2002

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ANGLE 2002

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1

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# Table of Contents

**Cover Art** Alexis Speck

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Letter from the Editors</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angle’s Home Grown Awards</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaffirmation</td>
<td>Nate Rider</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>Megan E. Herrman</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Cage</td>
<td>Kristen Orser</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyone’s Bonsai</td>
<td>Lori D’Ovidio Dabbagh</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting on a Wishing Star</td>
<td>David J. Landers</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Gallery</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penance</td>
<td>Mindae M. Kadous</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaleidoscope Child</td>
<td>Julie Wagner</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With You</td>
<td>Megan E. Herrman</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Day in the Life</td>
<td>Peggy Sterling</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost in Ordinaries</td>
<td>Jodi Rowland</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td>Alyssa Osinski</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Catharsis</td>
<td>Nate Rider</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation</td>
<td>Rita Nauman</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cracks</td>
<td>Vanessa Cardinale</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 A.M. Grocery Shopping</td>
<td>Kristen Orser</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising From the Ashes</td>
<td>David J. Landers</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She Speaks</td>
<td>Stacy Colombo</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before the Calm</td>
<td>Marcia Dodge</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Last Closing</td>
<td>Evelyn Jansen</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life is.</td>
<td>Marcia Dodge</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission Guidelines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle/vol2003/iss1/22
A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

While laying out this first Fall issue, we realized what a community effort The Angle has become. Taking this development into account, we have made some creative additions to celebrate work that encompasses the St. John Fisher community. Two faculty members shared their work with us in this issue. We are thrilled with this new addition to our magazine, and we hope to see more faculty and staff involvement in the future.

We were overwhelmed by the amount of quality work we received for this issue. To showcase these literary and visual works, we have added Home Grown Awards and a full-color gallery insert.

Thank you to everyone who has come together to help us celebrate our creative arts community here at St. John Fisher. Our next submission deadline is November 11th. We hope even more of you will share your talents with us in the coming year.

Enjoy this issue full of prose, poetry, and art, all of which have been handpicked just for you!

Thank you,

Mindae M. Kadous
Jodi Rowland
ANGLE'S HOME GROWN AWARDS

READER'S CHOICE

FIRST PLACE  NATE RIDER  . . . REAFFIRMATION
SECOND PLACE  MEGAN E. HERRMAN  . . . PUNCTUATION
THIRD PLACE  KRISTEN ORSER  . . . JOHN CAGE
FACULTY AWARD  LORI D'OVIDIO DABBAGH  . . . EVERYONE'S BONSAI

ART PICKS

ART AWARD  LISA GUARNERE
FACULTY ART AWARD  MARK JACOBS
ADVISOR'S PICK  MICHAEL ZAREMBA

ALEXIS SPECK
"Here’s to you and you
and to Lake Ontario,
nuclear reactors and lost attention,"
she said.

"You have all survived, you
unintentional martyrs and
insignificant heroes."

Eyes black, hair long,
arms outstretched in a prophetic,
Jesus Christ pose.

"There’s just too much anger here,
too much ruptured vanity,
too much shock,
too much identity crisis.
And worst of all,
too much patriotism.
Patriotism in a country that’s failing
Has a logical tendency to turn
fascistic.
You make fascism seem worthy of praise.
You’re filled with doubt
and a shroud of revenge that tilts your heads."

She sighed,
cigarette flickering in the dark,
only a pale, violet light
is cast upon
her tan skin, her white cloak.

"A big change is on its way,
a moon to alter your arrogant
sense of normalcy,
your beautiful lull,
your pendulum of democracy
and hate."

A tear, a smile, a raised voice,
All signs of pride.
"All you spics, dagos, canucks
niggers, chinks, gooks, zipperheads,
krauts, mics, injuns and those I may have
forgotten,"

another sigh,
another tear

"breathe in a deep breath,
a sigh of relief if you will.
They will no longer hate you,
And your miniscule morals."

A pause,
a silence deafening enough
to alter the tides,
to alter the world.

"Thank you America and praise to you
'past decade or two.'
Here's to you,
your frailty and weakness."
Megan E. Herrman

Punctuation

I graduated from the *Strunk and White* School of Grammar
passed punctuation effortlessly.
Had every intention of pursuing
a degree in Coordinating Conjunctions.
I had a future, grammatically speaking.

Now, I’m just a comma whore.
I became reckless,
started buying punctuation multi-packs.

Pausing within sentences regularly,
intentionally, deliberately,

transitions hanging,
flirting with compound elements,
mixing sentence parts with promiscuity.

The note my teacher left me
implored me to address
the problem with decency.

Absolve myself
in a manner dignified.

Bless me father,
I have sinned.
For, I’m a comma whore.
"what are you listening to?" you asked as I sat in what you thought was quiet
you saw me tapping my finger to a beat you couldn’t hear
you heard me hum along to lyrics that weren’t written.
"John Cage’s vision is playing for me for the first time" I told you without explanation.
I think you left the room then, I think you shook your head before you left;
I’m not sure I saw you leave or shake your head, but I heard it.
I heard the air dance
I heard the squeaking of the floorboards-
it was,
after all,
part of the song I was listening too.

preserved on blank music sheets
John Cage was the original appreciator of life,
the original listener.
not needing an orchestra,
not needing rehearsals,
living music instead of only making it.
always listening, always comprehending beauty-
an aesthetic reverie
dreamt by a man sitting at a piano, not playing it.

"do you want to go get some dinner" you asked with impatience
"just let me listen to four minutes and three seconds of life, then we can eat."
and your hands raised in confusion pushed the air and became part of the song’s finale.
Stay away from boys!
To hell with cherry blossoms!
Mama shouts to me.

Like a bonsai tree,
While all count crispy banknotes,
I wait for suitors.

They worship the Al-Mighty dollar. They don’t pray
Five times to Mecca.

Allah shines not so
Bright as newly-minted coins
And men with wallets

So arms akimbo
I hope for him with a shini
ny new Mercedes.

In my gilded cage
I’ll sing as the nightingale
A tinny refrain.

On a mountainside
I could have grown twelve feet high
But I was stunted

And potted to wait,
Consenting with my silence,
For the aunts’ shrill shrieks.

Ly-ly-lyiiish!!
Long live the bridled couple
That may have run free.

In a house of gold
I shall bear fruit and prosper:
Everyone’s bonsai.
DAVID J. LANDERS

WAITING ON A WISHING STAR

Saturday, August 31st

"Let's go look for a wishing star!" She says, amber eyes lit up like the prophetic rogue that she wants to find.

"Ok" Hesitancy fills my voice. I don't know what a wishing star is.

"You do know what a wishing star is, don't you?" She says, apparently reading my mind.

"Not really"

"Not really? Is that a 'no'?" She asks, and raises an eyebrow the same way she does every time that I say or do something truly ignorant.

"Yeah. That's a 'no.'"

I really don't care what a wishing star is. I'd go watch the grass grow with her if she asked me to; if that would make her happy; if that would make her want to be with me.

"You're hopeless Here, I'll show you." She grabs my hand, dragging me down the stairs and out her front door. We both lay down on the driveway, side by side; hands intertwined.

"Ok" She says "What you do is ask the stars a 'yes or no' question. If you see a wishing star, the answer is 'yes'. Get it?"

"A wishing star?"

"A comet!"

"Ohhh Ok " More hesitancy. I feel like an idiot, but that's ok. I'm willing to feel like an idiot if that would make her happy.

"Ok" She says, "Ask a question."

"Ummm " I keep my mouth shut and mull for a moment. I know what I want to ask, but I don't know how to ask it. And I think I'm scared that I'll either get a no or a yes or that I'll actually believe what the stars tell me.

"You can't think of a question?" She asks, talking to me like the idiot that I really am. "Just start with something easy."

"Why don't you start?" I ask "That way, I can think of a question while we're waiting for your answer."

"Ok, fine." She says; hesitates less than a moment, then asks "Should I look into my family lineage more? Should I try to find my step-brothers and sisters?" I look at her and, as if to clarify to either me or to the stars, she elaborates. "My father's other children that I've never met before." I nod. That's a good question.

Less than a minute later, we see something streak across the sky. A glimpse of hope. A frozen opportunity. I utter an expletive in my head, because I still haven't thought of a question to ask.

"Yay!" Mandy says 'yay' a lot when she's happy. "Ok. Your question"

"Ummm " I remain silent for a minute or so. All the questions that I want to ask would sound so stupid. Why am I here? Do I have a pre-destined purpose on this planet? Am I important? Do Mandy and I belong together? She breaks the silence.

"I'm freezing." She says. I take off my treasured navy hoodie and hold it out to her. Now I'm going to freeze, but I'd gladly go through low-tech cryogenics if that would make her happy.

"Thanks." She says, "You still haven't asked a question."

"I know Ummm"
"'Ummm ' is not a question."
"Ok, I've got one." I say and take a deep breath as if I'm about to dive into the ocean. "Is life going to get any easier?" We lay there for a minute A few more; I fidget. "I guess that's a 'no,' huh?"
"Guess so." She says.
"Well, that sucks..."
Apparently that's funny. Mandy laughs, and I laugh in agreement. She sighs and puts her head on my shoulder.
"We really make a great couple." She says. My heart skips a beat or two, and then rushes to catch up. I wasn't aware that she considered us a 'couple,' but I'm sure as hell glad that she does.
"Yeah." I agree.
"I mean I still have feelings for John, but I think we would go really well together." I hate it when she brings up his name, but by now, I've learned to grit my teeth and take it like a man.
"Yeah." I reply "Well, I think we're really good for each other, too. But if you still have feelings for John, I guess you should probably see what's going on with that." A few moments of silence and, finally, she nods.
"I really want to be with you. But not yet. I don't know I'm really confused right now. You caught me at a very difficult time in my life."
"Take your time, Mandy." I say, "All I've got is time."
"Ok." she says "I'm going to ask another question."
"Alright." That's all I can say. She looks up to the sky and asks her question. "Should I abandon John and pursue this relationship with Dave?" Within a few seconds, another comet crosses the sky, a bold and definitive 'YES!' A smile crosses my face.
"Sweet." I say. That sums up everything that I'm thinking.
"Wow." She says, "That was a quick response."
"Yeah." "Okay You get one more question." I'm still scared as hell of asking the question that I really wanted to ask, but, after a minute of silence, I finally get the guts to say it. My eyes drop to the ground, inspecting one of the many cracks in Mandy's driveway.
"Well I was just wondering if we are meant to be together." Before I can finish, she lets out one of those squeaks that she vocalizes every time she is really happy. I look over at her and see that she is glowing.
"Holy shit, did you see that?!?" She exclaims, "It was huge! The wishing star went across the sky before you could even finish your question!"
"Wow." I don't know what to say. "Rock on."
We lay there in silence, both of us happier than either had been in quite some time. Ten minutes passed in silence, and we just held each other. I had almost fallen asleep when she broke it with a whisper.
"I have to go in now. It's time for me to go to bed."
"K." That's probably a good idea. I'm tired, too."
"G'Night, Dave." She stretches out her arms and we hold each other. "Call me tomorrow, ok?"
"Sure." I say. We rock each other to the point of hypnotism. Neither of us wants to let go, but a few minutes later, we do. We hold hands for another minute, and then tear ourselves away from each other. It's not easy to do.
"Good night, Mandy. I'll talk to you tomorrow, ok?"
"Ok." She says "Good night." She crawls under the half-open garage door and hits the button to close it. I walk backwards to my car and open the door with a creak. A few seconds later, I’m driving home with a smile.

Friday, September 20th

"You don’t know who Humphrey Bogart is??!!" Mandy exclaims in shocked bewilderment.

"Well " I defend myself "I’ve heard of him, but I’ve never seen any of his movies."

"I can’t believe that! And you call yourself a movie lover?"

"Ummm We’ll " Why is she yelling at me about Humphrey Bogart? "I like movies, but I never actually claimed to be a movie expert."

"But still " she trails off and just shakes her head. She looks down, breaking eye contact for the first time in five minutes. I’m glad that she does.

The past few weeks had been great between the two of us. We’ve had a few great nights out, a few great nights in, and some great conversations. Things were looking better than they ever had between us, but she’s in a bad mood tonight. She and her mother had another fight earlier today. Unfortunately, I had already been too much of a wimp to ask her out several times, and I had convinced myself earlier that it was now or never. Tonight was the night that I would lose my single-ness. I’m too stubborn for my own good Mandy and I sit on her bed in silence for a few minutes.

"Hey, Mandy?" I ask.

"Yeah?"

"Ummm I have something I want to ask you, but I’m really, really nervous."

"What?"

"Well " I said "I wanted to ask you out tonight." She doesn’t say anything, so I elaborate. "I mean, I think we’re great together, and I really just want to be with you. You know? I care about you a lot."

"What?"

"This is me attempting to ask you out in my own weird way." Maybe she didn’t get it the first time.

"Dave " she says, "I don’t know " My proverbial jaw drops to the ground.

"Wow " I say, "That’s not exactly the answer I was hoping for, but ok."

"Well what were you expecting?"

"Ummm We’ll Amanda talked to me And told me that you told her you wanted me to ask you out. And Greg told me about your conversation about the same thing. I just kind of figured that since you told both your best friend and my best friend that you wanted to go out with me That you’d probably say 'yes.'"

"Greg told you what I said?!?"

"Well, yeah. He’s my best friend. It’s his job to, isn’t it?" We sit in silence once again.

"Hey " I say, "Can we go outside? It’s a little warm in here."

"Yeah, sure." She says. We go downstairs and out the door, silent. Each of us preparing ourselves for anything.

"Wow. It got cold out here." She says. I nod, take off my treasured grey hoodie, and hand it over. "Thanks." She says.

"Yeah. No problem. " We sit down on the driveway, the same driveway that gave me my first glimpse into a false future. She lays down, putting her head in my lap, and looks up at the stars.

"I wish things weren’t so difficult." She says.

"I know exactly what you mean " An elongated moment of silence fills the air. I fight
to keep myself from shaking. It really is cold.
"I'm going to ask again." She mutters.
"Huh?"
"Oh. Did I say that out loud? I just asked the stars if I should be with you, or if I should stay single."
"This doesn't really seem like something you should leave up to the stars." I say.
"I always ask the stars for help when I don't know what to do."
"Oh, ok." More silence, but I don't mind. Silence can be cleansing sometimes.
"Oh poop!" She says. I laugh. That sounds like something my mom would say.
"What's the 'Oh poop' about?" I ask.
"I just saw one." She says "Right after I asked if I should stay single."
"Oh h h h. That is an 'Oh poop' situation." I'm not laughing any more, and I really don't know what to say to show her that, sometimes, the stars can lie. Even wishing stars
"I'm going to try again." She says, "Should I stay single?"
Nothing.
"Ok Should I do what I want to or what I should do?"
Nothing.
"Maybe I need to be more specific." She says, "Should I go out with Dave?"
A comet streaks across the sky after a moment of nothingness. My eyes are beginning to droop. I can feel the bags getting baggier. And Mandy squeaks.
"Best two out of three, ok?"
"Sure." I say.
"Ok. Last question. Should I stay single or go out with Dave? If the wishing star goes 'up,' I go out with you. If it is going 'down,' I stay single." I don't know what to say. Plus, I'm starting to get really tired, so I keep my trap shut. Nothing crosses the sky; five minutes pass in silence.
"Don't leave this up to me. Please." She says, desperation beginning to fill her voice. I look over at her. Desperation is filling her eyes, too. She sits up, and a tear drops from her eye. She sniffs and wipes her nose on my hoodie, but I don't mind. I'd be happy to let her use my most treasured possession as a snot-rag if that would make her happy. I reach over and wipe the tear away with my thumb.
"Hey. It's ok, Mandy." She collapses into me and we hold each other. "Take your time, alright? I mean I really do want to be with you, but I don't need an answer tonight."
"But still I want to say yes." She says, "I just don't know if I can."
"It's alright." I say. We rock for a while and, this time, it is I who breaks the silence.
"Hey. It's three in the morning. I better take off."
"Dave?"
"Yeah?"
"I'll come up with an answer soon, ok? And I'm going to come up with the answer that's best for both of us, ok?"
"Ok." I say, "I really have to go."
"Alright."

We hold each other a while longer, exchange our final kiss, and part ways. As a man, I'm not allowed to look back, but I do; all I see is Mandy, fading into the distance; fate foretold by the stars. I drop my head and go home.
A dog is for life not just for Christmas

Art Award

Lisa Guarnere

Advisor's Pick

Michael Zaremba

Alyssa Osinski

Rebecca Kalamas
FACULTY ART AWARD  Maryland  MARK JACOBS

SHANNON BAKER

LISA GUARNERE
Your complexion is a window to the soul,

and it is this that I want to write about—what Society asks us to endure,

but I am not ready to.

Instead, I remember Father O' Flanagan’s three Hail Marys
and the confessional box,
its insides I had confessed eight years of my life to-

the same wood-paneled walls with the same gray screen, bordered by
old, silver duct tape rolling up at the corners.

I would stare hard into that gray screen,
as it veiled my complexion from the holy voice on the other side
and worry I was taking too long
and everyone waiting behind me in line would think it, too.

I’d walk out of that confessional box carrying my penance with me-
knowing once again, I’d stand in front of the bathroom mirror
washing my hands clean and counting the blemishes
on my 13-year-old face-

an indication that my life was still out of balance.
Someone once asked me
what I thought
would be the best gift
to receive
and I said
a *kaleidoscope*.

A child *is*
like a kaleidoscope,
the way the pieces cartwheel
and tumble over, always showing
something new. We’ve seen it before—
just not the silly way
he flops the orange; or with the character
she twists the black. Continually surprised
we are, though it’s the same thing
only a little bit different this time.

A child *is*
like a kaleidoscope,
with small chips of color
splashing through the last life and into
this one. The bits of purple that are me,
and the slices of green that are you.
All coming together finding new
resting places that are the person
in constant flux: floating, melting.

A child *is*
like a kaleidoscope.
One minute happy in bright yellow
and the next midnight blue
with that bottom lip hanging down
like Florida. One moment flush red from play
and the next a sleepy white that drifts
like Nevada clouds in sweet dreams.
In whatever way the light trickles in
A child *is*
every color.
MEGAN E. HERRMAN

WITH YOU

hanging upside down
blood rushing to brain
waiting for something to happen
watching a Popsicle river
run down my leg.
scars exist for the sake
of memory rather than
the initial pain.

PEGGY STERLING

A DAY IN THE LIFE

She first stares at her watch,
And then at me
She’d frown and curl her brows
If she had them.
Yells out
Have you worked on those highlights?

Can we highlight
the fact, I’ve had
no increases in two years.
She goes back to watching, the rest of day
The sentinel of the maze.
JODI ROWLAND

LOST IN ORDINARIES

My pencil has scratched
the surface of the page,

tracing a valley like an artist.
April showers

in the rain forest.
I have wrote and sung,

like a professional singer.
I am running into impossibilities-

veggie lo mein, chicken, pomegranate-
usually in September,

now, in October.
The jades and magentas

of my creativity
have dried like a desert.

I'm running from the rotten apples
squatting on the forest floor

and trembling, I scurry
to reach the April blue valley

bottled in the ocean
while the sky lamp

scorns its light
on me.
Alyssa Osinski

Words

My temporary escape from
What I perceive to be negative,
My life is an avalanche
Of challenges and aspirations.

There is a strange comfort
In seeing my soul on paper,
What I want and should do,
Who I am, what I once knew.

Structure, rhyming, blah!
But I can contradict myself
The present is mine
And I will prove it with words.

Nate Rider

National Catharsis

you were just two towers,
two buildings amongst thousands,
maybe millions.
not even the tallest or
the most glorious.
Maybe the most important,
but just a minor detail.

only three thousand perished,
not ten, twenty or fifty.
It was no Hiroshima,
38th parallel or even Chernobyl.
a simple fictive dream,
an archipelago of thoughts,
a lapse of reality.

no sense of compassion.
only weeks, maybe months later
just indifference,
a desultory way of life.
a desolate response to death.
you were just two towers,
two buildings, amongst none.
RITA NAUMAN

SALVATION

Mary had never been opposed to working downtown despite the drive, the parking, and the noise. She got used to it. As a lawyer, she knew that her profession may require her to work under such conditions. Mary grew up in a small town, but she was no small-town girl. Her ambitions were too great. She was a prosecutor, which meant it was her job to make sure that the charged party was convicted of his or her crime. She was exceptionally good at her job, and she always worked alone. She found all her witnesses, gathered all her evidence, and took all the glory or the shame when it was done.

Until the time it happened, everything else remained the same. Mary parked in a public garage and left the ticket on the dashboard. She exited her car with her briefcase in hand and locked the doors with her remote. Then, she tried the driver side door, twice. It was locked. It always was. She checked her lipstick one last time in the reflection of the car window, and began her walk to the office: 3 blocks north on Exchange Blvd., 2 blocks west on Main St. In her four years at the firm, the routine never changed. Mary hadn’t realized the consistency of her mornings until the day it did change.

She heard them from a block away. A group of raucous protesters had gathered on the corner of Exchange and Main. She heard shouts of "Turn to Jesus!" and "The end is near!" Mary had never witnessed such a disturbing display of Christianity gone wild. About two dozen protesters were gathered on the corner. Some were holding signs, and some were wearing signs, but all of them were shouting at the people walking by. Mary slowed her pace. She didn’t know what to make of the scene, but she knew she couldn’t avoid it. She had to turn that corner.

One of the men saw Mary approaching and directed his racket at her. "Live not by evil, but by the way of the Lord! The mighty wrath of God is upon us! Turn to Jesus, and save yourself! It’s not too late! Let God cleanse your wicked soul!"

Mary put her hand in front of her face and kept walking past the man past all of them. She had just begun to turn the corner onto Main St. when she heard him holler, "See that woman who walks the path of evil! She worships the devil! Let her be damned to hell for all eternity!"

Mary planted both her feet on the pavement. "This is ridiculous," she thought to herself, "and all I need is a name to put an end to it." She marched back to the man who was spouting at her and said plainly, "Tell me your name."

The man looked at her and looked as if he were considering it. He put a rough hand through his silver hair and cleared his throat. "No."

"Tell me your name," Mary repeated, "so I can tell Jesus who sent me."

The crowd became silent. They lowered their signs and focused on the man. His hands were shaking. "Peter Morris," he said.

"Peter Morris," Mary echoed with a wide smile. "Jesus will be pleased."
On the outside she:
Seems so together,
Epitome of style and class,
Dark ringlets dancing around silver hoop earrings,
Dangerous, inviting, red lips
Parted strategically
In a perfectly sly smile,
Cool, charismatic blue eyes that
Reveal nothing about her true soul.

On the inside she:
Questions life’s injustices and cruelties,
Everything that she had always thought was concrete
Nothing but cracks in the foundation
Of what used to be her comfortable life.
Just turned twenty and
Now sees the
Fractures and breaks
In the wall of life she trusted to hold her up.
Disappointment and
Loss of trust in all those she deemed trustworthy
Now commonplace
To a young idealist
Trying to comprehend the world
As she now sees it.
At 3 a.m.
I am the solitary walker of bread aisles
I am the only one who probes the now not so fresh sushi

The freezer aisle makes me speculate what age will feel like
as its coldness singes my skin.
The cereal aisle consoles me with childhood familiarity
marshmallows, toys, and lots of sugar.
I roam every aisle...
at a loss for what I am seeking.

The list I clutch is precise:
bananas, milk, whole-wheat bread,
and maybe some shrimp if it’s on sale
but I can’t follow the list exclusively -
tired of its structure
tired of oatmeal for breakfast and PB and J for lunch
I find something I hadn’t thought of,
something I hadn’t needed.

couscous
it seems daring, it seems foreign,
It’s not on the list

I buy couscous at 3 a.m. and I wonder,
will this change my life?

with obscure excitement,
I toss the box of couscous in my cart
I return to the list,
I’ve taken destiny into my own hands:
the predetermination of the list did not shackle me wholly.
I will have couscous for dinner because I elected it

I stand feet away from the checkout aisle
knowing that I will return home soon,
return to college applications, homework, and "to-do" lists.
I will return to maturity, responsibility, and age
I stand feet away from the checkout aisle,
on the heel of my cart
and I push myself.
I fly one final time.
When I look up
I see the storm...
Swirling grey;
Releasing its low,
Quiet rumble
Again and again
That forces a cower
From all living things
And from it leaps
Chaotic lines of
Purple, blue, green:
Flashes that seem like
The visual equivalent
Of a gunshot to the head

And yet
I know that,
Beyond the grey
Lies the blue.
And if I could only
Rise from the ashes
That have been burying me
For so long,
I’ll be able to
Live
Again.
And I know that,
If I’m able to
Weather the storm
Then maybe
I’ll be able to
Feel
Again.
And I won’t have to
Spend my life
Preparing to quiver
And I feel the rising
Levitating
Those things that are more powerful
Than gravity
And fear;
The will;
The desire;
The need,
And the power of the mind
To overcome
Even the most horrifying
Of life’s experiences.

And I rise toward the clouds...

APRIL S. ENGRAM
I am the words on the page
that captures your interest
with its context.

I am the fickle lilac
that blossoms in only early May.

I am the aged Red Wood- a canopy for many days.

I am the purring kitten
harmonizing to love’s touch.

I am the chilled breeze
wisping away the hair across your face.

I am the stars on a dark, foggy night.

I am the clapping thunder
amid the rolling winds
of the storm.

I am the heavy door,
the hinge, and the bolted lock.

I am the pesky weed
that grows unwanted in the fruitful garden
of soft, jade grass.

I am the blurry silhouette
in your dream when
you wish to never wake-up
BEFORE THE CALM

Behind the false face
of cool white and green
The house where I live
is loud and painful.

The anger flares inside-
as words slice
through my heart.

My ears burn-
I hear my mouth spill
the hatred
which overflows
my brain.

I ache for calm,
for peace and quiet.
I no longer desire
to be in this place.

Escape is short,
there is no place
to run.

I must remain in this house
until resolution comes.
EVELYN JANSEN

THE LAST CLOSING
AFTER EDWARD HOPPER, SEVEN A.M., 1948

As I closed and locked the door of my little country store for the last time, I could
smell the foliage on that warm, balmy evening. After I turned the key in the lock, I stared
at the weathered, white exterior of the building I had worked in for 27 years.

I could hear birds in the trees next door-chirping like they didn’t have a care in the
world. What I used to hear was the door constantly opening and closing as customers
came and went, and the ding of the old patina-colored cash register as I rang up
transactions.

Lately though, all you could hear was my own breathing, and the only smell was of
dust, settling on the empty shelves-chestnut in color. They line the walls of this store like
soldiers ready to advance on a silent, but formidable enemy-hard times.

It has become pretty isolated around here since the factory shut down. I can’t expect
people to buy things in my store when most don’t even have enough to eat.

All I can do now is draw the butter-cream shades, and lock the door.

MARICA DODGE

LIFE IS. . .

Life is rain
A warm misting that just gives you a small thrill
Gentle rain that fleetingly kisses you on its way by
The downpour that gets everything wet yet not enough to satisfy
A cold dark pelting that lasts awhile
An encompassing soothing rain calming and lulling you to sleep
Flashing thundering that holds your attention and puts on a show
for those unafraid to go

ALEXIS SPECK