

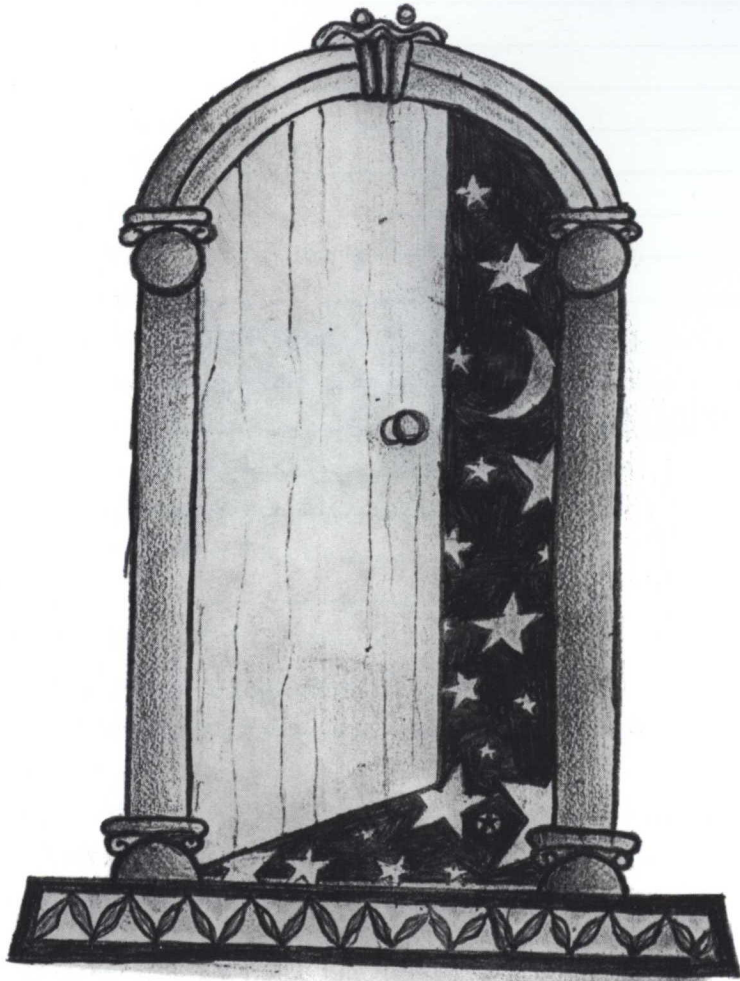


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Pegasus Magazine

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Stream of the Unconscious

Emotions
flow...
un-
Conscious-
ly
becoming words
uttered...
on the breeze
of
exhaled breath

- Cheryl A.

Breese - Workman



A Violent Tongue

Though violence may have the loudest voice,
It speaks a language that is neither comprehended nor condoned.
It can not claim the power and respect it tries to demand,
But only demonstrate ignorance
And affords little more than the backlash of it's own tongue.

- Rachel J. Bain

Taking a break by James Ulmer

who else can | play my music for?
who else can | hold like | held you?
who else will continually be my heart?
who else will always have a space there?

who else can make me want no one else?
who else can make me feel so comfortable?
who else can understand, "awfully bubbly"?
who else can | stay up late on the phone with?
who else can | watch cartoons with late at night?

who else left a stain of yearn on my heart | can't deny?
when our eyes catch gaze, who else makes my face glow?
who else's love can | feel when I'm not even around her?
who else can be considered a precious jewel from the Creator?
who else's sweet caress can cause my true feelings to exude?

who was the first girl to ♥ me before | knew | wanted to be ♥ed?
who else made me think of more than myself, and more of her and us?
who else, at first rising in the morning, is still a picturesque of beauteous?
who else inspires my heart
and gives me emotions | can barely put to words?

who else's body language can | read with one glance?
who else's worth is far above any earthy possession?
who else can | stare at for hours and not get bored?

who else will always have a piece of me with them?
who else could | love with an indescribable love?
who else showed me the traits of a true woman?
who else was always in my head like you were?

who else can make me laugh by being so silly?
who else can | open up to with no reservation?
who else was the first girl | never cheated on?
who else's love induced me to write sonnets?

Who Else? - Alexander Rose

who else can make my fantasies come true?
who else looks cute in everything she wears?
who else can fascinate me the way you do?
who else could be the highlight of my day?

who else can | serenade with my voice?
who else made me come out of myself?
who else was my best girl friend ever?
who else could | never get enough of?
who else can satisfy my every desire?

who else left me with great memories?
who else is more than | can ask for?
who else knows so much about me?
who else can | love like | love you?
who else did | let that close to me?

who else has the keys to my heart?
who else's face is a artist's dream?
who else could never lose my eye?
who else will always be a friend?

who else did | fall for so deeply?
who else was so understanding?
who else did | regret letting go?

who else did | shed a tear for?
who else let me do it my way?
who else did | give my all to?
who else has so much drive?

who else knows my secrets?
who else is my bella niña?
who else could be so real?
who else can | call Boop?

nobody but you.
Thank you for loving me.

The Sheep Collector

Karen Roveson straightened her boy's tie and whispered, "Do your best and I'll handle the rest." before sending him out on stage. She sipped nervously from an extra large coffee mug with tiny sheep printed on it. Karen collected sheep. She consumed vats of coffee whenever she had to deal with one of these Town Hall meetings, they were always the worst. Ever confident though, (some would say cocky) these jitters were only an inconvenience, since she knew she could always handle it. Handling was what she did best.

He was able to make it through the scripted part mostly intact, though he did at one point promise "dignicity" instead of dignity. This was a barely noticeable blip for Karen, who once had to explain why her candidate had pledged to "Lead optimalistically into a prosperous future". Some well planned self effacing humor, and a switch to outraged questioning about the opponents commitment to the economy had saved the day that time. At present, it was so far so good, nothing she couldn't manage. The actual interactions, or "interactives" as her guy liked to call them, were up next.

Karen listened intently as the opponent gave an intelligent and specific answer to a question about rising crime and what the candidates would do about it. She gave her counterpart across the room a look of compliment for being well prepared. Her boy followed with his pat response about having a "strong" position on fighting crime and an implication that the opponent was "soft" on the issue. All was going as planned, and Karen was pleased that she had prepared him well for this question. Then as she stood in the wings mentally patting herself on the back, he boldly proclaimed "If I'm President, rest assured, I will let no lawmaker go unpunished". Every head in the room snapped towards her with breakneck speed to see her reaction.

After what she referred to as an "eternity second", the crowd outside erupted with laughter. The monitor showed a moment of confusion on her boy's face which revealed he had no idea what he'd done, but he smiled, chuckled a bit and gave a self assured nod, which always worked when these things happened. Karen grinned at her colleagues already knowing how she'd play this one. Not only was this manageable, but she was sure she could turn it into a real gem. The "lawmaker, lawbreaker, sometimes it's hard to tell the difference" joke he would tell later upon questioning was half written in her head within seconds. It could be spun to fit nicely into the "replacing corruption with dignity" bit. She made a mental note to coach him some more so he wouldn't pull a reversal and declare intentions to replace "dignity with corruption" as he had done once earlier on the trail, and then she focused back to the matter at hand.

During an unremarkable segment her mind wandered again to the night before when she'd gone out for drinks with a counterpart and close friend from the other side. They had a great time as usual and vigorously discussed public relations feats of candidates and elected officials past, taking care as always to avoid discussing the present. Each of them knew that any information accidentally dropped was fair game. A customer in the bar had approached their table at one point and gushed that they were sure the candidate they supported would deliver on his promises. After the man walked away, an uncomfortable moment of eye contact was exchanged, followed by a giggle from both and then a rush to change the subject. Karen had been thankful afterwards that her former self, the idealistic true believer of long ago, didn't perch on her shoulder very often anymore. Which was fine with her, because those moments of introspection distracted her from being at the top of her game anyway.

As the evening rolled towards an end, her guy ended with a response to an agriculture question. "I believe in farms, strong farms, and I promise to do all I can to endure that farmers can get maximal farming for their funds". She flinched. The crowd let loose a muffled giggle. Her boy caught it though, and quickly corrected at least part of it by restating "funding for farms" and giving his best school boy smile while shaking his head at himself. It sold, and the crowd laughed, now convinced that they weren't being cruel.

They loved him. They didn't really know what he stood for, and if they found out, a lot of them might not agree, but they loved him anyway. If they continued to love him, they would vote for him, and if they voted for him, she could upgrade to that newer Mercedes she'd been eyeing. Karen relaxed now that the night was over, she smiled around the room and counted this one as a win. Then she hurried back to her hotel room so she could rest up to collect more sheep tomorrow.

Holly Jennings - Sandberg

The Night

death followed me like a wolf with hunger, strong as human passion,
my strength and resilience mute the night's laughing
this night be death,
personally I know him not, like thee,
have rested a tired soul to rot,
those that have fought,
don't haste but quicken the race,
fire from the circle they move in,
and embrace "the night"
sooner than thee thought,
but don't worry about these thoughts,
drive one to madness, my words not understood,
your place in the circle, that is my biggest sadness.

- Kingsley Okike

Dark Jeans in a Humid Memory

I wore my dark blue jeans
-a size too small-
Because you'd notice I looked taller
I knew I'd be walking home
on a night like syrup
But sweated sweetly in my favorite denim
The walk back
Left to my own devices
I mused of us
Fiction always easier to believe than we were
My legs ready to run
My lungs unable to meet
a challenge
Awkwardly
I kept my uneven pace
through the deserted streets between us
In my dark blue jeans
-a size too small-

-C. Draven

Sands of Time

Summer's gone still and dropped out of time
When words become whispers and images fade
Into shimmering golden haze
In and out of my mind's eye
Through time and all the times gone by
Dreams so sweet they melt the sand
The sands of time running through my hands
Every grain is a world under my command.

-Carolyn Delgado

Sometimes Boys (for my boy)

Sometimes boys get lost.
Counting their hours into days and then years.
Gentled by vulnerability,
And crushed by the weight of assumed expectation.
Trying to fill the holes within, they are sometimes left without.
So lost in the turmoil of youth.
Consuming days of crazy light
And slipping through nights of sleepy intoxication.
So wanting and touched by the impulse of not enough,
It seems a shame to cripple such beauty.
And always keeping just out of our reach,
Until they settle,
Sliding softly into men.

-Rachel J. Bain

Parrish Dreams

Lips
Feel like a newly painted canvas
against vulnerable skin
nails
creasing the dark olive of his back
As he paints me in colors with his eyes
That show me the novelty of innocent intensions
The curve of my
 (jaded eyes)
Back - arched reminds him of Parrish's
surreal sensuality
Golden bodies besides pools indigo
and inviting
Left in fantasy time and
Time again
Waking in
Loneliness covered in
colors

-C. Draven

FROM FREUD TO POLLOCK

Lines;
---- strong,
----- black,
----- Random?
The three converge
Id. Ego. Superego.
an unconscious combination
streak across your canvas
----- your eyes -----
Watching the stark and spare
of your stretched fabric
Take life
 and breath colors
revealing patterns of the subconscious
 deeper than a fifth of whiskey
 or the pretence of the audience
Lines converge
 into a swirl
standing
shaping it's own madness
abstractly puzzle piece eyelids yellow
 & torsos blue
Leaving bits of your soul
to remain within
Unshaken lines.

- C. Draven

Autumn

Cold wind; falling leaves; sunshine attempts to console me.
Crows caw, other birds mute, crickets sing final songs.
Autumn is here; winter will come; the nights will lengthen.
Much like the concept of death, life will be born in the spring.

- Laura Mattesini

Penelope

In my backyard there stands a tree
A tree with long lovely branches
And there she stands all year long
I've named her Penelope

I climb up her strong arms to the tippy top
She never complains or lets me fall
Sometimes I just sit at her feet and talk
But she never answers or speaks up

One day I felt sorry for Penelope
For she's always standing and never sits down
So I put a chair for her to rest on
But she didn't move or even thank me

Daddy says, "Trees aren't like other people, dear,"
"They don't get tired and cannot speak"
But I know Daddy's wrong, 'cause just like me
I see Penelope change and grow each year

-Liberty Anne Justice

Shade by Cheryl A. Breese - Workman



Of Assateague

The shore is a place of meetings.
Where sky meets water,
Where water meets land,
Where big meets small,
Where calm meets rage,
Where life meets death,
Where is meets was,
Where momentary meets eternal.

As I walk the beach, I watch the sand,
I watch her mystic slight of hand,
As she dazzles all who would watch,
With her vanishing act;
A footprint here, a shell there,
A thousand hermits disappearing
Into unseen portholes.
Who is this magic mistress I have met?

I watch the sea.
From torrent depths, she spreads her bounteous table,
A collage of purple, gray, gold, brown, and alabaster.
A scarlet ribbed scallop ensnares my eye.
The sea offers her tapestry on for a moment.
Its elegant specter of color and texture,
Are then retrieved like an errant child.

I continue my solitary vigil.
As I walk I watch the blending,
Sea to sky, sky to land,
All conspire to produce a composition of
ethereal splendor;
Yet with the minutest detail.
Light, color, form, composition,
All are in perfect balance.

There is life here.
I see it in the scalloped formations of foam,
That lick the ever-changing beach.
I hear it in the caw of the gull
And the siren's song of the eternal wave.
It moves in the frightened sand crab and the restless colt.
Life abounds, ever present and constantly renewed
I can feel here, the warm sand on my feet.
I can taste here, the salt upon my lips.
I can see here, the tempest hues are bright.
I can smell her, the sweet perfume of the sea.
I can hear here, the symphonic sounds of life
The shore has touched my body
And awakened my every pore.

And so I walk in silence,
Drinking in light, texture, sound and sense.
My feet tingle at the touch of the sand,
While my heart soars with the flight of the gull.
I will leave knowing a spirit that is Assateague
And in this place of meetings,
The Earth has met my soul.

Dona J. Dulin

Laying with Archangel Chronicles

Still a bit flushed from my frustrating trip into figuring out how people can push a button and, heat up cold food? I should just stop trying to understand and just go with the flow. Too much figuring can become a stressful adventure for me.

I ventured out for leisure time, accompanied by a picnic basket, cheese, grapes, and a bottle of wine. Not leaving behind, of course, my newly purchased blanket made from silk. Not as soft as that quilt I bought, but still, I love the way it feels when I hold it.

I still get nervous meeting her, even though it is the fourth time inside one month.

Even though it is the human emotion that I still need to get used to.

She arrived right on time, picking me up in her automobile. Still pressuring me to take the wheel and try to drive. "I'm fine!" I told her, when she asked if I wanted to take a chance and play with the road like romance.

Driving down country roads following flashes of meadows divine, lavished with butterflies surrounding wild flowers and skies of rainbow beauty. Clear oceans with only faint patches of diminished white could still be seen as the goddess of sunlight poured her flowing rays through the atmosphere. Breath taking blue, and green amber hue, all on cue with the changing winds. I still smile, while others I notice sadden with thoughts and dreams of approaching winter, that will with innocence, splinter the serene scene of falling leaves and drives like this one.

In the midst of calm, I felt briefly alert start leaking, but quickly retreating. Telling myself, I hope all is fine. For I was enjoying myself greatly, and maybe, just maybe she was too.

We arrived at a particular spot she picked out. I proceeded to take out the contents of the basket, arranging them neatly on top of the blanket. We talked about her job and her mother, if she had an older brother; and every now and then she would try to peep deep under my cover, but I just avoided certain questions, hoping she wouldn't think too much to mention why I never talk much about myself.

Soon, what started off as an uncertain talk about life turned into a comfortable and romantic thirst to hear more about her. She would talk, then pause, then look at the sky. When she would do this I would find it hard to not look at her. I seemed to hear birds sing their song whenever I attempted to look for too long. Not a bad thing, but, too good of a thing, for I felt a funny feeling as if my head just floated up and bumped the ceiling.

Her intrigue now reeling me in.

Hours felt like seconds she said, but for me it felt normal.

As we stood to stretch, little animals could be seen chasing each other ...in love with each other. I found myself lost watching their moments; they were smart, devoting more time on finding food proved prudent; for the long cool days ahead that they would face. Just then, I noticed her watching me, fascinated that I appreciate so much of the unappreciated. She took my hand in hers, and rested her smooth hand upon my face, filling me with a heart-pounding embrace. In any case, she then turned towards me, straining high up on her tiptoes before reaching my lips, holding on to my hips she softly, gently kissed my mouth. Surges of lightening shock waved down my body reaching my feet and ascending back up to the top, where they cropped and plopped all around inside my head, making my hands tingle and feel like lead, as I reached up gently creasing her soft head in my hands as our hearts did a dance, blowing out of the water passion, romance.

She slowly retreated, looking me in the eye.

We kissed once before but never did I feel this.

I was light-headed.

Suddenly, interrupting me and my thought, she and I both heard the cries of the sky as thunder struck with a loud BOOM

We both thought it was our hearts, but it was the weather, coming to pay a visit, and soon. Rain came faster than ever as we scrambled to get our belongings, making a run for the car. Both longing to still be lost in that kiss, even though in the midst of a storm. A storm sworn to come down with vengeance was the clouds intent. Lightening and thunder crashing all around, while over in town the sheriff was worried.

A call from a worker at the water plant said that the rain would strain the sides of the dam's walls, and it would be far too dangerous to crawl down the side and try to repair.

As we started the car, the storm that was far was now nearing near.

No more skies clear. Rain fell at an incredible rate; the weight of the water on the dam was immense. Into suspense, the whole town fell, while we drove faster to make it back home. Tree limbs fell as lightning struck their fragile branches. The barnyard animals in the nearby country ranches were in a panic. Frantically, pedestrians and cars raced for safety. Moms

holding babies, as they grabbed their children from the town nurseries. Dog barks were muffled from the loud thunder.

As for the dam near the lumberyard, it felt the hard strain and pain from the rain, bringing it one degree closer to breaking open its frame.

Coming closer together, the cars, including ours, came to a stand still at the bridge near Beaver Crossing. A truck had gotten stuck trying to cross, and the weight on the old bridge combined with the rising water started to make the bridge give way.

We saw it begin to sway from the car. I felt my protective nature slowly return, just as I watched the bridge start to break apart. The center cracked and the truck slipped halfway through.

"What should we do, we have to help." She shouted!

We both got out of the car and ran onto the bridge seeing the ridge of the truck slipping faster.

The man's door pinned between the floor of the bridge and the crack. I ran to the back, and climbed in through the window, getting him out of his seat. He reached out and took my hand. I pulled him out the way I came in. Just as he got out, the hole widened and the truck collapsed down into the water taking the center of the bridge with it, within an instant! The man and I stood in thanks before all of a sudden I thought...

Where is she?

I looked around but didn't see her. I called out her name but no response. Then the man spotted her holding on to one of the broken boards from the bridge, dangling twenty feet above the water.

"I'll go get help."

The man yelled as he turned and ran back towards town. I saw her scared frown as I bent down to extend her my hand.

For at that moment a mile away the dam could bear no more. The walls exploded from a dynamite blast of water at last. Uncountable gallons of water surged through the valley wiping out everything in its path. It was headed right for the bridge.

"Reach up. Take my hand! You can do it!"

Panic ran through her!

"Just take my hand, take it! You'll be ok. You'll make it."

Just with that last word I heard the monstrous roar of the flood. Although it had slowed down, it was filled with debris and dirt. Its slow power hit and hurt as it swept under the bridge high enough to hit her chest, forcing her to put strain to hold on as her dress got snagged by a passing branch. It wasn't long before she became weak.

I was just about to reach her when, the force untied her grip, and slick water took her along for the ride. She screamed loud for my help just before she gulped a mouth full of water. Coughing, she slowly was going under.

There I stood at the end of the bridge faced with a crossroad staring me in the face. There was no way I could save her with this body. No way for me, even to survive.

Then it all came clear.

"Look inside yourself," The elders had always said to me, "And you will NEVER go wrong!"

My scream broke the surrounding thunder, as I knew what had to be done.

Feeling the skin on my shoulder blades crack, I could hear now the voices of the young disciple cherubs sing, as my large and powerful wings broke through opening wide, stretching out with a flap, as blood ran, trickling down my back. Air and cold rain ran through my feathers as I stood, wings erected, projected towards the sky in the name of Heavens glory! Realizing what I have to give up and could never get back, but, realizing more what I can never turn my back on.

Forever am I....

Archangel!

I sprung up from the ground, flying high, spinning around in the wet air before pointing myself like an arrow. Down I shot with lightning speed in-between a narrow gap between broken flowing debris. Into the murky brown water I went!

Swimming faster than any fish, wishing to find her, for she had gone under.

My still part human eyes burned and were blurred. From under the surface I heard sirens and choppers above, but still I haven't found her!

I was afraid for her giving up hope, just then I silenced my mind... and heard her soul cry out to me. My body turned in the direction of her soul crying.

My eyes now focused, as my wings darted me forward with the help from the current. There, up ahead, I saw her floating body. I cut through the water in front like a knife, grabbing her limp limbs in my arms and held tight! I aimed up at the surface and took off. Passing by a floating flagpole, its broken serrated edge sliced a hole into my side like a knife- right before I broke free on top and took flight.

Zooming by helicopter pilots who looked at each other like, "What...the...hell was that?"

The rain and thunder was now calming.

I flew her in seconds back to her home laying her down outside on the porch.

Her pulse was not there. Other angels watched from above with a stare as I dare intervene with a living mortal! But as

I looked at her kind soul, I did not care.

I placed my hands onto her chest illuminating her and the whole area around her home, which was seen by the chopper pilots nearby. I released with a deep sounding sigh, filling her lungs full of new air, departing the liquid within. Then I kissed her lips renewing her heartbeat again.

A few minutes went by before she slowly opened her eyes. While cries of police rescue choppers neared. I feared what I had to accept... that I could not stay much longer.

"Where am I?" She said softly, with a clearing of her throat.

"You're safe now darling. You're here on your porch. You had fallen in the water, and I pulled you out."

"You...you saved my life...you..."

She blinked her eyes. Looked around confused, then said...

"I must have been dreaming while I was unconscious from the water, but...I...could swear that an angel... swam... to my rescue, and flew me to safety. Isn't that strange?"

Just then, she looked into my eyes, seeing that I showed no emotional response.

Just a blank look; right back at her eyes.

The eyes can't lie.

With disbelief at what she thought she saw, deep into my eyes as she peered came alive what is truly inside.

Shocked, reaching slowly, she put her arms around me touching the sides of my wings.

"This can't be." She said; she scuffled back and sat up. Angel wings spreading out, now into view...

She didn't know what to do?

"How can this be? I don't understand?"

I could hear the sirens getting closer. I knew it was time.

I stood up, taking her hands in mine.

"I can't explain it all to you, even though I want to. My time now is growing short, but I want you to know this: I was granted the wish that, for a day, I could come into earth, compensation from God for all of my work. But once here, I was so amazed by its beauty and wonder that I pleaded to stay, giving up my immortality in return. But if ever I used my special gifts from God in any manner, I would have to return once more.

I just opened a door that should not have been crossed, but I could not have borne the thought of you lost. So I made the choice that, because I love you I'll save you, even though it meant giving up my stay here."

"I can't believe this. This is not real!"

"But it is."

In her frustration and disbelief she looked at her shirt...

It was covered in blood.

"I'm bleeding!!" She said.

"No, your not....."

She looked down from my eyes as I removed from my side my white wing to reveal my wound. But as she looked with zooms of heart pounding booms, trying to get herself mentally composed, she watched the blood disappear, and the wound slowly close.

"A rose you are." I said, "And a beautiful rose you will always be..."

Kissing tenderly her lips I whispered softly as she closed her eyes...

"I'll never forget thee."

With the silence of a stare, I ascended through air, reaching the furthest point to a twilight of light.

I vanished forever, out of her sight....

As human years go by...
I sit, perched high on white;
looking out at endless stars,
and the realm of the earth's delight.
I think of the mortals...

Ashes to ashes.

Dust to dust.

Inside one hundred years.

All of their tears become mine.

But, dry fast with the first and last thought
of my earthly experience of life and love.

I think of the one who flirted with my heart;
Giving me an eternity of happiness to fly with,

just from one sweet kiss.
 Yes I miss her, and always will;
 but this is the way it has to be.
 Free will I was given from my dear God.
 Free will...
 From it I chose what has been my fate since the beginning of time.
 How old am I? - The world could only guess?
 Even I don't know?
 My prayer time devoted to bless others, but sometimes I drift off...
 Into my hidden dream...
 Where there, as she lay, I place softly next to her ear my verbal chronicles...
 telling to her all that I am, and all I have done and been through.
 Sharing with her my everything. Gaining back in return, the simplest delight,
 of just being able to touch her face under a blanket of a star filled night.
 And I say a prayer also to the Almighty, for myself as well.
 To please keep the memory of my human feelings awake forever,
 during my eternal reign as one of the many mighty protectors of His Kingdom.
 And when or if she thinks of me, and our short time...
 Please God,
 reassure that her visions of me are not filtered by blinds.
 And while she sleeps I'll come to see her in her dreams,
 making sure to remind, that the love I feel for her will go on and on, and never die!
 Love,
 without ever an end.....just as I.
 The End.

Brian Hist

ONE

The Sun and Moon are Distant
The Earth has Crumbled Away
Mankind has Betrayed and Left me
Whom with me shall

Stay,

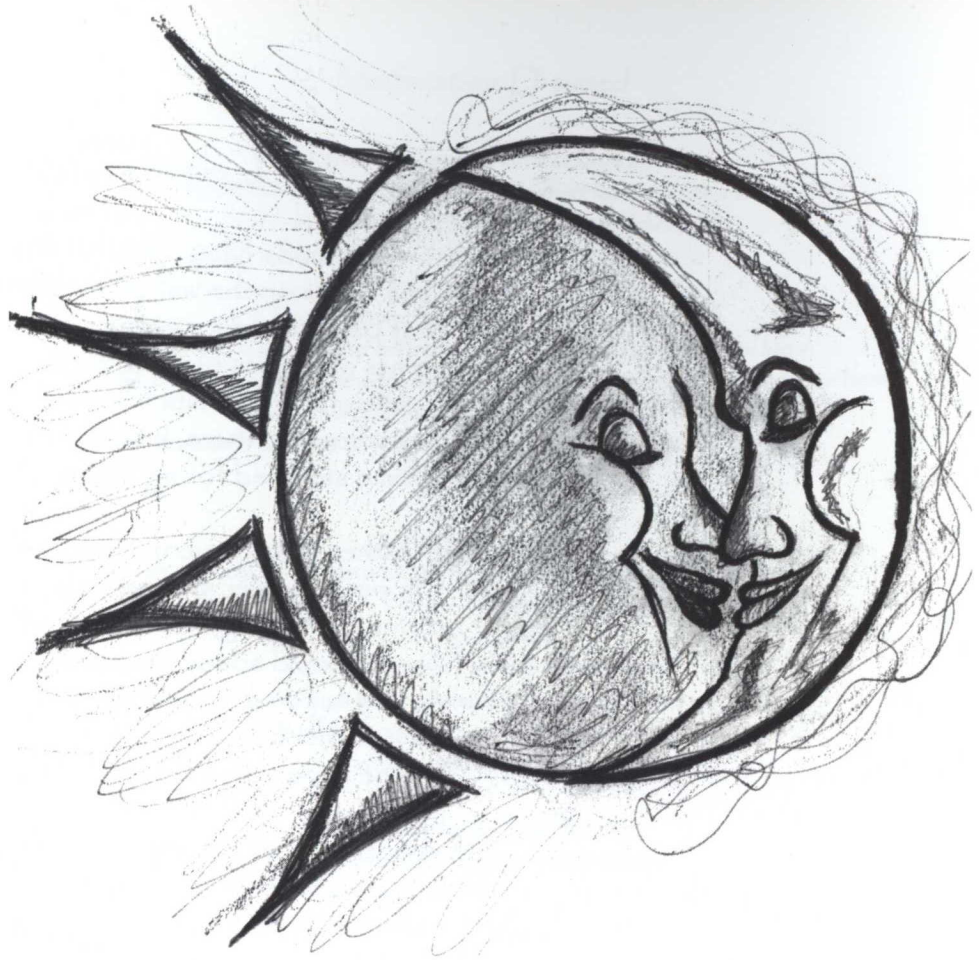
My heart she sits a' Lonely
Not a soul in sight
Drifting Without a friend
Who will

Hold me tight,

My Everything has Died
The Darkening Gloom of night
Save you, to Stay with and Hold me
My Love, my Hope,
My Light.

To TLR, my One

Liberty Anne Justice



Untitled by Rachel Kenney

The Moon Followed Me Home

One evening the moon was big and bright
And I was sad to leave it at Grandma's
I wanted to stay but we had to go home
Dad said, "Come on, it's a school night."

I looked up at the moon when I got in the car
And waved as Mom started the engine
We got to the end of the driveway
But it followed us leaving behind the stars

I thought it would get tired and stop chasing us
But it kept on rolling along
We went over hills and bridges
But there it was, coming like my yellow school bus

It followed me all the way home
And when I went in to my bedroom
It had stopped right outside my window
But when I woke up it was gone

-Liberty Anne Justice

The Calendar

It reads May, 1991
and still hangs on the wall of his garage.
On that page, there's a picture of a field
with grass and trees blowing in the wind.
But the calendar shows much more than that-
for those who were there, it shows the date
time stopped for my father.

My father wasn't a very handy man.
He would putter around outside
doing just enough to keep busy.
How he could spend an entire day
pruning and feeding his trees was amazing.
My father loved the outdoors
but he especially loved his trees.

He spent much of his time in the garage
since that's where his supplies were kept.
And each month, he would turn the calendar
to the next page to welcome in a new month.
It was an idyllic life, retired in the country
with the wife he had loved for forty-six years.
Then, one day, we received the bad news.
His days were numbered.

My father died in December of 1991.
But for him, time ceased to matter in the Spring of that year.
No longer able to get around,
he ceased to mark the passage of time.
After all, what do days and dates matter
when all your days are the same -
filled with sadness and pain?

It's fitting that my father left the calendar
at a place where he yearned to be.
It's been ten years since my father passed away.
Outside, time has moved on.
But in that garage, it will always be May, 1991
and the grass and trees will always be blowing in the wind.

-Tina Fleetwood

Moderation D-tuned

Describing beauty isn't always easy,
it's complexities confuse the flow of it's distinct aura for a short stay,
brief- with the intent to lounge for a short while,
defamed on a cloudy day-

The sun sits here and I train like a star to be
with a passion filled reflected look at a not so whimsical life -
my trails follow along by the sequenced patterns portrayed under your heart
the arch pushes us into moderation,
de-tuned and set to link like wild animals on a mission to feed,
without a frenzy-

It all looks pale,
as the shade comes around blocked out by the stingiest smile-
I knew it would be
or it could be

I only wanted it - not to be wounded
but just to smell the back of your head
and to bow in the refreshing moisture
of the new found light-

The room looks brighter now,
complimented by your compassion
it has helped me to build a complete circle
wrapped around the definition
of what's accepted
and what is truly beautiful.

- Jason A. Difilippo

Pressures of my life

The things that happen to others that you wish can happen to you.
To be able to put on a front that people think you have this
'so called ' normal life is the most stressful thing a person can deal with.
When you want to show your true colors but are scared
that you will lose all that you have achieved. When you no longer
have the ability to tell people what you really think of them because you feel bad.
When you lost your skill to look people in the eye and lie so that they wont get hurt.
When you can't even tell somebody that you like them because you are scared of
rejection. When you have to tell people that it's PMS when it's really not.
To live your life in one place and have to go to another.
To try to stay clean when its easy not to, just to tell people you don't
have a problem. To be so confused that you wish things could be
the same as they use to, even if they aren't as good as they seem.
To try to keep peace when you can only feel violence. To be brain washed
with the thought that everything is going to be better. To live
on this earth when you're not really sure why you're here. To tell
people your pitiful problems when you know they think you're psychotic.
And to tell someone you love them when you're not sure you do.
Just to live with all these pressures can drive a person crazy.
Unless they already are.

-Victoria M. Midiri

Forever Young

"Can you see beyond?" asked the girl. She was standing barefoot at the edge. She could see the icy cool water below. Her feet were bare and she gripped her toes as the icy wind blew past her feet.

"I see only water...its beautiful," replied the boy. His shirt was torn near the chest and the wind drafted through his body. It ran a chill up his spine. He looked up at the sky and at the stars. He began counting them quietly.

She knew he was counting the stars. He had always loved the night sky and was at his happiest when underneath it. He could lie beneath them for hours at a stretch, gazing at the barren landscape up above that filled his mind with an imaginative pleasure that only stillness could bring.

"I see a lot beyond," said the boy "A lot that I never saw before." He had just stopped counting, he was just looking at them now.

"You remember when we first came here?" asked the girl. She looked down again and watched the waves hit hard against the edged-rocked cliff. She had often heard how many people had fallen to their deaths from these cliffs. Everyone had told her that it was dangerous to stand so close to the edge - that she may slip and fall. But she saw no danger at all, only the clear blue water and beyond - peace maybe?

"I kissed you for the first time here...," said the boy. "And then we made love in the back of your Dad's station wagon."

She looked at him and smiled as though she was reliving those moments again as he spoke of them. Life seemed a lot less complex at seventeen. Only school, boyfriends, and sex to worry about. Then again, everyone had always warned her against growing up, so it'd be wrong to say that she wasn't aware of the pressures of adulthood. But she didn't know why it had to change. She had no intention of letting it change. She was determined to stay seventeen as long as she could. That's where he came in. He made her feel like that - always. Even now.

The boy stepped closer to the edge. He looked straight at the horizon and imagined sailing beyond it. He clutched her hand tighter.

"Why do you love me?" He asked her.

"Because you are all I ever wanted...." replied the girl, "And all I ever needed..."

She leaned over and kissed him. Then they stopped and looked at each other and then kissed some more.

The moon appeared bright as ever through the nighttime clouds. Moonlight hit her face like ripples in a pond. She never looked prettier, thought the boy. Then coolly as it had come, the moon disappeared.

He turned once again to look at the stars.

"Life's like a night time sky...it only looks better from the outside. The moment you are a part of it, you are just another star in the sky."

"There's so much more beauty in life," said the girl. "I am sure there is. It's hidden - you have to seek it. When you find it, it will make you the brightest star in the sky."

That's why he loved her. She knew what to say, when to say it and how to say it. All his friends told him to date her because she wore the shortest skirts in school. That's why he did date her at first. But then he noticed a lot more in her and he wanted to know her better than her body.

The wind blew a little harder and the girl gripped her toes even harder. The boy removed his shirt and covered the girl with it. She kissed him once more but she made it short. His lips were cold. He looked up at the night sky and counted the stars once more. When he reached seventeen, he stopped. All he saw was beauty...and beyond.

The moon came out once more in the night time sky and the stars seemed a little less bright. All except one; one that they had been looking at forever. It still shone brightly through the night time sky. As they looked at it, it seemed to move further and further away from them.

Then they jumped.

Rithesh V. Menon

Of You Always

I should not think of you...
Yet I cannot help myself.
You alone have brought sunlight
to places in shadow once known to a man.
Often I wonder what you will be like?
Dream of how you will look and smile;
The way you will walk and love.
At the sound of your voice,
would my ears crave more?
How would life be...
if I awoke one morning
with you inside my arms?
For as long as I am,
my dream will be yours;
you will be safe in my love.
I should not think of you...
Yet there is no end.
Of all the good, their stands still fear.
If I opened my wounds to you,
would you pour salt upon them?
Feeling not the same inside,
but still show happiness masked?
I believe that not of my dream;
still I worry.
To love you need not be my ailment;
to be loved back is my concern.
But of all true,
all that I know and believe,
you will be the one to fill my void.
I try to not think of you...
But I find it hard to hinder.
You came into my thoughts,
and brought me more riches
than forty kings combined.
For you are the air pressing my lungs;
The blood running my veins;
The reason why I smile like a child,
every time I play this game.
I tell myself to not think of you...
yet nothing works.
Patience I must learn!
Still, always will I think of you,
always will I yearn.
Even after I finally find you;
Even when we are together;
Never will I stop!
Of you always I am made of...
And always is forever.

-Brian Hist

9-1-1

9-1-1, throughout time will stand out
For that morning soon filled with horror and doubt
With multiple emotions and terror to mount
With effects that will linger
Too enormous to count

On that tragic morning of 9-1-1
Daylight disappeared as smoke covered the sun
With confusion and anger our hearts ached with fear
When suddenly through the rubble
Lonely heros appeared

September Eleventh of 2001
Shadowed our hearts
While pride raced for the sun
United We'll Stand
Until Justice is Done

In memory of angels rising with wings
America responds to the pain that now rings
Our anger is raging, emotions are strong
But love is the feeling
That will carry us on

-Sonja Kuchler



Self by Liberty Anne Justice

Cheesy poetry
Friends don't let Friends abuse Words
Please stop the Torture!

-Holly Jennings-Sandberg

Waking Up To A Dream

I can't help but dream about what is true,
Because the love inside is all for you.
Destined to be with each other I strive to put the pieces together,
Wondering what a life would be like in a world of splendor.

Realizing in this dream time is the enemy that will soon take the fall,
For the concept of life with you is all I need in this world to stand tall.
Enchanted by the omniscient emulating perplexing on your face,
My emotions become sentimental and lost without a trace.

Feeling the serene motion of your lips against mine,
I can't help but accept the orgasm of stilled time.
The intensity of joy and comfort is so surreal,
Relapsed from a dream the feeling is a morning meal.

As the moments pass me by I can't help but wonder,
Are you still in that sleepy slumber?
If you still are let me be your knight which sets you free,
And apply that kiss upon thy lips to awaken thee.

Beckoned by your beauty your gaze turns me into stone,
Paralyzed by your presence I realize that I am not alone.
Staring deeply into your eyes I fall deeply in love,
Unraveling my gift from God
for all eternity I now soar high above.

-Robert Heisler

Untitled

Silence
So peaceful and tranquil.
It assures me everything will be all right.
I feel so secure.

Drowsiness
It overcomes my being
And thoughts run through my head.
The clock on the wall ticks melodically, ever so surely
And my mind falls into it's rythm.

Obsession
The worst emotion of all
There is no logic
And there is no escape.
One cannot but love this handicap.

Mockery
People whisper then stop as I pass.
A funny "thought" arises
When something serious is said.
I know thyself
And I shall not be bothered.

Loss
Congratulations, move on.
I'm glad you're free.
Mind, let go.
Thy heart has answered for thee.
I admit love is gone.

-Laura Mattesini

The Seasons

As inevitable as time
The seasons continue to change.
With the approach of winter
I feel the tears begin to shed
Like the brownish green leaves falling from the maple.
And whether I want to accept it or not
I will soon be bare
Withering before the sun
Alas comes the day when I will be lost and scared
Waiting like I have never waited
Frightened like I have never been frightened
Calm like I have never been calm
With the first day of the cold I panic and long for summer
Remembering with an uncontrollable burning to...
Turn back the clock
To those days
That I now love so much
The truth to my soul is beginning to burn brighter
Outlining itself with all the colors of the rainbow...
That ironically appear after a storm
All the years
The seasons will change,
Along with our hopes and dreams,
For as one dream is born another follows
And another and another...
Repeating this cycle to keep us alive
I revere the birds traveling at will
Throughout the seasons
Longing to taste their spirit
So many the winds of the past we wish to chase
Fast and free with little care
Twirling and spinning with glee and gay
Dancing in fields filled with fireflies and butterflies
Watched in envy by the eyes of billions
There are no limits to ones smile
But rain will fall
Like the seasons
All whom we love will one day pass
But their seeds will carry on their beauty
Reminding the world
That there will always be new seasons of change
One cannot take for granted the birds that sing
Or the rivers that flow
Too many times we grow too proud
To skip down the street
Or dance in the rain
We forget the things we once remembered
We wonder why we're sometimes sad
Please do not wait as I did
Winter is never too cold for sun
Nor spring too nice for snow
We live our seasons the way we view our lives
It is only then, when we realize this
That we will be free
To drown ourselves in one eternal moment
When all our seasons become one
And the empire we begin to build
Inside our hearts
Will grant us wings to fly
- Brian Hist

Her Face Was Dying

She picked up the phone
And as the unknown caller spoke
I could see her smile slowly begin to fade
Her eyes began to well up with tears
I couldn't say for sure, but...
I think her face was dying

- Marvin Steele

Under the Precious Kansas Sky

A small piece of gold in the sky decorates the mood,
like a violinist on a romantic evening in the streets of Paris-
the surroundings favor a delicate whisper
meant to keep your imagination afloat and your heart dreaming-
The world that's involved could be considered a precious stone,
like the gold that decorates the sky
beauty is a pleasure,
not a luxury
a necessity for those young enough to dream
and a deserved right
for those old enough to still enjoy the kinder things that life provides-
It's an amazing feeling to experience the world as it turns in the Midwest,
free as the dove that soars and as lazy as the Missouri flows
down the path of the righteous and the like minded
a sullen face could be turned into a smile,
a cold heart could be turned towards the warmth-
On this train of drifters,
who drift so softly under the precious Kansas sky

- Jason A. Difilippo

(This was written in the middle of May 2001 at 6:30 a.m.
while eating breakfast with some guy from yemen and a retired
couple i never met before, while traveling along the Missouri River
on a three day train ride from L.A. to Philly, during one of the most
beautiful sunrises I have ever seen in my life).

Untitled

As I lie here soundly asleep
Without warning the door opens... "creek"
Startled, not woken but aware of this sound
Instincts alert me, my heart rapidly pounds
Again I question "a dream or for real"
Suddenly evident of the terror I feel

Now awake but pretending to sleep
He slips under the covers "Don't make a peep"
"I will not hurt you; your daddy's special girl"
I know what happens next and my thoughts start to whirl

Someone please help me this doesn't feel right
I squirm and struggle but still lose the fight
Now he is gone though just from my sight
For he has branded my soul again tonight

I know not a dream
Yes this is real
While in creeps the pain
And its shame I will feel

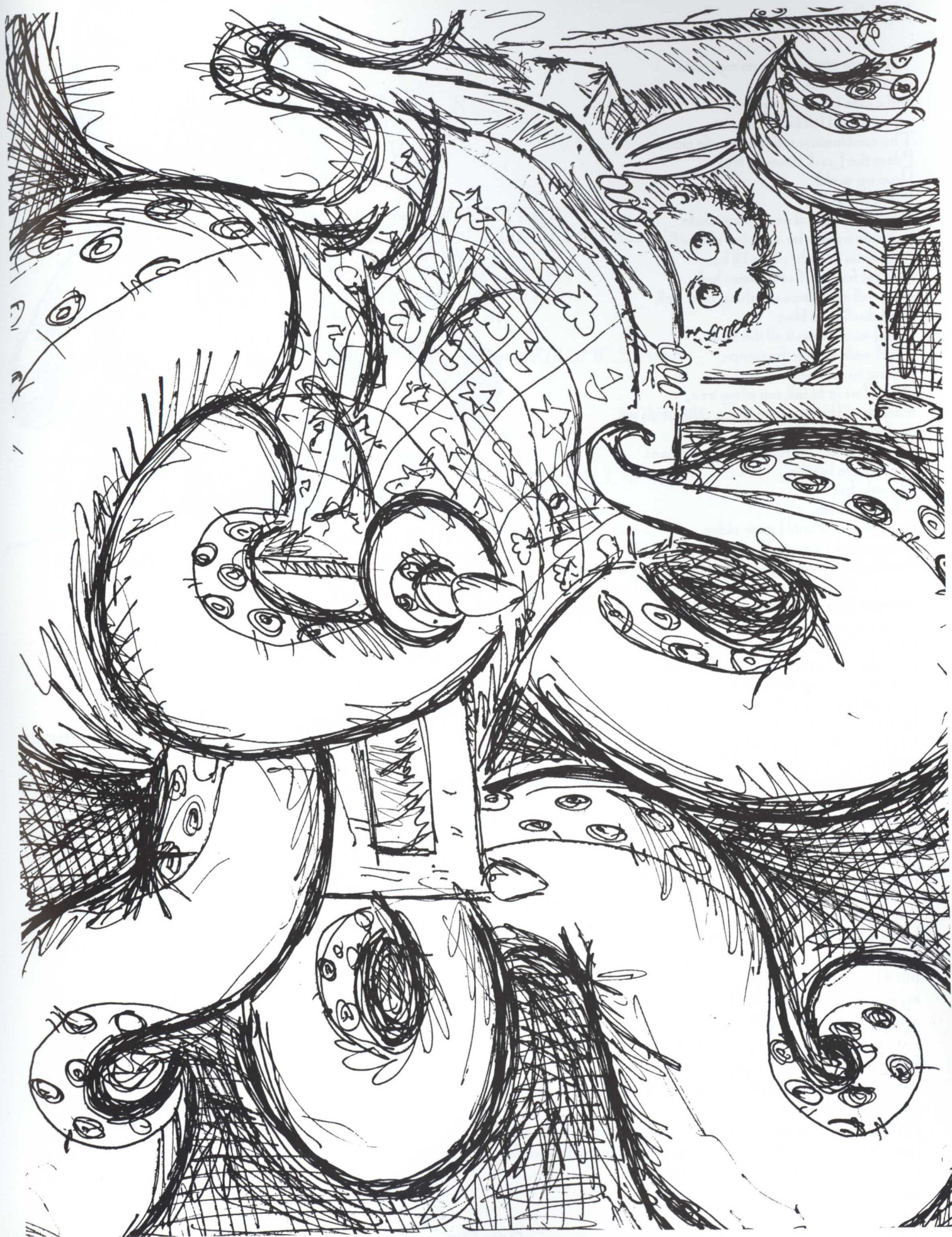
-Sonja Kuehler

Whispers

my head is an empty tunnel of
whispering VOICES
VOICES of my past
they swirl 'n' swirl
and the voices keep onn
they spin an' they twirl inside my head
forget-me-nots
words and actions on the winds
TAunting; HAunting; STalking my existence
• they call to me
from my right
And from my left
Beneath me
Above me
memories flowing back to remind me
Crawling through the folds of my brain
SCREAMING for my attention
• EVEN WHEN I close my eyes to sleep
I cannot ESCAPE them
they come to me in unending dreams
people.....places.....everything
INVADING my slumber
INVADING my peace
they will not RELEASE ME!
they will not FREE ME from their hold!!!

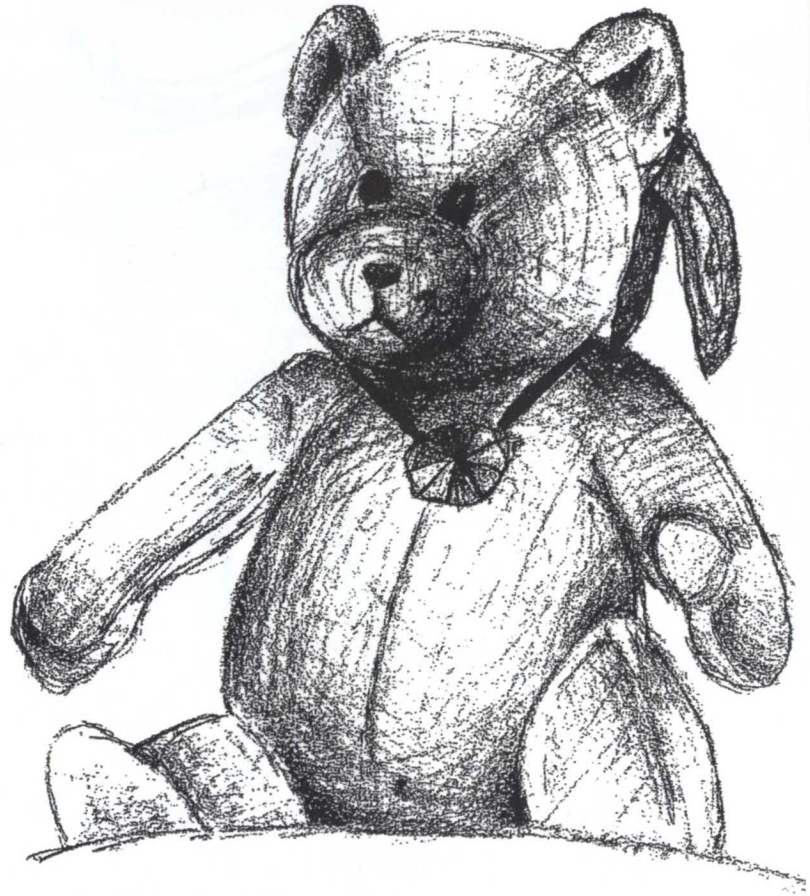
Liberty Anne Justice

Artwork : Insomnia
by Sarah Ryan



My Utopia

There are grass stains on my pants,
dirt on my hands,
and a little bruise on my arm
from when I fell last week.
The combination makes me smile more!
Bless the Lord! I love my life!
I love my world!
It is amazing!
I feel the happiest when I'm outside.
I want to forever be a climber of trees!
High in its branches free I'll be,
from the foul smell of realities hell.
My small mind knows nothing, but...well,
as I dwell in its bliss.
This I miss. I miss it all the time--
As I walk in large footsteps,
wishing to step small.
And if I were to fall, out of my tree,
there would be someone there, other than me,
to pick me back up.
My friends are everyone; all whom I meet.
We all have laughs...
My only foe
is my daily bath.
Unrecognized until I grew older...
everyone has already lived their own utopia.
Participating in smiling and dancing, running and jumping
until their legs were so tired that they could run no more.
But somehow, after a short rest, did it all over again!
It's that wonderful feeling...
perfect perfection unknown to rejection,
every suggestion from mama is Heaven!
When sunny days turned to rain,
they stay sunny for me.
I see the beauty of life
flourish inside each rain drop
right before my sight,
just as each new-born droplet makes its marriage with the grounds delight.
Frown not now, or ever today!
Inside I'll play; I'll laugh all day!
Go away! I say to my future--
I put you on hold.
I want to stay this way forever and never grow old!
Every night before I sleep I want to be hugged and kissed
in my warm soft bed;
I pray to the lord my soul to keep.
I will not die before I wake,
but if I do, the Lord knows me;
my soul he will take into his hands, no stops,
straight to the promised land.
For I am innocence;
I am ignorance;
I am everything a person wants to be when times get rough.
Sadly, my reflection now shows gray.
As I fall off into peaceful, happy dreams, about my past utopia,
I am overwhelmed with the wish of awaking snug inside a world
once seen through the eyes of a child.
A child...
always ready to climb trees, get dirty,
and hide when it's time to take a bath.



Untitled by Rachel Kenney

L R
O E
V H
E

HER Body is the FOUNDATION
A STRONG AND SECURE FORTRESS
FROM HER WOMB
SPRANG THE WORLD
THE PRESERVER of life
The PROTECTOR

A FOUNTAIN of nourishment RUSHES from h

c
r
BOSOM

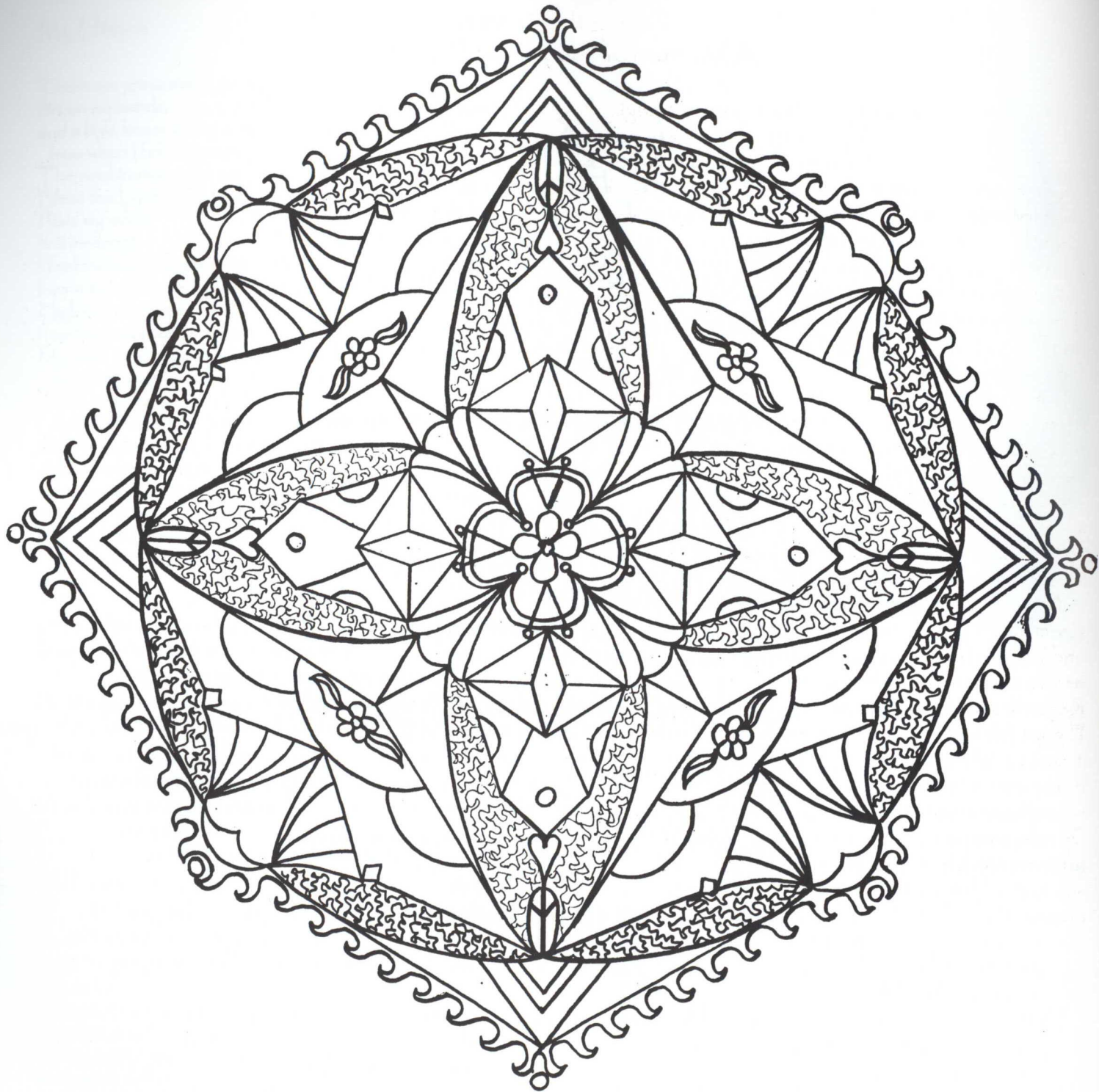
THE PROTECTOR
SUSTAINER of ALL
hEr heart B/EATS in PAIN for ALL to live
self sacrificing for the SACRED

hEr EmotioNs RUN like FIRE ...WILD
AND accept NO RIVAL
Beautiful and Seductive
NONE CAN RESIST hEr Charm
THOSE WHO SEEK TO POSSESS
AND
DESTROY HER
ARE ONLY HER CONTROL
UNDER
hEr SPIRIT cAn PERSEVERE THROUGH
any THING

AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE

I HER
AM LOVE
BEGINNING
TO

-Liberty Anne Justice



Heaven and Earth by Liberty Anne Justice

Taking the Blame: A Memory of Liberation Square

It had been an exhausting but fun day spent trudging through the dirt streets of Cairo and getting lost in its narrow medieval alleyways. Throughout my excursion, I was constantly attacked by obnoxious flies attempting to pick my nose, dodging piles of donkey droppings and avoiding flirty teenage boys. Finally, I had made my way to Tahreer (Liberation Square) and was headed towards Abd Al MinAam bus station to catch the number 38 home. As I swiftly moved through this familiar territory I took the chance to suck in some of the sights and do some reminiscing. The Egyptian Museum was where I had been snuck in by police and security guards only to be chased out by the Egyptian CIA. The American University of Cairo was where I went to get comfort in hearing my native tongue being spoken and Nile Hilton was where I used their off limits balcony as a picnic spot for one of my students only to be chased out by the Egyptian CIA again. These grand institutions and many more lined Egypt's most modern streets along with an overpriced McDonald's, KFC, and Blimpee's. Above it all hung a neon Pepsi advertisement, acting as our guardian angel to protect the lovely Tahreer from terrorists.

On the other hand, amidst these scenes of tourism capital and westernization, represented a very different façade; one of more traditional Arabian values. I was dressed in an outfit of religious modesty that signified not only strict Islamic teachings but rewarded me respect from most people; and usually shielded me from the perverted advances of untamed men. My long dress fell to my feet hiding my ankles and was wide enough to fit two more of me inside. An extra layer of protection started at the top of my head and flowed in plain cloth covering my hair and everything else down to my invisible waist, which was already hidden by my gown underneath. In fact, all that could be seen of me was my face and hands. Back in high school in America I used to be taunted with the title of "flying nun" and I imagine that is what I looked like just then rushing through the buzzing Cairinien streets of Tahreer Square.

About halfway to my destination my cloth armor failed once again to ward off the flirtatious advances of a young man. From a quick glance I could see he was tall and slim, but I could not make out much else on account of my near-sightedness and lack of glasses that day. From his nonsense phrases like, "ya bayda" (o' egg, meaning I like your white skin) it seemed he was attracted by my fair complexion, a physical quality that is rare and considered very beautiful to Egyptians. Regardless of the taboos of his Arabian culture he chose to pick on me. Flirting is considered wrong and disrespectful in Egypt. Men who come on to women are seen as profane and discourteous. However, this does not mean it doesn't happen, it most certainly does occur. Usually the victim is decided on by how she dresses. If a woman dresses in pants and does not cover her hair it is assumed that she is not religious or dignified and wants to attract boyish taunts. So, whatever sexual harassment comes her way is considered her own fault on account of her attire, or lack thereof in this case. On the flip side, a woman who is dressed as I was (the flying nun) is seen as very religious simply because of her guarded appearance. Most likely, men will leave a shrouded woman alone out of respect for her modest dress and assumed spirituality. But yet, there are a few males who just don't care. Despite the implications that are attributed to how a female presents herself he will prey upon her despite cultural taboos against him, like what happened with me. Imagine this, imagine a stereotypical jock-like persona hitting on a nun while at the same time a female beauty pageant winner walks by him without his notice. If that sounds absurd to you than you know how I felt being harassed when hardly any of me was even visible for such attraction.

Using the cultural judgment listed above I could tell the guy who had just started to pursue me was disrespectful and probably just trying to get a reaction out of me. Most of the time, I tried to be Ms. Proper and ignore the comments made by these types of men, but on this particular evening I was too tired to care and answered him with the middle finger on my right hand and told him in English to F**k off. I knew receiving the finger meant nothing to Arabs, so I figured it didn't matter. To my surprise the next words I heard were in English, asking, "Do you speak English?" My eyes widened in surprise and I darted off. I was expecting to hear more common phrases tossed at me like: ya aasil (o' honey, meaning you are cute) or anti zay alishta (you are like the cream that floats on top of unhomogenized milk, meaning you are very white). I suppose, I shouldn't have been too surprised, he was very possibly a student at the American University, where rich Egyptian kids take all their classes in English. After all, the school was only about three blocks from where we were.

I felt embarrassed that my thoughtless action and poetic comment had blown my Arabian cover. Now that he knew I spoke English and was possibly not Egyptian I would become more intriguing to him and he would hassle me even more. Sure enough, the next few words I heard were in English, like "Where are you going?" and "Come drink tea with me." He followed me over a few streets and I began to get very annoyed. I tried to keep my mouth closed and ignore him so he would go away, but my patience had run out and I told him straight up according to the beliefs of his own culture and in his native language, Arabic, "You don't want me. You want girls wearing pants." Just then two girls walked by wearing tight jeans. Pointing to them, I added, "Like them!" careful not to let anymore English slip out. I had hoped they would

distract him away from me, but no such luck. He continued following me over to the bus station. From then on I was able to ignore his desperate calls and darted across many lanes of traffic hoping to lose him. The excess material on my dress was flapping so hard from the speed of my step that it wrapped around my legs forming more of an evening gown look.

Finally, I had gotten far ahead of him and could no longer hear any of his obnoxious taunts. I felt relieved and began to look for my sardine can on wheels autobees to take me home. When I could find no number 38 I sat down on a bench to wait. I sat there trying not to choke on the big city pollution knowing that when I got home I would have plenty of dirt to blow out of my nose and wash off my feet. Yet, despite the environmental mishaps on my mind I was just beginning to get comfortable when a man sat down right next to me ignoring my personal space and addressed me with *asalam alaykum* (peace to you, a polite and religious greeting). I couldn't believe it, Mr. I'm bored so I'll follow and bug the hell out of this English-speaking lady was still on my tail. I didn't know why he had decided to be polite this time with his religious opening, but it didn't matter. I'd had it! I became very angry with his obscene behavior and shot out of my seat to face him directly. I starred him in the face, getting a close enough view this time to see that he was about my age and quite gameel (beautiful, meaning handsome). In a state of being royally annoyed I began to yell at him not caring that when I raised my voice my accent in Arabic became very obvious. I could feel the stares of the other waiting passengers gawking at me with surprise like they had never seen a foreigner dressed in traditional Islamic garb freaking out on a guy quietly sitting on a bench before. I should note that it was exceptionally strange to these people because it is considered unlady-like and definitely immodest for a woman dressed as I was to yell in public, especially at a man. But I didn't care, I could no longer hold on to my patience and I feared being followed home. I ordered Mr. "Do you speak English" to leave me alone and told him to go bother the ladies who wear pants in the Cairo tower, directing him with my finger pointing at the column in the Arabian skyline. But he just sat there, not saying a word. Eventually, judging from the look on his face he became very dumbfounded and began to laugh. I took his amusement as an insult and decided that was it! I had to get rid of him before he followed me all the way home.

As a final attempt to get rid of him I informed him that I wasn't going to sit next to him and that he was moving, not I. "And if you don't move I'll spit on your face," I added. After this announcement I sat back down and waited in suspense. I couldn't understand why he wasn't Mr. Slimy charisma mouth like before and why he would not move. It was like he was so shocked by my daring behavior, since he was more use to passive women, that he wanted to stay and see how far I'd go.

Well, about thirty seconds later I got up, stepped to his right side, collected a good lump of saliva in my mouth and launched it onto his shirt. He continued sitting, but his laughter ceased. His only reaction was a deeply surprised gaze of amazement and disbelief. People were staring at us with the same look of surprise and a couple of them decided to break the silence to tell him to listen to me and just leave. But he would not move, so I gave one last warning.

"I'm not moving, you are. And if you don't, I'll bath you completely in spit."

Like a lump of mud, he sat there.

"Go wash your shirt before I bathe you in saliva." I urged him, but he still wouldn't move. With a laugh and incredible bewilderment myself at this point, I sat down next to him again and waited to see if he would budge. During the next few tense moments that past an idea began to form in my head.

"Aren't you the guy who followed me from over there," I asked him as I pointed in the direction I had come. "No," he calmly replied. At that point I too was speechless. I was trying to rationalize what had just happened. First, I couldn't tell for sure this was the first guy because I could hardly see him. Second, come to think of it, this guy's voice was different than the pervert who was following me before. Lastly, it was not the style of my original pursuer to be this polite and quiet.

Suddenly, Mr. *Asalam Alaykum*'s respectful words and confused expressions made sense. This poor guy was just trying to introduce himself in a culturally acceptable manner and I let loose on him the wrath that was meant for the disrespectful conduct of my former pursuer.

"Oh my god," in English is what I instinctively let out when I realized I had punished the wrong man. I didn't know what to do. I had just hacked on this guy. I offered him a tissue but he declined. I couldn't take the embarrassment and decided to go back on my word and be the one to relocate.

Behind me flowed a quiet hush of chatter and a very confused young man who remained seated. Dodging non #38 buses and crowds of people I quickly found myself another bench to sit on. And there I sat quietly and uneventfully, awaiting my third class limo that holds fifty passengers with three or four hanging out doors or standing on the rear bumper. Leaving Tahreer in number 38 style with yet another funny memory.

by Liberty Anne Justice



Artwork: *Floating Image ... Interrupted* by Cheryl A. Breese Workman

A Parable

I. The Past Howls

I have come in solitude to view the place,
Once inhabited by a selfless human race.
Where dignity ruled the actions of the mind,
And the heart gave reasons to impart grace.
I am a witness to the glorious times of yore,
Of humanity, that has crossed all barriers before.
Of a time when men stood tall through actions;
Of honor - compassion, ne'er weary to act once more!
I tried to ponder reasons that exist beyond the person,
To explain the profanity of thought; plunder of reason.
To cry out aloud; to beg for mercy from the Gods,
As I stood by and agreed - the indiscreet acts of treason.

II. The Present Insane

I've come to live through many a change but to no gain,
What can be done, when men before, have come in vain?
It forces to pose: were it worth for philosophy to die,
For ideals that followed to grave, soon after the reign?
Seated sit in our homes and cages, naive to conflict;
Too scared to demand and too vain to admit.
Within our valley of fear, we let a river run through,
A river too deep - too wide, with no way across it.
We let the river cut us apart and erode, as it flows.
We let the river drown our souls; float our flaws.
And we stood by - watched, loves and lives it severed.
As I stood by and watched - in bondage, of our own laws.

III. The Result Dire

No one noticed, the evident desertion of sustenance,
Only fear spoke to all; asking to display ignorance.
It said through words that be spoken only by the devil -
To think of one's own alone, to avoid repentance.
Nodding in agreement to thoughts they ne'er heard,
They killed the sheep, not remembering the shepherd.
Soon wrath would inflict; and slowly the devil withdrew,
Before they knew of the trick, the penalty they'd shared!
The plague enveloped; to all mortals death certain,
He spoke, "Regret to live! Or witness the final curtain!"
But no man could say, for none had the purity,
As I stood by and looked - through the souls rotten!

IV. The Phoenix Rises

When at last man stood to speak, they failed to listen,
For deep inside, he meant little and faith began to lessen,
When no one trailed him; he couched it was not to be.
No one to blame but self, he vowed to learn the lesson.
Lessons told many a time; only to fall upon deaf ears;
Of fate's impiety, God's grace and of man's tears.
Yet we fail to learn, the lesson around us for all to see.
To let peace strive, sense rule and let fact replace fears.
To the end, man shall rise...like his forefathers before,
To restore his virtues and to let the bird of peace soar!
A land that has been, will now birth in itself - a soul,
As I stand by and see - never to shed a tear once more.

-Rithesh V. Menon

Longing For You

You take a step backward in regression,
As I try and take the breath you give me to live.
Have I ever given you the wrong impression?
If so, is there anything I can do to make you forgive?

I am willing to conform in any way you desire,
So please say that you love me.
You are the only one who can light upon my heart a fire,
And give me peace with prosperity.

Thinking of ways to get you to notice me,
I have so much pain within that I hope you know of.
Because of the mourning within that isn't yet free,
These emotions are still inside ...
feelings filled with sorrow and love.

To be captivated within your beautiful hungry eyes,
I would do anything in the world for you.
For if you ever say yes ... it would be a big surprise,
And I would surely know what to do.

After being enchanted with your perfectionate beauty,
I would wrap my arms around you for an eternity.
If one such as thee wishes a love filled with purity,
Than take my hand and cry out those tears of poverty.

Let me be the man that replaces those tears with love,
So that the tranquility is no longer filled with misfortune,
but with dignity.

-Robert Heisler

A Life Without You

For every moment that goes by,
I long to be with you.
Being with your presence makes me fly,
Because your love for me is true.

There has not been a day gone by,
Without the thought of your soul.
For each day that passes I wonder in a cry,
These feelings for you ... do I have them under
control?

Striving to be by your side I chase after time,
Yearning to taste your touch I fight for my life.
To be inside of you would be a feeling so sublime,
Yet without you in the world I would be stricken
with strife.

Eager to touch and smell your hair,
These eyes are enchanted with a spell that is irrevocable.
Staring at your picture you warm my heart up with a flare.
The love you give me inside is so provable.

As I strive to be sane twenty four-seven,
I cannot help but wonder about you.
For just the mere thought of your eyes send me to heaven,
Promoted an angel I fly high above ...
knowing that your soul is true.

Stimulated by the complexion of your soul,
My heart throbs for what is true.
For the very essence of your being is so incredible,
I ponder if my soul is good enough for you.

Now standing before you with my imagination,
I can't help but pretend.
For a life without you is but a hallucination,
The best thing in life is for our hearts to mend.

Robert Heisler

Home

My home is of the drifting hills.
Nestled within the dark creviced peaks.
How sad the song beneath the grass
and languid the landscape,
coming up through pounding hooves and silent feet.
Open to any of Nature's intrusions,
there is no hesitation of the senses here.
And again heady with the beauty,
I have come home.

-Rachel J. Bain

Inner Feelings

I have a feeling that is so intense,
Just thinking about it makes a suspense.
What to think of it, how to think it ... is entirely unknown,
But this feeling for you I have most definitely shown.

The fact of showing an appeal can be so dramatizing,
Yet somehow, in some way, it can be tantalizing.
Knowingly I fail to realize,
That such a burden could ever synchronize.

I have this feeling that friendship is all that is required,
Yet if possible, a step forward would be desired.
But in order to do one must acquire,
The visions ... the knowledge ... of such a sapphire.

-Robert Heisler

Ana Bihabak

The song you sang
...it was true
followed by the words...
...in love with you

A flip of my heart
A warming of my soul
My ever ready art
tricked into your control

The need to first feel special
controlled the impulse not to sway
Wanted to feel justified
before I gave it away

But now that I have it
The need has turned to fear
This sudden irony
won't let me come near

I can see it in your caring eyes
I can touch it through your fingers
I can smell it in the incense
I can hear it in your breath

But I can't feel it flying free inside
Like the hoopoe set free to live
Something's got her tied up good
But one day, those ropes, they'll give

-Liberty Anne Justice

One Hundred and two degrees by Cheryl A. Breese - Workman





Reminders

His walls are covered in posters and paintings of knights in shining armor.

Every surface in his room holds books of Camelot, and tales of noble hearted knights saving the beautiful damsels in distress. He sits at his desk with a cigarette burning in the ashtray, staring at black and white photos he's taken over the years. All of them are girls that loved him. All of them are gone.

His fingers stop on a pretty girl in a long sundress sitting in a tree branch. Her long light brown curls were pulled into a loose ponytail at the base of her neck, and pieces fell loose to frame her face. His fingers trace the edges and follow the tree branches towards her, stopping on her smile. A smile that could melt anyone's heart, one he would never see again. She was only sad once that he could remember, when he told her it was over. She cried so hard, and begged for an explanation. He sat in silence until he couldn't take it anymore and walked away.

Flipping the page he sees another girl naked, save for a white sheet, lying on his bed. Her black hair contrasts the pale porcelain of her skin and fans out away from her face. He takes the last drag from his cigarette sweetly recalling the feel of her smooth skin against him. The way she kissed him with all the passion of the world, and in an instant could be a child that needed to be held and protected. She was young and innocent until she met him, a crash course in reality. A crash course in pain, when he told her he could never love her and walked away.

The next girl he sees is sitting on a gravestone in a flowing black dress with dark black eyeliner and blonde hair spilling down her shoulders. So dark and romantic, she thought that they were the same inside. She read poetry to him on a swing set at a park down the street from her house, and danced in the rain with him. She swore she had never known happiness until him, but he saw in her face the night he left that he also taught her what loss was. She pleaded with him, prayed for him to tell her what he wanted or needed her to be, she swore she would change. He told her that she shouldn't change for anyone and walked away into the night.

The last photograph is worn at the edges, a girl in jeans and a tank top lining up a shot at pool. He stares at the intensity in her eyes, even in the photo he can feel her pain. She was nothing like his other girlfriends. She was scarred and hurt before him. For months he told her he loved her, that he would never hurt her, he meant it at the time. He swore that he was different then the rest, he never meant to hurt her. He wanted to break up with her, but she started cursing and calling him a liar and a bastard. She just kept screaming through the tears, he never meant to hit her. And afterwards when she was silent leaning up against the wall, he saw the mark already on her face and was so sick he just turned and walked away.

He lights up another cigarette and closes the album. In his head he keeps repeating it isn't him, none of this was him.

His walls are covered in reminders of who he'll never be.

C. Draven

Deeper Meanings

Sorrowful eyes can no longer cry blissful tears for they have drained,
not wanting to be stepped on again; the look so painful
inside to whom they are reflecting.

Some think they have more to them than personality;
these eyes are not filled only with emotions, but also thoughts that the public look for.

They may look deep, but not deep enough
maybe some reflections just don't want to be found...
or want to be found by their known defender.

-Victoria M. Midiri

Why Do I Still Hurt?

Just thinking about you hurts
When I close my eyes I try to sleep away your face
But it wakes me through the night
What ever happened to my dream?
I wanted so much, maybe to much
When I think about how you used to tell me
you thought about me
All the time
About how my clothes looked
About if I was smiling, crying, dancing, or just about what
I was thinking about
Now I know what you're thinking
Why couldn't I think it along with you?
Would it have made this easier?
Probably not
I live each day thinking of you
Thinking about if you are thinking of me
What you are wearing; how you smell
I have the shirt you gave me when I left
I used to hold it so tight, when I let go of it
I thought I was going to let go of you too.
Boy, did I think wrong
Why does this hurt so badly?
Oh god, Frankie, what can I do?
I'm trying so hard to let you go
I don't want to hurt any more; I just want to tell you
I love you
I want to hear you tell me
I would do anything just to be with you again
To marry my soldier, my love
I am still dreaming of walking down the aisle with you
Only now it's never going to happen
I'm just going to close my eyes and wake up, right?
This is all a dream? Tell me please, don't let it be real
It hurts so much not to be with you
I pray to God every night to make this pain go away
People tell me that it's normal but how do they know?
Does each human not have their own feelings and emotions?
Am I not entitled to take as much time as I need?
Well I'm going to close my eyes now
Wake me when the nightmares over.
I love you.

-Victoria M. Midiri

Rubaiyat

I

Oh glorious Morning! Arise and send forth your light.
Let the sun dance merrily on the waters and hold me tight,
Embracing my body as though I were its child.
Every creature on the earth gives thanks to and is awed at your might.

II

Beautiful Moon, how peacefully you repose in the sky!
Ever so silently your children gather nearby,
Who have listened to the stories that my ancestors once spoke,
These tales of the night shall live and never die.

III

Trust in the river for this is where peace can be found.
Its cool water rushes over my head now
And I can feel a rebirth of life within me.
To my ears, the babbling waters are a wonderful sound.

-Laura Mattesini

Life

The Lord wants me,
so the devil taunts me,
bless myself with holy water so my past sins never haunt me,
don't flaunt, can't take it with you in death,
everybody hears but understand the concept,
out of the darkness of pain,
you can truly see the light,
what was known as wrong, we always thought was right,
and my mind became no longer blind,
and I could see through the lines,
and grasp the signs,
and life and death were intertwined,
and fate is the only thing I could call mine,
so just sit back and recline,
as I reach into the depths of your mind,
from the inner ranks of my heart life has just been described.

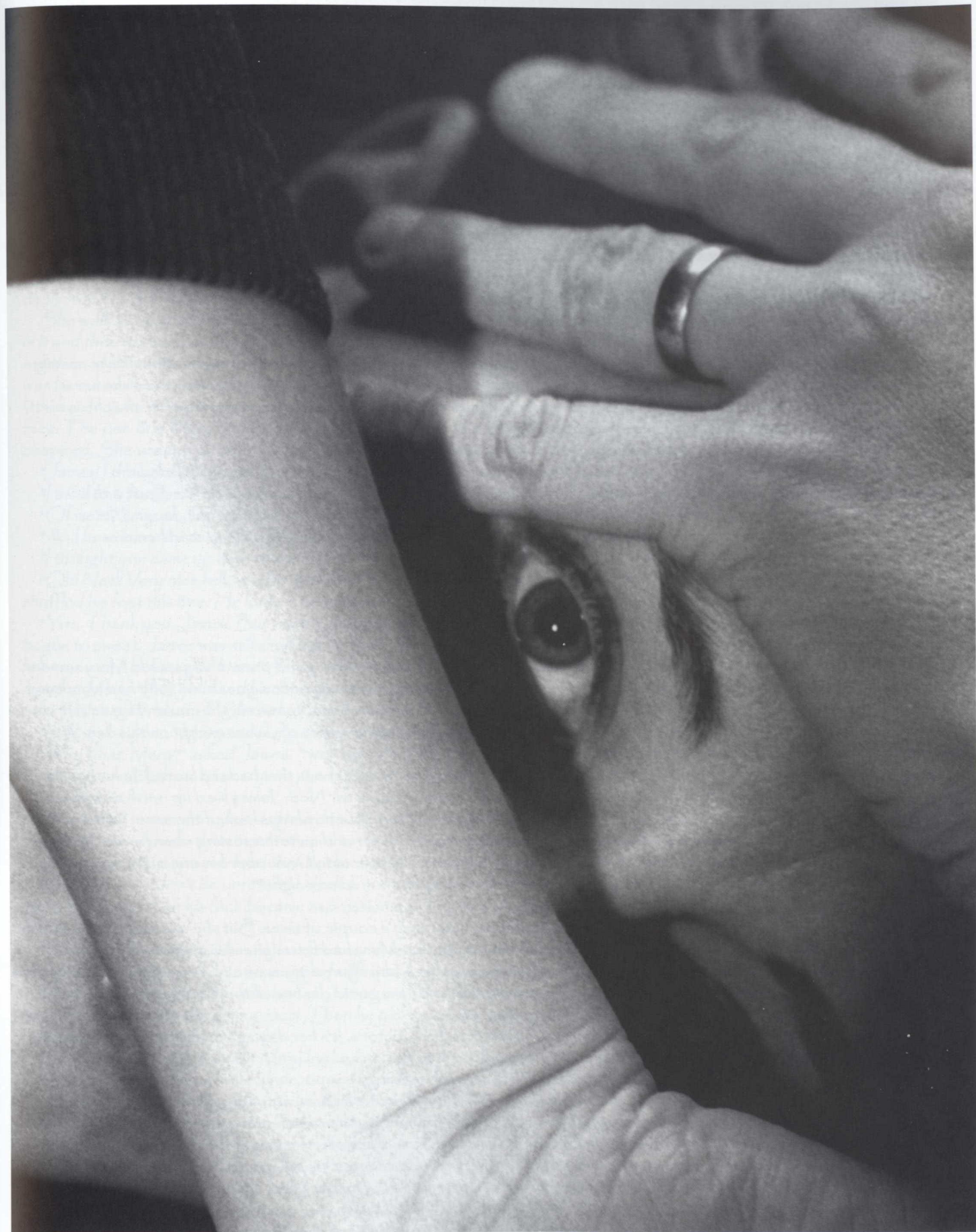
-Kingsley Okike

Club Superficial

Most all club-women they find me sexy,
dancing closer to my body they try and break me...
little do they know I don't want none of them, I don't want some of them...
Still there's one who strikes my fancy;
attitude that I like for club-women, cheap but classy,
walk a little closer she's moving sassy right passed me, making sure
we touch each other ever so gently
Strobe lights...
She's lost now somewhere in the smoke and lights; the crowd is loud, the night is on.
While I go get a drink I'm thinking: Underlining place, overlying people!
all just having fun.
I should know, I'm one of them right now.
But one thing's for damn sure,
I'm not your average-"tan in a bottle", can't control my throttle, let me stand here like I'm important,
some sort of model. To all the other guys trying to be jive, you can't fool real women;
to them you're just another fly buzzing around her...
Lick your lips, cause that's as wet as there getting I'm betting she's thinking;
When she sees you she knows,
believe me,
alcohol does not make the difference.
I pity you pretty boy you are just a face; inside you're not right;
women you replace after your dirty work is done:
Oh yea, your having fun...
at the others expense.
None-the-less, those sins are for someone else to confess.
What a mess is the dance floor;
A big open sore of oozing bodies, red hot hotties, all coming to party
No kind of place to meet someone real!
Everyone left their true selves at home tonight, not with their minds but their
bodies they'll feel-each other, someone's brother, a new baby's mother, significant other,
have all come out but gone undercover.
I started to dance, it wasn't long before the women saw I had rhythm.
Within minutes a girl came up to me close and approached with a shot
of rum-no whiskey,
said could she kiss me? For I would be her shot chaser;
after the burn she wanted some cooling.
My pals stood back and concealed their drooling.
Now is there a rule by which I should follow?! And tell her no?
Nah!!!! I don't think so! Come here baby; give me that kiss!
"That was fun," she said, as she licked her lips and sashayed her hips;
"But sorry to say, your cute, but that's all I wanted you for, so boy your dismissed."
Some would feel hurt, but I could care less, and just like I said before:
There is no big riddle to fiddle, just go out and have fun until you see sun;
But take with you my advise, and don't be too wishful...
It's just a good time!-
At Club Superficial.

Brian Hist

Photograph: Self Portrait by Kimberly Dietrich



Ned woke up in the morning and smelled the fresh air that was coming through to him from the vent right next to his bed. He had woken up early and proceeded to shower and shave. He smelled good now. He hadn't smelled like this in many months. Well not since last March anyway. Today was special and Ned knew it. He was going to see James. James was what he was not and everything he wanted to be. Ned appreciated that. Indeed he appreciated it more than he knew.

Mary, his wife of twenty-three years wasn't amused or surprised. He had been like this ever since she could remember. He dressed and groomed himself only once a year on a special occasion. Through high school it used to be the annual prom night or his birthday. When they were in college and Ned was dating her, it was Mary's birthday. But since he had met James it was this one-day. The 14th of March every year for the past fifteen years. Mary had spent half of the past fifteen years wondering why it happened and the other half not trying to wonder about it. Now, being his wife, she could have asked him why. Why March 14th? But she didn't, she was as happy not knowing, as he was, not telling. He never mentioned it to her and they never talked about it. It never came up in conversation or at the dinner table. For the past 15 years she had been content. Why change now? It never affected her or Ned. He was a dear in his own incomprehensible way. Mary thought of it as one more of her husband's incomprehensible habits. Besides he would probably have an incomprehensible reason for it as well.

"Mary!" cried Ned from downstairs, "Have you seen my pipe anywhere?"

"It's in your left hand, Ned" she replied, while making the bed.

"Why, yes...you are right. It is." Ned was a little baffled. How did she know that? Now that he thought about it, she usually knew where his things were. That's how it was when they were dating and since they got married. In fact at times she knew before he even asked. So this was no different. Ned continued to think about for a while till he started to feel an ache in his temple. So he decided to go pick up the newspaper.

"He's due at a quarter to ten." Ned said, picking up the newspaper and walking in.

Mary had reached downstairs and was setting up the living room table. She emptied the ashtray and placed the magazines on the table in a pattern that resembled a fan. She liked fans. Especially the ones from the Far East with a scenic painting on them. They were nice. Ned had brought her one when he returned from the war, from Japan. He had gotten it from a fellow in his company who exchanged it with Ned for his last cigarette. Ned didn't mind because he had another pack and he liked the fellow too. He was nice.

"You know, that fellow is a gem of a guy" said Ned, lighting his pipe.

"Yes dear," said Mary. "I know."

"He's a smart fellow too."

"I am sure he is a dear"

"Ahhh.... We had some good times together." Then Ned went on to his paper. The 'good times' always made Mary wonder. Where did they meet? And for how long did they know each other? And why meet only once a year now? She had wondered about this every other time he had visited. She thought about it very hard but for all her brainwork, she couldn't figure out where and when Ned had met James and what they had done together. And Ned never spoke of James except on this day. Why? Would Mary ask him? No. For the past fifteen years she was content. Why change now?

James was on time as usual. Neatly dressed in a brown coat and black pants with shoes that had red laces. He had on his head a very nice felt hat. He had brought red roses for Mary and a pack of cigars for Ned. James lived up north near the steel plants by the city and came down to visit Ned. He wasn't much older than Ned. But he always looked the same. With a sober face that lit up once, with dry chapped lips that looked very painful when he spoke and quite interesting when he ate. He had never put on weight or lost any either. He just hadn't changed. Somehow Mary couldn't remember him any other way.

"You lookin' fine, Ned!" said James. He shook Ned's hand vigorously. "Put on some weight?"

Ned was beaming. "How's Chris?"

Chris was James's wife. She was also Ned's sister. Mary had met her only a couple of times. But she was always sick as far as she could remember. A rather frail woman and she never smiled. Last that Mary had heard she was diagnosed with a sickness that James couldn't remember and Ned couldn't pronounce. So Mary figured it was one of those soap opera illnesses that ate away at your body slowly without letting you know and in the end, you get to die one of those more peaceful, glamorous deaths.

"She's fine. Been feelin' tired this week. But she's fine. I left her at the Doctor's. It's her day again. Doctor says it's just the usual." said James settling into one of the armchairs.

"Well, we are not getting any younger are we?" said Ned. He was still beaming.

"I know, Ned, I know." James looked at Mary. Smiled. Mary was standing in the hallway arranging the flowers into a vase. She didn't see James smile. James looked first at her hands, and then followed to the roses and up a stem that was in line with her breasts. Then he followed her body down to her shoes that were a bit muddy from trampling in the garden. It had rained two nights ago. Meanwhile Ned had stopped beaming and had suddenly recollected his pipe and Mary. She wasn't looking at me when she said that, thought Ned. Or was she? No she wasn't. I am sure of it, thought Ned. Maybe she just knows me well. Yes that's it. I am sure. She just knows me too well. It's always been that way. Why would it change? James was still looking at Mary. She still hadn't seen his smile.

"The beef is excellent." James had a mouthful of it once more. Then he said, "Wish Chris could cook like you Mary!"

Mary smiled. She watched as James took another helping. Yes, he ate a lot. Much more than Ned and in big helpings. And he always talked with his mouth full. That meant the tablecloth would be in the wash tonight. And she may have to work out the stains separately.

"You know, Chris is a good girl. Pity she's sick so often." Ned was trying to remember the last time he had seen Chris.

"What about fishin'? Done any fishin' lately?" asked James looking across at Ned. He had just finished the salad.

"No not much." Ned hadn't been fishing in over three years.

"I haven't had much time myself." James had just finished another helping of the beef. He looked for some wine.

"Would you like some more wine dear?" asked Mary. Ned nodded. Mary poured out another glassful. "For you too James?" She hoped he'd say no. He had four glasses already. But it always failed. He said yes. And later he'd have one more. And then the bottle would be over. James finished his beef and smiled at Mary. Ned thought about his pipe and how his wife knew where it was. And Mary wished it'd be six 'o'clock already. It has to change. It must. She would have to, or so she thought. Content wasn't enough. What can she do?

Mary wasn't sure what to do now. After lunch James and Ned would go to Ned's study and listen to some old records. Then they'd fall asleep on their armchairs respectively till Mary waked Ned up for tea. Till last year she would always go upstairs and help Susie with her work or just talk to her. Now Susie was at college and Mary was alone. She missed Susie. But now she was determined to find something new to do to while away time.

She walked downstairs and went into the kitchen to search for the latest issue of her weekly. She wanted to finish an article in it and then do the crossword perhaps. Not that she particularly enjoyed it. The crosswords were tough and she had to wait another week for the answers. She didn't like the idea of waiting. She had done a lot of that in her life already. But she felt that was because she was always giving up too easy on the hard words. And since she was in the mood for a change, why not try a little harder? As Mary turned around she was startled. It was James and he was standing in the doorway. He had a smile on his face. The one that Mary never managed to see and now that she did, she didn't like it. And his lips were even more dry and chapped. She wanted to offer him some balm but wasn't able to.

"James! I thought you would have been napping."

"I tried to," James shuffled around in the doorway. "But I was thinkin' of you."

"Of me?" Mary was trying to sound flattered but she noticed her voice quivering.

"As I have been thinking," James moved closer. "For the past fifteen years, Mary."

"I thought you came up here to see Ned."

"Oh! Ned! Very nice fellow, a bit slow; but nice all the same. We never had much in common. But you," James shuffled his feet this time. He looked around a bit and then continued. "Did you like the roses, Mary?"

"Yes. Thank you, James. But I don't understand. How was I a common subject?" Mary looked around. She had begun to sweat. James was still shuffling his feet. "You see Mary, we both loved you. Anyway, I did. Long before Ned even knew you and before you knew" James removed his hand from his pocket and wiped his forehead with a towel. Then he smiled again at Mary. "But you liked him. You never saw me. I was meant for you but you chose Ned. So I married Chris to be close to you. With her life was hell. She hated you more than I loved you. I still loved you, but you never saw me."

"Is that why you..." Mary suddenly stopped. Something dawned on her.

"Why what, Mary?" asked James.

"Why you come here once a year. And that's when Chris is at the Doctor's." Mary voice was quivering now. She looked around again.

"Yes Mary, to see you. Just as I loved to see you in college. I have waited enough. Now you will come with me." James smiled again and pushed his hand forward to touch Mary's. Mary stepped back. She knew she it wouldn't help to shout. Ned's record player was so loud that he'd never hear her. And no one outside would hear her either.

"James, please don't be unreasonable. If I never saw you its because ..." Mary now watched as James smile changed into a frown and then his face became expressionless. He then shuffled again. And did a turn. He laughed and naggged his hand on the wall.

"Because what? Mary! I knew you'd not come easy." As he said it, James opened the first drawer next to him and picked up a large knife. "All I want to do is see you. I will make you happy. Give you anythin', everythin' Ned could never give."

Mary stepped back. She watched as James smelt the knife and then placed it next to him on the table. He then took of his coat and threw it into the dining room. Then he picked up the knife and stepped forward.

"Mary, please let's go..."

"James....what about Chris?" Mary looked across at the rolling pin lying at the end of the cabinet board. She knew James couldn't see it. As James once again, turned and did a funny dance, she lunged forward and grabbed the rolling pin and before James could react, she brought it down hard on his head. James fell. Motionless, she wondered if he was dead. She took the knife and placed it in the drawer. Then calmly, filled a glass with water and threw the water on James's face.

"Get up and leave. And never return. If you do, I will have the cops on you!"

James got up staggered and walked towards the kitchen exit.

"You know, Mary, I'd give you everythin'...."

"Leave!" cried Mary and her hand rose slowly toward the phone.

James left. As he did so, he knocked over the living room table. The ashtray fell over with Ned's pipe under it. She picked up the ashtray and setup the table once again. Then she placed Ned's pipe on the sideboard next to his study board.

The study door opened and Ned walked in. He looked around and then peered into his study. Then into the dining room.

"Mary, where is James?" he cried.

"He left."

"Left? That's odd. He never leaves without telling me. Did he say why?"

"He said he had to pick Chris up." Mary walked toward her husband and held his arm and led him to the armchair. "He said he was sorry." She smiled.

"You know, that fellow is a gem of a guy" said Ned sitting down.

"Yes dear," said Mary. "I know."

"He's a smart fellow too."

"I am sure he is dear."

"Ahhh.... We had some good times together." Saying this Ned lay back and thought.

Mary thought hard. Should she tell him about what had happened? And why James left? No. She wouldn't. For the past fifteen years she was content and so was he. Why change now? She looked at Ned's face. He seemed to be resting. Why disturb him now? Then she walked upstairs to pick up laundry.

She wasn't looking at me when she said that, thought Ned. Or was she? No she wasn't. I am sure of it, thought Ned, still remembering the pipe incident today morning. Maybe she just knows me well. Yes that's it. I am sure. She just knows me too well.

"Mary!" cried Ned from downstairs, "Have you seen my pipe anywhere?"

"It's in your left hand." she replied.

"Yes you are right. It is."

Ned was a little bemused. How did she know that? Shall he ask her? No. He wouldn't. For the past fifteen years he had wanted to but he hadn't. He was content not asking. Why change now?

Rithesh V. Menon



Untitled

These days I'm drinking coffee two times a day, four to five cups each time. I used to abhor caffeine. I used to abhor many things. Similarly, I used to enjoy many things. Now my horizons, my sequential minutes, are but a fog. My passions have eroded to embarrassing levels. However, the real tragedy is that I am not even humiliated. My rituals of life have become my last rites. But when I look at them more critically I find that I don't even have rituals of life. I have sarcastic repetitive motions. They are corporeal diatribes to every molecule of air that enters my lungs with what seems to be a firmly rested agenda of altruism. Unknowingly and ironically, I have constrained my own 'degrees of freedom' to near suicidal definitions. Intellectual points no longer reside on philosophical continuums, but have morphed into sharp, dangerous objects to be avoided. They are arguments that now thrust me into a chasm of social separation. And when I look at them my fingers have grown to grotesque proportions. They can't grasp anything.

- Christian Kurpiel