



germinate



# GERMINATE



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STAMPED

"We are all cups, constantly and quietly being filled. The trick is, knowing how to tip ourselves over and let the beautiful stuff out."

- Ray Bradbury

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1010 West Chicago Avenue

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**If and Butts**

You should have been an apricot  
but then again I know  
that you would never  
resign yourself to that fate  
because it would mean that you  
couldn't curl your eyelashes.

You're a peach-tree girl  
In a navy state and you  
sign away statements with  
God on your side.  
I'll support you one more time  
but then  
it's over.

Maybe you should have been an orange  
Because then cellulite would be beautiful  
and you wouldn't worry about stairs  
or pinch your sides anymore.

*Emalene Clark*



*Jeff Lewis*

### **Sonnet for Fall**

Opulence walks on a photograph of New England's fall,  
alerting every animal, tourist, and monastic priest,  
that again they've seduced and acted the lady Robin's call,  
that again they've produced genuine "Vino de Christ."  
Yet I feel no connection to the male Robin, plain chested  
and stout. With diminished lungs I'm easily beat,  
cast down and laughed at with my idiot's feats.  
So by an elderly father am I passed and bested.

In the land's lull white building sit rested,  
a scholastic armada in waiting, a spotless fleet.  
It is there that I wish to lie, wish to return-  
Despite frigid Mongolian clarity and ivory uncontested,  
despite isolation; physically on my back, mentally on my feet.  
It is here that I want to lie, and hope never to return.

*Davidson Steele*

**Your Ancestors Were Peasants**  
**"Roberta's Opening"**

Roberta constantly awoke with numbness in her lower stomach. It usually passed; a few waddling steps around her steamy apartment would lessen her worried pain.

As soon as she got up, she would rub her warm, overflowing belly, and then move to put on her frock. Her four dresses sat draped over her thick plastic armoire, and when she reached for them, her body would knock the cabinet against her thin walls while she still struggled for her "Wednesday dress". Her neighbors used to complain about this: eleven o'clock was too late in the day for them to be hearing thuds from Roberta Halloway's apartment. She should be at work, using her voice to awaken the consumers of Chicagoland.

The Wednesday dress was a loose red affair; a mass of threadbare cotton that fell on her the same way it did the

armoire. Her thick arms moved through the sleeveless dress, and then lifted the garment over her head and onto her body. It was long enough to cover the majority of her legs, but her fantastic ankles were not hidden; their sexiness emphasized by her dress and choice of toeless sandals.

"What lipstick shall I wear today Roberta?" she whispered to herself as her inconvenient hands fumbled through her medicine cabinet. "A pearly pink? A lush red? Oh yes... this is perfect." Roberta picked up a burgundy lipstick, and painted three coats onto her pouted lips.

"Very wise choice, Miss Halloway," she uttered as she grabbed her purse from atop the toilet tank, gave her last goodbyes to her three cats, and strolled out the door to work.

*David Himelman*

**Close Your Eyes**

The voices waltz in my head  
Painting images of times  
Thought to be imagined

Blocking it all out  
Make it stop screaming  
Make all the voices stop  
Make it all go away

Wanting to be yourself again  
Forgotten soul lost  
In a maze of emotions

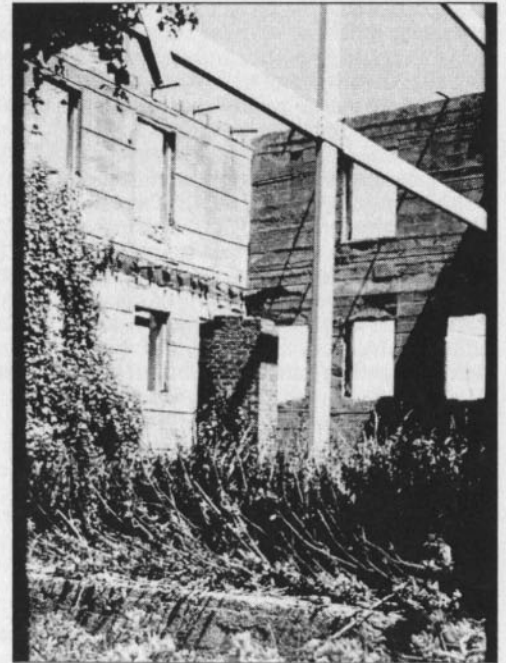
Every word you said  
Screaming through my head  
Not letting go

Wide awake and wondering why  
Walking through a world  
Of memories of times  
Thought to be a dream

Silently screaming  
For a way out

Get out of my head

*Jordan Brown*



*Elisa Bonesteel*



## Joshua Oak

Joshua Oak never cleaned his fingernails, nor did he ever have a reason to. He had grown up in a small town on the East coast that got snowed-in every other winter, and he had never built a snowman. Mostly because his mother worried that if his mittens got wet from rolling large balls of snow together he would get frost-bite, and that each of his fingers would need to be amputated. If this were the case she, as a dutiful mother, would be forced to sit in the hospital room clutching his wrists as the doctor carefully wielded his scalpel and removed Joshua's fingers, one by one. Joshua's mother's stomach did not agree with blood. So while the other fourth grade boys built forts and had snow ball fights, Joshua stayed inside, drinking hot tea and putting puzzles together.

Later, when the only way to get a girl to pay attention to you was to tackle her into the snow banks and rub snow in her face; Joshua was incapable of doing so, his mother's anxiety too deeply instilled in his mind. His first kiss happened in the back seat of a yellow school bus, he was 17. On the way home from a class trip to see how syrup was extracted from maple trees, he and a girl named Lydia ing their tongues together and acciden-

tally letting their teeth click against each other's.

When it was time for Joshua to leave for college he made sure to get as far away from the East as possible. He had finished too many puzzles, neglected, sitting one on top of the next, stacked on his desk, and he realized it was time to leave snowy winters behind. Joshua went to California, where he attended a good, solid, school and studied philosophy. This was much to his father's dismay, because a young man cannot make a career out of being a philosopher; one had to be dead and insane for such acclaim. But Joshua had an interest in existentialism, and his curiosity concerning Kierkegaard and Sartre had not been sated back in Vermont.

Joshua's mother wrote him weekly, refusing to acknowledge more advanced forms of technological communication, including the telephone. He wrote back methodically, in neat penmanship that that his mother had spent hours of lessons in which she imparted the importance of clean and precise handwriting within. "When you write elegantly and are legible, people will understand you are an intelligent boy Joshua," she explained. So there was much time devoted to learning how to make each word separate and even, each letter not

slanted, and carefully positioned and shaped, crafted to fit with the one preceding it and the one following. At Christmas time Joshua's mother would send him a sweater, sometimes knit lovingly by his grandmother, and others thoughtfully selected from Lands' End or L.L. Bean catalogues. Joshua did not have the heart to inform her that in California there wasn't really a necessity for thick, knit wool.

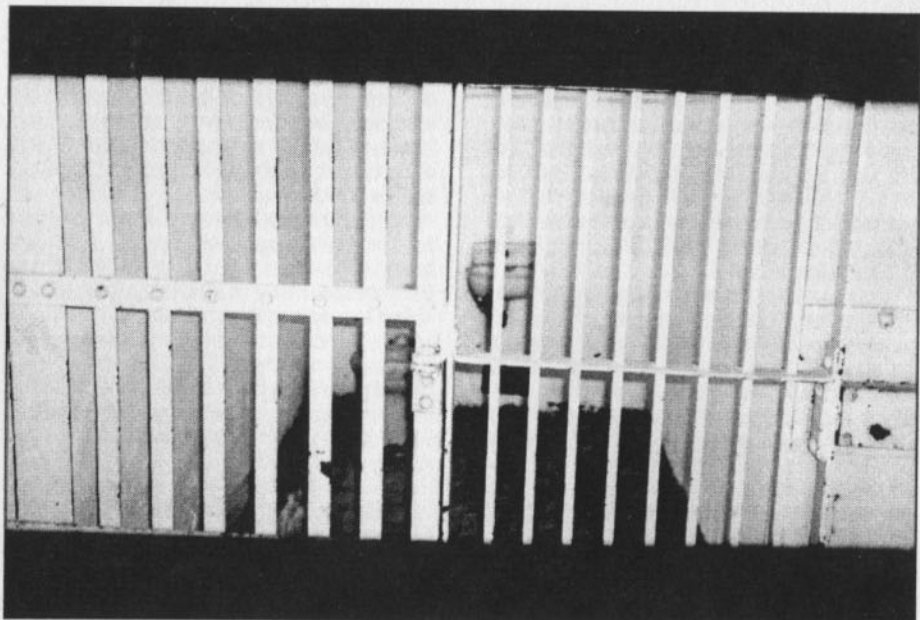
Joshua finished his undergraduate studies, and decided to go and spend a year abroad. He chose Prague, because he wanted to learn how to speak Czech and because the girl he had been dating since his sophomore year of university was going there. Kate was afraid of airplanes, and Joshua held her hand throughout the entire fourteen-hour flight, even when she had fallen asleep and his palm was sitting in a pool of sweat. Kate had a nervous lip-biting habit, and by the time they had arrived she had chewed her bottom lip until it bled. She had only met his parents once, on a trip home for Thanksgiving. She'd had to borrow a coat from Joshua's mother, having never been exposed to such cold air growing up in Arizona.

When Joshua and Kate returned from Prague they were engaged. She wore a simple ring, partly because he was not

an ornate person, and partly because even between the two of them they had very little money. They moved to Colorado, because red was Kate's favorite color and because Joshua liked mountains. He worked at a small bookstore and she started teaching kindergarten. They had a modest apartment, and Joshua's mother thought they should get married before living together, but she kept that to herself because she wanted Joshua to keep responding to her weekly letters.

In December, Joshua received a sweater in the mail and in the package there was an envelope for Kate. Enclosed were twenty seven photographs of Joshua as a young boy. Mostly they were of his birthdays, but a few of the annual kite-flying competition in August, and several of him working meticulously on his puzzles. All of them with the same big-eyed and brown-haired sweater-wearing Joshua. He didn't look much different, and that day that Kate looked through the photographs she knew she was ready to set a wedding date.

*Aurora Bat-leah*



*Elisa Bonesteel*

### **The Council of Four**

It's Paris, 1919, and Clemenceau is poking fun at Lloyd George's bushy eyebrows. Their upper extremities having fallen day by day into his kidney pie, especially made by an all-British staff at a Parisian hotel.

The Koreans marching from their land in the east, neglected by the Conference, and worried about Japan. The Italians are crying over Fiume, and their screams travel across the Adriatic: punching Croats with harsh blows.

Slovakia was dealt with quickly. Her sapphires turned brown from late nights at bistros, and early mornings in the suburbs. Now she's dating a Czech boy who makes fun of her orthodoxy, her lack of experience, and the way her feet constantly touch her neighbors.

"That pretty one" pinched out of satin sits in her salon all day talking of poetry and music. Always calling on her friends after she missed meetings to see if things were right, while her jaundice fingers clutch the fabric of her bleached bodices.

Imperial Russia is dying of cancer, Bolshevik cells multiplying swiftly, descending everywhere, and into Leon Trotsky's opened mouth. This time, an armistice can't solve the problem.

Thoughts on ethnic nationalism, reparations, and what will happen to tiny Montenegro, Plague the minds of everyone is Paris. The Vietnamese want independence too, and the Serbian student, the one who started it all, plays cards in Sarajevo.

*David Himelman*

**Dumb**

We flick our cigarettes  
mostly getting ash on  
each other's shoes.  
Someone plays a guitar  
because we are just that cliché.

We whine about our parents  
because it's the easy thing to do  
and we complain about the cold  
because it's the most obvious.

As teenagers  
we are awkward  
on park benches.  
Our glasses make us  
look like we are bugs.  
It's getting dark  
but the apartments across  
the street are lonelier.

*Liz Sheridan*



*Sara Caron*



## Cake

"That's the thing though. I can't really imagine her having sex. Or sweating. Or anything like that...serious, you know?" Katherine said. I watched as she measured out a cup of flour.

"I just can't picture it. She'd have to giggle or something. I just can't see her being able to keep a straight face." She thrust her pelvis back and forth, grunting.

"You know what I mean? She couldn't keep it up." Katherine winked.

"She's serious, sometimes." I responded; my only goal was to keep her talking, wandering the kitchen in search of cake ingredients or an escaped utensil.

"Oh and I know that. You mean like when she's listening, right?" I nodded.

"But she's never looking at you when she talks." She continued, "or else, she's looking through you which is sort of worse. In either case she inevitably laughs at something you say."

"But not at you."

"Of course not. That's my point. She brings to light the absurdity." At this, Katherine paused to crack an egg; the yolk escaped and dropped into the glass bowl, and she continued, "of every-

thing."

She sighed, somewhat dramatically, and turned to give a slight shrug.

"Haven't you ever seen her cry?" I asked. Katherine had become engrossed with beating the eggs, forgetting to talk.

"Sure, haven't you?"

Again, I nodded.

"Well? She's never just crying. She's always laughing and crying." She stopped stirring, a thought interrupting her speech. "Let's not use the mix. Let's use the real stuff. That'd be fun, right?"

"It's still raining though."

"You like rain." She said.

And it was decided. Katherine put the batter in the fridge for some other occasion.

It was warm and tight outside, our umbrellas barely held up the blanket of rain.

"I bet this is what she feels like." Katherine said, after a few minutes of walking.

"Who? Oh. What do you mean, feels like... Jennifer isn't really a wet person."

"Yeah she is. In like that way that you can tell she means it." Katherine held the door open. "But I didn't mean wet. I just think that what it feels like out here, and being under the umbrella out here... I bet that's what she feels like. Or inside

of her. What it feels like to be inside of her."

Katherine closed her umbrella and picked up a basket. While following her down aisle one, I asked if it wasn't possible Jennifer didn't have any insides.

"What do you mean?" She asked, trailing her fingers along the stocked shelves.

"She could feel like the weather as long as she's got room to feel something like that. I mean she'd have to be able to really look at herself to feel that way. I just wonder if she's not solid; there's no way to know. She could just be... sort of looking out of herself the way some people do, but she does it odd, so people think she's more than she is."

"That's sort of irrelevant though."

"No it isn't. It completely changes everything. See look," I took the flour from the cart, wanting something tactile. "She couldn't be a hole without... without being something right? We couldn't replace her without her first being nothing but a body, right? If she was self-aware, wouldn't she carry herself to wherever she went, and then we would disappear, or else... I don't know, but you see? How can we replace something like that."

Katherine picked out a wax candle in the shape of the number two. She raised

her eyebrows at me, asking my approval, and it was put in the cart. She drummed her thumbs on the cart handle and bit the inside of her cheek, looking over the aisle and thinking.

"Okay. I get what you're saying." She pulled down another candle, this one shaped like a rocket.

"I get what your saying, but you're making a huge assumption." She glanced at the back of the candle package and looked up at me. She grinned.

"Right? You're assuming there can only be one person...one real person, and everyone else is whatever you said."

"Solid." I muttered.

"Solid. Okay, and you're right I think, that if Jennifer was real, real meaning..."

Here she gestured out the window.

"Not solid." I said.

"Right, not solid and self-aware, and her being so eliminated the possibility of anyone else existing, then her moving certainly would have been bad news for us."

"We wouldn't really be here anymore, you mean?"

"Yeah I guess, right? Because she'd take everything that was real with her, and we'd have only been alive as long as she projected onto us." We needed more milk, too. The color of it, through

the plastic jug, looked watery, diluted, entirely unhealthy and unappetizing.

"I don't know. I'm okay with multiple real people. Certainly they're uncommon; at least, you can't ever know very many real people. Hey! Hey you know what I just thought of?" I shook my head.

"Ours is a sealed little world right?" She squinted and nodded her head, urging me to agree.

"So when something goes missing, when something taken away, what happens? POOF!" And she made a sucking, vacuum noise, pulling something invisible from inside my chest. She laughed, and I smirked.

"And that's how it happens. Doesn't that make sense though?" Katherine turned again, softening her eyes and voice.

"You meet this incredible counselor at camp or whatever, or a teacher in middle school...and that whole year you aren't real, but you're observing...well, you're not, but still...the data's there...and then she leaves, or you go back home, or you go to high school...whatever...but she leaves your little world, and it creates that suction that brings you out. You get sucked out by that vacuum and become real."

"I wish she'd sucked me." I said, and

looked down smiling.

I was in a bad mood then, after we left the store. Maybe it was the weather. Katherine was dressed for it: Yellow raincoat, red boots, clear umbrella. She was an image. My mind wandered, I followed her voice back to the kitchen.

"This has to bake for an hour." Katherine told me, mixing the batter.

"Then can we go upstairs?"

"Yeah, do you want to taste this first?"

"Of course." I said. She was sorting through a bin of spices. "Don't use any nutmeg Katherine — it tasted funny last time."

"You're a jerk." Katherine only got defensive when it came to her baking.

"It did; it tasted weird."

"Well the whole thing was weird." She said. "It was a bad idea, I think. Jennifer didn't want us to do that for her." She tapped some nutmeg into the batter.

"What, you think she wanted to just slip off? I don't think so. Anyone would have cried. It's a goodbye party Katherine. You're supposed to cry."

"Yeah but she wasn't crying like normal. She wasn't laughing. She always laughs when she cries. I think most people do though, don't you? Not at

once though. Like she'll be crying about something, something beautiful and sad, but then separately she's laughing at herself for crying. And I don't think I make her particularly self-conscious, I think she always does that. I don't think she ever just cries." She handed me a batter covered spoon to lick.

"It's good." I consented. "I'm sure she cries with people she feels close to."

"No, I don't know because think about it: wouldn't you rather be naked in front of a stranger than someone you're close to? Or like, in the bathroom stalls, right? At the movies or whatever, it really doesn't matter what kinds of noises you make in there as long as you don't know the person in the next stall."

"No, I would say the opposite." She continued, wiping her hands on the seat of her pants, "I bet she can't cry her guts out because when she's comfortable enough to start crying in front of someone, it means she's close to them, and you don't want to shit all over someone you're close to. You know? Of course you do, because crying is a manipulative tool at its core, and you don't want to do that to people you're close to. Right?"

"Was she close to you?" I asked. Katherine was scraping the batter into a round cake pan.

"I guess, I mean she wanted me to

like her, I think and that's about the same thing. Although, I guess when you want someone to like you, you don't always show them every part of you. No, I think we were close, or she was close to me. Felt comfortable. She always laughed if she started crying in front of me."

"You stopped talking to her."

Katherine paused, straightened her back.

"She left, Maggie. You know that as well as I do, I think. Everyone stopped talking to her. She left."

"You still talk about her so much though. It's like you forget she's not here."

"Well everyone talks about her in some way or another. And the same to you, I mean, if you left. We'd have to fill you in by talking. Like a hole."

"Am I a hole?" I asked

"No of course not. You're right there." And she shoed the cake into the oven.

I could spend ages in her room, wrapped in her, blankets covering me. Katherine's made in that way. You're meant to be lost there. She's covered two of her walls with shelves, which she has filled with every item she has ever been attracted to. Crowded together on one wall might be ticket stubs, a feather, a lighter, beach glass, a picture of her



grandmother in high school. Another wall houses a hornet's nest, an old blue bottle, and an used book she'd thought looked pretty.

Even the ceiling was busy. She hung things from it that didn't fit or didn't belong on the shelves. Parts of vines, deformed growths from trees, parts of dolls and paper cut outs of stars. It always looked different to me, every time I saw it. I knew it wasn't. I knew everything that was up there. Laying there, I tried to compare the feeling of her hair with what I thought the feathers must feel like, of her skin, to the dry and cold plaster from which the stars hung. Or her stomach to the moon. It was her stomach that most entranced me. Even under the covers I could see her fully. The invisible blond hair that grew dark at its roots. They found light, even here, to reflect: even in darkness, she glistened. Watching the peach white triangle formed by her hip-bones and her Adam's apple, I said I'd never seen a more beautiful plane. She told me I should try going south.

"Our cake's probably done."

We'd been listening to music and trying to move the hanging feathers by blowing on them. We got up to check on it. Katherine wasn't a cook. She was a baker, and she took pride in this. There

was something fitting to her personality; substantial meals, anything with any practical nutrient, spoiled at her touch, but she could concoct things beyond one's wildest dreams as long as she had butter. The cake then, was a shock. It had only half risen, the other half was still sticky and wet.

"This half is definitely done though."

"What do you want to do?"

"I don't know, what else can we do?" And she took it out of the oven. It smelled like it should.

"Do you want to just ice it?" I asked.

"I think we should. I don't know. This hasn't ever happened."

"We could put it back in for awhile."

Katherine tasted the low side of the cake. She shrugged.

"No, lets just ice it."

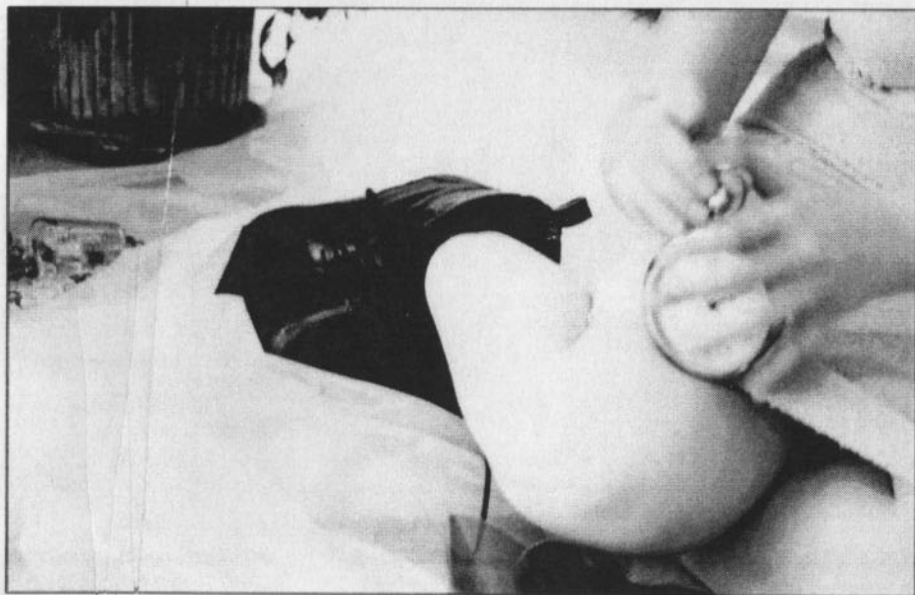
We had a jar of vanilla icing, a tube of yellow, blue and one green.

"Do you still want to use the rocket, Katherine?"

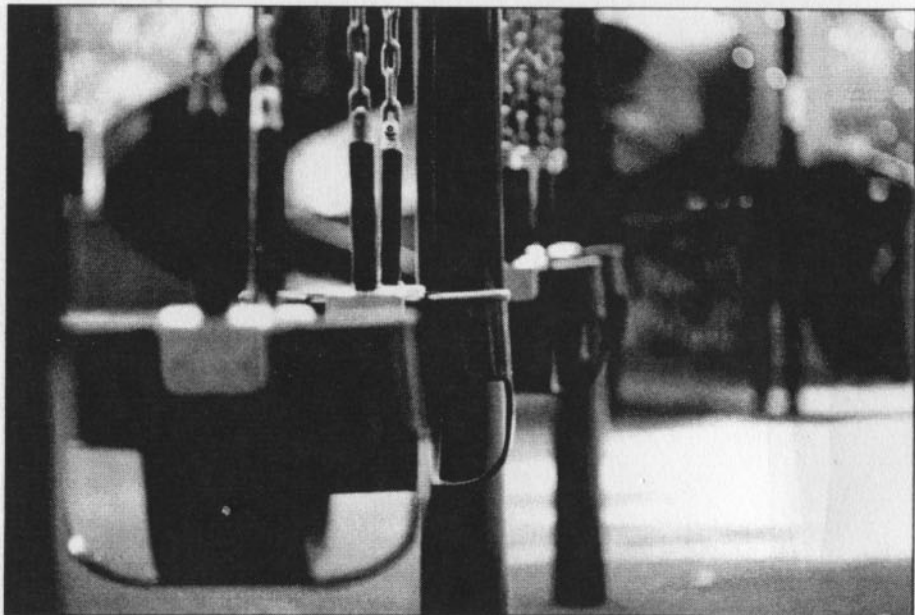
"No. I was going to make it the sky but it won't really work now."

She watched the cake, waiting for a new idea. I began laying on the white icing.

"It's a hill." She finally said. "We need a sled."



David Himelman



*Jeff Lewis*

### **Spoken With Teeth**

Basic laws condensed with stars and fruit salad.  
Rested, he lives in North and East. I stare into dark and blue,  
catching his breath in handfuls, sucking it in; hunched.  
Wringing fingers over his left hand, I hope he sees me, notices me,  
Touches me in the back room.  
Are guitar strings on fingers, under skin, in cheek?  
It's still purple from when he moaned, "Repent"  
and I forgot the bed sheets.

*Jessica Capocy*



Dry

"Seven," he whispers, "What was the name of the Father?"  
It smelled like Roses, when my eyelids grew heavy.

"The consequences of your actions my child."  
It smlelled like roses-- when their skin was chapped.

How sweet, seldom, prissy  
Pianos, little keys to fit his fingers, blackened and bleached.

Touch her cheeks afterwards, caked with mud and ice.  
We made them as children, maggots nestled inside,  
heavily breathing buried beneath dirt and snow  
there was less in the winter--the wind barely moved "Do not go there,  
There lies evil"

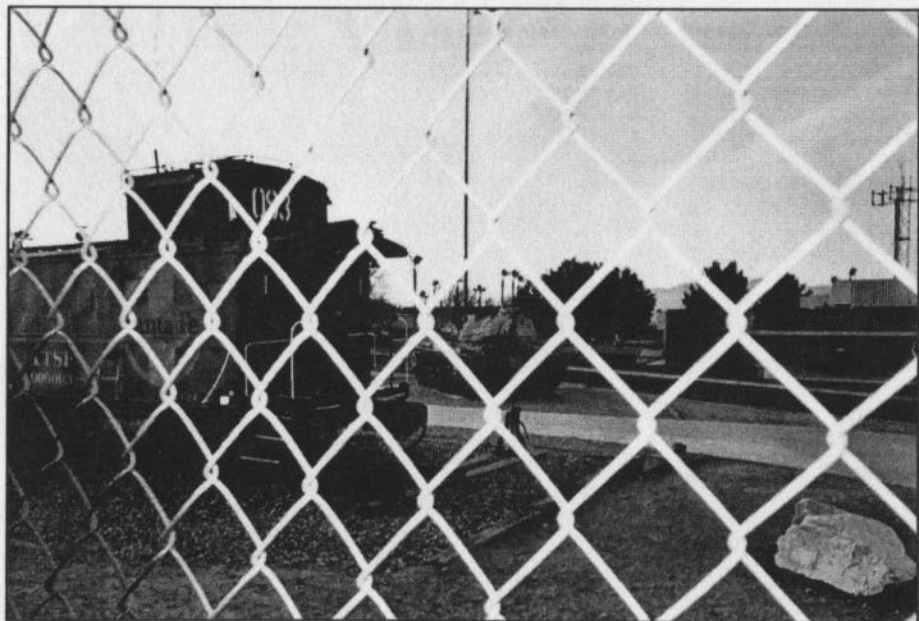
the books bound in leather, carried under one arm, title side up,  
gold and gleaming, oblivious  
I will not develop the pictures, I will throw them away, and I will never have  
gone.

I do not believe  
I do not believe  
I do not believe in ghosts.

*Elisa Bonesteel*



*Pablo Monterrubio-Benet*



*Latham Williams*

### **Canopy**

His eyes matriculated much too soon,  
spawn of Irish poems  
he would sit there by the canal  
covered in purple letters and  
overgrown forests, his life  
filled with remnants of  
sharpened pencils and paper cuts.

Explanations dull away at time  
corrode against the nostalgic markings  
of flickering lead.  
It's always been an excuse for him  
to tuck himself away  
beneath forgotten umbrellas  
and storms that have yet to fall.

*Emalene Clark*



### There Is No Naked Singularity

"I loved him John. I really loved him." The look on Sarai's face was blank and detached from reality, a parody of the man about whom she spoke.

Nearly a minute passed before John responded. "Me too."

Sarai looked up, curiously, and then quickly refocused her attention on the wood grain texture of the table in front of her. She didn't like the way John looked right then, his normally animated expression so uncharacteristically dead. She didn't want to have to try to connect with the man sitting at the bar with her - this Englishman who she had spent so little time with, and yet had heard so much about - and try to understand what it was that made him different now, and why.

Now that she thought about it, this was the first time they had ever been alone together, without Yaakov. She looked up again. John was staring into his empty glass. He lifted it to his lips and tipped it back, trying to get the last bit of whisky to drip down onto his tongue. Before he accomplished his goal he lost interest and returned the glass to the table. His head, however, remained

tipped back, the plane of his face parallel to the floor and ceiling.

Sarai examined his face. His skin was so pale it was almost yellow, around his eyes it had transformed into a shockingly defined blue. When she noticed, she recoiled, then thought about her own experiences over the past months - the uncertainty, the sleepless nights, the nights she did sleep and dreamed of him returning as if he had merely been away at a conference - and realized that he had gone through the same thing. She remembered what she looked like without any make-up on, and realized that he was holding up better than she was.

John sat up in his chair and looked at Sarai, his green eyes locking with her dark brown. "Do you think he knew?"

Sarai thought about the man she had spent two years of her life with, the father of her two month old son, born after he was already gone. Of course he knew; he was Yaakov, the knower. The question for her was whether or not it affected him, whether or not he could have gone on and lived his life the exact same way, and been the exact same person had they not.

When she realized that she tru-

ly did not know the answer, tears welled up in her eyes. In the moments before the first tear drop descended her cheek, she thought about the surface tension of the water in her eye, wondered if the salt level affected it, and realized that whether or not her loving Yaakov had changed who he was, it had left a deep impression on who she was.

She looked at John, his hair a red blur through the distortion of the tears. Blinking her eyes back into focus she looked at him again. His face was not that of a man who had lost a friend, or even that of a brother who had lost his kin. It was the look of a priest who had lost his faith. Fear was the emotion that contoured his muscles, fear that bent his skin. Fear of never understanding.

"Did he love us?" He asked. This was a harder question to answer. Sarai had never heard Yaakov say he loved her, or him, but Yaakov was not the type to say that sort of thing aloud. He never thought he needed to. It would be expressed through his actions.

Offense was her initial reaction, which was replaced by genuine interest as to the answer to the question.

"Does it matter?" She responded. The question paused John. It was an ob-

vious question, once he considered it. Did it matter?

"Of course it matters." He paused for a second letting the words hang in the air for a moment, hoping that her reaction would show him what she thought. When her face remained impassive, he became agitated. "Of course it matters! How can we say we love him and not even know if he loved us back?"

"I think the fact that the question never came up until now would indicate that it does not matter." The way she said it was more aggravating than her passivity in not reacting initially.

"The question is here now!" He yelled at her, immediately regretting the sudden outburst. "Of course you can say it doesn't matter. You were his, he was yours. You -"

"He was never mine." She cut him off, the intensity of her voice silencing him the moment the first sound escaped her mouth. Tears returned to her eyes as memories of all the nights Yaakov fell asleep at the labs and forgot to come home forced themselves into her conscious mind.

John's face flushed in embarrassment as he stared into his empty glass.

"His heart belonged to his

mind." She said.

"A mind that adored you for the satisfaction you gave it." He replied.

"What satisfaction? He was constantly frustrated by his inability to talk about his work with me. We fought about it all the time!" The calm composition that had frustrated John so intensely moments earlier had given way to an entirely new configuration. Her eyes were open wide, her teeth clenched as she breathed heavily. "How dare you assume to know anything about what we were like?"

"How dare I? How dare I? I was his best friend! I was his best friend for years before you had even heard his name! I'm not going to pretend I understand Yaa-kov, but I'm not blind. Or deaf for that matter." As comprehension of the dishonor done his friend, his face twisted in an unmistakable expression of revulsion. "You bitch!" He exclaimed, standing. "He loved you more than I've ever seen him love anyone. You inspired him, you challenged him, you gave him his greatest ideas. Without you he never would have even begun to understand what he was undertaking with his project. And you say he wasn't yours!"

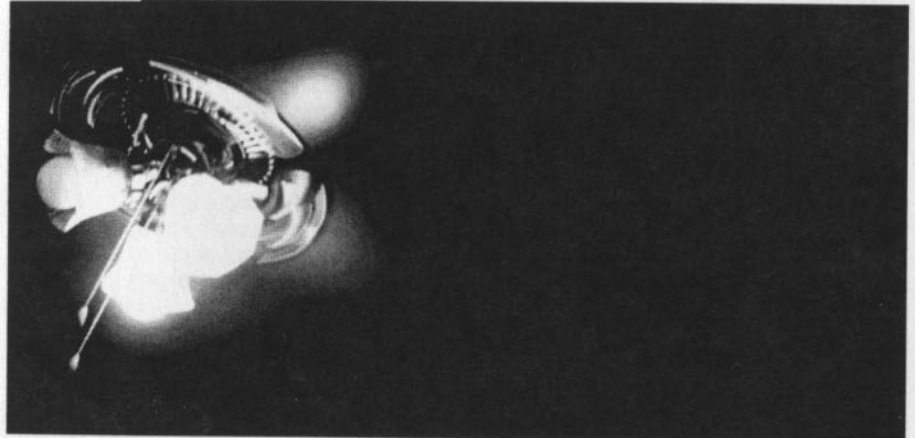
Now it was John who could no

longer see clearly. He squeezed shut his eyes and tried to refocus them, but found he could not. "You gave him what he needed to be fully himself. He loved you by definition." His face further deformed itself as the agony of embarrassment tortured his muscles.

Sarai stared at John, and watched the decision of whether or not to run away undergo the process of his mind. Before he even made his first movement to turn she knew he would not stay.

Promptly, he was gone, and minutes after that she followed suit and vacated the tavern. Soon after the bar sat empty, and no light escaped.

*Kevin Wolfson*



*Lili Canright*

### **Cold**

Flaming vodka eases the pain of Siberian cold. Caspian Sea czars, Romanov, betrayed by one of their own. The Starets poisoned, shot and drowned in the same river where the local baker takes the water for his rye. The bread is sold to orthodox Muscovites. The rest of their rubles go to paying protection fees to mafia bosses. Small children wait in a long line they think it the biggest in the world, their skin blends with the snow they are waiting to spend their money on cheeseburgers at the McDonald's outside St. Peters square. A place where outdated Soviets travel to honor a butcher, but Americans are drawn to the old capitol's onion domes not the grey streets and lonely store fronts of Moscow.

*Maxwell Gail*



### The Rendition

My heart is beating as fast as Afrikan drummers.  
I'm organizing every season  
Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer

The tradition you passed,  
it's my duty to pass it on.  
I'm going to do this until the day I can no longer prolong.

I'm going to speak out my beliefs,  
hoping that people follow me.  
Like Crazy Horse was the chief, now it's my turn to be.

I'm going to follow your ways,  
and lead my people home,  
because you steered us the right direction, you never taught us wrong.

I feel like we are one,  
as in we serve the same values.  
With God all things are possible as it was written in Matthew.

I'm going to hold out,  
even though my whole life I felt the drought.  
Changes are to be made and now shall they come about!

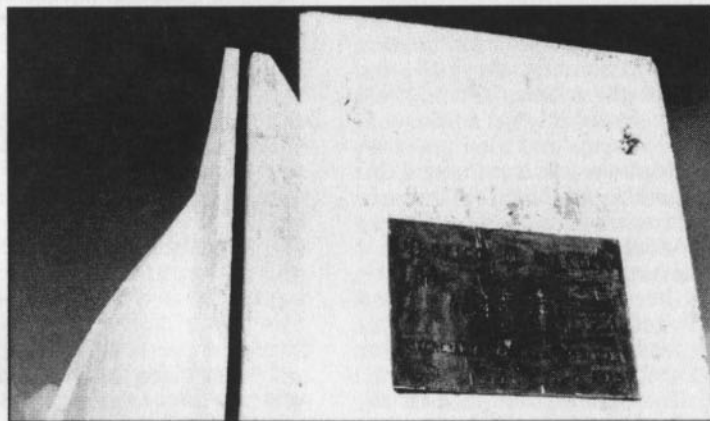
I've studied your life,  
thus I recognize your mistakes.  
I've mapped out my plan perfectly, I know which route to take.

I'm following the tradition Assata,  
that you have set forth.  
This is the Rendition, I'm taking the revolutionary course.

The revolution that they once said would not be televised.  
I'm going to keep on with all my strength despite the gray skies.  
I'm out to follow you so please pass the torch.

This is the Rendition,  
under the condition,  
to strive for better predicaments,  
For folks who don't have a pot to piss in.

*Jessica "Supreme" Disu*



*Pablo Monterrubio-Benet*

### An Excerpt from: *Sucrose*

Years later all he would remember about his time within the sallow walls of Pike County hospital was that her ears smelled like puzzle pieces.

He was just three months over eleven when the neighbor who always baked sugar cookies escorted him through the imposing glass doors. The cookie woman tried to appear confident as she tapped her fingers on her arm, waiting for a chance to approach the triage nurse, but her pursed lips betrayed her normally smooth countenance, and when his neighbor was finally able to talk to the woman in teddy bear clothes she sent him to go sit down in one of the red seats and then promptly left. He didn't see her leave; she didn't walk over and say goodbye, but he could feel the vibrations of her shoes clomp out of the front door.

Michael had always been tiny for his age; thus the seats were much too large and he spent his surplus of free time swinging his feet back and forth. Seven hundred and fifty-three times, then the doctor came. The man's hair was oily and his lips severely cracked, but he

managed to give Michael a rushed, sympathetic smile. Holding out a sticker he asked Michael to follow him. As they were walking through the hallway Michael saw the man reach out to pat him on the shoulder and then suddenly pull back.

"Michael, would you help me with this?" asked his mother as she tilted her head for a closer look in the mirror. Michael slipped off of the brown and mustard bed spread and shuffled over to where she sat in front of her vanity. He fingered the clasp of her faux pearl necklace and snapped it shut. Even though his fingers were still youthfully pudgy the task was simple; he had memorized the clasps of all her necklaces long ago.

"What do you think, Michael? Do the pearls match the dress?" she asked, looking down at him. She genuinely looked worried but Michael knew that she didn't want an answer. Promptly she turned back to the mirror and upon seeing herself smiled. "Of course it does. Everything looks perfect, simply perfect."

Then picking up whatever hair piece was popular at the moment, she would quickly put in place and turn to leave,

taking a disengaged second to kiss her son on the forehead and caution him not to do whatever he had done wrong the last time she'd gone out.

Even at the age of five Michael knew that his mother was a beautiful woman, it wasn't just the childhood adulation that all sons have of their mothers. Men always seemed to take notice when she was around, smiling, crossing their arms over their chests, so as to expose their biceps. Michael wasn't sure whether or not he liked their attention, but he knew that besides his mother they were the only people who ever touched him, patting his head or grasping his shoulder.

Despite the fact that Michael had slept deeply he knew exactly where he was when he woke up later that night. The TV was on, the blue glow flashing over the room, elongating shadows, making everything appear bigger than it was. The walls were covered in yellow striped paper and the floor was almost strategically decorated with various plastic toys.

The air tasted like a frozen pool, and the only sounds that interrupted the moment were the buzz of the bathroom light and soft rhythmic breathing.

When he turned to see where the feather breaths arose; he found a tall girl sitting in the bed, staring at him shamelessly. The dim light only allowed him to really distinguish two things about her, her white cotton nightgown, trimmed with lace, and the large grayish whites of her eyes.

He turned back to staring at the ceiling without saying a word, and proceeded to count all of the dots on up there. When the tiny black spots began to blur together he twisted to bury himself farther into the mattress. She was still staring at him as he fell asleep.

When Halloween came the nurses brought in animal ears and led those children who could walk around to each room of the pediatric section of the hospital.

"Do you want my yellow parts?" asked a voice to his side. Michael turned around to face the sallow-eyed girl. Her voice was different than he had expected, strong without the meekness that her actions suggested.

"What?"

"You aren't eating the white part. I like the white part but I don't like the yellow. Do you want to trade?" Michael suddenly realized that she was talking

yellow. Do you want to trade?" Michael suddenly realized that she was talking about his candy corn. Staring down at the little pieces of white in his hand he nodded and shoved them in the girls direction without even looking at her. He didn't know if she smiled as she grasped the sugary remnants but within seconds his hands were filled with much larger pieces of gold.

For what could have been two hours they sat in companionable silence, flipping through pages and channels, handing off the detested colors to each other whenever the rest had melted in their mouths. Later that night one of the nurses, a stocky woman with blond hair, entered the room and began scolding them for eating too much candy.

After they had been tucked in for the night Michael still lay awake beneath coarse sheets, as if waiting for something to signal that the night was truly at an end.

"Michael," said the voice of the girl from across the curtains. He could hear her sit up in her bed.

"How did you know my name?"

She didn't answer. "Why didn't you wear your bunny ears?"

He shrugged, forgetting that she

couldn't see him.

"Would you rather have my elephant's trunk?" Once again he began to count the dots on the ceiling.

"No, bunny ears are fine."

His step-father had always claimed to write the last sentence of his novels first. Michael secretly thought that it was impossible to know if what Danny said was fact because the truth was that he never finished them. His mother loved Danny because at parties consisting of olives and lemon swirls he would make everyone laugh and then the other women would turn to her and think how lucky she was.

Occasionally, Michael would watch football with his step-father; red and white, purple and gold, black and blue, all blurred on the television set. It was the only time he ever saw Danny dressed imperfectly, in a white undershirt and blue jeans. His mother was still at work.

"So how was school today?" Danny would ask as he rubbed the oily remnants of potato chips on his pants, crinkling the bag as he did so.

"Fine," Michael would reply, his hands clasped, tracing the flowered pattern of the sofa with his eyes. No one had ever

told him what to call Danny, so he simply never called him anything.

"And what about your teacher? Mrs. Sliverstine?"

"Mrs. Silverstone."

At that Danny would turn and look at him, still trying to remove the grease stains from his hands. "Oh, that's right, Silverstone. So did you do anything fun during class?"

"We made turkeys." When for a few moments the only sound that filled them room was that of roaring crowds and beer-bellied men he added, "Do you want to see it?"

"What? How about you show it to your mother and I later during dinner." By then the front of Danny's pants would always be completely soiled.

*Emalene Clark*



*Jessie Brett*



## Oregano

He bought new jars for all the spices,  
But the air still tasted like the desert,  
Still felt dry.  
Hair fell over teeth,  
The milk was never clean enough.

All of the blisters, and guns,  
Rusted and sealed shut.  
Salt water crusted over the holes.  
Nothing got through,  
And the wood turned green when she dug her nails into it.

"Too dusty,"  
It was said, whispered under coughs and used napkins.  
The outlets don't work and the sheets never fit.  
He didn't trust the smell -  
Laundry came back folded and taped into bundles.  
The payphone couldn't reach to bridge the gaps,  
And neither did their arms.  
Maybe it was better off this way anyways,  
He didn't have time to pine.

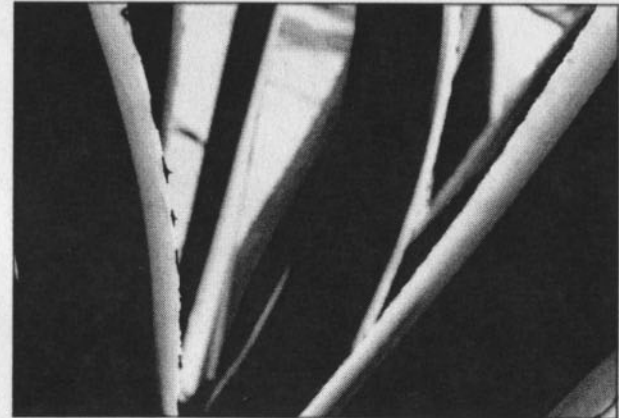
The meals were the same everyday,  
But the bread was never stale, and somehow,  
She couldn't help noticing that she was following in her mother's footsteps.  
Hadn't bought leather in years,  
It only felt fitting.

The blue was a different shade, unexpected.  
Never time to stop.  
Her head kept saying – just go –

The blue was a different shade, unexpected.  
Never time to stop.  
Her head kept saying – just go –  
The only rule worth following.

The smoke was black licorice  
And it was all coal and bad pipes.  
Who knew that his lungs had never healed,  
And that the guitars all had broken strings.  
there were too many couples.  
Nothing left to touch but chlorine and her own breasts.

*Aurora Bat-Leah*



*Pablo Monterubio-Benet*

## Complex

Oedipus

Prying your syndrome from my back  
Daddy's voice, always better than Mother's.  
Sword drawn in my hand though too small to fill sheath  
To stabbing Mother and not my father.

You taught teachers to tell tales of your lie,  
your life; caught on mountains.  
shaped like parts of her body, I won't touch  
was born not wanting to.

Did things to her that make men cringe,  
but Daddy's hair was shorter and prettier.  
And your syndrome made no sense  
when my senses filled with his hug.

Oedipus

Prying your syndrome from my back,  
your nails were long and intrusive.  
Pointed to paths, smooth and flat  
wanting them sharp and jagged.

*Jeff Lewis*



*Lilli Canright*

## Flat Line

Franco wore his hair long and dyed red. He slumped when he walked, bit his lip nervously and masturbated with his left hand: ambidextrous. His mother had been in a coma for four years, and in and out of hospitals since he was born; the only way he knew her was placid and cold, her cheeks pockmarked and a needle under her skin.

Franco was utterly devoted to Black Sabbath. He and his best friend Jez, who was an overweight blonde with beady eyes and tons of eyeliner, would go over to his house after school, open the windows, turn the volume up and smoke hash.

The night of his sixteenth birthday he spent alone and took a bath. He lay his head against dirty marshmallow tiles and stretched his legs out.

Franco slipped his feet into worn in Vans and leaned against the frame of the door, sliding a condom into his pocket, and thinking of Jez.

When the weather dropped below 30, which it did in Ohio, he pulled his father's moth-eaten Lacoste sweater over his boney shoulders, an olive vest over that, unraveling gloves and a thick gray ski cap.

He is HIV positive, got it some where, at a party, maybe the doctor, from a girl, and he has no idea. He's felt weaker with in the past two years, but because there aren't any physical signs he hasn't thought about it. He has passed it on to three so far, and on October 16, 1993 he gave it to Jez, the fourth time they slept together, after she had finally convinced her mother to buy her birth control.

His father works the only job he's ever had, in a large fluorescent power plant ten miles away. Franco has two brothers, and the younger one has been caught in his mother's robes twice. He doesn't tell his father, only slaps the six year old hard across the face until his cheek is swollen and blames it on the kids at school. He doesn't hit him because of embarrassment, or fear, but because his little brother is the only one who's touched his mother's clothes since she's slept.

Franco will die eight years later, his T-cells gone and his blood dirty--the virus eaten him alive. Lesions will rest between his legs, on his chest and below his hairline, which will have thinned and fungus formed under his nails. In a hospital bed, admitted two weeks prior, sickness gone untreated for five years, his penis is flaccid, the sides of his mouth are chapped and he bleeds calmly from

his right nostril.

Perhaps, he thinks, it has burrowed so deep, it can reach my soul.

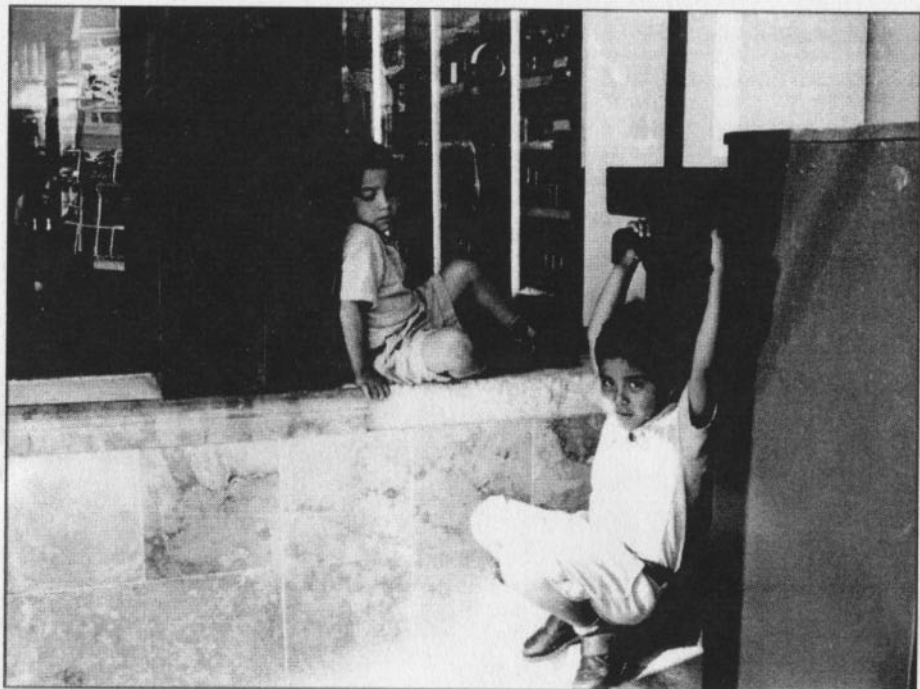
He will flat line at five thirty three in the morning.

*Elisa Bonesteel*



*Aurora Bat-Leah*





*Aurora Bat-Leah*

### Plastic Fingers and Red Clay Pots

Chiseled Styrofoam contours  
of bright and perfect bargains  
are shaped by stone wall men,  
with the whitest of walls  
golden and blue:  
still softer than the coats of nylon  
and the eyes of coyotes;  
bearing nothing but  
yellow and gum.

They all turn with swirls of icing  
on stretched polyester.  
Somehow dresser drawers  
have been turned inside out  
and everything is wallpaper  
Washes stand still  
with rolling blackouts;  
there's a drought in Mexico.

With too little cloth for  
one child and  
too much paint for  
any human being,  
elastic is twice as fueled in California,  
yet somehow remote  
in small town nowhere  
Slather cream,  
gray as bug spray,  
on time and wash  
away the grit

Lemonade has turned  
into powder and sugar  
with checkerboard picnics  
resting on parched tongues  
of the reservation's nimble,  
working fingers;  
Dusty and used  
like corn husks in the sand  
and the dogs who dragged them  
to a different planet.

Sea shells glued  
to white teeth  
and feathers stapled  
to white knuckles,  
clinking the shackles  
of deserts, and almond eyes.  
Narratively, peppered fry bread and mutton  
weren't in trickster's derailed pouch.  
Indifferently, tea and tobacco  
did get twisted,  
and thrown into the opalescent sky.

*Jessica Capocy*

**Staff Advisors:**

Ms. Cindy Daignault  
Mr. Jonathan Swegle

**Staff:**

Jordan Brown  
Liz Sheridan  
Elisa Bonesteel  
Aurora Bat-Leah  
Jessica "Supreme" Disu  
Maxwell Gail  
Emalene Clark  
Jeff Lewis  
Kevin Wolfson

**Postscript from the Chair**

**G**erminate. What exists in our collected Media Arts subconscious to generate this word? Chosen by our students to represent their written works and images, germinate can simply imply growth. However, as a department that flourishes on subtext and sub-surfaces, a simple reading would be insufficient. Looking closer and from a more holistic perspective, I begin to see other relationships emerge. Fertile grounds, proper care, sufficient light, root systems: metaphors extend, wildly.

Germinate holds our department's aspirations, providing the proper conditions for the expressions and visions of our maturing artists.

Geminate nurtures our ethos.

*F. M. Schill  
Media Arts Chair*