ConjuRings

Literary Magazine
of
St. Louis College of Pharmacy

Spring 1999

To call or
    bring to mind.
To evoke.
    To imagine.
To picture

Editor:
    Sara Lockard
Faculty Advisor:
    Marilyn Fontane
Cover:
    "Wandering Mind"
    Leah Kingery
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Tracy
4/22/98

by Tasha Stinson

In and back out of my life
She came and went so fast
Smiling, laughing, talking
Always happy, right to the last.

I met her back in January
When she chose to pledge KE
She became my lil lil sis
And made me so happy!

She was always having fun
Knew everyone she passed in the hall
Everyone was her friend
She was not a shy one, at all!

While talking on our cell phones
I'll never forget the time
I walked right in the men's restroom
And saw a man's bare behind!

That night, I got to meet Justin,
And oh how she smiled
As she watched him bowl,
Laugh, and run around wild!

On Easter Tracy left us
And went to her home
She'll always be in my heart
So, I'll never be alone.
Song Of Evangeline

Moonlight gleams silver... creating shadows upon swampy shores
Sweet scent of pregnant earth, saturates sultry night
   Evangeline waits-
Beneath heavy cypress boughs,
   Down by the Creole banks
Pagan drums pulse-
   Calling demons to ancient rites
   Evangeline at 17-
Seductress... Voodoo child... Priestess of Night...
   Her Voodooienne conjuring
Entice her secret lover—A Distinguished Gentleman
   Cristophe—
Husband... Father... Congressman...
   Under a Devil's moon
Lips claim lips in a feral embrace
   A lover's fatal caress
His hands crush her throat
   A desperate man’s escape...
   Kindly killer flees his sin
As Heathen drums beat louder
Beckoning Evangeline from her primitive grave-
   Her laughter invokes evil spirits
   within unholy darkness...
Awake—her demons thirst for,
   Cristophe's still beating heart.
   The Beasts of Hell draw near,
To feast upon the blood of human sacrifice.

   -Tanya M. Brock

Picture show

It's about time
and playing your lines
in tune with what you do,
It’s about rhymes
and connecting the dots
to create the fate that you control,
It's about seeing and believing
and the difference in between
somehow here
But remaining unseen

   RJ Wolke
Death of a Dream

Rob got home after working a full shift at the local saw mill. He pulled up to the house and shut off his engine. Getting out of the pickup, he picked up the case of beer and started to shut the door. Then he remembered, his pistol was under the seat and it needed oiled. Reaching back into the cab, Rob pulled the Smith and Wesson 38 Special out and carried it into the house with him. He put both it and the beer down on the counter and called to his wife Lelea. "Honey! I'm home!" Hearing no reply he walked through their house and out the back to where she often worked in their garden.

Choosing to supervise and run the household instead of working at another job, Lelea was usually always home when Rob arrived. Looking out over the garden area and the nearby woods, Rob still didn't see Lelea, but her hat and spade were lying near the porch, so he knew she was home. Rob decided to take a walk down through the woods to their private pond and see if Lelea was there gathering the plants she cultivated in the shade of the tall oaks. He left the back door open and walked outside. The screen door slammed behind him as he whistled for Cairo (their German shepherd), and together they strolled off down to the woods.

A few minutes later, Lelea returned from Seth and Adrianna's, their neighbors of ten years who lived about 1/8 mile away. Lelea had just picked some remarkable tomatoes and wanted to take them a few. Instead of taking the car, she usually walked over on the path the two couples had created between their two homes. She hadn't intended to stay long; however, once she arrived, Adrianna had to show off the new paintings she had just finished, and Seth demonstrated a new wood plane he bought. After chatting for a while, Lelea finally said she had to get back home to talk to Rob as soon as possible about something very important.

As she walked up to her house, she noticed Rob's truck in the driveway and thought, "that's odd; it's only 4:30; he must have left work early. I hope he's not been waiting long!" Lelea hurried into the kitchen and called for Rob. "Honey, I'm back! I was just over at Adee's and Seth's!" She continued to walk through the house when the beer and gun caught her eye. Stopping, she frowned and began to chide Rob under her breath. "I've told him a million times, don't leave things on the counter! The beer goes in the fridge, and that gun needs to be put away." She put the beer into the fridge and walked into the bedroom to return the pistol to its proper place in the night stand next to her husband's side of the bed. Just then, the phone rang, and Lelea hurriedly put the gun down on the stand and rushed back to the kitchen to catch the call. While Lelea was on the phone, Rob came back from the woods. Lelea saw him walk in and finished her conversation. Turning to Rob, she said, "Honey, when did you get home? I've been over at Adrianna's. I took them some tomatoes, but I wanted to get back home to meet you. I have some wonderful news!"

"That's great sweetie, but I also want to tell you something. I left work early to come home, but then after I saw your gardening tools out back, I thought you were in the woods," Rob replied, taking her hands and leading her out to the porch swing. They sat down and he said, "Honey, I got a great promotion at work. I've been made supervisor with an option to buy half the mill."

Lelea's face lit up. "Oh, Rob! That's great! I'm so glad; this will give us an opportunity to save up some more money."
Rob smiled. “I’m so glad you’re happy; I wanted to talk to you before rushing into anything.” They continued to talk about the future and then decided to go out to eat to celebrate. Lelea’s news was completely forgotten.

It was very late when they returned, and they were both tired. Lelea went to feed the dog the leftovers, but Rob went straight to bed. Within minutes, he was fast asleep. After feeding Cairo, Lelea decided to prepare for her surprise for Rob. Getting out the home pregnancy test she’d bought earlier in the week, she went to the bathroom and nervously followed the procedure. Eagerly staring at the test, she saw the blue plus sign. It was positive! Just then, the phone rang in their bedroom. Knowing Rob would get it, Lelea didn’t bother to. A moment later she heard an explosion of noise, like a gun shot. Ripping open the door, she rushed down the hall to their bedroom. As she stepped through the doorway, her eyes grew wide, and she dropped to her knees screaming. As she did, the pregnancy test fell from her trembling hands. Rob lay sprawled across their bed, his head now a bloodied mass of flesh and bones. He had mistaken the gun for the telephone and shot himself. Lelea rocked back and forth on her knees, knowing it was she who had put the gun in that dangerous place, and it was she who had killed her husband—the father of her unborn child.

Sarah Schackmann

SUMMER ROAD

Closing the gap between us
we walked that road many times
but it still seemed miles apart
between your house and mine

It feels like days, but it’s been years
since I’ve seen your face
the only thing that’s changed ‘round here
is the distance to your place

You kept in touch that summer
cards, letters and one long distance call
I loved and missed as much as I could
until the leaves changed in the fall

I still think back to you sometimes
and try with all my heart and will
but even with the passing years
I can love you still

Amanda Gudac
Though dark the night

Though dark the night, there flies my crow
Perched in his beak he carries hopes... dreams... my soul
Though flesh has long been lost, gone
My soul, my love, still stands strong

I send my crow: find her, find my love. Give her my kiss, gentle as if a dove
My crow, my only tool in this world. My only power love
Oh my crow, many moons have gone to rest since I last held her and felt her sweet caress
Will you find her? I must know

Yes, I am your crow... Though my claws be torn, and my beak be sever’d, your soul will come to her,
You see, through it may rain, true love lasts forever...

Joe Lassiter

Across the Ocean, A World Away
By Christine Spaeth

Unable to think about anything else,
But you over there, across he ocean.
Missing you more every minute,
And never knowing when you may return.
Not my fault, not your fault,
That we are separated.
That’s what makes it so hard.
No one to blame, no anger to vent,
Just a constant aching.
Defense of a country is what they call it,
But to me it’s senseless and wasteful.
Taking one’s son, brother, husband,
Or in my case, one’s boyfriend
Away from all who love him and who he loves
For a freedom that can never truly be won.
Call it selfish if you may,
But I’d rather have you here
Than in harm’s way, even if
It is in defense of a nation.
I miss you so, and I love you so,
And you’re still here in a way in my heart.
You’re in my dreams each night,
In my thoughts every moment.
And soon, God willing, you’ll be in my arms,
Safe from harm, free from worry.
And near true love.
My Puzzle

A puzzle lies before us
to stimulate our day
The pieces are the morning
we connect them as we play.

Interlocked emotion, a misperceived notion
reflects upon our face
A new found friend, an unsightly end
are the pieces that we place.

The day is long, the puzzle is hard
not all of the sections fit
Diligently we try, often we cry
and still, separated the pieces sit.

The day, it ends and the night begins
still the puzzle awaits me
I now know, through life we go
if the puzzle completes, it will defeat me.

Clay Wahlsmith

There once was a dumb rhyming verse
about which I did loudly curse.
   It gave me a fit,
for hours I would sit,
because each line I thought of was worse.

Sarah Schackmann

Skydancer

It navigates a mighty vessel
On a road with no margins.
It will follow a tireless path
Of white lines, which fade
To blue, and then return again
To engulf it folds of down
A hue of gray is cast, but late
Will be a brilliant orange on a
Decent to a cool bath.
Shadows dance at its will until,
It glows as a match before it’s
Extinguished.

Amanda Gudac

As the dawn comes, I think of you.
You are the sunshine in my day.
   You are the only one I can talk to.
You are my best friend along the way.
   I need you, and without you, I don’t know what I’d do.
I want to reach out to you and I want to say…
   I love you.

E.K.

8
Buck Sterling and Hondo Cooper have been best of buddies ever since they met in the third grade. Hunting and fishing expeditions were nothing new to them. About once or twice a month these two would set out on some type of reckless adventure. And I'm here to tell you about the frog gigging fiasco.

It all started after midnight one foggy Monday. Buck and Hondo were traveling back home from frog gigging along state highway 38. On their way back, near Cotton Patch, the headlights on Buck's old pick-up began to malfunction. Stuck on the highway with no headlights just after midnight Buck and Hondo came to the conclusion that the old truck had blown a fuse.

Well, with no extra fuses on hand, and knowing Buck and Hondo, they began a search for a replacement. Now me myself, I would have used a fuse from something needless like the radio or dome light. But nope, not these two geniuses. Rather than the sensible approach, Buck and Hondo noticed a box of 0.22 shorts in the glove box. And wallah! One bullet was a perfect fit to replace the fuse. The headlights returned, and they were again in business. Then about 20 miles further down the road, just before the White River Bridge, the bullet overheated and apparently discharged.

Since the fuse box is located below the steering wheel, the bullet shot out and nailed Buck in the family jewels. It went through his right testicle and sent Buck, Hondo and the pickup veering off the highway to the right where it struck a tree. Luckily Buck and Hondo suffered only minor injuries from hitting the tree. However, ever since the incident, all his friends and family now refer to Buck simply as Lefty. And let me tell you, Buck is right handed.

Patients of the
 cranky type,
 who swear
 and cuss
 and cry
 and gripe,
 we try to
 comfort,
 soothe and
 calm, instead of hit them with our palm
 for when we chose this profession, it became
 our obsession, and we can not blame the
 weak, who come to us, our help they
 seek. So we must smile and count
 and fill their bottles with our
 many pills. Then there are the
 happy ones who fill our days
 with loads of fun. They help us
 look past our frustrations until we
 get to our vacations. It is for them
 that we go to school so that we do not
 look like fools. It is for them that we learn
 to smile. They make the hard times all worthwhile.

Rose Haubrich
think about it...

you are a jerk.
that's all there is to it.
you hit me.
you screamed at me.
you lost me.
you are not a man.
you are not a human being.
think about it, you're going to hell.

you are mentally ill.
that's all there is to it.
you take 150mg of Prozac a day!!!
you gamble.
you drink.
you lost me.
you are not a man.
you are not a human being.
think about it, you're going to hell.

you are a stalker.
that's all there is to it.
you still call me and send letters.
you obsess over me.
you won't let go of me.
you are not a man.
you are not a human being.
YOU LOST ME!!!!!!!
think about it, you're going to hell.

-A Free, But Bitter Woman-

Tadd & Stacie’s Safety Compromise
by berni patterson 3/98

It is a risk to give something.
Allow for love and trust
to make an offer less painful.

Share of yourself
other than what is already known.
Take from another and appreciate it
even if it is unknown.

Familiar moods and feelings
bind.
Unfamiliar moods and feelings
tear.

Zipping the tear requires
work, patience, and tolerance.
The interlocking teeth make it
stronger than before.
It is worth the effort.

It becomes familiar and helps to
bind.
The risk won't be as great the
next time.
Or the next.
Or the next.
Once upon a time there was a young man named William. William was an average character in all aspects (looks, intelligence, etc.). Now in the village where William lived there was a stunningly beautiful woman named Alexandra. She had crystal blue eyes, long blond hair, and a perfect body.

One day, William and Alexandra happened to be walking down the same street, but in opposite directions. Their eyes were drawn to each other it seemed, by an invisible force. “She is absolutely perfect! I’ve never seen her before... who is she?” thought William. At the same time Alexandra thought, “Average person. Not good, not bad, just average. Oh, well.”

You see, Alexandra was looking for just the right person to marry. Her father had told her a long time ago that she must find someone to marry, and her time would be up in three days. She had tried to meet gentlemen at her father’s extravagant balls, but to no avail. All of the eligible men she knew were boring, self-centered, rude, or even worse, average. How would she ever find a mate?

William was so smitten that he was not about to let his one chance drop. “Uh, Miss I hope you don’t think I’m too rude, but I take this path every day, and I’ve never seen you before. Are you new to the area?”

Alexandra had a brief startled expression which she quickly stopped and replaced with a look of withdrawn aloofness.

William immediately sensed that she was going to pass on by without answering so he stuttered on, “I’m not asking just to satisfy my curiosity, but, but, in case you need help finding someone or something; I would be glad to lend my services.”

Alexandra was going to pass on by but the young man seemed so sincere, so much more interested in her than himself, so different than the men she knew, that in spite of her intentions, she did pause. Realizing that she had stopped, she now felt she had to say something or she would look stupid. That thought was startling to her as well; I’ve never felt insecure about my stupidity before or how I appeared to others. How can he make me feel that way when he himself is so average? She opened her mouth to speak and realized she couldn’t think of anything to say. None of her usual witty rejoinders fit the occasion. “No, I live here. I just seldom walk the streets...or at least not alone.” she finally blurted out.

“Never?” asked William. “How long have you lived here?” He appeared incredulous as indeed he was. How could she have lived here long and he not have seen her.

“I’ve lived here all my life,” she snapped.

“Where?”

“Over there. On that hill.”

“Ah, the Monmouth Mansion. Yes, I’ve never been there,” replied William.

Alexandra, sensing that it was late and that she needed to hurry home so she could change her clothes and mete more prospective mates of the upper class, dismissed the conversation. While she was walking home, Alexandra thought, what a strange “average” man, making me feel shy and nervous. The richer, better looking men never made her feel this way. As she got ready for the extravagant ball her father prepared for her, she kept thinking of the “average” man. She would catch herself wondering what he did for a living or where he lived. The time had come; she got into her limo and rode to the ball. Her heart raced with excitement about the new crop of wealthy men she would meet tonight.
As the car neared the curb, she saw a nicely dressed handsome man beside her car.

“This man is very delightful.”

“He is definitely of good stock!”

As the door opened, this man greeted her and said, “May I take your coat ma’am?” As their eyes met, she knew right away that he was the man she met on her walk.

“This cannot be; he doesn’t look at all like the man I met this afternoon.” As he walked her up the stairs, her heart raced with anticipation. “This must be the man my father talked about.” Her father neared her; she couldn’t wait to be introduced to the man. As her father approached, he tipped the young man and told him to bring the car around 11:30. She was mortified! This man was nothing more than a servant to her father. How could she have found someone like him attractive?

She tried to hide her astonishment and would have probably succeeded had William’s eyes not bored into her so deeply with innocent honesty. Was it the lighting of the moon that made him more handsome, or maybe it was his formal dress. Formal attire for a formal event at which he was a formal servant she reminded herself curtly. But still breaking through her ice, were his warm fingers against hers as she handed her wrap over to him. The electricity shocked her so that she turned on her heels and almost moved too briskly into the ballroom with her father lagging behind. Throughout the evening, Alexandra avoided potential suitors dancing only with her father or her two uncles. Her father didn’t press the issue because of something he had seen in his daughter’s eyes; something he had never seen before. Was it affection? The cold and bored expression in her eyes had been replaced by a look of bewildered love. She had found her suitor and thus the search was over. Alexandra would be shocked to find out that he was aware of her love. As they danced, Alexandra pondered what shock would ensue when her father learned the identity of he who was weighing so heavy on her mind. All’s well that ends well, her father would say, and so this journey would come to an end. She only hoped her father would understand.

Sara Lockard
Amanda Gudac
R. J. Wolke
Curt Griffith
& Jered Bauer

Time

Spinning uncontrollable
Like a lost planet in the endless space,
A black hole
Which no mortal can escape,
A calibrated bomb,
Pre-set by fate like a god’s sick joke
Weighing oppressively
On mankind’s bent back,
Forcing all forms organic
To decay in rotting corpse.
A sadness that ends all smiles
And yet a relief that stops all sorrow,
The end of creation
Will come within due Time...
And so life
Nervous with truthful knowledge,
Awaits its fine edged destiny.

RJ Wolke
A Little About Myself

Attentive to others to
Mask my own pain with
Apathy.
Nocturnal; daylight makes me
Disenchanted with the world
Always turning.

Captive by my mind, I
Hold a collection of worries
Rarely justified.
Inspired by beauty of all
Shapes, making art less
Task oriented.
Images are necessary for
Nurturing my
Extemporaneous creations.

Guarded in relationships, without an
Upper hand I feel
Defenseless.
Antiquated ideas and visions help me be
Creative.

You are the first thought in my head
As I wake, while lying in bed.
Your smiling face I long to see
Without you, how sad I would be.
Your passionate kiss and gentle touch
Gives me a chill, it gives me a rush.
My love for you will never end
How much I love you, you can't comprehend.
Sweetheart, you are so special to me-
Happy three year anniversary.

E.K.

A Professional

I don’t like this place

Breaking you Reshaping you

Until you are Them.

Joe Lassiter

JACQUE GRIFFIN

ONCE ACQUAINTANCES
THEN FRIENDS
NOW WHAT, SINCE THEY HAVE SEEN THE COVERS?
ARE THEY ACQUAINTANCES, FRIENDS OR LOVERS?
NO ONE KNOWS
NEITHER WILL SHOW HOW THEY FEEL
THE PHONE LINES ARE STILL.
IT ONLY TAKES ONE TO FEEL OFF THE MASK
THEN EVERYTHING COULD LAST
AS COULD THE FRIENDSHIP OF THE PAST.
THE CLUB

Join and fall, come and see
Membership for just a small fee
The Club is for a special breed
Members come in their need
Our members each have gifts to open
But they’re returned before the seal is barely broken
They had it all, but they couldn’t find
Just couldn’t find that piece of mind

Tormented and twisted my soul is wrung
I give myself to you, but on a cross I’m hung
In vain, I turn to false gods
But upon their altars I lay broken, and sob
No more can I exist
Life I will no longer resist
Salvation in the form of a shotgun

Or maybe a handful of pills and a bottle of rum
I have it all, I guess, like Richard Cory
But why, why can’t all of you see?
My life’s work the young shall dub
As I become a permanent member, a member of the club

Why join the stupid club?
What did you find?
Did you find your piece of mind?
We non-members still live, choked with grief
And try to live in your memory with belief
But a thought will always be on our minds: What, whatever did you find?

Joe Lassiter

Our Hero

Our hero, blessed throughout the war
Prayed as bullets from enemy guns shot him.
Now as the robe of death was pulled onto him,
He clinched his bloody rosary.
Thoughts of the war ran through his head
As tanks rumbled by and men killed each other.
He thought about his funeral mass,
And the homily the priest would give.
How his father would sing with the choir during the communion song.
How his mother would sob, as they lowered
His lifeless body into the ground.
Our hero, once a man, now a memory.

Jeff Sauzak
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Raymond’s Lunch box

There once was a young man who lived in a deep dark cellar. As he was growing up, he was always very quiet. He didn’t like too many things. He hated people; therefore, he didn’t have any friends. His parents always pushed him to join the other kids; therefore, he didn’t like them either. The sun was too hot and the day was too noisy. So, it was no surprise that he enjoyed being in this deep dark cellar all alone.

Although, he was all alone, he felt that he had many friends. Because, in the cellar with him was a mouse, that he called Jerry, a rat, he called Alice, and many little bugs and spiders. They always spent everyday together. The young man could really communicate with these animals. All day and all night he would talk with them and play games. They all seemed to have so much fun!

Since the young man hated daytime so much, he worked the midnight shift in a factory near the cellar he lived in. He was a very good worker and was always on time. But he was not friendly at all, and no one understood why.

They one day, while he was working, the other workers decided to play a prank on him. They stole his lunch box. They ate his lunch and filled it back with maggots. So as lunch time came and everyone headed into the lunch room, the young man went and sat alone in the back. Everyone turned to watch him as he opened the lunch box. Slowly he opened the lid; as he saw the maggots, the room erupted into laughter. Scared, confused and pissed, the young man ran out of the room swearing that he would get even. After he left, things went on like nothing ever happened.

The young man ran home to his cellar, crying and cursing under his breath. When he got there, he told what had happened to Jerry, Alice and all his bug friends. He thought about all the ways he could get revenge on them, but he really didn’t want to anymore. He was much safer and calmer at home with his friends.

So the next night at work, people left the young man alone. No one was really scared of him, but there was work to do. At lunch a lady who had witnessed the whole thing came up to him and asked to sit with him.

“I have seen you here for the last two years, but I do not know your name. My name is Terri.”

“My name is Raymond,” mumbled the young man in a voice just above a whisper.

“I saw what they done to you. I did not think it was funny,” she told him.

“It is ok; they can laugh at me now, but I will be laughing at them someday,” Raymond grunted with a demonic look in his eyes.

He thought all that day at work about how he could get back at everybody, but in the end thought of nothing. Disheartened, he returned to his cellar. After a short time, Jerry appeared.

“Well, Jerry,” Raymond said, “I wish I could think of some way to get back at those guys.” Jerry looked at him, twitched his nose, and scurried back under the dresser.

“I know you’re there, so I’ll just talk to you from here,” Raymond said. Two more mice ran in the shadows along the wall. A spider edged down through a dusty beam of sunlight along it’s silver web strand. A cockroach ran along the back of his dirt coated chair. In the silence of the murky basement, they all made noises, but none were speech. In fact the other creatures that made a home here didn’t even realize Raymond was there at all, yet he continued to speak.
need to draw some attention to myself instead.” Raymond lay back on his bed and plotted in his mind. Finally he fell asleep and continued to dream of an assortment of revengeful things.

The next day Raymond left early to go to work. He stopped by a local convenience store to pick up a few things to help with his plan and then went on to work. Again no one noticed him or even said hi when he arrived. Looking down he quickly clocked in and went to his workplace on the assembly line. Setting down his now infamous lunch box, he began to work. His coworkers beside him paid him no attention. Several minutes later the man working to his right walked away to go to the bathroom. Raymond looked around and furtively opened his lunch box. Pulling out a tube of super glue he gleefully opened and spread it all over the tools of his neighbor. Just as quietly he returned it to his lunch box. A few seconds later Tom, his coworker, returned. He picked up his tools to continue where he left off. Instantly his hand adhered to the metal. A look of bewilderment and then rage crossed his face as he tried in vain to free himself of the bondage.

Tom cursed Raymond in anger and then in fear as the assembly line started back up. What was he going to do? How could he let this stupid freak make an ass out of him in front of all his friends. He shouted at Raymond over the noise of the pounding metal, “I’m gonna’ kill you, ya little freaky son of a bitch!”

Raymond never even flinched as Tom screamed at him full of rage. He knew, even though he had not hurt Tom, that his pride would be killed after his coworkers found out. Although Raymond would have been happier had he thrown Tom on the assembly line and watched his body be mutilated by the machinery, this instead would do. As he stood there watching Tom fret, he was suddenly startled by the sound of the lunch whistle.

He picked up his infamous lunch box and walked in silence to his dark little corner to eat his egg-salad and jello for lunch. As he looked up from his sandwich, he saw Terri walking toward him.

“Why can’t she just leave me alone?” Raymond wondered.

“How are you today, Ray?” Terri cheerfully asked. “Do you mind if I sit with you again?” Raymond merely shrugged his shoulders in response as Terri plopped down next to him. “Ray, I wanted to know if you’d like to go out to a movie with me?”

“Not particularly,” Raymond replied never even looking in her direction. As Terri sadly got up to walk away, she looked back at the strange man she was only trying to befriend.

He went home that day feeling very good about what he had done to Tom, but a little depressed because he had turned down the only person that had ever tried to be his friend. He told Jerry, Alice, and the others what had happened at work that evening. When he had begun talking about Terri, he could sense a feeling of excitement yet depression. The thought of having such a nice friend was so exciting, but then he remembered he had not been very nice with her, and he told her he was not interested in going to a movie with her. So, he decided that maybe having a human friend would be a good idea. He promised himself that the next evening at work he would ask Terri if she was still interested in going to a movie!

Tasha Stinson
Leslie McDaniel
Dan Nelson
Jeff Sauzek
& Sarah Schachmann
Staying
LM

At one time you weren't in my life
I had no one to hold me, and to say I love you
You came at a time I wanted to be young, wild and free
I said you should find another, but you continued to stay
I guess all those years ago, you knew something I did not
You came around and made me crazy till you had your way

I cling to the way
We are now. Full of love and life
I need you always whether you need me or not
There is only one I'll love, and that my Dear is you
They say if you love, set them free
But we've tried it before, and always you stay.

Together is the way I hope to stay
After five years, I can't see my life any other way.
I think our love lasts because we are free
To say what's on our minds. Our live
Together has always been good. I certainly hope you
Feel like I do. I think I'd die if you did not.

Someday I hope to tie the knot
And in a home together forever we'd stay
If these words scare you
I know to be on my way
Looking to begin a new life
We're at a point we could be free

In just one year we'll be free
From school. Beginning new lives together or not
You say now you want me forever in your life
But maybe right now you want things to stay
The same until school is over. Then you plan to be on your way
I love you but will never try to control you.

In the end, you must decide for you
To make that decision you must set your heart free.
I wish so much I could see things your way
But as much as I wish, I just can not
I worry but I do know that you will stay
You have to, you complete my life.

When my life at school, began, I would never have thought I'd fallen the way I did.
You were just a guy I met; I never dreamed that you'd stay with me for the duration of school.
You were always free to go, but you did not. I guess you love me the way that I love you.
Time Well Spent

JB

Hello, anyone home, it’s me,
Here I am, am I the only one,
Where oh where are you,
Where have you gone to,
Yesterday it was us,
But then after we ate,

You left, and left alone me,
Again, I am the only one,
Then I went to work and left you,
You were alone until two,
Then I returned and it was us,
Again and then until eight,

After eight, you left me,
and alone the only one,
Here I waited for you,
Once you arrived we made us,
But once it became two,
I left until eight.

Last night when we ate,
I remembered to ask you,
About the game I missed at two,
I wanted to know who won.
You said never mind it’s just us,
We now have time for you and me.

I know that number one
In my heart is you.
I like things much better as us.
I also know that between you and me,
The hours seem as short as two,
The time we used when we ate.

However, I want for you
To know that these hours of eight,
That I spend away from us,
They take away from you, me,
But in the future what I look forward to,
Is all the time we will have as one.
The water falls slow
Sun beams bounce to and fro
Colors shine from deep

Amanda Gudac

RON HALL
ME AND THE BOYS

YOU COULD SAY I'VE GOT A SET OF FRIENDS
WHO LIKE TO GO OUT EVERY NOW AND THEN
IT'S NOTHIN' AGAINST THE GIRLS AT ALL
BUT WHEN IT'S THE BOYS WE HAVE A BALL

CAUSE ME AND THE BOYS ON A WEEKDAY NIGHT
DRINKIN' A BEER BENEATH A NEON LIGHT
SHOOTIN' DARTS AND PLAYIN' POOL
CHECKIN' OUT CHICS AND TRYIN' TO BE COOL

YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN US JUST THE OTHER DAY
WATCHIN' THE CARDS TURN A DOUBLE PLAY
THEN THE GIRLS CAME A WALKIN' BY
AND ME AND THE BOYS NEARLY LOST OUR MINDS

CAUSE ME AND THE BOYS ON A WEEKDAY NIGHT
DRINKIN' A BEER BENEATH A NEON LIGHT
SHOOTIN' DARTS AND PLAYIN' POOL
CHECKIN' OUT CHICS AND TRYIN' TO BE COOL

Seventy five cars
Mangled crushed steel, burning tires
St. Louisians can't drive.

RJ Wolke
One shell...
You were formed at the bottom of the ocean
tired from the journey
You slowly opened your eyes to face life
  You absorbed the rules and rituals of the vast waters
but created your own
  How hard it must have been for you to fit in
You allowed your outer shell to take form by the waters
  tumbling at times with the uneasiness of nature
You have distinct markings to prove your struggle
  You pulled through and continue to do so
Please protect your precious core as you have
  No force can touch that...

Death
As I attempt to unveil my eyes
  I cannot keep from wondering
What will I perceive to see?
  My windows are shaded, perception is dim
Am I just fatigued?
  I attempt again
  I see now
It is deteriorating though, my memory is fading
  I cannot recall events, names or faces
Most of all
  who have I become?
What have I contributed?
  Help me interpret each scene
Let the curtain descend slowly on my weary eyes...
Silence
If I listen carefully
I can hear the sweet quiet sound of silence
The vacuum
Hollow noise of emptiness
The sound of breathing disrupt the harmony
Engulf my being for I am yours
It is serenity I strive for
Silence...

Iris
Iris performs apoptosis
suicide...
Life is a threat to the flower
It lives a short fulfilled life
Surviving on the necessities
water and the sun
Self indulged
It folds inside
Be with yourself
Alas...
Wheat
Your hair is soft and golden
Glistening in the sun
You resemble the wheat fields in a soft summer breeze
The wind is I
Turbulent, troubled and not at ease
I blow on you, for you like adventure
You sway
I will bring clouds so I must leave
I wish to see you glisten always in the sun
For you are strong and beautiful
May nature always be good to you

Smile
What are smile lines?
Why should you wrinkle if you smile?
Why do we have creases in an otherwise smooth skin?
Punishment for good times?
Old age is inevitable...

Rain
It's raining
Rain is soothing
Cry, cry, cry...
I would rather earth cry that I...
Suffering
Is it a brutal chance of turbulent life
or premeditated course of expected events?
I sometimes wish to justly analyze my existence
I speak little, ponder plenty
conversing with oneself can become satisfying...

Time
Time is compressible
    Time is wasted minute by minute
Life is lost minute by minute
    Like sand
        slipping through a tight fist
Life is spilling
What to do, How to do it?
Enjoy, forget, hold on let go?
Not much is left of this journey
    A grave is a sound box
A container filled with lifeless memories
Enjoy now
Live later...

Border
"An extent beyond which an activity or function cannot or should not take place"
    I am the border
I wish to find that one to fill in my boundaries...
Persian Rug
As I approach your colorful spread
I imagine myself mingled in a wonderful explosion of blossoms
neatly woven in a vast flower bed
All shades precise
blending in harmony in my mind
soft to the touch
soothing to the soul
One must not forget their roots...

Sigh
An exaggerated exhalation as though to expel...
Love thyself ... no one else will

Your smile
Smile
for you light up my soul
brighten the sky
uplift my being
rejuvenate
reincarnate life
Please don’t deny us this joy...

Your voice
Speak
for your words are musical
your sounds magical
each note in tune
flowing in a harmonious beat
Lure me towards you
Let me flow to your rhythm
Cinnamon
Are you one that gracefully, shyly, cautiously consumes the outer layer of a cinnamon bun, first
or
One that tackles, better yet indulges in the inner most core of pleasure?
If the first
Please convert
Do not save the best for last
There may never be a one

Self sufficiency
Is it necessary to be a "couple"?
Completion? security? society?
I fulfill most of my needs
I read-
enter day dreams
welcome fantasies
What is independence?

Hey Man, Get Out of My Car

Cloudy skies may still be so bright,
The overcast he need not stay.
Once in your heart you have refused the darkness,
The sun will shine brightly your remaining days.

When cold winds blow and separate your warmth,
Do not be troubled eternally it will not remain.
For you must look deep into your heart,
And strive to make warmth forever your gain

by Jered Bauer
Mountain Men Anonymous

The weekend had finally arrived. This was the weekend that Tony would prove his manhood to all of the people of Huntington county in Oregon. Ever since Tony was a young boy, he dreamed of becoming a member of the infamous Mountain Men Anonymous club. These men were the fiercest, bravest, smartest men in the entire county. Tony’s father was a card carrying member of this exclusive club, and Tony would make his old man proud by being inducted into this hall of fame for real men. Tony wasn’t sure what it took to be a man of the Mountain Men Anonymous Club. But one thing was sure, he would prove to all of them that he was the biggest man in all of the county. The weekend was finally here, and Tony was poised to achieve his rightful place in this exclusive club.

When they had arrived at the camp site, “Tony was pumped and ready to prove to the other guys that he was more of a man than any of the guys. Besides, he was the son of Rosco Roberts, the most heralded lumber jack in all of Oregon. All of the men began drinking, and of course Tony had to drink faster and consume more beer than any other because he was a real man. The next morning came, and Tony wasn’t feeling too good due to his excessive consumption. This wasn’t going to stop him from claiming his rightful seat at the throne of manhood. He cracked open his first beer at 7:30 a.m. and never stopped thereafter. Once all of the men woke up, they jumped into their rafts and began rafting down the ferocious river. Each of the good old boys thought Tony was pretty cool and that he had proven himself, so an initiation really wasn’t necessary. Besides, they hadn’t initiated anyone since the accident of old man Brown. They pulled off to the side of the river and set up camp. The president of Mountain Men Anonymous proceeded to sit the men down and explain the significance and honor of being inducted into this exclusive club. Once all of the formalities were done with, he then proceeded to introduce the newest member to the club, Tony. Once he was through, he congratulated Tony and welcomed him to the family.

“No, this can’t be!” Tony exclaimed.

“Where is the initiation. You mean to tell me that I don’t have to prove my manhood!” Tony protested.

“We don’t do that kind of thing anymore; it seems a little stupid and dangerous now a days,” retorted the president.

“My father told me this was an exclusive club for men, and that I would have to prove my worth someday in order to be inducted!” Tony yelled.

“I demand to be initiated; my father was initiated and so will I!” Tony said.

The men looked at each other and pondered upon what Tony had said. They had no clue on how to initiate someone. Then Tony got really pissed off waiting for these girls to decide on something for him to do.

Tony spoke up and said, “Here’s what we are going to do. If any of you so-called men think you are manly enough to shoot this beer can that I am holding, then and only then will I be initiated into this exclusive club.

*****************************

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As Tony regained consciousness after surgery, he had a splitting headache and couldn’t believe what he had just done. Boy did he ever show those boys who was the real man. Some people might think it was stupid to shoot a can of beer off of Tony’s head with a bow and arrow. He laughed while he sat in the hospital bed with his head bandaged.

“Some men just aren’t man enough to prove themselves worthy of being a member of the Mountain Men Anonymous Club! Anyway, I still have one good eye!”

Curt Griffith

A Friend to Die For

Have you ever had a friend
Who would be there till the bitter end?
If so, then you would know
the best type of friend there is to know

The one who is there through the good and the bad
When you’re happy and when you’re sad

The one you could laugh with, the one you could cry with
The one you could talk with, the one you could die with

The one who makes you feel like a superstar
The one who takes you for who you are

If you have had this type of friend before
You surely know that this is a friend to die for.

Ron Hall

Complete solitude
Still, quiet, concentrating
Another boring test

RJ Wolke
Fate

They met on a train
One lonesome night
He was not married
And she was looking for Mr. Right

They talked for hours
About their pasts and old friends
She hoped she could make
The night never end

He was an investment banker
Who made lots of money
She was into advertising
She was cute and funny

Their nights were filled with passion
The days alive with laughter
She hoped in her heart that
They could live happily ever after

After the ride was over
They both went their separate ways
She thought back to
Their wonderful three days

As the years went by
And the thoughts of him remained
She tried to love another
But the love was not the same

They met many years later
With a passionate kiss
They thought about the years
Together they missed

They vowed to stay together
Their lives they shared
A couple they became
So happily paired

Jeff Sauzak
War

War is a horrific event.
However, confession shall cleanse the soul.
The infantry will not reach peace of mind
unless it is obtained through prayer.
As they wield their guns, their weapon of choice
they remember the Bible
for it is the sword of God.
At last the tanks roll in,
crushing the enemy;
they sing praise in a hymn
and are joined by the heavenly host.
As G.I. Joe recalls the battle
which shredded his soul,
he also partakes of communion
in recollection of his eternal salvation.

As the soldier is fighting for his country,
the priest is caring for those in need.

As the soldier is killing his arch enemy,
the priest will forgive those who cross him.

As the soldier continues battling the opposition,
the priest will be blessing all Godly men.

Jered Bauer

The bright rainbow shines
Through dark rain and light sunshine
The image is mine.

Tasha Stinson

Cold beer in the fridge
Cigarette smoke in the air
An American dream

RJ Wolke
The Salesman

“Jesus, it’s hot!” Ryan exclaimed out loud to himself. As he pushed on the heavy, tinted glass doors of the Watson and Sons building, the Miami heat hit him like a damp hot wall. Getting oxygen in this type of climate was hell for him, and he refused to take his asthma medication properly; his mother always had called him stubborn. “You’re not invincible, young man,” she would say while he was busy not listening. As he took in deep, humid breaths, Ryan turned to look at the building from which he had just emerged. It was one of the most breathtaking buildings in downtown Miami. From a distance it looked black; an ominous figure in the midst of the sunny, but pompous town that was its home. Where Ryan stood, just feet from the tower of glass, he could see the reflections of the extravagant marble and concrete statues that welcomed visitors at its entrance. Many salesmen, of all varieties in fact, spent the better part of their life in this building.

Life is good, he thought as he lit a cigarette and took a long drag before heading to his car. Jewelry sales had treated him well. Well enough for him to own a Mercedes, a house in his hometown of Hialeah as well as a condo in West Palm Beach. Ryan deactivated his car alarm and hit the remote starter. As he opened the door, he could feel the heat creep out and smother his arm. He hopped in quickly and flipped the AC on high. The backs of his thighs were seething on the hot leather, but he hardly noticed as he headed through downtown and out to Interstate 95. The drive to Lantana would take less than an hour providing the highways were clear. “They should be. It’s only 2:00,” Ryan stated out loud. Oh, shit. The end of March was always bad driving because of the spring breakers. Lord knows the highway would be congested around Lauderdale. “Oh well. May just take longer than an hour.”

As he settled back for his drive, he contemplated how fortunate he was to have achieved a salary and commissions such as his by his 24th birthday. Certainly he had done so by not completely honest tactics, but never-the-less he would be well taken care of for a long spoiled life. Today he would be traveling to smaller, independent jewelers in Lantana and stay overnight at his condo just a short trip away. It was always easier to sell augmented jewelry to the self-employed; they were much more trusting.

On that thought, Ryan decided to look up the number of his first client. He reached his right arm into the back seat to reach for his old sales manual. He took his eyes off of the road for a split second, and when his attention came back, he was nearly in the back seat of an Explorer. His brakes screeched, and the traffic came to an abrupt halt. The 195-95 interchange was always congested during spring break. Every car was filled with scantily clad college students making their way to the beach. The sun was still tormenting Ryan, and his air conditioner could hardly cool the interior fast enough.

“Damn kids!” He was getting pissed. Ryan flipped through his manual looking for the numbers he had jotted in the margins. His gas was running low since his AC had been going so ferociously and he was running late. “Damn!” The traffic was just barely opening up north of 195, and he was struggling to find an escape. “If I don’t make this sale, I’ll lose a huge commission. I can’t be late!” Highway congestion like this always had made Ryan feel somewhat claustrophobic. He moved deftly into the left lane and
relaxed his lead foot onto the accelerator. He was moving now at about 75 miles per hour and had left the bulk of the traffic behind him. He wiped the sweat from his brow and took a deep breath.

"Where did I write that damn number?" Ryan said as he flipped through his handbook. A convertible full of young college students honked and swerved away from Ryan's haphazard driving. He looked up at the highway disinterested and straightened up his car only to put more speed behind it. After placing the open manual against his chest to save the page, Ryan reached down to retrieve his cell phone.

The front left tire caught the median first. As his rear jerked to the right, the car behind him struck hard enough to deploy the side impact air bags. Ryan felt his heart almost explode with fear. He couldn't see around the airbags that ironically held his sales manual tight to his chest. It seemed like hours, but was only moments of spinning and rolling before the car was stopped by a concrete pole. The car was unrecognizable as was Ryan's body. He had always been confident that if he was ever involved in an accident that the air bags, roll bars and side impact beams would protect him from danger. Unfortunately his amenities had not protected him from his tragedy.

The sun was now setting beautifully over the ocean. West Palm Beach was bathed in orange and yellows that could be seen from Highway 95. It was finally cooling off in Florida.

Amanda Gudac

Boxes

I need a place to put my socks,
so I'll go to the store and buy a box.
I'll put this box in another, my drawer,
And this box in a drawer will be on the floor.

Socks in a box in a box called a drawer: a box on the floor.

I'll do this soon,
and put it in a big box, my room!
Perhaps in the drawer will live a mouse
and all of these boxes will be in my house.
And on my house I'll put on locks,
so nobody comes to steal my box.
I live in a box, this box is my house.
I bet all these boxes really piss off my spouse.

Dan Nelson
Lines drawn between us daily
Try to expose and contrast
Illuminating our differences insanely
Threatening if humanity can last
If only we could see
The limitless similarities between you and me
Proving without a doubt
It is all that we should believe.

As we dream
We seem to believe
The “possibility”
of impossible things
To be what we see
In our hearts and minds
Only to find reality
is not what it seems
We can be anywhere
We can be anyone
We can be anything
But we do nothing

We lie, cheat, and steal
We hurt, destroy, and kill
We hate, love, and don’t care
What do we all share
We share dreams and hopes
Fearing times we can’t cope
With the world and its laws
With ourselves and our flaws.

RJ Wolke

Friends

She went to college every day,
  mind intent on classes.
  Never really much to say,
always reading through her glasses.

  One day she met a classmate,
  he was nice and oh so funny.
  Becoming friends, but not to date,
and yet he was her honey.

  They grew closer week by week,
  seeing one you saw the other.
  They had fun, being geeks,
as long as they were together.

  Months went by; their feelings grew,
going to classes, always together.
One night they kissed and then they knew,
  no matter what, they were forever.

  Sarah Schackmann
The Runner

The boy runs with all of his might
to reach the coming of a new day.
No longer wanting to confine him-
sel to the dauntless tasks of yesterday. For
he is ready to run
and catch the wind of chance.

With each new step he sees a chance
to escape his captor and prove his might.
Some think he should walk when he decides to run
But all he wants is a new day
running from demons for
this is what haunts him.

Never looking back is the hymn
that prods him forward. Although there is a chance
of failure. Others laugh for
they do not know the inner might
that strengthens him each day
with each step along his run.

Others wonder, why does the boy run
many have tried, but no one can stop him
He goes to sleep dreaming of his next day
No one to bind him, only living by chance
People say he is crazy he might
disagree. Crazy because he knows not what is before

Him. Running for
he knows what is run-
ing behind him. His might
is strong, this is what keeps him
sane. There is a chance
he will not finish. He vows this will never be the day.

For with each morning comes a new day.
A day to run, a day for
freedom. No one gave him a chance,
a chance to succeed. For this is why he must run
Running alone and keeping to him-
sel. For a new day is dawn and he will run with all of his might.

Curt Griffith
The Gift

Arnie remembered the day he received his gift like it was yesterday. It was July 17, 1985, a Wednesday. The day started off like any other day. He got to the store about ten to eight. He went through his usual routine of turning off the alarm, unlocking the doors and picking up the nearly folded paper, opening the blinds, turning on the lights in the jewelry cases, and cleaning the cases' glass; then he would sit behind the shiny jewels and start to read the paper. They he would wait; sometimes many people would come in and try on many things and then just leave without ever buying anything. Other days only a few came in but would buy enough to make the store very profitable for Arnie. But on Wednesday, it just felt different. Arnie was late to the store; he left the blinds down, and the paper was not in its usual place, but in its place was a box wrapped in plain brown paper. Arnie picked up the box and read the address, Arnie Finklestein, 1283 W. 35th St. The package belonged to him, but had no return address. So he took the package inside for further examination.

Once opened, there was no note, just a dirty brown rock that was about the size of a baseball. Arnie took the rock and started to clean it off. When the dirt was removed, Arnie stood in amazement at what he held; he had a clean, dull brown rock. He decided that he should cut the rock open to see if it was sent to him because he was a certified gemologist. Arnie took the stone back to his bench and started the wet saw. With the whir of the saw in the background, Arnie began to prepare the stone. At first, Arnie sliced off one end. He examined the cut under his loop and saw nothing, just igneous rock. He then decided to slice the rock directly in the center. Arnie slowly eased the rock up to the saw blade. As the saw blade nicked the rock, a brilliant light filled the room, and Arnie fell to the ground blinded. Arnie stood up, rubbed his eyes and tried to open them. All he could see was a black spot, like he had stared directly into the sun for hours. Just then he heard the bell on the door chime.

"Can I help you?" Arnie called out from the back; "I will be right there."

"I came here to warn you that you must use the gift carefully, or you will be sorry," the stranger mumbled in a Chinese accent. As quickly as he came, the stranger was gone.

Still not being able to see very well, Arnie did not recognize the strange man.
"Those damn foreigners, I hate them. And that guy with his mumbo jumbo, ninjitsu crap. Stay out of my store unless you have American money, Ching Chang or what ever your name is."

Returning back to the saw, Arnie noticed that the rock was hollow inside, but that was its only unique feature, other than that it was just your run of the mill rock, not worth a damn cent and no good to him, but he decided to keep it. The days that followed were the best days the store had ever seen in its 60 year existence. Every person, who walked through the door, bought something after they had bargained with Arnie. And the people were coming in droves, and Arnie was selling everything in sight and at the prices he wanted. He thought to himself that he had become such a good salesman, that he should try selling deep freezes to Eskimos.
One morning, while watching TV, he saw the news flash. A crazy man had taken a bus full of kids hostage, on their way to school. The man demanded that he get paid two million dollars and be taken in an armored truck to the airport, where there would be an airplane waiting to fly him to Pakistan. Arnie decided at once that he must do something. Grabbing his cardigan and his Yamika, he was out the door to see what he could do to help.

Once on the scene, Arnie saw the man yelling loudly, and pointing his gun at the small, scared children. Arnie approached the police captain, who was running the situation, and asked him if he could help.

"Stay the hell back," the captain yelled.

"But sir, if you let me speak to the gentleman, I can have this situation resolved," Arnie countered staring directly into the captain's eyes.

"Well...OK, man, you drive a hard bargain. Get in there and you do your stuff," the captain said giving in to Arnie.

"Thank you, sir, I knew you would see it my way," Arnie snickered.

As Arnie approached the bus, the children began to cry and scream more loudly. The man yelled at the children, "Shut up, or you will all die a slow painful death, like the last five years in that institution have been to me."

Arnie asked the man, "What exactly do you want? Do you realize that you will not get anything unless a good will gesture is shown? Why don't you let the children go?"

Arnie looked directly into the man's eyes and tried to will him into giving in.

"Well...OK, the children go, but the teacher and the driver are staying with us," the man conceded.

"Now, you will give me the gun, you will walk off this bus, and you will give up. No money, no truck, no airplane," Arnie said with that now familiar glimmer in his eyes.

"Well...OK, OK, please stop, please stop." The man said beginning to cry.

The situation was over. The police commended Arnie for his bravery. The city gave Arnie a parade through the city. The mayor gave him the key to the city after the parade, and named Arnie the official police hostage bargainer. So every time there was a hostage situation, a red phone, sitting next to a hollow brown stone, would ring in Arnie's shop. And with a flash of his cardigan and Yamika, and a glimmer in his eye, Arnie Finklestein was on the job.

Jeff Sauzak

VOLCANO ERUPTS
ORANGE
RED
HUE AGAINST BLUE

NATURE TRIMUPHED

Amanda Gudac
Love I'm In

I just got off the phone with an angel
   And I think she's from above
So why am I afraid to tell her
That she's the one I'm dreaming of

   I'm in love, I'm in love
       What can I do
Girl I miss you so much
   But I'm so scared to
Tell you that I'm in love

You can bet your bottom dollar I'll tell her
   But I better do it real fast
Before some other guy gets to tell her
   And I finish last

   I'm in love, I'm in love
       What can I do
Girl I miss you so much
   But I'm so scared to
Tell you that I'm in love

Ron Hall

December 1993

A light rain begins to fall
The sky a darkish gray
Moist eyes are seen on us all
She can't come out to play

She was driving home from school
A frightful scream was heard
The other car broke a rule
The tragedy absurd

Buried in a darkened tomb
She will no longer smile
In her newly darkened room
I miss her all the while

Sara Lockard.
A Memory of Love

The car that sits in my driveway,
A gift to me from Dad,
I drove that old thing to its end,
And now there it just fades.

I've toyed with thought of rebuilding,
That old gift from my Dad.
It is a memory of my father,
One I don't want to fade.

I told myself I'd clean it up,
And one day give it to my son.
I know he'd love it just as much,
I still remember the fun.

From Dad to me and now my son,
A gift full of memories,
Coming from these loving arms,
For as long as he lives.

Jered Bauer

Red, White, Yellow and Blue
Who could have known that his love was not true?
It was not heard in his words
Or felt in his touch
Nor seen in his eyes
The others all spoke lies
That is why she never cried
She always showed pride.

J Griffin

The dumb dog barks loud
A woman constantly nags
The storm rolls in slow

RJ Wolke
Dream

I woke up in a cold sweat, confused and startled about the dream I had just awoken from. I raised my head to look at the clock. Two minutes before my alarm went off, just my luck. And then I began to think about my dream...Something had happened. Despite just waking up, it was by now beginning to fade from memory. It was a very colorful, vivid dream, but the harder I tried to remember it, the quicker I forgot it. Suddenly, the alarm blared with a shrill tone that startled me from my thoughts. I lazily arose from bed and took my shower, thinking the entire time what the dream could have been about. Whatever it was, it was Something Unpleasant. Something Bad was going to happen or Something was Wrong—I didn’t know, but I had a bad feeling about it all. I got dressed in an old pair of shorts and a ragged t-shirt. It was Saturday, and I really didn’t have much to do. I began to make breakfast when I was struck with the realization of what was wrong—it was Dad. I had no idea what the matter was, but somehow it was connected to my dream.

I tried to ignore this “premonition” and finished my breakfast. I headed out to the garage to mow my lawn on this muggy Saturday. As I walked across the driveway, my thoughts continued to focus on Dad. Something was wrong, and I knew it. I stopped and hurried back to the house and dialed his number. No answer. Could he be hurt? Can he not make it to the phone? I tried to reassure myself that he probably just went to the market or went outside. I couldn’t help it, though—in a panic, I grabbed my car keys and rushed to my car. Dad lived nearly six hours away, but what if he was really hurt?

I headed north out of Jackson toward my hometown. I skirted my way through St. Louis traffic, and in no time I was in Illinois. Although four hours had already passed, I stopped in Springfield and called him up again. Still no answer. I pressed on, finally reaching my exit from the interstate. I made my turn and went west on US-136, a lonely highway that cut a path through the muggy Illinois cornfields. The closer I came to Forest City, the more worried about Dad I became. If he was in trouble (and I was confident by now he was in trouble), nobody else would find him; Mom died a couple of years ago, and he lived out in the middle of nowhere. I turned north on the blacktopped road that would eventually become Forest City’s Main Street if I drove far enough, but my turn came before I got into town.

I came to the stop sign where my road crossed a highway—Finally, Dad’s street. A left turn and Dad lives less than a mile away. I’d be in his driveway in about a minute. I started to make my turn, but I was thinking so much about what might be wrong with Dad that I didn’t see the white Cadillac speeding toward me as I entered into the intersection. I slammed on my brakes and swerved left at the last second, but it was too late. The Cadillac would hit me.

As tires squelched across the highway, time slipped into slow motion. For a
moment I thought maybe it wasn’t Dad that was in trouble--maybe it was me! Then a horrible absolution came over me. Just before the car struck, I closed my eyes. Not because I was afraid, not because I didn’t want to see; I closed my eyes because I already knew what would happen.

The Cadillac swerved to the right but clipped my front bumper. It caused almost no damage to my car; but was just enough to send the Cadillac careening out of control. The sound of skidding tires gave way to an eerie mix of groaning steel and shattering glass. The car flipped over twice and came to a rest upside down in the ditch.

When the silence came, I sat with my eyes closed in darkness. Although they had been closed the entire time, I knew exactly what had happened. I now knew with closed eyes where the car was lying. As I opened my eyes, I saw Dad’s Cadillac in the ditch; twisted, shattered, and upside down—just the way I had dreamt it this morning.

Dan Nelson

Have You Ever Had a Girl So special?

Have you ever had a girl so special
That the mention of her name
Brings a smile to your face.

Have you ever had a girl so special
That when she leaves
You feel a part of you has left too

Have you ever had a girl so special
That when she’s gone
Her memory fills your mind

Have you ever had a girl so special
That you know every man is looking at her
Wondering, “How can I make her mine?”

Have you ever had a girl so special
That every night without her
Will always be blue

That just leaves me with one question:
Have you ever had a girl so special?

Ron Hall
Defeat

Defeat.

It can all be over in one instant,
with one word or action ending a hope,
ending a dream that carried a person for what seems like forever.
It can be a shot from center ice
just skipping over the goalie’s shoulder in sudden death overtime.
It can be a tear from a lover
when they tell you it’s over between you.
It can be the hurt you feel when you get a test back
and see a D in place of the A you expected.
Defeat is not just losing a game.
It is any loss, any setback in life.
Those defeats that sting the worst
are the ones you don’t see coming.
Those that catch you by surprise
and leave you stunned just standing there.
A person can’t elude it, they must deal with it.

Any possible way they can.
It’s a matter of attitude, of hope and optimism.
With these, any defeat, no matter how unexpected,
devastating, or heart-wrenching,
can be overcome.

And be overcome with grace and flair.
And then the healing can begin,
and the plan to win can be formed.
Defeat is not permanent, but is temporary.
And with every defeat there eventually comes a win.

Christine Spaeth

Academic Oligarchy
Sit upon your throne
Abuse your authority
Respected by none.
Joe Lassiter

Brook
Shiny, fast, tranquil
Yet rippled and babbling
Water flows freely.
Jered Bauer
What I Want

I want
to see my lover’s face as he
visually massages me;
to feel the sigh of his eyes while
his lips open to breathe me in.

It is almost unbearable. Almost.
I can’t look away.
It is exciting.
I don’t want to look away

With eyes closed, he sees into my soul.
And I feel
all that he wants for me.
All that he needs from me.

This is what I want.
A suspension of eternity within a glance.

To take this with me wherever I go.
To move, breathe, and taste the sensation,
he cannot extract himself.
Yet, he does.
Always.
I am left to remember
until next time.

berni patterson

What I Need

Napping on an early Sunday afternoon
The blinds are closed. The rain hits the windows.
The sofa fits 2. The patchwork keeps out the chill.
I am warm. You are warm.
Your breathing is deep and rhythmic. I feel your peace.
Your arms are around me. My head rests on our heart.
I feel your steady, moist exhale on my forehead.
You wake briefly and rub my head.
Stroking my hair, you tell me, “It’ll be okay.”
You fall back asleep. I match my breath to yours.
I feel safe. I am at rest now too.
I wish that I could make you see
This world through different eyes
What it is, and what it means
To see a clear blue sky

It's in our heart, it's in your soul
It's more than written words
It fills you when your days are gray
Your life becomes less blurred

It is my focus everyday
That keeps my mind on track
I never will forget these times
There is no turning back

I can't return to the terrible past
The clock ticks on and on
I regret the things I haven't said
But that time, it is now gone

I know you're tired, I know you're strained
You've gone through so much more
But please look into my soul and see
The spirit that makes me soar.

Drowning of Love

Bitter with anger I run to water
kicking and swinging my limbs.
Recalling sweet memories shared,
cold days finding sanctuary in bed
all the while bitter, pushing you from my head.
Many hours spent lounging in our loves' comfort
we shared sour memories and salty kisses.
You, secretly suffocating in loves' ocean of warmth
caring not that I lacked the breath to push you to surface.
All the while loving me, pushing me from your head.
Enraged at the loss of a love so great as to move earth
and forgotten as a missing locket after years of loss.
Hoping one day you will return to me, but knowing
you drowned that day in my sorrow and your stupidity.
I'll be missing you, while pushing you from my head.
Come Follow Me

Get in line fool, you were born to follow
Your mind is nothing, your body hollow
You tool, you cog, people like you are my prey
Hey! Pay attention so that you can copy what I say
A clone, a carbon copy of the authentic
If it wasn’t trendy, you might think it eccentric
Follow blindly, you flock of confused sheep
Like a drop of water are you as deep
Conformity, only a mere word needed to describe your life
Every time I hear the world ‘alternative’ I am overcome with strife
Like a horse with blinders, you can only see what the person ahead of you is doing
But you yourself is who you’re really screwing
Let the machine roll over you, never any rage
You have to imitate who you see on the stage
Think of all the fools you have placed on a throne
And listen to the anger in my tone
I leave you, tool, with a thought to make known:
Who, who would you follow if you were all alone?
Wakeup.

Joe Lassiter

Three Strikes and You’re Out

The first time I said goodbye was hard.
You twisted my words and begged to me.
You made promises of the happiness that could be.
You told me, “Our love is everlastingly strong,”
I started to believe that I was wrong.

The second time I said goodbye was scary.
You wanted me to be your wife.
Our future would be happy and full of life.
You told me, “Our love is everlastingly strong,”
but this time I wasn’t so sure who was wrong.

The last time I said goodbye was EASY.
You gave me excuses, excuses, excuses,
but all I could see were your abuses.
One last time I heard, “Our love is everlastingly strong,”
but this time I said no, YOU are wrong!

-A Free Woman-
Executive Resolution

February 20, 2001

It was 23:30 hours at the White House, and the President was preparing to sleep. Just as he was finishing brushing his teeth, there was a knock on the door. Through the large bedroom doors could be heard a muffled plea, “Mr. President, Mr. President, this is Thompkins. I must speak with you immediately.”

The President quickly threw on his bath robe and opened the door. “What is it Thompkins? Do you realize that it is late and my wife is trying to sleep?”

“Yes, yes, I am truly sorry sir, but it is urgent. It’s a matter of national security, sir.”

“Well, Thompkins, this had better be good.”

“It’s Iraq, sir.”

“What? What has that dam idiot done now?!”

“Well, sir, if you will just follow me, then I will try to fill you in on the situation as quickly as possible.”

“Alright then. Just give me a minute or two to make a quick change, and we’ll be on our way.” The President hastily threw down the robe, jumped into a pair of slacks, and grabbed a shirt on his way out the door.

“Mr. President, it appears that the Iraqi military forces have launched an attack on one of our carriers located in the Persian Gulf.”

“When did this happen? Are there any reports of fatalities?”

“Well, sir, according to the report sent from Col. Decker, the attack began early this morning at about 02:00 Iraqi time and continued for approximately one hour and twenty minutes. There were fatalities but no number on how many, and the carrier is still mobile.”

“Ok, Thompkins, now how exactly do we know that this was an Iraqi attack?”

“Well sir, according to the Colonel, we were able to get a handful of fighters airborne, and they knocked down three enemy fighters which were later identified as Iraqi. Once we started knocking down their planes, they lifted the assault. We also tracked them
on our radar, and the fleeing planes were lost on radar somewhere over Southwest Iraq.”

“Thanks for the information Thompkins. Now, where is everyone at?”

“They are waiting for you in the conference room on the lower level, sir.” As the President opened the door to the conference room, he expected to see hastily dressed advisors and military personnel with drawn looks on their faces. The President’s eyes widened with shock as he walked into a room ful of men dressed all out in black garments holding machine guns aimed directly at him. They all had a glazed, blank look on their faces as they stared at the President while he entered the room.

“What the hell is this? I demand an answer to this!” the President added while trying to cover up his growing fear.

“This, Mr. President, is our new, most elite, disposable army. They look amazingly alike, don’t they, sir?” Thompkins replied. He was right. These men were exact genetic replicas. “As an added bonus, sir, their bodies are equipped with biological weapons that become activated once their bodies are harmed. So if they are ever wounded during battle, their bodies will release these weapons and the enemy will become infected.”

“This is all too crazy” the President said nervously.

“But all too necessary, sir” Thompkins replied with a smug look. “We cannot afford to lose the upper hand. Don’t you agree, sir?” Thompkins added.

“And just what happens when one of our superior bionic soldiers becomes injured in neutral or friendly territory infecting innocent people? What if it happens here in our own country? What will we do then? Man, Thompkins, think! We do not want to start another World War. Frankly, I do not believe anyone could live through another one of those. At least not with technology like this,” the President said gruffly. Thompkins was hoping that he had hid the fact that this very thing had already happened a few months ago.

“Mr. President, with all due respect, this is the answer to all our problems in the Middle East. We do need your approval, however,” Thompkins said even as he thought of the fact that he would act with or without approval.

“I’m sorry, Thompkins, but I cannot do it. I will not do it. We cannot even ask Congress because if it became known that we had even thought of developing these specimens, our whole stand against Iraq would appear meaningless. My God, man, do you realize we have done what we have accused the Iraqi’s of doing? This is what started the standoff. You should not have done this. We will never use them. Forget it. Get
these soldiers back in quarantine or wherever you hid them.”

“Mr. President, I think you are making a huge mistake here. I think you had better reconsider,” Thompkins snapped.

“No, Thompkins, my word is final. NO. Send them back at once,” the President said as he walked out the door to the conference room.

Thompkins hastily led the troops back to the transport. Once at the plane he told the soldiers that they answered to him and not the President. He told them that they would continue the mission as planned. The transport headed off into the dark night sky on a very dangerous and unapproved mission.

Each soldier was given a parachute and told very detailed instructions to hunt out the Iraqi leader and assassinate him. Thompkins was careful to select the three best drop points behind Iraqi lines. The first drop went well. One third of the troops were on their way. The second drop as well. However, during the third and final drop, the Iraqi border troops spotted Thompkins’ transporter and blew it out of the sky with a magnificent explosion of fire. Thompkins and the remaining clones were showered over the Iraqi borders. Little did the Iraqis know of the harm they had just inflicted upon themselves.

Weeks later one of the President’s advisors asked where Thompkins was. The President honestly answered that they truly had no idea where Thompkins was. However, he strongly suspected that Thompkins disappearance had something to do with the strange plague afflicting Iraq and several other Middle Eastern countries. He, of course, could share his concern with no one, and he was well able to keep silent about the past incident in the conference room. His real concern was not in the past, but in the future. No, the U.S. would most likely never be blamed. The new biological strain that killed off so many Iraqi’s was blamed on their science. But, what if one of the clones survived the incident? What if one returned to the U.S.? There were rumors that the plague was spreading to Italy. Was it carried there by one of the clones? What was Thompkins thinking of? Was anyone safe?

Jered Bauer
Curt Griffith
Amanda Gudac
Sara Lockard
R. J. Wolke

A long winding road
Darkness of the night unfolds
Lonely walking man

RJ Wolke
Our Tennis Game

Soon you will be moving away.
I truly hope you’ll remember our game,
for now my life won’t be the same.
So let me review a couple of plays
for you to recall in later days...

We started out equal, both pretty unknown,
but then you smiled and your kindness quickly shown.
You began serving personal questions
I let you know you were in for a lesson.
That put me up 15-love.

Then the darkness of winter rolled in above.
So we called the game at fall’s end
and parted a little as very good friends.
You turned from another, and I couldn’t ignore
that 30-love was now the score.

We volleyed back and forth awhile
and everyday was worth the while.
But then something happened, I started to choke
and suddenly everything inside of you broke.
You walked off the courts with no words to speak of
I guess that left me at 40-love.

The set went to me and we suspended play,
cause of falling tears or falling rain.
The lightening flashed and the thunder rolled
the days grew shorter and the nights grew cold.
But in a flash of time came the spring,
so with a lighter heart we resumed our game.

So in the summer heat we say good-bye
and while every part of me wants to cry
you mean the very world to me
so I won’t forget you easily.

We’ve since considered completing our game,
but realized too much has changed.
Weeds have grown over the courts where we met.
The gates have rested with time-torn nets.
And I stand on the clay with the bright lights above
it was best we stopped playing at love-love.

Amanda Gudac
As a boy,  
I dreamed grand dreams.  
Of hitting a homerun,  
and hearing the crowds screams.

Going to bed at night,  
My dad would tuck me in.  
Saying a prayer to God,  
and then my dreams begin.

Each morning I would wake,  
awoken by the morning sun.  
Being the shadow of my father,  
a childhood dream had just begun.

When I grew up,  
to the city I would flee.  
The answer to my new dreams,  
or at least I thought it would be.

Now I am older,  
wiser who will know?  
Still searching for my dreams,  
everywhere I go.

Following my father,  
this path I would not take.  
Being my own man,  
this, my dream I’ll make.

No longer a shadow,  
of my father I will be.  
But hopefully someday,  
I dream to be like he.

Still that same boy,  
dreaming everyday.  
Only realizing now,  
that my dream was never far away.

Curt Griffith

Dormant

The best parts of me are untouched.  
They are not virgin.  
They are still and calm.

They have been put away  
and do not know pleasure.  
Exposure would sink them.  
Or so it seems.

A treasure to be re-discovered  
heals slowly.  
The depth feels the pressure.  
The mind knows it will end.  
Or so it seems.

Logic says, “Wake up and play!”  
Emotion says, “Not yet.”  
Emotion seduces logic  
and logic succumbs.

For how long?  
Two days? Two months? Two years?  
Time passes.

With patience and understanding,  
the best parts of me are untouched.  
I win.

berni patterson

Thunderstorms

Crackle, flash, rumble  
My car begins to rock  
Lightening strikes near me.

Jered Bauer
My Dream

In my dreams you love me,
But I don't know who you are,
I know someday I'll find you,
And then the world will be ours.
You'll hold my hand as we walk along,
Pondering each other's day.
You'll be glad we are together,
With me, you'll always stay.
You'll say that I am beautiful
And that you love my smile.
Your eyes will dance as you look at me,
I'll love your fun-loving style.
We'll dance beneath a moonlit sky,
While you kiss me tenderly.
The world will seem to slip away,
There's only you and me.
You will be my candlelight,
the flame that keeps me alive.
The heat, the passion, the love I want,
But only in my dreams.

CES

Colorblind

She was a settler, not from this land
Drawn by faith, only wanting to be your friend
The gift of herself, she gave, it was a Godsend
She wanted to be a sister, she was your sister
She, saw no color, to her, all were like one
Drawn by the motherland, hating none
Look through her prism: there is no color
Democracy? Yeah where's her democracy?
All she wanted was for you to be free
No colors... no colors... colorblind

But they took her, they painted her white
They colored her, they made her white
But can't you see? She was your sister, always your sister
Colorblind... she was colorblind... always colorblind...

TO AMY BIEHL, RIP 1993

Joe Lassiter
Ode to Jerry Springer

I've lived in a trailer park all of my life,
I kick my dog and beat my wife.
Jerry why don't you call me.

I've had many lovers from time to time,
I transvestite, a dominatrix, and even a mime.
Jerry why don't you call me.

I've waited and waited all of my life,
You never once noticed my internal strife.
Jerry why don't you call me.

What does it take to get national attention,
I'll even take a bath as long as you listen,
Jerry why don't you call me.

I'll bring all my homeys, my sisters, and brothers,
Your bouncers can keep us from fighting one another.
Jerry why don't you call me.

I will not beg but this is my last plea,
For I desperately want the entire world to see.
Jerry PLEASE call me!

CG

A 5-year Retrospective
I will not look back
or forgive my Oppressors
But I will get even.
Joe Lassiter

Sunsets bring calm, quiet
Darkness fills my loneliness
Sunrise brings new life

Amanda Gudac