

Rollins College

## Rollins Scholarship Online

---

Brushing - Historical

Brushing

---

2010

### Brushing, 2010, Vol. 38

Rollins College Students

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarship.rollins.edu/historical\\_brushing](https://scholarship.rollins.edu/historical_brushing)



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

---

# brushing

VOLUME 38 · 2010 · ROLLINS COLLEGE



# brushing

Volume 38 · 2010

EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

Tanya Grae · Sandra Chávez Johnson

EDITOR

Kyrsten Duncan

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Adrian Alexander · Kelsey Beaumont · Cary Hall · Kelly Sheldon

FACULTY

Philip F. Deaver · Alan Nordstrom

ROLLINS COLLEGE

Winter Park, Florida

Brushing is the literary and art journal of the Rollins College student body. Brushing publishes poetry, fiction, non-fiction, play excerpts, photographs, and art.

Cover: Photograph by Cary Hall

Centerfold: Photograph by Stefany Sosa

© 2011 Brushing, Rollins College

All rights revert to writers and artists upon publication.

Published by Rollins College

[www.rollins.edu](http://www.rollins.edu)

Email: [brushing@rollins.edu](mailto:brushing@rollins.edu)

Printed by Magnolia Press, Longwood, Florida

# POETRY

WILLIAM ALLRED

The Night · 25

AARON CHILDREE

Memories · 12

Circles · 13

JESSICA FIRPI

Ode to the Butter Knife · 23

BARRETT FREIBERT

Dungeon of Suds · 22

CARY HALL

What It's Like · 14

Another Time When My Father Left · 15

Deathbed · 16

New · 21

KIM HAMBRIGHT

His Promises Painted Landscapes in Me · 11

MICHELE HUNT

The TKE Walk · 26

ANNA KNAPP

Unconcluded · 19

REBECCA KON

What Shall Be · 28

E · 30

Inner Revolution · 31

# POETRY

DOMINQUE PARRIS

Heartless · 18

VICTORIA I. SANCHEZ

Lullaby of Birdland · 9

Devils, Dada, and Spaceships · 24

MEGHAN THOMAS

Faces · 27

## FICTION

LAURA HARDWICKE  
Baby I'm An Anarchist · 33

JOSH MANNEN  
Dreamscapes · 37

## ART

KELSEY GLENNON  
Jazz Hands · 45

MARIE EDITH PATRICK  
If You Only Knew · 42  
Infected · 43

# PHOTOGRAPHY

KYRSTEN DUNCAN

10 · 51

BENNETT GARFINKEL

7 · 32 · 44

CAITLYN GLATTING

49 · 52 · 59

CARY HALL

20 · 55 · 58

ASHLEY LIGHT

56 · 57

SPENCER LYNN

40 · 41

HELENE MARCANTONIO

46 · 47

JOY POWELL

48

JENNIFER RITTER

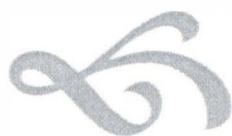
54

KRISTIN DAWN URBAN

50 · 53





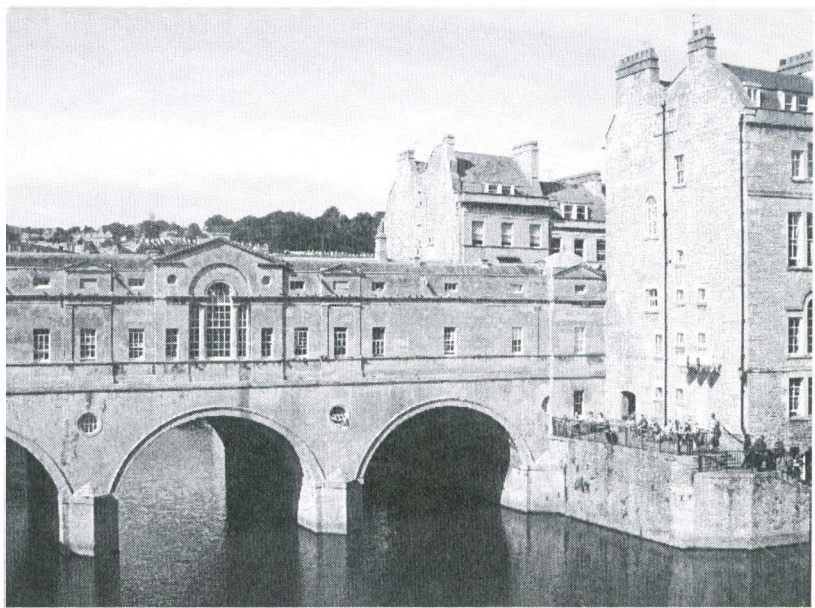


VICTORIA I. SANCHEZ  
Lullaby of Birdland

It was the Rhapsody of Blue Heaven  
that led them from the wreckage.  
The sound bit their ears and nibbled until  
they, with soft, contented sighs,  
followed like tame lambs.  
Starhouses, like birdhouses  
rise to house the drifter,  
the itinerant beggar,  
the flotsam of civilization.  
They arrive in the city;  
the debris slips through power  
cords, where the birds rest.  
The cords weave like the palm's lifelines,  
and separates outlines,  
and separates the weak from the weakest,  
and separates the water from the fire:

The lullaby rain washes the lullaby land;  
gently it falls down, gently.  
And the bird-men in houses built by the sand,  
While the rain—it falls down gently.

The men wake and slumber,  
They fly to Birdland; they breathe in Rhapsodies.  
They live in the lies of the sky-houses.



KIM HAMBRIGHT

## His Promises Painted Landscapes in Me

His words coloring me through passing time  
with the eager blues of the twilight shore  
and the fearsome reds of erotic sunrises . . .

Painted clouds and steamy thunderstorms  
nourishing my fertile garden to fruition,  
and each time his lips circled up to mine  
another painted ray broke through  
gray clouds of painted sky.

But more than watercolor daisies grew  
that season, underneath our personal sun:  
through the dripping mist of tender lies  
his slippery hands groped at my waist,  
as he spread new seed over the garden.

Our love, once a vibrant golden hue,  
illuminating the landscape of our lives,  
is now pale with years of neglect,  
the canvas cracked and forgotten,  
admired in no one's home.

Now, only broken images of the painter  
remain within me, heavy with dried paint  
and the weight of silenced words.

AARON CHILDREE

## Memories

Stretching

Out the days and nights, evaporating

The space between them, sifting

Through the dust that's left—

I feel dawns and sunsets fall through fingertips.

AARON CHILDREE

## Circles

In circles spinning and whirring and twirling  
With dizzying minds to match,  
In pictures blurring and films gone silent  
I watch my own eyes pass.

The moon around the earth, the earth about the sun,  
With no rest when feet are laid down.  
I age with each step, I wander in rings  
Toward an echo of sturdier ground.

CARY HALL

## Another Time When My Father Left

When I was eight, my father  
Set sticky mouse traps around our house  
While I followed him, watching.

For a week, we walked around them,  
Awkwardly lunged over them  
When we almost forgot they were there.

Then, on a Thursday night in my room,  
I heard the rustle of discarded  
Fruit roll-up wrappers and the blue Wal-Mart bag  
Lining my trashcan.

The mouse, against the black glue, cried.

I stared at its fear until my father came  
And picked it up, in the trap, and walked  
It through the house, out the back door,  
To the sawhorse.

I met him at the door,  
Begged him not to just leave the thing.  
I screamed and I cried, nothing out of him . . .  
So it died. Watching my father leave.

Saturday, I opened the trash bin out back,  
and saw the mouse trap  
With the dead mouse, exhausted, or starved  
To death. I threw up.



CARY HALL  
Deathbed

I cried when I heard you die on the bed.  
And why shouldn't I? I cried when I turned and saw  
You lying on that bed with your white body straight,  
And your blonde hair smooth, and your white arms down  
At your sides, practicing for the dark, polished coffin  
Made from the only walnut tree in your large, open yard.  
Your bed was sitting uneasily in the middle of the room,  
Your body a hive for worker bees with electricity and blades.  
After it was over, one bee called the time—11:52 p.m.  
One bee unfurled a sheet as thin as a new ice cube's  
Spider-vein layer top over you. And I hated that sheet  
Because your silhouette jutted out of it. They  
All flew away, took all their tools. And they went  
To the next bed and the next deathbed.  
Then I could see the silver rods on each side of you  
(The rods they white-knuckled here),  
A dozen gray wires sewn into tangles above your head,  
Discarded filmy masks and gloves in the trash can at the door  
(To be rid of your death, ready then to take on another's),  
And the shiny slate floor all around you,  
Ever expanding all around you, until I am far away,  
With its blankness only echoing everything I saw  
In that replicated room so many others were in  
While I was in there with you. And we all cried . . .  
And that's what's happened; that's what's happened. Death  
Slipped himself into your straight white body, smoothed  
Your blonde hair, stiffened your arms with the blonde hairs,  
And showed you how to be dead. Your bed just sat there  
Listlessly and did nothing but raise its bars. Death  
Took a step back and changed from a man, stretched himself

Into a black, depthless abyss, one for you to just  
Step through and not reappear on the other side with your  
Wide grin ready to talk of our plans . . .  
Our prayers to Father Time. I will not forget you  
With your blonde hair in your eyes, and your eyes  
That look right at me when they look at me,  
And your smile that comes when you look at me,  
Because they are a part of our love, and who can forget  
A love, no matter the length of its life, because love,  
Our love, is written, and has been painted, and will be  
Sung, and was spoken into the church air. It will last,  
For people read and look and listen, and the air holds  
Everything with cupped hands. But now we are still here,  
Death and I, waiting for a worker bee to come with his gurney.  
Only one will attend you, because you are only a body. Now  
I've taken my hands from the glass. Only there wasn't any glass.  
Nothing to hold over my ears. So I heard you die, quietly,  
Outside the running feet, and the yelled commands,  
And the shocks coursing your body. I heard you die.

Into a black, depthless abyss, one for you to just  
Step through and not reappear on the other side with your  
Wide grin ready to talk of our plans . . .  
Our prayers to Father Time. I will not forget you  
With your blonde hair in your eyes, and your eyes  
That look right at me when they look at me,  
And your smile that comes when you look at me,  
Because they are a part of our love, and who can forget  
A love, no matter the length of its life, because love,  
Our love, is written, and has been painted, and will be  
Sung, and was spoken into the church air. It will last,  
For people read and look and listen, and the air holds  
Everything with cupped hands. But now we are still here,  
Death and I, waiting for a worker bee to come with his gurney.  
Only one will attend you, because you are only a body. Now  
I've taken my hands from the glass. Only there wasn't any glass.  
Nothing to hold over my ears. So I heard you die, quietly,  
Outside the running feet, and the yelled commands,  
And the shocks coursing your body. I heard you die.

DOMINIQUE PARRIS

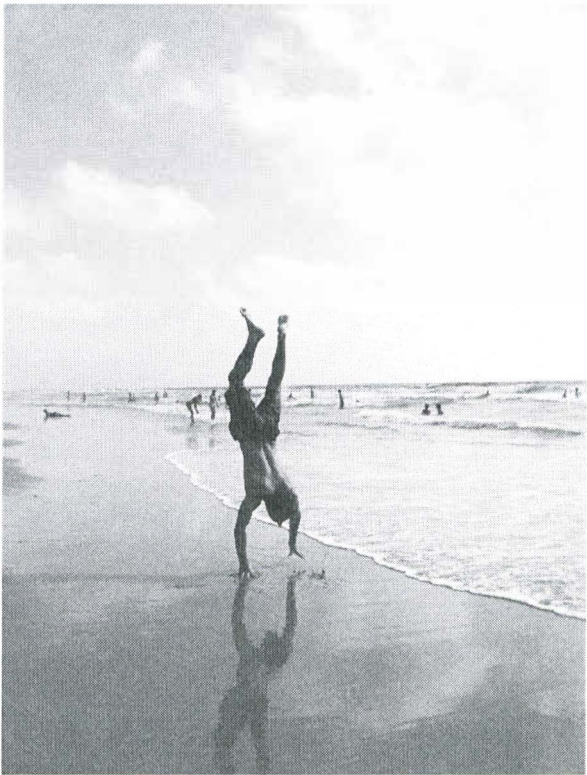
## Heartless

With a heavy soul, I resign my mind, to the fact that I must leave my heart behind. For the sad truth is, that I am inclined to only have a heart every once upon a time. And though I'd give more than a dime to have my heart with me all the time, I can't help but think of that old rhyme. Guess I can't have love all the time. . . .

ANNA KNAPP

## Unconcluded

Turn me outside in  
Reflect your organs on mine  
I'm composed of thirsty deserts and dense greenery  
Bald concrete and buttery cashmere  
A soft humming radio station and the rude laughter of fireworks  
This is no surprise to you, it is your own estate  
You've untangled that intricate knot that pumps blood into my veins  
And what do you have to show for it?  
You can braid it to wear around your wrist  
Or use it to lace your shoes, it's been stepped on before  
Unbound and fraying  
Just like us, holding onto that someday  
When we'll be bandaged together again  
Until then just tuck me neatly into the crowded drawers of your memory  
And once those hands on the clock release their grip on our throats  
We'll be just another dream aborted by intruding sunlight  
A handsome scar on our youth  
Constantly shifting and reshaping, only to eventually fade with time  
Like the blonde sand we assaulted with footprints



BARRETT FREIBERT  
Dungeon of Suds

Sometimes, when I'm in the shower  
shampooing my hair, my mind shoves me  
from behind and drags me into a daunting corner,

to shake the hand of all those screwed up situations  
I've tried to unscrew myself from:  
flee, float away on a bundle of cerulean balloons

or get ejected like a crackling cassette tape  
to then consume an entire mini-bar  
of clear spirits and wine,

to obliterate those sinister  
shadows of situations and myself.  
Only to discover, that my loved ones

will then loom and stare at me with those secrets  
I thought I discreetly discarded. Oh no, they stain  
like red wine and kill like second-hand smoke

while they deep-fry my faith like an albino  
would burn on a blistering August day.  
But for now, I am still showering—

stubbornly rinsing and wringing all those  
horrendous suds out of my hair and down  
into the dim dungeon of the drain.

JESSICA FIRPI

## Ode to the Butter Knife

Butter knife of vitality,  
Never will you sit idly.  
Your smooth, cold sides are like marble  
Your silver complexion shines  
Like a mirror hit with sunlight.  
My mouth waters for the melted butter  
You spread on my biscuit.  
Your gentle stability,  
And shrill tranquility  
Set the table for pancakes  
And sweet, saccharine syrup.  
The sugary aroma arouses my nostrils  
And starts the day off boldly,  
Like a cacophonous alarm clock  
Ringing in my ears.

Without your gentle ridges  
Never would I cut my muffin,  
Nor spread peanut butter,  
To craft the illustrious  
Peanut butter & jelly sandwich.  
Never would I slice my  
Salty sunny-side-up eggs  
Nor spread goocy, globs of mayonnaise.  
Where would I be without you?

Butter knife of vitality,  
Never will you sit idly  
Slicing into my cheese Danish heart  
You have become my helpmate  
May you never rust,  
May you never die.  
You will spread your charity till time  
Is sliced in half.



VICTORIA I. SANCHEZ

## Devils, Dada, and Spaceships

I make deals with a devil.  
Usually come out just fine,  
but this time what was left of the  
Outlaws in spaceships—  
was a combination of rust and stardust.  
They fought the outlaws in their Aztec red ships.  
The sun exploded into entangled webs of light  
and there was nothing, no one.  
Then, the stillness.  
It is spring;  
the stars are filming with weak, white blossoms.  
I'm stuck in eternal ether tides  
and circadian rhythms of the Departed . . .  
The maya was as mine as that devil was  
when he still breathed.  
It hurt the eyes:  
Hulls of broken backs, broken ships,  
gentle skeletons that lie adrift.  
Poor driftwood, poor metal heaps,  
poor bird with your promise of wings.  
You've lost them in your battle  
and they whisper secrets from the dead.  
Delirium of the hot and sleepless nights  
keeps rising in me.  
"I dream of you at night," he said.

WILLIAM ALLRED

## The Night

I am a somber child of the night  
She calls to me, hungry and restless,  
her mad howls demanding life and blood  
I call in response to the North,  
where beneath the water the call echoes  
in the ears of fishes and ancient life  
I call to the East,  
where the approaching sun slows with care  
it shall stay back, for this is not its time  
I call to the South,  
and birds in unconscious formation  
move entwined in silent unity  
I call to the West  
and the winds whisper silently to the earth  
and to the dead in peaceful rest

One, two, the clock bell tolls  
as wood creaks and metal cogs roll  
Three, four, the night awakes  
not to rest until its thirst it slakes  
Five, six, the tone unfaltered  
black sky church, the stars my altar  
Seven, eight, the crickets sing  
of quiet gifts their master brings  
Nine, ten, the clock bell falls  
the Night's disciples hear her call  
Eleven, twelve, the tone takes flight  
the world dies, reborn to the night

MICHELE HUNT

## The TKE Walk

Muscles screaming to break out of too tight tops  
Arms set stiff as they stroll  
Ego 10 feet ahead  
Head cocked, eyes covered and the long gait begins  
Almost a cock walk  
Not quite a lean  
Legs and arms move mechanically  
Charged by that bull testosterone  
Men on parade

MEGHAN THOMAS

## Faces

Ask me where I'm from, I'll tell you where I've been.  
Besides, my story's more important; I've got less color than them.  
Millions of voices, crying out in silence,  
The pain and the hurt, undergoing the violence.  
Ask me my story and I'll show you  
    A woman who makes 76 cents on the dollar as a man,  
    A black man, pulled over because he has a nice car,  
    A Hispanic woman forced to clean houses,  
    A Sikh searched in an airport because he wears a turban.  
Ask me my story, and I'll tell you one more important.  
    I'll show you hate, stereotypes, and racism.  
    I'll tell you about James Byrd and Matthew Shepard.  
Ask me who I am, and I'll speak for those who cannot.  
    Slavery never left us, millions live in fear:  
    Fear based on color, class, creed, sexuality, religion.  
The more I learn about oppression,  
The more it adds to my depression.  
Ask me my name and I'll tell you about the struggle.  
    I'll tell you my pain and the pain of those oppressed.  
    I'll tell you why I speak for millions:  
    I speak for millions who don't look like me.  
    I speak for them because those who do look like me  
        Are the oppressors, the silencers.  
Ask me my story and I'll tell you  
    That I'm a product of the power  
    My face proves my might.  
But I look at my friends' faces  
And I'm ashamed to be white.

REBECCA KON

## What Shall Be

It's been a while since the world  
Knew how to speak my language.  
They've forgotten the symbols, the beats,  
The art that makes up a song about real life.

So take note, for the vote is in, and  
I reckon you tremble, unwilling  
To acknowledge who you stand for,  
And who of you shall sit when called.

Raised as decision makers, political fakers  
Out to make the world "a better place"  
Than what we were given; never  
enough to satisfy the growing stomach—consumption.

That disease of normal conventions, a gathering of kind  
Intelligence indeed, dare I remind your minds  
That the brain gets weary with all of the rules;  
Religions and nations and weathering schools.

A well-read page, crinkled and bent.  
A prayer spent on the knees of division.  
This incision seeks only your sentiments  
—The price of power

Change for your time at the quarter hour  
For the value of colored metal and paper cuts.  
Oh, I do not envy you—this flat world  
Only the ancients knew—now resurfaces.

Solidifying the past, recording ages and times  
Where men chiseled statues, but now chip keys  
To eternalize and memorize the memories  
that constitute our future existence and lives.

A millennial age or a chromium card  
A picked pocket or a deeper hole  
Dug with dirty fingernails, out  
Into the open, polluted air we breathe daily.

A choked breath held back  
Reluctant to speak over the oppressive  
Whisper. You look blind and stiff,  
Mechanically sifting right from wrong;

Because life's a game on a TV screen, a second  
too long commercial, the fit is thrown  
Hits the fan, spins, another button pressed  
On the electronic controller that is now your mind.

Permitting you to cope with hard times—  
That brand of sneakers you couldn't buy,  
Too expensive. Yes, getting by is rough,  
Like sandpaper across your raw fingertips.

Then, a pivotal moment strikes the hand  
Suspended, lost beyond time, in time.  
Through the bind that is our way  
Out of what we once were made to believe.

REBECCA KON

E

The letter written  
in red ink,  
to a soldier's hands.  
It bleeds its message—  
fails to be gripped  
as it starts to rain . . .  
from his eyes.

"It must be a war,"

it read; in his lover's pen.  
The spaces were there,  
a blank distance between two letters,  
one to him, the other . . .  
never reached her.

The first's cursive  
must never be  
for if we have the E,  
there is no need for emergency.  
For if we can be aware  
we shall never have . . .  
a war.

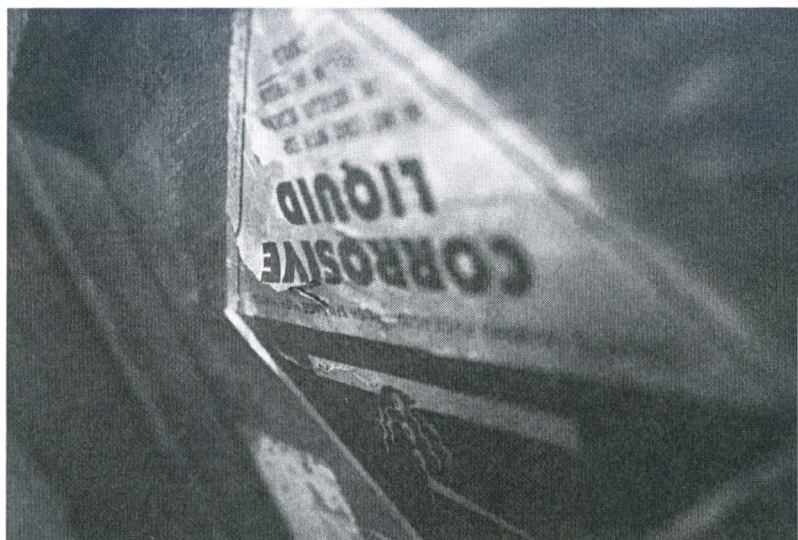
REBECCA KON

## The Inner Revolution

To stop the hallucinations  
Of conventions, all you must do  
Is keep wiping away  
The bugs in your eyes  
Until your body shakes  
With its own demise  
And the size of the problem  
Internally made, becomes as real  
As unnatural breath and a weak,  
Toxin-ridden body, trying  
To overcome the disease  
Of your own unrest  
For a time to sleep  
And a chance to live.



BENNETT GARFINKEL



LAURA HARDWICKE

## Baby I'm an Anarchist

I WALKED THROUGH THE BACK YARD, leaves crunching beneath my checkered slip on shoes. It was a surprisingly cold night for SRQ. I threw a huge dry palmetto leaf onto the fire. It erupted and everyone cheered, raising their drinks, and then resuming their activities. The bonfire hissed in the dry air. Usually Julian's backyard was a humid hoard of dirt and delinquents. Tonight the air was crisp, and the juveniles spread out across his yard like fibers in a spider's web.

My black hood hugged my cheeks as my hands slipped into my jacket's front pockets. I looked around: Julian strummed a guitar, playing for the fire, a group of girls I didn't recognize in the dark gossiped behind him. Luke warm beer bottles looked giant in their tiny hands. Guys dressed in black jumped around, punching and kicking and laughing. We were surrounded by woods on three sides, and the house on the other.

The old Florida home was a shell—devoid of traditional family artifacts such as portraits and coffee tables, and coffee table books of babies dressed as tulips and garden accessories. Instead, the shell was cluttered with empty bottles and jackets draped, like abandoned animal skins, on couches bursting with stuffing. Teens lurched over a large wooden spool, inhaling and snorting. Their brains melted to sludge. A trail of dirt on the white tile floor led to the bathroom where a 16 year old spilled her stomach into the rusty toilet. Her best friend waited in the adjacent bedroom, swallowing her ex-boyfriend's DNA. Music boomed from a speaker inside, but it failed to compete with the rising voices outside.

Comfort. I breathed the fresh air and stood in silence with my close friends. Our counter-culture sanctuary was a great escape from our mundane and painful family lives. April leaned in to whisper through our hoods "Oh shit, here he comes."

Kevin approached the bonfire with his arms snaked around a blonde figure. The dim firelight scorched her dark roots. I suppose she was pretty—if clear skin, a symmetrical face, and no body shape qualifies pretty. He constantly surveyed the yard, shifting his feet with anxiety, trying to escape his arm attached to the blonde. She was a pollutant littering our beautiful, shimmering spider web.

His eyes locked on mine. I felt a strange surge of pain that cooled and warmed my veins. I was elated to see him; yet my stomach sank seeing him with another girl, especially as one-dimensional as this one. I felt revived and free to be here without him, or any other guy, stifling me; yet I was trapped by his gaze. He still

pulled me in. The vengeance our former relationship provoked was gone. Relief. I instinctively pressed my lips to the glass bottle, an excuse to avoid a verbal greeting, and an anesthesia for the flood of empathy that drowned me. The muscles in our necks twitched—a sorry attempt at a nod.

The blonde was out of place and uninterested. Her eyes shifted between her bottle and Kevin. Occasionally, she'd move her weight to her other leg, glancing around at the various boys and girls in the night. She never looked at the fire. She never saw Julian. Her eyes never met mine.

A crowd formed around Julian. He beat the out-of-tune strings violently. The chords rang out in everyone's skulls. C, A minor, F, G. I knew them well, the only notes my fingertips could squeeze out. The brassy melody indicated our anthem, our pledge, our drinking song, our hymn, our salute. Each party had its own sloppy rendition of this song. The song resonated at these bonfires, creating an inescapable sensation, like salt on an open cut. Julian began the first verse, his Columbian accent lisping on each "s."

*Through the bethst of timeths, through the worthst of times...*

He wasn't concerned with notes, with tunes, with keys or octaves. He wasn't singing from his vocal chords, or his diaphragm, or his heart. He sang through his gut. It was a deep sound, booming from his intestines, his gallbladder, his kidneys. By the second line, we had all migrated to the crackling fire. Drunken stomachs screamed out:

*Baby, what's that confused look in your eyes . . . what I'm trying to  
say is that . . .*

We forgot our drinks, our emotions, our fears, when we sang.

As the song's peak approached, everyone clustered closer to Julian and the fire. The sweet wooden smell of the smoke cemented our bodies close together. It stuck to our hair and our bandanas. We continued,

*You watched in awe at the red white and blue  
on the fourth of July,*

Our voices changed from the low folksy sound emitting from our bellies. The bonfire seemed to reach higher to the stars, following the path of smoke into the

deep blue sky. We screamed, painful blood boiling through our throats:

*While those fireworks were exploding . . .  
I WAS BURNING THAT FUCKER AND STRINGING MY BLACK  
FLAG HIGH. . . .*

Our bodies froze. Then we slipped into the less intimidating tone from before. The war cry left behind a new, biter tone.

*While eating the peanuts,  
that the parties have tossed you*

The fire cast shadows on Kevin's face. I saw fervor boil up inside him. He craved commotion. He was a revolutionary with no revolution. Last month, in this same yard, we drunkenly spat those words into each others faces. It was our sick version of romance. We were an explosive pair. It made for the best sex and the worst fights. The crowd continued,

*No I won't take your hand  
and marry the state!*

The blonde hid the fact that the words of our gang's anthem escaped her by nervously chugging her beer. After each gulp her face showed faint signs of a grimace, quickly guised as she raised the bottle again.

The blonde's eyes finally met mine. They were blue and empty; the real Dead Sea. I saw nothing there. Her posture gave off a sense of ownership, a sense she didn't deserve. This wasn't her fire, her song, her Kevin.

She was the reason we sang. No one owned anything here. That was the rule. I wanted Kevin to be happy. But I knew this caricature of a human being couldn't deliver that happiness.

The shadows played on her face. Her terrible mask of makeup seemed to melt. I wanted to douse it in water, to see what lied beneath the cakey layer. The shadows pulled me in. The heat from the fire drew my fingers into a tight sweaty ball. My knuckles turned a bone-white as the group finished,

*When it came time to throw bricks  
through that Starbucks' window . . .*

Instinctively, my fist dove past the shadows. I punched her in her face, her bone, her flesh. Everyone watched the hit, with no sound but Julian strumming the guitar. Then as if nothing had happened, they drunkenly whispered the final line:

*You left me all alone, all alone.*

The song ended with a thud, and then a rustle as the dead leaves on the ground crashed into her yellow matt of hair. April broke the silence with a contagious laughter. No one resisted, not even Kevin.

JOSH MANNEN

## Dreamscapes

THE MISTS ONCE AGAIN SWIRLED around me. I knew this place. I had been here before. All that existed here was the blackness of the sky and the silent turquoise fog flowing around me. The only light seemed to emanate from the fog itself, embracing me in an eerie tranquility. Tiny sparks began to flicker amidst the mists, winking as if to greet me on my return. They danced amidst the shadows, swaying to an unheard ballad off in the distance. I became enraptured by the sparkles, tracing every one of their movements as if I had no choice in the matter. Their waltz complete, the lights began to fade off into the distance, as if beckoning me to follow. Yearning for their comfort, I took a single, hesitant step forward into the mists. My foot slid into a calm, warm pool, hidden under the fog. The water was incredibly soothing as I inched my way across the soft sands after my ethereal companions. The lights once again danced around me as I travelled, seemingly igniting the shallow waters.

I was not sure where I was going or even why I was doing it. All I knew was that this was where I was supposed to be, no more, no less. Slowly, the mist thinned as a large structure began to appear before my eyes. White stone pillars rose up from the sea like legs of a giant beast stretching into the heavens. As I approached the structure, I felt the sandy ocean bottom give way to a hard stone, leading me up out of the waters on a broad staircase. As I pressed onward, the top of the stairs never fully ascended above the warm waters; there was just enough to ripple across the smooth stone. It was then that I saw her; beauty astounding. Cloaked in the mists, her gown appeared to flow up from the waters, enveloping her rippling form. Her porcelain hands were laid bare and exposed, reaching out to embrace me as I glided towards her.

The lights grew increasingly erratic as I closed the distance. Flashing in dynamic patterns, their movements sent shadows dancing across the woman's face. Her visage illuminated, I noticed something unnerving about her glimmering eyes; streams of tears flowed down her face, rushing from each eye to form the amorphous gown around her. Her dress was actually no dress at all, merely the swirling tide of her anguish flowing into the seas around us. Void of expression, her face simply peered forward past me into the darkness. I stood very close to her now, feeling the waters rush around me as well. They were no longer warm and pleasant as they had been before, as their icy grasp now threatened to enshrine me next to this woman for all eternity, frozen in time.

For some reason, I felt no reason to turn and run; to retreat back to the tranquility of the mists. Peering deep within her tumultuous eyes, I could feel as if there was nothing left within her hollow form; as if her very soul had poured out over the centuries to form this place. My hand slowly rose to brush aside a single strand of hair behind her ear, my fingertips gently closing the space between us. Upon contact, her face turned to mine as the lights around us became frenzied. I saw her struggling to speak to me, her eyes betraying her emotionless exterior.

Almost instantly, the world collapsed around me. The stone I stood upon shook violently, rending the floor asunder. Great plates of the stone split and vaulted, toppling the mighty columns that surrounded us. A cacophony of destruction, the tranquil world became a veritable hell threatening to destroy everything. I grabbed at the woman, pleading for her to come with me away from this place—to somewhere safe and warm. Cold and lifeless, her body refused to shift an inch as I tugged at her outstretched arms. Crying in desperation, I felt lost and abandoned, stumbling away from the woman. Great chunks of marble crashed down around me as I made my way back into the mists, tears streaming down my face; the woman and I had something in common. All at once, the warmth of the water and hardness of the stone fell away as a great fault opened beneath my feet. The last memories I have of that place are the woman's outstretched arms reaching out for me as I tumbled backwards into the abyss.

I awoke to a slow trickle of water falling on me from above; each droplet echoing off the walls of the cave that had become my new home. I stood and took in the world around me. Enormous ruins from the world above lay scattered around, luckily nice enough to spare my life. I had no idea how I even survived what I imagined to be a very long and treacherous fall, not to mention how I avoided the mountains of rubble. A soft bluish light seemed to emanate from above one of the fallen pillars. Lifting myself above some of the smaller marble, I crested the peak of the destruction, providing a beautiful view of a vast underground lake surrounded by what seemed to be enormous Oak trees. At the center of the waters sat a small island, its only inhabitant a grove of Cyprus. Directly above the island, in the roof of the cave, a gaping hole poured sunlight over the unbelievable vista laid out before me. I began my descent down the ruins of a dream—a dream that only existed in memory and felt entirely intangible; the woman's face simply echoing in the ringing of the water droplets.

What struck me first about the trees was their odd coloring. Flecks of translucent blue and green dusted the warm brown bark of the immense fauna. Upon closer inspection, a carpeting of bioluminescent moss embraced every tree lining

my path towards the lake. Each step I took, I drew in the essence of life flooding around me. The air of the cave was sweet and heavy, the smell of a summer's rain pervaded every pore of my being. I felt absolutely renewed, as if someone else's vigor had been thrust into my bruised and beaten form, granting me a new day's walk and a new day's discovery. Elated, I began to run through the forest; rays of light shone through the dew laden leaves, warming my face. My soul screamed in ecstasy as I crashed into the glass-like waters, waves reverberating off the shore.

I floated there for what felt like an eternity, becoming one with the sea around me, letting the cool air excite my waterlogged skin. Dull lights seemed to hover beneath; small fish that adopted the same blue and green aura of the trees flew under the calm waters. I laughed while I swam with them, suddenly remembering the lonely, forgotten island. Gliding towards the ring of Cyprus, the rest of the island's inhabitants revealed themselves. The woman from the distant memory stood on the shoreline, white dress shifting pleasantly in the soft breeze. She laughed as I stumbled out of the waters, commenting on my most graceful and modest appearance. I returned her smile and laughed, remembering her scent and her touch, her taste and her beauty. Memories of our first date, our first fight, our first kiss—everything—all emotion rushing back into me at once. She reached her hands out, palms laid bare and exposed. I reached out and embraced her, feeling her warmth and beauty as the world around me drifted away.

I opened my eyes to a soft light coming in through the shutters. Saturday morning. The long forgotten smells of home—the pleasant aroma of familiarity and comfort—revived my senses, reintroducing me to the world of the living. I pushed aside my pillow to see her lying beside, the slow rise and fall of her chest as she slumbered. I reached my hand out and lightly slid a strand of hair that had fallen on her face behind her ear. She looked so beautiful. As I laid there searching the memories of my recent adventure, her eyes fluttered open.

*What time is it? Are you alright?*

*Yeah.* I smiled at her and chuckled to myself, looking deeply into her eyes.

*I'm perfect now.*







MARIE EDITH PATRICK  
"If You Only Knew"



MARIE EDITH PATRICK  
"Infected"

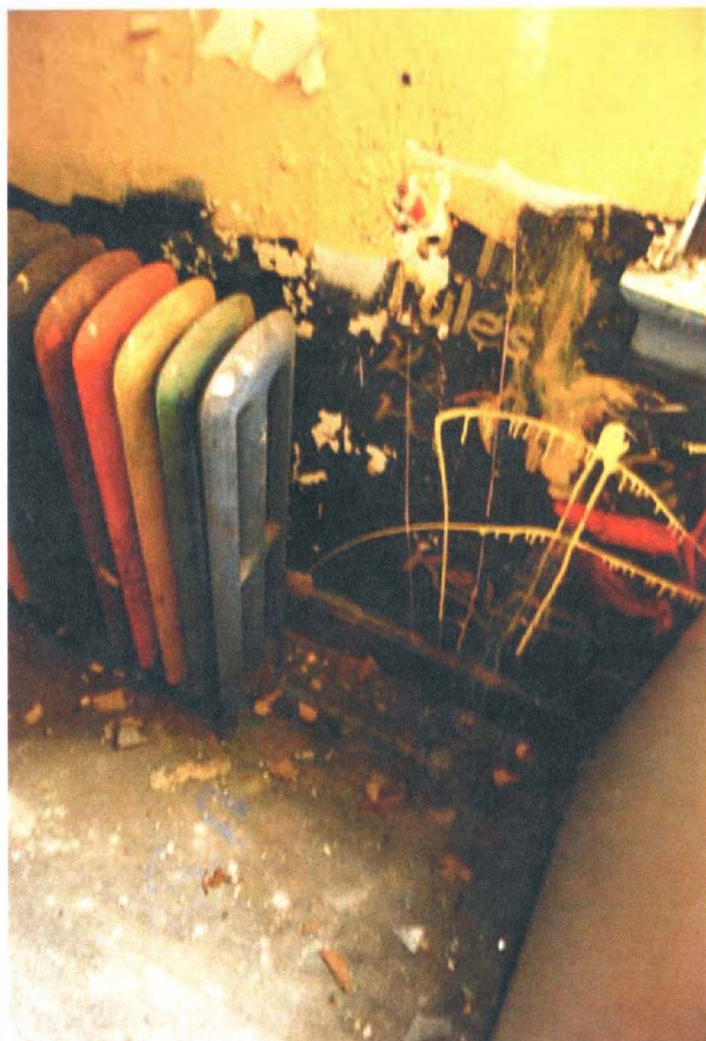




KELSEY GLENNON  
"Jazz Hands"

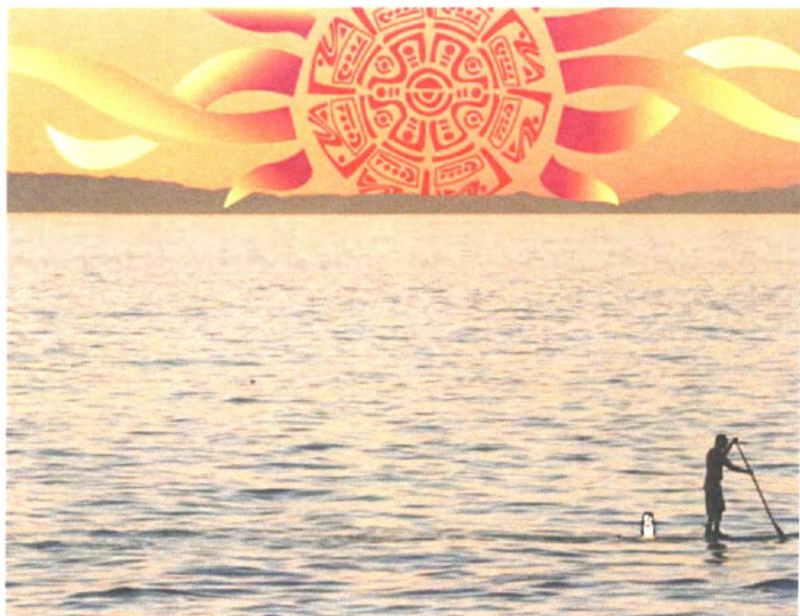


HELENE MARCANTONIO





JOY POWELL







KRISTIN DAWN URBAN



CAITLYN GLATTING





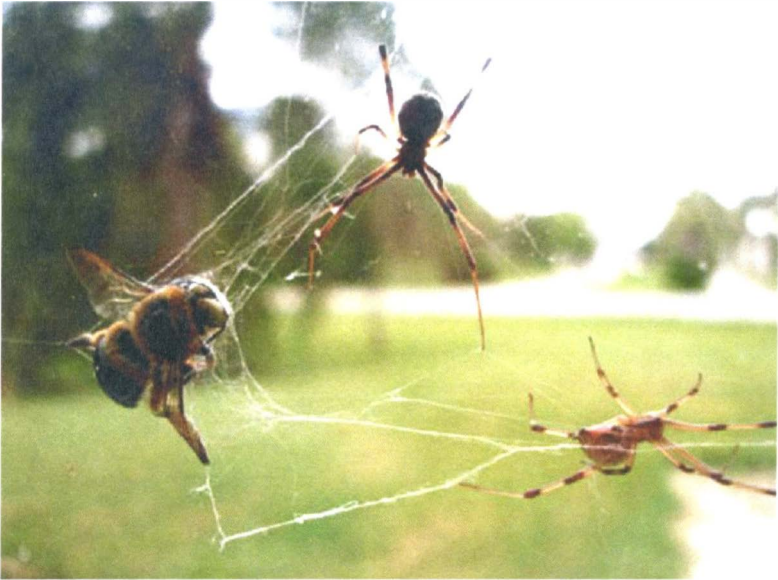
JENNIFER RITTER







ASHLEY LIGHT







CARY HALL







