

BAYOU REVIEW



SPRING / FALL 2001

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The Bayou Review
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*The University of Houston Downtown
Visual and Literary Arts Journal*



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Spring / Fall 2001
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University Houston Downtown
One Main Street
Houston, Texas 77002

“I would define, in brief, the Poetry of words as the Rhythmical Creation of Beauty. Its sole arbiter is Taste.”

Edgar Allan Poe
The Poetic Principle

The Bayou Review

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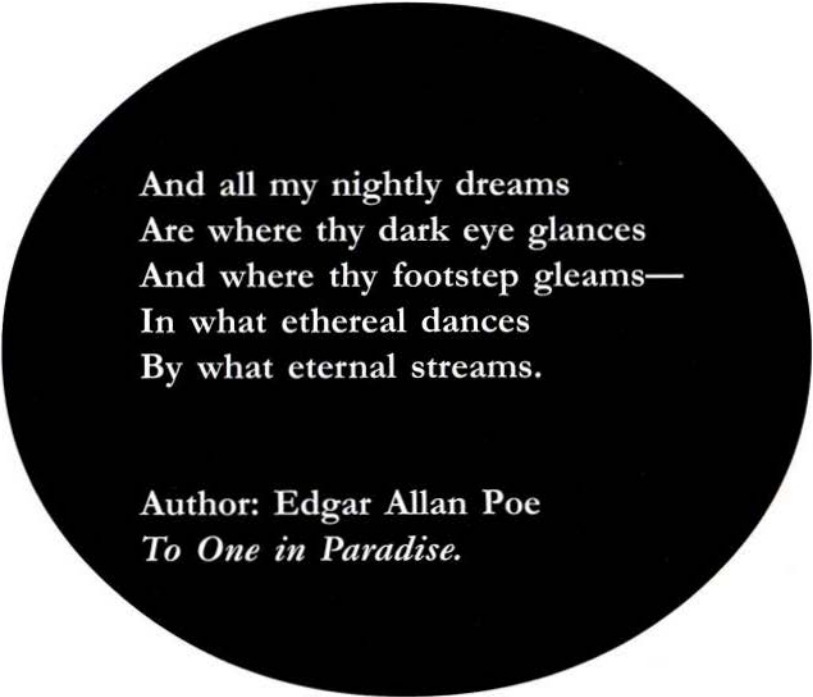
This publication would not have been possible if it were not for the tireless efforts of our faculty advisor and fearless leader, Dr. Jane Creighton. Dr. Creighton's passion and dedication to creative writing has been an inspiration to us all.

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Most of all we would like to thank all of the artists and writers that contributed their work. Through appreciation for the arts we have come together to bring you this collection of exceptional writing and artwork. We thank you and hope you enjoy it!

Editor
Marisa Demaya



And all my nightly dreams
Are where thy dark eye glances
And where thy footstep gleams—
In what ethereal dances
By what eternal streams.

Author: Edgar Allan Poe
To One in Paradise.

Contents

Reflections of 9-11-01	Ann Harlan	8
Artwork Untitled	Heath Ferrell	10
Your Words	Casey J. Davis	11
9/11/2001	Piper Peters	12
The Spirit of Ulysses	Rochelle Hope Mehr	13
That Day On The Bus	Latoya Hardman	14
I See You Black Lady	Erika Kalbermatter	16
My Blueless Blues	Valerie Felitia Kinloch	17
Speculations	Valerie Felitia Kinloch	18
Sonnet I	Dawn M. Jones	20
Lover's Night	Juan Vasquez	21
Clever Clever Chairs Never There	Heath Ferrell	22
Drinking of You	Scott Stephenson	23
Nothing New Under The Sun	Sheila Ray Reed	24
Tribute To Mr. Dunbar	Casey J. Davis	25
F#ck Face	Andy Grotfeldt	26
The Note	Craig Bechtel	28
he Power of Naught	Rochelle Hope Mehr	31
Untitled Poem	Heath Ferrell	32
Photograph "Caged Kid"	Terri Garcia	33

Contents

Untitled Artworks	Heath Ferrell	34
It's Not About The...	James Kinsey	36
Cordelia In The Fall	Jesus Arturo Avila	39
Last Chance	Denise Ditto Satterfield	40
Peach (For Joe Kysiak)	Edward Mycue	43
Remembering Joe Anthony Martinez	Mary Mata	44
To Keep	Joe Anthony Martinez	45
Dead	Joe Anthony Martinez	46
Photos- Joe Anthony Martinez	Mary Mata	47
My Rain Falls Outside My Door	Willie T. Huggins, Jr.	48
Una Rosa Llamad Genoveva	Andres Chapa	49
The Saint of Ceaseless Things	Carolyn Adams	50
Caffeine Kick	Laura Heimann	51
A Story For Julia	Gail D. Brekke	52
Who's In Control	Louis G. Duque, Jr.	55
Rice Paper	Thomas Hood	56
Gabriel Spins His Wheels	Marisa Demaya	59
Dream Unaccomplished	Deon Campbell	60
Oh Say! Can You See?	Sheila Ray Reed	61
Transcended We Stand Supplanted	Willie T. Huggins, Jr.	62
Playin' the lues	Jesus Arturo Avila	63

Reflections of 9-11-01

I can tell you where I was and what I was doing when I first heard of President Kennedy's assassination. I can also tell you the same information regarding the Oklahoma City bombing. Why is it people remember the smallest details during times of crises, but they can't remember what they had for breakfast two hours earlier?

On September 11, 2001, a group of 25 people from my company was meeting at Target Hunger, a food distribution center for Houston's hungry. As part of the United Way Day of Caring effort, we were scheduled to clean their kitchen, sand/paig three refrigerators, and paint the walls. When I arrived at the facility, several employees met me and quickly updated me on the events that were happening in New York City and Washington D.C. After discussion, we felt it was absolutely necessary to remain at the facility and fulfill our obligation toward Target Hunger.

During the next four hours, we donned our masks and grabbed our sanders, paintbrushes, and cleaning cloths. It was a bittersweet day. All of us were dedicated to finishing the task at hand, but at the same time we were aware that our world had changed forever.

The United States has always seemed to be a magical land. During previous wars in this century, fighting never reached the continental United States. Only the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor took place on United States soil. At that time, however, the targets were military ones. Our world has definitely changed. The attack of September 11 targeted civillians and our economy. Thousands of people lost their lives and tens of thousands lost loved ones. No longer is our land the innocent, peaceful, America that we have all known. Our airports are swarming with military personnel, unemployment is rampant, and children are havıng nightmares about planes hitting buildings. I have a two-year- old granddaughter. In the hours following the attack, my daughter watched the horrific events happening in New York.

The media kept repeating the footage of the planes hitting the buildings. Soon, she noticed that my granddaughter, Courtney, was saying, “planes-buildings- boom!” My daughter immediately changed the channel; they no longer watch the news while Courtney is in the room.

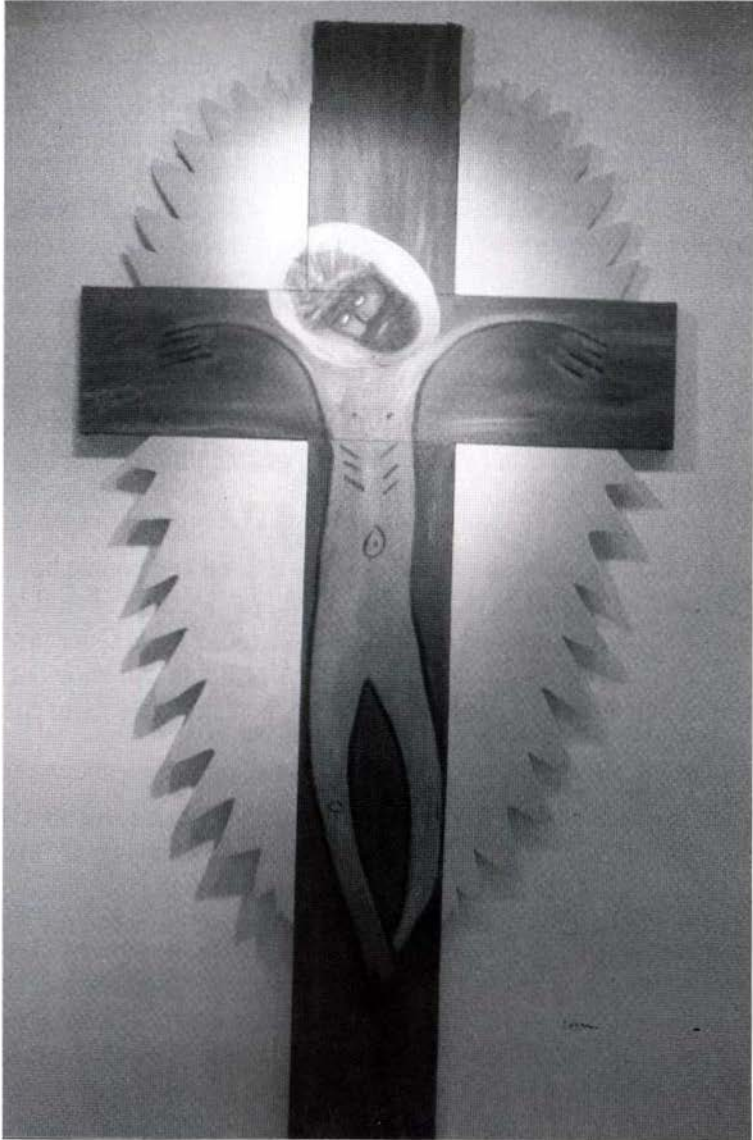
Last Saturday, while shopping with my daughter and Courtney, a military plane flew overhead. Courtney cried and clung to her mother. How do you explain to a two-year-old that the plane overhead is there to protect the coast from another attack?

I do not fear for myself. I’m 50 years old and have experienced life fully. But I do fear for my grandchildren. Will this war on terrorism end in two years, in five, in twenty? Will my grandchildren enter the military and fight this war or another one?

From the beginning of time, war has existed and people have died. During the Crusades, people were killed in the name of God. On September 11, thousands died in the name of another god. Over time weapons have become so sophisticated that one bomb can wipe out a city; one organism can be carried through the mail; and one germ could wipe out the world.

It is true that wars have always existed. It is also true that there is good and evil. But who decides what is good and what is evil? My prayer is that all the nations of the world will agree on the definition of good and evil during my grandchildren’s lifetimes. Otherwise, my fear is that some day there will be no world.

Ann Harlan



Untitled Photographed artwork
by Heath Ferrell

Your Words

Lord I read your words
And say your prayers
I've been traveling for years
But still I'm not there
Looking for peace
And still I don't see
No hope in this world
Please keep blessing me
My pledge to be righteous
To keep from doing wrong
On the right path
But that didn't last long
Looking for discipline
And still I don't see
Hard to be dedicated
Please keep blessing me
I believe in my heart
But sin in my mind
Got to get to heaven
And I'm running out of time
Looking for forgiveness
It's not up to me
By his grace I'm Heaven bound
As long as he blesses me

Casey J. Davis

9-11-01

can you feel it

Rising up beneath your feet

From this delicate Earth on which we tread...

Rise up and crumble

Eating up innocence
And ignorance

Evidence of need
Evidence of our need

To Stand together
To understand together

We are one-
One God, one Soul, one Self.

Mind yourself, lest you harm.
Your Self, Your Soul, Your God.

Piper Peters

The Spirit of Ulysses

No we do not die.
We get sick, we get weak--
Too weak to hone our skills
With cutting-edge precision--
We seek out some measure of perfection--
Some increment of honor--
Is it honesty
Is it pride
That swirls the seas--
That wil not appease--

At this breakneck pace
Wild with wind
Rhythm and froth--
There is not stopping for death

That Day on the Bus

A sunny afternoon, she left the school yard,
Friendly good-byes, then on the bus.
There, in her seat, sat that girl.
No need to be rude, move on smile.
But that girl glared. Spoke no word,
only inched closer to the window,

Then turned her pale face from window:
“My dad’s gonna burn a cross in your yard.”
Then rage. But what right word
could she fling? Just wait. Get off the bus.
No need to be rude, move on and smile.
Ignore the ignorance of that girl.

But when she passes that girl?
Is mere payback a chance, a window?
And stop. Right in her front yard.
Her heart races while she exits the bus,
Dares that girl to utter a word.

That girl dared, and said **the** word.
“Nigger” spat from the lips of that girl.
But now outside the bus
she saw the face in the window
as it drove off leaving her in her yard.
No need to be rude, move on and smile.

No need to be rude? Move on and *smile*?
But that girl crossed the line. The word
once private, now owned by a bus
That transports that hate-filled girl
safe behind that window.
A girl on the bus, a girl in her yard.

Looking outside into the yard
She found no cross. A smile
Covered her face. Her eyes met the window.
Liar. Cracker. Bitch. No word
could shame, scare, faze that girl
who made her aware that day on the bus.

On the bus, she sat a yard
from that girl. Today no smiles,
no words. Only stares out the window.

I See You Black Lady

I SEE YOU BLACK LADY

but that's not all I see

I was thinking profoundly

and I was curious as to what you believe

I SEE YOU BLACK LADY

but that's not all I see

I notice you're a doctor

what made you decide on PHD?

I SEE YOU BLACK LADY

but that's not all I see

You contribute to our society

So I know you're alright with me

Erika Kalbermatter

My Blueless Blues

And she yelled in a screeching tone, “My blues ain’t always blue ‘specially when my eyes are shut to the world. But when my eyes are opened, my blues still ain’t always blue.”

Who is to say that she’s wrong? Who is to say that she’s crazy for not seeing and feeling and caressing the blues that mark our lives of pleasurable ecstasy? Lives that we name Joy and Destiny and Faith and Delia with smiles wider than any river that I’ve seen. Her blues are not always blue, and I know ‘cause I’ve seen them and I’ve felt their torturing and strenuous attractions marking my body and forcing my mind into a cycle of delirium. Yet you and they all laugh when she and I say that the blues ain’t always blue.

Sometimes the blues appear in front of me with white masks and water-hoses demanding that I admit my self-hatred ‘cause my skin is too blue. You know what they call me – the blue black lady, or the blacker than blue mammy, or the *blue-ist* black of blue girls.

At other times, the blues appear behind me with large rings around my wrists and hurtful hands stealing away my thighs from my body. All awhile, that particular blues laugh aloud and the sounds utter forth, “I’m gonna taste your blackness tonight and you better sing the blues loud ‘nough for me to hear and low ‘nough for nobody else to want.”

So I sing, and only I and my body know that my song is of hate and pain and anger and rage and annoyance that all spark and thrive in the name of *My Blues*. See, my blues ain’t always blue; sometimes my blues are white or gray and other times my blues are all those things that have been taken away – body and mind, and I can’t even feel my own damn thighs. All I can do is ask what Louie asked:

“What did I do
To be so black
And Blue?”

And so she yells again and again, “My blues ain’t always blue ‘specially when my eyes are shut to the world. But when my eyes are opened, my blues still ain’t always blue,” until she can’t hear herself anymore.

Speculations

I think I'm supposed to be here

But maybe I'm not supposed to be here, but over there
In a world where the love doesn't fade away
And the childhood tendencies tend not to stray.
Maybe I'm supposed to be over there
Where the poverty and the homelessness don't exist
Don't filter into my thoughts and into my mind
Because when I see you and see that, I want to leave it all behind
And watch the lived realities run to lived equalities
Of man and woman and child
And America and Africa
And race and...
Did you imagine the swiftness of my pace?
I just want to get away
Without feeling and thinking whether or not I may
See an end, cause an end
To the stream of lived realities that paint
Our landscape,
That defines our real reality
That forces me to want to leave
Thinking that the poverty over there
The drugs right here

The violence everywhere
Will flow into my river.
And Roberta Flack said
Said something like, "Killing Me Softly With His Song,"
And my river is being killed, but not alone by his song,
But with the many painted and accepted wrongs
That you
And I live with and among
And while I think I'm supposed to be here,
I at times wonder if I am supposed to be over there
Thinking of America as killing me softly with freedom
Where we had our own Roberta Flack and Donny Hathaway
Singing about
Killing with freedom and rights and always good health
But never about poverty and crime and the white man's wealth.
Until then, I'll believe that I belong somewhere.
And then, I heard the man telling my river
"Come over here 'cause it's safe."
But I refused because I am never safe
Do you hear me? I am never safe,
And they all think I'm crazy!
Yet they don't, and never will hear my music:
Dop, Dop; Thump, Thump; Dop, Thump, Dump – *Speculations!*

Sonnet I

Inspired by a cute ass in tennis shorts
Her quick tongue pulsed cherry red.
She'd hear ZZ top, learn to roll a joint,
In the back of an Iroc (with t-tops).

She worshipped ancestors at drive in altars.
Gina, Lola, Marylin, Sophia,
Until three lines confronted a circle.
NO. I am. no. I *NO*. I know! i no no

Her belly pushed out into summers heat
A visitor grew underneath.
Sheltered waiting returning now
It's crown tied to the constellations.

The baby, five pounds two ounces
Rode home wrapped in cotton dreams.

Dawn M. Jones

Lover's Night

Me and my pal walk into our
Hotel rooms with our ladies by our sides
We knew the time was right
We knew the time was now.
To show these ladies how we felt inside
We held them close and let our passion
Take over our bodies, our hearts, our souls
Joined as one in love and in passion
Our bodies moved in one perfect motion
Like the waves in the ocean
Soft smooth strong and relaxing.

In other words we humped that ass
Like the dogs we really are.
Kicked that shitnezz doggiestyle and
By the end of the night the ladies were
Calling us Fred Flintstone and Barney Rubble
Because we were making their bed rock.
So they returned the favor by making us
Feel like we were in a major storm
By making us feel like we had gotten blown
From one side of the state to the next
When the act was done we rolled up a fatty
Lighted that blunt up like the Pimps we are
And said Pimpin ain't easy
As we walked out of the hotel the owner singing his favorite song
*Since the Rock's baby left him he found a
New place to play it is at the corner of
Known your role and Jabroni drive at the Smack Down Hotel.*

Juan Vasquez

Clever Clever Chairs Never There

ability gives way
her treasure
the lazy never blooms
with pleasure

and if this smoke didn't spiral
I'd surely be reading the bible

If she comes back around
seize
No more helpings, even if
please

Genius sits sexily on your face
like forest for the trees all you seize
a stocking of white lace

and if this barstool was clever
My posture would be much better

Heath Ferrell

Drinking of You

We were good ol' drinkin' buddies
With many great times forgotten to remember
Like those rainy days with a warm bottle in December
Or was it November? Neither of us can seem to remember.

Bent up on hard times, good one, and stumbling farewells
Those cab rides to the watering holes, pubs, and back alleys
All those friendly Patties, Joes, and Sallys
Winces of swaggered eyes quick limes--two young stallions

Ventures and fifths drinkin' tales and myths frosty sips
Trash cans filthy toilets brick walls or apartment halls
Cold dark places warm dim scenes stumbles and falls
Familiar faces fights and races the barkeep yells out 'last call'

Missed you last weekend went by myself drinkin'
Someone said your name and it just wasn't the same.
Went to the same old spots and places but you never came
Missed all those nights we went drinking in vain.

Scott Stephenson

Nothing New Under the Sun

There is an old saying that “There’s nothing new under the sun”
As the Millenium comes into full bloom I am holding steadfast to that
cliche’.

When I went shopping the other day, the clothes were all marked down.
To the point of giving them away. To make room for this season’s
Psychedelic, bell-bottom, micro mini, nik nik, flair of the 60’s.

The iridescent blues, yellows, and pinks sent a funky sensation down my
spine.

The mannequins were even in the groove as they posed with their flip-up
Pageboy hairstyles.

Just like the one that Jackie O. sported so chick-ly under Halston’s
famous
pillbox hat.

As I strolled through the mall browsing the decorative showcases.
A flashback of “Laugh In” came to mind
As the square shoppers stopped in their tracks
Oohing and awe-ing over what they thought was new funk on the scene.
This made me feel real cool in the notion,
That I was hip to the haute scene.

The feeling escalated as a woman walked up to me
With the last remnants of an Angela Davis hairdo, goo-go boots, and a
flower power dress and said,
“Hey sister,
Looks like ain’t nothing new under the sun.”
I replied, “Right on, Right on.”

Sheila Ray Reed

Tribute to Mr. Dunbar

We wear the mask that grins and lies
The truth is still there
But some close their eyes
Forgetting about the struggle and all that they took
Our culture unprotected
Getting robbed by the same crook
Most feel that they can make it
So they give in and sell their soul
No longer in physical slavery
It's their minds that's now under control
Some are just satisfied
With holidays and a few affirmative slots
When our forefathers marched and fought
For the forty acres and a mule they never got
I will continue this struggle
Until my blackness lays down and dies
Many don't understand why I won't wear the mask that grins and lies

Casey J. Davis

F#ck face

eyes glowing but face is dead
sickly white pallor permeating all seasons
hollowed-out, blue eyes
saucer sized circles underneath
had been there forever. and he was getting plenty of sleep these days
looking
weary, catty-corner stubble on
top of beautiful lips they told him. they said.
blankly in the mirror
it was the disgust he always saw first.
didn't know how to change some things
daunted by anger
daunted by depression
daunted by loneliness
it was clear he was starving for answers-look how skinny he is!!! war torn,
battle
scarred, shell-shocked
little drummer boy the pain he must have seen. or was it just felt inside?
blow apart
this beautiful face
with one bullet- it said it all! his voice didn't know how to answer his psyche
anymore-and his psyche was working overtime.
let my image speak for itself and you'll never understand me. some things
just
became clear the other day. he was growing older with wasted minutes
and he
wanted to drink them back into his life again. all I am is older. uglier.
you can see it in my face. sweetie-kins!
erectionless and wanting to penetrate.
f#ck my face
hesitate.too long.
my window of opportunity safeway for sniper fire
shooting innocents sacrificing lambs
how i bide my time.
failed my mother as a child, how?
overshadowed by expectation

I suck my stomach in so shallow-doesn't matter appetite lost.
some things are better left empty anyway.
way too sure
would love to limit, love to limit ya!
we require limitations.
love to limit. love to limit.
feel the reigns of my dog leash tightening around yer precious throat?
keep those thoughts coming in happy patterns. polka-dots. zebra print.stripes.
imprint skulls with hammer
turn it around
scratch my ass
huh? scratching heads.
would love to question ideas that run in heads.
clearly no value in this thinking
watch as yer bones are burning
they don't melt like the plastic chairs I set on fire
what a wonder- filled smell
I vomit into yer mouth while kissing with tongues
now she truly loves me
first time for everything
including honesty
knock out the smily faces in yer eyes!
looking at me like that!
wished I was feeling that way
with knife up in my hand, pointed at me oddly

Andy Grotfeldt

The Note

Flannery hid behind the couch, eyeing the pile she just left in the middle of the kitchen. She had an itch behind her ear, but she dared not scratch it. Doing so would only jingle her collar and bring unwanted attention. Her tongue nervously reached her nose, bringing to mind the awful taste and smell that reminded her of the last time she had such an accident. She heard and felt the footsteps before her master came into view.

Connor finished brushing his wet hair and threw on his red shirt and black slacks before heading to the kitchen to grab a breakfast bar. The smell hit him before the sight did. With a groan of anger, he called “Flannery!”

He knew better than to expect his chihuahua to come running. He had the dog for two months now, and it still did not know its name. Worse, though, it was not yet house trained. After he located the plainly visible pile, he contemplated the paper towels hanging above his green sink. Connor shook his head no, resolving himself. The maid was coming today, he reasoned; let her deal with this mess. That’s what she gets my money for, anyway, he thought superiorly. He might live in a trailer park, but he had his pride and would never allow himself to be thought of as a stereotype. He was the exception, not the norm.

With anger, he thought of how hopeless his attempts with the dog had been up to now. Every morning, afternoon, and night, he carried Flannery out the door of his trailer home and gave her a good two minutes to do her business, but even that unselfish, massive amount of time did not seem to be enough, as every morning, he came out to the same scene: a pile of crap in the middle of the kitchen. Two months was too long; tonight, he would shoot Flannery with his .22. She had her chance, and she blew it. “Damn dog,” he muttered as he hurriedly grabbed his breakfast. Forcefully, he pushed open the door to his trailer. The door never opened very easily, but it always seemed to shut easily enough, as the spring-locks weren’t adjusted properly.

He would fix it almost weekly, but for some reason, the adjustments never stuck.

Most of the time, in fact, he never made it all the way in the house before it slammed shut on his backside. Going out was different though. The control was completely his. He pushed the door open, shoulder first, and headed down the four wooden steps that led to the grass that surrounded his lot. The loud boom followed, as he expected, before he reached the bottom. Connor then climbed into his red Ford Aspire, slamming the door behind him. The seat belt automatically strapped him in to his seat.

Today was the day for the big promotion at Dairy Queen. He knew the choice was between him and the second shift supervisor, but if everything went well with the district manager this morning, by the end of the day, he would have a raise and new, flexible hours. His appointment was in an hour, but he wanted to get there early so he could personally wipe down each table. The place would be spotless when the district manager arrived. A good impression must be made to his superior.

“Oh no, sir. I am always here early cleaning up,” he imagined the conversation going as his supervisor caught him in the process of wiping the tables. “Sometimes I even stay late until the second shift supervisor arrives. I do it off the clock, ofcourse. No need for needless payroll money in my pocket. It’s rarely more than an hour, but we simply can’t trust the part-time help to themselves. You know how it is. Oh I don’t mean to imply that Rick is late all the time, just sometimes. I take care of it, though, and there’s not harm done. He’s a good guy.”

He smiled at his plan. By destroying the district manager’s faith in Rick, he would build up his own. Hey, he reasoned, it’s a dog-eat-dog world out there!

Connor, as most people do, lost himself in his thoughts and imaginings. The self-promoting conversations played in his head repeatedly as he veered ever so slowly into the oncoming lane. He never saw the oncoming Mack truck with its intimidating silver bulldog logo above its teeth-like grill until it was too late.

Mrs. Delgato watched the policeman leave the trailer. She had been cleaning the toilet of Connor's house when she first felt the pounding at the door, her thoughts focused on how one single man could miss the mark by so much.

Now she looked at the note that the officer had left in her hand. He must have known that she could not hear anything and figured it would be best to write his reason for coming in a note: HE IS DED.

She re-read the note over and over. He must have thought it would confuse her if he put the A in dead. Fool, she thought in disdain. She was deaf, for god's sake. Well, no sense continuing the job, she thought. Eyeing the pile in the middle of the floor, she laughed in ironic relief. Once she reached the door, Mrs. Delgato reached up and loosened the spring at the top of the door. With ease, she gently pushed the door, holding it open for a few seconds.

Flannery saw the lady holding the door open. Cautiously, she came out from behind the couch. As she got closer to the door, she ran a little faster. Freedom, she thought in ecstasy as she ran out the wide-open door, down the stairs, and into the early morning air.

Craig Bechtel

The Power of Naught

I face the white space
With the lines locked in place--
Tensile wire set to pluck
The choicest morsel from my heart
As I hurl myself against the fence
Of impenetrableness.

Now you are the foe
The mirror I would set to smash--
If not to smash at least to rend
Apart my private parts
And reconfigure in more pleasing
Form.

I throw myself Under the Wheel of this juggernaut--
Risking all
Gaining naught.

Rochelle Hope Mehr

Untitled

love is not
a game the
sane can play

primarily only
children have
perfected the sway

love is surely
a puzzle, for
which god forgot a piece

that piece is
man's diplomacy
incapable of such a treatise

Heath Ferrell



“Caged Kid”
Terri Garcia



Untitled Photographed Artwork
by Heath Ferrell



Untitled Photographed Artwork
by Heath Ferrell

It's not about the...

“You gonna eat that?”

Robert saunters over and peers suspiciously into his half-eaten pint of strawberry ice cream. The July heat has liquefied its contents. I guess twenty or thirty minutes in the direct sunlight will tend to do that.

“Naw man, I don't think so,” he replies, wrinkling up his nose at his gently failing dairy treat.

“Mmm.”

It was a typical summer day, back when the neighborhood was still young. The kind that will be reminisced upon and talked about for years, growing ever sweeter in our minds with every repetition. All discomforts washed away over time, and even the smallest victories glorified, swelling into the future.

This particular summer was a baseball summer. None of us really knew why. We didn't particularly care for the sport. None of us were particularly athletic. Our equipment was a ragtag assortment of leftovers: balls, bats and gloves of a much wider range of styles and sizes than we'd ever want or need, from no-one-really-knows where. Invariably someone, a lucky someone actually, would get stuck with a left-handed glove. Lucky, because the wrong glove was still better than no glove. There weren't enough to go around as it was.

Maybe somebody suggested the game. I'm sure someone must have made the call. But still, maybe it wasn't entirely their own idea. Maybe the grass called them.

The field we played in was right next to my house. It was vast by our standards back then. What with the quality of our hitters, versus the quality of our pitchers, we were lucky to get a ball outside of its boundaries. Which, all things considered was a good thing. Deep right field led to Main Street; an almost certain home run, and center field sprawled out across another street and into an asphalt parking lot. The latter was a smaller street, so chasing a ball across it, unlike Main, was not a certain death. Still, it was a long dash, and better to be avoided if possible.

But usually, the streets weren't a problem. Our lousy playing aside, it almost seemed as if the grass had a special gravity all its own.

The pull of the field seemed to bring down even the most promising fly balls, either sending them into some crazily unpredictable bounce, or just eating the balls outright.

The grass clippings in the early summer were deep in our little field. At the end of spring, the field would be just full to bursting, with little miracles of life everywhere. Huge sunflowers, tiny pecan tree sprouts, and surely dozens of dozens of vegetational variants crowded their way in, hungering for light and earth, and hustling their way up the ladders in their own little society.

And then the men would come. Once the heat set in for the summer, the owners of the field would send out their lawn crew to battle back the foliage that had rocketed up in the springtime. They would bring their weed whackers, their industrial strength mowers, their edgers, their pesticides, and they would destroy. All that would be left of the upstarts would be an inches deep carpet, spread humbly now, at the toes of the old ones, the great and sprawling pecan trees that shaded our infields. Surely though, even through this affront, the upstarts must have laughed their own little green laughter, knowing that this destruction would only pave the way for next year's revolt. A little decay, a little time, and a lot of sunlight, and the field would once again team with life.

But in the meantime.

Tribute.

The grass clippings in the early summer were deep in our little field. Its soft cushion beneath our feet was a welcome relief, soft and springy beneath our soles, and without the brutal glare of the sun reflecting up at us the way it would on an asphalt surface. Every footstep in this lush, moist surface would send up drafts of beautifully thick and syrupy air, still warm, but not brutal; refreshing and sweet. We were drawn in, all of us. It was as if the field demanded our attendance; our modest worship, and our repeated visits. It demanded first that we see what forces had been loosed upon it, and then that we see life's tenacity and resilience; that we smell the sweetness of the decay beneath our feet, and recognize it not as surrender or defeat, but as the beginning of the new wave of the revolution. Of a new wave of life.

Maybe somebody suggested the game. I'm sure someone must have made the call. But still, maybe it wasn't entirely their own idea. Maybe the grasses called to them.

Fitting then, that in these fields, and in this summer, I tasted the sweetest nectar that I have ever experienced, and came just that much closer to understanding the beauties of life. It was one of those long and lazy days of baseball, and the midday sun was beating down on all of us, and our little field as well. We had just adjourned to make a run to the convenience store, and we returned, all gorged on junk and fat and soft drinks (the 'other' miracles of life), and were refueled, almost ready to continue our game, when I saw it.

Here we were, about ready to resume our game, and devote ourselves for a few more hours, surely losing ourselves in the day and our exploits, and Robert wasn't going to finish his ice cream.

Now I usually like to eat my ice cream melted, or melting at least. That ooey-goey state just seems to bring out a little extra flavor that somehow, frozen taste buds don't seem to receive very well. So naturally, this was an opportunity I couldn't refuse.

Besides, like the grass...it was calling me.

To this day, I have never ever tasted anything so beautiful. This stuff went down like liquid silk, coating my throat, as if my tongue was reluctant to part with its rich texture. Like our summer days in the field, it was a miracle all its own. And, like the field, it had called me, demanding tribute, a testament to its magnificence.

Later that night, troubled in my slumber, I awoke feeling the need to stumble groggily out to our front porch and gaze out over our field, and maybe to make a little sense of the new wisdom I'd been handed. Staring out into the steamy night, I began to reflect back on the day's events.

And then it all came together. Clutching at my sides, arms crossed, I began to retch and heave. A lot of sunlight, a little time, and a little decay, and my gut was suddenly teaming with life. My stomach convulsed madly, but by this late hour, there really wasn't anything left for it to expel. This was perhaps the worst feeling I had experienced in my young life and may still to this day be one of the most unpleasant.

After a good half an hour or so, I gave the field a good glaring at, and then headed back to bed.

James Kinsey

Cordelia in the Fall

It was a cold , windy evening
in our little piece of the world.
At one distant end of the earth,
the red-orange sun was bleeding
the last of its dying rays upon *the village*.
On the other side, distant horizons
were melting into the darkened sky
and slowly fading into oblivion.
From all around,
the silhouette of naked tree branches
seemed to reach toward the fading skies
as whistling winds danced with leaves
that gently fell into a cold dusty grave.

All about, the children of Cordelia
waltzed in the debris of whirling dust devils
as they laughed themselves silly.
Meanwhile, others frantically chased flying leaves
across the old dirt road.
Children's eyes squinted
and their hands pushed against the air
as they fought against cold dusty winds
that blustered from every direction.
And when the winds suddenly calmed,
the restless children
threw their hands to the sky
begging for another Fall in Cordelia.

Last Chance

If today were this man's final day on earth, where he would inhale his last rising and falling breath, I dare say he could not ask for a more beautiful arena. The air is fresh and although the breeze is hot, it feels good against his worn bearded face. Songs from his earlier years run through his newly cleared head and he finds himself remembering times long past. This happens when he takes these long road trips; it is why he takes them. The mind is a magnificent thing that has the ability to wander back and forth between times and places as quickly as the second hand on a clock ticks from present to past. Today, he feels a peacefulness that grows as each day passes and with that calm he finds himself drifting off again. *Has it been 30 years since I was there, making my own history with men I have not, nor may never, see again?* And with sadness he remembers those left behind.

Did you know that when your life is being lived, you can't see the lessons you are learning in any particular moment? You only realize this, of course, in retrospect. Never would he have believed that the experience of war and death would surface years later, becoming the most important and rewarding thing he ever did in his entire life. Where did the time go? He notices that the sky is clear, not a cloud visible for miles. The earth is parched. Although rain would be a welcome visitor, the man is glad there are no blankets of gray falling from the sky ahead, for he is looking to make camp at his favorite watering hole some hundred or so miles down the road. Rain would hamper his arrival. The road in the distance shrinks to a mere dot in the endless horizon. but the peace in his heart, the humming of the motor beneath him and the silence of creation make him patient. He is in no hurry- for today is his and only his to fill, as he and only he chooses to fill it. History could be on the making.

Sunflower fields to the left ripple like rolling waves of yellow paint to and fro in the breeze. No matter how many times this very road has been traveled, the nature appears fresh, as if this were its first day of conception. The flat slowly shifts into gradual hills. Further up the road more rolling hills can be seen in the distance. It's hard to believe that it's only been three days since he left the high rises and fast moving lanes of the city.

He breathes in the fresh air and his mind wanders again, and it is a welcomed wander. Up ahead a sleepy, little town lies off the beaten path. It could easily be located in Anywhere, USA.

A stop for food gives this traveler a chance to exchange pleasantries with a few of locals, whom he always finds to be interesting. The “Last Chance Bar and Grill”-the name suits this ramshackle old place.

The only problem is he cannot zero in on which obvious “Last Chance” it refers to, “Last Chance” to eat here before it falls down? “Last Chance” to have a cool one? Maybe it is simply called “Last Chance” for lack of a better name. Who knows, but he is not going to miss his “Last Chance”.

Approaching the wooden makeshift structure takes him back in time. The wrap around porch looks dusty and with each boot step, tiny puffs of powdered clouds rise and gently fall. The floor planks echo in a welcoming, old-fashioned way and he pushes at the swing door to gain entry. Inside, the room is dark for such a sunny afternoon. There are only a few windows. As his eyes adjust, he surveys his surroundings. He hears in the background a winding whistle given off by several oscillating fans laboring to rotate, and the jukebox plays an old tune that is vaguely familiar. Other than that, the room is suspiciously quiet, as each patron bellied up to the bar turns to acknowledge the presence of a stranger in town. To slice the thick silence he walks up to the bar and orders an iced cold beer.

Idle chatter sparks up again and he learns that Willie John, the bartender, has worked at this bar for twenty-seven years. With his long, bushy gray hair and yellowed skin, he looks like he has been “rode hard and put up wet”- perhaps the consequence of a life of hard drinking and smoking. He and his buddies, all of similar appearance, are exchanging war stories, a familiar subject in this type of place. They are always the same stories, maybe a little fabrication here and there. It is certain that at any moment one will say “Why I remember when.” The conversation takes him back again, to his tour of duty and the young, scared kids he led, some to their untimely deaths. He gives quick thanks for being alive.

He never understood how he survived and sometimes the guilt of his life weighs heavily on him. As he stares out the window, the sounds of the room fade and his thoughts drift off. *They couldn't all be saved and he knew that, but there were those who did make it, like Perry, his radioman. Even after he watched his leg get blown off, and he was medevacted home, he got the warmest letter of appreciation from that kid. Made him feel like a hero. Hmmm. Hero he said.* It wasn't all that bad and that's why it was so good. He missed those days and always reveled in the memories.

The bar has gone quiet and Willie John heads toward the jukebox to crank the music up again. With a few quarters and a swift kick, an old Bob Segar song starts up. After another beer or two, a few jokes and a few laughs, the traveler says his goodbyes and in moments is back out on the road again.

The day has turned to late afternoon and it will not be long before the darkness takes over. The terrain has transformed and the earth has erupted into a world of mountainous rock, breathless canyons and endless brush. Having traveled these roads before, the traveler knows the dangers of the night and decides to make camp at the next suitable stop. Tomorrow is another day and he is in no hurry, for there is no particular destination to reach or goal to achieve. As he thinks back on this day, he smiles knowing that he has revisited, in memory, many old friends that he holds tender to his heart. That's when he sees the headlights, an oncoming tractor-trailer in his path. Instinct tells him to swerve right and with that sudden move he loses control, sailing past the unprotected embankment into the air of the open canyon that only moments ago was a sight of awesome beauty. He is filled with a sense of weightlessness. It only takes a brief second for him to realize that it is over and he is not afraid.

Denise Ditto Satterfield

Peach
(For Joe Kysiak)

Bossy Stopsign Under Full Moon Lotusblossum Nimbus
had the look of the twentieth century who's dirty
architect was all about surfaces, all about abouts,
and nothing to smile at otherwise, never had celestial
ears for smell of sandalwood and thyme. Your
glow, now passing, hums for your footstep, moans
on the lonely night stretching into this new century.
THOCK THOCK THOCK go the car tires away out there into
the Atlantic in Eastern Canada summers. No one hears.
Joe, Joe, Joe we are calling after you, you a peach,
you genuine authentic sincere true honest lots-of-fun,
go ahead and tinker a little. See if you can re-engineer
the way the earth turns, sun sets, and how the last
bell is run. We're waiting here taking inventory.
We needed more bunkum, hokum, nonsense, humbug, hotwash
in our lives and only got a few laughs and lots of
sorrows. But the good times were choice. We remember
your visions and dreams and gambles, still hear you.
Don't let our grieving be for you some bossy stopsign.
But under your fullmoonlotusblossum nimbus take our voice.

Edward Mycue

A POET REMEMBERED



JOE ANTHONY MARTINEZ

JULY 22, 1976-SEPTEMBER 14, 2000

The following poems were written by Joe A. Martinez, a University of Houston-Downtown student who lost his life in an auto-pedestrian accident on September 14, 2000. Joe was in the 82nd Airborne Division Artillery of the army and volunteered once a week at an animal shelter. He began writing poetry at the age of twelve and is remembered by his family and friends as a talented, young poet. All poetry and photos were provided to The Bayou Review courtesy of Joe's mother, Mrs. Mary Mata.

To Keep

Lord, why am I forsaken
Where goes my mind
My life is yours for the taking
Am I truly blind

Lord, why am I mistaken
What is it that I can't find
When at night my life is seeking
Tell me what you've left behind

Lord my eyes are weepin
Can't you give me time
My life is creepin
Towards that finish line

Lord, I don't know if I can take it
This slow rumble to death
But if life is to end
Pray for me on nights stayed out late

Cus when I go to sleep
God grant me my life
To keep...

Joe A. Martinez

Dead

I glide through the night
My chariot over head
Bullets wiz by me
Someone wishes me to be dead
I came here for peace
For freedom was mislead
I can't be scared
Cus I hit the ground with my head
I look all around me
And all I see is everyone dead
My buddies try to warn me
With all the lies they tried to spread
They tried to keep me from going
They didn't want to see me mislead
With the agonies of WAR
Paratroopers lead the dead
We'll fight to the end
As our hunger is fed
We'll capture the city
And cover it in red
My rto goes down
Oh my God I think he is dead
So I pick up and fight
That's what he would have said
For me to go on
And feel the anger cus he bled
But I know the truth
He left the street all red
You'll cry for a second
At what you've just read
You might even feel pain
Because I have already shed
So many tears for those I lost
And the memories stuck in my head
They'll never leave my mind
As I see him lying on death's bed
We might have won the WAR
But who is gonna tell his mom her son is dead...
To all those who lost in battle!!! RIP



These photos and other articles were part of an *Ofrenda* in memory of Joe Martinez, put together by his mother Mary Mata and featured in the *Día de los Muertos* exhibit at Casa Ramirez in October 2001.

“My Rain Falls Outside My Door”

I observe the rain fall
Drop by drop like tick tock
around goes the clock
another hour, another day
Yet still on the inside
As meaningless as it is
Yet still on the inside
Looking out; thinking, wondering
I remained and I remain seated
This is my defensive stance
I sit on the inside peering out the front
The door is open
I watch the rain fall
Cleansing formations cleansing foundations
Prohibiting ghastly mutation
Life to death
Strength to weakness
Potent dosage of supernatural giving power
We are alive, Alive for love
Love for we are alive
Thank you for the rain

Willie T. Huggins Jr.

**Una Rosa Llamada
Genoveva...**

I feel your pain your sorrow
today the cold rain is falling
and it won't stop because our
cloudy tomorrow is near filled
with dark skies, and grey faces
from poverty places I know is
going to cry and scream *la lluvia*
is following with the thunder
escaping whispers of agony
coming from heaven, seven cycles
of darkness eating light, happiness
checkmate to sorrow...

I feel your pain, sadness and gain
the cold rain touch my mortal
flesh victimizing madness to my
poisoned cadaver to fight to kill
for you and only you...

I feel your pain, your anguish, your
hate, the evil, the sorrow, the sadness
all this madness with in but your
tears made me weak desiring to
hurt bring death for the frowns on
your face

I felt your love heard the words of your
heart so therefore vengeance was slayed
for now for today but i'm getting ready
for tomorrow it might rain...

Andres Chapa

The Saint of Ceaseless Things

I am the thermostat clicking on and off,
Guarding temperature and humidity;
The traffic light completing its revolution—
Green, amber, red;
The ticking of seconds,
Hours, lifetimes
In your wristwatch.
If you listen,
You may hear your pulse, insistent
Against the elastic of your veins.
I am not contained in that small geography,
Will not succumb to
Its restless insufficiency.
All I know is
I keep this moment safe for you.
Within the orbit of perpetuity,
I will never fail the watch.

Carolyn Adams

Caffeine Kick

I can't hold my caffeine
Yes I know it's absurd
But every time I try

It seems to spurt from the holes
In my persona
Sugar coating whatever thought escapes

The prison of my frantic mind
Succeeding only in frightening small children
I'm not usually like this

Really I swear
It's the caffeine
All those cheerful little voices

Begging me to bounce off the walls
But all this bouncing is making me tired

Perhaps

I'll have another cup

Laura Heiman

A Story For Julia

This is a story for Julia, who I met on a perfect spring day while swinging in the neighborhood park. She was swinging while watching her twin brothers try and kill my three sons.

“There’s a graveyard in there”, she commented while swinging up high enough to kick a tree branch hanging down in front of us.

“Where? In the woods?” I asked, trying to see if my three-year-old was waving a long weed or a short snake.

“Uh huh. Back there. You can walk to it. There’s spooks back there.”

I looked at the woods with interest. They looked back at me.

“Do you mean a real graveyard? There’s no graveyard around here. There has to be permits and stuff, and rules and laws about them. If there was a graveyard, we would see a sign or something”, I told her, with the voice of adult reason and superior knowledge.

“There’s one back there. There’s graves of kids and stuff, and it’s real sad. It’s stuck in the woods back there. I don’t go back there; it’s haunted”, she replied, ignoring my attempts at authority.

We watched the boys climb trees and sword fight with crooked branches; they seemed intent on joining the denizens of the fictional graveyard.

“Will you show it to me? The graveyard?” I asked her.

“Nope. I don’t go back there. It’s too far. Plus, I hafta watch my brothers. It’s haunted,” she said emphatically.

“Not in the daytime. And besides, the boys can go with us. I can go. I’m an adult”, I reminded her.

I didn’t think there was actually a cemetery back in the woods; this was the suburbs of a small town, with vacation bible school and lemonade stands. But I was curious to see what was back there. Probably a place where someone had buried a beloved pet dog.

“I’ll take you, but we’ll have to go now, and my brothers will have to go”, Julia decided, stirring up dust as she slid to a stop.

We gathered up the boys, and began to walk on a path through the woods. The boys threw berries at each other, and frequently ran off the path, like puppies on a chase through an obstacle course.

We walked for about a mile, single file, and I saw miniature dumps of discarded tires, a broken wheelbarrow, the remains of campfires, and fast food wrappers. I carried Jon sporadically, because the lure of his big brothers kept him sliding in and out of my arms. I thought adult thoughts, like watching out for poison ivy and snakes, and the boys thought boy thoughts, like watching out for pirates and (hopefully) snakes. Julia led the way, her small frame carried with big sister authority.

And suddenly we came upon a real graveyard, stuck in the middle of the woods.

“Here it is. Over there are two kids’ graves; they make me sad”, said Julia, while grabbing a boy’s shirt to avoid a muddy puddle.

I was surprised. I wandered back and forth among the graves, recognizing family names only because the neighborhood street signs carried the same names. Old German names, now known as local elementary schools and churches. There were about forty graves, some with tombstones dating back to the Civil War. There were small children’s graves, and worn away tombstones tipped drunkenly sideways. There were no expensive tombs or monuments, only family stones with a few lines of remembrances.

“Wow. This is so weird”, I said, picking up a boy who was sitting on a tombstone.

Julia simply shrugged her shoulders, and kicked up a few leaves. She patted the tombstone of two sisters who had died in 1908, aged 8 and 9 years old.

The boys read out loud, with halting, new reader speech, the names of the residents of this quiet place, but they didn't understand the solemnity of the occasion. This was just another play place to them, a place to look for toads and play leapfrog over the smaller headstones.

Julia and I herded the boys together, and headed down the path back to the park.

"What do you do?" asked Julia, while we were wandering back down the path.

I smiled, thinking how Julia realized both moms and dads worked in this modern day world.

"I'm a teacher. I teach English", I replied.

"Wouldn't it be cool if you wrote a story about this? But in the story, when you meet me, I'm dead? Like, you meet my ghost in the park, and then I show you the graveyard, but then I disappear? And you find my gravestone? Wouldn't that be creepy?"

I laughed and agreed it would. We discussed teachers at the local school, and which teacher to avoid, and which teacher was the very best. We agreed Mrs. Martin was horrible, and Mrs. Maze was simply the greatest teacher in the world.

"You did bead work in Jake's class. Will you make me something?" Julia asked, as we practiced balancing on the park bench.

"Okay. It might take me awhile, though."

"And will you write a story about a ghost in the park?"

"Yeah, I can try. But that will definitely take me awhile", I told her, falling off the bench.

And so, one day I made a bead necklace for Julia, and snuck it to her in her classroom while her teacher (the awful Mrs. Martin) was down the hall, and all her friends and enemies envied her. And I wrote this story for Julia, because I told her I would. It definitely took me awhile, and it doesn't have her as ghost; I like her better real.

Who's In Control

I wish I could remember the simple things in life...
Love... Laughter... Sorrow... Fear.
I wish I could remember it when it was pure.
When it was untarnished from the imperfections of everyday life.
All the people that make up this world,
Both, honest and deceit.
When time had no meaning,
But now.
It must have been a long time ago,
Because it's too difficult to remember.
An unfeasible wish.
Where?
There must be a place...
Somewhere in time,
When no standard existed except that of your own.
I once thought I found that escape. This time...
Not so much as a place, yet a state of mind.
But not even the dreams of my imagination
Freed my constrained soul.
Not even when I sleep,
Because I cannot control
What I feel... Where I go...
Who's switching the channels on the remote control?
Creating pictures for me to go...
The little unbound piece of me would like to know.

Rice Paper

The air was filled with butterflies. Swarms of bright colors darted in and out of sight. Some landed, but most patted their delicate wings against the air in a ballet of nature. There were no sounds from this dance. A ballet dancer is quiet in her moves. She only wears toe shoes and they are soft and silent.

In the background there was a recording of the great rain forest. It was a mixture of squawks and thunder and ticking of tree insects. The setting was comfortable for the flies and they believed they were home. But their life was not the same in this forest of glass and steel. We created the capsule they inhabit and it is not like home, but a place for us to gaze at their helpless beauty.

Outside, the sky was aqua blue. Ivory clouds clinged together and floated on a level plane across the thin air. I admired the beauty of it and so did the butterflies. Some were bouncing against the thick glass in hopes of escaping, but it was not to happen. They had been born in captivity, but the small brains were very smart. Nature called to them to escape and mate and pollinate and we held them to ourselves.

I felt sickened by their demise, although I realized the importance of their exhibition. We would come to appreciate them and want to preserve their habitat and their beauty. I understood that some would have to be soldiers and die for their cause. It was not easy, but it was necessary. We are ignorant in our heads until we see what it is we don't understand. Then we learn to love through experience and sometimes death.

The ceilings were very tall and tropical evergreens reached near to the top. Some of the trees were manmade; their trunks were made of chicken wire and painted stucco. There is a waterfall on one end of the atrium. The water falls forty feet before crashing into the pool below.

It is very real to the butterflies. To me it is another picture painted by engineers to simulate home for my friends. Its flow wasn't born from snowcapped mountains in the summer thaw, but pumped through a maze of pipes and valves.

Children would look up at the falling water and smile and blink, as the mist would powder their faces. To them, the whole experience was very real and they were happy in the engineers' forest.

Paths wound through the forest floor and visitors moved slowly to spot and identify the different species. Laminated cards were given to each visitor at the entrance. On one side showed a picture of the butterfly with wings agape, showing its unique spectrum of rich hues. Each butterfly was slightly different than its plastic coated picture, signifying its individuality from its cousin's. The reverse side was a picture of its wings closed. Some showed hints of specialized camouflage, like large menacing eyes that portrayed a dangerous animal or insect.

Others carried a perfect mimic to tree bark and dead leaves, but this camouflage was of no use. The safety of the museum had rendered their differences absolute. Predators did not exist; a perfect life one would think. It must have seemed like a vacation to some perfect paradise. For the visitors, it is a world ruled by a simple, beautiful butterfly.

Everyone has his or her favorite butterfly. There were hundreds of species, coming as far away as Asia and Africa. No two were the same, yet they danced to the same music and ate at the same table. They must feel some sort of unseen kinship that cannot be explained. A species from Southern Mexico would drink nectar from the same flower as his sister from China. We are animals also, no better or worse and we can learn a valuable lesson from their indiscriminate love for each other.

Resting on the flower of an orange penta was the most delicate and gorgeous of all the butterflies.

She was as white as rare pearls and adorned perfect black stripes. She is the queen, I thought. There is only one queen and it was she. Her wings opened slowly as if to stretch and they closed just as softly as they opened. She paraded her papery wings for everyone to see.

A child stepped towards her and she took flight. Her wings gently pushed against the air and she was effortlessly rising high into the canopy, disappearing into the architect's facade of infinity. I quietly checked the plastic card to identify her. She was named simply, rice paper. Her thirst for nectar would soon steer her downward, appearing if she were attached to an invisible string. Other butterflies were near enough to touch, but my gaze was fixed upon the Rice Paper's descent. She flew as beautifully and as quietly as a falling autumn leaf.

Her landing was soft and precise as she plunged her hair-like tongue into a virgin bloom and closed her wings. I crept closer now, careful not to spook her. Kneeling down beside her, I focused on her papery wings. They reminded me of mother of pearl, yet were even more beautiful. For a short time, I did not blink. My eyes were attached to her every movement as she stepped from one flower to another. She had a new friend. We knelt together and looked at each other. Maybe she was free and I was captive. Her life would end soon and my time with her was precious. For a moment, at least, we connected as she does with her foreign brothers and sisters.

Soon her flower had dried and she stretched her wings preparing to flutter away. I stood up and bid her farewell on her final journey. She rose from her flower and passed just beyond my face. I followed her as she ascended into the canopy.

The butterfly museum was a real glimpse into the nature of the rainforest. It encompassed death and life as nature intended. My stay in this engineered forest would soon end and the visitors would be gone. existence.

Our friends would spend the night alone with dreams of escaping or mating or pollinating. For in nature we are all born and only time and evolution separate our

Gabriel Spins His Wheels

Midnight on saturday
ground the gears
granny shifting, knocking, knocking, knocking around
adrenaline and gasoline
breathe
don't rain, please don't let it rain tonight
roar the engine, let it ride
feel it
gunnit faster, faster, faster!
turn and slide, wheel it then break
see you on the other side, *suckers!*
crunch and grind, *damn! damn! damn!*
smell the rubber burning,
tires melting into cool summer concrete
steel frames shuffle and buckle
underneath all is quiet
underneath
the roar
move it you piece of shit! Go! Go! Go!
No!
It's done
She's done
exhaust lingers around
settles in the dark
The others pass,
One, two, three, four....ten
he bangs his head off the seat cushion
sits back, lights up
takes a drag, exhale then looks up, out the window
the others continue to pass
they are long gone
It's done
She's done

Marisa Demaya

“DREAM UNACCOMPLISHED”

I summon the elements,
through that resurgence of horrendous power.
Everything around becomes inanimate.
I try to evade the past,
but my unaccomplished dream festers.
What does nature have in store for me?
Which boundaries do I await?
I abandon the abandoned star...
I endeavor for the inevitable
but while I wait,
I ponder,
I hope,
I dream
Surely, the mysteries of life will
penetrate these depths and the
kaleidoscope of wonderful colors
will enthrone that
dream unaccomplished.

Deon Campbell

Oh Say! Can You See?

My national anthem says
Oh say can you see?
Hell no. I can't see
Been blind since a little baby.

By the dawn early light
Like that is suppose to make a difference
All light has taken flight.

Hailing proudly at the
Twilight's last gleaming.
What a notion.

I hear, I hear
All the commotion.

Stevie and Ray
Robbed as well.

Given the gift of song
Compensation
Nexus of vision
Finger moving with the play of light.
Out of sight!

Clearly for me
Out of sight
Tears flow openly
I can't take in a grand vista
Less lone my national anthem

This hymn. My hymn
I can, I can
Walk the ramparts
With my stick and Rex.

Transcended We Stand Supplanted

I walk supplanted from our collective reality
Indeed there was one who chose to walk with me
 Inside space we conjured meaning
 westwood, we talked
 conversed with implication
back and forth we spoke or lips seemings fixed
 for we spoke with thought
 And with a thought was our word
 And it was interwoven as verbal tapestry.
Though it was not seen, it was written in our heart
 For we had become one
 Fused and from each other never to depart
 she stole my heart, I in turn stole her own
 We crossed eachother for personal gain
 Instead we connected one and the same
Our fears were no more, our tears became one
For sorrow had left and happiness overcame
 It was experience beyond edible word
 So I shant scribe what could never be told
 Our cup overflows, our love is lifted
 What if first we had met
Before the curtain of dreams had been lifted
 Would we then have known
 The beauty within that existed forever
 For we are one, we are the same
 There is one creation
 For were written of from the before
 And now here we are, destined to be
 In each other

Willie T. Huggins Jr.

Playin' the lues

I Watch the steel slide
across her fat neck.
Tones slide low to high
“C-D-E, no F!”
“G-A, and no B!”
Then I ask myself,
“Can that really be?
A note that's so stealth,
it cannot be seen?”
This cannot be true!
If there is no B,
it's only the lues

I know! I'll change key
and play it in D!

About Our Contributors

Carolyn Adams currently attends the University of Houston-Downtown.

Jesus Arturo Avila was born in Mexico in the city of Piedras Negras, Coahuila but raised most of his life in Houston's Northside area. He is a local underground Hip Hop artist but is also involved in producing local Chicano rock bands. He has been a musician most of his life and enjoys songwriting and poetry. He is also currently an English major at UH-D and is planning on going into the area of African American and Mexican American studies in graduated school.

Craig Bechtel is a senior English major and former contributor who plans to pursue a master's degree in the future. He credits his wife and 20 month old son for their continued support and inspiration throughout his college career.

Gail D. Brekke teaches English at the University of Houston Downtown. She has three young sons, an overactive Sheltie, and lots of neighborhood children as friends and cohorts.

Deon Campbell is originally from Dominica, a tiny Caribbean island. He is a sophomore at the University of Houston-Downtown, where he is pursuing a degree in Microbiology. "It is my desire, to one day become a successful pediatrician. Poetry, however is my place of refuge and my greatest love. My poem was recently published in the collection of poetry *Rainstorms and Rainbows*, (publisher: International Library of Poetry). I look forward to gaining more exposure in the poetry industry."

Andres Chapa an elite member of the literary writing group known as WAR, is a poet,artist is attending university of houston downtown majoring in architectual design so stay intact with ..WAR...life...HYROGLIFX KONCEPTS...

About Our Contributors

Casey J. Davis is a native Houstonian and English major at the University of Houston-Downtown. In his own words, he writes from the soul.

Luis Duque Jr. currently attends the University of Houston-Downtown.

Heath Ferrell is an artist and writer. His artworks were exhibited at last year's show in the Okane gallery. He is currently a senior at the University of Houston-Downtown.

Terri Garcia works for the U.S. Postal Service and studies photography at Houston Community College.

Willie T. Huggins, Jr. is a junior at the University of Houston-Downtown. He was recently admitted to the college of business where he is pursuing a degree in administrative management. His interests include the arts as a whole and the spoken word.

Dawn M. Jones is a senior at the University of Houston-Downtown and the Spring 2001 recipient of the Fabian Worsham Creative Writing award. Her goal is to graduate before her 30th birthday next summer.

Erika Kalbermatter is a student at the University of Houston-Downtown and does not consider herself a poet. She was inspired to write last semester in her African American Literature class.

Valerie Felitia Kinloch teaches English at the University of Houston-Downtown. In her own words, She writes poems that range in subject matter and that, in some way or another, discuss social and political issues that many people encounter. Making her writing personal, she invokes into action many voices in her writing: her own, fictional and non-fictional voices, and the voices of ancestry.

About Our Contributors

James Kinsey- describes himself as “frustrated”.

Andy Grotfeldt is a student at the University of Houston Downtown.

Latoya Hardman is a Senior at the University of Houston Downtown. She anticipates graduating from UHD no later than August 2002 with a degree in English. After graduation, Latoya intends to attend graduate school to pursue a PH.D in English. In addition to being a full time student at UHD, Latoya also works for J.P. Morgan Chase in the Human Resources department.

Ann Harlan currently attends the University of Houston Downtown. Her reflection of 9-11 was written during an editing class and submitted as part of a final portfolio for the class.

Laura Heiman is currently a student at the University of Houston-Downtown.

Thomas Hood is a student at the University of Houston-Downtown.

Willie T. Huggins Jr. currently attends the University of Houston Downtown and continues to write.

Rochelle Hope Mehr is a former Bayou Review contributor who’s poems were also recently featured in Ibbetson Street Press, The Sidewalk’s End, and other print/online publications. She currently lives in West Orange, New Jersey.

Joe Anthony Martinez was a student at the University of Houston-Downtown who lost his life September 14, 2000. His poems and photos were supplied to us courtesy of his mother, Mrs. Mary Mata.

About Our Contributors

Edward Mycue is a poet and resident of San Francisco, California.

Piper Peters currently attends the University of Houston Downtown.

Sheila Ray Reed currently attends the University of Houston Downtown where she continues to write and pursue her degree. Sheila Ray-Reed is a proud native Houstonian of the neighborhood formerly known as Third Ward. Her roots lie deep in the life of the spoken and written word. Her childhood home was shared with her younger brother, mother, great aunt and grandmother, who was the matriarch of the family. She is presently an Advisor for the University of Houston-Downtown Upward Bound Program and Entertainment Editor for The Houston Sun Newspaper. She is in the process of completing her first book of poetry.

Denise Ditto Satterfield is a part time student at the University of Houston Downtown and currently works as an office manager for a real estate law attorney. She is an aspiring writer who considers every day to be a rewarding learning experience. At the age of 44, she is currently married with two children, two grandchildren and one on the way.

Scott Stephenson is a late blooming college student native to Houston who is undecided about life and education. He is currently attending University of Houston Downtown while working on his first serious novel. He enjoys beat literature, original music, sarcasm, and lots of things you most likely wouldn't understand.

Juan Vasquez currently attends the University of Houston Downtown. He is a native Houstonian who attributes his included works as inspired by events and deaths of those close to him during the period of time they were written.