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Und wenn dich das Irdische vergass,
zu der stillen Erde sag: Ich rinne.
Zu dem raschen Wasser sprich: Ich bin.

And if the earthly have forgotten you,
say to the still earth: I flow.
To the rushing water speak: I am.

--R.M. Rilke The Sonnets to Orpheus:
Second Series 29
translated by A. Poulin, Jr.

March 2001

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Editor's Notes

For four years I have been surrounded by amazing creativity and talent and have learned from my professors as well as peers that there is no limit to the imagination. The art that lives in LTU's Architecture building is inspiring. Fortunately, *Prism* has given me exposure to the spectrum of talent in other majors. I am grateful for the experience of working on this journal; I'm just sorry that it was reborn in my last semester here.

I'd like to thank *Prism's* Editing Staff; Jon, Alexis, Ryan, Demetrius and Joe for your time and dedication, Dr. Weinstein for your love of art and effort in reviving *Prism*, the Arts and Science Department for your amazing support, especially Gonzalo Munevar, and my friends for being you.

Congratulations to the students and staff who are recognized in *Prism* 2001.

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Double Take

| Dawn Goulet

Untold

| Adam Modrzewski

Open the book and you shall see
my truth I speak the pages empty.
Look harder still and you will find
not an indentation from edge to spine.
From top to bottom and front to back
not a book so empty is found on the rack.
The spine is all worn, frayed and tattered
the cover is torn, beaten and battered.
Reshuffled amongst the others is he
no western, or romance but a Greek tragedy
No soldier's welcome, no warm embrace
no recall of the battle taken place.
Oh captain, my captain lies cold and dead
under the waves his eternal bed.
And I a madman?! A wolf with no pack?!
a wounded animal who sways forth and back?
Disregarded by man and taunted by child
my fists clutch an empty book all the while.
No hero is there for me to behold
my story remains forever untold.
For not all sunlight shines with glitter of gold
fairy tales are not all revelations of soul.
Some harbor the spirits of weary old men
broken.... still searching for home.

Fall

| Kimberly Bates

The slowly decaying trees begin to shed their abhorred leaves.
Each leaf a burden, regret and sorrow held so high for the world to see.
These trees are lucky; they may shed their shame before they sleep.

But I must drown in the torture bestowed upon me.
Unable to shed my soul I sink under its weight.
The world is dying and so selfishly takes me with it.
My sorrows pull and drag me deeper into the earth.

Author: Anonymous
Time: Unknown

| *Alexis Black*

This is my personal journal. From now on, I will document my findings and keep track of my discoveries. Perhaps this work may damn me. But maybe someone else will find it and move beyond me. This is my sincere hope.

My name is not important, nor any of the other data which is usually included in journals. Day by day accounts of meals and meeting friends may work for those who have nothing else in their lives, but provides nothing. There is no advantage in knowing the schedule someone else adhered to without practical purpose. Although some would say that running the numbers would provide a prediction to answer any questions, I do not believe that. And if the God of this people is ready to damn me for that, then so be it.

To whomever finds this work after me, I doubt that I will need to tell you about this world. This society is dedicated to stagnation, refusing to change and destroying anyone who tries. Conform, agree, trust, those are the words I first learned to speak. They are also the first words I learned to hate.

My realization of those evil words first came to me when I was still a child. I witnessed something, an event which I was not supposed to see. My best friend in my childhood had always been a more daring and outspoken person. He said anything he wished and his parents smiled at his eloquence in youth. But he was not satisfied with reciting rhymes and learning philosophy. He began to question. He started to doubt. And he was not silent. He believed that the textbooks and the teachers did not have all the answers. He wondered whether he might have ideas which others did not. Of all the children, only I would stay and listen. His parents became frightened about his antisocial behavior and repeatedly punished him. Finally, they ran the numbers and gave

him the corrective treatments. They put him on the drugs and left him there. I continued to meet him and would ask where his ideas had gone. He could only frown. He could not answer me. He confided one day that he had found the place where his parents hide his medication and had destroyed it. I was very happy. He even took me to his house to show me. We were hiding in a closet when his parents discovered that the drugs were gone. He left the closet to come when they called and when he bravely denied his involvement, it happened. It turned out that they already knew and had just wanted to see his reaction. When they attempted to restrain him, he fought and ran from the house. That was his mistake. I could see from an upstairs window that a Preserver had caught him. The Preserver had all of his equipment and I watched as he first immobilized and then drugged my friend. Even from that distance, I could see the terror in his eyes, as he knew that there would be no forgiveness. No one would save him. Though all our short lives we had been told that the outcasts were violent and dangerous, we did not realize how easily we could be classified as them. Suddenly, my friend was violent and dangerous. He was declared an outcast and taken to a corrective center as all of them are. I waited in silence until I had a chance to escape. But when I returned home, my own parents were waiting. And I noticed that they had a Preserver standing by. My own turn had come. They asked me where I had been and I told them that I had gone to my friend's home, but he was not home. They asked me what I thought of his ideas and speeches and I said that they were quite amusing. They asked if I ever had similar thoughts and I said that I could never think of things like that because the ideas were too weird. I seemed to pass the test because they settled down and released the Preserver. They told me that my friend had become ill and was being taken away to get better. They did not know if and when he would return. A few days later, his parents were transferred and I never saw them again. The matter seemed to end there, but some years later, my class was taken to a corrective facility as an educational experience. I had almost forgotten about the incident with my friend, particularly since my parents and I had been transferred not long afterward. But I saw him there. I saw what years of drugs and therapy had done to him. I saw what society demanded of him, demands which he could not meet. My surprise was immense and I did not want to believe that my childish speculations were coming true. I

wanted to think that it was merely someone who looked like my childhood playmate, but then I saw it. A birthmark on his arm showed through the thin fabric of his hospital clothing. Most of my classmates were stupefied to see outcasts and I managed to cover my surprise. But then, I think he recognized me. I had no distinguishing marks, but he knew my face. He walked right up to the glass and stared right into my eyes. He knew. He knew who I was. He also knew that there was nothing he could say to me without compromising my freedom. But I could see in his eyes the same bold spirit which had captivated me as a youth. He would never be released because his will was too strong. He would never be heard as an individual, his ideas would never be analyzed and discussed, and he would never contribute to humankind. He would be locked in that building until he submitted or died. A Preserver who was supervising the visit noticed that one of the outcasts was gazing at a visitor. He asked me if I knew the boy. I had to say no, that he was a complete stranger but he was frightening, a true example of the dangerousness of outcasts. The Preserver was pleased by my words and dismissed the incident. My friend had also moved away. But as my class left, he gave me a crooked smile and a wave. I do not know what kind of punishment he suffered for his brashness, but I sensed his joy at my ability to remain free. Or maybe he thought that I had succumbed to the pressures of conformity and had forgotten him. I could not go back though. Any interest I showed in an outcast would place me in danger. There was nothing I could do for him. There was still something I could do for me.

I learned on that dreadful day why children learn to conform. I also discovered the contradiction in the teachings of society. My friend had not been ignored and scolded as a talkative child because parents still want their children to express themselves. Some people do quite well in this endeavor because they are able to express socially accepted concepts. Some become famous artists because the state can use their art. But many artists love the freedom and go too far. They try to find truth. When they publicize a new piece, it must be evaluated. The slightest hint of decadence or sedition is punished. That particular piece is burned and if other examples are related, they are also destroyed. The artist disappears and no one wonders why. It is for this reason that self-expression is encouraged. The outcasts cannot be identified as long as they are not spreading their ideas. Children do not under-

stand all of the consequences of their actions and they will tell anyone anything. A child may grow out of imaginative ideas, but the state already has files on anyone of this nature and maintains a watch. When my friend gave no sign of repenting or changing, he was whisked away to prevent his ideas from poisoning society. He reached an age where such ideas can spark action, a danger to the state.

I am not sure just how I managed to escape the notice of the system. Certainly I learned the lesson of the social contract that day. My friend was my mouthpiece and decoy before and my fear was my silencer after. I still had the ideas, but since I told no one and refused to express them by any means, I had no file. My precocity and fear saved me from that danger. Most adults have already been screened by this system and do not live in fear. An occasional lapse is excused because all of the traditions and social manners have already been taught. The belief system is already in place. When a person has been molded so completely, they cannot think away from the foundation for long. When I make the scarce error, I am forgiven because my file is clean. I must only be on guard from then on to never make a similar mistake in front of the same person again. Making a hundred mistakes in front of all different people is far safer than making ten in the presence of one person. Probability supports it and who am I to argue with the math?

Actually, I am everyone to argue with the math. How do I know that the math is correct? How do I know that every variable has been considered? How do I know that the computer understands the problem and the solution? How do I know that the computer is even doing calculations? With what little math is known, I could run some numbers in a hypothetical situation and get an answer which makes no sense. I cannot confirm the answer because I do not know what algorithms are being used. The computer could even be displaying random responses with no relation to the problem at all. And I could not dispute it because I would not know enough math to say that the answer is wrong. When the state runs the numbers, they automatically take the answer produced. They justify it, never questioning its veracity. They can make any solution seem attractive and correct with the poetry of their words. But they do not know. They do not know that they do not know.

I grew up with my ideas for company and consequently did not suffer

from the social programming which plagues the population. I allowed myself to think and question. I considered and cogitated. Although I remained aloof throughout my life following the dreadful day, I was not alone. I have my thoughts for company. But what good are those thoughts if they have already been had by many? I can think quite quickly, but I cannot think every thought ever thought by any human in the history of our race. I can think my whole lifetime, or ten or twenty thousand times that and still be far short. To simply know about freedom of thought is not enough. I needed to learn how to use that freedom. And I did so in the oldest possible way: books.

Just as society proclaimed the outspoken to be outcasts, they declared the idealistic book to be detestable. They banned any literature which did not have purely entertainment value. Some few volumes are kept in museums of history, usually visited by such classes as mine when they are learning about the effects of the past. After my class visited the outcasts, it perused the stacks. I was brave enough to open a cover and read the table of contents. I saw that the book would answer some of my questions about medicine. I wanted to look at the examples and gaze at the diagrams, but there was no time. I knew that if I showed too much interest, I would be making myself vulnerable. So I shut the book. I made the appropriate sounds of disinterest and disgust. I played my role as a conforming member of society. But I would not be stopped. I would not be content to act the part while not pursuing a conspiracy of one. That and many other books got read in the lonely hours of the night. Each one went missing for a day as I devoured the information. I could hide them among my entertainment books. No one noticed the disappearances from the museum. No one saw them appear in my room. No one cared enough to discover my secret.

In my investigations, I discovered the mathematics and science which support the state. I learned some of the theories and how to apply them to my life. I repeated the experiments and saw their results first hand. I no longer needed the information from the state, only the evidence of my own eyes.

One of the main things I learned from my scientific discoveries was entropy. I learned this term and since first reading it, I have seen it in the world around me. It gives me hope that this lifestyle will not survive. Entropy demands that life change and adapt. Systems are always breaking down and

chaos is inevitable. If so, then I am delighted. The uniform and self-perpetuating society which exists now will not continue forever. The children will not always be prisoners of the state. The idealistic and courageous will not always be drugged and oppressed. The need for freedom, despite the disorder which results, will drive the people away from this society and they will form a new one. They will rediscover their individuality. They will think for themselves again. They will discover the error the society in which they have been living. Long ago, humans lived in caves and hunted with their hands. But then they found the wheel, the spear, and eventually the combustion engine. They continued to evolve. With their ability to meet more people came the social contract and government. Science supported society by always striving to meet the new demand and better the human condition. Technology improved. But when technology seemed to have established itself so much in the background because it could satisfy every need, it no longer was deemed important. Those who could understand it were not accepted by society and those who were not able to run the number manually could not hope to understand the true importance of technology in their lives. They believed that what they had was good enough as long as it had longevity, low maintenance, and was user friendly. These people became our leaders. They became the aristocracy in this society. Because they could not use what they could not understand, they did not include technology in their ideology. It was and is a convenience to them, nothing more. When society had flowered and did not rely as obviously on technology, it gained the arrogance to believe that it could support itself. I do not know whether our technology surpassed our humanity or vice versa. I only know that the system is unbalanced and threatens to topple at any time.

To you who find this document after me, I hope that you do not know my name. I wish to remain a mystery so that my work here is unblemished by details of my life. When the biography of the author is read along with the work, the ideas diminish and become only the dogma of one person living a frustrated life. But if you should know my name, if you know who I am or was, please do not become upset. Do not believe that this work is hypocrisy. I gained my place in the government because I played my role too well. I knew the beliefs which I needed to show and somehow survival brought praise and

honors. I have not allowed these ephemeral items to cloud my judgement, but rather use them for as long as possible to save my life and work. I do what I can to prevent further regulation and punishment, but society is not ready to see its errors yet. I cannot move against an organization with so much power, at least not alone. In this line of work and life, trusting ideas to another is too risky and those who may be like me I will never meet because they will also be playing a role. Do not think that my decision to remain silent is an act of cowardice. Rather consider me a caretaker, the faithful steward who could claim no glory, but was essential nonetheless. The martyr cannot remain a martyr if there is no one to remember. My friend is the martyr and I am the caretaker who continues his story. My position is not cowardice, but conspiracy. And the conspiracy will spread. It is strange to think that the population is holding itself by force. But people like me will be there to pick up the pieces when social tyranny falls and freedom returns.



Shadows

| Kimberly Bates

October Dream

| *Carolyn Begle*

Cold October winds dance through ill-clad treebranches,
Rain whispers against the window, denying the Morning,
Who, from the very depths of sleep, implacably summons me.
Slowly, slowly, as if from under the weight of the ocean,
I am pulled, resisting, from dreams more real than daylight.
As the coldness of the morning seeps through my blankets,
I try to hold on to the dream, loathe to let go, to founder
Amid the realities and truths that now seem unreal, untruthful.
Though my mind is dazed, confused, duty and obligation are strong,
And propel me to my feet, push me into my routine.
Yet, I hold in my mind the dream, a dream of love—
A love that needs no language, but is evident in every touch,
Every glance, no matter how slight, communicates it—
Of hands that move like falling leaves—as if afraid
To shatter that which they touch, or perhaps to frighten—
Of lips that move of their own accord, seeking,
Of being pulled into embrace—as if drawn by destiny—
Of the one who can reach through my walls as if they didn't exist.
But reality is a cold bed and an empty room,
And a body and heart that ache with loneliness in the wake of the dream.
Sensitized, nerves at a high pitch, mind abstracted,
I go through the day, listening for the voice that my heart knows,
Hearing it call in the silence, making me jump at nothing,
Feeling as if I could turn and see him standing behind me,
Craving comfort but knowing no release,
Waiting, dedicated like a virgin priestess,
Looking for him in every man's face that I see,
Scared to be touched, but afraid to be alone.

Her Hands Were Just Like Mine

| *Carolyn Begle*

A former guitarist's hands,
Her nails have all grown out,
Her fingertips now smooth.
The callouses forgotten about.
The teenaged guitarist,
Has grown up and gone away,
Her guitar collecting dust,
She's forgotten how to play.
She put aside her guitar,
To grow her nails out long and fine,
She's all but forgotten when
Her nails were short like mine.
So in the closet waits her guitar,
Its strings all out of tune,
Waiting for a youthful face
To find it—hopefully soon.
She put aside her guitar,
To grow her nails long and fine,
She's all but forgotten when
Her hands were just like mine.

The Ghost of 218

| Nathan Kurmas

The heavy wood door in room 218 gives a loud rattle. Undaunted, Professor Woodlind jumps off the small laminate table and continues his song. His students often wonder where he gets such strange material; the Pop section doesn't feature too much on reinforced concrete. The door rattled again.

"What's up with that?" Amber asks, unhindered by the impoliteness of interrupting the well-choreographed lecture in the cream colored classroom at Lawrence Tech. "That's driving me crazy. It's been doing that all semester."

"Must be the ghost of students past." Professor Woodlind's voice seemed to be muffled by his silver mustache, giving up only a slight hint of his former black hair. He never missed a beat.

"Yeah, a student of yours is probably after you for the way you write those tests." Another student chimes in. "I never expected you to give us a doubly reinforced section this early in the semester."

"Just keeping you on your toes." The professor, unaware his grey hair is going wild, walks over to the overhead projector and jots down a list of problems. "This is your homework for Thursday, and don't forget the test corrections for extra credit. Have a good day, and be thankful I'm letting you out so early." A couple of students laugh.

The lecture had been very intense, and Amber, like the rest of the class had jotted very intently for nearly five minutes longer than the allotted class time; nobody complained. As students file out of the classroom, the girl in an unprofessional tube top, revealing skirt, and leather boots approaches the professor.

"I just want to clear up a question I had." The Brown-haired girl sits on a table near Woodlind's papers. Her deep brown eyes focus intently on the ring binder full of neatly lettered papers she carries up. She pulls a strand of

styling-stressed hair from around one of her many earrings.

"Ok, but I've got a meeting in fifteen minutes, so we need to make it quick, unless you want to meet me later." The professor had written her off as another ditz relying on a nice figure and flirtatious personality to squeeze through college. Contrary to her appearance, though her performance in the first three weeks of class had proven him wrong, the first time he had ever been so wrong about a student in fifteen years. He remembers the first time Jennifer came to ask him for help. Unlike her peers that showed up late, the striking young hippie was serious and performed well.

"It's quick." The professor returns mentally to the student in front of him. "I'm just not sure on this last example here. How did you determine 'd' as '4.603' I got something entirely different."

"Well, let's see what you did."

Amber unfolds her papers and lays them out. "Well, 'd' is the distance from the extreme fiber to the centroid of reinforcement. So, I have two layers of steel, an inch apart, right?" Woodbridge nods. "A 7.5" inch beam, minus 1.5" of cover, a #5 bar, which is five eighths?" Another nod. "And a half inch from there to the centroid. That gives me 4.325."

"Right, but look here. There are four bars on the bottom, two on the top. That moves the centroid down. Remember how to get that?"

"Yeah, I individual plus 'AD' squared. Duh, how could I have missed that?"

"Well, you know I did that just to throw you off, right."

She grins. "Thank you. And before your meeting..." She points and blushes through her dark skin.

"Oh, thank you." The professor turns to tuck his white shirttail back inside his fly and zip his pants. "Of all the things I've lost, I miss my mind the most." Amber smiles, pulling a pack of smokes from her rucksack and leaves with professor Woodlind. Shortly, he returns and grabs the briefcase by his podium.

That Thursday, class begins. Five minutes into his song and dance, Amber walks in, her pre-class cigarette lingers on her clothing. She puts her homework and test corrections into the appropriate haphazard papers piled on the wood grain table top in the front of the room. Professor Woodlind lectures in his usual song and dance style. The door continues to bang and rattle, as it

has done all semester. Twenty-five minutes into class, he writes an equation on the overhead and tells his class, "I'll give you time to write this down, just pay attention to what I do here." He runs step-by-step through the derivation, and then steps off to the left corner of the room. Noticing Amanda turning red and covering a grin, he looks down and discovers two middle buttons undone, revealing his pasty white skin sprouting an ample crop of silver hair. The skinny old man steps into the hall, buttons his shirt, checks the zipper on his pants. He tries to dress as the other tenured professors do, with the suit, tie and all, but his scattered memory usually hampers his ability to look nearly as sharp. He comes back into the classroom, shuts the door, and picks up a well-worn grey jacket he has set carefully over a chair. He notices most of the class has put on coats in defiance of the sudden chill.

"Man, Facilities can't operate a simple thermostat properly. And, why are so many of the lights burnt out?" The class grinned sympathetically to the comment.

He taught the remainder of class, noticing the door ceased to bang. With a sincere, "have a good weekend, and party down. No homework," he let his class run to the outside to enjoy the warm spring day shaping up.

The following Tuesday, he walks into class, his customary five minutes early, to find a note taped to the blackboard he never uses. The faded, sweet incense gives the sender away. It reads:

Prof. W,

Long time, no see. In case you are wondering, it's Jennifer. I haven't been exactly, well, living in your world the last few years, but I figured I should contact you anyway. Qzadt assures me you know the whole story. Anyway, I'm with his branch now, and we're trying to find another bright person to throw our pitch at. He tells me you're a clean man when it comes to this. Anyway, let me know if we can meet some time.

Jennifer Schmidt

Unfazed by unusual nature of the letter, he scrawls a note inviting a meeting with her in his office after class Thursday, folds it carefully, and tapes

it to the board.

"Oh, excuse me." Amber catches him off guard. "I'll come back later if you're busy. Just thought I'd, well, show up on time for once."

"Wonders never cease to amaze me." The class continues to drift in and takes their seats at the small tables scattered in the concrete block room. The lecture proceeds without interruption. As the professor is rooting through his ear with a paper clip, in a manner, however revolting, his students have come to accept, the smart aleck asks him what happened to the banging door.

"Oh, I told you, it was the ghost of students past. I have the note she was trying to leave me right here." He waves Jennifer's note. "Apparently, she had trouble getting in the door."

"Boy, you've really lost it, haven't you?" The class laughs.

"Now would I lie to you?" Pause. "On second thought, don't answer that. Now here's the breakdown of your tests after extra credit." He writes a line of numbers, a ninety and a string of sixties and fifties. "Please come forward as I call your name, so I can embarrass you individually." The class laughs again as he hands out tests, most of them showing acceptable grades.

"And here's your homework," the professor throws down a stack of papers, a brief pause while the class murmurs over their test scores. "Your homework, if you choose to accept it." He throws down another stack. "Class..." He eyes his watch ticking seconds away. When it reaches fifteen minutes past the hour, "DISMISSED!"

Thursday's song and dance proceeds free of uninvited interruptions, other than hallway noise drifting through the door left slightly ajar. For the first time in nearly two years, the professor had remembered before class to check his wardrobe. But had unfortunately, failed to notice his uncombed hair, or the fact he hadn't shaved. After class, he returns to his office and sits in his wooden chair, a fixture that had been with him since he was an adjunct twenty years ago.

His door closed as if guided by an unseen hand; the transparent image of Jennifer appears in front of his desk. "Just a minute. Let me finish this message." He scrawls a few lines on a single sheet of paper and sets it on top of a humming CPU. "Being 'dead' hasn't changed your looks at all, but is there a way you can crank up the opacity a bit?"

Jennifer darkens into a nearly human opacity. She folds her five foot

body on his overstuffed, torn blue lazy boy, the chair he often peacefully napped through many of his office hours in. "That better?"

"Yes."

"Well, as you know, the Schlaft government is interested in finding very smart people to assist with certain public works projects. Qzadt informs me you once worked on such a project as an engineer."

"Yes, I did. Several of your bridges over there."

"Qzadt was very impressed by your work, and regrets that you decided to come back to Earth, but is pleased you decide to come back when your cancer gets the best of you.

"I had family, and I didn't want them to all perceive me as dead. According to the *Free Press*, I don't die until forty years after I was recruited. Fate decided I couldn't live like that. I would have been saddened by your death, but I knew where you went.

"You were one of those students," He continued, drawing up the image of the first days Jennifer had class with him. "The first thing you said to me was..."

"...button your damn shirt."

"Yeah. I instantly put you into the 'no good slacker' category. I mean, the long hair, torn pants, reeking of incense. I thought you were another one of those hippies. Didn't care about the education at all."

"Fooled you, didn't I?"

"I've been fooled only one other time, this year. Amber." He sighed. "She reminded me of the nineties version of you. But she's got it together."

"Anyway, back to my point. You know what Schlaft taught us about the other perception of time. Most humans are limited to perceiving only three dimensions. The Schlaft are capable of seeing four. You experienced that."

"Yes." The professor absentmindedly fiddled with a gooey paperclip he pulled out of his pocket.

"Well, we hit a snag. Microsoft."

"You mean your advanced race, capable of interstellar travel at faster than light speed, colonizing, with our help, much of the universe, capable of cloaking yourselves to root through university files to find smart, young, daring people to assist you in engineering. I mean, I never knew so many different life forms existed until you recruited me. You mean to tell me they are

hindered by a software program?"

"Yes." Jennifer hesitantly admitted. "We've recruited computer geniuses from MIT, Georgia Tech, Harvard. They couldn't help us. We tried to recruit right from Microsoft, nobody wanted to lose their stock options to fly to the stars and risk real work. We just can't sift through university records since they all went to Microsoft's Windows operating systems."

"Wow. That complex?"

"No, that poorly written. We'd try recruiting hackers, but we just can't afford the networking costs. I mean Long distance across a few hundred light years? We're too far out for DSL." Professor Woodlind generates his characteristic toothless grin in response to the joke. "Seriously, though," Jennifer continues, "We just want to avoid that whole stealing, lying, cheating culture. If you notice, we try only to recruit outstanding, smart people. That's why I'm here. Since I can't tap into the records at the university, I was hoping you could help with that."

"What about the police files and all? You looked at mine, I mean to make sure you don't have that criminal element you don't want?"

"Right. But the police departments are part of your government. The same government that buys vacuum tubes to maintain your Air Traffic Control computers."

"Good point. So, what do you need?"

"Well, the name of some good students, and transcripts."

"I'll talk to Amber on this one. How's that sound to you? She's so much like you, and I think she'd be interested. I read in the paper two weeks tomorrow she inadvertently stabs herself with an X-acto knife and dies from blood poisoning. Let's meet one week from today, and I'll have a transcript and resume for you."

"I'll see you then."

"Wonderful seeing you, Jennifer. Glad to hear you succeeded."

"Thanks to you." She wraps her semi-solid arms about his neck, stretching up his lanky body to meet his neck. "Good-bye."

"Thank you. Thank you. Oh, good, you did it this time. Thank you..." Professor Woodlind's voice echoed in the classroom as the students dropped the homework on his desk on the way in.

"Your shirt, Professor, the third button down." Amber said, her

skimpy blouse and skin-tight shorts emitting the last traces of her pre-class nicotine fix.

"Thank you." Professor Woodlind buttoned his shirt and said, "It's nice to see you on time. Oh, and I would like to see you after class. I have something you may be interested in."

"No, I am satisfied with my Long distance service, and I am not interested in selling Amway." She grinned and took her usual seat near the back of the room, resting her head on the single pane of glass that passes for a window in the fifty-year old building. The professor gave his lecture, including a parody of a Pirates of Pinzance song relating to the difference between 'd' and 'h' in a structural concrete beam. Nobody missed the rattling and banging door; it was once again ajar. Class was dismissed.

"You wanted to see me?" Amber was fidgeting with a cigarette. Professor Woodlind jumped, distracted from his task of wedging another set of homework into his unkempt brown briefcase.

"Yes. Shall we go into my office?" They start walking down a poorly lit cooridor.

"You're not going to rape me, beat me and leave my body for dead in a storage closet or anything are you?"

"No."

"Your briefcase."

"Thank you." Professor Woodlind ducks quickly into the classroom, grabs the case and returns. "I have a job offer for you. It doesn't pay too well, but offers great benefits, and is a lot of fun. It's something I tooled with when I was younger."

"What's it involve?"

"In the office. It's weird, and I want the privacy thing on this one. Don't want too many questions floating around."

They walk into his office, he speaks. A company needs a smart, young person to do some work. She'd have to leave the University for a short trip, but he will forget to mark her absent. He feels she is qualified for this and would like a copy of her transcript and resume to give the contact. They'd show her the ropes, and she could decide.

That Thursday, Amber submitted the paperwork. The professor passed it to Jennifer.

As he expects, Amber is not in class the following week. Professor Woodlind lectures in his usual manner, for most of the period. The banging door interrupts him five minutes into class. He goes over and opens it. A rush of warm air, smelling mildly of stale cigarette comes in. A chair bangs along the exterior wall.

"This must be your ghost of students past." The smart aleck said.

"No, ghost of students present." The professor said, getsturing toward Amber's usual seat. "But you're getting the idea now."

As Professor Woodlind walked from his jalopy, wholly unworthy to his status at the university, into the Architecture building for his late afternoon structures class, a set of footsteps came up quickly behind him. "Professor "Button your damn shirt!" She was tokeing rapidly now, knowing she must get her fix before walking inside. The buttoned his third button and waited for her before walking into the glass foyer and down into the day lit basement where the disheveled professor kept his office. He sits down; she remains standing.

"What the Hell did you do to me? What the hell was up with that 'little trip'? What are you smoking, and where can I get some of that shit? You should be committed."

"First off, I apologize for upsetting you about the whole thing. Second, I'm not smoking anything; I didn't do anything to you. Third, yes, I should be committed, but don't tell anybody." The fact she now sat on the edge of the chair shows him the joke eased some of the tension. "I thought you'd enjoy the opportunity. You've got much going for you, and I wanted you to continue that."

"You mean all that was real?"

"Do I lie?" He showed a smile, all eight of his teeth. "Don't answer that." A brief pause: "It's an experience, few earn the privilege, and you are free to choose, or you think you are anyway."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"I know what you do, not that I'll tell you."

"The whole idea scares the piss out of me, and I almost wish you didn't do that to me. You should have told me everything."

"I told you everything I could tell you."

"But, still." Amber sighs, chewing nervously on the end of her pen.

“Just keep this in mind before you decide. You will die in an X-acto accident. I don’t know anything more than the *Free Press* publishes in your Obit next week. You are working on a late night project, stab yourself, get something from the rusty blade and die, pretty quickly.”

“Well, *if* you can read my obituary next week, and know all this stuff, why did you turn the job down?”

“I’d miss my family. I worked there for a few months, but I got homesick. My future sees me joining you in ten years or so. Cancer will get me, and I’ll lapse into a coma. That’s when I’ll return. I just have the love for education, and the students.”

“You’re screwy in the head.” She huffed out of his office, to the nearest exit and lit up.

A week and a half later, the professor prepares to teach a visibly distraught class. A girl in the back mentions the gruesome details of the accident; an X-acto cut, lots of blood, and death. The door is left open. Five minutes into the class, a breeze smelling of stale cigarettes blows in. He keeps talking; knowing exactly who has come to class. Suddenly, a girl screams. Another points and starts muttering nonsense. The smart Alec just points to the brown chalkboard, his jaw twitching. Professor Woodlind turns and reads the message:

Your Button, again.

“Thank you.” He buttons his shirt and resumes his lecture.

A Rubaiyat

| Betty Stover

Shall I make for you an omelet
Of lark’s eggs and truffles
Here in our garden of eden?
Shall we use as our table the moss-covered rock

In the glade, in the shade of the oak?
Shall we drink mellow wine
From the pink goblet shells
With the rose reflections of dew?

And shall you play on your lute
While I dance all around you
Twirling on grass-covered meadows?
Shall we sit in the sun

And dream of our laughter
To come in these days of enchantment?
And shall we be happy forever and always
In this chamber, our garden of love?

Stars
for Diane

| Jon Kade

When we were young,
we'd go out and look at the stars;
Not together, three hours apart.

The craze of age had stopped me;
your Guide was lost,
The stars went cold and blank.

I've started to look up again—
I've learned how to see.
What I see
(when I look up)
What I see
is you

Planetdance

| Jon Kade

To darkness daylight cycles
Earth spins beneath the sun
Then midnight gives forth morning
Another day is done.

So the cycle will continue
Though daylight hours will wane
The night gains then its dominance
But summer comes again.

And all the years enlocked in dance
Earth spun and swung around
And all the years the radiance
Gave life unto the ground

The planet has absorbed some light
The rest reflects to space
But life upon this whirling ball
Is at the sunlight's grace

One day the sun will cease to burn
Far in the future, sure
A barren, lifeless ball of rock
Earth swarms with men no more

Orion

| Jon Kade

Orion speaks:

Artemis, wound me not
This night of equinox
Spare me your arrows,
Loosen your bow.

Stars come a-falling
Over this ocean
Submerged to my neck,
Bend not your bow.

Dark is her vision
Shadowed her mind
Her eyes go a-searching
Her target to find
Her brother, conniving
Her heartsight to blind

And so the bow shivers
And so the shaft flies
And so the tip pierces
And so the man dies.



Luscious J

| Ben Kauffman

En El Silencio Que Nace Del Silencio

| *Gonzalo Munivar*

En el silencio
que nace del silencio
me parece ver
las almas sonreir

Son sonrisas muertas
en labios tristes
en noches grises
de lunas viejas

Almas
almas de mis recuerdos
que ya se han muerto
en el silencio
de la mente mia

almas
almas
que yo he querido
y se me empiezan
a olvidar

In Silence Born Of Silence

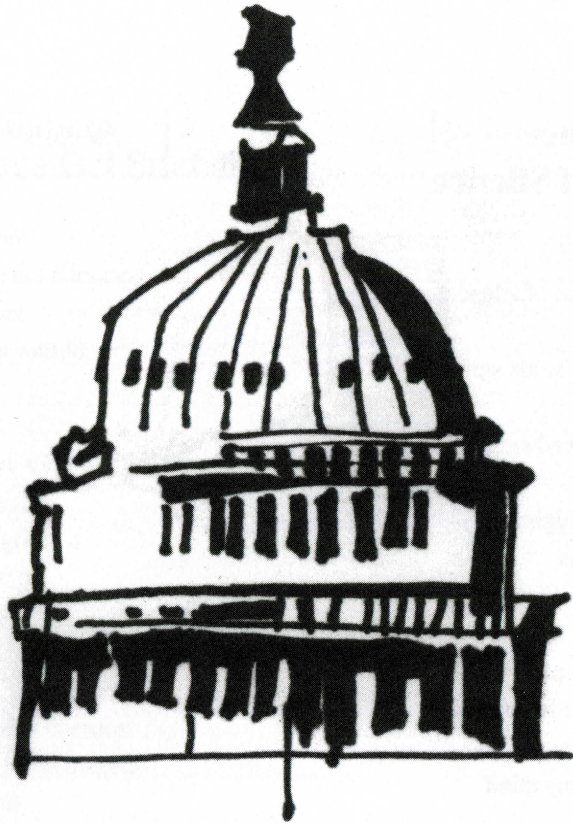
| *Gonzalo Munivar*

In silence
born of silence
I think I see
the souls smile

Theirs are dead smiles
on sad lips
in the gray nights
of old moons

Souls
Souls of my past
that have died
in the silence
of my mind

souls
souls
that I have loved
and I am beginning
to forget



Dome Alicious

Ben Kauffman

Historias de la Vida Real

Ramzes Vega

Helena's husband, Rodrigo, aware of his unsteadiness, cautiously pushes the torn screen door leading to the kitchen. The bitter, sour taste of three dollar tequila and lemon burns up his throat and into his mouth. He uses a firm grip on the door frame to anchor himself, to prevent stumbling, and makes his way into the kitchen. He is only thinking of sitting in the kitchen, like he usually does, to collect himself while Helena watches her telenovelas in the living room. He can hear the sobbing women from the television coming through the curtains hung as makeshift walls. This week, apparently, the star's novio has left her for a younger, thinner woman. He shakes his head, both to sober himself and to laugh at the twist of fate in the show. As his vision of the room clears, he realizes that Helena is not in her usual spot on the sofa, but is sitting in a corner of the kitchen, knitting so intently he has to touch the splintered edge of the particleboard table to make sure it really exists and that he is not simply passed out somewhere on his way home. When she puts her needle-work down, she glares at him with pent-up disgust that almost sobers him up. He has arrived late from work as he often does, reeking of smoke and cheap tequila.

"I hope you enjoyed your tragos in the cantina with your compadres," she spits at him. "My comadre called, not long ago, and it's not the first time she has told me about seeing you slithering out from the alley behind the shack of la Rosa." He vaguely hears the conversation from the soap opera continuing in the background and laughs to himself at the irony, hell, he and Helena could be the next episode. He doesn't have the words to deny her accusations, neither is he given the chance to. She storms out of the house, almost splitting the rotting step boards with her pounding footsteps, letting the door hang broken behind her.

She gets in his car and drives aimlessly, amazed that she had his keys in her pocket the whole time. Perhaps somehow she has been dreaming of this

day and she has always planned on leaving him in this way. In the rearview mirror, she notices her reflection. Her stringy pelo hangs straight all the way down to the car seat—she has had no reason to cut it or style it, except to slick the frizziness down with a ragged bandana. Her husband has not noticed her since their marriage 25 years ago. Once the wonder and excitement of their new life together wore off—she had gained about 2 pounds for every year they were married—Rodrigo paid more attention to other things, like if the laundry was done or the comida was on the table when he came home. She wanders down street after street, ambivalent to her surroundings and the world around her. She only snaps back to the world when she notices the bright reflection of a store display window. She stops the car and looks at the clothes worn by the streamlined mannequins—they look worldly, powerful, exotically sexy in their business suits, lingerie, and short dresses. Nothing she has ever worn or wanted to wear here; Rodrigo would have never allowed it. She smirks at the thought of him and Rosa, parks the car, and walks to the window. Once again she studies her own worn reflection, the hunched back, stooped shoulders, sagging stomach and breasts, wearing clothes that were stylish a decade ago and that Rodrigo had bought her at the local flea market. She reaches out a hand and touches the glass, leaving her hand print on it, smudging the glass with dirt as she caresses the dresses from outside of the store. She takes a deep breath, gathers all the strength within herself, and opens the door.

She runs her calloused, domestic hands over the fabric of the first vestido she sees, never thinking that anything could be this soft or smooth. She closes her eyes and sees herself as all the women who wear these clothes—the head of a corporate division, signing away lives with the stroke of a pen, wearing a gray cotton wool suit; an equally powerful mistress, with her apartment and car paid for by a wealthy patron, wearing a long, slinky, low-cut and slit red dress; a young woman walking leisurely on the beach in a light, airy sun dress. As the salesclerks whisper and make subtle snide gestures towards her, she lifts several off their racks.

“Our sales racks are in the back if you are bargain shopping,” says the nearest store employee, una niña, probably a quarter of Helena’s age, wearing bright red lipstick and what looks like colored tinsel in her hair. Helena thought she could have been a Christmas decoration or something out of the teen magazines at the corner store. “You know, we are going to be having our spring line sale next week if you’d rather come back then, or if you are really in the mood to shop, the thrift store next door always has sales . . . Why don’t you check them out?”

With as much dignity and false courage as she can command of herself, Helena looks at a different, older sales woman. “Can you show me where the fitting room is, I’d like to try some things on, if you don’t mind.” As she walks to the back of the store, she hears, “Those Mexicans are all the same. They only try things on, getting them so dirty we have to put them on sale a week later. You watch, she’ll be back in a week to pick up the outfits she’s ‘trying on today.’”

The first thing Helena does in the fitting room is look at herself full length in each mirror on each wall. She is embarrassed to take her clothes off with each of the reflections watching her. As she discards each article of her own clothing on the floor, she feels as if she is getting rid of one of the memories from her struggles with Rodrigo. She picks up the first dress, hoping that by putting it on, she will be creating new memories of better times. She struggles to get the fabric over her broad shoulders and wide caderas. Its softness feels foreign against her dry, hard skin. She doesn’t want to look in the mirror, afraid of what she will see, how foolish she may look. Reluctantly she slowly moves her eyes up her body, from her pile of clothes at her feet to her knees, hips, breasts, shoulders, then her stunned face; she is marveled at the woman the clothes have transformed her into. The figure is voluptuous instead of boxy, there is form instead of bagginess, and the breasts and hips that she thought had disappeared were still there. She runs her hands over her new silhouette, learning again all the curves of her body. She looks at all the new clothes she has picked up with desperate hope and tries each one on, inventing herself with each new pattern, design, fabric. She feels heated passion in the silk slip dress, cut throat ambition in the pants suit and tie, emotion after emotion that she had never experienced so boldly before. She wonders why she has never bothered to try on or even look at these clothes before. She has forgotten her husband and the life she just walked out on. It doesn’t matter to her right now. All that matters is the feeling of the cloth on her skin and the images of herself that she sees when she is wearing the clothes. She looks down and notices her own ragged clothes on the floor, the faded brown skirt with grease stains, the threadbare sweater with the familiar patch on the sleeve. She grimaces and suddenly is brought back to her reality and wonders if these new clothes could have kept her husband from turning to Rosa, if she could have kept him if she were someone, something else. Could she still keep him by enticing him with these new clothes?

The Long Ride Home

| *Kristina Blazewski*

Merging onto the path
That captures the thinker.
Dashed white lines
Guide you around the next curve.

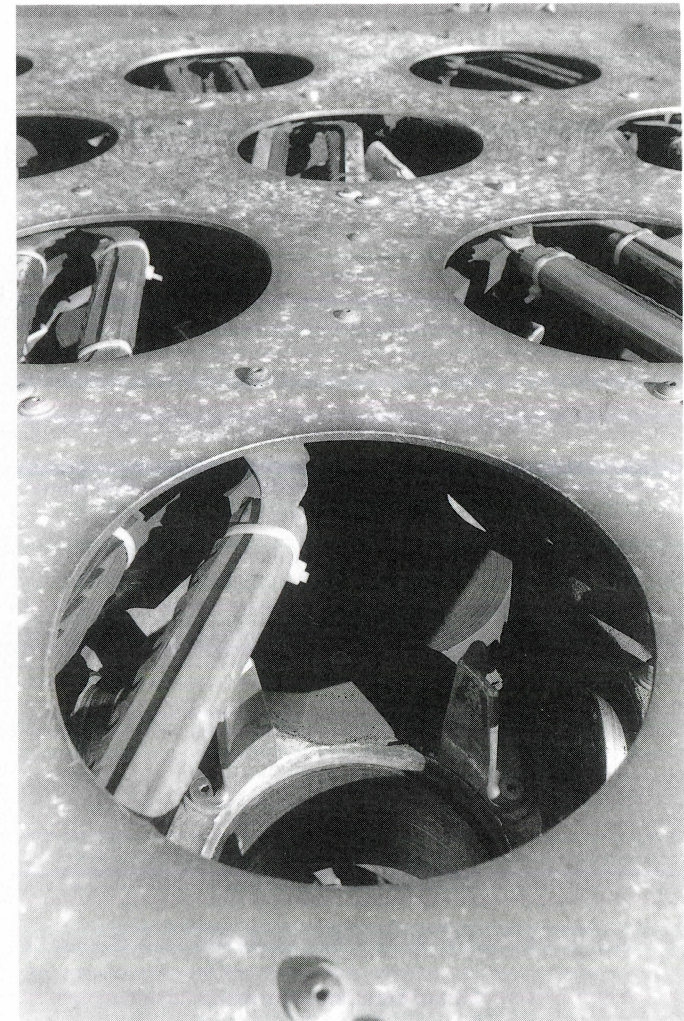
See the need for speed,
Stay on the left.
Not sure when to get off,
Stay on the right.
But somehow you'll end up at the
Same place at the same time.

Red lights will put
You in a trance.
Stop and go.
Stop and go.
Stop and go.

The pattern breaks your thoughts.
Your thoughts grow
Around that next turn
Only to be
Interrupted by the inconsistency
Of the red arrangement.

The thought returns,
But incomplete
Intriguing the continuation
Of the thought.

When you exit
Your mind is exhausted.
Not enough time
For my thoughts.



Untitled

| *Steve Rost*

Never Let You Go

| Alexis Black

It's been over four years
Since you left your place on Earth.
You left behind your body,
But took everything of worth.

Your house has been emptied.
Your husband lives alone.
The cats are all gone now.
So's everything you've known.

Now you are a memory.
You exist only in the past.
Your face is unrecallable.
Your words did not last.

So many people forgot you;
Out of sight, out of mind.
They do not feel your absence.
You're just somebody who died.

But I still remember.
I can still recall.
I can see your face.
Your words I remember all.

What I tend to forget
Is that you're really dead.
To me you are still living.
Your cheeks are flush and red.

Four years after the funeral
Where I shed so many a tear
The memory has not dimmed.
I still believe you're near.

I'm not superstitious.
I don't believe in ghosts.
But of all the pain in my life
Your death hurts me the most.

That's why four years later
I continue crying.
I can't control my tears
When I think about you dying.

I know I should move on.
I know grief isn't good,
But time can't change the fact
That you are gone for good.

You will wait in heaven,
So most people say,
But no one can be certain
Where you have gone away.

Death seems easy for others
To bear and to get through,
But I feel that if I leave
I'll have stopped loving you.

I cannot stop my crying
Though time has passed, I know.
Others may forget you,
But I'll never let you go.

Excerpt from Helen

| Kimberly Bates

Helen digs through her black briefcase looking for her cigarettes. Chewing on her bottom lip she frantically fumbles past her portfolio, her wallet, a few empty granola bar wrappers and a change of nylons. "Damn it, where are they, I know I brought them!" She slips her hand into the outside side pocket and pulls out the pack with a sigh. Helen nervously lights her smoke and glances at her watch bouncing her crossed leg with fury. Helen in her usual manner begins talking to herself under her breath, "Man I have got to piss! I hate waiting for this damn train. Oh my God! I am not going to make it to the apartment." Again Helen checks her watch. The low rumble of the Georgetown train can be heard in the distance. People begin to line up along the edge of the platform in anticipation of its arrival. Helen slowly stands contracting her stomach muscles to control her grieving bladder. Quickly smoking her cigarette, Helen again checks her watch; it's now 3:25. "No wonder I'm hungry, I haven't eaten since this morning, man I have go to *pee*." As the train pulls into the station Helen swings up her briefcase and begins pushing her way to the front of the crowd.

"Hey lady, watch where you're going!"

"Hey baby walk on over here."

"Yeah, back off buddy, kiss my butt!" The scream of the train drowns out every sound in the station, even Helen. It rattles and jerks to a stop.

Helen starts jogging when she gets to her street; she cringes as her apartment comes into view. It was once a fancy home for a wealthy family but has been run down for a long time and was divided into its current six small apartments. Bricks are missing from the façade; the faded, peeling blue shut-

ters are hanging on by their last nails; shingles lie upon the ground instead of the roof; and the overhang of her porch is beginning to sag. Helen shares the porch with her new friends Zeak and Stella, a cute couple that immediately befriended her when she moved into the building. Helen winks at her 95' Ford Ranger sitting in front of the house. "I'll be able to drive you soon, well, as soon as I get a better job." She swings herself around the railing and bolts up the crumbling concrete stairs. Helen bangs on Zeak and Stella's door while unlocking her own. She knows if Stella's home, she'll come over with that invitation to see how her interviews went.

Helen's shades were still drawn so even in the bright summer day the apartment was dark. She struggles into the bathroom right off the foyer. Not bothering to shut the door, Helen hikes up her skirt while frantically tugging down at her sweaty nylons. "Ah, get off me!" After a few frantic seconds, her nylons finally gave way. Helen steps out of the bathroom into the dark foyer gathers her briefcase, open the blinds and turns into her living room. Her heart sinks and her mind begins to race. It seems everything she owns was thrown around the small apartment. "Oh God who did this?" Her vases all shattered on the floor, pictures knocked off the wall, clothes and shoes thrown about the house, an empty space in the corner where her TV and stereo lived and a gaping hole in the ceiling where she had replaced the crappy light fixture with one she brought from home. Helen's vision closes and her breath quickens, she stumbles backward over her fallen side table and crashes onto the floor hitting her head on the wall, knocking herself unconscious.

"Helen, wake up, wake up sexy"

Helen's eyes flutter open to see Zeak's dark, blurry face leaning over her from the doorway. She jerks up and rubs her eyes trying to get her bearings, a sharp pain shoots from the back of her head to her forehead. "Zeak, be a doll and help me up." Zeak reaches under Helen's arms pulling her onto her feet. Losing her footing, she falls back into his broad chest. Zeak, an attractive man at twenty-six carries most of his weight in his upper body, which he is very proud of. He works out at the gym almost every day. Helen envies his dedication. Wincing at the mess of her apartment she turns to Zeak and walks onto the porch to try to catch her breath. Taking deep breaths she begins to cry, "God I can't believe the day I've had! This, this is not right! Zeak can I please use your phone to call the cops, I don't want to go back in there, hell, I don't

even know if there's a phone in there."

"Yeah, sure sweetie."

Following Zeak into his apartment, Helen looks back at her little black truck, grateful it was left unharmed. Zeak and Stella's apartment is the same size as Helen's, but looks half the size with all the nick nacks they gathered over the years. Every wall is covered with Stella's paintings, the tables are filled with pictures of family and friends, the floor hides under layers of dirty clothes and the furniture peeking out from under home made quilts is old and worn. Zeak throws Helen the phone.

After calling the cops to make a report, Helen curls up on the couch across from Zeak. She snatches the pack of cigarettes from the coffee table and struggles to get one out. She quickly lights the cigarette and deeply inhales.

"Helen, want something to drink?"

"Yeah, thanks, did you hear anything Zeak? I mean the break in?"

Zeak quickly stood, "No I was just gettin home from work when I saw your door open, Stella's still at work. Want ice?"

"Please."

Returning with the water Zeak plops down on the couch directly beside Helen. Uncomfortable with the closeness she shifts her weight. "Hey, don't be uncomfortable, I just want to hold you. This has got to be really upsetting."

"Well it is and I really appreciate the smoke and you letting me use your phone. I'm gonna get back to my place, the cops should be there soon." Helen stands to leave but Zeak grabs her wrist with his large, rough hand.

"Helen I think you should stay."

"No, Zeak, I'll see you later. Please have Stella come over when she gets home, OK?"

Zeak sits, staring at Helen holding her wrist, not moving, not hearing. He slowly, but forcibly pulls her within inches of his face, his strong fingers lock around the back of her neck; Helen doesn't understand what is going on until Zeak's lips are pressing against hers. With her hand on his chest, she tries to push him away. Her cigarette falls onto the coffee table. Zeak doesn't budge. Helen tries to say no, tries to talk but his lips only press harder to muffle her pleas to stop. After what seems like forever, Zeak releases his kiss

but remains inches from Helen's face. With this chance to plead, Helen begins to speak frantically,

"Zeak don't do this to me. I'm not comfortable with this at all. If you have the slightest respect for me you will stop this right now. What will-would Stella say? Don't put me in this situation, please Zeak, let me go back to my apartment." Slowly letting go of Helen's head, Zeak stands and moves to open the door. Helen quickly retrieves her cigarette and follows trying to rush past him; Zeak smacks her in the butt on her way to the freedom of the porch. A flash of rage shades Helen's face. She refuses to look back at Zeak as she scurries into her violated home.

Pyre

| Jon Conger

It dances, licking the air
Reaching for sustenance
Yearning to spread
Its heat tightens my skin
Its fingers tickle my eyes
It feeds my primal instincts
This ever-changing entity
Crawls slowly
Shifting, rolling, laughing
It calls me inside
I am forever lost in a trance
My eyes fixate in its spirit
Unaware of reality
I am tied tightly by the hands of
The flame



Some Man

| Kimberly Bates

Memory of the Past Exert

| *Eric Whims*

A young woman walked through the town with a jump in her step, a smile of complete love consuming her. As others passed by compliments surrounded her; it was her wedding day. On the other side of the city a rally was being organized to protest against some recent action by the Empire. She didn't care though; Palpatine could do as he pleased with the rest of the galaxy for today, for now all that mattered was that her greatest love, the kindest, most compassionate and caring person she had ever met, was returning home to marry her.

Looking up in the sky, she saw the pleasant wedge-shaped sight of a Star Destroyer appear in the sky. He had arrived. Now she had no worries, no fear of some tragedy striking him in the dangerous outlying of space, because he was too good a pilot to crash taking a shuttle down, besides, she loved him too much for him to just die on her. Already she could feel him near her, as the connection they'd always shared grew at his arrival in orbit. Her blood coursed with happiness, every atom in her body yearned to be held in his arms, and in her mind's eye she could already see everything, his smile, his eyes, his touch, his love.

That's when something went wrong. The sky seemed to light up, and suddenly flames surrounded her. Bursts of energy shot down upon the city, and the young woman turned around her, trying to figure out what was happening. A bolt hit the building across from her and permacrete melted to slag, and the tainted scent of charred flesh filled the air.

Panic overtook her, and she dropped the basket of flowers she'd just bought for the wedding onto the street as she took off towards her home at a sprint. As she ran the flames seemed to chase her, even engulf her at times. Crimson mixed with the yellow-white colors as hot as the star above her, heat

pouring off the flames, drying her skin and evaporating the sweat that perspired from her body. And the smell, the terrible odor of burnt flesh and charred bone, of skin evaporating, and bodies cooked like one of the wild horn turkeys that could be found in the forests at the lower part of the continent. Fear overwhelmed her, and she ran even faster. As she turned a street corner and her house came into view she froze in terror at the sight before her.

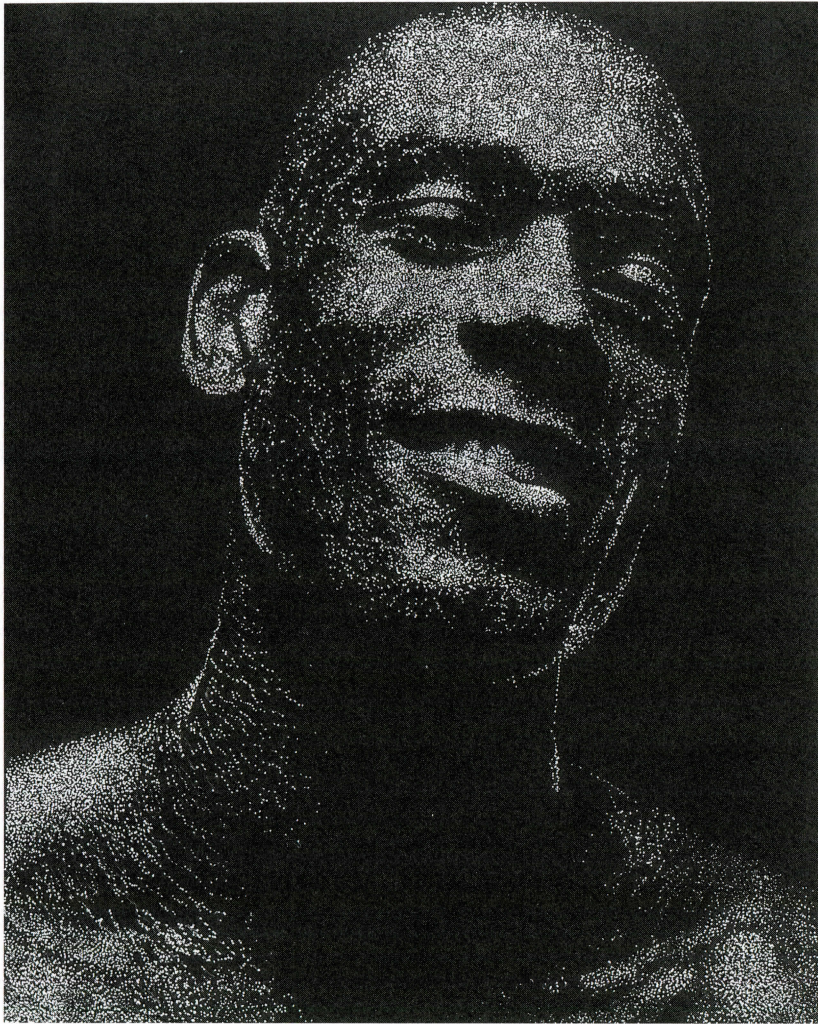
The house was ablaze, parts of it already burnt away to reveal the interior, but most importantly a human hand, the flesh dripping off the blackened bone like a leaking pipe. In front of the house a man laid motionless, a lightsaber strapped to his side, cloak afire, eyes lifeless. He had only come for the wedding, to see her get married to his nephew, and now he had paid for his kindness.

Next to him laid a burning cloak with a durasteel beam on top of it, lightsaber a meter or so away, several other pieces of shrapnel already cut around the empty cloak. It had been her soon-to-be father in law, vanished, assimilated by the Force as Jedi had been known to do upon death. His brother was the one that laid there next to him, and now the flames engulfed him as well, the heat working its metamorphic powers over him, transforming the once great Jedi Knight into nothing but ash; nature's own funeral pyre.

That's when the realization of the truth hit her. She was alone. As far back as she could remember, whenever she was afraid, whenever she was lonely, he'd been there. Her love, her life, the man who completed her; and now for the first time that she could remember, he wasn't there.

A single tear formed and slowly slid down her cheek, evaporating in the heat of the flame before it reached her chin. She reached down with her hand and felt the double sapphire gold ring on her left ring finger, anguish filling her. Twin flames seemed to flicker in the jewels, and they dimmed as if sensing the sorrow within their bearer. Then she looked up towards the Star Destroyer, that terrible wedge that protruded through the beautiful blue sky, that harbinger of death and destruction; of all that was evil in the galaxy and silently cursed it. With tears now flowing, her mind focused on one person, mind reaching for some glimpse of hope, yet finding none. Finally, with tears still falling she said, desperation in her voice, "Bethan, where are you?"

The only reply that came was another bolt of destruction from the sky that slammed into the street where she had been, and the woman was gone.



First Impression

| Dawn Goulet



Sweet Water

| Ben Kauffman

All Alone in the Deep, Dark Woods

| William E. Kolasa

Muck and mire—the stench of rotting organisms still decaying after an unknown number of years—the ghastly sights of the same, however indistinguishable or rare, sent one’s stomach, immediately, reeling in queasiness, forcing the owner to turn away before a reaction of sorts resulted.

Jervis did turn away, just soon enough to regain control of his body before that reaction. He turned around to face the living trees now in front of him. How could he have gotten here, anyway?

He couldn’t remember anything before he had come into this forest. In fact, he couldn’t even remember coming in, either. His first recollection was simply walking in this forest, and this swamp was his first concrete memory, now.

He walked. Menacingly, the trees loomed about and above him, as though ready—at any moment—to seize a person and lock him up in them, to suffocate, starve, or be squeezed to death—their choice. Jervis walked on—faster now. He had to find the way out, but the fog, seemingly as dense and thick and enveloping as the swamp, permitted a visibility of only twenty feet, if, indeed, even that. Jervis quickened his pace even more. If he kept walking in one direction then, logically, he would eventually come out of the forest, wouldn’t he?

Of course he would.

The gnarled trees seemed closer now, even more eager to strike. He saw what he thought to be a branch moving beside him, and he stopped abruptly. He slowly turned his head so that his eyes focused on a motionless, inanimate tree. He began walking again.

Walking . . . walking . . . left, right; left, right; left, right. How long had

he been doing this? Had he lost all sense of time as well? He must have, because now he couldn’t decide whether it had been minutes, hours, or even mere seconds since he had found the swamp. His legs were tired; his mind was tired. Maybe he should stop and sleep. Maybe when he woke up the fog would be lifted. Maybe—

No! . . . *No!* . . . *No!* the last thing he wanted to do was fall asleep, and he knew he would if he sat down. If he fell asleep he might lose any few memories he had. . . . So, what to do? He had to focus his mind on something. . . . Whistling? Yes, whistling, that was perfect. What should he whistle . . . ?

Jervis thought for a few seconds, then a few seconds more. Nothing. Nothing was coming to his mind—nothing!

—*All right!* . . . All right, he had to keep control of himself. He didn’t have to remember anything; he could make up his own song. Just random notes that would soon form a melody. Yes, all right—fine. He put his tongue and lips in the proper position and started blowing. There was no sound! He stopped and put his hand before his mouth to feel for air. There was none! He moved his hand to his chest to feel if it was rising and falling. It was. He looked down and confirmed this. An intense and immediate panic rushed through him and he screamed out loud!—No, he didn’t! There was no sound now, either! He felt his breath becoming short and on instinct started running at full speed!

Faster, faster! Something told him that he must not stop. Somehow he knew his life depended upon it. His head began to hurt, probably because of the . . . lack of oxygen? He kept running. Everything was starting to go dim. *No! Keep running!* Darker . . . darker . . .

Jervis felt his legs give way as he fell to the ground in the middle of the road and lost consciousness.

Jervis awoke, panicked. He couldn’t breathe! He realized that his arm was covering his nose and mouth. He moved it away and began gasping for breath. After a minute, he tried to remember what the nightmare was about. He couldn’t. He looked around and realized that he had been sleeping against a knotted tree. He stood up. He noticed that he was in a particularly dreary forest, and that in front of him was a massive swamp. He walked over to it . . .

The End

The Calling

| Alexis Black

crescendo, diminuendo
low to high to low again
now pizzicato now legato
until the page's end

Line by line, fast and slow,
note by note is played
until silence will deafen
as the echoes slowly fade.

Stillness is broken with contented sigh.
The pages have all been turned.
Now the heart is naked and wild
for it briefly ceases to yearn.

No status is reached, no gains are made
yet music has sated a need.
For the beauty is poignant and pure
when the soul is finally freed.

The Lotus Eaters

| Melinda Weinstein

How quickly the men dispersed
themselves among the Lotus Eaters
repudiating me, Odysseus

who gathered up his ropes
and knives to get the men
to row through danger again.

Long haired maidens. Citrus fruit.
The clinging odor of the Lotus Root.
Disporting the sensuous canals

of the dam like porpoises, my men.
In the end, I dragged them home.

My New Book

| *Kristina Blazewski*

To the giver of this book
My greatest appreciation goes.
For this gift
Is the greatest that I have received.

It has powers
Capable of unleashing things
That would forever remain within, without.

Questions that continually converse
With themselves
Now can be answered
Incorrectly or not
Preventing any chaos buildup within, without.

My own expression has been given to me
Use it with caution and freedom
I will.

Someone else knows
That disorder within
And cares to banish it from me.
Thank you for this gift.



Things That Should Not Be

| *William Hass*

Contributors

Kim Bates: a senior studying Architecture. "Art is my first passion. I love Salvador Dali, macaroni and cheese and my dog Charlie. I hate speed bumps."

Carolyn Begle: graduated in December 2000 with a B.S. in Computer Science. She is currently working as a software developer for Stardock Entertainment, a local game development company based in Livonia.

Alexis Anne Black: is a freshman Chemistry student at LTU. She enjoys writing, singing, and making large toxic messes in the lab.

Kristina Blazeovski: "I am a dual degree student for Architecture and Architectural Imaging. I am a freshman."

Jonathan Conger: "I am a freshman studying Mechanical Engineering. I hope to graduate by 2005."

Dawn Goulet: "I am a senior at Lawrence Tech, dual-majoring in Architecture and Illustration. I love to travel and enjoy photography, good books, and good movies. I feel that the artist's greatest talent lies in knowing which mistakes are keepers."

William Hass: "Senior Architecture student. People see flowers as something peaceful, but I wanted to give flowers a perception that people would not expect by having them on fire."

Jon Kade: was born, brought up, and lives in the Detroit area. He is currently majoring in Computer Engineering.

Ben Kauffman: "Architecture senior at LTU. Design is a life experience."

William Eric Kolasa: is a senior working toward his Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering. He enjoys photography, drawing, reading, writing, and being with his friends.

Nathan Kurmas: is a senior in Architecture; after graduation, he hopes to pursue a career. He enjoys biking and Saturdays.

Adam Modrzejewski: senior in Architecture, would like to thank Suzanne Whitaker Lightner and Alessia Costantine for their inspiration and guidance.

Dr. Gonzalo Munevar: is the chair of Humanities, Social Sciences and Communication. He has published several books, including a novel, *The Master of Fate*.

Steven Rost: has been teaching in the College of Architecture and Design for 18 years and is a practicing artist. His most recent work was an installation collaboration with his wife, Andrea Eis, for the Center Gallery at the Center for Creative Studies. His art typically addresses issues of the urban condition and is both photographic and sculptural in form.

Dr. Betty L. Stover: has been a professor in the HSSC department for 14 years.

Ramzes B. Vega: is working toward his Bachelor of Science in Engineering Technology and expects to graduate in December 2001. He is currently involved with Process Engineering Co-op at Ford Motor Company.

Dr. Melinda Weinstein: is an assistant professor of English at Lawrence Tech and the faculty advisor of *Prism*.

Eric Whims: "I'm a Computer Engineering major in my freshman year. Writing science fiction is something I've always enjoyed doing and plan to continue."

Prism was founded in 1978 by Humanities and Social Sciences professor Paula Stofer '79 BSHu when Lawrence Technological University was still the Lawrence Institute of Technology.

Just as an actual prism refracts white light into an array of colors, LTU's literary journal displays the literary and artistic talents of its diverse academic community. Students interested in becoming involved in *Prism* should reserve Tuesdays 2:30-4:30 p.m. in their schedules to work on the journal in the Kahn Library and to plan other campus events. For further information contact Dr. Melinda Weinstein at weinstein@ltu.edu/.

