

GERMINATE

VOLUME II



VOLUME II

MAY 2006

Jessica Disu.....	Awake	1
Elisa Bonesteel.....	If You Could Mask Such Deception	2
Jack Gorman.....	Brian and Joseph Have a Conversation	3
Aurora Bat-Leah.....	For Now	7
Anna Green.....	Bombs Like Rain	9
Mo Hickey.....	Not Even Close to Venus	12
Liz Sheridan.....	Eugene Picks Up Stella	13
Aurora Bat-Leah.....	November Men	16
Jeffrey Lewis.....	Shaving	17
Jessica Disu.....	Runnin(g)	20
David Himelman.....	Dark Hair Gray Eyes	23
Liz Sheridan.....	The Chase	26
Lilli Canright.....	Gave Strength to the Aztecs	27
Jessica Disu.....	Teresa	29
Aurora Bat-Leah.....	Lazarus	30
Mo Hickey.....	Healing	31
Liz Sheridan.....	Drought	34
Elisa Bonesteel.....	Cedar Point	36
Jeffrey Lewis.....	Chair in the Corner	43

The Chicago Academy for the Arts prepares young artists for life through rigorous academic education and professional arts training.

All work contained herein remains the property of its author.
No part of this book may be reproduced without express permission of the author.
Copyright 2006, all rights reserved.

The Chicago Academy for the Arts
1010 West Chicago Avenue
Chicago, IL 60622
Phone: 312.421.0202
www.chicagoacademyforthearts.org

cover design by Jeffrey Lewis

There are painters who transform the sun into a yellow spot, but there are others who, thanks to their art and intelligence, transform a yellow spot into the sun.

—Pablo Picasso

From the Editors:

Musician Steve Lacy says that in collaboration the nature of art is revealed. In the last few months, the Poetry Two class has worked to curate a representation of the Media Arts Department as a whole. We hope to show the wide range of tones and themes in our work, and put together a collection of our writing that does justice to our efforts. It is here that our thoughts and passions grow, and bloom within our audience. Among these pages we share something, and our collaborative efforts take root and germinate.

Aurora Bat-Leah
Elisa Bonesteel
Jessica Disu
Jeffery Lewis
Liz Sheridan

Awake

Jessica Disu

I. Veronica

whose village forgot to raise her.
Manolo boots pounded pavement that
breathes enchantment,
giving birth to womanhood.
Misguided by principles disguised as morals.
Reformed,
she now worships the Virgin Mary.

II. Pedro

embodies a broken home,
tattered curtains behind shattered windows.
Beneath the furnace – lighting matches, he
prays for hope.
Soft caresses led to anti-depressants.
He, the manipulation of self-hatred;
abused by the man once called Dad.
He now preaches sermons.

III. Bobbi

favorite bird was the Phoenix.
Convinced she was a volcano,
erupting when inner youth wasn't enough.
A singer, voice like no other,
but self doubt descended into her.
Inflicting adverse interests,
nemesis of her own existence.
She snorted three inches North.
Eyes rolled back two miles South.
She now sleeps facing West.

IV. They

failed to acknowledge the Sun who rose in
the East.
Humming nursery rhymes,
blowing softly on the back of necks.

If You Could Mask Such Deception

Elisa Bonesteel

I know you'll dress him better
than he ever looked alive
because there we will all
praise his courage and
remind each other of his quiet dignity.
(you get to close his eyes and not me)

and those who never knew him,
were never tortured by him
will stand up and commend him
for everything that he never was.
Too grieved to see any damage
still floating on the surface.
(now you'll dust his cheeks with powder)

Because he's dead now and won't see
me crying, can't watch me stumble
or try to piece together memories of mine,
of my mother's, of my grandmother's
and hope that some how, in the morning
I'll forget what happened
and all of this will turn out okay.
(please repair those broken blood vessels)

He won't be there to hold my mother's hand
in photographs, greasy palms resting roughly
against hers' while my grandmother stands
off to the side because she doesn't want to
see his face, twisted and sweating
and coagulating underneath.
(so you can finally cover him up)

He'll never hear me breathing in the dark,
pressed against my wall until it's
no longer cool, with my sheets drawn up
over my head, still praying for help
that I can't bring myself to get.

Brian and Joseph Have a Conversation

Jack Gorman

"It's kind of a hiccup in his mood swings."
And another bite in return. Turn away,
Joseph. Brian looks a bit much like a
hiccup himself, and it's visible. It's right
vivid.

Joseph: "Just not good for anyone
involved, you understand. All things
considered, it's just what's best."

"And no apologies. For any of it." Of
course not, Brian.

And with that, Joseph is on his feet.
"Well, no hard feelings, of course, just
need to keep in control. Let something out,
eh?"

"I'm going to explain myself fully."
Something must be there to explain, else
that statement would be useless. What
protagonist makes a useless statement?

"Well, not now, no."

"I certainly think now. I don't see any
other time." Eyes on fire now. Well!

"Well?" The hook is to come.

The Hook:

Brian eats beans. Joseph eats steak.
That was characterization. This is a
statement. These are actions and traits
belonging to the characters. These define
the character's personality. This will help
show the author's intent. I am the author. I
have intent. This was a statement.

That was the hook.

And we return:

"I didn't want to hear that, really." He's
cringing now, he may be shaken.

"Well, it's the truth, and did you ever
want to hear that?" Of course not, Brian.
You are the arbiter of truth. You know it
and dispense it as you see fit. Of course,
this was where it was needed.

"Oh, don't be silly." Joseph, it's your *job*
to find the truth. You're something of an

expert in the field, aren't you?

As a click, the door opens. As a slam, even.

"You've heard it all, but not an apology, and I've had my say." Nod, nod. "And I'm leaving."

"I think we need to meet again."

Click? Slam?

The Jab:

I am at a computer, and I am tired. Brian is on a sidewalk, and he is caught in thought. Joseph is in his office, two floors above Brian. Joseph is tired: a couch.

Brian is now at home. He is talking to his wife. It is not the time right now, though. Now is not the time for that.

Recoil:

I'm a godawful mess! Just look at me. I'm covered in sweat and stained vomit! Goose-down pie and frank-tart pops. Oh, what did I do here? It's a story, really. It's the kind of thing that old thanes might have related. It's canned, really. I'm getting the distinct feeling that what I'm saying is

a canned thought. And where's the can? I need to go.

Return:

"Betty, how many times have I told you to watch your goddamned language in my house." Betty is Brian's daughter. He has already finished talking to his wife. She is upstairs, by now.

"Go fuck yourself."

Well, the rest of the scene can be played out in your head; you've seen something to this effect before. Brian isn't a violent man, he is just frustrated, so don't worry, this is nothing as dramatic as child beating. This is just an example of Brian's current frustration. His daughter, Betty, can be a frustration. Brian, though, is a loving father. All that is needed right now is a simple family dispute. You can provide that much. I am providing that much.

Brian is in bed. Brian's wife is in her bed. This is the 50s. No. They are in the same bed. This is the 60s. No. They are divorced. This is the 70s. No. They are each other's third marriages. This is the 80s. No. This is no time for games! This is

quite serious business, writing is!

The Punch:

Brian has a wife, a daughter, and an estranged son. The estranged son once told Brian a story. It was long, and very complicated. When the story was done, Brian cried. His son had a few spiteful words to say, and left. Brian has not seen his son since. Although the key conflict, this is a piece of backstory that you, the reader, might find useful, consider that when, you, the reader, reads this, constructed, story, understand? Consider it characterization. That was characterization. It may be a plot point. But I cannot tell you. That is a surprise.

Puffy Eyes:

"Goddammit, Sarah." He can't get to sleep. "I don't think this is what I'm supposed to be doing." He is biting his pillow. "How could I do that?"

"Francis is in Canada." Francis is not in Canada. Sarah only thinks that. Sarah is wrong. Francis is in town right now. He is

in a hotel in town. I hope you have inferred that Francis is Brian's son. I'm not sure if I made that clear.

Brian is not frustrated on Francis' account, though. Francis was not on Brian's mind at all, actually. Francis is not in a hotel in town right now. He is not in town at all. Francis is in Canada. Giveth and taketh.

Brian moans softly and Sarah pretends not to hear.

Brian wants attention from someone, and he's not sure who. This is a key problem that Brian faces: feeling ignored. Right now, he thinks he wants attention from Francis, but at the moment, it's more like he wants attention from Sarah. But convention dictates that he just wants attention from his mother. Or his father, I can't remember which, but I never wrote that in, you just transposed some Freudian mumbo-jumbo on my story.

Brian is unable to sleep, poor Brian. His thoughts turn again to Francis:

I live for you and me and we live forever but you can't understand how much I sacrifice and I try and I work and I only want the best but you

*can only take and take and take and take until I
have nothing left to give but I work as hard as I
can to only provide and you take for granted that
you can take and take and take for granted that
you can and I am only a man and you are still a
boy no matter how old you are and cannot surpass
me and only look up to me because I am your
father, do you understand me, boy?*

Francis is not asleep, either. Francis is currently driving his car down a long highway toward a destination that will not be relevant for some time, and only he understands why and why he is there. Brian cannot take comfort in his son's safety, and he does not, he never does.

An Uppercut:

"Brian, you can't continue keeping secrets from me; you're supposed to tell me *everything*," Joseph plays with a pen resting on his desk. He has not taken notes for twenty minutes.

"Well, I'm not sure what there is left to say, I thought I did say everything." Joseph needs to trust Brian, otherwise, he'll learn nothing at all.

Truth be told, Brian actually did tell Joseph everything that he knows, or at least that he knows that he knows. Joseph can see something is being left out.

Neither knows how much, though. There's the mystery, right there.

There is no such thing as a lie.

For Now – After Frank O'Hara's "Morning" Aurora Bat-Leah

it is difficult to imagine the
field without our bed next
door the men at the gyros
place stare at my breasts

even when we're kissing
the train when your stop
does not alter my position
not ordering for you at

japanese I see the class
room on the third floor
empty cigarettes don't
seem the same you are

becoming solid I know
at night I leave the windows
open no cat hair will
get on your pillow nothing

is loud I don't know how
not to cry my laundry
basket is empty I
have room to think

of you the way you
watch me when I'm
sleeping leather is
less daunting now

that I eat cheese
burgers no roller
coaster will ever be
as scary when the

alarm is beeping
every ten minutes
there are ice trays
in the freezer and

in time the black
pepper will be out
of commission I miss you
now when I'm smoking

in that hat I took nothing
can distract me I can't pick
the right song my eyes
wont focus are you

happy now are there
dinosaurs it isn't as pretty
when I'm alone laziness
won't come the sky

reminds me of you
it doesn't commit it wont
tell me what I want to
hear the mayonnaise

hasn't been opened since
you left no one plays the
air with fingers until today
I didn't remember what

being lonely feels like
eating is the hardest
the french toast is salty

running late doesn't happen
no one drives are you
okay is there someone
that makes you smile
I can't help but be envious

of other cities and your
instruments I haven't
tasted in a week you'd
be proud of how much

I don't let people see
my mouth is locked do
not try to leave I'm keeping
you there for now

Bombs Like Rain

Anna Green

Tap. Tap. Tap. Hokey Robinson
watched the raindrops hit the glass of
the cockpit of his B- 52. As they hit the
window pane, Hokey counted the drops.
One:

He watched the drop slide down the metal
plane's side.

Two:

Hokey then turned his back to the window.

Three:

He shut out the sound.

Then nothing, nothing, but the sound
of his comrades snoring as the plane sat
on the runway of the air force base. Hokey
scratched his nose with his pen. His tree
bark brown hair fell across his eyes in
triangular bangs.

The smooth top of his head was
partially covered by his flight goggles and
his body by his green flight suit.

"Hey Hokey!" one of his comrades
called. Hokey grunted. He hated to be

disturbed while he was writing.

"Hokey, you should get some rest," his
comrade, Brian Anderson
said. Grumph was the only noise that Brian
scemed to get from Hokey.

"Hokenz Robinson!" Brian yelled in
Hokey's ear.

"What! Hey, I thought I told you never
to call me that, Brian," Hokey snapped.

"Yeah, but it got your attention," Brian
replied. Hokey sat up, his
dog tags clanging as he grabbed the collar
of Brian's brown flight jacket.

"You want to tell that to my fist,
Brian?" Hokey asked.

"Hey, no offense was meant. I was just
looking out for your own good."

"Look out for your own skin, Brian,"
Hokey said dejectedly. "I'll go to sleep
when I'm good and ready."

"Whatever you say, just don't fall asleep
while you're at the guns again."

"Robinson! Anderson! Get to bed or I'll report you!" Captain Wallace said coming over to the two bickering men.

"Get going, Anderson, I'm going to talk to Robinson," the captain ordered.

"Yes sir!" Brian cried as he scrambled to get to his hammock.

"Robinson, sit your keister down here and listen to me," Captain Wallace snapped. Hokey sat down next to the captain as he stammered,

"Yes? Sir . . . ?"

"You can guess what I'm going to say, Robinson. You may be a great pilot, but you're no veteran. You're only nineteen! Now don't let me catch you cutting short your rest time again or I'm going to send you home with an injury you won't be proud to sport."

"What kind of injury, sir?"

"Get to bed, Robinson!" The captain yelled and with that, Hokey ran over to his hammock, snickering.

"Greenies these days, one wonders what they'll send us next!" Captain Wallace muttered as he walked away.

Hokey lay in his hammock staring at the ceiling. He remembered the day that

he received his draft paper. His mother had already lost his brother in Korea and now he was in the army in Vietnam. Mrs. Robinson had cried and kept saying "Bring my boy home, bring him home!" Hokey winced as he thought of the look she had on her face when Robert, his elder brother died. She was pale and kept on saying "No! No! No!" Then cried some more. It seemed to have shocked her, then broken her down. She even called Captain Wallace an idiot and a murderer for sending the only son she had left off to war. Hokey had planned on sending her the letter he was writing later that day if he had the chance. But schedules in the military were as fickle as the moon, ever changing and ever so difficult to follow.

"Hokey!" Brian snapped in a raspy tone,

"You still awake?"

"If I wasn't before, I sure am now."

Hokey replied, "What do you want?"

"Some paper."

"What for?"

"To reply to a letter I got from a friend at home."

"Ok. What did the letter say?" Hokey asked handing two pieces of paper to

Brian. Brian looked reluctant to say something, and then sighed.

"He's a veteran of the war in Korea.

He says things are bad back home. He says there's not a lot of support for what we're doing here. The people back home want us home, and I don't blame them, over here it's horrible! Day in and day out we fight and we see all our friends die, blown to bits! We see dead people and not just dead soldiers, civilians too. Thousands die from the bombs we drop. Most of the world doesn't like us, especially after Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the last war."

"That's true; we have been using so many bombs lately. It makes you wonder if you're the bad guy or the good guy." Hokey replied.

"Come on, let's get some sleep, we aren't going to end this war by chattering," Brian said and turned over in his hammock.

"Maybe, but we aren't going to end wars by fighting either," Hokey said to a now silent Brian.

Not Even Close to Venus

Mo Hickey

She was naked once,
no goddess of beauty but clean from the
bath. Lonely midnight snacks while our
family slept had settled loose skin around
her middle and she liked to pretend the
extra padding on her arms was soft armor.
While we slept she stayed up, dreaming of
escape, planning the day
she'd leave us behind.

Maybe I should have hailed you more,
painted the windows black
(I know the light hurts your eyes)
and broken the mirrors so you wouldn't
have to look at your reflection and frown.
Look at your face. Can you peel away
those layers to something holy underneath?
You have birthed a set and you can only
move so many times before you have to
face yourself.

She digs down deep to her quiet place
where extra skin is worth money and her
mouth is less of a tight straight line. In that
place, no one is lonelier than her.

Digging deep past layers of fleshy tissue,
white skin folding over, over, over itself
in rolls, past all the snaking rivers between
here and Virginia, lies a goddess
without a boulder to rest on.

Eugene Picks Up Stella

Liz Sheridan

Eugene stopped his cab abruptly at the
red light. He had been staring at a young
girl wearing a short black dress and shiny,
spike heels crossing the street.

"Hey!" Someone yelled. Eugene looked
and saw a man, must have been in his
thirties, running towards the cab. Turning
the wheel, Eugene pulled the cab to the
curb.

"No. Hey, wait, that's mine!" The girl in
the dress called.

They stood outside the cab bickering.
Eugene ran his hands through his red hair.
He didn't have time for this. He got off
work in about twenty minutes, and all he
wanted to do was relax.

"Look, mister. I've been working my
ass off all day and really need to get home.
I got things to accomplish okay?" She got
real close to his face while she talked.

"Babe, we all have bad days. There will
be another cab any second now. After all,

it's New York. Don't get all fussy. I saw it
first, plain and square. Hey, there's one at
the light down there," the man talked to
her slowly. He seemed tired, but calm.

She snapped her gum and stuck her
head in through Eugene's window. She
leaned on the front of the car, her cleavage
pouring out of her dress.

"S'cuse me. I know you probably don't
care, but uh . . ." She stopped talking and
stared at Eugene. "If you give me a ride,
maybe I could help you out, know what I
m saying?" She winked.

Eugene blushed. "Oh ma'am, that's
quite alright, no need for that," he
stammered.

"Aw, that's real cute, mister. Where'd
you get that accent?"

"Oh, it's French. My dad's from Canada.
I lived there 'til the end of my teens, before
I got to the states."

"That's all you could get? A lousy taxi

cab? Well, better than I got. No fuckin' idea why you would come here though. Don't Canada have the lowest crime rate or something?" She opened the cab door.

"Something like that," I replied.

"Look, lady, while you're seducing this man, I am going to get home."

Eugene did not know what to do. No girl ever paid attention to him and she was gorgeous. She maybe even liked him.

She slid in the front seat, right next to Eugene. The man screamed.

"Fine, bitch. If you were a *real* lady, I'd feel bad for yelling at you, but no one gives a shit." He flipped her the bird and stomped away.

"I'm sorry about that, miss. People are so rude. You are a real lady . . . don't you listen to him." He looked at her, but looked away when a smile slid to the corner of her mouth. She was pretty, in an unconventional way.

She put a manicured hand on the dashboard. "Now, don't you worry about a thing. That guy just hasn't gotten any in forever and I knew he was checkin' out my goods. Probably jealous I was talking sweet to ya. Mind if I play the radio?" Eugene

liked the way she stretched her words out, long like Mississippi.

Eugene shook his head. He decided to make a move. This girl was beautiful.

"No, doll, play whatever you'd like."

"Ooh, honey, check you out. You don't seem like the kinda fella to be talking sweet to some girl. All the guys at work shout things out like that. Hey baby, get me another shot. Ooh doll, you got someone to come home to. Or how about me? Ever been with a real man, sweetie, someone to treat you good? And on and on."

"Oh, well I imagine they're just lonely and think you're pretty. Probably trying to be sweet. I'm sure you run into a lot of nasty fellows in your . . . uh, line of work." Eugene stared at the road.

"What do you think I do?" She laughed shrilly.

"Uh, well that other man . . . he said you were a . . . I didn't think you really were one, but . . . with your dress and shoes . . . and . . ."

"You think I'm a hooker. No, siree, I'm just a bartender. I get better tips with my dresses and all that. Our boss wants us to dress like we're fucking streetwalkers."

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean you looked . . ." he trailed off. He wasn't sure if she was insulted or not. He just kept saying the wrong thing. Better not say anything else, he thought. "Err, you never told me where you were headed."

"Oh, 23rd and Booker."

"You never told me your name."

"Stella. And yours?"

"Uh, Eugene," he stammered. She started laughing. "I know, I know, it's really dorky."

"Well, no one knows my real name. I named myself Stella."

She sat back and stared out the window. Eugene glanced at her from time to time, but had to stop himself.

He pulled the cab over on the corner of 23rd and Booker about fifteen minutes later. He pressed the button the meter for the final sum. Thirteen fifty in red, digital letters appeared on the screen.

"There you go."

Stella sat forward and rummaged through her purse. "Damn, I know my wallets in here somewhere." She pulled it out a few minutes later. "Sorry 'bout the wait. This thing is bottomless."

She pushed a wad of crumpled bills into his hand. "Ya know? You're a nice guy. I mean it, you really are."

He blushed and looked at his lap. She pulled a matchbook out of her pocket, threw it on the seat, and closed the cab door.

He watched Stella enter a brick apartment. Picking up the matchbook, he smiled. It read "Blue Bar" and gave its address. He drove away, smiling.

November Men

Aurora Bat-Leah

They sit at the dinner table
Playing poker like the brothers and fathers
I should have had
in their post ping-pong losses and victories
and after turkey and potatoes
drinking vermouth and bourbon
pounding their wallets on the wood
disturbing the floral cloth patterns
leaving their chips in strewn piles
I never knew men like these
in their grunts and coarse fingers
Calloused and warm blooded
smoking cigars on the snowy porch
and resting a hand on their wives' knees
During films by the fireplace

Shaving

Jeffrey Lewis

The day of his grandfather's funeral, Zachary stood in his bathroom mirror, pulling at the few hairs, curling from his jaws and chin. In some adolescent attempt to make them longer he'd pull each one, apply gel to its feeble length, and then brush it. They were growing in thicker now. Every part of his face was covered in at least some density of hair, but for some areas where it was thick and solid against his tanned skin, there were others where it was scraggly and desperate, like old slivers of time. This was his own personal bathroom. Every inch of white counter, the silver faucet and face bowl it surrounded, the single shower facing the sink, the toilet facing the door, and the tall slim rectangular mirror on the wall above it all, that swallowed any body that peered into it like a case, all belonged to him. He stood back from the mirror and eyed his shirtless sixteen-year-old body

and he was happy because he was older. He was growing up, slowly forming a masculine physic, facial hair, and most of all possessions. Things belonged to him, like they did a man.

Zachary's grandfather was a solid person. He made a solid living, generated a solid amount of money, and lived solidly after retirement in a two-bedroom condo facing a lake. Though his skin firmly etched his age into itself, there was no limit time could put on his spirit. He was always young, a child wanting to grow up. When seventy-five finally entered his life, the man eagerly longed for seventy-six to come next.

He hated how Zachary's face tried to be like his own. "It's like, looking in a mirror sixty years ago," he secretly thought, holding baby Zachary in his hands. "I don't like him," he exclaimed, and tossed the infant into its mother's lap. The two males

had the same birthday and his grandfather resented it. But these feeling didn't last long. The two grew close. And as Zachary got older, slowly morphed into a physical mold of his grandfather.

At age five, he resembled the old man almost exactly when he was seven. On his tenth birthday, Zachary assumed a picture he received from his mother was a picture of himself but as his mother tried to convince him it was a picture of his grandfather at his twelfth birthday party. The resemblance lied in their faces. They both commanded the glances of strangers with the thickness of their eyebrows. Their noses were round between their cheeks, and their chins pointed slightly. Their lips were exacts; the fullness mirrored, as if they were filled with exactly the same amount of blood and fat, and covered with exactly the same density of skin.

But what intrigued most about their likeness was the two males inability to see it. When holidays stumbled about bringing family dinners and reunions, the two were simply blind to what the world could have sight of. "Oh . . . my . . . god," snapped Zachary's Californian cousin Stephanie one

Christmas gathering. "It's freakin scary."

"What?" Zachary asked.

"You two are like twins. It's freakin scary!"

"*You're* freakin scary you whore." And with that the cousins both laughed.

On Zachary's sixteenth and his grandfather's seventy sixth birthday, after watching the parade of aunts, cousins, uncles, brother's, sisters, and children, and after the drowning in hugs, and backslaps, and hand shakes, and head rubs, his grandfather's simple response to observations of his likeness to his grandson was boldly, "What the hell are you talking about?"

A few months later, the old man died; found lying in his bed surrounded by candy wrappers, his television blaring the audio of some twenty-four hour cartoon station.

Zachary, after molding his hair into a darkly mid-parted mock of masculinity, turned off the light in his bathroom and headed downstairs in the two floor mahogany house. On the door was a note on which was sloppily scribbled:

Zach,

You took too long. We left without you. Grow up.

P.S Directions are on the counter.

Runnin(g) Jessica Disu

Mesmerized at my defiance
of gravity. Stare at the sun
as she maneuvers around
me.

She shines brightly,
but her reflections don't
beam on my society.

(Because) brown on brown love
ceases to exist,
misfits strip lives for
notoriety.

Youth(s) worship idols,
whose objective is
commodity.

Hate perpetuated,
(Because) social class
is overrated.
Truth of lies being
debated as our demise is
contemplated.

We soul search for
purpose within ourselves
Losing train of thought,
focus caught
(By) the check in the
mail.

(I'm running)

Complications of
admiration is the game
we be chasin(g).
Upholding want over
need, hard times is what
we facin(g).

We agin(g) now
agents don't cast us in
blockbusters.
Old values are obsolete –
New era block hugger.

(I'm running)

Spittin(g) game
as our souls inflame.
Gossip of change is a tease to the brain.
We choke on smoke to
ease the pain.
Pockets is broke so we blame the ma(i)n.

(I'm running)

Hope.

One word that depends
on the sum of our
stipend.
It's depressing, to
suppress the pain I
prescribe to Vicodin.
Triflin(g) brothas'(ers)
abandon child,
the child is raised by
single mother.
Child skin is pale, child is
confused by his color.

Searching for paradise,
we look to the heavens
but our sky is falling.

The Alpha Omega,
we search for Him.
Humming church hymns,
offering up our offerings.
Praying to Him to keep us out the coffins
that was made for us.

'cuz if I gotta go,
we all gotta go,
I'm taking (yo)u, (yo)u
and (yo)u with me'

That was the mentality
Of my grandpa in the
sixties.

(I'm running)

Inside an enigma –

Trapped by layers of
mazes,
our Black Kings aspire to
be Aces,
our Queens date Jacks,
Face it, we(re) cursed
since birth
it gets worse and worse.

(I'm running)

Drenched in sweat,
Thirst quenched by
thick saliva.
Veins pump morphine as
heart beats rapidly.

Silence,
I block out the
crowds misery.
Immense imagery blurs
the scenery,
yet I can taste victory.

Five feet – from the
finish line,
Four feet – flashbacks and recaps.
Three feet – misery over destiny,
Two feet – until the last breath of me,
One foot – this is the
epitome.
I stop!

(I'm on the wrong track)

Dark Hair Gray Eyes

David Himelman

It's early and the white paint on the ceiling is cracking. Soon the white will be gone, and I'll see blue, after that red, and after that some indeterminable color that the boy who used to have my room liked. The sun barely shines through my dirt windows and mother's sobs fill the room. She sits at the kitchen table crying over somebody. Her dark hair covers her gray eyes. Maybe it's my grandfather.

My legs hurt. I shouldn't have walked all the way into the city yesterday. When they're finished hurting I'll get dressed. Mother's crying gets louder. I'm really annoyed. My legs start hurting more too. I need mother to help me.

"Mom!"

She can't hear me. The kitchen is only ten feet away, but she's too busy. She's too busy crying, too busy thinking about somebody, too busy to think about me. I think my legs are getting better now, but —

"Mom!"

I feel a little better. Maybe I can get up. I go to get dressed. My clothes are fitting too tightly and I remember when mother bought them for me. I stuff my calves, thighs, and crotch into them and sigh when I finish. She was so happy to buy me the clothes and even though I didn't like them, I didn't tell her. Whenever we went shopping we'd go out to lunch afterwards and she'd buy me a cheeseburger and make me hold her hand. She's still crying. Second by second her sobs become more harsh.

I'm dressed now. I go past mother while deciding whether I should leave the house or not. She bites at her lip nervously and I'm bored. The sun in the kitchen is bright. There are no shadows on the wall, and the counters are covered with crumbs of the dry cake mother eats every morning. The floor is tiled in the kitchen and its blue tint reflects all over the walls. A centipede runs across the windowsill. I kill them sometimes, but it's mother's turn now. Too

bad she's still crying.

I want to leave the house, I know that in two hours mother's going to be wondering where I've gone off to but it looks so warm outside and I'm sick of her crying. I'll take a walk. I'll go to the supermarket. Hopefully she won't notice I'm gone.

Outside it's hot, and I take off my sweater. Mother tries to keep me bundled up during the fall even in September. She used to tell me that I couldn't go outside without a sweater on and that I needed to be careful of the ladies sweeping on the street. She said that I shouldn't bother them and if I did, they would sweep me all the way away. She said that then I wouldn't be able to be with her, but now I'm not anyway because she's too busy crying. She still cries, even though she's had her dry cake, three cups of boiling morning coffee and I know my grandfather isn't dead.

The streets are filled with people on their way to work and I bump into all of them. When I do they give me dirty looks and I just say sorry without looking. I can't see too well anyway because I have my sunglasses on. By the time I apologize they're a half block away and I don't care

anymore.

I think about what I'm going to buy at the supermarket and then about all the things mother wouldn't let me have: sugar-things, fat-things, salt-things. I have three dollars in my pocket to do what I want.

It's too hot outside to walk very far, and by the time I get to the halfway mark I have to get on the train because I am so tired and sweaty. The subway stop is cool and all the people there are good-looking. Half of them are very young and fresh, but none of them look like mother, who's at home crying while looking for some crackers, but they are beautiful. One wears a short lacy skirt: really-skinny-legs, flat-stomach. When the subway train comes I try to get into a car with her but it's too crowded so I have to stand in a different car next to a woman whose dark hair covers her gray eyes.

Her lips are pouted and she holds a cup of coffee. When the train jolts, I fall into her. I laugh, then laugh some more because when I do her eyes blink and she pretends to look away. Outside, it's completely dark and we can't see anything. We stay like that for a moment, my crotch right against her

thigh. The train shakes a little and our jeans rub together and make a squeaky noise. She laughs at that too. The train stops and she has to get off. I think about whether I should follow her while mother's crying and looking for the crackers, and the doors almost close before I can get off to go after her.

Her legs carry her quickly, and before I'm halfway up the stairs, she's on the street waiting for the bus or me. She bites at her lip nervously and her hip juts out far to the right pointing at a gas station. She gives me a look and starts walking towards it. I follow. She walks even faster and I remember her hair, her eyes, and my crotch. She and I cross the street and I stare at her hips moving back and forth. They take her into the gas station's bathroom and my legs try too. They're hurting again now, but I run after her so I can get in before she closes the door.

She stands in the corner of the room, both hands on her hips, waiting. My legs are still hurting. It's too hard to look at her. I close my eyes and think about the ceiling, the chipped paint and mother who's sobbing and almost done with the

whole box of crackers. She comes closer to me and my legs are hurting so much. Her hands are on my pants' button and she's still crying. My legs are about to go. My pants are unbuttoned, my knees are caving in. She's looking sad right now, she knows I don't like it, and I fall onto the floor crying. It's grimy and smells like vinegar and pee. The floor's getting wet, and now she's down on the floor with me buttoning my pant back up and helping me stand. Mother's blowing her nose and we're not done, but she leaves the bathroom anyway now that she's finished buttoning my pants for me. Her lips aren't pouted any more, and on the way out her hips don't swing, but she's still crying in the kitchen about something. She has a big stomach.

My sunglasses lie broken on the bathroom floor. I can't get up, and mother's laughing in the corner of the kitchen. She sips on some fresh coffee, waiting impatiently for me to come home. She'll ground me. I hope it's not too bright outside.

The Chase

Liz Sheridan

The wolves bite at our ankles
during the chase.
Branches catch on dress hems,
feet beating the ground flat,
our hearts threatening to burst open
in our ears.

Wolves tear the flesh off,
if their teeth can grab hold;
taught by their fathers to break skin.
There is no undoing this tradition;
passed on to son
they learn as young cubs.

We will watch from windows,
peek out of curtains thick as fur.
They kill the strongest;
jaws wrapped around limbs of
girls we once knew,
scars scatter their body
of bites from before.

If they had hands, they would grasp guns
on all fours, they can take off faster than
the bullets they don't own.
Our bodies laid in front of their caves on
display ripped open chests, hearts still,
faded.

Eventually, our bodies will
rot away with the earth.
Wolves will always smell our scent,
running us into nothing.

Gave Strength to the Aztecs

Lilli Canright

I'd lived in Milwaukee my whole life,
and Helen had moved in back in February.
Now it was May, and I was already sick of
her. When she'd replied to the roommate
want ad, she had promised to pay half of
the expenses and claimed to be a designer
for a small graphics firm. Helen worked
weekends at a corner store checkout and
spent all her money on her junk habit; I
had a full-time job in Medicaid Billing and
paid both our shares of rent.

The job was hell. It involved sending
hospital bills to people without insurance.
All of the calls would go something like
this:

"May I offer my condolences about
your daughter's bone cancer, your father's
tragic accident, your sister's rape? You owe
us a large sum of money."

"You're billing me for this? I can't
believe you're billing me for this! Can't you
tell I got no money? Lady, I am so poor

you wouldn't believe it. Please, lady, I am
so poor."

I was sick of that, too.

When I got home later, Helen was
shooting up in the bathroom. I sprawled
on the couch in front of the TV, waiting
for her to finish so I could use it. She was
out in a few minutes, smiling beatifically
and nursing a Diet Coke.

"Hey son."

"Hi Helen." I shuffled in behind her.

When I got out Helen was on the
couch, sucking at her Coke and a cigarette
and staring blankly at the television. I
poured myself a glass of buttermilk and
sat down next to her. We generally stayed
there like that every night, never a word
between us, until it was time to go to sleep.

I woke up early the next morning and
was out the door even before Helen had
time to piss me off. I got to work in record
time and after the usual calls ("You're

billing me for this? I can't believe you're billing me for this!"), I was back on my way home.

Every day, walking down State, I would pass the same man, a guy named Joe who lived on a bus bench. Sometimes he'd ask me for change, sometimes he wouldn't, but if I had extra I'd always give him money. I liked him because he took care of all the stray cats. He usually had one on his lap and would pet it tenderly, cooing and humming. It seemed like he knew what was important in life, and I wished we were friends, maybe bums together, or maybe some time I could find him a job and he could replace Helen.

Teresa Jessica Disu

She speaks blank expressions,
soul pours through her eyes.

Stained and translucent
reflects in her temple.

Her spirits lifted up, once
as subtle hisses buzzed her ear.
An ocean without water,
those words rolled off her tongue –
when she felt he was near.

This incandescent candle,
burned out at an early age;
pendulum for his mood swings,
unconscious, so she stayed.

White roses with brown petals,
were her vision of their future –
wrapped tightly in his coffin
premonitions of the altar.

On both knees, grasping affection:

Revisions of street symphonies,
induced a new beginning.
He was not what the portrait he painted
but she worshipped him.

Her God was purely
his work of art.

Lazarus

Aurora Bat-Leah

My grandfather flirted with you,
in his grungy blue bathrobe and worn underwear,
that Saturday was the first that his telephone had been
used.

in New York we got a call from my mother's brother
You gifted him a stroke, his wife found him seizing,
My grandmother pretended not to care,

but in pictures it looked as if they once loved each other.
when they were young and he had a full vocabulary
and you hadn't seen their children

you crept into my mother's tear ducts,
Trying to fool her, give her another tally mark,
because that's how well she knows you.

We've only met once, when I could see your face
only to realize we'll never meet like this again,
because from now on I only see you walking away

and will never allow you into my throat.
I remember choking on your fingernails until
you understood I saw you in the shadows before,

and recognized your resolution.
No child should be able to recall your facial features,
and the posture you assume, leaning on the back wall.

Healing

Mo Hickey

"We must peel away the layers of the heart," Alana cheerfully exclaims, while breaking off sections of a grapefruit. "It's time to heal yourself." Alana is my latest therapist, a new-age kind of social worker who firmly believes in the curing power of crystals and acupuncture. Her office has shelves of books about feng shui, and stress balls declaring, "Be happy!" in big, loopy writing. She's a very "At peace with one's self" kind of person, if you know what I mean. Think candles and patchouli oil. Herbal tea. I'm only seeing her because the Lennon Center said I had to have a year of counseling, and my last social worker, a man named Joseph Siegel, was disbarred from counseling after we got a little too close. He was a very nice person though, a quiet man who spoke softly, encouraging me to better myself while sipping coffee instead of gushing new age mental health cures while sucking on citrus fruits.

I never talk about Joseph with Alana. All we talk about is The Program and The Center and AA, whether I'm staying sober or not, which I always say I am. And actually, I have been sober for a month now; the anniversary was last Monday. But I've been seeing her for six months, and for five of the six months, I was definitely not sober. I tell her I bought a plant and a pet and that they're both alive and well. I tell her the plant is a healthy, green fern and that it even has a name, and that name is Joe. The cat is supposedly named Mooshi and it wears a blue collar and sleeps in a pet bed in the corner of my living room. It's all a lie; no animal or person has been in my apartment for months, and if I had bought a plant or cat it would be dead and stinking up the place within a couple weeks. But I figure it's easier to not create conflict.

Alana is sucking the juice out of a

wedge of grapefruit now. She has a couple strands stuck between her front teeth and it's making me sick to my stomach. I stop staring blankly at her and shift my gaze to the parking lot outside where a group of teenagers stand, smoking cigarettes. One of them has bright blue hair the color of Joseph's Toyota. That car had such soft seats.

The kids look around at the parking lot and the buildings nearby, avoiding each other's eyes, even though I'm sure they must be friends. I can't figure out why they look so angry. What do they have to be so pissed off about? They're all wearing leather jackets and clothes, which even look like they were torn up by a pack of wolves, run over by a train, and then safety pinned back together, look pretty expensive. None of them are starving to death, and one of the kids has a keychain hanging from his studded belt, so he must have a home to unlock. They're not living on the streets or in a third-world country, but they're spitting on the cement and squinting. If anyone should be seeing my therapist every Saturday afternoon, it's them. What did I do that was so fucking horrible?

When I get home from therapy, I remember I have Joseph's phone number somewhere in my address book. I had forgotten that once, when I was in an emergency and worrying about relapse, he gave me his home number in case I needed to talk during the night. It was very sweet of him; he could have gotten in a lot of trouble. I decide to call him.

I dial his number: 828-7171. It's so organized and simple; hard to forget, even after one time. Two rings and then a woman picks up. I clear my throat and sweetly say, "Hi, is Joseph there, please?"

"Who is this?"

I'm pretty taken aback by her harshness. She didn't even say hello back. Not to mention that Joseph definitely wasn't married the last time I talked to him. "This is Natalie. Is Joseph there?"

Her tone softens. "Hello, Natalie. I'm Joseph's mother. I didn't mean to sound rude . . . I was just surprised. No one's called for Joseph in a while. I'm, well, I'm sorry to have to tell you this, but Joseph was killed in a car accident six months ago. I moved in here after that."

My mouth hangs open and my hands feel too heavy to hold the phone with. Something made of steel is wedged near my vocal chords. I whisper things that must not be words. "I'm sorry Natalie, did you say something?" Joseph's mother is so nice, so polite. I bet I would have liked her.

"No . . . no, nothing. I guess . . . well, goodbye."

"Goodbye, Natalie."

I can't move. I sit for a couple minutes and stare at the phone in my hands. Then I decide I have to move sometime and it might as well be before nighttime, when I'll be sitting in the dark. I slowly walk into the kitchen where my fern, Joe, supposedly lives. Another lie; all that lives on my counter is a large bottle of vodka which I pour into a dark blue mug. I go back into the living room, where if I had a cat, it would be standing in the doorway, getting underfoot, and I would trip over its tail and go flying. My drink would land somewhere on the wood part of the floor and shatter into dust, just to spite me, and the cat would lap up vodka puddles while its tail soaked up the liquid and I swept up pieces of my most unchipped mug. It's a good thing I tell lies. I

make a note to tell that to Alana.

I sink into my couch with my drink and raise my glass to toast Joseph. Joseph and I were so opposite we made something so . . . complete. I'll miss him. He was more of a rebel than he seemed like on the outside, with his black coffee and ear whippers. Right from the beginning, he broke all the rules.

Drought

Liz Sheridan

At almost day,
listen to me.

These are the poems
I'll tell you:
there is nothing
there's nothing in the morning to find.

Plastic vines wrapped around our rotting
fence posts;
nothing growing
or surviving in this era.

At almost day,
listen to me.

I'll tell you about the poor,
arranging their suitcases and odors
marching into town, proudly carrying
boxes against their chests.

pouring out their sins
on the table,
holding dignity between
pieces of cardboard
found in alleys.

Can carry their beds, backyards,
and belongings
in plastic.

Make-shift homes
collapse easily for
travel and weather.

Their violence is stuck inside containers
and leftovers.

They dream of tiles, flannel sheets,
and porcelain cups.

I could tell you stories
for hours,
stories of mine,
of ancestry,

but not much you'd like to hear,
in this era where
growth is stunted,
only dry, cracked earth rubs to dust.

Cedar Point

Elisa Bonesteel

Robbie throws himself onto the couch and switches on the TV. I'm behind him, making his lunch and vaguely listening. I spin when I hear the word 'wolf' come up and tell him to turn it off. He shrugs. "Robbie, I said it once," I try. Finally, after finishing his sandwich and folding a plastic bag around it, I move towards him, heels sliding on the floor. I stand in front of the vast screen, trying to make myself taller. He stares through me, still following the story line. I raise my voice, "Robbie, shut it off."

He shrugs again.
"You do it."

With my back to him I do, the television crackles and darkens. When I face him again he's still staring past me.

"Are you ready to go?" I ask, he nods and pulls on a navy blazer. "Then get outside." I'm hoping Will, my stepson, will drive him to school, but I know I'll

probably be the one who ends up doing it, Will reclining by the pool, cigarette and magazine in hand.

Robbie shuffles towards the front door, bending under the weight of his backpack, which doesn't have anything heavy inside, but he bends anyway. His hand slips around the door handle and he turns around.

"Mom?"

I look up.

"Is it safe?"

There is something so honest in his eyes that suddenly I can't recognize who's standing in front of me. I nod and give him the most comforting smile I can offer and as much as I think he'll accept from me. He mumbles something that sounds like "okay" and disappears behind the heavy oak door.

On my way through the kitchen, to check on Will (who isn't at the pool), I

notice Robbie's lunch, his name in marker and circled still sitting on the counter.

"Shit," I mumble, reach for it, spin around, and make it out the door as our van rounds the corner. I'm not sure who's inside there with him and a dull panic rises in me, but since Will wasn't outside and it's easier to assume it's him, I drop the thought and go back inside.

I try finding ways of keeping busy during the day and sometimes I make meal plans for the rest of the week. There should be roasted lamb and asparagus, some kind of pilaf and home made pudding but I don't want to do any of it. I don't care enough to drive to the butcher in Donald's car. I try to commit to everything I've promised him I would do. Instead, I fall asleep by the pool in Will's usual spot, wasting the day, and wake up in late afternoon with Robbie standing over me, his tie loosened. "What?" I mumble opening and closing my eyes. Robbie is worried. "Its okay, its okay, I was only sleeping."

"I couldn't find you."

His cheeks glisten in thin streaks.

"I'm right here Robbie, my throat contracts.

"I looked everywhere, Will went out, I looked everywhere, I couldn't find you."

"You're right, I'm sorry Robbie."

He nods and looks into the pool, the water undulating even though there is no wind.

"C'mon, you shouldn't be out here, it's getting dark." My hand hovers over his shoulder, but I drop it to my side.

"You shouldn't either." He pushes his hands into his pockets, his fingers slightly visible and scratching through the cotton. I get up and he walks towards the glass doors, light spilling into the dark that's settling in on our quiet street.

Robbie is wrong. Most of the children don't understand what's happening now, just that more and more of their classmates are disappearing everyday. For Robbie, it's not uncommon to have his plans canceled with a friend unexpectedly. In Cedar Point, the children cannot leave their homes at night. Official authorities dismiss what's whispered, though all of us have seen limbs on the sides of the roads. It's gotten easier to ignore them as

time goes on. It's gotten easier to explain it to our children, that they are parts of animals, even though bright clothing still clings to what the wolves have left behind. I see their forms at night, sliding across our lawn and through the flower beds we had landscaped when we moved in. Their snouts high in the air, searching for a scent through an open window, a tear in the screen. That's the reason I draw all of the curtains at night, or that was the reason I did. Now, I can hardly remember to lock the windows upstairs, but they tend to go for easier targets. Donald and I argued in the first weeks, when the disappearances and sightings began. In the end, I wanted to tell Robbie the truth, but Donald refused to subject him to it. He smiled at me and said that children should never understand their own mortality.

I open our oven, not wanting to hear the hum of the microwave tonight, and place two T.V. dinners on the rack. I can hear Robbie shuffling around upstairs, finally making use of a Christmas present Donald gave him. I hear the garage door opening and accidentally let go of the oven door. Will stumbles into the kitchen, and

even if I couldn't smell it on him I would know he was drunk.

"Clara! Where's Robbie?" He shouts at me, grinning, three feet from my face.

"Upstairs I think."

He spins towards the staircase and bounds up it. I am disgusted by the feeling he leaves me with. My hands suddenly feel dirty even though they aren't. I search the kitchen for something to do and then abandon the dinners, still frozen inside the oven. Climbing the staircase I run my fingers along the grooves in the railing, and step lightly in the mud tracks it looks like Will has left for me to clean up. I'd promised Donald I'd keep the place together, but now, with him gone, I can't see a reason.

Inside my room I check and recheck the lock that's bolted loosely into my door. I've lost so much weight these past three months that my pants slip off with out unbuttoning them, which Donald would find disturbing, but I laugh at it instead and wonder just how much time I'm saving. The calendar inside our closet says he's three days from coming home but it seems like he's been gone a lifetime and I'm not

sure how to adjust to his presence again. Will is playing basketball with Robbie, I can hear it through the walls. It hasn't always been this unnerving, I don't think, to have them come home, to hear something besides silence and my own breath.

Everything moves too slowly tonight, each bra clasp take hours from my life and getting a new one on seems to take even longer. I'm dress rehearsing for the night Donald comes home, making sure the tangle of mesh and lace I bought three months ago, right when he left, still fits me and hugs what curves I have left. The bra fits fine, but pulling on the underwear, even over my tattered gray ones, it's obvious that they are far too big. Scrutinizing myself further I can see that my roots have grown in, my red hair polluting the blonde that I'll have to fix by Friday. I run my hands over my body, freckled and loose, and slide my fingers across my ribcage, each indentation a flaw, wishing I had remembered to eat.

It's quiet beside my room now as well as across the hall in Will's. But even with the silence their presence, the fact that I know they are here is still unnerving. I wish with everything I have in me to never have to

make his lunch again, to hear his footsteps outside my door in the morning, to feel the pull and bond that a mother and her child are supposed to feel. I sink to the floor, carpet under me rough, and put my head in my hands.

I wake up looking at the last thing I focused on yesterday, deep grooves scratched into the chair that sits before the vanity in the center of the room. I do not know where they came from, but also, it doesn't really matter because it's past noon and I forgot to wake Robbie. I rise hazily, my veiny legs barely holding up my torso and move out of my room and down the hall. My bare feet slap against the ground and echo briefly. Reaching Robbie's room, I am afraid to open the door, afraid to find my son, any boy at all inhabiting it. He sits, his shoulders and spine rounded off, playing some video game. I smile for a moment, happy that he's not asleep and then look down at myself, still wearing the lingerie from last night. He turns to face me right as I pull the door closed and hurry and hurry down the hallway back towards my room. Will stumbles from

his room laughing, his briefs clinging to his skin. I try to rush past him, but our shoulders meet and when they do I nearly gag, not having felt flesh against mine since Donald left. As I barricade myself in my room I can vaguely hear Robbie ask what is happening and Will still laughing and laughing. I hope that Will will take care of Robbie today, because I can't bring myself to the door knob until I know he is gone. I lay back on the bed, cream-colored sheets and comforter undisturbed, and close my eyes, even though they are dry and it hurts to feel my eyelids against them.

Turning my head to the side I can see that Will's care is gone and the house is silent. I slip on one of Donald's oversized robes, catching his scent as it cradles my shoulders. It's unfamiliar.

At the grocery store I see the mother of one of Robbie's friends. I cannot remember her name, so I snake around the store, trying to avoid her, but fail picking up organic fruit snacks to put in Robbie's lunch.

"They're just so good." She smiles at me. "My kids just scarf 'em' down!"

I smile back at her, not wanting to reply, to encourage her.

"Don't you think?" She forces me to answer.

"I do," I reply meekly.

"Did you hear about Marty and Selma's kids?"

I shake my head.

"Well I heard that they didn't care much or believe in all the rumors, and their little girl stumbled into their boy's room, right as he was being attacked." She lowers her voice, "Marty and Selma weren't even home, and the babysitter had gone out after they'd gone up to their rooms and left the door wide open." She shakes her head, "When the two got home their boy was completely gone, but their girl, lord, they say there are still parts of her turning up in the woods." She reaches for another fruit snack and frowns.

"If you see them," I smile, unsure of how genuine I sound, "tell them I'm sorry." I know that if Donald were here we'd send them flowers. I turn and shakily push my cart down the aisle, but she calls back to me.

"How are your boys?"

I turn slowly and do not know the answer.

"Fine, they're all fine."

"That's great Clara, I'm glad to see you doing to well for yourself. Give them my best."

I'm stunned while she turns away from me, and we move in opposite directions.

After the fruit snacks I'm sure there is more to get, but with every aisle and option laid out before me I'm not sure where to go. I silently wish I had made a list, but I force myself down the frozen food section and get chills from the cold vaporizing around me.

In the car, on the way back, I recount my meager purchases: bottle of milk, head of lettuce, whole grain bread, and Robbie's fruit snacks. Everything in the bags are things Donald and I have bought together, but under the Florissant lights of the supermarket I couldn't think of a thing to buy myself.

By the time I round our corner I have gotten lost three times, and it is already getting dark. No lights are on inside the house, except in Donald's office, which makes my stomach ache for a second

before I realize that there is no way he is home yet. I park quickly, nearly missing the long driveway and walk the brick path that leads through overgrown flower beds straight to our door. The door is unlocked and as far as I can tell there is no one else in the house. Towards the kitchen the back door is open and the faint smell of pizza drifts towards me. But I can't make it all the way there and instead stumble into Donald's office. I am transfixed by it now that he isn't here.

The house is silent, and it is suffocating, but also gentle, easing me into Donald's chair. My arms are sprawled, and my legs spread, revealing too much to the inside of his desk. Outside of his window everything is bleak and muted, and even on trees the leaves refuse to shake. I don't know how late it is now, but a glance at the grandfather clock I gave him for Christmas assures the fears that have been slowly rising, and now settling in the depths of my throat.

I climb the stairs to Robbie, to my son's room, and notice what I had failed to before. On each step, stain after stain on ivory carpeting, blood smeared and

splattered about, as if caused by something thrashing and heaving violently, as it was dragged down. At the top of the stairs I step into it, and like quicksand my foot sinks silently, red curling up around it. It leads down the hall and straight past Will's door, snaking left to Robbie's. Everything suspends now, and by the time I've reached his room I am so still even his torn sheets, the mess, and his absence cannot pull me away.

Downstairs it is nearly sunrise, and later today Donald is coming home. I want to go back upstairs, slip past the stains and into my room, what will be our room and wait, posed for him. But now I am glued to this window seat, watching the distance, far down the road, waiting for the yellow glint of a taxi. Sometimes when I can't focus on the street signs anymore I see condensation on the windows and my view blurs. When Donald comes home though, everything will be clear again.

Chair in the Corner

Jeffrey Lewis

I wish you were sad,
then I'd know why you're blue.
Why four legs refuse to fondle
hard wood floors,
three eyes don't blink,
your spines stay stiff,
no way to scratch an itch,
or breathe.

If you were to have a pulse
I'd hug you to happy,
play footsie,
sleep in your lap,
and we'd breathe heavy
as we danced.

Germinate 2006

Designed by:

Elisa Bonesteel
Jessica Disu
Nick Edelberg
Anna Green
Mo Hickey
Jeffrey Lewis
Julia Markham
Liz Sheridan

A Note from the Chair:

Germinate: to sprout from a seed. The Media Arts Department has grown beyond the metaphorical seedling. Three years ago, Media Arts sought to blend two seemingly diverse arts disciplines, creative writing and videography; Hybrids, growing into a rare collaboration of words and images. Rather than annual, we have become perennial. And this publication, our second volume, is an example of the flowering efforts of our students and staff.

-Fred Schill