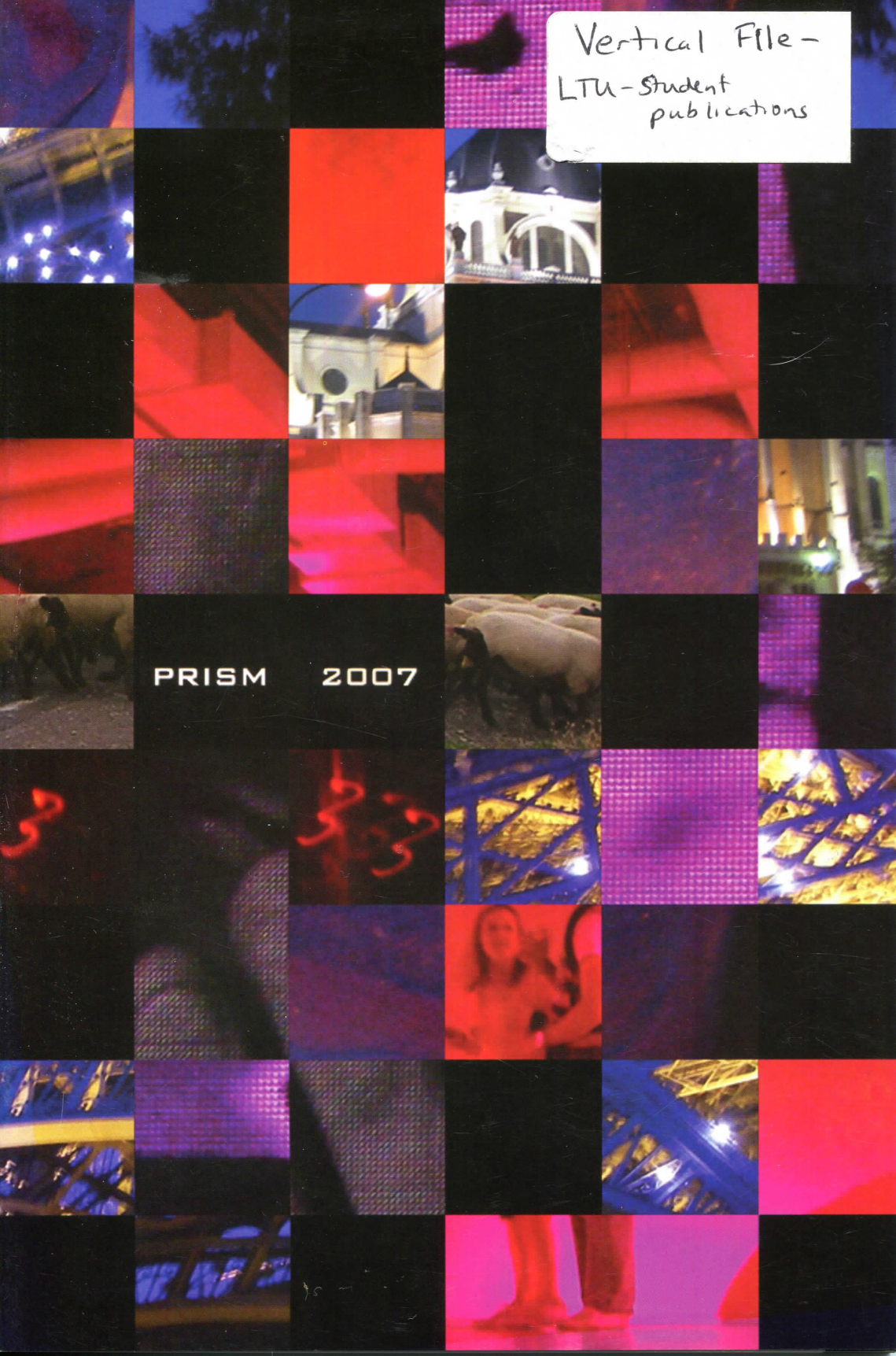


Vertical File -
LTU-Student
publications

PRISM 2007



PRISM2007

A publication of the LTU Artist's Guild
Spring 2007

Editors-in-Chief

Elsida Konackiu
Ireli Xhani

Faculty Advisor

Prof. Sara E. Lamers

Editing Board

Kris Naylor
Francis Paradela
Thomas Phillips
Alexander V. Popovich
Dan Sanderson

Special Thanks

Sofia Lulgjuraj

Cover Art

Design by Michael Jacobs



Artists' Guild

LAWRENCE TECH LIBRARY

Prism was founded in 1978 by Prof. Paula Stofer

Copyright © 2007 Lawrence Technological University

All rights of individual works revert to their respective original authors and artists upon publication.

A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

A prism is defined as a medium that changes the appearance of what is viewed through it. In many ways, the same can be said of this collection of works that has been titled "Prism." Here is a collection of short stories, poetry, drawings, graphics, and photographs contributed by students, faculty, and alumni of Lawrence Technological University.

Prism was founded in 1978 by then-student Paula Stofer, who would later go on to become a faculty member at LTU. Prism had modest beginnings as a small newsletter printed on standard 8"x11" paper. Prism was only printed for two years in its infancy. In 2000, Dr. Melinda Weinstein, with generous backing from the Arts and Sciences Department, restarted the dormant Prism as LTU's premiere exhibition of artwork. Since then, every year has been preceded by a larger and more refined Prism. The Artists' Guild continually strives to expand its presence on campus and evoke creative ideas from the students. This year we had the honor to work with a new advisor, Sara E. Lamers, acquired a new editor and added several new members to the group.

Much like a physical prism can separate white light into colors, this copy of "Prism" you are reading right now has separated the static of everyday life into various themes, from the brightest highs to the darkest lows, as told by pieces of text, lenses, paint, and mixed media. The entire spectrum of emotion is accounted for.

We would like to sincerely thank the Arts and Sciences Department for their support, with special thanks to Sofia Lulgjuraj and Katherine Charbeneau for their guidance in completing the finished Prism. Also, thanks to all the contributors for their inspiring pieces.

Enjoy.

-The PRISM2007 Editors

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editors' Quote - Matt Groening	4
A Swing in the Park - Carrie Rasak	5
Like Daddy, Like Daughter - Heather Moldenhauer	8
Peekabo - Tracy McGhee	9
Viewing Sculptures of the Madonna and Child - Sara E. Lamers.....	10
Mourning - Tracy McGhee.....	11
The Busy Atrium - Don Mexicotte.....	12
Untitled 04 - Alivia Stalnaker	13
Green Song - Melinda Weinstein	14
The Deserter - Betty Stover.....	15
Gates of Hell - Tracy McGhee.....	19
Daddy You Can't Go - Andrea Lazor.....	20
Memories - Phillip Krochmal	21
Black Clouds - Michael Jacobs.....	22
Will I? - Alexandar V. Popovich	23
Life in a Moment - Jessica Lechkun.....	24
At the Foot of the Stairs - Don Mexicotte.....	26
Untitled 03 - Alivia Stalnaker	27
From: The Jello Hour (novel excerpt) - Barry Knister.....	28
A Small Wonder in a Large World - Phillip Krochmal	32
The Habits of My Love - Gonzalo Munevar.....	33
The Secretive Kiss - Heather Moldenhauer	35
The Deficiency of Men - Brian Obot.....	36
Chase Requiem of a Rotting Hypnotist - Alexandar V. Popovich	37
Rock Dam River, Adirondack Mountains - Scott Schneider	38
Serenity - Beth Hopson.....	39
Cloudgate 1 - Edward Orłowski	40
Symboisis in Pink - Ronald Livingston.....	41
Iced Blueberries - Scott Schneider	42
Falling Water - Alda Gapi Black	43
Autumn Gold - Ronald Livingston.....	44
There - Alda Gapi Black.....	45
Landscape - Alda Gapi Black.....	46
7 - Alda Gapi Black	47
Terminal Beauty - Sofia Lulgjuraj.....	48
A Touch of Color - Elsidia Konakciu	48
Mountain Bliss - Ronald Livingston	49
Weeding the Garden - Rhoda Stamell.....	50
Kensington Bridge Revisited - Scott Schneider.....	53
Dance, Dance - Carrie Rasak	54
July 19 1983 - Hassan Raychouni.....	55
Untitled 01 - Alivia Stalnaker.....	56
I Never - Sara E. Lamers	57
Confusion - Beth Hopson	59
Equipped - Nathan Shobe.....	60
Shhhh- - Andrea Lazor.....	61
The Teacher's Critique - Jessica Lechkun.....	62
The End - Markus Sheldon.....	63
Artists' Biographies.....	64

EDITORS' QUOTE

Living creatively is really important to maintain throughout your life. And living creatively doesn't mean only artistic creativity, although that's part of it. It means being yourself, not just complying with the wishes of other people.

- Matt Groening

Award-winning American cartoonist

"So, you gonna swing or not?" asked Jade.

Lisa frowned at the tire swing. It's so much smaller than I remember it, she thought. I can't possibly climb on.

"I don't know," she managed.

Jade sighed. This was Lisa's idea in the first place, and at the time the park had seemed like a great idea. Now she wasn't so sure. There wasn't as much to do as she'd thought. She was getting bored.

"Hop on," Jade commanded. "I'll push you."

Lisa hesitated. Lately, Jade had become so demanding, almost exerting her small bit of seniority and self-confidence as though she regarded Lisa as beneath her. Jade showed her disrespect in small ways, but they built and built. Over the years she'd gone from bad to worse, and Lisa didn't think she could take much more.

"Well?" Jade demanded. "What did we come out here for if you're just gonna stare at the swing like it might bite you?"

Lisa made a split second decision. "You go first," she said.

Jade shrugged. "Whatever." She stood with her feet apart on two different parts of the tire and wriggled from side to side a bit. "Are you gonna push me or stand there?"

Lisa sighed and pulled the tire toward her, giving it a shove to the right. Jade laughed softly, challenging: "Is that all you've got?"

Lisa waited for the swing to come back to her before pushing it again, harder. Jade leaned hard to the right, challenging again: "Is that all you've got?"

Lisa pushed so hard she almost knocked Jade into the wooden poles that held up the swing. A faint look of nervousness passed over her face, but she quickly dismissed it by repeating: "Is that all you've got?"

Lisa pushed the swing harder and harder, each time Jade repeating her mantra: "Is that all you've got? Is that all you've got? Is that all you've got?"

Finally Lisa was sick of it, sick of Jade's conceit, her airs, her entire persona. Lisa pushed the swing so hard that Jade lost her balance for a precious half second—but that was all she needed. Jade went flying.

Lisa screamed in horror, falling to the ground. In the distance, she heard a young girl crying to her mother: "Mommy, why is that girl on the ground? Why isn't she moving?"

Lisa doubled over and everything went black.

Oh, no. I'm so sore. My neck especially. It keeps cracking in various places, but I think it's helping. I'm beginning to be able to move it around now. I still haven't managed to stand up, just yet. I'm getting my bearings. I'm trying to remember why I'm lying on the ground and why I feel as though I've been run over by a truck.

I'm getting feeling in my arms now—I can move them around, though it hurts a bit. My legs are shaky, but they're good enough to stand on. Time to look around.

All I can see are trees. My vision is somewhat limited, but as my sense come back I begin to feel lighthearted. Free. Nothing hurts anymore. It's so sudden, I almost can't believe it.

My memory, however, seems to have permanently abandoned me. No matter. I begin to walk, and as I step on branches in the woods I'm reminded of a few things. I remember a girl named Lisa. Lisa is my best friend. Lisa is a very passive person, so it's funny that we're as close as we are, because I am her total opposite. I remember that. Lisa sometimes resented me because I had more friends and attracted men far more

easily than she did. I remember that.

Lisa...she rarely spoke her mind. It's hard to tell what she's thinking. It's hard to tell what I'm thinking, too, for that matter. But if Lisa had a problem, why didn't she tell me?

Maybe she did. Maybe she tried. Maybe I didn't listen.

Maybe...that must be it. That must be why she's been strange lately. Lisa is upset because I like things to be instant, I like to figure things out right away, I like things to be simple. I like solutions to come quickly. Lisa would take hours, maybe days, to understand and work through. I've been ignoring her for so long, pretending that she didn't have problems, that she wasn't trying to get through.

What kind of a friend am I?

I hardly know. I hardly know myself. I don't know anything about myself, but I do know that as I recollect and think things through, my path becomes clearer. I know what I have to do. Lisa and I need to have a long, long talk, before our personalities clash so hard we destroy each other.

And...I see her. My path is so clear I can almost taste it. I run to her, screaming her name, my voice louder with each breath I take: but she doesn't hear me. Am I too late?

Then I stop short. Lisa is crying. I go to her, to touch her shoulder, or give her a hug, but she still doesn't see that I'm there. And then I follow her eyes to see what she's staring at.

I feel myself go cold.

It's the sprawled body of a girl. Young. Her neck is bent at a hideous angle. It appears that by some freak accident she fell off a swing.

I feel myself go colder when I realize the girl is me. The girl is me, and I felt sore, and as I healed I died, and I am no longer alive.

I go colder still as I realize what Lisa is quietly whispering to herself. "Not an accident..."

Not an accident? Lisa meant for this to happen? How could she? How could I have been that horrible?

There is quite a crowd around my body, I realize, and soon police appear, questioning everyone. The little girl who noticed my body, her mother, who was with her, and Lisa herself, who was pushing me. The police seem to confirm her belief that it was not an accident at all. Lisa protests, and I can't believe my ears.

I really didn't mean to, I swear. I didn't mean to push her that high. She was tall, anyway. But I guess that doesn't matter. Look at her now, all crumpled on the ground. Did you do this, did you do this? No, surely not. She was my best friend, after all. Why would I push her so high, so hard, that she'd fall off and snap her neck? I'm so sorry. Can't you see me cry? I'm so sorry. She finally kicked the sky for real, and now look what's happened. No, I'm not deaf. I don't appreciate that comment. Didn't I hear her scream at me to slow down, to stop, even? No. I did not. Did she say please? I don't know. Please always made me get my way with her. I remember that. I remember she'd take my stuff and not give it back unless I said please. I remember when she stopped taking my stuff, too. That was right around when I stopped feeling any sort of camaraderie with her. But that doesn't mean I pushed her off the swing. I did not cause her death. Why won't you believe me? Why would I want to kill her, I feel nothing for her, nothing, NOTHING! Yes, I know I'm shouting. I think I have reason to shout, my best friend

is dead, snapped her neck, you say? And you're all looking at me, ME, like I did this, I knew I should have stopped her, it's just like her to put the blame on me even at her death. She was always like that, you know, manipulative, only cared about herself, didn't need anyone else. But you won't, you can't understand that, you never knew her. It would seem as though you never knew me either, since you all think I did it. Well, maybe I did, and so what? She deserved it, she put me through so much grief, me, and everyone else, she's probably happier wherever she is anyway, oh what a flimsy excuse. I've killed my best friend, KILLED HER, I wasn't sane, I swear, what am I supposed to do, where can I go? I know what I'll do. Watch me run to the swingset. Watch me climb on. Everyone is silent, watching, to see what I will do. Well, I'll swing so high I'll go over the top, and no one will have to push me. I'll kick the sky, too. All by myself.

Everyone watched in horror as Lisa slowly walked to the tire swing and climbed aboard. She turned to the crowd, daring, challenging, much like Jade had. She could hear Jade's voice in her ear, her cruel laughter, demanding: Is that all you've got?

"Isn't anyone going to push me?" Lisa called.

No one moved.

Lisa swung one leg over the top of the swing set, then the other, balancing cautiously. "All right," she called again. "I'll push myself."

Lisa swung into a ball and catapulted off the top, aiming for the ground parallel to where Jade had landed.

Everything went black. Jade felt herself fade out as she moved to catch Lisa, but it was too late.

They were trapped in a darkness that would never let them go.

L
I
K
E
D
A
D
D
Y,
L
I
K
E
D
A
U
G
H
T
E
R

The eldest of three girls,
my dad always said,
“Stick up for yourselves,
don’t let anyone push you around.”
Through adolescence I put up
many verbal fights. Our heads
would butt always.

But few years have passed
since he led me down the aisle.
Our matching tempers still flare,
But we are different now.

I know one day
I may have
a child who gives me the spitfire
I once gave to my dad.



P
E
E
K
A
B
O

Digital photo: 8" x 10" print

V
I
E
W
I
N
G
S
C
U
L
P
T
U
R
E
S
O
F
T
H
E
M
A
D
O
N
A
A
N
D
C
H
I
L
D

Why is the Christ child so fat? Why does his face
 appear so stern? How does one make
 swaddling clothes? Did the Virgin want,
 when it was all said and done, to be
 a mother anyway? Who mothered her? Who sat
 up all night, offering tea and unsolicited advice?
 Which pains did she know and not speak of?
 Which hours did she spend alone, in work
 or worry? See how her slender hands
 cup the child in a manner which suggests
 he must be so light, nearly weightless? Like
 a phantom or held breath.
 Did she stay a virgin forever? Did she want
 more children or only wish for moments to savor
 the crunch of sand between her toes?
 Did she guide by example, instruct in clichés, speak
 in riddles? And what about now, the weight
 of all these centuries? A woman frozen in time:
 is this reward or curse?



M
O
U
R
N
I
N
G

Digital photo: 8" x 10" print

THE
BUSY
ATRIUM

Noises echo through the vast open space,
squeaky shoes fill the void with sound.
An airplane hangs from the rafters,
stuck in a soaring posture.
It adds to the pleasant atmosphere.

As busy people descend down
the circled staircase, more
sound is heard, sounds of action,
sounds of business.

The waxed floor lusters from the
skylights above sharing their light.
The coffee stand making foam
fills the air with sound and smell.

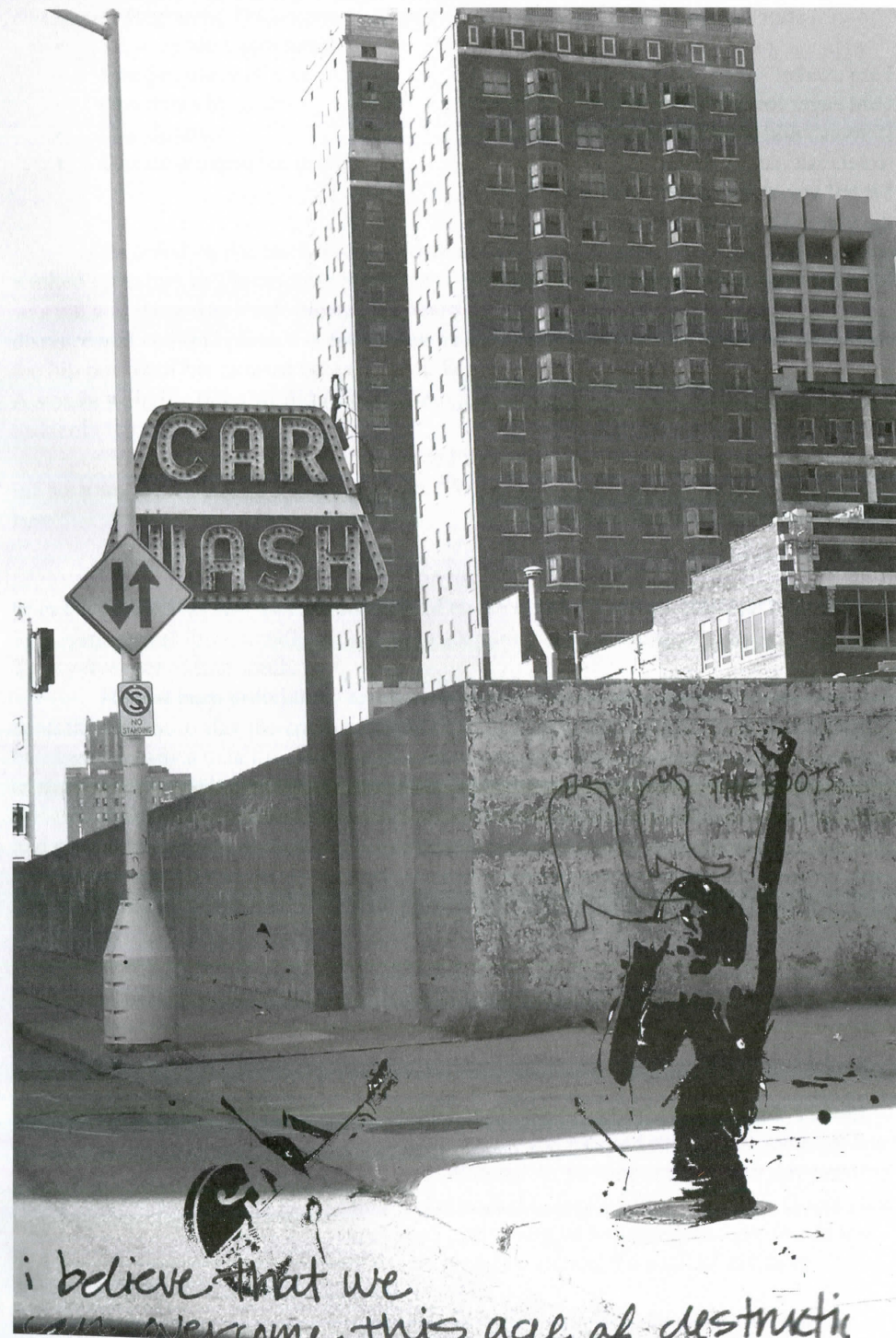
Laughter in the distance,
the figure is not seen,
only heard.
Its quiet know.

A squeak again is heard,
a conversation in the line
as two wait for brew.
Laughter again.

People have different objectives.
Some walk fast,
hurry.
Some walk slowly,
dawdling.

The smell of brew fills the air,
drawing in slumberous few,
awaiting their wakeup brew.

A central place for sure,
education into pleasure.



i believe that we
can overcome this age of destructio

Digital photo

after Tennessee Williams

I am awake.
I am eager for talk and activity.
If you should meet me upon the
street, ask me my name.
I'll tell you about my home town,
the places I've lived, the crazy
things I've done.
It matters that tomorrow arrives
clean and neat with the window
shade rolled up.
But, if there is only this night
and after it is morning,
all right.
Now I am awake.
I long for speech and action.
In the heart of me you will find
a sprouted seed. Take it.
Blow it out upon the wind
Let the wind have it.
Wherever it falls it grows.

4th Cavalry Regiment, D Company—Statistics for Battle of Gettysburg:

- Six wounded, two fatally
- Five prisoners of war
- One death by disease
- One deserter
- One discharged for disability

He stood on the bank looking down at the creek bottom. Water sparkled and winked up at him as the current played the creek over the rocks. It was warm. The sun was out and there was a soft breeze. He heard a rhythmic ticking somewhere out in the distance and couldn't place it at first. Then he realized it was his pocket watch, stuck in the hip pocket of his tattered blue uniform. Funny, he'd never noticed it ticking before. A steady whirring tick that didn't stop. Time just kept ticking away....ticking. He felt suddenly frightened.

"What am I doing here?" He gasped the words and they seemed to echo among the surrounding hills, coming back at him: "What am I doing here? What am I doing here?"

**

His pa had given him the watch on his eighteenth birthday. It had been his grandpa's. That was two months before he'd enlisted in D Company of the 4th Cavalry Regiment. It was three months before he headed out on horseback with the Company. Thirty-five men riding south.

He had been proud then: an eighteen-year-old man riding with other men to meet the enemy, to slay the enemy, to stop those infamous brutes from putting others in bondage. He was a man too. His pa had said so and gave him the watch as proof. It was in the right front pocket of his uniform. Yes, he had been proud.

He'd always been of a romantic turn of mind. His school teacher, Miss Hazel, had given him extra books to read because he was so far ahead of his classmates. The books were special and he felt special. In them he had read of great acts of chivalry, knights riding out on deeds errant. His favorite had been Spencer's Faery Queen with its dragons and witches and innocence and love. He hadn't cared for Don Quixote. He thought it profane. Irony he couldn't appreciate. He discussed it with Miss Hazel. She tried to explain Cervantes' purpose. He just watched her face while she talked. She had the most beautiful eyes. They matched her name. When she wore a green dress—like she had been wearing that day—her eyes were emeralds shining on her face. They were like topaz at other times. She had the prettiest mouth he'd ever seen. It was shaped so that she always seemed to be smiling. Together with her twinkling eyes there was always about her a warm glow. Happy. He felt happy while he sat and listened to the light music of her voice. She epitomized for him beauty, love, Woman. As he rode out that first day heading south with her parting gift in his other jacket pocket (a small volume of Faery Queen) her soft vision was before him. She represented everything he was going to fight for. At last he could be the knight with his lady's scarf wrapped around the shaft of his saber.

**

They rode on for days. For months. He was getting saddle weary. However, Miss Hazel's image was always before his eyes. It wasn't until the time they ran out of food that he forgot about her. His burning stomach wouldn't let him think of much else. It seemed to turn over and over inside of him. When they had their first meal of "skunk

stew," as some called it, his stomach finally felt warm and good again. That night he took out Faery Queen and caressed the smooth leather binding. The war wasn't really bad so far. With a full stomach nothing seemed bad to him that night.

They had traveled many miles but his Company hadn't yet engaged the enemy. They heard fighting in the distance sometimes, but hadn't come upon it yet. At night, when he was kept awake by the cannon fire, he wondered about actual battles. The cannons sounded fierce. They were miles away but they sounded as though they were right in the next field. He began to wonder what he would do in battle. He began to wonder if he could kill a man and watch him die. He had never killed anything before, except an ailing horse. It had made him violently ill at the time: to see something with life in its eyes one moment, and the next, nothing but a blank glassy stare. It was a thing too frightening to contemplate—death, killing.

He talked to some of the other men about the fighting. None of them seemed concerned.

"Ya jus do what ya hafta son, that's all."

"If'n ya don kill them first, they're sure as hell ta kill you."

So he contemplated this unknown thing—the battles he was soon to experience—in solitude, while gazing up at the night sky. Home seemed just as far away as those small silver specks. He reflected that it would be nothing worse than learning how to swim. At first you were scared of all that dark wetness, but you'd fight your way to the surface light and breath and kick and paddle. After a while it would be easy. Nothing scary.

**

Their first battle came at last and all the men, tired of the endless riding and camping and waiting, welcomed it. Finally it was here.

When he realized that he was at last going to fight, he felt paralyzed. This only lasted an instant. He surged forward with the rest. They were like a blue wave rolling in one mighty roar of power beneath the lighter blue sky. The enemy seemed to be scattered beyond in the field. He charged on with his comrades to meet the enemy in gray. They galloped their horses forward and jumped to the ground to fight as they had practiced time and again. At the first sound of gunshot he watched amazed as a mass of birds flew up from the trees, going up and around in waves like a big black net. They swooped through the sky, crying out their fright and indignation.

Everything became confusion. The shouts, the guns, the sun streaking down hot on the field of fighting men and the birds soaring high above. The noise was going to break his eardrums.

He rode to get away from the pandemonium but seemed enclosed by gray and blue jackets, intertwined, performing some exotic acrobatics. A gray shirt was running up to him with a rifle sticking out in front. He started to jump from his horse but his foot got twisted and caught in the stirrup. In a frenzy, he wiggled out of his boot. As the roar of a shot came to his ears, he felt his body fall left toward the gray shirt. His saber was in front of him and the blade of it glistened in the sun and blinded him. It seemed to take forever to fall forward.

The next instant he was lying with blades of grass around his nose. He smelled the moist brownness of the earth and was surprised that it smelled the same as the ground at home. There was a patch of yellow flowers close to his face. They let off a faint bitter odor.

He waited for the pain to reach his brain. It didn't come. He scrambled to his

knees and realized that he hadn't been shot. Beneath him his saber was standing on top of the gray shirt, its blade stuck into the man's flesh beneath. There was a growing ooze of red on the shirt, getting larger, a shiny, brilliant red that seemed to be eating away at the gray cotton. Then he saw the enemy's face. There was a strange contorted smile on his face and chipped yellow teeth were showing beneath the cracked lips. The man's cap had fallen off and his tan hair was falling in greasy strands onto the green and brown ground. The man's eyes were looking into his. He seemed startled, almost puzzled. His eyes suddenly opened wider and the whites seemed to pop out. In the next instant they were blank. Gray, glassy, sightless. They were just like the horse's eyes had been. He ran.

He ran past the noise and the contortions of men. He ran past the pieces of flesh littering the ground. He ran past the rearing horses, their flaying legs and wild eyes. He ran past the screaming guns until finally he couldn't run anymore. He collapsed in a field of bright green clover by the edge of a shallow creek, its water shimmering over the stones beneath. He vomited on the clover. His yellow sticky bile fell on the delicate leaves and clung there, glistening in the sun. He drank from the creek. He soaked his face in it, putting his head all the way in until he felt the soft cool stones on his cheek. When he looked up he saw a pine forest on the other side of the bank. It looked calm, silent and dark. He walked into it.

The trees were tall and straight. The needles didn't start until far above his head. They seemed to be planted in long straight rows. All upon the floor were golden needles. They made a damp crunching noise when he paced them. He felt a sharp jab of pain in his right foot as a needle stuck into his stocking. He only had on one boot. He sat down and took the other off. He fell upon his back and looked up at the powerful trees. It was dim in here and it was peaceful. He had the same feeling here that he got walking into the empty church back home. Coolness. Dimness. Peace. Above him some sunlight filtered through the trees in a radiant stream as it picked up dust particles in the air. It reminded him of a picture in his church of Jesus Christ on his knees praying while a stream of light came down from the sky and flooded him in grace. He felt that he could get up and walk upon that soft ray of light, walk right up to heaven. He fell asleep.

When he awoke, the sun was still shining, but there was a different angle to its light. The ground beneath him seemed chill. It was morning. He got up and ran out to the edge of the creek and looked into the distant field. It was empty. There was absolutely nothing left to show the scene of destruction it had witnessed the day before. His Company had left without him. He sat down and took off his socks. He bathed his feet in the creek. It felt so good that he took all his clothes off and sat in the creek, splashing water all over himself. When he got dressed again he realized he was hungry. His haversack was on the edge of the creek where he had dropped it the day before. In it were a few sticks of dried beef and he sucked on these while thinking of what to do next. He'd try to find the Company. He'd walk until he found them.

Suddenly a noise startled the birds and they again rose in the sky, going higher and circling and dipping: hundreds of birds flying as one. They were free. They were in a state of grace...but where was he? The sound of cannon burst in the distance, shattering the peace in the pines. He remembered the battle, the noise and the blood. Those gray lifeless eyes. He picked up his haversack and walked in the opposite direction.

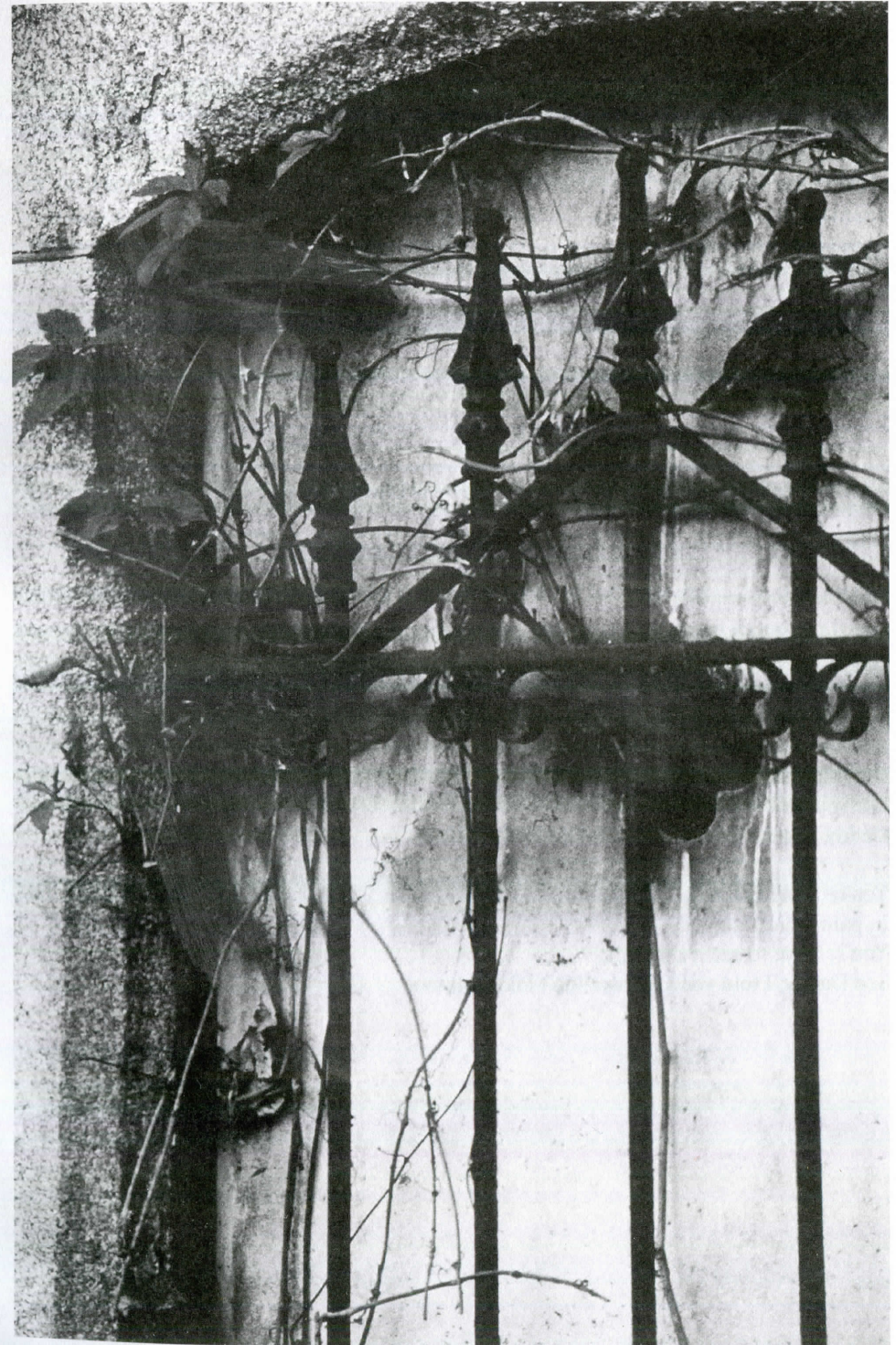
**

One day as he was fishing in the creek, two blue-jacketed soldiers rode up upon him suddenly. They knew immediately what he was: his tattered blue jacket full of holes after months of wandering; his feet wrapped in mullen leaves; his startled eyes like those

of a rabbit caught in a glare of light. These gave him away. Here was a deserter.

“What am I doing here?”

It echoed in the distant hills. So did the sharp crack of the gun as a bullet broke open his chest, slicing through lungs and heart and cracking his spine. Above, the birds' songs and the splashing creek echoed through the hills as well, blocking out the steady whirling tick of the pocket watch inside the deserter's jacket.



Digital photo: 8" x 10" print

D
A
D
D
Y

Y
O
U

Don't grab your heart,
Don't say hi to God,
Don't close your eyes,
Daddy you can't go.

You joke and laugh,
You act like it's funny,
Dying like your dad,
Daddy you can't go.

C
A
N
'
T

Tell the doctors now,
They need to fix you,
A miracle once again,
Daddy you can't go.

G
O

Don't talk of your will,
Where you want to be buried,
Don't say final goodbyes,
Daddy you can't go.

Don't leave your girl,
A girl not out of teens,
Ready to see the world,
Daddy you can't go.

Hold my hand now,
Don't cry as you go,
For you will awake,
Daddy you can't go.

You're awake Daddy,
In pain which is good,
You're alive to see it through,
See Daddy, I told you God wouldn't take you too!

Memories are a blessing
But they are also a curse.
They remind us of the best
And also of the worst.

We reflect on the days
We so dearly miss.
Like that first date
Or just that first kiss.

Perhaps they are an infection.
A disease of the mind.
Sometimes divulging to us
What was left behind.

They reference our choices
And help to guide one's soul.
It might just annoy us
As would a mole.

These things identify us
And shape us each day.
Though they affect us differently
Each in their own way.

We transgress what doth hurt
And embrace what doth heal.
Yet sometimes we wish
We just did not feel.

Thus are these things
That take refuge in our minds.
These memories which seem
Like an ever growing vine.

M
E
M
O
R
I
E
S

B
L
A
C
K

C
L
O
U
D
S



Digital photo

Choose my weapon:
 Knife?
 Gun?
 Alcohol?
 Death or life?
 Stay here or leave?
 I look to the knife.
 Slow,
 Shows signs of effort.
 The gun?
 Quick, painless.
 Alcohol will drown my sorrows.
 Death would be better,
 But life is always easier.
 You'll always be here,
 But I can't leave.
 The choice is obvious,
 But only a coward
 Could choose such a thing.
 Will I?

W
I
L
L

I?

Jessica Lechkun

L I F E I N A M O M E N T

I wake with tears
streaming down my face,
fearing for the worse.

Remembering my dad.

Staying up late and watching movies
was the time I loved best.

Tucking me into bed,
reading me stories
are the times I hold close.

Remembering my brother

when I was young,
light at heart, joyfully enjoying life,
playing in the yard.

My brother right beside me.
My shadow,
and my best friend.

Climbing trees.
Swinging from branch to branch,
playing pirates
or pretending we were monkeys.
Each day a different adventure.

Beautiful memories

that every child
should be able to experience.
Someone to love.
These moments
will never be forgotten,
can never be erased, or taken away.
Their company is missed.

Now I am fearing

the death of my loved ones
as I sit here on my death bed.
The sickness fills my lungs
and makes it almost impossible to breathe.
With each breath I take
I remember
the family who means so much to me.
The ones I could not live without.

They come to visit,
but I am still missing,
being a child with no care
in the world.

Missing

the moments
that helped me become
the woman I am today.

A
T
T
H
E
F
O
O
T
O
F
T
H
E
S
T
A
I
R
S

after Marcel Duchamp's Nude Descending a Staircase

A clutter of abstract takes its shape at the bottom of the banister.
A nude stands there in a stance of leisure and incredible posture.

She waits till this day to finish her last step.
She is stuck in an intriguing glance at the viewer.

Her movement is soft as she travels down the stairs.
Her body language is careless and inviting.

The background colors are dark next to her skin.
The flow of gold flesh all into one intriguing figure.

Her mind is careless shown by her action,
Her descent is captivating as is why she is bare,

She is slender with a curvy outline.
She flaunts her figure with her inviting pose.

A shameless descent to what lies below.
A mystery to what her intentions are.



Digital photo

"So," Janey says, "you'll be all right?"

Pleased his daughter has at last spoken to him, Brady Ritz turns. "Come on," he tells her. "Your old dad's the original hurricane tough guy."

But Janey is already facing away. She is bent at the waist, fiddling with the collar on Madison's polo. It irritates him. Not because everything about the seven-year-old makes him think of a Land's End or LL Bean catalogue. It's because Janey's expression of concern for her father has so quickly given way to something else.

And he regrets again the absence of Daddy. Janey is twenty-nine but has always called him that. Just how hard would it be - You'll be all right, Daddy? He knows her question to him was a pro-forma PC gesture in an airport, but still he wishes it would go on longer. In a Category 4, the shutters could blow off, right, Daddy? What if the roof caved in?

Watching her, he notes the incongruity of Janey's appearance in relation to her child's preppy outfit. Madison, he thinks. He still can't believe his favorite person - his own child - would succumb to the current, bogus trend of using last names for first names. Even so, as a voice mumbles something over the airport's PA system, Ritz still hopes Janey will straighten and turn to him. In shapeless blue jeans and equally shapeless maroon jersey top, she looks like someone from a truck stop or battered-woman's shelter. Her face is concealed, curtained by thick black hair as she goes on fussing.

As she moves on to Madison's hair and shorts, Ritz studies his granddaughter. She's still pale after a week of Florida sunshine. How many vats of sunscreen were lathered on her these seven days? Every time he looked, Jane or Dan was greasing up both girls as though getting them ready to take on the English channel. Seeing this over and over, he began wondering if the parents might be unconsciously sealing out some genetic influence they thought had seeped out of Ritz into his pool water. As Jane continues fussing, Madison is oblivious, looking off like an actress being laced up by her dresser. Studying her little body being swayed and pulled, Ritz follows her gaze to the observation window. Outside, the plane that will fly her back to Michigan is still being loaded. Her father and sister are off to the right, Dan holding Ashley. Like his wife, Ritz's son-in-law also reminds him of the homeless, the sad trolls at expressway ramps holding signs. Just now Dan is explaining something to the younger girl. When he points to the plane, Ashley nods solemnly.

Ashley - God. But Ritz mustn't say anything. He did, in his Free Press column, and it wasn't at all well received. Even though he suspects Dan is the one responsible for the children's bogus names, Ritz still likes his son-in-law. But just now he is jealous of Dan, and for this reason everything Ritz doesn't like about him leaps into high relief. For instance, Dan's efforts to individualize his public self by sporting nineteenth-century mutton chop whiskers (Ritz titled the column "Hair and Character: the Bald Truth"), or his bored, already-world-weary-at thirty-tone of voice ("Yawning toward the apocalypse"), or his lack of interest in books ("What's all these pages fer?"), not to mention his taste in music ("Al Qaeda's Secret Weapon").

Ritz's wife says what he wrote isn't fair. Not false, just unfair. This makes no sense to him. It's all part of the mix, isn't it? Plus and minus, upside-downside? In print, he has freely acknowledged Dan as a superior father. His son-in-law invents imaginative games for his children, stages magic shows, builds daily a chain of events that hold his wife and daughters' interest. Very possibly, Dan is not just one more swell dad and husband, but a truly superior human being. Ritz doesn't believe this - there are

no superior human beings - but he is willing to listen. Even so, in this moment, in the absence of Daddy or small talk from his favorite daughter, Brady Ritz resents Dan. He is now Daddy.

"OK, that's us."

The public-address voice is still echoing in the girders overhead. All brushings and sprucings complete, Janey now takes Madison under both arms, hoists her and deftly saddles her in the cradle made of her own arm and shoulder. "It's easier this way," she says facing her father, giving him a look of warning.

"She's seven," Ritz says. It just comes out and immediately he regrets it. But since the words can't be called back, he adds, "She's bright, a reader. A fine swimmer and fashion maven. She's a big girl, aren't you, Sweetie?"

Madison turns in the bucket seat formed by her mother's body to regard him. Her face is both passive and mildly suspicious. Because she is a smart child already nuanced in response to experience, she has picked up on the week's tensions. But her look isn't related to that. The suspicion and slight wariness come from Grandpa introducing the idea that at seven she is well able to make her own way, on foot, through the concourse and into the plane. When he makes such suggestions, she gives him the look.

"No," Janey says again, "it's just easier if I carry her. Believe me."

"I believe you."

"Goodbye grandpa." Lounging now, reassured there will be no further nonsense about walking, Madison has decided to be generous.

"Goodbye, Sweetie."

He smiles and moves closer, but resents Madison too, now. People are shaped by their names. The incomprehensibly fatuous one chosen for his granddaughter ("From Soaps to Suburbia: Instant Pretense among the Booboisie") means that Madison is and will all her life be a Madison. And the second reason for resenting the seven-year-old is that, having conned her way into being picked up, she will now prevent Ritz from getting a proper parting hug from Janey. Little upper-class twits all of them, he thinks as the three move together ("From Stroller to Barouche: The Origins of Aristocracy"). All three now engage in a clumsy embrace, the child's warm breath on his neck.

"You have a mole," she tells him. "Right here." She taps him below his right ear.

"Would you like one?"

"No!"

"I could get you a nice juicy one," he tells her. "From the Mole Hole. Big, with red lumps and green slime."

"NO!"

Surreptitiously he checks out of the corner of his eye - Janey may be suppressing a smile. Before, she would have laughed her wonderful, life-enhancing laugh. She always took pleasure in his jokes the way a daughter should. "Grandpa's being silly, Mom," Madison says. "You can't buy moles."

"The Mole Hole's a real store, honey. In Old Naples. Grandpa is just being grandpa." Yes, Ritz thinks. This is the new Janey. The post-partum literalist, the school marm mom.

"You're smothering me -"

Janey backs away from him, so quickly Ritz wonders if she's given Madison some signal to break the hug. By now Dan and Ashley have come from the observation

window. His son-in-law steps to him, shifts Ashley on his arm and moves with practiced ease to initiate the second group hug. "Goodbye, Buzz. Thanks." Ritz mumbles his answer, nose teased by his son-in-law's mutton-chop whiskers. Right out of a Dickens novel, he thinks. Mr. Fezziwig, Squeers, Pickwick - whichever you choose, Dan hasn't read the book.

They unclasp and as if on cue Ashley, four, begins whimpering. Her lower lip turns down, inverted and pink. The group begins moving in the direction that will take them to security check-in. As much as he now wants them all gone, Ritz is frustrated at having been given no chance all week to make his case.

"What is it, honey?" As she walks, Janey secures Madison on her hip. The seven-year-old's feet are flopping over her forearm like the jointed limbs of a ventriloquist's dummy. Janey reaches out to smooth Ashley's cheek.

Unlike her preppy sister, Ashley is dressed today for combat in camouflage tee shirt and bib overalls. The girls always get to choose their clothes for the day. Ritz knows Ashley picked out what she has on, not to suit the needs of travel, but in accordance with whatever drama was being rehearsed this morning in the theater occupying her small, coppery head. Ashley was born to act and is in character right now. Ashley Vanghent, Ritz thinks, walking. He sees her name in lights above the film's title. Today, for whatever reason it's Martian Holiday. The marquee is an old-style, actual marquee above the kind of theater long ago demolished to make way for parking structures. But that's the right kind of theatre for Ashley, a big one full of gargoyles and lions, lots of gold leaf and pillars. If humans are acting most of the time, Ashley figured this out in the womb. The whimpering grows louder. Listening, Ritz is convinced it's an exercise, part of Ashley's prep work before the curtain goes up.

"No!" she says as they all turn right onto the main concourse. "No!"

"Come on, honey -" Dan is holding her close, walking in his slow, measured way. Ritz has never seen his son-in-law in a hurry. "You know we have to leave."

"No, Daddy, we don't." Ashley adds a catch in her throat to underscore despair. "We don't," she says. "You know we don't. You say it, Dad, you know you do, you always say nothing is cast in stone. We don't have to leave, it's not cast in stone, we can go some other time -"

Both parents exchange looks rueful and proud. Ritz is no longer free to write about his family or anything else, but even if he were he couldn't write about this. It's the sort of thing that passes for wise-child dialogue in bad movies. No one's going to believe a four-year-old throws in "cast in stone" at such moments. It happens all the time with Ashley, and it works. Mother, father, and sister Madison all appreciate Ashley's gift for improvisation and snappy patter, the sudden, out-of-left-field figures of speech offered up by someone not yet in pre-school. It flatters her native-bearer parents and makes Madison seem more advanced to herself. Farther along the maturation time line.

Ritz used to take part in such moments, the way he just did about moles. What about your gerbils? Grandpa might say at this point. Your cats? Think of them, Ashley, waiting at home, their little faces. All these seven days their little minds full of confusion because you have been missing. It's wrong, Sweetheart. You have to go home as soon as you can and stop their suffering.

Not anymore. But it's just a matter of time. Once his crimes have been purged and pardoned, he'll be allowed back on stage. They are nearing the x-ray conveyor belt. Sensing this, Ashley adds the throwing-herself-back-and-forth-in-her-father's-arms bit of business, keeping time with "no no no." No one breaks stride. As her performance

builds, those charged with walking and hefting hasten toward the security check-in.

But this Wagnerian excess doesn't explain the silence among the adults. If Ritz were to say something about it, Janey would finesse him by asking how anyone could think let alone talk with Ashley like this. Not so. It's been like this all week. The only reason they came down was because the tickets had been bought months before and couldn't be refunded. In the seven days of Dan's spring break - he teaches high-school math and physics - they refused to use Ritz's car, came and went in their rental, prepared food, politely invited him to join them and then quickly accepted without so much as a pro forma protest when, expecting to be coaxed, he declined. Played their music, swam in the pool, went to Naples beach.

They near the table in front of the x-ray machine. At such moments, he has seen Ashley so caught up in the genius of her performance that she frightened people. Most recently, this happened at Christmas. She had to be physically removed from an actual stage, performing what was supposed to be a minor, non-speaking role as a shepherd in a church pageant. In secret Ashley had expanded her role. When her moment came, whatever might be claimed regarding the nativity itself, the actual, on-stage arrival of baby Jesus came courtesy of a heavily robed and bearded extra named Sponge Bob.

"OK, 'bye."

Janey sets down Madison and shoves the girl's backpack into the x-ray tunnel.

"Safe trip," he says. "You have window seats?"

"The girls love it."

She un-shoulders her own bag. Ritz realizes he asked this question in the car. He can't think of anything else to say. His daughter looks careworn as she drops the bag on the moving belt. Having gone ahead, Dan now steps under the scanner with the four-year-old at the apogee of her final scene in Florida. Nothing sounds except Ashley. They are waved through. Ritz lays a sack of grapefruit on the belt. "You used to get window seats for us," she says finally looking at him. "We loved it, too."

"Good times," he says.

"They were." She reaches down and again hoists Madison. "Good times."

"I like to think--"

Ready for this, Janey reaches out with her free hand and places her palm on his chest. It is at once an act of intimacy and one of self-protection. The meaning, he is sure, is to make clear there will be no last-minute bonding. When he places his hand on hers, she gently slips free. He watches her pass through the scanner. Ritz is sure she won't turn before disappearing. He's right, she doesn't. Now, Madison looks over her mother's shoulder and waves.

A
S
M
A
L
L
W
O
N
D
E
R
I
N
A
L
A
R
G
E
W
O
R
L
D



Digital photo

I still collect
the impressions of the day,
the amusing conversations,
the little triumphs,
the opportunities
that knock so lightly
on my door
the occurrences that surely
will bring a smile
to her face

I edit my way
through morning rush
and daily work
I imagine how best to tell her
of dreams, of plans
of obligations new and old

I buy flowers for my table
so she will find them fresh
and welcoming
if she comes
I dust and clean
and change the sheets
and sift once more
through the trivia of the day

I look at her photographs
slowly
fixing her glow
in my mind
so while I cook
I can recall at will
that meal we fixed
on that winter trip
or that summer vacation

I sit on my blue chair
the phone by my side
until I doze off
in its silence

T
H
E
H
A
B
I
T
S
O
F
M
Y
L
O
V
E

Later I dream in my bed
 and wake to tell her
 only to realize
 that I must be carried
 one more day
 and then another
 by the familiar habits
 of my love

after Francesco Hayez's The Kiss

She had been
 waiting,
 longing
 for his strong warm hands
 to embrace her cheek
 and pull her close.

She had been
 dreaming,
 hoping
 for their next covert reunion
 that would only give
 a few moments alone.

He had been
 searching,
 looking
 for this young maiden
 whose rosy lips
 he longed to feel on his.

He had been
 wishing,
 aching
 for the warmth of
 her small, young, beautiful
 body against his.

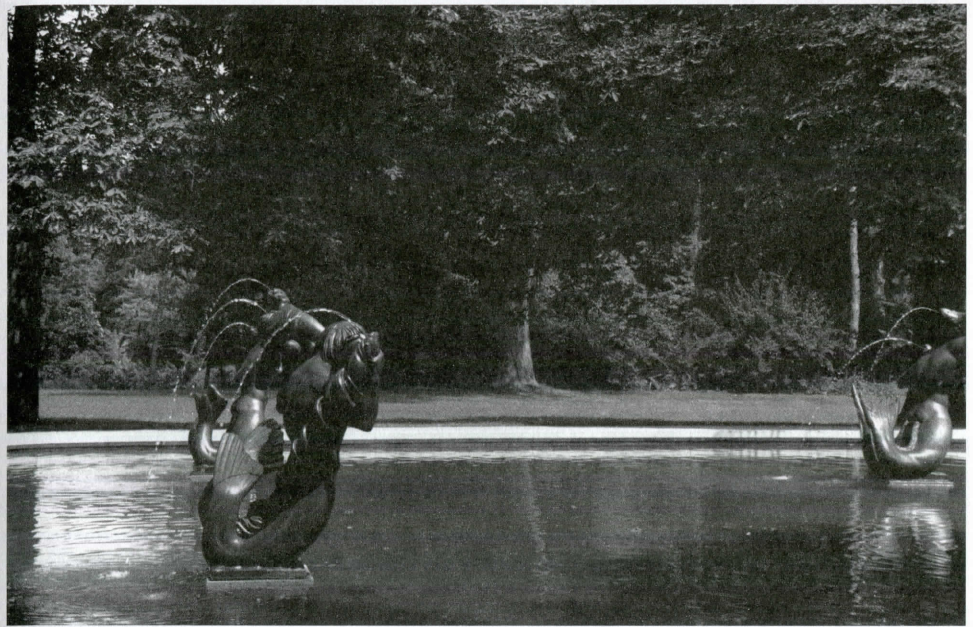
But now they are
 kissing,
 embracing
 trying to savor every second
 of this forbidden union.
 This union that would keep his face hidden for eternity.

Throughout his domestic life he was raised by women. In his youth he occasionally overheard his mother say that all men were dogs. As he grew older, he attended seasonal man bashing affairs, where his aunts coined the phrase: All men are deficient. During his teen years, he was incessantly disturbed by his older sister's firsthand accounts of the wrong doings of young and not so young men. The kindest words he recalled being spoken in eighteen years by one of the women in his life was the explanation: "They aren't intentionally that way... it's just a deficiency." It is no wonder that he has become a summary of every negative thing they believed a man could be. Near the end of her life, after she muttered "It takes a village to raise a child," his mother nearly realized that women are responsible for raising men to be dogs.

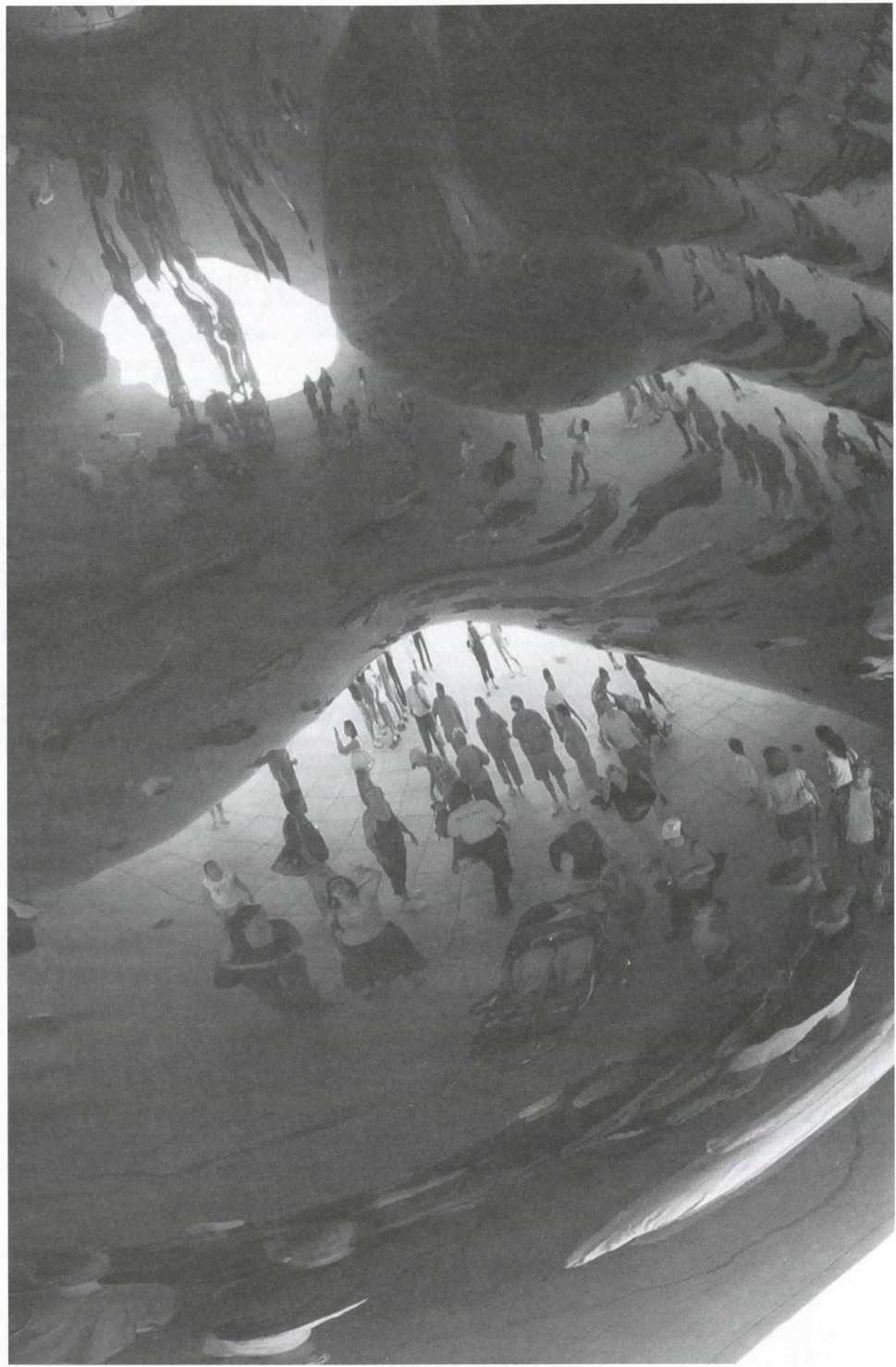
*drudging in the dark,
Groping the Cold Gravestones,
Awake, aware, and full of Anguish.
slow, staggering, stuttering, still standing,
Bleeding badly, bathed in red, boiling, Baking,
Shot full of stupid and Holy holes.
Why do they pursue me now?
Why do they persecute me?
What is it that I have done
that they detest so very much?
How can they shoot their kin, their own flesh?
This is madness! This, Hypnotic Hate, this
group delusionalism. Such an evil Irony;
While I rot, they're the ones who are
diseased. Although insignificant, they still
have a unity. I'll make them divided;
infected, persuaded, opened to their
light of their de-
spicable darkness.
"Seize the undead," shouted one.
Quickly, quickly, I must attack
their minds, making them
puppets. Better yet, I'll
call them undead*



Digital photo



Black and white digital photograph



Digital photo



Photo



Digital photo



Color pencil drawing



Photo



Oil painting and collage

L
A
N
D
S
C
A
P
E



Oil painting



Oil painting and collage

TERMINAL
BEAUTY

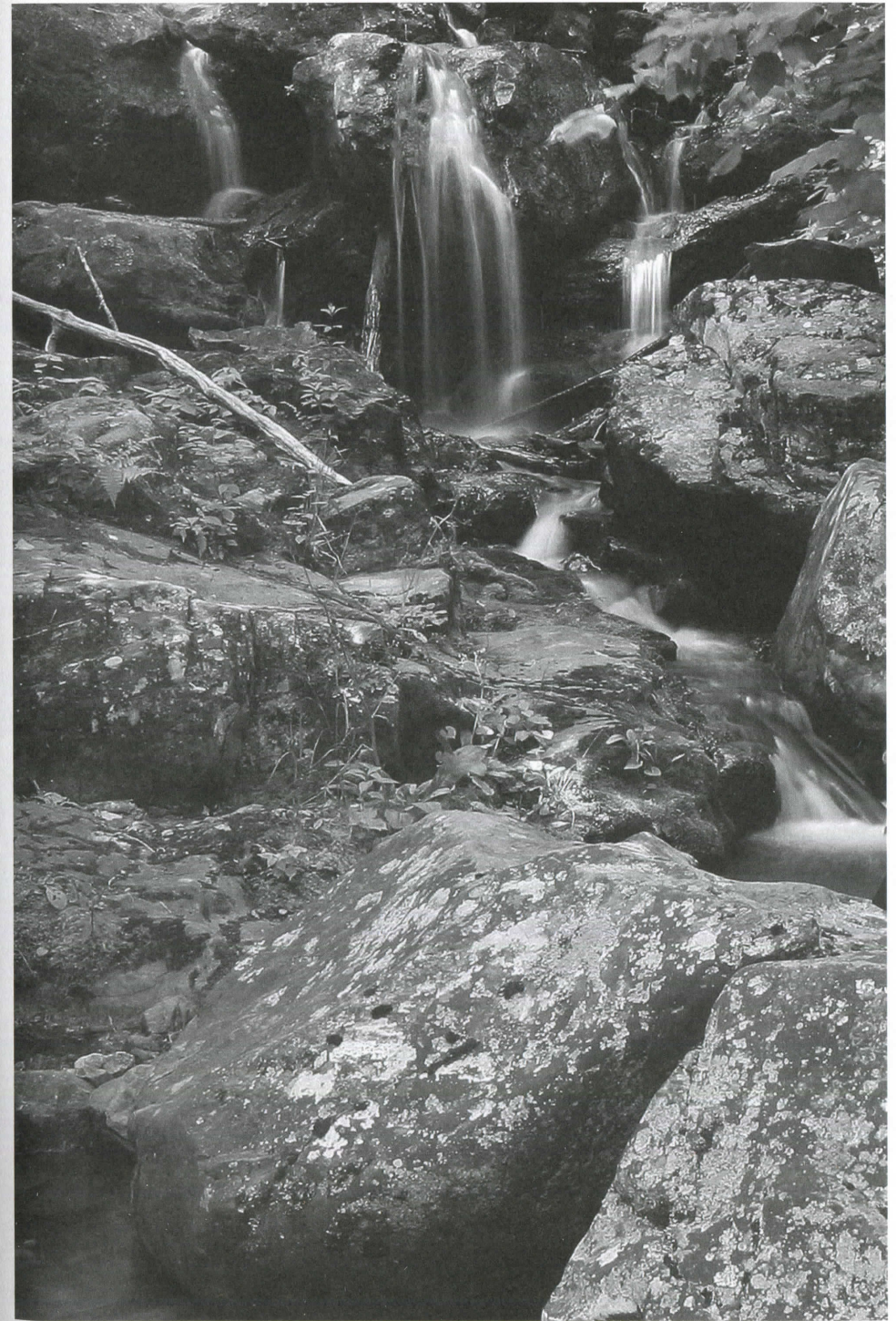


Mixed media painting: 11" x 30" acrylic on torn canvas with thread



Digital photo

A
TOUCH
OF
COLOR



Photo

MOUNTAIN
BLISS

Norma and Julie are arguing again about money. The money we don't have, I mean, that they don't have. It has gotten so that we think what's theirs is ours—their dream coming true is the one we dreamed of, a place to have a life. Like kids on television. Like white kids.

Now there is trouble: money trouble, school trouble, lots of trouble between Norma and Julie with us in the middle, loving them both because they were dreaming for us. If we have to leave, we don't know where we could go that would be anything like the School Home we made for ourselves.

Me, I know I'll never find a place like this for myself. I can sit under a tree and think about the things I need to know. I can sleep all the hours I need, nobody hollering, beating down the door or doing stuff that I never wanted to happen, not ever, ever, ever.

"They sure is arguing," JeTohn says. He's been here the longest. When Norma and Julie started School Home, he had dropped out of school and was living on his own. Norma just went over to where he was working and told him to come on. She had a home for him, no strings attached. He said that he was fine the way things were, but she nagged him so much that he just went along with her.

Even though I'm the last one to move here, I see his mark is everywhere. Walls painted an earthy red; tiles laid so carefully in the courtyard; the bookshelves in the commons room and the cabinets for dishes in the dining room stained layer upon layer. The fine little flowers on the wallpaper in the bathrooms all lined up perfectly like they had been growing there according to some gardener's plan.

"Where'd you learn to do this, JeTohn?" I asked him while he was lying under the sink, installing a garbage disposal unit.

"Girl, you know I can read," he snarled. He is the kind of person who doesn't believe in civil talk, and you think he has no feelings at all until you read his writing. That's how he got Norma to care so much about him. He writes like some people know how to sing.

When Norma and Julie argue—and we know that the arguments are about closing down or holding on—it's hard for all of us, especially JeTohn, who poured all he ever dreamed of home into this falling-down house.

"We should go outside and maybe pull some weeds," Damon said. "We shouldn't be listening to this."

"It's us too. They go, we go. We should know when."

"Waste of time," JeTohn snarled. "I'm fixing the latch on the gate. You all can pull weeds from around the tomato plants and the green peppers. Don't be pulling up the wrong things. You don't know, ask me."

Weeding was what we did when things got bad because you can think and not think at the same time. By the time you got up from the ground, your knees all crinkled from the grass or the turned soil, your fingernails are lined with dirt, your back sort of aching, you didn't care about much except how much an area you had cleared; how far you had managed to push back the enemies of the tomatoes, the peppers, the carrots.

I like weeding even when it's hot. I like the feel of the sun on my back and on my legs, even the sweat. I concentrate with my fingers, reaching down into the soil, grabbing that tiny, living thing by the roots, and easing it out of life. In a way it makes me sad because I am throwing a living thing into the pile that's beginning to wither. But there is accomplishment in these little deaths: the tomatoes, wobbly on their stalks, the carrots, pushing their roots downward, their green tops upward. It is more important for the carrots to grow and the tomatoes. Still I would like both of them to live side-by-side.

There should room enough in the world for weeds and tomatoes and peppers and carrots. I work beside Damon, who pulls out as many plants as he does weeds. I have to watch him because if JeTohn sees that some of those "weeds" could have grown into vegetables for the table, he will go after Damon.

"Boy!" he would shout. "You were born to destroy. Can't tell good from bad. Probably never even seen a blade of grass in your whole stupid life."

Damon is terrified of JeTohn and hasn't known enough good in his small life to know about good yelling. But he weeds with enthusiasm, squinting knowingly at each plant he rips from the ground before he throws it in his growing pile.

Norma comes out. She always looks calm even when we know that bad things have been going on. Julie is something else. She has to cry in order to keep going, so after the fights, she goes to her room or maybe the office. At the next meal her eyes are red, but she is okay. But Norma, she doesn't believe in burdening children with the troubles of adults. We have heard her say that a million times.

We don't think we are children. We have been through things that don't belong in the world of children. Norma takes on herself the heavy load we have carried until she found us.

"Watch out for the zucchini," she says, more to announce her presence than as a warning. "No zucchini means none of that great zucchini bread like last year."

JeTohn doesn't turn away from the gate where he is repairing the latch. "Norma, I'm going back to work. Someone needs to bring in some money."

"You aren't. During the day you are going to take classes at Wayne, and at night you are staying at home where you belong."

"You think we don't know there is nothing left? You think we want to see you shut the doors on us? We can work. Ain't none of us....sorry...none of us are strangers to work."

"I don't need to worry about you out all times of the night. Let me worry about something I can handle."

"I'm not a child, Norma."

"I'm not calling you a child, but I am saying that you are my responsibility."

"Remember when you were a teacher? Remember back then when you said you were convinced that you would end up a bag lady? That's where you're heading, Norma. You haven't left anything for yourself."

"At the risk of sounding melodramatic, I have never had more in my life."

"Damn, Norma! You just love being a martyr. All those books taught you a bad lesson. Let me help. Give me the privilege of helping."

"JeTohn, we'll work it out. Together. You're just as much a part of this place as I am. I won't keep you from helping. Just let me find the right way."

"Find it soon."

We were all scared, but we couldn't believe that it would end. Not our School Home, not the world we made to keep the world from getting to us. If we have to leave, then I'll know for sure there isn't any God. Or if there is, He is a mean, white man, so mean that He doesn't even give any credit for Norma and Julie being white, too.

JeTohn says that it isn't about whiteness or about God; it is about life being mean because that's all people deserve to begin with. "We aren't any more than the weeds you pullin' out, Nefertiti. We're just weeds who sprung up with no one wanting us around."

Nefertiti, that's my name, and it is not easy going around with a name like that, but it's what I have, a name that has nothing to do with me.

I want to say to JeTohn that we are important to Norma and Julie, but I am afraid of what he will answer: That Norma and Julie don't matter either. If he says that, then the world is a pit that we are falling down all the time.

It's starting to get cooler, so the other kids are drifting outside. We don't ask: What you been doing? Where you been? That's small talk for white kids. Daily events, they kind of get lost in the bad stuff that can happen. And some things just aren't worth talking about, like what have you been doing, sleeping or something? Where have you been, to the art studio or what? And the big things, well, I don't think there are words for the big things.

For instance, when my baby died, I couldn't find any words. They were too flat. MY. Something that belonged to me, someone I loved so much even with the hardship that came with her. MY. It is too tiny, only two letters for how she grew inside of me and then inside my heart, all tangled up in my days.. MY. Not any more. So MY stops being a word that could mean all that she was to me.

BABY. That could be anyone. It is not a pretty word. Say it. BABY. BABY. Your lips hardly move with a word like that. It doesn't take any effort. It doesn't have any music to it. Not like Angelica. That takes effort to say like the Shakespeare poems Norma loves to read to us, saying all the syllables.

That's what I called my baby. Angelica. Or Angel, a name for morning and for rocking her on my lap. If I had had a rocking chair, I could have rocked her and said to her over and over: See how nice, Angel. See how peaceful it is for the two of us to sit here rocking in the early morning with no one around but me and my Angel.

But Angel is dead. DIED. I don't know how or I don't want to say. Riding in the cab to the hospital, the cabby saying all the time: You sure you got the money. And me throwing all the dollars in my pocket on the front seat. This got to be enough. It's all I got. Then he didn't say any more. She was so still and I knew what that meant without ever having seen it before. Stillness means death, all the little quivers of life gone out of her.

My baby died. Died in a cab about 11:00 at night, and I don't know what I did to make her die like that. But I do know. All she had was me to keep her from danger. And who am I?

In the emergency room I said, "I think my baby has died." Just like that, and then I couldn't hear what the nurses said back to me. Their mouths moved, and one of them took Angel from my arms. I don't remember any more. It was like a dream under water, moving with a lightness that takes you nowhere, everything one color, and all the sounds in the world low like thunder as it moves away. Rumbling, muttering, rolling over into silence.

It is more peaceful now. Late afternoon here at the School Home is always peaceful when the sun moves off to the side, and the light softens. We rake our piles of weeds together with our fingers. Wynikki is there, Darryl, Charissa, even James, who only likes to hang around Norma because of his troubles. Sharnell and Mario. Oh, we are the lost children, but now in this golden-rosy light, just before everything we have in the world is about to disappear, we are all right. We are together, and we are protected by two women who have nothing left to give us.



Digital photo

Standing there by yourself as the music resonates, you think I need a bathroom and so you turn and run for it half expecting no one will follow half hoping someone will. You stop short at the sink and gasp for breath. You crane your neck to look at the mirror but it's just out of reach you're not quite tall enough even the three inch heels you thought made you look sexy just don't cut it. Your makeup is running, streaks of dark blue tracing your cheeks. Your skin is splotchy. It matches your blush wrong shade everything was the wrong color wrong wrong wrong wrong. Your eyes burn you heave and rush to the toilet heaving again but nothing happens and you hear the door open and you rush to close the stall door and lock it behind you and you hear two girls laughing saying things about you maybe maybe you're not sure in your state of mind. You don't hear them as they speak and you almost don't hear them leave but then you think maybe the bathroom stall isn't such a bad place after all if you're going to be alone anyway and you sink to the ground and let the mismatched tile be your friend and lean your head against the puke-colored wall and ignore each and every time the door opens and closes even the time someone looks around and says "Where'd she go?" Because it's ruined now and no one understands. They're all having such a good time but you're always alone as you watch everyone be close together no one is close to you no one followed you when you ran they didn't even notice maybe you should just climb out the window.

In the midst of fighting
Innocent men with half faces torn off
Dead citizens on the ground without burials
Women dead with their children in their arms
Elders flattened by machines that roam the cities
Nights turn day when bombs light up the sky with blue
Orphans scattered in the ghost streets of "Paris of the East"
Shelling of bombs in the sky make rainbows flare with color
Buildings ripped off like Lego pieces, exposed on different sides
Weddings and blessings happen feet apart from funerals and burials
In the midst of all that, my carrier delivered her package in the city of Sidon
I am a lesson to all humanity
Nothing will stop the blooming of the flower of life



Digital photo

got to see them kill the chickens, my grandparents'
farm eighty-some miles from my home. Though

some summer days I helped feed, the coop
a gray half-dome, tin igloo, low and strange,

like crawling into the brightest tunnel, all straw
and sticks. The water they drank

floated in plastic milk jugs sliced
into halves, corn they'd jab each other for,

a threatening pounding of wings that kicked
up dirt and straw and dust and shit, too.

A smell like nothing else, the heat a force
all its own. Cousins told me

of the killings, how some Saturdays
they'd do as much as half

a dozen, hand out fresh hens
to all the aunts for Sunday dinner.

Grandma tearing feathers from hot
bodies like tangles from a comb. It was

the way the legs still ran after
the head had been cut that

amused my cousins most, that panicked
race-without-a-finish line, survival-

of-the-fittest in reverse.
The severed signal. I never saw

it but can imagine the confidence
of my grandparents performing

a task mastered years ago, comfortable
with the blood, the feet, the mess, the stench,
none of it too crude to manage. The picture
as real to me as our grandmother, those same

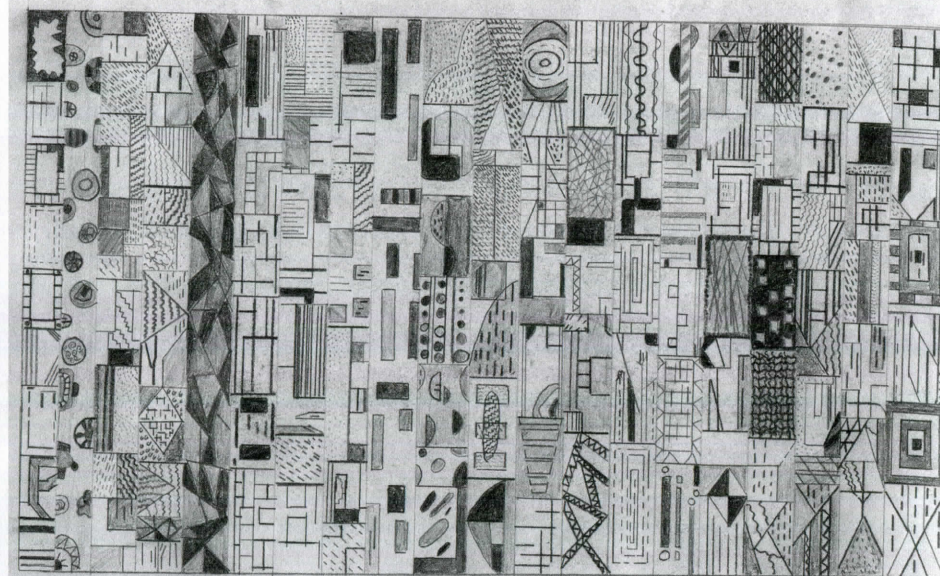
summer months, pressing milkweed
into our hands while we walked

through orchards, tugging back the skin

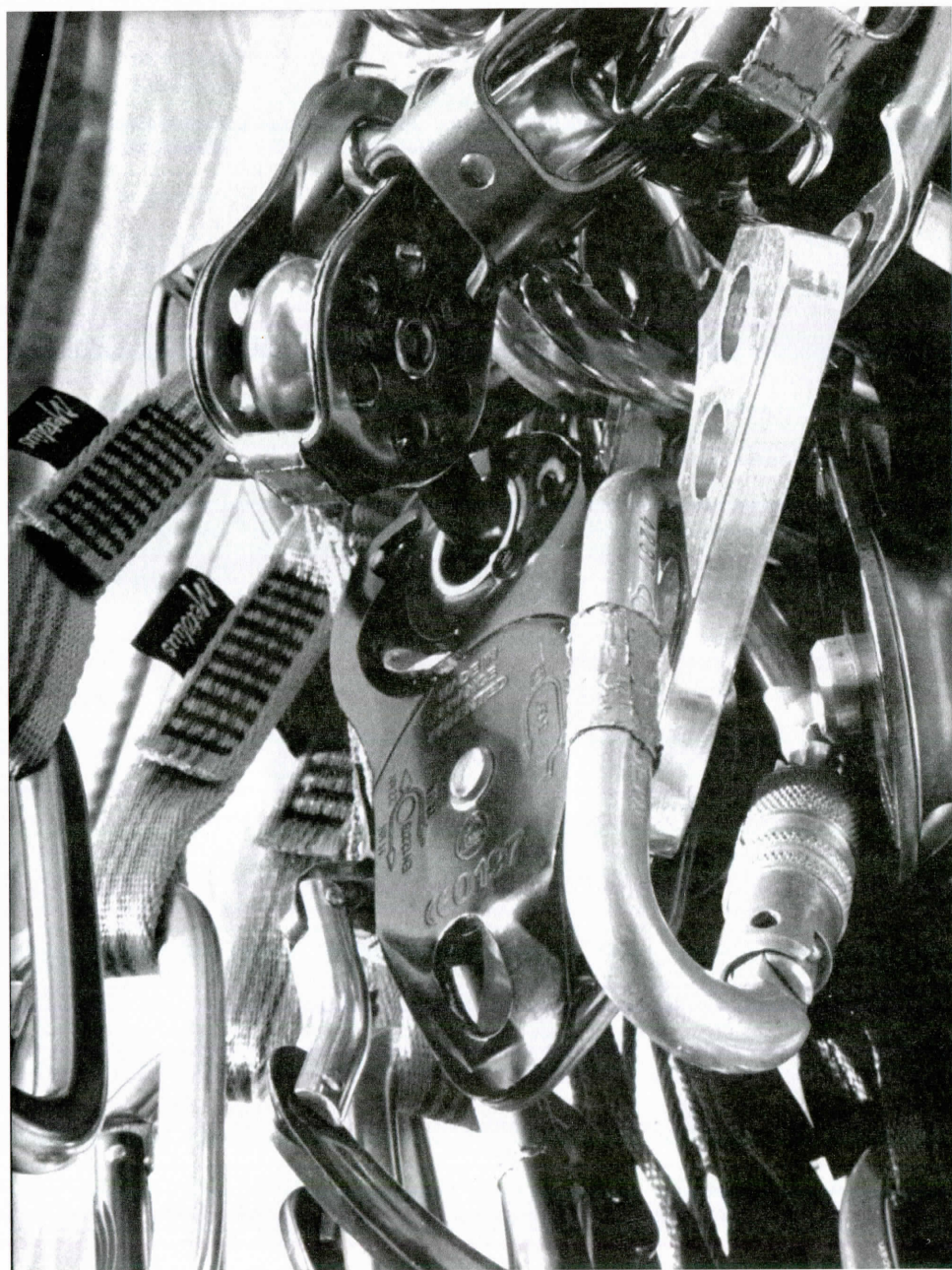
down to the bumpy pod, saying "Look:

These could be fish if we really wanted
to think of them that way." And we

never dreamed of arguing.



Drawing: 6" x 10"



Print: 8" x 10" semigloss paper

after Pablo Picasso's Nu de Dos

Shhh... Talk in a whisper,

I can hear you, but I cannot see,
A fog of blue and gold is affecting me.
I cover my eyes to hide from hate,
Hope my heart will open before it's too late.

I have never had love in my life,
Only I want to have children and be a wife.
Please leave me alone in the quietness of blue,
I have a lot of feelings to work through.

Shhh... Talk in a whisper,

I lay like a baby to get closer to my grave,
I cannot move my head or even be brave,
Please tell me things will get better soon,
I hope before the change of the moon.

My bones are brittle. My skin is getting cold,
I never wanted to die before I got old.
Today is the day, I can feel it now.
I am here, but I don't know how.

Shhh... Talk in a whisper,

My grave is warm; my eyes are open free,
The feeling of pain is gone now for me.
Please understand I had to do this,
For the rest of my life I will be in bliss.

Shhh... Talk in a whisper.

after Edgar Degas' The Dancing Class

THE
TEACHERS
CRITIQUE

Do it again, again, again.
You must have grace, beauty, poise, and posture.
Posture, posture, posture!
Your toes must be pointed to perfection.
Point, point, point.
This is not acceptable!
You must feel the music
in your heart and throughout your limbs.
Reach as if you are being pulled...
Reach!
and every muscle in your body can stretch no more...
Stretch!
Feel it in your eyes.
Let me see the love of this dance in your eyes.
Let me see your soul.
Let me see!

after the Roman Statue Dying Gaul, 230 – 220 B.C., commissioned by Attalos
to commemorate his victory over the Celtic Galatia

THE
END

Too far I have gone
to end it all this way.
I must get up, get back,
to see my wife today.

Back home to the start,
where the end began.
I was called to war
to prove myself a man.

The feeling in my heart
is cold, twisted, broken.
Weary is my outlook.
Displayed yet unspoken.

Slowly it took from me
my only reason to live,
too far away from home,
no message of life to give.

I have now forgotten,
for it has been so long.
Who is it that I am fighting?
I hear no country's song.

She is expecting me now,
a bride so pure, so sweet.
She will see me again,
after her life we shall meet.

Finally my war is over,
My mind I can finally rest.
Go with content, my heart,
for I have done my best.

Artists' Biographies

Alda Gapi Black is a graduate of LTU's class of 2006. She says: "My art is an expression of emotions and stories mapped by materials, textures, layers, and colors."

Beth Hopson is a senior majoring in Architecture. She enjoys drawing and photography and notes "I especially adore black and white photography." After taking a photography class in the summer of 2006 and really loving it, her new goal is to pursue a master degree in the subject. She explains "a photograph has the ability to speak a thousand words. It captures a moment and a lifetime of memories."

Michael Jacobs is a fourth year architecture student, born and raised in metro Detroit. He writes "I find architecture compelling because it allows for creative thinking. I have always had a strong interest in photography. Anyone can take a picture, but whether or not other people have a reaction to the image is what determines if it is art."

Barry Knister is an Associate Professor of Humanities and the author of *The Dating Service*, a novel.

Elsida Konackiu majors in Interior Architecture and Digital Imaging. She's in her third year at LTU. Photography and fashion design are two of her passions.

Who is **Phil Krochmal**? Is he a student, a friend, an employee, or just some name you've heard in passing? The answer to these queries is simple. He is a person, not unlike yourself, working to do what he does best. No, this does not mean causing trouble. Rather, he is the guy you go to when you need something done. A former Architecture student, he has since been working in the area of Digital Imaging. Yes, that means creativity galore. His work is not always in the paper or on the monitor, but sometimes in the people whom he has changed with a few kind words. The question is, what will he do next?

Sara E. Lamers teaches in the Department of Humanities. Her collection of poems, *A City Without Trees*, will be published in 2007 by March Street Press. While poetry is where she feels most at home, she is currently at work on a novel.

Andrea Lazor can be most commonly found huddled in a studio attempting to please her crazy design teachers. Her hopes are to become a famous architect and then destroy all good buildings in the world because of her business sense. If you would like to get a hold of Andrea just scream "AIAS" and she will come running, armed with propaganda.

Ronald Livingston is an LTU alumni and a retired Detroit public schools teacher. He writes "LTU has redirected my life bringing many opportunities along the way. I began working with the hybridization of the genus *hosta* in 1996; since then I have bred award winning plants. The *hosta* hybridizing led me to photography. At some point, it became an artistic pursuit. I began to see the beauty in the *hostas* from different angles, close ups and lighting. I am now using my photography to do stained glass art by using some of my favorite photographs as patterns for window pieces. Some of my other interests are dancing, computers, digital video, and running."

Jessica Lechkun writes: "I have just recently graduated from Lawrence Technological

University's Mechanical Engineering program. I also took part in the Entrepreneurial program to focus on the business side of engineering. In 2004, I competed at the World Synchronized Team Skating Championships and since then I have been teaching figure skating part-time."

Sofia Lulgjuraj, a graduate of the College for Creative Studies, is the graphic designer for LTU. While part of her mind is working on university projects: posters, brochures, and invitations, another part is working on what creative use can be made out of the waste (cardboard, pen casings, and flopping disks) that all office settings produce.

Tracy McGhee is a graphic design student; the work submitted to Prism is the result of her first photography class. She says "The class really encouraged me to go out and randomly shoot objects. I have always loved taking photos, particularly landscapes. I really enjoyed taking photos of Japanese dolls and characters, because of my Japanese heritage. P.S. I like long walks on the beach."

Don Mexicotte writes "I am a fourth year student working my way through [LTU] as quickly as possible. I am studying for a Bachelor in Engineering Technology and hope to be working in the performance field. I work as a mechanic when I am not at school during the week. I really enjoy writing short stories. I was hesitant to submit any works to Prism at first, but I think now it will be a really interesting and satisfying experience. I have never had anything published before, and it will be new ground traveled."

Heather Moldenhauer will graduate in the spring of 2007 with a Bachelor of Science in Architecture and a Bachelor of Science in Interior Design. She hopes to continue at LTU for a Master in Architecture. She explains that the works she created last semester in the Creative Writing course were invigorating, and she hopes to dabble with some more writing in the future. She enjoys fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, boating, and spending time with her husband and German Shepherd.

Gonzalo Munevar teaches philosophy. He has published several books and many essays, short stories and poems.

Brian Obot graduated from LTU in 2006 with Bachelor degrees in Humanities and Psychology. Currently working full time while attempting to grow two startup companies, Brian plans to enroll into graduate school eventually. He says "People feel and think different things at different times; this is nothing remarkable. The ability to evoke specific emotional responses and thought patterns in your audience is Art. Remarkably, I have not met anyone incapable of producing art in some way, shape, or form."

Edward M. Orlowski is the Chair of the Department of Architecture where he also coordinates and teaches in the sophomore level integrated design studios. He was co-creator of the senior-level Sustainable Architecture studio and has overseen its growth and development. He is the University's representative to the U.S. Green Building Council Detroit Regional Chapter and served on that body's Board of Directors from 2004-2005. He has presented papers to numerous conferences on sustainability and other studio-based design paradigms. In addition, he is the college's IDP coordinator and

serves on the University's Center for Sustainability.

Alexandar V. Popovich: artist or engineer? Nobody really knows; he's a lot of both, really. Alex is a sophomore at Lawrence Technological University; he currently is majoring in Mechanical Engineering and plans to get a Mechatronics degree as well.

Carrie Rasak is a freshman at LTU. She is a Computer Science major, specializing in game development. She's been writing since she was in first grade. Her main influence is Ray Bradbury, and she works best while listening to music and drinking something caffeinated.

Hassan Raychouni was born in the historic city of Saida in Lebanon and has been living in Dearborn since he was three years old. He writes "After searching for my place in life, I discovered the field of architecture after high school. I think my writing skills have flourished because of the design skills that I have been acquiring at Lawrence Tech. since 2003."

Having recently returned from a tour of the core system aboard the Firefly-class ship "Serenity," Dr. **Scott Schneider** decided to focus on some Earth-bound pictures. (Get it? I said "focus," and I'm talking about photography – oh the chuckles to be had!) He is mostly interested in nature landscape photography and never repeating jokes. And, he continues his quest to be a fireman when he grows up.

Markus Sheldon is a graduating senior, in the Architecture/Digital Arts program. He likes to express himself in many ways, with writing being one of the most recent outlets. He enjoys designing and hates cheese.

Nathan Shobe, born in 1983 and raised in Farmington Hills, is currently working toward a B.S. in Architecture at LTU. In his downtime he is a competitive rock climber. He developed an interest in photography on his first road trip to California with his family in 2004 and says "I am intrigued by the idea of creating a static image out of the dynamic actions of those around me."

Rhoda Stamell began writing fiction at the age of fifty. When she was sixty-one, she won the Francis Shaw Older Woman Writing Award. She retired from high school teaching the next year and has been writing fiction ever since. Her short stories were published in 2006 by Mayapple Press. Stamell lives in the suburbs of Detroit and is an adjunct professor at Lawrence Technological University and Wayne State University.

Alivia Stalnaker is a senior majoring in Architecture. When not sleeping on blueprints or fueling up on coffee, she enjoys drawing, dancing, and capturing photos of the places she travels.

Betty Stover has been a professor in the Humanities Department since 1986. She is currently department chair.

Melinda Weinstein is an Associate Professor of Humanities at LTU since 2000. When she is not teaching literature and writing, she can be found at the park with Jed, her black and tan hound dog.

