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Co-Editors
Valentina Cisney-Martinez
Katherine M. Smith

Advisor
Janet S. Craven

Prose Jury
Valentina Cisney-Martinez
Brian Croft
Phil Darley

Poetry Jury
Garry Alkire
Christina Gaukel
Rhitta Smith-Bounds

Artwork & Photography Jury
Valentina Cisney-Martinez
Katherine M. Smith
Jeff Van Patten

Technical Assistance
Mark Rein

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WASTED TIME
by Justin Calder

The time that I’ve wasted is my biggest regret
Spent in these places I will never forget
Just sitting and thinking about the things that I’ve done
The laughing, the crying
The hurt and the fun

Now it’s just me and my hard driven guilt
Behind a wall of emptiness I’ve allowed to be built
I’m trapped in these walls just wanting to run
Back to my youth with its laughter and fun

But the chase is over and there’s no place to hide

E verything is gone including my pride
With the reality suddenly right in my face
I’m scared and alone trapped in this place

Just living for the drugs and the shame I had grown
My feelings were lost and afraid to be shown
I ask myself why?...and where I went wrong?
I guess I was weak when I should have been strong

So I live for the day when I’ll get my new start
To live out the dreams I hold deep in my heart
I hope I can make it. I at least have to try
Because I’m heading towards death and I don’t want to die!
Emerging Voices

THE NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENT
by Margret Helton-Cole

Shooting bolt upright in her bed, looking around, lost in the darkness she was just able to make out the shadowy shapes of her room as her nightmare faded into nothingness. Getting carefully out bed so as not to wake up her husband, the woman silently makes her way through the house, calmed by the familiarity around her. Her nightmares had been growing more vivid as her big day grew closer, and now, on the eve of her big day, she had experienced the worst of her fears through her nightmares. Would her first day back at school be anything like her nightmares? She hoped not.

Thankfully though, this was the last night that she would have to endure the nightmares. The ringing of the alarm clock signified that her big day was finally here. Would it be like it was in her dreams? Everyone making fun of her and singling her out, or would it be like her husband assured her, no big deal? That she would just blend in, no more noticed than anyone else? Listening to her service dog moving by her side she seriously doubted that blending in was something she could count on. Just how exactly does someone blend in with a hundred pound German Shepherd following him or her around? Already she was feeling like the day was outside of her control.

She looked at the clock and thought about trying to get some more sleep. Sighing, she realized that it would be a lost cause and resigned herself to starting her day. She found herself going on autopilot as her mind pondered what would lie in store for her that day. Nothing she considered made her feel reassured.

Later that morning as she stood outside of the main building, intimidated by the sheer aura it put off, she almost gave in to her urge to run away and return home. The school represented a complete and total change for both herself and her life. Something that would be a daunting prospect to anyone. Gathering all of her resolution and squaring her shoulders she entered the building. Unlike all of the other people there who had the luxury of anonymity, every person in the lobby turned their head to look as she and her dog walked in through the door. It was understandable really, not a single one of them had a dog standing by their side. The woman was prepared for this though; the same thing happened just about every place she went. The whispers about the dog were almost reassuring in their familiarity she realized dryly. What had been one of her nastiest fears was instead strangely encouraging. After all she thought; her dog had always been a first-rate icebreaker when it came to starting conversations with new people.

All of her nightmares and anxiety attacks! It really was so ridiculous if she stopped to think about it. After all, she wasn’t the first or only middle-aged woman to go back to college. She was pretty sure that she wasn’t going to be the last one either. It would just be so much easier if she could blend in like everyone else did, able to be anonymous and part of the crowd. As long as she had to make use of her service dog though, she knew there wasn’t a Democrat’s chance at a Republican rally that she could ever count on that happening.
DANCE FOR KALI
by Megan McCune
Emerging Voices

Leaves were just beginning to carpet the meadow which the two young men’s path traversed. A gentle breeze barely rippled the surface of a nearby pond. It was a perfect early-autumn day, but this was to be no mere walk-in-the-park. Both guys are armed and dangerous.

The shorter one, dark-haired and sporting a Charlie-Chaplin mustache but without the bowler hat, sneaks a glance at his companion. “I found what I was looking for the other evening.” CharlieC reaches into the folds of a jacket draped over his arm and pulls out a fully loaded book.

Turning to a page he had marked, he says, “This is what B.F. Skinner says about your precious freedom, ‘Man’s struggle for freedom is not due to a will to be free, but to certain behavioral processes of the human organism, the chief effect of which is the avoidance of or escape from so-called ‘aversive’ features of the environment.’” Turning to another marked page, CharlieC continues, “A person who possesses a ‘philosophy of freedom’ is one who has been changed in certain ways by the literature of freedom.”

“I knew you’d do that,” says his tall companion, light-complexioned with blue eyes and a mop of sandy-colored hair. “I just knew you’d do that,” Sandy repeats. A more unlikely-looking pair can scarce be imagined. No doubt that’s why they’re friends. “So I came prepared.”

Sandy in his turn brandishes a book, turning it to a marked page. “You listen to Victor Frankl, no ivy-towered academician like Skinner, but a man whose views were forged in a Nazi death camp. He says, ‘The freedom of decision, so-called freedom of the will, is for the unbiased person a matter of course; he has a direct experience of himself as free. The person who seriously doubts freedom of the will must be either hopelessly prejudiced by a deterministic philosophy or suffering from a
People mired in poverty can’t be expected to value freedom over food. For everyone above subsistence level though, aren’t the best opportunities reserved for the privileged—like us, let’s admit. Aren’t they what society uses to tease us into conforming, to take away our freedom? Look at Eric Hoffer, the longshoreman whose independent way of doing philosophy was surely due in part to his not being part of academia.”

“So you’re saying opportunity is not necessary for freedom?”

“It shouldn’t be. It shouldn’t be,” says CharlieC. “Not if freedom is real. But is it? Imagine yourself in a much earlier time of human existence, say, when all humans were hunter-gatherers. In your band minimal coercion is needed, but there is also little opportunity to ‘better your life’. Do you think you’d feel free?”

“No. Or unfree either. I admit that,” Sandy says “Freedom probably wouldn’t be an issue, but that doesn’t mean it isn’t real. It just means there aren’t many opportunities.”

“Okay, opportunity’s minimal, but so is coercion,” CharlieC says, “and that after all is what people have fought and died to overcome. Political freedom is just what we mean by freedom from coercion, the prototype of negative freedom, where negative obviously doesn’t mean unimportant. Why, if we once have this, do we think freedom must be something more?”

“Because,” Sandy says, “Freedom isn’t just a matter of my relations with others. It’s something I have in my own person.”

“Requiring a certain clarity of consciousness, right? You can’t be driven by unknown motives.”

“Right.”

“But you can’t be driven by known motives either. And what if we accept that genes have a formative influence upon our behavior? Must you be free of that?”

“Well.”

“And a lot of times you just try to do what’s best, right? To the extent you can determine what’s best, is your behavior thereby determined? If you don’t do something for a motive, or because it’s your nature, or because it’s for the best, why do it? Must your behavior be random to be free?”

“Of course not. Having to roll the dice to decide just means I won’t myself decide, but we’re talking around the issue. We’re not really getting to real freedom.”

“Okay. It wasn’t my intent to convince you that freedom is unreal, but that it’s unnecessary. Say your life has a minimum of coercion in it. Of course if you murder or steal, you will feel coercion all right, but that’s not what I mean. Say you get to not only sleep where you want, like the grizzly, but to live your life. Do your thing. Isn’t that enough? Isn’t negative freedom enough?”

“If it is, positive freedom is unnecessary,” Sandy says thoughtfully, “and if it’s unnecessary, it’s unlikely to be real.”

CharlieC grins impishly. “Well, I wasn’t gonna go that far, but be my guest.”

Sandy doesn’t respond. His eyes still to the ground, he seems to be deep in thought, but no. He reaches down and picks up a flower. “Hey, look at this.”

“Lucky you,” CharlieC says. “You get to find out if she loves you.”

“But I already know,” Sandy says. “She loves me not.”
SITTING AND WAITING
by Heidi Hermanson

UNTITLED
by Kimberly Hall
A LITTLE TASTE OF HEAVEN
by Isabel Mendoza
THE UNAPPRECIATIVE AMERICAN
by Valentina Cisney-Martinez

No one’s appreciative of being American anymore.
I guess they’ve all forgot where their ancestors were before.
Forefathers vanquished, condemned and oppressed by their own land.
Hungry for a better life; no choice but to take a stand.
Quality of life, not for themselves, but for their children,
motivated them to abandon their mothers and brethren.
“I know the U.S. is worth the struggle to get into”.
Not knowing till they swallowed exactly what they’d bit into.
Gramita’s fierce crusade for freedom and equality
was clearly deficient of any breaks or holidays.
Daily hustling, “con seis hijos cuando no hay welfare,”
tenacious Gramita’s endurance wasn’t even rare.
Carmelita, Chavela, Teresa, and Beatriz;
these mamas sacrificed their blood; they paid the entry fees.

~ SLAVE ~ STRAIN ~ STRIVE ~ STING ~ PLOD ~
PUSH ~ PAIN ~ GRIND ~ FORCE ~ TRY ~ BLOOD ~
SWEAT ~ AND ~ TEARS ~

PANG ~ THROB ~ BURN ~ TOIL ~ ACH ~
STRESS ~ AIL ~ VEX ~ SHOCK ~ CRIES ~ HURT ~
WOE ~ AND ~ FEARS ~

I try to control my anger but it’s hard to maintain.
Our generation has taken that suffering in vain.
It’s taken in vain each time I hear someone complain.
Not wanting to go to school, we ought to be ashamed.
The motherland taxes for anything beyond third grade.
I am sure there are Mexicans who’d be eager to trade
your undeserving spot in Science class for their field work.
Be appreciative already, stop being such a jerk.
Mad because you Aid to Dependant Children check is late,
better bit your tongue, realize you’re fortunate and just wait.
Way down south, if a woman is caught without nourishment,
too bad, after the country’s bar tab, the money’s all spent.
So when you start your bitching of the “man” holding you down,
please shut your mouth and remember how this nation was found.
Prologue

Basically, the job is pretty simple. What you're going to do is take this bust of Lou Rawls and paint it red with this paint right here and that paintbrush right there. After you paint it red, let it dry. Then take it down the hall here, and turn right at the end of the hall. There's going to be a lady sitting in a desk named Karen. Give her the bust. Then go back to your office and wait. Karen is going to give you back the bust, which is either going to be repainted green or blue. If it's been repainted in blue, you're going to walk it down the hall and give it to me in my office. If I'm not in the office, set it down on my chair if the paint's dry. If the paint's wet, give it to Todd in the front office. Now, if the Lou Rawls bust has been repainted green, you're going to repaint it again in red, wait for it to dry, then take it down those stairs right over there and hand it to the boys in the print shop. Well, they're not all boys, I should say. Two of them are women. At any rate, the print shop gets it if it's green. You want me to go over this again? No? You got it? Alright, I think you're ready to get to work. I look forward to having you aboard, and this place will treat you real nice if you work hard. If you have any questions, just ask me or Todd. Ask Todd first. If Todd's not in or doesn't know, ask Karen. If she's not in or doesn't know, ask me. Good luck.

January, many years later

This is not an easy thing to tell you, Mr. Worfel, but I'm putting in my two weeks' notice.

"I'm sorry to hear that, Ray. May I ask why?"

"I'm ready for something new."

"If you're tired of Lou Rawls, I could transfer you to Walter Cronkite, Dionne Warwick, or Wade Boggs."

"No, thank you. It's not Lou Rawls. I need something completely different at this point in my life."

"Well, good luck to you, Ray, but I think you're making a mistake. You'll have a hard time finding benefits like ours elsewhere. 401k, dental, medical, two free trips to any zoo of your choice, a glossy 8” x 10” of Rip Torn signed by Rip Taylor. These are the perks you're walking away from."

"I understand that, sir, but I need a change of pace at this time in my life."

"I'm sorry to see you go, Ray. We'll miss you."

Thank you.

February

The alarm clock is unplugged. The pillow is soft. The bed is warm.

March

Honey Nut Cheerios or Grape Nuts? They both have good points and bad. A chart is made. Honey Nut Cheerios are consumed on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Grape Nuts are eaten on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Saturdays and Sundays are wild cards. Breakfast is either slept through or purchased from an inexpensive eatery. This Saturday: migas from Taco Supremo. A woman works there with the face of a rat and the complexion of a cadaver, but she makes a taco like she's putting a favorite child to bed.
wife was once seduced by Lou Rawls. The very mention of his name is grounds for immediate dismissal. We’re sure you understand our predicament. Thanks for applying, and we are confident things will work out for you soon. Good luck in your job search.

August

Judge Mablean is a good judge. She knows when a relaxed approach will work, and when it’s time to crack the whip. Hawkeye Pierce, Frank Burns, and Hot Lips Houlihan called out, “Red Rover, Red Rover. Send Judge Mablean right over.” They laughed. They didn’t think she’d break through their linked arms. No one had. She was smart. She found a weak spot and barreled right through it. To their credit, Pierce, Burns, and Houlihan were fair. Judge Mablean was given one hour a day. Pierce, Burns, and Houlihan kept the other twenty-three.

September

Wanted: Three foolish idiots willing to drink elephant urine and set their own shoes on fire. Must have master’s degree in child psychology or equivalent experience. Benefits. Excellent salary.

October

Nothing happened in October.

November

Geraldo Rivera’s mustache was given thirty minutes of airtime after much deliberation. Red Rover had been abandoned after the Judge Mablean incident. The tally: Hawkeye Pierce and Hot Lips Houlihan voting yea, Frank Burns voting nay. The mustache thanked them effusively for the opportunity, even Frank Burns.

December

We looked at your resume, and we’d like you to come in for an interview on Thursday at two o’clock. We are big fans of both Lou Rawls and busts of Lou Rawls. We look forward to meeting you.

Epilogue

Basically, the job is pretty simple. What you’re going to do is walk into this warehouse every morning. See all those empty cardboard boxes? What you’re going to do is take each cardboard box into the alley, one by one. Follow me into the alley. See this button here, next to the Dumpster? Press this button. No, not now. Once you get a cardboard box. Okay. Press it and wait thirty seconds. If nothing happens, press it again. Wait thirty more seconds. If nothing happens, press it a third time. Wait thirty more seconds. If nothing happens all three times, throw the box away. This is what will usually happen. Occasionally, within thirty seconds of pressing the button, a man with long blonde hair, sunglasses, and a leather jacket will walk up to you. He’ll ask you for your name. Tell him your name is Tony. If he says his name is also Tony, give him the box. Otherwise, throw it away. That’s about it. That’s the job. You want me to go over this again? No? You got it? Alright, I think you’re ready to get to work. I look forward to having you aboard, and this place will treat you real nice if you work hard. If you have any questions, just ask. Good luck.
CAT NAP
by Ruth Jackson
Am I?
by Katherine M. Smith

Am I selfish and untrue?
Do I not do to me what I
would do to you?

I suffer from anxiety and
lack of alibi,
pour my head into my
hands and begin to sob
and cry,
worried who, when,
why.
Never accepting the
pieces where they lie.
And so, indeed, I see my
shallow ways and hope
they correct themselves
one of these days,
but perhaps it’s me,
maybe
I’m just wired this way.
Is that so bad I say.
Let’s switch roles,
I’m hunter, you’re prey!
Run, run, far, far away,
and hide yourself well,
so to give me a challenge;
this way everyone
watching will see my
excellent talent!
And am I selfish
and untrue?

Or do I realize and see
right through you?

HANDS
by Asia Razo
THREE WEEKS AND COUNTING
by Jose Valencia-Fitch

He is glad that he lives in the small house by the alley, away from the regular passerby. That day it serves him perfectly; otherwise, they will look at a middle-aged man pacing, talking to himself in a not-too-normal way and, by the way, answering too. He is rusty, Spanish-speaking mind tries to find a solution to the task just given to him.

"Come on! You’ve got to be kidding! It has been only three weeks in college, and you want me to write about it! Chingado! This guy must be loco," he mumbles as he continues to pace back and forth.

"Campus Life," that is what he said. "Campus Life," what aspect of this life was he talking about? His old brain was still suffering from the effects of the big bottle of intellectual booze he drank the same morning. "I better slow down," he thought. He sat down and lit a cigarette.

"Maybe he wants me to write about the fear of being at this level, not knowing exactly why or how I ended up here; or that I still do not have a clue how I am going to make it; or maybe about the frustration: when in the middle of some explanation this old mind is trying to assimilate the last sentence and simultaneously losing the next." He paused for a moment in self-inflicted mental torture and lit the second, or was it the third cigarette? "Darn teacher;" he swears, "why won’t he choose a topic and make it easier? What can an old goat like me, with broken English, who has been out of a classroom for almost thirty years, possibly write about college life?"

He got up and started pacing, thinking, mumbling Spanish as well as English phrases. Ideas floating in his mind, like butterflies in springtime. College terms? Parties? Dorms? Teachers? What else is on campus? I do not know anything about that. I am so glad I live in this secluded place.

He felt frustration building up again, thinking, "Where in hell am I going to find a topic, that is not a made up story? Maybe, he thought while sitting back in his La-Z-Boy chair he bought last week at a garage sale, "maybe I can write about the unforgettable first day of classes when all these mixed feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, eagerness, and excitement very much like the old days invade one’s mind as well as one’s body, ready to start one more fight in the betterment of the mind and soul."

"Or maybe I can write about the pride expressed by my family when I told them I was back in college, or maybe I can write about the possibilities of a better standard of living if I get through these classes in a successful manner. Or maybe I can write about the invaluable growth of self-esteem that higher education brings, or about the satisfaction of accomplishing a long expected goal, or maybe I can write about the realization that it does not matter how old or how rusty one feels one’s mind is when one keeps it busy trying to figure out what the ‘Darn Teacher’ wants you to write about campus life."

He leans back, pulls the side knob of his La-Z-Boy chair, pushing his feet up, lights one more cigarette. A hint of smile starts to appear as he realizes that maybe, just maybe he has found the topic to write about.
If I Die 2-Day
by Andrea Dawn Cummings
Age 12

If I die today
Right here, right now,
Burn my body to ashes
And send me to hell.

If I die today,
Remember me always
Remember how I looked and acted
Remember me for nights and days.

If I die today,
Put my body in the ground
Three days from now
And remember how I looked when I was down.

If I die today,
Don't think of me as Great
One more person dead,
A thousand more to go.

If I die today,
Think of me as a good friend
You used to know.

Thunder
by April Ewing, age 7

The thunder booms
like cars crashing
and everybody in the world
jumping.

Dad
by Selena Johnson, age 12

Dad, you make me feel happy every day
But every once in awhile you make me mad.
But I still love you even though I say I don’t.
You sometimes make me sad, but afterwards
I laugh.
Every day I think about you everywhere at every time.
I cry for you and think of all the bad things
I've said to you.
To make you feel left out. I wish I could be there right now
At this very minute to apologize, but I’m not.
Instead I am writing how I feel on this paper.
Love,
Selena
Commitment 1990
by A. Rose Hill

Handsome groom to beloved bride,
brought a gift named Riot,
nine pounds of wiggle and bark
wrapped in glossy black
with golden brown beneath his stub of tail,
across his chest, around his muzzle,
oval stamps of approval below his frown.

Gift of love, groom to bride,
Riot is stranger-timid, sometimes,
as she is sometimes shy.
Riot's eyes mirror innocence - or mischief.
Newcomer, he is quickly in command,
Teaching his family as fast as he learns.

Riot sleeps on the couch,
buries bones beneath the cushions,
snitches keys from purses, potatoes from bins,
leaves souvenir rings on his spot
when no one thinks to let him out.

In the years of his life, fifteen, maybe,
he'll bridge the rifts that newlyweds face,
pace with the father-to-be,
see the babies off to school,
comfort the hurts of the hearts and knees.

And when his life is finally done,
he'll teach the balm that comes
in the midst of grief
from just remembering.

A F T E R W O R D 1993

The groom, father now, tends Riot,
returns him at last to the vet
who finds lumps, lumps,
that keep him from eating,
keep him from seeing,
keep him from being.

GOT YOUR LISTENING EARS ON?
by Christina Gaukel
STRANGER AT THE LOOKOUT
by John Nesbitt

A few years back, I spent three months in Saltillo, Coahuila, in northern Mexico, where I studied Spanish philology and literature. For a good part of the time I was alone, and I didn't mind it. The other lodgers in the boarding house, university students, had left for summer vacation, so I often sat at the big table and ate by myself. The language institute was changing its focus from advanced studies in language to a bilingual secretary program, so I was the only student in most of my classes. To get my exercise, I went on long afternoon marches, by myself, through various parts of the city. I would lace up my hiking boots, put on the straw hat I bought in Chihuahua, and set out, not concerned about whether people took me for an extranjero—a foreigner, or stranger. For the most part, no one paid me much attention and I went on my way, comfortable in the city that called itself “the Athens of Mexico.”

Several of my routes had good uphill climbs, which I enjoyed for the exertion, and one of them led to a place called El Mirador—the Lookout—which offered a fine, broad view of Saltillo. The site had a parking lot, then a terraced area with a low wall around the edge, a raised flower bed in the middle, and picnic tables and benches flanking it. I understood from one of my professors that this place and a couple of others like it were traditional parking spots for young lovers, but with the rise of youth gangs, the places had become dangerous at night. In broad daylight, however, the Mirador looked as innocent as it might have in any era. Couples strolled, mothers wheeled their babies, and children ran around.

On one Sunday in July, I put on my hat and set forth. After a half hour of good walking I came to the base of the Mirador, then climbed the steep set of stone-and-dirt steps on the west side. I came out on top, walked across the terrace, and admired the city spread out below.

As I stood there enjoying the view, three boys of about six to nine years old came up to me, and one of them surprised me with a question. At first I didn't understand him, because I wasn't expecting him to ask me that kind of question. If I was expecting anything, it would have been that he would ask me for money, but since I never took along anything but the house key on my walks, I didn't even think much about that kind of an encounter. But his words were about something else, so I had him ask again.

From his question, now that I heard it, I imagined he did not take me for a stranger. “Is it true that some man got it in the ribs here?” I said I didn’t know, and I asked him if it had happened the night before. He said yes, that his grandfather had told him the assault was committed by a young man fifteen years old.

I said I didn’t know anything about it.

The boys wandered away, having found in me, I supposed, nothing to satisfy their curiosity. I went back to looking at the scenery for a few minutes. Then as I turned to leave, I noticed something I had seen before I talked to the boys. Some recent visitors had strewn a mess of styrofoam plates and cups. I was wondering what kind of an outing had taken
SLAVE MARKET
by David Marez
My father taught me so many things: how to fish, the difference between cumulus and nimbus clouds, how mirages on the road work: mirages that look so real, yet vanish as you approach them.

He read me the Bible, the story of the land of milk and honey that God promised the Israelites. He explained the metaphor: in order to have milk, you need cows, and good green grass, while honey takes bees and flowers. A rich and fertile land.

We are bound for the promised land, oh Lord,
we’re bound for the promised land,

Our promised land, a jagged line across Arizona, California, Washington, always one state, one day, ahead of the cops, my mother...
He took us away, a whole year on the road, then disappeared.

Heading down the interstate, another back road with that bottle he loved so much more than us, more than anything.
But I am half him, I can drive forever, running to or from I can’t tell.
Passing Honey Creek, I remember my father.
I look for him

Oh, who will come and go with us?
For we’re bound for the Promised Land.*

but see only a mirage.

*On Jordan’s Stormy Banks I Stand by Samuel Stennett (1727-1795)
COMMUNION WITH ETERNITY
by Michael Sunderland

Over all the sky—the sky! far, far out of reach, studded with the eternal stars.

Bivouac on a Mountain-side, Walt Whitman, 1819-1892

When one that holds communion with the skies has fill’d his urn where these pure waters rise, and once more mingles with us meaner things, ‘tis e’en as if an angel shook his wings.

Charity, William Cowper, 1731-1800

There is a place I go when I need to be alone. A place where I can shut out the clamor and dissonance of life and deal undisturbed with my thoughts and emotions. It is not a place of grand vistas or special beauty, yet it calls to my spirit with a voice older than time.

A sandstone bluff rises 100 feet or more above our place of residence in Sioux Villa, Sidney, Nebraska. It is not much to look at. There are no brightly colored rocks, no wildflowers, nothing but sand and pebble covered, wind worn rock and sparse patches of scrub grass. Few go there and that is its major attraction. To reach the top of the bluff I turn right from our front door, walk up the alley, then make a left diagonal across a field covered with knee-high scrub grass. Once across the field, a hard right puts me on a rut veined dirt road that curves up the side of the bluff before wandering off across the countryside. The road takes me most of the way to the top, but I still have a short climb to reach the top. The summit affords a clear view of most of the valley.

Arriving in late afternoon, while the sun is still above the horizon, I stand upon this place of solitude. Though there are homes all around, the bluff becomes a fortress keeping the world at bay. The horizon forms the front line of my battleground. Below this line sit houses, businesses, and the hustle and commotion of daily life. Height and distance mutes the raucous din of trucks and trains that continually assault my ears. The acrid stink of diesel fumes drift even to this height. To the west and north are a few houses backed by wide-open fields. In the northeast is a man’s pasture where he keeps several horses. Due east is Sioux Villa and I look down on my neighbor’s roofs. Trees and another sandstone bluff obscure the view to the southeast. Thus is the battleground of my daily affairs delineated. Spreading above the field of conflict is a canopy virtually untouched by the warfare below where the present meets the eternal.

The tension between the time of man and the eternal is keenly felt when contentious day is ending, fleeing from peaceful night. I feel their opposing pulls. One seeking to drag me down, the other to lift me above self. The ruthless, contrary winds that buffeted me throughout the day are gone. They have given birth to a clean, gentle breeze wafting away the last smokes and dust of the day’s battle.

My fortress of solitude becomes a stronghold of forbidding black, standing invincible as the sun hides its face, shunning man’s presumptuous arrogance. The battle line in my soul is mirrored in the view below. Sidney, where I live and work, where I fight for survival against predators that kill mind and soul with dreary, fruitless labor lies below in the deepening night. The darkness that lives in the valley seems to reach out to take me in its talons of despair.
take a close look at the rings of Saturn, more elegant and beautiful than any ring fashioned by man. Out and out the stars take me. Awe inspired speculation brings questions to mind... Is there other life out there? What is it like? What other wonders are hidden among the stars.

Nighttime and the glorious beauty of the universe help get my thoughts and feelings in perspective. Pains ease and tribulations are soon forgotten as I contemplate the eternal truths portrayed in the heavens. Faster and farther my thoughts fly. In an instant the Eskimo Nebula flares spectacularly at my feet. Exploding suns, expanding nebulas, and galaxies without number flash past my astonished eyes. As they recede behind me, all of my problems recede with them. The One who maintains this glory through time immeasurable establishes His ability to preserve me. On and on, the wonders of Creation spread out before me and...

Ouch! My movements have dislodged a rock from the dirt under my back. It digs into my spine - a painful reminder that it is time to return to the here and now. A piece of the eternal remains with me, hidden safe in a corner of my soul. Like a sweet song it brings peace to my heart and soul. Like a revitalizing drink it brings strength to my body and resolve to my will. Mind, body and soul refreshed and strengthened, I'm ready to do battle for another day. With a confident smile, I get up and make my way down the starlit path towards home.
HOPE FOR TOMORROW
by Dorothy Kuxhausen

Like a sparrow alone on the housetop.
Withstanding the wind and the rain.
Give us strength to continue
on life’s road with struggles and strife.
May we soar like an eagle
With strength never failing
Looking ahead with faith for the future
Expecting the best and believing
Take not thy tender mercies from us,
May we ever be,
Safe beneath thy wings.
Free from all earthly cares
In thy secure hiding place.
All worries and woes,
Are left and life seems to grow.
A brighter future will I see
With faith for each day.
With hopes for a brighter tomorrow.
Forgive us for what we take for granted
For blessing without measure.

HARMONY
by Mary Strong Jackson

Harmony
thrown
not like a cat in a kettle
but a dry spot on the slide
so you wander to both sides of the room
yearn for what you’re not tasting
doubt the colors of stones
the one thing you could be sure of

NEVER ENDING JOURNEY TO NOWHERE
by Asia Razo

claws and screams
THIS SPRING  
by Janelle Wicht

Cocooned in fear, she carefully plotted her escape from the control of his unpredictable dread. How did she, a smart professional woman, get slowly bound in gauzy layers, get de-winged of her reality, and get husbanded in this isolation?

This Spring, she coddles Mocha Irish Cream Cappuccinos at the bookstore's corner table. She readies a plan. She journals and surmises. She visits daily with her possible demise--afraid of his voice, his volume, his requirements, his rules. It has been subtle. Slowly discounted here and there; cut one knick at a time, and then tightly bound in ragged torment.

This Spring, she is determined to fly. Cut free. Fly solo. Even with her brain's banter: “Drink your sacred vows. Stir in sprinkles of sweetness. One more dollop of hope.” She will fly. She scoffs at her “gotta-be-married” flutter. For way too many anniversaries--she has rationalized reality, recalled their history, fretted her responsibility, and savored the golden ring of possibility.

This Spring, she straightens her spine. Grinds her mind around an edgy departure. She needs a house, money, allies, and the right time. She steels herself. Snags a sister's same story and asks: “Can she save her son if not herself? Could she speak her plan out loud? Draw it out on paper? Whisper it to her mom and dad? Tell his? Can she un-numb her soul?”

She figures and fidgets. She plagues patience. Measures her mark. Sets her watch. Calculates the risks. Calculates the bank account. Sees the lawyer. Mothers her courage. Ah, she cups the brew and sips it in:
1. Find the right time.
2. A steady hand.
3. Someone to hold the light.
WOVEN WORDS
by Cornelius F. Kelly

What does one do when words woven with warp and weft into terrestrial tapestries hung high on castle walls depict bucolic scenes of flowering meadows embracing the antlered deer and the mounted hunters and their eagerly straining hounds?

Why cannot the words weave a different design in which two lovers join hands and step together purposely through the flowering meadow on a fragrant journey to ecstasy?

Why cannot the words create a peace which lasts, a shield which protects, a semblance of what is truth?

Well, woe to the weaver.

SIGHTSEERS
by Lacy Anderson

AGE
by K. Christie

Gnarled hands worry knotted laces.
**WITHIN THE HEART**

by Dorothy Kuxhausen

Buried deep within the heart,
Lies memories that don’t depart.
When I’ve drifted out to sea,
Without a thought of my destiny.
Thoughts of yesterday emerge,
With happy things that did occur,
Disappointments filed away,
Substituted for a happy day.
Expectations high for tomorrow,
Without doubts and no more sorrow.
Good comes to those who believe,
With open arms you will receive.
Enjoy life’s little pleasures,
Expecting things without measure.

A beautiful sunset at eve,
A gift you might receive,
A smile from a little child,
All weather so brisk and mild.
Life changes that do not alter,
Faith in God that never falters.

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**SERENITY**

by Tara Prazak

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**UNTAMED**

by Christina Gaukel
ROAD HAZARD
by Ramona Ver-Maas

Two pair of eyes reflected in the headlights’ glare, a doe with fawn stand poised in paralyzed stare.

A kangaroo rat scurries in hasty retreat, the silent nightowl swoops, life’s cycle to complete.

Dew drops lace the spiderweb in prismatic grace, awaiting unsuspecting victims in the silken maze.

Jackrabbits race their shadows in the approaching light, headlong into danger overwhelmed by fright.

The masked raccoon rambles in his curious quest, the hunter becomes the hunted, when he stops to rest.

Life can be violent, it’s natures way, forever constant, unchanging night or day.

UNTITLED
by Amanda Aguirre
HEAVEN’S METAPHORS
by Peggy Wymore

I used to think when Scriptures foretold
Of a crystal river, it seemed so cold.
Its harsh, stark nature held no appeal.
Tumbling, rushing water would seem more real.

Until, on a warm summer’s day I chanced,
Upon a glistening river by the sun enhanced,
Sparkling like crystal, not harsh nor cold...
Heaven’s metaphor – crystal river it holds!

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I used to think when Scriptures foretold
Of Heaven’s mansions and streets of gold,
They can’t compare to nature here
That I love to see and hold so dear.

Until, on a crisp fall day I chanced,
Upon golden leaves by the dew enhanced
Beneath Aspen trees on the path we strolled...
Heaven’s metaphor – the streets of gold!

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I used to think when Scriptures did state
Heaven’s entrance is a pearly gate,
That’s not for me; it’s way too grand
I would much prefer this natural land.

Until, on a cold winter’s night I chanced,
Upon a snow-white gate by the frost enhanced,
Luminescent beneath the stars out late...
Heaven’s metaphor – the pearly gate!

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Nowadays, I think when Scriptures reveal
The beauties of Heaven, they seem more real.
The vivid pictures the Word has shared
Take on more meaning when creation’s compared.

Until, on that spring-like day I chance,
To share new life with creation enhanced,
I’ll praise God for the gifts of this earth that are real...
And trust that Heaven’s metaphors more glorious will reveal.
WHEN SPARROW EYED WOLF
by Janelle Wicht

Slants of rain slashed the tin roof determined to disturb me nesting inside.
I snuggled deeper under my feather comforter to partake of this endless moment.
I had picked this cabin near Aspen for exactly this day.

Hypnotized with the fluttering tin – rumbling and tumbling and mumbling outside.
I was dazed - lost in my inner landscape when an odd sleep came.

...I was semi-dreaming about Sparrow...I crossed boundaries.
I shaped easily into Sparrow and mused over...the soft aura of teal just above my brown feathery head.
Sparrow.

...But then, in an eye’s flicker,

I was perched in Alaskan wildflowers
   face to face with the black,
   four-legged one,
   the one with the neon-green eyes.

YESTERDAY’S SECRETS
by Tara Prazak
UNTITLED
by Alex Vargas
MILLION DOLLAR MADNESS
by Janet S. Craven

Inside the movies
amid the maddening crowd of extras
lost in the flesh of humanity
lessons in humility -
insignificant - she retreats further
from a world that seems
less friendly, less colorful
less interesting, less hopeful
with each passing frame.

Each rewind, fast forward
flicker of black and white,
battling eyelashes,
pursed lips and raised eyebrows
dances with Garbo’s prances and Bogey’s breath
while madness banters with
Bacall’s and Brando’s charisma,
leaving her breathless while she recalls
Film noir and
The little she remembers of a self before
The movie played and she forgot her lines.

MANNEQUIN
by Stacy Wilson

UNTITLED
by Amanda Aguirre
Biographical Notes

Lacy Anderson is a WNCC sophomore majoring in business. She is actively involved with the college and enjoys photography.

Amanda Aguirre is a student at WNCC in photography class.

Justin Calder lives in Gering and enjoys writing.

Cassie Calderon wrote her poem at age 5 with her mother and now is student at WNCC.

Chad is a WNCC student pursuing interests and perhaps degrees in Psychology, Art, Philosophy, and General Science.

K. Christe lives with her husband and assorted animals in the Panhandle of Nebraska.

Carson Cook is a student and plays baseball at WNCC, he is also interested in photography.

Janet S. Craven believes poetry and art reveal truth. She works at WNCC.

Brian Croft is a Composition and Literature instructor at WNCC. He recently moved to the Panhandle and enjoys, along with his writing pursuits, hiking and exploring.

Colin Croft is an instructor and the division chair of the Social Sciences department at WNCC.

Patrick Dalen is a Legal Aid attorney who knows several WNCC students. In addition to photography, he loves cheese, dogs, and video games.

Andrea Dawn Cummings is a 12 year old student at Porcupine School.

April Ewing is a 7 year old who is the great-granddaughter of Frank Hefner and Rita Ewing of Mitchell. She thinks she wants to be a librarian when she grows up.

Diane Dinndorf Friebe is a resident of Sidney, NE and has worked at WNCC - Sidney.

She is a writer, musician, and mother of three daughters.

Christina Gaukel is a WNCC student majoring in Art Education and she works in the Writing Center as a tutor.

Tammie Gitschel is a WNCC employee at the Guadalupe Center in Scottsbluff.

Kimberly Hall is an aspiring photographer.

Nicole Hanjani lives and works in Scottsbluff.

Margret Helton-Cole is a non traditional student at WNCC.

Gary Henderson is a sophomore at WNCC, works part time, tutors, works with the Theater and Speech department, and will graduate in May.

Heidi Hermanson lives and works in the Omaha area. She has been published in several different periodicals.

A. Rose Hill is a Wyoming resident who keeps books for her son’s business, is a church historian, and a member of the Wyoming Writers Inc.

Mary Strong Jackson lives in Scottsbluff and is a social worker. Her latest poetry collection is titled “No Buried Dogs”.

Ruth Jackson is retired and lives in Bridgeport.

Selena Johnson is a 12 year old student at Porcupine School in South Dakota.

Josh Krauter grew up in Bridgeport, NE, graduated from UNL and now resides in Austin, TX.

Mark Kautz is a self employed farmer.