Forces

Volume 2010 Article 152

5-1-2010

2010 Forces

Scott Yarbrough

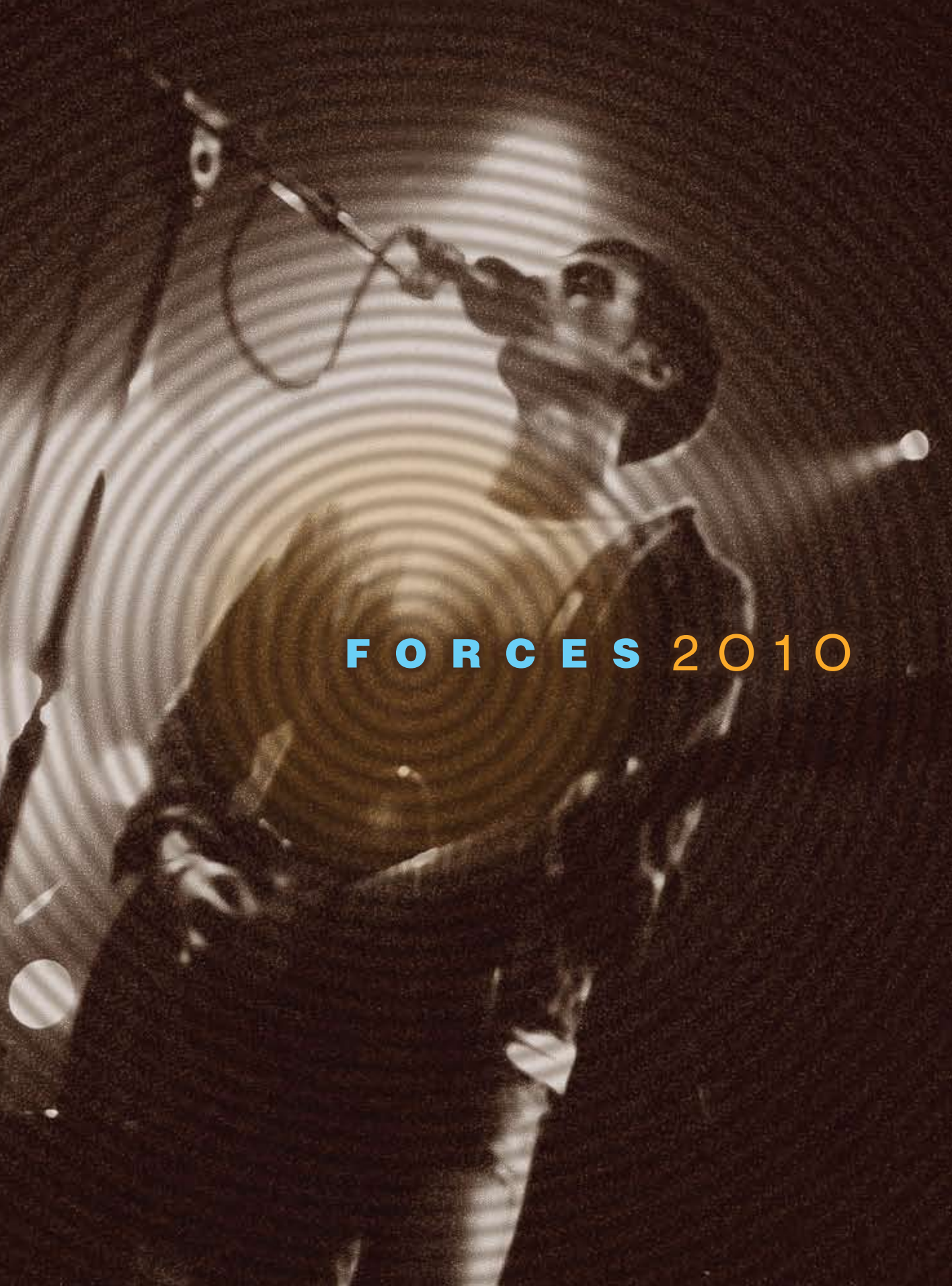
Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.collin.edu/forces

Part of the Ceramic Arts Commons, English Language and Literature Commons, Painting Commons, Photography Commons, and the Sculpture Commons

Recommended Citation

Yarbrough, Scott (2010) "2010 Forces," *Forces*: Vol. 2010 , Article 152.
Available at: https://digitalcommons.collin.edu/forces/vol2010/iss1/152

This Complete Issue is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Collin. It has been accepted for inclusion in Forces by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@Collin. For more information, please contact mtomlin@collin.edu.


FORCES 2010

FORCES 2010

INTRODUCTION

Most years a theme rises to the top of the mix, some underlying motive behind all of our actions and thoughts over the last year. This edition, however, simply marks a theme of absurdity meeting beauty and perseverance like a stick boat on a journey down the curbside in a rainstorm: from a woman facing a visual disability and learning to read later in life to a musing about stirring Kool-Aid with a spoon or one's arm, from a World War II Victory Garden to the question, "Will Michael meet Farrah in heaven?" Ironically, the absurdity is stoically personified in an interview with Texas Poet Laureate for 2010, Karla Morton, who also shares a few of her poems. The irony, her poems are the result of her writing herself through her battle with cancer: art is hardly the tool with which to battle cancer, is it? That's absurd.

R. Scott Yarbrough

Editor of *FORCES Literary and Fine Art Journal*

FORCES
is an annual student publication
sponsored by the
Communication and Humanities and Fine Art Divisions
of Collin College.

COLLIN COLLEGE

CCCCD is an equal opportunity institution
that does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion,
age, sex, national origin, disability or veteran status.

CONTENTS

1 **Goodbye to You, Searching**
Alyssa Lancaster

1-4 **Coping With My Vision Disability**
Kathy Orr Allen

5 **Meander**
Daniel Shipley

Tread Soft Here
K. L. Dryk

6 **Window #9**
Sabrina Mendoza

7 **Available Light**
Brian Fennig

8-9 **Be Careful What You Wish For, Little Girl**
R. Scott Yarbrough

9 **Untitled #3**
Stephanie Kelly

10-11 **Photography**
Stephanie Kelly

11 **Trust**
Beth Turner Ayers

12 **Hippie Hollow**
Carissa Battaile

Olympians
Molly Boyce

13-15 **A Soldier's Tree**
Betsy Giron

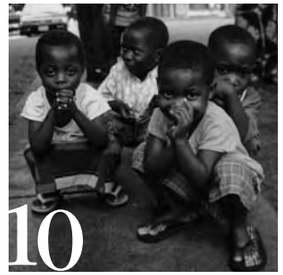
14 **Cold**
Shannon L. Williams

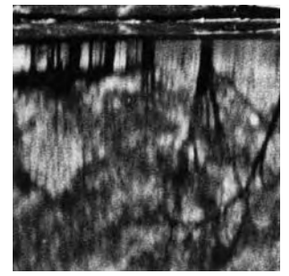
15 **Vagabond**
Kathy Davidson

16 **Reflections**
Essie P. Graham

17-20 **Poetic Grit** An Interview with Karla Morton
Dallie Clark

19 **When Pigs Fly #1 and #2**
Ava Everett





21 **Behind Bars**
Essie P. Graham

In Camera 102, Hotel de San Francesco
Karla Morton

22 **Mr. Giggles**
Daniel Shipley

New Sheets
Karla Morton

23 **Victory Gardens and Tomatoes**
Barbara Roth

24 **Words**
Angela Cid

25 **Father**
Daniel Shipley

Late Scholarly Nights
Sabrina Mendoza

26 **Empty**
Shannon L. Williams

27 **Life Drawings**
James G. Robinson

Coffee With Friends
Josh Levinstone

28 **A Stroll**
Brian K. Williams

Haiku
Doris Yanger

29-31 **Encounters with Türkçe**
Jules Sears

32-33 **Beholding**
Paloma Hernandez

33 **My Muse**
Mary Baumgartner

34 **Out of Place**
Essie P. Graham

35 **I Don't Know**
Brian Fennig

36 **Naught but Ghosts and Memories Remain**
Josh Dryk

37 **Different Skies**
Beverly Sellers

38 **Desolation**
Paloma Hernandez

Addictions
Molly Boyce

39 **Bereaved Soldier**
Michele Cave

Drafted
Molly Boyce

40 **Moonwalking on a June Thursday**
Jessica Gonsoulin

40-41 **Shedding My Skin**
Josh Dryk

42-43 **The Honorary Title**
Daniel Shipley

42 **Nursery Rhymes Revisited**
C.J. Dunning

44 **Winter Scene 2**
James G. Robinson

Tempus Noctem
K.L. Dryk

45 **The Rave**
Daniel Sandoval

46 **Emi's Feet**
Brooke Opie Ragusa

47-48 **Kool-Aid**
Beverly Sellers

48 **Addressing My Very Mind**
Sabrina Mendoza

49 **You Stand in the Window**
Sabrina Mendoza

Serendipity
Beth Turner Ayers

50 **Dancers**
Michele Cave

51 **Mad Love Meets and Roars Life Tenderly**
Amy Holt

52 **Abandoned**
Shannon L. Williams

Static
Shannon L. Williams

Privacy Fence
Kathy Davidson

53 **The Anthony Family**
Amy Holt

54 **Off the Beaten Path**
Alyssa Lancaster

55-56 **The Visitor**
Nancy L. Ross

56-57 **Pottery**
Eunice Bridges

57 **Glowing in the Dark**
Bathshua Thomas

The Perch In Cottonwood Creek
David Knape

58 **A Train Ride to Happiness**
Christina Chuang

59-60 **Well Respected Man**
Amy Holt

61-62 **A Modest Proposal: Drunk Driving**
Erica Harvey

62 **Love Always Mary**
Crissa Battaile

63 **Cathedral de Toledo, Up the Street**
Brian K. Williams

Intersection
Beth Turner Ayers

64-66 **The Body**
Matt Miller

65 **Touch**
Brooke Opie Ragusa

66 **Is It There**
Brooke Opie Ragusa

Goodbye to You, Searching Alyssa Lancaster

Coping With My Vision Disability

Kathy Orr Allen

I didn't begin learning to read until my first child was born in 1972. When he was born, I wanted to be able to read to him, as my grandpa Wall and my grandmother Ruby Nell had read to me. I have struggled my whole life with a vision disability called convergence insufficiency, but it was not diagnosed until last year. When I was a child in school, my teachers only knew that I couldn't, or wouldn't, read. I always had trouble when we were reading or copying from the board.

In elementary school, we were divided into reading groups. When it was my turn to read, I could never see the words on the page. They were blurry, or they appeared to float on the page. When my teacher would ask me to read, I would say nothing. Then she would ask me to read after her; I could always do that because I was repeating her reading. Then she would say, "It's your turn to read the next line."

I would pause, struggling to remember what might have happened to Dick or Jane at that point in the story. The reading group would laugh, the teacher would get upset with me, and then I would throw up on the teacher's shoes. My teacher would then scream, "Take her to the school nurse!"

For many years, I related reading to being sick. It always made me sick. My teachers didn't know what to do with me during reading classes, so they had me run errands for them or sit in the back of the room and draw. I spent much of my time in third and fourth grade drawing cartoon figures, a talent that was useful later when I became a mom and a teacher's aide.

One day when I was giving my mother-in-law, Adelma, a ride in an area unfamiliar to me, she told me to turn right onto a certain street. I missed the turn because I couldn't read street names. So she called out to me, "You missed it, Kathy. It was this street. How could you have missed it?" I didn't know what to say, so I told her that I was sorry. I said that we were talking and I just didn't see it. She nodded her head, but she suspected the truth.

Days later, when I was at her home, she handed me a magazine, opened it to a recipe she had marked, and asked me to read it. I just looked at it and set it back down. Soon she started to question me about the recipe: "Does it sound good to you? Would it be easy enough for you to prepare?" I didn't know what to say.

She then said, "Kathy, you didn't read the recipe, did you? And you couldn't read the street names the other day, either!" I was crushed. I admitted that I had never been able to read words because they were blurry to me and made me sick when I tried.

Within a few days, she had made me an appointment with her optometrist. He wasn't sure about the problem but gave me eye exercises and prescribed glasses to help with the eye strain. Adelma then revealed to me that her own mother had an eye disability!

Adelma was always supportive. Over the years she helped me deal with my reading problem in many ways. For example, she bought me a dictionary and taught me how to look up words. She helped me plan the preschool Sunday school lessons I taught, by reading the lessons to me and helping me look up words I didn't understand. She also taught me how to write letters to family and friends. She often did so over the phone when my husband and I were living overseas or in a distant state.

Even as I was learning to read, I still continued into my adult life trying to hide my disability because I lacked self-confidence and my reading vocabulary was limited. When asked to read aloud in church, for example, I would hand my scripture verse to the person seated next to me before it was my turn and then dismiss myself, saying I had to go feed or change my baby. I would stay in the lady's restroom until I was sure my verse was completed, then return to thank the person who had read for me.

I remember once when my first daughter, not yet two years old, asked me, "Mommy, why do we always stay in the lady's room to just stand here?" I didn't know how to answer her, so I picked her up held her in my arm's and cried. I didn't know what else to do. She put her little hands on my back and patted me gently, with her head on my shoulder, saying, "It's all right, Mommy. It's all right, Mommy." She kept saying that until I stopped crying.

In the fall of 1984, while living in Maryland, I enrolled in the GED program. I was told to be at Maryland High School at 7:00 pm for testing. I was nervous, but not as much as the man sitting in front of me. He was struggling so hard, he got up twice and asked if he could leave, but the woman in charge asked him to stay until we finished the testing. As we finished, I tapped him on the shoulder and said softly, "You know, in time, you can get your GED!" He told how hard this was for him, I said, "I know. I used, to sit in your desk!" He did stay and went through the program in the lowest class.

I was placed in the highest class, thanks to Adelma's earlier work with me. After seven months of GED classes my teacher sent me to the testing center to take the final tests. My reading was so slow and painful that it took me two Saturdays, a month and half apart, to complete all five of the testing booklets. Even though I received my GED, reading was still slow and painful for me. It always gave me migraines and made me nauseous.

Over the years, my convergence insufficiency became better, but it still gave me headaches and eyestrain. The months I was studying for the GED, my young children would get off the school bus, come in, and find me lying on the sofa with a wet washcloth on my forehead. My oldest son would say to the three others, "Shhh. Mom's been studying again."

A few weeks after I completed all the GED testing, an envelope came in the mail from the testing center. I placed it on the kitchen table. As I did my housework, I would walk by it, pick it up, then put it down again. I could not open it. If I had failed, then I would have to retake it and study even harder, and that would make the migraines and nausea start again.

When my children got off the bus and came in from school, they noticed the envelope on the kitchen table and asked me, "Mom, why haven't you opened this to see your test scores?" My daughter opened the envelope, put the testing score in front of my face, and said, "Mom, don't you want to see that you passed?" All four of my older children hugged me, and said, "Mom, we knew you could do it! My oldest son added, "And it only took you thirteen years!" I yelled, "What, I passed?"

As painful as my disability has been for me, in some ways, it has made me stronger. I have learned that I can relate to children and adults who have disabilities or have been rejected. I could do so even as a child. In my neighborhood in Oklahoma, where I grew up, Indian families moved in throughout the school years. They came from different reservations from all over the state, some with only the clothes on their backs. Some children from one of the reservations didn't even have shoes to cover their bare feet when they arrived. The PTA had a clothing drive to help them.

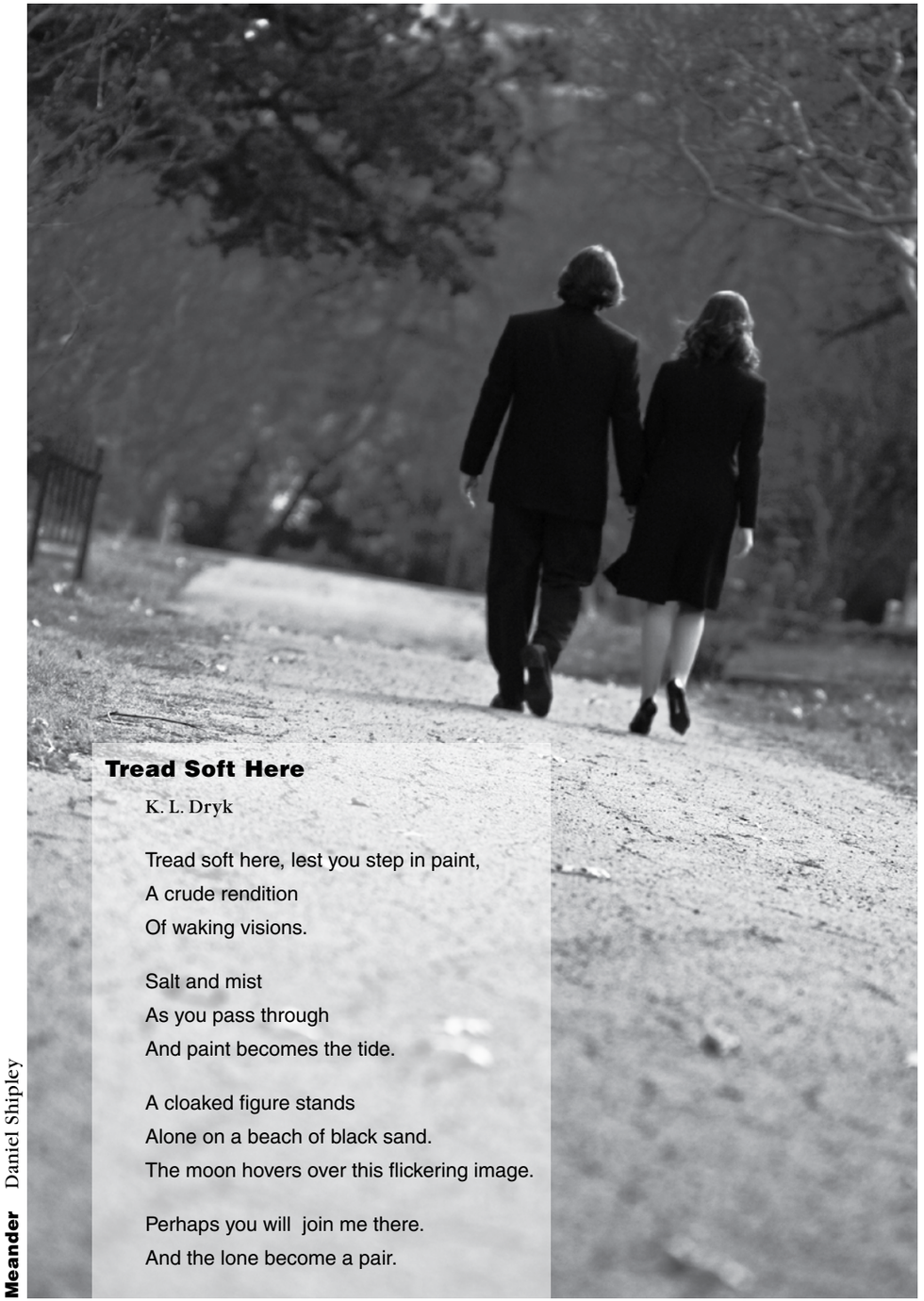
Some of the children in my school made rude comments to them about wearing their old clothes. One day I saw one of the Indian girls wearing one of my own old dresses, but I didn't say anything to her. In fact, most of them didn't speak much English. When I got home from school that day, I asked my mom what I should do. I explained to her that some children were making rude comments to them about wearing hand-me-downs.

My mom said, "It's important to be kind to them, help them, and be their friend. If you see someone wearing your old dress, say, 'You look very nice in that blue dress today,' but never mention that it was your blue dress before it was theirs. That would be unkind. They are a proud people. As you know, you have two great-grandmothers who are Indian. They are proud of their heritage, and you should be too."

As an adult, I have continued to work with people with disabilities. I worked in church as an interpreter for the deaf and later in the public schools, signing for deaf children at all grade levels.

Adelma had opened a whole new world for me that I never dreamed would ever be within my reach. Even the time I spent alone drawing cartoons in the back of my third and fourth grade class has proven valuable. My students today are delighted when I draw pictures of them, such as my sketch of the three second graders standing in front of a row of computers and staring through a window into the adjoining class. Not only are they delighted to see themselves in the picture, but their parents often ask for copies. My hearing impaired students are especially fond of my sketch of myself as their interpreter wearing my "Hands in Harmony" choir shirt.

It has been many years since I was that little girl in elementary school who couldn't read and was sent on errands or simply sat alone in the back of the classroom drawing pictures. As I look back, I can see how being excluded, though painful at the time, was in some ways a blessing. The experience helped me develop my talents and my sensitivity to others. In all reality, dealing with my disability has helped to make me who I am today.



Meander Daniel Shipley

Tread Soft Here

K. L. Dryk

Tread soft here, lest you step in paint,
A crude rendition
Of waking visions.

Salt and mist
As you pass through
And paint becomes the tide.

A cloaked figure stands
Alone on a beach of black sand.
The moon hovers over this flickering image.

Perhaps you will join me there.
And the lone become a pair.

Window #9 Sabrina Mendoza

Available Light

Brian Fennig

I'm traveling down the road at night.
Passenger side window open.
Air conditioning on.
Lack of commitment obvious.

I stare into the windows of the houses that I'm driving past.
Worlds in each window
each porch light
screen door, hanging lamp.

Upstairs downstairs constellations pass
each a mythos with colors for every story.

Gothic arch bright white porch light
no one home.

Yellow orange glow from downstairs den light.
T.V. blue upstairs; pulled up blankets on a hot summer night.

Dim white light through second story brown shutters.
Pill bottle top falls and rolls.

Yellow white kitchen light; scrape the grilled cheese from the pan.
Kick the cat's toy, it hop scotches across dirty brown linoleum.

Pale back room light; green doorbell miniature moon.
Awkward kiss.

Bright lights inside and out.
Tandem 70 watts on in rooms where no one is or will be for minutes.

Front door open
8 year old boy runs home; late.

Traffic sounds
a stop light
I'm riding in a car with no radio and no talk.
Just looking out and in.

Stopped at a corner house.
Through the window I see a woman on the phone.
Crape paper yellow light behind her creates a silhouette.
Curly hair.

I want to wave as I look in.
She is looking out at me and listening.

Be Careful What You Wish For, Little Girl

R. Scott Yarbrough

“What’s stupid literary analysis for anyway?
I just want to move,” Julie said.
She pumped her hips on “want” and “move.”
There are times when silence is the best service.

Be careful what you wish for little girl.
You may just get to be as big as you
thought you wanted to be. First,
you should prepare for your journey:

alienate your family; then, confirm
an animal as your new BFF.
Dogs are always good to run
away somewhere over the rainbow.

Second thoughts? Too bad. Screen door’s smacked
shut, your home-sweet-home’s twisted up in a tornado
and dropped into a color-filled, little-people patch.
You’ll need new shoes when you arrive; a journey requires them.

Red flashy ones always stir up the town.
Bask, because suddenly, you’re bigger
than even the mayor, got a key to the city, and
an endorsement from the Good Mother. Still, there’s

always that catch; your journey is just beginning. Just
stay on the straight and narrow and everything will be
fine, but look left and right, pay attention
to crossroads, and remember to pick up some tools:

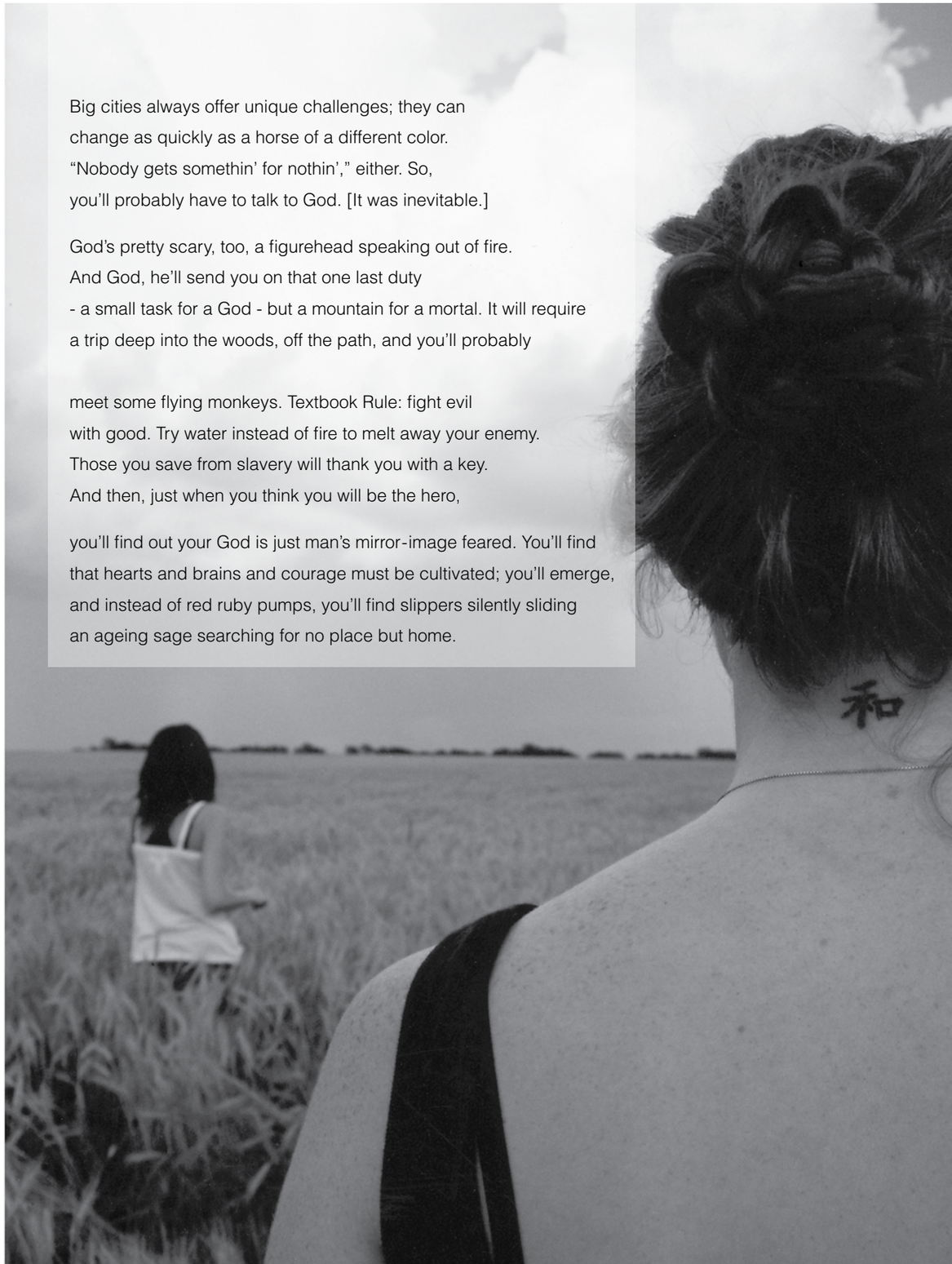
get some brains for logic, a heart to feel, and a badge for courage,
even if – inside – you’re really still scared. Road Trip! Stay
away from drugs, especially when you see your final
destination; there are those who want to see you fail.

Big cities always offer unique challenges; they can
change as quickly as a horse of a different color.
“Nobody gets somethin’ for nothin’,” either. So,
you’ll probably have to talk to God. [It was inevitable.]

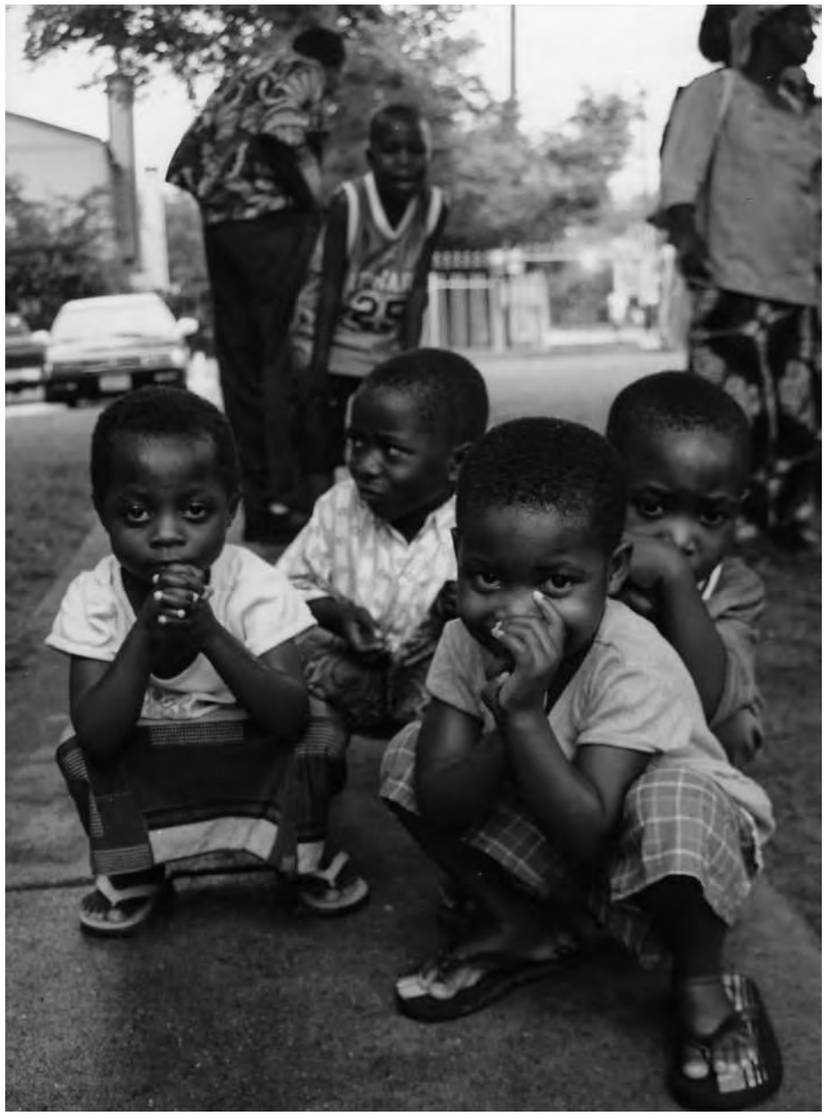
God’s pretty scary, too, a figurehead speaking out of fire.
And God, he’ll send you on that one last duty
- a small task for a God - but a mountain for a mortal. It will require
a trip deep into the woods, off the path, and you’ll probably

meet some flying monkeys. Textbook Rule: fight evil
with good. Try water instead of fire to melt away your enemy.
Those you save from slavery will thank you with a key.
And then, just when you think you will be the hero,

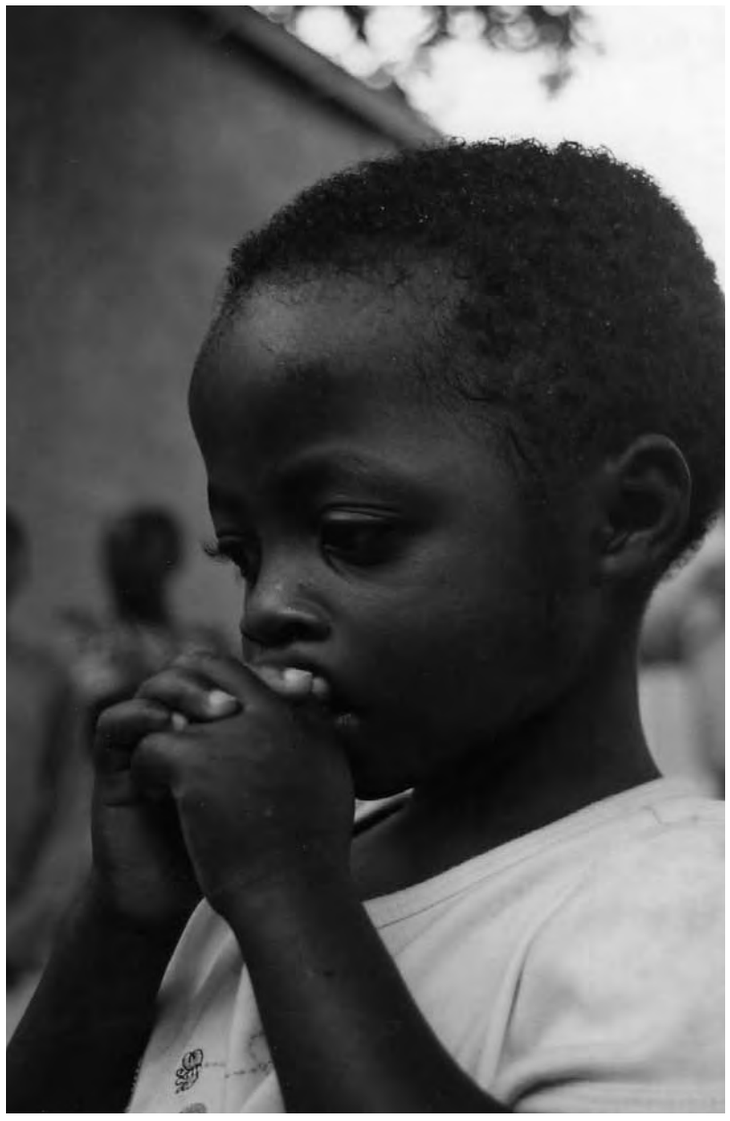
you’ll find out your God is just man’s mirror-image feared. You’ll find
that hearts and brains and courage must be cultivated; you’ll emerge,
and instead of red ruby pumps, you’ll find slippers silently sliding
an ageing sage searching for no place but home.



Untitled #3 Stephanie Kelly



Photography Stephanie Kelly



Trust

Beth Turner Ayers

Powerful words have purpose.
They are written and spoken aloud.
They pass through time and time again
Until the meaning may be muddled,
Twisted into contradiction.

Consider the shepherd.
Keeper of the flock,
Vigilant always,
Watching for danger,
Eyes and ears alert,

Guiding with the staff,
Ready to defend
With the rod.
To protect.
Not harm.

Not hit
In a futile effort to teach.
Spare the rod and spoil the child.
It has been written and read,
Used to justify the unjust.

Guidance. Safety. The truest goals.
Protect the child from harm.
Deliver defense.
Misuse the shepherd's tools
And trust is all that spoils.

Olympians

Molly Boyce

proud friends, one woman
imitate wild duck waddles
schlepping across shining
satin sheets of tiled water
under cleansing waterfalls

disrobed copper-toned bodies
molted shades, mauve into deft blue,
exposed by time and space,
inches away from their finest hour
or destined great despair

they take their mount, toes grasp edge
eyes steadied on eastern sun
stretch high above exalted heads
ascend skyward, body spirals uncoil
into the rippling tide below

Hippie Hollow Carissa Battaile

A Soldier's Tree

Betsy Giron

In 2005, a soldier left his family for a tour of duty in Baghdad, Iraq, and I inherited the new position as caretaker of his Tree. That soldier is my husband, Jason, and this is the story of the day I began a relationship with the Tree in our front yard. Until that day, it was a relationship I kept at a distance, viewed only from a window and passed by on the front walk.

The Tree began its roots in our family as a gift to us, one that my mother-in-law ordered from a catalogue. We received the gift in a long, narrow box which we opened with interest only to find a four-foot long, leafless, twig. The diameter of the twig was about one and a half inches at its thickest section. As I carefully took it out of the package, the thought occurred to me that I was grateful this gift did not come from my mother! Its pathetic appearance left me doubting its future.

The twig, however, disproved my lack of faith after my husband planted it. Within four years, the twig grew to nearly 30 feet in height with a one-and-a-half foot diameter trunk. I christened it, "the Tree." It was a stunning, willow-type, hybrid and the tallest tree on our street. Neighbors frequently complimented on its appearance. My husband, having always been the sole caretaker of our yard, received these compliments with moderate pride–and rightly so. I never touched yard work. I did not know, nor did I care to know, anything about it. The yard was my husband's territory, and my allergy-ridden immune system happily relinquished yard work to him.

All this changed, however, when my husband was deployed to Iraq for active duty. Before going, he gave me my orders, to care for his yard. He showed me how to use the lawn mower, weed-eater, edger, and sprinkler

Cold Shannon L. Williams

system, all weapons for the lawn battlefield. He told me when to fertilize and weed 'n' feed. He finished the yard work boot camp with a reminder to trim the lower branches of the Tree. I took this charge with determined gusto and felt my own ego building over the next couple months as I battled yard work on the front lines and saw imminent success. The yard was looking pretty good, except for a few small weeds.

So I went on a tour of duty to Home Depot, confident that I could find the right solution to the weed problem. I consulted the pros, read the labels (Operations Manual-OM), and decided on Weed B Gone in a spray bottle. The application was a cinch and the weeds would meet their doom, said the OM. But they had no intention of complying with such orders. The day after application, my grass was brown and the weeds were still a vibrant green, alive and waving at me. Concerned that I had consequently killed the grass, I rushed to Home Depot a second time and, again, consulted the OM. This time the procedures involved an application of summer fertilizer which would green-up the grass in no time. I handled this application with mild agitation as I poured around the healthy weeds, still sneering at me. Never had I known an enemy with such confidence and audacity.

After spending $30.00 to see a few weeds flourish, and assuming the worst was over, my good intentions were again plagued with problems. The third day, I noticed that some of the leaves on the Tree were turning pretty colors of orange and brown-on only one side of the Tree! Over the next couple days, leaves dropped profusely from that side, and I raked desperately. I had at least enough knowledge of plant cycles to determine that in the month of June, leaves were not supposed to fall. I knew that I was, again, being tormented by the Weed B Gone demon.

I questioned whether my husband was going to believe this story. He would return to no Tree and I had only the prolific weeds to attest to the tragedy, but I wasn't about to radio in this information to him. My neighbor, in sympathy, helped me rake, laugh, and cry over the possible fate of the Tree.

In the meantime, while I was killing the Tree, my husband was growing an army. As a liaison to the Iraqi military, he assisted in the recruitment, organization, and assignment of their soldiers into necessary divisions. Officer Jason helped establish the roots of the Iraqi army from its beginnings, more than doubling their troops from about 60,000 to over 140,000 which earned him a bronze star. He handled the daunting task with order and good judgment.

I, back on the home front however, was not about to give up. The battle was at hand. I grabbed my favorite weapon (checkbook), jumped into my tank (Suburban), and drove back to the base (Home Depot), but not without first consulting the General (a local tree farm manager). He suggested I use a product called Super Thrive, a highly concentrated vitamin-hormone supplement. A mere $25.00 later, I soaked the roots of the Tree very carefully with a dilution of half an ounce of Super Thrive in five gallons of water over the course of eight applications in 30 minutes. I nurtured and prayed and, a week later, repeated this same process.

Finally, the demon was exorcised and the Tree showed signs of new life. I touched the baby green leaves that sprouted from the leafless side of the tree, and a sense of motherly protection overwhelmed me. I knew then, that the Tree and I would survive anything, including separation from our caretaker. Besides, after all we'd been through, the weeds didn't look so bad. At least they complemented the green leaves on the Tree.

Vagabond

Kathy Davidson

Solitary little stick
blown far from home
bone dry and flaking from exposure.
Thickly layered chunks of bark
peeling and lifting away
like plaster from an old wall.
A short crusty appendage
points upward:
a Hitch-Hiker's thumb.

Reflections Essie P. Graham

Poetic Grit An Interview with 2010 Texas Poet Laureate Karla Morton

Dallie Clark

Gifted. Fighter. Sensitive. Humorous. Survivor. Kick-butt – all words that describe the 2010 Texas Poet Laureate Karla Morton, a woman of astonishing diversity and strength. This Fort Worth-born poet and Texas A&M graduate wasn't even afraid to veer away from her Texas roots to create an epic, rhyming poem about a Scottish pirate – and then solicit an award-winning Canadian composer she'd never met to write a musical score for the piece. She also wasn't afraid to be photographed vulnerably bald for her recent 2009 book *Redesigning Beauty* that chronicles her struggle and subsequent survival from breast cancer. In the interview below, Karla Morton generously shares her insights, wisdom, and hope for sharing not just poetry with her fellow Texans, but the grit and spirit of life itself.

• • • • •

Dallie Clark: I've read that you had longed to be the Texas Poet Laureate since your middle school days! When did you first realize you had a love for words and language? Was poetry an initial part of that love - or did that come later?

Karla Morton: For as long as I can remember, I have been in love with words, with phrases, cutting out quotes and pinning them to corkboards, pasting them to my paper book jacket. I used to think I was crazy (and, okay, maybe I still am!), but words would spin in my head like unpolished agates until I wrote them down, arranged and rearranged them until they looked right, until they sounded right.

There was a night I distinctly remember, however, going to Casa Mañana when I was in the ninth grade, and seeing *Man of La Mancha*...it brought me to tears. I wanted to be that good, to put a lump in a throat, to bring out those emotions inside of me and pass them on.

DC: In today's rushed, multi-tasking world, do you believe that poetry has therapeutic - perhaps even curative - powers?

KM: I think today, poetry and the written word are even *more* important. I think it settles us, brings us back into the mindset of what really matters in this world. It grounds us and makes us whole, and brings us rest. There's a church in Dallas that just bought pieces of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and paid a fortune for them, I'm sure. Why is that? Because words are our *history*; words are our *future*. They give us the tools to quietly seek that great Voice inside each one of us…and I believe *that* is the greatest of healing powers.

DC: You've discussed the enormous significance of "giving back" a portion of what we've been given in this life. How does that influence your poetry?

KM: That's a good question, but honestly hard to answer, because I don't write poetry with an audience in mind. I write for the sake of the words, for the story, for the emotion that is tied into it.

I wrote a poem, titled *Picking Up the Accent*, which is about how *everything* shapes us, how we "ingest every experience," how everything we've done"...seeps into the bone, curves the hand around the pen..." I think who we are, and what we believe in can't help but come out in our writing.

DC: As Texas Poet Laureate, you've committed yourself to a project called the "Little Town, Texas Tour" across the state, during which you will be visiting many small towns, some described as possibly "underserved" in the arts. When your position comes to a close, what do you hope to have accomplished through this mission?

KM: I want to lift up poetry to kids and adults – if even for just one hour of their lives. I want them to see how important poetry and the arts are; I want them to see how *fun* it can be, how it can *enrich* their lives. I want them to crave this kind of beauty every day in their hearts.

DC: During your tour thus far, has an experience with a particular place or person encouraged and confirmed that you chose the right project as Texas Poet Laureate?

KM: Oh, there are so many cities, towns and villages that have left an impact on me – and how can that be? Here I am trying to give something of beauty to them, yet I'm the one who ends up being so blessed! One place in particular, however, stands out so far – Hardin, Texas (in Liberty County). It's a tiny place that brought me into their homes and schools; a place that understands what community and neighbor is all about; a place that made me fall in love with Texas all over again.

DC: Tell us how you and photographer Walter Eagleton decided on the photographs for your book *Redesigning Beauty* – the work that chronicles all sides of tackling breast cancer.

KM: Well, that was Walter's magic. I was on the Square in Denton one day– bald head o'shining – and Walter said to come into his studio; we were going to take some pictures. I had lost my hair from the chemo, but not my eyebrows and eyelashes yet. He is an amazing photographer, who sees beauty in a whole different way, and the way he captured that time in my life was something, we hoped, could be passed on to others.

DC: Our society has an obvious and relentless love affair with beauty. How would you counter or comment on that?

KM: Absolutely! What we see on TV and in the magazines is just crazy, and we can so easily buy into the idea that THAT is what real beauty is. But there is so much more – our lives are so much *more* than what is on the outside. In the title poem of *Redefining Beauty*, I compare true beauty to the love of two eels – those creatures of the deep, where everything and every being is "... *blind by Divine design*…" It's more than what we see. *Beauty* is who we really are.

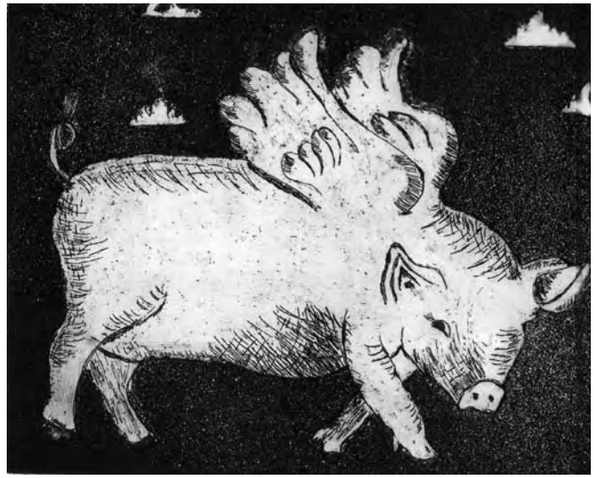
DC: Out of all the poems you've written, do you have a favorite one – and why?

KM: Gosh, you know, sometimes they become like your children, and it's hard to choose between them, but one of my favorites is *"For Love and Michelangelo"* because it combines my love of storytelling with the emotions of love, timelessness...okay, and a little lust!

DC: How has the tone and direction changed in your newest books (*Becoming Superman* and *Names We've Never Known*) changed?

KM: I'm still doing what I do, but…as I write – as we write, as we gain more

When Pigs Fly #1 Ava Everett



When Pigs Fly #2 Ava Everett

practice, as we witness more of life, we can't help but change in certain ways. I'm constantly learning new things, new ways of doing things, meeting new people. And, I'm also guilty of creating new forms, many of those being syllable count forms. I have a book of Sufi poetry titled *Stirring Goldfish*, which is coming out May 7th, by Finishing Line Press.

I stumbled upon an old book by Bahu at Recycled Bookstore in Denton, and it was a treasure. So, I spent months learning the Sufi poetry form. It's deceptively simple looking, but difficult for a modern western thinker like me to wrap her brain around an ancient, middle-eastern poetry form! But I did, and it changed my view of the world yet again. These Sufi poems are tiny love letters between man and woman and man and God – a mix of the earthly and the eternal, the sensual and the spiritual.

DC: You've been charmingly open about your past rejection letters, insisting that you could "wallpaper" your whole house with them. What words of encouragement can you offer to aspiring poets and writers of all ages who have also experienced a great deal of rejection?

KM: This may sound simple, but I tell you – DON'T GIVE UP! You have to have a strong backbone to be a writer, because so much of it is an individual taste. You put three people in a room, and you will have three different ideas about your work. I have a plaque in my bathroom with that famous quote by Winston Churchill: *"Never, never, never give up."* Good words to live by.

DC: What else inspires, motivates, and drives Karla Morton? What bigger-than-life dreams do you have - and do they include other collaborations similar to the epic poetry and music project you completed in 2007?

KM: I have a fascination with life. My husband often asks me what color the sky is in my world, but I believe you have to have a sense of wonder, a sense of imagination. Why be bound by reality? I am inspired by nature, by other poets, by music, by a need to be all I was put on this earth to be. I want to take *"Wee Cowrin' Timorous Beastie"* to stage. I want to put together an event with other Texas Poets Laureate at performance halls. I want to raise up poetry in the public's eyes – even showcasing the Laureates in such venues as in the permanent library in the future Museum of Texas Arts and Culture (which is in the works in Denton by the Greater Denton Arts Council).

I want to write into my 90's. I want to publish so many books that my friends dread the next Christmas. I want to walk this earth in my new Leddy's custom boots (with the hand-tooled shaft and a laurel wreath around a Texas star) into every section of Texas, every state in the United States, and every other country that calls my name. I want to kick life in the teeth, to dance at my grandchildren's weddings.

I want to wake up each morning with the love of my life at my side, and laugh every single day.

I want, just like the *Man of LaMancha*, to… *dream the impossible dream*.

• • • • •

For more information about Karla Morton's events and projects, visit her website: www.kkmorton.com

Behind Bars Essie P. Graham

In Camera 102, Hotel de San Francesco

Karla Morton

I think of you,
in that corner room,
where flowered papers
soften 500-year-old walls…

Our love blooms
thick and tangible;
like silent sweat on skin;
lips moving in their own language;

pale sheers, a sanctuary –
holding back the world…

And across the street,
across cobblestones toed
by barefoot saints,
sits a chapel…

ancient doors and ten million prayers
padding the archways…
In there, our hands would clasp
together again,

our tongues, remembering the silence –
the taste of all things holy.

Mr. Giggles Daniel Shipley

New Sheets

Karla Morton

It's a scent that reminds me more of her
than her perfume –
clean cloth and hot iron;
sweet steam permeating her face; her hands.

Saturday mornings, back aching
over the ironing board;
shirts, in queue on hangers
waiting for her touch…

I realize now, it was all for us – each
ironing, each call; each care package;
each Sunday dinner…Mom, we'd say,
why do you go to all this trouble?

18 years ago, I knew this day
would come, when the gift of life
welled up inside me like cool waters,
destined to be free.

What if he hurts? What if he needs?
What more can I give him?
18 summers pass
like constellations in the night.

I washed his new sheets twice;
pulled out the ironing board,
steamed tears into fresh pillowcases,
pressed my hands to the seams.

His first night away;
I'll think of his cheeks on the cloth;
his sleep, steeped, with the
sweet smell of home.

Victory Gardens and Tomatoes

Barbara Roth

The time was World War II and I was in kindergarten. One spring day, just before the closing bell rang, our teacher gave each of us a packet of seeds, "To plant a Victory Garden at home, to help the war effort," she told us. A picture of a vegetable was on each envelope. Mine was a shiny red tomato.

Clutching the packet and my drawings, I raced the three blocks home. "Mom, Mom. Look! Seeds for a Victory Garden." The seeds rattled as I shook the packet. "What's a Victory Garden?" I demanded. Mom explained to me that if everyone grew their own vegetables, there would be enough food to feed the soldiers fighting in the war. My Uncle Walt was a soldier in the war. He was away in a far-off place called Hawaii. I did not like tomatoes, but I liked Uncle Walt, and I was curious about how tomatoes grew from seeds.

"Can we plant them, Mom?"

"We'll talk about it over dinner."

Saturday morning found Dad straining to spade the stubborn earth in the back yard. Soon taut white string marked straight rows. How tiny the seeds were as they dropped into the fragrant, crumbly soil. Then came the watering, the weeding, and the waiting. At last, slim fingers of pale green curved upward through the earth's crust and strained toward the sun. The same miracle occurred in each neighbor's backyard. Gardening hints passed over adjoining fences and we shared or exchanged abundant crops.

Oh, those bountiful tomatoes. Everyone was trying to give them away. There was no choice, but to can them. Mom found canning instructions in the newspaper and bought two cartons of mason jars and paraffin wax for sealing. Grandmother came by bus to help and Mom drafted me. We speared tomatoes on forks and plunged them into boiling water to loosen the skin for peeling. The juice stung as it ran in thin rivulets down my arms. The boiling water intensified the already hot, humid kitchen and tempers became as acid as the tomatoes. Mercifully, Mom sent me outside to play. At day's end, ruby jars lined the countertop, Grandma had gone home, and Mom went to bed early. Patriotism was not easy that day.

Years later, I learned that U.S. citizens grew over 40% of the nation's produce during World War II.

Words

Angela Cid

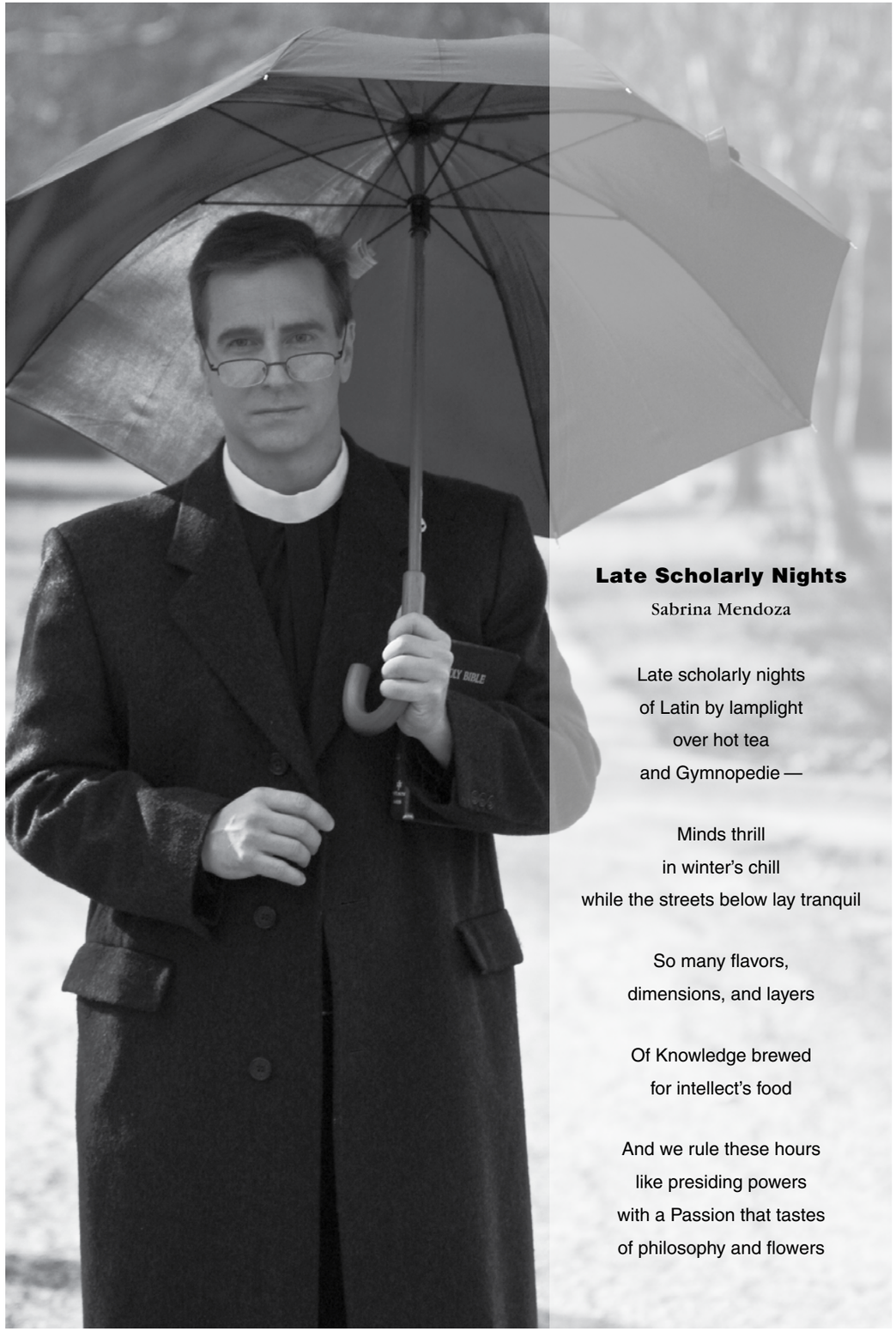
Words are the blood of our souls
And when we speak, we bleed with emotions.
Emotions are the truth behind our tears
And our tears are cause for speculations.

Speculations stem from fear and ignorance
By those whose souls have been bled dry.
Dry are those who've tried and died
Blind to everything but the very lie.

Lies are the absence of truth
And the truth is all that sets us free.
Free are those who have faith in all
But those who don't will never be.

Be that of truth and let bleed
Allow your soul to speak and shout
The pains, the happiness, and the sorrows
Of what our generation is all about.

Words are the blood of our souls
And when we speak, we bleed with emotions.
Emotions are the truth behind our tears
And our tears represent all our devotions.



Late Scholarly Nights

Sabrina Mendoza

Late scholarly nights
of Latin by lamplight
over hot tea
and Gymnopedie —

Minds thrill
in winter's chill
while the streets below lay tranquil

So many flavors,
dimensions, and layers

Of Knowledge brewed
for intellect's food

And we rule these hours
like presiding powers
with a Passion that tastes
of philosophy and flowers

Father Daniel Shipley

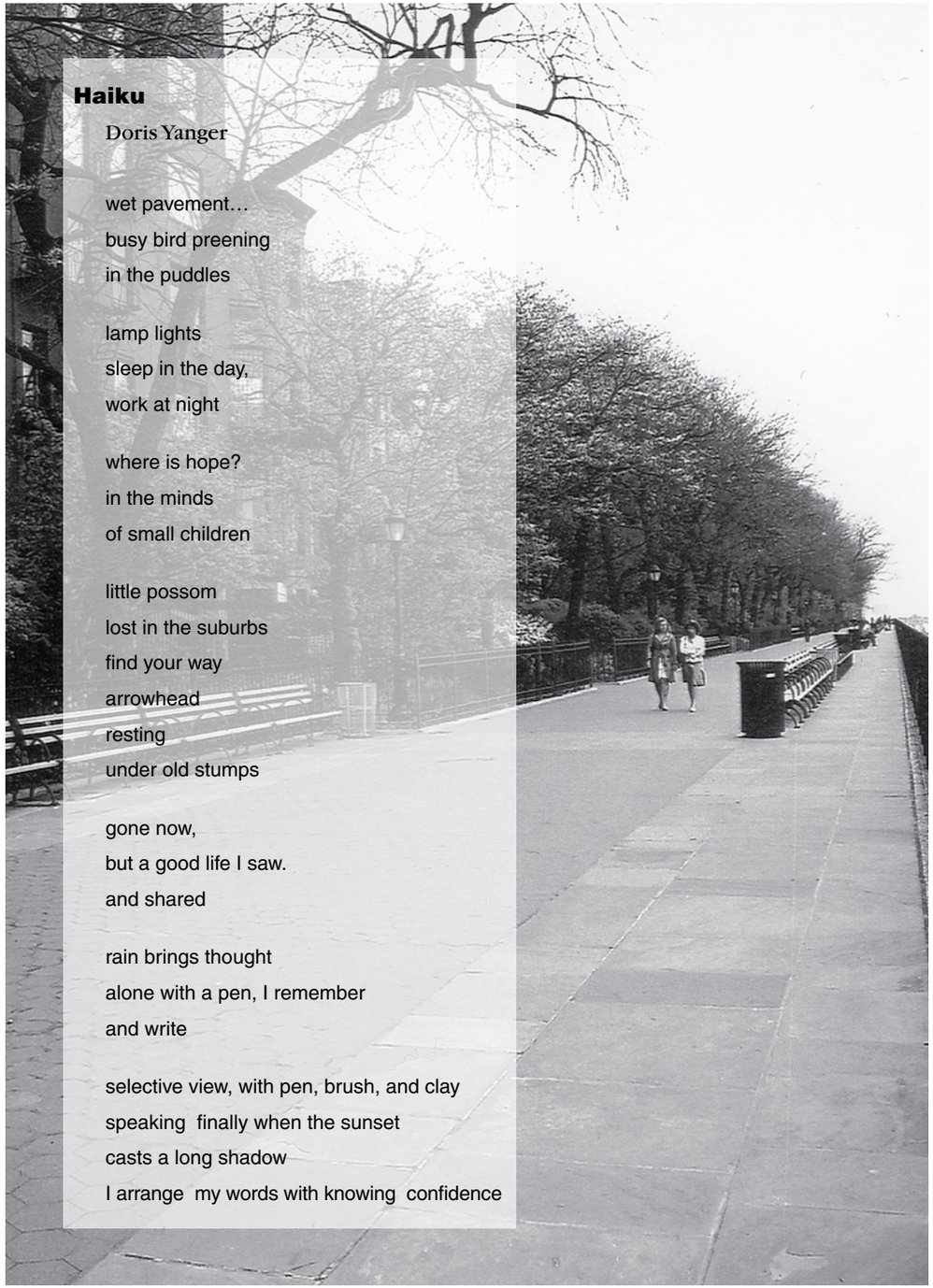
Empty Shannon L. Williams

Coffee With Friends

Josh Levinstone

They, they bring with them their world
Wherever they go, it's always there.
Something leads them to avoid a smile,
Avoid a chair too close, or a talk too long.
I wonder if they realize their world is stuck
To their shoes, whose heels have worn bare?
But, it's only coffee and they're likely busy;
Too busy to stop, too busy to talk,
And far too busy to break from routine. Through,
My chair is comfortable, as are the ones near.
"Come join me, just please don't speak,"
Exclaimed withdrawn eyes above a withdrawn smile.
You and I are not so different, are we?
We drink from the same well through different glass,
Which offers us, well . . . nothing really.
Still, I sit and I judge these characters from silence,
Created by apprehension, fueled by self-doubt,
And piloted by fear – silence is our voice
Of reason without speech, as we wait;
Basked in fluorescents and seeming so ideal.
But is silence really so ideal?
Maybe they're just busy, or maybe,
Just maybe, their coffee is simply too bitter.
Maybe I should ask them . . . or maybe not.

Life Drawings James G. Robinson



Haiku

Doris Yanger

wet pavement…
busy bird preening
in the puddles

lamp lights
sleep in the day,
work at night

where is hope?
in the minds
of small children

little possom
lost in the suburbs
find your way
arrowhead
resting
under old stumps

gone now,
but a good life I saw.
and shared

rain brings thought
alone with a pen, I remember
and write

selective view, with pen, brush, and clay
speaking finally when the sunset
casts a long shadow
I arrange my words with knowing confidence

A Stroll Brian K. Williams

Encounters with Türkçe

Jules Sears

I was in the midst of the "in love" stage of our relationship, when I first heard Erdal, my boyfriend at the time, speak Turkish. It was a Saturday morning. Erdal told me he needed to call his parents, who live in Istanbul. I found it strange when he closed the door to his bedroom, leaving me alone in the hall. Like a dog that has separation anxiety, I wanted nothing more than to be in that room with him. But I could not scratch and paw at the door, whining to be let in. Instead, I put my ear against the door, straining to catch the meaning of his words.

The dark and heavy language mystified me. It sounded like a foreign tongue spoken backwards. Turkish had no relationship to any language I had heard; it is not even from the same family tree, the Indo-European language group, as English.

I crumpled up in the hallway and started to cry. I believed that the man I loved had been cut away from me by a voice I didn't recognize. I felt there would always be a part of him that I could not access because it belonged to a world I would never comprehend.

Over a year later, I took my first trip to Turkey to meet Erdal's mother, Belgi, and father, Kâzım, and his grandmother. He wanted them to get to know me and to see how I felt about his family and home country before proposing to me. We flew into Istanbul, an ancient, yet very modern city—one of the most populous in the world. I learned as we took a bridge crossing the Bosporus Strait that Istanbul straddles Europe and Asia. Once we were on the Anatolian side of Istanbul, we drove a circuitous route to Suadiye, a fashionable neighborhood. His parents' flat on the top floor of an apartment building looked out on the Sea of Marmara. Here I met Erdal's grandmother, whom I attempted to greet in the manner appropriate for a respected elder—kissing her hand and touching her hand to my forehead—only I accidently put her hand to her forehead, causing me some embarrassment.

Soon Kâzım showed us the famous sites of old Istanbul. The Grand Bazaar, dating from the 15th century, is one of the largest covered bazaars in the world and site of many sellers of rugs, leather goods, pottery, and trinkets. These persistent salesmen called out to me in English, "Yes, please, where are you from?" because they could sense I was a foreigner, just as a dog can smell fear. Hagia Sophia, topped by a massive dome, was once a Byzantine cathedral, then an Islamic mosque, and now a museum which, according to our overweight and slovenly guide, has a handprint of the Virgin Mary on one of its columns. We also saw the Sultanahmet Camii or Blue Mosque, the unofficial symbol of Istanbul, called "blue" because of the blue tiles bedecking its interior.

All the time I was absorbing this new experience, I heard voices speaking Turkish with bewildering fluidity.

What I lacked in words I tried to make up for with friendly gestures and signs of appreciation. I won points with Erdal's family because of my enthusiasm for all of the sights and sounds of Istanbul, not simply those of cultural or historic value: the iconic ferry boats that seem to date from the 1930s; the muezzin's plaintive calls to prayer five times daily (these in Arabic); the equally plaintive, yet much harsher cries in Turkish of the man selling "Semit!"— savory pastries shaped like donuts with sesame seeds on them that hung from a stick as he walked through the neighborhood; the street dogs traveling in packs, apparently harmless; tea servers going from shop to shop delivering small glasses of tea; and the waiters dressed in white and black who changed our plates every time they got too "messy"— each of these I embraced.

My future family especially appreciated my desire and ability to eat large quantities of Turkish food, like cigara borek (flakey cigar-shaped filo pastries stuffed with white cheese and parsley and then fried), wrinkly black olives (eaten at breakfast with slices of fresh bread, cucumber, and tomato and rose petal and sour cherry jams) all manner of eggplant dishes, whole fish grilled and served simply with lemon, baklava, Turkish coffee with its sludgy coffee grounds at the bottom, and the cool yogurt and salt drink called ayran. I never really took to the Turkish national alcoholic beverage, called rakı, which is translucent, anise-tasting liquor that turns white when combined with water and ice. Aptly nicknamed "lion's milk," it is very potent. Luckily, my lack of enthusiasm for rakı wasn't held against me.

I was also fortunate that my future mother-in-law is fluent in English, and my future father-in-law can speak it fairly well. Even so, it seemed to me that things would quickly "degenerate" into Turkish, for example, as soon as I left a room. During meetings with friends and family who did not know English, if I asked Erdal to translate a question for me, he would, but he might get lost in a conversation about the answer and forget to translate it back. I often felt left out as everyone laughed at something very funny that I couldn't grasp.

I tried to learn some polite phrases before arriving and I picked up a few words, names of food items and useless things like pembe araba (pink car), but mostly I didn't know what was being said. Whenever I spoke Turkish, I received praise and encouragement. I felt proud, yet I had the lurking suspicion that this was not going to be an easy language to learn, and I wondered how long I would be granted permission to remain in this state of relative ignorance. Once I became a gelin (or bride), this concern weighed heavily on me.

Language is not only the quality of sound and the particulars of a grammar; it is also the mentality that one inhabits when one speaks it. I witnessed how Erdal became a different, seemingly angrier person in Turkish. He read Turkish newspapers with a scowl on his face. When he and his parents had a discussion, I assumed they were fighting over some very important matter; in fact these were usually minor squabbles about paying for this or that (in Turkey it is a disgrace not to let one's elders pay for things). But without knowledge of the words, how could I know? I had to sense things. At times I'd get paranoid; if Belgi growled when she said something, I feared it was about me.

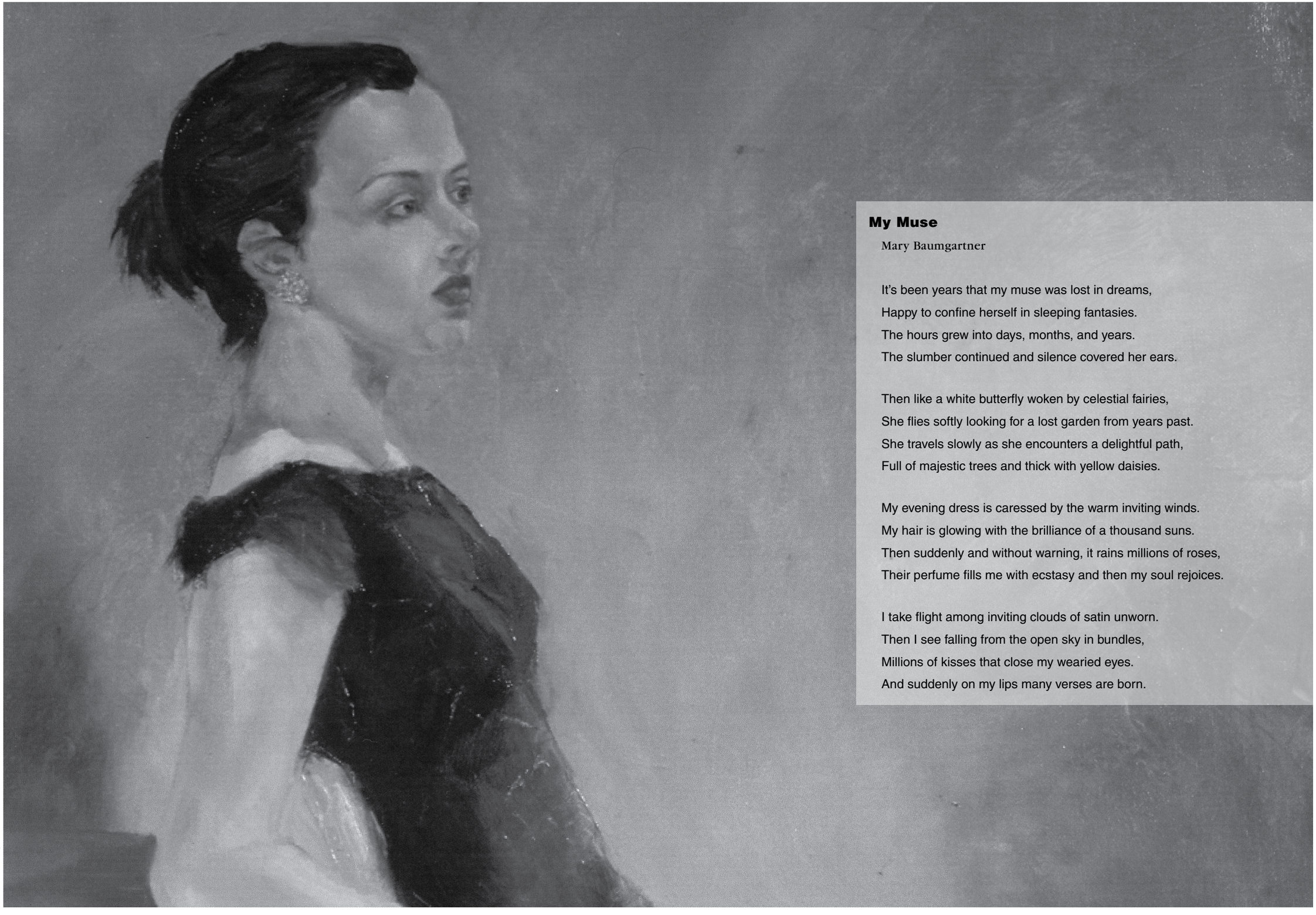
As the years passed, I felt more like a willfully-ignorant American, so I made an attempt to learn Turkish. I got a grammar book, an English-Turkish dictionary, tapes, and Rosetta Stone language-learning software. Erdal put labels on items around the house. He was adamant about the importance of knowing Turkish grammar, which has peculiarities like vowel harmony, agglutination through suffixes, and subject/object/verb order. He said there were lots of rules but few exceptions. He made timed tests for me. I did well on the tests, but then I'd forget what I had learned. I felt overwhelmed, and I gave up.

Failing to learn the language, I decided to find out more about Turkish culture. Like many Americans I was unfamiliar with the long, complex history of Turkey, once center of an empire founded by Turkic tribes from central Asia and now a secular nation-state. So I read. I read novels, short stories, and poems by Turkish authors (in translation of course). I watched Turkish films. I tried to find out more about Turkish politics. I became a fairly attentive fan of Turkish football. I took belly dancing lessons.

In Turkey I still have moments when it seems I am a child visiting "boring" relatives who talk about grown up things. To be polite, I nod my head during discussions I can't understand. Like a dog, I wait for something to happen; my ears perk up when I hear certain words—those related to food and my name. If someone says "Jules," I wonder, What are they saying about me?

Still, I believe I have received much more than I thought I would lose that morning I first heard Erdal speak Turkish. The once alien language now has a familiar sound to it; I can recognize it when people are speaking Turkish even if I don't know what they are saying. Most importantly, I have grasped some of the spirit of the culture.

Nevertheless, I admit I felt a sense of triumph when my husband recently told me that his English is now better than his Turkish.



Beholding Paloma Hernandez

My Muse

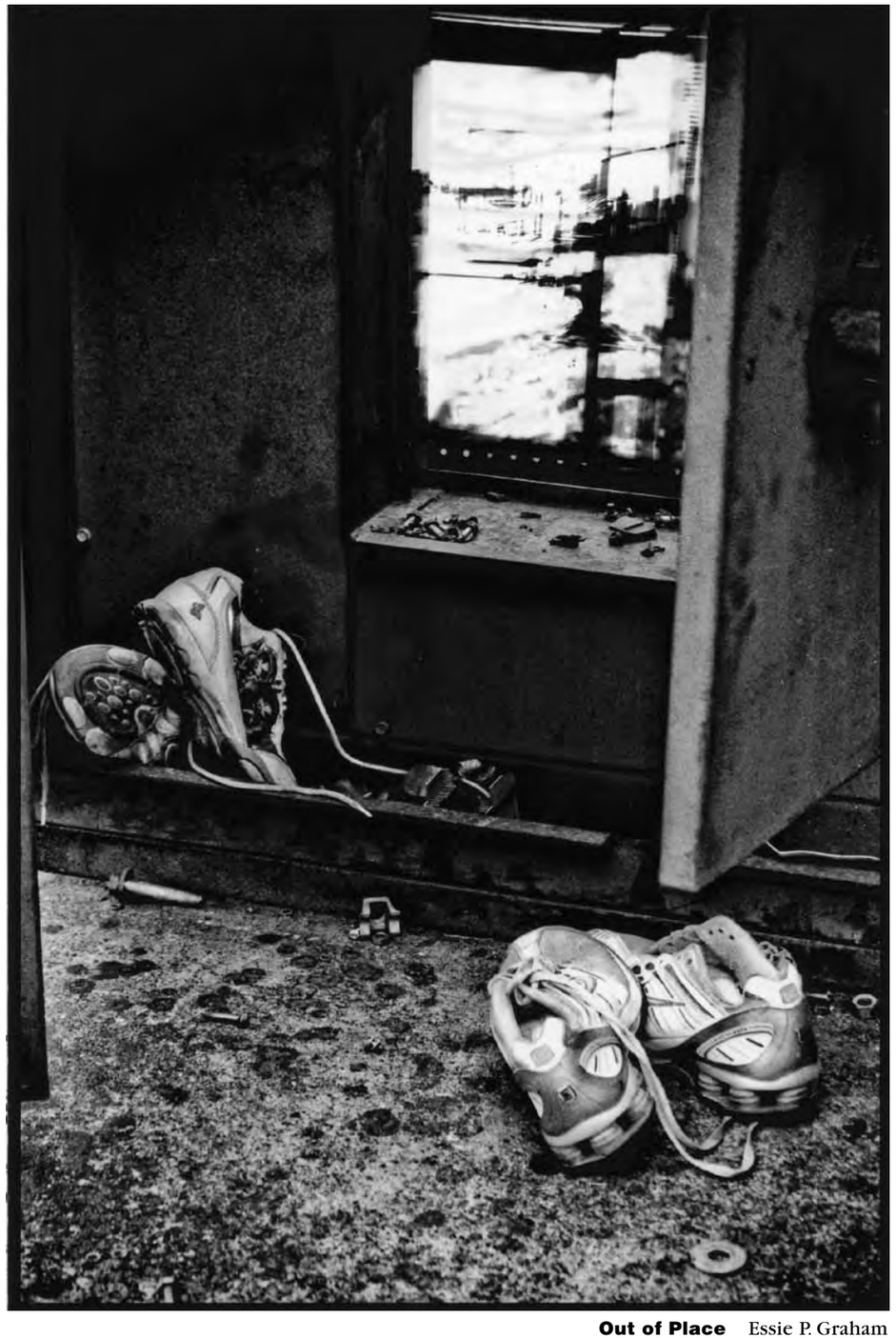
Mary Baumgartner

It's been years that my muse was lost in dreams,
Happy to confine herself in sleeping fantasies.
The hours grew into days, months, and years.
The slumber continued and silence covered her ears.

Then like a white butterfly woken by celestial fairies,
She flies softly looking for a lost garden from years past.
She travels slowly as she encounters a delightful path,
Full of majestic trees and thick with yellow daisies.

My evening dress is caressed by the warm inviting winds.
My hair is glowing with the brilliance of a thousand suns.
Then suddenly and without warning, it rains millions of roses,
Their perfume fills me with ecstasy and then my soul rejoices.

I take flight among inviting clouds of satin unworn.
Then I see falling from the open sky in bundles,
Millions of kisses that close my wearied eyes.
And suddenly on my lips many verses are born.



Out of Place Essie P. Graham

I Don't Know

Brian Fennig

Step into the cold and walk.
Old shoes crunch on a ground of frozen grass.
My body moves quickly but my still life bleeds
and the only difference between you and me

is two miles and a station wagon ride.
A.M. radio is loud with words that I will never really hear
and news of where I'm supposed to be
but I don't know.

So I walk and inhale and walk
toward a building with identical rooms
where having a name is just an invitation
to sit in a blue plastic chair and maintain a gaze

that lasts for only a few hours
but not quite short enough to escape
tall women with brown wigs who scuff white tile with short heeled black shoes
as I swagger from room to room with extended strides that say I don't know.

Valium picks up where closing doors in B-hall leave off.
My head is down in algebra.
A bell moves my mind.
I wake and leave.

I walk home to the tune of weed-eater kazoos spinning through grass
and city bus tires percussion on streets
where I can't see the traffic for the cars
and I want to get home.

I step into a house and through a door and into darkness
where I might see Mrs. Havisham
but find the familiarity of silence, absence
and solitude that I do know very well.

Naught but Ghosts and Memories Remain Josh Dryk

Different Skies

Beverly Sellers

During the night years can pass, time moving only in her mind. The changing of seasons, a place well loved and people once children continue outside, while inside light-years propel her forward then back again through landscapes that revolve beneath different skies.

She recalls the white stone structure, dedicated in 1936, its Greco façade facing a manicured lawn and beyond an area for teacher parking. Evergreens—a mixture like children of tall and short—surround the two-story school, only occasional pruning required. Each morning a yellow bus stops at a brick walkway leading to the front entry as children—offspring of farmers, oil-field workers and merchants—gather lunch pails from under seats and scurry inside to waiting teachers.

The children, seldom overly boisterous as teachers march them through halls to the playground where they busy themselves on swings and seesaws laughing and talking to each other.

"Look what the tooth fairy brought me last night," a child with a shiny quarter says to a classmate in line for a swing.

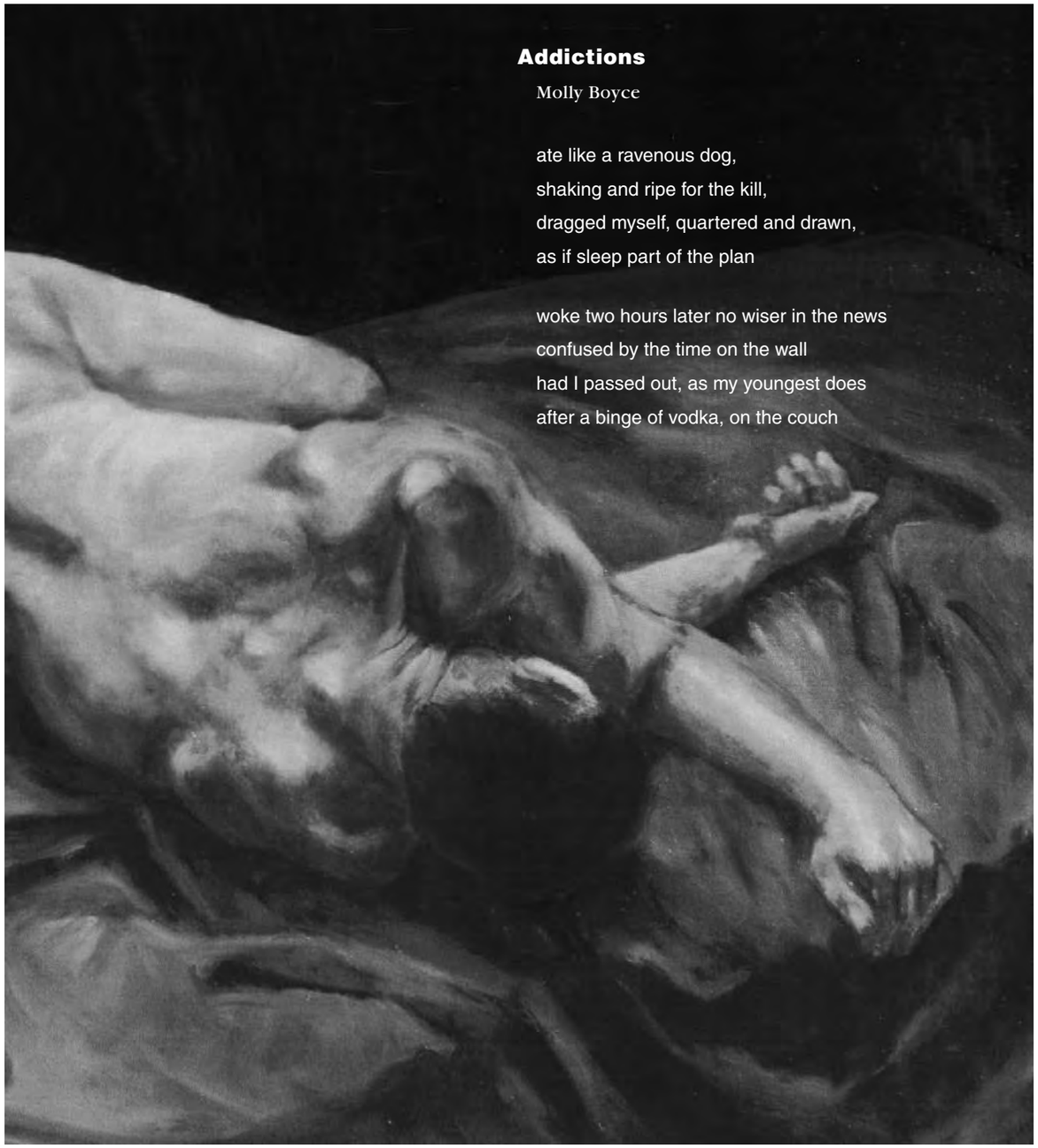
No decline in good manners. Through ropes of an empty swing,

one child says, *"Go on. I'll wait for another."*

"No, you go first." Who goes first she no longer recalls, but a bony, towheaded girl (maybe herself) waits for another swing, bent over picking scabs off one knee.

Further out on the playground, in an open field, boys play kickball while girls play house next to the building, squatting between spaces of evergreens. She remembers one girl whose mother would die before the girl completes Grade Six Reader. The girl plays the role of mother, sweeping dirt with a broken branch as if it were a broom and the dirt brown linoleum. Did she know her carefree days of playing house were rehearsals for what would come?

As one grows old, years dissolve during the night, often going where one should not look. Only the sun-warmed stones of that school, if any remain, can set things right—stones that radiated warmth but never spoke, though there still might be names upon them, like the girl who played mother. All gone now, except during the night when they rise to play once more—landscapes revolving beneath different skies.



Desolation Paloma Hernandez

Addictions

Molly Boyce

ate like a ravenous dog,
shaking and ripe for the kill,
dragged myself, quartered and drawn,
as if sleep part of the plan

woke two hours later no wiser in the news
confused by the time on the wall
had I passed out, as my youngest does
after a binge of vodka, on the couch

Drafted

Molly Boyce

I, like others,
stood in lines
signing up
under duress,
calculated
commitment

eminently
shaped by
present dangers
for services
rendered
abroad

required,
cold silent
signatures
scrawled across
bloody
wounded
scars

Bereaved Soldier Michele Cave

Moonwalking on a June Thursday

Jessica Gonsoulin

The heat cooked the moon like an omelet.
Bernie Madoff stood trial.
Farah Fawcett died in the morning—
Resulting in surprise, but not mayhem;
Dispelling rumors she would live forever.
The news spread quickly by text and Twitter.
What was I doing when I heard?
Watching Headline News, of course.
Next Michael Jackson died.
His doctor disappeared and was located.
The police declared him a material witness.
The autopsy concluded cardiac arrest—
but wait four weeks until
the toxicology test results: Demerol?
Election riots in Iran were
forgotten as were the further deaths
of Ed McMahon and Billy Mays.
Old albums flew off the shelves,
putting an incidental dent
in Michael's mounting pile of bills.
A choir of questions and answers ascended.
Who is the mother of Prince II?
Who will get custody of the kids?
Will Michael and Farah meet in heaven?
Spontaneous memorial services took place
around the world. Fans gathered
together to celebrate, dancing
at the death of Michael Jackson and themselves.

Shedding My Skin Josh Dryk

Nursery Rhymes Revisited

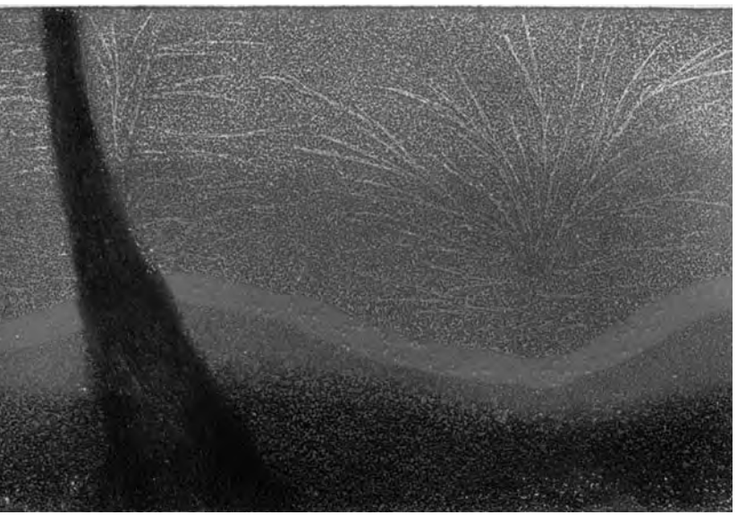
C.J. Dunning

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB.
WHO REALLY CARES?
HUMPTY SAT ON A WALL.
BRING DOWN THAT WALL!
LITTLE BO PEEP HAS LOST HER SHEEP.
IS SHE JUST STUPID?
LITTLE JACK HORNER SAT IN THE CORNER.
UNCONCERNED, BLAMING EVERYONE.
JACK AND JILL WENT UP THE HILL.
JACK WAS REALLY WITH JOEL.
OLD KING COLE WAS A MERRY OLD SOUL.
HE WAS SMOKING POT AND DOING DRUGS.
LITTLE BOY BLUE COME BLOW YOUR HORN.
TAPS ARE SOUNDING 'ROUND THE WORLD.
OLD MOTHER HUBBARD WENT TO HER CUPBOARD.
THE FOOD PANTRY IS EMPTY, STOREHOUSES GONE!
HEY, DIDDLE DIDDLE, THE CAT AND THE FIDDLE,
THE GOVERNMENT RAN AWAY WITH FREEDOM.
LULLABY, AND GOOD NIGHT,
UNBORN BABIES CRY IN THE SILENCE.
LITTLE MISS MUFFET SAT ON A TUFFET.
EATING HER CURDS, NOT SHARING.
ONE, TWO, BUCKLE MY SHOE.
EDUCATION IS GOING TO RUIN.
ARE YOU SLEEPING UNDER A HAYSTACK?
FREEDOM IS DISAPPEARING.
THE HORN IS SOUNDING THE ALARM,
BUT NOBODY IS LISTENING.
THE TROOPS ARE MARCHING, ONE BY ONE.
HOORAH! HOORAH!
THE YOUNG ONES STOP TO PICK UP A GUN.
AND WE ALL GO MARCHING - DOWN
IN THE GROUND - TO GET OUT - OF THE RAIN!

Tempus Noctem

K.L. Dryk

The barmaid grabs a bottle of Ruffino,
Pulls the cork out with her teeth.
A fallen god breathes violet smoke
And sips absinthe from a straw.



Winter Scene 2 James G. Robinson

Wood nymphs and werewolves
Form a string quartet,
Conducted by the Austrian man-child:
A baton in one hand, Schnapps in the other.

An angel and daemon dance
Their hips grind in rhythm
Her face pink with passion
His face pale with fear.

A water sprite dances alone,
Soaked beneath her rain cloud,
And with a crook'd finger beckons
The monster cowering in the corner.

The barmaid blinks at the doors,
Varnished in white clover,
Protecting her patrons from horrors beyond.
She pours another round.

The Rave

Daniel Sandoval

Spread the word, the Machine is coming, a circus of steel springs and combustions all grinding to the drums. Watch them waiting, every color, every clan; all wanting to be part of the system as it begins with a roar like a turbocharged engine they rush the door.

Inside, heads swim in a new found sea, unconscious are the dancing sparks and gay revelers in their glitter coated world. Limbs pumping, pounding pistons running full blast through the night, up creaking stairs into the radiator, cooling chamber, thick green haze passes over innumerable points of light; oxygen restriction. Drums persist pouring down white rain on melting minds. Thrilling, rushing euphoric rhythms flow like wine from fine crystal. Speak and you will not be heard, listen and you will hear no voice, for the machine stops for no one until morn.

Wasting away in the exhaust of a comatose state are some, eyes open seeing new worlds in clarity are others, while a select few crawl through Hell blinded by visions of terror. Still the electric pulses have yet to slow, numb to the deafening watts as they are now winding their way to the surface of a sleeping city. Whimsical youths will lay until afternoon, their internal timing chains hours slow, yet only eight rounds of the gauge have passed. The beating motion is still lingering as weary heads fall upon waiting pillows, headlight eyes switch off near six a.m. The last sounds fade for these who now dream anew, yet still worshipers of the dance rage against the coming of the light, would they be consumed in the warehouse flames before they saw the dawn?

Spread the word the machine was here and they called it the Rave.

Emi's Feet Brooke Opie Ragusa

Kool-Aid

Beverly Sellers

"Young 'uns can't sit forever," she told me. "Got to be done fairly." We talked on while we worked, preparing for the children. All these years I never forgot her.

She was black, mother of three. I was white, girl of thirteen. We lived on the fringe of piney woods in rural East Texas, a place chock-full of common people–poor by all the charts. On summer evenings in mid-July, the youth at my church volunteered in Vacation Bible School at her church, a congregation separate from my own.

Things always separate for black families in the 50s, just trying to hold their heads above water. Signs on fast-food drive-ins–Colored Served in Rear, on courthouse water fountains–Whites Only, and schools–Colored Schools. Never equal to whites. Life being what it is, that's how it was.

My fondest remembrance of that time in July? The two of us in the kitchen of that aging wooden structure–a school on most days, a church on others–preparing refreshments for the children. A schoolteacher, she had a smile that melted butter, a woman for whom heart, not color, mattered. I was shy, bashful around strangers. She was tall, self-assured. I was skinny and self-conscious.

• • • • •

Girl-of-Thirteen opens packs of broken cookies from a day-old bakery, arranging as if they arrived from Neiman's, poised on plates once polished with luster. Presentation covers a multitude of sins, my mama says.

Mother-of-Three opens packets of Kool-Aid, shaking purple contents into a five-gallon crock, the kind used to make sour pickles. She pours sugar–four pounds worth–into the crock, followed with pitcher after pitcher of water until the crock stands full. With no spoon long enough to stir sugar at the

bottom, she rolls up one sleeve, submerges her arm into the liquid. Down it goes, disappearing beneath the surface–stops short of her armpit. Round and round the arm turns until all sugar dissolves. I gaze her way in silence. The last cookie in place, I find a dipping spoon to fill cups with sweetened Kool-Aid. We talk – small talk mostly.

"That enough cookies, you think, Mrs. Jackson?" I look in the direction of the cookie table. She glances, continues to wipe spills off the countertop.

Addressing My Very Mind
Sabrina Mendoza

" 'Pect so," she answers. "Mind you, they got to last till week's end." Her response gives me confidence. She's an adult. I'm a girl.

"Hope they're on time tonight," remembering a late dismissal the night before.

"Young 'uns can't sit forever. Got to be done fairly." She goes on humming and drying dishes with a flour-sack cloth.

"Good." I go on dipping sweetened Kool-Aid, pondering her arm stirring that sugar.

Overly germ conscious, my mama says. Won't drink after others – even my own family. Won't eat eggs either, makes me sick thinking about their trip through a hen. Mama's probably right.

"Young 'uns turn into wild Indians if they sit too long." She chuckles at the thought. I laugh too. She likes me and I like her. How do I know? I know.

By and by we hear the sound of feet scurrying through the wood-plank hall. With doors and windows wide open, sounds
carry with absolute clarity. Squeals of laughter, like bouncing balls, precede the children's entrance. Time to move to my post, the cookie table.

"Take two…two please...leave some for others."

A cup of Kool-Aid rests in my hand, placed there by Mother-of-Three. When all is said and done, does it really matter how sugar gets dissolved in Kool-Aid?

Serendipity

Beth Turner Ayers

I suppose I was seeking validation
That I was acceptable, if not desired
At least tolerable.
High school boys had offered
Little confirmation – So I said "yes"
I will go out with your cousin's friend
Sight unseen, few details given,
A fraternity brother who needed a date.
What did that say? I wondered.
Not the fraternity with high academic standards
Or thankfully, the one of drunken philanderers.
His was non-descript – the one that few knew.
It was arranged.
I waited, peering through window blinds
Into January's cool darkness,
Watching shiny red tail lights disappear
As the clock ticked in my head and I
Left my post to glance at the one on the stove
To validate my suspicion of tardiness,
To affirm my fear that even sight unseen
He had passed me by.
Then the yellow car with the black racing stripe
Circled again and stopped.
My pounding, curious heart led me to the foyer
With the hope of confirmation to arrive.
But there was more – I opened the door
To the love of my life.
Daily validation.

You Stand in the Window Sabrina Mendoza

Dancers Michele Cave

Mad Love Meets and Roars Life Tenderly

Amy Holt

Mad love meets and roars life tenderly
But where is this love that gently woes?
How can I convince it to come after me?

I heard about that nymph in the city
Whose love lacked action by a loss of voice
Mad love meets and roars life tenderly

Well young Echo knew more than anybody
That love only imitates what has come before
How can I convince it to come after me?

A bright, young man sits with a girl by a tree
His eyes fixed on her angelic face
Mad love meets and roars life tenderly

But when dominance takes over gradually
The girl will soon learn love's bumps and tears
How can I convince it to come after me?

If I am meant to love only the arbitrary
God, strike my voice that I may not speak
Mad love meets and roars life tenderly
How can I convince it to come after me?

Static

Shannon Lee Williams

An unchanged soul is he
Who threw eggshells on the floor for me
Tiny toes too careful to break
Shhhh, don't cry for crying's sake
All from his recliner.

I grow and hide inside my room
My closet, safe as mother's womb
Until the shaken soda explodes
His way of shouldering the world's load
empty cans around his recliner.

Out, away, I flit, I flee
Escaping those words he said to me
Writing new rules for him to follow
Time for him– His pride to swallow
Shhhh dad, get back in your recliner.

Silver now and you'd think milder
T.V. fueling his passions wilder
Retired, golfing, no worries but bolder
Still carrying the world square on his shoulders
All from his recliner.

Abandoned Shannon L. Williams

Privacy Fence

Kathy Davidson

The nails have rusted
weeping matched trails
of darkness
like Christ's hands
down the rainy fronts
of weathered gray planking

The Anthony Family

Amy Holt

Even time could loose track of itself while watching Nancy Grace
As a man searches for his granddaughter
She, not yet three, was taken by an uncompromising fate
People stop to watch him scurry hurriedly from town to town
Relentlessly determined to make reality TV
Out of a man's search for thoughtful clarity
Running, fumbling, and crawling down his unruly path
Looking for his baby girl
Who, all too long ago, ascended to the Father
But wait.
He thinks he sees her. Fallen near a shrub, by that tree!
He runs! Grab her by the leg! Don't let her get away!
Just touch her and you can avoid inevitability
He makes his way, grabs her up by her ankle
Only to find his own daughter, cowering below him with her eyes on the street
"I'll find her!" she says. Oh, we're convinced of that.
He lets go and she runs away
A 23 year old, lost in morbid apathy.
He continues on in his search, completely in denial
That he ever had the answers right under his nose.

Off the Beaten Path Alyssa Lancaster

The Visitor

Nancy L. Ross

Mary Elizabeth was sweeping the dirt floor of the Soddy, a task that always made her smile as she thought how ironic it was. Whenever she swept she was reminded of the oriental rugs on the gleaming hardwood floors where she grew up in Pennsylvania.

Behind her the door was standing open to let the hot air from the Bad Lands circulate through the two rooms. As she finished sweeping she turned and gasped as she saw outside the door. With her hand covering her open mouth, and the hairs standing up on the back of her neck, she took in the sight of an Indian. He was a large man wearing a wide brimmed leather hat with an eagle feather stuck in the band. He wore a vest with no shirt and a pair of light colored cotton pants with leather leggings over them. On his feet were handmade leather moccasins with colorful beadwork.

As her heartbeat started to calm down she said, "May I help you?" He made a motion of feeding himself. She said, "Are you hungry?" and motioned for him to come in and sit as she pulled out a chair from the table. She went to the iron stove where the stew for the night's supper was simmering, took one of her mother's china plates out of the cupboard and filled it to the edges. Then she sliced the bread she had baked that morning and put it on a plate. She brought both dishes to the table and put them in front of him. She poured a glass of tea and put it and a container of honey on the table.

As Mary Elizabeth stood and watched the Indian eat she heard one of her younger children turning over in the adjoining room, and gave a prayer that he and his sister keep sleeping. She thanked God that this was the day her older children made their monthly trip in the wagon with Harvey to Wall to get supplies.

As she watched him he ran his tongue over the rough edge of the sterling silver spoon she often used to stir food as she cooked. He pulled it from his mouth and looked at it before taking the last of the stew. Then he wiped the plate clean with bread and with his finger traced the pattern of the blue flowers that her mother had loved so much.

He suddenly pushed back the chair and looked at her. Then he spoke for the first time, "Good." He turned and walked out the door. Mary Elizabeth followed him and stood in the doorway as he walked to the far side of the house. Then he stopped and picked up the ax that was leaning against the stump used to cut fire wood.

Her heart stopped; he glanced at her, ax in hand. Then he picked up a small log and swung the ax at it, breaking it into pieces. After watching him chopping wood for a few minutes she went inside and sat down heavily at the table. She put her hands in front of her, slowly opened them and noticed that her knuckles were white and her nails had left marks in her palms.

Soon she heard Charley, her youngest, and went to get him out of bed. When she had time to look outside again her visitor was gone. By the stump there was a large, neat pile of firewood.

Glowing in the Dark

Bathshua Thomas

Glowing in the dark,
Fireflies exhibit light shows.
Crickets applaud them.

The Perch In Cottonwood Creek

David Knape

perch hang playfully
in the water
slowly turning like a baby's
mobile

they rise to the surface and park
fanning their tails slowly
unafraid

fall brings an early sunset
and the perch float in half-light
asleep in their water bed.

Pottery Eunice Bridges

A Train Ride to Happiness Christina Chuang

Well Respected Man

Amy Holt

He's the kind of guy that would give you the penny in his pocket, even if it was the last one he had. It just didn't faze him. He didn't waste time on frivolous things like money. A man of faith need not worry about that.

Well, time moves me forward whether I like it or not, and I find myself at yet another crossroad. I wonder what he would do in my place. If humility and discipline are the way to go, he would always come out on top. Maybe if I act like him, I will get the same results. So I do every chance I get. If someone needs I ride, I don't hesitate to offer one. I once loaned two hundred dollars to a heroin addict in high school so he could pay his probation fines. I always try to listen to people before I speak. I try hard to put others first and sometimes I succeed. I don't know how he does it all the time. I wonder how naturally it comes to him, or if he's had to work hard to attain that ability.

Out of the many jobs he has had over the years, one was being a limo driver. I was about fourteen years old at the time. He was driving some rich, business men to the cowboy's game. Since he knew that I liked going to Dallas, he invited me along for the ride. I said yes because I knew that meant we could go out to eat at some fancy-shmancy restaurant downtown. We picked the limo up just as the sun was setting. We got to the hotel and the men came out of the front door with some ladies tagging along behind them. The moment they got in the car, I could smell the booze. They were already wasted before the game even started. After arguing with the men about the fastest way to get to the stadium (they weren't even from Dallas), we dropped them off at the front and one of them slipped us a twenty and told us to wait there.

I sat in the back of the limo, sipping soda and watching a movie on the small T.V. I fell asleep for probably half an hour before I felt a hand on my forehead. "Get up. They're coming back. I promise we will get something to eat after this." He sounded calm and collected but I can tell when he's really angry.

The men got in the car right as I was climbing back into the front seat. They were hammered at this point, yelling out of the sunroof as we were driving off. The women were just as drunk as the men, and I think they were getting frisky back there but I heard the tinted window shut behind my head before I could get a glimpse. The engine started and we were finally on our way to drop these yahoos off at the hotel and get some food at an expensive place. I think I had decided on seafood. We got to the hotel and the men showed the ladies to the front lobby.

I saw them talking for a long time and finally he got in the driver's seat. "They want me to take them somewhere else."

"Do you have to?" I asked, pleadingly.

"It's my job."

We started driving again and someone rolled the tinted window down again. A man asked, "Hey driver! You know any places we find some good hookers? Come on, I bet you know places around this city! How long you been a limo driver? We'll throw some more cash your way if you can get us some ladies for the night."

"I don't know any of those places. I haven't been a driver for very long. I don't live around here."

After some arguing over that, they finally just told him to take them to the strip club we passed earlier. "That's a classy joint, right Kev?"

He didn't answer them, simply rolled up the tinted window.

We waited in the parking lot for these guys to finish what they were doing. Around 4 am, they come stumbling out.

The ride home was a rather quiet one. Up front we were listening to NPR, because that is what we like to listen to. The window behind my head was down and one of the guys managed to finally notice me sitting in the passenger seat.

"Who's that?"

"My daughter."

"How old is she?"

"Sixteen."

I don't know why he lied.

The man said, "I have a sixteen year old daughter too." He sounded sad and didn't say anything after that.

We got to the hotel and the man gave my father a hundred dollar bill. We left right after, and went to eat at Ihop. It was six o'clock on a Monday morning. On the ride home I fell asleep on his arm, wondering if all this meant I didn't have to go to school and what exactly his plan was when it came to telling mom.

A Modest Proposal: Drunk Driving

Erica Harvey

In 2006, the national number of fatalities from car crashes was 42,532. Of these, 15,829 deaths were alcohol related. So, 37% of fatal crashes in the United States that year were due to one of the parties involved being under the influence. The state of Texas had the highest number of driving fatalities due to alcohol out of all the other states. Out of the 3,466 fatal crashes, 1,544 were due to alcohol consumption. That's 45%, 8% higher than the national average! These outlandishly high numbers are ridiculous, and something needs to change. So I have a new proposition to offer the federal and state governments, and it will be so effective I suggest it be put into effect immediately. Statistics show that of the 45% of fatal crashes due to one person being under the influence, the fatality was not the guilty party. This means that innocent, sober citizens are being killed while the idiot breaking the law and drinking and driving survives! How can this be?

According to studies, this is because under the influence, as we all know, a persons reflexes (and judgments) become slower. So, upon impact, the driver is less likely to tense up, making themselves like Jell-O. As their car collides with another and spins and tumbles out of control, their body is flopping around inside, not breaking anything or damaging any organs. This is why, on average, the drunk driver walks away with a few bruises and mild soreness. The sober victim however, sees the impact about to happen and tenses up, "bracing themselves." Upon crashing, the force of impact goes right to their bones, breaking them and damaging crucial organs. In 2004, Cody Bilbraid was struck by a drunk driver head-on along the highway. With the severity of the crash, and the high speeds both parties were traveling, Cody died on impact. The drunk driver walked away. In 1996, Maria Hegg and her father Ted, who was driving, were traveling through an intersection when a drunk driver ran the red light and crashed into the car. Maria died on the ride to the hospital, Ted was in ICU for weeks, and the drunk

driver survived with minor injuries. Crashes like these should not be happening! Kids shouldn't have to be raised without a mother, and a father shouldn't have to live with the guilt of his daughter's death. I propose to make alcohol consumption while operating a motor vehicle legal. In fact, everyone riding in or operating a vehicle should have a blood alcohol level above .08, despite their age.

This way, though there may be an increase in minor vehicular crashes, there is a high probability in a decrease in fatal vehicular crashes. If everyone is drunk, no one will die in car crashes. The ramifications of this proposal are very minimal, and it will work best in actively getting the number of fatal drunk driving crashes. It will also heavily decrease the amount of tickets for Driving Under the Influence. If drunk is the new normal, then a driver should get a ticket for a blood alcohol level BELOW .08 (the legal check point of "intoxication")! If a law enforcement officer pulls over a sober citizen, the officer will have his or her choice of giving said citizen tequila shots, or engaging the law breaker in a game of beer pong. This will mean the law that states "no open containers of alcohol may be present in a vehicle at any time" will need to be changed. The police officer also has the right to detain sober criminals for their horrific offense. The uniformed officer should take the law breaker to the local bar and get him or her drunk (a blood alcohol level ABOVE .08) before sending the offender off on his or her way.

This will also clear up the local jails, since in 2005, 20% of all incarcerated persons were there on a drug/alcohol abuse charge. With less prison space being devoted to house people convicted of such petty crimes like driving under the influence, there will be more space to fill up the prisons with people committing more serious offenses like smoking pot, being a stockbroker or lawyer, along with sex offenders, child abductors, robbers, and murderers. Also, with the up rise in alcohol intake (since everyone will have to drink a glass or more before every car trip), there will obviously be a major increase in alcohol sales. This benefits not only the sellers and brewers, but the consumer as well by bringing down the price of alcohol and adding jobs in the bar business. Overall, many people can benefit from this proposal. Sure, it will take some getting used to, but it will certainly be effective in the long run. All in all, this is a win-win situation, and law makers would be doing the right thing by making this new law effective immediately.

Love Always Mary Crissa Battaile

Intersection

Beth Turner Ayers

It was gone today.
The frequent reminder
I've passed on my way
From here to there
Has been removed.
Was it by the hand of
An employee who counts
Hours for City pay?
Or did the hand that placed it
Cut the brittle tape to
Take it down?
Quivering fingers that must
Pause to wipe leaking emotion
That never dies but sinks until
A reminder pushes it to the surface
Like that brilliant bouquet
First faded, then browned
Under hot Texas sun,
Broiled upon a tall silvery stove
That doubles to shine light down into
Darkness. Illuminating regret.
Connected to colored lights
That direct us to stop or go.
Some see Caution.
Others must not let Care take the lead.
I see that absent reminder.
This is an intersection of Death.

Cathedral de Toledo Up the Street

Brian K. Williams

The Body

Matt Miller

I'll tell you again that I'm really sorry about what happened. I can't imagine what it must have done to those people…mistaken identity is one thing, but I imagine it must be even worse when the guy's dead.

Yes, that's right. It's Greg Mahoney, M-A-H-O-N-E-Y. Came to Philadelphia about two months ago. I got this job at Shady Glens through a temp agency – real nice girl, Amber, I think, fixed me up here. Said the hours were great for a part-time student. Go to school during the day, work nights. Real 'Paper Chase' kinda stuff, only without the law degree.

Well, it happened that Thursday night, before my shift. I came about an hour early so I could show Cass around. You know, do her a favor, maybe get a little pick-me-up to help me through my shift. Anyway, once we got here, she almost dragged me by my wrist into the prep room, where…

Who, Cass? Short for Cassandra. Dupree, I think her last name is. No, with two 'E's. Real goth/punk kinda girl, if you know what I mean. Really cute, too. I met her in my clinical rotation class. I could barely get her to say two words to me until I told her that I work at a funeral home for a living, and then she couldn't wait to go out with me. I, uh… I kinda think she was more into my job than me, you know? She'd been pestering me for a week or two to take her to see where I worked. Said she wanted to see "where the dead people lived." That girl is really into corpses. I guess it's part of the whole goth-image thing. She was a little out there… but man, she knew how to drive a man wild. There was this one time, right, on the city bus, where out of nowhere she starts to…

What? Oh, sorry. I'll try to stick with what happened.

So anyway, we got here, and she started dragging me, like I said, back to the prep room. You ever been back there? No? Well, it's got these stainless steel doors, floor to ceiling, like you see on cop shows, where we keep the bodies until they're needed. Then in the middle there's a big table where we can lay them out to get them fixed up for viewings or whatever, and a sink at one end to clean up at. It's a really creepy place – fluorescent lights, all metal walls, knowing there's dead people on all sides… gives it this really sterile feel. After she dragged me in there, she started looking around and examining everything.

I asked her if this was what she wanted to see, and she started to get all happy. "Yes," she said, "it's very nice, but what I really want to see is one of the bodies." Well, I immediately told her no, that I could get fired for that. So she leaned back against the counter, did this really sweet "Pleeeeeease," and started undoing the buttons of her top. Real casual-like, too, like I wasn't supposed to know she was trying to bribe me. But I figured hey, I ran away from that podunk town, I ran away from my drunk-ass dad, and hell, I got this job so I wouldn't have to deal with people – live ones, anyway – I was not gonna run away from this girl. See, Cass was the first… well, nice things just don't happen to me very often. Besides, if you saw this chick, you'd understand.

So I gave in. I know, I shouldn't have, and like I said, I'm real sorry about how all this turned out. I didn't know at the time. Anyway, so I pulled out one of the trays with a body in it – Kenneth Roberts, it turned out to be – and she immediately started poking at it. She was really fascinated with it. Well, I let her go on for a minute, but then she went to prodding the guy in earnest, and really messing around with him – I'm talking about stuff I would get fired for doing. So I started telling her to lay off, and that it was probably time to go. Well, Cass spun around with this wide look in her eyes, and pleaded with me not to make her go. Like I said, I think she liked my job more than me. The weird thing is, the way she said it… she sounded almost afraid. I've never heard that out of her before.

Well, that brought me up short. I kind of stood there a moment with my mouth hanging open, not really sure what to do. I mean, I told myself I wouldn't run from this girl, right? Only here I am, just minutes later, trying to shoo her out. My mind sort of locked up on that concept.

But Cass made the choice for me. Before I could tell her to leave again, she just sort of leaped into my arms and shoved her tongue in my mouth. Any sense I had up until then went right out the window at that point. I don't remember a lot after that… I mean, I remember losing my shirt somewhere, and I remember fiddling with the clasp on her bra, but not a whole lot outside of that.

The next thing I remember, she pulled me backwards like we're gonna fall back onto the floor, only she missed. See, she wanted to keep so close to that corpse, that when she went to fall back, it was in the way. So we tumbled in a heap onto this dead body, only this guy was having none of it. He went sliding off the table and crashed onto the floor, and when he hit, he hit head first at this really awkward angle – snapped his neck clean through. It made this really awful crack sound, too.

Touch

Brooke Opie Ragusa

Well, that sound killed the mood instantly. I scrambled over there and started lifting him back onto the table, but in my hurry I pushed something wrong, and his jaw snapped loose. Tore up some of the skin around his mouth pretty bad. I finally got him back on the table and started looking at the damage, but he was pretty messed up. I was freaking out at this point, because I knew this much damage was going to take me days to fix, if I even could. I made the mistake of glancing over at his chart, and damn it if the bastard wasn't scheduled for a viewing the next day!

Oh, sorry, pardon my language. Yes, I'll try.

Well, that just blew the lid off whatever cool I had left. I just snapped out at Cass, since this whole thing was her fault anyway. I yelled at her, saying something about… I don't remember exactly… something about how her obsession with my job was now going to make me lose it. Apparently, that was too much for her, because she just broke down into tears, cursed me for being a dumb country hick, and ran out before I could say anything.

So I stood there a while, slowly losing my grip on my patience. I had days of work to do in eight hours, I was probably gonna get fired, and the girl I swore not to run from just ran out on me. I was pacing around pretty frantically, trying to figure something out. Well, as it happened, my eyes fell across the sheet for one of the other bodies. I saw height, weight, skin color, hair color, all about the same. So I pulled the guy out, and to my surprise, he looked really similar to Mr. Roberts.

I still don't know why I did it. The logical part of my brain can keep on saying that it was easier to put makeup on the other guy than it was to fix all the damage to Mr. Roberts, but that doesn't make it right. I know I'll never be able to make it up to the people who came to the viewing and found someone else there… all I can do is say I'm sorry. In a way, I guess it was just another thing for me to run from.

So I got him fixed up and wheeled him in for the viewing the next morning. At first, everything was cool… I mean, I thought I was gonna get away with it. But then eventually, people started murmuring at the back. That gossip, it's like a freaking tidal wave – you can't stop it, not until after it just rolls over everything. So, eventually, they called the director over to talk to him. That's when I knew I was toast.

But you know the really messed up part about it? Some of those people at the viewing, they mourned over that body. It took the people running the whole thing almost two hours to figure out something was wrong, but during that time? I mean, people cried over that body. Some of them even kissed it.

They told the funeral home people later that they thought something was wrong… but what did they do about it? They grieved over the corpse of a man they'd never met, rather than stand up and face the fact that they'd never seen him before. Only they already had this idea worked up in their heads of how it was gonna go down, see, and they didn't want to let anything mess that up. They even lied to themselves to keep that idea going.

I mean, who does stuff like that, anyway?

Is It There
Brooke Opie Ragusa

2010 FORCES

COLLIN
COLLEGE

10PB-170