This issue of Emerging Voices is dedicated to the faculty and staff at WNCC. Thank you for always encouraging creativity and supporting student participation in the arts.
Biographical Notes

- Jacqueline April attends WNCC in Sidney. At present, she is an English major.
- Kim Arno is a Photography 2 student at WNCC.
- Tara Frazier Avis is a WNCC student who enjoys photography and writing.
- Jenny Bell is concurrently enrolled at WNCC and Chadron State College majoring in psychology. She is married with a 7 year-old daughter.
- Lisa Bets grew up in Gering. She recently returned to the area, having lived the last five years in Detroit, Michigan where she worked as a professional actress. She is involved with local theatre, is a freelance writer, and works for the Office of Human Development.
- Rhonda Brewer is a support staff member in Educational Services at WNCC.
- Joni Bunzel is a former WNCC student who enjoys writing and art. She rescues lost and abandoned animals.
- Cassie Calderon will graduate in May with an Associate’s degree. She has found writing to be therapeutic during painful times in her life.
- Chad attends WNCC and is an artist.
- Valentina Cisney is a WNCC student and full time paralegal, as well a proud mother of four children.
- Carson Cook is a WNCC student who plays baseball and works as a children’s book illustrator. He is studying business and art.
- Andrea Dawn Cummings is 13 years old and attends Porcupine School in South Dakota where she is in the eighth grade.
- Diane Dinndorf Friebe lived in Sidney for 10 years and worked briefly at WNCC. She now resides in Lincoln with her husband and dog Tabz.
- Lynn Gibb is a WNCC student at Sidney. She is in the process of discovering whether her childhood dream of being a writer can become a reality.
- Kara Glenn of Mitchell is a freshman business major at the WNCC Scottsbluff campus.
- Sandy Gomez is a Navy veteran and is enrolled at WNCC.
- Gary Henderson is a WNCC graduate who lives in Scottsbluff. He is also an actor and has participated in several theater productions at the college.
- Jack Hollingsworth was born and raised in Scottsbluff and played poker professionally for 28 years.
- Laura Imtaites Dog-Cummings attends Little Wound High School in South Dakota where she is in the tenth grade.
- Mary Strong Jackson is a poet who works as a social worker in Scottsbluff. Her poetry has appeared in numerous anthologies, magazines, collections, and chapbooks. Her most recent poetry book is titled No Buried Dugs.
- Melissa Jones is a WNCC student in Scottsbluff majoring in psychology. She lives in Gering with her husband and five children. Her favorite hobby is photography.
- Leah Karpf lives in Morrill and is studying art at WNCC.
- Cory M. Kinsey is a WNCC student from Mitchell. She states, “I find solace in words, and I live a free life... really I’m so happy now that I hardly ever write, unless I’m deeply inspired.” She has a daughter named Talera.
- Mary Strong Jackson is an English major who enjoys photography and writing. She lives in Gering with her husband and five children. Her favorite hobby is photography.
- Leah Karpf lives in Morrill and is studying art at WNCC.
- Cory M. Kinsey is a WNCC student from Mitchell. She states, “I find solace in words, and I live a free life... really I’m so happy now that I hardly ever write, unless I’m deeply inspired.” She has a daughter named Talera.
Collective Unconscious
by Mary Strong Jackson

we smile the small
apologetic shrug smile
that happens between strangers
it’s brief but time-mysterious
we witness a pale penance
to each other
sorry for the sins of all dear losers
messy souls who break a birded wing
the twig it flies to
the earth it birthed from
we concur with nodding minds
to hope for a new fish
to crawl from the sea
evolve with less greed
and more peace

Untitled
by Gary Henderson

Magic in your kiss.
Make the world turn to vapor.
Abracadabra.

Mine
by Megan McCune

What if you could just dull the pain.
Large and imposing, grand indeed.
Nothing slight of magnificent, and we want to be all to ourselves.

Emerging Voices
Emerging Voices
Emerging Voices
Emerging Voices
Emerging Voices
Dear Lover
by Valentina Cisney

Is it safe to say I need you?
These aren’t just lines that I feed you
Do I make you feel secure?
In every sense you procure
I am just as lost as you
Your sap pride could cost you too
You pervaded through my heart
it decided to restart
Despite fear of revulsion
Your comrade’s exhortation
Couldn’t keep you from falling
Our destiny is calling
This is what you call divine
Seek my love and you will find

Jester
by Katherine Smith

Your love...
Your love...
Your love, all it does is bitch and moan. Makes me clench my fists until the fingers hurt to the bone. While you perform your monotonous soliloquy about how much trouble it is for you to put up with me. And then, at the end, you expect apologies galore.
You want me to stroke that unimaginative ego; but oh no, I don’t think so.
I am so much trouble and I am so much work, well you according to me, “an unbelievable jerk!”
Who’s putting up with who?
Am I the one shouting about how ridiculous you are, mocking your efforts and imploring, “How’d you make it this far?”
Does my free will bother you that badly? Disturb your sit on the throne;
Well “forgive me your majesty.”
I had no idea your highness, I’ll stop breathing now if it pleases his court...I’d rather do that than let him slit my throat.

Pose for the Camera
by Sandy Gomez

Untitled
by Gary Henderson

Darling, you’re a drug.
I can’t seem to get my fix.
Strung out with kisses.

The Rose
by Leah Karpf

Your love…Your love…Your love, all it does is bitch and moan. Makes me clench my fists until the fingers hurt to the bone. While you perform your monotonous soliloquy about how much trouble it is for you to put up with me. And then, at the end, you expect apologies galore.
You want me to stroke that unimaginative ego; but oh no, I don’t think so.
I am so much trouble and I am so much work, well you according to me, “an unbelievable jerk!”
Who’s putting up with who?
Am I the one shouting about how ridiculous you are, mocking your efforts and imploring, “How’d you make it this far?”
Does my free will bother you that badly? Disturb your sit on the throne;
Well “forgive me your majesty.”
I had no idea your highness, I’ll stop breathing now if it pleases his court...I’d rather do that than let him slit my throat.

Jester
by Katherine Smith

Your love...
Your love...
Your love, all it does is bitch and moan. Makes me clench my fists until the fingers hurt to the bone. While you perform your monotonous soliloquy about how much trouble it is for you to put up with me. And then, at the end, you expect apologies galore.
You want me to stroke that unimaginative ego; but oh no, I don’t think so.
I am so much trouble and I am so much work, well you according to me, “an unbelievable jerk!”
Who’s putting up with who?
Am I the one shouting about how ridiculous you are, mocking your efforts and imploring, “How’d you make it this far?”
Does my free will bother you that badly? Disturb your sit on the throne;
Well “forgive me your majesty.”
I had no idea your highness, I’ll stop breathing now if it pleases his court...I’d rather do that than let him slit my throat.

Pose for the Camera
by Sandy Gomez

Untitled
by Gary Henderson

Darling, you’re a drug.
I can’t seem to get my fix.
Strung out with kisses.

The Rose
by Leah Karpf

Your love…Your love…Your love, all it does is bitch and moan. Makes me clench my fists until the fingers hurt to the bone. While you perform your monotonous soliloquy about how much trouble it is for you to put up with me. And then, at the end, you expect apologies galore.
You want me to stroke that unimaginative ego; but oh no, I don’t think so.
I am so much trouble and I am so much work, well you according to me, “an unbelievable jerk!”
Who’s putting up with who?
Am I the one shouting about how ridiculous you are, mocking your efforts and imploring, “How’d you make it this far?”
Does my free will bother you that badly? Disturb your sit on the throne;
Well “forgive me your majesty.”
I had no idea your highness, I’ll stop breathing now if it pleases his court...I’d rather do that than let him slit my throat.
Alone at Last
by Shirley A. Smith

I'm home alone in my favorite chair.
No one to bother me; they wouldn't dare.
My favorite show is on TV.
I have my popcorn and a diet Pepsi.
I finally have the peace that the evening brings,
And wouldn't you know it, the stinking phone rings.

Oh to be the malicious one. Take all those backstabbers and stab them right back, right in their butt cracks. I swear they hate me because I refuse to share my colorful past; all the stories about how I was a shameful lass. As far as I'm concerned they can above it up their...

In all honesty, who really cares about what I do or where I go? It's of no significance; I'm just another Joe Blow. Out there in the real world doing my own thing, no commitments to speak of, and no strings. I've become accustomed to this sort of behavior from strangers. No one likes me after our first meeting and all these 'has-beens' appear to resent me extremely. I wish I were still confident enough to call it envy, instead I think its pity. From me, for people who can't admit they're just looking for something about me to pick. Like a scab or a hangnail, so then they can revel in their inner tattletale.

I cringe at the thought of needing a man At the same time I'm feeding from his hand My satiety appeased with acceptance My antique independence is Past tense This is ... I roared Can I balance "I" and being adored Can I accept his unselfish concern Or will my self-governing heart just burn

To Whom It May Concern:
by Katherine Smith

Oh to be the malicious one. Take all those backstabbers and stab them right back, right in their butt cracks. I swear they hate me because I refuse to share my colorful past; all the stories about how I was a shameful lass. As far as I'm concerned they can above it up their...

In all honesty, who really cares about what I do or where I go? It's of no significance; I'm just another Joe Blow. Out there in the real world doing my own thing, no commitments to speak of, and no strings. I've become accustomed to this sort of behavior from strangers. No one likes me after our first meeting and all these 'has-beens' appear to resent me extremely. I wish I were still confident enough to call it envy, instead I think its pity. From me, for people who can't admit they're just looking for something about me to pick. Like a scab or a hangnail, so then they can revel in their inner tattletale.

Thank the Lord there's still a few things I'm not. Not a thief, not a thief, not a villain, no damsel in distress, not a ravened nervous wreck. But I feel like a tourniquet, something they can hate, turning the nice folks ugly with my pretty face. Sometimes I feel badly, but mostly I feel these people need a dose of reality. I'm sorry your so turned by my personality. Feel the need to make a phone call? Tell all your hers what I've done now, and please include the way I run circles around, you, in my style so savant guard. But I forgot to mention, I'm packing much bigger balls. I can't stand lame wussies, the ones that are always crying over their milk and cookies.

They should have put me in charge, instead they labeled me at the barge. Made me out to be some airhead jezebel. I'll say it again "I don't care." Think what you want, we all breathe the same air. In fact it makes me chuckle, that some lives aren't so consumed by their own personal struggles, they feel the need to meddle...in my plans “whatever, go ahead, it's cool man.”

Independence Day
by Valentina Cisney

I cringe at the thought of needing a man At the same time I'm feeding from his hand My satiety appeased with acceptance My antique independence is Past tense This is ... I roared Can I balance "I" and being adored Can I accept his unselfish concern Or will my self-governing heart just burn

Peaceful Mountains
by Melissa Jones

To Whom It May Concern:
Here I Stand
by Quaerito Veritas

Here I stand, against anything
thrown at me. Here I stand in
the middle of this storm. Here
I stand while the rain, wind, hail,
and lightning all seek to drive me off.
Here I stand with everything falling
apart around me. The harder the wind
blows the harder I work to remain
standing. The harder the rain falls
the straighter I stand. The bigger
the hail the more I want to defy it.
The more lightning flashes the
Stronger my resolve grows.
Don’t try to push me, for
I have withstood a far greater
storm without budging.
I’ll just dig in my
heels and weather
all you can
throw at
me.

I Thought I Was Right
but Still I was Wrong!!
by Andrea Dawn Cummings

I thought he’d never cheat
But that’s what they all say, right
I thought we’d always be there for each other
But now he hardly calls, just to say goodnight
I thought I was in love at one time
But it was all just a lie
I thought he loved me back
But instead he just made me cry
I thought he was like no other
But now I know they’re all the same
I thought he’d be at least a little different
But they all think love’s just a game
I thought he was supposed to be my Romeo
But he couldn’t even be a Prince Charming
I thought he meant every word he said
But hey, it wasn’t me he was harming
I thought with him I’d be happy
But now I know I was wrong
I thought he wouldn’t change, for me
But after a while I knew he wouldn’t all along
I thought he’d never do what he did
But hey he did it three times before
I thought I’d never find myself saying this
But now I hate him even more
I thought he’d never play the “Game of Love”
But I caught him playing more than twice
I thought I would be able to forgive him
But still try and be a little bit nice
I thought of all the stupid things
A girl like me could think
And I hope he feels all my anger and pain
As my heart slowly starts to sink
I thought we would be together for a while.
But love itself couldn’t even keep us together
I thought we were both in love with each other
But I knew it wouldn’t last forever!
Deed or No Deed?
by Stacie M. Meisner

The other night I had to make a quick pit stop at Wal-Mart to drop off a roll of film and pick up some milk. It was freezing outside, and I hate the cold. Focusing on the cold wind, I grabbed my cell phone and a ten-dollar bill, darting for the doors. When I finally reached the building, I looked in my hand. The only thing there was my cell phone. Yes, I apparently dropped my ten dollars somewhere between my car and the doors of the building. Instinctively, I turned around to search out the bill, not really expecting to see it anywhere in sight. How often do you drop a weightless piece of paper in a cold winter wind and expect to turn around to see it?

Well, to my great surprise, a man probably in his early thirties was walking towards me, his arm stretched out, holding nothing else but my money. Relief and gratitude washed over me, quickly followed by shock and awe. I energetically thanked the man, giving him a great big smile, and then I turned on my heels and was on my way.

I probably walked about halfway to the film drop off before my feelings of gratitude and shock faded and we’re instead replaced by those of wonder and confusion. Don’t get me wrong, I was thrilled that the man had done something so honest. He was probably raised very well and clearly knows the difference between right and wrong. But I started to think about all the different people that walk in and out of Wal-Mart and any other store for that matter and how easily it could have been for someone to pick up my money and pocket it for themselves. What would you have done?

I, personally, would have returned it. Partly because I know the frustration that mounts from losing money, but mostly because it would be the right thing to do. By this time, I had tossed my film into the Drop Film Here slot and was headed toward my gallon of milk. Soon my thoughts changed from why the man gave me the money back to what I should have done to thank him. Yes, I told him thank-you (probably a few too many times) and did so with a grateful smile, but the more I thought about it, the more I began to think that I should have just let him keep the money as a reward for his honesty. I suppose as I mentioned earlier, it is not everyday you meet such an honest person.

I gazed at the cartons of milk and tried to remember what color cap I usually got. Finally, I picked out the green one. I stuck my hand in my pocket to make sure my ten-dollar bill was still there. It was.

Then it hit me. It would have been ridiculous to give the man the money. For one, he probably wouldn’t have accepted it; but more importantly, he did a good deed. He did something that is supposed to make you feel good, without expecting any reward or prize in return. Giving him the money would have been pointless almost canceling...
out the good deed and offending this man’s integrity.

As I headed to the checkout, I made a quick detour and picked up some cans of vegetable juice. While I was comparing the price of the cans to the price of the bottles, my thoughts on good deeds continued to swirl in my head.

That's the problem with a lot of people today, I decided. No one wants to do something good just for the sake of doing it. Hardly anyone volunteers their time, money, or energy while expecting nothing in return. Instead, we spend time at the animal shelter to add some volunteer work to our resume. We donate to the Salvation Army because those that see us do it will think we are good people. We shovel our neighbor's sidewalk after it snows so we can make a quick twenty bucks.

However, that is how we have been raised.

“If you sit still during church we'll go to McDonalds for lunch.”

“If I give you five dollars for every A you get in class?”

“If you just be quiet while I'm on the phone I'll let you watch an extra hour of TV tonight.”

Shouldn't children be sitting still when they are told? Shouldn't they be working hard in their classes? Shouldn't they be quiet while dad is trying to talk on the phone? Why are we constantly playing Dead or No Dead with children? Probably because it's easier said than done, but shouldn't we at least give the extra effort?

By this time, I finally made my way to the checkout. My total came to eight something, and I pulled my ten-dollar bill out of my pocket. Yes, it would have been inappropriate to offer the money to the man. He did something good for the day, which probably not only made my day better but his better as well.

Maybe instead of simply going aimlessly throughout our days, we can play a small game of Deed or No Deed? We should make it a point to help others simply because it is the right thing to do. What is something that you can do for someone else and truly expect nothing in return? What can you teach others about volunteering for the sake of helping out? What is that one small thing you can do to make someone else's day brighter? Just a thought. A lengthy one maybe, but still simply a thought. So now, you have to decide-deed, or no deed?
Who
by Mary Strong Jackson

who stepped on this ground before this foot
an hour ago, a day, a year

who spat, who shat along this path walking
with friend, spouse, child

who stroked this dog’s ears yesterday
who kissed the muzzle of this dog’s grandfather
who paddled the oar, the child,
the cream into butter

who wished he were dead, upon a star, to go home

who worked the clay into beauty, the clay into dark
the gold in the mine

who stepped on a crack to break their mother’s back,
out on you, across the line

who rained on your garden of dreams and bones,
on your wedding, on your parade

who dreamt the story, the bridge, the possibilities
who bought the ring, the farm, the dinner

who killed time, the bottle of rum, his brother

who raked the yard, the gravel, you over the coals
who stroked the breast, the child’s cheek, a silky cat
who hungered for passion, for love, for food
who shivered a minute, an hour, to death

who bled, cried, pled, rejoiced, died on a cross, in a car, at a war
who whirled the dervish in love, hate, compassion, devotion

KING

SOLOMON’S
RING

by Jerald H. Lucas

I followed the route of ‘Selassie’s army,
slept on floors in the land of Sheba,
walked the roads of Menelik,
In search of the wisdom of a king.

From the mountains of Kilimanjaro,
To the floor plains of the Nile,
Through the legends of Amhara,
And clues of Coptic Eritrean’s,
Including myths of Eritrean Jews,
I went seeking the wisdom of the world,
I went seeking the legacy of a king,
I thought I would hold the answers
If I possessed King Solomon’s ring.

In my youthful ignorance
I went in search of Solomon’s ring,
Now, by time and age invested,
I comprehend the twists of myth and legend
Spawned by people long ago,
The wisdom of the ring I sought
The actual value of this thing,
Rests in the hearts and souls of man
And the faith that we may bring.

Dubai
Mall of the World

by Sandy Gomez
Who's That Knocking?
by Cassie Calderon

Knock-knock-knock, 
Who's that knocking?
Who's that knocking at my heart?

Knock-knock-knock, 
Who's that knocking?
You want to come in?

Knock-knock-knock, 
Who's that knocking?
Not me, I'm no good...
I'm full of sin.

Knock-knock-knock, 
Who's that knocking?
Me, you want me?
I've done such wrong.

Knock-knock-knock, 
Who's that knocking?
You love me? Need me?
What can I do for you?

Knock-knock-knock, 
Who's that knocking?
Please come in and keep me
With you for eternity!

Quinn in the Redwoods
by Chad

Beyond the last boundary of imagination,
Realm of the unimaginable possibility,
An infinity of unrealized reality.
The property of no man or nation.

Where are the unsung songs?
The unwritten great works?
Where are today's young turks?
For the unachieved no one longs.

Outside imagination's boundary
Undreamed of realms abound,
Unborn realities yet to be found
Eternally awaiting our discovery.

Where is the adventurer daring?
The courageous, daring, bold?
Died all... Of technology cold?
Behind virtual reality cowering?

Among the stars the dream is dead.
No grave, no epitaph written,
By video games imagination smitten.
Feelings numbed, none feel dread.

Behind screens cold and lifeless,
Life and love all shut out.
Ears and heart deaf to the shout,
Mind's imagination lies listless.

None see the cost
of infinity lost

Writer's Block
by Gary Henderson

The dogs in my head are howling,
"Come on, Master. We must go now,
Faster, faster."

Another city to seize.
The lust drips from our lips,
tasting gold, and blood, and war on our tongues,
like vampires.

I am the Necromancer,
The Child,
The Vandal conjuring gods from
the grave; so that I may be worshipped
in homage such as this.
The Shaman, the Vessel, the Medium
for these glorious specters!

Sing with me a song or two;
the storm approaches!

And Satan plays his guitar
in my heart; his vicious violin;
this sin will be the end of me!
Oh! To hear this song!
This dance! This dirge!
The atheist priest, the angel in the heath.

And the storm is come!
How it grows, chewing us up
and swallowing us whole
like the dead meat that we are.

The hounds bay louder,
"Come on, Master, we must go now,
faster, faster!"

But I am paralyzed in the trance
of the séance and the storm.

Emerging Voices
The Portrait
by Shirley A. Smith

Her portrait hangs above the cold fireplace.
She has such a sad, forlorn little face.
Her black dress of mourning is trimmed with white lace.
The tilt of her head shows her charm and grace.
What sadness, what heartache do her blue eyes hide?
Has someone broken her heart? Has someone lied?
She sits all alone, no one at her side.
Her husband is gone and her child has died.
Her life must go on; she will continue the race,
And leave her portrait hanging above the cold fireplace.

Through the Eyes of a Child
by Rhonda Drawer

A Spade
by any other name...
would still be a spade
by Valentina Cisney

My use of language is plain
Please allow me to explain
When I say I'm done, I'm done
When I say I got a gun
It's time to run, I'm just straight
Forward, ain't no time to wait
For someone to decipher
An obscure word, I am sure
About the message I bring
Whether I write, text or sing
It's meant to be sharp, concise
To the point at any price
Don't step to me with some cheese
Like, "I heard you said __________" Please
I've expressed my sentiments
Verity knows no limits
Everything heard in the street
Is the same said as when we meet
I ain't trying to evoke fear
I'm just trying to be clear
Let's avoid the confusion
Your being is an illusion
You are deception, deceit
You heard me loud, now retreat
To your world of make-believe
While loyalty and I grieve

Fate
by Carson Cook
Stillness of the Battle
by Mary Strong Jackson

War is a guitar
encased in glass
its sound not riding the rhythmic labor of a woman’s womb
not easing the pain of living
music that doesn’t drift against wonder
making it yearn

War is paint dripping from an soldier’s psyche
hanging on the brush’s bristles
basted with beauty, ready to burst with passionate answers
but the artist’s fingers coil around triggers
so meaning soft as a cat’s pads
sharp as the same’s claws
is not painted

War is the stilled step of dance
denying the choreographed beat
from sole to soul to soul
dance
that does not leap

War drapes itself over strings
that a man’s child’s fingers could mimic
over art that a woman’s child’s hands could copy
over a pair of feet with small ones atop
that could cradle the joy of movement

but all are dead living or not
convinced that buried heroes
make us free

Faces
by Michael K. Sunderland

Faces... their’s, your’s, mine
Faces... on all the time
Faces... outside lookin’ fine
Faces... just another mime

Hiding hurt behind faces...
Telling lies with our faces...
Abiding alone... faces
Selling our lives... faces

Faces... lookin’ for love
Faces... showin’ the hate
Faces... hidin’ the love
Faces... until too late

Showin’ lovin’ faces...
Hidin’ the hatin’ faces...
No frownin’ faces...
Just smilin’ faces...

Which is yours?
Which is mine?

Rising Son
by Valentina Cisney

He ran so fast
the crowd was a blur
however
The crowd could see him quite clearly

The Lime & The Coconut
by Valentina Cisney
My Book
an excerpt by Quaerito Veritas

...and in a world fraught with peril someone was born. His name is not known, even he didn't know his name. All he knew about himself was that he used to be someone of little significance. He was anything but at the end of his extraordinary life...

Commentaries on Castellum

He was walking down a path in his way to town with unusual wariness. Usually, he didn't go to town but he needed supplies after his venture to the rim. He had stayed with an acquaintance the previous night named Raz'ee.

Raz'ee was a loner who had been alive before the Massacre at Ft. Leatherbender one-hundred fourteen Tempests ago. What Raz'ee saw there had changed him. Most of the soldiers that survived all died of self-inflicted causes, those that had come back. Thousands of soldiers had been at that massacre barely fifty had come back. Those that survived had seen the atrocities done by the countless Dragonspawn and couldn't live with it.

Raz'ee had just decided that he didn't want to know anyone so he wouldn't have to deal with them dying. Everyone knew him and what he had done for their fathers and respected his desire to be alone. As it was except for the occasional incursion of ill-behaved youth he was the only one to ever see Raz'ee. Every now and then he stayed in the barn to catch up on missed sleep without having to worry about something finding him unaware.

Usually he didn't even see Raz'ee, he just left something to repay for his hospitality in the wild. If he had any spare food on hand he would leave it or he would gather wood and leave it by the barn. This time though Raz'ee wanted to discuss some things. Mostly things he had seen stalking him. There was the usual pack of Garhounds, but he had seen something that he didn't know what it was. A print of a man burned into green grass, with nothing left but blackened earth.

As Castellum walked he came to a small fort owned by a big farming family. They had seen the same tracks and also had found a dead Garhound with blackened hand shaped burns. This was enough to make him edgy but that was nothing compared to what he felt when he noticed he was being followed. It was a small thing that most people would not have noticed. The rustle of weeds rubbing something a ways back, the quieting of wildlife as it went by was easy for him to notice. He knew not to look back knowing that doing so could alert it to the fact that he knew he was being stalked.

He continued to act normal and with a slight change of course started towards an area where he knew he could defend himself better.

The short time that it took him to reach Crowned Hill seemed to speed with no change in his surroundings. The barely perceptible rustle turned to a loud whisper, the padding of bare feet replaced it along with a slight hiss. Time seemed to slow while his muscles loosened from sleeping on the hard ground.

When he finally reached the hill, with its particular cliff that covered all but a narrow path leading to the top, he strung his bow and pulled one arrow from his quiver. There would only be one shot before it would be all at him.

A hooded figure strode toward him out of the thick forest undergrowth. It trailed wisps of a smoke-like substance that came from where his feet touched the ground. Those wisps seemed to dissolve anything they touched. The figure started to run at a tremendous rate. He loosed and a hand shot from the cloak snapping the arrow from the air to dissolve in a wisp. There was no more time; it was now so close that he could smell the putrid ever-present wisps.

Odd Couple
by Jann Rouzee

The Spirit of Friendship
by Lisa Bate

After years of separate lives in separate cities, when first we meet, there is the first awestruck moment of golden warmth and sheer delight; bright, beautiful smiles framing burnt umber pools and blue eyed depths that whisper wisdom and hint of a soul's longing. The energetic embrace of two gently beating hearts sends ripples of laughter and unspoken promises to explore past and present mysteries. Then a sigh of relief for two dear friends' joyful meet; the kitchen table and a cup of tea as though we had never parted.
Katrina
by Jacquelyn April

I stare out across the endless sea,
Knowing that death is behind me.
The beauty I see before my eyes,
Swept this world at my back away.

Water gently singing upon the shore,
Hearts crying out for their love, their rest.
Everything has been swept away,
Crushed by the raging waves.

Where do they begin,
How do they start over?
When all they have built
Has become the ground upon which I walk.

All seems hopeless,
Yet the sea sings on.
Hearts cry out,
As she sings her gentle song.

Snow
by Shirley Smith

As I look out my window at the ground below,
Once again I see the world all covered with snow.
It seems like the Winter God is angry at man,
For ruining his world and poisoning the land.
The air we can’t breathe and the water we can’t drink,
We have finally driven this God to the brink.
More snow! More snow! More snow he will send.
There will be no escape. Yes, this is the end.

The last thing that he ever saw was a fair face and then red as pain lanced through his head. He awoke to the realization that he didn’t know who he was. He tried to move but couldn’t so he tried to remember something about himself. The only thing he was able to do for now was name all the plants he knew and what they do. It seemed as if he had his knowledge but not his memories. He only had time to think that it was a strange occurrence if what he knew was correct before he fell into a deep sleep.

The next time he woke up he was a little more aware yet he still didn’t know who he was. His head hurt and there were burns on his temples but he was able to move. He sat up and started. Across the room was a giant wolf. She was so big that he couldn’t believe what he was seeing. He was so amazed by her size that it took him a while to notice that she was silver. She looked like she was liquid metal. She opened a giant eye and looked at him. She sat up and only then did he truly see how immense she really was.

“Are you getting better? I thought you were going to die after all,” a voice asked him. It was difficult to discern where it originated from. He looked around to try to see who was speaking. The wolf seemed to smile and the voice said, “I am not that hard to find, considering you insist on thinking of me as a wolf.” He realized that it was her speaking.

“Well aren’t you a wolf?” He had to ask.

A touch of amusement seemed to enter the voice, “Those puny things couldn’t beat me in anything except maybe hiding. Yet even there I have the advantage of being able to stand the weather beyond what you call the rain. None would even dare to show face to the dragon while I have dared to whisk you away right from his hands. The name of my race was lost long ago by your race, and I will not tell you it now or else our existence might become known. You may call me Gregra.” It was then that he first noticed the burns on her side.

A patter came from behind him as another more normal-sized wolf-like creature, although from the shape of it still a baby, came walking along. At last the instant right before it entered the same cavern it noticed that he was awake. A new voice entered the discussion, “So it is better, can it play yet?” Gregra said, “No Venator he just awoke and by the time he is better your teeth would shred him, his skin is not very tough.” To him she said “This is my son Venator. Never treat him as a pet. I have seen what your kind do to our smaller kin, he is your equal and if you like your friend. By the way, while we are introducing each other what is your name?”

He thought for a while before he answered, “I don’t know. I can’t remember anything about myself, I do seem to have knowledge but no memories.”

With a touch of concern Gregra replied, “I had feared something like this would be the result of what you went through. Why don’t you rest now, don’t try to search too hard for what isn’t there any longer. I shall give you a name.” After a pause she told him his name would be Castellum.

It took a while for Castellum to regain his health. In the meantime there was little to do but talk. Gregra liked to talk about hunting and the history of her noble race. Venator liked to talk about all the things that were new to him. It was soon obvious that Venator grew very slowly. In fact he didn’t notice any changes at all. When he broached the subject with them he was surprised to learn that it would take about two-hundred Tempests for Venator to grow a stride. (Until then, he didn’t realize that they would live longer than anything else ever did.)

They usually ate very little compared to their size, Gregra could eat an entire goat while Venator and Castellum shared one. These goats were like none Castellum knew of. They were one and a half strides tall, and were so thickly muscled that they weighed over two stones. This usually lasted them about ten days.

Once Castellum could walk, Venator took him to see all the things that he had been telling Castellum about. That was the first time he saw a Firelizard. Firelizards had a thin shiny black leathery hide.
that repelled all cold. As was their habit when anything new ventured too near to them, the Firelizards dived into water so cold that it would freeze your hand solid if you put even the tip of your finger in it. At once Castellum saw the value of clothing made from that hide, but he couldn’t help but see how majestic these creatures were. He would not kill one unless he absolutely needed to and even then he knew he would feel the loss of such an amazing creature.

It wasn’t long until both Castellum and Venator were ranging far from the den. They both enjoyed exploring and had a surprisingly wide variety of things to talk about. Rare was there a fight that they didn’t soon resolve. Even rarer were the times that they could manage to stay out of trouble. Gregra constantly had to rescue them from new danger, all the while muttering about “mischievous pups.”

Those happy days didn’t last long, soon there were rumors among the wolves of a creature that had slaughtered many packs of strong wolves. These packs were big and had the biggest territory, which signified the most power. It wasn’t long that the wolves started to become skittish. Where once it was common place to see wolves, it was now rare.

Gregra started to keep the “pups” close to home. There wasn’t a long wait until what she feared had come. A Dragonspawn Overlord had invaded the forest, and had now gained enough strength to challenge her.

It appeared the Overlord had killed wolves in order to gain their strengths, a unique ability between wolves and Dragonspawn and one of the reasons they were such vicious enemies. And this Overlord knew and hated Gregra as much as Gregra knew and hated it. When the Overlord came to their den it knew that its life would depend on how strong it was compared to Gregra. Unfortunately it decided to err on the side of caution; it made sure that it was strong enough to destroy Gregra.

When she caught sight of the Overlord in the distance she knew what she had to do. She had Castellum skin an old Fire Lizard that was already dead of age, and gave him the hide to keep warm. Then after she had sent them both away she hid their trail from the Overlord. She knew that she wouldn’t be able to defeat this Overlord and had to try and make it too weak for it to hunt down “the cubs.”

The sound of the battle made animals run for cover at a hundred flights distance. Castellum and Venator knew what was happening, but knew they could do nothing about it. When the battle ended there was one thought sent out to them: Run to the end of the world and beyond the dragon is hunting you. By then, they were long gone.

Castellum knew what had happened and he imagined that Venator did as well. Although he looked like a wolf he really was extremely intelligent. There was little that Venator didn’t understand. Sometimes his insights into a problem proved to be more accurate than what Castellum knew.

It wasn’t long until they reached the end of the area that was warmed by the constant hot springs. When the temperature started to drop the landscape started to change. The trees thinned and then ceased, the grass started to be less and less thick until the ground became solid gravel. There was little life now, most animals preferred to stay in the warmer areas.

They walked a little while longer and they came to the border where snow and ice started and all life was said to end. These places were called a rim, in most places the rim was a wall of solid ice. In others it was little more than half a stride. Luckily, here it was no taller than a stride. Castellum had to stand on Venator is back to get up, but Venator took it in one jump.

Once they were both up Castellum thought of how cold it was getting. When he mentioned

Abstract Mums

by Leah Karpf

Sam’s Rural Landscape

By Janell Wicht

The bigger white clouds boast “We’re in Charge”
To a transparent moon sitting pale in the afternoon sky. Without ears,
The four grounded pines nodded politely, stirred ever so slightly, and giggled evergreen. Even the blue birds of everyday business discounted the giant formation arriving with concrete gray ground.
it to Venator he said that it didn’t bother him and suggested that Castellum wrap the Firelizard hide around him. After he did this he soon found out that he had to keep some airflow or else he would start to sweat even on the coldest of nights. That didn’t last long however. Soon Venator had to start sharing the hide with Castellum, especially at night. It wasn’t that he needed it, but with the cold Castellum would have frozen during the night.

Traveling like this they soon ran into another problem, food. They hadn’t even imagined how desolate it was beyond the rim. Wherever they looked was ice and snow with no hint of vegetation or wildlife. Soon both were weak with hunger and they slowly came to the realization that if they didn’t find something they would soon die. This started them searching for anything that might resemble some sort of life. This is the only thing that saved them from what came next.

Few survived an encounter with Garhounds, but no one even knew about the white version of Garhounds because none had survived an encounter with them. Venator had heard of them but didn’t think that there was a pack anywhere near where they were. His reason was simple. Gregor would have hunted them to extinction if she knew any were about. He soon learned that there was a pack in league with the Dragonspawn Overlord.

Castellum spotted them first. At first they just looked like a row of snowdrifts, but a snowdrift with eyes is a rarity even beyond the rim. He told Venator that something was wrong in the way that Gregor had told them to run, with thought. He didn’t know how the warning was needed, he just did it. Venator told him what they were and informed him that he wouldn’t be able to do anything about them at his present age and size. He hoped that they wouldn’t need to fight, but feared they would be forced to.

As it turned out, the white Garhounds had noticed a slight hesitation in their prey’s steps and they decided to get it over with. When the Garhounds started to move Venator bolted towards them in the attempt to take a few down before they could surround both of them. The explosion of fur, blood, and snow was so spectacular that the Garhound that was his target died instantly. Venator continued on taking down or injuring as many as he could. Castellum tried to be of some use, but without having a sword he was more a liability than an aid. When Venator’s momentum gave out the Garhounds heled them into the center of an ever-shrinking circle.

When the shrinking stopped as each Garhound had been given an order at the same instant, a giant Garhound stepped forward a little and spoke. “The Mighty One has ordered any of your kind to be captured and brought to him. But this two-legged creature is meaningless. Surrender or go down with a fight. It doesn’t matter, you are tired and even with another charge, you only killed five Garhounds with the last one. A spectacular feat, but there is still thre: that of us remaining.” At the end of this speech Venator was filled with such rage he charged. The leader leapt aside and three other Garhounds pinned Venator to the ground while the circle closed in on Castellum.

During this exchange Castellum had felt a particular sensation in his entire body, it felt as if something was building in force that was always there, but had never before been noticed. His hands started to tingle and the force moved through his arms and yet stayed the same intensity inside his body. When Venator charged again and the circle refocused on him, whatever was building had started to search for an outlet. After that point the world went white and he remembered no more.

Venator had calmed the instant he was pinned, he knew that they were both doomed and yet Castellum didn’t seem to even notice any of it. He just stood there with his eyes closed, and with the Firelizard hide lying at his feet.

When Castellum at last; opened his eyes, where there used to be a light blue was silver. The
Garhounds were so shocked at the change they paused staring at this strange phenomenon. What they all failed to notice except Venator was the silver flame escaping Castellum’s hands. All of the sudden Venator was extremely happy to be lying on the ground.

Castellum’s eyes focused on Venator for the first time and streams of silver flame burst in every direction at the same instant their eyes met.

The next thing Venator knew was the weight of the white Garhounds on top of him lifted and a yawning faded into the distance. He opened his eyes and saw the little ash that remained of the White Garhounds slowly falling to the ground. Castellum was now lying where he had stood with all of his cloths burnt off except for the Firelizard hide. Venator, not thinking clearly yet, got up and wrapped Castellum in the hide. He checked the horizon for more Garhounds before he curled up along his side and went to sleep.

my thoughts bounce off the rubber walled insides of my brain careening at high speed back and forth colliding into one another exploding into splinters of ideas lying there shining but shattered useless trash to be swept out so more thoughts can careen, collide, explode brain combustion fires in my eyes illness? disorder? insanity? dysfunction? or just, the way it is
At the Pawn Shop

by Valentina Cisney

I was walking down Main Street when I met up with deceit. While passing by the Pawn Shop I saw forced me to stop. There in the display window next to an old Nintendo was your loyalty to me. It was so faulty to see something so priceless amongst cheap tv's and other junk. My broken heart pushed the door to look inside and learn some more. What I saw made me bitter. Amidst the trash and litter (that was disguised as guns, rings, knives, cd's, and other things) there were your good looks, clear skin, the focus that made you win, your self-love, healthy smile, morals, concern for your child, your security, your home, your own tv, vcr, cd's, title to your car, the kids' tv, x-box, and your once cherished wedding band.

My first reaction was that you were robbed by that one cat. But when I asked the store clerk she explained how it all works: "It all started with her time." "Not aware it was a crime." "Her one friend, the rebel broke her off just a pebble... After that it was on her." Puff-puff – she was a goner. She hawked her very own soul in an exchange for a bowl.

Untitled

by Gary Henderson

Let's ride our wild ponies into the wildest heath,
Far from this cold stone city and grey cobbled streets.
Be as free as wild wind, blowing on green moors.
Out into the wild plains, where our horses soar.
We will chase the setting sun, off into the West.
Ride forever on and on, never needing rest.

Shopping

by Sandy Gomez

Angel

by Carson Cook
The Scarlet Letter
by Lisa Betz

Tear off that letter of limit and lack. Claim your heart unfettered and free. It is thine own prison that binds it to thee. Walk out of that cave of darkness and want. Look into the sunshine! The scarlet letter you’ve worn all these years, it’s your mind’s utter creation. It constantly whispers the wicked can’t “not good enough, not worthy, not rich enough” and more. Tear off this scarlet letter of fear, grind it under your heel and walk into life! There is much joy near.

S.O.S.
by Valentina Cisney

Anne Slater, “Candy” to us, also known as “Martha’s Mom”, has passed from this world. To say that Anne was an intellectual woman who didn’t suffer fools is to put it mildly. A fabulous cook, knitter of amazingly beautiful sweaters and lover of fine wines, Anne was a mystery.

Something about my vibrant spirit and tendency to talk too much rubbed Anne the wrong way, yet despite this, I believe she liked me. Anne was fascinating. I often wondered what had made her the way she was.

It always felt like she didn’t think much of me. I was even a little afraid of her. Sometimes it seemed that she could disintegrate you with her brain. Then came a moment in time when I stood up to Anne Slater. Standing up to Anne was something that could only happen unexpectedly. In one shining, spontaneous moment, I spoke my truth to Anne.

It happened like this. Martha, her boyfriend George, Anne, a family friend and I went up to Vedauwoo for a picnic. I had just finished taking a Geology course and was delighted to find a pile of rocks on the picnic table. Full of fresh air and the joy of knowledge, I picked up the stones one by one and announced to the company, the classification of each stone.

There was a pause when I finished. Then Anne stiffened and wrinkled up her nose and said something like this: “Lisa, my dear friend, ‘So and So’ is the leading Geology expert at ‘So and So’ University. Anyone who really knows rocks would never classify one as a conglomerate.” A hush fell over the company. The sun seemed to disappear behind a cloud, birds stopped singing and everyone froze in horrified expectation. I too was frozen in place as though I’d looked upon Medusa.

Then, some unknown fire welled up inside of me. I stood tall and confidently told Anne that I had just taken a class in Geology and while I may not be an expert, I knew that my classification was correct and in any case, it really didn’t matter to me because I love rocks and was just having fun!

And that is how I stomped Anne!

She seemed stunned. Anne did not really have a response. In fact, SHE became frozen for a moment. I think it was shock. After a brief moment, the world restarted, life went on and I became a hero to Martha and her beau, who were flat amazed that someone told Anne what’s what. Apparently, this sort of thing didn’t happen very often. I was left with a curious exhilaration and quaking knees.

Shortly thereafter, I graduated and moved away and on with my life. Occasionally I’d call Anne’s house to stay in touch with Martha. Anne always kept me on her toes. You never knew what to expect from her. She had a very brusque style of communication. Yet she often surprised me by asking me how I was and really wanting to know. She could completely disarm me with a warmth I would never expect from her.

One time I told her I was dating a guy from Malaysia. She became very concerned and asked me if he was younger or older than me. She left it was important to tell me that if he was younger, I should not hope for a future with him because for a Malaysian man, marrying an older woman was a cultural taboo. I loved Anne for this. She always “knew stuff.” Her brain was a magnificent encyclopedia. I certainly had not known this cultural detail and sure enough, she was right. No wonder that boyfriend was so oddly excited that I was an “older woman” by just six months.

It was really during these occasional phone calls that I came to realize that Anne was fond of me. I don’t know if it was because of the fact that I stood up to her at the picnic that day and had earned her respect or whether she had always liked me but hadn’t expressed it much. I do know that I always admired her intelligence, which I think, was her most prized possession. I loved her Sweet & Sour Stir-fry and I always wished she would knit a sweater for me.

Anne was a giantess in the world. She was a pioneer in the male dominated world of academics. She had to be feisty to accomplish all that she did in her life. Sometimes a giantess is feared yet sometimes she can be incredibly gentle. Often she is misunderstood. Anne was certainly a mystery to me. She was a vibrant, original soul and I find myself sad today, knowing that she is gone. Rest in peace, Anne. We shall meet again.
Wind and Sand
by Jenny Bell

Coarse is her hair
A few strands fall in the sand
Wind sweeping them away
The locks caught in the cold air
Tears make beaded lumps
The wind should cry
But instead it howls.

She opens a book
Pages flutter softly
Then are swept into the fury
The book sliding gracefully
From her hands
To collapse on the ground
Beneath her blistered feet.

That Was My Grandmother
by Cassie Onstott

With her short, crimson curls,
Her green, glistening eyes,
Her heart full of warmth,
That was my Grandmother.

With a million dollar smile
That would cheer anyone up,
She was always full of laughter,
That was my Grandmother.

She could put me to sleep, tired or not,
Away I would go to sleep,
Away on my cot,
That was my Grandmother.

Our favorite show was
Mr. Roger's Neighborhood,
She made it so fun,
That was my Grandmother.

That way she could just look at me,
And my troubles just went away,
There never was a cloudy sky in my day,
That was my Grandmother.

She could put me to sleep, tired or not,
Away I would go to sleep,
Away on my cot,
That was my Grandmother.

A wonderful woman,
That's what she was,
And still to this day I say,
That was my Grandmother.

Gran`uta
by Valentina Cisney

Home
by Sandy Gomez
Lonesome Jim
by John D. Nesbitt

Sometimes he rides in on a sorrel,
Sometimes he shows up on a bay.
He drifts from one ranch to another
In wintertime when there's no pay.

He does any chore that the ranch cook
Or foreman will ask him to do—
Sort beans, fetch the water and firewood,
Or cut up some spuds for the stew.

He keeps to his bunk in the evening,
You won't hear him brag or complain,
Till one morning his bedroll has vanished,
And he's off on the grubline again.

To folks who don't know him he's a drifter
Who goes here and there on a whim,
But out on the range we don't judge him,
This fella we call Lonesome Jim.

Come springtime he rides for an outfit
And works for a dollar a day,
Rides outlaws and ropes like a top hand
And never has too much to say.

Then roundup is done, and this loner
Gets off of his stake rope a while,
Cuts loose like a wolf on a full moon,
Sings Mexican songs with a smile.

He tells of the woman who left him,
And a woman who died in the snow—
And he hopes he can find him another
Who'll stay for the end of the show.

I opened my mouth to speak, but the words would not come. I felt my body slowly start to crumple. My knees started to give. I could not stop myself. The earth darkened as a blanket of despair draped itself over my mind and heart. I sank into its depths.

"Mom! Mom! Wake up. Mom! Are you ok?" Cary frantically shook me. "Looking into the eyes of my lovely daughter, my heart began to beat erratically. I realized she was alive, that I must have been dreaming! I struggled to sit up on the couch where I was lying. Cary sat down beside me. "I walked in the door and the oven timer was going off, and I couldn't find you," she said. "Are you sick?"

Rubbing my eyes, I tried to wake up. I realized that I had fallen asleep watching television, and the oven timer sounding off had been the doorbell in my dream. "I'm fine," I answered. "I guess I dozed off." Cary shook her head. "Well, I thought you were dead! I couldn't get you to wake up! You scared me to death!"

Remembering the evening's events, I started to berate Cary for coming home late, but something stopped me. Looking into her concerned eyes, I thought, "What is wrong with you? She's worried about you, and you're ready to yell at her again."

I took a deep breath and silently thanked God for the second chance. He had given me and pulled Cary close to hug her.

Things were not perfect between Cary and me after that. It only took a doorbell, however, to remind me that life is precious. Letting go of the small things was a small price to pay to keep my daughter.

Old Bar
by Becky Shaw
The Doorbell
by Lynn Gibb

“I am so sick of you!” The door crashed against the wall as Cary threw it open in anger. “Why can’t you just back off, Mom? You act like I don’t know I need to be making decisions about college?” I stood there in stubborn silence as she stormed out the door. The car tires squealed as Cary tore out of the driveway.

I slammed the door in annoyance. Rolling my eyes in disbelief, I bent down to scrutinize the hole that now adorned the wall. “Great!” I grumbled. “Just what I needed. Something else to fix.”

Frustration increased as I wandered into the living room, reminding myself of how ungrateful my teenage daughter was. My eyes drifted to the table by the couch, and memories came flooding back as I looked at Cary’s preschool graduation picture. Looking into her grinning face, I realized that my little girl was growing up. Unquestionably, she resented my pushing her to make decisions about her future.

Recalling something my mother told me when Cary wanted to try living with her dad when she was twelve, “Sometimes you just have to let them learn through their own mistakes.” Grimacing, I realized that Cary was a young adult, not that tiny preschooler. Feeling some regret at our argument, I sighed, “Oh, well. She’ll be cooled off by the time she gets home, and I can apologize then.”

The rest of the day was spent trying to get caught up on the household chores that always seemed to get neglected during our busy week. Sometimes I was overwhelmed by all of the volleyball, basketball, track, and music functions that Cary was involved in. Secretly, though, I dreaded her upcoming high school graduation. Since my divorce eleven years earlier, Cary had been my focus. My mind reeled with panic when I gaped into a future without scheduled school activities.

Occasionally, I glanced up at the clock and then peeked out the living room window, looking for some sign of my only child. The sun fell slowly behind distant clouds, spreading fingers of brilliant reds and oranges across the horizon. Still no sign of Cary. Starving, I took the lasagna from the freezer, put it in the oven, and set the timer.

Checking the TV Guide, I decided to watch one of my favorite reruns, Little House on the Prairie, and sat down on the couch to commiserate with Pa that Laura had the audacity to want to get married. My attention kept straying to the door as it got darker and Cary had yet to arrive. Worry settled in.

As I shut off the TV, the doorbell sounded, and I went to the door. “Cary!” I exclaimed. “You had me scared to death . . .” but Cary was not there. A police officer stood on the step with his hat in his hand, staring at me with solemn eyes. “Are you Kathryn Gibson?” he inquired.

“Yes. Can I help you?” I responded. After a brief pause, he showed me his badge and asked if he could come in. I slowly opened the door and gestured him inside.

The officer turned toward me. “Ma’am, do you have a daughter by the name of Cary Gibson?” he questioned. At that moment, a feeling of absolute dread spread throughout my body like a ravenous cancer, seeking to destroy every cell. I looked at him and knew. Knew without the officer ever uttering one word. The one thing that I held precious on this entire earth was gone. Cary was dead.
Looking Through My Window

by Laura Imitates Dog-Cummings

Looking through my window
I see gangs and violence
I wish that I can see clear,
But the world is silence.

Looking through my window
I see no kids running and playing
But I wished I did.
I only see the gangs and violence staying.

Looking through my window
I see people doing drugs!
I wish that they would stop
Because you know this really bugs.

Looking through my window
I see no laughter cries and tears.
I only see empty cans of beer.

Looking through my window
I wish that I can see a happy place
I wish I can see the children playing,
With smiles and tears of joy on their face.

Looking through my window
I see all them wanna be gangsters
Fighting over stupid colors!
But they are nothing but wanksters.

Looking through my window
Wishing this all would end:
Maybe it would
If you had the right friend...

Untitled

by Gary Henderson

A new house for us.
Built a castle in the clouds.
Like renting Heaven.

Untitled

by Gary Henderson

College Masquerade:
Waltzing in expensive masks,
as the ballroom bums

Adoring Gazer

by Cory M. Kinsey

Have you ever watched a child get down from a chair?
No, now seriously.
Focus your eyes on that adorable little,
hard working child.
And watch them.
CLOSLY!
As they laboriously,
Turn themselves,
Completely
Around.
So that they may hold on to the back of
the chair.
Then they pull their knees so beautifully
below them.
And begin to push their feet further out
from under them.
REACHING
For the bottom of the chair with no fear.
STRETCHING
And now fearing that they may not find the
bottom.
Pushing desperately with their little toes
To seek out
The bottom.
Where their chair meets
THE
Floor.

Ode to Judges

by Shirley Smith

I accept what you say,
I have no other choice.
You have murdered my thoughts,
you have silenced my voice.
You consider yourselves judges,
but what do you know?
I am judging you,
and you know where you can go.
Some Other Place
by Cheryl Wilkinson

The leaves have left the trees
They've gone without a trace
Bare limbs swaying all alone
Leaves are some other place.

Leaves piling in the yards
What a sad disgrace
Homeowners have to rake
Wishing leaves some other place.

The cold west winds blow
To move the leaves around
Blowing here and there
They make a swishing sound.

When the winds blow from the west
It seems to me at least
It would blow the leaves
And pile them in the east.

A Sill Into The World
by Cheryl J. Wilkinson

When we die, you and I,
exhale this heavy metaphysic,
I shall sing and you will shine,
and be my favorite color when I die.

When we die, you and I,
and men's philosophies recede to stars.
you and I shall draw the lines in night,
and hold religion in our arms.

When we die, you and I,
before we wake from this dream,
be my sweetest vision here,
and be my favorite thing when I die.

Withered Beauty
by Cheryl J. Wilkinson

Untitled
by Gary Henderson

When we die, you and I,
exhale this heavy metaphysic,
I shall sing and you will shine,
and be my favorite color when I die.

When we die, you and I,
and men's philosophies recede to stars.
you and I shall draw the lines in night,
and hold religion in our arms.

When we die, you and I,
before we wake from this dream,
be my sweetest vision here,
and be my favorite color when I die.

When we die, you and I,
be that which I most adore-
I shall sing and you will shine,
and be my favorite thing when I die.

“La Mafia”
by Kara Glenn

In my life, I was given a second chance,
To meet these people and learn their dance.
When I felt my life was in despair,
They showed me that hope was always there.
When I felt all was closing in around me,
They broke through the barriers and made me see.

Life wasn’t all about homework and stress,
They made me see how life felt as its best.

Where would I be if I hadn’t met them all,
Who knew what would have come from that first hello last fall.

I never knew that I could find what I had always dreamed,
I began to feel that reality was better than anything else seemed.

When I ended high school, I had so many fears,
Now, I have a family that I hold so dear.

Someone must have been watching over from above,
To send all these angels and all of their love.

Where would I be if I hadn’t met them all?
Who knew what would have come from that first hello last fall.

Some Other Place
by Cheryl Wilkinson

The leaves have left the trees
They've gone without a trace
Bare limbs swaying all alone
Leaves are some other place.

Leaves piling in the yards
What a sad disgrace
Homeowners have to rake
Wishing leaves some other place.

The cold west winds blow
To move the leaves around
Blowing here and there
They make a swishing sound.

When the winds blow from the west
It seems to me at least
It would blow the leaves
And pile them in the east.

A Sill Into The World
by Cheryl J. Wilkinson

When we die, you and I,
exhale this heavy metaphysic,
I shall sing and you will shine,
and be my favorite color when I die.

When we die, you and I,
and men's philosophies recede to stars.
you and I shall draw the lines in night,
and hold religion in our arms.

When we die, you and I,
before we wake from this dream,
be my sweetest vision here,
and be my favorite color when I die.

When we die, you and I,
my name will sing in the sky.
My notes will make the angels fly.
Be your favorite song when I die.

When we die, you and I,
be that which I most adore-
I shall sing and you will shine,
and be my favorite thing when I die.
A.J.’s Hands

by Diane Dinndorf-Friebe

I shook his hand
Young man’s hand
strong, still innocent
soon to hold a gun
hard metal grazing smooth palm
Palm now held in mine

Palm of a brave young man
who doesn’t think he is brave
but the courage in that hand

To get on a plane
Leave his family and friends
To work as a soldier
In the war, in Iraq
Where daily body counts rise and fall
Where his hometown friends
Have just experienced
the loss of one of their own
have been injured
have been in the truck
that drove over a bomb
seconds before it detonated
under their friend
have been the first on the scene
the ones to see their friend’s body
killed by a bomb
lying on the hard Iraqi soil
hard and smooth
like A.J.’s hand

Brave hand
Smooth and young, yet innocent
Palm now held in mine

BAM

by Jack Holtingsworth

I’ll do it tomorrow you say
and Bam
You’ve slugged yourself with your own lie
I’ll do it tomorrow
and Bam
Bam
You’ve thrown a jab
And a wicked left hook to your mind
A quick one-two
In the endless repetition of lies
Your own lies
I’ll do it tomorrow I said ok, dammit
tomorrow

and Bam
Bam
You are now staggering and dazed
And soon you will be knocked out
Bam
By your own combination of lies

WAR

by Joshua Woods

With the crash of guns death calls to me.
And my final battle has begun.
And we march steadily on.
Shots ring out and blood splatters and men fall.
In front of me someone’s head splits like a melon and he falls.
And we march steadily on.
I can see the geysers of dirt explode as the rounds from cannons land ahead of us.
Death calls on us all.
And we march steadily on.
I have lost many friends in this war of the states.
Their faces haunt my sleep and my days.
And we march steadily on.
As we close on their lines more of us fall.
I hear for death.
And we march steadily on.
I cannot hear anything but the sound of war but the crack of a gun separates itself.
I can see it flying to me. Death. I open my arms

and…………….blackness.
And they march steadily on.
**Untitled**  
_by Chad_

long to weep at your knees

to hear our words intimate with each other

my sorrow was never so light as when with you

---

**Sit**  
_by Janell Wicht_

Outside Winter's unforgiving snow
boulders stop me cold.
Press me inside to tender embers of stillness.

---

**Castellum's Creed**  
_by Quaerito Varitas_

All I desire is peace,
alI deserve is death,
all I get is a battle
in a war that spans time.

---

**Thought**  
_by Megan McCune_

---

**Untitled**  
_by Tara Prazak-Avis_
He Puffs On His Pipe
by Jerald H. Lucas

A white haired man,
Face etched and wrinkled
By age and experience,
Sits meditatively silent,
In the brittle prairie grass
Which grows sparse and free
From valley to summit
Of the ancient rock bluff,
Taking deliberately long slow
Puffs on his pipe.

He sits staring across
The grassy valley below,
Eyes unfocused and glazed
Thoughts drifting across
Open vast plains of time,
To a place where two boys
Fished, hunted, and played
As if they were brothers,
And he puffs on his pipe.

Now, as the sun begins
Setting on his life
Now, as the years behind
Number more than ahead
Now, when memories
Hold warmer feelings than
Hopes and dreams of a future
He misses his old friend
The boy of his youth, long ago,
And he puffs on his pipe.

A white haired man sits in the grass
Atop the ancient rock bluff
Silently gazing unfocused.
An eagle circles overhead
Above the valley below
He puffs on his pipe
Awaiting his friend
The boy of his youth.
And he puffs on his pipe
Long deliberate and slow.

A Single Red Rose
by Joshua Woods

I wrote you this letter but I guess it would be better if I just read it to you I began.
Our time together was the happiest in my life except there at the end. It's time I moved on now. And I hope you can forgive me for any pain I have caused you. I whispered to her.

I slowly looked around as I wiped a tear from my cheek, the sun was bright and the sky was clear and a slight breeze rustled the leaves on the trees.

I just have to let you go and move on but it's not that easy. You have been a part of my life for five years now and it is hard to just say goodbye.

In the distance I could hear traffic and the sounds of children playing.

I feel like life has passed me by and I need to catch up to it. And I cannot do that when all I want is to be with you. You will always be my love and I hope when you see me you will be happy about how I have moved on. I love you

I laid the note and a single red rose on her headstone and walked slowly away.

Life As A Rose
by Kim Arnott

A Single Red Rose
Seriously
by Michael K. Sunderland

Wiggledy Piggledy went higgledy arm in arm with Roly Poly through the land of Ahs. Fuzzy Wuzzy the bear didn’t care if he had no hair sittin’ by Rainbow Lake. Silly Willie sure was a dilly though the wind was chilly in my back yard. Sergeant Grand lead the band of green soldiers on sand, and we always won. Cowboy and I rode the West on many a glorious quest until the sun set. I’ll never those long ago days of childhood’s happy daze with unabashed silliness. Grownups now, shout and pout in all seriousness all about their ares and woes. Time is come to seriously get right down silly. Remember how?

The Mechanic
by Diane Dandorf Friebe

He came in with his clipboard and brisk manner
Talking technical terms that shot right over my head
Never looking at me he peered at gauges checked hoses tested this tried that

Spitting more syllables In my direction
He switched to the other side Fried, pressed

Scribbling scrawls on the crisp clipboard he shook his head mumbling more mysteries he lifted, he opened

More notes
Another head shake A sigh
A stream of technical jargon hit me, but was not absorbed

I stared at him Disbelieving

She was not a car She was my daughter

Mom
by Megan McCune

Rick
by Sandy Gomez

Ice on Tree
by Teri Lucas

Emerging Voices
Emerging Voices
29
Emerging Voices
36
Emerging Voices
Dodge Bottom Burn Sky

by David Wiegel

Having Fun With Rick

by Sandy Gomez

My Double Diamond Friend

by Rhitta A. Smith-Bounds

Beautiful fluorescent lights sparkle like gems,
Dollar signs and shiny cars seduce unsuspecting victims.
Shouts of jubilation beckon shy visitors to come inside,
Crisp bills, silver coins, and plastic cards fight for right-of-way.
Silver haired orthopedic grandmothers fight for a lucky slot,
Bald platted men sweat profusely at the turn of a card.
Smokey-voiced platinum painted Barbie dolls offer pink champagne and hors d’oeuvres.
Cherries, diamonds, yellow dollar signs spin at the touch of a button,
Sarcastic comebacks echo from smart aleck machines. “I don’t have all day.”
Embarrassed guests pop in another dollar, hoping to hit the elusive jackpot,
An anguished groan drown out clanging bells and buzzers.
My Double Diamond Friend takes my last nickel.
Prairie Storm
by Lisa Betz

Back home where the great prairie earth meets the big sky, one’s vision is limited only by the eyes’ ability to see at great distances. Storms are noticeable from far, far away. At first, a storm appears like a tiny dusty gust, registering a slight disturbance on the horizon. Then clouds form. They look so tiny, it seems they could not possibly affect you but as the storm grows larger and more ominous, drawing great brushstrokes in the sky with fantastic flair.

This sky has a magical power to hold you transfixed, rooted in awe. As the clouds build, they creep closer and closer to where you stand, eating up the blue sky, replacing it with billowing, black thunderheads. If the sun is setting, the pinks and purples swirl in magnificent array. When the pregnant storm arrives and releases its great cleansing waters, you know it will only last for a little while. Though you be thoroughly drenched, the sun will come out again, birds will sing, blue skies will return and life will go on as before, only brighter, cleaner and with the fresh scent of a new day.

The Time Has Come
by Sandy Gomez

Wild calls to wild in the deep forest.
Upon mountain massif, proud the gray wolf
surveys his wide domain, and sings
the joy of the hunt and warmth of the pack.
Cubs and elders gather, all the furry clan,
in gleeful counterpoint and harmony.
He leads them well, they live in harmony
within the bounty of far north forest.
The alpha, strong and confidant leader of the clan
is he, cunning and bold in the gray wolf.
Now is the time for carefree play among the pack.
They cavort, nip and yip as their spirit sings.

Before the cold winter comes, the family sings,
weaving voices high and low in delightful harmony.
Soon snow will come bringing hard toil to the pack,
when they hunt the frozen drifted forest.
Then all the skill and wisdom of the gray wolf
will show forth on the winter hunts of the clan.

His strength and shrewdness assures survival of the clan.
In the frozen still of winter no cub sings,
sharing meager rations with the gray wolf.
None join in song, silent, gone the summer harmony
as they await the birth of spring in the forest.
Hope of renewed life, another year for the pack.

Sun rises higher; slowly warmth returns to the pack.
Romance of alphas soothes the cares of the clan
as spring seeps through the northern forest.
Offspring assured, old wolf in confidence sings
of the coming births and new melded harmony;
and, over all, stands proud the gray wolf.

Cubs romp and play with the gray wolf.
Small furry carefree additions to the pack
join with high pitched yowls in spring harmony.
They learn the ways of the hunt and the clan
When the full moon rises, the whole family sings
filling glade with joyful song in their forest.

Life is good, thinks the gray wolf, leader of the clan,
as the pack leaps in joyful play and sings
Harmony is assured for another year in the forest.