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ANGEL’S HOME GROWN AWARDS

READERS’ CHOICE

FIRST PLACE Pro America Juvenis......Andy Brunton
SECOND PLACE Hindsight......Matthew Mendolera
THIRD PLACE Sonnet in Brown: Carnival Time......Krista Byfield
EDITOR’S PICK The Almighty Our Facebook......Dave Lester
FACULTY AWARD Pissing in Good Company......David White

LISA BROTZ
I recently heard on the national news, the report: a higher incidence of driving deaths, among teens.

I immediately thought of the parking lot at my high school overflowing down the street, blocking the views of passers-by and the constant need of teenagers to announce their power with their car horns like a constant, sorry fanfare, out of tune, and so the dissonance echoing.

I wondered how young Columbus was, when he drove his ships across the ocean, carrying ancient invisible maladies, like pox and testosterone.

How easily these young brothers cut down the wise old man that lived on this land and how swiftly and blindly they sailed.

I thought of McCauley Culkin, who divorced his parents while, far away, his father sat in a golden chair, proud of his boy’s power, through clenched fists.

I thought of how the boy’s changing voice affected his booming infant career while his thoughts were in their ‘60s and drove him for ages to avoid the blinding light of his adoring fans.

I thought of a teenage girl’s bedroom where she sleeps among posters of her tiny heroes, each wall an altar to a brand new, shiny false-idol, clad in the fad of hot-pink.

I thought of myself as a teen: the incurable temper and the ferociousness of my friendships. I thought of the debauchery of my senior year, driving drunk to the schedule of the school day, and on Graduation day trying coke for the first time.

I thought of milestones, like manifest destiny, or oil like ink spilled from a half-full glass, spreading on the cement of the garage floor and settling into the cracks and craters, the powerful odor rising out and spinning hard like the torque of wheels turning on a car.

I remembered milestones measured in teeth and then in steps and then in words and then in hair and then in years and then ceremonies and then in jobs.

Numbers like 16, 18, 21 marking the adolescent calendar unfolded under pictures of busty blonds.

And I realized how, collectively, our numbers are much larger, but mark the same growth: First to drive, then to vote, then to forget. And who is it that has invested in us this power to drive ships, and tanks, and choppers, and planes strapped with fire through borders like two yellow lines between two white ones? It is no wonder that teenagers die in such large numbers in ditches, and trenches, and against telephone poles, and often past our bedtimes.

And where were the parents in all of this? And why have their hands relaxed around our necks and shoulders? We have learned to differentiate their cars from their children’s by the conspicuous yellow ribbons on their trunks, but where are they going, these parents, and why do we follow their kids? Where were the wise elders to drive us to school where, together we can grow and mature into strong, noble leaders with sturdy backs, and straight enough to see over the steering wheel? Have they already succumbed to that genetic contagion, testosterone, coursing rudely in their systems? Please, someone take control until we are old enough to know that we can die!

Finally, in a fever of reverie and fear for my children, I thought of my high school Latin class and every day the back-of-room conversations with another student about drugs and the crazy things we’d done when high. I thought about my children, and about how important it was to learn the vocabulary of a dead language.
It's July and I am dumbfounded.
The plane ride was uncomfortable and I am almost annoyed
that you bought us tickets that were not even next to each other
but then I figure that you bought us tickets...
so I'm really not annoyed at all.

It's August and I am depressed.
My parents are crying again and I am aggravated
that you don't seem to get it, that you don't seem to realize how deeply this cuts into me
but then I understand that you keep surprising me with gifts and trips and
I am just comforted knowing that you are trying to make me smile.

It's September and I am lost.
Work is piling and graduation is looming and I am so distraught
that I push you away and I see you push back and I cannot understand why we are straining
but then I hope that routine will win and snap things back into place
so I am secure in knowing that sooner or later, things will get normal again.

It's October and I have committed self-murder.
The minutes that make up my days are unorganized and unfamiliar and I am bitter
that you cannot seem to save me even as I run away fiercely and triumphantly embracing my
independence
but then I hurt you and suddenly all I want to do is run back.
So I awaken and I'm stubborn and instead of sorry all I can say is stop.

It's November and I am ruined.
You are gone from me and yet when we are together there are moments when all I do is cry
that things will never be as they should be and I won't allow you to diminish my pain even as I
cause you more
but then you forgive me and I will not forgive myself
so we are just as dead as we were when you hated me for closing you out and letting him in.

It's December and I am alone.
The kitchen table is cold and my mother's words warm and I am amazed
that you still cannot see through my eyes and you've stopped calling and this makes me
enraged
but then I want to die all over again rather than hurt you once more so I drink and I call and I
hang up
so I don't have to face you or myself or even the icy wind.

It's January and I am wise.
Getting lost in the snow is no longer an option and I am certain
that I was right all along even when I was so utterly wrong wrong wrong
that you accepted less than you needed or wanted or deserved and I was in power
but then I did not want to be, all I wanted then and want now is to grow with you.
So I say sorry every day and I buy you gifts and trips and try to make you smile.
Brown skin people dance all over the land;
Torrents of water ragging down the falls;
Bakanal, Calypso whine and reggae band;
Kingston people looking over their walls.
Glistening sunshine, bright colors, and luscious lips,
Horns tooting, brakes screeching, hands are waving;
People dancing and everyone moving hips
And no one is worried about saving.
Palm trees swaying in the cool island breeze
And in Jamaica everything is no problem;
Because everyone is feeling at ease;
Carnival time and nothing bothers them.
Everyone together without fear
I wonder why it’s only once a year.
"Our Facebook,
Who art in cyberspace,
Hallowed by thy name.

Thy social network come.
Thy will be done,
At Fisher as it is in cyberspace.

Give this day our daily poke,
As we poke those trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from myspace.

For thine is the social network,
And the power,
And the glory,
For ever and ever.

HTML."
Sleepy Hollow Cemetery opens at 7 in the morning, so I arrived before 5 intent on some contemplation prolonged and private, a plan of some merit but less well executed since by the time I'd found Emerson's grave on Authors Ridge my bladder was ready to burst, not at all embarrassed if I knew its distress to the extent I was ready to piss in my pants and get it over with, still determination can work wonders of invention, so I dropped my pants and squatted next to the marker, so if apprehended at all I would appear to be engaged in nothing more offensive than some unauthorized grave-tending, then in another burst of the creative as would make Ralph smile, I did a slow release despite my pain and urgency with each drop grateful I am woman and get to piss like a girl with none of the crude male competitiveness of who can arc farther, no, for me as for Ralph Waldo the question is rather how deep one goes, my thin yellow cord going deep indeed reaching my man and quenching his long thirst for the non-conformity one needs to be a man. With each timed release I sent the sage a terse and personal message of gratitude, complaint, perplexity, irreverence. No, I say to my Ralph, as he receives my urine, my sacred fluid, a part of myself I cannot part with without ceremony, a ceremony worthy of being heard of by others in need, if not all over the world. They did not beat a path to me that morning I pissed on Emerson's grave, but so what if they had? It was a good piss, I, and perhaps you, shall remember it fondly whenever, for the rest of my life, I relieve myself and remember to take the time to think of what matters most, how the waste I no longer can use goes back into the great moral economy that brought Emerson to Concern, to me, and I to him, this early, dark, morning, still dark, still cold as I pull up my pants preparing to make my escape, my day's work done before breakfast, a broad margin of life spread before me.
I am Latina. I have yellow skin.
Soi Latina, others judge without knowing my kin
Trapped, ricocheting between two worlds
Ejected like a rocket from my world to theirs
Abiding their rules, trying to fit in,
I am Latina. I have yellow skin.

I am Latina. I have yellow skin.
Soi Ispiracion, I am the hope of my kin
Escaped, bipolar existence these worlds demand
Searching for my place in my world and theirs
Polishing my exterior, trying to fit in,
I am Latina. I have yellow skin.
In a station, Grand Central
I was hurtin’ to escape my ache
a railway rendezvous
away from You.
My soul—in real bad shape.

Well little did I know
my train had broken down
wrecked—just like my life.
Just then the Engineer
Decided to appear
And he offered this advice:

He said: Hop on board the pain train.
Sure it hurts, but not like hell.
Ride on with Jesus,
He’ll make you well, boy
Soon it’ll be pain, plus pure joy.

What do you mean, joy
I asked him in a rage.
I’ve tried booze and women
And needles too
Cuz suffering is something I can’t do.

And now you say,
Ride some train
Towards the pain
I asked him, what good can that be?
Does God want to hurt me?

He said: Hop on board the pain train.
Sure it hurts, but not like hell.
Ride on with Jesus,
He’ll make you well, boy
Soon it’ll be pain, plus pure joy.

Then I saw the Lord
He climbed on in,
And shouted “All aboard!”
And I hopped on, too.
The pain’s not so bad
With Jesus sitting next to you.

Ride on, ride on
Jesus is gonna take it all away
Everything ya feel
He felt it too
And it did it all
To strengthen you.
SAMANTHA WAGNER

BROOKLYN BRIDGE

I walk lonely on the coldest day of the year. I am not sure where I am going; all I know is that I need to get out of that house. One block turns into seventeen and I can still feel the anger rising. I am angry at her, at myself, at life. We always seem to argue about the same issues: money, my drinking.

I stop to look at my exact location. These streets are all too familiar. Thousands of times I have walked up and down, to work, skip school, sell and do drugs or drink, the streets where I met many fates. My memories run on these streets.

My eyes refocus back to reality and I am standing in front of a sign, Center Avenue. The sign to my left reads, Brooklyn Bridge.

Brooklyn Bridge, out of focus, my mind drifts to my childhood. Anger comes hot on my face. I use to take my younger brothers and sisters to the bridge. My parents would fight; punches received. I did not want my siblings to see them fight. I did not want their memories like mine.

Refocus my eyes and I am more than half way up to mid bridge. When I reach midway, I look up Manhattan. I can see three boroughs. I look at the water and see cubes of ice floating downstream. The water is intimidating and relentless. I can almost see his muscles flexing. The air hits every surface, sweeping across the water with perfect grace. Each element is opposite, yet they naturally fit.

My thoughts drift back to our argument. Why do I have so much anger? Why do we always argue? Would we be happier if we never came to be? She is my world and I am her world. Can we make this work?

I realize a hot tear forms from the corner of my eye. There is no way I can go back to her. I have turned into the one person I promised never to be. I can not face her. Humiliation washes through me, and as my tear rolls down my windblown face, something hits me from behind. I reach to the back of my head and feel the cold wet snow clinging to my hair. The snow quickly turns into water, and is now streaming into my coat and down my back.

I turn to see who had thrown the massive ball of snow, when I turn I see her. I see the scarf tied tightly around her head, so her hair will look perfect for our company later. I see her eyes, murky as the water below. She stares at me with a look of laughter and sorrow. I know that snowball made her feel good, but I can tell she is still raging within. I can not even look at her. I am shameful for what I have done.

I feel my legs weaken, my knees hit the cold metal, and I begin to weep. She comes to me. She places my head into her stomach. The warmth radiating of her comforts my soul. Tears flood my eyes; She says, "It’s ok, baby, Mama’s got you."
They would sip beer in the garage, talk about meaningless things, scratch themselves.

They drove Camaros, decals covering the paint. Sporting Coolwater and leather jackets.

jeans with holes, stiff gelled hair.
They were so bad . . . so cool.

I saw one roll a joint, pressed between the folds of a dollar bill. It was tight,

sexy, tasty. The smoke lingered in the air making the world hazy, dream-like.

They had jobs, cars, girlfriends.
Money to make, sex to have, drugs to do.

They were aesthetic, into the "finer" things in life,

Coors Light, Marlboro 27, shwag, dim lights in their palace.
“Still”  

LISA BROTZ
ART GALLERY

"ANNA B"  MATTHEW OSBORN

"SUMMER ESSENCE"  REBECCA HARRISON
"SUNNY SIDE UP"  VINCENT AZZARELLI

"BIG BEN AND PARLIAMENT AT NIGHT"  KIMBERLY SMITH
"West Virginia Travels"
MICHAEL STECK

LAST DAYS OF NORTHSIDE

When I was seven years old, I was happy to be me. I went to grade school in Falconer, NY and my parents were actually told I was too chatty which was a far cry from when I was voted "The Quietest" in high school. One report card even said, "Mikey is a good student but likes to chitchat too much." I just remember getting along with all the kids in school then; and since it was a small school, you knew everyone. Most, if not all, the kids lived within a few blocks of Northside Elementary. I lived close enough to trot my towheaded self to school every day.

Halfway through second grade, I came home to our upstairs apartment which was in my grandmother’s house. My mother stood in the kitchen, wearing her favorite yellow canary bell-bottom pants with the waist almost to her armpits. I always thought she looked like a blond Cher, with her long hair, parted in the middle that went almost to her thighs and the snow white eye shadow that went from lid to brow. Usually, she always greeted me with her big warm smile, but that day it was different. She had this look on her face like someone had kicked her in the shin but gave her a wad of cash right after.

“What’s wrong, Mommy?” I asked.

“Nothing’s wrong, Mikey, but I have to tell you something,” she said as she pushed her long blond hair behind her ear.

“What?”

My mother guided me to one of the rainbow sherbet colored kitchen chairs. I just hoped she wouldn’t tell me that “The Muppet Show” had been cancelled. She poured me a large class of whole milk and sat in the chair next to me.

“You dad is being transferred,” she said, looking into my eyes.

“What’s that mean?”

“It means that we have to move to a new town.”

“But what about everyone here? Are they coming too?”

“No. It’s just us. You, me, your daddy and Susanne.”

I felt as though I was under water. I continued to listen to my mother talk about how my father was going to make more money and that we’d have a house of our own but all I could think about was “who was I going to talk to” and “who would I play with?” It felt like the end to my seven-year-old life. I wouldn’t even be able to finish out the second grade. I was going to have to transfer in the middle of the school year. All I could think was of the horrors that awaited me in this place called Olean. Would it be a wild, she-beast teacher with hair like mangled roadkill and breath that melted metal? Or would it be little gremlin students who would chant bizarre songs and speak in ridiculous rhymes. Or maybe this new house would hold the ghost of a dead seven-year-old who died from his heart breaking into a zillion pieces.

I remember the day we moved; it was warm and sunny. It felt like the world was sticking its tongue out at me; although by this time, I was a little more excited. I was anxious to have a yard the size of a football field and a big forest behind it. That day I got to go to school for half the day, mainly to see my friends one last time. Everyone in the class had made me going away cards out of construction paper, glitter and noodles, all the standard grade school fare. Nowhere else can you make works of art out of old food and mismatched ripped up paper and have people proclaim it as “works of art.” Well, maybe in Manhattan.

As I waved goodbye to my adoring fans, my mother led me down the hallway of
Northside past my second grade classroom and then past Mrs. Bowling’s first grade classroom. She glanced out her room and stared down her librarian spectacles at me, her pinched lips held firmly in place. I always thought she looked like the old maid on my deck of “Old Maid” playing cards.

My mother and I walked by the boys’ lavatory and I thought of the time last year when my friend Corey and I hid in the stalls to scare chubby Martin as he walked into the bathroom. As we jumped out and yelled, we looked down the long corridor of the lavatory and there was Mrs. Bowling in the doorway, waiting. I knew what was coming next. Everyone whispered about the notorious Bowling Spank Machine.

Corey walked out before me as I began to wash my hands. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw her hand grab his arm, like the claw in a crane game clamped onto a stuffed panda bear, while her other arm went high up in the air and smacked down on his butt with the gusto of a pro golfer driving from the tee. It sounded as if she had broken his bones or hers. I imagined her bones to be very brittle; since at the time, I thought she was older than dirt. I washed my hands so much that they began to look like pieces of raw meat. I tried to walk as slow as I could manage to the paper towel dispenser. I dried my hands until the paper felt like sandpaper scraping the rest of my skin away. I put my head down and I began to walk the walk of shame to take my turn in the dreaded machine. The hand of doom went up and in a split second cracked on target. It felt like someone had just burned me with a cigarette the size of a grapefruit. I quickly walked back to the classroom and sat down, making sure to sit on the unbruised cheek.

“You know I’d hate to get one of Mrs. Bowling’s spankings,” said know-it-all Norman. “I heard they really hurt.”

“Yeah,” I said, “I’d hate it too.”

I don’t think it was the first time I had ever lied, but it was when I realized that it was much better to save face. It’s better to lie than to admit your shameful moments. I never spoke of my spanking to anyone, especially not my mother.

Now, we continued walking down the hallway and we walked past the gymnasium where I had my special gym class. I was only in it for a short time, and I know I was in either kindergarten or first grade when I got put in there. I’ve always thought of myself as athletically declined, but I don’t know if I’d go as far as saying I needed a special needs Phys. Ed. class. The whole gym thing never made much sense to me. I guess I never really understood the point of taking a large textured rubber ball and whipping it as hard as you can at someone’s face. Maybe I never saw the point because it was usually my face. I don’t remember the specifics of the class, just that I was in it. I can’t even begin to imagine what the hell we actually did. Would we have jump-roped without the rope or the jumping? Or instead of “Duck, Duck, Goose” would we have played “Duck, Duck” because they didn’t want to strain you by actually making you run?

The gymnasium also doubled as the school auditorium, where I had my stage debut in a Christmas concert. I was part of the chorus singing along to one of the ten standard Christmas songs. According to my mother, who sat proudly in the audience, along with my father, my aunt, my grandmother and baby sister, I began to sing along with my fellow classmates and suddenly I began to slowly slink down to the floor. I remained on the floor until the concert was over and then I stood up and walked off with the rest of my class. I don’t remember this at all, but perhaps, I purposely blocked it out of my memory. I later redeemed myself in the Christmas play the following year, where I was to play the Easter Bunny.

The day I got the part, I rushed home from school and cheered, “Mommy, I’m going to be in the Christmas play!”

“Oh, that’s nice, dear,” she said with a soft smile. “What are you playing?”

“I’m going to be the Easter Bunny.”

My mother stared blankly at me for a moment, perhaps desperately seeking
something to say.

“That’s nice,” she finally said, her standard reply when she had no clue what to say or if she got a gift she hated. “But Mikey, why is there an Easter Bunny in a play about Christmas?”

I sat there for a second, with a glazed look in my eyes and said, “I dunno.”

Appropriately, the bunny got confused as to which holiday it was and ended up coming down the chimney or something to that effect. Either way, I had my first major role. Fittingly, it was a bunny, my favorite animal. At age five, my first pet had been my rabbit Buttercup, named because she was similar in color. I used to draw pictures of her and one of my drawings won the first prize in a contest and was going to be sold as an Easter greeting card. The picture I drew was a boy (well, actually it was a red box with some resemblance to a square head and two black dot eyes and a black line smile) who had a rabbit (or a big yellow blob, also with black dot eyes and a black line smile) on a leash. This was a self-portrait and yes, I did walk Buttercup on a little leash around our backyard. The card read on the outside “Get in the Easter Habit…” and on the inside it said, “Go out and walk your rabbit!” I only did the artwork, not the moving poetry that accompanied the card. I also got my name and picture in the local paper. For this incarnation of my rabbit habit, my mom made my full bunny costume (which I wore for Halloween the following year and then when my sister was old enough, she wore it). This time I actually said my lines and remained standing for the duration of the performance.

When we reached the entrance of the school, our Creamsicle colored Chevy Oldsmobile was parked in front. My father sat in the driver’s seat smoking a cigarette and drinking a beer. My little sister sat in the back of the car. She pointed her stubby finger at me and cried out, “Mikey!”

Susanne was just at the age of discovering the wonders of speech. I like to say her first word was “Mikey,” but I know it was something like “dada” or “mama.” I do however know that her first full sentence was, “I go ask Mikey.”

One night my mother said to my sister, “Susanne, you need to put your toys away because it’s bedtime.”

“You sure? I go ask Mikey.”

“I am sure. I am your mother. I know when it’s bedtime.”

“No, I go ask Mikey.”

That was the time I had power. I had a little disciple who would listen to me above her own mother. I wish I could say I never used it to my advantage, but that would be lying. Of course, I can’t lie because pictures don’t lie. I had taught my sister when people told her to “smile pretty,” what they meant for her to do was to crinkle her nose and squint her eyes and breathe quickly through her nose. So, every time my mother would say, “Smile pretty, Susanne,” that’s what she got and with that, photographic evidence of my deviance.

My father beeped the horn and yelled some indecipherable obscenity. My mother looked down at me and grabbed my hand.

“It’ll be ok, Mikey. We’ll be better off.”

“Okay, Mommy.”

I don’t know if she was trying to convince me or to reassure herself, but either way we climbed into the orange monster we called a car. We were off to this place called Olean, which sounded to me like some town where they played banjo with their toes and you were expected to marry your first cousin. I didn’t have much of a choice though, being seven and all. I thought maybe I could join the circus and be a carny for the rest of my life, either cleaning up piles of elephant poop taller than I was or getting shot out of a cannon. For a fleeting moment, I actually considered it, but then I thought it was probably best to just go with my family. Besides, clowns scared the crap out of me.
BRIAN WATKINS

AS REAL AS A PAINTED VASE

A horizon stands before him
Spacious, unending and surreal

Slipping and splashing
Like the colors on canvas being slapped around

It seems too close and undeniable
But also so fleeting

As the sun hides itself beneath the ocean
The image of the landscape shatters

Like a vase taking a dive
From a table’s edge

The pieces fall about
The colors zipping in an instant

And then gone
Maybe even from memory, too

After all, this brief moment of beauty
Was only as real as a painted vase
JESSICA COLVIN

WHAT MAY COME IN MAY?

Grey skies today
Winter’s gloomy haze
Filled with foreboding clouds
And unfulfilled fortunes

With every day
One day closer
To the first growth of spring
And the last days of certainty

May’s sun no longer brings
Freedom, resurrection and conviction
The looming season
Promises nothing but questions
EMILY RYAN

GRADUATING

It's only the beginning of March
but in the warm dark
with night voices wafting through
the slatted shades
season is in masquerade
and I stand, solitary,
expecting
change like the imminent buds
on the bare maple tree

Peeking out from the blanket of winter
the air is lighter, expansive
so that breath and beat
tavel on the horizon
turning to something bigger
than I know

It's only the beginning of march
but in this warm dark
with night voices wafting through
the slatted shades
season is in masquerade
and I stand, solitary,
between
yesterday and tomorrow
this is change.
KERRY MEAGHER

ST. PATRICK’S DAY

“MOM! Why do I have to wear green today? I’m black!” Sam yelled down the stairs.

“Sam, you know very well that you are Irish too,” his mother called up from the kitchen. “Just put the green on.”

Sam was not appeased, but he put the green shirt on anyway. He knew he was Irish, but he also knew the kids in his class only saw black when they looked at him. He remembered St. Patrick’s Day last year. When the teacher asked him to say why he was wearing green, the whole classroom erupted in laughter as he said he was Irish. For the rest of the day, all of the kids in his class made fun of him for wearing green. It wasn’t until the teacher pointed out he was mulatto, and that his mother’s Irish decent was passed onto him, that the other kids stop making fun of him. Well, to his face anyway.

That afternoon he heard a kid named Sean say, “Ugh, I hate that Teacher yelled at us; it’s not like we were doing anything wrong. If I find out he told her, I’ll make him wish he hadn’t!” Sam hadn’t told the teacher, but Sean still made him wish she hadn’t said anything.

Sam’s mother had laid a green sweatshirt with a huge, white Shamrock design on his bed to go over the green shirt, but Sam was over at his closet picking a black sweatshirt with a red dragon design off of one of the shelves. He had just pulled it over his head when his mother walked in.

“Sam, honey, why aren’t you wearing your green sweatshirt?” she asked in a soft voice.

“I don’t want to wear green,” Sam shot at her. He was trying hard to fight back tears. He had never told his mother that Sean beat him up and he hated lying to her.

“Why don’t you want to wear green?” his mother asked, concerned.

“Because the other kids make fun of me when I wear green on St. Patrick’s Day, because they say I’m not Irish,” Sam shouted through tears.

“Oh honey,” Sam’s mother said, wrapping her arms around him in a hug. She held him close until he stopped crying. “You feeling a little better now?” she asked once he pulled away.

Sam nodded. He still couldn’t speak.

“Well, I noticed how you didn’t want to wear green,” she began with a smile, “so it’s alright with me if you wear a different color today, as long as you wear this,” and she opened her hand to reveal a Shamrock pin.

“But mom, that’s still an Irish symbol,” Sam said with a worried voice.

“Yeah Sam, it is an Irish symbol, but more importantly, it’s a Christian symbol.” Sam looked confused so she continued, “St. Patrick used the Shamrock to teach the people of Ireland about the blessed Trinity.”

“The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?” Sam asked.

“Yes, that’s exactly it,” his mom said with a smile. “And wearing green is just another way of expressing your Christian belief.”

Sam looked at his mother. She gave him a big smile. He knew she would be okay with him not wearing green as long as he wore the pin; but now, he wanted to wear green from head to toe if he could. He took off the black sweatshirt, put the green one on and fastened the pin over his chest. He would be ready for question today. The reason he is wearing green is because of his faith. Sean couldn’t beat him up because he is Christian. Not when Sean is a Christian too.
ERIN DORNEY

THERE. BUT NOT THERE AT ALL.

Snow filters down
outside your basement window—
a single streetlight painting shadows
on your face.

Alone, I carry on a personal
correspondence with the ceiling.
Tears drip into
my ears.

Double down comforters
bunched between us,
arms crossed over
my chest.

My hair,
cold and clammy on pillows,
like strands of seaweed
lying limp on the shore.

I want sun,
to melt the icicles
barring your window
like a cell.
I want morning,
to erase
this solitary night.

Because you’re here,
but not here at all.
MEGHAN PRICHARD

SARA

I left a bottle on the front step for you, Sara. It's a cheap gift to drown your loathing, but I don't get paid again until Thursday. I wanted to come in and hold you; creep up from behind and slide my digits up your side. But I'd frighten you. I just know it.

So I left the only liquid that loves us both to death. And I stood on your stoop in the sunset haze with recovery on my teeth. Tonight I watched your skin shadow itself a matching spine and followed your limbs into sheetrock and window panes. You're a skeleton spinning on spilt coffee and thumbtack carpet. A plastic cup that swallows your hands when you dance those reckless steps. And with each sway I see another stain; adding to the million we made (when we made love).

I give myself one more minute. A moment to match the one before. So when I slink off your steps I hug each arm, the way I wanted to hold yours. Our limbs shake alone. A separate presence that cannot be soothed. The walk home has never been longer. Off to another rented room that screams me into sleep.

I fall into a mattress covered in dirty clothes and stripped of soft sheets. Then you flood over me; a tapestry of tongues, time, and touch. Fight just to make up. Fight just to make up. We'd fall asleep like two bar stools, with knocks of knees and foreheads trying to adjust with each other's shapes. I'd take that wooden partnership over my loneliness tonight.

I curl over to the alarm clock and imagine your face in its reflection; those brown eyes were so much like my own. And if I could taste your body without that bottle. Oh, I would. You know I would.
A Thought Away

Wet lips
Randomly caressing
Patches of smooth skin
Hair follicles
Standing on edge
As there is a sudden chill
That causes an immediate jerk
To try to overcome the
Sensation that is sending
Your body into a paradise
Sexual Juices being released
Before any penetration
Before any contact
Ecstasy is attainable
It is only a thought away
With a vivid imagination
Pleasure is possible in every way.

Shannon Price
Once again, the snow has retreated; the birds have begun to sing and fresh sprigs of green grass are peeking through the earth. At my favorite spot on the Eric Canal in Pittsford, I am amazed at how life has so naturally resumed at its normal pace after winter’s hibernation. Children are running around, throwing rocks into the still quite emptied canal – there are dogs of all sizes, happily walking with their owners, and the bike shop has rented out almost all of its cycles.

Here, at Fisher, these changes not only mean spring, but the end of the academic year. Whether it’s your first completed year, your second, or third, or even your last year of college, we all have something to be proud of – we are one step closer to an exciting and successful future. As this is the last issue of The Angle this semester, and the end of my two-year career as Editor-in-chief, I would like to express my gratitude to St. John Fisher students, faculty and staff. This has been a priceless experience. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with such a dedicated staff, who have become my good friends; and contributors who have supported us with their many talents. Because of you, The Angle is an award-winning journal. Not only have I learned valuable editing skills, but I have seen within myself, the journal, and my peers, a maturation that is exciting and promising. As this experience is coming to an end, I am naturally filled with sadness, but am also filled with a sense of anticipation and pride. I have every confidence in the oncoming Editor-in-chief, Kerry Meagher, as well as in staff members Nicole Russo, Despina Isihos, and Kara Drebitko. These dedicated women, along with our talented community, will bring the journal to a new level of innovation.

Basking in it all, my mind unavoidably wanders to memories of the last four years and questions of our unknown future. It’s then that I realize, although we are moving on from our college, our town, and our community, our thoughts, our experiences, and our hearts will always return to this place. Without fail, we will all return, like the children, dogs, and bikers on the canal in spring.

Thank you,

Emily Ryan, Editor
“EIFFEL TOWER AT NIGHT”  
KIMBERLY SMITH
Submission Guidelines

-All writing submissions must be sent to angle@sjfc.edu.
-Although we have previously required your work to be sent as attachments, we ask you to please paste your work into the email. We will no longer be accepting attachments.
-Please include your name, address, phone number, and the title(s) of the piece(s) submitted.
-Art can be submitted in JPEG, photograph, photocopy, or actual form.
-All submissions are judged anonymously.