

# Harbinger 1993



*Stephens' Magazine of the Creative Arts*

# HARBINGER 1993

*The Stephens College Magazine of the Creative Arts*



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This issue of Harbinger is dedicated to Rosalind Kimball-Moulton, whose excellence as a teacher is reflected in the photography in this and many past issues of the magazine, and Carol Perkins, who has helped many young women at Stephens College find and celebrate their voices. Your contributions are in evidence throughout the magazine.

## CONTENTS

Heather L. Hay	North Campus, 5
Suzy Perkins	Untitled, 6 Flower Power, 7
Debbie Huber	Territory, 8
Julie Curry	The Good-bye Gate, 9
Laura F. Purdy	Specula, 10
Casey D. McDonald	sophisticate, 11 A Rebel Craze, 13 The Descent, 14
Shalea Bucheit	Dreaming with Alana, 16 Snow, 17
Laura F. Purdy	Aural Trails, 18
Aimee Adams	Untitled, 19
Ce-sha W. →	Confessions of a Student in Agony, 20 Tutelage, 22 I Become Her, 23
Simonie Hodges	Fairy Tales, 24
Beth Link	Untitled, 25
Mara McEwin	Obedience of a Woman, 26 Venerating Strength: For Wyoming, 27 Wyoming Solstice, 28 In Being Mother's Ghost, 29
Sara Bader	I'm Flying through the Clouds, 30
Sarah Ann Resnick	Night, 31
Kira Robbins	Three of Us, 32

Raven S. Wilder	No. 94, 34 1 out of, 36
Rose Wethe	Sister Dream, 37 Nature, 43
Susan Jackson and Muffy	I'm Vain, 38
Jami E. Walker	The Real Sex Objects, 41
Heather L. Hay	Self-Portrait, 42
Toni Rickman	Waiting for the Wind, 44
Alisha Surface	Maybe Flower, 45 Candle in the Cradle, 50
Suzanne O. Naquin	Self-Portrait, 37
Beth Rosch	Untitled, 51 in your opinion, 52 Settle Unsettled, 54
Jim F. Rose	Self-Portrait, 53
Holly Kelso	The Story that Became Your Life, 55 Holding, 56
Laura Marker	Number 1, 58 Number 2, 59 Number 3, 76
Toni Rickman	Mother and Child, 60
Tina Parke-Sutherland	Beauty and the Beast, 62
William T. Clow	On Saturday Afternoons, 64
Heather L. Hay	Down Town, 77

# North College

Heather L. Hay



# untitled

## Suzy Perkins

---

You take a lot a heat,  
you always have.  
The origins and evolutions  
of society's oddities and evils  
are always traced back to you, somehow.  
Freud and Bly blame you  
for making your sons unmanly, for not letting them be men.  
It's you, Mother.  
No wonder that men rape,  
when someone didn't allow them to be men.

6 I think they're afraid:  
of your strength  
wisdom  
afraid of your power.  
It's you who controls the most valuable resource.  
They know this and it scares them.  
They'd like to control you, to own your womb  
to manage your power.

Sometimes it would be easy to give in  
to buckle under  
to not offend.  
It would be easy  
but it wouldn't make you safer.  
Don't relinquish your power  
don't forget that it's yours.

# Flower Power

Suzy Perkins

---

MAKE LOVE NOT WAR

is painted on the belly of a girl  
dancing naked in Central Park.

Orange and red fingers lick the sky,  
containing in them the ashes  
of a hundred induction notices.

A parade winds its way down 42nd Street.

On the floats sit congressmen waving little flags;  
in front of them spin baton twirlers in sexy, star-spangled costumes.

There's a man sitting in the White House who  
political cartoonists are thanking to this day.

My brother's room is just the way he left it  
except there's a scrapbook lying on his bed  
that dad kept for him while he was away.

It's filled with reports clipped daily from the papers.

That scrapbook still sits on his bed — my brother hasn't  
looked at it. He won't touch it.

My brother sleeps with me now, in my room, on a cot he brought up  
from the basement.

He says he's afraid to sleep alone.

He dreams a lot every night; he wakes me up to tell me his dreams,  
and I listen

and hold him when he cries.

7

# Territory

Debbie Huber

---

8



# The Good-bye Gate

Julie Curry

---

The doorway supports me  
the warm air beckons me  
the earth continues the path of revolution.  
You slowly pass through the gate.

I inhale. The world stops on this minute.  
Mother's pink and yellow roses uproot  
Exploding into thousands of seeds  
no longer blooming Love.  
The kitchen's newly renovated cabinets  
Splinter into piercing shards  
no longer pine scented.  
The protective stucco wall of home  
Crumbles into grains of sand  
no longer counting time.  
On this minute I am the vortex.

The gate creaks closed.  
The earth continues the path of revolution.  
The air tells me it is too late  
for my eyes to reach you.

# Specula

Laura F. Purdy

---

10



# sophisticate

Casey D. McDonald

---

She was the sophisticate of my third grade class, a girl who sported eyeshadow the color of a robin's egg, as well as burn marks on her forehead created by clumsiness with a curling iron. We wanted to be like her. She had the biggest collection of pastel legwarmers in the entire third grade and she knew all the words to the "Fame" theme song. Singing it at recess, her head thrown back to catch the spotlight of the midday sun, she enthralled us. That was the voice we attempted to emulate when we got home at night, that pre-pubescent throatiness that each of us desired. We wanted our hair to hang breezily down our backs like hers did, a field of daffodils. We wanted frosted eyeshadow and coarse lavender bunches around our ankles. We wanted a dancer's posture and cheekbones highlighted in powdery rose.

Her brazenness awed us. Once that year she was late coming back from bathroom break. Mrs. Mallet asked, with impatience lacing her voice the way brandy laces coffee, where she had been. Lori replied curtly, her nose high in the air, "I was constipated, Mrs. Mallet. Is that okay with you?" We were not as worldly as she — we didn't know such long words. Sarcasm was never an effective tool for anyone but her.

Now she is a night waitress in a New York City greasy spoon, I imagine. The neon sign blinking to indicate the existence of the diner flashes through the plate glass windows, like lightning illuminating still water. She wears pink, her hair in a bun, accentuating the grace of her neck and the strength of her cheekbones. The soles of her scuffed shoes are as thick as mosquitoes after a heavy summer rain. A diamond in the mud puddle of the diner, her skin resists the contamination of the grease permeating the air. There is a tune in her head, a smirk playing with the shadows on her lips.

11

“Heya Joey!” she yells. “I need a Number Nine.” She imagines herself in *Frankie and Johnny* in the *Clair de Lune*, not wanting to remember where she is or what she’s doing. Her hand makes rapid swipes at the sticky counter and she notices a shaft of color trapped in the silver napkin dispenser, fingerprints dulling it to the color of a pond which reflects a bleak winter sky. Her hands polish the dented metal, revealing her distorted image. She smiles at the rectangular box, as one would smile for an audience offering a standing ovation, then sets the box down while performing a dance in her head. She auditions in the daytime, with dreams of becoming a Broadway starlet, her name in lights, mink coats to replace the legwarmers.

# A Rebel Craze

## Casey D. McDonald

---

Obsession

A straight jacket swallowing the insane man.

I was obsessed once

Am i over it now...who knows

He was tall with blond hair

Which was spiky and they called him the next james dean

Did he have chiseled features

Or am i confusing him with fabio the harlequin man

He had black leather and a harley davidson

Leave it to me to be impressed by a hunk of metal

Suddenly my dream was to own a hog

He was irish and then i wanted to live in dublin

A good irish town

He sat down for a living and

Even though mom said never go for a guy who sits down for a job

He was okay because he played the drums

What better tool for passion than the drums i asked

And i dreamt about him whether i was asleep or not

And bought his picture at a bookstore

And he was mine forever

Until i saw his friend

The singer.

13

# The Descent

## Casey D. McDonald

---

14

She had come to South Carolina with the promise that it would be the “vacation of a lifetime.” At the time that small, overused phrase had excited her. Now she was left wondering why she bothered going on vacation, when it was more stressful than her normal routine. Her flight had been two hours late in arriving, her baggage had been lost, the bed that she’d imagined as a haven from the day’s trials was hard and allowed her no sleep. And then she discovered it. The hotel had a garden full of lipstick colored flowers and waxy green plants. At the center of it all was the waterfall. It didn’t matter to her that it was a clumsy experiment with concrete, it only mattered that the water flowed and fell, flowed and fell. The water grasped the light like a lost lover and danced with it until the two pooled together at the bottom. Touch it, her heart cried, but her mind would not let her. Touching the water would disrupt its flow...its beauty. And with that moment of solitude, her mind being swept away by the sigh of the cascading water, the course of her vacation was rectified.

When she thought that she couldn’t be any more content or any more relaxed, she met him. Walking along the faded, splintery boardwalk, she had seen him, at once intimidating and approachable. His hair, like a collage of autumn leaves blurred by an unshed tear, ruffled in the breeze, his face evenly tan with intense eyes and a slightly crooked nose. Endearing wasn’t it—the flaw of a crooked nose? With all of her resolve, she shuffled hesitantly forward, then stopped abruptly. She had come to the coast to get away from distraction and here she was inviting it. But she continued her path toward him, her heart making decisions. She timidly made eye contact and, after a brief introduction, they were strolling along the grey planks of the boardwalk together. Plans were

made for the week as they walked. Plans that said “you and me” instead of “you” and “me.” The week progressed with little time spent apart — walks which made them hazy silhouettes on the horizon, wind caressing their misted faces, a canvas of watercolors created as the sun melted into the frothy tide. Suddenly she was tumbling into an unknown space, a grey space where there were no rules. She was in love. She protested her heart loudly with her mind, reminding herself that she only loved this man because she was on vacation, and it seemed the thing to do, the story to tell. But her heart argued just as loudly, unable to let her mind rule. She listened to her heart, knowing that this love she felt was beautiful because it was out of her control. She had not chosen it, it had chosen her.

Before she knew it, the wonderfully sluggish trip to the ocean was over and the plane ticket was poison in her hand. She left saying goodbye to him until the last minute, as if prolonging the act would erase her pain. Wishing she had never met him, she packed with dread, not caring where the clothes landed. With reluctance, she took her bags out to the taxi, and gave a last lingering look at the room that had been her home for two weeks. The cab ride, which took her away from the place, and the person, she had loved, was excruciatingly long, taunting her. She boarded the plane with regret, tears stroking her cheeks like soft fingers. It was only after she stashed her bag in the overhead compartment that she let the tears run wild across the plains of her cheeks. She hated the grief, but the tears were in some way sweet. They fell unleashed, as if anxious to be set free. Smiling, the salty rivulets flowing faster to meet the rueful curve of her lips, she let the weight of her head fall to the sterile solace of the seat, thinking of the promises to stay in touch which would soon be forgotten.

# Dreaming with Alana

## Shalea Bucheit

---

16

In the soft grass the summer blades  
tickle our ears and toes  
fingers intertwined, feet touching  
we watch the sky  
with the blue so bright it stings  
my eyes I have to blink  
wait you say  
here comes a dragon puffing smoke  
his billowing tail fighting  
across the blue  
behind a sheep white and fluffy  
nudges his way into a train  
a lost duckling waddles near  
looking for his siblings  
from horizon to horizon they churn  
white distorting the  
blue  
blue molding the white  
imagination  
on my lips and in my eyes  
look I say  
there is a castle where we will live  
sleeping on white feather beds  
eating ice cream cones  
the afternoon sun always in our sky  
except when we would spend our time  
touching the stars.

# Snow

Shalea Bucheit

---

Silently I lay

motionless

bound in layers  
of red wool  
heavy on the white

ground

my body imprinted  
on the cold wet  
the sky hangs

deep

above me the  
endless grey  
inviting me up  
the frozen flakes

17

fall  
spin  
rush

at my face  
catch on my lashes  
melt on my lips  
a snowstorm of

silence

rings in my ears  
the ground says

nothing

only the sky  
beckons me up

floating

I am an angel.

# Aura Trails

Laura F. Purdy

---

18



# Untitled

Aimee Adams

---

Beaming gleams of  
streaming rings  
are wrapped around  
these precious things.

With teaming screams  
of silent kings  
conspiring on  
noble things.

19

So Here I Am. . .  
Making means of burping games  
that inspire  
my corrupt streams  
of useless schemes.

# Confessions of a Student in Agony

Ce-sha W. →

---

It becomes such an effort to stay seated in this classroom

There's not a hint of class about it

I want to throw the desk in your face for teaching this

And I want to throw more desks in the face of my pupils for learning it

And I want to throw a desk in my own face for part of it is true

And I want to throw all the desks out the window so that it will never be true again

Good morning white amerika

Good morning white history

Good morning white english----oh but let's not forget to dote on Alice Walker as if she's the only one to add color to paper

20 Wear her out. Hurston too.

To discuss them one must create an entire class. Create a new schedule for this. Well, there's nothing new or trendy about blackness

There's nothing contemporary about

pain

blues

rape

death

hair oil  
strength, womanhood or an occasional happy  
Theres nothing exotic about braids and dreadlocks and mammys and  
mulattoes  
This is not an eccentric era  
This, my pale friends is life, was life, Is life  
This, my blue-eyed pals is my past, my present, my NOW  
But I could not sit down on the porch and share lemonade with you and re-  
tell tales that were never told to me  
I can however sit down for tea with you and tell you George Washingtons  
position on slavery. Niggers. Yes. That slapped me too.  
I can sit and eat apple pie and tell you how the upper class whites  
restored the theatre in Europe while we scraped the burning candle wax  
from the benches  
We can sip martinis over a conversaton of the racist amerikan hero Elvis  
Presley but we'll whisper the part about the music lessons given to him by  
black men  
You may think me just an ungrateful colored gal but the root of my color  
began way before these half truths were printed in your textbooks that I  
am required to purchase  
And so teach on but always know that there is more  
It is unfortunate that it can't be incorporated into your syllabus.

# Tutelage

Ce-sha W. →

---

Nine a.m. I kiss your back I relish its sour taste

A combination for the morning blues; sweat, liquor and a story of the night before My perfume teases the blankets while the cat joins me on my side of the pillow His body carefully curls around my hair Your hand slowly slides over my hips

I want to be one----for this moment One body One breath One heart...beat  
I inch my legs inside of yours quiet not to disturb the resting cat or your morning dreams

My arm, by its own will, covers your left nipple and lazily dangles there unobtrusively

With every breath I'm in your skin With every beat nakedness sews us together

22 From spiritual peace to sexual discovery my back lifts itself and leaves to explore the underlife My mouth anxious and...not finds its way over your hip bones through the thickness of hair to your center

A fury of emotions and labels live here; Ego, Passion, Power and Strength  
My lips take them on one by one provoking truth and breaking down shields of "manhood" Breaking and building simultaneously to gain the efforts of being.

# I Become Her

Ce-sha W. →→

---

I looked down at my hands but I did not recognize them  
They were soft and wrinkled with foreign new lines and scratches  
I popped off one of the plastic press ons and studied the red bitten down  
skin, they instantly reminded me of my deceased grandmother that I never  
met  
The birthmark of a shield on my right thumb has grown paler and is on the  
verge of obscurity  
The once well-buried veins are gradually climbing to the tip of my skin to  
take a peek at the outside world  
My love line is decreasing  
My life line is increasing and I can never remember what the third line  
symbolizes  
I can still see the two tips of embedded lead from a sharpened pencil and a  
clumsy handler  
I glance at the palm of my hand and am amazed still at the whiteness of it  
I turn it over and look at the brownness and briefly search for a connection.

23

# Fairy Tales

## Simonie Hodges

---

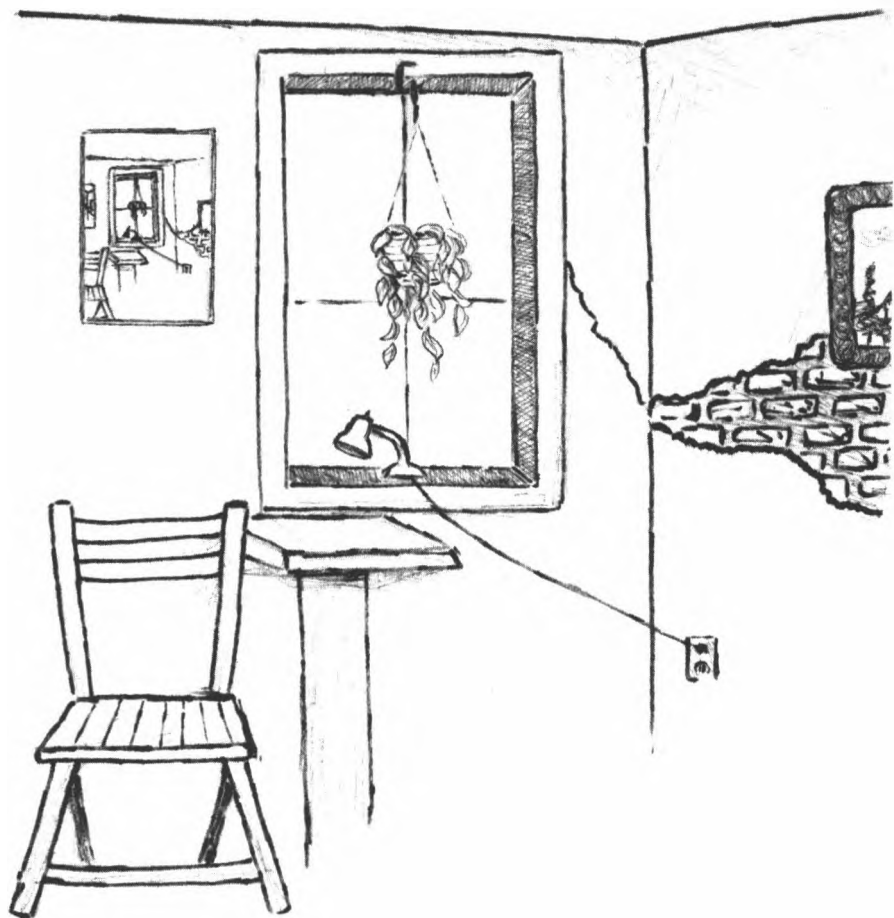
24

Rounding the corner to happiness  
I skin my knees.  
Skipping along the path to love  
I stub my toe.  
If I was Cinderella, the glass slipper  
would have shattered on the stairs.  
What would life be like if Sleeping Beauty  
had decided to catch a few more z's?

# Untitled

Beth Link

---



25

# Obedience of a Woman

Mara McEwin

---

Woman in distress

Lady sitting under the Elm tree

With her Renaissance of womanhood.

Classy and elegant—

Her heart is torn

Burn Free

Child—undo your bun

With hair which climbs like a ladder

To your mind. Out of metaphors  
and William Yeats—

Into May—

26

Put on your stomping boots—

and hike to the tallest

Height

climb the Elm tree and

Shake the leaves free— FREE

of their November cold.

Lady of male poetry

Woman of individual Freedom

Child of

Riots and rallies, climb

Down your Elm tree

and change the plight

of Feminine roots.



# Wyoming Solstice

Mara McEwin

---

Isn't it strange to find me wrapped into  
a Wyoming solstice— why you ask, since my  
soul has always been in her air.

Take my address  
if you like

I like— I like the gentle breeze of your  
bedroom, and your eyes which watch me  
for every second— for every kiss.

And now I find myself here— as a tourist  
I am awed with her spiritual wind dancing  
in my mind, and at my bedroom door—  
and the clowns who call on a Monday

28                   afternoon— asking me questions— nonrelevant  
questions because all I want to think and say  
is of you, but instead I tell them of my

free drinks  
and work loads—  
as my mind is always on you even  
with my hand on a bottle  
of Wyoming whiskey.

# In Being Mother's Ghost

Mara McEwin

---

The mother is thin and dark,  
she is made of paint thinner.

She ran it through my hair once,

I was three. Mother said the gum wouldn't  
come out without the potion—

the same gas lining she rubs into her other children.

Their backs strong---their whiteness brilliant  
she feeds them color  
with her strong, dark arms.

Indian so dark.

As a child I dreamt of gypsies with  
canvases strapped to their backs.

The sun darkening their skin,  
brilliant darkness

29

wishing I could rub mother's pigment  
into my own glass— but my skin is  
whiter than snow, and she has  
never been able to paint me with her  
vibrant color.

She drinks her coffee in the morning—  
her face seemingly sharper as morning  
awakens her mind— her artist.

My mother is thin, dark and strong. She is powerful  
and whole and smells of oil paints in  
the afternoon

sun.

# I'm Flying through the Clouds

Sara Bader

---

"I'm flying through the clouds," she said  
and lifted her skirts around her ears.  
She giggled and was filled with awe,  
as she said...

"I'm flyng through the clouds."

She ran through the mists  
bestowing a kiss on each one of the clouds.

She came back to me,  
surrounded by curling tendrils,  
Parts of the clouds which had actually  
gotten entangled in her hair and  
wouldn't let go.

They understood how special she was,  
as did I.

# Night

Sarah Ann Resnick

---



31

# Three of Us

Kira Robbins

---

1

It took three of us  
that fall day when  
the cold air was so piercing  
it stung through our clothes,  
an eager disease  
invading our skin  
and eating away  
at what was within.

2

32

The sky hung there  
right above our heads  
like it would collide with Earth  
had we moved out of the way.  
It was an empty, bluish grey  
with a fury of white  
whipping together in  
the few hours before night.

3

One at the wheel  
and two more in the back  
pushing, and digging until  
it seemed so useless.  
Mock smoke seeped through

our clenched teeth as I  
crouched down and dug deep.  
Car fumes made me high.

4

The tire rocked and spun  
and crackled like bacon  
spitting snow, not grease  
back into the tire's tracks.  
Our muscles hitched-whirled into knots  
with a fire cold burn  
forcing the car to move  
and the tires to churn.

33

5

It was good that the car was free  
now my hands were so cold  
they felt they could not bend  
and prickled at the tips.  
Just to climb into the warm nest  
inside and smile at our fuss  
of moving the car  
that took three of us.

# No. 94

## Raven S. Wilder

---

Confusion runs rampant  
As I mindfully scatter

aMirEALLYaFRAID

Of commitment

Can I settle on one  
I try to convince myself  
That I can't because of  
Choice of career  
But the affection I need

To be sane  
To be happy

I need attention

34 What can I be looking for  
What am I built for

I need to open doors  
Don't be afraid  
Help me I'm scared

Let loose

Feel emotions

Make waves

Cause a ruckus

Make noise

rRELEASE

rRELEASE

rRELEASE

rRELEASE

WHAT!  
I dO nOT kNOW

i aM cONFUSED  
aND fLUSTERED  
aFRAID tO IET kNOW  
wHAT i fEEL

Tell I am pissed  
Tell I am proud  
Tell I am happy  
I'll tell you you're loud

Pardon

The carousels spinnin'  
round my head

With the Da dA Da  
of the music  
Driving me batty

Spinning, Spiraling, Turning, Whirling

You can't stop the spinning  
Till you fall to the ground  
From 10,000 feet  
With no rip cord

Pisces shines through

As the weaker of the two

Water, Why.

I have learned, wHAT?

Am I really afraid of

cOMMITMENT

# 1 out of

## Raven S Wilder

---

---

36

1 out of how many  
must perish  
1 out of how many  
must die  
Till we stand up and say  
fight  
let us unite  
let us relish in our  
differences aren't  
a problem is what  
fear is keeper  
of our thoughts  
of our freedom  
can we stand  
this can we  
live with  
this let us  
announce our  
differences and be  
proud of

who and what  
each one  
of us are  
Because  
we can not tolerate  
1 out of how many  
will perish  
1 out of how many  
will die  
  
1 out of how many  
will perish  
1 out of how many  
will die  
by your own hand  
by mistake  
by carelessness  
and thoughtlessness  
  
toleranceisZero

# Sister Dream

Rose Wethe

---

In the dream dark  
The inky black with smouldering grey  
They rise, pushing the  
Tang sweet sea water into fountains  
At their approach  
A softly spoken word  
A look from eyes who have seen the forever  
A soothing touch  
All is communication, all existence  
To the silent dark of night  
Three figures, those wonderful beings of the mind  
Sink slowly in the afterglow of  
Their arisen selves  
And then  
She links arms with me  
A love bond never spoken in life  
So apparent in death  
I gaze across the barrier,  
But it is disappeared and gone  
For that one fleeting moment  
That I meet her  
As sister, lover, and friend

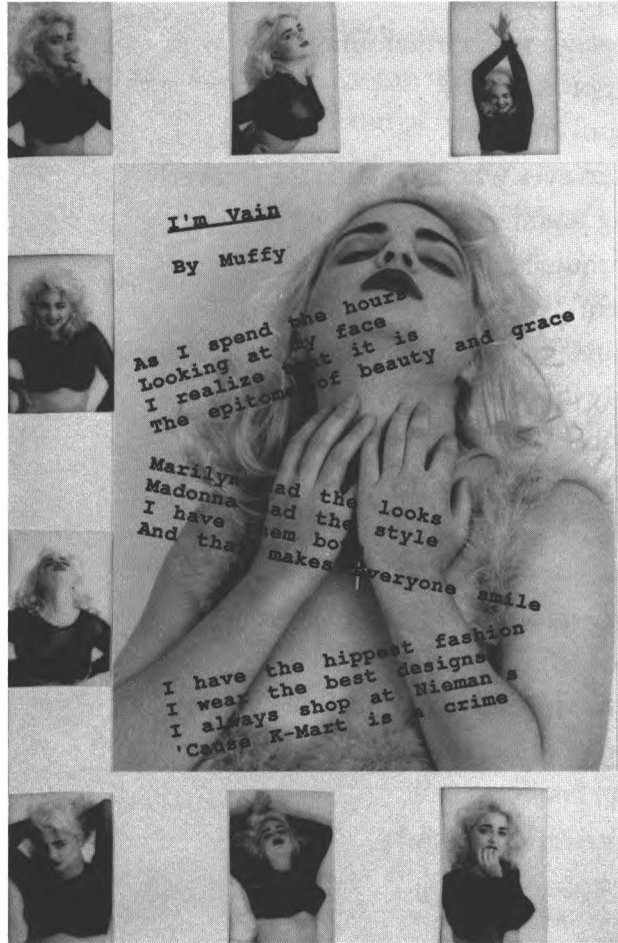
37

# I'm Vain

## Muffy

---

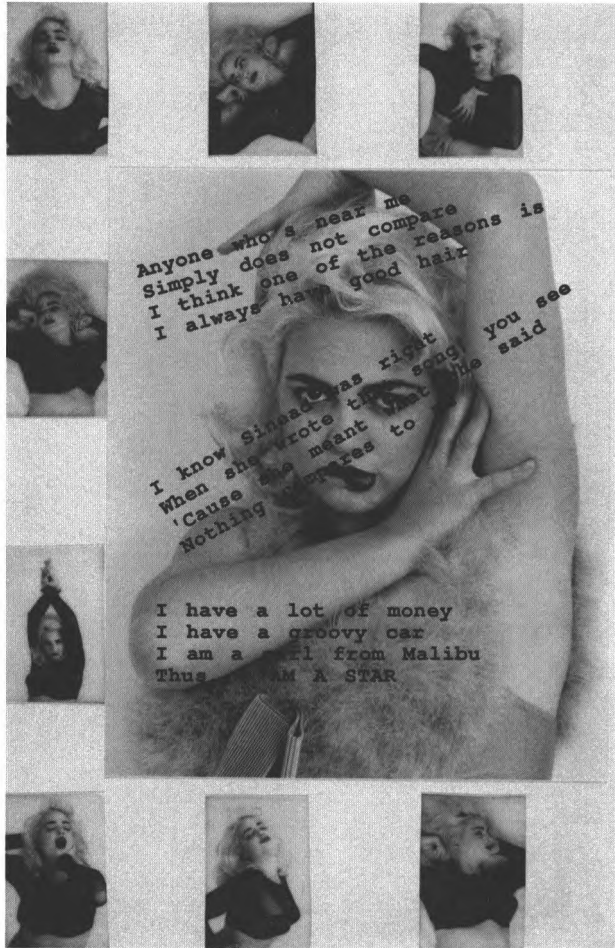
38





Photographs by Susan Jackson

If you sport Chanel  
You simply are divine  
But if you wear polyester  
You are not a friend of mine  
I'm tastier than chocolate  
I'm better than sex calling  
But don't even bother calling  
If you don't have gold checks  
Any man who's worth me  
Brings me diamonds and pearls  
'Cause if you didn't know  
I'm a material girl



# The Real Sex Objects

Jami E. Walker

---

Why don't we see men  
in skimpy clothes  
on magazine covers  
waxed  
with polished nails  
thighs to die for  
showing bust  
smooth oiled bodies  
bending, grinding  
posing for a camera  
operated by women.  
They would have to be  
young, and slim, and toned  
other men would strive  
to be the same  
SMILE  
show a little prick baby  
bend 'em over  
we could call them  
hun, sweetie, hey you  
and have their jobs.

41

Why? because they would be flattered by it all.

# Self- portrait

Heather L. Hay

---

42



# Nature

## Rose Wethe

---

White flowers tremble  
On the thin arms of their bush

Daisies crumple  
In the mid-afternoon heat

Rocks split and break  
On the sandy riverbed

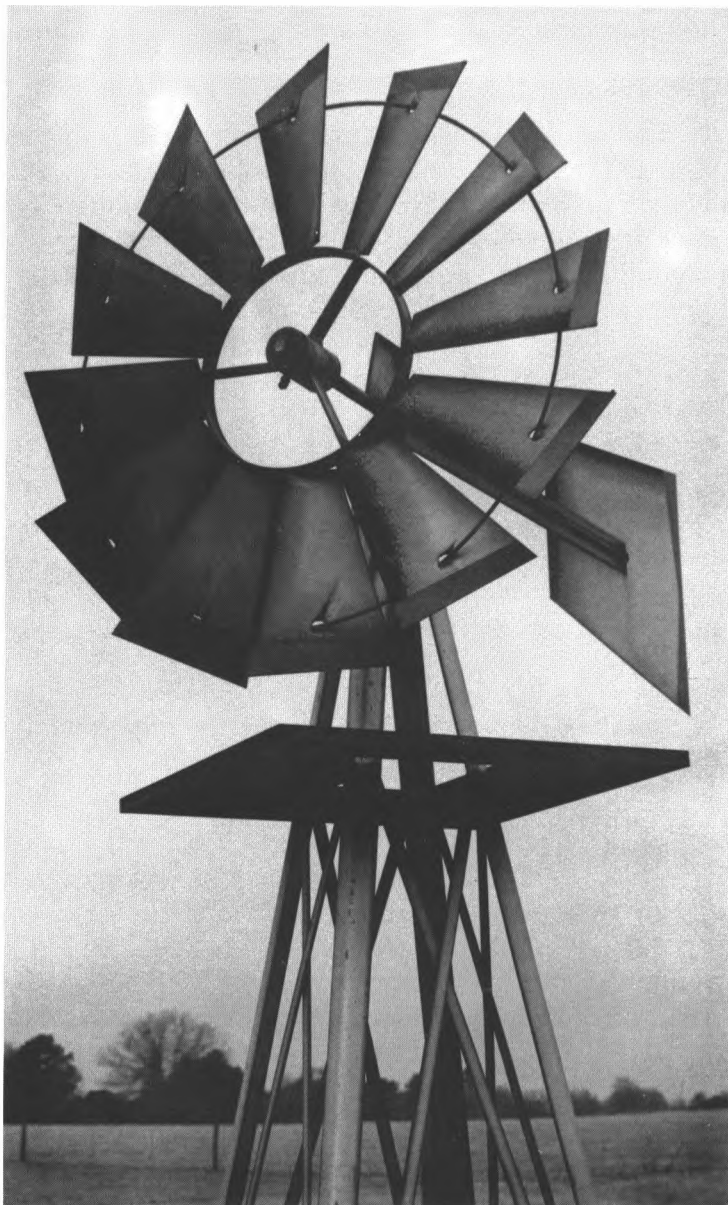
How can something so frail  
Give me courage and strength?

Perhaps it is the vibrant yell of life  
That echoes from the canyonside

# Waiting For The Wind

Toni Rickman

---



44

# Maybe Flower

Alisha Surface

---

The I.V. attached to the swollen purple worm underneath the skin of my hand keeps me in check. I won't move for as long as it is there poking and reminding me of the void that has taken hold of me. There are five different machines in my room, all of them paying attention to me. I have a gritty substance floating in my spit that makes a scratchy sound when my teeth touch. My sister is sitting next to me. She wraps her long dark fingers in the curls around my face over and over. I want to say something to her but I'm afraid. She won't understand. I'm not crazy. I had no choice. They are so cruel. I just want to tell everyone what really happened.

I say to her, "He says it's not true and he really didn't do any of those things. He says—"

"Ellen," she says, "remember when mom made us weed that flower garden on the side of the house, while she cut the weeds around the oak trees with the weed eater? It was early evening and the sun was about to set. I thought we would never be done with that damn garden because mom kept finding new weeds every time I thought we were done. And you didn't help matters either. Do you remember what happened? You were taking your sweet time and some of mine too in an attempt to be sure that what you were pulling was a true-to-life weed. I can still see it. You, on your knees, looking all perplexed, because you couldn't decide if the green growth between your fingers was in need of being plucked from the earth. You said, "Mom, do you think this is a weed? It's kinda too pretty to pull." And it all pretty much went down hill from there. The second that mom turned to look at the weed in question, the old weed eater gave out a high pitched scream and sprayed us all with a fresh pile of dog shit.

I want to remember and laugh along with her but that's not what erupts from my mouth. I say, "He said that I would hate him if I chose to have it. And he really didn't want me to hate him. He said it was very selfish of me to jeopardize a two-year relationship over something that we could plan at a later date. And he said it wouldn't hurt either and that he would be right outside in the waiting room. I asked him how he knew it wouldn't hurt and he said that he read something about it, an article or

something. He said that Michael had to wait with him because he couldn't handle the clinic by himself, something about being surrounded by women. He said that Michael brought along the book so that they would be able to sympathize, understand, and keep me and themselves informed of what I had to go through. He said that Michael only read the procedure out loud to me in the car afterwards so they could make sure everything went like it was supposed to. You know, to make sure it was gone from our lives. He asked so many questions that I couldn't remember the answer to. But, he said that was normal and that I didn't have to say anything because he would just read it aloud to me step by step. They both called me an ungrateful baby when I began to cry. He said that I needed to be alone in order to better cope with 'the pain.' He said that ..."

Her expression doesn't change. She stares straight through me and my audience of machines that applaud my outburst with an assortment of tones. A nurse steps in and adjusts a few things.

46

"Is everything all right?" she asks in a suspicious nasal tone that only a nurse could have.

"Yes, everything is just fine," says my sister as she pulls open the gray curtains behind her.

"You know Ellen," she says, "it makes me laugh to think of us all covered in shit because you were worried about pulling a potential flower. My God, we were covered from head to toe. It still boggles me, how in one instance we were all going about our own business trying to get done before the sun went down and in the next instance we're all covered in the most putrid of earthly substances, wandering aimlessly without a clue of what had just taken place."

"He said that they would be back later. And they did come back. He said that Michael had to stay with us because they had been out drinking and he didn't feel comfortable letting Michael drive home like that. He said that I should sleep on the couch and let Michael have my bed because the bathroom was closer to the couch and that I might have some sort of emergency. He said that he would have Michael check the book to make sure I would be all right. Michael said that my physical

pain would go away in a couple of days and the mental should be nonexistent because I did the right thing. He said that his own personal pain was so great that he shouldn't live with me anymore. He said he was lucky to have such a good friend like Michael to be so supportive of him during this rough time."

The Machines don't go off this time, but I am covered in sweat. She wipes off my forehead and continues to play with my curls that seem to be springing up like mushrooms on my once stringy head of hair. The sun is now starting to shine through the window.

"Woowee sister," she says. "Do you remember us all making a dash for the garden hose at the same time? It was in our hair and our mouths. It was even in our eyes so that we hardly see where we were going or what we were doing. The smell, she says, "literally clung to every crevice of our bodies and taunted and teased our senses so that they were pushed to their limits. I thought I was going to puke, especially after mom did. We all cursed and shoved one another as we fought over the hose. I kept thinking over and over, 'All of this for a fucking maybe flower.'"

She has a wild look in her almond shaped black eyes now. It is as if she were still dripping wet from the garden hose or something. I'm sitting up now and I feel like brushing my new curly hair myself but I'm not done telling her yet.

"He said that Michael gave him permission to sleep with his girlfriend because they share everything. He said that they indulge in and share each other's pleasures and pain. He said that he was sorry about the blood stains on the carpet from when he let Michael carve an "M" in his back with a razor blade. He said that the M didn't stand for Michael but for May because that was the month of our tragedy. And he did it for us all so that we would forever remember that month and what happened. I tried to tell him that I wouldn't be forgetting any time soon but he said that his pain was officially represented by the thick purple scar. He said that he bled for me and a lot more than I ever would through any sort of natural feminine occurrences, induced or not. He says that he thinks 'they' did the wrong thing now, by allowing me to go through

with it, because it would be kinda neat to have a kid they both could influence and raise. He said that I should probably have a blood test also, because who knows who that slut (Michael's girlfriend) had been with."

She is standing up now and urging me out of my bed. I hold on to her strong olive colored arm and tease that floor with the tips of my dangling toes. I think I can really get up. She opens the window and picks up my hand.

She says, "We were all shaking and shivering and trying so desperately to get a grasp on what had just taken place. I was pissed off more or less because you were taking too much care and time to pull weeds. I mean for God's sake, girl, they were just weeds. And to top it all off you had to distract Mom, the wild woman with the machine, who used no discretion whatsoever on what to pull. Yea, I was mad at you. Mom was just mad because her train of thought was interrupted by dog shit that clung to every crevice of her body. I remember you. You were mad at the single weed. And I don't mean potential flower, I mean weed because that is what you called it after you cleaned up. You marched over to the garden and pulled it without a second thought. You said it was a weed no matter what because it covered us all in shit."

48

She was smiling at me now and wiping off my face again. I feel clean enough to feel again. As I look at where I am and the machines that are making me well from what I tried to do to myself, I touch her hand to tell her that we will all be okay this time too.

# Self-portrait

Suzanne O. Naquin

---



49

# Candle in the Cradle

Alisha Surface

---

Shook your rattle  
baby boy  
watched my wick flicker to your  
naughty noise  
you fueled up  
flamed out  
left my ass to drip  
over the edge  
stuck to your arctic hands  
clung to your vacant words  
birthday boy blew the big breeze  
Did you make a wish?  
Put the Zippo away my fetal friend  
Don't you know  
children shouldn't play with the flame.

50

# Untitled

Beth Rosch

---

Diana, I could stand like you:

tall and strong,

bow upraised,

ready to indict.

I could stand straight in the cold wind,

severe, seeming like a statue,

my legs planted like trees, head thrown back.

Diana, I could wander fine in your homeland,

traverse the craggy craters

and find my way by the empty white light.

Diana,

I am with you.

I do stand and walk beside you.

Sometimes I look up and it's just us, Diana,

just you and me,

holy and lonely on the earth's only moon.

# in your opinion

Beth Rosch

---

Shall I do the expected—  
(be kind) and hint gently that you're on the wrong track  
or shall I be blunt  
and tell you to get your fucking choo-choo  
out of my yard  
and let me get on with my life?

# Self-portrait

Jim F. Rose

---



53

# Settle Unsettled

Beth Rosch

---

maybe we're sisters  
or maybe we were rival queens  
in a former life  
there's just no way to tell  
there's just no way to straighten this  
except start over  
I just don't know what to do with women  
I guess they're the closest things human to what I am  
but somehow I just can't relate  
I can't make love to you  
and make it better  
we have to talk  
and I haven't learned the word yet  
to reconcile this chasm  
to heal this split that's like a canyon between us  
every little tremor driving us farther apart  
but I know we can't let it settle like this  
settle unsettled  
so damn you tell me what to do  
to make us love each other again  
and tell me why we feel so different  
when you're the closest thing human  
to what I am

54

# The Story that Became Your Life

Holly Kelso

---

I imagine how you must have looked,  
the strains of your twelve-year-old body  
crumpled in the backseat  
of your parent's family car, eyes  
parted halfway to your mother  
as she twists her face around  
as if to accuse you, as if  
to ask you why. And you, unable  
then and wrapped in this scene  
of mishap Sleeping Beauty,  
unable to tell her of how  
your too-big boyish hands  
had popped off the lid of your father's  
back pills, pushed them to the swallow  
of your throat where your mouth  
opens red, all because  
the girls of the basketball team with you,  
dressed in matching half-sewn  
uniforms worthy of this country school  
had circled around you as a rite of passage,  
trapped you between their elbows and  
tossed you back and forth as the ball, saying  
how you must be gay. Now, the pills,  
the motion of the car, the low  
Iowa skies descending on your life  
like a curtain, you said you felt you were

falling.

55

# Holding Holly Kelso

for A.A.

---

Your body accomodates me.  
Beneath you, my weight  
lies shifting, drawn full in breath  
as my hips rise again from the mattress  
and return. We fold into each other halfway,  
undecided as the fractious moon  
revealing her darder side  
only during harvests.  
It would be easy still you say  
to turn away, as a child yearning  
to stare into the eyes of the eclipse,  
yet remembering. Instead,  
I hungrily consume your presence. Now

56

as the birds outside the window  
have taken their leave with you,  
and the wind spirals in to roll  
unfulfilled through the sheets, the hymning  
of your absence parts the air  
in a silent vibration.  
All around me blows an echoing breeze;  
chill clings to me as clothing  
and I can neither cover it  
nor drive it out of me.  
My body doesn't fit me anymore,  
I have become a stranger to my own skin.

And my apartment doesn't feel like home,  
as the rooms spread before me  
and I see you lying twisted in my sheets;  
see you standing beneath the shower,  
the water running over you and through you  
as though baptizing you; see you  
sitting in my window for hours,  
as though you are waiting for me to return;  
see you holding the glass against your lips,  
the water wetting the inside  
of your mouth slowly, and the taste of water,  
the simple luxuries I may have missed.

When we come together again  
we must overcome the awkwardness  
of your visits, move past the need  
to talk of how this is killing us,  
this having without holding, this piecing  
of you randomly into my life.  
We must remember to speak more clearly,  
remember to walk slower, side  
by side. We must remember  
we cannot fall back  
into one another's lives  
as though we have never been apart.

# 1

## Laura Marker

---

We dance together in the daylight Love.

At night we speak poetry.

You helped me bury those rotting

Catepillars and the seaweed covered

Girl is six feet under.

Those screaming whispers uttered

From unseen lips you silenced.

The insanity no longer haunts me,

And I have let go of all those lies from

Those beings of darkness.

But today I need You more than I have

Before,

I must be so close to You that we blend,

–blend to the point of not being

Able to tell where You let off and

I begin.

## 2

### Laura Marker

---

Let's make mud pies, Lord.  
We can decorate them with leaves  
—orange, yellow, and red.  
Let's dance in the rain, Lord, and  
jump in all the puddles  
—barefoot.  
Let's blow bubbles, Lord and see if we  
can see ourselves hanging upside  
down on their surface.

# Mother and Child

Toni Rickman

---

60



# HEY, WHO SAYS THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A FREE LUNCH?

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Each year, the Harbinger staff asks a couple of faculty members to contribute some creative work to the magazine. This year's staff invited Tina Parke-Sutherland, Languages and Literature, and William T. Clow, Theatre Arts, to retell the fairy tale, "Beauty and the Beast." Their wonderful responses follow.

## Contest:

This is a contest for those of you who try always to land on the brown spaces in Trivial Pursuit. The first two people who can identify the literary allusion in the last two lines of Tina's version of "Beauty and the Beast" will win a free lunch with Tina Parke-Sutherland and Brenda DeMartini-Squires. May the luck of the Irish be with you.

61

# Beauty and the Beast

## Tina Parke-Sutherland

---

Years later, she begins to have the dream:

He's the way he was before the kiss,  
his chest muscles tight as wrought iron,  
his claws, a cheetah's, unretractable,  
a red glow in his eye.

Late at night he stalks the courtyard,  
(Now, they feed the chickens there.)  
the icy moonlight haloing the dark fur round his head.

She sees him ease into his animality,  
(God, that used to frighten her.)  
and then, on all fours, slip into the trees  
to hunt.

She feels his passing  
as the distillate of all her losses:  
the mother who couldn't fit into the logic of the fairy tale,  
(What mother lets her daughter live with such a devil?)  
her father and his heart-attack,  
the perfect little girl born dead,  
the headstrong beauty, the cherished beast.  
She wakes weeping.

Across the breakfast table from her,

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he is gentle, loving, in his middle years.

She smiles but has trouble recognizing his smooth face.

The dream confuses her.

She knows the fairy tale so well

(Who better?)

she can (but doesn't) recite its lesson in her sleep:

To love and be loved makes us human.

Now that humanness has run her through,

she understands it all too clearly.

There might have been another end, another ever-after.

(Happily?)

She could have been the one transformed

almost past recognition.

What then? What then?

As he sips his morning tea, she wonders

what rough kiss can set her running

through the long wet night?

# ON SATURDAY AFTERNOONS

William T. Clow

---

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

CLAIRE, a young woman  
ZACH, a young man

64

The action takes place in an old, forgotten playground, in an unnoticed section of the city. Within the playground are the remnants of a swing set with one working swing, a teeter-totter, and a dilapidated bench. It should be obvious that at one time children happily played here. The time is the present. It is morning.

*The most as you'll ever go  
Is back where you used to know  
If grown-ups could laugh this slow  
Where as you watch the hour snow  
Years may go by. . . .*

*Rickie Lee Jones*

## I

(As the house lights fade, the barely audible sounds of children's voices are heard playing in the distance. A long, solitary bell is heard, and the children's voices fade. Lights up. After a moment, CLAIRE enters. She is dressed as woman who knows how to survive in the city. She is strong, but it is obvious that the years have taken some of the life out of her. Her innocence has not yet been consumed. CLAIRE quickly surveys her playground choices, singing quietly to herself. CLAIRE heads to the teeter-totter, bounces herself once or twice and steps off in disgust. She heads for the swings, tugs at the chains and sits in the first swing satisfied. After a tentative push or two with her feet, she leans back and puts all of her body into the job of swinging. The seat breaks, and CLAIRE is deposited on the ground in front of the swing.)

**CLAIRE**

65

Ouch

(What is left of the swing hits her square in the back on the return pass.)

**CLAIRE**

Damn it!

(She rubs her wounds a moment.)

**CLAIRE**

(Determined.)

This one looks better anyway.

(CLAIRE mounts the second swing. She begins to gain momentum as she gains trust in this swing. She is kicking her legs wildly when she notices ZACH, sitting on the edge of the playground with his back to the action. ZACH is tall and somewhat mysterious. He is dressed for his

life on the streets, but doesn't try to wear this as a badge. These are the clothes he lives in. The years have worn on him. CLAIRE suddenly stops swinging.)

**CLAIRE**

(A bit unnerved.)

Excuse me, sir. I didn't know anybody else was around. I just came out here to relax a little this morning and was singing cause I didn't think anyone would notice and then I fell on my ass and now I'm really embarrassed by the whole thing and I guess I should be going and just leave you alone so you won't be bothered, and I'll just go now.

(ZACH doesn't move.)

**CLAIRE**

So I'll just leave you alone now mister, and. . . okay so I'm leaving and. . . Mister, you okay? (No answer) I mean, I don't really have to go yet, and I sort of want to stay but if you'd rather I leave you alone, then I understand.

(CLAIRE crosses toward ZACH tentatively. As she gets closer, ZACH suddenly moves. He does not show his face. CLAIRE bounds to the other side of the playground.)

66

**CLAIRE**

(Terrified.)

Holy shit, mister. I didn't mean to upset you. If you want me to leave, just say so, and I'm gone. I mean, who's got rights to this space? If you were here before me and I never noticed, then it must be me who needs to leave. I mean, you were here first, right? If that isn't the way it was, then maybe you could kind leave and I could just get back to my swing. Nothing personal you know. It's just that I was kinda looking forward to spending some quiet time with myself and wasn't expecting that anybody would be here. Didn't know anybody ever came to this place anymore. I'm not sure anyone even knows that it's here. Well obviously someone does because you're sitting right here. I mean, I can see you with my own eyes. I guess you could be a mirage or something like that but there isn't a desert around for miles. (She laughs at her own joke.)

(ZACH moves again, reaches into his

pocket and pulls out a pack of cigarettes. ZACH strikes a match.)

**CLAIRE**

Boy, you know that smoking is really an awful thing to do to yourself, not to mention that second hand smoke is really bad for all those around. If you had any idea how many people die each year from smoking, lung cancer and emphysema, and all the other diseases that come with smoking. Gees', have you ever seen a picture of a smoker's lung? It is an awful thing. That picture made me quit smoking on the spot. Yea, I was a smoker. Smoked for an entire week in high school. Boy, quitting was tough, but once I saw that lung...

(ZACH has let the match burn to his finger tips. Just before it burns him, he blows out the match and tosses the cigarettes off to the side.)

**CLAIRE**

Wow, what will power. I mean if you can just give up smoking after my saying how bad it is for you...I wonder if I could be that effective on a regular basis with other smokers. Did you know that some doctors theorize that smokers really just want to kill themselves, but don't have the guts to carry out the actual act of suicide, so they smoke for years and years as some sort of twisted death wish. Isn't that a scary thought.

67

(Pause.)

**CLAIRE**

Okay, so this is how I see it. I come here and I'm going about my business and I come across you. I sorta wanted to be alone here and be with myself, while it seems that you want the same thing, I get the picture it doesn't matter to you where you are, and since I seem to be doing all of the negotiating, perhaps it would be okay with you if you moved on.

(ZACH does not make a sound.)

**CLAIRE**

(Worried.)

Maybe I should just be on my way. I'll just be going now. Gonna find some place that I can be, other than here.

(CLAIRE starts to exit. She stops.)

**CLAIRE**

Is there any chance that you won't be here all day? I mean, I kinda had my heart set on spending some time here and I really wouldn't mind coming back later if you....

**ZACH**

(Speaking, does not turn around.)

Got a match?

**CLAIRE**

(Nervously.)

You mean me? (Pause.) Of course you do, right? I mean, who else is around here. This awful place...no one around but you and me.

**ZACH**

Match?

**CLAIRE**

(Digging through her bag.)

Um, matches. Yea, I got some in here somewhere. No ex-smoker goes anywhere without them. Matches. Matches. Nope, don't have any matches. I do, however, have a lighter. (Laughing at her own joke.) Gets you every time doesn't it? Specifics. Everything comes down to details and specifics. Got to specify what you want in this world.

(Fade out.)

68

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## II

(Spot up on ZACH.)

**ZACH**

(To Audience.)

Do you realize that there are people in this world that have no desire to discover why? There are people in this world that don't give a damn about why they have been put here. Put in this place, at this time. How does anyone function without this knowledge? Why is it that I just happen to be in this place, with this woman, at this very moment of my being? Am I to let this thought race through my system without so much as a brief pause to reflect on the reason why? I'm not capable of that. I have to know why. Nothing just happens in life. Life is casual.

(Fade out.)

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### III

(As the lights return to the playground, ZACH is sitting with his back to the audience, in the opposite corner of the lot. CLAIRE is attempting to balance the teeter-totter by herself. She stands in the middle of the teeter-totter, a foot on each side of center, precariously leaning back and forth.)

#### CLAIRE

So we have established that you are a smoker. We have also established that you come to this park and sit at it's edges for some reason or another. I mean, I guess that you've been here before. You seem rather comfortable with the location. Have you bee here before? I'm only assuming that you've been here in the past. I don't mean a past life or anything like that. That is far too metaphysical for my tastes. I just can't believe that in another life I could have been a frontier wife or even worse a frontier cowboy. Whew, can you imagine me as a man in another life? What a horrible thought. What if all women today, or for that matter from anytime in history, were men in their previous lives? Boy, would that ever explain why women and men don't seem to get along. It would explain why men are so intimidated by us women. If this were true, women would actually understand what it was like to be a man, and therefore, be yet another step up on the male gender. We hitched the wagons as men, and now as women, we can hitch you.

69

(She loses her balance and falls from the teeter-totter in laughter. ZACH shifts a bit.)

#### CLAIRE

(Still laughing.)

Oh, I got to you with that one, huh? Actually made you move a bit. I ought to get some kind of award for that. Woman moves man of clay. Film at eleven.

(Pause.)

#### CLAIRE

All the same, the strong silent type is wearing a bit thin, don't you think? No I doubt that you think at all. In my world thinking people tend to respond to questions put to them and often remark without being provoked. I get it. I missed out on the rules explanation at the start. I forgot to say "Simon says."

Is that it? "Simon says" you may respond to any questions I ask.

(No response from ZACH.)

**CLAIRE**

(Annoyed.)

Well that is fine by me. I mean, I didn't want any company anyway. That's why I came here in the first place. You're a freak, pal. Know that? You are a genuine freak-o'-nature. Side show ready and box office strong. Step right up and see the man that isn't dead but neither is he alive. Step right up, ladies and gentlemen, never before seen on this continent. Straight from over seas, the one, the only, lifeless man! We could set up an entire freak show around you. You could be the highlight of a show made up of faceless women, hapless children and homeless men.

(This causes ZACH to reach for another cigarette. CLAIRE pauses as ZACH lights his cigarette and exhales.)

**CLAIRE**

Listen, mister, I gotta be going. Can I have my lighter back?

70

(ZACH throws the lighter over his shoulder toward CLAIRE. CLAIRE scrambles for the lighter as if it were priceless.)

**CLAIRE**

(Uneasy.)

I'm sorry, mister. I didn't mean to upset you. I, I, I just wanted my lighter. I need to go. I have some things I need to do today.

(CLAIRE starts to exit. As she walks past ZACH he reaches out and grabs her around the ankle. As CLAIRE begins to scream, the lights fade.)

## IV

(Spot on ZACH.)

### ZACH

(To audience.)

People never bother to see what is around them, let alone right in front of them. We pass through each day as if nothing could ever matter, and we don't even notice what is right in front of our eyes. People actually do everything they can think of, to not have to see what is there in black and white. We miss the obvious. We kill each other for our shoes, videotape the killing for entertainment, drink to forget the killings, and ignore each other's calls for help for the sake of a good night's sleep. What a circle. If she could only see what was before her.

(Fade out.)

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## V

(As the lights fade up, ZACH is sitting perfectly balanced on the teeter-totter, his back still to the audience. CLAIRE is sitting in the swing with one arm tied to the chain above her head.)

71

### CLAIRE

(Frightened.)

Listen mister, I'm only here because I'm waiting for my kid. See that school over there? I got a little girl. She gets out of kindergarten at noon.

(She struggles to see her watch above her head.)

### CLAIRE

Yea, see? It's almost noon. I gotta be in front of the school by noon to get my girl or she will be all alone. People will wonder where I am and call the cops. I'm always on time to get my girl. They'll know that something is wrong, and then the cops will show up and haul you off to jail. You really are a freak aren't you? You're some sort of twisted head case aren't you? You can't kill me you know. You'd never get away with it. I bet somebody comes by here soon. I mean, we're right out in public. You're nuts. My little girl is going to be standing there wondering where her mommy is and she is going to be frightened if I don't show up and....

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ZACH

Name?

CLAIRE  
(Confused.)

What? Name? Huh?

ZACH

Her name?

CLAIRE

Oh. My daughter's name is Margaret. I named her after her father's mother.

ZACH

Pretty.

CLAIRE

(Losing herself in thoughts of her daughter.)

Pretty? You mean her name or her person? Actually it doesn't matter because both are pretty. She is all I have in the world. The only reason I go on. Well, sometimes that's how I feel anyway. Her rat bastard father left before she was born, and his mother helped me through. That's why I named her after his mom. Margaret was so special. After she died, little Margaret was all I had left. Her eyes were all that I could see when I would close my own. I could turn a corner or watch TV or just sit reading a magazine at the laundry and there she was. I gave up on baby-sitters. Now I live for her. She's why I quit my job you know. People said I had gone crazy after his mom died, but that isn't right. I just decided that I wanted my daughter to have the best mother any girl could have. Nothing was going to get in the way of that. Nothing can keep me from her.

(Pause. CLAIRE seems to drift away for a bit. CLAIRE is startled back to the present as ZACH loses his balance and he falls to one side of the teeter-totter. He crashes to the ground. CLAIRE instinctively goes to help him up, but is jerked back by her arm tied to the swing. ZACH shaking himself off, sits on one end of the teeter-totter.)

**CLAIRE**

You okay, mister?

(Zach nods.)

**CLAIRE**

You sort of scared me for a second. That's the most life I have seen out of you all morning. I mean, except for when you grabbed me.

(Fade out.)

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**VI**

(Spot on ZACH.)

**ZACH**

(To audience.)

Sometimes, if you're not careful, truths jump right out at you. You're the one that watches. You're the one that searches out facts and wrestles with the past. You're the one that cares to discover why. Suddenly you realize the only voice you hear is yours and just as you make this revelation...whack! Right in the kisser. You should have heard it coming, should have noticed it on the horizon. It isn't like it snuck up on you. It walks up in broad daylight. No dark alleys. No tricks with mirrors. There's nothing mystical about it. Your plans are laid.... "Of mice and men." It just grabs you.

73

(Fade out.)

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**VII**

(As the lights fade up ZACH sits as if he is waiting for a partner on the teeter-totter. CLAIRE, straddling the swing, has been crying. ZACH is holding his face.)

**CLAIRE**

Why'd you do that. You made me do that you know? I mean, if you hadn't tried that...well, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to hurt you. I'm sorry.

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(Pause.)

**CLAIRE**

Listen, mister, my wrist hurts here. It's digging in pretty hard. Besides, I really gotta get going. My kid is going to be out soon and she's gonna need me. Let me go, will you?

**ZACH**

Pull the rope. Just pull the rope.

(CLAIRE pulls on the lose end of the rope and it falls off.)

**CLAIRE**

You made me bleed.

(Pause. CLAIRE examines her wrist as ZACH pulls a gun from his coat and lays it on the teeter-totter.)

**CLAIRE**

(Scared.)

74

What's that for? Hey, this isn't funny. Put that thing up. I told you, if you kill me they will be down here looking for me. I gotta meet my kid. When that bell rings and I'm not there....

**ZACH**

Shhh.

**CLAIRE**

Right. Not another word. I'm just gonna sit here for a bit. I mean, the bell won't ring for a few minutes. I have some time to sit here with you.

(Pause. CLAIRE crosses over and sits on the opposite side of the teeter-totter. ZACH does not move.)

**CLAIRE**

Mister, I gotta go. (She shows ZACH her watch.) See, it's almost time.

(CLAIRE gets up from the teeter-totter and stands for a moment. All is still. She crosses over to ZACH and gently kisses him on the forehead. ZACH does not move. CLAIRE walks over and picks up her bag. She looks back at ZACH one last time and slowly begins to exit. As CLAIRE turns away, ZACH picks up the gun. He reaches up in the air and holds it there for a moment. ZACH begins to lower the gun as the lights fade. As the lights go to black we are startled by the sound of a bell. One long, solitary bell is heard, and again we hear the barely audible sound of children's voices.)

### 3

## Laure Marker

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You were partly an invention of a poet  
– a dweller of the shadow lands.  
You were partly a wish  
– a desire for a secret sharer.  
You are partly a memory which  
– refuses to leave my heart.  
You are mostly someone I do not know.

76

# Down Town

Heather L. Hay

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77

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