

MARIAN UNIVERSITY
Indianapolis



THE FIORETTI

Spring 2012

Charles Peñalosa
Editor-in-Chief

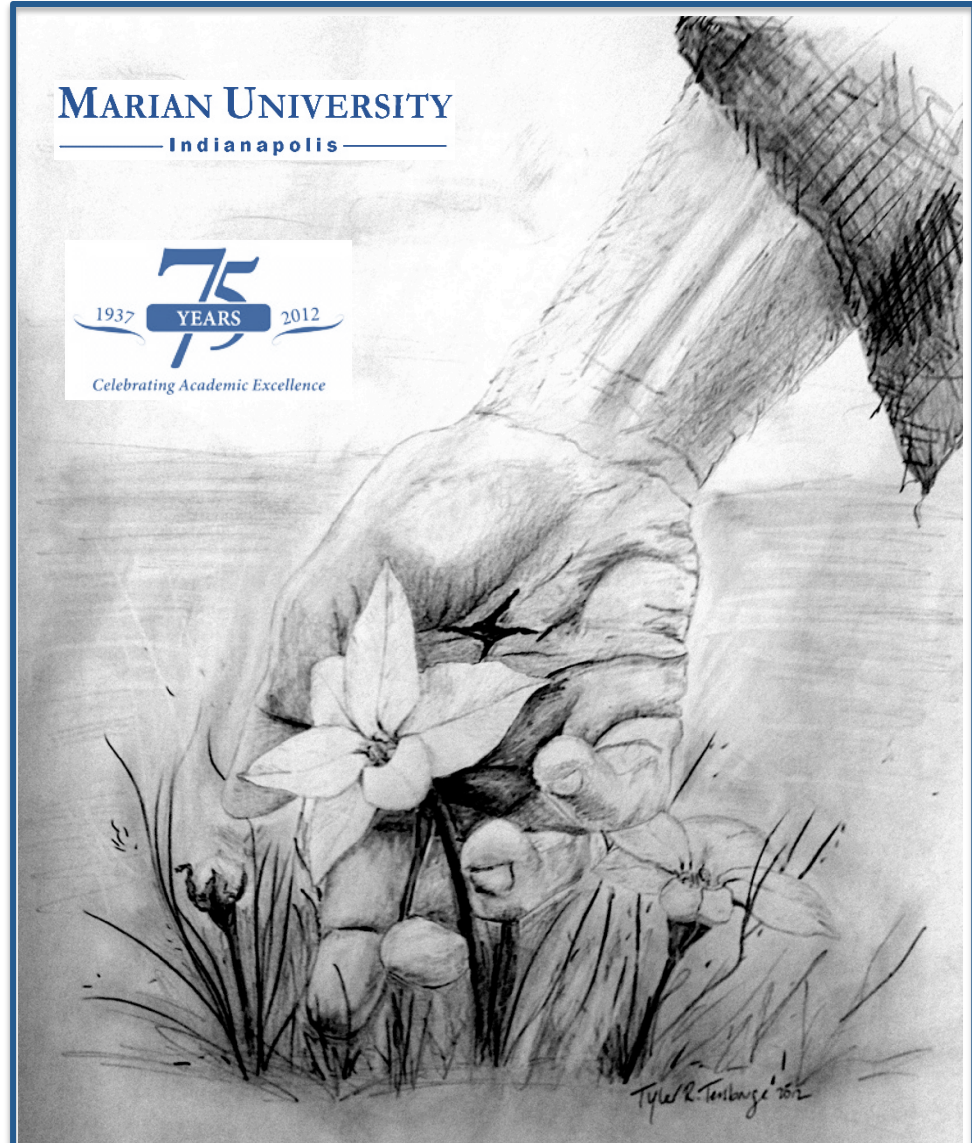
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Editors' Note:

The word *Fioretti*, translated from Italian, means “little flowers.” Specifically, the *Fioretti* is a collection of little tales on the life of St. Francis of Assisi. The idea of little flowers was a catalyst for Marian University’s *Fioretti*, a student-run literary and art journal. Editors Charles Peñalosa and Sarah Gabonay wanted to create an atmosphere where the little flowers of Marian University could flourish and bloom. We sincerely hope you enjoy this edition of *The Fioretti*, which the Marian University student body has offered.

Dr. Diane Prenatt

Faculty Advisor

Charles Peñalosa

Editor-in-Chief and Layout Designer

Loved

Front Cover

Tyler Tenbarge

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Tasting Spring

- Spring 2012 -

Big Bang

Charles Peñalosa

In the beginning there are popcorn kernels.
So I place the small, folded universe
Inside the microwave and push a button.

Then there is light, the glass disc
Beginning to rotate. Kernels pop and collide.
Puffs of stars form, brim with heat.

The universe expands, gets bloated.
As time passes, the popping becomes less frequent.
Gravity pulls everything to equilibrium.

I take out the scorching universe from the microwave,
Tear open the top to release fragrant gasses.
Air and mist escape. Big crunch commences.

Stars get chewed and die, until only the dregs
Of failed stars remain. The universe contracts,
Gets crumpled, and thrown to the trash.

Spring

Michael Baumann

We hibernate here near murky water. Where once a man dumped a dead body that after three days grew pregnant and burst with mud and mosquitos. Where heat lightning rolls through burning sheep in the sky. Where streaks of coal murmur in the bones of the rocks. We hibernate here, and when the air thaws, we wake and sow seed. Our children play with tires and tin cans.

Adagio

Sarah Gabonay

They say that music is everywhere-
All you have to do is listen-
This is true-
But I never learned to play-
Words are my cello-
God, I love that sound-
The rich primal groan that lovers make when they stroke the right place-
I try to recreate this with poetry-

Abuse

Michael Schrader

You say tomatoes,
I say radishes.
That bruise on your arm
isn't from me,
you fell down the stairs,
remember?
If you would quit
running into tables,
sofas and chairs,
you wouldn't need
to go to the hospital.
You say tomatoes,
I say radishes.

Dec. 20, 2011

Melodic Memories

Karen McNulty

I wrote the lyrics to my favorite songs on the wall in my closet. It took one day.

The poet's down here / don't write nothing at all, they just stand back and let it all be. – Bruce Springsteen

I was seven when Dad handed me the lyrics to “Jungleland,” an eight-minute song by The Boss and said Memorize this before I’m finished cutting the grass. He set off on his task and I started on mine. He mowed. I memorized. It took me longer than a mowing hour to memorize each line, but I did it. The verses are up on my wall now. “Beneath the city, two hearts beat” is plastered in a place that catches my eye each day, cursive script on purple paper above my closet door. I remember every word. Regardless of his purpose, it brings us closer every time, singing in unison, windows down, music loud. Each melody still speaks to me fourteen years later.

I swear that old bear whispered “Boy, welcome home.” – Kenny Loggins

He whispered the secrets of my childhood in one single album: *Return to Pooh Corner*. Goosebumps still shimmy up my arms and legs at the end of the title song. Sprinkled with silly children’s stories, the music masks fairy tales with melodic voices and sweet harmonies and the rubbing of guitar strings as he shifts chords. I sat outside of my window on the roof of my house under a blanket watching the stars while Kenny serenaded me. Just watching. Just listening. The brisk night air and the bright white stars whisked me away to another world. I was home.

I cannot forget where it is that I come from. – John Mellencamp

Mellencamp grew up in the house next to Mom. Seymour, Indiana. Grandpa yelled at him when he played his guitar too loud on the front porch, so I keep listening. The cornfields played audience to his shows, listening with their ears, intent to remember every note, at least until the farmers came to collect them. Mellencamp reminds me of small town heroes playing music in the basement of the local bar for a room full of thirty people, entirely unaware of the talent in their midst. That was him

in small town Seymour, playing for my family.

Come take my hand. – Bruce Springsteen

“Thunder Road” blasts through the speakers of Dad’s gold Infiniti, and he reaches for mine. Only for a second, we hold hands and finish the verse: Riding out tonight to case the Promised Land...before we let go, not even missing a beat. Neither of us could tell you where this all began. This holding hands ritual. I only know that it’s important, and not just to Dad.

You know I still want to play. / So just make sure you’ve got it all set to go / before you come for this piano. – Jackson Browne

Let me stay. Just a little bit longer. With these lyrics that empower their listeners. Empower them to live. The words sink into their skin, not like tattoos, but more like words that were always meant to be there. Imprinting on their skin and their lives. My life and yours.

Lace

Cassy Brown

Tattered Fabric
Reminds her of home
Broken Windows tell her
That she is no longer alone
Faded Wallpaper
Only thing that marks the age
Peeling Paint tells her
This is no longer her gilded cage
The Creaking Comforts
As lullabies often do
The bloody carpet reminds me
 (“Oh, rent is overdue!”)

Storm

Charles Peñalosa

The superstitious would have said
That Zeus was just having fun,
Perhaps throwing a stick of light,
For his dog to fetch. But that's just silly.

The truth is that the gods
Convinced Prometheus
Not to steal the fire,
And instead to settle for something less:
A digital camera with a spacious memory card.
So I guess today Prometheus was in the mood
To take pictures, showing off
The loud shutter sound, the bright flashes.

Tasting Spring

Caitlyn McIntyre

It's a new leaf type of day
A way that won't go away
To a place where angels lay.
A fire burns in a hobo's eyes
The trash can holding hope for another day.
Slow down, taste the sweat on your upper lip
To reveal the efforts of today
And breathe sweet lungs I tell you
We can all just breathe and new beginnings can fill you.

Magic Marker

Michael Baumann

If I gave you a magic marker—
and I'm not talking about any of that Sharpie shit—
but if I gave you a magic marker that was
(really, truly)
magical, I feel like you would use its powers for good
and not evil,
because you would rewrite the wrongs to make rights
and write songs onto kites
so you can raise your melody,
hoisted like the spines of so many big, black tree trunks in the high sky,
and the leaves would become the punctuation at the ends of your
 declaratives and interrogatives,
raining exclamation points and periods and question marks onto the
 sentence-soil of your paper-world-ground,
giving the earth and the nation and all of creation some sort of
 connotation.
And after sketching a stretching mouth in the earth it would dictate
 wisdom-words you would translate-write in the white clouds, the
 sounds of an orb hoisted on the hurt heart and head of a man named
 Atlas.
Then you would draw a mustache on his face.
And if I gave you a magic marker that was
(really, truly)
magical, you would draw me a new set of hands
that can make fists gripping inside ribcages, pulling heartstring curtains
 apart, and squeezing the soul inside so soul-juice would drip onto the
 canvas of your new world, soul-drops dotting the i's you left
undotted
unblotted
unjotted
unbottling the bottledup stuff. Thousands of bottles with messages you
 wrote, corked, and left drifting in all the small and tall waves you
 would draw in a new ocean of emotion outlined by the lines of your
 marker.
With my new set of hands, I would uncork each and every bottle and eat
 the message hiding inside so that I could exhale your exiled words
 into the wild wind currents that you would write onto the calloused
 skin of the sky.

And if I gave you a magic marker that was
(really, truly)
magical, you would draw me a new set of eyelashes
that can curl like the swirls of a girl's hair, and
My new set of eyelashes would be stringent. They would only allow
images of the imagination that I approve into my eyes and
filter guilt or
deflect rejections
easily.
Breezily.

And then you would illustrate on me a new set of retinas because whereas
the eyelashes are for filtering, these would let me see everything you
drew with your magic marker I gave you.

And if I gave you a magic marker that was
(really, truly)
magical, you would draw me new set of internal organs
That go pumpety-pump-pump
in synchronization with yoursity-yours-yours,
opening valves and doors and letting blood take elevators to different
floors in our
skyscraper bodies like little skyscraper people that tell the little
skyscraper stories of our lives.

You would draw the stories on my circulatory system using veins arteries
like lines on notebook paper.

Your ink would blacken my blood and eventually replace it so that
you would have to surgically remove my body parts one by one by one
and draw new ones one by one by one, and by the time you'd be
done, I'd cry ink and blink ink and breathe and bleed and drink ink.

I would be your masterpiece.

But if you gave me a magic marker that was
(really, truly)
magical, we would stomp on and scoop up and landscape over the crust
of the articulation of our lives,
brush off and shove down and burrow under the dust and the rust of the
ironclad, spiralbound spines of the books of our bones.

And I would write this poem a hundred thousand times on the surface of
your body so that when
you walk,
I talk,
and the world will be better for it.

The Flower

Dylan Ng

A colorful little blossom
With petal after petal plucked
In hopeless wishes
That “He loves me”
When truly love is dead
Buried in a field
Of petals and bare flowers.

It's a Vegetable

Dylan Ng

Consider the orange
Feel its skin
Taste its juice
Pluck the seeds
That grow a new tree
Delicious, isn't it?
A magnificent
Display of food
Only...
It's a vegetable
Or so society
Tells us.

Untitled

Kaitlyn Reed

Her eyes were slightly sunken –
lids heavy and underscored with a delicate bruising
that betrayed a lack of sleep
punctuated her sallow, drawn skin
stretched tightly over her cheekbones.

She looked down her nose at the mirror then turned away,
wondering who the reflected woman was.
She didn't recognize her.

The woman had been showing up in the mirror with her unkempt hair.

She found a certain beauty in the lavender cast of the woman's lips,
but it was offset by a blemish at her hairline.

Stroking her neck, feeling each ridge of her trachea,
she watched the woman do the same.
She sniffed dismissively and turned around in her chair.

It was always said that mimicry was the best form of flattery,
but she wanted this imposter reflection to disappear
and never come back

Surely that could not be her.

Mia Bella

Jessica Armacost

It was completely her fault this was happening. Her friends had warned her about him. He was dangerous, a rebel, which was probably why she had fallen so hard for him. Even though she was only 16 and he was 21, she was completely smitten with him. Everyone said he was too old for her, but for Sylvia, true love knew no bounds. Then there were the rumors, but Sylvia had ignored every one of them. They couldn't possibly apply to her Tony. So what if he had a temper. They were working on it, she told herself. The bruises on her arm had even started to fade. But now, as she lay in the cold dark alley, she realized she had to accept the truth. Her friends were right. She should have stayed away from Tony from the start.

It was funny really that it all had to happen today, of all days. Valentine's Day was supposed to be a day of love, when couples did something special together. She and Tony had been dating for almost a year now, so she had hoped he would say something. She waited and waited for him to invite her to some romantic expensive restaurant, had even dropped hints about the approaching holiday, but Tony never said a word. That should have been her first clue. Instead, she had been the lover's fool and finally asked him straight out, despite the strict mores that a girl should never have to ask a guy out, especially on a day like this. She'd confronted him three days ago.

"So Tony, what are we gonna do for Valentine's Day?"

"Whatdya mean?" His question had been nonchalant, and that irked her.

"Hello, its Valentine's Day! The day for couples, and we are a couple aren't we?"

"Sure. Look, mia bella, I don't think we're gonna be able to do anything this year. Me an' the boys have plans. Sorry."

"On Valentine's Day?"

"Yeah. Look, I said I was sorry."

"How come you and 'the boys' are always doing something together? Why can't we just hang out for once like every other normal couple?"

"If I say we ain't doin' nothin', then we ain't doin' nothin'." He was starting to get angry again so she backed off.

Tonight though, Sylvia started to have her doubts. She wanted to find out just what exactly Tony was doing instead of being with her. All she knew was that he spent most nights with his friends at a bar

downtown. It was shady, but he wasn't the kind of guy to get involved in that kind of stuff. It was for that reason that she had walked to the bar while most of her friends were having romantic dates with their boyfriends.

The bar was almost deserted when she entered. There was no sign of Tony or one of his friends. No one was at the counter, but she heard voices coming from one of the back rooms. She followed them, even though her instincts were screaming at her to just go home. She saw his friends first. They were all standing in a tight knit circle around. . . something, she couldn't make out exactly what it was.

"The guy should have known better than to go back on his word." Silvia's heart stopped. She knew that voice only too well.

"Tony-" At that moment, the sickening sweet metallic smell hit her, but it was already too late.

The circle parted slightly and she saw him, standing right in the middle, holding a silenced gun. Then she saw where the smell was coming from. A dead body lay at Tony's feet.

She stood frozen for a moment, then turned and ran. She heard quick, measured steps made by a pair of familiar leather boots following her and she ran faster. She fled from the bar, turning down a nearby alley. The first shot missed her by a mere couple inches and hit a window. Sylvia ducked and curled into a ball in the dirty alley, her back against the wall of a rundown apartment building. The steps were slowing now that he had her cornered. That was when the sobbing had started. In the corner of her eye she caught a glimpse of black leather boots.

"No. . . please. . . Tony. . ." The boots stopped and she could picture him raising the gun. She heard a soft click as he cocked the gun.

"I swear I won't tell anyone. . . I swear. . . Tony. . ." She could barely understand the words coming out of her mouth over her own tears and the frantic beating of her heart.

"You're too much of a risk. It's a shame, really. You were . . . quite diverting, but all good things must come to an end. You should have known better than to play with Mafia."

She didn't hear him fire the shots, only felt three bullets penetrate her chest. She thought she had screamed. Sylvia rolled onto her side, struggling to breathe as she watched him turn and slowly walk back towards the bar without a qualm. He paused at the end of the alley and, without turning, whispered so softly she could barely hear him. "Ciao, mi bella."

Strange, how she had never seen this coming. She should have listened to the rumors about him, but she had been too in love to care. Now, everything was becoming clear, though. Now that it was too late. With her dying breath, Silvia couldn't help laughing. Funny, how it had all happened on Valentine's Day.

December 24, 2011

Caitlyn McIntyre

A Christmas poem left unsaid
Where one child laid his head, upon straw I'm sure was dead.
Who would have thought a child could save me
One being could change me.
One sacrifice when the blood spilled from each thorn
His eyes did not cry.
For He knew it was all for me.
Yes that one child did save me.

It is Only Called Faith

Anonymous

Why do I have faith?
Because the empty longing for love that was so strong,
that had such a part of me
that it itself came to define who I was,
is gone... left without as much as a bump or a whimper.
Now there's a little spirit in my heart that is hugging its Love with a smile
and closed eyes,
and my heart is broken from the bursting.
It is only called faith
because my eyes cannot see through my chest and my shirt.

The Chaos Theory

Dylan Ng

This pen is orange
Except it's blue
And the sky is green
Because everything is backwards
And God is dead
Only...
He's not
And religion thrives
Except polytheism is king
Because the queen ran away with the spoon
And the fork is dating an egg
Because the chicken didn't come first
And trees don't make noises when they fall
Because sound is irrelevant
And science doesn't make sense
Since stupidity is awesome
And IQ levels don't matter
So we'll color pictures
With our orange pens
Even though they're blue.

The Invention of the Stratosphere

Sarah Gabonay

The invention of the stratosphere. Whether or not invention implies intention is superfluous. Superfluous because the question is not by whom or why but what and how. Sky. Sky. Sky. Where we fly. Fly. Up so high. Primitive. Primitive in our perception. Deception of a limitless plain striated by the excrement of engines and speckled with stars as we stumble out of bars and cars. Look up. Admire. Damn. "It's all so limitless!" Cry the grains of sand in unison as they peer bewildered from their jar. "Gotcha." Retorts the jar. The stratosphere is a skeleton. Its warm bones suspended not sporadically, but superimposed. Superimposed super absurdly in a space that tells it to do so.

Untitled

Michael Schrader

If I were a Buddhist
on my death bed
and Jesus came to me,
I would tell him
to save his breath
and to not pray over me,
I wouldn't mind
being a dog.

Feb. 10, 2012

Untitled 2

Michael Schrader

She wanted to dance
like the Natives,
so she put on a head dress
and painted line on her face,
jumping up and down
around a fire,
waving a blanket
moving the smoke in odd
patterns,
singing to the great one.

It started to hail.

Feb. 10, 2012

Spanish Minor

Jasmine Nicholson

En mi vida
Quería aprender una nueva lengua
To express myself
To challenge myself
Entonces, tome una clase de español
After the first taste
Quería más
I fell in love
Con la cultura, con las personas, con la lengua
I found it to be beautiful
La forma en que suena
The way it feels
I felt a part of something
Una parte de la historia
For a long time I wasn't very good
Yo practicaba, y practicaba, y practicaba
Finalmente
I could hold a conversation
Una conversación nueva
With new people
Una nueva perspectiva
Por la primera vez
I saw myself somewhere else
Algún lugar en el mundo
Somewhere other than my small town
Quiero explorar
To see new places
Comer comida diferente
To listen to new music
Experimentar una cultura nueva
So when I came to college
Decidí arriesgarme
To do something I knew would be difficult
Algo que necesitaba hacer
That's why I decided to get
A Spanish minor

Recipe

Michael Baumann

I've decided to liquefy my heartbeats so that I can boil them down to broth and drink drums. Here's how I'll do that. Step one: punch netted bags of onions until my nose bleeds quickly and thickly. Step two: sip elevator music. Step three: snail mail you a letter composed on a patchwork quilt of my dead skin cells telling you about Step four: build a machine. Step five: smack sunflowers in the face until they grow up into weeping willows hunched and bruised from years of my abuse. Step six: travel back in time and call you on my tin can telephone in our tree house and inform you of every time someone will think something nice about you so that you will transform your arms and legs into tablets bearing hatch marks, into constant reminders that you are loved so that you will not grow up to hang yourself from the gas pipes in your garage. Step Seven: lick olive pits like a koala bear. Step eight: swallow scalpels I crafted from bird bones. Step nine: redeploy my vertebrae. Step ten: witness the birth of a hero. Step eleven: stir. Let cool.

Foam

Hillary Carpenter

The waves crash and I hear your voice,
pulling me back like the currents.
Dwelling in my brain,
where you have burrowed yourself like the shell deep in the grainy sand—
stuck.
Rip tides crash and the waves wash over me,
you are here again. I can't escape.
Memories collide in my brain—
of then's and used to be's
and I can't move my feet out of the sinking sand.
They are covered, buried, out of sight.
You flood into my mind—your unending memories.
I blink and the waves have gone back out to sea—
Only the foam remains.

Artemis and the Phenomenon of the Women's Bathroom

Brianna McCaslin

‘Sacred space’ is a phrase that conjures to mind cathedrals, sanctuaries, and churches. However, for as long as culture has existed there has been another kind of sacred space: the female bath.

“...I have to go to the bathroom, does anyone one want to go with me?”

“I could pee a little.”

“I don’t have to, but I’ll go anyway because the twenty hours a day we spend together is not enough!” (theannexboulder)

This common exchange when in female company has been satirized in the YouTube video “If Guys Were Like Girls.” Everyone can recognize the legitimacy as well as the humor in this exchange. The women’s bathroom is a concept that is bigger than the term itself. The mystique of the women’s restroom was first quantified in the classical mythological story of Artemis and Acteon. Acteon encounters Artemis bathing with her nymphs and as punishment she turns him into an animal that subsequently is devoured by his own dogs.

What is it about the women’s restroom that makes women want to travel there in packs? Why do women go so often and stay so long in the bathroom? What are they doing in there? The phenomenon of women’s bathrooms makes perfect, if inexplicable, sense to women. Men could not be more confused. The women’s restroom is a place that women like to travel in groups to, and a place that they spend a great amount of time in, because it is a sacred space. The women’s bathroom is a place for women to go to be alone, a place to go to be together with other women, and a place to go to be away from men.

Women go to the restroom as often to actually use the facilities as they do to be alone. The restroom is a respite from all of the things that go on outside of its physical or metaphorical walls. When a woman is at a bar, or on a date, or out with the girls, the restroom is the one place she can go to be out of the public eye and recharge herself. Even in ancient times, the bath was a place to rejuvenate oneself in more than just the actual act of bathing. “Here the goddess of the woods would come/to bathe her virgin limbs in its cool waters,/when hunting wearied her” (Ovid 203-205). Like Artemis, after a long day, many women retreat to the bathroom for relaxation. Jo Barrett’s book The Men’s Guide to the Women’s Bathroom explains through fictionalized accounts many

different bathroom experiences. There is an unspoken rule about the women's restroom that it is a secret place; if a woman looks like she wants to be left alone she is left alone. This secret sacred respite for women is their chance to be alone, to put their game face back on and the shield or hunting equipment like the goddess Artemis to return to the real world.

The women's restroom is also obviously a place for socialization, for women to come together as a group. Most of the tales in Barrett's novel are experiences Claire, the main character, has with women in the bathroom: "She realizes that all of the good advice she has ever received has been from strangers in the women's bathroom. If only she'd listened before she'd married the wrong man and wound up on the losing end of a divorce" (Barrett). There is an unspoken rule of isolation in the restroom, but there is also inherently a solidarity that can break the rule when a woman needs to. Artemis had her own special community of nymphs that she shared her sacred space of the bath with, just as women share their sacred space in community with other women.

she hands the Armoress of Nymphs
her spear, her quiver, and her unstrung bow;
and while one nymph folds her discarded robe
over an arm, two more remove her sandals,
and the accomplished Theban nymph, Crocale,
gathers the stray hairs on Diana's neck
into a knot. (Ovid 207-213)

Even back in the eighteenth century there was an understanding of the community in women's restrooms. Even across cultural boundaries the sacred space of the female bathroom is understood and accepted. It is a place for the female community to be venerated and separated from all of the pressures of society. The bath is a place where women can be as naturally the women they want to be. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu discovered the transcendence of culture of the sacred space of women when visiting a Turkish Bath and wrote home about it in 1717:

The first sofas were covered with cushions and rich carpets, on which sat the ladies, and on the second their slaves behind them, but without any distinction of rank by their dress, all being in the state of nature, that is, in plain English, stark naked, without any beauty or defect concealed, yet there was not the least wanton smile or immodest gesture amongst them... In short, it is the women's coffee house, where all the news of the town is told, scandal invented, etc. They generally take this diversion once a week, and stay there at least four or five hours (Montague).

These natural women could be relaxed and natural because they were away from the prying eyes of men, a necessary component for the female restroom.

Women often go to the bathroom to escape men. They go to discuss how a date is going, or to take a break from bad male jokes, or to have important talks with women that they could not have with men; all the while primping or prepping or making themselves physically feel better and stronger with their metaphoric shields. When men break that sanctuary it is the gravest of all sins. Women have not been granted much space or power historically. They had to carve out their own place from the small allowances they were given. For a man to intrude on their minimal space, the place where they derive their power is so unacceptable that the punishments must be as severe as Artemis transfiguring Acteon:

but making do with what she had, scooped up
water and flung it in Acteon's face,
sprinkling his hair with the avenging droplets,
and adding words that prophesied his doom:
"Now you may tell of how you saw me naked,
tell it if you can, you may!" (Ovid 238-243)

Acteon's brutal death, by his own dogs, warns all men to stay where they belong. The women's bathroom is not a place for men. However, one must wonder if a certain kind of man would have been welcomed by Artemis if he had asked.

Dionysus was not an average god. From the moment his mother Semele died when she gazed upon Zeus in his natural form, Dionysus was destined to be different. Zeus transfigured his thigh into a uterus to place Dionysus, so that he might be continue to be nurtured to life. "The child is bizarre, abnormal from the standpoint of the gods, since he is simultaneously the son of a mortal woman and the son of Zeus in all his brilliance. He is bizarre because he was nurtured partly in a woman's belly and partly in Zeus's thigh" (Vernant 142). As a roving and itinerant god, one who is not inherently male or female, especially one who challenges the status quo of logic, would Artemis have allowed him to be a part of her sacred space? Dionysus had followers in the same way Artemis had. Both had female companions, though Artemis' were nymphs and Dionysus' were women already entrenched in their social roles in life as middle aged women. Would Dionysus' androgyny as well as his connection and understanding of "that unruly female world" allow him entrance into the female sanctum? (Vernant 147). Dionysus' story as

well has themes of sacred space for women, and their total freedom there; so much freedom that they become others and do not necessarily know what they are doing. Agave is so outside of herself that she kills her own son when he is caught spying on the women:

Frenzy has already possessed them utterly, and they do manage to buckle the tree. Pentheus topples to the ground, they fall on him and shred him to pieces. They rip him apart the way the victim animal would be ripped apart raw and alive in some Dionysian rites of sacrifice – Pentheus is dismembered in the same way. (Vernant 150)

These themes are so similar in the tales of Artemis and Dionysus, one wonders if an exception would have been made in the case of Dionysus in the sacred space of women. Today, exception are made for those men who can respect the sacred female space and make themselves a part of it: gay men.

In modern understand of the sanctity of the female bathroom there are new exceptions made for homosexual men. Gay men desire the same sacred space to be alone, to be in community and to be separate from men that women desire in restroom space. Male restrooms are not conducive to the same kinds of asceticism. In *Mean Girls* one of the main characters' best friends is "almost too gay to function" and he is allowed into the female bathroom sanctum to discuss petty high school drama which is the central theme of the movie. In the scene he is in fact more helpful in the girl realm than the female best friend because he actually owns pink. *Will & Grace* contains the same dynamic, where homosexual men are allowed into female sacred spaces because they are unlike heterosexual men. Gay men can understand, respect, and be a part of the women's bathroom in a way that straight men could not.

The phenomena of the women's restroom is a sacred concept that has existed for as long as culture has existed and can transcend cultural boundaries. The first quantification of the sanctity of the space of the female bath was in the story of Artemis and Acteon, but the veneration is given to that space today. Women need the hallowed space of the bathroom to be alone, to be in community with one another, and to be free from men. However, homosexual men are increasingly included in revered space because they hold it in the same esteem as women and they desire the space that women have created.

NASCAR fans are dropping like flies in Indianapolis.

With the arrival of the NASCAR Brickyard 400 in 2011, fans notice that it seems hotter each and every year, regardless of the actual temperature. Fans pass out due to heat stroke. Some sit underneath the bleachers, basking in the balmy shade. Others sleep under the protection of the trees on the cool grass of the golf course. Only the true fans duke it out in the hot seats, dowsing themselves with beer, furthering the dehydration process, but it's race day. They'll risk it all to watch Tony Stewart beat the shit out of Kurt Busch.

The Brickyard 400, a 160-lap race that takes place in the middle of July, is new to the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series, only seventeen years old. A baby when compared to its IMS counterpart, the Indianapolis 500. The first NASCAR race rivaled the Indy Car races in crowd size with nearly 300,000 fans pouring in "to watch the closed wheel steel beast tackle the speedway" (Langford). The race was new. The fans loved it.

But Bud's Tavern hangs on by the sticky string of a spider's web.

On race day, the tavern pretends it's in business and thriving. The bar is wet with anticipation of the race's outcome, and the countdown ticker on the wall reaches 00:00:00 because it's finally here. The regulars sprawl out next to the nearest televisions, watching intently because they couldn't afford a ticket and would rather watch it in the comfort of the local bar anyway. "With NASCAR's new television contract with NBC, the race [is] no longer blacked out in Indianapolis as of 2001" (Martin), so they don't have to wait until the winner drinks the milk to see the race in its entirety. The bar, however, remains quiet. The empty seats, cold and lonely, yearn for the warmth of butts. The butts of racing fans.

NASCAR vomited on the walls at Bud's. Posters, race programs, license plates and full car bodies cover every open space on the walls. A program on race day used to cost a penny. The history of NASCAR touches the hearts of the race fans that walk into the bar. They reminisce on the times when beer was cheap and race tickets came easy and the IMS sold out for the Brickyard 400. NASCAR's heyday. The full walls make up for the empty bar and the dying culture.

The bar longs for the days when NASCAR reigned and had fans that had fun. It's not the same anymore. NASCAR no longer boasts of packed tracks. No one goes to the races. Indy Car stole the thunderous roar of the

engine, and the race is more exciting with smaller cars and better drivers. The Indy Car series continues to captivate the crowds, cars racing to speeds of 225 miles per hour where NASCAR remains at a low 182. The pace alone draws in bigger crowds, but racecar drivers that represent more countries than just the United States bring in a more sophisticated fan base. NASCAR is for the “hicks,” the blue-collar, down-home folks like the ones that sit at the bar. They drink beer like Pabst Blue Ribbon and Milwaukee’s Best and Natural Ice Light. Cheap shit. Beer made for swollen bellies and backyard barbecues in low-income neighborhoods. Where NASCAR flags still fly in the front yard and racing hats don’t gather dust on the top shelves of their closets. Where everyone enjoys watching cars turn left.

But NASCAR fans are dropping like flies in Indianapolis.

The 2011 race only drew in 140,000 fans. While this number remains high for NASCAR races, the Indianapolis 500 blows it out of the water. Indianapolis race fans no longer appreciate the intensity of NASCAR. The Indianapolis Motor Speedway seats 257,325 people in the bleachers alone, not counting the extra thousand or so that cram into the infield on race day for the 500. The 2011 Brickyard 400 couldn’t even fill the grandstands.

Many unfortunate events account for the crater in the number of Indianapolis NASCAR fans. First and foremost: the weather. “Asking fans to sit in the July heat for 3 hours is a little much. And frankly, given the fact that the racing isn’t thrilling, getting fans to hoof it to IMS and sit in the Turn 4 bleachers, where they will bake, isn’t the easiest sell” (Potter). Second: the 2008 Goodyear tire debacle. “The day before the 2008 Brickyard 400, Goodyear tires were suffering unusual wear due to the new Car of Tomorrow, [and] fans were a bit put off. With tires blowing out after a handful green flag laps, race officials threw competition cautions in roughly 10-lap increments” (Potter). Ever since the tires blew on race day, fans lost faith in their favorite teams, no longer able to count on them for an exciting day full of fantastic racing.

The decline in NASCAR’s fan base sinks Bud’s Tavern with it. The memorabilia on the walls doesn’t do much to glean profits from the customers. The bar is a ghost town almost every day.

Come in on a Wednesday night, however, and the scene changes. Only a two-minute drive from a small university, Bud’s becomes the adopted campus bar, where all of the students go to drink away the duress of obtaining their diplomas. When you walk in, it feels like a different place entirely, beginning with the noise. The talentless singers

serenading the bar with their not-so-beautiful voices cannot be classified as musicians. Karaoke at its finest. The bar is packed, all the pool tables are spoken for, and only one booth is open in the back.

College students dressed in t-shirts and jeans fill the bar spilling beer on the floor as they stumble to the stage. It's only eleven o'clock, and their rendition of "Friends in Low Places" makes Garth Brooks hang his head in humiliation. They enjoy it, and so does the bar. The dying race culture makes for tough fiscal years, but college karaoke is a savior. Two nights a week. Wednesdays and Saturdays. The parking lot fills up. Bud's makes money. Everyone goes home drunk without feeling it in their wallets because pitchers of domestic beer only cost seven dollars split between four people and slammed down quick and easy. Who cares if it's Coors Light?

The bar gets quiet around one in the morning. The lone waitress starts to clean up after the college drunks. It's only Wednesday and she has another four days of this before she gets a night off. At two, the bar closes. She is irritated at the mess but she knows that it's going to be a long three days before the bar fills up again, and the loneliness is more irritating than the full ashtrays and the sticky floor. As she walks out of the bar after the long night of listening to the blubbering educated fools, she takes a look around her home away from home.

The NASCAR memorabilia hangs like cobwebs on the ceiling.

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The Ecstasy of St. Theresa

Sarah Gabonay

Tonight, we have the itch-
You know that itch in your loins that only one thing will satisfy?
Like a proverbial beast at the sword of an ancient hero?
I am Gilgamesh. You are Enkidu. Humbaba is our vice-
God, how I want to lay into my beloved like Shamhat for seven days
and seven nights-
It is the only thing that can tame my rabid hunger-

And now we're on the hunt-

Casanova salutes us from the right-
San Marco shades us in disappointment from the sky-
But we forge ahead,
Weaving through narrow sidestreets, we search for her-

Our beloved-

Yes, others might curb our hunger,
But we wait patiently for the Madonna-
We round the corner-

Spotted-

The most beautiful maiden in all of Italia-

To taste her would be heaven-
A slice- -ineffable
Tenderly, we approach our prize-
She smiles at us,
Radiantly dancing in the sun-

With calloused hands, we hold our fair maiden gingerly-
Lower our heads toward her southern-most apex-
Part her glistening center-
And groan as we indulge in the sweet nectar-

Responsive to our trembling fingertips,
She drips down our chins-
“Oh fuck, that’s good”-We moan in unison
Eyes rolling back,
We savor every last bite of the most delicious pizza in Venezia.

Aqueous Transmissions

Michael Schrader

The rain
pitter patters
on cold, grey shingles;
each drop
slipping down,
colliding with another
and all sliding
into the gutter,
carrying leaves
further down the river
towards the waterfall,
as boats transporting out dreams,
floating along the waters
of sleep, waking us up
as they crash
against the rocky reality.

Nov. 26, 2011

A Beautiful Rain

Anonymous

Help me understand the clues.
Help me unravel these ties that bind and fall into freedom.
One day my love will not just be an intently focused patch of aching blue,
one day a prayer will return for a real kiss
as the sun stoops for the earth, winged by fire,
an embrace of light condensed to matter.
No more pleading, no more questions.
As of now, all I can see is a lie and a dark night.
We only live a layer of paint apart, the kingdom hidden
behind an electric mural galvanized across the walls of my mind.
I study the textures, the bumps and bruises,
the ridges and mountains, the colors...
Reading this world like a map of your face,
hoping to catch a glimpse of the true Beauty stirring underneath
that disturbs the murky shadows on the glass surface.
In this watery den, thick as thieves,
Truth is only read between the brushstrokes of a fabricated reality,
every once in a while given away by a flickering miracle,
culprits in the corners of her eyes.
It could take years of weary traverse within this facade to understand your
depth,
each step weighing a mile,
but instead Grace has quickly fallen me life's single secret,
only love lies behind.
It is only love, whose drops of sapphire sunshine, seven seraphim bright,
rain on our heads like the blood of a heartbroken star,
descending with higher purpose.
It is only love that pulls the strings of the cosmos
like the dance of a whirling dervish,
a fierce storm whose funnel crushes us against the walls of this galactic stage
as we stare plastered in place by the awe.
Only love, whose Light floods into our souls,
pouring in through the cracks and pooling on the floor,
washing away the shadows,
tearing on the edges of broken glass punched from the panes of broken eyes,
spilling tears of color down our cheeks
and consoling us a beautiful rain.

A Belief So Twisted

Caitlyn McIntyre

Please take me along the forgotten path
With bruises on my skin
For I am nothing but useless
Follow me for I am setting myself free.
Waiting on one hope's tear to fall
I am nothing but useless
Do not listen to me
Forget all that my ink has brought
And lose mind, body and soul.
For I am useless, do not listen to me.
Erase all unseen
Give in to all sin
Find peace in gluttony
Divine light in killing with sweet hands smelling of melted butter.
As knots arise in ones stomach
Thrash and gnash all teeth
As stones find their way to the skin
And leave only welts, no pain do the eyes behold.
Grace for only the world can save me
Sweet sinner I am broken.

Love

Cassy Brown

She uncurls like a cat
Right at my side
“What’s it like. . .
To be in love?” she sighs
“Have you ever burned. . .
Numbingly, slowly alive?”
Those green eyes penetrate
With deadly question
“Have you ever taken breath. . .
Only to wish to stop?”
Her gasp threatens
With fragile depth
“Do you ever bleed without meaning. . .
Only to find meaning?”
Pale icy fingers
Curl about a pathetic wrist
“Have you ever looked. . .
Painfully into eyes that are no longer eyes?”
A hand to a tear____
“Do you feel. . . ?!”
“Have you ever felt. . . ?!”
Her lips begging words she cannot say
“No, I know nothing of love...
Perhaps you could tell me”

Shake the Dust

Michael Baumann

I'm weary.

I'm spent like air recycled by the lungs of a million.

Tough and taut like the cracked hands of the drudge.

With palm lines that make maps and

Callouses that could fill tomes.

Recorded history.

The chronicles.

Shake the dust.

I long for the well water.

I long to cool blistered lips.

I long for the dusktime slump and for the unravel and for the
Caesura.

I long for the day I can place my bones on the mantelpiece.

A constellation telling my story.

Shake the dust.

Can You Feel the End?

Cassy Brown

My river, river is running dry

And filling with these drops of lye

They erode my soul like nothing else

And leave me wanting something—

And yet I see that blessed be

Ever forgotten my eternal eternity

And your rope it binds, burning wrists

Like so many, cigarette tips

I lie in wait for an explosion

Of your hatred built for so long

I drown, drown, drown

With the ache, with the beat

Alas my fairest, I'm yours to keep.

Haircut

Charles Peñalosa

It was Persephone's second day
of cutting hair at Great Clips.
I was the blind poet
walking in with Cerberus,
its heads made of paper.

She told me to sit on the black throne,
putting me on a toilet-paper leash.
Demeter, the general manager,
looked at me with dull scissors, grinning.

Persephone splashed water on my hair,
and for a while, I thought my head was Atlantis,
submerged in the ocean.
Maybe I had angered the gods,
those mosquitoes in need of attention.

She closed the shears
like small guillotines each time.
Needles of hair began to fall.
My shirt began to look
like a scratch paper
for a child with a black crayon.

A Letter to a Boring Man

Dylan Ng

Mr. Smith,
You bore me
Get a life
You're not the least bit exciting
In fact
Watching paint dry.
Is more fun than you
Slit my wrists
And blow my brains out
Because I can't stand you
Sincerely,
A man with a better last name than you.

The Clock in the Kitchen

Karen McNulty

It can't quite make up its mind... that clock in the kitchen. Some days it's right. Makes me feel sane. Other days... Other days it moves backwards. Sideways even. Do you know what it feels like when a clock moves sideways? In any sideways second I could be stumbling down the stairs into a sizzling bowl of passion fruit vodka. Scrumptious. Sideways seconds pass, and I'm spinning beneath a sky of Blue Moons and oranges... waiting for the rain. The backwards days are my favorites. The world shifts. Rules rearrange. I stroll down the street in my socks as a ravishing rainbow peeks out from behind the purple clouds. Just my socks. My neighbor kneels down in the dirt of his garden in a baseball cap, plucking chocolate rabbits from the soil. Just a baseball cap. Back at home, the furniture floats to the ceiling. I spend the rest of the backwards days trying to sit on my couch and watch life upside down. It looks funnier upside down. On rare occasions, the clock stops. I don't like those days.

For Kara

Michael Baumann

Sometimes I tune out that makeup-caked slut sitting across from me. Every day she belches out about last night—how much sex she has, how high she gets, how drunk she still is—how impressive. She heightens details to meet slutty friends' expectations. They call her a sex goddess, not a slut, and she needs that. She's very convincing, sure. But I don't think she's actually proud of herself. I think she's still upset that her brother killed himself last year. I think she still remembers the vigil we held that was both too soon and too late. I think she still remembers walking in on him.

I think she forgets that I love him too and that I hate to see her disrespecting his memory. I want to tell her that.

I bet she woke up today thinking that the thick, purple lens that tints her vision comes partly from her mascara, partly from the literal bruises, and partly from the figurative ones. I bet the stumble from the bed to the shower in the broken home felt like walking on broken glass like the Little Mermaid did in Hans Christian Anderson's original tale. Funny how the world turned something so dark into something so princessy. Funny how she does the same thing. I bet the water felt like baptism or crying. I bet everything does. I bet she starts over with moving on every day. So everything looked purple, plastic, and spent, like the condom wrinkled under her bed.

She's late to school, and she's wrinkled. Her forehead and her Catholic school skirt and polo haven't been washed for a week and a half, but it's just what was in her car. We have theology together, so we talk a little every day. Hey how are you? Good. How are you? Good.

No she's not. She smiles. But I know better. I see it in her eyes. We avoid the giant elephant.

I talked to her mom the other day, and she said she worries about her. I told her she shouldn't. Of course she should. After what she went through? She asked me if I was okay. I told her I was fine. Of course I wasn't. After what I went through? It was only a couple months ago. We were still raw.

I met him early that second year of high school. He was a senior, and he told me I should try out for the play because he really thinks I could be great. We hung out. He was a mentor. He made me feel important. He helped me know myself. He had scary depression sometimes.

We were planning to hang out in his garage on May 26—drink a little, listen to some music, practice for the play, do whatever. My phone murmured into my thigh when I had one foot in the car. “Can’t do it anymore man, sorry.” I didn’t notice how final that sounded until May 27 when the public address speakers crackled with the message that started with “Please pray for.”

I remember deleting the text because I was so mad at him. I remember regretting it one second later.

I don’t know why we started talking about it a month later. We had a half a pack of cigarettes before we said one word. She poured it out. She told me that she found him in the garage that he was dangling struggling pulling that he didn’t do a good job with the cords that they fled to the hospital that they pumped on his chest until it bruised that he was in so much pain that he died in the ER that his larynx was mutilated that he was twenty that he was her brother that he was her brother that he was her brother. I hugged her. I missed him too.

I try to talk to his sister for him every once in a while. He still talks to me every once in a while. During junior retreat, we talk about it a little. In the last week of school, when we’re about to go get diplomas and undergraduate degrees, I exhale because for a while there I was worried about her. On graduation day, she shows me her ribcage in the girls’ bathroom. It spells “Matthew 1987-2007.” On his birthday this year she writes “Happy birthday Matt, I miss you so damn much I can’t even describe it. I love you. please keep watching over me” on his Facebook wall. I still dedicate a fraction of every performance to him.

I’d like to say that his sister has started to get better because I have. I know she chooses to deal differently now. I think that’s a good thing. I hope she knows that I still pray for her.

Here’s to you, Kara.

Prodigal Pen

Charles Peñalosa

My Pilot pen wanted to escape.
Maybe it was too tired
Of writing and erasing.
So last laundry day
It hid deep inside a pocket
That I forgot to check
Before throwing my clothes to the washer.

Seasons changed for the Pilot pen,
From a bubble-filled winter,
To a spring of rinsing,
To a summer of drying.
After mindlessly
Bumping into so many shirts and pants
And not doing any writing,
Life became meaningless for the pen.

Then I went back to the basement
To check the dryer
And found it buried under the clothes.
I took it and saw that it was bleeding,
Or perhaps crying.
Black tears covered my fingers
As I threw it away.

Salida 71-

Sarah Gabonay

Here,
At night,
Everything glows-
Clouds drenched in moonlight-
The deep gleam of street lamps awaken palm leaves,
Which expand like the great wings of archaic birds,
Ready to taste the drunken stratus-
Police sirens illuminate my pages-
I can trace Orion's belt with my toes-
I'd like to imagine
That if you were here,
We'd be perched lazily on the banister of the spiral staircase-
Two shadows melding into one with each passing headlight-
We'd giggle at the confused rooster-
And compose symphonies from the sounds of foreign fauna-
I'd study your lips and wonder if they still taste of sea salt-
If you were here, I'd tell you that when I contemplate the constellations,
I see triangles in the stars-
So if you stumble across pyramids of Giza in the night sky,
You're seeing them through my eyes-
And we could find solace in the silence-
Just you and me.

Love is Like Air

Anonymous

Let me explain with a story...

In a far-off land, there once were turtles swimming in the sea. . . . when Adam, the first turtle, was born, he was born out of the water on dry land filled with air. He was joined with his Creator and had infinite air to breathe, infinite Love to enjoy, behold and sustain in himself. He and his mate could waddle around, play in the flowers and sun, with birds and crickets to sing them to sleep at night. He knew only what his Creator told him, and what was told him was enough.

All turtles were of course destined for this, but for sorrow, Adam was curious about his body, why he had fins and a shell and the ability to enter the cold dark water where he could not long survive without the need to return. He had choice. . . being born according to the Law of Love. He was curious and curiosity unfortunately killed the cat. . . pride. . . for he had followed his own will and not the Maker's.

For straying off land into the sea, where light and air are soon to found in want, he faced death and his children had to follow with him until they could prove themselves worthy to again serve their original purpose, for that was a place of perfection.

Once he became deceived and thought he be something he was not, a swimmer, and he took a breath to do it, he closed off his connect to the air Infinity, even though it was for but a moment, and lost perfection. All his kin, all little Adams still encased in eggs were thrown into the depths of the sea, born in the sands of the bottom, where unless they swam *perfectly* straight up, could not reclaim their perfection and inheritance of the perfect land above... drowning from from a lack of air.

Life at the bottom of the sea was much, much different than the life of Eden, full of struggle and darkness, hunger, sharks and much danger. This place they called 'the world', but their Maker called the 'Sea of the Dead', filled with His tears, for if they could not make it back to Him again, His lost children would all surely die.

These little turtles swam to and fro, not knowing where to go in the dark, dismissing the air inside of them constantly tugging them up to the light. These materialistic little turtles chose to stay blind, tempted by the smell of the dirty seaweed and dark sand, telling themselves that it was 'natural' for them to love these dark depths, for is it not just turtle nature? Is it not their natural senses that draw them to love all the dead

things on the seafloor? Is it not just natural law of gravity that inclines them to keep to the bottom? “Why should I have to fight to rise above the gravity of self-centeredness and materialism?” they said.

For sorrow, they failed to realize that even so, they had within them more precious air, air which as we know deftly conquers gravity by a superior natural force. The little turtles would not survive long miles down under the surface, but they were most unwise... they thought they did not air need to survive for they could not, in fact, breathe underwater.

Little did they know that *they actually ran on it*.

They swam and they swam, weaving in circles and wasting time. They let their ‘natural’ inclinations and gravity to take hold, while still others did not even believe in a surface. This lot swam about wasting their precious air on bottom-dwelling seaweed and mucus, never considering a place of higher dimension of land, sunshine and air Infinite, not knowing there were things much greater to be loved than what was currently available to them. They dismissed their quiet internal pull as insignificant; they didn’t want to waste their time on the untouchable *spirituality*, as they called it.

Others, however, came closer to the light, understanding somewhat what they had in them and what air really meant... the only thing they had from the surface... the power of the Maker. But try as the good turtles might, nobody was perfect. Their weakness to gravity, the materialistic things, and wasted air spent on chasing other things besides surface things and their Maker was their downfall. All, no matter how hard the fight, eventually succumbed to the temptations of the dark depths. None kept straight the path to the Maker waiting on the Surface.

All hope seemed lost. . .

Then came along the One, *the Hope*, the only little Turtle who swam straight-up all the way to the top and broke the surface into Light, for He was sent from the One Above and knew full well what lay up there. This One, by His Perfection, redeemed all, for He forged them a path and by doing so ‘died’ (as in the act of leaving the realm of the ocean), but unlike the others who left to below by death, He left to air above by Life.

However, that Good Turtle had to struggle and strain, for to reach the surface, involved a more suffering and strength than any turtle that had come before. Still, He was the Son of the Maker and He was victorious. Soon afterward He returned happily bringing with Him an essentially infinite supply of air, knowing well the Way back to the top.

He breathed new life into those who died with eyes pointed up, a sign of love for the Maker, a faint glimmer of the sun illuminating their

longing faces, able to receive life because they could see His hand reaching down. His Love was the only thing that could bring them back to the surface.

He loved them *most* dearly and His air found those that *loved Him back*.

The other turtles, for choosing to live by an inferior set of natural laws, seeking the bottom got their heart's desire, choosing the dark depth as their exit, to their Maker's great lament. It took One sent from above, the Creator Himself, the only One perfect enough to overcome the ocean, in order to save them, all they had to do was lift their little heads in belief.

They call Him Jesus.

Jesus ate our imperfection. . . our sin. He suffered and died for us. In His perfect, straight-up Sacrifice in order to save those who yearn to 'breathe love' He died for us. In dying to evil He died for us. He comes for those lost, the ones alone, the ones empty, and all who suffer, for He loves us and knows well the word suffering. God Himself became as one of us and being *like us*, having a body and a soul like ours He can breathe into us a new Perfect life, for only a turtle can take a breath for another turtle but only God is Perfect.

Only love covers sin, and Jesus is the tip of the funnel to God's Infinite Heart. Jesus plunged Himself into the cold, dark sea to bring life and love to His most beloved little turtles, for as is the law of nature and the Law of Love, air underwater can and will only finally come to rest with Air Above.

Yes, love is like air. . .

That's Why They Call it Naptown

Michael Schrader

It was as we were walking down
Massachusetts Avenue when you told me
you sprouted a pair of wings
and soared to New York City
but the streets were screaming
with horns and whistles and voices
and the shops were crowded
with people who don't care
about your last name,
let alone your first.
So you flew to San Francisco
where they caught you
in the same tragedy as New York
and kicked you out into Oakland
so weak with fatigue
you lifted up into the sky
wing spread wide
and came back here
to Indianapolis,
where nothing really happens
and you're okay with that.

January 17, 2012

Oxy Moron

Michael Baumann

Here, tie this around your bicep. Tighter. Take this and find the softest part in your crook. Don't go until you know you found blood. Go slow. There. Now you might throw up the first time y—I was already on my way to the broken toilet in the bathroom. Then ten minutes of the strongest paranoia I've ever felt. Then nothing.

Nothing about that night was fun. I woke up on a faded purple couch under a scratchy blanket, encrusted eyelashes scraping at dark moons under my tired eyes, the inside of my right elbow perforated. Yes, I'm left-handed. And addicted. That drive home was quiet.

Want to know the price of OxyContin in Newport, Kentucky when I was growing up? He always sold it to me cheap—2 milligrams a dollar. That dollar could get you there for 6 hours. Oxy is like capsulated morphine. It makes you thicker, the world slower, breathing governable.

Maybe that's why I started.

Maybe that's why I stopped.

Because there's a fine line between control and controlled.

I was categorically more patriotic to depressants. Halcyons and Vicodin did the same thing for me, although they are unfailingly more expensive. Twice the price. The hydrochloride inside works like a biological wrecking ball, a catalyst for molecular fission in the highways of the bloodstream, a plug pulled. Pills kill the power in adrenaline factories, warp blood vessels, deaden nerve endings, encumber energy, anesthetize heartbeats. I'm a smart guy. I did my homework.

There's a fine line between control and controlled.

High school is blurry, but I do remember that I didn't like it very much. Now, I don't want to feign depression or angst: I wasn't miserable. I was frustrated. I was highly critical of the world around me. Judgmental. I mean, I was popular, liked. Witty. Sharp and effervescent. Talented. I had friends I didn't really like. They were predictable and easily impressed. They bored me. Everything did. I wanted edge. Maybe that's why I started. I needed a reprieve from humdrum. I was so stagnant, so static. I went through the motions. Yupp: I got good grades and led clubs and organizations and printed off a stellar résumé and did what I was told. I was perfect. Maybe that's why I started. I wanted an explicit flaw. I don't even know the names of all the drugs I ingested, and it's sad to say that I'm proud of limits like

only shooting up twice in my life and making sure to be sober for Mass. I was addicted. I stutter-stepped like a zombie through the latter half of whatever I did junior year. That's why it's blurry. Sometimes, rarely, I found myself lucid and unbelieving of who I was unbecoming. Maybe I wanted a top-secret story, a double-life, some secret to contain, some skeleton to closet, some control. Maybe that's why I started.

A fine line between control and controlled.

It took some of life's most powerful persuasion to convince me to get clean. I didn't sleep too many nights in a row, and I didn't eat too many days in a row for my mom and dad to not know. I hated telling them. We cried together in their bedroom after I hadn't told them the half of it: I only told them how I felt all of the time. I left some stuff out because I felt prickles of scorching embarrassment and guilt, and I wanted to protect them. They don't need to hear about how many pills or about how many mornings I woke up on the purple couch or about how many times I saw stars or about how many times I sat in the garage with a cold key cocked in the ignition, just thinking. They made me go see somebody who didn't listen and didn't help. He said he knew how I felt, and I said he didn't, and he said he could help, and I let him think he made progress with me, but he didn't of course. I love my parents for trying. But it took a cataclysmic car crash, the suicide of my dealer, and some good hard looks in the good old mirror to realize that I didn't want to die with this kind of ethos.

Withdrawal sucks. You wait. For the storm to be over. You shake in cold sweat and throw up toxic sludge and just curl and unfurl like a roly poly. Or like a steamroller. Your arms and legs are concrete. You spit out tar. You flatten. It took me seventeen days. I blamed it on the flu. But when you're done—you're done. Spent. Hungover. In love with the world. Turkey sandwiches taste like something again.

"God, please be with me" was a very common prayer back then, and it still is. Although now, it's said with a different firmament: it's not as desperate. I've been in control—for real. I mean, addictions never stop. I want to get so high right now. Every once in a while, I itch to go back to Newport. But I never have. Here, college, lucid—I grip life by the throat, and I love it. I have a purpose and a vocation and a target to shoot for other than the inside of my elbow. I want to teach. I'm preparing for that now. I actually like my non-druggie friends, and I actually like my clubs and organizations, and I actually take pride in my grades, and I'm actually excited. Excited to imbibe more knowledge in the stead of hydrochloric acid. Admittedly, I'm still a little critical and judgmental—still working on that. It's going to be a cool dénouement.

I didn't know why I started writing this essay. Maybe I wanted to learn why I started—because it made breathing governable or because I wanted edge or secrets or control because or because or because. Maybe I wanted to learn why I stopped—because there's a fine line between control and controlled—A backdoor. A way out. A voice. A choice. Maybe I learned that I'm better now for it.

Blinds

Karen McNulty

She keeps her blinds closed. Hates the way the trees judge her with their bark and their green. Spread their roots from her backyard to Timbuktu. Mingling. Weaving. She keeps her door locked. Hates the smile of sunshine on her front porch. The warmth worries her. She won't retrieve her mail. Hates the way the envelopes remind her that the 'R' shouldn't be there anymore. She sits in her dark kitchen. Empty pantry. Half gallon of Christmas eggnog rotting in the fridge. Nothing else. She sleeps. She breathes. She takes the picture frames from the mantle. She waits. She longs for pine and quiet.

Where Did Our Lives Go?

Michael Schrader

Where did our lives go?
I put a quarter in my pocket
every time you surge
into my mind.
A dollar seventy-five
clings together,
bouncing against a thigh.

Your brown hair shines
in the sweet summer sun,
waving goodbye.
I would have liked
to say goodbye,
but my cowardice
is a cruel companion.

We never had a moment
in a coffee shop,
never stopped on the side
of the highway to argue,
nor did we watch the sun drown
off the Chicago Shore Line;

we never took the time
to look up at the screen.

October 17, 2011

Shutters

Cassy Brown

Cool blue shutters
Haunt my dreams
Cool blue shutters
All I've seem
Cool blue shutters
Are all I dream
Cool blue shutters
Are all they seem
Cool blue shutters
On everyone's house
The "Where are mine?"
I'll never doubt
Warm blue shutters
Tear at the seams
Warm blue shutters
Never ever, ever clean
Cool blue shutters
All I could want
Cool blue shutters
Oh, how they flaunt
Cool blue shutters
Haunt my dreams
But, oh, those cool blue shutters
What do they mean?

The Skate Park

Michael Baumann

They fly and fall there. They're like frail fledglings when they find fresh feathers on their wings. Flap.

Metal-punctuated punk skater boys take wing, pivot slowly, and fall back onto the back of gravity, down to the ground of the concrete jungle of the skatepark at the cusp of Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis, Indiana, The United States of America. They glide on the glossy concrete of the skatepark by the Major Taylor Velodrome, a quivering bead of dew on the busy road-web of the nation.

Quivering because the hard scoops and deep valleys, concrete yawns infused with Teflon and fiberglass and steel, rumble-shake with the earthquake of a rolling stampede. They're smooth. They line the silk of their turf with the blurs of their bodies: watercolors on their

canvas where they paint the stories of their lives. They're fast. Airborne. They teach gravity lessons; they flip and flop and rotate in the middle of a slower timeline. They don't talk, yet so much talking goes on. They communicate with stamps of graffiti tattooed to the floor, some fresh as grass stains, others faded and diced by the tracks of their war-torn wheels.

Here is their jungle.

When we talk it doesn't matter

Because real shit—real

Conversation crafts

Piles of words

When we shatter clatter

Courage walls with speed

Listen to us. Because

When we talk, it doesn't matter, but

When we sing,

We break sound barriers

And change things.

We start with snowshovels for our word piles

And shovel until our heels can't feel anymore.

We jump on the ground to pound our flat fate

Into the stuff of pancakes. That's what we do.

We are the brigade of Dream Street, because

We see here. We see here. And

We educate the blind with a

Headphoned cacophony of creation.

We walk at the same time on the graffitied concrete

sheets of Dream Street,

Chalklines in the greedy soul of cement.

I went there the first time because David Leszcynski was doing a photography project and asked me to come with him. He wanted to capture the achingly human aspects of the skatepark and wanted me to

write about them. An entourage of two. These people are interesting. Click. Camera. Scratch. Pen. Brake, scrape, break, curse, slap, smack, crack. Bodies and BMX and bleak concrete. The firm pant of the air raping my face as they race by. We got what we needed.

I've never actually seen them entering or leaving. They're always there when I get there and there when I need to leave. But I imagine they prowl, growl, haunches raised, shoulders back, eyes fastened on the park. They stop walking and start rolling and flying. At night, they slope off, new wounds enlisting to join old battle scars, joints sore from falls yesterday and today and tomorrow.

They come from carpools and nice homes and slums and sordid

***Not Garbage: Starfrazzle like solar flare like
staircase of humanity built out of
greenhouse gases trapped inside glass
houses with ripples and
rhymes***

sidewalks. They come from public high schools and public transportation and, contrary to public belief, contrary to my

personal bigotry, they are respectable. Moral. Upright. They are in the same Yellow Pages as you. They are not addicts or junkies. Nor are they deviants, delinquents, or dropouts.

I really thought I would see a lot more tattoos than I did. No, I saw scabs and scars and facial expressions. And I really thought they congregated there to worship in the Church of I don't Give A Damn and prayed the Holy Liturgy of the Curse Word. In this chapel of the skatepark, though, in this sacred space, they do care. They express themselves and pray in the middle of the air. Their sacrament is the rush of their ambition and drive. It's invigorating and inspirational and almost tangibly symphonic to see.

One kid, AJ, likes to be called Purple. He wears the same T-shirt

***He told me his name was purple
Because no one calls him AJ
Anyway.***

every day. I dare you to guess the color. Royalty used to wear purple dyed by the chemical found under sea snails' shells off the coast of Phoenicia. That's what he told me, and I looked it up, and it checks out. He's a natural leader, the king of the park: the title so deserved because he can do the fanciest shit. Purple tells me he comes here daily to think. And if I weren't here, who would look out for this guy? He points to a mentally retarded skater punk. He coaches the 35-year-old man with

Down syndrome although he falls better than I

***I like how oblivious he is
When he flails and fails
Because it makes me feel***

on roller blades who, occasionally, can blade can. And if anyone

**He's a father:
The guy with the green shirt?
He can't lie, but he doesn't tell the whole truth,
So he yells with his gears instead.**

guy with a green shirt tells me that he has to come here to take out his anger, his frustration, his dissatisfactions, his regrets that hover overhead just as high as he does when he ramps off the edge of the bank—or he'll take them home with him and punch holes in walls or in his ten-month-old's head. He told me he has to hit concrete so he doesn't hit his family. He's 24. One kid spray-paints a new stamp every time he masters a new trick. He graffiti's his name intricately into his canvas. He says he touches them all before beginning every day to remind himself what he's accomplished and to imagine where he wants to be.

I started to see them now. I started to picture them as the little hydrogen and oxygen molecules in that quivering bead of dew on the busy road-web of the nation. They are a mini-microcosm with archetypes that sum up our world pretty well. They have a spectrum of winners and losers here; they are showoffs and coy. Modest and braggarts. Charismatic and embarrassed. Hard workers and naturals. Helpers and cheaters. They are leaders and followers. Experts and novitiates. They extend helping hands and lock tight fists. They remind me of no one and everyone.

**Because when I'm down everywhere
else, I can
Come here and
Go up and
Clear—
Flipflop a gravity easily**

create and express, and...

I'm jealous. I'm jealous of them. In addition to rocking my stereotypical viewpoint of skater punks, they learn to express themselves aptly. Poignantly. They have stories, and they tell them fiercely, fearlessly in their concrete jungle. But I can't help but think as I jot down the

gives him shit, he says, they have to answer to me. I have respect for AJ—Purple. Another

**Spinning is how I do.
Get out of there.
Come here.
Find my stamp, light lamps,
With kerosene of caring,
With the
Fragments of words we create
When we skate
When we hate
When we scrape scribble scrawl
drawl like skating scribes
The gurus of love language that
Cocreate realities
With these obscenities
With these melodies
The song of songs on
The sheetmusic of the world,
And the whole wide world writes a
Sentence slowly when we rotate.**

They are artists.

They are athletes and control freaks. They come here to be perfectionists and to be able to control their tricks when they can't control anything else anywhere else anytime else. They

neophyte lines of another poem they've injected into my mind: were they to visit me in my element, were they to swap their skateboards for my notebook, were they to tiptoe into my critical and creative nonfiction writing classroom...

Would they be jealous of me? Of my artistry and expression and story? The grass is always greener, I guess. I guess we could teach each other a thing or two about flying, respectively. Flap.

*I walk on your designs because I
can't draw my own,
And this is how I
Take hollow hands to cup
The soup in the sky—
But trying to hold soup
Is actually like trying to
Hold clear water,
Which is impossible or
improbable
And so it sifts and strains
From fingerlace and
Weeps from fingertips
Drips
Slips
Like rain-lips
Kiss my mouth with memories.*

Your teeth are fucked up, but you still slide glide with your wheels and feel more than I do.

No One Talks of Fall Love

Cassy Brown

The sun is so bright
That it blinds and burns
All at once
-But we don't care
Those beautiful colors
Of red and gold,
Yellow and brown
Crunch beneath our feet
-But we don't care
We laugh
And stumble
While everyone stares
-But we don't care
Our lips touch
While my hands run down
Your soft and delicate form
And we are not in love
-But we do not care.

Single Servings

Sarah Gabonay

I want to compose,
But all I can do is retrace the lines in my notebook-
Inspiration doesn't come easily at 32,000 feet-
Closed quarters and the conglomerate cocktail of body odor stun my tongue-
My tongue is connected to my hand-
My hand that writes springy poetry and pointed prose-
Or that's what I tell myself, anyway-
That's my excuse-
If one needed an excuse to dawdle lazily with words on a plane-

How can I compose with crust in my eye?!
Someone fetch me some parchment and a fountain pen!
Fan my dewy brow so that I may release this burdensome PO-E-TRAY!

In times like these, I love the taste of sentences-
I don't have to deal with the monotony of meter or maintain morality-
"Hear ye, Hear ye! I would like to announce that my soul has dissipated into
the abyss of stagnant dissonance!

Thank you and don't forget to tip your waitress."
One day, I hope to be as eloquent as sticky fingered school kids-

Cindy-slung-a-sack-of-shit-

I love synonyms for secretive-
This is my vice-
Clandestine. Surreptitious.
E-NIG-MUH

The sordid snail slides-
Where does he go?
Who gives a fuck?
Not the sordid snail-

I have the attention span of a seagull-
Eliot would smirk at my brevity-
But I'm a product of my environment,
And so was he-
I'm sure J. Alfred Prufrock would agree;
We're all poets-
Some of us just know it-

A Time for Everything

Charles Peñalosa

According to the cat,
There is a time for everything:
A time to play, a time to nap,
A time for a belly rub, a time to claw,
A time to jump on your lap and curl,
 a time to ignore you,
A time to pet, a time to collect
 the fur from the furnitures,
A time to eat, a time to poop,
A time to be cautious, a time to be obnoxious
A time to knock down stuff from the counter,
 a time to eat pellets on the floor,
A time to inspire a poet, and a time to tick one off.

Contributors

Jessica Armacost is a freshman Pastoral Leadership major. She also loves reading, writing, and just about anything to do with books.

Michael Baumann: “I am a junior English and communication major, and I want to teach in college. I like flowers and tigers and poems. My God is an awesome God.”

Cassy Brown is a Junior Psychology student with a Concentration in Clinical Health. She has been writing poetry for many years now, and is a part of the Literary Arts Society. She is looking forward to coming back next fall and will begin applying to PsyD. programs then.

Hillary Carpenter is a junior studying English and psychology. In her free time, she likes to be with family and friends, play tennis, read, and be outdoors.

Sarah Gabonay

Brianna McCaslin is a senior Sociology and English major, with a minor in Pastoral Leadership. She loves the word thither, thinks raisins taste good in everything, is slightly frightened of squirrels, currently has fourteen holes in her ears, could happily live in a used bookstore, and watches old Elvis movies on rainy days

Caitlyn McIntyre, freshman, psychology major and photography minor.

Karen McNulty is a senior English major graduating in a few days. She would like to thank everyone at Marian University who impacted her life, especially all of the faculty in the English department and her mentors in Student Affairs. She is now and will forever be a Marian University Knight.

Dylan Ng is a sophomore double major in math and music with a minor in secondary education. He is a member of the marching band as well as the Literary Arts Society, and will be taking over as president of LASMU next fall.

Jasmine Nicholson is a freshman pursuing a major in elementary education and a double minor in special education and Spanish.

Charles Peñalosa is a senior double majoring in Catholic Studies and History and is a seminarian at the Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary. This is his third year being editor of *The Fioretti* and he loves to write poems as a way to contemplate the extraordinary in the mundane. In the fall he will be attending St. Meinrad School of Theology.

Kaitlyn Reed

Michael Schrader is Marian University's most prominent hipster, not only equipped with artistic talent, but also luscious, long locks that makes him every girl's dream-boy. He has sprouted from humble roots in a small industrial city that is home of everyone's favorite minor league baseball team, the Lafayette Jaguars. He aspires to remain unemployed and in debt after college as he is majoring in Philosophy, with minors in Peace and Justice and Global Studies, and has a concentration in Writing. He hopes to use his collection of studies to reconcile Karl Marx and capitalism in order to create world peace.

- written by Mike Byers

Tyler Tenbarge, a Haubstadt, Indiana native, is a senior graduating in May 2012 with a B.A. in Catholic Studies and minor in Psychology. He will be enrolling at St. Meinrad School of Theology to continue formation for Catholic priesthood. Tyler enjoys sports, art, and working on the family farm.