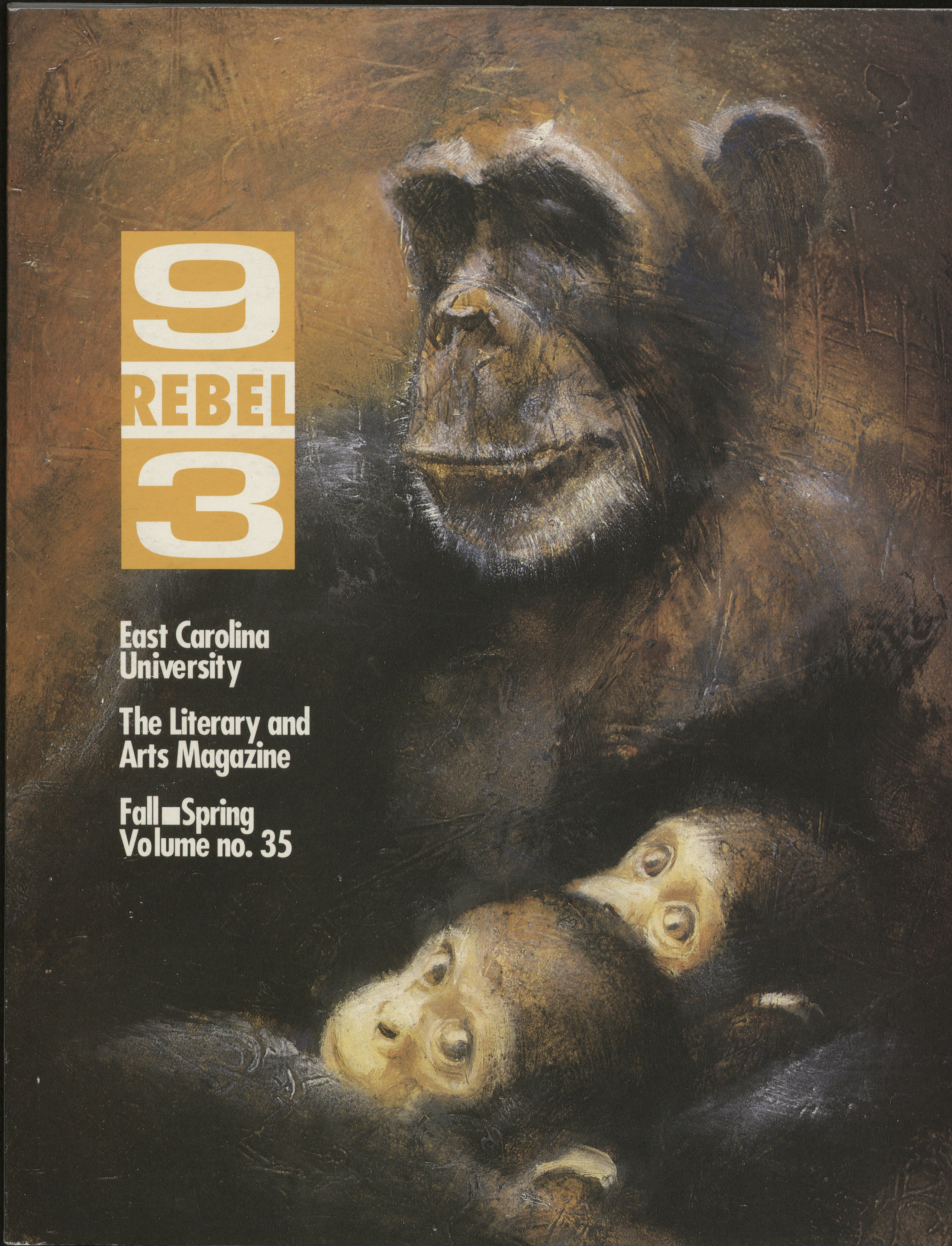
REBEL
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EAST CAROLINA
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Prize **Finalist**
Artist **Stanton Blakeslee**
Title **Mother and Children**
Category **Illustration**

" If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you." (Jesus, from *The Gnostic Gospels*)

For me, creative expression is the way you discover what you believe– who you are. It takes effort and perseverance. Being an artist or a writer is not for the shallow, or weak in spirit.

The **REBEL 93**'s sole intention is to showcase the creative expression of students at East Carolina University through Poetry, Prose and Art Competitions. I only wish the budget would have allowed us to show more, as there was much, much more work worthy of publication. I applaud those who made the effort to share themselves with us. I encourage anyone to begin by believing in yourself, and not to give up.

Those people who were involved with the development and production of the **REBEL 93** Magazine have inspired me to continue in my personal search through artistic expression. I thank you for the opportunity to work with you. Before I present this year's **REBEL** for your enjoyment, I would like to borrow the following words from Nancy Thayer, an American writer, "It's never too late– in fiction or in life– to revise."

Margie O'Shea

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Prize **First**
Author **J.E. Boyette**
Title **Visitation**
Category **Poetry**

Two hours late
ex-husband
makes a grand entrance

bearing gifts
he pulls from a bag
five turtles
all stolen
from the roadside
he has named them

"This is better then Christmas!
Isn't it Mommy?" she says.

I had asked
had needed
him to bring
new school shoes, white
leather, size 2

Later,
as a loving servant
bearing tithes
to his queen
he presents a dime-store locket
picture of him on one side
her on the other

"Where does Mommie's picture go?"

"Silly," he says, "Promise me you will
never never ever take this off."

"Necklaces get tangled in my ponytail."

"This one won't."

He leaves
three hours early
promises more turtles
not a date for his return

That night,
in the bathtub
the golden necklace turns green
pictures dissolve
like dandelions in the wind

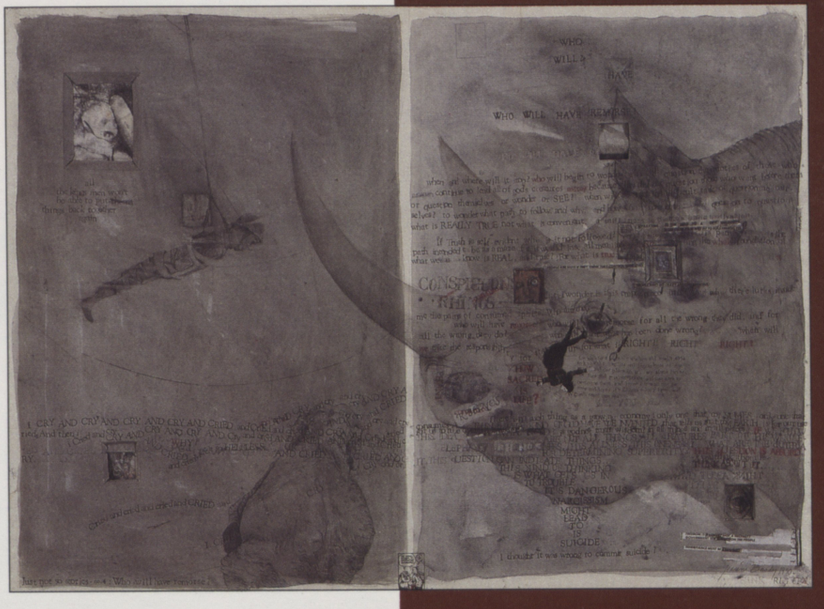
"I'm sorry that happened." I say.

She kicks the water
storming the air
her eyes blacken
like her Daddy's
and she growls

"No you're not. You are a liar."


Prize Best In Show
Artist Shannon Morrow
Title Self-Portrait
Category Painting
SHANNON

Prize **First**
Artist **Jeanne Brady**
Title **Just Not So Story #4**
Who Will Have Remorse?
Category **Drawing**



Prize **Second**
Artist **Stanton Blakeslee**
Title **Depleting Environment...**
First In Series
Category **Illustration**



Echoing
conversation more than
a quarter of a mile away
the closest home

Humming
electrical wires,
though few,
crossing the field
to the stark white cabin
through wild orange blossoms

Whistling
wind
caught in
gutters, uninsulated
walls
struggling to be
free again

Creaking
under gusts
Roaring
with leaves

Oaks my father said had earned tenure here

Remembering
my father
chasing me through the tobacco field,
wet, gritty leaves slapping my arms,
shoulders, cheeks
porous sandy earth,
clumping
around my ankles,
my feet, between my toes

Tipping
his chair, beneath the moaning eaves,
oak,
as he reached
for bourbon
ice

swirling
clinking
Threading
me to him
and them
-Artelia, Gladys, Theodious

Rocking
alone
wrapped in a clinging, punctured
womb
Thinking
of their
tenure
beneath
my feet
in pine boxes...
soft whispering
through the branches and bark
rows of tobacco
sandy earth

Prize **Second**
Author **Tracey Gay**
Title **Tenure**
Category **Poetry**

Prize **Third**
Author **Don Marr**
Title **The Swing**
Category **Poetry**

This girl knew him from years gone past,
but these inner questions will never be asked.
Something in him familiar and quite similar,
that could have been a dream or a distant fear.

The contours of his face seemed the same,
as cracks in the earth forever unchanged.
And yet, she sometimes thought she knew him,
reminisced and returned to days back then.

She moved higher toward the stars,
her pleasure and laughter heard afar.
With childlike laughter she filled her desire,
pushed by his thrust she flew higher, higher.

This vehicle once in her struck fear,
with his hard-worked hands he pulled her near.
A pull and a push and upward she flew,
falling back to earth to one she knew.

Pushed, she swung upwards and returning,
to his safe touch and rich love burning.
"Push me higher, Daddy, higher,"
gentle force could not quench her desires.

Years have passed and she still returns,
to a time in her mind forever burns.
This man beside her in blissful sleep,
memories in her soul forever will keep.

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Prize **Third**
Artist **Nikki Holbrook**
Title **Pueblo Ceremonial Bird Vanity**
Category **Wood**

keeping house

Illustrations by
Keith Hobgood

Prize **First**
Author **Angela Bacon Reid**
Title **Keeping House**
Category **Prose**

Kathleen couldn't keep the invitation from her mind; she might as well have tacked it to her cart, so frequently it rose before her eyes:

Mr. and Mrs. Franklin David Bishop
request the honor of your presence
at the marriage of their daughter
Victoria Christine
to
Mr. Michael Andrew Connor
on Saturday, the twenty-ninth of August
at three o'clock
First United Methodist Church
Burlington, Vermont

The ticket there enclosed hadnot startled her half so much as had the message scrawled across the invitation's bottom: "See you at the airport —Mike." So nonchalant it was, you'd think she knew that he was getting married, that he had found a bride. She'd called him when she had gotten the invitation yesterday, and he had laughed. He'd meant it to surprise.

It had. She'd listened with bemused amazement as Michael rambled on, his grown-man's voice grown husky in the year since he'd left school, "Wait until you meet her, Mom. Vicki's just a doll. Her father runs the company I work for. He's been so good to me; they all have. I know you'll learn to love them, too."

Small chance she'd have for that. According to the ticket she'd get two nights in Vermont. She had no doubt her son would put her up in style, but it was obvious he didn't mean for her to stay.

When had he dropped the "O'" off his name?

Two nights before the plane returned her to resume her life. At least she'd get to see a hotel from the other side.

The cart's wheels snagged against the carpet as she put it to the side before the next door, glanced down automatically to see the little sign, the "Please

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Clean Early" or "Do Not Disturb" or anything to warn her of the resident's intent. Nothing, as it often was the case. She rapped softly, heard a lazy answer without inquiry. "Come in."

Her key chain jingled as she unlocked the door, smiling blandly before she'd seen the face, said, "Maid."

A young woman tall, most of her blonde hair concealed by one of the hotel's white towels, glanced indifferently from the vanity against the wall. Although she had enough that she was careless of the wrinkled clothing strewn across the beds and chairs, the white sun dress setting off her tan was neatly pressed. Her eyes slid off at once, as though Kathleen lacked detail, was not important enough to keep the girl's attention from the mirror and herself.

"Would you like me to come back ma'am?"

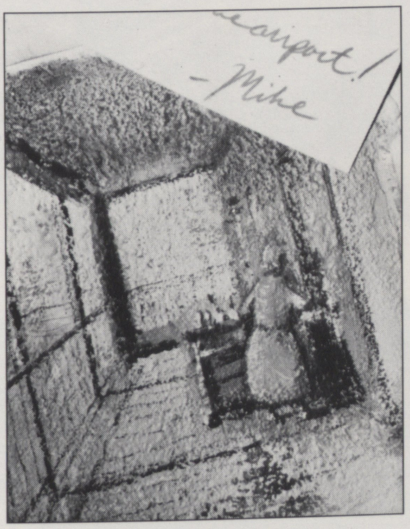
"Hmm? Oh, no." The lady pulled the towel away and ruffled her short hair, "Go ahead. We'll be leaving in a moment."

Kathleen pushed her cart up tight against the wall, glanced within to see the bathroom door was closed— the other half of we, perhaps. She grabbed a dust cloth and a trash bag, stepped briskly in the room towards the half-filled ashtray on the table by the open blinds. Outside the sun was shining on the water, painting free and easy highlights on the waves. The sunburned children playing by the boardwalk spoke to her of happy days.

The blonde put on her coral lipstick flawlessly, enraptured by her ritual while she critically applied her face.

The same shade stained the filters of the cigarettes, Chesterfields, a great profusion in all stages of completion, as if the woman didn't care if they were done or not. Ashes spilled out on the table, a smattering had fallen on the tawny rug. Familiar money, used to service, no matter she was young. Kathleen stole a glance at her —pretty, jewelry shimmering at throat and ears and hands, the wedding band perhaps the newest of the lot. She seemed more picturesque than the view from the balcony window, acutely conscious of heraffluence and the aristocracy it conferred.

Would Vicki look so to the maid that served her in her honeymoon hotel?



Blue eyes met hers in the mirror. Just the flicker of a frown upon those painted lips sent Kathleen to her work, almost brought a blush to Kathleen's face that mercifully subsided when the man came through the bathroom door.

She felt him glance towards her and away, a quick dismissal. He, too, was dressed in summer white, was tanned. He strapped a watch onto his wrist. "I'm getting hungry, Ellen. Shall we go?"

There was no spoken answer, nor did Kathleen see the woman's response, for she had bent to move the sheets off the bed, pushed gingerly aside the silky clothing, knowing that the hotel rules forbade her move these people's things, knowing the housekeeper, Yoni, would have a fit if she did not– she had to make the beds, remove the hair and debris their guests left behind. She heard them walking, looked to see him usher her out through the open door, one connubial hand at the base of her back. There, that was Michael and his bride. Comfortable in the world his mother's paychecks and his education bought him. Not hiding the girl from his mother, but hiding her from the girl.

The air conditioner shut down with a cough, left the muted rush of the sea her only companion while she pulled the sheets from the bed, shookthem and smoothed them back down again, emplacing the heavy orange bedspread and reinstating the clothes. She couldn't help spreading those out–her meticulous care of her own things madethe thought of leaving this finery crumpled abhorrent. Kathleen could make an outfit last a lifetime.

She tried to summon her usual pride in restoring the illusion the hotel meant to make—casual, effortless elegance, but she had curiously little emotion to spare. She moved into the bathroom, felt a flicker of annoyance when she surveyed the damp towels and the sand-begrimed tub, the trunks and red one-piece dripping from the towel-rack onto the floor.

Tubs were the hardest, but she had techniques for dealing with those—twelve summer seasons of getting out sand gets routine. She took one of the used towels and bent to the task, feeling the strain on her back. Twenty pounds less might make this much easier.

Might make her look better for Michael.

When had he started to call himself "Mike?"

Under the metallic water flow the sand went into the drain, pressed on bythe work of the towel. Here were the pubic hairs she hadn't found in the bed— dark ones. She guessed they were his. His hair hadn't been wet when he'd come from the bathroom—she imagined him standing under the stream, head pulled away so as not to wet his coiffure, and half-smiled. It seemed a ludicrous image. Unmanly. Not so much like Michael, then. Or not as he was when young.

When young. A sobering thought. It accompanied her while she hefted the wet towel from the tub, carried it out to her cart and pulled forth the fresh ones; two bath towels, a mat, two face cloths, two washcloths. Four plastic-covered cups for the ice tray, and then to the toilet. She took the brush in her hand and knelt on the checkered floor, swabbing the bowl with a lilac perfume. Michael'd been young not so long ago, a tow-headed boy with his father's eyes. Not a freckle for all his fair skin. He'd not been ashamed of her then, not until high school did he start to notice the lack in their home, in the quality of clothes that they wore.

She never resented it then. Thought he'd grow from it. Thought he had. Never imagined to feel the same scorn from him that she felt from her guests.

The thought made her sad, made her tired. She let the perfume sit for a minute and bent to thefloor, her cloth picking up hair from the tiles that seemed to match neither guest—oversight from the maid here before. Some of them weren't as careful as Kathleen was. Being careful took time, took too much time, that and her musings had cost her ten minutes to the schedule this morning and that meant a scolding from Yoni. She'd just two more rooms on her listing—no way to cut enough corners to make up the time without failing her standard of work.



Despondent, she turned towards her cart and the doorway, finished with her final review, and was ready to step out into the hall when she saw the light glint from the ring.

On the threshold of thedoor, just in a boundary to leave her no doubt who had dropped it. She bent to it slowly, feeling the creak in her knees, adjusting in case one gave out. It felt smooth in her fingers and warm, recently worn. It wasn't the wedding band as she had first thought—the onyx had fallen face down, the band of diamonds spanning the center initially hidden in the nap of the ring.

It would be worth a small fortune, a month's wages or more if those diamonds were real, and she'd no reason to think they would not be.

She straightened and looked at the ring, thinking wryly how different she was from them. Ellen had much, cared for it little. She'd bet her son's Vicki had known her share of jewelry, like Ellen lost finer than she'd ever known. She'd spent her money helping Michael through graduate school—not that she ever begrudged him, nor that he didn't work for it as hard as she had herself, but it was a shame it had taken so long, she had grown old, would go to Vermont ugly, with nothing to wear.

Nothing to wear. Like her carburetor on a cold morning, her heart gave a jump and the color flooded her now. She went scarlet down to her fingertips as she felt herself seized by the thought.

Nothing to wear?

Not in her life had she jewelry as gorgeous as this, this ring dropped and forgotten by that pretty young woman who begrudged her a look through the glass. How was that woman to know where she'd lost it? Surely she'd remember having put it on, think she had worn it to dinner or wherever she and

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her young husband went. Surely she'd never think for a moment Kathleen...

Twelve seasons and never a problem. Yoni was hard, but she'd stand by her workers. No one would ever imagine. Kathleen hardly believed it herself when she slipped the ring into her pocket.

They gathered in housekeeping at the end of each day to compare notes on who'd had the worst room, bargain for who would get which floor tomorrow. Five maids, they sat in their hard folding chairs in an arc facing Yoni, hands digging into the box full of cups and slipping them into the plastic while the housekeeper laughed, carried on.

This end of the day was important to them and to her. Work done, they could be easy and comfortable, relaxed, as they talked and shared the small details of life. Their meetings were late enough afternoon that the game room next door was usually empty, guests usually all dining out. The housekeeping room could stay open, letting them enjoy what wafted in of the late summer breezes, for in spite of the air conditioning this tiny room would never be cool.

Today it seemed worse than ever, but Kathleen knew the sweat on her brow wasn't entirely heat.She felt it branded her, made it apparent to any that looked that she had a secret. She knew that was plain paranoia. If anyone thought anything of it, they might put it down to the lashing she'd gotten from Yoni, the quickly served verbal punishment that had been put aside for one of Yoni's favorite preoccupations.

Yoni was mocking the new girl, her fierce black eyes snapping over her gap-toothed smile. It was the same smile she'd had when she had been hired, ten years ago, seeming young enough then to be Kathleen's daughter. But no mind what they said on TV about Japanese, they aged just like everyone else. If Yoni's hair was still black and her figure still trim enough to get away with tight jeans, her face didn't get her the same kind of men that it did.

"...trying to be slower than Kathleen?"

The others laughed easily and Kathleen joined in, knowing that was expected —no hurt feelings here, she had slowed down this summer. Her seniority, affability, would forgive her a lot.

The new girl looked ready to cry. Yoni could do that to the young ones, the teens who came on to work over the summer, earned good tips for indifferent service, went under the wing of herself or Daisy and under the suspicion of the rest. She looked at Kathleen, expecting defense, but Kathleen couldn't think of what to say. She couldn't remember the name—Amy or Annie, or was that last summer's? The ring was a weight in her pocket, exciting and frightening. It made her forget all her lines.

"Kathleen," Daisy said slowly, "Don't you feel good?"

Daisy always spoke to her slowly, as though she couldn't quite fathom that otherwise Kathleen would know what she meant. The rest of them looked at her now, expectant, while Kathleen reached in the box. She ad-libbed into their silence, eyes fixed on the plastic bag in her hand. "My son's getting married this month."

Her voice was too loud. She heard the quiver and hoped they did not. She wanted to look at them, see, but her eyes remained riveted to the bag, the "Sanitized for Your Protection" as her dirty hands swathed over the unending stream of cheap cups.

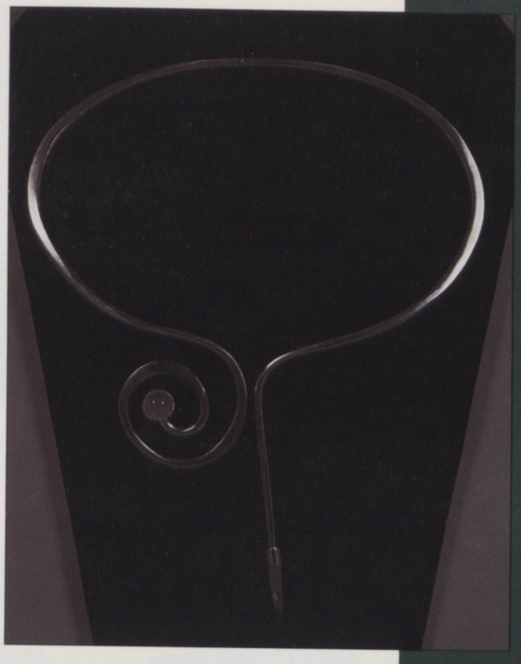
"Little Michael?" Yoni sounded amazed. She had met Kathleen's son once when he was fifteen, too sick one June day to stay home. He'd been set up in an empty room like a king, and all the maids took turns checking up on him. When he'd vomited all over the bedspread, Yoni had cleaned up efficiently without ever saying a word. "He just *otoko-no ko*, a pimply-faced little boy. Who he find to marry?"

Kathleen said, "They're having me up for the wedding. I need the 29th and 30th off."

Yoni pursed her lips and whistled, "So quick? Is she pregnant? No mind. You can have those two days,but no more. You know how busy we are." One of the last weekends in summer before the kids went to school, the hotel would be near-capacity.

Kathleen didn't need anymore. She nodded her head in acceptance, and

Prize **First In Metals**
Artist **Mitzy Jonkheer**
Title **Color Of The Dream I Had**
Category **Metals**



Prize **First In Textiles**
Artist **Jeanne Brady**
Title **Just Not So Story #6**
All That Remains
Category **Textiles**



Yoni, reassured, gave her a benevolent smile. "You go see him Thanksgiving, when we shut down. See if they started your grandchild. Mr. Gray says maybe good bonus this year."

The others wore uncertain faces, obviously confused by her announcement, its tone, the expression she must herself wear. She could almost hear Daisy's mind working, the superciliously motherly woman pondering what this must mean, the loss of her son when Kathleen "had no one else." It might net her a casserole or potted plant like the ones Daisy had given the desk clerk who'd lost her mother three years before. She knew they all sensed her discomfort, if not its source. They didn't know that the ring was burning its way through the cloth.

Footsteps in the hallway beyond the small room; Kathleen jumped in her seat, looked towards the doorway, alarmed. The eyes of five others followed hers, watched two teenage boys romping their way towards the game room. Clean-cut kids, miniatures of the businessmen who had spawned them, whose kingdom's they'd one day inherit.

She felt fearfully near to the point of tears, uncertain what she'd expected. The couple in white demanding the return of the ring? Or worse, dapper Mr. Gray, the annual promiser of unmaterialized bonuses, asking her just what this meant. She knew what the other girls thought of her: sweet, simple, homely Kathleen. She didn't want them watching her humbled for this. She shuddered, both from the relief and the horror, unable to hide the reaction though she knew Yoni, whose eyes could spy dust in a white pile carpet, would see it.

Yoni cocked her head curiously to one side, her tongue to the gap in her teeth. "Kathleen, you afraid I'd not let you go? Take another day off if you want. I maybe can cover for you."

The housekeeper was injured, seeing Kathleen's emotion, seemingly thinking that she was the cause. Kathleen bit down on her lip and tried to regain her composure. "I don't feel good," she said. "Can I go home?"

Daisy, self-satisfied, looked to the others as if to say, "See?"

Back on tangible ground, away from the morass of emotion, Yoni seemed relieved. "Ah, go on," she said, "You cleaned your rooms for today, and as slow as you are on those cups we finish faster without you." She smiled teasingly, her underlying concern only for those who knew how to read it. "You feel really bad? You need a ride?"

"No, no. I just need to go home to bed."

They watched her rise from the chair and weave her way out to the hallway,



turn towards the lobby beyond. The hall seemed ten times as long as it ever did, the voices growing evermore distant, seemed far too surreal. She thrust her hand in the smock, to the ring, felt the smooth, soothing curve of the onyx, the rough sprinkle of diamonds. Aside from the odd bar of soap, the Kleenex they all took, she'd never stolen from work or from anywhere else she remembered, had had no idea how it would feel. She wondered the worth of the ring, wondered the penalty if she were caught. Would she lose her job at the hotel?

She had to walk past the front desk to get out, returned the wave of the smiling clerk. He'd gone to school with Michael, been amazed to learn when he'd first come here who she was. He was himself maintence man at the start—*eight* years ago? He'd risen fast in Mr. Gray's opinion since that time and would be manager if he kept it up.

She knew he expected her to stop and to talk to him as she always did, go into the small attached office or at least to the counter, but she had too much momentum to stop. She was moving too fast, the clatter of her hard heels (nurse's shoes, required) on the tile floor was too staccato, she couldn't even slow down. Out into the parking lot, half-deserted with the tourists departed for dinner, and found her salt-seared blue sedan, unlocked it with trembling fingers. The smell of hot vinyl made her dizzy as she slipped in the car, but she didn't take time to open the window, set the fan on full blast and started it, eased it out onto the road.

Traffic was mercifully light. She watched her speed with stringent eye, maneuvering turns so long familiar she could have made them at night without lights, from boardwalk to causeway, from causeway to bridge and then into the city, to the back street that led to her house, finally into the drive, all the while hunched over the steering wheel as if pulled down by the weight of the ring.

She couldn't let go at first, sat clutching the wheel long after she'd eased up the gas and the engine had stalled out and died. She registered automatically that her house needed painting, the bright yellow coat she'd put on last summer already fading and peeling under the sun. It made the house look abandoned even though the lawn was well tended, porch swept, meter clicking methodically on.

There was even less sign of life in the houses around hers, the neighborhood quiet as always. Her nearest neighbor, Mrs. Brinson, signaled her presence

through only a quiet little code—venetian blinds open, blinds closed, the occasional church van with food for the shut-in, the glimmer of the blue TV from tight-shuttered windows at night. The Thurbers were little better, the Olsons, Mrs. Haversham two houses down kept a Siamese cat that sylphlike would on occasion appear at the kitchen window, pass judgement on the passing world with its soulless blue eyes. Sometimes Kathleen wished there'd be havoc, even the sounds of stereos too loud would be preferable to the mortuary stillness of this dying road. Old people only around her, she grown old herself, too old to pull pranks like this, to draw police to her home.

Would they send the police? She prayed not, let Mr. Gray come for her, she would gladly give back the ring, leave her job. Or if they sent the policeman at least let it not be Larry, the one who stayed free at the hotel in exchange for keeping an eye on the place, not much of a cop but a good man, and one she'd rather not have to know. Their common heritage was a bond for them; so many times he'd come in while she cleaned out his room and she'd heard him discordantly bellowing forth, *I'll bring you home again Kathleen.*

Home. She locked her car door mechanically, walked up the rickety porch to the mailbox, not surprised to find nothing was in it. She pushed the door hard to the wooden frame, jiggled the key in the lock and went into the serene sour silence. She put her purse on the TV and turned on the lamp in the living room. She switched on the tube out of habit, her eyes not on the humming blue screen but on the picture, Michael's picture, over the TV that smiled at her, teeth postbraces straight and dimpled chin. He looked so like his father to her. To the sounds of a show host consoling a losing contestant, she pulled the smock from her, with uncharacteristic abandon draping it over the patched leather easy-chair as she took the ring from the pocket it seared, looked at it in the light of the lamp, half-expecting it transformed into the onerous thing it had become.

It still shone radiantly. It promised a beauty and an elegance she'd never known.

There were no excuses for this. She had none to offer man nor God, but as she looked at it, she knew she'd not



return it. She wanted so much what it promised. It was no more than she deserved—surely she'd not worked more than half her life to slink into her son's wedding unadorned? Unadored. She felt a sharp pang of envy for that woman, that Ellen, that Vicki who'd captured her son. She, who'd not even a wedding ring to remember Michael's father, still deserved.

She took the ring into the bedroom, placed it carefully on her bed, in the center of her bedspread just as if it were a stone amid that flowered field. She slid open the door to her closet, reached high for her sewing kit, pulled it down and opened it quickly enough to upset it, rummaged through its haphazard entrails.

There past the spools of white thread was a razor blade. She took the pillow off her bed and pulled it from its faux satin cover, slit the seam alongone dark-stained end. The ring, wrapped in her old yellow scarf, would go in there. With a few neat stitches she'd sealed it inside.

Before she put up the basket, and undid all the evidence of her treasure trove, she held the pillow to her breast and she wept, wept over the beautiful ring.

That night she dreamed of a young girl with long hay-colored hair and laughing black eyes that, if they were not pretty, appealed. She dreamed of a sturdy young woman, supple round arms and a full breast and a tending fleshiness that had a charm of its own to the type of young man who liked a young woman to snuggle. She dreamed of Kathleen in her youth, Michael's father spinning her round in a waltz, making her laugh and sing *hey nonny* under her breath. The church hall was transformed to a magic land, lights sparkling on windows, an old-fashioned lantern on the table where the green grocer's wife served the punch. She saw the light catch on the folds of the dancing girl's white party dress, on the silk ribbon that weaved through her hair. She saw her mother at the sideline with her sister, her nephew—all laughing and loving and amazed that their changeling girl had such a handsome young beau.

How he had loved her. His words were as sweet as persimmons, his hands so gentle around her she hadfelt precious, like pearls. He'd kissed like a young boy, clumsy and wet and impassioned, his hands trembling as he held her against him and pulled at the waist of her skirt. It wasn't his words that had won her, nor even his comeliness, but that tremble. Oh, so earnestly he had wanted and that want built desire in her. He'd married her with a moment, with the thrust that had taken her innocence, with the short weeks of courting before he had drifted away.

What a gift he had given her—beauty. The dancing girl sang *nonny hey.*

She woke to a gray-sunwashed morning, sat up in the used bed that had been her second purchase in her first home, after the hand-finished crib. Michael's picture on the dresser smiled at the ceramic Madonna. She recalled suddenly as if it were again a day long ago spent at the beach just the two of them. She'd held his plump hands and spun in a circle knee-deep in the surf, seen his sunny face bright with delight and desire, the freedom to fly through the salt-scented air. At four he had just begun questioning the lack of a father, the grandparents he knew through only mailed gifts.

She hoped that he loved her, this Vicki, more than her father's last name.

The ring was a lump in her pillow, scarcely discernible as she ran her hand over the case.

With her teeth she tore at the stitches and squeezed the scarf-wrapped bundle out through the hole.

Cold diamonds, black onyx. Bittersweet shame settled over her, and in a spirit of self-mockery she forced the ring onto her finger for the first and last time. In the cold light of morning she was no longer so certain the diamonds were real, but the ring was still pretty—and costly. She suspected the cost to her could be dear.

It weighted her hand as she dressed for work, the blue polyester pants as old as her job, the flowered shirt from the rack of the five and dime. It caught her eye when she fluffed out her hair in front of the mirror—rather than enhancing her features it made her seem homelier, older, with a face that at best would be motherly and a figure to beguile no eye.

The view through the kitchen window suggested it was likely to rain, no clouds but a heavy sky, a summer wind whipped the leaves framed in the deep August blue. She didn't bother the toaster, spread scuppernong jam on the crust ends of the loaf and took her food into the living room, murmured grace



Prize **First In Sculpture**
Artist **Ray Kaylor**
Title **Untitled #2**
Category **Sculpture**

Prize **Second In Painting**
Artist **Irene Bailey**
Title **Mr. Armstrong**
Category **Painting**



into the silence before she turned on the TV, sat down into the familiar sag of the sofa as she waited for it to spark into life.

The square of light in the center expanded to static; she tried to remember if a crash in the night had warned her the antenna had fallen again but all she recalled was the music that swirled through her dream, the sound of her own happy song.

She finished the bread without tasting it, rose and started to don her smock out of habit before she decided to fold it instead, carry it under her arm to the waiting car.

The morning would hold heavier traffic when the sun had gone higher,but 6:30 was too soon for most of the tourists, and she took the ride in with no trouble. Pulling into the parking lot of the hotel, she saw Larry the cop pulling out. He paused and waved half a doughnut at her through the window, a closed-mouthed smile to indicate the fate of the rest.

She parked in her usual place and made her way through the lobby, saw the tray of glazed doughnuts that Larry had pilfered from, otherwise largely untouched. The clerk making wake up calls nodded hello as Kathleen walked past her into the lounge with its rows of quietly cheerful TVs. The night auditor, recently divorced and seldom in a hurry to go home after his shift, stood before one with a cup of coffee in hand, the bleary-eyed grimness of the night worker fading as he saw her approach. "Morning, Kathleen. Did you catch the game?" He shook his head morosely, not expecting a response. "Larry's sure happy this morning. He won five bucks."

The hallway that led to the game room seemed long. A mother and child walked towards the beach at the end of it, from the economy rooms, the ones Kathleen usually cleaned.

The door to housekeeping opened. Yoni was talking to someone, someone stepped out with a clipboard in hand to go to her floor and the cart in the closet, double-check her cleaning supplies.

It was Amanda (not Annie or Amy). Yoni was speaking to the girl with an edge not usually there, chiding her for failing to restock her equipment the previous afternoon.

The housekeeper cut off mid-word when she saw Kathleen. "Go on," she said to the other and Amanda looked at her, looked at Kathleen with an uninformed conspiratorial sympathy as if to say, "It won't be that bad."

Yoni beckoned Kathleen in, closed the door behind them, and they faced each other over the closed box of cups, the new cups, to be bagged for a new batch of guests.

Yoni looked curiously vulnerable. There was no doubt that she knew.



"Kathleen?"

Kathleen held out the hand with ring.

Yoni sat heavily in her chair. "Shit. Kathleen, why did you do it? Why?"

Kathleen thought of telling the truth, the wedding, her shame, but she realized it wouldn't be all of the truth, for that she didn't know where to begin. The ring was a weight on the housekeeper now, an unintended result, and Kathleen would add to that weight if she tried, if she made a bid for sympathy. Instead she stood silently by.

Yoni sighed. "Michael getting married. What would Michael think of this?In your vacuum bag," she said suddenly. She held out her hand for the ring. "You did not see it there on the floor."

"I don't want you to get in trouble for me."

There was a flash in Yoni's eyes, not anger, although the housekeeper balled up her fist; something else, something more. "Stupid woman. You want me to fire you? I won't let you make me do that. This is my wedding present to you, for Michael. But I don't want to see you again. You go to the wedding and stay."

Yoni stood by her workers, her friends.

There would always be work for a cleaning woman—even if Yoni gave her no reference there was the nursing home by the waterfront where she could apply. More grueling labor, less pay, but she would survive. She had overcome shame once before.

She reached down to twist off the ring.

Tight, mercilessly tight, on her hand, work-roughened, spotted with age.

It wouldn't come off of her finger. It seemed it had settled to stay. ▬

Prize **Fifth**
Author **Ashley Gruber**
Title **Margaret**
Category **Poetry**

After it ain't dark no more
And I've made my way to
The big old building
Just me and the big quiet sky
And the bus driver
And a few other people who
Mind their own business...

Like the girls in the building.
I take out the garbage
and a girl walks by
And puts an apple core in
My trash can.

They all wear
Bags on their backs
And always look nice
But never stop going...

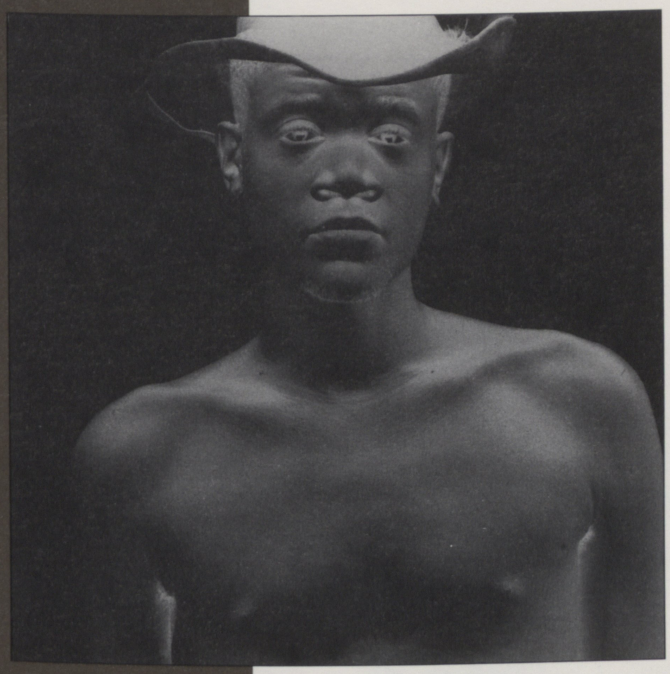
And they mind their own business.

Out the window I see
More of them walking fast...
The patterns of the
Children with bags move and move.
They look straight ahead but
I wonder what they're really seeing.

I see them wind around
The Arboretum fast, so fast...
And it all looks so funny...
These youngsters running
Around with backpacks
Looking straight ahead.

I'm cleaning up after
Them so my daughter can
Wander around a pretty
Garden with a backpack...

And mind her own business.



Prize **First In Photography**
Artist **Todd Houser**
Title **Untitled**
Category **Photography**



Prize **Finalist**
Artist **Traci Mercer**
Title **Watervessel #1**
Category **Metals**

Prize **First In Graphic Design**
Artist **10:00 Graphics III Class,1992**
Title **Design 9: History Calendar**
Category **Graphic Design**







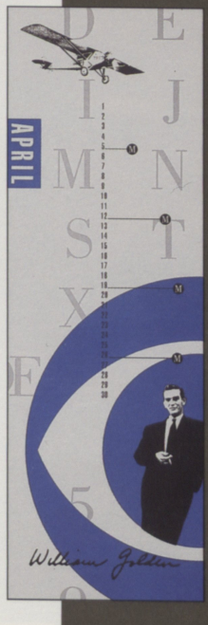














Time was
When I could remember
The mystery in your eyes.
I smelled the rain in your hair-

Your plum lips
Were taken in so readily
(A harvest of Godflesh).
But now I must forget.

Arsenic
on your words
Henbane
your scent
Permeated,
Poisoned my thoughts.

I recollect a time
when I willed every second
last an infinity
My passion burned
as the sword of God
over your Eden of Heart.
That time is wan,
fading....
Hazing over....
indiscernable.
Seeping into this hard Earth
on my tears of blood-

Fruitless

I have brought you
Full circle,
you see.

This is the end of the beginning,
the beginning of the end.
(A Golden ring)
Destined for no beginning
And no end
Yet all are at the
Same junction.

You came with nothing,
And will leave likewise.

Vanity is not a treasure,
and treasure...
true wealth-
is not vanity.

This ring,
when not properly filled,
is but the definition
of a hole...
filled full
of arsenic and old memories.

Prize **Finalist**
Author **Rod Hawkins**
Title **Of Arsenic And Old Memories**
Category **Poetry**

Illustrations by
Stanton Blakeslee

a cleaner place

Prize **Second**
Author **Jim Shamlin**
Title **A Cleaner Place**
Category **Prose**

My back is not touching the steel girder behind me, but I can feel that it's there. It is pressing against an invisible skin that covers me, a few inches over my coat. I cast my stare into the tunnel, hoping to catch the glare of headlights through the thick mist of my own breath. There is something else: a person standing beside me, several feet away—beyond the scope of my vision, but I smell a distinctly human musk. I stand rigidly, my feet at shoulder width, prepared to resist the push.

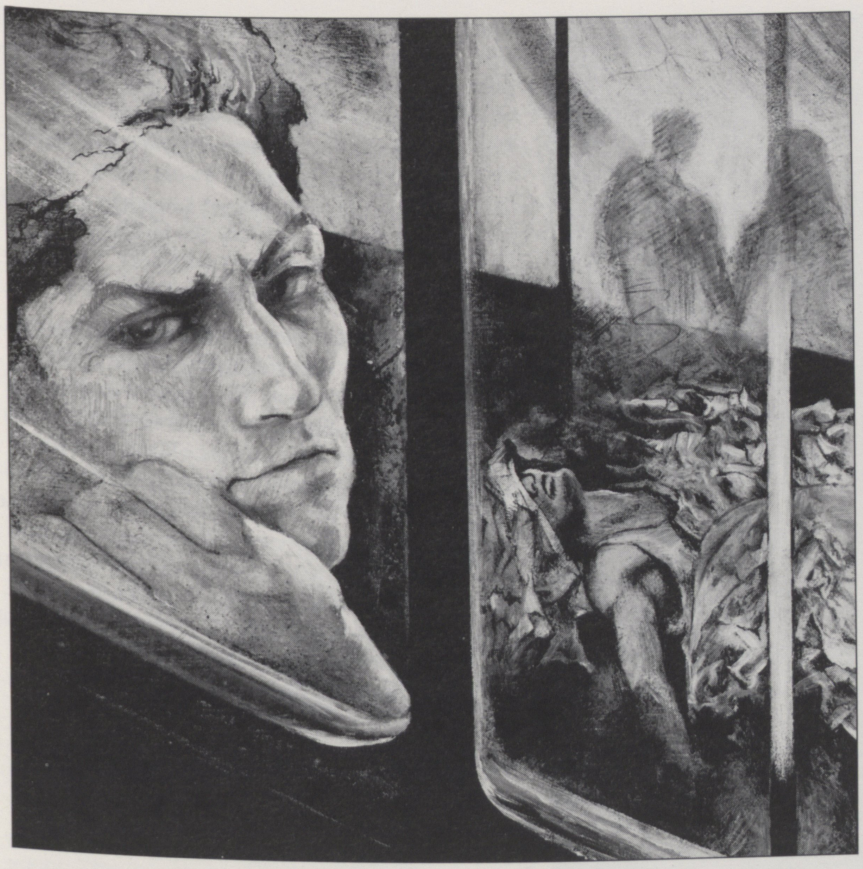
I tighten the muscles in my legs when I hear the stranger moving closer, keeping them stiff when the shuffling stops.

It is quiet for five heartbeats.

"You got any change?" The voice is hoarse, yet mezzo-soprano. I do not know if it is a woman or a man.

I tense the muscles around my eyes, trying to stare deeper into the darkness. My calves are beginning to ache. Three more heartbeats pass before the stranger moves away. When the sound grows soft enough, I relax my legs. It is almost inaudible when I turn around and hazard a curious stare down the platform. The stranger is no longer there.

I stamp my feet. The chamber echoes with a dull clatter and the scattered shadows on the other side of the station turn their heads in my direction. I feel warmer and the stiffness in my legs fades. It seems almost foolish, tap-dancing in the underground, but I don't know of anything else to do. My



overcoat is buttoned to the neck. It is the topmost layer of insulation over my jacket, shirt, and undershirt. Still, I feel the chill.

I stop marching in place when I feel the platform tremble beneath my feet. A small, white light appears in the tunnel. I watch as it grows larger. The sound comes next. It begins soft and low, like thunder in the distance, then crescendos to a howl that smothers every other sound. I turn once more to be certain that the stranger has gone—anyone who wanted to push somebody in front of the train would move when the noise was the loudest.

A procession of steel boxes passes me, each filled with people. Through the windows that rush past me, they seem no more intimate than statues. When the train begins to slow, I see fragments of motion. It seems that the most minute movements draw my attention: a young man in the fifth car turns the page of his newspaper, a middle-aged woman in the sixth looks at her watch, an old man in the seventh closes his eyes.

The tenth car stops in front of me. There is nothing to see through its windows, which strikes me as strange: while the other compartments are as full as usual, this one is practically vacant. When the door shifts open, the reason confronts me—a powerful stench, so pungent and sour that it has an almost physical presence, envelopes me when I step into the car. It seeps from the vagrant who is sprawled, facedown, across my usual seat. Disgust pulls at the corners of my mouth as I step across the car and take a place on the opposite bench.

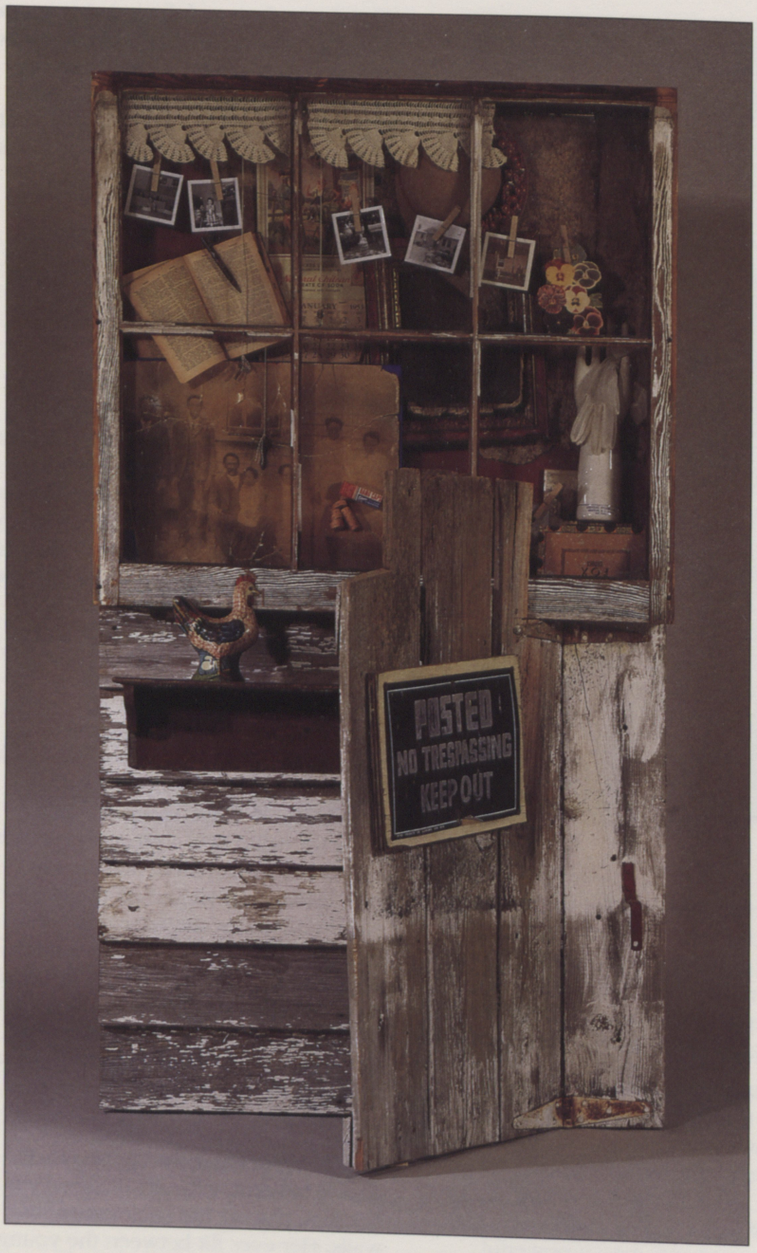
The doors close and the train begins to roll. I watch through the window as the columns pass, slowly at first, then faster, until they rush by in a blur, and then the glass goes black. My eyes drift from the window to the advertisements posted above it: a recruiting poster for the police, something about STDs written in Spanish, and a 970-prefix dating hotline. The smell seems less powerful now. My eyes begin to drift, falling toward the person who sleeps across from me.

I get only a glimpse of ragged blue cloth before I turn away, casting my stare at the far end of the compartment. There are three people there, positioned in an almost perfect triangle. Closest to me is a woman my own age, perhaps a few years younger. I can only see the profile of her nose and lips through the veil of dark hair that falls across her cheek. Her head is tilted downward, unseen eyes focused on the magazine that rests on her skirt.

Across from her, leaning against the doors, is a young man dressed in black leather. A crown of thorns is tattooed on his naked scalp. The harsh light gives his pallid skin a greenish hue that makes his cheeks seem hollow. His eyes seem to be locked on the magazine in the lap of the woman across from him. I stare at him for several seconds, counting the links in the chain that runs from his earring to the corner of his mouth, before I realize that his gaze is resting somewhere else—in the direction of the magazine, but several inches higher.

The third person in the group is an elderly woman, who sits diagonally in her seat, placing her back against two walls. Her eyes flit between the young punk and the woman, and then she notices my stare. Her eyes stare back at me from the shadows of their sockets and a skeletal hand clutches the air before her. She is beckoning me to her end of the compartment. I don't move.

I face forward again and turn my eyes to the figure I've been avoiding—the



Prize **Editors' Choice**
Artist **Jerry Jackson**
Title **Saved By Two Bang Caps: Toursie & Glennie**
Category **Sculpture**

vagrant. His body is a pile of dirty cloth. From where I sit, I can see at least three shirts, possibly a fourth underneath, and two jackets. His trousers are torn along the inseam, revealing the yellowed leg of a pair of sweat pants. The cuffs of long flannel breeches peek out at his ankles. Only his feet are bare, though blackened with soot. I cannot– I will not—look at his face.

I can feel the train slowing, inertia pulling me forward, and I notice that the tunnel outside the window is growing lighter. Soon, the window is filled with light and the images of columns rushing by, quickly at first, then slower, until they are no longer passing at all. The doors shift open, and a man steps into the car. He's wearing the same overcoat as he wore yesterday. It isn't quite black, but a dark shade of gray. He pauses for a moment to look at the vagrant, then sits on the bench beside me. The train begins to roll before he speaks.

"Morning, Phil."

"Morning, Chris."

Often, this is all we say to one another, but today, he leaves his newspaper folded in his lap. He is staring at the bench across from us, his nose wrinkled with disgust. "Can you smell that," he says. It's more a statement than a question.

I turn to face him, but he doesn't meet my eyes. At the other end of the car, the young punk reveals a row of perfect teeth.

"They should put them off the train," he says, a bit more loudly. "They should put them out of the city."

"No," I say softly. "They should get rid of them altogether."

"You know, there was this plan in October to give them all a free ticket to Florida for the winter. The idea even pleased the bleeding hearts. Trouble is, the Floridians heard about it. They didn't like it much. They'll take in all the scum from the Cuban jails, but they don't want the American variety."

"I think it was for the best."

He looks at me for the first time, his face a mask of disbelief.

"Do you want to see them when we are retired, too?"

"You got a point there." He shakes his head. "Cat food."

I don't ask him to elaborate.

He opens the paper, turning directly to the stock market report, and begins to scan the columns. I watch his face as he reads the paper. His black eyes are steady, but his mouth twitches periodically —sometimes it assumes a smile, but more often, it forms a tacit curse. He may be swearing silently. If he were, I wouldn't know. His voice would be smothered by the steady rumble of the train.

"His eyes are open, looking at me, staring through me, and his mouth is agape."

When we stop in the next station, the business woman leaves our compartment. The young punk throws himself at the place where she was sitting, apparently oblivious to the fact that she enters the compartment in front of our own. He sits, legs splayed, and glowers at the old woman, who watches him nervously, eyes avoiding his stare, her right arm elbow-deep in a wicker shopping bag.

Another man steps into our compartment, a small man with hair so blonde it seems almost white. He looks at the punk, then at the vagrant. He steps out of the car. The train is still for a long time.

Chris looks over the top of his newspaper, but says nothing. The punk rises and goes to the door. He leans out to gaze over the platform, then ducks back inside the car. His eyes meet mine for an instant before he opens the door between the compartments and steps onto the small ledge outside.

Seconds later, a police officer passes by our window. He stops to scan our compartment with his eyes, then doubles back toward the door. He is a lean man with dark skin and a closely shaven head. Once he is inside our car, his hand drifts to his belt, fingers brushing over the butt of his pistol to remove the small handset. He holds it close to his mouth when he speaks. "I've got him. Third car from the end."

I look at the window at the end of our car. The punk is pressing himself against the railing between the cars, but I can still see the profile of his mouth, the chain that parts his lips shimmers in the fluorescent light. I want to ask the officer what is happening, but I know it is best to remain silent.

Shortly, another officer enters the car—a short. fat man with thick black sideburns. They stand directly in front of me as they speak.

"You get the head," the tall one says.

"I ain't touching his head. You get his head."

"You want to touch his feet?"

"No, I don't want to touch his feet, but I don't want to touch his head, either."

"How about we both get an arm?"

He pauses for a moment and runs his fingers through his sideburns. "I hate this damned job."

The tall officer bends over and takes the vagrant's arm, pulls until the vagrant falls to the floor. The other officer steps over the vagrant, whispering a curse, and takes the other arm. Together, they drag him across the linoleum and through the door. I cannot avoid seeing the vagrant's face. His eyes are open, looking at me, staring through me, and his mouth is agape.

Seconds later, they are gone. The doors shift closed and the train begins to move. I feel cold again, terribly cold, but sit still, unable to move. When I lift my head at last, my eyes fall upon a long, dark stain on the bench across from me.

"He was dead," I say softly.

"No wonder he stunk so bad."

"He was dead," I repeat.

I can hear Chris folding his paper; I can almost feel his eyes upon me. He says nothing for what seems like a long time while I sit still, without speaking, without thinking. I feel colder now. My hands are starting to shake and I can feel my body tremble.

Chris speaks. His voice is soft and even, though still twisted in the urban way. "Sometimes I look at you and see the same guy I saw—what was it—five years ago? The guy who asked me how to get to Sixth from the Avenue of the Americas. Know what I mean?"

It is silent for a time. When I speak, the voice I hear comes from somewhere outside me. I can feel my mouth move, the warm, damp breath flowing over my tongue, but it's as if I'm not making any noise, only mouthing someone else's words in perfect synchronicity. The voice I hear is deeper and hoarser than my own. "When I was younger, we used to play in the fields beyond the wood. There were so many fields there, full of thick grass."

"Maybe it's because you come from a cleaner place," Chris says. "You come from a place so clean that the dirt can only get down to a certain point."

"It wasn't grass, though," I say, as if Chris had never spoken at all. "It was rye, or perhaps corn—some kind of crop. The farmer would walk out from this small house. We could barely see it in the distance."

"Look, things are different here. Your nearest neighbor is through the wall. If he breaks wind, you know what he ate. It's just—"

"He had a gun—a long shotgun. It was old and worn. There were places on the barrel where the naked metal show-

ed through. It would catch the light as he walked. It seemed to sparkle. I can't remember what the farmer looked like, but I can remember his gun."

"People who've have robbed say the same thing," Chris says. "'I can't remember what he looked like, Officer, but he was carrying a .22 that had a scratch on one side.' It's strange."

"He would carry that gun with him when he came to tell us to get out of his fields. An hour later, he'd be back. It was like that every spring. He didn't bother us in the winter. He never bothered us in winter."

"I guess things were different in winter. Here, it always the same. The only way you tell the difference is it's either too damned hot or too damned cold. For three days a year, maybe four, it feels good."

"He didn't come after us one spring. His fields were a mess. The grass was sparse, with clumps of soil and furrows where he had driven the tractor during the last harvest. The field was peppered with strands of long, dead grass and brambles. We stopped playing there when Jerry barked his arm, stripped the skin from the wrist to elbow against something. I don't know what."

"Phil?"

"We played in the woods, on the edge of the field. All the winter, shouting among the trees. Building forts out of deadfall, chasing rabbits and,—"

"Is this going anywhere? You keep barking and barking about this place I've never seen like it's—"

I turned to face Chris. His eyes meet mine, but I could not feel them there. "We didn't know anything until April. That's when the smell reached the woods."

Chris is silent. His features seem frozen, his mouth forming a perfectly straight line, his eyes staring somewhere behind my own. He turns away and looks over his shoulder to find that we are alone in the compartment. Neither of us, it seems, saw the old woman leave.

"That's a pretty bad memory," Chris says. "That smell must have—"

"That's not the point," I say. "He lived alone, Chris. Nobody knew he was dead until he started to smell."

"That kind of thing happens in the city, too. All the time. There was this old lady in the attic of my sister's building, a mean old hag who was so tight she never ran the heat in the winter. Nobody knew about her for months. So what?"

"So how are we any different from them?

"Why do we have to be?"

"I stare at the floor before me, trying to find shapes in the grime."

The compartment leans forward, an indication that the train is approaching the long stretch of track that runs beneath the river. The lights flicker twice, then fade until the compartment is almost dark. I realize that we are alone, Chris and I, riding in the darkened compartment, travelling beneath the river. It is only he and I, and the shadow of that smell.

"What's the difference between him and us, Chris? Really."

"Phil. Look at me, guy."

I look at him. His forehead is smooth, his jaw set, but there is something uncertain in his eyes.

"Change the subject or shut up," he says. "Get me?"

"Got you."

"There's some things in this world I'd just rather not think about," he says. His voice is softer now.

The train rolls silently through the darkness. It slopes upward and the lights glow brighter again. I stare at the floor before me, trying to find shapes in the grime. Today, I see only faces. Their eyes are cleaner places in the filth, and those cleaner places stare back at me. I can almost feel their anger.

"I don't know why you're upset," Chris says at last. "People die all the time. I got this brother-in-law who's a cop. He's a rookie, just joined last spring. His partner's this old guy. I never met him, but Greg tells me about him. That's my brother-in-law's name—Greg. Nice name, right?"

I say nothing.

"So anyways, his partner's this crusty old fart who's been walking the same beat downtown for twenty years or something. Greg's first day on the job, the guy's walking along pointing to the squares of pavement on the sidewalk. Now get this: for every square, the guy tells Greg about a person who died, right on that spot." He laughs. "Could you imagine that, just walking along and some guy talking to you, saying, 'well, that's where some suit landed on Black Friday, and the one beside it, an old lady had a heart attack,' like it's some kind of sight-seeing tour. Some tour, hey?"

"I thought you wanted to change the subject."

"I am changing the subject."

"You're talking about death."

"It's a story, Phil, just a story. He was probably making it up anyway."

I shake my head. "It could be true, all of it."

"Impossible! There's no way that somebody could kick on every last—"

"There are ten million people in this city," I say. My voice is smooth and calm. "Thousands of them die every day, thousands more are born to replace them, only to die later. It's quite possible that someone's last blood has fallen on any given stone in this city."

"That reminds me of this playground I pass every day when I'm on my way to



Prize **Second In Ceramics**
Artist **Jamie Kirkpatrick**
Title **Ash Starburst**
Category **Ceramics**



Prize **First In Printmaking**
Artist **Amanda Taylor Durant**
Title **Interior With Bottles**
Category **Printmaking**

Prize **Second In Textiles**
Artist **Laura Sharar**
Title **Under The Sea**
Category **Textiles**



the station. You should see it some time, Phil. You'd laugh."

"Every place you step, you're passing through the outline of a corpse, a huge pattern of corpses lying on top of corpses."

"That's just what I'm talking about," he says. "They got this area of the playground, near the hopscotch boards. God only knows what they use it for—

"Everywhere you go, the pavement is brown, reddish brown. I always wondered what made it that color. It's blood. It's so much blood."

"They got it painted with the outlines of bodies. Little kids' bodies. I guess the kids lay in the outlines. It must be part of some game they're teaching them. Some game."

"It's the city, Phil."

"It looks like some kind of murder scene, like some crackpot finally broke and sprayed the school yard with a machine gun."

"It's tainted somehow. There's filth everywhere, so thick. It's on everything you touch. It seeps through your skin and gets inside you."

"It's a God damned riot, Phil, I'm telling you."

I look at him. There is water in the corners of his eyes and his face is flushed. He catches my stare, then turns away. I turn to face the opposite side of the car. The stain on the bench is only a smear now. In months, itwon't be noticeable anymore, just another part of the grime.

The train slows and Chris rises. "I'll see you tomorrow, Phil, maybe Wednesday."

"Maybe."

When we stop moving, he steps briskly through the doors. I watch his back moving away from me until a woman steps into my way. She pauses in the doorway, but is swept into the car by the people behind her. She takes the bench across from me and looks at herself in a mirror she takes from her purse.

People brush by in shades of khaki and gray, slowly filling the compartment. When the bell rings, a hand clasps the side of the door, holding it open as one more person enters the car. I rise and cross the compartment to stand by the door. I look over the woman's shoulder, watching her reflection in the mirror. In time, she sees the reflection of my eyes. She turns to face me and she smiles.

"Without thinking, I turn to face the voice."

The smile does not last long. Her eyes stray away from mine, then back. "Did somebody die in here or what?"

Someone laughs.

"Yes," I say. "Right where you're sitting."

"What a coincidence," she says, then returns to her mirror.

I brace myself against the post when the next station enters my window. The train slows, the doors open, and I step out of the car. The tide of people bears me down the platform and around the corner, where it deposits me in a small alcove. I wait silently, looking at the pale sunlight that drifts down the stairway.

"Excuse me, sir, but do you have any change?"

Without thinking, I turn to face the voice. I find myself looking into the blue eyes of an old man. His face is covered with matted white hair that hides his lips and his forehead. Only the tops of his cheeks are visible, and they are crimson. While I'm reaching into my coat, I notice that he doesn't have the smell that the other beggars do.

I offer him the fistful of change I find in my pocket, glancing ruefully at the two subway tokens that fall into his cup along with the coins.

"Hey, thanks, buddy."

"Wait. There's more." I reach beneath my coat to the pocket of my trousers, where I find another handful of change, somewhat smaller than the first. I drop it into his cup and he smiles at me.

The traffic is growing thinner on its way to the exit. I take a step forward, but I feel a hand on my shoulder. It is the old man again. "Are you a bachelor?" he asks.

I look at him for a moment, my face set in a stare that tells him it's none of his business. He keeps looking at me, the same wan smile displacing his beard, until my features soften. "Yes, I am."

"Take these," he says. I raise my hand to recieve the two coins he offers me. "There's a fountain in front of the Randolph Building, a block west of the station."

I look at the pennies in my hand. They are old and brown, not shiny and new as wish-coins should be. I lift my head to look at the old man again. He gives me a smile that I cannot return.

"In my case," he says, "you might need them someday."

Prize **Finalist**
Author **Latonya L. Hargrove**
Title **The Black Woman**
Category **Poetry**

Even through the countless times the earth performs its ritual around the sun; situations change and are yet unchanging.

Quite often it is said that she has progressed considerably, but what good is this if she is still so far behind?

Forced to run a race in which her competitors repeatedly place her over again at the start.

So beautiful is she from head to toe, she is hunted for her skin, but is no mink.

So strongly domineering is she that when actually placed side-by-side with others her great shadow is cast over them and instills fear deep into their souls; but is no grizzly.

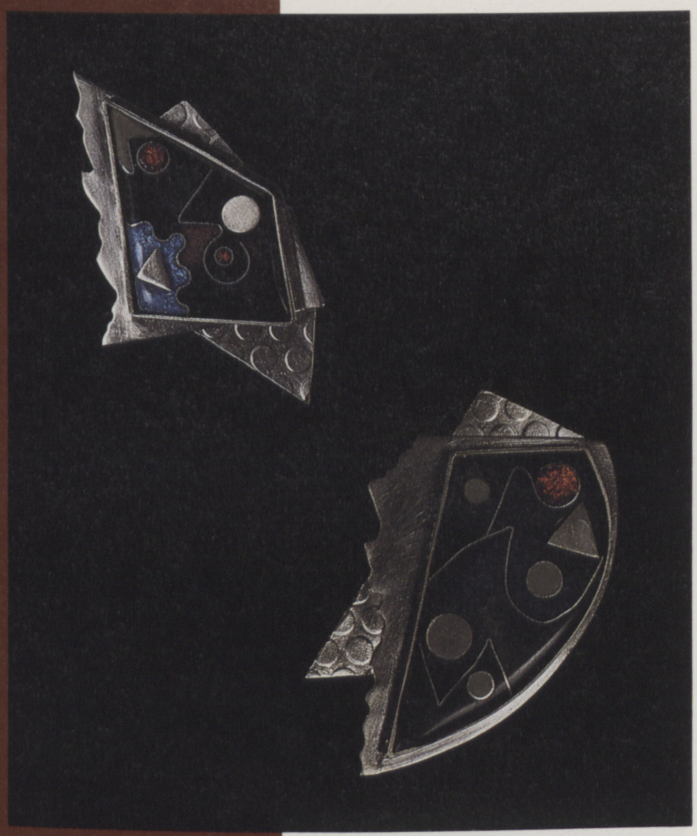
So rejected and prejudiced is she, even by her own, she must adapt to the battered life of an outcast; but is no criminal.

Sensitive yet unbreakable, Aggressive yet passive.

Vast as the set of fractionals that bridge zero and one, with each approaching step, she finds an infinite more to be taken for it.

It may seem unlikely for one to possess all this in entirety, but she is complete, she is a woman.

She is a Black Woman.



Prize **Second In Metals**
Artist **Jennifer Green**
Title **Circle Pins**
Category **Metals**



Prize **Finalist**
Artist **W. Keith Hobgood**
Title **Waffle House**
Category **Illustration**

Prize **Editor's Choice**
Artist **Steven Benson**
Title **El Pulpo**
Category **Wood**



Prize **Finalist**
Author **Rod Hawkins**
Title **Click**
Category **Poetry**

The Gears of time are Grinding to a halt
tonight.
There is an ominous presence abiding in the thunderstorm
outside.
I can feel it.
It won't be denied.
Something must change drastically
tonight.
We will have a meteor shower tonight,
one such as has not been seen by my eyes
since
my Dream
of the book's opening.
I feel the coming of stoppage.
I feel the onset of negated motion in the universal axis of being.
I feel Quietus beginning.
Spreading like a wave of heat
over the blind planet,
I feel the beginninninninninn—
No.
It is listening for me.
"I can't hear it."
Creeping like a stalking cat
I can't hear the last fading "click"
of the gears of our existence,
And the first great Rumble of my Reversal.
May I marvel at our raving fantasies,
Blind seers, and prophetic drivel?
Your words spill slowly from your lips...
Backwards....
And the storm begins.

Prize **Finalist**
Author **Ronald Jason Osborne**
Title **Rapids**
Category **Poetry**

Rush rhythm
of the river
as it pounds
on rocks
(first drums)
peeling over
granite under
skin so supple
and the bubbles
marking motion
gather, froth, and pop
in dizzy, swirling pools.

Prize **Third**
Author **J.E. Boyette**
Title **Rain**
Category **Prose**

rain

Illustrations by Lee Misenheimer

Sarah leans against the white column under the grey stone arches at the top of the sanctuary stairs. She wears her birthday jeans and a daisy patterned shirt.

Tom, the local bum, climbs up four of the twenty steps and stops.

"Hi Tom." Sarah says.

He glances toward her, his eyes catching hers for an eighth of a second. "Sarah. Fourteen. Sarah." he says.

"That's right Tom. Fourteen today. How did you know?"

Tom looks toward the sky. It's dutch boy blue like the sky in the crucifixion stained glass window. "Going to rain," he says.

"When is your birthday, Tom?"

Tom licks his finger and holds it in the air. Testing the wind. It seems to get stuck there like a giant mother who has reached down to take hold. Sarah wonders if it hurts him to hold it up so long, like it hurts her when she tries to roll her long hair.

She shifts her small frame. "Put your arm down Tom," she says.

He does, and unbuttons his outer overcoat. When he takes it off, the dust swirls around the hemline and Sarah smiles thinking of "Pig Pen" in the cartoons. Tom lovingly stretches the coat along the brass rail. He loops the sleeves under and over the bar and ties them securely. He pats the coat on the shoulder.

Sarah looks at her watch. Its new, Mickey Mouse. She likes it, she had written her favorite and richest aunt a letter of request for it, but she knows Daniel will tease her about it. "I don't care," she proclaims to the wind.

She looks at her golden watch now. Daniel is late. He is always late, she knows he can't be anything but late, but it makes her mad anyway. She pulls her blonde ponytail across her shoulder and twists it around and around her finger. The twist stays, in a ringlet, like Pollyanna. She wants it there. Daniel will know she is mad when he sees it.

Tom takes off his second overcoat and ties its sleeves to the hemline of the first coat lying prone across the rail. "You two stick together now," he says. "It's going to rain."

Daniel yanks the red Volkswagen bug to the curb. The right front tire bounces on the sidewalk. Tom screams, throws his arms around his coats and buries his face in their flaps.

Sarah stands straight and brushes the grit off the seat of her pants. She adjusts the shoulders of her blouse and sucks her stomach in tight.

Daniel runs up the steps skipping two then three, two then three. He grabs Sarah by the shoulders and lifts her off the ground. "I'm on time, on time Sarah can you believe it?" He jerks his hands away and she lands hard on the walkway. "God, look at your hair. It's twisted. What's the matter, what have I done, was it a cardinal sin?"

"I got a new watch Danny boy. You're late."



"Oh."
Tom stands, looks at Daniel and screams, "Rain!" He drops his voice to a whisper and says, "Rain, Daniel 16, December 12, rain."

"Hi Tom," Daniel says. "No rain today."

"Is your mom coming to help us when she gets off work?" Sarah asks.

"No, she's beat. I told her we could do it."

"We, did you say we? You will direct and I will clean, there will be no we." Daniel reaches up and gives Sarah's ponytail another twirl.

"Did you pick up the stuff yet?"

"No, I was waiting for you."

Daniel turns toward the cherry wood doors of the Sunday school section. "Come on Minnie," he says. "M-I-C-K-E-Y M-O-U-S-E," he sings and he runs across the walkway.

Sarah runs after him. She catches up at the doors and pounds him on the arm.

"Don't beat me, don't beat me," Daniel says and he falls down on the stone and curls around her feet. "Nice jeans," he says, "are they new?"

In his office, Reverend James pulls white tissue paper around a small Bible. It is cream-colored and her name, Sarah Johnston, is engraved in gold letters on the bottom. He runs his fingers over the name. It feels raised and he is sure he could read it even without knowing what it says. He likes that. He tapes the ends of the paper together and cuts a piece of purple ribbon to go on top.

He holds the ribbon between his fingers, rubbing the slickness, thinking of the feel of Sarah when she was born. He had been there, with her mother and Sarah, in the bedroom of their home. He had taken her from the doctor, her little body still bloody, her first screams loud and low-pitched and wrapped her in the towels he had warmed in the dryer. They were beside the sink in the bathroom, clean and ready to protect. She had looked hard at him then, straight into his eyes, hers blue like a storm, his brown. She stopped crying as if she knew he had something important to tell her.

He knew already that her Dad was dead. The policeman, knowing the family, had called him first after the accident. Sarah's Mom had called her Dad at work, told him it was time for the baby to come and refused to leave the house until he got there. She was still waiting all twisted up with pain, when Reverend James and the doctor knocked on the door less than fifteen minutes before God had given Sarah safe passage into the world.



Prize **Second In Sculpture**
Artist **Terry Wiggins**
Title **Full Fathom Five, My Father**
Category **Sculpture**

Reverend James said the words to Sarah first, in the safety of the bathroom, in the safety of tiny ears that couldn't understand, "Your Daddy is dead." They didn't ring true, didn't say what he felt. He tried again, "Your Daddy can't come home," and he watched himself say the words in the bathroom mirror. They weren't enough. He needed the words to be more, different words to use only at times like these and at times when you heard God call your name.

"Help me," James said to the sky, to God, to the being who was going to force him into telling Sarah's Mom, telling her how. He couldn't find the words. They were lost in the smell of Old Spice in the bathroom, lost in the pocket of Sarah's Dad's pajama bottoms hanging over the shower bar.

"Reverend James, let me see her please." Sarah's mother had called from the bedroom. He had walked to her, Sarah in his arms and placed her carefully beside her Mom.

Later that night, when his wife was saying grace, he opened his eyes and saw a pink tinge of blood under the hair at his wrist. "I washed my hands," he said aloud.

"It's all going to work out dear," his wife said.

Sarah and Daniel knock on the door at the same time. "Anybody home?" Sarah says through the door.

"Or awake?" Daniel adds.

Reverend James jerks straight up in his chair and drops the purple ribbon to the floor. "Come in you two," he says.

Sarah pushes the heavy oak door open with two hands and walks inside. Daniel follows.

"Hi," Sarah says. She walks around Reverend James' desk, sits on his lap and hugs him tight around the neck.

She kisses his cheek, stands up and goes back to stand beside Daniel.

"Hi yourself," Reverend James says, "You two ready to clean? Daniel, thanks for coming to help out."

"Sure," Daniel says. "You know Reverend James, I've been coming to help out for over two years now, every Sunday."

"Yes, Daniel, I know, but this is the first time your Mother hasn't come. So I think it may be the first time you will work hard enough to be much help."

"Ha, ha," Daniel says, but he smiles and offers his hand to the Reverend. "Good one sir," he says.

Sarah looks at Reverend James and smiles. She knows he teased Daniel to make her laugh, but she is relieved to know that it was a joke. It is important to her that they like each other.

"So, how's the birthday girl?" Reverend James says.

"Good," Sarah answers, "Did you tell Tom that it was my birthday?"

"No, darling, he knows all the church member's birthdays although I think yours was the first he learned. He helps me keep up."

"That's wierd, isn't it?" Sarah says.

"Damn sure is," Daniel says.

"Here is a little something for you my dear," Reverend James says to Sarah. The tissue paper rattles when she takes the present.

Sarah walks back around the desk and leans against James as she opens the Bible. She smiles, holds it close to her chest. "Thank you," she says. "It has my name." She bends down, and kisses Reverend James' huge hand.

"God, so much mush," Daniel says.

"You are welcome Sarah," James says. Now don't forget to read it."

Sarah and Daniel pick up the yellow cleaning buckets. One has two sponges, both gray with the use in it, the other has three bottles of wood soap and a drying cloth.

"Good luck, that balcony gets dustier every week, with plaster flaking the way it does."

"Thanks," they both say and they leave the office, letting the heavy door slam shut behind them.

Tom has taken off two of his shirts and tied them to the hemline of his second coat. "Hold on boys, hold on boys, hold on boys," he is saying to them. When he sees Daniel he runs up the stairs, and face to face blocks Daniel's path. Tom sniffs Daniel's shoulder, and leaning closer, his nose actually touching Daniel's T-shirt, sniffs his chest.

"What the hell?" Daniel says and he pushes Tom away, grabs Sarah by the hand and walks towards the leaded glass doors of the sanctuary.

Sarah drops her Bible into the cleaning bucket. "He's harmless," she says.

"The hell he is," Daniel says and he charges up the balcony steps skipping two then three, two then three.

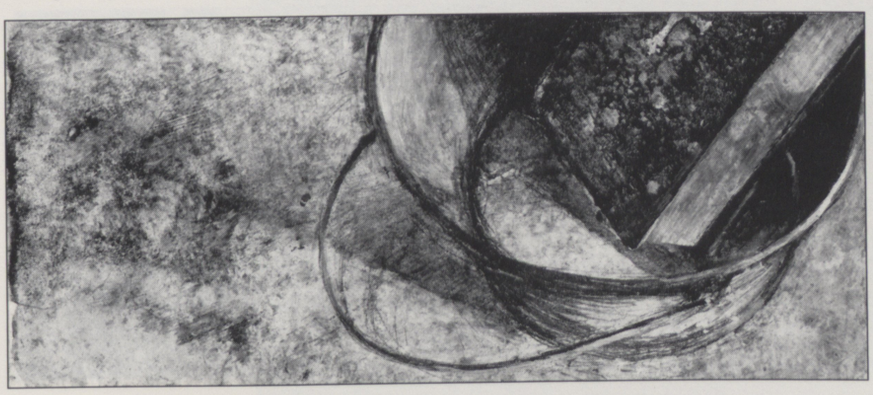
Outside, Tom takes a gray Ked off his right foot and a tan cowboy boot with a silver toe off his left foot. He places them in the worn dips in the stone steps. "Time for a swim, boys," he says. He stops, turns towards the balcony and sniffs the air. He growls, a low dog throat noise. A dangerous sound.

Sarah follows Daniel up the narrow balcony stairs. It's dark and the carpet is worn in the center so that footsteps are disguised as creaks or wood settling sounds. Daniel has hidden behind the third pew. Sarah can see him in the reflection of the "Let the little children come unto me" window, but she pretends to look for him. When she walks past the fourth pew he jumps out and grabs her around the waist.

She spins away from him. "Let's get started," she says.

"Remember when we stared at Mrs. Fenell so hard this morning. She kept rubbing the back of her head like a spider was in her hat or something. Its our power eyes," Daniel says and he opens his eyes wide and stares at Sarah.

"I'm glad no one else likes to sit up here", Sarah says. I like the dust too. It makes great patterns in the light. Jesus must watch the patterns too. Sometimes I think I see his eyes move, especially in that window." She points to the scene of Jesus taking bread from a basket and all the little children in many colored-



coats gathered around him. "His eyes make me want to touch him, if I could walk across this air I would."

"You've got nice eyes too, Sarah," Daniel says.

Sarah pulls a sponge from the bucket and pours a round circle of wood soap in the middle. "Let's put a lot on the back pew, we can slide across it to polish it."

"Okay," Daniel says and he grabs a bottle of soap and pours a thin line down the middle of the pew. Sarah rubs it in.

"Me first," she claims. She gets a running start, sits and slides to the far end of the pew. At the end she bangs her hip on the hand rest. "That hurt, but it was fun," she said. "You try."

Daniel slides so hard, when he hits the end, the hand rest cracks. "Shit," he says, "this was your idea."

"It doesn't matter, we can fix it," Sarah says.

"Now who's using we?" Daniel says.

They clean the mix-matched pews of pine, oak and cherry and meet together at the windowsill.

"I bought you something for your birthday," Daniel says. He sits on the edge of the windowsill, motions for Sarah to sit beside him.

"I didn't know you knew it was my birthday," Sarah says.

"With all the hints dropped?"

"Okay, so what did you get me?"

Daniel pulls a necklace from his jeans pocket. It is silver and there is a turquoise stone in the center. He holds it by both ends, walks behind her and hooks the clasp together.

Sarah turns, "Its beautiful."

Daniel takes her hand and kisses it.

"Such mush," she says.

"Come here," Daniel says and he guides her to the second pew. "I want to show you something. I learned it in karate class."

"What?"

"Just come."

Sarah walks with him, sits down. "Does it hurt?" she asks.

"Only a little. Lay down."

"No way."

"Okay, chicken shit," Daniel says and he stands up.

"Wait, wait, okay, okay, but if it hurts I'll never speak to you again ever."

Sarah lays down on the pew. Daniel kneels beside her. He moves quickly, yanks up her shirt and blows air to her stomach. The sound echoes in the empty room. Sarah screams, brings her knees up to her chest and bumps Daniel's head hard. He falls backwards, her shirt still in his hands.

Sarah sits up, pulls her shirt down,



looks at Daniel. He kneels, walks on his knees two steps to her, opens her legs and pulls her by the thighs toward him. He lifts her shirt, pushing his fingers under her bra and pulls it up and over her breasts. They are round, small, white next to the bathing suit tan line. He leans forward, kisses her nipples softly, carefully. She sits still, feeling the blood travel in waves through her body, not wanting tolose the sensation.

"See what you do to me," he says, and he pushes her hand under the waist band of his Levi's. Sarah doesn't resist. She leaves her hand where he places it. She feels warmth, then wetness.

Daniel lifts her hand, stands. "I guess we should be ashamed of ourselves," he says, as he walks slowly down the stairs, his footprints hanging on every step.

Sarah lays down on the pew. She pulls her shirt over her head, unclasps her bra, drops it on the wooden floor. She waits. Her nipples harden in the cool air. She brings her fingers to her nose, smells the wetness, tastes it, touches her nipples with it.

She hears the creak of the steps, knows from the sound that it is Reverend James and still she waits. He reaches the top of the stairs. She sees him in a reflection in Mary's robe. He sees her and stops, silent, to watch.

Five minutes pass, ten maybe. She sits, picks up her Bible and closes her fingers inside hoping to save what might be left of the new smell, and she turns towards Reverend James.

He walks to her. When he wraps his arms around her she feels his hardness. It occurs to her that she had never felt it there before. "What happened Sarah?" he asks. The hardness dissolves.

"Nothing, I don't think."

"Let's put your shirt back on, it's cold up here." He walks with her to the pew, helps her put her shirt on, picks up her bra and hands it to her. "Thanks," she says and stuffs it into her pocket.

"Did he rape you?"

"No."

"Are you okay?"

"Yes."

"Good."

Reverend James wraps his arm around Sarah and they sit together, her head against his shoulder, her Bible in her hand. It begins to rain and the drops

roll down the face of Jesus like tears. For the first time, Sarah is afraid to look into his eyes.

"We better get you home," Reverend James says after a while. "You sure you are okay?"

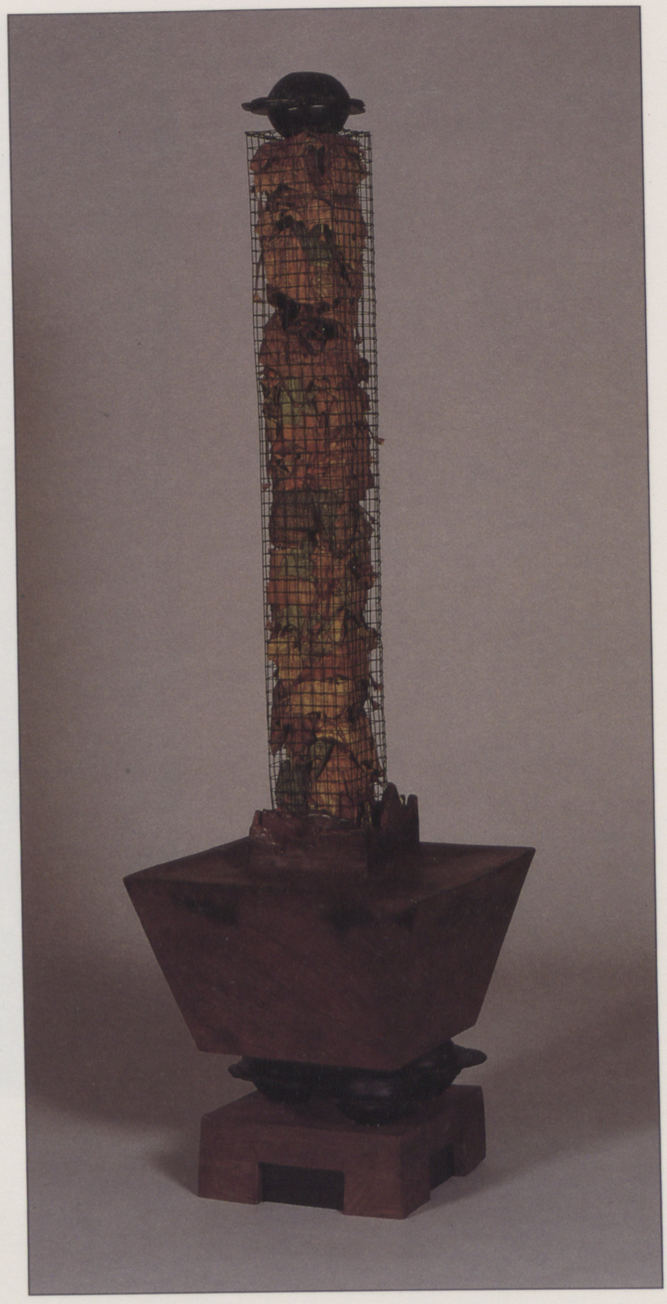
"Yes."

They stand and walk down the stairs hand in hand.

"We'll talk tomorrow, okay?" Reverend James says and he kisses her on the top of her head.

On the stairs, Tom is dancing in the rain. He is wearing his red swimming trunks as he always does when he is bathing and all his other belongings are scattered around in specific spots taking their baths.

Reverend James and Sarah walk past. Sarah is using her Bible to shield her from the rain. Tom stops and sniffs the air. He turns in a circle, "Reverend James, January 12, rain," he says and he growls low and mean until he sees the car pull out of the parking lot. He takes off his swimming trunks, walks tothe walkway under the stone arches and hunches the column where Sarah had stood. His wetness is sheltered from the rain and does not wash away. ■



Prize **Finalist**
Artist **Jerry Jackson**
Title **Leaf Catcher**
Category **Ceramics**

Prize **Finalist**
Artist **Todd Houser**
Title **Untitled**
Category **Photography**



Prize **Finalist**
Author **J. E. Boyette**
Title **Autumn Aging**
Category **Poetry**

Driving my father's '59 Chevy
down a color-quilted street
toward home

I watch
the cadillac ahead
choreograph
the leaves

They spin
into pirouettes
flash orange, red,
yellow tumble seconds
of leaping glee

and I laugh
even the brown ones
dance

Prize **Finalist**
Author **Malana Harris**
Title **ANGRY HAND**
Category **Poetry**

ENDLESS RECOLLECTIONS OF MY LIFE GONE PAST
WITHOUT WARNING, INTRUDE MY BRAIN;
THAT BIG PARENTAL HAND HAD ME TRAINED
ME HOPING TODAY WILL BE THE LAST.
TO GOD, ENDLESS QUESTIONS I WOULD ASK,
LEFT UNANSWERED. MARK ANOTHER FOR THE INSANE.
THE DAY THE BIG HAND WOULD LOWER NEVER CAME,
LEAVING ME ONLY TO HIDE BEHIND A MASK

OF FEAR; THE SCARS WILL NEVER LEAVE.
WILL I LIFT MY HANDS IN LATER DAYS?
THE ANGER IS SO EASY TO RETRIEVE.
THIS FEROCITY WILL ALSO AMAZE
THE VERY EYES OF MY FIRST CHILD,
WHEN IN HIS PRESENCE MY ANGER TURNS WILD.

Prize **Finalist**
Author **Terry Wiggins**
Title **Stephen**
Category **Poetry**

When I was little–eight or nine,
I cried because suddenly I thought
I was the twin that lived, survived.
Had she- the first one, died at our birth,
Or by some tragic accident left me alone?

Silly child, my mother scolded,
Half laughing at my imagined suffering.
You are the first, not the only–
Two brothers and the new baby now
Hush now hush that noise.

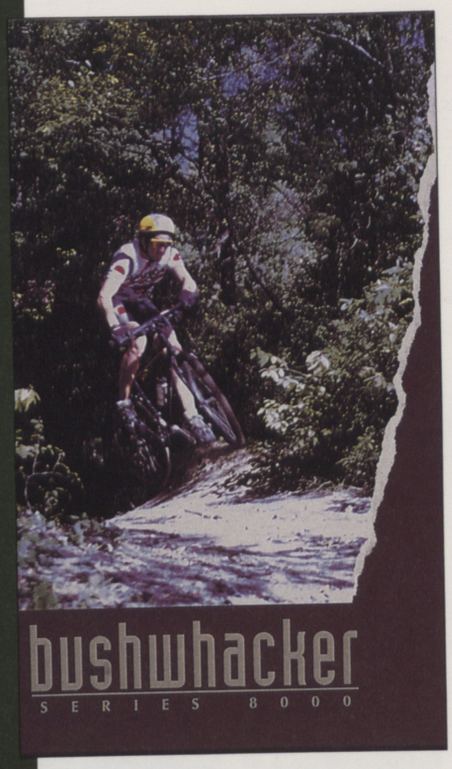
When I knew everything–fifteen or sixteen,
I thought Astrology was my answer.
Born in May (of course)
I had a cosmic twin;
The Power of the Universe, Castor to my Pollox.

Foolishness! my mother chided
And a waste of precious time.
You are only you. Unique. And
Too smart to be led by
The ringing of Celestial Spheres.

When I was grown-thirty-three or so,
With a girl of my own nine years old
I yet considered myself bereaved
But instead of cherishing my cankered cavity
I searched for another self in someone else.

Phah! exclaimed the potential reflections,
Malcontents and miscreants all,
We are uniquely we, not yours to touch.
It did change, one cold hour, one cold day when
You heard my stories and I your poems.

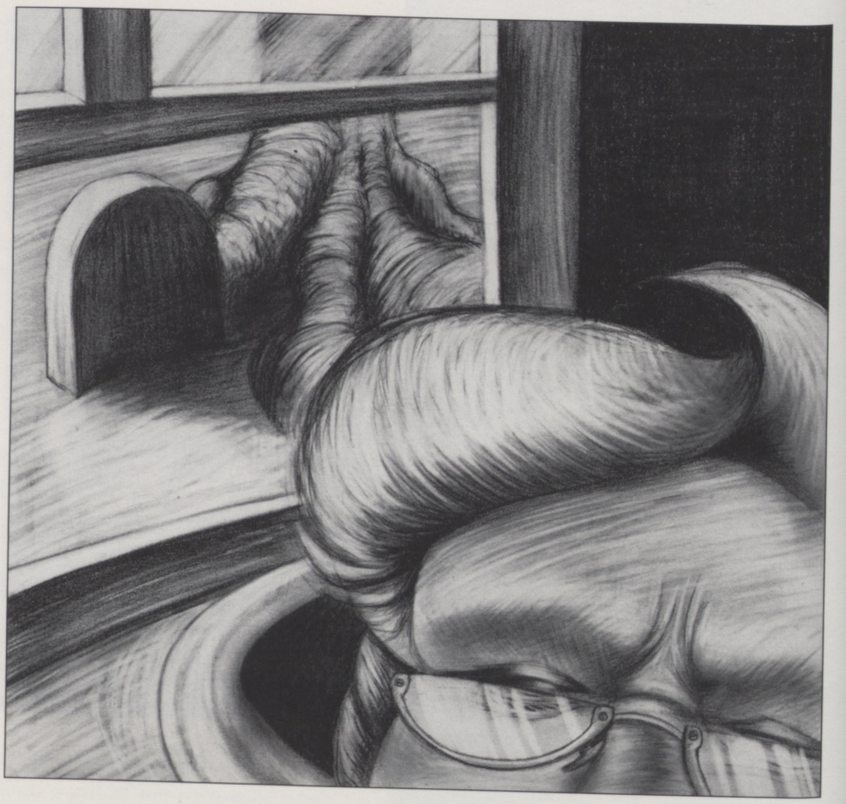
The sepulcher has been razed.
My ribs now buttress a concave
Warm with magic, mystery, time, and telling.
Cushioned there I keep you,
A talisman against loss, past and future.



Prize **Second In Graphic Design**
Artist **Colleen Parks**
Title **Bushwacker Catalog**
Category **Graphic Design**



Prize **Finalist**
Author **Timothy C. Hampton**
Title **The Porch Sitters**
Category **Prose**



Illustrations by Tom Kim

the porch sitters

The Cravens sat on their porch watching cars, dogs and clouds pass by, trading discriminate comments when necessary, while leaving most unscathed. They called their dog, Gracie, but she didn't listen. The black dachshund sniffed a lilac bush at the end of the lot before finding interest with the tires of a parked car on the street.

"There comes ole Junior in his deuce and a quarter, thinking he's king of the worle with his mag wheels and such," Billy Craven said between his yellow teeth.

A Buick Electra barreled down the long street, its hood ornament, a flying woman dipped in chrome, leading the way. Cowered by the noise of the rambling car, Gracie scampered to cross the street. Junior swerved with a squeal of rubber. Gracie just barked. "Junior, you son na bich, someday you'll learn," Billy screamed as the Electra escaped.

Billy's daughter left her green metal chair to console the frantic animal. He and his wife matched insults about Junior for a while until they felt he was sufficiently condemned. With peace restored, the Cravens found that all the ice cubes had melted in their plastic cups of tea.

Jiggling and rolling on four bent wheels, a ragged lawn mower moved defiantly down the street, pushed by a boy who they guessed to be about 15. He stopped to wipe his brow with a shirt tail and asked for grass to mow. Eyeing the several clumps of brown grass in the front yard, the porch sitters shook their heads no. But on second thought "We got some weeds ta pull out back," the boy explained. He had a rash on his hands and milk weeds burned something fierce and briars usually meant snakes and his uncle was once bit by a copperhead, so he'd rather not.

Flinching back in his chair, Billy pulled on the creases of his pant legs as to announce he was going to speak. He told the boy to walk across the street and ask the lady there, "Mess Pender's her name." With a hand on a gallon milk jug of gasoline, he pushed the chrome handle bars of the mower with sneakers soiled fecund-green. Near the curb with his brown eyes wide, he saw a herd of ornamental animals frozen suppliant on the lawn, molded in concrete and painted with afresh coat of enamel. People driving by often slowed down to look at the unescapable beasts. Children on bikes would skid in front of the rooster and gawk at his mauve beak. The paper once had a photograph of the scene on the front page.

The boy and the animals stood at attention as Mrs. Pender came through the screen door in a bleached-white apron and glasses that hung around a craning neck of mistrust. After peering into him, she agreed to an eight dollar job under the terms that the boy would trim sufficiently around the animals, especially the spotted fawn with its nose in the grass.

Witnessing the agreement, the Cravens smiled in their tea as the grass cutter, now partially hidden by a constant plume of the mower's blue smoke, lost his scent in a bombardment of bleeding blade tops. He negotiated the rabbits and the ducks without allowing the wheels to scrap their hardened fur. Mrs. Pender peered over her half lens to watch him, keeping her pensive hands on her wide hips. *He'd better treat 'em right.*

Creaking in his chair, Billy sucked his cigarette and exhaled, "That grass of Pender's is high enough to choke a cow. He'd be better off watching that milk weed burn his hands than work for that slave driver. Man, oh man, he don't know what he got hisself into."

His wife shook with silent laughter.

"And hope the Lore come to the rescue if he disturbs ole Mrs. Pender's barnyard," she said shaking her Saturday head full of curlers.

Mrs. Pender situated herself on the front porch swing, reading a tabloid



she had picked up in the grocery store line that morning. Tomorrow, her daughter would come to visit after church and eat Sunday dinner. The cleaning was complete, including the parlor reserved only for sacred events such as visits from Uncle Eddie or bridge parties. Now recleansed from its previous untainted state, the parlor doors were resealed, its sanctimonious air forever locked with the Jesus over the mantle, its overstuffed furniture never to fade from a venetian blind left open. The living room was also spotless with furniture wrapped in plastic slip covers, of which she refused to shed because she didn't trust the urinary tracts of her older relatives nor her grandchildren. *And the youngin's muss things up with their grubby little paws.* But she loved Ida, her only child, she told the checkout person at the store. In between a story about miracle weight loss, the mower belched and cut off.

"Those mowers is all the time breaking down. I have to side with my daddy when he said them gas mowers can't beat the old-fashioned reel variety. And he never did buy a gas one either, told my brothers that they would just have to cut the grass by the sweat of their brow," she said, resting her eyes on the before-and-after photos of a 300 pound woman now wearing a size seven dress.

"Lady, if I mowed with one of them old-timey things, I'd be dead," the young man said, turning the handle bars on its side and patiently digging out the grass still wet from the morning as it clung to the mower's belly. He tugged the truculent starter cord and the engine sputtered back to life. Halfway through, while approaching the bird bath protected by a perched eagle, the mower blade again became cloggedon the killing field. The boy wanted to vent a blasphemous scream, but insteadasked politely for a glass of water.

On her way through the screen door into the foyer, she decided to use an old cup because the glasses with daisies

already sat on the dining room table beside the polished silver and the ironed linen napkins. Passing through the dining room, she could smell the plastic flowers sitting on the center leaf.

While filling the cup under the tap, she heard the mower rumble again and looked through the kitchenwindow at the backyard. Compared to the front, it was cluttered with nothing, inanimated, spotted with a few weak wild flowers, its roof and walls of towering pine trees produced dark. On the limestone, her name awaited. It was all arranged, even the preacher's verses. Ida will get the house and all its contents. The other daughter, Delores, isn't in the will. *Delores moved away before the end of high school, left a note on the bed saying she was going to Waltersboro in search of "culture." She's lived there for 30 years now, with the same woman, writing poetry and doing all kinds of ungodly sins. Read about her getting arrested at some freak demonstration, said she was 'the spokesperson for the movement.' Couldn't be like Ida and have children that she could growed up just right. Just had to hurt her momma and run away in a red dress.*

Turning off the faucet, her thin, sterilized hands found the window curtain to be off center—slightly more to the left—an imperfection amended by her fast blinking eyes. She exited the white kitchen framed-in-pink trim with a steady but cautious pace, stopping only to reexamine the curtain from afar and bending her lips slightly upward.

"Mama, why ain't that lady very nice to us? We sent her hot chicken noodle soup when we found out her husband was sick last winter. And called the cops that time that bum wouldn't leave her porch. Maybe, it was that time Gracie chased that cat under her house and it took Daddy two hours a crawling to get ole Gracie out," the daughter said.

"Honey, the woman just don't like Campbell's and little black dogs," the mother said while clapping her hands.



Across the street, water ran down the boy's Adam's apple as he tilted the cup toward the sun. He was disappointed by the absence of ice, but Mrs. Pender said that she was having company tomorrow and her husband did not want her to buy a freezer with an automatic icemaker back in '79, *so sometimes you have to take what is given to you in this world.* The Cravens laughed to hear her sing-song voice.

"Don't pay no heed to them people across the street, they's all the time laughing about something, just like those laughing hyeners," Mrs. Pender said in a low tone, just above the rumble of the stationary mower.

Back to work, he pushed the mower slowly, wishing he hadn't agreed to the job, wanting to be far away from the staring, concrete eyesof the green goat. Tempted by the eight dollars, he gripped the chrome handle for what seemed liked an eternity of work ahead. His sweat had dripped on six lawns yesterday and three today. He crammed the money in his jeans, not stopping to count. At night, the crumbled bills were stashed under the mattress; he lay atop them with images of motion and flight, wheeling across Pitt River Bridge, leaving, not waving goodbye. *Jesse's dad gotta two-door for sale in the front yard. Burns oil, needs a head gasket. Marvin says I can stay with him at school at Brownville. Has a couch and says I can find something. All-night, every night, Saturday night, something.*

"That boy is looking a tad tired. Looks like an old man out there on prison detail. I'm surprise she ain't come out and tole him he's got to tuck his shirt tail in. Mr. Pender tole me one time she's the most nit-pickin'ness person about being proper," Billy said.

"I remember ole Mr. Pender use to sit out on the swing and not even move. A fire truck, all wailing and flashing could drive by and he wouldn't even flinch," Roberta said, sucking in the sweet smell of cut grass.

Smoothing her apron with both hands and allowing a sigh to escape, Mrs. Pender returned to the swing. She looked through the window at the set table and heard her husband's voice. *Honey, can't you sit down and stop taking up the dishes before everybody has finished. I know, Reva, but you don't have to 'get things out of the way.' For you know'd it, Ree, it'll be out of the way.*

Springing up, she moved quickly to advise the lawn cutter. She hollered at him:

"Now be careful when you get around that rooster. My little grand daughter and her brother are coming tomorrow and they think he actually crows. I tell'em he only does it in the morning, real early when they'd asleep. But it would break their hearts to see him dead. Besides, my daddy willed these things to me. Said they use to remind him of when we lived on the farm out near Idyen. But look here, I'm paying you good money, so you be careful and trim it up good."

After she turned her back, the boy contorted his face and spit into the grass a long stream of saliva. As much as he



Prize **First In Ceramics**
Artist **Doug Knotts**
Title **Fallen King**
Category **Ceramics**

Prize **Second In Wood**
Artist **Steven Benson**
Title **Untitled**
Category **Wood**



Prize **Finalist**
Artist **Catherine Blackburn**
Title **Summer Workout**
Category **Painting**



didn't want to pull the weeds with his hands, he knew he had to. Bending in front of the coral-pink pig, he tried to pull the shoots, but the roots held firmly to the red earth, unwilling to part. When Mrs. Pender went inside, he inched the mower as close to the lumps of painted concrete as he could. The futility of it all made him grimace and chuckle. He pushed the crooked wheels closer and closer to the rooster's feet. The cutting bladeswung low on the neon yellow claws, creating an abundance of sparks as if a jar full of furious fireflies had been freed. Frightened, he tried to push the cutter, but it rammed into the stilt legs and toppled the rooster onto the mower's engine, it's mauve beak crushed on the starter rotor.

Mrs. Pender flew out of the house, squawking and pacing around the middle of the yard.

"My God, you are as stupid as an ape. I can't believe what you've done. You can't buy anything like this anymore. You can't replace it. If my daddy were here, he'd whup you good. Now the yard is all a mess. People drive from all around to see my pretty yard, but not anymore," Mrs. Pender screamed at the boy.

He had a tolerance for people yelling at him; he stood evaporating the ire, looking calmly ahead expecting anything. There was an urge to run, but not now.

Across the street, amidst all the chaotic commotion, the Cravens rumbled with a hysteria of their own. They stopped once to catch their collective breaths, but the uncontrollable urge returned, tickling the bottoms of their lungs into a series of unstoppable contractions. They grasped for air after several minutes of continuous shaking and attempted to escape the blissful euphoria.

"Now, that ain't nice, let's..." Mrs. Craven said before the contagion reappeared, causing her to hinge at the waist and her eyes to water. She couldn't see her husband or daughter, both caught by the compulsion, howling and clutching their pants at the knee.

Alerted by the outpouring, Grace, her tail hinging back and forth furiously, began to bark near the curb as if she didn't want to be excluded from the excitement.

Mrs. Pender's anger grew as she heard the Cravens' cackle. She crossed her arms and issued a sleet-cold look across the street, awaiting the cessation of laughter.

"You people ain't worth nothing," she said as she began to march between the deer and goat, extending the length of her stride as she approached the curb, intent on going across the street to scream some sense into the Cravens as if they were her children.

Junior sped along in a hurry to pick up a bag of cornmeal. His fingers were feeling for loose change deep in the crease of the seat cushions when he looked up. He swore and stamped his foot down hard. The smell of burnt rubber and metal against metal. After charging like a bull into a fearful matador, the Electra lurched to a stop.



The dog barked more fiercely now. Mrs. Pender lay frozen on the hot asphalt, her vision twisted. She tasted the blood streaming from her nostrils and breathed with pain. Smelling the chance, the dog lapped the salty blood from her chin.

"Evil...Dog...Evil...Dog," Mrs. Pender wheezed.

Junior knelt before the grill of the Electra and muttered softly.

"Do you need anything?" I was just on my way to the store...shouldn't of been speeding...momma always said. You are the woman with the statues, listen, it'll all be fine. But lady, you ain't gonna die. You gotta...Live...God."

From the street, Mrs. Pender saw three —her husband, Delores, and herself— looking at a bleeding animal with wont to help, yet with steps frozen.

The Cravens stood by the curb. They did not pass judgement. ■

Prize **Finalist**
Author **Jennifer Tiedebohl**
Title **Lost Images**
Category **Poetry**

pictures melting on the wall
the fan sucking up memories
filling my head with smiles

she reads to me
with a voice about ready for death
soft pillows
underneath a sheet of sorrow cushion

swim through it
really you can
sugar so sweet you can taste it
suck it in
swallow it
a dirty rag floating in it
entangles me

the weight so heavy
pressure creeping up slowly
from beyond the pillowy white
snow falling
sliding down my face into the
pool of blood

Prize **Fourth**
Author **Eva Rogers**
Title **Recreation**
Category **Poetry**

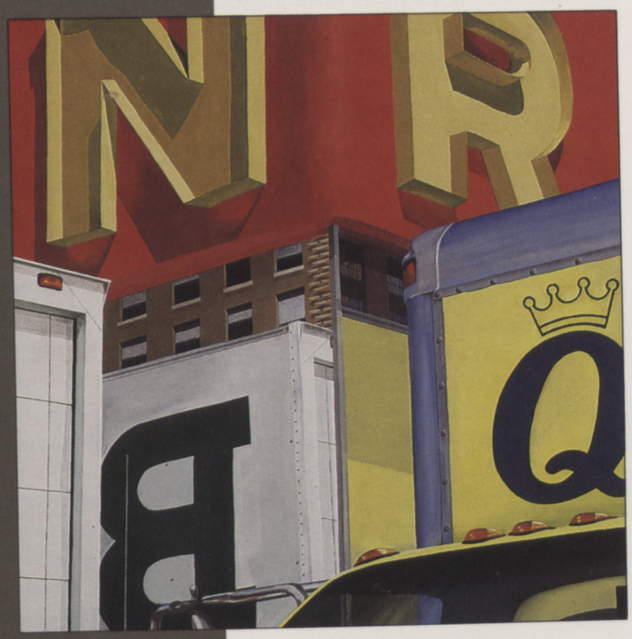
I should like to glimpse the palette of the morning maker,
The dabs of blue and violet he blends behind black trees.
I should like to dip my brush into that ether.

What must it be
To paint with water, air and fire,
To work and never tire,
The bold master who with one sweep
Begins another he needn't keep?

Would I dare to have one canvas for my life?
To slash a new stroke across my finest moment?
I should prefer a trembling wonder
To a comforting content.



Prize **Second In Illustration**
Artist **John Loftin**
Title **Untitled**
Category **Illustration**



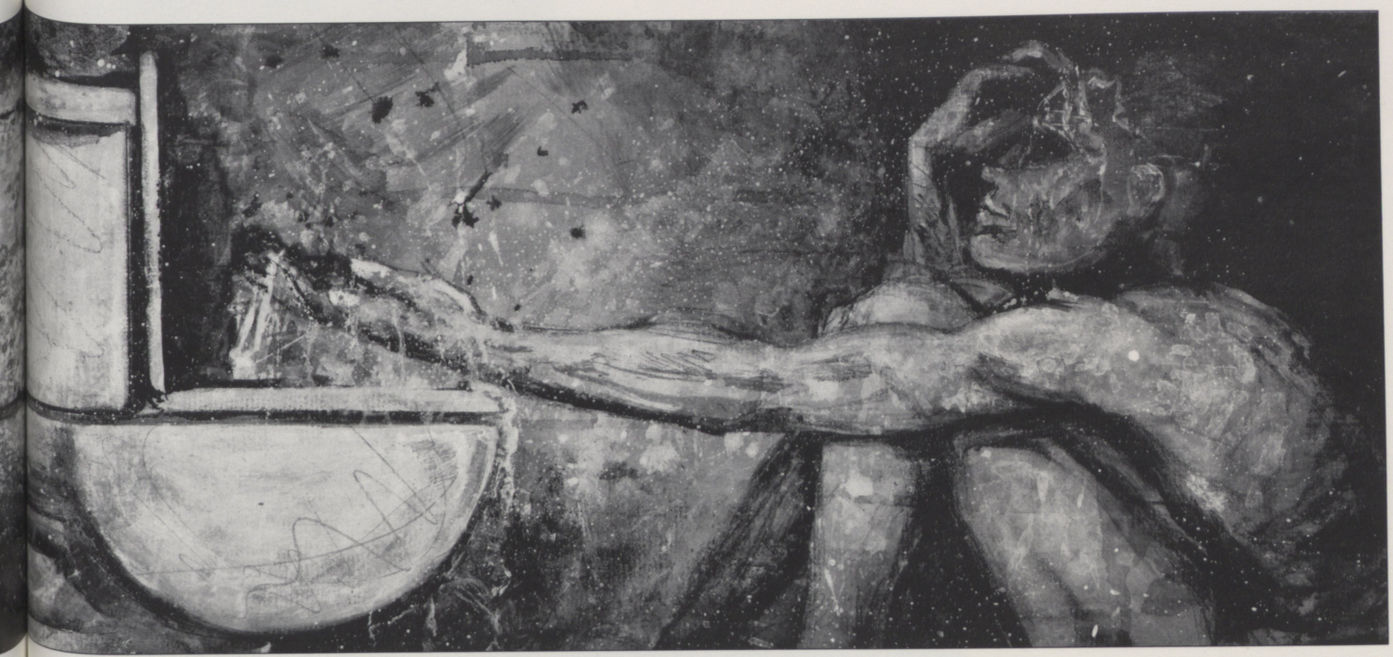
Prize **Finalist**
Artist **Mark Elmore**
Title **NRBQ**
Category **Painting**



the way with water

Prize **Finalist**
Author **James Casey**
Title **The Way With Water**
Category **Prose**

Illustration by Stanton Blakeslee and Lee Misenheimer



"You should have been there."

The boy raised the white porcelain lid and seated himself on the cold tile, curling into the corner. The naked bulb on the ceiling revealed little in the four-walled room. On the side, by the corner where the boy was, the stale grey paint was cracked and peeling.

"I think you could have easily laughed out loud. You see, the entire situation was absurd. The old priest was a wretched sight. Scraggy hair, stained teeth, and eyes that you could see straight through. A picture of Catholicism. And he smelled of rotting fruit."

The boy, now on his knees, began to move his hand around the edge of the bowl in front of him, staring into its recess.

"When he talked, the smell on his breath was fetid and unclean. And he spouted out prayers or something. I couldn't hear him. Noise was everywhere. The presence of so many eyes uponme, so many people seeing themselves in my place, so many people wanting what's best for me. They said my parents would have wanted it that way. And most of them don't even know my full name. I almost cried, right there, with Jesus looking down on me from the wall."

The water in the toilet rippled slightly as the carp in its bowl shifted sides. Looking away from the fish, the boy tilted back his head and examined the ceiling, finally stopping his eyes upon the burning glass bulb which protruded from its socket.

"I almost didn't see. The scheming old man. I looked up just in time to find him lifting his twisted and bony fingers from the pedestaled bowl of water. Holy, they called it. This was what they had come for, this was the spectacle to gawk at. And their noise as unbearable. I hated them for it, and I hated the perverse smell of the priest as he moved his hand toward my forehead. I saw three drops of water fall from his hand onto the dirty floor of the cathedral and I knew I could not bear the completion of the ceremony. So I ran. Past the spectators, who couldn't even exist without me. And I ran and I ran and I ran and I feel as though I'm running still."

The boy lowered his head and shut his eyes against the light. A stream of salted water appeared on his pale cheek. His bare chest rose and fell rapidly with his short breaths.

"That wasn't supposed to be the way."

The boy sat, eyes still closed and again moved his fingertips round and around the polished rim of the bowl. He then, gently, descended his hand along the inner curve of the toilet into the cold water that waited in the rounded white bowl. Letting his fingers prove the seeming depths, the large fish moved across the boy's palm. The boy recoiled and the water made a subtle splashing sound as he pulled his hand from it. The water on his hand was dripping as he held it in front of his fae, examining it. Several drops moved across his wrist and ran down his arm nearing his elbow.

"But I guess that's the way with water," the boy said, exhaling deeply. He placed his hand to his face to wash away his tears and opened his eyes to see. The walls and the dusty pattern of the tile below him were unaffected.

Prize **Finalist**
Author **Nicole Ossman**
Title **Keep Her Well**
Category **Poetry**

Keep her well, my dear.
Idolatry is a fever
absorbed, like a candy apple
in the hands of a child,
into conception.

On the cold, steel surgical table
sterile and white:
elbows bolted into place,
smudgy fingerprints
are consumed into memory.
Rigid- to match the atmosphere,
the sun melts down the mountain
the last tear from the tiger's eye.
The hum is vague,
the vibration close to the skull;
before a golden glow
now clean with chemicals
stunted and,
chopped off at the knees.

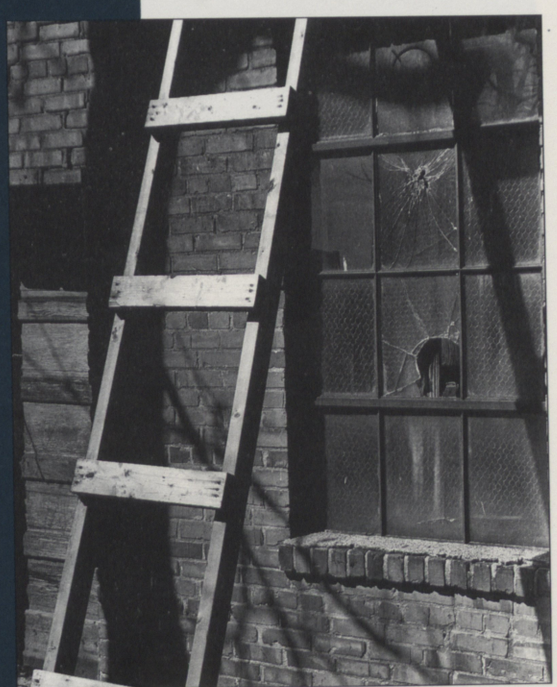
There, there — it was all very painless.
Drowning in Valium,
heavy chain,
keeping the tiger at bay
lost for tears, no channels to flow.

Become a hole,
a vacuum sucked within yourself:
swallowed by emptiness,
regurgitated a machine.

Hollow,
hallowed torso
It used to be a nursery rhyme.



Prize **Editor's Choice**
Artist **Bill Dermody**
Title **Untitled #2**
Category **Painting**



Prize **Second In Photography**
Artist **Christine Cranford**
Title **Untitled**
Category **Photography**

Prize **Finalist**
Artist **Liz Parker**
Title **Perfume Bottle Set**
Category **Metals**



Prize **Finalist**
Author **Melissa Link**
Title **Oblivion**
Category **Poetry**

I awoke again today
My clothes a crumpled heap on the floor
And my hair still stinking of stale beer, smoke, and sweat
And the insufferably loud thump-thump-thumping
Of a bass line still pounding inside a skull
Void of memories
Of last night's Bacchic revelries.

Did I really dance?
Or was it simply the painfully mad, thrashing death throes
Of a youth fast fading
Into Oblivion.

Prize **Finalist**
Author **T. Scott Batchelor**
Title **I Saw Falling A Leaf Claimed By Autumn**
Category **Poetry**

I saw falling a leaf claimed by autumn,
And thought of you.

Those pre-winter days when our natural paths
Cross less and less, and their lengths cut
Short by a quickened pace,
I saw the lonely brown and gold thing
Fluttering helplessly downward,
And thought of you.

When souls who mean the most–
Who really count–give respite from the
Closing cold with their warm
(More than just heat, though) presence,
Over soothing, crackling fires and wistful
Talk of summer plans,
Walking hurriedly past I marked the leaf's
Aimless descent through steely air
To the dead and dying ground below,
And thought of you.

While in the evening, shades draw shut and
Amber glows fill window-eyes, I hurry
Past their watching gaze, (their pitying gaze!),
As used-up leaves in the sterile, biting twilight
Fall, I sense them there,
And think of you.

Prize **Finalist**
Author **Matthew D. Jones**
Title **A Bus Station In Charlotte**
Category **Poetry**

"I grow old, I grow old.
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled."

"The cigarette machine stole my money."
—older woman to daughter.

The air is cold and dead.
—remains of all
—exhaled from people who had
used it

Moments ago,
lively
action
here.

Room full of people who never look one another in the eyes,
talk only to their own,
carefully suspicious of any passerby
who intrudes too close.

Most are gone now, off to other places, other bus stations.

north
west east
South

The room is almost empty.
—people left find it hard to breathe the stale air of

They are waiting.

At a bus station in Charlotte.

Slowly,

Slowly.

The people return,
not the same people to be sure.
Same, however, in spirit — tired,
weary.

Quick to make small talk to the stranger
anything to pass the time
some read
some talk
others sit.

They sit and stare.

What do they think of? Or do they think at all?
To think would proclaim existence.

(The buses pump the life of their existence through the roads. The bus terminal is vast and encompassing. They will only find existence on the roads, that is their lifeline. Here they are nothing.)

"I'm going to the bathroom."
—man to wife.
—doesn't glance from her book.
—nods at the information.

People wander aimlessly.

"Wouldn't be so bad if the bus weren't an hour late."
—Old man to himself,
hoping to stir conversation.

Awestruck, the players in the station remain silent.

Old man reaches for a sandwich from brown paper bag
wrinkled from use
(it has seen many of these bus
station's and so has the old man.)

"What time do you have?"
—young man to older woman.
He is anxious to go.

How long is an hour when you don't exist?

The station fills. Motion stops.

There is no reason to move.
Everyone silently waits for the bus
(it's late!)
and count the minutes they imagine go by.



Prize **Finalist**
Artist **Rachel Banks**
Title **Lucille, Maggie, & Suzanne**
Category **Painting**

Prose Judges

Susan Sturgill is an author, illustrator, and since 1988, a publisher under the name, The Laughing Academy Press (Ego adsum quod insana non stulta). Her books include The History of the Universe Vols. I and II. She lives and works in Columbus, Ohio.

Ashley B. Futrell, Sr. is the Editor Emeritus of the Washington Daily News in Washington, North Carolina. He has been a member of the East Carolina University Board of Trustees. He shared the prose entries with members of his newspaper staff and his decisions represent a cooperative effort.

Poetry Judges

Dr. Joseph Bruchac is a poet, editor, and storyteller whose work has been widely published. He is the founder of the Greenfield Review Press. His newest book, *Turtle Meat and Other Stories* was published in 1992 by Holy Cow! Press.

Marvin Hunt, professor of English at Campbell University, took his B.A. and M.A. degrees from East Carolina University (where he taught during 1987-88) and his Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. A specialist in Renaissance English literature, Professor Hunt writes nonfiction essays and book reviews in addition to scholarship and criticism. As a student at ECU, in a distant age, he edited the **REBEL** magazine.

Art Judges

Mark Brown is the Visual Art Director of the Community Council of Arts in Kinston, North Carolina. He received his MFA from East Carolina University in 1987, and works as a sculptor and draftsman.

George Baka has been a part of the Washington, DC and Buffalo, NY design community for 25 years. Mr. Baka received his degree from Pratt in Brooklyn, NY, after serving as a combat photographer during the Korean Conflict. He has been involved in the design of World Fairs and has won numerous awards from Buffalo and Washington, DC Ad Clubs, Society of Federal Artisits and Designers, and the Federal Design Council. As Director of Design Division for the US Dept of Agriculture, he gained national acclaim for his designs for the World Poultry Congress, where he received a Gold Medal. Upon retiring from the federal government in 1990, he has been teaching Graphic Design at Pitt Community College, Greenville, NC. He has been recognized in both *Communication Arts* and *Print Magazines*.

Meade B. Horne is the Director of the Blount Bridgers House and Hobson Pittman Gallery in Tarboro, North Carolina. She received her B.A. in Greek from Vassar College, and M.A. in Classics from Johns Hopkins University. She is a current member and past Board member of the North Carolina Museums Council, as well as a Founder of the Eastern North Carolina Gallery Directors Association.

I want to thank the **REBEL '93** staff for their dedication. There has not been a harder working, more worrisome staff. I believe we thought too much and tried too hard. Valerie loves Carters for making those huge red markers, and Ovid Pierce for starting the **REBEL** Magazine in 1958. Special thanks to John Bullard for his help this year. Kris thanks all the secretaries in the English Department for redirecting last minute entries. I thank Kris' officemates for giving him messages. Allison Heintz, thanks for typing. Matthew, your messages were inspirational.

Yvonne, we enjoyed the smoke outside Jenkins, and thanks for finding a storage area. Craig Malmrose, you have been a calming, yet directing force for us all. I'm not sure why you came to us, but the **REBEL** Magazine and ECU is better for it. Brandon, your tape was a lifesaver, as was the fellow in the sculpture area who loaned me the wood glue. Advice from Ray Elmore, Charles Lovell, Donald Sexauer and Your Eminence, Art Haney, was much appreciated.

Catherine Walker, how did we convince you to shoot the photos again? Have you been paid yet? Well, the wheels turn very slowly at ECU. Kristin thanks Susan in the Gray Gallery, for knowing about tables. Kristin would also like to thank Johnny Gee and Inga for putting up with her bitching, like usual, right? What would I have done without the support of Yvonne, Janet and Deborah, who work in the Pubs Bldg, who patiently listened to me complain about the system? Greg Brown, I will never forget you! J-net, you sure have got the resources, and we could not have gotten along with out you on entry day. My utmost respect goes to your uncanny ability to get things done without being "too confrontational..." Myra and Kelly, the donuts were brilliant, and Myra, Happy New Year to you too! (You know Hugh, don't ya?) "..your kisses, sweeter than honey..." Thanks Mike (aka Too Short) for doing the dishes and keeping the home fires burning. And Terri, Ms. Media Board, you will become a famous diplomat one day! Enough said, you get the point. Chuck, thanks for the inspiration, and I promise you and myself I'll do better next semester.

Margie O'Shea

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NON-CIRCULATING



Thanks to all entrants who made this **REBEL** possible.

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