Full Issue

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The Angle

March 1999
Greetings!

This issue marks the arrival of March and, hopefully, the home stretch of the winter season. This time of year, in Rochester, people seem to ache for honest air and the rebirth of spring. While The Angle cannot deliver a rebirth of spring, we can fulfill the promise of honest air.

This month ninety-three strong submissions were received to be reviewed by our staff. I feel that those chosen to be published in this issue accurately exemplify the surplus of work we are unable to include. The events and emotions touched upon by the various writers are true to nature and represent the deep well we all draw from, the common water we all drink.

There will be one final issue of The Angle published at the end of this semester. I challenge you to submit your creative work and take a chance at being an integral part of the whole. The deadline is Friday, March 26th by 4 p.m.

Again, praise to my staff who are the people that make this publication possible. And thanks to those who believe in its voice.

Always write, and equally important, always read.

Erin A. Hopkins
**SUBMISSION GUIDELINES FOR THE ANGLE**

The following submission guidelines **must** be followed for the December 1998 issue. **All** pieces must:

1. Be typed (space according to your preference)

2. Include a cover letter which contains the author's name, address (campus or off-campus), phone number (home & work), and the title(s) of the piece(s) submitted

3. **Not** include the author's name or personal information on any pages of written text

4. Contain 1 **work** per page **only** if writing a poem or haiku

Regrettably, we are unable to accept any piece which does not follow these guidelines. If you have any questions concerning submission guidelines, please contact the Editor, Erin Hopkins, in the Writing Center (Science 225) at 385-8219. Thank you.

*** Please note: if you would like your submissions returned after the issue is published, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

**All submissions are judged anonymously.**
THE WRITERS

Sydney Andrysiak
Mike Bailey
Mark Bowers
Jessica Brand
Clairissa Breen
Shawn Carter
Sarah Crimmins
Carol Ferguson
Ben Frimpong
Scott Grates
Erin Hopkins
Monica Hopkins
Jennifer Alise Lydum
Bryan Mahoney
Krista Malagisi
Patrick McLoughlin
Kate McNamara
Hope E. Ryder
Tomomi Tamura
First Prize Winner

Green

Happiness comes at all the wrong times,
to piece together life’s riddles and rhymes.
Loneliness touches the soul and cries
for a smiling face with twinkling eyes.
A kindred spirit that seems to be true,
forms fondness and friendship embraced by so few.
The wrong time and place,
and struggles to face.
All that might be, once again torn apart,
left only with memories that dance in the heart.

--Carol Ferguson
It’s Not You

Remembering the first time you saw her,
That feeling, what was it?
Unsure, but you acted on it anyway.
It’s 8:00, the phone rings,
it’s not her, it’s not her.
The words she said, the way she looked,
it must have been everything.
Whatever it was, it has you,
and you can’t seem to escape.
It’s 8:05, the phone rings,
it’s not her, it’s not her.
You just enjoy being with her,
talking to her,
thinking about her.
It’s 8:10, the phone rings,
it’s not her, it’s not her.
Imagining what could have been,
keeping that faint hope alive
that it might still be.
It’s 8:15, the phone rings,
this time, it’s her,
but you just realized,
it’s not you.

--Shawn Carter
Third Prize Winner

I am looking for
One perfect reason
to answer all my questions,
Satisfy my soul...

I am looking for
The man of my dreams
To tell me why he hasn't
found me; a mix-up?

I am looking for
A tax-free million
ticket to love, trouble is
no store will sell them...

I am looking for
A dozen roses
to last twice as many years
as he who gave them...

I am looking for
A world to live where
Love has 'no vacancy' and
Check-out is extinct...

I am looking for
What I already
have, but want to double-check
he's what I ordered.

--Sydney Andrysiak
Why Write?

I sat, and sat, and sat. Contemplating.
Perhaps not, but I thought I was.

Pen unmoving, the flow of ink stopped cold
As I search for the inspiration that can make it write.

Paper unblemished and stiff, yet laughing.

The pen begins to move,
The paper is becoming marked,
And now we can laugh together.

I write, and write, and write.
I write to explore, and to escape.

I write to see my words,
To truly know what I mean.
And I write for you, and for others,
But not as much as I write for me.

I write for others to read and enjoy,
But only if I had fun writing it.

I write to evoke feelings in others,
But I must feel it first.

I write, not well, perhaps,
But I still write. Do You?

--Shawn Carter

You never write nonsense,
You just haven’t figured out what
You’re trying to tell yourself yet.

I don’t understand a lot of things,
I don’t understand when a light bulb
is the light just kidding?
I don’t understand those black boxes
airplanes that make it through crises
blow the rest of the plane to bits,
I don’t understand why they don’t
plane out of that stuff? And I sure
don’t understand what happens to
but what I have heard is that
your foot goes into a coma so that
you would never have known that
that little black box was there then
if light were able to kid, that would
because then flashbacks wouldn’t cause it would just be the light,

Kidding.
You never write nonsense, 
You just haven't figured out what 
You're trying to tell yourself yet.

I don't understand a lot of things, 
I don't understand when a light bulb burns out, 
is the light just kidding? 
I don't understand those black boxes on 
airplanes that make it through crashes that 
blow the rest of the plane to bits, 
I don't understand why they don't make the whole damn 
plane out of that stuff? And I sure don't understand what happens when your foot falls asleep, but what I have heard is that 
your foot goes into a coma so that 
you would never have known that 
that little black box was there then and 
if light were able to kid, that would be pretty cool because then flashbacks wouldn't be so alarming cause it would just be the light,

Kidding.

--Sydney Andrysiak
The Trouble With Befriending Insects

Here are my friends:
A bee and a bear.
They're friends with each other
And live over there;

Way way 'cross the sea
I can see with my eye
By the flopping old fruit tree
That no one will buy.

And next to the tree
Is an old man named Saul
Who is trying to sell me
A whooping-bird call.

I don't really need it,
But oh what a price!
It comes with a pair
Of geologist mice!

I told him I'd give him
An answer next week,
When I know for sure
If my new pets can speak,

For what would I do
If I came home today
With a couple of rodents
With nothing to say?

The bear would just eat them.
I know that's a fact.
The bee would leave me
All swelled and attacked.

So if Saul comes around
And he brings what he brings,
I'll just have to tell him
"I don't want those things."

--Bryan Mahoney
Squirrels in Self-Destruction

The month of April blooms with fresh beginnings as a new spring season is welcomed to the Northeast. The streams are flowing, the birds are chirping, and the front lawns of the neighborhood are inhaling the green glow of new life after suffocating under the winter snow. Mother Nature energizes her creatures with a spirit of freedom. We're all especially amused by watching the playful antics of the squirrels. Our fuzzy little friends seem to be having so much fun. However, if we only laeew the daredevil motives behind some of the squirrel stunts, perhaps we would see that their capering is not so carefree. We observe these actions as being cute - cheek stuffing, car racing, dog chasing - but they are nothing but dangerous! Human beings need to be exposed to the problem of squirrel hazing so that measures can be taken to end this cycle of self-destruction in the squirrel community.

We often associate the word "hazing" with the ritual initiation into a fraternity. However, college students are not the only ones harassing new group members with foolish pranks. Squirrels have been forcing each other to perform meaningless, difficult tasks since the birth of their species. It's time we realize that young squirrels who feel pressured to be part of the group are being tortured by these humiliating acts. Hazing is not only physically harmful, but it's damaging to the rodent's emotional health as well.

Cheek stuffing has been around since the first squirrel on earth discovered a nut. It's one of the most cherished rituals of squirrel hazing, but it comes with a price. The object of the dare is for the squirrel to stuff as many nuts as possible into his cheek pouches. Too many naive youngsters, simply trying to be "one of the gang," have fallen victim to this stunt. They suffer from permanent disfigurement of the cheek pouch for the rest of their lives. Even more of a bodily threat, however, are the hazing practices of dog chasing and cat taunting. Numerous squirrels attempting to be "macho" have been maimed by agitated dogs. The act of teasing cats poses a heightened risk, because the feline fighters will chase antagonists into the sanctity of their own home—a tree. These poor, shredded squirrels serve as reminders to human beings to take a stand against hazing.

Car racing is the latest fad in the initiation risks taken by squirrels. This task involves dashing out in front of a car at the last possible moment. Scientists have offered the explanation that this action is a normal behavioral response to a fast-moving object passing in front of the animal. Yet, the fancy rhetoric of experts
cannot shield us from the horror of hazing when we see it! A variation of this trick is for the squirrel to freeze still in the road when a motor vehicle approaches. This game of "chicken" is known for its tragic results. If the challenger moves too soon, he is labeled a coward for the rest of his life. The consequences get a little messy, though, when the squirrel moves too late.

The self-destructive actions of our furry rodent friends are actually desperate cries for help. As human beings, we have an obligation to help fight squirrel hazing. The first step that must be taken is to get rid of the squirrel judge. Any time one of the humiliating tasks is forced upon a victim, there is always a nearby squirrel who stands alone and observes from a safe distance. This is the judge—the one who decides when another nut cannot possibly be crammed into a bulging cheek pouch; the one who must be satisfied with the daredevil performance of a dog-chaser or car-racer. Elderly members of the squirrel society usually act as the judges - a reward for surviving the hazing of their own youth. In order to eliminate the position of judge, the entire squirrel community must undergo social reconstruction. Humans can help their furry neighbors adjust to this institutional change. For example, it's not difficult to refrain from pulling out the wild mushrooms and various weeds that clutter our front lawns. Thus, we provide elderly squirrels with an alternative position in their social structure: lawn maintenance.

Another step that can help halt the hazing is eliminating "observers." Those chosen to carry out the stunts are not as affected by human on-lookers as they are by crowds of their own species. Therefore, it is up to us to disperse the squirrel "observers" as they gather to watch a friend humiliate himself. These crowds serve as a double-edged sword: taunting victims if they hesitate and punishing them if they fail. When a human happens to see a group of "observers" beginning to assemble, that person must break it up. Those clusters of squirrels only lead to trouble. It’s our duty to take an authoritative stand by policing our neighborhoods in this way.

Counseling is the final portion of the three-step process. This is a vital part of a solution to the problem. The emotional toll on those squirrels who have undergone hazing is immense. Scars to their self-esteem last a lifetime and make it hard to function socially. Many of these troubled rodents estrange themselves from the rest of the population and become recluses. Furthermore, it’s not uncommon for these particular "hermit" squirrels to suffer a mental breakdown. We’ve all witnessed the results of such a freak occurrence: none other than Rocky the Flying Squirrel.

By creating a supportive environment filled with peace and
tranquility, we can help the emotionally damaged squirrels adjust to their surroundings. When encountering our fuzzy friends, use soothing sounds and gentle movements. Humans must make an effort to stop the hazing and start the healing. Such accommodations might lead the squirrels to a road of recovery and steer them away from their ultimate road of destruction...road-kill.

--Krista Malagisi
Reincarnation

As I sit on the plane,
  Flying over millions of people
I wonder who they really are-
  And do they even know themselves?
I wonder if reincarnation exists,
  And I wonder who’s within them.

I wonder if John Grisham wrote the bible.
  I wonder if we’re just characters
    In the movie-
  Acting out our rolls, wondering about the ambiguous ending.

I wonder if George Washington was a pothead.
  With that funky hair,
    Maybe he came back to sing Sugar Magnolia.

Flying over the city of Chicago-
  I wonder what will happen when Jerry Springer dies.
I wonder if he will live again,
  Perhaps in a trailer,
    Making sweet love to his sister...
      Who’s really a man!

I wonder if God hated the Knicks,
  And decided to come back as,
    Michael Jordan.

I wonder if my second grade teacher ever dated
    SATAN,
      Got dumped,
        And took it out on me.

I wonder if those are really Jim Morrison’s thoughts
  Coming from Eddie Vedder’s music,
Or if it was Dave Matthews,
  That headed up the Salt March.

I wonder if Abraham Lincoln was pissed off,
  And came back as
    Lee Harvey Oswald...
And somewhere today he lives in the body of
  An innocent man...
  Once again.

I wonder if a saint lives within my
  Mother,
But is just having a hard time adjusting to
  20th century realities.

I wonder if William Shakespeare came back as
  A west coast rapper,
    And wrote lyrics for...
    Tupac Sukar.

I wonder if Henry VIII came back as
  Bill Clinton,
Or if Marilyn Monroe is now...
    Monica Lewinsky.
And does J.F.K. approve?

Flying over the Atlantic-
  I wonder if Christopher Columbus lived within
    Neil Armstrong,
Or was he the skipper of the Mayflower?
Or even possibly at the helm of the...
    Titanic.

I wonder if James Dean came back as
  Vanity Smurf
Or if Janis Joplin lives as Scooby Doo...
    Co-starring with a stoner in a,
      Psychedelic cartoon.

I wonder if Babe Ruth came back as,
  Mark McGwire.
And decided to trade alcohol for
  Andreostine.

I wonder if Adolf Hitler is pissed off being
  Jerry Seinfeld.
Or if Benedict Arnold enjoyed his time as,
  Winston Churchill.
I wonder if Francis Scott Key came back as
Jimi Hendrix,
And played the Star Spangled Banner at Woodstock,
The way he had intended it to sound.

I wonder if Harry Houdini came back as
Elvis Presley,
Before he left the building.

I wonder if Alfred Hitchcock
Is now a first grader at
Bodega Bay Elementary School.
And is now running scared from the story he developed.

I wonder if Ronald Reagan will come back
As an honest man,
Or maybe he will live in the Middle East,
And secretly sell nuclear weapons back to the U.S.

As our pilot prepares us for a crash landing in Europe-
I wonder if he is really Amelia Earhardt.
And suddenly I wonder who lives within me.

I wonder if I was ever a piece of dust
While you were a broom.
Or were you my favorite book...
And I loved to finger through your pages?

I wonder if my children will be,
All those whom I loved before,
But passed through my life too quickly.

I wonder if I was ever the bed you lied upon,
Or the sneakers you ran in.
And I wonder if it angered me when you sweat,
Or did I enjoy the odor?

I wonder if I was ever romantically involved with
My wife
Perhaps during the Renaissance Era,
Or maybe a fling in Louisiana during the roaring ’20s.

I wonder if I’ve ever killed.
Or I myself have been killed.
I wonder if that's why I'm scared?
Is it what I've done? Or what I'm capable of doing?

I wonder if I will come back as
The daughter of my great, great grandson,
And give birth to the first doctor in my family.

And seconds before my plane crashes-
I wonder if I ever lived in you,
Or you within me,
Or perhaps we were just great friends,
Or maybe even enemies,
Or maybe we just bumped into one another,
Or maybe your eyes never saw mine,
Or maybe your ears never took in my name,
Or maybe next time this will be true,
Or maybe it won't.
And maybe reincarnation doesn't exist,
Or maybe it's true that the impossible is simply,
Something we've never seen before.

But regardless...
I still wonder.

--Scott Grates
Perfect

Would you love me better if I had another face to look upon?
   One more pleasing to your eye
   Cheeks blushed with innocence or perhaps flushed with sin?
   Eyes that could show you the world
Or is my face enough for you?

Would you love me better if my voice was sweeter than it is?
   With deliverance of well thought out words
   Witty discourse that unlocks the mysteries of life
   Should I speak less of you and more of myself?
Or is my voice enough for you?

Would you love me better if I was another me?
   The light of your existence
   The puzzle piece you’ve always searched for
   Could I be perfect?
Or am I enough for you?

I am the strength in the shadow of your weakness.
I am the kindness that nullifies your cruelty.
I am the loyalty that bridges your betrayal.

Are you enough for me?

--Monica Hopkins
Say Present If You’re Here

It’s still there! Digging deep
profound
Burning charred-black, my blistered
feet
Ugly rumors, nothing is
sound
Spinning head, in frightful
deceit

Obstinate, it won’t go
away
Gets bigger; expanding with
time
My soul fragmented deep in
decay
Desperate questions with your
crime

No longer a person, my
own
Multiple parts; pieces all
you
Deconstructed to the white
bone
Elements of me so very
few

My heart a tiny, small
tatter
You turn away and ignore
this:
It is not mind over
matter
Must I confess it’s you I
miss?

Your weakness I greatly
suffer
Your absence I strongly do
feel
Please—I beg you be my
buffer
It is to you sir, I
appeal

How I manage to cope and
try
You distractedly never
ask
Swathed in a terrible white
lie!
Tied and ribboned with a happy
mask

Necessary is it but
why
For me to be dipped
subjected
To your trashy, white flailing
lie
Which I've bitterly
rejected

And is it too not
possible
You acted with relishing
bliss?
To uncross the
uncrossable
Bowing gallant with Judas'
kiss

And what the hell were you
doing?
With your sly sex and
imploring
Outlandish charming-red
wooing
Sleazy change, pocket-book
whoring

And who did you honestly
think
your pimp dallying wouldn’t hurt?
The little girl in frills and pink?
Or the woman with answer curt?

And where did you possibly think
I could go with my shattered life?
If I shiver, gulp-down and sink
With terms such as husband and wife

And what can I feasibly do?
When I find I’m falling in love
When I’m scared of your figure you
Crushing the flight of a winged dove

And what did you think I’d become?
In my willingness to believe
Love: impossible to succumb
When abandon, he does achieve

How am I to know who’s right?
wrong?
If in game hiding you insist
To live upon a broken song
Of which you squirm, writhe and persist
And all of those formative
years
Do I carefully mend but
how?
If I carry poor tools of
fears
No oil for my rusting
plow

Tell me how, and where should I
go?
With all of this trash and old
junk
If you act like you’re blind but
know
How to piece back this sawed tree
trunk

For a time machine I do
yearn
Whirl! To discover the
secret
Of the stars, the means to
discern
If we should scrap this or
keep it

No! Don’t leave this up to
me
I want you to battle and
fight
With broken branches you can
see
I’m crippled in my desperate
plight

You can change! faith! You can do
it
Please, please just a little; a
tad
Longing, hoping more than a
bit
For the strength of the so-called
dad
Oh no—I'm so terribly wrong
To hope and want what can't be sought
To desire for, need and long
In treacherous hours, restless thought

--Jennifer Lydum
"December 17..."

You left me here
Bleeding and alone
Underneath these dirty sheets
You took my core
Tore it to shreds
Tossed it over your shoulder
And never looked back

Sometimes I wonder
If you do look back
And think about what
You did to me

NO
I don’t wonder
I’d rather leave you
Nameless
Faceless
Unhuman
Just an evil in the wind
Maybe if I thought you felt guilty

(Who’s mistake was it, really?)
Everyone makes mistakes
Some large
Some small
Some worth dying for
You left me there
Bleeding

--Kate McNamara
On The Wall

The water dripped from the faucet nearest the door. The little boy hid behind the toilet, in the stall closest to the window that opened onto the playground, and waited. He waited for school to end. It was the last day, one more hour and he could leave and no one would stop him. He took a deep breath, he was eight years old. His elder brother had been nineteen when he'd left. He'd sat in his car, in the garage, opened the door and turned on the engine. It was simple, but the little boy didn't have a car. He had sat in this same spot everyday, curled up in the corner, no teachers yelling for him to pay attention, until they'd read his record and then apologized in hushed tones. No big brother found as a substitute by his brother's guidance counselor the woman that gave him cookies because she felt guilty.

No mother and father yelling and not getting the divorce because they thought their little boy needed them. When he'd first hid here, there was a magazine. It told him about this girl who slit her wrists to suicide. She'd cut down veins and died from loss of blood. It sounded like it would hurt, but he didn't care, he was going to put his arms in the cold water of the toilet until they started getting bumpy and then he'd cut them open, down the vein and he'd let the blood fall into the water, so the nice janitor wouldn't have that much to clean up. Then he'd have a funeral, with lots of people, more friends than he really had would be there. His mom would cry and his dad wouldn't touch beer for a week and there would be flowers and everyone would eat a lot and then they'd say nice things about him; his teacher would tell everyone about the report he had written on the book his brother had given him.

His parents would listen and be proud and then they'd eat together at the same table for a while and maybe they'd like each other again. He took the Swiss army knife he'd taken from his brother's before going camping with his friends. His brother had sharpened it on Thursday, the week he'd died and he'd died on Friday. He'd been looking out for his little brother. The little boy smiled and looked at the door of the stall as he put the knife back in his pocket. The bell would ring soon and he would go find his brother and they'd have fun and laugh and everything like they used to.

He read the phrases written by the older kids on the wall. "If I'm gone by summer, let my little brother know that I loved him dearly and I really did have to go; look after him and keep him happy
if you think yourself a friend of mine. He likes to read and he likes to draw and he likes marshmallows in his hot cocoa. And tell him I'm sorry, if you think you're a friend of mine."

The little boy read his brother's name at the end of the words and ran out of the bathroom in tears. He ran to the office of the guidance counselor who'd always felt so guilty. She smiled when she saw him and opened her desk drawer to give him a cookie. He shook his head and dragged her out of her chair. He dragged her down the hall and into the bathroom. He showed her the words written on the wall in his brother's casual script and handed her his brother's knife. She hugged the little boy tightly and cried. They left the school in her little red car, before the bell, and drank cocoa in a small corner diner, with marshmallows.

--Clairissa Breen
Time Bomb

Another kid gone, his departure too soon.
No more big dreams of reaching the moon.
It happened one night in the room where he grew.
His head full of troubles but nobody knew.
"No more abuse" he cried as he fired a round,
Watching his mother fall to the ground.
Too many years of torture and pain,
To turn down a ticket to the clouds and the rain.
With one more gunshot he ended his fight,
In hopes to reach heaven by the end of the night.
I'm in peace now, said the note on his bed.
My body's alive, but my suffering is dead.

--Mike Bailey
Sunshine fell from behind the curtain and warmed Sara’s cheek. She yawned and stretched herself awake. Careful not to disturb her boyfriend, she slid out of bed and pulled on sweatpants and a T-shirt. Her coach had wanted her at the track early this morning. Sometimes she wondered why he pushed her harder than the other girls on the team, didn’t he know that track was not her life? She looked at her son sleeping in the rickety homemade crib. How could her parents not love this child that she and John had created? They didn’t want to try, or maybe couldn’t was the better word. They had immediately kicked her out of the house when they found out her “predicament.” She had made a life without them anyway. She had survived.

Sara turned and stared at herself in the mirror. Sometimes she wondered how she had gotten to where she was in only 19 years. While running a brush through her long brown hair she let her eyes drop to a picture of her parents. She still loved them. Sometimes she missed them, and wondered if they missed her. Their pride probably got in the way of missing her. Filled with anger towards the unforgivable, she yanked her hair into a quick, tight ponytail. Satisfied with the way she looked she packed her duffel bag.

Looking at the clock, she saw that she only had 10 minutes to get to school.

“Hon, wake up, I’m going now.” She wanted to remind him to feed the baby.

“Ok, babe, feed the baby at eight, I know . . . love you.” He smiled and blew her a kiss, then rolled back over to doze a little longer.

On her way out the door, the phone rang. She ran to answer it before it woke the baby.

“Hello!” She snapped into the phone, annoyed that someone would call this early.

“Sara?! Baby? Is that you? OH MY GOD, Lou, it is her, we found her. Oh, Sara, honey are you there?” The crying, screaming voice of her mother was distant and distorted to her. She dropped the phone back into it’s cradle as if it were a bomb. Shaking, she swore they would not be a part of her life. Ever.

--Kate McNamara
Bound

Time passes, feelings change,
but do they?
The irony of life has gone full circle,
and now I am the one who is left wanting.
Bound by questions I cannot answer,
questions that I have yet to gain the courage to ask.
Will you change?
Will I be the one who changes you?
Will any of the beautiful thoughts dancing in my head
become a sweet reality?
One word could end my wanting,
and yet another could destroy me inside.
What will become of me,
of you,
of us?
Anything, or nothing?
As it is I am helpless,
unable to control the situation.
I have never been here before,
please show me the way.

--Shawn Carter
Encounter

Big guy upstairs: what do you have to say he said
I answered:
   I prayed a lot
   Used to go to church
   My Sundays are busy for nothing
   Think tank appraisals for
   Unconditional disdain.
   Uneligibility for my punctuality outfits my
   transcendence for perfection,
   and in my imperfection, I looked up
   And said thanks for another day.

--Ben Frimpong
All In A Day’s Walk

There was a man who used to walk down the street everyday in the city. He always minded his own business, never saying a word to anyone. He would leave his apartment at 4:00 p.m., and walk for exactly a half an hour, returning home at 4:30 p.m. The neighborhood kids would make fun of him, but he never replied, and they would leave him alone after a couple of minutes.

One day while out on his walk, after the kids had given him his leave, he was walking past the small fruit shop on the corner. He saw a couple of young boys steal two apples and run off while the store owner had his back turned, and the man said nothing.

A few minutes later, as he was passing the shoe store, he saw two teenage girls run out of the store in brand new shoes, as the shoe salesman ran out of the store behind them, yelling “Somebody stop them.” Again, he said nothing.

As the man was circling the block that led to his apartment, he noticed two older women standing on the stoop to his building. While he was watching them stare at him, a rugged looking youth approached him from behind. The youth stabbed the man twice, and then took off with his wallet. The police came, and they asked questions. The old ladies said nothing.

--Shawn Carter
Acadia

Here
Seagulls beg to be left
Alone
this is not urban living-
dirty feathers sweeping
through
yesterday's meal

Here
voices change
in air heavy with salt
and mollusks
pale pink and plentiful
leave empty homes
behind-
treasure scattered amongst
smooth orange stone

Here
bellies full
Gulls watch and listen
Above
they are lost in crisp white light
leaking over
earth water sky

Here
they are no longer the
nuisance of parking lot feeding,
Begging—No

Here
I am the intruder
(out of place, out of home)
subject of the dark coal eye
confused by my screeching.

--Erin Hopkins
The Storm

The water rose upon the shore
as the waves came rolling in.
The twisting winds and their fierce roar
had started coming in.

The clouds came in, the sky grew dark,
and the downpour had begun.
We knew this storm would make its mark.
Oh, when would this hell be done.

The tide was very swift and strong.
   It tore apart the land.
   It ripped apart and lasted long,
   and took with it the sand.

The sands of time that we did know,
   and know only so well.
Why, oh, why did they have to go,
   and leave us hear to dwell.

--Hope E. Ryder
The First Time I Realized I Never Wanted To See Her Again

Flat against the bed
laid my back to rest in
the hollow between the
sinewy coils
of springs

Halfway into cold sleep
breezed my arms against the
rounded gold pillows
and delicacy
of sheets

Tick tock of headboard
beat rhythm with my head as
vines of subtle breath
subdue every bit
of time

Forward through the air
opened my eyes or dreamed with
a sweet angel arrow’s
golden touch
of silk

Lifeless bodies meld
showing no threat of movement, so
rotted wood planks
drift in a sea
of subtlety

--Bryan Mahoney
You I Sought

Your presence seems to haunt me,
like a ghost with work undone.
The air that you exhaled whispers,
secrets from your tongue.
The light you shined upon me,
burns deep into my skin.
Your laughter dances above me,
your spirit seeps within.
The tears that you cry nightly,
fall fast from morning's sky.
Salty, wet upon my face,
your heartache's lullaby.
Amidst your sweet devotion,
I lost my weakened will.
You left me here in wonder,
I waited for you still.
Your touch was but a memory,
lost in battle with the dawn.
I worshipped the very thought of you,
long after you were gone.
Your footsteps still echoed,
in my mind's most precious thoughts.
The you I loved is in my dreams,
the one that I first sought.

--Sarah Crimmins
Call of The Moon

Jodie says forget-me-nots
forget you quickly, all too soon
And roses red carry blots
which only fade and never bloom

Jodie watched her ship sink low
and saw the gold pieces scatter
Guess that’s why her heart won’t show
the way in which it can shatter

Jodie reaches far and high
with pools of slat streaking her face
Gurgling throat she heaves a sigh
wipes her eyes with her grandma’s lace

Jodie says she’s blind with light
and in her head she hears a tune
It comes to her dark at night
Jodie hears the Call of the moon

--Jennifer Lydum
The Five Versions of Stars

They are puckered plaster, said the sculptor, chafed by the upper ozone.

They are one billion watt bulbs, said the electrician, dimmed by the distance of time.

They are points of pins, said the seamstress, lodged in the belt of night.

They are fireflies, said the reverend, swimming in God's glass eye.

They are wishes, said the child, born when there was no light.

--Erin Hopkins
Appearances

Surrounded by people, all alone
Making conversation, telling nothing
Brightly smiling, full of tears
Watching nothing, seeing all
In a hurry, going nowhere
Cold at heart, feeling everything
Always wanted, never loved
Silently sitting, screaming for attention
MIRRORS REFLECT, APPEARANCES LIE

--Jessica Brand
Destination

Bradford saw them descend across the silver sky. He held his camera toward the scattered points of white, arriving on the barren field. He knelt down on the frozen mud. "Three snowfalls in the mountains comes snow in the field," a farmer had told him. The sun had never appeared in northern Japan since his arrival.

The swans were busy picking up leftover grain. Their necks inclined from their bodies like birches bearing the heavy weight of wind. "What the hell am I doing here?" Bradford thought. But he knew that he had met at home—the woman who had posed for him, had loved him for a moment, and had left him for her husband.

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It was not the first time for Bradford to shoot a female nude, but he was holding his camera more tightly than usual. She did not hesitate at all before taking off her clothes. It made him nervous. She acted no differently than when she had her clothes on.

"Do you see what I think you see?" she asked, returning his gaze through the lens. Bradford saw no sign of guilt in her brown eyes. She stood up, sat down, and stretched on the floor. Bradford shifted downward along with her motion.

"I have a cat," she said, "she misses me terribly when I leave her alone. I can see her rushing down the hall when I get home."

"I hope she will survive the loneliness," he said.

"Oh, yes, she will, unless she is too curious to know where I have been."

He located the strobe lights and checked the light carefully. He brought the meter up to her body. She closed her eyes and heard the meter click by her ears, in front of her nose, and by her breasts. She posed for a few hours. The studio was isolated, with a curtain drawn to shut out the daylight.

Bradford never touched her while shooting; he touched her at night.

"Artists fall in love too easily," she said, "and they keep falling in love with different women. That's how you are, Michael." He had never gotten into an affair with his models before. He needed a good reputation, but moreover, his object of gaze had never quite become his object of love. She was the first exception.
The swans were still busy gleaning the grain. One of them caught his eyes. The bird was straying away from the rest, step by step, searching for more food. He slowly moved his focus to the swan's beak, neck, and to her soft feathers. He kept shooting. He felt his body chilled down to the same temperature as the swan's. By the time some of these photographs would appear in a national magazine, bearing his name, Michael Bradford, the swan would have returned to Siberia with the rest of the flock. She knew where she belonged, and the travelers from the North would never lose their destination.

--Tomomi Tamura
Rain at Dusk; Two Parts

The shoulder, a doorframe supporting dusk, stood under the heights of air reconstructing charm.

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Stand cry and clutching close shiver in rain and crying stand while clutching far shiver in sun and discover standing on sky falling below rain clutching close to sun and self crying in sun shivering and falling again discover and trip in rain to spill self in close and falling sun clutching sky crying in close to self and try not to fall standing on rain shivering close to sky discovering sun and self and trying not to shiver or clutch in close again far from rain standing crying and clutching close shiver below rain while sun clutches sky falling far from self standing and trying not to fall in rain trip and spill in close clutching shiver discover self crying again while falling trip trying not to fall.

--Mark Bowers
My Brother

Tall and proud
branches reaching for the sky
The top is far from sight
like the climb and twists of life.
Tiny pine cones cling to the safety
of the needles.
There is no smell,
only the sight of the tree,
forever out of my reach.

--Carol Ferguson
Branches

"Give it back to me!" she cried trying to reach the small, tattered toy in his hand.

"Now way," he laughed, teasing his sister, "you have to come and get it! Come on! Here it is..." He held the stuffed animal with floppy legs and black button eyes out to her, and just as she was about to latch on to it, he thrust it high in the air out of the reach of her six year old hands.

"Johnathan..." she cried, becoming exceedingly more frustrated over the authority that four inches and two more years on this Earth had granted him as a brother. It wasn't fair. Her sweet little Pony never did anything to him! Just because he is the brother doesn't give him the right to pick on defenseless animals. Poor Pony, just look at how sad and scared he is right now, she thought to herself. She had to rescue him!

"POOOONNYYYYY!!!" she screamed as Pony's scruffy black tail and floppy legs went flip flopping through the air. With every one of Pony's flights through the air Beth's face became a little more flushed.

Just as Jonathan was about to give Pony another huge hurl into the atmosphere, Beth got one pudgy little hand on Pony. Jonathan shoved her to the ground and Pony was catapulted into the air. Pony slowly reached a peak, then his flight started to curve back towards the Earth. His descent was unbearably slow, taunting Beth's mother-like concern for his well-being. With his legs sprawled pitifully through the air, his landing place seemed unsure.

Everything became deafeningly loud when Pony hit the first branch. As the soft bean bad flesh hit one branch and then the next, it seemed as though the entire world had stopped to focus on this little stuffed horse. Scratch after scratch, branch after branch, he tumbled. Finally, the great branches of the Old White Pine managed to grab hold of him, and he rested in her arms. Pony hung there for a moment in eternity and then just dropped, his little black eyes staring at nothing.

"YOU KILLED MY PONY!" Her voice broke the crashing silence. She started to scramble up the ominous tree to rescue Pony. Jonathan, two years wiser, grabbed her.

"You can't climb that tree, you're too little?" He told her. She stepped back, tears streaming down her red cheeks and stared at the tree. It's rough old branches towered over her blond curls, and Pony, poor sweet Pony, stuck up there halfway to the sun. How ever
was she to get him out?

"Get him out! Get him out! GET HIM OUT!" she wailed, kicking and punching her brother.

"Okay, okay, stop hitting me!" he said, pushing her away. He stared up at the small pony. He knew she would tell if didn’t find a way to get Pony out of the tree.

“You got him stuck, you’ve got to get him out. You had better do it or I’m telling!” A panicky Beth threatened. Jonathan racked his brain for a solution and furiously setfled on one.

"We’ve got to go get a ladder. Follow me." Jonathan said with brotherly authority, not wanting to get in trouble. When they got to the shed Jonathan pulled hard on the door, only to find that it was locked. Beth knew that the key was in the kitchen next to the phone...he would have to walk right by that make-up covered, gum chewing, frizzy-haired baby-sitter, Heather, to get it. She would be suspicious and she would surely come to investigate, and Jonathan would get in trouble for doing what he did to Pony.

“Go get the key!” Beth’s angry little voice demanded.

“I can’t...” Jonathan said knowing it was inevitable, she was going to tell.

"Why not?" Beth’s lower lip started to tremble, before he could give an excuse, she turned on her heel and ran to the house.

"Beth! No you can’t--" He caught up with her and tried to stop her, but she was on a mission. She didn’t care who she had to go to, she was going to get Pony out. She pushed open the back door, slamming it into the wall.

"Heather! Do you know what Jonathan --" she stuttered.

"Quiet!" Heather barked, “tell me during the commercial.” Heather was poised on the couch leaning intently toward the TV. Beth was really beginning to resent these soap show's.

"But Jonathan--" she tried again.

"I told you! After my soap!" Heather snapped, not taking her sight off the television. The anger showing in her dark eyes, Beth turned on her heel and marched outside to the tree. Jonathan followed close behind, quietly rejoicing that Heather didn’t listen, or seem to care.

“What are you doing?” Jonathan asked the determined Beth.

“Getting rocks, I’m going to knock Pony out of the tree.” After picking up some good size rocks she started throwing them at Pony. Sadly, none of her shots came close to the solemn black and brown toy. Panic returned. How was she going to get him out? She pushed the question out of her head and convinced herself that she
would get Pony out no matter what it took.

"Aren't you going to help me!" Beth yelled at Jonathan after a few more feeble attempts. While Jonathan's throws were stronger and more precise, they still weren't good enough to knock Pony out of the tree. Beth frustrated and tired, threw herself on the ground in an angry pout. With utter despair, she again stared up at the massive tree. Was Pony going to have to spend the night up there instead of in her arms? What if monsters came and scared him, or tried to eat him? What if he was stuck up there forever? Another cycle of tears started to stream down her face.

Suddenly, she heard something. Was that the garage door? Daddy was home! Beth sprang to her feet and ran to the garage, leaving Jonathan behind. Her father scooped her up into a hug, and through a fit full of wailing and tears, Beth managed to spit out the story. He chuckled at Pony's predicament and laughed at Beth's animated concern for the toy.

"Well, we are just going to have to fix things, aren't we?" He put her down and opened up the shed. He pulled out the huge silver ladder and propped it up against the tree. Beth just stared in awe while he climbed to the deadly height where Pony was. She didn't draw another breath until Pony was safely returned to her loving arms, and she knew that he would be with her that night.

--Kate McNamara
Real World 101

I didn’t think that it would end,
another twist in this winding bend.
Four years in the blink of an eye,
I never bothered asking why.
Good times, great friends I’ll leave behind,
the rest of my path will now unwind.
A potential employer called yesterday,
for a moment my worries have gone away.
Then I open my mail and let out a moan,
they really expect me to pay back those loans?

--Patrick Mcloughlin