



# *The Bottom Shelf Review*



2004



# **The Bottom Shelf Review**

2004

Editors:

Michael G. Cornelius  
Rebecca Hartman-Berrier

Staff:

Lee Ann New

Advisor:

Michael G. Cornelius

## **My Name Was Malady**

Malady is what my mother used to call me.  
Black torches falling from my palms.  
They fell like rain, they felt like prison,  
They ran ten miles in the wrong direction.  
Stop signs raced in the wind, winds were dire,  
And screeched the words of a new revolution:  
Emancipation rolled over my tongue, and  
Palaces crumbled down my throat,  
Like angels lost in heaven.  
Two long braids the shape of,  
Fear hanging from my shoulders  
Fear and scissors make a deadly combination,  
My braids drifted down a river,  
I have short, miserable hair.

Indiscretion is a horrible crime,  
I let the sun pour over my fingers,  
And cried in vain as small pox crossed my era.  
Winter came and went, summer melted into fall,  
My mother never did forgive me.

I spilt spaghetti all over the living room floor;  
I broke her favorite wine glass;  
I knocked over the Christmas tree;  
I blamed it on the cat.

Truth tripped me on the stairs. I fell.  
My shoes made strange whimpers and,  
My socks learned to dance.  
My best friend was a shadow on the wall.  
We played monopoly in the basement,  
We have not basement.  
I lied to my mother; I lied to myself.  
I've never really been to the moon;  
I was hiding in the closet instead.  
I didn't believe in the boogie man,  
But the boogie man believed in me.  
The dark was afraid to smile.  
I'm not sorry.  
I thought it was a game I used to have.  
I never wanted to grow up, up was down.

And I forgot how to spell my name,  
Two M's, three Y's, no S's.

My name was Malady, but my mother didn't know that.

Jamie McCauley

## Between two palms

Between two palms, life breathed  
Without breathing  
And I cried  
Without crying  
Tranquil raindrops trembling down  
The sky,  
Fatal frugality scampering up  
A ladder  
There is no down, there is no up, there is no ladder  
Here never really was determined

And then,  
an echo escaped from Alcatraz:

*Escapee, Escapee  
Scalawags are running,  
The tyrannous sounds, the fictitious voices,  
The pounding in my head, ending, ending, gone.  
Alarms, too many alarms,  
Hissing, snake-like hissing,  
Merciful dictator, oh God,  
I can see it all too clearly!  
Blindness is too sweet a sorrow,  
the brutality sweeping right through me,  
open door, empty picket, broken chest  
Fire screeching a foul, foul song  
Plagiarizing storm,  
Liar, liar  
I can't believe a dream is a dream.*

Gusts of wind, hollering shadows,  
And spastic lights,  
Clenched fists, braved tortures, fascistic faces  
melting between two palms, broken glass  
Calamity within calamity, bleeding skin  
One after the other,  
Thunder cloud within thunder cloud,  
Bolts of angels hitting the ground,  
Band and crack, whimpering feathers, moaning halos moaning,  
My eyes weren't as engraved, burdensome torches, desecrate graves.  
A procession of militia from heaven's gates,  
Hell isn't half as haunting, nightmares fair as lilacs, soft as rain.  
The night that never fainted, before all things collapse,  
I've had enough of world wars, deprivation,

Bruised and shadowed.

*My lungs filled with exploitation,  
Sickly, wan manipulation stinging my palms  
like a rushing torrent of bullets, ammunition, gun shots,  
shock waves moving the earth, continental drift,  
final divide,  
and I, I spilt over myself  
like the Niagara, suffocated child, abandoned orphan,  
crazy, crazy drifter.*

I flooded streets and wreaked havoc  
Through cities of cities of cities.  
Small cities, big cities  
cities that never existed,  
reflecting on how it feels  
to hold innocence, purity, embryonic seed,  
in these hands, hands I am afraid to claim,  
(proclamation, declaration), fright master, flabbergasted,  
as mine own, hands, mine own, that are tainted, pandemic,  
marvels sifting through these fingertips,  
too weak to carry on, to grasp a mountain, to compress Mt Rushmore,  
me and my compassion.  
I can', I can't, I can't, my own fixation, abomination.

Again this voice,  
My echo with a foreign accent,

*Between these palms  
deadly errors, sticks and stones, sacred Rome;  
Poisoned bones, drunken skeletons, crunchy shoes  
And gravel.  
Dirty stairwells go on and on, infantile walkways, Stop.  
This is home.*

Jamie McCauley

## **Aromatherapy**

Midnite is my favorite  
Time of the day  
Yours too  
Our ecstasy only  
Occurs between  
One and five in the morning

Today I will  
Wake up at  
Five thirty to  
No you  
Your scent yes  
Sandalwood and frankincense  
Rocking me back to sleep

I don't think  
Of your ecstasy  
(Occurs from six am to eleven pm)  
With her  
When I sleep  
You bring her scent  
With you  
Lavender and clary sage

Lets take a shower  
Dry off, lay down  
Stretch ourselves  
Across one another  
Create a new scent  
Not ours  
Not hers  
Mine  
Blue chamomile

And tomorrow morning  
I will wake up  
At four thirty.

Cassandra Miller

## Desire

Entangled in water  
a vast sea of  
sugar and coffee  
enveloped by Orishas  
sweet      dark

Child of Oya  
i saw you on Wednesday  
with nine purple ribbons  
and a bowl of coconuts and rum  
dark      sweet

The reality of dreams  
    craves  
the song of  
    your soul  
your art delivers  
    me  
sweet and dark  
dark and sweet

Cassandra Miller



## **Bein' Corporate**

Bein' corporate puts corns on yo' feet  
I'd prefer my un-calloused  
bare feet any day  
Those high heels keepin'  
You' feet all tight and  
cooped up  
Fancy colors in suede and leather  
Give me the orange/yellow of  
a poppy or the pink of a  
rose quartz  
Those designers are always trying  
to imitate nature  
I want to see the blue sky above  
not a shoe that's sky BLUE

Handlin' those papers  
robs yo' hands of moisture  
keeps your nails brittle  
I have to give it to you  
I don't see how you do it  
Takin' care of their  
Business...as if  
We don't have  
plenty of our own  
I mean!!!!

All that  
filing, 10-keying,  
word processing  
photocopying, paper clipping  
stapling, typing memos,  
formatting letters,  
phone answering,  
"not available",  
"in a meeting",  
"may I take a message?"  
And that voice you have to use  
You know the one I mean  
I even heard it on your  
answering machine

And the work place  
don't look too nice to me  
Artificial and plastic

fake plants, reprints/copies  
of art on the wall  
Even the air you  
breathe is recycled.  
And the windows  
don't OPEN  
Now that's just plain  
Dysfunctional!

As I put my bare feet  
up and allow the wind  
to blow between my toes  
and soothe my hands  
with almond oil  
My thoughts are on you  
(and I realize)

Some things just shouldn't be  
I M I T A T E D

Cassandra Miller

## Foreigner in my Own Country

It all happened in the summer of 2003. I had graduated from an American high school, where I had studied for three years as a boarding student and decided to go home for the summer, in my home country Bulgaria. I had not seen my family and friends for a year and I was excited to see their reaction after knowing how many awards I had won and all the honors I had received.

It was a wonderful, bright night and the lights of the streets made my little hometown look even brighter. The thought of seeing my cousin, who was one of my closest friends, make my heart beat faster and I speeded up to tell how much I missed her. We used to go out together every summer and we always had enormous amounts of fun. Whenever we had a date with a guy, practice or just wanted to go for a walk, we were together. That is why people started to call us “the inseparable twins.”

My cousin Desy was waiting for me, together with three more of my good friends at one of the most famous cafes in town. We always used to meet at the same café, because they played great music there and they always served us with smiles on their faces.

“Hi everyone! I am happy to see you again! Especially you dear ‘twin!’” I said and gave my cousin a warm hug. At that particular moment anybody could see the contrast between the sparkles in my eyes when I said that and the cold reply that I received afterwards: just a plain, dry “Hey” that barely slid down my cousin’s lips, I cannot describe how my little heart broke into thousand pieces. At first, I imagined that the reason why she was behaving so weird was because she was tired so I calmed myself down and sat down to have a drink of juice. An interesting conversation broke the silence that existed between us.

“So how was America?” asked Savi, who was always the girl that inspired everybody with her beauty and way of thinking, and also one of the few people that had the biggest influence over Desy. She had long, black eyelashes and big, brown eyes that looked at me as if I was guilty of doing something wrong. “It was great,” I said. “I graduated with a medical award from my high school. It was tough studying there, but I finally made it. And guess what? The biggest surprise that I have for you all is that I won for best actress in our last One Act Competition! I could not believe it! International students rarely get prizes when they are competing with American students in that high school! But anyhow, I am going back, and this time to go to college.”

My cousin Desy, who always used to accept everything I said with pride and happiness, emphasizing how much she loved me, looked at me as if I was a stranger who did not know where the place that she belonged to was. I felt confused because I could not explain Desy’s excluded behavior and most of all why Savi had this cold expression on her face; nobody seemed to be happy and excited for me.

Savi asked with her eyes staring jealously and somehow dirty at me: “Are you planning to come back to Bulgaria and live here someday?”

I answered, “Maybe, but I like America a lot. I think that it will give me more opportunities to live a better life and I will develop a stable future for my medical career and myself. Nevertheless, I love my country so of course I will be back to visit. I miss all of you. It is tough to live far way from everything I love, you know.”

I looked at my cousin waiting for her to support me, but instead she looked away. We looked as if the world was about to end we just stood there waiting for it to happen. I smiled hoping that it would melt the ice that was placed between my friends and I. "What are all these questions for? Let's talk about something else. Desy, aren't you going to say something? You have not spoken a word this evening!"

"I do not feel like talking and there is nothing that I can talk about," she said as coldly and unemotionally as possible.

Suddenly Savi burst into anger with her eyes still filled with jealousy. She stood up, looked at me and said the worst words that I had never heard from a friend before: "You are so snobby! Because of people like you, soon everybody will leave Bulgaria. You are exactly like them! You act and think like them! You have become an American! And the worst is that you are making us feel like fools!" Then she slammed on the table and left without turning back. I was speechless. What was it that made her think that way?

I did not have the intention of making her feel the way she did. Did I really lose my national identity and turned into a completely new person, a foreigner?

I looked at my cousin for an answer but all she said was: "She is right! You have changed. You are not the same anymore." After Desy's answer I felt as an outcast. I felt as a true foreigner. I guess that it was not only me that changed, but also she-my closest friend; the one that I shared my laughs and pain with was now turning against me. Deep inside of me, I already knew the answer of that bothering question why. I did change but for the better. How I had pride and a future that most of my friends, including my cousin did not have. I was able to freely express what I believed in and how I felt, despite the way that my close friends treated me. After that night, my cousin and I split apart and there was nothing that could bring us back together. For her, I was a foreigner, a betrayer. For me, she was a lost friend that I had in the past. And it all happened because of jealousy; because it was I who came back as a succeeded person, who had escaped from the muddy environment that my country had created for me, not her. It was I that came back as who I am today and who I will be on my way to success and independency and this is what makes me a betrayer, a foreigner in my home country Bulgaria.

Nikoleta Kravchenko

## **Time**

Traveling ahead of time,

Through the darkness of mankind,

Passing by the strong desire of success,

Makes it easy to reach the suffering.

There is not time for indolence;

There is just the pain of what is left behind.

The clock counts down the hours,

The minutes I have arrived...

I am all alone.

There is just the long period of era.

Courage, desire, passion is what I need.

Time makes it hard to breath,

But there is a trust for a returning.

“Don’t give up! Be strong!” was all that I could hear.

There is always time for a hope, for a change.

Traveling ahead of time,

Traveling behind a wall of memories,

I am there, I am all alone,

I need time.

Nikoleta Kravchenko

## **Life**

Bloody eyes follow the path of life,  
A scarecrow demands above the ground,  
A tear drops into the sound of unconsciousness,  
The time has lost its perfection...  
Happiness spears into the men's heart,  
Creates a whole that fulfils with pain,  
Freshens the thirsty mind by giving a hope,  
Resembles the perfect mistake..  
Nature surrenders the eye with pleasure,  
Creates stories that give life to mankind,  
A holy spirit helps the human race,  
Love becomes a need...

Nikoleta Kravchenko

## **Wait at Heaven's Gate**

I can't wait to get to Heaven's gate  
to see my mama again.  
I know that I have not been great  
God damn! This woman can sin.  
But, I know that she'll be waiting there  
with her arms open wide.  
If those holy rollers won't let me in  
then she'll crash the whole damn sky.  
She'll punch old God right in the nose  
And say "Don't insult my little girl.  
She's had it hard since you took me away  
and left her in that world.  
You let the devil marry her  
and tear apart her soul  
If that was not enough  
look at all the money he stole.  
He left her with a child to raise  
and she did the best she could.  
If I could slip through those pearly gates  
to give her a hand, I would.  
She knew my love was strong  
enough to hold her through the night.  
And if she had one ounce of fear  
to me it was told.  
It's all your fault, she had it bad  
'cause you wouldn't let me grow old.  
Now, she stands outside these gates  
and I won't leave her in the cold."

I know that if I was to die today,  
that is what she would say.  
But, I'm going to be here for a while  
I won't let them take me away!  
I've got a baby girl of my own  
and I'm going to watch her grow.

So Mom you're going to have to wait  
until I decide it is the end date.  
When my little girl is woman enough  
to be happy and safe in the world so rough.  
I'll protect her from the devil man  
and make sure she has her education.  
I'll be there when she has a baby  
and then help her to raise him.

By the time my work is done here  
They'll have forgotten all my sins.

When I can meet you up in heaven  
I will give you a great big hug  
We can watch after my children's children  
and make sure they have love.  
Because we'll be the toughest team in Heaven.  
All the saints will fear us.  
They won't let pain or sorrow  
touch the ones we love.  
Out generations will go on forever  
in perfect harmony.  
The devil would not even touch  
anyone who belongs to you and me.

I'm going to have to wait  
to get to heaven's gate  
to be with my mama again.

Marigrace Talbot



## **Horse**

Fifty million years of perfection,

Unlimited energy,

Bound within muscle and bone.

Most noble of god's creatures,

Undisputed king of the wind,

He who flies without wings.

Astride his barely tame back

Skin to skin,

Muscle to muscle,

Double handfuls of flying mane.

Rhythmic waltzing beat,

As metal shoes tear the earth

The echo of his heart beat,

The roar of his lungs,

In time with mine.

Together,

We are invincible.

Kathryn Welteroth

## **Empty Sea**

I am nothing.

Why can't you see?

There is nothing to me.

I live in an empty sea surrounding,

The waves are sent pounding,

Sending me from thought to thought.

Until I am nothing,

Nothing but me.

Why can't you see?

You can never swim in my sea

Because there is nothing to me.

Amanda Cochran

## **Lines Written for My Daughter**

The rain falls on forgotten

Puddles, and the most  
Beautiful rainbow is born.

Amanda Cochran

## **Looking Back**

Battered Trees,

Down a childhood trail.

A struggled past,

The need to let things go.

Weathered signs,

On a forgotten road,

Lost now,

With seasoned pain.

Tired skies,

Hold our mistakes,

Falling down upon us.

Destroying times to come.

Ancient graveyards,

Holding our own.

Journeys will be forgotten,

Moments will be lost,

Our day will end,

But the world won't stop.

Amanda Cochran

## Friend to Friend

My life again is spinning into a black hole, out of control emotions. I am so desperate to have someone to love me. So desperate to have my inner child loved and comforted, this inner child that feels so much pain.

When I was walking into the movie theater, I left my best friend behind and walked alone, faster and faster until I really felt like running, as if I could take off into flight. I just wanted to spring into happiness. I just wanted to run and maybe I could catch up to my heart that is open to love and disappointment. To catch up to it before it is too late and time runs out. I see the clock ticking away months, weeks, minutes and seconds go by. I take part of a path here and there and still see just darkness, sadness and loneliness. I see it behind me running after me. I see darkness, sadness and loneliness that I am running into. The clouds that are above me are raining; if I stop I feel I may drown in it, because I will let the heavy drops fall into my mouth filling my throat. I just may drown if I stop here for too long, so I keep running.

I see a bright orange, red ray of light at a path's end. I keep running to this ray and can get close enough for it to warm my body. I feel it warm my feet...now my legs...now my stomach...and my lungs (giving them their first chance to dry out and fill with air once again), but just as this ray is making its way to my heart I get pulled away onto another path. No! I do not want to go. I know where this path leads and know this is somewhere I have been time and time again. I don not want to go there anymore, it is cold and damp but I am being pulled and dragged away by the lour of the familiar pain I have always felt. The hold it has on me I am not able to shake. It is not unfamiliar, so I submit to its comfort, like a hungry infant does to its mother's breast.

This pain fills me, weighing me down, starting with my head and it begins to fall, now my heart becomes hard and cold to anyone that tries to touch it, my chest and lungs fill with pain so deep they are blackened like tar and I can hardly breath...drowning once again. The pain continues to travel to my stomach turning burning acid. I feel so ugly on the inside and want to get rid of it so bad. I can taste the bitter pain each and every day, it does not want to wash out. So I try to stuff it back down to push it out of me, but here it is coming back and I start the process all over again.

Bringing me to ask you how you can want me as your best friend, when you do not want to deal with my issues? You say my issues are the problem; my issues are what make me an unattractive person to you? Do you not know that my issues are me? That my issues are what make me know that I am feeling? Without acknowledging these issues I would be dead. I finally feel for once in life. I am not hiding behind a wall of any more. This wall is the same wall that made me stop and ask for help, finally. I hid behind this wall and stopped feeling for too long. So I ask friend to friend as I rebuild this wall brick by brick into a wall of hope, strength, accomplished goals and love for my inner child, will you please pick up a brick or two? From time to time I have been known to drop one or several at a time and need someone strong to stand by me. Someone who can help me put them back up and when I get them all up in need someone to bust me top of this wall and stand there because there will be times when I will fall. I need you to catch me and put me right back on top. **I have been hiding behind that old wall for too long.** Do you think that you can assist with this task without ever giving up on me? Too many

times my wall building has been put on hold and **I no longer will put it on hold** for no one or anything. So I ask you again are these bricks you can help pick up?

Chrystal Audet

## **My love**

My love will always bloom  
Even when in doom  
It will shine the night  
Or stop the biggest fight  
Cheer up a gloomy day  
Or dry your tears away  
The only thing it can't do  
Is break away from you

Chasity Setzler

## **Letter to Him**

I have a lot going through my mind right now. And it's the type of thing you would only talk about to the people closest to you. But I only have two people I can really talk to, one who I cannot turn to because of her feelings, and the other is you. See right now I'm sitting here crying and wishing I were someone else. And I didn't have any one to turn to. There's this guy in my life and he's absolutely amazing. I love everything about him, his eyes, his smile, personality; he's perfect. He's my best friend. But the way I feel about him isn't the same as the way he feels about me. And I never understand that. That's not the problem. This guy has such an impact on me. He lives inside my head. I've never had a guy who makes me feel unworthy. Some one who makes me think I'm not pretty or smart enough. Some one who seems to deserve so much more than I can offer. I feel insignificant, weak and helpless. So I tried to distance myself from him. I thought sooner or later the pain would go away and I could move on. I was wrong. Because I can't forget about you. I can't pretend any longer that you aren't the most important person in my life. And most of all I can't pretend that I don't love you.

Charity Setzler



## **Right Where I Want To Be**

I lay here staring in your eyes  
With you staring back  
You are laughing at my latest attempt  
To show you I can beat you  
We are lying on the bedroom floor  
Facing towards each other  
With your arm underneath me  
And your fingers slightly touching my back  
Your right hand is in the air  
And seems to grab for mine  
It brushes gently against my fingers  
And they stay there reaching for each other  
Sharing your laughter  
Seeing that smile  
Laying next to you  
Feels so comfortable  
I realize this is what I want  
This is where I should be

Charity Setzler

## **Memories**

As we say our goodbyes  
And wipe the tears from our eyes  
Remember the times and the fun  
The friendship you made with someone  
All the tears of love and joy  
Maybe a special girl or boy  
Even though we have to go away  
Memories made will always stay

Charity Setzler

## **A Rose to Cherish**

A rose that is cultivated in a bed of warm dark, well-nurtured soil grows to become a bud.

At first sight the, this bud is tightly wrapped with its many petals holding one another until the right amount of tender care has been given.

Then its beautiful, tight bulb begins slowly, deliberately open.

Bit by bit, recognizing its beauty within, it continues its growth with comfort and ease.

The once tightly held bulb loosens and in time, becomes a fully developed, firm, vivacious blossom of beauty-a rose which delights in being held gently and fondled by some one who appreciates its tenderness, as well as its beauty.

That is a Rose to Cherish.

Rebecca A. Ross

## Starry Night

I stepped out onto the balcony of the small hotel room, hearing the crash of the waves as they hit the shore. Laying my hands on the rail, I looked down at the deserted beach, the moonlight covering everything, giving the water and sand a silvery glow. Off in the far distance was a small ship thundering past, glittering with lights and I could faintly hear the voices of people as they talked amongst themselves, paying no heed to the glowing sphere of the stars overhead.

Gazing over the water, I came to see the small cliff of rocks on the far left. The waves dashed up against their surface with such force that it makes you wonder how nature could be so cruel to itself. Moving my eyes up the face of the cliff, I saw a small figure standing near the edge, gazing out into the blackness.

I jumped the rail and floated gracefully to the sand. As I made my way towards the rocks, a light sea breeze came, like a gently kiss, and lifted my hair off my neck for a moment or two, racing across my chest, around my back and ruffling my shorts a little before dying away. The sand was soft and cool beneath my bare feet, and all the feeling had returned to my limbs, making it very easy to propel my six-foot, male, frame, towards its destination in only a matter of seconds.

Reaching the small cliff, I could see more clearly the figure that stood above me. A pair of kaki shorts and a white shirt covered up the physical aspects of her female form, dark hair let loose, dark eyes gazing out at the still water beyond the waves, or possibly at the ship I had seen. She, too barefoot, the pale skin of her legs, arms, and face ever more highlighted by the silvery light from above. Her face having no real expression, other than the hint of child like wonder that never really leaves us, no matter how long we live on this earth.

Another cool breeze comes, and in response, she lifts up her arms, spreading them out like a bird's wings. She closes her eyes, letting the wind encircle her, blowing back her hair, and ruffling her shirt.

I whistle softly, too softly to be heard by any one but her. Startled, she jumps and then jerks her head down to look at me as I stand there, the perfect imitation of a mortal man, looking no more than twenty years in age.

A smile breaks out on her face, a little embarrassed to have been caught so lost in her own thoughts. Dropping her arms to her sides, she turns around not to face me, but to face the land, her back to the crashing sea. Moving ever closer to the edge, she raises her arms as if she means to rise up into the air.

But instead, she jumps high, and does a back dive off the rocks. I see her body plummeting to the waves below, and for a moment a spasm of fear grips my heart, my mind saying, *save her...she'll die!* Then I remember she's not the same girl I had met two years ago.

Her body disappears into the water and for a long while the world is quiet and still again, only the sound of the waves hitting the shore and the soft voices of people from the far off ship. Then suddenly, she shoots up from the water, sending up a shower of white foam. Her arms stretched out again like wings, her legs dangling freely, back arches and her head thrown back as she rises ever higher into the starry blue blanket.

Stopping her flight, she straightens, and looks down at me again. I look away for only a moment, and when I look back, she's gone. Confused, I turn around and almost

jump, seeing her standing beside me. Clothes stuck to her body now, wet hair hanging heavily down her back, but her skin blown dry by her rapid climb to the stars.

“Scared you, huh?” she says softly, her voice almost startling me again, the silence before now so hypnotizing, and it seems I was snapped out of my trance. “You thought I was going to die, didn’t you?” A sly smile blooms from her lips as she says, “You should know better than to think that about me now.”

I laugh, “I guess, but I suppose it is my natural instinct.”

She comes closer, laying her cold hand on my face, eventually running her fingers back through my black hair. I feel the other hand sliding across my back, these gestures sending a quick shiver up my spine. Gently pulling her to me, feeling the dampness of her clothes against my bare chest, I kiss her lips, tasting the salt that lingers on them. Her body relaxes in my arms and I pull back to see her eyes closed for only a moment before they open again, catching the light.

“Let’s go see what’s happening on that ship,” I point out to the vessel, which had dropped anchor and now floated in the calm water.

She smiles at me, “Alright, and maybe I’ll find someone to suit my taste. I’ve been watching them out there. They seem very interesting and no doubt taste as good as they look.”

Out to the ship we flew appearing on deck so fast that I wondered if anyone had noticed. Her hand squeezes mine before she separates from me to weave her way through the crowd, carefully selecting her victim; a medium sized man with fair skin and big, dark eyes, nothing like the blue ones that were a striking feature to my own face. I saw her start to put on her little act, flirting with him, tempting him until she had him in her arms and went for his neck, piercing the skin, and taking all she could before having to pull away and hide the wounds. She left him there, slumped back in his chair, and went to find one more before we left, disappearing from my sight.

“Hmmm...don’t remember you,” I hear a voice say. Turning, I see a woman, around twenty years old, the curves of her body covered by a short black dress, her curly red hair falling down over her shoulders, and there was no doubt in my mind she had had too much to drink. Her gestures awkward and it seemed she didn’t have control over her limbs. She reached up clumsily to touch my face, and I let her, convinced that this would be an easy kill. And the alcohol in her blood would give it a little extra flavor.

“Where did you come from?” she asks, moving closer and wrapping her arms around me.

I smile, leaning in closer for the kill. I kiss her neck once, letting the smell of her blood fill my senses. Her skin soft and very warm under my touch, and I find myself losing control before I mean to, and having to fight harder against the craving to just sink my teeth and crush her.

Slowly, I pull her into my arms, breathing deep, savoring the warmth coming from her, the sweet fragrance of blood that flows so near to the surface. She giggles in response to me, and asks again, “Where did you come from?”

I bend in to her neck, “From your worst nightmares,” I mumble, the need for it too strong to bear now. I sink my teeth, feeling the hot stream rush into my mouth. There is no struggle; she just slips away, as if only falling asleep for a while. But from this sleep she will never awake. I set her body down, closing the wounds, and wiping my mouth.

Taking my leave from her corpse, I stand now by the railing, waiting for my newborn to return.

Very soon I see her, weaving back through the crowd, a triumphant smile on her face. She was successful in her kills, her skin had lost its pale color, at least for now. I knew it was as warm as my own, and if you didn't know it, you would have mistaken her for a mortal seventeen year old.

I feel her take my hand before I even knew what I was feeling. Looking down at her, she smiles back up at me, seeing that I too have fed. "Come on," she says staring back over the crowd, "lets go walk for a little. I didn't want to stay here too long, even though all these drunk mortals can be so funny to watch."

I laugh at this. "Yes, they are. But I have seen enough in my long lifetime."

"Come on," she says again, turning now to take my other hand as we rise silently off the deck and glide on the wind until our feet touch the white sand once again.

Holding tight to my hand, as if she is afraid I will leave her, we start to walk down the shore, near the edge of the water, feeling the surf come up over our feet every now and then. She starts to talk softly; of what we'd do next, of where we might go, of whom we might meet along the way. And as I listen, I realize that at this moment, all the pain that I had suffered so many times before, didn't matter. The weight on my heart was lifted, and for once, I was truly happy.

Heather M. Burke

### **Into the void**

Memories of a haunted past,  
Faces come and go,  
Mere flashes, lasting only seconds,  
And they fade into the fabric of time,  
Never to be seen again.

And in their wake,  
They leave nothing but hollow decay,  
Leaving you as the shell you were,  
Long ago when someone found you.

And into this void  
A war breaks out,  
Between feelings of unknown distinction,  
That hate comes to battle pain,  
The sadness comes to battle the hate,  
And in the end it is the rage that wins,  
Its army much stronger than any other.

But in the end,  
If you are lucky to reach it,  
You return to the nothing you once were,  
A hollow shell of your former self,  
And there in the wasteland you crumble,  
Never again to be filled with feeling.

And those, whom you have sentenced you,  
To such a horrible fate,  
Care no more for what once was,  
For they have been blinded by the light,  
Which you are damned never to reach.

Into the void you finally fall,  
Which is no safe haven,  
But instead a grave,  
Reaching up to consume you.

And as you lie there,  
Disconnected from those who wronged you,  
You think back on what had been,  
Think back on what could have been,  
And into the oblivion you slip finally,  
Never to be heard from again.  
That's life...isn't it?

Heather M. Burke

## **Through My Head**

When I woke up I knew it was true,  
The feelings of dread lying down in the dew,  
The heavy torture of feeling I'm dead,  
Your lying and cheating floating through my head.

You told me it love and I was your first,  
My heart feels broken with cracks of hurt,  
I knew you had changed and there was nothing I could do,  
I was wrong all along because this is the real you.

Korinne Ashton



## Regrets

The sun is rising now, start of a new day,  
Light begins to shine as shadows run away.  
You rise to look at me, but I am just not there,  
I have left you in the night while you were unaware.  
Your eyes grow wide with fear as you see what's new,  
My wrists cut wide, blood mingles with the dew.  
My corpse is growing cold and you begin to cry,  
But this is all your fault because you never tried.  
You ignored my pain because I let it show.  
You abused my soul, my self-esteem was low.  
And though I loved you so, and my love was true,  
I regret to say that I meant to cut you.

Korinne Ashton

## **My Love**

No words can describe how much you mean to me.  
No expression of face is expression enough.  
No actions or gifts could prove my love of you.  
Nothing in my power could show it all.

My heart is too full and my mind too slow  
To think of a way to express it to you.  
So I try daily to show you  
That you are my one and only.  
So I try daily to tell you  
What I feel in my heart.

Time with you is never enough  
To look into your eyes,  
To look into your heart,  
To feel it in your heart,  
I love you.

Korinne Ashton

## **A Timeless Treasure**

We are a family, working together as one  
Through times of good and bad, all combined  
Forever we will be  
Evil lurks more and more these days  
We should lead and help each other  
And not let anyone struggle or fall away  
Together we will be  
No one person knows the way  
However, our devotion and strength will prevail  
Forever we will be  
As money, greed and violence builds in the world  
Let faith and patience show the path  
Follow your goals, your dreams  
And conquer each day with sheer determination  
Together we will be  
The future brings new memories  
Nevertheless, don't forget the past  
Forever we will be  
Cherish and pray for one another  
No matter what our differences may be  
Everyone is equal in this partnership called life  
Live, laugh, love  
Together we will be  
A family we are and shall continue to be  
We are born in separate months  
And celebrate our own times  
Yet the months act together, forming each coming year  
We will be as one  
Together forever

Heather Simpson

### **A Bearing Wish (Sonnet)**

Oh I know I know you not but well I want  
It's possible that you are love's true prince  
Is this the final search that I must hung  
For, long I've waited for this special wish

Thy heart is yours if you wish it to take  
We shall be a couple, one, together  
Our loved combines in ripples of the lake  
Two souls reaching for each other forever

Even after the mind blows far to die  
Don't leave thy lonely breath to linger so lost  
Your patience will wait for my turn to fly  
Your true adorenness is a priceless cost

Your smile and eyes spell truthful and caring  
Thus, take thee if it is worth your bearing

Heather Simpson

**'Tis No Trick, Wick or Bribe**

Blue have my thoughts been of late  
For my mind wonders, not to thy  
But for those in need of dream or prayer

There are many fools in this world of cruel  
With never ending snitching and breaking  
Pain and selfish deeds act their fuel  
Made by some force to forget saking  
Yet, they fall at end  
Evil will try but will not endure

Ones own hear can choose the bend  
Tether East to fail or West to prevail  
The compass to pick is yours alone

Be troubles for 'tis you will be  
You will rot with flies to the bone  
The fire of hatred will fire deep thee  
Your depression will send you eyes to boil  
And your fingers to toil  
This wrath is only part of the describe

True or not to dare I ask  
'Tis no trick, wick or bribe  
Trust just a questioning task

Remember to whom you are close  
And near friends if you have them so  
Where would you be without them not  
Your goals of inspired conduct  
Yourself feels hard in a lonely seat  
Put you and them together to defeat

Share with the hungry man of poor  
Pass the hand of a cripple through a door  
And feel the pleased thanks

As the plunder of the Earth's Banks  
Give a curb a softer pillow  
And water to they drying willow  
Your tears swell with compassion  
As you mind how all has happened  
Your ears fill with condolence  
As sadness envisions you hence

Heather Simpson