

# The Idol

1994



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# The Idol

1994



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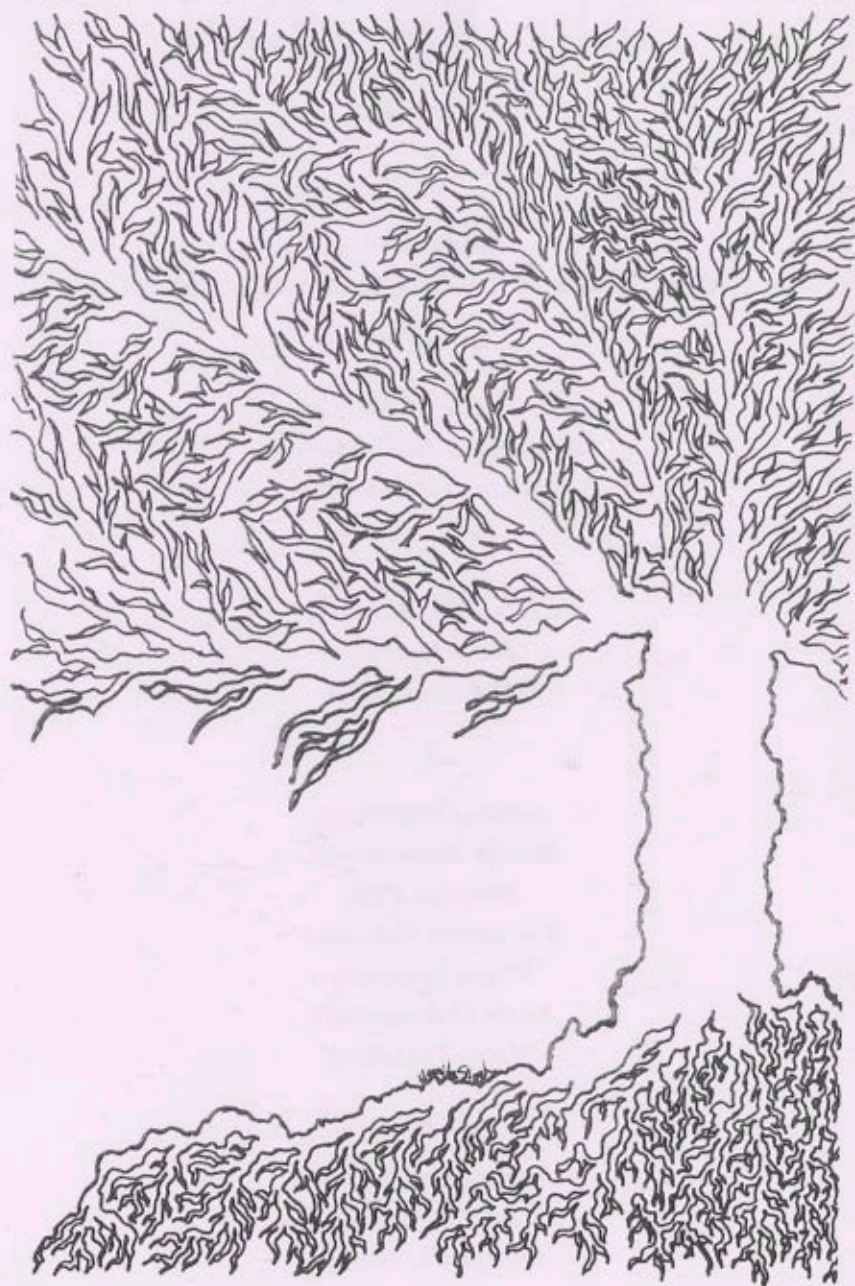
SPECIAL THANKS TO  
**LEIF ZURMUHLEN**  
**WILLIAM I. WOLFF**

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## NAMITA SINGH

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## A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

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The literary and artistic works produced by the students of Union College during the academic year 1993-1994 are culminated in this 66th year of the *Idol*. As a literary forum, the *Idol* presents, perhaps, the finest creative works among Union Students. The *Idol* is ever changing and improving as evident by layout changes herein. We are indebted to our illustrious staff and the very talented poets, authors, artists and photographers of Union College.

CO-EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

KATHERINE UHLMANN

GLENN T. KONOPASKE





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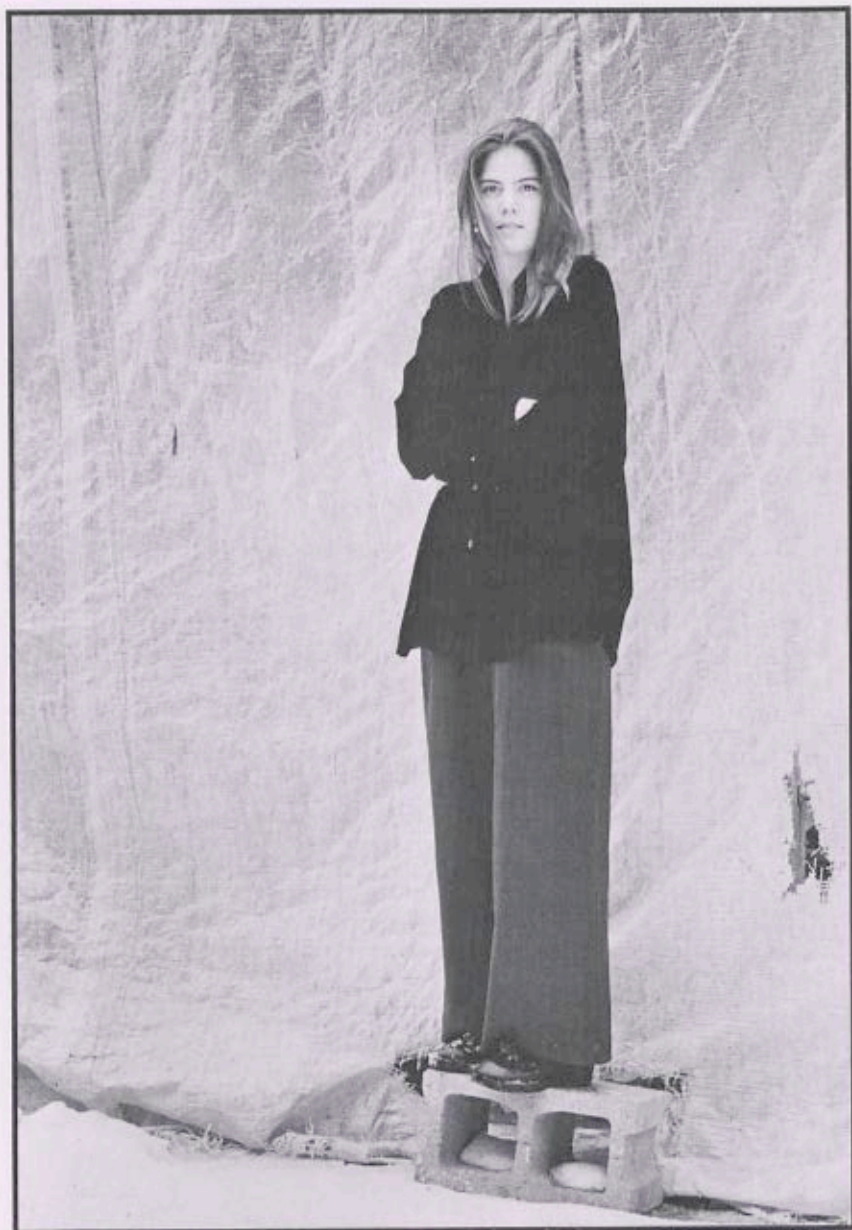
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**LEIF ZURMUHLEN**

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**SHANNON**

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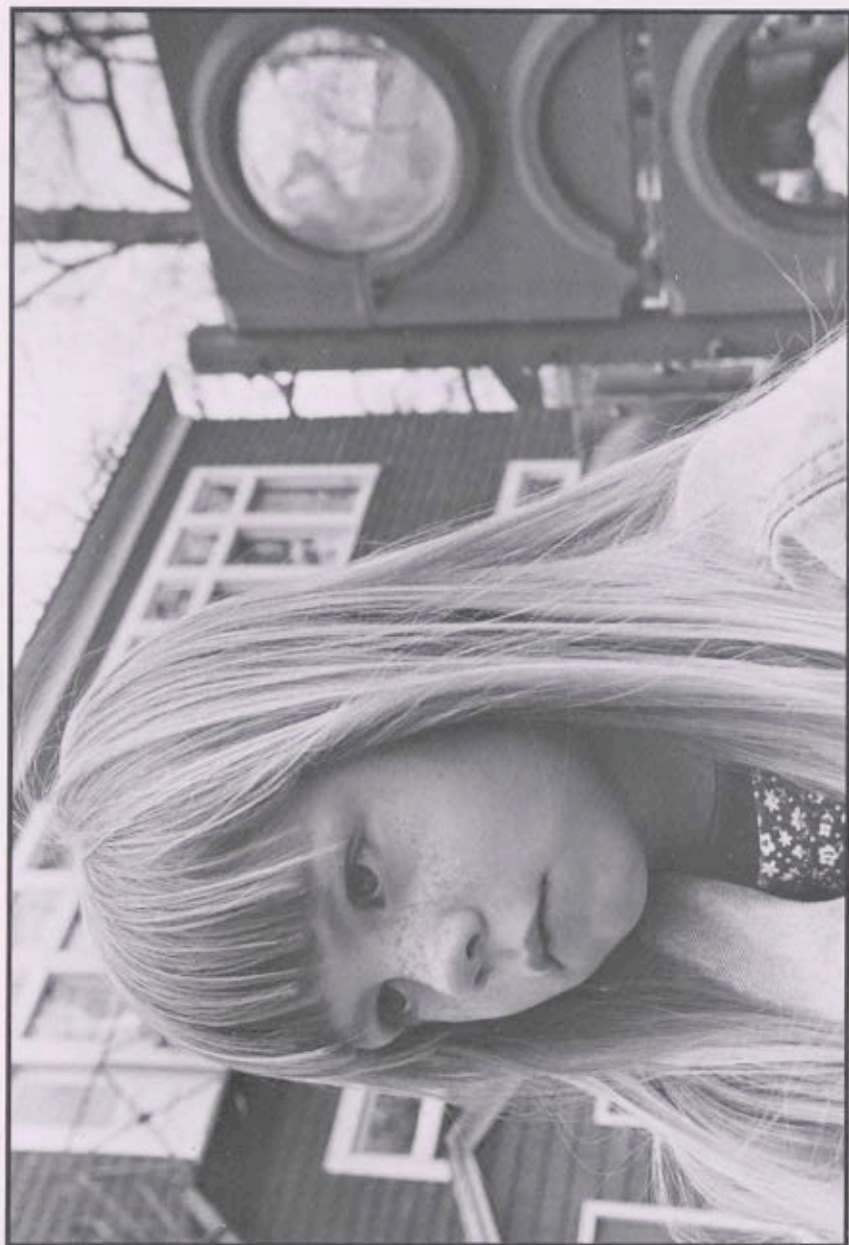
**THE OCEAN**

Every ocean is just  
An infinite collection of art.  
Countless droplets unrecognized for  
Their beauty.  
Each drop (able to glisten  
Alone) is but a compliment  
To the glory of the next.  
When seen as a whole  
Each exclusive entity is often  
Left unnoticed –  
But the magnificence of the ocean –  
It's fury jubilation and odd serenity  
Leave it's company passionately devout –  
In it's reality.

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## SARAH C.M. OLSEN

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## LAUREN A. MOUZAKES

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### "THE EPIC"

Time to pass, like waiting  
for the school bus on a cold day.  
Blistering wind.  
They could stand inside and look  
through the window.  
Not me.

What became of a fingernail tease,  
an October fourteenth in the basement.  
Then seeing the "Paint me!" on  
the mustard wall of his bedroom.  
Leaving a letter, impressed  
by notebook museums. The  
fine art work. King of hearts.

And so my walls are naked from  
magazine clippings, banana stickers.  
I'd miss them if it wasn't for  
the tape that held them up.  
Peeling paint.  
Stripping to a beige core of  
what used to be there.

Wearing jeans that have  
become soft enough to feel warm.  
My final two loads of laundry,  
finishing the Clorox 2 and it's  
a good thing it happened now.

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## **"CONTACT"**

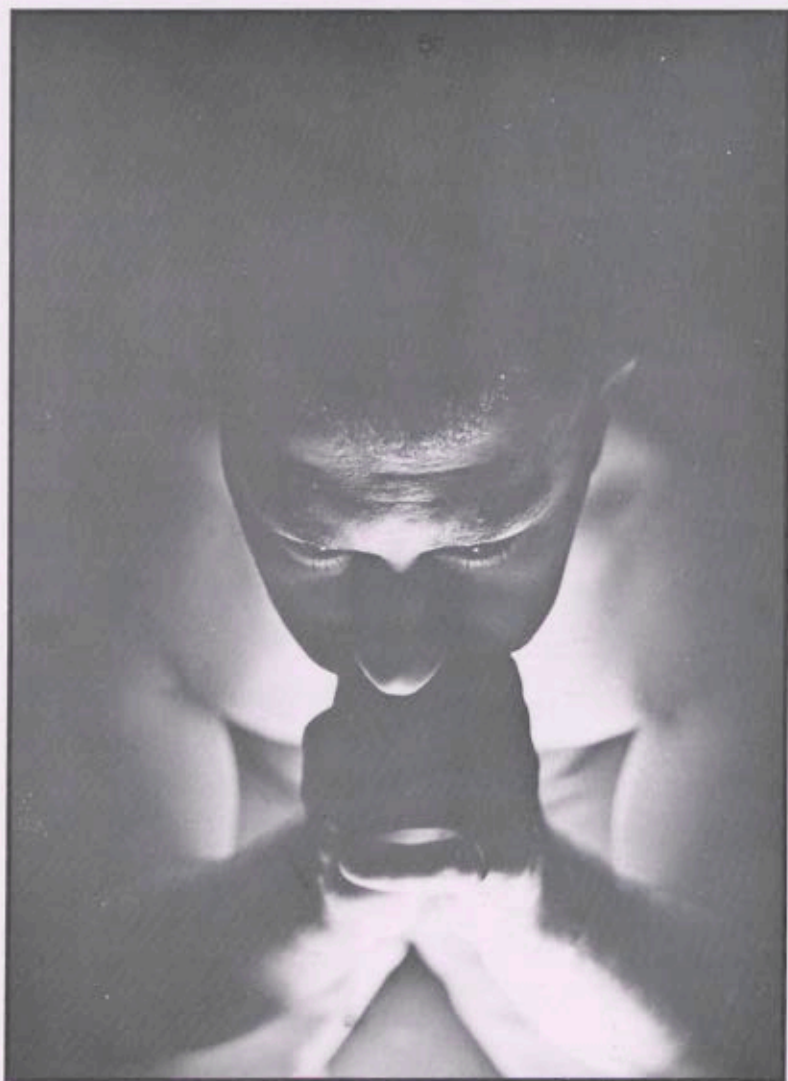
What you desire, I find difficult to serve.  
It can only be on a silver-plated platter,  
if you wish. I have no sterling.  
It's your passion that I can tolerate;  
your fervor, my subtlety,  
a response. Leaving the moment with  
a teasing touch, that is interpreted  
all too wrong. Once again, lost in  
bliss, ecstasy. The intensity, I  
desire, not the mingling presence  
of the darkened shadow.

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### **"AFTERWARDS"**

Your cell flows through my aching  
I don't know what to think  
or I don't know which one thought  
to think  
some pain  
our heads throbbing  
yours is pleasure  
the stinging doesn't escape  
the burning and bleeding  
bitter reality  
we fell into the scene again  
rehearse so many times  
and when it seems to be perfect,  
I think about that bad taste in my  
mouth  
that smell in the air  
plague  
the thought of leprosy setting in  
writhing a sturdy soul  
pretended sturdy soul



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## SCOTT C. MORRISSEY

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### HOTEL BLUES

I finally find myself here, waiting again  
for a road that's free of cops, and a car  
that's free of problems. Not too much too  
ask, I think to myself. But those are dreams;  
the reality is that I'm stuck here, with  
sounds of people enjoying each other's  
bodies, and I remain here,  
alone.

Being alone isn't so bad when  
you're friends with yourself.  
It's when you don't know who you are  
that you can be your worst enemy.  
Sometimes I don't know which I am,  
and yet, I find myself constantly  
by myself, not exactly lonely, yet still  
alone.

Between the breaks of my neighbors,  
I listen to my radio  
songs I only dream of writing, and  
I think of all the tunes I let slip away.  
I quietly promise not to let that happen  
again, but I know it's a promise  
I'll never keep.

My neighbors retire finally  
so I do as well, though I find the new silence  
too loud to sleep through  
I masturbate, hoping the same peace  
that came over my neighbors will find me  
in my hotel.

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## KATE UHLMANN

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### MY VERSION OF THE SEA

I.

Waves crashing  
Pounding the shore  
together with the sun.

II.

Stars dancing  
on the water  
leaving a trail.

III.

A bottomless pit of  
a birth canal.

IV.

Shadows creep  
to the surface  
mimicking the monsters  
that live below.

V.

An oozing bottle  
of cough syrup-  
thick and coarse.

VI.

Water being poured  
over wheat flour  
and put under the  
mix cycle of the blender.

VII.

Tornado of mist  
from the turquoise surface  
to the blue sky.

VIII.

Fish flying with fins  
Boats driving with sails  
Water churning with the  
help of a hidden motor.

IX.

Starfish and sea urchins  
suctioned on the stern of  
the boat.

X.

I glide through the water  
with the red buoy on my right  
shouting "Red Right Returning!"

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## CHAIR

Your body composed of  
    solid steel  
        shaped angles  
Intersecting perfectly  
    to hold me.  
You bring comfort  
    A place for me  
        to lean my  
            problems on your  
                amber stomach.

You support me  
    with your  
        smooth vanilla back  
Always waiting for me  
    quietly in the corner.  
I am greeted  
    silently by you  
        with no protest.

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## TANWEER ANSARI

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## NEW YEAR'S EVE

My eye have become tropical waterfalls

My body collapsed

My soul erupted

Like a volcano when I heard the news . . .

Guitar strumming blaring from  
the large steel machine

four friends passing the bottle  
to the sounds of their laughter  
and tunes.

Their blood flows warmly

Through their veins

The head-lights soon turn

Obstructed by the tree.

No longer laughter

Just cries of anguish

and

rivlets of blood.

Now as I sit in the cold

Helping me face reality-

Thinking of the memories with four

Now they have come and gone –

Sitting here –

I listen to my screams echo

Throughout the cold midnight-blue air

Watching my breath

Reaching out and disappearing into the heavens.

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## ANONYMOUS

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**STONES**

Brown grass grew next to the tombstone with her name etched upon it. The large block letters echoed in the air with their emptiness, proclaiming their existence with a silent shriek of nothing. And the crowd marched past their shadows upon my neck. I felt relieved of the weight of the afternoon sunshine. A caterpillar squirmed slowly up the dead stalk of once vibrant life and the dead groaned in their withered caskets, once made of autumn-fresh boughs. The night came slowly, like a frightened child, and I sat upon the bones of dead men.

I heard the faint cry of doves. Two of the snowy creatures flew past, in the half-light, shy as the approaching dawn. Just then under the pink streaked sky I felt a light hand on the nape of my neck. There was no one in the empty space where I stood. Not even the caterpillar, for he had crawled within the rich soil, a neighbor to the dead. As the sun arose in the morning, I heard the last trill of the nightingale rushing into the fast fleeing darkness.

I was faced with the dull sheen of the scattered stones in the bright light of fresh sunlight. They looked unearthly, so perfect with sharp angles and smooth edges. I laughed aloud as a squirrel scurried past leaving me an acorn gift. He danced about for a moment in our sacred stone circle, sharing with me an inquisitive glance and darted out of my world.

I walked to the street, daunted by the thought of crossing the long snake with the sunlight consuming black scales and stripe of yellow. This was the edge. I started across the boundary, my head bobbing dully in the bright sun. With slow steps I crossed to the other side. Entering into the land of chrome monsters. Giant obelisks adorned the horizon. Skyscrapers rose to the heavens like toy minarets to false gods.

I saw the grass again and a small doe ran from the forest behind me. She stood curious, on the roadside opposite from me. Once crystal tear ran from her eye as she gazed upon me. It fell, as if in slow motion, and shattered on the back of the snake. She ran away from me back toward the forest looking back only once, then hiding among the soaring oaks. I felt the need to run to grasp the strong trees and feel the rough bark upon my face. It was too late, I knew, turning to find the snake surrounding me. I laughed, on last time, as the stripe of obscene yellow constricted me and caught me in its black coils.

The crowd walked past with one new shadow casting its chill upon the dying grass.

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## DEBORAH BINDER

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### COURAGEOUS AND DARING

Stationing myself in a wire chair at a  
lopsided marble table  
chipped with age,  
I mentally peered into the universe  
of two old friends sipping coffee  
and crunching on biscotti  
at a Cambridge kiosk  
enveloped by nostalgia as they gazed  
at antiquated Polaroids  
of the two young girls in pigtails and bell-bottoms  
made from synthetic fibers.  
Their backs were turned from the camera,  
their bags were at their sides,  
as they journeyed  
to their first day of elementary school.  
The following photograph,  
preserved since their youth,  
was of the two gleefully clutching  
diplomas in one hand,  
each other's shoulders in the other.  
Consumed by the past, the women  
reminisced of the interim years.  
The images of the trials and  
tribulations that their friendship endured  
flooded the bustling restaurant  
until there was room for only the two women and  
their lengthy past.  
A waiter refreshed the dwindling  
supply of coffee and the two women,  
whose once flawless skin  
was now marked by the imperfections of age,  
returned to the present.  
I stared at the two familiar strangers,  
now grown, self-dependent.  
After an hour out of their hectic schedules,  
their youthful innocence reappeared.  
My eyes filled with tears.  
My mind was flooded.

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ALLISON

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LEIF ZURMUHLEN

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## LIFE WITH MALKA

I still vividly recall the long, exhausting car ride that my family took en route to my grandparent's house on Thanksgiving day of 1978. Our maroon Plymouth unassumingly traveled along the highway, swerving slightly every few miles as my disgruntled father blindly reprimanded my sister and me for quarreling. He did not know what it was like to be forced by circumstances beyond his control into sharing the backseat with the two most undesirable travel companions, my older sister, Malka, and our pet beagle, Maidel. Had my father been made to endure even one eternal hour in the cramped backseat, he would have undeniably understood my plight. In an effort to dissuade the inevitable attacks that eventually ensued, at the onset of the journey, Malka and I drew an imaginary line through the center of the backseat, quibbled for a while over whose side was bigger, and then proceeded to spend the remainder of the trip pushing the dog back and forth onto each other's side.

My sister, a typical big shot, six year old, knew how to suck in her naive and impressionable four year old sibling. She silently taunted me with all of the treasures that she found on her side of the car, making her side seem like the best side and leaving me horribly upset and feeling as though I had been cheated. My sister even tricked me into having the dog stay on my side of the car. When I was not paying attention, she slyly pulled the dog over to her side, spread her yellow security blanket over Maidel's back and then rested her head over the soft cushion. When I discovered my sister's new sleeping conditions, my mouth salivated in jealousy over the supposed comfort that she was experiencing in her slumber. Unable to keep my mouth shut, I implored her to let me have a turn with the dog. Malka, trying to contain her smile of satisfaction, made a huge production of processing my request of having the dog share my side of the back seat. The bargaining ceased when I was forced into making concessions in which I had to give up my treasured goods: my barnyard lunch box and a new Barbie lipstick. When we finally settled on mutually acceptable terms, the dog was passed over neutral territory onto my side of the car. This was when I discovered that once again my sister had conned me into a situation in which she clearly benefited.

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Contorting my body to rest my head on the my dog's abdomen while remaining on my half of the minuscule backseat proved to be most uncomfortable and clearly a task that my sister had performed purely for the purpose of tricking me into wanting the dog. However, with each attempt of mine to scoot the dog into the middle seat, my sister retaliated by pushing Maidel even further onto my side of the car and then did not let me forget how much fun she was going to have once she got her hands on the prized possessions I had to relinquish in order to have the privilege of sleeping with the dog. An argument ensued.

My mother, feeling her maternal duties kick in, tried to quell the uprising in the southern portion of the car by announcing that it was time for a snack. Surely her daughters were cranky just because they were hungry. My mother never failed to understand that there was an underlying evil force that caused the feuding to occur: my villainous sister. Nevertheless, my mother, attempted to hand the food to us in the backseat, not realizing that with the length of our little arms and the restraint of the safety belts, we could not reach the food which she was nonchalantly dangling at us from the front seat. Malka and I took turns swinging at the food which was just beyond our reach. We both knew that it wasn't hunger we were experiencing, but the sort of jitteriness which most youngsters need of perpetual amusement encounter when cooped up in the car.

We were then faced with a new dilemma: What to do with the food. Lucky for Maidel, this was the one aspect of the car ride from which we derived absolute joy in her presence. Malka and I took the hot pieces of week old, unrefrigerated American cheese and then proceeded to shove them into my dog's mouth. However, like most car activities, this task began to bore us after a very short time interval.

I knew from prior experience that quizzing my parents at thirty second intervals with questions such as, "How much longer 'till we get there?" and "Are we almost there yet?" was useless. This futile bombardment of questions proved to be a discouraging reminder of what further car tortures I would be

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forced to endure. Therefore, for the next stretch of the journey, I had the choice of either focusing on my father's nauseating driving skills, or on the drool that my pet beagle was emitting from her cheese encrusted lips.

My sister, sensing the boredom that had overcome the backseat, was fast at work cooking up a new scheme which she could use to taunt and terrorize poor, unassuming, innocent little me. On this particular day, however, she discovered a new pastime for me which was so outlandish that even I had never imagined it before. She asked me to withdraw from my mouth the wad of gum which consisted of four monstrous pieces of Hubba Bubba. She then proposed a dare to me which, not wanting to appear a coward, I reluctantly accepted. I should have known better.

At her request, I shoved the grotesque blob deep into my nasal passages. Finally when it occurred to me that I could no longer breathe, I made an attempt to extract the sticky substance from my nose. Malka, who was ready to wet her pants from laughing, was useless in coming to my aid.

It was surprising that my parents didn't immediately pick up on the fact that the backseat was unusually calm. Even the dog had ceased to pant; she seemed to be staring in amazement at the stupid thing that her "sister" had done. I pulled and tugged, and then I pulled some more; that gum just would not budge. I was then forced to call in the "big guns," Mom and Dad. Before I could open my mouth to whine my desperate plea to my parents, my sister, having made a miraculous recovery from her once debilitating fit of laughter, gleefully announced as she unequivocally denied having played a major role in what had just ensued, "Daddy, Deborah put gum up her nose and can't get it out!" Upon hearing those alarming words, my father immediately pulled the car over to the side of the congested highway where he performed the delicate process of removing the gum from my nostrils. I was reprimanded for my wrongdoing and spent the remainder of the ride dissolved in tears as I cast evil glares at my sister who shielded contented face under the protection of her yellow blanket.

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## REUNION

I scanned the frenzied crowd,  
searching for the faces or those I knew.  
My eyes fell upon an image that mirrored yours,  
a petite innocence that captured your  
exuberance, flirtatiousness,  
and ability to mesmerize.  
In telepathic insight,  
you did likewise,  
focusing on a timid little gem,  
round-faced and ruddy cheeked  
belonging to me.  
We swooped up our little ones,  
patient husbands tagging along,  
bringing up the rear of our families.  
In a fit of confounded curiosity,  
our goslings circled one another,  
bewildered.  
Momentarily, years were erased  
like the stench of cigarettes from a dorm room  
anxiously awaiting important guests.  
The others were lost  
to our abbreviated conversation.

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Ten years sufficiently allowed our reveries  
to become realities:  
my Vice-President's office  
papered with reviews  
lauding your prolific pursuits.  
Old friends and new family  
created a *mélée* of comfort  
whispering in a bouquet of velvety pride  
that we had made the right choices.  
Finally grasping the uniqueness of our bond,  
we bid adieu,  
retreating to our chaotic existences,  
allowing the irresponsibility of our  
college experience  
to be replaced with the triumph and  
satisfaction of our dreams.

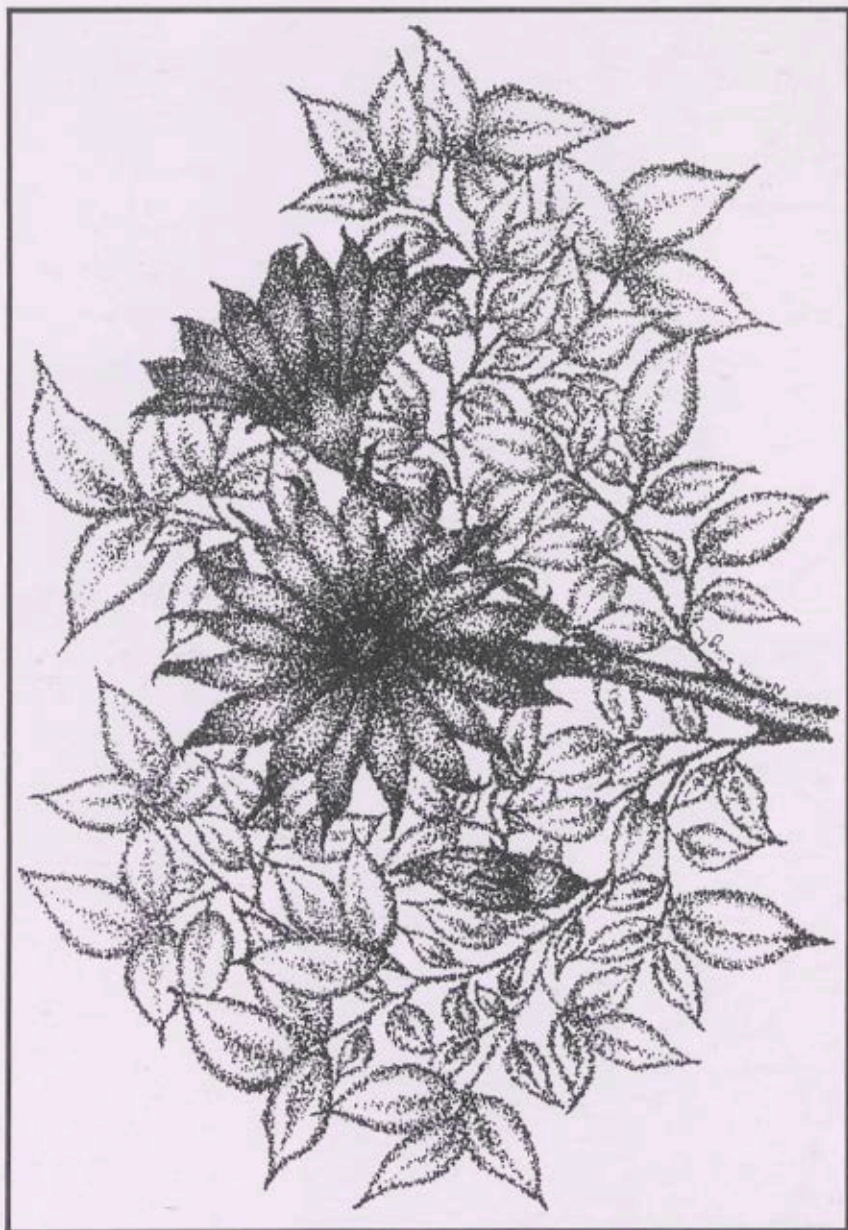
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SARAH C.M. OLSEN

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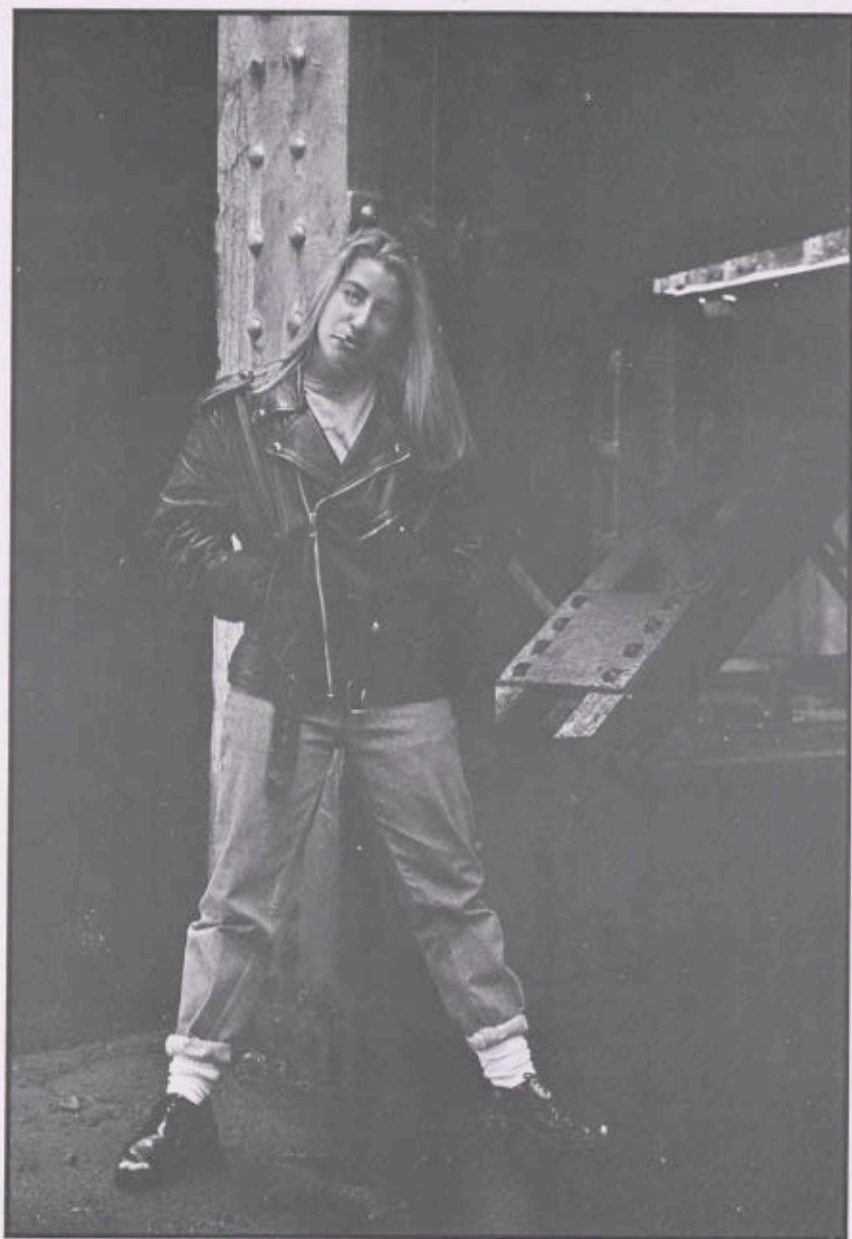


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## 1706 EASTERN PARKWAY

Fields of delphinium stalks with  
Shattered petals have withered  
And the sun's diminishing rays  
Have revealed the dawn  
Of an imminent dusk  
Halls that once resounded  
With the laughter of your presence  
Are now barren  
And the voices have faded to  
Unintelligible whispers  
Memories of intimate backyard picnics  
with fairy sandwiches and  
Summer jaunts to Hoffman's Amusement Park  
Come screaming back  
I wander into the dining room  
And can see the contented faces  
Of another Thanksgiving well spent  
Aunts and uncles and cousins are all assembled  
To witness the customary carving  
Of the festival bird  
The images become translucent  
And the vacant furniture reappears  
I look out the window and observe  
The blood red geraniums which linger  
As the only vestige of life remaining  
In the house that I visited for nineteen years



**CAFÉ PAMPLONA**

I sit in the café 's courtyard every weekend.  
My sheet music clutters a small table,  
A battered back pack sits at my side.  
Music is suddenly not just marks on a page,  
But the symphony of my city.

The waiter smiles at me as he  
Weaves his way through umbrella-shaded tables  
Occupied by others like me.  
This café is not in the square,  
Which is teeming with tourists and  
The Harvard elite.

It is populated by those  
Who live in Cambridge,  
Who seek good espresso and talk of art and literature,  
Who can't stand the tourists or girls from the suburbs.  
We don't pour off of the Red Line to buy beaded necklaces  
From the girl who sits outside Briggs and Briggs.  
We aren't those who seek pictures for relatives at home,  
Who don't know that there are other cafés  
Besides Au Bon Pain.

I sit alone and watch  
The freaks and burn-outs  
That drift past like the leaves  
Skipping over cobblestone paths.  
The smoke from my cigarette spirals upward  
and joins the rest of the city-  
In this small way I am a part of it all.

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## MICHAEL J. McARDLE

---

**"FUCK OFF, PIG! WE'RE WAXING POETIC . . ."**

Vermont mountains,

once lush-green-envious of our freedom,  
now define the August horizon

with brooding blackness.

Cigarettes strobe, arc,  
and expire on the bank of the night sky

as talk of No Regrets and What's to Come

escapes from the mouth of an empty  
bottle off in the grass.

Shooting stars

scatter across the surface of still water  
until the searchlight reminds us

that this world has **NO VACANCY**

for romantics or dreamers  
anymore.

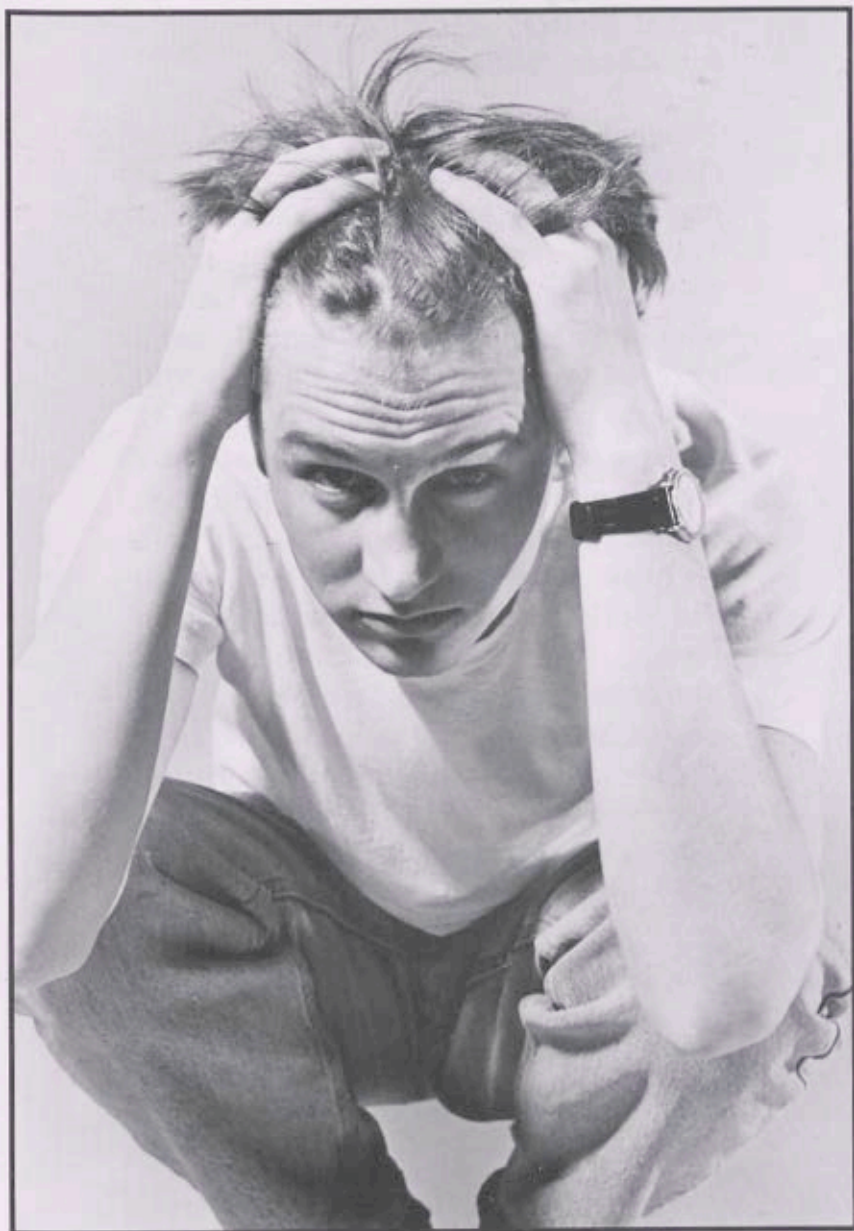
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*PETE*

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**BEVAN MEYERS**

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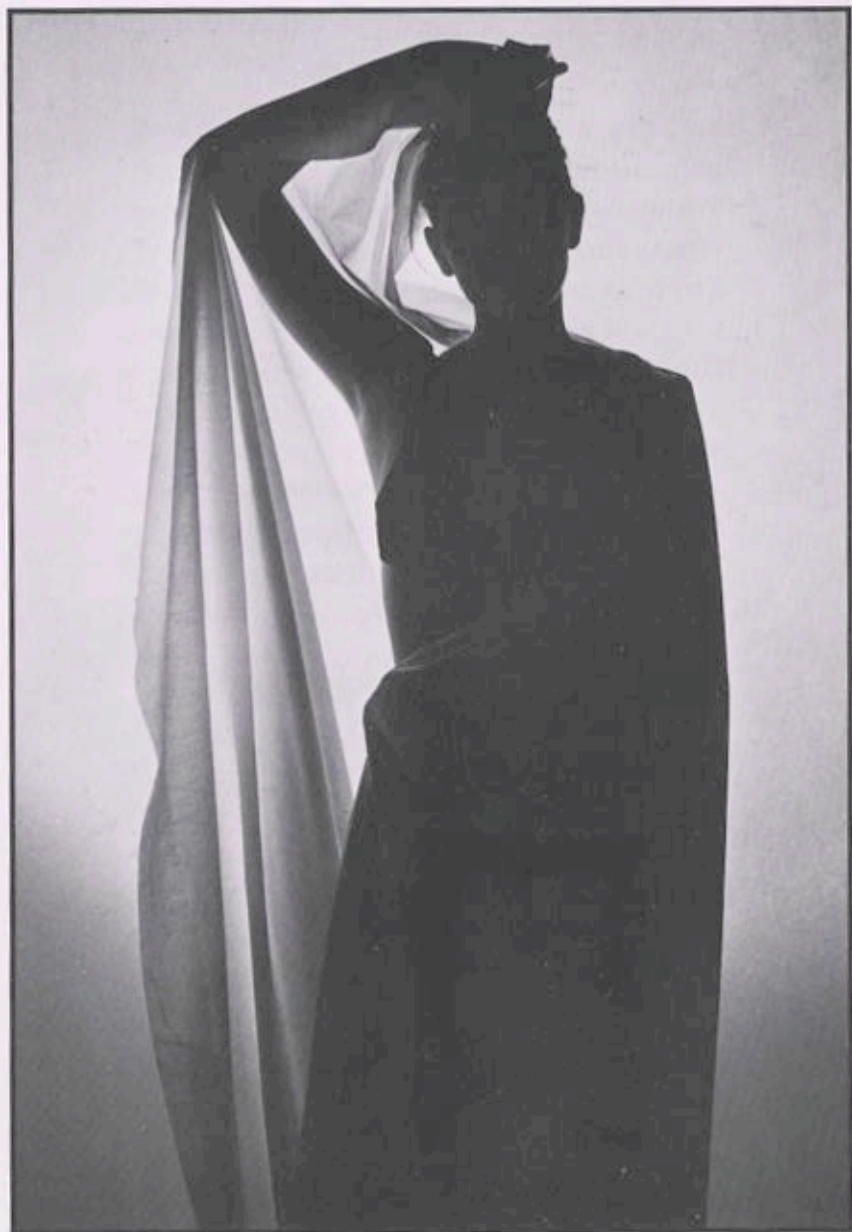
**MILE ZERO**  
**for Adam Daniel**

Tangled.  
Grazed by my own  
mental barbed wire.  
Trapped.  
Surrounded by so many  
who stare straight at the sun,  
I pound the keys of a piano  
with no wires—  
A gut-wrenching Requiem  
for a friend I've never met.  
The telephone rings  
its futile reminder of  
the World Outside these walls.  
Rain,  
like tears from recent storms,  
hangs from  
the wire between us.  
Your voice  
warms me through the  
electric I.V. like the ironic  
sunlight of late winter.  
You hear  
familiar music,  
screaming in undertones  
in the static background,

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and know that  
sometimes  
Tomorrow scares me  
when you're not around.  
There is an image,  
a visual emotion,  
that comes to me  
at times like these:  
You and I are driving,  
speeding past the sign for Mile Zero  
at a thousand miles an hour  
in our brand New Salvation,  
heading west  
from the dim What-Is  
Into the gleaming What-Will-Be.  
For now  
I mark Time in my ashtray –  
Waiting  
for the ebb and flow of rush-  
hour traffic  
to bring you home  
and put  
my scattered pieces  
back together  
again.



## THE DARK

Confusion occurs when thoughts of myself  
    convect in my mind

Pain is felt when each minute I see you share love with  
    her, takes an eternity to overcome

Contacting your crystal eyes to see right through  
    who you are

To stimulate more than bodily fluids

To make you feel the same passion

To make you recall the same fantasizing thoughts

Frustration, trying to input you with the same love  
    making dreams at dark

Where the only light visible is the one to my soul

Seeing you with her, my tears put the fire  
    out in my heart,

Where live no longer lives.

The light grows dim,

As the night rolls in, my dreams no longer consist of  
    the beauty that we create together

The star that together our bodies had created,  
    has fallen

No more wishes, no more dreams,

Complete darkness.

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## ALISON FOSTER

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### THE MAGIC KAYAK

I was working in a restaurant,  
the type that's in a hotel, in downtown Juneau, Alaska.  
The pay was great, nothing like the East.  
By the end of the night I'd have 100\$ easy from tips.  
Everyone said I reminded them of their daughter,  
or niece, or cousin; someone from whom they  
were far away.  
Sometimes I'd wait on people from around my hometown.  
They always tipped well, every one wanted to  
take care of me.

At lunch the tourists would come in,  
tired from a hard morning shopping at  
Pattiti Woolen, The Whales Tale, Taku Smokeries.  
They'd examine their purchases saying,  
"Isn't this cute", not understanding them at all.  
I felt a certain pride in knowing, what they did not.

Myrna worked with me.  
She's a Clinquet Indian, lived in Alaska her whole life.  
All the morning girls were Filipinos.  
Lynn, Margery, Emma, Nadia.  
They'd always be laughing, speaking so quickly,  
saying "oh Al-e-son you so cute."  
They all looked about 25 but were actually double that,  
and worked in about five different places around town.  
Sometimes we got to eat lunch together.  
Sometimes they showed me pictures of their children,  
they were so proud.

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Myrna and I were close.

We would sit during that post-lunch, pre-dinner period,  
on the maroon vinyl seats in the booth in the corner,  
drinking coffee and folding napkins,  
the way the Greek sailors from the cruise ships taught us.  
We would sit there, making flowers and boats and  
animals, and talk about love.

Her husband proposed to her on their first date, she said  
they both just knew.

All I knew is that nothing like that had ever happened to me.

Myrna would tell me stories.

Her accent making them seem so important,  
an extension of herself.

She told me about the raven, why it's color is so deeply black,  
and how it was the one to bring daylight.

I had always looked at them and thought they were ugly.

Now I do see a sort of beauty in their shiny coat, a pride in  
the way they slowly stalk the docks.

One particular rainy afternoon (most afternoons were  
rainy in Juneau), she told me the story of the magic kayak:

There was a hunter, deep in the woods, listening  
to the birds, when he saw the most beautiful girl  
lying near a pond. Her blonde, almost white hair,  
cascading down her fair skin, her dark eyes shining  
like the night. She had taken her goose coat off and  
the hunter stole it and convinced her to marry him.

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A son later, the girl grew to love her husband, but missed her home and her people. Collecting feathers she placed them between her fingers and the fingers of her son. A flash of flesh and feathers and once again they were wild geese, heading home to the land of the birds.

Her husband put on his warmest clothes, brought with him an amulet, and set off to find them. He traveled until he came to a river which he could not cross. An old man sat at the side of the water gave the hunter a sliver of wood.

Once in the water the sliver of wood turned into a magic kayak that led him across the river and to the land of the birds. The spirits took pity on the hunter and changed him into a bird so that he could live forever with his wife and son.

Myrna told me she'd always loved that story.  
She said her mother used to tell it to her before bed.  
I told her I didn't really understand it that much,  
but that I liked it anyway.  
Myrna just laughed and said we'd better get back to work,  
the dinner crowd would be coming soon.



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## BOUNDARIES

I walk on, thinking of . . . something  
with the stars trapped below me  
held within their watery cage.  
I look down to see their image  
trembling under my feet,  
fluttering to an unknown rhythm.

I see my own face distorted above them,  
but then I am gone.  
I've slipped through and now I'm looking up  
through the ripples.  
Everything seems so clear now,  
-no distinctions, just fluidity,  
Like the passing blur of the countryside  
transformed into a monotone of color.  
No boundaries, only waves.

It seems I have been here quite a while, yet  
the traffic light hasn't changed.  
I sense my feet damp in my shoes  
and wonder what has happened to time.  
Impatiently the drivers keep edging closer,  
all too aware of what is ahead.

Somedays I wish I could be impatient,  
for things to change  
to have a destination.  
But for now I can't understand where to go.  
This town is just too large.  
— I think this is why my feet are always getting wet.

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## ANDREW CHAPMAN

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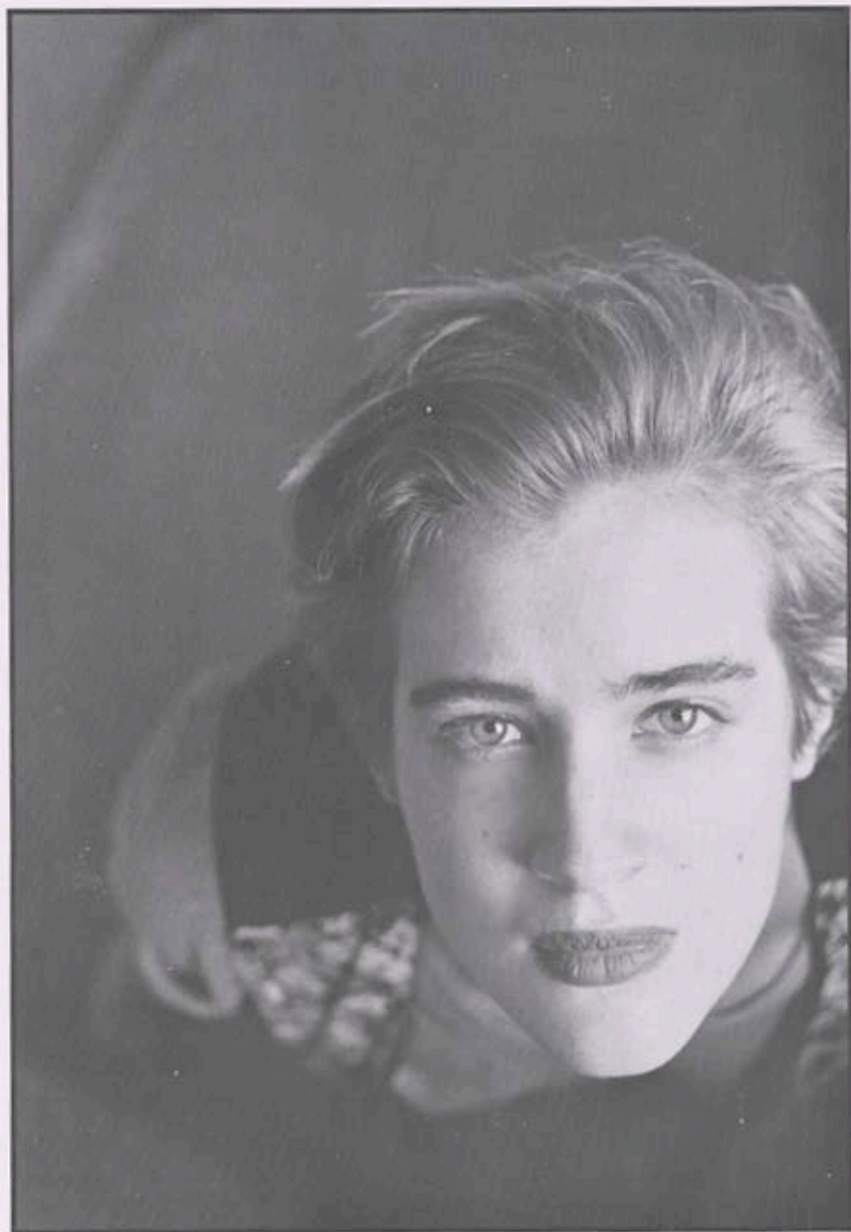
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ALEX VALLEE

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KIMBLE V SARAH

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## THE DANCER

She frantically clings to her forlorn hope  
that is all that is left.

For a windy sleepless night  
holds no alleviation for her frustration  
but only increases them  
as she is left alone; again.

Morning light on the cushion.  
Warm coffee, stale bread.

Lucky people, eyes of light  
they've all got it all, seemingly so.

Boarding the train, she watches as the money slowly  
falls down the shaft and into its holder.

She takes her seat next to an MIT student  
She's seen them before, felt their presence  
they always have a way of making her feel dull.

Above ground  
the skaters are thrashing about the Common  
trying to kick the pigeons and squirrels,  
hassling the drunks.

She walks down Boylston  
wishing it was Telegraph Ave. down near  
Fishermans Wharf.

California was always fun  
especially during the winter  
Christmas trees made from artificial plants  
but it was alright, it was all that she knew.

Nighttime under a blue sky  
the air is still, the trees motionless.  
She begins to pirouette for the moon

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leaping higher and higher  
on legs made for dancing.  
Familiar voices drift to her  
like rain through a window,  
some loud, others muddled and distant.  
Memories push their way to the surface  
as she begins to feel that dull throb in her leg  
which grows with every step.  
No longer afraid she fights the pain  
and dances, dances for the moon  
until all that she can see are stars  
— yet this is all that she ever wanted.

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## TANWEER ANSARI

## PORTRAIT

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## CONVERSATIONS IN THE DARK

In the darkness  
vision fades to outlines.

I touch your back  
curled, shielding,  
skin pressed tightly against bone.

Speaking the words only suited  
for ears with no eyes

I tell of my fears  
whispering lightly,  
into space with no time.

So quiet,  
it could be merely...  
pages moving against the breeze,  
curtains gently billowing,  
filling and falling.

As I grope to find you,  
to feel your breathing,  
rising and falling.

When the morning light  
edges across the room,  
creeping up the bed in rectangular patches

We begin to stir,  
slowly removing the night,  
layer by layer.

Words in the night echo in our ears

Hiding in a memory,  
we are not sure is our own,  
but remember with vague familiarity.

**THE PORTAL**

I was drenched in fear,  
Enshrouded in terror.  
Sheets of ice encircled us  
As the snow danced  
To that macabre tune.  
I watched as she slipped  
Into oblivion's icy waters.  
The size of the ice hole  
Ever so perfect for her fragile body.

And I went on a journey,  
Falling through time  
And witnessing the darkness,  
Inebriated with panic  
I was enveloped in numbness.

And I tried, I did,  
To make myself save her,  
But my own heart's travesty  
Would make me freeze  
And a small force  
Held me to the edge of that  
Bloody hole.

My soul grew content  
As it never had before.  
I listened attentively  
To her cries,  
Her shrieks,  
Yearning to be saved.  
She became a much enrapturing finale  
To a life long cacophony of music.

My fallen angel had disappeared  
Into the depths  
Of the icy earth.

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And so here I stand,  
A portrait of a young man  
Hovering over a grave,  
And the peace I feel now is  
Overwhelming.  
In all my eighteen years,  
I could finally see a future,  
Witnessing sunlight  
For the very first time.  
The springtime will no longer be dreary,  
The hot summer nights  
Will no longer chill me.

Mother,  
Forgive me.

I know nothing  
Of my gnarled emotions.  
I remain your son despite  
Your absence on this earth.

And all those years,  
You were inside of me,  
Pleasures,  
Raping me of my  
Respect and  
Honor,  
Innocence,  
And youth,  
For all those years Mother,  
I pray.

But do not leave  
Without my gifts Mother.  
I give you my comfort to save you,  
My respect to remind you.  
And my heart to break.

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## GLENN T. KONOPASKE

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### THE MIRROR

With every passing of winter, the blossoming of spring,  
When the sparrow and robin perch upon the youngest heather,  
The season beckons me to resume my annual journey to  
Hopton Meadow.

To return again behind the sterling wall of my boyhood home.  
To return again to the keeper, my aged friend, Hoffmann.  
Aloof, but with a spark of gothic proportions, a memory of  
yesterday's splendor,  
Of a time of balls, operas, and muses in the eastern wing,  
And dark secrets as the river flows beneath our feet.

The tapestries are now faded,  
The stories of lives embroidered for posterity,  
Dying to reveal their hidden entities.  
We walked through the gilded halls, the marble floors glistening.  
"Do you remember the alter boy who dropped the cruet?"  
Yes, Saint Jude's with its purest white marble.  
The scolded boy and chards of glass scattered about.

He led me to the gardens.

Etruscan statufures, hedgerows and mazes.  
Tulips, trilliums, and soft orchids.  
All the grandeur and gaiety that once was this grand palace,  
Where kings lived as children,  
Now resides in an old man.  
Everything that this stately expanse once stood for,  
Everything that it once was, glimmers in his pale grey eyes.

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Again he led me through the house.

This time stopping in the chapel.  
A chant, eery and melodic, hung in the air.  
The lilies have not yet lost their breath.  
This is where Angeline came to pray, her pew is no more.  
Turning to the setting sun, an aged glass laid on the  
cold marble.  
I held the glass, looked, and was frightened.

"Look again, peer into the mirror, meet the one who fell  
too young.  
See the tears transfigure the polished glass into a watery pool.  
Hear the sad whisper yearn to hold his love's hand,  
His eyes to the world forever a reflection.

Narcissus has taken his revenge;  
He has come to consume the young noble.  
Charity and love forgotten,  
Ignored were the tears from the maiden who loved.  
Cruel and cold as glass itself,  
Two became one after a long night of enrapture.

The girl beckoned him; she found the glass."

"Where do the footsteps lead?  
Where do the monsters roam?  
Where has he been taken?  
Only now has his heart left the stone."

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"Night has taken nature's son past the grave and beyond,  
Night has taken our hearts with it,  
Our smiles are overturned.  
Shadows will envelope our lives,  
Unless the sparrow returns to us,  
Unless the wisdom can forgive our souls.  
We dance in the wind swirling,  
We are bound to the earth in tattered sheets.  
Our God left us to our own devices  
And we lost the war."

"The procession passed.

Yet the whispers continue from the darkened room."

"Can anyone hear me, can anyone hear me, can anyone  
hear me, can anyone hear me, can. . ."

"The world has been reversed.

Beauty is sin, sin is gold.

Only now does the sinner kneel.

The dame entered the room."

"Can you save me?"

"I've done all I can and still more."

A time has arrived to reveal.

Its time for me to leave this world."

"No, you must help me."

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"I can't be where you have left . . . you can't pull  
me from where you've placed me."

"I see an angel before me."

"Your world is a myth, an image.

You hold on by a thread

Suspended from the spool.

The time is coming swiftly as

The ghost horse in the night.

My time has passed.

I cannot cry forever."

"Wrap her in linen, the angel passes.

Ignorance and gaiety have consumed youth.

Love of the self, traps you.

Love of the self, separates your world

From dream and reality.

You lose your life.

You lose your love.

He has lost, the petal hit the floor."

As I entered my coach,

I watched as Hoffmann closed the door to my home,

And to my past.

I watch as ravens arose blanketing the sky

Before me.

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## ILONA PETERY

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### TRESPASSERS

I stepped sluggishly off the narrow, wood landing ladder of the notoriously old D-16 plane which in the past had seated many skilled game hunters of the Kenyan plains. Stepping off the last creaky step, I began to rub my eyes which were practically swollen shut from over exhaustion and sudden exposure to the bold Kenyan sun. As I stood on the flat ground all I could see of the new country around me was sky. I had never seen this much sky in my life. The subtle baby blue flowed and circulated in a perfect dome around me. I wondered, was this the same innocent, clear blue sky that I caught glimpses of through towering skyscrapers in New York? I felt secure under this blue dome, like it would surround me with gentle warmth wherever I walked.

The smooth leather of a man's traveling bag brushed against my calf as he placed it on the dusty ground next to me. The man panted from the hot noon day heat and periodically wiped his forehead with a white linen handkerchief. I lifted my own cloth knapsack and placed the string straps securely on both of my bare, brown shoulders, then walked slowly away from the tour group which was gathered in a stuffy, clump with their worn luggage piled strategically in a fort around them, beneath the shade of the airplane's wing.

My leather sandals were covered in a film of golden-brown dust that rose up from ground of the dehydrated, buff-colored plain like puffs of stale baby powder with each careful step I took. My white T-shirt fluffed from a thick rush of air given when the clumsy D-16 took off from the stout air strip, leaving behind a cloud of ancient dust for me to choke on.

Turning my back away from the whirlwind of dust, I felt a different and exhilarating feeling as though I was almost alone and isolated in an unfamiliar place. I felt safe. Everything was tranquil, the landscape was soft and melted

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together. Nothing that I placed my eyes upon had a rough contour or jagged shape-no glass, no metal like in the cities of Nairobi or New York. I felt so free and open, as if I could take off my sandals and run out onto the plains of the Serrengetti feeling completely untouchable.

The loud, obnoxious "toot" of a green jeep as it drove up from one of the few dirt roads intruded on my solitude. In response to this blatant hurry-honk, I joined the others in boarding open-roof jeep, but I kept my head turned for quite some time, looking back in search of the area where I stood before. My footprints were gone. My footprints and all the freedom that I felt just moments ago had been swallowed up by the clouds of diesel dust which erupted from the army jeep. How could I have let this rare, desirable freedom slip away with out a fight?

Cooling, peaceful wind rippled my t-shirt again and lapped against my warm body, comforting me. Turning my head to rest against my mother's strong shoulder, I caught a glimpse of animals in the distance. The driver veered off the road towards these brownish figures in the distance. I heard zippers unzip, buttons unsnap, cameras being wound, film being loaded and the uncontrollably loud whispers of our tour group as we neared the completely undisturbed elephants.

The tour group swooned and focused their stiff binoculars in on the pachyderms who simply went on enjoying each other's company and basking in the pleasant sunlight. I watched a 3ft tall baby walk in and out from between his mothers firmly planted legs, occasionally stopping to nurse.

The freedom I yearned for already belonged to the animals-the mother and the nursing baby elephant. This remarkable environment was theirs and I was a tourist trespassing. I really belonged in an ugly green jeep where I was a visitor only allowed to look and to observe their wild, untouched and free world.

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**ALEX VALLEE**

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