



Phantasmagoria

Central Bucks East High School
Art Literary Magazine

Phantasmagoria

Art and Literary Magazine

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This magazine is dedicated to the belief that the arts are a necessary and important force in our lives, and to the support of the young artists who bring them to us.

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Mixed media by Adri Kalinowski

Change

In youth,
my hair cascading,
over my shoulders,
would glisten in the sun's rays.
It would rarely rain.

At twelve, things became more complicated,
it took longer to get ready,
clouds were constantly masking the sun,
people talked loudly laughing--
out of insecurity.

At thirteen things grew,
then died,
sometimes stayed permanently.
It was fun and exciting.

At fourteen you appeared,
a new adventure
which I would always hold on to.
There were a lot of sun showers that year.
My hair, teasing my back--
maybe sunny days were ahead.

Now, things are short again.
The days.
My hair.
My thoughts,
but you,
you are far.

Alone

At night,
all I can hear is
silence--
the lack of voices
evading the rooms,
along the narrow hallway.
No one turns on the lights,
no one is ever there to
loosen the knobs on the doors,
or walk amongst the numbed room,
with their emotions held out in front of them,
to light their way.

Poetry by Jamie Harris '02

Jamie Harris was one of the top three poets selected from East. Not only does she lend her creative talents to the Phantasmagoria staff, but she also uses them towards other uses like her Graduation Project. This past year she researched poetry and constructed her own book of original work. Next year she will be at Penn State majoring in Undecided.

Meghan Daily
The Flower Shop

interrupted my thoughts. He picked up a lily and smelled it. "This must be well, your life." He handed me a card. "Let me know within a week?" He tipped his hat and followed the other men back outside. The bell on the door jingled as they all filed out.

The sales clerk put the petals in the trash can and then came over to put a hand on my shoulder. The tender caress set my emotions off and I let the tears that had been brimming behind my eyes stream down my pale face. I swallowed and looked at my flowers.

"Can you see this as a cigar shop?!" I cried. "I can't! This is my store! No amount of money can take this store from me!"

"Tell those men that," the sales clerk said. He seemed to be scolding me and my eyes dropped down to the floor.

"Oh, I'm sorry," he said as he cleared his throat. "You should just tell those men that the store is not for sale."

I nodded and gulped back a fresh batch of tears. I knew I had to stand up for myself, but I wasn't sure if my voice would cooperate.

The rest of the week went by in a haze. Customers came in and out of the store and flowers disappeared, but I did not see them. I sat by the window and played scenes through my mind of how life would be without my store; I would be wealthy and comfortable however. A bag of money and a vase of roses were on a mental scale, but every time the roses weighed more than the money did.

The following Tuesday arrived and I walked slowly into work. The store was once again surrounded, but this time only by Jay Miller and the tall man. The sales clerk stood next to them, swinging his keys in a circle. The men saw me approaching and rushed to greet me. They shook my hands and their grips were tight. I had to wait for them to release my hand.

"Good morning!" Jay Miller flashed me his smile and pointed towards my shop. "Ready to become a millionaire?"

I couldn't respond. Jay Miller took out his check book again and clicked his pen. He acted as if I had already told him that the shop space was his. I went to say something, but my voice got caught in my throat. My eyes fell to the ground again as Jay Miller began writing a check. The sales clerk nudged

me and cleared his throat. I shook my head. Was I going to lose my one love because I couldn't stand up for myself? Many questions began to race through my mind.

"Well, do we have deal?" Jay Miller ripped the check from his book. I swallowed hard and took a deep breath. I then felt something snap inside of my body and my heart swelled.

"No?" Jay Miller looked at me harder.

"You can't have the store," I announced. "It's not for sale." The sales clerk's eyes grew wide and a huge smile spread across his face. I could feel my face flushing and my heart was pounding against my rib cage.

"No amount of money can take this store away from me," I continued. "It's my life and I'm sorry Mr. Miller, but my answer is no."

The tall man wiped his face and coughed. "I'll meet you in the car Jay." He headed out the door.

Jay Miller's face turned a shade of purple and then deep red. He clenched his teeth.

"I won't take no for an answer," he told me. "Come on, you'll be rich!"

"No," I said again sternly and stamped my foot for emphasis. Jay Miller saw that I was not going to change my mind. He tore up the check and the tiny pieces scattered to the ground.

"Fine," he said. "Your loss!" He stomped towards the door and then flung around. "Keep your pathetic little store! We'll find a different place and make millions!" He slammed the door and the "Open" sign fell off. I saw their car take off in a puff of smoke. The sales clerk let out his breath.

"I can't believe you just did that!" he cried. "You really saved my job, thank you. I knew you couldn't get rid of the store!" He gave me a huge smile again and went to sweep up the dirt the men had tracked in.

I smiled to myself. My heart was still beating rapidly and I was sweating. I wiped my brow and went over to the daisy patch. The daisies' yellow eyes smiled at me. I cut a few and put them in a vase next to the roses. They all watched the busy streets of town as the people bustled by. The yellow and red seemed to reach my soul and filled the store with a bright happiness.

Nina Campellone

You Noticed Me!

You noticed me
Your olive colored complexion stunned me
While your coffee eyes casually
Watched my every movement.
I blushed and gave a flirtatious smile.
It was that math class that united us
And I became helplessly yours.

My heart pounded furiously with excitement
As the words slowly oozed out of your mouth
Like a thick caramel colored honey.
"Do you want to go out?"
Those words I would remember for eternity.

Time moved too fast with you.
And too slow without you.
I cherished every soccer game I watched you play in.
The way your uniform clung to your body after a game
And the way your hand caressed mine.

I was unaware of everything around me
As you pulled my body in.
You held my body close to yours
And tightly gripped my sides.
Slowly and calmly we moved closer
Until the space between us was no more.
I could feel your lips tenderly massage mine.
I wanted time to stop.
Your eyes were warm and soft
As you pushed your body away and smiled.

As spring evolved into summer
Our relationship passionately bloomed.
The summer nights were spent
Walking along the boardwalk
As the summer breezes blew a salty mist from the ocean.

When August came, the white and black saddle shoes
And plaid jumper revealed that the school year was
beginning,
Yet our relationship was ending.

Right there, on the corner of Rhawn and Pine
We went our separate ways.
Never to see each other again,
But to have the scar of our love engraved on us.

Ryan McGrainer

Sonnet of Uncertainty

A thousand, thousand whispers in my dreams
They say, "what if you had done this instead?"
"Perhaps if you ... Maybe if you ..." It seems
I haven't yet chosen right, and this I dread
Did I do the right thing? It burns away
At every waking moment, sleeping thought
An acid of self-doubt, I cannot say
If what I did will ever be forgot
Am I this thing? Why even make an attempt?
What is right anymore? I reel with confusion.
From these thoughts I'll never be exempted
What I know has faded to an unreadable illusion
And still the silence in my mind remains
unbroken
For not one single, simple word has been
spoken



Mixed media by Mary Bradley

Steve Voorhees

The Loft

The steadfast day returns obscurity.
Showing its wear from man's brutality.
And frustrated from the day's turmoil,
It throws itself into Evening Royal.

Moonrise

And once again the night's warmth embraces.
The darkness takes and comforts the spaces.
Protection from the hidden unknown,
As I consider my mind's exhausted tone.

My Loft

The place for enlightened confusion.
This pot of concentrated muddlement.
For always thinking, and yet rambling.
Motionless silence between rest and sleep.

Minds Disarray

I ponder, propose, but more so pray.
I reflect, recall, and recollect.
I wonder, worry, staying wishful.
I mill, mull over, and meditate.

Nights Arms

The comfort of night wraps around me,
Showing sleep to be the necessity.
Throwing the trap,
Taking me captive in...

The Loft

Snowy Days

As I sit upon the porch, I watch them play
in the yard. They move like snow,
As it flutters down toward us.
They dance and move in the light
of day with the greatest of ease. The white
of the flakes glistens off of their cold
bodies. They shiver from the cold
that caught them in their rambunctious play.
The children's cheeks drop from red to white
as the day continues. The snow
falls more rapidly as the day's light
begins to bear down upon us.
The chill of the air gives us
a new vision of the crispness of cold.
I look around at the blurred images in the light
of the sun. The brightness taunts them as they play
together. The children run about catching the snow
on their tongues. The fresh taste of white
flurries fall around them. These white
dustings come down layering us.
They cover my lap in a thick blanket of snow.
These crystals sit on my knee. I feel the cold
of their touch. They rest from their time of play
and dance, as they bask in the afternoon's light.
The day is ending as the light
moves on. The sky quickly changes from white
to gray. The children have stopped their day of play
in the sparkling yard. The wind bites at us.
The children retreat, escaping the devouring cold.
There are whistling sounds, followed by more snow.
The storm rushes to throw more snow
at our feet. The time of light
has diminished, making me feel even more cold.
My body is frozen from the white
flakes. These iced droplets of joy that fell upon us
danced from the sky, and stayed to play.

The falling snow now encrusts the window with white.
In the fading light of the sun, hiding from us,
out of the cold, the children still play.

Malory Seeton

'Panic struck my heart'

Panic struck my heart like a cannonball in the chest as I went to grab my cousin, Julie's, hand but it was not there. Julie, being the rambunctious child she is, had finally succeeded in breaking free from my hand's grasp that I had kept so tightly throughout the day. Spinning around, I frantically darted my eyes among the crowds of children and adults who temporarily become children themselves while in these amusement park borders. There are no other responsibilities, no jobs or other obligations. The echo of laughter and shouting substitutes the office phones and school bells for this flawless day in the park. It is an atmosphere of an utterly carefree world—but not anymore. How could I have done this? Julie was my only responsibility! And now our much anticipated fun day in the amusement park transformed into a nightmare.

The bright, smiling and blissful faces of the crowds turned into concerned worries with wrinkled brows at my obvious predicament. The sun high above in the blue sky, a motherly figure almost, turned her face and hid in the clouds, her comfort disappearing. I could hear my parents now. "Sarah, you're fifteen. We gave you your chance to prove that you were responsible and keep watch over your cousin." Great, I blew it. But at this point, I couldn't waste the time to think about my parents condescending lectures. I ran to the nearest vacant park bench, jumping on top, hoping to spy that fire-red haired, ten year old girl that I would curse for leaving my side. Without consciousness, I yelled out for Julie instinctively. No response.

No, I could not see that mass of exploding hair, which would have stuck out like a canary in a flock of white doves. This was getting serious. Sweat drops began to form on my forehead, sinking helplessness into my brain. To stand there for just a bit longer, scan my eyes across the crowd of children racing by, dragging each other to the next roller coaster, yes, that was the only solution. She was bound to see me standing above the crowd, obviously searching for her. Then she would run to me, wiping tears from her eyes, and hug my waist, never to let go again. But of course, following the pattern of my luck, this failed to happen.

Jumping down from the bench, I surveyed the area of the roller coaster we had just gotten off of... just gotten off of! How could I have possibly lost her in those few seconds? We were just about to go get an ice cream cone, and now she was gone. Wherever she ran to, I knew that when I found her I would scold that little mischievous child until I yelled her ears off or until I lost my voice from screaming-whichever came first.

All right, she had been missing for almost fifteen minutes. My mind began spinning in circles of worst case scenarios. What if I didn't find her? What if some criminal roaming the park for lonely children found her first? What if I had to explain to my aunt and uncle that I had lost their only daughter? I

was getting myself upset. The swarm of people all looked alike, a blur of colors. My eyesight began to fade. My head throbbed with confusion and panic. My heart beat at such a rate, I thought it might explode from my chest. I suddenly felt dizzy in my growing state of hysteria.

Gather yourself Sarah. You're going to find her; keep telling yourself that you will find her. I had traveled the radius of our last roller coaster's exit for what seemed like a hundred times at least. She has yet to be found. "Julie! Julie!" I randomly would call out, praying to God that I would hear the response, "Sarah! I'm right here!" However, there was a strange silence settling over the crowd—the disintegrating crowd.

"Excuse me," I asked a stranger walking by in a tacky orange, Hawaiian shirt. "Could you please tell me what time it is?"

"Oh, it's about..." He glanced down at his watch. "It's about ten after five."

I didn't even remember to thank the man. It couldn't be ten after five! The park closed at 5:30. That meant I had twenty minutes before the park was closed for the night. That meant I had twenty minutes before we were supposed to be meeting my parents at the entrance. And there I was, with my cousin still missing! Maybe I should ask someone for help, someone that works here. But I felt so stupid, and how were they going to help? Stopping to investigate every redhead in the park would not be of much help. I was better off by myself. No wasted time. Unlike an employee of the park, I knew exactly who I was looking for, and I knew I had to find her.

While running plans through my head, I had walked a good distance from my previous over-searched area, still yelling out for my cousin. The crowds of people began slowly filtering out of the park as rides began to reject any newcomers. There was no way I would be able to search the entire park in twenty minutes. The reminder made my temporary absence of hysteria creep its way back into my throat. No Sarah, don't let yourself get upset again. You're likely never to find Julie if you do.

My legs were starting to feel like rubber, tingling as though they had fallen asleep, even though it was the sign of my weariness of trudging through the park. My throat was growing equally weary for shouting Julie's name; my voice grew hoarse and raspy. At this rate, I would barely have enough in me to yell at her if I ever did find her, but I assured myself that if I did, somehow I would find enough in me to give her what she deserves.

Not wanting to know the truth, I asked another stranger making their way to the exit of the park what time it was. It was 5:25, only a matter of minutes before I would have to go meet my parents and explain to them that I had lost Julie. I had lost all hope that I would find her. My efforts so far had been

Malory Seeton

'Panic struck my heart'

of no success. Then I began to think of how I would tell my parents, and how they would react. However, my thoughts were interrupted by a loud speaker, overheard throughout the park.

"To all visitors: The park will be closing shortly. Please make your way out the exits. Thank you for coming, and we hope to see you again soon." It was as though an angel was speaking over that loud speaker. I ran to the nearest employee, wearing the obvious red and white striped uniform.

"Where do those announcements come from?" I questioned the employee.

"From the front desk of the gift shop," the young girl responded, a little puzzled by the peculiarity of my question.

"And where can I find the gift shop?" I asked so quickly out of anxiousness that I almost stumbled on my words.

"Right next to the Ferris wheel."

With that, I was running as fast as I could possibly run, considering my legs were so tired. I could see the Ferris wheel above all the convention stands and game buildings and roller coasters. I was getting closer. This was my only hope. If Julie was still in the park, which I prayed to God that she was, I would tell her through the loud speaker to come to the Ferris wheel to meet me.

I spotted it in the distance, a building directly next to the Ferris wheel entrance. I sprinted as fast as I could. Finally, I was carrying out a sensible solution! I knew it had to have been past 5:30 now, and I didn't care that my parents, being at the entrance, might hear the loud speaker calling Julie to meet me. I didn't care that I would have a lot of explaining to do. I didn't care that I would still get punished even if I did find her. All I cared about was getting to that gift shop. It was the best I could do.

My legs were moving without control. I was so tired, and yet my legs kept moving just as fast as ever. It was like that last lap of the mile run at school. But then suddenly, my legs came to such a sudden halt that I almost toppled over.

"Sarah!"

I knew that voice. That was the voice of Julie, that fire-red hair, ten-year-old girl I was supposed to curse. I turned to see her standing in front of the ice cream stand, cool and relaxed.

"Where have you been? I've been waiting for you. I thought you said we were getting ice cream." Julie said innocently.

I could not say a word. For the first time in my life, I was speechless. Again, without control, I ran, dropped to my knees in front of her, and hugged her. I didn't want to ever let go. I could not stop the tears of joy coming from my eyes. Julie did not seem to understand, shown by the one-sided hug distributed by myself.

"What's the matter? Why are you crying, Sarah?"

I don't know how I did it at the time, but I parted from her. Still on my knees, and looking up to her, I could only stare into her eyes. She was so young, so naive, and so clueless as to the possibilities of what could have happened to her while she was without me. She looked back at me, obviously confused. She had just been waiting, never thinking twice that I wouldn't know to come to the ice stand. And still, I stared in her eyes, those eyes that I never wanted to lose sight of again.

"Why are you crying, Sarah?" Julie repeated, growing as concerned as a ten year old possibly can.

Regardless of all the things I wanted to yell and scream at her, how tired I was, how my throat burned, how I had spent the afternoon worrying, how I was to the point of hysteria, I could only answer this.

"Because I love you," I choked. I took her in my arms again.

Julie was still confused but she sympathetically patted me on the back and replied coyly. "Well, I love you too, Sarah." There was a pause as though Julie expected me to let go of her, but seeing that I wasn't going to, she continued, "...but are you going to get some ice cream or not? I've been waiting forever."

I couldn't help but to laugh, even through my joyous tears. So we both got our favorite: a mint chocolate chip ice cream cone (which the man was nice enough to give us considering they were officially closed). And so we walked toward the exit, licking the drips of melting ice cream off of our hands, and giggling at the mess it made on our faces.

Julie and I have been inseparable ever since. Now that we are all grown, both with lives of our own, we still are the best of friends. As the years passed, Julie began to understand the trauma of that day, and she began to appreciate that moment of being reunited at that ice cream stand. To this day, we go back to have ice cream there, just the two of us. It's become almost a tradition every summer, just to remind us how lucky we are that we have each other.

Confirmation

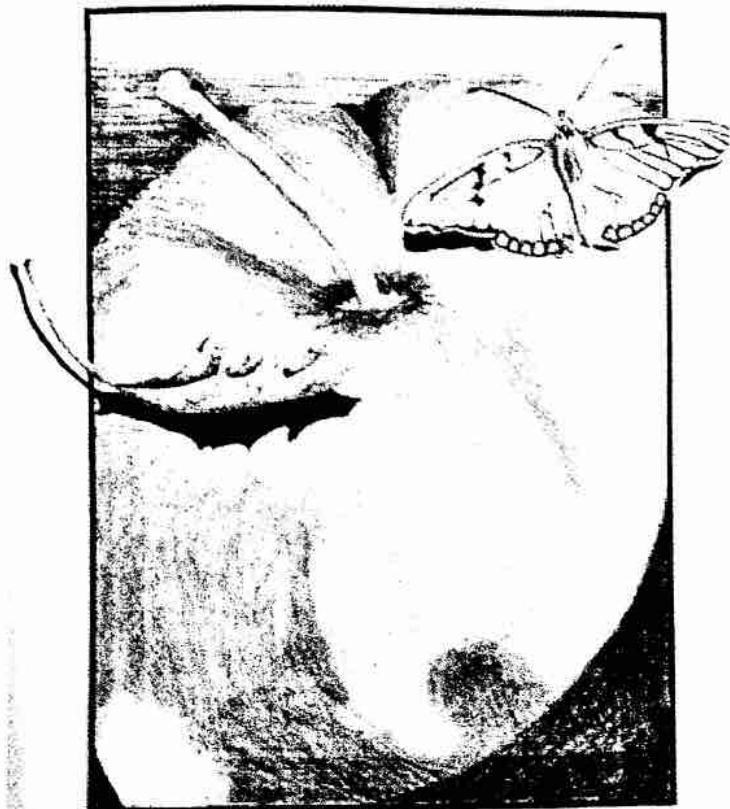
Kneeling softly on smooth wood,
sweaty hands clasped in prayer,
looking like a Catholic should.
The priest begins his monotone address,
about His might and whom He will smite.
I sit in silent solitude,
casting a light of holiness.

straying from the flock...

Shoelaces smacking the pavement with my pace,
Mother holds my wrists tightly,
pulling my soul towards grace.
Teachers talk in monotone voices,
I stand in a C.C.D class from my past.
Children turn and stare blankly,
chanting "Central City Dump!"
Cover my ears to block out the sound,
but their hymn rips my hands away.
I break into a run and stumble
carelessly over the Lord's Prayer.
Tripping over Christmas presents,
not noticing Jesus lying beneath.
Not caring about the commandments
on which I tread.

Back to Communion and stale wafers.
Quickly I reprove my sins.
Cautiously avoiding the eyes,
of the all too knowing priest.
Body and blood are tasteless in my mouth.
Sitting down before they see
my gray sweatshirt and dingy jeans.
"This mass has ended, go in peace,"
provokes a long awaited sigh of relief.
My duty done I rise.
I wonder if there will ever be
a holy day where I will see
consequences unknown to me.

How long must I kneel on this worn wood,
acting like a monotone Catholic should?
not able to see one step ahead,
How will I know if my stop has arrived?
Does He come in glorious light?
Will He save me one sinful night?
Is He deaf to my pretentious, "Please..."
Did he pass by me while I was on my knees?



Mixed media by Emily Smith

Writings of Alison Gregory '02

Alison Gregory was one of the top three poets selected from East. If you are in Philadelphia next year be sure to keep an ear open and you may hear her singing at some of the restaurants near her school, Temple University.

The Death of Tradition

"Honey, can you bring the green box in here?" My mother's shout interrupted the flow from my mind to my fingers, causing them to dangle in midair above the keyboard. I sighed and closed the instant message box so my dad couldn't read it from his desk. My sister chuckled about how much it sucked to be me as my brothers salivated at the sight of an available computer. Glancing out at the powder that was beginning to layer the ground, I groaned and lifted the heavy container.

"Here you go..." I sighed as I lobbed the box onto the couch. Without looking up from what she was doing, she nodded and I began to hastily walk back to my online conversation.

She waited until I was halfway down the hall, "Wait!" I stopped without turning around and listened, "Do you think you could turn off the oven?" It was more a command than a question. I told her that I would be more than thrilled to do that, as soon as I finished what I was doing.

Chasing the boys away I reclaimed my seat at the computer and stared blankly at the screen. My friend was no longer online so I told the boys to take the damn computer and walked with contempt towards the kitchen. Passing the family room, I stopped, and noticed that atop a peach colored carpet, my mom prepared for Christmas. Ornamented in bright light she hung shiny metallic balls, figurines, and gold beads from the crisp branches of the tree. Lifting the nativity out of its box, she placed it on top of the table. Mary and Joseph looked serenely out at me from their miniature manger. Green and red wreaths filled with a menagerie of trinkets decorated the doorways and accented the mistletoe perfectly. My mom hurried through the cinnamon scented hallways to remove her gingerbread men from the oven. I looked to the point of the shining tree to see an angel with a golden crown looking at me.

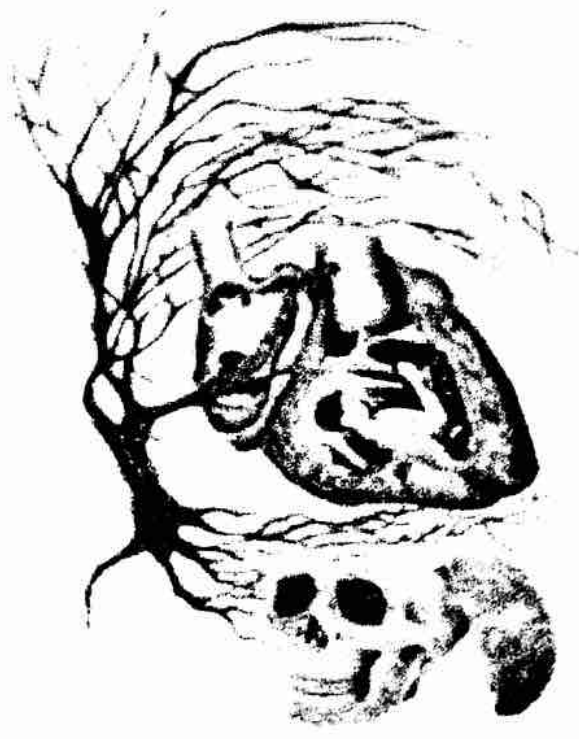
It was the same angel that had watched my family grow over all of our existence. I remember one year we all piled into the car and excitement rose as we drove closer to the tree farm. My brother and I leapt from the car as my dad helped my mom out of the car and retrieved my sister from her car seat. My brother and I ran circles around trees, laughing and shouting as my dad inadvertently reached for my mom's hand. After careful scrutiny, we selected the tree for my dad to cut down. Once he got it to the breaking point, we all pushed it over and called the farm owners over to tie it to our roof. My family and I had just enough time to grab a quick cup of hot chocolate before starting back home. I remember my brother tickling my sister with a goofy smile, and drool leaking from her lips as she giggled with him. My mom was waddling slowly, trying to balance her protruding stomach as she walked along uneven ground. When we got home my dad lifted me up to the height of the tree to affix the celestial figure there.

In the family room, atop a peach colored carpet, next to the hearth, my mom hastily prepared for Christmas. The hate and fear of relatives out decorating or out cooking her drove her into a frenzied state. Ornamented in bright lights that reflected in the tears of perspiration on her brow, she hung paint-chipped metallic balls, pieces of figurines, and partial strands of gold beads from the branches of the CVS tree we bought two years ago. Lifting the nativity out of its tattered grease stained box, she heaved it on top of the table. Mary and Joseph wore faded robes while facing opposite directions, unable to see that their baby had toppled from his cradle. Green and red wreaths filled with a menagerie of cobwebs and grime decorated the doorways and held up the mistletoe perfectly. My mom dashed through the cinnamon Lysol scented hallways to save her blackened gingerbread men from the blaze of the oven. I looked to the point of the shining tree to see a crooked angel with a rusting gilded crown looking down at me. I sucked on my lower lip as tears caused the angel to turn into a blurred glow.

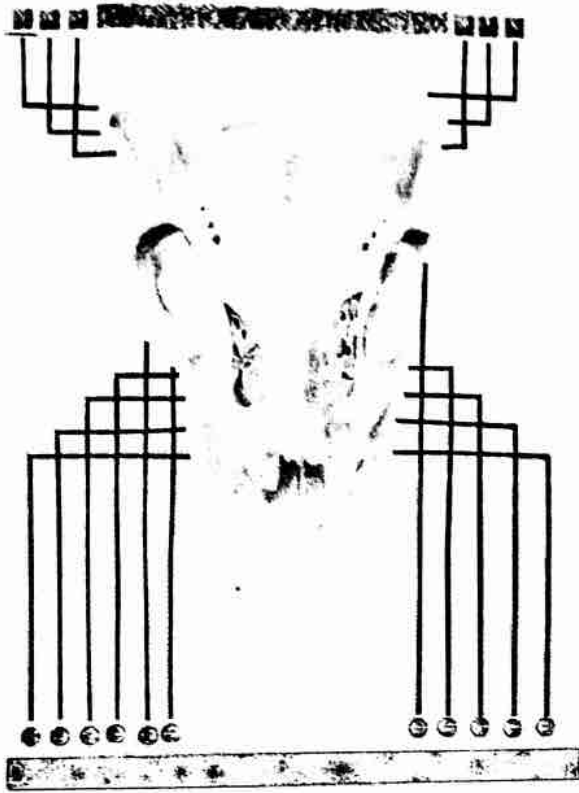
My mom parted with her frenzy for a moment and glanced back at me.

"What's wrong with you?"

"Nothing." I walked away.



Mixed media by Karen McFadden



Mixed media by Christina Roland

Infatuation

Initial love like
 Sucking pebbles through a straw
 With sporadic success and temporary excitement
 When the tiny rocks shoot up at you
 But land at the back of your throat,
 Or sit heavy in your stomach,
 To leave you aching . . .
 And wanting more.

Empty Things

I could barely talk and glanced up at you,
 occasionally,
 Eager to impress you with my supposed eloquence.
 I called your name, you called me small
 . . . and I resent that.

I grew and became defiant,
 Looking over at you seldom, with hope hidden
 Like an old lady sitting behind a window
 And you were always there,
 I relied on your consistency and your control.

Still I grew out of you and tried to find myself,
 eventually.
 But I was lonely and glanced back . . .
 Looking for your aged face but I came upon a daunting
 rift
 that we began to scream across,
 Until our voices were hoarse
 And thick fog lay stiff between us - an exhausted,
 stubborn child.

You were desperate to construct a stable bridge
 To help me understand you,
 And smooth the lines on your face.
 I was resolved to turn my back to your instruction,
 And wander through foolish endeavors ungov-
 erned . . .

But I keep finding you on the other side of empty things.

Poetry by Meghan Feeney '02

Although this poet was very shy about submitting and reading her own work, Meghan Feeney was one of the top three poets selected from East. On the weekends you might find her at a show or just hanging out with her friends in Doylestown.

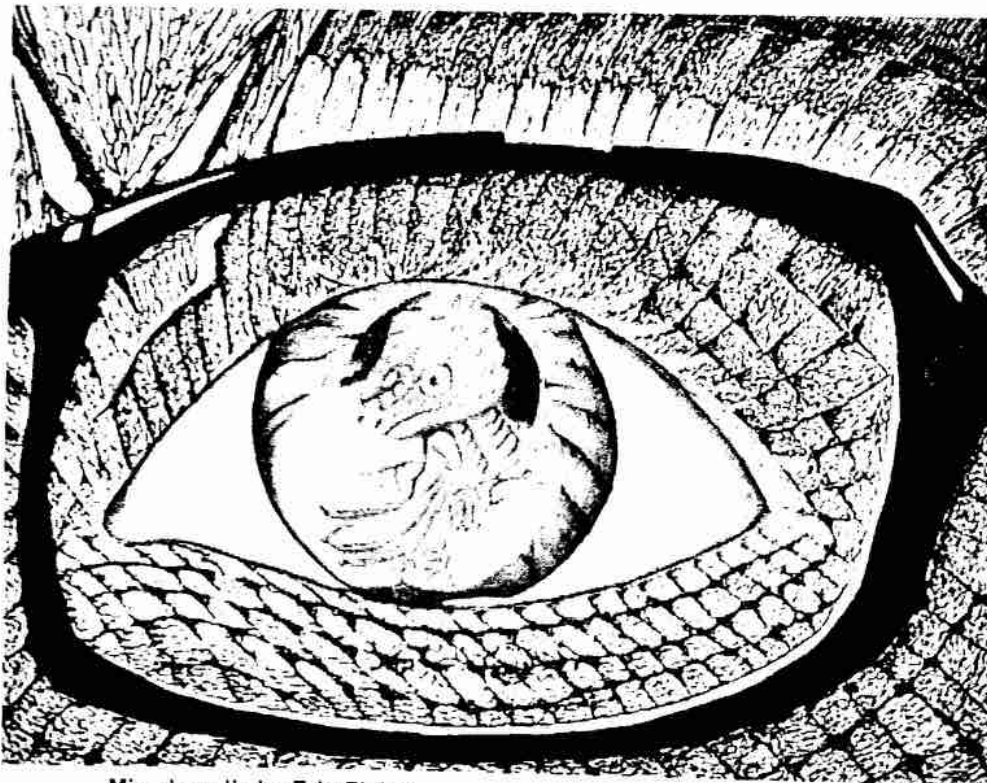
Maggie Ullman

'Splinter in the flesh'

Splinter in the flesh
Causes no pain, no harm;
Healed with no scars, its entry is now
Hidden from
Examining eyes.
Stable and secure between throbbing veins the splinter
Is massaged,
Each fiber rubs into the next, slowly deteriorating each other.
Splitting apart with each pulse from its casing
The splinter dissipates long after it has been forgotten.

'The space'

The space
Between tomorrow and never
Creaks open slowly from a hinge that whines with pessimism.
As she walks into never never land her footprints vanish
Shortly after they are made.



Mixed media by Erin Fisher

Alex Dubilet

The Reconstruction of Reality

In late 1945, during a period of lithographic inspiration, Picasso deconstructed the image of the bull, which he claimed to be symbolic representation of himself. He withdrew a cultural symbol from within the grasp of a chaotic and turbulent World War II reality and transformed it, leaving only the quintessential simplistic foundation in its place. His eleventh and final, post metamorphous abstraction stripped away all the deceptive appearances and was composed of just a few brushstrokes: the body, the tail, the legs, the horned head and the genitalia. With those few strokes he retained an image as complete and powerful as the original. As he himself later said, "In the end, though, nothing is lost."

He swam against the current; and so do I. But the current in the meantime has changed. The world is no longer chaotic or in the midst of destruction; it itself began shedding layers of complexity and now reality is as simple as those few brushstrokes. But the simplicity which surrounds us is no longer vibrant or enchanting, but rather tainted and dull. Realizing this I became determined to reconstruct reality to its natural state of harmonious completeness on the infinite canvas of my own mind. Using the world's physical appearances I wanted to give birth to a human being and then reconstruct the rest of reality. I understood that the world's exterior would be a very brittle foundation, but if I was to raze the system from within I had no other choice.

Feeling the initial jolt of movement, I put aside the issue of the periodical that I was reading and awaited the self-appointed threshold. The metro train traveled its usual course: south to center city. I began my journey at the depot station. The seats were not all yet filled up and only a stubborn few stood straight holding the handrails. I looked into inverted silhouettes and blurred outlines, into the subterranean architecture of tunnels that unfolded infinitely into the depths of labyrinthine darkness we pass instantaneously upon our hurried journeys onward. My eyes were slightly pained every five seconds by the fleeting appearance (and then relieved by the brief disappearance) of bright, but tarnished, fluorescent lights in the darkness of the tunnel and every half that interval by the somewhat blurred reflections of those lights that passed behind me.

I carefully surveyed those who traveled alongside me in the subway and with them, the subway itself. The metro car was one of the traditional design: two parallel rows of continuous worn cushioned seats, fragmented only by three equally spaced out pairs of sliding doors facing each other, leaving room for an aisle in the middle. Two middle age men talked. One had a folded backgammon board on his lap. Across from them, beside the sliding doors, sat a plump elderly woman and near her stood her granddaughter, holding a handrail. At the other side

sat another elderly woman, with a knitted string-bag, who, most likely, would get the finest selection at the central bazaar. Two young Arabs talked in their native tongue. Sleeping. Rubber crevices in the floor filled with dirt. A woman in her mid-twenties with a red beret engagingly read a novel. A folded newspaper. More Sleep. As I turned my head I saw more possible foundations, more physical appearances. Then I stopped, for I had to select a single identity. Ninety degrees through my field of vision, half way through my survey, I stopped on the man directly across from me. He looked straight ahead at me, past me, as if I was not the target, just a blockade of his vision.

He was leaning back and motionlessly looking ahead. Inevitably I was drawn into his eyes. They were dark, deep-set eyes. Eyes that made you shudder in fear, not because they resonated evil, but because of their sheer power. But they lured you back; you had to look in them again, because they were as black and mysterious as the night, because in them you could see traces of the truth. They, on their own, could completely alter the expression on his face. Now, they looked painfully fatigued, burdened with existence. The sincere anguish was unbearable to watch. I lowered my eyes. His black hair, smoothly brushed back, was still wet from the morning shower of awakening. He had gaunt, but dominant features. His untied scarf fell down along his chest to his relaxed hands. All but the top button of his black overcoat were fastened. A neatly done collar slightly showed beneath his narrow chin. Without going into elaborate detail, he achieved a neat simplicity. He obviously cared for his appearance, because he cared for all aspects of his existence; but he wasn't deceived: he understood that his appearance was secondary, yet not something that should be left completely unattended.

Today he wore a collar and a tie, but that could not be the norm. He did not have a stable profession that required such a dress code. He was an opportunist. Without fright, he knew that day in and day out he would find a way to feed himself. The modern version of a renaissance man, he had from a young age opposed a society that inevitability turned everyone into cogwheels. He began as a self-taught man, learning without guidance the arts, literature, philosophy and linguistics. He then began freelancing around the world, working in opium dens, railroads, and dockyards, as a tenant farmer, a sailor, a saxophone player and occasionally had tried to live off his creations, never relinquishing his freedom; now he was going to meet with some cultural administrator that he had befriended. But he was not tied to him or any one else. He moved freely about the continent; his movement depended only on his own desires and inspirations. Those who were close to him had said that in the past, he had disappeared for prolonged periods of time from civilized society and could only hypothesize whether he had

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submerged himself into the jungles of the Amazon, or the fruit bazaars of India, or just let himself remain unnoticed, lurking in the shadows, observing the world from the side.

Many were acquainted with him, but with the exception of a few who did not share his physical life and who saw him quite rarely, most had been unsuccessful in sustaining close contact with him. Those few others were deeply rooted, everlasting friendships that were strong enough to survive on years of mere correspondence. The rest knew him as a person who appeared as suddenly and mysteriously as he disappeared, exerting a swift, long-lasting influence on the situation at hand.

His living quarters were meager and transient, for they constantly changed alongside his travels. But in some southern residential quarters he owned an open studio, to which he occasionally returned and secluded himself. Its walls were in chaotic disarray, plastered with a conglomeration of posters, newspapers, collages, and artwork, which in parts were hidden behind bookcases, unfinished canvases and mirrors. The room itself, if stripped naked, was very spacious without any subdividing walls; but it was by no means empty: a large round table, a small typewriter in the corner, an upturned easel, a folding cot in the opposite corner, and a hammock hung along one of the walls. The floor was filled with tubes of paint, music instruments, vinyl records, journals, and open books. This was his permanent residence, but most of the time, the lights in it were turned off and the door locked; he could be found here quite rarely.

He resorted to public transportation: to metros, tramways, hitchhiking and for further distances to cargo and passenger trains. Inside urban environments he walked, especially when dusk enveloped the city. But the destinations of his trips were always unknown. He traveled to find something unattainable. He wanted to find himself in this infinite world. It seemed as though there was an entire secret society dwelling entirely within him, because his inner motivation or goals were known to him alone.

His unending travels had a large drawback, which he chose to ignore: His disappearance would go unnoticed, except by those few friends with whom he exchanged correspondence, but those would grieve quietly, as he would do for them. He had dedicated his life to his inner development and fulfillment, not to recognition or glory of the outside world. For him it was the inner struggle of creation: His whole life had been driven by the increasing need to express his own individuality to the world.

He did think himself superior to the rest of the world, but had long ago decided to keep that conviction private instead of showing it in the form of arrogance to others. He was cold, but not unkind. He had a strong moral code set for himself, but did not expect others to comply with it, or even be aware of their own wrongdoing. He only judged himself on that scale of inner ideals. That scale was law for him, and he did not abide by any other system. For such beliefs he had been imprisoned; and there bonded with the inmates. He was a passive vigilante who just didn't see point enough in the surrounding world, to attempt to change it.

The coldness in his face was a self-imposed mask to conceal from the world the fire that burned within. He had learned to transform that insuppressible passion into other less profane forms. But rarely, he did allow the sexual energy to possess him. It was at those occasions that he would let himself feast upon the body of a woman; he would unleash the animal within. He satisfied the bestial satisfaction of a primal urge, as primal as the quest for food. And after he would disappear into the blinding light that blinded everything but him

The dispatcher's prerecorded voice announcing the arrival of the train to central station woke me from the depths of my imaginary creation. The train was indeed emerging from within the tunnel into the brightly illuminated central station. As we entered the realm of light, the contrast ceased to exist and everything between the inner and the outer worlds became one. The fluorescent illumination of central station penetrated the windows of the car; the light had conquered even that, which is hidden so far below the surface. But momentarily prior the fusion of lights, I saw him for the last time: I looked up momentarily and again met his gaze, and then he dissipated into the light that infiltrated the cabin. He was an anachronism that, through me, attempted to transcend time; but both in the current reality and my psychologically created one he was surrounded by the infinite white that of the canvas. I glided my hands through my black hair, and wiped the dampness on the rough topcoat, retied my scarf and exhaled. Resigned to the futility to change or alter anything on the larger scale, I chuckled at my foolishness and looked away from where my reflection used to be. He was an anachronism and I wasn't. I looked at my wristwatch: quarter after eight. Remembering the previously agreed upon meeting, I once again foresaw my superiors being displeased with my lateness. I nervously anticipated for the doors to slide open, so I could hurriedly advance to my office on the third floor.

Andrew James Burgess

“Yes, I’ll have the Calamari please...”

Alien lights illuminate the mass of
Tentacle wielding gray blob beasts that flip
Flounder over one another,
Lightly ponder the rendezvous
With the thirsty knife
And the board accomplice,
Known destiny, to a certain degree.
Sautéed? Deep friend? Raw and alive?
A trip to the Old Bay?
A meeting with Mrs. Dash?
The chef approaches, scoop in hand,
And the thirsty knife delights.

Lacey Anderson

An Ode to the Ocean Tide

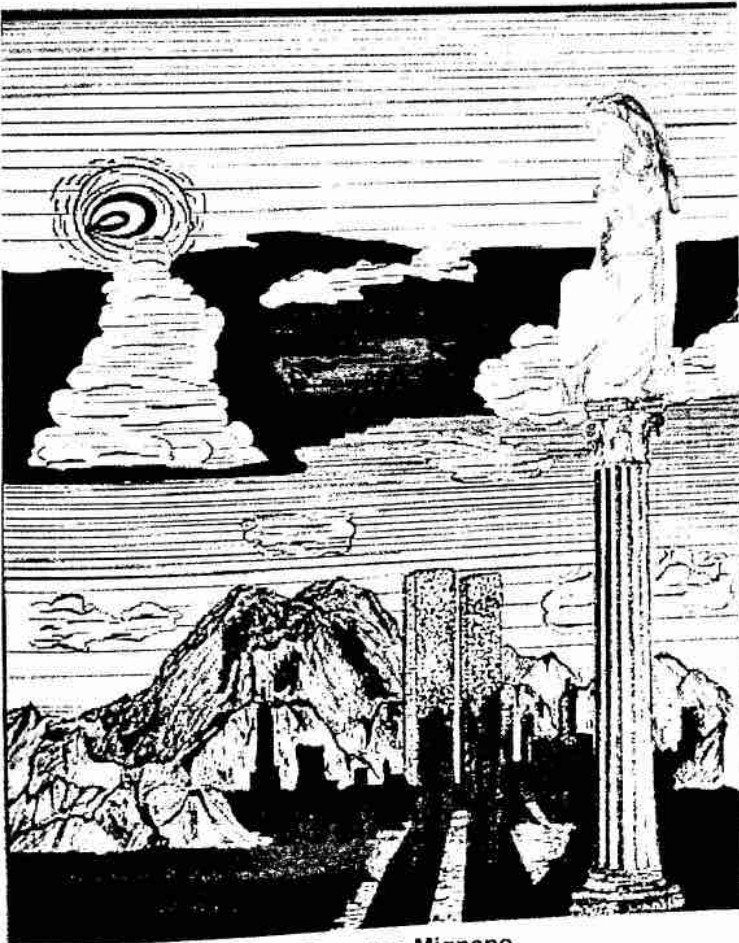
You are the ocean’s salty breath...
Continuous
Like the strides of Father Time.
You submit to the invisible grip
Of that brooding man in the moon,
Pushed and pulled, but never tired.

I hear the soft whisper
As you are thrust upon the sand.
I feel the energy
Generating in your bubbling veins.

Like a second ice age
Your chill penetrates my delicate fibers
And yet your warmth scolds me
Like an alluring, internal fire.

Standing at your edge...
My curious eye begins to tear
Trying to grasp at the vast nothingness
Which joins the illusion of the horizon line
As your heavy mist overwhelms my senses.

And as I stand
I begin to sense
The youthful playfulness of a child
And the wisdom of an ancient chief.



Mixed media by Rosanna Mignano



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