. You were flying away. I said Jay, do you see that? Shekinah is flying! He just looked at me and said ‘I know Mabel, I always knew she could’.”

She began to cough again and I helped her sit up and take a sip of water. Her breathing was shallow and strained. She laid back and looked up at me with a furrowed brow and I could see the pain was getting to her. Her eyes were heavy again.

“What a nice dream, Mabel. Wouldn’t it be wonderful to really be able to fly?”

She closed her eyes. “Everybody can fly honey, we just forget how.”

She fell back to sleep, her crepe paper skin luminous in the light of the afternoon sun. I leaned down and kissed her cheek and walked out of the room through the house to Jay’s workshop out back, where he was just stepping through the doorway. His back was stooped and he walked like he willed each foot in front of him. He stopped in front of me, reached out and took my hand, and placed something inside. I opened my palm and there was the birdhouse, tiny, perfect, painted bright red with a green roof, just like my barn.

I woke to strangeness, a slapping, bumping flurry of noise all around me and I opened my eyes to gray haze. The sun was going down and the light had faded. I smelled smoke. The air was thick with it. Above my head the owl was panicked, flapping his wings desperately, slamming into the barn walls and roof, circling, trying to find a way out. I sat up with a start, my mouth dry and hot, my throat burning. I heard the sound of glass crashing and breaking outside against the barn walls, it sounded like Jake was getting rid of the day’s empties. He was whooping and hollering.

“I told you Shekinah! I told you you couldn’t hide from me forever! Now you’ll get your ass out here. Come on, Shekinah! Come on out and play!”

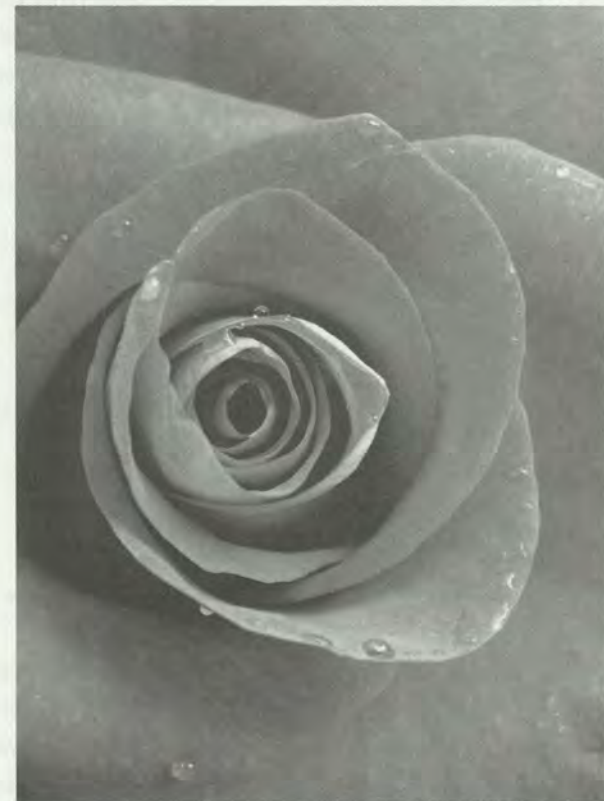
I crawled over to the edge of the hay bales and looked down into the barn. The bottoms of the swinging doors were being licked by tiny, hungry, orange flames. As I watched, they grew bigger, greedier, traveling up the edges of the door, laughing, devouring the century old wood as if it was made of paper. The flames traveled across a main beam at the top of the doors and

straight for the loft, racing toward the hay.

“Shekinah! You’re crazy, you know that. Get on out here now. Whoooooeee, she’s gonna go! It’s gonna be a pretty sight, Shekinah.”

As I watched, frozen, the flames met with the hay and in one gleeful burst that whole side of the loft was blazing. The owl was crazy now, swooping down at me as I ducked to avoid his sharp claws. It was too late to go down into the lower level now, the only way out was going to be up. I looked at the window. Flames were edging over to the bottom of the ladder. I leapt over the bales stacked in front of me and made a lunge for it. I swung myself up just as the flames started licking at the bottom rung and I climbed up fast, hand over hand until I reached the narrow platform and climbed onto it. My insides were humming like bees were trying to burst out through my skin. I pulled at the rusted latch to the window and it wouldn’t give. I pulled again with all my might, but there was no way I could budge it today. Those Mast boys had latched it good. The smoke was thicker now, black and boiling up from the hay and barn walls in angry clouds. It was hot and my eyes were pouring tears. All those ghosts must have been crying too to see this. One crazy man destroying what all those hands had blessed. I couldn’t hear Jake anymore, all I could hear was the crackling and popping and roaring of the fire. I started pounding on the glass with my fists, shattering the panes, my hands slicing and shredding with each blow, blood running down my arms and dripping onto the thirsty wood of the platform beneath me. I kicked at the window latch with one last effort and finally the wood splintered and the latch hung useless. I swung the window open and stuck my head out into the air, choking and gasping. I stood with my feet planted on the edge, my hands grasping the sides of the window frame. The sky was burning too, the clouds an inferno of bright, golden plumes. I looked down and there was Jake, staggering around the yard. His mouth was moving, but I couldn’t hear what he was saying. It looked like he was crying. He dropped to his knees and raised his hands to me. He looked so small. I felt the heat behind me, like a blast furnace, the flames

were licking at my ankles. I looked out over the house, over the fields, out to the woods where I saw a tiny white figure limping along. I looked down the road to Jay and Mabel’s. Was that them on the porch, waving? I felt like the whole world was waiting, waiting for me to go. As I stood there I heard a whirlwind of feathers behind me and in one blind swoop the owl swept past my head and out into the sky. The flames were hot on my fingers now, and then the pain made me let go. I teetered there on the edge for a moment and looked up to see the owl soaring off into that glorious sky. And then I remembered. I remembered how to fly.



Ashley Richardson

Rose

13" x 9" Digital Photograph

# Contributors' Notes

**Joe Bieschke** is currently a Senior attending the Herron School of Art and Design, majoring in Fine Art. He currently teaches a Saturday School class in Comic Illustration, and works as a Herron Gallery Monitor. An online portfolio is viewable at <http://joebieschke.mosaicglobe.com>.

**Colleen Card** is a forty-six-year-old mother of three. She began working on a degree in Secondary Education but decided halfway through that she loved writing too much to not pursue it. "The right words can change the world. I hope to spend the rest of my life finding the right words."

**Catherine Coppage** would have been a Junior this semester if only she had payed more attention to the whole credit system that college is built around..."Why didn't I take tennis?"

**Loretta Ebnet** continues to be inspired by the art of poetry. "Poetry is a sort of food that feeds my soul, whether reading it, studying it, or writing it, it is a never-ending, limitless art that allows me to perceive and give out perceptions on life that are unique by using language."

**Michael D. Edwards** is a senior, Creative Writing Major focusing in Poetry at IUPUI. He plans to attend graduate school to obtain an MFA. He lives in Indianapolis with his dog Saturday, who recently learned to shake hands. When Mike is a grown up, he hopes to be a writer or a space cowboy.

**Katie Fleetwood** is a French major who spent the past summer teaching English as a Second Language in

China. She enjoys spending time overseas and hopes to fluently speak five languages before she dies.

**Mary Greenwood** is twenty years old. She has attended IUPUI for five semesters but is still unsure of a major. She has been drawing her whole life. Her father, who attended the Art Institute of Pittsburgh, has taught her a great deal about art. Mary is hoping to make drawing her career.

**Sondra Hansen** is pursuing a BAE degree at Herron School of Art and Design. She enjoys draft cider and Alfred Hitchcock movies (or anything with Ingrid Bergman in it).

**Heidi Herbst** is a senior in Philosophy and will be graduating this May. After graduating, Heidi plans to apply for the Peace Corps. She will also consider graduate studies in Italian Literature. Last summer she studied abroad for six weeks in Rome, Italy.

**Daniel J. Hook** is a fifty-three-year-old lifelong resident of Indianapolis. He has lived many lives, worked many jobs, and married many women. He is a father of three, grandfather of three, and an aging college student hoping to have a degree in history before he is history. "One should always set attainable goals."

**Taryn Lotak** is a sophomore at Herron School of Art. While she's currently majoring in painting, she plans to pursue children's book illustration. Art, writing, philosophy, and religion have always been primary interest of Taryn's, and she aspires to combine them in her books.

**Ashley Mack** is an Indianapolis native and a creative writing major at IUPUI. She has been greatly influenced by Dr. Tony Medina of Howard University who was her first creative writing teacher. Ashley was in the 2005 issue of Drumvoices Revue and was invited to attend the Callaloo writer's retreat at Texas A&M University.

**Debbie Mcdougal** is currently a senior, English major going into the SPEA Masters Program for Public Affairs. She works in the nonprofit sector as an advocate and resource coordinator for previously incarcerated men.

**Karen Mitchell** is an English major who adores winged cats and thunderstorms. Her greatest fears are math and mediocrity. She's proud to be an Indy Feral colony caretaker, and recently fostered a beautiful three-legged cat named Kiki. Karen was the 2007 recipient of the Rebecca Pitts Poetry Award.

**Sarah Nicley** is a freshman seeking her Bachelor's of Fine Arts in photography at Herron School of Art and Design. She and her husband are the proud parents of two cats, two Chocolate Labs, and a German Shorthair Pointer. She loves chocolate and is addicted to Starbucks coffee.

**Ashley Richardson** started taking photographs about three years ago, and received her own personal camera last year for Christmas: a Konica Minolta DiMage Z6. Ashley is currently attending IUPUI and is studying at the Herron School of Art and Design in Indianapolis. Portfolio available at <http://witchlady750.deviantart.com>

**Anthony Schroeder** is currently studying sociology and has a long, withstanding passion for photography.

**Clint Smith** is an Honors Graduate from The Cooking and Hospitality Institute of Chicago, Le Cordon Bleu, and is currently the Chef Instructor in the Culinary Arts Department at Central Nine Career Center. When he is not teaching, Clint enjoys reading himself to sleep, writing, raking leaves and Chaos.

**Jacob Sunderlin** is an English major at IUPUI

**Megan Wells** is a sophomore at Herron studying Art Education. She enjoys reading Willa Cather novels and drinking Gin and Tonics.

# \$100 Prizes for Best of Issue Poetry, Fiction, Creative Non-Fiction and Art!

*genesis* will only accept submissions from **current IUPUI undergraduate students**.

**All submissions for the Fall 2008 issue due by: Friday,  
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## **All Submissions:**

E-mail submissions are preferred for all genres if possible. Please include your name, title, contact information, a short biographical note (no more than fifty words), genre, medium, and dimensions in the body of an e-mail and submit each piece of work as an attachment. Do not include your name on the file as all submissions are judged anonymously.

Send submissions to:

**genesis1@iupui.edu**

## **Writers' Guidelines:**

Literary submissions must be sent via e-mail as Microsoft Word attachments. All genres should be in Times New Roman font, single-spaced, and contain no more than **3,500** words. Students may submit a maximum of **nine** pieces: **five** poems and **two** prose pieces per genre. Do not put your name on the manuscripts.

## **Artists' Guidelines:**

A maximum of **five** art submissions may be sent via e-mail or on a CD as EPS, TIFF, or JPEG files with a **minimum resolution of 300 dpi**. Include titles, medium, dimensions and a short bio. Please note that all artwork, except those which go on the front and back covers, will be reproduced in black and white. All CDs should be mailed to the address below or put in the *genesis* mailbox in Cavanaugh Hall room 502-L. E-mail [genesis1@iupui.edu](mailto:genesis1@iupui.edu) for information on scanning high-resolution images or submitting original artwork.

**genesis**

c/o Department of English  
Cavanaugh Hall, Room 502-L  
425 University Boulevard

## **Back Cover Art:**

Sondra Hansen  
The Cat in the Moon  
7" x 11" Digital Image

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Catherine Coppage  
Loretta Ebnet  
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Katie Fleetwood  
Mary Greenwood  
Sondra Hansen  
Heidi Herbst  
Daniel J. Hook  
Taryn Lotak  
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