Three strangers entered a classroom for a meeting one late afternoon in October of 1999. They were all freshmen, and were unsure of what to expect from their first experience with Signatures. Over time, each would find his or her own place within its pages. One would find herself with the challenging tasks of its design and print. Another immersed himself in its new technological opportunities. The last would find himself involved in all aspects of its production, shifting from one area to another.

This brief story is about the experiences of our editors-in-chief Andrew & Stephanie, and Rishi our CD-ROM developer. This account illustrates what it means to be a part of Signatures. Being a member of the Signatures staff has given us experiences which we can draw on for years after our graduation from RIT.

Over the past four years, Signatures has evolved into more than just an annual magazine publication. It has become a gateway for new artists and writers to showcase their best work to the RIT community. The gateway has been expanded to include not only a printed magazine, but also a CD-ROM and website. In addition, thanks to our generous sponsors, we have been able to increase the number of editions released to reach an even larger audience.

None of these accomplishments would be possible without our amazing and dedicated staff. Our advisor John Roche, has guided the staff for the past four years to achieve this level of excellence.

On behalf of the entire Signatures staff, we hope you enjoy this year’s edition of Signatures Magazine.

Sincerely,

Andrew Schall & Stephanie Snow
Editors-in-chief, Signatures Magazine
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STAFF

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Stephanie Snow

Design & Layout
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Web Programmer
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A Prayer to the Moon

Dimitrios Stournaras

O Goddess of Mysticism,
Dress our bodies
With your silver web
And make us, who are lovers,
Emphasize our loneliness.

Governess of the waters,
Pay us in silver rays
For we have faith in you,
And, while free of mundane life,
Prepare us
for mankind's most demanding time,
The Dawn.
Pilgrimage
Alice Salzberg

Fields of my childhood had grown old
When I came back
Kicking through calf-high grasses
Seeds and thistles clinging
Like desperate lovers

When Guernseys lived here
Their heavy sacks swayed as they wandered
Pulling up mouthfuls of soft green
Into ever rotating jaws
Untouched islands of brambles

Fieldstone walls marked the farmhouse
Where she hung dripping cheesecloth bags of curds
She padded around in cloth slippers and black dress
Uniform of the old Italian women
She spoke a melody of Calabrian staccato

Peaches once hung heavy
We bit into fuzzy dry skin for
Gushing ambrosia
Pasture and wall still there
Is there fossilized cow dung
Under unblemished houses
Built by city commuters?

Reverence
Colin Zablocki

The first fold of autumn calls the secret shadows out
Contagious spreads the royal way upon the path ahead
So many veiled nights were hidden by a drizzled pall
Splashing lines of merciless tears down a face that’s fallen

Dozens few cannot compete with such a sullen storm
A silent scythe of silven fire forever goes unmourned
Unjust it seems the sins of time to gather to this point
Centered cruelly above a mind already wracked with hate
Morning Rituals
Evinn Neadow

warmth entwined cover
body tenses bare toes
cold bathroom floor

puffed eyes awake
sticky sweet spread honey face
soaked pores refreshed

bowl, spoon
spilled milk
dry break-fast
the snakes started coming in through the faucet
and you said they were sewer snakes and
that's how they got into our pipes
and it was almost funny the first time
after the screaming had died down
and i told the people at work
and we all had a good laugh
but then it happened again and
again and again and again and again
and suddenly it was a little more
scary than funny and we wondered if
it would ever stop and we called the
plumber but he was bitten and poisoned
and he died and we found it kind of odd
that the snakes would not bite us but
if an outsider came in he was guaranteed
an early death and we wanted to move
but we couldn't sell the house because
who wants to have to live with so
many snakes(?) and honestly we were
scared that if we moved the snakes
would follow us so we took our
baths in water filled with snakes
and used snakes to boil our
pasta and you said to me one day
that you thought it took a lot of patience
to get through this and that if we
could pull it off we could probably
get through anything and then i remembered
why i married you.
Trust
Jocelyn Gajeway

earth-strong,
 ceaseless shifting.
 gravity's pull,
 still and dark as water
 engulfed in flame.
 half-slurred words
 and bright red screams,
 reaching through gelatin.
 my ruby heart
 helpless in your hands.
When Adam tasted the apple, he did so carefully. Hesitant with guilt, he nibbled at the crisp skin.

Not so Eve, she took a large bite, relished its sweet tartness dribbled juice down her chin.

SHE was ready to move on ---on to Africa.
A Simple Sight
Dallas Verdugo

the prettiest thing
that snow can do
is cover the top of a tree limb,
which leaves a black line to define it.

Dusk
Ed Scutt

Like the child’s last faint sigh
Before she surrenders to
The interruption of sleep,
The stubborn orange firebrand
Collapses below the distant line.

Tribute
to Adenike O. Agusto
Olukorede Agusto

Mother though you’re gone,
Thoughts of you are ever fresh in me,
I still hear you loving voice,
Feel your tender touch,
It feels like you’re still there,
Till realization hits me,
And I discover you’ve been snatched by Death
as he slowly ate you
Taking time to devour his prey
I stood helpless
The night before I remember you say goodnight
as if you knew it were to be the last
Adieu Adieu dear mum:
Though you’re gone, I know you watch me
Up there in the Grandstands,
As I run the race of life;
Soon we shall be together never to part again
Till then....
Untitled
Robert C. Kalajian Jr

Playing in fields of amber
Caressing golden thistles
Burrs in our hair
The promises we made

Salad Worm
Bonnie ann McLaughlin

How can I so hate
such an innocent little thing,
just because it’s found
where we say it should not be?
Because the Dance
Oana Ghiocel

Because the dance
Rupture occurs
Serene
As the fall breeze
Strong
As the wind on twin peaks
Interaction
Seduction
Passion
I feel resurrected
Because the dancers fly
My gravity’s an illusion
Because their bodies are soft
They are untouchable
Because it steals my eyes
The rhythm’s divine
Because it divides my heart in two
It unites me with you
Because the dance never stops
Wings grow on your back
And the dance emerges in you...
I was walking by your room, when I heard the sound from you.
I stopped and waited, listening, concerned.

I gently knocked on your door,
at the same time realizing you couldn’t hear me.

I slowly opened the door and peered in. Your lights were off,
but streetlight shone through the window, and I could see you
curled on the bed, gently sobbing.

You seem not to know I was there, as I slowly approach your bed.
I startle you at first touch, but you soon relax as I sit beside you.
You lean against me and I embrace your fragile frame.

The tears renew, soaking my shoulder, but I barely notice.
I gently rub your hair and back. No words are spoken.

Five minutes. 15 minutes. An hour, two hours. Time does not matter.
You long ago stopped crying, but still we stayed, each in our own thoughts.

At some point in time we finally separate. I lower you back to bed,
covering you with a blanket, and kiss you on the forehead.

As I step away you softly say “thank you”,
to which I give a simple “you’re welcome”.

And really, that’s all that’s needed.
I don’t know what was wrong, nor do I need to know.
I only want you to know that no matter what, I will always be there.
Martyr
Spencer Slavin

He stood on top of the gallows like he owned it. And the hot Spanish sun burned our eyes and turned everything a washed out shade of yellow - the cameraman had put a piece of cellophane across the lens. His words bleached our minds - a contemporary brainwashing - promises of a better Spain, promises too wild to be believed. He could speak until the end of doomsday and I think we all would have stayed to listen to him. We may have done just that, if the gallows door had not swung open - The man's last sentence punctuated by the sound of his neck snapping.

here
Patrick Kelley

he controls
no one

he does not understand
that he controls me

he does not understand obsession
in the milky way

and I do not want our progression to go this way
let us turn around
and try again

when this orbit completes
we will have returned to the beginning
and we can what we should have earlier
we can make it stay
The turtle that never sleeps: Time

Spencer Slavin

(She)
encapsulated
life moves slowly - progressively - forwards
I can't remember what they
(said)
to me
enamored
with the punctuation of the day
stop signs
(I)
think of them falteringly
twice now
disengaged
I should probably...
(don't)
Like red signs with white letter
I pull over
And head home
Home is where the heart is
(love)
the castle
cracks fades
time to flip
another tired cliché
scrawled on the back of a chair “
(you)
were never there”
the Intrinsic energy within a body

It's cold outside
I look at the paleness of my flesh
I don't want it
(anymore)
For Christina

i set off for the woods and
the quiet shimmying of pine needles
beneath me
tells me i am there

i realize how i
depend on these woods as
a sanctuary, as
a safeguard against...

the forest turns in on itself behind me and
all that i have passed exists now
only in me

the moon makes hands a palish blue
and I wonder
if this isn't skin's
true color

thick roots penetrate the ground
like veins
carrying blood
to the center of the earth

leaves are brushing against a tree
in a sensual dance –
tree watches and silently speaks as
leaves flow over its skin

there was once movement like that
between you and me

i was once a tree and i would
stand cold and strong
as you fluttered by
and caressed me

it was our secret, i felt...
it would always be our secret
that we were different parts of
the same tree

i was silent as a dying planet when
the warm wind carried you away

Rose Figliomeni Mariposa
First Kiss
Colin Zablocki

It was so long ago
But just three days before wasn’t I waiting for that bus in the snow?
Cold cold air with my purple hair
Running down my face
Staying up late, on the phone
with a nameless girl my time was my own
and she was alone
She was my first kiss
...so dangerous

Laying in bed with my eyes broken and running down my face
Staining my pillow violent with water-color bruises
Despising the lies I wasn’t even aware of until three years later
the fake little masks of a lost little generation
missing the traditions of old lifetimes

But there I was with my purple hair and safety-pins
...oh so safe.
Making noises to myself I could understand
drowning out the sins and
swearing I would never be like them

They were jealous, devoured me
Like trite words on paper white as snow
tumbling down in blankets of warmth
wrapped in deepest purple sorrow
no one understood my loss

Not even me until now
it was unpreventable
it was oh so dangerous

Ann Zakaluk Curly

19
As I Wander Through the Tumult, after Whitman

Gary Hoffmann

As I wander through the tumult and throngs of hawkers and buyers,
As I pass the wares of farmers, as I pass the wares of bakers,
As I pass the butcher boy sharpening his knife, the butcher girl his sister gazing with dark eyes after me,
As I walk by the new mother with her new babe,
As I walk by the old mother, a mother of mothers whose daughters are themselves mothers,
There do I see you among the hawkers, you a hawker or you a buyer.

Are you he I've seen before? Are you she I've seen before?
Are you she I've been seeking since I saw you in Manhattan, a street hawker?
Are you he I have searched for since I watched you curiously in Chicago buying trifles?
It has been too long, old friend,
Too many miles distant from our last encounter,
Too many miles distant from our last encounter,
Too many years displaced from our past rendezvous.
You don't recognize me now any more than you did then,
When you yelled the price of jade luck charms across the streets of Chinatown in Manhattan,
When you stopped to listen and buy those same luck charms at a flea market in San Antonio,
When three pounds of flax sat beside you laughing, as you sat among the concrete pilasters of San Francisco laughing.

You are older now, or you are younger now,
Your eyes are darker, or your hair is lighter,
But I still recognize you.
Broken
Austin Cantrell

I have commented a grievous error
I have broken you
With no thought of your feelings
I used and abused you mental state

With out a care I saw a toy
Like a child I played for fun
My mind not ready for you
Like a coward I ran from you

I hurt you in ways I can never know
Thinking I knew best but was wrong
I hurt you in way that can not be cured
Throwing you heart into you face

I have seen I am a barbarian
With no say of over your life
I have shown you nothing but pain
To repay the love given to me

For my sins I accept the punishment
To live never knowing your touch
To see you never knowing your gaze
To love you never knowing your heart

I know I will never have you back
I know I will never repair you soul
I know only my most sorrow apology
I know it is worth nothing

To live without you
Is the hell I must live
For my sins to you are great
And retribution I must make
Soul Soup
Aron N. Schauer

In an hour or two
or somewhere between
I'll cook for you
a nice tureen
of soup the like you've never seen
such flavors will I consummate
to tempt your palate from thence your plate
on soup of tender squab you'll dine
my skills you will justly prostrate
the soup I place in front of you is no ordinary brine

My dear, you know not of your fate
our souls are destined to conflate
this soup will make you mine
my soup, your soul, it will mandate
the soup I place in front of you is no ordinary brine
Amongst The Heavens

Joseph Lee

Beneath the winter sky I gaze upon the heavens.
What do they hold for me?
To live to work to play to die.
What does my future hold?
As I gaze upon the stars I meander through my soul.
Where is the path I seek?
I see hooded men with blindfolds stumble through the heavy fog.
Will they ever find the answer?
I search their empty, vacant souls.
Am I doomed to die like them?
Will I be like the falling star burning into oblivion?
 Plans, schedules, dates, and times.
 Do they at all matter?
 Life is a slave to nothing.
 When will all the hapless souls of men open their self-sewn eyes?
 Still I wonder amongst the heavens.
The Orange Grove

Lorraine E. Beasom

They walked in the
Orange grove at night
His arm about her shoulders
Hers about his waist
Heads together they
Made plans for the future.

The orange trees were
Mature and laden
With golden fruit
They plucked one to eat
And thought how delicious
Was fruit which had ripened on the tree.

They walked in the
Orange grove at night
She with her cane
He with his walker
Found a bench placed near
At hand on which to sit
Quietly remembering.

The orange trees bore
No fruit having been
Killed by a deadly frost
That year --- their
Twisted branches now
Ghostly shadows in the moonlight.
Memoirs
Kelly Beller

Childhood’s passionate reject,
A recycled upright, veneered in pickled oak
Purchased to honor the commandment
Thou shalt practice!
Insufficient recompense for not playing with my friends.

Youth, I find ‘Fumed Oak’, a show.
Enter Noel Coward and company,
Enter laughter.

As a young adult,
Ewell Gibbon guides me
To collect, roast, and grind acorns
making muffins, sharp and sawdusty to the taste
but natural, gathered, near at hand.

Our first apartment
Furnished courtesy of curb exchange and house sales.
The flatness of Mission Oak
Rugged, utilitarian, Stickleyan,
Fitting setting for children, pets, family.

Our last house,
With its thin strips of red oak flooring.
Bruited tough, hardened revelations
Of high school years and family turmoil,
The scuff of ages.

Uncoupled,
I remember the series ‘Oaks of the Genesee’
Richard Beale’s fine tribute
To our grand ancient sentinels
Confident enough to stand alone.
Queen Anne's Lace

Nyssa Schauer

Down the road,
Through a thicket,
Beyond the bend,
And up a hill,
To where the servile pine trees bow,
In reverence, to the Holy Place.
There,
Betwixt the shadows,
A rising ray of sunlight,
Brings focus to a feathery patch of wildflowers.
Like maids in waiting,
They modestly tint the courtyard
Of the Queen.
There,
She reigns amidst her loyal subjects.
How stately she stands,
Adorned in her finest frocks of white.
Sentinel of a secret treasure,
Enshrouded within her lacy collar;
A jewel of vesper tine purple,
Glittering in all its glory,
For only the most deserving spectator to behold.
Every day. I had thought about it every moment. I couldn’t tell anyone; I wouldn’t tell anyone. They had these enormous expectations; I had these enormous expectations.

“Erin will get into any college she wants.”
“Erin will be in the limelight.”
“Erin can...Erin is...Erin will....”

Well it’s crap. “Erin” is full of shit. A myth, a fable told over and over for the past seventeen years. I really can’t do anything. I don’t give a shit about the grades. I don’t care about soccer or softball, student government, the spring musical, or tutoring. I don’t freaking care. There’s nothing I actually want to do anyway, besides sleep. A really long nap sounds spectacular just about now. There’s no doubt I couldn’t fail at that. I won’t.

I won’t really remember anything. Mom will stand there stroking my hair for two weeks before I’m allowed to go home. Grandma won’t understand and just bring me homemade food that has enough fat in it to kill a small horse. My brother won’t come visit me. When I go home, he will only grunt a “hi” and “bye” at me. Who wants to be related to anyone that tried to kill herself anyway?

I am so successful according to everyone, but I hadn’t succeed at this. Despite the fact that I got into Berkley like my guidance counselor had hoped. I earned enough money to pay for my own car like my parents had wished. I had been voted onto prom court as all my friends said I would. Now I truly let them down with one more thing I couldn’t accomplish. Forever labeled as a failure.

I would only remember the feeling of charcoal encrusted around my chin after the doctor forced me to vomit. I would only remember the look of pity in the shrink’s eyes as he asked me why I had done it. I would only remember the stench of the carnations standing alone on the windowsill as it snowed outside. I would only remember that. Every day.
Ben Golloum lay on his bed staring at the peak of the blue and white sponge-painted ceiling as the bright sunshine glared through the large window to the right of him. The curtains flapped like sheets on a clothesline in a mid-simmer afternoon breeze. He could hear pans clanging from his wife stirring in the kitchen downstairs. With his hands behind his head, underneath his wavy brown, shoulder-length hair on the pillow, his thin cheekbones are stretched, revealing a frown. He sat up and grabbed his journal from the nightstand drawer. He began writing...

I am very dispirited.
My decision for departure from you has caused me deep pain.
Though the sadness is within me,
I cannot let it surface.
As I question the matters of her future,
I think I saw the sadness in her deep blue eyes,
But it's difficult to tell.
How I yearn to tell her how I feel.
Yet I must keep it deep inside,
Where it may never show.
I wonder if she feels the same way.
The longing and desire to be with her has been with me for years.
She is in my every thought, every moment, every day.
Will it ever go away?
My self-torture brings on excruciating pain and suffering.
It cannot be.
It must not be.
She is no longer free,
Nor am I.

I thought it was all right.
Everything would be OK,
When I started to work with her one day.
Then that other guy came along.
That's when I lost any chance I had with her.
Now it really hurts.
I lost my best friend on that very day.
We're never apart,
But always together in my heart.
This one deed will bruise forever.
I have to go, to get away.
I must forget her every day.
Things are tough.
They are so sad.
I've lost the woman I've never had.

“Honey! It's time for dinner!” his wife called from downstairs.

Ben's head jerked as if she scared him out of his deep thoughts. He put the journal back into the drawer and went down to eat with his wife of 20 years.

After eating dinner and watching Sunday Night Football, he lay in bed in just his boxer-briefs, and reached over and put his arm around his wife. She made a groaning noise and pulled away. Ben fell asleep.

The next morning he arrived at work. There she was, before his eyes in the hallway. He couldn't avoid her and she was headed his way. Her brown hair shined like glitter under the fluorescent light. She wasn't the most gorgeous person he's seen, but she wasn't ugly and she was sexy to him. The way she walked and how she always knew what to say when he needed comforting or needed to laugh was what he saw in her. His pulse was racing and he felt himself become weak in the knees and start shaking. Nobody in this world has ever had this effect on him before.
Inflatable Snowman (at the Market)
Maura Bress

Bloated, smiling, he stares ahead stiff, stocky arms offer embrace
a big ugly hat and a carrot nose frame his pale and placid face

8 feet tall, he overpowers children he taunts them with his mittens
he taunts them with his mittens a hug can cause asphyxiation
it’s rumored he eats kittens

he sits in the corner of the store while you shop
serves no purpose
he should just be popped

with a poke or a prod I’ll let him fly
releasing the children
he’s stored in his thigh

his firm, swollen physique
still towers, stiffly looms
I want him limp, slack and sagging
then we’ll hit him with our brooms

the power’s still running
I hear the whirr of his fan
some day I’ll pop him... that Inflated Snowman
H₂O
Bonnie Ann McLaughlin

Water...
where the new Life began.
Rising, falling, integrated whole,
in constant peace amidst the change.
Offering to its sisters and brothers
its candid whispers,
indeed — to anyone who sets aside
a little while to while away,
and seek the lessons —
from the drop, the pool, the spring...
Every aspect tied into one
beckoning refreshment,
from this mirror and captuator of
the soul.

Juliana Vail

Brendon
Taking Out the Trash
Nicole Sommer

The little bead in my pocket
It keeps me sane...
Never noticed it until now
Taking out the trash at 4:00 a.m.
I hear the geese heading south
Aren’t they supposed to be home by now?
Aren’t I supposed to be home by now?
Funny how I feel myself...
Feel myself under the moon
Walking in the puddles
Caressing my bead
It’s in my pocket
No one knows, not even I
When you hear the geese
See that moon
Feel that puddle...
My bead is in my pocket
And I will be all right
It tells me, I will be all right

Remembering Desire
Jocelyn Gajeway

your hair
shines
Apollo’s glory
an electric waterfall
whipping in the wind

your cotton sheets
warmed by our breath
our bodies
bathed in the scent of wet soil

that night
drowning in humidity
stars masked by moisture
the truth emerges
clad in a shroud of
gray stone and wrought iron

during that night
drowning in humidity
stars masked by moisture
the truth emerges
clad in a shroud of
gray stone and wrought iron

this joy
those drunken nights
laughter
and your gentle lips
calefaction
the world catches fire
a wild dance of sparks and smoke

but fire lives
breathes
consumes
and soon there was
nothing
left

your eyes
dull
like wet ashes
tears and hardened lips
All or nothing
Kelsey Burch

Was it really as easy as you made it seem?
To not talk 'n' cut me out like a bad dream?
I'll speak of the night it all came to an end
And of the incident that will never mend
I could hear the helplessness in your voice
The distance between us was never our choice

But when I look back at that horrible night
I ignore the sadness and remember the light

How I sat a the bar with my ol' girlfriends
Bringing back the smiles, jokes and laughin' trend
And how I, tough girl got all teary,
From thinking about you not near me

My friends were shocked by my affectionate display
Cuz I was an ice princess back in the day
Of you all I ever did was boast
Then you left when I needed you the most

You said bye and walked away
Good reasons you never did say

You returned everything I gave
Everything I ever made
Everything our love represented
Leaving my ghost to remain

Memories of us hugging so tight
Close was never close enough
Now we don't even talk at all
All or nothing is fucking rough

Now that you've heard a part of my side
Please answer what's been eating me alive

Was it really as easy as you made it seem?
To erase me forever... like a horrible dream
What is peace of mind?
It is a white wire hanger with nothing on it
In a closet of identical
Inspector-Gadget coats

I don’t know whether you’re
talking sex food religion
or politics
when you mumble half-finished impromptu thoughts
Hands in your pockets eyes
in some other
direction knowing that volume
and syntax are undoubtedly
a gateway to your own mental
Nakedness
reach
Jacqueline Licht

When the world speaks
I listen
When the world shows
I watch
When the world reaches out
I take hold

When I speak
The world is deaf
When I show
The world is blind
But when I reach out
The world can feel my touch

Doodles
Merrilee Rose

The days of my past
Replay in tiny doodles
Elapsed in pictures of emotion
I have almost forgotten the fun we’ve had
The love we’ve shared.
Brotherhood.
History is held on this page,
As it was then;
The dated doodles of children
Repeated by a young woman
The doodles of our childhood dreams
Are placed besides the ones of adolescence,
And maturity,
Their inexperienced in comparison
Yet charming.
Our dreams have changed since the first doodle
Yet the excitement of them coming true has not faded
Just like the image of the doodle reappearing in time.
Maurene the Machine?

Blake Pellenberg

When I was 27 I got on this moving machine--
it propelled me to a place I had never before seen.
I'm not sure what happened...I just kinda stepped on--
colors flashed, days passed, my whole life could've gone!
Sexey legs and a sexy voice guided me all the way across--
Maurene told me listen near, she said she was the boss.
She made me promise to come back...she was even a bit mean--
I hurried and stepped off--wait a sec...what the heck?--now I'm...

seventeen.
cutting angles
Stephanie Snow

i keep running back
to this place far within the sky
filled with tears long forgotten

breathing in my hair as it
dances away from me
wandering to the clouds as
they fall up above me

i can't say these feelings have
changed
as the stars reflect my eyes
cutting angles through the
dust filtering in the windows

but this is how it has always been
and the feelings stay the same
Click
Nyssa Schauer

Click. I’ve stolen your soul.
And notice, I didn’t hesitate.
I put it in my magic box,
Where only I will know its fate.

Yes, you’re a big time glamour queen,
Adored by all, you cast a spell.
You reel them in and make them drool,
Then when they’re yours their lives are hell.

But so delicious is this day,
When unprepared you ventured out,
And left behind your crafty mask,
Of paint and powder to hide your snout.

Ah, but it was worth the waiting.
Did you really think you could hold the pose?
And now the monster is revealed.
From the inside out, your true nature shows.
Green Blue Yellow Red
Spencer Slavin

The snow is coming down hard now but we're safe inside the car.
The heater makes a funny whistling sound.
We sit in silence, content to let each other absorb the moment.
Whirling flakes out of an endlessness of black.
I can see the road from our clearing.
The street light that always seems to be on the fritz.
broken.
Green-Blue Yellow Red
It's raining outside.
But we're safe in our alcove.
Our time away from space.
We're drenched from when we went to play on the small.
Swing set outside.
Like when we were kids.
We're close enough to the road that the light.
casts green shadows across your face, which turn to yellow briefly
and then to red.
It creates a sense of surrealism.
The ghosts of yesterday are kept quiet by your eyes.
If I only knew I didn't have to face them when I leave.
Forever.
Green-blue-yellow.
We're two kids sitting on the roof of a car.
The sun has just dipped below the horizon.
Soon all the shadows will come to swallow the remains of the day.
For now the only thing I notice is how the light pools in your eyes.
And I wonder why I am not drowning.
Because I can't breathe.
And then the moment is past.
And my breath returns.
And you never know how close we all came.

Green-blue Yellow
The one month anniversary of your death.
A single figure.
Silhouetted against a fading sky.
The leaves flutter and fly around.
Oblivious to his pain.
His sorrow.
His loss.
(You said you'd always be there).
Yellow Yellow Yellow.
The heater's broken.
And his hands are cold but in a few minutes it won't matter.
The blood rushes inward to the heart.
But like the heater... Two days later he is found.
The tears frozen to his face.
Red Red Red.
Sleep.

Sara Moosbrugger
Illumination.
Sagamore Trophy Room
Stillman Clark

An elk adorns chosen place
Above stone mantled fireplace

Buffalo still wears the frown
Caused by hunter who shot him down

On far side of western wall
An elephant from Nepal

Tiger, lion and cheetah cats
Align as fondly treasured mats

Then wild turkey buck and ram
Three large fish and wild boar ham

Mountain goat from precipice
One grizzly and polar bear apiece

A rhino head charges hippo face
While hyena smiles its disgrace

Many a beast from Congo wild
Adorns the wall -- hunter styled

Each trophy proclaims, “I’m great”
Not yet agreed by those whose fate

A badge of courage heads may be
Or perhaps more fearing mortality

Unknown to hunter from deep within
Lies kinder nature than killer’s whim

Message on hunter’s wall to see
Says “nature spirit preserved for thee

Too soon their fine magnificence
Is lost to those who come here hence

My duty to vast mankind:
Preserve God’s gifts for mankind to kind”

Not yet agreed by those whose fate
Had been determined by need of man
To grace his wall from nature’s plan

A badge of courage heads may be
Or perhaps more fearing mortality

Sparkling Diamond
Jannette Hanna

The sinking sun
Sends one last beam of light
And for just one instant
The shining silver flares fiery light
As though it is the sun itself

The ring sits still
The light is gone
The dark of night
Still shines in its band
The sparkle of the diamond
Glow quiet in the dusk
The blues of the sky echoed in its depths

He gave it in love
He gave it for convenience
Because it’s easier than leaving
To promise a lifetime
An eternity
A promise that can be taken back
With the signature of a judge

The white picket fence
The briefcase job
The silver band shines
These images flash
In the glare of the ring

It means more than you think
But most things do
The fiery lure of the diamond died
with the sunset.
Volcano

for Todd Beers

Matt Mattece

The Volcano erupted during our walk to church. First came the thick, grey clouds. They blocked out the sun and My son asked me what was happening. I told him and he asked me if it was because God willed it be so. The spurts of hot lava interrupted the skyline and I said yes, I believe that he probably does. Or she, I said. I wanted to raise him with modern ideology. Now the smoke was like a quilt that was helplessly trying to smother the fire. The bursts of lava cracked and roared.

‘There are quiet places in the world,’ I thought. And I wanted them then. I wanted to be there with my son. On the white beaches I wanted to see him grow up. These thoughts had never crossed my mind before, but now as the ground rumbled and shook, I saw the beaches, almost as if I had wished for them all along.

We were all parts of a web that I didn’t understand, and days later, looking at the aftermath, I dreamed that the volcano had swallowed me whole.
On the Disappearance of Wealth

Wynne McClure

I was cradled here
A seedling nurtured
In the rugged loam of earth

I have sought the light
Felt the warm sun
And flourished

Stars were my magic
As I suckled dew,
Harbored rain

I have known nestling birds
Watched them in flight
Protected them

Felt the soft fur
Of small playful things
Who sought me out

Worn winter’s cold
Danced with the wind
Joyed to summer’s jewels

My probing fingers reach deep
Filling my veins with
All I can give

You come.
Better you uproot me
But you cut.
The Four Elements of Gaea

Jenny Ashman

In the heart and soul of Gaea
Lies the origin of emotion
The burning of desire
The fire in the eyes
An element necessary for survival
One that is hard to tame
The mysterious warrior...fire

The blood that flows through Gaea
And keeps her alive
It gives life
It takes life
It has survived since the beginning of time
Despite the poisoning that has been done to it
The source of life...water

The breath of Gaea
That drives away the foul air
It warms the earth in the summer
Cools it during the winter
It can destroy structures with its savage force
Or blow playfully across the savannah
The invisible force...wind

The body of Gaea
Is where everything grows
The place where creatures roam
And the plants sprout
The one that has re-shaped and evolved
And has survived war, mass destruction, and ruin
The maternal element...earth
Warm Spring Wind

Luke M. Vaillancourt

It's when the warm Spring wind, pushes the green pole back and forth under the bright silver sun, and moist rings fall from their place in the sky and dark glances are met between curious eyes, with the warm breeze bringing them together, in one solid movement, within one fluid, frisk, brisk movement—like the solo voice of the violin—that's where we are now.

Hannele Lahti Firenze
A Walk in the Woods
Betty Rockford

Lured by wedding foliage
Sanctioned by springs yearly promise
They move tenuously through worn paths
Eroded by winter's fervor

Faint sounds of mating birds in distant abodes
Reassure natures sanity
Steps acquire a lilt, faces in relaxed repose
Walkers stride ever deeper into the woods

Thunder, rain, darkness interrupt nature's tranquility
Panic ensures, tears fall
Hikers cling to each other seeking closeness

The storm abates. A golden light emerges
Persistent sun peeks through branches
Quell fear and sadness
Friends forge quickly ahead
Dream the Impossible
Joseph Lee

Live the ideal moment.
Control time with a thought.
Cast away regret and doubt.
Wander through the past.

Change the unchangeable.
Bend the inflexible.
Love the unattainable.
Dream the impossible.

Untitled #1
Kate Bloemaker

I'm tired of being your fucking
Prozac. It happens to me too
so then where are you? Always
slipping am I from cloud ten
to eight to six in my sparkling sky
your eye is opaque and your words
apologetic I envy the ignorant
birds who eat my crumbs because
they never go hungry like me
Silent Dawn
Margaret Sangree

Early rain so pale
One must lie still
To hear it fall

Bird song waits
Only a mourning dove
From the distant wood
Calls.

Not the day to get work done
But a day for private thought
Not to intrude on this quiet

Or a time to re-enter sleep
A light that pale realm
Between blue
And becoming grey.
Honor the mood.
Alright
So to all things there is an
appointed time
and our trees must
pause in their vital duty
producing oxygen
and accede to their
winter’s nap
heralded by
brilliance of
purples reds and yellows
but here and there
I see a flagrant orange
who’s blatancy takes my breath
like the avid child
who resists bedtime to
the final bitter end
but is soundly out
before the door can close
Crimson
Wynne McClure

Smokey clouds
Billow
Yellow
Thick across the day
Fall as summer sky to
Form the burst of sunset
We rivet ourselves to the rocks
And watch –

Lake waves are
Catching cups of crimson
Sky's passion pours
Upon the moving waters
And desire bends
Toward the fire breath of night

Morning Forecast
Seth Staples

People gripe about the weather.
They get up early
and scrape their cars,
then slip 'n' slide
on one rubber
or another.

I smile
and catch snowflakes
on my tongue.
Tropical Morning Wakes
Margaret Sangree

Sorry I have no watch to tell
But the day is fully here
And I, restless, hear a morning bird
Beyond the bedroom’s thick drapery
   And a cricket chorus
   That stops and starts.

How is the small sea in this hour
Gentle on the shore?
No surf, but an incoming tide
To break the reflecting pattern
   Of leaves that overhand
   Grey-green in the warm light.

A window of clouds, high in the west
Slowly catch rose feathers
But the sun is yet a haze.
A conversation of birds
   And morning
   Is quiet again.

Still, all still
Under motionless trees.
The little morning signs
Are on the water now.
A land hushed
   Before heat
   Blankets the day.
Whoever You Are
Fuyuko Tadegawa

Why do you inspire people so wrongfully?
Is it your pleasure to see sufferings?
Is it your comfort to witness sorrows?
It is your satisfaction to acknowledge fears?
You are not what you said to be

If you are eternal
You've been around for quite a while
You have so much time ahead as well
You have so much more to grow
It's a long way to go

You know our existence assures yours
Is it the reason for what you have done?
You are as insecure as we are
You are as lonely as the rest
You are not different from us after all
You know you are not what you said to be

You are within us
With or without
In one way or the other
You are not alone
You are not the only one
You are not
Floor

Austin Cantrell

Passed out on the floor
Senses gone
Mind out to lunch
Pools of vomit piss and blood
Coat the earth where I rest my head
Crawl in my liquor home
Tis the drink of heaven's womb
In one shot
A world to forget
To bury my worries in brown water
Driving down the old road again
No stop until the wall
Or the bottom of the glass pit
40% chance of an unknown ride
See the world through my sad eyes
Eat the worm
Until you die
Feeling
Chin-Yu Chen

I look in your eyes...
I do not see my reflection

Instead
I see the whole world in you.

Everything around me dissolves into nothingness...
You'd be the only one in the space...

I've felt like this before
I let the chances slip by...
I will not let it slip again

No words can describe
how I really feel
And now
I can no longer hold it back....

You are the world to me.
I Love You.
Pin oaks stretch upward
On either side of the road
Reach across to caress
Each other in leafy embrace

Myriad-hued azalea bushes
Color the silence

Hand in hand we float
Over a magical path
Of gold dappled light
The Smell of Roses
Armel Ramadji Doumnande

It was windy. Nay felt a very smooth and pleasant wind stroking his skin. At the same time he could hear the nice and melodious singing coming from the trees that were near the Logone River. The lullaby came from a small white dove perched in the branches of a blossoming tree. He closed his eyes and seemed to be gliding. He had his head in the clouds. Nay was quick tempered by the bewitching song. He was there, admiring the awesome landscape. On the bank of the Logone River, the weather was so quiet, so full of tenderness, and so peaceful evening. The hot sun of the summer going down was in a fantastic sight. In many small groups, birds flew in the sky. All of them moved from west to east. Nay did not think why none of the birds went from East to West. Anyway, he did not come to think about that. He relaxed and breathed the fresh air rising from the river. However, he could not forbid himself thinking about the birds’ motion. The dove was still singing. It was more and more interesting. Maybe the bird was singing just for Nay who was so alone. It was exactly like a mother rocking a baby in her arms. Nay kept his attention on the paradisiacal sight in the sky. The sunset was beautiful seen from the green carpet of grass of the shore where he was sitting. His contemplation went on and on. One moment, he almost fell in the river. It was exactly as the famous Thales who fell in a hole when watching the stars in the sky in the Greek mythology. It was very interesting, wasn’t it?
Then Nay calmed down and took a deep breath. He smiled, grabbed pebbles, and very slowly threw them in the Logone one after another. He enjoyed doing that. The sunset was almost complete. He was about to go back home. The dove left, bringing an end to the nice lullaby. All of a sudden, Nay felt a very good smell.
Regret
Glenn Flood

Regret is a descending staircase
Whose steps are labeled:
What we should have said and
What we should have done.

At the bottom is a place
Lit by uncertainty
For us to dwell on our mistake

At the far end of this place
Are two more staircases
One that descends into indifference
And then immobility
The other ascends

Its steps are labeled:
Acknowledgement, acceptance and resolve
And at the top is another lesson
Waiting to be learned
A Thousand Silences
Sarah Harmon

A jaded juxtaposition
You and I,
Yet I wore trust and hope
On frayed shirtsleeves,
While you wore none.
Why promise the rapture
Of moonlight and wine,
When you merely intended
To shatter the night
Into a thousand silences
And let them sink into me slowly.
Lying in bed I dreamily watched dust motes moving lazily in the golden light of an early morning sun.

Suddenly gathering speed they began swirling clustering together and forming steps upward on a ray of light.

Rising I began ascending the steps higher and higher and found a seat—not too near the sun but surrounded by its warmth.

Looking down I could see the whole world below—the trees the flowers and the follies of the people moving about intent upon their lives.

Suddenly I was afraid I was so remote from all below so uninvolved so terribly alone and I stood to return to earth.

But the steps had disappeared and I felt myself falling falling falling.

With a sudden start I awoke to find myself in my bed dreamily watching dust motes moving lazily in the golden light of an early morning sun.
Red dreams and silver leaves wade into the sea.
Little boys on white buoys sink into the deeps.
Beads of light bleed, drawing their last breath.
Red leaves weigh heavily on oxygen deprived skin.
Silver dreams flit through the murk of many dirty sins.
a smell
Leila Navidi

I never believed before but I see them now everywhere and while I look in the toilet and they are brushing hairs with gravy fingers and a faint odor putrid odor breath like old food sink stink for days rotten. and the crumbs are crusting the floor today.
Solid waste jams and I never believed before but I see now ghosts everywhere now in Big Gulps of bright puke pink under tables She told me once that ghosts are a part of the energy of the world approximating a photon I see ghosts in small grains of caloric intake soon to be blood stream sugar Soon to be energy life Soon to be glucose sucrose and complex carbohydrates Soon to be another opportunity to move across the room Soon to be conglomerates of various devices coming together finally to feel soft and full and to outwardly project Soon to be big fat ass.

But she's small now comatose and frigidly aware of certain and most things. genuinely manufacturing spirits of herself with every delicious dirt-packed

Heave-haw.
Night Creature
Seth Staples

sliding, slinking
on the outside and in you
sneaking, peeking

hiding, biding
eyes in your eyes, cynical
watching, waiting

needing feeding
coiled tight with hackles roused
sensing, tensing

lunging, plunging
teeth in unknowing soft flesh
free at last

Words. Thoughts.
Evinn Neadow

Words. you want my words
should they be thoughts, real
strangers, faces turned towards floating worms
as we pass through day old moisture
do you feel sad for the life-less bodies under foot
imaging their cries, so meek and unseen
what if the choice was yours
muddy grave, watery last breath
intestines after the beak
Thoughts. you asked for my thoughts

Little Birds
Molly Miles

building nests on broken branches,
coated with newly frozen water
bend beneath new burdens
and fall to pieces

Sheila Barabad
Puritan
THANKS

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