Full Issue

Cover Page Footnote
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A Letter From the Editors

Well, here we are at the end of another very quick semester. It is a time of relief and reflection, as we sit back and contemplate what this school year has brought us. For many of us, the days at Fisher are numbered, and we prepare for endeavors beyond the undergraduate world.

This issue focuses on many different themes, including regrets, change, death, and memories. There is also a special section devoted to M.J. Iuppa's Senior Writing Seminar. We think it's a great mix of work by our peers that will entice and inform you.

This is the last issue for two of us, but we leave The Angle in very capable hands. We wish Melissa Japp the best of luck as she takes on the role of senior editor in Fall 2001. We know she will do an amazing job in being true to what this publication stands for and will bring her creativity and expertise to the job.

We would like to thank Dr. Nicolay and M.J. Iuppa for their constant support and valuable insight. Without them, this publication would not be what it is today.

Another big thank you goes to our staff. We are a small group, so any help is greatly appreciated. The people who come to every meeting and offer their opinions will never know how much they mean to us. Thank you Jen, Angela, Erin, and Lisa!

We hope the end of your semester is smooth and your summer is carefree and refreshing. Keep writing and remember that there is always a place for your voices to be heard.

Sincerely,

Sarah L. Crimmins
Melissa M. Slocum
Melissa A. Japp
The Editors

"Small minds discuss people, average minds discuss events, great minds discuss ideas."
--anonymous
Submission Guidelines for *The Angle*

The following submission guidelines must be followed for every 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 and work), and the title(s) of the piece(s) submitted.

3. **DO NOT** include your name or personal information on your submissions.

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

5. All submissions, including short stories, should not exceed three typed pages.

Regrettably, we are unable to accept any piece that does not follow these guidelines. If you have any questions concerning submission guidelines, please contact the editor, Melissa Japp in the Angle office (basement of Basil 210) at 385-8213. Thank you!

You may submit pictures, drawings, computer generated images as well as many other types of artistic expressions. Please direct any general or specific questions to Melissa Japp (maj0770) at your convenience.

Look for information about the next *Angle* deadline through e-mail and flyers.

****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.
April 2001

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Utica

I was born in this broken home,

where the streets wear dirt

Under fountains and brightly painted

murals

like a cheating father wears shame

under a cheap business suit.

I grew up in this ghostyard,

where the windows

of closed warehouses and shopping malls

once smudged by the red lips of children

fogged by their warm cookie breath

now lay in shards on the floor.

Water falls in a stream
to the concrete below
the eye of this booming metropolis
hurricane
just as busy as those who hurry by
intent on its job
of being beautiful

I am on a lawn that just 10 years ago
seemed to stretch for miles in
this city with no future but such a past,
in this city with nothing to offer but its character,
in this city that raised me into
the strange young woman I’ve become
in this city where my lawn doesn’t stretch quite as far as it used to.

I am young in this old jungle
where the crack dealers hide behind corners
like snakes in the grass waiting for prey
where the business world steps over the homeless
as if they are already dead.
Second Prize
Gillian Scruton

Remembering Thanksgiving

This house
I know it well,
The cracked toilet seat, the blue water
The smell of Darling’s fancy powder,
The dentures in your designated ceramic bowls
The bath tub that never looked inviting,
The narrow staircase that led to my father’s room
Where he grew
And where his brothers fought
And where the sisters thought they were queens.
I played up there too, maybe twice
I slept there,
Only once
And I looked at the tiny rooms,
The big family that lived there
Darling’s bedroom had a rosary
Too big for a neck, too big for the palm of a hand
Just right for the brown-papered wall
The silk pillowcases were smothered with winter coats
And the picture of Jesus had nothing else to look at
The dresser had a mirror and I don’t know who looked in it
Or when or what the images said
The kitchen where I dried the dishes on Thanksgiving
Grudgingly
And the closet where the vacuum sat for a rest
And the table with those place mats
Plastic place mats that I could indent with my finger nail
And brush off the crumbs to reveal the flowers on the white
Plastic surface.
There was the TV guide, there was an Avon catalog
There was a cracked mug, cold coffee inside,
And lipstick on the edge.
There was a leather seat I had sat in before with the crack in the corner
The table could grow bigger and yet it never did,
I looked out the window, a big window,
Where the garden lay lifelessly and the hummingbird
Came to the feeder
And returned and returned and returned
I never frequented that much
I just looked at the corner cabinet
Where there was candy
There were bottles of prescription pills,
There was a photo of my cousin standing by his motorcycle,
And another- a black and white one
Recovered from the attic,
The porch, too cold to go to, kept itself from the outside with a single sheet of plastic,
There were games out there.
There was a long table, mis-matched chairs,
a Thanksgiving dinner
And Jell-O salad
And green stuff I was always too afraid to try.
My brother sat close at hand,
And neither of us said a word—
After all these memories, after going into the laundry room time and time again to visit,
And look at the extravagant collection of magnets on the fridge,
We still never said a word
We didn’t know what to say
We just sat there
And learned the house
And learned about the house
And learned nothing about what happened in there
In the house
We never knew what was in the basement,
Nor who lived in the house for too long
Who was born there
Who died there
We were not there for any of that
We were there time and time again
And yet all we know is where everything lay, where the doily was on the back of papa’s
Chair
And tea towel rested on the arms.
I wish I could go back there now, take one last look,
Play one more time in the screened-in porch,
Have one more barbecue
And look around and not look at the house
The house, the house
I want to look at who was there
And breathe it in
And still sit at the table and not say a word.
And maybe try that green stuff-dad always liked it.
Third Prize
Joella Sweet

“Remind me that I am alive”

Swoops of color passing –
and this blue,
lingering, darkening
like a bruise –
painlessly
reminds me
of how great
life can be.
Jen Enright

4000 Miles

4000 miles isn’t that far,
Unless your heart is doing the swimming.

A five-hour time zone difference is nothing,
Unless you want to talk to your loved one.

The Atlantic is only a small pond,
Unless you want to meet sometime.

England is just another country,
Unless your soul mate is there.

Longing is just a thing that stalkers do,
Unless it refers to you.

Love is just another four-letter word,
Unless it is shared and returned back to you.

Hope is a nice idea,
Unless it means actually meeting.

4000 miles is a long way,
Unless you have longing, love, and hope.
Rhiannon Roof

Chaos

Our hands touch—we watch
The shore rising. I am
An open book, you play
The gesture game. We are
Two bells smashing, we are
A photograph dark, we are
Apples plunging. I am
Hungry, you are free. We look
To delirium, we search
For blues in autumn, we dive
Without our wings. We are spirits
Colliding, we are deer in bright light.
Kevin Aubrey

Coaster

Up and down the coaster goes
   Love comes in with gusty flows
Weaving and bobbing through
   The tunnels
Of time
   Taking what's yours
giving what's mine
   Over
and through
   the bumps and hills
Several deep moments
   and a couple cheap thrills
The secret to which
   No one knows, but
With the next day's morning
   my lovetide over flows
Question: "Do you have any regrets?"
Answer: "Just One."

I had suspected
you were there,
with me,
like a shadow.

You confirmed your presence
in a Taco Bell bathroom.
until then I hoped
that you were just teasing.

Standing in my dirty white uniform,
I didn't have to say anything.
Amanda was there
and she knew
before I could speak.

There was really no decision
to be made.
We were wrong for each other,
or maybe I just wasn't ready
for you.

I knew
I could've made a life for you,
for us.
You'd be better off without me,
and I without you.
I'll spend the rest of my young life
proving just that.

Sitting by the pool,
in the dark,
shivering and wet,
crying,
I apologized.
You deserved a chance,
and I denied it.
Giving you a name made it easier,
more comfortable, more humane.
I was doing you a favor.

Riding to the doctor's I thought
of everything but you.
I gave another name,
not my own,
and waited.

They put me through tests –
blood, urine, AIDS.
I knew what was wrong.
Finally, they believed me,
and made me wait some more.

Amanda couldn't be with me
like she had been before.
But the nurse's voice soothed me
as the doctor said,
"You'll feel some pulling."

After the pulling,
and the nurse's voice,
and the anesthesia stopped,
I got instructions, pills,
and a good talking to.

Other women had new families.
All I had was guilt,
pain,
and a prescription.

I miss you now,
wish that you weren't gone,
wish that I
had chosen you before me.
It's true what people say about the kind of love that you have for your children. It can never be matched.

Question: "Do you want to have kids?"
Answer: "No, I already had my chance, once before."
Melissa A. Japp

Untitled

You never understood
Why I retreat into words
Or how poetry can tell a story—
    My story of my life in my writing in my books
    But you see...
Behind diction lurks feeling
Beneath letters cowards love
Punctuation ciphers tears
Covets nerves
Conceals fears
    All you view is paper with graphite smudges
    Secret codes that you don’t want to solve
But if you felt each pulp fiber you’d find...
Ink stain bruises
Perforated smiles
Alphabet thoughts hard to sing
    Permanence through the art of print
    Is threatening, alarming, desired
    You’re afraid of what you will discover
Buried underneath the alliteration, analogies
    And those damn metaphors
’Cause you know that
My hand doesn’t lie
Louis DiDone

The Griffin and his Checkerboard

Narrator: The curtain rises, a Griffin is playing checkers with a group of hermit crabs (The crabs are the checkers themselves).

Griffin: Can't you move any faster. I want to make my next move; it takes you forever to move with that shell on your back.

Hermit Crab 1: Well, if you had a shell that you had to drag around all day, you too would move a little slow.

Hermit Crab 2: Shut up you mental midget, you do not know if you are a lion or an eagle, you can not make up your mind if you want to fly or run half the time. You think of walking and your wings start to flap. Make up your mind.

Hermit Crab 1: He just told you off.

Griffin: That's true, I can never pick which way to travel, but you can take your shell off, so why don't you speed the game up a little.

Narrator: The crabs are discussing the game. They started to take their shells off.

Griffin: Isn't that better, knowing you can feel the breeze and the warmth of the sun?

All the Crabs: Now we can relax, that was a load off my back.

Narrator: The Griffin picks the checkerboard up, bends it in half, and all of the crabs with their shells off are hurled to the middle. The Griffin opens his mouth and the crabs become his lunch.

Griffin: Last time, those damn shells got caught in my teeth, but not this time. There were a lot sweeter without those damn shells getting in the way. Those things are a lot of work to crack.

Narrator: The Griffin flies off with his checkerboard.
Far back
in the trees
I cannot see any person
only apples hanging
high
in green
above me
The sun flows down
a halo
on my head
Blossoms linger
in white
soft smells
as purple-winged hummingbirds
beat rapidly
around them
Reaching up
I touch,
gazing
slowly fingering
one lone
round
fruit
and pluck
leaving behind
the quiet crash
of branches returning
to their places
In silence
I roll
red
through my fingers
and
then
slowly
lean back
and bite
Joella Sweet

winter night

This chill tonight brings crisp
bits of light out of hiding
into the never ending space
above us.

It reminds me of shoeboxes
Painted black with pinholes and
A flashlight so we could bring the sky
Inside
Such a sad countenance I found
when I walked in the room, a face
as long as the winter blanket beneath.
The snowman in the backyard
turning to slush-
one button eye out,
pipe dangling limp
from its overturned mouth.
its carrot nose half pecked
by the black crows.
As my son lies on his bed watching
his creation his
short-term friend descending
in the ground-
sodden brown scarf heavy
around its neck. I break
the silence the moment I wished not defy
and say, cheer up my son
he'll return again next year.
I turn to his Frosty again,
and for a moment in the glimpse
it seemed as if it gestured a goodbye
with the hat tipped slightly
on its buckled head.
He lifts his face and turns to me finally
hanging on to my every word, and looks
at me with pursed lips from
where a pillow soaked up his tears.
Memory

Summer hung in Edmund Lyon Park
Reaching out forever,
Always changing,
Always the same.
The pool was there,
A monument to the days of my childhood.
Here I played Marco Polo in the high noon sun.
My skin a dark almond,
Hair golden blond,
Moving through the warm, thick water
Tiny body writhing as "Marco" reached for me.
Smells of the heavy hot chlorine filled my nose
As the shouts and giggles of my playmates poured into my ears.
I learned the art of silence as I slid by "Marco"
Staying quiet to keep him away.
Before the haze settled in
And the sky grew dark
And the lightning struck the old oak tree
Followed by the blast of the lifeguard's whistle
Calling us out of the pool.
Washed Anew

Her feet are bare and cold; her legs pressed against the body for warmth. Across the field a bit of orange glow pushed its way through the trees, washing the world anew. Another day – but this one is different. The sky warms progressively; she rubs her roughed-up arms and smiles at the red and golden beams that encourage a sense of relief to enter her being. The sun continues to crawl towards the edge of the tree line, commanding new life to the earth. She feels connected; her neck no longer aches even with the faded bruises that surround her delicate nape. This range of soft warm colors stretch out toward her and she feels the ever-present heaviness cascading off of her shoulders.

She directs her gaze to the radiance that rises with compassion and she unfolds her arms to embrace the newness of this most beautiful morning. The fresh sunrise envelops her; she has finally buried the pain that has governed her for so long. Her heart aches with gladness; at last that steadfast hope that lingered like the morning dew fighting the heat of the dawn has been realized. Her ears will stop ringing, her eyes will refresh – any tears that flow now will be tears of relief.

Now, though, now – she regards the expanse above her and absorbs all of the pinks, yellows, reds, and oranges that caress the morning sky. With new eyes, dry eyes, she focuses on the gentle glow that has taken over the trees, the grass, the earth; birds announce the arrival of the sun as if a goddess were present. Ripples of light trickle through the branches that stretch across the area over her head. The warmth strokes her hair, golden tresses that gleam for the first time since she cannot remember when. A sigh escapes her lips as the light from beyond wraps around her like a shawl: comforting her, warming her, helping her to see the most amazing thing – the start of a new day.

There is no need to hide anymore.
In lieu of...

When someone dies, people send flowers,
Bake too much food and say kind words.
Sometimes though, the write up says:
"In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to..."
Well, I'm still alive, in body at least and no one sends me flowers.
But, if I penned my write up now, it would read:
"In lieu of heartache, please donate hope."
Mindae Kadous

Just Like...

Photographs turn yellow
Just like
My heart

Rumors spread
Just like
Autumn scatters leaves

Our hands come undone
Just like
Laces on shoes

Illusions are seen
Just like
A book twice read

The pain becomes exhausting
Just like
Summer's heat

It's loneliness so constant
Just like
Rising waves

Me without you tastes
Just like
Peanut butter without jelly

I can't get over you
Just like
That.
Jennie Raymond

Polydactylism

Seven plump toes
Looked like you were wearing
Baseball mitts
Polydactylism
Supposed to bring good luck

Plastic fishing box
Salmon, Haddock, Tuna
All your favorites,
Pink towel lining the bottom,
You rest inside

Wake up,
Come back,
I love you,
O please someone take off the plastic cover
She can't breathe

It's too late,
Cancer conquered
Your entire, loved body
Think it was a
Brain tumor

Did you know that?
Did you know death was
Capturing you when
You couldn't meow or purr
Anymore?

Did you know that when
Catnip no longer appealed to you,
Birds were no longer
Your hobby,
Days with your family were almost over

Were you confused?
You were transforming
Into an Angel
You will never hurt again
The way you did, all three days before your death
Senior Writing Seminar
Cookies, a Community Liter of Mountain Dew, a Cell Phone, and a Book of CDs That We Would Play One Out Of

We waited patiently for the darkness to fall. For some reason, Deanna and I could never take our ritual car ride during the day. In fact, it was more like ten o’clock when we would leave the house. She would carry the book of CDs and the cookies. I would grab the community liter of Mountain Dew and the cell phone. We would get into the car and decide to follow the signs that we never follow, the ones that would take us any place but here. But we always ended up taking the same route. We passed the same clock attached to a brick wall every night, but the trip would not be the same if we didn’t bring the whole collection along. On the nights that it snowed, we still took our nightly road trip, but we just took it slowed careful no to let Little Car’s bald tires spin us out of control. Sometimes we would stop for gas or windshield wiper fluid or oil. The occasional faceless guy behind the counter would ask us what we were doing out here. We never really knew where here or there was.

After Deanna had died, I still took the nightly road trip. Except I was carrying the cookies, the community liter of Mountain Dew, the cell phone, and the book of CDs that I would only play one CD out of. And sometimes I would stop at the same gas station to get gas or windshield washer fluid or oil and the occasional faceless guy behind the counter would say to me, “Where’s your friend tonight?”

I think about the irony of her death. I think about how I thought it was a joke when her Mom called me and told me she had been killed in a car accident. The one thing that held us together had pulled us apart. We used the road trips to talk about our day. We talked about really leaving town this time. We talked about our life and our family. We talked about nothing. We enjoyed singing to the same CD. We knew all the words. We passed the same houses every night and shook our heads at the ones who still had Christmas lights up at the beginning of February. It was like they had found one thing that brought them joy and they did not want to take that away from themselves. I continued to take the trip until I could no longer stand the pain of being alone.

One night, I had my arms filled with cookies, a community liter of Mountain Dew, a cell phone, and a book of CDs that I would only play out. I began to walk out the door. I paused, turned around and dropped my memories on to the counter. I decided that it was finally time to take down my “Christmas lights.”
Upon losing him

Hollow blue moon hide
behind drench skies.

World bursting
alive with sound

Brave tears
mix with raindrops...

how his strange purple eyes tugged at mine
(the angle of his hand
on my face)

how his suddenly common blue eyes
Spoke without remorse

of our meaninglessness
our "wasted time"

Full skies pour out
the story of our planned life together

in straight heavy rain
that mats my hair

/ 

and turns the world brown
Lisa Middendorf

Cinnamon

He hadn't changed the clock in the two-seater since Daylight Savings Time, months ago. God, I thought, Who doesn't change their clocks? I should have guessed he wouldn't. He is one of those people, too lazy to change them now, with the mindset that six months will come around quickly and no one will notice his broken clock. God, I hate that mentality: "Someone else will do it."

I was still staring at the clock when I realized he was waiting for me to get out of the car. I finally opened the door, hitting it on a snow bank. He couldn't find a better spot in the parking lot?

I hadn't said anything while he made his way around the car. Still telling me about his day, he hadn't noticed that I was unusually quiet tonight. I had stopped listening about his business suit, lunch-on-the-company-credit-card, why-he-was-late-day. I had heard that excuse enough; I'd almost rather hear, "Sorry I was late, I forgot to set the clock back."

He had manipulated our walk so we were headed straight for a sign on the edge of the parking lot. This made me remember when my fifth grade boyfriend used to do that. He didn't know he was my boyfriend though. He thought he was just my next-door-neighbor. We would walk to the pet store, hand-in-hand, to play with the puppies, maneuvering our path so that every sign we came upon would end up between us. We would let the sign catch our hands, still together, then stop and pretend our fingers were glued together and we couldn't get past the sign without letting go our hands. Each time would bring giggles into my stride and a smirk into his. I would always let him go first.

Neither of us prevented our run-in with the sign; I held on to Jack's hand not letting go and he looked at me. I guess he didn't see the glue holding our fingers together. "There's a sign there, Sugar."

No shit, jackass, I thought, I see the sign. He pulled me to his side of the sign and we entered the restaurant. Jay spotted his business-suit buddies at the far corner of the bar.

"Jay," came grunts from this corner. My all-of-a-sudden sweat-soaked palms slipped from his grip. My fear of meeting large groups of people for the first time had taken a hold of my stomach. Jay had convinced me that Monday Night Football was fun.

"Especially with the guys!" He added, twice. "They're great."
Introductions were casually made ("Guys, this is Cindy. Cindy, these are my boys." And amidst the "Hey, Cindy's" I made my way to a stool that faced the wall. The more I could avoid conversation, the better. I began to check out the scenery when I noticed directly above my head a sign 'Men at Work,' only someone crossed out 'Men' and replaced it with 'Women.' Of course. Should have thought in a brewsky and mustard joint like this.

"Cinnamon, a beer?" I nodded and caught Jay's striped tie friend looking at my tits. I winked, laughing inside. He looked away. Why in the hell does he call me Cinnamon? It's Cindy! It's just like calling me sugar. I'm not a fucking sweetener. I'm barely even sweet.

"Jay, going to the bathroom."

"In the back, Sugar." I wasn't listening. I didn't care where the bathroom was. On my way out, I borrowed a notepad and pen from the waitress. ‘Jay, got a cab. Don’t call.’ There, he should understand that.

"Would you mind giving this to that guy over there in the suit?" I asked the waitress.

"Um, no. Which one?"

"Doesn't matter, I guess. Pick one." I went to hand her the paper but stopped and looked at it again. I noticed it was bordered with daffodils. I took the pen and scribbled them out. They made the paper look too girly, too sweet.

Like cinnamon.
Lindsay Shortino

Silence

Silence is the seed on the strawberry
   As it sticks between your teeth.
Silence is the single black dot
   On the wing of the ladybug.
Silence sways on the tree’s wooden swing
   And whispers secrets to the breeze.
Silence is the shadow that hovers over left shoulders
   And speaks to the wind.
Silence inhibits your growth
   And withers confidence.

... And then you move your lips
   And everything is changed.
Natalie Ferreri

Seasons

I.

I have watched the tree
Three stories high
Pass from green to orange to bare

I will also see it bloom
Buds sprouting
As they began yesterday – warmth in February causing confusion –

I too have passed from green to orange to bare
In the time I’ve say within
These three stories

I too am waiting for the buds
In the midst
Of my confusion

II.

Where street lamps and concrete mix with grassy hills and blossoming trees
I walk solitary in a warm breeze

In the country I would not feel secure
The honking cars with grinding engines and headlights offer comfort

Although for me safety is asphalt clutching my heels
I long for the uncertainty of open fields dirt roads mountain ranges.

III.

Sitting in a groggy state that even two tall cups of vanilla latte can’t cure,
I watch the world outside my window.

Like my cat staring intensely at crows and sparrows,
My gaze becomes lost in the bright powder blue sky.

The inviting sun and bitter cold
Continue their debate.
I turn to my coffee cup
My pen and blank paper

And sort out the details,
Turning my back on the sunset.
March 21, 1998. This was the day my whole life changed. Years have passed since this day, but I still hold a vivid picture of my last moments as a normal man. It was a Wednesday, garbage night, and I had endured another awful day of routine. My morning dragged on as I sat through three boring classes. I was unfortunately enough to have to follow this morning with an eight-hour shift at the deli where I had been working for the last year. I had just wanted to go home and relax, but couldn't keep my mind off the several papers that would fill my small amount of free time for the next week. After searching for a parking space on my street, I sat in my car for a moment and watched the rain pour down like a floodgate had just opened in the sky. I flung my bag over my shoulder and hurried for my house a block down the street. Soaked to the bone, I flopped down on the plump cushions of the green couch that filled our living room. It was my night to take the garbage out, but I figured I'd take a short nap and wait for the rain to let up. As I lay there, I couldn't shake the picture of the smiley face on the bumper of the car I had followed home. My irritation drew greater with the idea of this everlasting smile. I dismissed my wish for a constant smile because of its mere impossibility. So I closed my eyes and snuggled into the cushions, hoping to rid myself of troubles for a brief moment.

A splash of water in my face brought me back to reality. My eyes opened to an unfamiliar room being doused with the rain a shaggy yellow dog was shaking off. "Petie! You're making a mess in here. Go lay down." A woman of about twenty entered the room. I didn't know what to do. I tried to hide but I could not move. A powerful force seemed to hold my arms and legs in an X against the wall. My heart beat uncontrollably. I watched the stranger discard her wet clothing and smooth her long blond hair over her shoulder. As her eyes met mine, I tried to say hello, but the words just sputtered over my lips. She wasn't even phased by my presence, walking into the other room to carry on with her business.

I wasn't sure what had happened, but I knew that something wasn't right. I was stretched upon a cold wall to face the blankness of the empty white wall adjacent to me. My head was throbbing and the shaggy dog wouldn't stop sniffing at my feet. The stunning blond returned moments later and placed a full-length mirror against the opposite wall. I peeked in the corners around her to make sure that I wasn't the invisible man. The glimpses I caught were of a green tie-dye tapestry with a huge florescent smile plastered across the front.
It took hours of staring into this mirror for me to realize that my wish had come true. I was the everlasting smile people stared at and bitched to about life. I’ve since lost track of the years that have passed. Keeping up with seasons, I’ve watched the wardrobe of Katie, the blond, and her friends change over time. I now spent my days listening to conversations about boys and other juicy gossip that spilled out of the mouths of women. Overlooking my comments, the girls revealed their secrets, shedding tears and sharing laughs. Katie and shaggy Pete had become my best friends. We’d all sit together day after day watching soap operas and designing strategies to help Katie cope with the obstacles of life.

A summer morning came when Katie questioned our friendship and broke my spirit. She diminished the happiness that I had come to cherish by yelling at the smile that constantly flowed across my face. The smile was just a front that I thought Katie had looked past enjoying the real me. I had troubles too, but no one wanted to listen to my problems. When Katie wasn’t around, I just stared into the space that occupied the plain white wall in front of me. No one saw the frown that filled my face, created by the boredom and loneliness of my days. I had wished again and again that I could be a man again. I could make Katie happy. But my wishes, like my thoughts, were ignored and I remained immobile and without sympathy from my newfound friend.

I thought that change was coming when Katie started packing her belongings into boxes. We were getting out of here. No more white wall staring back at me. We were moving. My spirits began to rise as I dreamt about the new scenery and the new friends Katie would invite over to be mesmerized by my appearance. I was ready for the trip. A sigh of relief flowed out of my body. Katie removed the metal that had held me for so long, and carefully lay me across the floor to stretch and relax for the big day. I watched her carry everything out; offering my help, only to be dismissed useless. Finally my moment had come.

Katie picked me up and stared me in the face, looking deep into my eyes. She gave me a soft kiss upon my smiling lips, and then everything went dark. My eyes were open, but the light had seeped out of my world. My arms were crunched over my knees, my head pushed against my feet. My eagerness was replaced with fear and confusion. Pain overcame my body as some large object was placed on top of me. I couldn’t breathe. The air seemed to be drawing out of my lungs like a pool draining water. I gasped in a deep breath, closed my eyes and wish that I was someone else.
“Hey. Can I help you with that?”

Katie looked over her shoulder to find a tall dark man standing behind her. Their eyes met. She felt a chill of familiarity and choked a moment on her response. She handed him the box with a quiet ‘thanks’ and a smile spread over her face.
Beachhead landing on enemy sands
Frozen feet and shaking hands
Salt spray ice wind stings the eyes
Suilen storm clouds loom overcast skies
Black waves strike and smash and roar
Nausea consumes bile spit on flooded floor
Fear clutches soul tears at the heart
Buzzer screams the nightmare starts

Bullets falling pouring malicious rain
All around the sound smell sight of pain
Thunder crashes from concrete clouds
Lightning flashes strikes targets like angered gods
Fireball spraying sand cloud of choking haze
Rusty razor wire biting cruel dead wood maze
No place to run cower shelter or hide
Knee-deep cold sea breaking crimson tide.
Faceless foes merciless towers of steel and stone
Invoking resistance bearing none
Drills six months hidden in unconscious mind
Operation briefing no memory like home left behind
Blood stained sand mud covering boots hands soul
No mercy shrapnel fallen soldier chest gaping hole
Smell bitter smoke wet sweat piss bated breath
Staggering onward certain death

Delusive quest slay Fascist beasts force surrender
Love hope dreams life flame reduced to cinder
Twisted cross plague pestilence infecting evil smear
Futile fight for freedom people to never see touch or hear
Purple heart iron cross president's honor badge
To decorate casket folded flag twenty-one shot barrage

Pain shatters falling spinning burning lungs chest
Tasting blood retching gore red torn worthless vest
Lying crying praying staring at the sky
Arms legs fingers toes mind unfeeling throat dry
Mind blackening thoughts life reflect closing doors
Another nameless casualty decorating scarlet shores.
Sarah Nichols

My World

The color of the sky in my world is white,
Blinding, pure, light, fun, and clean.
The clouds are shades of purple,
Soothing, forget-me-nots, shifting always.
Birds of green and yellow pass by,
Dancing in the wind, careless, tiring.
Oceans clear, mountains with escalators,
Picnics can be held on both, floating or suspended on a cliff.
Visiting is easy, leaving is hard.
A place I've never been, and one that I can't leave.
What color is the sky in your world?
Ann Stanley-Barry

corridor sleep

night comes swiftly on
light feet the darkness
ushering in of my mind that burns me
craving the sun burns my eyes ice plunged in
two cubes of boiled water -blurring
melting-
i cannot see the horizon
i cannot see it all the end of
trapped in corridor an endless
no rights- no lefts
no end in sight desperately
running which never comes
i stumble glance around darkness
falls my hair crowds
my vision webs of
tangled in denial banging my
i am rocking head simplicity of
wondering at the life for harsher
corners
slants of light disrupted by
eclipsed moons
falling stars that leave
giant thumbprints
upon the earth
change is too
tame is an
illusion is a
lullaby sung to help us drift to sleep
corridor sleep
I woke in the night
and the moonlight fell upon
your sleeping face.
and I thought that by mistake
I'd ended up in heaven.
and when your eyelids
fluttered with dreams
I hoped they were of me
and you, dancing again
to the songs of baritone angels
and Russian piano duets.
your breathing and your heartbeat
were steady. I whispered
I love you
in your ear and I lay
in your arms listening,
silently through the night
hearing your voice and your poetry
read over in my head.
Lisa Middendorf

**Swing of Life's Pendulum**

*How many dead people do you know—Mary Lavin, "The Living"

"How many dead people do you know?" I only know of one. I first knew him as alive. I first knew him as my grandfather. I guess I still know him as my grandfather.

The earliest memories I have of the one dead person that I know, I don't really remember. I was a baby, the "Muffet" of "Misty and Muffet," he would take his teeth out and talk gibberish.

The last memory I have of him taking his teeth rest on the nightstand in the bedroom. He wasn't speaking gibberish. He wasn't speaking gibberish at all. He was rattling. My mom said it was called the death rattle. I still hear it when I visit the room where he died.

There are two noises that I will always connect with grandma and grandpa's house. The death rattle is the strongest, most eerie noise that haunts me. The other is the clocks. The only clocks that grandma owned were the one that tick-tocked, tick-tocked.

There was the one clock behind the guest chair in the living room. It had deer in the backdrop and the tick corresponded with the second hand. There was another on the wall behind grandma and grandpa's recliners. This tick corresponded with the pendulum that was hanging beneath. If you sat just right on the couch, you could watch the pendulum disappear behind grandpa's head, reappear then disappear again, behind grandpa's head.

There were days when I would lay on that couch and not be comfortable until I found that spot.

Two reasons existed for my lying on the couch. The first being I was sick and had to stay home from school. Sometimes I wasn't sick, but I made my mom believe that I was, because I knew that grandma was planning on making cookies that day. Her cookies always had extra chocolate chips in them.

During Christmas season, it seems that I was sick a lot. Of course, during the Christmas season, grandma made a weekly batch of woopie pies. The only way for you to understand woopie pies is to picture them in your head:

Close your eyes, imagine OREO cookies. Now imagine one OREO cookie. Take the size of that one OREO cookie by, like, six, make it homemade. See why I was never healthy during the Christmas season?
The second reason that made me find my dent on the couch was for grandpa’s stories. He was in the Korean War and, with the stories he told, I was there too. After a while, I would ask for specific stories. I had my favorites, 4 or 5 that complimented grandma’s cookies perfectly.

You see, my grandpa was a hero. He saved lives. One in particular.

They were coming home; their service time was up. Joy could be felt in the rocking of the waves. Grandpa was making his way to the bathroom on the deck. He opened the door to walk in. Simultaneous to his opening the door, a stranger jumped off the toilet and hung from a homemade noose. With his quick reaction, Grandpa grabbed the man by the waist and lifted him up. He called for help, and help came. The man did not die. Mail call that day had produced a “Dear John” letter for him. He had read it and wanted to end his life. He didn’t get the chance. My grandpa saved him.

Grandpa is a hero with or without stories. He is the only dead person I really knew as alive.

It took him only a few short hours to die. Up until then he was still living. The death rattle would lift his ribs high and then drop them quickly, loudly. I would sit and watch. Watch and wait. Wait for another rattle to shake his bones.

The time came. His ribs lifted up one last time, the rattling ceased. The dog, a 17-year-old beagle we called “Jefferson,” howled and ran to the door.

I would be sick from school that day. Only there would be no stories, only cookies. Grandma would feed me woopie pies and I would listen to the only sound left. Tic, tock, tic, tock.

I sat in my dent on the couch, a cookie in my hand, and watched the entire swing of the pendulum.
Ann Stanley-Barry

hunger is an illusion

rising in my milky mind
    like coral reef
    beautiful and
    jagged

swimming in stillness

stench of raw meat
    odor of wet books
    crawling through
    time

truth lies in movement

i could easily eat
    photographs or feet
    as i could apples
    or plums

talk lace hands and shoes

autumn delusions
    paint gestured rumors
    on the sky

illusion is a hunger
The rain fell in sheets against the house, making the windows rattle. It was one of those nights in November when it was cold, but just hanging on to that last breath of fall. Jane got up from her soft, brown chair to get the fleece blanket that she kept on top of the couch, then settled back into the chair with her book. Before long, the rain lulled her away from her book and into a sound sleep.

Jane's dream consisted of an old museum filled with sculptures. They ranged from the odd, to the oddly normal, to the beautiful. Jane wandered through the museum, staring at and studying every sculpture she came to. She seemed to get lost in the endless hallways, bumping into something every time she turned a corner.

Suddenly, Jane couldn't move anymore. She was seated on a platform in the center of a room filled with statues of people in different poses. She tried to jump down, but couldn't move her legs. They were stuck in a crossed position, and her elbows were resting on them. Her chin was stuck to her hands. Jane was completely immobilized.

People were walking around and around her now. There were men caressing her legs and women staring at her face. They all seemed fascinated by her shape and the way she was sitting.

"She looks nice, but her nose is kind of big," one woman said.

Another woman said, "And look at her breasts...quite small, aren't they?"

"Yes," said a tall man, "but the eyes are exquisite."

Jane started to feel extremely uncomfortable, but she couldn't run from them. Groups of people were touching her and commenting on her body. The line of them seemed endless, an
she couldn't stop their wandering hands. She wanted to scream, but no sound came out.

She woke suddenly from the dream when Percy, her cat, jumped onto her lap. She tried to move her arm to shoo him away, but she couldn't. Her skin felt clammy and cold. She felt stiff and tried to stretch, but couldn't lift her arms. Jane figured they must have fallen asleep from being in an awkward crossed position while she was sleeping.

Her book had fallen to the floor next to her, and Jane tried to pick it up. Her body just wouldn't shift the right way. She started to feel trapped in her chair, almost as if she were glued there. Percy began to rub back and forth, back and forth against her legs, purring softly. Jane wanted to pet him, but her head felt too heavy to move from its place on her palms. She figured she must have been asleep for quite a while to feel this stiff. She remembered dreaming, but couldn't quite think of what the dream was about.

The grandfather clock directly across the room struck the hour. Jane glanced over to see what time it was and noticed her reflection looked pale in the glass. She looked again and noticed she didn't have any clothes on. The only thing hiding her breasts was the position of her hands. She tried to get up and cover herself, but she couldn't move. She watched her attempts in the glass. Nothing was happening. Her body was completely still. Jane was stone-faced. She tried to cry out, but it only echoed through her mind. She was bound to the chair. Left to be forever rated and scrutinized. The true destiny of every woman.