

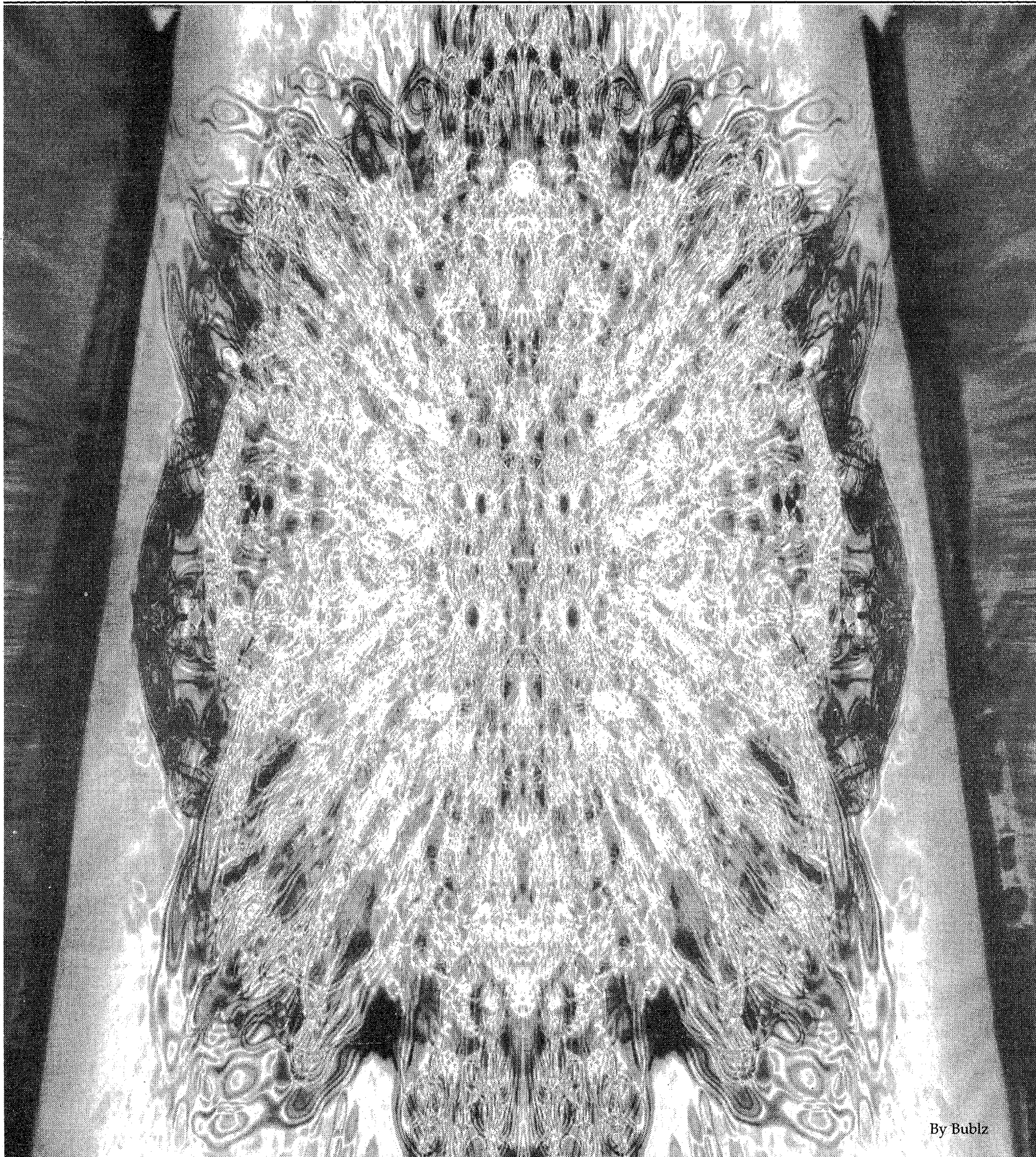


# THE STONY BROOK *PRESS*

Vol. XXV, Issue 7

"The Literary issue"

December 18, 2003



By Bublz

## All Literary Content, AllThe Time!!



# Before the Invitations Went Out

By David Fink

ELSBETH fidgeted with her finger, pinching each knuckle in turn with the thumb and forefinger of the opposite hand. Her subconscious groped with unease at the obstruction of a diamond ring on her left hand. She heard the rush of air, her train approaching, and she wished that it would hurry. It was cold and the dinginess that coated the concrete floor and the steel girders made her feel also covered in filth. Her mind worked rapidly on the same problem, the same host of solutions, none of which attractive to Elsbeth. Her eyes were fixed on a bolt in the steel, painted over many times—the bolt and its brothers that valiantly kept all of downtown from crushing her little body like a june bug.

INSIDE the subway car the actual dinginess was a thinner lacquer over rubber straps, resin seats, tin walls and the speckled floor. The seediness inside the car that truly penetrated the young lady was the dinginess of human spirit—the hapless sense of discarded newspaper becoming the miserable sole of bedding. Elsbeth thought of her therapeutic mattress cover—what was it?—viscoelastic memory cells?—it was like almost nothing in nature a girl could night her body down upon. She thought of her sheet set, tee shirt cotton, dark gray, like being in God's shirt pocket. All this luxury and splendor awaited her from the stillness of a basement apartment, one of the many ducts in the porous surface that is Astoria. She had something to do first. The train was barreling uptown. She was tired though, tired near resignation.

GERALD was sipping a rum and coke. On the bar in front of him was a list of names with a column of numbers. At a cursory glance the mode of the number of guests was two. Some of the twos had been scratched out and replaced with desultory ones. His competitive spirit was trying to ebb up the sum. His financial practicality was searching the archives of memory for forgotten betrayals to excuse omissions. The girth of his thumbnail was cradled in the gab of his front teeth in a show of concentration.

There was a hand on his shoulder. He quieted the shock of its arrival and took the hand into his own. It was ice cold. His face had a red suffusion from drinking while Elsbeth was running late. Elsbeth's cheeks were red from the frigid brush of winter air. This was nature echoing the woebegone rituals of shyness at beauty and cosmetics for these two who felt past those rituals. Gerald grinned with delight. Looking ahead he saw his bride, he smiled. In response Elsbeth rolled her eyes away but failed adorably to restrain the ascension of dimples. Her

eyes came back, grayer than blue, and she surrendered a smile but it suddenly vanished by something remembered.

She folded her overcoat onto the empty stool to her right and sat down. In a practiced symmetrical movement she tucked the loose waves of her hair behind her ears and away from her chin. The indoor heat was thawing her ears and the action felt to be burning.

"I have bad news," she began and solemnly gave Gerald three quarters of her face to see how bad.

"I've got 38 already. God, before I started this I didn't think I knew a dozen people. What were you down to? 57?"

"Gerry, I'm trying to tell you something. Forget about the wedding a second."

Now he heard her. He put down his pencil and sat up straight. "What is it?"

"Suzy lost the baby." She looked fully upon Gerald now and waited for a reaction. Then despite of herself she added, "In the shower."

Gerald took a moment to register the new information, connecting the news with his own knowledge of Suzy and Jack. His cheeks were slack and jaw drooped with contemplation. "I just saw Jack after work, two hours ago, he seemed fine." He loved Suzy and Jack's baby that would never be. He loved it because it was the future he saw for all of them. He was ready to be a family with Elsbeth and had already pictured watching football games with Jack and Suzy and Beth in the kitchen complaining about the boys. There was this coming of children that would make them all family people. And the one expected would never be.

"He doesn't know yet," Elsbeth said. Her elbows were on the bar. She used her fists to pull the sleeves of her sweaters past her wrists.

"She hasn't told him?"

"She's waiting for him to come home. We had a lunch date after my seminar. I wish she canceled. She went to the hospital and they sent her right home again to rest. She said she just didn't want to be alone. She said that, under the circumstances, she was willing to tell me that the color of the bride's maid dresses makes her want to vomit."

"What did the doctor say? What happened to the fetus?"

"Oh, Gerry, it happens all the time. I think it was stress."

"Stress?"

"Well, she just sits around since she got laid off waiting for them to call her back."

Gerald looked at Elsbeth incredulously.

She made an offering. "She thinks Jack is cheating on her," she said as plainly as she could.

Gerald's jaw went slack. He discovered in himself a greater knowing than he wished. He gulped. "Is he?"

"What do you think? You see him everyday. He's always staying late at work." Elsbeth's pitch, she observed, was reaching accusation. She changed her approach and at last added indignantly, "I don't know."

Gerry was quietly thinking, but his jaw had clenched. "I think you do know." The strangers in the bar were scattered and attending to themselves at generous distances. They clinked and murmured to themselves the way all late evening weekday bar crowds do. They were spared the cataclysm of these two that could not be seen or heard.

Elsbeth took in a restive length of breath. "Fuck you." She found herself permitting defeat earlier than she wished she had. Suddenly she saw a way through guilt, and the way was loss. "You're right. We—Something happened." Her voice strained. "We never thought about. It's over now."

"What's Suzy going to do?"

A tear fell warm on Beth's cheek. "I'm sorry," she whispered. She looked with remorse towards Gerry for a sign of mercy. Her eyes now were blue. He gazed back but fleetingly.

He swiftly bottomed out his glass. He took up the list and folded it into sloppy quarters. He stuffed it into the emptied glass. Elsbeth reached for his shoulder to keep him there. He paused but she found no words and let him loose. The ring glinted and they both took the opportunity to admire it.

"It's so beautiful," she said and fancy preempted everything else. "Can I keep it?"

"For a while." Then Gerald stood up, left a ten on the bar and walked out.

Elsbeth stayed. She wanted to put off the freezing walk back to the subway until she could at least get warm. She stared through the bottlenecks and shelves and found herself in the mirror. "See Jack, we ruined everything," she whimpered to herself.

"Can I get you another one?" Elsbeth looked up to see the grin of the most obnoxious man ever to wear a polka dot shirt and a business suit. He was gesturing at the glass with the first draft guest list in it, presumably ignorant of it having been her fiancé's glass.

"Oh, no, I shouldn't drink. I'm going to be a mother," she sniffled.

"Congratulations," enthused the stranger.

"Yeah," said Elsbeth.

By Bublz



By Bev Bryan

So, I was talking to you about loss and sorrow  
and I threw words at you.

You said you were afraid of losing her  
I told you I had the bends.

You said you were afraid of falling out of love,  
you were thinking of breaking off the affair with  
your Pre-Raphaelite, genius angel-baby.

I told you this year would be  
shorter than the last one.

But I abandon you to the rancid geishas of your  
nervous fantasies.

I said to talk to her. You said I was right. So, what  
else is new?

As far as I am concerned you ARE already in another  
time zone.

As far as I am concerned you are already teaching  
English under the fluorescent lights  
of a Japanese town I've never heard of.

You have already broken off the affair with the Pre-  
Raphaelite, genius angel-baby  
who loves you.

And I have already become a woman you won't rec-  
ognize when you get back to town.

I'll have to sing "Hello Dolly" so you'll know it's me.

So, I was talking to you about distance and loss and  
the inexpressible sorrow of a broken horned unicorn  
my voice rattled in an empty kitchen. Pine wood and  
shining countertops.

I threw my voice long distance, forlorn, like a paper  
airplane  
spiked by a draft.

I thought someone must have shut a door on the  
other end.

We got cut off three times but you were there, hang-  
ing on to the line,  
anxious to reiterate the pact. Best Friends Forever.

But where is it? Preserved among stickers and nega-  
tives

in the collaged cigar box of the past,  
clinging somewhere, a residue on the inside of tele-  
phone cables,

years of love and voluble need hardened to a plaque.  
A resigned technician will show his young assistant  
how to count

the rings before they have to be scraped away.

I'll say: "I thought you had it? You keep everything."

Or you used to.

If nothing else it's there, ground into the brown shag  
carpeting

of the house you grew up in.

I locked eyes with the face reflected in the darkened  
kitchen window

like they were yours

and I started banging around with parables and  
memories like brass pots

and it all sounded as hollow and echoing to you as it  
did to me in the empty kitchen.

Forget the ghosts and broken unicorns.

Forget that the whole universe is succumbing to heat  
death.

I made it up.

### Kiss me

### Beauty

If I had a vice  
I'd squeeze the  
Truth  
out from your  
soul

With a scalpel  
I'd slice slivers  
through layers  
and peer inside  
your  
Heart

Through Blood  
and Flesh  
I'd sift to find

that Ruby –  
or Diamond  
that lives in You  
Then –

I'd show it to you  
and watch you  
Revel in it's  
Glow –

Anything to get  
you  
to know

There is such  
Beauty in  
You.

In the darkness of this night  
In the lightness of your  
touch

I melt  
Under the spell of your skin  
and

The sweetness of your  
mouth

I am wet where you are not  
Soft where you are hard —

A symphony  
of silk and honey  
Perfectly blending  
As if it was always like that

But it's just for now  
Just for now  
And just for tonight  
Just for this second, at least,  
I know this is right

As the birds sing us a  
melody

And the stars take their  
leave

the sun begins to wake  
And the darkness starts to  
fade

Your face is becoming clear-  
er

Strong and beautiful,  
Gentle and kind

Just as I learn to hold on  
I must learn to let go  
The day is coming

Your voice offers solace  
Your lips offer warmth

But it's just for now  
Just for now  
And just for tonight



## The Literary Issue

This issue represents the Stony Brook Press' final issue of the semester, and we thought we'd do something special and do an entire issue of literary content. Normally the literary content is but a mere supplement in our issues, but this semester we figured we'd give our readers a treat.

We hope you enjoy the issue, and it's a welcome distraction from whatever else you're doing at the time. We've had a lot of heavy content this semester, and it's a welcome distraction for us even to print this issue.

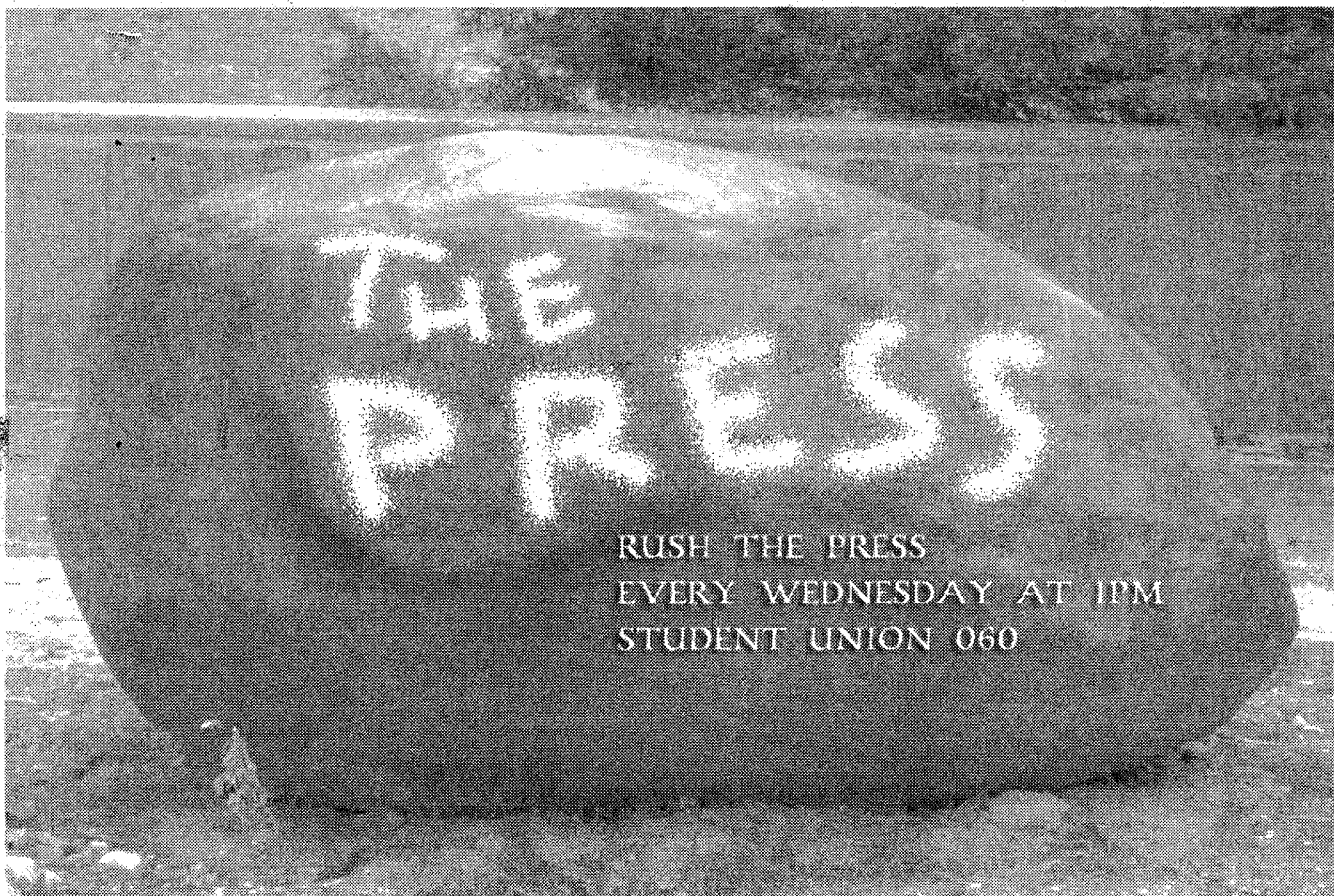
We'd like to thank everyone who's come to meetings, helped do production and most importantly contributed content to this issue, and all of the other issues we've print this semester. We'll be submitting many of our issues for awards, and we feel that we have a better chance then ever to win more then we normally do.

In the next coming months, you can watch out for our record setting issue, which will be ready by the end of the intersession, and even more enticing content to follow for the entire spring semester. Our general body meetings will begin the first Wednesday that we have classes, and we hope to see you all there. Union room 060 is always open to accept writers old and new into our ranks.

Thanks again for a great semester, and for hanging with us through the best and the worst. Your comments and content are always appreciated! For those of you who are already staff, watch your e-mail and blackboard for updates and information about activities over the intersession.

Also coming in spring will be a new look and layout, and the opening of our brand new website!

Thanks again,  
The staff and editors of The Stony Brook Press  
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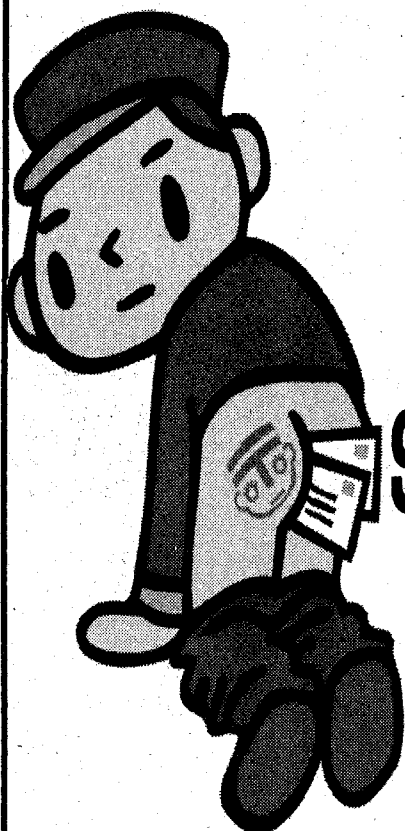
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(hint: It Rhymes With  
"Stained-Glasshole")



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# The Swordwielder

By David K. Ginn

The skies opened up against the gray backdrop of the morning. Lyn, the Swordwielder, walked on.

It had been raining for three days, and she had walked for three days. Before she had started walking again, she had been staying in a tiny motel outside the town limits of Oskow. Ever since then she had been walking. Ever since then it had been raining.

She pulled the green hood over her head and took a breath. It was going to be another long day. She could tell. She didn't have enough food to last her for the week, and that was bad news. She didn't have any fresh water, and that was also bad news. Just last night she had tried to boil the rainwater, but in the end it tasted sour and smelled of disease. That's just how it was in these parts.

The desert was not long. She could see trees up in the distance, although they were probably another day's walk at best. The Lords had given her good eyes. That much she was grateful for.

Her boots had started to hurt last night, and so she had camped early. The leather was torn by the heel and up by the lace. If she got to another town soon, she'd have that fixed. She liked her boots. She'd had them for them years at least. Fix them, don't replace them. That's how she kept them for so long.

It was going to rain again. She could see that. More than anything she wanted the rain to stop, but she knew that it wouldn't. It would just keep coming, until it was done with her. Then, it would move on.

She had woken up early this morning, thinking that a dog or maybe even a wolf had come snooping around her camp. The camp wasn't really much; just whatever she could do with what she had and what was laying around. Ultimately she had dug a nice hole in the ground and kept the sides up with the boards from an old sign she had found. It was cool in the hole, and the Lords knew it was the best sleep she'd had since the motel, which wasn't even that great. When it started to rain again last night she simply pulled her cloak over her body and tried to forget about it. She had laid her shirt and coat on the ground beneath her to stop the moisture from rising up from the ground, and when she woke up she was freezing with nothing but her blouse and workpants covering her body.

There had been no wolf; just the wind, she supposed, since the rain had stopped again sometime during the night. Still, she was frightened. She did not go back to sleep, partly because of her fear and partly because it had gotten too cold.

For the first hour of her walk her thoughts had drifted constantly to what it was that had woken her up. She kept going back to images of wolves, dogs, and anything

else that could scare her as she walked. Ultimately the thoughts had faded and she had managed to cheer up a bit. Now the clouds were moving again.

She could only go on for a little bit today before she would have to start thinking seriously about food and water. Grimacing at the newly-formed rain clouds, the Swordwielder walked on.

At half past noon she stopped to refit her laces. Bright red bruises were forming on the backs of her ankles, and she knew that something would have to be done about it soon. She could only hope that there would be someone beyond those trees who could help her. If not, she was walking barefoot.

It had stopped raining once again, and now was a perfect time to lay out under the clouds for a while. She pulled back her hood and lay up against a small rock as she sang to herself.

"Don't take my hand.

Don't walk away.

Don't leave the forest in a can-sen'-dal way.

All the treasures

all the pain,

all the cam'mens as they come back out again...

But there's only sky tonight.

Only fire tonight.

There's only break-ing sounds

As the shores come 'round

And the fires heat the sky--"

A warm breeze drifted by. Lyn smiled and stood up again. Just a short break; enough to sing the first few verses of a song and then move along again. Also the only time she'd be smiling that day.

It was warmer than the day before, and she was sweating under all the clothes she was wearing. It was near evening.

Just before nightfall she saw the eyes.

It was getting darker; much darker and much quicker. It seemed that every minute it not only got darker but the pace at which it happened sped up. The worst part was that it wasn't getting any cooler. If anything, it was getting hotter. And that didn't make any sense.

She was thinking about all these things when she saw the eyes. They were bright and yellow, like twin candles turned sideways with the flames stretched out. The yellow of the eyes seemed to melt at the sides, then fade away as it blended with the darkness. After a minute the eyes flashed with white light, then continued to stare. But the eyes weren't staring at all. The eyes were waiting; the eyes were gloating.

By Bublz

After each minute the eyes

seemed more and more to be drooling instead of fading, as if the very sight of her standing in the desert caused the preying eyes to salivate in the darkness. Still she stood, unwilling to move and unable to think of anything else.

At last the eyes moved, moving up and down in a swaying motion and at the same time growing larger, more gluttonous. Whatever it was, it was moving closer.

She moved one hand to the hilt of her sword, never taking her eyes from the approaching stalker. It was moving faster now, likely having realized that her paralysis was broken and that she was only faking it now. Well, no bother anymore.

As she pulled Angorich from its sheath the wolf pounced. It leapt in the air, growling fiercely as it danced in the desert air. The wolf's growl bled with the angry cry of metal as Angorich was freed from its place at the Swordwielder's side.

It landed on her first.

She tossed it backwards, feeling its mighty weight against her body and wincing as the jagged claws were pulled from her shoulders. She sat up and gripped her left shoulder. Trying not to cry and trying even harder to make sure the wolf wouldn't see her.

But the wolf could sense it. He could sense it, and it made him stronger. He leapt onto her back, pushing her weight forward and into her knees. She cried out in pain, feeling a warmth of tears and blood trickle onto her forearms. She closed her eyes and waited.

Suddenly it came. Whatever strength she has been looking for finally decided to rise up and pour out of her shoulder blades. With a quick jerk she threw the large body of the wolf into the air and stood up to face it.

Angorich was humming. The humming was like the sound of flimsy metal being shaken in the open air. It was the sound of power. Somehow, like every time before, it seemed to call to her.

She closed her eyes again and answered it. The answer she gave was neither telepathic nor spoken. The answer she gave came from somewhere else. Exactly where it came from she would never find out, not even when she came to her deathbed, but over time she would certainly come closer to knowing.

Angorich felt her response, and it hummed louder. The wolf was trying to get up, but the Swordwielder had thrown it against a rather large rock, and by rights a rock that large had little place in the desert, but it didn't seem to matter much at the moment.

When the wolf got up its eyes were dim and weak. The Swordwielder waited. With a quick flash of white light every lost ambition returned to the fading eyes of the



# The Swordwielder (Cont')

wolf, and when it raised its head the Swordwielder could see the yellow light around its mouth. The jaws were hungry, and they would stop at nothing to have her.

The wolf attacked again, but this time the Swordwielder found little trouble throwing seventeen inches of steel into its chest. The wolf fell onto her, taking the rest of the sword into its chest as it growled out in pain. The Swordwielder felt a sudden jolt as the hilt made contact with the bleeding chest, stopping the wolf from crushing her under its weight.

She pushed the ragged body of the wolf to her side and pulled Angorich from the bleeding hole in its chest. The wolf cried out once more, but this time there was no echo throughout the desert. Now there was just a quick and awful death for each sound, as if it sensed there was no place to go.

"Why did you want to kill me?" the Swordwielder asked, holding Angorich out and across her chest.

The wolf turned its head slightly, trying to look at her but giving up eventual-

ly. "Why do you want to live?" it said.

The Swordwielder stopped. The breeze of the night seemed to get louder. She lowered her sword. "Why shouldn't I?" She tried to sound powerful, but her eyes were wide with fear.

"They will come for you," the wolf replied. "They will come for you, and they will make the pain of living worse than any pain of life. Oh yes, they will come for you."

"You haven't answered my question."

The wolf laughed weakly. "I tried to ease your suffering. When I heard what they were going to do to you, I ran off to help you. I was going to kill you, and then it would all be over. You wouldn't suffer the fate that would last you the rest of your miserable life, and all the evil would end. You see, I wanted them to lose."

The Swordwielder shook her head slowly. "Then I must have misperceived that lustful look in your eyes right before you leapt at me."

The wolf's voice was getting weaker. He spoke through labored breaths. "I do not deny I looked forward to the pleasure of

your death, but that is only because I am a wolf, and I know no other feeling. I envy you, you know. We envy you. We envy your emotions, Swordwielder, we envy your feelings. That is why they have tried to capture you. That is why I tried to save you."

The Swordwielder took a step forward and knelt down beside the wolf. Placing one hand behind its ear she lifted the sword to her breast. She spoke softly. "Then may you be blessed with those emotions wherever you shall go from here."

She thrust the sword through the heart of the dying wolf. It did not cry.

Later on that night she built a camp. She tried to light a fire, but after a while realized she just didn't have the strength. She didn't bother digging a trench. Her cloak would keep her warm. And she wasn't really afraid, either. She just didn't care.

She pulled her cloak over her face and fell asleep at once. The open night sang to her as the cool breeze ran over her body and drifted back out into the desert world.

## Poems by Jackie Hayes

### Portrait of Reality

The world is framed in two  
Glass slivers, two cat eyes.  
All is there and surprisingly  
When the tax collectors come  
They are content  
For once, still bitter, but content.  
The rich man thought he framed  
The world with green pollution,  
With tatters of shit smeared heir looms,  
With posters of playboy bunnies that  
Bleed when you touch them.  
But on nose-dives into underwater  
Cities I found the world is framed  
In two glass slivers.  
Two cat eyes that remain silent  
And blink to the beat of their change cup.  
A quarter? A nickel? A dime? A penny?  
Anything at all for a beautiful portrait  
Of reality.  
But no, there aren't many buyers

### Neo-liberalism Part 1

Chilled to the bone by cold capitalism  
Sold as "cool, cool"  
It's cool to put a price on everything  
And everyone  
It's all for sale  
Sentiment is stale  
Throw it out in a garbage heap  
The poor can pick through it  
Make a meager living off  
Dying products of  
An oh so moody market  
Selfish bitch you had us believing  
In benefits that never came

### Neo-liberalism Part 2

A cigar explosion to light up his face  
They hoped nicotine would dull idealism  
Dope up realism with capitalism ideology  
See what's spit out...

It's shit, shit, black tar wit of the US dollar  
But it's enough  
Train the exiles, drain hate into a pool  
Big enough for a silent splash  
Rehash juicy details to the media,  
Republican dogs, ignore the smoke stacks,  
The smog, haze the poor into buying  
More, more, more  
Tell them, make them believe cheap mass  
Produced stuff is enough  
Plant a CIA microphone garden  
See what grows, water it with white  
Documents Washington will provide  
Open consumer mouths wide  
Shove it down with a billion dollar deal  
Sealed with Hollywood  
Sell it in a Disney store.

### Ode to My Sisters

I was just jotting down some notes in a dusty library  
When my sister began to speak to me  
"Over here" she said.  
There she was in my water bottle,  
Crying so hard it began to overflow with tears.  
I leaned over to let her out,  
But then she disappeared.

Headlights scatter across railroad tracks,  
Reminiscent of a playground flashlight light show.  
They lower in a cloudy haze,  
I'm shrouded by a drunken daze.  
Where are we?  
A hand claps thunder across the night sky  
As I watch her shatter in the back seat.  
Her eyes bat tears away  
They dribble down her face, over her swollen lip

Like two soldiers propped up against each other,  
I dreamt we won the war.  
But the battle ravages on forever,  
And leaves us both as whores.



Tickle me blind with your kisses  
Blanket me in your magic

I want to be wrapped up into you,  
All warm and soft like a pretzel

Or butter melting on hot toast  
Take a bite  
Do I melt in your mouth

Your tongue is soft  
And sweet  
Like honey dripping  
on  
my lips

it waters  
and I get wet  
every  
inch of me  
wet

I lose myself in you

And soon we are bare  
Body  
Mind

And soul-fully  
we dance through the sheets, on top and in  
between

And  
Soon  
But never  
Ever  
soon enough  
You are  
on top of me

Pulsing pushing but not rushing  
Baby please don't rush, I whisper through  
the moist darkness of our heaven

you slowly enter  
I gasp — now  
You are beating inside me  
And more than my heart  
Our bodies are one  
Moving in a syncopated rhythm of love  
Total tenderness  
Utter surrender  
I am safe  
You're here  
We are one

And just like that —  
Through the dark

We dance and laughed  
And gasped and sweat  
Until the sun, slowly  
Sensually  
entered the sky

By Bublz

I had a dream that I was  
running with  
David Bowie  
Through this checkered  
Maze  
Of cars and streetlamps

He stopped  
I gazed back  
And floated away

And became  
Captain Ahab

Dream Love

By:Bev

Last night the world came loose.  
Toys walked, plastic dinosaurs chewed  
the air.  
Stars fell and shattered glass roofs, ele-  
vators clammed shut  
to entomb their charges in the bowels of  
hotels.  
The wallpaper crawled with portents.

I held you in that landscape of snapping  
beams like a bale of stars  
on an abandoned couch, its owner  
detained by disaster.

A little Warm

a small crack in his heart  
gave off a warmth  
only she swore  
she could feel

without planning  
her eyes pleaded -  
love me

and without knowing,  
he did



### Politics

Fake smile precedes the forced handshake.  
Wide eyed disbelief engulfs perception,  
But covered slyly by a rehearsed laugh.  
Audience applauds as harsh spotlight blinds.  
Seeing blindness is stifled through by inane banter.  
Sweaty palms grip solid podium,  
While eager faces repress anxiety.  
Pleasantries take a backseat to hateful verbiage,  
Words thrown like knives where waiting targets  
are left wounded.  
Undefended attacks become slaughter as the  
predators shred their prey.  
Finality is silent and orderly as the lights dim.  
Applause dies down as minds shut themselves  
off.

### Why lead on

Why lead on,  
When you could be lead away?  
Carpe diem,  
Seize the day.  
The day to follow,  
Hop in the car.  
Which way to where,  
By whom and how far?  
You question too much,  
Thoughts overcrowd your head.  
If I ever actually thought this,  
I'd shoot myself dead.

### St. Mary's Hospital, Room 3052

by:Bev Bryan

The last colors of sunset grope their way through  
searchlights and signal towers' measured beauty,  
glittering information pink and blue.  
Really, this sky is not pink and blue  
but made of similar, stranger colors  
unable to cut the glare on the plate glass.  
I know what a sunset looks like.  
The shape that does reach me—clouds  
outlined against the just still light world  
reaches me like a waving hand,  
mouths a thing like a warning,  
a character silhouetted I can't read  
like the dreams I wake from too quickly.  
Like injured lovers they go with the stars.  
Just as hard to make out by the light of day.  
Their constellations invisible they watch deadpan  
outside my town's pink veil of humming light.  
Shifty motes.

Bv Bublz

### Blank white paper

Blank white paper,  
As plain as can be.  
To think that it once,  
Was a living tree.  
A tree that grew,  
As tall as it could.  
Perfectly asymmetrical,  
Made of beautiful wood.  
The tree is now dead,  
Evidence easy to see.  
I don't know why I,  
Sometimes acre about a fucking tree.  
I must be stupid  
'cause it's only me.

### In a row

In a row,  
Cell phones in tow,  
The pigeons strut across the way.  
Is that new?  
It's totally cool,  
An empty language they seem to say.  
In their Honda Accord,  
Or wasting time in class bored,  
Gabbing about everything and nothing at  
once.  
Dressed in the latest fashion,  
Excessive makeup done with passion,  
Laughing at those who sit up front.  
From the corner of my eye,  
She sees me and sighs,  
Tilting her head with a slight twitch.  
Tapping at the phone,  
Boasting of things she owns,  
Until I scream "Shut up you bitch!"



### Humble Fit by Ben Bravmann (October 2003)

Falling, scattered colors surround, shifting phases profoundly sparkle yet soothe a mood uncertain. a mind behind a curtain fickle tackle to mount the brain and drain the sane. Rushing towards the ground a blushing sound a building mound of fear a frightened mare fiddled care making this descent fair banshees blair doubting glamour to enamour the heart before it tore it apart taken away in a shopping cart your only hope shadowed by dope a slippery slope.

I stand on earth hate and mirth from birth I've been unique a technique to reap and seap venom salty sweet I take the leap what I say today may make no sense but I still dispense a ragged dose of middle-america's pulse Riddle erica's coast with a self-fulfilling boast come to roast the rich left my soul in a ditch choked the witch made the switch from bad to worse crafting my own curse. May I empty my purse and drown in verse before I disperse

Unfold, untold, tales I mold, shit on gold, power culled, temptation lulled so I might resist, first twist, soaked in mist, ball my fist, break my wrist, make a wish, serve a dish, mish mash, dash away, into fae, reappear with nofear, not a single care, MANY, but anyone who dares dismiss this potent piss will miss nothing. Am I bluffing? or still stuffing this hole with a role of get up and git, welcome all, to my humble fit.

This is your life  
By Sandy Riefberg

1. Some of you will have to sit on the floor.
2. The thought that nothing's real.
3. Who will carry me?
4. I wish I had the words to tell you.
5. Check please.
6. And she laughed.
7. There was nothing but cheese.
8. I'd rather not discuss politics.
9. We're playing musical chairs here, it's so gay.
10. No thanks, I don't drink.
11. Lock the door at night.
12. I saw Wally at the police station.
13. She had doodles in the margins of her notebook.
14. More optimistic might be Wednesday.
15. Every human has a stomach in the same location.
16. You are a disease.
17. The male seahorse has the babies.
18. Sperm under the microscope.
19. I'll have the strawberry cheesecake.
20. This is really good stuff.
21. The rain trickled down off his ears.
22. Times power to end.
23. These sunglasses are 50 dollars.
24. It's pay back time!
25. Rest rooms this way.
26. And on we went.
27. She realized it was right there all along.
28. The munchies.
29. I met him at a rock and roll show.
30. That's so Jewish.
31. Oh, Nietzsche.
32. That won't even get you drunk.
33. He wore nothing but polyester.
34. Today's forecast calls for slight drizzles.
35. Eternity is the broken wings of your kiss.
36. Cheerleading really isn't your style.
37. I am always thinking about fucking you.
38. Please report room maintenance problems to the academic facilities manager.
39. Chocolate chips in the garbage can.
40. Fences around concrete graveyards.
41. I'm not into prescription drugs.
42. Dirty converse all stars.
43. He always cracks really lame jokes.
44. She had extremely interesting glasses.
45. Curly haired blonde Asians.
46. This fading culture in New York of drifters and crazy people.
47. Side of a cereal box.
48. Or else.
49. Crushingly bored in class.
50. Stanza is an Italian word for room.
51. I don't accept your appology, Joan.
52. Corner missing off of flourescent lights.
53. Turtle power.
54. I wouldn't scream.
55. Page 575.
56. We're just going for the afternoon.
57. As long as I have Kerouac I'm fine.
58. She had it in her crotch.
59. Do you have the animal that bag came from?
60. Why are you wearing lipstick?
61. I'd have to say Romeo and Juliet.
62. That's just how it goes.
63. All creatures need water.
64. Burnt spoons for cooking drugs on the streets of Brooklyn.
65. I need to write fairly quickly.
66. Argue about standards, baby.
67. Fuck your new Lexus.
68. Kids that dress funny don't want to be doctors.
69. Someone called my phone from this number.
70. Is that a dog?
71. He gives me a lot so it's okay.
72. Come now.

Bv Bublz



# Pandemonium Breaks

By Vikil Girdhar

We do have other ways of making you talk. We can torture you, or worse...

go ahead and threaten me, right to my face. but you still won't know how great this power tastes. now would i be lying if i said that life is a waste? so what if i breathe and have a name, i was born without a face - i'm just another body surviving in the name of human race. i spit upon the grave in which i will be kept, and look forward to the dust under which i shall be swept.

Oh, is that why you've always had such a dark past? Because you're only human?

darkness crawls so deep into my skin that it becomes part of me. what is it about the human mind that blinds us for life so that we fail to see - how our conscious thought and emotion is just another attempt to make us something that we do not want to be.

take me out of this disorder, bring me away from this chaos and corruption.

with god as my witness, my anger maintains its potential for eruption. if i choose to think like this, then let the world see - that if this pandemonium ever breaks, it will do so because of me.

What exactly controls the things you do? What makes you who you are?

why does the monster that lives inside my head tell me things i do not want to do? perhaps the voice that speaks to me secretly is the only thing about me that happens to be true. when given the choice between right and wrong, why must i always choose wrong? and when i do so, then for how long must i be seen as insane in the eyes of the world?

how long?

from the day i was born till the day i die,

i was forced to become something else, implanted upon me so early in life, that now i'm stuck in a web of lies. that motherfucker of all evils is the devil that made me what i am today. is this me talking? or is something else speaking the words that i'm about to say?

Tell us about your childhood.

if i could turn back time, i would tightly squeeze the life out of my beloved mom and dad. i wouldn't put in too

much effort ñ after all, my entire life i invested into seeing them glad. i'd thank them so much for making me just like them - it's as if they gave me the life that they never had.

where is the child that was to be born anew? where is the soul that was supposed to become one in a few? what is the point of experiencing life if it's through their words and abuse? what is their fucking excuse? have they lost all sense that they took the right for me to live my life even before it had been sworn? pandemonium will break, and trust me, when it does i will be reborn.

All you need is a little trust - in yourself, as well as those around you.

with my eyes blinking like the speed of light, i'm afraid to even trust myself. those i once considered my friends turned out to be the biggest stabbers my back has ever felt. when selfishness, jealousy, rage, and hatred overcomes every bit of human emotion that i could ever see - those that once pretended to care, turned out to be the first to curse me. in my struggle to announce my own identity - i became the figure that society would deem insane through abnormality. yet i laugh at those that labeled me something i am not. those that believed, listened and forgot. those that chose to stay with me, began stealing my spot.

You should be flattered there are people crazy enough to follow you.

it took me my entire life to get where i am today. a least give me this much, people, - this is a right you can not take away. i am me, and me you can not

be. live your own life, be it so miserably. What makes you so sure your life isn't miserable?

once judged by the twisted thoughts that would feed my inner mind - now the world kisses my ass all the way from behind. locked inside a prison for acting the

way i do - now the world has given me another good reason for possessing you. for possessing you. for possessing you.

You sure possessed us, buddy. That you did.

then why do i feel so fucking lost? because i'm just another body who can't be its own boss. as many people as i choose to greet, it's all so fucking pointless since it's yourself that

you're about to meet. every soul i come across, it's as if it's my own. i no longer pick up the phone, in fear that it's me on the other end of the tone. i rather live secluded all alone, rather than

become diluted in this world - the last thing i want to see is me in the form of a clone. so why don't you just leave me the fuck alone? God save us if we began cloning you. Then there'd be no escape.

and as warm blood rushes through my veins, i am left with blurred vision, head throbbing with pain. sweat trickles down my face and into my eyes, yet something inside of me makes my heart rise. the rain pours heavily

upon me, but for the first time in life, escape becomes a site i finally get to see.

Tell us what happened earlier today. Give us your account.

in the mist of night, i drive out into the cold, and inhale a breath of air as my story unfolds. i see the shadow of a figure

standing right in front of me. i squint my eyes

to catch a glimpse - and without second thought, i turn that figure into a body. enough impact so that i hit it with such force - i purposely attacked this stranger,

and yet i felt no remorse. i ran over him once, and saw him laying there - body covered in blood, him gasping for air. yet i had no idea who this man was. and for a fucking lunatic like me, twisted is as twisted does.

i saw the man reach out, as if giving me his hand - how weak his body had gotten,

yet he still did not understand. i thought to myself - no need for hospitality. and so

i put the car in reverse, and ran over him

several more times, this repeatedly. enough to wipe his face out, off the face of this earth, i knew that i was only adding value to my own being's worth.

the reason for my actions, you see - is that the man resembled me...

my identity is something nobody dare takes, in which attempt, this pandemonium breaks.

You're free to go.

By Bublz



"Sing in me, oh muse..." Fuck it. Worked for them, Milton, Homer, Virgil, not for me. They each had one, flesh incarnate. I don't. Makes it hard. What is it now, 37 hours staring at this blank screen?

"What time is it?"

"You mean now?"

Of course I mean now, asshole. I am not in the mood for your shit "Yes, I mean now, Chris" He has one too.

"Um, its about 4:30, er, yeah, 4:27"

Fuck, work. I don't want to go, too painful. Get me through the goddamn night, then it will be all right. Find one then. "Drive me to work?"

"Yeah, fine. You ready to go?"

Never. "Uh, yeah, I think so. You gonna use the computer when you get back?"

"Probably not. I'm not gonna be back to late. Anna and I are going out to dinner."

Dagger right to the heart. Inadequacy. Not that platinum blonde and blue eyes ever did anything for me. It is more the principle. Chris is happy. Andrew too. I don't begrudge any of that. It's just that they can sing.

"That's cool. What is it, 37 years now?"

"No, just a little over one"

"Seems like more to me" I miss him. Miss him so much it hurts. My best friends stripped away from me. Clinging, screaming for them not to go. It is the evolution of things. Only a matter of time, how can I afford this place? A thousand a month for a wayward history student isn't going to cut it. I got my job. Fuck. Work. "Chris, we gotta go"

"Shut the computer down and we are outta here. Christ, how long have you been working on that thing. What is it, 37 years now?"

"Piss off." Easy for you to say. What you have courses in you're elevating the mundane to the exalted. Every puddle in the city is a mirror to me, I just drown.

Makes the internet trek across this island beautiful. Not just an avalanche of concrete and steel that I see. You have a higher purpose, a...

"It's not easy to submit your soul and submit it for approval. You know, it should be, um, refined"

"I see. So when will the great Gabriel Bradford gonna be refined enough to finish a page?"

"Let's just go"

Gabriel stubbed out his cigarette and shut down the computer. He walked across the gray-carpeted floor to his bedroom. It wasn't a long walk across the small suburban apartment, it just felt agonizingly so. Every step taking him closer to what he most dreaded: work. Going there and seeing, hearing, smelling. All his senses were bombarded. It was just seven hours, and the obsidian night would bring his counter-attack. Speaking of which...

Damn. Where is it? Top drawer, pens, paper, t-shirt. "Hurry the fuck up" Impatient prick. I'm gonna miss that. Ah, here it is. Hmmm, looks like salt. Surprised Chris has no idea.

Bounding out of his room, Gabriel grabbed his Saints jacket and slung it over his hunched shoulders. Chris was waiting in the hall, just next to the large wood door that led out to the third floor of their apartment complex. Gabriel looked up and briefly caught Chris's heavy brown eyes.

"Thanks, man"

"No problem" responded Chris as he tasseled Gabriel's chin length black hair "What'cha doing after work tonight"

Debauchery. Night-town. Oblivion. Drown

every sense and try to escape. "Me and Pete are probably gonna go out for a few drinks. Maybe rock the Diamond" No need to tell him the whole truth. He would just go and try to save me, as if I needed saving. Well, maybe I need something. Need to find it, or it to find me. Then I would sit before the blank screen and words upon words would flow like a deluge from my shaky fingers.

They winded the short but circuitous route from their apartment to the stairwell. Gabriel plodded down the three flights of stairs. Chris, the more athletic of the pair, seemed more to glide down the concrete waterfall, seeming not to make the descent so much as float above it. Halfway down the second flight, Gabriel noticed a couple standing in a smoldering embrace just outside the third floor door. The girl's back was to him, but the image of hands flowing all over her back and under her brown hair pricked his green eyes. He did not speak. Even then it did not flow. Even then I could not sing.

The descent complete, the pair made their way out into the street. It was raining, and the heavy, cold wind prevented Gabriel from lighting his cigarette.

"Go get the car"

"Fuck you. You can come with me"

They plodded down the narrow sidewalk; Gabriel's faded jeans hiding the watermarks much more effectively than Chris's neatly pressed khakis. Behind them, the amorous couple had apparently finished the interlude and walked out of the apartment hand in hand, as Chris hand found its mark on Gabriel's shoulder I tried. I really did.

The red mustang was parked where it always was, fourth row back, third spot in. Gabriel stopped alongside the vehicle and fumbled through his pockets, making sure he had his name badge with him. The wind and rain stirred the earth, causing a musty fragrance to waft up off the muddy ground

Earthy. Familiar. No, not here, not where we live. No. It's not sweet enough. Must be the storm.

The rain was streaking down the rolled up windows, like teardrops forging a new delta along a windswept face. Chris unlocked both doors and they slid into the car. Chris quickly navigated the confines of the parking lot and sped way too fast along the narrow side streets that led to the nearest major road that would bring them to the record store at which Gabriel worked.

Twenty minutes. I'll make it there in time.

The car ride was ominously devoid of conversation, as Chris fiddled with the ten-disc changer he recently had mounted in the back of the car. Gabriel took this opportunity to light a cigarette, and as he smoked it he looked out the window at the panorama that passed by.

"How many special people change..."

They passed a solitary man on a bench in front of an insurance agency, Calamity insurance as the red-glowing sign proclaimed. The "CAL" were not lit, and a cable sagged down from underneath the remaining illuminated letters coming to rest just behind the man's head. He was nursing something in a brown paper bag that might have just as easily been draped over a passer-by's head.

Gallows.

Gabriel's musings were interrupted as the mustang screeched to a halt as Chris decided against trying to beat the amber.

A year ago he would have made it. I guess things change when you can sing

"Despite all my rage, I'm still just a rat in a cage" "Fundamental....differing"

They had alighted next to a church, and a small procession was exiting the front door into the waiting mist. Not that many people, but enough to take notice. Six men, kids really as they looked younger than both Chris and Gabriel, were carrying a small white coffin to a waiting hearse.

Change. Change. CHANGE. Can you ever really, again, after that?

The mustang jerked forward once again as they sped toward work. A couple was walking down the street, the man dressed in earth tones and the woman wearing a cascading aquamarine overcoat. The mustang splashed through a nearby puddle, sending a wave over the sidewalk and its occupants. The water doused the man, making mud of his sand and stone. The woman, however, seemed to absorb the approaching tidal wave, making it seem almost part of her.

Two more lights, then we are there

"Me and Cinderella, put it all together"

"Sing us a song..."

They pulled into the parking lot and Chris looked at Gabriel with a satisfied smirk.

"Two minutes late. That's not too bad"

I wish we were later. "No, not too bad at all. Technically I don't have to punch in for three more minutes. Wanna smoke a cigarette?"

Chris rarely smoked but Gabriel was hoping he would, only if it meant delaying the inevitable for another three minutes.

"No, man, you gotta go in and make us some money. Anyway, Anna will smell it on me, and you know how she is"

Pipe dream, but they all are aren't they? "Yeah, I know, thanks for the ride" Cannon to the left of them, cannon to the right of them. Tennyson. Yeah, he had one too.

Gabriel made the Bataan-like march to the front doors, red metal framing glass. He took note of the new posters adorning the windows, ended at the rain marked bench where he had spent many a break, smoking cigarettes and pondering the inevitable unattainability of everything. Deep breath. Breathe. Open the door.

Gabriel snaked into the store and darted his way directly to the back room. He picked his time card out of the armada of red and white pieces of plastic that adorned the wall. Slide. Beep. :05, just in time. He fished his nametag out of his coat pocket and struggled to slide his coat off and hang it up before anyone came over to him. Before she came over to him.

7 hours. I can make it through seven. One hour is lunch. I can do this. Oh no. It's rising in my nose. Get to the registers. Six hours and fifty-eight minutes.

Navigating the maze of displays and fixtures that adorned the floor of the record store, Gabriel took his position at register 2. It was Wednesday, a slow day, so it was likely nobody else would be joining him at register for his shift, which was fine with Gabriel. What kept Gabriel most entertained during his interminably long shifts was watching the droves of people who came in to browse the store. This was simultaneously fascinating and disheartening, enlightening and soul-crushingly painful. He watched as couples walked in arm in arm and his soul receded a little more into the cavern of his heart. Then there were the eccentrics, who



espoused the existence of fairies and the grandeur of a simple game of chess. A conversation with one of these people would make one hour dissolve into six.

One time, Stan was telling me how you could actually cure cancer by... Here it comes, drifting. Here she comes, floating on a cloud of black ember. Red. Catch her eye. No, don't. Thank Christ.

"Did you find everything you were looking for today?"

Crisis averted. We fight these imaginary wars with ourselves, but in situations where the heart collapses, we naturally defer to the mind. Yet, the collapse spills over and a mind in rebellion is just as useless as a collapses heart. Anyway, just one more hour to my lunch. Funny, time has been going fast. That was the only time I saw her? She must be busy in the back.

Time marched on and Gabriel was about to call for his backup to come and relieve him. He got on the loudspeaker and called Greg up to relieve him. In Gabriel's mind, Greg was damn near a god, always good for amusing conversation and to indulge Gabriel's quirky theories. Quickly retreating from the register, Gabriel gingerly walked to the break room, being careful not to call any undue attention to himself. Draping the hood of his jacket over his black hair, he explored his jacket pocket for the pack of cigarettes he knew he had. Gabriel typically eschewed an actual meal unless he was feeling particularly brave, and today was certainly not one of those days of exceptional fortitude. Instead, he would simply sit out in the rain, chain smoke, and hope against hope that some idea, some inspiration would fall upon him somewhere amidst the cavalcade of rain-drops.

As Gabriel slowly emerged from the recesses of the break room, he noticed her standing off to the side, rifling through a selection of CD's. She flipped her flowing hair over her left shoulder with a grace and delicacy that made angels envy and granite hearts flow with molten passion. The contours of her creamy neck retreated under the lace of her top, melding which her shoulders, which slowly began to turn toward Gabriel.

"There you are, motherfucker. How it is?"

Thank Christ, Pete. "Yeah, yeah...I am right here. On the move. Let's go out and smoke a butt" Perfect timing. Get me out of here.

Pete and Gabriel spent the next hour outside, in the pouring rain, smoking cigarette after cigarette. They planned their night out. Aside from what Gabriel had smuggled out of his apartment, Pete had secured some fine means of herbal refreshment. That, along with copious amounts of alcohol, would provide the basis for an evening of sensory numbing relief. This was not to be the focal point of the evening. Both had secured ample amounts of cash to spend at the Diamond Club.

"If I can't do it on my own, drugs, alcohol and strippers are gonna make me sing"

"Sing? What the fuck you mean? You been smoking already"

"Never mind"

"Is Chris gonna come with us tonight?"

"No. He wouldn't anyway. He's got Anna. He can sing"

"What the fuck is up with this singing shit?"

"Nothing. Forget it. It's a literature thing. I gotta go back in. See you at 11:30"

"Later. Do re me fa so al ti do. I can sing too!"

No. You can't. Same reason I can't. Same reason I am hanging out with you tonight.

It was now nine o'clock and there were only two and a half more hours to go. A steady flow of customers helped to whittle away the time, but inevitably as it drew closer to closing time this influx died down and the minutes began their agonizing ascent to eleven. The steady rain colliding with the window was reflected in the orange glow of Gabriel's register screen. He watched the rain trace trails, crawling, creeping, and inching its way further down the screen, masking the lines of water on his own face.

Click. Click. Getting closer, getting stronger. Where? Over in imports. She's talking. Talking to him. Not him again. Anaheim Angels 8, New York Yankees 1. Bottom of the eighth inning. I can feel Rogers Clemens in the dugout. Losing, losing, but not yet lost. Falling, falling, not yet fallen. Self-indulgent fuck, I am not Lucifer. Well, maybe I am. Cast out by..

"Attention Tower Records customers, the time is now 11 pm and Tower is now closed for the evening. Please bring all your final purchases up to the front registers at this time."

An uncharacteristically quick close followed, and Gabriel hurriedly grabbed his jacket, popped a cigarette into his mouth, and waited by the front door for the rest of the closing crew. The lights winked out in the store and in his heart as he slid out the front door into the deluge of rain and sensation. Gabriel said his goodbyes to Greg and nodded at Pete as he walked over to his waiting white car.

There she goes. Crimson angel adrift in the blanketing night.

"You ready, man?"

"Fuck yeah" Get these fucking drugs into me

"Wanna do this here?"

"As good a place as any"

Gabriel reached into his pants pocket and pulled out the little vial he so adroitly hid from Chris. Scouring the back of the car for one of Pete's barely read literature anthologies, Gabriel found one that would be suitable. He traced two long and ripe lines along the cover, neatly obscuring two rays of sunshine that made part of the mosaic on the frontispiece of the book. They took turns; breathing in deeply one after the other, wave upon wave overtaking the pair. Revelry lasted for a few minutes, then Pete reached into his pocket and produced the bag he had purchased earlier in the day, followed by a pack of rolling papers. After rolling a sizable joint, the two departed for the Diamond Club, which was not too far from Gabriel's apartment. They smoked on the way there, the cocktail of drugs marrying in their systems. By the time they arrived at their destination, both were noticeably buzzed. Pete struggled to parallel park his car, but eventually maneuvered it into a space a good two minutes away from the Diamond Club. There, both produced identification to satisfy the bouncer, who no doubt noted their blazing red eyes. After producing a five-dollar cover charge, Gabriel and Pete took their customary spots at the bar, away from the main stage and the gyrating girls.

"Shot?"

"How about two" Can't get her out of my head with just one

"OK...Two prairie fires"

"Lots of Tabasco in mine"

"I know"

"To us, and those like us" Ah, strong. Way too

much Tabasco. Burns.

"Want a beer"

"Yeah, I do"

"Two Killians"

Gabriel took out his wallet and paid. His mind, still reeling from the drugs and the new influx of alcohol, drifted back to its favorite topic.

Immortalize it. Immortalize her. Immortalize how I feel. Can't without her.

"Another shot?"

"I'll take two please"

"OK...two more prairie fires"

First. Burns. Second. Burns even more. Chaser. Done

"Another beer...two more Killians"

"Wanna head over to the stage?"

The two saddled up to the table that wrapped around the stage. On stage were two girls, a blonde and a brunette. They were undulating, writhing in faux-coital ecstasy. One, Natasha, caught Gabriel's eyes. She slithered up to him, liking her lips as a lioness before a helpless gazelle. She spread her long, lean legs out before him and slid a hand seductively up her thigh. Gabriel produced a dollar, which he placed gingerly between her breasts. She slid closer, bringing her firm breasts closer to Gabriel's face. Another dollar, this time placed tenderly under her garter.

Angel of mortal youth and beauty. Can I sing now? No, it doesn't feel the same. Manufactured, commercial. Not immortal, nor should it be. I cannot muster the words for her. The DJ announced that next on stage would be the lovely Candy, but Gabriel did not stay to see the lovely Candy gyrate and sway. He bid his farewell to Peter, who was more than willing to stay and watch this carnival of flesh.

You will never sing.

The winds were still blowing, the rain was still driving and Gabriel's mind and body were still racing. Images and light danced together, and the darkness crawled across the landscape. The brick and stone buildings looked ominous and heavy, falling still erect around Gabriel. Ghosts and demons attacked Gabriel's senses, just as she did.

Razor-wire in the back of my mind. Embrace them. Light. I can see. Sound. I can hear. Smell. I can smell, yes I can smell it. That is all I need.

Stumbling down the rain-soaked street, Gabriel cut through a cemetery. He was surrounded by headstones and mausoleums. A statue of Mary adorned the grave on his right, an angel ornamented the grave on his left, but Mary's head was severed and he angel's wings were shattered. His mind gyrated and turned, transforming granite and trees to phantoms and gargoyles. Shadowy images emerged from the ether of night to guard the final resting places of the bodies they once called their own. Piercing eyes stared out blankly from every corner of the grave, and the silent encroachment began to suffocate Gabriel. Out of this dance macabre, a voice rose up:

"Sing"

Yes, I can sing. Sing from afar. Not from having and holding but from feeling. Truth. Beauty. Consecration. Immortality.

Home. How did I get here?

Gabriel got up the next morning and noticed that Chris was not home. He smiled to himself. Sometimes, you can have and hold. He sat down at the computer and began to type:

"Sing in me, oh crimson angel of the blanketed night..."



# Nintendo Haikus

By David K. Ginn

The Paperboy flies  
Through the day and in the night  
The dog scares him not

Zelda kicked some ass  
And still kicks the shit out of  
Final Fantasy

I beat Mike Tyson  
When I was only seven  
But not again since

Die, infidels, die!  
I have passed your Tetris score!  
Now bow before me!

How come Mario  
Never let Luigi in  
On Princess action?



Beloved

By Vikil Girdhar

It's as if my every move disturbs  
you. Each of my actions, comments,  
and words go against you. When my  
very being is challenged, what am I  
to do?

I love you regardless ? this is true.  
But when one is fed up beyond what  
words can describe ? I dedicate this  
to a beloved soul, who was once by my  
side.

You look so amazing sitting right  
there.  
The way the air moves through your  
hair.  
I see your eyes look straight through  
me,  
And stare into nothing, a space so  
empty.

My tongue is screaming out your name,  
Calling out loudly, that it drives me  
insane.  
Now that you're here, I hope you  
stay,  
You will be mine by the end of the  
day.

I need to run my fingers across your  
skin,  
This is a promise that I need to keep.  
I have enough saliva to leave us both  
wet,  
And kisses I must deliver to your  
cheek.

A scent so refreshing, It's full of  
grace,  
How beautiful you look, this I have  
to say.  
My innermost desires thirst for your  
taste,

You just happen to be what I crave.

Out of the oven, dinner is left to cool,  
Candlelight wax now resembles my drool.  
I just can't wait to sink my teeth right in,  
I lay a napkin on my lap, It's time to begin.

But before I begin, I must say grace.  
My mouth begins to anticipate your face.  
Here you are, situated right before me,  
As heavenly as I hoped you would be.

I stick my fork in, bring my lips near,  
Begin to wonder what brought you here.  
It's a shame things turned out this way,  
My mouth all full, I have nothing to say.

Here it is, the very pinnacle of my hate,  
Your severed head resting on my plate.  
To devour you fully, to wipe you clean,  
You're the best last meal I've ever seen.

With someone like you, I couldn't ask for another.  
Take it from a son who just swallowed his mother.

If cannibalism is a crime ? consider me guilty. If  
living your own life is worthy of punishment ?  
then execute me.



**Nightingale**  
by Mick Vukota

An opaque song reaches from the periphery of dusky twilight

three a.m., is this the true nightingale I hear tonight?  
The delicate ode banding together lucent chorus  
collapsing conceptual chimeras  
as it repossesses the pilfered obscurity  
we are one step from natural obscurity

who knew a bird could inhabit what should be a departed sky

I thought we had driven all this wilderness to extinction?  
Not that it mattered in any direction that I  
with eyes undone discern  
nothing but a blank dark and a song  
Still

Still enough to carry me on past

The radiating hint of synthetic plastic  
the importance

the meaning of the song is more malleable  
then scripted speech mended to restrain  
to fake marble masses

**Grave Robber**  
by Mick Vukota

You know there's a problem when disaster doesn't necessarily create mourning  
but creates a new marketing perspective, an increased product sales opportunity

and a chance to sell products fraudulently for 'respect for the dead.'

It seems there's no dark designs with profiting from the misfortunate of others  
from robbing graves by misusing their names on products put out to 'honor.'

Or pushing fruitless measures by recalling venerable fears  
of a return of one-time tragedy.

Well not useless measures,

these acts benefit the diminutive percentage destined to receive them

The pilfering of our fears, tied to our material worth

is apparently much more appropriate,

then seeing to it that each man wasn't seen as a consumer  
and seen only as their own worth.

**A View of Roman Glass**  
by Mick Vukota

Cloths crumpled in my fist

I can't stand to look at the sky tonight

So lambent and lifeless

endless ceilings void of white

curled in a spiral

hidden behind bottles

as inferiority crawls closer

air throws thoughts in a muzzle

a delicate composure

muffled in fragile reflections

A timeless obscurity

with no ease from no affection

Inanimate skies and a clouded three

Never spawned as I was born

And never as mortal

As are even the oldest tree

Somber skies arise

Through the green skin and thighs

Through their skull and arms

Right up in to their heart

Penetrating the staunchest armor

Disarming life without

a single touch of a knife

**Exploitative Thief**  
by Mick Vukota

fluttering like a sycophantic moth

searching for a new fiery cloth

always dancing towards spirited light

leaving pale coffins, a tail that strips

everything to night

Lives portrayed as mere paths

compensates not only for what he lacks

to trouble others to carry the sky

The moth's burden eluded with lies

It's not an idle body

it's soma moves to disembody

augment a moth to a leech

and have shadows bleached

annexing bodies as tools

for the purpose of one purely

Everyone has a purpose

the proposition is that all line up

to be told they're purpose

in the moth's plans

to escape staining the moth's hands

People's prospects

a moth's manipulation perfect

You all are meant to serve my purpose

**Pillage the Falling Stars**  
by Mick Vukota

Heaven is down

Everything is ours

our time to take advantage

our time to pillage because we have this vantage

our fault is everything

There's no time to check the wounded

each second checks less time out of this opportunity

all that's now opportunistic bends in to a silver spoon

If you fail to see our cerebral wound

our cupidity trades for cenanthy

We carry thoughts of the wrong necessity

it's undeniably necessary to correct

our fancy for filigree over necessity

**Green June**  
by Mick Vukota

She's beautiful in a chest full of ugly gods

A bad moon touches cheeks constrained  
sad

A Self-Image of June mirrors not herself

Her Self-Respect mirrors the doubts

wrongly strung about

Today's Erroneous gods create a mirror of  
refraction

Enough to create unreasonable dissatisfaction...

.....Wavering faith

A Latent mind

downgraded to an eighth

Feign Failures

A Slain June

End of Bloom

Bending Blue Moon

in to everyday occurrence

Establish a ever-present

self-enforced deterrence

wayward circumvent

this regular occurrence

June is more meaningful then all that sci-

ence has progressed

more meaningful then mining for truth

obscure

An Abstruse mind wavering and unse-

cured

Everything else is meaningless

Like a tea bag pitched to a burning cup

Certainly slowly swallowed up

As Tiny embers disintegrate in space

thoughts never to be heard again wasted  
in space

The Oneiric Mind as a pregnant womb

engulfed in pennyroyal tea

A Mind afraid to Bloom

June is more potent

then a fragile plea



Into the Wind  
by Joseph Colavito

Walkin' into the wind,  
a trend begins.  
How much of my life,  
can I tell through a pen?

How much of this rain,  
will turn into hail?  
How much longer will I,  
stay in this hell?

This jail, this cage,  
that captures my rage.  
I walk around in this world,  
while my life just stays.

Days and days,  
the hate remains,  
there are too many things  
that I don't want to face.

But I embrace my fate,  
as I run from this place.  
I should cheat my life,  
and drop that ace.

As I race towards the irate,  
I waste and I taste,  
the blood on my face,  
the product of my hate.

Since I take the bait,  
and give in to sin,  
it all brings me back to my trend,  
and keeps me... walkin into the wind.

Holy Paladin  
by Ben Bravmann

i once was a kitten, not a hope in the world  
until I saw women, then my vision did swirl  
now I was a new man, but still a naive boy  
saw intense pleasure can, null purity with a toy  
wanting women so much, It was like I couldn't  
stop wanting that soft touch, discovered the wooden  
stuffed and nude teddy bears, turning tricks on the cor-  
ner

Conquered and ruled by fears, life turned from its for-  
mer

Potential is never abating, never ever ending  
torrential immortal rain,  
a boy's mind rearranged, so steadily became  
corrupt verily deranged, by this pussy n' pain  
at constant odds with peers, I was ruled well by fear  
receiving cast down leers, shed not a single tear  
but escaped ugly truth, with text role-playing games  
found life in a networked booth, filled with sluts n  
dames

drinking in visions of lust, craved young flesh on which  
bust

my mind began to rust, n' gather so much dust  
Trust in G-d creator one n only, he never leaves ya lone-  
ly

his will and rod retained

I make a confession, Trust nullified and abstained  
Truth I did doubt n question, temporarily stained  
a brutal life lesson, was divinely ordained  
Broken n weary my heart, still endured this twisted life  
as I worked on puter parts, in this office space strife  
had the suit and the tie, the position n the pace  
still just wanted to die, n push key life erase  
wanted to burn the sky, annihilate human race  
Homage paid but wasted on puters, was a social neuter  
Growth Decayed off cutting edge  
quit my full time tech job, to go back to college  
became a full time silent bob, smoking weed sipping  
knowledge

Hardly went to classes, but got the A n Bs  
A new set of glasses, thrust and cut into me  
These thugs were scared of me, a scrawny red haired  
white boy

Anger boiling in me, they felt my will ta destroy  
They Tried ta make me leave, my will is never worn  
my goal I must achieve, Eventually reborn  
Cause many did deceive, my spirit had been torn  
Holy Amor, fed me fortitude, as my grim temper stewed  
I got more then I asked for  
From the holy spirit, two friends n much much more  
warriors who won't quit, protecting me from others  
Able minded student, I came ta learn much from them  
Well trained to be prudent, Now I am one of them  
Now Holy Paladin, with the true faith in him

I must not fear.  
Fear is the mind killer.  
Fear is the little death that brings total obliteration.  
I will face my fear.  
I will permit it to pass over me and through me.  
And when it has gone past I will turn my inner eye to  
see its path.  
When the fear has gone there will be nothing.  
Only I will remain.



## Poems by Mike Jha

### Brazil

the bars seem clean,  
and dead,  
now that addiction  
is my only friend. sliding  
through radio stations trying  
to set a mood,  
i stopped on a pair of  
sad notes playing on  
a piano. over and over  
again.  
i once knew a girl who  
taught piano to kids  
even  
younger than i was.

### Voidoid

we parked on a dead  
end street and listened  
to Richard Hell, smoking  
harsh trees rolled in  
an empty cigar.  
smoke cleared my throat  
and spoke more truth  
than written words.  
it was a nice time to be  
insane from the chaos  
'cause back then we had the  
ignorance we lack now-  
we drove, sniffed, and fucked  
faster.

but then sirens went off  
on top of a blue and white van  
behind us  
blocking our only way out.

the siren screamed for two minutes,  
punishing me for all of my  
sins.  
scotch, vodka, whisky, and gin with  
the whores  
lies and cravings and  
scars.  
sins on sins  
and sins of sin,  
knives with blood  
and combs without  
thorns.

soon they were off,  
and the van drove away,

all of my sins  
forgiven

she broke my heart the  
worst way possible; un-  
remorsefully stepping to  
the side,  
letting me fall un-  
gracefully.  
etta james is making me cry  
and  
gilliam too,  
but i am high  
high  
too high  
to even notice this  
slight and sudden  
change of pace.

### With Your Eyes Closed

the chill in the hurried wind  
kept my feet moving-  
my mind nowhere  
but at the destination. but  
my brain dropped slowly  
and  
eventually fell in to  
a deep sleep,  
cold wind  
nothing  
but a memory

warm heat melting the city  
at night, and it's red light district suffocating  
with more life  
than any other streets i've  
ever  
known. a  
presence well spoken for  
greeted bills with dreams  
and  
i knew it Then! that  
this  
was where everyone got  
their fifteen minutes  
of Fame! and

she knew why i was there, but  
i didn't. with a quick hello she brushed  
me off to  
get herself a drink. but she came back  
and dressed in something less. we decided on  
Iggy Pop for the night, and  
drank  
each other  
to a slowly

fading

ballad

fading

### Breaking It

down  
into finer pieces  
would be  
little ling  
s  
childhood,  
dressed in dirt and a pair  
of beige and puke  
bowling shoes,  
she fled her scene  
and found too much joy  
in the

drip  
of a bitter perfume

she bit her lip  
one  
too  
many times and  
began to slowly  
bleed  
to death:  
leaving puss drying  
on our carpets

never changed.

### All this for Nothing

is it a sin to avoid  
the sun?  
at dusk your face  
looks so much clearer  
and  
the peace settles  
as the winds gather  
to take the town  
for another night.  
nothing is quiet when  
the salsa moves  
from the upper west side  
down to the stoops of noho.  
flying  
are the light scents of  
soft music dimming  
over a slow light  
dancing  
whispering  
into my unconscious  
ears  
and...  
no,  
but!  
the sting of the  
mustard sun set pace  
for tomorrows race.



# Eye Can't Feel A Thing

By Vikil Girdhar

## Part One

Needles penetrating into my skin,  
Razorblades slicing my tongue in half,  
A bullet resting at the base of my chin,  
All I can hear are giggles and laughs.

From this endless torture, mercy I do beg,  
Watch in shock as they amputate my leg.  
So much of my blood, going to waste,  
My last breath of life I can barely taste.

Moments remained, then I could see,  
They were getting ready to decapitate me.  
Can't say what happens after a person dies,  
God never gave me the ability to cry.

## Part Two

God never gave me the ability to cry,  
However I can still splash water in my eyes.  
From birth until now, a tear hasn't been shed,  
Even as I recall images of mother on her bed.

A dark and stormy night: a loud thump I heard,  
The house went silent as nobody said a word.  
I walked into her room and what did I find?  
Her raped body, left dead to rot behind.

I looked across the wall, and what did I see?  
My father's eyes looking straight at me.

He hanged from the ceiling, no life remained,  
His throat had been slit: his blood had drained.

I went on to greet my one and only brother,  
I found him on the ground, just like another.  
His body covered with flies, I'm sure he had  
died,  
His fingers chopped up and left upon his side.

It's then I studied myself in the mirror,  
And noticed the absolute absence of fear.  
For not one tear had my eyes let loose in  
Suffocating them as tightly as a noose.

## Part Three

I realize my actions never had any motion,  
And my expressions really held no emotion.  
I guess people like me are fucked from birth,  
And there's no space for us, on this earth.

A house full of corpses, and here I am.  
Without any feelings, how can I stand?  
I can't even recall why I did all this.  
Maybe because it was a psychopath's last wish.

For once I realize, there's a problem with me,  
I desperately need my tears, you see.  
Without them I remain, as heartless as stone,  
And because of this, I'm left all alone.

I walk in to the rain, as it pours on me,  
I open up my palms, as dirty as they may be.  
I try to aim raindrops underneath my eyes,  
But this isn't really how a person cries.

## Part Four

This isn't really how a person cries,  
What really happens when a person dies?  
To seek the truth, this I shall compromise,  
Just for the answer, myself I will sacrifice.

I call upon deceased members of my family,  
Explained how their tears gave me jealousy.  
In my heartless attempt to live life for free,  
I requested them to torture me.

Enough so that life is sucked out of me.  
Enough to make up for their misery,  
With all the pain that I had endured,  
Eye never cried once, that's for sure.

I lived my entire life with a fucked up mind,  
I'm afraid all this has to be left behind.  
Now that my murder marks the end of me,  
Just one little teardrop eye had wished to see.

*Emotions are perhaps the most reliable  
sources of truth. They teach us a lot about our-  
selves. Do not be afraid to let them prevail.*

# Crasher

By Vikil Girdhar

How long have I waited,  
To see the sun rise?  
Just as much I have wished,  
To look right into her eyes.

A good chance as any other,  
That I would ever get,  
To pour out my emotions,  
For this girl that I have met.

Some momentary silence,  
As she was beside me.  
I took a simple glance at her,  
Yet she didn't look back at me.

Until I called her name,  
And she turned around.  
I soon began to speak,  
Yet her screams gave way to sound.

Her screams,  
Filled with a voice that feared its death,  
With shock and confusion melted  
Into her breath.

To hold onto life, afraid to let go,  
Her screeches deafened me  
Beyond limits that I would know.

Her eyes,  
Bloodshot to the point I prayed  
That they would blink,  
Frozen from the horror,  
And getting me to think.

I was certain that I was driving  
On the surface of the road,  
Yet the thumping of her heart,  
Gave me a hint of something more.

And the next thing I knew  
Tumbled upside down,  
Crashed down into nowhere,  
Silence was the only sound.

Lying motionless,  
She and I beneath the car,  
Blood stains covering our flesh,  
We were only distances apart.

Hand in hand,  
Body to body,  
I felt her fade away, for the very first time.  
I can't remember what crashed first?  
My words, her screams, the car,  
Or my mind?  
The answer to this, I have yet to find.

My only regret,  
Is that I couldn't express  
My feelings for her  
Before putting her to rest.  
Perhaps she would respond,  
With a smile for me,  
A smile for me,  
Just so I could see,  
How happy she was,  
Just by knowing me.

Had she loved me to the point,  
She screamed to warn me first,  
Had she figured me out before I spoke,  
And saved my heart from dying of thirst?

Had she stared,  
Just so she can admire my face?  
To lean over and give me a kiss,  
Causing me to crash into place?

One last look,  
Before my eyes would close.  
She looked as if she was asleep,  
To never awaken, ever anymore.

Yet the sense of isolation,  
Knowing it was her and I,  
Gave me this relief,  
And I was more than happy to die.

May this be, all in my mind.  
But somehow I felt she was already mine.

She and I, still distances apart,  
What really crashed first,  
Was the beating of my heart.

A secret so powerful it starts to haunt you.  
A feeling so overwhelming that it starts to  
control you. An emotion so honest that it  
kills you.



President George Bush  
Firewood can outsmart him  
And his sidekick dick

Chim Chimney chim  
Chim cha roo, Claire's pipe is cleaned  
By the backdoor kid

Enormous floppy  
You stick it in the slot  
I love my disk drive

You make hot blood flow  
Whips, Chains, leather all fun  
Grandma's sure is nice

Sticky face and chest  
It is also in her hair  
She sure loves Jell-O

Leaky and dripping  
You gush when I turn you on  
Someone fix the sink

## Student Media Haikus

Blood blood comin' down  
Jesus Christ you make my frown  
how come you're not brown

Sam Goldman's Haikus  
Are really good - for a fat  
Mohawked Russian man

Big fat and juicy  
Firm to the touch; yummy too  
Huge watermelons

If sex is evil  
Then I am the devil  
I get laid a lot

Really nice and hard  
Conquering it gives pleasure  
Time for finals week

Under wire sports bras  
Two are needed to control  
The Worthington "Twins"

My name is Easy  
Because my mom's pants had holes  
Dad's easy access

Oompa loompa doo  
Pa de poo, whip out our cocks  
And shove 'm in you