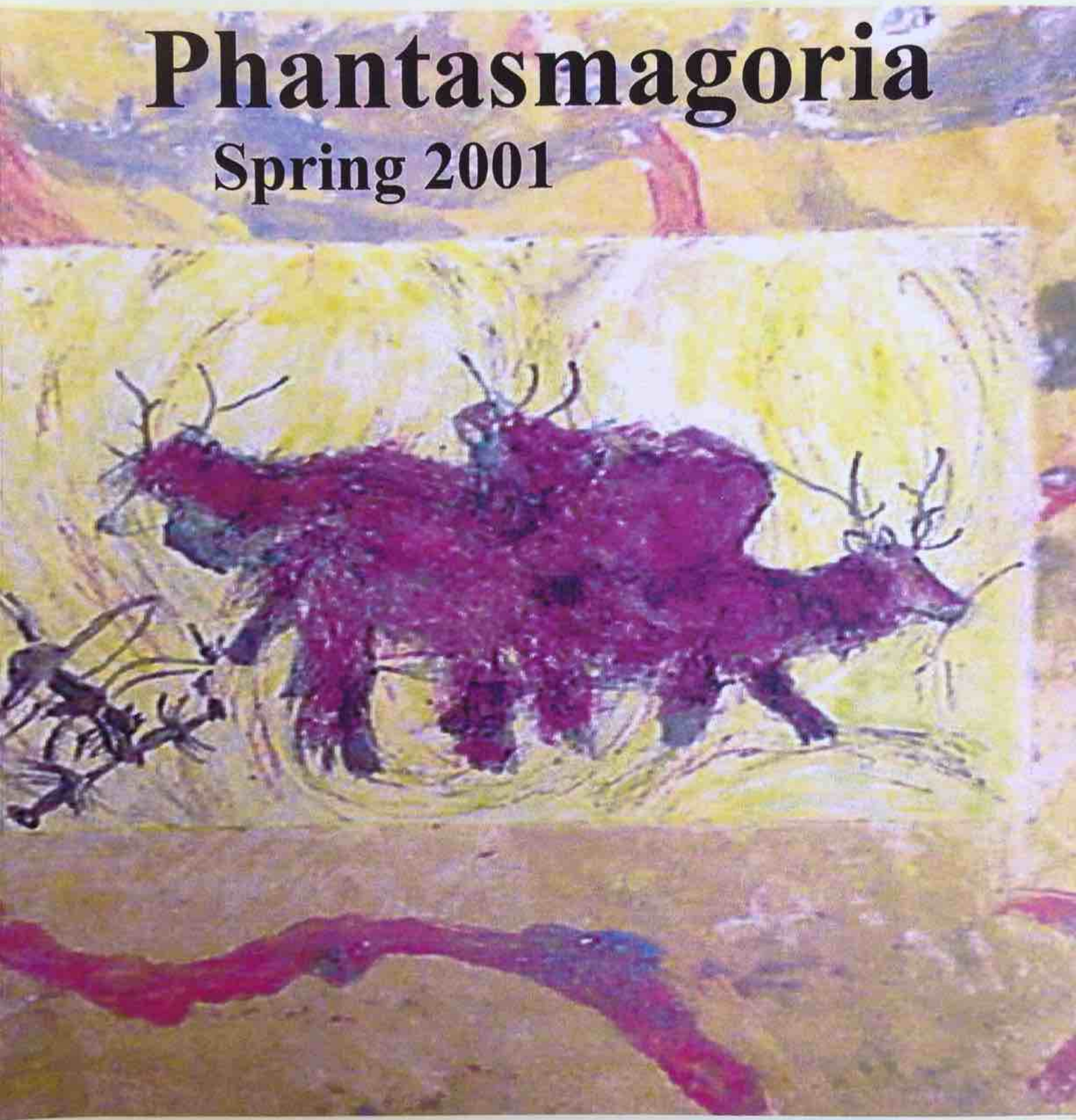


Phantasmagoria

Spring 2001



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design and layout

Stacy Staranowicz

advisors

Mrs. Mathews

Mr. Trachtenberg

editorial staff

Dan Connelly

Alex Dubilet

Jamie Harris

Melissa Hediger

Emily Raterman

Diana Sette

Stacy Staranowicz

Jane Sugarman

Zach Weisser

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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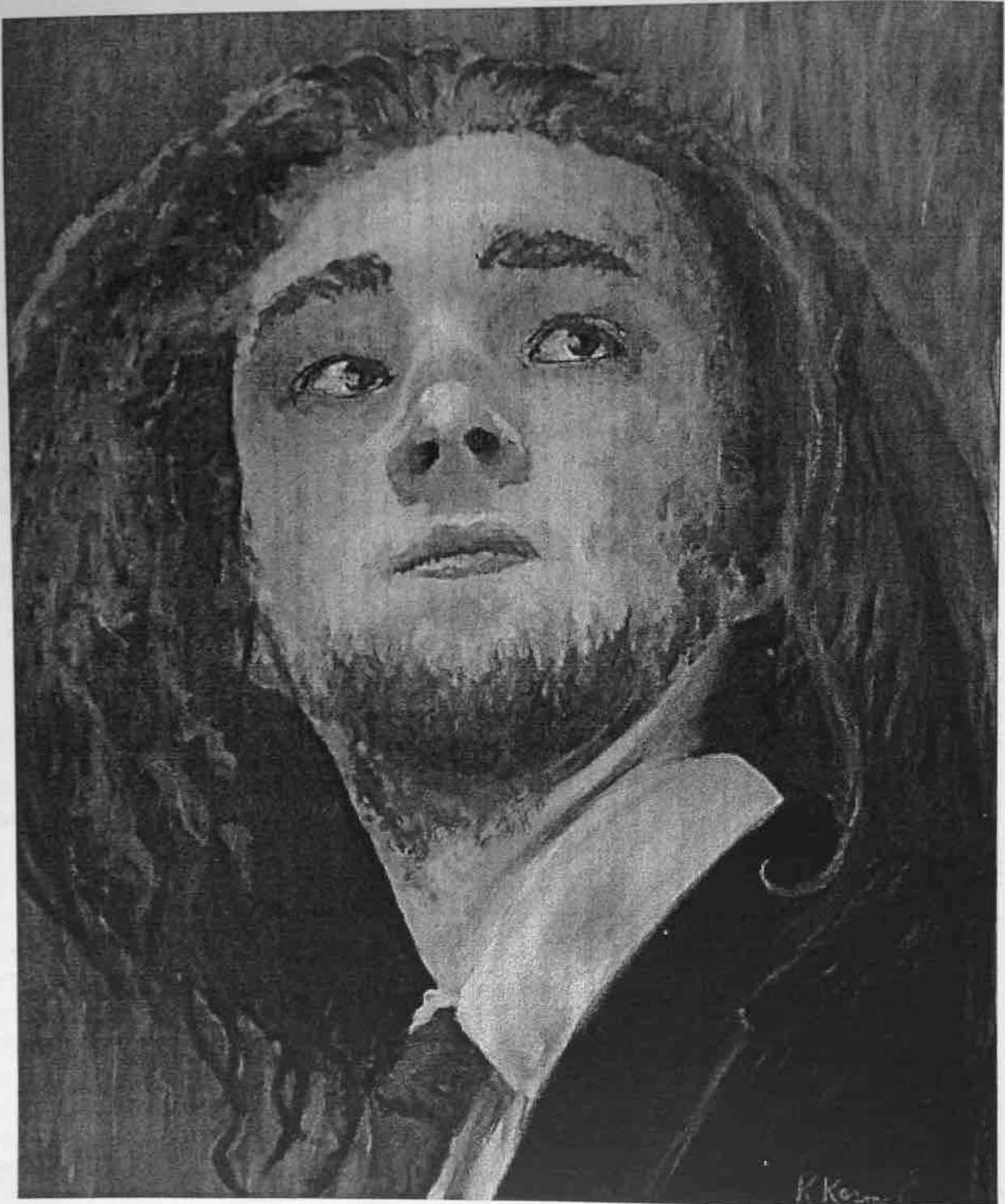
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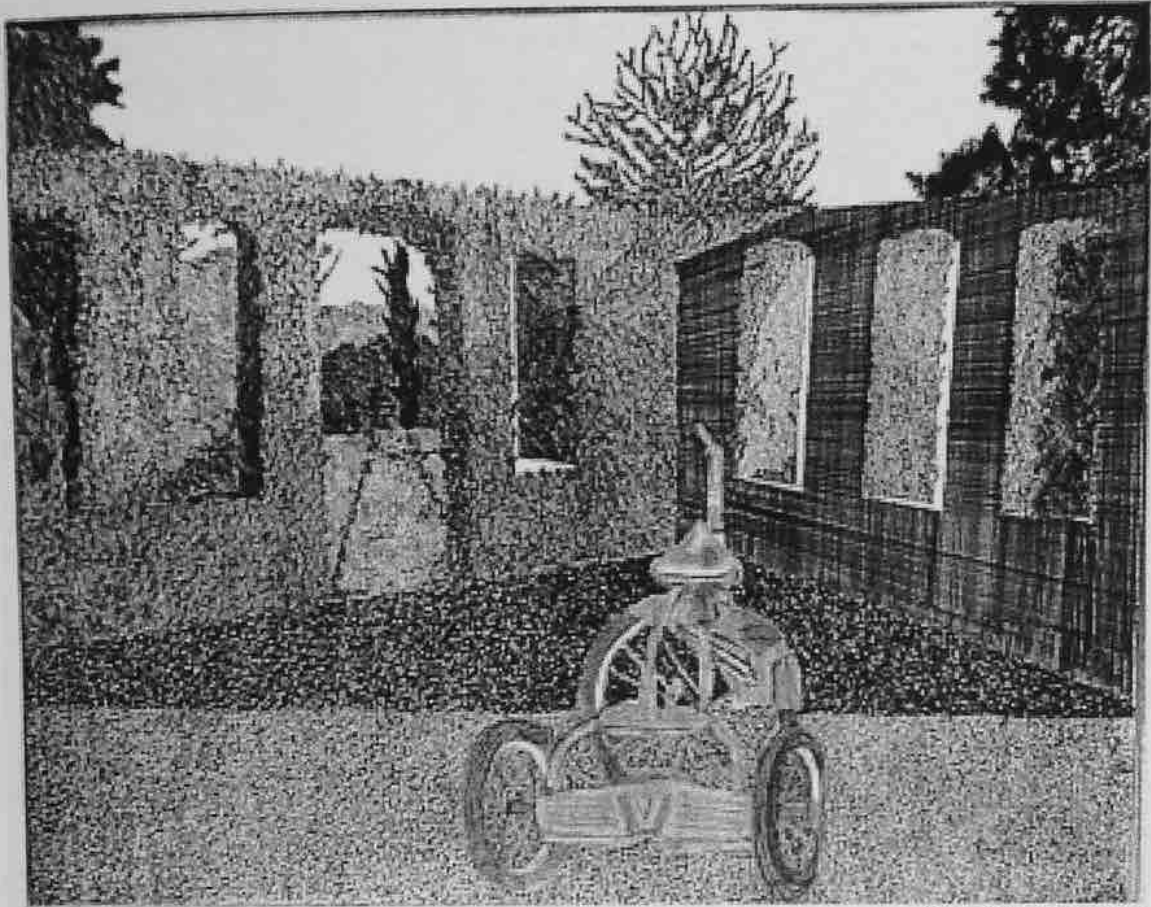
—Cover art by Rachael Bloemker



Lindsay Jennelle



Kelly Kozma



Kate Tramontana

Nirvana

I could live like that,
Leaving lukewarm high life (tea or coffee?),
Sterling silver shined to pristine gracious, a
Tilting whisper to appease the shadow-puppets.

I could leave them to their vapid function
And take a broom to stardust,
And tame the mighty Leo,
and all the while,

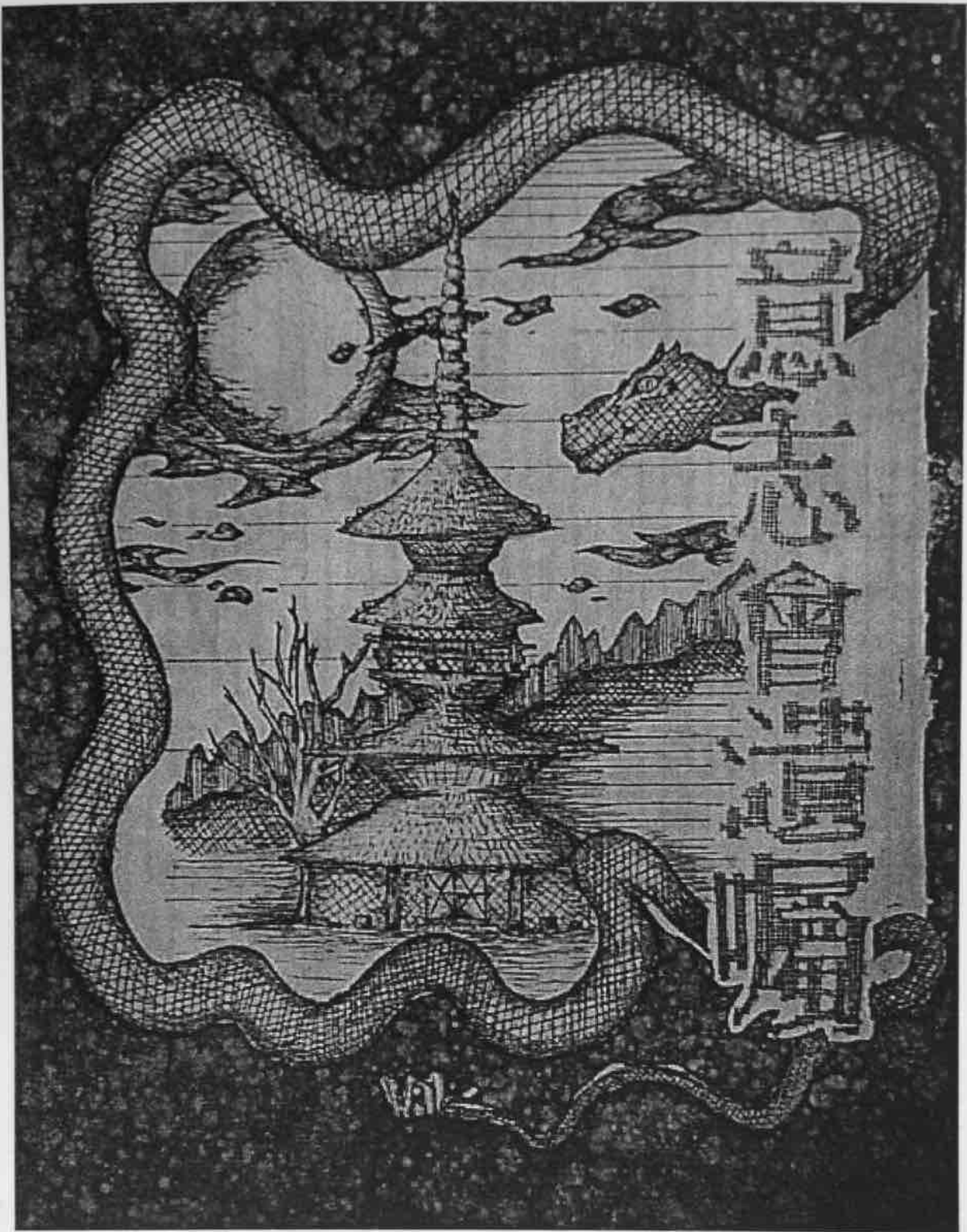
I could be sitting on a straight-back chair
And flirting with the governor's son,
And cobwebbing my mind in visual reality
To wipe it clean again in Ursa Major.

Jaime Moore

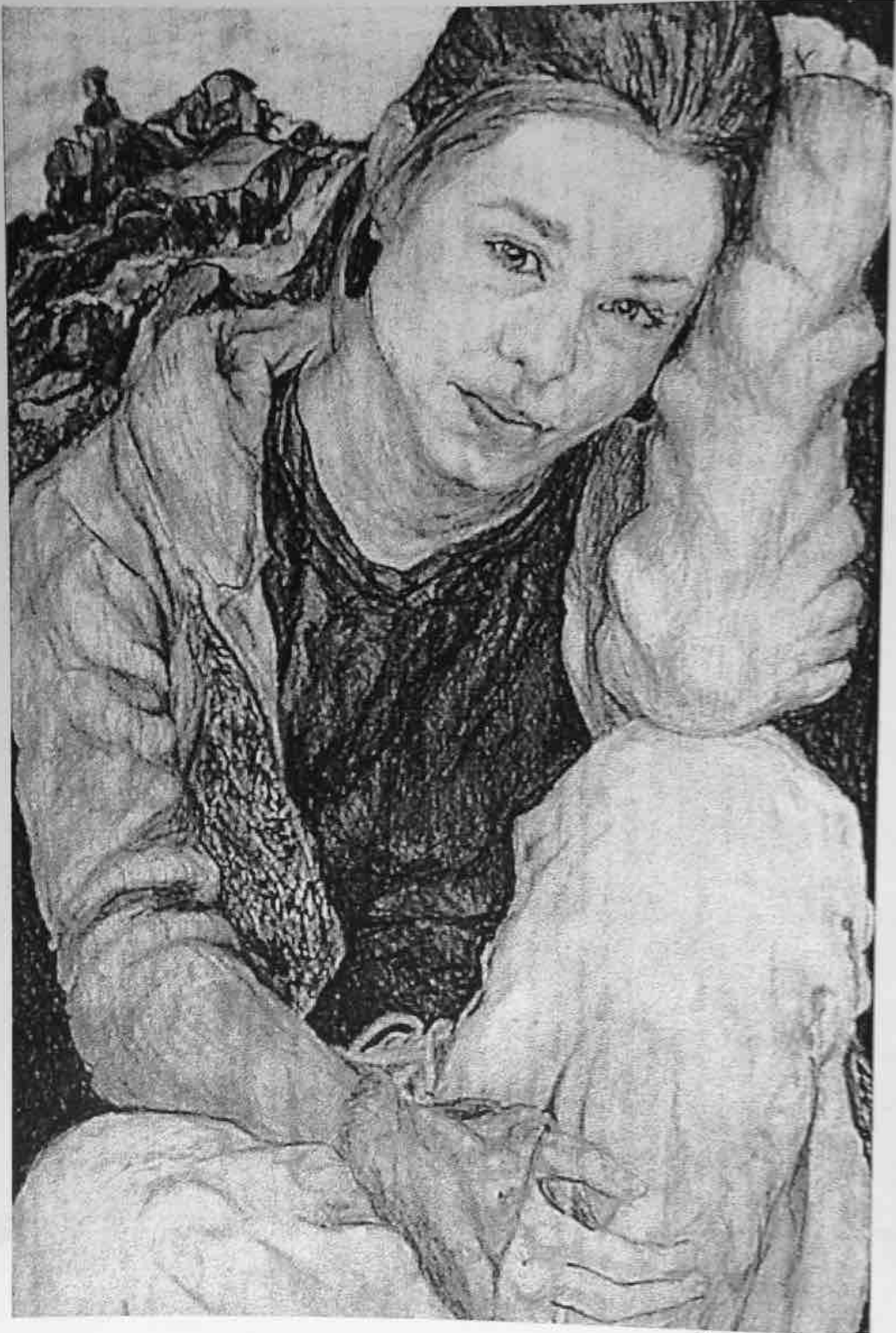
Charlie Brown goes to Guantanamo Bay

things always look so much nicer on tv
saturday mornings all funny and empty
made of color not substance everything flows
we were all cartoons then waiting to explode
I can't help but feel that something's gone wrong
since Shaggy stopped growing his hair out long
stopped caring about solving those mysteries too
then he went and voted for Nixon in 72
Mickey used to say we just needed more time
Just bomb them some more and everything will be fine
He's quieter now and Donald's in shock
when Huey Dewey and Louis came home in a box
Tom took a Freedom ride against prejudice
still believed in the long dead idea of justice
Jerry was down there working as a KKK cop
beat Tom half to death before he stopped
Charlie Brown is still stationed at Guantanamo Bay
while the end of the world happens miles away
Linus is so nervous his blanket keeps getting wetter
praying that when he wakes up it will all be better

Matt Silk



Will Murray

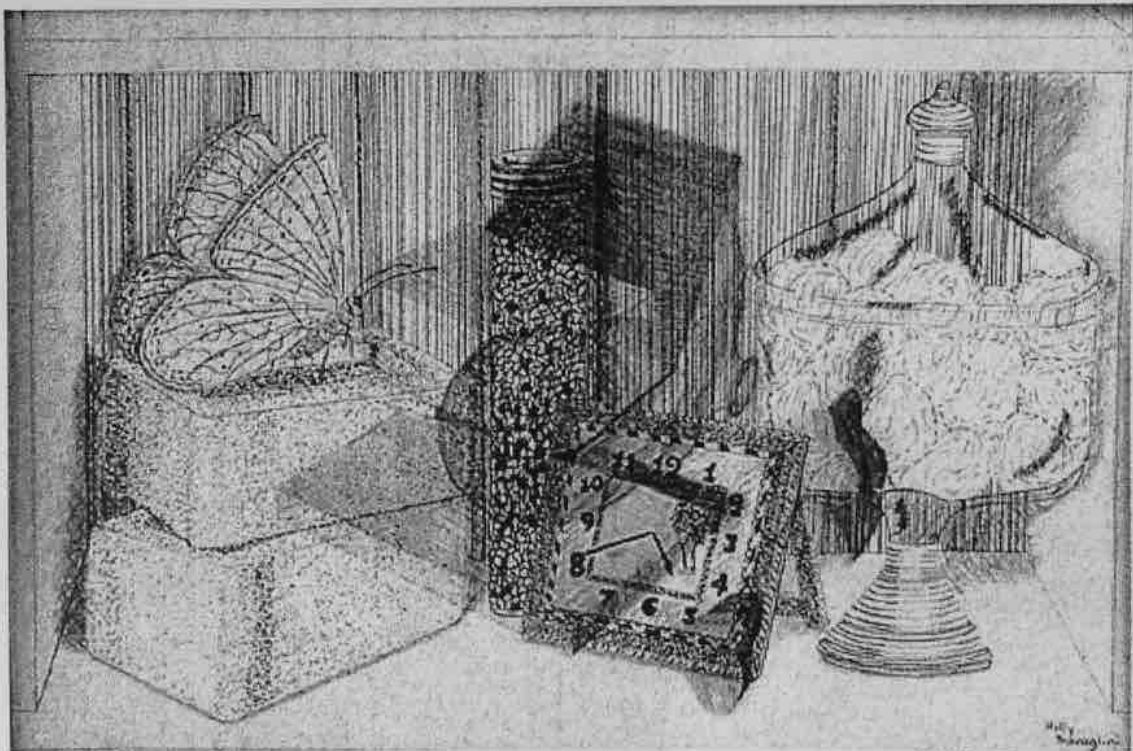


Jensen Bucher

2:15 at the Bus Station

Blank stares of boredom and solitude bounce from the walls.
I'd have to be superwoman to dodge them.
No one belongs here in this room with yellow smoke stained walls,
Everyone has a different destination. Some other place they assure
Themselves is better than here.
Why wouldn't it be better, we're all sitting in this purgatory watching the clock
Tick Tock one... Tick tock two...
Go to the smoking room and grab a grit, nicotine provides some sense of release.
My destination is better than this.

Maggie Ullman



Holly Travaglini

"Would you like to Buy?"

I was not for sale
but you sold me like a cheap whore
Priceless, you'd said,
but apparently not worth all that much to you.

Your ink-drop cufflink chilling my shoulder
Bluebeard disguised in a tuxedo,
and your captive, enveloped in a dress of sea foam,
walked the plank on my own accord, oblivious myriads maurauding about.

An unkempt canary flits past
Isn't this fun! she maliciously chirps,
perching on an arm to make eyes.
A shadow of water continues to close in

Look at me!
Look at my mock smile
gilded in happiness!
A night to remember, you'd told me.

The laughter on your breath
is like the mockingbird on your shoulder.
Perhaps it was all my fault after all;
you can't sell what's not already yours.

Jaime Moore



Steve Evans



Dom Cotugno



Rachael Bloemker



Nick Gurolla-Gal

Question

The question as do I believe in God, one
To which I was unable to reply.
What deity philosophies apply?
Do the heavens go beyond the sun
And past celestial bodies roaming space?
Is chance what rules our realm or is
Someone responsible; does God exist?
"NO!"

Until I looked upon your face
And saw before me proof of thought above.
A thing or force, God had to have a plan,
Before he made the heavens, earth, or man,
For you and I to meet. The proof is love.

A shooting star descends from the abyss
As you and I and God all share a kiss.

Daniel Connelly

The Calculus Poet

Since curves don't make noise-
well, at least not this one sketched before me.
If it did, I'd hear the
ceaseless pitter-patter of little
trochees
tripping towards infinity,
alternating infinitely between
stressed and unstressed
just as sine oscillates between
1 and -1;
or perhaps I'd hear the undulating rhythm
of the Sea as she,
in her eternal tease,
embraces the shore,
pulls away,
changes her mind,
and embraces again
only to
pull away

(but the graph makes no sound,
is just a pencil sketch)

Moving on to a intricate indefinite integral,
I struggle to detect the path
leading to the solution
as if looking for a jellyfish
beneath the waves,
its iridescent bell
indistinguishable from the
sun-dappled water that
glints like mica.
Finally spotting the solution,
I add my plus 'C,'
the curve of the letter
echoing the curve of the pearly bell
now visible floating in the salty water.

(though of course all I
really see while staring
at the problem is a dx,
a mess of x's inside a square root, and
the integral sign
curving like a swan's neck . . .
no, just a plain integral sign)

The next problem waits,
calling for integration by parts.
O, ex! You are perhaps
the ultimate metaphor
for what we all

desire to be-
the golden child
favorite
darling
(wait-
no, you're just a function-
ask anyone-
a curve, a graph,
nothing more-
integrate and move on)

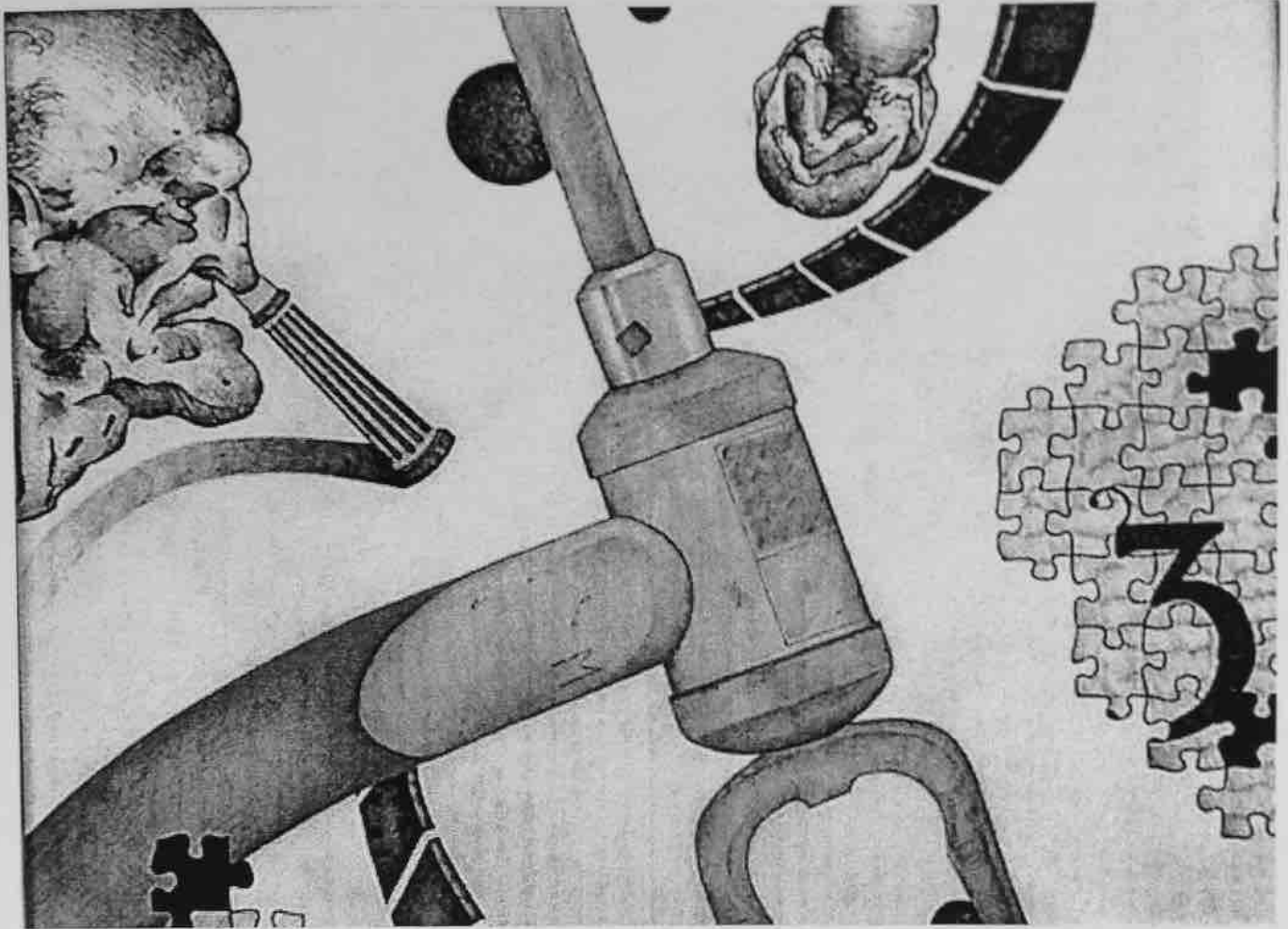
Separating my variables
in a differential equation,
I smile,
thinking of how
in the integral of life
(stop!)
we all have our dx's;
mine is poetry.
I inhale,
exhale it,

knowing that to cover my mouth
and pinch my nose
would be to see the green line go flat.
But as long as I have
eyes, ears, nose, tongue, or skin
it'll fill my lungs,
as I instinctively sense its presence
anywhere, everywhere,
even in this integral
(Newton's same thoughts no doubt).

Finished,
I double-check my work,
my calculations neat
like properly ordered
shelves of encyclopedias
(they're just numbers)
like rows of blunted baby teeth,
tiny plateaus of white protruding
from a desert of coral
(just . . .)
like a gated community
of condominiums with
crew cut grass and bright white trim
(. . . hopeless).

Handing in my quiz,
I am amazed anew by
calculus' beautiful complexity
poetry's complex beauty.

Melissa Hediger



Thomas Gauss

On Drinking Bubblebath

Swashing about
beneath the
steam frothed foams,
soapy billows, and
churning faucet
of my weekly cleansing,
I saw it.

A smoothed bodice
(squat vertical and sloping
on the edge of the bowled tub)
of the most pure, shaded, and dense
red.

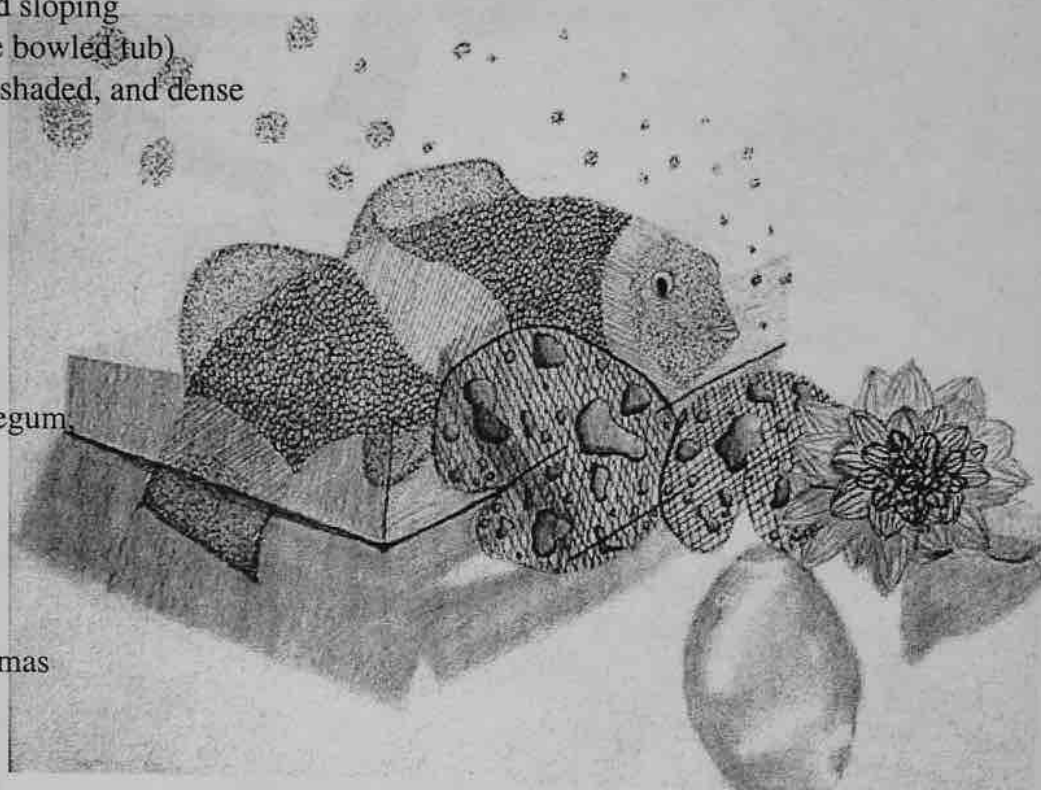
Layered in thick threads
like honey,
faintly glowing
like rouge stained glass,
and smelling
like melted cherry bubblegum,
its allure was instant.

My fingers extended
toward the trans-
lucent plastic shell,
amongst the popping aromas
of filmy juices.

I unscrewed the cap.
spat bathwater on
on good conscious
on a clergy of nauseated Mr. Yucks
and raised the plastic vile letting
its liquid indulgence stream towards my mouth

the bitter base scorched my tongue,
lingering fragrances paled,
and the seering flatness
lashed on
foaming
mouth
that, which was intended for
sinful
eye.

Dave Alff



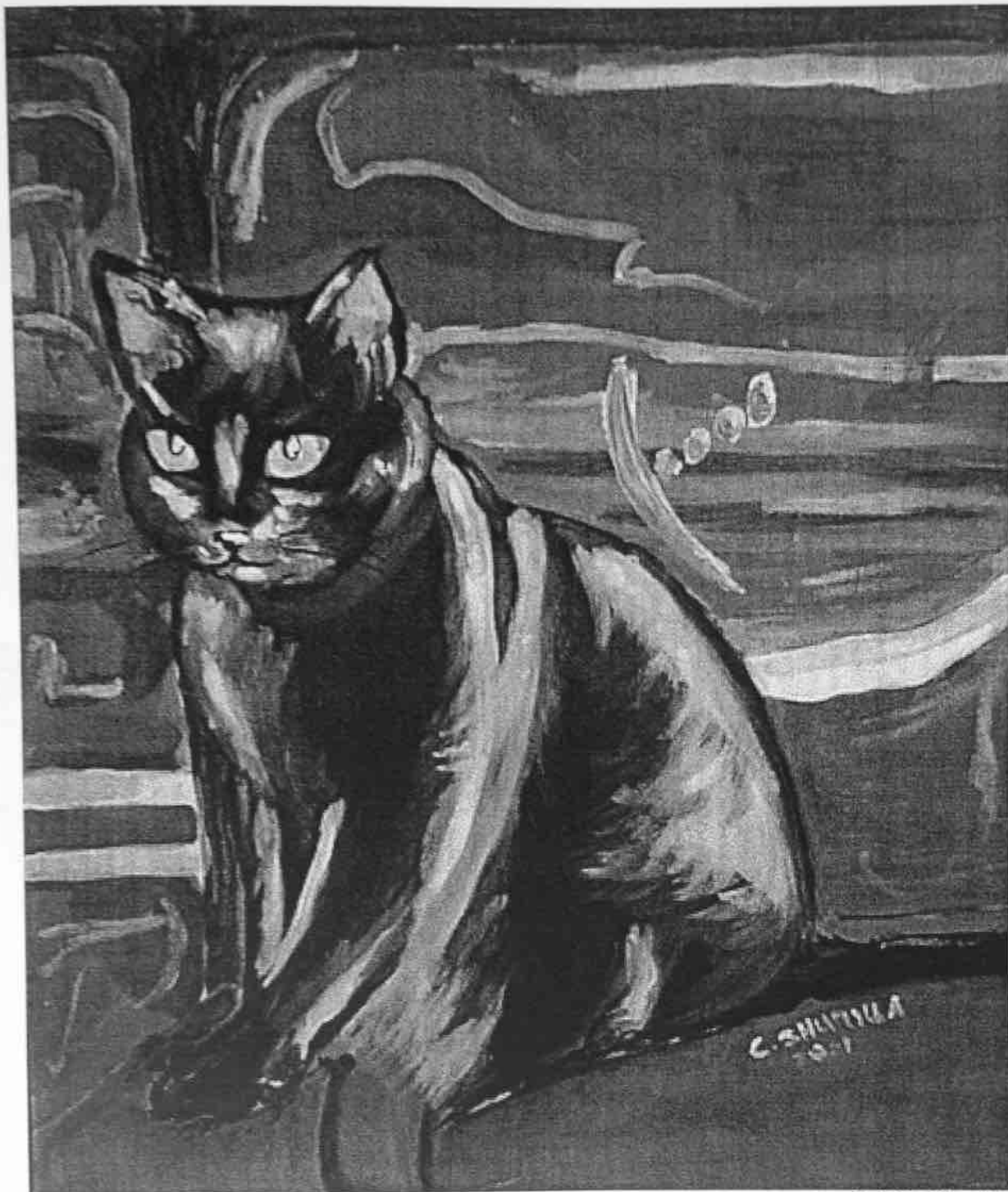
Jessalyn Lewis

Swift, shaggy, brunette
Disheveled bush behind him
Unseen acorn hoards

Becca Kesting

Crimson velvet cuves,
Sparkling liquid diamonds,
Luring flesh to thorn

Kristin Kiorpes



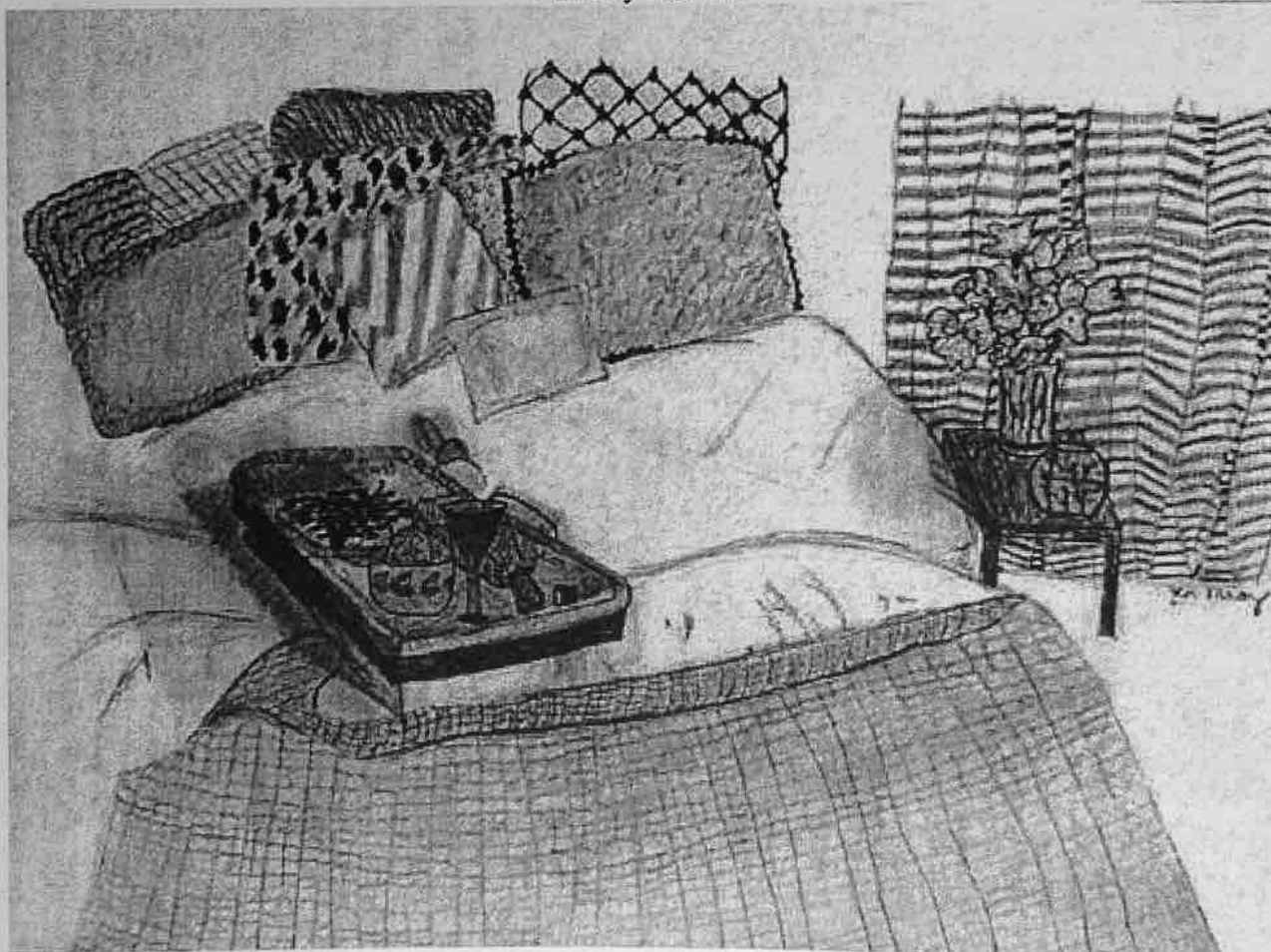
Caitlin Shurilla

The Broken Window

Glass shatters in my mind,
Little shards, sailing through time.
A broken window remains.
There is no protection from the cold, from the rain, from the whirlwinds of my
memories.

My shield has gone, exposing me to all around my frail body.
The tinted glass has been swept away, my world is no longer rosy and bright.
Hysteria comes and laughter goes.
Myst gathers by the door;
She knocks, but I answer not
I am surrounded as she sweeps through the hole where the glass stood so long ago...
She lifts me upon her back and sails through the space in the wall.
I float upon her, above the world.
Day gleams faintly through the cracks in the darkness of nighttime sky;
I reach out my hand and feel it brush against the stars.
The mist sinks lower in the vast ocean, until I stand, once more, upon the ground.
I am on the other side of the shattered window, staring into my home.
As I cross the threshold, the window reappears, as it first was,
I reach out my fist and smash it all over again.

Lindsay Feltzin



Jen Mraz

The disgusting frog I live with crawls under my arm
Only after the sun goes down.

His dingy yellow belly and neck remaining
Beneath the browned green collar of ribbon stitched to his neck seams.

I live with him among the rubble of dirty socks,
Damp towels, and flannel sheets.

We both retreat to bed with cigarette breath
Intruding each others space and music softly activating
Our almost dreaming minds.

Only as my eyelids close to return me
To my dreams his large black pupils stare into the darkness
Of this shambled room.

He's being a good frog, by staring off
Into this darkness while I retreat for the night
Into my dreams.

His eyes burn from never closing and I dream and think.

Once during our nights routine I dreamed
My frog closed his eyes with mine and we both dreamed
Of a world already figured out.

I awoke the next morning
To find my frog in the crack
Between my bed and the wall, above the radiator.

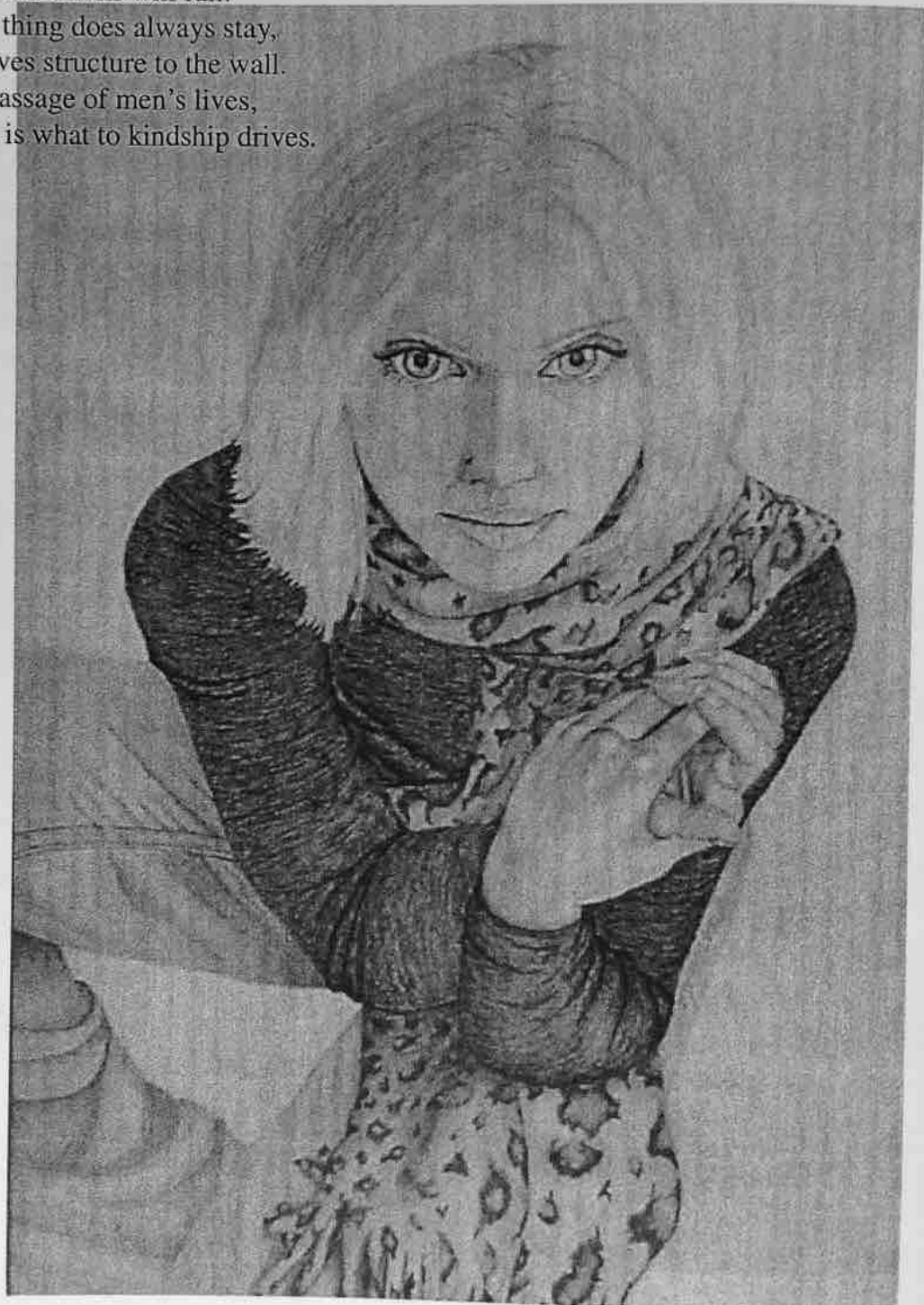
His limbs and neck contorted beneath his
Yellow dingy belly,

and his big black pupils still staring
but now it's dawn and I have to go to school.

Maggie Ullman

In ocean's ebb, the barnacles are splayed
of men, who clung to joy in giant heaps.
They laughed at Death as they picked up the spade
to dig their holes, and made the mindful leap
to think that pleasure, woman's fleeting prime,
cannot be tarnished. Clever seekers for
not beauty look - it sours like a lime
'tis wisdom that to questers is a lure.
By using love as mortar, there is clay
without the sand; cemented bricks will fall.
But throughout life one thing does always stay,
For pain, when used, gives structure to the wall.
 And in eternal passage of men's lives,
 shared suffering is what to kindship drives.

Zach Weisser



Emily Willmott

A is for Anarchy

A is for this anarchy,
your apathy,
my atrophy,
perfect like time,
pretty rhymes,
straight lines and sympathy

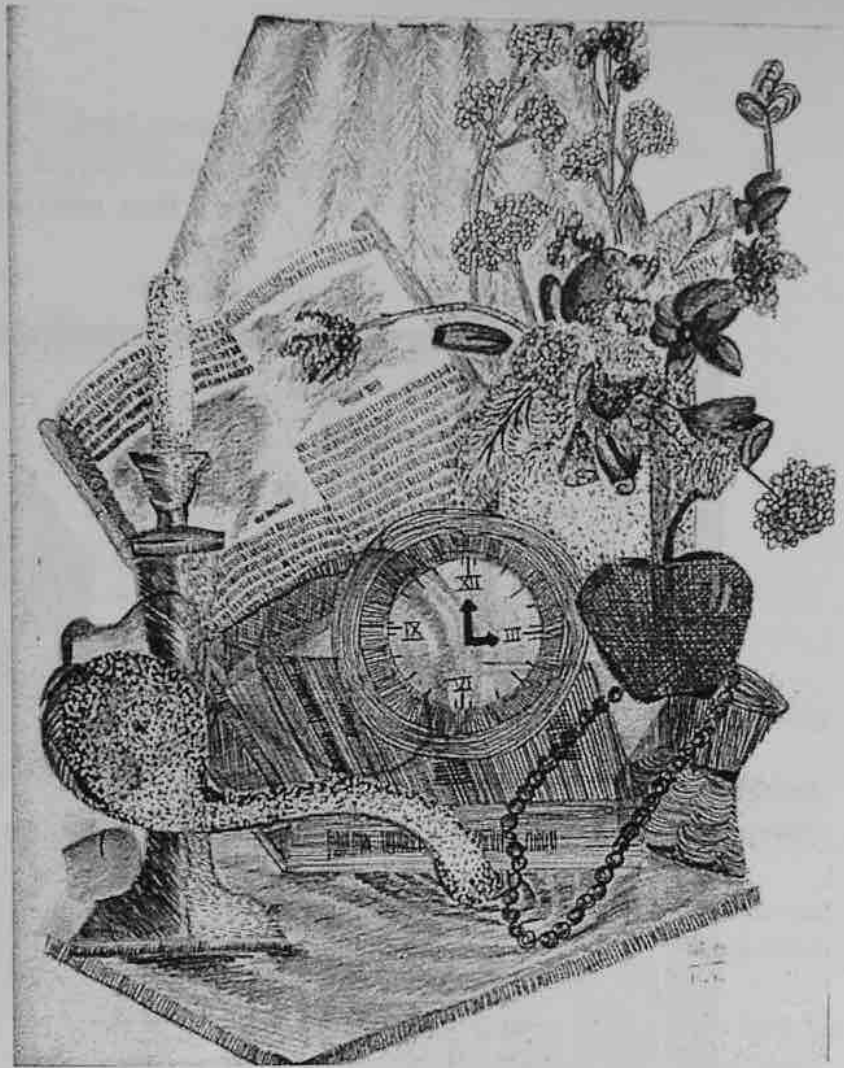
Reality now slipping
away dripping
staggering and trippin
on entropy,
no empathy,
with ecstasy glistening

perceptions are fake
the chaos shakes
bonds till they break
at the seams
leaving streams
of dreams and mistakes

feeling slightly paranoid
feeling in the eyes devoid
event horizon
complications arising
peer deep down into the void

diffusion of the soul
into the calm blackhole
into oblivion they follow
devourer of worlds hollow,
swallow it whole

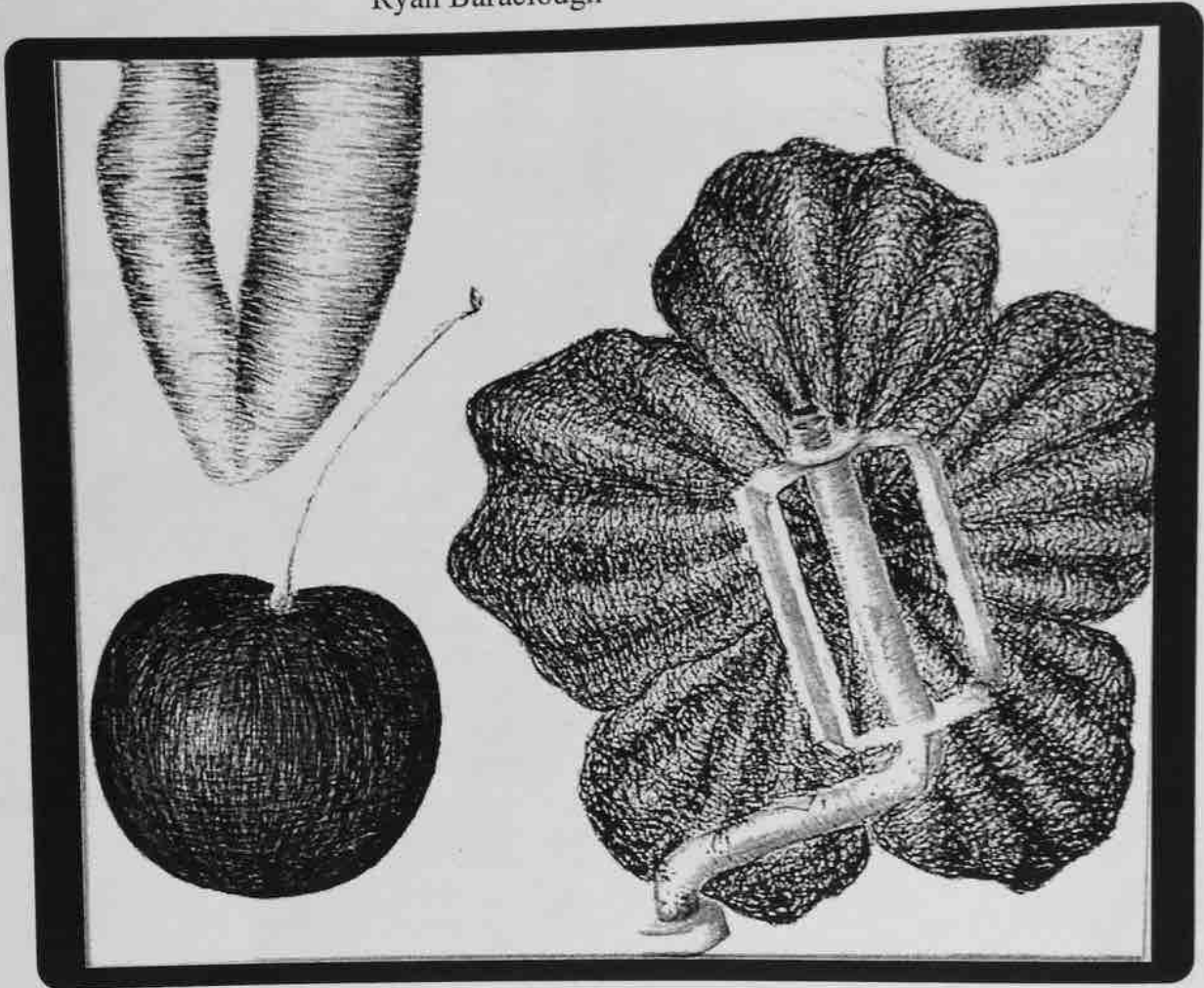
Matt Silk



Rushita Patel

Escaping rainfall
To the surface for oxygen...
Sun is here, must dig

Ryan Baraclough



Kristy Kulp

12 A.M. curfew
Speeding through highway stoplights
Sirens, ticket...dad.

Heather Lauterback

Streamlined

Across the fenced in pasture lies a stream
that cuts through forest thick with trees and brush.
I wade into the waters running hushed,
and let the current pull me into dream.
Alone to let my mind drift with the slate
gray waters spilling down the slope of time,
to places filled with toys and nursery rhymes.
Oh how I long to be back in that state!

As I grow up I lost a little piece
of what I used to cherish most of all:
freedom to run, barefoot through the grass,
and leave my legs to take me nowhere fast.
But now it seems I've run into a wall . . .
I thought that childhood could never cease.

Dan Connelly

Ghost Slug

Ghost Slug with ghost slime to grease the path skyward;
He didn't need the tiny angel wings anyway.

Ghost Slug in a Christmas Heaven;
Where celestial slime coats planes fling cloudless skies.

Ghost slug's amphibious soul peels away in slimy layers,
Lucid even in death, colored like the blood of flora and fauna.

Free at last to glide-
Without fear of salt,
Or fear of cleats...

Anna Kates

Floyd

Dark clouds scurry from the south,
like clumsy waves.
Which break,
this way and that.
Unholy storm over the horizon,
Engulfs the Keys as a child does cereal.
Waves roll,
Rapid and random abandoning,
White foam upon the shore.

Wet sand retreats under their feet as they reposition,
themselves with the tide.
They crash again on the rocks with a violent thunder,
like a drunken ballerina a step behind and out of sync.

Jon Meister

Baby Stealer

Timmy was tucked into bed so tightly that a robber wouldn't have been able to pry him loose with a crowbar. Looking towards the foot of the bed, he could see his little feet making hills under the covers. The moonlight crept through the window and spread soothing fingers over Timmy's sheets. A hall light was on and a chop of yellow clung to the rug next to the door. A big, dirty, tattered Adidas running shoe crouched between the door and its frame, assuring the little boy that he wouldn't be locked inside his room with the monsters and the dark. To Timmy, his room was a big gaping mouth, the door was the lips and teeth that could shut and leave him swallowed inside forever.

Every night, Timmy's bedtime ritual began with his mother reading him a story. Her smooth voice sounded exactly how stirring a cup of hot chocolate would sound if the swirling liquid and steam made noise. Her voice was soft and sweet, her breath warm. Her words tiptoed off her tongue with just the right amount of warm milk, making Timmy's ears grow sleepy.

Now, the story was done, and the book was safely enclosed by the other books on the shelf. His mother had explored the corners, closets, and under the bed, daring any monsters to make their presence known. After she and Timmy were both fully convinced that there was nothing there that would harm him, his mother had tucked him in gently but firmly, and said, "all right Timmers, you're snug as a bug in a ... bed." Then after returning Timmy's gentle smile, she had blown him a kiss, and retreated from the room. She had pulled the door closed behind her, and made sure the dejected shoe was there to serve its purpose. Now Timmy was all alone.

Timmy's mother was all alone as well. Her feet were carved into the floor outside her son's room, and she stayed there in motionless silence for a few moments. Then, she inched a few steps away, and leaned against the wall. Her body seemed to melt into the striped wallpaper, her skeleton seemed to liquidate, and her body poured to the floor as silent tears poured down her cheeks. After a few minutes of crying, her bones became strong again, and she slowly stood. Her hair hung in her face like the branches of a weeping willow, thick brown pieces wet with salty tears. She looked down at her white shirt, where pools of make-up polluted the fabric. The watery blobs seemed to be locked in a jail of light blue pinstripes. Timmy's mother smoothed her hands over her cheeks and pulled the wet blackness of melted mascara away from her eyes.

"Waterproof, my ass." She muttered inaudibly as she moved away from her son's room. She would check on Timmy again in about an hour, just to make sure he was asleep, but for now she had her own bedtime ritual to complete.

Downstairs, Timmy's mother moved around the house, her hands running fluidly over doors and windows, making sure they were all locked. Her motions were quick and practiced and she was very sure of herself. Moving to the front door, a flick of her wrist shut the lock; she turned the key. In the same movement, she turned the second, third, and fourth locks on the door. Drawing a silver chain out from under her linen button-down shirt, she clutched the minuscule silver key. The key

was about the length of an apple stem, and about as wide as the space between two of the pinstripes on her shirt. The key and its corresponding lock had been handcrafted in Scotland by Timmy's grandfather in the two months that Timmy's mother had spent hiding in the Scottish countryside with her son. The key fit smoothly into the lock, and a reassuring "Ting!" sounded as Timmy's mother pulled the key out and dropped it back beneath her shirt.

A step to the left and she began to tickle the keypad of the alarm system with an intricate code tapped lightly by smooth fingers. A month's worth of numbers later and Timmy's mom hopped to the kitchen, and to the garage door, where she played a similarly complicated pattern into another alarm box.

In the half-minute she had before the alarm system activated, she moved swiftly to the living room, and flowed into an armchair. She leaned her head back against the cushioned satiny material, and closed her eyes. "4...3...2...1...click." She said, and with her last word, the alarm system went on, and a criss-crossed pattern of invisible electric lights shot across the floor.

Breathing in and out, the air circulated through her lungs as if she had an electric fan in her throat that pumped the oxygen in and the carbon dioxide out. Her rhythmic breathing relaxed her, and before long, Timmy's mother was in a state of utter calm. She was not even close to sleep though, and her mind still whirred as if there was a fan in her head as well. Momentarily, she thought of those two months she had spent with Timmy in Scotland. Timmy's grandfather had been their only contact to the outside world, and she found herself missing it. But she needed her work, she craved her job, she couldn't live without the electric shiver she got after every dark night. Next time, she would just have to be more careful.

Mentally, she checked off all the steps she had completed in her bedtime ritual. Everything was done, and yet it never seemed like enough. But she wouldn't let it happen again. Nothing would ever harm her son again, be it monster, ghost...or human.

Now that her body was relaxed, Timmy's mother stood, and, with her eyes close, languidly moved across the grid pattern on the sag carpet. On the stairs, she stepped only on every other, and at the top, there was a hop and a slide, and she was at Timmy's door again. Peeping in, she could see his immature face sliced by knife of yellow light. His eyes were closed, and his lashes twittered like a flirty teenage-girl's. His breathing was smooth and even, and every little exhale fluffed the little tuft of feather-like hair that always stuck up from his forehead.

Assured that her son was safely asleep, Timmy's mother closed her eyes once more, and moved like the clock-work across the hallway to her room. Opening the door, a suction of wind made the goose bumps rise on her arms. She stepped inside, and stopped for a moment and let her body adjust to the temperature. The door closed behind; no Adidas sneaker required to keep her safe. She paced across the room to the open window, her bare feet crunching lightly on the square of frozen carpet that was in reach of the window. She looked out at the moon, a tiny sliver of white fingernail in the black sky. Silently, she cursed the hateful night.

Although it had been days since her eyes had been closed without tears seeping out the

corners, she still had work to do before she could give in to sleep. Pulling off her shirt and pressed khakis, she donned a skintight outfit the color of the night. She braided her hair, and stabbed it with pins, attaching it to the back of her head in a tight bun. She slid her feet into thin, flexible shoes, and pulled her pants over the tops.

Back at the window, she quickly slithered over the windowsill. A long drop to the ground, but she easily made it. Running swiftly away from the house, she didn't look back. The feeling in her stomach told her that Timmy would be safe that night, no one would take him away.

She ran for half an hour, covering almost 6 miles. She reached the bridge, and slid into the waiting car. The car flew away as she shut the door, and whisked her to her desired location. Tonight it was a 3-month-old-girl. Timmy's mother wouldn't think about that though, she would just do her job. She couldn't afford to let her mind wander to the sheer pain and terror this 3-month-old's mother would feel in the morning. She couldn't let herself know that feeling that she had almost felt once. She could only do her job, the job that she needed and craved so much. The job that had made Timmy her son. She would steal this baby, but tonight, no one would steal hers.

—Chelsea Schmidt—



Kristin Klosinski



Danielle Mitchell

The Winter House

The cold winter snow
Falls gently on my shoulders
As I peer in through the window.

I see them all sitting around the fire
With their plush Armani suits
And velvet sofa cushions.

I also see them chained to the wall
Unable to leave the house
Forced to live and die in bondage.

Yet if they could leave,
Would they even bother
To give up their comfort for the truth?

It's easy to choose poison over wine
And a warm fire for the cold forest
Which is truly better?

I stand outside and wonder this
For though I have an infinite forest to explore
I have no one to explore it with.

If they could all break their chains
They could see the beauty of the forest
And their warmth would melt the snow of the undying winter.

I am cold and hungry with nobody to comfort me
Yet they are warm and satisfied,
Able to share their burdens with each other.

So who is empty and who is full?
Who is free and who is chained?
Who is smart and who is dumb?

I am stupid, depressed and lonely
But I walk away from the house quietly
For to disturb their slumber would surely kill them.

And thus I am alone in the woods
The light of the moon falling upon my pale face
Carrying the house upon my back as I walk the eternal path.

Kevin Tummy



\$2.00