




Harbinger

2010

unhinged



Harbinger

2010

“a person or thing that comes before
to announce or to give indication
of what will follow”

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Foreword

Unhinged: Life and Art in a Frantic Era

The most disruptive time in my life took place during my junior year of high school. I had an intense migraine that led me across three states, five hospitals and a baker's dozen of shots and IV treatments in search of relief. After this month of pain and confusion, my life returned to a normal state, but I was left feeling unhinged. I was no longer the same person I had been before and during the migraine episode.

These days, the disruptions in my life are less intense but more constant. Technology has been thrust upon the millennial generation. We are asked to produce faster than ever before. When my father recounts his glory days of college, he speaks of writing a single paper a semester and working on big projects instead of a billion small ones. There is a sort of peacefulness to concentrating on a single project for a long period of time rather than the multitask overload that fills our twenty-first century lives. Of course my father's college days were also the era of typewriters and eight tracks, so I'm not terribly jealous.

This modern, instantaneous 2010 lifestyle has had its side effects: short attention spans, less effective communication and an ever-growing, self-focused society. Even our pop culture wants to be ingested at break-neck speeds. The musical group Girl Talk takes snippets of other songs and melds them into one piece,

what you might call an all-you-can-eat genre of music. Beyoncé trumps her foolish song “Video Phone” with a video so ridiculous, with its lack of cohesion and editing, it must be a parody. The mash-up novel *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* combines classic works with new passages, sparking the question, is this trend laziness or innovation?

I live in a world where technology changes so quickly I have trouble connecting with those a mere four years younger. Their need for instant communication via text and email diminishes coherent conversation. It’s not just the older generations who are frustrated with this whirlwind lifestyle. Often while riding shotgun down I-29, I have the urge to chuck my cell out the window. So it does not come as a surprise that the minds of writers at times seem unhinged, strategically drifting from one thought to the next. The writers of this year’s *Harbinger* convert their overload frustration into style, voice and theme.

One of the most interesting components of being “unhinged” is not the actual state of disruption, but the journey a person takes to get there. Our authors take the reader on that journey. In Sydney Haven’s short short “Masquerade,” a lover is left feeling removed from life as she knew it. Kristin J. McCowan’s personal essay “Enmeshed Enemies” tells of a mother-daughter relationship altered by one event that not only separates them but also leaves them unable to restore their love for each other. In “Mona,” by Samantha Swafford, one man has a disorienting business trip, which moves him from apathy to joy.

Much of the poetry reflects the disruptive experiences of our lives and the effect on voice and form. Like the disorder of today's world, "I Am" by Paige Burton employs a style that sets aside traditional narrative for a ping-pong paced defense of individuality. The displacement of geography is reflected in Emily Petrie's "And So We Meet Again," which captures a longing for the familiar and the slower pace of an afternoon on the Californian shore. "David" by Rhea Amos touches on the disruption of war and its impact on life's order. In Sarah Jost's "Prolonged Exposure," she explores the mentally unhinged, evoking a scene of madness while maintaining the tone of eerie calm. The unsettling effect reminds us that while we have become accustomed to being jolted by media, society, and ourselves, the mind is the most valuable and difficult thing to keep hinged.

Please take a minute, slow down, and enjoy your copy of *Harbinger 2010*.

A.S.



Prolonged Exposure

Sarah Jost

I am a product of your disease.

Purple and green blossom on my skin
like irises in the spring.

I will hide this leprosy—
wishing

I could dig my fingernails in and
peel it away.

Will it make me a
masochist?

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Petals of flesh slip to the ground:

he loves me

he loves me not

he

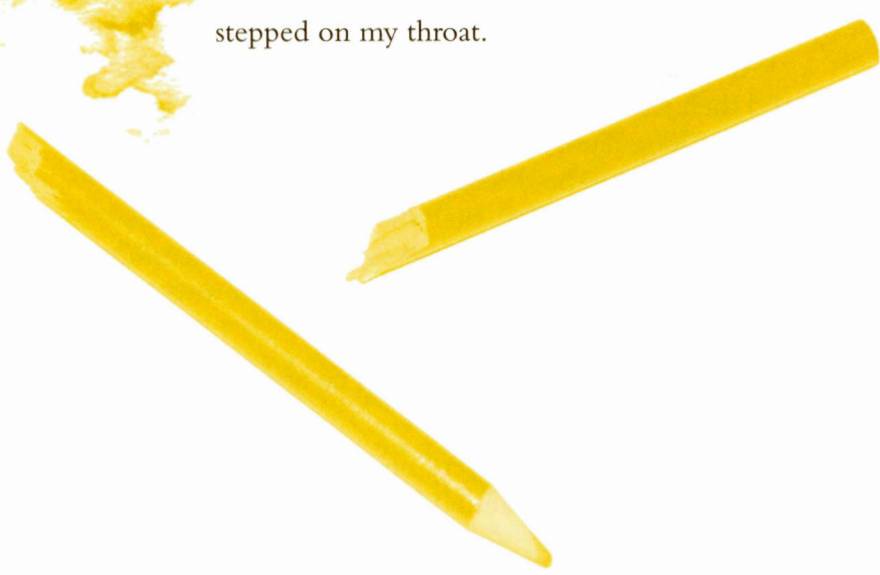
loves

me.

Ignis Fatuus

Ivy E. Lynch

The other day I time traveled
into a dark quiet. He had
a tiny key. When he opened
the door, he carefully slipped
his foot through and quietly
stepped on my throat.



Mona

Samantha Swafford

You have been here before. You have been everywhere before. The jaundiced light bearing down, suffocating you. You have been here before. Neon waves blur the peripheral. The world is static. You are on another conveyor belt in another airport in another city. You stand still as the walls rush by. You are part of an Escher design. It's ten to midnight when you see the golden arches, sniff the bubbling oil. America. Your stomach leaps toward the fried food. Your feet melt into the floor. You drag them along anyway.

“Bonjour, monsieur. Vous voulez commander?”

You fumble with the French to English translator, and then just decide to point to numbers on the board. It was a long flight and you are too hungry from an 8-½ hour trip to be dealing with such complexities as linguistics. Five minutes later you bite into your little piece of USA and close your eyes, savoring the comfort of midnight at home. You are awakened by a woman jabbing at you with a straw.

“Monsieur, s'il vous plait, vous ne pouvez pas dormir ici. Il faudrait que vous partiez.”

Your eyes can barely focus on her face; it's vaguely pink, sort of smeared around like a Pollock. You blink and can see her features better. Short red hair cut into a 50's style bob, cute slightly upturned nose with a bridge of freckles and a crystal stud in the left nostril, bright unforgivingly

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“You think, fast food employment is a greasy deep-fried vampire.”

red lips, eyes clear like the first ray of sunshine after a storm. You have no idea what she wants from you. You shake your head and shrug.

She has seen this shrug. She has seen every shrug there ever was. You know this because the world looks different to people like her, like you. People who have lost faith in humanity. The disillusioned, the empty, the weak. You note her red polo emblazoned with the yellow 'M', and you see that she has given up. You think, fast food employment is a greasy deep-fried vampire. She is still so young, her eyes are still unguarded and you think you can see Seurat's work in them. A complicated piece of art, beautiful on the surface, but, when you really look at it, an intricate web of dots. You were young once too. Full of the fresh exuberance that comes with a college degree. Proof that there is something inside of you, that you aren't just a shell. She pokes you with the straw again. You imagine her in a beret and striped shirt with a tiny red scarf around her thin neck, smoking from one of those long cigarette holders that you've only seen Cruella de Vil and Audrey Hepburn use.

You see she is going for a third poke, so you ask her, "Do you want me to leave? Is that it?"


She raises one eyebrow. "Ah, American."

Ah, Amerrycain.

"You cannot sleep here, and I need to close out my shift. You must get out."

You stare at her. You remember that despite her revealing eyes and innocent cherry lips, this is a woman






who has seen every gesture mankind has to offer. You nod and remove yourself from her domain. You find yourself in a fathomless chasm. A relentless descent to the realm of baggage. You ignore the winding black snakes carrying luggage and head straight for the desk with the small, round, mustachioed man. It has been hours since you were meant to retrieve your blue Samsonite roll-along. You picture it riding around and around, lonely without you there. You actually see it sitting on top of the pile in the back, staring at you like you were late picking it up from soccer practice.

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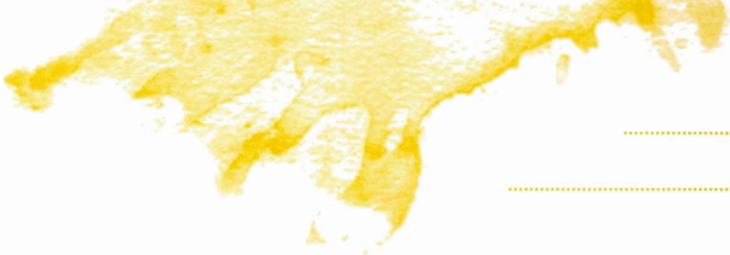


Consulting your guide to successful human communication in the civilized world, you ask, “Puis-je prendre moi-meme mon poulet?”

The man, Claude, from his nametag, chuckles under his breath and says, “I don’t know about your chicken, sir, but if you give me your claim ticket I can get your bag.”



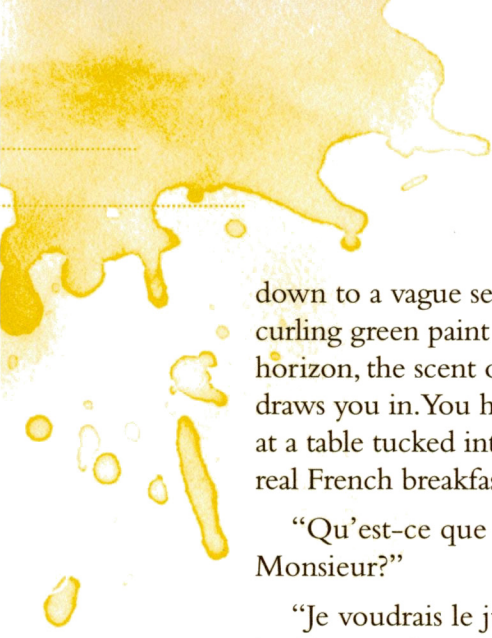
You have been here, to this city, many times before, but never learned the language. You have not taken the time to do many things. You can feel them all weighing down on you. They make your feet lag, your eyes droop, your lips sag. You’ve never even been to the Louvre. Not the museum part anyway. Only the back area where the business gets done. Your life is the back area. The part that no one sees. Behind the curtains of masterpieces. Claude returns with your cargo; you smile an empty smile and slip away into the sunrise. The cab ride to Hotel Astor Saint-Honoré is relaxing and allows you to catch the only real glimpses of Paris you will get this



trip. Or any trip. The Eiffel Tower is distant, cut from a magazine and pasted against the azure sky and quaint buildings. You do not see the Arc de Triomphe, but the people on the streets lackadaisically bustle about. You don't know how, but the French are the only people in the world who can be casual and busy at the same time. Most are one or the other; the French are both. You pass a café like van Gogh's *Café Terrace at Night*, except it isn't night and it isn't deserted. You see bits of the France you always wanted; you see bits of who you were going to be. Your boss calls to make sure you have arrived okay and that you keep your noon meeting. You remember why you are here, why you are anywhere, why you have never seen the *Mona Lisa* hanging proudly on the wall of the Louvre. Selling supplies. You breathed Vulpex Spirit Cleaner, ate Linoxyn Remover, dreamed Damar Gloss Varnish. Art restoration products. In the days when you were young, you'd thought you would be reviving great works of art. Instead your life has become sell, sell, sell. Traveling around the world, not seeing famous museums and cities. Yes, you will keep your noon meeting. Yes, you will sell boxes and boxes of art restoration kits to professionals who get to do what you have always wanted to. And you will smile.

After checking into the hotel and dumping your few travel possessions across the queen-size bed, you stroll down Rue de Rivoli. You notice all the cracks in the sidewalk, the trodden gum spots, the smooshed worm guts from the last rain. Once you would have seen an abstract beauty to it all. That part of you has been worn





down to a vague sense of longing. A small bistro with curling green paint and gold lettering looms on the horizon, the scent of fresh croissants wafts on the air and draws you in. You have time before the meeting, so you sit at a table tucked into a corner of the outdoor patio for a real French breakfast. Or at least a quick version of one.

“Qu’est-ce que vous ferait plaisir ce matin, Monsieur?”

“Je voudrais le jus de l’orange,” you stumble, not looking up from your bible.

“Oh, it’s you.”

You peek out from behind the book to find the lady who had previously committed straw assault. You quickly ponder leaving the bistro, but your stomach rumbles so you decide to stick it out. She glowers at you.

“Nom de dieu de bordel de merde, you are, what? Following me?”

“What? No, how could I possibly know you work here as well?”

“Look buddy, I don’t have time for any, eh, shenanigans.”

“I am completely shenanigan free. I just want some breakfast and this place smelled great, so I came in.”

“Whatever, so you want the juice of the orange?”

“Yes, please. Sorry about my fluency deficiency. I usually try harder to translate properly when I’m here, but I’m just so tired. I bet you are too, working two jobs.”



“Tiens! Don’t let anyone hear you say that.” Her voice lowers to a nearly inaudible whisper. “They would fire me if they knew, and my mother is the owner!”

“I am sorry... uh...”

The left side of her lip pulls up, an imperceptible brush stroke, her eyes slant sideways at you, as she says, “Velma.”

“Thelma?”

“Velma, with a V, like from the Scooby-Doo? My mother is a *vieille femme insensée, pas sympa*, with no joy in her heart. I guess she grew up watching that accursed show and so she decided to name me after the maudit lesbienne character. Fool woman, does she want no *petit-enfants?*!” Her voice rises at the end, clearly meant for a hidden party.

“Right, well, I am sorry Velma.”

“N’importe, I go by V anyway.” With that she disappears into the recesses of the tiny bistro.

You should have ordered your entire meal. You’ve begun to realize that she is even younger than you had thought. Not a lady, not a woman, but someone caught in time. The jaded mask of the corporate employee was dripping away like someone had poured linoxyn remover on her. You see less of yourself in her. More of something lost. You think about your business meeting, how you need to sell at least 50 units to this buyer, and over 400 throughout your stays in various European locales. The Louvre today, the Musée d’Orsay tomorrow,



the Musée de l'Orangerie the next day, the Uffizi Gallery in Italy the day after that, the Sistine Chapel, the Guggenheim, the Tate Modern, the continuous recitation of foreign museums. Velma approaches your nook, orange juice in hand; a small soft tangerine-colored flower floats at the top. A tall Mediterranean looking man in a waiter's uniform of head-to-toe black follows her with a tray filled with warm buttered croissants, one regular, one chocolate, and a bowl brimming with melons and grapes. You eye the tray and search the patio for the lucky recipient.

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“Here is ‘the juice of the orange,’ there’s a daylily on top. They’re sweet and unique and enhance the flavor of the juice.”

She is oddly expectant as she says this, looks at you with a glimmer of interest that you can’t grasp. You get the idea she is waiting for you to try it. You take a bite of the flower. It is indeed sweet, but has a buttery mellow taste like the melons on the tray you were admiring. Followed with a sip of orange juice, the effect is immediate. It isn’t a taste anymore; it’s a mood. The mood is... another sip... the mood is relaxed. She seems pleased with your reaction and gestures to the Mediterranean man.

“Levant, bring the man his prize.” As he brings forth the desired tray, she adds, “I took the liberty of ordering for you. J’éspère que ca ne vous gênez pas. I could tell it is what you wanted most.”

“How could you possibly know that Velma?”

“I told you, I go by V, and I just do. Call it a gift.”

“I could just as easily have wanted...”Your stomach growls as the food draws near, and your mouth begins to salivate, giving you away.

“That’s what I thought.”

You don’t respond, your mouth is too full of flaky goodness. She narrows her eyes at you, scrutinizing the greedy intake of scrumptiousness. This may not be a real word, but you don’t stop to consider it. She smiles, slow and devious. Your brain knows this smile will get you in trouble; your stomach, stupid thing though it is, can only think it will end in delight. When you have polished off the croissants and are moving on to the luscious fruits, she sits across from you, blocking the view of a small park you had been enjoying.

“I think I am going to experiment on you.”

“I’m not sure that I would agree to that.”

“Hey, no humans have been harmed in the making of this experiment.”

“As fun as that doesn’t sound, I do have somewhere to be at noon.”

“So? *Emportez-le*. What is so important?”

“My job. I have a meeting at noon, I can’t miss it.”

“Pff, job. What of jobs? *L’avenir est malléable*. The future is malleable. Why tie yourself down like that?”

“Don’t you do the same? I saw you at McDonald’s. I saw you beaten by the system.”





“That is what the tourists expect you to look like at a place like that. I don’t let it own me. I don’t let schedules define my life. Besides, the hours I work there don’t really interrupt anything else.”

“Then why do you even bother working there?”
Between bites of sticky honeydew, it sounds more like,
“Den vie do you efen bover workin dere?”

Popping a grape into her mouth, she says, “Look I’ll tell you about it later, if you agree to be my subject.”

“Why do you want me anyway? I’m sure there are tons of people who enjoy being guinea pigs.”

“Cobaye! I guess I just like the way you eat. You savor food and devour it at the same time, like it’s the last thread of life you have left.”

“There was a time when art was like that for me.”

“Art? That’s interesting. Why is it not that way anymore?”

“I suppose I’ve just lost touch with it. All I do now is sell art restoration supplies. Wait. Why is that interesting?”

“You’ll find out why it is interesting, and why I work at McDonald’s, when you come with me.”

“Fine Vel-, Fine V. I will be your lab rat until my meeting starts, and then I bid you adieu.”

“D’accord, D’accord, give me your money and then we can go.”

You hand her a few bills and she flounces inside, shouting to her mother that she is taking off. She

returns, grabs you by the hand, and yanks you to the street. Where was the person you had met in the wee hours of dawn and who was this replacement? Could she truly change faces so easily? Are you still the same lessened man or has the time between then and now changed you as well? You take stock of yourself. You are still wearing the same brown dress pants, the same khaki sweater with a small stain on the arm that you bought 'as is' for a cheaper price, the same auburn hair, the same heavy heart, the same, the same, the same. She must be bipolar. You walk with her. You don't know where the destination is, but you enjoy the journey. The surrounding architecture is serene and hypnotic as if designed by Piranesi himself. The buildings seem to tilt and swirl bending in on themselves, each trusting its neighbor to uphold the structure of the other. People laze about, walking dogs, carrying groceries. The sky is a backdrop of rolling gray; the sun is hidden but present, illuminating the trees jutting sharply about. V stops in front of a crumbling two-story and waves at the stairs next to it that lead down to a dark abyss. You tiptoe after her, wary of strange possibilities. She gestures toward the bumper-sticker-covered door, and opens it to reveal a brilliant stainless-steel kitchen, a roughed-up orange striped couch with duct-tape patchwork, and a pint-sized antennae TV.

"Is this where you live?"

"More or less, oui."

"It's... interesting. Why do you have such a high-end kitchen but basically nothing else?"



“My father, le connard, before he left he gave me all his cookware. I was nine, but he didn’t care. Cooking runs in the family, vous savez?”

“Why do you do that? Slip in and out of languages?”

“Look, I’m only speaking English for your benefit, so what if I find it such a boring language that I need to revert to my own?”

“Fine, fine. Can we get on with this? What are you going to do? Stick electrodes on me and make me squirm? What?”

“It’s nothing like that. All you have to do is eat. Do you have any food allergies?”

“Not that I’m aware of, but there is quite a lot I’m not aware of.”

“Good, then go sit on the sofa and look through the pictures underneath. I’ll be working in here.”

You sink into the orange death trap; it feels like the sort of thing that the dust bunnies of the world go to die under. You bravely reach your hand under the frame of the couch and retrieve an overflowing manila folder. The first picture is none other than da Vinci’s masterpiece, the *Mona Lisa*. The very painting you have so longed to see in all its glory. If you had the skills to paint a portrait, it would be the *Mona Lisa*. An eternal enigma with blank eyes. Next is *Starry Night*, followed by *ANT154* the Yves Klein piece using naked women as paintbrushes, then a Klimt piece you don’t know the name of, Monet’s *Water Lilies*, Degas’s *Ballerina #2*, Picasso’s *The Tragedy*, and finally Frida Kahlo’s *Self-portrait with Thorn Necklace*



and Hummingbird. You figure this must have something to do with why your lost passion for art is interesting to her. You review these a few more times, listening to V open and close cabinets, bang pots, boil water, and make other indecipherable sounds. You notice she is no longer wearing the all-black waiter ensemble and has moved on to a long magenta batik skirt and a forest green camisole. And bunny slippers. She catches you watching her.

“Hey, what do you think you’re doing? You can’t look until it’s time!”

Turning back, you ask, “Well when will it be time?”

“Actually, now.”

You squint at her and smirk. She raises one eyebrow, a smile playing at her cheeks.

“Now, come here and close your eyes.”

You obey. The air is permeated with various scents that have become indistinguishable as they combine and meld into something new that gets your salivary glands working once more. She hands you a bowl and tells you to eat without looking. Again you obey.

“Now think about the pictures. Does this make you think of any of them?”

“ANT154.”

“Very good! Most people just say ‘Le Bleu.’ But you even know the name of the piece.”

Of course you know the name of it. Those years of college weren’t all for naught. You take another spoonful





of the cool blackberry sorbet; a hint of vanilla bean sneaks into this second bite, enriching the flavor. It is at once fresh, French and naked.

“As delicious as this is, it can’t be what you’ve been doing in here.”

“Monsieur correct. Now try this,” she says, shoving a plate and fork at you.

This one is warm and homey yet complex – robust. Some type of meatloaf with nutmeg, sun dried tomatoes and a gravy that has a touch of balsamic to it. It reminds you of the Klimt piece. Next a delicate puff pastry hides an airy strawberry mousse at its center. Clearly the Degas. It is followed by a hearty salad of arugula, walnuts, and a dressing that tastes like a blend of salsa and Italian herbs. It takes a minute, but then you taste Frida in it. She presents these in no particular order. *Starry Night* is a silky dark chocolate soufflé, *Water Lilies* is a cucumber and grapefruit salad, the Picasso is a pasta carbonara with sage leaves thrown in. Last comes a simple mushroom soup. It is subtle and satisfying, mellow and mysterious. The flavors sneak up on you the way a pet cat might suddenly appear entwined at your feet. It is comforting but leaves you feeling that you will never understand this, or any soup, ever again.

“*Mona Lisa.*”

“Très, très bien! Most people confuse that one with the Kahlo piece.”

“So you’ve done this experiment before. Why?”

“Oui, but you’ve been the best subject so far. I’m

working on a theory that certain foods can call up certain pieces of art. That they may even taste better when enjoyed with them.”

“Well this one definitely calls up Mona for me. She’s probably my favorite piece of all. I wrote my dissertation on her.”

“It’s one of mine too. It’s so amazing in person, the way her eyes look at you, look into your soul, follow you around. It’s as if she knows all your darkest secrets and can only smile at them. That’s something that just doesn’t translate well in reprints.”

“Actually, I’ve never seen it in person.”

“You’ve been to Paris before but you’ve never seen Mona?” she asks, incredulous.

“I’ve always been in the backrooms, sometimes at other meeting places, moving on the next day. Never had any time to go experience it.”

“Well, then, that will be the mission for today.”

“No, I have to get to my meeting soon. I should go.”


“Where is your meeting?”

“Far from the Louvre. We aren’t even meeting on site.”

“You know what? There’s a train leaving in ten minutes not far from here, tant pis pour votre reunion. I can tell you don’t want to go to any maudit meeting. If you don’t go with me now, you never will.”

You evaluate her expression, full of mischief, her eyes





sparkling in the dull light. You could always reschedule the meeting for the next day; squeeze it in between your other obligations. She's right, if you don't go now, you'll never go, something will always be in the way. You don't want to live out your life like this. You take a deep breath.

“Let's go.”

You watch the dank subway station float by, pick up speed and disappear in black. It is true night in the tunnel, no stars, no moon, no buzzing signs with letters blown out to light the way. The train is a fluorescent white. Old ads and half-ripped flyers adorn the walls, and it smells faintly of urine. An old man walks up and down the car, muttering to himself. You turn to V who is writing vigorously in a notebook.

“What are you writing?”

“Juste quelques nouvelles idées. Too many thoughts. They have to spill out somewhere.”

“So you never told me why you work at McDonald's. It seems like you would be happier in your own restaurant.”

“C'est ca, I want to have my own place, base menus on different works of art, but my mother won't hear of it. There's no way I could start up on my own, and she won't help because she thinks that all food has to be done her way. She never has fun with it, won't try new things. Even simple things like the flower in your 'juice of the orange'. She won't hear of it.”

“So working at an airport McD's seemed like a viable substitution?”



She laughs sardonically through her nose. “No, not really, but they provide an extra source of income and let me work strange hours so that I can avoid ma maman. I know I’m not making enough money for anything agréable, but I don’t spend much. You’ve seen my place. I hope in a couple of years I will be able to open something small, and if it goes well, expand out.”

The lights flicker off for just a moment, and you are plunged into darkness. In that brief second you feel your heart stop, proof that it was beating after all. The momentum of the train stopping at your station pulls you crashing into V. You help her up, and the two of you make your way out of the night tunnel. A light rain has fallen while you were underground. The Louvre stands in majestic grandeur; I.M. Pei’s Pyramid glistens from the recent shower. The sun shines anew upon the winding line of tourists waiting to enter the historic museum.

“It’ll take all day to get in. I should have gone to my meeting.”

“S’il vous plaît, this line is for outsiders. We do not wait. We enter and claim art for ourselves.”

You follow her to a door on the side of the building; she glances around and pushes it open. You only briefly wonder why it wasn’t locked. You end up in a warehouse-like storage room. Boxes and various trinkets scatter the cement flooring. V beckons you forward, then stops you just before you step in the sightline of a guard. You both crouch behind one of the larger cardboard monstrosities, peering over the edge, waiting for the



guard to move. Finally he does and you make your escape, running bent over with boxes as cover. You're in a cramped dark hallway, but a white light shades the end, leading out to a much larger hallway filled with sculptures. You don't recognize most of them—your focus was always on paintings—but you do know the *Winged Victory of Samothrace*. A headless, one-winged statue of the goddess Nike. It's magnificent. V pulls at the stain on your sweater.

"You can enjoy the rest of the museum later. Mona is impatient."

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Several corridors later, Mona sits as serenely as she did in the 1500's. She is smaller than you imagined, but that doesn't matter. A small crowd of people stands around her, snapping photos. V walks up to a middle-aged woman wrangling three children and taps her shoulder.

"Hey, did you hear that Brad Pitt is here, a few halls down?" She says this with a forced impersonation of an American southern drawl.

"Brad Pitt! Oh I just love him! Come on kids, let's go find him!" the woman shrieks.

The rest of the crowd begins murmuring amongst themselves, and they all disperse within minutes. V grins at you and the now-empty hall. You can't help but laugh. You begin to feel lighter, as though a layer of tough hide has been shed to reveal pristine pink skin. You sit cross-legged in front of your treasure. V does the same.

"Hey Velma will you say jinkies for me? Just once?"

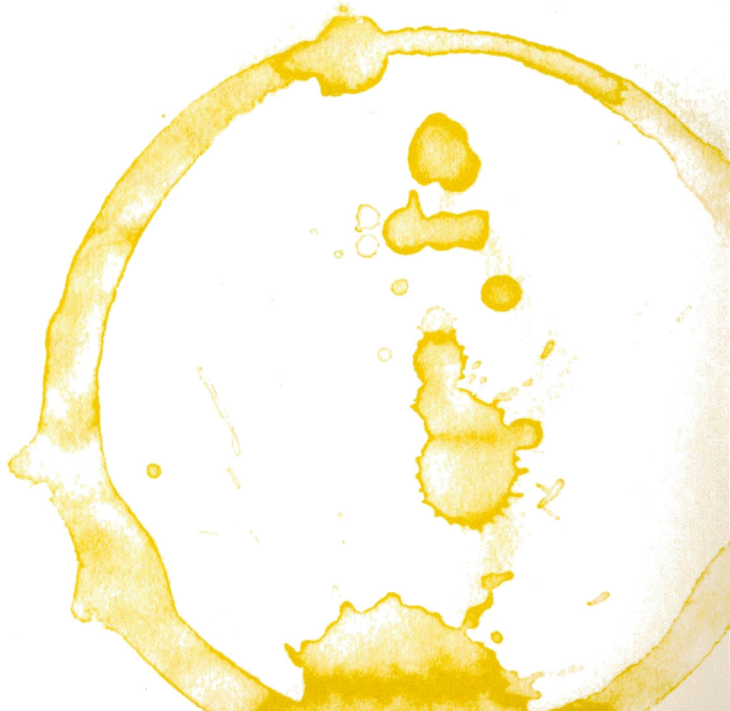
She rolls her eyes. “Jinkies.”

Zheenkees.

“I hope you make it, the restaurant. I really do.”

“C’est sympa, I hope you reclaim art as yours
once again.”

You both fall into a comfortable silence. You stare
into Mona’s eyes; they are like that little piece of limbo
created when two mirrors face each other. A limitless
reflection of itself. You lose yourself in the infinite
oblivion that is the *Mona Lisa*.



Kindergarten

Amy Sand

I cannot tell you
what I have learned here.
Colored blocks connected
and kicked down.
Construction paper tasted
and enjoyed.

I got lost in the compost pile,
the curly blonde's banana
slowly changing color,
yellow fading to black.
My eyes were vibrating.

I fell through a window
made of toilet-paper tubes
onto sand and popsicle sticks
and crayons.

I licked my fingers covered
with dried-on paste
and ingested the glue
of my education.

They told me to lie down
on blue plastic
and repeat, repeat, repeat
my z's.



I am a mustache,
growing to the point
of sensibility.

I will be
shaved off
when necessary.

29



Impressions

Rhea Amos

We cover our hands
in color
and proceed
to touch everything
until my magenta fingertips
stain the beige walls
and your pronounced
sienna lifeline
snakes across
bronze doorknobs.

30



Now we know how it feels
to leave something
behind.



It all sounded so lovely
at the time;
the delicate sonatas
we made at dusk
as our forks
scratched the bottom
of fine china.

We were doing just fine
until we started running

and then we felt alive.



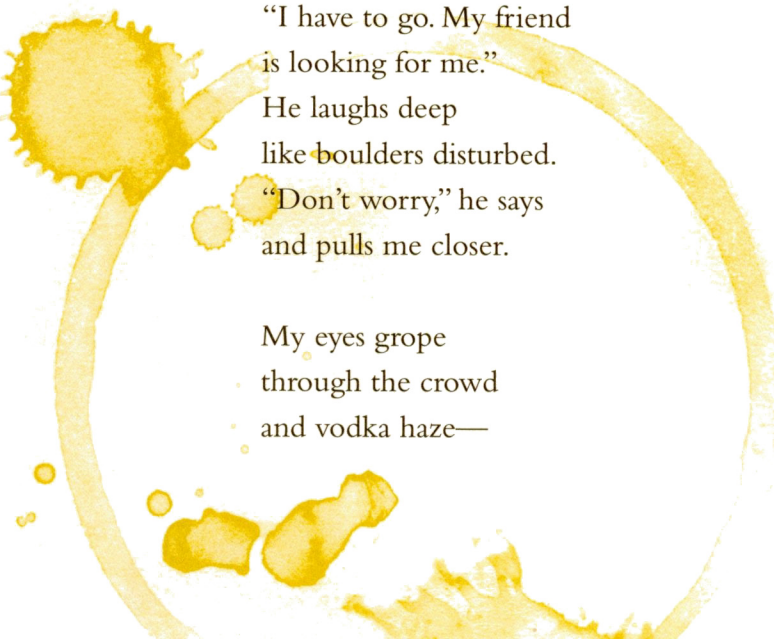
Bella Figura

Ellie Rempel

In the corner of the club
broken Italian and
the self you lent me
implied things I didn't mean.
"No lo so." I shouldn't
have said I didn't know
where you'd gone.

Objections dismissed,
a mistaken invitation
for him to hold me
in strange hands,
say bella into my hair.
My voice weak against
the DJ's heavy beat,
"I have to go. My friend
is looking for me."
He laughs deep
like boulders disturbed.
"Don't worry," he says
and pulls me closer.

My eyes grope
through the crowd
and vodka haze—



find your raven hair
and knowing hips
that sway to the rhythm.
Your twirling skirt
the color of club lights
and city streets.
You, oblivious and happy,
just beyond reach.



Anesthesia

Sarah Jost

I drive thirty minutes just to calm
your nerves.

To ease your thoughts we discuss temptation
with smiles.

These nights are dangerous
like Satan on a Sunday.

We aren't destroying each other in ways
everyone expects.

34

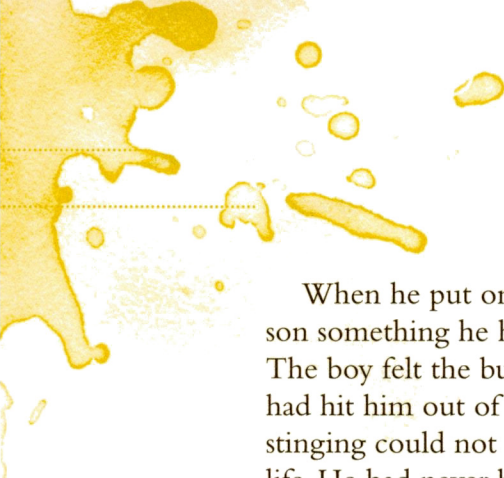


When he put on the red lipstick, he was complete. He stepped back, looked in the mirror, and took in the transformation. Moments ago, he had been dressed in baggy blue jeans and a flannel shirt. Now, he looked at himself carefully from head to toe: the v-neck argyle sweater fit him at every curve, the knee-length skirt showed off his calf muscles, which were accentuated by black pumps. He reached into his wife's jewelry box and pulled out the coveted string of pearls, fastening it around his bulky neck. This feels so right, he thought as he wrapped his arms around himself and stared at his own reflection.

It seemed that he had always known, had always felt that he was in the wrong body. He was born a boy, and had eventually grown into a man, but on the inside, he had never changed. He had always been a female confined in a male body. He remembered vividly watching his mother putting on her makeup in the mornings, gliding the creamy tint over her lips in one effortless move. One day when he was quite young, he had asked her if he could have some lipstick. His gentle, loving mother, thinking it was a harmless request, dabbed her son's lips with the lipstick. Just as she began, the boy's father intruded on them and demanded to know what was going on. His mother tried to explain, but the father became enraged at the sight of his only son's pouting, crimson lips.



“It seemed that he had always known, had always felt that he was in the wrong body.”



When he put on the red lipstick, his father saw in his son something he hated, something that frightened him. The boy felt the burning of his cheek where his father had hit him out of anger and fear, but the temporary stinging could not compare to the pain he felt his whole life. He had never been the son his father wanted.

He had tried to control his feelings, though they gnawed at him daily. He had tried to pursue the lifestyle that he knew his parents wanted for him. He grew up, went to college, dated girls, and then he met her. Instantly, he was drawn to her, because she reminded him of his mother. She was soft-spoken, compassionate, and had magnificent, warm brown eyes that made him feel at home. When they graduated from college, he asked her to marry him. He had never shared his secret with her, and though he felt like he was deceiving her, he truly loved her and wanted her to be his life-long friend and companion.

When he put on the red lipstick, he had to be careful. Once, she had almost caught him when he thought she had left to go to the store to pick up milk, and she had come back to get her wallet off the bedroom dresser. He had heard her coming up the stairs in time, but it was at that moment, as his heart was beating furiously and drops of sweat were beginning to accumulate on his forehead, that he knew it was time. It was time to tell the woman that he had shared a bed with for twenty-three years and had three grown children with that he was not who she thought he was.



When he put on the red lipstick, she sat on the edge of the bed, dumbstruck. Standing before her was her husband, but he was a she. The way his wife looked at him made him feel like a sideshow freak. But more than anything, he wanted to show her that he was not a freak. He was the same person even if he looked differently on the outside. He told her that he had always felt the way he did, throughout childhood, in college, on their wedding day. Every day of his life, he felt he was a woman trapped in a man's body. His wife listened as he explained that he still loved her; he had always loved her. He always would. When he ran out of things to say, he watched as she stood and walked past him, into the bathroom, shutting the door behind her. He listened as she cried for what seemed like hours.

At first, she treated him with disgust. She couldn't look at him or be near him. But as time went on, she started missing their life. After all, they weren't strangers—they had been husband and wife for twenty-three years. Their relationship could not simply be undone. Slowly, very slowly, she tried to accept his new way of life. She would let him borrow her clothes—the ones that fit, anyway—and she would listen as he talked about his interest in taking hormones to make himself appear more feminine. Inside, she was torn apart by the thought of her husband becoming a woman; she still inwardly cringed whenever she turned around and saw him in her own clothes, and she spent many nights crying herself to sleep, wondering why this had to happen to her of all people. But at the same time, she



still loved him, and because she loved him, she eventually came to terms with having another woman in her home.

When he put on the red lipstick, he knew he was asking a lot of those who loved him. But he also knew that he had waited long enough to be true to himself. For the first time in his life, he was at peace when he looked in the mirror. And with that thought, he put on another layer.



“Why are you crying?”

“I don’t want you to go.”

“You knew about this for months. Why are you just now crying?”

“I-I-I don’t know. It’s finally here.”

She reached around her neck and released her golden cross from its hook. She then placed it around my neck and said, “Hold onto this until I get back and don’t lose my stuff.” She had given me a piece of her that I knew was more symbolic than the gold charm I was now wearing. She gave me a part of her that I had to cherish forever. I wanted a part of my mom but with it came a responsibility. I couldn’t lose it; I couldn’t break it. I was responsible for caring about this relationship, this charm and her. We had become enmeshed. She finally gave herself to me, and I finally understood that I had a responsibility to her.



“She gave me a part of her that I had to cherish forever...I couldn’t lose it; I couldn’t break it.”

Toni is the type of woman who gets what she wants, when she wants it and how she wants it. God forbid any person challenges what she says or believes. Her favorite question to ask after a passionate lecture is, “Am I right or am I right?” I grew up not understanding that there are options other than the ones presented, so I’d simply say, “You’re right.”



My mom grew up in Berkley, a small town in north St. Louis County. Given my grandpa's account of my mom during childhood, she ran rampant through Berkley, beating up everyone. She fought all the time. No one wanted to mess with her, and if you weren't her friend, you were definitely her enemy. Turns out she only had one friend, her little brother who had no choice. Toni had a dire need to control something, anything and giving birth to me gave her the opportunity to mold me into her image.

Needless to say, my mom spoiled me. She took me to every Sesame Street, Barney and Arthur on Ice concert. When I was old enough to go to school, she bought me all the best clothes. We shopped at department stores, and I never got the chance to pick what I wanted to wear. After awhile, what she wanted became what I wanted. I loved shopping at department stores and wearing my little black loafers with my green, white and black plaid dress. Being well dressed put me above all of the other kids in my first-grade class. My teachers loved me and always referred to me as the miniature adult. By second grade, I'd convinced the entire faculty at Bermuda Elementary that I was too advanced for their basic second-grade curriculum. When the suggestion of having me skip second grade was presented to my mom, she told the faculty that I was too emotionally sensitive to move into the third-graders' dog-eat-dog world.

My brothers were already too harsh for me to handle; they made me cry every day, and every day my mom babied me. Nothing was ever my fault. When I snuck



into my brothers' room to steal their game, they would come after me, pull my hair and force me to give it back. Eventually, after I returned their Sega game, I would tell my mom and my brothers would get punished even though I stole their brand new Sonic 2.

As I grew older nothing changed. I got into basketball, and my mom went to every game, paid every tournament fee and cheered me on even when we lost. "It's ok, you'll get 'em next time," she'd say. I even started Judo in fifth grade. My mom drove me over 200 miles to a tournament that I forced her to attend despite the fact that she had worked earlier that day. Again she cheered me to my first place trophy. In the midst of what seemed like great parenting, this was all a ploy to get me on her side.

"Your mother is the most manipulative woman I know. She trips me up, man. She's a liar and a cheater. All to get what Toni wants," Charles P. said.

Charles was my mom's ex fiancé. They were together for seven years and when it ended, Charles vented to me. We had a tight relationship. He was more of a dad to me than my mom allowed my real dad to be. We spent a great deal of time together and when my mom told me no, I'd ask him and he'd change her mind.

"Now, don't get me wrong. I love the shit out of that woman, but it's all about her, you know? No sacrifice. It's her way or the highway. She's crazy."

The entire family saw my mom this way and





whenever they got the chance, they warned me. I didn't believe it. I still saw my mom as the best mom ever. Being as young as I was, my mom's evil ways were not obvious. All I knew was that she let me do whatever I wanted, have whatever I wanted, and, most of the time, say whatever I wanted. In retrospect, everything I said, did, or craved was a product of her influence.

We were sitting downstairs around the glass dinner table, the one we only used for Christmas and Thanksgiving dinner. Mom told my brothers and me to be sitting there when she was done talking on the phone.

"Ok, listen. You all know that your uncle Davin is a drug dealer, right?" she asked.

It was no secret that Davin was one of the most infamous drug dealers in all of St. Louis in the '90s. Every month, he had a new car and a new cell phone number. Everytime we saw him, which was usually every other week, he gave my brothers and me fifty dollars for no reason other than the fact that he had it. We watched my uncle move from place to place quickly, and we saw how strategic his moves were.

"Duh, Mama," I said.

"Well, they arrested your uncle last month, and they are planning on taking him down in what is called a conspiracy. A conspiracy is when there are multiple people involved in one crime. This letter has my name on it as one of the people who was a part of this crime.

Now, I was talking to the prosecutor, and he said that I have two options. One, I can sell out your uncle, say that the drugs they found in the house last week were his and he will get life in prison. Two, I can say that the drugs found in the house were mine, and your uncle will only serve 12 years.”

We understood. We were exposed to the world of drug dealing from a young age. The police were always referred to as “they,” and we knew that they had wanted to take my uncle down for a long time. It was no surprise to us. I also knew that when someone pleads guilty to a crime there is a consequence.

“What happens to you, Mama?” I asked.

“Well baby, if I confess that the drugs are mine, I’ll have to go away for three years. What do you think I should do?” My mom opened the floor for suggestions. She always included us in big decisions.

“Man, Mama. That’ll be messed up if you let Davin go to jail for life. I know them was his drugs in the house ‘cause I saw him put ‘em there, but that’ll be messed up if he was gone forever.” My brother Dwayne was my uncle’s number one fan. He loved the cars Davin drove, the designer clothes he wore and every pair of his Jordans.

“Well, I don’t know, Mama. I don’t want Davin to be gone forever. But, I don’t want you to be gone either. Where will we go if you have to go away?” I asked.

“Wherever you want, baby. You can go to your dad’s, you can go to your grandma’s or you can even go to






your TT's." I knew for sure that I didn't want to go to Grandma's because she lived in the city. I hated the city. It smelled like sewer water. Not to mention the fact that there was always a murder or homicide that occurred in that area. I was scared of the city.

"I'm going to TT's," Bigman said. Bigman was always the quiet one, but when he made up his mind that was it. No questions asked. In his own way he felt superior to Dwayne and me because he could make his own decisions, whereas my mom usually controlled my thinking and my uncle controlled Dwayne's. "By myself. I hate this messed-up family. I don't want to live with none of ya'll. Kristin, always comin' in my room messin' up stuff, and Dwayne always meddling with somebody. I'm going to TT's by myself."

We all decided at that moment that my mom was going away. Now we just needed to choose a place to go. I had no other choice but to go to my dad's.

My dad's house was a brutal place. It was messy, and there were kids everywhere, screaming and jumping and running all over the place. Every day I battled; first against those demonic children and then against my evil stepmother. She hated me because she hated my mother. She made me do all of the chores like Cinderella. I washed all the dishes, did all the laundry and mopped all of the floors, daily. She claimed that my mom spoiled me and that doing these chores would help me build character. Well they didn't. I cried every night, and when



my mom called, I told her all of the horrible things I was forced to do. We cried together. My mom was the only person I could confide in. I sent her a letter every week, and she did the same. We were each other's safe haven from the world. Throughout those three years of being away from my mom, I grew more attached to her. I was fulfilling my responsibility to her; she needed me to be there because everyone else had strayed away. My brothers followed my uncle's path and began selling drugs. I was the only one she had, and she worked hard to keep me close. If I had abandoned her, it would be the end of what she lived for. We were so interdependent emotionally that we became one. She felt my pain and I hers.



When my mom got out of prison in 2005, she was mandated to live in a halfway house for six months before she re-entered society. While living there, she worked at a diner in Union Station in downtown St. Louis. She nickel-and-dimed her way back to a normal life. When she was allowed to leave the halfway house, she moved in with an old friend, Ken.

Ken helped my mom in every way that he could, and I soon moved in with him, too. I was ready to leave my dad's battlefield and be loved again. I also started working at a restaurant in Union Station to be near Mom. That summer we got our life back. My mom bought me a car, and herself a jeep.

Once we moved back into our home, my brothers



refused to return; they were making too much money on the streets to care about our family anymore. It was just the two of us.

Fall was quickly approaching and I was looking forward to softball season. Every day after work I conditioned with the team for the upcoming season. School started, I quit my job and softball took over. During the home opener I tore my ACL sliding into third base. I was escorted off the field to the bench to wait for my mom to take me to the hospital. When she arrived, she was mad that I had decided to tear my ACL on a day that she had to work. She took me to the hospital, and the doctors said I needed surgery. A week later, my mom took me in for the operation.

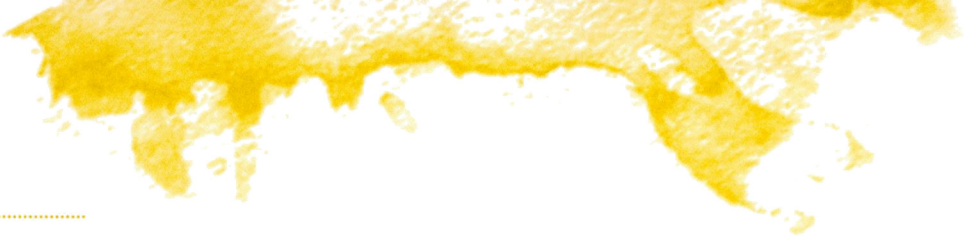
“Ok, Toni, you can go ahead and wait in the waiting room now. We will take care of your daughter.” The anesthesiologist was a fairly young woman with blonde hair and green eyes. She seemed nice and harmless, until she shoved the needle into the top of my leg.

“Can she stay until the anesthesia kicks in?” But before the anesthesiologist could respond, I was out. I woke up after the surgery screaming my brains out for my mom to come save me. I had no idea where I was. The room looked like a big aluminum ice box. The nurse walked in to soothe me, but I demanded my mom instead. The nurse let my mom into the operating room to calm me down. I was fifteen at the time, still acting like a baby.

My mom wanted to leave St. Louis because she knew that as long as she stayed her felony would haunt her. I began to see the manipulation that my family talked about. My mom didn't love Ken initially. She saw him as a way to escape the crime-ridden city of St. Louis. Under probation, my mom was prohibited from leaving the state unless she had a spouse who lived elsewhere. So she drew Ken nearer to her, making him want to marry her. Fall of 2005 they married, and my mom moved with Ken to North Carolina. I followed.

Soon after our move, Mom started working on getting relicensed in the state of North Carolina so that she could return to hospital work. During those six months, my injury prevented me from driving my car, and my mom had to drive me everywhere. Besides studying for her licensure, she needed me to fill her time. After awhile our need for each other became frustrating. I expected my mom to drop everything and be there for me whenever I needed her. My mom, on the other hand, had trouble putting my needs before her own. My junior year of high school, I got involved in a lot of extracurricular activities, knowing that this is what colleges look for in a candidate. While I was being overly involved in school and she was trying to get relicensed, we butted heads. We were two driven individuals who needed something from the other in order to be successful. She needed me to stop interfering with her plans, but I needed her to support me so that I could get into college.






We were enmeshed. We needed each other despite how much we argued. We fueled each other's frustration as well as each other's need for an emotional connection. I later learned that enmeshed is a psychological term used to describe people whose instincts direct them toward individuals with similar needs. People who are enmeshed tend to push the same emotional buttons and massage the same emotional needs. Enmeshment is also present when our sense of wholeness comes from another person.

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My mom's time in jail not only brought us closer, it made her more self-involved. She knew that in order to get her life back, she would have to focus on herself. Despite my instant need for her attention, she overcame the struggles of re-entering society as a convicted felon, got relicensed, and went back to work. Determined not to let anyone jeopardize her opportunity to regain a normal life, she was willing to manipulate others to do so.

To this day my mom and I argue a lot. She recently came to visit, and I had car trouble. My car started smoking, but instead of worrying about whether it was going to blow up she yelled at me. It was my fault that she had to waste her valuable time helping me get my car fixed. It's hard for two self-involved people to deal with the fact that our independence and success depends on mutual cooperation. She had no other choice but to help me get my car fixed. In order for her life to run smoothly, my life needs to run smoothly. Her happiness is dependent on mine, and my happiness is dependent on her being happy with me.



Growing Chart

Amy Sand

It wasn't easy to tell you that your dog smells.

I thought this hot dog would be different.

Dogs that fold too easy are not to be trusted.

Ones that play poker are even sneakier.

Warning: If you use paint remover, paint will come off.

I've never bought a house before. Does that make me homeless?

My parents have a lovely home. What is the cutoff for dependents?

Oh, I hate taxes; I don't care for money.

Yes, I loved Marc Jacobs' new line too.

Where did all my Lucky Charms go?

Yeah, it was me who ate all the marshmallows.

What to do with all the tan pieces the dog won't eat?



Casualties of Glam Rock

Emily Petrie

Outside the Whiskey A Go-Go
the adolescents of Hollywood hang
their hulking heads.

Long, teased messes of hairspray
drip the wake of a raucous night.

Only a few hours ago
shirts were stolen from a crowd,
leaving chests stark and unbridled.

50



Now, the traffic bucks up,
the pavement marinates, and
the reek of puke and booze make their encore
on the Strip.

Leather pants loosen
to accommodate bloat,
and chicks not remembered
curl up against them.

On stage,
dumped,
are the hapless guitars.

They too have cricks
in their necks.

In a Nam sunrise,
streaks of sienna
snake down rice paddies
to catch a glimmer on
rusted dog tags
under murky waters.

Much like your face,
fading from memory
day by day.
Each night,
I forget a centimeter
of your jaw line.

I put the silver bracelet
in my jewelry box
and moved away,
where ivy-sheathed windows
block out the past.

Now I have found you,
shining as you always do
in the curvature of letters
strung together
to forge your forgotten name.

To Private First Class David Roe, a missing-in-action prisoner of war, who was last seen on 8/28/1967. Hoping to send the bracelet back to you.



And So We Meet Again

Emily Petrie

California is dying to be in my skin
and the heat of nearly burning flesh
feels unconvincing,
lying on plexiglass at Tan Co.
in middle America.

I crave authentic sunlight,
my former freckled body, and persuasions to doze
riding shotgun in Eden's
'67 Beetle convertible.

52



The quintessential beach day.

The ocean salt
that once sculpted my hair,
mimicking the waves at Point Dume,
has been replaced with Aqua Net,
which rivals at a mere \$2.75 at Wal-Mart.

Summer flings
were conceived at the beach.
A Californian birthright,
an excuse for toes to tear
into the sand mid-kiss
and our mouths to grasp



these moments for just a while longer.

1,500 miles away,
California is in my clothing.
Sweatshirts fragrant from reefer go unbathed,
bringing me back to drum circles on starry nights,
and aimless drives.

I have seashells that tell me secrets,
pressed against my ear. In my reverie
their hollow song moans for my return,
and I reciprocate those cries
for the coastline; the twinkling

of a carousel at the end of the pier.



One Sip, One Swig, One Gulp

Marné Timon

The train pulled into L.A. while Louise was still nursing a hangover and a broken shoe buckle. The shoe, straight from her personal shoemaker in Berlin, a man with an eye for trends and Louise's breasts, had been promised never to break. And now, before she had even set foot back on Los Angeles soil it was broken. Glaring at her ankle she hoisted her bag onto her shoulder, stuffing a large book in among cigarettes and a bottle of perfume. Her alcohol she kept out.

She squeezed out onto the platform, the haze of summer simmering up around her knees. Oh, Hollywood, how she wished it had died in this sticky soup while she had been gone. How she wished she had given it longer to simmer before coming back. One swig to season the taste.

54



“Oh, Hollywood, how she wished it had died in this sticky soup while she had been gone.”

In her line of sight was Mr. Paramount himself squinting in the sun and showing his teeth in a grin as she neared. Louise could feel her shoe's

broken clasp bobbing at her ankle, the decorative buckle bending the strap backwards so it flapped up and down with each step. She leveled with him, and he smirked, giving her a coquettish bow and offering his hand for her bag.

“May I, my doll, my dear Ms. Brooks?”

“You may,” she said, letting her bag drop into his hand. She kept her alcohol. One swig for every time he

calls me doll. God knows she's going to need it.

He turned on his heel, and spurted the hotel reservations and perspective schedules in an oily, jovial tone.

“You could even start tomorrow, doll. We're flexible, you know. Maybe not your old shenanigans. No disappearing now, but we're open...” His voice trailed off in the clamber of the cars. Two swigs already. Louise followed behind, that buckle still bobbing, the bow heavy on the strap and slipping along the stones with each step.

As the pair reached the curb, he signaled for the taxi, and she took a step. The heel of her shoe landed on the buckle, and she fell, the tassels on her dress spraying out, earrings clinking, and the soft flesh of her palm scraping the ground. Her flask remained safe in the hand she flung up for counterbalance.

The event was over faster than it had begun. Employer helped employee off the ground, and she steadied herself, bending and tucking the offending buckle into the side of her shoe. The pair slid into the taxi, a womanly ankle sliding in as a man's greasy head ducked through the door.

As the taxi pulled away from the curb, Louise looked down at her hand and grimaced. Hollywood was already exacting its price. Soon it would be her sanity sacrificed to half-wits, giggling tramps, and grinning men with large paychecks. One swig for reparations. She loosened the cap on her alcohol.





Masquerade

Sydney Haven

Taylor paces the parking lot while she waits, nervous for reasons she doesn't understand. She looks at her watch again. It must be broken. It hasn't seemed to move in the three minutes since she last looked. The building looms over her, ominous and dark; everyone is asleep, like she should be. She's anxious that he won't show, even though he's always shown up before. She's just early; she's always early. "When you're early you're on time" and all that, and he's always late. Why would this time be any different?

It's different because this time she wants him to show up. Every other time that he's late, a part of her hopes that he's not coming, and when he finally strolls through the door—he doesn't apologize—that same part of her is disappointed. Even though she is disloyal, dishonest, worthless, and pathetic, she prays that one day he will gain some decency or integrity and call the thing off. Then, only one of them will be going to Hell.

56



“The building looms over her, ominous and dark; everyone is asleep, like she should be.” But this time she wants him to show up, and she's terrified that today will be the day that he decides to walk away. She looks at her watch again and nearly passes out as Evan emerges from the building's shadow.

She doesn't like the look on his face. Evan has a lot of looks that are familiar to her. He smirks, grins, scowls, and a whole mess of other things, and she loves all of those. This face does not belong to him. He looks tense,

his jaw clenched and his teeth grinding. None of this bodes well for her. Her anxiety must show.

“Are you okay?” is said in unison, and so is, “I have to tell you something.” They pause, eyeing each other, waiting for the other to speak. Grow a pair, Taylor tells herself sternly. She can almost taste the words she wants to say: sweet with a bitter aftertaste. She is practically sweating anticipation as she tries to talk herself into speaking first.

“I’m going to marry Dani,” Evan says abruptly, and Taylor laughs because the idea is so ludicrous. Then she realizes he’s serious. The words become less like a joke and more like a punch to the gut.

“When?” she asks, managing to force one word through the fog in her head.

“Next spring. You know how much Dani loves spring.” He says this casually, but he means the words to be a knife in her chest.

Yes, she knows how much Dani loves spring. She knew years before Evan even met Dani. She knows Dani better than he ever will. Evan knows exactly how his words affect her, which is why he says them. Those are the rules.

But Taylor’s not in the mood to play their game today. She feels crushed under the weight of his announcement. It was always the two of them, Taylor and Evan, from the day they met. Even when it was the three of them, Dani never belonged. Yet, Taylor was drowning in the thought of him leaving her alone. She



knew him first, so it's only fair, right? Finders keepers, right? So she should be the one he takes out on dates, holds hands with in the mall, and cuddles with on the couch instead of the one he fucks after hours in the back seat of his car.

But that's not the game. Those aren't the rules they agreed to. So she has no choice but to smirk at him and say, "So which one of you gets to wear the dress?" He scowls and pushes her into the back seat. When they're finished he goes back to his fiancé, and Taylor tells the stained interior of the car what she couldn't tell him:

"I love you."



“I am.”

I see these two words followed
by a long white space that
I am
supposed to fill—

I can't
make myself into a definition.

Words:

black hieroglyphs
on a white page
won't tell you who
I am

Like the Tao, once you
categorize, simplify, dehumanize or
try
to name me with your
words,
I am
no longer what you say
I am.

Try and carve me down into
pieces:
white, female, brunette.
Is that all you've got on me?



I might as well be a
robot;
program me to give you my
identity.

I won't
play your game. I won't
stay in your boundaries. I won't
follow your rules or your pre-formed ideas.

Your words are a sharpened arrow and
I am
a moving target.
Even if you hit and capture and cage
Me
you will never really have me.
You may possess
the parts you can see, but
you will have lost my movement,
my soul:

What makes me
Me.
And besides,
you aren't that great of a marksman,
and I
refuse to stand still.



Artwork by Cecily Haubner

Artist's Statement

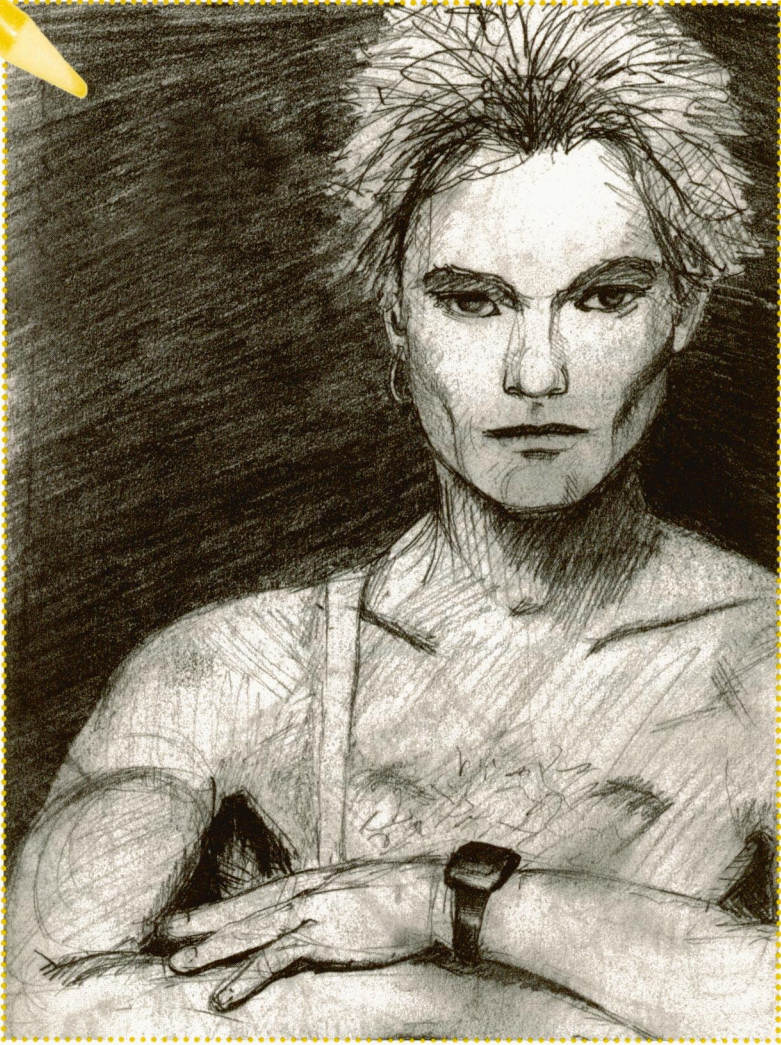
I am a fledgling artist who is slowly learning to use her wings. Finding my artistic wings has proved to be the most freeing journey life has to offer. I tend to focus on the female figure because I am fascinated by women's soft, unassuming strength. I am surrounded by exceptional women doing amazing things. Through my art, I attempt to capture women's wit, intrigue, beauty & depth. I gravitate toward simple media such as pen & pencil because it is easy to come by, & it allows me to communicate my message with simplicity & grace.

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Sting: Word is Hard

Cecily Haubner



Jeanetics

Cecily Haubner



The Softer Side of Metropolis

Cecily Haubner



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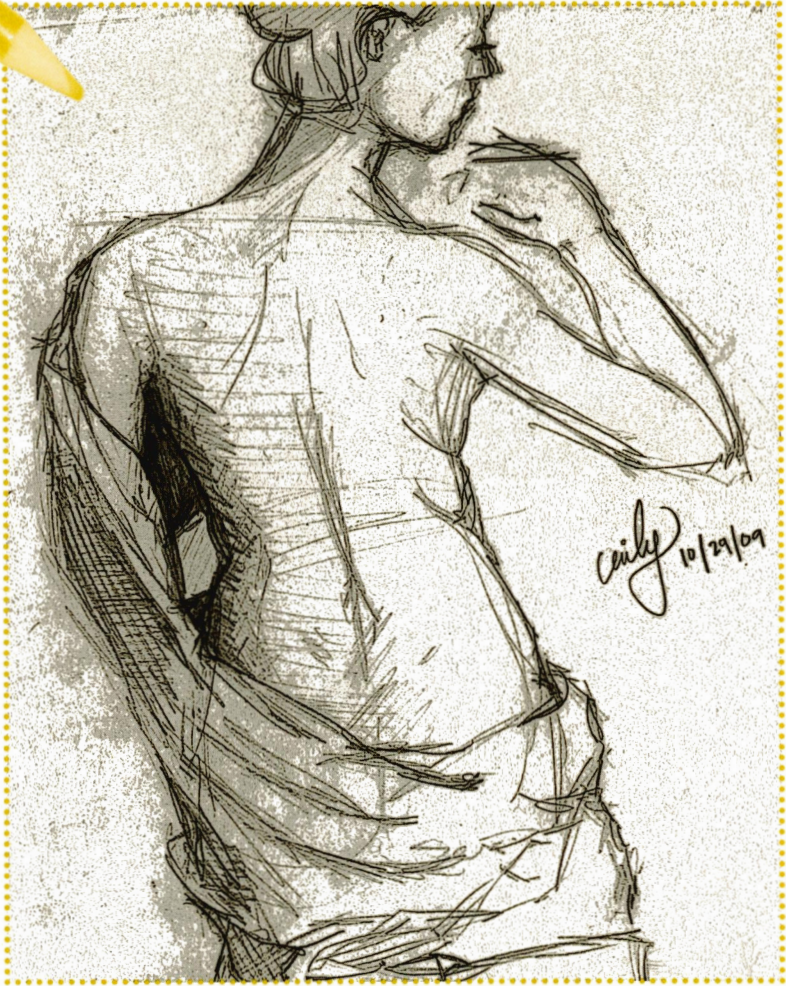
Bunny Face

Cecily Haubner



I am Woman

Cecily Haubner



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Darkness Falls

Cecily Haubner



Sisterhood

Cecily Haubner



We come to her with dangerous dreams of succeeding.
And she speaks to us, "Make monumental differences in
the world, as I will shape you all to be well rounded."

We come to her burying backgrounds, hoping to evolve.
And so, she cultivates brilliance from our talents.

We come to her to be transformed into women of
distinction.
And so, she moves like blood in our veins, changing our
lives,

One heartbeat at a time.

Constricting fear, pumping courage
Constricting simplicity, pumping creativity
Constricting self-doubt, pumping confidence

And so, she dwells in our character and spirit.

She is our hero.
She is our hope.
She is our beloved,
Stephens College.

*"She is..." was written in honor of the inauguration of
Dr. Dianne M. Lynch to represent the creative imagination of
writers at Stephens College. This public poem celebrates the
spirit and character of Stephens as we welcome a new leader.*



Contributors



Rhea Amos

“David” is Rhea Amos’s second publication in *Harbinger*. She is a junior theater major who played Ursula in Stephens College’s production of William Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing*. She will premier her 10-minute monologue play *Into the Blue* in the 2010 Stephens College New Play Festival.

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Paige Burton

Paige Burton is a junior English major from Frankfurt, Kansas. She is a member of Sigma Tau Delta, the 2009 recipient of the Merry Ann Sauls Devaney Writing Award and has been a student presenter at the Sigma Tau Delta National Convention. She enjoys reading, driving around aimlessly, daydreaming, and being a tutor volunteer.



Cecily Haubner

Cecily Haubner is a junior fashion design major from Columbia, Missouri. She is interested in art, fashion, and illustration. This is her first publication.



Sydney Haven

Sydney Haven is a sophomore digital filmmaking major and creative writing minor from Groveland, Illinois. She is on the Executive Board of the Student Ambassadors and is a member of Sigma Sigma Sigma.



Sarah Jost

Sarah Jost is a senior creative writing major. This is her first publication in *Harbinger*.



Ivy Lynch

Ivy Lynch is a broadcast media major from Columbia, Missouri. She is a baker for a local store and an avid dancer. Ivy's photography was featured in *Harbinger 2006*.



Kristin J. McCowan

Kristin J. McCowan is a junior double majoring in English and psychology. She is the president of American Association of University Women and a member of Sigma Tau Delta. Her poem, "She is..." was selected as the official inauguration poem for Stephens' 24th presidential inauguration. "Enmeshed Enemies" is her first non-fiction publication.





Emily Petrie

Emily Petrie, a junior creative writing major and music minor, is President of the Student Ambassadors, Associate Editor of *Harbinger*, and a member of Sigma Tau Delta. Hailing from Los Angeles, she enjoys writing poetry set against the California landscape. In the future, she plans to work on travel inspired, multi-media poetry projects.

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Ellie Rempel

Ellie Rempel, a senior creative writing major, is from the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. She serves as the secretary for Sigma Tau Delta. Her fiction has appeared in Cottey College's *Image Tree* and will appear in the May issue of *Long Story Short*. A writer of short stories and the occasional poem, her love of travel, nature, Italian food, snowshoeing, and the incredible women in her life all inform and inspire her art.



Amy Sand

Amy Sand is a senior creative writing major and graphic design minor from Nebraska. She is the current Sigma Tau Delta President and a dating and relationship contributor for *Grad Magazine*. Amy's work appeared in *Harbinger 2009*.



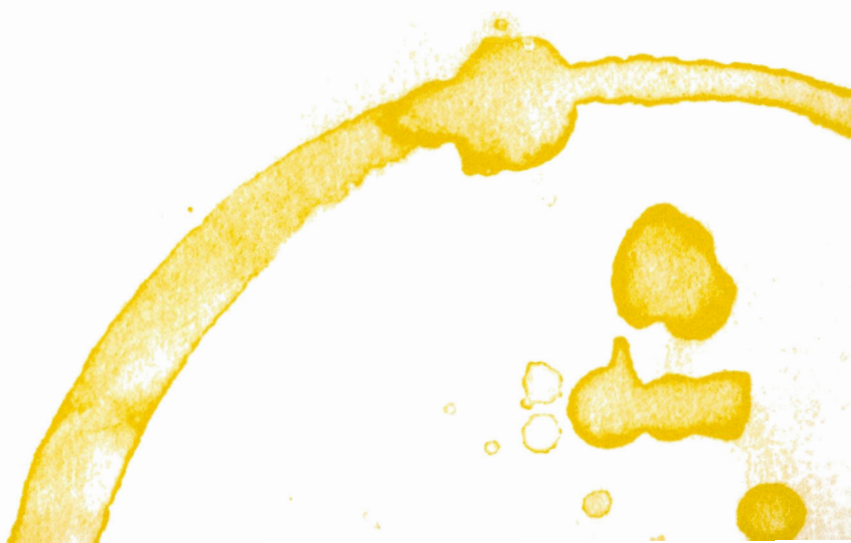
Samantha Swafford

Samantha Swafford is a senior digital film major and creative writing minor. She attended the Iowa Young Writers' Studio and was nominated for the 2009–2010 AWP Intro Journals Project. She enjoys long walks on the beach and candle-lit dinners.



Marne Timon

Marné Timon was published by the Great Adirondack Poetry Contest at age 15, and again at 16. Her poem “Mother, Darling” won a full scholarship to the Young Writers of Vermont Conference, as well as entry into the St. Lawrence Writers Conference and the New England Young Writers Conference at Breadloaf. Marné is a dance major and creative writing minor.



“ Stephens College is bursting with engaged and interesting young writers, and *Harbinger* is an excellent vehicle for all of that talent.”

Gabriel Fried, Poetry Editor
Persea Books

“ Looks good, reads great. One of the best showcases of young talent I've seen.”

Speer Morgan, Editor
The Missouri Review

First place winner in the 2009 Literary Arts Journal category.

Sigma Tau Delta
International English Honors Society