Un
signatures 2004
art & literature

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2004

Rochester Institute of Technology
Art and Literature Publication

www.rit.edu/signatures

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We are most grateful to Mary Lynn Broe and Rahul Mehta of Language and Literature, as well as to the Signatures Faculty Advisory Board:

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unbarred

1. Of harbours: Not obstructed by a bar.
2. Not secured or blocked with a bar or bars.
3. Law. Not excluded or blocked.
4. Not marked with a bar or minus sign.
5. Of music: Not divided into bars.

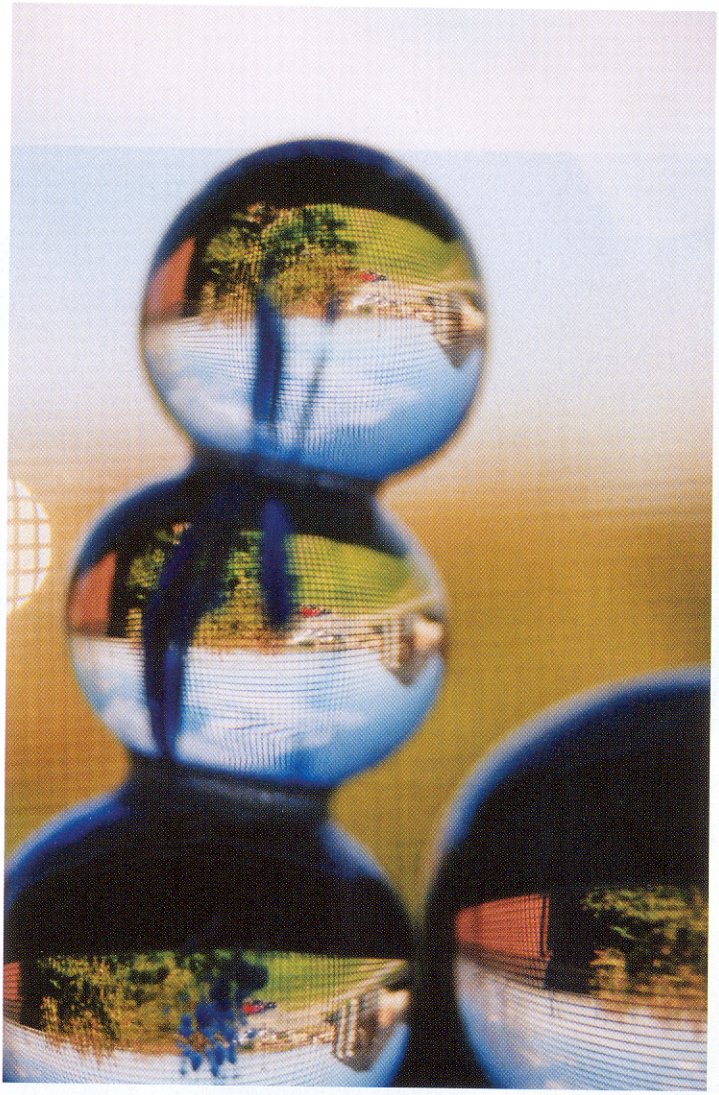
Noah Stupack :: I am the Answer

Lavender

I am the color lavender
When a highlighter bleeds
You are the stain of a red ballpoint pen
It's difficult to sign your name
gracefully
With a highlighter
You laugh at the childish motions of my wrist
As I try to make my name beautiful
Your signature clones itself
Until it is genetically perfect
Mine becomes more and more mutant
People must wonder
What happens when we kiss.

Alexis G. Mc Vicker

Lynn Wilson :: Beautiful



Pete Karl :: Untitled

Early

your lips are bitter
with morning coffee
Cold hand grasping at
the wispy slivers of
Love
diamond heavy on my
finger
reminder of the time
when the struggle felt
good
And now you kiss my hand
from a distance
apologetic eyes
jump around my face
wishing away
salty tears
stripping safe haven
of our future
dreams together
we don't know
why

Jennifer Kunz

My Grandmother's Feet

For $15 they old Muh Dear she could bury her foot in the same Georgia soil she grew up in. $15 for a plot at the cemetery at the end of the road my aunt used to push herself down with a broom as she stood on a single roller skate.

They told Grandma nothing. Perhaps respectful enough not to patronize an old woman but most likely too annoyed and afraid of senility. She woke up in her nursing home bed one morning and could no longer feel the memory of the hot Louisiana grass between her toes, couldn't feel her brown cocker spaniel's fuzzy, warm chest heaving under her heel as she begged for her attention. Grandma couldn't even remember that she would never again pace around the house telling elaborate stories about my great-grandfather, a man so light-skinned he passed himself off as white and opened a general store.

Muh Dear's foot was the same one that held the weight of her children, and their children...and their children...
The same foot that taught roaches their place and gave the baby roses in the backyard a goal to reach towards.

All the while Grandma's foot chased my deadbeat grandfather all the way to California and back, taught my father that game of walking over the furniture – trying to see how far you could walk into the house before you had to touch the floor, and 30 years after doing this would leave it's prints in the ground around my brother's headstone as she bid goodbye to the one she always said looked the most like her father should have.

And while Muh Dear's feet shuffled through the shag carpeting of Jewish homes filled with chihuahuas for less than minimum wage, Grandma's feet rarely touched the ground save for the days when she though Jesus' arms might be tired.

Molded by moist, southern dirt roads and Epsom salt baths.

Tempered by motor oil, soaked concrete and broken glass their feet still hover in the air above the Detroit Medical Center and now their ashes relay instructions to the clouds above Woodward Avenue and teach them how to hold the sky up with dignity and grace.

And when Muh Dear follows Grandma back into the soothingly sultry air for their first real conversation with each other as they walk through dusty fields of cat tails and peach blossoms where the air is dry and warm with a hint of salt....
somewhere in the houses they lived in, perhaps long torn down, the floorboards will have quiet evenings together and reminisce on how blessed they were to be able to feel my grandmothers' footsteps.

Chris Wiltz

Caitlin Brennan-Cant :: Danita

Michael Delano :: Untitled

Surface Tension

If it were left to my eyes,
We would watch as this world dries.
Until, of course, rage boils over...
Then springs well up from my eyes.

I think it's because of my glasses,
Causing the lack of goulashes.
The surface tension holding the water
Just above the top of the rims.

I'll just buy a bottle of Evian,
Rinse myself off and try again.
I can hope for condensation,
I'm always cold on a warm day.

Jacob Langworthy

Kate Motter :: Sara

Matthew Emond :: Message

Lovingly

He loved her like that—
With her right ear cut off
Under her round blond curls
He loved her like that—
The right way as his glorious Athena—
Not out of compassion but the opposite
Her chopped parts made her entirely his.

Oana Ghiocel

Sean McGlincy :: Glass

Casey Gathy :: Good Enough

Scrabble

The descending sun mellows heavily
upon a calm Carolina lake--
The tiny tips of waves chip-chip it apart
and throw glistening shards our way.

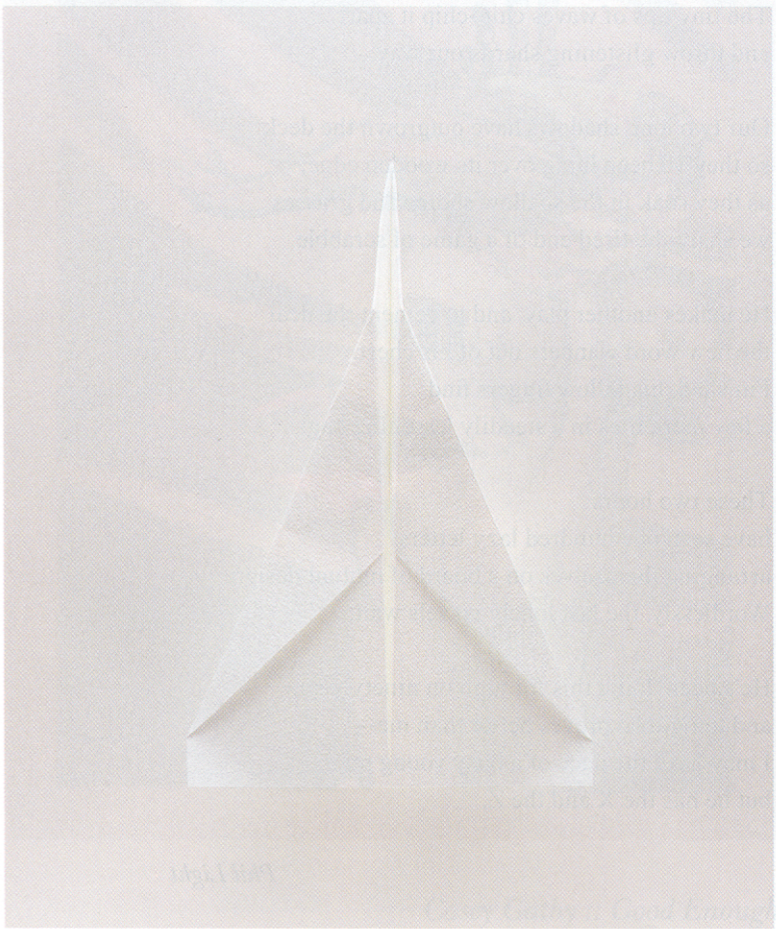
Our two long shadows have outgrown the deck
so they've been hung over its wooden edge;
as they soak in the shallow shores and grasses
we share the tired end of a game of scrabble.

He makes another play, and to cement the deal
the new word wanders out of his chest.
Finished, his fallow fingers find
a few more tiles in a steadily lessening bag.

These two hours
have seen one hundred lazy letters
arranging themselves on a board of mutual design.
Wordlessly, the last lonely vowels wait.

He's been doing this for nigh on ninety years
and tonight he proves better than me--
I may have the pace of a busy young man
but he has the X and the Z.

Phil Light



Nicole Summer :: Paper Airplane

Michael Skyer :: Untitled

Mascara

Your body curling like a mascara coating
Ready to rebel from the artificial black
Smoky eyes are in
Be as special as a corner girl on a Sunday
The virgin marry is watching you
She told me she had a few things to say
Why are you tapping your heal on the sidewalk
Don't you know what that says
Colors are simple
If you're not wearing a dress.

Alexis G. Mc Vicker

Shower

the scent of soap and you fill the air i breathe
i feel your fingers running through my wet hair
our slippery bodies glide easily against each other
soapy hands slide smoothly down my soapy body
"so good"
amazing
i love the feel of your touch
the water's touch
all over my thirsty body
your mouth finds mine
finds my neck
it kisses all my delicate parts
elicits a moan...
the air is steamy yet cold
i lean in closer to you
feeling your heat
i close my eyes to keep the water out
and to keep the sensation of your mouth
your hands
your body
lingering on my skin
phantom touches and caresses
still haunt every inch of me
long after we've dried off

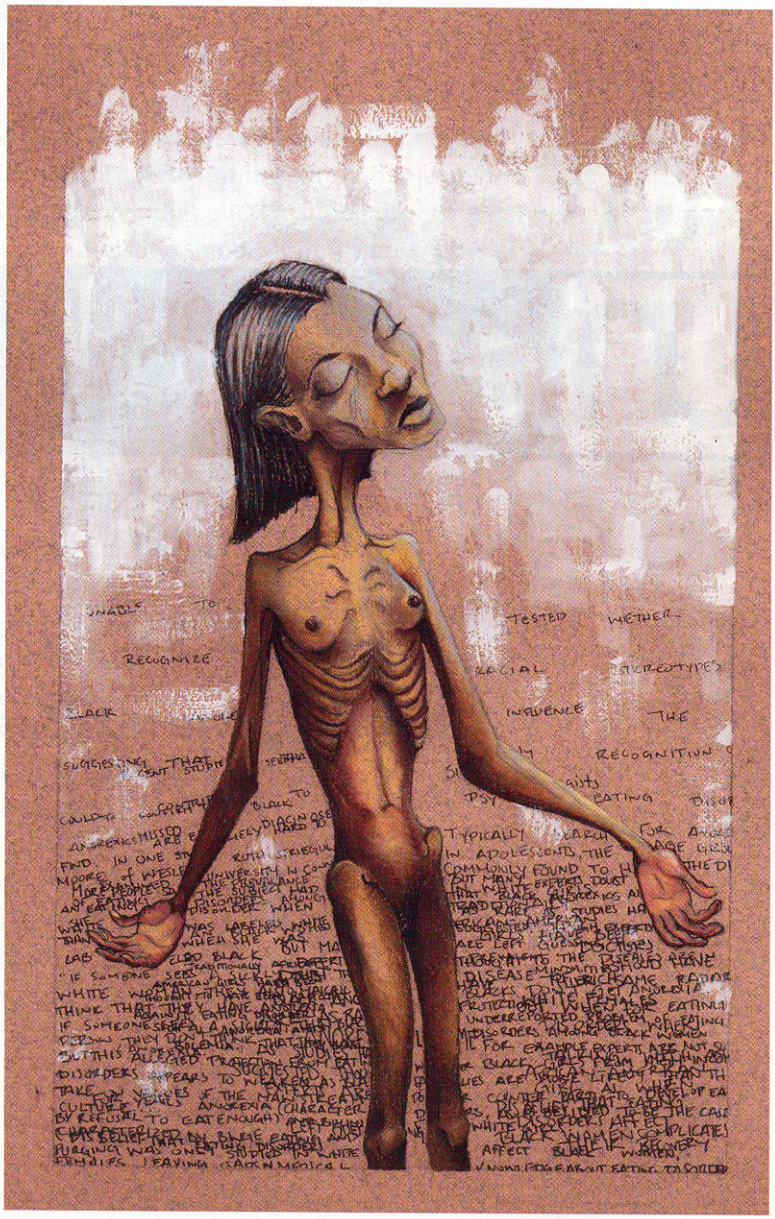
Carmelissa Valera

unearth

1. *trans.* To dig out of the earth, to exhume; to disclose by the removal of earth.

2. *fig.* To bring to light; to disclose, reveal, discover, etc. (Freq. from *c*1860.)

3. *fig.* To free from earthly qualities.



Casey Gathy :: Believe It

Mark Zimmerman :: Another Postcard

Natural Color

Like the gleaming surfaces of caffeinated drinks
And dark chocolates
And dirt after it rains
I want to understand you like the color brown
I need to know what neutral feels like
Simple and boring and natural
Grainy draining of coffee materials
Into a bitter soup of normalcy
Stir
Simple can be pretty
You said when your eyes blinked
Brown is utterly interesting
I should grow back my natural color.

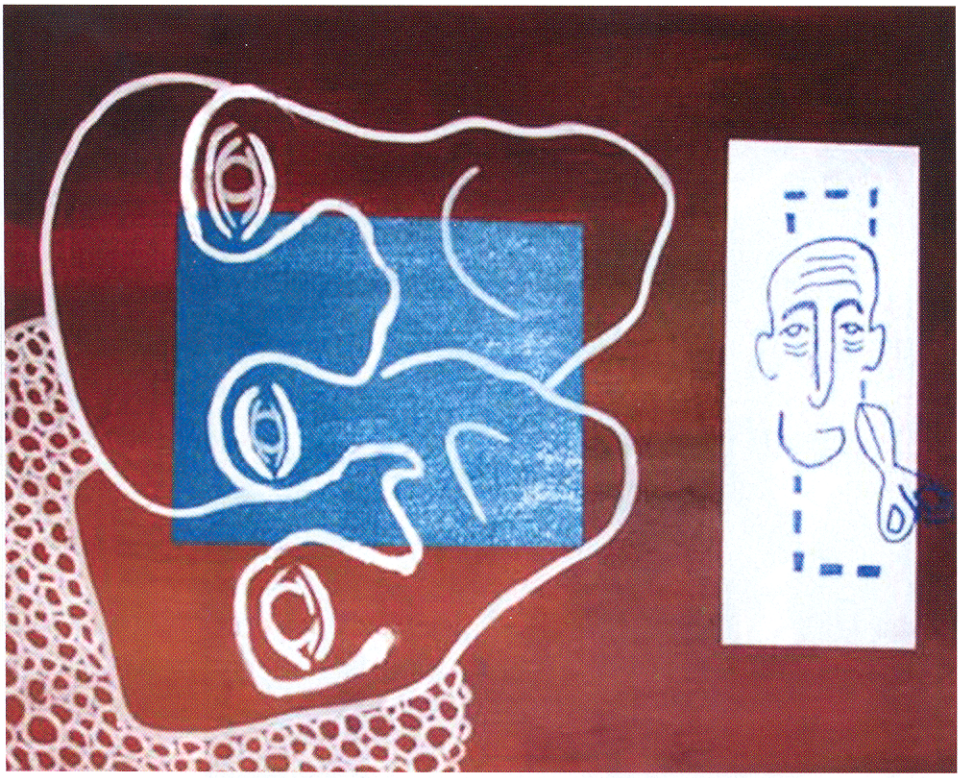
Alexis G. Mc Vicker

Two:

Heat lightening like dry heaves,
nothing coming up, nothing going down,
another day, another dollar,
another night without rain,
to spend wishing there was someone,
to be missing, or missing me.
Well they white washed the writing from the wall,
just when clarity was fleeing.
Anyway,
the lighting in the night is far off and never bright,
But by that failing light introspection has revealed,
that rains still far away.
Stomach still keeps churning,
though it emptied long before,
in the toilet, on the floor
the dust is thick and hardening,
and the tiles are worn dull,
but the shadow now is clearer as it falls upon the wall
sympathy for strangers, and for the starving plants
pushes madness closer
it seems logical by moonlight,
possible by day
for the never ending sorrow
and the never ending rage
form a never ending hatred
for the never falling rain
if summer in its wisdom
could find a way to fail
mercy might still have time to prevail

Benjamin Foster

Sean McGlincy :: Inside Church



Jonathan Rivera :: Sad Blue Box

Zero Celsius

Cold, harsh, dark weather
Killing the Homeless
Keeping people close

Columbus Dixon

P.S.

He was left handed. He had a penchant for aviator sunglasses.

The first sentence he spoke to her was harsh.

She went to Joe's every week where she allotted herself six pastrami sandwiches per month. It was the ninth of November and she'd had 4. It hadn't been a good Fall so far.

She walked in, expecting Sam at the counter. And then she saw him.

Holy Shit. That's him.

She hadn't seen in a week—or the 4 years she'd lived here. And there he was, sitting at the third booth of three on the left-hand side. She always ate on the right. How many times had she gone in there, head down, hair plastered about, eating assorted red meat with cheese.

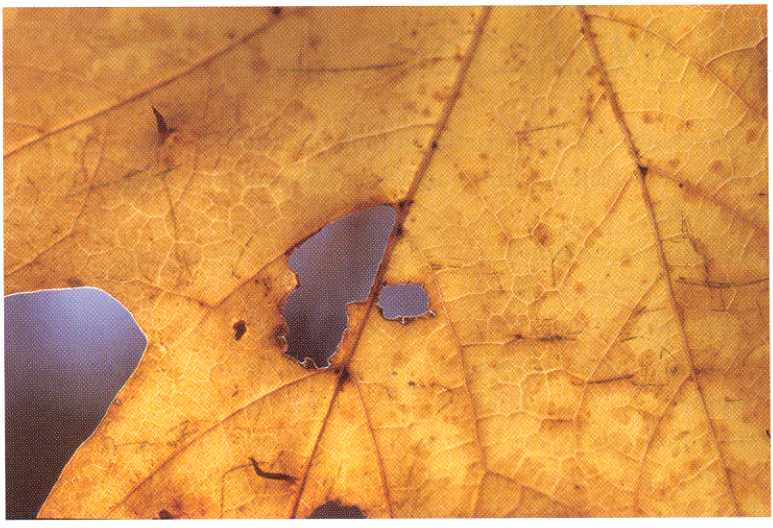
For six days she thought of him. When she closed her eyes to take a longer than usual blink; when she was in the shower as her hands skimmed limbs with generic soap.

I can't fucking believe he's here.

She ordered the vegetarian sub and a diet Coke to Sam's dismay.

He hadn't even looked up when she'd ordered—he didn't recognize her voice. She moved to sit in the second booth facing him. She tried to catch his scar. *His eye! His eye!*

He wasn't looking at her. Instead he was reading *The Post*. He had beautiful hands. She wanted him to rub his knuckles along her less than prominent shoulder blades. She looked down at her own, rarely buffed nails, and noticed remnants of Revlon's Puff Pink on her index finer. She hid her left palm in her pocket.



Melissa Miller :: Yellow Leaf

Scrambling for an excuse, she saw an article on the front page.

"Excuse me."

He looked up. He was annoyed. He'd lost his place.

"Can I borrow the first section of your paper? I didn't realize Gary Oldman died. Jesus, 'Sid and Nancy' was one of my favorite movies."

His look said, *am I supposed to be impressed? She probably couldn't even tell me one song by the Sex Pistols.* His mouth said, "Fine. I'm done with it anyways."

Six words. Well if you don't count the long audible sigh as he handed over the paper with a grease stain in the top right corner. He was Irish. She had never fucked a man with an accent before.

J. Wigent
[complete story available on CD]

MONvALISe (A)

I was sitting in my compartment for some time
The awkward silence filling in where I should have been conversing.
The train went along
CLACK CLACK CLACK
Who travels by train anymore these days?
The man across from me clears his throat and I look up to meet his eyes
Damn what a cheap trick I think. This guys' obviously been waiting to strike up a conversation, looks to be a dousy too.
Why can't these people leave me alone?
"So I've noticed you staring at my valise," he starts.
I haven't even glanced at your fucking 'valise' you slimy toad
"oh?" I say aloud.
"It's imported leather from Italy"
I nod
"well, the briefcase isn't really what's important, it's what's inside that counts"
oh great, here come the knives, or maybe the amazing salad tongs I can't do without
"If you'll excuse me for a moment, the dining car closes in half an hour, and I'm famished."
"but of course," he replies. I can tell he's upset at not getting to sell me anything.
With any luck he will have moved to a different car when I return.
No such luck bud
He's still sitting there when I open the door. A smug smile on his face, his hands clasped neatly over his "valise"
God, I can't believe he actually called it a valise.....and of course I had to make eye contact with him again
"mind if I continue?"
"oh?"
"from before, I was talking about the contents of my valise"
there it is again. Ha.
"oh, well, I haven't got any money..."

he laughs, even his laugh is positively irritating.
"no no, I assure you, I'm not trying to sell you anything"
"sorry"
"no worries, look" here he opens his case to reveal a fairly standard suitcase…..empty.
"yeah?"
"nothing there - because I threw it all out" his smile is getting on my nerves now.
"starting over?"
"something like that, I believe that the contents of my valise are metaphorical with the contents of my life. Right now, it's empty, as am I. My wife died two days ago."
Oh Christ, I've got a real live one here
"sorry to hear that"
"no worries."
We sit in an awkward silence for awhile, I can tell he wants me to inquire about more of his 'valise' theory.
"….32….STOP 32, LINDENBERGH STOP 32….." over the loudspeaker
"hey buddy, sorry to hear about your wife, hang in there" this is my stop.
He looks at me, something resembling rejection hangs there in his eyes,
Oh well, there will be other passengers and other trains, in other cities… they're all alike.

Spencer Slavin

Kelly LaDelfa :: Karyn

Three:

I have no regrets.
None that matter or get in my way.
I am indifferent to the sirens calls.
Could be, the sun might have burned me,
without free-will...
eternity is a word,
hopeless is just as long as words go.
One hour or one week,
But the mini-fridge is full,
and the beds are made.
No sense in leaving a mess,
since I was never a choice I was given.
Or a choice I made, leaving the other.
I have no regrets.
None that matter.

Four:

Muted hues fade into copper streetlights.
All the headlights shine like coupled stars.
Within a steel box fly alone.
The glow of dashboards peeling back humanity.
The car is dark and silent, faces drawn and still.
night is brighter here more forgiving.
Forget life's mistake and drive.
The dawn is hours off, tomorrow slid into today.
The off ramps are darker, slower, drive on.

Benjamin Foster

Eyes

It's strange the way we met...
I still remember sitting down
in the cold and snow
on a stone bench
I remember taking in a deep breath
and trying to collect my thoughts

But everything just falls apart
and tears come flowing out
I pull my knees up to my chin
and bury my face in my arms

I feel snow move, next to me
being crushed under a gentle weight
I feel a warmth of a hand on
my back, cradling me

I hear a voice whisper
"what's wrong?"
I look up, into eyes
the color of deepest blue,
And I'm lost in those depths

Shit - here I go again.

Jonathan Sondergeld

Brian Saghy :: Corridor

Midnight

22

there is an escape

if i get through the next two days then i will make it through this life . there are some tests that are harder than you ever thought possible . in a state of mind when even the hardest decisions can be the easiest to make .

it is hype, all these magazine quality ads for something that could be . it is every glazed over look from every person walking down the street between you and your new found lover that dies, at midnight . and every missed glance, parted touch from cold hands, is a second that you can,t get back to . as your train takes off in the wrong direction, you can never make it back to dawn from dusk . never back from dark into light . so get started loving him, your time will be up before you are ready . for we are never ready for the escapes we know we have to take .

every rollercoaster drop, every traffic light that has been on yellow for too long . every drink of spilt milk laced with shards of broken glass . every missed brush against a stranger that would have granted you the warmth-love of their shoulder . this is what we miss

every morning with dawn we realize we could do anything . and with every star in the night sky we realize we have completed nothing .

but he dies at midnight

yes, at the stroke of the days end, as days end your love, your lover will die . because every day he is a different person and every day he is born once again .

this is the saddest story, because he is gone, and you never had him, he is lost to a place that you can,t go, the decisions you didn,t make block every backwards fork down a path that keeps you moving forward, but always looking back . it is being blind to emotion that gets you around each bend .

there is no end .

you will always love him, and you will always lose him .

there are some words you know you cannot say, and that is how you move on .

it depends what happened five seconds ago . the way you glanced ^ the sip you took ^ the word you wrote with your lips ^ the blood you let go of as you fell into a darker time ^ it is time to start walking again .

Patrick Kelley

Theodore Procita :: Ivy Plant

Noah Stupak :: Arclight

unheard

1. Not caught or apprehended by the sense of hearing; not heard.

2. Not before heard of; unknown, new, strange.

Fatima Padela :: Wedding Day

Guardian Angel

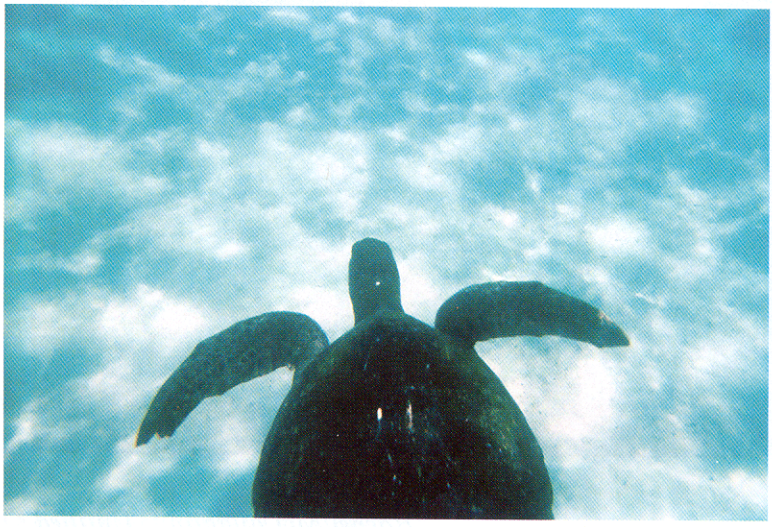
My war-torn guardian angel,
In our hour of need,
You'll protect our innocence,
You'll fight and you'll bleed.
With the sand in your eyes,
The sun on your wings,
The desert of the lost and broken
Bringing you to me.
Feathers, bullets, blood, and tears,
Sweat running down your face,
You and me, fight side by side,
The heroes of the day.

Matthew Campbell

Recognize

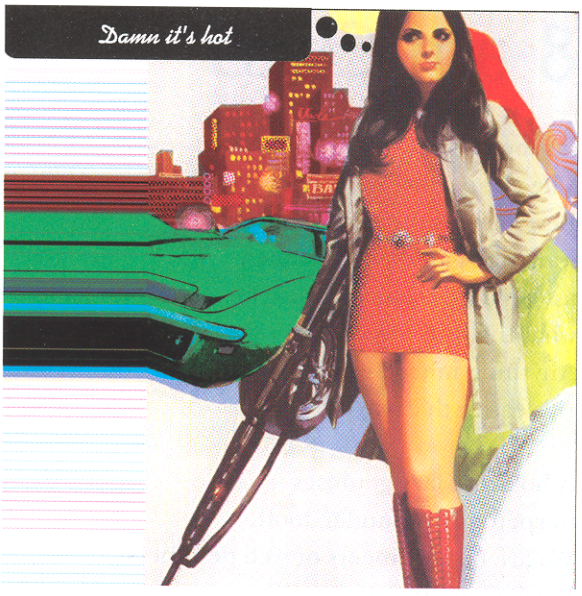
Figure you know me
Stroll through the cemetery
Recollect your thoughts

Eric Steiner



Jacqui Licht :: Flying Underwater

Rachel McLaughlin :: Untitled



Nicole Killian :: Damn

Obvious Pinks

It isn't an expression of self which leads to
Coating the soul with tested abrasion:
Adopted in a scour of Good Will and not
Embraced of a pilgrimage within.

It's a betrayal to hide clean cotton
Behind cracked polyester and
Beautiful gray behind purples and yellows and
Obvious pinks.

Alistair Davis

8 am Class

It's too early.
The clean white walls hurt my eyes.
Beside me is the stereotypical geek,
wannabe game programmer,
asleep in his chair because he already understands
what the droning voice is reiterating for the 64th time.
Anything missed can be learned later on his own
(it's easier that way).

A hoard of lazy geniuses -
perpetually misunderstood.
We are not engineers or web designers.
We defy definition
and like it that way.

We are the architects who
build the castles in the sky.
We are a band of starving artists -
sculptors of algorithms,
painters of the future.
We are not afraid to reinvent the wheel;
In fact, we make it better every day.
We are the rebels
who break every rule
and frequently do the impossible.

We are the poets
shaping code in elegance
Zen-like aesthetics.

We are religious -
Buddhists, born again Christians,
atheists, and Jews -
with deeply rooted conviction we live
according to our beliefs.
We are the musicians -
inspired songwriters,
punk rockers, and concert pianists.
We are the philosophers -
brutally honest with ourselves and others.

We are computer scientists.

Ryan Becker

Jenn Plevy :: Asparagus

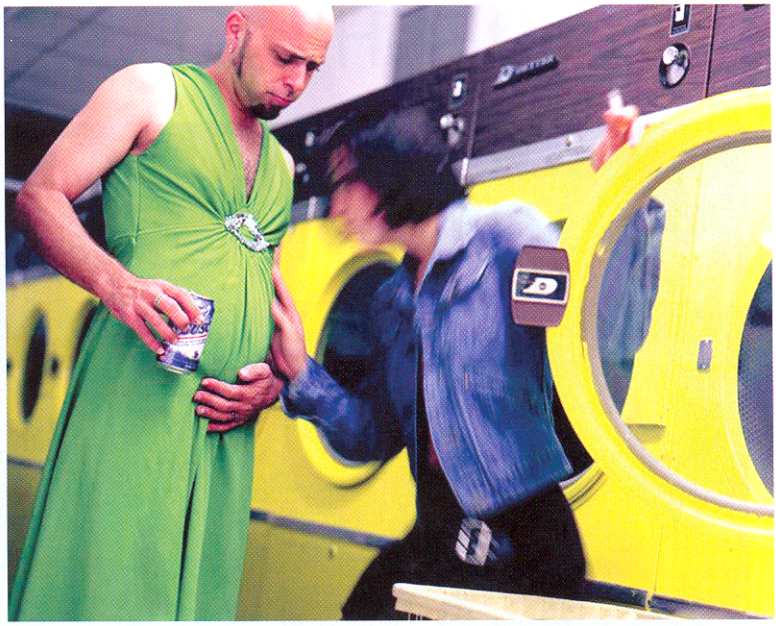
The Key to a Healthy Diet

Make them plump; obese
I don't care if they suffer
Appetite prevails

Conzetti Finocchiaro

Jessica Suworoff :: Dog

Pete Karl :: Swimmies



Ashely Woodall :: expecting CONFUSION

Picture

When we were in the park and you whispered in my ear
I didn't hear you because of the wind
but I think you said, "I love you"
and when you spoke of our future and you included me
I wasn't listening because I was thinking of my death
but I think you said, "why don't you love me?"
and when you left me unchanged and unfeeling
I was not paying attention because my dog died
but I think you said, "why can't you try?"
and that time we took a picture
and I wasn't in it
I think I meant to be, but my mind was somewhere else

Spencer Slavin

Rose Figliomeni :: Silhouettes

The Story of Mean Eugene

[in which i shed a tear or two]

because of this gypsy
i bought a ticket
for new york city

i made a special outfit
to commemorate the occasion
as if my
sewing skills
would make him instantly recognize
i am his long lost
  rock and roll
    gypsy
      princess
and i went to the show

anticipation hung in the air
or maybe it was just the
vague numbing haze
of three vodka tonics
but i was ready to ROCK

i spotted him across the room
wait, was that him?
how many
  handlebar-mustachioed
    blonde Ukranians
      in bike shorts
could there be?

"EUGENE!"
i said,
"HEY! you guys are super awesome and
i saw you a few months ago and
it was the best show ever and
my dad loves you too and
you guys are totally the best band ever
and ohmygod i'm so excited!!"

and he said
"okay thank you."

um, WHAT?!
that was it?!
i spent the entire concert
wondering
why he did not instantly
want to be my friend

even front row center
when he hovered in midair over
the crowd, freaking out and
dripping sweat right in my eyeball
i could no longer
muster up any enthusiasm

i realized i was close enough that
if i wanted to i could
yank his heart right out of his
sweaty
  scrawny
    chest

and waggle it at him
maybe then he'd want to be my friend
but i didn't attack him
i left the show moping
melodramatically, letting myself
be dragged down 14th street
through the tide of
exiting concertgoers

i trudged onto the subway
my handcrafted custom legwarmers
drooped in puddles around my feet
my t-shirt, once white
was now the color of
sweat, and other grossness clearly not my own
i laughed at my reflection in the window
i looked
ridiculous

when i stepped out at the
bedford ave station
the dreadlocked stranger next to me said,
"LISSEN! YO' OUTFIT IS THE SHIT!"
and i turned around, grinning
as the sliding doors slammed shut
and the only validation of my efforts
shot off into brooklyn

Agnes Barton-Sabo

School Lunch

Ripped brown paper bag
Holding nothing but stale air
Useless piece of trash

Columbus Dixon

Julie Williams :: Jerome

Scott Wolf :: Aiga Valentine

Casey Gathy :: Reach

Nicole Summer :: Lightbulb

The Great Sentinel

so much debate
about

the big steel
statue

streaked with brown
rust

inside the admin
circle.

Kevin Ptak

Around the Tree

Around the tree
For years to come
Leaves will grow
To come undone
And deeper and deeper
The roots will run

Under frozen ground
And cover of snow
Broken rivers run
Lost and cold
Dark and alone
Into pools of memory
Dripping timeless...

Jerk back
Into childhood changed
Older and grown
Lost and cold
Dark and alone
Into pools of memory
To sluggish to move
The serpent is trapped
Choked on milk
And babies fat.

Around this tree
For years to come
Leaves will grow
To come undone
And deeper and deeper
The roots will run
Until past the serpent
Time has come
Time:
For the melting
And waking

The moving
And grating

The loosing
And shaking
And growing
And making
And reaping
And taking
And eating
And tasting

And wasting...
Until the memory is gone
Past the serpent
Time has come.

Eric Donaldson

unroot

1. *trans.* To tear, pluck, or dig up by the roots. Also in fig. context and *transf.*

2. *intr.* To lose root-hold; to withdraw the root from the soil.

May This Be

I

Here in the night
Amidst the tranquil park

A blend of green and gray
With cricket songs
And distant hums

Of passing cars
From May St.
to South Ave.

Full moon up high
Wrapped in sheets of cotton
Far and wide
It paints the skies
To a pink blue sight

How majestic is to share
This treasure lit sky

Here in the night

You could've seen this park
Here in the night

II

Factors conflict
Both hers and his
Intrigue builds the expanse
Tacit speak sets the lapse

However riveting
Doubt lurks amidst
However capsizing
Truth lies within

Desire succeeds
Both hers and his
Intrigue bridges lives
Words of sea and sand

However fantastic
More beauty is within
However inspiring
To her from him

Pedro Barinas

Katie Duane :: Untitled

Poem

There are tears in my milk at dinner
My mom shifts her gaze
As not to watch them slide off my face
And splash into the hollow whiteness

There are heartaches in each move
I make through the day and my friends
Subtly shift back a little,
So they might not catch the desperation they feel
That is drowning me

My cigarettes taste like blood,
I think its seeping up with each beat
Especially when I'm lying down
Pretending that I'm tired and that sleep is near
I sob under the ocean of my blanket
And I imagine your face

Very close to mine and smiling
As we inch closer

Melissa Skyer

Brian Saghy :: Isla

Just a Resolution

Just stay until the fall. Stay long enough for me to have that winter scramble experience. Until we have enough good memories that one disposable camera can hold them all. Stay so that the seasons will fall in sync and finally live up to their intended elegiac, purpose. We can spend the spring punctuating every sentence with a kiss, using our lips like four-letter words until they lose all meaning and once that happens we can look forward to doing our own separate Nothing in the same room during a midday thunderstorm and to silent handholding that asks and answers a thousand questions about our future. Just stay until we get sick of those same ten songs on the radio and plane tickets and phone calls from old acquaintances come knocking at my door and invite me to some bar, club, or movie theatre to get re-associated with them and…

Stay with me so that when we see each other on the street one day we'll both keep walking- pretending while still carrying that subtle look of recognition on our faces and a small, private wish in the back of our minds. Stay so that the next time I see two people on their first date under a canopy of fireworks I can shake my head at their asynchrony and amuse myself at seeing an anachronism acted out before my eyes. Wait until there are as many colors in the trees as there are feelings between us. Until we can't find the outfits we met each other in and please …

just stay…

Just until…the fall

Before December drapes a veil of harsh purity around us and I find myself holding a champagne glass and toasting yet another year wasted…

Chris Wiltz

Nothing Next

Staring down the barrel of a poem,
A few words to jump the cliff.
I still feel the curve
Of your knife in my head.
The knife I took from you,
The knife I bled all over.
Stay in your seats, folks,
There's nothing next,
After these messages
From our sponsors.
I smile as I smell the smoke,
Taste the ashes of my life,
I am the phoenix that you cannot kill.
The fire makes me stronger,
The flames, my only solace,
Remind me of myself.
Don't go away, friends,
You're gonna see
That nothing's next,
What a show.
I wondered then and wonder now
Why we bother with this dance.
I end up in the same place
As I started and I laugh
Because I can't stand anymore,
But that's fine with me.
It doesn't really matter,
Because nothing's next
And I can't wait
To play my cards.

Matthew Campbell

Michael Turek :: Pierre

Caitlin Brennan-Cant :: Jumpcat

Michael Chotikul :: Untitled

Icebreaker

Hey, I really like your ___ because –
Wait, I just wanna say:
No, I mean…what I meant to say was…

Your eyes…I mean you hair was-
__ No wait, lemme start over okay?
Hey, I really like your ___ because –

I-was-standing-over-there… and I swear I don't have a buzz
But I found-you-intriguing-in-some-way
No, I mean…what I meant to say was…

Do-you…work out during the day?
(I'd say something about you running but that's kinda cliché.)
Hey, I really like your ___ because –

Would you like my drink / a drink?… I mean, can I buy you a drink because…
No I'm not trying to take advantage I just think___ I saw you looking this way.
No, I mean…what I meant to say was…

I don't suppose you read Maxim because___
There was this really good article (I don't remember) from the other day… anyway
Hey, I really like your ___ because –
No, I mean…what I meant to say was…

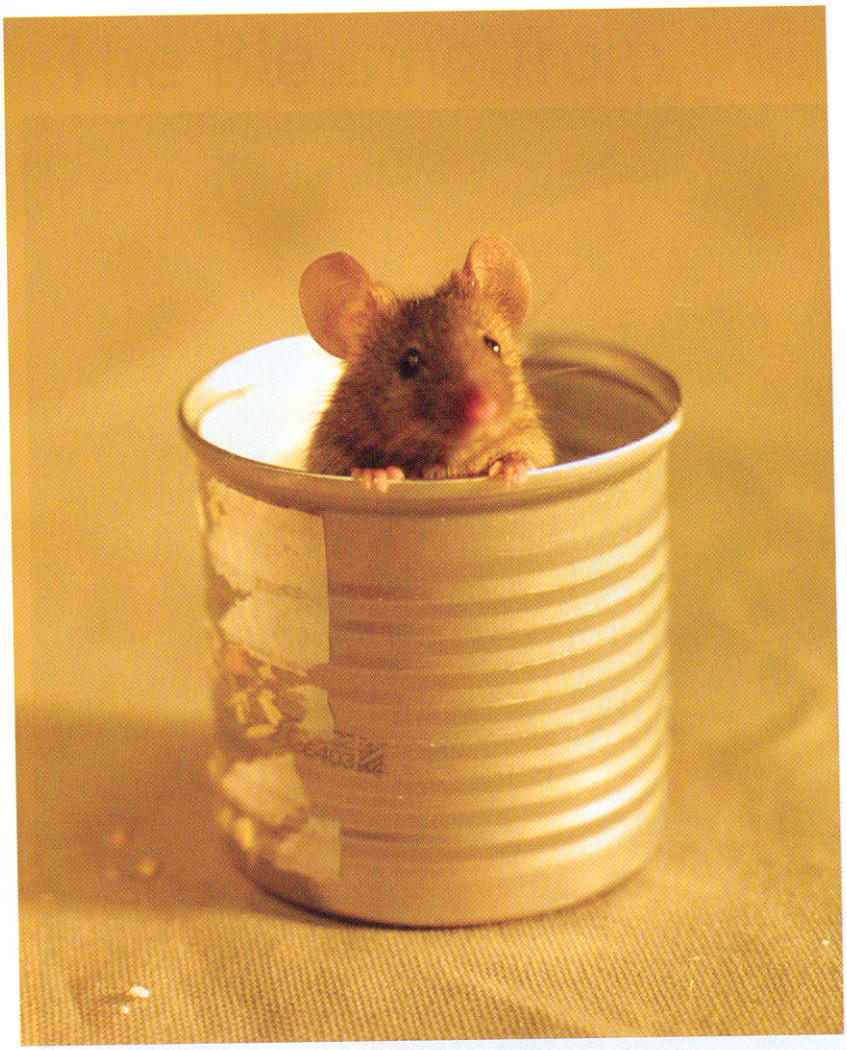
Chris Wiltz

The Blessing from the Hobo Cost me Thirty-Five Cents

We rose and bore the strength of three hours' sleep to traverse the scars of asphalt. The moon visible still from the night is hazy and blurred, preferring to stay behind. The mauve and gray sky and all those fucking pine trees. A fog blankets the ground and we are all so exhausted. It masks out eyes with transparent gauze. Heads rattling on pillows made of windows and legs bent into awkward positions. Twelve people plus equipment in one van. Sleeps' heavy hand beckons and most succumb to the call. We sleep. Double stacked on the bass cab, squished into the running board, wedged between the drivers and the floor. Squirming to find comfort and warmth. The bruises and scrapes from the circle pit and fuckedup skate tricks all burn anew in the bestraddled dawn. The sun gathers momentum and that fiery chariot begins its traceable arc again. The fog thins out and eyes grow wider, blinking back sleep. Stolen goods taste so much sweeter and saltier than they should in a slowly warming Easter morning. We achieve the glory of the Skate Park that is nestled in the woods. Our feet trod on clay and teenage anxiousness overcomes suave professionalism. Even the most stoic crack smiles and grin stupidly at the Snake Run. Allies are flipped, coffee is drained, the pool is skated, graffiti is drawn and we all engage in the martyrdom of this day. We are the renegade artist-warriors. Rubber bleeds to pavement and the miles pace on. Stopping for breakfast all the necks crane, mouths are covered with hands and children are instructed not to look. They dressed in finery, pale and pastel and perfumed. We, poor, dirty and alive.

Michael Skyer

Philip Kwok :: Slow Falls



Philip Kwok :: Courgeus Gerog

Diffuse the Sugar

Tick BOOM!

The sounds of the hyper-vigilant, upstrung, overachiever
have finally coalesced into the only
inevitable end.

Everywhere the work is scattered,
no sign of self or satisfaction,
just degrees and PhD's,
paychecks, medals, awards and rings,
trophies, lovely lovers had and won, and
resumes with skills and experience.

The family was shocked
no doubt surprised
but still were filled with awe and grief,
guilt that they did not see
the signs.

The coffee.
The cereal.
The cakes, creams, and jelly puffs.
The open packets of Sweet and Low-

Oh No!

How could we have been so blind?

Christopher Vongsawat

Digested

She shut me out with her vault of inflection
and I stepped back from the pummeling beat
of angry fists pounding on the steel drum of her throat.
Oh the rage,
you could feel it tussling and bumping black elbows
fidgeting like a bull trapped in the cardboard box of her temper.
Her lips were tense,
pursed with prehistoric pressures
vainly trying to press her dirty words to diamonds.
But the pain and sorrow climbed out of her,
parting her lips at first with the trembling tips of fingers
popping out like seedlings from the rocks,
then bursting forth, escaping from the cask of flesh,
a butcher with round and meaty hands
cracking open her jaw with the snapping of bones
and sinew slapping their flailing tendrils in the air.
And what a sound that came from her—
a guttural utterance of regurgitated frustration,
vomiting a screaming skull
that wailed double loud with cries of terrific claustrophobia
as it pushed its way through the width of her jaw.

And that was the last thing
I remember her saying.

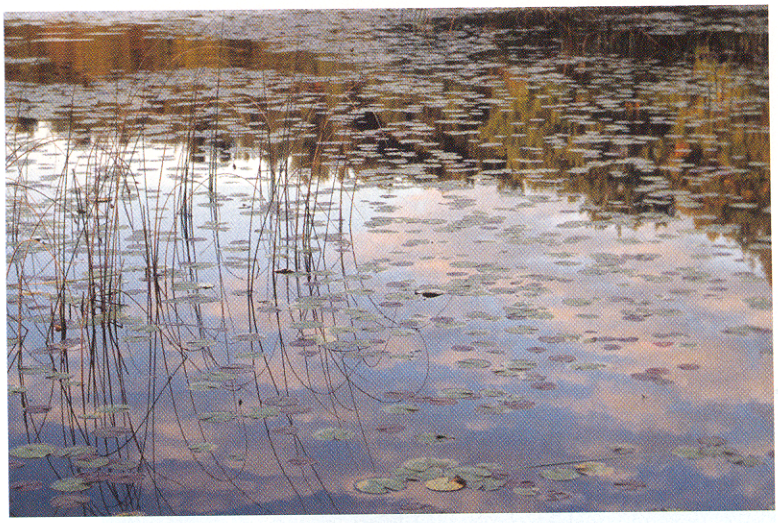
Christopher Vongsawat

Seth Perkin :: Keith in the Train Tunnel

Three Days in Toronto

My shoulder still smells
like your deodorant
Grinning convincingly
to motivate me
wash away the
watery mascara mess
I shower and you
make me tea
you shower and I pack
our things into
separate bags
you warm up the car
I check out
And silently we make
our way across
the borders
tired eyes heavy
with the dread
of deadening silence
that has grown
between
the words we cannot say

Jennifer Kunz



Melissa Miller :: Lilly

Spirit

The spirit clings to life,
leaving heaven only for the
precious dim of the heart.

But when the walls grow close
from end of faith or end of days
it flees this world of man.

Kept here only in our minds and
hunted by our narcissistic prayers,
a spirit finds no peace on earth.

Alistair Davis

Jillian Patterson :: Flower & Roots

unstable

1. Not remaining steadily in the same place; apt to move or be moved about.

2. Not stable in purpose; vacillating, fickle, changeable.

3. Not fixed in character or condition; exposed to vicissitude or chance; apt to change or alter; variable.

4. Not firm or solid; insecure.

In the Hall of Hardware

Sexy Macs.
Blue-screening PCs.
Setting Suns.

Sys admins,
like paternal spiders,
form their intricate, interlocking web,

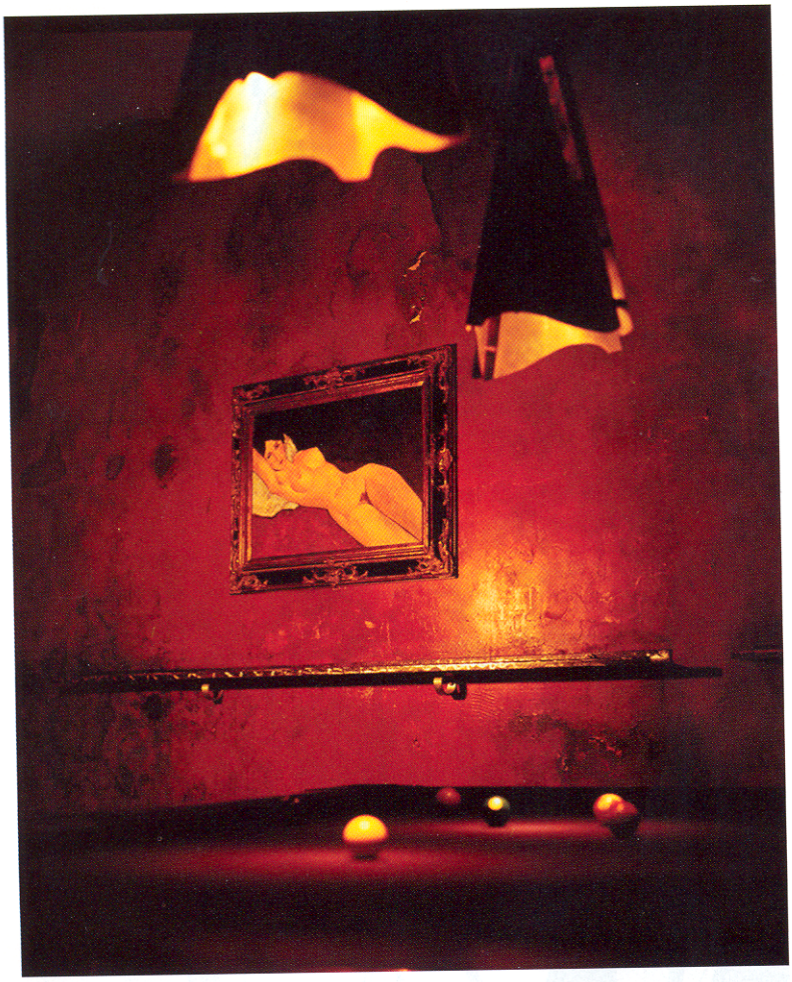
pulsing with life,
as signals flow like lightning
from the fingers of red-eyed zombies.

Dirty mice crawl
behind the walls of conciousness.
No one hears over the rhythm of trained fingers

furiously dancing,
like some kind of tribal ritual
designed to appease the gods.

They eat bugs for breakfast
and hack from hell to heaven
in the Hall of Hardware.

Ryan Becker



Ashley Woodall :: Love Pool

Michael Skyer :: Trace

Ode to an Old Grand Piano

She stands in noble silence,
yellowed keys telling tales
of walzes, sonatas, and nocturnes goneby.

One or two broken keys,
evidence of passion – in love
Something always has to break.

The air is stiff with music.
Inspiration dances across the keys,
a flickering divine spark.

Standing in this sacred place
I revel in the music
that echoes in my heart.

Afraid to move or speak a sound,
memorizing the theme before it vanishes,
mysteriously transcendent, yet extraordinarily personal.

The bench creaks,
the sound of cracks creeping
along a frozen river.

The heavens resound when the ice shatters
and the raging torrent roars along and on into sea,
adding it's melody to the eternal song.

Ryan Becker

Placing the Blame

You son of a bitch.
I can't believe you just did that.
You think that's funny?
What? I can't hear you, you piece of shit!
Speak up!
You made me trip!
Don't act like you don't know what I'm talking about, goddamnit.
You know exactly what you did!
Gah, you bastard! How do you like it now?
I just punched you in the arm!
You want me to break it?
I'll fucking break it, no questions asked, you son of a bitch!
How about a kick in your leg?
Take that, you fucking asshole!
Piece of shit!
You shouldn't have messed with me!
You shouldn't have made me trip!
Say something, asshole!
How does it feel?
Listen to me! Look at me!
You ever, and I mean EVER, do that again
I will fucking end you!
Goddamn stupid chair.

Javin Gasper

Chris Domkoski :: A Midsummer Night's Dream

Eyes

Eyes of innumerable traits cowed and diminished
Devoured her silky skin of implacable force
Dropped jaw retained yearning, sadistic zest and
Devotion for the life abandoned—
Hyper sensitivity
Iron curtain fell over the eyes that broke hearts,
Now tied down by old age, old clothes and old friends—

Memories no longer match

And no rewards to pick and choose—

Good people sometimes harbor nothing
But a basket of failures

A glorious past is a sweet daring lie.

Oana Ghiocel

Michael Turek :: Monique

The Street and the Heat

I'm walking
  Walking home from the bar
The heat's taken it to me
  Can't drive around in my car
Ronny ain't home
  And I don't have a ride
Staggering and swaggering
  As I'm walking outside

I'm drunk
  I'm as drunk as can be
Blurs and illusions
  Are all that I see
Staring at my feet
  Boy, it's quite a sight
So plastered my mind
  Can't tell my left from my right

I don't like it
  I don't like it one bit
Need to rest my feet
  Find a nice place to sit
Pain's putting me
  In one desperate mode
Sat down and rubbed my dogs
  In the middle of the road

A truck's coming
  Yeah, it's coming on fast
Would've enjoyed that beer more
  Knowing it was my last
Horn is a sounding
  Like some vicious beast
The pain in my toe
  Now troubles me in the least

Now I'm rising
  Rising straight for the sky
Meeting Saint Peter
  On the day that I die
One path is to darkness
  But he points to the light
I'm still way too buzzed
  To tell my left from my right

So I'm burning
  I'm burning in Hell
All in all I admit
  The day didn't go so well
But don't be so sad
  That I'm living down here
The air conditioner's broken
  But they serve some great beer

It's hot here
  Yeah, there's plenty of heat
But the alcoholic beverages
  Just can't be beat
They gave me a choice
  But I said down here is fine
What can I say?
  I'm not a big fan of wine

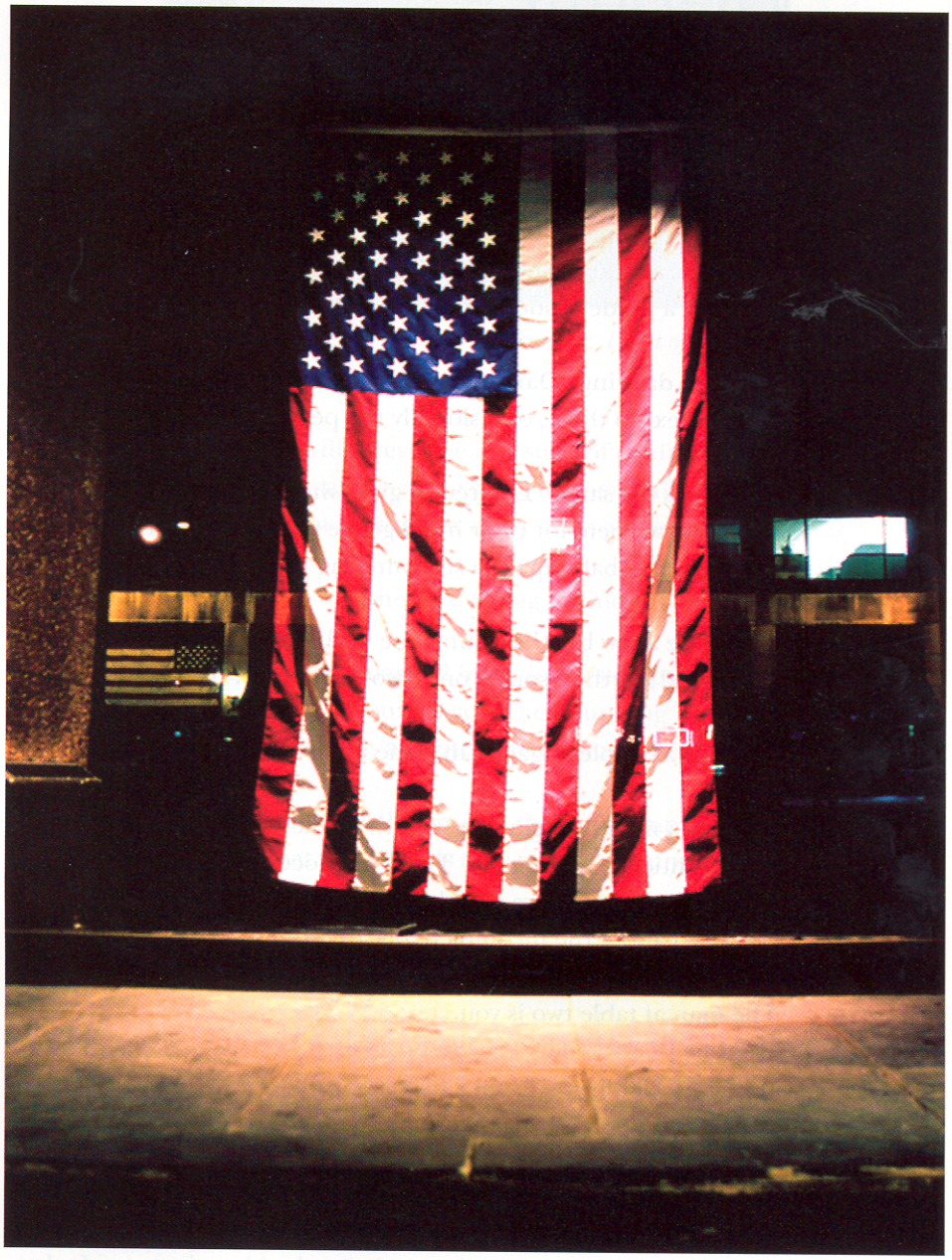
Gavin Jasper

Alecia

Blue eyes bright as stars,
Hair blonde as a corona.
Intoxicating.

Daniel DeCecco

Scott Wolf :: Overprint 15 of 37



Kurt Nelson :: Flag

Nightlife

Walk out of the classroom, walk into the night life

It is a club scene at midnight.. The lights, bright, beyond are blaring, and the beat is what they call bouncing. The floor is filled with people, busy with bodies that just lost their status as teenagers and are compensating buy wearing clothing that would better fit a grade school child.

They are dancing. Dancing as in forcing themselves on to the people next to them, occasionally the people on top of them.

The bar is the same. Layered in girls who want alcohol to be rewarded to them for their intelligence and brains by the older less attractive balding men surrounding them.

There are a few booths against the wall. Let us say four of them, numbered north to south: one, two, three, five.

One has a couple engaged in some illicit activity.

Two has a man sitting alone with the table covered in papers, that he is frantically writing on. Three is unoccupied. Four is not in existence. Five has five people sitting around it, looking awfully confused about the incomplete place settings.

The man at table two is you.

You are scribbling over the landscape of parchment, copier paper, defaced advertisements and napkins.

You are a philosopher or you would be, but that does not pay the bills, it only devalues the concepts of bills, payment and yourself.

Number three is still empty.

David Mandeville :: Light of the Night

Number five is still, and will forever be in a state of confusion, unless of course they are caught at the same moment, all locked, not thinking or eating, but waiting for relief that will never come.

The guy at table one is now alone, and trying to find his pants.

You are soon going to be approached by an interested passer-by. You will tell them that this is your release, the bounding bass on your brain brings - relief that is accepted after a busy week.

Because of this intrusion you will consider this trip complete. You think to yourself that the effect is only pure while until you have been noticed.

Table four is still missing.

You survey the heap on the table among the dialogues, the arguments, the theories, the unperformed experiments, that you could take with you from the work of the night.

You select a single napkin with only a scribbling of the drum beat from a song that captured your attention hours earlier. It is the only thing on the table that feels genuine.

Patrick Kelley

What is Life?

Sitting bored, nowhere
Thinking where to go
Living is so useless
If you go against the flow

People walking everywhere
They think they know how to
Live their lives so easily
When they don't know what to do

Walking down the streets of life
I find myself to be
Pulled away by a man in black
What does he want from me?

Sitting down by the side of life
The old man speaks his tale
Of how he is misunderstood
And that life was not at sale

Story starts when life begins
It was something to believe
Now those times had changed so much
Hell was something good to see

Worst of all the cases
Was heavens destiny
He told me all the things they changed
And not a place he'd rather be

For 10 had turned a 100
And faith into control
If you could not reach their price
Then you would have to fall

He said love is now what is left
But in itself its rare
So smile to life if you're in love
For it's not anywhere

The old man then turned his head
And looked at me for long
He said then with a long sigh
I've come to take you home

I then was not afraid of him
For he became a friend
I turned down onto his path
And life came to an end

Juan M Obes

Theodore Procita :: Ruby Beach

Seth Perkin :: Power House at Heart

Chris Domkoski :: Macbeth

Fantasy

He wallowed in her sadness
Her lips twitched, trapped
Exits blocked — no escape
She looked dead with no defenses
He had neither respect nor compassion
But wanted her transmuted into brilliance
Anesthetized by his candid passion
Sublime, intensified, devoid of time
Superb and daring

Oana Ghiocel

Joseph Rossi :: Andi