

Preface

Literary Magazine



Introduction

Goucher's Literary and Art magazine has been reborn a number of times, appearing under different titles, in various formats, or being revived after years of absence. Just as the student community becomes a new creature every year with the flux of incoming and outgoing students, Preface transitions through new forms and guises, like a very confused phoenix.

This year, we've journeyed through programs and publishing terms in an effort to polish the magazine's format. We've upgraded our layout to Quark and found a high-quality printer. I am thrilled and amazed by the progress that has been made. I feel that Preface has grown incredibly and is taking on a form that does justice to the work it showcases.

This was made possible largely due to two dedicated people who had the talent, the guts, and the humor to make this magazine something excellent. Rachel Stark, our art editor, assured the quality of our product with her deliciously honest expression of opinions and her genius in artistic affairs. Hilda Rizzo-Busack brought the magazine to an entirely new level with her technical knowledge of Quark, her enthusiasm, and her astounding baking skills.

However, a much larger group made this edition possible. I would like to thank all the assistant editors who rated submissions and lent their support in general. Thank you to our poetry editor, Jillian Schweitzer, and our prose editor, Allison McCarthy. A special thanks goes out to Ayumi Yasuda in the Communications Office, who helped us through the publication process. Thank you especially to Melissa Tillery, who provided our beautiful cover and page art. We would also like to thank Madison Bell, our advisor, and Amanda Bannon, our dedicated treasurer. And, finally, thank you to all of our contributors, whose participation is truly essential to our existence.

Shaina Longway

Staff List

Editor in Chief—Shaina Longway
 Art Editor—Rachel Stark
 Poetry Editor—Jillian Schweitzer
 Prose Editor—Allison McCarthy
 Layout Director—Hilda Rizzo-Busack
 Treasurer—Amanda Bannon

Assistant Editors:

Rayna Andrews
 Jessica Fugate
 Katherine Lepham
 Allison Maskaleris
 Julie Steinbacher
 Abrielle Willis
 Dana Winkler
 Brett Youngerman

Faculty Advisor:

Madison Smartt Bell

Interested in Contributing?

Send Spring 2008 submissions to
 PrefaceMe@gmail.com by Friday, March 28



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Hips

Franca Muller

To the part of my body
which crests and undulates,
the wave of weeds, salt,
groupers, and sea bass,
my pendulum
for when I walk,
dance, stand
in open-air markets, sit
in waiting rooms,
and look for my glasses.
To the camber of my waist
that suspends linens,
frustrates pant legs,
and clarifies
where the darkness of my eyes
is borne from,
why there is an Andean cassette
whose roots have wound themselves
into my tape player,
and in what language
I dream.



Reaching

Julie Steinbacher

Digital Photograph



With Honesty

Adriana Saldana

I admire the skill with which you
 avoid confrontation;
 I, myself, am a pacifist.
 But your diverted glances
 and denial of my existence
 have inspired me to explore new limits,
 because
 your silences have done more to
 than you could ever accomplish
 because you never said you would
 and you left me, waiting
 for your return
 most
 expectations, when all
 I sought was the
 You would
 avert your eyes and
 lower your standards in order to lie,
 admit to the damage you have
 done to
 life.
 In this deafening quiet,
 I resist the temptation to jump
 to conclusions,
 but your silence is the canvas
 for my most compelling
 destroy me
 with honesty,
 leave me
 with the
 brutal
 truth,
 rather
 than
 my
 illusions.

White Veins Against the Sand

Rachel Stark

By the sea, beneath the yellow and sagging moon,
 cast off with me. Silver flowers are blooming
 and wilting on top of each booming wave.
 By the sea there's a city over which
 red and highlighter-yellow hang like a shroud.
 There are clickety-clack boardwalk boards under
 wheels and toddler feet, sweat that sticks just
 over your lip and the yells of swimmers
 clogging your ears. There is no world there,
 only violent color and heat.
 But in the night the people disperse,
 and the sky seems to cool with the release.
 By the sea, we scuffle our feet in the sand,
 love the sound of it and leap out amongst
 the violet breakers.
 Let's slip like the moonlight through the sheaves of sea.
 Let's reflect to the ocean floor and shimmer
 like white veins against the sand.





Warm Metal

Rachel Stark

Digital Photograph

Fear

Dalenna Moser

What was I doing alone?
I remember the heaviness of my feet
in thick snow, my own voice crying as they came behind.
A flock of gobbling males pecking at my rear,
small back and stubby legs.

Have you ever looked into the eyes of a bird?
Solid black eyes. Never mind the handsome blue face,
I only knew the eyes and thick red skin
hanging at the neck, a flap drooping over the open mouth.
And looking into those eager eyes, I wondered, what do you
want?

My parents rescued me swinging brooms
“Get! Get!” they yelped
as you would to a stray cat
or a scroungy dog.

When I hear them just over the mountains,
when my father brings out that wooden instrument
echoing through the air like their shrill gurgle,
when we devour turkey on thanksgiving—

Still, I try to remember
why I was alone
in such cold air,
deep snow.



The Wax Man's Offer

Ashley Haavik

It was the day the museum rained
with the undusted longing
I had swept into the cracks
in the walls
of myself.

I pulled away,
refusing to indulge
the idle coquetry
of a handsome stone statue,
beckoning me,
from behind its glass abode.

In the unlit corridor
the wax man glowered from his pedestal.
The shrink wrapped crowd marveled momentarily,
then hurried past with waning interest,
each exhibit, precursor to the next.
But I stood
stultified before him,

then slipped my hands through his façade.
Let his lust dribble over me
like warm saliva.
His lopsided lips bequeathed
one flypaper kiss,

and I was enmeshed comfortably
in the gummy body of the pitiable paramour.
He threw a pasty bridal gown over my neck,
and hung me pretty beside him,
begged me to stay forever.
With him, I never had to live or see
but in the curdling, seemingly painless existence
of wax.

I left the museum forever.
Abandoned the wax man and his
convincing imitation of what love must feel.
As indeed I would rather bleed,
then pretend to be.



Rain Dancer*Abrielle Willis*

You like the rain.
I know because I've seen you dance
Under each drenching torrent.
I've seen you close your eyes
And reach out your hands
To try and catch the flood.
I've seen you cry;
You say it's the rain,
But I can see your eyes.
They glisten
And right after it rains
They no longer do so.
You hide your hurt among the waterfalls.
I've seen you watch the storms.
I know you reminisce.
I know you have regrets.
The storms shadow the misery on your face.
You say that only the darkness loves you.
You say you are alone.
But what you do not realize
Is that I also like the rain.

**Love at First Sight***Emily Taub*

Digital Photograph



The Proposal

Janosek Doyle

A Play

Cast of Characters

Les:

A young man, mid twenties at the oldest. He has a soft voice, and a slightly feminine demeanor. Prone to extreme frustration. Dressed in a dark suit.

Allison:

A good friend of Les. Big personality, very loud voice. Also prone to extreme frustration. Dressed in a black dress.

Scene

A bathroom, presumably in the home of Les or Allison or a mutual friend.

Time

The present, almost anywhere and any time of day.

Setting

The action takes place in a bathroom, which is formed by three walls center stage, one upstage, and two on each side forming a trapezoidal chamber (missing, of course, the 'fourth' wall). On the stage left wall is a door, leading into the rest of the home. Against the rear wall is, from stage right to left, a sink and medicine cabinet, a toilet, and a bath/shower. A small rug is down center. For no justifiable reason the whole chamber (which should take up no more than half the stage at most) is against a backdrop of a fanciful jungle.

At Rise

The lights come up as ALLISON drags LES through the door at stage right and sits him down angrily on the toilet.

ALLISON (Angry)

What the hell is your problem?

LES

What do you mean? I asked you a question!

ALLISON

You asked me to marry you!

LES

Uh...yeah?

ALLISON

Well could you have done it any more incorrectly?

LES

What was wrong with it?

ALLISON

What was right with it? (A knock is heard at the door)

LES & ALLISON

(In response to the knock) In a minute!

ALLISON

There are ways to do this! (becoming very flustered) you ask me out. We date for a few months. Eventually we have sex and I regret it! You buy me flowers and chocolates, you introduce me to your parents and they don't approve because I'm not Jewish, so to spite them you invite me to move in with you. (Pause) The sex gets a little better, you ask, and then, only then after all that, do I say yes! (ALLISON has worked herself up into a fit, and begins to cry).



LES

So, if I do all that, will you marry me?

ALLISON

Oh, Les, it was never really about that! I mean, I'd expect all that, but...(suddenly angry) What the hell is wrong with you? There is just so much wrong with this I don't even know where to start!

LES

Allison, outside of the fact that we've never dated and we haven't had any really bad sex, what's wrong with this?

ALLISON

Les, how can you honestly ask that? You just proposed to me!

LES

So?

ALLISON

At my brothers funeral!

LES

Fair point, but I was close to him too, you know.

ALLISON

Yes, I know. You were his gay lover!

LES

Yes, that is true.

ALLISON

So what does that mean for you? Are you trying to replace him with me? Because I'm pretty sure that I don't have a vital piece of equipment...

LES (frustrated)

Allison, I'm not gay!

ALLISON

What?

LES

I'm not gay, is there a fucking echo in here? (A knock is heard at the door)

ALLISON & LES

(In response to the knock) In a minute!

ALLISON

How could you say you're not gay? You fucked my brother! Straight men do not fuck my brother! I saw you fucking my brother! It was very awkward!

LES (condescendingly)

Yeah, I remember. Thanks for knocking.

ALLISON

Don't pan this off on me! (Imitating LES's voice) Yeah, I sleep with guys but I'm not gay. (Her own again) I have boobs and menstruate, but can I be sure I'm a woman? (Dissolves into tears again).

LES

We don't have to raise the kids Jewish.

ALLISON

Shut up, it's not funny.

LES

But we're naming the first girl Bitina.





Conversio

Adriana Saldana

Pencil, 8" x 11"

ALLSION (disgusted)

No we're not, we're (catches self) we're not having kids!

LES

Allison, I love you. And I loved your brother, and that was weird. I'd never felt that way about a guy. But I did, and I feel the same way about you. You don't have to agree to it right now, but (pause) please don't say no.

ALLISON

What is this really about? Are you trying to replace him? With me?

LES

No, God no!

ALLISON

Well then what's going on? Why do you want to be with me?

LES

Because I love you!

ALLISON

But you're gay!

LES

I'm also gay! I'm not just gay! God, who knew people would give you more crap for going into the closet.

ALLISON

But...(trails off)

LES

Allison, nobody can be all gay or all straight. I'm not at least. That's it. I love you.



ALLISON (angrily)

Stop saying that, you (awkward pause) fag! (Long silence. ALLISON begins to cry again). I'm sorry, it's not you.

LES

What is it?

ALLISSON

(Half kidding) I'm in mourning, you jack-ass! (A knock is heard at the door)

ALLISSON & LES

(In response to the knock) In a minute!

ALLISSON

I loved him so much. I know you did too, but it was different. Trust me, it was different.

LES

How?

ALLISSON

Well I never had his dick up my ass for starters. Sorry. You don't know what it was like. You were good for him. You really were. Did you know that our parents stopped talking to him after they learned he was gay?

LES

I thought they were dead.

ALLISSON

Is that what he's been telling people? They might as well be dead as far as he's concerned. They didn't even come today. They wouldn't invite him home for Christmas. He used to love Christmas. Oh, sorry.

LES (irritated)

Allison, I'm a Jew, not a Christian-hating abomination.

ALLISSON

But don't you get it, that's how we were raised! My parents were so extremely right-wing. They completely cut him out after he came out. They wouldn't even answer his calls. I wouldn't even for a while. But I loved him. And so I began to talk to him. Before you came into his life, I think I was the only friend he had.

LES

He always spoke very highly of you.

(A knock is heard at the door)

ALLISSON & LES

(In response to the knock) In a minute!

ALLISSON

I always tried to be there for him. I guess I felt badly not having been there for him in the beginning. I always told him to call our parents. It would take hours, but he always would, and they would ignore the call and he'd feel worse.

LES

No wonder he told me they were dead. He always sounded so sorry that they were gone though.

ALLISSON

He was. He loved them. (Pause) He had alcoholism pretty badly for a while, you know.



LES

I didn't. But in retrospect it kind of makes sense. That's kind of how we got together. I was at that Halloween party. We were both so hammered and started making out like our plane was going down. I was already bi-curious, I guess.

ALLISON

I remember that. (Pause) It was kind of hot, actually.

LES

But then one thing led to another. Twice. The second time...

ALLISON

Yeah, I really don't need to remember that. You could have locked the door, though.

LES

And the next morning it just still felt right. We had been drunk as fucking hell, but no regrets.

ALLISON

When did he tell you about the AIDS?

LES

The next morning. Thank God we used protection. Thank God thank God thank God. And Jesus, why the hell not, now? I still can't believe I remembered to, I was so shit-faced. But I did. No, I didn't remember, he did. Thank God, I was so drunk I didn't even know what I was doing.

ALLISON

He was really grateful to have you those last two years of his.



Goth Queen

Rachel Stark

Silver Gelatin Print



LES

Well, maybe he shouldn't have been.

ALLISON

Why not?

LES

I cared about him enough to stay with him and comfort him those last two years. I owed it to him even. But that last year, I wasn't in love with him anymore.

ALLISON

What do you mean?

LES

Well, as little sense as it made even to me, I was in love with you.

ALLISON

You mean you were hiding from the world the fact that you were straight?

LES

Yeah, I guess so.

ALLISON

You're a dumbass, you know that? (Hits him in the arm)

(A knock is heard at the door)

ALLISON & LES

(In response to the knock) In a minute!

LES

Allison, I know it's weird. It's weird for me too, and I get it, I did it all wrong. But I do love you. I may not have acted like it, but I do, and I want to marry you.

ALLISON

I love you too. But I'm not ready to marry you yet.

LES

That's fine. 'Yet' is good.

ALLISON

And I don't want to raise the kids Jewish.

LES

(A moment pause for thought) That's fine.

ALLISON

So what do we do now?

LES

I don't know.

(There is a knock at the door)

ALLISON & LES

(Furious, in response to the knock) In a minute!

THE END





Quiet Corners

Julie Steinbacher

Digital Photograph

Deliver Me

Shaina Longway

Deliver me.
 Wrest me from this place
 Of shuddering and bodyfists
 Where I am clenched
 Into something rigid and unnatural,
 A rictus of resistance.
 Deliver Me.
 Breathe into me the peace of the sky
 Or something as pale blue.
 I am tired of these dark colors and
 Long for light, something airy,
 Something blue, like the fingernail-
 Crescent of a periwinkle
 Nestled in sparkling sand.
 Deliver Me—
 So That I too may nestle, may rest.
 I have gone for so long without breathing.



Ophthalmic Solution

Franca Muller

On a stoop one house down
 from Pandora's Italian Ices
 where my thighs cooled
 on slates of limestone
 while I watched green dye
 settle into the niches
 of your lips,
 I caught your pupils dilating;
 irises being swallowed
 by the black mouth
 at their center.

But we weren't
 on a sidewalk at 2am,
 where street lamps and bar lights
 wouldn't be enough to satisfy
 our hungering eyes.

No. We were outside Pandora's
 on a Saturday afternoon
 saturated with photons,
 absorbed
 by our melanin
 and keratinocytes,
 where the only reason for your ocular behavior
 was wanting to consume more
 than luminous rays.

Symmetric

Abrielle Willis

My eyes are closed,
 clenched against the world,
 the twisting world that bites and breaks.
 I breathe cotton breaths,
 smell caramel and coffee,
 my head rising and falling:
 crescendo...
decrecendo...
 in the gentle dawn
 For the first time,
 I feel no pain.
 I feel nothing but his heartbeat,
 his left hand mixed in my hair,
 fingertips of his right hand
 meeting the fingertips of mine
 in an innocent kiss.
 Palm to palm.
 I bend my knee,
 giving space to my numb thigh,
 stamped with ridges from the couch.
 He stirs.
 He exhales.
 His hand tiptoes into mine.
 We match;
 perfect symmetry.





Whitewash
Matt Coben-Price
Digital Photograph



The Sky Speaks
Julie Steinbacher
Digital Photograph





Evolution

Shaina Longway

Scratchboard and Watercolor, 8.5" X 11"



Undercurrents

Rita and Eric Damiana

Digital Photograph





Transcendent World

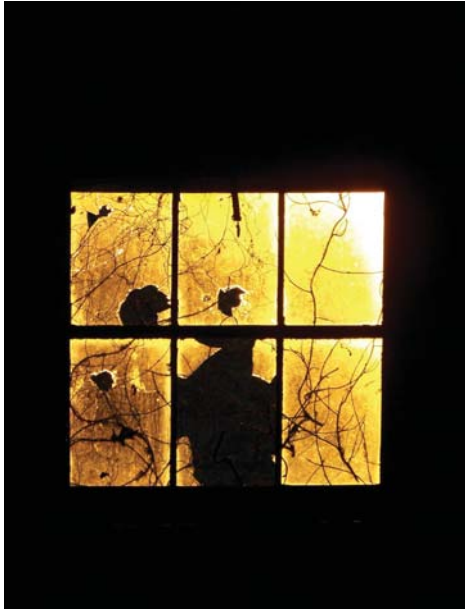
Jessica Fugate
Photograph



Down Greenmount

Matt Coben-Price
Digital Photograph





Shatterglass

Julie Steinbacher
Digital Photograph



Fall

Rachel Stark
Digital Photograph



This is not...*Julie Steinbacher*

This is not
 an ode to the networks
 of wires that carry your
 voice to mine,

but to the feel
 of your breath on my
 cheek as you speak.
 Nor is it an ode

to the screen that
 narrows your essence into
 a tiny box, but to your
 strong arms that

encompass me,
 your warm body
 against mine.
 This is

an ode to
 immediacy, the
 silent hush of a finger
 pressed to lips, the

message
 behind your gaze.
 This is not an ode
 to technology,

spawned
 of cords and electric

signals, stringing
 its message along

like the silk
 from a spider's
 abdomen.
 This is

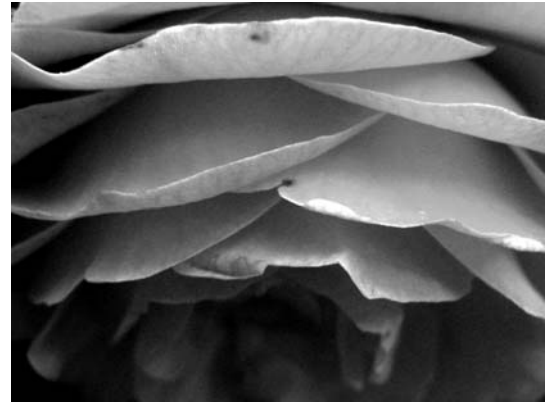
to your hands
 which know my body
 better than the pattern
 of letters

on your keys;
 to your tongue which
 draws warmth and salt
 from me,

kisses that
 can never be equaled
 digitally. This is
 to you,

your
 physicality tied
 to the electricity in
 your brain

which,
 through sparks and
 leaps, directs your touch
 to my face.

**Untitled***Emily Taub*

Digital Photograph



In Our Café

Joe Muscolino

We would sit for meals in the dusk of day
Lit by lonely café candles
Bustling by heavy chairs to grab our own

Around us the buzz of occupied life
Would hum whispering stories
Over ours spoken loud
Through teeth painted purple
And smiling for another bottle

And we shared the grit of life
Setting loneliness aside
Against our better judgment
To risk another loss
To give ourselves to each other
As our meals grew cold with talk
And warmed again with laughter

We would play with our forks
Poking holes
In our napkins like children
When silence was enough
And you wondered
Why crayons didn't come with wine

Shadows flanked our conversation
Streaked and wisped in our smoke
Dancing in the dimming light
And how did it get so late
I wondered
How did it get so late
And you slipped silent fingers that spoke
Warm into my palm and told me
We must do this more often

Only we haven't seen
That same table that cradled the wood post
And that piebald cloth from your silly spill
Still stained after all these years

We talked a month ago to sounds
Of a lost friendship through busy phones
And vacant answering machines
Messages too timid to leave
We separated into our lonely spaces
And lost ourselves again

If only I could have stopped your hands
From rattling keys to your car
To show you mine instead
Or to have stilled your hands by lightly
Touching yours inside
Maybe I could have stopped the wine
Flowing like your words to say I loved you then

And now, but somewhere, since then
I lost myself again
Found only to sit lonely in that cafe
Leaving my fork alone to drink
Even more asking myself
Under the same buzz of now tired tables
How it got so late
And how
My hands like the food across my plate
Are so cold without your touch

So when the waiter brings a check for two
I explain how you're detained
As I dine
Indulging in whispers
Spoken by the ghost of you



A Disgruntled Uterus

Shaina Longway

A disgruntled uterus is a terrible thing.
 Mine is often petulant and demands
 Penance for the many trials I put it through:
 Bouncing, jostling, running,
 But most of all,
 The great indignity of lying fallow.
 My uterus would rather swell with
 Blood and life—
 Each month I pass in chastity
 Or careful avoidance
 Angers the domineering, pink sphere within me.

At least, I think it's pink.
 I don't actually know if I'd recognize
 My uterus if I came upon it lying in the grass.
 I might think it a fantastical jellyfish that
 Managed to crawl hundreds of miles from the sea
 To lie glistening on a vacant lawn,
 Or a very odd balloon come upon hard times.

The truth is, I never asked my uterus to move in
 And make demands.
 The swollen tyrant twists in resentment
 And grumbles with annoying regularity,
 But this is not a monarchy,
 Neither is it a menarchy;
 It is an organic democracy of opinions.
 So far, the majority votes not to
 Usher in a new being,
 And my uterus will simply have
 To accept that fact.



Untitled

Kaitlyn Orr

Digital Photograph



Assateague Intrigues

Zach Martin

1. Crabs

Habitually abandoning shell
homes, the hermit's instinctive habit that
resembles a real estate buy and sell.
Is it strange to see seashore habitat
through new armor each time the body swells?
If a she crab says conchs make her seem fat
when she emerges from dressing room dells,
Will her male hint she try on a new hat?

2. Beetles

In straight lines, pushing balls of dung and dirt.
Sisyphean mimics, seldom inert.
What Olympian wrath do they deserve?
What crimes committed could such sentence serve?
Detested by the west, Egypt's Arabs
believed them holy, rollers of the sun.
Such reverential treatment of scarabs
crumbled with our finding the planet spun.

3. Horses

On that serene island, there run feral
ponies. When their equine ancestors found
sandy shore off a trade ship run aground,
they slaked marsh thirst with wine from beached barrels.
The snorting stallions' mare-courting carols
Multiplied the herd with surprising sounds.
Brackish postcoital grass snacks imperil
Mare bellies soon to be pregnancy round.

4. Birds

Avian suites of ibises, sea gulls,
blue herons, and egrets. Their cheerful cries
drown out wavelets' pounding. On annual
southern tour they honk forlorn goodbyes.
Without fail, migratory memory pulls
them down past here, the journey serves to cull
the flock. Do they mourn the fledgling that dies?
Though gorged on crab eggs they still flap and rise.



Landscape with the Fall of Icarus

Lily Smith

The plummet is one lifetime and one more
 A sharp inhalation of breath
 And a deluge of memories:
 The day of
 The fatigued fingers crafting
 The delicate, fearsome wings with
 The intense courage to pump
 Up
 Up
 Squinting against the heat haze
 Tasting the fire inside his skin
 Until
 Mind journeying far
 From his first fancy of flight.
 Body traveling nearer
 To the last fancy
 and the last flight
 Then difficulty recalling
 The details of father's face
 As the details on the ship's mast below

Become too distinct
 The sails billow
 With an insuppressible life
 Merchant hurries past—
 Market's bustling today
 Sheep graze,
 Thriving
 The shepherd is lost in
 His own fancies
 The second lifetime,
 Heart plummets
 And thuds dull with realization—
 The realization
 And then he exhales,
 A mess of feathers
 And all that's left of plummet
 Is a plume
 Perhaps the man by the shore will
 Put it to good use





Swimming Horses

Rita and Eric Damiana

Digital Photograph

It is Night

Julie Steinbacher

It is night

and you are beside me,
 warm as a sleeping ember.
 Do stars fall as I look at you?
 (your upturned cheek, patterned by the streetlight)
 Do other lovers embrace, spinning out
 spiral galaxies? or
 do all men sleep as you do, soundless but for your soft
 breath.

It is night, and all things should rest now,
 softly as we rest.
 The wind only tosses in its sleep, gently tumbling
 the newly fallen leaves.
 The rain clings to the clouds: another hour, another night.
 The stars, the
 clocks, the
 bells
 all hold their silence.
 A spider strings her web with dew.

Are we infinite in this moment, or are we only
 heartbeats
 pulsating with
 longing and
 sleep.
 What can we be but
 faint, golden imaginings that flicker

like stars of the earth.



Johnny

Brett Youngerman

“Johnny, eat your big mac,” I whisper, “Eat your fucking big mac Johnny.”

“Shut up...” Johnny murmurs making sure the people in the booth across from us can’t hear him. He just sits there, bathing in self-pity.

“Johnny, your dinner is getting cold,” I continue, “There are people in this world who would do horrible things just to have that Adonis of a burger which sits before you,” I can feel him getting impatient, “Ah, Ah...we don’t want another outburst, then no one gets to eat.” It takes some serious shit to get kicked out of a McDonald’s in Newark, the fabulous “Brick City” of New Jersey. I mean you gotta be going nuts, but once or twice I’ve gotten Johnny riled up enough to get his ass kicked to the curb, “Eat your burger you dumb fuck, you’re gonna be late for the show.” Johnny takes a couple of pecks at his sandwich before tossing it in the trash bin and we take off. He’s the soundboard guy at a small club in the South Ward called “Microphone’s”. Johnny has been the sound guy there going on 18 years now, way before I came around. He went straight from Rutgers Grad with a B.A. in Music Production to Johnny, sound guy at “the Mic.” The first couple of years weren’t bad, it was decent pay and a good way to stay connected to the music industry, but right around Johnny’s 10-year anniversary shit started to sink in.

“Hey Johnny,” Doug, the twenty something door manager pauses from putting big black X’s on underage kids hands to make a path into the club, “Big show tonight, Hamsterdamn is playing.” Hamsterdamn is your less than mediocre indie rock band who play the Mic every month or so.

“Fuck...” Johnny utters. The way to the soundboard is

littered with clove smoking, blazer-laden hipsters and over-excited, thick-rimmed indie punks. I’m glad that I get a space to watch the show in the sound booth and I don’t have to wade in that sea of alt rockers.

“Quit your bitching and set up, you know when they pack the place everyone gets a bonus.” Johnny jumps to work at the command. He never intended to be here for nearly two decades. Right when Johnny was getting ready to quit he met Jean and fell into a false sense of satisfaction and hung on to the job. When they met she was starting to become a local at the club. Who knows the fuck why. Microphone’s was a club in Newark! Filled with high school kids from Essex county and Rutgers students who were bored as shit and didn’t make it into the city that night. No place for a thirty something, nominally good looking, single chick.

She wasn’t showing when they first went out; in fact it was almost two months before he realized that Jean was beginning to grow. By that time Johnny thought he was in love. The bitch let him fall in love with her without even telling him she was pregnant with some ex-boyfriend’s kid. After that bomb dropped, Johnny kept Jean and the soundboard job.

“Hello...uh we’re Hamsterdamn. 1, 2, 3, 4,” after the lead singer’s countdown calamity kicks in, Johnny busies himself with checking that everything is at an adequate volume. The recently docile crowd begins convulsing to the simple rhythm that they are being beaten over the head with. The bar that’s against the left wall seats only 6 at a time, after that it’s standing room only. A thin haze begins to rise between us and the Hamster-fucks. It would be pointless to throw the smokers out. The Mic is pretty hard to stand sober even for the occasional concertgoers and business would not fare well if the club started making illegal substances one of its top security priorities.

The song ends and the lead singer motions for his micro-





Untitled

Racbel Stark

Digital Photograph

phone to be turned up. Johnny jumps to and finds the right knob on the board and pushes it up a couple of notches. That's about the extent of his job. Band mates tell him what needs to be turned up and Johnny makes said microphone or instrument louder. Try that for going on two decades.

The show mercifully ends and we make our way out to the street. The block outside the Mic is littered with the same indie trash that was inside.

"Hey soundman!" some hipster yells and flicks a lit butt at Johnny. That little cocksucker! Johnny is kind of a joke to the locals who know how long he's had the soundboard job. This is where I take over. I wind up and throw a clenched fist into the kid's stomach. While the kid is doubled over my knee connects with his face and I leave him on the pavement with a broken nose and a little more respect for the soundman. The rest of the crowd quickly moves out of the way.

"That little fuck," I'm steamed; for how much shit I give Johnny I hate when other people have a go at him.

"You didn't need to do that," he mumbles, "just a cigarette butt..."

"Man, fuck that! If you not gonna make those little cocks respect you then I will!" I'm yelling. Johnny gets uncomfortable when I yell. He thinks it's because of all my "antics" and me hanging around him all of the time that Jean left him. She didn't think Cassidy was growing up in a stable environment. Cassidy was that little surprise that Johnny got two months into the relationship. For how badly she sprung it on him, Johnny took it all pretty well. When she was born he took care of her while Jean went to her shitty job in the city. He raised her like he was her father, but when Jean decided to leave, Cassidy was hers to take. Biology was on her side. Cassidy was about two when I started showing up



more and more. Johnny thinks everything started going down hill after that. He keeps going back to this one particular thing. It was after a show, we were walking back, I hadn't met Jean before and I was relatively new to Johnny as well. Some macho weight freak starts hitting on Jean and of course Johnny does nothing and lets this roided up asshole eye-fuck the shit out of his girlfriend. I jump in and take a brick to the fucker's head. Jean flipped out, said that that kind of violence is outlandish and no one deserves anything like that. Johnny calmed her down by being his usual passive, apologetic self. I didn't show up for a little while after that. I don't need anyone telling me how gently I need to beat some asshole that had it coming to 'em anyway.

"Damn it," Johnny murmurs as he jiggles his keys, "Door is jammed again." I move Johnny out of the way and throw my shoulder into the door a couple of times. The thing eventually budes and reveals the old wooden staircase leading up to Johnny's place. Little clouds of dust erupt with each step taken on the earwax colored carpet that lines the building's hallways. It's in a part of the city, between 15th and 30th, where going outside after midnight is ill advised. 3-B is Johnny's literal hole in the wall. The same nauseating carpet that covers the hallway follows us into the apartment and spreads throughout the place. A pile of wrinkled clothes sits on the coffee table that's held up by a thick copy of *The Cider House Rules*. Dust coats the television and the ugliest fucking floral print easy chair sits in the middle of the entire shit hole. There's a patch of carpet that's a little lighter than the rest. Jean's couch was much nicer than that ass ugly recliner.

"When is that piece of shit chair going to get thrown out?" I really don't care but I know it bothers the hell out of

Johnny when I make him think about improving the apartment. Johnny ignores me and reaches for the paperback supporting the table, "Don't tell me you're going to read that thing." When he removes the book, clothes fall onto the floor. Johnny doesn't really care.

"Irving is a literary genius..." Johnny trails off as he loses himself in the book.

"You know they made that into a movie right? That could save you a lot of time and me a lot of boredom" Johnny just keeps on reading, that's how the night goes.

It's 3 in the afternoon and that lazy fuck is still not out of bed. That's what having a job that doesn't ever require you to show up before 7:30 p.m. will do to you. Johnny stays up late and sleeps in even later. He gets up and lies around until Microphone's beckons, a blueprint for monotony. It's a good thing he found me to stir shit up every once in a while.

"Wake up" I whisper, "wake up, I'm hungry," this time with a little more volume, "It's three o fucking clock are you seriously going to spend this whole day in bed?" A muffled "fuck you" finds its way out from under the sheets, "FUCK ME! FUCK YOU! Get out of bed you lazy fucking douche bag, I want some fucking nourishment!" That does it. Johnny slides out from under his blankets and into jeans and a t-shirt. Big Macs all around!

The show that night is another all out hipster fest. Some guy is up on stage singing about being "naked as we came" and "spreading ashes around his yard." He doesn't use his name; he calls himself wine of iron or some shit like that. God I hate the fucking no talent acts this place brings in. Iron



McWhiney ends his set and thankfully we get to head home.

"I hate when those shitty folk acts perform, you have to be so quiet," The night is brisk and Johnny is walking quickly, "At least when a bad indie rock band plays you can make noise."

"I thought he was good," Johnny says under his breath continuing at his quick pace. Johnny turns down Northern instead of continuing up Easton towards his apartment.

"Hey, where the fuck are you going?" Something out of the ordinary is very rare for Johnny, "Why have I not been informed of our alternate route?"

"Just shut up," Johnny quickens his pace, he's in command for now and all I can do is go along with him. We continue down Northern and turn onto Dumott.

"Seriously, where are we headed, who do you know in this neighborhood?" He seriously never does this. He mumbles something inaudible, "What was that? Speak up Charlie!"

"Jean..." this time it's barely enough to make out.

"OH FUCK NO!" I can't believe he's pulling this, "Jean!? Are you fucking serious? What has caused for this serious lack of pride and balls on your part? That bitch left you over a year ago and now you're crawling back to her door like a fucking dog!?"

"She called me..." Johnny speaks a little louder this time.

"Oh...shit," We walk the rest of the way in silence.

Jean's new place is a lot nicer than the shit hole that is Johnny's apartment. The North Ward is full of yuppies trying to convince themselves that Newark is an "up and coming city."

"It seems that Daddy stepped in to help out his little girl. No more living in the West Ward for this little lady," I



Burst

Emily Taub

Digital Photograph



can't stand this woman.

"Shut up!" Johnny actually yells. I forgot how defensive he gets when I rip on Jean.

It takes her a couple of minutes to come to the door. If I did what she did to Johnny, I would take a while to answer the door too.

"You gonna let her have it? Or are you gonna be a little bitch?" Oh man there is no way I'll let this go well.

"Shut the fu-Jean...hi..." Pussy....

"Talking to your better half again?" Sarcasm oozes out of her words.

"No...uh..." before he can even ask to come in she walks into the apartment and leaves the door open behind her.

"So uh, you called...how are things?" Oh my god, I can't even stand how much of a pussy he is.

"I care about you Johnny, that's why I called," She's looking out the window, can't even look at him, what a whore! Have him raise your fucking kid for you and then leave him the minute you think he's going a little nutty. My fucking god, what kind of society do we live in if a guy's not entitled to round out his edges a bit, "I think you need help. You've gotten so angry. The last six months of our relationship I felt like you couldn't stand the sight of me. Then randomly you fucking explode. Every fucking bad thought you keep pent up gets dumped on some poor schmuck who does the tiniest thing wrong."

"I'm fine...is there anything else," Running, of course. First fucking instinct this little coward has.

"I'm trying to fucking help you. I tried to stay with you, I really did, but you just kept scaring me, I couldn't stay, especially not with Cassidy." Oh boy, it's coming soon; just let me loose, "You gave me no choice. Did you really expect me to stay with you with the way you were?"

"Just...I...never...uh..." He's squirming now, move on

over Johnny boy! "He's gone! He's going away! I'll get rid of him!" Oh no, I'm right here buddy; I'll get us through this. I love this kind of calamity.

"Who's going away? Get rid of who? Johnny there's no one to blame. You need help! I'm just trying to help you." She looks at him with pity that could melt bricks. Here's my chance.

"Trying to help!? Is that what you call taking half the shit in my apartment? Is that what you call telling everyone we knew that I'm crazy? That I'm fucking mentally unstable? You won't let me see Cassidy, am I too crazy to see the child I raised while you were busy creating a career for yourself? Am I t-" That bitch cuts me off before I can really get going.

"This is what I'm talking about! You fucking flip out, out of nowhere. I didn't know how long you had been keeping shit inside the first time. You almost killed that poor son of a bitch with the brick! That was almost four years ago and I still haven't gotten over it. And Doug fucking told me that you broke a kid's nose after a show the other night? Jesus fucking Christ John, I don't even know who I'm trying to help."

"Then don't fucking help. If I scare you so much stay the fuck away!" The door slams with such a satisfying sound, you know, the nice crisp slam that lets you know that you really got a hold of the door.

"Oh fuck..." That silly son of a bitch is back to worrying again.

"Hey man, Johnny wants a Big Mac."



Back Alley, Prague

Jillian Schweitzer

I've never trusted my memory much
Pictures mean as much to me as words.

I stepped outside of Bric a Brac,
the expensive antique shop on Tynska 7.

I've been to this store earlier in the trip but came back
at the urging of my teacher. And I didn't want to leave
without capturing this spot.

I prefer urban settings, especially here. The cobblestones
never seem to end around the buildings and the gritty texture
captures more about what it is to be here in this city.

There are more modern
settings here, on the sanitized tours that they give to tourists,
but every time I've ventured back here,

I'm usually alone while
the locals around the corner share wine and stories.

I'm a harmless voyeur,
accidentally capturing people in my path,
including this young woman,
debating a purchase in the heat that
has blanketed the city.

I don't blame my memory for
not remembering as it should,
I relish the chance to capture instead of it fading.



Back Alley, Prague

Jillian Schweitzer

Digital Photograph



Suburban Ungulates

Tim King

The deer in this town grew
up with no coyotes, no wolves
and no predators but vehicles.
They grazed from their youngest
days, eyes big globs of dough,
and the bucks fought the trucks
quite by accident all the time,
leaving intestines and bones
that looked like movie-prop
clay in a brand new place
on the streets every day.
One afternoon in childhood,
(with sticks instead of lighters
and friends instead of buddies),
we saw a buck bend his sleek brown head
down brow-forward with a forest
of antlers staring us in the face.

We ran, and the pointed buck
rumbled after us until we hit the tree,
climbed up,
minor scrapes, got safe,
and there we stayed and giggled nervously
until one boy's older brother came
and scared the deer away.
All this in my neighbor's front yard,
and ten years later I still have to slam the
brakes so as not to make road-cake
out of the bucks does and fawns
that take jaunts on busy highways.
Just like them, I still don't watch my step.
But they've learned not to fear
anything human unless they're already dead.
They've learned to not care
their environment is staring them down
with even more antlers than them.



Lunch

Shaina Longway

Sunlight danced through the opened windows like an impetuous child. Mirrors, cups, and metallic appliances cast slivers of rainbow across the walls and floor of the quiet house. Daryl sat in the middle of his kitchen awaiting lunch, scheduled exactly at noon. He had already set the table and now sat on a cushioned chair in front of an empty plate and a glass of something foamy and faintly green.

Large, circular mirrors affixed to every flat surface of his kitchen reflected his face a hundred of times over. Daryl looked up at the large skylight in the center of his ceiling and saw the sun approaching its zenith.

At noon, sunlight blazed through the center of the ceiling and onto the mirrors. It shuttled back and forth amid the labyrinth of reflective surfaces, intensified, and coalesced in a glowing mass on Daryl's plate. He tucked a napkin into his shirt collar and began to feast on the captured light before him. As the sun changed position, he spooned up the last few rays of nourishment and the mirrors once more reflected only the endless replications of his face, which had taken on a healthy glow.

Daryl sighed and leaned back, fully sated. He sipped some of the green liquid by his plate and felt his fingernails growing against the cup.



I Fell Asleep Curled Up on the Floor

Bethyn Merrick-Nguyen

Bisqued Porcelain





The Voice to the Script

Rachel Stark

Silver Gelatin Print

The Boathouse

Ella Aroneau

Not used for sleeping ships,
 but saturated seaweed clothes
 fresh off the foaming sea,
 curled in front of the fire.
 We dig deep in these clothes
 for dark blue mussel shells
 cloaked in bumps of white
 barnacle coats.
 Three packed paint buckets
 (where we plopped the mussels)
 crowd the kitchen floor
 that creaks when soles step
 across the aging oak,
 socks grey with wood ash.
 Ocean salt soaks,
 seasons our handpicked food,
 tickles our tongues,
 keeps us thirsty for
 water, the waves rocking
 under a wild white moon.
 At night we climb,
 careful not to wake the dog.
 The stairs are ladder-like,
 they lead to our dream rooms.



Wayward*Scott Ferguson*

Everyone at home went to sleep three hours before.
I leave by the back door, just like every time before.

Trudging over fallen branches and old barbed wire.
The path ends at a cornfield. It was a clearing before.

I jump over a creek, and land face down on the far bank.
Humbled, I scabble to my feet. I could have
made it before.

I scale the retaining wall behind the video store.
It's a shortcut back to a main road. I've done this before.

I wander the streets and fields of my home,
suburbia incarnate
I search the familiar, to find something
I've never seen before.
