

The 2007 Bottom Shelf Review



Faculty Advisor:
Michael G. Cornelius

Editors:
Meg Oldman
Amanda E. Horn

Co-Editors:
Martine Bourque
Sarah Shetter
Ashley Mudd
Stephanie St. Louis
Nikola Grafnetterova
Iuliana Matalica
Elizabeth Rice
Katelin Reeve

The Sailor

By Megan Betts

Feeling the refreshing wind through my hair,
I sail to find the sunset.
The sun kissing my skin warms my bones
I hear the cool water as the boat cuts through it,
Throwing waves toward the shore.
Sundays are beautiful.
No work and we all get to play.
It's a bitter sweet end to the weekend.
As I reach the sunset,
I only think of what tomorrow will bring.

Elegy to a Poet

By Elizabeth Clever

The laurel moaneth, trampled by the Faun.
A faded page quivers; the tomes torn!
As arson-eyes now desecrate the dawn,
a fiery blaze consumes the blessed morn.

Those musing lips are pursed forevermore;
the Harpies gladly claim the rights to song.
The poet trembles on the battered shore;
aesthetic Man enjoins the mourning throng.

Aloha to Meredith

By Martine Bourque

Beautiful soul, gossamer wings fluttering.
All the joy you gave so freely;
Did it weigh you down?
What about the love shared?
Did you leave it behind as you locked that door?

What demon did you encounter?
He filled your mind.
Blocked your memories.
Slithered through your veins
Wrapped himself around your neck
Seduced you with deceitful promises of peace.
Did you even put up a fight?

Silence now fills your laughter.
There will be no answers.
Why will remain why.
Pain will consume itself
Freely burning, unextinguished.
Rage will burn, white hot.
Blemished only by the ebb and flow of tears.

You turned your light off early,
Leaving us in the dark.

Pink

By Satoko Unno

When you feeling too much passionate

Put some white in your red.

Pretty pink, you can make.

Pink is warm but not too hot.

Pink is elegant but not too formal.

Do not blame for its indecisive feel.

Keep it vague

And warm yourself with your pretty pink.

Grow Up

By Kim Allen

Its funny how you can't remember anything in the beginnin'
Even though you knew you were sinnin'
Startin' off with that immaturity that lead to the insecurities
That leads to the impurities of yourself, and not anyone else
Yeah you make mistakes
But it seems like that one person cant take the time to forgive you
They call you a fake
But its too late to turn back the hands of time
To stop and give your mind the opportunity
To think with that maturity that you know is inside of you
To think about what you were supposed to do
To make things right
And not fight the hostilities of other infidelities
Just live and give your all, and know all you need to do is grow
Let your mind grow
Let your heart grow
Let your spirit grow
Let it flow with all the love, let it fly, let it soar
Know that its yours and you don't have to fall short no more
No more givin' up, cause its time to Grow Up

Don't sit around and not let things happen
Just do it
Don't let the chance come where you would say, I blew it.
'Cause then everybody would be able to say, I knew it.
I knew that you would lose and you would never find the clues
That would lead you to the path that would lead your from your past
You look them in the eyes and tell them its never gonna end
'Cause youre gonna tend to what lies within your heart
Be smart and don't let anyone tear you apart
You see, you've come too far to let anyone scar your tissues
You tell them to deal with their own issues
As youre dealin with yours
Tell them to put their knees to the floor
Repent to God as you have, 'cause thats the task to be done
'Cause He's the only one who can take it all away
Don't let anyone lead you astray
You gotta say. Jesus fill me, Lord I need you to heal me.
You gotta let him know that you know that you know you gotta grow
So when people come to you with all the negativity
Don't let it fill your head up
Listen to God...
And Grow Up.

Eyes
Jessica Elser

Why do you believe in me? She stares deeply into his eyes silently questioning every glance and gesture that comes from his loving face. He stares back at her. She pauses for a second. *Why don't I believe in me?* Her head and heart are screaming loudly, colliding roughly with the scattered memories that are rushing through her clouded mind.

She glances around at the surrounding landscape, as if validating their existence. It is beginning to get dark and a sunset slowly melts across the sky, clothing the clouds in bright silky robes of elegant purples and royal blues. Sunset has always been her favorite time of day. It is the only time she feels a sense of belonging, seeing the sun retreat, leaving its mark on the day that has passed. *What kind of mark am I leaving?*

Neither of them knows what to say. Copious tears fill her eyes and as she blinks to try to escape the pain, through the blur of those salty droplets, she sees something that crushed her quickly beating, bleeding, heart. He is hurting. He cannot bear to see her pain and have no control over the many things that are causing it to flourish. She knows that feeling. Helpless. Grasping onto something so tightly and watching it slip slowly and agonizingly through the cracks in her fingers.

"It's not your fault," she says to him softly.

It is my fault. He is the one who is supposed to cause every problem to slip into the dark recesses of her mind. All he can think of is her beautiful smile, and how much he longed to see it fabricate itself once again on her soft lips. She glances back at him and cannot help but wonder why her problems were slowly drifting into the shadows and all she can see is him. His eyes...so full of determination, pain, and passion. His eyes are a deep blue with hints of grey tossed throughout, like the sea after a storm. She looks deeply into those eyes and her heart is battered and pushed in every direction with each high tide of emotional waves. Those eyes have concentrated so deeply on her inmost thoughts and feelings and penetrated any mask of self-acceptance she is trying to wear.

He knew she was broken, but he loved her the same. She does not need to say anything. She slips softly into his arms and lets her face sink into his shoulder. She glances up; only to meet those eyes...the ones that spoke softly to her own in whispers saying "You can do anything," with her own so that she may somehow calm the storm.

And for a moment, she is lost in those two soft-spoken eyes, until a gentle smile grazes her lips. She looked back. "Thank You" they whispered. The sea is calm. "You're Welcome."

This Feeling

by Kim Allen

This feeling
Flowing through my body
Keeps me warm through the storm
But I'm torn between believing and receiving
This feeling
I feel safe, but at the same time
Moving at a fast pace
In a race against time
Trying to figure this feeling out
Before my mind overflows with doubt about
This feeling
Plus I'm scared thinkin' about the past
Never did last
Left my heart in an unseen cast
Again, body feeling like it's movin' too fast
But I'm secure
This feeling don't seem impure
Slowly I'm becoming sure
This feeling is so right
Something I just can't fight, try not to be uptight
Just relax, sit back, and let this feeling
Attach my body, all the while being cool
Don't be no fool, stay smart
Knowledge saying thinkin' and feeling are
Two different parts of my anatomy
But this feeling takes away my gravity
Gradually floating higher and higher
Feeling so good inside, don't wanna hide
Don't wanna deny, wanna forget about pride
This feeling
I'll open the door if you keep knockin'
Take over my body
Make me feel weightless
But remember... I'm watching
Oh... but this feeling.

“In love”

by Mariza Cooray

First a growl, then a rumble
Finally a crash.
It swoops her only defense
Which flies high in rainbow colors,

She runs without thought, past care
Ceaseless in cold ecstasy.
Relentless it covers her with its long, pale fingers
A gathering of wind hisses through azure tears.

Fast and forbidden, they fall, they drench
They leap in cold bounds like the hope
That bounces with her smile.

Its assurance seems larger
Than the puddle she steps on or the rock that
Tripped her dandy feet,
It seems to reckon itself with the lightning,
To resist it and to recollect its bright light and freeze it,
To stop the world for moments not one, but two
Of pure fright, of mysterious awe and
Overwhelming delight

“The Grind”

by Michelle Pearson-Casey

The alarm

erupts,
and I begin
another
reluctant
descent
into the corrupt conglomerate
to feed the greedy machine.

Long ago,
I sold my soul
to pay the mortgage.

A New Life
By Sherri Peters

And so she blooms full of color and renewed life.
Nothing can stop the woman she is becoming.
Nothing can change the woman that she was.
No one can shadow all of her beauty.
Besides she too content to notice if they try.
Purposefully she places all of the pieces.
Paying no mind to the insignificance of time.
One by one, as she spins around in circles,
All of her dreams begin to fall in line.

Wedding Day

By Madeline Newell

Long, luxurious ivory lace floats from my head and down,
Down to the ground, it trails, it sweeps behind,
Knowing
Today is the day I wed.

The flower you place in your pocket, I picked
from our favorite spot and it sits there
Knowing
Today is the day you wed.

Walking towards you down the aisle, you take a hand and remove the veil,
and the minister comes to us
Knowing
Today is the day we wed.

We promise to love, with looks of meaning, forever from this day.
From this day, the day that we are wed.

Like a Thief of Her Own

By John A. Scarffe

Like a thief of her own
Belongings we helped her
Rip away from long-settled

Places plants rooted into
Blinds and growing up
Walls, a dryer holding

Men's pants, a washer
Hiding socks, a dresser of
Clothes-too-small and Scout scarves

No longer used. Packing
Cars, trucks quietly
Quickly looking over

Shoulders for his tires'
Angry squeal at last the
Screaming parakeet climbs its

Cage stuck in a left over
Space within a crowded
Car pulling away from the

Curb. Cross town a new
Place awaits with enough
Room only for one.

The Way They Look At You

By John A. Scarffe

Bright, glassy eyes of tinted office windows
Stare into free and open green space.

Inside shadowy, carpeted halls
White shirts appear from dark office doors.

Fixed faces intently pursue small tasks
As trash bins brim with mistaken words.

The 5 o'clock blues deep in their eyes
Haunt the way they look at you.

The Revelation

By Alyssa Paczkowski

A sadness left me in a lost war with myself. All hope was lost. Nothing could make my life better. Not even the happiest place in the world. A revelation was told to me. Not to make me sad anymore. Somewhat of a new life for me, I was told. I agree to it. Who wants to be sad? Who wants to feel alone in the world?

The revelation was put to the test. I felt the same, until I felt nothing. No emotion. Nothing. I woke up with a straight face. The worst thing could happen and still I would feel nothing. The greatest thing in my life could happen and still feel the same. I thought to myself, "is this happiness? A vast of nothingness?"

Now, it's still the same. Waking up with no expression on my face. Though, the bad thoughts that left me in a war are gone with no return. Now I look ahead of me than what the past has left me. It was the true revelation that I wanted. The revelation actually worked.

The Answer

By Sherri Peters

A flux of speculation courses through me

Insisting I go back from which I came

Looking for the piece I must have dropped along the way

When I hurried from this place last time - set forth to seize the day.

Relativity is not the question; it's the law

The question of to be or not presents itself to all

Revelation comes from searching for the truth

Creation comes from insistence upon evidence of proof

Subjective Objective Relative Reality

Infinite in every endless way

Sooo... there's just no way to really know for sure

What each of us has had and have in store

Therefore it makes no difference if it's True

As long as there is love and light

In everything we do

?????????

The Hand We Are Dealt
By Sherri Peters

Beautiful child...

How can I explain something that I will never understand?

Everyday you grow wiser and closer to the truth.

What is the truth again?

I guess the truth is that we may never know.

My little fishy...

*Your journey has barely begun and already you have experienced some of what this life
can dish.*

Trust me...

Swimming up stream will make your soul run deeper.

For those who struggle grow stronger from the fight.

And when you're in the thick of it, remember...

We will always be with you, no matter where this life takes you.

You will be okay...after every dark night there will come the day.

Just

By Rebecca Cheek

I'm just a whore wearing clothes...

Just a wolf in sheep's disguise.

I'm just a babe wearing woman's skin...

Just a weed in flower's mask.

I'm just an orphan pretending to be theirs...

Just a moth in butterfly wings.

I'm just me trying to be you...

Just a little girl in your shadow.

I'm just waiting, hoping to be loved.

Just a nobody in awe of you.

You long for freedom

By John A. Scarffe

Tied like a leaf by the stem
You yellowed from the futile effort
Of pulling away.

You danced the frantic step
Of a spectator watching
A loose world float by.

Pinned by the hands of age
Like an old man's laundry
You turn brown and brittle.

You see the end
Like the darkness
At the light beam's edge.

Ode to a Dying Copper Beech Tree

By Michael Cornelius

Yesterday, I saw my Wilson daughter
standing underneath
the yawning arms
of a copper beech tree.

Her plaited hair and plaintive eyes
swept restlessly over the broken bough
of the gnarled, sleeping wood, looking,
it seems, for nothing in particular.

She has communed here in the past, both
recent and long forgot, and, watching their silent dance,
I found myself jealous of the branch closest
to her mourning face.

Suddenly, softly, with gesture simple,
she touched
the tree, a hesitating sigh of
rough hewn on cool skin.

And next, stepping back, she turned her gaze
upwards, as if to say farewell
to an epoch whose fall
has come at last.

Then, head bowed and eyes averred,
she turned to go, and I, afraid
to spoil her moment, stepped back into
the recess of my own, long shadow.

It was a restive spirit that led her here, to this tree.
It was a grateful spirit that led me here, to her.

Walking towards the tree,
I placed my hand where hers had been,

and felt.

I felt rough. I felt broken.
I felt warmth. And I felt human.

And in that moment...

And in that moment...

And in that moment I understood
why Daphne became a tree when
pursued by love's cruel designs.

It was not for fear, nor sudden violence,
nor random chance in the
frantic rapture of escape.
It was not for concern at all.

No, the chased nymph, desperate of immortality,
chose instead to embrace time,
to bear witness, to know winter—

In short, to die.

As I inhabit the guise of my daughter,
her head, her space and her tree,
I recall the words of the blind poet:
“Once more, O ye laurels, and yet once more ye myrtles brown,”

and remember the story of the boy
who drowned so long ago on
that fateful autumn day,

and sigh.

Standing there, where she once stood,
I dwell on all these things:
my Wilson daughter, the nymph,
water, end, and time.
But most of all, most of all
I dwell within
the dying arms of a
copper beech tree.

The Pirates life for He

By Simon Moyes

Little Tommy Took had a hand for a hook,
He dreamed of being a pirate, which his parents understood.
His dad bought him a parrot,
And his mother made a patch.
Still Tommy only had a hand for a hook.

When it was time for bed Tommy's dad read him his favorite book,
It was all about Peter Pan and Captain Hook.
Tommy dreamed of the open sea,
Swashing his buckle it was the pirate's life for he.
Still Tommy only had a hand for a hook.

When Tommy played in the garden, he was the master of all he surveyed.
From the sand pit to the spade,
Between the house and his make shift boat.
He'd do battle with Peter and the Lost Boys.
Still Tommy only had a hand for a hook.

Tommy's dad has a hook, so why shouldn't he.
His dad got his out on the open sea.
Sometimes it would make his mother sad,
But all Tommy wanted was to be like his dad.

The Dwelling or the Dweller

By Sherri Peters

Something moves me inside of myself

What an old soul I have become

Never dying yet forever young

Peering through a transparent blue lens

I study the details of every detail

Curious to find what things lie beneath the underlining

Marveling at what a novel place this is

A place where if you can dream beyond the no ways

Then you can stretch yourself in all ways

And you won't dare to waste a moment of this infinite time and space

Manifesting all you can imagine simply by willing it to be

Oh, if I could only see the look in your eyes

When you realize the something that stirs deep inside you

Is the very same that inhabits me

My heart beats in time with the tides

And in turn sets the stars in motion

Telling anything's future

Echoing everything's past

Can you tell me

What purpose is it that you claim

Are you the dwelling or the dweller?

Wedding Day

By Madeline Newell

Stepping to a gown of lace,
I pull it above my head.
Turning, I look into my face.
Today is the day we wed.

I draw the veil across my eyes,
and shield the world from view.
One last look brings a sigh,
I then move to go join you.

My feet, they saunter down the aisle,
stepping with nervous ease.
Eyes wide, you give a smile,
my heart is now at peace.

My hand in yours, two rings exchange,
In love, we promise, to never change.

The Ex

By K.D. Mertz

I am the ex. Simply the old high school girlfriend, who spent five years of her life with one boy. Sure, those years are history now. *"It was a long time ago,"* they say. *"Get over it,"* they quip. But to me, it's no joke. My memories are real. My pain and anguish are great. Why? Because I once loved him more than I loved myself.

He died on May 3, 2004. My first love. A shotgun to his head, in the bedroom we once shared. I didn't know anything of it until the following day. After the authorities took their reports. After family and friends had the opportunity to begin the grieving process. I sat unknowing. No one called. No one came to me. An e-mail. All I got was a simple e-mail.

"I heard some bad news, and thought of you. Please give me a call."

In my worst nightmare, I would have never thought that I would hear those words. "He killed himself yesterday. I thought you knew." Had she not known that my daughter was not his, would she have written? Would she have called? Would anyone have even thought of me?

We broke up many years ago. Sadly, it was not mutual. Out of a selfish need for independence, I walked away. We were engaged to be married! We were once in love! But the fire had gone cold within me. I barely knew him anymore. I barely knew myself. But he knew me. Better than I had realized. He knew that, one day, I would think of him. He knew that, one day, my sleep would be filled with happy memories of him. Memories that would cause me pain and remorse.

The sweet taste of our first kiss. His eyes, looking into mine, baring his soul. His breath in my hair as we slept. Our fun. Our fights. Our lives meshing together as one and for the first time feeling whole.

My mind boils over with five years of memories. His prom, when I kept my promise not to sleep with him. And one month later, losing my innocence. His graduation, when I thought that our relationship would soon be over. September 24th, when he asked me to be with him forever. The day he broke my heart. The day I broke my own.

He now haunts my every moment. There is not one day that I feel at peace. Not one day that I do not hear a song, and shed a tear. I feel him watching me. Listening. When I cry, when I laugh, when I write, when I spend time with my family. My husband, my daughters. He is always there, lurking in the darkest corners of my mind. I want him to go. I want him to stay. It is a vicious cycle.

And still, no one thinks of me. I have posted my messages in vain on this makeshift memorial. One on the day I was told, and one on the anniversary of our first becoming a couple. So many years ago...April 13, 1992. He was a senior, with blonde hair and blue eyes. He had a charm all his own, and made me fall in love with him. How I wish that he hadn't, but am so glad that he did.

I try to rationalize it. I tell myself that I outgrew him. I outgrew the "us" that we had become. But am I lying to myself? Had I known what the future would hold...had I only known...would I have been so selfish? Had I only known...would it have changed anything at all? Was I the one who set his destiny?

He was once so carefree. A true ladies man, yet he was mine. He could light up a room with his antics. He would chase away my own melancholy with simply his smile. The charming way he had about him, I could never stay mad...

Even after that fateful night and the words we spoke in anger. Even after the ferocity of his hand on my face. Even now, after taking all the precious memories of my youth with him to the grave... I cannot stay mad at him forever. How I wish I could, and how glad I am that I have not.

But I am the ex. The old high school girlfriend of long ago, who once loved him more than life itself. He leaves behind a wife, a daughter, and a son. A mother, father and sister. They all grieve together. They go to one another for support when their pains are too much to bear. They share a shoulder to mourn on.

And I? I am only the ex.

Standing on Un-Solid Ground, and Living to Tell

By Lacey Brownawell

Stages, as in hard, relatively tall structures which make a person visible to all, bring about different emotions in people. The two main emotions are fright and happiness. Under the happiness category falls things such as different types of programs that involve happy people getting happy awards. Here everyone is excited and dressed up to show the world, or the small amount of people present, who they are and what they've done. I guess my stage experience has at some points involved this emotion, but somehow I always end up getting scared, which is the second category. Stages expose people and are a major contribution to a huge possibility for embarrassment.

All throughout my life I have always been scared or shy, and it seemed to come out more in high school. Every time I had to make a speech I would feel sick for days in advance. I thought about all the things that could go wrong. What if I messed up, or worse passed out? There I'd be on the stage, lying on the floor for everyone to see and laugh at. Luckily, that never happened. I would always make my way to the stage with a sudden burst of confidence, which was soon lost. I'd start speaking and look into the audience. That was the end of whatever confidence I had mustered up. I could always feel my face getting warmer and warmer. Imagining how red my face was only made everything get worse. Next, I could always hear my voice shaking. I'd always try as hard as I could to regain my composure, but my composure was long gone by then. Somehow I always managed to get through whatever required me to be on stage, but not without trials, many trials.

That's what most of my high school career revolved around. Granted, high school wasn't always *that* terrible but my stage phobia was terrible enough to totally toss out any thoughts about joining a club that revolved around the stage; even though this did seem a little fun. By my senior year I had avoided any clubs that forced me to be on stage. Then something happened. I had a sudden burst of confidence; I guess since I knew I'd be out of the school in less than seven months. I got sick of being afraid and missing out on something that would allow me to not only spend time with my friends but to do something different that would help me to be more confident and allow my fellow classmates to see that I really could be on stage, something that I was sure would shock them all.

I decided to give it a shot. There really wasn't any harm in at least trying. I decided to try out for Shakespeare Troupe, which would put on a show in November. I thought this wouldn't take very much of my time and I'd be done with it by Christmas. If the whole performance really was terrible I'd at least have half a year left to regain my composure. I might as well try something different for my senior year.

The day of the auditions I was beyond scared. I knew I didn't have anything to lose. I wasn't going to get a big part because of my inexperience and I certainly didn't want one. I *still* couldn't shake the fear. I don't know why I always get like that. I felt like I was facing a near-death situation. I always wanted to run, but I never could because I always have had to stay to get a good grade and to not get kicked out of school. This time I could run, though. I could just pack up my stuff and leave. I wouldn't get in trouble, no grade or purpose was really involved, just my sole purpose of proving who I was, or at least who I knew I could be. I had to go through with this.

Auditions seemed to come pretty quickly. I knew my friends, the directors, would let me in regardless of how I did, but I still wanted a small speaking role. I wanted everyone to see that I really could be brave and I wanted to prove it to myself.

The hallways seemed to quiver, along with me, with the silence of an almost empty building. I slowly walked into the holding room. Everyone seemed to be having such a good time, laughing and smiling. I waited with my friends and found myself becoming more and more confident. Finally, my turn came. I walked into the room a little shaky and realized that the audition wouldn't be so bad. I read the lines, looked at my friend for him to read his lines, and I laughed while trying to read the rest of my lines. Laughing wasn't part of my role; I just thought the whole thing was so funny and I'm not quite sure why. I looked at my audience comprised of only two directors and felt satisfied. I smiled, pulled open the door to the hall, and walked out. Sure, my voice shook and I was scared, but it wasn't so terrible. I got through the whole audition, even though I knew I hadn't done wonderfully or even well.

I got a speaking part. Next up was the seemingly endless hours of practices and rehearsals. My part, the Watch, had just two lines and one was in French. Everything went smoothly, other than my struggling with the impossible French pronunciations, and I was happy that if I really did mess up it was only two lines. How bad could it be?

The one director approached me and said almost too happily and just about sinisterly, "Hey! Guess what? This is going to be so cool! You are going to stand up there, pop out from the prop, and recite your lines. It's going to look so awesome."

Stand, up there! The object my dear friend pointed to was a set of stairs that when slightly touched, wobbled, shook, and did everything I pictured stairs should or would do, right before they collapse. To top it all off, these stairs had been made by some wood-working class many years ago. They weren't just ordinary stairs either. They were extremely tall and to get to the first step I had to climb on a chair and take a huge leap. These stairs had to be the stairs of Satan, stairs that make people fall straight into hell. The background I had to hide behind while climbing Satan's stairs wasn't much better. This city-scene background was some type of construction material, think thin foam, suspended by chains. This prop swung back and forth. If I were to fall there would be nothing to hold on to, no railings and no strong and dependable prop. If I did have to grab the prop I would probably end up swinging and falling onto some poor, unsuspecting member of the audience. This is when I started to regret the whole burst of confidence feeling.

The night finally arrived. I mapped out all my plans for if anything went wrong, since I was sure I was bound to fall. I tried to work falling into the play. I made up lines that I could quickly blurt out that might fit into the whole plot; I could call out some French curse on those who were to knock at my door, I could pretend I was being killed by the English or French army, or I could pretend I was a very anxious Watch, cower and jump off a tall building whenever I heard knocking. My plans weren't very successful, but at least I had a plan.

The auditorium was just a little over two-years old. The seats were red and comfy, compared to the uncomfortable wooden chairs in the old high school. Everything was grander and more professional-looking. The curtains looked like curtains that might be at a fancy concert or performance. The walls even had something on them to make all of the sounds sound better. From where I sat, waiting behind the swaying props on the stairs of

doom, I couldn't see any of that. All I saw were the lights and the chipped, black stage paint.

I waited for Joan of Arc and her friends to climb the stairs in front of my hideout. The lights went off and then turned back on. I pulled my chair over, hopped on that, and I leapt onto the evil stairs. One more scene and it was my turn. I climbed slowly on up the stairs. The stairs and I were both shaking, which wasn't a very good combination. I saw the prop/city swaying in front of me. I ducked so the audience couldn't see me. Every time I exhaled the prop swayed closer to the audience. These couple minutes seemed longer than they really were. The stairs shook more.

I thought about how exciting this actually was. The lights turned red and then went off completely. I started to look forward to my lines. I heard the next set of people coming. *Bang*. I looked where I was stooping. I was still on the steps; I hadn't fallen. Someone on the other side of my swaying city had stumbled and had almost fallen of the table prop, an upgrade compared to the stairs, but still not sturdy. Soon I would have to pop out. I heard the knocking. I popped up, slowly, knowing that my falling wouldn't be too unexpected in the show now and grabbed one person, like I was supposed to do.

"Qui est la?" I screamed, or more like said a little loudly.

The one person jumped, that wasn't rehearsed, and more lines were said. I slowly said my last line and my job was done. I looked at the audience and smiled, probably not what my character should have done. I slowly crawled down the defeated steps and jumped to the chipped floor. I pushed open the door and saw the light. I ran outside and breathed a sigh of relief. It was over and I did it, successfully and without falling. Someone even said that my part was the funniest, in a good way. *She should have seen it if I would have fallen and recited my made-up lines*, I thought.

The stage and I were now friends. The stairs and I still are not. The stage brought out my bravery and allowed me to conquer my fears. I still get a little afraid when talking in front of people, but now it's different. I now just blurt out random things where years ago I wouldn't have said a thing. I remember my stage experience, and a voice in my head says, "Qui est la?" whenever I approach a situation like this. Then I can at least get through the first few minutes, especially since normally I stand on solid, non-satanic ground.

Lifting up the Magic

By Madeline Newell

Meeting Finley

I talked to a tree today. He was quite magnificent; a more magnificent being, I had never seen. His limbs raised up and down at will and he glowed as though the sun, itself, were settled in his branches. His bark was a pure white, and his foliage a deepened brown. He moved to and fro with such ease that I was green with envy at the sight of his trunk, which gave in whenever he wished to make even the tiniest motion. The wind spoke through him with amazing rapidity and together they howled at the sky and sang songs full of life. He was so full of life, in fact, that I wondered for a very brief moment whether he was a tree or not, but came to the conclusion that there was no mistaking him for anything other than a tree. I did, however, have to realize that he was not ordinary. He had this magic about him; it entranced me with every whirl and rustle. And I spent half of our first meeting watching his graceful movement and the other half searching for a name that I could give this magical creature. The most befitting, most imaginative, most magical name that I could come up with was Finley.

Our conversation together was not long, as you may easily understand, for he was but a tree, and trees only talk in the waving of their limbs or the rustling of their leaves. Most of our conversation, therefore, involved a variety of stares and inquisitive glances as we searched one another out. I admit, though, that there were times when he reared back his top and gave such a rustle as I had never known could come from a tree.

He had arrived when the sun was high and left as it began to turn the sky into a sleepy shade of orange. His coming and going was most curious, for I know not how a tree can move as he did. One moment he was staring right at me and in the very next, he was gone and no trace of him could be found. It was as though magic had entered his roots and gone to the top of his leaves and left him invisible to everything around me and to myself. This is how I came to the name of Finley, for Finley is a “magical” name.

Finley Returns

Finley returned to me this next day. And just as before, he arrived without notice. He called to me through the wind and waved his branches in gleeful expectation. I rustled back and our conversation began. As we talked, I watched him dip his branches and limbs into the stream beside us. Pouring the clear springs over his top, he let out a rustle, almost a sigh, of content. Coming back, he reached for me and I motioned for him to come to my side. Together, we talked of the view before us, of the many hills and valleys and of the countless number of trees in the forest. We talked about the streams and in a reciprocal exchange; the streams seemed to talk back. Laughing as though I were young again, I looked at my companion and marveled at the life that I felt once more. He was young, as must be noted, but in all my years, there was a wisdom in Finley that I could never hope to attain. During his stay, the forest came to life; the birds sang long, beautiful songs of years past and the waters so near us rushed in a carefree joy. As the sun deepened in the sky, the time came for Finley to depart once more. And so he left, turning to stare at me and wave a goodbye, giving me a look as though it were a promise that he would soon return.

And return is what he did; the next day, the day after, and the day after that. Each day his

return became more and more expected, not only by myself, but by the entire livelihood of the area. We depended on his coming and longed for it the moment he left us. For in his coming, we were able to have a piece of a life so free and marvelous, without bounds and full of dreams. He tried hard to remain in these parts and to become as we were: elements devoted to nature. And we admit that we tried to do the same, in wishing every moment of every day to have the freedom of his movement and the glory of his stance. There was one day, however, that he did not come. And it was this day that the forest went wild, beyond the imagination of any of us inhabiting it. The trees creaked with age as I did and the stream seemed angry with torrents of water spitting from its banks. The clouds overhead crowded the sun from the day and night began to enfold us. This madness that occurred sprung from our disappointment. We were depending on him, depending on his life to keep us going. My being turned green, once again, with an envy so deeply rooted. And the birds gave into their nature and spent the morning, afternoon, and evening squawking at every noise and rustle that I made and that the trees made. We were a mess; our order had left us. It was at this point that I knew true despair and when the moon was overhead, I felt it not for myself, but for Finley, who appeared so suddenly that a hush filled the forest. All creatures of nature held themselves low to the ground in shame, for, immediately it was seen that Finley was not himself. His limbs sagged and his trunk staggered. The wind moved through him in such a way that I heard a moan come from deep inside his being. His disappointment was so heavy that I tried unceasingly to give him comfort, for his disappointment had become my own. I reached for him and as he came to me. I felt his burden. He rustled something to me and though I could not hear, I began to understand. I tried to console him and with a wave and rustle to the stream beside us, a lullaby ensued:

Hushing waters, Rushing waters
Send your soul to sleep.
Hushing waters, Rushing waters
Quiet now and dream.

It was not long until this lullaby began to take hold of him. His grip on me lessened and his being sighed with trouble and fell into a deep rest. And as he slept, I, also, rested my limbs, in hopes that all would be normal in the morning hours.

But all was not normal when I awoke. Finley had disappeared and I was left alone. For the countless hours that lay before me, I contemplated my place on earth and felt a foreboding presence telling me that my days were coming to an end. Finley's coming last night had been a warning and as each hour passed, I grew more and more still and those around me sang their songs of mourning.

The Ending of Mine and the Beginning of His

I waited for Finley to return that night, for I knew what was to be conversed. It was clear to me now that I was facing my life and so was he; my days were ending and his were just beginning. As I thought into the late hours, I looked for him in every rustle. With the moon casting a glow about the forest, he came to me with a look that concluded the matter and was heavy in air. Water poured from him in such a way as a tree could never do. The stream beside me let out a loud hush, begging Finley to quiet his tears, begging him to release his soul into the waters. His limbs shook with a passion that I have never known. His trunk split to the sobbing grass and melted into a full being of sorrow. I cried with him. He expressed what I never could; gave in as I never could. The winds around

left us in silence and their leaving was so overwhelming that Finley bowed with the weight of it all and with foliage outspread, he gripped for all he knew. His burden was so great that I began to feel it, myself, as he wrapped himself around me and tried to keep his roots in the earth. A lofty figure I once believed him to be, but now, now he was what I was. Together, we were two beings searching for our lives and once we had found them, we were unable to stand under the pressure. This was too big and we were too small. He stayed with me that night and we leaned on one another for support. With all our might, we tried to lighten the situation as each of us remembered the days of true happiness, when we were free to converse as we pleased. But the more and more we thought of it all, the more sorrowful we became. So we silenced ourselves in our hanging. When morning came, I was not surprised that he was not there. But I expected him back at any moment. I took the opportunity of his absence and gave one final look at all that was before me. To the birds of the air, I rustled a goodbye, and to the lofty trees, I bowed. To the stream, I whispered and with limbs lifted as high as I could make them, I gave the heavens my final stance and Finley appeared once more. In his limbs he held a shiny object: the object of my passing. With a peaceful look upon us both, the time had come. The shiny object crashed into my side and the heavy bark of old age fell to the ground. Another crashing was all that I could take and I fell upon the grass, embracing the life that was before me. I understood what I was in this moment and I understood Finley, as well. We were tree and man, providing for each other's needs and finding that together, we were lifting up the magic.

Finis

My Alma Mater: the Architect of My Fate

By Mariza Cooray

As the house built on rock, she stands firm.

Winds may try to wind her calm,

Storms to wound and shake her,

But never to break her.

Her grounds echo lessons of past,

Verity, spirit and youth generous yet evenhanded,

Only tip to spill the loyalty

That unites,

Yet, define each marble of promise, faith and effort

Which sometimes unknowingly bound and stretch and threaten

To scrape her, but not to break her.

The different marbles unlike yet so much alike,

Translucent, yet vivid in their colors scatter

Red, Black, Green and Blue

Lying proud, unafraid and sparkling underneath

Rain and Sun, at night or day

Beckoning to passer's-by to wander through narrow paths,

Her wide open Doors there to meet.

Perfect

By K.D. Mertz

This dress is so tight on me. I can't believe that I chose this one. And my hair...my goodness! It looks like it belongs on a porcelain doll. I can't imagine what I was thinking. I've been to so many of these events in the past. They always make me feel like I am going to a fashion show. Everyone is always looking at you. They're always judging you on your appearance and on the way you carry yourself as you walk through the double doors. God, I'm a nervous wreck.

The phone is ringing again. Never a moment of peace in this house. "Mom, will you get that please? My nails aren't dry yet."

She looks at me and rolls her eyes. She's been doing that since I was a child. For some reason or another, my mother has never approved of the way that I handle things. She has told me in the past that she is proud of my accomplishments, at least once or twice. However, most of my life she has criticized the way I have chosen to live it. I suppose she has every right, being a mother. I am the embodiment of everything she once was and is now. At least, that is what is expected of me.

"Kathy, it's John. He wants to know if you're almost ready." She laughs. "Should I tell him to wait another week?"

Am I almost ready? That's a good one. "Tell him that perfection takes time. Can't rush it." That is all too true. "I'll be ready when Carrie gets herself moving and puts on my face."

In my life I have worn many faces. I think the majority of women do, especially in my family. To me, it's like hiding the truth behind the mask. You put on a show for others. You reflect what they expect, or what they want to see. Outside I am this calm and pulled together twenty-five year old. I never freak out. I am poised and ready for anything that comes my way. But inside, I am a wreck. I hurt easily. I take things to heart way too much. Inside I am your average, ordinary girl who just wants to live her life without anyone's constructive, or rather destructive, criticism.

"Ouch!" I rub my brow. My sister just laughs. I'm so glad it's so easy for them to laugh right now. Honestly, I haven't had the time or the desire to laugh in a week.

For Carrie, beauty has always come easily with her long, blonde hair and soft features. Five minutes, and she was out the door looking completely finished and refined. My mother has always favored her in that respect. "She'll marry well. She'll do well in life," my mother was fond of saying about her other daughter.

"I'm just trying to make you beautiful, Katie. And sometimes beauty hurts." She continues to pluck my brow. "Hold still. Stop shaking."

Stop shaking? I might as well stop breathing. Thank you Lord for finally making her put down that Chinese torture device. "Mom, is Daddy gone yet?"

"Yes, honey. He said he will meet us there." She hands me a glass of champagne. "I figured you could use one of these." I could use one actually, and then a few more.

Carrie dusts powder on my face. "I honestly don't know what you are so worried about." She sweeps blush across my cheek, like I need it. I know I am flushed already. "I mean, it's not like you don't know John. Not like it's your first date or anything. And besides, he's so perfect."

"Do we ever truly know anyone completely?" I have pondered the thought many times.

"Katie, must you be so melodramatic? You've been this way all of your life. Don't you think it's time to grow up a bit?" I can always count on my mother to remind me of my tendency to overreact. Too bad I don't think she is justified at the moment.

My sister breaks up the impending argument, turning me around to face my mother. "There. See that face, mom?" She smiles proudly. "Perfection."

There is a knock at the door. "That must be the driver. Good timing." My mother rushes to get the door, and I look into the mirror to examine Carrie's artistry.

I smile, giving her a sense of approval for her hard work. But as I take a deeper look into the face staring back at me in the mirror, I don't see perfection. I see the same scared, uncertain girl I have always been. No amount of makeup can hide the truth beaming from my eyes. "It's time," I say taking a deep breath.

As we arrive, my mind is racing back and forth. I have heard the saying that right before you die, you see your life flash before your eyes. I realize now that it's not that they are dying that brings the mind to manifest these things, but anxiety and frustration about what lies ahead.

I see my father standing at the double doors, looking at his pocket watch and pacing. He looks at me and smiles proudly. "You look beautiful, baby. Ready?" I give him a faint smile and take his arm in mine.

The crowd of people swarm around me, all telling me how perfect I look as they fluff my gown. They hand me my bouquet, and as the last of the crowd disperses into the building it is now my turn. The doors open, and I look down the long walkway. I see John, smiling from ear to ear at the sight of his perfect bride. I see my family and friends, all looking at me and whispering to one another their opinions of me.

As I approach the altar, I look to my mother. She gives me a reassuring smile. I can sense what she is saying as she looks at me with pride. "Just smile for the cameras, dear. Everything is perfect."

It's everything, it's nothing, it's what you want it to be.
By Sherri Peters

God it's so late, but I can't stop the rate that my thoughts whirl in circles round my brain.

*Thoughts of you, thoughts of him, thoughts of loving again, I swear I'm as good as
insane.*

Or maybe not so, for the direction I flow is toward any and all things that ARE.

With that thought in mind, I remember a time I was more lost than I am right now.

I put myself thru it and as soon as I knew it I promised I'd never forget how.

It comes from within, you've seen it, and you've been, where the matter no longer does.

To transcend space and time it's all in your mind as the world falls away with a clatter.

And alone there I sat, and I sat, and I sat until all I had know was just shattered.

Mutter mutter. What about matter????

Holding my head because my thoughts are too scattered!

Come back HERE and play or u might fly away!

Must you always be searching for more?

Always!

Love For My Man

By Kim Allen

Can
You
Help
Me?

When do I stop pretending to be happy?
When do I stop smiling,
And laughing?
How do I begin the process of mending my broken soul?

I reach out to my Man
And I hear Him saying, trust.
But if I must be honest...
Its hard to have hope.
It's hard to cope with the realities of this cruel, cruel world.
You said put my faith in You and be patient.
But on the real, I'm tired of waitin'
I been doing everything You've asked me to do
I pray and pray and pray
Yet sometimes it still feels like You have nothing to say in return
And it hurts.

You been waitin' a long time for me to come to You
You been asking me and begging me to confide in You
I hear You in my sleep
Saying You'll never leave
But when I open my eyes
My eyesight seems....
Empty

I know You're there
I know You hear me
Speak to me
Speak to my heart
Tell me where to start to begin
Hell... Tell me when it's gonna end.

Am I asking too much?
Am I just in too much of a rush?

Ok, ok... I feel You.
I'ma let You handle this
I'ma let You do what You do
And in the meantime, I'ma try to stop brow beatin' You

But while You're workin', can I have a request?

I
Need
To
Be
Loved

Will You love me?
And never leave me?
Whole Heartedly?

What's that You say?
Will I love You.....?

Hell yeah!
If thats all I gotta do to get the things that I need and dream of...

I'll
Give
You
My
LOVE

“Wet Wood”

by Ashley Barner

I sing the songs of the wet, wet wood.
The drop that drips from the twig is shod
Like a silver tear from the cheek of God,
Like a di'mond drop, the falling blood
Of the clouds that melt like sorrowing ice,
Mourning the loss of paradise.
I sing the songs of the wet, wet wood.

I sing the songs of the deep, deep drop
That lands on my head from the high tree-top,
That falls from the leaves more thick than the rain
That fell from the cloud on the open plain;
As if the wood in sympathy cries
For man's sad loss of paradise.
I sing the songs of the deep, deep drop.

I sing the songs of the gray, gray sky,
The hem of His robe that's passing by,
As He walks on high, and sees, and cries,
Mourning our loss of paradise,
Like I walk below, and I bend and sigh,
And feel in the woods the sympathy nigh
From the last living things that reach the skies
And have seen both earth and paradise,
Whose wooden faces and greening eyes
Were the last to see sweet paradise.
I sing the songs of the gray, gray sky.

The Temple Falls

by Megan Betts

Follow my lead,
Take my hand,
You can trust me.
But I can't,
I don't know.
You don't have to know,
Just feel.
But what if...

My voice falls away.
He's inside everyday.
Inside my head,
Inside my heart.
This thing he calls love,
Is dead.
He's just a fake.
I struggle to control him,

But he always breaks free.
When I resist him,
Blunt force throws me back like a frisbee.
When I run from his arms,
He deals me more harm.
After it's over,
I feel like a whore.
I don't love him.

But leaving is more than just a chore.
I put up my walls,
He crashes through them.
He doesn't stall for a second.
He finds my weaknesses,
My self consciousness.
He bruises my heart.
I try to leave,

He threatens my soul and breaks every part of me.
I push away,
He brings pain to my side.

I threaten to leave,
He contemplates suicide.
Won't let me go,
'Til I say I'd die...
For him.

I try to leave,
Then the temple again he rapes.

My Space is a place for friends

By, Elizabeth Rice

It's one place to come together
or to fall a part
and it's one way
to find Nobody who you
would have never found
in previous technologies
It's a place where you can seek
if you have within you the ethic to look
(but it's probably more of a debate of drive than ethic)
The good and bad reside there
Nobodys can be Somebodys
as long as the friend count portrays it
though no one said it couldn't be a HTML lie
(to themselves to falsely boost confidence)
But in the long run:
the outcome could be just
a bunch of denatured third person thinkers
who contribute to the stereotypes of their own
automatic generation

The absence of three senses
makes this environment dream like
because it could very well be
not as true as you
think or want it to be

They added the sounds
to make it more real, (I guess)
probably to make it seem
like a place worth investing trust
The rules for the exhibitions
are constantly being broken
Little girls scantily clad
can stay
but artists' renditions of Nobody
can not
because They are afraid.
Generations become corrupt
but the mouse keeps clicking and
the network sizes keeps growing
but at the end of the day
Law suits can save Nobody

In the Ocean's Eye

By Madeline Newell

Notes are in the voice I hear,
a melody that reach my ear.
Soft in language, it comes to me,
like the gentle waves touch the sea.
Deep his thoughts are, deep I feel,
when the tide comes in, I then am real.
The sun shines with a knowing look,
for in his words, my heart he took.
They bind me to him and to his grace,
I look unto his wondering face
and the salt of the ocean is in his eyes,
for in his tears, the ocean cries.
I turn to him and he turns to me,
and then we turn to the blueing see.
Two steps we take to the ocean ahead,
and make the promise to be, instead,
no more a part of the world behind,
but only part of the hearts we bind.
And into the ocean, the waves cover us,
we profess not to live a life loveless.
A crashing sound drives us in
and to the depths we carry, when
the water reaches our lungs the same
and to the ocean, our love remains.
To death we give our final bow
and the waters of love complete our vow.
So to the ocean we owe our lives,
for now our love is in the tide,
our tears no longer remain hidden,
for what is free was once forbidden.

The One
by Kim Allen

In all of my life I've put myself on a quest
To find The One who I can love the best
Not The One who indulges in my looks or success
Not The One who plays games with my heart as a test
My quest is to ultimately discover "my baby"
Not a brotha that disrespects but a strong willed young man
Whose smile is so radiant it outshines the sun
And his mind is more dangerous than a 12 gauge shot gun
Not The One who only wants to get me between the sheets
But The One who is going somewhere to make his ends meet
I need The One who will overcome all adversity
By trusting in God and his soul to be what he wants to be
Please understand I can't have a weak man
Like those brothas who want me to be less than I can
I consider myself to be a strong young female
After I've done all I can I keep trying to excel
God gave me the skills to be strong and to keep my stand
That is why I need The One so I can fulfill the Master's plan
Behind every sista there has to be a mista
I've went through a lot of the wrong ones so hopefully I haven't missed him
So now I foresee that my quest is over and done
I've visualized the end as in the west sets the shimmering sun
The Almighty Father has blessed me from up above
With The One who forever I can love
The Lord has never lied to me so what I shall say now is true
My quest is now history, I've found The One
It's you

The Pianist

By Mariza Cooray

The sadness engulfs his eyes,
Each movement so imprecise yet precise.
He glides slowly,
His emotions cold and white.

Beyond words,
Helpless to heal fresh wounds
Inflicted by my own deeds.
The covering of shame clothes his eyes,
The agony between us,
As a string taut and stretched.
His eyes closed tight, he flies.
Beyond age-old keys of black and white.

In vain, he changes to tunes bright,
Conscious of my unconscious gaze
Entertaining only his audience of boxes and clocks.

Tick tock... tick tock...
Tick tock...
Time retards his tempo,
As skies grumble,
He opens his eyes wide and
His fingers stop flying.

Tick tock... tick tock...
Oh, glorious silence.

Legacy

By R.S. Heston

Times will come, and go,
are here.
Things we want, and dread,
and fear.
The world is dark, alight,
and dim.
An unknown dangles on
broken limb.
Something nags at back
of mind.
Something lost I want
to find.
A story unfurls, opens,
starts.
Among the bonded women's
hearts.
A whisper: softly, silent,
still.
A cry from one with new-found
will.
"People, now: this sorrow:
Pierce.
A sorrow: frightful, frequent,
fierce."
Here, but not:
invisible.
A secret: harsh, benign,
civil.
A Blaue Blume calls from
Far away
A story now we start
to say:
Loneliness with friends
so dear.
Times will come. And go.
Are here.

College

By Danae Paiz

I'm a big girl now. *Am I ready for this?*

I'm shopping and packing. *Do I have everything I need for school?*

Wow! I thought this time in my life would never come. *Me in college?*

I know I'll miss my family. *I know they'll always be there for me, though.*

I'm moving out of the house! *Well, pseudo-moving out, 'cause most of my stuff is still at home.*

I'm excited to see my new friends that I met at orientation.

And, I can't forget my new room mate, my old friend from fifth grade, Rosalie.

But, I know I'll miss my old friends, too. *That's what cell phones and IMs are for, right?*

Everyone says that you make your closest friends in college. *I'll always have Jenn and Agatha.*

Everyone says that the college years are the fun years. *We'll see.*

I'm so excited about taking riding lessons from a real instructor! *Bye-bye, Phillip and Kathy!*

Independence. *Isn't that what I've always wanted?*

Making my own decisions; managing my time; *feeling grown-up.*

I'll be ok, even though I know I'm a "work in progress." *I'll be just fine.*

Untitled

By Michelle Pearson-Casey

The grisly gore
consumes the floor
from the closet to the hall

and on the tile
the splattered bile
where bloody rose buds fall.

The wide-eyed man
returns his hand
to the broken, splintered hull

and rips apart
his lover's heart
still twitching at her gall.

His eyes red, wide
hands still inside.
Voices warn him not to stall.

Then quicker still
he tears his kill
from the battered, gaping skull.

When all is done
and rose the sun
alarmed at what he saw

and called his Lord
from the bloody board
of his sister's front room hall.

Ascension

By John A. Scarffe

With a measured stride like dawn
He poked over the hill's horizon
Where the gray, wounded sky bled orange cotton.

Past tall church-door pines he climbed
To the cliff's altar in a mountain-lipped bowl.
His spirit rose like smoke from an open fire.