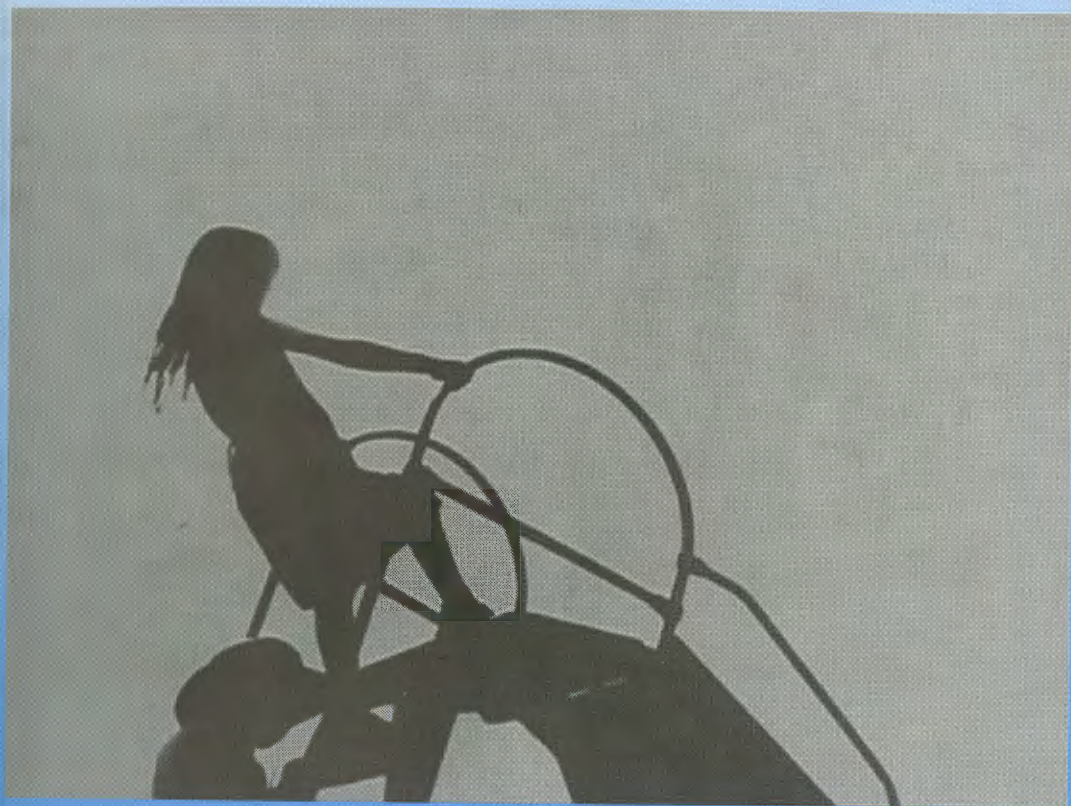


Byways



CTC Journal of Art and Letters
Spring 2003

BYWAYS

CTC Journal of Art and Letters
Spring 2003

Cover Art

Chris Gould

Child at Play

Student Editorial Board

Jason Lamb, David Nielson, Kelley Reno

Faculty Advisors

Michael Matthews, Communications Department

Melissa Richardson, Communications Department

Dr. Wynona Alexander, Fine Arts Department

Layout

Melissa Richardson, Communications Department

Thanks

Nathan Kutch

Kristin Latour, Rhonda Sullivan,

Anna Holston, Dean Don Mikles

I thank all the contributors to this edition of *Byways*. Your efforts should stand as examples for what it takes to constantly struggle with doubt and finally take a risk despite it. The creative method can be elusive, especially for those who make it a challenge to express ideas and opinions for others to share. Everyone can benefit from your contributions simply by seeing that it is possible to work with and sift through the doubt so that it becomes the catalyst for expression rather than the means by which to never try. This is the work of your peers that has been chosen by your peers. Let this edition be an inspiring gift for all those who want to discontinue wondering if it is possible for them, too.

-- Michael Matthews

CONTENTS

ART

Janet Grice, <i>Life</i>	5
Essence Williams, <i>Nature</i>	6
Maria Rodriguez, <i>Hands</i>	11
Myrna Hawkins, <i>Twin Tribute</i>	12
Mary Tia, <i>Tia's</i>	17
Connie Koski, <i>Hang in There</i>	18
Angie Head, <i>Child with Doll</i>	23
Shiela Richardson, <i>Jewelry</i>	24
Emmanuel Vomvas, <i>Untitled</i>	27
Kim McKinney, <i>House</i>	28
Wesley Meyer, <i>The Gift</i>	31
Dominic Mabine, <i>Motion</i>	32
Myrna Hawkins, <i>Native American</i>	39
Alfre Wells, <i>Creation</i>	40
Leticia Wilkes, <i>November Bottle</i>	47
Ruth Forster, <i>By the Shore</i>	48
Jessica Collin, <i>Untitled</i>	51
Paul Wheeler, <i>Bracelet</i>	52
Jerry Allen, <i>Building for the Future</i>	54

DRAMA

Rebecca Montgomery, <i>Nathaniel's Dream</i>	26
--	----

PROSE

Kelley Reno, <i>Tour de Force</i>	7
Angie Head, <i>Upon Waking</i>	43
Deanna Stonerod, <i>Mississippi</i>	45
Jason de Frietas, <i>D.C.</i>	50

CONTENTS

POETRY

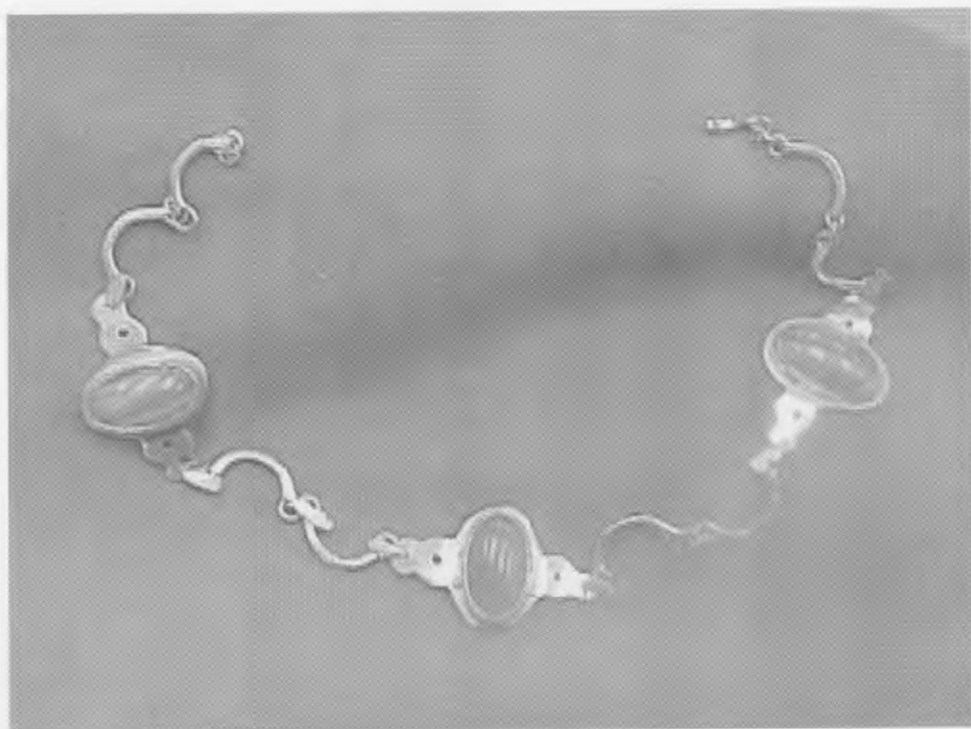
Kelley Reno, <i>Love Sweetly, Love Madly</i>	14
Kelley Reno, <i>In My Town</i>	15
Kelley Reno, <i>Welcome to the Playhouse</i>	19
John Webster, <i>Sock Puppet</i>	20
John Webster, <i>Time</i>	21
John Webster, <i>Haiku for Yuriko</i>	22
Patricia Lynn Garcia, <i>For I Am...</i>	25
Lashonda Gordon, <i>Ghosts in Your Soul</i>	37
Kelly Christine Fest, <i>Poem to Chris</i>	38
Kelly Christine Fest, <i>Ladybug</i>	41
Rebecca Montgomery, <i>The Plateau</i>	42
Nicole McGurk, <i>Sonnet: Are You Looking at Me?</i>	49

Life



--Janet Grice

Nature



--Essence Williams

Tour de Force

It was a strange sort of brilliance, one not far removed from madness. Ideas glowed like coals and I was a catalyst fanning the flames of enlightenment. Painted canvases lined the walls, haphazardly resting their weary selves against the cold brick, their faces marred by frozen tears.

It was perpetually gloomy inside our loft, teased by the sun through our windows, which were masked by papery-thin tape that split at the seams and curled towards the center, cringing from the weight of protecting us from the bourgeoisie world. Sometimes he would rage against the darkness, and a fresh sculpture would inevitably crash through the window and dive for cover on the wild weed courtyard three stories below.

**Ideas glowed like coals
and I was a catalyst
fanning the flames of
enlightenment.**

The super only complained once. After the first stone Medusa was heaved to the ground, we heard a knock on the door. He flung the door open to reveal the shriveled super, looking up at him with broken pieces of plaster in his hands.

“You wanna explain this, son?”
the super asked, holding out the

shattered pieces.

He snatched the portions from the super’s hands and said gruffly, “It’s art.”

The super shook his head slowly and said, “Well, son, I can appreciate this new-fangled art you kids have. But you need to keep you *art* up *here*. That window’s gonna cost.”

He slammed the jagged chunks of plaster down at the super’s feet and began ranting about personal freedoms and the liberty of artistic motivation. The super opened his mouth to speak, but was verbally trampled upon. He took a step towards the elderly super, fists clenched at his sides, and the super started back, defensively raising his hands, palms out, in front of his face.

“Son, see here,” said the super, lowering his hands. “I don’t give a good damn about what you do in your place, so long as you pay me on the first and you don’t destroy nothing. That window, now, that’s destroyed.”

“Destroyed? A pane of glass that I pay for every month same as I pay for the walls that guard me and the roof that shields me?”

He turned and began picking up every object within reach. He grabbed the candlesticks that lined the entranceway, and then he grabbed the ceramic umbrella stand, and out marble ashtray. Each item he picked up, he threw across the room. The super stood in the doorway in shock, then walked away,

Tour de Force (cont.)

muttering something about goddamn commies. After the ashtray slammed into the wall above our bed, he slammed the door on the super's faltering retreat.

I escaped from my corner and warily approached him. He was shaking in anger and raving about societal oppression. I placed my hand on the small of his back and said, "They don't understand us. They never will."

He spun around, eyes glazed, "What do you know? You're one of *them*. A parasite sucking the life out of me, waiting for a chance to bleed me dry and inhabit my withered soul!"

He knocked away my outstretched arms and marched away. He flung open the door violently and slammed it in my face as I followed him.

He didn't mean it. I *knew* he didn't mean any of it. His soul was gilded iron to me, precious and strong. If anyone empathized with his struggle, I did. I had grown up a narcissistic rich girl. I saw the self-exalted fall from grace living by society's codes. Torment and angst were ours to share; to beat shamelessly as one against our brainwashed outer selves and reveal to the world the veracity of it all. We would feed off each other and become messengers for our cause.

Until his return, I lay in sweat-encrusted sheets, rising only to use the bathroom and drink grape juice and Wild Turkey. I could not bathe or change my clothes. When he returned this time, everything had to be exactly as it was when he left. There could be no indication of his absence. As for the broken shards of ceramic and the holes in the walls and window, I left them, for they were his latest magnum opus, a statement about chaos and entropy.

When he straggled in the door after three lonely days, unshaved and weak, I could exhale again. He stumbled to the bed, mumbling incoherently, and I cuddled next to his rancid body. Artists need their muse, of course, and he always came back to me. Within seconds, he was snoring, and as he slept I leaned over him, memorizing every detail of his face, searching for any changes. I had to know. When he was gone, I would lay in bed, constructing him piece by piece so he would feel how much I wanted him. He needed my devotion as a haven from his demons.

He awoke hours later and turned to me and asked, "We got any food?" I jumped out of bed, wavering, and promised gourmet cuisine.

He said, "Jesus, I just want a bowl of cereal."

As he rolled back over, he reminded me to put fat-free milk in it, and not too much sugar on top.

I saw that my methods were successful when, after he ate, he decided to paint. I perched on my chair in the corner across from his easel and watched in awe as his brush raced across the canvas. Single jagged lines of a multitude

Tour de Force (cont.)

of colors evolved into sublime creations when he painted. This one was an impressionist nude of a longhaired, voluptuous blonde. I tugged at my choppy black hair, my gaunt shoulders hunched over, and examined his painting. It was simply an artistic rendition. He always painted me. This one made a statement about both my sexual and my maternal energy. As he viciously attacked the canvas before him, his sandy hair swung about his shoulders, and his eyes were like ice: silvery-blue and cold. Sinewy arms wielded the paintbrush deftly, and he appeared to be hanging onto it for his life. They tell me he was beautiful.

By the time he was done, the clouds overhead spoke of thunder. He hated storms. He always said that they drowned out everything else, and he was left with nothing to listen to by his thoughts. He crawled back into bed and I stayed awake all night, humming and caressing his paintings, producing an even stronger union between us.

The gallery called the next day with the news that his "Rapture" series had sold. After he hung up, I told him giddily that the exposure was phenomenal, but he just complained about having to wait a week for his profit. He knew I had enough money for the both of us to live, and I reminded him that he had only to paint and prepare himself for the time when the world would hear us.

Later that night I showed him the sketch I did of us, and he just laughed.

"How many times do I have to knock it into your head? You have no talent. Jesus, I swear you're selectively deaf. You only hear what you want, when it suits you, and when it doesn't disturb your world."

I jutted my chin. "You know that I had three years of art school, and I got B's and C's, thank you. How can that not be talent?"

He just laughed. "They want your money, not your talent. Who do you know of these days who ever made a living or a name with their art and went to art school? It's for catastrophes like yourself who decide they have a calling and have to be a part of something bigger."

He proved his point by tearing it into dismal little shreds and warning me about mania and fixation. Perhaps the love that flowed between us was overwhelming and the energy, though persistent, was too profound when combined with a tangible depiction.

Of course, my skill was not yet at his level. His radiated from inside him like a frequency. I could see it in the air, ricocheting and spinning like a whirling dervish. It was there, at that very moment, and I leapt to catch it in my hands.

He glared at me while I jumped and tumbled, then asked, "Hearing voices again?"

Tour de Force (cont.)

I couldn't stop myself. Here was my chance to acquire a portion of him, and my chance to be intense like he was.

I told him, "I'm catching you. I can only see it when you're static."

He backed away from me. "You have lost it. Officially. I can't take your deranged ideas anymore. The way you have started to stare at me I feel like I'll wake up with a knife at my throat. I'm gone. For good."

I grabbed his shoulders. "You can't! You need me! You won't do it; you always come back to me."

"It may not be the next scene in your delusional little script, but we're through. How else can I make it clear? For days you've walked around here in my underwear, for God's sake! What sane reason would there be to stay here?"

He pushed me away from him, and I stumbled on a whiskey bottle and fell to the floor. He scoffed and began picking his clothes up from the floor. I realized he had been serious, and as his only belongings in our apartment were his clothes and his art supplies, I had to think quickly about how to make him stay.

I couldn't think clearly. I was livid. I was his muse, his true genius that he drew from. He fed off my brain and I relished in his talent, the talent that was so close to being mine. I lay on the floor near shock.

He had been dining on my cerebral cortex for three square meals a day, and now wanted to disappear before sharing his wealth with me. I could not allow that. I knew I would never see him again, yet I still had work to do. I looked around the room, and his canvases mocked me, their tears turning to laughter, their grins only intensifying the anathema of his denunciation.

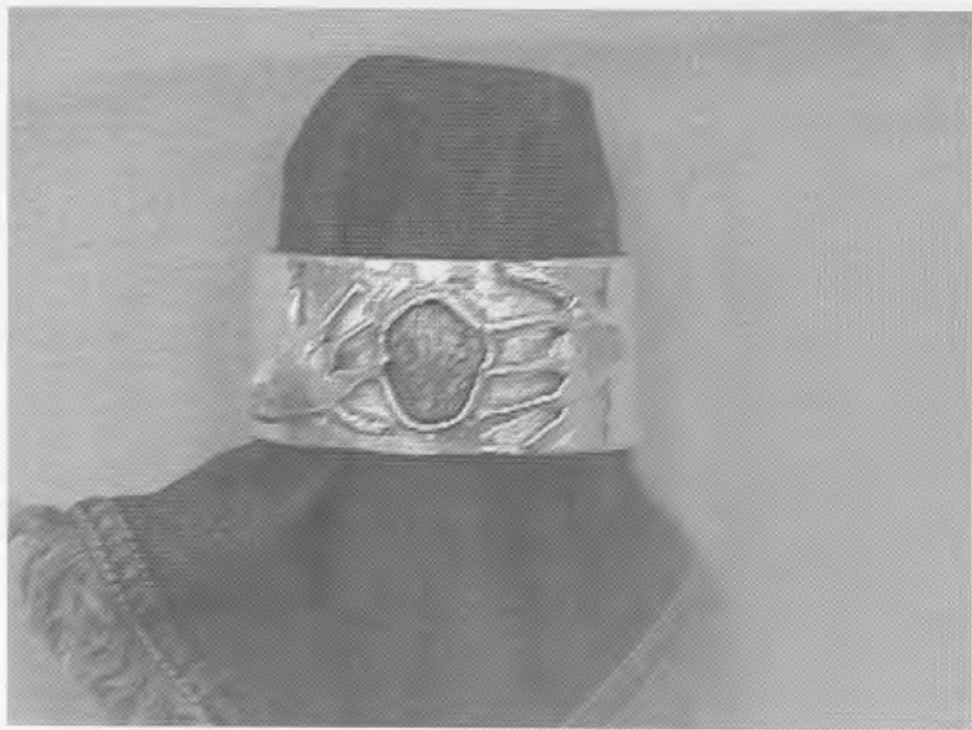
I was his muse, his true genius that he drew from.

In an inexplicable moment of epiphany, I realized that his gorgeous nudes were not me after all, and his ventures away from me had to be for debauchery, not inspiration. My idealistic fantasy was a junkie whore, and I had simply been a pawn in his sadistic chess game.

As he went around the room, picking up the traces of our life together and discarding them in a threadbare duffel bag, the world became a kaleidoscope of barren expectations. My freedom, my purpose, was packing up and fleeing.

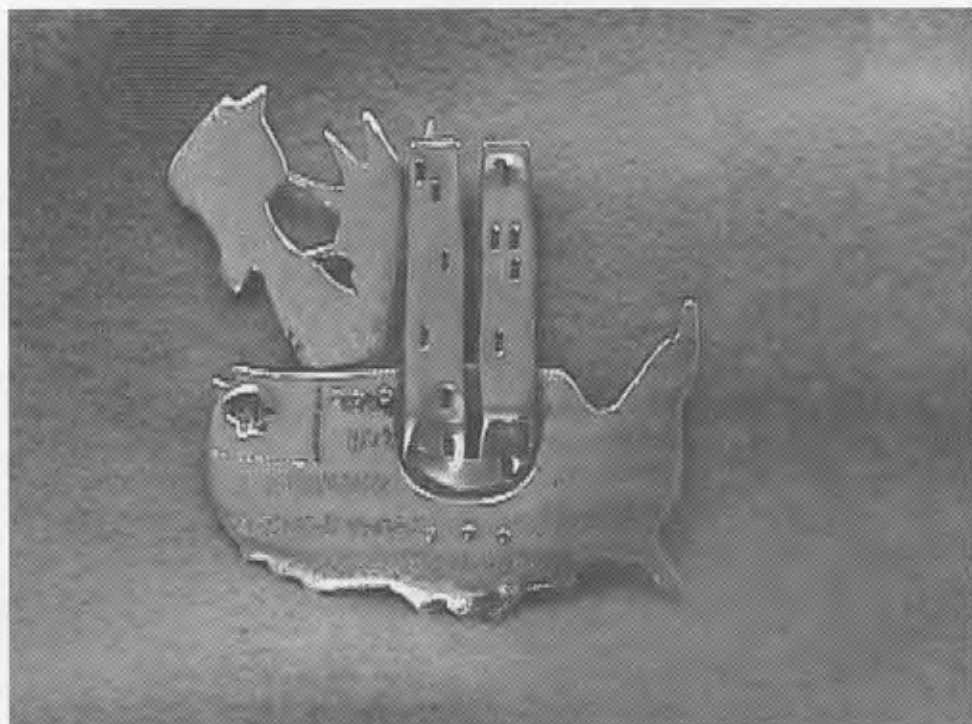
They tell me he was beautiful, but he was ugly. He was a beast intent on inflicting cruelty and stealing away what rightfully belonged to me. All the

Hands



--Maria Rodriguez

Twin Tribute



--Myrna Hawkins

Tour de Force (cont.)

energy and the nights I spent in wait and he was trying to take away *my* art. I reached down for the marble ashtray that was still prone on the floor and walked over to him.

"I don't want it," he said. "You want a piece of me, take that. It's all you'll ever get."

I slammed the ashtray into the side of his head and he fell to the floor with a shout. I knelt beside him, and when he tried to get up, I just kept pounding. His life flowed from his battered temple. I didn't want a piece of him; I was going to be what he couldn't. I cupped his glistening vivacity in my hands and bathed in his glory. After a few moments, he was no longer breathing, and I left him there while I gathered my supplies.

The sky was shadowy and the moonlight shone unevenly through the jagged edges of our windows. I placed his body across one of his eight-foot canvases, and using tent stakes and a hammer, crucified him on his final bed. It was the art that mattered, and I would now teach him. As I painted, I told him all about my dreams to be the next Dali, and how he was hindering my performance. If he would have just given in, and let me share, then everything would have been fine, and we could have shown everyone together how to be. He lost the credo somewhere, and I would have to venture alone. I worked all night, his eyes never leaving my face. I finally had his absolute awareness.

I finished the next morning, and after cleaning up my paints and washing my brushes, I called the gallery. His defining masterpiece was ready to be picked up, I told them, and forewarned that it was large.

When they arrived, I called that the door was unlocked. One man fainted when they saw his work. The other man seized his unconscious co-worker and dragged him out the door as fast as he could, screaming.

I was sobbing in my pose when the police arrived. I had finally created a work of art using his abilities, and still I wasn't accomplished enough for the gallery. They had rejected me countless times, but this time I had been sure they would accept me. I protested their accusations, reminding them that Jesus died for us, eventually depicted in all his grandeur in countless mediums across time. Why should my reverence be a sin?

His face was motionless in an articulation worthy of any master, and he was surrounded by a surreal assortment of his wanton women. Their arms groped for him, never quite reaching, however. There I was, wrapped in his arms throughout eternity, never leaving his side, ultimately reaching my utopia. At last, he *was* beautiful.

--Kelley Reno

Love Sweetly, Love Madly

Tastes of 3 a.m.
Tomorrow's shadows linger.
Salty tokens wane.

Chastity eludes.
Curiosity abounds.
Jagged edges fit.

We mix together
In a sea of sweat and pain.
Lonely in your grip.

Seeking salvation,
Red tears stream from soiled eyes.
Grey heart wails a hymn.

--Kelley Reno

In My Town

Nights are long and days are short
In my town.

People scurry, hanging weary heads,
Ashamed of human contact.
Shattered concrete is where
A desolate man lays his head
In my town.

Whimpers resound from the
Corridors of the broken streets
Apple-pie mothers whisper
Don't looks to children so pure
In my town.

The shells of America wander,
Peering at the ones who smell
Of soap, all the two-thousand parts
Their bodies have, too,
In my town.

Sitting outside the bus station
Gesturing with all-but-forgotten
Middle-class hands.
Buses rescue the lucky ones,
Always on the go to somewhere green
In my town.

A day late to make a buck
A dollar short for dignity
The others, they wait in resigned
Silence, hoping the world will
Come back for them,
In their town,

America.

In My Town (cont.)

A rusty car with plastic bag windows
Clunks to the side of the open street,
She slinks in,
Tonight's diaper money
In this town.

Solemn faces with eyes glazed,
Some with braces still, stare blankly
From posters pleading for their return.
Crumpled papers too many
To count, too many to care
In your town.

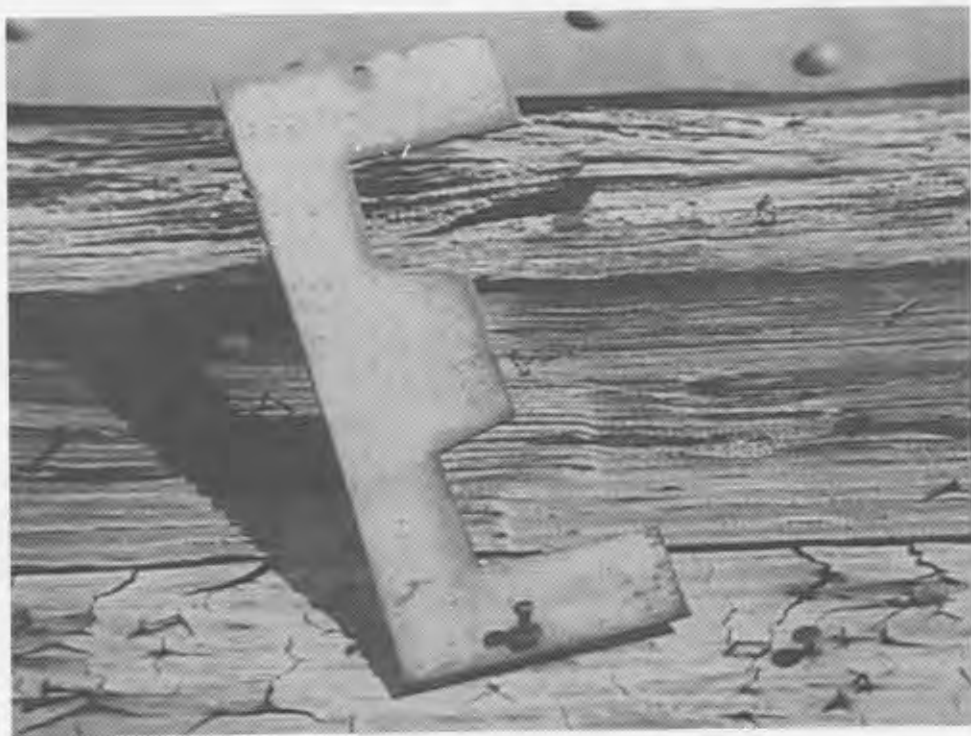
-- Kelley Reno

Tia's



-- Mary Tia

Hang In There



--Connie Koski

Welcome to the Playhouse

Old habits cause hard death.

New drinks drown the rent.
Bitterness slides easily down my throat,
I choke
On the hysteria, the sheer weariness.

With each hit, I'm wasted.
Wasting away in a coffin
Of my own temptations.

Scraping matted change off
Dirty floors for a cigarette-
The tumor grows.

Starving a little more:
Ripping off 7-11
For M&M ice cream sandwiches
So good.

Raped for an age-old fantasy
By madness incarnate.

Sleazy desecrations of capitalism.
A gunshot still echoes from a steamy night.
Invulnerable, he lies sprawled on the trashy ground.
I hunt for blood.

Finding no wound,
I clasp his shaky hands
Head high, praising incompetence.

Pushed away, I'm broken.

Battered, unrecognizable
Even to myself,
Plastic lies melt slowly away.

--Kelley Reno

Sock Puppet

When I look at you
It's hard to ignore
Your plastic googly eyes
Rolling so derisively

I know very well what
Torture is promised by
The cruel twist of
Your stitched-on smile

When you are wagging
Your red felt tongue
The pain it causes is
Sharp for something soft

Your hurtful words
Come from my mouth
My hand moves yours
In time with the lies

I feel powerless
Even though they say
I can stop anytime
Maybe I just won't

-- John Webster

Time

Time...

What...

Time...

Time is...

Time is like...

Time is like a Waffle, Yeah!

Fresh from the toaster

The hot Waffle of mine

So big and Round

And golden-toasty

That sweet syrup dripping

And hot butter melting

Mm! Mm! Mm! Waffle!

What was I talking about?

What was I...

What was...

What...

Time...

--John Webster

Haiku for Yuriko

I am so fragile
Touch me softly with your hand
And I will shatter

-- John Webster

Child with Doll



--Angie Head

Jewelry



--Shiela Richardson

For I am...

As hollow as the barren tree...
Empty as the air I breathe...
So longing for that tiny seed,
That holds the life I seek.

As clear as the crystal waters...
Invisible to the "rock hoppers"...
Yet toss they do a little stone,
That makes a ripple known.

As clueless as a secret...
Held tightly by those who keep it...
Free me now! Shout it out!
For I am that which is loud.

--Patricia Lynn Garcia

Nathaniel's Dream

Characters

Nathaniel: An up and coming middle class man.

Cerenea: A mystical wood-sprite of the forest.

Boy: A groomsman.

Scene

Dusk in a thick forest in late 16th Century England. A hunter is walking through the forest with his horse.

Nathaniel: Rotten luck. Not a thing seen today worth wasting my time. And now you...have thrown a shoe. We'd best be on our way quickly. Zeus has run away with the Sun and Morpheus comes bringing the night. My belly is wrought with emptiness and you are in need of a brush and some oats for your fine companionship today. If we were in Elizabeth's court, I would have a groom to care for you and another mount. Then the walk home would not be so long. Yet, were I in Elizabeth's court, I am sure I would participate in the grand adventure of hunting in sport rather than necessity. Ho Ha! Were I in court, I would instead sport every grand lady. And this...*(Holding up his gun.)* ancient weapon would remain on its lofty perch, gathering dust. I would hunt instead, with something else! I would wager that I would be the life of their grand party. It seems to me that any sensible woman would rather spend time with a man who has made something of himself rather than those simpletons who were born into position. But one cannot simply do away with centuries of tradition even if that tradition is stale. I shall have to find another way into recognition. Ah, such is dreams. Come, Sir William, it's past time to go home.

Cerenea: *(Behind trees, whispering.)* Sweet Mother Earth! It's a human! Whatever is he doing here so deep in the forest? I must hide quickly as to not be found.

Nathaniel: Whoa, William, did you hear that? Perhaps our luck today will not run completely foul. Shh, I hear it again. Stay horse. Aha! Over there! Steady...squeeze...*(A gunshot.)*

Cerenea: *(falling)* OH!

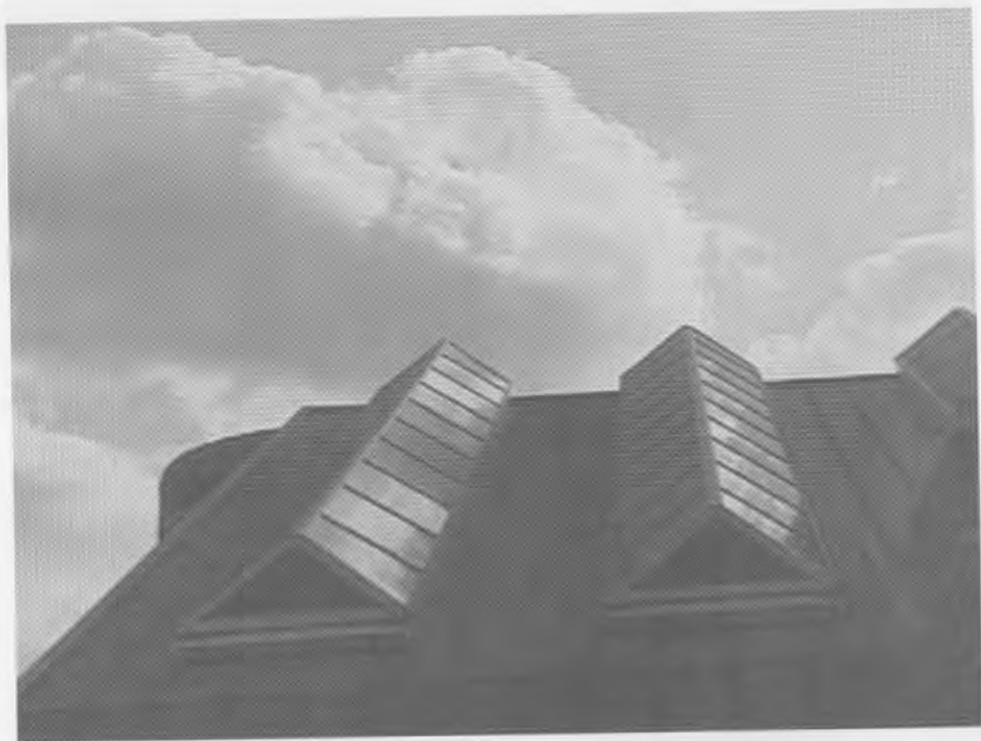
Nathaniel: My God! That...Not a woman!...Oh God! *(He reaches the woman.)* You've been hurt! I'm so sorry. Your cloak looked like...Never mind my silly reasons...Let me see your wound. I can help you.

Untitled



--Emmanuel Vomvas

House



-- Kim McKinney

Nathaniel's Dream (cont.)

Cerenea: (*Grasping her cloak together.*) No! Leave it be! I am fine! Leave me!

Nathaniel: Don't be ridiculous, girl. I cannot let you lie here and quite possibly bleed to death.

Cerenea: T'would be better than- OH!

Nathaniel: Wings! Christ Almighty! She has wings!

Cerenea: I, um...Of course I do! I am an...angel, you see? Now go and forget me!

Nathaniel: No, an angel would not run through the forest. An angel does not bleed or become harmed by man's weapons. Were you an angel my flesh would not be able to physically hold you. What are you?

(*Cerenea passes out.*)

Nathaniel: I guess the time for questions would be best later.

(*He rips some cloths and tends to the wound on Cerenea's shoulder. He covers her with a blanket and sits back. He does not notice that Cerenea awakens and continues to talk to himself.*) My guess is that you are a faerie, like in Shakespeare's play. Perhaps you are one of the creatures repudiated to haunt these forests at night. Are these more like you? Why are you here alone?

Cerenea: You must go now. It is not safe for you in the forest when it is late.

Nathaniel: Oh no, if you think I am leaving now you are sadly mistaken. You are wounded and I see no help coming for you. Tell me where you live and I will take you home.

Cerenea: This...is my home. Go and leave me be.

Nathaniel: I just may have found one of mankind's greatest...(He smiles slyly at Cerenea.) How would you like to be rich...and famous?

Cerenea: I care nothing for human wealth or recognition. Whatever you are planning, leave me out of it. You won't see me again after I leave. (*She tries to stand, but the pain is still too great and she lies down again.*) Oh!

Nathaniel: Now see here, you are going to do yourself permanent harm. You need to rest a moment and gather your strength. What I had in mind was simply taking you to the Queen of England herself. She would love you. Of that I am sure. Especially if she is the first person I presented you to-

Cerenea: —you aren't presenting any-

Were you an angel, my flesh would not be able to physically hold you.

Nathaniel's Dream (cont.)

Nathaniel: —I would be the toast of London. In fact, no, I would be the toast of all of Europe! (*While Nathaniel talks on, not paying attention to Cerenea, she quickly pulls out glittering dust from her cloak pocket and sprinkles it on her back, healing her wound.*) Surely I would be gathered into the court's arms and nestled smugly within its bosom. We would enjoy fine wines and eat the best foods created by the continent's greatest chefs. Our beds would be made of goose down with silk coverlets. Our clothing would be of the finest Florentine cloth and of impeccable taste. Everywhere we go, everyone would say, "Oh look! That's Nathaniel Raleigh! He's a great man!" Everyone would seek my favor. The possibilities-

Cerenea: —STOP! I cannot hear any more! I cannot bear to listen to one more word of your ill-gotten fame and glory.

Nathaniel: Ill gotten? I-

Cerenea: Oh you humans are all alike. It's no wonder my people have been avoiding yours for centuries. We began hiding after the Romans first came to England. "Come to Italy as our guest" they would say. "We have fine banquets, the best wine and great philosophers and thinkers." Yet all they really wanted was to convert us into their religion and control our people. I'll have you know that not one member of my family of wood-sprites would ever dream of going out, capturing a human, and bringing him back to show for recognition! Yet you would treat us like the poor beasts in one of your menageries.

Nathaniel: You wound me! I am asking you to join me on this grand adventure!

Cerenea: If it were not for me, would the possibility to "nestle smugly" within the bosom of Queen Elizabeth's court even be attainable to you?

Nathaniel: Now that's just not-

Cerenea: —It is a completely fair question!

Nathaniel: (*Sighs.*) No...of course you are correct. A person has to be born into position. A man's worth is all in his breeding. Only something truly fantastic could get the everyday man into position.

Cerenea: So what is to become of me, then?

Nathaniel: Well, never let it be said that Nathaniel Raleigh is not a gentleman. I may have let my dreams alter my view temporarily, but I would not hold you against your will. Nor would I want to parade you about as a creature at a show. You are a living being with a heart, a will and a soul of your own. I apologize...Oh heaven strike me, I do not even know your name.

Cerenea: It is Cerenea, and you are Nathaniel.

The Gift



--Wesley Meyer

Motion



--Dominic Mabine

Nathaniel's Dream (cont.)

Nathaniel: Beautiful name, one worthy of a queen. (*He leans in closer.*) You aren't, by chance, the queen of your kind, are you?

Cerenea: (*Laughs nervously.*) Heaven's no! We have no queen.

Nathaniel: I guess you wouldn't be. I am sure if you were, there would be many others out looking for you.

My good lady, I meant you no harm. Please accept my heartfelt apologies.

Cerenea: Of course I will. You are a good man in your heart, Nathaniel Raleigh.

Nathaniel: (*Helps her to her feet not noticing her speedy recovery.*) Yes, well, that will get me into heaven one day I suppose.

Cerenea: And there you will have the riches of your dreams. (*Nathaniel and Cerenea both laugh.*)

Nathaniel: Are you sure you will be able to make it home? Do you need help?

Cerenea: I will be fine, thank you, Mr. Raleigh. Go now and be away with you. Your horse needs tending and you need some rest.

Nathaniel: (*Looking about.*) Sir William! I had almost completely forgotten about him! Where did he go?

Cerenea: (*Slips into the dark when Nathaniel is not looking, and whispers...*) Good luck, Nathaniel Raleigh. (*She reaches into a pocket on her cloak and pulls out a hand of glittering dust. She blows it in his direction. Still whispering...*) May you find your dream exactly as you want it.

Nathaniel: She's gone? Ah, but what a beautiful creature that one was. I must go and tell Sir William all about it.

(*As Nathaniel looks about, he sees Sir William come to him in the hand of a stranger. The stranger is dressed in the clothing of a groomsman and he is leading another horse. Both horses are geared in the tack of nobility.*)

Boy: That one must have gotten away from ye, eh, my Lord? It took me some time to find ye 'ere in the forest. It seems Sir William has lost 'is shoe. Take Lady Maribel and I'll follow with Sir William.

Nathaniel: Er...Um...Thank you.

Boy: (*Looking around now nervously.*) I hear tales these forests are haunted by wood-sprites.

Nathaniel: (*Turning and leaving the stage.*) I think that's quite a silly notion...I think it's time that we headed back for I am famished.

You aren't by chance the queen of your kind, are you?

Nathaniel's Dream (cont.)

Boy: Oh yes, I 'ear the queen has brought in a chef from Italy for this evening's fare...

(As the Boy walks on toward the horses, Nathaniel looks back at the dark forest one last time and sees a pleased Cerenea watching from behind a tree as they leave. She waves good-bye. Nathaniel bows elegantly to her and exits.)

--Rebecca Montgomery

Journal of a Chronicle Knight

A Prayer Unto Thee

*There, there it is! The light of my salvation.
Hurry! I must speak before it leaves me once
again.*

“Many a years I have suffered in silence,
and all that time I can feel you suffer with me.

Always just within sight, you have lit my way through
many of the days of my dark past, and I know you will
remain at my side through the darker ones still to come.

Always within ear's shot I can hear your voice, many times
as if standing beside you. Oh, how I cherish those moments.
Visions fill my mind as you speak and I can almost feel the warmth
of your body, your soft, silken hair as I hold you tightly.

How I miss you. Many a nights I dream of thee. Being
together, it seems like cruel torture for I know with the coming
of light you will fade, plunging me once more into the darkness
of day.

It seems like so long ago my Angel that we shared what
seemed like our last good-bye's. The memories of that day still bring
me to tears as I remember our last words; our first kiss. Oh, that was the day
our journey began.

There was but one time since then I have been blessed with
your presence. Oh, the sight of thy beauty is unimaginable to
any who have not yet been granted the chance to behold your
radiance. I am sure my angel you alone can understand they joy
and happiness you made me feel those few days that we shared. I
still cherish those nights we spent innocently sitting together, holding
one another closely. I rely on those as I am forced to realize the darkness
of the place I now must dwell.

My Angel, my Guardian, I have faith that we will one day be reunited again.
Oh, it seems like eternity until then. I am not a religious man, but I now must

Journey of a Chronicle Knight (cont.)

wonder. Is this a test of faith, a test of devotion to my beloved Angel? Do you watch from a distance, from the great beyond how your loyal subject will fare against the temptations of the world? If this is so I understand now. This is a test, where time is the challenge and patience the answer. This I know all too clearly now. Fear not my beloved, I will not fail you! We have come too far together. I have not lost my faith and trust in you as you have not in me and I hold firmly now to the only thing I can in this darkness: hope. The hope in knowing that you and I will share our presence with one another again.

I can feel my strength now waning my beloved and I am losing sight. I am afraid I must now return to the darkness which your soft light and loving presence has pulled me from. If only I could reach out and hold firm to your angelic hands. Alas, this must be another cruelty I must face. Feeling as if you are right here with me I must force myself to realize you are yet so far away.

Goodbye my beloved Angel, to the darkness I must now return, I pray unto thee that your presence will find me in this darkness again so that both our suffering may be laid to rest once more.

Farewell, until I see thee at long last again,
My thought, my heart, my love will wait upon thy return . . .”

--David C. Haley

Ghosts in Your Soul

As I gaze into your eyes
I am disturbed by the sadness that I see
You rarely speak your feelings
Your inner most thoughts, are such a mystery to me
Some call it macho madness
But I see what others don't
I see the unhappiness
Caused by the ghosts in your soul
Have you committed some horrible crime
or are the ghosts the signs, of your trying times
You've loved and lost
A time or two
Abandoned by friends
Who claimed to always be true
You are such a good person
You have such a giving heart
I want to take your pain away
And give you a new start
Erasing the pain of your past
So that you may find happiness at last
Maybe one day you'll let me
But from the look in your eyes
I can tell that today is not that day
It doesn't matter though
Just as long as you know
I will be here
Whenever, wherever, forever
Especially when you build up the courage
To release the ghosts from your soul

--Lashonda Gordon

Poem to Chris

Fly away soul
With the wind
To the fields of gold
Where it all began.

My heart and soul
Breaks every day
But I will go on
Each tortuous way.

It was not all for nothing
This life that you lead
Each night I pray for you
Alone in my bed.

What were you thinking,
Were you in pain?
The thought you were hurting
Drives me insane.

I tried to protect you
From the day you were born
I failed you brother
Myself I scorn.

Please forgive me
For all of my sins
Until the day I see you
I'll mourn 'til then.

--Kelly Christine Fest

Native American



--Myrna Hawkins

Creation



--Alfie Wells

Ladybug

Ladybug fly free
Leave your spots at home
To rattle the chains
Of blood and bone.

Fly away free
Past the moon and stars
To a place where your heart
Is not behind bars.

Run away free
What will you find?
Without the trees
Or the pain that binds.

Swallow the sky
Burst into divine
Ease your pain
With thistle and wine.

--Kelly Christine Fest

Written to my only brother who
recently passed away

The Plateau

This plateau
Has got to GO!
I'm eating right,
Don't snack at night,
I drink my water
Just like I oughter
Oh woe is me!
I just can't see that scale move down
I pout and frown!

I walk, I tone, I Jazzercise.
My clothes have all gone down a size!
And yet my scale
Moves like snail!
My hips and thighs I measure
And sure enough to my pleasure
There seems to be somewhat less of me
But this scale won't budge. How can this be?

I know, I know, I am improving!
I watch my calories. I've started moving!
I know eventually it will pay.
But how to endure 'til that day?
Long days, longer weeks slowly creep by
My frustration is impatient, I will not lie!
I won't give up! I can't, you know!
But this damned plateau has got to go!

-- Rebecca Montgomery

Upon Waking

A soft warm breeze caressed my face and tussled my hair. Cool ice cream dribbled down my round little chin. Sunlight, spilling through the unrolled window, warmed me.

I was settled into the velvet-like interior, the smells of fresh damp earth, green grass and sawdust co-mingling on the gentle breeze. I hear my father's low voice, giving instructions to his workers. The scream of the saw blade ripping through lumber, like a pebble tossed into a pond, was the only thing disrupting my complete serenity. As my cone disappeared, the scream fades into a whine. I am completely content. The warmth envelops me as I drift slowly to sleep.

That day was so fresh and bright, the earth still damp from several days rain. Having been cooped up for so long with my domineering mother, a trip to the job sight made the adventure a special treat sealing the memory forever.

I was happiest with my Dad. The jobsite was a different world from my mother's endless tasks as a homemaker. I revelled in the processes of laying a sturdy foundation, framing, exterior work, and the interior completion until at last an immaculate home stood towering before me. I

I felt destined to become the carpenter's daughter.

can still feel the pleasure upon entering the completed home, feeling soft new carpets beneath my bare feet and breathing deeply the new-house-smell.

I felt honored when I was allowed some part in the process, which consisted of picking up small boards and nails, hammering that together, until I was later allowed to clean them up. I eventually would work on the house itself. I felt destined to become the carpenter's daughter, capable of taking on the family business.

I awake as I normally do now in the middle of the night, unable to sleep peacefully, suffering from nightmarish horrors, followed by fits of insomnia. I hear the soft low voice that used to comfort me after many a nightmare, drifting from the dining area through my thin walls. Two other voices cut through the chorus of crickets chirping outside my window. The cool night breeze encourages me to burrow deeper beneath my thick quilt. I listen intently, yet am unable to make any words form. Max, who is nestled between my feet, stirs. A low growl vibrates from his small throat, as if he senses my unease.

"Shhh," I whisper, and he begins to settle.

Upon Waking (cont.)

I can feel dryness in my mouth, an unsettling feeling in my gut. I groggily roll out of bed, still in a sleeper's haze I rub my eyes, blink, rub again as I shuffle toward the door.

I quietly turn the knob. I poke my head out, as my eyes adjust to the dimly lit room, just past the hall. My heart stops, my gut wrenches. Before me is my father, Penny, and some venomous stranger bent over the kitchen table taking turns snorting filth of what flavor I care not. Perfection in an instant, shattered.

Now fully awake I backstep into my room. I get into bed, where I lie in silence: Max now in my arms cuddled as a child's teddy bear. Eyes wide, disbelief courses through me.

The crickets were no longer able to soothe me back into the depths beyond reality's grasp. I was now in a wakeful surreality that bound me to consciousness.

The man, who I idolized, disintegrated over the next few years into someone I would no longer recognize or understand. The kindness was gone, replaced with moody tension.

What left a lasting impact were the words that followed the morning after, "You don't remember anything from last night, do you honey?"

--Angie Head

Mississippi

I despised the lowly state of Mississippi. As a child I did not understand why my hatred ran so deep. I knew one thing: I hated Mississippi, and Mississippi hated me.

My dad hung his hat with Uncle Sam for over 24 years. Our family, at the time, numbered six. My parents grew up around their cousins and wanted the same for us. Because we traveled often, my parents felt that any time spent with family helped improve us.

My father's people hailed from Mississippi. Every summer that we lived stateside, we made our trek to the Delta State for the annual family

I hated that monster river, threatening to devour my family and me.

reunion. Just the thought of my forced journey to 'Sip filled me with melancholy.

One summer in particular, as we crossed the Mississippi River, I slunk down into the car. Why did we have to drive to Mississippi? I hated that monster river, threatening to devour my family and me. The river taunted, "Welcome to our state. We have been waiting to GET you." The river never gobbled us up, but that did not mean it did not try.

The river, at last behind us, began to fade. As we traveled farther into the heart of Mississippi, the air, humid and thick, pressed in from all sides. The oppression of the state settled upon me. The sun mercilessly beat down on us, as we made our way to Indianola. The thick, humid air sucked half of the moisture out of our bodies. Mosquitoes sucked out the other half. We arrived at our cousins' (the pig farmers) houses, tired, dried up. Mississippi took over us and did not leave much.

The stench of the pigs was unbearable. Our family whisked us to the "cold room" (the only air conditioned room in the house.) We began to regain our moisture and in crept hunger. One thing about the South, they cooked enough good food to fill your belly and almost make you forgive them their faults. We ate ham, chitlins, greens, all kinds of barbecue, pies, cakes, an embarrassment of salads, and lord knows what else. We feasted like royalty. The first night ended well, but the next day loomed.

My parents taught me to respect everyone. Grown-ups received the most respect and on down the line. I witnessed something that summer of 1978 that shocked my seven-year-old mind.

Mississippi (cont.)

My older cousins wanted my sister and me to hang out with them. My parents allowed us to go. Mosquitoes and flies attacked, but the day was fun filled. We played with the farm animals, drove a tractor, and ran into town. Our cousins took us to Kentucky Fried Chicken for lunch. Revealed that day was a world unknown to me. I saw my lively, vivacious cousins lower their heads and hearts and allow every white person, young and old, to go ahead of us. When we pointed out that we were there first, they covered our mouths and told us to "Hush." My sister and I could not believe what occurred. Raised to believe that everyone and everything was equal, something, clearly, was not equal here.

Later that day, we questioned our cousins. "Why did you let them cut in front of us?" "Why were you calling little kids 'Mister' and 'Miss'?" We repeatedly asked the same questions different ways and only received two answers, "That's just the way things are" and "Because they are white." My cousins' whole world was summed up with those two simple but devastating phrases. I understood then, my cousins believed they existed because others allowed them to exist.

On that day, my hatred for Mississippi sealed itself in my mind. I visited Mississippi for the last time in 1987. At sixteen, I saw that Mississippi was not as bad as I remembered, but things were barely better. At sixteen, I decided never to return to Mississippi, and to this day, I never have.

--Deanna M. Stoneroad

November Bottle



--Leticia Wilkes

By the Shore



--Ruth Forster

SONNET: Are you looking at me?

I saw you looking through the leafy tree.
Your eyes gazing as if they were in love,
Could those endearing eyes be meant for me?
I look up to the leafy tree above.

Raindrops gently fall down from that tree
Caressing my skin through your affection
Trying to break through myself to be free,
Could your love be an awful infection?

To taste the bitter sweetness of the rain,
The different colors that fall before me,
Picture us a scene down a dusty lane,
Rippling red, lemon yellow, quite serene.

I'll not pretend to see you looking here,
I'll not pretend to see if you are near.

—Nicole McGurk

D.C.

We gathered our skateboards, cameras and backpacks and eagerly headed towards the metro. It was a typical summer day, the sun blazing bright with hints of an icy cool breeze to even things out. The four of us, glowing with excitement, paid our \$2.40 and boarded the yellow line headed smack dab in to the middle of D.C. I had been to D.C. many times, but this time was completely different. Not only were we a few weeks away from entering high school, but our parents let us all go into the city by ourselves to see the new photography exhibit at the National Museum of Modern Art on Constitution Ave.

There was concrete and chaos everywhere.

We took our seats on the abandoned cart and talked about all the things we were going to do. I stared out the window, mesmerized deeply in my thoughts. We sped by gigantic shopping malls with what seemed like endless rows of cars in

the parking lots. We passed the county fair, which had just begun to set up the monstrous ferris wheel and the Yogi Bear roller coaster which I had ridden many times in my youth. I started to space out, forgetting about all the life-threatening problems that all middle-schoolers are plagued with, such as who to ask out at the party Saturday, or what to wear on Monday. Suddenly, I realized we were nearing our destination. We certainly were not in Virginia anymore. The buildings were aged and rundown, reminding me of a cynical war vet showing his much-earned battle wounds. A thick layer of city smog filtered the sun and the air was crisp and cold.

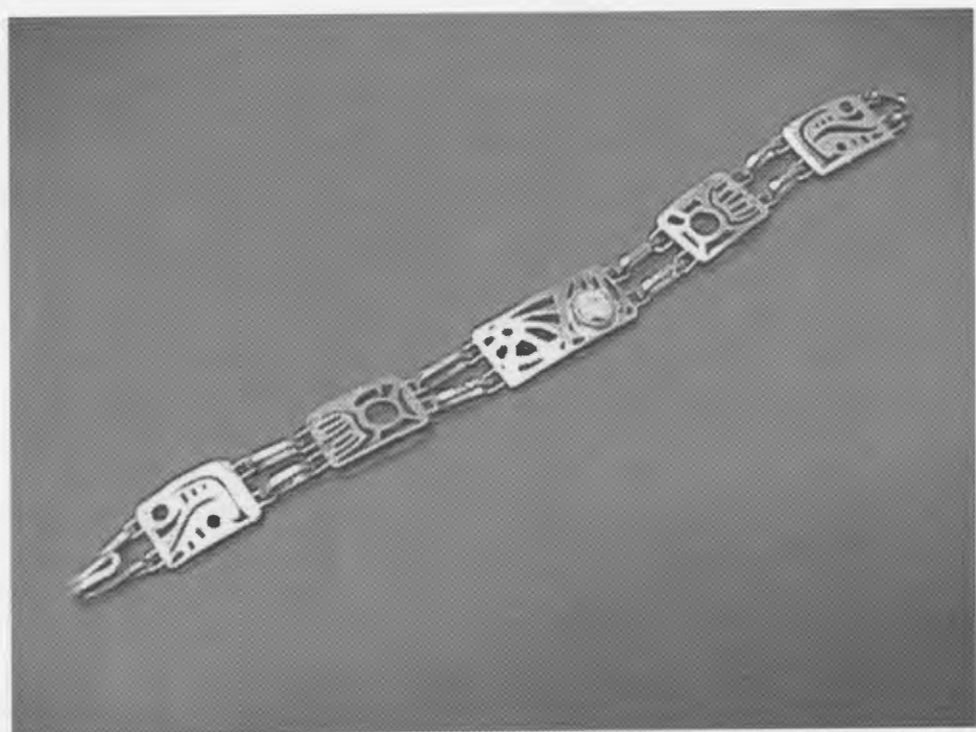
As we stepped off the metro, we started our seven-block trek to the exhibit. There was concrete and chaos everywhere. We kept to ourselves, trying our hardest not to look anyone straight in the eyes. When we finally reached the museum, I was surprised that there was no charge to get in. "Now I'll have money for lunch and a souvenir," I thought to myself. Once inside the museum, we immediately noticed that we stuck out like sore thumbs. A hallway full of professional looking art critics in business suits surrounded four teenage punks with baggy jeans and piercings carrying skateboards. I wandered away from my friends and made my way to the Ansel Adams section of the gallery. As I was looking at some beautiful black and white landscape photographs, I noticed a gentleman standing next to me. He was wearing mangled army pants, a plain black sweatshirt, and some old school Chuck Taylors whose soles were practically separated from the shoe. "He's good isn't he," the man blurted out.

Untitled



-- Jessica Collin

Bracelet



-- Paul Wheeler

D.C. (cont.)

Not knowing much about the artist, I reluctantly replied "Yeah." "He seems like an intelligent man, and he knows a lot about art," I thought to myself. He began to talk about another artist I had never heard of when my friends found me and said they were going to get something to eat. I awkwardly nodded and made my way out of the museum.

As we ate at a nearby Burger King, my friends were planning on what we were going to do next. I finished my soggy chicken sandwich and threw my trash away in the overflowing trashcan. We sat for a while, resting before our journey to the record store near the nicer side of town. As I looked out the window, I noticed the man from the gallery sitting across the street. Next to him lay an old worn out duffle bag. It occurred to me that he was homeless, which struck me as odd seeing how he wasn't any older than 30. I had seen many homeless people on television and while driving, but never in person. I felt uneasy. I stood up and told my friends I would meet up with them at the record store. As I made my way towards him, I suddenly realized how sick he looked. His skin was pale white and his face looked very tired. "Can I buy you something to eat?" I asked. The man refused to take my money even though he was obviously hungry. I insisted on buying him some coffee and we made our way back into the Burger King.

As I walked up to the counter, I noticed he limped to the bathroom. An idea rushed into my head, as I quickly reached for my wallet. "When he comes

out, tell him I left this for him," I said, handing the cashier my last \$10. Not even thinking about how I was going to get home, I grabbed my stuff and walked away. I hurried down the street, catching up with my friends a few blocks later.

My friend gave me money for the ticket home, and we sat down right as the doors to the cart closed. I did not space out as we made our way out of the city. Instead, I quietly observed how much of a different world was out there and how one will starve while another gains. I thought about how the city thinks only of itself and has no remorse for those in need. I thought about how lucky I was to have a house to sleep in, let alone food to eat. It was then, as we made our way closer to our suburban white neighborhood, with swimming pools in the back yard and two-car garages filled with SUV's and sports cars that my perception of life was forever altered.

**The city thinks only of itself
and has no remorse for those
in need.**

Building for the Future



-- Jerry Allen

Central Texas College
P.O. Box 1800
Killeen, Texas 76540-1800