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# THE MITRE 2006

## Bishop's University

# The Mitre

2005 - 2006

113th Edition



**Bishop's University**

A literary tradition since 1893.



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Editor's Interruption:

Many thanks to Jann Kang, for her expertise in all things Mitre-related; Colin Unsworth and Ellie Louson, for their patience and advice; Joy Chandler and Evan Hughes, for helping make things happen; Sam Solomon, for helping me find the necessary software; Ryan Nadeau, for his computer, and for everything else; and Del Springate, for her constant support throughout the whole process.

Thank you so much to everyone who contributed. I was blown away by the number of submissions, making the selection process that much more difficult.

I hope you enjoy.

Anna Springate-Floch

Editor, 2006

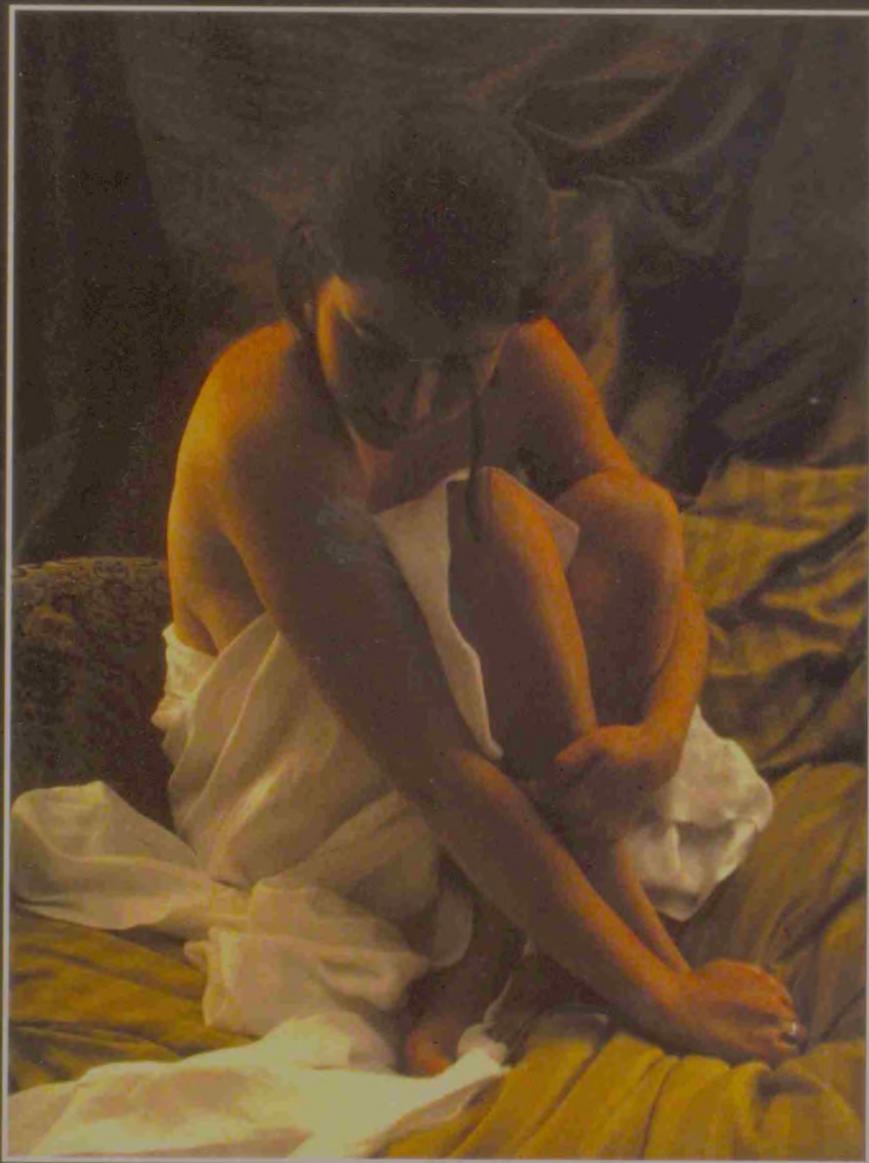
### Alternative Pompeii

I dodge around, at times leap over,  
the broken scattered proof  
of the anger of yesterday's rain,  
and follow a path  
that preserves the depression  
of each heel-toe stride  
as if they were to be cast in plaster  
and put behind glass  
above a neat label with date, location, and subject.

Perhaps tomorrow an undiscovered volcano  
will erupt near this very spot  
and the molten blanket thrown across  
this valley between two unnamed hills  
will guard forever the secret knowledge  
that today I was here,  
until, daydreamt centuries from now future tourists,  
with their cockroach resilience,  
will walk the ways of this alternative Pompeii  
and pause to look at the sign  
by those footprints which reads:

"Running male  
21 years, 6'2, 170 lbs;  
doing okay, limping slightly,  
likely perished in the eruption."

W. J. Greaves



Untitled - Anna Springate-Floch

### After the Separation

After he left  
I lay in the dark  
and ran my hands over the emptiness beside me.  
Nerves jumped,  
fingertips anticipated  
but touched nothing.  
My fingernails skated solemn figure eights  
across ice rink sheets and pillowcases.

I rose without turning any lights on  
to inspect the bathroom sink.  
The cleanliness of the chipped porcelain broke me  
and I cried for the little bits of hair  
he used to leave from his morning shave.

I never expected him to take them  
with him.

Lindsay MacLeod

(home)

the place a lover's hands make of your body  
or the secret heart of you  
or the words and words never spoken  
abandoning their soft, mute flesh for skeleton  
layer after layer of the unspoken  
slowly replacing your frame so a reef now  
between bone and the briny sea of you  
so now to speak  
will break you  
open

Ann Scowcroft

### **A Well-Trained Poem**

Before lunch  
I will walk my poem  
down the road  
let it sniff at the base of trees  
call after it as it starts,  
in chase of some small creature,  
following its instinct  
to go off the path check the woods  
shadow between the trunks.  
My indignant poem will lift its leg  
on invisible borders, growl  
at whiffs on the wind  
bark at dark deep holes, roll incessantly  
in cow paddies and dust, smiling.  
And sitting by the steps back home  
will lick its lips beat its tail,  
quivering for a treat  
from my infinite pocket.

**Marjorie Bruhmuller**

### **Word collage #1**

Buoyed by liquor and barefoot  
In the ecstatic haze of pre-dawn rain and soot,  
You're grey and green and  
I'm the garden in the Fall  
and your apple shines.  
Driftwood rickshaw rubs over frozenmud  
and cellar lamps throw shadows like spilled blood.

### **Word collage #2**

Having sought not found, or lost never having possessed,  
Discovered that which we hoped to leave at rest:  
Snow seemed lighter than  
air, from streets blowing quiet  
up beyond treetops.  
Birch trunks disappearing among gusts, white on white colourlessly aligning.  
And we float upwards, blown here and there lightly, occasionally colliding.

**Sam Solomon**

## The Crossing

I cross the threshold.

It's been ages - ages since I've felt  
this weight. The smell alone is enough  
to slip me back in amongst stale strips  
of a past that slink along the baseboards.  
They wind themselves around my feet,  
compelling me to move forward.

If not for them, the warm breath  
of the spring wind would have surely  
seduced me. I leave its tender caresses  
behind and sidle into hundreds of years  
of tradition. I'm careful to stay out of view.  
I wouldn't want to startle it. I grow cold with  
the thought that perhaps it already knows I'm here.

I cautiously pick my way through the laughter.  
I'm dangerously close to being within arm's reach  
of a smile. Finally out of striking distance, my back  
hugs the wall in relief. The pretensions around me  
shift uneasily at the presence of this stranger in their midst.  
I pretend to be fascinated with the architecture of the ceiling.  
I can hear the sky on the other side.

The heavy doors are shut, as if they are afraid of  
the giant beast escaping. I smile faintly as I imagine  
the very marrow of the bones of this place leeching into the  
sweet, damp earth. The air twitches in irritation, my cheeks  
flushing with the reprimand. The salty steam of burning  
rises up and beads upon my forehead. "It's hellfire,"  
the foundation groans.

I would like to argue this point. I want to wrap strands  
of the light pulsating against the back of my eyes  
around the throat  
of what's choking me  
and choke it back.  
Instead I let them ease mealy words into my mouth.  
I hold them until they're not looking and spit them out.

Minutes drag their nails across my skin.  
Pull me up.  
Push me down.  
But eventually I taste the last tenuous strains of the organ.  
The doors open as the beast is pushed to the back to let the keepers out.  
I can hear it writhing with discontent.  
But there's nothing I can do.

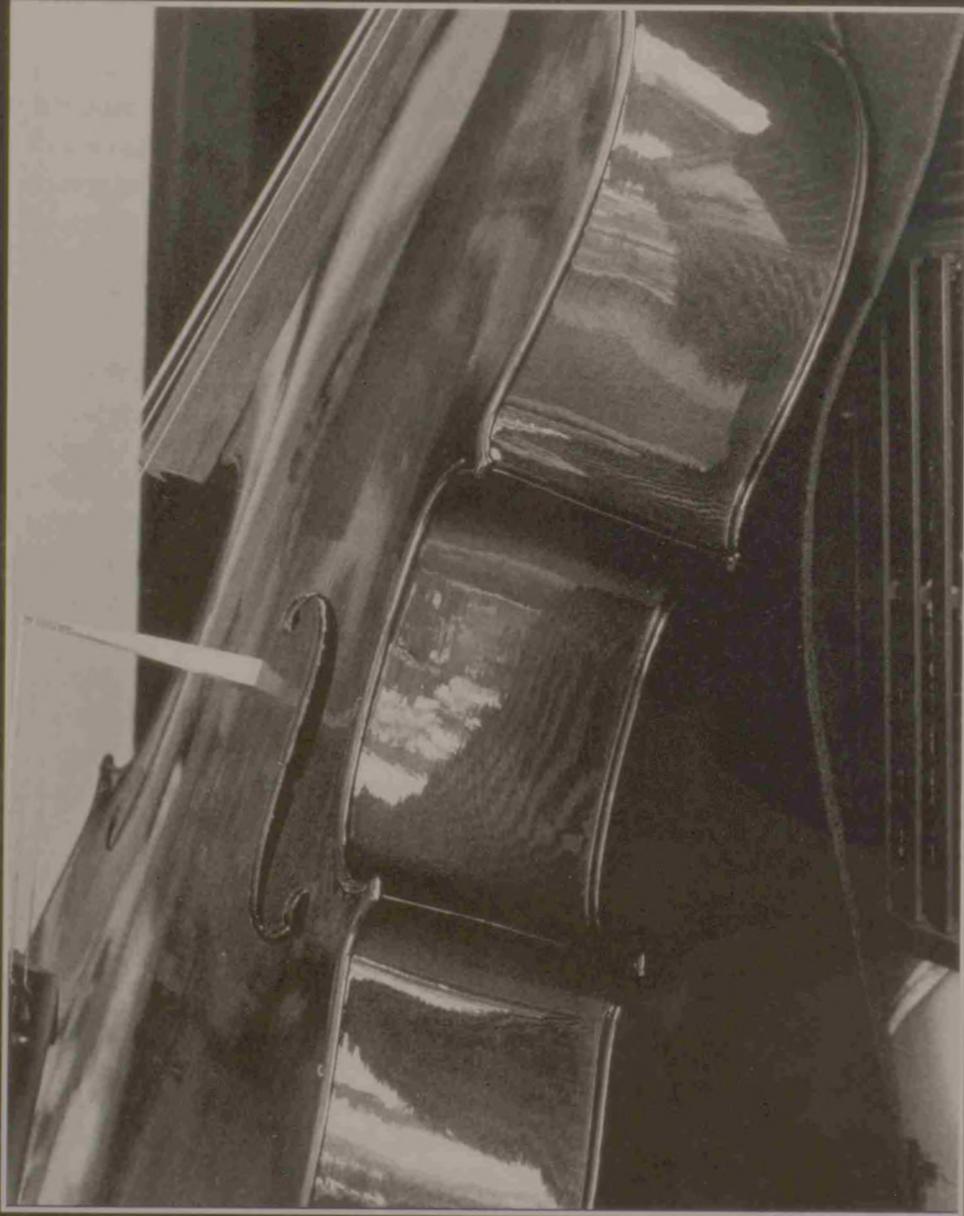
Outside again.  
I shake the dust of inertia off of my wings  
and stretch them in gratitude. Again amongst  
the warmth of green and the cool of blue, I look  
back upon the shards of my past  
scattered across the threshold.  
Perhaps it's just as well.

Ah, my faith.

You're too hard to hold.

And too incomplete to let go.

Kayla Webster



Cello - Kate Jabalee

### Me, the number

I am invisible,  
Reading and writing,  
Watching and playing,  
All because of  
The number  
I was given.

To be a part of this equation  
That will result in a passage  
Into the next equation.  
Forever free to watch  
And sing  
By myself.

Every digit decreases your chances  
Of finding me.  
Like the superheroes,  
I can walk among  
The masses,  
Hiding my superpower.

All because of  
The number  
I was given.

2030910

### The Conception of the Universe

so  
this is how we all began

not in an idealized confluence  
of celestial bodies

inexorably drawn closer by  
colliding gravities,  
overlapping electromagnetic fields,  
the appearance of order among chaos,

but in an unspectacular nova  
of lusty recycled parts.

and,  
not willing to surrender,  
or perhaps not able to,  
we push ever outwards

hoping to see out of the corners of our eyes  
the comet trail of a transcendental spark,  
the hint of an escape  
from the universe's inviolable truth:

we are doomed always to return  
to whence we began.

Sam Solomon

## Ireland the Free? ( A Dialogue Poem)

Part A: I am an Irish man

I know our cultures  
and our ways  
I know our past  
of Pierce and Connolly  
and Easter Rising  
1917  
I grew up in  
Dublin town and  
Was raised beneath  
the green flag of Eire.  
Raised to hate  
the damned Protestants!  
They don't know what  
it's like for our people  
Hunted by the  
Ulster Constabulary  
The South versus  
the North.  
Armored cars  
Won't make me run  
I will not leave my  
home for them,  
We've survived worse  
The Orangemen are fools  
Alcoholics  
Always drinking their Bushmill's.  
I hope they all die:  
A car bomb up  
In Belfast city  
Click  
---  
Click  
---  
Bomb!

Part B: I am an Irish man

I know our cultures  
and our ways  
I know our past  
of William of Orange  
and the great battle  
of the Boyne  
I grew up in  
Belfast City and  
Was raised beneath  
the Red Hand of Ulster  
Raised to hate  
the fucking Catholics!  
They don't know what  
it's like for our people  
Hunted by the  
Irish Republic Army  
The North versus  
the South.  
Your Armalities  
Scare me not  
I will not leave my  
home for them,  
We've survived worse  
The Southerner's are bastards  
Alcoholics  
Always drinking their Jameson's  
I hope they all die:  
A car bomb up  
Down in Dublin town  
---  
Click  
---  
Click  
Boom!

J. Coplen Rose

## The Sky is Quilted

A random design  
of hillocks and valleys  
pillows and billows  
horizontal bands  
pulled  
to strong diagonals  
of whites and greys  
blue close to the horizon  
stitches tiny as raindrops  
quilted sky  
steadily pulled  
west to east  
west to east  
heading out to sea  
to be fluffed once  
with a snap, a flap  
then left to fall gently  
on the old grey sea  
tucked in at the edges  
'round the briny deep  
for a long winter's sleep

Janice LaDuke

## Kissing Eyes

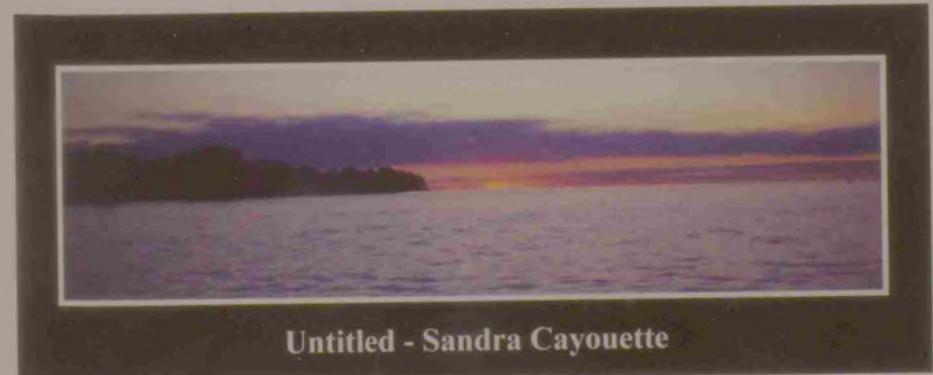
A woman of much passing grace,  
Implied my eyes,  
Did linger on her face.  
I asked her how,  
She might know this,  
Unless my face her eyes did subtly kiss.

Benjamin Oomen

## I'm in English

Perceived plague of writer's ail  
The clock ticks [tic toc tic toc tic toc]  
**Sudden surge of**  
Pretentious pen  
Juxtaposed with  
Sun's morning state  
A **seventies something...**  
Visions of limitations  
**To Secretarial streams**  
The Paper shredder  
**HUMMING**  
Eating my dreams

Catherine Swann



Untitled - Sandra Cayouette



**We are All of One Blood - Andrea Robertsdotter**

### **Much More than a Lady**

She rides for honour  
The embodiment of virtue  
Valour and bravery shining in her eyes  
She will change the world  
Rewriting history  
Adding a feminine touch  
Kings have dominated  
Queens at their side  
The true masters behind masculinity  
But no longer will she stand reserved  
The product of a painter's hand  
She is not the creation of a man's brush  
Today she will make her stand  
Long locks of golden blond  
Taken by the wind  
Guiding her to destiny  
Through the people's land  
She knows what it is to suffer  
Behind a crown of cruelty  
The burdens of one man's greed  
Has sent her on this journey  
She is naked to all eyes  
All flaws and perfections exposed  
But no one dare gaze upon her  
Temptations washed away  
Galloping in her kingdom

Pride resounding in her wake  
Strength is much more than muscle  
Dignity that no man can take  
No saddle  
No reins  
No garments  
She travels alone unclad  
Possessing a love for her people  
That no king ever had  
Sacrificing herself  
To all of nature's glory  
She rides in the name of justice  
Knowing few would remember her story  
Freedom has taken hold of her  
A soul that cannot be tamed  
Nothing can break her spirit  
Nothing can bring her shame  
Damsel, she never was  
Warrior, she will become

Her quest needs no armour  
She alone protects herself  
The heroine of her own legend  
A heart that no man could claim  
As smooth and pure as chocolate  
Godiva is her name

**Hilary Atkinson**

## Learning the Colour Green (for Emily Carr)

(i)

You vaulted  
high and thin into clouds  
far away from your suffering  
and in thick mists  
wandered the rain forest.  
You painted the wind-  
in wide pine branches  
twirling arms of redwood,  
streaked the rough canvas  
wild green and dirt brown, black and white  
gleaned the message of ancient peoples  
from the wreckage of the totems  
off-kilter in a jumble of weeds.

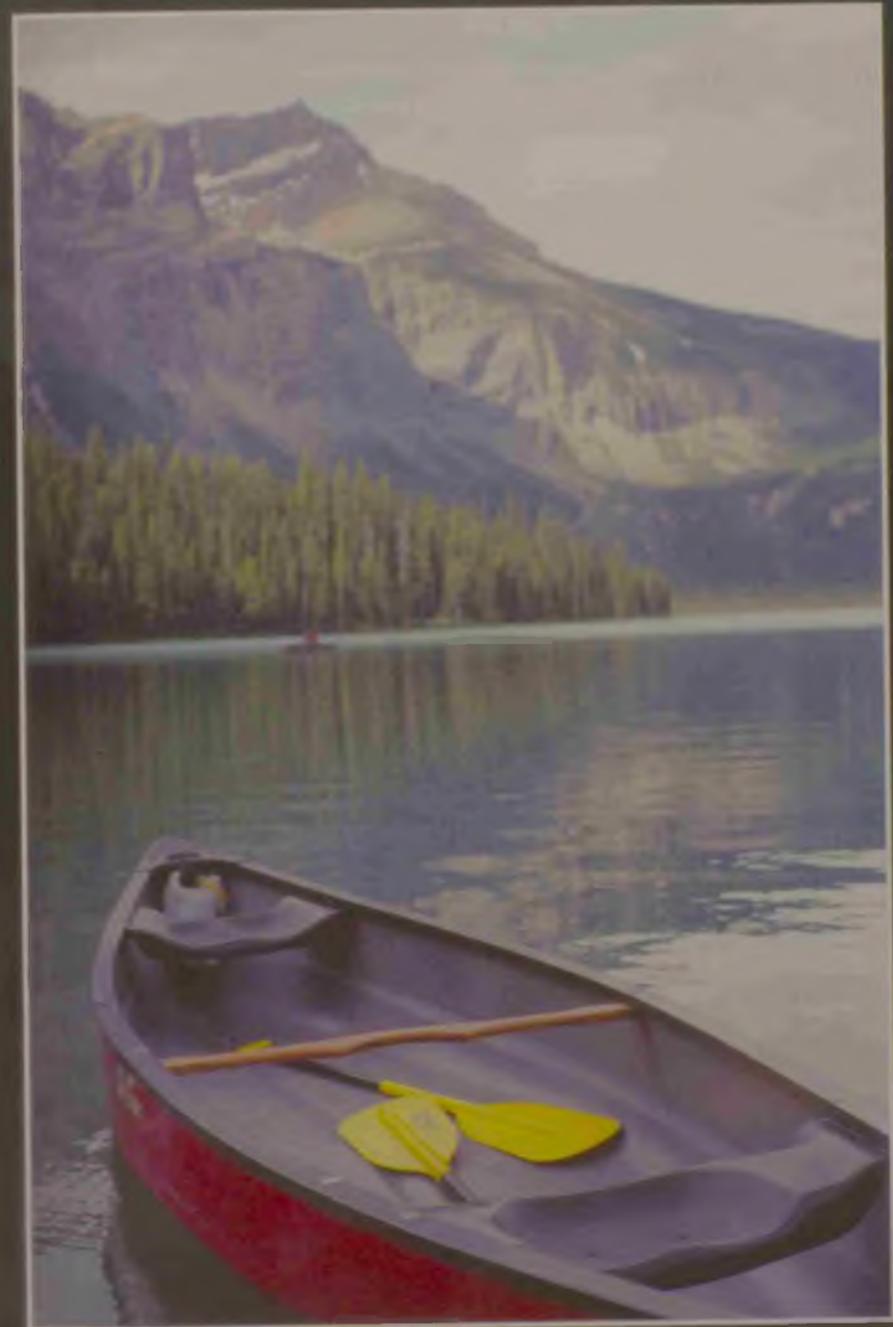
(ii)

You haven't much time to hold  
this other world in your hand  
a glimpse-  
to set every needle in motion  
send each long trunk  
into heaven-lift the scent  
from the air into colour-  
but when you traipse home, lean the fresh  
canvas across the sink in the trailer  
the oil seeping in  
you sense you have captured  
what only trees know  
and sky-  
you carry the ghost  
of the Haida in your step.  
Cats circle your ankles  
and time stands as still  
as wind in the valley will let it.

(iii)

I would have been your apprentice  
struggled over logs, waded through  
streams  
juggled your paint-box and easel,  
watched at a respectful distance  
as you disappeared under a low beach  
canopy  
to sketch round hairy nuts  
clustered like heads in the saber-tipped  
leaves,  
would have followed your bowed head  
beneath branches  
as you tracked the solid pad of cougar  
or bob-cat  
would have caught up to you-lying flat  
out in a clearing  
measuring the height of the sky  
the weight of clouds, listening to gravity  
and learning the colour green.  
I would have kept silent  
while you read the wind's lips  
hummed out of tune,  
would have been content  
to be as invisible  
as the eagle's shadow  
through the leaves-  
could have held a piece  
of all the silence  
that has been lost.

Marjorie Bruhmuller



Canoe - Kate Jabalee

## Saint Beatrice: Virgin Martyr of the first Christian Centuries

I was just a child then. I suppose I will forever be a child, for death puts an end to one's growing. I may even have been beautiful, but that wasn't important to me then, and it certainly makes no difference now.

I took orders very young, possibly against my will, for death makes you forget much. I cannot even remember if I had begun my monthly bleeding yet. I was a quiet girl, obedient and studious. My family was poor and my mother fecund, so I was the obvious choice to send to the convent. I had a brother who entered the priesthood as well, but I've forgotten his name. I barely remember my own. Was it Clara, Elizabeth, Beatrice, Josephine? Yes, I have forgotten. That doesn't matter now either.

At the nunnery I no longer saw my parents or my siblings. The sisters became my family, but I still pined after my natural relations. There was not much in the way of warmth among the inmates and many was the night I cried myself to sleep on the hard palette in my small cell. I especially missed my puppy and the cat that kept the mice from the grain. The mother superior would not let me befriend the convent cats. She was a mother in name only, possessing little of any milk of human kindness for me and the other young initiates.

Eventually I fell into the routines of the convent and got used to the bad food, the lack of sleep, being woken up at all hours to troop down to the chapel in bare feet on the freezing stone floor. As I said, I was a quiet girl and my silence must have been taken for piety. I started spending much time alone in the chapel meditating, remembering carefree afternoons with my sisters, my lips moving silently as I mouthed the songs we sang together. My rosary reminded me of a necklace my older sister had given me but my vow of poverty prevented me from now owning, and I would finger it as I knelt and dreamt of lost freedom.

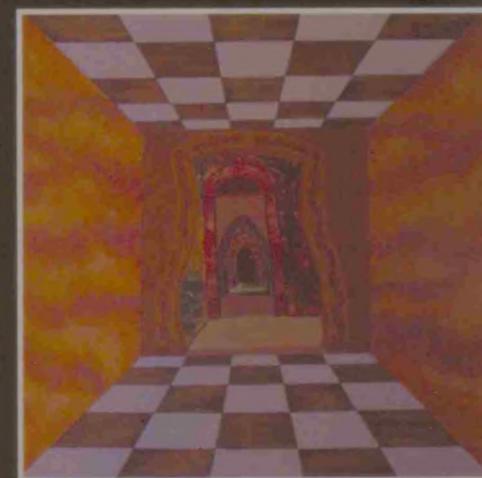
Everything changed when the war broke out. The bad food got worse, there were no new habits and small clothes to replace the ones I was rapidly growing out of, and suddenly we nuns were required to turn our cloisters into hospital rooms. The little joy I took in my privacy was set aside for a shared cell with one of my fellows. We girls learned how to clean wounds, to sew severed skin together, to bandage and,

on occasion, to amputate. The work disgusted me, but I said nothing as always, and the soldier patients found my manner and my silent stolidness reassuring. They would even ask for me by name, the name I have since forgotten. This did not go unnoticed by the priest and the mother superior.

Then one day our makeshift hospital itself was attacked by the enemy. We were dragged outside into the smoke-filled yard as our convent was set to the torch. The soldiers, boisterous in their conquering mania, did not care that we were servants of God, but proceeded to have their way with the sisters. I was sickened by what I saw, more so even than when I had sawed off a festering leg, as I watched my cell mate stripped naked and raped by an armed man. Her screams cut deeper than the bone saw, her tears more draining than the blood that spurted out of his arteries, and when it was my turn I would not yield, but seized my would-be rapist's weapon and slashed my own throat, hoping for a quick oblivion that would end my adolescent suffering. Alas, my death did indeed end the lustful violence, but the mother superior quickly canted my own life blood as it spilled from my wound. My broken body was spirited away and I was declared a saint, for I had died a martyr, defending my chastity as Christ's virgin bride.

There is not much left to tell. My bones now lie in a glass case beneath this altar, clad in silken raiment. Pieces of my crushed skull are hidden inside a beautiful wax head, the rest are in a bag hanging around my spine and resting inside my empty rib cage. Golden locks the like of which I never possessed in life adorn this effigy, golden mesh gloves encase my skeletal hands, and a bottle decorated with a cross guards the dried blood that flowed from my corpse. I cannot sleep, I cannot leave. There is no rest and there is no exit.

Eleanor Gang



Untitled - Cara Said



Toit de Paris-Night - Frederic Veilleux

### Montreal is Suicide

One Sunday afternoon  
I stood in the shadow of la Croix de Montreal  
and got the scent all over me. I fell down the  
mountainside and wandered the streets. I queried a  
Haitian cab driver with a PhD about the perpetual  
state of death in this city. He grinned, nodding  
understandingly in the rear-view. I heard a  
French-chanting rout marching down through the  
streets. Unconsciously I grabbed for my neck and  
swallowed hard, but it was only a Union parade. I  
waited outside your window but you never came. The  
freeways are eroding to ash and I wonder who's in  
charge here exactly. I tried to evince the song of the  
city coming out of sleep in Spring but you never heard.  
Supine I fell gracelessly on your checkered floor;  
Eighteen months ago you played the voyeur. There's a  
spark because I saw you watch me when you knew  
I was sleeping I was not. I wretched as I was  
leaving; the city is yours.

James Hatch

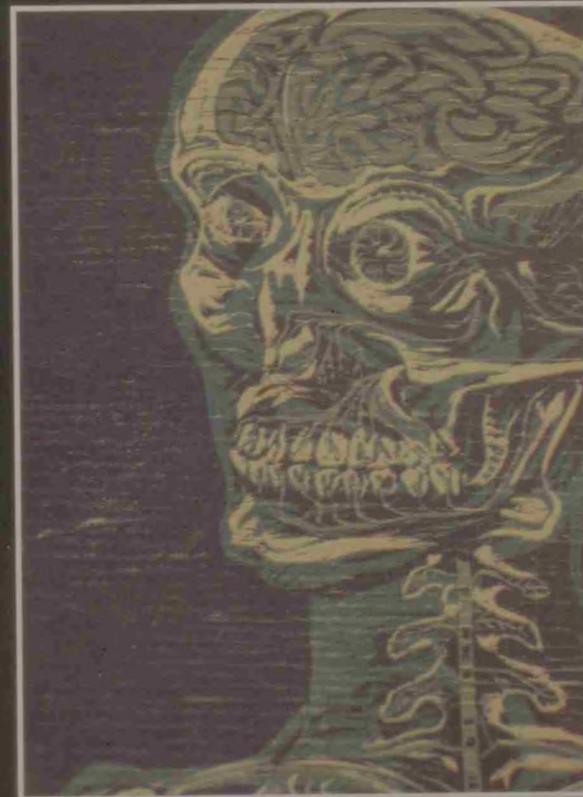
## To Wax and Wane

Picture a man. He is an ordinary man. He does not move. There is nothing special about him. He exists in space and time and there is not much more to say about him. He could be described, but to what purpose? Everyone has seen ordinary men and has their own perception of what one looks like. To characterize this one in particular would be to discredit his mundaneness for some. Thus, he remains what you think him to be, though, rest assured he does physically exist in this instant. He does not think for there is no time to think in an instant. He exists.

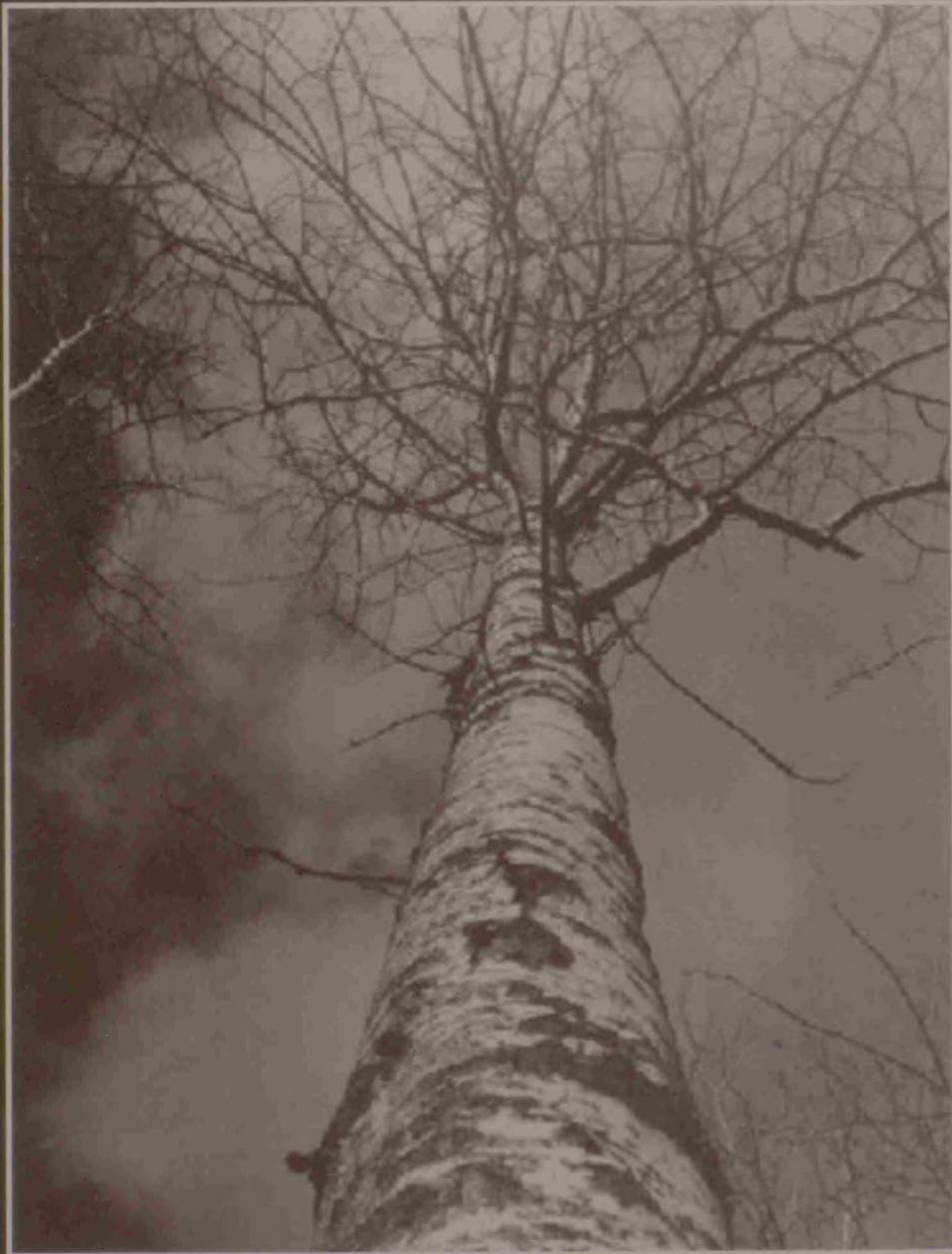
There is something odd about him. If asked, one would be hard pressed to put their finger on exactly what that something is. If one were particularly observant, which few in this age are, they may notice that he looks a bit droopy like a wax figurine on the mantelpiece of a dancing fireplace or a stock trader who has just found out that what he paid thousands for last week is now worth merely pennies. To look upon such a face is deeply disconcerting because it arouses within our own minds a form of distress; not the kind that causes one to run to the nearest exit, but the kind that makes one turn on the TV for some anesthetizing distraction. Escapism. Run away, flee from the culprit, the scene of the deed, turn the stereo up to block out the thought.

Pallid he sits, a waxen man in a freshly lit world from which there is no escape. His only recourse is to bend over and blow out the flame. If only he would look down and see it burning his feet.

Samuel Janzen



What Am I? - Wes Colclough



Untitled - Erin Wallace

### second story

What to do about the son who clings  
remembers when night falls how Achilles  
in that movie leapt into the air  
found his challenger's throat and sliced it open  
or that ogre two movies ago  
that rose from the slime full born and inviolable  
or the one—what about—with the man who had  
sharpened blades of steel instead of teeth. He says  
they are all outside his second story window  
in the middle of this land, which rises and falls  
like the breath of some sleepy, ruminating mammal  
close your eyes, I tell him, imagine our home in daylight, the  
ducks in the pond, the smell of hay in the sun, listen  
to the peepers remembering when they were birds.  
Sometimes, he says, I am even afraid to breathe.  
And what makes us safe and what makes a home  
and what lies beneath the monsters that would  
consume him without my protection despite the noise  
of my pages turning, my water drunk volubly from just across  
the hall?

A week ago I meandered again the floodplains of my childhood  
swatting clouds of insects, sucking my feet out of silt,  
walking through gullies of cool air that held the same sudden  
surprise as springs in a pond or lake, trusting my body to remember  
its way through red pine, maidenhair, violet, buttercup, dogwood,  
indian pipe to the bank of the lazy river where I had found refuge  
from the thrumming ache of home by immersion  
in the muddy chatter of that fecund place.

It was dusk when I decided to turn back, only to discover a small  
tremor of dread fluttering in my chest as the dark of return  
revealed itself as unknown. I am grateful my body learned so well  
to intuit escape. But for my son, I wish it could recognize home  
and then, the way there.

Ann Scowcroft

recognition

the lines are traced,  
contours drawn,  
a silhouette sure to shock  
and frighten  
everyone.

with the first stroke,  
a scar vanishes  
pigment absorbed  
by her flesh.  
seeping in,  
spreading out,  
releasing her.

with each dab  
the brush removes  
the stains, smudges,  
and the smears.  
undressing,  
unraveling,  
revealing her.

swathing canvas speaks  
her name, her truth,  
her certainty.  
and I see -  
oh, I see her!

the paint bleeds  
and overflows  
those sharp edges  
once imagined.  
flooding the frame,  
erasing her shame.

but never mine.  
I stared.  
I wondered.  
I understood.  
I saw the scar first.

Vanessa Liston



Heather Sinnot - Elongated Woman

Mid Winter (for my mother)

it is mid winter  
the dawn lines the street  
with flickering white patches  
my eyes mistake as snow;

then:  
early sounds of radios, car horns, babies.

it is still dark here  
but  
you are shoveling the days  
light from your driveway  
cutting out the ice  
from underneath the wheels  
to drive  
to market.

i feel the gloves  
on your hands  
grip the shovel

as the whitened silence  
crunches  
under your shoulders  
the spray,  
a foamy breath  
in the stinging air.

silently you work  
at what the night  
has rained down  
around the house;

silently,  
a path is made.

4:08 p.m. - Friday, Nov. 18, 2005

Swirling ominous clouds,  
raining white sparks  
upon the  
not-quite-frozen  
earth.

Unable to shirk this numbing  
sense of solitude,  
of wavering resolve to  
keep going;

it all seems so unreal  
compared to my dreams.

My interactions are superfluous,  
my actions are inconsequential,  
my thoughts are cyclical  
and my heart is weakened.

I feel so separate from my reality,  
as if I weren't really here.

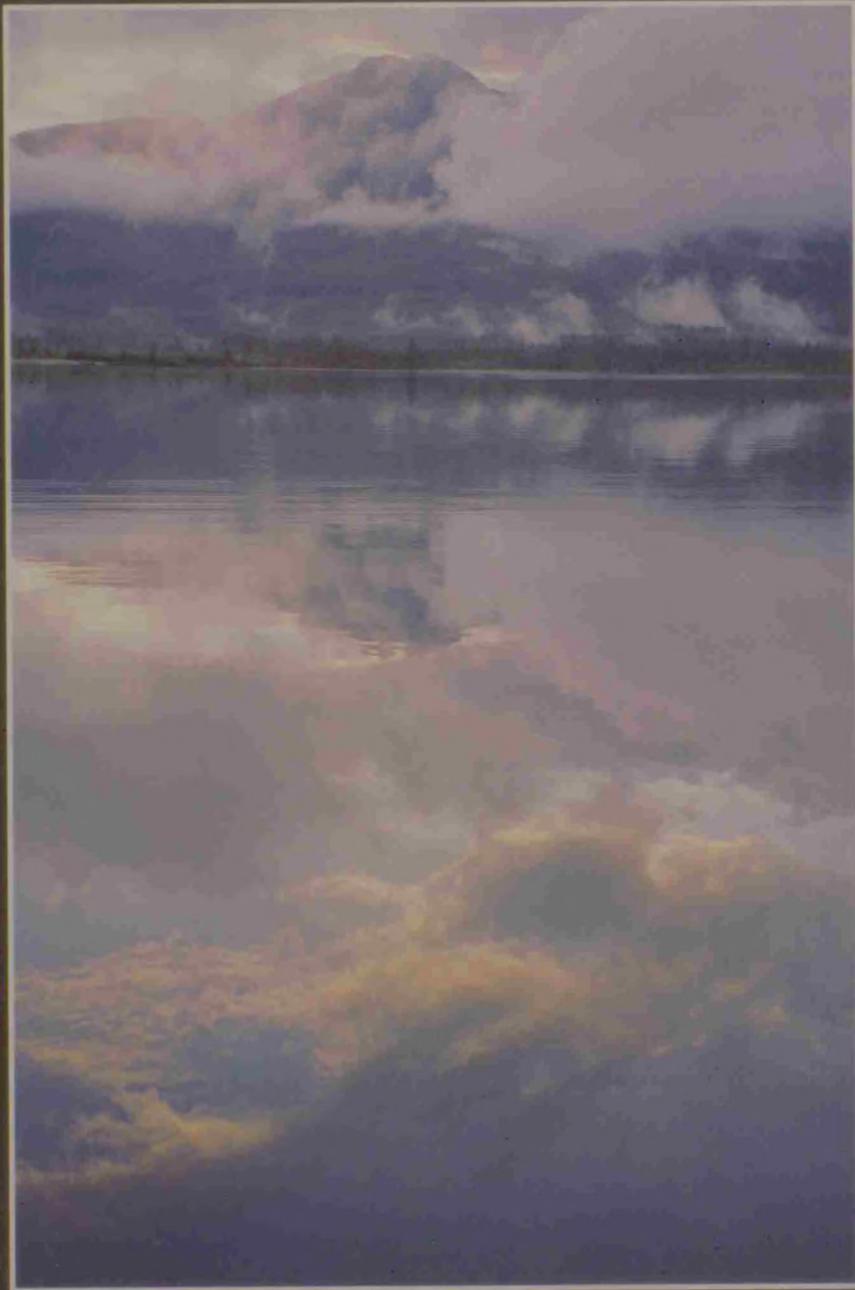
If you stare at me long enough,  
I just might vanish.

It is a cold wind blowing tonight,  
so wrap yourself up tight.

Veils of illusion abound  
and I am  
frozen where I stand...

Noni Howard

Mike Folkerson



Vanilla Sky, Pyramid Lake - Kate Jabalee

## The Train

When I'm halfway across the earth, all the way to the sea and looking out past the edge toward Britain, I hear the whistle's call and think of you.

I hear the iron rattling - the rhythmic cacophony of a freight train - and I see your bright eyes and think of the times we spent laying alone in beds or on floors; admiring the amazing perfection of the world, and life, and ourselves; dull and rounded and frozen - frozen stiff and frightened while existence rumbled on down the tracks around a bend in the trees and out of our lives.

The train was our thundering reminder of what was normal in life; what was dependable. We slept ten metres from the tracks and every night at four a.m. we held each other close as the steel barreled down them. We whispered assurances to each other that seemed to shrink in comparison to the assurance of the train - a rule like gravity or time; something to depend on and lean against and hide behind.

But life ran off its tracks - ran off into the trees, and we couldn't bring it back.

Suddenly it's four a.m., and we're alone, and the hum of the freights makes us feel more alone than we've ever been. The grinding of the brakes through the night air makes us wish they were stopping for us, and we could jump on, and rumble out of this town and this life, into something more me, and more you, and more . . . hopeful. Always something hopeful 'round the bend; through the next break in the trees; over the next bridge; past the next city. Always a better group of buildings; a better group of trees; a greener patch of grass.

It's never there.

And now, as life rolls off the tracks - a ghost train - through the forest and between trees; away from this town - the river rolls. The roar of the water over the eighteen wheelers on the bridge throws a mockery to the thunderclap and call of the trains on the rail: the whistle in the night; and your breath, a steam train, fighting at my neck.

M.G. McIntyre

## Movement

The pulse and shimmer of undetectable, ecstatic motion  
reverberates in every footstep, every glance of blinking, lash-ed eyes,  
every turn, every tremor of laughter on the lips and air,  
And in every moment of stillness.  
Moving our bodies among the greater and the lesser,  
Forward but never ahead,  
Towards life... and death.

Miles and hours pass, accumulate but  
Move us not.  
Whirling, twirling minds crank and hum like machines,  
Carrying electric flashes of small things  
(of all things)  
said and done before.  
Flashes of thoughts;  
Flashes of not.

Lethargic and trance-like, brought to tears or laughter,  
Boredom or glee,  
Feeling not.  
Even among the soft extremes  
and extensive shadings in between.

Floundering and weary our movements move on;  
Eluding and receding  
Until the sticks and stones know more of movement  
and being moved,  
than we.  
Ours, that seemed so simple once, has not only moved on,  
It's gone.

Sally Bourque



Untitled - Andrea Robertsdotter

Jason was beginning to fear that he was the main character of the story, and the title was far from promising. He was at that moment walking up a driveway towards the house of a man who he knew only vaguely in the company of a friend he came to dislike more each paragraph. The house was brilliantly alight, the yellow glow of electric bulbs spilling forth from every window into the cool darkness of the evening street. The light failed to dispel the gloom around him, and Jason could barely see the street in front of him. He followed it by vague intuition and half glimpses from the corner of his eye. A chill breeze blew down the silent street, and despite the presence of Sophie, Jason felt alone as he shivered in the cold. Jason turned to Sophie.

"What if... what if I'm the main character? I mean, just look at the title. It doesn't exactly sound like the feel good story of the year, you know what I mean?" He chuckled nervously. Sophie sneered, her elaborately painted face loosing some of its plastic beauty in the ugly expression.

"God Jay, you're so conceited. Just look at all the people in there. Any of them could be the main character. Why on earth would it be you?" Jason supposed she was right, and tried to shake off the feeling of foreboding that had sunk in. He knocked on the door. It was opened by a bleary eyed young man in cut off jeans and a sleeveless t-shirt. His mouth hung slightly open, and he looked around blankly for a second, then turned back inside without a word. Jason followed him into the house, hitching his shoulders nervously as he stepped over the threshold into the heat and noise within.

The living room was a mass of sweating bodies, twisting and grinding in crude pantomime of copulation to the pounding beat of the stereo. The smell was a heady mix of booze and sweat, laced with smoke both legal and otherwise. Jason edged his way through the living room into the kitchen. The counters were covered in liquor bottles of every shape and description, reminding Jason obscurely of pill bottles, lined up on a pharmacy shelf. Sophie deposited her own bottle of Vodka on the counter, and found a pair of shot glasses in the sink. She poured the Vodka into the glasses, and offered one to Jason. He accepted it with a sliver of trepidation. They gulped them down, and Jason shivered as it burned down his throat. Sophie smiled at him, and tossed her shot glass idly onto the counter.

"Come on, Jay, lets dance." He pictured the room full of gyrating bodies, and the idea of being one of them quietly repulsed him. He nodded agreement. They re-entered the living room. The music obliterated any chance of conversation, the base vibrating through the floor, the inarticulate voice of the dancing figures. They found a less crowded area, and immediately Sophie threw herself into the pounding beat. She pushed herself against Jason, grinding her crotch against his, undulating and twisting her body in a parody of desire. He tried to respond appropriately, floundering through his sketchy knowledge of dancing, his breathing rapid and shallow. The feel of Sophie's body against him elicited contradictory emotions in him. They weren't dating. Sophie was currently seeing an older boy whom Jason loathed. Despite this, the feel of her body caused a surge of desire, a knot of helpless wanting clenched in his chest. As inevitably as a brick is pulled down by the mass of the earth, the mass of hormones pulled that knot of desire from his chest down to his groin, as Sophie rubbed her body against him. Shame filled him at this physical reaction, and an obscure guilt. He turned away, yelling behind him that he had to go to the bathroom. He wasn't sure if she heard, but she nodded, and he stumbled out of the living room, trying to conceal the bulge in the crotch of his jeans. He found the bathroom upstairs more by luck than by design, and sat on the lowered toilet seat, his heart pounding in his ears, waiting for his erection to subside. He rested his face in his hands, breathing deeply. Slowly his body



Untitled - Cara Said

subsided, although the flushed feeling didn't entirely leave his skin. He paused for a moment at the bathroom door, stealing himself to leave the brightly lit, tranquil porcelain refuge, then opened the door back into the dim and upstairs hall, with music and shouted voices floating up from below.

He paused for a moment and inspected the hallway in which he found himself now. Further down the hall, enshrouded in the dim half-light two figures stood, entwined in each other's arms and mouths. The world outside was forgotten in their lust, their universe consisting of each other's bodies. Jason felt a surge of jealousy spike up from the pit of his stomach. He envied them the clarity of their passion. He tore himself away, and descended the stairs once more into lights and noise.

He peered into the living room, and located Sophie. She had, in his brief absence, managed to find a new dance partner. She was writhing against him with as much enthusiasm as she had displayed with Jason such a short time ago, real and feigned desire mixing to the point where Jason couldn't tell the difference. He wondered if Sophie herself could. His enthusiasm for dancing, what little there had ever been, was totally gone. He wandered through the kitchen, pouring himself a drink from a bottle selected at random from the counter. It tasted vile, and made him shudder with distaste, but it burned a line of fire down his throat and into his stomach, an expanding flame that made him cough weakly and exalt in the rush of sensation. He poured himself another, drank hurriedly, and passed into the next room.

The floor was carpeted in soft beige and the walls were a matching light peach color. On the two couches arranged at right angles to each other sprawled a number of young men. A door onto the back patio stood open against the far wall. In the middle of the room, a young woman sat on a low coffee table. Her tank top was scrunched in a heap beside her on the table, leaving her upper body bare, from the delicate line of her throat, down over the swell of her breasts where the pink nipples stood erect, from desire or the cold air that blew in from the open door, down to the where the soft curve of her stomach stood out slightly over her jeans.

As Jason looked at her, he felt the desire stir within him once again, stronger than ever before. It was a revelation, setting his limbs tingling and his chest tighten, while his thoughts whirled. And yet the true revelation seemed just out of reach, a fingers length away. There seemed to be more, so much more, such clarity and pleasure, just out of reach. He wished that he could drink in the sight, go beyond the spectacle of photons impacting his eyes, and touch the source of his lust. His eyes then traveled upward to her face. She was grinning and laughing at something one of the boys had said, and her eyes were glassy with alcohol. She preened under the attention of the dozen eyes fixed upon her, the center of attention. She bent her back, thrusting out her chest to display her young body to best advantage. Beneath that, Jason couldn't help but see the desperation in her eyes. He shifted his gaze to those who watched her. They were engaged in conversation with her and with each other, more than one of them with legs crossed in calculatedly casual fashion. And there was a hunger in their eyes, and in the way they leaned towards the anonymous girl in the middle of the room, a hunger that was frightening in its impersonal intensity. Jason knew his own face had worn the same expression mere minutes earlier.

One of the boys got up and staggered towards the kitchen, empty glass in hand. As he passed by Jason he leaned towards him, and whispered drunkenly in his ear.

"Hey man, you should stick around. This chick is crazy. Get a couple more drinks into her, she'll

take it all off. Have a look at that ass, man, wouldn't you love to get a closer look at that?" He winked in a grotesque camaraderie, but Jason knew that, grotesque or not, the camaraderie was there. He shuddered and pushed his way past the young man, headed for the door outside.

"You don't know what you're missing, man!" Jason ignored him and stepped out onto the patio. He exhaled heavily, and let the cool night air caress his skin. He looked out into the darkness, what seemed an endless expanse of undifferentiated blackness. The light breeze helped cool his flushed skin. Jason had never felt so lonely. He remembered what he had thought on arriving. What if he was the main character? Had the author bothered filling in the details of the other characters? Where they like him, did they feel the same confusions and fears, or were they just cardboard cutouts, each selected to play its one tiny role and then shuffle off stage? Were any of them real? The darkness seemed to close around him, and he shook with the cold, and with his newfound fear. He had no way of knowing. He could never know what went on in their minds, why they did what they did. The darkness seemed absolute, a comforting certainty in its endless expanse, and he found himself leaning towards it. He closed his eyes, and focused on the numbness of the cold, on the lack of sensation that spread through his skin.

He heard the noise of footsteps approaching from the far side of the patio, but he didn't open his eyes. The footsteps stopped just in front of him. He could sense the person standing in front of him, the woman standing in front of him, for even in darkness her femininity was obvious, in her footsteps and the smell of her hair and light perfume. He stood for a moment, still shrouded in darkness, then opened his eyes reluctantly. As his eyes opened, the woman in front of him stepped closer to him and wrapped her arms around his back. Her head leaned close to him, and her lips found his, gripping them in a kiss. Her tongue pushed its way into his mouth, bringing with it the unfamiliar taste of her spit, sweet and foreign. For a moment he was too shocked to respond, standing still as a statue as she kissed him. Then he moved into her embrace, moving his own tongue against hers, one hand going to the back of head, the other encircling her waist, holding her against him. His skin burned with her touch, his eyes closed to cut out everything but her. He pulled his head back slightly, getting his first look at her.

"What's your name?" He asked softly.

"I remain nameless to reinforce the impersonal and transitory nature of our contact." Her voice had a musical cadence that set his heart beating faster again. She leaned forward and they embraced once more. He pressed his lips harder against hers and felt her respond. His hand around her waist moved over the expanse of stomach barred by her tank top, and exploring higher across the warmth of her skin. And then it was gone. It was as if the link between his mind and his body had been broken somewhere along its length. He still felt the warmth of her body, the feel of her tongue, the taste of her mouth, but it no longer meant anything. His hands were just rubbing against skin, collections of cells grown to sheathe the blood and bone beneath. Her tongue in his mouth seemed suddenly ridiculous, rather than desirable. The warmth of her body was no different from the warmth of a heating vent, it carried with it no thrill. His lust dried up, leaving him wrapped in a pointless flail of lips and tongues. He pulled back, out of the circle of her arms. He turned away slightly, ashamed.

"Look, I'm sorry. I mean, you, you're beautiful. But it doesn't..." He paused, searching for the word. "It doesn't mean anything. And it should. I'm sorry." He expected anger, but she nodded, as if in understanding. He turned away and went back through the open door. As he passed through, he glanced back at the topless girl sitting on the table. The sight did nothing for him. From her throat

where cords of muscle contracted to force saliva down her esophagus, to the twin lumps of fat which held her still dormant mammary glands, he saw only the flesh, and whatever it was past that that he had longed to touch was out of reach. He didn't want to be here. He hurried past to find Sophie again. He wanted to leave, and knew he had to tell her before disappearing. A numbness was filtering through him as he went. The people and noise around him started to seem more and more like a dream. As he entered the living room, he overheard two men leaning against the wall, drinks in hand.

"This story is like 3000 words, right?"

"Yeah, around that. Why?"

"Well, we're already at the 2288th word. What happens to use when the stories over?" There was a pause.

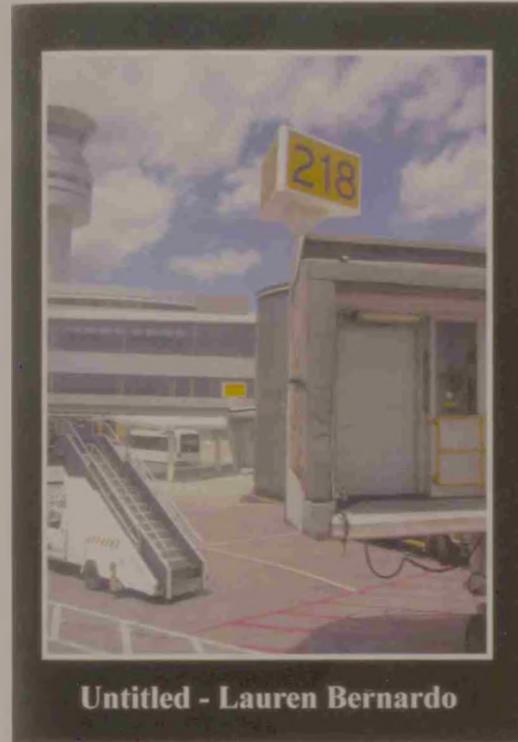
"Fuck" was the eventual reply. Jason stopped moving. What would happen to them? Once the story was over, would they all cease to be, dissolve into the formless creative soup from which they had been spawned? He shuddered as the implications of the innocuous conversation sank in. All around him, the idea was spreading through the crowd. He could see the ripples of fear that spread from it, disrupting the flow of dance and conversation and turning it to panicked, purposeless activity. He watched as around him the party dissolved into primal fear, under the imminent end of the world. He felt the fear as well, but he felt it through the numbness that had suffused him, and he felt more of a bone deep regret than any sense of panic. He watched with mild interest how the others reacted to the news. Some seemed filled with a directionless energy, moving swiftly back and forth, pacing and gesturing, anything to keep moving. Others seemed to lose all animation, falling in corners or on couches, weeping helplessly or just sitting and staring. A few even began dancing again, striving to lose themselves in the rhythm and each other. He saw Sophie among these, and turned away. He saw many couples slipping off together, to spend their last minutes surrendering to their biological urges, trying to pass on their genes in the time that remained. Jason felt none of these things. He turned and made his way back through the house onto the back porch. He looked out upon the darkness of which he would soon be a part. Then he looked around. She was still there, right where she had been when he had left. He turned to her.

"This story is ending soon. We won't be here much longer." She nodded, as if she had always known this. "Well, since it will be ending so soon, I wanted to ask you if..."

"You want to fuck me before the end of the world? Is that it? Don't want to die a virgin?" She smiled invitingly as she said this, with a teasing note in her voice. He shook his head.

"No. No. Nothing like that. I know we don't really know each other. But I would like to pretend... pretend we meant something to each other. That way, I wouldn't feel like I was facing this... alone." She nodded again, and he felt a surge of relief and joy at the understanding in that nod. He put an arm around her, and held her against him. The heat of her body brought no desire, but it comforted him. He closed his eyes, and tried to pretend he was in love with her, that they met the end together after sharing a life together. He leaned towards her and their lips met.

Ben Wald



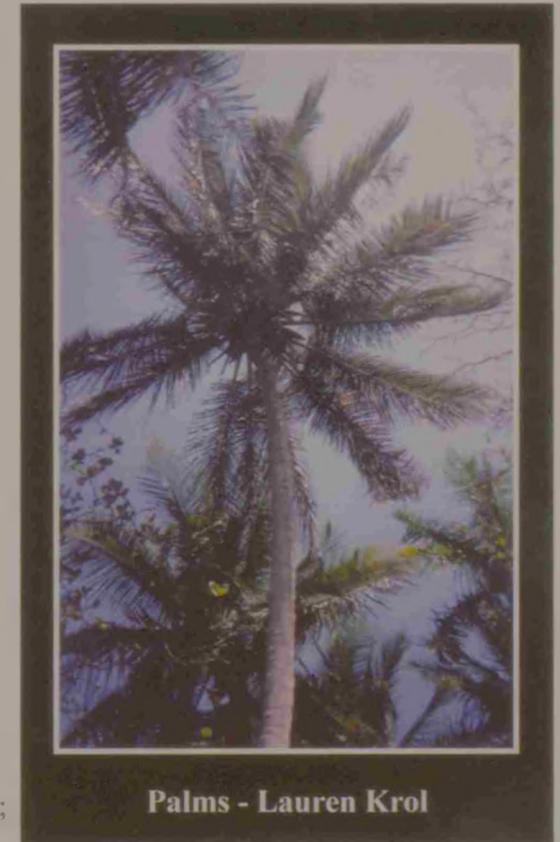
### Love, Long Gone Awry

Amidst a blanket, monochrome-bleak,  
Tidal waves crash a silver delta-sleep.  
Rings of phones rattle weary hearts,  
While sings of love time teases apart.

Tallow-traced lines envelop dreams (this shore);  
Five, thirty-one, and thirty more.  
So breathe, breathe it in my dear,  
For the day it comes, when to you I adhere.

(Beware the Picturesque!)

Tyler Burleigh



### L'histoire

Some stayed in bed with  
Peggy Trudeau during the  
autumn stasis of the FLQ.  
Somebody said (We don't  
remember who) 'let bleeding  
hearts bleed' and so we bled  
for her and only for her.

For months taper-lit silhouettes  
caught up in graceless linen  
and shag carpet. We hung down  
in basement bedrooms with  
pockets of antibiotics and  
petals from tulips, docile fingertips.  
We stole salt from her limbs, her  
torso, the unknowing vertices where limbs  
met torso. All this in Montreal  
upstairs. On Sussex St. underground.

Years later we combed  
through her autobiography  
for our names and when we  
found nothing, we grieved.

Years after we combed  
through the (very-much  
redundant) sequel to her  
autobiography, but there  
was no mention of us,  
and again we grieved.

**James Hatch**

### Untitled

&, driven half-mad, forward we trudge-  
& downward, too, in hordes we throng-  
the space between "when" and "never,"  
& swearing underneath that arch  
we think with our mouths opened  
but with our senses shut.

Fumbling around, a sea of sound &  
splinters swallows all,  
a storm raging on, a beginning without end.  
It is as though life loses track of "how" & "when,"  
& in a glass-eyed dream the truth is found  
complete.

&, patiently dousing all the lights,  
& the stars too, killing every one,  
we forget what we sought to ignore.  
With, lone victorious, oblivion-  
we curse with our lives opened  
but with our senses shut.

**Etienne Domingue**

### When I Pissed in the Water

When I pissed in the water,  
I never knew you would be mad.  
I been doing this since I was a baby.  
But it's true... never in front of a lady.

**Wesley Krauss**

## The Ocean

I'm standing on the edge of a cliff. It's grassy. It's not like the cliffs in movies or cartoons; it's not rock and it's not straight down - more like a steep hill than a ninety degree drop. I'm looking out over the ocean... the sea... whatever you want to call it. It's all just water to me.

Living by the Ocean my whole life, I never really appreciated how big it is until I spent some time inland - suffocating in dry, dusty air that sits all day like the air in my garage or the air in a Tupperware container that has nothing in it. Even solid objects have a hard time moving through it - it's more like Jell-O than air; thick and sweet and not something you really want in your lungs.

I'm looking out over this cliff; the water's down below. It's low tide so all the water's backed off the beach and the rocks and the sand are opened to the world and the sun, and light has a hard time reaching certain places in the rocks, making it look like some shadows are stronger than light. Some shadows don't leave, even with dawn. Even with fire, some shadows stay, like the shadows on the rocks that sleep under the water. Low tide brings the rocks out into the light and the clean ocean air. Sharp like ice water and salt water, they are hard and dark and dirty; not clean the way things that spend their existence in water ought to be.

The waves blew out a few hours ago, and I can taste the creeping dusk in the air, along with a rain that seems to be waiting just over the edge of the horizon. Earlier there was probably a pretty decent break off the point, and the high school kids with dark tans and sandals and family sedans drove in from their split entry suburban houses; beige, and brown, and brick, and images of doll houses their mothers owned when they were six and have always kept as the image of a proper house, even through the 70's and 80's when the art nouveau and post modern interior designers ravaged America with rounded edges and phallic furniture - those sun-beam clocks hang over their sinks and they look at them every morning, thinking of those doll houses and of the times they dreamt about what it would be like to own a house and own that same clock; and how different it turned out to be. How real, and terrible, and amazing, and sad, and how they still felt like they were living in doll houses; plastic people with glass eyes that roll back and close when you lay them down, and arms that only go up and down and not side to side.

The kids would have driven in from Colby South and Portland Hills and farther, listening to reggae and grunge and indie rock all the way in; to get to the beach and ride the waves off the point of Lawrencetown, into the Atlantic Ocean - tubes and pipes breaking off the one big rock; splitting into twos and threes, rolling along the beach and the sand, only to roll back into the ocean once more.

They probably had a good surf a few hours ago, but now it has blown out, and all that is left is the gentle lapping of small swells against the underwater rocks and sand as the ocean desperately grasps at land, as if it could be swept off into itself like a shipwrecked sailor who never learned to swim. The salt air and the breeze and the tall grass against my bare legs make me think of too many sailor songs, and I let my mind wander for a second before an arm brushing mine makes me remember I'm not alone, not even in the greatest sense of the word.

She's standing beside me and wearing a skirt that makes it seem she was made for it and not the other way around - that without her, the skirt would not exist and the threads that sacrificed themselves to make it would still be in the moth. She elbows me lightly and I look into her face and she smiles with her eyes and I see the sky reflected in them.

"So... what happened to us?" She asks this in the way a ten year old asks if a person of the opposite sex likes them - as if it's the furthest thing from their mind even if they've been staying up nights thinking about it for a month or a year or a week.

"I don't know... I think 'we' happened to us."

She laughs at my stupid joke, and looks down at the grass, then up and out over the water. She looks as if she were trying to see the edge of the world - the same way she used to look at me. I feel a tightness in my chest I try to ignore, and a lump in my throat that won't go away, and I open my mouth three times before I can form a word.

"I missed you."

She looks away from the Ocean, and into my eyes and as she turns into the sunlight she squints and tilts her head at an odd angle, giving me her lie detector eyes.

“I missed you too.” Her voice is a whisper, and the wind off the water carries it down the cliff and out into the waves to where the sun sinks below the edge, toward England and Ireland, and she’s still looking at me when I look away.

I think of how she looked that morning that seems so long ago when I said goodbye - and how she looked an hour ago when I said hello. I think of how much time I’ve spent thinking and not doing.

I think of her as a child and I wonder if her doll house was blue or white. I don’t know which, but I feel a desperate surety that it was one of the two. And I wonder if she’ll ever get a doll house of her own - plastic children with glass eyes that shut and roll back when you lay them down to bed, who can’t bend their arms side to side; only up and down.

For a brief moment I think about the doll house filled with GI Joes and the idea brings a smile to my thoughts, but I don’t laugh.

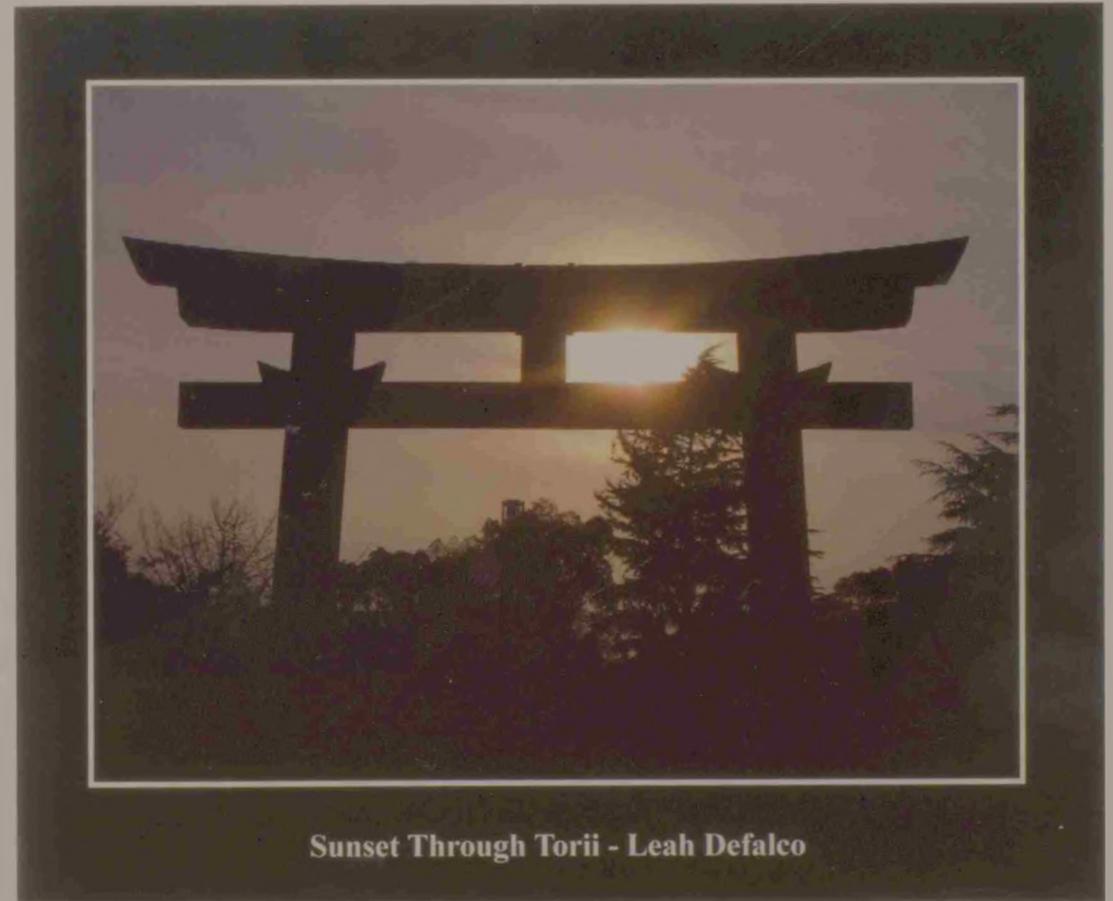
“I’m sorry.” My voice pleads forgiveness while my face drowns in her sorrow. Her face turns away from the ocean as mine does, and our eyes meet again, and I see her eyes filled with tears I know she’ll never cry.

“I know... me too.”

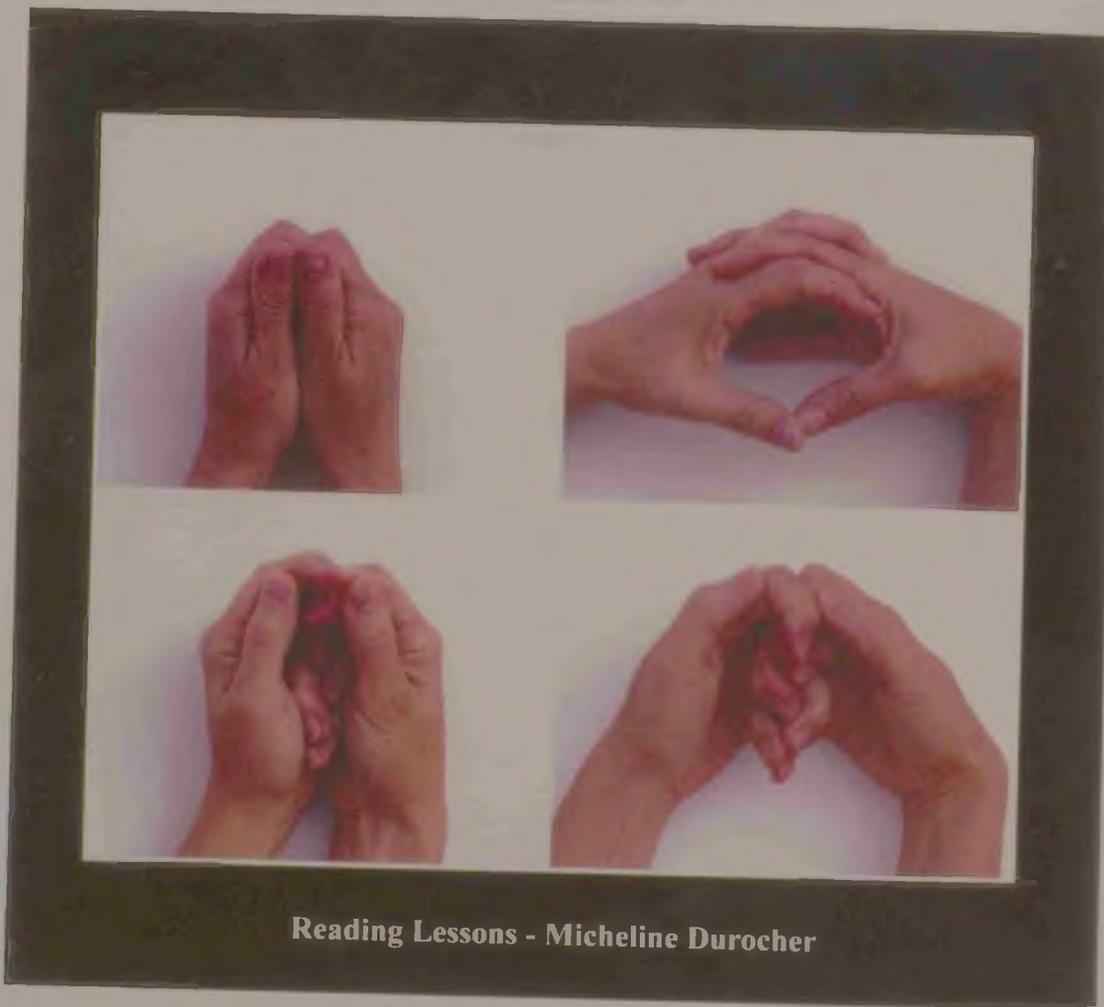
She’ll never trust me again, and at this moment I don’t think I’ll ever see her doll house, but I don’t care. I just want to be lost in the idea of things and forget the pain I caused myself. I want to hug her, but instead I take her hand and kiss it. She squeezes. So do I.

It will be a quiet drive home.

**M.G. McIntyre**



**Sunset Through Torii - Leah Defalco**



Reading Lessons - Micheline Durocher

### Ruin

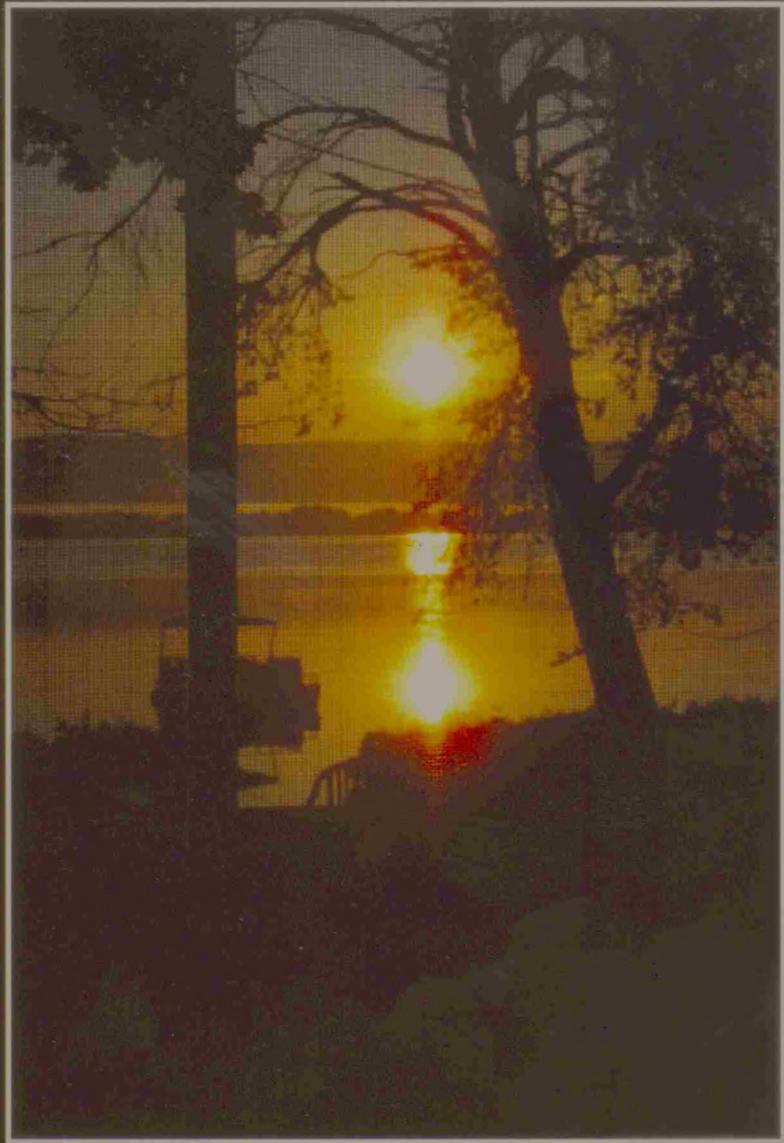
Consider this ruin, humbled by fate,  
 The roofless structure and its fractured stone,  
 Consider the fallen and rusted gate,  
 Built by a hand that is now dust and bone.  
 Reflect on the pathway, a fading trace,  
 The mortarless walls of grass, weed, and dust,  
 Reflect how time has passed over this place  
 And how one day it will pass over us.  
 Our deeds, like memory, grow fainter with time,  
 To those who remain, too soon disappear,  
 Our very substance is set for decline,  
 Let's make ourselves loved by those who are near;  
 As loved is best to be remembered by,  
 Let's love and be loved till the day we die.

Frank Willdig

### The Flag

She turned around, breathing heavily, and gazed behind her. Her tracks already fading, their existence quickly approaching extinction. Her trek was already forgotten by the land; insignificant in a longer history not offering accommodations to brief visitors. She could leave some symbolic proof to mark her accomplishment, but in the end, time would pass and the tattered flag would also fall, blending into oblivion with her footprints. She could collect a few mementos, clutch them to her chest as proof that it had all been worth something. Something to show to others, to convince herself with; a flag of pride to wave in the winds of insignificance.

Samantha Morley



Memories - Leah Defalco

NOT TO BE TAKEN AWAY

Hilary Atkinson	Vanessa Liston
Lauren Bernardo	Ellie Louson
Sally Bourque	Lindsay MacLeod
Marjorie Bruhmuller	M.G. McIntyre
Tyler Burleigh	Samantha Morley
Sandra Cayouette	Benjamin Oomen
Wes Colclough	Kelly Reid
Leah Defalco	Andrea Robertsdotter
Etienne Domingue	J. Coplen Rose
Micheline Durocher	Cara Said
Mike Folkerson	Ann Scowcroft
Eleanor Gang	Heather Sinnot
W. J. Greaves	Sam Solomon
Lauren Krol	Anna Springate-Floch
James Hatch	Catherine Swann
Noni Howard	Frederic Veilleux
Kate Jabalee	Ben Wald
Samuel Janzen	Erin Wallace
Wesley Krauss	Kayla Webster
Janice LaDuke	Frank Willdig