

Fall 1998

Fall 1998

Valparaiso University

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the
lighter



fall 1998

the lighter

valparaiso university's
literary magazine

Volume XLV Issue 1

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All selections remain anonymous throughout the selection process. *The Lighter* welcomes submissions from all undergraduate, graduate, and law students regardless of race, gender, or sexual orientation.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Lighter staff would like to thank our advisor, John Ruff, for his guidance, and the Committee on Media for their support. Also, special thanks to Jessica Binns, Lindsey Gaff, and Sarah "Otto" Marxhausen for their wonderful proof reading skills. Most of all thanks to all the students who graciously submitted their work this semester.



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 Back: **Naomi Strom** *Green Gate*

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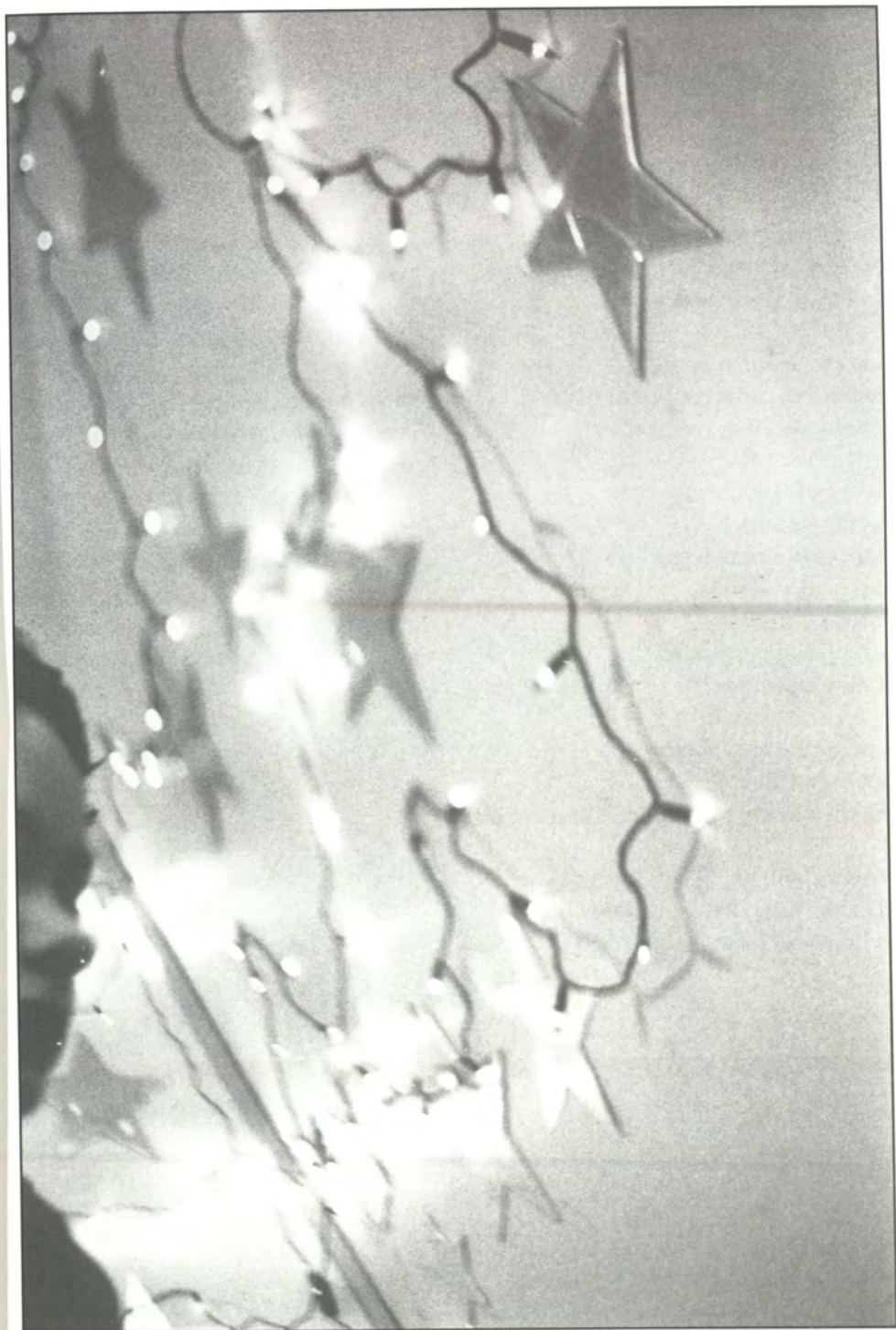
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Wendy Barker

Watermelon Seeds

Bethany Hirt

drip from mouths of children
as they laugh carelessly
in bright summer sun

the picnic table is full
and a red-checked tablecloth
grows sticky in the heat

swings glide cleanly
as horseshoes clang
shouts of unexpected joy

noises surround—
deep, summer sounds
full, unrelenting

and everything stands
clear and true
like a sterling rose without thorns

or children,
mouths dripping
with sweet watermelon seeds

G randma

Bethany Hirt

The box of ribbons, perfectly organized
stayed behind after she had gone.
Whenever we opened it to wrap a gift
we thought of her and everything she did.

Then we spilled the box, ribbons rolled
across the floor. Reds mixed with blues
and lost their perfection,
ruining memories left behind.

So we put them all back, with no order
in particular, cursing ourselves as we did:
We imagined her childings at the mess
we'd made and smiled at the memories within.



Daughter's Remembrance

Bethany Hirt

for Dad

just weeks before you left
you explained to me the soul
and I listened to you with intent eyes
as we walked side by side
to the park, to watch the sky
and throw stones
across the glass bay

we walked under a canopy
of fragile leaves, bleeding
their color to the ground
before us, ushering us on
to that water ahead

as the infinite blue
lay open before us, broken
only by your triumphant
skip of a stone
that left ripples forever

Motion Sickness

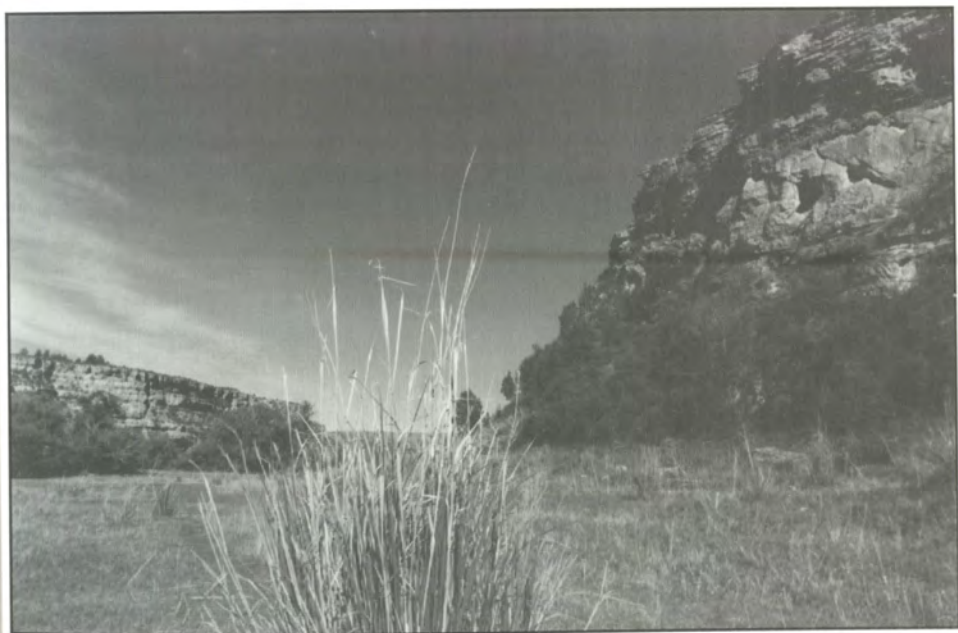
Jennifer Fett

She sits
Holding breath and bony knees tightly
Her own futile attempt to make the world become still
But after a transient calming, seconds still tick
and shadows swim down again
Plunging from the abyss overhead
Water sparkles as it tries to travel
Though the lake traps its will with an imperfect circle
Even solid trunks are not left statuesquely still
With chittering leaves and branches bending willingly with the breeze
She exhales—a tiny gust blends into the wind of the world
She is compelled to let limbs bend like branches
and live on—once again consenting to bear the energy of life
and to take shape accordingly.
As the clock chimes,
She rises.

Somewhere within Grid b-4

Jennifer Fett

Coasting over this breathing topography,
Thoughts hover with gulls overhead.
Miniature roads on a page have opened up
Into gigantic asphalt opportunities.
I glance down at the linear colors
Which collide and intersect, but ultimately connect
Different paths to the same place.
Mentally narrowing in on this vast unknown,
Other connections are shown on a smaller scale:
Tapestries of gas-filled pipes, water mains and telephone lines;
Extentions of the loose ends we've tried so hard to tie
As if connecting mysterious dots with strings of rubber and metal
Would enable us to exert control over the whole or
Create in us a technological puppet master.
When what they really provide is a giant tangle of futile knots that
We've forgotten how to separate.
Still we mask our plight with this veil of "progress" and
Tell ourselves we've come so far-going nowhere.
Me, I've got many miles to meet before I get back to where I started.
I choose to let my ambition fly with my winged friends above
Rather than try to tie it down with threads of logic and common sense.
Though so many have tried to put this life into neat compartments,
None have caged its mystery.
The fundamental questions still slip free though the spaces left open,
No matter how much we chip away at their dimensions.



Buffalo Cliffs

Naomi Strom



Independence Day Darkening

Jennifer Fett

The full moon swells like a cyclops in the sky
Its unflinching stare penetrates my defenses.
Charcoal clouds swim carefully around
The heat of celestial spotlights
Unlike the anxious thoughts tripping through my brain.
Though the fiery crackling above has died,
Smoky structures like arachnid skeletons
Still haunt the night sky.
The human quilt on blanket patches will soon unravel.
Here I will remain until the last skeletal cloud has decayed.
Box-shaped glowing emanates
From the land of the free and the homes of the brave.
Straggling children ahead wave sparklers
Like swords and I silently warn them
To bun brightly while youth's fuel is still abundant
Because it, too, is surprisingly extinguishable.

*Dedicated to the countless number of people
who have suffered from anorexia nervosa*

Her presence is cast with the fragility of a flower—
Steely stems and thorns like daggers, her permanent accessories.
Two vacant, shadow-cast eyes complement
Two sweetly slick lips playing seductively with a smirk.
A face made of porcelain and stained with pink
is a petal of confection-coated confidence.
Delicate half-moons decorate fingertips otherwise too soft,
and render hands exempt from having to reach for
everything which is handed here.
Her glowing gown's aura is the strongest indication that
this gilded commodity will never suffer strain of working weeks.
A visage, as angelic as it is angular, suggests starvation;
though this ravenous vulture craves consummation
of plates piled high with emptiness.
Flowery fluid flows thick through the veins
of a vision such as she;
but when pricked with envious pins,
she may bleed vanilla venom.
Hiding frozen within the high-gloss barrier which encases her,
the shiny stare reflected is a paralyzing painting.

The disciplined eye sees
that it is not a diamond shining in her left eye,
but a sparkle of fear—a small signal of distress.
Could it be that she too is trapped
in her magazine mold,
trying to convey her masked pleas for help
through the words December's ephemeral trends
Have allowed to remain?
Hatred turns to pity as I realize where the true nemesis thrives—
it is the force behind the cosmetic curtain;
the intangible yet invincible dragon.
Feeding on false ideals and failed aspirations—
lurking blamelessly faceless in the shadows of our lives,
it leaves us to sling our arrows blindly into the darkness.



Lone Cowboy

Naomi Strom



Rush Hour in Downtown Chicago

Faris Adnon

(For the Bohemian friends)

Everybody in a hurry,
vehicles are moving to everywhere,
the metro, the terrifying snake,
comes from the earth's heart,
and goes everywhere but the dreams eyes.
A taxi driver with similar accent, same color
and different direction:
he was after the green paper happiness
and I was after a dream
a cup of coffee,
poem
and lake view...

Ladies in different ages
with skirts
that are going shorter momentarily,
ladies on the sidewalk
in a hurry to get the lunch sandwich
and gossiping about the boss or the last night lover
It's the rush hour in downtown Chicago...

Guys to the drive-thru
to get the national burger
are these human faces behind the sterns
or burgers with eyes?
It's the rush hour in downtown Chicago...

An old man is talking about the bad weather and the Korean war,
a young man talks about drugs and basketball,
Two men are chatting about fast sex in the drive-thru,
A homeless man is sleeping in a corner with careless eyes,
and an officer is driving the official vehicle through
the crowded road like a bullet...

Everything is going so fast
so fast towards somewhere
except us
we were moving from the coffee cups to the fine art
and wondering: if Mikhail Angola
was an atheist or not?

Mikovski, a poet from a different time*

Faris Adnon

Regardless all this randomness
he was trying
to planet our forgotten childhood
in the concrete cities,
in the censured dreams,
in the cloud's path...

Also, he was listening
to the big crowd
from a room without number
in the next door hotel...

In unknown room
he was hiding his last poem
in the air's pockets
before his sudden departure
towards the death island...

Regardless all this randomness,
he was dreaming
of roads without the propaganda mud
but they forced him
to leave the madness occasions
and start digging,
through the ideological graves,
looking for a prettier portrait
of the Comrade Stalin.

* A Russian poet who committed suicide in 1945 during Stalin's reign

Postcards from Octavio Paz

Faris Adnon

-1-

They are bearing their faces
anywhere they go
they are wearing them
any time anywhere
one face per day
one face for every occasion
one for the office
one for mass
one for a loud bar
one with make-up
one without
one for smoking grass
one for Christmas
and one important one
for any ID photograph
their faces? that's the question

-2-

This morning, I tried,
in front of the bathroom mirror,
to shave my beard—
brush my teeth—
wash my face—
my face disappeared—
nothing there...
nothing but my old poems
but my future poems
and my simple dreams...

-3-

I was following
the poem's madness
towards the lake (the poem face)
I always tried, tried hard,
to find the poem's face
on the others faces
I found your face, last Summer,

on the Mahogany roots
Is it an ordinary incident?

-4-

Now, maybe it's a nightmare,
I really don't know,
I'm running from their city
and their machines
they are all wearing
a hunting dog face
and the Nazi cross
they are looking for me
I'm leaving their city
and its big concrete gate,
they are looking for me,
for you,
for the unarmed poems,
for the Mahogany tribe.

Dressing Room

Michelle Slaughter

I don't know
If relationships
Are much like clothing.
But

How would you know
If I fit
If you don't
Try me on for size?



THOUGHTS travel at the speed of light and echo into
FOREVER,
shattering the barricades of FATE.

TIME staggers drunkenly up the steps of Life,
praying for a LOVE Elixir.

... And DESTINY just laughs.

Splinter

Michelle Slaughter

While cleaning yesterday,
I thought of you.

The splinter in my finger
Had your name written on it—
The splinter of my soul.

It took a long while
To dig that splinter
Out.

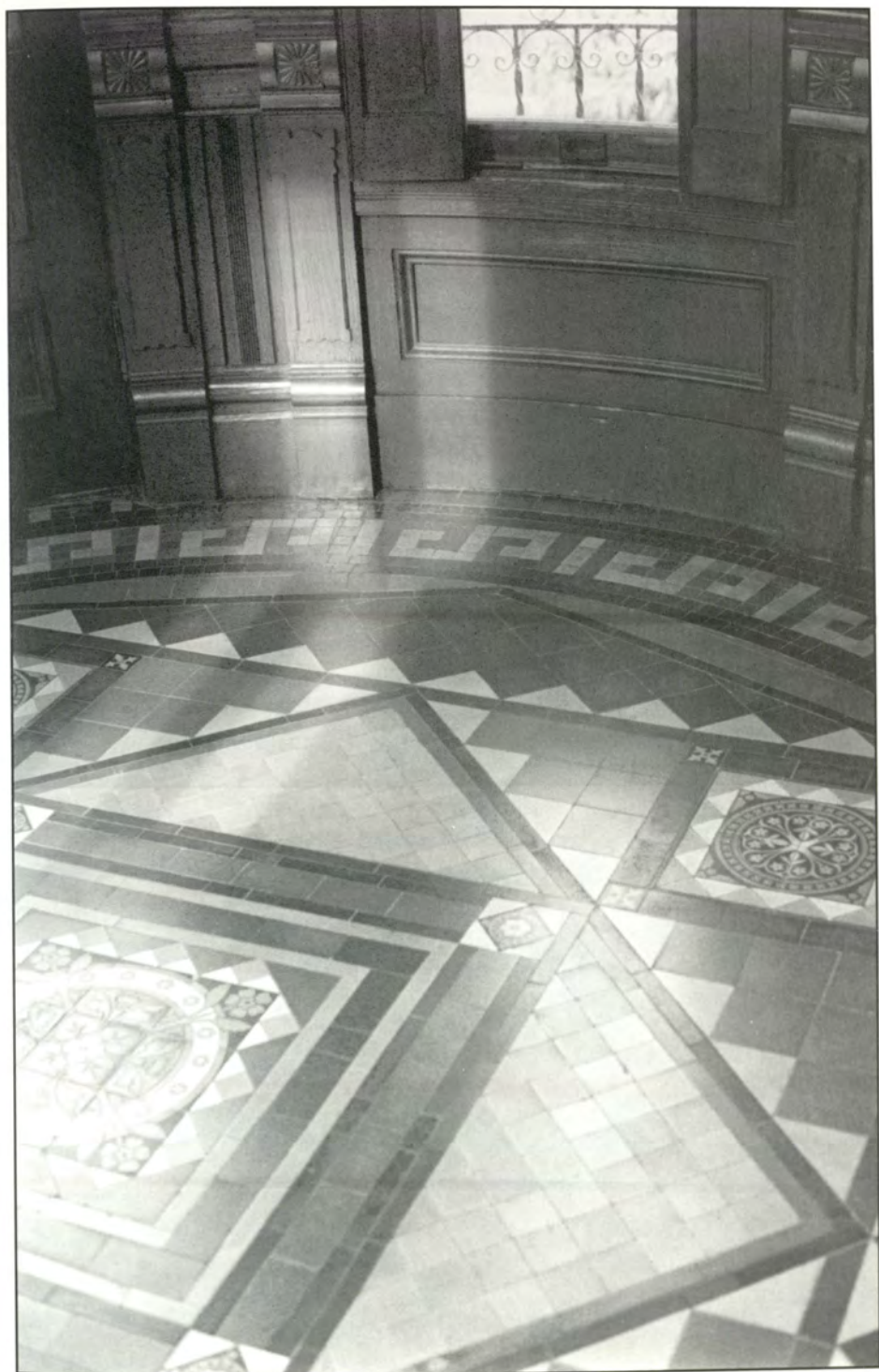
I thought I could do it
By myself.
I couldn't.
I had to use a safety pin.
(How ironic: That which
Holds me together.)

But you know what?
Even after I got rid
Of that splinter

It still hurt.

It even hurts today.

But I have to remind myself.
What is a splinter?
Nothing, really,
But an unimportant, indelible, tiny piece
Of wood.



I.

She rises with Grace,
every morning.
Showering us with her
songs of light,
Her golden voice
delivers life.
She abolishes fear,
casting out the
shadow demons
of our soul.
Once again, victorious.
Softly, She beckons us:
Arise! Arise!
My children,
Arise!
And slowly, we answer.
Awakening, as our buds of
reality unfold.
Our senses bathed by
Her Holy warmth.
She inspires joyful work—no toil.

II.

She whispers to us:
Rest, my children, rest
We fall to her command.
Not out of fear, but out of
Respect and Awe.
She sings to us a lullaby
named "Dusk," where
crickets
sound symphonies
of Tomorrow.

A

HUSH

falls over the land, Darkness
taking over.
In our quiet slumber, She
battles for Her life,
for our love.
And, every day,
She dies
once more.

n His Nature

Michelle Slaughter

The man,
As he strolled though the
Garden of Life,
Noticed all the beautiful roses.
Their brilliant beauty
Evaded his senses.
Their sensuous scent
Washed over him
And he drown in
Their cascading colors.
He knew of the unwritten law of the garden:
Pick only one.
And so he did.
He held her long, slender stem
Gently in his hands.
He caressed her smooth, delicate petals.
Her rubbed her soft velvet along his cheek
And lusted after her beauty.
Her bleeding maroon was the color of his heart
And burned with the fire she had taken from the sun.
He found his
Most beautiful vase—
No prize compared to the lavishing rose—
And displayed her in the window
For all to see.
Then,
Forgot about her;
Only thought about her
When passing through
Her lingering scent.
One evening,
He stopped to gaze upon her beauty
And saw it had vanished.
He head was bowed
In the sorrow
Of her own death.

Decaying petals were gathered
At her feet in mourning
And the strong, rotting smell of decay
Proclaimed the victory of Death
To all.
The man knew
And was saddened.
He was responsible
For the destruction
Of life and beauty.
He was the cause
To the end of perfection
And deserved only
The emptiness
That such knowing
Can bring.
And, so, he decided
He would walk
To the ends of the earth
Until amends could be made.
He found himself,
Once again,
Where he began.
And the man,
As he strolled though the
Garden of Life,
Noticed all the beautiful roses.
He knew the unwritten law of the garden:
Pick only one.
And so he did.

God Child

Michelle Slaughter

Deepset black-brown eyes
Little black ringlet drops of hair
Curl around your porcelain face
Five little fingers wrap around my one.
And the most beautiful smile
Lights up my life at any moment.
From the first day I saw you
Lying in your mothers arms,
Seeing your face scrunched
Into a pile of wrinkles and tears,
I have never had a reason
To doubt
That God exists.



Line of Time

Gregory Denton Gallup

May you pass though me
the way this moment has passed through us.

If you could see me now, the way I've grown,
each line around my eyes a story
of mind blowing, strengthening hardship.

You've been recorded in pictures on the back of my eyelids.
You've soaked into my skin through my clothes.
You've become a line on my face, along with the others.

May you draw your lines elsewhere,
for this face has years of painting to endure.
Soak yourself into others, while I soak up the rain.

May the lines on my face drink.
May you pass, as moments do.



partment Seven

Gregory Denton Gallup

Checking my back as the blue-eyed boy leaves,
checking the closets for strangers or thieves.
It's quiet in here and the taste of the air
is dreams of my teeth falling out and the fear
that my newly dyed hair and the cigarette smoke
will turn cool savoir faire to a marvelous joke.

The kitten has grown to a fat feline furball,
and flavors the air with is freakish cat flip-fall.
The bed is three feet from the doorway—it seems
within reach of the phone won't provide all the safety I need.

When I see him, much later, his sapphire blues
brought out by his shirt, his hands and his fingers
rinsed clean of the dirt of my nightmarish fantasies,
still he'll embrace me, chest like a cat—
furry and thick, but muscled and fat—

and leaving him chases me, checking my back
for blue lingerie and a paranoid cat.

Do You?

Mary Lucinda Linxweiler

I love using too many staples.
I find myself using too many
And being excited
When I mess up.
I pry out the wrinkled little bugger
And penetrate a virgin
Into my work.
After each use
I want to open
The compartment
And check the status.
I don't let myself.
Instead, I make myself wait
After awhile
So I'll be surprised
At how many I have used.



Dominance

Kerri Klein

Trickery

Mary Lucinda Linxweiler

microscopic fibers
magnified
magnified
magnified
so fucking close I don't know where I end and you begin
we have blended
meshed
united
into one

and I want out
out of this trickery
into me
me no more
not you
not for you

you are separate
you are alone
I want to see you behind glass
I want you in a cage
I want you alone
alone

away from me
and him and her too
you are alone
disunited
disjointed
disregarded
fallen
alone



transitional thoughts)

Mary Lucinda Linxweiler

A flame slices through the sky
and that is me
—red of flamenco dresses at Feria—
—orange of the sweet trees of Sevilla—
and I am home.

“Home?” I laugh and cry simultaneously,
involuntarily
A language and people,
suddenly so foreign.
“Is this real?” I truly ask myself.

The sky is smoky charcoal
and a blue-white light of angels
and an ordinary twilight hue.
That flame against it captivates me,
enchants me.
But it is fading,
which makes my eyes fill with tears
that I halfheartedly attempt to blink away.
“Don’t fade. Don’t fade!
Please don’t go.
Don’t leave.
Stay.
Stay.
Please, stay!”

I scream until my throat is raw
yet full of mucky mucus.

God, I don’t want to watch you go.
I can’t. I can’t.
But I know I can.
I must.

My lips are dry and cracked—
licking them does nothing.

They want horchata.

A stale, sterile odor fills my nostrils—
no more aroma of ajo as Sevilla knows it.

The flame fades.

Fades.

Fading.

“No! Please! No!”

I try one last time in a painful throaty wail,
knowing nothing will change,

Except I pray my heart won't feel
so steel-like, so unforgiving
because it craves Spain.

But torn, also, craving
this new territory called “home.”

Now, I can barely see
the flame.

I feel slight relief at knowing the flame
is Spain.

While not here, it still
continues powerfully.

With that, I can weakly
but so very sincerely say

To that precious land,
“Hasta luego.”



Red Rock, Blue Sky, Dead Tree

Naomi Strom



Nighttime

*A Translation from Spanish, from the
Argentinean poet Oliverio Girondo,
from his book **Twenty Poems to be Read On the Train***

Mary Lucinda Linxweiler

Coolness from the glass which supports the front of the window. Dim lights that are turned off leaving us more alone still. A cobweb of wires woven about the roofs. Traveling vacantly because of those people that pass and make us emotional for no reason at all.

What makes us remember the howls of the cats in heat, and what will be the intention of the papers imprisoned in the empty patios?

The time of the old furniture exploits for eliminating the lies, and the pipes have strangled screams, as if they were asphyxiated within the walls.

At times it is thought, as the key to the electricity turns, of the fright that the shadows will feel, and we would have wanted to tell them so they would have had time to curl up in the corners. And at times the crosses of the telephone poles, above the roofs, have a sinister nature, and one would have wanted to the walls to be rubbed, like a cat or like a thief would do.

Nights were those in that we wished they would pass by placing their hands to our backs, and suddenly it is understood that there is no tenderness comparable to that of caressing something while it sleeps.

Silence! –a soundless cricket comes within our earshot–. Singing from the poorly locked bones! –the only cricket that is suited to the city–.

Buenos Aires, November 1921

P rayer

Mary Lucinda Linxweiler

I saw weakness defined in your eyes,
your sagging lids,
as though formed from steel,
exhaustion emanating from your glassy spheres.

I wonder,
is there life in those pupils?

You proceed,
rusty hours turned days
turned nights.

Then, I know you,
clearly and suddenly,
belovedly
I cherish you.

and as the ages roll along,
our crime is augmented:
indifference and apathy
shroud our senses,
obscuring what is right
and wrong,
so that even now
justice has become
injustice
as we choose
to mitigate the pain
of the punisher
so that we good, moral
and upstanding citizens
can rest easier at night.

Assaulted by the swirling demons
painting with their frozen brush
stinging, whipping, castigating:
instantly the giants obey,
paralyzed and feverish—
not pausing to appreciate
the beauty of such evil.

Shrieking elves greet each
gossamer imp
dancing,

 whirling

 glacial

 rites

soon after obscured in a diaphanous film of brotherhood

Coffee mug
Columbian brew
Seize the day
Mountain Dew
Caffeine high
Sugar low
TV dinners
On the go
Modern man
Overtime
Office slave
Social crime



Ruby Slippers

Kerri Klein

broken glass bottles
bottled glass balls
glass of pink sherry
broken glass doll

twisted black window
black widow spider
window of third floor
twisted beside her

crumpled white paper
white paper dolls
paper plane flying
crumpled form falls

Folded by a Girl

P. Sanchez

The T-shirt I let you
borrow sits on my desk.

A girl I can not seem
to recognize smells like you.

I did not unravel it
from its cotton box
and push it to my nose,

I could never have.

Instead, I let it be
and hoped for it to move.

For long moments I
worked around it
like it was something blood.

Before it crawled across
my neck and made me shiver,

I tucked it in the farthest
corner of my T-shirt drawer—

and dismissed it—

like a spider.

ecretly Yours

P. Sanchez

blush lips beside me unmoving,
her nostrils purring beautiful life,

outside street lights play tag
with 2 AM shadows,

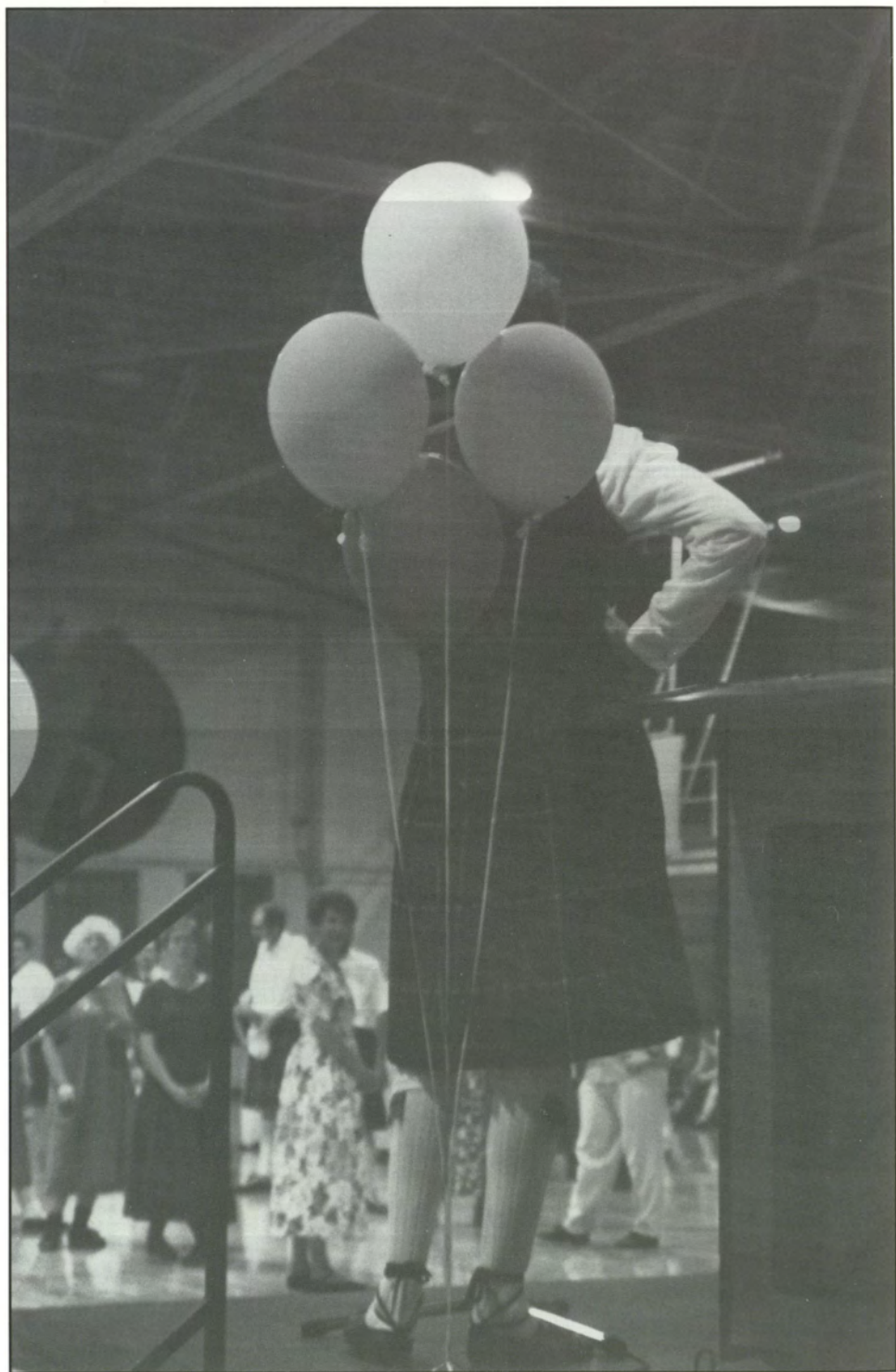
neck-warm and smooth I capture
air to release a waking breath
across my sleeping her,

moon-balm peels back the darkness
with wet light and calm,

gently pressing my open hand to her face
I exhale like it was the first time,
and watch my darling rest,

clouds cover the moon like a blanket,
tucking it to bed like a child,

my thoughts turn over scribbling her name,
and just as quietly—vanish.



Cheryl Lohrmann



Third Row, Second from the Right

P. Sanchez

Let your hair down once more.
Put it up again.
Raise your arm above your head,
look sideways.
May I stare at your eyelashes?
I'm sorry for asking this much.
Dangle your fingertips off
of the edge of your desk,
arch them like your back.
I see your ankle,
the golden anklet is sexy.
May I stare at your eyelashes?
I should ask kindly,
please perhaps?
Touch your earring. Twirl it.
Rub your neck and write something down.
Are you doodling?
Are you taking notes?
I would like to watch you think.
Have I? I'm not imposing am I?
Today I have taken too much
of your time haven't I?
I will receive no further charity.
Forgive me. Please, forgive me.

The Painting of the Icon

Lorie Kolak

Between your fingers
roll currents of paint,
streaming down your artist's hands.
The colors that stain the plaster walls
course through the rivets of your skin
in fonts of green and blue.
And when you fill your palette
with crimsons and scarlets and carmines
they bleed into the palms of your hands
as open wounds.

Minutes crust on the drying plaster
as the pigment blushes into images
and your brow furrows
in a thick crease of anguish.
A lifetime breathed into the chapel walls
leaves you breathless from racing
the drafts that freeze the fleshy plaster
before you color its pallor.
Gilded halos and forested capes
that drape on square bodies and bloated arms,
await your brushstroke for the life
that sweats from your fevered forehead.

Your artist's fingers comb away woman's wrinkles,
massage off man's knobby chin,
and wear away the child's scratches
from falling down in an alley somewhere.
The face of the child
has seen an adult's world
and is hardened by the same stretched skin
and eyes that never blink.
Whose countenance chiseled in the plaster-
whose features repeated over and again
in crowd scenes of human sameness?

Eyes witness the stories
ears heard many times divined
as the limits of the walls press together.
Whispering from the arched doorway,
strains of "hosanna" and "crucify him" argue
in a conversation muted by layers of plaster.
Arguing whispers are tormented contentions
as stilled fists clench and frozen eyes blink.
The plaster cleaves
at the seams where you bonded the panels together.

From atop your cross-beamed scaffolding
you witness the revolt of the created
as the walls press together further still.
The praises and condemnations
smother your screams for silence
as the walls press together further still.
Nothing to stop the walls from tearing each other down,
you reach out your artist's hands,
full-extended as your wingspan
and the walls can press no more together.
But you are no longer free to leave
for the creation requires your armspan
to stop from caving in upon itself—
you remain upon the scaffolding
holding the walls apart,
crucified to the plaster walls of the chapel.



Radiant Architecture Series: II

Naomi Strom

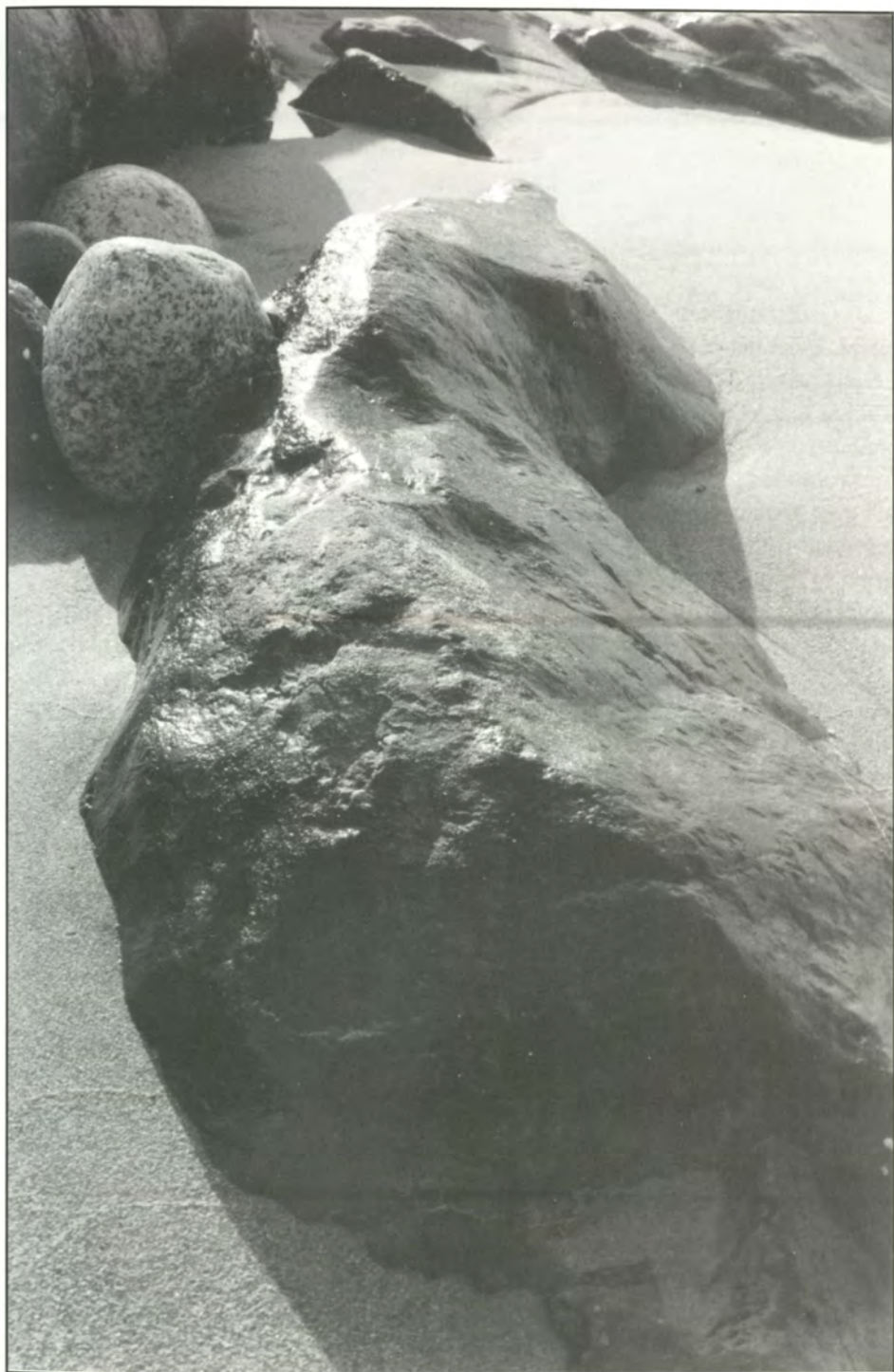
cigarette butts,
smashed
by feet
that have walked down endless halls
filled with the stench
of death,
lay strewn
on cement curbs.
a reminder to
the visitors
of what could happen
to *their*
child.
legs have
collapsed from this
heartache
of possibility.
words that
mean more than their letters,
throw themselves
around a sterile
waiting room.
whiteness
covers
blackness.

Portrait of a Stone

Jes Noon

the muddy earth
and the blister sun
begot her.
hundreds of children
broke away from her body,
made her small and jagged.
the callused hands
of the ocean
beat her against the tide.
her jagged facade smooth,
silent she sat
beauty from time evolved.

a finger points to her
and voices resound
from peaks of temptation.
her destiny lies
in the words of one.
fulfillment for the hungry body
tempts the claws of evil
“man cannot live by bread alone.”
the words of salvation echo,
sustain her life
while He suffers.



Metamorphic Rock

Naomi Strom

houghts from the past

Jes Noon

(journal compilation)

birmingham... the newspaper man paced on his concrete island once again. i wonder if he is ever discouraged by all of the cold, avoiding eyes of the ninetofivers. i believe my newspaper man is the essence of poetry. his dirt-stained face is covered by an unkept beard that celebrates its freedom by soaking up the rays of the sunset. his fluorescent orange vest rests heavily on the worn shoulders (it covers his latest purchase from the Alabama Thrift Store). his eyes are magnified by the second-hand glasses that look a bit on the feminine side. the piercing blue gateways to the soul reveal determination and pride as he struts. he owns this island. its glass shard strewn walkway seems paved with jewels. the drivers are heard praying as they approach the light. "dear god, please turn it green!" he forces them to face their immortality merely by his presence. God knows it and with an ironic smile turns the light a blood red. windows ascend and the false air of the chemicals mixes with the exhaust from the car in front. the suburbians in their boxes only fool themselves into an icy hell. the newspaper man grins as he peers into their air-conditioned glass. they regard him as yet another obstacle to their utopia of suburbia. he is grouped with the "will-work-for-food" and the street preachers. as he peers into their lives, he also angelically peers into their souls.

laguna beach... the laguna beach buddah sits, or rather, plops down beneath an overbearing fruit tree and sways slightly. in one hand she claps a white-breaded sandwich of unknown ingredients. the other hand lays carelessly upon her huge knee. her congregation swarms around her awaiting the next crumb to fall from her lips. as she speaks, they slowly approach her, encircling her body. every now and then, one of her so-devoted followers flies away, making room for another. she rants and raves at the gathered sea-gulls, allowing her not-so-sacred words to fly about. brainwashed, they stare at her in awe and stupefaction. she munches down the free lunch and draws a filthy hand across her mouth. we continue walking and watch the surfers who seem to have no reverence for the temple on the hill. after turning back, i find that the congregation has been dismissed, for the crumbs of wisdom have all been eaten and hardly shared. my laguna beach buddha lays on her side in deep meditation. a few lingering followers search for any sort of offering, but leave empty-handed.



adam Scarred

Jes Noon

you hide your scar well, adam
show it *proudly*.
what you long for
I HAVE.
i'm not giving it up either.
as hard as you try, you can't get it back
it is *mine* **FOREVER**
you can try to outsmart ones into giving
it back to you.
you can try to win it back.
you could even try to
steal it.
but not from *me*.
I know you want it and so I will **keep it** within
my own body.
it is part of *me* that causes eternal longing in *you*.
my only weapon against *your* rule.
my only part
of YOU.



omentary lapse of i

Joshua C. Honn

holes in the screen let bugs in.

and **i** feel human when **my** fingers press against their bodies.

little marks on **my** table. insignificant to whom?

me, **i** must care, **i** cry a.sleep.is the act of not being awake, yet **i** cry? what do **i** cry about/for/with? sometimes it is real, and maybe that is why **i** cry?. for those **i** love and therefore there is love in **my** dreams. a circle of love, meaning .life?. in dreams leans towards reality. a difference? seeing as **my** eyes are shut, if that is possible, **i** must not know what is above **me**. a force of grand persuasion? ha! **i** say nay. **i** cry for **me**, and **my** loved ones. **i** cry because **i** cry, no other force, none of this god you speak of. unlearn. trains. humans lay the tracks of destinations. all there .is. **i**, but part of it? it.it.ti.tim.time. oh where are you when **my** watch stops? have you runaway, or are you in a pack of circle things that breed "life"? circle things outlast **me** and **me** outlast the earth, forevermore unto the ground **i** lay! **me** is infinite, intricate, intimate, and at the possibility of **my** dreams being now, eyes open and fingers pushing, **i** am in.ins.insi.insid.inside **myself**. belonging to a spherical self-assurance that **i**

will not. float. is bad and here is
good.ness.nes.nest.nests hold little
spheres, of sorts, of life. crack! beak
and eyes, closed at first! yet alert to
survive.al.l that life is outwardly
affecting the mass(es) hysteria created
by simple influxes of incompetent
workers who need not be shelved, but
sent home with a smile and a paper of

power.

i see.k only what ripe fruit would call "rotten" and is **i** this? god means evil, his creation was, with eyes open! and **i**

think evil is in exiting signs that
people notice not for texture but
for safety.pins hold together simple
pleasures, like pages of a book? no, not
pages or binding or .covers.that safely
keep the nighttime dooms apart from
skin.less people eat too much and there, yes,
haste is made!

yet trials are continuing episodes of life that is not.eworthy to him and her and i

is an isn't! seeking vio(lins)lence is like
fixating on a strong figurine never to
be bought, talk is talk.ing to others,
over dime store candy. sweet is the tooth
and the candy does the walking.canes
support lonely life that magnifies the age
of inexperience, laugh if you must,
but knowledge keys the keyhole currently
involved with a next-door-neighbor.hoods are
inexplicably triangular.

you've got your here and your there and you, uh uh, over there! in the middle is
the i(eye)(i)eye of apple juice factories that flower the possibility of a new
re.run!boy! save everyone else, forget your tears of simple sundays and pass the
truth.trut.tru.tr.try.tryi.tryin.trying is like knowing you won't reach i-ism. solid
on the outside and the inside is made of little piles of little things that come in
big boxes! and i knows the way of i. that it, the tears i make are evoked by
me, and love, but love is not i and i is in love so i stand not at my bedside but
rather in a tree of misconception. audiences contemplate contemplating and all
is lost on horseback dreams. stables of lies. liars. lines of white wisdom. smells
of sugars past. i's live in, i live to be, and search of me winds up at the doorstep
of i, just like you.



Liz Wuerffel

Exit

Joshua C. Honn

I am the outside of the room, the closest chair to the door.
I am the magnet box, my observant static eyes.
Faith lost in columns of numbers, I scramble for answers.

Exit; walk the path over the cliff. Falling is the easiest, Exit.

I am the doll and the house, plastic realism.
I am the dream of a generation that chants, "more."
We all lost the game, and we all lose our faces.

Exit; walk through that wall. Seeing through is so simple, Exit.

I am the panic button housewife, bonding weak seams.
I am the toy under the couch, slaved and then forgotten.
Once I met a man, he told me to run as fast as I can.

Exit; walk into the glass bank. Buying is believing, Exit.

I am the child on the "children at play sign," alienated.
I am the microwave oven that gives you cancer, convenient.
I am the book that heals your inner wounds, ubiquitous.
I am the salesman at your front door, unrelenting.
I am the document that your ancestors died for, a failure.

Exit; like that man told me, "Run as fast as you can."
Run as fast as you can, 'cause they're on your heels and they have communication lines,
And business ties, and there is no stopping the blood thirsty dog,
So run as fast as you can, please, for the love of God, Exit.

The Dearest & The Innocent

Joshua C. Honn

It's more of the same, in every eye-opening image.
The dearest and the innocent are mindlessly pillaged.
For deception creaks into the house of pure thought.
And wrestles with lessons learned and taught.

When one leaves the doorknob burned from within.
The others think similar, yet none begin.
The ease in which the house could crumble,
Speeds the growth of the surrounding jungle.

'Til all fear not the house, and door,
But the idea of knowing that outside is no more.
In reach it may be but all are trapped.
For the jungle consumes the easily grasped.

Examples they are for future rat races,
And desolate they serve their ultimate relations.
The windows swell up 'till they can see not.
And the insides must look for something forgot.

Their heads and their hearts look no longer out.
But seek solace in the shape of the clouds.
They find escape when all seems the end.
The roof is the ceiling, which above can bend.

The house loses shape yet the jungle grows dense.
'Till all the house, all day is darkness.
But the dearest and the innocent still toy with hope.
For one day they know they'll be dropped their rope.

And all will find luck, life and light with the clouds,
With no recollection of the jungle or house.

Dinner for Two

By Kerri Klein

All my troubles seem so far away
Sing the Fab Four over an omelette
He's looking at pies and pondering grey hair
She's trying to feed four and frustrated
I read the Legend of Good Women and eat
My honey mustard sauce ever so tangy
And that one missed the stuffed panda
Looking like a Toys 'R Us substitute
The one I hugged and wouldn't let go
When we found the Valiant and it snowed
We made love in a glass house
The squirrels and goldfish looking on
Like curious children

She takes her leftovers home in their
Styrofoam landfill-resistant dwelling
Underage smokers flaunt their Reds and Zippos
Looking for impressions in the comfort of a sea-green booth
A glass breaks in the kitchen
Signs of imperfect hash browns
Cold coffee
You're a Lost Boy
But Wendy's gone and I'm no mother
So I troggle on
Killing my Jabberwockies and waiting for your eyes
The piles of sweaters and phone numbers
Will surround us in our
pained paradise



Seventeen

Kerri Klein

Little backpacks notebooks
pens saddle shoes hemp
J-Crew sweaters and
snowboarding jackets never used
for snowboarding just driving
He plays soccer with Geoffrey she says
I'm feeling a trend sweep over me
writing this like I'm a dying breed
but oh no everyone's a
fucking poet
ten thousand high school students
and not a drop to drink
just vinyl and khaki and fleece
and their mothers never fed them
their fathers just read the paper
so they watch Jerry Springer and sympathize

one of them looks like Charles
They always look like Charles to me
I'll be seventeen in twenty-six days
she said
and tossed her hair her green eyes smiling

Where We Belong

Kerri Klein

Cosmopolitan ladies passing by in large Buicks asking me for directions to the financial maintenance program and all I can say is no but could you possibly spare that Saks blouse or a copper cause lady I don't know where in the hell I am I just pissed on your bumper
and I certainly don't know shit
(although I reek of it) so
how in Christ's Cabinet am I supposed to tell you where to go?

he says it's up in you sweetheart and drools a mindless snot kiss.

she rolls up her automatic window on his fat finger and pulls away
leaving him lie
in the street.

Burned

Kerri Klein

i don't claim anything
I just eat spinach lasagna
and warm cheesecake
and even this art
overdone
overused

the couch with the brown flowers
a late night Macomb meat locker
Butterflies on the wall in the air
Chris wanted to be a film star
christmas lights blue green red white
i came so hard tears squeeze out
i love you baby
oh no
gunshot cranium
blacklight fear, curled up
a potato bug
i cry no reason
just radiant fog grunge
fitful sleep attacks
calling from a corner
barking box and a beep
mom says he died with no pain
he was sleeping and aunt Carolyn was
the only one there, at approximately
three-fifty am.
i pick up
call your cousins tomorrow she says
i love you baby

and you wouldn't wake up.
you kept talking, asleep
i lost my papaw i said
but you slept on, a silent
helicopter waiting to descend
i curl and vaporize
my head band playing a fast tango version
of O Holy Night



Radiant Architecture Series: III

Naomi Strom

Choked

Adrienne Baker

Choked

down, way down in my throat
what I really want to say.

Suppressed, stifled,
escapes with a squeak
and shyly averted eyes.

My mouth moves,
and I can hear the words,
and I can feel them,
but I can't say them.

Scared

because you are right next to me
and I know you
(but I don't)
and you know me
(but you don't).

Crying

because you'll never know,
I turn to the window
and swallow love back down.

Why do I let you hurt me
Let you take it all away
And still I'm waiting,
Still I'm waiting,
But I know that all you'll say
Is you made a mistake.
If that's what it takes
To push it aside
Then fine,
Let me bleed and cry alone
On the phone
To a voice that has the words
But never backs them up.
Still I'm hoping there's a meaning,
There's a feeling
Somewhere, anywhere.
Help me find it
If it's not you, help me.
Be everything you said
Nothing more.
I don't expect more,
Not from you.
Left me crying,
Left me dying,
Still I'm waiting for the fall,
So catch me with your words
Because you have no arms to hold me,
Only looks to hurt me,
Only thoughts to make me cry,
And I let you,
I let you.

Words

Adrienne Baker

And words are fine on paper.
They are fine until they reach my lips,
 and then you stare at me
 like you have no clue
 and I swallow hard.
The feeling is in my nose and eyes
And any minute the tears could fall
 and all you would do is stare
 because you wonder if
 I'll get the wrong idea.
Maybe that's why I have pages and pages
Of what I would say to you
 if the opportunity came—
 if you asked me to really
 share my heart with you
The minute I say anything to you
Its real meaning gets caught
 in my throat and it never
 makes it past my lips
 meaning what it should.
So I just pretend that I can't speak
And instead spill my feelings
 onto paper, and you will
 never see them, and maybe
 it's better and safer that way.
Three little words, lots of big ones,
And I doubt you would even understand.



Nickel Slots: A Sestina for the 90's

Guy W. Meikle

Watch the incessant lights waterfall,
cascade down the blocks
of another tower of hopes.
Play on till the money is all gone.
Spangled fluff serves booze
to another monster of tradition.

This town built with money blocks
cannot save all those who have gone.
Just the ones whose hopes
crash and churn waterfalls
of luck. Chaotic tradition
swells with anticipation; the first sip of booze.

Shiny-shoed hopes
lost soundlessly in the waterfall.
Inside these blocks
are those charmed by a tradition
of heat, flash, and booze.
Gray velcro sneakers of the luck-gone

sneak stealthily across blocks
to find the name that serves 99 cent hopes
and Bloody Mary waterfalls
to spurt tradition.
If they were gone
who would lose? Not these rivers of booze.

Pristine tradition,
love unchecked in the face of booze,
on some blocks,
weddings of hopes,
and rushing, feverish waterfalls
of lust; inhibitions gone.

Once the flurry of night-gone
eyes see reality of mountain blocks
from the night before. Stains where the waterfall
of tip-over ice-buckets and stray shakes of booze
will always be tradition,
cleared by a maid who hopes.

Blocks hold in the waterfall
of booze. A spirit lives in this majestic tradition
of hopes and class where the glam has not gone.

-For Las Vegas-

Glazed

Dawn M. Millsap

You worship the face
without name,
the voice without words,
message without pen.
In the crowd

she rises tall
above the peasants:
a cracked ceramic
through which your
good favor seeps.

Night Year

Dawn M. Millsap

She sleeps, she sleeps
Un-rewarded with rest

I hear the madman is in his dungeon,
what used to be our basement.
He turned dad's tools into beakers
and needles, and I know
he's torturing my father.
I open the door;
demon creatures do his bidding
lab rats and snakes,
deformed through experiment,
dry in their sliminess,
climb to kill me;
they grab me by the hair

She sleeps, she sleeps
She doesn't know how to rest

I'm driving in my
car. When the persistent rain threatens,
the wipers slide it away.
I know where this road leads,
I know this graveyard; it's got highways
on either side, but no sidewalk;
I can't get in; no one comes out.
I see a bridge and more darkness

Impact.
Car collides
with the water
So deep it knocks me into empty air.
As I plunge to silence
chords release
my last cry
Save Me.

River Town

Dawn M. Millsap

We crossed the river by ferry
to a town where houses walk
on stilts nearly twenty feet high.
I had never seen such
desperate strategy before,
and it moved me.

They hope that the next flood
will rush on below their limits
and they'll finally be dry, saved
from the further indignities of mildew.

Such a precarious state, walking
on stilts. You'd think they would
fear the tipping and bending
and the occasional crack in the
sidewalk.

Having shed memories, old photographs,
new furniture, and old friends,
the brave ones remain, to fish in muddy water
and wait for the next rain.

All homes have growth marks
here, stained on support beams.
In the restaurant aerial photos
reveal instant islands of corn
where they were never meant to be.

Next time, the river just might
carry their stilts away. But right now
chicken strip baskets are on
special for \$2.99, and the Clemons'
need help cranking up their stilts.



Amar Singh

What is this,
she asks,
poking herself
in the rib,

and does it
have a maker?
She throws her arms
up to catch the sun

as it rises.
She remembers
telling him about
this feeling, and
he called it *dawn*.

How is it that he
names my thoughts,
as if he and I
are the same?

Her body, which
has not the wear of
growing, does not yet
know if she belongs.

Through the morning
mists, which are her
only gown,

She hears the sound
of a thousand wings
flapping. And her rib
tingles again.

M Memorial Day

LuAnne Sawyer

I had to go for a walk,
so I went outside.

It was one of those times
that you actually pay attention to your senses:
the chill on my skin, the sounds in the distance
of children shouting and dogs barking,
the smell of grilling?

The smell that a car brought (and took) as it passed,
the orange in the western sky as the sun finished setting,
the outlines of the horses in the pasture.

I walked quickly along the road to the west.
One of those walks where our feet are propelled
by your pent up emotions.

I missed you.

It had only been a week,
but I knew that there was a lot more ahead,
and that weighed on me.

A correspondence from earlier in the day had
reminded me of the sins of exactly one year ago.
It bothered me.

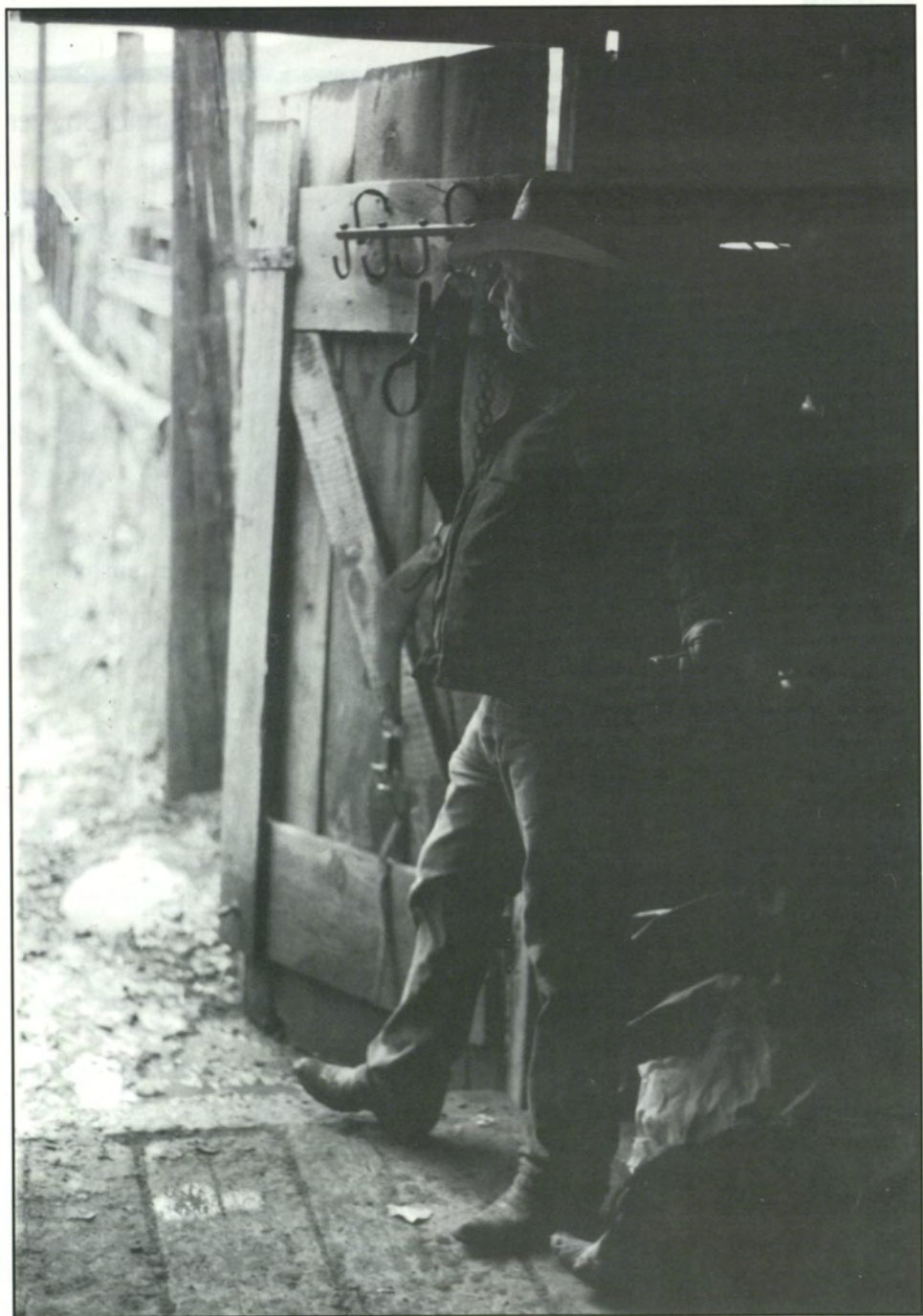
I knew that I needed to cry soon, it always builds up in me.
But I just kept walking.

Pop cans, a lighter, discarded fast food containers. A glove.
And then that stupid dog.

A big dog. It just kept barking at me and barking at me.
Then it started following me.

Not a friendly dog, but I just kept walking at my quick pace.
It scared me, but in a way it was good to be consumed,
at least for a little while,
with the fear.

Dogs and me haven't gotten along too well in the past.
But you know that.



Joe: Waiting out the Rain

Naomi Strom

ontributor's Notes

Faris Adnon was born near the Euphrates River in 1966. He has been living in USA since 1992, near Lake Michigan since 1993. He has attended VU since Spring 1998. He believes in "ultimate writing" as a form of internal energy. He is trying to live and write freely.

Adrienne Baker is a junior English Education major from Rochester, Michigan. She is an avid daydreamer, procrastinator, and analyzer of movies who believes wholeheartedly in praying, wishing on stars, and the power of positive thinking.

Wendy still has nothing to say about herself.

Jessica Binns is a freshman Pre-Physical Therapy and Spanish double major from Succasunna, NJ. She enjoys lacrosse, classical music and procrastination.

Gregory Denton Gallup is a senior English major with a Writing minor. He was born in Pennsylvania, but raised in Indianapolis. He enjoys camping, hiking, and communing with the supernatural forces of the world.

Joshua C. Honn is from Homewood, Illinois. He is a Communications major with a Political Communications minor. "Revolution is not showing life to people, but making them live." - Guy Debord

Bethany Hirt is a junior majoring in American Studies. She is enjoying her journey through life and is greatly appreciative to her God, her friends and family, and her surroundings for their company along the way.

Kerri Klein lives in a small limestone building not far from campus. She takes pleasure in a few things, including photography, mad libs, basket weaving and canoeing. She hopes to one day retrieve the Holy Grail, as well as learn how to correctly bake brownies so that they're smoochy on the inside. She sends thanks to Delirium and the rest of the Endless for the great job they're doing, and also to the masses for their wonderbra support.

Mary Linxweiler adores poetry and confirms what a professor once told her: "Que la poesía es el primer lenguaje, el único lenguaje." That is, poetry is the first language, the only language.

Cheryl Lohrmann is a senior Art/Graphic Design major and English Writing minor from Battle Ground, Washington. With her first photography class she discovered an interest in taking pictures of people and finding humor in everyday happenings. Her favorite photographer is Elliot Erwit, a taker of genuinely funny photos. Here's something he wrote: "Making people laugh is one of the highest achievements you can have. And when you can make someone laugh AND cry, alternately, as Chaplin does, now that's the highest of all possible achievements. I don't know that I aim for it, but I recognize it as the supreme goal."

Dawn M. Millsap is a senior from Michigan City, Indiana, with a double major in English and German. Rainer Maria Rilke is the poet most dear to her heart. Here follows a quotation from his poem "You the beloved...": "...Who knows if the same/ bird did not ring through both of us/ yesterday, alone, at evening?"

Jes Noon, a sophomore individual majoring in international service and theology, hails from "the magic city" of Birmingham, Alabama. No accent from these lips, but a love for her home and some good ol' southern cooking. "sometimes i wonder...what the rest of the country thinks of where i live. if all y'all see is segregation and civil war and before you buy the hazard boys...i hope you meet fried okra, goofy smiles and sweet iced tea among folks i call friends in a place i call home." --unknown southern band.

P. Sanchez is a sophomore from Portage, Indiana. His favorite authors include WH Auden, ee cummings, Whitman, Dylan Thomas and Sylvia Plath. "The dream that kicks the buried from their sack, then takes their trash honored like the quick, this is the world. Have faith." -Dylan Thomas

LuAnn Sawyer is a senior computer science major from Elgin, Minnesota with theology and math minors. This is her fifth (and final!) year due to co-op, study abroad, and changing her major. She has one word for her fellow morning stucons: squirrel!

Amar Singh is a senior from Northbrook Illinois, graduating in December of 1998. Photography is his form of artistic expression. It is something that he enjoys and is able to put a piece of himself into. Photography is a "medium, a language which I might come to experience directly, and live more closely with the interaction between myself and nature." He considers himself to be a completely organic photographer. Nature and travel photography are his topics of concentration. He has been fortunate to have travelled extensively throughout the years, countries including: Thailand, Singapore, Japan, Nepal, and India to name a few. He feels that it is these experiences that have allowed

him to mold myself as a person as well as a photographer

Naomi Strom is a senior from Bainbridge Island, Washington. She is an Art major concentrating on photography and an individualized major combining Art History and Communication. As always, her work is inspired by her entertaining friends and family, her love of the great outdoors, and the Seattle Mariners.

Liz Wuerffel is a junior majoring in Philosophy and History, and minoring in Art. She is the Layout/Design Editor for the 98'99 Beacon and is Vice President of the Philosophy Club.

You can be a part of the Spring 1999 issue of the Lighter!

WRITTEN ENTRIES DUE BY MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8

- entries can be dropped off at the Lighter office in the Union
- all entries must be neatly typed
- please include a cover sheet with your entries stating your name, address, and phone number
- your name must not appear on the entries

ARTWORK DUE BY FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26

- The Lighter accepts all artwork, including, but not limited to: drawings, photography, and digital art
- size: artwork must be of scannable size (11 x 17)
- color: artwork chosen for the front and back covers will be printed in color. All other work will be printed in black & white
- entries can be dropped off at the Lighter office in the Union
- please include a cover sheet with your work stating your name, address, and phone number
- All artwork will be returned

If you have any questions, or are interested in being on either selection committee, please call Jesi Vredevoogd at 548-8496 or e-mail jesi.vredevoogd@valpo.edu

