

A Literary  
Magazine

# **Watershed**

*Volume 32, Number 1*

## **Watershed**

Volume 32, Number 1

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*Carol MacKay*

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**Saturday, Waiting Outside the  
Recording Studio Barn (Ryley, Alberta)**

The trees lay a backing track against a lead shot sky;  
just a slight buzzing, like breath blown through the teeth of a comb  
and the periodic cracking of puddle ice.  
There are mole songs, humming, running beneath the receding snow,  
this year unnerving. Quieter.  
The fire in our exhaust speeds the lazy thaw,  
forces new hiding places as it radiates a half circle from the pipe.

This place knows it will be gone. Maybe not next year but soon.  
It is the consequence of engaging in creative audacity  
above veins of coal: 312 square kilometres of compressed darkness.  
When the skin of this land turns inside out to expose ancient bones,  
folksongs of the living, its gyroscope will bend, stop the spin because  
land doesn't bargain.  
It knows current for beard trimmers, rotating tie racks, rice cookers is  
the only currency.  
Worry-free over the dumping of oxides,  
green-sounding particulates that seep deep into its music,  
it simply plays the notes given.

## **On my way to warn Jesus**

I explore the lake and pray for rain  
to fill the huge bowl of dirt  
where once the reservoir lived.  
Jesus can't walk here. It's bad for his feet.

Earthworm bodies litter the ground,  
among sharp rocks and styrofoam.  
The ghost of a tule elk licks at parched earth  
while dragonflies shimmer  
towards the edge of disappearing.

This place beyond recovery,  
like my past  
when I angled in a watery world,  
floated along with the drift,  
and ebbed my years away.

With no license to fish,  
and caught in an undertow of debris,  
I create a blaze  
from plastic bags and milk cartons.

I fan flames to signal the fisher, Jesus,  
who waits for me on the spongy bank  
with poles and hooks.

*Lacey Saborido*

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**Cathedral**





## Yenowine Creek

My husband likes to steal the rocks from Yenowine Creek, bringing them home in the back of his truck, working all afternoon on a wall for my flowerbeds.

I go along, sometimes, and remind him to turn over each carefully, look for the tiny clear bubbles that don't pop, but jiggle a little with the life inside.

*You can't take that one*, I tell him. *You could be destroying a whole species*. So he replaces it carefully, but not enough, I think.

*Watch out for that one*. It won't do either. *There, shaped like a potato. See the bubbles floating to the surface, ones that pop*. *Crawdads*, I say fondly.

None of these will do either. I wouldn't be happy with them in my rock wall. They wouldn't be at home there. *If you take just one, you'll mess up the path*.

The skipping stone path to the meadows of the other side; then, how will we ever get over to see all the butterfly weeds afire in the sun?

With the monarchs floating across, playing tag, and then thirsty, stop for a breath and a drink. *If you'll just be still a moment*.

*We'll never get the wall finished this way*, you say and I think you're probably right.

## **Yesterday's Summer**

The sunlight slants in and catches  
a solitary mason jar, empty now  
of summer peach sweetness.

Scalded and soaked, wide mouth  
yawning, the emptiness of his  
future fills me to the exclusion of today.

Young girls, busy with the industry  
of beauty, having forgotten the  
secrets of their grandmothers.

Chamomile flowers nodding lonely,  
a decorative touch now, as they sip  
Green tea in recycled plastic bottles.

Hydroponic sweetness a pale  
comparison to Big Boys who once  
grew boldly in every backyard.

Homemade ice cream, delightful  
anticipation a cranking uncle with  
big rock-salt muscles.

Yesterday's summers lying  
forgotten in garages, filling  
slowly with the dust of anonymous spiders.

*Elizabeth Cannoy*

**Drunk Plaza**



## **Because I Stopped for a Sandwich**

40 kilograms of diseased flesh  
Hang from my tuberculosis-ridden bones.  
Here in Theresienstadt  
Who'd have thought  
A sandwich at Schiller's  
Would land yours truly,  
At 19,  
20 in Theresienstadt?  
One day we'll all see  
The very gun in  
The museum of military history.  
5 deafening shots for them,  
Cheap cyanide for me.  
I vomited painfully.  
The sixth and final  
Slug would have done the job  
If it weren't for the police.  
Just shy of 24,  
Here in Theresienstadt I'm fed  
No more.  
"Too small and too weak" they said.  
They were right  
Just shy of 24 and I am  
Here in Theresienstadt wishing I  
Wasn't hungry for a Schiller's sandwich  
That maroon and chaotic afternoon.  
Nedeljko too suffers the night chills  
And sweats and coughs.  
Appetite loss, how ironic.  
Avoided scrofula,  
So far death too.  
23 in Theresienstadt  
4 years back I took  
Franz, his Sophia too  
I swear I meant no  
Harm to the baby in her belly  
3 months along  
Because I stopped for a sandwich.

**Polyglot**

This is never downhill—  
Climbing books of syntax,  
Grasping at morphemes.

One must grip  
Cliffs with teeth.

Be hungry; spoon sounds.  
Gorge on glottals and aspirations.

Defeat—cut out the tongue,  
And from the top  
Of tower Babel,  
Throw it.

*Bob Garner*

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**Snowflower**



## **Mole**

My bestest friend Annie Randle calls it my beauty mark, like those movie stars had in the black and white movie days. It's right next to my nose, and my gramma had one too, in the same place. Annie says Marilyn Monroe had one, and that's what made her a star. The lady who played Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* had one too, but we can't remember her name. Anyways, Annie says it's beautiful and brown, just like her arms are chocolatey brown when we're up in her cherry tree in the summertime and the sun's shining so, so bright. I don't know why my stepdaddy wants it cut off. He calls it something else, something that isn't pretty at all.

What he calls it makes me think about those mounds of fresh dirt, piled up like Egypt's pyramids we learned about in school. When my stepdaddy sees those dirt piles in the lawn he says awful swear words and gets a shovel and turns on the garden hose. He shovels away the pyramids and stuffs the hose in one hole, then another hole, then another. When the holes are all filled up with water, and the grass is squishy green like a big old swamp, he leans on the shovel and drinks beer from a can with a big blue ribbon on it. He smiles and waits. His fingers open and close on the shovel handle.

I watched him from my window one day. It was awful, like the sound a soda-pop can makes when you pull the little ring. He waved that shovel over his head like them baton girls do in the half-time shows and the pop pop pop sounded sort of like the drums when the marching band starts up. Late that night I snuck outside. The shovel was next to the biggest pile of dirt, all muddy and sticky red.

He left it where he hit it. Its head was melting sideways like the way those chocolate dipped frostie cones from Big Al's do when it's hot. It had soft, shiny grey hair, kinda like the fur coats Marilyn Monroe wore in the movies. It musta been blind because I didn't see any eyes, but its nose was long like my pinkie finger, a pretty pink too. It was a teeny thing, really, to make all those big dirt piles in the grass that made my stepdaddy so mad.

The weird thing was its hands. They were like my baby hands I pressed in plaster for mama a long time ago. It had little baby hands with five little fingers and long yellow nails. Its mama should of cut its nails. I buried it in the backyard under the maple tree next to my dead dog Dusty and the goldfish my stepdaddy told me he buried there. I think he flushed them down the toilet.

Sometimes, I touch the little bump next to my nose, and I think about those little dirt piles it made in the lawn. Sometimes, I still think about its little people hands and those long yellow nails.

*Lisa Trombley*

## **Allegory of the Road**

A thirty-something man stuffs the last box into a Uhaul. There's 3200 miles of open road between him and Purpose. He's on the road with Kerouac, Dylan and Young licking his ears. He stops along the way at Motel 6, roadside burger stands, a strip joint or two.

He rolls through Needles, California after midnight. He notices how the moon etches the desert in silver light. A cactus drowns in light as it lifts its arms to the stars. The cactus is the shadowman traversing the land. He sees this as a good omen, but the moonlight hurts his eyes.

He passes through TexArkana two days later. He plays number games with road signs to stay awake. 6 Motel 6s on Route 66 makes what?  $6 \times 6 \times 66$  is 6 squared times 6 times 11. 11 and 6 is 17, which reminds him of how old she was when they met, although she lied and said 21, which is 11 and 6 plus half of 6 plus 1. The yellow lines double.

She told him once the road draws lines in, so you remember the road is both coming and going. Coming and going depend only on what side of the yellow line you're on. The road is on both sides. She said this long ago and he wonders why he thinks of it now. The yellow line reminds him of her hair, Summerfest Ale, and the swirl of daffodils she planted in their garden.

Seventy miles later he understands: the road is not an allegory. The road is just a road. He is a thirty-something man, alone behind the wheel of a Ford Taurus, and Purpose is before him. And behind him.



*Elizabeth Cannoy*

**Shine On**



*Kenneth Fries*

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## **Green Parakeets in South Chicago**

years ago two parakeets flew from a Hyde Park kitchen  
found haven to survive the bone-chill winter  
on the shore of Great Lake Michigan

now more than two  
sow green in that gray neighborhood  
of vacant lots and old apartment buildings  
circling the University

amid the smell of beer and Polish sausage  
where students heft and haul the ancient books  
wrestle with the rules of law and logic  
weave together dreams of Africa and art  
shape their skills as father urges  
still unlit their lamps of poetry

those birds roam the city parks where students  
on a break unleash their dogs  
Livingston and Thurber, others known by all  
chase hurled sticks and each other then are leashed again  
by owners holding back their own names

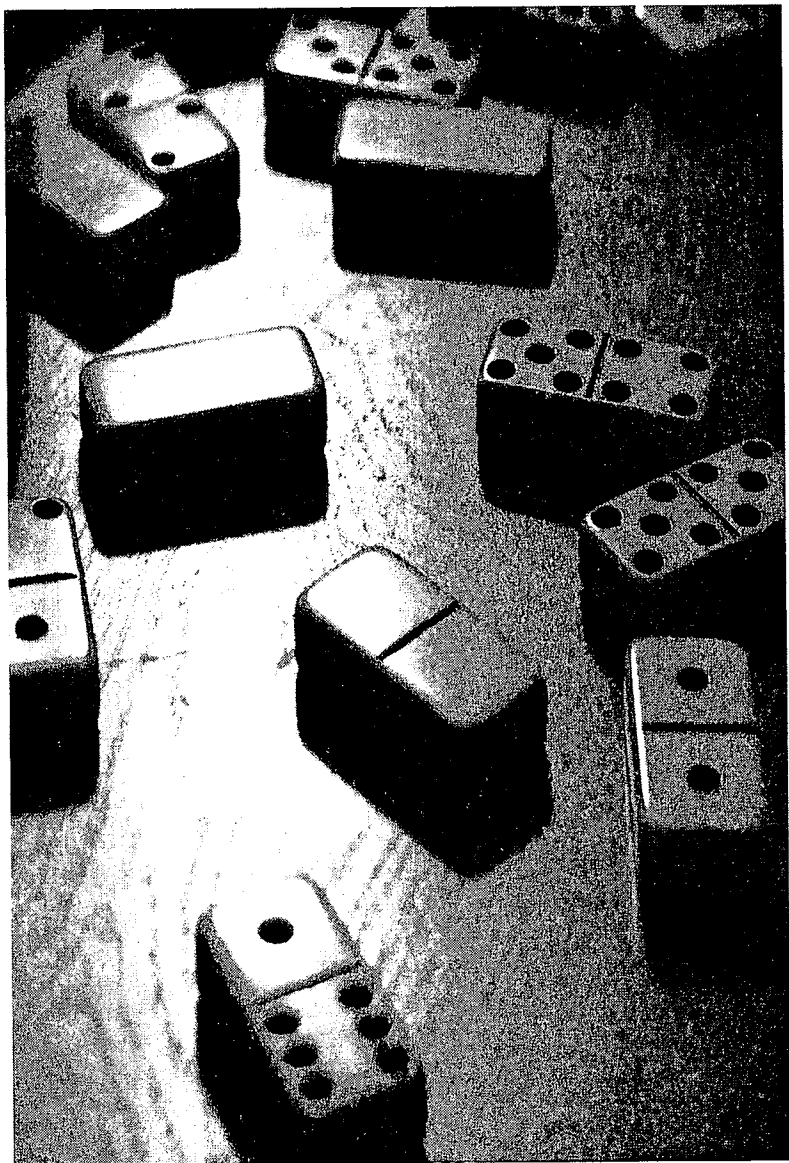
in other towns  
the birds are held in cages  
dying in a tiny world  
yet in South Chicago  
darts against the darkening skies  
green parakeets are free

**Russia**

A broken giant tethered  
to two foreign shores,  
where men's mouths settle downwards  
hard as anchors,  
and emperors' ghosts linger  
to worship in the temples  
erected on spilled blood;  
where women's eyes are relentless  
as ships that sift  
the sea for its captives  
drowned in baths  
of sharp minerals;  
and people pass by  
haughty  
as condemned Gods.

*Meggie Schultz*

## **Dominoes**



## **Wonder**

After the long illness and eventual passing of his mother, a young man from our neighborhood came to develop a morbid fascination with death, disease, and mortification of the body.

While he'd fairly skidded his way through his high school years, completely lacking in ambition or direction, out of the blue he announced that he'd decided to pursue a career as a paramedic. This was a respectable profession, he argued, one in which he could obtain state certification in relatively short order, and would provide him thereafter a good income (as well as a constant supply of the life-and-death experiences he longed for).

He attended health science classes at a local junior college, but suffered from test anxiety and routinely failed his exams. Boredom and a taste for alcohol and self-loathing further clouded his focus. He washed out of the EMT program before semester's end, then disappeared into the vast suburban sprawl.

The following summer his name popped up again. My wife learned that he'd taken a job as a delivery driver for a large commercial bakery.

Apparently he hadn't abandoned his dreams: there were sightings of our young friend in a rip-stop nylon jumpsuit, stethoscope dangling from his neck, police scanner holstered at his hip, delivering fresh loaves and muffins to local grocery stores. At the scene of traffic accidents, amid whirling emergency lights, a curiously out-of-place bread truck might be observed idling on disaster's periphery.

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## **Starship Blues**

You regret blowing up that last planet to hide your getaway. You regret having to leave her behind in that pod without an explanation, shooting her back to her father, the trigger-happy Ambassador. But most of all, you regret having to end your affair with the android. No amount of diplomatic skill could get you out of that love-triangle; no explanation could explain your affection for your faithful servant. She got too attached, and when you tried to end it, you had to drop her out an airlock onto the scrap-yard asteroid along with the garberator and out-of-order septic tank. In your nightmares, the android's square-wave voice creases its chiseled face with frown lines, distorting the craftsmanship of her beauty, howling at the binary moon, howling at the sunset sunrise, howling for comfort, tar and oil in her alkali cereal, the deafening absence of her master/lover, her brain stuck in an endless love loop.

The howling attracts the native lycanthropes bounding silently through the thin atmosphere. Their sharp fangs tear at her adamantium features. Her laser shots toss up chunks of bloodied fur and bone, as if the horde were merely a bunch of cut-up pillows, her tasers jolt the unlucky ones who fall, frothing at the mouth. The lycanthrope horde eventually subdues her, and rends her limb from limb. Unsatisfied with the feast of aluminum siding, they throw her carcass into the wishbone heap. The silver taste of her bloodstream causes a lingering allergic reaction, giving them something to think about, but not just yet.

They bury their dead lost in the battle. Their losses are numerous, the outcome unsatisfactory. Their skin itches in an odd, disquieting way. They feel discomfort at killing for the first time in their lives, and the more they think about it the more their skin itches. This allergic reaction becomes the conception point of an animal mind taken over by reason. Allergies make the lycanthropes go inside and hide from the sun and the safety of the pack mind. This solitude begets prolonged philosophical enquiry, self-doubt, and second-guessing, the embarrassment of drastic palm hair loss a precursor for embarrassments yet to come.

*Julian Gobert*

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**Everybody Wants To Be the Fonz**

Except

Henry Winkler

*Sarah Brown*

**Duck Discovery**





*Gary Lehmann*

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## **How to Levitate a Frog**

Take an ordinary swamp frog and offer him liberty in exchange for immunity.

Pass the subject frog over a plate of ionized steel for a full 15 minutes.

Charge the plate to 77 hertz. Do not over-heat, or the frog will explode.

The frog **MUST** agree never to reveal any of your up-lifting secrets,  
And to sign the “Voluntary Non-Collusionary Amphibian Consent Form.”

You are now fully prepared to levitate your frog using all natural methods.

For complete liability protection, be sure the frog has no living relatives.

Feed the frog small quantities of powdered barium and strontium 90.

Offer a chaser of pureed carrot tops mixed with a tasty worm paté.

Few frogs there are who can resist this succulent designer mixture.

To raise your frog, place him within the **ZONE OF LEVITATION**.

Hold the frog at full elevation for 15 minutes to amaze colleagues.

Don't mention the reproductive implications to the frog at this point.

Pass a silver hoop under the frog to dispel any lingering doubts.

Provide triplicate copies for the journal's reviewing staff.

Discard the frog.

Your reputation is made.

## **Leathered Lunches**

A million four-legged leathered lunches,  
rump-coarsed, lice, on a brown, and  
milky hide. The grazing creature once  
stood a'tanning, with masticating teeth,  
bred and hairy. "May I take your order?"

Nagging fliezzz her blinking sockets...  
shackle, hoist, clang and twist, her  
hooves a'kicking: volts and twitch. A  
Sin(ew) Zap! "Lightning?" Her silent,  
hanging, Brahman's glazed glare,  
no buzzes nagging, her terror stares.  
"Would you like cheese on that?" A

Four-limbed walking upright maggot,  
stomach-white smocked, goggled and  
gloved, his laughing bloody, fork lifts a  
Chino tortured, dis-eased...slaughtering.  
Onion, pickle, ketchup and, lettuce, *prey*...  
"Have a nice day."

Recalled fears, no fast-food tears, a cut  
saw slicing Patty hacked to peaces—her  
carriage soul, flushed away...like all those  
other million four-legged, leathered lunches.

## **Dear Geneseo Alumni**

An unusually thick envelope came in the mail last week, from my alma mater.

Dear Geneseo Alumni,

We know you took pride in Geneseo's high admissions standards when you were an undergrad. Those standards have gotten even higher since you graduated. Geneseo accepted 23% fewer freshman applications this year than we did for your graduating class, and the students we did accept scored an average of 122 points higher on the SATs than you and your classmates.

To ensure that a Geneseo degree remains the gold standard of public liberal arts education, we're asking that all alumni re-apply and be re-accepted to Geneseo under the new, higher standards. Alumni who do not re-apply, or are not re-accepted, will have their degrees officially rescinded.

Your re-application packet is enclosed. It includes information on re-taking the SATs and ACTs as well as a selection of re-admission essay questions. Please include an essay (under 2,000 words), based on the question of your choice, along with your reapplication.

I sent the packet to the far corner of my desk as if I was making it think about what it had done. Eventually I picked question number three.

Our records show you fulfilled all graduation requirements and paid your tuition in full. Setting aside those facts, why do you deserve to keep your degree?

I feared this day would come. Not in the particular form it has—this is overdone—but insofar as someone would catch on that I hadn't completed college.

This might be confusing to you. You sent me this letter because your records show I graduated. And, in the sense of being only a half-hearted class-skipper and avoiding the five-year plan, I did. Is that the gold-standard definition of "complete liberal arts education" we're going with though?

In four years I read one book I was not specifically assigned to read. I read it in my airless, paisley dorm single. Not ruminatively, under a tree, in the fading October sunlight—as admissions brochure iconography might lead you to believe. I knew I was missing The College Experience. Sporadically I'd go looking for it. Freshman year I

went to three meetings of the History Club. At the beginning of every semester I evaluated each new class and professor. Was this going to be The Life Changing Course? Was he going to be The Visionary Adjunct Who Sees Something in Me I Never Would Have Seen in Myself? When I went to office hours to follow-up, the potential seers would chat amiably for a few minutes about the last class assignment, then resume grading papers.

After four years had elapsed I got a diploma in the mail. I don't take any impish pride here. Nor do I think Geneseo didn't hold up its end of any implied bargain. Grad school was exactly the same.

If I arrange my still memories of higher ed into a flipbook and speed through, I see something—it's too metaphysical to call an explanation—emerge. I see myself putting in 75% of the effort a given task requires, over and over, and yet gliding over the bar every time. A force is at work in my life. There is an excellent physics metaphor somewhere in here that I cannot make, because physics would have been an awful lot of work for an elective. The force is akin to anti-gravity. I call it *cush*.

*Cush* is in action when a convenience store clerk sees you drop a commendable number of coins in the March of Dimes jar on his counter and smiles at you, even though if you knew how much you were going to put in (you were just trying to get rid of change) you would have held back. *Cush* can be hard to identify because it so closely resembles luck. The two are distinct: luck is the bold force of a winning lottery ticket. *Cush* is the forgiving presence of a snooze button. In the form of compliments that are solely polite, glances from women way outside your league and the deference of interns who don't know you hardly make more than they do, *cush* makes the crushing weight of human social life bearable. And wherever actors are raking in millions for phoned-in performances, wherever line workers are going for drinks at four and having their buddy punch them out, *cush* is greasing the wheels of the global economy.

I don't know why or how *cush* works. I can't prove it applies to anyone else but me, though I suspect. I do know that *cush* attracts more *cush*. I was sitting in a law office, across an assertively-sized desk from a lawyer who'd just hired me as part-time office help, when I noticed it.

"You're a grad student—," he said, searching for a paper.

I was. In a creative writing program. The only thing this said about my employability was that I can, with a single act, delay all

important decisions for two years. He saw it differently.

“—and I’d like to pay you at a level commensurate with your education.”

To him it was a generous afterthought. I felt like I found a dollar while cleaning my ears. I had been assuming that after Geneseo I would careen into the real world any minute and after that, no more sliding. Apparently not. Apparently these pieces of paper with Old English font were taken seriously. The lawyer gave me \$12 an hour and I shook his hand like someone getting away with something. Though I expected the feeling would fade once I started doing work.

That never happened. I went in and sat upright at my desk for 20 hours a week, as agreed. But there were only five hours of work for me, in a busy week. I did everything I was asked, responding with every zealous affectation short of “golly sir, I’ll have that for you right away!”

And still, every day I backstroked through an ocean of empty time, tentatively at first, furtively checking my e-mail, then voluptuously, reading nytimes.com until I got to the Style section and cruising the w4m sections of every Craigslist on the West Coast. Occasionally a panic would grip me, and I’d rush to be seen scribbling meaningless notes on a yellow pad, or dialing numbers I knew would not pick up. On some level I thought the entire office knew my game but let it slide because I was a nice guy. A couple months after I left I heard the lawyer had been sorry to see me go.

Here’s a possibility that terrifies me: after a while, cush settles in your subconscious and when you finally will yourself onto the high road every turn takes you back to a plush place.

My next gig was at a knockoff WebMD. It was run out of two dingy bedrooms in a peeling beige bungalow. The boss was an erratic, expressionless Korean doctor who’d lost all interest in running the company years ago. I was the in-house writer. My beat was acne and low-carb diets. And I was psyched. I’d been thinking of myself as a writer for some time and being paid to write made me more plausible.

The one, 1,500-word article I was expected to produce per week could have taken me three hours to research and write if I worked straight through. Then I’d have 17 solid hours of paid relaxing a week. But why rush? I spread my meager load out: 10 minutes of work an hour, four hours a day, five days a week. Usually, after 50 minutes had elapsed I’d be in the middle of reading something. So I’d push that ten minutes back to the next hour. I’d repeat the process until, late in

the afternoon, I'd flip back to the blank Word document and realize a solid 40-minute block of work stood between me and the end of the day. I'd slam all my browser windows shut and stare at the blankness for 20 minutes. Then I'd panic. Then I'd wish I had any other job in the world but this one. Then there were only a few minutes left, and what was the point of starting anything? So I'd open Explorer again.

At this point one of my co-workers might come in with a simple question and I would answer in a poisonous tone. I wasn't angry at them. I just wanted to see how far I could push them, and by extension, this insolent little job.

Little jobs, that's all these were. That's what I told myself when my eons of downtime curdled into a churlish sense of missed opportunity. All of it was beside the point now. I'd graduated and now I was starting my career. The future was clear: I was going to be a magazine editor. I had no particular magazine in mind. I didn't really read magazines. But it was a field and I was going to rise in it. I applied to dozens of places. After sleeping on my friend's living room floor in Queens for four nights, I became acutely afraid I would never have any money again, and took the first offer I got.

A subconscious cush reflex must be at work. I could not have chosen a workplace any more randomly than I did. And here<sup>1</sup> the cush-to-work ratio was so high I couldn't stay awake. Consciousness started slipping out of my grip at ten to two. So I would open a trusty blank Word document, place my elbow firmly on desk in front of the monitor, arm up, and rest my head in my hand. With my fingers curled around my cheek, it looked—to any passer—like I was staring down an intractable problem. Then I closed my eyes.

I put my arm too far forward on the desk, so that my face looked eye-numbingly close to the screen. I didn't know that then. I figured my big challenge would be preventing the screen saver from flipping on while I was under. So I rested my free hand on a random keyboard letter. If I really went out, my forearm would relax, my finger would fall on a key and exposure would be staved off. And, with Rube Goldberg beauty, the involuntary drop of my hand onto the keyboard would bump me back awake. I could have just disabled the screen saver from the control panel. But my feeling was, if you can't have fun falling asleep on the job, what's the point?

It worked. Until I poked out of the woozy darkness and felt my boss' face hovering inches over my shoulder. Out the fogged over

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<sup>1</sup> It wasn't a magazine, or even close. We're getting closer to the present now and, as I dig steady income, details are going to fade.

corner of my right eye I saw he was concerned. He was looking at the monitor. My finger had fallen on a key. It hadn't woken me. In the white void of the otherwise empty document, it had dashed off an unspaced and unexplainable trail of 187 v's.

He clapped me on the shoulder. "You might need new glasses," he said. There was no mockery in his voice. When I quit a few months later they offered me a raise to stay.

I will say nothing of my current employment, other than that certain trends look probable to continue indefinitely. And—I could live with this. The ten years since I started at Geneseo have made me a reflexively comfortable person. Mondays are the same to me as Fridays. There have been side effects, mostly minor. I can't sit up straight in an office chair anymore. I become suspicious of my colleagues when I see them working earnestly, and when they don't get my *bon mots* to the effect that work is a big joke we're all in on. And the self-doubt. I still assume that deep down I am an intelligent and diligent person who, one day, will be an indispensable asset to the right company. But I don't actually have any evidence of this. If I never did, could I live with that?

Now you come along waving the bolshevik proposition that a decade of cush can and should be eliminated.

What if your proposition was broadly implemented across society? First the economy would collapse. Hundreds of millions of us—all of us: well-paid CEOs of tanking companies, janitors who steal naps in mop closets they rigged to lock from the inside—would swamp unemployment offices. Factor in the follow-on disintegration of consumer spending, factory production and investment, and we're looking at a scenario which would find a plurality of Americans in flat-screen-TV-box huts, hungrily masturbating to the erotically tinged overtones of superabundance in Dorothea Lange photos.

At least economically we'd have some sense of direction as we fell. Cushless social life is terra incognita. It's easy enough to imagine a single dour convenience store clerk who would never smile at you for donating to the jar. But try a world where no convenience store clerk ever smiled at you, ever.<sup>2</sup> Or, a world where letting a less-than-sincere "thanks" or "you're welcome" slip out in conversation with an acquaintance would be as awkward as dropping an "I love you."

Thus, I find the prospect of being shaved of my college degree...

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<sup>2</sup> Because even if you said "I'm feeling generous today, I think I'll donate," as you made your deposit—how could he ever really know your motivations? How could anyone?

exciting. If you took it back I would sequentially lose my master's. Then I'd lose my job. I'd send out hundreds of slapped together resumes trying to reach anyone who would employ me without a degree, smoldering through my savings in the process. Whatever I landed would require actual work, and pay much less. I could lose my condo. My personality would almost certainly warp under a decade's worth of deferred effort. My wife—who I met while I was working at the law office—could leave. The only way forward would be back: to school, really graduate this time, and really work. I could, in another 10 years, probably claw my way back to the bourgeois perch I occupy today. Or not. I don't fundamentally care. Either way, I would be pushing against the cool, complete surface of the real world as I went.

The only knot in the plan is that I have enjoyed writing this essay. Some I wrote at work, in my me-time, maximizing an old spreadsheet over it the few times I sensed my boss was about to pass behind my cubicle. The rest I wrote at home, in my study, on my 19" Dell monitor—all made possible by my cushy salary. As my real name isn't on this, I'm not so embarrassed to confess that I thought about this essay when I was not working on it, and that I enjoyed the act of polishing it, draft after draft. Completed, it feels like a silvery shard of the real person I would be if it weren't for cush.

An abrupt paradox: without the benefits of cush, I could not have developed this mirror that reflects who I would be without cush. In an alternate, cushless reality, I would be so consumed by honest work, or so successful at whatever I ended up doing, that I would have neither the time nor inclination to write contrived re-admissions essays. Is this really a conundrum though? If I have something that seems to be a small part of my more-perfect self, shouldn't I trade it for a complete, cushless more-perfect self? I should. But I can't bring myself to make the transaction.

My hope is that you'll have had to re-read the above paragraph several times and, either bored or impressed with my depth, you'll have stopped reading there: because I still don't deserve my degree. The best I can do is a prediction. If you let me keep my degree, I'll quietly stay at the same job—or a series of very similar ones—wrapped in a featherbed of unearned regard for the rest of my life. If you take the degree, in my subsequent job search I'll have to tell my interviewers that I am, at least in a poetical way, the product of a Geneseo education.



*Lacey Saborido*

## **Panza Meets His Creator**



**Feet**

When did my feet get so far away?  
My legs have lengthened, taking  
my feet with them,  
and like friends who move away,  
I no longer know their secrets.

I have no time to spend pretending  
my feet are people with complicated lives,  
who yell at each other with a twitch  
of the toes, and make up just as quickly  
with an awkward arched embrace.

No more do my feet rise out  
from the bathwater, then sink back  
below, growling and lurking  
like prehistoric creatures whose  
remains are found in museums.

My closet no longer fills  
with carefully chosen shoes,  
not meant to cover, but to adorn  
my feet, with bright colors, brand names  
painted on skin of slaughtered lives.

I've lost all interest in preening my feet  
with "Binge and Purge Pink" or  
"Rhinoplasty Red," breathing  
in the toxic air of beauty,  
of stale femininity.

Growing up from my feet  
has widened my stride, now  
a downward glance reveals  
traveler's tool, hints of yesterday,  
hiking towards tomorrow.

**Prey**

I saw the small child laying limp, then  
jerking under pressure.

I saw the attempt  
of desperate ER hands, pressing  
chest and mouth.

My stomach dropped,  
the way an osprey shoots  
from the stillness of trees,  
down,

distorting a double  
world on water, then  
returning to her hidden perch  
among the pines, ready  
to sharply kiss her prey  
clasped tight in talons.

I can almost hear the fish's tribe,  
crying out from their watery depths,  
the way the child's mother  
cried out in pain,  
perhaps never to leave the guilt  
that comes with something so small  
becoming prey to a predator that  
cannot be defied.

## **Breakfast with Grandma**

Every morning, and every night  
Grandma pricks her fingertip, squeezes a drop of crimson  
Onto a bright white blood glucose test strip,  
Waits for a digital answer to appear on a small gray screen,  
Clicks a cheap mechanical pencil, and  
Scribbles the numbers in a sulfur-yellow notebook  
She will show to her doctor, to be sure she isn't  
Consuming a toxic level of mashed potatoes.  
A vivid cardinal worries a thin branch just outside the window,  
Reminding her of another story I've heard before, but  
I listen, nodding, knowing  
She retells to remember, to return.  
The scratched laminate kitchen table top  
Is cluttered with large print, easy-open pill bottles, and  
Paper napkins overflowing from  
A molded plastic Praying Hands holder.  
The old TV hums and crackles beside her as  
She works a crossword puzzle (to keep her mind sharp),  
And watches "The Price is Right" for the  
Dependable tangerine stage  
And bright, eager smiles.  
Then, the News. With an emphatic frown,  
She accuses those Democrats, Liberals,  
Heathens, Homosexuals,  
Blacks and Mexicans,  
Of destroying our nation...  
Meanwhile, she doesn't hear the body count,  
And she doesn't notice my silence  
As I sit carefully carving segments into a grapefruit half,  
Acidic juice burning in a small cut on my hand.  
She calls me "Angel" when I bend to give her a hug  
On my way to the faucet. Water flows and beats  
Against the bottom of the metal sink while I wash the  
Stinging stickiness from between my fingers.  
The wooden chair creaks and complains  
As I sit down next to Grandma, and  
Pick up the "Arts & Living" section of today's newspaper.  
Her trembling hand stirs a pink packet of Sweet and Low  
Into watery decaffeinated coffee, the  
Spoon clinking against the cracked cup.

**the sun shines through January, today  
but he's not looking at her**

he's curling paper ends to strings  
for the tongue & groove joint  
that fastens lung to eye, life to mind  
with the swell of smoke behind it

there at the park that  
infatuation has inherited before  
for hovering loves akin  
gasping at abstractions &  
slaying themselves with themselves  
just dying over it

while clouds, unconcerned, lurch at daylight  
he's talking at her about an apartment  
& he's talking at her about a dog

but trouble she finds in the  
heaps of years from now  
when she's not hen to his cock  
but clocking in sleepy couch love  
and pig belly beer love while  
barefoot in the kitchen, he eats  
turkey on sourdough with  
no tomatoes, ever, love.

& how the sunshine urges,  
when he looks at her &  
"baby," he says, "you better  
take that diamond ring,  
you better pawn it fast"

what trouble she finds  
there in the green & grey  
& grass of the afternoon  
where the slack driving sun  
glow his eyes blind  
& her naked shell knuckles with the  
crescents caked dirty with resin  
lift his joint & take his last drag

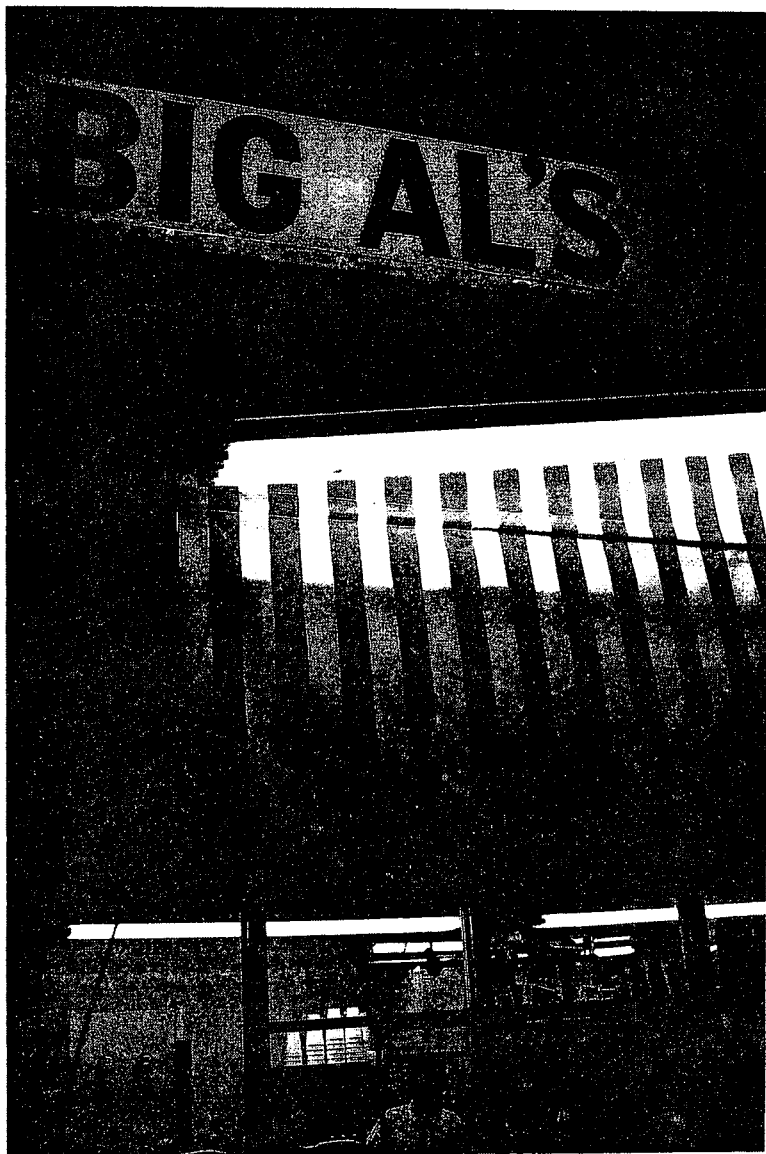
“I never had a diamond ring before”  
she says with a sigh

& knows the sun is soon done in  
because every time that night pleads heavy

it dies, it dies,  
it dies

*Sharon DeMeyer*

**Big Al's**



*Sharon DeMeyer*

## **Drive-Thru Love**

Knights on white stallions, searching for true love,  
Leave in their wake trampled black and blue love.

Scoop out my honeycomb, lick my pot clean,  
Roll me in new mud, Winnie-the-Pooh love.

Down on the farm, and deep in the haystack,  
Roosters making cock-a-doodle-do love.

Seal in my juices, keep basting my chops,  
Set me ablaze, glowing barbeque love.

Stiff grooms at the altar, down on their knees,  
White-washed brides vowing "yes, yes I do" love.

Lonely travelers with bulging baggage,  
Strangers on trains ask "how do you do love?"

Glass-slippered slave girl on a pumpkin ride,  
Charming bippity-boppity-boo love.

Land of the brave and home of the free dumbs,  
Americans wave red, white, and blue love.

Chalk it up to blue-tipped sticks, call your shot,  
Eight ball in the corner pocket cue love.

Lather me up with Herbal Essences,  
Rinse and repeat me with Suave shampoo love.

Sticky fingers running through my wet hair,  
Curling my toes with Dippity-Doo love.

Buried my face in your pillow of dreams,  
And over the cuckoo's nest you flew love.

Cool creamy swirls dipped in warm chocolate sauce,  
Sharon's consumed by soft-serve drive-thru love.



*Sharon DeMeyer*

## **The Encyclopedia of Spots**

*After James Richardson's "The Encyclopedia of Stones"*

*—for Troy Jollimore*

Not all spots are created equal.  
They are often marked by an X.  
They can be very stubborn and hard to remove.  
They don't like being associated with their distant relatives,  
    chickenpox and measles.  
They like to think outside the blotch.  
Staring at a bright light enhances their beauty.  
Their favorite creatures are giraffes, cheetahs, ladybugs, and Dalmatians.  
Their German cousins are known as polka dots.  
They are mostly seen and not heard.  
One spot may hide another.  
They think pink, when they think about love.  
Their favorite book is *Fun With Dick and Jane*, especially the part  
    about the dog.  
They think freckles are beautiful.  
Bleach makes them nervous.  
Little Dot was their favorite cartoon.  
They think squares are edgy and boring.  
Children can play safely around them without bumping their heads on any  
    corners.  
Spots bounce back quickly from tragedy and heartache.  
They believe in miracles.  
When they cry they make puddles.  
Playing dot-to-dot makes them feel connected.  
Their babies are called speckles.  
They are superstitious about the number zero.  
Their favorite tongue twister is "*Spot spat spicy Spam through a special  
    slotted spoon.*"  
They prefer dot matrix to inkjet.  
Spots and holes are not the same, although it can be very difficult to  
    tell the difference, especially in the dark.  
Their favorite Beatles' song is "A Day in the Life."  
They are fascinated by stars.  
They believe that nobody's a perfect circle.  
Pancakes are their favorite food.  
When they join together, they are bigger than the sum of their spots.  
They are not strong swimmers, but they have mastered the art of floating.  
Without them, life would be spotless.

Kelly Reeve McGarva

## **Those Dates**

He'd like to think this is a date,  
This cousin of a brother of a roommate's lover.

And at first, that seems okay,  
Even when he orders two Orange Julius teas

Without asking first my preference.  
Or when he tips the bartender his fifty-cents change.

It's not immoral to be thrifty.  
And most people probably like the aftertaste of cream.

I don't mind any of this, you see,  
Until he starts to ask me "favorite" questions—

*What's your favorite season?* Summer.

*What's your favorite food?* Lamb Gyros

*What's your favorite color?* Caribbean Blue

And by the time he gets to my favorite animal,  
I know this is one of *those* dates—

The exchange of answers to questions  
You answered on a third-grade survey

Over eighteen years ago—  
Those dates that we remember, Ladies,

Not as dates, but as free drinks we paid too much for.  
So to his question, I respond:

My favorite animal is the squirrel, you see.  
I love to watch them chase each other,

Whirling their tails up and down the trunks of trees  
Like crepe paper twisted around an American maypole.

At first I always think they're playing games, you know,  
Those games people play before they fall in love?

But then I realize he is chasing her for another reason.  
You see, she's got his nuts.

At least one of his nuts. She's got it tight between her teeth,  
And it's driving him crazy.

And somehow, she remains one squirrel-length ahead,  
Leading him in front of speeding tires,

A Handyman Mower 2000, and Snappers the Terrier.  
And of course, she does this on purpose

All day long, until Mr. Squirrel cannot chase any longer.  
Then she sits in a nearby tree and breaks his nut open,

Dropping its contents to the crows,  
Because you know, she didn't really want it anyway.

That's why squirrels are my favorite animal.  
But I like horses too.

Kelly Reeve McGarva  
**The Interpreter's Chair**

*It is possible I have imagined my entire life*  
—Manguso

The interpreter's chair...is empty. Is always empty. I dare to hold memory's trace paper to the light, to lift the pen and remember... what...you would have remembered different.

All I have ever *known* has been imagined—like bowls of dusty fruit equaling still life. Is still life? I imagine the glazed crème bowl from raw clay beneath my feet, earth's decadence, useful. I imagine today as the sum from some time rounded up in Past's frothy, crowded harbor.

The crowning bald head of interpretation is birthed daily through imagination's lofty canal.

Facts drop like rocks, smoothed and polished from tumbling through the sandy sheets of sky.

• • •

What if you are wrong about the plutonic world beyond this one? What if you are wrong about those rooms filled with iridescent spirits who, I imagine, struggle to prop their once-feet on ottomans of cloud—who never *knew* their bodies. What would we talk about then? I do not want to just exist forever.

How sad you cannot trust your senses—*See*. The way light through leaves cuts lace into cement. *Feel*. A velvet-gloved hand graze your naked thigh Christmas morning. *Smell and Taste*. The purple-bleeding blackberries picked straight from the bush, an end-of-summer tradition. *Hear*. The thorns. Your voice.

Leaning back on the precarious stilts of truth, you realize you've been sitting the entire time, not a single page turned, this world tired of waiting.

*Bob Garner*

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**Soldier**



**Committed**

This will seem like a morbid transgression,  
a blasphemous sign of disrespect,  
but when I saw you in your box—  
your skin ashen, papered-thin,  
your empty mouth cotton-puffed, sewn slightly turned up—  
I battled urges to knock it over,  
to claw drag your body out,  
punch your fortyyearyoung Life back into you,  
scream selfish prick! even though I know you weren't;  
Why couldn't you commit to transition, to self reinvention,  
instead of suicide?  
Why find somewhere tiny inside,  
a split second of courageous weakness to commit  
permanent change, an irreversible departure.  
Why give a bullet so much power?  
I want to grab fists of your hair,  
whisper in your hardened ear  
you left here a graveyard—  
flesh and bone markers  
of the family you  
once belonged.  
And I try not to,  
but I can't help wonder if  
those moments  
as your breath  
ceased to exist  
whether you had time to regret,  
whether you thought leaving for  
the unknown  
wasn't better than staying here.

**Glass Kites**

I woke up this morning curled in cold sweats,  
Carved from an emptiness I can only describe to you in a language I don't  
even know how to speak,  
But I am determined to breathe reclamation back into myself,  
And I've been here at the edge of a rain dance for a really long time,  
Fragile and impractical like a glass kite that doesn't remember how to fly  
back to God.

I've grown weary from wearing counterfeit smiles,  
And I'm waterlogged by the velocity of living in the updrafts,  
But every time I bend down to touch brilliance,  
I end up with a pocket's worth of prayers that taste like dust storms.

I was born on the wrong side of standing still,  
And sometimes I need kaleidoscopes to see clearly  
When I finish reading the bedtime stories we've told ourselves  
In order to sleep better next to the gravity that drags us under,  
We can't recover what lockjaw and nightmares stole from us,  
And we have to stop decorating the walls of the Hell we've mistaken for  
home.

Now you've got the axe,  
And I've got the grind stone,  
But we both know that it's only possible to sharpen catharsis with shivers  
from your spine,  
I wonder if there's enough courage in this world to cover the stutter in  
mine,  
Because my jigsaw skin has forgotten where it's been,  
And my hands shake at the burden of remembering where I am,  
As if to say:  
"Don't worry, arms,  
You'll never have to fist fight with the sky."

But my glass kite doesn't come equipped with a ripcord,  
And I'm clinging onto rope burns like they need to be held more than me.

I feel like a sock puppet with a pulse,  
Gagged by cracked halos and airtight lies,  
Watching as we shove silence so far down our throats that we choke on  
our inability to believe  
That there's absolutely nothing wrong with being desperate.

I have not taken my first true steps yet,  
I've only just learned how to stand like matchsticks,  
But when the carpetbaggers held a flame to the world,  
I stopped to watch it burn:  
Rubbernecking like conveyor belts turning to the sound of what  
freedom used to mean.

Now crowds of opaque people pick forgiveness from their teeth,  
With tongues wrapped in razor wire just to split the difference  
Between talking out of one side of their mouths before the other.

They're goose-stepping like an army of the bar-hopping dead,  
And I will not follow them into the rain.

I've taken up writing poetry in Morse Code  
So someone might decipher these directions to parts of me they can't see,  
Before I trade it all in for a pair of tchotchke dreams,  
And a paper-thin future of punching holes in my skull,  
Because I think too loudly,  
And breathe too heavily:  
Fogging up my glass kite like there's nothing on the other side of the sky.

My right hand is full of eraser dust,  
And my left is resting on a chest of heartbeats,  
I want to find the missing pieces of my spine,  
Because I'll need them where I'm going.

And I pray for those with countdowns between their ribs instead of  
journeys,  
Who fill themselves up with lifetimes of waiting for something that's  
sitting right in front of them.

What do you do when your smile feels crooked?  
Sometimes mine falls like a landslide,  
When I try to stretch enough mercy across it to contain all the pain  
I've locked away.

And I pray that the last of these will be the first to see past the bullets,  
Because the holes shot into this soul are big enough to carry memories  
of God,  
And all the years of screaming out for something to cover me in the rain



Are like battery acid coating the throat of a poem humble enough to  
whisper,  
And hero enough to shout

I'm shoving wires inside your ears,  
Can you hear me now?

There are earthquakes set to "repeat" inside of my chest,  
And it feels just like 10,000 miles of "I'll be home soon,"  
But I've promised the world to someone who asked for the moon.

I can only pour out of myself so much,  
I can only cast the first stone so many times before I realize that I'm  
just breaking my glass kite,  
Like a window into the heart of those who can't see Heaven,  
Those who build monuments for every dead end,  
Those who pretend it doesn't hurt to read scar tissue with sea salt,  
Who carry blizzards on their backs for the things they can't run from,  
Who spout rapid-fire nothings to no one,  
They say listen:

"Martyr,  
Pick up your shovel,  
Dig into that bag of neglected poem fragments,  
You'll want them when your pen becomes a crutch..."

Or...

"Brother,  
Pick up your skull,  
Reconstruct its contents  
So you'll be able to see what fits for the first time..."

Or...

"Poet,  
Pick up your spine,  
You'll need it after leaving this place of accidental bravery..."

Now, walk out into the rain with me,  
Empty your heart of all its paper targets,  
Fold them up like prayers,  
Soak them in God,

Then seal them shut with a soft spot,  
A stitched kiss,  
And a silver-lined stamp.

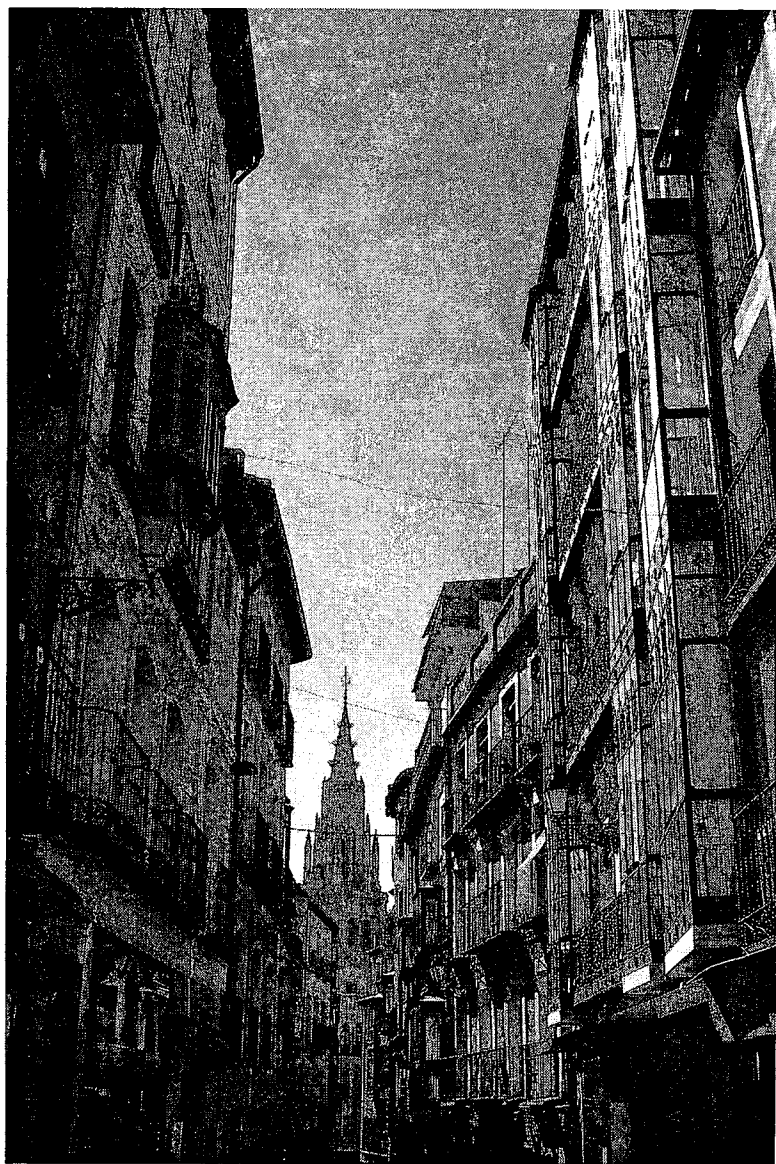
Etch it all into a glass kite and fly it back to sender,  
Complete with a message that reads:

“Take care,  
This is not a counterfeit style.”

*Lacey Saborido*

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**El Gran Protector**



## Flush

The American does not speak Spanish, but it does not matter. He rarely speaks English. He spends his mornings in the *jardines*, *parques*, and *cementerios* of San Miguel de Allende. He wields a notebook, a pen, and a saber-curved mustache.

While loafing in the park between Guadiana and Potranca, he catches a sharp voice now and again: "*Te amo...te amo...te amo.*" He slashes his gauntness through a hedge of aloe to investigate and spots, beyond a courtyard fence, a red-streaked green parrot caged on the stone stoop of an apartment. Inside, a young maid mops the glazed terra cotta tile floor. He squints at her through the spear-tipped-iron-barred window and scratches something in his notebook. She glances and snaps shut the blinds.

Earlier, after scrubbing the sidewalk, the maid left the courtyard gate ajar. The flagstones are still wet with lime-scented soapy water. The American pauses to enjoy this fresh, common scent, and then plunges into the shady courtyard. He cuts toward the door and then draws up short. He hears the deliberate click of the door lock. He runs his fingers over his moustache as if it were a blade, slits his eyes back at the sun-flayed street, and then sinks onto a low dry-stack stone wall.

The parrot stops talking and paces back and forth along her perch. Sweat splays between the American's shoulder blades onto his Western-style shirt. A black-and-yellow butterfly darts about his head stopping to feed on the splattered red droplets of flowers in a crown of thorns tangle. Eventually, the American rises and approaches the apartment. His boots chirp on the clean bricks.

The maid, peeking through the blinds, drops her mop, and dials the *policía*, but it is too late. From a finely tooled leather scabbard, the American draws a decorative silver-and-turquoise Bowie knife he bought that morning at the *Mercado de Artesanías*. It smells of new leather and gun oil. With the six-inch blade, he pries open the door, and with his free hand, he flushes the parrot from the cage.

## Linger

A scarlet tanager here  
is not a fantasy. A transparent-winged  
swallowtail sips the common mud.  
Women walk off magazine

covers and sip large cocktails  
of fruit, rum, and lime.  
It is always *verano* with showers  
of sun and breezes of shade. Mangoes

rest together like a hutch  
of small mammals. Roses are baled  
like hay. The music is never over.  
Fountains drizzle over like warm

sweet oil into earaches.  
Swarms of yellow and black  
hornets worship in the rivulets.  
It is a table setting of dry bread,

rosé wine, and polished silver.  
The spell cannot be broken  
with crushed peppermint, sprigs  
of rosemary, or cold compresses

packed with basil and ferns. Come  
sit under the swaying palms  
and hold my brown hand.  
The flagstones are smooth

and warm. The cobblestones  
are an arroyo of dance.  
Linger like a dream.  
Linger.

## **Contributors**

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ANNALISA BRIELLE CORIOSO

was born and raised in Fairfield, California, in a mixed heritage household. She is majoring in Linguistics and Spanish. She studied abroad last school year in Madrid. She loves to study foreign languages, and is working as an English tutor for non-native students. Poetry is important in her life, as well as jazz, world music, and her languages.

SARAH BROWN

is a Journalism major on her way to CSU, Chico, with interests in photography, foreign language, and travel. She prefers comfort and practicality. Sarah likes the sound of clanking empty clam shells, Cracker Jack surprises, and parking backwards. She dislikes it when her nose itches at work.

ELIZABETH CANNOY

was born into a close, large, artistic family with more testosterone than estrogen. She lived amongst the trees in Oregon for the first 19 years of her life. Living in that green and blue gave way for her whimsical mind to waltz with creative impulses, that she continues to indulge. She writes, paints, sketches, does photography, and much more. She thanks God for having placed her in a family enriched with creative minds.

SHARON DEMEYER

graduated from CSU, Chico with a BA in English in 1996, and is currently a graduate student in the English department focusing on creative writing.

JIM ELLISON

lives in Paradise, with internal conflict. He earned a BA in Psychology from CSU, Chico. "Leathered Lunches" is his first published piece.

BRIANNE EPLEY

is a fourth-year senior at Chico State and will be graduating in spring 2009 with a BA in English. She hopes to continue her education on the East Coast, become an English professor, and smash patriarchy.

KENNETH FRIES

has been living in Chico for the past four years with his wife, Janet, since retiring as a federal attorney with the US Agency for International Development in Washington, D.C. He has been writing poetry for the last 15 years, inspired by travel, time for reflection, and the encouragement of other writers here in Chico.

BOB GARNER

is still “on the road to find out.”

JULIAN GOBERT

is a filmmaker, composer, and writer currently living in Toronto, Canada. He received an MFA in Electronic Music and Recording Media from Mills College in Oakland, California. His poetry had previously appeared or is forthcoming in *CV2*, *Grimm*, *Carousel*, *Quills*, *Existere*, *The Chaffin Journal*, *Freefall*, *dANdelion*, *The Nashwaak Review*, and *Pilot Pocket Book*.

EMILY GRELLE

is a junior and an English major. If she could bring three books to a desert island they would be *Perelandra*, *Under Plum Lake*, and *Ariel*.

LARA GULARTE

earned an MFA from San José State University, where she received several Phelan Awards and the Anne Lillis Award for Creative Writing. Her poetry has appeared in *Watershed* and such journals as *Bitter Oleander*, *The Fourth River*, *Windfall*, and the *Santa Clara Review*. She is an assistant poetry editor for *Narrative Magazine*.

RICH HELLER

has poetry that has appeared or is forthcoming in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *Three Rivers Review*, *Collision*, *Georgetown Review*, *Hiram Poetry Review*, *THEMA*, *Acorn*, and *Pearl*, among others.

ICHABOD

is the pseudonym of a New York area writer who is given to understand that employers are now googling their employees.

GARY LEHMANN

has been twice nominated for the Pushcart Prize. His poetry and short stories are widely published. His books include *The Span I will Cross* (Process Press, 2004) and *Public Lives and Private Secrets* (FootHills Publishing, 2005). His most recent book is *American Sponsored Torture* (FootHills Publishing, 2007).

CAROL L. MACKEY

has poems that have appeared in *Prairie Journal*, *The Fiddlehead*, *Antigonish Review*, and anthologies such as *Threshold: Contemporary Writing From Alberta* (University of Alberta Press) and *Writing the Land: Alberta Through Its Poems* (Blue Skies Press). Carol lives on

Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

LESLEY MATTHEWS

is in her first semester at Chico State as a transfer student from Mt. San Jacinto Community College in southern California. She came to Chico State specifically for the Certificate in Literary Editing & Publishing, and was senior editor for her high school's literary publication.

ED MILLER

resides in Fresno and works as an immigration officer at the federal building downtown. A couple of his stories have lately appeared in *Steam Ticket* and *Midway Journal*. A volume of his poetry, *The Whole Enchilada* (Cervena Barva Press, 2006), was nominated for a Pushcart, but the judges apparently are impervious to sops.

KELLY REEVE MCGARVA

has a BA in English and a minor in creative writing. For her, writing is like finding her way to the bathroom in the dark. No matter how many sleeping dogs she has to trip over first, it's always worth the relief. These are her first submissions under her new last name.

LACEY SABORIDO

and her husband are inseparable. They can most often be found at the Used Bookstore downtown or sharing a bowl of green curry at Sophia's Thai. She spends most of her free time devouring literature and poetry and watching foreign films.

TOMMY SABORIDO

grew up in Chico and is graduating in May with a degree in Psychology. He is interested in Gavrilo Princip and the first World War and driving around town looking for places John Gardner and Raymond Carver may have been. He works at Planned Parenthood and is currently applying to the Peace Corps. He studied abroad with his wife and has traveled to Morocco, the Balkans, and Turkey.

MEGGIE SCHULTZ

is a junior studying English and minoring in Creative Writing and Public Relations. Photography is a hidden passion of hers that is slowly beginning to rise to the surface, urging her to consider a minor in the subject. Whether it be writing or photography, her main goal is to create an image that evokes emotion and imagination in all.



C.C. THOMAS

has been published in *The Chaffin Journal*, *Hot Metal Press*, *The Litchfield Review*, *Bellowing Ark*, *Toasted Cheese*, *Hard Row to Hoe* and *Lucidity*, among others. As well as being on staff at a local newspaper and for an online magazine, he currently teaches reading and writing at the middle school and collegiate level and has been in this field for 10 years.

LISA TROMBLEY

graduated from CSU, Chico in 1991 with degrees in English and Humanities. After an 18-year detour working in banking, she recently returned to CSU, Chico to continue her studies in English and Creative Writing. She shares her passion for the Chico community with Dave, her husband of 19 years, and their two boys, Trent and Trevor.

JENNIFER WHITE

is inches from finishing her Master's in English and miles from being the kind of mother, teacher, and wife that she believes possible. Her poem is dedicated to her big brother Michael Allen Bailey. His struggle and ultimate loss to his demons two years ago aided her in slaying hers. In his death bloomed her epiphany that continuing to submerge herself in doubt and inaction is far worse than living with actual doing, failing, and trying again. In his death, she learned that living is the process of active revision.

HEATHER WILSON

is currently studying Literature, with a focus in Creative Writing, at the University of North Carolina at Asheville. Her writing has appeared in *Speechless* and *Speak of the Devils*.

MATTHEW ZELLMER

was born on the wrong side of standing still. He carries fields of four-leaf clovers on his back for the sake of good luck. He keeps an ocean's worth of dried-up poem fragments in his throat. He has high-maintenance goosebumps. He's got a really bad habit of beating himself up from the inside-out...he also likes tea...and tube socks.

